

# Devotion and Doing

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[ 0 : 01 ] Now Josh has been leading us through some studies in the early part of Luke's gospel and we're coming to Luke chapter 7 and we're going to read from Luke 7 at verse 36 right through to chapter 8 and verse 21.

Luke 7 then and verse 36. One of the Pharisees asked Jesus to eat with him and he went into the Pharisee's house and took his place at the table.

And behold a woman of the city who was a sinner when she learned that he was reclining at table in the Pharisee's house brought an alabaster flask of ointment. And standing behind him at his feet weeping she began to wet his feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head and kissed his feet and anointed them with the ointment.

Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw this he said to himself if this man were a prophet he would have known who and what sort of woman this is who's touching him for she's a sinner. And Jesus answering said to him Simon I have something to say to you. And he answered say it teacher. A certain money lender had two debtors.

[ 1 : 18 ] One owed 500 denarii and the other 50. When they couldn't pay cancelled the debt of both. Now which of them will love him more?

Simon answered the one I suppose for whom he cancelled the larger debt. And he said to him you judge rightly.

Then turning toward the woman he said to Simon do you see this woman? I entered your house. You gave me no water for my feet.

But she has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You gave me no kiss. But from the time I came in she's not ceased to kiss my feet. You did not anoint my head with oil.

She's anointed my feet with ointment. Therefore I tell you. Her sins which are many are forgiven. For she loved much.

[ 2 : 19 ] But he who's forgiven little loves little. And he said to her. Your sins are forgiven. And those who were at table with him began to say among themselves.

Who is this who even forgives sins? And he said to the woman. Your faith has saved you. Go in peace. Soon after he went through the cities and villages.

Proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God. And the twelve were with him. And also some women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities.

Mary called Magdalene. From whom seven demons had gone out. And Joanna the wife of Chusa. Herod's household manager. And Susanna. And many others. Who provided for them out of their means.

And when a great crowd was gathering. And people from town after town came to him. He said in a parable. A sower went out to sow his seed.

[ 3 : 20 ] And as he sowed. Some fell along the path. And was trampled underfoot. And the birds of the air devoured it. And some fell on the rock. And as it grew up. It withered away. Because it had no moisture.

Some fell among thorns. And the thorns grew up with it. And choked it. And some fell into good soil. And grew. And yielded.

A hundredfold. As he said these things. He called out. He who has ears. Let him hear. And when his disciples asked him.

What this parable meant. He said. To you it has been given. To know the secrets of the kingdom of God. But for others. They are in parables. So that seeing.

They may not see. And hearing. They may not understand. Now the parable is this. The seed is the word of God. The ones along the path.

[ 4 : 14 ] Are those who have heard. Then the devil comes. And takes away the word. From their hearts. So that they may not believe. And be saved. And the ones on the rocks.

Are those who when they hear the word. Receive it with joy. But. These have no root. They believe for a while. Fall. And in a time of testing. Fall away. And as for what fell among the thorns.

They are those who hear. But. As they go on their way. They're choked. By the cares. And riches. And pleasures. Of life. And their fruit does not mature.

As for that. In the good soil. They are those who. Hearing the word. Hold it fast. In an honest. And good heart. And bear fruit.

With patience. No one after lighting a lamp. Covers it with a jar. Or puts it under a bed. But puts it on a stand. So that those who enter. May see the light.

[ 5 : 14 ] For nothing's hidden. That will not be made manifest. Nor is anything secret. That will not be known. And come to light. Take care then. How you hear. For to the one who has.

More will be given. And from the one who has not. Even that which he thinks. That he has. Will be taken away. And then his mother.

And brothers came to him. But they couldn't reach him. Because of the crowd. And he was told.

Your mother and your brothers. Are standing outside. Desiring to see you. But he answered them. My mother and my brothers. Are those who hear. The word of God. And do it. Amen.

May God. Add his blessing. To this word. And help us to understand it. And indeed. To do it. We'll do turn.

[ 6 : 12 ] In your Bibles. Once again. To this last section. Of Luke chapter 7. Into chapter 8. Now.

An insurmountable debt. Is a crushing burden. To bear. It can be crushing. For nations. And governments. Who have. Recklessly overspent.

And of course. It can be crushing. For individuals. Who get themselves. Into all kinds. Of desperate situations. Because of money. That is owed. Picture.

A husband. And father. Who has gotten into. A terrible mess. Of debt. The phone calls. The letters. The people calling. At the door. Lingered ever closer.

And the shame. The embarrassment. Are soon to be exposed. Not to mention. The ruin. That his family will experience. Such a predicament.

[ 7 : 11 ] Carries with it. An inescapable stress. And panic. Well. We've been seeing. Luke picture for us. Different aspects of salvation.

In chapter 7. We have seen. That. The salvation. Jesus brings. Is a rescue. From the curse of death. Death. We saw last week. That a key part. Of Jesus salvation.

Is that it is. Eschatological. It is. Yet to be realized. Fully and finally. It's a certain salvation. But it's a future one. And in our passage today.

We see salvation. Cast. As the forgiveness. Of the death of sin. Great relief. From the crushing burden. Great relief.

From the crushing burden. Of knowing that you have a debt. That you cannot do anything about. But being told that it is forgiven. Wiped clean. Now we've also seen.

[ 8 : 08 ] That alongside the pictures of salvation. That Luke has arranged. We've seen that he is unpacking for us. Real faith. Saving faith. We saw it in the centurion.

Last week we saw. Doubting faith. Faith seeking reassurance. In John. And then we saw. Rejection. In the Pharisees. And Luke continues to flesh out.

What real faith looks like. And his focus in today's passages. On the obvious and visible. Fruit of real faith. We've asked the question.

What will we do with the word of God? But here's another question to ask. What will the word of God do with us? Luke isn't dealing in this passage.

With what it looks like. To take hold of salvation. Rather he's picturing. What it looks like. When salvation has already been taken hold of. What is the fruit of salvation.

[ 9 : 05 ] In the life of a believer? Look back at. 734. Jesus was happy to eat. With all kinds of sinners.

So much so that he's labeled a glutton. And a drunkard with it. And for some people. Jesus grace. Jesus salvation.

Does raise a question. Does Jesus not care about godliness? Does he not care about what is good. And what is evil? That's very often the concern of the self-righteous.

Isn't it? Those who don't like it. When certain types of people. Certain types of sinners. The particularly disreputable. Don't like it when they receive grace. When people who profess faith from messy situations. Surely they can't be religious. Look at them. Does Jesus not care about what they are like? I heard just the other day.

[10:03] Of someone who had come to faith. Being written off because of their recent past. You can't take religion that seriously. I mean. Look at what you've done. Well Luke wants to make clear.

That when salvation comes to a sinner. It doesn't leave the sinner unchanged. Jesus isn't just a friend to sinners. He bears fruit in sinners lives.

Because real faith is seen. It works out in life. And so the first thing we see in this passage. Is wholehearted devotion. From verse 36 through to 8 verse 3.

Wholehearted devotion. Real saving faith in someone's life. Produces glad devotion to Jesus and his ministry. This whole episode centers on a meal.

Verse 36. Jesus was invited to a Pharisee's house to eat. And recline at table. And meals in Luke's gospel are very significant. We've seen one. We've seen one already.

[11:01] Back in chapter 5 verses 27 to 32. Levi. A tax collector. Who had been called by Jesus. Well he held a great feast. And that feast came just after Jesus.

Wilderness temptations. A day of attunement type event. And after the wilderness temptation.

Jesus begins his ministry by claiming that the great year of Jubilee.

That was long promised has arrived with him. And then as he begins to work out the fulfillment of that year of Jubilee. The next thing is a meal. With a forgiven sinner.

God himself sitting down to eat. With the redeemed. Day of atunement. Year of Jubilee. Year of Jubilee. Fellowship meal. Luke shows us a tax collector who's experienced the salvation that Jesus brings.

And as Levi receives salvation he also gets to dine with God himself. And that's where the great sacrifices and offerings of the Old Testament culminated. God eating with his people.

[12:06] And that meal with Levi in chapter 5 is a glimpse of the last day when Isaiah tells us. That the Lord of hosts will make for all people a feast of the best things.

That's where history is going. That last day will be a great wedding feast for the Lord's people. A feast of celebration. A feast of full final fellowship with God himself. And so a meal with Jesus is no small thing.

We see a meal with a tax collector delighting in Jesus' presence. It's a feast. It's rejoicing. Full of generous celebration. But isn't that quite a contrast with this meal?

Here the Pharisee asks Jesus to eat. But verses 45 and 46 doesn't really show very generous hospitality. I look back again at 7, 29 and 30.

We've already read, haven't we, that the tax collectors and sinners, they declared God just. They received the gospel message. But verse 30, the Pharisees reject the purpose of God.

[13:15] Sinners receiving. Pharisees rejecting. And the two meals that Luke's put before us so far reveal the same thing. Two meals. One that is joyous. A feast because it was with those who should receive salvation.

And another, an invitation that is littered with indifference. Luke shows us three times in his gospel. There's a couple Pharisees sitting down for a meal with Jesus.

Here, again in chapter 11 and in chapter 14. And each one of them follows some sort of conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees. And each one of them has the Pharisees watching Jesus.

See that verse 39? The Pharisees saw how Jesus responded to the lady. And he concludes, he can't be much of a prophet. In chapter 11, they're astonished to see that Jesus didn't wash.

In chapter 14, it progresses. They watch carefully to find fault in Jesus. What a contrast that is.

Jesus' salvation grants intimate fellowship with God that can be delighted and enjoyed at the table.

[14:22] But when some get to the table, they see it as an opportunity to grill Jesus. To expose him. To catch him out. But the reality here is there's only one person who's exposed.

And it's Simon the Pharisee. It's so very stark, isn't it? And it's a starkness that carries through this passage. Luke makes clear that there are ultimately two ways that we can hear and respond to Jesus' word of salvation.

There are two ways that God's word can have its way with us. And we see that firstly with this lady, a sinner, verse 37. She comes to Jesus, cleaning his feet with tears, drying them with her hair, anointing them with prized ointment.

It's a picture of unrestrained affection. Adoring him, blessing him. Now, some of us might get a little bit uncomfortable with such expressions of love and devotion towards Jesus.

It's not really our thing, we might say. It's all a bit much, not very Scottish Presbyterian, is it? And of course, this isn't corporate worship. This is one woman taking the opportunity to pour out her love and affection upon her saviour.

[15:35] Jesus doesn't treat this as if it's a bit embarrassing, a bit out of place. He doesn't take offence at the lady letting her hair down in public. Jesus just receives the love.

Meanwhile, the Pharisee scoffs in his mind, thinking we were right all along. Look at this embarrassing, shameful display. He isn't just associating with sinners.

He's letting this one touch him. Ugh, it's just so inappropriate. Doesn't he care about cleanness and uncleanness? Isn't he careful of what and who he touches and what touches him?

But Jesus, as he is always able to do, sees into the heart and he perceives the thoughts. Verse 40. Jesus answers Simon, even though Simon didn't ask the question out loud.

And Jesus' answer is this story of the moneylender and two debtors. One debtor owed 500 denarii and the other 50. Something like two years' salary versus two months.

[16:39] And look at verse 42. When they could not pay, the moneylender cancelled the debt. The debt was insurmountable.

They couldn't do anything about it on their own. But here was a gracious lender who absorbed the cost himself. This is another illustration of salvation, isn't it?

Those of humble estate, those who like the centurion, knew that they're not worthy. Those who have a debt they know they cannot pay. It is such as these that Jesus' salvation comes to.

But Jesus presses the point. He asks the question, which debtor loves the moneylender more? Verse 43. Simon, perhaps feeling somewhat snookered.

I suppose it's the one with the larger debt. And so Jesus contrasts Simon with the sinner. Simon's right. Of course he is.

[17:36] And so look at the two together. Simon, verse 44. Verse 44. You give me no water for my feet. But what did this woman do?

She wept tears of joy all over them to wash them. She used what she could to tend to me. She used her hair to dry my feet. No kiss. No sincere greeting from you, Simon.

But she hasn't stopped pouring out love for me. Verse 46. You didn't anoint my head with oil. But she has anointed my feet with prized ointment.

It's a stark contrast, isn't it? Cold, measured, calculated indifference to Jesus on the one hand. And genuine love on the other.

Well, I guess I'll have him to dinner. Why not? And find out what all the fuss is about. It's half-hearted from Simon. Versus someone who pours out every last bit of affection that they have.

[18:38] And so look at what Jesus says. Verse 47. She loved much. That's how you can be sure her sins are forgiven. You've answered it yourself, Simon.

This is her response to forgiveness. Now, we mustn't read this as her love gained her salvation. That's not Luke's point at all. That would contradict all that he's been saying. And actually, the tense in both verse 47 and 48 is the perfect tense. Jesus is speaking about something that has already happened.

Her sins had already been forgiven. Her debt was already settled. Jesus' point here is the lady's reaction to him shows that she has tasted salvation.

Tasted forgiveness for a mountainous debt. And what else could be an appropriate response to that than an outpouring of affection? Think again of that man who had gotten his family into a mess of debt.

[19:39] Letters, phone calls, visits from the bailiffs. Building up and hanging over him. And the shame of the truth coming to light. Well, what would he do if suddenly, instead of being chased for his debt, he receives a letter that says, it's paid.

It's wiped out. It's cancelled. Cleared. You'll receive no more calls. No more threats. No more visits. This is a fresh start for you.

This is hope being restored. Well, wouldn't that produce unbridled joy? The weight of the world has lifted. The burden is gone.

And you'd think there'd be a thank you card. Or a gift. Or something that expresses the gratitude of receiving such a generous relief.

Well, how much more when that debt is a weight and burden of sin that leads to death? How much more when the penalty is far, far worse than the social fallout of being bankrupt?

[ 20 : 45 ] This lady's reaction is the most normal thing in the world. She knew that she was a sinner. She didn't need a pompous Pharisee to point it out. She knew her predicament. And so when she tasted salvation, it prompted love and devotion and gratitude.

Love for the one who ended her misery. And doesn't that reaction expose so clearly where faith is not? Her devotion exposes where salvation hasn't reached.

Because Simon had no love whatsoever. He didn't see that he needed forgiveness. He hadn't been touched by salvation. The point of Jesus' story isn't that Simon's death is smaller and the woman's is bigger.

It's about how conscious the debtors are of what they owe and cannot pay. Jesus is saying, Simon, your coldness towards me exposes that you haven't been touched by salvation.

It exposes an absence of faith. Because real faith produces wholehearted devotion to Jesus. And so, friends, even if it's uncomfortable, it's worth us pondering, isn't it, where our devotion lies.

[ 22 : 01 ] Our devotion to Jesus isn't likely to involve ointment. But it's fruitful to take note of the contrast painted in this episode. Is our commitment to Jesus very delineated as it's contained within a box that says he can come for dinner.

But I won't be going out of my way for him. It will be dinner. That's it. He can have a Sunday. That's what he gets. Or perhaps just a Sunday morning. He can have dinner.

Or he can have this small window of my time and service. This little bit that ticks the box of being involved in church. So I'll do a little bit of ministry over there to fly under the radar. But I don't want to get too involved.

I don't want to give up too much for him. Or do we begrudge costly service of him and make a song and a dance without having to do it? Jesus can come for dinner.

But I won't be breaking out any rich ointment for him. I will hold my best from him. Put it towards someone else. Someone else. Keep it for myself.

[ 23 : 06 ] Jesus can come for dinner as long as he doesn't mess up my life plans. My career goals. My family life. I'll take a bit of Jesus as long as it doesn't cause me any trouble.

Do you see what Jesus is saying here? Those who have been forgiven much. Love much. Those who are conscious of the great debt that has been paid.

Those who know the great burden of sin's debt graciously lifted from them. Well, they see devotion to Jesus as a joy and a delight. How can I express my devotion to him?

How can I serve him and honor him for what he's done for me? Costly love for Jesus is the fruit of real faith. And look at those gracious words that Jesus speaks to those who pour out their love on him.

Verse 48. He assures us. Your sins have been forgiven. That's the evidence. Your love proves it.

[ 24 : 07 ] Not as a reward. But because it's exemplifying. It's showing that faith is there. That you've received. You've been touched by. The grace of God. And that's why Jesus says in verse 50.

It's your faith that has saved you. But our devotion poured out as an act of love for Jesus proves that we've received salvation. And it's a living witness of us having tasted all that Jesus offers.

Look again at the tender words of Jesus in verse 50. Those last three words in the chapter. Go in peace. Words reserved for those who please God.

That's what the angel sang in chapter 2. Glory to God in the highest. And on earth peace among those with whom he is pleased. Friends, when we pour out our love to Jesus.

When we spare no expense in our devotion to him. When he gets the best of us. The best of our time and our talents and our money. Because we love him. Then he assures us that he's pleased with us.

[ 25 : 17 ] Perhaps there are some who've never really known that they could please God. How could he be pleased with me, we might ask. How could he be pleased with someone so sinful. Someone like me.

Well, we're reading here, aren't we? That our wholehearted devotion to Jesus. Every act of selfless love to him. Is a pleasing aroma. Well, where we have the exuberant outpouring of love from this lady.

Where tasting Jesus' salvation stirs our hearts. We see something similar in chapter 8 verses 1 to 3. In three other women. And Luke makes clear that it also.

Tasting salvation also stirs our pockets. We read about Mary and Joanna and Susanna. Three women who, verse 2, had been touched by Jesus' salvation.

And as Jesus carried out his ministry, what was their devotion like? It was being present with him. Providing for him.

[ 26 : 23 ] Of course, we shy away from talking about money because we're British. But John's explanation of repentance back in chapter 3 largely revolved around money. And here, devotion to Jesus means loving him not just with our words and tears, but with our wallets and treasure.

Few things reveal our love and commitment and devotion quite like what we spend our money on. But here's the other thing about these ladies. They are mentioned again at the very end of Luke's gospel in chapter 24.

As the ladies who went to Jesus' tomb. Real faith isn't a flash in the pan. It perseveres. It perseveres in love and service and sacrifice for our wonderful debt settler.

And this idea of persevering is picked up in our second point in the parable of the sower. And the other two parables. But before we get there, two final words on this. Perhaps you're sitting here with a tender conscience.

And are feeling like, oh, I really don't love Jesus enough. And you're feeling a little bit wracked with guilt. And you're questioning whether you have faith at all. Well, the question is, do you love Jesus?

[ 27 : 40 ] Do you know a great sense of relief that he has rescued you? Do you want to honor him and make your life about him? Is he the person or thing that you wouldn't trade for anything?

If that's you, then Jesus' words in verse 50 ring true. Your faith has saved you. Go in peace.

But for those who are exposed by the word of God, for those who see in themselves more of Simon than the sinful women, then it isn't too late.

You see, Jesus goes to dinner at the Pharisee's house, even though 730 they rejected him. If your service of Jesus is joyless and constrained, if you've been withholding from him your best service, your wholehearted commitment, then take note.

Very soon after chapter 7, verse 30, soon after rejection by the Pharisees, comes 736. An invitation to come and eat.

[ 28 : 46 ] And it's an invitation that Jesus accepts. Jesus responds when self-righteous religious folks come to him because he's in the business of salvation. It isn't too late.

But do not put it off. And we see why we shouldn't put it off in our second point. We see three parables that all focus on hearing and doing.

Chapter 8, verses 4 to 21. Hearing and doing. Real faith takes care to hear and respond to God's words. Real faith is seen.

It's visible both in loving service of Jesus and in an increasing and lasting obedience to his words. The key word throughout these verses is the word hear.

It's used nine times from verse 8 through to verse 20. And the concern in these parables is in how we will hear God's word.

[ 29 : 51 ] But first, in verses 4 to 8, it's important that we see why Jesus speaks in a parable here. And it isn't because stories are the model way to communicate to everybody.

That actually rubs against what Jesus himself says about parables. Verses 4 to 8, on their own, are hard to pin down. We can speculate, but you can't be sure what exactly Jesus is talking about aside from his own explanation.

And he finishes the parable initially, before he's explained it, with a rather enigmatic statement. He says, verse 8, He who has ears to hear, let him hear.

But at that stage, you might be asking, hear what? What's he talking about? Indeed, that's what the disciples seem to be thinking. Verse 9, they ask for more. They want to know what he means. And then look at verse 10.

Jesus says to the disciples, You have had the secrets of God's kingdom revealed to you, but others have been given parables. Why? So that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.

[ 31 : 10 ] Jesus is saying here that a parable is not a story told to shed light. It's a story told that conceals the clarity of revelation. It's like the conversation that parents might have in front of their young children, using coded language or spelling words, instead of saying them so that young ears don't understand.

To conceal the meaning. That's what Jesus says about parables. But why? Well, because it's judgment.

Jesus' explanation, verse 10, is drawn from Isaiah chapter 6. He quotes from it. And Isaiah was ministering at a time when God's word was being uniformly scorned and rejected.

And so Isaiah's ministry, he's told, was going to feature God withdrawing his word as a judgment upon his hard-hearted people. And so as Isaiah ministers the word of God to his hearers, it might as well be gobbledygook.

Seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand. And so Luke places this parable, which is a kind of headline flagship parable, he places it here, right beside the exposure of a Pharisee's hard-heartedness.

[ 32 : 26 ] A hard-heartedness that has been characteristic of the professing church throughout Luke's gospel, and throughout Jesus' ministry. Yes, Jesus celebrates the faith of these women, but he also makes it clear that those who continue to refuse him, those who have heard and seen and witnessed his gospel of salvation, but who won't heed it, well, then he may just withdraw his word or obscure it.

That is what is at stake when we hear God's word. When his gospel of salvation is put before us, he says, take heed, lest my word be taken away.

And that's really the message that we see throughout these three parables. Jesus goes on to explain about the parable of the sower, verse 11, the seed is the word of God.

And in verses 12 to 15, there are four different ways of hearing the word of God. And of course, only one of them is truly fruitful. Notice the point here is nothing at all to do with the word of God itself.

There's nothing wrong with the seed. It's living, it's active, it's in the right soil, it will produce a rich harvest. A seed's whole point is to produce fruit.

[ 33 : 48 ] That's what it does. And so what counts is how the seed is received, how the word of God is heard. Some, verse 12, some will have God's word snatched away before it can sink in.

It's heard, but not in any way he did. It's those who hear God's word, those who hear sermons from time to time, but tune out, crack on with life, without paying any attention.

Verse 12 is a picture of complete unbelief, and so, Jesus says there's no salvation. Verse 13, there are those who with great fervency and keenness latch onto the gospel word, but it's really only a flash in the pan.

The seed spread on the rocks, seed that doesn't have any real roots. And it's a sad fact of life that we will welcome folks into our church family only for them to drift away soon after.

Because it's easy to have a first flush of enthusiasm for Jesus until the first sign of trouble. God's word, in verse 13, has not really been the foundation of life.

[ 35 : 04 ] And so at the first quake, at the first shake, the enthusiasm crumbles in unbelief. Verse 14, there are those who will hear the word of God and it will appear to take root.

There'll be glimpses of fruit, but it won't mature. And the phrase in here that is particularly poignant is that the rejection isn't quick or instant.

It just happens, verse 14, as they go on their way, as people are taken up with everyday life, with the cares and the riches and the pleasures of life.

Such things choke the word of God out of them. When suddenly a new job or certain decisions about ordering family life or moving to a dream house or taking up a new hobby or a love of holidays in the sun.

When these kinds of things take hold, they can become a barrier to the word of God dwelling richly in our hearts. When these kinds of things are what we love and order our lives around.

[ 36 : 09 ] And it's a bracing thing for us to grasp that this doesn't happen overnight in verse 14. God's word is squeezed out slowly, gradually, choked.

And what once seemed like real faith is exposed to be nothing of the sort. Luke's message, Jesus' message, is that we must, verse 18, take care how we hear.

Literally, we're to watch how we hear, to keep our eyes on our ears. And so verse 15, the good soil, the soil of real faith, is hearing God's word and holding it fast in an honest and good heart.

and notice, it's bearing fruit with patience. It's real faith is faith that endures.

It's faith that endures with the word of God. Real faith endures in obedience to God's word. Hearing it and heeding it with integrity.

[ 37 : 19 ] Hearing it and doing it. And that's what the other parables are explaining. The lamp, verses 16 to 18. It's spelling out that real love for Jesus always produces lasting obedience to him.

And that cannot be hidden. With real faith, there's always something to see. It isn't hidden away inside someone as if some thoughts in our head is what real faith looks like.

No, it's always on display. It works out in life, in everyday life. If it isn't seen, if it isn't worked out, in life, then that is like verse 16.

Hiding a lamp under a bowl or under a bed. Light isn't to be covered over. There's a point in having it on. Light isn't to be hidden away somewhere.

It's to be put on display so that it fills the room. And Jesus' point here is that if a life displays darkness, if a life displays no meaningful sign of love for Jesus and obedience to him, then the most obvious conclusion is that there's no light.

[ 38 : 32 ] And where that is the case, verse 17, the truth will come out eventually. Just as it did for Simon when he came face to face with Jesus.

He was exposed. The very obvious exposure of his unbelief. And so the crux of all of this is that we need to keep our eyes on our ears.

Because Jesus says, verse 18, those who receive his word with gladness, those who bear fruit in keeping with repentance, those who are devoted to loving service of Jesus, well then, God's word will be a fountain of riches to you.

More and more fruit will be enjoyed by you. But God's word provokes division, doesn't it? To some, it will be boundless riches that multiply.

Whereas to others, Jesus says, even what you think you have will be taken away. That's the parable of the sower, isn't it? The same message.

[ 39 : 37 ] The word of God that seemed to take root was choked and the fruit didn't ripen, it died. What we thought we had taken away. How we hear and respond to God's word matters immensely.

It is either going to lead to blessing or curses. Jesus lands his point with a final picture. Jesus' blood family are trying to get to him in verse 19, trying to get to him amidst the crowds.

Jesus is told that they're looking for him. But verse 21, Jesus says, my family are those who hear my words and do them.

And so what will it be for us? Seed that is snatched away, that is without roots, that is choked, or enduring fruit?

Will it be a life that displays and proves God's word working graciously to change us, to transform us into the likeness of Jesus? A life that is always gaining light because more has been given?

[ 40 : 49 ] Or will it be darkness because there is no light? Will it be being lost in the crowds at a distance from Jesus?

Or will it be being received by him as family, adopted to be co-heirs with him? Will it be toying around with God's word, pretending, enjoying it as an intellectual exercise?

or will it be hearing and doing God's word? Jesus' salvation is a great counseling of debt.

It is relief and forgiveness from an unbearable burden. And salvation is of such quality that tasting it means that things can never be the same again.

And there is great comfort for us and great encouragement for us here because do you see what is implicit through these verses?

[ 41 : 54 ] When we come to Jesus in genuine repentance and faith, when we come to him in a humble estate, he grants salvation to us. And that word of salvation is planted within us.

And when it is planted within us, it does produce fruit. it works. It actually does something. God's word is seed, we're told.

Seed which is laden with the potential for life and bounty. Seed grows and produces. That's what it does. And with a lump, notice what Jesus says, his conclusion in verse 18.

Those who are hardened in unbelief have nothing and all that they thought they have is taken away. But those who have God's word planted within them, they don't just have something wonderful now.

They will have something that will be more and more and more. Because God's word does something. His salvation reaches into lives and transforms them.

[ 43 : 04 ] And verse 21. Those who have God's word planted within them, they know ongoing fellowship with God. That's part of his family.

Luke says, take care how you hear. If you refuse Jesus' words today, it will only get easier and easier to refuse them. But, if you hear his word today and receive it, it is laced with power to grant

you forgiveness.

forgiveness of the great death of sin that you could not pay by yourself. And his word is laced with a power that sprouts into loving devotion and lasting obedience for the one who's rescued you.

he who has ears to hear. Let him hear. Let's pray.

Let's pray. Lord God, the depths of the salvation that comes to us in Jesus Christ are immeasurable.

[ 44 : 17 ] and so we ask that you would graciously grant to us a deepening appreciation of all that is ours so that our love for the Lord Jesus might multiply and so that our ears may ever be open.

Help us to this end we pray for we ask it in Jesus' name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.