

Sunday  
26 Jul 2020

# LISTEN | LISTENING TO JESUS WHEN IT SOUNDS LIKE CLICK-BAIT

**MATTHEW**  
**13:1-52**

## **A hearing test**

This chapter is a hearing test for Jesus' disciples.

For Christians, it shows up selective deafness.

We're surrounded by a cacophony of click-bait fads.

There's a constant noise of news and information.

Every tweet, podcast, hashtag, ping, blog, alert, notification...  
is a digital promise of hopeful importance.

Our ears get fatigued to noise.

Our focus is distracted.

Life-giving Kingdom-news is lost in a busy newsfeed.

Jesus taps the glass and says: **Hey, are you really listening to me?**

Right in middle of Matthew's Gospel... focus is on tuning our ears to Jesus.

He invites us into the blessed good life of his kingdom.

He promises to be WITH US in discipleship and disciple-making.

But we've got to be listening to him.

**[v9; v43; v16-17]**

Jesus says... those who belong to him have 'secrets of the kingdom' (v11).

The purpose of parables: expose spiritual blindness and deafness.

**[v12-13]**

Are you ready for your hearing test?

## The parable of the soils (v1-23)

The parable of soils is about hearing Jesus' message about his kingdom.

There are 4 soil-types - 4 hearing assessment categories:

- Path (v19) = one who doesn't receive is unbeliever.
  - Gospel germinates eternal life in one heart... and in another bounces off like golf ball on concrete.
- Rocky (v20) = one who receives but shallow roots and withers.
  - Unless the truth about Jesus takes deep root in the human heart it will not endure.
  - Thin soil produces thin faith.
- Thorns (v22) = one who receives but distracted and fruitless.
  - Warning: An obsession with money bankrupts faith.
  - A life fertilised with worldliness guarantees crop failure.
- Good soil (v23) = one who receives - tuned to Jesus and growing.
  - Those who truly belong to Jesus and his kingdom...
  - listen to him with an undistracted and growing commitment.

Are YOU listening to Jesus? Let's get personal and be honest here:

Why are you NOT the path, rocky soil, thorny soil?

2020 is season that'll expose rocky-soil believers who looked like good-soil believer. Wild weather and high tides expose foundations of coastal homes. Long season of disconnection from usual discipleship disciplines will expose our roots.

I'm sensitive to this in myself. It's my pastoral concern for you... New Life. So I'm glad we have Jesus' parable in front of us right now. A early diagnostic hearing test. Not like one in shopping centre selling something you don't need. Offered by master clinician who is most concerned for our souls.

We don't want to get to the other side of a global pandemic...

then find we're a shallow-soil church... that many of us are in need of special nurture... needing transplant into propagation plot to regrow roots in good soil.

We need to do some root work now.

We CAN, by tuning our ears to Jesus more... put down deeper roots. It's hard, inconvenient, determination and discipline.

But steady nurture now will be life-saving for us...  
individually and as a church community.

Let's do some of this root-growing listening now...

### **The parable of the weeds (v24-30, 36-43)**

We see in the world around us a mixed crop of belief and unbelief.

Jesus expects it.

Warning: we ought not get so comfortable in the paddock we look more like weed than wheat.

There's a definite day when separated.

### **The parable of the mustard seed and yeast (v31-35)**

Vivid picture of Jesus' kingdom.

Encouragement: Great kingdom growth stems from small beginnings.

Your outlook on Jesus' kingdom may appear small...

but know it has a majestic destiny.

Just how majestic is captured in...

### **The parable of the hidden treasure and pearl (v44-46)**

Jesus' kingdom ought to be the ONE great treasure in our life...

without competition.

Finish by reading with you the parable of the net and storeroom.

### **The parable of the net and storeroom (v47-52)**

This is an uncomfortable parable.

A Christian can only speak about hell with gravity and sorrow.

The reality of hell is more devastating than the picture.

As uncomfortable as is... no wisdom or love in skirting around it.

Eternal judgment is real.

The world is only put right into eternity by removing all that is wrong.

Jesus' message is easily drowned out in a noisy world.

If you're not Christian-believer you might've tuned out to Jesus...

and not REALLY listened to what he says.

If you're a Christian-believer you might be in the rocky soil...

and only half-listening to Jesus.

The message of Jesus' kingdom is an invitation... to belong to him.

An invitation to be welcomed by him and transformed by him...

to be brought into the good life of the kingdom. Ears tuned to Jesus grow the roots for a life that thrives steadily into eternity.



**Discussion and reflection questions | [gotherefor.com/newlife](http://gotherefor.com/newlife)**

Read Matthew 13:24-30 and 36-43.

1. What do each of the following things in the parable represent?
  - the sower
  - the field
  - the good seed
  - the weeds
  - the enemy who sows the seeds
  - the harvest
  - the reapers (i.e. those who harvest)
2. From this parable, what should we expect to happen to those who oppose Jesus, both now and in the future?

Read Matthew 13:47-50.

3. What does this teach about the end of the age?
4. How is this parable similar to the parable of the weeds? How is it different?

5. Summarise in a sentence the main point of these other parables in the passage. What does each parable teach us about the kingdom of heaven?
  - the parable of the mustard seed (vv. 31-32)
  - the parable of the yeast (v. 33)
  - the parable of the hidden treasure (v. 44)
  - the parable of the pearl (vv. 45-46)

Looking back over Matthew 13...

6. What do we learn about what the kingdom of heaven is like now?
7. What expectations ought this to give us about life and ministry in this age?
8. What encouragement is there from knowing these things about the kingdom of heaven? How might we be discouraged if we didn't know these things?
9. What do we learn from these parables about what will happen in the future?
10. Is this encouraging or alarming to know? Why?
11. How might this passage help you answer someone who says, "I don't believe God is going to judge people"?
12. What are the dangers of expecting the future aspects of the kingdom of heaven now?
13. What specific things are you tempted to value more than the kingdom of heaven? Are you prepared to give those things up for the sake of the kingdom?