

## Open Our Ears Lord

As we gather on this Resurrection Sunday and return again to these precious scriptures given to us here in Luke chapter 9, we see in these words that Jesus was just beginning to reveal to His disciples some soon coming events that were going to be very difficult for them to hear and to accept, plans of God that had been settled in the Trinity from eons past and had been revealed by the prophets within the Old Testament scriptures, but plans that the disciples and most all of their fellow Jews had failed to see and to comprehend.

Those divine plans and events that Jesus was here beginning to reveal to His disciples are events that you and I can and should know well, really well, because they have already taken place and are written down in great detail within these gospels. But unfortunately for many of us, we also find these things that Jesus has done very difficult to comprehend. We have not, as Jesus worded it here, "let these things sink deeply into our ears".

Look with me at these words in Luke chapter 9, beginning in verse 43. Here, just after Jesus had demonstrated His divine power by driving a demon out of a young boy and healing him, we read . . .

43 . . . all were astonished at the majesty of God. But while they were all marveling at everything he was doing, Jesus said to his disciples, 44 "Let these words sink into your ears: The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men." 45 But they did not understand this saying, and it was concealed from them, so that they might not perceive it. And they were afraid to ask him about this saying. (Luke 9:43-45)

Folks, how often do you and I read and hear the words of Jesus within these scriptures, but fail to listen carefully to what they are saying to us, and fail to do as Jesus is saying here, fail to allow God's Holy Spirit to "open our ears" so that the full meaning of His words can "sink deeply" into our hearts and our minds.

These words that Jesus gave here are simple words. But as we know, simple words, when spoken from the mouth of Jesus are never really simple. Each thing that He says is filled with deep, intentional meaning and purpose. Here, He simply told His disciples,

44 "Let these words sink into your ears: The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men." (Luke 9:44)

The Apostle Mark also gave us these same truths in Mark chapter 9. Listen!

<sup>30</sup> They went on from there and passed through Galilee. And Jesus did not want anyone to know, <sup>31</sup> for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, "The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men, and they will kill him. And when he is killed, after three days he will rise." <sup>32</sup> But they did not understand the saying, and were afraid to ask him. (Mark 9:30-32)

Knowing all of the things that we know now, having studied these scriptures and having heard so many, many times about the events of the betrayal, the crucifixion, the death, the burial and the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, you and I should now be able to fully know, to fully understand, to fully comprehend, all that Jesus was speaking about in these words. But do we really?

The disciples did not. And perhaps that is understandable. Because the things that Jesus was forewarning them about here were still yet to take place, sometime out in the future.

But even more than that, we know that they had another reason for not fully comprehending the deeper truth that Jesus was revealing to them. As we have reminded ourselves on many occasions before, Spiritual matters can only be discerned by God's Spirit. And it will always be that way. The human mind, of its own capacity, is never able to perceive the lofty things of God.

And while yes, by this time the Holy Spirit had in some ways already been ministering to these disciples, the Spirit had not yet been fully given to them. So, for that reason, their minds suffered much of the same lack of understanding that did many within the crowd.

And in addition to that, we are told here in verse 45 that Jesus chose to intentionally hide the full meaning from them. Verse 45

<sup>45</sup> they did not understand this saying, and it was concealed from them, so that they might not perceive it. And they were afraid to ask him about this saying. (Luke 9:45)

Folks, this is often also true with you and me. Why? It's because a little bit of information, without the ability to fully comprehend its full meaning can cause us to believe wrong things and to have wrong responses.

And that was especially true with this matter that Jesus made quick reference to. The things that would take place shortly, His sacrifice on the cross to cleanse men's souls from the guilt and shame of sin, the justification that would wipe away the power and the presence of men's sinful natures, is far too incomprehensible a concept for any human mind to fathom, no matter how wise, no matter how intelligent a person's mind might be. Again, that sort of understanding can only come through the special ministry of the Holy Spirit as He ministers His truths to our spirit.

And Jesus, having as He did, the supernatural ability to look deeply into the hearts and minds of His disciples, knew that they were not yet ready to receive those truths.

The question for you and me today as we read and hear simple statements of Jesus such as this is, "are we, are you, am I really ready to receive the deeper, more intimate truths as God reveals them to us? Is my heart, is your heart filled with God's Spirit and ready to receive His truths?" "Do we fully realize and accept all the many wonderful things that Jesus has provided for us through His death, His burial and His resurrection that we are celebrating this Easter weekend?"

If the answer to that question is "no I am not really ready", then the next question must follow, "what must I do to prepare my heart to be ready, to prepare my soul to be trustworthy enough to receive those deeper, more intimate truths of God?

But first let's consider for a moment the special circumstances that led up to Jesus saying these words to His disciples. He had just healed a young boy of a lifelong illness described as epilepsy. And as the people in the crowd watched this take place, in verse 43, we read,

<sup>43</sup>And they were all amazed at the majesty of God. (Luke 9:43)

As Jesus observed the people in the crowd, He knew well the way in which the desires within men's souls ebbed and flowed. He knew that some of those people there that day truly wanted Him to be the long-awaited Messiah, God Almighty who had come to save them.

But He knew also that for many of them, their amazement and their adoration would soon fade. And He knew that some of these very same people who were

now amazed, might also be in that crowd later on that would be crying out for Him to be crucified.

That is the way of men's souls. It is easy for us to believe while we are still caught up in the fervor of emotion, while faith is young and still convenient and untested.

But what about later on? What about those times, especially for these in the crowd, when powerful leaders like the Scribes and the Pharisees would put them to the test? What would their reaction be then? Would they be able to stand strong in their newfound faith in Jesus?

Sadly, no! As Jesus said here, He truly would be "betrayed into the hands of men", and they would torture Him and kill Him on the cross.

So, what then was the purpose of Jesus saying these words to His disciples at this time, especially if they were not to understand His meaning? Was it that Jesus did a thing that we often do, start to say something but change our mind at the last moment?

No, not at all! The real answer is, Jesus knew that wisdom, true wisdom is most often acquired in that way, a little at a time. Jesus knew that knowledge acquired too quickly and not allowed to "sink deeply" into His disciple's spirits in the proper way could bring about a misuse of it.

True wisdom almost always begins with only small amounts of knowledge. And as that knowledge matures, with the help of the Holy Spirit, that knowledge begets understanding. And as understanding matures, with the help of the Holy Spirit, that understanding begets wisdom.

Now, the question for you and me today is, what are we to do with these precious truths that we are receiving from the Lord Jesus? Are we willing to let His words "sink deeply into our ears"? Are we truly listening? Is our heart really "ready" to receive some of His deeper, more intimate truths?

Are we growing strong in our faith, or are we like the disciples that day, amazed by Jesus' miracles, but unable to really comprehend His truth? Or even worse, will we turn away from Him when the pressures around us get strong?

My mind goes quickly to some of the students who came through our school at French Camp. In their years with us, they were told about the precious salvation that Jesus offers to each of them. And in the safety and security of the lifestyle at French Camp, it was convenient for them to taste of God's salvation. And many of them did. But later, when they were away from the protections afforded them there on our campus, many of them struggled and some even turned away from the faith they embraced while they were there with us.

We found that to especially be true as they began to immerse themselves in the lifestyle and the demands of college. Expert tempters awaited them at every turn, gaining access to their meager faith, causing many of them to wander away and to join into the secular culture that surrounded them.

And that sort of response is also true with children from some of the strongest of Christian families. No one is exempt.

Families who have been faithful to attend strong evangelical churches, find that as their children enter into adulthood, often one or more of them turn away and want little or nothing to do with Christ.

And so, the warning that is implicit within Jesus' words here should be a "goad" to spur you and me to move on forward in our faith, lest we ourselves begin to drift away from Him.

Yes, we are saved, and yes we have witnessed God's goodness and provision on many occasions. But perhaps even so, our surrender and commitment to Him has only brought us barely across the threshold of salvation. Like a very small child, we have enjoyed His goodness, but have done very little giving back in response. We are saved but hesitating and perhaps faltering, just inside the doorway of God's kingdom, not moving forward as we should.

Folks, I do plead with each of us. Such hesitation must never be allowed to be. The very nature of salvation itself requires that we move on forward. We must allow the truth of all that Jesus accomplished in His death, His burial and His resurrection to sink deeply into our understanding, and we must move on forward.

Scripture commands like those found in the Book of Philippians urge us to venture on deeper into God's plan and purpose for our life. The words of

Philippians 2:12 are especially demanding upon us, calling out to us to “work out our salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who worketh within us to will and to do according to His good pleasure.”

I especially like the way that Oswald Chambers expresses this very special truth. He tells us that you and I are to intentionally and purposefully begin to “work out the salvation that God has worked into us.”

And we must know that the readiness to receive and to work out the truths of God within our souls does not just “happen” to us. We will not just wake up one morning and find ourselves mature enough and strong enough to receive and to understand all the special things God is doing in our lives.

Not at all! You and I must intentionally and purposefully invest ourselves within God’s plan. We must ask, and seek and knock at His door . . . with all of our heart.

In Luke chapter 11, Jesus has promised us,

<sup>9</sup> Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. <sup>10</sup>For everyone who asks receives; he who seeks finds; and to him who knocks, the door will be opened. (Luke 11:9-10)

Folks, I do myself want to be ready to receive the truths of God as they are revealed to me. And I want the same for you. I don’t want Jesus to have to continue to withhold His deeper truths from me, or from you, simply because we are not ready to receive them.

There is mysterious wisdom within the mind of God that He is willing to share with us, but only when He knows we are truly ready to receive it.

Recall those words that I have read to you often from 1 Corinthians chapter 2. Listen!

<sup>6</sup> . . . we speak wisdom among those who are mature, yet not the wisdom of this age, nor of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. <sup>7</sup>But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, <sup>8</sup>which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.

<sup>9</sup>But as it is written:

"Eye has not seen, nor ear heard, Nor have entered into the heart of man the things which God has prepared for those who love Him."

<sup>10</sup>But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. (1 Corinthians 2:6-10)

The question for you and for me on this Resurrection Sunday is this. Has God done as these words of 1 Corinthians 2 tell us, and revealed some of the secret wisdom of His kingdom to our hearts and minds. And have we been listening carefully to His voice as verse 44 of today's passage instructs us to do, and have we let the fuller meaning sink deeply into our ears, deeply into our understanding, understanding that Jesus really did accomplish everything that we now need for "life and Godliness", that as He died there on that cross His precious blood was the perfect "payment in full", the full and perfect "propitiation" to pay for all our sins and to bring us redemption and salvation?

If we have done that, then these simple words and this simple requirement given in 1 Corinthians 2 is coming true for us, that our eyes can now begin to see and our ears can now begin to hear all the many blessed things that God has prepared for those who love Him.

So then, for us today, as we now pause to enjoy a time of blessed communion with the Lord Jesus, may I ask that as we carefully examine our hearts in the taking of this communion, that we truly do stand at our Lord's doorway, asking, seeking, and knocking, saying to Him "Lord, I want more of you. I want to know you more and to love you more, to love you with all of my heart, with all of my soul and with all of my strength".

May we pray!