

Intro:

Today is a critical study as the summer begins to really pick up. Read Text: Luke 8:1-21

The stories are linked, and they're all about how we hear and respond to God's Word.

- Underline the following words, and you'll see the connection: "hear" in v.8, 10-15, 18, 21; "word" in v.11-15, 21.

Our main question is: How do we respond to God's word when we cross paths with it? Before we get there, though, two things. First, what do we mean by God's word? Second, why would we want to even respond to it in the first place?

What is God's word?

God's word= Jesus' word. Luke 5:1 has the only other usage of the phrase "word of God," and it's clear there that it refers to Jesus' teaching. This, along with the clarity throughout Jesus' teaching and self-understanding that his words are to be taken authoritatively, as if he were God (6:47, 9:26, 21:33), point to the reality that God's words are Jesus' words.

It's interesting to note that Jesus says him and his words in 9:26. Elsewhere, the Bible says that Jesus is the word- his whole life, not just his words, is God's communication to us. So we're talking about responding to Jesus: his words here in the Bible, his very being as he encounters us today.

But why would we want to respond to Him and His Word appropriately?

Three reasons found in the metaphors.

1. Purpose: To live the fulfilling life we were meant to live (8:4-15)

2. Conscience: So we can stand before God on judgment day (v.16-18)

Text: the light is Jesus and his teaching. God has put him on display for all to see, and He will reveal one day all things as noted elsewhere in the Bible. So we need to respond to him, or else we will end up with nothing on that day of judgment.

3. Acceptance: So we can be a part of God's family. (v.19-21)

So how should we respond? Not just once, but as a continual pattern in our lives?

Four options based on the text

1. *Reject it. This will lead to Satan taking it away. (v.12)*

Note: it may sound like these people aren't at fault because Satan comes and take it away. But note they hear first, and nothing happens with it. Then Satan takes it.

Also, this is what is what is partially meant in v.10. For those who have been following Jesus so far, responding to him, they have been given more understanding. But for those who have not been responding, they will continue not to get it. In fact, v.18- what they have will be taken away. This is happens when we reject God's word.

2. *Embrace it when it's convenient; leave it when it's not. But this will bring us nowhere. (v.13)*

3. *Embrace it, and still hold onto other things as equally influential- certain cares, money, pleasures, and so on. This does not lead to the full life of God. (v.14)*

Note: God is not against these things; we can enjoy them. But when they have equal status in status with Jesus in terms of having control and direction of our lives, that's a problem. See extra study notes for some intriguing articles.

4. *Embrace it, do it, with perseverance and patience. (v.15)*

Note: perseverance, patience.

Application:

1. Get to know the words of Jesus. He will talk about everything here, from how we deal with money, family, people who bug us, God, sex, and more.

2. Cry out for a change of heart to hear and obey. This thing about having an honest and good heart- the Bible says that comes from God, so cry out for that.

3. Respond where you need to.

4. Take a weekly inventory and ask yourself how you're doing in following Jesus. The summer is important, don't let it slip away.

Extra Study Notes:

v.2-3- about these women, Joanna was present with Mary Magdalene in Luke 24:10. Mary also shows up in the crucifixion (Matt 27:55-56=Mark 15:40=John 19:25), saw where Jesus was laid (Matt 27:61=Mark 15:47=Luke 23:55), and anointed his body (Matt 28:1=Mark 16:1=Luke 24:10). Nothing else is recorded in the Bible about these women.

v.4- This parable is also recorded in Mark 4:1-20 and Matthew 13:1-23.

v.10- "mystery" as used in the New Testament refers to God's plan through Jesus that was previously unknown before He came, but has been made known through Him. See Romans 16:25-26 and Colossians 1:26.

v.10- reference is from Isa. 6:9-10. Luke's account is shorter (cp. Matt.).

v.14- for some thoughts on how "things of the world" can choke out the faith of Jesus, consider these articles on some recent phenomenon in our culture.

"Apple: the New Religion?" by Skye Jethani.

"Love and Devotion: The World Cup and the 'Religion' of Soccer" by Bradley Onishi

v.16-18- The idea of light is different from its usage in Luke 11:33-36. It is more like Luke 1:78-79, 2:32.