

07/22-2018

Message: Jesus Is Lord over the Natural and Supernatural

Text: Luke 8:22-39 and Psalm 107:23-31

Introduction

- A. Thus far in Luke's gospel, we see Jesus, by His miraculous works and His teachings, calling us to put our faith in Him as the Lord, our Deliverer.
- B. Jesus has already inspired Luke to record His miracles demonstrating His authority over nature, demons, disease, and death. Now beginning in 8:22 Jesus engages in increasing demonstrations of His authority and power. So while earlier we saw His authority and power over nature demonstrated in a miraculous catch of fish on the Sea of Galilee, we now see His authority and power to immediately calm the winds and waves of the sea. We earlier saw him cast out a single demon from a man in a synagogue in Israel. We now see him cast out a legion of demons from a wild man in a godless Gentile region.
- C. Why is Jesus both performing these wonders and inspiring Luke to record them for us? He does this to reveal to us His identity as Lord, the divine Son of God. And He reveals His identity to us so that we might in every circumstance put our faith and trust in Him as our great God and Savior.

I. Luke 8:22-25 Jesus exercises authority and power over nature.

- A. Jesus inspired Luke to record His authority over nature in chapter 5, when He directed a overwhelming catch of fish into the nets that had remained empty all night in the hands of seasoned fishermen. That was a miracle of His provision for His people. This will be a miracle of protection of His people.
- B. Vs 22 The setting
 - Luke 8:22 **Now on one of *those* days Jesus and His disciples got into a boat, and He said to them, "Let us go over to the other side of the lake." So they launched out.**
 - 1. (Show map & slide of 1century boat excavated from the Sea of Galilee.) Jesus instructs his disciples to sail from the Jewish shore to the Gentile shore of the lake (9x13 miles).
 - 2. Something about Jesus should touch us about this trip, once we read what happened when they reached the other shore. What is also remarkable about this trip is that Jesus left the Israelite crowds to show compassion and salvation to one naked, crazed, violent, demon possessed, Gentile man.

- B. Vs 23 The disciples suddenly find themselves in a dangerous, life-threatening circumstance.

Luke 8:23 **But as they were sailing along He fell asleep; and a fierce gale of wind**

descended on the lake, and they *began* to be swamped and to be in danger.

1. Jesus is asleep in the stern of the boat (Mark 4:38). Psalm 121:3,4 reveals the Lord our Keeper as one who neither slumbers nor sleeps. Psalm 121:3 ... He who keeps you will not slumber.⁴ Behold, He who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep. Yet the divine Son of God took upon Himself the weakness of human flesh and succumbed to exhaustion like all of us for our sake.
2. The fierce gale of wind “descended” (from the surrounding hills) upon the lake, filled the boat. Matthew 8:24 uses the word “seismos” = shaking, quaking to describe the sea, and “kalupto” = to cover, to describe the waves covering the boat. (Show slide of Sea of Galilee at Arbel Pass). Given that the lake is almost 700 feet below sea level with surrounding hills/mountains, air currents can suddenly rush down upon the lake stirring up fierce waves. So there was a risk in crossing the lake versus sailing around its perimeter. (Thursday, 7/19/2018 at Table Rock Lake in Branson, Missouri, a boat carrying 31 people capsized in winds over 60 mph and 17 people were drowned. A National Weather Service meteorologist said, “There’s nothing to slow down winds in an open area.”)

C. Vs 24a The disciples cry to Jesus for help.

Luke 8:24 **They came to Jesus and woke Him up, saying, "Master, Master, we are perishing!"**

Mark 4:38 Jesus Himself was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke Him and said to Him, "**Teacher, do You not care that we are perishing?**"

1. Those sailing the boat were seasoned, professional fishermen. This was not their first storm on the sea. But the intensity of the storm, the number of occupants in the boat, the waves crashing over the boat, created in their eyes a deadly situation, like that described in Psalm 107 ...

Psalm 107:25 .. a stormy wind, which lifted up the waves of the sea.²⁶ They rose up to the heavens, they went down to the depths; Their soul melted away in *their* misery.²⁷ They reeled and staggered like a drunken man, and **were at their wits' end.**

2. The parallel account in Mark reveals some questioned Jesus’s concern/care for their lives.

D. Vs 24b Jesus rebukes the wind and water.

Luke 8:24 They came to Jesus and woke Him up, saying, "Master, Master, we are perishing!" **And He got up and rebuked the wind and the surging waves, and they stopped, and it became calm.**

1. The word “rebuke” is the same verb used to rebuke an unclean spirit in 4:35 and a fever in

4:39. Jesus has authority and power to rebuke any force hostile to humanity. He can be trusted to save us.

2. At Jesus's command, the wind and waves ceased, the air and sea became calm. If inanimate wind and water immediately obey Jesus, why don't we immediately obey Him?

E. Vs 25a Jesus rebukes His disciples for a lack of faith in Him.

Luke 8:25 **And He said to them, "Where is your faith?"**

Matthew 8:26 He said to them, "Why are you afraid, you men of **little faith** (oligopistos)?" Then He got up and rebuked the winds and the sea, and it became perfectly calm.

1. Jesus's question is intended to make a statement of rebuke: "You should have been more trusting of Me." "You are afraid of a situation you can't control, because you don't trust Me to be in control."
2. Notice when Jesus expected His disciples to have faith in Him that overcomes fear - while He was asleep in the stern of the boat at the height of the storm. When He had yet to indicate He would do anything. When it is most natural to fear, we are to have faith in Him.
3. 11 of His 12 disciples were believers at this point. They had not lost their overarching faith in Christ, but had in a moment of crisis lost sight of Him as their object of faith and hope. They were in the moment functioning like unbelievers, a condition Jesus inspires both Matthew and later Luke to describe by the single compound Greek word "oligopistos," from "oligos" = "little, few" + "pistos" = "faithful, believing," and often translated in to English as "little faith."
4. The occurrence of this word in the biblical context appears to refer exclusively to believers, who while not losing their faith in the Lord, lapse into momentary doubt in a particular situation.

Matthew 14:31 Immediately Jesus stretched out His hand and took hold of him, and said to him, "You of **little faith** (oligopistos), **why did you doubt?**"

F. Vs 25b The response of the disciples

Luke 8:25 And He said to them, "Where is your faith?" They were fearful and amazed, saying to one another, **"Who then is this, that He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey Him?"**

1. Jesus's demonstration of authority and power over wind and water points to and begs the question of His identity. "Who is this ...?"

2. These Jewish disciples have grown up hearing/singing the Psalms which reveal the identity of the One Who has authority and power to command the winds and water, along with all elements of creation. They have now seen and experienced what they had previously sung about. Whose works have they now seen? To whom are they now to give thanks? “The Lord (Yahweh).”

Psalm 107:23 Those who go down to the sea in ships, who do business on great waters;
²⁴ **They have seen the works of the LORD, and His wonders in the deep.** ²⁵ For He spoke and raised up a stormy wind, which lifted up the waves of the sea. ²⁶ They rose up to the heavens, they went down to the depths; Their soul melted away in *their* misery. ²⁷ They reeled and staggered like a drunken man, and were at their wits' end. ²⁸ **Then they cried to the LORD in their trouble,** and He brought them out of their distresses. ²⁹ **He caused the storm to be still, so that the waves of the sea were hushed.** ³⁰ Then they were glad because they were quiet, so He guided them to their desired haven. ³¹ **Let them give thanks to the LORD** for His lovingkindness, and for His wonders to the sons of men!

3. Jesus inspires Luke to record their question about His identity to point us readers to seeing Him for the God and Savior that He is, that instead of giving in to the fear that comes from unbelief, we might put our faith and trust in Him at all times, including those times of hardship, danger, perplexity, when we do not yet see Him working. Christ enables His people to say ...

Isaiah 12:2 "Behold, God is my salvation, **I will trust and not be afraid;** For the LORD GOD is my strength and song, and He has become my salvation."

4. The whole world, which lies under the power of the evil one, does not think Christ can be trusted to control our destinies. God help us to believe and receive Your Son whom the world denies and rejects. The world is out of it's mind to reject the Son of God. But as this next miracle reveals, God's Son is able to deliver us from the power of darkness and renew and transform our self-destructive minds.

II. Luke 8:26-39 Jesus exercises authority and power over demons.

- A. Jesus has previously cast out demons from individuals in Luke 4:35,41; 6:18, but now the display of His authority and power over evil spirits is intensified by His exorcism of multiple demons from one man in Gentile territory, a hard place to minister. (Blessed are our sent ones who follow Jesus to minister to lost souls in hard places.)

- B. 8:26-29 The setting

Luke 8:26 **Then they sailed to the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee.** ²⁷ **And when He came out onto the land, He was met by a man from the city who was possessed with demons; and who had not put on any clothing for a long time, and was not living in a house, but in the tombs.** ²⁸ Seeing Jesus, he cried out

and fell before Him, and said in a loud voice, "What business do we have with each other, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg You, do not torment me."²⁹ For He had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For it had seized him many times; and he was bound with chains and shackles and kept under guard, and yet he would break his bonds and be driven by the demon into the desert.

1. The parallel text in Matthew 8:28 tells us there were 2 demoniacs who were so violent that people could not pass by them, but our resurrected Christ inspired both Mark and Luke to focus on this one man.
2. He was violent, wild, unable to be subdued - even by chains, living in the tombs (which would render him unclean according to Jewish law). Mark 5:5 tells us night and day in the tombs and surrounding mountains he would howl and bruise himself with stones. He was running around naked, out of his mind. Picture in your mind today's multiple news reports of violent individuals, running around naked, out of their minds on meth amphetamines.
3. In a Cleveland, Ohio Walmart a naked man on crystal meth ran through the store barking and randomly biting 28 people - he was out of his mind on meth. Something more powerful than meth was making this Gerasene man crazy - a legion of demons was possessing him.
 - a. Yet the man falls down before Jesus, recognizing His authority. Notice the man/demons believed that Jesus is the "Son of the Most High God," and are so convinced that they tremble.
 - b. Jesus inspired James to tell us that such conviction by itself does not indicate the presence of saving faith.

James 2:19 You believe that God is one. You do well; **the demons also believe, and shudder.**²⁰ But are you willing to recognize, you foolish fellow, that faith without works is useless?

4. If there was ever an illustration that Jesus has come to save outcasts, this is it. And as we see the story unfold, Jesus crossed the sea to save this individual and to provide an example to his disciples and us of the wideness of His mercy and the power of His \ transforming grace.

C. 8:30-32 The plea of the legion of demons.

Luke 8:30 And Jesus asked him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Legion"; for many demons had entered him.³¹ They were imploring Him not to command them to go away into the abyss.³² Now there was a herd of many swine feeding there on the mountain; and *the demons* implored Him to permit them to enter the swine. And He gave them permission.

1. The presence of swine, unclean animals according to Jewish law, reminds us of how dark, lost, and lawless this region of the Gerasenes was.
2. The demons recognized they were powerless before Jesus. They recognized Him as the one who has authority and power to throw them into the “abyss,” the eternal lake of fire reserved for the devil, his angels, and all who reject Jesus as Lord. And so they begged permission to enter instead into a herd of about 2,000 pigs (Mark 5:13), unclean animals appropriate for unclean spirits.

D. 8:33-36 Jesus delivers the oppressed man from the demons.

Luke 8:33 And the demons came out of the man and entered the swine; and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned.³⁴ When the herdsmen saw what had happened, they ran away and reported it in the city and *out* in the country.³⁵ *The people* went out to see what had happened; and they came to Jesus, and **found the man from whom the demons had gone out, sitting down at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind**; and they became frightened.³⁶ Those who had seen it reported to them how **the man who was demon-possessed had been made well** (Gk: “sozo” = “saved”).

1. The once wild, violent, self-destructive, crazy naked man was now:
 - a. clothed. b. sitting at the feet of Jesus - the posture of a disciple (Cf. Mary in 10:39, listening to His words). c. in his right mind. d. made well (Gk “sozo” = “saved”).
2. The exorcism of the legion of demons was immediate and visible, with around 2,000 pigs rushing into the sea to their death (show slide of eastern shore). There would be no question that the demons had left the man, which is perhaps why Jesus permitted the demons to enter the pigs.
3. None of us was born in our right minds. None of us here was born receiving Jesus as Lord and Savior. And even though we might not have been possessed by demons, God’s Word informs us that we were certainly oppressed, influenced and enslaved by the devil and his angels.

Luke 8:11 "Now the parable is this: the seed is the word of God.¹² "Those beside the road are those who have heard; then **the devil comes and takes away the word from their heart**, so that they will not believe and be saved.

Ephesians 2:1 And you were dead in your trespasses and sins,² in which you formerly walked according to the course of this world, **according to the prince of the power of the air, of the spirit that is now working in the sons of disobedience**.

4. If today you do not belong to Christ, you have not yet received Him as your Lord, God and Savior, you are not in your mind. You are like we believers all were, blind and senseless, having our thinking very much influenced and controlled by Satan and his demons.

Jesus, and no one else, has the authority and power to free us from the devil's dominance and to heal and transform our minds.

2 Corinthians 4:3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing,⁴ in whose case **the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving** so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

2 Timothy 2:24 The Lord's bond-servant must not be quarrelsome, but be kind to all, able to teach, patient when wronged,²⁵ with gentleness correcting those who are in opposition, if perhaps God may grant them repentance leading to the knowledge of the truth,²⁶ **and they may come to their senses and escape from the snare of the devil, having been held captive by him to do his will.**

5. And while true believers are indwelt by God's Holy Spirit and not by demons, we can nonetheless be oppressed and influenced by the devil. We all need to continually seek Christ, and receive from His authority and power renewed, transformed minds. Peter knew this well, and so exhorted believers to be "sober," unintoxicated by the mind and spirit of the world.

Matthew 16:21 From that time Jesus began to show His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised up on the third day.²² Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "God forbid *it*, Lord! This shall never happen to You."²³ But He turned and said to Peter, "**Get behind Me, Satan!** You are a stumbling block to Me; for you are not setting **your mind** on God's interests, but man's."

1 Peter 4:7 The end of all things is near; therefore, **be of sound (wise) thinking (sophroneo) and sober spirit** for the purpose of prayer.

1 Peter 5:8 **Be of sober spirit**, be on the alert. **Your adversary, the devil**, prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

6. If mindless wind and water immediately obey Christ, and we whose minds have been fearfully and wonderfully made by Christ do not immediately obey Him, are we not out of our minds? When purely evil demons immediately submit to the authority and command of Christ and we don't, are we not out of our minds? In such times do we believers not need to repent and call upon Christ to heal our thinking? Is this not why Christ inspired His apostle Paul to write to us ...

Romans 12:2 And do not be conformed to this world, **but be transformed by the renewing of your mind**, so that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect.

... and the 119th psalmist to teach us to pray for understanding at the unfolding of the

Lord's words.

Psalm 119:34 **Give me understanding**, that I may observe Your law and keep it with all *my* heart. ... 73 Your hands made me and fashioned me; **Give me understanding**, that I may learn Your commandments. ... Psalm 119:130 **The unfolding of Your words gives light; It gives understanding to the simple.**

E. 8:37-39 Jesus sends the man to his home city to bear witness to Christ.

Luke 8:37 And all the people of the country of the Gerasenes and the surrounding district asked Him to leave them, for they were gripped with great fear; and He got into a boat and returned.³⁸ But the man from whom the demons had gone out was begging Him that he might accompany Him; but He sent him away, saying,³⁹ "**Return to your house and describe what great things God has done for you.**" **So he went away, proclaiming throughout the whole city what great things Jesus had done for him.**

1. The Gerasenes, like the demons, were gripped with fear and rejected Jesus. It was they who were not in their right minds.
2. This man that Jesus crossed the sea to rescue now desired to leave his homeland to do cross cultural evangelism with Jesus. But Jesus sent him back to his own city to bear witness to the person and saving work and power of Jesus.

Conclusion

- A. Jesus inspired Luke to record these words and deeds of His so that we might put our faith in Jesus as the Son of the Most High God, who has authority and power over all the forces of nature and the evil one.
- B. If we are in our right minds by His transforming grace, ...
 1. ... we will not fear but trust in Him in every situation, even before we can discern He is working for the good of those who love Him.
 2. ... we will continually seek a right-minded understanding of how to think and live from His unfolded Word, empowered by His indwelling Spirit.
 3. ... we will share His mercy and passion to make His salvation known to those in our own culture and to those in every culture, even to the most unlikely of outcasts.