**The Role of Hearing in My Salvation**

In the first article in this series, we observed that God has loved us enough to devise a plan to save us from the destruction we have reserved for ourselves. We noted passages of Scripture that clearly taught that a person who hears the gospel and believes it, who is willing to repent of their sins, confess Christ as Lord and be baptized in His name will be saved. Of course. Jesus expects nothing short of a life totally devoted to Him. In this article, we will focus on the importance of the gospel in the process of changing a person’s heart, which is the fundamental goal in the conversion process.

“Faith comes from hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ” (Romans 10:17). The idea is that a person does not have saving faith in Jesus before they are exposed to His word. But after hearing the facts, weighing the evidence and considering His teachings, he has good reason to believe, not only that Jesus is the Christ, but that He deserves total devotion. Simple concept, right? But there are some who believe that it is impossible for a person to accept Christ unless the Holy Spirit acts directly on his heart and enables him to respond. If you believe that is a Scriptural concept, I have three questions for you.

**Why did God always send a preacher?** Paul said, “I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek” (Romans 1:16). God was so committed to the power of the message, He sent a preacher every time someone needed salvation! Saul in Acts 22 – God sent Ananias. The Ethiopian in Acts 8 – The Holy Spirit sent Philip. Cornelius in Acts 10 – God sent Peter. No exceptions. The power is in the message.

**Why did the apostles work so hard to reason and convince?** Read Peter’s sermons in Acts 2 and 3. Read Paul’s sermon in Acts 13. When they were teaching Jewish people, they appealed to Old Testament prophecy to demonstrate their fulfillment in Jesus of Nazareth. When Paul taught Greek philosophers in Athens (Acts 17), he changed his approach and used arguments to which they could relate. Paul said, “Knowing the fear of the Lord, we persuade men” (2 Corinthians 5:11). None of this makes any sense if the Holy Spirit is manipulating the heart of the person miraculously.

**If God enables the heart of one but not another, isn’t He guilty of partiality?** Yes He would, but no He doesn’t. The Scriptures clearly teach that there is no partiality with God (Romans 2:11; Galatians 2:6; Ephesians 6:9; Colossians 3:25). In fact, Peter stated the standard of acceptance perfectly in Acts 10:34-35: “’I most certainly understand now that God is not one to show partiality, but in every nation the man who fears Him and does what is right is welcome to Him.’”

God is “not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance” (2 Peter 3:9). That is why He has provided me with His gospel. It is up to me to accept the implications of the message. If I do, it will be to the salvation of my soul – and it all starts with hearing the word.

**John McKee**

**West Murray church of Christ**