

Listen and Understand

Series: Sustainable Faith: The Word

Matthew 13; Proverbs 2 NLT (0932)

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Bert Robinson "We know more about the kingdom of darkness than we know about the kingdom of light."

I. A clear command of Jesus

a. Listen and understand (Matthew 13:3-9, 18-23 NLT)

Matthew 13:3-9 NLT ... "Listen! A farmer went out to plant some seeds. ⁴As he scattered them across his field, some seeds fell on a footpath, and the birds came and ate them. ⁵Other seeds fell on shallow soil with underlying rock. The plants sprouted quickly because the soil was shallow, ⁶but the plants soon wilted under the hot sun, and since they didn't have deep roots, they died. ⁷Other seeds fell among thorns that grew up and choked out the tender plants. ⁸Still other seeds fell on fertile soil, and they produced a crop that was thirty, sixty, and even a hundred times as much as had been planted. ⁹Anyone with ears to hear should listen and understand!"

TM "Are you listening to this? "Really listening?"

b. The challenges to listening and understanding

Matthew 13:18-23 NLT ¹⁸"Now listen to the explanation of the parable about the farmer planting seeds: ¹⁹The seed that fell on the footpath represents those who hear the message about the Kingdom and don't understand it. Then the evil one comes and snatches away the seed that was planted in their hearts.

Leviticus 19:26, 31 NLT "Do not practice fortune-telling or witchcraft. ... ³¹"Do not rely on mediums and psychics, for you will be defiled by them. I, the LORD, am your God.

Matthew 13:18-23 NLT ²⁰The seed on the rocky soil represents those who hear the message and immediately receive it with joy. ²¹But since they don't have deep roots, they don't last very long. They fall away as soon as they have problems or are persecuted for believing God's word.

Howard Hendrix—We get just enough Christianity to be immunized from getting the real thing...

Matthew 13:18-23 NLT ²²The seed that fell among the thorns represents those who hear God's word, but all too quickly the message is crowded out by the worries of this life and the lure of wealth, so no crop is produced.

c. The reward of listening and understanding

Matthew 13:18-23 NLT ²³The seed that fell on good soil represents those who truly hear and understand God's word and produce a harvest of thirty, sixty, or even a hundred times as much as had been planted."

II. Practical steps to listening and understanding (Proverbs 2:1-11 NLT)

a. Choose to value what God has to say to you

Proverbs 2:1 NLT ¹*My child, listen to me and treasure my instructions.*

b. Accept that the process will be hard work

Proverbs 2:2 NLT ²*Tune your ears to wisdom, and concentrate on understanding.*

1 Corinthians 3:18-19 NIV ¹⁸*Do not deceive yourselves. If any one of you thinks he is wise by the standards of this age, he should become a "fool" so that he may become wise. ¹⁹For the wisdom of this world is foolishness in God's sight.*

Psalms 1:2 NIV *But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night.*

c. Acknowledge your need for God's help

Proverbs 2:3 NLT ³*Cry out for insight and understanding.*

d. Engage the pursuit as a journey rather than a destination

Proverbs 2:4 NLT ⁴*Search for them as you would for lost money or hidden treasure.*

TM *Searching for it like a prospector panning for gold, like an adventurer on a treasure hunt...*

e. Rest in the promise of God

Proverbs 2:5-11 NLT ⁵*Then you will understand what it means to fear the LORD, and you will gain knowledge of God. ⁶For the LORD grants wisdom! From his mouth come knowledge and understanding. ⁷He grants a treasure of good sense to the godly. He is their shield, protecting those who walk with integrity. ⁸He guards the paths of justice and protects those who are faithful to him. ⁹Then you will understand what is right, just, and fair, and you will know how to find the right course of action every time. ¹⁰For wisdom will enter your heart, and knowledge will fill you with joy. ¹¹Wise planning will watch over you. Understanding will keep you safe.*