



“How Are Your Ears? And, Your Eyes?”

Luke 11:29 - 36

March 10, 2019

This morning we are going to be in Luke Chapter 11, where the Lord will be asking us: How are your ears and how are your eyes on the spiritual level?

I wonder if any of you have noticed that we are living at a time when people are not very easily impressed? We are living in a day and time where it takes more and more to keep people interested and satisfied.

I remember the days of my childhood when our home had a single television set. It was a big television set, not the kind that you can hang up on the wall. If I remember correctly, we had seven channels that we could watch. There was Channel 2, Channel 4, Channel 5, Channel 7, Channel 9, Channel 11, and Channel 13. We could get some programming with static on Channels 28 and 56 too. There were no remote-control devices either! I think many parents then considered their children to be the remote-control device, telling them to go change the channels.

Today, we have great big, crystal-clear, life-like, high definition flat screens that pump hundreds of channels from cable television. But, guess what, those hundreds of channels don't seem to be enough because so many people also have Netflix and Amazon, where they can stream most any television show or movie they want at any time and without commercials!

What do so many people do when watching their giant crystal-clear flat screen televisions? Their phones are also on and in front of them as well. They are half way watching the television screen and they are half way checking Facebook, Instagram, or looking something up on Google.

We are so easily distracted and to despise these amazing things that we have, we are pulled in so many different directions. We are a generation of people not easily impressed. This also translates into the movie theaters and the restaurants that we go to.

I wonder if this is also creeping into the religious life or the spiritual pursuit of our people. I wonder if people have demands or expectations of the churches and the worship services that they will attend. Do churches need to resemble designer strip malls, with a gourmet coffee shop, with perhaps the service even including some kind of light show to keep and hold the interest of a great many people?

I wonder if all this has affected anybody's expectations of God Himself. I wonder if people have certain requirements, certain demands, that they might have of God before they are willing to give Him the praise that He is due as their Creator and their Sustainer? I wonder if in order to believe in God, first they say, *I have this problem in life that needs to be solved. I have a financial crisis that I need for the Lord resolve for me. I have a certain ailment that needs to be healed, then if this God does this for me, then I will believe.*

I wonder if the Word of Christ and His cross and His empty grave is enough in a generation of people that are not easily satisfied, in a generation of people not easily impressed.

This morning we open God's Word to the Gospel of Luke and what we find is that people have always been the same. There have always been a great number of people not easily impressed, people always looking for something more. This was the case even when Christ Himself walked the earth.

As we look into Luke Chapter 11 this morning, we see a continuation of the story that we began last week. To refresh our memories and to help us understand what is happening in today's passage, the Lord Jesus had just delivered yet another demon from yet another person. This time, the demon was a so-called mute demon. Somehow the demon possessed a man and it blocked his ability to communicate verbally. He could not talk. Evidentially, this had been going on for some amount of time. It is not disclosed how long he had been mute but enough time so that people were blown away when Jesus came delivered this man from that demon, so that the man was speaking and communicating with people again.

Jesus performed a wonderful work in that man's life. As interested as we might have been to hear what this man had to say when he could finally speak again, instead our attention is directed elsewhere. We hear what some of the bystanders said.

In the verbal response of some of those people, we see that Jesus was met with two faces of unbelief. First, He was met with the condemning. There were some people in Israel who simply could not acknowledge that God was working through Jesus, so what did they do? They said that Jesus was an agent of Satan, working in the power of Beelzebul. We saw how Jesus challenged the logic of that and how He answered it in our text last week.

Not only were there condemning people, but the other face of unbelief that manifested itself at that time were those who were conniving. They began putting Jesus to the test. They saw that sign, but they kept pressing the Lord Jesus for yet another sign, testing Him.

They were thinking that they had seen all the earthy signs, the miracles that Jesus did as He walked throughout Israel. They would have known full-well that Jesus had healed people. He had driven out demons on the earth. They would have caught wind of the feedings that Jesus had done for massive crowds. They would have wind of His calming of the winds and storms.

However, they were thinking: We have the earthy signs, now we need to see a heavenly sign. If you want us to believe and acknowledge that you are the Messiah in the world, we need for you to do something spectacular that comes from heaven above.

Maybe they wanted to see a constellation move. Maybe they wanted to see the name of the Lord written in gold letters in the sky. Maybe they wanted to see fire drawn from above. They wanted to see something like that. They were testing Jesus in this. They were prodding and pushing Him. instead of seeing all that God had given to them, they were seeking still more and more and more.

It seems that this attitude of unbelief was spreading among the people of Israel as Jesus was inching closer and closer to Jerusalem. A little leaven leavens the whole lump. It seems that this attitude was becoming characteristic of more and more people.

So as we continue into the portion of Scripture before us, we see Jesus answering this request and the attitude that drove the requests. Jesus was not going to mince words. He brought rebuke. In the midst of that rebuke, Jesus called into question their hearing and their seeing.

Let's see what Jesus said to those who were seeking more and more and more. Luke Chapter 11 and Verses 29 through 36:

**<sup>29</sup>When the crowds were increasing, he began to say, "This generation is an evil generation. It seeks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah. <sup>30</sup>For as Jonah became a sign to the people of Nineveh, so will the Son of Man be to this generation. <sup>31</sup>The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with the men of this generation and condemn them, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here. <sup>32</sup>The men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here. <sup>33</sup>No one after lighting a lamp puts it in a cellar or under a basket, but on a stand, so that those who enter may see the light. <sup>34</sup>Your eye is the lamp of your body. When your eye is healthy, your whole body is full of light, but when it is bad, your body is full of darkness. <sup>35</sup>Therefore be careful lest the light in you be darkness. <sup>36</sup>If then your whole body is full of light, having no part dark, it will be wholly bright, as when a lamp with its rays gives you light."**

Here we have the response of Jesus to that generation seeking a magnificent sign. In response to their continued prodding request for some kind of stellar sign from above, Jesus said, *This is an evil generation.*

These people knew full well that Jesus was going throughout Israel performing signs and wonders and miracles, showing the Kingdom of God at work through Jesus yet they kept asking for more and more and more. Jesus rebuked them and said that it was evil. There were plenty of miracles to validate the breaking in of the Kingdom through Him.

Nonetheless, in the midst of this rebuke, Jesus declared to them that there was another sign, an ultimate sign, that would come to them. The sign that He spoke of was a sign that He called the sign of Jonah. This sign, brothers and sisters, is a prophecy of His coming resurrection from the grave. In the same way that Jonah was in the belly of the fish for three days then came out, so would Christ be in the belly of the tomb, and on the third day out would the Savior come.

In Jonah, we have the reappearance of a man whom the sailors that threw him over would have certainly thought him to be dead. In Christ we have the resurrection of the Man who, not only

was thought to be dead, but He was dead. He was dead! His heart no longer beat. His lungs no longer drew in breath.

Jesus was treated for burial, and He was wrapped up and placed in the tomb. He was in that tomb for three days and on the third day, He came forth with victory over death. This is the ultimate sign that Jesus would give to that generation.

Praise God, brothers and sisters, this is the sign that we want to be proclaiming here at Bethel Grace, that Jesus the Savior was lifted up on a cross. That is a sign of how serious human sin is. Jesus Christ emerged from the grave. That is a sign that God has conquered sin and death in Christ.

This is what we want to proclaim until King Jesus comes back. I'm looking forward to that day just several weeks from now where in a very special way, we will preach forth and sing forth the sign of Jonah—the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Pray that this place would be filled not only with the family of believers, but with people who don't know Jesus, because we have Good News to proclaim. We have a story to tell. Jesus died for sin and He rose from the grave, so Jesus pointed those people to that sign that was yet to come—the sign that we now look back to—the resurrection of the Christ from the dead.

Taking a closer look at how the Lord responded to those who were seeking that great sign from above, there is more for us to consider in this text. For while God in His grace has provided signs and wonders throughout human history to demonstrate and validate the power of His message, the greatest sign culminated in the resurrection of the Christ. What we glean from this text is that a person does not need to personally witness a miraculous sign to know God and His power.

Jesus is speaking to us about other means other than some kind of sign or wonder where a human being can truly come to the knowledge of the Lord. Jesus spoke of this here in this text. I was reading this passage and began thinking about how doubting Thomas became worshiping Thomas after the resurrection of Christ.

Do you remember that culminating moment in the Gospel of John? Jesus had risen from the grave and had appeared to some of His disciples. Thomas was not among those disciples, so they told him that Jesus was alive. Thomas did not believe them. Thomas said that unless he probed His wounds with his finger, he would not believe.

Shortly after that, Jesus appeared to Thomas and Thomas saw Him and did not need to stick his fingers in the wounds of Jesus. What did Thomas do? He went from doubting Thomas to worshiping Thomas. He fell on his knees and said, *My Lord and my God.*

The Gospel of John opens by saying in John 1:1:

**<sup>1</sup>In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.**

Jesus is God. Then here we have Thomas saying, *My Lord and my God*. But what did Jesus say to Thomas? John 20 29

**<sup>29</sup>...”Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”**

What a beatitude. When we think about redemptive history, I would say the overwhelmingly large percentage of people who are born again in Christ, they have believed without seeing some kind of miraculous event that blew their minds.

Looking through the pages of Scripture, it would seem that there were several eras that had the flurries of miraculous power at work. Look at the book of Exodus with sign after sign taking place at that time.

Look at the ministries later of Elijah and Elisha. Then, of course we come to ministry of the Messiah and His apostles. There were many signs being done. Then we get to the end of human history, this phase of existence, the end times when there is going to be signs and wonders again.

But if we look through the normal working of how redemption works, people are coming to know God apart from some kind of visible, supernatural miracle in the heavens—or something similar to that.

If we take a close look at this passage of Scripture, from the heart of the Messiah we come to the understanding that people come to the knowledge of God in other ways. God has invested certain things with power to redeem the human heart and help us to know our Lord, our Maker and Creator.

I want us to see these things. Specifically, we need to have ears that hear the Word of Christ because in the Word of God there is power. We need to see the account of the life of Christ. We need to look upon Jesus through the lens of Scripture because in seeing Jesus there is power to know God through His testimony of His visitation to this earth and the things that He is doing now. There is power to know God, apart from demanding to see Torus the Bull chasing down Orion the Hunter in the constellations above.

There are two words of wisdom that we need to receive from the Lord’s rebuke to these people who were so prodding and persistently asking for sign after sign after sign. What Jesus had already done was not enough, they needed to see more.

Jesus was speaking to that generation but there is wisdom here for every generation, including this generation of Southern California in the Twenty-First Century. Let's look at what is here and see two pieces of wisdom.

Instead of asking God for some miracle that will condition your faith in Him

**1. Ask for ears to hear the word of Christ (11:31-32)**

Notice how that in this passage, Christ takes us from the days of ancient past in Israel's history, and the Word of Christ takes us forward to a scene of awesome judgment that is to come.

Jesus spoke of how certain Old Testament foreigners would be called to testify against the unbelieving people of Israel in His day. We read about the queen of the South and we read about the men of Nineveh and the judgment they will bring, particularly against those Israelites that were not believing.

Look at what it says in this passage. We will start with the queen of the South. Verse 31:

**<sup>31</sup>The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with the men of this generation and condemn them, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.**

Jesus presented the queen of the South, also known as the Queen of Sheba who came up from the southernmost portion of the Arabian Peninsula, probably modern-day Yemen. She came to hear the wisdom of Israel's king. She heard about the clear understanding that the Lord, the God of Israel had given to the one who was on the throne in Israel about his ability to articulate and clarify things and make things known.

There was wisdom at work through the king of Israel in her day and hearing that, she made the trek. She went all the way from way down south all the way up to Jerusalem and the Holy Land. You can read the story in I Kings Chapter 10 about the queen's visitation and how her breath was taken away at the wisdom of what she heard from the one who was on the throne of Israel. She heard the word of the Lord and in the end, she said, *Blessed be you and your God.*

Then Jesus said that she was going to rise up and step forward on the Day of Judgement and condemn that generation of Israelites, saying, *I heard from one who was so much less than the one that you heard from. You heard from someone that is so much more convincing and anointed than the one that I heard from. You need to enter into your judgment because of the hardness of your heart and the closing of your ears.*

She will condemn them. Get that! A pagan Gentile queen is going to be a part of those who, with the Lord, issue those people into their condemnation. Wow! You think Jesus is serious about this? Jesus is serious about this!

But there is more. Jesus brings forth more witnesses against that generation, the men of Nineveh. Verse 32:

**<sup>32</sup>The men of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and behold, something greater than Jonah is here.**

Now we have the men of Nineveh rising up and coming forth. These would have been previously ruthless men from the capital city of Assyria. They would have been men who were raised in and practiced great violence.

Jonah came to them. He was spit out of the belly of the whale and made the trek over to Nineveh and he preached through this capital city. If you read through the book of Jonah, you see that he did not even call them to repent. It seems that Jonah didn't even want them to repent since they were so wicked, and he despised them so much.

God told Jonah to go preach to the Ninevites, but he got in a boat and went in the opposite direction to modern-day Spain. There was a bad attitude in Jonah the whole time. He did not go into Nineveh preaching repentance. He just walked through the city, saying, *Forty days and Nineveh will be overthrown. Forty days and this place is toast. Forty days and this place is judged.* That is what he preached.

Yet, these men of Nineveh, they had ears to hear. Their hearts believed. Their hearts trembled at the word that came from the Lord and they repented. And the day is going to come when they are going to stand against that generation of Israel. They are going to say, *What more did you need? We had Jonah who did not want us to repent. You had Christ who wept over Jerusalem. You had the Anointed Messiah.*

It would be on the basis of the preached Word that all these things would take place. Christ is telling us that there is power in the Word of the Living God. God has put power in His truth to convert the sinful human heart.

Instead of asking God for some kind of sign, we ought to ask God to give us ears to hear the truth of the Gospel message of Jesus Christ. There is power in the Word. Do you believe Jesus Himself? In John 6:63, Jesus said:

**<sup>63</sup>It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh is no help at all. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life.**

Wow! Paul would go on to say in Romans 1:16:

**<sup>16</sup>For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to anyone who believes, the Jew first and also to the Greek.**

Even back into the days of King David in Psalm 19:7

**<sup>7</sup>The law of the LORD is perfect,  
reviving the soul**

If we are going to ask for something, we need to ask the Lord to open our ears to all that He has proclaimed because His power is truth. We need to ask that His truth comes with the Spirit's anointing.

The Holy Spirit is the One who authored and inspired the text. If we are going to be wise people in view of what Jesus said here, we are going to ask the Lord to help us to hear and have saving faith and growing obedient faith based on the things that He has said, because His Words are true and point us to how good God is.

The Word of Jesus came, and He spilled His blood for sinners who could never save themselves. He came not only to cleanse those with humble faith that turns to Christ, but also to cloth us in His righteousness

We need to ask the Lord to give us ears to hear that and to give our neighbors and family members ears to hear that and help us to be an agent of that message. Wouldn't that be the wise way in view of what Jesus said to us hear? Let's pray that the Word of God and its power would be released in us and through us.

We continue and see another piece of instruction from the authority of the Messiah, wisdom that comes from the heart of the God-man who is in charge. Instead of asking for some miraculous sign, let us:

## **2. Ask for eyes to see the glory of Christ (11:33-36)**

Let us ask for eyes to see the glory of Christ that has already been revealed and recorded for us in the pages of Scripture that are living and active. Ask for eyes to see the glory of Christ.

It almost seems like Jesus was speaking in riddles as we go into Verses 33 to 36. We need to take a close look at what Jesus said here and I think it will become clear enough. Jesus used the imagery of the lamp burning with light. He is the Light and we need to have eyes that are like little lamps that help light us up to see His glory.

Look at what is said in Verse 33:

**<sup>33</sup>No one after lighting a lamp puts it in a cellar or under a basket, but on a stand, so that those who enter may see the light.**

Jesus was talking about Himself. I know that Jesus said to His church that He was the light of the world in Matthew Chapter 5 and Verses 13 through 16 where He talked about being the salt of the earth and light of the world.



But first and foremost, Jesus is the light of the world. What did He say in the Gospel of John Chapter 8 and Verse 12?

**<sup>12</sup>...”I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”**

Jesus is the light. Jesus was saying that nobody lights a lantern and puts it under a blanket. No, they put it on a stand, and that is what happened in the ministry of Jesus. He conducted public ministry. He preached from hillsides. He preached in public synagogue services.

He is the Light of God showing the way. Then Jesus continued and said in Verse 34:

**<sup>34</sup>Your eye is the lamp of your body. When your eye is healthy, your whole body is full of light, but when it is bad, your body is full of darkness. <sup>35</sup>Therefore be careful lest the light in you be darkness.**

Christ is the light of the world and for us, the eye is the lamp of the body. Jesus was not saying here that our eyes are that which emit spiritual life, per se. Although I have been around some people and I can see it in their eyes when they are glowing with godliness.

However, something happens first. First, the eye is the lamp of the body in that it receives light from the Lord, and as we are gazing upon Christ, receiving light into our being, we then become those who are lamps for Jesus and who also start to glow with His very light shining in us and through us.

That is what I understand to be the point of what Jesus made here. We must make sure that we have eyes to see who Christ is and the glory of all that He has done. We need to be those gazing upon Jesus, that we might be filled the light of the Lord.

Instead of asking God to perform some stupendous sign, we need to ask the Lord to give us eyes to see Jesus and what Jesus has already done and what it is prophesied that He will do to give us clear vision of what is in the Word of God.

Think about it like this: You are what you behold. You become like what you gaze upon. If you are focused on looking at the light, you will be full of light. That is the point that Jesus made here. If you are focused on darkness, your eye is bad. If you are not taking in the light, you are going to be full of darkness.

So imagine the life that neglects the light of Jesus. Their eyes are not looking upon His glory. Their eyes are focused on the things of the world, and it is going to be a gnarly situation. Think about the inner condition of the one with an eye that is constantly gazing upon pornography. It is going to be full of darkness.

Think about the condition of the one with the eye that is constantly gazing upon futile and stupid internet clickbait. Think about the eye of the one that is constantly gazing upon base

entertainment that is used to perpetuate satanic lies in the ways of the world over which he rules. Imagine the inner condition of the one who is gazing up these things.

I think there is a warning even for those who are in Christ. Be careful that the light in you is not darkness. Christ comes but if we are sitting here gazing upon the kinds of things that are horrendous for the soul, don't be surprised if your life is made dull and dark. Don't look upon the darkness! Is that not what Jesus is telling us?

Then imagine the one who is looking upon Christ, reading through Scripture and praying for the Lord to open their eyes that they might see the wonder of His visitation to this earth. Imagine the one who is gazing and meditating upon the King of kings, the Lord of lords, the God-man, who was born in the manger with remarkable prophecies of His coming Everlasting Kingdom of Light, just overwhelming this world.

Imagine the eye that is looking upon King Jesus and watching Him call gruff fishermen and tax collectors and zealots into discipleship and changing their lives before our very eyes. Imagine the eye that is gazing upon Christ, even pouring out mercy upon the prostitute when everybody else was condemning her. However, Jesus lifted up that prostitute up into newness of life.

So many people in this generation would have watched her on a screen. What a heartbreaking thing for our generation to gaze upon. May the Lord grant us repentance because, I think that if we are all honest, we are all cut from the same fabric that produces those kinds of things. It is horrendous and it is horrible.

Going back to the positive side though, imagine the eyes that see Jesus giving mercy to such women and such men—tax collectors that were robbing people blind, and Jesus made them new, so that the heart of little Zacchaeus got ignited and he said that he would pay back four times what he stole. That man was changed.

Imagine the eye that is focused on the Everlasting Lord of Glory nailed to a cross, our sin imputed to Him, paying the price for our sin in grace and love that our sin might be removed from us and that His righteousness might be imputed to our account.

Imagine the one gazing upon the empty grave and the great joy and power it unleashed for the Christian church. Imagine the one gazing upon Christ ascended and enthroned, pouring out the gift of His Holy Spirit.

The one who is gazing upon these things, they are going to have some spiritual health going on inside of them. Look how Jesus put it in Verse 36:

**<sup>36</sup>If then your whole body is full of light, having no part dark, it will be wholly bright, as when a lamp with its rays gives you light.”**

Jesus wants to give us light. Here we see Christ desiring to enter into us and emit forth grace and truth and light from us. In this verse we see the purpose of Christ for His people at the collective

and individual level. He wants to fill us with His grace and His truth and His light that we might spread it to others.

The purpose of Christ for us is not simply to get us into Heaven, although I praise God that is His purpose for me. Beyond that, it is to get Heaven into me, not just us into Heaven but Heaven into us so that we can be an agents of Heaven here on this earth.

Once again, the purpose is not just that we be in Christ, although I never ever want to understate that—that is glorious, but there is more to it. It is not just to get us in Christ, it is to get Christ in us, the hope of glory filling our lives. We need to pray this wisdom, *Lord, give me eyes to see the glory of Christ that I might be more like Him.*

In closing, I am glad to let you know that I have finally been developing a relationship with a physician. They say that a man should start seeing a doctor on a regular basis when he is 40. I started at 45. It took me a little while, but the doctor said that I have a clean bill of health.

I am reminded that Jesus is the Good Physician. He wants to bring His spiritual healing into us. How are your ears? Are you listening? How are your eyes? Are you beholding? May Jesus perform His grace and His wonderful works in us.

By the way, Jesus performs miracles today. I have never seen the movement of the heavens. I have never seen a broken arm suddenly get healed, but I have seen the power of the Word of God in the lives of people that I am in fellowship with; how Jesus raises dead sinners to newness of life and fills them with His grace and truth.

That is the work of God that we see happening today. Let's pray that it would be the case more and more through us. Let's pray, then we will sing a closing song.