INTRO: LISTEN UP!

Mark 4:3, 9 (NIV)
Listen! … Then Jesus said, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

Hebrews 4:12 (NLT)
For the word of God is alive and powerful. It is sharper than the sharpest two-edged sword, cutting between soul and spirit, between joint and marrow. It exposes our innermost thoughts and desires.

2 Timothy 3:14-17 (NIV)
14 But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, 15 and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus.

16 All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, 17 so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.
Mark 4:1 (NIV)

Again Jesus began to teach by the lake. The crowd that gathered around him was so large that he got into a boat and sat in it out on the lake, while all the people were along the shore at the water’s edge.

Mark 4:2-8 (NIV)

2 He taught them many things by parables, and in his teaching said: 3 “Listen! A farmer went out to sow his seed. 4 As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. 5 Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow.

6 But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. 7 Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants, so that they did not bear grain. 8 Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up, grew and produced a crop, some multiplying thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times.”

WHO ARE THE “DIFFERENCE MAKERS?”

Never Get Started

Keep Going but Get Distracted

Persevere and Make a Difference
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Start but Give Up
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3-Part Series starting next Sunday

1. OPEN YOUR HEART

Mark 4:9-12 (NIV)

9 Then Jesus said, “Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear.” 10 When he was alone, the Twelve and the others around him asked him about the parables. 11 He told them, “The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you.
Mark 4:9-12 (NIV)

But to those on the outside everything is said in parables so that, “they may be ever seeing but never perceiving, and ever hearing but never understanding; otherwise they might turn and be forgiven!”

Isaiah 6:9-10 (NIV)

He said, “Go and tell this people: “Be ever hearing, but never understanding; be ever seeing, but never perceiving.” Make the heart of this people calloused; make their ears dull and close their eyes. Otherwise they might see with their eyes, hear with their ears, understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed.”

ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR “HEART DISEASE”

Proverbs 28:14 (NIV)

Blessed is the one who always trembles before God, but whoever hardens their heart falls into trouble.

Ephesians 4:18 (NIV)

They are darkened in their understanding and separated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them due to the hardening of their hearts.
ASK GOD FOR AN “OPEN-THE-HEART” SURGERY

Ezekiel 36:25-27 (NIV)
25 I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your impurities and from all your idols. 26 I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.

Dear God,
Thank you for sending Jesus to die for my sin. I want to give you control of my life. Please forgive my sins and give me the gift of the Holy Spirit and eternal life. Help me to know you better and to learn from the Bible how I can live a life that pleases you and helps others. Amen.

James 1:21-22 (NIV)
21 Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you. 22 Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says.

2. CULTIVATE YOUR FAITH

Word sown on rocky ground…
Matthew 7:13 (MSG)

"Don't look for shortcuts to God. The market is flooded with surefire, easygoing formulas for a successful life that can be practiced in your spare time. Don't fall for that stuff, even though crowds of people do.

Ecclesiastes 11:4 (TLB)

If you wait for perfect conditions, you will never get anything done.

LOOK INTO GOD’S WORD

Romans 10:16-17 (NLT)

16 But not everyone welcomes the Good News, for Isaiah the prophet said, "LORD, who has believed our message?" 17 So faith comes from hearing, that is, hearing the Good News about Christ.
LOOK BEYOND YOUR TRIALS

James 1:2-4 (NIV)
2 Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, 3 because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. 4 Let perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything.

2 Corinthians 4:16-18 (NIV)
16 Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. 17 For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. 18 So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

LOOK AT JESUS

Hebrews 12:2-3 (NLT)
2 We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith. Because of the joy awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame. Now he is seated in the place of honor beside God’s throne. 3 Think of all the hostility he endured from sinful people; then you won’t become weary and give up.
3. PROTECT YOUR PRIORITIES

Mark 4:18-19 (NIV)
18 Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word; 19 but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful.

MANAGE YOUR THOUGHTLIFE TO AVOID DISTRACTIONS

1 Peter 5:7 (NLT)
Give all your worries and cares to God, for he cares about you.
Matthew 6:33-34 (NLT)

33 Seek the Kingdom of God above all else, and live righteously, and he will give you everything you need. 34 "So don’t worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring its own worries. Today’s trouble is enough for today.

MANAGE YOUR SCHEDULE TO KEEP GOD FIRST

Luke 10:38-42 (NLT)

38 As Jesus and the disciples continued on their way to Jerusalem, they came to a certain village where a woman named Martha welcomed them into her home. 39 Her sister, Mary, sat at the Lord’s feet, listening to what he taught. 40 But Martha was distracted by the big dinner she was preparing.

Too Busy?

She came to Jesus and said, “Lord, doesn’t it seem unfair to you that my sister just sits here while I do all the work? Tell her to come and help me.” 41 But the Lord said to her, “My dear Martha, you are worried and upset over all these details! 42 There is only one thing worth being concerned about. Mary has discovered it, and it will not be taken away from her.”
MANAGE “YOUR” RESOURCES TO BLESS OTHERS

Mark 10:25 (NIV)
It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.

1 Timothy 6:17-19 (NLT)
17 Teach those who are rich in this world not to be proud and not to trust in their money, which is so unreliable. Their trust should be in God, who richly gives us all we need for our enjoyment. 18 Tell them to use their money to do good.

1 Timothy 6:17-19 (NLT)
They should be rich in good works and generous to those in need, always being ready to share with others. 19 By doing this they will be storing up their treasure as a good foundation for the future so that they may experience true life.
CONC: EXPECT AN ABUNDANT HARVEST

Mark 4:20 (NIV)
Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop—some thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times what was sown.”

Colossians 1:6 (NIV)
In the same way, the gospel is bearing fruit and growing throughout the whole world—just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and truly understood God’s grace.

Isaiah 55:10-11 (NIV)
10 As the rain and the snow come down from heaven, and do not return to it without watering the earth and making it bud and flourish, so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater, 11 so is my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.
Matthew 9:37-38 (NIV)

37 Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. 38 Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”

Growing Point

1. OPEN YOUR HEART
   ◆ ACKNOWLEDGE YOUR “HEART DISEASE”
   ◆ ASK GOD FOR AN “OPEN HEART” SURGERY

2. CULTIVATE YOUR FAITH
   ◆ LOOK INTO GOD’S WORD
   ◆ LOOK BEYOND YOUR TRIALS
   ◆ LOOK AT JESUS

Growing Point

3. PROTECT YOUR PRIORITIES
   ◆ MANAGE YOUR THOUGHTLIFE TO AVOID DISTRACTIONS
   ◆ MANAGE YOUR SCHEDULE TO KEEP GOD FIRST
   ◆ MANAGE “YOUR” RESOURCES TO BLESS OTHERS

CONC: EXPECT AN ABUNDANT HARVEST

Follow-Through Guide

Go Deeper This Week

Reflect & Respond

The Lord’s Supper
See instructions in your bulletin.
"Remember Me"

"This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is shed for you."