

Pastor Brian's
Mid Week Message
May 13, 2020

“GOOD LISTENERS!”

“So faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.” Romans 10:17

I have to give all of you all a lot of credit, you are great listeners. All last week I urged those who could shift their usual worship attendance from the 10:30am service to 8:30am for now, so as to not “overcrowd” the latter, to do so. It turns out that many responded to the call, hearing my voice, and actually, it might have been a few TOO many. Our 8:30am worship was just a bit over the 40 or less that we had hoped to keep the attendance to (shhh...please don't tell anyone lest the government shuts us down) while at 10:30 we fell far short, and I mean FAR short. So, what I have to say to you this week is...just come to the service that best fits your personal schedule and the Lord will make sure that things work out. Listening is about the most important thing that we can do in life, maybe not to me but most certainly to God. In Psalm 95:7-9 God says to us, *“For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture, and the sheep of his hand. Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts, as at Meribah, as on the day at Massah in the wilderness, when your fathers put me to the test and put me to the proof, though they had seen my work.”* A little context here; Meribah means “quarreling” and Massah means “testing” and these names were given to a place (Rephadim, Exodus 17:1-7) in the Exodus where God's people grumbled, complained and rebelled as they had no water to drink. Just days after their miraculous rescue in the parting of the Red Sea their unbelief and lack of trust was fully displayed as they whined and complained about the situation rather than praying to their God who had continually rescued and provided for them. The Psalmist says, *“Today, if you hear his [our God's] voice”* don't reject his Word and rebel against him like they did, but rather listen to him. Listening to God brings about tremendous benefits. Turning from him leads to eternal death and damnation. The Word of God carries within it great power. The Apostle Paul puts it this way. *“I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.”* (Romans 1:16) It is the Word of God, the Words of Jesus and about Jesus, that God the Holy Spirit works through to create and grow faith, faith that grabs on to the gift of God's forgiveness and salvation. Paul goes on to state that *“faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ.* (that's Romans 10:17 listed above) The only place that we can get faith; receive faith, as a gift is through the Word of God, through Scripture. Faith isn't something that God somehow magically and miraculously zaps us with through some “spiritual experience”, it comes to us, is given to us, by the power of the Holy Spirit working in the Word of God. This also happens in the Sacraments; Holy Baptism and the Lord's Supper, as it's the Word of God attached to the elements (water in baptism and the bread and wine of the Supper) that makes them what they are...means that God uses to bestow His grace upon us as well as to give and strengthen faith. All that said, the best thing that we and everyone else can do is to listen to what God says to us in the Bible, His inspired, inerrant and infallible revelation of who we are, who He is and what He has done and will do for us eternally in Christ Jesus. Not only are we to listen, but also to actually hear His voice and respond to it through the Spirit, His Spirit, that lives inside of us. In James 1:22 we are exhorted, *“Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.”* God gives us His wisdom in the pages of Scripture, wisdom that we can hear and grab hold of to apply in our lives. The ways and wisdom of God are far higher than the wisdom of the world, which is no wisdom at all. The wisdom of God leads to our salvation, our eternal life with God in paradise. The so called “wisdom of the world” will take us in the opposite direction. So today...we can't wait for tomorrow...when you hear His voice, as you hear His voice in Scripture, listen for it and to it. Hear that voice and pay attention, and then apply the wisdom to life. I must say “the world could certainly use a bit more wisdom right now” in light of the current circumstances.