

Lesson 4: Ears to Hear - The Four Soils

Main Focus:

Hearing God's voice is not mainly a hearing problem; it is a heart problem. God is always speaking, but the condition of our hearts affects how clearly we hear Him.

Key Scripture:

Luke 8:4-15

Matthew 13:10-15

Luke 8:18

Big Idea:

The seed is the Word of God. The sower does not change. The seed does not change. The soil changes. The condition of the heart determines how the Word is received.

1. God Wants His People to Hear Him

God is a talker.

Hearing God's voice is the birthright of every believer.

We primarily hear Him through Scripture, but God can also speak in many other ways.

Many believers know there is more but wonder if hearing God is really for them.

The issue is often not that God is silent, but that our hearts are not ready to receive.

2. The Heart Is Like a Safe

The heart stores valuable things, both good and bad.

Some things locked in our hearts are memories, beliefs, wounds, fears, and assumptions.

Some of these things clutter the heart and make it harder to hear God clearly.

Surrender means giving God access to the locked places of the heart.

3. The Four Conditions of the Heart

A. The Trampled Heart

Luke 8:12

This is the hardened path where the seed cannot penetrate.

The Word is heard, but the enemy quickly steals it away.

This hardness is often not rebellion, but repetition.

It comes from beliefs, habits, and assumptions we have accepted for years without questioning.

Examples:

Cultural beliefs that are not biblical

Theological assumptions we never examine

Thinking, “God does that for others, but not here” or “not for me”

Question to ask:

Lord, what well-worn paths in my heart need to be broken up?

B. The Troubled Heart

Luke 8:13

This is the rocky soil.

The Word is received with joy, but it has no deep root.

When testing or difficulty comes, the person pulls back.

This often comes from wounds, rejection, shame, or painful experiences.

Key thought:

The walls we build to keep pain out can also keep God's voice out.

Question to ask:

Lord, are there wounds or hidden beliefs beneath the surface that keep me from trusting You fully?

C. The Tangled Heart

Luke 8:14

This is the thorny soil.

The Word is heard, but it is choked by cares, riches, pleasures, and distractions.

These things may not be bad, but they become lesser things that crowd out the greater thing.

The thorns tangle the heart and strangle spiritual fruit.

Common distractions:

Busyness

Possessions

Comfort

Entertainment

Success

Worry

The desire for control

Question to ask:

Lord, what has my heart too tangled to hear You clearly?

D. The Tilled Heart

Luke 8:15

This is the good soil.

The Word is heard, held fast, and bears fruit with patience.

A tilled heart is open, surrendered, and willing to let God work deeply.

The soil does not till itself; it is surrendered to the sower's spade.

Key thought:

Surrender is giving God the key code to the heart.

Question to ask:

Lord, what do You want to till, remove, heal, or prepare in me?

4. How Do We Clear the Way to Hear?

Take care how you hear.

Let God examine the condition of your heart.

Ask the Holy Spirit to show you what needs to be softened, healed, removed, or surrendered.

Spend time with God in Scripture and prayer.

Be willing to let go of lesser things to receive greater intimacy with God.

Trust that God speaks as a loving Father, not with shame or condemnation.

5. Practical Application

This week, take time to sit with God and pray:

God, speak to me today.

Show me one area of my heart that needs Your attention.

Break up any hardened ground in me.

Remove any rocks beneath the surface.

Untangle me from anything that is choking Your Word.

Make my heart good soil.

Closing Thought:

God is speaking. He wants His people to hear Him clearly. The invitation is not to try harder in our own strength, but to surrender the heart and allow Him to prepare the soil.