

EAST CAMBRIDGE CHURCH OF CHRIST

“A first century church in the 21st century”

Bible Reading Plan

Week 20

○ 2 Sa 6; 1Chr 13; Ps 60;

Act 23

○ 1 Chr 14-16; Ps 132; *Act 24*

○ 2 Sa 7-8; 1Chr 17; *Act 25*

○ 2 Sa 9-10; 1Chr 18-19; Ps 89

Act 26

○ 2 Sa 11-12; 1Chr 20; Ps 52,
32; *Act 27*

Leading Services

Announcements: Larry L.

Morning:

Song Leader: Tony Y.

Opening Prayer: Richard L.

Lord's Table: Brock G.

Asst By:

Closing Prayer: Mike V.

Evening:

Song Leader: Mike V.

Opening Prayer: Richard L.

Closing Prayer: Zack V.

Scripture Reading: Brock G.
(Zechariah 1:1-11)

Sermons



Listening

Last night we attended the opening session of the Florida College Lectures. The general theme this year is “Never Has a Man Spoken the Way This Man Speaks.” Specifically, it’s dealing with Jesus’ parables.

Edwin Crozier presented the keynote address entitled “How Will You Understand All the Parables? Subtitled “The Parable of the Sower.” It was masterfully presented in a way that was thought-provoking, challenging, and stimulating.

While Edwin didn’t follow the printed Lecture book, he did incorporate many of the thoughts from the book into his lecture. His approach reflected the quote by Klyne R. Snodgrass. “Throughout much of the church’s history, the parables of Jesus have been mistreated, rearranged, abused, and butchered. Often they still are today. They are used more than they are heard and understood.”

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Are we really hearing?

“The Sower,” Edwin wrote, “is so fundamental to hearing, when asked what it means, Jesus responded, ‘Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables?’ (Mk. 4:13). We study the Sower first because we not only need to hear it but to learn how to hear from it.”

Edwin hammered home the point that is possible that we’ve heard some of the parables so often both listening to sermons and reading them that possibly the personal application is missed.

There is a tendency to apply the parables to other people and not us. The wayside ground. The stony ground. The thorny ground. That’s not us. It’s them. We’re the good ground. The good and noble heart. But are we?

Interestingly, Jesus’ parables indicted the religious leaders of the day—The scribes and the Pharisees. We may be guilty in our superficial reading to miss that Jesus is speaking to us. To you and I.

Could there be times in hearing the Word, that it has not penetrated the heart? Like the wayside soil, where people walk and pack down the ground, are you allowing others to harden the soil of your heart?

Hearts, like the ground, need to be plowed and cultivated to receive the seed. This can be a painful process. If you’re not obeying the gospel and you know you should, be careful not to harden your heart.

Suppose like the seed that fell on the rocks, we may at times possess a shallow heart? Could it be that we’ve become so familiar with some of Jesus’ teaching, that we’re not really hearing what he’s saying to us? That we’ve become so well acquainted and accustomed to certain passages of scripture that we’ve failed to let them penetrate the heart?

Has our heart become crowded with the worries of the world, the cares of daily life, the pursuit of pleasure, and the deceitfulness of riches, that the Word is unable to take deep root in our lives and bear fruit?

We want to believe that, unlike others, we’re the good soil. But are we bearing good fruit? Do we allow the Word to be implanted deeply with us, so it can germinate? Can others around us see the results in our lives of really hearing? Really believing? Really obeying?

“The Sower,” Edwin wrote, “is about hearing. The question is not will we know the parables, will we enjoy the parables, will we love the parables. The question is will we hear the parables.” Really hearing with discernment and personal introspection is the challenge whenever we listen to a sermon, attend a Bible class, or read the Scripture.

The repeated refrain last night, and I suspect throughout the week, will be one that we need to heed: “Those who have ears to hear, let us hear.”

- Ken Weliever