

Coming to Hear God's Word

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[0 : 00] It's good to see everybody this morning. I had a talk with Wes and Nathan about the lights right here. I'm used to speaking on Thursday nights, but I don't have that in my face. But it's like impossible to lift your eyes to heaven and actually pray while you're up here.

But, uh... You do that so much, right? I know. I try. Yeah, it's not too bad. But, um, I had one person already say to me, I like your pink shirt, and I don't think it's pink.

I think it's kind of a light color red. So, uh, just, uh, settle that real quick, too. Um, well, I wanted, uh, this message, we've been in the Gospel of Mark, going through Mark, and this isn't necessarily from Mark.

This is kind of more of a, uh, an aside, a topical message that will hopefully help us get more out of God's Word as we come to hear it week by week.

And, uh, over the Christmas break for the students, I was, uh, at home with my parents in North Carolina, and I went to their church in, uh, Hiawassee.

[1 : 07] And while I was there, I was not really, I hadn't really prepared my heart to come to hear God's Word that morning. And so, when the preacher got up and he began teaching on, um, the idea of the birth of Christ and the incarnation and the importance of it, I just kind of completely zoned out and kind of had this idea of, I've heard this so much in my life, and I really don't want to pay attention.

I already know this. I probably, probably could teach this better than he could. You know, all these little arrogant, pompous thoughts that showed that I really did not believe what it was I was hearing at all.

And it really convicted me. So maybe you, some, some of you have been there before, you've heard a sermon that you've heard before, and it's really tempting just to check out. And instead of asking yourself, Okay, Lord, help me pay attention, help me to get something, um, new out of this. Speak to me afresh on this. And then to ask yourself, do I actually practice what I claim to believe? And so, with that, I was really kind of broken and messed up that afternoon.

I just couldn't get my mind right, because I felt so messed up in my heart. So, uh, I went home, back here to Dahlonga, and I dug out an old book, *The Genius of Puritanism*.

[2 : 35] Great title. Great pictures, too. Very scary looking pictures, so. But, I don't know how many of you know anything about the Puritans, but they were really very, very serious about not just the preaching of God's Word, but also the, uh, the idea of preparing yourself to hear God's Word, hearing God's Word, and then discussing things after you hear God's Word.

They were very, um, serious about that kind of stuff. So, I began reading back through some of the stuff, and it was really convicting and challenging. And since then, it's really helped kind of alter my posture and how I come here on Sunday mornings.

And, uh, with that in mind, uh, this past Wednesday, I was with Nathan, and I told him, you know, at some point, I think it would be interesting to, uh, to speak on the idea of coming to hear God's Word, the idea of coming to hear the preaching of God's Word.

And, and he said, how about this Sunday? And, uh, so, and it really was quite providential because, um, where we are in Mark, we're about to get into the parables, and Jesus says a lot of things like, those who have ears to hear, let them hear.

It's this idea of hearing God's Word. And so, I want you to flip to Luke, uh, chapter 8, and look at verse 18, just carefully.

[4 : 09] Wow, there's multiple water up here. Okay. Leave that here. So, in Luke's Gospel, after the parable of the sower, Jesus makes this comment in chapter 8, verse 18.

He says, take care then how you hear, for to the, the one who has more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he thinks that he has will be taken away.

Very strong words. Take care then how you hear, for to the one who has more will be given, and for the one who has not, even what he thinks that he has will be taken away.

Just pray with me for a second. Father, I just want to confess to you that there's nothing that can be done today in my heart or the hearts of your people that are here apart from your Holy Spirit, and him administering the word to our hearts, our minds, and God has asked for help, and for the Lord to open up our ears and let us hear your truth today.

Just help us, Father, in Christ's name. Amen. So, we need to understand that the way we hear God's word can be a life and death thing in many ways.

[5 : 46] Jesus constantly brought this up to the people he was teaching. He says, you know, if you actually do hear, more will be given, and if you don't hear, what you think you know will be taken away.

So, just put that in your own life in terms of hearing God's word. And in Mark, Jesus says, having eyes do you not see, and having ears do you not hear, and you do not remember.

So, it's possible to have ears that fail to hear, and at the same time, even to be hearing but not understanding. Really dangerous stuff.

And so, this is what was happening to me. And so, listening to sermons, and the preaching of God's word is a risky business. It will either sanctify you or it will harden you.

But one thing it won't do is leave you unchanged. When you go here today, something will be different. And you either will know Christ more and want to be conformed more to his image or you'll be hardened. It's like, it's really one or the other.

[6 : 48] So, that should scare you a little bit. It scares me. And also to realize that you'll be accountable before God for everything you hear in your soul.

A lot of you, I remember, you know, back in the day when Nathan West and I were in school, I probably went through like a pretty long period of time where I was just learning a lot but applying very little.

And then I just realized that all I'm doing is making myself more accountable for what I know. Like I'm storing up all this knowledge and I can't obey even a quarter of it.

And God's going to hold me to a higher standard because of what I've been taught. And so, understand that your faith can rise and fall based on how you hear God's Word.

Right? Romans 10. So, faith comes by hearing and hearing through the words of Christ. Romans 10.17. So, briefly, this is, you know, this is the written copy of God's Word.

[7 : 54] This is not God's Word. God's Word is living, active. Christ Himself is the Word of God. And on the throne of God there's a man, not a book. But this is the recorded words of God.

And over 2,000 times in the Old Testament alone, the Bible asserts that God spoke within its pages. And the phrase the Word of God over 40 times in the New Testament.

And so, you hear phrases such as, has not God said? What do the Scriptures say? Thus says the Lord. They're interchangeable all throughout the Scripture.

So, they're affirming one or the other. That the Scripture really is God's Word. And so, you're all familiar with Paul's words to Timothy where he said all Scripture is breathed out by God and is profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness that the man of God may be competent and equipped for every good work.

Alright, so, that definitely destroys the idea that it was only relative to the people in the past. This idea that it is breathed out by God and is always profitable and for training.

[9 : 09] So, that word, some translations may say inspired or inspired by God and that's not a bad way of saying it but really the literal word is a combination Greek word.

It's not used anywhere else in the whole Bible or in classical Greek literature is theophanoustos and it means that the idea of God breathed these things out. Let's forget our word for pneumonia or pneumatic and God breathed out these words.

So, it's saying that that God in person has spoken through these pages and so, in the scripture, the person of God and the word of God are so interrelated that what is true about God is true about His word.

God is perfect, He's pure, He's righteous, He's truthful and therefore, so is His word. They're interrelated. They're perfect in all ways. So, I have a pastor friend of mine, he's been preaching

God's word for about 45 years.

I don't know if he's going to hang it up sometime soon or not, but he's over in Northern Ireland and his name's Billy, Billy Reed and he told me about six years ago that we are changed and transformed by beholding the glory of Christ and where we see the glory of Christ most clearly is in His word.

[10 : 39] So, that's why we need to like spend daily time soaking ourselves, meditating in God's word. But, even getting more specific, you know, we're going to talk today about the preaching of God's word.

But, just understand that this is the very word of God. John Calvin said, we owe to the scriptures the same reverence for which we owe to God because it has proceeded from Him alone and has nothing of man mixed with it.

Our own experience has taught us that the highest proof of scripture derives in general from the fact that God in person speaks in it. It's really good. So, I think I have four or five questions that we're going to kind of look through today.

But, first off, what, the first question is, what is teaching and preaching? What is teaching and preaching? And are they different? And the answer is, yes, they are different.

God has given stewardship, given gifts to His church for the building up of His church and for the equipping of His church. And so, the Holy Spirit is the agent of these gifts.

[11 : 54] And among these gifts, all to be used for God's glory, you mainly see speaking gifts and serving gifts, typically, but among them are the gifts of teaching and preaching.

So, let's look at teaching first. Teaching, at least, when it's used in the New Testament, it means to instruct, to clarify, to explain, to guide, to nurture the truths about God's Word into the hearts of people for the purpose of unifying, maturing the church and maturing the body to Christ.

but understand, though, that teaching is not necessarily preaching. There's another element of preaching that kind of goes a little further. Okay? So, we have many teachers in this room, but you may not actually be a preacher, so to say.

So, preaching carries another element. Preaching, also referred to as prophecy, doesn't necessarily mean that you're going to predict future events.

Most of it, even the Bible prophets didn't really do a lot of that. They mainly called God's people to repent of their sin and to come back to God, to be restored back to God. But, it can mean that.

[13 : 11] But, at least in the New Testament, we're going to read you a pretty cool definition, at least of what the Greek means for preaching. Okay? It says, to be a herald, always with the suggestion of a formality, gravity, and an authority that must be listened to and obeyed.

That's what preaching kind of carries with it. So, a herald, they suggest a formality and gravity, and an authority that must be listened to and obeyed. So, remember, just think whatever you can from history, but a herald's message was never his own message.

It usually came from a sovereign, like King David, or Solomon, or Caesar, for that matter. And they carried the message from this sovereign. And he was judged, the herald will be judged by the faithfulness to the message.

He wasn't judged by the results of what the people did with the message. He was judged for just faithfully delivering the message to the people. That was what he was judged by.

So, preaching is boldly proclaiming the Word of God unreservedly to the people of God. And so, the purpose of it is to inform, persuade, to call forth an appropriate response to God whose message is being derived from.

[14 : 35] It's God's message. And so, when you unleash that, it's really up to the hearer to do something with it. It's not the messenger or the herald's responsibility to see what happens with the people.

He's supposed to deliver the message. And so, understand though that when that happens, God's Word can break you, convict you of sin, can make you feel pretty rough, and at the same time, it will heal and restore you and give you strength right after that.

It's pretty cool. So, but understand though, that a lot of preachers today, they like to give you their words or a good word or tell stories.

you don't want that. People are outside their authority unless they're speaking God's Word. We're commanded as preachers to preach the Word.

Not a good one or just a cool one, but the Word, God's Word. And in the Scripture itself, you see that if a so-called preacher ventures outside of God's Word, he no longer has any authority. [15:44] He no longer should even be listened to. And so, I'll give you two examples of that. Alright, Stephen in Acts 7, before the Sanhedrin, walked through the Old Testament from Abraham into the patriarchs, and he walked all the way into the New Testament where Christ comes in, showing that he was the fulfillment of these things.

Then Peter also, before that, in Acts 2, he expounded on the Old Testament. He used the Scripture as his authority to show that Jesus was the Christ.

Christ. Right? So even the ones in the Scripture themselves, they use God's Word as their authority. So, when you say, thus says the Lord, you better know what the Lord saith.

Right? You better know you're in trouble. God won't tolerate that. Paul said to the Corinthians, for we are not like so many peddlers of God's Word, but as men sincerely commissioned by God, in the sight of God, we speak Christ.

Guys, and girls to a degree, but especially guys, some of you may like to teach, to be heard, teach to be seen, and you need to understand, I mean, I'm even kind of fear and trembling a little this morning, but James says that those who desire, not many of you should desire to teach, he says, because you'll be held to a higher standard by God, because you're influencing people by what you say, and God will hold you accountable for that.

[17:19] That's James 3. You cannot peddle with God's Word or treat it cheaply. It's to be taken seriously. Turn to 1 Thessalonians. I'll just look at something real quick.

1 Thessalonians chapter 2. 1 Thessalonians chapter 2 verse 11.

So in Thessalonica, Paul had preached the gospel. He had lived an upright life before them to encourage them, exhort them, but above all things, he gave them God's Word. He ministered and faithfully taught God's Word.

So we look at verse 11. He says, And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the Word of God, which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the Word of men, but as it really was the Word of God, which is at work in you believers.

So, see that? So it is God's Word, and all that a human preacher is supposed to do is just to expound upon what God has said, and nothing else.

[18:32] He's supposed to teach what God has already said. And they said that, Paul said that the reason why this did you so good is because you didn't think it was our words, you understood that it was God's very words spoken from us to you.

So a lot of helpful things that I pulled out of this, but commenting on this passage, there was a guy named Jeremiah Burroughs, and he wrote a book called Gospel Worship, and his idea of how do we come and worship together as a body, and have God administer the gospel to our hearts, and a huge section on hearing the word of God is there, but he remarks on this passage, when you come to hear the word, if you would sanctify God's name, you must possess your souls of what it is you are going to hear, that is, what you are going to hear is the word of God, therefore you find the apostle writing to the Thessalonians, gives them the reason why the word did them so much good as it did, it was because they did hear it as the word of God, so sanctify God's name in your heart before you come, so the second question is what are responsibilities before hearing

God's word, alright, what are responsibilities before hearing God's word, so understand that like the corporate gathering of God's people is a huge blessing, there's so many places in the world where this couldn't happen, and it's such a blessing, God administers and strengthens us while we're together here as a people, we're commanded to be together, so, but many of us, I'm guilty myself, I'm trying very hard to fight now against this, because I know I'll be held to this standard by God because I'm speaking it to you today, but many of us come here with very little soul preparation at all to be here with the people of God and especially to hear God's word, and I only have just a few places for you to turn, but look at Ecclesiastes 5 really quick, Ecclesiastes 5, so most of us come with very little preparation to engage our hearts and minds, and this is

Solomon, probably, most likely Solomon, writing this in chapter 5, verse 1, he says, guard your steps when you go to the house of God, to draw near to listen is better than to offer the sacrifice of fools, for they do not know what they are doing is evil, be not rash with your mouth, nor let your heart be hasty to utter a word before God, for God is in heaven and you are on the earth, therefore, let your words be few, so, understand that this building, and no building for that matter, is God's house, that's not what we're going at here, many guys will try to interpret it that way, so when you

come to this place, you know, it's not really the point, we are now the temple of God because of what Christ has done and the Holy Spirit dwells in us, but we can learn some serious things though about corporate worship from this text, so when the ecclesia, the gathering of God's people, the bride of Christ comes together for multiple purposes, so in context, this is obviously probably Solomon's temple that he built, but also if you go online, you can find pictures of this, but Herod's temple, at the time of Jesus, you can actually go to the southern southern part of the temple mount, and the stairs of that temple are still there, I've seen, I'd like to go there one day, we have a few ladies who went recently, but the stairs of the temple are still there, and what's interesting is if you look at it, you would think that it was just an engineering disaster, but it really wasn't, more than likely, the men who built that did it for a very specific reason, but the stairs of that going up to the temple mount, they're different widths, and different heights, constantly, so it's like you can't just kind of run right up the stairs, they're constantly kind of staggered in a really weird, strange way, and a lot of people believe that they built it that way, so that it would force people who were coming to the temple to slow down and actually think about what it was they were going to do, to think about they were going to offer up sacrifices and to worship

[23 : 34] Yahweh, so that's a pretty cool thought, to slow you down and to think about it, so this indicates the seriousness of what it means to come to worship with God's people, and you have to fight to not let your hearts be directed for other reasons, some of you may be here because you think a girl is cute or vice versa, you may be here just because you want to see this person and hang out, or because you thought it was just the right thing to do, but you don't want to be here, you could be here for like our coffee, like whatever, there could be a thousand reasons why you're here, but you have to fight to keep in mind why it is that you're here, so you have to fight that, to be slow in what we say before God, so some of you come here and you sing, you sing songs, you hear God's word, and deep down, what you confess with your mouth is very far from your heart, and it shows when we leave, we go to a thousand different things after we leave, our minds and our hearts do, so God is saying, be careful, guard your steps when you come together to worship with God's people, and you will be held accountable for every word that you say,

Jesus says, and it's a scary thought, come rather to listen than to offer up the sacrifice of fools, so many of us, we're talking about before hearing God's word, many of us, like I said, have very little preparation, probably, most of us here sadly, spend more time preparing our physical looks than preparing our souls, others of you for maybe some crazy, ridiculous reason, college students, especially talking to you, you stay up super late on Saturday night, and then you're even up to the a.m.

on Sunday morning, and you're in a wreck this morning, you can hardly even keep your eyes open and pay attention to what's being said, some of you guys, you have sticks in your hair, and you have the pillow smear across your face, like you just literally walked out of bed and came here, it's not the right way to prepare to come and hear God's word, it's serious business, some people may be concerned with overdressing, and some don't really care at all what they wear, and sometimes we wish that they would think about that from time to time, but we're not legalistic here, you don't have to dress a certain way to be accepted here, God cares definitely more about what's on your heart, the motive behind it, moderation is the rule, but if you're trying to dress, to come here to draw attention to yourself, you need to stop and think, this is not why you're here, this is why Paul addresses that kind of stuff in his letters to Timothy, where women particularly were dressing up extremely extravagant type stuff to draw attention to themselves, and he's like, no, this is not why you're here, you're here to engage with God, so, flip to

Nehemiah chapter 8, by the way, I understand that some of you have legitimate reasons for being tired, especially the ones with children, and I have no idea what that would be like, but I mean, I know that for some reasons you're legitimately tired, and God will help you through that, you know, so, I'm just talking about the deliberate entering into stuff, flipping or half heartedly, before you come here, it should never be done flippantly or light heartedly, so, so, a few tips underneath this, okay, how do we prepare ourselves to hear God's word, one thing is to sanctify this time as holy, set apart this time as holy, alright, learn to sanctify it as holy, because you're coming to here, not my words or Nathan's or anybody else's, but God's word, you're coming to hear this, and you're hearing it through a human preacher, but hopefully, like I said, we're expounding on what God himself has said, so when the

Bible is faithfully taught, God ministers grace to our hearts, and builds us up, we're going to see here, this awesome chapter, I encourage you to go and read all chapter 8, but when the Israelites returned from the Babylonian captivity, many of them had never heard God's word read at all, can you imagine that, like they had no idea, they understood that they were the people of God, but they didn't really never hear God's word, so as prescribed in the feast of Booth in Deuteronomy 31, they gathered together near the water gate in Jerusalem to hear the proclamation of the scriptures, the Torah, most of that would have been the Torah, some of the wisdom writings, and Ezra the scribe and some other Levites took turns reading from the word of God, the law, and they read for a very long time, they read,

[29 : 03] I want to say, yeah, from early morning to like midday, that is read, and they even stopped and explained what the scriptures meant along the way, so you see the teaching aspect of God's word there, so they worshiped together here, so look at verse 8, chapter 8, it says, they read from the book, from the law of God, clearly, and gave the sense so that the people understood the reading, God's word has to be explained a lot, there's things in here that are hard to understand, and Nehemiah who was the governor, and Ezra the priest, and the scribe, and the Levites who taught the people, said to the people, this day is holy to the Lord your God, do not mourn or weep, for all the people wept as they heard the words of the law, so hear that, they're hearing the scripture and they're breaking down, they're feeling the conviction and weight of God's word, and he says, then he said to them, go your way, eat fat and drink sweet wine and send portions to anyone who has nothing ready, for this day is holy to our

Lord, do not be grieved, for the joy of the Lord is your strength, like wow, a beautiful example of God's word being taught faithfully to the people, and you're seeing the effects of it, right, so, understand that this is a holy time, alright, and, I mean, those of you who know me well know this is a pretty big soapbox I get on, so I'm not going to stay on it for just maybe a minute or two, but, particularly you college students, you have to absolutely put to death, destroy the idea that worship is simply music, that worship is simply just coming to hear music, music can be an act of worship, but it's not alone by itself, just worship, if you read this passage, what you see is the hearing of God's word, them paying attention, them sitting upright and listening to God's word is an act of worship, modern day terms of worship, worship would totally confuse these people in the scripture, they'd be like, what are you talking about, they would have no idea, like, what you meant, this idea of hey, let's enter into this time of worship, and it's like, what have you been doing all day, not worshipping, you know, it's like it doesn't make any sense, the idea of our English word, worship, comes from the word worship, whatever it is you value and treasure and consider to be the most worthy, and that's shown, enter in how you live and life, right, I mean, that's what worship really is, so you're listening and you're paying attention to God's word, is worship, and see, what I see is a lot of people listening and kind of all into the music aspect, when they sit down, it's like, just turn off, and it's okay to goof off and mess with your buddies, and no, like, this is a serious time, worship of

God's people is continuing, especially His word, being spoken to you, it has to be that way, this is what we see here, and this same word broke the people, it convicted them of sin, they were weeping, and no doubtfully, Nehemiah, being led by the Spirit, said, understood, that this same word that was doing that would be the same word that gave them strength and joy to keep going and pressing on to what they were doing, so he brought that up to them, even the idea of the pulpit, they built a large platform in Nehemiah for them to stand on, to read the word, and to teach it, definitely for audio purposes, so that people could see them and hear them, but I think it's kind of cool, a lot of our heroes from church history, the reformers, Luther, Calvin, Spurgeon, the Puritans, they kind of took the pulpit and had a different idea for it, pulpits, if you go along, it's really old, I had a picture of one I was going to try to show, but Calvin's pulpit in Geneva, it's like it has this staircase and it goes up, then, you know, you can't really see it, that's okay, but it goes up, and so, the point is, not to show the importance of the man who was going up there and how important he was, but it was to say that we stand under the preaching of God's word, and so, when a man went up those stairs to deliver a sermon on God's word, he did it with fear and trembling, and with a great responsibility as he began walking up those stairs, I think it's pretty cool, so he climbed those stairs with great reverence and joy, so, just a cool thing to know about pulpits, but, so, yeah, sanctify, this time as holy, so another thing is pray expectantly, come expecting to hear from God, right, without faith it's impossible to please

[34 : 34] God, you have to understand that you have to, your heart is naturally shut up against God, you need prayer to soften the soil of your heart, so it's vital at all times, but especially at this time, so, excuse me, that, sorry, pray, as David prayed, great, great scripture here, Psalm 119, verse 17, deal bountifully with your servant, that I may live and keep your word, open my eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of your law, I'm a sojourner on earth, hide not your commandments from me, help me to behold wonderful things in your law, he's praying this, so, Jeremiah Burroughs again, on this idea, he says, pray beforehand that God would open thine eyes, open thine heart, and accompany his word, as David did, and you know what it is said of Lydia, the Lord opened her heart to attend the word which was spoken, you have need to pray, oh Lord, my eyes and my heart,

Lord, my heart is naturally locked up against your word, and are the words in my heart, that except apart from you, cannot be, will not open to your word, Lord, I have often gone to thy word, and had the key stuck in it, and had failed to open it, but Lord, if you would, but fit it, and turn it in your hand, my heart would open, oh come with such a praying heart to the word of God, that he may be glorified in you, and you would be profited, so pray, even while you're in the car on the way here, that God would use this time to minister to your hearts, so, that's before you hear the word, what about while you're hearing the word, right now, some duties, responsibilities, one, hang on the words you hear, hang on the words you hear, so we read in Luke 19, something interesting about after Jesus cleanses the temple, and he's teaching, this is something that said, it says, he was teaching daily in the temple, the chief priests and the scribes and the principal men were seeking to destroy him, but they did not find anything they could do, listen to this, for all the people were hanging on his words, as he taught, they were just completely hanging on his words, and it says here, another

Puritan, John Wells, said, it is said of Christ's auditors, that they did hang upon his mouth in their hearing, the ear is the proper door to the heart, study then to make it a door to salvation, by serious and diligent attention, the ear lies in the way to the soul, as the light shines not into a house, but by the window, let us not lose the blessed truths by neglectful hearing, which Christ had brought by his painful bleeding, okay, so, these things are our life, when Moses and Deuteronomy was speaking, it's like, these words, these commandments are your life, so, like, come to hear the scripture in that way, another thing to do, pray sporadically during this time, I mean, there's often times, especially when I knew that Nathan or Wes or Kyle or somebody was up here teaching on a hard subject, and I'm back there in the back just thinking, man,

I'm glad to, but I'm not up there today, I'm glad it's him, and I'm like, and I can see their face, and then like, just, just, my Lord, help them to explain this well, help them to teach the people well, pray for the preacher, pray for your neighbors, and pray for your own heart while you're hearing God's word, pray sporadically, Samuel Ansley, another period, he said, mix your hearing with prayer, jog your hearts as you do your sleeping neighbors, right, call in your thoughts while they are within call, and as far as possible, think of nothing but what you are about, which is hearing God's word, right, so one more thing you can do during this time is personalize your hearing, personalize your hearing, it often helps to think of God addressing you personally, if I was to say, Cody, and I looked at him, he immediately would buck up, and if

I called your name, you would buck up too, right, so think of it, is God personally addressing you, Jeremiah Burroughs, he says, as a man that is asleep, if there is a noise made, it will usually not awaken him so soon, but, come and call out his name and say John or Thomas, and he will awake sooner than a great noise will, so, when the word makes a noise, when it is delivered only in general, men take little notice of it, right, so, if I'm just kind of delivering it to everybody, you may not, may not possibly hear, but when the word is particularly to the souls of men, as it were, called their names, it awakens them, so, think of it like me, this is being spoken to me, and I need to hear this, so, those things, hang on the words you hear, pray sporadically, personalize your hearing, the fourth question, this is the last question, what are our responsibilities after hearing the word of [40 : 14] God, so, when you go from here, what happens, typical, guilty, most people set their souls solely on the meal before them, right, you think, like man, like you start to think, like where can we go eat, where am I going to eat, what are we going to do after this, who am I going to hang out with, a thousand different directions your mind goes, some for more urgent reasons, and some for not so urgent reasons, but regardless, the word of God is quickly snuffed out, a lot of the time from your heart, so, some things you can do to think about this, alright, right, others you may say

there's like an important sports game I want to go watch, there's this, there's that, there's a ton of things, some of you are going to go home and go to sleep for probably five hours, don't do it, unless you got like one hour of sleep last night, for a good reason, right, so, don't allow the word to be so quickly snuffed out, recognize right now that when you leave,

I want you to like pay attention to this, there's going to be a thousand things like, look at me, look at me, forget about the word of God you heard, and think about this, right, recognize and embrace that reality, there's going to be a thousand things trying to pull you away, prone to wander, Lord, I feel it, that's like what you're going to feel like when you leave here, so, our Lord himself said, a wise man is a one who hears the words and does them, and a fool is the opposite, he only hears but does not do, right, so, right down underneath this, be a doer of the word, okay, be a doer of the word, look at James chapter 1, this is the last thing you have to look at, James chapter 1, James chapter 1, verse 22, and you know, by the way, the wise man that built his house on the rock and obeyed and took action on the words of

Christ, he's the one who survived the flood and the storm, and the one who did not apply what he heard, said great was the fall of his house, great was the fall of his house, so, James chapter 1, verse 22, with this in mind, James says, but be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves, for if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks intently at his natural face in a mirror, for he looks at himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like, but the one who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty, and preserves, being, excuse me, perseveres, and being no hearer who forgets but a doer who acts, he will be blessed in all his doing, strong words, verse 22, you see the word like deceiving yourselves, it's used of a mathematical miscalculation, right, that's what you see here, so those of you who just merely hear, but then fail to do, he's saying that you've made a serious, grave, spiritual miscalculation, if that's what you've done, it's like what he's saying, it doesn't add up, and it's not right, and the perfect law that's spoken about here is obviously the scripture, what you look into and gaze into God's perfect law, but if you ever just looked at a mirror, and then just walked away real quick, and then you really just forgot what you looked at, you might like to jump back and look again,

I do that with my beard all the time, because sometimes there's like parts that are out of order, so what he's saying is, you need to not just take a quick glance and walk away, you need to look intently into the perfect law, right, furthermore, unless you act promptly after this time, unless you act promptly after you go from your hearing, you'll forget adjustments and changes that need to be made to your soul, just like if you look in the mirror and walk away, you'll forget what God convicted you of and showed you here, so act promptly, right, it'll build more faith, joy, peace, and hope in you, be a doer of the word and not just a hearer, since the doers will be blessed by God, right, so be a doer of the word, and then two other things, one, discuss the sermon when you leave, with whoever you're with, talk about it, and men, you must lead in this, you've got to like step up and bring this up in the groups that you're in, fathers,

I know a lot, I'm thankful a lot of men here actually do do that, but college students, guys, take the lead, talk about how this convicted you, how this encouraged you, anything, how it's always a benefit to hear what other people saw from the scripture, right, it helps bring further illumination, another Puritan, Thomas Sonor, he said, repeat it in your families, talk of it as you go from your hearing, pray to the Lord that he would preserve the word in your hearts by his spirit, the devil would snatch away the word of God from us if they were not as stronger to guard it, the Holy Spirit, right, so talk about it as you go, lastly, pray the Holy Spirit enables us to hide the word in our hearts, as David did, Psalm 119 verse 10, with my whole heart I seek you, let me not wander from your commandments, I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you, so pray that the Holy Spirit would hide the scripture in your hearts, and then the last thing by

[46 : 18] Burroughs, he says, about this text, we must hide the word in our hearts, we must not only hear, but keep it, preserve it, and then do what we declare on account of the word of God, and if we do, we actually say that the word of God is worth something, indeed, if thou wouldn't sanctify the name of God in the hearing of his word, turn it into practice, listen, as he's saying, if you don't turn it into practice, this is what happens, he says, if you fail to turn it into practice, otherwise the name of God is blasphemed, or at least taken in vain, that's serious stuff, so we need to learn to treasure this, and treasure how it's taught, and if you ever hear any man come up here and say something that's outside of this, humbly bring him back to it and say that this is what we believe here, this is what we proclaim here, Christ, we behold the glory of Christ in the scripture, and that's

how we're changed and transformed, so I hope that some of that stuff will help you come here, and not just get more out of it, but it will come here, it will help you glorify God in your hearing, and your listening, and your paying attention, and while you go, it will help you apply what you know into your life, so let's just pray together.
Thank you.