

Luke 8:16-21

Sermon: **My true family**

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THERE IS A TRAP

1. (Luke 8:16–17) Now no one lights a lamp and covers it with a container, or puts it under a bed; but he puts it on a lampstand, so that those who enter may see the light. For nothing is hidden that will not become evident, nor anything secret that will not be known and come to light.

1.1 Jesus continues speaking in parables. This particular parable is described in a way that every disciple could easily understand. At that time there was no electricity, so when someone came home at night, the very first thing they would do was light a candle and place it on a high spot so that the room would be well illuminated. Only then could the homeowner move freely around the house — as could everyone else who came in after him or her.

1.2 We do the same today — when we come home at night, the first thing we look for is the light switch. Once the light is on, we can move freely through our home.

1.3 All right, now let's ask: what did Jesus mean by this parable? Was He telling His disciples, *"Those who believe My teaching will go into the world and proclaim the Good News — they will not be ashamed or afraid to speak of God's salvation"*?

Or was He saying, *"If you are not completely open to My teaching, you will never truly know who you are or what you must do to inherit eternal life"*?

1.4 In other words, is this about preaching and evangelizing the multitudes who would one day hear the apostolic Gospel — or about the inner growth of faith that happens when we allow Jesus' teaching to fully enter our hearts?

1.5 Many Bible teachers throughout history have said that this passage is primarily about evangelism — that all of us who call ourselves Christians are obligated to proclaim the Gospel. Those same teachers often return to the verses in Matthew: "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden; nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on the lampstand, and it

gives light to all who are in the house. Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father who is in heaven.”¹

1.6 And I believe they are partly right. But there is a trap if our primary focus is only on proclaiming the Gospel. Why do I believe that? Because after studying Scripture for quite some time, I’ve come to the conclusion that the primary focus of all the biblical authors was first for us to recognize ourselves — to know who we are, what the purpose of our existence is, who God is, and what He requires of each individual.

— In other words, the primary focus is us — not evangelism. Evangelism comes later, I believe. —

PROCLAIMING THE GOSPEL IS EASY

2. With that said, let us recall once again the context in Luke concerning the four types of soil: we are the soil, and the seed is the Word of God. If we continue interpreting the following parable within that same context, then the lamp represents the teaching of Jesus — and we decide where to place that light. Either we hide it, so that it does not expose who we really are, or we place it high, so that it fully illuminates and reveals who we are and why we were created.

2.1 In that context, let me say this: proclaiming the Gospel is easy — anyone can do it!

2.2 Throughout history there have been individuals and groups who, with passion, knowledge, charisma, and eloquence, proclaimed the Gospel to others. But that doesn’t mean they were all the fourth soil — those who are truly chosen. I personally know people like that today. I admire their presence before others, yet, having spent much time with some of them, I’ve seen that inside they are like rotting bones — to use the very words my Teacher Jesus once spoke to the Pharisees.² Their understanding of themselves, sadly, is far from the truth that Jesus brought through His teaching.

2.3 Let me say this: one of the main ideas of today’s church is that its members must proclaim the Gospel to those who haven’t yet heard it. They teach their congregations that they must do this if they wish to prove to God, the church, and themselves that they are truly disciples of Christ. In other words, over time this act indirectly becomes the foundation of their salvation — even though they would likely deny my conclusion, I still strongly believe it’s true.

2.4 Moreover, the human ear loves to hear the words: *“Without you, others who haven’t heard the Gospel will not be saved.”* In case you didn’t know, my dear readers, that is called the “messianic syndrome”³ — and every one of us is an easy target when that role is placed before us. It is in our nature to want to be someone’s savior — a messiah with a small “m.”

2.5 And the church knows this very well; sadly, it often uses that fact to fill its quota of new members. Not all, but most — yes, I believe so.

¹ Matthew 5:14-16

² Matthew 23:27

³ Messianic syndrome — a psychological state in which a person believes they have a special, divinely appointed mission to save or redeem others.

2.6 My dear friends, the church is primarily an organization, a business, and it is managed by administrators who receive directives from higher leadership to meet yearly goals — just as the Pharisees once did.⁴

2.7 On the other hand, allowing God to tell us who we are, allowing Him to expose us, to strip us bare, to teach us who we truly are — that is the hardest decision every human being has had to make, and still must make, for themselves.

2.8 There is no person who, deep down, does not struggle daily to avoid admitting that he or she is an evil being unworthy of God's favor. That is why this must be the primary focus of everyone who has decided to follow Jesus Christ — not preaching the Gospel to those who haven't heard it.

2.9 In other words, our first and most important task is to allow the light of Jesus to expose us daily, and then to change us — for only then do we become soldiers of God, ready for battle against Satan, against ourselves, and against this world.

WE CANNOT HIDE IT

3. Let's go back a bit. I said earlier that I believe Bible teachers are partly right (see §§1.5–1.6), but my conclusion is that the primary focus of Jesus' teaching is that we continually recognize who we are before God — for the rest of our lives. That is the task we must work on daily. And then, in that process, our light will begin to shine outward, and those around us will undoubtedly see our good works.⁵

3.1 In verse 17 Jesus says that nothing is hidden that will not be revealed — and that's true. If we have decided to let Jesus' teaching change us from within, it will eventually be visible outwardly, as a testimony to all.

— We cannot hide it, nor will we even want to, in the end. —

3.2 Someone might say, *"To examine myself daily? That's exhausting — who can do that!?"* And that's true. Anyone who sees it merely as an *obligation* will never understand the grace of God and will not endure in it to the end. Only those for whom it becomes a *need* — those who cannot and will not live any other way — will persevere.

3.3 In other words, those who feel that inner need have discovered, through their journey of faith, that this very need is created by the grace of God, which is the main driving force of the Spirit dwelling within them.

3.4 All right, here's the conclusion. First, forgive me for repeating myself — I know I do. But this is very important for me to convey, so I will say it again: it's easy to preach the Gospel; it's easy to go into the world and help the poor; it's easy to tell others to repent or they will not inherit the kingdom of God; it's easy to help those in need; it's easy to fill churches with thousands of followers and quote

⁴ Matthew 23:15

⁵ Matthew 5:16

Bible verses; it's easy to donate large sums of money to organizations that call themselves Christian; it's easy to build orphanages and hospitals... but it's hard — in fact, I believe it's the hardest — to place the lamp on the stand so that it daily exposes who we are before God.

3.5 With that said, don't think I truly believe that all those things I listed above are easy — that wasn't my point. My goal was to lead you to reflect, to understand what God primarily seeks from us all. Everything else is meaningless if we refuse to face the truth that Jesus brought into the world. That alone is what matters in God's eyes — that is the *great work* He wants to see unfolding in our lives — not preaching the Gospel, building churches, or anything like that.

JESUS DROPS A BOMB

4. (Luke 8:19–21) *And His mother and brothers came to Him, and they were unable to reach Him because of the crowd. And it was reported to Him, 'Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, wishing to see You.' But He answered and said to them, 'My mother and My brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it.'*

4.1 Before us is a scene where Jesus' family comes to see Him. I won't go into the topic that many theologians have already explained in detail — the question of whether Mary had children after Jesus, and how the Catholic Church distorted the true picture of Mary.

4.2 I'll only say this briefly: the Bible itself contains written evidence, in several books of the New Testament, that contradicts the Catholic position. That's all I will say on that subject. What truly fascinates me is Jesus Himself. Truly, this man was unique — there has never been anyone like Him, and there never will be.

4.3 Let's recall something. Up to this point, He had been teaching and preaching, returning home from His travels only to continue teaching again. He hadn't even had time to eat for quite a while because of the massive crowds eagerly waiting to hear His teaching.

4.4 In the middle of all that chaos, His disciples decided to send a message to His family — His mother, brothers, and sisters — to come and get Him, because He was utterly exhausted. Here's the question: why did they do that? My assumption is that the disciples had already been urging Him to take a rest, but He refused to listen. So perhaps they decided among themselves to call His family, figuring He would surely listen to them — after all, they were His family.

4.5 That, of course, is only my assumption — but allow me to explore it further.

4.6 We read in verse 20 that someone told Him, *"Your mother and brothers are standing outside and wish to see You."* And then Jesus drops a bomb among everyone present: *"My mother and My brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it."* Perhaps there is no other moment in Scripture that better captures what truly matters to God and why He created this reality in the first place. I believe that in this statement, Jesus said everything that needed to be said. It is so important, so profound, and so magnificent... yet for some — for others — it sounds incomprehensible, unrealistic, crazy, even absurd.

4.7 With that said, the first thing I want to reject as false is the claim that Jesus was dismissing His family as something unimportant in His life. That is not true. Jesus honored, loved, and cared for His family — as every person who has ever lived should do.

4.8 So yes, Jesus understood the saying, “Family comes first,” and I’m certain He demonstrated throughout His life that He believed in that truth. But once He began His ministry — once He understood the plan His Father had for this reality, namely: *“My Father is preparing a kingdom in which I, as King, will live with the rest of God’s children — My brothers, My mothers, My sisters, My fathers — that is My true family, with whom I will dwell for all eternity”* — He realized that some family members would inevitably become spiritually divided because of that truth.

4.9 And He witnessed that very thing happening before His eyes — families torn apart because of this truth.

4.10 Furthermore, let’s not forget: up to this point, His brothers and sisters had not yet accepted His teaching in their hearts. And He, as a man (I assume), did not know whether they ever would. So from personal experience, He already understood the weight of that reality.

4.11 When we take all of that into account — His exhaustion, His hunger, the sorrow in His heart knowing that not everyone in a family would accept the truth — we can begin to grasp how courageous and steadfast our Lord Jesus Christ truly was.

— He used the visit of His physical family as an opportunity to show everyone present what really matters. —

4.12 I can only imagine how this sounded to the people listening. I believe everyone was shocked — even His disciples, who had faithfully followed Him for some time. I doubt anyone immediately grasped the depth of His message. Most, including His disciples and His family, probably thought at first that He had lost His mind.

4.13 Yet over time, some of them came to understand the depth of Jesus’ words. They realized that love for another child of God is more important — and more real — than the love they had for their physical family.

4.14 In other words, while we, as children of God, strive for what is magnificent — for what is yet to come — the children of the devil strive for what is earthly, and their story ends there. It goes no further. And as life moves on, whether we like it or not, if there are members of our families who live only for this world, we will inevitably grow spiritually distant from them.

4.15 Understanding this, we will increasingly seek to find those who share the same values as we do. I believe this is the truth the apostles and all of Christ’s disciples came to understand as they grew older.

MY TRUE FAMILY

5. All right, let's move to the application. I deeply love my family; they hold a special place in my heart, and there is nothing I wouldn't do for them.

5.1 Yet at the same time, they bring great sorrow to my heart. As life goes on, I see more and more clearly how much they love themselves — and how little they love God the Father, our Creator. In truth, they don't love Him at all. Over the years I've tried to reach their hearts and minds. I've tried to show them that they're living a lie that leads to certain destruction. I've tried to prove that we, human beings, were created for something far greater — something glorious and magnificent. I've tried to present the true image of Christ so that they might fall in love with Him. But sadly, they still talk about the same things, live the same lives as before, love the same things as before: pride, judgment, self-righteousness, self-pity, gossip, lust, false joy, false hope, false stability — and so on.

5.2 It's truly astonishing — when you witness it firsthand — how stubborn a human heart can be toward the truth. A person would rather remain miserable than acknowledge God in their life and be set free. That's how hard the human heart can become.

5.3 As the years go by, I have less and less hope for some in my family. I try — and will continue to try until my last breath — to keep that hope alive, but we've reached a point where only a few topics can safely be discussed. They now know what I don't like to talk about, and I know what they avoid talking about.

— While I grow in the wisdom of God, they remain imprisoned in their worldly wisdom. While they decay, I am renewed and grow — to put it figuratively. —

5.4 Sadly, it takes very little time before we get up from the table and go our separate ways. We don't share the same values, and everyone now knows it. We love one another for the sake of the past and because we're family — but that's about it. When we rise from the table, we each go our own way.

5.5 That being said, on the path before me, my true family awaits — waiting for us to meet again and talk for hours about the hope and truth that lie in the future. Our hearts leap with joy when we talk about our King who is coming to establish His kingdom.

5.6 I truly have such people in my life — and I sincerely hope that you do too. Some of them are members of my physical family, while others are not, yet together we are being gradually shaped into the image of God's family.

5.7 And why is that? Because we share one central truth: our hearts love God the Father and His Son, Jesus Christ — and They are our highest priority.

5.8 That is exactly what Jesus was saying to His people: *"My mother and My brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it."*

5.9 In conclusion, we who call ourselves children of God must follow Jesus' example. When the opportunity arises to highlight something important about God's plan, we must not be guided by

human weakness — fatigue, hunger, or the pressure of a crowd that may not approve of what we have to say. We should desire to be like our Teacher: courageous, bold, and steadfast in speaking the truth. That alone matters. We never know whether someone in the crowd — or in a small group — might hear and later come to understand that truth.

5.10 Furthermore, Jesus does not ask us to abandon our physical families. If our life circumstances show that we can still coexist — and in most cases we can — then we should remain, be present with them, and nurture the hope that one day they too may see the light.

5.11 One more thing: some of you listening to or reading this sermon will never understand this truth — you'll reject it immediately, both in mind and in heart. But others who read or listen will not reject it; they will keep it in their hearts and allow life itself to prove whether it is true or not.

5.12 I want to close this sermon with a prayer. I hope that in your case, God will grant you the gift of seeing all your family members become children of God. But if they do not, I pray that God will give you the strength to choose what is greater: "to hear the word of God and to do it in your life."