

“Hearing and Believing”
Ephesians 1:13-14
(Preached at Trinity, December 29, 2013)

I'm supplying these notes for the benefit of busy pastors who may be engaged in bi-vocational work, feeling the pressure of preparing to preach twice on the Lord's Day while trying to balance full-time secular work as well as caring for their families. While the notes of another man are no substitute for personal study, I pray that these may aid in the process of preparing to preach.

Disclaimer: These are the actual notes I bring with me to the pulpit, which I follow loosely. They are not designed for publication. While I try to make every effort to give proper credit to my sources from the pulpit, adequate citations will sometimes be absent from my notes. If anyone feels their intellectual material has been used without adequate citation, please contact me and I'll make immediate correction giving credit.

1. We've been looking at **Verses 13-14**. The key phrase in this passage is “in Him.” God's incredible work of redemption finds its fullness in Christ. In Christ we received the Holy Spirit, God's glorious gift to us as the pledge of our inheritance and the seal of our redemption. The Holy Spirit is truly the neglected person of the Godhead. He is either dismissed and forgotten or portrayed in a way quite contrary to the true essence of His divine character.
 2. In Ephesians 1 Paul wants us to be clear of the wonderful nature of the Holy Spirit in our life. The Holy Spirit is the agent of our salvation. He's the source of our faith and repentance. He enables us to hear the Word of God and receive it. He is the pledge or earnest of our inheritance. In **Verse 13** Paul refers to Him as the “Holy Spirit of promise.”
 3. **Verse 13** touches on some things that we must not miss. It is full of rich truth.
Ephesians 1:13 NAU - "In Him ^(Christ), you also, after listening to the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation-- having also believed, you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise"
 4. Unfortunately most of the English translations miss the richness of truth Paul is conveying.
The ESV is pretty accurate here:
Ephesians 1:13 ESV - "In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit,"
A literal translation: “In whom you also when you heard the Word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation, and in whom also when you believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise.”
 5. We must not miss the power of God's infallible Word as we heard and believed. I want us to see here:
The **Indisputable** Word, The **Indispensible** Word, The **Irresistible** Word
- I. The Indisputable Word
 - A. Paul is using the phrase “Word of Truth” as referring to the Gospel but we must not miss the revelation of the Gospel – the Bible.
 1. This is why I think the ESV does a better job of conveying the richness of the passage. The word is λόγος
 - a. λόγος is a word rich in meaning
 - b. The NASB translates it “message” which is an acceptable translation. The NASB focuses on the content of the Gospel which is the message of truth.

- c. λόγος has a fuller meaning than the message of the Gospel. In the fullest sense it refers to God's revelation.
- a. It is the word used in John 1
John 1:1 NAS - "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God"
 - b. Jesus is the glorious revelation of God in bodily form. He is the divine λόγος
Hebrews 1:1-3 NAU - "God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, ² in these last days has spoken to us in His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the world. ³ And He is the radiance of His glory and the exact representation of His nature, and upholds all things by the word of His power. When He had made purification of sins, He sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high"
 - c. John wrote:
John 1:14 KJV - "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."
2. The expression "Word of Truth" is used in Scripture to refer to the Word of God.
James 1:18 NAU - "In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures."
2 Timothy 2:15 NAU - "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word of truth."
- B. The Bible is the Word of "Truth" – It is infallible and indisputable. It is inerrant.
1. Christianity presupposes the truth of Scripture. The Bible provides our credibility; in fact, it is the basis of our Christian faith. The claim and presupposition of orthodox Christianity is that the Bible is divinely inspired, authoritative, and inerrant—it is the infallible truth of God.
 2. **Lorraine Boettner:** "The answer we give to the question, 'What is Christianity?' depends quite largely on the view we take of Scripture. If we believe that the Bible is the very word of God and infallible, we will develop one conception of Christianity. If we believe that it is only a collection of human writings, perhaps considerably above the average in its spiritual and moral teachings but nevertheless containing many errors, we will develop a radically different conception of Christianity, if, indeed, what we then have can legitimately be called Christianity."
 3. If the Bible is the Word of God and God cannot err then the Bible cannot err. God is intimately connected with His Word
Psalms 33:4 NAU - "For the word of the LORD is upright, And all His work is *done* in faithfulness."
Psalms 12:6 NAU - "The words of the LORD are pure words; As silver tried in a furnace on the earth, refined seven times."

4. If the Bible is the Word of Truth then the Gospel is indisputable and undeniably true.
It is "The Gospel of your salvation."
The Gospel is the only way of salvation.

II. The Indispensible Word

- A. Paul makes an inseparable connection between faith and the Word of God
Ephesians 1:13 ESV - "In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit"
 1. Hearing the Word precedes believing in Christ – "you heard . . . and believed."
 2. The "Word of Truth" is the only source of saving faith.
1689 London Baptist Confession
Chapter 1:1 - Of the Holy Scriptures
The Holy Scripture is the only sufficient, certain, and infallible rule of all saving knowledge, faith, and obedience.
- B. Saving faith presupposes knowledge—knowledge that comes from the Word of truth, knowledge that forms the essence of the Gospel
 1. The Bible contains God's Law and the demand for obedience
We cannot know sin apart from the law
Romans 3:20 – "...for by the law *is* the knowledge of sin."
Romans 7:8 – "...For without the law sin was dead."
 2. The Bible contains God's revelation of the Gospel of Christ
Colossians 1:5 NAU - "because of the hope laid up for you in heaven, of which you previously heard in the word of truth, the gospel"
Ephesians 1:13 ESV - "In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation"
 - a. The Bible describes our sinfulness
 - b. The Bible describes the nature of Christ – human and divine
It describes His sinless life
It describes the nature of the atonement
 - c. The Bible describes God's demand for faith and repentance
 3. The Bible is the only source of knowledge unto salvation – God's appointed means
 4. In the Parable of the Sower Jesus describes the Word as the seed which the sower sows to the saving of the soul
Matthew 13:23 NAS - "And the one on whom seed was sown on the good soil, this is the man who hears the word and understands it; who indeed bears fruit, and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty."
- C. The proclamation of God's Word is the ordinary means of salvation
 1. What about those who have never had access to a Bible? They are lost.
 2. This is why missions and evangelism are so essential
 3. It is false to say that men are only lost if they reject Christ

III. The Irresistible Word

A. Paul says, "when you heard"

1. Again, I don't think the NASB expresses the fullness of meaning
NASB – "after listening to the message"
2. A better translation is, "and when you heard the Word of truth"
3. This "hearing" is more than just listening. It is more than just the operation of our auditory senses. There are multitudes who have heard with their physical ears and not hear to the saving of their soul.
4. Salvation demands spiritual hearing. Our ears must be opened supernaturally.
5. Jesus told the Pharisees:
John 8:43 NAU - "Why do you not understand what I am saying? *It is because you cannot hear My word.*"
6. Paul declared in **Romans 10**
Romans 10:17 NAS - "So faith *comes* from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ."
7. The Holy Spirit must come upon us with Divine illumination
We saw this in **Verse 9**
Ephesians 1:9 NAU - "He made known to us the mystery of His will"

B. God uses His Word powerfully and effectually

1. The Word of God has the power to cut through the heart of the most hardened sinner - God can save even the worse skeptic and scoffer
Hebrews 4:12 – "For the word of God *is* quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and *is* a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart."
2. God makes the preaching of the Word effectual
1 Thessalonians 1:5-6 – "For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but also in power, and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake. And ye became followers of us, and of the Lord, having received the word in much affliction, with joy of the Holy Ghost:"
1 Corinthians 2:1-5 NAS - "And when I came to you, brethren, I did not come with superiority of speech or of wisdom, proclaiming to you the testimony of God. ² For I determined to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ, and Him crucified. ³ And I was with you in weakness and in fear and in much trembling. ⁴ And my message and my preaching were not in persuasive words of wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power, ⁵ that your faith should not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power of God."
3. God applies and impresses His Word upon our hearts
James 1:21 NAS - "Therefore putting aside all filthiness and *all* that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls."

- a. God has implanted His Word upon our hearts.
Jeremiah 31:33-34 NAS - "But this is the covenant which I will make with the house of Israel after those days," declares the LORD, "I will put My law within them, and on their heart I will write it; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. ³⁴ "And they shall not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they shall all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them," declares the LORD, "for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more."
 - b. It is like a horticulturalist making a graft upon a plant. The two grow together and becomes one.
- C. The Holy Spirit takes the Word of Truth and illuminates our minds enabling us to perceive and comprehend the spiritual truths
1. This is an essential aspect of the new birth. We become spiritually alive and able to perceive spiritual truths
 Jesus told Nicodemus:
John 3:3 NAS - "Truly, truly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." (ὄρω)
 2. On one hand the Bible is perspicuous (i.e. clearness of expression or style) – the Bible can be understood.
 The Bible is a plain book. It is intelligible by the common man.
 3. On the other hand the Bible cannot be known or understand by the natural man. He is incapable of discerning spiritual truths without the help of the Holy Spirit.
 1. It isn't just knowing the Word. It demands a new heart
 Paul told Timothy:
2 Timothy 3:15 NAS - "from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus."
 2. This is clearly seen in the case of Lydia
Acts 16:14 NAS - "And a certain woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God, was listening; and the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul."
 3. Paul wrote in 1 Thes:
1 Thessalonians 2:13 NAS - "And for this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received from us the word of God's message, you accepted *it* not as the word of men, but *for* what it really is, the word of God, which also performs its work in you who believe."
 4. The greatest power in the entire universe accompanies God's Word effectually as the Holy Spirit opens the dead hearts of sinners and applies to them the atoning sacrifice of Christ enabling them to receive the good news of the Gospel

Conclusion:

1. God will be successful in saving all of His elect people. His Word will powerfully cut through the most hardened sinner.
2. But we must never diminish human responsibility. While we are dependent upon God's Holy Spirit to open our hearts, all are commanded to hear and believe.
James 1:18-24 NAS - "In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth, so that we might be, as it were, the first fruits among His creatures. ¹⁹ *This* you know, my beloved brethren. But let everyone be quick to hear, slow to speak *and* slow to anger; ²⁰ for the anger of man does not achieve the righteousness of God. ²¹ Therefore putting aside all filthiness and *all* that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word implanted, which is able to save your souls. ²² But prove yourselves doers of the word, and not merely hearers who delude themselves. ²³ For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; ²⁴ for *once* he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was."
3. Have you believed it? In it is life. To refuse it is death.
Mark 16:15-16 NAS - "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation.
¹⁶ "He who has believed and has been baptized shall be saved; but he who has disbelieved shall be condemned."