

Midweek Lenten Series: Open My Life, Lord



Week of Lent 3: Open My Ears, Lord

Ancient Greek philosophy notes that we have two ears and one mouth so that we can listen twice as much as we speak. Jesus reminds us that we sometimes hear but don't listen, listen but don't understand. Opening our ears isn't as easy as it sounds.

Consider including an extended time of silence, listening, prayer, and meditation.

Opening Dialogue

As children, we hear: **Don't touch! Slow down!**

As teenagers, we hear: **Your curfew begins in an hour.**

As adults, we hear: **Cash or credit?**

In the water and the word, we hear: **You are loved, my precious child.**

Greeting

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God,
and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. **And also with you.**

Prayer

Open our ears, Lord, to heed your will for our lives. Help us not only to hear, but to listen and understand with our hearts. In Jesus' name we pray. **Amen.**

Reading

Isaiah 50:4-5

⁴The Lord GOD has given me the tongue of a teacher,
that I may know how to sustain the weary with a word.

Morning by morning he wakens— wakens my ear to listen as those who are taught.

⁵The Lord GOD has opened my ear, and I was not rebellious, I did not turn backward.

Psalmody

Psalm 40:1-8

¹ I waited patiently for the LORD;

he inclined to me and heard my cry.

² He drew me up from the desolate pit, out of the miry bog,
and set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure.

³ He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God.
Many will see and fear, and put their trust in the LORD.

⁴ Happy are those who make the LORD their trust,
who do not turn to the proud, to those who go astray after false gods.

⁵ You have multiplied, O LORD my God,
your wondrous deeds and your thoughts toward us;
none can compare with you.

Were I to proclaim and tell of them,
they would be more than can be counted.

⁶ Sacrifice and offering you do not desire, but you have given me an open ear.
Burnt offering and sin offering you have not required.

⁷ Then I said, "Here I am; in the scroll of the book it is written of me.

⁸ I delight to do your will, O my God; your law is within my heart."

Reading

Matthew 13:10-17

¹⁰ Then the disciples came and asked him, "Why do you speak to them in parables?" ¹¹ He answered, "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. ¹² For to those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. ¹³ The reason I speak to them in parables is that 'seeing they do not perceive, and hearing they do not listen, nor do they understand.' ¹⁴ With them indeed is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah that says:

'You will indeed listen, but never understand,
and you will indeed look, but never perceive.

¹⁵ For this people's heart has grown dull,
and their ears are hard of hearing,
and they have shut their eyes;
so that they might not look with their eyes,
and listen with their ears,
and understand with their heart and turn—
and I would heal them.'

¹⁶ But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. ¹⁷ Truly I tell you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, but did not see it, and to hear what you hear, but did not hear it.

Reflection

Prayers

Lord of all life,
when we cannot see the beauty of your creation,
open our eyes, that all living things thrive and grow.
When we neglect the poor, the sick, and the grieving,
open our hands to do your work in the world.
When we ignore the cries of injustice in our midst,
open our ears, that all will know your love.
When we are hardened against our neighbor,
open our hearts and heal our resentment.
When we are closed to the grace you long to give us,
open our lives and turn us to follow in the way of the cross.

Here other prayers may be offered.

Into your hands, gracious God, we commend all for whom we pray, trusting in your mercy;
through Jesus Christ, our Savior. **Amen.**

Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven,
 hallowed be your name,
 your kingdom come,
 your will be done, on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
 as we forgive those who sin against us.
Save us from the time of trial
 and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power, and the glory are yours, now and forever. Amen.

Blessing

Go into the world with eyes open to the transforming light of Christ, hands open to serve those you meet, ears open to the call of the Spirit, hearts open to the bountiful love of God, and lives open to follow Christ to the cross.

The God who opened for us the way of everlasting life ✝ bless you now and forever. **Amen.**

Dismissal

Go in peace. Christ is with you. **Thanks be to God.**