

Mark 4: 21-25; “Use what You Have”, Sermon # 23 in the series – “Astonished at His Teaching”, Delivered by Pastor Paul Rendall on September 14th, 2014, in the Morning Worship Service.

Here in these verses Jesus is making application of the truth of this parable to His disciples so that they would know what to do with what they had been given. The application is that they would use their spiritual understanding to be wise in all that they would say and do. The Word of God and the grace of God not only teaches the disciple of Christ what his or her responsibility is; it also teaches them the right way to go about those responsibilities. So having followed the Lord Jesus this far in the teaching of this parable, this morning we want to have him give us His wisdom in applying the truth of it to ourselves so that we will truly bear fruit to God. There are 2 exhortations which the Lord Jesus gave to His disciples that day which are also given to all of His disciples in every generation, and even to us here today. The 1st is that you as a Christian have been given light. Do not hide it! The 2nd exhortation is that you as a Christian have been ears to hear. Use them to judge things righteously. Let's delve into some of the details of these exhortations and each make application of them to our own hearts and lives.

1st of all- You as a Christian have been given light. Do not hide it!

(Verses 21 and 22)

“Also He said to them, ‘Is a lamp brought to be put under a basket or under a bed?’ “Is it not to be set on a lampstand?” Now it is interesting, is it not, that Jesus uses another parable and a proverb to apply the truth of the main parable concerning what it means to bear good fruit to God's glory in the life of a Christian? In fact, in these verses, he uses this format twice in succession. In the first, he is speaking of the parable of a lamp. In the second he is speaking of a parable of ears that hear in the right way. Following upon the giving of each small application in parabolic form, then comes the proverb, starting with the word, “For”. It is a mind illuminating principle to remember as you go about to live out the application of the parable. You, as a Christian, are a light giving lamp. You say, “Who, me?” Yes, you. You as a Christian have been illuminated with the light of Jesus Christ, who is the only saving light of this dark world of sinful men. You are a part of the outworking of this mystery of the kingdom of God. Men and women, young people and children, need to come to know God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Only God can give them saving grace. But you are part of the means that God might use to that end; if you will only see your own responsibility and lay hold of it to do it. Each and every Christian has a responsibility to shine the light that has been given to them so that others can see it. Is a lamp brought to be put under a basket? Or under a bed? No, the thought is ludicrous. A person puts a light on a lampstand.

First of all, let's look at the truth that Christians are the light of the World. Turn with me over to Matthew 5, verse 14. Here Jesus is teaching His sermon on the mount to the multitudes. He is proclaiming to them, in many ways, what the Christian life is like and what its responsibilities are, to God and man. A Christian's responsibilities flow forth from what they are. “You are the light of the World.” “A City that is set on a hill cannot be hidden, nor do they light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house.” “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven.” The “you” in verse 14 is actually plural. “Ye” are the light of the World. The “ye” refers to the true disciples of Jesus Christ, the Church which He is still in the process of building, which will only be completed when He personally and visibly returns. When He was here upon the earth, He said in John 8: 12, “I am the light of the World.” “He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.” The Apostle John said, “In Him was life and the life was the light of men.” “And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.” This is the light of life that each individual Christian has, in coming to have spiritual understanding given to Him by Christ himself. When you believe in the gospel, when you trust in those things which the Lord Jesus has done for

you, Then you are then saved from your sins. You come into a personal relationship with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. You have seen the light and you are now a son of light. You no longer want to walk in the darkness of sin; you want to walk in the light with others who walk in the light. This same light of truth that you have received, you find to be much brighter yet, when you find a church that you can join. You come to see that the congregation of Christ's people, when they are gathered together, are all shining forth with this same light in a dark and sinful world. Walking in the light of the Lord every day is the blessed and joyful experience of every Christian. "They look to Him and they are radiant and their faces shall not be ashamed." In Psalm 36: 9 it says that all believers have come to understand that with God "is the fountain of life," (that is - Jesus Christ is that fountain), and "in His light they see light." They are illumined in their minds and hearts by the truth that everything that they need for life and godliness through the Spirit shining in their hearts. They find this understanding coming to them through the Word being read and the Word being preached to them from the Bible.

In Matthew 5: 15, the parallel passage to the one that we are studying, it says this: "Nor do they put it under a basket, but on a lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house." The "house" that is being referred to is no doubt the Church of Jesus Christ which is the household of faith. The Church of Jesus Christ is the "city set on a hill that cannot be hidden." Christ is the One who has been "faithful in all His house". Not only was He faithful here upon the earth in the days of His earthly ministry, but He is faithful now in the days of His heavenly ministry of intercession. But part of Christ's reward for His faithfulness in His earthly ministry was that He purchased by His righteous life and His sacrificial death the gift of the Holy Spirit; the Spirit who would come and reside in each believer's heart, and in His Church collectively as well. It is He who illumines the words of the preacher of Christ, so that when you are listening with grace, you will hear and see the light of the glory of Christ; the excellency of believing in Him and receiving Him. It is God who commands light to shine out of darkness who shines in our hearts. "In Thy light we see light." This is how each believer and all of the churches of Jesus Christ come to be the light of the world. Our Lord said in John 9: 5, "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." But now that He has gone back to heaven to be at the Father's right hand, the Holy Spirit who is given to us, is His light, in whom we see light. We, who believe, are now children of light, walking in the light. "The path of the righteous is like the light of dawn which shines brighter and brighter until the full day."

But if all this is true, and it is, dear believer, what should your response be to this glorious shining of light? Should you not put the light on the lampstand where everyone in the house can see it? Should you not first of all to make a profession of faith in the Christ who has given you light? Should you not proclaim the praises of Him who has called you out of darkness and into His marvelous light? But some who are young believers are afraid to do this. They take and hide their light under the bed. They were able to sleep on this bed before. It was a bed of sin before, but now it is a bed of comfort and delight since Christ has come and married them spiritually, and given them rest, and given them peace. But why then put the lamp under the bed? Why not rather put it on the lampstand by coming and giving in your testimony to the pastor of the church and telling of your spiritual experience to the members of the church? Why not, now that you have truly believed and have found this light and all the blessings of salvation, let your light shine forth? Oh, how I pray that you would consider. How can you bring glory to God if you will not show forth the truth of what He has plainly done for you? You, as a Christian, have been given light; you dare not hide it!

But there is another very tangible way to bear fruit to God and to show forth the light that Christ has given to you. And it is given to us Matthew 5: 16. "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven." In Luke 8: 16 it says, "...he sets it on a lampstand so that those who enter may see the light." That is, not only those in the church, but those who may come to visit the church, or those who are seeking to enter in to life. This is the way that all of us as Christians, old and new, can bring glory to God. It is to engage in

good works, and be on the look out to see how we might truly help other people in their human needs and their greatest times of need. The verse says, “let your light so shine....” This means, that it is important to God, that you do all of your good works in accordance with the right motives. Love to God and love to men are the right motives. When people look at you and see your good works, they may be tempted to conclude wrong things about you. They may be so impressed with the help that they are receiving from you that they do not at all think about God when they see the works. They may be tempted to think that you are a great person instead of thinking, “What a great God you serve.”

When you do your good works you should do them in such a way that the light (the wisdom and truth and love which have been shown to you by God) is seen by the person that you are ministering to. The Lord Jesus has given us good instruction on this truth in Matthew 6, if you will turn there with me. This is how your light is “to so shine”. “Take heed that you do not do your charitable deeds before men, to be seen by them.” “Otherwise you have no reward from your Father in heaven.” “Therefore, when you do a charitable deed, do not sound a trumpet before you as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory from men.” “Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward.” But when you do a charitable deed, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, that your charitable deed may be in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will Himself reward you openly.” This is letting your light shine before men in the right way. It is not that men might praise you or be impressed by you; it is so that they might praise God and be thankful for His goodness and mercy. Your reward is with God, who sees in secret. It should not come from the people whom you help, or from those looking on. Your reward should not even be you patting yourself on the back. “Do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing.” Do not think about how great you are or how good you are. Let God be the one who rewards you, in His way, and in His good time. But you say to me, “I do not have money or alms to give to people in need.” “What should I do?”

You should use what God has given to you, in the gifts and grace which He has given to you, to do good to others, and to bear witness to the truth. You find a good example of this over in the book of Acts, Chapter 3. “Now Peter and John went up together to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour.” “And a certain man lame from his mother’s womb was carried whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms from those entered the temple; who seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked for alms.” “And fixing his eyes on him, with John, Peter said, ‘Look at us.’” “So he gave them his attention, expecting to receive something from them.” “Then Peter said, ‘Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.’” “And he took him by the right hand and lifted him up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength.” “So he, leaping up, stood and walked and entered the temple with them – walking and leaping, and praising God.” “And all the people saw him walking, leaping, and praising God.” “And all the people saw him walking and praising God.” “Then they knew that it was he who sat begging alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with amazement at what had happened to him.” “Now as the lame man who was healed held on to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them in the porch which is called Solomon’s, greatly amazed.”

Now you see here that Peter and John had no alms to give this poor man. But they could do this good work to his body because of the power of God with them. You understand that you don’t have this same power to heal as these Apostles did, but you have the ability to think about what you could do for others who come into your range of experience to help them with the gifts and abilities that you do have. This is what good works are all about. But look at how Peter directs the on-lookers to the glory of the Lord. Verse 11 – “So when Peter saw it, (the amazement of the people) he responded to the people: ‘Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this?’” “Or why do you look so intently at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk?” This is really wonderful! Peter gives all the glory to God, and then bears witness to Him. “The God of Abraham,

Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go.” Peter preaches the gospel to those who were amazed. He used the opportunity which he gained through the good work, not only give glory to God, but to preach the gospel. Verse 16 says, “And His name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know.” “Yes, the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all.” These were some of the same people who had been in agreement with those leaders of the Jews who had put Jesus to death. They needed to understand that Jesus was indeed raised from the dead, even though they had helped to put Him to death. This good work, and especially the power of it to heal this man, did this very thing.

You see, your good works will give you the opportunity and open the door to be able to speak to people about Jesus Christ. You can speak to them about sin, and you can tell them also about the forgiveness of sins. The power to do a good work to the glory of God can only be done by the power of the risen Christ. Peter and John were going up to the temple to pray. When you pray you will begin to see good works that you can engage in. When you pray and are seeking the glory of God, God will let you know how to truly help others. You will be eager to do so. In the process, you may even get into some holy trouble for it. You may be brought before other people in authority, either in church or state, and yet look at what Peter does there in Chapter 4, verse 7. “And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, ‘By what power or by what name have you done this?’” “Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, ‘Rulers of the people and elders of Israel: If we this day are judged for a good deed done to a helpless man, by what means he has been made well, let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole.’” “This is the stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief corner stone.”

You see, this one good deed led to a whole chain of witness-bearing sessions before many of those who had put Jesus to death. God was the One who led Peter and John into this. He will do the same for you, if you will let your light so shine before men that they will see your good works and glorify God. You, as a Christian have been given light; see to it, that do not hide it! There is nothing hidden in relation to the gospel and what it is able to do; that will not be revealed in time, especially if we who understand tell other people the truth. Therefore, why should you be afraid of sharing it? There is nothing secret in these parables but that it will not be made known or come to light through those who will put their light on the lampstand so that all can see.

Now the 2nd Exhortation that Jesus gives as an application in relation to bearing fruit in your Christian life is - You have been given ears to hear; use them to judge things righteously. (Verses 23 and 24)

“If anyone has ears to hear, let him hear.” “Then He said to them, ‘Take heed what you hear.’” “With the same measure you use, it will be measured to you; and to you who hear, more will be given.” Learning to listen with ears that hear spiritually, and then receiving the word of God in order to live by its truth; this is something that is given to you by God. We have seen this in all that we have been taught in this section. “To you it has been given...” “It is God who is at work in you, both to will and to do according to His good pleasure.” But it is you who should be “working out your own salvation with fear and trembling.” (Philippians 2: 12) You must learn to use the spiritual discernment which God has given to you; to take heed to what you hear from other people and other sources of information which might come to you. Some things that other people say are good; they will benefit your soul; and other things are not good and they will not benefit your soul or the souls of other people. There are many things that other people will tell you about the word of God, and some of those things are good and right and others are not. There are many things that other people will tell you about themselves and what they think about other people. And some of these things are good and true and some are not. This is where discernment is needed. Take heed

what you hear. You should measure everything by the truth of what the Word of God says about it; and what it says you should do about it. You should not twist the word of God to suit your own fancy or to please other people in relation to the things that they say to you. You should measure the thoughts of your own mind, and also the words of others, by the principles and precepts of truth found in the word of God.

This measurement you should apply to everything that you hear. The word of God is your measuring stick of truth. That is how you judge what you should hear. You will also need to have wisdom and love to use the measuring stick rightly. That is the “how” of how you should hear. If you were to turn over to Luke 8: 18 you would find this very wording, in the parallel passage to the one that we are studying. “Therefore take heed how you hear.” Both are things that Christ would have us to take heed of; the what and how of hearing. You should take care that in the things that you hear, that your measurement of what you hear is right. This is the reason that you should be often reading the Bible. Read the Proverbs to see how it is that you should respond to both fools and wise men. You certainly should listen to those who are wise. Or do you think that you know better than they do how to live? Sometimes you will need to be corrected. How will you receive it? Proverbs 1: 17 says, “He who keeps instruction is in the way of life, but he who refuses correction goes astray.” “Whoever hides hatred has lying lips, and whoever spreads slander is a fool.” “In the multitude of words sin is not lacking, but he who restrains his lips is wise.” “The tongue of the righteous is choice silver; the heart of the wicked is worth little.” “The lips of the righteous feed many, but fools die for lack of wisdom.”

Oh, take heed if you are talkative, my friend. All of your talk about God and your criticisms of people who are trying to live a godly life shall all come to nothing. If you spend all of your time looking at the faults of Christians, how will you ever see your own? You will be a fool in the end and have to answer to God for it. Should anyone listen to a fool, one who thinks that he is wiser than a hundred men who can give a right answer? No, I think not. You should not think that you must believe everything that you hear from other people; you should weigh what you hear, and then you should decide if it is something that you need to listen to and act upon. Some things you need to respond to, and other things you do not need to meddle with. A good listener is one who does not feel that he has to answer everything that he hears; he realizes, however, that he will answer to God for everything that he says. Do your lips feed many? They can only feed many if you have been abiding in the word of God and praying about what you read and praying about the sermons that you hear. If you have understanding; wisdom from God and love for Him and for other people, you will learn to take heed to what you hear.

When you truly have God’s understanding, you will not hear and receive information that is slanderous to other people who are not there to defend themselves. You will not receive and give out private information about others without their approval, or participate in the destruction of someone else’s character just because you want the approval of the person who is giving it to you. You as a Christian should want the approval of God more than any other person’s approval. Would you yourself want to be spoken about in the way that the slanderer and the gossip speak about others? They speak about someone else and you come to realize, as they talk about that person, that they trying to get you to join them in looking upon that person as sinful or stupid because they do not like that person? Maybe they do not like that person because that person tried to get them to look at themselves and see where they needed to change. There may have been some aspect of sin in their life that they do not want to deal with, some aspect of righteousness that they need to engage in, and so they have spoken to you against them, because they do not want to change or repent. Let it not be the case with you, dear Christian, that you participate in other men's sins. Let your measurement of what you hear be a righteous measurement, and your measurement of how you listen, be with the wisdom and love of God, and men, working in your mind as you listen.

You can see that this is what the Lord Jesus wants, if you will turn to a couple verses with me. Turn to Matthew chapter 7. Here we find a very important principle being taught here by the Lord

Jesus to His disciples. Unfortunately, many people who do not want to be judged by God or by any man use this verse to justify themselves in their own sins instead of dealing with them. We will see that this is not the purpose of why the Lord Jesus gave these words here. He says, “Judge not, that you be not judged.” “For with the judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with the measure you use, it will be measured back to you” “And why do you look at the speck in your brother’s eye, but do not consider the plank in your own eye?” “Hypocrite!” First remove the plank from your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.” Now what is Jesus saying here? Is he saying here that we should never judge what other people are doing? No, that is not what He is saying. In fact, we find him saying in John 7: 24, “Do not judge according to appearance, but judge with righteous judgment.” Usually the problem is that when a person judges someone, he is judging according to appearance. He cannot see the heart of the person that he is judging and so he draws conclusions about that person that are not only not true, but as he speaks about his conclusions to others, it becomes very hurtful to that person they are speaking about. So what is Jesus’ answer to this? Don’t make yourself a high and mighty judge of the things that you see in other people’s speech and actions if you are not willing to look first at yourself. Look at your own life first and you may find a log in your own eye. And here, all the while, you have been trying to remove a speck from your brother’s eye. This is hypocrisy. If you will look into your own heart you may come to realize that your measurement of the greatness of the sins of other people may be a wrong measurement. Really, as you think about it, your own faults and sins could be far worse than theirs, but you really do not want to see it. We must all look to ourselves. Having looked at ourselves first, it is not wrong to go to a brother in love about the speck in his eye.

Another passage will also be helpful to us. It is 2 Corinthians 10, verse 7. “Do you look at things according to the outward appearance?” The Apostle Paul was trying to address this matter of how the believers at Corinth measured themselves and others. They had made a judgment concerning him that was disqualifying his authority over them as an Apostle. Verse 10 says, “For his letters, they say, are weighty and powerful, but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible.” Paul responds in verse 11, “Let such a person consider this, that what we are in word by letters when we are absent, such we will also be in deed when we are present.” “For we dare not class ourselves or compare ourselves with those who commend themselves.” “But they, measuring themselves, and comparing themselves by themselves, and comparing themselves among themselves, are not wise.” “We, however will not boast beyond measure, but within the limits of the sphere which God appointed us – a sphere which especially includes you.” What was wrong with these Corinthians measuring stick? It was that they had made their own powers of observation the standard of truth, as though their ears and eyes saw everything perfectly clearly. Therefore they thought that judgments could be made without taking time to look more carefully and see God’s work and his will. They had thought that since Paul was not impressive in his appearance and speech; that since he was not impressive in some fleshly way, that they did not need to listen to him or heed his Apostolic authority. Paul warns them that this is wrong. It is a fleshly way of thinking and reasoning. You and I need to be warned about it as well. Let us not glory in our own abilities and powers of observation. Let us not glory in men and their fleshly abilities, or even men and their spiritual gifts. But as it says in 2 Corinthians 10: 17, “Let him who glories, glory in the Lord.” “For not he who commends himself is approved, but whom the Lord commends.” May each of us do this.