



WOW: Word Of the Week

Hearing

January 6, 2021

“He that has ears to hear, let him hear!” How easily we pass over Jesus’ words – one with ears to hear should hear! Notice the implications: not everyone has ears that can hear. Not everyone wants to hear. Have you considered the application in our lives? The words of Isaiah – some have eyes without seeing and ears without hearing—are not only for the first century!

When Jesus came, announcing and demonstrating the presence of the kingdom, most religious people rejected his message. Jesus did not reveal the kingdom they wanted and expected. They wanted power, pomp, and grandiosity restored. They expected prestige and prominence. They wanted something spectacular. Are we different? Do we measure success by whether the church is recognized, prominent, known? Do we operate by the values of the world? Do we measure numbers, dollars, attendance? Do we see success through human eyes are through God’s eyes? Do we look at things seen or at eternal things unseen?

The first century world that Jesus entered was not ready for a kingdom inaugurated by self-sacrificial service, love demonstrated on a cross. From Jesus’ birth to Jesus’ death, their expectations of Messiah were shattered. Most had no idea what was happening – ears without hearing, eyes without seeing. They could not escape darkness, they did not recognize him, they rejected him, they did not receive him (John 1:9-11).

When the church (members, leaders, ministers, workers) gets serious about participating in God’s work in this world, an essential first step is to develop the eyes and ears of God.

- Hearing God means spending time with him in communication, listening and not just speaking. A primary way we listen to God is through spending time in his word!
- Hearing God means listening to him speak. Seeing God means paying close attention to what he says and what he does. What is God up to in this world? Where is he at work? What is he doing? What is his purpose? What does he want?
- Until we struggle with these questions, we are not hearing and we are not seeing. We will continue to do what we have always done.
- We must ask hard questions, listen and observe—are the ministries we are involved with and support God’s instruments to accomplish his eternal purpose?
- The church that is deaf and blind, without hearing and without seeing, will continue to pursue ministries based on agendas that are largely personal and little related to God’s agenda in this world.
- The church, even with lots of activities, “ministries,” and “missions” can fail to pursue the way of God’s kingdom.

Ears are interesting. Hearing occurs when ears process sound waves. At another level, a “trained ear” hears things others do not hear. My musical background says that training an ear takes time, to sing or play in tune.

The Bible distinguishes physical hearing and spiritual hearing. The church must recover spiritual hearing. Jesus said, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear” (Mark 4:9). Some heard but never heard; some saw but never saw. How sad!

Even sadder are those who refuse to hear, those who never take time personally to hear God speak through his word, those who do not use their ears to hear, those who do not train their ears to hear. The church struggles when leaders, preachers, teachers, members do not have trained ears. Do you hear discordant sounds? Can you distinguish uncertain sounds? Those who do not spend time hearing God remain spiritually tone-deaf and are easily drawn away by the siren songs that surround them.

Another challenge—we often hear what we want, what we expect. Until we develop spiritual thinking, hearing, seeing, we will be trapped by our expectations. We will fail to choose what is best. We will keep doing what we are doing. We will not ask ourselves whether we hear and see from God’s perspective. Jesus said to Peter, “You see life from a human perspective, not from God’s!”

Do we have ears to hear? May we hear! A first step is our commitment to spend significant time in the Word of God in the coming year!