

God's Word Is Designed to Affect the Heart
(Hebrews 4:12-13)

Introduction:

1. This morning we covered a number of "matters pertaining to the heart."
2. In this lesson we are emphasizing the fact that "God's Word is designed to affect the heart."

Discussion:

- I. THIS POINT IS CLEARLY MADE IN HEBREWS 4:12-13
 - A. In vs.12 God's Word is described as being alive and powerful, it pierces and divides, and it is "*a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.*"
 - B. Vs.13 shows why we must allow God's Word to affect our hearts -- God knows all, and He sees all.
 - C. In order for God's Word to affect our hearts it must be heard correctly.
 1. The people in Jerusalem on Pentecost heard Peter's message correctly, and they were affected by it (Acts 2:37-38, 41).
 2. Felix did not hear Paul's message correctly, and the condition of his heart was not changed (Acts 24:24-26).
 - D. This brings us to our second point.
- II. JESUS ILLUSTRATED THE PROPER WAY TO HEAR GOD'S WORD IN HIS PARABLE OF THE SOWER (Luke 8)
 - A. The Lord presented His parable in vs.4-8.
 1. As a sower sowed his seed, the seed fell in 4 different types of soil.
 2. The effect of the seed was determined by the type of soil upon which it fell.
 3. Three types of soil failed to produce a crop, but the good ground produced an abundant harvest.
 - B. The Lord explained His parable in vs.11-15.
 1. The seed is identified as "*the word of God*" (vs.11).
 2. The various types of soil illustrate different ways God's Word can be heard.
 3. God's Word will have no lasting effect upon 3 types of hearers.
 4. However, God's Word will affect those who hear it with an honest and good heart, keep it, and bear fruit with patience.
 - C. God's Word is designed to affect the heart, but it must be heard correctly to be effective.
 - D. After Jesus presented His parable He gave 2 warnings in Luke 8:18a; Mark 4:24.
 - E. For a final thought about how God's Word is designed to affect the heart, . . .
- III. LET US TAKE A BRIEF LOOK AT EZRA
 - A. Ezra served Israel as a priest and a scribe (Ezra 7:11).
 1. As priest, his genealogy is traced back to Aaron (vs.1-5).
 2. In addition to being a priest, Ezra was "*a ready scribe in the Law of Moses*" (vs.6).
 - B. We are especially interested in Ezra's preparation (vs.10).
 1. He "*had prepared his heart*" to accomplish 3 objectives that involved God's Word -- to seek it, to do it, and to teach it.
 2. Consequently, Ezra pleased God, and he had a great influence upon Israel.

Conclusion:

1. God's Word is designed to affect our hearts.
2. In order for our hearts to receive the intended effect, we must hear the Scriptures correctly.
3. Others will observe how the Scriptures have affected us, and they will be influenced by it.