

Luke 8:51

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Preacher: Douglas MacMillan

[0 : 0 0] Now will you turn with me this morning to the Gospel according to Luke on chapter 8, and in that chapter to the same narrative as we read essentially in the Gospel of Mark, the healing and raising from the dead of the daughter of Jairus.

And let us read here in Luke chapter 8 at verse 51.

And when Jesus came into the house, he suffered no man to go in save Peter and James and John and the father and the mother of the maiden, and all wept and bewailed her.

But Jesus said, Weep not, she is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed into scorn, knowing that she was dead.

And he put them all out and took her by the hand and said, Little maid, arise. And her spirit came again, and she rose straightway, and he commanded to give her meat.

[1 : 0 8] And I want to isolate the words especially from verses 52 and 53. These words, She is not dead, but sleepeth.

And they laughed into scorn, and he put them all out. Words from verses 52, 53, and 54. If you have an NIV, it will not leave quite the same, because the text in which the NIV is based doesn't bring out what the text here brings out, but it does have the very same phraseology in math in the NIV, that Jesus put them all out.

Now, I want just to concentrate on these words. They laughed him to scorn, and he put them all out.

Now, the Bible has, I think, very fittingly been described as the handbook of faith, from Genesis right through to Revelation.

All that God has revealed of himself and of his ways is calculated to draw out and to win the faith and the trust of men and women like ourselves.

[2 : 4 1] The Bible defines faith for us. It describes faith. It illustrates faith. It tells us what faith is and how faith works, where faith comes from and where faith leads to.

So, it's really, I think, very fitting to describe the Bible as the handbook of faith. And, in fact, the Bible has so much to say about faith and about belief and about trust and confidence in God, that we often overlook the simple fact that the Bible also has a great deal to say about the opposite of faith, about faith, about non-faith, or about unbelief.

But the Bible does have a great deal to say about unbelief. And, to put it very simply and succinctly as possible, the Bible, I think, cuts across many of our ideas about unbelief.

For example, the Bible will not allow us to look upon unbelief merely as a neutral thing. Very often, when we meet people who proclaim themselves quite proudly not to be Christians, they almost glory in their unbelief as though it was something worthwhile having.

And as though they were not doing much harm either to themselves or to the Creator whom their unbelief denies. They look upon unbelief as a neutral thing.

[4 : 40] Now, the Bible will not permit us to look upon unbelief as neutral. If you are an unbeliever today before God, one of the solemn messages of the Bible is that you are not living in neutrality.

Now, will the Bible even permit us to think of unbelief as merely a negative thing? And again, many of us, or many people, seem to believe that unbelief is just the negation, the denial of what belief and Christians believe to be true.

But unbelief is not. The Bible will not allow us to look upon unbelief as merely a negative thing.

Unbelief is a very positive, virulent process at work in the minds and in the hearts of men and women without the grace of God.

And unbelief never stands still. Unbelief is a process which carries a passion along in it and with it.

[5 : 56] And really, it's a state and a process of enmity against God. For example, one of the things that the Apostle Paul says about unbelief is that in order to be a non-believer, men have to suppress the truth of God.

They have to put the lid on it and put their feet on the lid in order to keep the truth down, suppressing the truth of God. Now, that's a solemn truth which finds illustration many times over in the life and ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ.

And it finds, perhaps nowhere, illustration as clear and as vivid and as memorable as it does in this story, this history of the raising of the little daughter of Jeruses.

And really, that is why I want to look at it with you this morning. Jesus came into that house which had been visited by death.

And he said a strange thing, didn't he? That, I think, was what first attracted my attention to this text almost a year ago, just over a year ago. Don't cry.

[7 : 25] Weep not. What a strange thing to say for someone visiting the house of death in the name and in the power of God.

What would you think of your minister and your pastor if he came to your home when your heart was broken and death had devastated and blusted your life? And the minister put out his hand and said to you, Now, now, stop all this weeping.

What would you think of him furthermore if he would want to say, Don't weep because they're not really dead at all. They're only asleep. And I don't know what you would think of them, but I know what these people thought of him.

He said, Weep not. She's not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed him to scorn. Do you know what that was? It was unbelief showing itself in the reality of its nature.

Unbelief is not a pleasant thing. It's an ugly thing. It can look into the face of the Christ of God and scorn him and laugh at him and say, You're a fool!

[8 : 47] That is the essence of unbelief. It scorns the face of the Almighty and looks upon his revelation of himself and his ways and his doings with the children of men as folly.

We remember that an apostle inspired by the Holy Ghost has said, But the foolishness of God is wiser than the wisdom of men.

And you see, in essence, we have illustrated for us here a very simple principle that runs right through the Word of God.

And I just want to try and illustrate it for us. And the principle is very simple. Those who refuse to believe Christ's message are debarred forever from witnessing Christ's power.

Got it? Those who refuse to believe Christ's message are forever debarred from witnessing, experiencing, seeing Christ's power.

[10 : 18] They laughed into scorn and he put them all out. Let's see how we can illustrate that principle from this narrative, the excluding power of unbelief.

And we'll note, first of all, just this, that unbelief shuts men off from any vision of the Savior's grace, his tender grace.

I can't help but call it that. Unbelief closes men off from any vision of the Savior's tender grace.

Here, you see, we have the Lord Jesus and vouchers to impart one of the most wonderful manifestations of his power and his glory as the life-giving Son of God.

He has walked into one of the darkest and saddest experiences that men meet, but that all men do meet.

[11 : 29] And only really on three occasions in this earthly ministry do we have any kind of record of this kind and therefore it's worthwhile paying very close attention to it.

Now, you remember those three occasions. Let me just remind you of them. When Jesus is seen by us in the presence of death, there was his presence at the open grave of Lazarus.

and there was his encounter with death in the road from Nain. I've always got to be very careful because when I speak about Nain, I often call it Nairn instead of Nain.

And it builds a very vivid picture in my mind. But Nairn, as well as Nain, had its cemetery and has its cemetery. Christ met with death here.

And then Christ met with death in the home of this godly man, Jairus, the ruler of the synagogue, where his little girl had been touched by death.

[12 : 32] Now, each encounter has its own aspect, I think, of the tender mercy of God in Jesus Christ to teach us. And I think that this one in particular teaches us about the gentleness of grace in Christ.

I think perhaps in two psalms, certainly in one psalm, David the psalmist speaks to God and he says, Thy gentleness hath made me great.

And it's the gentleness of Jesus that shines out here for one. And we see it in the words that he used to raise this little girl from the caverns of death.

Did you notice them? That's why we read in Mark. Jesus spoke in the everyday Aramaic, the type of Hebrew that they had.

He spoke in the everyday language of the little girl. girl. And he used just two words which were pregnant with meaning, full of meaning for this little girl.

[13 : 50] Talitha kumi. Do you know what Talitha kumi means? It means literally, up my little lamb.

Up my lambkin. I don't know what you would call it. Up my little lamb. there were the two words that a mother in Israel, every mother in Israel, would use to wake her child in the morning.

And since this girl had been a baby, perhaps the first words that she really understood the meaning of in all her human experience were these two words.

They would have been spoken to her very tenderly by a proud young mother lifting her baby in the morning. Time to be up my little lamb. Talitha kumi.

You can imagine the tones in which she was saying. Then as the wee girl grew and began to go out to play, I don't know if they were allowed to go to school.

[14 : 50] Maybe she was. And like other wee girls, once she was five and six and seven, she wouldn't be so easy to get up in the morning. And there would be a stronger note in it, and it would be Talitha kumi.

Time to be up. these were the words, a mother's mourning call. These were the words that Jesus laid hold of and used to bring a little girl who had been through a traumatic experience, whose soul had been severed from her body, that he used to bring her back from the dead.

Do you see how the power of God was tempered to suit the one with whom he was dealing with? My friend, when you get omnipotence tempered and molded and shaped to fit the need of your soul and of mine, do you know what we call that?

We call it grace, and it's tender grace. It's the loving kindness of God. Language almost fills in any attempt to describe it.

Jesus reaching into the depths of human personality, where death had wrought and wreaked havoc, and he is rebinding and bringing together and unifying that link between body and soul, and as he takes hold of them with the hands of omnipotence, he exercises the heart of God, which is tender and full of pity, such pity as a father hath unto his children dear, like pity shows the Lord to such as worship him in fear.

[16 : 49] My friend, these are wonderful words, and they're illustrated for us here in the act of Jesus, Talitha kumi, never forget what these words mean, and in his own way, when Jesus comes to you and me, he uses the Talitha kumi, which fits our particular circumstances, for he is of tender mercy, he is God.

God. And you see, what a privilege to have been there. What a privilege to have seen this master of life at work, healing, restoring, blessing, raising, and there were those there who saw it.

There was Peter, James, and John, the three who so frequently were allowed into the secret of his presence in a particular way, and there was the father and the mother of the, yes, there were those there who saw Jesus at work, and my friend, they were men of faith.

Let me say this, faith sees, and has given the vision of Jesus at work, and only faith sees, because although there were those who were in the room and saw what Jesus did, there were those who did not see.

And they did not see for a very simple reason. They were on the wrong side of the door. They were on the wrong side of the door.

[18 : 38] They had been excluded because of unbelief. Let me say this to you this morning. There is only one thing which closes man off from a real view of the tender mercy of Christ, and that is unbelief.

Unbelief scorns the ability of this prince to renew and to regenerate and to lift men and women out of death into new marvelous life in Christ.

They scorn the doctrine of regeneration sometimes, but we know who scorns it. So do you. The Bible teaches us they scorn it who have never been there, who have been excluded because of their unbelief, and sometimes sometimes we have been admitted to the place where God works the miracle of new life, and we have knelt beside those whose lives have been changed and transformed, and we have seen Jesus at work.

You've seen the same. Let our faith in this Jesus be strong. And then, again, I think that we can illustrate our principle by seeing this that those who refuse to believe in Christ are not only closed off from any vision of the Savior's grace, but they're excluded from any verification of the Savior's power.

This is one thing that faith does. It brings us into the realm where the power of God is verified in human experience. Now, Jesus' power, was hidden just as often as his glory was.

[20 : 31] We're well acquainted with the fact that only on two or three occasions did the glory of his passion shine out through his humanity.

And that's the same with his divine power. It was held in leash by human nature. But occasionally it flashed out.

and it flashed out in the presence of death, I think, as it flashed out at no other time. It's a strange thing which I noticed only recently, but I think that I'm right in saying that on each occasion when we have a record of Jesus in the presence of death, death seems to be a challenge not just to his love, but to his power.

Now I'm not saying that every time Jesus was in the presence of death, he raised the dead. What I'm saying is this, every time we have a record of Jesus in the presence of death, there is a manifestation of his power over it.

death. That was verification of his power to raise the spiritually dead into newness of life.

[21 : 58] That is the verification that faith alone can come to. Supernatural power.

It's there. And it's a miracle. Every time a soul is quickened from death into life, it's a miracle of God's heaven working on earth.

Take, just for purposes of manifestation, take Jesus when we do see him in the presence of death. I've reminded you of the three occasions when that's recorded for us.

We see him, for example, dealing with death in three stages. In the case of Jairus' daughter, we see him dealing with death in the first flush of its triumph.

This little girl had just died. Her body was still warm. One had come where Jesus had been halted and where another had drawn power from him to heal.

[23 : 06] And they had said, trouble the master no more. She's dead. It's too late. Ah, but it's never to wait for Jesus. He said, let's go.

Death in the first flush of its triumph. And it seems so easy to raise death in the first flush of its triumph that some commentators have said, ah, we know what Jesus did.

He gave her the kiss of life. some kiss. Luke makes it quite clear to us that she was dead.

55, her spirit came again. From the land and shadow of death, her spirit came again. Then we have Jesus dealing with the widow's son.

This is death in another of its stages. death in open victory. Death carrying one off to the burying place.

[24 : 07] Jesus can stand by the beer and say, young man, I say unto you, arise. And he that was dead sits up.

There's no sign of that kiss. Then we find him at the death of Lazarus, the grave of Lazarus. And here is death in a further stage. Corruption.

His own sister uses an ugly, ugly word in the Greek. And its ugliness comes through into English. In the authorized version, Lord, by this time he is stinking.

It'll take grace to kiss this one into life. And it'll take some kiss, won't it? And he calls Lazarus come forth.

And he that was dead came forth. Death in all its stages. In the first flush of its prime. In its open victory. death in its ugly corruption.

[25 : 10] It doesn't matter where the Christ of God meets with death or with spiritual death. death. The Holy Spirit can convert a child of three or four or five.

In the first flush of the working of the death, which is spiritual death. And he can convert, praise God, for young men in their teens and in their twenties and their thirties.

men in the people. And he can convert those who have been in corruption for many years. I didn't see much of it in Aberdeen. I saw many young people converted.

God took me to Glasgow to teach me, I think, that old men and old women can be converted too. The first person to be converted under my ministry in Glasgow that I know of was even before my induction to St. Vincent Street.

In a hospital, a woman was there with cancer. belonged to my own native village in Argyle. And she was over 70. And she was converted.

[26 : 19] It wasn't me that converted, it was gone. She was ready for it. She said to me, the first word she said, I'm so glad she said that Jesse McMillan's son must come to Glasgow to be her minister.

When Mr. Ross went away, I prayed that God would send you. And I said, why? She said, I thought that if I could ever speak to anybody about my soul, I would be able to speak to you, because your mother used to speak to me when I was 16 and 17.

And for 30 years, Douglas, I've wanted to speak to a minister to find out how I could find a savior. And I've always been afraid to do it.

What ministers we must have, what creatures we must appear. And the next one, she was over 70, the next one was an old man from Sky of 85.

God can save, he can raise those who have been in corruption of death for a long time. I remember once, I'll never forget it, saying, from the pulpit in D.C., if you're over 30 years of age, the age at which your savior was crucified, then statistically your chances are very slim, it's hardly worth your while coming.

[27 : 40] I said that one night in D.C. I would never say it again, because three or four days later, a woman said to me, I'm going to stop coming, Mr. McMillan, it's not worth my while coming, I'm nearly 40 and I'm not converted.

So ministers should be careful what they say, but that is true, most people are statistically converted before the 30. And a little bit slimmer, but don't give up, even if you're 80 and you haven't found Christ, or if you're 85 and you haven't found Christ, my friend, he can touch you and change you.

And not only do we see Christ dealing with death in three stages in these narratives, but we see death in dealing with death in three spheres of life. You notice that too? The freshness of childhood.

What an anomaly that a child should die. What an anomaly that an old man should die. Death is unnatural in the universe of a good God.

And the sad fact of sin at work and death because of sin is that children do die. One of the saddest things we see is a young father carrying a little coffin to our little grave and yet it happens.

[29 : 03] And it happened here and Jesus came and you notice how kindly and tenderly and graciously he dealt with death working in childhood.

Then we see him dealing with death in young manhood and he says young man arise. He can deal with death when it's worked in the full vigor of youthful life.

And then he can deal with death in a man of the age of Lazarus. I'm not sure what age he was but I would imagine he would be a young man about my own age, about halfway to a hundred. And even there, Lazarus, Jesus can control death.

It doesn't matter which sphere of life it's working in. And so one could go on these are just illustrations of his power and how it was verified by his works.

Now in each of these instances there was a marvelous forthputing of his power. And in each instance there were those to see it. In some of them even unbelief was permitted to see much.

[30 : 18] In this particular instance unbelief as I've remarked was closed out. Let me say again what an experience for faith to be present when the power of Christ is exercised like this.

What a vindication of all his claims as Messiah. What deep seated, you would think, what deep seated, settled convictions Peter and James and John must have had.

What proofs to garrison their faith. It's amazing isn't it that a Peter can deny this Christ after such work as this.

But a Peter can. Jesus had drawn no near.

And there were those who saw, but let me say again, there were those who were excluded from this vindicating verification of his power. Why? Because of their unbelief.

[31 : 25] They laughed him to scorn. And when a soul laughs the claims of God and the Christ of God to scorn, that soul need not expect any verification of the Savior's power.

Never get it. God, let me put it like this, God doesn't deal with this scorning, unbelieving soul. And finally, just this unbelief closed them off here from any vindication of the Savior's teaching.

vindication. There's no vindication of the truth for those who do not believe. How do we know the gospel is true?

When we act on it, when we believe it, when we trust ourselves to it, then its truth is verified and vindicated in our own personal experience.

you see, Jesus, let me try and illustrate this, Jesus had come and he had said, she's not dead but sleeping. And they thought he was wrong. Why did they think he was wrong?

[32 : 47] because they assessed reality on the basis of their own experience of it. And their experience of the reality of death was that it was something which lasted and that you couldn't awaken people out of.

They looked at death on the basis of the reality of their own experience. But the reality of their own experience was not the total reality of death.

Jesus had come to shed light upon another aspect of death. Jesus had come to verify to men that the human soul lives on through death.

And that this world is just the stepping stone into an eternal world. Jesus had come to tell men that the dead are only asleep and that there's going to be an awakening and an accounting before God.

And he had come into this room and he had cast the light of eternity into the dark cavern of death. And men would not take the light.

[34 : 03] And they would not believe his reinterpretation of the phenomena that they knew at only one level. And when he said to them, she is not dead, but sleeping, they laughed in the face of one who was God.

And you see, so men refuse to be taught of God, don't we all? We refuse to be taught the truth as it really is.

He was reinterpreting the most solemn of all realities. He was going to cast new light upon believing man's last enemy.

And you know, when Jesus comes into a place where there's sorrow, when Jesus comes to a place that's been visited by death, when Jesus walks into a cemetery, then I think something of the grimness and the ugliness and the coldness of death goes.

And when we hear his voice speak right through and in death and say, I am the resurrection and the life. He that believeth on me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.

[35 : 22] And he that lives and believes on me shall never die. When we hear Jesus speak like that, my friends, I think death loses something of its awesomeness and its gruesomeness.

And it can become a friend which will usher God's people into his nearer presence, a doorway into a wider, fuller, glorious light.

Eye has not seen, nor ear have, neither has it entered into the heart of man. What things God has laid up for them that love him.

But the Spirit has revealed him to us in the world. Now let's go back.

We've been summarized very quickly. We have been illustrating a basic biblical principle that unbelief excludes from the presence of Christ.

[36 : 29] close his men off. Inevitably, invariably, it will always happen. Closes off from any vision of the Savior's tenderness and graciousness, his love and his mercy.

It closes off from verification vindication of his great power to save. And it closes off from any vindication he gives us of the great lasting verities of life, of eternity and of God, and of his own Christhood and Saviourhood, of the truth of the Scripture.

Now, all that is just to say this, that which we know so well, but which we fail to take in, all that is just to say that unbelief shuts off from God.

God. My friend, unbelief shuts off from Christ and shuts out from heaven itself.

We read of a whole generation of the people of God in the Old Testament, that they perished in the wilderness. What does Hebrews say of them?

[37 : 52] They entered not in because of the of what? Because they didn't read their Bibles, because they didn't pray, they entered not in because of unbelief.

We read in Hebrews again of men and women who brought themselves under the authority and the power of the Word of God, and the Word of God was profitless to them.

Why? The Word preached did not profit them, not being mixed by faith in them that heard it, not being mixed with faith in them that heard it.

It's good to bring yourself under the preaching of the Word and the authority of God. Continue to do it. But my friend, ask God to give you a hearing, which is the hearing of faith, and a hearing that will be unto life eternal.

these are solemn things, lasting verities. Death is always at work amongst us. And except we believe, we will be shut out.

[39 : 03] And I don't want to finish on that note. I want to finish on a far more positive note, because if unbelief shuts out, my friend, the of which is wonderfully and everlastingly true also.

Where unbelief shuts out from God, faith brings in. There were not only those, my friend, who were on the wrong side of the door when Jesus raised the dead, there were those who were on the right side of the door, and there were those who saw and who believed and were caught up in the orbit of his divine power and grace.

And surely the simple lesson for all of us today is this, that we have to pray the prayer of another man who said, Lord, I believe help thou, mine unbelief.

They laughed him to scorn and he put them all out and he still does the same.

But they believed on his name and he took them all in and he still does the same there as well. God blesses what to every one of us and teach us to believe and to be saved.

[40 : 46] Let us pray. our gracious God, we humble ourselves before thee, we humble ourselves before thy majesty and thy sovereignty and before the mystery of thy ways with the children of men.

But we humble ourselves gladly also before the tenderness of thy grace and mercy as they are revealed in Christ. We thank thee, O God, for the extravagance of thy love and we pray thee that we may learn to rest in it.

May our hearts and our confidence be drawn out to such a Jesus as is held out to us in the gospel of thy grace. Bless each one of us, we pray thee, and go before us throughout this day and keep us in thy love.

Pardon and cleanse us from all our sins. For Jesus' sake, Amen.