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Luke 8



Gospel of Luke - Steve Gregg

In this talk, Steve Gregg discusses the first three verses of Luke 8, exploring the meaning behind Jesus preaching the glad tidings of the Kingdom of God. Gregg delves into the different stories and parables found in this chapter, examining the deeper truths within them. He also touches on the idea of Mary and Jesus' brothers, explaining that the term "brothers" refers to anyone who has access to Jesus as a family member, regardless of biological relation. Overall, Gregg's discussion provides a thoughtful and insightful exploration of Luke 8.

Transcript

In Luke chapter 8, we read in the first three verses, Now it came to pass afterward that he went through every city and village, meaning, of course, in Galilee, but probably not every, literally every last one, but he went through a great number of them, preaching and bringing the glad tidings of the Kingdom of God. And the twelve were with him. And certain women, who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom had come seven demons, and Joanna, the wife of Chusa, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others who provided for him from their substance.

Now Jesus made a circuit of the various Galilean towns, and his message was the glad tidings of the Kingdom of God. I'm hoping that you've already come to know what the Kingdom of God means. I've talked about it many times, I have a complete series on it at our website, but just to make it very clear, the good tidings, or the gospel of the Kingdom of God, is not the gospel of going to heaven, it's the gospel of Christ's movement, fulfilling the promises that God made to Israel in the Old Testament, where he said that he would establish his kingdom under a ruler, and it would be on earth.

In Daniel chapter 2, it says, The stone that hit the image in the feet and grew up to be a great mountain to fill the whole earth is the Kingdom of God, filling the earth. So in the days of these kings, the God of heaven shall set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed, and it shall consume all these kingdoms, and it itself will fill the whole earth. So the Kingdom of God is not a pie in the sky, the Kingdom of God is the movement on

earth that began with Jesus and his disciples, and has spread through the preaching of the gospel as people embrace the King, Jesus.

His kingdom is enlarged, because his kingdom is consisting of the King and his subjects. And so we, for example, are his subjects already, and because of that, the Bible says we are in his kingdom. As Colossians 1.13 says, that God has translated us out of the power of darkness into the kingdom of his own dear son.

That's already happened. And so, Jesus is preaching this movement. Preaching the Kingdom of God is a call to repent and believe that he is the King and to act like it.

We know this because Mark summarizes the teaching of Jesus in his Galilean ministry very similarly, but gives more detail in Mark 1.14-15. This is how the Galilean ministry in general is summarized by Mark. Mark 1.14, Now, after John was put in prison, Jesus came to Galilee, preaching the gospel, or the good tidings, of the Kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand. Repent and believe the gospel.

So, there's two announcements and two ultimatums. The announcement, the time is at hand. That means the fulfillment has come.

The time is fulfilled. This is the fulfillment of prophecy. God said he would do this, and this is the time he's going to do it.

And the Kingdom of God, therefore, is imminent, is at hand. Therefore, what are we supposed to do? Repent and believe the gospel. That's how Mark summarizes Jesus' message, and we have to assume that Luke is simply giving a more brief summary.

When it says he was preaching the good tidings of the Kingdom of God, it must have included these elements that Mark has labeled for us, or listed. Now, it says the Twelve were with him, and also some women traveled around, apparently, through much of the cities with him. These were women who supported him financially.

That's what it says at the end of verse 3. They provided for him from their substance. This is perhaps the only verse we have that tells us how Jesus' ministry was financed. We know he had been a carpenter, and he left that trade to be a full-time minister.

Since he was a rather poor carpenter, we have to assume, since his parents were poor, and also Joseph was a carpenter and was poor, he can't have saved up enough money as a carpenter to go into and support his own ministry afterwards, so he had to be supported. Now, it's certain that Jesus was not salaried. There was no organization that hired him to go around and preach and be the Messiah for them, and who issued him a paycheck on a regular basis, but he was supported by the thankfulness of people who had benefited from his ministry, and who had money to do so.

So, it mentions certain women, including some who had had evil spirits and who had

been healed of infirmities. Whether all the women listed here had been delivered of evil spirits, or whether only Mary Magdalene, who had been delivered of seven demons, is the one with the spirits, and the others were delivered from infirmities, just healed of something or another, we can't really know. We don't know enough about these women.

Even Mary Magdalene, who is very prominent in some of the later stories, we don't know very much about her. Magdalene means she came from a town called Magdala, and her name was Mary, which is the most common of all female names in the Bible. So, fairly anonymous.

We are told that she had seven demons cast out of her, but we're not told when that happened. But, of course, we have read earlier that Jesus went about to all the villages casting out demons and healing the sick. She apparently was one who had been delivered of multiple demons.

So, the Bible makes it very clear that a person can be demon possessed with one demon, as is sometimes apparently the case, or with multiple demons. In the case of the man of the tombs, a multitude of demons were in him, a legion. Or, in this case, seven demons had to come out.

Now, what was Mary's condition as a demon possessed woman? We don't know. There is that Catholic tradition, which has also spilled over into some Protestant preaching, that she had been a prostitute. This is not stated in Scripture, and there's no reason to believe it.

First of all, the fact that she had seven demons might suggest she was a very wicked woman, but actually, in the Bible, demon possession does not necessarily predict for wickedness. Demon possession is an affliction. Some demon-possessed people, no doubt, are very wicked, because they're crazy, and they're manifesting, in many cases, the personality of a wicked spirit.

But many of the possessed people in the Scripture are not described as bad people. They're deaf or dumb or blind until the demon is cast out, and then they're okay. Or they behave fairly normally most of the time, and they even go to the synagogue, but then they kind of act up in a certain case where the demon gets uncomfortable with the presence of Jesus or something.

I'm sure many demon-possessed people are also wicked, but the Bible does not necessarily indicate that being demon-possessed has anything to do with being wicked, but rather a victim. There was a little boy that was demon-possessed that Jesus cast a demon out of him. He said to his father, How long has he been this way? He said, Since childhood.

Certainly it can't be the wickedness of the child that caused him to be demon-possessed,

nor is he described as a bad boy when he is demon-possessed. His problem is the demon throws him into the fire and the water trying to kill him. Demons are tormentors of people.

They also no doubt influence people in bad ways, but sometimes they just torment them. And Mary Magdalene had seven demons, but we don't have any evidence that she was a bad person. Now, the reason why Mary Magdalene traditionally came down to be thought of as a bad person is because there is this sinful woman mentioned in the previous chapter.

At the end of chapter 7, we have this unnamed sinful woman who washes Jesus' feet with her tears and wipes them with her hair. And then in chapter 8, we have Mary Magdalene mentioned by name for the first time in Scripture. And it's merely the proximity of the mention of her name in chapter 8 with the story of the sinful woman in chapter 7. Although Luke doesn't connect them at all, it's just the fact that they're near each other that has apparently encouraged some to think this way about Mary Magdalene.

She, of course, becomes a very close associate of the apostles, and we would perhaps like to know more about her background, how she came to encounter Jesus, what her condition was before the demons were cast out, but we're not really told anything about that. We're only told even that she had been demon-possessed in this one verse. All the other references are not really focusing on her past that much.

Now, these other women, Joanna, the wife of Chusa, Herod's steward, and Susanna, are women we know very little about. There is a Joanna who apparently was at the cross with some other women, and at the tomb, perhaps, the empty tomb, this may be the same Joanna. What we're told about her here is that she's the wife of Chusa, who was Herod's steward.

Now, Herod's steward would be a member of the Herodian household, one of the servants of Herod, and it is believed by virtually all commentators that the nobleman whose son Jesus healed at the end of John chapter 4 was a steward or a servant of Herod in some way. He's called a nobleman in John chapter 4, and it is thought that a nobleman would refer to somebody attached to Herod's court. It is mere speculation, but some have thought this Chusa might be that nobleman.

We don't know how many Herodians followed Jesus or had contact with Jesus, but we know of one, the nobleman whose son was dying, and Jesus healed him. It may be that Joanna is the wife of that nobleman and is thankful to Jesus for having healed her son, who was at the point of death at one point and was healed by Jesus. These women, all of them, whatever else can be said about them, had received some kind of benefit from Jesus' ministry, and they, like the sinful woman in the previous chapter, having received such mercy, also loved much, and they showed their love for him by supporting his

movement.

Probably their gifts also supported the apostles. Since they left their jobs, they had to be supported by God, really, pretty much living by faith, and when you live by faith, it happens that someone who has money is moved by God to help, and these are the women who God moved to help, these on Jesus' team and himself. Verse 4 says, And when a great multitude had gathered, and others had come to him from every city, he spoke by a parable.

A sower went out to sow his seed, and as he sowed, some fell by the wayside, and it was trampled down, and the birds of the air devoured it. Some fell on rock, and as soon as it sprang up, it withered away because it lacked moisture. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up with it and choked it.

But others fell on good ground, sprang up, and yielded a crop a hundredfold. When he had said these things, he cried, He who has ears to hear, let him hear. Now, in telling parables, Jesus was concealing certain truths in a familiar story, deep truths in a rather shallow story.

A story about a farmer throwing seeds, and each of these seeds experiencing some different fate depending on the quality of the soil it falls on, is a very average, kind of a mundane tale. There's no real plot to it. It's not really a story that captivates you because there's some kind of a plot line, or there's some characters that engage you.

This is just telling about a farmer throwing seeds, and some of it grew, and some of it didn't. End of story. Boy, was that a winner.

That's a classic. Can't wait to see the movie. And yet, though it's a very plain and mundane story, it has a profound lesson, and that's what a parable is.

It's couching some profound spiritual truth in a very ordinary kind of a story from normal life. And yet, that profound truth is not at all visible in the story. That is, the crowds that heard him teach it would not really be able to take away much from it.

They would say, okay, so a farmer threw seeds. I got that. I can see that.

I can picture it. There's one over there right now. I can see it as we speak.

He's throwing seeds. Seeds fall on different ground. Different things happen.

So, what's the punchline? No punchline. That's just, that's the story. Now, in other words, the average person listening to Jesus would say, huh? And they wouldn't get his message.

And for this reason, in verse 9, the disciples asked Jesus, saying, what does this parable mean? And he said, to you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of

God, but to the rest it is given in parables, so that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand. Now, this is a greatly abbreviated version of this conversation with Jesus and his disciples. In Matthew 13, we have the parable of the sower followed by this conversation.

But the disciples actually come to Jesus in Matthew 13 and say, why do you speak to these people in parables? Implying, you know, this isn't really a good strategy. They don't understand what you're talking about. Why do you use these stories that obscure what you're saying, whatever it may be.

We don't even know what it means. What does this mean? And he said, well, the reason I speak in parables is because it is given to you, the disciples, to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to them it's not given. And he does quote Isaiah there, seeing they may see, or seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.

That's a little shorter than it's quoted in Matthew. Seeing they may see and not perceive, hearing they may hear and not understand. But the point is that Jesus is deliberately obscuring this.

They'll see and hear something, but they won't perceive or understand what it is they're hearing. That's why I'm using parables, so they won't. When I was in Sunday school growing up, I was always told that parables were in order to illustrate and clarify spiritual truths.

Well, maybe to the right listeners, the ones who hear the explanation from Jesus, it would be perhaps clarifying, but to the average listener, it wasn't clarifying at all. It was obscuring. It was keeping them from knowing.

Now, this raises questions. Why did Jesus do that then? Didn't he want people to know his message? Apparently, not everybody. This was the mysteries of the kingdom of God.

God doesn't share his secrets with everybody, certainly. It says in Psalm 25, the secret of the Lord is with them that fear him. Job, when he was going through his trials, said, I remember the days when the secret of the Lord used to be in my tabernacle.

God shares his secrets with certain people. In the prophet, it says, surely the Lord God will do nothing, but he reveals his secret to his servants, the prophets. God's secrets aren't for everybody.

Nobody tells their secrets to everybody or else they're not secrets. Somebody's got to be left out of the loop or else it's not a secret if everyone knows it. Now, God has secrets, mysteries of the kingdom of God.

This is his secret strategy. He's invading an enemy territory, the devil's kingdom, and he's bringing his kingdom to supplant it. There's a war here.

We're not just going to reveal our strategy on the front pages of the newspaper. We're going to tell it to the trusted comrades in this movement. The rest, we're going to keep it from them.

And so, I'm hiding the secrets from them, but I'm giving them to you. Now, that still leaves a question unanswered. If you don't want them to know, why are you talking to them at all? Why even tell stories to them? You could conceal it just by zipping your lip and not even addressing them at all.

You could keep a secret real well that way. Why tell them a story that actually has potential of letting the cat out of the bag, though they're not understanding it? Well, he doesn't explain that, but we can see what that is. His disciples had not all been gathered yet out of the population.

Potential disciples were there in the crowds. Disciples who are potential disciples were people who were hungry for the kingdom of God. And if Jesus said, the kingdom of God is like this, and they didn't understand it, they wouldn't just say, oh, well, I guess I'll never understand the kingdom of God.

I'll go home now. No, they'd say, I'm going to find out what he's talking about. They'd come to him and ask him.

That is, anyone really serious about his movement would not let him get away with that kind of obscurity. They'd come and say, tell us what this means. But anyone who would let him get away with it and never ask him what it means, they're not the right stuff.

They don't care enough about the kingdom anyway. They just said, I guess this guy doesn't say anything profound. This guy just talks about farming.

I've known that all my life. What's the point of following this guy? Why listen to him? He said, the kingdom of God, I don't even know what that is, and I don't really care that much. I'm going home.

I've got better things to do. I've got meals to cook and kids to watch. But the ones who were saying, no, the kingdom of God, he's talking about the kingdom of God.

I don't know what that is. I don't know what he's saying, but I'm not going to let him get away. I'm not going to let him go until he blesses me.

I'm going to wrestle with this. I'm going to make him tell me. And people who were that into it, he told.

In Mark chapter 4, in verse 34, and by the way, Mark 4 also has this parable of the sower in it. But in Mark 4, 34, it says, without a parable, Jesus did not speak to them, the crowd. And when they were alone, he explained all things to his disciples.

Remember, disciples is not restricted to apostles. Anyone was a disciple who continued in his words, and therefore there might have been a great number. We know in chapter 10, there were 70 at least, and there could have been a much larger number at certain times of real disciples.

They were called from the crowd. The crowd were not disciples, and they weren't going to know his secrets. He's not going to share the strategies of his movement and of his enterprise.

They're on the wrong side. They're the enemy. But there were some in there who potentially might defect to his side.

So he raises their curiosity by telling a story. He says, this is what the kingdom of God is like, but it's not at all clear what it's like from hearing the story. And this would divide between two kinds of people, the people who were more or less apathetic about the kingdom of God and decided he didn't have anything profound to say, on the one hand, and those who knew there's something more to this.

He's not saying clearly everything he means, but he is talking about the kingdom of God, and I don't have the luxury of ignoring what he's saying. I want to be in that kingdom. So people would become his disciples, drawn by this kind of advertising, these parables, knowing that they didn't understand it, but wanted to.

And those who didn't, well, they didn't deserve to know. They weren't worthy of the truth if they didn't love it enough to pursue it more than that. And so they would hear and not understand.

They would see and not perceive, and that was just fine. If they're not the type who required knowing, they don't have to know. They don't love the truth, they're not worthy of it.

Now verse 11, now the parable is this, he explains, the seed is the word of God. In Matthew's version in chapter 13, it's the word of the kingdom. And I think in Mark chapter 4, it's just the word, but of course, just different ways of saying the same thing, the word, the word of God, the word of the kingdom, the message of the kingdom.

That's what the seed is. The message of the kingdom is being preached by Jesus. He's scattering seed.

He's scattering his word all over Israel. Those by the wayside are the ones who hear. Then the devil comes and takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.

Now, the wayside is referring to the pathways alongside the fields. In a farm, the workers have to walk somewhere and they don't want to trample on the plants. So they have

certain walkways that are designated for travel through the fields to the different parts of the fields to do what has to be done.

And these pathways, of course, they wouldn't receive seed very well because they're continually walked on and pressed down. They're hard. They're hardened by being walked on regularly and so the seed doesn't penetrate well.

The birds, you know, when seed is thrown randomly, some of it falls there and it doesn't take. So the birds eat it. And that's like the devil coming because it didn't penetrate.

Now, in Matthew's version, Jesus said, these are those who hear the word and don't understand it. And because they don't understand it, the devil snatches it away. Obviously, it doesn't penetrate.

They don't know what they're hearing and apparently don't do anything about it. So, if they don't care enough about it, it just kind of goes somewhere else and leaves the rind. The devil snatches it away.

Lest they should believe and be saved. But the ones on the rock, in Matthew, it says rocky soil, suggesting there might be a little soil on top of a rock. The seed penetrates the soil but it can't penetrate the rock.

The soil is enough to get it to germinate and spring up but the rock is too hard for the roots to penetrate. So, it can't draw any moisture any deeper than the rock itself and there's none there. So, the sun rises and it kills it.

Well, he says, those are those who, when they hear the word, they receive the word with joy, briefly and initially. And these have no root who believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away. Now, notice they believe for a while.

Are they saved or are they not? Can you believe for a while and later not believe? If so, what's your condition? If you believe for a while, are you saved? Well, apparently because the last line of verse 12 says the first group don't believe and if they had, they would believe and be saved. Being saved is a result of believing. These ones do believe for a while so they're saved for a while.

But then they fall away under temptation or testing. Verse 14, the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life and bring no fruit to maturity. These ones actually fall on soil that has some promise.

These people actually can grow and produce fruit except they get choked out by things that needn't be there and shouldn't be there. The cares and riches and pleasures of life. Those things distract from the kingdom and eventually people get drawn away into worldliness, basically.

They backslide into worldliness. Now these don't necessarily, they're not the same class as are falling away because of testing or tribulation as Matthew puts it. Tribulation and persecution because the word caused the second category to fall away.

This is the attraction of the world. It's opposition from the world that causes some to fall away and it's the lure of the world that causes others to fall away. But in any case, they fail to bring forth the fruit of the kingdom.

But the ones that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience. Now obviously, the ground condition is a heart condition. The good soil is a good heart.

The other conditions are other conditions of heart. Hard hearts, shallow hearts, you know, worldly hearts. But the seed that produces good fruit produces what a crop is supposed to be is good seed on a good and noble heart.

And they bear fruit with endurance. The word patience means endurance. So they have to endure a hardship.

They go through the tribulation that the second group went through but they don't fall away through it. They endure it. And they persevere in it and they bear fruit.

Now notice, some people, when the word is preached, some people have a good and noble heart. This raises questions about total depravity. How so? How can somebody who has not yet been saved, not yet heard the gospel, have a good and noble heart if everybody is so wicked that men cannot receive it? Jesus does not indicate that the miracle here is strictly in the seed.

It's in the soil too. The soil has to be the right kind of soil for conversion to take place, for fruit to be produced. And he assumes that some hearts are in that condition.

Even before the seed is sown, even before they hear the gospel. This is talking about the condition that the gospel finds them in, not the condition that it creates in them. And so, it raises serious problems.

This parable, in several ways, raises problems about total depravity and perseverance and things like that. But then, in that respect, it's like the rest of the Bible, which also raises serious questions about those documents. Verse 16.

No one, when he has a lamp, covers it with a vessel or puts it under a bed, but sets it on a lampstand, that those who enter may see the light. For nothing is secret that will not be revealed, nor anything hidden that will not be known and come to light. Therefore take heed how you hear.

For whoever has, to him more will be given. Whoever does not have, even what he

seems to have will be taken from him. Now this, it's not entirely clear how he's understanding the lamp and lampstand thing.

Obviously, he's making a point that everyone knows you don't light a lamp in order to obscure and block the light, like putting something over it that's opaque. You light a lamp in order to be seen. Perhaps he's responding to the fact that he is, he's a lamp.

His teaching is a light, but he seems to be putting a bushel over it by putting it in parables so that people aren't seeing it. And he says, now that's not what people usually do, I know. You don't usually light a lamp and put a bushel over it.

If it seems that that's what I'm doing by telling parables, there's light in here, but they're covered up by the story that people can't see. They see but do not perceive. He might be saying, well, if that's what it looks like I'm doing, you know people don't really do that.

So that's not really how it's going to turn out. I do intend for the light to shine to everybody. Everything that is hidden will be revealed at some point.

I'm just not revealing it to these people at this point. It may seem strange to put such a bushel over the light. You normally would want the light to be seen and it will be.

There's nothing hidden that won't be revealed. But this isn't the time for it. And if he's talking about the message of the kingdom as the light, which is being currently revealed or hidden under the bushel of these parables, which obscure it, he'd be saying the time will come when it's clear enough to everybody.

At this present time, it may be that there's a bushel over the light, but whatever is hidden is eventually going to, in fact, be revealed. And he says whoever has will receive more. And whoever doesn't have will have taken from him what he seems to have.

What? Light, apparently. Whoever has some light already, whoever has enough reception to a little bit of light already, they're open to receiving more. That's why those in the crowd who were capable of being disciples would come to him and seek more light.

They already had a bit of light. They were already good folks. They already had a good and honest heart or noble and good heart.

They were already people who had made some steps in the direction of desiring the kingdom and seeking light. And therefore, having received a little bit through the Old Testament, they're going to receive more. But those who don't even, haven't even received any light through the Old Testament, those who have paid no attention, those who have no concerns, those who are lightless, well, they're going to even have taken from them what they think they know.

The knowledge is going to be increased to those who've had enough good sense to pursue it in the past and have a little bit. He's got more for them. Those who don't have it because they've never pursued it and didn't value it, well, they're not going to get any more.

In fact, they're going to lose what they have eventually here. Then his mother and brothers came to him and could not approach him because of the crowd. And it was told him by some who said, your mother and your brothers are standing outside desiring to see you.

But he answered and said to them, my mother and my brothers are those or these who hear the word of God and do it. This story is also told by Matthew and Mark. What's interesting about Mark's version is there's sort of a back story to it.

In Mark chapter 3, we have this story in Mark 3, 31 through 35. It says in verse 31, his brothers and his mother came. But it doesn't say what they came for.

They wanted to see him, but it doesn't say what they wanted to see him about. And he didn't grant them an audience, which seems rather rude. Even strangers could often get to him for what they wanted.

How come his mother and brothers couldn't? What's up with that? Well, the back story is found a few verses earlier in Mark 3. In Mark 3, 20 and 21, it says, and the multitude came together again so that they could not so much as eat bread. But when his own people heard about this, they went out to lay hold on him for they said he's out of his mind. Now, these people must be his mother and brethren because otherwise we'd never hear of these people again.

These people went out to lay hold on him, his own people went out to take him into their custody. He's gone crazy. We need to take him, give him some rest and relaxation.

He's not sleeping. He's not eating. He's not taking meals.

He's a fanatic. We need to take him to a deprogrammer and get him back on the normal path again. Let's go take him and get him healed of this delusional stuff he's doing.

Now, that is apparently the errand that Jesus' mother and brothers were on when they came to pick him up. Now you might say, why would Mary who knew he was the Son of God, why would she think he was nuts? Hey, she's a Jewish mother, right? I mean, she's going to be concerned about her son. Even John the Baptist knew he was the Messiah but had his moments where he's like, Jesus, you're not doing this the right way.

And certainly a mother seeing her son not eating, not sleeping, just being thronged with people continually, you know, exhausting himself, she's thinking, oh, he needs a mom. You know, he needs someone to take him aside and give him some rest and relaxation.

She may not have thought he was crazy but she thought it was imbalanced.

His brothers weren't even believers. And there may have been other, you know, townspeople that knew him that were among them too or relatives. In any case, this would explain what they were there for and why Jesus didn't grant them an audience.

They weren't there on a mission of genuine mercy from God. They were there to oppose what he was doing, to interfere with it. And he knew that and that's why he said, who are my mother and my brethren? He doesn't ask the question in Luke but he does ask the question in Mark and Matthew.

Who are my mother and brethren? Are they not these around me who do the will of my Father? Now, this makes sense. A mother is someone who's submitted to your father. Your brothers are children who are submitted to your father.

The father is the head of the household. Therefore, my mother and brothers are those who are in the household of my father, who do the will of my father. These people aren't doing that.

Mom's not obeying my dad. Right now, my dad's God. And she's not on God's errand.

She doesn't understand. I am on God's errand. She's not.

My brothers are not. They're not my brothers and mother when they're doing that. My family is consistent of those who are obedient to the father.

Now, it's interesting that some people when they are commenting on the parable of the sheep and the goats where Jesus said, whatsoever you do to my brethren, in as much as you've done it to the least of these my brethren, my brothers, you've done this to me. Some people interpret his brothers to be the Jews. And they think that this is a judgment of the nations, the Gentile nations, based upon how well they did or did not treat the Jews, Jesus' brethren.

But how strange it would be for Jesus to refer to the Jews as his brethren when he doesn't even refer to these Jews, his mom and brothers, as his brethren. Now, he says, my brethren are not defined by relationship genetically or biologically or racially. My brethren, it's a spiritual designation.

Those who are submitted to my Father. Those who, like myself, are about my Father's business are my brothers and my sisters and my mothers. So, he seems to disown them.

By the way, the Roman Catholics believe that we should pray to Mary because they say that Jesus is a busy man and he can't attend to all prayers. They don't say it like that. But they say, certainly he would never deny a prayer that his mother would bring to him.

So, we go and get her sympathy. She's got those motherly kind of sympathies that Jesus

lacked being a guy. And so, you talk to mom and she'll talk to Jesus for you.

That's exactly what the prayers to Mary are intended to be. The idea is Jesus is going to be much more open to requests from his mother than from other people. And so, and his mom apparently is regarded to be more sympathetic or available than he is.

So, we'll talk to her and then we'll get our prayers answered because he can't deny her. In fact, I've heard Roman Catholics say Jesus certainly would never deny a request from his mother. Really? When did he ever not deny her request on record? When she came to him and said, they have no wine in John chapter 2. He said, what do I have to do with you? My time has not yet come.

Now, later he made water into wine but he didn't do it because of her. It was his father's will that he was going about. Not his mother's.

And when she wanted to kind of take charge, he said, what do your concerns have to do with me? He said, essentially. And it's not as if he gave her special deference because she was his mom. There was a time when one of the women in the crowd shouted out, we'll find it in Luke later on.

She started, blessed is the womb that bore you and the breasts that nursed you. In other words, Mary. Blessed is Mary.

And she said, no, more blessed are those who hear the word of God and keep it. In other words, more blessed than Mary are those who hear and keep the word of God. Now Mary sometimes did that and eventually she was in the upper room on the day of Pentecost with the rest.

She certainly turned out well but she had her moments when she wasn't sure what to think either. Like John the Baptist wasn't sure what to think. There were times when she wasn't doing the will of the Father.

This is one of them. She requested of Jesus and he said no. We never find a case where Mary requests something of Jesus and he says yes.

But on multiple times she comes thinking that he ought to do what she has in mind. He says, no, I'm on another plan, thanks. I'm doing my Father's will instead.

So this idea that Jesus would never deny his mother. On what scriptural basis is that based? None. He certainly will deny his mother's request if her requests are misguided as much as anyone else's.

Anyone who does the will of the Father is his mother as far as he's concerned and brother and sister. That is, everyone has as much access as a family member to him whether they're physically related to him or not. And those who are physically related to

him are not his brothers if they're not obedient to his Father.

Now it happened, verse 22, on a certain day that he got into a boat with his disciples and he said to them, let us go over to the other side of the lake. And they launched out, but as they sailed he fell asleep. Why? Because he'd been going without sleep and meals as Mark tells us in chapter 3. He had been deprived of sleep and he was catching up.

So he fell asleep in the boat. Apparently a very deep sleep at that because even a storm which was filling the boat with water didn't wake him. You know, it seems like if your feet are starting to get wet and being submerged in a storm that would wake you if anything would but he was very, very tired.

He fell asleep and a windstorm came down on the lake and they were filled with water, filling with water and were in jeopardy. That means danger. And they came to him and awoke him saying, Master, Master, we are perishing.

Now what they actually said to him is rendered a little differently but the same basic idea in the different Gospels. This story is found in Matthew 8 and in Mark 4. In Matthew it says, they said, Lord save us for we're perishing. So it's not just Master, Master, we're perishing but save us because we're perishing.

They cry out for salvation not just letting him know they're perishing. In Mark, it actually goes further. In Mark 4.38 they say, Teacher, do you not care that we're perishing? Ooh, that's not the right thing to ask.

Do you not care? You think he doesn't care? Well, that, you know, I don't know if he liked having his sleep disturbed with that kind of suggestion. What, you don't care? Are you apathetic toward our plight? Well, of course he cares. Where's their faith? That's what he's going to ask him before this is over.

Where's your faith? Don't you think I care about these things? Then he arose and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water and they ceased and there was calm. But he said to them, the disciples, where is your faith? Or something similar to that because in Matthew 8.26 he said, Why are you so fearful, O you of little faith? Or in Mark 4.40 he says, How is it that you have no faith? So each of these gospels renders his statement a little different but the content is obviously the same. He rebukes them that their faith is little and asks them why they were so fearful.

Now, you might say, well, why wouldn't they be fearful? Jesus was sleeping, the boat was sinking, they're in the middle of the lake. Why would they expect that things would turn out well? They'd never seen him stop a storm before. They didn't know that he could do that kind of thing.

There's a reason to be fearful. But, their doubts had to do with whether he really cared. Do you not care that we perish? They actually asked him according to Mark.

And also, the fact that they didn't trust him. He said, let's go to the other side of the lake. In a sense, him saying, let's go to the other side of the lake is some kind of a guarantee they're going to get there.

When God tells you to do something, he's certainly going to make it possible to do it. Even if there's obstacles, even if there's challenges, even if there's tests between you and the object, if God says, you're going there, let's go there, then you're going to get there. They shouldn't have any doubts about it.

They should have wondered how are we going to get there. If Jesus is sleeping and the boat's filled with water, I don't know how we're going to get there. But, hey, I think he knows what he's talking about.

We're going to get there. He said so. Well, anyway, their faith was about average, like most of ours would be probably.

And, obviously, it was a scary situation when you think you're going to drown or it looks like it and he's asleep, the one person who might be able to do something. What did they expect him to do, though? If they didn't expect him to steal the storm, and they apparently didn't because they were shocked when he did it, what did they think he'd do? In the middle of the lake in a storm? Lord, save us. I'm sleeping on the life preservers, I guess.

Here you go. You know, what are you going to do? Well, they didn't even know what he could do. But they knew he was the guy to ask.

You know, I mean, if anyone's going to help you, it's got to be Jesus. Now, what he's got up his sleeve, who knows? But that's not necessary to know. All we know is who he is and, you know, who to ask.

You know, in calling out to God, sometimes you have no idea even what kind of a solution is a possible solution, even possible for God. But, he's the one to ask about it. And so they asked, save us.

And he did have something up his sleeve. He did command the storm to stop. And it did.

And it said, And they were afraid and marveled, saying to one another, Who can this be? For he commands even the winds and water, and they obey him. Who can it be who does that, I wonder. In Psalm 107, if you look there, the answer to their question seems to be given.

Verses 23 through 31. It says, Those who go down to the sea in ships, who do business on great waters, they see the works of Yahweh and his wonders in the deep. For he commands and raises the stormy wind, which lifts up the waves of the sea.

They mount up to the heavens. They go down again to the depths. Their soul melts because of trouble as they're terrified, the people, the sailors.

They reel to and fro. They stagger like a drunken man. They are at their wits end.

Then they cry out to Yahweh in their trouble. And he brings them out of their distresses. He calms the storm.

Who does? Yahweh does that. So that his waves are still. Then they're glad because they're quiet and he guides them to their desired haven.

Oh, that men would give thanks to Yahweh for his goodness and for his wonderful works to the children of men. This being an example. It almost sounds like the story we just read.

These people are at their wits end. They cry out to God. They cry out to Yahweh and he stills the storm.

The waves are calm. When they say, who is this that can command the wind and the water and they obey him? Well, the answer is already in their scripture. Yahweh.

That's who he is. That's who Jesus is. Then verse 26, we find out that on the other side of the lake, the place they were sailing to, there's an important encounter with a demon-possessed man.

An unusually demon-possessed man. There's lots of demon-possessed people in the Bible, but this man is about the most severe case there is. He's a nut.

He's crazy. He behaves weird. He's got supernatural strength.

He's ferocious. People avoid him because he's scary. He's tormented and he gets set free.

Now, in verse 26, it says, they sailed to the country of the Gadarenes, which is opposite Galilee. That means across the lake from Galilee. And when he stepped out on the land, there met him a certain man from the city who had demons for a long time.

And he wore no clothes, nor did he live in a house, but in the tombs. When he saw Jesus, he cried out, fell down before him, and with a loud voice said, What am I to do with you, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, do not torment me. For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man.

For it had often seized him, and he was kept under guard, bound with chains and shackles. And he broke the bonds and was driven by the demon into the wilderness. Jesus asked him, saying, What is your name? And he said, Legion, because many demons had entered him.

And they begged him that he would not command them to go out into the abyss. That is the word that Revelation uses for the bottomless pit, where demons apparently are chained in Revelation. In Mark's version it says they prayed that he would not send them out of the country.

Now a herd of many swine was feeding there on the mountain, and they begged him that he would permit them to enter them. And he permitted them. Then the demons went out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd ran violently down the steep place and into the lake and drowned.

When those who fed them saw what had happened, they fled and told it in the city and in the country. And they went out to see what had happened and came to Jesus and found the man from whom the demons had departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid.

And they also, who had seen it, told them by what means he who had been demon-possessed was healed. Then the whole multitude of the surrounding region of the gatherings asked him to depart from them, for they were seized with great fear. And he got into the boat and returned.

Now the man from whom the demons had departed begged him that he might be with him, but Jesus sent him away, saying, Return to your own house and tell what great things God has done for you. And he went his way and proclaimed throughout the whole city what great things Jesus had done for him. Now, this story is found also in Mark and Luke and we have different details given in some cases.

Mark chapter 5, I said Mark and Luke, I meant Mark and Matthew. Matthew chapter 8 and in Mark chapter 5. Now the first thing I need to point out is there's some controversy over the location. And there's textual differences.

The Alexandrian text, which is used by most modern translations, reads differently as far as the location from the textus receptus, which our text is taken from. Here in verse 26, it's said to be the country of the Gadarenes. In the Alexandrian text, it says the country of the Gerazenes.

Now there are two towns, Gerasa, which would be where the Gerazenes live, and Gadara, where the Gadarenes live. These are about, oh, 34 miles from each other. They're not the same town.

But some manuscripts actually say, here and in Mark, the Gerazenes rather than the Gadarenes. Now what's interesting in Matthew, our version says the Gerazenes, but the Alexandrian text says the Gadarenes. So, Matthew, Mark, and Luke don't agree with each other on the location in any of the texts.

In the textus receptus, Matthew says the Gerazenes, and Mark and Matthew say the

Gadarenes. In the Alexandrian text, Matthew says the Gadarenes, and Mark and Luke say the Gerazenes. In any case, there's some conflict as to the location.

Now, this has been thought to be a problem because Gadara is six miles from the lake, and Gerasa is 40 miles from the lake. Yet this man met Jesus when he stepped out of the boat, and the pigs, when they became demon-possessed, ran into the lake. Now, Gadara is six miles from there.

Gerasa is 40 miles from there. Certainly this couldn't have happened 40 miles from the lake, and six miles from the lake certainly seems distant too, since that would be two hours' walk from the lake, and yet Jesus stepped out of the boat and was met by this man. Of course, we have to realize it doesn't say he was in the town of Gadara.

He was in the country of the Gadarenes, which might also be the region of the Gerazenes, depending on how large the region is considered to be. It's possible that one city was under the jurisdiction of another, or something like a county. When I go visit my sister, she's in Orange County.

My parents actually live in the city of Orange. But Irvine, where my sister lives, isn't the city of Orange, but it's in the same county. I don't know.

I think Santa Ana is the county seat. Someone could say it was in the county of Santa Ana, or the region of Santa Ana, but neither place is in Santa Ana. One's in Orange, and one's in Irvine, but they're both in the same region.

Depending on how the political boundaries were in this area, and apparently no one knows for sure at this point about this region and that time, it's possible that the whole region was called the region of Jurassic, although the city of Jurassic was 40 miles from the lake. That doesn't mean the whole region couldn't be the county or the province that was the region of the Gerazenes. But since Ghidara was nearby, the people who might well have been in the land of the Gerazenes, it was also the land of the Gadarenes.

We don't really know. The man was obviously not in town. He's closer to the lake than that.

He'd been driven from town because of his abnormal behavior, his antisocial behavior. And so he apparently had taken up residence in a wilderness near the lake, close enough to meet Jesus when Jesus stepped out of the boat. There's no serious unresolvable problems about this difference in locations, but it's interesting that the different Gospels mention different locations.

Now Matthew also mentions a difference. He mentions there were two demon-possessed men. Mark and Luke only mentioned the one.

That being so, some again have thought there's a contradiction. People are always

looking for evidence of contradictions in the Bible. They find contradictions in the Bible where they wouldn't find contradictions if it wasn't the Bible because they have a vested interest in proving the Bible contradicts itself because they don't want to believe the Bible.

If there were the same kinds of differences in some other record that wasn't the Bible, they wouldn't see a problem. If I said that I taught a Bible study at Panera Bread this morning, for a group of people, and I later, you heard me talk to somebody else, said my wife and I went to Panera Bread and I taught a Bible study, you'd have heard two different reports. One, that I was there.

The other, that my wife and I were there. Well, did I contradict myself? Of course not. My wife and I were there.

And I was there. And I could tell you, I could give a total list of all people there if I wanted to, or mention that I was there and I wouldn't be lying. In other words, if there were two demon-possessed men there, then there certainly was a demon-possessed man there, and another one too.

This records the conversation between Jesus and a particular demon-possessed man. He had a friend. He had another demon-possessed man who had also joined him to live in the tombs.

Matthew gives that detail, the others leave that out. It's more interesting to tell of this particular conversation and interaction, and that's what Mark and Luke want to tell us. Matthew, who happened to have been there at the time, remembered there were two.

Similar occurrences happened when we read about the angels at the tomb when Jesus rose. Two Gospels mention an angel. Two of them mention two angels.

Some people think that's contradictory, but if there were two angels, there was certainly an angel there. And so, those who say there was an angel there were not lying. Those who say there were two are telling even more of the story.

Likewise, the blind men outside Jericho. One account says there were two blind men. Another says there was a blind man named Bartimaeus.

Well, there was a blind man named Bartimaeus, and another one whose name we aren't given. To say there's one doesn't mean there aren't two. And so, Luke and Mark tell us about this one man, but we have additional detail given to us in Matthew 8, 28.

There are two there, actually. Now, this man had, as we see, a legion of demons in him. And he reacted to Jesus the same way that other demons and possessed people do in terms of terror.

He said, don't torment me. Now, this man didn't say don't torment us, but the man himself felt apparently he would be tormented. Unless the demons were speaking collectively as one, it's kind of hard to say.

Because Jesus said, what is your name? He says, my name is Legion for there are many of us. So, maybe there's a spokesman for the demon who spoke in the singular, but there were many demons. A legion is, of course, a designation of a Roman army.

A legion of Romans was 6,000 soldiers. So, it is thought that there may have been as many as 6,000 demons in this man. There were, we are told in one of the gospels, is it this one, that there were about 2,000 swine.

This is helpful information because the man, if you compare the stories in the gospels, came running to Jesus and bowed down and worshipped at his feet. But this man was as severely demon possessed as any man we read about anywhere. Which means what? It means that even when a person is demon possessed, they are not prevented from seeking help from Jesus.

Some people think that when a person is demon possessed, every thought of theirs is under absolute control from the demon. Well, maybe at times. Probably at times, a severely demon possessed person is, their mind is not their own.

They are just in another, they are out of their mind. But that doesn't mean that a person who is loaded with demons can't, at some point, if he wishes, choose to seek help from Jesus. And this man did.

It is clear the demons weren't running to see Jesus and worship him. They didn't like seeing him. In fact, they were terrified of him.

The man, however, did want to be helped. Now, Jesus, it says, when it says, they said, I beg you, do not torment me at the end of verse 28. Interestingly, Mark 5, 8 says, For he was saying to him, Come out of the man, you unclean spirit.

That is, they said these words at the end of verse 28 because Jesus was saying to them. That is, he had already said it and was continuing to say, Come out of him. And even Luke confirms in verse 24, he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out.

The reason I mention this is that he had commanded them to come out and they didn't. They kept talking. They kept bargaining.

They said, Could we negotiate something here? Now, the reason I point this out is because in most cases, when Jesus commanded demons to go out, they went out immediately. Here, Jesus commanded and was commanding them to come out and they were still trying to bargain, trying to say, Listen, please don't torment us. Don't send us to the abyss.

Could we go into the herd of swine? And so forth. And he finally agreed to let them go in the swine and they left. The fact that they were even able to remain where they were long enough to make these negotiations after Jesus had told them to leave is surprising.

And I think this just shows that when it comes to demon possession, there are different degrees. There are different kinds of demons, different ranks of demons. Some of them are terrified at the mere name of Jesus.

There are demons who, if you mention the blood of Jesus, they freak out. There's other demons so bold that they'll curse the blood of Jesus. I've heard it done.

And, you know, some of them are resistant more than others. This man had a legion in there. They apparently knew they had to go, but they didn't run away real fast.

They thought maybe they could work a deal. And they did. Now, why did Jesus let them do that? Well, maybe he was against those pigs being there.

Jews aren't supposed to be herding pigs. What are they doing that for? They're not supposed to eat them. Maybe he had no sympathy for the pig herders.

But when the people came and saw the man delivered of his demon, it says they were afraid. Interesting, they were afraid of him when he was demon possessed. They're more afraid when he's normal, but not afraid of him, afraid of Jesus.

They saw this man in his right mind in clothes all of a sudden, and they were very afraid. But see, in this case, they were afraid in a different way. Initially, they were afraid of physical harm that the man could do.

They obviously weren't afraid of any physical harm he could do at this point when he was in his right mind, nor certainly of any physical harm Jesus would do to them. What were they afraid of? It was spooky. There's different kinds of fear.

C.S. Lewis says, if someone told you there's a tiger in the room, you'd be afraid, and rightly so. If someone told you there's a ghost in the room, you'd probably also be afraid if you believed it, but not for the same reasons. You'd be afraid of a tiger because it could kill you.

You wouldn't expect a ghost to kill you, but it's just creepy. It's just the numinous. The realm of the numinous is that which is otherworldly.

And when they saw a man that they knew to be absolutely whacked out, now he's absolutely normal, that freaked them out. How could this be? We saw the same thing of the disciples in the boat when they were crossing the lake. They were terrified when the storm came.

When Jesus stilled the storm, they were even more afraid, not because they were in

danger, but because they thought, whoa, we're in the presence of something different here, something we don't quite understand, something we are unfamiliar with and we aren't sure what to do about it. So they asked Jesus to leave. And so he did.

And the man wanted to follow Jesus like a disciple, but Jesus thought, I've got better news for you. You go back to your town and you spread the gospel there. And he did.

And so what became of this man later in the church, let's say after Pentecost, we don't know, but I think there's a good chance that they looked him up and he probably became part of the church of that region, but we don't know. Now, this is the time I would normally stop, but let me just say this. The remaining story in chapter 8 is also paralleled in the other gospels, which means that I don't need to comment on it as much, but I do need to cover it.

So I'm going to quickly go over this story. The commentary on it will be found in my lectures on Matthew and Mark. So it was when Jesus returned that the multitude welcomed him for they were all waiting for him.

Came back to Capernaum from the other side of the lake. And behold, there came a man named Jairus and he was a ruler of the synagogue, which just means the guy who kind of ran the service. He wasn't a rabbi.

And he fell down at Jesus feet and begged him to come to his house for he had an only daughter about 12 years of age and she was dying. But as he went, the multitudes thronged him. Now Matthew compresses the story and says she had just died.

Well, she did die before Jesus got there. So between the time this man came and the time she got there, she died. Matthew treats it as if she's dead when the guy arrives, but not quite.

She's dying. But as he went, the multitudes thronged him. Now a woman having a flow of blood for 12 years who had spent all her livelihood on physicians and could not be healed by any.

By the way, Luke doesn't mention what Mark does. The physicians only made her worse. But Luke was a physician, perhaps out of professional courtesy.

He didn't mention that this woman spent all her money on physicians and they only made her worse. That doesn't make the trade look very good. So he just says no one could help her.

She spent all her money on physicians, but no one could help her. She came from behind and touched the border of his garment and immediately her flow of blood stopped. Now the other gospels tell us that she actually anticipated that touching his garment would do so.

She said if I can just touch the hem of his garment, I know that I'll be healed. So that was her anticipation. That was her faith.

And when she touched him, she drew power out of him and she was healed. And Jesus said, Who touched me? And when all denied it, Peter and those with him said, Master, the multitudes throng you and press you. And you say, Who touched me? In other words, everybody's touching you.

What do you mean who touched you? But Jesus said, Somebody touched me for I perceive power going out from me. So, apparently you can have contact with Jesus but without faith and never get anything from him. But contact with Jesus that is mixed with faith, you do get something from him.

Power goes out of him. Lots of people grow up in contact with Christianity, with Jesus, but they don't have any faith and they never benefit. They never gain anything.

They don't, they aren't born again though they have very familiar with Jesus. They're thronging him perhaps all their lives in the church, but only the person who reaches out by faith to him, touches him. But many were touching him but power wasn't going out of him to them.

Only one person touched him with faith and power went out and healed her. And he sensed it. Now, when the woman saw that she was not hidden, she came trembling and falling down before him, she declared to him in the presence of all the people the reason she had touched him and how she was healed immediately.

She probably was afraid because she knew that by touching him she took the risk of making him unclean. She was unclean for 12 years with this issue of blood. Touching him would make him unclean.

But she took her chances anyway. She touched him anyway and he didn't get unclean. She got clean.

That's how it always happens when Jesus comes into contact with the unclean here. But she came out and confessed and he said to her daughter, and by the way, she's the only person he ever addressed by the word daughter for some reason, daughter be of good cheer. Your faith has made you well.

Go in peace. And while he was still speaking, someone came from the ruler of the synagogue's house saying to him, your daughter is dead. Do not trouble the teacher.

But when Jesus heard it, he answered and said, do not be afraid, only believe and she'll be made well. You can imagine this man, he's left home, his daughter is nearly dead. He's racing against time hoping to get Jesus on foot to come to his house.

He couldn't run there in a car or anything. So, you know, is time going to run out? Is his daughter going to die? Is Jesus going to get there in time? This is what's in the man's mind as he's hastening to get Jesus there to heal her. And then he gets news just before he gets home, oh, she's dead.

You can just imagine how his heart sank. And then he thought, oh man, I tried, but I was too late. But Jesus, knowing that he's going to have this reaction, anticipates it and says, don't be afraid, just believe and she'll be made well.

And when he came into the house, he permitted no one to go in except Peter, James and John, the inner circle, and the father and mother of the girl and all wept and mourned for her. There were professional mourners there, the other gospels tell us. But he said, do not weep, she's not dead, she's sleeping.

And they laughed him to scorn knowing that she was dead. But he put them all out and took her by the hand and called saying, little girl arise. And her spirit returned and she arose immediately and he commanded that she be given something to eat.

And her parents were astonished and he charged them to tell no one what happened. And of course, the other gospels report, of course they did tell people. But why did Jesus say she's only asleep? Jesus often spoke that way.

Lazarus, he said, is asleep too when he really was dead. Well, because sleep is a metaphor for death. You wake up from sleep, you will wake up from death in the resurrection.

In this case, it was going to be quite soon. He may have said, she's not dead, she's asleep, partly to explain that when she came walking out of the room, they might think, oh, it wasn't a resurrection. She was asleep after all, he was right.

He didn't want people to know about this, obviously. He made it a private matter. Just three trusted disciples and the parents were allowed to be.

And he says, don't tell anyone about this. Jesus was trying to avoid causing a sensation with his miracles. And if these mourners saw that the dead girl rose, how could he contain the rumors? It may be that he said, she's just sleeping, I'm going to go wake her up.

And then she comes out, they might think, hmm, well, maybe that was true. I thought she was dead. Well, the Bible says she was dead.

And Jesus saying she's sleeping is speaking metaphorically. But perhaps he intended them to mistake him for speaking literally so that they wouldn't know he'd raised her from the dead. Hard to say.

Not much that I need to say about this simply because, again, it appears in three gospels and in my teachings in Matthew and Mark I cover it in great detail. So we'll just finish with that and come back to chapter nine next time.