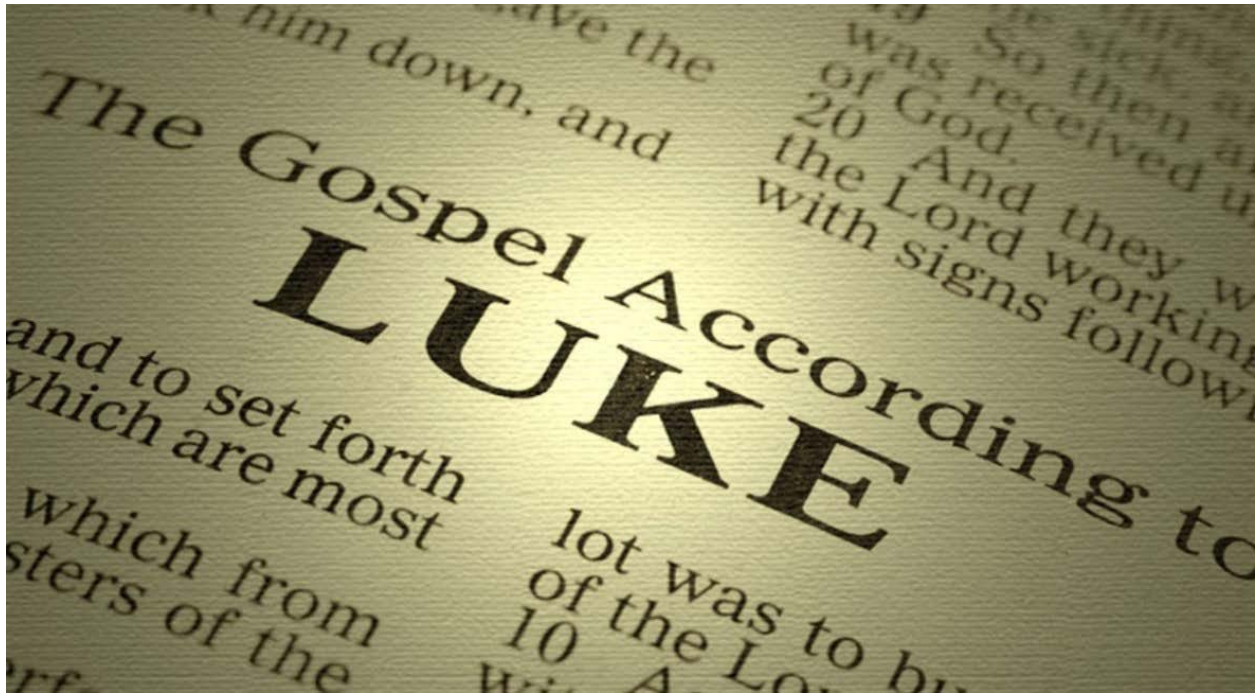


Luke 8, Part 1



T. M. AND SUSIE MOORE

A Scriptorium Study from The Fellowship of Ailbe

Luke 8, Part 1

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Introduction to Luke 8, Part 1

Jesus came preaching, teaching, and bringing the Kingdom of God to the world of fallen people. He came to overthrow the old regime of sin and death and bring a new regime of life and hope to the world. Everything He did was to that end and with this in view.

Luke 8 especially gives us a look at what the coming Kingdom of God involves. Jesus calls each of us to hear His voice, receive His Good News, and join His family in the eternal realm of God.

If you find these studies, or any of our other resources, helpful, we hope you will consider making a contribution to help support our work. You can do so by using the donate button at the website or by sending your gift to The Fellowship of Ailbe, 360 Zephyr Road, Williston, VT 05495.

We hope you find this study of the gospel of Luke instructive and helpful to equip you for your walk with and work for the Lord. Thank you for joining us.

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1 The Gospel of the Kingdom

Pray Psalm 47.7-9.

For God *is* the King of all the earth;
Sing praises with understanding.
God reigns over the nations;
God sits on His holy throne.
The princes of the people have gathered together,
The people of the God of Abraham.
For the shields of the earth *belong* to God;
He is greatly exalted.

Sing Psalm 47.7-9.

(Truro: *Shout, for the Blessed Jesus Reigns*)

God is the King of all the earth; sing praise to Him with glorious psalms!
He rules the nations by His worth, and on His throne receives their alms.

Princes of peoples gather all to Abraham and to our God.
Exalt the Lord, and on Him call – the earth is His, so praise our God!

Read and meditate on Luke 8.1-3.

Preparation

1. What was the substance of Jesus' preaching and teaching?
2. How was Jesus' ministry supported?

Meditation

Many who profess to believe in Jesus Christ today rejoice to know that their sins are forgiven and they are going to heaven when they die. This may well be true; however, this is not what Jesus proclaimed during His earthly sojourn.

This “gospel” which offers forgiveness and eternal life as the substance of Jesus' Good News is more a form of “near Christianity” than true. Jesus granted forgiveness and spoke of eternal life, it is true, but not as the primary focus and content of His teaching. Jesus preached and brought glad tidings of the Kingdom of God, the new regime of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit (Rom. 14.17, 18) that He brought into history like a bright new day, and which was rolling back the darkness of sin and wrong belief and would reconcile and restore all the world – every feature, facet, and form of it – back to the Father Who made it.

The message of Jesus is Good News because it addresses life *here and now* as well as life *there and then*. The *there and then* of the Kingdom is more than most believers understand, and there *here and now* it affects is beyond what many have ever dared to ask or think (Eph. 3.20). The true Gospel, once believed, unleashes power to make all things new in our lives (1 Cor. 4.20; 2 Cor. 5.17), to transform us from woeful sinners to image-bearers of Jesus (2 Cor. 3.12-18), to embolden us for effective witness (Acts 1.8; 1 Pet. 3.15), and to use us to turn our upside-down world rightside-up for God (Acts 17.5-9; Rev. 21.5).

If the only thing you received when you believed in Jesus is forgiveness of sins and assurance of heaven, then you have not heard the complete Good News, Good News so powerful that it heals the sick, drives demons to their doom, changes the course of everyday lives, and leads folks – like the disciples and these brave ladies – to commit themselves and all they are and have to follow Jesus, come what may.

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162.

After all the miracles that Jesus had done in a variety of places, now He and His chosen twelve were setting off to go through every city and village preaching and bringing the glad tidings of the Kingdom of God. The very Kingdom that we are to work and pray for so that it appears on earth as it is in heaven (Matt. 6.10; Lk. 11.2).

The logistics of how they accomplished this journey are interesting. Besides the work that they were doing in their own sphere, Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Susanna, and many others also provided for the group from their substance (Lk. 8.2, 3). This is the giving that Jesus had taught His disciples about: “Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you” (Lk. 6.38). Tithing from their livelihood, they supported the needs of others. “Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that there may be food in My house. And try Me now in this’, says the LORD of hosts, ‘If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it’” (Mal. 3.10).

I remember having a conversation with a person skeptical about tithing. Their issue? Christians are just tithing their money to Christian endeavors and the money just keeps going around. Hmmm. Christians give to the poor, the needy, the unemployed, the sick. Christians tend to the needs of people’s health and well-being. Christians spread the Good News of Jesus and the Kingdom of God. Christians educate and train for employment. Christian ministries reach around the globe to do works of mercy and service. Churches help people in their given communities. Christian people all work in their Personal Mission Field in their own special ways. And some need the financial support of others. Some don’t. But God’s money does keep going around in circles and it is a genius way to fund the earthly Kingdom of God.

And we see life-giving aspects of service and funds happening in this situation, with Jesus and His disciples, on this arduous adventure (Lk. 8.1-3). We are all called to follow Him. And tithing happens to be an act of obedience (Lev. 27.30). In our minds it may not always make fiscal sense, but it is something that we are commanded to do. It is how things work in the Kingdom.

We are called to follow Jesus with our life and substance. “When He had called the people to Himself, with His disciples also, He said to them, ‘Whoever desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me’” (Mk. 8.34).”

“These are the ones who follow the Lamb wherever He goes” (Rev. 14.4).

We are all *the ones*—preaching and bringing the glad tidings of the Kingdom of God.

For reflection

1. Why is giving an important part of the life of faith?
2. What do we mean by “near Christianity”? What’s lacking in this view of the faith?
3. Whom will you encourage in the Gospel of the Kingdom today?

We are here told what Christ made the constant business of his life, it was teaching the gospel. Tidings of the kingdom of God are glad tidings, and what Christ came to bring. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), Commentary on Luke 8.1-3

Pray Psalm 47.1-6.

Thank God for His Kingdom and for your calling to it as a citizen and ambassador. What will you give for Jesus today? How will you follow Him? Commit your day to the Lord as His disciple, servant, and ambassador.

Luke 8, Part 1

Sing Psalm 47.1-6.

(Truro: *Shout, for the Blessed Jesus Reigns*)

O clap your hands, you peoples all, with joy to God your songs intone!
Shout out to Him, and on Him call, He is the mighty, sovereign One!

High is the Lord, O, fear His Name! He rules, a King o'er all the earth.
Nations and peoples He has tamed, the heritage of His holy worth.

God has ascended with a shout, the Lord with sound of trumpet bold!
Sing praise to Him, let praise ring out! Let praise through all the world be told!

2 The Four Soils

Pray Psalm 107.1-3.

Oh, give thanks to the LORD, for *He is good!*
For His mercy *endures* forever.
Let the redeemed of the LORD say *so*,
Whom He has redeemed from the hand of the enemy,
And gathered out of the lands,
From the east and from the west,
From the north and from the south.

Sing Psalm 107.1-3.

(Faithfulness: *Great Is Thy Faithfulness*)

Lord, You are good, we give thanks and we praise You!
Your steadfast love will forever endure.
Let the redeemed, who from trouble You rescue,
gather and say that Your mercy is sure!
Refrain vv. 1-3

Lord, for Your wondrous works, and for Your steadfast love,
we give You thanks, we exalt Your great Name!
We who from east and west, north and south gather,
boldly redemption in Christ we proclaim!

Read Luke 8.1-15; meditate on verses 4-15.

Preparation

1. Why did Jesus teach in parables?
2. What do the four soils represent?

Meditation

Let's begin in the middle of this passage and ask, Why did Jesus teach in parables? Not hard to answer (as the old Celtic teachers would say). Parables were impenetrable to those whose hearts were hardened against the truth. They didn't bother to understand or try to apply them, so they couldn't argue against them, either. But to those who sought understanding ("What does this parable mean?", v. 9), Jesus would readily explain and grant them further insights to the Kingdom of God (v. 10).

Now the parable. The four soils represent four ways the seed of the Gospel is received. Some people are so under the thrall of the devil and his lies that they don't even hear the Gospel (vv. 5, 12). Others may listen to the Gospel but their hearts are hardened against it, so that it cannot take root in their soul (vv. 6, 13). They may believe "for a little while" but the seed is not nurtured within them so that, when temptation comes, they bail out on the Gospel. Still others have so much worldly clutter in their souls – diversions, entertainments, idols, pleasures – that these choke off the good seed of the Kingdom so that it never bears fruit (vv. 7, 14).

But then there are those whose soul is ready to receive the Gospel. God has prepared their heart for the Good News and they receive it gladly and apply themselves to enabling it to take deep root and begin to grow. They "keep" the seed, like Adam was commanded to "keep" the garden (Gen. 2.15), so that it grows, flourishes, and bears fruit (vv. 8, 15).

Do you "hear" the parable as Jesus intends (v. 8)?

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

Parables, like music, bring people together without judgment and without rancor. They are stories. And who doesn't enjoy hearing a good one? Parables usually have a purpose, and of course, when Jesus was at the helm of a story, it most assuredly had a Kingdom thrust and an eternal meaning.

His great multitude of listeners was an audience of people from every city. The first part of the story was for them. The second part—the explanation—was for those who wanted to pursue the truth. Some just wanted a little diversion from the day's activities, others sought to be taught. "Buy the truth, and do not sell it, also wisdom and instruction and understanding" (Prov. 23.23).

"But wisdom is justified by all her children" (Lk. 7.35). Again, this rings true. As Jesus said, "But the ones that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience" (Lk. 8.15). And later Jesus said, "By your patience possess your souls" (Lk. 21.19). Proven by our obedience.

The beautiful music of Jesus' words reached into the souls of many hearers that day. They gained truth, wisdom and understanding about their own standing; and learned the predicament of others who had already heard or will eventually hear the Good News and the glad tidings of the Kingdom of God. Those whose seed had fallen on unworkable soil.

But even those, can be reseeded and watered and have the light of the Son shine upon them. It is never too late for sprouts to appear. And we, as God's children, are to have seeds ready to sow, full watering cans ready to sprinkle, hoes at hand to till the soil, and rakes to scrape away the rocks. And prayer—the compost and the mulch both to fertilize and protect the sown seeds. It will take a lot of gardeners to do this work, and happily there are many willing to strap on overalls and get this work done. As Paul opined, "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase" (1 Cor. 3.6).

He who wants to garden, let him get gardening. "For we are God's fellow workers" (1 Cor. 3.9). "He who has ears to hear, let him hear!" (Lk. 8.8) and be pushed by a parable to produce.

For reflection

1. How should you prepare each day to sow the good seed of the Kingdom?
2. Remember: Our job is only to sow. Only God can give the increase and bring forth fruit. Why is it important to keep this in mind?
3. Which of those soils best represents your life? Why?

Parables, we may say, are the images not of visible objects but rather spiritual and understandable by the intellect. The parable points out to the eyes of the mind what is impossible to see with the eyes of the body. It beautifully shapes out the subtlety of intellectual things by means of the things of sense and palpable to the touch. Cyril of Alexandria (375-444), Commentary on Luke, Homily 41

Pray Psalm 107.33-43.

Praise God for the abundance of His grace toward you day by day. Be specific in enumerating the many ways His undeserved love reaches, refreshes, and renews you.

Sing Psalm 107.33-43.

(Faithfulness: *Great Is Thy Faithfulness*)

You make the desert a river o'erflowing;
You make a wasted life fruitful and strong!
You bless the hungry with fields for the sowing;

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Bless and increase us who to You belong!

Refrain vv. 1-3

Lord, for Your wondrous works, and for Your steadfast love,
we give You thanks, we exalt Your great Name!

We who from east and west, north and south gather,
boldly redemption in Christ we proclaim!

When we are low, are oppressed and in sorrow,
You pour contempt on our fierce, angry foes.

We will rejoice at the hope of tomorrow:

He shall be wise who Your steadfast love knows!

Refrain

3 Caveat Auditor

Pray Psalm 12.1, 2.

Help, LORD, for the godly man ceases!
For the faithful disappear from among the sons of men.
They speak idly everyone with his neighbor;
With flattering lips *and* a double heart they speak.

Sing Psalm 12.1, 2.

(Hamburg: *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross*)

Help, Lord! The godly cease to be! They who believe in Christ are few.
Falsely the wicked confidently flatter, deceive, and mock Your truth.

Read Luke 8.1-18; meditate on verses 16-18.

Preparation

1. To what does Jesus liken us in verses 16 and 17?
2. What does He warn us about in verse 18?

Meditation

I think it was Little Marcy who first impressed on me Jesus' warning, *caveat auditor*:

*O be careful, little ears what you hear;
Yes be careful, little ears what you hear;
For the Father up above
Is looking down in love,
So be careful little ears what you hear.*

Jesus' teaching about being a careful listener begins with a metaphor. Lamps are for giving light. Light a lamp and it reveals things which were before secret and unseen. When you turn the light of God's truth on in your soul, what does our Father up above see there? What secrets are revealed when the lamp of God's Word (Ps. 119.105) illuminates the recesses of your soul? What have you been listening to?

Darkness and light gain access to our soul through the portals of our ears. What we hear, listen to, receive with understanding, and shelter in our soul will affect everything about us. If we listen to lies, half-truths, flattering words, or the temptations of fleshly indulgence, these will become the secret things of our soul that shape us. The lamp of God's truth can expose all such darkness, but we need to hear that Word, over and over and day after day, and receive and embrace and cling to it.

At the same time, we need to make sure we're not listening to the voices of our lying age that tell us to make up our own minds about this, that, or the other, or to just do whatever we feel like at any moment. They may shout their lies at us from many directions throughout the day, but that doesn't mean we have to take them seriously. If we hear God faithfully, His Word will guard our soul with the light of truth.

Shelter daily in the Word of our Father up above, and the lies of this world will have no power to deceive and destroy you.

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

The truth that Little Marcy proclaimed is even older than she; although that seems hard to believe. Who doesn't remember singing along with this song? And being a little afraid?

But way back, long ago, Moses said, “The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear...” And then God added, “I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him. And it shall be that whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require it of him” (Deut. 18:15, 18, 19). Jesus is the Prophet of God we are to hear, and if we do not carefully hear Him, God will look down and see it.

God is intent upon searching our hearts and winnowing out what shouldn't be there. “The spirit of a man is the lamp of the LORD, searching all the inner depths of his heart” (Prov. 20:27). Yes please, “Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my anxieties; and see if there is any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting” (Ps. 139:23, 24).

Jesus proclaimed, “For nothing is secret that will not be revealed, nor anything hidden that will not be known and come to light” (Lk. 8:17); and long before that, the LORD God said, “The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it? I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, even to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings” (Jer. 17:9, 10).

Along with our little ears, our little eyes, little hands, and little feet are to be careful what they hear, see, do, and where they go: for the Father up above is looking down in love. And because He is, then we should be very careful about how we are showing Him that we love Him, too. Hear Him. Carefully do what He says.

And just to include our Personal Mission Field, we have Paul's words that remind us of our responsibility to others. “How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?” (Rom. 10:14).

“How beautiful are the [careful] feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!” (Rom. 10:15). And the careful ears, eyes, and hands that love and serve Him in the light of His Word.

For reflection

1. How would you counsel new believers to guard their ears against false teachings?
2. What would you suggest as a good way of regularly shining the light of God's lamp on the recesses of your soul?
3. How does the Word of God function as a lamp to your path?

We ought to take heed of the things that will hinder our profiting by the word we hear; to take heed lest we hear carelessly and slightly, lest we entertain prejudices against the word we hear; and to take heed to our spirits after we have heard the word, lest we lose what we have gained. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), Commentary on Luke 8:16-18

Pray Psalm 12:3-8

Pray that God will stop the mouths of liars and that He will guard you from being led astray by false teachings. Commit yourself to sheltering in His Word for all the work of this day.

Sing Psalm 12:3-8.

(Hamburg: *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross*)

Stop, Lord, the lips that utter lies, all those who speak with boasting tongue!
See how Your holy Word they despise, while their own praises they have sung.

Rise up, O Lord, and rescue all Your precious children sore distressed.
Save those who faithfully on You call; grant them deliv'rance, peace, and rest.

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Your words are pure and proven true, like silver seven times refined.
You will preserve Your Word ever new, and keep the heart to You inclined.

Proudly the wicked strut and stand; Your indignation builds on high.
Men may exalt their wicked plans, but You will judge them by and by.

4 Jesus' Family

Pray Psalm 105.6-11.

O seed of Abraham His servant,
You children of Jacob, His chosen ones!
He *is* the LORD our God;
His judgments *are* in all the earth.
He remembers His covenant forever,
The word *which* He commanded, for a thousand generations,
The covenant which He made with Abraham,
And His oath to Isaac,
And confirmed it to Jacob for a statute,
To Israel *as* an everlasting covenant,
Saying, "To you I will give the land of Canaan
As the allotment of your inheritance"...

Sing Psalm 105.6-11.

(Warrington: *Give to Our God Immortal Praise*)

You holy children of Abraham, You chosen ones of Jacob, stand!
He is our Lord, of wondrous worth; His judgments are in all the earth.

He will His covenant faithfully guard – His oath, the promise of His Word.
That which He to our fathers swore, He will perform forevermore!

Read Luke 8.1-21; meditate on verses 19-21.

Preparation

1. Who was seeking to see Jesus?
2. Whom did Jesus identify as His relations?

Meditation

One of the recurring scandals of Jesus' ministry was that He was forever reaching out to the Gentiles, doing good, hobnobbing with them, and offering them forgiveness and the Kingdom of God. To the religious leaders of Jesus' day, this just would not do.

But that's because they failed to heed the Word of God given from the time of Abraham throughout the entirety of the Old Testament. God always intended to bring the Gentiles into the family of His people, to make them Israel who never were Israel. Anyone who heard the Good News of the Kingdom, repented of their sins, forsook all, and followed Jesus would be grafted into the family of God and considered part of the true Israel. Paul makes this very clear (cf. Rom. 4.13-18; 11.1-12).

The arrival of Jesus' family, "seeking to speak with Him" (Matt. 12.46), gave Jesus an opportunity to illustrate this aspect of His teaching. Surrounded by a "crowd" (v. 19), which included folks "from every city" (v. 4) and likely some Gentiles, Jesus extended the privileges of relationship with Him beyond His mother and brothers to all "who hear the word of God and do it" (v. 21). He intended no disrespect to Mary and His siblings. Rather, He welcomed all who truly believe into a familial status like that of His kindred in the flesh, which is to say, into the family of His heavenly Father (cf. Jn. 1.12). That includes you and me.

Typical of Jesus, He did not explain what He meant by this. He simply launched this gesture out into the crowd and let those who had ears to hear think about it, ponder it, and marvel. As we should, too.

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

I'm going to digress here for a moment and talk about good manners. However, in doing so, I do not mean to diminish Mary or the brothers; but really, their timing was off. Picture in your mind this crowd swarming around Jesus, Who has just told this amazing parable about Kingdom entrance, understanding, and work; and a challenge to take heed how you hear this teaching. It is a dramatic moment, full of heightened emotions and thoughts. And into this mix, Mom and the family want a word.

Of course, they had every right to do what they did, and request what they requested, but was it the right time? I don't know. And because I don't, I maybe shouldn't be saying anything about it. But just as a casual observer I think we could learn something about the proper place and time for things. We must always be sensitive to the Holy Spirit's leading. As Solomon penned: "To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven..." (Eccl. 3.1). The digression is over.

So, now let's move forward into the beauty of Jesus' gracious words to His hearers: "My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it" (Lk. 8.21). Do you want to be a mother of Jesus? Do the word of God. Do you want to be His brother? Do the word of God. Do you want to be His sister? Then do the word of God. It is very straightforward and plain to anyone who chooses to hear. Do we want to be in His family? Then we must hear the word of God and do it!

If we haven't been in the family, we can be in the family. If we have strayed from family life, we can return home. It is never too late to repent and be in a familial relationship with Jesus. As Nehemiah prayed, "Remember, I pray, the word that You commanded Your servant Moses, saying, 'If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the nations; but if you return to Me, and keep My commandments and do them, though some of you were cast out to the farthest part of the heavens, yet I will gather them from there, and bring them to the place which I have chosen as a dwelling for My name'" (Neh. 1.8, 9).

And the words that solidify our relationship, secure us in the family, and determine our present and future life? They are words prayed by our beloved Savior, Jesus Christ, to His heavenly Father: "I pray for them, I do not pray for the world but for those whom You have given Me, for they are Yours. And all Mine are Yours, and Yours are Mine, and I am glorified in them" (Jn. 17.9, 10). All His.

Settled. Secure. In Jesus' family.

For reflection

1. What does it mean to you to be in the family of Jesus?
2. How would you explain to an unbelieving friend how they could become part of that family?
3. Families take care of one another. Will you see other members of Jesus' family today? How will you encourage them?

Great encouragement is given to those who prove themselves faithful hearers of the word, by being doers of the work. Christ owns them as his relations. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), Commentary on Luke 8.19-21

Pray Psalm 105.26-45.

Thank the heavenly Father for sending Jesus to deliver us from our captivity to sin, to bring us into the precious and very great promises of the covenant, to enrich us with the gift of His Spirit and every good gift for ministry, and to carry out all the promises of His Word. Commit yourself to following Him and all His commandments today.

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Sing Psalm 105.26-45.

(Warrington: *Give to Our God Immortal Praise*)

He brought His people from Egypt alive, and made their joy and song revive.
He made the nations' land their own, and all the wealth that they had known.

To them He granted the promised land, the portion of His gracious hand.
Though they were few, and wandered far, He kept them close within His heart.

So let us all in our Savior confide, and in His holy Law abide.
Let us observe His glorious Word, and praise our sovereign, faithful Lord!

5 Words of Love (1)

Pray Psalm 29.3-6.

The voice of the LORD *is* over the waters;
The God of glory thunders;
The LORD *is* over many waters.
The voice of the LORD *is* powerful;
The voice of the LORD *is* full of majesty.
The voice of the LORD breaks the cedars,
Yes, the LORD splinters the cedars of Lebanon.
He makes them also skip like a calf,
Lebanon and Sirion like a young wild ox.

Sing Psalm 29.3-6.

(Toulon: *I Greet Thee, Who My Sure Redeemer Art*)

Over the waters, over thunder's roll, God's voice creation's mighty pow'rs controls!
Cedars collapse at His majestic Word; nations are shaken by our mighty Lord!

Read Luke 8.1-24; meditate on verses 22-24.

Preparation

1. Why were the disciples fearful?
2. What did Jesus do?

Meditation

The Psalms, such as Psalms 29 and 147 – among many other places in the Old Testament – teach that Yahweh – the LORD – is sovereign over all creation, including all its waters and winds. Creation does what Yahweh tells it to do.

So what does this suggest about the ultimate identity of Him Who commanded the sea to be still, and it did? The writer of Hebrews tells us (Heb. 1.3) that our Lord Jesus, exalted to the right hand of God, upholds the entire vast cosmos by His mere Word. He speaks, and the entire cosmos – all those billions and billions of stars and galaxies and everything in or on them – does what He commands. His Word is powerful because it is *His Word*.

Jesus rebuked the raging wind and sea and “they ceased, and there was a calm.” How does that work? We cannot know. We can only read the report and draw the conclusion it suggests: Jesus is Yahweh, Immanuel, God-With-Us. He rules the world with truth and grace and with the unsearchable, unfathomable power of His Word. Every moment Jesus speaks to everything in the cosmos, saying, in effect, “Do that again.” And it does.

If Jesus ever stopped speaking to the cosmos, as John Scotus Eriugena wrote, it would simply cease to exist. And amid all those powerful words spoken to every particle and planet, Jesus speaks to you and everything you are – your cells, breath, blood, bones, brain, and everything else. Because He speaks to you, you continue to exist. And He speaks to you because He loves you; and He speaks to all the details of your life, most of which you seldom give a thought. He's speaking to them constantly, bathing and suffusing and pervading everything about you with words of love.

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

And it is because the disciples knew that Jesus loved them, that they came to Him, in their fear because of their jeopardy, saying, “Master, Master, we are perishing!” (Lk. 8.24). They knew in Whom their only hope

was fixed, “Give us help from trouble, for the help of man is useless” (Ps. 60.11).

We, too, on a daily basis must cry out, “Master, Master” give us help from trouble, and help for our very maintenance and existence. Jesus tenderly cares for us and wants to do so: “How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings...” (Matt. 23.37). So gentle and kind is He.

We can cry out, like Asa did when he faced an army of a million men and three hundred chariots, “LORD, it is nothing for You to help, whether with many or with those who have no power; help us, O LORD our God, for we rest on You, and in Your name we go against this multitude. O LORD, You are our God; do not let man prevail against You!” (2 Chron. 14.11).

“Arise for our help, and redeem us for Your mercies’ sake” (Ps. 44.26).

“God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble” (Ps. 46.1).

“Help me, O LORD my God! Oh, save me according to Your mercy...” (Ps. 109.26).

“Our help is in the name of the LORD, Who made heaven and earth” (Ps. 124.8).

“Help us, O God of our salvation, for the glory of Your name; and deliver us, and provide atonement for our sins, for Your name’s sake!” (Ps. 79.9).

Master, Master, preserve our life. Help us for Your mercies’ sake. You are our refuge and strength. You are the Creator and have power over all Your creation. You provide eternal help by atoning for our wretched sinfulness. And for all this help we thank You and say, “Lord, I believe; help my unbelief!” (Mk. 9.24)

“Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need” (Heb. 4.16). Because He loves us so!

*Oh, how He loves you and me,
Oh, how He loves you and me.
He gave His life, what more could He give;
Oh, how He loves you, Oh, how He loves me,
Oh, how He loves you and me.
(Kurt Kaiser)*

For reflection

1. What are some things that cause you to become fearful? Can Jesus handle these?
2. Why do you think some people have difficulty believing that God stands ready to help them in their times of fear?
3. How can believers help one another look to God for help with their fears and needs?

He who was sleeping was awakened and cast the sea into a sleep. He reveals the wakefulness of his divinity that never sleeps by the wakefulness of the sea that was now sleeping. He rebuked the wind and it became still. Ephrem the Syrian (306-373), Commentary on Tatian’s Diatessaron 6.25

Pray Psalm 29.1, 2, 7-11.

Praise and thank the Lord for His sovereign rule over all creation. Meditate on Him, exalted in glory, and seek His strength for the work of this day.

Sing Psalm 29.1, 2, 7-11.

(Toulon: I Greet Thee, Who My Sure Redeemer Art)

Give praise to God, you children of the earth! Tell of His strength, proclaim His glorious worth! Give to the Lord the glory due His Name! Worship in holiness; His grace proclaim!

Luke 8, Part 1

God speaks and lightning streaks across the sky; by His decree He shakes the desert dry.
Speak, Lord, and life to beasts and men is giv'n. Forests dissolve, and glory rings in heav'n.

Sovereign, the Lord sat o'er the raging flood; sovereign forever rules our gracious God!
God will His people bless with strength and peace: Lord, may Your holy Word to us increase!

6 Words of Love (2)

Pray Psalm 141.5.

Let the righteous strike me;

It shall be a kindness.

And let him rebuke me;

It shall be as excellent oil;

Let my head not refuse it.

For still my prayer *is* against the deeds of the wicked.

Sing Psalm 141.5.

(Truro: *Shout, for the Blessed Jesus Reigns*)

Lord, let a righteous man rebuke – a kindness this shall surely be.

Like healing oil upon my head, Your sweet rebuke shall be to me.

Read Luke 8.1-25; meditate on verse 25.

Preparation

1. What did Jesus ask the disciples?

2. What did the disciples ask one another?

Meditation

Imagine the corporate sigh of relief as the wind and sea died down. Whew! That was close!

Then imagine the troubling of the waters and winds of their souls as Jesus rebuked their puny faith: “Where is your faith?” Ouch!

But Jesus was simply pointing out an important spiritual fact: Faith is meant to override fears, not the other way around. Think of the many ways fear can thwart faith. We fear the loss of some cherished practice or possession, so we fail to believe God’s Word when it urges us beyond our zone of comfort or convenience. We fear what others might think of us, so we keep our faith to ourselves. We fear having to exert ourselves in some good work – the loss of time, the risk of failure, having to go out of our way, etc. – so we fail to believe that we are saved for good works, and we merely *profess* faith rather than *live* it.

Jesus wanted us to know that faith must prevail over fear. By faith we cling to God’s Word. By faith we look to Him in prayer. By faith we set our minds on the things that are above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. By faith we take up the example of our forebears and follow in their lives of obedience and witness. By faith we stare down our fears and step out on the troubled waters of the sea of life, looking to Jesus for every next step.

The disciples’ problem, of course, is that they did not yet understand who Jesus was. He was really cool, of course, and spoke interesting truths, did many good works, and paid them special attention. But Yahweh? LORD of the wind and sea? They weren’t there yet. That is, their faith had not rested on that lofty plateau.

How about you?

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

Jesus said to His disciples, “Let’s cross over to the other side of the lake” (Lk. 8.22). And that one sentence determined their faith or lack thereof. He told them they were going to get to the other side. So, what if a huge storm arose? “Let’s cross over.” And so, what if Jesus was taking a well-deserved nap and seemed

inattentive to their needs? “Let’s cross over.”

Jesus also said to His disciples, and says to us, “Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. And where I go you know, and the way you know...I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me” (Jn. 14. 1-4, 6). So even when storms arise in this life of ours, He still says and means, “Let’s cross over.”

Also, when Jesus berated them, and berates us for our lack of faith, He was and is showing great love. “Open rebuke is better than love carefully concealed.”

“Faithful are the wounds of a friend...”

“As iron sharpens iron, so a man sharpens the countenance of his friend. (Prov. 27.5, 6, 17). His love rebukes, wounds, and sharpens us for service to Him and to others while we’re crossing over.

We have been told of God’s love and tender care in the Old Testament and the New.

We have been told that we will cross over one day into eternity; and in the meantime, we have work to do in and for the Kingdom of God (Eph. 2.10).

“Be strong and of good courage, do not fear nor be afraid of them; for the LORD your God, He is the One who goes with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you” (Deut. 31.6; Heb. 13.5). With us in transit. Always.

“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever.” (Heb. 13.8)

“Let us cross over to the other side...” Words of Love.

For reflection

1. In what sense is a righteous friend’s rebuke a “word of love”?
2. What can we do to increase our faith in Jesus?
3. Suppose God called you to rebuke a Christian friend. What would you do make sure you did that in love?

So we see that the fear that tests faith is not evil in itself, until it becomes excessive. This excess occurs when the tranquility of faith is troubled or disquieted, when it ought to stop and rest in the Word of God. Heinrich Bullinger (1504-1575), An Ecclesiasticall Exposition upon Saint Mattheue 8.5

Pray Psalm 141.1-4, 8-10.

Call on the Lord to guard your heart and your lips today, so that you praise and serve Him with all your words and works. Set your mind on the things that are above, and strive to keep it there throughout the day.

Sing Psalm 141.1-4, 8-10.

(Truro: *Shout, for the Blessed Jesus Reigns*)

O Lord, we call to You in prayer! To us come quickly; hear our cry!
Receive our prayer as incense sweet, our lifted hands as a sacrifice!

Lord, set a guard upon my mouth; let not my heart to evil bend,
nor let me work iniquity in company with wicked men.

We lift our eyes to You, O Lord, and refuge seek; Lord, save our soul!
From every trap and snare redeem; deliver us and make us whole.

7 Kingdom Features

Pray Psalm 110.1-3.

The LORD said to my Lord,
“Sit at My right hand,
Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.”
The LORD shall send the rod of Your strength out of Zion.
Rule in the midst of Your enemies!
Your people shall be volunteers
In the day of Your power;
In the beauties of holiness, from the womb of the morning,
You have the dew of Your youth.

Sing Psalm 110.1-3.

(Aurelia: *The Church's One Foundation*)

“Sit by Me at My right hand,” the LORD says to my Lord,
“until I make Your foot stand on all who hate Your Word.”
From in His Church the Savior rules all His enemies;
while those who know His favor go forth the Lord to please.

Read Luke 8.1-25; meditate on verse 1.

Preparation

1. What did Jesus preach and teach?
2. In general, what kind of message was this?

Meditation

To learn the truth of His Word, God prefers for us to search the Scriptures daily, comparing spiritual truths from one section with spiritual truths from another, using the mind of Christ and seeking a better understanding of Him throughout His Word, that we might become more like Him (Acts 17.11; 1 Cor. 2.12, 13, 16; Jn. 5.39; 2 Cor. 3.12-18). The first part of Luke 8 can serve as a lab session for us in learning about the Kingdom of God. What we find here is by no means exhaustive; however, it will serve as a good exercise to guide us in knowing more of the presence, promise, and power of the Kingdom of God.

Let's note the following:

First, the Kingdom was the primary occupation of the mind of Christ and the substance of all His preaching and teaching (v. 1). What Jesus thought and taught about the Kingdom was Good News – glad tidings, not onerous (v. 1). Next, Jesus intends His Kingdom to take root on earth, and He is preparing hearts even now to receive it so that it might bear abundant fruit in and through them (vv. 4-8, 11-15). But not everyone will receive this Good News (vv. 9-12), and even some who do will not realize the fruit Jesus intends (vv. 13, 14). Many voices – enticing us to believe or desire or seek this, that, or something else – compete with the glad tidings of the Kingdom, and if we are not careful, those deceitful voices can obscure the Good News and even lead us astray (vv. 16-18). Growth in the Kingdom is a matter of trusting Jesus and taking Him at His Word (vv. 22-25), knowing that He is God and Lord of all creation. The Kingdom of God creates the family of Jesus, and it is open to all who listen to Him and do what the Word of God teaches (vv. 19-21). They who become disciples of Jesus shine Kingdom light on everything and everyone around them (vv. 16, 17); and they give of themselves and their resources to further His Kingdom work on earth as it is in heaven (vv. 1-3).

Thus far the lesson. Reflect and respond.

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

If you were hankering to visit Vermont, we could probably tell you a few things about it: It is very green in the Spring and Summer (thus its name); it is very colorful in the Fall; and the other eight months of the year are very cold and snow covered. Makes you want to jump right in your car, or the train or plane and come right on up.

The Bible, on the other hand, has made the Kingdom of God far more appealing! So, I would recommend your preferred transit and immediately pack to enter therein.

Here are some Kingdom Features:

David said, “Blessed are You, LORD God of Israel, our Father, forever and ever.

Yours, O LORD, is the greatness, the power and the glory, the victory and the majesty;

for all that is in heaven and in earth is Yours; Yours is the kingdom, O LORD,

and You are exalted as head over all” (1 Chron. 29.11).

“For the kingdom is the LORD’s, and He rules over the nations” (Ps. 22.28).

“Your kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and Your dominion endures throughout all generations” (Ps. 145.13).

John the Baptist said, “Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand!” (Matt. 3.2).

Jesus said, “For Yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever” (Matt. 6.13).

“But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness...” (Matt. 6.33).

“Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God” (Jn. 3.5).

“My kingdom is not of this world” (Jn. 18.36).

Paul wrote, “...for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit” (Rom. 14.17). This affirms what Jesus said, “The kingdom of God does not come with observation...for indeed, the kingdom of God is within you” (Lk. 17.20, 21).

“Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom which cannot be shaken, let us have grace, by which we may serve God acceptably with reverence and godly fear” (Heb. 12.28).

Caveat Emptor. Buyer/traveler/resident beware.

“For our God is a consuming fire” (Heb. 12.29).

Enter the kingdom carefully, surely, and sincerely to life more abundant and joy that is full (Jn. 10.10; 15.11).

For reflection

1. Which of the Kingdom’s many features do you experience?
2. How would you explain the Kingdom of God to a new believer?
3. Today, how will you show that the Kingdom is as high a priority for you as it is for Jesus?

Tidings of the kingdom of God are glad tidings, and what Christ came to bring. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), *Commentary on Luke 8.1-3*

Pray Psalm 110.4-7.

Thank God that His Kingdom has come, is coming, and will come in its fullness when Jesus returns in glory. Call on Him to increase His rule of righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit (Rom. 14.17, 18) in and through you today, and to help you seek more of His Kingdom as you work your Personal Mission Field.

Sing Psalm 110.4-7.

(Aurelia: *The Church's One Foundation*)

Filled with the Spirit's power, in holy robes of love,
from early morning's hour they serve their Lord above.
Christ reigns a priest forever, the King of Righteousness
and King of Peace who ever His chosen ones will bless.

The Lord at Your right hand, *LORD*, in wrath shall shatter kings,
when judgment by His strong Word He to the nations brings.
Then, all His foes defeated, He takes His hard-won rest,
in glorious triumph seated with us, redeemed and blessed!

Luke 8, Part 1

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

1. What do we learn about the Kingdom of God from Luke 8.1-25?
2. In what ways is the Kingdom of God like a seed? What kind of “soil” does this seed require?
3. Why is Jesus the fitting and proper King of the Kingdom of God?
4. What does Jesus expect of and seek for you as one of His family?
5. What’s the most important lesson you’ve learned from our study of Luke 8.1-25?

For prayer:

The Fellowship of Ailbe

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