

Luke: Chapter 8 Jesus and the Women



Begin each reflection day in prayer: (Suggested prayer)

Loving God, you sent us your only Son, Jesus

He came to fulfill your promises and invite all to participate in your Reign.

Send us the Holy Spirit to embrace Jesus and Your Kingdom.

Teach us the ways of the Kingdom. Amen.

In Chapter 8 Jesus begins a second and final tour Galilee. This time he leaves the towns and visits the villages and country - side. As expected the Twelve accompany him. The surprise is that a group of women also accompany him. Jesus breaks with the customs and expectations of his day. Luke tells us more about women than the other gospels. He presents them as having a central role in the ministry and mission of Jesus. He likewise demonstrates their prominent and pivotal role in the mission of the early Church (Acts of the Apostles).

THE WOMEN WHO ACCOMPANIED JESUS: Lk 8: 1-3:

8:1 Some time ¹ afterward ² he went on through towns ³ and villages, preaching and proclaiming the good news ⁴ of the kingdom of God. ⁵ The ⁶ twelve were with him, **8:2** and also some women ⁷ who had been healed of evil spirits and disabilities: ⁸ Mary ⁹ (called Magdalene), from whom seven demons had gone out, **8:3** and Joanna the wife of Cuza ¹⁰ (Herod's ¹¹ household manager), ¹² Susanna, and many others who provided for them ¹³ out of their own resources.

DAY 1: (Read Luke 8: 1-3) Women who follow Jesus.

Take a moment. Read the passage of the day. Breathe deeply.

In Jesus' day it was unheard-of that a rabbi would allow women to travel with him as disciples.

<p>1. Why do you think these women followed and supported Jesus?</p> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>2. What does this say about Jesus and the Reign of God?</p> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>3. How do women serve Jesus today?</p> <hr/> <hr/>

Luke 8

Jesus now has two distinct groups of followers: The twelve and the women. Three of the women are mentioned by name; Mary Magdalene, Joanne and Suzanna. Yet many others also accompanied Jesus.

The women are depicted as ministering to Jesus and the twelve in roles that were revolutionary for its day. Women were never called to accompany a Jewish Rabbi nor were they taught to be disciples. Also, they are providing for Jesus and the twelve from their own economic means. Some were single. At least one was married, Joanna. Most likely others were married. They were conversing, learning, supporting and traveling with a man who was not from their husband, father nor brother.

In introducing these women early in Jesus' public ministry Luke is emphasizing the key role that women have in Christianity. They are not only healed and invited to the Kingdom but they are called to be full participants in the ministry and mission of Jesus.



Luke foreshadows their importance and pivotal roles which will be demonstrated at:

- 1) the cross of Jesus. (Lk 23:49).
- 2) the resurrection of Jesus. (Lk 24:10-11)
- 3) the descent of the Holy Spirit. (Acts 1: 14).
- 4) the establishment of Christians communities with

Paul. (Acts of the Apostles).

Likewise, Luke demonstrates Jesus' attitude and actions towards women. He restores the proper image of women expressed in their creation. They are man's equal and partner in the world. (*Genesis 1: 26-29 & 2: 18 -23*).

Mary (called Magdalene) Lk 8:2

Mary of Magdala has been erroneously equated with the prostitute mentioned in Lk 7: 36-50 or with Mary of Bethany, the sister of Martha and Lazarus. Luke makes it clear that she had been possessed by 7 demons - a quite different problem from the other 2 Marys. Regardless of her troubled past she had a glorious Christian future. Jesus made her his first witness of the Resurrection! She then became the Apostle to the 12 Apostles. Lk 24: 10-11)

Joanna, the wife of Chuza. Lk 8:2

Jesus healed her and then she became a member of the group of Galilean women who followed and ministered to Jesus. She even followed Jesus to his crucifixion (23:55). She went to the tomb and was one of the first witnesses of the resurrection (24:10). She is referred to as the wife of Chuza who held a position in the court of King Herod. This mention of Joanna highlights the reality that Jesus' preaching and ministry touched high places and influential public figures. Many, such as Herod, would be responsible for his death

Women as Apostles:

The various gospel accounts present the vital role of women in the life, ministry and mission of Jesus. As witnesses of his death and resurrection it confirms their apostolic identity. Luke does not limit the concept of apostle to the twelve. His Gospel makes this clear. The Acts of the Apostles will expand the role of women in the apostolic mission. These women were effective and prominent witnesses in the early Church.



THE FIRST PARABLES: Lk 8: 4 - 18.

8:4 While a large crowd was gathering and people were coming to Jesus ¹⁴ from one town after another, ¹⁵ he spoke to them ¹⁶ in a parable: **8:5** “A sower went out to sow ¹⁷ his seed. ¹⁸ And as he sowed, some fell along the path and was trampled on, and the wild birds ¹⁹ devoured it. **8:6** Other seed fell on rock, ²⁰ and when it came up, it withered because it had no moisture. **8:7** Other seed fell among the thorns, ²¹ and they grew up with it and choked ²² it. **8:8** But ²³ other seed fell on good soil and grew, ²⁴ and it produced a hundred times as much grain.” ²⁵ As he said this, ²⁶ he called out, “The one who has ears to hear had better listen!” ²⁷ **8:9** Then ²⁸ his disciples asked him what this parable meant. ²⁹ **8:10** He ³⁰ said, “You have been given ³¹ the opportunity to know ³² the secrets ³³ of the kingdom of God, ³⁴ but for others they are in parables, so that although they see they may not see, and although they hear they may not understand. ³⁵ **8:11** “Now the parable means ³⁶ this: The seed is the word of God. **8:12** Those along the path are the ones who have heard; then the devil ³⁷ comes and takes away the word ³⁸ from their hearts, so that they may not believe ³⁹ and be saved. **8:13** Those ⁴⁰ on the rock are the ones who receive the word with joy when they hear it, but they have no root. They believe for a while, ⁴¹ but ⁴² in a time of testing ⁴³ fall away. ⁴⁴ **8:14** As for the seed that ⁴⁵ fell among thorns, these are the ones who hear, but ⁴⁶ as they go on their way they are choked ⁴⁷ by the worries and riches and pleasures of life, ⁴⁸ and their fruit does not mature. ⁴⁹ **8:15** But as for the seed that landed on good soil, these are the ones who, after hearing ⁵⁰ the word, cling to it ⁵¹ with an honest and good ⁵² heart, and bear fruit with steadfast endurance.

DAY 2: (Read Lk 8:4-15) The Parable of the four soils.

1. What does the seed represent?

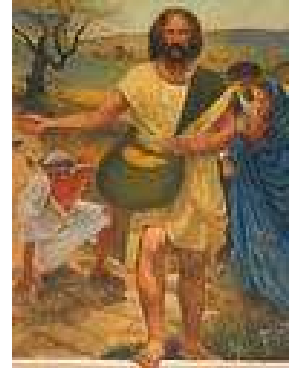
2. What kind of soil best describes you today? Why?

PARABLE: *a brief story taken for everyday life to make a spiritual point. Jesus taught the people using parables. Most of his parables confront the hearer with a radical choice to accept or reject the Kingdom of God. A typical parable presents one single point. It usually makes comparisons and normally has a surprise ending or surprise application for the listener.*

Parable of The Sower: Lk 8:4 - 8.

The point of this parable: Jesus' word will bear fruit.

The point of the parable concerns Jesus and his ministry. He may appear to have little success. Yet one day his life and ministry will bear an abundant yield of faith and believers. The parable likewise, is to encourage the apostles of every generation to persevere in the ministry. The word they proclaim and live will bear much fruit.



TO SOW. Lk 8:5: *In the mid eastern practice the seed was sown first and plowed afterwards, if it was plowed at all. Roads and pathways cut directly through the fields. Traffic made much of the surface to hard for the seed to take root.*

The Explanation: Lk 8:9-15.

Following Jesus' parable Luke presents an explanation. It turns the parable into an allegory. In an allegory each concept has a particular meaning. (example; **The rocky ground**). *“The rocky ground represents the ones who hear the word, receive it with great joy, but they have no root; they believe for awhile, but fall away in time of temptation.”*

Most likely the explanation was an inspired teaching by the early Christian community that clarified why certain Christians persevered in their commitment while others fell away. The interpretation serves the Christian today as it did in the early Church.

Parable of the Lamp. Lk 8:16-18:

⁵³ Showing the Light**8:16** **“No one lights ⁵⁴ a lamp ⁵⁵ and then covers it with a jar or puts it under a bed, but puts it on a lampstand so that those who come in can see the light. ⁵⁶ 8:17** **For nothing is hidden ⁵⁷ that will not be revealed, ⁵⁸ and nothing concealed that will not be made known and brought to light. **8:18** So listen carefully, ⁵⁹ for whoever has will be given more, but ⁶⁰ whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has ⁶¹ will be taken from him.”**

The point: The one who receives the word will be a light of witness to others.

The follower of Jesus is enlightened by God to receive the Kingdom and know its ways. This gift granted to the disciple is to be publicly lived and shared with others. The maturing Christian because of his/ her acceptance and practice of the Word of God becomes a light to show others the way. This is the role of the Christian- to be witnesses of Jesus.

THE TRUE FAMILY OF JESUS: Lk 8: 19-21.

8:19 Now Jesus’⁶² mother and his brothers⁶³ came to him, but⁶⁴ they could not get near him because of the crowd. **8:20** So⁶⁵ he was told, “Your mother and your brothers are standing outside, wanting to see you.” **8:21** But he replied⁶⁶ to them, “My mother and my brothers are those⁶⁷ who hear the word of God and do it.”⁶⁸

DAY 3: (Read Lk 8: 19-21) Jesus’ Family.

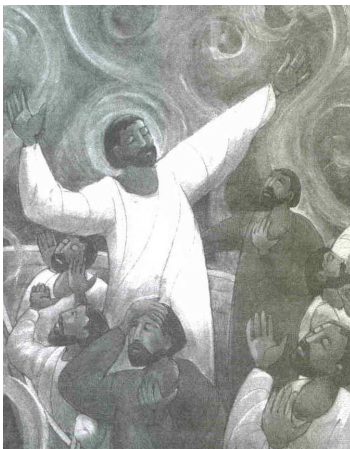
<p>1. Do you feel like a brother or sister or mother to Jesus? Why?</p> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>2. How did you get so close to Jesus?</p> <hr/> <hr/>

This passage emphasizes the points made in the beginning of the chapter. Two groups have dedicated themselves to Jesus; the apostles and the women disciples:

- They hear Jesus’ word and act upon it. Jesus establishes this as the criteria to belong to his family. The relation between Jesus and the committed follower is a powerful bond of family.
- The women are clearly given a role of equality and dignity. Jesus’ attitude towards them is best expressed when he refers to such women as “mother” and “sister” to himself.

THE BROTHERS OF JESUS: *In the strict sense, “brothers” are certainly born of the same father and mother. But in Hebrew and Aramaic, as in many other languages, the word also designates other members of the same family or tribe.*
Adelphos is the Greek word use for brother in the gospels. It can express other relationships such as neighbor, tribesman, step -brother, cousin and kin.

The most ancient tradition has interpreted the term of “Jesus’ brothers” as kindred or cousins.



THE POWER OF JESUS. Lk 8: 22-56.

Luke now describes the power of Jesus and his word in 4 miraculous events. All these events include women. Yet the last two events inter -weave the restoration of women to God’s original plan since creation.

Calming of the Storm. Lk 8: 22-25:

8:22 One⁶⁹ day Jesus⁷⁰ got into a boat⁷¹ with his disciples and said to them, “Let’s go across to the other side of the lake.” So⁷² they set out, **8:23** and as they sailed he fell asleep. Now a violent windstorm⁷³ came down on

the lake, ⁷⁴ and the boat ⁷⁵ started filling up with water, and they were in danger. **8:24** They ⁷⁶ came ⁷⁷ and woke him, saying, “Master, Master, ⁷⁸ we are about to die!” So ⁷⁹ he got up and rebuked ⁸⁰ the wind and the raging waves; ⁸¹ they died down, and it was calm. **8:25** Then ⁸² he said to them, “Where is your faith?” ⁸³ But they were afraid and amazed, ⁸⁴ saying to one another, “Who then is this? He commands even the winds and the water, ⁸⁵ and they obey him!”

Jesus has demonstrated his power over sickness, death and Satan. Now the power of his word controls the chaotic forces of nature. Jesus is lord over all even nature.

The disciples still do not fully grasp who Jesus is. The disciples in the boat include the women who were introduced at the beginning of the chapter. They are terrified by the severity of the wind and waves. They are sure that they are doomed. They are gratefully amazed when Jesus calms the storm. They witness that even the wind and the sea obey his word. The calming of the sea calls the followers to place faith in Jesus in all situations. It calls them to not lose hope nor faith in the periods of trial. The same disciples who live with such fear will become the first Church and will face many trials with courage and perseverance.

The Gerasene Demoniac, Lk 8: 26-39:

8:26 So ⁸⁶ they sailed over to the region of the Gerasenes, ⁸⁷ which is opposite ⁸⁸ Galilee. **8:27** As ⁸⁹ Jesus ⁹⁰ stepped ashore, ⁹¹ a certain man from the town ⁹² met him who was possessed by demons. ⁹³ For a long time this man ⁹⁴ had worn no clothes and had not lived in a house, but among ⁹⁵ the tombs. **8:28** When he saw ⁹⁶ Jesus, he cried out, fell ⁹⁷ down before him, and shouted with a loud voice, “Leave me alone, ⁹⁸ Jesus, Son of the Most High ⁹⁹ God! I beg you, do not torment ¹⁰⁰ me!” **8:29** For Jesus ¹⁰¹ had started commanding ¹⁰² the evil ¹⁰³ spirit to come out of the man. (For it had seized him many times, so ¹⁰⁴ he would be bound with chains and shackles ¹⁰⁵ and kept under guard. But ¹⁰⁶ he would break the restraints and be driven by the demon into deserted ¹⁰⁷ places.) ¹⁰⁸ **8:30** Jesus then ¹⁰⁹ asked him, “What is your name?” He ¹¹⁰ said, “Legion,” ¹¹¹ because many demons had entered him. **8:31** And they began to beg ¹¹² him not to order ¹¹³ them to depart into the abyss. ¹¹⁴ **8:32** Now a large herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside, ¹¹⁵ and the demonic spirits ¹¹⁶ begged Jesus ¹¹⁷ to let them go into them. He gave them permission. ¹¹⁸ **8:33** So ¹¹⁹ the demons came out of the man and went into the pigs, and the herd of pigs ¹²⁰ rushed down the steep slope into the lake and drowned. **8:34** When ¹²¹ the herdsmen saw what had happened, they ran off and spread the news ¹²² in the town ¹²³ and countryside. **8:35** So ¹²⁴ the people went out to see what had happened, and they came to Jesus. They ¹²⁵ found the man from whom the demons had gone out, sitting at Jesus’ feet, clothed and in his right mind, and they were afraid. **8:36** Those ¹²⁶ who had seen it told them how the man who had been demon-possessed had been healed. ¹²⁷ **8:37** Then ¹²⁸ all the people of the Gerasenes ¹²⁹ and the surrounding region ¹³⁰ asked Jesus ¹³¹ to leave them alone, ¹³² for they were seized with great fear. ¹³³ So ¹³⁴ he got into the boat and left. ¹³⁵ **8:38** The man from whom the demons had gone out begged to go ¹³⁶ with him, but Jesus ¹³⁷ sent him away, saying, **8:39** “Return to your home, ¹³⁸ and declare ¹³⁹

what God has done for you.”¹⁴⁰ So¹⁴¹ he went away, proclaiming throughout the whole town¹⁴² what Jesus¹⁴³ had done for him.

DAY 4: (Read Lk 8: 22-39) The Demoniac.

<p>1. How did these 3 groups respond to Jesus when they saw his power? Why?</p> <p>a) The demon, Legion. Lk 8:28-32</p> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>b) The Gerasenes. Lk 8:34-37.</p> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>c) The freed demoniac. Lk 8:38-39</p> <hr/> <hr/>

Following the calming of the sea Jesus now calms a sea of insanity raging within the human soul.

The story is compelling and points out the power of Jesus on many levels.

- Jesus crosses the sea and enters pagan territory. No place is off limits for him.
- Jesus’ power saves a non-believer. It prefigures the missionary outreach to the Gentiles that will be carried out by his followers.
- No amount of demons or evil can match Jesus’ power, not even a legion. *(the pigs prefer suicide to the company of demons).*
- The power of Jesus is met with fear by the pagan population. They are not ready to receive him. They ask him to leave. However, the apostles will return after the resurrection. Then the Gospel of Jesus will be embraced enthusiastically by the Gentile world.
 - The man who is healed becomes a missionary amongst his won people. His personal testimony will prepare his people to accept Jesus at a later time.

The Healing of Two Women, Lk 8: 40 - 56:

8:40 Now when Jesus returned,¹⁴⁴ the crowd welcomed him, because they were all waiting for him. **8:41** Then¹⁴⁵ a man named Jairus, who was a ruler¹⁴⁶ of the synagogue,¹⁴⁷ came up. Falling¹⁴⁸ at Jesus’ feet, he pleaded¹⁴⁹ with him to come to his house, **8:42** because he had an only daughter, about twelve years old, and she was dying.¹⁵⁰ As Jesus was on his way, the crowds pressed¹⁵¹ around him. **8:43** Now¹⁵² a woman was there who had been suffering from a hemorrhage¹⁵³ for twelve years¹⁵⁴ but could not be healed by anyone. **8:44** She¹⁵⁵ came up behind Jesus¹⁵⁶ and touched the edge¹⁵⁷ of his cloak,¹⁵⁸ and at once the bleeding¹⁵⁹ stopped. **8:45** Then¹⁶⁰ Jesus asked,¹⁶¹ “Who was it who touched me?” When they all denied it, Peter¹⁶² said, “Master, the crowds are surrounding you and pressing

¹⁶³ against you!” **8:46** But Jesus said, “Someone touched me, for I know that power has gone out ¹⁶⁴ from me.” **8:47** When ¹⁶⁵ the woman saw that she could not escape notice, ¹⁶⁶ she came trembling and fell down before him. In ¹⁶⁷ the presence of all the people, she explained why ¹⁶⁸ she had touched him and how she had been immediately healed. **8:48** Then ¹⁶⁹ he said to her, “Daughter, your faith has made you well. ¹⁷⁰ Go in peace.” **8:49** While he was still speaking, someone from the synagogue ruler’s ¹⁷¹ house came and said, “Your daughter is dead; do not trouble the teacher any longer.” **8:50** But when Jesus heard this, he told ¹⁷² him, “Do not be afraid; just believe, and she will be healed.” ¹⁷³ **8:51** Now when he came to the house, Jesus ¹⁷⁴ did not let anyone go in with him except Peter, John, ¹⁷⁵ and James, and the child’s father and mother. **8:52** Now they were all ¹⁷⁶ wailing and mourning ¹⁷⁷ for her, but he said, “Stop your weeping; she is not dead but asleep.” **8:53** And they began making fun ¹⁷⁸ of him, because they knew ¹⁷⁹ that she was dead. ¹⁸⁰ **8:54** But Jesus ¹⁸¹ gently took her by the hand and said, ¹⁸² “Child, get up.” **8:55** Her ¹⁸³ spirit returned, ¹⁸⁴ and she got up immediately. Then ¹⁸⁵ he told them to give her something to eat. **8:56** Her ¹⁸⁶ parents were astonished, but he ordered them to tell no one ¹⁸⁷ what had happened.

DAY 5: (Read Lk 8: 40-56) A Woman and a little girl.

<p>1. How was the woman healed?</p> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>2. What does it say about our relationship to Jesus?</p> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>3. For women: Which woman in Chapter 8 do you relate to most? Why</p> <hr/> <hr/>
<p>For men: Which man in Chapter 8 do you relate to most. Why?</p> <hr/> <hr/>

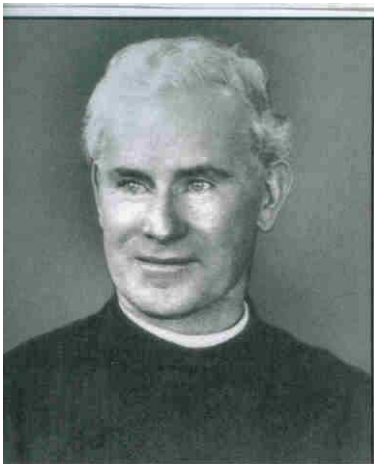
Two miracles are interwoven. They masterfully symbolize what Jesus wants for women.

The woman with a hemorrhage: Because of her affliction she is ostracized from her family, her religion and her place in society. Jesus restores her. The woman breaks new ground concerning the power of Jesus. The healing does not depend upon his word nor even his awareness. It is the woman’s faith that creates the conduit for his power that heals and saves.

The little girl: Jesus heals a child of 12 years. Among Jews a girl entered adulthood at 12 ½. Jesus restores her to life and womanhood.

Jesus establishes the equality of women in the Reign of God. They become disciples and will become his witnesses, even apostles. They are healed by Jesus and restored to the image in which they were created. He establishes the standard for belonging to his family. All who are obedient to his word belong. All are called to participate in his mission. They are called as men and women with complementary roles to use their gifts for the Kingdom.

Fr. Judge remembers an extraordinary woman of faith, Mother Boniface:



“What is it that made Mother Boniface so attractive? To meet Mother Boniface meant that you came away under the sway of a most extraordinary personality. I think when I say this I speak with caution... You would say that Mother Boniface was one of the most extraordinary individuals you ever met. In what was she extraordinary? Mother Boniface never acted apart... there is nothing of affection in her. Mother Boniface was extraordinarily simple. She was extraordinarily humble. She was extraordinarily self-effacing.

She was a woman of faith, otherwise she would not have begun or carried on the adventures in which she engaged herself... Mother had a great faith because she was simple with God; she was direct with God. She had a great trust in Him... We know Mother’s hope.

*It was abounding; it was courageous, that is, a hope in those moments of anxiety when we are in a Gethsemani of some kind, when the heavens seem death to our prayers. That is the kind of hope that does violence to the Kingdom of Heaven—that takes the gates off their hinges.” **Fr. Judge.***

Conference to Missionary Servants. Jan. 10. 1932.