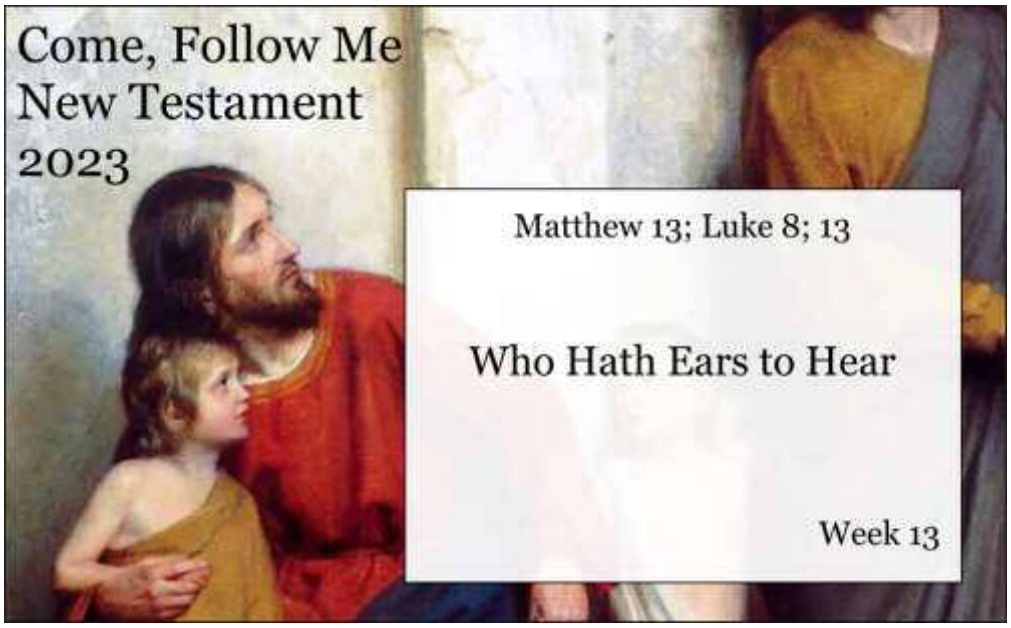

Week 13 is scheduled for study March 20-26, 2023. If we have ears to hear and eyes to see, it means we desire to know, so we listen and watch for that which will teach us something new.

Day 1

As you read Matthew 13 and Luke 8; 13, think about how you will prepare yourself to "hear" and appreciate the Savior's teachings in these parables. What will you do to apply these teachings in your life?

Matthew 13:3-23; Luke 8:4-15; 13:6-9 - My heart must be prepared to receive the word of God.

The parable of the sower is a great description of what it is to be human. I can think of times in my life where certain ideas taught to me would qualify me as one who lived a spiritually fallow life. Thorns grow in fallow or unused fields. That means I had let the cares and concerns of the world fill my life, because I hadn't filled my life with spiritual purpose. The care and concerns of mortality created a thorny field for any spiritual ideas, making it difficult for them to take root and prosper.

There have been times, and circumstances where my heart was more like the stony field. I had some fertile soil, ready for spiritual ideas, but because there was so little soil available to grow those ideas, when they came up or sprouted they didn't last very long.

My shallowness of purpose or character at that time was too easily overcome by other concerns, and the spiritual ideas soon died.

Some of the time what spiritually came my way landed in much better soil. I don't know if I was just better prepared to accept it, or if I was doing something at that time that facilitated its growth within me. All I know is that when I was introduced to particular concepts, doctrines, or teachings, I felt "ready" to hear it.

I spoke to my wife about this parable and she gave me a good comparison. Soil in the garden is soil in the garden. Some seeds sprout right away, while others struggle. Sometimes it is the seed itself, but more often than not it is because of the conditions of the garden at that time. The weather may be working against any of the seeds prospering. Too cold a temperature, too hot, too dry, or too wet will cause one seed to thrive, and kill many of the others.

But soil can be conditioned to withstand the vagaries of the weather. With proper preparation, conditioning, and fertilizing seeds that might have died otherwise have a much better chance of bearing much fruit. People are much like the seeds in the soil. With proper effort on our own part, many of the things that might produce doubt or offense to a gospel principle can be helped instead to grow and produce good things in our life. We can't change many things in our life, but we can improve the depth and fertility of our spiritual soil by the choices we make each day. There really is no excuse for any of us to be those the Savior referred to as those seeds that fell by the way side.

Satan can only take away from us what the Lord gives us when we let him do it. Those who are the seeds that fall along the way side are those who don't give the gospel a chance to even take root in their life. Those who do give it a chance might still be those who currently live among the thorns of this life, the cares and concerns of the world. We might also be those who have done a little preparation, but not yet enough to have the gospel flourish and produce great things in our life.

This parable aptly describes where people are in life, and how they generally react to the gospel when the truth is introduced to them. It also describes those of us who have let the gospel take root, and are currently enjoying the fruits of what we have nourished in our soul. We may not be able to change the circumstance of our lives, but we can influence our own spiritual fertility through the choices we make.

Day 2

As you read Matthew 13 and Luke 8; 13, think about how you will prepare yourself to "hear" and appreciate the Savior's teachings in these parables. What will you do to apply these teachings in your life?

Matthew 13:24-35, 44-52; Luke 13:18-21 - Jesus's parables help me understand the growth and destiny of His Church.

The manual is not real specific as to how to find the teachings of Joseph Smith on Matthew 13. Here is the link to the chapter in the manual they refer to - Chapter 25: Truths from the Savior's parables in Matthew 13. I strongly recommend you read this chapter, as it is so clear about the meaning of these parables as to need no current commentary.

Day 3

As you read Matthew 13 and Luke 8; 13, think about how you will prepare yourself to "hear" and appreciate the Savior's teachings in these parables. What will you do to apply these teachings in your life?

Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43 - The righteous must grow among the wicked until the end of the world.

The Master's decision on getting rid of those who are not currently converted, so as to improve life for those who are converted, is that it is better that it happen only when we reach the end of the world and the wicked are gathered together for the burning. Some will argue that the wicked among us are damaging our testimonies in the here and now. But that argument doesn't hold any merit, since the Lord has already declared that wisdom dictates otherwise.

So for the here and now, we learn to recognize those who preach false doctrine, and don't listen to their false ways. The best way to deal with false doctrine is to kindly and lovingly preach correct doctrine. We forgive those who hurt us or seek to cause offense, making us more Christlike in the process. We should also recognize that unlike in nature, being a tare or being a wheat is something that is currently fluid. There are

those we love today who could fall away from the church next year and become poisonous to others. There are those who currently espouse the teachings of the world today, but could repent at any time and become the proverbial salt of the earth.

My point here is that we are in no position to declare who is worthy of being wheat or tare. We need to leave that up to the Lord to decide. In the meantime we love all with whom we come in contact, and learn to accept and forgive as we promote goodness wherever we go.

Day 4

As you read Matthew 13 and Luke 8; 13, think about how you will prepare yourself to "hear" and appreciate the Savior's teachings in these parables. What will you do to apply these teachings in your life?

Luke 8:1-3 - In what ways did "certain women" minister to the Savior?

I don't have anything profound to say about this topic, except to express my opinion and gratitude.

It is a universal truth that women are more giving, accepting, and prone to be kind than men are. They think of the needs of others more quickly than most men do. It doesn't surprise me at all that it was the women in Christ's life who looked after his welfare more than the men did. It is in their nature to be more considerate of others. That isn't just a blessing in the life of Christ, but in the life of every person who is raised by a loving mother. I am only sorry we don't have more written about these women and how they cared for our Lord. Unfortunately, our records were all written by men, who "stuck to the topic" and didn't consider the magnitude of the service these women provided.

That's my two cents worth.

FHE/Personal Study

Matthew 13:13-16 - Seeing and hearing

One of the five laws of agency I write about is that the Lord will never force us to recognize and understand anything spiritual. We must want it and be seeking it. He

honors our moral agency so that his judgment of us will be completely just. If we don't want to know then we may burn because of our choice, but it was all our choice. The Jews in Jerusalem were demonstrating this law beautifully. The same parable given to the populace and that left them confused was also given to the disciples, those who followed Jesus. To them the Lord gave the explanation of the parables because they believed, and they wanted to understand what the parables meant.

This deliberate spiritual blindness on the part of most of the population in Judea is referred to as being "dull of hearing", "seeing they see not", and "hearing they hear not." Jesus deliberately hid the plain meaning from them because they wanted things to be mysterious. Because that is what the Jews wanted, that is what God gave them. It was to their own damnation, but He has always told us that He will give us what we ask for.

The Jews had the physical capacity to hear the words spoken by Jesus, but because their hearts were not seeking the truth, the truth was hidden from them. The disciples went to Jesus and asked for a plain translation so they could better understand him, and he willingly gave it to them. They got it because that is what they wanted, what they sought for.

The Book of Mormon was written in a very plain style, yet there are still those who claim it to be a mystery. If we are seeking for the truth, God will reveal it to us. The more grateful we are for the truths revealed to us, the more of those truths will be shown to us.

Click the link below to

print a PDF copy of the article.

NT13-2023 - Who Hath Ears to Hear

Week 13