

AM Luke 8:16-25

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[0 : 0 0] Well, good morning friends. It's good to be gathered together with you this morning as we continue to praise and worship God in this slightly strange setting, this slightly unusual and uncomfortable setting for us.

But it's important that we continue to meet together as much as we can. It's important that we continue to praise God together and it's important that we continue to hear from God's Word together. I suspect that many of you, like me, are now becoming weary of this experience. We long for the day when we can meet together again. We long for the day when we can sing God's praise together again as a people of God.

But we look to God who holds the future. We look to God who brings about all according to His good and perfect plan. And as we come this morning, let's pray together to God. Let's pray. Heavenly Father, we thank you that you are the God who holds the future. We thank you that you are the God who knows the end from the beginning. That you are the God, Heavenly Father, who has written the days in the book that are to come to pass.

That you are the God of history. And we pray for ourselves now, Heavenly Father, as we perhaps feel the pinch, as we perhaps feel the weariness of meeting together virtually.

[1 : 1 6] We pray, Father, that you would sustain us. That you would sustain us by the work of the Holy Spirit. That you would sustain us by the ministry of the Word. That you would sustain us as your people.

That you would encourage us and keep us, we ask. Remember all of those who are sick and suffering at the moment, Heavenly Father. All of those in the community who are suffering with this virus.

Praying that you would be near to them. Remembering again our health staff and our doctors and nurses, our porters, our cleaners. All of those, Heavenly Father, who keep the health service going. May you keep them safe. May you keep them from contracting the virus. We think of those who work in our care homes and those who provide care in the community. May you, Heavenly Father, keep your good hand of love and care upon them.

Remember our governments before you. We think of the government at Westminster and the government at Holyrood. Praying that you would bless them. Give them wisdom as they seek to contain this virus.

[2 : 1 6] We remember our friends in India as we've heard about their terrible plight of late. Praying, Father, that you would be near to them. Be all that they need. May you provide for their daily bread, we ask.

And remember ourselves, Father, as we come to your word now. Give us insight and understanding. Give us clarity, we ask. In Jesus' name. Amen. Well, this morning we're coming to Luke chapter 8 and verses 16 through 25.

Sorry. Verses 16 through 25. These nine verses in Luke chapter 8. Let's read them together now. Now, Luke chapter 8, beginning to read it, verse 16.

This is the word of God. No one, after lighting a lamp, covers it with a jar or puts it under a bed, but puts it on a stand so that all who enter may see the light.

For nothing is hidden that will not be made manifest, nor is anything secret that will not be made known and come to light. Take care then how you hear. For the one who has, more will be given.

[3 : 2 2] And from the one who has not, even what he thinks he has will be taken away. Then his mothers and his brothers came to him. But they could not reach him because of the crowd.

And he was told, your mother and your brothers are standing outside desiring to see you. But he answered them, my mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it. One

day, he got into a boat with his disciples and he said to them, let us go across to the other side of the lake.

So they set out. And as they sailed, he fell asleep. And a windstorm came down on the lake. And they were filling with water and were in danger. And they went and woke him, saying, Master, Master, we are perishing.

And he woke and rebuked the wind and the raging waves. And they ceased. And there was a calm. He said to them, where is your faith? And they were afraid.

And they marveled, saying to one another, who then is this that he commands even the winds and the water? And they obey him. Well, as we turn to these verses in Luke chapter 8, these verses 16 through 25, it would be helpful if you had them open in front of you so that we can see what God is saying to us together through his word.

[4 : 40] A lot of the focus in the media recently has been on the COVID-19 situation, the coronavirus situation. And rightly so, it is a pandemic that's sweeping across the nation. It is costing lives right across the nation.

But, however, it seems to me that one of the unintended consequences of coronavirus, one of the unintended consequences of the stay-at-home message, has been that people are reluctant to go to hospital.

Even when they're ill, even when they're suffering from symptoms of heart attack or stroke, people are unwilling, it seems, to go to hospital. There's probably two reasons for this. One is the fear that when they're there, they'll catch coronavirus.

And that'll make the situation that they're in even worse than it is now. The other, I think, is that people are genuinely afraid of overwhelming the NHS, of the NHS not being able to cope.

And so rather than being a burden, they seek to stay at home. It was brought home to me, I suppose, in a real way with a report that people are reluctant to bring children to hospital even when they're really ill, even when they're seriously ill.

[5 : 46] The reasons that parents were giving for not going well, well, we don't want the child to catch coronavirus. But secondly, the reason that parents gave was that they didn't want to be separated from their children.

They had this vision that in hospital now, because of the virus, because of the social distancing measures that had been put in place, that the child would be somehow taken off, whisked off to a separate room, and they wouldn't be allowed to see them.

Well, of course, the NHS were quick to quash that and quick to say, well, that's ridiculous. Why? Because for a child who's going through a difficult situation, because a child who's going through an emergency, because for a child who's going through an illness, what is it that they need?

They need a parent there. They need someone there who can comfort them. They need someone there who they can trust. Someone there that they know. Someone there that they can rely on. Someone who brings reassurance.

And as we come to these verses in Luke chapter 8 this morning, as we come to consider these verses this morning, I think that's what we find Jesus doing, isn't it? Certainly for his disciples. As they're in this boat, as they're terrified that they're about to die, as they're terrified that they're about to drown, what is it Jesus brings them?

[6 : 58] He brings them comfort. He brings them reassurance. As Jesus teaches the crowd, as people come and say, look, your mother and your brothers are looking for you, what does Jesus bring to the people?

Well, he brings comfort and reassurance. It says, look, these are my mother. These are my brothers. Those who hear and do the word of God. I want to think about two things this morning and see two things together from this section.

Firstly, we want to think about doing the word of God. And secondly, we want to see how Jesus delivers the fearful, how Jesus instructs us to do the word of God, and how Jesus secondly delivers the fearful.

So first of all, we think about this instruction to do the word of God, do the word of God. And we see that in verses 16 through 21. He's opening five verses of this section, verses 16 through 21.

So we remember where we are in Luke's gospel. We remember where we are in Luke's account of the life of Jesus. We thought last week about the very famous parable that Jesus told us, very famous parable about the soils.

[8 : 02] We thought last week how, in some senses, parables are designed to bring separation, how parables are designed to show those who truly belong to the kingdom of God and those who don't. We saw how some will hear only an earthly story.

Some will hear merely a story about a farmer going out to sow some seed, while others will hear the deeper spiritual meaning of that. Remember, we finished by thinking about what the different types of soil stood for, and how ultimately the good soil was the soil that produced a crop, was the soil that produced some fruit.

And in a sense then, as we come to verse 16, we see how that's really a continuation of that theme from last week, how we see how verse 16 carries on with that theme. Jesus says to his disciples, verse 16, Look, no one, after lighting a lamp, covers it with a jar, or puts it on a bed, puts it under a bed, sorry, but puts it on a stand.

Why? Because that would be madness. When you light a lamp, you don't cover it. When you light a lamp, you don't put it underneath something. That would be madness. Instead, rather, you put this lamp on a stand.

Why? So that people can see by it, so that it gives light to the whole room, so that it gives illumination to the whole room. What's the purpose of the light? In your own home, what's the purpose of your light?

[9 : 24] Now maybe some of you are perhaps more into home decor than I am. And for you, the purpose of your light is so that it looks nice, that fits in with the overall theme of your house.

Maybe some of you have lamps, because they're the latest fashion, the latest trend. But yet at heart, what is the purpose of a lamp? Well, it's to bring light.

It's to bring illumination. It's so that you can see in your house. So that the things that are in the dark can be seen more clearly. So that the obstacles in the dark can be seen and avoided.

The light shines in the darkness. And this says Jesus in verse 17. This is what I'm talking about. Nothing is hidden, verse 17, that will not be made manifest.

Nor is anything secret that will not be made known and come to light. What's the purpose of the light? It shows the darkness. It takes away the darkness.

[10 : 29] Nothing will survive in the darkness. Nothing will be hidden that won't be made clear. But rather, one day will be brought in the light. There is nothing that is done in secret that will not come to light.

Now, what's Jesus talking about here? What's Jesus getting at here? Well, as I read this section, I take Jesus to be talking about the final day of judgment. When all things will be made manifest.

When all things will be brought to light. When all things will be revealed. The day whenever everything will be brought to light. And that then serves as a warning to us, doesn't it?

Because it's a warning about those secret sins. It's a warning about those besetting sins. It's a warning to us about those sins that we do in the closet.

Those things that we do whenever we think that no one else can see. Those things that we do when we think that no one else will ever find out about it. Remember, one day the light will bring all these things to light.

[11 : 34] One day the light will expose the darkness. One day all these things will be made manifest. There's no such thing as a secret sin because God sees all.

But yet actually, what's the wonderfully reassuring thing about this? That despite the fact all of our sin will be made manifest. Despite the fact that there is no such thing as a secret sin.

The light drives out the darkness. The light of the gospel shows us our sin. The light of the gospel shows us where we feel. The light of the gospel shows us the difficulties and the darkness in our life.

But the light of the gospel drives them out. The light of the gospel expels the darkness of sin. But what's my warrant for saying that?

What's my warrant for making the connection to the final day of judgment here? I think it comes in verse 18 when Jesus says what? Take care then how you hear. How you hear what?

[12 : 43] That's the question, isn't it? Jesus says, verse 18, take care how you hear. Well, what's Jesus talking about? What are we to take care with how we hear? Well, it's the parable he's just told, isn't it? It's the good news of the kingdom of God.

It's the parable of the sower. Take care how you hear. Why? Because remember, some will only hear a story. Take care how you hear because you want to get to the true spiritual meaning that

Jesus gets at.

Some will hear and will think only of a farmer. Some will hear and think only of a seed. But Jesus says, take care how you hear so that you get the true gospel meaning, so that you get the good news about the kingdom of God, so that you understand what it is that I'm talking about.

Take care how you hear and respond to the story with faith and repentance. Take care how you hear because there is a day of judgment coming. Take care how you hear because there will come a day when all will be brought to light.

As you know, most of you know, I studied history and politics at university. And in terms of the history, one of my favorite things to do was source work. You know, you might get ten sources on a page and you had to try and piece together what each source was saying.

[14:02] You had to try and piece together what was happening from the sources you had. You would look at various things about the source that were given to you. You'd look at the date.

You'd say, well, was this source published during a war? Might it be a piece of propaganda? You'd look at things like where the source was taken from.

Was it taken from a reputable paper like the Times of London? Or was it taken from a magazine that was perhaps designed to boost morale for troops on the front line?

You'd look at all of these various bits of information and you'd try and say, well, what's the source saying? You had to be careful that you didn't take everything at face value.

You had to be careful with what you were reading. You had to be careful with what you were listening to. And so Jesus says to his disciples here, take care how you hear.

[15:02] Pay attention. Listen. We then move on to this other episode that's recorded for us in this section in verse 19.

Jesus' mother and brothers come to him, verse 19. Now notice in passing here, that there is no basis for a belief in the perpetual virginity of Mary as some other people believe.

Jesus had brothers and sisters or at least half-brothers and sisters from what we read here. They can't get near Jesus because of the crowd, verse 19. They can't get near Jesus because so many people are hanging on his every word.

And someone comes and says to him, look, verse 20, he was told, your mother and your brothers are standing outside desiring to see you. Your brothers are looking for you.

Your mother is looking for you. They want to talk to you. They want to see you. Jesus looks at the crowd, verse 21, and says, my mother and my brother are those who hear the word of God and do it.

[16:11] They are those who listen and obey the word of God. They are those who do the word of God. And that's why we've tied these two sections together, really. That's why we've studied these two things together, really.

Because what happens, verse 18, Jesus says to his disciples, look, take care how you hear. Take care how you listen. And what does he say then in verse 21? He says, well, actually, these are my mother and my brothers.

Those who hear, verse 18, and those who do, verse 21. They have heard well.

They have heard right. This is my brother and my sisters. Those who hear and those who do. It's the word of God and our response to it.

It's the word of God and what we do with it that ties these two episodes together, that ties these two sections together. But what does it mean for us this morning?

[17:10] What does it have to say to us this morning? Well, two things, really, I think. Firstly, this section wonderfully reminds us of the truth of adoption, doesn't it? Because what does Jesus remind the people of here?

He says to them, look, these are my mother and my brothers, those who hear and those who do the word of God. Those who are in his family are those who respond right to the word of God.

Those who are in his family are those who hear and those who do the word of God. What was the word of God? Well, quite simply, it was the gospel. It was the good news of Jesus Christ. It was the good news that Jesus Christ had just preached.

Are we believing in it? Are we being renewed by it, day by day by day? You see, friends, the family of Christ doesn't advance by birth.

That was how the Jewish religion advanced. You were born a Jew. It isn't given as a right to those who are born at a particular time and a particular place to a particular people.

[18:17] Rather, the family of God advances. The family of Christ advances by those who hear and those who do the word of God. The family of God advances as the gospel is preached and as people believe it.

But secondly, I think this section causes us to ask the question, well, are we doing the word of God? Are we living lives that are more and more shaped by the word of God? Are we living lives that are more and more in conformity with the word of God?

Are we living lives that are becoming more and more reflective of the God we serve? Are we becoming more and more Christ-like in our behavior and our reaction? Where are we hearing the word of God?

What opportunities are we opening up in our lives to listen to the word of God? Sure, we have church Sunday by Sunday by Sunday and we listen to God speaking his word there.

But what other opportunities are we making? What other opportunities are we taking? Are we reading our Bible daily? Are we making the most of the excellent resources that are out there like podcasts and sermons that are available online?

[19:32] With this coronavirus we have seen an explosion in the number of resources that are available online? Are we making use of them? One sure way we can know that we're in the family of God is that we have this growing desire to listen to God's word.

This growing desire to delight and study God's word. It doesn't come naturally to us but it's given to us by this new birth. So we see then Jesus' instruction first of all that to be part of his family is to do the word of God.

To not only hear the word of God verse 18 but to do the word of God. Secondly this morning we want to think about the delivery of the fearful the delivery of the fearful and we see that in verses 22 through 25.

Jesus gets into a boat with his disciples and they plan to go across to the other side of the lake they plan to go across and all seems fine all seems reasonable. Jesus as they cross falls asleep we see that verse 23 as they sailed he fell asleep.

It's another reminder to us of the true humanity of Christ another reminder to us that he was truly man that he didn't kind of float through life unencumbered by the cares and concerns of this life.

[20:50] No he was tired and he went to sleep he was hungry and he sought something to eat he was thirsty and he sought a drink from a woman at a well he was weary from his journey and he sat down.

Episodes like this help us to flesh out what the author to Hebrews was talking about the author of the epistles of the Hebrews was talking about. He assures us that Jesus was familiar with our weaknesses one who has been tempted every way just as we are and yet was without sin.

Jesus knew what it was to be man. Jesus knew what it is to be like us. He knew the feelings of tiredness he knew the feelings of frustration he knew those feelings of anger he knew thirst and hunger and yet Jesus knew all of these things without sin.

sin. When I'm angry it's often I'm angry in sin. When I'm frustrated I'm often frustrated in sin.

I'm frustrated because things haven't gone my way because I haven't got my desires granted.

When I'm angry it's because my glory has been impinged not the glory of God.

[22:07] Jesus knew all of these things yet without sin. Jesus understands us this morning. And if we're honest Jesus probably understands us better than we understand ourselves.

Maybe you feel that no one else does. Maybe you feel that no one else cares. Maybe you feel that no one else gets what you've gone through. And Jesus has.

And Jesus does. He has experienced every temptation common to man yet without sin. He is our hope when we sin because he is the sinless one.

So we're in the boat. Sealing across. Jesus is sleeping. Now remember who this is. This is Jesus and his disciples. These are commercial fishermen. These are the trawler men of the day if you like. These were men who were used to the conditions of the sea. These were men who made their living off the sea. and suddenly a great windstorm comes upon the boat.

[23:12] Verse 23 as they sailed he fell asleep that is Jesus and a windstorm came down on the lake and they were filling with water and were in danger. It must be quite a serious storm by the look of things.

Verse 23 the boat starts to fill with water. They're taking on water. They're in danger. it must have been quite something to scare these fishermen.

Men who were used to the rough seas. And yet they're terrified by what's happening. They're terrified by the severity of the windstorm that comes upon them and they think are we going to die? So what are they going to do? They go down below verse 24 and they went and revoked him saying master master we are perishing, and he awoke and rebuked the wind and the raging waves and they ceased and there was a calm.

These men are terrified. They're at their wits end. They go and wake Jesus and he simply speaks and there's a calm.

[24 : 22] He simply speaks to the wind and the waves and all is well and they cease from their raging. I can remember the voice of the vice principal from my primary school and Mr.

Goff. He just had one of those voices that resonated authority. I think as a child it probably resonated authority because you were little and he was very loud. There could be anything going on in the playground and all it took for Mr.

Goff was to lean out his window and speak and that was the end of it. No matter what it was there could be a fight breaking out between two boys and Mr. Goff spoke and that was the end of it.

There could be a particularly zealous football match going on and Mr.

Goff spoke and that was the end of it. His voice resonated authority and as the storm rages around the disciples as the storm rages around these men Jesus speaks and it brings calm.

Jesus speaks with power with power and authority. The voice of Jesus is enough to calm the storm. He turns to the disciples verse 25 and says where is your faith?

[25 : 42] Didn't you know I was here? Didn't you know who I am? Didn't you trust me? Didn't you trust God? Why are you so worried? Why are you so afraid? And notice the question that they ask one another.

Very end of verse 25. Who then is this that he commands even winds and water and they obey him? It's the question we need to get to this morning and it's the question we need to answer this morning.

Who is this Jesus? Who is this one who speaks to the wind and the waves and they obey him? Who is this one who brings calm out of great distress?

Who then is this in the boat with us is the question the disciples asked. Who is this who asks us where our faith is? Well who is it?

Who is it? Who is he for you this morning? Maybe Jesus is an irrelevance. Someone you've never thought of, someone you've never thought about, someone you don't give any credence to.

[27 : 01] But then you need to question, well, how did he speak to the wind and the waves and they obeyed him? Maybe someone for you who's just a historical figure, someone who appeared and left like Alfred the Great, like Richard the Lionheart, whoever it is.

He left his mark on history but that's all he is. Well the question is then, if that's all he is, how did the wind and the waves obey him?

Maybe for you he's an inspirational teacher. Who is Jesus for you this morning? It's a question you need to answer.

Because it's a question that has eternal consequences. You see, the disciples here are what? They're afraid of dying. They think the storm is about to kill them and so they run to Jesus.

We live in a world that is terrified of death. The coronavirus has brought that home in a real way. People are terrified of death. And in the midst of this storm that rages around us, in the midst of this storm in our world, we ask ourselves, well who is Jesus?

[28 : 27] And the answer is the same today as it was then. Jesus Christ is the Son of God. The Saviour of mankind. Who is Jesus in the midst of the coronavirus?

Jesus is the one who rules from the right hand of God on high. And the one who saves all who look to him. Who is Jesus?

Well, he's the king. And he's the ruler. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.