

Luke Chapter 8

Luke 8:1 "And it came to pass afterward, that he went throughout every city and village, preaching and shewing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God: and the twelve [were] with him,"

We see here, that Jesus has left the Pharisee with whom He had dinner and even left Capernaum and began to travel from city to city carrying the gospel of the kingdom. He took his twelve disciples with Him.

Luke 8:2 "And certain women, which had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities, Mary called Magdalene, out of whom went seven devils,"

“Certain women”: Her name probably derives from the Galilean town of Magdala. Some believe she is the woman described (in 7:35-50), but it seems highly unlikely that Luke would introduce her here by name for the first time if she were the main figure in the account he just completed.

Also, while it is clear that she had suffered at the hands of “demons,” there is no reason whatsoever to think that she had ever been a prostitute.

Luke 8:3 "And Joanna the wife of Chuza Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others, which ministered unto him of their substance."

You see, from (verses 2 and 3) here, that there was a group of women who accompanied Jesus on this missionary journey, as well as the disciples. It appears they gave to Jesus' ministry. Jesus seems to have great compassion for women. He cast seven devils out of Mary Magdalene and healed several women specifically mentioned, such as Peter's Mother-in-law.

“Joanna;” This woman is also mentioned (in 24:10), but nowhere else in Scripture. It is possible that she was a source for some of the details Luke recounts about Herod (23:8, 12).

“Susanna”: Aside from this reference, she is nowhere mentioned in Scripture. She is probably someone Luke knew personally.

“Of their substance”: It was a Jewish custom for disciples to support rabbis in this way (10:7; 1 Cor. 9:4-11; Gal 6:6; 1 Tim. 5:17-18).

Jesus loved and still does love people. He does not first check to see if they are men or women. With God there is no male and female, as we read (in Galatians 3:28). With mankind, there is male and female. God is not interested in flesh. He is interested in spirit.

Luke 8:4 "And when much people were gathered together, and were come to him out of every city, he spake by a parable:"

“Spake by a parable”: This marked a significant turning point in Jesus' ministry.

Everywhere Jesus went. He was thronged with people, and this was no exception. It seems His fame had spread so that a very large group of people had come from all the cities to hear Him and see the miracles.

Luke 8:5 "A sower went out to sow his seed: and as he sowed, some fell by the way side; and it was trodden down, and the fowls of the air devoured it."

“To sow his seed”: Seed was sown by hand over plowed soil. In throwing seed toward the edges of a field, the sower would naturally throw some that landed or was blown onto the hard beaten path on the edges of the field, where it could not penetrate the soil and grow. This could refer to the hard, obstinate Jewish leaders.

This is the famous parable about the seed (Word of God), which was sown. This is one of the parables that Jesus gives the exact meaning to. Jesus spoke in parables throughout the Bible, and it is necessary to ask the Holy Spirit of God to reveal the meaning of these parables to us many times.

Jesus spoke in parables so that the world could not use head belief to come to Him. A person must give his heart to God, not his head.

Luke 8:6 "And some fell upon a rock; and as soon as it was sprung up, it withered away, because it lacked moisture."

This parable is dealt with more fully in the 13th chapter of Matthew and the 4th chapter of Mark. We will touch it briefly again here. Notice especially, that Jesus does not explain this parable to the great masses of people. He waits until He gets with just the party that is traveling with Him.

“Upon a rock”: Very shallow soil with a layer of rock lying just below the surface. This could refer to the fickle mob that followed Jesus only for His miracles.

Luke 8:7 "And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprang up with it, and choked it."

“Thorns”: This could refer to the materialists to whom earthly wealth was more important than spiritual riches.

Luke 8:8 "And other fell on good ground, and sprang up, and bare fruit a hundredfold. And when he had said these things, he cried, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear."

“A hundredfold”: Luke simplified the parable. (Matthew 13:8 and Mark 4:8), described 3 levels of fruitfulness. “A hundred times” simply speaks of inconceivable abundance (Gen. 26:12).

“He that hath ears”: All 3 of the synoptics include this admonition with the parable of the sower (Matt. 13:9; 4:9). Jesus often said this to stress particularly important statements cast in mysterious language (14:35; Matt. 11:15; 13:43; Mark 4:23).

Luke 8:9 "And his disciples asked him, saying, What might this parable be?"

It seems so obvious to us, that we cannot believe the disciples could not understand. They were not baptized in the Holy Spirit at this time, and their understanding had not been opened. Before this, Jesus had not spoken in parables. This was a new type of teaching.

I really believe that these parables contained messages not for the worldly people, but for those who chose to follow Jesus. These parables would be revealed to the Christians by the Holy Spirit of God. These were not flesh messages. These were messages to be revealed to the spirit.

Luke 8:10 "And he said, Unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God: but to others in parables; that seeing they might not see, and hearing they might not understand."

“Mysteries”: “It is been given to know”: Here Jesus clearly affirms that the ability to comprehend spiritual truth is a gracious gift of God, sovereignly bestowed on the elect (Matthew 13:11). The reprobate ones on the other hand, are passed over. They reap the natural consequence of their own unbelief and rebellion, spiritual blindness (Matt. 13:13).

“The mysteries of the kingdom of heaven”: “Mysteries” are those truths which have been hidden from all ages in the past and revealed in the New Testament. Many specific doctrines of the New Testament are identified as “mysteries” (Rom. 11:25; 1 Cor. 15:51; Eph. 5:32; 6:19; Col. 1:26-27; 2 Thess. 2:7; 1 Tim. 3:9, 16).

We find in this type of teaching a separating of the people. The Bible and its meaning is revealed to those who diligently search the Scriptures and truly desire to know the will of God in their lives. To the worldly, it is a book that is too difficult to understand. They throw it down saying they can't understand it anyway.

The Bible is understood by the heart and not the mind. The Bible is to be understood by the spirit of mankind. Parables (a special type of teaching introduced by Jesus), are God's way of concealing from those worldly people His message of salvation.

They can see the literal word and cannot understand its meaning. They can look at Jesus Christ the righteous (Messiah), and see nothing more than a man. The sad thing is that many church goers who proclaim Jesus as their Savior still see a man.

In the next few verses here, Jesus will reveal the meaning of this very important parable.

Luke 8:11 "Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God."

Jesus, in revealing this particular parable here, is also teaching the disciples, and in fact, all of His followers, to look for deeper meaning in all of His Scriptures; not just the obvious parables. When we see the seed anywhere in the Bible, we know that it symbolizes the Word of God.

Luke 8:12 "Those by the way side are they that hear; then cometh the devil, and taketh away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved."

This person could even be a casual church goer. Somehow, through preaching or some way, they are exposed to the Word of God. The world and the lust of the flesh seem to have a greater call on their life. They do not accept the Word of God into themselves.

A common way to say this would be: it went in one ear and out the other one. The devil in this instance I believe, is just saying the sins of the world caused this person not to retain the Word of God.

Luke 8:13 "They on the rock [are they], which, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, which for a while believe, and in time of temptation fall away."

“For a while believe”: I.e., with a nominal, non-saving faith.

“On the rock”: “Stony places”: Some people make an emotional, superficial commitment to salvation in Christ, but it is not real. They remain interested only until there is a sacrificial price to pay, and then abandon Christ.

We have all seen this type of person in the church. An exciting evangelist comes through town and they get all excited and are going all out to live for Jesus. Troubles or trials or sometimes even good times come along and they fade away. There is danger in teaching that if you receive the Lord only good times, health, and wealth await you.

If hard times, sickness, or poverty comes to those people, it would destroy their faith. Problems come to everyone. It rains on the just and the unjust. Suffering comes with the territory.

Jesus told Paul that He would show him what great things he would suffer. At any rate, this person in verse 13 cannot stand up during trials. Their faith in God and His Word will not bear up under testing, and they lose the faith, because they have no root.

Luke 8:14 "And that which fell among thorns are they, which, when they have heard, go forth, and are choked with cares and riches and pleasures of [this] life, and bring no fruit to perfection."

Strangely enough, not only hard times run you away from God. Great wealth is a real problem. Just like the rich young man who went away sorrowful without receiving God when he had to choose between God and his money. Our generation seeks pleasure more than they seek God.

Worldly pleasures are more available to the wealthy. Jesus said it is difficult for a rich man to make heaven. It is not impossible, but it is difficult. These people work a short while for Jesus and then give up. They have no fruit, because they give up.

Luke 8:15 "But that on the good ground are they, which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep [it], and bring forth fruit with patience."

“Heard ... keep it ... bring forth fruit”: This constitutes evidence of true salvation. “Heard” is a reference to understanding and believing (John 8:31, 47). “Hold” refers to ongoing obedience (11:28). “Fruit” is good works (Matt. 7: 16-20; James 2:14-26).

This describes the Christian who not only receives Jesus as his Savior, but as his Lord. This person learns everything he or she can and uses that to bring others into the kingdom.

Luke Chapter 8 Questions

1. When Jesus went from city to city, what was His mission?
2. Who went with Him?
3. What had Jesus done for Mary Magdalene?
4. What did these women have to do with the ministry?
5. Does Jesus love men or women the most?
6. God is not interested in _____. He is interested in _____.
7. What kind of new teaching did Jesus start here?
8. Give 2 reasons why these great throngs of people followed Him.
9. What is this parable all about?
10. What happened to the first seed?
11. What is the seed symbolic of?
12. Why did Jesus speak in parables?
13. Where did the second seed fall?
14. Where did the last seed fall?
15. What did Jesus tell them about hearing?
16. Why did the disciples not understand these parables?
17. Jesus told these disciples that unto them He would reveal the _____ of _____.
18. What does this type of teaching show us?

19. The Bible and its meaning is revealed to whom?
20. When worldly people look at Jesus (Messiah), they see just a _____.
21. Who were those by the wayside symbolic of?
22. Who were they on the rock symbolic of?
23. Not only hard times cause you to lose your faith with God but _____ _____, as well.
24. The seed that fell on good ground are symbolic of whom?
25. What lesson can we learn for our day?