



“Revelation and Response”
Luke 8:16-18

Idea: Responding in faith and with obedience to the revelation of God’s Word is absolutely crucial to knowing and following Jesus.

Intro: Do I believe the Bible? Can I believe the Bible? These are two very important and critical questions that those who would follow Jesus must answer. On the surface, the answers might seem simple. More than likely, most of us would emphatically say, “Yes.” Yet, even as we say that there are many stories and events in the Bible we cannot explain or justify through science or logic. Here are just a few examples:

- World-wide flood (Gen 6-7)
There has been no other global, cataclysmic flood event in history other than the one described in the Bible. Natural disasters are always compared to other similar events. This flood has no historical companion.
- Parting of the Red Sea (Ex 14)
Science cannot explain how the Red Sea could be parted so that over two million people might pass through on dry ground.
- Manna (Ex 16)
The Bible describes that each morning this flakey, flour-like substance accumulated on the ground much like dew. Six days a week this phenomenon occurred (Sunday-Friday), but on the sabbath day (Saturday) no manna was ever found on the ground. In my forty-four years, I have never seen anything like that. For that matter, I know of no other time in history where food was manifested from the atmosphere to feed one single person, much less an entire nation.
- Jesus walking on water (Matt 14; Mark 6; John 6)
This story defies everything we know about physics. It is impossible for a person to walk on water, yet the Bible claims that Jesus did so. In an attempt to help explain this claim, US and Israeli scientists in 2006 dismissed the miracle by asserting that Jesus floated on a thin layer of ice, formed by a rare combination of weather and water conditions on the Sea of Galilee.

These are just four examples of stories and events in the Bible that defy science and logic, complicating a simple belief in what is recorded. There are many others with the apex being Christ’s resurrection. While it is important and even critical that we believe what is written in the sixty-six books of the Bible, I think it is more important that we ask a different question. The better question is, “Do I believe Jesus?” In other words, I believe it is important to respond in faith and with obedience to Jesus first. As we read through the Bible, this seems to be the very point of everything we read. It all points to Jesus.

The Bible does not contend for its readers to believe its stories, but it does call for its readers to believe in and obey Jesus. Therefore, we should not become fixated on being able to understand and explain every nuance of Scripture, but instead we should give ourselves to knowing Jesus Christ. Leonard Ravenhill, offers insight here: “We have adopted the convenient theory that the Bible is a Book to be explained, whereas first and foremost it is a Book to be believed... There is a world of difference between knowing the Word of God and knowing the God of the Word.”

Ravenhill directs our attention and belief toward the Lord because the point of the Bible is for its readers to know the God of the Bible. When, through the Holy Spirit’s illumination of Scripture, we are made to believe in Jesus Christ and choose to know Him intimately, then our hearts and minds are opened more and more to believe and follow the teaching of the Word. Those difficult passages and hard to believe stories have a way of making sense once our faith is seated in Christ and our yes is on the table. Failing or refusing to do so leads to the opposite result. Jesus calls on us to respond in faith and with obedience to this revelation. The verses we are examining today on the next stop along our journey through Luke’s gospel relate to the theme of revelation and response. This theme was on full display in the previous pericope (8:4-15), and it will also be in the next one (8:19-21).

Read Luke 8:16-18.

Inquiry: These verses read more like a proverb than a parable. Perhaps, due to its proverbial nature, verse 16 is repeated in almost exact verbal form in 11:33 and is quoted similarly in Matt 5:15 and Mark 4:21. Contextually, the first half of Luke 8 focuses on the various responses of people to the preaching of Jesus. We read in verse 1 that Jesus was traveling “*through cities and villages, proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God.*” As Jesus preached the gospel people responded in one of four ways. The parable of the soils explains those different responses. Some were calloused. Others were crusty. A few were crowded. Then a small number were capable.

In these next verses, Jesus uses the metaphor of light from a lamp to teach about the activity and power of His Word and how we must believe it. We learn from these verses that responding in faith and with obedience to the revelation of God’s Word is absolutely crucial to knowing and following Jesus. Three thoughts stand out in this metaphor.

1. A light shines and reveals. (vs. 16)

Light is the natural agent that stimulates sight and makes things visible. More complexly, light is electromagnetic radiation within the portion of the electromagnetic spectrum emanating from a source that is perceived by the human eye. For example, sunlight comes from the sun and reveals the objects around us. When you walk into a dark room and flip on the light switch, light shines from the bulb and reveals what is in the room. When the power goes out in a storm, forcing you to light a candle, light rays are emitted from the flame. Those rays bounce off what is around the candle and the reflected light is picked up by your eyes and translated into an image.

Sight, then, is dependent upon light. If there is no light for the pupils of our eyes to absorb, then there will be no sight, and nothing will be seen. Jesus tells us that light is essential for sight. For this reason, it makes no sense to light a lamp just to cover it up or tuck it away. Instead, you light a lamp and hold it high that all may see. The very purpose of light is to shine and reveal.

2. The Word speaks and exposes. (vs. 17)

Jesus infers in verse 17 that His Word is light. And just as light shines and reveals, Jesus’ Word speaks and exposes. This statement is not a stretch because Jesus Himself is described by John as being “the Word” and “the light of men.”

Read John 1:1-5, 9-18.

Jesus, as God the Son, spoke creation into existence (John 1:3). Life emanates from Him (John 1:4-5). He shines and reveals God the Father to mankind (John 1:9, 18). As the only One who has seen the Father, Jesus portrays the Father to us. Likewise, as the Living Word, He speaks to us through His written Word, which exposes the dark places of our lives.

You see, there is nothing off limits or out of bounds in our lives when it comes to the Word of God. It speaks to every issue and exposes every sin in much the same way that light shines and reveals everything in the room. God has graciously given it to us for this purpose.

3. Your response brings gain or causes loss. (vs. 18)

Jesus offers a warning in verse 18. The ESV translates the first word in the verse as *“take care.”* The Greek verb root is βλέπω, which means “to see.” The idea is to take heed or to watch out. It calls our attention back to Jesus’ appeal in 8:8, where He said, *“He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”* The point of sharing this metaphor with His hearers is now made clear. Just as light shines and reveals what is in the darkness, God’s Word speaks and exposes the dark spaces. Therefore, it is vitally important for people to respond in faith and with obedience to the light of God’s Word. When one heeds the Word more is received, but when one neglects the Word less is given and some is taken away.

Another way to think about this is, when I believe and obey God’s Word, more light is given to see and do His will. The luminescence is increased with each step of faith, exposing more dangers, pitfalls, blessings, and opportunities. On the flip side, when I refuse to believe and obey God’s Word, light is removed to see and do His will. The dimmer is turned down, preventing the ability to see potential dangers, pitfalls, blessings, and opportunities.

It is obviously advantageous for us to believe and obey God’s Word. Let me share four benefits of doing so.

- Happiness
Blessed are those whose way is blameless, who walk in the law of the LORD! – Psalm 119:1
- Personal purity
How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word. – Psalm 119:9
- Freedom from shame
Then I shall not be put to shame, having my eyes fixed on all your commandments. – Psalm 119:6
- Discernment
Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path. – Psalm 119:105

Hopefully, we can see that responding in faith and with obedience to the revelation of God’s Word is absolutely crucial to knowing and following Jesus. What we might not understand is how to approach God’s Word. Let me offer three practical approaches to believing and obeying the Word.

Practical Approaches to the Word

- Commit to the daily reading and studying of the Bible.
- Read and study the Bible to know God.
- Prepare to obey what God speaks and exposes through the reading of the Bible.

Conclusion: Responding in faith and with obedience to the revelation of God’s Word is absolutely crucial to knowing and following Jesus. As I was preparing for this message, a thought kept coming up in my mind,

“Why does almost every story in Luke’s gospel contain a negative component? I would much rather prefer to preach a cheery five-steps to a happy life passage.” Well, the reason is that sin is real and because of it every person is totally depraved. Sin has perverted every aspect of our lives. It is man’s nature, affecting our choices and behavior. Sin is rebellion against authority, which is the breaking of a relationship. Sin causes a person to submit, love, and obey something over and in place of God. It is a willful missing of the mark because the person does not want to abide by the standard God has set.

Sin is real, and it holds everyone in bondage. Jesus, however, shines the light of the gospel on our lives and frees us from the power of sin. Sinners forgiven in Jesus now have new life. The soil of their lives can produce fruit, but it will require a determined choice to respond in faith and with obedience to God’s Word.

Use a candle as a light on the stage.

When believers fail to listen and obey God’s Word we do not gain more insight and more revelation. No, we lose it. We lose our happiness, personal purity, shame, and discernment. When we lose revelation, it is not that God has walked away. Instead, it is that we have walked away from the Word. In our rebellion, we are walking at a guilty distance. The Word is getting farther and farther away, and we no longer can hear it. Therefore, what needs to happen is an acknowledgment of where you are, confession of disobedience, repentance to stop moving away and to start moving toward Jesus, and then obedience to walk in the Word.

Christian, how bright is the light in your life? Is it like walking in the brightness at noon, or is it more like walking through caves with a paper match?

Whatever the brightness of your light, today commit to respond in faith and with obedience and your light will shine brighter.

For those outside of Christ, the Bible describes your life as full of darkness. You are dead in sin, separated from the God who created you, yet there is hope. Jesus is the light of men, and He is shining in the darkness of your sin. He calls you to respond in faith, trusting Him as your Lord and Savior.

Good news: God loves you. He created you and desires to know you.

Bad news: You are a sinner in rebellion against your Creator.

Best news: God has done everything necessary to justly deal with your sin and bring forgiveness and restoration to your life. Today, He calls you to turn from your sin and self and turn to Him as Savior and Lord. Do you need to be forgiven?