

May 7th, 2023 – (full sermon notes)

“Hear and Understand, Believe and Obey”

Luke 8:16-18

Six weeks ago, March 26, was the last time we were in **Luke chapter 8**, after which we spent several Sunday’s studying the events of Passion Week, followed by an extended study on the post-resurrection appearances of Christ.

As we open our Bibles today, let’s begin with a brief overview of **Luke 8:4-15**. As you may recall, this is a parable about a sower who sows seed on four different types of soil; but the seed is only able to grow and produce fruit in one of the soils.

After Jesus had told the parable of the sower (**Luke 8:4-8**), He called out, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.” His disciples didn’t understand so they (**9-10**), “began questioning Him as to what this parable meant. And He said, ‘To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest it is in parables, so that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.’”

Then Jesus (**Luke 8:11-15**) explained the parable to His disciples; revealing to them the spiritual truth it contained. He is not just talking about a sower casting seed onto different types/conditions of soil, the seed is the gospel of Christ and the soil is the human heart, but only one of the heart conditions receives the seed, begins to grow, and produces fruit, i.e., only one of the hearts hears, understands, believes, and obeys the Word of God concerning Salvation.

Mark 1:14-15, “Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying, ‘The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel.’” **17**, “Come, and follow Me.” So, what exactly is the gospel?

1Corinthians 15:1-4, “Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain. For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures.”

1Peter 1:3-5, “Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who according to His great mercy has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to obtain an inheritance which is imperishable and undefiled and will not fade away, reserved in heaven for you, who are protected by the power of God through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.” **23**, “For you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word of God.”

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Romans 10:9, “If you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.”

Romans 15:13, “Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you will abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Do you see? At the moment of genuine belief in the death [payment for your sins] and resurrection [demonstration of eternal life] of Jesus Christ you are born-again by God’s Spirit, and you will indeed bear fruit, [do the things that please God], for you have been born of God’s Spirit, becoming a child of God, a believer and follower of Christ, a first person witness to the Salvation of God in Christ.

When you hear and understand, you either believe and obey the message of Christ, at which time all your sins are forgiven (past, present, future), or you continue to reject the message of Christ, remaining dead in your sins.

Read Luke 8:16... In the Bible, light is often used as a metaphor for the spiritual truth and spiritual life that comes from God, referring to all things that reveal and exemplify God; whereas darkness usually refers to those things that are void of God’s person, presence, pleasure, and power.

So light is a synonym for all things God, and darkness is a synonym for all things void of God, i.e., anything that is offensive toward or displeases God.

John 8:12, “Jesus spoke to them saying, ‘I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the Light of life.’”

1Peter 2:9-10, “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for God’s own possession, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light; for you once were not a people, but now you are the people of God; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.”

Matthew provides a parallel passage to **Luke 8:16 (Matthew 5:14-16)**, “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor does anyone light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.”

God’s Church is illustrated as a lighted city on a hill; while true believers are said to be the individual lamps in each of the homes of the lighted city on the hill.

Believing in Christ brings you into God’s Kingdom where you receive eternal life from God, in fact, the very Light [or revelation] of God, in order that you will expose unbelievers to the marvelous revelation of God in the Person of Jesus Christ.

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2Corinthians 4:6, “For God, who said, ‘Light shall shine out of darkness,’ is the One who has shone in our hearts to give the Light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.”

Our purpose as Christians, is to let God’s Light show through us, so that those who are living in darkness might be exposed to God’s love and forgiveness.

Read Luke 8:17-18... The Spirit of God exposes everything, i.e., nothing is hidden from God (**Hebrews 4:12-13**), “For the word of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight, but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of Him [to whom we must give account].”

God knows all things, even what is in our hearts. God’s forgiveness and eternal life is granted to all who hear the message of Christ, understand it, believe it, and demonstrate obedience to it; for we have come out of the darkness of unbelief, into God’s marvelous Light, by believing in God’s Son.

See **Ephesians 5:8-13...** All of us, at one time, were guilty of sin, separated from the light [*revelation of God*] and the life [*eternal life with God*], we were living in darkness; but now we are children of light, seeking to do that which pleases God. We are not to participate in the fruitless deeds of darkness; but instead we are to expose them for all to see; for everything exposed by the light is made known.

See **Ephesians 5:14-17...** The truth of God’s Holy Word, through the work of God’s Spirit, exposes all sin, so that those who are spiritually dead can be made alive through repentance of sin and belief in the Savior.

Unbelievers are spiritually dead [asleep] living in sin’s darkness, unaware of their lost condition and the judgment of God’s Wrath to come. God wants them to wake up and receive God’s forgiveness for sin and eternal life, through His Son.

Paul offers an invitation in **verse 14**, to all who are not children of God, so that they might come to the light of Christ and be saved, “Awake, sleeper, and arise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you.”

Then Paul continues in **verses 15-17** saying, “be careful how you walk, not as unwise but as wise,” “making the most of your time,” “do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.” What is God’s will, what does He desire?

1Timothy 2:3-4, “God our Savior, ...desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.”

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In **John 14:6**, Jesus declares that He is the only way to God, and the only truth from God, and the only life with God; and that no one comes to the Father but through Him, God the Son [i.e., no one is made right with God, no one is forgiven their sins, no one goes to heaven] apart from believing in Christ’s sacrificial death as full payment for our sins, and His sovereign resurrection from the dead as demonstration that He is the resurrection and the life.

1John 1: 5-7, “This is the message we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is Light, and in Him there is no darkness at all. If we say that we have fellowship with Him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth; but if we walk in the Light as He Himself is in the Light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus His Son cleanses us from all sin.”

God’s Word, from beginning to end, demonstrates God’s plan to separate light from darkness, forever (cf. **Genesis 1:1-4; Revelation 21:23-24; 22:3-5**).

Speaking to those who believe in Him, Jesus said (**Matthew 5:14**) “You are the light of the world.” **16**, “Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.”

Has anyone come up to you lately and asked you what the light is that is shining through you? Probably not! But if you are a Christian (a believer and follower of Jesus Christ), you will desire for the light of God to be seen in and through your life, so that, when an unbeliever asks you why you are different from the rest of the world, you can tell them it is all because of God’s Son.

John 3:16-19, “For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. This is the judgment, that the Light has come into the world, and men loved the darkness rather than the Light, for their deeds were evil.” **36**, “He who believes in the Son has eternal life; but he who does not obey the Son will not see life, for the wrath of God abides [*remains*] on him.”

He who has ears, let him hear!

Jesus Christ, God the Son, took our punishment for sin upon Himself, dying in our place on the cross, *according to the Scriptures*, He was then placed in a tomb, but on the third day, He rose from the grave alive, *according to the Scriptures*, demonstrating His authority over sin, death and judgement.

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But that is not all, He promised that He is coming back to take all those who believe in Him, to be with Him in heaven forever, where there will no longer be any darkness; and there will no longer be *any* mourning, or crying, or pain, or death, for all those things have passed away and will never return.

Now to God our Father, to God the Son, our Savior Jesus Christ, and to God the Holy Spirit, *be* the glory forever and ever, Amen!

Pastor Mike

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