

Luke 8.22-39
From Hearing to Seeing

“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.'”

That’s what Jesus just got done telling his disciples in verse 10 of Luke chapter 8. It’s *given* to some to know the secrets of the kingdom. But to others it’s not given, for *though seeing they do not see*, and *though hearing they do not hear*.

And here now in verses 22-39, we transition from the emphasis on *hearing* to an emphasis on *seeing*. In the last section, the crowd *heard* Jesus’ teaching.

And here through the rest of the chapter, people *see* a string of miracles that once again show Jesus’ identity. But *though seeing* with their physical eyes, not everyone who witnessed the mighty acts of Jesus *really saw*.

Because there are 3 basic responses to the signs Jesus performs in verses 22-39. 1. *Simple amazement*—the disciples in verse 25. 2. *Fear*—the people from the region of the Gerasenes in verse 35. 3. *Faith and obedience*—the Gerasene demoniac in verses 38-39.

1. Jesus Is Lord Over the Natural (verses 22-25)

So, after telling the Parable of the Sower to a huge crowd of people in the first part of the chapter, the scene shifts in verse 22 to another day when Jesus and his disciples set out to cross the Sea of Galilee.

And as they’re sailing to the other side, Jesus falls asleep in the boat. And so, he’s sleeping when this major storm approaches. And Luke says in verse 23 that the ship was filling with water and they were in danger.

So, you sort of have this picture of the disciples *frantically* trying to fight against this storm and keep the ship above water. And all the while Jesus is sleeping in the stern, not affected by anything that’s happening around him.

That itself is a picture of his supreme authority *isn't it?* He's the Lord. He's not worried about a storm. The disciples have the Lord of the weather sleeping in their boat and they're afraid for their lives because of the wind!

So, they wake him up and say, "*Lord, We're perishing!*" And what does Jesus do? Verse 24: "*He arose and rebuked the wind and the raging waves, and they ceased.*"

Now, we've seen Jesus rebuke things as he performed miracles before, haven't we? Sure, In chapter 4 he rebuked the demon at Capernaum, and then Simon's mother in law's fever. And then he rebuked a host of demons as he cast them out of people at Simon's house.

So, he's *rebuked* demons and sicknesses and they obeyed. And now here he *rebukes* the wind and the sea, and it obeys. As he stills the wind and sea with a word!

And Jesus' power here over the wind and the sea ought to have reminded the disciples of the great act of God's parting of the Red Sea in the Exodus of Israel out of Egypt.

Here's how Psalm 106.9 describes what the Lord did in parting the Red Sea: "*He rebuked the Red Sea, and it became dry, and he led them through the deep as through a desert.*"

And so, Jesus responds to the disciples, verse 25, "*Where is your faith?*" You see, this was a time of testing. Remember the Parable of the Sower.... *What kind* of soil were they? *What kind* of fruit would they bear in time of testing?

And what we see here is that their faith had its weaknesses. Because while they believed in Jesus, at this particular point—out on the sea amidst the storm—their faith was faltering.

And so, they were acting out of character with who they *really* were as Christ's disciples. Their calling was to be good trees that produce good fruit. To be the good soil that produced a crop.

But here they don't act in faith, but only in doubt and fear. And that's why Jesus asks them, "*Where is your faith?*" *Where was it?* Well, it was *focused* on the storm. They *couldn't take* their eyes off their circumstances.

The Lord's asleep. He's not here helping us! Why doesn't he do something? Lord, we're perishing! Don't you care!? When are you going to wake up?

It reminds me of the opening words of Psalm 13, where David says to God, "*How long, O Lord, will you forget me forever? How long will you hide your face from me?*"

David was in distress and so he cried out to the Lord to be delivered from his enemies. And given his situation, it didn't seem there was much hope for him, *unless* the Lord would *rise up* and do something!

But then, here's how Psalm 13 ends: "*But I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation. I will sing to the Lord, for he has been good to me.*"

But, David was still in the *same situation* he was at the beginning! *Nothing changed.* God hadn't given him an answer to his prayer!... Hadn't yet delivered him.

So, How could he just go from "*How long, O Lord, will you forget me forever?*" to "*I trust in your unfailing love, my heart rejoices in your salvation*"?

But, see, that's really the whole point, *isn't it?* David was in a dire situation. So, he cried out to the Lord. And he was brutally honest with God about his pain.

But he did it in faith. And so he didn't let his circumstances destroy his faith. *Instead,* he interpreted them in light of his faith.

You see, although David *saw* the storm raging around him, he was nevertheless focused on the big picture. The big picture of God's faithfulness and his greater purpose in everything that happened.

And that's what the disciples were called to do as well, as the storm raged around them. What did *they see*? They saw the storm. But they also needed to *see* with the eyes of faith that the one sleeping in their boat was the Lord of the wind and the sea!

Remember what Jesus said to his disciples back at the end of chapter 6 about the house built on the rock of him and his teaching?

He told them that when the *torrent* rises against that house, it won't be shaken! All sorts of things might come crashing against the house. And it might even seem chaotic. But the house itself won't fall.

Now, if you're united to Christ by faith, your life really is built on the foundation of Jesus himself. But in this world, as we struggle against enemies and storms, the house can often seem a little wobbly, *can't it*?

And amidst those struggles, *how often* are we just like the apostles here? Fixated on the storm instead of who our Lord is. What do you do in times like this?

It doesn't have to be in an actual storm. Maybe it's a load of debt you can't pay off. Maybe it's temptation to sin. Maybe it's persecution for your faith. Maybe it's discord at home. Maybe it's the loss of someone you dearly love.

But whatever it is, if you stay *fixated* on your circumstances in this world *rather than* on your Lord and his coming kingdom, the result will be chaos and despair.

And the only way to not get swallowed up by the storm is to interpret everything that happens in light of the big picture of who your Lord is, what he's done, what he's doing, and what he promises yet to do.

Brothers and Sisters, Jesus is the one who calms the raging sea! Jesus has all authority in heaven and on earth. And that *same* Jesus is *your* Lord and *your* King! *You're* seated with him in the heavenly places. And he's coming to take you to himself and make all things new!

And in fact, he's the one who puts you in the middle of the raging sea for your own good! Remember, it was Jesus who told the disciples to go out to the sea.

He knew very well the storm was coming when he told them to set out. And he knew it was coming when he decided he'd take a nap!

But he wanted their faith to be tested. After teaching them in a parable about the importance of rightly *hearing* the word with ears to hear, he now wanted them to *see* with their *eyes* the glory and magnificence of his power! And that's just what happened.

So, after Jesus calms the storm, in verse 25 the disciples respond in fear and amazement. "*Who then is this, that he commands even winds and water, and they obey him?*"

Who then is this? Well, they get their answer in the very next scene, *don't they?* And from a rather unlikely source.

2. Jesus Is Lord Over the Supernatural (verses 26-33)

Because when they come ashore, and the demonized man from the Gerasenes sees Jesus, he approaches them, falls down before Jesus, and cries out with a loud voice, "*What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God?*" *Who is this?* ... There's your answer.....

So, Jesus just rebuked the wind and the sea, reminiscent of what the Lord did in parting the Red Sea. And like the Israelites, the disciples were then brought by his power safely onto dry land.

And once they arrive at the other side of the sea, they're met by this *army* of God's enemies. But enemies quite unlike the Egyptians or the Romans. A Legion of the Kingdom of Satan who've had their way with this man who's living among the tombs.

Now, this man has undergone this torment for a long time. Verse 27 says "*For a long time he had worn no clothes, and he had not lived in a house but among the tombs.*"

And he's now at the point of being almost dehumanized. He's completely out of his mind. No clothes. Breaking chains people tried to bind him in. Living among the tombs.

It's really an *erie* picture that's painted, *isn't it?* Forget being socially outcast. The demons had such control over this guy that by now he's *barely even human!*

In the sermon he preached on this text many years ago Pastor Wallace, pointed out just how *unclean* this man was. Really, he's unclean in four rather stark ways.

First, He's a Gentile, living in a Gentile region. Second, he's *inhabited* by a *Legion of demons*. Third, he lives naked among the *tombs*. And lastly, he's surrounded by a heard of pigs!... Unclean animals.

Now, sure, Jesus did just recently help a Gentile, at the beginning of chapter 7. But the Roman Centurion was a God fearing Gentile in the Jewish city of Capernaum who loved the Jewish people and built the synagogue there. He was a *far cry* from the Gerasene demoniac.

So, we shouldn't miss the significance of what's going on here. Jesus just crossed over the chaotic sea and entered into a Gentile territory controlled by the enemy. And he *infiltrates* that territory and *claims* it as *his own*. As he defeats this "Legion" of demons.

As a point of reference for what this implies, a Legion in the Roman army had around 6000 soldiers! So, this is a *huge* company of demons.

But even so, they know they have no chance when they see Jesus. Because they know exactly who he is. They know that all he has to do is say the word, and they'll be thrown into the *abyss*—into the place of judgment.

So they beg him to instead let them go into this heard of pigs that's feeding on the hillside. And Jesus mercifully lets them. And they do what he allowed them to do and then *drive* the pigs down the bank and into the sea. And they drowned..... *Poor little piggies.....*

But, *Why* didn't Jesus just destroy these demons and throw them into the abyss then and there? Well because this wasn't yet the time or the place for the final judgment of Satan and his minions. *That's coming*. But it wasn't quite there yet.

Now, there's a symbolism in how this encounter ends that we shouldn't miss. Because we see here another similarity to what happened with Israel at the Red Sea.

Just like the *army* of Egypt was crushed in the Red Sea, so this *Legion* of demons winds up in a herd of pigs that *drowns* in the sea. God's enemies *thrown* into the sea at the hand of Jesus!

So now, again with a word, Jesus demonstrated his absolute authority over all forces opposed to him and his people, whether natural or supernatural.

Just as with the scene on the sea after the storm was rebuked, so here after the demons are cast out—*everything's calm*. As Jesus by the word of his power brings *peace* out of *sheer chaos*.

3. The Aftermath: Fear and Obedience (verses 34-39)

And in the aftermath, we see two reactions to what Jesus just did which really exemplify the different types of soil he just talked about in the parable of the Sower.

The people were generally amazed and struck with fear. But they wanted Jesus to leave! They didn't want anything to do with him. They *saw* what happened, or at least they saw the results..... But they *didn't really see*! They *heard* what happened..... But they *didn't really hear*!

They're the people along the path, who had the seed thrown at them, but Satan came and snatched it away.

But in stark contrast, look at the demoniac. The *town lunatic*. He's as a picture of what happens when Satan *tries* to snatch away the word but is met by the power of Jesus.

Not only did Satan come down from the outside like a bird and try to snatch away the seed of the word after it dropped. But he was there *before* Jesus even arrived!

But by Jesus' *powerful word*, the birds scattered! And as a result, this man's state was *completely changed*. Look at how Luke presents the before and after picture.

In verse 27 we see that the man had many demons and didn't wear any clothes. In verse 35, it says the demons had gone out of him and he was fully clothed.

Verses 28 and 29 tell us the man fell down in front of Jesus and *shouted*. And that the demon often seized him and he was out of control. But after the demons left him, Luke says in verse 35 that he was sitting peacefully at Jesus' feet and in his right mind.

In verse 27 we're told that the man didn't live in a house but amidst the tombs. But in verse 39, Jesus tells him to *go back* to his house. And in verse 28 the man confessed Jesus' identity in *opposition* to him. But in verse 39 he walks away proclaiming who Jesus is in *service* to him.

You see, Luke intentionally gives us a before and after picture of this man. It's sort of like one of those commercials with the two pictures side by side—one's horribly wretched and the other's beautiful.

Here's the *Gerasene demoniac* before his encounter with Jesus, and here's the *Gerasene demoniac* after his encounter with Jesus. The man's *entirely changed*. Restored to his right mind. No longer tormented. And so, of course, *all* he wants to do now is to be with Jesus.

But the Lord had other work for him to do. And so he gives him this commission in verse 39 to now go back into society and proclaim to his people all that God did for him.

And note *well* the wording of the concluding verse, verse 39. Jesus tells the man, "*Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you.*" And then Luke tells us, "*And he went away, proclaiming throughout the whole city how much Jesus had done for him.*"

You see, the acts of God and the acts of Jesus are *one and the same*. There's *no distinction*. Jesus sends the man to declare the mighty acts of *God's* deliverance. And he goes and declares the mighty acts of *Jesus!*

And so, now this formerly demon possessed man *becomes himself* a servant of Christ who goes around sowing the seed of the word about the coming of God's Kingdom in Jesus.

And just as the children of Israel did after they crossed the Red Sea and saw the army of their enemies crushed, so this man declares the great deliverance God granted him from *his enemies*.

The song of Israel in Exodus 15 began like this, *I will sing to the LORD, for he has triumphed gloriously; the horse and his rider he has thrown into the sea.*

Maybe the demon possessed man went around saying something like, *I will sing to the LORD, for he has triumphed gloriously; the pigs and their Legion he has thrown into the sea.*

Because like Israel in the Exodus, he's *released* from his bondage. He's *no longer* a servant under the dominion of Satan. And he saw his *taskmasters* thrown into the sea.

And so he's now freed to be a servant under dominion of Lord Jesus. And his *new faith*—his *new identity*—brought with it the responsibility to proclaim the coming of the Kingdom of God—to celebrate and spread the word about what Jesus did for him.

And, brothers and sisters, that's *exactly* what's happened to each and every one of you, if you believe in the Lord Jesus and follow him. *How often do you declare how much God has done for you in Christ?*

The Lord Jesus has defeated all his and your enemies in his death and resurrection. As Paul says in Colossians 2.15: *"God disarmed the rulers and authorities and put them to open shame, by triumphing over them in Christ."*

And he's broken your bondage to those enemies in your own life by uniting you to himself by his Spirit and drawing you out of bondage in the kingdom darkness and into his kingdom of light.

Colossians 1.13: "*He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son.*"

You see, the people in the country of the Gerasenes who only heard and saw what Jesus did didn't want anything to do with him. And so they begged him to leave them. Their lives were just sort of *momentarily interrupted*.

But the man who was *actually restored* by Jesus wanted to be with him wherever he went. His life was *entirely changed* and could never be the same.

But with his restoration came a calling to go and obey! "*Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you.*" And he obeyed.

So, what we see here in verses 22-39 of Luke 8 is that Jesus is Lord over the natural—he rebuked the wind and the sea and they obeyed.

He's Lord over the supernatural—he commanded the Legion of demons, and they obeyed.

But he's also Lord over the lives of his particular people—he commands the delivered demoniac, and *he obeys*.

And if you've been *delivered* by him, he is *your Lord*. And it's your calling to obey his demand upon your life to declare the great things he's done for you.

Don't neglect that calling, brothers and sisters. God has truly done *great things* for you through Jesus Christ. So, as you go, *declare* his mighty acts in Christ whenever you have the chance.