

# Lesson 2: Why Listen to Preaching Anyway?

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## INTRODUCTION

- Every explicit command in the Bible for pastors to preach is an implicit command for God's people to listen to preaching.

## A DEFINITION OF EXPOSITORY LISTENING

Expository Listening is actively receiving, understanding, and responding to the meaning and significance of an expounded biblical text with the full purpose of worshipping and obeying God and applying the gospel to one's life.

## THE NEED FOR EXPOSITORY LISTENING

**Class Discussion:** *If a believer can read and study the word of God on their own, what's the benefit of listening to preaching?*

### 1. Old Testament Overview

- Deut 4:10: Israelites were "called together by the word of God and they were called together to listen to the word of God." (Ash, *The Priority of Preaching*, 79)
- Deut 21:12-13: All of Israel, after hearing God's words, was commanded to fear God and do all the words of the law.
- Deut 31:11: All of Israel was called to assemble together to hear the reading of the law regularly every seven years.
- Amos 8:11: God threatened Israel with a famine of hearing the words of the Lord as they persisted in sin and idolatry.
- Psalm 74:9: Asaph laments that there is no longer any prophet to be able to preach the words of God.
- In the OT, the ability to hear God's words was a sign of blessing, and the inability to hear God's words was a sign of judgment.

## 2. New Testament Overview

- Matt 7:24-27: Jesus describes the one who hears his words and does them as a wise man who builds his house on the rock, and the one who hears his words and does *not* do them as a foolish man who builds his house on the sand.
- Luke 10:16: Jesus equates listening to faithful preachers with listening to Christ and rejecting faithful preachers with rejecting the Father and God the Son.
- John 10:27: Jesus declares that true disciples listen to his voice and obey him.
- Rom 10:17, Phil 4:9, 1 Thess 2:13, 2 Tim 4:2-4, James 1:19-22, 1 John 4:6, Rev 2:7: The New Testament repeatedly emphasizes the importance of hearing and obeying God's words.
- Matthew 13:1-23: The Parable of the Sower
  - **Hard-packed soil** = hearts hardened by sin and unreceptive toward God's word.
  - **Rocky soil** = hearts that superficially and emotionally respond to God's word but fall away after affliction or persecution.
  - **Thorny soil** = hearts that initially profess to follow God but fall away after succumbing to temptations of worry, riches, and pleasures.
  - **Good soil** = hearts that are open and receptive toward God's words and strive to obey God's words.
- Eph 4:1-16, 1 Tim 4:13-16: Every explicit command to preach God's word is an implicit command to listen to preaching.

## THE CHALLENGES OF EXPOSITORY LISTENING

1. Unsaved Listeners
2. Untrained Listeners
3. Unfocused Listeners
  - Internal distractions
  - External distractions

## FIVE KINDS OF HEARERS OF GOD'S WORD

### 1. Mr. Blind

Because of Mr. Blind's spiritual blindness, he calls evil good and good evil and is not bothered by living in sin.

### 2. Mr. Afraid

Mr. Afraid knows he has spots on his face but is afraid to look at them in a mirror (James 1:22-25). He tries to avoid the truth and does not want to be confronted by God's Word.

### 3. Mr. Self-Righteous

Mr. Self-Righteous thinks he is good enough to go to heaven. When exhorted to change his wicked behavior, he reasons, "At least I'm not as bad as my neighbor."

### 4. Mr. Pessimistic

Mr. Pessimistic knows he is a sinner but thinks his sins are too great to be forgiven.

5. **Mr. Wise**

When Mr. Wise notices his sins by looking at God's word, he comes to God for forgiveness in Christ. He then prays for strength to apply God's word and bear fruit in keeping with repentance.

**THREE GOALS OF PREACHING**

1. Worship

- Preaching evokes worship because the preacher and listener are in Christ's presence, hear his voice, and adore his character. (Ferguson, *Pulpit Aflame*, 91, 97-98).

2. Discipleship

- Colossians 1:28: Paul defines the purpose of his preaching as "presenting everyone mature in Christ."
- "Preaching is a means of discipleship, a shaping of men and women into the people God wants them to be." (Gibson, *Preaching with a Plan*, 17).

3. Gospel Proclamation

- Regularly proclaiming the gospel helps root believers in God's grace as the foundation and motivation for godly transformation.