

• *The good news of the Kingdom*

1. The kingdom of God comes through attentiveness to His Word

• *God intends that His kingdom is revealed not hidden*

• *How much we hear and understand depends on how well we listen*

• *Listening with an open mind and perseverance*

• *Hearing with a willingness to change*

• *Repentance involves a change of mind*

Jesus is concerned to preach 'the good news of the kingdom'.

1. **The kingdom of God comes through attentiveness to His Word** ^{☞1}. The parable in Luke 8:16–18 makes the point that Jesus intends that the kingdom of God should be revealed. This might seem surprising because the kingdom, says Luke 8:10, is given to some but not to others. For some people the parables are revealing; to others they simply make them more spiritually blind than ever. The parables are 'in order that seeing they may not see'. For those who refuse to heed Jesus the parables are a kind of punishment.

It might seem that God is almost hiding His kingdom. It is a mystery. But Luke 8:15–16 says 'No! God is not hiding His kingdom'. God is intending to reveal His royal power. Many miss the experience of God's majestic power but that is their fault, not God's fault. No one lights a lamp and then covers it or puts it in a place where it will not give light. Anyone who lights a lamp will then put it in a place where it can give light to the room ^{☞1}. Similarly God intends His royal power to be known. 'Nothing is hidden that shall not become known...' ^{☞2}. The question is: when will the secrets of God's pre-eminent rule become known? For some, it may be known now in their own lives and experience. For others, it will be known eventually. This is why Jesus goes on to say, 'Take care how you hear...' ^{☞3}. The experience of the kingdom comes by careful attentiveness and obedience to Jesus. It is still the same message as in the parable of the sower: hearing, receptiveness and perseverance are needed. If we do not respond in this way our experience of the kingdom will lessen. Even that which we think we have shall be taken away. The 'bottom line' of the parable is in verse 18. We must be careful how we hear God's voice. We need to hear Jesus without previous ideas overcoming the power of God's voice. This is specially true when we read the Bible or when we listen to biblical exposition. Often what happens is that we listen to God's Word or we listen to some preaching but we think we already know the truth. We have our own ideas. So when God speaks we put God's Word through a filter and we allow through only what we want to hear. **Take care how you hear!**

We need to hear with a willingness in our heart to be changed. God speaks to us in order to bring about change. Many listen to the Scriptures or to preaching in order to criticise, or to get confirmation of what they already think, or they listen selectively, picking out only what they want to hear. But when we do this it means that we are not listening to God with a view to change, growth and development. God's Word is intended to bring about repentance and repentance involves a change of mind. If we are under God's Word but have already resolved not to re-think anything or not to change our minds about anything, then we are impenitent even before we start! **Take care how you hear!**

☞1 8:16-18

☞1 8:16

☞2 8:17

☞3 8:18

• *Hearing with expectancy*

• *For those who refuse to heed Jesus the parables are a kind of punishment*

Jesus intends that the kingdom of God should be **revealed**. This means that changes and new revelations and new experiences of the power of God in our lives are to be expected every day! Sooner or later, God will reveal the kingdom. But the kingdom is given to some and not to others. If we do not take care how we hear, the parables will not reveal anything to us at the moment. They will actually blind us. They will come to us 'in order that seeing they may not see'. For those who refuse to heed Jesus the parables are a kind of punishment, but then we shall know the truth eventually. One day everything will come out into the open. God's kingdom will be fully revealed. Yet it will be terrible for us if it is only revealed to us **then**. Why should we not experience the power of God's kingdom now? The 'mystery' of the kingdom can be known. It is possible now, in this life, to enter into rich experiences of God's power working in our lives and using us in blessing to others! But everything depends on whether Jesus is able to speak to us. **Take heed how you hear!**

2. The kingdom of God comes through spiritual relationship to Jesus

2. The kingdom of God comes through spiritual relationship to Jesus ^{☞1}. Luke reports at this point that there was a time when Jesus' mother and brothers wanted to speak to Him ^{☞2}. Luke has slightly delayed telling this story in order to link it with the theme of hearing Jesus' Word. In Mark 3:31-35 the story was told a little earlier in the narrative; Luke has rearranged Mark's order of narration. He brings it in here because it makes the point that hearing God's voice has nothing to do with being related to Jesus 'in the flesh'. It does not matter who your parents are or who you are related to. In this matter of experiencing the kingdom, relationships are spiritual not biological. Jesus was told that His earthly family wanted to see Him ^{☞3}. He replied 'My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it' ^{☞4}. Jesus was making the same point as was made in the parable of the sower and the parable of the lamp. The kingdom of God does not come through earthly relationship to Jesus. Even Mary the mother of Jesus could not relate to Jesus in this way. Those who hear and obey Jesus are the ones who are related to Him.

• *Those who hear and obey Jesus are the ones who are related to Him*

- ☞1 8:19-21
- ☞2 8:19
- ☞3 8:20
- ☞4 8:21

	<p>Dr Michael Eaton is highly respected internationally as a theologian, author, preacher and teacher. He lives in Kenya where he is one of the leaders of the Chrisco Fellowship. His <i>Preaching Through The Bible</i> (PTTB) books are highly popular worldwide. Michael Eaton puts the theological and practical meaning of the Bible in a clear and down-to-earth way so that what is written can be easily understood by the reader.</p>	
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