

## I.N.I.

Fourteenth Sunday after Pentecost  
Sept. 10, 2017  
Jeremiah 23:16-32

In Christ Jesus, whose word we proclaim is the infallible, eternal word of our God, Dear Fellow Redeemed,

As an avid sports fan I regularly listen to the radio in my car on long road trips and what I listen to most often, depending on the season, is Brewer's baseball, Packers football or sports talk. What is so irritating is when you get away from a city and the radio signal starts to fade. Another station interrupts the one you are listening to and you start hearing music or other news over the ballgame. But the stubborn sports fan that I am, I continue to listen to the static picking up words here and there, clearly distinguishing Bob Uecker's voice over the other sounds and I can get some information about how the game is going. To others in the car it is only irritating static and a jumble of noise, but to me I have learned to tune my ears to hear what I am listening for.

It is important for all of us to fine tune our hearing in more important matters than just a fading radio signal. How about political news? Can you distinguish between news that comes from a slanted liberal view or a conservative view or one that is "fair and balanced?"

But an even more important question is have you fine tuned your ears to distinguish between the Good News and the truth from God's Word and the so called good news and truth from the lips and mouths of humans?

There is so much out there to listen to. What proclamations and messages are worth listening to and believing, and which are a crock of bull? Which ones have a sound foundation and base from God and which are the views, opinions and philosophies of humanistic, materialistic people?

These questions we really need to ask ourselves as we day after day face a barrage of advice, messages, propaganda, teachings, information and signals from everywhere around us.

Our text today helps us in this most important part of our life—listening and learning! Our theme is:

### **FINE TUNE YOUR LISTENING CAPACITY**

What is your listening capacity? What kind of listening do you do? From our text we find at least 3 reasons listed for fine tuning our listening capacity.

#### **I: TO RECEIVE HEAVENLY MESSAGES.**

#### **II: TO DISTINGUISH GOD'S SIGNALS FROM THIS WORLD'S.**

#### **III: TO HAVE THE TRUE ANSWER TO THE SALVATION OF YOUR SOULS!**

The Lord Almighty is speaking to us directly even as He was to the people of Jeremiah's time when He says in our first verse: **DO NOT LISTEN TO THE WORDS OF THE PROPHETS WHO PROPHECY TO YOU. THEY MAKE YOU WORTHLESS; (or FILL YOU WITH FALSE HOPE;) THEY SPEAK A VISION OF THEIR OWN HEART, NOT FROM THE MOUTH OF THE LORD.**

Jeremiah had been told by Jehovah God, "proclaim to My people, 'Repent! Turn from your wicked, evil, rebellious and idolatrous ways or surely the destruction prophesied will come to pass.'" But the people wouldn't listen. At least not to Jeremiah. They listened rather to the many false prophets in Israel who were saying "the Lord will destroy Babylon. Have no fear, God will take care of them. Just keep living as you are. You will have peace and safety and no harm will come to you."

Which message would you rather hear? To be told that you are sinful, that you need to repent and turn back to your God or you will be destroyed or that you should not worry, God won't destroy you. He loves you and doesn't really care how you live so live as you want and don't be concerned.

You'd be a fool to listen and believe that first message, but you would be a godly fool! For that message is the message sent from heaven. It is the message the world has to hear; has to take note of and pay close attention to for that message is true!

In Jeremiah's case the people, as we heard last week, tried several times to get rid of that rabble rouser Jeremiah, that pain in the neck who kept prophesying gloom and doom, destruction and

desolation because of the people's wickedness and sin! In fact right up to the very day Babylon struck and carried away many of their people, yes, even up to the very moment when the city of Jerusalem was being destroyed, the people still refused to hear and believe Jeremiah's heavenly message. They didn't fine tune their listening, but let the other worldly messages drown out God's message. Peace and safety is what they heard, not repent or be lost!

They foolishly clung to the vain, empty hope of the false prophets who said: **YOU SHALL HAVE PEACE"; AND TO EVERYONE WHO WALKS ACCORDING TO THE DICTATES OF HIS OWN HEART, NO EVIL SHALL COME UPON YOU.** Saying this even as the enemy army was advancing with their swords drawn!

In older TV's there were fine tuning knobs that you would have to adjust to make sure the channel would come in right. Today's TV's do that automatically. Your radio dial has to be fine tuned to the right station or you won't be able to hear the words or the song. So also we need to fine tune our ears and hearts. Fine tune our listening capacity so that we receive only those heavenly messages and not a garbled up message that fades in and out; has two stations coming in at once--- both God's message and the world's message. That kind of spiritual listening proves fatal to the soul.

Today's message from the world is "guilt is bad!" We shouldn't feel guilty about the bad things we do, for even "bad" is relative. After all we can't help ourselves from doing whatever we want and we aren't responsible for our actions. And if what we say or do doesn't hurt anyone, can it really be called "bad?"

Today's message from the world tells us to look to ourselves for the answers to the complex questions and problems of life and death. Seek satisfaction and peace for your future by looking to yourself and your neighbor for we can do anything we put our mind to.

Today's message from the world tells us to live for the moment; live life to the fullest with pleasures and joys for today, for no one really knows what the future holds.

If there is one thing the world thinks they know about God, it is that God is love. He surely cannot hate and therefore He will not destroy and condemn anyone. He will overlook our faults. He will cover over everything so live as you please. **YOU SHALL HAVE PEACE---NO EVIL SHALL COME UPON YOU.**

God responds: **FOR WHO HAS STOOD IN THE COUNSEL OF THE LORD, AND HAS PERCEIVED AND HEARD HIS WORD? WHO HAS MARKED HIS WORD AND HEARD IT? BEHOLD, A WHIRLWIND OF THE LORD HAS GONE FORTH IN FURY -- A VIOLENT WHIRLWIND! IT WILL FALL VIOLENTLY ON THE HEAD OF THE WICKED. THE ANGER OF THE LORD WILL NOT TURN BACK UNTIL HE HAS EXECUTED AND PERFORMED THE THOUGHTS OF HIS HEART....I HAVE NOT SENT THESE PROPHETS, YET THEY RAN. I HAVE NOT SPOKEN TO THEM, YET THEY PROPHESED. BUT IF THEY HAD STOOD IN MY COUNSEL, AND HAD CAUSED MY PEOPLE TO HEAR MY WORDS, THEN THEY WOULD HAVE TURNED THEM FROM THEIR EVIL WAY AND FROM THE EVIL OF THEIR DOINGS.**

Had these false prophets stood in the council of God and really heard His Word they would have warned the people, "the soul that sins shall surely die. Repent and turn to the Lord" Salvation and righteousness is found only in the Lord Jehovah and in the message of the Messiah which brings forgiveness. That is why we need to:

### **FINE TUNE OUR LISTENING CAPACITY**

#### **II: To distinguish God's signals from this world's.**

With a word God sweeps away the false prophet's delusions: **AMI A GOD NEAR AT HAND," SAYS THE LORD, "AND NOT A GOD AFAR OFF? CAN ANYONE HIDE HIMSELF IN SECRET PLACES, SO I SHALL NOT SEE HIM?" SAYS THE LORD; "DO I NOT FILL HEAVEN AND EARTH?" SAYS THE LORD.**

God compares the dreams of the prophets to straw while His Word is grain? **I HAVE HEARD WHAT THE PROPHETS HAVE SAID WHO PROPHECY LIES IN MY NAME, SAYING, 'I HAVE DREAMED, I HAVE DREAMED!' HOW LONG WILL THIS BE IN THE HEART OF THE PROPHETS WHO PROPHECY LIES? INDEED THEY ARE PROPHETS OF THE DECEIT OF THEIR OWN HEART, WHO TRY TO MAKE MY PEOPLE FORGET MY**

**NAME BY THEIR DREAMS WHICH EVERYONE TELLS HIS NEIGHBOR, AS THEIR FATHERS FORGOT MY NAME FOR BAAL. THE PROPHET WHO HAS A DREAM, LET HIM TELL A DREAM; AND HE WHO HAS MY WORD, LET HIM SPEAK MY WORD FAITHFULLY. WHAT IS THE CHAFF TO THE WHEAT?" SAYS THE LORD. IS NOT MY WORD LIKE A FIRE?" SAYS THE LORD, "AND LIKE A HAMMER THAT BREAKS THE ROCK IN PIECES?**

There is no comparison between the word of the false prophet and the Lord's Word. The Word gives life like wheat. It is powerful like a burning fire. It burns up our own righteousness and purifies us with Christ's righteousness. It is like a hammer that shatters even the hardest hearts so that they might be recreated through a living faith in the Lord. To get real comfort and help, to reach people and save them, one need only to use the Lord's Word, not man's babbling.

May we not put ourselves at the feet of those who with **SMOOTH WORDS AND FLATTERING SPEECH DECEIVE THE HEARTS OF THE SIMPLE.** May we not listen to those who travel door to door peddling their dreams, their fantastic ideas of a kingdom on earth which is to come and their wild delusions. For falsehood mingled with the truth is powerful error. It is like a little poison in a cup of wine. It looks so good, may even taste good, but makes one sick and may even kill spiritually.

That is why the Lord declares: **BEHOLD, I AM AGAINST THE PROPHETS," SAYS THE LORD, "WHO USE THEIR TONGUES AND SAY, 'HE SAYS.' BEHOLD, I AM AGAINST THOSE WHO PROPHECY FALSE DREAMS," SAYS THE LORD, "AND TELL THEM, AND CAUSE MY PEOPLE TO ERR BY THEIR LIES AND BY THEIR RECKLESSNESS. YET I DID NOT SEND THEM OR COMMAND THEM; THEREFORE THEY SHALL NOT PROFIT THIS PEOPLE AT ALL," SAYS THE LORD.**

#### **FINE TUNE YOUR LISTENING CAPACITY**

#### **III: To have the true answer to the salvation of your souls!**

When we fine tune our ears and hearts to God's Word we can "test the spirits." That is test the teachings of the organizations and churches of this world and see if they teach only God's Word or a mixture of truth and error. And then we will have the only correct answer to our salvation. And that is Jesus!

No matter what the world may say, the only way to everlasting life is through God's Son, our Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ. He is our righteousness. He is our sacrifice. He is our salvation. Through His perfect life and substitutionary sacrifice all of our sins have been paid for in full and we have His perfection applied to us. His resurrection assures us of a resurrection to eternal life. There is true peace and real safety in the message of "Repent and believe in Jesus!"

What is your listening capacity? What kind of listening and hearing do we do?

May the Holy Spirit lead us to fine tune our listening so that we

- 1) receive heavenly messages
- 2) are able to distinguish God's signals from man's
- 3) have the true answer to the salvation of our souls.

**FOR GOD SO LOVED THE WORLD THAT HE GAVE HIS ONLY BEGOTTEN SON, THAT WHOEVER BELIEVES IN HIM SHOULD NOT PERISH BUT HAVE EVERLASTING LIFE. (John 3:16)**

**DO NOT BE AFRAID, FOR BEHOLD, I BRING YOU GOOD TIDINGS OF GREAT JOY WHICH WILL BE TO ALL PEOPLE. FOR THERE IS BORN TO YOU THIS DAY IN THE CITY OF DAVID A SAVIOR, WHO IS CHRIST THE LORD. (Luke 2:10-11)**

**BUT THESE ARE WRITTEN THAT YOU MAY BELIEVE THAT JESUS IS THE CHRIST, THE SON OF GOD, AND THAT BELIEVING YOU MAY HAVE LIFE IN HIS NAME. (John 20:31)**

**SO THEN FAITH COMES BY HEARING, AND HEARING BY THE WORD OF GOD. (Romans 10:17)**

Amen.

