

# Life in the Word

*Cornerstone Sermon-based Life Group Lesson*



Sermon Series:

Sermon Title: **Itching Ears**

Scripture Passage: **2 Timothy 3:21; 4:1-4**

## **Getting Started** *Sharing from personal experience*

1. When the true believer receives the power of the Holy Spirit to live in and through them, “something has to give.” The world thinks, acts, responds, and loves in one way and Jesus thinks, acts, responds, and loves very differently. What “had to give” in your life when you committed to becoming a follower of Jesus? What is fundamentally different about your life and the lives of the people you work with or your neighbors?

## **Observation** *Discovering the context*

2. The issue in 1 John 4:1-6 is a two-sided coin—one side is false teaching and the other side is our appetite to hear what we want to hear or that which is novel or fashionable. 2 Timothy 4:3 calls it “itching ears.” In 1 Timothy 4:1, Paul is coaching his young pastor-in-training to see something that was happening at that time and would continue to happen in the future. The essence of his warning was that people’s devotion will shift.

How would you put 1 Timothy 4:1 into the context of April 2021 and what you see happening with regards to the shifting of people’s devotion from the truth of scripture and devotion to God’s Word to other so-called “biblical truths?” Be specific.

3. In his message this weekend, Dr. David Tally challenged us to get real with the reality that we may claim to believe what the Bible teaches, but is it possible we might sometimes actually live by another set of beliefs. Let's start with Romans 12:1-2.

*I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. <sup>2</sup> Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.*  
(Romans 12:1-2)

One aspect of itching ears theology is the attraction to false gospels like the "Consumer Gospel," where people seek Jesus to help them transform their circumstances and help them be more successful. The consumer gospel puts man at the center while the real gospel puts Christ at the center. People who view the gospel, church, or Jesus himself as a way of elevating themselves to become better versions of themselves or the "insurance" of getting into heaven, are missing the essence of Jesus' call to discipleship as Jesus puts it in Luke 9.

*And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me." (Luke 9:23)*

We live in a time when itching ears crave hearing from a God who would never make demands like "present your body as a living sacrifice" as the portal to what is "good, acceptable and perfect" as a Christian.

What do you want to hear, and what would you rather *NOT* hear, when you read Romans 12:1-2 and Luke 9:23?

### **Interpretation** Discovering the meaning

4. Dr. Tally also challenged us to dig deep to discover if there is real evidence that our belief system is obviously different than the world. In light of this challenge, what visible evidence is there that clearly distinguishes between what people in the world give themselves to, chase after, and plan for in their life versus what you give yourself to, chase after, and plan for in your life?

5. *Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. <sup>16</sup>For all that is in the world—the desires of the flesh and the desires of the eyes and pride of life—is not from the Father but is from the world. <sup>17</sup>And the world is passing away along with its desires, but whoever does the will of God abides forever.*  
(1 John 2:15-17)

How do you interpret the message of 1 John 2:15-17 relative to what you believe about Jesus' terms and conditions for being a disciple in Matthew 28:18-20, Matthew 9:37, and Luke 10:2? Do you think the church has ears that are itching for this call to personal discipleship, or are we more likely to cup our ears and listen for a different message?

### **Core Truths** Discovering Biblical truth

In your own words, share at least one core truth God has shown you in this week's study and why it is timely or significant for you.

### **Practice Makes Progress** Putting knowledge into practice

What action is the Lord prompting you to take this week as a result of being in His Word?

### **Worth Memorizing**

Scripture: *Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.* (Romans 12:2)

### **Prayer Time**

How can your Life Group pray for you this week?

### **Praise Time**

How has God blessed you and answered prayer this week?