

**Title:** Whoever Has Ears, Let Them Hear

**Date:** February 17/18, 2018

**Speaker:** Phil Vaughan

**Big Idea:** This week we paused from our Kingdom Stories series to mourn and reflect on the string of deadly violence that has dominated the headlines over the last few weeks. Phil taught that the first part of a Christian response - before activism and public debate - is empathy that puts us in solidarity with those suffering the most.

**Passage:** Romans 12:15b

**Discuss It:**

1. Each person grieves and endures tragedy differently. Describe, as best you can, how you have processed the tragic events of the last few months. (Phil mentioned the three recent officer shootings in Colorado, as well as the school shooting in Parkland, FL... you may have other events in mind as well). Which emotions surface first: outrage, numbness, despair, resolve, other?
2. Phil pointed out that most people try to suppress sorrow and grieving. Is this true of you? If so, how do you find yourself avoiding mourning? (ie., Staying busy with work, refrain from watching the news, engage in other distractions, etc.).
3. **Read Psalm 10.** The Bible views the expression of sorrow and anger - even anger toward God - as a healthy thing. What do you notice about the way the psalmist approaches God in the psalm? What are some emotions that you experienced while reading this psalm? In what ways might psalms like this one be a companion in bringing our various emotions - grief, regret, discontentment - before God?
4. Phil's main point this past weekend was that empathy must be the starting point of a Christ-follower's response to the cause of suffering. In other words, before we lobby for gun legislation or school security reform or improved mental health treatment, etc.; we must do what we can to sit with the victims and feel the weight of their hurt and loss. Do you agree that empathy must come first? How might intentional empathy enable a better response in terms of bringing solutions through activism and social engagement?
5. Where might you have the opportunity this week to empathize with someone who is hurting?

**Apply It:**

- What is the one thing you need to take away from this study?
- What will help you remember it?
- Is there anything that needs to change in your thinking, actions, or relationships as a result?