



# Tough Talk

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Then Jesus said, “**Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear.** When he was alone, the Twelve and the others around him asked him about the parables. He told them, “The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those on the outside everything is said in parables so that, ‘they may be ever seeing but never perceiving, and ever hearing but never understanding; otherwise they might turn and be forgiven!’” Then Jesus said to them, “Don’t you understand this parable? How then will you understand any parable?”  
**(Mark 4:9-13)**

## Parables sometimes conceal and sometimes reveal.

The farmer sows the word. Some people are like seed along the path, where the word is sown. As soon as they hear it, Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown in them. Others, like seed sown on rocky places, hear the word and at once receive it with joy. But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word; but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful. Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop—some thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times what was sown. **(Mark 4:14–20)**

**Sower:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Seed:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Soil:** \_\_\_\_\_

## Pay Attention to How You Listen.

### Hardened Heart

Some people are like seed along the path, where the word is sown. As soon as they hear it, Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown in them. **(Mark 4:15)**

So, as the Holy Spirit says: “Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as you did in the rebellion, during the time of testing in the desert...” **(Hebrews 3:7–8)**

### **Shallow Heart**

Others, like seed sown on rocky places, hear the word and at once receive it with joy. But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. **(Mark 4:16–17)**

### **Divided Heart**

Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word; but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful. **(Mark 4:18–19)**

I know your deeds, that you are neither cold nor hot. I wish you were either one or the other! So, because you are lukewarm—neither hot nor cold—I am about to spit you out of my mouth. **(Revelation 3:15–16)**

## **Choose A Responsive Heart**

Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop—some thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times what was sown. **(Mark 4:20)**

Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry for man's anger does not bring about the righteous life God desires. Therefore, get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you. Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says. **(James 1:19–21)**

### **Choose Humility**

### **Take Action**

## **Pay Attention to How You Listen.**

*The Scandalous Servant Savior*  
*Part Four: Tough Talk*

1. On a scale of 1-10 what rating would you give your listening skills? What would or do others say about that?
2. Talk about a time when you got into trouble because you did not listen very well.
3. **Read and discuss Mark 4:1-8** Why does Jesus start out by saying: Listen?
4. **Read and discuss Mark 4:9-13** Discuss this statement: **Whoever has ears to hear, let him hear.** Did the disciples understand what Jesus was saying?
5. **Read Mark 4:14-20:** Define: Sower, Seed and Soil.
6. What does a person with a hardened heart look like?
7. What are sometimes when you have struggled to faithfully follow Jesus. What were those times like for you?
8. What are the things that tend to "divide or choke your heart"? What things get in your way that stunt your spiritual growth?
9. Share some areas of growth and success in your spiritual journey.
10. **Read and discuss Rom. 10:17, James 1:19-22:** What do these verses teach about hearing God's Word? What helps you to develop a Responsive/Listening Heart?
11. Share areas of your life where you need to listen more carefully. Spend time praying for us to develop a heart that listens and obeys