

Luke Chapter 8 v 16 - 25

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Preacher: Peter Robinson

[0 : 00] Thank you.

He says, disturbed. What's the antidote to feeling low, to feeling under the weather in that sense, spiritually or emotionally? Well, here's the answer.

Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my saviour and my God. The way to deal with feeling low is to worship God, to praise him for his salvation, for his love, for his care, to remind ourselves of what a great and wonderful God we have.

Our first hymn, again, is a hymn similar to that of David, speaking to our soul. Oh, my soul, rise and bless your maker, our God, for he is your saviour and your friends.

Let's stand and sing this hymn and lift our hearts to worship God and praise him for all his goodness. 625. Let's continue in our worship and our praise of God as we pray together.

[1 : 41] Let us all pray. O Lord, our God, you are indeed our maker, our creator, our saviour and our friend, our king and our Lord.

You are everything to us, everything we could possibly need or want and more besides. And, O Lord, we thank you that when we focus our attention upon you, when we stop from the busyness of the world around about us and life in general, when we take time to consider who you are and especially what you've done for us, then, Lord, we can't help but find our hearts, our minds, our emotions lifted as we delight in and rejoice in the wonder of your greatness, your love and your power.

Lord, there are times when we do feel low, perhaps even this morning. For some of us, that's the case. For some of us, it may be because of the weather. For others, it may be more important things.

Our health, concerns, fears, struggles, Lord, within and without problems, difficulties. Lord, we thank you that whatever the circumstances of our lives, first of all, you know us completely and you know what it is that troubles us.

You know what it is that concerns us. For you see not only the outward. You hear not only our words, but you see and hear even into our hearts and minds. We thank you, O Lord.

[3 : 08] We can bring to you everything that concerns us. We can bring to you every problem, every difficulty. We can bring to you every joy and thanksgiving. And we just take a moment now, the quietness of our own hearts and minds, to lift before you our praise and bring before you our needs.

We ask again, O Lord, that if we are downcast, that like David, we may be able to renew our hope in you.

For, Lord, you are the God of hope. Not a hope which is sort of vague and dreamlike and perhaps or maybe, but a hope which is certain, absolutely steadfast.

A hope, Lord, which is real. A hope, O Lord, which is, yes, perhaps unseen at this time, but we know, O Lord, it's a hope based upon your promises, your faithfulness, your word, what you've done in the past.

Surely the God who did not spare his own son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also along with him give us everything? Thank you, O Lord, that that's the case.

[4 : 37] And, Lord, we pray that this morning as we seek your face, as we come to worship and praise you, as we come, Lord, to hear you speak to us through your word. We ask, O Lord, that you would meet with us and that you would encourage and strengthen and lift us up, that, Lord, that you would correct us where that's necessary too, for we confess freely, O Lord, that we are sinners before you.

We still get it wrong, but, O Lord, how thankful we are for your patience to us and your long-suffering. We pray again that by your grace, you would do your work in our lives for the praise and the glory of your name, for the joy and the blessing of us, your children.

We ask it all in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen. Let's turn together in our Bibles to Luke and chapter 8.

Luke and chapter 8. Last week, we returned to Luke after a little bit of a break over Christmas and New Year. And in the morning, we looked particularly at this parable of the seeds and the sowers. In the evening, we looked at some of these wonderful ladies in the first three verses and what it means to serve the Lord. We're going to pick up from verse 11, which is Jesus' explanation of the parable.

[5 : 59] A parable is an everyday illustration, as it were, which teaches about a spiritual or a heavenly reality, a heavenly spiritual truth. So we're going to pick up Jesus' explanation from verse 11 and read through to verse 25.

If you've got one of the church Bibles, that's page 1037. So verse 11, halfway down the page. This is the meaning of the parable.

The seed is the word of God. Those along the path are the ones who hear, and then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts so that they may not believe and be saved.

Those on the rocky ground are the ones who receive the word with joy when they hear it, but they have no root. They believe for a while, but in the time of testing, they fall away.

The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way, they are choked by life's worries, riches, and pleasures.

[7 : 01] They do not mature. But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop.

No one lights a lamp and hides it in a clay jar or puts it under a bed. Instead, they put it on a stand so that those who come in can see the light.

For there is nothing hidden that will not be disclosed. There is nothing concealed that will not be known or brought out into the open. Therefore, consider carefully how you listen.

Whoever has will be given more. Whoever does not have, even what they think they have will be taken from them. Now Jesus' mother and brothers came to see him, but they were not able to get near him because of the crowd.

Someone told him, your mother and brothers are standing outside wanting to see you. He replied, my mothers and brothers are those who hear God's word and put it into practice.

[8 : 06] One day Jesus said to his disciples, let us go over to the other side of the lake. So they got into a boat and set out. As they sailed, he fell asleep. A squall came down on the lake so that the boat was being swamped and they were in great danger.

The disciples went and woke him, saying, Master, Master, we're going to drown. He got up and rebuked the wind and the raging waters. The storm subsided and all was calm.

Where is your faith? He asked his disciples. In fear and amazement, they asked one another, who is this? He commands even the winds and the water and they obey him.

Please have your Bibles open to Luke 8 and particularly to those verses that we read from 11 to 25. I wonder, do you like jigsaw puzzles?

I know that some of you do. When was the last time you ever did one, though? Trying to think. Did you get one for Christmas? Perhaps as a present?

[9 : 18] Perhaps you're one of those people who like to go through the charity shops. They're always out there on the top shelf, aren't they, and pick a puzzle and do it. There's something very satisfying about taking lots and lots of different odd-shaped pieces, putting them together to make a united picture.

Patience, of course, is very much needed and so is concentration. For some people, the very thought of attempting a thousand-piece puzzle is a terrifying nightmare.

They'd rather do anything else. There's nothing less enjoyable that they could think of. Well, we're going to face a little bit of a jigsaw puzzle this morning.

So I'm sorry if you don't like them. But you'll be glad to know it only has three pieces. So it's perhaps more on most of our level than a thousand-piece. The three pieces of the puzzle are there in the three events that Luke records for us in verses 16 through to 25.

Perhaps as I read through them, you thought, well, why does he continue? These seem to be very separate, unconnected, unrelated incidents. After all, one is instructions about how you should light your home.

[10:34] One is when Jesus' mothers and brothers came to visit him. And one is a near catastrophe on the Lake of Galilee. What on earth is these three passages put together make?

Have they anything to do with one another? Or is it simply that Luke is sort of padding out his gospel record by just bringing in a few little snippets, unconnected, but they're interesting and it seems a good place to put them?

No, that isn't the case. Luke, led by the Holy Spirit, is delivering for us, again, very clear message. He's painting a very clear picture for us to grasp and understand in these three events.

And we can see that there is a very close connection between them when we take out one word in each section. In the first one concerning light and lamp, verse 18 says, therefore consider carefully how you listen.

Listen. Okay? In the next one, Jesus is talking about mothers and brothers and in verse 21, he says, my mothers and brothers are those who hear.

[11:51] Okay? Listen, hear, then later on in verse 25, after Jesus has calmed the water, the people, or the disciples say, who is this? He commands, even the winds and the water, and they obey.

So we have listen, and hear, and obey. So clearly, there's a connection, isn't there? The connection is to do with Jesus' words. In fact, as we, I included that passage from verse 11, because that was Jesus' explanation, as he tells us, the meaning of the parable is this, the seed is the word of God. So these three pieces that follow, these three separate, seemingly, situations and events, are all to do with the word. Listen, hear, obey.

They are like the three blows of a hammer as you fix it in its place. They are confirming what Jesus has said in the parable about our response and reaction to God's word.

And they answer for us, I think, three very basic but very essential questions. Why should Jesus' words be heard?

[13:12] Why should we listen to the words of Jesus? Secondly, how must we listen to the words of Jesus? And thirdly, what happens when we do listen to the words of Jesus?

Okay? Three very simple questions but essential questions about the words of Jesus. Why on earth should we pay any attention to them? In fact, the majority of our nation, the majority of the world would say there's no need to pay any attention to the words of Jesus.

But I would put it to you that it is essential that we pay attention to Jesus' words. First of all, we're to pay attention to them because they give us light to see in the dark.

That parable there in verse 16, that illustration, no one lights a lamp and hides it in a clay jar or puts it under a bed.

Instead, they put it on a stand so that those who come in to see the light. He's talking about his words having the effect of bringing light to those that are in darkness.

[14:17] It would be the most unsensible thing to do, to have a light and stick it in a jar. Maybe modern sort of fashion or tai chi or whatever it is for your house, but it's pretty impractical.

Neither would you stick it under the bed. That's no good either. Jesus' words are a light and they're to be shone, they're to be heard, they're to be listened to, they're to be allowed to have their effect. Jesus himself spoke more than once that he was the light of the world, that his coming into this world was to bring light into a dark place. That's why he went about preaching.

Remember, at the very beginning of chapter 8, Jesus went from village to village proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. He was teaching, he was speaking, and his words were lightening up things which were concealed.

That's why he says there's nothing hidden that will not be disclosed, nothing concealed that will not be known or brought out into the open. When Jesus' word comes into a person's life and situation, it reveals to them things that are otherwise hidden.

[15:31] Think about that parable that he gave about the different types of heart. That's the first thing that Jesus' words do. In one sense, they illuminate our hearts, they show us what's hidden inside.

We put on a mask, we put on a presentation to others, but God sees within. And when we receive his word, it shows us what's within as well. And sometimes that's very uncomfortable, unpleasant.

It's what we'd like to hide from others, from God, even from ourselves. But Jesus' word shines a light into our lives. But more than that, Jesus' word shows us the wonder of God. It shows us the wonder of that spiritual realm which we do not see with our physical eyes. Without Jesus' words, how would we ever know what God was like?

He came to describe, he came to live out, he came to reveal to us how much God loves us. How would we be able to find the answers to the most hidden questions of life and death?

[16:37] Jesus' light, his word, shines out and reveals that which is hidden. That's the first reason why we should listen and pay attention.

The second reason is given in that second little episode when Jesus' mothers and brothers come. The words of Jesus should be heard because they are the very words of God.

Notice he says, verse 21, my mother and brothers are those who hear God's word and put it into practice. The words of Jesus and the words of God are the very same words.

We may not fully comprehend and understand the relationship between the Father and the Son and the Spirit, what we call the Trinity, but there is a complete unity amongst them.

Three persons, one God. And when Jesus speaks, he expects us to understand that he's speaking the very words of God. That's what he said later on in the Gospel of John in chapter 14.

[17:38] These words, you hear, are not my own. They belong to the Father who sent me. Jesus' words are the words of God.

And so he says, my mother and brothers, those who hear God's word, who hear what God is saying through me and act upon it. The people who heard Jesus when he preached and he preached in many different places were absolutely astonished with the way that he spoke.

Not because of his elocution, not because of his oratory, but as they said, the crowds were amazed at his teaching because he taught as one who had authority, power, unlike the teachers of the day. Jesus' words are the words of God. But don't just take my word for it or even his word for it. Look at what happens in that third episode. There are the disciples.

disciples. They're on the sea. And a squall, which is a very strong wind, comes down. And the boat is being swamped and they are in danger.

[18:48] And what happens? He got up and rebuked the wind and raging waters. The storm subsided and all was kind. This is the very voice of God speaking with power over nature.

So if we doubt that Jesus is the voice of God or the words of God, look at that. He simply spoke to them. He didn't pour oil on the water or whatever it is or do some sort of thing that he could try to keep the waves down or buffer them.

He simply rebukes them. He speaks to them and they are silent. It's not just a gentle breeze, is it, that's taking place?

You can see that. They're in great danger of being swamped. These are fishermen. Fishermen who'd lived on that lake all their lives and done their work on that lake all their lives and they are terrified that they are about to die.

He speaks words that can control nature. And we know that we cannot control the weather. We can't even forecast it all that well, but we certainly can't control it.

[19:51] Someone who has power, whose words can still a storm, can't be ignored, can he? He can't just brush aside his words and say they don't matter, they're not important.

So that's why we should. They bring light to our darkness, they are the words of God himself, and they are powerful and effective. But then we say, well, how should we listen to Jesus' words?

If we should and we must, well, how must we listen to them? Well, first of all, remember there in verse 18. Therefore, consider carefully how you listen.

We mustn't ignore Jesus' words. We mustn't reject Jesus' words. We mustn't consider them irrelevant to the things of life. We mustn't just sort of consign them to the library, our Bible, or Jesus' words.

Say, well, they're just words the same as Mahatma Gandhi or some other great teacher in life, but they're just words. We must listen to them. And when you listen carefully, it's much more than hearing, isn't it?

[21:02] You can hear things but not listen. All of us have done that. As you get a bit older, perhaps you have to listen more carefully at the TV.

What did they say? And you're straining. You're wanting. Perhaps it's a really, absolutely listening to the radio and the archers. And you're listening along and you're straining.

You're caught up with the story. You're caught up with what's happening to whatever his name is who's done something else and he's left his wife and he's done this and he's done that. And you're listening in. You don't want to miss a thing, do you? Because you're caught up in the story. You're caught up in the events of what's happening. That's listening, isn't it? How do we listen to God's word, to Jesus' words?

Do we strain our ears to hear? Are we that longing to hear? Listen carefully. I don't want to miss a thing. I don't want to miss anything that God has to say to me. Listen carefully.

[22 : 05] Then Jesus says how we are to listen as well. Verse 21, those who hear God's word, what? And put it into practice. Who act upon it. Who treat Jesus' words directions for life.

Jesus' words are not simply an interesting story about seeds and about flowers and about these sort of things or interesting stories he tells about other matters in life.

No, Jesus is not simply giving us some intellectual, theological debate. His teaching is to have an impact upon our lives daily. They're to affect us.

We've met people like that, haven't we? Their words affect us. They make us change our view of the world. They make us change our actions. They stop us in our tracks, maybe.

Just like that man that John was talking about when he left the church and the man said to him, I'll see you on judgment day. Just those few words stopped him and affected him.

[23 : 07] So the words of Jesus are to do that. They are the words which are powerful, as we've seen, that karma storm that speak into a place where nature obeys him.

We can't ignore the words of Jesus. He says we're to put them into practice. Like nature, we're to obey. To reject Jesus' words, to ignore Jesus' words is to break the highest law on earth. to commit the greatest crime because we set ourselves above God's law. We determine that we know better than God and therefore we can afford to ignore God and disobey God as he speaks to us in Jesus.

We think that we have everything we need. I don't want to be too judgmental, but I doubt if there's many people here who drive who haven't at some time broken the law of the road.

And why do we disobey the law of the road when it tells us that we should do 60 mile an hour or 40 mile an hour or 50, whatever it is? Well, because we think it doesn't really matter if we go a little bit faster.

[24 : 26] It's not really going to cause any great harm. The road is clear. There's nobody about. We put our foot down and we do a little bit more speeding. We're in a bit of a hurry. It's not a terrible thing.

It doesn't really matter all that much. Well, how many of us have been to a stately home and we've seen that sign on the well, wonderfully manicured lawn?

Do not walk on the grass. I bet you two things. One thing is, you definitely were tempted to walk on the grass. The second thing is, most of us did walk on the grass even if we just put our toe on it.

It doesn't really matter, does it? It's not that important if you walk on the grass. They're just being fastidious and churlish and so on. Brother, dear friends, when we ignore or decide to disobey the words of Jesus, it's not a light matter with no consequences.

But we think it is. We act as if it is. We think that his words really have no consequences. There's no harm done because I've disobeyed Jesus and lived my life my way.

[25 : 39] But there is harm done. There's harm done to you, dear friend. And there are eternal and lifelong consequences. Jesus' words must be listened to.

They must be put into practice. And they must be obeyed. Is that your attitude to the words of Jesus?

Is that the way that you respond when you hear the things of Jesus Christ spoken about? Is that how you respond and react to the Bible? Is it something you say, I really want to know what God has to say to me because I want to do it.

I want to obey it because I know, as we'll see in a moment, that those words of Jesus, when they are heard and listened to and acted upon, produce something in us.

They have a tremendous effect. That's the third question. What does listening to the words of Jesus do to us? Well, here's what Jesus says, doesn't he, in verse 18.

[26 : 48] Therefore, consider carefully how you listen. Whoever has will be given more. Whoever does not have, even what they think they have, will be taken from them.

Listening to the words of Jesus, acting upon the words of Jesus, obeying the words of Jesus, give to us something that we've never had before. They give us something more.

We're made richer by the words of Jesus. But we are all the more poor for discarding them. The whole purpose of Jesus' life, the whole reason for his birth at Christmas, the whole reason for his living, his dying, and his rising again, the whole reason that he, this very living God, came and took upon himself our human nature and entered into this world was to enrich humanity, was to bring to us and give to us something that we do not have, something that we desperately need, something that we cannot find anywhere else.

And let's be honest, over the course of history, men and women have looked just about everywhere to find something that will deliver, something that will satisfy, something that will give them the more.

But Jesus is the only one who does it. Why is it that men and women think that God sent his son into the world to spoil our fun?

[28 : 18] Why is it that men and women think that God purposed and planned to give himself to us and make himself known to us so that he might crush us, so he might rob us, so he might take from us the very enjoyment and purpose of life?

In fact, the very opposite is the truth, isn't it? Jesus' words himself in John chapter 10, I've come that they may have life and have it to the full.

The very entrance of Christ into the world is to enrich the world, to give to the world, to bless the world, the people of it, in a way that nothing else possibly could do.

So the reality is, and it's a tragic reality, that men and women who reject the words of Jesus are the losers, not the winners, that those who think themselves superior to God, who think that they don't need Jesus' words, who think that they have everything they have, are those who are actually the ones who are desperately empty.

And all the things that they cram into their lives, all the things that they run after and seek after, can never give what Jesus gives. In fact, what does Jesus say?

[29 : 33] Whoever does not have, in other words, those are the ones who do not take his word and receive it for themselves, take his word and have his word, even what they think they have will be taken from them.

When we reject Jesus' words, we think we know and understand the world. We understand life. We've got things pretty much nailed down. We think that we have all that we want or need in life. But the truth is, to reject the words of Jesus is to sentence ourselves to an eternity of sorrow and loss. To turn away from the words of Jesus, to say I have no need of them, to reject them, is to bring upon ourselves not just a life which is always going to be hungering and thirsting and scrambling around and looking, but an eternity of utter and complete frustration.

Listen to how Jesus, and he does this more than once, describes what will happen to those who rejected him in this world when they reach the next. And they're sobering and they're grievous words.

They will be thrown outside into the darkness where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. teeth. When do we gnash our teeth?

[30 : 54] When we're frustrated. When we're angry. When we are full of regret. That's what hell is like.

It's a place of utter regret, inexplicable suffering and self-loathing because here we are in hell and we've been told again and again that Jesus is the one that we should have listened to and obeyed and we just thought we knew better and we kept on living our lives our own way and we decided that we didn't need him and we didn't listen and we're going to spend all eternity in this sense and in this state of utter, why?

You stupid idiot. Why did you not do it? Why didn't you believe him? Why did you ignore him? Why didn't you believe him? We've all had regrets of things that we should have done and didn't do. None of them will compare to this. But Jesus has said whoever has will be given more. So even what you have in life he wants to give us more through listening to and taking notice of and obeying his word.

And what is it that he gives us? What is it that's so great? What is it that he gives us more of? Is it that you want more money? Sadly, sadly there are some people in the name of Christianity who teach sort of stupid message.

[32 : 21] Believe in Jesus and you'll be rich. Believe in Jesus and all your problems will go away. No. That isn't what Jesus promises. That isn't what we need anyway. That's not what we actually really want.

What we want is what he gives us which is a new family that we've never known before. What does he say these strange words in verse 21? My mother and brothers are those who hear God's word and put them into practice.

He's not denying that Mary was his mother. He's not denying his four brothers that they aren't part of his family. What he's saying is this. He says there's a relationship that's stronger than blood. It's a relationship with God.

We enter into the very family of God we become part of this wonderful embrace of God where he becomes our heavenly father who loves us.

We are restored to relationship with him through the words of Jesus. Not through us being good people not through us turning over a new leaf not through us being religious but simply through the words of Jesus.

[33 : 24] The good news of the kingdom of God is this that we can enjoy God's friendship and fatherly love whoever we are that we become children of God.

There's a new TV series about to start with a man called Danny Dyer. Apparently when he his descendants go back to royalty and he's just he's an actor and so he's going to do this TV show going through all the descendants his royal descendants and the way they live their life and so on and so forth.

Dear friends you and I are children of God not just descendants of some king of England many centuries ago. Paul writes to the Galatians to the Christians in chapter 3 in Christ you are all children of God through faith.

We're not servants of God firstly we're not the people of God firstly we're children of God firstly loved. The mission of Jesus in coming into this world is that we can be restored in our relationship to God.

At the moment at this time if we do not listen to the words of Jesus we are in a broken relationship with God. That's why we can't see him that's why we can't hear and that's why we feel so far from him that's why he seems to be so distant and unknowable but that's because the relationship has been broken it's been destroyed it's been destroyed by us rejecting God's word going our own way we've torn the family apart in that sense of our own selfishness and pride and greed and doing our own thing but Jesus came to restore the family to heal the break to bring us into a wonderful united loving relationship with God and therefore with all those who are his children and to do that Jesus Jesus didn't just speak to restore what was broken to put things right he didn't just say a word or teach but he gave his very life he gave himself to death

[35 : 48] Peter in his first letter writes to the Christians and tells them for Christ died for sins once for all the righteous for the unrighteous he is the righteous that means someone who is pleasing to God for the unrighteous that's us who've lived our lives in opposition to God Christ died for sins once for all the righteous for the unrighteous to bring you to God that's the key that's the chief that's the most important thing that Jesus lived and died for that you might be restored to God and know him and enjoy him and delight in him there's one final thing isn't there and it's here in this tremendous event it's only a few verses 22 to 25 but it's something which is astonishing a terrible storm a shipwreck about to happen when we listen to the words of Jesus we put them into practice and obey them they save us from an everlasting disaster by his word

Jesus rescued the disciples from drowning to save a life is a marvelous thing isn't it we honor people who are life savers we give them medals and we publicize them and we speak of them in great and glowing terms those who rescue people who are in danger of death placing perhaps their own lives in danger to do so whether it's in a war or a lifeboat crew but Jesus saves all those who listen and practice and obey not just from physical death but from eternal death see the reality is you and I no matter how many times our physical lives are saved by doctors or surgeons or by heroes or lifeboatmen physically we must die but there is an eternity beyond this physical life and either it is an eternity of life or an eternity of death and Jesus' words are so powerful that those who put their faith in him are given eternal life so that they need not fear death so they might be saved and rescued not just in this life but in eternity so that most famous that most wonderful of verses in the Bible is true

John 3 16 for God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only son that whoever believes in him in his words that he has spoken shall not perish and endure that everlasting sorrow but have eternal life and so I close with this question that Jesus gave to his disciples I lay it before you dear friends this morning verse 25 where is your faith where is your faith for life and for death in whose word are you trusting who do you think can be depended upon Jesus his words are the words of God he's the one who's shown it by the power of his word his words transform situations and lives he's so certain of his word that he's been willing to die to keep his word and to bring its power into your life or are you trusting in your own understanding your own words your own thoughts your own wisdom

I'll leave that challenge with you you alone can answer it but the words of Jesus are a light and they reveal what's hidden within and right at this very moment I believe that through God's word he is shining a light in your heart and showing you that what you are trusting in will fail you unless it is Jesus because his words have eternal life Jesus said I am the resurrection and the life the one who believes in me will live even though they die and whoever lives by believing in me will never die do you believe this oh Lord give us that faith that we need to believe on you your word your truth that we might have the gift the gift that you have purchased with your own life but freely given to us of life eternal

Amen