

Luke 8:22-56 // Deliverance in Every Direction

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Preacher: Tim Scoular

[0 : 00] And richer discipleship. And we pray that in Jesus' name.! Amen. When I was about eight or nine years old,! And in the bush, it looks something like this.

There are rocks. There are cliffs. There are trees. There are very few signposts. And there are, of course, multiple animals that can kill you if they want to.

And we were going on a bushwalk as a family with another family, and they'd been on this bushwalk before. It was about a two- or a three-hour walk, and we'd stopped at the halfway point to have something to eat, have a bit of a drink.

And for me, as a primary school-aged boy, and with this other family who had two boys about my age, we didn't like the idea of stopping and doing nothing.

So we wanted to keep going on the bushwalk while the adults and the other kids hang back. I mean, I was with these two other boys. They'd done this walk before. We'd be okay.

[1 : 19] And so on we went. Now, it's worth pointing out at this stage that in Australia, if you're going to get yourself into trouble, it's generally not the animals who are going to be the difficult part.

If you go to the beach in Australia, it's very unlikely that you're going to have issues from a shark. But it is likely that you're going to get into trouble if you don't understand the ocean and how it works, if you're not paying attention to the currents and which way they're going to take you, and you're not careful when you're in the water, well, then you're likely to get into trouble.

In the same way, in the Aussie bush, the snakes and spiders are probably going to cause you no issue at all. But you are likely to get lost if you don't know where you're going.

There are stories all the time of people who get lost in the bush, they're trapped or they're stuck, and no one knows where they are. That's the biggest danger that the bush is.

Now, you might be at this point wondering why three primary school-aged boys were allowed to venture into the bush ahead of our parents and our families. And I'm sure my parents would appreciate me telling you that one, underconfidence has never been a significant aspect of my personality profile, and two, we may or may not have asked for permission before we ventured further into the bush.

[2 : 44] But whatever happened, there we were, three primary school-aged boys in the Aussie bush what could go wrong. Well, I'm sure you guess, right? What went wrong? We got lost. Although they'd done the walk before, it obviously hadn't been done with sufficient clarity on their behalf to be tour guides.

And it was the moment when we sort of realised that we hadn't seen any sort of defined path for a little while, that we started getting a bit nervous.

Panic started to creep in. And we realised that we were in over our heads. Have you ever had a moment in life where you feel that pang of panic where you know you're in over your head?

It might be from something like a boy being on a bushwalk, or it might be something later in life, where life's circumstances have just overwhelmed you, and you feel uncertain, and you feel unsure, and you feel panicking, because you don't know what to do, and you don't know where to go, and you don't know what's going to happen next.

In Luke 8 today, four stories, one after another, where each of them talk about a family, or an individual, or a group, who are deep in the pang of panic, and they don't know what's going to come next, and they are desperate.

[4 : 21] They have lost control over themselves, or they're living with chronic disease, or a dying child.

All of that's in our passage for today. You can see in the outline, we're going to be thinking about danger, demons, disease, and death.

We're going to start with danger. I'm going to invite Jackie up, who's going to bring our first Bible reading. As she comes up, you can turn in the Bibles to page 1037. It's Luke chapter 8, verses 22 to 25.

One day Jesus said to his disciples, let us go over to the other side of the lake. So they got into a boat and set out. As they sailed, he fell asleep.

A squall came down on the lake, so that the boat was being swamped, and they were in great danger. The disciples went and woke him, saying, Master, Master, we're going to drown.

[5 : 31] He got up and rebuked the wind and the raging waters. The storm subsided, and all was calm. Where is your faith?

He asked his disciples. In fear and amazement, they asked one another, who is this? He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him.

Keep those Bibles open as we walk through. Look at verse 22. Jesus says to his disciples, let's go over to the other side of the lake. Now, this might sound quite obvious, but when Jesus is ever on water, he's always travelling.

He's travelling somewhere, and in this instance, he's travelling to the other side of the Sea of Galilee. The Sea of Galilee was right up the top, right up the north of the land of Israel, and he's going from the land of Israel to a Gentile area, where people who are not Jewish live.

And that's going to be significant in a moment. But he says, they go to the other side of the lake, and so they got into a boat and set out. Verse 23, as they sailed, he fell asleep, and a squall, a big storm, came down on the lake so that the boat was being swamped.

[6 : 46] And they were in great danger. The disciples have no control. They're getting desperate because they are in great danger.

Now, how do you think the disciples are going to act at this point? I mean, they've been hanging out with Jesus for a little while by now. They've heard some of his teaching. They've heard some of his claims about himself. We might imagine that the disciples are there going, well, we sort of know Jesus.

We think he might be the Messiah. He hasn't saved the world yet, so he's probably going to do that at some point. I don't think he's going to die in a boating accident. But they don't do that.

They do what probably all of us would have done. They panic. Master, Master, we're going to drown. That is what they expect is going to happen.

And Jesus rebukes them for a lack of faith. A lack of faith in who he is. A lack of belief in who he is.

[7 : 55] And it seems that the disciples still have questions. Who is this? They ask themselves. And if the disciples are not yet sure who Jesus is, well, the next three stories are told of people who do have definitive clarity on who Jesus is.

I'm going to invite Az up. He's going to bring us our second reading for today, verses 26 to 39. We're going to start thinking about demons. They sailed to the region of the Gerasenes, which is across the lake from Galilee.

When Jesus stepped ashore, he was met by a demon-possessed man from the town. For a long time, this man had not worn clothes or lived in a house, but had lived in the tombs.

When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell at his feet, shouting at the top of his voice, What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, don't torture me.

For Jesus had commanded the impure spirit to come out of the man. Many times it had seized him, and though he was chained hand and foot and kept under guard, he had broken his chains and had been driven by the demon into solitary places.

[9 : 27] Jesus asked him, What is your name? Legion, he replied, because many demons had gone into him. And they begged Jesus repeatedly not to order them to go into the abyss.

A large herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside. The demons begged Jesus to let them go into the pigs, and he gave them permission. When the demons came out of the man, they went into the pigs, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned.

When those tending the pigs saw what had happened, they ran off and reported this in the town and the countryside, and the people went out to see what had happened. When they came to Jesus, they found the man from whom the demons had gone out, sitting at Jesus' feet, dressed and in his right mind, and they were afraid.

Those who had seen it told the people how the demon-possessed man had been cured. Then all the people of the region of the Gerasenes asked Jesus to leave them, because they were overcome with fear.

So he got into the boat and left. The man from whom the demons had gone out begged him to go with him, but Jesus sent him away, saying, Return home and tell how much God has done for you.

[10 : 49] So the man went away and told all over the town how much Jesus had done for him. Thanks, Az. Two things to notice from that story.

First, this happens outside of the land of Israel, this region of the Gerasenes. It's in Gentile country, as you've noticed before. This is the first time in Luke's Gospel that Jesus has ventured outside of the land of Israel.

And yet, even here, Jesus is known. He's not known by the people, but he is known by the demons. They know who he is.

The second thing to notice is that this man is utterly controlled by these demons. We're not talking about bad mental health here, we're not talking about a few rough days.

Look at verse 28. When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell at his feet, shouting at the top of his voice, What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God?

[11 : 54] I beg you, don't torture me. For Jesus had commanded the impure spirit to come out of the man. But the man says, don't torture me when the demon is commanded to come out.

I don't want to read too much into this, but sin, when it is left unchecked, does begin to control us. And when it's threatened in our life, when our sin is threatened, when it's pointed out or it's challenged, our bodies will fight it, our bodies will be defensive, or our fight or flight, impulse might kick in.

That's evil at work within us. That's what's going on for the man here. The demon is rebuked and the man speaks in defence. But Jesus willingly steps into this.

And Jesus is the only one who will willingly step into this. It seems like the town was quite happy with this guy sort of wandering around and breaking his chains and doing his thing, so long as he did it outside of the town.

So long as he was in solitary places and he wasn't disrupting them, well then they were happy for him to keep doing his thing. Stay out of the town and we won't bother you. We'll be tolerant of you so long as we don't have to deal with you.

[13 : 13] But Jesus doesn't have that approach. He talks with this man. This man who so identifies with these demons that he has taken on the name of the number of demons who are inside him, Legion.

And Jesus gives the demons permission, verse 32, to do what they're begging him for, to go into the pigs. And the pigs run into the sea and the pig tenders, they go and tell this story in the town.

And the town will ask Jesus to leave their region. But it's not because they lost the pigs. Have a look at verse 35.

It says, the people went out to see what had happened. And when they came to Jesus, they found the man from whom the demons had gone out.

Now this was the man that they couldn't do anything with. This is the man who lived in the tombs. This is the man who broke his chains. This is the man who ran around naked.

[14 : 29] Everyone in the town knew this man. Mothers warned their children about this man. teenagers at school mocked this man.

Fathers in the pub would talk about this man. Government officials would talk, scratch their heads about public health policies that were unable to help this man.

And the mothers and the children, the fathers and the teenagers, and the government officials, all come out from the town to see what had happened.

And they found the man from whom the demons had gone out sitting at Jesus' feet, dressed, and in his right mind.

And what does Luke say next? And they were afraid. Afraid of Jesus.

[15 : 31] Because someone had stepped into their world who they have no explanation for. Messing with their categories.

And they don't know what to do about it. They tell him, just please leave us. Verse 39, Jesus says to the man, who's now dressed and in his right mind, return home and tell how much God has done for you.

So the man went away and told all over town how much Jesus had done for him. And the demon-possessed man, or the formerly demon-possessed man, becomes the sharpest theological thinker that that region has ever produced from one afternoon with Jesus.

Clarity. Who is Jesus? He is God. Belief. Now for our third reading, Malcolm, sorry, as we're going to have both our Bible readers back up, and we're going to read together, because there's two stories in this one.

So first, we're going to have verses 40 to 56, and Jackie's going to read that. So if your Bible's fallen shut, we're on page 1038. So Jackie's going to read verses 40 to 42, and then Az is going to jump in, because Luke interrupts that story with another story, Az is going to read that one, and then Jackie will finish it off.

[17 : 16] Now, when Jesus returned, a crowd welcomed him, for they were all expecting him. Then a man named Jairus, a synagogue leader, came and fell at Jesus' feet, pleading with him to come to his house, because his only daughter, a girl of about 12, was dying.

Oh, sorry. As Jesus was on his way, the crowds almost crossed him. And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for 12 years, but no one could heal her.

She came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak, and immediately her bleeding stopped. Who touched me? Jesus asked. When they all denied it, Peter said, Master, the people are crowding and pressing against you.

But Jesus said, someone touched me. I know that power has gone out from me. Then the woman, seeing that she could not go unnoticed, came trembling and fell at his feet.

In the presence of all the people, she told why she had touched him and how she had been instantly healed. Then he said to her, Daughter, your faith has healed you.

[18 : 35] Go in peace. Jesus said to Jairus, someone came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue leader.

Your daughter is dead, he said. Don't bother the teacher anymore. Hearing this, Jesus said to Jairus, don't be afraid, just believe and she will be healed.

When he arrived at the house of Jairus, he did not let anyone go in with him except Peter, John and James and the child's father and mother. Meanwhile, all the people were wailing and mourning for her.

Stop wailing, Jesus said. She's not dead, but asleep. They laughed at him, knowing that she was dead. But he took her by the hand and said, My child, get up.

Her spirit returned and at once she stood up. Then Jesus told them to give her something to eat. Her parents were astonished, but he ordered them not to tell anyone what had happened.

[19 : 46] Thanks, Jackie. Thanks, Az. It's no accident that in this story of the synagogue ruler who was at the very top of society, there's an interruption one by this nameless woman who is at the very bottom of society.

We'll think about her first, we think about disease and then we'll come on to Jairus' daughter. It's no accident that the story about the synagogue ruler, sorry, that's what I said before, let's look at verse 43.

A woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years, but no one could heal her. Just have a think about how desperate this woman was. For over a decade, she has been trying to get control over her body, to no avail.

She was poor, she was alone, and she was, as a Jewish woman, religiously unclean, for blood and bleeding like this puts you in that category.

And she's been like that for twelve years. She's been to every conventional and unconventional source of healing, but none have been able to help her.

[21 : 07] And as a last ditch attempt, she works her way into the crowd, so that she can touch the edge of Jesus' cloak. Now, she's not supposed to be in a crowd, she's supposed to be, by herself, unclean.

she wants to be invisible. She doesn't want to be noticed, she doesn't want to be shamed. And she touches Jesus' cloak.

She's nameless, she's unnoticed by everyone, except Jesus, because Jesus stops.

And she notices that her bleeding has stopped. But she still doesn't want to show her face. Now, Peter's there, he wants to keep the show moving, but Jesus doesn't.

Jesus knows this is a significant moment. Verse 46, someone touched me. I know that power has gone out from me. And it becomes evident to the whole convoy that it's no longer a convoy because Jesus is going to stop until someone shows themselves.

[22 : 32] Then the woman, seeing that she could not go unnoticed, came trembling and fell at his feet.

In the presence of all the people, she told why she had touched him and how she had been instantly healed. And then he said to her, with world-altering tenderness, daughter, your faith has healed you.

Go in peace. Now, I don't think it's just out of tenderness that Jesus speaks to her in this way. It's certainly not less than that, but it is to show how important she is in Jesus' eyes.

There are two daughters in these two stories. Did you notice how old Jairus' daughter was? About 12. And how long had the woman been bleeding for?

About 12 years. For 12 years, one of these daughters has been bringing joy to her father, the synagogue ruler, and he adores her.

[23 : 50] She is one of the most privileged 12-year-olds in the whole country. And around the time when she was born 12 years ago, this woman started bleeding and has lost everything.

Her life has become one of isolation, rejection, derision, and poverty. Very different trajectories those last 12 years.

And then this man comes along and he heals her and by faith, she isn't just the daughter of the synagogue ruler. She's the daughter of God Most High.

by faith. Just notice Jesus transforming power on behalf of the afflicted.

And this has, of course, come right in the middle of the final story about Jairus and his daughter. Our final one for tonight, I'm going to think about Jesus' authority over death.

[25 : 01] The convoy had been rushing to Jairus' house until this other story came about. So, let's think about Jairus. Synagogue rulers don't publicly come to self-proclaimed rabbis for healing unless they're desperate.

And Jairus is desperate. Verse 41, he falls at Jesus' feet and he pleads with him because his only daughter, a girl of about 12, was dying.

The way Luke phrases this, it's something like his daughter, his only one, was dying. It seems like this is Jairus' only child and he's about to lose her.

Synagogue rulers don't publicly come to self-proclaimed rabbis unless they are desperate. Kobayashi Issa was a Japanese Buddhist poet a couple hundred years ago.

Buddhism teaches that life is transient, it's all passing by, life is sometimes described as due to reinforce this and the teaching of Buddhism is that the Buddha was the one who realised that suffering comes from our clinging to things that will inevitably change and so he found freedom or Nirvana by letting go of attachment to life and his followers seek to walk that same path.

[26 : 43] Kobayashi Issa sought to walk that same path. But then Kobayashi Issa's daughter died. And he wrote his most famous haiku.

The world of Jew is a world of Jew. And yet, and yet. His religion told him that loving his daughter was contributing to his suffering.

So he should think of her as Jew. and yet. That proved to be an insufficient belief when it was really tested.

It did not make sense of the human condition. Japanese Buddhist poets don't publicly question their religious dogma unless they're desperate.

there is no firmer test for a world view than when death meets your child. And so while the convoy has stopped for this bleeding woman, Jairus is in the most significant period of testing that he's ever had in his whole life and then the whole crowd get the terrible news.

[28 : 09] verse 49 your daughter is dead. Don't bother the teacher anymore.

But with words that banish sorrow Jesus says don't be afraid. Just believe. Believe me.

Believe me, Jairus. In the boat when the disciples saw Jesus calm the wind and the waves, they responded with fear and they weren't sure who Jesus was.

When the townspeople saw the demon-possessed man sitting at Jesus' feet, they responded with fear and they drove Jesus away while he believed who Jesus was.

When the bleeding woman had been healed, she came trembling and fell at Jesus' feet. Her belief in who Jesus was is what established her as a daughter of the God Most High.

[29 : 21] When Jairus' daughter has died, Jesus says don't be afraid, just believe. And Jesus walks into that house and he takes the girl's hands and he says, my child, get up.

And from the other side of death, her spirit hears the voice of Jesus and obeys the voice of Jesus and life was breathed back into her mortal body. love.

And Luke includes these stories one after another for his friend Theophilus, who the whole gospel of Luke has been written to.

The whole book is written that Theophilus might have certainty about the things that he has been taught. And Luke wants to teach Theophilus something through these four stories. Jesus is powerful over danger, demons, disease, and death.

And he is happy to share that power with whoever. Even you, Theophilus, if you will believe.

[30 : 39] Even you, Saint Silas, if you believe, if you have faith that Jesus is who he said he was, the Son of God. Back when me and my friends were lost, we were wondering what to do.

Unsure. How could we find our parents? How could we find our way back to the path where we were supposed to be? And we didn't know, we were beginning to panic, we were starting to get those pangs. Now, boys and girls who are in here with mum or dad, this is one of those sneaky stories where I'm going to address you, I'm going to talk to you in the room, and everyone else is going to listen in that little bit more closely, right, because I'm talking to the kids and they want to know what I'm going to tell you.

So it's a little game that we play, it helps the mum and dads to listen, and other adults and students and everyone else. So, boys and girls, our two families who we were on this bushwalk together, we were friends from church, that's where we knew each other from.

And when we panicked, and when we were unsure and uncertain, there was one of the boys in our group who said, we can always pray to God, God, and so we decided that, yes, that's what we should do, and so as a group of three primary school aged boys, we started praying, God, would you help us find our parents?

Would you help us to be safe? Would you save us from being lost? And we backtracked our steps and we found the path we were supposed to be on, we kept following the path until eventually we found our parents.

[32 : 34] For however long you live, you're always going to have times where you feel like a little boy lost in the bush. And when those times come, you need to know that Jesus is especially close to you.

Jesus doesn't run away in the hard times. The proof is that when He went to the cross, He faced the danger Himself, He defeated demons and all evil and He ensured that disease and death will not have the final word on your life.

And He did that for anyone. The four stories that we've looked at say that Jesus did that for Jew or Gentile, for people who have known Jesus for a long time or just an hour, for people at the top of society, for people at the bottom of society, for young and for old.

So when you're lost or scared or uncertain or afraid, whether you're six or you're 36 or you're 86, Jesus says, don't be afraid, just believe.

We're going to sing a song as a church family called Jesus Strong and Kind. And boys and girls, this is another song, another one of those ones where this is written for kids, so listen and sing loudly.

[34 : 20] But you might just notice a few tears in the eyes of the adults around you because this is such a beautiful song.