

CHAPTER 8

Overview of Luke 8

This chapter opens with the observation that there were quite a few women following Jesus, as well as His disciples. As the crowds become larger and larger, it becomes more difficult to determine who is really receiving Jesus' words, and who is just a curious onlooker. Therefore Jesus provides His disciples with a parable, perhaps one of His most important ones. It concerns how people respond to His teachings. There is then a short paragraph concerning Jesus' own family, and how Jesus defines His spiritual family. The scene then shifts to a region across the Sea of Galilee where Jesus confronts a mad man who is demon possessed. On His return, He is asked to heal the daughter of a synagogue official, and on the way brings healing to one who fulfills Jesus' teaching concerning who is really a part of His family.

What to look for in Luke 8

1. As you read each paragraph ask, "How is God speaking to me personally through His word?"
2. Look for the theme of "faith" throughout the chapter.
3. In the stories at the end of the chapter, look for the similarities between the woman with the issue of blood and Jairus' daughter.
4. Ask, "Why does the writer Luke include the story about the calming of the sea, and how will this event prepare the disciples for the future?"
5. In the parable of the sown seed, look for the four different types of soil, and then ask which type of soil describes you?
6. Look for the purpose Jesus gives His disciples when they receive God's word with faith.
7. Look for the "family" theme in regards to those who have faith in Jesus.

1 Soon afterwards, He *began* going around from one city and village to another, proclaiming and preaching the kingdom of God. The twelve were with Him,

2 and *also* some women who had been healed of evil spirits and sicknesses: Mary who was called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out,

3 and Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others who were contributing to their support out of their private means.

8:1-3 The thematic connection between chapter 7 and chapter 8 is the woman mentioned at Simon's dinner. Luke is recording that not only were there many men disciples following Jesus, but also a fairly large contingent of women disciples. The woman at Simon's party may have been one of them. (There is no indication, however, that the woman mentioned at Simon's dinner was the Mary Magdalene of 8:2, an assumption that early Christian theologians mistakenly made.) So Luke begins the chapter by introducing us to some of the more notable women disciples who were following Jesus.

The first woman mentioned is Mary, a disciple from the town of Magdala, or modern-day Migdal on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee. Note that she is not offended—as some would be today—by allowing Luke to tell the world that she had seven demons cast out of her. Most likely, she is so wonderfully grateful for her deliverance that she wants the whole world to know that Jesus is her deliverer. Her love for Him would have been very great. The nature of the demons that inhabited Mary are not stated, but an issue of sickness is implied. There is no reason to assume that her demons resulted

in prostitution. Her love for Jesus will find her at the foot of His cross and at the tomb of resurrection.

Contrary to popular belief, nowhere in Gnostic or other heterodox literature is there the suggestion that Jesus had a physical relationship with Mary Magdalene. Only present-day sensationalistic docudramas emanating from Hollywood suggest that Jesus may have had a son with Mary Magdalene. Such suggestions are not only completely out of touch with the reality of the relationships between rabbis and their disciples, but they are projections of personal debauchery and hideous perversions of love, not to mention a very low view of the person of Jesus Christ. Those who propagate and profit from such heinous conjectures are guilty of sacrilege and blasphemy, and betray their own crude depravity and banality.

Nothing is known about Joanna, but her association with Herod's household probably resulted in privileged information about John the Baptist's death and the events surrounding the crucifixion. Nor is anything known about Suzanna, and she is not mentioned again in Scripture.

It was common in the day for disciples to support itinerate rabbis. Note, too, that unlike modern-day ministries, there is no hint of offerings being taken for the building of Christian empires. The support offered by Jesus' followers was completely voluntary and of a good will, with no strings attached or promises of healings or prosperity, and sufficient only to provide for daily rations of food and possibly for clothing.

4 When a large crowd was coming together, and those from the various cities were journeying to Him, He spoke by way of a parable:

5 "The sower went out to sow his seed; and as he sowed, some fell beside the road, and it was trampled under foot and the birds of the air ate it up.

6 "Other *seed* fell on rocky *soil*, and as soon as it grew up, it withered away, because it had no moisture.

7 "Other *seed* fell among the thorns; and the thorns grew up with it and choked it out.

8 "Other *seed* fell into the good soil, and grew up, and produced a crop a hundred times as great." As He said these things, He would call out, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

8:4-15 What follows next in Luke's narrative is what is called the "Parable of the Sown Seed." This is not a parable about salvation—although some conjectures may be made—but a parable about how people react when hearing the teachings of Jesus. The present-day equivalent of this is how people react to God's word, the Bible, which contains the words of God. Ultimately, the issue is truth. But this parable focuses on Jesus' teaching itself and relates primarily to those who are coming to hear His teachings and to be healed. The context to this parable is 8:4a: "When a large crowd was coming together..."

8:5-8 A parable is a story that could be true but isn't necessarily true. It is based on what happens typically. Parables are always designed to teach a spiritual truth; in this case, the lesson involves the crowd's response to Jesus' teaching. Therefore, parables are spoken to provide truth to those who are willing to listen (believers) and to hide truth from those who are unwilling to learn from the speaker, and therefore remain blinded from seeing the truth.

Jesus gives a simple parable that those who grow crops can relate to. Not all seed lands on good soil.

9 His disciples *began* questioning Him as to what this parable meant.

10 And He said, “To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest *it is* in parables, so that SEEING THEY MAY NOT SEE, AND HEARING THEY MAY NOT UNDERSTAND.

11 “Now the parable is this: the seed is the word of God.

12 “Those beside the road are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their heart, so that they will not believe and be saved.

13 “Those on the rocky *soil are* those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no *firm* root; they believe for a while, and in time of temptation fall away.

14 “The *seed* which fell among the thorns, these are the ones who have heard, and as they go on their way they are choked with worries and riches and pleasures of *this* life, and bring no fruit to maturity.

15 “But the *seed* in the good soil, these are the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance.

Anyone who has sown seed in a large field realizes that some seed falls on the road or path, and makes for easy picking by birds. Other seed falls on parts of the field that have not been prepared. They fail to receive water and therefore never grow beyond initial sprouting. Yet other seed falls on relatively good soil, only this soil also has weeds, and the seed and weeds grow together. However, some seed falls on well-tilled and prepared soil and, along with the water, produce the desired growth and crops.

The phrase, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear” means, “Those who have the desire to understand need to listen carefully and seek to understand the spiritual truth behind the parable.”

8:9-10 The key phrase here is “began questioning Him.” In other words, the disciples desired to know the spiritual truth behind the parable. Caring about the truth is the first step to learning it. Jesus responds that His disciples are in a privileged position: God has granted to them the opportunity to know the “mysteries of the kingdom of God.” The word “mysteries” does not have the same meaning as used in a mystery novel. This word means that which has been hidden from man by God will now come to light. God is granting the disciples—those who have faith in Jesus and desire to know the truth—the blessing of having this spiritual truth revealed to them. It is not a new truth but a spiritual truth newly revealed.

Jesus then quotes from Isaiah 6:9 which is part of a passage involving Isaiah’s commissioning: “Who will go for us?” to which Isaiah responds, “Here am I, send me.” God then informs Isaiah that because of the unbelief of his generation, his message will fall on deaf ears; that is, people who don’t really want to know the truth will reject Isaiah’s message. Jesus is therefore likening Himself to Isaiah. However, that section of the Isaiah continues on to describe a believing remnant. Jesus is likening His disciples to the believing remnant who will hear the message, understand it, take it to heart, and act upon it because of their faith.

One must be careful in interpreting this passage not to come to the conclusion that God is withholding truth from unbelievers. What is being said here is that God is blinding the eyes of those who have *already* rejected the truth, for they are so far gone there is no turning back from their unbelief, and that all the truth and facts in the world will not change their minds. This is not an unloving act on God’s part, but a supreme act of love, protection, privilege, blessing and revelation for those who *are* willing to listen and receive the truth.

8:11-15 Jesus now explains the parable to His disciples. The seed is the “word of God.” Today’s equivalent is the Bible. Where the sown seed falls

represents the “ears” of those hearing it. The first seed—that falling on the road—represents those who are blinded by Satan from understanding the truth. In other words, they have allowed Satan to so rule their lives that they are prevented by him from coming under conviction. Most likely, this soil is referring to the Pharisees and scribes who work in opposition to Jesus.

The second soil represents those who “believe for a while.” In other words, the word of God never takes “root” in their lives. They have very little spiritual depth and it doesn’t take much to cause them to forget the word of God and continue living for themselves. An illustration would be a candle that is lit but has little wax to sustain it, and it eventually flickers out. Unlike the third soil that follows, these hearers are those that fail to grasp and maintain the significance of God’s word. There may be narcissistic elements to their personality. When trials or afflictions come their way, they have not allowed God’s truths to penetrate deep enough into their psyche and beliefs systems to trust in, rely upon, and adhere to those truths.

The third soil represents those whose lives are so wrapped up in the world and the cares of the day that they pay little attention to God’s word. This is the person who believes he or she is a follower of Jesus but spends little time in prayer or study of God’s word, mostly because they are just too busy doing other things. God’s word is low on the priority list when it comes to time or interest. Most American evangelicals typify this kind of soil.

The final soil is soil represented by the disciples. In this soil, the word of God is incarnated to the point that their lives are changed as a result. This is the soil of those who actually “do” God’s word; they are not only hearers of the word, but doers (James 1:22). The truths of God’s word not only penetrate their belief systems and their world view, but result in changed behavior, particularly when it comes to relationships. They take seriously the command to “love one another” and to “love your neighbor as yourself.” The result is a changed life and one that produces lasting spiritual fruit, regardless of the circumstances.

How one responds to God’s word is a barometer of how one responds to God Himself. If there is no love for God’s word, then there is most likely no real biblical love for God. Why? Because God’s word is literally God’s voice to us today. Someone might ask, “Why doesn’t God speak to us today like He spoke to the prophets in the Old Testament, or like the Holy Spirit in the New Testament?” The fact is that God *does* speak to us today—He speaks to us through His word. If one wants to hear the word of God, one need look no further than the Bible. The Bible is literally God’s voice to us today—it is designed to *change us*

from the inside out, to make us more like Christ, and to transform us into the kind of people that reflect God Himself. One cannot love biblically unless one is loving in a manner that is consistent with God's word. No one can consistently behave in a biblical manner unless one has a biblical perspective on himself, others, and the world around him. Having the word of God incarnated into one's life is, in fact, the *only* way a follower of Jesus Christ can be sanctified, for Jesus prayed, "Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth" (John 17:17). The word of God is the truth, and it is truth that sets us free (John 8:32).

Whether or not a person is born into a type soil and can never change, or whether or not a person can change from being one kind of soil to another is merely a matter of speculation. It is even conceivable that both are true; that there are some people who are born as a type of soil and will never change, and some people who may be like one soil at one time in their life, and become a different kind of soil at another point in their life. These are questions that cannot be answered based on this parable, and therefore, placing people into categories of whether or not this person or that is saved, or ever will be saved, is useless theological speculation, neither warranted by the parable or a good use of one's time.

Out of love for others, however, one should gravitate toward the latter explanation with the hope that people do indeed change. The word of God should always be presented in hopes that eventually a person who may have rejected the word of God at one time finally takes it to heart and becomes the good kind of soil producing fruit.

16 "Now no one after lighting a lamp covers it over with a container, or puts it under a bed; but he puts it on a lampstand, so that those who come in may see the light.

17 "For nothing is hidden that will not become evident, nor *anything* secret that will not be known and come to light.

18 "So take care how you listen; for whoever has, to him *more* shall be given; and whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has shall be taken away from him."

8:16-18 Jesus now explains what to do with the word of God once it has been received. This passage can be applied only to the "good soil." Once receiving the word of God, it is to be shared. It is not to be like a lamp that is covered with a container (in which the lamp would be extinguished due to lack of oxygen) or to be put under a bed (in which the bed would catch fire and become destructive to the holder). The word of God is light because it is the truth about God. It is the light that sets souls free. Therefore, it is to be placed in a position so that it not only lights up a room but serves as a guide for all who see it. The purpose of receiving the word of God, then, is to share the word with others who still walk in darkness.

Eventually, light exposes everything. The word of God can expose the hearts of all mankind. It is the light that reveals the truth. A person's heart may be judged by how he or she first responds to the word of God, as in the earlier picture of the soils. The word is the light and the light is the truth. It is the truth that exposes the depravity of all people in regard to sin,

and it is the truth that sets people free from depravity and bondage to sin.

Jesus ends His discourse with a warning—“take care how you listen.” This warning refers back to “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.” In other words, listen carefully and take the words seriously. Do not just let them go in one ear and out the other, but take them to heart to the point that the word of God is incarnated into one’s life resulting in transformation and sanctification. The warning also implies that one will not always have the word forever. If one hears the word of God but does not act on it, God Himself will remove the word from him. The word of God is “living and active” and not just stagnant information. It is a living organism of truth that stays with those who receive it and act upon it, and is taken away from those who don’t.

19 And His mother and brothers came to Him, and they were unable to get to Him because of the crowd.

20 And it was reported to Him, “Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, wishing 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.”

8:19-21 The gyrations of illogical reasoning that have attempted to explain away verses 19 and 20 are legion. Some of these maneuvers are designed by liberal scholars to dismiss the miracle of the Virgin Birth altogether. Other maneuvers are designed to defend a corrupt theology surrounding Jesus’ mother, Mary. The glorification of Mary by the Roman Catholic church—which borders often on deification and idolatry—has been around since the beginning of church history, but did not become official until the time of the Reformation. The reasoning behind Mary’s glorification goes like this: if Jesus was born without sin, then it would have been impossible for Mary to have had sin. Therefore, whereas Jesus had a Virgin Birth, Mary had an immaculate conception herself, meaning that she, too, had a miraculous birth and was born without sin. And, to preserve her uniqueness, she could not have had other children, lest they too would have been born without sin. Therefore, the traditional Roman Catholic explanation for verse 19 is that “mother and brothers” refers to Jesus’ followers, not His biological mother and brothers. This interpretation by Maryologists faces grave discrepancies with passages like Matthew 13:55-56 which unequivocally name Jesus’ brothers, and states as well that He also had biological sisters. Recent Roman Catholic scholars, realizing the above interpretation to be tenuous at best, have come up with another heretical explanation. This explanation is that Joseph had children from a previous marriage. Therefore, “mother” *does* refer to Mary but “brothers” refers to stepbrothers (and stepsisters, in the Matthew passage). The problem with this argument is that there is no shred of evidence in Scripture that Joseph was previously married, a detail that Luke, a thorough and accurate historian, would surely have included in his gospel. The reason for Luke’s omission of this detail, Roman Catholic

22 Now on one of *those* days Jesus and His disciples got into a boat, and He said to them, “Let us go over to the other side of the lake.” So they launched out.

23 But as they were sailing along He fell asleep; and a fierce gale of wind descended on the lake, and they *began* to be swamped and to be in danger.

24 They came to Jesus and woke Him up, saying, “Master, Master, we are perishing!” And He got up and rebuked the wind and the surging waves, and they stopped, and it became calm.

25 And He said to them, “Where is your faith?” They were fearful and amazed, saying to one another, “Who then is this, that He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey Him?”

scholars contend, is to preserve “the myth” surrounding the birth of Jesus and the purity of Mary. It is interesting how one heresy leads to another. Such theologians fit into an entirely different kind of soil—poisoned.

Jesus’ answer in verse 21, therefore, is not denying that Mary and His brothers are who Luke himself says they are, but He is using His own family as an illustration of how close those are to Him “who hear the word of God and do it.” The familial relationship that exists among the members of those “who hear the word of God and do it” will be illustrated in the healings at the end of the chapter.

8:22-23 The boat is probably the same kind of boat Jesus preached from in chapter 5. Jesus directs His disciples to take Him to the other side. The boat would have been large enough to hold all thirteen men, but it would have been quite laden down and low in the water. Whether strong winds from Mt. Hermon sweeping down through the gorges or a thunderstorm with a strong downdraft, either would have been sufficient to make the boat uncontrollable and to swamp it. There was no doubt that the men were in danger, and the assessment by the experienced fishermen was correct. As a result, they panicked and cried out to Jesus.

8:24-25 What happens in the next two verses is a deliberate attempt by Luke to show that Jesus is more than a simple rabbi. Jesus has already demonstrated His authority over demons, He has demonstrated His authority over disease, and He has demonstrated His authority over death at the funeral in Nain. The response of the people has been to refer to Him as “a great prophet.” But Jesus wants His disciples to be witness to the fact that He is more than just a rabbi or a great prophet. Jesus is God.

It is possible that the disciples were recalling the prophet Jonah and his trials, and perhaps wondering which one of their companions was guilty of sin. It is possible that the disciples expected Jesus to identify the culprit and throw him overboard to save their skins. (It was already known by then that Judas Iscariot was dipping into the purse.) They certainly had no expectations that Jesus might actually stop the storm; that thought didn’t even enter their minds.

Note that the disciples call Jesus “Master.” The Greek word is *epistates*, meaning “chief” or “commander.” So far in Luke, other than one incident when Peter calls Jesus “Lord” (Grk *kurios*), that is the only term the disciples have used to address Jesus. (Luke himself and others have addressed Jesus as “Lord,” but not the disciples.) This will change at the end of chapter 9; the only term the disciples use thereafter is “Lord” (*kurios*). This is to point out that up to a point, the disciples were having a difficult

26 Then they sailed to the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee.

27 And when He came out onto the land, He was met by a man from the city who was possessed with demons; and who had not put on any clothing for a long time, and was not living in a house, but in the tombs.

28 Seeing Jesus, he cried out and fell before Him, and said in a loud voice, “What business do we have with each other, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg You, do not torment me.”

29 For He had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For it had seized him many times; and he was bound with chains and shackles and kept under guard, and *yet* he would break his bonds and be driven by the demon into the desert.

30 And Jesus asked him, “What is your name?” And he said, “Legion”; for many demons had entered him.

31 They were imploring Him not to command them to go away into the abyss.

32 Now there was a herd of many swine feeding there on the mountain; and *the*

time acknowledging Jesus as Lord, the Old Testament equivalent being *Adonai*, thus equating Jesus with God. Luke’s purpose in recording this incident is to help the reader see how the disciples themselves were moving closer to discovering the divinity of Jesus.

That Jesus had authority over nature gave proof of His deity, although the disciples would continue to have a difficult time grasping the significance. Perhaps only after the disciples recalled Psalm 107:23-30 would His deity be apparent and undeniable. The answer to their question, “Who then is this...?” will not be fully answered until the resurrection. Looking back, they will have remembered they witnessed the hand of God on the sea.

When Jesus asks, “Where is your faith?” He is neither rebuking them nor implying that if they had had sufficient faith, they, too, could have commanded the storm to stop. The faith issue here is one of trust in the person of Jesus. With Him present, how could anything happen to them? This lesson is not just a present lesson for the disciples, but one that will abide with them when the storms of persecution arise after Pentecost.

8:26 The region where Jesus and the disciples land is an area known as the Decapolis. The region got its name from a string of fortified cities to guard against invasion from the east. Although there were Jews living in the area, the Decapolis was comprised primarily of Gentiles.

8:27-31 Today’s interpretation of the man described here is that of someone with a psychiatric disorder. If not institutionalized, he certainly would have been prescribed heavy psychotropic drugs and extended counseling. The medical community would, of course, dismiss any notion of demon possession, attributing Luke’s diagnosis as appropriate for the day but ignorant in modern times. The reader, therefore, is forced here to make a decision as to whether or not this man was actually the victim of demons or the victim of pure psychiatric disorder. The possible answer is that both are true—this man had a psychiatric disorder as well as demonic possession. The reason is that there is legitimate physiological, pathological and medical explanations for what appears to be schizophrenia, and can be treated with medication and counseling. But what is also true is that demons take advantage of psychiatric weaknesses, finding an open door for possession. Which comes first is hard to say, but either may be true. A psychiatric illness may open the door for demonic possession, or demonic possession may lead to psychiatric illness, which appears to be the situation in this poor individual’s case. Regardless,

demons implored Him to permit them to enter the swine. And He gave them permission.

33 And the demons came out of the man and entered the swine; and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned.

34 When the herdsmen saw what had happened, they ran away and reported it in the city and *out* in the country.

35 *The people* went out to see what had happened; and they came to Jesus, and found the man from whom the demons had gone out, sitting down at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind; and they became frightened.

36 Those who had seen it reported to them how the man who was demon-possessed had been made well.

37 And all the people of the country of the Gerasenes and the surrounding district asked Him to leave them, for they were gripped with great fear; and He got into a boat and returned.

38 But the man from whom the demons had gone out was begging Him that he might accompany Him; but He sent him away, saying,

39 “Return to your house and describe what great things God has done for you.” So he went away, proclaiming throughout the whole city what great things Jesus had done for him.

those who choose to describe this man’s problems as purely psychiatric in nature will be hard pressed to explain the behavior of the swine after his healing.

Note the interplay between the man talking and the demon talking. This is not atypical of demonic possession. Note as well that the demons know full well who Jesus is, quite unlike the men around Him. The name “Legion” refers to the number of demons inhabiting the man, yet there appears to be one who is the leader, and he is called “the unclean spirit.” Some demons are more difficult to send away than others, and the primary spirit appears to have been particularly strong. He is resistant to leaving the man because he is well aware of the fate awaiting him, called “the abyss.” In Greek culture, the abyss refers to a bottomless pit. The abyss is also described as “the outer darkness” in Matthew and “the lake of fire” in Revelation. It is the place where Satan, his demons, and Satan’s human followers go at the end of the age.

It is obvious in this passage that this unfortunate individual has been suffering for quite some time. His demon is described as an “unclean” spirit because of the man’s preoccupation with filthy and self-deprecating habits. It is not unusual for people who are possessed by unclean spirits to handle their own feces which, of course, would make him unclean in Jewish culture.

8:32-33 The herd of swine would have belonged to a Gentile, not a Jew, although the ethnicity of the demon-possessed is never stated. It is quite possible, however, that the demon-possessed man is a Gentile, and this incident is a picture of Christ freeing Gentiles from the bondage of Satan. It is appropriate that the demons wanted to enter the swine; they were unclean spirits wanting to enter unclean animals. This incident also informs us about demons—they can inhabit anything or any living creature. When the demons entered the swine, the herd stampeded off the cliff and drowned in the Sea of Galilee. Jesus is not showing compassion or love for the demons, but instead withholding final judgment. He could have sent them straight to the abyss, their final destination, but this action was not in accord with God’s immediate plan for them.

8:34-39 When the people come out to see what had happened, they witnessed an amazing thing—the man was “in his right mind.” Such a dramatic turnaround would make anyone sit up and take notice. Not only was he in his right mind, but he was sitting at the feet of Jesus who, obviously, was teaching and ministering to the man.

There is a sequence of events that must not be overlooked. When someone has mental illness and demon possession is involved, the first thing that must happen is the person must first come to Christ (v. 27; “...He was met by a man...”). The second

thing that must happen is that demonic elements must be dealt with—the demons must be cast out, whether by an exorcism involving a power encounter, or, better yet, a truth encounter through discipleship. Either way, once a person has been led to Christ, the next step is to get demons out of the way from blocking the mind (v. 33; “...and the demons came out of the man...”). It is only then that medical management (healing) will be effective and lasting. This is where medication and clinical counseling can be helpful (v. 36; “...had been made well.”). Finally, discipleship must take place (v. 35; “...sitting down at the feet of Jesus...”).

Consistent with a modern-day reaction, the people “became frightened” (v. 35). People become frightened about things they do not understand, and this fear can be manifested as skepticism, especially by the medical community. The result was that “...the people...asked Him to leave” (v. 37). Again, this reaction is typical of a modern-day skepticism concerning the demonic. The restored man, however, begs Jesus to accompany Him. Jesus, knowing that the man could better serve as a witness, sends him away, instructing him to tell others and give his testimony as to the miraculous powers of Jesus to deliver from darkness. The man was obedient and went off preaching the greatness of Jesus.

Deliverance, healing and discipleship should always have as its fruit the proclamation of the good news about Jesus. If this man were indeed a Gentile, then he would have been the first evangelist to Gentiles.

What is truly sad about this story is the reaction of the people. They were not only frightened to see the man in his right mind, but they were probably furious at Jesus over the loss of the herd which would have had a substantial financial impact. So their concern over the loss of profit overruled their concern for the man. That he had been delivered and healed seems of no relevance to the people. This reaction is not unlike the callous response of the Pharisees when Jesus healed the man with the withered hand. Whereas Jesus showed great love for the man, the people showed great love for their financial security. Therefore, instead of inviting Jesus to stay awhile and enjoy the blessings of His healings and teaching, they asked Him to leave.

Finally, the question might be asked, “Did Jesus fail to show love for the people by allowing their livelihood to perish?” The answer to this is simple: He was actually protecting the people, for where else would the legion of demons go but into other people? (Not to mention, of course, that swine were considered unclean, an appropriate habitat for unclean spirits.)

40 And as Jesus returned, the people welcomed Him, for they had all been waiting for Him.

41 And there came a man named Jairus, and he was an official of the synagogue; and he fell at Jesus' feet, and *began* to implore Him to come to his house;

42 for he had an only daughter, about twelve years old, and she was dying. But as He went, the crowds were pressing against Him.

43 And a woman who had a hemorrhage for twelve years, and could not be healed by anyone,

44 came up behind Him and touched the fringe of His cloak, and immediately her hemorrhage stopped.

45 And Jesus said, "Who is the one who touched Me?" And while they were all denying it, Peter said, "Master, the people are crowding and pressing in on You."

46 But Jesus said, "Someone did touch Me, for I was aware that power had gone out of Me."

47 When the woman saw that she had not escaped notice, she came trembling and fell down before Him, and declared in the presence of all the people the reason why she had touched Him, and how she had been immediately healed.

48 And He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace."

8:40 Notice the different reaction of "the people." Just awhile ago, a crowd of people had asked Him to leave. Now "...the people welcomed Him...."

8:41-42 Jesus is approached by "an official of the synagogue." A synagogue official was a layman who arranged services and took care of the administrative matters of the synagogue. He may or may not have been a Pharisee; in this case, it is unlikely that he is. He even may have been present when Jesus cast out a demon in his synagogue in chapter 4.

As the story of Jairus' daughter unfolds, note that she was *twelve years old* and she was dying. There will be important similarities in the other story imbedded in this one.

8:43-48 This woman probably had a medical condition called menometrorrhagia; that is, a persistent and excessive menstrual flow, often accompanied by pelvic pain. Physiologically, the condition is very debilitating due to the constant loss of blood. Persistent blood loss results in anemia (low hemoglobin) which in turn causes weakness and excessive fatigue. There were spiritual consequences as well; because of her persistent flow, she would have been declared ceremonially unclean (Lev. 15). Being unclean, she would not have been allowed entry into the Court of Women in the temple, and she would be obligated to inform everyone around her that she was unclean, for touching another person would cause them to become unclean as well. Note, too, that the woman has had this condition for "twelve years," so that her physical problems started about the same time as Jairus's daughter was born. There is, of course, no relationship here, but the number twelve has spiritual significance as far as the nation of Israel is concerned.

Stealthily and unannounced (a violation of the law), the woman presses through the crowd and touches the "fringe" of Jesus' cloak, probably a tassel tied to the edges of the cloak to remind a person of the law. The cloak was a larger and heavier outer garment not tied around the waist. It was a cloak, or mantel, that Elijah passed down to Elisha. Though the woman did not touch Jesus Himself, He senses that someone drew His healing power out of Him, and He asks, "Who...touched Me?" Justifiably terrified and fearing retribution for touching a rabbi, she meekly approaches Jesus and, as did Jairus, falls at His feet, for she realizes she has been healed.

Expecting severe punishment by Jesus and chastisement from the crowd, the woman hears the contrary: "Daughter, your faith has made you well."

Note a number of similarities in the two stories. First, it is Jairus' daughter who is ill. Jesus addresses this woman as "daughter." Second, Jairus' daughter

49 While He was still speaking, someone came from *the house of* the synagogue official, saying, “Your daughter has died; do not trouble the Teacher anymore.”

50 But when Jesus heard *this*, He answered him, “Do not be afraid *any longer*; only believe, and she will be made well.”

51 When He came to the house, He did not allow anyone to enter with Him, except Peter and John and James, and the girl’s father and mother.

52 Now they were all weeping and lamenting for her; but He said, “Stop weeping, for she has not died, but is asleep.”

53 And they *began* laughing at Him, knowing that she had died.

54 He, however, took her by the hand and called, saying, “Child, arise!”

55 And her spirit returned, and she got up immediately; and He gave orders for *something* to be given her to eat.

56 Her parents were amazed; but He instructed them to tell no one what had happened.

is dying. This woman is experiencing a slow death physically and a present death ceremonially. Third, Jairus’ daughter is “twelve years old.” The woman has had the issue of blood for “twelve years.” Fourth, apparently no physician could heal Jairus’ daughter, and he had at his disposal abundant resources. The woman “could not be healed by anyone.”

That Jesus should address the woman as “Daughter” ties into what Jesus said about His family in verse 21.

Finally, Jesus tells the woman, “...your faith has made you well.” The word “well” in the Greek is *sozo* which is also the word translated “saved” and refers to wholeness. Was it just having sufficient faith in and of itself that saved her? Surely not. If that were the case, then having enough faith could have resulted in her healing apart from Jesus. The faith she had was that Jesus was the source of her healing, indeed, her salvation. It was her faith that brought her to Jesus for deliverance from her affliction, and it was faith in Him that enabled her to be “saved.”

The she should “go in peace” changed her world.

8:49-50 Jesus now proceeds onto the house of Jairus. Meanwhile, word is brought the Jairus’s daughter has died, and Jairus informs Jesus that coming to his house is no longer necessary. Apparently, Jairus never heard about Jesus raising from the dead the son of the widow of Nain. If he did, he isn’t applying that story to his daughter.

Jesus once again turns to the issue of faith. He encourages Jairus, “Only believe.” Was Jesus telling Jairus to simply believe that his daughter would live again? Surely not. He was telling Jairus to believe who Jesus was and what He was capable of doing.

8:51-56 Jesus enters the house. Of the disciples, He has only Peter, John and James accompany Him. This is the first time in Luke that we see Jesus’ inner three disciples. Also with Him are the girl’s parents.

Already the official mourners had arrived at the house and were busily engaged in their wailing and cries of grief. When Jesus instructs them to stop their mourning, that the girl is only “asleep,” He is mocked.

Jesus addresses the girl as “Child,” once again affirming those who are a part of His family. The physician Luke records that her spirit returned to her body and she became alive. Unlike the previous encounter with the demoniac, Jesus instructs everyone “to tell no one what had happened.” This is a curious instruction because the mourners were sure she had died. Thus we understand now why Jesus said to everyone that she was only “asleep.” The mourners who mocked Him because of their lack of faith would now go away thinking that she really had been only asleep, rather than to believe Jesus raised

the girl from the dead. Thus, those who “only believe” are rewarded for their faith, but those who “laugh” and mock are sent away continuing in their unbelief.

The common theme, therefore, echoing throughout this chapter is “faith” and believing who Jesus is and what He can do. The faith theme has been introduced in the parable of the soils, was directed toward the disciples during the storm, was addressed toward the woman with the issue of blood, and was preeminent in the raising of Jairus’ daughter. Those who have faith and received God’s word are the good soil, but those who did not believe are placed in the other kinds of soil that produce no fruit.

Questions for Your Personal or Group Reflection

1. In this chapter, Luke states that Jesus and His disciples had a financial support group. Does Luke call this a tithe? What was the purpose of those who provided for Jesus and His disciples? Was the financial support for basic necessities, for running an empire, or for providing luxury housing and transportation for the team?
2. What is your opinion about those who propose that Jesus and Mary Magdalene became secretly married and possibly had a child? What do you think will be the final outcome for those who make those suggestions, or who make financial gain from such speculations?
3. Are you able to explain the four types of soil that Jesus described in His parable of the sown seed? Which category would you fit yourself in? If you do not fit yourself in the “good soil,” what do you plan on doing about that?
4. How does the parable of the sown seed relate to the “faith” theme throughout the chapter? If the good soil produces fruit, what is to be done with the “seed” that is received and the fruit that is produced? Are you presently engaged in fulfilling that instruction? If not, why, and what do you plan on doing about that?
5. What is an application of the story about Jesus calming the sea? Can you identify with that application personally? If Jesus can immediately calm the storm, why do you think He is not immediately calming the storms in your life?
6. The common theme in the story of the calming of the sea, the healing of the woman with the issue of blood, and the resurrection of Jairus’s daughter, is faith. But does this faith need to be qualified? Is simply having faith and believing strongly in something the key to healing? In other words, is believing in something strongly the key, or is it trust in the Person rather than the outcome? What is the primary qualification for the faith?
7. Do you know anyone who has mental or emotional problems? Is that person receiving medication and counseling only, or has the issue of demonic influence ever been addressed? Is it possible that there may be a demonic aspect to this person’s problems? If that is a possibility, what do you plan on doing about it? (Of course, this question can be applied to oneself!)

The Disciplex's Commentary
Fill-in Outline for the Disciple
Luke 8

8:1-3 – The companions following Jesus: many who followed were _____

8:4-15 – The parable of the sower and the seed: a picture of how people respond to _____

8:16-18 – The warning following the parable of the sower: take care how _____

8:19-21 – Jesus' family: Jesus had _____

8:22-25 – Jesus calms the storm: Jesus rebukes the disciples for their _____

8:26-39 – The healing of the Gerasene demoniac: from demon possession to _____

8:40-42, 49-56 – The resurrection of Jairus's daughter: a Jewish ruler believes Jesus can _____

8:43-48 – The unclean woman with an issue of blood: her faith _____

The Discipler's Commentary
Answer Outline for the Discipler
Luke 8

- 8:1-3 – The companions following Jesus: many who followed were women
- See if the disciple can find the connection between the end of chapter 7 and the beginning of chapter 8.
 - Inform the disciple that of all the gospel writers, Luke was the one who most often mentioned women.
 - Ensure that the disciple understands that women were just as important disciples as were the men. They especially took on the role of securing provisions for Jesus and the twelve apostles. And women followers of Jesus were just as important as the men in remembering the details of Jesus' earthly ministry, and it was to Mary Magdalene that Jesus first presented Himself at the resurrection.
- 8:4-15 – The parable of the sower and the seed: a picture of how people respond to the word
- Ensure that the disciple knows what a parable is: a story that could be true (but isn't necessarily), that always teaches a spiritual lesson, and one that reveals spiritual truth to believers but hides spiritual truth from unbelievers.
 - Have the disciple tell the parable of the seed sown in his or her own words. See if the disciple can remember people he or she has known who fit into each category.
 - Make sure the disciple does not attach the concept of being saved to this parable, as is often done from the pulpit. The point of the parable is clear: it is a parable that teaches how people respond to God's word. Any attachment of salvation is deductive, not inductive.
 - Make sure the disciple is able to describe the different types of soil, and especially for the second and third soils. Have the disciple come up with specific examples from everyday life.
 - This parable can be a great source of encouragement to the disciple. The disciple's desire to study the word is a good indicator of seed that is falling on "good soil."
 - The disciple may have difficulty understanding the meaning of verse 10. The discipler may refer the disciple to the source, Isaiah 6:9. This verse has become a stumbling block to those who have not "been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God."
- 8:16-18 – The warning following the parable of the sower: take care how you listen
- Help the disciple see the relationship between the first parable (sown seed) and the second parable (lamp). (Hint: it is related to "bear fruit with perseverance.")
 - Make sure the disciple understands the meaning of the second parable.
 - Ensure that the disciple knows and can explain the significance of the word "listen." The discipler may want to have the disciple look up James 1:22.
- 8:19-21 – Jesus' family: Jesus had brothers and sisters
- If the disciple was brought up as a Roman Catholic, he or she may have some difficulty with verses 19-21. To reinforce the fact that Jesus had brothers and sisters, have the disciple look up Matt. 13:55-56 where they are named. Ask the disciple state the clear and logical meaning of the texts.
 - It's very important that the disciple understand that the Catholic doctrine of "Immaculate Conception" does not refer to Jesus' conception by the Holy Spirit, but to Mary's conception by her parents, and that it states that Mary herself was without sin. Inform the disciple that the doctrine of Immaculate Conception was not officially recognized by the Catholic church until about the time of Martin Luther and the beginning of the Reformation in the mid-1500s.

8:22-25 – Jesus calms the storm: Jesus rebukes the disciples for their lack of faith in Him

- *There are two important points for the disciple to grasp in his incident. First, it is the acknowledgement that Jesus is not just a very good teacher or miracle worker. The disciple should realize that this incident demonstrates clearly that Jesus is divine and has powers that only God has. This is a proof to Jesus' disciples that Jesus is the Son of God.*
- *Second, the disciple should attempt to make application out of this incident. If Jesus can control the weather, He can control anything. But be careful: the disciple mustn't assume that Jesus will make all trials and "storms" of life go away. This is the lesson: "Where is your faith?" The faith is not that Jesus will make all "storms" become calm, but that He is still in control. Of course, after this life is over, all storms will indeed be calmed.*

8:26-39 – The healing of the Gerasene demoniac: from demon possession to evangelist

- *Ask the disciple what he or she thinks was wrong with the man described in verse 27. If the disciple states there was a mental or psychiatric disorder, have the disciple read the text again. Make sure that the disciple understands that the source of the man's problems were demonic, and that it was the demon possession that affected his mental and behavioral health. If the man wasn't demon possessed, how else could the reaction of the swine be explained?*
- *This may not be the time, however, to launch into the subject of demonology. Be careful that it does not distract from the true message of Jesus' encounter with the man; that is, his deliverance.*
- *Have the disciple describe the reaction of the townspeople. Why is this such a sad situation?*
- *Have the disciple describe why Jesus instructed the man not to go with Him. What was the man's greater mission?*
- *Finally, have the disciple discover the elements of love—or sometimes lack of it—that are interwoven throughout this incident.*

8:40-42, 49-56 – The resurrection of Jairus's daughter: a Jewish ruler believes Jesus can raise the dead

- *The love motif continues into these next two encounters. Have the disciple identify them.*
- *This, of course, is not the first resurrection performed by Jesus. With the widow in Nain, it was her only son who had died. In this incident, it is Jairus's only child. What was significant about Jairus's status in the Jewish community, and why is that important to the story?*
- *When Jesus arrives at the house, He is greeted by official mourners. What is ironic that they so quickly move from mourning to "laughing"?*
- *Have the disciple determine how faith plays a role in Jairus's request of Jesus. Obviously, Jairus believed that Jesus could heal his sick daughter, but it never occurred to him that Jesus could also raise her from the dead.*
- *When arriving at Jairus's house, ask the disciple why Jesus only allowed Peter, James and John, and the girl's parents, to be witnesses to the resurrection.*
- *Jesus instructs the parents to give the girl something to eat. Why did He do that? (It falls into the category of proof.)*
- *How does the act of raising from the dead fit with the story of the woman with an issue of blood?*

8:43-48 – The unclean woman with an issue of blood: her faith saves her

- *Ask the disciple to describe the similarities of these two encounters by Jesus. How were both Jairus's daughter and the woman with the issue of blood raised from the dead?*
- *What role did the woman's faith play in her healing? How did her faith differ from Jairus's?*
- *Ask the disciple to describe how this woman's social and spiritual life would change as a result of her being healed from a constant flow of blood. (This may require some review of Jewish laws concerning a woman's menstrual cycle. See Lev. 15:25-30.)*