

The Gospel According to Luke

March 10, 2019

Reading: Luke 8:40 to 56

Sermon #36

Luke 8:40-56

Power in Miracles

Paradise Corrupted

As I began studying, meditating and praying over this passage I was not sure where to go. Two more miracles that demonstrate the divine nature of Christ. We are not in the crowds witnessing these events. We are observing them from a distance of almost 2000 years and we have this panoramic view of all the recorded events in the Bible and especially the New Testament and Jesus' many miracles. We read of so many miracles that they could become common and the deity of Jesus taken for granted.

There are some things I want us to consider. First, the world is not the way God designed it. It changed radically at the fall and has been struggling and dying ever since. The fall brought, disease, corruption, human and natural disasters and death into the world. Before the flood life expectancy was in the 100s of years but unfortunately man's fallen state was bent towards evil. After the flood people's life expectancy was greatly shortened and only through modern medicine has life expectancy been lengthened. Man's efforts may prolong life and delay death for a few years, but it cannot change the course of a world that is dying. From birth we begin the process of dying and moving towards mortal death and either eternal life or eternal death. Mankind's fallen nature is to turn away from God as Isaiah wrote about what people's behavior would be at the coming of the Messiah, "He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not." (Isaiah 53:3) Jesus is a threat to some and despised by many. As his followers we too are problem for the prince of the world and our society. Even though this is sad

we are comforted by this fact; with Jesus' 1st coming there was another radical change to the world and salvation was made possible. Jesus loves all and desires all to know God and be his children, but not all will follow him. This caused Jesus to feel the emotional pain and suffering that humans experience, if he had not felt emotional pain, he would not be able to relate to us as the perfect man who knew no sin. Remember when Lazarus died – who was a friend of Jesus and someone Jesus deeply cared about. Jesus arrives, and Lazarus' sister Mary is weeping and we read, “he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled. ... ³⁵ Jesus wept. ... ³⁶ So the Jews said, ‘See how he loved him!’ ³⁸ Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb.” (John 11:33, 35-36 & 38) Why would Jesus weep? As the God-Man, the Messiah, he knew he was going to raise Lazarus from the dead. Then why the tears? I believe Jesus wept over the devastating effect of sin on the world; sickness, pain, suffering and death because of sin. How the children of God had fallen into corruption and because of sin they experience all the horrible effects of sin. This is why Jesus came to begin the end of the evil one and prepare for paradise to be restored.

Jesus' teachings and miracles show that despite the terrible effects of sin there is hope. The Messiah, as promised had arrived and had the power to remove the curse, to heal, to raise the dead and his teaching and many miracles proved he would restore paradise at his 2nd coming. The Messiah, Jesus, will fulfill what Isaiah prophesied hundreds of years prior to his coming to the earth the 1st time about his 2nd coming. Reading from Isaiah chapter 65, ¹⁷ “For behold, I create new heavens and a new earth, and the former things shall not be remembered or come into mind. ¹⁸ But be glad and rejoice forever in that which I create ... ¹⁹ no more shall be heard in it the sound of weeping and the cry of distress. ²⁰ No more shall there be in it an infant who lives but a few days, or an old man who does not fill out his days, for the young man shall die a hundred years old ...²² for like the days

of a tree shall the days of my people be, and my chosen shall long enjoy the work of their hands.” (Isaiah 65:17-20 & 22)

After Jesus’ 2nd coming he will destroy the corrupted earth and heavens, reading from 2 Peter, “the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a roar, and the heavenly bodies will be burned up and dissolved, and the earth and the works that are done on it will be exposed.” (2 Peter 3:10) The sin and corruption of this present world will be destroyed to make way for “a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. ... ³ And *John* heard a loud voice from the throne saying, ‘Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. ⁴ He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away.’ ⁵ And he who was seated on the throne said, ‘Behold, I am making all things new.’ ” (Revelation 21:1-5)

The Bible in the Old Testament speaks of the Messiah bringing salvation and the New Testament speaks clearly that Jesus is the Messiah, the very Son of the Living God and it is he that is the only One that can and will accomplish God’s plan of salvation, cleansing away all corruption and creating a new perfect paradise. These are some of the thoughts I experienced this week. Thoughts of hope and warning, peace and war, joy and stress.

As we now focus on Luke’s record here at the end of chapter 8 the question that is brought forth is what do we need to see in this passage? This is the question that is always before a preacher? Our passage this morning shows Jesus has both the power to heal and the compassion to heal. It is the same powerful compassion

that will protect believers and create a new paradise, but it is also the divine power to eternally judge unbelievers, Satan and demons.

God with Us

All other religions believe in gods who are distance, watching over their creation but not actively involved with each person. Isaiah knew God the Father and he knew his God was very different, he prophesized, “Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel.” (Isaiah 7:14) About 740 years later we gain understanding as the angel spoke to Joseph, “Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel’ (which means, God with us).” (Matthew 1:23) The true God has always been concerned with each person and he came to earth that his relationship would become even more real for people who struggle to understand the spiritual world’s relationship with the physical. In this passage in Luke chapter 8, it begins, “Now when Jesus returned, the crowd welcomed him, for they were all waiting for him. ... and then going to the 2nd half of verse 42, As Jesus went, the people pressed around him.” These 3 words, “As Jesus went” tell us a great deal. Jesus was among the people, he made himself available and the people sensed his special abilities and his availability. He was not a Pharisee at the temple where people would go and seek their help or seek God. Jesus was God with us and even though Jesus has returned to heaven and waits for the time appointed to return he is still with us. He is not a God who is distant but who lives in each and every believer through his Spirit. God the Father gave Isaiah this wonderful image of Jesus, “He will tend his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms; he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.” (Isaiah 40:11) I hope you are able to see this same image – for Jesus is a loving Shepherd caring and protecting us and as Jesus says later in Luke, “Go your way; behold, I am sending you out as lambs in the midst of

wolves.” (Luke 10:3) Just “As Jesus went” we too are to go our way living in this broken dying world as the light of hope.

Power Over Corruption

Jesus’ light broke through dark hearts and gave light and the people were drawn to him. Even Jairus the ruler of the local synagogue was penetrated and fell at Jesus’ feet. This would have been an unusual sight; one of the most important men in this city, a man from the group religious elite Pharisees who feared Jesus and did everything they could to discredit him. But this Jairus pushes his way through the crowd and falls at Jesus’ feet. Jesus knew his plea is sincere and heart felt. He begins to walk with Jairus and they are in the midst of a pulsing crowd where people want to be near Jesus, they want to touch him, hear his words and see his actions and maybe even a miracle. The disciples are struggling as they try to keep people from crushing in on Jesus. Here is this scene, a churning mob of people moving through the narrow streets with Jesus in the center.

A woman who has been sick for 12 years and who is considered unclean through desperation - for she has spent all her money on doctors and they could not heal her. She pushes to get near with hope and faith and she reaches out to touch Jesus and is able to touch “the fringe of his garment” but it is enough “immediately her discharge of blood ceased.” Jesus speaks out, “Who was it that touched me?” Jesus knew who touched him. His purpose was to show that it is by faith one is healed. Matthew does a better job of making known this woman’s faith in Jesus, he records her words, “she said to herself, ‘If I only touch his garment, I will be made well.’” (Matthew 9:21) The word “touch” does not convey the depth of meaning here. In the Greek the word is *haptomai* (**hap**·tom·ahee) meaning to fasten one’s self to, adhere to, cling to. It is not a casual brushing of the hand on Jesus’

garment. This woman's only hope was Jesus and she sought him out and clung to him both physically and in faith. Jesus honors her faith and she is instantly healed.

Luke's account like the other gospels records that someone had touched Jesus, but Luke is the only one that records Jesus' words, **"Someone touched me, for I perceive that power has gone out from me."** God is not impersonal and no one receives the power of God without realizing what God is doing. No one can take power from God, he must give it. Jesus knows who she is as Luke makes clear in verse 47, **"the woman saw that she was not hidden"** and from Matthew we know Jesus healed her because of her faith. Matthew writes, **"Jesus turned, and seeing her he said, 'Take heart, daughter; your faith has made you well.' And instantly the woman was made well."** (Matthew 9:22) This is the only place in the New Testament that Jesus uses the term "daughter" to address a woman and when coupled with **"Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace."** and returning to the story of the woman who anointed Jesus' feet in chapter 7 where Jesus said to her **"Your faith has saved you; go in peace."** (Luke 7:50) It is implied that by Jesus calling this woman daughter and saying **"go in peace"** she is not only healed but has received salvation for her faith in Jesus. I can image her testimony and its effect on those she witnessed to. Your salvation is no less miraculous than this woman's. Instead of you reaching out to Jesus, it was he who reached out to you and saved you to eternal life. Who are you telling your miraculous story to?

Once again, the crowd, Jesus and Jairus is ready to move towards his house. As Jesus was finishing his conversation with the woman and telling her **"Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace."** Someone from Jairus's house arrives to inform him that his daughter has died. Jesus' response is again about faith, saying, **"Do not fear; only believe, and she will be well."** Jesus is not making Jairus' faith a condition for his raising the girl back to life, but is encouraging him - **"Do not fear; only believe, and she will be well."** Jesus knows Jairus' faith was

mingled with fear at this point and he needed encouragement. In Mark's there is the encounter of Jesus and a father with his possessed son. The father pleads to Jesus, ²² “if you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us.” ²³ And Jesus said to him, ‘If you can’! All things are possible for one who believes.’ ²⁴ Immediately the father of the child cried out and said, ‘I believe; help my unbelief!’” (Mark 9:22-24) The boy was healed by the father's faith. Jesus reassures Jairus to not fear his daughter would be healed.

In 1st century Israel bodies were not embalmed and funerals happen quickly. People would have been put on notice that this child was sick and might die. By the time the crowd arrives at Jairus' house the funeral would have been in full-swing and because Jairus was an important man in this city the funeral would have been large; family, friends, interested neighbors and people from the community at large. There would have been the professional mourners and musicians. The noise level would have been high with the wailing. Now add to this the crowd that was following Jesus and it would have been a chaotic mass of people. In verse 51, we read, “when he came to the house, he allowed no one to enter with him, except Peter and John and James, and the father and mother of the child.” ⁵² And all were weeping and mourning for her, but he said, “Do not weep, for she is not dead but sleeping.” As Jesus is entering the house he stops and speaks to the group of family and mourners in the house and says, “Do not weep, for she is not dead but sleeping.” They laugh at Jesus for they have checked and know she is dead. We know from Mark's account that Jesus “put them all outside” (Mark 5:40) Everyone is sent out to wait with the crowd; only Jesus, the parents, and Peter, John and James are allowed to see this miracle. Jesus is introducing a new perspective of death; it is temporary and sleep begins to be used in the New Testament to show the body has died but not the spirit. As Paul wrote to the Corinthians, “we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord.” (2 Corinthians 5:8) Is

this how you understand death? Mortal death brings us to our true home, living in the presence of God.

Jesus takes the girl by the hand, understand that Jesus did not have to touch her to heal her, but he honors Jairus request that he made by faith. In Matthew's account we read, Jairus implores Jesus saying, **"My daughter has just died, but come and lay your hand on her, and she will live."** (Matthew 9:18) Now the gospels are written in Greek and Luke records Jesus saying, **"Child arise"** but Mark records Jesus' words in the original Aramaic, "talitha kum" literally meaning "little girl, arise." Just as God gave life into Adam, Jesus now commands life into this little girl. She is instantly healed and whole for she immediately gets up. Jesus tells those present to bring food, **"something should be given her to eat."** This shows his compassion for the girl and her need and it also showed by her eating that this was a real resurrection. Remember, after Jesus was resurrected the disciples had gone back to Galilee and Peter decided to go fishing. They fished all night and caught nothing. At dawn they saw a man on the shore with a fire and the man told them to cast the net on the right side of the boat and they caught many fish. As they came to shore, they cooked the fish and ate with Jesus. The power Jesus used to resurrect this girl and Lazarus and himself is the same power he uses to resurrect all believers. Jesus said, ²⁵**"Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and is now here, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. ...** ²⁸**Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice** ²⁹**and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment.** (John 5:25, 28-29) The bodies of believers will be resurrected and united with their spirit and live in heaven with God forever. On the other hand, the bodies of unbelievers will be reunited with their spirit and live in everlasting torment in hell.

Believers need not fear death because they have put their faith in the One who has conquered death.

Our story concludes with, “her parents were amazed, but he charged them to tell no one what had happened.” The Greek here says that the parents were not just amazed, but they were beyond amazement, they were overwhelmed to the point of fear for they were having to try and absorb what Jesus had done and what this meant as to who he was. Jesus instructs the parents to “tell no one” not trying to keep this miracle a secret, after all there were many who could testify the girl had died and now, she was up and walking around. As Matthew wrote, Jesus “took her by the hand, and the girl arose.”²⁶ And the report of this went through all that district. (Matthew 9:25-26) It might have been Jesus did not want the news to spread quickly so he could move on and not be overwhelmed by the ever-growing crowds. Why he asked the parent not to tell anyone - I am not sure.

What these 2 miracles among the many he performed show is Jesus’ compassion for people who are hurting, suffering, burdened, troubled and his deep burden for the sin that came into the world. He offers hope and peace and most importantly like the woman who grabbed hold of his garment by faith Jesus gives salvation.

I end with the words of Jesus - words of comfort and warning, words read a few moments ago, ²⁵ “Truly, truly, I say to you, an hour is coming, and **is now here**, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God, and those who hear will live. ... ²⁸ Do not marvel at this, for an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice ²⁹ and come out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment. (John 5:25, 28-29) People’s destiny lies in 1 of 2 places; heaven or hell. This

should spur us to live for God's glory and share the gospel with all who will listen for the time is growing short.