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## *THE POWER OF CHRIST'S WORD* *LUKE 8:1-56*

Jesus preached the good news of the kingdom of God (8:1). In the Parable of the Sower His word was the seed. For those who received and believed it would bring forth much fruit (8:15). All should listen to His word with obedient hearts (8:18). The closest personal relationship to Jesus comes through hearing and doing the word of God (8:21). Jesus demonstrated the power of His word by commanding the stormy wind and waves to be calm and they instantly were still (8:25). He commanded the demons to leave the Gerasene man (8:32). The daughter of Jairus was resurrected from the dead by the awesome power of Christ's word (8:54-55).

### **Women Who Supported Jesus — Luke 8:1-3**

The financial support of some women provided resources for Jesus and the twelve so they could conduct their itinerant ministry.

**8** Soon afterward he went on through cities and villages, preaching and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God. And the twelve were with him, <sup>2</sup>and also some women who had been healed of

evil spirits and infirmities: Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, <sup>3</sup>and Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, who provided for them out of their means.

**8:1.** Some believe that Jesus was forced out of the synagogue so He went to open air preaching. This view is unlikely because during His trial Jesus said, "I have always taught in your synagogues" (John 18:20). Luke frequently mentioned the crowds in this period of Jesus' ministry (7:11,24; 8:4,19,40,45).

Soon after raising Jairus' daughter Jesus went on a preaching tour traveling through the Galilean cities and villages. Jesus preached with authority. The content of his proclamation was good news concerning the kingdom of God which He was about to establish. The key idea of the kingdom is the rule of Christ in the hearts and lives of people. The twelve apostles now regularly accompanied Jesus.

**8:2-3.** Jesus did not use His miraculous power to meet His personal needs. Some women of means were also with Jesus and the twelve. These women out of their own resources provided for the material needs of the traveling group. Jesus had helped these women by healing them or casting out demons, now as an early ladies' aid society they were helping Him. Luke distinguished between healed of evil spirits and infirmities. This is the only passage which told of how the expenses were met on Jesus' preaching tours.

Some Jewish rabbis refused to teach women and assigned them an inferior place; however, they received support from women and at times took advantage of them (Matt. 28:14; Mark 12:40; Luke 20:47). The service of women was important in their relationship with Christ. Some followed Him to the cross (John 19:25) and to His grave (Luke 23:49,55; 24:1-10). Women also played a vital role in the early church (Acts 9:36; 16:14,15,40; 18:26; Rom. 16:1,2; Phil. 4:2,3; II Tim. 1:5).

Because Mary was a common name the addition of Magdalene would help specify which Mary was meant. She was called after her home town, Magdala, which was located on the west shore of the Sea of Galilee, south of Capernaum and north of Tiberias. She is not to be confused with Mary of Bethany (Luke 10:38-42; John 11:1) nor with the sinful woman in Luke 7:37. There is no reason for considering her an immoral woman just because she had had seven demons. Mary Magdalene watched the crucifixion (Matt. 27:55-56; Mark 15:40; John 19:25). She observed the burial of His body (Matt. 27:61; Mark 15:47; Luke 23:55) and came with other women that resurrection Sun-

day morning to anoint the body (Matt. 28:1; Mark 16:1; Luke 24:10). She was the first recorded witness of the resurrected Christ (John 20:1-18; Mark 16:9).

### The Parable of the Sower — Luke 8:4-15

The people thought of the kingdom in material and political terms. Jesus pictured the key characteristics of the kingdom through stories and illustrations called parables. Matthew (13:1-53) and Mark (4:1-34) recorded a whole sermon of kingdom parables. Luke chose to record only the Parable of the Sower.

<sup>4</sup>And when a great crowd came together and people from town after town came to him, he said in a parable: <sup>5</sup>“A sower went out to sow his seed; and as he sowed, some fell along the path, and was trodden under foot, and the birds of the air devoured it. <sup>6</sup>And some fell on the rock; and as it grew up, it withered away, because it had no moisture. <sup>7</sup>And some fell among thorns; and the thorns grew with it and choked it. <sup>8</sup>And some fell into good soil and grew, and yielded a hundredfold.” As he said this, he called out, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

<sup>9</sup>And when his disciples asked him what this parable meant, <sup>10</sup>he said, “To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God; but for others they are in parables, so that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand. <sup>11</sup>Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. <sup>12</sup>The ones along the path are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, that they may not believe and be saved. <sup>13</sup>And the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy; but these have no root, they believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away. <sup>14</sup>And as for what fell among the thorns, they are those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life, and their fruit does not mature. <sup>15</sup>And as for that in the good soil, they are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bring forth fruit with patience.

**8:4.** Great crowds followed Jesus. They came from many towns. Luke did not identify the location. Matthew and Mark said the sermon in parables was delivered from a boat to a large crowd on the northwestern shore of the Sea of Galilee.

Jesus used parables to teach concerning His kingdom. Those who

genuinely wanted to know God's truth learned vital lessons. The others heard only stories.

**8:5-8.** The text literally has "the" sower. This emphasizes a person whose business was sowing. Perhaps Jesus could see a sower on the hillside and used him as an object lesson. Their method of sowing was to broadcast seed with dirt. When this writer visited the Sea of Galilee our bus stopped on the hillside west of the sea. In a small area I saw all four kinds of soil mentioned by Jesus in this parable.

Walking paths often went through the fields. The seeds that fell on them could not penetrate these hardened walkways. The seeds that fell on the path were walked on by those passing by and were eaten by birds. Matthew (13:5) and Mark (4:5) have "rocky ground." The statement does not mean ground with stones or rocks in it. The rock was a shelf of rock underlying a thin layer of soil. The seed quickly germinated and started to grow but the roots hit the rock and could not get down to moisture so the hot sun caused the plant to wilt, wither and die. Some of the seed fell in with small thorn plants or thorn seed. These vigorous, prickly plants grew faster than the wheat or barley plants. Taking most of the nourishment from the soil, they choked out the grain.

Most of the grain fell on good soil. The rich, fertile ground provided moisture and nourishment for the plants. An abundant harvest resulted. Matthew (13:8) and Mark (4:8) mentioned thirty fold and sixty fold as well as hundred fold which Luke stated. Luke's shorter account focused on the central point of an abundant crop. One grain of seed produced one hundred grains.

Jesus concluded the parable with a challenge for all to hear the message intended by His words. "He called out" underscores the seriousness of what He said. "Anyone who has an opportunity to hear, let him be careful to *listen*." (On this expression see Matthew 9:15; 13:9,43; Mark 4:9; Luke 14:35).

**8:9-10.** The disciples included "the twelve" and "those who were about him" (Mark 4:10). Matthew recorded that they also asked why He spoke in parables (13:10). Jesus responded by explaining why He taught in parables and explained the meaning of the Parable of the Sower.

To His believing and teachable disciples He said was given to know "the secrets of the kingdom of God." The word "secrets" is sometimes translated *mysteries*. It does not mean spooky. In the New Testament this word is used to refer to truths which man could not have learned by himself, but God has revealed them so man can know

them. To those who were willing to listen and learn He revealed through His parables important truths concerning His kingdom.

The worldly-minded heard only parables; they did not understand their meaning. In the light of His fuller explanation in Matthew 13:10-17 we know Jesus did not give a fuller revelation of these truths to the multitudes because of their willful rejection of His spiritual message. Jesus abbreviated the words of Isaiah 6:9-10. (See also John 12:40; Acts 28:26-27; Rom. 11:8; II Cor. 3:14.) Lewis Foster explained:

These words do not mean that God desires that some will not understand, but it expresses the sad truth that those who are not willing to dig for the treasure will not find it. Their disinterest in spiritual truths and their concentration on the things of this world keep them from pursuing the deeper lessons of the parables (p. 135).

The religious leaders and the crowds had opportunities to trust and understand Jesus' teachings concerning His Kingdom, but their selfish and materialistic view of religion and life kept them from seeking to truly understand. They heard words but did not understand their intended meaning.

**8:11-15.** Some modern scholars are right in rejecting allegorical interpretation of the parables, but they are wrong when they say the early church and not Jesus gave the interpretations of the parables which the Gospel writers ascribe to Jesus. We must take Jesus' explanation as final.

Many Bible teachers have called this the Parable of Four Soils or the Parable of the Hearers. However, it is better to stick with the title Jesus used, "Hear then the parable of the sower" (Matt. 13:18). This title seems to point to the parable as an encouragement to those to sow the seed of the gospel to be prepared for various reactions on the part of the hearers including rejections as well as acceptance. The stress on hearing in the context and the explanation given by Jesus focus on how one hears and responds to Christ's teaching. Surely the parable was intended to inform both sowers and hearers.

The word of God is the seed. The word tells about God and is from God (Matt. 15:6; Mark 7:13; Luke 5:1; 8:11,21; 11:28; John 10:35). As God's word created the universe so God's word has power to create newness of life in every person. We have access to God's power through His word (John 15:3; Rom. 1:16; 10:17; Col. 3:16; Heb. 4:12;

James 1:21; I Pet. 1:23-25).

The pathway represents unresponsive hearers. Their hearts, hardened by pride or indifference, do not accept and trust Christ's words. The devil takes the word from their minds before they believe it unto salvation. This happens because they choose not to be open and receptive.

The seeds on the rock represent hearers who at first have an emotional excitement which is only a superficial and shallow enthusiasm. They receive Christ quickly but have no solid basis for faith. It is easy come, easy go. When temptations or hardships and persecutions come they shed their new-found faith. A faith based on feelings is a fragile thing. Real faith must include intelligent conviction.

The third group of hearers accept Christ's word. They have potential for spiritual growth. But they fill their lives with other things so that Christ is crowded out. Mark listed the thorns — "the cares of the world, and the delight in riches and the desire for other things" (Mark 4:19). Luke also has "pleasures of life." A thing need not be bad in itself, but if it becomes more important to us than Christ is then it has become a thorn. Barclay observed,

A man becomes too busy to pray; he becomes so preoccupied with many things that he forgets to study the word of God: he can become so involved in committees and good works and charitable services that he has left himself no time for Him from whom all love and service come" (*Matthew*, Vol II, pp. 67,68).

This choking may be a slow, gradual but deadly process. Spiritual life requires regular renewal.

The good soil represents the hearers who bear much fruit. Their response to the word includes "hearing the word," "understands it" (Matt. 13:23), "accept it" (Mark 4:20), and "hold it fast." Their heart is interested in knowing and obeying the truth. Through feeding on the word of God they endure by producing fruit of godly living according to the will of God (Acts 17:11; Gal. 5:22,23). Christian maturity is not received instantly but is a growth process. Jesus said, "If a man loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him" (John 14:23). Christ is formed in them (Gal. 4:19) and they have the mind of Christ (Phil. 2:5). They become partakers of the divine nature (II Pet. 1:3-4).

### **A Lamp on a Stand — Luke 8:16-18**

<sup>16</sup>“No one after lighting a lamp covers it with a vessel, or puts it under a bed, but puts it on a stand, that those who enter may see the light. <sup>17</sup>For nothing is hid that shall not be made manifest, nor anything secret that shall not be known and come to light. <sup>18</sup>Take heed then how you hear; for to him who has will more be given, and from him who has not, even what he thinks that he has will be taken away.”

**8:16-18.** The purpose of a lamp is to be illuminated so it can provide light. He would probably be thinking of an Herodian lamp which would fit in one's hand. It held oil and had a wick. When the wick was ignited the lamp would provide light. It would defeat the purpose of a lighted lamp to put it under a basket or under a bed.

When people think something is hidden or secret they need to realize that nothing is hidden from God (Matt. 10:26; 12:36; 16:27; Mark 4:22; Luke 12:2; Rom. 2:6,16; I Cor. 4:5; Col. 3:3-4; Rev. 2:23; 20:12-13). On judgment day even things thought to be hidden will be made public.

Verse 18 does not mean that he who has money will make more money. The statement has to do with how willing and careful one is to hear the word of God. When a humble, teachable person has faith and knowledge of God's word he will keep gaining more and more light. When the word of God is given full control in one's life then one has light to share (Psa. 119:105; Matt. 5:13-16; Phil. 2:15). The basic principle is that if we use what God gives it will increase. If one is indifferent to what God gives, that person will lose even what he thinks he has.

Plummer said that because the teaching is to be made known it is important it is to be heard with intelligence and a good heart. “Whoever gives a welcome to the word and appropriates it, becomes worthy and capable of receiving more. But by not appropriating truth when we recognize it, we lose our hold of it, and have less power of recognizing it in the future” (p. 223).

### **Jesus' Mother and Brother — Luke 8:19-21**

<sup>19</sup>Then his mother and his brothers came to him, but they could not reach him for the crowd. <sup>20</sup>And he was told, “Your mother and your brothers are standing outside, desiring to see you.” <sup>21</sup>But he said to them, “My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it.”

**8:19-21.** Mary would have the natural mother's concern for her son. She and Jesus' brothers came to visit Jesus. They were prevented from reaching Him because of the large crowd pressed about Him.

Undoubtedly these brothers of Jesus were children of Joseph and Mary born after Jesus. The Roman Catholic view that this could not be true because Mary remained perpetually a virgin has no convincing evidence to support it. (See Matt. 1:25; Luke 1:34.)

Someone informed Jesus that His mother and brothers wanted to see Him. His answer seems cold and unsympathetic at first. But Jesus did not say He rejected His family or that one's family is not important. While He hung on the cross He manifested His concern for His mother's welfare. His teaching of the Word of God as the world's Savior and Messiah took precedence over His family ties. We enter into a close family relationship with Jesus when we *hear* and *do* His word. Our allegiance to Christ must have priority over every earthly tie.

### **The Stilling of the Storm — Luke 8:22-25**

The Sea of Galilee has a special attraction for the Christian. In the spring, when the grass is still green, the deep blue water of the pear-shaped lake fits the description of a sapphire in a setting of emerald. So many striking events in the life of our Lord happened on this lake. As we study the calming of the storm we are captivated by the majesty of the Master.

<sup>22</sup>One day he got into a boat with his disciples, and he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side of the lake." So they set out, <sup>23</sup>and as they sailed he fell asleep. And a storm of wind came down on the lake, and they were filling with water, and were in danger. <sup>24</sup>And they went and woke him saying, "Master, Master, we are perishing!" And he awoke and rebuked the wind and raging waves; and they ceased, and there was a calm. <sup>25</sup>He said to them, "Where is your faith?" And they were afraid, and they marveled, saying to one another, "Who then is this, that he commands even wind and water, and they obey him?"

**8:22-23.** As is often true in Luke, he does not precisely state the time of this event. Mark puts it on the same day as the teaching in parables, including the Sower (Mark 4:35; see also Matt. 12:22,38,46; 13:1 for other events of that day). In the light of this information,



then Jesus and the disciples entered the boat on the northwest part of the sea and started southeast toward the other side. Matthew said that Jesus saw a crowd around him when He instructed the disciples to depart to the other side of the lake (Matt. 8:18). Mark mentioned that it was evening (Mark 4:35). Jesus apparently fell asleep, weary from the demands of His ministry to the multitude. He had had a busy day, full of activity. Jesus' humanity was real. He grew tired, thirsty and sleepy.

"A fierce gale of wind descended upon the lake, and they began to be swamped and be in danger" (NASB). The lake is twelve or thirteen miles long and six or seven miles across and is surrounded by hills and mountains on all sides. The sea is 692 feet below sea level. It is in a deep trough. The chilled air from Mt. Hermon (9,200 feet) in the north rushes through the channels of the ravines and gorges and clashes with the heated air above the surface of the lake. These storms descend very suddenly. The word translated "storm of wind" is literally whirlwind. Violent gusts of wind whipped the lake into a frenzy of angry, unruly waves. The waves were so great that the boat was hidden between the waves (Matt. 8:24). The boat began to fill with water. Even seasoned seamen were afraid, recognizing the real danger to their lives.

**8:24-25.** Luke omitted the interesting detail that Jesus was sleeping on a cushion in the stern (rear) of the boat (Mark 4:38). The urgent question of the disciples as recorded by Luke is supplemented by Matthew, "Save, Lord" (8:25) and Mark, "Teacher, do you not care if we perish?" (4:38). The turmoil at sea brought turmoil to their hearts. They were frantic, desperate men. They had to alert Jesus to their plight.

As Lord of all nature Jesus awoke, stood in the boat (Matt. 8:26) and rebuked the wind and the waves. Immediately the whirlwind and the raging waves were calm and quiet. The water did not continue to slosh back and forth. An obvious and awesome miracle had occurred. A Scottish metrical version of Psalm 107 has:

The storm is changed into a calm  
 At his command and will  
 So that the waves which raged before  
 Now quiet are and still.

See Psalms 89:8f; 93:3f; 107:23-30; Isaiah 51:9f.

The disciples did not fully realize and trust Jesus as the divine

Lord. Both before (Matt. 8:26) and after He stilled the storm, Jesus addressed the disciples for their lack of faith. It would have been extremely difficult for them (as it would be for us in the same situation) to understand that Jesus was God in flesh. Miracles like this one helped them come to an unshakable conviction that Jesus was in fact God and man. Some people accept some of Jesus' miracles but stumble at the nature miracles. But if Jesus created the world and its elements and sustains it in its normal, orderly behavior (John 1:3; Col. 1:16,17), then it would be no problem at all to direct the behavior of the elements at any moment. If they had a childlike trust in Him as Lord they would not have needed to fear the storm.

Their response to His miracle and His question was one of awe. This is the usual response to the presence of the supernatural (Isa. 6:5; Ezek. 1:28; Luke 5:8; Rev. 1:17). Filled with reverence and a growing understanding of His divine nature, the disciples say to each other, "Who then is this, . . . ?" Well did the psalmist answer their question,

O LORD God of hosts,  
 who is mighty as thou art, O LORD,  
 with thy faithfulness round about thee?  
 Thou dost rule the raging of the sea;  
 when its waves rise, thou stillest them (Psa. 89:8,9).

The question, "Who is Jesus?" is the central issue of the gospels and of our lives. I. Howard Marshall pointed out that the disciples' question is not answered, "but the answer is implicit for the reader who knows his Old Testament: what God did then, Jesus does now" (p. 335).

This event teaches that Jesus was both human (asleep) and divine (stilled the storm). We learn that we must have confidence in Jesus as our divine Lord.

### **A Demon-Possessed Man Is Freed — Luke 8:26-39**

Some deny the reality of demons holding that modern knowledge has disproved such superstitions. Others, some nominal Christians as well as non-Christians, are preoccupied with the world of evil spirits, being more afraid of the power of Satan and demons than they are trustful of God and His power. Rather than accepting either of these extremes we should realize that the devil and demons, evil spirits in the

devil's service, do in fact exist and work in opposition to God. The Bible tells us the truth about the world of evil spirits. The Gospels are historically reliable in describing the events where Jesus cast out demons.

Exorcists, who claimed to cast out demons by omens, charms and the like, practiced black magical arts in Jesus' day, as some have since. Jesus had no part in black magic. As the Son of God He had supernatural power over the spirit world as well as the physical world. Such divine authority is demonstrated in events such as the one involving the Gerasene demoniac.

From the Gospels it is evident that a demon (unclean or evil spirit) could take possession of an individual's personality. The person possessed was not responsible for his or her actions (Matt. 8:31; Mark 3:11). The person could not separate his own identity from the influence of the demon. The demon was a separate spiritual reality who dominated the possessed person, using his or her physical faculties, for example the voice. The Gospel writers distinguish between diseases and demon possession (Matt. 4:24; 8:16; 10:1,8; Mark 1:32,34; 3:15; 6:13; 9:32-33; Luke 6:17-18; 9:1; 10:17-20). Sometimes diseases did accompany demon possession: muteness — Matthew 9:32-33; deafness and muteness — Mark 9:25; blindness and muteness — Matthew 12:22; epilepsy — Matthew 17:15. Demon possession was not a mental or physical illness. Possession by a demon did not mean the person was immoral or sinful.

Are people possessed by demons today? We can not say that this is impossible. The New Testament does not give us guidelines for recognizing demon possession. Jesus and the apostles cast out demons. The commission to all believers centers on preaching the gospel and baptizing believers. We are called to be evangelists, not exorcists. However prayer and the Word of God can free pagans from the power of evil spirits. Christians need not fear they will be possessed by demons. Paul assured us, "No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:37-39).

<sup>26</sup>Then they arrived at the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. <sup>27</sup>And as he stepped out on land there met him a man from the city who had demons; for a long time he had worn no

clothes, and he lived not in a house but among the tombs. <sup>28</sup>When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell down before him and said with a loud voice, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beseech you, do not torment me." <sup>29</sup>For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. (For many a time it had seized him; he was kept under guard, and bound with chains and fetters, but he broke the bonds and was driven by the demon into the desert.) <sup>30</sup>Jesus then asked him "What is your name?" And he said, "Legion"; for many demons had entered him. <sup>31</sup>And they begged him not to command them to depart into the abyss. <sup>32</sup>Now a large herd of swine was feeding there on the hillside; and they begged him to let them enter these. So he gave them leave. <sup>33</sup>Then the demons came out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and were drowned.

<sup>34</sup>When the herdsmen saw what had happened, they fled, and told it in the city and in the country. <sup>35</sup>Then people went out to see what had happened, and they came to Jesus, and found the man from whom the demons had gone, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind; and they were afraid. <sup>36</sup>And those who had seen it told them how he who had been possessed with demons was healed. <sup>37</sup>Then all the people of the surrounding country of the Gerasenes asked him to depart from them; for they were seized with great fear; so he got into the boat and returned. <sup>38</sup>The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with him; but he sent him away, saying, <sup>39</sup>"Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you." And he went away, proclaiming throughout the whole city how much Jesus had done for him.

**8:26-28.** Variations exist in manuscripts concerning the location. The best texts for here and Mark 5:1 have Gerasenes. Gadarenes is the preferred reading in Matthew 8:28. Gerasa, modern Jerash, was located about 30 miles southeast of the Sea of Galilee. Gadara was located five or six miles southeast of the sea. Apparently this area bordering the southeast shore line of the Sea of Galilee was identified by these cities. The area called Galilee was located west of the Sea of Galilee. This event happened on the opposite side of the lake — on the east side. This area was settled mostly by Gentiles.

Jesus and the disciples came by boat to the shore. When Jesus stepped out of the boat onto land, He was met by a man who had for a long time been possessed by demons. Matthew (8:28) mentions two men; Luke and Mark referred to one. No contradiction exists here

because Luke and Mark do not say only one. Apparently they describe the leader of the two. Many tombs are located in the rocks in this area.

The man addressed Jesus as "Son of the Most High God." Plummer held this to be evidence that the man was not a Jew since "the most high" was a name for Jehovah common among the heathen (Gen. 14:20,22; Num. 24:16; Isa. 14:14; Dan. 3:26; 4:24,32; 5:18,21; 7:18,22,25,27; Acts 16:17) (pp. 229-230). How did the demons recognize Jesus? Perhaps they knew Jesus in heaven before Satan and the demons were expelled. The demons begged for mercy that Jesus not torment them.

**8:29-31.** As Sovereign Lord over all things, Jesus ordered the demon to come out of the man. The man had been bound with hand chains (Acts 12:6f; 21:33; 28:20) and chains on his feet as well (Mark 5:4), but he broke these bonds. "The chains he wrenched apart, and the fetters he broke in pieces: and no one had the strength to subdue him;; (Matt. 8:28). The demon drove the man to live in a normally uninhabited area.

Jesus asked his name. Perhaps Jesus wanted the man to distinguish between himself and the demons controlling him. The Latin word, Legion, is the response. A Roman legion was a force of about 5-6,000 men. The meaning is that the man is inhabited by many evil spirits. Other scriptures give evidence of a person being possessed by multiple evil spirits (Matt. 12:45; Luke 8:2; 11:26). In the rest of this account the plural of demons is used instead of the singular.

The abyss refers to a place of confinement and punishment for the devil and evil spirits (Rev. 9:1-11; 11:7; 17:8; 20:1,3). The demons dread to be sent to this place of punishment.

**8:32-33.** Mark reported the number of pigs was 2,000 (Mark 5:13). Luke says it was a numerous herd. Jesus granted the wish of the demons to enter the swine. The pigs suddenly rush down the steep slope and are drowned in the lake.

Ethical questions have been raised concerning this event. Some even charge that Jesus was wrong in what He did. Various responses have been offered. Morris asked, "Can anyone seriously hold that the pigs should have been saved and the man left unsaved?" (p. 156). Farrar said, "The freeing of the neighbourhood from the peril and terror of this maniac was a greater benefit to the whole city than the loss of this herd" (quoted by Morris, p. 156). Plummer suggested, "A visible effect of the departure of the demons was necessary to convince the demoniacs and their neighbours of the completeness of the cure. Brutes and private property may be sacrificed, where the sanity and

lives of persons are concerned” (p. 228). It has been suggested that the owners of the pigs were Jews who were violating the law by raising pigs. However no evidence in the text proves the owners were Jews. To prove Jesus guilty of wrong in His action one would have to know things from God’s point of view, which I’m sure is what Jesus did. Convincing evidence establishes that He is Lord and God. We are wise to trust Him.

**8:34-36.** The pig keepers reported the story of what had happened as they went through the countryside and in the city. Curiosity brought the people out to see for themselves. They found the man who had been possessed sitting instead of being restless and wild, clothed instead of naked, in his right mind instead of raging and terrorizing people. Seeing such an obvious transformation caused them to be afraid in the presence of supernatural power. Those who had witnessed the man’s deliverance told how the man had been healed. The word translated healed can also mean saved, which could refer to the man’s spiritual salvation. But it is a normal word for rescue from any danger or recovery from any affliction (e.g., see Mark 5:23,34; 10:52). Mark added that the people were also informed about the pigs.

**8:37-39.** Because of their fear they asked Jesus to leave. It is not clear whether they fear the display of supernatural power or whether they feared what further loss they might experience at the hand of His miraculous power. For whatever reason they missed the greatest opportunity in their lives. They thought they would be better off without Jesus. Sadly many people foolishly reason the same way today. Jesus entered the boat and started away. Concerning this request of Jesus to leave, Plummer observed, “There is nothing like it elsewhere in the history of Jesus” (p. 233).

The delivered man begged Jesus to allow him to go with Him. The man wanted to stay with his deliverer. But Jesus refused his request. Jesus had a job for him at home. His witness to Christ’s power to save would be more powerful in his home area because of the undeniable change that was evident in his life which would be obvious to them. Jesus was not allowed to evangelize in the area, but He commissioned the man to tell what great things *God* had done for him. He went throughout the city declaring what *Jesus* had done for him. He knew God was in Christ meeting his needs.

Personal testimonies can be self-centered and self-glorifying rather than pointing people to Christ. There is a danger in excessive subjectivism that calls attention primarily to one’s testimony. In the book of Acts the evangelism pointed primarily to Christ not to self. Yet the

type of witness we observe in the book of Acts is testimony that includes what great things God has done for the person through Jesus Christ.

When Jesus commanded some to be silent (Luke 4:41), why did he ask this man to speak? Apparently in this area the miracles of Jesus did not have the danger of arousing a political, Messianic excitement as was the case in Galilee.

Later Jesus was in the area east of the Lake of Galilee. Great crowds came. Many were healed. The people glorified God, Jesus fed the 4,000 (Matt. 15:29-38). Could it be that this good response was due at least in part to the witness of this man who was freed from the demons?

### **A Woman Healed and a Girl Raised from the Dead** **Luke 8:40-56**

<sup>40</sup>Now when Jesus returned, the crowd welcomed him, for they were all waiting for him. <sup>41</sup>And there came a man named Jairus, who was a ruler of the synagogue; and falling at Jesus' feet he besought him to come to his house, <sup>42</sup>for he had an only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she was dying.

As he went, the people pressed round him. <sup>43</sup>And a woman who had had a flow of blood for twelve years and could not be healed by any one, <sup>44</sup>came up behind him, and touched the fringe of his garment; and immediately her flow of blood ceased. <sup>45</sup>And Jesus said, "Who was it that touched me?" When all denied it, Peter said, "Master, the multitudes surround you and press upon you!" <sup>46</sup>But Jesus said, "Some one touched me; for I perceive that power has gone forth from me." <sup>47</sup>And when the woman saw that she was not hidden, she came trembling, and falling down before him declared in the presence of all the people why she had touched him, and how she had been immediately healed. <sup>48</sup>And he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace."

<sup>49</sup>While he was still speaking, a man from the ruler's house came and said, "Your daughter is dead; do not trouble the Teacher any more." <sup>50</sup>But Jesus on hearing this answered him, "Do not fear; only believe, and she shall be well." <sup>51</sup>And when he came to the house, he permitted no one to enter with him, except Peter and John and James, and the father and mother of the child. <sup>52</sup>And all were weeping and bewailing her; but he said, "Do not weep; for she is not dead but sleeping." <sup>53</sup>And they laughed at him, knowing that she was dead.

<sup>54</sup>But taking her by the hand he called, saying, "Child, arise." <sup>55</sup>And her spirit returned, and she got up at once; and he directed that something should be given her to eat. <sup>56</sup>And her parents were amazed; but he charged them to tell no one what had happened.

**8:40-42a.** The "crowd welcomed him" stands in direct contrast to the Gerasenes' request that He "depart from them" (8:37). Jesus did leave from the east side of the Sea of Galilee and apparently crossed the sea to Capernaum (likely site, though not named in the text).

Among those who waited at the seaside (Mark 5:21) for Jesus was Jairus, the ruler of the synagogue. A board of elders governed each synagogue. Jairus, as ruler of the synagogue, supervised the synagogue worship including the selection of those who would lead in prayer, read the scripture and preach. He was to see that order was maintained. This position commanded respect in a Jewish community. Since this event probably occurred in Capernaum, Jairus no doubt had heard of Jesus' miracles, perhaps even had witnessed some of them.

Jairus showed his faith and respect for Jesus as he came and fell at Jesus' feet, fervently pleading with Him to come to his house. The crisis was urgent. His only daughter who was twelve years old "was dying." Mark said "at the point of death" (Mark 5:23). Luke and Mark record that the man came and reported his daughter was about to die. Then friends came reporting that she had died. In Matthew's abbreviated account he recorded only the later report that she had died.

Immediately Jesus started with Jairus toward his house (Mark 5:24). His disciples went with Him (Matt. 9:19).

**8:42b-44.** Progress was slow due to the great crowd pressing about Him (Mark 5:24). In this crowd a desperate woman felt anonymous and hoped to be healed without being noticed. She had a condition of continual hemorrhage for twelve years. Perhaps she had a tumor in her womb which resulted in an excessive loss of blood causing severe weakness. Surgery was not available then to correct the problem. Only Mark mentioned that she "had suffered much under many physicians, and had spent all that she had and was no better but rather grew worse" (Mark 5:26). Luke merely stated that hers was an incurable case defying doctor's skill.

Since she had heard reports of Jesus' miracles, her faith led her to work her way through the crowd until she was behind Jesus. When near enough she touched the tassel on his outer robe (Num. 15:38,



Deut. 22:12).

She did not come openly because of her shame and embarrassment. Her condition made her ceremonially unclean (Lev. 15:19-33). The intimate nature of her problem explains her shyness. We have to admire the strength of her faith believing she could be healed merely by touching His garment. Perhaps what she failed to realize was that she could not escape the Master's notice. Immediately the bleeding stopped and "she felt in her body that she was healed of her disease" (Mark 5:29).

**8:45-48.** Jesus was not unaware of what had happened. He knew of the woman's faith. He knew that power had gone from Him in the healing of her body. The crowd had no clue this had happened.

Jesus abruptly stopped. The crowd bumped against Him. Jesus asked, "Who was it that touched me?" All denied that they had specifically touched Him. Because the jostling crowd pressed all about Him, Peter and the disciples wondered why He asked, "Who touched me?" (Mark 5:31).

Jesus declared that He knew someone had touched Him and that power had gone from Him to the person. It was a deliberate touch, not an accidental one. He had not asked for information but He wanted to lead the woman to publicly declare her faith so He could publicly announce her cure.

Realizing she could no longer maintain secrecy, trembling she came and fell at Jesus' feet and stated why she had touched Him and declared that she had been immediately healed. She had been a ceremonial outcast, discouraged and lonely, but to Jesus she was not an unimportant person.

Jesus made it clear that it was her faith in Him, not the touch of the garment, that healed her. In gentle kindness, Jesus reassured her, confirmed her healing, and sent her away with peace in her heart. There are no "little people" in Jesus' eyes.

**8:49-53.** The delay must have frustrated Jairus. Yet on the other hand, the miraculous healing of the woman may have strengthened his faith in Christ.

While Jesus spoke these last words to the healed woman, a person came from Jairus' house bearing sad news that the child had already died. They reasoned that it was too late. They need not impose on Jesus' time now.

Instead of panic and fear Jesus calmly assured all the people that all would be well if they would "only believe." The girl could be made well again. Jesus is not teaching that salvation is by "faith only" as

some have used the verse to teach. He is saying that in this situation, faith will be the basis for this girl's restoration to life and health.

Upon reaching Jairus' house Jesus took only the father and mother and the three apostles, Peter, James and John into the room. He did not want a crowd, but took the three apostles to serve as witnesses. On several occasions Jesus took only these three apostles with Him.

Perhaps this conversation with the mourners took place as Jesus entered the house, or the mourners were already in the house but not in the room with the dead body (Matt. 9:25; Mark 5:40). Some say the mourners were insincere. Of course their scorn at Jesus' words was inappropriate. The "tumult" of the wailing and the sounds of the musicians may seem wrong to us today but their culture had a noisy way of expressing grief.

Some suggest that the girl was only in a trance or a coma and not really dead. Luke 8:53 shows she was actually dead. Jesus used the word "sleep" here as He did in the case of Lazarus to mean not permanently dead (John 11:11-14). Death would not be the final outcome.

Being positive she was dead, the mourners mocked and laughed in loud derision at Jesus. They neither understood nor believed the power of God would be exercised by Jesus.

**8:54-56.** Jesus put the mourners who scorned Him out of the house (Matt. 9:25; Mark 5:40). He did not show His power to mockers.

In the room with the mother and father and the three disciples Jesus manifested dignity and tenderness as He raised her from death. When Jesus took her by the hand and said, "Child, arise," her life returned as her spirit rejoined her body. "Immediately the girl got up and walked" (Mark 5:42). Out of consideration for the girl, as proof of her resurrection, and perhaps to give the mother something to do with her hands, Jesus asked that the mother give her food to eat. Jesus was sensitive to practical concerns.

Jesus told the amazed and astonished parents not to tell this miracle. Of course some people would know. Jesus did not want it broadcast widely. Already crowds were following Him. He wanted to teach learners without being thronged by sign-seekers.

Several lessons can be learned from this story. Jairus and the woman with the issue of blood knew who could help them. They went to Jesus for help. Jairus was not too proud to ask for help. The woman was not too ashamed to go for help.

One cannot become a Christian until he or she admits the need for

help and is lost. A Christian must continually look to Jesus for power and wisdom to cope with life's problems. Our own strength and resources are insufficient. We must trust in the Lord.

They trusted Jesus' power to help. The woman was healed because of her faith, Jairus' daughter was raised because of Jairus' faith. We can acknowledge the power of God, but we must really trust Him, not just say He is powerful.

Jesus is willing and able to help us. He is the only savior for lost souls, the only hope of the hopeless, the only way to a worthwhile life.

## STUDY QUESTIONS

1. Name three women who helped support Jesus and the twelve in their travels.
2. Identify the four kinds of soil described in the Parable of the Sower.
3. What does the word "secrets" mean in 8:10?
4. What does the seed represent?
5. Identify the kind of hearer represented by each of the four kinds of soil.
6. What are the three things that choke out the word in a person's life?
7. Explain Jesus' response to His mother and brothers.
8. Locate and describe the Sea of Galilee.
9. Describe the kind of storms that came upon the sea.
10. How does the stilling of the storm show both Jesus' humanity and His deity?
11. How are we to understand the accounts of demon possession in the New Testament?
12. What are demons and what happened when they possessed people?
13. Locate the event involving the Gerasene demoniac.
14. How would the demon know Jesus?
15. What is the significance in the name Legion?
16. What response can be given to the ethical questions that have been raised concerning this miracle? (e.g. Was it right to kill the pigs?)
17. Why did Jesus not let the man freed of the demons come and follow Him?
18. What is the probable city where Jairus was a ruler of the synagogue?

TWENTY-SIX LESSONS ON LUKE

19. What was the role of the ruler of the synagogue?
20. Why did the woman not come publicly to be healed?
21. What are some reasons why Jesus insisted on identifying the healed woman?
22. Was the girl dead or only asleep?
23. State some lessons that can be learned from the story involving the healed woman and Jairus' daughter.