Grace to Those Who Hear

When God wants to help us, He usually sends a person. When you were headed the wrong way, who stopped you? God could write a message across the sky. That's not how He works. *He sends people. When help comes, what do we do with it? Today,* we're going to talk about listening, and especially about listening when what we hear is hard.

I. Quick to Hear

A. James 1:19: *My dear brothers and sisters, understand this: Everyone should be **quick to listen**, slow to speak, and slow to anger.* Listening comes first.

B. What to do with what we hear:

1. James 1:21: *Therefore, ridding yourselves of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent, **humbly receive** the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.*
2. A proud heart argues with the word. A humble heart lets it in.

C. Don't hear the truth and walk away unchanged:

1. James 1:22: *But be **doers** of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.*

II. Why We Stop Our Ears

A. Pride or Weariness. See 1 Kings 12:8 and 2 Timothy 4:3.

B. Solomon said:

1. Proverbs 27:6: *The wounds of a friend are **trustworthy**, but the kisses of an enemy are excessive.*
2. Proverbs 12:15: *A fool's way is right in his own eyes, but whoever listens to counsel is **wise**.*
3. Proverbs 12:1: *Whoever loves discipline loves knowledge, but one who hates correction is stupid.*

III. When Refusing Becomes the Problem

A. Constant refusal will keep you stuck.

1. Proverbs 29:1: *One who becomes **stiff-necked**, after many reprimands will be shattered instantly—beyond recovery.*
2. God is patient. He sends the word again and again.

B. A heart that keeps saying no is a heart that's slowly hardening.

1. Hebrews 3:13: *But encourage each other daily, while it is still called **today**, so that none of you is **hardened** by sin's deception.*
2. Hebrews 3:15: *As it is said: Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion.*

C. Psalm 145:5: *Let the righteous one strike me— it is an act of faithful love; let him rebuke me— it is **oil for my head**; let me not refuse it.*

IV. Look to Jesus

A. Jesus taught hard things (John 6:60). What does it look like when we stop listening?

1. John 6:66: *From that moment many of his disciples turned back and no longer accompanied him.*
2. Jesus asks: *"You don't want to go away too, do you?" Simon Peter answered, "Lord, to whom will we go? You have the words of eternal life.*

V. Grace to Those Who Hear

A. Ephesians 4:29: *No foul language should come from your mouth, but only what is good for building up someone in need, so that it gives grace **to those who hear**.*

1. Where does the grace end up? *To those who hear.* It's meant to reach you. If we refuse it, we:
2. Ephesians 4:30: *…**grieve** God's Holy Spirit.*
3. Don't shut your ears to instruction, even when it comes through the mouth of a friend.

VI. As We Close

A. The people God has put in your life are part of His answer to your struggle.

B. They're carrying grace to you. Please receive it.