

NOT ONLY HEARERS

“But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.” James 1:22

God’s will is that his children would carefully hear the word he has given. To gather in the Lord’s house each Sunday or even more frequently is good and must always be encouraged, but even more important is it to hear the Word when it is preached. We must be careful not to begin building upon our regular church attendance as being in any way meritorious. But one may say, I am certainly not building on such a weak foundation as church attendance. Before we voice such an adamant and hasty denial of being guilty of such a thing, let us look more closely at this matter. Have we ever been guilty of arriving late for the worship service, frustrated to find that the service had already begun, irritated because of the circumstances that contributed to our late arrival, remembering something left undone at home because of our hasty departure, hoped that the message would be brief so we could arrive home early enough to attend to those forgotten things, become anxious when the message was longer than we hoped for? While it is true that we have been in church, at the service, have we truly been a hearer of God’s Word? The Apostle Paul writes in *Romans 10:17* *“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”* But if our mind is beset in the way aforementioned, can we honestly say we have heard the Word with the ears of our heart?

In another example, perhaps we arrived at church early and before the service we have been involved in such interesting and lively conversation concerning politics or other earthly matters that these topics we again rehearsed in our minds throughout the service. In either case, was our soul benefited? Can we honestly say we heard the Word with the ears of our heart? Dear friend, these are but two of countless examples of how Satan, the enemy of our soul, would snatch away the Word before it reaches our heart and thus rob, as it were, the nourishment we all so desperately need for the strengthening of our faith. So frail is this human portion.

But now our text verse reminds us that we should not only be prayerful and diligent hears of God’s word but doers also lest we deceive ourselves. How quickly the great sower of deceit comes to us even after we have indeed heard the Word preached and he applauds us for being so attentive. He would seek to inflate us with pride as we eagerly agree that we have listened so closely. Beware dear friend the enemy always desires to feed our pride. It is then that he would endeavor to convince us that we are such diligent hearers that we need nothing else. Self righteousness begins to raise it’s ugly head within us and we are lulled by Satan into such apathy and spiritual sleepiness that thoughts of putting the instruction received in God’s Word into practice in our daily lives is quickly forgotten. Satan is jubilant. He has accomplished his mission in that he has, in his subtle and deceitful way, blinded our hearts to his intent. Now our pride would lead us to immediately defend our lack of will to be doers of God’s Word by consoling ourselves in the fact that we have attended church and heard the Word preached. After all, we were careful hearers. But alas, dear friend, our defense is futile. We will have been duped by the enemy and have become as wells without water and fig trees with no fruit; having a name that we live but Jesus said, *“Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.” Matt. 7:19-20* How can such a condition of heart bring glory to God?

God has so preciousy provided us with many opportunities to learn more of his love and greatness in our worship services and our Bible studies. How will we answer on judgment day if we spurn or neglect these opportunities which are gifts of his love. Fortifying ourselves with his Word is our sure defense in times like these.

Pray earnestly dear friend, that our Father in heaven would reveal our hearts to us and deliver us from the enemy of our soul in these perilous times and that he would motivate hearts by his Holy Spirit that we may be found both hearers and doers of his Word. He alone, can give us strength to overcome the enemy and obtain the glorious victory in Christ Jesus, our Lord.

Ken Storm – pastor

