

Kingdom Principles for Everyday Living

Luke 8:16-25

Encountering Jesus Today

By Dave Urbanski

As Pastor Scott explained during this past Sunday's message covering Luke 8:16-25, it's a continuation of Jesus' message — the Parable of the Sower — that we studied the previous Sunday. So there are elements from our previous study that relate to this latest one ... and we can build on what we've already learned.

Jesus begins in verse 16 telling his listeners that a lamp is of no use if it's covered up. Really, what's the point? Why would anyone go to the trouble of wasting time and material lighting a lamp that gets covered over?

As you might guess, it's the same for us and the light within us through the power of Christ. If we shy away from showing the world who we are through Jesus — NOT as if the light is coming from us — then what is the point of living a "Christian" life? If we cover over our light, we make Jesus invisible — and our life in him may end up counting for very little.

That's our first question: Are we hiding our light ... or letting it shine? Jesus gets deeper with us as he explains in verses 17 and 18, "For nothing is hidden that will not be made manifest, nor is anything secret that will not be known and come to light. Take care then how you hear, for to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he thinks that he has will be taken away."

Those are hard words! Jesus is telling us that no matter how much we hide him or hide our faults and sins, someday everyone will know everything! So, seriously, what do we have to lose by letting it all hang out for Jesus in the here and now?

What's more, Jesus warns us to be careful about how we're hearing him ... and then to those who have been given much, even more will be given ... but for those who have little, all of their "little" will be taken away.

Even more tough stuff to ponder!

So ... where does all this leave us? Fortunately, Pastor Scott offered us four things all of us can do ... and do right now!

The first principle we've already covered: **Display your faith; don't hide it!** We don't have to be a street preacher and lay the gospel on the line for others on a daily basis;

but we CAN get strategic about the people we see every day and ask the Lord to guide us into how we can do our part to reach them for Christ. Maybe it's just a word here or there ... Maybe we can tell others who don't know Jesus that we'll be praying for them about their issues. It doesn't have to be heavy or scary.

Second, Pastor Scott reminded us to **be authentic**. Because over time others will see who we are, for good or bad. And as God chooses to turn on his light for others to see, we want to be right there with the people with whom he's placed us and be ready to talk about the faith with them.

Third, Pastor Scott repeated the familiar truth that **privilege and responsibility go together!** It speaks to the earlier verse we discussed that for the one who to whom God has given more, even more will come to that person; but for those who have little, even the little they have will be taken away. Such a hard truth! But it does make sense. Are we willing to take steps to manage not only our emotions but also our finances and relationships? And when Pastor Scott pointed us to the familiar parable about the landowner and the talents, who didn't feel the pain of the servant who buried his talent in the ground instead of trusting the Lord to let it grow?

One of my favorite parts of this passage is when Jesus' mother and brothers want to see him — but as he frequently does, Jesus turns this situation on its head: "My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it."

Wow! What happened to "blood is thicker than water"? I like this principle because it mirrors much of my own life. Indeed, I've been blessed with numerous brothers and sisters in Christ who are very much like family to me — while nearly all of my blood relatives do not share my faith. Yes, my Christian family much of the time is closer to me than my earthly family!

Finally, Pastor Scott brought up the truth that **adversity + faith = new God insights**. How true! Here we find Jesus and his disciples in a boat when a storm comes ... and of course, Jesus' earthly followers panic while Jesus is ASLEEP! Can you imagine? It's actually kind of comical. But the disciples are still learning about Jesus, and he's stretching their faith big time.

What do we do when storms hit our own lives for real? Do we scream out for Jesus' help — as if he doesn't *already* know about the trouble we're facing? As we all know, in this passage Jesus calms the storm and then asks his disciples, "Where is your faith?" How did you do with the last challenging — or even scary — thing the Lord allowed you to endure? It's OK if you didn't do well; that's not uncommon, nor is the Lord surprised. Therefore, just talk to Jesus about what happened and ask him to forgive your lack of faith. And think through the possibilities of danger coming your way — and

soon. Also, ask yourself where your roots are, as we talked about in the Parable of the Sower. Ask yourself what kinds of things are you likely to lose? Spouses, reputations, money — to name just a few. Are you prepared for the possibility of such losses? But in the end, what do those things mean in comparison to Jesus? Is he not far, far greater than anything we might lose!

Don't forget to take heed of what the marveling disciples wondered after Jesus calmed the storm: "Who then is this ...?" That question is not at all unlike Jesus' all-important question he once asked his disciples — and to us: "Who do you say that I am?"

May we all, at the end of the day, confidently show the world our vibrant faith instead of hiding it ... and never fail to answer Jesus' critical question to us: "Who do you say that I am?"