

Scripture Readings:

Luke 8:16 “No one, when he has lit a lamp, covers it with a vessel or puts it under a bed, but sets it on a lamp stand, that those who enter may see the light. **17** For nothing is secret that will not be revealed, nor anything hidden that will not be known and come to light. **18** Therefore take heed how you hear. For whoever has, to him more will be given; and whoever does not have, even what he seems to have will be taken from him.” **19** Then His mother and brothers came to Him, and could not approach Him because of the crowd. **20** And it was told Him by some, who said, “Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, desiring to see You.” **21** But He answered and said to them, “My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it.””

Acts 13:44 On the next Sabbath almost the whole city came together to hear the word of God. **45** But when the Jews saw the multitudes, they were filled with envy; and contradicting and blaspheming, they opposed the things spoken by Paul. **46** Then Paul and Barnabas grew bold and said, “It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken to you first; but since you reject it, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles. **47** For so the Lord has commanded us: ‘I have set you as a light to the Gentiles, That you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth.’” **48** Now when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.”

Being the Mother & Brothers of Jesus

We continue with our journey through the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts. Luke is giving an “orderly account” to his friend Theophilus of what the coming of Jesus means for him and the world.

In the early verses of Luke’s Gospel the Angel Gabriel says that John the Baptist would make a people prepared for the Lord: and of Jesus He proclaimed that, “Of His Kingdom there will be no end.” Luke keeps the focus on Jesus and His Kingdom throughout both books with the Book of Acts ending as Paul is, “preaching the Kingdom of God and teaching the things which concern the Lord Jesus Christ with all confidence!”

A simple message: Jesus has come & His Kingdom changes everything:

- **Our sins are forgiven**
- **The Church, Christ’s Bride is established**
- **The New Heavens and Earth have come**

When we studied John the Baptist we saw how all of this had been prophesized in the Old Testament and this morning we continue to learn how it impacts our lives today! The passage from Luke is familiar and simply says that if we hear and do the words of Jesus, we will be lights shining in a dark world and will relate to Jesus as His own mother and brothers.

- **I guess my biggest job this morning to make sure that I don’t complicate such a simple message!**

What we do want to consider is just what it does mean to be “light” and more importantly, what it means to be the mother and brothers of Jesus.

- **The first is a picture that is often used in the Bible and illustrates that saving faith is not just something to be known, but that it must be seen.**

Again the woman who washed the feet of Jesus and anointed Him with expensive perfume should come to mind or the centurion with great faith: Those at the dinner or those traveling with Jesus could clearly “see” the gift of saving faith in their lives.

- **What we should see from this simple illustration is that it is NOT ONLY important that the lamp be lit, but to place it somewhere to shine in the darkness. [Give lamp in closet picture for kids]**

Sometimes, especially in America today, we become very self-centered about salvation: The importance of the Gospel is that I am saved, that I have MY ticket to heaven – A candle is NOT lit to give light to itself!

In his Gospel, John clearly presents Jesus as the Light that brings salvation to the world:

John 1:1 “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. 4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men.”

Again in John 8:12 Jesus says “I am the light of the world. He who follows Me shall not walk in darkness, but have the light of life.”

Also in John 12:46 Jesus says, “I have come as a light into the world, that whoever believes in Me should not abide in darkness.”

- **Jesus gives us a simple illustration of saving faith: It is like a candle that has been lit and should give light**

No one takes a candle and puts it under a cover: It is placed on a lamp stand to give light in the darkness.

- **This is why we are here and not in heaven today: God has chosen us to be the carriers of His Good News, which is a light unto the world.**

This is what Paul proclaimed in this morning’s passage from Acts after the Jews rejected his message: “47 For so the Lord has commanded us: ‘I have set you as a light to the Gentiles, That you should be for salvation to the ends of the earth.’” 48 Now when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed.”

As we often mention, this is why the strongest declaration of God’s sovereignty in our salvation is found right next to the strongest call for us to preach the Good News in Romans chapters nine through eleven.

This is also what Simeon knew as he held the baby Jesus in his arms praying: “For my eyes have seen Your salvation which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, A light to bring revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel.

- **This is why we sing his prayer at the close of each of our worship services as a reminder of what we are to be and to do throughout the coming week!**

Luke could have left it with this illustration but, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, Luke links this with the response of Jesus to the appearance of His mother and brothers.

- **Luke brings these two things together to make the point about hearing and doing very personal!**

The image of the candle on a lamp stand is easy to see but the Kingdom is more than just mechanics:

- **Jesus has come to save His PEOPLE from their sins and we are to be the Bride of Christ as His Kingdom fills the whole earth.**

We learn much from these parables, as we did from the farming seen in the parable of the sower, but the Spirit of God does not want us to miss the importance of relationships and priorities in the Kingdom.

We are not told exactly what was on the minds of Mary and the brothers of Jesus when they came looking for Him: It may well have been similar to concerns that had John send his questions to Jesus. Jesus does not address their concerns, but uses this time to teach a very important lesson:

We are people made in the Image of the Triune God: As such we experience relationships and know that importance of them. This is why the Bible speaks of God as our Father, Jesus as our brother and the Spirit as our comforter.

Even in a fallen world where some have had very bad experiences with mothers, or sisters, or fathers, or brothers, this truth is still relevant: We do not have to teach an infant to love its mother!

Good family relationships are desired by all, even those who have never had them: So much so, that many look for them in ALL the wrong places, even with gangs or abusive relationships

Jesus takes the occasion of his natural mother and brothers coming onto the scene to teach an important lesson of the Kingdom:

- **Those who hear the words of God and do them are to be considered as the mother and brothers of Jesus Himself.**

Think about what is being said here:

- **We can think of the story of an orphaned child that is brought into a loving family:**
- **We have many examples of love and adoption in our small congregation and it is a joyous sight!**

While these are touching, here Jesus is saying that we become part of His family: Being as close as a son to his mother, or brothers to each other!

This is almost beyond our comprehension, but here Jesus is teaching that very lesson. It comes through loud, clear and personal in ALL three accounts:

- **Here in Luke, "My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it."**
- **In Mark chapter 3: 34 And He looked around in a circle at those who sat about Him, and said, "Here are My mother and My brothers! 35 For whoever does the will of God is My brother and My sister and mother."**
- **And in Matthew chapter 12: "49 And He stretched out His hand toward His disciples and said, "Here are My mother and My brothers! 50 For whoever does the will of My Father in heaven is My brother and sister and mother."**

Notice the relationship with the example of the light: A properly functioning candle is lit and placed on a stand: Giving light to the darkness. A disciple that is considered as close as a mother or brother of Jesus is one that hears and does the Word of God!

Here in Luke's account, Jesus said, "take heed how you hear."

In Chapter 8 after the parable of the sower Jesus said "'He who has ears to hear, let him hear!'"

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus commends those who hear and do His words as those who are wise

James challenged the Saints to “be swift to hear.” We love to be quick to speak, but the Bible says we are to be very careful to “hear” what God has said and then to do what we are told!

Again, lighting the lamp is not enough: It must be placed where it can give light: We must not just hear or understand what Jesus says, we must DO what we are commanded! The importance of hearing and doing is certainly tested when Jesus teaches us another important lesson about the Kingdom priorities when it comes to family:

- **As close as we might be to our earthly families, the Kingdom of God must come first!**

Thinking that being the mother or brother of Jesus is more important than our earthly families is easy to proclaim intellectually, but Jesus warns us that here also we must hear and DO the Words of Jesus: Words we will see just a few chapters later in Luke:

Luke 14:25 “Now great multitudes went with Him. And He turned and said to them, 26 “If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. 27 And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.”

Jesus goes on to use the illustrations of building towers or making war to properly count the cost of discipleship and then He ends with those familiar words: “He who has ears to hear, let him hear!”

We see a similar warning in Matthew: 10:32

“Therefore whoever confesses Me before men, him I will also confess before My Father who is in heaven. 33 But whoever denies Me before men, him I will also deny before My Father who is in heaven. 34 “Do not think that I came to bring peace on earth. I did not come to bring peace but a sword. 35 For I have come to ‘set a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law’; 36 and ‘a man’s enemies will be those of his own household.’ 37 He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not

worthy of Me. 38 And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. 39 He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it.””

And while these are hard lessons from a human standpoint, Jesus does not tempt us past that which we are able: After teaching the disciples how difficult it is for a rich man to give up his wealth for the Kingdom, we find the disciples astonished by His teaching, but Jesus gives them comfort in Matthew 19:25

“When His disciples heard it, they were greatly astonished, saying, "Who then can be saved?" 26 But Jesus looked at them and said to them, "With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible." 27 Then Peter answered and said to Him, "See, we have left all and followed You. Therefore what shall we have?" 28 So Jesus said to them, "Assuredly I say to you, that in the regeneration, when the Son of Man sits on the throne of His glory, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. 29 And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or wife or children or lands, for My name's sake, shall receive a hundredfold, and inherit eternal life.”

We have God as our father, the Church as our mother and all of us as sons and daughters of the King are brothers and sisters. Our human family helps us to understand the importance of these relationships, but we must remember that THESE are the ones which are eternal!

So what are the lessons to learn here this morning:

- We must have right actions and right priorities!
- Our lamp must be lit & SEEN!

As William Wilberforce asked in Real Christianity, “If someone held a trial, would there be enough evidence to convict you of being a Christian.”

- Does the light of the Gospel shine through us brightly into a dark world, or do we keep in under a bed during the week and only let it out on Sunday!?

Paul declared the we are created in Christ Jesus unto good works that God ordained for us to walk in: Those are to be our priority: We are to seek FIRST the Kingdom of God, not riches, not fame or popularity and not even family.

- **God may well bless us with incredible prosperity:
But we must be ready to sell all and follow Jesus**
- **God may well make us famous and certainly wants us to have a good reputation that is beyond reproach:
But we must be ready to be fools for Christ in the eyes of the world.**
- **God wants us to have strong and faithful families promising us blessings to a thousand generations:
But we must stand ready to even hate a mother or brother, father or sister that stands at odds with the work of Christ's Kingdom.**

As Jesus said so simply in the Sermon on the Mount: "But Seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness and all these things shall be added unto you."

So what will this look like in the Church? Paul gives us some instructions in his letter to the Ephesians.

Ephesians 5:6 Let no one deceive you with empty words, for because of these things the wrath of God comes upon the sons of disobedience. 7 Therefore do not be partakers with them. 8 For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Walk as children of light 9 (for the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness, righteousness, and truth), 10 finding out what is acceptable to the Lord. 11 And have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather expose them. 12 For it is shameful even to speak of those things which are done by them in secret. 13 But all things that are exposed are made manifest by the light, for whatever makes manifest is light. 14 Therefore He says: "Awake, you who sleep, Arise from the dead, And Christ will give you light.""

If we are willing to hear and DO the Words of Jesus – Even those which challenge us beyond our human ability and make us uncomfortable...

Then will we be Christ's lights shining in the darkness and He will embrace us as He would His mother and brothers!

Communion Meditation:

Revelation 21:21 The twelve gates were twelve pearls: each individual gate was of one pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass. 22 But I saw no temple in it, for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. 23 The city had no need of the sun or of the moon to shine in it, for the glory of God illuminated it. The Lamb is its light. 24 And the nations of those who are saved shall walk in its light, and the kings of the earth bring their glory and honor into it. 25 Its gates shall not be shut at all by day (there shall be no night there). 26 And they shall bring the glory and the honor of the nations into it. 27 But there shall by no means enter it anything that defiles, or causes an abomination or a lie, but only those who are written in the Lamb's Book of Life.