

Title: How's Your Hearing?

Text: Luke 8:16-21

Date: July 26, 2026

Proverbs 4:6 says, *"that if we love and do not forsake God's wisdom, she will protect and guard us."* And so, if you have your copy of God's word with you today, and I hope you do, please turn to Luke 8. Luke 8, we're going to be looking at verses 16-21 this morning, which is a passage that I've titled this morning, How's Your Hearing? And well, I know how's my healing, it's not great, but how's your hearing? And I've titled it this way because this passage prevents for us a sort of spiritual hearing test, as I was looking at it, by which we can test the health of our spiritual healing, which is a very important thing.

You see, one of the most glorious and fundamental realities revealed to us in the pages of scripture is that there is a creator, God, who has made us and that he has spoken. This is the truth that bursts onto the scene right from Genesis 1. In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth, and what was the first thing that he did? He spoke. And God said, to borrow Francis Schaeffer's phrase, he is there, and he is not silent. Ever since the very beginning, God has been speaking to his creation. And as his appointed representatives who have been made into his image, God has been speaking to mankind. As Genesis 1:28 records, *"And God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and exercise dominion.'"* And so ever since the very beginning of time, God has been speaking and he has been speaking to humanity.

And if you recall, the first and greatest and most important task and test that God put before humanity was this; how would they listen to God's word? Would Adam listen to what God told him with an intent to share God's word with Eve so that she might be able to follow it for herself? Would Adam listen with an intent to grow in God's word so that he would come to know experientially the difference between good and evil in the way that God intended? And would Adam listen with an intent to obey God's word and fulfill God's divine purpose and calling for him in creation? How would he listen to God's word? How was Adam's hearing? Did he pass the hearing test? The obvious answer is no. He failed. We all know the answer to that question. Adam failed his hearing test, and he chose to listen to the devil and his own desires rather than God and the consequence for Adam's failures and the failures of each concurrent generation after him.

To listen rightly to God are all around us on every side with broken countries, broken governments, broken communities, broken families and marriages and bodies and souls because of sin and a failure to listen to the words of God. Ultimately, we see around us a broken creation and a humanity that is alienated and far off from its holy creator and headed to an eternity of judgment beneath God's wrath because when the creator and the giver of life spoke, we refused to listen. And just like Adam individually we often fail our hearing test and yet God has not given up on us. That's why we read in Hebrews 1:1, *"Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers through the prophets, but in these last*

days he has spoken to us by his Son.” And again, in John 1:1 & 14, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.” See Jesus has come. It's the final revelation from God to man. A light for all mankind. He has come bringing words of eternal life and the question that Jesus has for all of us this morning is how is your hearing when it comes to the word of God even as this passage is spoken by the word itself.

As Jesus is going to say later in verse 18, *“Take care then how you hear.”* Not just that you hear God's word but how you're hearing it. Are you paying attention for purpose or are you failing your spiritual hearing test? Well, this morning our Lord Jesus is going to show us three ways in which we can take care how we hear. Three ways in which we can pass our hearing test. That is first Jesus tells us here that we are to listen in order to share God's word. That is in verses 16-17. Second, we are to listen in order to grow in God's word. That's in verse 18. And then third we are to listen in order to obey God's word and that's in verses 19-21. So, if we're to pass our hearing test when it comes to the word of God how are we to listen? We are to listen in order to share, in order to grow, and in order to obey. This is how we demonstrate faith in Jesus Christ as the good soil.

So, with that in mind if you're able please stand with me out of reverence and readiness for the word of God as I get to read our passage before us today from Luke 8 starting at verse 16 on into verse 21. Our author, first century doctor Luke writes under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit these words for us today,

“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 all those who enter may see the light. For nothing is hidden that will not be made manifest, nor is anything secret that will not be made known and come to light. Take care then how you hear, for the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he thinks he has will be taken away. Then his mother and his brothers came to him, but they could not 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.’”

This is the word of God who holds back our feet from every evil way when we keep his word.

Let's pray.

Dear Heavenly Father, I thank you so much for what it is for us as hungry and weary souls to receive with meekness your implanted word which is able to save our souls. Father, you have the words of eternal life, and it is like honey to our mouths, to our souls. Father is more precious than gold or silver that perishes. It is the lamp to our feet and the light to our path. It is the mirror by which we see things dimly. It is the means by which we see ourselves and it is your very word which reveals your glory to us and the glory of your son. And so, Father I pray that the Holy Spirit would wield his word powerfully in our midst today so that we would hear your word. That we would pass the test this morning and thus be equipped to follow Christ in hearing him all our days. Give us grace towards this end.

We ask in Jesus' name, amen.

You may be seated.

Now before we jump in, I just want you to recall the context of this passage because it's been a spell. Here in Luke 8, we're about halfway through Jesus' public ministry. Jesus has been sharing the gospel throughout all the cities and villages there in Galilee, in northern Israel, and as a result massive crowds are starting to gather around him. And it's in front of this huge crowd Jesus stands up in verse 5 and he delivers a simple story. A sower sowed some seed and it fell on four different types of soil and so he who has ears let him hear, get it, got it good, and then he sits down. And what's interesting is no one in that crowd cared to find out what in the world he was talking about. And only his disciples did as shown in their question in verse 9 when they said what does this parable mean? And so, to them and to them alone Jesus gives the secrets of the kingdom of God. To them Jesus gives the interpretation of the parable of the soils which we studied last time in verses 11-15.

That leads us to this morning's passage in verses 16-20 which increases the momentum of the previous passage because it's all about how we are to hear the word of God when it is delivered to us. This is the significance of the parable that Jesus has been teaching. I don't know if you've ever noticed it before, but I want to point it out to you this morning that the difference between good soil and bad soil, fruitful hearts and unfruitful hearts, believers and unbelievers is not whether you hear the word of God or not. Because in this parable everybody hears the word of God. See that in verses 12, 13, 14, and 15.

"The ones along the path are those who have," what, "heard; and then the devil comes and takes away the word from their heart, so that they may not believe and be saved. And the ones on the rock are those who, when they," what, "hear the word, receive it with joy. But they have no root; they believe for a while, and in a time of testing they fall away." Verse 14, "And as for what fell among the thorns, they are those who," what, "hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by the cares and riches and the pleasures of life, and their fruit does not mature. And as for that good soil they are those who," what, "when hearing the word, hold it fast with an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patience."

See the difference between good soil and bad soil, the difference between a fruitful heart and unfruitful heart, the difference between a saved individual and an unsaved individual is not whether they hear audibly the word of God. Even if they've heard it every single Sunday of their life. The difference is how they hear it. The barren soil hears the word of God superficially, but the good soil hears the word of God savingly. Jesus's teaching in this parable of the soils is very clear. A person demonstrates whether they're genuinely saved or not, not based upon whether they hear and listen but how they hear and listen to the word of God. And therefore, his central admonition given there in verse 18, *"Take care then how you hear."* Because how your heart listens to God demonstrates where your heart is before God.

So even again before I even look at one of these verses, we need to ask ourselves the question. What soil are you? You may be here at church this morning. That's good. You're about to hear the word of God. That's even better. But make no mistake that that is no indication this morning of whether you are saved.

This passage records there's an enormous crowd in front of Jesus. All of them heard. Only a few demonstrated saving faith and even one of them who came up and asked a question ended up being a devil. So just because you're here at church this morning hearing the word of God doesn't mean you're saved. The test of genuine faith and spiritual regeneration is not whether you're hearing the word but how you hear it. You've got to pass the hearing test.

And so, this passage is given to instruct us in how true believers do and ought to listen to the word of God. Which I would remind you is immensely practical because all of us are professional listeners whether we know it or not. You who are Christians what is your regular practice? Nearly every day it is to open up the word of God and what? Listen to it. Even I as your pastor. I spend way more time listening to the Bible than I do ever teaching it. Therefore, it is immensely practical for us to learn this morning how we ought to hear the word of God for the glory of God. Scripture commands us over did you know that over 200 times to hear and listen to the word of God just like Jesus does back in verse 8 when he says, *"He who has an ear let him hear."*

Did you know that even if you missed up to 12 Sundays a year from the age of 18 to the age of 80 you will still have listened to over 2500 sermons in your lifetime. Not to mention all the times you open up God's word for yourself at home or listen to teaching or sat in Sunday school or other studies. God tells us repeatedly to listen to his word because it is what we are to primarily do, and it is what imparts saving faith. It is what demonstrates saving faith and it is what matures saving faith. It is listening to the word of God. And so, Jesus this morning instructs us in how we are to listen and when I sit down with my Bible later today or tomorrow morning and when I come to services next week and hear the word of God taught how am I to listen to it?

Jesus shows us first that we are listening in order to share God's word. That is in verses 16-17. Here Jesus follows up this parable of the soils with another parable about a lamp. He says in verse 16, *"No one after lighting a lamp covers it with a jar or puts it under a bed."* You ask why well one it puts the light out or second it sets your bed on fire. No that's not what Jesus's point is, right. If you cover a fire with a thick mat or blanket what happens? It extinguishes it. It puts it out. So, Jesus is saying no one lights a lamp for the purpose of extinguishing it. They light a lamp to do what? To spread that light. And that's why he says at the end of verse 16 that after you give light to a lamp you *"put it on a stand, so that those who enter may see the light."* You give light to a lamp so that the lamp will shine and give light to others. And so, Jesus gives truth to his disciples so that they will share it. That's the connection between what we have seen previously in Luke and what we're seeing now.

Those who receive the word of God when in the *"honest and good heart"* as verse 15 describes are like a lamp that's been lit. And as a believer you have received the word of truth and you've received that light. You've received that truth not so that you can keep it to yourself but that you can spread it as far as possible to others. And that's why Jesus says in verse 17, *"For nothing is hidden that will not be manifest, nor is anything secret that will not be made known and come to light."* Jesus is telling his disciples you are not a depository of truth. You are a channel of it. There may be some truth he's telling them that I teach only to you and not to these crowds but that's not because I don't want anyone else to know this truth. It's

because I've planned for you to be the one that shares it with others. Yes, as verse 10 says, *"I've given you the secrets of the kingdom of God."* But as verse 17 says, *"nothing is given in secret that will not be made known and come to light."* I haven't given you the truth so that you would hide it or keep it to yourself. I've given you the truth so that you would shine it forth. I am teaching you so that you would teach others. Everything I'm sharing with you; you are to share with others later. Whether I give it in public or in private, reveal it all is what Jesus is saying.

And the apostles listened to Jesus's instructions didn't they. It began on the day of Pentecost when Peter stands up and says let me tell you all about this Jesus of Nazareth whom you crucified. And he keeps on going. Him and the other apostles with him for years writing four gospels in order to share as much as possible about who Jesus was and what he taught. Teaching both publicly and privately and then they gave all these letters in the New Testament just to explain those gospels. Nothing was done in secret that was not made known. And the apostle John writes in his first epistle, *"That which was from the beginning, which you have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon and touched with our hands, concerning the word of life - the life was made manifest, and we have seen it, and testified to it and proclaimed to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and was made manifest to us - that which we have seen and heard we proclaim also to you."* They held nothing back. Nothing back. And as students and learners of Jesus Christ we're not to hold anything back either.

Christ has decided to give the light of the knowledge of the truth to you. Not so that you would keep it to yourself but that you would spread it to every single relationship you have in life. And that's what's supposed to happen among the people of God. As we read the word of God, we truly plant it deep within us when we share it and plant it in the life of someone else. And even for me I spend all week listening to the word of God, why? So, I can share it and then you all listen to the word of God, why? So that you can share it too. It's just like what Ephesians 4 says, *"God gave pastors and teachers,"* to do what, *"to equip the saints to do the work of the ministry."* See this these truths we learn on Sunday morning I share from God's word. Why? So, there's not just one person who lives out and proclaims the truth of Luke 8 this week but 300 people.

You know as a pastor sometimes I hear after a sermon I really wish my son, my daughter, or my husband, or my friend, or my fellow church member, that guy over there, right, that he could have been here to listen to that sermon because all of them they really need to hear it, right. Well first no. Actually, you needed to hear it. And then secondly have you ever considered that one of the reasons why you were the one that heard it this morning and not them is because God wants you to be the one that shares it. That is the reason why they were not here, and you were, was because you're the one ordained by God to share the truth with them and not me. That it's your job to share the message with them and it's not mine. And that's why Jesus says here to his disciples, he says, listen I'm telling these truths to you not because I don't want the world to hear them but because I want you to be the one who gets to tell the world these truths. Isn't that awesome. Jesus could still be here on earth preaching the gospel and he'd do it way better than, way better than me or any of you but he wants us to be a part of it. It's a privilege.

He calls all of us to enter into the work of his ministry. Jesus expanded the ministry of the apostles, and he could have just chosen the apostles to share the truth, but he didn't. He expanded the truth to pastors, and he could have just chosen pastors to share the truth, but he didn't. He expanded the truth to all believers, to all of us, to you. In his marvelous grace he says, I have chosen you to be the one who will share this truth with him. So that's why you're in this neighborhood, that's why you're in that street, that's why you're in that job, that's why you're in that relationship, in that family, in that marriage. It's your privilege and it's your ministry.

As 1 Peter 2:9 says, *"You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light."* We were called to proclaim. Is the truth sitting stale with you because it's not being used? Understand this then, that when we hear the word of God, we are to listening in order to share it. The torch of truth is being handed on and so listen carefully that you may share it. So, when you come before the word of God you are to listen in order to share it.

Second when you come before the word of God you are listening in order to grow. Jesus says in verse 18, *"Take care then how you hear, for the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he thinks he has will be taken away."* I want you to notice Jesus says, *"Take care how you hear."* It's very important that you hear. And it's very important what you hear. I had a whole devotional written here that just hit the cutting room floor this week but the point that Jesus is making in this passage is that it's very important how you hear. All of us are hearing that. We can assume that this morning, I hope.

Sound waves are passing through your ear canal creating a vibration in your eardrum, your brain is processing that some of you might need some aids to help that but it's working. And what your brain is hearing this morning is Christ's words from Luke 8 as I give them. But even though that you're hearing is happening and the what you're hearing is happening that's not good enough in the eyes of him who sees the heart. The question he asked this morning to you is how are you listening to the words of Christ? There are many possibilities in different ways in which you can hear God's word.

You could be like those in Isaiah's time who were hardly listening, and they basically said keep on talking Isaiah but I'm never going to listen. You could be like those who were living during Ezekiel's time who were shallowly listening, and they said you know we should go to church, right. We should go listen to prophet Ezekiel preach because he's got such dulcet tones to his preaching, right. Boy he preaches that old time religion just the way I like it. Boy it's just like going home. And then we'll just keep on going back to our Monday through Saturdays until next week. They listen only to make themselves feel better. Or you could be like those in Jesus's time who listened only to find a fault in his message. But God wants you to be like those that are described in these verses. He wants you to be the good soil who listens with faith and receives the word of God with an honest and a true heart in order to share, grow, and obey God's word. And so, this is how we listen to Jesus and his word. And that's why Jesus keeps on returning to this point over and over again.

For example, at the end of Luke 6 Jesus contrasts those who hear his words and puts them into practice with those who hear his words and don't put them into practice if you remember. One survives the storms of trials and difficulties and judgment and the other doesn't. And the difference was how they listen to the word of God. Here in the parable of the soils just before this he contrasted the person who hears the word of God and holds it fast with the people who hardly hear the word of God or shallowly hear it or distractedly hear it. One is marked by life and fruit; the other is marked by death and vanity. And the only difference between the soils is how they listened. And that's why Jesus says, *"take care how you hear."* Everything depends on it. As he says here, *"Take care then how you hear, for to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he thinks he has will be taken away."*

In other words, you only get from something what you give towards it. You use it or you lose it, and this principle applies to every area of life, but it especially applies to spiritual areas. If you don't use the truth that's given to you, you lose it. If you're resistant and different or disobedient to God's word when it's put before you then even the smallest amount of spiritual knowledge that you think you possess will be taken away from you. But if you use what God gives you, if you hear God's word and hold it fast with a good and honest heart desiring to grow in your knowledge of him and put it into practice then in that case more will be given to you. You'll grow in your knowledge of God's word.

Has it ever occurred to you that one of the reasons perhaps if this is true for you that the bible is a closed book to you is because you honestly have no desire to obey anything in it anyway. You got to use it, or you'll lose it. You got to grow in your knowledge of God's word. This is exactly what we saw illustrated in Jesus's giving of the parable in verses 4-10. The disciples who carefully listen to Christ, who honestly desire to know the truth, to them more truth was given. But the crowd who casually listened to Christ who didn't care about knowing the truth, what happened? Even what they thought they understood, a parable of a random farmer even that was taken away.

This is why Jesus emphasizes so much how you listen because how you come to God's word is how you walk away from it. If you come honestly seeking the truth and wanting to obey it, you will walk away with more truth. But if you come to God's word desiring as little truth as possible then you'll get exactly what you want to, barely anything. There's no way to be neutral towards the truth. You'll either be growing in it or you'll be losing it. And the choice is yours every single day you open up the Bible. Every single time you come to church. So, take care how you hear. Listen in order to share. Listen in order to grow.

And then finally listen in order to obey God's word, verses 19-21. We read immediately tacked on after this parable a story for a reason. It says, *"Then his mother and his brothers came to him, but they could not reach him because of the crowd. And he was told, 'Your mother and your brothers are standing outside, desiring to see you.'"* Now I'd tell you how I would expect to react to that news if I had been swamped with constant ministry to the point where I wasn't even getting enough time to sleep and eat. All of a sudden, my family comes up out of a distance to see me I would drop everything in that moment to spend time with them. But Jesus doesn't do that. It says, *"But he answered them, 'My mother and my brothers are those who,'"* what what's the word, *"hear the word of God and,"* what, *"do it."* That must have been shocking. Jesus, aren't you going to drop everything and spend time with your family? I mean they came from the

long ways. And Jesus replies I already have. I have dropped everything to spend time with those who hear the word of God and do it. That's my family. Those are the ones who belong to me. *"My mother and brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it."* I give my time to those who hear the word of God and obey it.

Now this passage doesn't say that Jesus never goes out to see his family. He probably did. It doesn't say one way or another. But Jesus cared for his family on earth. It was very clear on the cross. He made sure that the needs of his mother were taken care of after his resurrection. One of his first appearances was with one of his brothers and so I don't think Jesus is saying this because he's not going to go out and see them. I think he's saying this because before he goes out and sees them, he wants to take this opportunity and teach the entire crowd in front of him and his family a very important lesson. And that is this; those who are truly related to Christ are those who listen to the word of God and do it. Those who are in the family of God are those who hear the word of God and do it. Those who are your brother and sister believer are those who hear the word of God and do it.

Family is so important, isn't it? Amen! Okay. You want to know who your family is? Those who hear the word of God and do it. Do you know why God made you a parent? Is it so that you would find ultimate satisfaction in the biological offspring that God has given you? No. He gave you children so that you could by God's grace be a tool in that biological offspring to make your son or daughter your brother or your sister in Christ. Because your real family is not the one that's related to you by blood, your real family is the one who's related to you by Christ. And we must remember that. As Christ does here, *"My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it."* And Jesus wanted to teach that lesson.

Those that Jesus is dedicated spending time with, who he has a relationship with are those in whose veins pulse the desire to listen to and obey the word of God. That's how you know who's related to Christ. It's not by whose bloodline they're a part of as the Jews thought but it is by whose heart they possess. The heart of obedience, the heart of Christ. Having a relationship with Jesus is not defined in physical terms, it is defined as hearing the word of God and doing it.

I love Grace Chapel. You are my family and there are many large families in this church that have been coming here for generations. I want to encourage the youngest members of those families. It doesn't matter what family you're a part of. Your faith in Christ must be your own. Your faith in Christ must be your own. To have a relationship with Christ is not defined as in physical terms. You don't make it into heaven on someone's apron strings. You make it into heaven through faith in Jesus Christ for yourself alone. And it's shown by a heart that hears the word of God and does it.

Later in Luke 11:27 a woman yells out as Jesus is teaching. Instead of amen, she says, *"Blessed is the one that bore you, and the breast upon which you're nursed."* And he said, *"Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it."* Enough amens. Just do what I'm saying. That's the priority. It's the heart, always the heart. Hear the word of God and do it and that's how you know who has a relationship with Christ and those who don't.

And this is repeated in James 1:22, *"Be doers of the word,"* as we read this morning, *"and not hears only, deceiving yourselves."* Jesus says in John 8:31, *"If you continue in my word, you are truly my disciples."* John 14:15, *"If you love me, you will keep my commandments."* And 1 John 2:4, *"Whoever says, 'I know him' but does not keep his commandments is a liar, and the truth is not in him."* Over and over again the message is insanely clear. Those who have a real relationship with Jesus Christ show the fruit of good listening. They listen in order to share God's word, they listen in order to grow in God's word, and they listen in order to obey God's word.

It's very critical to preach God's word carefully. That's my responsibility and others when they get behind this pulpit. But it is critically important to listen to God's words carefully and that's all of our responsibility. So how can we grow in this regard? Because we've heard it this morning, why? In order to obey, in order to grow, and in order to share. So how do we change in this regard? What are some practical ways we can take to heart what we've learned in order to share, grow, and obey? Here's some just really quick suggestions.

First if you don't do any of these things have you ever tried paraphrasing a message? I mean like literally that means not only taking notes while the sermon is happening but if it's helpful for you, if you keep a journal throughout the day which it's often helpful to do, it wouldn't be a bad idea after church to come back home and try to write down one paragraph of what you learned in the morning service. And by you processing the word of God by yourself you meditate on it and seek to implant it deeper into your heart. So, I'd encourage you to write down what God is teaching you while he's teaching it to you because it's important to remember.

Second is to ponder the message. You know sometimes it's great to take notes and I'm glad to see how many people in our church take notes. I don't know about you though, there has been sometimes where I've been sitting under the preaching of God's word, and I recognize God is trying to teach me something very very personal that I need to listen to. And in those moments, I just need to put down the pen and I just need to listen as closely as possible. And so, I'd encourage you that when you feel the holy spirit convicting your heart about an issue you don't have to write down every cross reference. We have those recorded. You can look that up online later. You need to hear the word of God.

Third way is to pray over the message. I know we live in a very fast-paced society but when a message is given to you don't rush away into all the cares and concerns of the world. There's a lot of rooms in our church building that are empty on Sunday mornings after the sermon. If you need to get away to one of those rooms and pray, find a quiet place and if you need find someone to pray with you. I know your kids won't always understand or other people, but your family can wait. Your relationship with God comes first when he's dealing with you. Your guests can wait, and you can explain God had a message to give me today. Your lunch can wait believe it or not. But your personal commitment to Jesus Christ never should. So, pray over the messages as they're given. And then pass on the message. Pass on the message.

There's a very fast easy way to do this. You can share what you appreciated about the sermon to the one who gave it to you. Scripture actually records this in Galatians 6. 6, it says, *"Let the one who is taught the*

word share all good things first with the one who teaches." So, talk to your teachers about the things that you've learned. There are people that spend so many hours and minutes into their Sunday school lessons preparing for it just to teach it to you on Sunday morning. When something stands out to you that really gets you thinking go up to them and say thank you for sharing that. I've never thought about this before. That is a huge encouragement to a bible teacher. Ask questions like the disciples did. Search for connections to the truth. Brainstorm with the one who spent time in the passage about how that passage connects to other passages so you can grow in your knowledge of the truth. Pass it on to your teachers. You can also pass it on to your family. Talk to your spouse and your kids about the message over lunch on Sundays. Ask them specifically what stood out to them if there's any way that you as individuals in a family can better obey the word of God.

And then finally and most importantly pass it on to the unsaved. Invite others to church. Have lunch with them afterwards so you can talk to them about the message. Start a weekly Bible study at work. Either at break or after work. Share what your teachers taught you. You can share their outlines and their arguments. It's okay, they won't care. They will be thrilled that you are passing on the lesson. If you know how to do it put the message out on the internet. Put it out on social media. Put it on the radio. Put it out through mailings. Put it on booklets. Put it on blogs. Put it to everybody but most importantly put it in your conversations. Put it out there and use your imagination because God's word is supposed to be shared. Paraphrase the message, ponder the message, pray over the message, pass on the message. These are just four simple ways that we can take care this week how we listen to God's word.

And I just want to let you know that we as a church want to do everything we can to help you in this. So, on our website and on our church app we have study questions and the transcript of the sermon that accompanies every sermon recording. So that is available to you each and every week. Why? So that you can have as many tools as possible at your disposal to take care how you hear in order to share, grow in, and obey the truth that you're hearing. So how is your hearing? Are you passing the test? This week by God's grace may we listen in order to share, to grow, and to obey.

This is the word of God from Luke 8:16-21 which I considered a great privilege to have finally been able to share with you this morning. And which I now commit to your further study and your faithful obedience until Christ who is the final word from the Father returns.

To that end let's pray.

Father, we thank you so much for your word. Father, we thank you that it is true and timeless. Father, I thank you that it is through hearing your word and hearing it over and over and over again that we learn it. And by learning it we can learn to share it and grow in it and obey it. Father, I ask for your grace by your spirit this week upon each and every soul who's here today. We thank you for the immense privilege you have given us to have a copy of your word in our own language, to have given us the tools of those who have faithfully studied for years before us, and to even have a church body that commits to sharing your word faithfully.

What riches you have bestowed upon us. Help us not to be the most neglectful generation. Help us to be the most faithful. Help us this week to be in your word and as we're in it to be listening, looking for ways to share it, looking for ways to grow deeper in it, and looking for ways to change our lives in light of it. So that we might bear fruit even a hundred-fold as we receive your word with honest and good hearts for the glory of God.

We ask this in Jesus' name, amen.

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