

Hear and Understand

Opening Text: Matthew 15:1-2, 10-17

V.10 - "When He had called the multitude to Himself, He said to them, "Hear and understand:"

V.15-17 - Then Peter answered and said to Him, "Explain this parable to us." So Jesus said, "Are you also still without understanding? do you not understand?"...

Context

In this passage, some Pharisees and scribes brought an accusation against the disciples of Jesus for not washing their hands before eating bread and because of breaking the tradition of the elders. Defilement was a big deal in the teachings of the Pharisees. Jesus, used the opportunity to bring a correct understanding of what defilement is and pointed out that the real problem was their lack of understanding and their blindness as leaders. Today's message is not about defilement as such, but about the importance of 'understanding'.

Introduction

Jesus said: "hear and understand"!

It is so important to understand:

Proverbs 4:7 - *Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom. And in all your getting, get understanding.*

1 Corinthians 14:20 - *Brethren, do not be children in understanding; however, in malice be babes, but in understanding be mature.*

Understanding means "good judgement or comprehension, to grasp an idea, to perceive the meaning". According to one dictionary: "*enlightened intelligence*" - that makes me think of the prayer of Paul in **Ephesians 1:18** - "*the eyes of your understanding being enlightened*".

Paul also prayed the same prayer for the Colossians:

Colossians 1:9 - *For this reason we also, since the day we heard it, do not cease to pray for you, and to ask that you may be filled with the knowledge of His will in all wisdom and spiritual understanding;*

The understanding we are talking about today is not natural understanding but spiritual understanding (see 1 Corinthians 2:13-15).

A lot of people have a huge deficit when it comes to spiritual understanding. They understand well natural things but not spiritual things. That is why we read this about Jesus: **Luke 24:45** - *And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.*

4 things can keep you from understanding:

1. Man-made religious thinking

In the case of the religious Jews, their lack of understanding was the direct result of the fact that they followed a man-made religious system. They held on to traditions that made the word of God of no effect.

Matthew 13:13-15 - *13 Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand. 14 And in them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says: 'Hearing you will hear and shall not understand, and seeing you will see and not perceive; 15 For the hearts of this people have grown dull. Their ears are hard of hearing, and their eyes they have closed, lest they should see with their eyes and hear with their ears, lest they should understand with their hearts and turn, so that I should heal them.'*

They were blinded by religious tradition. That is why Jesus called them the blind leading the blind. In **2 Corinthians 3:14** Paul said that this blindness is only taken away in Christ.

2. A hardened or unbelieving heart

Mark 8:17 - *But Jesus, being aware of it, said to them, "Why do you reason because you have no bread? Do you not yet perceive nor understand? Is your heart still hardened?"*

V.21 - *So He said to them, "How is it you do not understand?"*

Unbelief is a type of intellectual resistance, a wall we put up against spiritual truth. Unbelief resists the understanding of a miraculous God.

3. Neglecting to seek God

Romans 13:11 - *There is none who understands; there is none who seeks after God.*

Psalms 14:2 - *The Lord looks down from heaven upon the children of men, to see if there are any who understand, who seek God.*

Seeking God and understanding are inter-connected. If we live our lives always in the natural and always going about natural things, we cannot expect to develop our spirit man and understand spiritual things.

4. Demonic

2 Corinthians 4:4 - *whose minds the god of this age has blinded, who do not believe, lest the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine on them*

Ephesians 4:18 - *having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the blindness of their heart;*

The enemy works overtime to blind people, to twist truth and corrupt knowledge, to cause people to have the kind of understanding that is 'darkened'. Jesus came to give us understanding:

1 John 5:20a - *And we know that the Son of God has come and has given us an understanding...*

We don't need to stay in the dark, thank God we can receive and increase in understanding.

How to increase in understanding:

1. Through the Holy Spirit

Job 32:8 - *But there is a spirit in man, and the breath of the Almighty gives him understanding.*

(The “breath of the Almighty”: **John 14:26** *But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, He will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all things that I said to you.*)

Don't just walk in the natural, but walk in the Spirit, be filled with the Spirit, learn His ways.

2. Through good teaching

Jeremiah 3:15 - *And I will give you shepherds according to My heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding.*

Nehemiah 8:8 - *So they read distinctly from the book, in the Law of God; and they gave the sense, and helped them to understand the reading.*

Acts 8:30-31 - **30** *So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, “Do you understand what you are reading?”* **31** *And he said, “How can I, unless someone guides me?” And he asked Philip to come up and sit with him.*

In your search for understating you don't need to do it on your own. That's the beauty of church. God ordains teachers and pastors to come alongside and help you.

3. By setting your own heart to understand

Daniel 10: 11 -12 *And he said to me, “O Daniel, man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak to you, and stand upright, for I have now been sent to you.” While he was speaking this word to me, I stood trembling. **12** Then he said to me, “Do not fear, Daniel, for from the first day that you set your heart to understand, and to humble yourself before your God, your words were heard; and I have come because of your words.*

V.14a – *Now I have come to make you understand ...*

Proverbs 2:3-5 *Yes, if you cry out for discernment, and lift up your voice for understanding, If you seek her as silver, and search for her as for hidden treasures; Then you will understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.*

Psalms 119:25 - *I am Your servant; give me understanding, that I may know Your testimonies*

Conclusion

In all your getting, get understanding. Make it your goal to be mature in understanding. Be diligent to seek God and get into His word!

“ Consider what I say, and may the Lord give you understanding in all things”.

2 Timothy 2:7