

AM Luke 8:1-15

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[0 : 00] Well friends, good morning as we begin another week in lockdown, as we begin another week not being able to meet together.

It's good to come together and study God's Word. It's good to come together and see what God is saying to us through His Word. As we come this morning we're going to read from Luke chapter 8 and verses 1 through 15.

Continuing our studies in Luke's Gospel, Luke chapter 8 and verses 1 through 15. Soon afterwards he went on through cities and villages proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God.

And the twelve were with him, and also some women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities. Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, and Joanna, the wife of Husa, Herod's household manager, and Susanna and many other provided for them out of their means.

And when great crowds were gathering and people from town after town came to him, he said in a parable, A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell along the path and was trampled underfoot, and the birds of the air devoured it.

[1 : 09] And some fell on the rock, and as it grew up, it withered away because it had no moisture. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up with it and choked it. And some fell into good soil and grew and yielded a hundredfold.

As he said these things, he called out, He who has ears to hear, let him hear. And when his disciples asked him what this parable meant, he said, To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God.

But for others they are in parables, so that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand. Now the parable is this, The seed is the word of God.

The ones along the path are those who have heard, Then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, So that they may not believe and be saved. And the ones on the rock are those who, When they hear the word, receive it with joy.

But these have no root. They believe for a while, And in time of testing fall away. And as for what fell among the thorns, They are those who hear, But as they go on their way, They are choked by the cares, And riches, And pleasures of life, And their fruit does not mature.

[2 : 20] And as for that, In the good soil, They are those who, Hearing the word, Hold it fast, In an honest and good heart, And bear fruit with patience. Well friends, Let us turn to the Lord in prayer.

Let us pray. Heavenly Father, As we come this morning, We want to give you thanks for, Another Lord's Day. Perhaps another Lord's Day, When we feel the pain, Of not being able to meet together.

Perhaps another Lord's Day, Where we feel the absence, Of the corporate gathered worship, Of the people of God. But yet we thank you Father, For the work that you are doing.

We thank you Father, For that recent survey, In the newspaper that reported, More and more people, Are going to church services, In these times of uncertainty, In these days of uncertainty, More and more people, Are searching, For answers.

We thank you, That as we look, At our social media channels, As we watch, Our news feeds, On Facebook, And on Twitter, We see church service, After church service, After church service.

[3 : 27] We thank you, We thank you Father, That your word is not bound, And that your word, Is still going forth, As we come this morning, We want to pray, Again for all of our, Health care staff, For all of those, In the NHS, For all of those, Doctors, Nurses, For all of those, Porters, For all of those, Technicians, For all of those, Involved, In the social care setting, We pray Father, That you

would keep them, Safe, That you would protect them, We think again, This morning Father, Especially of those, Who are, Caring for those, In nursing homes, Praying again, That you would keep them, Safe and protect them, Remember our governments, At this time, As they, Seek wisdom and guidance, As they seek to know, The way ahead, May you, Enlighten them, May you show them, The right steps to take, And Father, We pray that as we come, To your word now, We pray that you would indeed, Give us ears to hear, As Jesus reminds us, In this parable,

That he who has ears to hear, Let him hear, We pray that not only, Would our physical ears, Be open, But we pray Father, That the spirit, Would be ministering, Mightily to us, That our spiritual ears, Would also be opened, That we may hear, And see the great truths, That you have for us, We ask, In Jesus name, Amen, Well I encourage you, This morning, To have this passage, Open in front of you, This passage, Luke chapter 8, And these first 15 verses, Luke chapter 8, And verses 1, Through 15, I was watching, The Lion, The Witch, And the Wardrobe, The other night, On Disney Plus, It's a, A great film, If not, Slightly longer perhaps, Than it really needed to be, And before you ask, Yes, I have read the books, As well, As watched the film, But of course, The books and the films, Work on two levels, Don't they, On one level, They're great stories, On one level, They are enjoyable stories,

For children and adults, Like to read, They're easily relatable, Stories of fantasy fiction, But of course, For those of us, Who believe, They also work, On a deeper level, Don't they, We can see the symbolism, We can see the, The faith of C.S. Lewis, Coming across, We see the sin of Edmund, In eating the Turkish delight, And handing his family, Over to the white witch, It was brought home to me, I suppose, In a, A fresh way, A different way, When Aslan was sacrificed, As I watched it, The other evening, Aslan was sacrificed, In Edmund's place, This was the great moment, When the white witch, Thought that she had won, And this was the great moment, When the white witch, Thought that she was victorious, She thought that the great lion, Had been slain, That she defeated the great lion, But of course, He comes back to life, And shatters the table of death, His words, As he comes back to life, To Lucy and her sister, When a willing victim, Is killed, In a traitor's place, Then death itself, Starts working backward, On one level, It's Aslan coming back to life, To help the children, In a battle, On one level, It's Aslan coming back to life, To assist the children, In the great final battle, Against the white witch, But on another, Deeper level, Of course, It reminds us, Of the sacrifice, Of the Lord Jesus Christ, Doesn't it?

It shows us, That he who had no sin, Was made sin for us, So that we might become, The righteousness of God, It shows Aslan dying, In Edmund's place, Just as Christ died, In our place, It works on two levels, There can be two meanings to it, And as we come, This morning to this section, In Luke's gospel, As we come to Luke chapter 8, As we come to these parables, That Jesus is teaching, We see that in effect, They work on two levels, Don't they?

[7 : 29] There is the story, That people hear, There is the story, In this case, Of a farmer, Planting seed, There is a farmer, Sowing seed, But it works on another level, As well, As Jesus will explain, To his disciples, For some, It's simply a nice story, It's a nice, Down to earth illustration, That they can understand, But for others, It conveys spiritual truth, And reality to them, We want to see three things, As we come this morning, See three things, As we look at Luke chapter 8, This morning, Firstly, We want to think about, Jesus proclaiming, The gospel, We want to see how, Jesus proclaims, The gospel, Secondly, We want to think about, The parables, Themselves, And then thirdly, Finally, We want to think about, The purpose, Of the parables, Why does Jesus tell the parables, Why does Jesus use, The parables that he does, So the first thing, That we want to think about then, Is proclaim, Proclaim, And we see Jesus, Proclaiming, The gospel,

The good news, Of the kingdom of God, And we see that, In verses 1, Through 3, Of Luke chapter 8, So we remember, We remember where we are, In Luke's gospel, We remember the things, That we've seen, So far, We remember where we finished, Last week, Thinking together, In Luke's gospel, Last week, We finished with that, Shocking confrontation, Between Jesus, And Simon, Between Jesus, And this religious leader, We saw how, Ultimately, That it was the sinful woman, Ultimately, That it was the woman, With the reputation, Who went away, With her sins forgiven, Rather than Simon, The religious person, Rather than Simon, The good living person, If you like, We see that, Soon after these things, Verse 1, Soon after this confrontation, Soon after the, The incident with John the Baptist, Soon after these things, Verse 1, Jesus engages on this kind of, Preaching tour, Jesus begins this, This kind of, Season of itinerant ministry, If you like, Luke tells us

in verse 1,

That Jesus, Went through the cities, And villages, Proclaiming, And bringing the good news, Of the kingdom, Of God, So what we find Jesus doing, Time and time again, As we read about him, In the gospels, As we read about him, In these biographies, Of his life, We read about him, Traveling, And we read about him, Proclaiming the kingdom of God, We read about him, Telling others the good news, About the kingdom of God, Said it before, And we'll say it again, But preaching, Sharing, Telling people the good news, Was central to the ministry, Of Jesus, It was central, To what he came to do, Telling people, How to get into the kingdom of God, Telling people, How to be right, With God, Was a central part, Of what Jesus came to do, Many people today, Want to, Write off the gospels, Because of the miraculous, They say, Well, How can someone, Come back to life, They want to write off, The gospels, Because they say, Well how can someone, Turn water into wine, But yet that essentially, Misses the point, Of what Jesus came to do, Jesus came not, To be a miracle worker, Jesus came, Not to do these miraculous, Signs per se, But Jesus came, To tell people, About the kingdom of God, To preach the good, News, The miraculous, In a sense, Authenticated that, The miraculous, In a sense, Proved that he was, Who he said he was, Proved that he could be trusted, When he told them, About the kingdom of God, The miraculous was, An authentication, Authentication of the message, That he brought, And it's a reminder to us, That we need to keep the ministry, We need to keep the message, We need to keep the gospel, Of the Lord Jesus Christ, Central to everything, That we do as a church, Of course we engage, In mercy ministries, Of course we, Feed the hungry, Of course we clothe the naked, Of course we do, All of these things, But the danger can be, Sometimes that we, Do them, Without ever getting, To the gospel, That we do them, Without ever telling people, About the kingdom of God, That we do them, Without ever telling people,

The good news of the gospel, We can solve our consciences, By feeding the hungry, We can solve our consciences, By doing prison ministry, We can solve our consciences, By doing whatever, Without ever getting, To the gospel, Of course the opposite, Is true as well, That we can get, To the gospel, Without ever doing, A mercy ministry, That we can get, To the gospel, And preach the gospel, Tell people the good news, Of the kingdom of God, Without ever, Showing people, That we care, And love, And are concerned, For them, There are two ditches, If you like, Two extremes, That we need to avoid, Falling into, On either side, Luke also records, Another little detail, For us, In chapter one, In verse one, Sorry, Of chapter eight, That the twelve, Were with him, The twelve disciples, Are with Jesus, As he goes on this, Preaching tour, The twelve disciples, Are there, As he tells people, The good news, About the kingdom, Of God, And it's significant, Because it's going to shape,

[12:32] Their later ministry, On these tours, What did they see Jesus doing, Healing people, Yes of course, On these tours, What did they see Jesus doing, Driving out demons, Yes of course, But on these tours, What did they see Jesus doing, What was the, The central thing, That he did, He taught people, About the kingdom of God, He taught them, The good news, That he had come to bring, But notice that his entourage, Notice that his group, Doesn't finish with the twelve, Because we're then introduced, To others who are with him, Others who are there, In verse two, There are some women, Amongst the group, And not just any women, Though not just kind of, Hangers on, If you like, Not just those who are there, For the show, But rather, Look tells us, Who they are, Women who have been healed, Women who have been cured, Of evil spirits, And infirmities, We have Mary Magdalene, From whom, Seven demons have, Gone out, We have Joanna, The wife of Husa, Who is Herod's, Household manager,

And Susanna, And many others, It's a bit of a mixed bag, Really, It's a, A bit of a, A hodgepodge, Of people, Of women, Even to be fair, We have Mary Magdalene, The formerly demon possessed woman, We have, Joanna, Who would have been of a, A certain standing, Who would have been of a, A certain level, In society, The, The manager, The wife of the manager, The wife of the manager, Of Herod's household, We have this woman, Susanna, As well, As many others, It's a real mixed bag, I was reading a, A biography, Of a, A cricketer, An autobiography of a cricketer, The other day, Of Rob Key, The former England batsman, And he was talking about the teams, That he played with, And kind of, The different characters, Within each team, You know, He played, In a team, With a, A man, Who had a double first, From Oxford, Or Cambridge, But also, He played in a team, With a man, Who hadn't finished high school,

What kept them together, Was their common bond, What kept them together, Was their, Professionalism, What kept them together, Was their desire, To win cricket matches, And this bunch of individuals, These businessmen, These fishermen, These tax collectors, These high ranking women, These women, Of whom demons, Had been driven out, What was it, That kept them together, What was it, That kept, This disparate group, Of individuals together, It was that they'd seen, Jesus for who he really was, That they'd seen him, As the king of kings, And the lord of lords, That they'd seen him, As the savior from sin, That they'd seen him, As the son of God, That experienced, Deliverance at his hand, That experienced freedom, At his hand, And it was that, That kept them together, It was that, That bound them, Together, Together, The ties that bind us, As Christians, The thing that, That keeps us together, As Christians,

Should be far stronger, Than anything, That tries to divide us, Should be far deeper, Than anything else, In our lives, If we know, The peace of sins forgiven, If we know, The reality of Jesus, As our lord, And savior, It doesn't matter, Our social status, Or lack of it, It doesn't matter, Our position, Or lack of it, We are brothers, And sisters in Christ, And notice, The final little thing, That Luke records for us, In this opening section, The final little detail, We want to draw out, Many others, Verse 3, Who provided for them, Out of their means, Despite being a king, Jesus didn't live in luxury, Despite having every, Resource in the world, At his disposal, Jesus was reliant, On the kindness, And care of others, He was reliant, On the kindness, And provision of others, For himself, And for his disciples,

We in the west, Have become entirely, Self-sufficient, Haven't we? Even in church, If we're honest, We've become, Entirely self-sufficient, We have, Enough money, To meet our needs, We have, Good jobs, That we can have access to, But that doesn't follow, The example of Christ, Does it? [16:58] He cast himself, Upon God, And he cast himself, Upon the mercy, And grace, Of the people of God, So we've seen Jesus then, Proclaiming, The gospel, Proclaiming the good news, As he travels around, Secondly then, We want to think about, This parable, That Jesus tells, And we see that in verses, 4 through 8, The parables, In verses 4, Through 8, So Jesus has been traveling, Jesus has been telling, Everyone who will listen, Jesus has been preaching, Everywhere he goes, The good news of the kingdom of God, He's been telling people, He's been telling people, The gospel, And notice as we come to verse 4, That this great crowd, Was gathering to him, That people from, Town after town, After town, Were coming to hear him, People from town, After town, After town, Wanted to hear, What this rabbi had to say, It was the most important thing, Going around the area, In those days, Everyone wanted to know, Well what is it, That Jesus is saying, Word is spreading, Far and wide, About Jesus, And as the crowd gathers, As they come near, To hear the good news,

About the kingdom, Jesus begins, To teach them in parables, And he tells them, This ordinary, Everyday story, About a sewer, Going out to sow seed, It's an image, Everyone there, Would have been familiar with, It's an image there, Everyone would have understood, And again it reminds us, That Jesus spoke the language, Of the everyday, Ordinary man, That Jesus didn't, Go around speaking, In words and similes, That people didn't understand, That Jesus didn't go around, Saying things that people, Had no idea, What he was talking about, Jesus spoke, And used common, Ordinary, Everyday, Illustrations, As he sows, Some seed falls, Along the path, It was trampled underfoot, And the birds of the air devoured, And as he sows, Some seed, Falls along the rocks, And as its plant grows up, It withers away, Because it had no roots, I'm sure most of you, Know the manse, Most of you know the, The house that we live in, And you know those areas, Of stone, That are around the house, It kind of runs from the back door, Around down the side, Of the garage, And it's amazing, Even amongst those stones, How many plants, Can grow there, How many plants, Find kind of sustenance, To grow there, Yet they're also, The easiest plants, To weed out, Why?

Because they've no root, They've no depth to them, They've no real, Health to them, And that's what Jesus says here, About this seed, That falls among the stones, That they might grow, Quickly, But there's no root, There's no depth, There's no seriousness, To them, They don't last, Some seed falls among the thorns, Verse 7, And the thorns grow up with it, And choke it, They choke the life, They choke the goodness, Out of those plants, And some seed fell into good soil, And it grew, And yielded a hundredfold, Verse 8, That which was sown, Now what does this have to do with us? What does this have to do with us, This morning? Well quite a lot actually, As we're going to find out in a moment, The seed stands for the word of God, The sower sowing the seed, Stands for the

preaching, Of the kingdom of God, Now if I were scattering seed, And I don't do it often, I have to confess, If I were scattering seed, What would I do?

[20 : 29] Certainly in the west today, What would we do? We'd look for good ground, We'd look for that place, That gives us the best chance, For a return on our investment, We'd look for that place, That gives us the best chance, For the seed to grow, I wouldn't waste it on the path, I wouldn't waste it amongst the thorns, And I wouldn't waste it amongst the rocks, I'd look for the place, Where the seed would grow best, And yet this farmer is indiscriminate, This farmer sows seed, Wherever he goes, Wherever he can find ground, He sows the seed, No matter how unpromising it might look, He sows the seed, This passage reminds us, To sow the seed, Indiscriminately where we go, To tell people the good news, Of the gospel of Jesus Christ, Indiscriminately wherever we go, It's easy, Well, It's easier, To wait until people are showing signs of interest,

To wait until people are showing signs of promise, And then, Sow the seed of the gospel with them, But actually, That's the same as trying to find the promising ground, We can't tell where the wind, Of the spirit may bloom, We can't tell when, Ground may be taken from being unpromising, To being promising, So we're called to scatter the seed, We're called to share the gospel, We're called to tell people, The good news of Jesus Christ, Indiscriminately wherever we go, In the workplace, On a Monday morning, We sow the seed, In a conversation with a friend over Zoom, We sow the seed, As we go to the shops, Week by week, We sow the seed, We're called to sow the seed, Even when the ground, Looks unpromising, And trust the rest, To God, So we've seen Jesus proclaiming, The kingdom of God, We've seen the parable,

That Jesus tells here, And then thirdly, Finally this morning, We want to think about the purpose, The purpose, And we see that in verses 9, Through 15, Don't you just love the disciples, Don't you just love the response, That they have, Because what does Jesus say, At the end of verse 8, He who has ears to hear, Let him hear, And then the disciples come in verse 9, And what is it they say to Jesus, Actually, We don't get it, Actually verse 9, We don't understand, Actually verse 9, We, Haven't heard, We've heard one level, Yes, We've heard the story about the sword, Yes, We get that, We understand that, But what's it all about, Verse 9, What's it really, All about, Verse 9, And notice the purpose, That Jesus outlines in parables, We've always assumed, That the purpose in parables, Is to make things clearer, To make things easier to understand,

We've always been taught, Since Sunday school, That the purpose in a parable, Is to convey a heavenly truth, In an earthly message, To make things clearer, Easier to understand, About heaven, Using a down to earth story, Yet what does Jesus say, In verse 10, To you it has been given, To know the secrets, Of the kingdom of God, Of God, But for others, They are in parables, Why?

So that seeing, They may not see, And hearing, They may not, Understand, It's of course a quote, From the prophet Isaiah, Isn't it?

[24 : 12] And more than that actually, It's a quote from the commissioning, Of the prophet Isaiah, But it seems to strike, Against everything, That we would assume, Doesn't it?

It seems to strike, Against everything, That we would think, That we would think, It turns parables, Into that kind of, Masonic handshake, It turns parables, Into that kind of, Insider knowledge, That only Christians have, But actually, But actually the point, That Jesus is making, Is that there would be, Some who understand, Some who get it, Some who, Hear, And others who don't, Some who would get, What the parable was about, Some who would understand, This deeper meaning, And others who would think, It was just a nice story, About a farmer, Sowing some seed, Yet what is it, That would make the difference, What meant, That one person, Would understand, What meant, That one person, Would get it, While someone else, Wouldn't, Notice what Jesus says, To the disciples, First of all, In verse 10, Notice what, He says, It is, Makes the difference, Verse 10, To you,

It has been, Given, To know, It was something, That was revealed to them, It was something, That was shown to them, The secrets of the kingdom of God, Were revealed to them, This wasn't that the disciples, Were especially clever men, This wasn't that the disciples, Had worked harder, Than everyone else, This wasn't that the disciples, Had in an earthly sense, Understood more than everyone else, No, rather, That his knowledge, Had been revealed to them, It had been shown to them, And fundamentally, It's that, That makes the difference, That God reveals it, That God shows it to us, That God shows us, The message of the gospel, Not that they, Understood in and of themselves, But that it had been shown, To them, This is where we need, The work of the Holy

Spirit, This is where we need, The ministry of the Holy Spirit, To illuminate, To show, The true meaning, Of the parable, To remind you to us,

That as we preach the gospel, As we tell friends, And neighbours, The good news of the Lord Jesus Christ, And his saviour from sin, These two responses, Will always be there, For some, It will always just be, A nice story, For some, It will always just be, A story about a man, Who suffers unjustly, A man who meets, An unfortunate, Unjustified end, But there will be those, In whom the Holy Spirit, Is working, There will be those, To whom the, The knowledge is being given, The secrets of the kingdom of God, Are being given, Who will come to see Jesus, For who he really is, Who will come to see him, As the son of God, Who will come to place their trust in him, As their saviour, Jesus then goes on, To explain the parable, To his disciples, To explain what he was talking about, We see that the seed, Is the word of God, The ones along the path, Are the ones for whom, The devil comes, And snatches away the word, Before they've even had a chance, To hear it, Before they've even, Had a chance to think about it,

The devil comes, And takes it away, The ones along the rocks, Are those who receive the word, With great joy, But they have no root, They have no depth, They have no soundness in them, And eventually, They'll fall away, There are some who, Fall amongst the thorns, Who start out with great promise, Who start out with great joy, But then eventually, The cares and concerns of life, Choke them, The cares and concerns, The pursuit of money, And wealth, And career, And family, Choke them, So they don't make much of it, As for those, That fall along the good soil, They hear the word, They hold it fast, And they produce a crop, They bear fruit, With patience, At this point, The application is usually, Are you bearing, Are you bearing, Good fruit, Are you, Good soil,

[28 : 29] It's a legitimate application, To make, And I think it's probably, The one that the saviour, Has in mind here, But I want to finish this morning, By drawing out something, Different, Something, Different, Look at the seed amongst thorns, What happens, Verse 14, As for what fell among the thorns, They are those who hear, But as they go on their way, They are choked by the cares, And riches, And pleasures of life, And their fruit, Does not, Mature, The seed that falls among thorns, It produces fruit, But it doesn't mature, It produces some signs, Of life, And health, And vitality, But it never, Matures, It never grows, It never ripens, Into anything much, Because they're concerned, With the cares of this life, They're concerned, With riches and wealth, In this life,

Perhaps speaks to us, Of Christians who are saved, But stuck, Saved but not making any real progress, In the Christian life, Genuinely one of Christ's people, Genuinely converted, But the cares of this life, Are weighing them down, The cares of career, Of money, Of success, Of family, Of job, Of whatever it is, Are weighing them down, And so they don't ever really go anywhere, Their fruit never seems to mature, If you talk to them today, And talk to them in 10 years time, You'll find them, In exactly the same spiritual condition, They're saved, But trying to live a life, With a foot in two worlds, So the application I want to finish with isn't, Are you good soil, I suppose the application I want to finish with is, Are you maturing, Are you growing in your Christian life, Are you day by day putting to death,

The deeds of the body and the flesh, Are you day by day being renewed, And conformed to the image of Christ, Rather than the image of this world, Are you being choked, By the cares and concerns of this world, Are you trying to live with a foot, In two worlds, Friends remember, There is forgiveness with Christ, And there is hope with Christ, Come to him, Come to his kingdom, And go at it with all your heart, And you will not be disappointed, And you will not lose, In this life, Or in the life to come, Amen.