

No Respector of Persons

Gospel According to Luke

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If you will, take your Bibles and look with me in Luke 8. My text is taken from verse 19 down to verse 21, not a long text. As I prepared this particular message, I thought it would be relatively easy to get all the way down through it but as the LORD has directed, we'll get it started this week, the LORD willing, and then next week come back to it and finish this up. Let me read this for us, Luke 8, beginning with verse 19.

19 Then came to him his mother and his brethren, and could not come at him for the press. 20 And it was told him by certain which said, Thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to see thee. 21 And he answered and said unto them, My mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it.

A very simple story here of Jesus' mother and brethren coming to see Him. You say, "What's wrong with that?" Well, judging by our LORD's answer in verse 21, there was to be a lesson learned even here and I believe the greatest of all is just simply that God is no respecter of persons. I think there are times when we think that because of our relationship with the LORD, He's going to do anything we ask Him to but that's putting the cart before the horse; that's putting yourself above the Master. As anything in life, it ought to be, "If the LORD will, we'll do this or that."

Let's never lose that perspective, but even more than that, here's the first point I would have us to remember and that is that mere flesh and blood relationship is no privilege with God. We tend to think so. We tend to think that because the LORD has been pleased to teach us in His Grace and Mercy, that He ought to teach our children. Or if we just pray enough, He's going to save So-and-so, He's going to receive So-and-so because we say so. But mark it down and this is throughout Scripture, that mere flesh and blood relationship is no privilege with God. We dare not think that somehow because He showed Grace to me that He has to show Grace to those in my circle and that can be a hard lesson to learn, especially when the LORD pulls out His hand and leaves our loved one standing even as He did here in this particular story.

You know, He didn't beckon them to come in because these were His mother and His brethren. I know that puts a shock to some that elevate Mary in their doctrine right on up

there as part of the Trinity. Here is this one that even Mary acknowledged back when we were studying about the angel coming and saying the Child, the Holy Child that was in her was of the Spirit of God, not her and she confessed that it was Grace; how is it that the LORD would Grace such a one as her. And here we don't find any answer given that she complained. You know, sometimes we think that she may have insisted. We don't find any insisting on her part. What I find is avowing that even as the one that the LORD used as a virgin to bring this One into the world, that when He was told that His mother and His brethren, notice in verse 20, "stand without, desiring to see thee," you see, if it was men, we would be saying, "Okay, clear a path. Let them through. Let me introduce you to my mother. Let me introduce to you my brethren," like preachers like to do sometimes, they favor people in a congregation and I'm always glad to see visitors but, you know, we don't acknowledge visitors here as if we're privileged somehow because you showed up, or God is. You know, if the LORD has drawn you, then, well, that'll be manifest over time, but I've had some that, you know, they've come and gone and said they don't even hand out visitor cards there. Well, it's because we're all here for One Purpose, we're all lepers in a colony, what's one leper over another?

We come because we need the LORD's blessing, we need His healing, we need Him to teach us and I believe there's something said here with regard to even our LORD. When His mother and His brothers came to see Him, that's an interesting way that it's put there in verse 19, which describes really any one of us in our state before the LORD, "could not come at him for the press." There are many today that think that God is sitting there with the gate wide open and it's like a bridge you can cross anytime you want to and, you know, he's free and open, just come. But this is a strong word, this is true not only physically, the words 'could not' mean 'unable.' They were unable to come at Him for the press. These were His flesh and blood, if you will, but how that's true Spiritually.

We're unable to come, it says here, "at him for the press," whatever that press is. I'll tell you the biggest press for us. A press is something that presses against. What is it that keeps us, or any sinner, from getting to Christ? It's our will. Christ said, "You will not come that you might have eternal life." People will come to an organization, they'll come to a worship service, they'll come to experience, they'll come to an ordinance, but to come to Christ is not by our determining, it's by the LORD's. So, here's a lesson to be learned here, that just having this flesh and blood relationship is no privilege.

Look in John 1. Notice in verse 10 it says that He was in the world, and the world was made by Him and the world knew Him not. Talking about physical creatures, this world made by Him, knew Him not. It says in verse 11, "He came unto his own, and his own received him not." His own being the sense of that Jewish kindred, kinship. He was born of the lineage of David, so physically He was a Jew as a man and yet just His being there as a Jew in no way persuaded Jews, His own, to follow Him, come after Him and the reality here is that no mere flesh and blood relationship can cause one to come to Christ in the way that sinners should come. This mother and brethren, they came to Him but not for the right reasons. It's one thing to come, being drawn by the Spirit to Him, and it's another thing to come out of whatever selfish reasons, but either way it was the LORD purposing that they come at this time.

We can never question God's providence. We do that sometimes, why would the LORD bring someone even here for one time to hear and then you never see them again, they're gone and you stop and think, "Well, you know, was that just a fluke?" No. We don't know how the LORD might be pleased to use that down the line. Maybe they came and heard and went their way just like the prodigal son, but when it pleased God to reveal Christ to him.

I always remember the story of that mother whose son took off, this was years ago when they didn't have planes and trains, it was just a ship and he got on a ship going on an adventure and he left in rebellion and during her entire lifetime, never heard from him again and died presuming that the LORD had just cast him out. That was her written testimony. Unbeknownst to her, though, he'd come across the sea to the United States and when he was 75 years of age living in the United States, he went to hear a Gospel preacher and as that preacher preached, the LORD opened his heart, got him of Christ by his testimony. Now here's the mother, unbeknownst to her thinking, he wasn't one of the LORD's and yet in time it pleased the LORD to cause his path to cross at the age of 75, ripe old age. That's the LORD's doing, but the privilege of this mother praying for him wasn't the reason that God eventually said, "Okay, well, then I'm going to save your son." We know the one reason that the LORD did would have been because that one was already in the eye of the Father one for whom Christ had come and paid the debt and it was going to be in His time that He would draw him.

Can we bow to that? You see, we say we believe God's sovereign, we say we believe this Word and yet you think about how much heart struggle it is to wrestle with God over loved ones and thinking because they're ours that He has to save them. May the LORD just bring us to bow to His will. Shall not the Judge of the earth do right? That's what Abraham was brought to say and that's what I want you to see here.

It says here, "He came unto his own, and his own received him not," verse 12, "But as many as received him." Don't you like the 'buts' in Scripture? But God. "But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God," we're talking about the family of Christ here, "even to them that believe on his name." Now let's be careful because Scripture says one thing and men interpret another. There are many that read this and say that, "If you'll just receive him," you see, they put an "if" there, "and if you'll just believe on his name, then you can become a son of god." But doesn't that put it right back to this matter of the will of man? Here's Mary, here's the brethren standing outside demanding to see Him, the LORD left them standing.

We don't demand of God anything and that's what's wrong with religion today, so-called 'christianism,' because it's a name it, claim it. If you're not getting what you want, you're not asking enough, you're not asking the right way, you haven't got enough people praying, let's get together and get the prayer chain, let's do this. That's the way and then when something happens, they're like, "Oh, we've got a testimony now for our next meeting." We don't find any of that in Scripture. That's contrary to how God works. You

might have a house full of people that think that because of their profession then they're the LORD's, but in reality they're still standing outside.

That's not what the LORD does. Here's what this is saying. So He came unto His own and His own received Him not but, the "but" is in God's hands, as many as received Him. So now we go back and read the Scriptures and we read about a Zacchaeus who climbed that tree; we read about Simeon that was drawn of the Spirit there at the temple and took that Babe in his arms and said, "Now mine eyes have seen my salvation"; we read of Saul of Tarsus, a man breathing out hatred and suddenly now he's brought on his face to say, "Who are you, LORD?" As many as received Him, whoever they may be, notice, to them gave He power to become the sons of God. The only reason they received Him was because the LORD gave them the power and authority to become the sons of God.

Go back to Mary and the brethren standing outside, the press against them, the reason that crowd never even made way for them to get in was because the LORD didn't give the order to them. Now if the LORD had said, "Clear the way," they would have cleared the way but He left them out there standing. It wasn't that they weren't His, in fact, if you look in Acts 1 after the LORD had ascended, that group of people meeting in that Upper Room when the Spirit was poured out, among them was Mary and the brothers of Jesus. Not above them. Not, again not because of their flesh and blood relationship in any earthly sense, but among them right along with everybody else.

They initially did not believe Him, the brothers. They were unbelieving as to Who He was. You know, like physical brothers do, they try to pick on the other brother and, you know, tell him what to do and all these things, you can imagine, but Scripture says they didn't believe on Him, in John 7. I don't know at what point they did and that's probably a good thing because we'd probably make an idol out of that, looking at them thinking, "Well, they were really close to him. Let's figure out how they were saved and let's develop an evangelism program around that and let's go after our relatives." That's the way the world thinks but all we know is that John 7 says they didn't believe on Him and in Acts 1 we find them worshipping Him.

Why do you suppose the Spirit did that? Well, again so that we don't look to men but to the work of God and that's what's described here, "them gave he power to become the sons of God," when it says there, "even to them that believe on his name," the believing on His name is not the cause of them receiving Him or Him receiving them, it's the fruit. How is it that we recognize those who are children of God, the true family of Christ, that He's redeemed and drawn to Himself?

They believe on His name and notice it's not even put the way that works religion puts it, they believe in His name. "Have you believed in Jesus?" How often that's asked. You say, "Well, that's just kind of splitting hairs." No, it's not. You can believe in somebody without resting on them. Here it is to "believe on his name." That word "on" means that all of your hope rests upon Who He is, what He's accomplished, and you have no other foundation. Anybody that asks how it is you're the LORD's, all you can do is give Him the glory. That's what it is to believe on His name.

Now the problem with most people when they read the Scriptures is they put a period and then they jump over to something else. Keep reading. Notice there's no period at the end of verse 12, the period comes at the end of verse 13. "Which were born." We're talking about the family of Christ. A family. How is it that you become part of a family? You're born. "Which were born, not of blood," so right there it cuts out any near flesh and blood relationship as far as any privilege with God. You know, I don't care if I was or am the son of a preacher. People get all enthralled with that when they find out, "Well, your grandfather was a missionary and your dad was a missionary and so, oh, you were too? Wow." The LORD had to cut that chain as far as I was concerned because that was at one point a point of pride, the fact that three generations, only to find out that I was a lost missionary. Yes, a congregation had sent me but I didn't know Christ at that point, in fact, you know, for a number of years He left me out there preaching away and building an organization, strategizing a mission, all of these things, until it pleased God to reveal Christ to me. None of that matters. God could just have easily left me to continue under that delusion but He didn't. Why? Because in God's purpose I was to be part of Christ's family.

But, "Which were born, not of blood," that's what that's about, but it also says, "nor of the will of the flesh." What is it that you hear preached so often today? "Well, it's up to you. God's done all he can do, now the rest is up to you." Well, that contradicts what I read right here because it says not of the will of the flesh. Do you suppose that if I just willed it, I could get in an airplane and fly to Washington, DC today and go up to the White House and demand to see the President because I willed to see him? You'd probably see me on the news, they were hauling me off in handcuffs somewhere, putting me in a police car thinking, "Here's another lunatic trying to get in to see the President." The only way to get in to see the President isn't based on your will, it's based on the will of the President. If he will, he'll see you.

People have this notion, this idea that somehow, we can just will our way to God but it says here, "not of the will of the flesh," and then it says, "nor of the will of man." What's that? Well, that's what I just talked about. If we really want to see god work, let's all get together and put them on our prayer list. You know, god has said that where two or three agree together in any matter, he'll do it. That's how they pull it out of context. So, prayer circles, you know, keep them on a list. You know, I don't even know where that came from, having somebody on your prayer list. I mean, you might as well set up one of these little round things like they do on "Wheel of Fortune" and just spin. That, to me, is a prayer list, spin it one more time to see, spin it and if we spin it enough, somehow god will do his work.

Do you realize that the only type of god that ever requires that of his subjects or even acts that way, is a false god? When those false prophets of Elijah challenged him on Mount Carmel, that's what they were doing. They were dancing around their altar, crying out, cutting themselves, thinking that somehow god would hear and answer. Not the true God. No. When the LORD, you read Elijah's prayer, it was short. I don't even know if it's 60 words long when he addressed the LORD, "But that they might see and know your

honor," and what was he standing in front of? He was in front of an altar. He didn't go rebuild their altar. We don't go in and try to fix up false religion. There's an isolation, there's a separating out. The Altar, like the writer of the Hebrews said that we have an altar which is Christ, that those that serve at that other altar have no privilege because He's made of His children a Kingdom of priests unto God. We don't have to go through these other men to get God to act. That's a false god.

No, the true God is One Who acts according to His will and accomplishes it according to His will and that's what verse 13 says here, "Which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." It's not God plus you. This matter of salvation is not a cooperation, you do your part, God will do his, you take the first step and God will take the rest. When you hear any sort of message like that, mark it down, it is antichrist. You have no business even trying to figure it out. Don't even argue with such. Just leave it alone. Walk away. Run out of there like the building's on fire because it is. There's no place there for any that are the LORD's. That's true Spiritual coming to Christ, is Him doing it.

If you look in John 6 in verse 37, there's a lot in this chapter. I read this with the men just before our time of coming out here for a time of worship, but you know, it's not even physically having seen Christ, because you look in verse 36, "I said unto you, That ye also have seen me," but what? "And believe not." So even amongst that press that was there, that crowd, those that followed our LORD, it wasn't the fact that they were seeing Him physically that generated in them then life. I've heard people say that, "Oh, if Christ would just come back today and start..." If He did, it would be the same response. He came unto His own and His own received Him not, but as many as received Him, to them He's already given the power that's why they receive it, to believe on His name.

And that's what we see here, verse 37. You see, people like to quote the second part of this verse, "and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." That's what they cling to. They say, "Well, God's promised if we just come to Him, He won't cast us out." And what does the first part say? "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me." That's who's going to come, it's given of the Father. And in that case, those that come, He'll not cast them out. If He's drawn you to Him, you don't need to fear at any moment that He's going to for any slight reason just cast you out then because you somehow did something that was displeasing to Him. You see, we still live under that bondage if we're honest. We think that somehow our day is directed by if I got up and had my devotions and I'm living right then God's blessing, but to realize that there is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus and that even in the worst of falls, and there will be falls, you see, the only difference is the LORD may not still have exposed yours but every one of us in this room and hearing me is living as a fallen creature and I'll venture to say if you think you've got anything worthwhile, just come on up here, let's interrogate you, let's do some cross-examining. That's how they break down witnesses, if the witness is lying, they keep asking questions and all of a sudden here it comes. You know, that shows already that we're rebels because we like to justify ourselves or think that somehow, I'd never do what David did. You know, if I would have been Moses, I wouldn't have gotten angry and smitten that rock a second time. Yes, you would have. Or

if I'd been there in the garden, I wouldn't have done what Adam did. Yes, you would have. You see, all of that is just self-justification which if the LORD ever left us to that, that would be sufficient to cast us into hell.

So it's not that we're any better but the point of this here is that the assurance is for those that the Father has given to Christ. They shall come, "and him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out." And He says that in verse 38, "For I came down from heaven, not to do mine own will, but the will of him that sent me. And this is the Father's will which hath sent me." Notice it doesn't even say there that of all which believe on My name and cling tenaciously to Me throughout their lifetime and never turn loose and never look back and always persevering, looking to Christ, looking to Christ, looking to Christ, that I'll raise them up the last day. What does He say? "All which he hath given me I should lose nothing." I'm thankful it's that way. You know, it's not me holding to Christ, it's Him holding to me and He'll not lose one that the Father has given Him.

Now here you go. Well, you preach like that in a religious, self-righteous crowd, you're going to get people upset. Look in verse 41, "The Jews then murmured at him, because he said, I am the bread which came down from heaven." He was comparing Himself to that manna. That manna was just a type, 'I am the Bread.' And here it is they're thinking, they said, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know?" What are they building on there? Physical relationships. What He's saying here, "You know, He's one of us. Why is He talking like He's not?" When they called Him Master, that wasn't out of any respect as to Who He was, they were seeing Him as their equal.

Do you ever hear anybody talk that way; it just grates you? They talk as if, you know, they're the pilot and Christ is the co-pilot. You know, they've got a familiarity with Christ, so they think, at least their Jesus. We can come and go as we need to and he's always there for us and we just have to call on him. He's like a big brother, he'll be there. But when you set Him forth as He is, in Truth, as the King of kings, LORD of lords, the One Who is sovereign and does His will when He will, where He will, how He will and to whom He will, you're going to have people murmuring the same way. That's why most preachers don't preach what's in this Book. It's not because they don't see it, but it's like one preacher told me, "If I preached like you're preaching and I preached what's there, they're going to fire me." Well, guess what? Get fired. You're not helping them. But you see, even there they show their rebellion because they care more about their belly and their pocketbook and their lifestyle than they do representing the LORD Jesus Christ but then on the other hand, you can't represent someone you don't know. So, what we've got is a bunch of lost preachers, rebellious.

But here's our LORD's answer in verse 43, "Jesus therefore answered and said unto them, Murmur not among yourselves." It's a way of saying, "All your murmuring hasn't affected Me one whit. It's not going to change one whit how I do what I do." And then He put the whammy on it, verse 44, drive the nail, "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath sent me draw him: and I will raise him up at the last day." That's saying the same thing as verse 37, "All that the Father giveth me shall come to me. No man can come except the Father which has sent me draw him and I'll raise him up at the

last day." He didn't try to enter into an argument or debate as to why they should believe, He just said, "You can't come unless it's given you of the Father."

Read on down through there, that whole passage, look in verse 60, "Many therefore of his disciples, when they had heard this, said, This is an hard saying; who can hear it?" I dare say, a preacher hadn't said it clear enough unless this is the kind of reaction that's coming out. This is hard. This is a hard saying. Why is it a hard saying? Well, it's because no man can receive it, no man can come unless it be given them of the Father.

In verse 61, "When Jesus knew in himself that his disciples murmured at it, he said unto them, Doth this offend you? What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before?" He's talking about after His death, burial and resurrection, ascending on high. He knew what it was He came to accomplish and would do it.

Verse 63, "It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing." So apart from the Spirit quickening, giving life, He said, "the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life." But He said in verse 64, "there are some of you that believe not," and this is not our LORD complaining, "Why can't you believe?" He just simply said, "Jesus knew from the beginning who they were that believed not, and who should betray him. And he said, Therefore said I unto you, that no man can come unto me, except it were given unto him of my Father." Repeated again. And "From that time many of his disciples went back," these were professing disciples, "went back and walked no more with him." Their heart was exposed.

Why do you suppose there's so many more people that attend places of worship where they build up man and his will? Because that appeals to the flesh. Why do you suppose congregations are so small where Christ is truly exalted and set forth and no compromise? You know, if you were to judge our LORD's success, He was the Prince of Preachers, Christ was, not a man and yet how many were there that were following Him when it was all said and done? He referred to them as a small flock but He wasn't saying it in a way of being upset, "Wish I could've done more. Wish people would just believe." No, He purposely made a dividing between the sheep and the goats and here were these that went back and followed Him no more. Why did they follow Him no more? They never were His. They followed Him for other reasons but they weren't His.

So that's what we see. This mere flesh and blood relationship is no privilege. Now I know our time is about gone and we're going to come back to this but in Luke 8:20, here's the other side of that coin and that is that familiarity with the LORD Jesus is no indication of relationship. Just because a person says, "I know him," is no indication that He knows them or acknowledges them. This was the basis on which His mother and His brethren came, you can see that in verse 19, "Then came to him his mother and his brethren... And it was told him by certain which said, Thy mother and thy brethren stand without, desiring to see thee." They passed the word forward, "Tell Him we're here." So it went forward. Christ's answer, He didn't answer in a different way because this was His mother and brethren. It's the same as what we just read in John 6. If they're going to use that as

the influence, that's not how you come. "My mother and my brethren are these which hear the word of God, and do it."

So our LORD was making a distinction but how many there are that think that their familiarity with the LORD by people that say, "You know, I've known the LORD for a long time," well, my question is, "Does He know you?" But you hear people say that, "Oh," and when they die, "He loved the LORD." Well, did the LORD love him? That's the question. "Well, how can you say that? Look what he did? Served all those years as Sunday school superintendent, even went over and served on the mission field for a while." What does that have to do with it?

Multitudes came to the LORD Jesus who were not His Spiritually and in time He divided them, sorted them out. Many believed on His name. If you look in John 2, look in verse 23, "Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover, in the feast day, many believed," but look at the difference here, "in his name." Remember the difference "on/in"? But why? "When they saw the miracles which he did." Well, you want to get a crowd, just preach up miracles.

"But," here's a "but" but in the opposite end, "Jesus did not commit himself unto them." Why? "Because he knew all men." He knows those that are his. "And needed not that any should testify of man: for he knew what was in man." That's why we don't ask people to stand up and raise their hand and tell us what, you know, what you think of the LORD. That's your testimony. You know, what does the LORD say? And I'll tell you, any that are the LORD's, they're brought to bow to Him in silence. It's not all this hoop-tee-do and standing up and carrying on that proves to people that somehow, you're the LORD's.

You know, there's a lot of crowd psychology that's going on in religion. I've used that example before when we used to, Mary and I, used to go out to the Independence Bowl and some, you know, we didn't have any skin in the game, it didn't matter what team it was and one year we were watching the team and we were sitting there, that's where our seats were and for all they knew, we were alumni, you know? So, as we got into the game, we started cheering and everything and every time they'd score, do something, they'd turn and high-five us like we were...and we got into it.

But that's crowd psychology but that's what preachers do, "Can I get an amen? Can I get a witness? Can I... Come on now!" And you get enough of it going on and, boy, I'll tell you, you'll have people clapping, dancing and singing and breaking out in song and all this stuff and they're no different than the ones dancing around the altar to Baal. Familiarity with the LORD is no indication of relationship and I'll tell you, that's where the LORD broke me to think of all the years that I grew up reading this Bible, memorizing it as a young boy, being impressed because my dad got up and read it with a kerosene lamp, wanting a Bible, going to school and all the way up and I was going to be the best missionary there was, read books about others that went out and yet realized I was lost until it pleased God to reveal Christ in me. You know, so we don't even count heads. How many were there in the worship today? I don't know. I know everyone that

was there was supposed to be. You know, how many? How did they respond to the message? I don't know. I just know I'm the needy sinner if I'm the only one.

You know, I don't want a familiarity that's based upon just my head knowledge and being able to say I know the LORD. You know, there's a danger even in going back, as precious as that was, in 1984 when sitting at my desk with a kerosene lamp the LORD began that work and opened my heart to see who I was and caused me to start crying unto Him. I don't even want to rest there because just like the manna, it's only as good as this day. So when I come and hear this Word, this is my prayer, "LORD, teach me again. I don't want to presume even on these passages that I've been reading for you, that I know what they are, how they apply. LORD, teach me again."

I believe that's the sense here. I don't want to be one of these that it says they believed in His name and yet Christ did not commit Himself to them. But you think about the multitudes right now around the world that believe they're the LORD's because they took a preacher's hand but the LORD's never taken theirs. They've confessed His name and yet He's never confessed their name. "Depart from me," it says there in Matthew 7, "ye workers of iniquity," and He's not talking about people out there in the bars and the brothels and the casinos because it says, "LORD, LORD, have we not prophesied in your name? Done many mighty works in your name? Cast out demons in your name?" And the LORD will say, what? "Depart from me, ye workers of iniquity, I never knew you." Never. Not that He knew you and now He doesn't, no, He never knew you.

So, familiarity with our LORD is no indication of relationship but it's the LORD that does the saving. Well, we're going to stop there and come back to this because there's a whole lot more that we need to hear, LORD willing, next time.