**OPEN EARS, EYES AND HEARTS** 2021-08-15

**MATTHEW 13:15(NLTSE)** For the hearts of these people are hardened, and their ears cannot hear, and they have closed their eyes, so their eyes cannot see, and their ears cannot hear, and their hearts cannot understand, and they cannot turn to me and let me heal them.’

* If we have anything other than a positive outlook for the future, then our eyes cannot see, our ears cannot hear and our hearts are hardened.
* If we have anything other than a positive outlook for the future, then we’re not seeing things from God’s perspective.
* If we have anything other than a positive outlook, then we need to align ourselves with the word of God. This simply means that we must allow the word of God to renew our minds
* Imagine what it must have been like, for the Israelites having the Egyptian army behind them and the Red Sea in front of them (See ***Exodus 14***)
* God knew His plan to have the waters part so His people could walk through, but the people couldn’t see it
* Imagine what Ezekiel thought when he saw the valley of dry bones, before God made an army of them (see ***Ezekiel 37:1-10***)

**2 TIMOTHY 4:1-3(NLTSE)** “I solemnly urge you in the presence of God and Christ Jesus, who will someday judge the living and the dead when He appears to set up His Kingdom: 2 ***Preach*** the word of God. Be prepared, whether the time is favourable or not. ***Patiently correct***, ***rebuke***, and ***encourage*** your people with ***good teaching***.

3 For a time is coming when people will no longer listen to sound and wholesome teaching. They will follow their own desires and will look for teachers who will tell them whatever their itching ears want to hear.”

* ***Our responsibility is a follows***:

**1.** Preach the word: Being ready as the great commission calls us

**2 TIMOTHY 4:5b(NLTSE)** Work at telling others the Good News, and fully carry out the ministry God has given you.

**2.** Patiently correct: There is no “quick fix”

**EPHESIANS 4:15(NLTSE)** Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church

**3.** Rebuke: be willing tell it like it is, even if it offends those who don’t want to hear

**PROVERBS 15:31(NLTSE)** If you listen to constructive criticism, you will be at home among the wise.

**PROVERBS 29:1(NLTSE)** Whoever stubbornly refuses to accept criticism, will suddenly be destroyed beyond recovery

**4.** Encourage: Focus on building up not breaking down

**ACTS 4:36(NLTSE)** And Joses, who was also named Barnabas by the apostles (which is translated Son of Encouragement)

**5.** Good teaching: our message must be scripturally sound

**2 TIMOTHY 2:15(NLTSE)** Work hard so you can present yourself to God and receive his approval. Be a good worker, one who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly explains the word of truth

**CARE GROUP DISCUSSION**

1. Discuss the saying: “nobody is a blind as those who do not want to see or as deaf as those who do not want to hear” What does this mean?
2. What causes the kind of ears, eyes and hearts, described in Matthew 13:15 and how can this be prevented?
3. Is there any part of your perspective of the future that is perhaps not like God’s and how can it be changed?