

“The Power of Jesus”
Luke 8:22-56

Intro: Five hour energy...

The Point: Recognize and receive the power of Jesus.

Our text moves us to a series of stories that help us to continue to wrestle with the identity of Jesus.

Trans: I want to draw out three truths as we work our way through each major section of this passage. Let’s pick up in v. 22-25

- Storms: I love storms... I love the power of a good storm. The wind picks up. Thunder. Lighting... but not in the middle of a lake.
- The Sea of Galilee sits roughly 700 feet below sea level and is surrounded by mountains, making it very susceptible to sudden violent storms.
- I’d be right with the disciples. Picture the scene.
- They are completely gripped with fear. The rain is beating down, the thunder rolls, lighting flashes as wave after wave crashes against the boat and begins to fill it with more and more water. Meanwhile, the disciples are yelling to and at one another. “We’re going to die!”
- Illus. It’s hard for me to read this passage and not think of the movie about the Gloucester men of the Andria Gail, depicted in the movie, “The Perfect Storm” Those six men were killed in that storm, and while this particular storm on the Sea of Galilee surely did not compare to that Perfect Storm of 1991, their lives were endangered nonetheless.
- While all of this is going on, where is Jesus? Asleep! The contrast in composure between the disciples and Jesus could hardly be more vivid...
- v. 24: “Master, Master, we are perishing!” Jesus can you do something about this?!?”
- After Jesus woke up from his nap, he rebuked the wind and the raging wave with two simple words that were simply powerful: “Be still.” What happened? They c e a s e d... and there was a calm, a hush, stillness. A placid scene returned to the lake again.
- He spoke to the wind and the waves, now he speaks to his disciples. V. 25: “He said to them, ‘Where is your faith?’”
- Did you really doubt that I would get us to the other side of the lake? I mean, that’s what I said we were going to do in v. 22...
- And the disciples respond to this stunning act with fear and amazement. They were filled with awe, sheer amazement. “Did we see what we think we just saw?”
- “Fear and awe is the natural reaction to the powerful presence and work of God.” - Strauss
- This leads them to ask a most important question: “Who then is this, *who is this?*” In other words, are we dealing with someone who is merely a man, merely a good teacher, merely someone I would like to pattern my life after, or are we dealing with someone even greater, I mean... he commands even winds and water, and they obey him?”
- “Who then is this?” Jesus has authority over nature.
- The disciples had read their Bibles. They knew **Psalm 89:5-9** says: **“Let the heavens praise your wonders, O LORD, your faithfulness in the assembly of the holy ones! For who in the skies can be compared to the LORD? Who among the heavenly beings is like the LORD, a God greatly to be feared in the council of the holy ones, and awesome above all who are around him? O LORD God of hosts, who is mighty as you are, O LORD, with your faithfulness all around you?” You rule the raging of the sea; when its waves rise, you still them.”**
- Could he be divine, the Messiah who we have been waiting for? Do you see what the power of Jesus does? Here’s our first point:

I. The power of Jesus should cause us to reflect on his identity (8:22-25).

- The question we will see explicitly in our text next week is one I will pose to you now. “Who do you say that Jesus is?” Is he a great example? A wise sage? A wonder worker sent from God? A great option among all other religious leaders of the world? Or is Jesus God? the Lord of your life? the One who receives your highest allegiance? The power of Jesus should cause us to reflect on his identity.

Trans: Now look at verse 26. **Read 26-33.**

- As soon as Jesus stepped off the boat, a man with a great need was there to greet him.
- Luke tells us he was often ostracized and oppressed by demonic attack. He was driven out of the city where he had no home and wore no clothes. It was an ugly situation. Verse 29 says he was kept under guard, but would often break the shackles that bound him and run free.
- He was a demons-possessed man, not demon, demons. When Jesus asked his name, the reply of the demons was “Legion” because many demons were present in his life.

- Jesus' battle with spiritual forces of darkness continue, as we've seen since his encounter with Satan in chapter 4. What do we learn about these demons?
- 1) The demons know who Jesus is. They address him as "the Son of the Most High God." Intellectual knowledge is not enough to save anyone...
- 2) They know they are no match for Jesus. Despite their number and power, they realize his power is greater and he has ultimate authority, so they make a request: "Don't cast us into the abyss. May we have permission to enter the pigs." In the OT the abyss refers to the place of the dead. It seems to be the place where demonic spirits dwell.
- "Jesus, the powerful Son of God, enters and overwhelms the dominion of evil." – Strauss
- Now let's read **vv. 34-36**
- Quite an interesting sequence of events. After the herdsmen witness these events, they flee from the scene and tell people in the city and the country what they saw. When the people come out to see for themselves, they found the demon-possessed man sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind.
- And what is the response? A party? Great celebration? They must be overwhelmed to see such a contrast between who this man used to be and who was after meeting Jesus.
- **Verse 37.** Then they asked him to leave, for they were seized with great fear.
- What? Why do they ask him to leave?
- We think materially. Jesus is no better than any other politician. He can't fix our economy. So far, he's only made it worse! But these people are not concerned with dollars and cents, at least not at this particular moment. They thought spiritually. They were astounded and overwhelmed with great fear because they had never seen anything like this in their life. You are too powerful. You are dangerous. We want things to get back to normal quick. Leave!
- That was the response of the crowds, but what about this healed, changed man? Listen, Jesus brings change! If you get in with Jesus, he's going to change your life.
 1. We already saw him sitting at Jesus feet. The place of a disciple: learning, listening, receiving his wisdom and truth.
 2. Then he begged to follow him. He was willing to leave it all. But Jesus had other plans for him. This is instructive. Jesus calls some to immediately leave their homeland for his sake. For others, he tells them to stay and witness right where they are. To put it this in practical terms, we are praying, and this is already happening, that God would send many from our church to take the gospel to the nations. At the same time, he will lead many to stay and live like missionaries right here. Are you willing to go anywhere and do anything for the sake of Christ's mission? I love what Charles Spurgeon said in light of the great global need, he said, "The question should not be, "Should I go?" but "How can I stay?" Let's pray and give and go to make Christ known among the nations.
 3. It was the task of this man to stay and proclaim what God did for him & Luke tells us that "proclaimed throughout the whole city how much Jesus had done for him."
- The change Christ brings is too good to keep quiet. And here's some good news, you don't need a seminary degree to get this done. Take a small step this week by inviting someone and bringing someone with you to church next week.

In his book, *The Unchurched Next Door*, Thom Rainer provides the following information. I hope you will let it soak in this morning (You might even want to jot this down):

1. **Most people come to church because of a personal invitation.** (No surprise there. We probably didn't need for him to tell us that. Here's the bad news.)
 2. **7 out of 10 unchurched people have never been invited to church in their whole lives** (now the really bad news)
 3. **Only 2% of church-going people invite someone to church in a given year.** "That means 98% of church-goers never extend an invitation in a given year!!" (That's startling. Now the good news.)
 4. **82% of the unchurched are at least somewhat likely to attend church if invited.**
- We can do this. We can have more than a few individuals on board. We can be a 2% church. Everyone can own this, and if we do, look out!
 - Tonight, at our members' meeting, we will be going over some of the components of our vision for 2013. Let me give you a sneak peek of one of our goals for next year. We want to see multiple people come each Sunday because of personal invitation.
 - So what do we learn here?

II. The power of Jesus should move us to proclaim his mercy. (8:26-39).

- **Verse 40-42**
- Back in Galilee, the crowd was waiting to welcome him back. Luke highlights a couple of people for us.
- First there is a man named Jairus. He was a ruler of the synagogue, and he had a twelve-year old daughter, his only daughter, who was on the verge of death. With a sense of desperation and respect, he fell at Jesus' feet to present his request. I want us to stop here for a moment.
- Think about this picture. He fell at Jesus' feet. It's the place of humility, place of desperation, of submission, of worship. What about our prayer life? Do we regularly get on our knees and bow before God. Posture is important.

- Try to put yourself in his shoes. If we don't find ourselves on our knees, it could be just that we've not been taught or seen that it is an appropriate way to pray, but it could also be that we lack a sense of desperation and desire before God.
- We ask God for a lot of good things. God, we pray that you would release my friend from the bondage of alcoholism. God, we ask you to bring healing to their marriage. God, we pray your Word would spread rapidly among the nations.
- Let me ask a follow up question. How bad do you want those requests? I'm not suggesting that God fails to hear us or that we are insincere if we are praying standing up, sitting down, or even lying down in our bed, but it is a good thing to get on our knees in a posture of humility before the greatness of God, and submit our praises and our requests to him in prayer. Sometimes our posture reveals what's going on in our hearts.
- Let me introduce you to one of my new favorite animals: the camel. I would like to ride one of these someday: the camel. **(Picture #1)** What a beautiful creature! They say beauty is in the eye of the beholder. Don't hate.
- Here is a camel kneeling. **Picture #2**
- Here is a camel's knees. **Picture #3**
- Where on earth am I going with this? Church tradition tells us that James, the half-brother of Jesus, and the author of the NT letter, had a nickname that reflected his persistence and posture in prayer. That nickname was camel-knees because they were callused from being on them so much. That may not be the coolest nickname in the world, but we would be hard pressed to find one more spiritually significant.
- So often, I offer up sleepy prayers on my back, when God is calling me to hit my knees. Sleepy prayers will never shake the heavens. The prayer of humble desperation will.
- Let's be a church that hits our knees for one another, for those in our Community Group, for this city, for our friends who have yet to experience the freedom of the gospel.

Now, as Jesus is going to Jairus' house, the people continue to press against him. **Verse 43.**

- This woman had a physical condition that caused her to bleed consistently. From the language here, it seems that she had a uterine hemorrhage that would have made her unclean by Jewish standards, brought great embarrassment, and made her a social outcast. Her condition could not be healed by anyone. She had tried so hard that she spent all she had on doctor bills.
- I love how Luke highlights this story (the only time in the gospels, by the way, where two miracle accounts are intertwined like this), and he gives us a man, who was a social elite and a woman, who was a social outcast. Jesus' ministry highlighted the dignity and worth of women and elevated their role in society. The first three verses of this chapter tell us that women traveled in the company of his disciples. Luke loves to tell us that the gospel is for all people. Remember that when you're inviting people to church this week. ;)
- This woman got close enough to touch the fringe of his garment, and she was healed immediately! And immediately, Jesus knew something happened
- Peter speaks up.... But Jesus said, "Someone touched me, for I perceive that power has gone out from me."
- This moment helps us understand the concept of power. When we say Jesus has power, we are saying he has the ability, the strength to affect change.
- Verse 47: She came trembling and, here it is again, fell at Jesus' feet. Don't miss this next line.
- **v.48** Daughter, "the only time in the gospels where Jesus uses this affectionate term."
- Term of love and relationship. I have two daughters. I look on them in a way that is different from the way I look at every other little kid. Why? Because I have a special love for them as their father.
- "Your faith has made you well; go in peace." Faith heals not because it is meritorious, but because it trusts in the One who can truly bring the change.
- This gives us a picture of how our salvation works. Jesus is my Savior. In him alone is salvation. I apprehend this salvation, when by God's grace I am moved to place my faith in him and I cease trusting in myself to please God and begin trusting in him and what he did for me to be accepted by God.
- This faith brings *peace*. This kind of peace refers to spiritual wholeness. The OT concept of *shalom* is present here.

Verse 49-56

- Picture this. Luke has taken us on a journey as we wrestle with the identity of Jesus. He is the One who has power over nature, power of demons, power of disease, and just in case you thought he might be limited in some way, he holds the power over death.
- What is it that you believe Jesus can't do? Do you have some kind of a physical ailment? I can't promise that he will, but Jesus still has the power to heal. Is there a spiritual stronghold in your life? Are you tired of floundering as a Christian? Jesus has the power to make you flourish. Do you have a desire to be used by God among your friends and in your workplace? Jesus has the power to use you in ways you would have never dreamed of.

III. The power of Jesus flows to those with a posture of desperation (8:40-56).

Conclusion:

Do you need the power of Christ in your life? You are the conclusion... Let's hit our