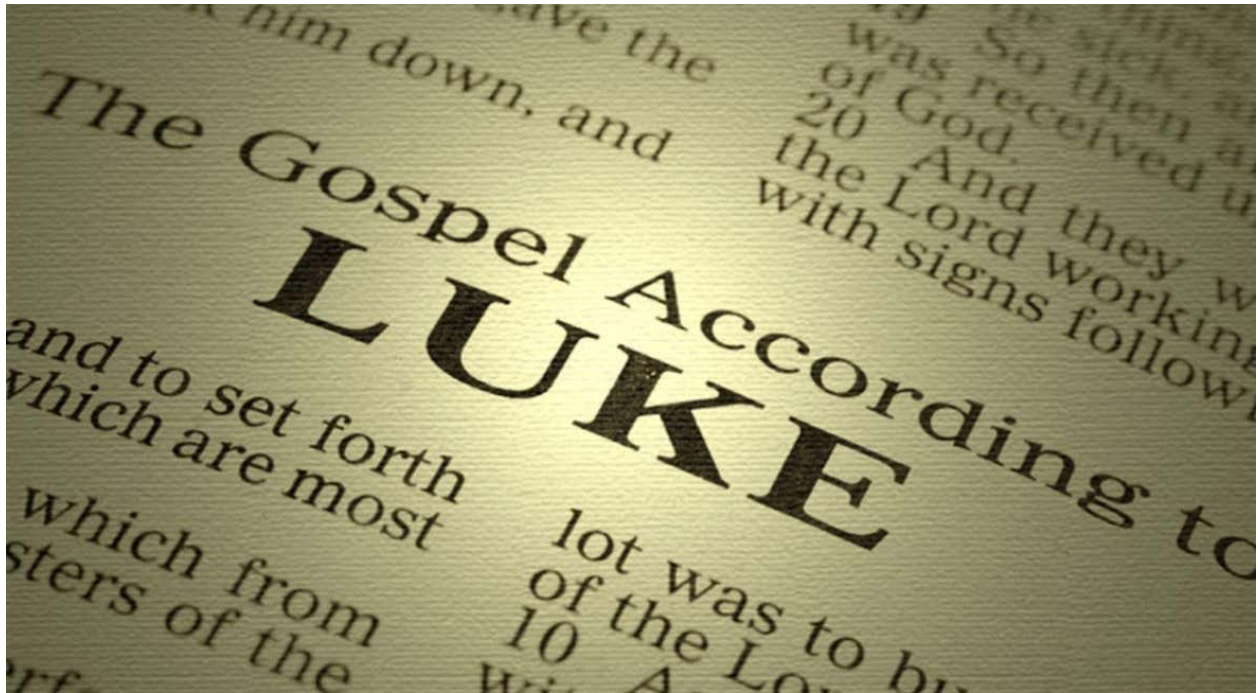


Luke 8, Part 2



T. M. AND SUSIE MOORE

A Scriptorium Study from The Fellowship of Ailbe

Luke 8, Part 2
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Introduction to Luke 8, Part 2

Through the devil and his minions, thousands and thousands of years of misery, mayhem, madness, and murder plagued the world, while they, like playground bullies, delighted to deceive and destroy, and plotted their ultimate overthrow of God Himself.

Satan saw his chance in that Judean wilderness, but he underestimated his rival, bet the whole table on his flimsy hand, and fell into the clutches of the Son of God. He was bound, his regime overthrown, he and his minions were doomed, and the rest, from then until Jesus returns, is just mopping-up, pushing ahead, and preparing for glory.

We get a good look at the scope and power of the Kingdom-preparing work in Luke 8.

If you find these studies, or any of our other resources, helpful, we hope you will consider making a contribution to help support our work. You can do so by using the donate button at the website or by sending your gift to The Fellowship of Ailbe, 360 Zephyr Road, Williston, VT 05495.

We hope you find this study of the gospel of Luke instructive and helpful to equip you for your walk with and work for the Lord. Thank you for joining us.

T. M. Moore, Principal
tmmoore@ailbe.org

1 Tormentor of Tormentors

Pray Psalm 58.10, 11.

The righteous shall rejoice when he sees the vengeance;
He shall wash his feet in the blood of the wicked,
So that men will say,
“Surely *there is* a reward for the righteous;
Surely He is God who judges in the earth.”

Sing Psalm 58.10, 11.

(Arlington: *This Is the Day the Lord Hath Made*)

The righteous will rejoice to see the vengeance of the Lord.
All men will say, “Then God must be, the righteous to reward.”

Read Luke 8.1-25; meditate on verses 26-29.

Preparation

1. How did the demons treat the man they possessed?
2. What did they, speaking through the man’s voice, respond to Jesus?

Meditation

The old regime of world order, which was presided over by Satan and his numerous spiritual subordinates, has come to an end. Jesus is bringing the new regime of the Kingdom of God, and this is Good News.

Well, not entirely. It wasn’t good news for the demons tormenting that poor Gadarene (Gerasene) man. And they knew it. They suspected that Jesus had come to “torment them”, as Matthew has it, “before the time” (Matt. 8.29). The defeat and binding of Satan (Lk. 4.1-13) reverberated throughout the spirit world. The demons understood their happy days were over. They knew Jesus, and they knew to fear Him (cf. Jms. 2.19). They understood that a day of final destruction is coming (Rev. 20.7-10), but they continued to “party on”, as it were, hoping they might escape notice.

These vicious, cruel, heartless spiritual tormentors had oppressed this man “for a long time.” Look at his miserable condition (v. 27)! This man is a microcosm of the world wherever the remnants of Satan’s dominion continue – oppressed, despised, impoverished, hopeless, fearful, as good as dead. Who would do this to someone? Such beings deserve the worst we can imagine.

How about a lake of eternal fire?

The man’s response to Jesus is an amazing combination of his heart’s desire and the demons’ dread. He fell before Jesus because he knew Him. “What have I to do with You?” is literally, “What to me and to You?”, that is, “What’s with us?” This is the voice of the man crying for help. But the demons who control him know Jesus, too. They know Him as their Tormentor, and they seem to rebuke Him for getting ahead of Himself, as Matthew’s account makes clear.

Jesus fully intended to torment those demons. Smash out their teeth? Break their fangs? Melt them like water? Not torment enough. Their destruction in the Lake of Galilee portends their ultimate and eternal torment in the lake of fire. “Before the time?” For that Gadarene man, “Just in time.”

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162.

Indeed, “who would do this *to* someone?” And those that do? They continue, even today, having not received the memo that they are eternally finished.

The description of this man is heart-rending: naked, homeless, bound in shackles and chains that could not bind him, destitute in the wilderness and amongst the tombs. Those who send others into estranged privation are still active today. They would like nothing better than for all to be demoniacs. The tormentor has his sights on everyone.

“For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places” (Eph. 6.12).

And beware, they are deceivers. “For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light” (2 Cor. 11.14). “He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it” (Jn. 8.44). He does not wish you well.

But Jesus. “When He stepped out on the land...He...commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man” (Lk. 8.27, 29). “Surely there is a reward for the righteous; surely He is God who judges in the earth” (Ps. 58.11). “Jesus...gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself His own special people, zealous for good works” (Tit. 2.14).

Our job is twofold: First, to keep ourselves pure and safe from the enemy of our soul. “He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who has not lifted up his soul to an idol, nor sworn deceitfully” is the one who may “stand in His holy place” (Ps. 24.4, 3). And second, to be our brother’s keeper. “Deliver those who are drawn toward death, and hold back those stumbling to the slaughter” (Prov. 24.11).

We are God’s ambassadors, sent to do works of mercy like Jesus did. “Now then, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were pleading through us: we implore you on Christ’s behalf, be reconciled to God” (2 Cor. 5.20).

Who would do this *for* someone? Only those who know that we are washed, we are sanctified, we are justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God (1 Cor. 6.11); and know that He, the Ruler over the kings of the earth, loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood (Rev. 1.5). We will be the ones who strive to give the tormented new life in Christ, since we were once as lost as they (Rom. 5.8).

For reflection

1. Do you believe that spiritual powers of wickedness are still active today? What evidence can you cite?
2. What can you do to make yourself less vulnerable to such powers?
3. Whom will you encourage today to resist the devil and all the powers of darkness?

We may learn much out of this history concerning the world of infernal, malignant spirits, which though not working now exactly in the same way as then, yet all must at all times carefully guard against. And these malignant spirits are very numerous. They have enmity to man and all his comforts. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), Commentary on Luke 8.26-29

Pray Psalm 58.1-9.

Spiritual forces of wickedness in high places continue to torment and corrupt many, including many world leaders. Pray that kings and rules everywhere will submit to the rule of Jesus in their hearts, delivering them from evil thoughts and influences and transforming them into servants of God for good (Rom. 13.1-4).

Sing Psalm 58.1-9.

(Arlington: *This Is the Day the Lord Hath Made*)

Do you indeed speak righteousness, you rulers of the earth?

Luke 8, Part 2

And do you judge the sons of men according to their worth?

No, not at all, but in their hearts they seek unrighteous ways.
Their hands weigh out upon the earth cruel violence all their days.

The wicked from the womb rebel; from birth they utter lies.
Their tongues of serpent's venom tell; all truth their ears despise.

Break, shatter, and destroy them, Lord; dissolve them from the day.
Consume them by Your mighty Word; and sweep them all away.

2 To Restrain and to Permit

Pray Psalm 119.49, 50.

Remember the word to Your servant,
Upon which You have caused me to hope.
This *is* my comfort in my affliction,
For Your word has given me life.

Sing Psalm 119.49, 50.

(Wycliff: *All for Jesus*)

Lord, remember all the good Word You have spoken unto me!
For I ever hope in You, Lord as I serve You joyfully.

This my comfort in affliction, this my comfort in all strife:
that Your Word is my redemption, giving me eternal life!

Read Luke 8.1-33; meditate on verses 30-33.

Preparation

1. What did the demons fear?
2. What did they request?

Meditation

Here we see the power of Jesus' Word to restrain and to permit. We know that Jesus upholds the cosmos and everything in it by His powerful Word (Heb. 1.3). He does this by commanding the cosmos to do what He wills. For example, in Psalm 147.15 we read that the entire earth obeys His command as His Word runs swiftly over it. What's true for the earth is true for the rest of the cosmos: It does what Jesus commands, because all created things are His servants (Ps. 119.89-91).

In addition to ruling by command, the Word of God rules by restraint and permission. He restrains the wicked from doing the worst they could imagine. We see this in our text. Jesus is about to restrain the demons from further oppressing this poor man. He keeps them from doing the worst they could do.

But He also exercises His powerful Word in a permissive manner. We see this in the exchanges between God and Satan in Job 1 and 2. And we see it here. I find the cringing, pleading, desperate appeals of the demons mewling and pathetic. All these years they bullied that poor man. How many times did he beg for relief? Plead for his torment to end? And yet they persisted.

And now, here they are, the "Legion" of them assembled before a penniless Prophet, begging not to be made miserable by being cast into the abyss. That will come soon enough, as we have seen. They beg to be sent into the pigs – just the right place for them, since pigs were unclean in Jesus' day (at least, to this point in His ministry). By His Word of permission, Jesus allows the demons to do, not what pleases them – they did not ask to be sent into the pigs and then into the lake – but what pleases Him and glorifies His Name. And points forward to the day of His ultimate and final triumph over all the powers of wickedness.

Why is there so much evil in the world? Jesus permits it for His purposes and glory? Why is there not more evil in the world? Jesus restrains it according to His pleasure. What a powerful Word!

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

Regardless of how many pigs constitute a herd, it was a bunch of pigs. And the number of demons powerful

enough to send all those animals into the lake lived in one man. Legion-infested. That poor man. Bullied and tormented all those years.

And then Jesus entered the scene with hope for a new life, freedom, and relief! “I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly” (Jn. 10.10).

“Praise Him for His mighty acts; praise Him according to His excellent greatness!” (Ps. 150.2).

God has been longing to protect us from destructive forces from the very beginning. In the case of the plagues sent upon the Egyptians, the last one, death to all the firstborn, could also afflict the Israelites. However, it was avoided by their placing the blood of a lamb on the doorposts of their house; so that when “He sees the blood...the LORD will pass over the door and not allow the destroyer to come into your houses to strike you” (Ex. 12.23).

God’s desire is for His children to be free from the torment of evil and destruction.

God rules over all creation—the evil and the good. For His own purposes and glory.

“Who has ascended into heaven, or descended?

Who has gathered the wind in His fists?

Who has bound the waters in a garment?

Who has established all the ends of the earth?

What is His name, and what is His Son’s name,

If you know? (Prov. 30.3, 4).

Who rules over demons and pigs and death and life?

“And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly.

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you” (Rom. 16.20).

“When the wicked spring up like grass, and when all the workers of iniquity flourish, it is that they may be destroyed forever” (Ps. 92.7).

The destroyers are controlled by God. Regardless of what they may think. And they will one day be abyss-driven. But until then...He permits them.

In the midst of all the mayhem of pigs and demons we know:

“There is no one like God...

Who rides the heavens to help you,

And in His excellency on the clouds.

The eternal God is your refuge, and

Underneath are the everlasting arms;|

He will thrust out the enemy from before you...” (Deut. 33.26, 27).

“To Restrain and to Permit.”

For reflection

1. What kinds of things do you think Jesus will work to restrain in your life?

2. Why do we need to bear in mind that Jesus is sovereign in every aspect of our lives?

3. Do we need to fear the devil and his minions? Whom should we fear? Why?

Oh what a comfort it is to the believer, that all the powers of darkness are under the control of the Lord Jesus! Matthew Henry (1662-1714), *Commentary on Luke 8.30-33*

Luke 8, Part 2

Pray Psalm 119.51-56.

Pray that God will encourage you by His Word today, to help you obey all His commandments, stand firm as His witness, and rest in the security of His love.

Sing Psalm 119.51-56.

(Wycliff: *All for Jesus*)

Though the proud deride and taunt me, I will trust Your faithful Word.
Let Your judgments from of old be all my comfort, holy Lord.

Indignation grips me, Savior, for those who forsake Your Word.
All Your statutes, all Your favor, I will sing with joy, O Lord!

In the night Your Name attends me, and I keep Your holy Word;
let Your precepts all befriend me, as I keep them, glorious Lord.

3 Sea of Fools

Pray Psalm 12.1, 2.

Help, LORD, for the godly man ceases!
For the faithful disappear from among the sons of men.
They speak idly everyone with his neighbor;
With flattering lips *and* a double heart they speak.

Sing Psalm 12.1, 2.

(Hamburg: *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross*)

Help, Lord! The godly cease to be! They who believe in Christ are few.
Falsely the wicked confidently flatter, deceive, and mock Your truth.

Read Luke 8.1-39; meditate on verses 34-39.

Preparation

1. How did the people from the city and country respond to Jesus?
2. How did He respond to them?

Meditation

This passage is my number 2 on the all-time list of stupid responses to Jesus. Stupid in the true sense of “having or showing a great lack of intelligence or common sense” (*OED*). The people heard what Jesus had done and came out to have a look-see for themselves (vv. 34, 35). They saw the man, whom they had doubtless seen many times before, now “sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind” (v. 35). Eyewitnesses reported what had happened to the growing crowd (v. 36).

Can you imagine the excitement? The relief? The sense of wonder? What would we have done? What these people did was to ask Jesus to leave, “for they were seized with great fear” (v. 37). Fear of what, we wonder? That He might throw them in the lake? That something they were unlawfully indulging might be exposed and taken from them? Or just fear of fear and uncertainty?

Jesus, obligingly, “got into the boat and returned” (v. 37). But not before the one sane person among that sea of fools appealed for the privilege of going with Him (v. 38). But Jesus appointed him the mission of going home to tell his family what God had done. And as he was going, he “proclaimed throughout the whole city what great things Jesus had done for him” (v. 39). That’s why Jesus had him stay, so that the fools who sent Him away would have more opportunities to hear and receive the Good News.

And Jesus has left us here, each of us in our own Personal Mission Field, to boast of Him, rejoice in Him, talk excitedly about Him, and show His healing and restoring love to everyone we meet as we are going. When we know the goodness and power of Jesus like this Gadarene man did, we, too, will follow and proclaim Him where He sends us. They may tell us to go away, and we will oblige. But the Presence of Jesus with us will continue to woo and strive with them, as we continue faithful in our calling.

Oh, and number 1 on my all-time list? The Pharisees and Sadducees in Acts 4 (check it out, especially vv. 13-17).

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

Could it ever be said of you that you have responded in a #1 or #2 way? Either the way this whole multitude did; or the way the Pharisees and Sadducees did in Acts 4? Any time we doubt Jesus or declare to God that we know better than He how things should be, we are toying with the dubious opportunity of being #3 on this list.

But then there is the man healed from the Legion of demons. Interesting to note that he was, in fact, “the one sane person among that sea of fools”. He, amongst the pig-herders, townsfolk, owners of the pigs, and the ever-present religious snoopers, was the only one in his right mind. He loved Jesus and wanted to be with Him (Lk. 8.38).

Jesus did have other plans for this man’s life. Don’t you know, though, with all the nay-sayers around, this man would have been a comfort to Jesus to have as a close follower. In the same way it is hard for us to let our children go, it must have been hard to send this man away. But send him, He did. And this man’s testimony has trickled down to each one of us (Matt. 28.19, 20; Acts 1.8).

Jesus gave him an opportunity to be obedient. And in this he succeeded. “Return to your own house, and tell what great things God has done for you.” “And he went on his way and proclaimed throughout the whole city what great things Jesus had done for him” (Lk. 8.39). This man got the most important message correct: Jesus is God!

And interesting that Jesus sent him home. First and foremost. So often family members are the ones most hurt by sinful behavior. And the Bible has much to say about how we comport ourselves with those closest to us. “Honor your father and your mother.” “You shall not commit adultery” (Ex. 20.12, 14). “Husbands, love your wives” (Eph. 5.25). If we can’t pull off behaving like Christ in our own homes, we will never have a solid witness anywhere else.

The psalmist Asaph wrote:

“Offer to God thanksgiving, and pay your vows to the Most High.
Call upon Me in the day of trouble; I will deliver you, and you shall glorify Me...
Whoever offers praise glorifies Me; and to him who orders his conduct aright
I will show the salvation of God” (Ps. 50.14, 15, 23).

Jesus sends each one of us back to our homes and out to others to prove that we will obey Him. “But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves...But he who looks into the perfect law of liberty and continues in it, and is not a forgetful hearer but a doer of the work, this one will be blessed in what he does” (Jms. 1.22, 25).

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation [we, the healed and now sane]; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new” (2 Cor. 5.17). And now Jesus has sent us home, then out, with a job to do—so let’s do it!

For reflection

1. Why is it so important that we live our faith and testify about Jesus to those who are closest to us?
2. If someone were to ask you, “So, what has Jesus done for you?”, what would you say?
3. What does Jesus promise when we obey His instructions (Jms. 1.22-25)?

*Hence we learn how wide is the difference between the knowledge of the goodness, and the knowledge of the power, of God. Power strikes men with terror, makes them fly from the presence of God, and drives them to a distance from him: but goodness draws them gently, and makes them feel that nothing is more desirable than to be united to God. John Calvin (1509-1564),
Commentary on Luke 8.38*

Pray Psalm 12.3-8

Pray that God will protect you from every lie and every false wind of doctrine, that He will empower you to stand in His truth today and to enable you to do good in the Name of Jesus, regardless of how others

respond.

Sing Psalm 12.3-8.

(Hamburg: *When I Survey the Wondrous Cross*)

Stop, Lord, the lips that utter lies, all those who speak with boasting tongue!
See how Your holy Word they despise, while their own praises they have sung.

Rise up, O Lord, and rescue all Your precious children sore distressed.
Save those who faithfully on You call; grant them deliv'rance, peace, and rest.

Your words are pure and proven true, like silver seven times refined.
You will preserve Your Word ever new, and keep the heart to You inclined.

Proudly the wicked strut and stand; Your indignation builds on high.
Men may exalt their wicked plans, but You will judge them by and by.

4 Pictures of Prayer (1)

Pray Psalm 55.1-3.

Give ear to my prayer, O God,
And do not hide Yourself from my supplication.
Attend to me, and hear me;
I am restless in my complaint, and moan noisily,
Because of the voice of the enemy,
Because of the oppression of the wicked;
For they bring down trouble upon me,
And in wrath they hate me.

Sing Psalm 55.1-3.

(Bread of Life: *Break Thou the Bread of Life*)

Hear now my prayer, O Lord, hide not from me. Answer me by Your Word and set me free!
Wicked men sore oppress; restless am I. Lord, ease my soul's distress and hear my cry!

Read Luke 8.1-42; meditate on verses 40-42.

Preparation

1. How did Jairus approach Jesus?
2. What was the burden of his prayer?

Meditation

The accounts of Jairus and the woman with the flow of blood provide pictures of prayer, in the light of which we might gain insight to how our own prayers can be improved. Let's look first at the "ruler of the synagogue" (v. 41).

We note, first of all, that he sought the Presence of Jesus through the press of a "multitude" (v. 40). We don't have multitudes of people discouraging us from prayer, but we do have multitudes of distractions – things to do, interruptions, routines, etc. If we want to get to Jesus, we'll have to find a way to part a path through the multitude of things that keep us from Him, and do so earnestly.

Next, Jairus "fell down at Jesus' feet" (v. 41). We must come before Jesus humbly, with a sense of our own unworthiness but, at the same time, expecting that He Who is so full of grace will receive us and hear our complaints.

Jairus "begged" Jesus on behalf of his daughter (v. 41). The Greek could be translated "begged and pleaded and begged". He was persistent in putting his request before Jesus, determined to gain a response from Him (cf. Jer. 33.3).

Finally, Jairus prayed earnestly on behalf of his daughter (v. 42). Of course, he was also praying for himself, that he might be spared the tragic loss of his twelve-year-old daughter. And he was specific in his request: that Jesus should come to his house and attend to his daughter's need.

Determination, humility, urgency, persistence, intercession, supplication – these are all ways that we demonstrate trust in the Lord through prayer. Let's work to bring our lives into line with this picture.

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

Jairus and the woman with the flow of blood provide pictures of prayer. As do the multitude.
"So it was, when Jesus returned, that the multitude welcomed Him, for they were all waiting for Him" (Lk.

8.40).

In prayer, we wait on the Lord, and we welcome Him into our presence, as He welcomes us into His.

“Wait on the LORD; be of good courage, and He shall strengthen your heart; wait, I say, on the LORD!” (Ps. 27.14).

“Rest in the LORD, and wait patiently for Him...” (Ps. 37.7).

“Wait for the LORD, and He will save you” (Prov. 20.22).

“Behold, this is our God; we have waited for Him, and He will save us.

This is the LORD; we have waited for Him; we will be glad and rejoice in His salvation” (Is. 25.9).

“But those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint” (Is. 40.31).

Here is the promise of waiting on the LORD in prayer: His Presence will go with us into our Personal Mission Field. To give us grace, to guide us into all truth, and to separate us from the world, as a “chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, His own special people” (1 Pet. 2.9).

“My Presence will go with you, and I will give you rest.”

Then Moses said to God, “If Your Presence does not go with us, do not bring us up from here. For how will it be known that Your people and I have found grace in Your sight, except You go with us? So we shall be separate, Your people and I, from all the people who are upon the face of the earth” (Ex. 33.14-16).

As we wait for Him in prayer, and welcome Him into our day, our expectations of joy are fulfilled. “You will show me the path of life; in Your Presence is fullness of joy; at Your right hand are pleasures forevermore” (Ps. 16.11). “You have made known to me the ways of life; You will make me full of joy in Your Presence” (Acts 2.28).

Welcome Him. Wait for Him. The picture of prayer.

*Sweet hour of prayer, sweet hour of prayer, that calls me from a world of care,
And bids me at my Father's throne make all my wants and wishes known;
In seasons of distress and grief, my soul has often found relief,
And oft escaped the tempter's snare, by thy return sweet hour of prayer.*

*Sweet hour of prayer, sweet hour of prayer, thy wings shall my petition bear,
To Him whose truth and faithfulness engage the waiting soul to bless;
And since He bids me seek His face, believe His word and trust His grace,
I'll cast on Him my every care, and wait for thee, sweet hour of prayer.*
(William Wolford, 1845)

For reflection

1. If you could picture your prayer life at this time, what would it look like?
2. What's one thing you could do to improve your time with the Lord in prayer?
3. How can believers encourage one another to a more consistent and fruitful life of prayer?

The ruler of the synagogue of the Jews came near and, embracing the Savior's knees, begged him to deliver his daughter from the bonds of death. Cyril of Alexandria (375-444), Commentary on Luke, Homily 46

Pray Psalm 55.16-23.

Ask the Lord to help you improve your prayer life, to make it more continuous, more honest, more urgent and enjoyable, and to use your prayers to glorify Him in all things.

Luke 8, Part 2

Sing Psalm 55.16-23.

(Bread of Life: *Break Thou the Bread of Life*)

Lord, I will call on You, answer and save! Noon, morning, evening too, my voice I raise.
Grant me Your peace, O Lord; answer my foes! All who reject God's Word He overthrows.

Many assail, O Lord, many betray. See how they draw their sword across my way.
Take up my burden, Lord; strengthen and bless! Let judgment by Your Word their souls distress.

5 Pictures of Prayer (2)

Pray Psalm 143.1, 2.

Hear my prayer, O LORD,
Give ear to my supplications!
In Your faithfulness answer me,
And in Your righteousness.
Do not enter into judgment with Your servant,
For in Your sight no one living is righteous.

Sing Psalm 143.1, 2.

(Divinum Mysterium: *Of the Father's Love Begotten*)

Hear my earnest prayer, O Lord! Give ear to my pleas for grace!
In Your faithfulness and righteousness, look upon me with Your face!
Enter not to judgment with Your servant, Lord,
with Your loving servant, Lord:
none can stand before Your Word.

Read Luke 8.1-47; meditate on verses 43-47.

Preparation

1. How did this woman approach Jesus?
2. How did Jesus respond?

Meditation

We have all known people who say they have given up on prayer. They tried it, and it didn't achieve what they expected. But to give up on prayer is really to give up on Jesus, to deny His promises, refuse His Presence, and forfeit His healing and renewing touch.

This woman, stricken for twelve years, "who had spent all her livelihood on physicians and could not be healed by any", could easily have concluded that Jesus couldn't help her, either. But she did not. Imagine the struggle it must have been for this woman to make her way, in her desperately weak condition, through multitudes of people, thronging and pressing against Jesus (v. 45). She could have talked herself out of all the trouble, I'm sure. But instead, she launched into the fray and struggled to get to the Lord. And then she "touched the border of His garment" from behind (v. 44), not even daring to present herself before Him.

What a picture of prayer she is! Desperate but determined. Struggling against all odds. Humble, hoping. Touching Jesus in faith. Whatever excuses we might offer for not seeking the Lord in prayer, this faithful woman puts them all to scorn. She was not going to allow anyone or anything to keep her from even the slightest touch of the Savior. Believe. Approach. Humble yourself. Reach out. Believe. See what Jesus will do when you pray like this.

Don't give up on prayer. And don't give up on Jesus. Let this woman's faith, fearful and trembling as it was (v. 47), encourage you to stay the course of prayer.

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

Luke, the ever-observant physician, made note of the fact that this woman had been bleeding profusely for as long as Jairus' daughter had been alive. Both for twelve years. And if Luke observed this, we know certainly that God observed it, and took pity on this woman and on the child.

This brave, determined woman knew what she needed. Until Jesus appeared on the scene, her only hope had

been doctors, who took all her money but didn't return her health for the expenditure. She had no doubt heard amazing reports of Jesus' work with the sick, and she wanted what He had to offer. She needed to be in His Presence and receive His blessing. Perhaps she was familiar with the psalm of the sons of Korah: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. Therefore we will not fear, even though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea; though its waters roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with its swelling... God is in the midst of her, she shall not be moved; God shall help her, just at the break of dawn" (Ps. 46.1, 2, 5). Seems like this prayer had been written just for her!

All Scripture is written for each one of us to claim as our own, as she did. She was not afraid or pushed aside by the crowds, and God did help her. "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work" (2 Tim. 3.16, 17). Thoroughly equipped with words to pray back to God. "For the word of God is living and powerful..." (Heb. 4.12).

The same Scripture that drove this woman to prayer, and then to her own healing, is available to all who choose to read, memorize, meditate in, and claim it as their own. Taking Jesus at His word is the faith, without which, we cannot please Him (Heb. 11.6).

*'Tis so sweet to trust in Jesus, just to take Him at His word;
Just to rest upon His promise; just to know, "Thus saith the Lord."
Jesus, Jesus, how I trust Him! How I've proved Him o'er and o'er!
Jesus, Jesus, precious Jesus! O for grace to trust Him more!*
(Louisa M. R. Stead, 1882)

For reflection

1. What do you learn about prayer from the example of this woman?
2. How can Scripture help us in praying more fruitfully?
3. What are your primary goals in prayer?

She was afraid to make a direct intercession to Christ for her health, but instead, through humility and lowliness of mind she came behind, as though Christ would not know it, and touched his garment. Thomas Becon (1511-1567), *The Twenty-third Sunday After Trinity Sunday 6*

Pray Psalm 143.7-12.

Thank the Lord for all His lovingkindness. Today, renew your trust in Him, offer yourself as a living sacrifice for His glory, and call on the Lord to revive and help you work your Personal Mission Field today.

Sing Psalm 143.7-12.

(Divinum Mysterium: *Of the Father's Love Begotten*)

Answer quickly, O my Lord! Do not hide from me Your face!
For my spirit fails and I am like those who do not know Your grace.
In the morning let me hear Your steadfast love;
Lord I trust You, show my way!
I lift up my soul and pray!

Rescue me from all my enemies! Lord, I refuge seek in You.
Let me know Your will, O Lord my God; make me know what I must do.
Let Your Spirit lead me on to level ground;
save my life! Preserve my soul!

Rescue, Lord, and make me whole!

6 Prayer's Reward

Pray Psalm 102.1-4.

Hear my prayer, O LORD,
And let my cry come to You.
Do not hide Your face from me in the day of my trouble;
Incline Your ear to me;
In the day that I call, answer me speedily.
For my days are consumed like smoke,
And my bones are burned like a hearth.
My heart is stricken and withered like grass,
So that I forget to eat my bread.

Sing Psalm 102.1-4.

(St Chrysostom: *Not What My Hands Have Done*)

Lord, hear my prayer and cry; hide not Your face from me!
In my distress and tears I sigh – Lord, hear my earnest plea!
My days like smoke blow past; my bones are scorched with sin.
My heart, like wilted, withered grass bends low to earth again.

Read Luke 8.1-56; meditate on verse 48-56.

Preparation

1. What did Jesus say to the woman?
2. What did he say to the people at Jairus' house?

Meditation

In response to their prayers, Jesus brought the great hopes of both Jairus and the woman to reality. She was healed and saved; his daughter was restored to life. Faith, expressed in earnest, humble, trusting, persistent prayer, can bring rewards from the Lord, Who seeks faith in us.

But those rewards will not always match up to our expectation. We sometimes say that God hasn't answered our prayer, when what we really mean is that God hasn't told me what to do or given me what I requested. But God hears the prayers of His humble, faithful children, and He answers them according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus. He has promised that if we call on Him, He will answer us and show us great things and even mysteries we have not known before (Jer. 33.3).

The unbelief of the people gathered at Jairus' home did not keep Jesus from His determined course. He was answering the prayers of a faithful servant; He would not be deterred though the whole community and the whole world did not believe.

And so it is today. Jesus is ready to hear and answer our prayers. He will do so, above all else, by giving us more of Himself – His Presence, attention, Word, and Spirit – and, if it suits His purposes, according to our request. We must never give up on prayer. Never doubt the Lord's good intentions to hear and answer. And never think that we know best what's best for us in every situation. The great reward of prayer is to know that our Lord and Savior hears, cares, and answers out of the abundance of His eternal wisdom, goodness, and love.

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

“Do not weep; she is not dead, but sleeping” (Lk. 8.52).

Whether it happened right then, or it happened later, the truth of what Jesus said rings true. For each one of us who draws breath will one day stop. And we, too, will be sleeping in Christ. Or if it should happen simultaneously with Christ's return, then we will be awake. Either way, Jesus' miracle for Jairus and his daughter is a picture of what happens upon a person's death and resurrection.

"Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed—in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (1 Cor. 15.51, 52). Can you hear the thrilling music of Handel's rendition of this?

"For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. Therefore comfort one another with these words" (1 Thess. 4.16-18).

There is much comfort to be experienced in these words! We dare not be like the mourners in Jairus' living room. "And they ridiculed Him, knowing that she was dead" (Lk. 8.53). Well, they didn't know anything. They just ridiculed. And cruelly. In front of grieving parents, you do not ridicule anyone. What were they thinking?

But isn't that the way folks can be when they don't want to believe Jesus' words? For if you believe Him, then you take on the responsibility of having to do what He says. "...for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins" (Jn. 8.24). "My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me" (Jn. 10.27). "If you love Me, keep My commandments" (Jn. 14.15) "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me" (Lk. 9.23). To ridicule is so much easier.

When we are ready to stop ridiculing, and start believing, that is when we experience the glories of prayer. To be in communion with Him, believing and trusting, so that whatever He says is what we believe to be true. And the eternal joy and glory of this truth is: "Jesus is ready to hear and answer our prayers. He will do so, above all else, by giving us more of Himself."

"Prayer's Reward."

For reflection

1. What makes Jesus so desirable as the reward of all our prayers?
2. What have you learned about prayer from Jairus and the woman Jesus healed?
3. How are you hoping to see your own prayer life improve, so that you know more of prayer's reward day by day?

This woman came trembling, yet her faith saved her. There may be trembling, where yet there is saving faith. Observe Christ's comfortable words to Jairus, Fear not, believe only, and thy daughter shall be made whole. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), Commentary on Luke 8.41-56

Pray Psalm 102.5-14.

Pray that God would revive His Church and that we would recover our vision of Jesus and our calling to seek His Kingdom and glory.

Sing Psalm 102.5-14.

(St Chrysostom: *Not What My Hands Have Done*)

With loudest groans and cries, and leanness in my soul,
no shelt'ring place arrests my eyes, no rest to make me whole.
My enemies grow strong; I weep with bitter tears.
My days are like a shadow, long; God's face is no more near.

But You, O Lord, abide forever in Your place.
Arise and stand on Zion's side and lavish us with grace!
Revive Your Church, O Lord! Let all her dust and stones
Be strengthened by Your mighty Word, and compact be as one.

7 Like a Conquering Stone

Pray Psalm 40.1-3.

I waited patiently for the LORD;
And He inclined to me,
And heard my cry.
He also brought me up out of a horrible pit,
Out of the miry clay,
And set my feet upon a rock,
And established my steps.
He has put a new song in my mouth—
Praise to our God;
Many will see *it* and fear,
And will trust in the LORD.

Sing Psalm 40.1-3.

(Dix: *For the Beauty of the Earth*)

I waited patiently for God; He inclined and heard my cry,
lifted me up above the sod, set me on a Rock on high!
New songs in my mouth He gave; may He through me many save.

Read Luke 8.1-56; meditate on verses 27-31.

Preparation

1. How did the Legion respond to Jesus?
2. What power did the Legion have over the man?

Meditation

We must remember that all the wicked, woeful, wretched conditions that plague our world are the result of sin. People fall into sin just like Adam and Eve did, by listening to lying promises from the father of lies and preferring those over the truth of God (Rom. 1.18-32).

Through the devil and his minions, thousands and thousands of years of misery, mayhem, madness, and murder plagued the world, while they, like playground bullies, delighted to deceive and destroy, and plotted their ultimate overthrow of God Himself. Satan saw his chance in that Judean wilderness, but he underestimated his rival, bet the whole table on his flimsy hand, and fell into the clutches of the Son of God. He was bound, his regime overthrown, he and his minions were doomed, and the rest, from then until Jesus returns, is just mopping-up, pushing ahead, and preparing for glory.

Daniel interpreted Nebuchadnezzar's dream to mean that God's Kingdom would, like a conquering stone, overwhelm, supplant, and replace every kingdom of men that made up the old regime of Satan and his cronies (cf. Is. 9.7). In Luke 8 we're seeing the beginnings of that prophecy come true. Terrified demons are cast out and deep-sixed. Death and debilitation are overcome. New life and sound health abound. The Word of Jesus and His rule over all things wicked, woeful, and wretched is broadcast far and wide. He is the Rock of Daniel's prophecy, and in Luke 8 we see just how powerful and glorious His new regime is and will be.

Praise God for setting you on that Rock (Ps. 40.1-3). Sing out the victory of King Jesus!

Treasures Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

Our glorious Conquering Stone was busy being victorious here in these passages from Luke 8. So many healings! From so many different horrible afflictions dealt out by the enemy.

We first read of the women who ministered to Jesus and the disciples, who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities—Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Susanna, and many others (Lk. 8.2, 3). Strike one!

Then Jesus conquered the wind and the raging water and the disciples' lack of faith (Lk. 8.24, 25). Strike two!

Then there was the demon exchange from man to pigs. He was healed, they were drowned (Lk. 8.26-33). Strike three!

Moving on we come to the woman who had been brutalized for twelve years by constant bleeding. She was healed through touching His robe (Lk. 8.43-47). Strike four!

Then there was the raising of Jairus' daughter from her sleep of death (Lk. 8.54, 55). Strike five!

The Conquering Stone ruled over demons, all infirmities, nature, unbelief, and death. A rousing victory for Jesus, and a stunning defeat for the enemy who says, "There is no God." (Ps. 53.1).

And the glory of it all? We who believe in Jesus are victors with Jesus. "For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world—our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?" (1 Jn. 5.4, 5).

With all these people, healed and renewed by the Conquering Stone, we can rejoice and say:
"As for me, I will see Your face in righteousness;
I shall be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness" (Ps. 17.15).

For reflection

1. What does it mean to say that Jesus and His Kingdom are a Conquering Stone? How do you experience that?
2. How should knowing Jesus in this way affect our work in our Personal Mission Field?
3. How will you proclaim the Good News of Christ and His Kingdom today?

Those under Christ's government are sweetly led with the bands of love; those under the devil's government are furiously driven. Oh what a comfort it is to the believer, that all the powers of darkness are under the control of the Lord Jesus! Matthew Henry (1662-1714), *Commentary on Luke 8.22-40*

Pray Psalm 40.4-10.

Ask God to show you how you can proclaim the Good News of the Rock of our salvation today. Offer your life to Him as a living sacrifice, then go forth to make beautiful music for the Lord.

Sing Psalm 40.4-10.

(Dix: *For the Beauty of the Earth*)

Blessed are all who trust in You, turning both from lies and pride.
Countless wonders, Lord, You do, and Your thoughts with us abide.
Lord, Your worth who can declare? None with You can e'er compare.

Off'rings You do not require – open now my ears, O Lord!
What from me do You desire? Firm delight to do Your Word.
Take my life in ev'ry part; write Your Law upon my heart.

Lord, Your truth will I proclaim to Your people gathered 'round.

Luke 8, Part 2

Nor will I my lips restrain – let Your precious ways resound!
Of Your saving grace and Word I would speak, most loving Lord.

Luke 8, Part 2

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

1. Why do demons tremble at the Presence of Jesus? How should knowing this embolden us?
2. What can we learn from the man from whom Jesus cast out demons?
3. What do you learn about prayer from Luke 8.26-56?
4. What do we learn about the Kingdom of God from this section?
5. What's the most important lesson you've learned from our study of Luke 8.26-56?

For prayer:

The Fellowship of Ailbe

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