

## Luke 8:22-56 • The Working of the Word

### Introduction

There is a greater spiritual lesson behind each of the four miraculous events provided in Luke 8. The proper context for this lesson is provided in the first part of the chapter by Jesus' Parable of the Sower which explains the working of the seed of God's Word. The right context for what is to come is summarized in what happened shortly thereafter:

And His mother and brothers came to Him, and they were unable to get to Him because of the crowd. And it was reported to Him, "Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, wishing to see You." But He answered and said to them, "**My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it.**"  
— Luke 8:19–21

The Parable of the Sower is His teaching about those who "hear the word of God and do it", and the events which follow are earthly examples of the same.

<sup>22</sup>Now on one of those days Jesus and His disciples got into a boat, and He said to them, "Let us go over to the other side of the lake." So they launched out.

<sup>23</sup>But as they were sailing along He fell asleep; and a fierce gale of wind descended on the lake, and they began to be swamped and to be in danger. <sup>24</sup>They came to Jesus and woke Him up, saying, "Master, Master, we are perishing!"

And He got up and rebuked the wind and the surging waves, and they stopped, and it became calm. <sup>25</sup>And He said to them, "Where is your faith?"

They were fearful and amazed, saying to one another, "Who then is this, that He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey Him?"

### [Read v.22-25]

**Q: Why exactly did they cross the lake in the boat?**

A: Because Jesus specifically told them to.

**Q: So what would Jesus have known in advance about that trip that none of the disciples knew?**

A: Being God, Jesus already knew the storm was coming.

**Q: If they had fully understood this, why might it have actually encouraged the disciples that Jesus went to sleep on the ship?**

A: They would have seen His going to sleep as confidence that His command to cross would be fulfilled in spite of the changes to the environment.

**Q: How does Jesus define their problem?**

A: "Where is your faith?" (v.25) He characterizes their actions as proof that they did not really believe His Word.

**Application:** This is the classic problem all Christians in every age have faced: we know the Word of God but do not believe it when faced with a test in real life. It is one thing to **learn** the Truth and quite another to **live** it. Do we trust in God's promises or do we trust ourselves or our circumstances?

**Q: How is this a real-life example of the Parable of the Sower?**

A: "Those on the rocky soil are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no firm root; they believe for a while, and in time of temptation fall away." (Lk. 8:13)

<sup>26</sup>Then they sailed to the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee.

<sup>27</sup>And when He came out onto the land, He was met by a man from the city who was possessed with demons; and who had not put on any clothing for a long time, and was not living in a house, but in the tombs. <sup>28</sup>Seeing Jesus, he cried out and fell before Him, and said in a loud voice, "What business do we have with each other, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg You, do not torment me." <sup>29</sup>For He

### [Read v.26-39]

**Q: How did the demons, the people, and the man healed all do the same thing?**

A: They all begged for something from Jesus. The demons begged Him to be sent away into the pigs rather than the abyss (v.31-32), the people begged Him to go away from them (v.37), and the healed man begged to go with Him. (v.38)

**Q: To what does everyone's begging directly relate to?**

A: How each one deals with the Jesus the Word.

1. The demons believe in the Word but refuse to submit. (James 2:19)

had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For it had seized him many times; and he was bound with chains and shackles and kept under guard, and yet he would break his bonds and be driven by the demon into the desert.

<sup>30</sup>And Jesus asked him, “What is your name?”

And he said, “Legion”; for many demons had entered him. <sup>31</sup>They were imploring Him not to command them to go away into the abyss.

<sup>32</sup>Now there was a herd of many swine feeding there on the mountain; and the demons implored Him to permit them to enter the swine. And He gave them permission. <sup>33</sup>And the demons came out of the man and entered the swine; and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned.

<sup>34</sup>When the herdsmen saw what had happened, they ran away and reported it in the city and out in the country. <sup>35</sup>The people went out to see what had happened; and they came to Jesus, and found the man from whom the demons had gone out, sitting down at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind; and they became frightened. <sup>36</sup>Those who had seen it reported to them how the man who was demon-possessed had been made well.

<sup>37</sup>And all the people of the country of the Gerasenes and the surrounding district asked Him to leave them, for they were gripped with great fear; and He got into a boat and returned. <sup>38</sup>But the man from whom the demons had gone out was begging Him that he might accompany Him; but He sent him away, saying, <sup>39</sup>“Return to your house and describe what great things God has done for you.” So he went away, proclaiming throughout the whole city what great things Jesus had done for him.

<sup>40</sup>And as Jesus returned, the people welcomed Him, for they had all been waiting for Him. <sup>41</sup>And there came a man named Jairus, and he was an official of the synagogue; and he fell at Jesus’ feet, and began to implore Him to come to his house; <sup>42</sup>for he had an only daughter, about twelve years old, and she was dying. But as He went, the crowds were pressing against Him.

<sup>49</sup>While He was still speaking, someone came from the house of the synagogue

2. The people do not believe in the Word and refuse to submit.
3. The man believes the Word and is willing to submit.

**Q: What fact in this story reveals to us that the people of this region were spiritually far afield from obedience to God’s Word in the first place?**

A: No one in compliance with Old Testament Law would be raising pigs, animals specifically identified as “unclean”. It shows that they were not simply disobedient to the basic things, but they had become so corrupt that a biblically unclean thing had become a central source of commerce. The demon possession was a visible sign of the greater spiritual problem within that they were indeed slaves to sin.

**Q: When it comes to Jesus working a sign, what is the difference between the healed man and the people?**

A: The one who was willing to repent and change from the heart was transformed spiritually by a miracle and sought to embrace the Word; those who remained unrepentant even after witnessing a miracle were driven even further away from the Word by their rebellious nature.

**Q: Why do you suppose Jesus would not allow the man to come with Him?**

A: New converts may not be ready for full-time service, but they can certainly tell others what Christ has done in their life.

**Q: How is this test of faith where the people are concerned dramatically different from that of the disciples crossing through the storm?**

A: Although both exhibited a lack of faith, the disciples reacted in fear and amazement, acknowledging Christ; these people reacted in fear and amazement in the course of rejecting Him.

**Application:** *In every sign and work God brings about, it is a test of faith that either reigns in the heart that softens toward Him or drives further away the hardened heart rejecting Him. Knowing God’s Word is not enough – even the demons and the people in their own way recognized God’s Word – it is how you act upon it.*

**Q: How are the people a real-life example of the Parable of the Sower?**

A: “Those beside the road are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their heart, so that they will not believe and be saved.” (Lk. 8:12)

**[Read v.40-42, 49-56]**

**Q: How are the people on this shore a dramatic contrast to the people on the previous shore?**

A: Whereas the people on the other shore did not want Him and asked Him to leave, these are waiting for and welcome Him.

**Q: What might have been particularly frustrating for Jairus?**

A: In the course of going to address Jairus’ needs, Jesus seems to be sidetracked by someone else’s need. It is while these things are happening that Jairus receives the bad news that his daughter has died.

official, saying, “Your daughter has died; do not trouble the Teacher anymore.”

<sup>50</sup>But when Jesus heard this, He answered him, “Do not be afraid any longer; only believe, and she will be made well.”

<sup>51</sup>When He came to the house, He did not allow anyone to enter with Him, except Peter and John and James, and the girl’s father and mother. <sup>52</sup>Now they were all weeping and lamenting for her; but He said, “Stop weeping, for she has not died, but is asleep.” <sup>53</sup>And they began laughing at Him, knowing that she had died.

<sup>54</sup>He, however, took her by the hand and called, saying, “Child, arise!” <sup>55</sup>And her spirit returned, and she got up immediately; and He gave orders for something to be given her to eat. <sup>56</sup>Her parents were amazed; but He instructed them to tell no one what had happened.

<sup>43</sup>And a woman who had a hemorrhage for twelve years, and could not be healed by anyone, <sup>44</sup>came up behind Him and touched the fringe of His cloak, and immediately her hemorrhage stopped. <sup>45</sup>And Jesus said, “Who is the one who touched Me?”

And while they were all denying it, Peter said, “Master, the people are crowding and pressing in on You.”

<sup>46</sup>But Jesus said, “Someone did touch Me, for I was aware that power had gone out of Me.”

<sup>47</sup>When the woman saw that she had not

**Q: Why might this all be part of a greater test of faith?**

A: If one truly believes in the fulfillment of God’s Word, one must trust it will come about according to God’s will and timing and not strictly according to man’s. What Jairus saw as time running out was in itself a test of his faith where God’s Word is concerned.

**Q: So when did Jairus actually pass this test of faith? Was it when his daughter was healed?**

A: No, it was when he took Jesus at His Word and continued on back to the house with Him.

**Q: How would their arrival at the house been an even greater test of faith for Jairus?**

A: On the road the situation had only been relayed to him verbally; now he was in the house and witnessing the actual aftermath of the people mourning.

**Q: Why does Jesus admonish everyone that “she has not died, but is asleep”?**

A: He is conveying the greater teaching that when believers die, the body sleeps but the spirit goes to be with the Lord. (See 1 Th. 4:13-18; Phil. 1:19-23)

**Q: What did everyone witness? What did the little girl actually experience?**

A: They witnessed and experienced the life-giving power of the Word of God.

*For He spoke, and it was done;  
He commanded, and it stood fast.  
— Psalm 33:9*

*He sent His word and healed them,  
And delivered them from their destructions.  
— Psalm 107:20*

**Application:** Tests of faith where God’s Word is concerned often have to do with whether we believe according to God’s timing and the way He has determined things will come about.

**Q: How are the mourners a real-life example of the Parable of the Sower?**

A: “The seed which fell among the thorns, these are the ones who have heard, and as they go on their way they are choked with worries and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to maturity”. (Lk. 8:14)

**[Read v.43-48]**

**Q: How is this woman a direct contrast to Jairus?**

A: Whereas Jairus is a prominent, well-known man in the community identified by name, this appears to be a poor, anonymous woman.

**Q: How is the situation of this woman contrasted to that of Jairus’ daughter?**

A: The woman had been suffering for twelve years whereas Jairus’ daughter was well for twelve years before becoming ill.

escaped notice, she came trembling and fell down before Him, and declared in the presence of all the people the reason why she had touched Him, and how she had been immediately healed. <sup>48</sup>And He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace."

**Application:** *One might say that the ground is level at Jesus' feet where everyone is welcome to present their needs. Tests of faith are different in the details for each person, but common in what they strive to produce.*

**Q: In the context of the time and culture in which this took place, why is it perfectly logical that she "touched the fringe of His cloak"?**

A: At this time the hem of a garment was a sign of authority. In fact, hems were so customized and unique for each individual – the fancier the hem usually signaled a wealthier and more powerful person – that a business deal was "signed" by imprinting one's hem in the mud of a tablet rather than signing one's name. This is the greater meaning when Ruth slept at Boaz's feet and is described by God through Ezekiel...

*"Then I passed by you and saw you, and behold, you were at the time for love; so I spread My skirt over you and covered your nakedness. I also swore to you and entered into a covenant with you so that you became Mine," declares the Lord GOD.*

— Ezekiel 16:8

**Q: Why do you suppose that Jesus would not allow the woman to slip away anonymously?**

A: Had she done so, she would have never glorified God by her testimony and she would have never heard Jesus' special words of blessing.

**Q: What is the greater meaning when Jesus said, "Your faith has made you well; go in peace"?**

A: The same words used for "made you well" is a translation of "to be saved". Healings are always symbols and teachings for salvation. It was not just an act for the body, but the soul as well, both accomplished through His Word.

**Application:** *We may need to experience the blessing of His power, but it needs to be accompanied by the greater need to experience the blessing of His Word. But His power over the physical is always a greater representation of His power over the spiritual.*

**Q: How is this a real-life example of the Parable of the Sower?**

A: *"But the seed in the good soil, these are the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance." (Lk. 8:15)*

## Overall Application

We are presented with four events which portray contrasting examples of faith:

1. The lack of faith of the disciples.
2. The lack of faith of the people/example of faith of the man healed.
3. The faith of the woman.
4. The faith of Jairus/the lack of faith of the mourners.

We are presented with four events which portray Jesus' authority to effect signs in every realm:

1. Calming the storm = signs in nature's realm
2. Healing the demoniac = signs in the spiritual realm
3. Healing the woman = signs in the physical realm
4. Healing the girl = signs in the heavenly realm

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*We are presented with four events which mirror the Parable of the Sower:*

- 1. The disciples in the boat = the rocky soil*
- 2. The people of the Gerasenes = the soil beside the road*
- 3. The woman = the good soil*
- 4. The mourners = the thorny soil*

*Whether it is from the point of view of testing one's faith or responsiveness to the signs and working of God, every situation is an example of how one responds to the Word. This is the ultimate spiritual application for every person in the course of this life: How will you respond to God's Word?*