



## Jesus: A Life: Week 6

### The Impossible and the Outcast

Big Idea: Desperate people can have a savior who is bigger than our problems.

Read the Bible:

Luke 8:40-56

### **STUDY**

\*\*\* Before interacting with this guide, all leaders should study the referenced texts using the HEAR Method. It's also important to encourage your group members to read the text using the HEAR Method. \*\*\*

H: Highlight, or take note of, things in the passage that stick out to you as you read.

E: Explain what the passage means by asking simple questions of the text:

- **Why was this written?**
- **To whom was it originally written?**
- **How does it fit with the verses before and after it?**
- **Why did the Holy Spirit include this passage in the book?**
- **What is He intending to communicate through this text?**

A: Apply the text to your life. What does God want you to learn from this text?

R: Respond to God in prayer.



<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 implored 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 Jesus went, the people pressed around him.<sup>43</sup> And there was a woman who had had a discharge of blood for twelve years, and though she had spent all her living on physicians,<sup>44</sup> she could not be healed by anyone. <sup>44</sup> She came up behind him and touched the fringe of his garment, and immediately her discharge of blood ceased.<sup>45</sup> And Jesus said, "Who was it that touched me?" When all denied it, Peter<sup>46</sup> said, "Master, the crowds surround you and are pressing in on you!"<sup>46</sup> But Jesus said, "Someone touched me, for I perceive that power has gone out 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, someone 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 will be well." <sup>51</sup> And when he came to the house, he allowed 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 mourning for 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.



## Summary

Have you ever been truly desperate? Desperate to the point where you were out of options? In a position where if God does not act, then you are out of luck? We read about two people who find themselves in this situation in Luke 8:40-56.

First up is Jairus. As a local ruler of the synagogue, we are most likely dealing with a prominent and proud man. He is well known. He leads services and gathers volunteers. He orders the disciplines of the local synagogue. Jairus is not a man who we usually see begging for help. Nevertheless, we find him in exactly this situation. He finds Jesus and implores him to come and heal his 12-year-old daughter who is near death. Jairus is a desperate man. One daughter. 12-years-old. Dying.

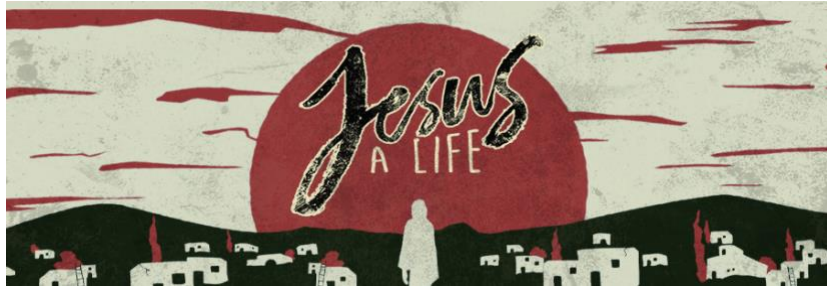
Jesus takes mercy on him, and they set off to Jairus' house. However, if Jesus is a first-century ambulance then traffic is not getting out of his way. The people are pressing in on him, crushing him. In the midst of the traffic Jesus senses that by faith someone has laid a hold of his garment and been healed.

As if there was no hurry at all, no dying little girl waiting, Jesus stops and asks who touched him. Peter and the other disciples laugh. Who touched you? Jesus there are people everywhere. Jesus insists. Someone touched him to be healed. In that moment, a woman comes forward.

We come face to face with desperation once more. This lady, we aren't told her name, has hit rock bottom. She has had an issue of blood for 12 years. She was tired. She was broke. She was lonely. She WAS all of those things. Not anymore. One touch of Jesus' garment and everything changed.

Jesus makes clear to the desperate woman; his power wasn't in the garment. His power was released because she had faith. A desperate woman found a strong savior.

Imagine Jairus watching all this. On one hand, he has to be dying to move along and get to his daughter. On the other hand, he has to be even more confident. If Jesus can heal this lady, then he can handle my daughter for sure. He's got a little hope now. His hope is short lived when someone comes to him with the worse news imaginable. "Your daughter is dead. Leave the teacher alone." He was desperate before, but at least there was hope. Now he is hopeless.



Jesus steps in. Jesus looks the desperate man in the face and says, "Do not fear. Only believe."

What does that even mean? She's dead Jesus!

Death is no problem for Jesus. He shows up to Jairus' home goes inside and issues a simple command. "Little girl, arise." She does just that.

A desperate dad found a strong savior.

Everyone watching Jesus' act, and everyone reading along, now begins to realize just how strong this savior actually is.



## **Leading Your Group**

### **Community Time**

Start group by asking for Prayer requests and checking in on everyone.

### **Bible Study**

\*\*\*Have everyone in your group read assigned scripture before meeting. \*\*\*

Start Group by Reading Luke 8:22-25

### **Major Lessons – (These are the “Lesson Points” in Class)**

#### **Point No. 1: Desperate People Realize There Need for Jesus.**

This story highlights a common theme throughout all the gospels. Most of the time the people who need Jesus the most are not people who have it all together. The people who need Jesus are people who have their world falling apart.

This is true spiritually and physically, until we are in a place of desperation we don't often resort to looking to Jesus.

However, desperation puts us exactly where we need to be to encounter Jesus.

“Despair is commonly the prelude to grace.” – Kent Hughes

Discuss: Why do we so often neglect God until we find ourselves in desperate situations?

#### **Point No. 2: Jesus has Authority Over Disease and Death**



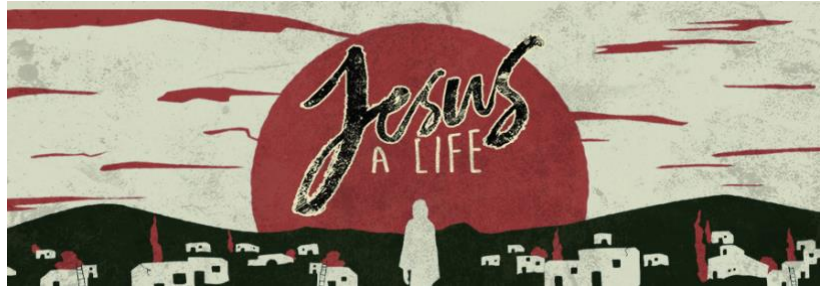
The ultimate point of this section shines through clearly. Jesus is in control over everything that we are not. Luke points out that this desperate lady has been without help from Dr.'s for 12 years. No one could help her. Jesus could. Because Jesus is in control.

The 12-year-old little girl lies dead. No one could help her. Jesus could.

Why? Because Jesus' authority is greater than anything we could imagine. It extends even into the places that we could never dream of, over death and disease.

We do not serve a powerless savior. We serve a savior looking to fix the most desperate people's solution.

Discuss: Have there been times in your life when you have seen the authority of Jesus stretch into places beyond your control?



## Resources

### Expositor's Bible Commentary

#### 10. *Jesus' power to heal and restore life* (8:40–56)

The third part of the section on Jesus' power is composed of two intertwined stories—a pattern of alternation common to all the synoptic accounts and apparently one that goes back to the tradition (see Introduction: Method of Composition). We must ask why the two events are so closely connected. In both, the power and compassion of Jesus are notably displayed. Also, in both we see the importance of faith. Another point of comparison may be that Jairus's daughter was about twelve years old, while the woman (vv. 43–48) had suffered a hemorrhage the same period of time. Perhaps we ought also to reflect on the tension created for Jesus and his disciples by the two pressing needs: prevention of impending death, and helping a pathetic woman whose illness had isolated her from normal life and relationships.

**40–42a** The words “Now when Jesus returned” (v. 40) establish a continuity with the preceding episodes and alert the reader to this sequence of Jesus' mighty works. Once again Luke shows us the popularity of Jesus. The only recent event to have caused such expectation was the episode in Gerasene territory, word of which must have spread immediately. The present section now before us ends, by contrast, with Jesus' command not to speak of the girl's healing (v. 56). As a leader of the synagogue, Jairus was locally prominent (v. 41; cf. Notes). In the extremity of his need, he humbled himself as a suppliant. Luke describes the girl as Jairus's “only” (*monogenēs*) daughter (v. 42a). The term “only” (or “one and only,” as in John 3:16 NIV) adds to the pathos, as it is used in Scripture to designate an only child who has died or is in mortal danger (cf. note on 7:12). The further detail “about twelve” points out that in Jewish society she was about to become a young lady of marriageable age. This intensifies the poignancy.

**42b–46** The “crowds” (*ochloi*), now an integral part of the narrative, cover the woman's furtive approach to Jesus (42b). The verbs “almost crushed” (*synepnigon*), “crowding” (*synechousin*, v. 45), and “pressing against” (*apothlibousin*) bring the scene to life. Luke does not specify the nature of the “bleeding” (v. 43), which is usually taken to have been a gynecological problem. The restrictions imposed by Leviticus 15:25–33 and by Jewish custom (codified in *M Zabim*) would have radically affected the woman's life. But her primary problem was the discomfort



and embarrassment of her prolonged malady. If Luke did not mention the failure of the physicians to help the woman (v. 43; cf. Mark 5:26) because he was one himself, that would be understandable. Yet the omission may be of no more significance than others (as in v. 42; cf. Mark 5:23).

More serious questions are raised by (1) the woman's touching his cloak (v. 44), as though magical power could be transferred, and (2) by Jesus' awareness of the transfer of power apparently without knowledge of who had done this (vv. 45–46). As to the first, the intrusion of Hellenistic ideas and superstitions may indeed have influenced her action; but Jesus did not quench the "smoldering wick" (Matt 12:20) of her faith; instead, he fanned it into flame (v. 48). Elsewhere it is implied that God honored even stranger expressions of faith, presumably because imperfect knowledge did not hinder confidence in the Lord himself (cf. Acts 5:14; 19:11–12).

Regarding Jesus' awareness of the transfer of some of his power, his question (v. 45) need not imply ignorance of the woman's identity but only his intention of singling her out. The dialogue (vv. 45b–46) suggests that he knew only the fact that power had been transferred. (Just as Jesus was the bearer of the Spirit [see comment on 3:22], so he was the bearer of the power of God.) While at times he chose to heal people who had not expressed any faith, the reverse seems to be true here—viz., that someone with faith in him drew on his power without his conscious selection of that person. Since he bore the very power of God, and since God the Father had not assumed the voluntary human limitations the incarnate Son had, God could have extended his healing power through his Son even though Jesus may not yet have been aware of the woman's identity. "Power has gone out from me" (v. 46) does not mean that Jesus' power was thereby diminished, as though it were a consumable commodity.

**47–48** The woman had desired to go unnoticed (v. 47), possibly because of the embarrassment of her illness or because of her audacity in breaking her ritual isolation to touch Jesus' cloak. Her public confession of faith may constitute the purpose for which Jesus asked, "Who touched me?" (v. 45). Jesus prefaced his traditional words of benediction (v. 48) by words of grace (see comment on 7:50).

**49–50** The episode of the sick woman delayed Jesus until word of the death of Jairus's daughter reached him (v. 49). Yet the woman's healing also paved the way for Jesus' words in v. 50.

**51–56** It was only on particular occasions that Jesus selected Peter, James, and John alone (v. 51) to be with him—e.g., at the Transfiguration (Matt 17:1; Mark 9:2; Luke 9:28) and in Gethsemane (Matt 26:37; Mark 14:33). The secrecy involved and the command to silence (v. 56) may seem incomprehensible to some apart from the awkward theory of the "messianic





secret” (see comments on 7:20–23; on 9:21 and on Mark 9:9 in this volume). In actuality Jesus often tried to avoid publicity to prevent premature or misguided declarations of his messiahship from being made. Of course, it would be hard to keep silent about the girl’s restoration to active life, but the use of the word “asleep” (v. 52) might have diverted the attention of the mourners and others from Jesus to the girl. While Jesus’ statement “she is ... asleep” (*katheudei*) meant that her death was not forever but only till the Resurrection (cf. John 11:11; 1 Thess 4:13–14), the others probably assumed that she had, after all only been in a coma. If they thought she was only revived, not raised from death, Jesus could thus reserve the public acknowledgment of his messiahship till the proper time. But the words “her spirit returned” (v. 55) plainly imply that the child actually was dead. Because of these words, Marshall (*Gospel of Luke*, p. 348) suggests that the miracle is not to be described as a resuscitation of a body but as the calling back of the girl’s spirit. The secrecy of this miracle is in contrast with the public nature of the raising of the young man from Nain (7:16–17).<sup>1</sup>

## Teacher’s Bible Commentary

### **An Itinerant Ministry (Luke 8:1–56)**

*The passage.*—“Soon afterwards” (8:1) marks the transition to another phase of Jesus’ activities. He now embarks on an itinerant preaching ministry that calls for rapid visits to various places. The chapter begins with some teachings of Jesus, followed by four miracles. The general theme of “hearing the word” may be the bond uniting verses 1–21. The last two miracles (vv. 40–56) are unusual in that one is set in the context of another, the only example of this in the Gospels.

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<sup>1</sup> Liefeld, W. L. (1984). [Luke](#). In F. E. Gaebelin (Ed.), *The Expositor’s Bible Commentary: Matthew, Mark, Luke* (Vol. 8, pp. 915–917). Zondervan Publishing House.



*Special points.*—Luke alone explicitly says that the material needs of Jesus and his disciples were met, at least in part, by some women of means. “Seven demons” (v. 2) describes the severe emotional disorder from which Jesus had healed Mary Magdalene.

The parable of the sower (vv. 4–8) is based on the common experience of Palestine farmers. The various responses of hearers to the gospel are illustrated by the different kinds of soil into which seed might fall. “Rock” (v. 6) is shallow soil which covers underlying rock. The parable teaches that the indifference, lack of commitment, and even hostility with which men receive the Word must not lead believers to despair. The seed will fall on good soil and will bear fruit. God himself guarantees the result of the harvest.

Why did people not understand and respond to the teachings of Jesus? The answer is that the parables of Jesus are vehicles of revelation to those who are perceptive, the disciples, but their truth is hidden from the others (v. 10). Is God himself responsible? In a sense he is, for he has chosen to reveal himself in ways that man in his arrogance and rebellion will not accept. But the real problem is man’s own spiritual blindness—his refusal to see what is right before his eyes.

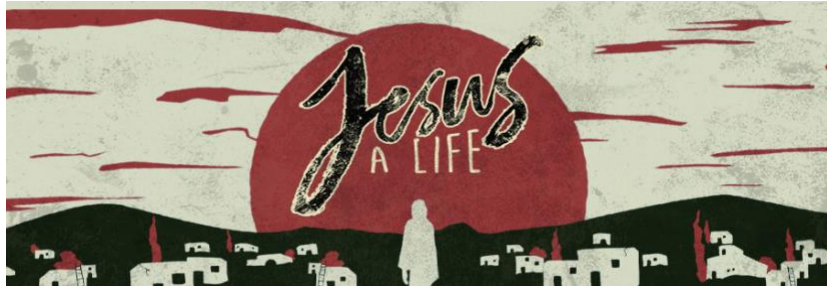
The meaning of the three sayings in verses 16–18 is obscure. In this context they probably mean that the gospel is a light that was not intended to be hidden. It is to be given the widest possible proclamation. The failure to respond to the gospel upon hearing it may result in the loss of further opportunities (v. 18).

Why did the family of Jesus wish to see him (vv. 19–21)? Mark (3:31–35) implies that they wanted to interrupt his ministry because of the report that Jesus was crazy. But Jesus makes it clear that the narrow claims of family and race cannot disrupt his larger relationships with those who have responded to the gospel.

Jesus “rebuked the wind” (v. 24), as he had already rebuked demons and disease. The manifestation of Jesus’ lordship over the forces of nature is one more sign of the breaking in of the kingdom of God.

“Gadarenes” (v. 26) probably should be Gerasenes. This is a place of uncertain location on the east side of Galilee. It is the only instance in Luke in which Jesus set foot on pagan soil. The demoniac was violently insane. Legion (v. 30) was a Roman division of about 6,000 men, but here it stands for a host of demons. The “abyss” is the nether region (hell), the prison for demons. Some people object to this story because they feel that the destruction of a herd of swine is not in keeping with Jesus’ character. But swine, considered unclean by the Jews, was a more appropriate house for evil spirits than was a man.

*Truth for today.*—One of our major problems is the tendency to evaluate what we do statistically. And when the statistics do not show an increase in baptisms, money, and churches, a general cloud of pessimism descends upon us. When shall we ever learn one of the major truths



of Scripture? The victory of God does not depend on numbers. Nor is it deterred by the character of human response.

We can preach the gospel with confidence in its power. Many will reject it or be indifferent to it. But occasionally the seed will fall on good soil. When it does, God guarantees that it will take root, grow, and produce a harvest. Our hope and optimism must not be based upon what we do, nor upon the results of what we do. Faith will stand the test only if it rests in God's power to guarantee his kingdom.<sup>2</sup>

## **Reading The New Testament**

### **Jesus' Power over Nature, Demons, Disease, and Death (8:22–56)**

Luke has previously demonstrated that Jesus has power over demons, disease, and death, but Luke seeks to reinforce and expand the conversation about Jesus' power in this final literary unit prior to the commissioning of the twelve apostles in 9:1–6. Here, Luke seeks to show that Jesus possesses the divine power of Yahweh. This divine power is most evident when Jesus calms the sea storm and directs an entire army of demons. Following these two miracles are another resuscitation miracle and a healing miracle. All four feats firmly establish Jesus' divine status before the narrative shifts toward his journey to Jerusalem in 9:51.

(1) *Luke 8:22–25*. When Jesus calms the sea amid a windstorm in 8:22–25, it further reveals the divine power of God at work in Jesus. Matthew (8:23–27) and Mark (4:35–41) also include this dramatic story, though Luke's narration has more in common with Mark than with Matthew.

The pericope begins when Jesus seeks to cross the Sea of Galilee with his disciples (8:22). After Jesus falls asleep, a severe windstorm creates a perilous situation for the boat and the crew (8:23). Luke underscores the severity of the situation when he says that Jesus and the disciples "were in danger." In response, the disciples frantically wake Jesus. They address Jesus using the deferential title of "Master" or "Commander" (Gk. *epistatēs*) (8:24). Jesus, in turn, wakes and immediately rebukes (Gk. *epitamaō*) "the wind and the raging waves." Here Luke employs the same vocabulary that we saw in 4:35, 39, and 41 when Jesus rebuked demons and diseases.

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<sup>2</sup> Tolbert, M. O. (1972). [Luke](#). In H. F. Paschall & H. H. Hobbs (Eds.), *The teacher's Bible commentary* (pp. 644–645). Broadman and Holman Publishers.



Consequently, it appears that Jesus rebukes the evil forces at work in the wind and sea in the same way that he rebukes the demons.

After calming the waters, Jesus then turns to his disciples in a teachable moment and asks, “Where is your faith?” (8:25). It is difficult to know the tone with which Jesus speaks to his disciples at this precise moment. Was it an angry tone or a compassionate one? Regardless, the next time Jesus uses that phrase (“Where is your faith?”) with his disciples, Jesus is teaching them in 12:28. In the latter instance, Jesus’ question is clearly a rebuke for failing to place their trust in God. As a result, our best evidence suggests that Jesus was irritated with the disciples in 8:25 as well.

Finally, the disciples respond to Jesus with fear and amazement (8:25; cf. 8:35, 37). Fear, in particular, is a common—and indeed the proper—reaction of humans to a manifestation of God in their midst. This can be seen in numerous texts in the OT and NT (see e.g., Gen 26:24; Exod 3:6; Luke 1:12; 2:10; 8:35, 37). Here in Luke 8:25, Jesus has given his disciples reason to believe that they have just witnessed a manifestation of the divine in their midst. For instance, this is the first occurrence in Luke’s Gospel in which Jesus demonstrates his power over the natural elements. The import of this miraculous event is that from the beginning of creation, God alone has been the one who commands the wind and sea (Gen 1:6–10). God alone is the one who orders creation. Many portions of the OT then reinforce this belief (see e.g., Ps 89:9; 107:28–30; Job 26:12). In 8:22–25, when Jesus commands the wind and sea as only Yahweh can, it reinforces the unique identity of Jesus as the Son of God (cf. 8:28; also 1:32, 35; 3:22; 4:41). Consequently, the disciples are left asking, “Who then is this, that he commands even the winds and the water, and they obey him?” (8:25). The implied answer is “The Son of God.”

(2) *Luke 8:26–39*. In 8:26–39, Luke narrates the exorcism of the Gerasene demoniac (cf. Matt 8:28–34; Mark 5:1–20). While doing so, Luke continues to construct an impressive four-fold set of miracles in 8:22–56 that demonstrates the breadth of Jesus’ power as the Son of God. Obviously, by including this exorcism account Luke seeks to show his readers that Jesus’ power greatly exceeds that of the demonic realm.

According to the best manuscripts, just after Jesus and his disciples cross the Sea of Galilee, they arrive in the region of the Gerasenes (8:26). The city associated with the Gerasenes is Gerasa, which is about thirty miles southeast from the Sea of Galilee (or Lake Gennesaret) in the Transjordan. Some confusion exists, however, among other ancient manuscripts about the proper name of the region that Jesus visits. For instance, some manuscripts refer to the region of the Gadarenes, which corresponds to Gadara. Origen even suggested that the Gospel writers were referring to the region of the Gergesenes, which corresponds to Gergesa, a seaside town. Fueling this debate is the pig stampede in 8:33. The story suggests that the swine are somewhat near the lake into which they run. Regardless of the specific city, Luke makes it clear that Jesus is



on the east side of the Sea of Galilee, which would have been predominantly populated by Gentiles, and that the man and the herd of pigs were in the countryside well outside the city where the townspeople lived (see e.g., Craig Evans, *Luke*, 137–38).

As soon as Jesus arrives on the east side of the Sea of Galilee, he is met by a demon-possessed man from Gerasa. Luke paints a horrific portrait of the torment that this man has long endured as a result of his demon possession (8:27, 29). In addition to having no clothes and no home, the man lives among the tombs, which makes him perpetually unclean in the eyes of the Jews (e.g., Num 19:11, 16). Jesus then commands the evil spirits to come out of the man (8:29). They respond by causing the man to fall down before Jesus and shout, “What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, do not torment me” (8:29). This reaction echoes a variety of previous passages in Luke’s Gospel. For instance, God’s own voice first identifies Jesus as God’s son at the baptism (3:21–22). Additionally, Luke narrates Jesus’ first exorcism in 4:31–37, where the demons also identify Jesus as “the Holy One of God” (4:34). In the previous story, Jesus calms the sea as only God can do (8:24–25). Finally, here in 8:29 the demons once again recognize Jesus as “the Son of the Most High God.” As a result, Luke further reinforces Jesus’ unique identity and divine power while narrating Jesus’ encounter with the Gerasene demoniac.

At that point, Jesus asks the Gerasene man his name, and the man answers, “Legion,” a name that refers to the many demons that possess him. The implications of the man’s response are significant. Previously, Jesus exorcised multiple demons from one man (4:31–37) and seven demons from Mary Magdalene (8:2), but now the number of demons is astronomically large. The word “legion” technically refers to a division of the Roman army numbering between four and six thousand soldiers. In essence, here in 8:26–39, Luke depicts Jesus as being in a showdown with an army of demons. Even when the ratio is six thousand to one, however, the demons are no match for Jesus. His divine power as the Son of God is so great that no demonic force can ever defeat him.

Admitting defeat, the demons beg Jesus a second time in 8:31–32. They ask that he not send them into the abyss. Numerous Jewish and Christian texts around the time of Jesus spoke of the expectation that God would eternally banish the demons to a bottomless abyss at the final judgment (see e.g., Rev 9:1–11; 11:7; 17:8; 20:1–3; *1 En.* 16.1; *Jub.* 10.5–11) (Craig Evans, *Luke*, 137). The fact that Jesus does not send them directly to the abyss suggests that it is not yet time for the final judgment. Nevertheless, the outcome of the demons in this story clearly foreshadows what the future holds for them. Jesus sends the army of demons into a large herd of swine, which were deemed unclean for the Jews (Lev 11:7; Deut 14:8) but not for the Gentiles who populated this region. Immediately, the demons control the herd of pigs as evidenced by the destructive outcome (8:33).



After the swineherds report the event to the people throughout the region, many come and investigate (8:34–35). Notably, they find the formerly possessed man “sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind” (8:35). Luke now depicts the man as one who wants to be a disciple of Jesus. Later, Luke will depict Mary (10:39) and Saul (Acts 22:3) in the same manner—sitting at the feet of their teacher. The eyewitnesses then relay to the Gerasene people how Jesus has healed, or saved (Gk. *sōzō*), the man from the demons. The people respond with great fear (8:35, 37) just as the disciples had done when Jesus calmed the sea storm (8:25). As noted in the previous pericope, fear is the typical response in the biblical texts to a manifestation of God’s power. The people are so afraid that they ask Jesus to leave their region. Due to this unforgettable display of divine power, the people desire to rid themselves of Jesus. Of course, after the destruction of a large herd of swine, it is also clear that Jesus and his power had a negative impact on their local economy.

Jesus cooperates with the request of the Gerasenes. He gets into the boat in order to return to Galilee (8:37). Before he departs, however, the formerly possessed man begs (Gk. *deomai*) Jesus (8:38), just as the demons had initially begged (Gk. *deomai*) Jesus (8:28). The demons begged Jesus not to torment them. The healed man begs that he might be with Jesus, just like the other disciples (8:38; cf. 8:1). Surprisingly, instead of calling this man to follow him as he did with Peter, James, and John (5:1–11), Jesus commands the former demoniac to return to his home in a predominantly Gentile region (8:39). Furthermore, Jesus instructs him to declare “how much God has done” for him. The man obeys by proclaiming throughout Gerasa “how much Jesus has done” for him (8:39).

Luke accomplishes at least two objectives by means of the ending of this pericope. First, Jesus’ instructions to the former demoniac, who lived in a Gentile region, lays additional groundwork for the Gentile mission that begins in Acts 10. Between the centurion who had faith in 7:1–10 and the restored demoniac who desires to be a disciple in 8:26–39, Luke has highlighted the embryonic role of two Gentiles within his Gospel. While these two Gentiles who demonstrate their faith in Jesus do not directly follow Jesus and are not fully incorporated into Jesus’ ministry, both foreshadow the inclusion of the Gentiles that will take place after Jesus’ resurrection and ascension. Most important, Jesus’ receptivity to both men helps to provide the warrant that will be needed later to justify the declaration of God’s favor upon both Jews and Gentiles who believe in Jesus and respond appropriately.

Second, Luke further intertwines the work of God and Jesus by means of the conclusion to this encounter. After Jesus orders the demons to depart, thereby healing (or saving) the man (8:36), Jesus then commands the man to declare what “God had done” (8:39). In response, the man obeys, but as he does so he declares what “Jesus had done” (8:39). In effect, Jesus’ accomplishments are God’s accomplishments and vice versa. Both God and Jesus, as the Son of



God (8:28), bring about salvation and restoration for humanity. Luke wants his readers to realize that the work of God and the work of Jesus are one and the same. They cannot ultimately be separated.

(3) *Luke 8:40–56*. To complete the set of four miracles in 8:22–56 that climactically illustrate Jesus' power over all realms as well as his status as the Son of God, Luke narrates the last two miracles in a parallel fashion. Mark frequently intertwines two narratives. In this instance, Luke follows his source and retains Mark's sandwiching effect. In this intercalation, Jesus heals a woman who has been bleeding for twelve years (8:42b–48), and he raises a twelve-year-old girl from the dead (8:40–42a, 49–56). The story of the bleeding woman is imbedded in the story of the twelve-year-old girl. Luke desires his readers to read and interpret the stories together.

In the process, Luke's readers can discern a variety of commonalities between the two miracles, as well as some similarities with the previous two miracles. For instance, Luke continues to rely heavily on theological terms like faith or belief (Gk. *pistis*) to describe an appropriate human response to Jesus (8:48, 50) and terms like saved or salvation (Gk. *sōzō*, *sōtēria*) to describe how Jesus aids the afflicted (8:48, 50). Furthermore, Jesus continues to disregard the Jewish purity laws as we saw in the previous unit (8:26–39). Both the bleeding woman (Lev 15:25–32) and the dead girl would have been considered unclean (Culpepper, "Luke," 9:191). Nevertheless, Jesus comes into contact with both of them without worrying whether he himself will become unclean.

Additionally, Jesus continues to show compassion for both those of high status (8:41; cf. 8:2–3) and those of low status (8:43; cf. 8:26–39), both the clean and the unclean. On the one hand, Jairus provides leadership for the worshiping community. On the other, the woman is prevented from participating in worship whatsoever due to her flow of blood. Jesus responds empathetically to both. While Jesus' compassion for the poor and disenfranchised sets him apart from most in his day, he does not disregard the pleas coming from the well respected in his day such as Jairus. Finally, Jesus' mighty acts continue to go well beyond mortal capabilities. Rather, Luke continues to exhibit Jesus' divine power by means of the miracles that he is performing.

In the narrative itself, when Jesus traverses the Sea of Galilee from the Transjordan back to Galilee, a large crowd welcomes him (8:40). In particular, Jairus, the leader of the synagogue, approaches him, falls down before him, and begs Jesus to come to his house and heal his only daughter who is dying (8:41–42). Notably, aspects of Jairus's actions may remind Luke's readers either of people whom this Gospel has portrayed positively—the demoniac who falls down before Jesus (8:28, 38) or the woman whose only son dies (7:11–17)—or of those whom the Gospel has portrayed negatively—the inhospitable Pharisee who invites Jesus to his home (7:36–50). Here, however, Luke clearly portrays Jairus in a positive manner. Like the Roman centurion



who has faith in Jesus' ability to heal (7:1–10), Jairus's actions also reveal his faith. He fully trusts that Jesus can help his twelve-year-old daughter who is dying.

At that point, Luke temporarily leaves the narrative about Jairus and his daughter hanging in midair. In the meantime, Luke turns his readers' attention to a woman who has had a flow of blood for twelve years—a possible reference to an atypical menstrual cycle (8:42b–43a). Consequently, she has been considered ritually unclean and unable to worship God with the rest of the people for over a decade. Due to her state of uncleanness, she has been sequestered in a manner that prevents her from physically touching others. Otherwise, they also will be rendered unclean (Lev 15:25–32). The flow of blood has further victimized this woman because she has spent all her money on physicians. Yet none of them have been able to heal her (8:43b).

Attempting to keep her actions a secret, she stealthily touches the fringe of Jesus' clothing, and immediately she is healed (8:44, 47). Jesus, sensing that the power of the Holy Spirit has again been at work through him, asks who touched him (8:45–46; cf. 3:22). In a respectful manner, Peter addresses Jesus as Master and reminds him of his crowded context (8:45; cf. 8:24). At that point, however, the woman realizes that she cannot keep her desperate actions a secret any longer. Akin to Jairus, she fearfully falls at Jesus' feet, publicly admits that she touched him, and testifies that touching Jesus immediately healed her (8:47).

Luke builds a moment of suspense for his readers. The unclean woman has touched Jesus, which should render Jesus unclean according to the Jewish ritual laws. Moreover, when Jesus inquires about who touched him, the woman fearfully confesses. Perhaps Luke's first readers wondered if Jesus might respond with anger. Instead, Jesus addresses her as "Daughter," thereby reaffirming her status as a Jewish woman among God's people. His address places her back among the people from whom she has been separated. Finally, he claims that her faith has healed or saved her (Gk. *sōzō*), and he tells her to "go in peace" (8:48).

Luke shows his readers that God's power is at work in Jesus to redeem and to save God's people—collectively and individually. What her money cannot buy and what no human can do, not even multiple physicians, Jesus does. Jesus does not worry about her uncleanness contaminating him. As Son of God (8:28), he has the power to heal her disease, to make her clean, to restore her to her community, and to grant a life of peace to her. In short, Jesus saves this woman from her life of torment and publicly affirms her spiritual identity in the presence of a great crowd.

At that point, Luke resumes the story of Jairus and his dying daughter. Unfortunately, while Jesus' attention is focused on the bleeding woman, Jairus's daughter dies (8:49). In response, Jesus commands Jairus just as Jesus has commanded the storm (8:24), the demons (8:29), the former demoniac (8:39), and soon Jairus's daughter (8:54). He commands Jairus not to fear, but





rather to believe or have faith (Gk. *pistis*). Jesus announces that Jairus's daughter will be saved or rescued (Gk. *sōzō*) just as the hemorrhaging woman has been rescued (8:50).

From that point on, Jesus' actions again resemble those of the great prophets, Elijah (1 Kgs 17:17–24) and Elisha (2 Kgs 4:32–37). Just as he raised the widow's only son from the dead in 7:11–17, so also Jesus will raise Jairus's only daughter from the dead in 8:51–56. When Jesus arrives at the home, the grieving has already begun (8:52). Jesus tells those gathered that the girl is sleeping, a term that can refer to literal sleep or death in antiquity (cf. 1 Thess 4:13). The mourners laugh at Jesus, assuming he is referring to literal sleep. Their laughter, however, reinforces the main point, which is that the girl has died (8:52–53). In a private gathering of Peter, James, and John along with the girl's parents, Jesus commands the dead girl to get up. Consequently, her spirit returns to her. Jesus has resurrected her. In addition, the girl eats food, which verifies that she is a human being as opposed to a vision or an angel (cf. 24:36–43; *Tob.* 12:19) and that she is fully alive in her body and not only her spirit (8:54). Notably, Jesus, who publicly announced the healing of the hemorrhaging woman to the crowds in 8:48, here seeks to keep this resurrection of the dead girl a secret. From Luke's perspective, raising her from the dead foreshadows Jesus' own resurrection, but it is not yet time for Jesus to talk openly about the events that will occur at the end of his life.

In sum, Luke has impressively highlighted the divine power of Jesus as the Son of God in 8:22–56. Before Jesus' first commissioning of the apostles in 9:1–6, Luke has sought to summarize definitively Jesus' authority over nature (8:22–25), the demonic realm (8:26–39), disease (8:42b–48), and death (8:40–42a, 49–56). Moreover, Jesus possesses this authority because he is "the Son of the Most High God" (8:28). He brings salvation, restoration, and wholeness to those who exhibit faith. The Spirit of God is at work in him to bring about God's kingdom on earth.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Arterbury, A. E. (2019). [\*Reading Luke: A Literary and Theological Commentary\*](#) (pp. 67–74). Smyth & Helwys Publishing, Incorporated.