



STORIES OF LIFE!

The Gospel of Luke

A Story of the Heart

Luke 8:1-21

Message #26 of 50 – S805

Sermon given on August 19, 2018



Sunday Morning Service

Pastor Rick Lancaster

A Story of the Heart

Luke 8:1-21

Opening Comments

- Turn to **Luke 8**
- We continue a study through the Gospel of Luke – **The Stories of Life**
- On Wednesday evening, Kelly and I attended the screening of a new movie produced by a friend – False Hopes – it was a Christian love story – of the chick-flick genre
- If it hadn't been for the fact that it was our friend, I would have passed
- There is just way too much emotion, and not enough action or drama for me
- All people are different – different things affect our hearts
- Often it is about unimportant things like what kind of movies we like to watch, or what is our favorite ice cream, or style of worship
- From an eternal perspective, how I feel about certain genres of movies is just not a big deal
- Jesus is going to say in our text for today that how I feel about God's Word matters – it has eternal consequences
- This is a message that will be a call to self-reflection
- Let's pray and ask the Holy Spirit to prepare our hearts to allow the light of God's truth to show us what He can see in our hearts
- **Pray**

Teaching

- **A Story of the Heart**
- Our text begins with some women who had thankful hearts
- **Luke 8:1-3**
- Because of what Jesus had done for them, these women are supporting the work of Christ by meeting His human needs – food, clothing, lodging
- It is interesting to me that Luke makes a point of mentioning these women, but not any men

- As we have already seen, many people are following Jesus
- But the problem is they were not sincere in their commitment to Him, or to the Word of God, or to the kingdom of God
- They wanted something from Jesus, or just wanted to be where the action was, or to be seen where Jesus was
- God knows what is in our heart – He knows what we are thinking
- Jesus tells a parable that reminds us that not all people who follow Jesus are actually saved
- And the test He uses for that determination is their response to the Word of God
- **Luke 8:4**
- A parable is an ‘earthly story with a heavenly meaning’ (Hughes)
- **Luke 8:5**
- Everyone in Jesus’ audience was familiar with the work of the sower
- Someone with a bag of seeds would walk through a field throwing handfuls into the plowed ground
- Some would fall on the wayside = hard paths around fields
- **Luke 8:6**
- Israel is a stony place – stones were collected and piled up
- No place for the roots to grow down
- **Luke 8:7**
- No matter how diligent you are to eliminate weeds in your fields, some will always persist
- They usually grow faster and stronger than what you are trying to grow – choke out the plants – stealing water, nutrients, and sunshine
- **Luke 8:8**
- The good ground is where the sower is hoping the seed will land
- Seeds truly are miraculous – within one seed is everything necessary to reproduce itself and produce, in some plants, hundreds more seeds
- Jesus ends this parable by telling them to pay attention to what he is saying – don’t just hear it, but listen and respond
- The illustration/parable is simple enough that a small child could understand it
- The interpretation and application of that spiritual truth Jesus is trying to communicate is not so obvious

- **Luke 8:9**
- It always encourages me when those closest to Jesus didn't understand something that I didn't understand when I first read it
- **Luke 8:10**
- A 'mystery' is a divine secret that can only be revealed by God choosing to reveal it
- If you are a believer here today, it is because God chose to reveal to you the truth of His plan to redeem you through His Son Jesus
- Thankfully Jesus explains this parable
- **Luke 8:11**
- Just like a plant seed, the Word of God is alive, it has everything in it to bring life – eternal life, and to reproduce life in those who take it in
- **Hebrews 4:12**
- **For the word of God *is* living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.**
- The sower in this account is Jesus – though it also includes anyone who shares God's Word with anyone else
- What Jesus is going to say next explains not everyone responds to the gospel message
- In all four places the seed lands we must keep in mind it was all the same seed – the problem is not with the seed or with the sower – the problem is the condition of the soil the seed lands in
- The problem is not with the sower or the seed, but in the heart of those who hear God's Word
- **Luke 8:12**
- This is the **Hard Heart**
- This person hears the good news, the gospel, the Word of God, but their heart is so hard that there is no chance for it to take root
- Someone who believes there is no such thing as absolute truth
- Or someone who hears the gospel and thinks it is too simple – believe and be saved
- The Devil comes and takes that truth out of their minds so that it doesn't have an opportunity to break through their hard heart
- **Luke 8:13**
- This is the **Shallow Heart**

- This person responds to the gospel message emotionally
 - These ones are often the ones who accept the message of hope, peace, joy, and blessings, but without true repentance
 - Notice what is the first word of Jesus' first sermon **Matthew 4:13**
From that time Jesus began to preach and to say, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."
 - First word = repent
 - Without repentance, there is no forgiveness – without forgiveness, there is no salvation
 - As soon as there is trouble with the shallow heart they wilt
 - You will hear these ones say something like, I tried being a Christian, but it didn't work
 - Problem is – they never were Christian – most anti-Christians come from this group
 - **Luke 8:14**
 - This is the **Infested Heart**
 - This is someone who has made a confession of faith, but maintains a firm grasp on the things of their life
 - In fact, the things of this world have a higher place in their life than does God **Matthew 6:24**
- No one can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.**
- This person finds it hard to make time for the things of God
 - The early church referred to Sunday as the Lord's Day
 - It was the day of the week that Jesus rose from the dead
 - And they chose to set it aside to gather together to worship Him
 - The infested hear tis so busy with the things of the world that they do not have time to gather with God's people to worship Him who gave them their things **Matthew 6:33**
- Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you.**
- Because they are focused on the things of this world, they produce no spiritual fruit
 - The fourth type of heart
 - **Luke 8:15**
 - What is a 'noble and good heart'? **Jeremiah 17:9-10**

The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it? I, the LORD, search the heart, I test the mind, even to give every man according to his ways, according to the fruit of his doings.

- A ‘noble and good heart’ is a person who knows they are wrong, they are a sinner, and is committed to letting God do something about it
 - When the Word of God lands in a heart like that, life is produced – spiritual fruit comes forth in great abundance **Galatians 5:22-23**
- The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control.**
- Only this last heart was able to produce spiritual fruit – the other three did not – even though the same seed landed in all four
 - The hard heart is obviously not saved – the shallow heart and the infested heart give the impression of salvation, but it is not real
 - Notice the last word of verse 15 – patience
 - The test to determine if someone is saved or not takes time, because sometimes the fruit of salvation is slow to grow
 - But eventually it will show up in your life
 - **Luke 8:16-17**
 - I have had people tell me that their faith is a private thing – it is personal
 - That’s not what Jesus thinks – He says true faith is public – it should be seen by all around you
 - This also tells us that if your faith is not real, that is going to come out too – you can’t hide it – God won’t let you – you must choose!
 - Jesus concludes with an exhortation
 - **Luke 8:18**
 - ‘take heed how you hear’ – pay attention to how you are listening to the Word of God
 - Are you listening with a hard heart – shallow heart – infested heart or a good heart?
 - If you have a good heart – know who you are, trusting God to change you – more will be given to you as you hear God’s Word
 - But if you have one of the first three hearts, God’s Word will not affect you, will not benefit you
 - Notice who Jesus is putting the responsibility on – the hearer, not the speaker

- The speaker has the responsibility of letting the Holy Spirit speaking through him or her – the listener has the responsibility of hearing what God is saying
- If God can speak through a donkey, which He did, He can speak through me – are you listening?
- Jesus concludes connecting hearing the Word of God to obedience and to our relationship with Him

- **Luke 8:19-21**

- Hearing and doing God’s Word is the key to intimacy with God **John 14:21**

He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.

- Someone who loves God loves His Word, and it is bearing spiritual fruit in their lives
- What kind of heart do you have?
- This is an important question – it has eternal consequences
- Only one of those four hearts are going to heaven
- If yours is a hard heart – shallow heart – infested heart – you may know things about God and His Word, but that doesn’t mean you are saved – you might hear Jesus say **Luke 13:27**

He will say, ‘I tell you I do not know you, where you are from. Depart from Me, all you workers of iniquity.’

- If you are not absolutely certain what kind of heart you have, there is only one solution – repent
- Listen, Jesus came to this earth as a man so that you could know that you are going to heaven
- He lived a perfect life in absolute obedience to God and His Word
- He then sacrificed His perfect life on your behalf to pay for your sins
- He did for you what you could never do for yourself
- If you are here today and you think yours might be a hard heart – pray ask God to break up the hardness of your heart so that you can believe
- If your heart is shallow, repent for your sins, and come humbly to the foot of the cross for His forgiveness
- If your heart is infested, crowded with the things of this world, ask Jesus to fill your heart with love for Him and for His Word

- And even if yours is a good heart, ask Jesus to break up the hard spots, shallow areas, and infested parts of your life so that you can bear more fruit to glorify Him, bless others, and grow in your faith
- God's Word has been sown, what are you going to do with it?
- **Pray!**