

## Hearing with an Honest and Good Heart (Luke 8:15)

by Justin Hopkins

Farming is a concept with which our society is very familiar. The countryside surrounding our towns and cities is littered with plowed fields that are under cultivation for one purpose or another. It is also replete with parcels of ground that are full of rocks and scrub brush scarcely fit for a goat to eat.

You can pick out quite easily the fields that are being farmed, because they have been cleared of all other plants and trees, all of the rocks have been removed, the soil has been carefully prepared, and often the fields are irrigated. Farmers spend a great deal of time, energy, and money to carefully prepare their fields, because they want their crop to bear fruit. Their livelihood depends on it.

In Luke 8, Jesus gives us the parable of the soils, in which our hearts are compared to parcels of ground in various states of preparation, with only the prepared field (heart) bringing benefit. It is made clear that we ought to carefully prepare our hearts so that we can gain the most benefit possible from them; after all, our very lives depend on it. In verse 15, Jesus describes what a prepared heart is like.

### Hearing with an Honest Heart

An honest heart is one that is “good, excellent in its nature and characteristics, and therefore well-adapted to its ends” (Thayer, 322). Our hearts have a singular purpose (Eccl. 12:13).

If my heart is going to be fruitful, I must prepare it so that when I study and meditate upon the Word of God, I am ready to receive it (James 1:21). This process involves purifying my heart, so that it is excellent and ready to do the Master’s work (2 Tim. 2:21).

A good heart is one that is “inclined to goodness and accordingly eager to learn saving truth and ready to bear the fruits of a Christian life” (Thayer, 2). As the old cliché goes, “Minds are like parachutes; they work best when open.” When you look out on a freshly plowed field, it seems to be teeming with fertility. If nothing is planted in the field, it isn’t very long before wildflowers and native grasses have gone to seed and covered the field. That is because it was ready to grow something!

Our hearts and minds ought so to be prepared. Those Christians in Thessalonica were praised because they received the word “*as it is in truth, the Word of God.*” The result was that it “*effectually worketh also in you that believe*” (1 Thess. 2:13). They were ready to not only hear God’s Word, but to put it to work in their lives.



## For Your Information

# Senior Servants

### **EVENING AT WESTSIDE HOSTESSES**

There will be a meeting of all hostesses today at 4:30 in the fellowship hall. All hostesses need to attend!

### **EVENING AT WEST SIDE**

Our Annual Evening at West Side Dinner will be held on May 22 at 6 PM. Ladies should have received invitations, if you haven't please see Jo Ann this morning. Please respond to your hostess as soon as possible!

### **LADIES NIGHT OUT**

Ladies' Night Out will be on Thursday, May 27th, 6:30 p.m. hosted by Jennifer Laplante and Jeanny Gilpin and will be at Jeanny's house. The theme will be "Sisters" and we will begin a "Secret Sister" year with the "reveal" next year at this time. Please bring a Mexican dish for our Mexican Fiesta. If you are unable to attend, but would like to participate in the Secret Sister for the coming year, please see Jennifer for a short information sheet and yours will be put in the hat with the others. You will get a "Secret Sister" for the year to surprise with little surprises throughout the year on special occasions. We hope to see you on the 27th.

### **GRADUATION DINNER**

We will be honoring our graduates on Sunday, May 30, with a fellowship potluck dinner after morning services. Our grads this year include: Caroline Doss, Garrett Durham, Ethan Rogers and college grads Kirk Gilpin and Caleb Guard.

### **EDP MEETING**

There will be an EDP Meeting on June 6 at 4:00.

### **VIRGINIA CHRISTIAN CAMP**

Hope you have already turned in your registration for VCC 2010. It's shaping up to be one of the best years yet!!!! Hurry and get your application in—deadline was May 15!!!!!!!

### **CHRISTIAN TRAINING SERIES**

CTS at Freed-Hardeman will be held July 11-15. Registration forms and bus forms (green) are available in the foyer.

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**What a great meeting with John Shannon!! CD's will be available if you missed him or would like extra copies. Sign up on the media door and Tom will get you a copy as soon as possible.**

**Thanks Tom for all your hard work!!!!**

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Lynn Anderson

Norma Biller

Betty Buckner

Marguerite Charles

Jim Dorsett

Al Furrow

Collin Gregory

Walter & Betty Jenkins

Martha Keith

Margaret Kratz

Miriam Majors

Jo Musgrove

Grace Myers

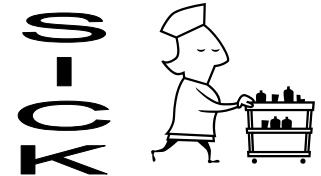
Elsie Smith

Ruth Stanton

Evelyn White

EV Wimmer

WJ Wood



- **Annette Shrader** will be having surgery on May 24 at UVA.
- **Claude Crowe** will undergo more tests before his surgery is scheduled.
- Mary Cannaday, Karen Munsey's aunt, has cancer.
- Marty Clark, father of a friend of the Laplantes, is in critical condition after a heart attack.

#### **Remember in prayer:**

Madolia Rosette, Shannon VanRavestein, Kathleen Soliday, Elizabeth Lynch, Bob Watson, Mr. & Mrs. Glenn Hartman Sr.

*Sympathy is extended to the family of Joseph Gray Cannaday, Karen Munsey's uncle, who passed away last week.*

May 2010

**Announcements** Mike Durham  
**Song Leader (AM)** Eric Earnhart  
**Opening Prayer (AM)**  
5/2 Barry White  
5/9 Danny Guard  
5/16 Tom Richardson  
5/23 Charlie Gwaltney  
5/30 Jim Harrington  
**Preside at Communion** Paul Mays  
**Serve Table**  
Ethan Rogers, Jim Cooke  
Marc Laplante, Jack Cook  
**Closing Prayer**  
5/2 Bob Garby  
5/9 Jeff Durham  
5/16 Ron White  
5/23 Herman Lowe  
5/30 Bob Martin  
**Song Leader (PM)** Sam Valentine  
**Opening Prayer (PM)**  
5/2 Herb Baker  
5/9 Glenn Hartman  
5/16 Jeremy White  
5/23 Josh Whitlow  
5/30 Roger Mays  
**Scripture Reader** Nathan Pelfrey  
**Closing Prayer (PM)**  
5/2 Wayne Dixon  
5/9 David McFalls  
5/16 Don Pettit  
5/23 Ethan Rogers  
5/30 Gene Benefield  
**Serve Table (PM)**  
Jeff Guilliams, Bradford Durham  
**Song Leader (Wed)** Bob Garby  
**Prayer (Wed)**  
5/5 Fred Altizer  
5/12 Collin Gregory  
5/19 Garrett Durham  
5/28 Jimmy Harrington  
**Open/Close Bldg** Tom Rogers  
**Greeters** Anderson, Guilliams  
**Nursery Attend** Dee House (AM)  
Jo Hartman (PM)  
**Ushers** David Brown, Curtis Oakes  
**Handouts** Ron White, Claude Crowe  
Herb Baker, Mark Brooks  
**Prepare communion**  
Judy Durham, Michelle Earnhart

**Last weeks attendance 5/9-12/10**

Bible Class— 138    Worship Service—160  
Sunday Eve.— 143    Monday Eve—156  
Tuesday Eve.—129    Wednesday Eve.—147  
Contribution—\$5313

## “But God...” (1)

The phrase “but God” appears in 44 verses in the King James Bible. It is a phrase of contrast showing that something was said, done or had occurred which was followed by something God said or did that changed the matter completely. An examination of the occurrences of this phrase makes for some interesting studies.

Genesis 20 records the movement of Abraham after the destruction of the cities of the plain (Sodom, Gomorrah, etc.). When he came to Gerar he declared to the king of Gerar that Sarah was his wife (the same declaration he had made to the Pharaoh of Egypt earlier- Gen. 12:11-13). The king then went about to accept her into his harem. This was what Abraham feared would happen, with the exception that his life was spared since she was thought to be his sister and not his wife. How Abraham expected to protect the honor of Sarah and retain possession of her as his wife we are not told. This was obviously an attempt by Abraham to preserve his life on his terms rather than allowing God to preserve him on His. Though not detailed in Scripture, Abraham was in a difficult situation and the promise made to him (Gen. 12:1-3) perhaps in difficulty as well.

However, as He had done with the previous incident in Egypt, God intervened. Genesis 20:3 states, “**But God** came to Abimelech in a dream by night, and said to him, Behold, thou art but a dead man, for the woman which thou hast taken; for she is a man's wife.” With the phrase “but God” we see God’s actions put into place that preserved the Abrahamic promise. He overruled the desires of the king and the foolishness of Abraham in order to maintain His promise to mankind. It is with this abrupt statement that God is seen to enter the picture and save the day.

-Eddy