

Take Care How You Hear

Luke 8:16-18

August 5, 2018

What is Jesus illustrating with the lamp lighting analogy? What are the hidden things that are made manifest? What are the secret things that will be made known and come to light? Are Jesus' disciples to take that as a word of caution? That that is why we are to take care how we hear? That is to say, is that the fact that all of our dirty laundry will one day be hung out to dry? So we better be sure we listen carefully to make sure that our laundry is clean? Or is this something, rather than being more negatively oriented, more threatening, more foreboding, is this more like a positive statement? Is this a word of, of encouragement?

So rather than leaving you in suspense, let's get right into the text and see what we can find out by paying close attention to what Jesus says here in this context. You're gonna see two main points in your bulletin, and then you'll find there are a number of sub-points under the main points. You've got a bunch of blank spaces to fill in, so we can go through the process of, of discovery together and just walk through it. And what we're going to see this morning is not only

GRACE CHURCH



the meaning of these verses, but we're going to discover what I think is one of the strongest motivations in Scripture. Just to be clear, this is strong motivation for a true believer. An unbeliever wouldn't find any motivation in this text whatsoever. But one of the strongest motivations in Scripture for a believer, a true believer, to adhere to Jesus' command at the end there, "Take care then how you hear." Very strong motivation in this text.

So for the first point, for this morning, verses 16 and 17. You can fill in the blanks there. God's intention in revealing the truth. God's intention in revealing the truth. And that's the main point. But we want to begin with a simple, straightforward illustration Jesus uses there in verse 16 and ask a simple question about it. You can call this, this is sub-point A in your notes. And the question I'm asking there is why do we turn on the lights? Simple question, why do we turn on the lights? Look what it says there in verse 16, "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."

Why does anyone turn on a light? To promote seeing, right? Very simple. That's it. That is Jesus' point in giving you that

GRACE CHURCH

Grace

analogy. People turn on lights so they can see. And you say, duh. Yes, that's exactly where he wants you to come. Jesus here he's talking about the light. He's talking about the lamp. He's talking about a small handheld oil lamp. It's like a little, like a little bowl. Some were made out of metal, but most in common use were made of clay pottery. You might imagine a, a small shallow saucer shaped bowl that could fit in your hand, about the size of maybe a cereal bowl. Edges of the bowl were folded inward, leaving openings in the top to add oil, allow access for air. But to make sure you didn't spill oil over the edges if you're careful.

It was a nozzle shaped extension attached to the lip of the bowl. There would be a hole running through that nozzle to allow a wick to go through and run the length of the nozzle. The lower end of the wick would be dipped down into the oil and draw that fuel into the upper end of the wick and keep the flame alive. Now, no one lit one of those handheld oil lamps with the purpose of covering it. Very simple, people did not light lamps and then cover it over.

It says in our ESV text, a jar, or you know the, the word is, is broader than that. It speaks of a vessel. It's a *skeuos*, it refers to containers of all shapes and sizes. Could be a smaller jar, could be a basket, could be a , a, a water jar that's larger, a pot. Any of these

GRACE CHURCH

Greeley

containers of all shapes and sizes used for carrying liquids, solids, all that for domestic use.

So no one would light an oil lamp and then go and empty out a grain basket, or pour out the water out of their water jug and then put it over a lit lamp. By the same reasoning, no one would put that lit lamp underneath a, a bed and hide it under there. Once someone lights a lamp, the progression, you can see here, notice the progression of illumination that you see in verse 16, it goes from the private and personal, to the public and the corporate. The handheld lamp starts out in the hand, but then it ends up in a prominent place. That's the progress of illumination to take what is illuminating on a small sphere for personal use, but then elevating that and broadening that, and spreading that to a wider sphere for public benefit.

Many houses had an indentation that was built into the side of the wall with a little shelf to hold exactly these kinds of small handheld oil lamps. In larger rooms, bigger rooms, larger houses, you'd have a stand, a pillar kind of in the middle of the room. It was a small but sturdy, maybe waist high, maybe a little higher, little pillar and it had a horizontal surface on the top of it, built sort of concave to provide a seat for holding that

GRACE CHURCH

Greeley

handheld lamp in place, and that allowed that light to go beyond just the handheld, and then benefit anybody who entered into that room. It freed up that individual tying up his hands so he could put that on the stand, not have to carry a lamp around and then freed up both hands to do work or read or whatever. Lamp stands in homes, very common.

Same thing today, right? We all have flashlights in the house in case of a power outage or a breaker going off or something like that, but we prefer to use electric lighting for public places, public spaces. If someone overloads the breaker in your house, lights go off. What do you do? You grab a, a flashlight. You don't pull out the flashlight and then immediately tape over the lens with black electric tape so no light can get out. Of course, you take that flashlight, you go to the breaker box and you turn on the breaker and light comes on in your home once again and everybody who enters into the rooms of your home can see.

So far so good, right? Simple. Light is for seeing. We light lamps. We turn on flashlights. We turn on electric lights so people can see. We illuminate on a small scale that we might, whenever possible, provide light on a bigger scale, a larger scale, a wider scale. The question now is, what is Jesus trying to say by talking

about the human purpose in lighting lamps? Some see this section here as a general exhortation to believers. That Jesus talks about lighting a lamp and the purpose of that. And then in verse 17, "For nothing is hidden that will not be made manifest, nor is anything secret that will not be known and come to light."

And some see that as a general exhortation to believers that we need to let the light that God has given us shine forth. We are the lamps on the lampstand, and they get that from Matthew's record of the Sermon on the Mount, where Jesus said in Matthew 5:14-16. He said, you may remember it, "You are the," what? "light of the world," right? "A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way," Jesus says there, Matthew 5:16, "Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."

Comparing Scripture with Scripture, that is a very sound principle of biblical interpretation. It's called the analogy of Scripture based on the Latin phrase *analogia scripturae*. It's the principle that, because Scripture is in harmony with itself, that is to say, God never contradicts himself. He's always in harmony

with himself. Therefore what he revealed is always in harmony with itself, and therefore we can rely on Scripture being its own best interpreter. We compare Scripture with Scripture. It's very true.

When interpreting the Bible, you do want to compare Scripture with Scripture to see how related passages, using similar phrases, similar ideas, how they, how they compare with one another. How they shed light on each other. How, you make sure that what you read in one text and what you think an interpretation in one text is, you want to make sure that that's not out of harmony with other texts of Scripture that speak on related things and that's a good principle, sound principle of biblical interpretation.

But you also need to make sure, when you're comparing Scripture with Scripture, you want to make sure that you mark the differences in related portions of Scripture as well. Similar principles, similar turns of phrase, a whole verse being quoted. Similar principles in different texts, even having the same wording. They may not be used at times to teach us the exact same thing, that's the case here. If Jesus in Luke 8:16, if he is using this lamp lighting, lampstand metaphor to illustrate the exact same thing in both texts, we need to import the meaning from Matthew 5:16 into Luke 8. Then what that means is that there is a hidden, "Let your light shine before others, so they may

see your good works" idea. Hidden, but it's inserted into the white spaces in between verses 16 and verse 17.

So if that's true, that between verse 16 and verse 17 we need to assume, "Let your light shine before others, they may see your good works and glorify your father." If that's true, then verse 17 becomes a bit of a warning to believers about their behavior, about hidden secret behaviors that will become publicly known, "For nothing is hidden that will not be made manifest, nor is anything secret that will not be known and come to light." So, you better be sure that you listen well because you don't want, as we just said, you do not want your dirty laundry hanging out in public.

People who interpret that, this text in this way, they would say, well, um, warning sure, but there also is maybe an encouragement here, that when God does reveal all things like it says in 1 Corinthians 4:5, there will be commendable motives of believers revealed there too. That verse, 1 Corinthians 4:5 says, "When the Lord comes, that he will bring to light the things that are now hidden in the darkness and will disclose the purposes of the heart, and then each one will receive his commendation from

GRACE CHURCH



God." So, they would say, sure, there's a warning, but there's also an encouragement.

But I want to ask, how is that helpful, because what we've done, by going from Luke 8:16 over to Matthew 5:16 and then over to 1 Corinthians 4:5, we have just compounded the complexity of interpreting this passage. We've added 1 Corinthians 4:5 in its context to Matthew 5:16 and its context, that we've imported the whole lot into the wide spaces in between Luke 8:16 and 17, and in verse 5, 1 Corinthians 4, we need to see that it's the Lord that discloses, not just any hidden purposes and motives, though he will do that, but he discloses, in particular in that context, the minister's hidden motives and purposes in order to commend him because in that context, talking about the true ministers of the gospel, there is so much that I'll just say for your elders, so many of their motives that you do not see, so much that's commendable.

So many ministers in this church, many servants, many people working, and so many back in the children's ministry and at VBS and, and AWANA, and all the other ministries in this church, so many motives that are hidden from view. And when the Lord comes, he's going to take those good motives, those that are worthy of commendation, not condemnation, commendation, he's going to expose those things. It's a

promise. In Matthew 5:16, Jesus says nothing there about our motives shining. But instead, he commands believers to, "Let their works shine before others, so they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."

There are other explanations of Luke 8:16 and 17, as well. Some say that the effect of believers letting their lights shine, again, importing the meaning of Matthew 5:16 into this text. The effect of believers letting their lights shine out, is that they become the means that God uses to make hidden things manifest, to make secrets known among the unbelieving world. For that they go to Ephesians 5:11, "Take no part in the unfruitful works of darkness, but instead expose them." Bring them to the light.

Okay, but now that requires us still to attach Ephesians 5:11 to Matthew 5:16 and then import the whole thing into the context of Luke 8:16-17. I hope you see the, the problems we need to wrestle with in this very simple section of Scripture. None of those explanations really fit the context here, because we have the Parable of the Soils and immediately following, it's the good soil, good hearted believers in verse 15, that leads us into this section and coming out the other side in verses 19-21, Jesus clarifies who his true family members are and I'm scratching my

head and saying, okay, how does all that fit together? And I want you to scratch your head with me.

You might be interested to know that Jesus uses the same metaphor of a lamp on a lampstand over in Luke 11:33. But even there, as he quotes the exact same analogy, the exact same illustration of a lamp on a lampstand, there illustrates the need for spiritual perception. "The eye is the lamp of the body. So if your eye is dark, your whole body is going to be filled with darkness. But if your eye is filled with light, you'll see clearly." Those used differently there. He has used, Jesus has used the same analogy, the purpose of lighting a lamp. He's used it three different times, three different occasions, three different contexts for three different purposes to illustrate three different principles. Okay, so you say enough already. What is the purpose of the metaphor here? Quit beating around the bush. Get us to Luke 8:16.

So let me give you the punchline first. The interpretation of verses 16-17 in context, and then I'll come back and unpack it for you a bit. Jesus is using the lamp on a lampstand illustration here to teach his disciples about God's intention in revealing the truth. Jesus is using the lamp on a lampstand illustration here in this context to teach his disciples about God's intention in revealing the

GRACE CHURCH



Grace

truth, and according to this understanding, and in this context, God is the lamplighter, and God is the one putting the lamp up on the lamp stand.

So let's go in your notes to sub-point B. And the question is, why does God turn on the light? Why does God turn on the light? God turns on the light to reveal the truth, not to conceal it. And you think, well, of course he would do that. He would turn on the light to reveal the truth and not to conceal it. It's a very simple point, but it is much needed to state that clearly in this postmodern age, because the instinct of the time, the skepticism of the age is to reject the intention of the original author in favor of the readers, changing interpretations of the text. The instinct today, you'll see this applied to the U.S. Constitution, as well as to the Bible. The instinct today is to deconstruct the text, to read the text through the lens of skepticism, to let the modern interpreter interact with a living document and derive new meanings for a new age. One that applies to us in our own day.

This is how many liberals have been interpreting the Bible for a long, long time, and this is exactly what we see in the liberal conservative divide in our own country with regard to the

GRACE CHURCH

Grace

Constitution of the United States. Is the Constitution a living document that every, scholars in every age and judges in every age are to interpret according to the spirit of the age, and let that document live and breathe and have new meanings in new times? Or do we go back to the framers of the Constitution, say what did they intend when they wrote this document? If you're conservative in your thinking, it's the latter, not the former. If you're liberal in your thinking and progressive in your thinking, it's the former, not the latter.

You find the same parallel with regard to Scripture. We interpret Scripture, not according to our own changing age, not according to our own preferences, not according to what fits our time and LGBT issues and all the rest. No, we go back to the authorial intent. What did God, who revealed the Bible, what did he intend when he wrote this down? So the instinct today is to deconstruct the text. Interpreters interacting with the living document to derive new meanings.

So it's no wonder that people come to a myriad of conflicting interpretations. You've talked to people and they say, I don't, I don't know, I can't trust the Bible, so many interpretations. Those many, many, many interpretations, all of them except one are false. But all those interpretations are conflicting, confusing, it's no

GRACE CHURCH

Grace

wonder people are confused out there because they're hearing all of this. All this the, the, the modern mind going into Scripture and using it like Play-Doh and forming it to however they want to make it. It's like gumby. And then they have the nerve to accuse the Scripture of being unclear. How dare they, right?

If you let Scripture speak for itself, and you try to get Jesus' point in context, he's telling us here that God is the lamp lighter, and God has lit the lamp, and he has turned on the light in order to reveal the truth that all who come into the house might see and benefit from light. He doesn't turn the light to conceal the truth. He turns on the light to reveal it. When God speaks, he speaks in a clear, consistent, non-contradictory voice. He does not stutter. He doesn't speak in esoteric mysteries. He doesn't speak in confusion. When God speaks, he speaks clearly and when he speaks to us, he uses normal, everyday, unambiguous human language.

That's why we hold fast to the grammatical historical interpretation, hermeneutic. That's a hermeneutic we, we use, Grammatical historical; the rules of grammar, the facts of history. The facts of history help inform us of what's going on at the time, so we understand the context and how people are

GRACE CHURCH



Grace

thinking when they hear things like lamp they don't think flashlight, they think oil lamp, we understand that. Facts of history, but also the rules of grammar. That's why we pay so much attention to the grammatical structure in the text, because that's how God revealed it to make it very, very clear for us.

So why is Jesus making the point that God is the lamplighter and God is the one who put the light on the stand. Why is he making that point to his disciples here in this text? And why, we might add the human author into this and his authorial intent; why is Luke recording this for the sake of his initial reader? You might say, "The most excellent Theophilus," Luke 1:3. Why is he recording this for Theophilus's sake and for our sake, how does this fit the context?

Let your eyes go back up to verse 10 and Jesus told his disciples the reason he speaks in parables, "So that seeing they may not see and hearing they may not understand." You might get the, the sense from that that Jesus' intention is to hide the truth from people. Is that true? According to our text here, no, not at all. As we've said when we went through that section of Scripture, Jesus spoke here to the crowds. The largely unbelieving crowds, and he spoke to cause people to listen more carefully, actually. He wanted them to look beyond the simple story about a sower sowing seeds in different kinds of soils.

That if you took it just, wooden literally, it wouldn't make any sense at all.

And so he's provoking them to discern a deeper meaning. He wanted them to see, but, not merely with their physical eyesight. He wanted them to hear, but not just merely with their natural sense of hearing. He wanted them to go beyond their natural perception to seek spiritual perception. He taught in such a way, using these parables, so as to frustrate any attempt to rely on our own natural perception to use human intuition, human experience, because you need to understand something from Scripture. We don't have wisdom in us. We need to seek it from outside of us.

Think about the analogy of a light. The light is external, it's absolute. It's not a subjective issue of my opinion, it's either on or it's not, right? Same thing here. He doesn't want us to rely on human intuition, subjective experience. He wants the crowds not to lean on their own understanding. In fact, he wants them to absolutely despair of their own sense of wisdom. He wants them to come to him to gain a deeper, truer, fuller, spiritual understanding. That's what the disciples did, right? They heard something and they're scratching their heads and saying, doesn't,

doesn't make full sense. That's not how farmers, that's not how farmers farm. What is Jesus after?

So they come to him in verse 9, "His disciples asked him what this parable meant," and what did Jesus say? He responded, "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.'"

He didn't hide the truth. Quite the contrary. He is here revealing everything. Profound insight he's delivering and pouring out to all those with spiritual perception, but in parables it is true, he did make a distinction. Jesus did discriminate between those who listened with spiritual perception, that is his disciples, and those who listen with merely natural perception, that is the others; the unbelieving crowds, those with hard hearts, shallow hearts, hearts distracted by worldly cares and affections, that's all pictured in the hard packed soil, the rocky soil, the thorny soil.

So when you go back to verse 16, you can see that Jesus is using that illustration of a lamp and a lamp lighter to argue from the lesser to the greater. If it's true, that on a mundane, common, human level, that no one after lighting a lamp covers it with a jar, puts it

under a bed, but puts it on a stand so that those who enter may see the light. If that's true on a common, mundane, human, normal day-to-day life level, how much more true is it when God lights a lamp and when he puts it on a lampstand? If the principle is true on a human level, then certainly they could understand Jesus' intention as well is to reveal the truth not to conceal it.

So it's God's intention in lighting a lamp, putting it up on a lampstand, God's intention that all might see, and hear, and perceive, and be saved. That's Jesus' intention as well, even when he's speaking to the crowds in parables. Here's another question, sub-point C. What does God intend to reveal? What, in specific, does he intend to reveal? During Jesus' ministry on earth, the seed that he was sowing, the light that he was shining, we can see a definite revelatory intention in Jesus' ministry, that is, he's specifically revealing something in particular. God intended to reveal something very specific by sending his own beloved son, Jesus Christ. In fact, turn over to Mark's Gospel for a moment just so I can show you what I mean here.

And here, by the way, is where the interpretive principle that I mentioned about the analogy of Scripture, it helps us

GRACE CHURCH



tremendously, because over in Mark 4, verses 21-25. Mark 4:21-25, we find Jesus there speaking once again about the lamp on the lamp stand and in this case, this is a true parallel to what Luke has recorded in Luke 8. What Mark tells us and what Mark records about the lamp on the lamp stand is not a different time, occasion, context, or purpose. It's the same thing that Luke recorded, and in both places the illustration of the lamp on the lampstand, it follows immediately after the Parable of the Sower. So we should pay close attention to this.

Notice in Mark 4:21-25, "Jesus said to them," who's them? Back in verse 10, it's his disciples, it's those who are with him, "And he said to them," in verse 21, 'Is a lamp brought in to be put under a basket, or under a bed, and not on a stand? For nothing is hidden except to be made manifest; nor is anything secret except to come to light. If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear.' And he said to them, 'Pay attention to what you hear: with the measure you use, it will be measured to you, and still more will be added to you. For to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he has will be taken away.'"

That sounds a good bit like what we just heard in Luke 8, doesn't it? Notice what follows though in Mark's record. There are two

GRACE CHURCH

Greeley

parables that follow immediately after about the kingdom of God. You see, in verses 26- 29 there, it's the parable of the seed growing into a fruit bearing plant. It's an illustration of the, the growth of the kingdom and then in verses 30-32, it's the Parable of the Mustard Seed. Again, a parable about the kingdom; small beginnings, massive growth.

Starting with the Twelve, or go into Acts chapter 1 and 2, the hundred and twenty. Little, hidden up in an upper room in Jerusalem. Here we are in Colorado two thousand years later. It's clear from Mark's Gospel, the truth about the kingdom of God, that is the light that Jesus came to shine on the earth, the revelatory intention of Jesus' ministry, the purpose for which God revealed, it's to reveal God's plan about the kingdom, about things pertaining to the kingdom. The lamp is lit; the light started shining when God sent the king of the kingdom into the world; the Christ born of the Virgin Mary.

Back in Luke 1:76-79, Zechariah prophesied about his son, John, "the prophet of the Most High," who would go before the Lord to prepare his way, and it says there, "To give knowledge of salvation to his people in the forgiveness of their sins, because of the tender mercy of our God, whereby the sunrise shall visit

GRACE CHURCH

Grace

us from on high," to do what? "To give light to those sitting in darkness and in the shadow of death, and to guide our feet with that light into the way of peace."

Simeon saw that same light when he came into the temple. When the Holy Spirit drove him into the temple and Simeon saw the true light, and he held the baby, who is light, in his arms, a saving light, and he praised God for sending the light of his salvation, for not hiding it from anyone. Instead, he praised God in heaven for sending salvation that God had, quote, "prepared in the presence of all people, a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to God's people Israel." Kingdom truths, not a Kingdom for Jews only, but for Jew and Gentile alike. Not a Kingdom won by external military force and conflict, but going down to the heart, the spiritual nature of the conflict and dealing with sins, that's the kingdom of God.

If you go back to Luke 8:16, we can see there that God lit the lamp with the light of truth about the kingdom. He set the light of that truth on a lampstand. He elevated his own son, Jesus Christ, and then this in verse 16, "So that those who enter may see the light." Whoever enters with forgiven sin, with a clean conscience; whoever enters, covered with the righteousness of Christ; whoever enters, Jew

GRACE CHURCH

Greeley

or Gentile, male or female, slave or free, all those who enter may see the light, find salvation, being kingdom citizens.

Jesus' mission statement, back in Luke 4:18-19, he quoted from Isaiah 61:1-2, so this is not something that was even hidden in the Old Testament. Jesus said, "The spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives, recovering of sight to the blind." There it is, sight again. "To set at liberty those who are oppressed and proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

Look, that's what God is revealing in Christ. That is what Christ is teaching in his parables, truths about the kingdom of God. He's not clothing the truths about the kingdom in parables to render them unintelligible, to give confusion, to hide them under a vessel, or put them under a bed. Rather, he speaks about the kingdom openly, publicly, clearly.

He sets that truth up on a lampstand so that everything can be viewed, and heard, and discerned, and examined; ah, but only by those with eyes to see, only those with ears to hear, only those who've been granted spiritual perception through spiritual

regeneration. They, and they alone will see, and hear, and discern unto salvation. They, and they alone are the true citizens of the kingdom.

So, why does God turn on the light? To reveal the truth. What truth does God intend to reveal? It's the truth about the kingdom of God, which starts with Jesus Christ and culminates in Jesus Christ. As the commentator Frederic Godet put it, "Whilst the night thickens over Israel on account of its unbelief, the disciples would advance into even fuller light until there is nothing left in the plan of God, which is obscure or hidden." And that brings us into verse 17.

One final question in this first major point, sub-point D for your notes. How much does God intend to reveal? How much? Notice the comprehensive extent of what Jesus is revealing. Verse 17, he says, in no uncertain terms at all, "For nothing is hidden that will not be made manifest, nor is anything secret that will not be known and come to light." When we read from Mark 4:21-25, as I said, that's the parallel of what Luke recorded here. And those two parables about the kingdom of God, we mentioned those. At the end of that section, after he's talked about the light, the lampstand, revelation, the two parables of the kingdom, Mark records this in verses 33-34, Mark 4, "With many such parables he," Jesus, "spoke the word to them, as they

were able to hear it. And he did not speak to them," that is the crowds, "Without a parable, but privately to his own disciples he explained everything."

Same thing here in Luke 8:17. He's explaining everything, but this is even more emphatic here; he's using poetic parallelism and it kind of reveals actually, as Jesus kind of breaks into poetry, it kind of reveals the state of his heart as he speaks this verse. There is a joy and an excitement about what he's saying. Listen, Jesus knows what he has called these disciples to do, he knows what the heavenly Father has chosen these disciples for. These disciples are the very foundation stones of the edifice of the Christian church. The new temple where God resides by the Holy Spirit and Jesus is excited to send these men out, shining the brightest light, the good news about the kingdom of God.

Missionary work is going to begin with the Twelve, in Luke 9 and continue with the seventy-two in Luke 10. It's gonna go on, but after Jesus' earthly ministry, after Jesus offers himself up as a substitutionary atoning sacrifice for all who believe; after Jesus is risen from the dead, showing the approval of that sacrifice and God's power over death, and Jesus' power over

GRACE CHURCH

Greeley

death; after he ascends bodily into heaven where he continues his ministry becoming the head over the church, and continuing an intercession ministry, and an empowerment ministry from heaven here on earth.

The day would come when Jesus would send forth his Holy Spirit to fill these very apostles to empower them to continue their preaching, and their teaching, and their building up of the church, to fulfill the purpose for which God had chosen them. The purpose to which God called them. Jesus still had a few things to tell them. They're gonna need some information.

In John 16:12, Jesus said to the Twelve, and you might keep in mind that as he's speaking this to the Twelve, Judas Iscariot's not there. And he says to them in John 16:12, "I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you," that's the Twelve minus Judas. "He will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak on his own authority, but whatever he hears he will speak, and he'll declare to you the things that are to come. He will glorify me, for he will take what is mine and declare it to you. All that the father has is mine; and therefore I said that he will take what is mine and declare it to you."

GRACE CHURCH

Greeley

That's the ministry of prophecy; that's the apostolic ministry of prophecy and when other speakers of other languages were in the room, that's the ministry of tongues. Speaking in tongues, revelatory words in another language to people who speak another language. That's what's going on. This is where Jesus promised it. That's a reality that Jesus has in mind here in Luke 8:17, Jesus has lit the lamp. He's put the lamp on the lampstand. He preaches the truth of the kingdom. He preaches it plainly, and publicly, and straightforwardly. But what he says in verse 17, is that the truth, it's going to be revealed not in minimalistic fashion but comprehensively.

"For nothing is hidden that will not be made manifest. Nor is anything secret that will not be made known and come to light." It's emphatic language. In fact, the strongest possible way to deny something in the Greek language, namely, that anything could be kept hidden that anything secret won't be made known or come, become manifest. The strongest possible way to deny that is found in the grammar here in this verse. It is absolutely emphatic. It is, he's trying to say in the strongest terms possible, to give the greatest assurance possible. The effect is to say, anything that's currently hidden, anything that God has chosen to keep secret for a time. All that previously

unknown truth about the kingdom, it will most certainly be made manifest.

And again by putting that in the negative form, negative form. Nothing hidden that won't be made manifest, nor is anything secret that will not be known or come to light. Doesn't come through as well in the English and but in the Greek language, that expression is totally emphatic. It's so emphatic, it conveys the strongest level of certainty and therefore the greatest degree of assurance possible. Everything that's now hidden, it will be made manifest. Everything that's now concealed, again, in the time of the apostles, and they're listening to this, it will be most certainly revealed, most assuredly come to light.

And listen, as I said, this is poetic in its structure. He's, Jesus is excited about this truth. He is joyful to tell them, he wants, and you gotta get that tone because rather than a dire warning about all your dirty laundry coming out, hanging out, before everybody to see it, to embarrass you, that is not what he's saying here, he's speaking something so incredibly encouraging. You know what kind of confidence they find that the God of the universe has already determined to tell them everything? He's holding nothing back. He's unpacking everything.

When Matthew gave his account of the Parable of the Sower, then when he showed Jesus explaining why he speaks in parables Jesus turned to his disciples, after talking about the unbelieving crowds. He turned to his disciples and said, "But blessed are your eyes, for they see. Blessed are your ears, for they hear. For truly, I say to you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, and didn't see it, and to hear what you hear and didn't hear it."

God was holding some things back during their time. But in these last days, everything is revealed. The apostle Paul understood the, the impact of this, the apostolic privilege that he had. He understood it perfectly when he wrote in 1 Corinthians 2:9 and following he said, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man imagined." Okay, so it's not coming from mankind, it's not coming from human beings, it's completely external. "What God has prepared for those who love him." Those things, "these things God has revealed to us." Who's us? Paul, the apostles, those who are involved in his apostolic ministry. "God has revealed to us through the spirit those things."

GRACE CHURCH

Grace

The spirit, the one that animated, empowered their ministry, the spirit searches everything, even the depths of God. And now we have received the spirit, not of the world, but the spirit, who is from God, that we might understand the things freely given to us by God. Do we have those things? Oh yes, we do. It's written down for us in the apostolic ministry of giving us the Holy Scriptures.

There in Luke 8:17, the word hidden is the word *kruptos*, from which we get the word cryptic. The word secret is the word *apokruphos*, which is where apocrypha comes from. Nothing will remain cryptic or apocryphal for us. For a time, for his purposes in revealing, God had kept some truths hidden and secret in the past, but now, "What no eye has seen, nor ear heard, nor the heart of man ever imagined, all that God has prepared for all those who love him in Christ." God has revealed all of it to us. It's all in Scripture.

"In Christ are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge." Colossians 2:3, and by his spirit Christ has revealed the very depths of God to the church. Again it started through the holy apostles. It's promised here. It's revealed through them. It's recorded in Holy Scripture by the Holy Spirit, ensuring the accuracy of every word that God breathed out and that extends the full manifestation of kingdom truth to us. Old and New testaments. All of it, completed canon. All

that revelation has been made available to Christians down through the centuries and now to us as well.

Nothing for us is hidden any longer. All is made manifest. Nothing is held back as a secret from us, but all has been made known and has come to light. That's the message Jesus had for his disciples here on this day. God's intention in revealing truth is to go all the way to tell them everything. And Jesus rejoices here to bring them as it were into that very Holy of Holies, into the fullness of kingdom truth.

So if God, listen, think about the vastness of what's being revealed to us. As it says in 1 Corinthians 2, the *bathos* of God. The very depths of God, that only the spirit of God can search. That is exposed to us in the Scripture. If that's the case that God has been so gracious to reveal truth without measure. What does that mean for us who hear the truth?

This is point two in your outline, main point. Man's obligation in hearing the truth. Man's obligation in hearing the truth. Let's personalize it, my obligation in hearing the truth, because divine revelation places an obligation on those who hear it. Look at verse 18, "Take care then how you hear." The word

GRACE CHURCH

Greeley

translated by the ESV, it can be translated, *then*, but because of the connection to what came before, it should retain its usual sense of, *therefore*. Jesus talking about a, an inference here, a logical inference. In light of God's intention in revealing his mind to you, "Take care therefore how you hear, for to the one who has, even more will be given, from the one who has not, even what he thinks he has, that'll be taken away."

Listen, you cannot hear the truth without bearing personal responsibility for obeying the truth. Hearing truth is a moral issue. It's not simply a physical exercise, just hearing stuff with your ears; sound waves bouncing off your auditory nerves and going into your brain, it's not just a physical exercise, not just an intellectual exercise only. About just, oh I, I've heard it and I, I get it. I'm, I'm really enjoying the intellectual stimulation that I'm getting from, from teaching. Hearing the truth, according to what God says, is an issue of morality or immorality. Hearing the truth is an issue of morality or immorality. One's response to it makes all the difference in the world.

If you notice the verse there, there's one command, "Take care how you listen." Followed by a twofold explanation and one of those explanations is a huge encouragement to believers, the other

explanation is a warning to false pretenders. So let's take the command and then each of those explanations one at a time.

First sub-point A, should be there in your notes. Listen carefully in view of God's benefaction. Listen carefully in view of God's benefaction. Benefaction, it's a word that means to do good to. We're talking specifically about the good that God has done to us and for us. Remember this first applied to Jesus and his disciples, the ones who heard this teaching. They too had to be careful to appropriate what they heard, to heed the truth that Jesus taught, to assimilate that truth and to obey it. But in light of God's gracious intention to reveal and keep on revealing, granting more light, more truth, more wisdom for, for living what believer, including these disciples, what believer, would ever turn away from it?

God's revelation about the kingdom, about all that that means for the believer. Read the book of Revelation. Don't just look at the scary parts, that you can, your imagination can run wild, but let your imagination run into all the joy that's stored up for believers there. Let that book fill you with hope. God's revelation about the kingdom is so glorious. It's so joy

GRACE CHURCH

Greeley

producing. It's so obedience stimulating. It's so heart arresting.

For any born-again believer, the fact that God would condescend to say one word to us thrills us to the core. But to reveal everything? Jesus rejoiced to tell them, "It is your father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom." "Therefore, don't be foolish," Ephesians 5:17, "but understand what the will of the Lord is." It's all here in black and white, written in the Scripture. As kingdom citizens, "We're not of the night or of the darkness," 1 Thessalonians 5:5, "but we're all children of light, children of the day." "At one time we were in darkness," Ephesians 5:8, "but now we're light in the Lord, we're to walk as children of light."

We're to walk and live according to the light God has given, right? That's what the psalmist, David, in Psalm 119 rejoiced in, "to walk in the light that God has given him." Walking in the light means we live as those who can see the light, to heed whatever dangers and distractions the light reveals and also to pursue the good and holy ends that the light points us to. That's why Paul continues in Ephesians 5:9, he says, "Walk as children of the light for the fruit of light is found in all that is good and right and true."

GRACE CHURCH

Greeley

As kingdom citizens, as those with eyes to see, ears to hear, hearts that understand and comprehend, we love to pursue that which is good and right and true. To be children of light is synonymous with being children of God. It says in 1 John 1:5, "God is light, in him is no darkness at all." "If we walk in the light, as he is in the light," we trace our connection to God, who is, who is light. That brings our identity in Christ, the light of the world.

Well, that's the encouragement part. And I do admit it's far too brief. But next week we're going to look for more encouraging truth for us as believers in the next section.

But first, let's just quickly look at the warning. Sub-point B. Sub-point B says, listen carefully in view of God's salvation. Listen carefully in view of God's benefaction, first sub-point and then second sub-point, sub-point B, listen carefully in view of God's salvation. And this is really a warning to false pretenders. True believers who are rejoicing in these things, I mean, we want to be careful. We want to listen to this warning and heed it, as all the disciples certainly did.

GRACE CHURCH

Grace

But especially for the false pretender. The one who sits in sermons week after week. The one who listens to them all the time and it's only going in through the auditory nerves, only going up in stimulating the brain a little bit and causing a little bit of heat up here in the cranial area, and then changes the life not one whit. That's the person who needs to hear this. This is the use it or lose it principle. That those who think that they see, and hear, and understand clearly. If they don't obey what they hear, and that, by the way, is what God means whenever he says, listen and hear, he means, observe, obey, live according to.

Those who do not obey what they hear are in for a very rude awakening. Remember, Jesus spoke here in Luke 8, he spoke at first in the hearing of his disciples, and among them at this time was Judas Iscariot. In light of what Jesus knew about Judas from the very beginning wasn't it gracious and kind of him to continue to direct warnings to people like Judas? Judas Iscariot, he heard everything that the rest of the disciples heard. He heard the teaching explained. He was there to see truths unveiled. Joyful things promised. Judas saw all the miracles. He witnessed supernatural power.

He experienced the protection of the Almighty God with supernatural power as we're going to read in, coming up in the passage

GRACE CHURCH

Grace

Luke 8:22-25. Jesus commands the storm; Judas is there. Judas ate miraculous food along with the rest of them. He partook of everything the disciples did, he's among them. Judas didn't weed the soil of his heart. He allowed the weeds to grow and those weeds choked out the good seed of God's word, and Judas perished in the end, tragically and eternally. Judas' departure and death was so tragic because he was so close to the truth.

When I was at Grace Community Church under John MacArthur's ministry, he used to look out at that huge crowd, thousands of people and talk about what a sore severe judgment would fall upon people who listen to him week after week with the clear teaching not just from his pulpit, but all through that church. What sore and severe judgment would fall upon any who listened and went away not knowing Christ. What he said to us, as I sat there, I pass on to you. I don't wanna see anybody leave Grace Church in an unbelieving, unregenerate state.

Judas, he didn't consider his moral obligation when he was listening to Jesus. He didn't consider the grace and the kindness of God. He took God's grace for granted, and he spurned the gift of divine revelation. He did not take care of how he heard. And thus he lost even what he thought he had. What he thought he had

his, was taken away from him. Again, it's a use or lose principle. That's the way with divine truth. Obedience to the truth if you use it, it leads to greater, deeper, more intimate acquaintance with the truth. Listen, God is under no obligation to reveal anything to those who refuse to be humble learners, to be teachable people, to be obedient recipients of the word.

So I guess the question becomes clear for us here at the end of this. How do we listen carefully? What does it mean practically to take care how you hear? And simply say you need to obey what is revealed. But let me give you just a few points to jot down. I'm not gonna elaborate much, but just one, two, three, four, five, I think I have six, six points. Just jot these down at the end of your notes so you can think about these implications for your life and apply it.

How do we listen carefully? Number one, listen carefully by esteeming God's word. Listen carefully by esteeming God's word, that is, to not dismiss it and set it aside as common, as just any other book. We treat it as holy. I had a Hebrew professor tell me about the concept of holiness when I was in seminary. And he said sometimes we think of holiness as just something that we kind of like, kind of make special, like you know, remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. It's

GRACE CHURCH

Greeley

kind of, a kind of at the end of our week. It's kind of set apart, holy. He said no, no, no.

If you want to consider the concept of holiness, here's your desk and here's everything on your desk. Take that thing that's holy and put it in your desk and then sweep everything else off your desk. Throw it aside. Holy. Esteem God's word as holy in your life. Esteem God's word as holy in your ears. So when you hear it, you pay careful attention. It's not on the level of Rush Limbaugh. Okay, turn off Rush. Turn on Scripture.

It's really sad to me how lowly people esteem God's word. And beloved, I'm not talking about the unbelieving world here, I'm talking about professing Christians, professing evangelical Christians, professing pastors who purportedly are people of the book. It's absolutely heartbreaking to me.

Saw a preacher online this last week, and after clowning around for ten to fifteen minutes, telling a bunch of jokes, he looked at the camera, and yes, he did know exactly where that camera was; he looked at the camera and sort of catching himself, he said this about his own church. He said, "This is a youth group for adults." And then he moved on. I thought man, that's an

GRACE CHURCH

Greeley

indictment. You just spoke your own indictment there. It was a fair description. I didn't just listen to his sermon; I watched the whole service. His sermon, if you can call it that, was more like a motivational pep talk to spoiled suburbanite college students, twenty somethings.

This church was filled with people like that. No public reading of the Bible in the service. Very little from God's word in his sermon, just text pulled out of context to fit his points. What he wanted to say to motivate people. I think the topic for his series was fearless. I saw no fear of God in that sermon. Listening carefully begins with holding God's word in high esteem. God does, Psalm 138 verse 2, "You have exalted above all things your name and your word." God's name and God's word are very important to him, ought to be important to us.

Number two, listen carefully by believing God's word. Believing, listen don't come to listen with the spirit of skeptic, of the skeptical doubting age in your heart. Don't come to critique sermons. Don't come to find fault with the preacher. If you want to find fault with me or any other preacher, you don't have to look very long. We're human beings. Don't come to listen to the text as just merely an intellectual exercise that you're going to study and find some really

interesting facts and share with other people. Don't come to be a master over the texts of Scripture. Instead come to be mastered by the Scripture. Come in submission. Come in humility and come believing. Come with an ear for believing, trusting, eager to listen, to learn. Listening in that way reveals a heart attitude.

So we may also add number three, point number three: Listen carefully by fearing God's word. Reverence it. Proverbs 9:10 says, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom, knowledge of the Holy One is insight." You will only find the knowledge of the Holy One in the Bible where he has revealed the knowledge about himself. He's pleased to reveal himself to us, to share his mind, that we might come into full understanding. Listen if you don't fear the Lord, though, if you don't reverence him, it avails you nothing.

Listen carefully, number four, by obeying God's word. Obeying, that is what listening carefully is according to Scripture, to heed it, to obey it. We might remember Ezra. Ezra 7:10, had his, "He had set his heart to study the Law of the Lord, and to do it and then to teach his statutes and rules in Israel." He didn't want to teach until he first did. He didn't want to pass on what he wasn't obeying for himself.

GRACE CHURCH



Greeley

Look, that's what counts in God's eyes. Hearing with an immediate concern for obeying to put it into practice, that's what wisdom is, knowledge rightly applied. We ought to be people who love wisdom, love to, to practice wisdom, that is our birthright, that's our heritage as Christians. And as we're gonna see from Jesus next week, he counts as family members those who hear the word of God and what? Do it.

So we listen carefully by esteeming, believing, fearing, obeying God's word. Another one, number five, listen carefully by praying through God's word. Pray through God's word. Praying isn't waiting to hear God speak to us. Praying is us speaking to him. God speaks to us in his Scripture. You say, I wanna hear, I wanna hear God speak audibly. Read the Bible out loud. You'll hear it. So while you read, pray and ask God to help you understand what you're reading. Pray and ask God for what Jesus describes here as an honest and good heart. One that holds fast to the word, a heart that's esteeming, believing, fearing, and obeying God's word.

When you come to church each Sunday, whenever you hear the word of God preached, taught, shared, pray that God will give you a heart for hearing and obeying for listening carefully. Pray, pray, pray.

GRACE CHURCH

Good book on that, D.A. Carson, it's called, it used to be called, *A Called Spiritual Reformation*. I think it's now called, retitled, *Praying with Paul, A Call to Spiritual Reformation*. It's a very good book to help you practically pray through Paul's prayers. You'll learn how to do that, pray.

So finally, we've gone through five of them. Here's the sixth. Listen carefully by rejoicing in God's word. Delight in his word. Rejoice in it, find pleasure in it. If you're reading, reading, studying, studying, learning, learning, and grunting out your obedience, but you find no joy. Take a step back and wonder what is going on in your heart, that you do not delight in God's word.

For a true believer, we are the ones who love the Lord our God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength. Love. Love, it says it speaks of an affection. Emotion. Delight. Joy ought to be driving all of this. If you do all the rest of these other principles here, number one through five. Esteeming, Pharisees esteemed God's word. Believing, they said they believed it. Fearing, oh yeah, they feared it. They created extra laws so they didn't break those laws, layers of laws. They said they feared

GRACE CHURCH

Greeley

God's word. Obeying, they're fastidious about external obedience.

Praying, three times a day. Did they rejoice?

If you do all these other five things, but there is no joy and delight in your heart over God and his word, you're no better than a Pharisee and Jesus has some pretty harsh words to speak to us that go through a form of religion, but deny its power. Remember, don't ever forget, the high and holy privilege that is yours; it is the pleasure of your father in heaven to give you the kingdom and he is not only giving you the kingdom; he's explained it to you, he's revealed it to you, his mind. He has lit the lamp. He set it on a lampstand. He's been pleased to bring you into his house that you might see the light.

So beloved, don't ever, ever, ever ever, ever, a lot of evers, take that for granted, but rejoice, that's what this passage is about. It's for every believer, so I close with this appeal, beloved. "Take care therefore how you hear, for to the one who has, more will be given, from the one who has not, even what he thinks he has, that'll be taken away too."

Let's pray. Our father, we pray that there would be among none of us an unbelieving heart to turn from the living God. It is such a joy, privilege that we have to know you, to know your mind and your heart

GRACE CHURCH

Greeley

and to walk in your ways. So please father don't let this fall on deaf ears. In Jesus' name, amen.