

The Gospel of Luke

Lesson 12: Deliverance, Healing, and Restoration -- Luke 8:26-56

The boat scrapes ashore on the far side of the lake, in the country of the Gerasenes, and before Jesus has fully stepped onto the sand a man comes screaming out of the tombs to meet Him. He wears no clothes. He has not lived in a house for a long time. The local people have tried to chain him, hand and foot, but he snaps the chains like thread and is driven out into the wild places by the demons that own him. He is, by every human measure, a hopeless case, the kind of man a village writes off and learns to avoid. And Jesus has crossed an entire sea, it seems, to find this one ruined man and give him back his mind, his dignity, and his life.

Luke gives us three scenes in this passage, and they build on one another like waves. First a man enslaved by a legion of demons, then a woman drained by twelve years of bleeding, then a twelve-year-old girl who slips away into death while her father waits in agony. Each scene reaches a deeper kind of helplessness than the last. The demonic, chronic suffering, and finally death itself. And in each scene Jesus speaks, and the thing that cannot be fixed is fixed. The man is found sitting at Jesus' feet, clothed and in his right mind. The woman feels the bleeding dry up in an instant. The little girl sits up at His word as easily as a child waking from sleep.

What ties these stories together is one quiet, staggering claim: there is no power in heaven or earth or under the earth that does not answer to this Man. Demons beg Him. A disease that no physician could touch flees at the brush of His garment. Death itself, the last enemy, lets go of a child when He takes her by the hand and says, Child, arise. Luke is not merely collecting impressive stories. He is showing us, step by step, the breadth of the authority of Jesus, until we are standing at a grave and watching Him treat death as though it were nothing more than a nap from which He can wake whomever He pleases.

Read these verses slowly, and do not rush past the people in them. Notice the man who begged to follow Jesus and was instead sent home to tell his town what God had done. Notice the trembling woman who reached out in fear and was called Daughter. Notice the father, Jairus, told to keep believing when the worst news he could imagine had already arrived. These are not tidy people with tidy faith. They are desperate, afraid, and at the end of themselves. And every one of them discovers that the One they reached toward is mightier than the thing that was destroying them. That is the question this lesson presses on us: do we believe He still is?

Group Discussion: In this passage Jesus confronts three things that human beings cannot fix on their own: a man enslaved by demons, a woman with an incurable illness, and a dead child. Each person is at the absolute end of their own resources before Jesus acts. Why do you think we so often wait until we are completely out of options before we truly turn to Christ, and what might it look like to bring our helplessness to Him sooner? Share a time when reaching the end of yourself became the place where you finally met the Lord.

Personal Reflection: The woman in this story had spent twelve years and all that she had on a problem that only grew worse, and she came to Jesus trembling, certain she had nothing to offer Him but her need. Is there a part of your life right now where you feel exhausted, ashamed, or at the end of yourself, a place you have been reluctant to bring honestly to the Lord? What would it look like this week to reach out and touch the hem of His garment, trusting that He is not put off by your fear or your need?

Read Luke 8:26–56

Study Questions

1. When Jesus arrives in the country of the Gerasenes, the demons recognize Him at once, crying out, “What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, do not torment me” (v. 28), and they beg permission before they can even enter the pigs (vv. 31–32). What does this scene teach about who Jesus is and the extent of His authority over the spiritual realm?
2. After the man is delivered, the people of the region find him “sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind, and they were afraid” (v. 35), and they ask Jesus to depart from them (v. 37). When the evidence of Christ’s power and goodness is right in front of us, we can still respond with fear and a desire for distance. Where in your own life do you sense Jesus offering change that you are tempted to keep at arm’s length, and why?
3. The healed man begged that he might be with Jesus, but Jesus sent him away, saying, “Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you” (vv. 38–39), and the man went and proclaimed it throughout the whole city. What does this teach about the relationship between being saved by Christ and being sent to bear witness to Him?
4. Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue, “fell at Jesus’ feet and implored him to come to his house” (v. 41) for his dying daughter, setting aside his position and pride in his desperation. What keeps you from coming to Jesus with that same humility and urgency, and what would change if you brought your deepest fears to Him as openly as Jairus did?
5. The woman with the discharge of blood “came up behind him and touched the fringe of his garment, and immediately her discharge of blood ceased” (v. 44), and Jesus said, “Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace” (v. 48). What does this account teach about the nature of saving faith and about the way Jesus deals with those who reach out to Him in desperation?
6. Jesus would not let the healed woman slip away unnoticed but drew her out until she came “trembling” and “declared in the presence of all the people why she had touched him” (v. 47), and then He called her Daughter. Why do you think Jesus wanted her to come out of hiding and confess openly, and where might He be calling you to stop hiding and bring something into the light?
7. When the message comes that the girl has died and the crowd assumes it is over, Jesus says to Jairus, “Do not fear; only believe, and she will be well” (v. 50). What does it mean to “only

believe” in the face of news that seems final, and how does this passage define the kind of faith Jesus is calling for?

8. Faced with mourners who “laughed at him, knowing that she was dead” (v. 53), Jesus put them outside, took the girl by the hand, and called, “Child, arise” (v. 54). When the people around you treat faith in Christ’s power as foolish or naive, how does that scorn affect you, and what helps you keep trusting Jesus when the world is laughing?
9. Jesus took the dead girl by the hand and said, “Child, arise,” and “her spirit returned, and she got up at once” (vv. 54–55), just as He had said to Jairus, “only believe.” What does Christ’s authority over death itself teach us about who He is, about the nature of the faith He calls for, and about the hope every Christian has in the face of death? How does this scene guard us from thinking of faith as either a mere mental agreement or a guaranteed formula for getting what we want?
10. Look back across the whole passage, from the tombs of the Gerasenes to the bedside of a little girl raised from the dead. Jesus has shown His power over demons, disease, and death, and He has met desperate, frightened people with both power and tenderness. Name one specific way you sense Jesus forming you through these verses. What is the single truth from Luke 8:26–56 that you most need to carry into this coming week?

Now or Later

Reflect on these passages: Colossians 1:13–18, Christ delivering us from the domain of darkness and holding authority over all things; Mark 16:15–16, the sent ones called to proclaim the gospel and the response of faith and baptism; Hebrews 11:1–6, the nature of the faith that pleases God and draws near to Him; John 11:25–26, Jesus as the resurrection and the life; 1 Corinthians 15:20–26, Christ the firstfruits and death the last enemy to be destroyed.