

ARE WE LISTENING?

December 21, 2011

For more than sixty years, Brother V. E. Howard conducted the International Gospel Hour on the radio. Brother Howard would start his program by saying, “Are you listening?” This is a question that emphasizes the fact that one should engage the mind and pay close attention when the gospel of Christ is being preached from the pulpit or taught in the Bible class.

Remember when Jesus finished His Sermon on the Mount and the reaction He received from the people? Matthew wrote, “the people were astonished at his doctrine: For he taught them as *one* having authority, and not as the scribes” (Mt. 7:28-29). To have had such a reaction to His preaching, the people certainly must have been listening intently to what He was saying.

Sometimes, we are guilty of not listening to the truths found in the gospel because we have made up our minds as to what we believe and will not hear anything that goes against those beliefs. The problem that results from this is that we may have been taught something other than what the scriptures actually teach. John encouraged his readers to “believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world” (1 Jn. 4:1). If a problem existed in the time of the apostles concerning false teachers, surely that same problem exists today. Only eternity will tell us how many people were exposed to the gospel of Christ and rejected it because they would not listen to the soul saving words that the Spirit led the writers of the Bible to both speak and record.

When we sit in a Bible class or listen to a sermon, we must engage our minds in what is being taught. This is desirable for two reasons: we must make sure that we are not allowing a falsehood to be taught and we must be eager to apply the teaching to our lives. It is not enough to be present in body only; we must be present in mind and spirit as well.

The Holy Spirit has recorded for us that three thousand truly listened on the Day of Pentecost because they wanted to know how to be saved, and they were obedient to that message. Just as those on Pentecost, we must obey in the same way because there is no other revelation coming (Jude 3). We have to take what God has given us and submit to it. In the words of Brother V. E. Howard, “**ARE WE LISTENING?**”