

Daily Discipleship

Sunday, July 17-23 (A) – Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

Tips of Discipleship: *Listen*

Focus Question: *How do you listen to God's Word?*

word of life

“Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Let anyone with ears listen!” Matthew 13:43 (NRSV)

Read Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

One way to study scripture is to explore the historical context as a basis for understanding. Thus, to understand this parable of the weeds among the wheat, it is important to first understand the audience and the setting of Jesus by reviewing previous verses until the setting of the parables can be identified.

Matthew 13:1 reveals it was the “same day” when Jesus went out and taught the great crowds from the boat. But what happened on that “same day”? A reader would need to return to Matthew 12:1-2 to find the early part of that day when Jesus and his disciples were walking through the grainfields. His disciples ate some grain. That doesn't seem like a problem, but it was the Sabbath. The Pharisees complain and conspire against Jesus throughout Matthew 12. Thus, it is a very long day for Jesus.

1. *How do you think the complaints of the Pharisees spoken earlier in the day influenced the teachings of Jesus?*
2. *The Pharisees listened to Jesus, but how might you characterize their listening?*

Listening seems to be an underlying theme of these parables. In fact, “Listen!” is how the parables begin. (See Matthew 13:3)

The parable of the weeds among the wheat is a strange one. A malicious person sows weeds among the good soil. What good might come from such an act? That is not an act of a friend, but an enemy. Because the soil is good, the weeds grow well. The owner is bright and understands the problem. This is only the work of an enemy, one that means harm.

The servants ask for direction. Are they to gather the weeds? The answer from the landowner is actually the heart of the parable because it reflects the heart of God. “No; for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them. Let both of them grow together until the harvest.” (Matthew 13:29-30 NRSV)

3. *How do you explain the patience of the landowner?*
4. *What might happen if you weed too early?*
5. *What might happen if you weed too late?*

Later, Jesus is asked to explain the parable. He is very specific in his response. There is definitely an enemy at work. Even though the weeds are allowed to live, there will be a judgment day. The Son of Man will send his angels to gather God's children. The weeds will be thrown into a fiery furnace. There is no doubt; any one with ears listening to this story will want to be like the plants that grow in good soil. Again Jesus repeats his warning, “Let anyone with ears listen!”

6. *How do you respond to this warning?*
7. *What would it be like to be a weed?*

word among us

Eve was talking and her husband Adam was nodding his head. Adam looked like he was listening, but Eve suspected Adam had not heard one word she said. Eve kept on talking as she walked closer and closer to her husband. Finally, she stopped talking, looked deep into his eyes, and asked the question, “Adam, are you listening?”

1. *How do you think Adam responded?*
2. *What helps you listen?*
3. *How do you listen to God?*

Listening is a theme of Jesus as he shares his teachings through a series of parables found in Matthew 13. We are reminded to hone our listening skills – particularly when it comes to listening to scripture. There are many ways to listen to scripture, but it all begins with being open to God’s Word. It helps to listen and read God’s Word with an attitude of a student eager to learn.

Lutheran camps are well-known for introducing people of all ages to God’s Word and new ways to listen to the message of Jesus. Mount Carmel Ministries in Minnesota encourages people to use the T.R.I.P. approach as people read the Bible for devotions. (See questions below.)

Take some time to use the T.R.I.P. approach to this text. First, read through the text. You may need to return to the text several times to reread it in order to answer the following questions. Prayerfully reflect on the following four questions:

4. *T = THANKS What in the verse makes me thankful?*
5. *R = REGRET What is the verse causes me regret?*
6. *I = INTERCESSION What does the text lead me to pray for?*
7. *P = PLAN OF ACTION What action does the text encourage me to take today?*

Many find the T.R.I.P. pattern of reflection to be most helpful especially when it is used on a regular basis. Some have benefited from beginning their day using the T.R.I.P. approach to listening to God’s Word. The plan of action sends the person out into the day closely connected to God and grateful for the forgiveness extended by Christ.

Some find it helpful to end the day with a prayer using the T.R.I.P. approach. Consider answering these questions at the end of your day, before you go to sleep.

8. *T = THANKS What of today makes me thankful?*
9. *R = REGRET What of today causes me regret?*
10. *I = INTERCESSION What of today leads me to pray for?*
11. *P = PLAN OF ACTION What action of today do I need to turn over to God so I might rest on this night?*

Prayer

God, open my ears and heart to your Word. Amen

Dig Deeper

Isaiah 44:6-8

last word

Try the T.R.I.P. approach to scripture each day this week.



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