To Whom Will We Listen?

I. Introduction.
   a. To whom do you turn for advice?
      i. Health: a trusted doctor.
      ii. Car problems: an honest mechanic.
      iii. Financial questions: a knowledgeable financial professional.
   b. We all need advice.
      i. There’s no way to be an expert at everything.
      ii. We should understand that we don’t know everything.
      iii. The question is not whether or not we need advice; the question is whether we will listen to it when we get it.
      iv. Even more, will we know what advice to which to listen and what advice we would be better off to ignore.
   c. Bad Advice.
      i. All advice is not good advice.
      ii. Learning the difference is crucial.
   d. Biblical Examples of People who listened to Bad Advice.
      i. 2 Chronicles 10:1-19.
         1. Rehoboam listened to the wrong people.
         2. He shunned the voice of experience, the voice of wisdom.
      ii. 2 Chronicles 22:1-5.
         1. Ahaziah listened to the bad advice of his own mother.
         2. She advised him to do wickedness.
         3. Even members of our own family may lead us down the wrong road.
      iii. 2 Chronicles 24:1-4,15-22.
         1. An extremely sad story.
         2. Joash had chosen the right man to whom to listen, Jehoida the priest.
         3. But, after Jehoida’s death, Joash’s downfall came about because of who he chose to listen to next.
         4. Such a delicate situation: the choice of whom we allow to give us advice could make us or break us.
   e. Lesson.
      i. Title, “To Whom Will We Listen?”
      ii. Four points that will help us answer this very important question.
II. Be Careful of Your Friends.

a. Friends can be a great help.
   i. Ecclesiastes 4:9-12.
   ii. Reference to last week’s lesson about the need for social interaction among Christians.
   iii. To whom are you going to turn when you have a big decision to make?
      1. We all probably have a few people to whom we will turn.
      2. They help us think things through and make the right decision.
   iv. We need good friends when we’re suffering.
      1. Friends who will be there to help us.
      2. Who will speak to us words of comfort.

b. But friends can also be the worst advisers.
   i. Think back to Rehoboam.
   ii. Sometimes, our friends can lead us away from God.
   iii. Friends are not always a help to make us better.
   iv. 1 Corinthians 15:33, “evil company corrupts good habits.”
   v. Proverbs 12:26, “The righteous should choose his friends carefully, For the way of the wicked leads them astray.”

c. We need friends who are true friends.
   i. Not every person who appears to be our friend is truly our friend.
   ii. Proverbs 27:5-6, “Open rebuke is better than love carefully concealed. Faithful are the wounds of a friend, but the kisses of an enemy are deceitful.”
      1. True friends will say what needs to be said even if it hurts.
   iii. How many friends do you have who care enough to tell you the truth?

d. We need friends who are friends of God.
   i. If serving God and reaching heaven are the most important things in the world to us, then it makes sense to have friends who share the same goals.
   ii. James 4:4, “Adulterers and adulteresses! Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Whoever therefore wants to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God.”
      1. If we are a friend of God, does it make much sense for our friends to be enemies of God?
   iii. 2 Corinthians 6:14, “Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness.”
III. Be Wary of the Advice of the Multitude.

a. The voice of the majority is often wrong.
   i. Jesus tells us that the easy way is the way to destruction.
      1. Mt. 7:13, “Enter by the narrow gate, for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.”
      2. Contrast of many and few.
      3. Do we want to follow the many?
   ii. When have God’s people ever been in the majority?
      1. If you find yourself in the majority, you might want to re-examine things.
   iii. The law of Moses contains a warning about going along with the crowd.
      1. Exodus 23:2, “you shall not follow a crowd to do evil.”
      2. 2 Corinthians 6:17, “come out from among them and be separate.”

b. Pilate is an example of someone who allowed himself to be persuaded by the majority.
   ii. Pilate knew the Jesus was innocent.
   iii. Pilate knew the Jews handed Jesus over to Him out of envy. Vs. 18
   iv. But He wasn’t willing to stand up against the multitude.

c. Groupthink illustration.
   i. Are we willing to stand up and be different?
   ii. Definition: “psychological phenomenon in which people strive for consensus within a group. In many cases, people will set aside their own personal beliefs or adopt the opinion of the rest of the group. People who are opposed to the decisions or overriding opinion of the group as a whole frequently remain quiet, preferring to keep the peace rather than disrupt the uniformity of the crowd.”
   iii. Let’s say you have a group of 20 people.
      1. The overwhelming majority (18) voices their agreement for a certain proposal.
      2. One person in the room voices an alternative which is met with immediate criticism by the rest of the group.
      3. What is the 1 person that’s left going to do?

d. To whom will we listen?
   i. It’s easier to go along with majority.
   ii. But are we willing to look a little closer?
IV. Identify False Teachers who would Lead you away from God.

a. Not every teacher of God’s word is telling the truth.
   i. Epistle of Jude.
      1. Vs. 3-4.
      3. Vs. 16-19.
   ii. Simple point: Not all teachers who claim to be speaking for God are actually speaking the truth.
   iii. The whole epistle is a warning to “contend earnestly for the faith.”
      1. Don’t allow yourself to be deceived.
   iv. Just because your preacher tells you something, that doesn't make it right.
      1. Your preacher is not the authority.
      2. God is the one and only authority.

b. Not even all sincere teachers will be right.
      1. Apollos was an eloquent man and mighty in the Scriptures.
      2. But he still needed to be taught.
      3. He only knew the baptism of John, but Aquila and Priscilla taught him the way of God more accurately.
   ii. There may be many sincere teachers of God’s word today who are wrong about what they’re teaching.
      1. Perhaps this is why James warned about becoming a teacher in James 3:1.
         a. Because of the great responsibility.
      2. But it is possible to be sincerely wrong.
         a. Like Saul of Tarsus.

c. The remedy is to test the teacher by God’s word.
   i. Be like the Bereans of Acts 17.
      1. Vs. 11, “...they received the word with all readiness, and searched the Scriptures daily to find out whether these things were so.”
   ii. Or heed the admonition of Paul to the Thessalonians.
      1. “Test all things; hold fast what is good.” 1 Thess. 5:21
V. **Good Advice is God’s Advice.**

a. Paul speaks of the “whole counsel of God.”
   i. Acts 20:27, “For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God.”
   ii. The counsel of God.
   iii. God is giving us advice in His word.

b. Wisdom could be defined as choosing good advice over bad advice.
   i. And many times, the choice is listening to ourselves or listening to someone who really knows.
      1. Sometimes it amounts to choosing to be proud and stubborn or humble and willing to listen.
   ii. Proverbs 13:10, “By pride comes nothing but strife, but with the well-advised is wisdom.
   iii. We have a choice to make: to whom will we listen?
      1. To man or to God.

c. Ultimately all Counsel is God’s, and His counsel is really all that matters.
   i. Proverbs 8:14, “Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom; I am understanding, I have strength.”
   ii. Proverbs 19:20-21, “Listen to counsel and receive instruction, that you may be wise in your latter days. There are many plans in ‘a man’s heart. Nevertheless, the Lord’s counsel --- that will stand.”

VI. **Conclusion: To Whom Will We Listen?**

a. To God.
b. And those who speak the words of God.