

**RUTH 3:10-14**  
**EARS TO HEAR!**

Please turn in your Bibles this morning to Ruth chapter 3 as we continue our in-depth study of the book of Ruth.

Let me set the stage for what we will be looking at this morning.

As you may remember, there was a famine in the land of Bethlehem, where Elimelech and his family lived. Because of that we see Elimelech take his wife Naomi and his two sons, Mahlon and Chilion to Moab because there was food down there.

But keep in mind that Bethlehem means the House of Bread and Moab is spoken of as a washpot or toilet bowl. So Elimelech moved his family from the House of Bread and into a toilet bowl!

Down in Moab we see Elimelech die.

Then, his sons, they marry Moabite women by the names of Orpah and Ruth. Something that they should not have done, God warned the children of Israel not to marry Gentile women, and yet, as you live in the world, then what happens is you become like the world. The influence of the world was too much for these young men and they succumbed to it!

Then, after this marriage we see that the sons of Naomi died as well. Now Naomi is left with two widows and she herself was a widow. Not a good thing during that period of time, it was hard to support yourself.

So Naomi hears that God is blessing His people in Bethlehem and she prepares to leave Moab and head back home, back to Bethlehem. But she tells her daughters in law that they should remain in Moab, not go with her. Which is strange to me.

It would be like saying, “*Girls, remain in the toilet bowl, I am going to the House of Bread!*”

And Orpah decides to stay in Moab but Ruth refuses, she wants to go with Naomi, and I believe it is because Ruth is saved, and she wants to go where God’s people were.

Listen to what Ruth told Naomi in Ruth 1:16-18, “**But Ruth said: ‘Entreat me not to leave you, Or to turn back from following after you; For wherever you go, I will go; And wherever you lodge, I will lodge; Your people shall be my people, And your God, my God. Where you die, I will die, And there will I be buried. The Lord do so to me, and more also, If anything but death parts you and me.’ When she saw that she was determined to go with her, she stopped speaking to her.**”

So Naomi and Ruth make this long journey to Bethlehem and upon arrival the women recognize Naomi, but those ten years down in Moab, in the world, took its toll on her and she did not look like she did when she left.

And Naomi tells these women not to call her pleasant or blessed but Mara or bitter. She was angry with God for all that happened in her life. But, as we have seen, God was working and there was a kinsman redeemer who could marry Ruth there in Bethlehem! His name was Boaz.

And Naomi begins to see the hand of God upon her life and upon Ruth’s as well. So she tells Ruth to prepare herself as a bride and go and lay down at the feet of Boaz after he is asleep. And the idea here is submission to Boaz. And we looked at that last time – ***TOTAL SUBMISSION*** as we looked at Ruth submitting to Boaz and how we are to submit to the Lord!

This morning we are going to focus on – ***EARS TO HEAR!***

Now it is important to have ears but if you have ears and you are not listening, that is not a good thing.

And we see that today with the Word of God. God has spoken to us through His Word and yet, there are those who are putting down God's Word, not listening to it or trying to tell us what is being said instead of listening to what God has already said in His Word.

Let me share this example with you. This is from Ken Ham and it is a letter he sent out back on December 28, 2020. This is what he wrote,

As I've pondered and prayed concerning the AiG ministry in 2021, I reread an article on the AiG website written by Simon Turpin, the Executive Director of our United Kingdom/Europe AiG ministry. Simon holds a BA and MA in theology. Simon wrote this:

*Today there is an increasing number of pastors, theologians, churches, and theological institutes that use the term inerrancy, but it may well be a redefined meaning. Much of this is due to the compromise on the Bible with secular ideas like millions of years.*

*This is because there are evangelicals (like Dr. Mike Licona) who, because of the human element of Scripture, want to define inerrancy as: "God inspired the biblical authors with the concepts . . . and He wasn't concerned with the peripheral details. He wanted to make sure that the concepts and the teaching . . . [were] preserved without error." The outcome of this definition is the belief that the Bible's authority is not found in its words but only through its intention. It's so sad to see many church leaders going in that direction.*

Now a couple of months ago, I wrote a blog about a "Christian" college in the USA:

*Recent headlines announced something rather shocking to many Christians – the president of the study body at Calvin University has "come out" as a homosexual. What makes this so shocking is that Calvin University is supposedly a Christian college! What happened?*

*Well, Calvin University has compromised God's Word for years.*

*For example, they have compromised Genesis with the pagan religion of evolution and millions of years. They won't take a stand on a historical Genesis – indeed they teach quite the opposite – and therefore, even though they claim to believe that “human sexuality is a gift from God reserved for expression in the context of marriage between a man and a woman,” they have no foundation from which to do so – after all, marriage, family, and sexuality are grounded in the history in Genesis (see Genesis 1:27, 2:24 and Matthew 19:4-5) . . .*

*Calvin also wants to take as many colleges with them down this compromising destructive path. Recently the school published a science textbook they want other colleges to use. But this text is destructive to the authority of God's Word beginning in Genesis.*

Just to give you a glimpse of the sort of compromise rife [rampant] throughout this textbook produced by Calvin College professors . . . consider these quotes:

*Although some Christians have argued that the fall utterly disrupted some kind of original perfection of creation, there is no evidence from either the Bible or the creation, making that a forgone conclusion. . . . Here it is enough to say that geological data to support a flood of massive proportion is lacking. Furthermore, no archaeological evidence lends support to such a flood.*

Such compromise as outlined in the quotes above permeate much of the church and most Christian colleges, seminaries, and Bible colleges.

- Ken Ham, Answers in Genesis, December 28, 2020

I understand that these are professors at Calvin College, and they are smarter and more educated than I am. They have degrees in theology, I don't.

But these are the most ridiculous statements I have ever heard. What do you mean that there is no original sin, that Adam and Eve were not created perfect and when they sinned, sin affected the entire human race?

Just one verse to show you their foolishness in saying that the Bible does not teach original sin. Paul wrote in Romans 5:12, **“Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned.”**

I think that is clear and there is much more in the Scriptures about this, but do you see how they have either lied or they don't know the Scriptures, or they are not agreeing with what the Scriptures are saying. They have ears but they are not hearing from God! Not only that, but they are telling their students not to believe in the foundational truths of the Scripture. In other words, they are dangerous, very dangerous because they are not listening and obeying what God has said in His Word.

And then to say that there is no evidence for the flood in the world, are you kidding me. Have they not seen the Grand Canyon! The foolishness of man to deny the Words of God!

And that is what we will be focusing on this morning – ***EARS TO HEAR!***

And I have broken these verses down into two main points. They are,

***LISTEN – RUTH 3:10-13***

***OBEY – RUTH 3:14***

So with that as our background, let's begin reading in Ruth chapter 3, beginning in verse 10, and let's see what the Lord has for us as we look at this topic – ***EARS TO HEAR!***

**RUTH 3****VERSES 10-13**

First, let me share what is going on here and then we will see how Ruth was listening to what Boaz was telling her.

Keep in mind that Boaz is a picture or type of Jesus Christ. And when you look at the character of Boaz, it comes shinning forth!

Because he was the GOEL, the kinsman redeemer, he had every right to force himself upon Ruth, but he didn't.

Also, there is this age factor, he seems to be a lot older than Ruth, and because of that it caused him to sit back. Yes, he loved her, but I don't know if he was sure that she loved him, but as we see, she did!

Let's apply that to our GOEL, or our Kinsman Redeemer, Jesus Christ!

Does Jesus force Himself upon us?

Absolutely not! He will not force Himself on anyone. He grants each of us a free will and the ability to accept and submit to God, or to reject Him and live according to our own desires.

And there is no Scripture in the Bible, no situation in the Bible where someone wanted to reject God, hate God, and God stepped in and made that person love Him!

And if there was, that would not be love! You see, love is based upon a choice. And yes, we were created to love God, but we are not forced to love God. It is a choice that we are free to make or reject!

Let me show you what I mean.

There is this young couple, and they are very much in love. They have been going out for a long time now. And she is ready to get married and if he asked her to marry him, she would say, ***“YES!”***

And that day comes. He has everything planned out. The romantic dinner, beautiful surroundings, flowers, and then those words, ***“Will you marry me?”***

And, for some reason she hesitates for a minute. And she tells him, ***“I would like to think about this for a bit.”***

So he pulls out a gun and again asks her, this time by threatening her, ***“Will you marry me? Look, I have spent a lot of my time and money on you, what is your answer?”*** as the gun is pointed at her!

Now, what choice does she have. She has to say yes because the consequences are not good!

As we examine all that has taken place here, would you say that she is marrying him out of love? Would she feel that he truly loves her?

And we all know the answer to that. She would not marry him because she loved him, and she would not feel that he loves her by his actions.

And yet we think that is how God treats us! Not at all. You can't be pressured into love. You can't be forced into love. You must freely enter into that relationship and that is what we see Ruth doing and it is what we do as we come to Christ!

Listen to this invitation that is given to us in Revelation 22:17, **“And the Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let him who hears say, “Come!” And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.”**

We are the Bride of Christ and it is not a shotgun wedding. The invitation is to all and then it is our choice to accept that free gift of salvation that is in Christ or reject it.

Now look at the character of Ruth. Her background is that she was a Moabite who came to know the Lord. In other words, she was a Gentile.

And out of all that we see that her reputation, her virtues, the way she lived has spread all around. She shined brightly!

Yes, as I have said Boaz was a lot older than Ruth, and thus, during this time of celebration she could have gone out with any number of young men, but she stays faithful to Boaz, her kinsman.

You see, she was willing to marry an older man in order to fulfill her commitment to her first husband, Mahlon and the family name of Elimelech, when she could have gone after other men. (Ruth 4:10)

Ruth's reputation quickly spread, not because she flaunted it - but because she lived it!

Here we are, brought into the Kingdom of God through Jesus Christ, and we are Gentiles!

And we too are to be faithful to our Lord, not go after other things.

And the way we live out our lives, should be a witness to those around us. They should see Jesus manifested in our lives. We should have a good reputation just as Ruth did!

What a great lesson for us. May others see that our character, the faith that we have is solid, not because we flaunt it, but because we live it out!

We also see in Ruth 4:12-13, the character of Boaz. He was honest. What do I mean by that?

There was a problem here. You see, there was another relative that was closer, and it was his right to be the kinsman in this situation.



Thus, Boaz tells Ruth that if he would like to go through with this, fine, but if he refuses then he will be her kinsman, “**as the LORD lives!**”

We see Boaz manifest honesty, integrity and these are virtues that God desires from each of us to have. It may not be to our benefit, but it is the right thing to do and God will bless us for it!

Now, as Boaz is speaking, what is Ruth doing?

She is on her cell phone texting Naomi, right? No, that is not what she is doing.

She is thinking about all the work that she has to do when she gets home, right? No, that is not what she is doing.

And I can go on, but I think you get the picture. Ruth was not distracted but Ruth was listening to all that Boaz was saying to her.

Now I do have to admit, there are times, please don't record this, but there are times when my wife is talking to me and I am not listening. I know, hard to believe but it is true.

It appears that I am listening, but I am distracted, I am thinking about something else, and then when I am called to respond to what she is saying, all I can say is, “***Sounds good!***” And I hope it is correct.

Make no mistake about it, my wife does not appreciate that kind of response, and she should not appreciate it because I am telling her that I am not interested in what she is saying.

Now let's apply that to our walk with the Lord. And I know, some people feel that God is not speaking to us today. My response is simply, God is speaking that is not the problem. The problem is that you are not listening.

You see, God is speaking to us through His Word and when we ignore it, when we do what we want, when we think we are right and He is wrong, then we truly are not listening to Him!

In Revelation 3:6 we are told by Jesus, **“He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.”**

We also see the phrase, **“He who has ears, let him hear”** spoken some six times in the Gospels.

The phrase, **“let him hear”** comes from the Greek word *AKOUO* and it is a verb used here to mean, ***“to hear”*** in various senses: one of those senses being hearing as an **act of being informed** and another being hearing as an **act of learning**.

In its primary sense, it means to hear as in to ***“perceive with the ears,”*** but other connotations include to listen, as in ***“to give ear to,”*** to pay attention to.

Even more, the word *AKOUO* also implicates ***“to give heed, to obey.”*** And we will deal more with that as we look at our second point this morning in regard to having – ***EARS TO HEAR!***

Turn to Mark 4:13-20 and listen to what we are told in this Parable of the Sower. We are told, **“And He said to them, ‘Do you not understand this parable? How then will you understand all the parables? The sower sows the word. And these are the ones by the wayside where the word is sown. When they hear, Satan comes immediately and takes away the word that was sown in their hearts. These likewise are the ones sown on stony ground who, when they hear the word, immediately receive it with gladness; and they have no root in themselves, and so endure only for a time. Afterward, when tribulation or persecution arises for the word’s sake, immediately they stumble. Now these are the ones sown among thorns; they are the ones who hear the word, and the cares of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and the desires for other things entering in choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful. But these are the ones sown on good ground, those who hear the word, accept it, and bear fruit: some thirtyfold, some sixty, and some a hundred.”**

What I want you to notice, as Jesus explains this parable to His men, is that all of them had ears to hear in this parable. They heard the Word of God, that is not the issue. The issue is how they responded to the Word of God that was spoken to them.

Those by the wayside heard the Word of God, but it never sank down into their hearts to become part of their lives. And because this seed of God’s Word was on the surface, Satan came and snatched it out of their lives before it could take root and grow. They are not saved. They heard, but it did not impact their life, it did nothing for them, and before long it was gone!

Then we see those who were like the stony ground, when the Word of God is given to them, it is superficial. And, because of that, even though they have some emotional response, when the heat is turned up, those seeds dry up and die. And they too are not believers.

Then we see those who have the Word of God sown among the thorns and thus, like weeds in a garden, they begin growing and they choke out the Word of God from their lives and those weeds are the cares of this world. The world's influence moves them away from God and again, they are not believers.

Now some feel that the second and third ones, some even the first one, were believers and their faith was young. I don't see that. And the reason I feel that way is because there was no fruit in their lives and if you are a Christian you will bear fruit in your life.

It is a natural product of being in Jesus just as an apple is the natural product that is produced from an apple tree!

And if you still doubt that, then look at what happens when the Word of God is sown among the good soil, whose heart is open to what God is saying. There is much fruit that is born in this person's life! In other words, this person heard the Word of God, applied the Word of God to their life, they were saved, and they naturally bore fruit in their lives!

Let me share with you the importance of listening. Back on May 25, 2001 Erik Weihenmayer reached the peak of Mt. Everest. At 29,035 feet, Everest's summit has approximately one-third the air pressure that exists at sea level, which significantly reduces a climber's ability to breathe in enough oxygen.

But that is not the only difficulty of climbing this mountain for Erik. You see, Erik also is ***BLIND!***

Suffering from a degenerative eye disease, he lost his sight when he was 13, but that didn't stop him.

On a mountain where 90 percent of climbers never make it to the top and over 300 have died trying since 1953, Erik succeeded, in large measure because he listened well.

The overall death rate is approximately 1.2 percent, meaning that if you try to climb Everest, you have about a one in a hundred chance of dying along the way.

One writer put it like this, ***“Statistically, Everest is becoming safer primarily due to better gear, weather forecasting, and more people climbing with commercial operations,”*** says Alan Arnette. ***“From 1923 to 1999: 170 people died on Everest with 1,169 summits or 14.5 percent. But the deaths drastically declined from 2000 to 2018 with 7,990 summits and 123 deaths, or 1.5 percent.”***

So how did he not only climb this mountain but how did he do it blind? Remember what I said. The way he accomplished this was that he listened.

What did he listen to?

He listened to the little bell tied to the back of the climber in front of him, so he would know what direction to go.

He listened to the voice of teammates who would shout back to him, ***“Death fall two feet to your right!”*** so he would know what direction not to go.

He listened to the sound of his pick jabbing the ice, so he would know whether the ice was safe to cross.

You see, he not only listened but he took that information and walked accordingly!

That is what we are to do as God is speaking to us. We need to listen to Him!

In Isaiah 55:1-3 we are told, **“Ho! Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters; And you who have no money, Come, buy and eat. Yes, come, buy wine and milk Without money and without price. Why do you spend money for what is not bread, And your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to Me, and eat what is good, And let your soul delight itself in abundance. Incline your ear, and come to Me. Hear, and your soul shall live; And I will make an everlasting covenant with you - The sure mercies of David.”**

The Lord is trying to get the attention of every person on this earth to listen to Him because He is inviting them to come and receive this invitation of eternal life. What must we do to obtain it?

You can't buy this, but you can receive it by faith.

Then why does it say, **“Come, buy and eat”**?

You need to read on because it also says, **“without money and without price.”**

How can that be?

Because the price has already been paid for by Jesus! It is as Jesus said in John 3:16-17, **“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved.”**

The price for our redemption has been paid in full, all we must do is receive that free gift by faith and that gift is wrapped in Jesus you might say!

Listen to how the last chapter of the last book of the Bible closes, with an invitation, and I have shared this with you already, but listen again.

In Revelation 22:17 we are told, **“And the Spirit and the bride say, ‘Come!’ And let him who hears say, ‘Come!’ And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.”** God keeps calling for us to come to Him, even at the very end!

Then, here in Isaiah 55:2 we see a rebuke for those that are buying things that can’t satisfy and isn’t this amazing. Look at what people try to fill their lives with today and in the end, they keep looking for bigger, faster, shiner, prettier, or whatever and they still are not satisfied. They fill their lives with all kinds of material things and our society is a vivid example of what covetousness is all about. Thus, they need to listen to God and follow Him!

What does God have for us? He tells us and the key here is that you need to be thirsty for God and if you are, He will satisfy that thirst in your life and you will want even more of Him in your life as you do.

The first thing the Lord talks about is ***WATER***. In John 7:37-39 we read, **“On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, ‘If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’ But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.”**

Jesus is speaking of the refreshing, life-changing waters of the Holy Spirit, and all you need to do is come to Him and receive it.

The next thing the Lord speaks of is ***WINE***.

What is that about?

Wine speaks of joy, a glad heart which God desires us to have. As one person said, ***“Joy is the flag that is flown in the heart when the King is in residence there!”***

And as Psalm 16:11 says, **“You will show me the path of life; in Your presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore.”**

And the third thing the Lord has for us is *MILK*.

I know, it may not sound great, but it is very important in our life. You see, when you think of milk you think of that which nourishes, and the thought that is being expressed here is the Word of God. The Word of God will keep you healthy and strong in your spiritual life.

As James 1:21-22 says, **“Therefore lay aside all filthiness and overflow of wickedness, and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls. But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.”**

And we know what Paul told Timothy in II Timothy 3:16-17, **“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.”**

The key, of course, is being hungry and thirsty for the things of God. God tells us these things are free, you don't have to spend money for them you must only receive them into your life. God has given to us all we need to grow in Him, but we must take them in. Salvation is a free gift for us, so, **“Everyone who thirsts, Come to the waters.”**

And then we see Isaiah tell us in Isaiah 55:3, to **“Incline your ear.”**

What does it mean to **“Incline your ear”**?

It means you need to listen. Yes, it is important that we read God's Word, but we must then listen to what God is saying to us through His Word and obey. It is not just about information, which is important, it is also about application! And again, we will look at that in a few minutes.



But today, many are refusing to listen to what God is saying and we even see this in the church as we saw what Ken Ham was saying about the apostasy that is related to Genesis and people calling themselves Christians denying the fact of original sin, creation and so on.

You see, Genesis is a foundational book and if you refuse to listen to what God is saying in Genesis, then what you believe is going to be off.

Can you be a Christian and deny the opening chapters of Genesis? I guess you can, but it is difficult.

The reason it is difficult is that you are not listening to what God has said about His creating the heaven and earth and it was all good.

He created man and gave man a free will. Everything was his in the Garden of Eden except the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

And Adam sinned, he disobeyed God and partook of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, sin entered the world, and as God said, death through sin.

Death spiritually speaking as sin separated man from God and God sacrificed an animal to cover the nakedness of Adam and Eve. The death of the innocent to cover the sins of the guilty!

Also, death physically as the death process began with the sin of Adam!

And death and sin spread from Adam and Eve throughout all of mankind, even the animals were affected by this.

But if you do away with this, then there is no original sin. If there is no original sin, then we don't need a Savior because there is no sin. And if we don't need a Savior then why did Jesus come in the first place?

Do you see how important this is? I hope so, we need to listen to what God is saying from Genesis through the book of Revelation, all 66 books of the Bible!

In Zechariah 7:11-12, as the Jews are back in the land after their captivity and they are being told to listen and follow the ways of God, this is their response, **“But they refused to heed, shrugged their shoulders, and stopped their ears so that they could not hear. Yes, they made their hearts like flint, refusing to hear the law and the words which the Lord of hosts had sent by His Spirit through the former prophets. Thus great wrath came from the Lord of hosts.”**

This is an interesting response by the Jewish people. And please understand that there was a progression to their rebellion against God.

First of all, they **“refused to heed”** or they did not want to hear God’s Word any longer, they were not going to follow what God had said!

Then we are told that they **“shrugged their shoulders”** and the idea here is ***“Big deal”*** or a kind of self-justifying shrugging of their shoulders. They heard what God said and it didn’t matter, they were going to do what they wanted.

From there we see that they **“stopped their ears”** or they didn’t want to hear what God was saying any longer.

And finally, notice what happened to their heart, **“they made their hearts like flint.”**

They had become insensitive to the things of God. When God spoke to them through the prophets or through His Word it bounced off their hard heart and it never penetrated.

This reminds me of when my children were young, and they would have temper tantrums. And they would put their hands on the ears so they could not hear me any longer because they didn't like what I said, and the children of Israel didn't like what God was saying to them and they closed their ears to Him!

The prophets of God spoke for God and the people refused to obey, and, like I said, they closed their ears and hardened their hearts. And maybe they thought that they won, but they didn't! And, God's wrath came upon them. You see, we don't let our children get away with disobedience and our heavenly Father does not let us, His children, get away with anything because He loves us! He wants us to hear and not only hear but obey!

And we are not different today. Listen to the warning that Paul gives to us in II Timothy 4:3-4, **“For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine, but according to their own desires, because they have itching ears, they will heap up for themselves teachers; and they will turn their ears away from the truth, and be turned aside to fables.”**

What are they refusing to hear?

They are refusing to hear “**sound doctrine**” or healthy doctrine. In other words, they did not want to take the good medicine that God had for them.

Then what did they do?

They went to find teachers who would tell them what they wanted to hear, the medicine that they wanted to take. It was not what God had for them, but it is what they desired and, in the end, instead of receiving from God who loves them, they found these false teachers who were giving them doctrines of demons and instead of believing in the truth, being guided by the truth, they were living in a fantasy world!

I don't know if you heard this story before, but it does fit in with what we do when we hear God's Word many times.

It is the story of Franklin Roosevelt and some of the frustration that he had.

Franklin Roosevelt often endured long receiving lines at the White House. He complained that no one really paid any attention to what was said.

One day, during a reception, he decided to try an experiment. To each person who passed down the line and shook his hand, he murmured, "***I murdered my grandmother this morning.***"

So as the people passed through the line, Franklin Roosevelt said to them so that they could hear, "***I murdered my grandmother this morning***" and the response of the guests is funny if it wasn't so sad.

The guests responded with phrases like, "***Marvelous! Keep up the good work. We are proud of you. God bless you, sir.***"

I guess they were not really listening to what the President was saying.

But then, at the end of the line, while greeting the ambassador from Bolivia, something happened. As he spoke those words, his words were actually heard.

Can you imagine hearing that, how would you respond?

We don't have to guess what this ambassador said. Perplexed by what he heard, the ambassador leaned over and whispered, "***I'm sure she had it coming.***"

I told you, funny, but also kind of sad because as God speaks to us, we say, "***Yes, Lord***" and then do what we want, we don't really even hear what He was saying to us.

As Jesus said in Revelation 3:22, may we do, "**He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.**"

Ruth listened to what Boaz was saying to her and we know that she not only listened, but we will also see, as we read on, that she will – ***OBEY!***

#### VERSE 14

Now if nothing went on between Boaz and Ruth, why does he tell her to leave before the sun comes up and people can recognize her?

It is simple: ***GOSSIP!***

You see, if people saw Ruth leave the place where Boaz was sleeping, the stories would start to spread, and even though nothing happened, that doesn't matter.

What I want to focus on here is this, **“So she lay at his feet until morning, and she arose before one could recognize another.”**

In other words, Ruth did not just listen to what Boaz said and then did what she wanted anyway.

No, Ruth listened to Boaz and obeyed what Boaz had told her.

And remember what we talked about regarding the phrase, **“let him hear.”** We said that it comes from the Greek word ***AKOUO*** and it means, ***“to give heed, to obey.”***

Make no mistake about it, you can read from Genesis to Revelation and you will find that the Bible has a lot to say about obedience.

For instance. In the story of the Ten Commandments, we see just how important the concept of obedience is to God.

Deuteronomy 11:26-28 can be summed up like this ***“Obey and you will be blessed. Disobey and you will be cursed.”*** Pretty straight forward.

And even as we go into the New Testament, we learn through the example of Jesus Christ that believers are called to a life of obedience.

And the general idea in both the New Testament and the Old Testament is that of hearing or hearkening to a higher authority, God and His Word!

In the New Testament, one of the Greek terms for obedience in the Bible conveys the idea of positioning oneself under someone by submitting to their authority and command, like I have said.

There is another Greek word for obey in the New Testament and it means ***“to trust.”***

And this is what we have been talking about this morning. In Holman’s Illustrated Bible Dictionary, they tell us that the definition of biblical obedience is ***“to hear God’s Word and act accordingly.”***

Exactly!

Eerdmans’s Bible Dictionary states, ***“True ‘hearing,’ or obedience, involves the physical hearing that inspires the hearer, and a belief or trust that in turn motivates the hearer to act in accordance with the speaker’s desires.”***

And that is again what we have been talking about this morning, hearing and acting upon what God has told us. Otherwise, what we are hearing is falling upon deaf ears if we don’t obey.

And so, biblical obedience to God means to hear, trust, submit and surrender to God and his Word.

And let me give you a few reasons why we are to obey God. And the first one is obvious, but I think we need to hear it and apply it to our lives.

***JESUS CALLS US TO OBEY!***

As we look at the life of Jesus, we see a life of obedience. He was obedient to the Father's will. And thus, He is our example to follow in regard to obedience, in fact, for everything!

Remember what Jesus said in John 14:15, "**If you love Me, keep My commandments.**" And so, our love for the Lord is seen in our obedience to Him! That should just make sense.

***WORSHIP IS AN ACT OF OBEDIENCE!***

Now please understand we are not saved or justified by our actions. We can not do anything to earn or merit our salvation. It is a free gift of God! And thus, we worship the Lord for not only who He is, Almighty God, but because of what He has done for us, all that He has done for us. He has given to us eternal life with Him and we in no way deserve it.

Remember what Paul said in Romans 12:1, "**I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service [or spiritual worship].**"

The Amplified Bible puts this verse like this, "**I APPEAL to you therefore, brethren, and beg of you in view of [all] the mercies of God, to make a decisive dedication of your bodies [presenting all your members and faculties] as a living sacrifice, holy (devoted, consecrated) and well pleasing to God, which is your reasonable (rational, intelligent) service and spiritual worship.**"

Paul is saying, in light of all that God has given to you, give your life over to God as a sacrifice to Him, allow Him to use your life fully each and every day. And, as you do, it is a form of worship unto God!

***OBEDIENCE TO GOD IS REWARDED!***

Why are we rewarded for obeying the Lord?

Because God knows what is best for our lives and as we obey Him there is that automatic blessing we receive. I am not saying that it is easy, or everything works out as we plan, but there is a reward in obeying the Lord.

And if we disobey the Lord we miss out on that blessing. It truly is as simple as that. We don't need to make it complicated.

Remember what James 1:22-25 tells us, **“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 observing his natural face in a mirror; for he observes himself, goes away, and immediately forgets what kind of man he was. But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does.”**

Keep in mind that in the ancient world many loved to hear what a teacher had to say, they loved information.

But that is all meaningless if you don't apply to your life what you hear.

You see, if you heard a teacher and followed his ways you would be called a disciple.

That is what God wants us to be, disciples, not just hearers of His Word but doers! And as we do, we are blessed.

Remember what Jesus said in Luke 11:28, **“But He said, ‘More than that, blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it!’”**

And again, remember what James said, **“But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.”** James 1:22.



You see, it doesn't matter how much of the Word of God you hear, you must also apply it to your life, you must live what you say you believe. For the Jewish religious leaders, they knew the Word of God, they knew what was said, but they didn't apply it to their lives or if they did, they applied it in the wrong way.

God's Word is not open for our own private interpretation. God means what He says and says what He means whether we agree with it or not. Thus, we must hear and correctly apply God's Word to our lives, and in that there is the blessing!

***OUR LOVE FOR GOD IS SEEN IN OUR OBEDIENCE TO HIM!***

If you truly love someone you will not only listen to them, but you will be obedient to them. If you say you love someone and you are not listening to them and you are doing whatever you want, that is not love, that is being selfish and unconcerned for others.

In I John 5:2-3 John tells us, **“By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome.”**

And John tells us that if we really love God then our obedience to Him is not going to be a burden because we are doing it out of love!

And here's the thing. You will not be able to love the brethren as God has called you to do unless you first love God and keep His commandments.

Now for some people, the burden that some religions and I should say most religions put upon people is too much. It is a heavy burden for them to do these things.

Look at the rules and the regulations that some religions make you do – even having to wear holy underwear!

Jesus said of the religious leaders of His day, **“For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men’s shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers.”** Matthew 23:4.

But for those who would come to Him, Jesus said in Matthew 11:28-30, **“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”**

Why are the commands of God not burdensome? Because God’s commands to us are simply, *love God and love the brethren* and if we do that we will walk in obedience!

It is a labor of love you might say and not a burden! You see, we are a new creation in Christ and thus we need to walk accordingly!

And there are more, but you get the idea, we need to not only listen to what the Lord is telling us but then we must also live accordingly, we must obey the Lord!

Let me share this with you and you will see that we listen and obey not out of legalism or the Law, but out of love. We are told,

“Fasten your seat belt,” I said to my wife, Elaine, the other day. “It is the law, you know.” As she fastened her seat belt, I thought, ‘Dummy, that is not the reason you want her buckled up. You want her protected from the harm of any accident you might drive her into.’ How shallow would be my concern if I was more in fear of paying a fine than in her being seriously hurt!

How much this can describe our approach to our obedience to God! Almost all we do is from mixed motives. Yet which motive is overriding?

Do we obey because we fear God’s wrath and judgment?

Do we feel He will break our leg or burn down our house if we disobey?

Do we feel that Christianity is just a set of rules to be obeyed and our satisfaction comes from doing a good job of keeping rules?

The result of such an attitude will only breed fear and guilt. Fear comes from any failure to obey, and there will be such failure.

Guilt comes from many sources, such as finding there was a law you had been failing to obey.

Any failure at perfect obedience can lead to regarding some laws as more important than others. All this can lead to a disregard of others who do not keep laws as well as we do (Luke 18:1). It can lead us to giving more attention to the minute details and neglecting the major virtues God desires us to have (Matt 23:23). We become ridiculous gnat strainers and camel swallows (Matt 23:24).

We should obey God because we love Him.

We obey because He has done so much for us and we have done so little for Him.

We obey because love is never content to accept but must always give.

Jesus said, "If you love Me, you will do what I command" (John 14:15). We then come to realize that our disobedience not only breaks the laws of God, it also breaks the heart of God.

How often they rebelled against Him in the wilderness and grieved Him in the desert! (Ps 78:40).

Such obedience is far fuller, richer, and freer than can ever come from a legal motivation.

Imagine a woman who is a nurse and a mother. She may work at a hospital all day caring for the sick. When she has worked eight hours, she goes home. Upon arriving home, she finds her child is seriously ill. She will then give her child the same care she gives the hospital patients. However, when she has cared for her child for eight hours, she will not quit. She gives care no one can buy. The difference is the motivation.

What is your major motivation? Seek to know God better, and you will find yourself obeying out of love. It will become “richer, fuller, deeper” and will become “sweeter as the years go by.”

- A Treasury of Bible Illustrations

Yes, we need to have ears to hear from God as we read His Word and we are open to His Spirit’s leading – ***WE NEED TO LISTEN!***

But if that is all we do is listen, if it does not affect our lives, the things we do and the things we say, then it is meaningless – ***WE NEED TO OBEY!***

Let me close with these words in Exodus 23:22, where we are told, “**But if you indeed obey His voice and do all that I speak, then I will be an enemy to your enemies and an adversary to your adversaries.**”

May we listen and obey the Lord!