

# "HEAR YE HIM"

## A Devotional Series For Radio

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The Sermon: TREASURE UP THE WORDS OF LIFE

Scripture Reading: Doctrine and Covenants 10:10

Behold, this is your work, to keep my commandments; yea, with all your might, mind, and strength; seek not to declare my word, but first seek to obtain my word, and then shall your tongue be loosed; then, if you desire, you shall have my Spirit, and my word; yea, the power of God unto the convincing of men; but now hold your peace; study my word which hath gone forth among the children of men, and also study my word which shall come forth among the children of men, or that which is now translating; yea, until ye have obtained all which I shall grant unto the children of men in this generation; and then shall all things be added thereunto.

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Neither take ye thought beforehand what ye shall say, but treasure up in your minds continually the words of life, and it shall be given you in the very hour that portion that shall be meted unto every man. (83:14)

The fear of facing an audience to make a speech is well-nigh universal among civilized men. Even if we know what we want to say, the sight of a sea of eager and expectant faces exerts a sort of paralysis of both action and thought, so that we can think of nothing to say. Years of practice and experience never quite do away with this fear, or this concern about what to say and how to say it.

In the early Christian church, there was an even greater fear added to this one. Early Christians lived in constant expectation and fear of being haled before either an ecclesiastical court in the synagogue, or before the secular court of some Roman ruler to answer to the charge of being a Christian. What could they say? How could they answer the skilled and learned officers and elders and prosecutors in those courts? Knowing that this need would arise, Jesus had given them the answer before his departure: "Settle it in your hearts not to meditate before what ye shall answer; For I will give you a mouth and wisdom, which all your adversaries shall not be able to gainsay or resist." "Meditate" is translated from a technical term in Attic Greek meaning to prepare a speech for oral delivery. "Take no thought how or what ye shall speak; (or in other words, "don't worry") for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak," said Jesus. The Holy Spirit will teach you all things, guide you into all

truth, and bring all things to your remembrance.

The truth is always simple. No particular strategy is needed to proclaim it, or to bear witness to it, if one really knows it. When the early Christians stood before kings and courts and rulers, they simply bore witness to what they knew. The difficult, complicated task of planning some cunning strategy fell to their persecutors, who denied the truth and tried to twist it to make these men guilty of a crime. But when the disciples trusted in Jesus' promise, and bore witness to the truth they knew, simply, straightforwardly, they became bold. Acts 4:13 says of one such incident before the Sanhedrin; "Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were unlearned and ignorant men, they marvelled, and took knowledge of them that they had been with Jesus."

Ofttimes a simple testimony is more convincing than one which uses every strategy of rhetoric, logic, and persuasive psychology. There were times when Paul used clever strategy -- when he claimed the prerogatives of his Roman citizenship -- when he divided the Pharisees and Sadducees on the question of the resurrection -- when he was let down from the city wall in a basket. But when he stood before King Agrippa, he told a simple straightforward story of his conversion in "words of truth and soberness!" When the blind man whom Jesus had healed

was brought before the Pharisees he refused to enter into any arguments about who Jesus was, or by what power he had opened his eyes. "Whether he be a sinner or no, I know not," he said; "one thing I know, that whereas I was blind, now I see." No amount of argument could change that simple truth, and as long as he stuck to that truth he was on safe and logically unassailable ground.

In our day, as in the times of Peter and John and Paul, there is need of people who know the truth, and who will bear simple and sincere witness to what they know. But there are times, too, when we need to know a great deal more than we do about the scriptures, about doctrine, about theology, about the beliefs and thought processes of other races, other peoples, other religions, in order to reach other people and convince them. How shall we know what to say under those circumstances? The answer lies in our text: "Neither take ye thought beforehand what ye shall say, but treasure up in your minds continually the words of life, and it shall be given you in the very hour that portion that shall be meted unto every man." This does not mean that we should be totally unconcerned about what to say in testimony, or that ministers should make no preparation for their sermons. Rather it expresses the idea that all of life should be a preparation for the time when you will need to have something to say, and will need to know what to say at that particular moment, and how to say it. "Treasure up in your minds continually the words of life."

To "treasure up" something is to collect and deposit it safely for future use, to lay up, to hoard, to hold or keep as precious, to cherish, to prize or value. The antonym of the verb "treasure" is "disregard, spurn, ignore, reject, discard." The command of modern revelation is to treasure up continually the words of life; then the promise is that the Spirit of truth will give you in the very hour you need it, that portion which is to be meted out to every man. The Comforter will bring all things to your remembrance -- provided that you have already treasured them up in the storehouse of the mind when you had opportunity and time. The Holy Spirit can teach you all things, and guide you into all truth -- and in cases of urgent necessity where the emergency is not of your fault or

your making, can instantly and miraculously give to a worthy and needy man the exact words he should speak. But if we go all our lives disregarding, ignoring, rejecting, spurning, discarding the words of life -- if we make no attempt to seek them or to treasure them up, then we have no right to ask for a miracle from God when we need those words later, perhaps most desperately.

The things taught, discerned, discovered, apprehended, or proved by the Comforter as he reveals all things, teaches us all things, and guides us into all truth, are sacred, worth while, and precious. All truth, in whatever field it may be found, or however it is revealed to man, is precious. We have been commanded to seek learning by study and also by faith; to seek out of the best books words of wisdom, to teach one another the doctrine of the kingdom which includes all truth, all science, all history, all philosophy, or anything concerned with any phase of God's all-inclusive kingdom. The "words of life" include all truth revealed by the Spirit of Truth. Let us place no arbitrary limits on the "words of life" which we are commanded to treasure up in our minds.

If we really treasure the words of life, we will not throw them carelessly or indiscriminately into a disorderly heap in our minds. We will sort them out, organize them by relating them to other truths and other ideas. We will put them away with care, guard them against forgetfulness, classify them so that they can be taken out of the treasure house of memory when we have need of them.

If we really treasure up the words of life, there will be little or no room in our minds for the ephemeral, the transitory, the inconsequential, the trashy, the trivial things of life. Too many of us have our minds full of such treasures as the plot of the latest novel, the jokes from yesterday's television shows, the latest gossip from Hollywood, until there is no room for the words of life. If you would speak words of truth and testimony for Christ, if you would declare his word, you must first obtain his word. And if you treasure up in your mind continually words of life, you will never need to worry or fear about what to say to any man who asks you to give a reason for the hope and faith within you.