

Don't Hide the Truth

Jack Hughes

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Well, if you have your Bibles, you can turn to Luke 8, where we are continuing on in the section right after the parable of the soils. There are a whole bunch of little things that are kind of interrelated, and we'll see how that is this morning.

When I was going to college at Boise State University, I also worked at a local hospital, in the graveyard shift. I worked from 11 p.m. to 7:30 a.m., and then went to class from 8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. every day. I didn't sleep much, but the job was kind of a good job because I got to travel around the hospital. I worked in the instrument room, putting surgery packs together, and also central service, the linen room, and the decontamination room—I was kind of all over. I was the only guy working in those four departments at night. And one day, when I was walking down the hall (I was pushing a cart over to surgery), there was this “pop” and everything went completely dark. The power just went out. And I had been studying the Rapture the day before. My first thought was, “Whoa, He's coming back!” But that's not what happened. I just stood there in the dark. I couldn't see—there were no windows, there were no emergency lights. It was just dark, *dark*. So, finally there were noises and the power came on as the emergency generators kicked in to take over for the power outage. But I started to think about that. What if somebody was in surgery? What if you were lying on the table and that doctor was doing that lobotomy on you or had your heart

in his hand and was making that critical suture and all of a sudden, “Light’s out!”? Fifteen to twenty seconds would seem like a *very* long time.

You know what? We need light. We need light to see and read and do things. Light is so important. But what is more important than the light we receive from candles and light bulbs and things like that—and even the sun—is the light of God’s truth. You cannot go to heaven without the light of God’s truth. If you die in darkness, you die and go to hell. As we look at Luke’s Gospel this morning, and we follow up on the parable of the soils, we come to another parable: a very short one, a very simple one. It’s the parable of the lamp and several other sayings that Jesus says following it that are all related.

As we have been working through this section, we’ve talked about *why* Jesus is teaching and *what* He’s teaching. Jesus’ disciples have been following Him around the country. Jesus is preaching, He’s doing miracles, He’s healing the sick, and He’s raising the dead. He’s doing all kinds of things and teaching them [the people] things like they have never seen before. The people are just amazed. Huge crowds are following Him around the country. But in Luke 9, Jesus is going to start sending the disciples out on trial runs to get them used to preaching the gospel. They’ve been receiving the light of God’s truth for a long time, but now it’s going to be time for them to go out and to begin to do something with what they have been entrusted with. So He’s trying to prepare them for what they’re going to encounter. The whole parable of the soils was designed to say, “Listen, you’re going to go out there, you’re going to preach the gospel and some are going to be hardhearted. Some are going to have what appear to be salvation responses to the preaching of the gospel and then are going to fall away. But then, finally, there are going to be some who are going to receive the Word implanted—they’re going to have their souls saved, and they’re going to bear fruit with perseverance.

He has just said that, and now, in the middle of giving the parable and the explanation of the parable, the disciples come up to Him in verse 9 and say, “So, what does this parable of the soils mean?” Implied in their

statement is, “So, why do you teach in parables, anyway?” Think about it. Parables are very cryptic. They are hard to understand. So why would you speak to somebody in a parable when you could just tell them straight out? Jesus gives a very interesting answer. He says, “To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest it is in parables, so that *seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.*” And then He quotes a text from Isaiah [6:9–10], where God, in judgment, says, “These certain people I will purposely keep from understanding my truths so they will not be saved, will not be forgiven, and I’m going to do it as a form of judgment.” Now that is amazing. Why would Jesus tell them that? Because they need to know.

When you go out and you share the gospel, it’s not your job to save people. It’s not your job to grant them illumination. Only the Holy Spirit can open their hearts so that they know, understand, and experience the life-transforming truths of God’s Word. If they don’t understand at that time, they may come to understand later. Or it may be a judgment from God. But that’s not our job. Our job is to sow the seed. It’s God’s job to use it unto the salvation of souls.

So, having said that, Jesus now is going to switch from emphasizing what happens when people hear the gospel to our responsibility. He has talked about the different responses and *God’s* responsibility, now He’s going to talk about *our* responsibility as children of Light—those who know the truth—and what we are to do with the truth that we have. So, if you have your Bible, look at Luke 8, and follow along as I read verses 16 through 21. Jesus says,

Now no one after lighting a lamp covers it over with a container, or puts it under a bed; but he puts it on a lampstand, so that those who come in may see the light. For nothing is hidden that will not become evident, nor anything secret that will not be known and come to light. So take care how you listen; for whoever has, to him more shall be given; and whoever does

not have, even what he thinks he has shall be taken away from him. And His mother and brothers came to Him, and they were unable to get to Him because of the crowd. And it was reported to Him, “Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, wishing to see You.” But He answered and said to them, “My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it.”

Now, what you're going to learn from these verses is four truths you need to obey and submit to if you're going to give glory to God and if you want to avoid ending up in hell. The first is this: Be shining the light. Look at verse 16: “Now no one after lighting a lamp covers it over with a container, or puts it under a bed.” That's not a very profound statement, is it? That's kind of like a “no duh.” In New Testament times, lamps were kind of like squatty little teapots. They were these short little things with lids that had little breather holes. You poured oil in them, you put the wick in the oil, then you would light the wick. Sometimes the lamps would be more open, and you just laid the wick in there, or sometimes they'd have multiple wicks. Whatever the construction, there'd be olive oil and a little wick that you lit. Pretty simple. And people would have them and carry them around. They've found that a lot of them had little handles on them, so you could carry them around, kind of like a coffee cup.

Jesus does not really care about how lamps are constructed—He could have used a flashlight or a table lamp like we have today as his example. But look at the middle of verse 16, “But he puts it on a lampstand, so that those who come in may see the light.” When you have a lamp, you don't stick it under a pot, or container, or under your bed. That would be counterproductive. You would put it someplace high. They have found little shelves that [people in biblical times] would carve into their walls or they would have a lampstand and put the lamp up there so that it would spread as much light as possible. That's just so easy. It would be foolish not to do that.

Well, Jesus is not teaching us about the *location* of lamps, either. I was in the library the other day and there were some books about feng shui—furniture placement. You know what I'm talking about, where you get your furniture and arrange it in just the right way, so it kind of makes you feel good or something. Well, Jesus is not giving a lesson on that. What He's doing is continuing on after having addressed different responses to the gospel, and God's responsibility in the proclaiming of the gospel. Now He's talking about *our* responsibility in the gospel. The light that Jesus refers to here, like the seed, represents the Word of God. Jesus is saying, "Listen, you who have the truth, you who know what is right, you who have the Holy Spirit in you, you who have been saved: Let your light out. Don't go putting it under a container." Proverbs 6:23 says, "For the commandment is a lamp and the teaching is a light." All the way through Scripture, you see the word "light" used to describe the Word of God, as a simile or a metaphor. Psalm 119:105, a commonly known verse, says, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." Later on, in verse 130 of Psalm 119, the psalmist goes on to say, "The unfolding of Your words gives light; It gives understanding to the simple." Paul, in Philippians 2:14–15 says, "Do all things without grumbling or disputing; so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world." How do you appear? By not grumbling. You want to appear as a light? Don't complain. Do you want to appear as a light? Abstain from wickedness. That's why he [Paul] goes on to say [in Philippians 2:16], "Holding fast the word of life, so that in the day of Christ I will have reason to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain." You hold fast the Word of God, which means you obey the Word of God and that makes you a light.

Peter, in II Peter 1:19–21 has a sustained section on the Word of God and why it's important. But in these last three verses he's summarizing, and he says,

So we have the prophetic word made more sure, to which you do well to pay attention as to a lamp shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star arises in your hearts. But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

So he's saying this, "You, believers, are to be lights in a dark place." The world is a dark place. You, who know the truth, who have the light in you, you're children of Light. You have Christ, who is the God of Light, dwelling in you, and you are to let your light shine. Be a light in the dark place. Of course, you do that by obeying God and speaking the gospel. When you do a study of light, it almost always refers to God, God's Word, or Christ. Christ, of course, is the Word of God incarnate, and so, He is the Light that comes into the world and lightens every man.

There's an important lesson here: Truth is not for hoarding. Truth is not for personal boasting, for selfish pleasure, for accumulating great amounts of biblical knowledge so that you can just keep it and to use it to make other people think that you know a lot about the Bible. God's truth is like light, and that light needs to be spread around. And guess what? It's your responsibility. The question is: Are you doing this? Are *you* doing this? You may be thinking to yourself, "Well, Jack, I want to get up on the lampstand. I want to be up there. I want to let my light shine, but I'm not quite sure how to do that."

Well, you have come to the right place. There are two ways you can let your light shine: with words and with deeds. That's it. Those are the two general categories. You know, there are many ways of getting the gospel out. You can have tent meetings. You can have evangelistic crusades. You can write books. You can distribute tracts. You can invite people to church. You can do one-on-one evangelism, group evangelism, whatever. There's street preaching. There are tons of ways to let your light shine by your

words. But do you know how most people come to know the Lord? Do you know the most common way in which people come to the Lord?

We'll just do a little experiment right now. If you came to the Lord through an evangelistic crusade, and then started following the Lord from that point on, raise your hand. There are a couple of you—just a couple. Now, let's try this one: If you came to the Lord through a street preacher or a street evangelist, raise your hand. There are a few more. Now, if you came to the Lord through a friend, coworker, or family member, who shared the gospel with you, raise your hand. Bingo! Does that tell you anything? It should teach you that the most common way that people come to know the Lord is when people share the gospel with those they already have an established relationship with: a coworker, a friend, a neighbor—somebody like that. They bring them to church, they share the gospel with them or they give them something to read. That's how the bulk of people come to know the Lord. Now, God uses a lot of amazing ways [to bring people to Him], but the point is this: you are to shine your light with what you say.

Secondly, you are to shine your light in another way: by your deeds. You remember what Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5:16. Jesus said this, "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may" hear what you say? No. "That they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven." In other words, live out the truth that you study and hear from the Word of God, and that will make you shine.

Some people are confused, though, because right after that, He condemns those who do good works in order to be seen by men. Have you ever come across that? That's kind of weird, isn't it? It's like, "Well, are we supposed to be shining or not?" Light on or light off? Which is it? I mean, He says, "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works," then right after that, "Don't do good works to be seen by men" [see Matthew 6:1]. That could make you schizophrenic. So the question is: What is Jesus talking about? Why does He say "don't" and "do"? Well, in the first instance [Matthew 5:16] all He's saying is, "Live a holy,

godly, obedient life.” And do it in front of other people so that they can see how God has changed your life. In the other instance [Matthew 6:1], He is condemning those who do good works in order to feed their ego—in order to be seen by men and get glory for themselves. That is the kind of good works you are *not* to do. Everything is to be done for the glory of God.

For instance, in Ephesians 2:10, right after it talks about being saved by grace, it says, “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.” When you were saved—saved by grace—you were saved as God’s workmanship to do good works for God. In I Timothy 2:10, Paul encourages women to engage in good works. In I Timothy 5:10, widows are to have a reputation for doing good works. In I Timothy 6:18, Paul tells those who are rich financially in this world “to be rich in good works.” In Titus 2:7 and 14 and 3:1, 8 and 14, Paul tells us that the reason God saves people is to create for Himself a people zealous for good works. That’s why you were saved. You must do good works, because salvation and the grace of God change you. Your life, as someone said, speaks louder than your words. The way you live, what you say, what you do, tells other people who you really are. Who you *really* are. If you don’t pray, and don’t really care to pray; if you don’t read your Bible, or care to read your Bible; you don’t give, or really care to give, now you know why: You don’t love God. That’s why. Jesus said, “If you love Me, you will keep My commandments” [John 15:10]. There is only one way to love God, right? There is only one way: Keep His commandments. You can’t love God by rebelling against Him. There’s only one way: You love God with your heart, your soul, your mind, and with your deeds.

But you have to align yourself with the truth and submit yourself to the truth. And if you’re unwilling to do that, you’re just telling God, “I don’t love You.” There is only one way, and that is: you must speak the truth and you must live the truth. And that, and that alone, is how you love God. If your life is a life that doesn’t love God, then you need to be saved. You need Jesus. Quit lying to yourself—that you’re a Christian—because you come

into a building where the Church meets. Believers are to work at letting their light out, to shine before men. They are to live and speak the truth, so that the dark world sees it. But you know what? When you do that, there's something that happens: People reject it; people make fun of you; people persecute you. So, then, what do you do?

This brings us to our second point in Luke 8:17: Be afraid of the Judge. Jesus goes on to say, "For nothing is hidden that will not become evident, nor anything secret that will not be known and come to light." Does God know everything? Absolutely. Though men may keep secrets from each other, they never keep secrets from God. Ever. God knows your thoughts. Your mind is an open book to Him. He sees you at home, He sees you at work, and He sees you at church. He sees you everywhere in between: all the time. Whether it's dark or light, He sees you.

Do you know what the last verse of the book of Ecclesiastes says? Let me just remind you: "For God will bring every act to judgment, everything which is hidden, whether it is good or evil." Every single one. Is that a scary thought? It should be. In Matthew 12:36, Jesus says, "But I tell you that every careless word that people speak, they shall give an accounting for it in the day of judgment." All your words, every careless one, will be judged.

In Matthew 16:27 "For the Son of Man is going to come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and *will then repay every man according to his deeds.*" Every one of your deeds is going to be evaluated. Every careless deed, Jesus knows about and will judge. Jesus warned His disciples of the hypocrisy of the Pharisees and then said this in Luke 12:2-5 "But there is nothing covered up that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known. Accordingly, whatever you have said in the dark will be heard in the light, and whatever you have whispered in the inner rooms will be proclaimed upon the housetops. I say to you, My friends, do not be afraid of those who kill the body and after that have no more that they can do. But I will warn you whom to fear: fear the One who, after He has killed, has authority to cast into hell." He says, "Yes, I tell you, fear Him!" Jesus says

that every secret conversation will be “proclaimed upon the housetops.” It’s going to be brought out in the open. Is that a scary thought? It should be.

Paul, in Romans 2:16, says, “On the day when, according to my gospel, God will judge the secrets of men through Christ Jesus.” Any secret of any form that you think you have is going to be exposed. Is that scary? It should be. In I Corinthians 4:5, Paul says, “Therefore, do not go on passing judgment before the time, but wait until the Lord comes who will both bring to light the things hidden in the darkness,” (and this is a really scary one), “and disclose the motives of men’s hearts; and then each man’s praise will come to him from God.” Every motive of your heart will be judged. You think, “Well, Jack, what is there that God doesn’t see? Is there anything?” Listen to Hebrews 4:13: “And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him with whom we have to do.”

That, people, is an elk-hunting verse. You may think, “Well, how is that?” In the Greek, the words “laid bare,” talk about gutting an animal and filleting it open. That’s what it’s talking about. All things are filleted open before God: everything, *everything*. So why do you need to remember this? I mean, is this for terrorism? No. It should motivate you to have a holy reverence for God. He’s no one to be trifled with. He’s no one you can just sin against and assume He doesn’t know about it. It should motivate you to strive for holiness.

Most kings would not tolerate even one instance of rebellion or treason against them. Think of how many times we sin against God, how we rebel against Him. We’re basically looking in God’s face when we sin and just going, “Pbbsstt! I’m going to do my own thing.” That’s what we’re doing. Remember that when you sin, you always sin in the face of God.

Parents are grieved when their children disobey. When the children are first learning how to talk and you’ve got that cute little thing, and you say, “Come to Mommy and Daddy.”

“No!”

Does that grieve you? It's like, "I didn't teach him that. Where did that come from?" They [children] are sinners. They're like you. They came from you. That's where they came from. But how much worse it must be before God—an infinite, holy God—when His children rebel against Him, especially when He *saves* them. He *frees* them from sin. He always provides a way of escape. He gives them every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ. He gives them His all-sufficient Word, and all-sufficient grace, so that they can always, in every good deed, obey Him. And yet, we still take all of those resources and say, "No! I refuse to use Your grace. I'm going to rebel against You and I'm going to do it in Your face."

How gracious is God that when we are faithless, He remains faithful, for He cannot deny Himself? Let the thought of God's perfect knowledge and ever-present being stop you from engaging in sin. May it ever be a holy terror to you to remember that any sin you commit, you commit in plain view of God. If we would just stop before sinning and just remember, "God is watching this, and when I do this He's just going to be watching the whole thing." It would significantly hamper our pleasure and take away the temptation.

But there is a second application of this truth. And I think this is the one that Jesus is driving at for His disciples. And that is: When you share the gospel, people reject it, don't they? It's like, "Religion's not for me. I'm glad it's good for you in your life, but it's not for me."

Or, "You know, there are so many translations and transliterations, how do you know the Bible's true?"

"There are so many religions in the world, how do you know Christianity is the only one?"

"What about the natives in Africa?"

"I don't believe there's a God."

"Jesus didn't exist."

"You know, there are contradictions in the Bible."

"I know Christians who are hypocrites."

You know the excuses—they're legion. Sometimes when you begin to try to witness to these people, some of them know the Bible more than you do. They ask questions you can't answer. They scoff at you. They ridicule you. They look down on you, and pretty soon you can be tempted to think, "You know, people, maybe they're right. Maybe the Bible isn't true. Maybe *I'm* the deluded one. Maybe they're wise and I'm foolish. Maybe I'm in the dark and they're in the light. Maybe life is just about believing that we crawled out of some primordial slime and lost our fins and tails, and we're all homo-sapiens by chance. Maybe that's true. There is no right and there is no wrong. I can do anything I want and indulge in any pleasure I want because, after all, there's no Judge and when I die I'm just going to disappear."

Well, snap out of it! What Jesus is telling you in this text is that every scoffer, every atheist, every agnostic, every slick-speaking philosopher, every cult, and occult, and member of every false religion, and everyone who ever persecutes any Christian and refuses to repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ alone for salvation—they will be exposed for the imposters and the liars and the deceivers that they really are. Every one.

Picture yourself dressed in white clothing. You've got a glorified body. All your sins are forgiven—washed whiter than snow. All those bad deeds that mounted up against you have all been washed clean by the blood of Christ. And there's Christ, sitting on the throne. His hair is white like wool, His feet like burnished bronze, His eyes like a flame of fire. Around His throne are myriads and myriads and 10,000 times 10,000s of angels attending to Him and all the saints of all the ages are on His right hand. And there are all the rest—all those people you shared the gospel with—bosses, neighbors, family members, friends. The people you tried to love. The people you shared the truth with but who would not have it, who said you were a joke. It's judgment day, and you're on Christ's side and they're not. You are Christ's brother, His sister. You are a high priest, you are a king. And there they are: all those people who you tried to help, but who would not

have it. The gospel you spoke to them out of love, they rejected and scoffed at and made fun of: “People can’t rise from the dead.”

“The Bible isn’t true.”

“Jesus didn’t do miracles.”

“No one’s ever been born of a virgin.”

“God doesn’t even exist.”

All of those excuses they used will become plain to all that they *were* excuses. There they will be before the Lord of Glory Himself and there you will be next to Him. And words that were rejected will now come to their perfect, resurrected minds. And you will know, and they will know, and Christ will know that they are the liars. They are deceivers. They are deluded. They were in the darkness. And you, by the grace of God, were in the light. The words of Jesus that we are studying this very moment will be fulfilled: “For nothing is hidden that will not become evident, nor anything secret that will not be known and come to light” [Luke 8:17]. That will happen on that day. And you can count on it. Only those who have repented of their sins and placed their faith in Christ alone to save them will be vindicated on that day. The rest will tremble with holy fear, and will be judged. And I’m telling you there will be no plea-bargaining—no lawyers, no evidence brought forth, because God knows all things. He doesn’t need any expert testimony. Most judges don’t know anything. So the evidence is brought before them and they have to make a ruling. In this case, the judge knows everything already. So it’s already decided before the people show up.

The lesson to learn here is: Be afraid of the Judge. Let it scare you from sin. And if you don’t know Christ, may it drive you to repentance. As David said in Psalm 2:11–12, “Worship the LORD with reverence and rejoice with trembling. Do homage to the Son, that He not become angry, and you perish in the way, For His wrath may soon be kindled. How blessed are all who take refuge in Him!”

This brings us to the third point: Be listening to the messenger. Look at Luke 8:18. Jesus, speaking to the crowds and his disciples, says, “So

take care how you listen.” He’s just warned that the judge is coming. He says, “Take care how you listen.” In this text, Jesus is the messenger. He is proclaiming the truth, He is sowing the seed, He is shining the light, and He is commanding you to “take care how you listen.” The Greek word that is translated “take care” means “to see so as to understand with the mind.” Now, what’s interesting is when you say, “Well, if that’s what it means, if it means to understand or perceive or to discern the truth, then why does Jesus tell us that that’s only something God can do?” Well, I explained earlier, in verse 10, Jesus is explaining what *His* responsibility is. And here, we’re learning what the *listener’s* responsibility is. The word “listen” is a present active verb that means that you should always be listening so that you’re always understanding and perceiving. When Jesus is speaking about God either revealing or hiding truth from people, He’s speaking about what God’s responsibility is. But here, He’s telling you *your* responsibility is to listen to the Word of God and do what it says—to seek to understand it.

You know, we don’t know who the elect are. We don’t know which people are going to come to salvation. We don’t know when they’re going to come to salvation. It’s God’s job to make the Word of God living and active and to use it to open people’s hearts and transform them. It’s our job to proclaim it. And, if we’re hearing the message, to listen carefully, seek to understand, and seek to obey.

Remember what Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount when He gave the parable of the two houses: One was built on the rock, and the other was built on the sand. He said that the house that was built on the rock is, “Everyone who hears these words of Mine and acts on them” [Matthew 7:24]. The house on the sand is, “Everyone who hears these words of Mine and does not act” [7:26]. Just hearing the Word of God doesn’t get you into heaven. Many people hear, but there must be hearing *and obeying*. Again, it’s not that doing good works saves you. Works do not save you. But you are saved to do good works. You are saved to do good works. We just read it. You’re His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus, for good works. It’s

pretty clear. And so the life of a true believer will produce works because the grace of God is working in them.

You need to ask yourself how you are listening to God's Word. When you read your Bible, when you read a book that's about the Bible, when you hear a sermon, when you go to a Bible study, when you're in a discipleship group, when you are exposed to the Word of God, how do you listen? Do you listen to understand, so that you can obey, or not? When you look around the church you'll find different groups. There are those who just don't want to listen. They're like the Pharisees, and they will not listen. There are those who hardly listen at all. Maybe they come to church and they sit down, but as soon as they sit down their minds start wandering. They start doodling; they start thinking about their car, a TV show, or what's for lunch. The Word of God's not that big a deal to them. There are those who only listen to find fault. Maybe not with the Word of God, but they just come and the whole time they're just scanning. And they're critical. They're thinking, "Oh, he got that gerund wrong."

"He stuttered."

"His tie is crooked."

"How come they can't turn up the heat?"

"How come they can't turn down the heat?"

"The services are so long."

"When's he going to stop?"

"When's he going to finish?"

"When's he going to start?"

There are those who listen to obtain wisdom, though, so that they can put it to use. And this is what Jesus wants all of us to do. He wants us to be good listeners. J.C. Ryle says there are three things that are necessary to being a good listener. One, you must believe God's Word is true. Two, you must have a holy fear and reverence of God. And three, you must pray—pray for understanding, pray for wisdom, pray for discernment. Why do we need to take care how we listen to the Word of God? Look at the middle of Luke 8:18: "For whoever has, to him more shall be given; and whoever

does not have, even what he thinks he has shall be taken away from him.” Those who are blessed by God’s grace, who understand the Word of God and the truth of the gospel will have more truth and more grace continually given to them. They will constantly be growing in wisdom, and knowledge, and grace.

That kind of reminds me of the parable of the talent. The men are all given different talents to invest. And what happens to the guy who didn’t do anything with his? Who just buried it and said, “Hey, I knew you were a hard man. I was scared to lose it, and so I didn’t even try using it. Here’s your money back.” Remember what happens to that guy? His little one talent is taken away from him and given to the man who produced ten. That is the same truth that Jesus is teaching here [in Luke 8]. There are many people on earth who think they are saved, who think they are wise, who think they are intelligent, who maybe even know the truth and know some of the Bible and they think they’re going to heaven. But they’re not. They will arrive in heaven looking for their reward, trusting in their works to save them. They lean on their church attendance, on their heritage, on their parents, on their profession of faith in a creed. And Jesus will say to them, “I never knew you; Depart from me, you who practice lawlessness” [Matthew 7:23]. Though we are called to do good works as believers, we are not called to trust in good works to save us. “I need no other argument, I need no other plea. It is enough that Jesus died, And He died for me” [“My Faith Has Found a Resting Place” by Lidie H. Edmunds]. That is all that you can ever trust in: Jesus, and “that He died for me.”

The fourth point is: Be a member of Jesus’ family. Look at Luke 8:19: “And His mother and brothers came to Him, and they were unable to get to Him because of the crowd.” Picture this in your mind: Jesus is standing there and there’s a huge mob of people crunched around Him. They all want to get healed, they all want to see the miracles, and they all want to be able to hear the teaching. It seems like the mass was so thick that people were literally touching, and the family couldn’t even get through. The people in the crowd were so interested in being close to Jesus, they didn’t want to

give up their spot. They're thinking, "Let somebody else give up their spot. Go around." So the family is wandering around. They can't even find access to Jesus and they say, "Hey, Mom, I'll take care of it." One of Jesus' half-brothers says, "I'll take care of it, Mom. I'll talk to somebody and they'll pass a message forward." So he says, "Hey, hey, hey. You know, I'm Jesus' brother. Could you tell Him His mother and His brothers are here to see Him?" And the message trickles forward. Mary's thinking, "He *is* my son." And the brothers are thinking, "He *is* my brother. You know, we should have some family privileges here." But notice how Jesus replies in verse 21: "But He answered and said to them, 'My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it.' " Jesus was not being mean here, but He *was* letting people know that those who are the true children of God are not those who are hearers only, but those who hear the Word of God and *do it*.

There is a widespread lie among people in churches today that says you can be a Christian, but sporadically go to church. You can be a Christian and rarely, if ever, read the Bible. You can be a Christian and infrequently pray. You can be a Christian and intermittently serve. You can be a Christian and give sometimes—just a little. You can be a Christian and live like an unbeliever the rest of the week, but pretend to be a believer on Sunday. That is a lie from the pit of hell. That is Satan speaking to you, and not God. If you want to know what God says, then look at the end of Luke 8:21. If you want to know if you're a Child of God, look at the text: "These who hear the word of God and do it."

If you're one of those people who think that just by hanging around Christians in a building called the church that you're a Christian, you better think again. You better fear the Judge. You are not part of the family of God unless you hear the Word of God and *do it*. Now, we aren't talking about sinless perfection here. Everybody sins. But listen: When God begins a good work in you through salvation, He perfects it until the day of Christ Jesus. *He* perfects it, which means that you're going to grow as a Christian. Yes, you're going to have ups and downs. Yes, you're going to fall into sin.

Yes, you're going to mess up over and over again. But over the average, you're growing in knowledge, in grace, in love, in Christ-likeness. If you look at your life, and this isn't true of you, you need Jesus to save you from your sin. Don't lie to yourself anymore and tell yourself, "I'm a Christian. I just don't live like one."

"These who hear the word of God and do it," they are the children of God. *They* are the children of God. So, if you've never given your life to Christ. If you've never repented of your sins, if you've never trusted in Jesus—His death, His shed blood, His resurrection power to save you—do it now! And you know what? God will invade your life. He'll give you the Holy Spirit. He'll wash you clean. He'll make you into a new creature. He will sanctify you. He will transfer you from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light, and He will create you as His workmanship, unto good works. You will begin longing to do those things that right now you just can't seem to muster up enough spiritual juice to get going on. You'll want to do it. It's like, "Man, when am I going to find some time to read my Bible? I can't wait!" Instead of groaning, "Oh, I have to read my Bible."

We need to think about what Jesus is saying here [in this passage]. And when you leave here today you need to remember these things. One: Be a light. *Be a light*, and get up on the lampstand. You do that how? You do that by knowing God's Word, speaking God's Word, living God's Word. Two: Be afraid. If you're a believer, remember that every sin you commit, you commit in the face of your Savior. If you're not a believer, I warn you whom to fear. Fear Him enough to turn from your sins and receive the grace of God in Christ Jesus.

As you leave here today, be careful how you listen. Remember that all things will be revealed by the Judge. And finally, know that you are in the family of God if you see God working in your life, and you are being transformed from one glory to the next in the image of Christ. That is your assurance—not church attendance, not mere profession, but, "these who hear the word of God and do it." Let's pray.

Father, we thank You for Your Word and we thank You for the hard, but necessary words of our Lord Jesus. Father, I know each person here who knows You is probably thinking to himself, 'Is it me, Lord?' just as the disciples did in the upper room. It's good, as Paul says to examine ourselves, to see whether we are in the faith. And Father, I pray that you would give comfort and assurance to all those your grace is working in and through. That we would look at our lives and see that, yes, though we are sinners, and even the righteous man falls seven times, yet he rises again and he presses on toward the mark. As Paul said, he longed to get out of his wretched body. And Father, for those here who don't know You—for those who have never repented of their sins, who are still clinging to themselves and their sins, and their jobs and their hobbies, and the things they want more than You—I pray that they would be afraid. That, Father, right now, they would cry out to You in their hearts. That they would realize that You, out of love, sent Your Son to die on the cross for their sins, that You might wash them clean, that You might change them and make them one of Your children. Father, do it today. Do it for Your glory. Do it for the blessing of this church. We pray this in Christ's name, Amen.