

Speak, Lord, your servant is listening

Week 17: For the next few weeks, we will listen to some of the parables of the Kingdom of God. But first, we will listen to Jesus explain why he speaks in parables.

The disciples came and asked him, "Why do you speak to them in parables?" He answered, "To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of God, but to them it has not been given... The reason I speak to them in parables is that 'seeing they do not perceive, and hearing they do not listen, nor do they understand.' With them indeed is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah that says:

'You will indeed listen, but never understand,
and you will indeed look, but never perceive.

For this people's heart has grown dull,
and their ears are hard of hearing,
and they have shut their eyes;
so that they might not look with their eyes,
and listen with their ears,
and understand with their heart and turn—

and I would heal them.'
But blessed are your eyes, for they see,
and your ears, for they hear. Truly I tell you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, but did not see it, and to hear what you hear, but did not hear it."

Matthew 13.10-11, 13-17

Choose the reflective questions that suit your family:

Jesus says our eyes and ears are blessed. That means God makes them holy. What do holy eyes see? What do holy ears hear? What does God help us see and hear?

Ages 3-6

Jesus says that we receive a gift: to know the mysteries of the Kingdom. Exploring the parables helps us understand more about these mysteries. We wonder why some people do not receive this gift... ?

Ages 6-9

blessed are
your ears.
for they hear

"This people's heart has grown dull," Isaiah hears God say. What is a dull heart like? Does it not love brightly? Does it not care sharply? How can we keep our heart from growing dull? What causes dull hearts?

Ages 9-12

Perhaps the saddest line is God saying, "I would heal them." If only. What healing do we need? What healing does our people need? Our planet? Our culture? Our country? How much God wants us to listen and understand and turn...

Teenagers

Read the scripture.

Ask questions.

Listen to each other's answers.

Then pray the prayer together on page 2.

Listen Prayer

One person leads and everyone else responds (R.)

Lord, our God,

We praise you for the wisdom of your will that unfolds all around us. We desire to enter more profoundly into this mystery, to root ourselves firmly in your will, to listen ever more deeply to you.

R. Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.

Teach us to listen closely to your Word—to the words on the page and the meaning they invoke, to the human author and to the divine, to the spaces between the letters where your Spirit dwells.



R. Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.

Teach us to listen attentively to Creation—to the voice of the earth, to the whispering of wind and waves, to the silence of the rocks and soil and swarms of voiceless creatures.



R. Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.

Teach us to listen respectfully to the culture that surrounds us—to its wisdom and its folly, to the loud voices and the quiet, to that which can teach us and form us and expand our thinking.



R. Speak, Lord, your servant is listening.

And teach us, Lord, to listen deeply to one another—to what we speak aloud and to what we leave unsaid, to our needs and to our concerns, to the love and the longing and desires of our hearts.

**R. We come before you.
We make ourselves still.
We listen to understand.
Amen.**

