

Are You Crowned Spiritual ?

Title: Are you dull of Hearing?

Text: Hebrews 5:11-14

Would you take your Bibles, please, and turn to the book of Hebrews chapter 5 and we will begin reading at Vs 11. \* The Title of our subject is not too thrilling, but it came right out of the Bible. It is there in Vs 11. The title is: "ARE YOU DULL OF HEARING."

Now, I know that is just what you wanted to listen too today. You have come to have someone tell you that you are "DULL" OF HEARING". But, that is what the Bible is talking about in Hebrews chapter 5 verse 11.

The Book of Hebrews was written to Jewish Christians. Jewish believers who had a temple standing in Jersualem; and who were still practicing sacrificies. The Temple was not destroyed until 70 A.D. by the Romans . And during this period of time, between the death of Jesus and the distruction of the Temple, the Jewish Christians were tempted to go back to the comfort of Judiasm. Because Christians were, now, under persecution.

So, when a Jew became a Christian he was open to persectuion and to suffering. And many of them were thinking: WHY, DON" T WE GO BACK TO JUDIASM? After all, Christianity is a fulfillment of Judiasm. So, why don't we just stay there and be SECRET BELIEVERS. And there is a lot of warnings in this book about that sort of belief and practice. And in chapter 5 verses 11-14, we have a very important warning. A practical warning for all christians today. As to why believers never mature in the faith.

(Read Hebrews 5:11-14)

Join me for a moment of prayer

Father, we thank you, again, for these wonderful moments of looking into your Word and examining its truth and applying it to our lives. Father, we pray that you would help us to understand the issue of maturity; and the cause of immaturity in the life of a believer. We pray that you would help us to discern where we are in all of this. That we might determine to do something about it. Father, we thank you for the overall

message of your Word. And we pray that you would help us to see where this particular passage of scripture fits in with your total revelation. That many of us are not understanding because we are dull of hearing. Help us, Our Father, in this area of life for Jesus' sake...Amen.

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Last Labor day weekend, I was privileged to spent the weekend with about 80 of our people up at Camp Sugar Pine. We were there taking part in a Family Camp. Sunday night we gathered around the camp fire and we were singing and just having a <sup>great</sup> delightful time.

But, you know I realized that some people, just a little ways away, were not hearing. I mean they were not paying any attention. They were asleep. It is night and it has been a long day and we are around the camp fire singing songs, ~~but~~ but, there where some people just a few yards away, in a cabin who were asleep. They were sacked out....

Now, that is what you call <sup>are you</sup> "DULL OF HEARING".....

However, that is not the point of Hebrews chapter 5. It is not simpley that people had gone to sleep. There is something else involved. And that is what I want to look at this morrowing.

(2C) We are basical dealing with an exhortation to maturity. And how we need mature people who understand what God's truth is really all about.

(1D) And in this exhortation to maturity, Paul begins by dealing with the causes of immaturity. The causes or reasons for immaturity in a ~~person's~~ <sup>Christian's</sup> life. And I believe you can see three causes or reasons for immaturity in these verses.

(1E) Number one, the first reason for immaturity <sup>is</sup> ~~was~~ the lack of response ~~these people have~~ to what ~~was~~ <sup>is</sup> being taught <sup>from the Word of God, & Living Response</sup>

You can always tell immaturity by the response in people to what is being taught. There are a ~~two~~ <sup>three</sup> things that I want you to understand.

(1F) First of all, let's look at the content that is involved <sup>in this content</sup>

What are we talking about? Why are people dull of hearing? Why are Christians immature? What is the content that is involved?

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(10) In Vs 11, it begins: "CONCERNING Him." Now, who are we talking about? Well, the closest person in content is found at the end of Vs 10. It is a guy by the name of Melchizedek. O.K. who is Melchizedek? He is a high Priest and a believer in the Most High God in the ancient city of Salem. And by reference he becomes an example of the high priestly ministry of Jesus.

And the point of this passage is: Are we concerning ourselves with the depth of the ministry of Jesus. You see, the book of Hebrews is teaching that Jesus is our High Priest. He knows what we are going through. In fact, Jesus is the fulfillment of the Melchizedek priesthood. He is also, by way of application the fulfillment of the Levitical Priesthood. Jesus, because He is God, is our merciful High Priest. PRAISE THE LORD.

So, Paul is saying that some people are immature because they are not responding to the High Priestly ministry of Jesus Christ. In other words, what is being taught about Jesus goes in one ear and out the other. They are not getting awholed of it. And this is what this passage is all about. It tells us why some people hear the gospel on the surface, but it doesn't penetrate them. This passage, also, tells us why some people when they do hear the gospel, they do not respond to the obvious truth. This passage deals more with application than with understanding. Because many people do understand what is being taught, but they are not responding to the principles of God's Word by way of application.

Thus, the content of the reason why is the depth of the ministry of Jesus as our High Priest. And how we desperately need Him. And many of us keep going on in our own strength and our own engery, egnoring our desperate need of Jesus and His ministry in our life.

It is not simply that I believe in the cross and that He died for my sins. It is not simply that He arose from the dead and he is coming back. All of that is true. And I am thankful for it...But, I need Jesus NOW. And you need Him now. And we cannot live without Him. We cannot live without His ministry in our life.

And some people are not responding to this. They know it. But, they are not applying it. The content is about the ministry of Jesus Christ as our High Priest..interceding for us..and doing what we desperately need doing in our life

(1F) A couple of things about this content which is found in Vs 11.

(1G) First <sup>Paul</sup> the extent of the content. Paul says in Vs 11, "Concerning Him we have much to say." Literally the Greek reads: "THE WORD IS MUCH TO US...THE WORD IS MUCH TO US." Paul is speaking about Christ. And he is saying, "What the Bible has to teach about Jesus, even to us(that is Paul) even to us this word is much." That is, it is powerful. There is much, here, to learn. There is much you should learn about Jesus Christ.

You know, you can never really get tired of learning about Jesus, if you get turned on. That is a fact. If you are responding to the Holy Spirit of God, you will never get tired of learning about Jesus.

In fact, one of the marks of Christian maturity is that you settle down into one major goal in your life...LEARNING MORE ABOUT Jesus."

We sang a few moments ago: MORE ABOUT JESUS WOULD I KNOW..More of his grace to others show...More of His saving fullness see, More of His love who died for me." What a wonderful concept to follow.

Paul wrote in Philippians 3:10: "That I may know him, and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His suffering, being conformed to His death."

Now, let me ask you. <sup>aguest?</sup> Was Paul a Christian? Sure he was. He had come to know Christ through faith. He had walked with him. But, he is saying that his driving goal in life is to know more about Christ day after day after day.

Dear friends, that is maturity. And the extent of this whole content which some people are not responding to..IS LEARNING MORE ABOUT JESUS.

So, if you stop learning about Jesus...if you stop discovering the wonderful ministry that He has in your life, you stop growing spiritually. Thus, you are immature. And that is the problem of so many christians today.

(2G) There is something else I want you to see about this content. Not only the extent, but also the explanation and its difficulty. Paul says in Vs 11: "CONCERNING HIM WE HAVE MUCH TO SAY, AND IT IS HARD TO EXPLAIN."

Form this word "EXPLAIN" or "UTTERED"(KJV), we get our word "HEREMENUTICS". Heremenutics is the science of interpretation. That is, how to interpret the Bible. How to explain the Bible....

Christ was the master of heremenutics...explaining the scriptures. He says in Luke chapter 24 that all the Bible, including the law and the prophets and the writings, every part of it, was concerning HIM. You see, Jesus knew the depth of meaning. And he said that the entire Bible, from Genesis to Revelation, is about Himself.....

Dear friends, if you do not see Jesus in the pages of the O.T., you do not know, yet, what is there. The Bible teaches that some people do not respond to the depth of teaching for a very definite reason and that reason is hard to explain.

Now, this doesn't mean that the Bible is hard to understand. Or, that the Bible isn't clear.....Satan would have you believe that....A lot of people say that the Bible is hard to understand.....I HAVE ONE GREAT THEOLOGICAL WORD FOR THAT ATTITUDE.....BOLOGNA....

Oh listen, dear friends, little children can understand the Bible. Don't worry about the difficult sections. There are plenty of sections that we can understand and apply.

The point is: that there are reasons..why...we are not understanding the scriptures. And the main reason is found with the HEARERS. It is hard to explain the scriptures to people who are not responding to what is being taught. PEOPLE WHO ARE DULL OF HEARING.....

You know how it is.....You talk with someone and you try to explain to them....But nothing seems to get through.....They are dull of hearing....

(2F) Now, that is the content. The second thing I want you to notice about

*the* response of those people in Vs 11 is the change that they experienced.

*And don't let this happen to you  
There is a warning, here, Don't let this happen to you*

They actually went through a change because they were not responding to what was being taught. Paul says in Vs 11: "Since you have become dull of hearing." This phrase is in the perfect tense. And that means that at one point in time they were not dull of hearing. But they went through a change in their life. And they have now become dull of hearing.

Oh, ~~I hope you will~~ <sup>We all need to</sup> apply this truth. You may have had a past that has really responded to Jesus and what the Bible teaches. But, that does not guarantee that you are a mature christian, right now, today..You see, you do not just arrive at maturity and then stay there the rest of your life. You can always fall right back to being a baby. It can happen JUST LIKE THAT...

You maybe a mature person from the past. Say, 20 years ago. 20 years ago you were solid in the Word. You witnessed daily. But, that is no guarantee that you will stay there. And that is the sudden temptation of the Devil. He gets us to believe that we have arrived in our spiritual growth. And thus, we engore the continued teaching of the Word. We stop applying Biblical preinciples to our life. Oh...we still believe the correct doctrine, and thus we think that we are mature. But, you are not. You are dull of hearing. And you have become a baby, again.

Now, dear friends, this little verb tells us that there is a danger here. And if we are not careful in our attitude we can become dull of hearing. A real change can take place in our life..Very important.

So, a lack of responds to what is being taught concerns <sup>First</sup> the content to what is being taught. Secondly, a change will result in our life. And (3 )third, the condition we find ourself in. Our condition. This condition is discribed as BEING DULL.

Now, what does it mean to be dull of hearing? We all know what a "dull" person is. It is someone who is..BALH..NO PERSONALITY...

But, that is not the meaning, here. The word "dull" is simply the word "lazy"... "lazy"..Lszy in what? In the realm of hearing.

Now, it doesn't simple mean a refusal to listen to words. It is referring to application. A lot of people hear the truth and principles of God's Word, they might even know it, but there is no application of the truth to their lives. The truth is not penetrating. WHY? Because they are dull.....lazy.... *This is why people can say, no they - in heart - doing the work, yet really are lazy.*

So, what is being said, here, is that some people have become lazy as to the application of the depth of teaching about the person of Christ....

*So the first reason for immaturity is the lack of response to what is being taught*

(2E) N.O.C. A second reason for immaturity is found in Vs 12: They

needed basic teaching. Paul says: "For though by this time you ought to be teachers, you have need again for some one to teach you the elementary principles of the oracles of God, and you have come to need milk and not solid food."

There are two things I would like you to notice.

(1F) First, the period of time. The time between their conversion and the writing of this book should mean that they would be teaching what they had learned since they first became christians....Vs 12 says: "For though by this time:"....You see, a period of time had taken place. It is talking about that period of time which has elapsed since you became a Christian.... 6 months...2 years...or whatever....

When you became a Christian no one expected you to know everything about the Bible. But, the point is: that over a period of time you should grow, you should mature, something should happen in your life. *There should be changes -*

(2F) Secondly, it tells me that God expects all of us to be teachers at some point in our life. Obviously every believer is suppose to be a teacher.

AND WHAT ARE WE TO TEACH? "The elementary principles of the oracles of God."

That is, the basic fundamental principles of the Gospel: who Jesus was....

Why did he come....Why did he die....His resurrection and his second

coming.....The elementary - Principles of God!  
~~This is called one on one discipleship.....~~

And Paul is saying that some of you are not doing this. And that is why you are immature. That is why you are babies needing milk instead of solid food.....

It is not talking about being a great Bible teacher in a Sunday School class. It is talking about sharing your faith with others. Teaching others the Gospel message. Teaching others the basic fundamental principles of the faith. And every Christian should be teaching these basic principles to others.

And the reason for immaturity is that we refuse to be teachers of the Word. And we desire only milk. Dear friends, when we start sharing our faith and teaching the principles of the gospel...RESULT...we will want the solid food of God's Word...RESULT...Christian maturity.

(3 ) Now, let's come to the third reason for immaturity.

First, a lack of responds to *to what is being taught.*

Secondly, our need of basic teaching because we refuse to be teachers.

And third, the results that are produced. In Vs 13 and 14 we see the results in two kinds of people. Those using milk. And those using solid food.

(1 )First of all, notice the folks who use milk. Vs 13 says, "For every one who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness, for he is a babe." There it is! Because of a lack of ability in the Word of God, *The immature* he is discribed as needing milk.

And did you notice what the verse said? <sup>u</sup>He is not accustomed to the Word of righteousness." The word "accustomed" means "without experience." *No experience*

Now, when I became a Christian I was pronounced "righteous." That is God's act to the believer. That is my position in Christ. I am righteous in Christ.

But, that is not what Paul is talking about here. He is talking about practical righteousness. How do I apply what I have learned in Christ. That is what he is talking about. And the one who is using milk is without experience in applying righteousness in his life.

Let's ask ourselves a question. ARE WE REALLY APPLYING THE TRUTH WE KNOW, SO THAT OTHER PEOPLE WILL KNOW AND SEE THAT WE LIVE WHAT WE SAY WE BELIEVE?

Are we doing that? And if we are not doing that, it means that we lack ability in the Word of God. And if we are trying to have that ability without studying the Bible, forget it. It is only God's Word in a life that gives one the skill and experience to apply God's truth in daily life.



Do you know why you find it hard to live for Christ in a tough situation? Do you know why? Because there is nothing in your life.

Now, some of you may not like that. But, dear friends, it is true. If I ignore this book over a period of time, you know what happens? My machinery gets rusty. It doesn't work. Thus, a pressure or a decision comes my way...  
QUEST WHAT HAPPENS? I become frustrated and discouraged...WHY? Because there are no principles within my life to guide me and direct me. The Word of God is simply not there.  
*Living - telling off others & folks - like a doctor runs with a gun*

But, if the Word of God is going, daily into my life, I will become skillful, experienced in the Word of Righteousness.

Do you understand? The person who desires only milk...nice sermon now and then...a good devotional thought once in a while...is not experiencing practical application of the Bible in his life.

Dear friends, this is daily..daily ..not something you remember from 20 years ago. But, daily, as a habit of life..in the Word of God. And nothing is more important than this. RENEWING YOUR MIND, DAILY, IN THE WORD.

(2 ) O.K. that is a discription of the one using milk. Now, let's come to the person who uses solid food. Vs 14 says, "But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice(there is the key word) who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil."

Now, what is spiritual maturity? A person, who because of practice.. meaning "a habit of life" ..a person who is apply the principles from God's Word to daily living. *A person who is Responding To what is being taught, a person who is not lazy* And that person has his senses trained . He has been trained by the Word of God. And the result: the ability to discern good from evil. TREMENDOUS...It is so important for us to daily be in the Word of God. There is no substitute.

You see, I am not here to entertain you on Sunday mornings. This whole subject of doing what God wants you to do is <sup>u</sup>the matter of discipline. And christians who by reason of use have been trained in the Word of God, YOU KNOW BY EXPERIENCE WHAT THE BIBLE TEACHES AND YOU ARE BY EXPERIENCE APPLYING IT IN YOUR LIFE. ~~This you can discern good for and~~

And this is so important. Because if you are not applying God's ~~word~~ word, you can be so easily deceived to go along with every so called "spiritual idea" that comes along...Never stable....no consistence...always up and down.....Result ~~no~~ fruitfulness in your life....

I ask you <sup>Dear</sup> christian, <sup>Friend</sup> where are you? Are you growing spiritually? Or, are you remaining immature because you have become dull of hearing. Lazy in your application of God's principles in your life. <sup>NOT Responding TO</sup> <sup>What is being taught</sup>

Solid food...or the blessings of God's life, or victory in christian living...is for the person who by faith is applying, through daily ~~practice~~ practice, the word of truth.....<sup>My</sup> ~~And that word~~ <sup>is</sup> changing <sup>his</sup> your life

Shall we pray