

The Weekly Word

August 2-8, 2021

Hello Bible readers thanks for joining me. We continue Luke's account of Jesus reading 8:26 – 9:27 this week. Happy reading...
Grace and Peace, Bill

To hear the Bible read click this link... <http://www.biblegateway.com/resources/audio/>.

Monday, August 2: Luke 8:26-39 NIV2011

²⁶ *They sailed to the region of the Gerasenes, which is across the lake from Galilee. ²⁷ When Jesus stepped ashore, he was met by a demon-possessed man from the town. For a long time this man had not worn clothes or lived in a house, but had lived in the tombs. ²⁸ When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell at his feet, shouting at the top of his voice, "What do you want with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, don't torture me!" ²⁹ For Jesus had commanded the impure spirit to come out of the man. Many times it had seized him, and though he was chained hand and foot and kept under guard, he had broken his chains and had been driven by the demon into solitary places.*

³⁰ *Jesus asked him, "What is your name?"*

"Legion," he replied, because many demons had gone into him. ³¹ And they begged Jesus repeatedly not to order them to go into the Abyss.

³² *A large herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside. The demons begged Jesus to let them go into the pigs, and he gave them permission. ³³ When the demons came out of the man, they went into the pigs, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and was drowned.*

³⁴ *When those tending the pigs saw what had happened, they ran off and reported this in the town and countryside, ³⁵ and the people went out to see what had happened. When they came to Jesus, they found the man from whom the demons had gone out, sitting at Jesus' feet, dressed and in his right mind; and they were afraid. ³⁶ Those who had seen it told the people how the demon-possessed man had been cured. ³⁷ Then all the people of the region of the Gerasenes asked Jesus to leave them, because they were overcome with fear. So he got into the boat and left.*

³⁸ *The man from whom the demons had gone out begged to go with him, but Jesus sent him away, saying, ³⁹ "Return home and tell how much God has done for you." So the man went away and told all over town how much Jesus had done for him.*

What does the passage say? (What is this passage about?)

This is a fascinating passage because Jesus intentionally leaves Galilee and sails over to the Gentile region of the Decapolis for this singular event.

As soon as Jesus lands He is met by a demon possessed man. For a long time, he wore no clothes, he lived out by himself, and could not be restrained either by guards or being chained hand and foot. The picture of him is that of a pathetic human being.

Jesus addresses the man and asks the demonic spirit its' name. To which it replies, *Legion*, because many demons had gone into him. The demons beg not to be sent into the abyss. Jesus apparently obliges, and the legion of demons fled into a herd of pigs grazing on the mountainside. As soon as the demons entered the pigs, the pigs rushed down the steep slope and dove into the lake where they drowned. (It seems reasonable that what the demons did to the pigs is what they were intending to do to the man.)

The pig shepherds saw what happened and ran off to the town and countryside and told the people what had happened. When the people came out to see for themselves they found the man sitting at Jesus feet (the posture of a disciple), fully clothed and in his right mind. At this sight the people became so afraid that they asked Jesus to leave their region. So, Jesus got into the boat and left.

The healed man begged Jesus to take him with the disciples. But Jesus said "no" that he was to return home and tell how much God has done for him. So, the man went away and told people all over how much Jesus had done for him. (This man becomes the first missionary/evangelist listed to go to the gentiles.)

What does the passage mean for all Christians? (The meaning of the passage needs to fit believers everywhere in the world.)

What is it that the church learns from this story? A few thoughts capture my mind. One, Jesus has power and authority to command demonic spirits. There are no wild incantations or dramatic displays. Beyond asking the demons their name no words are recorded at all. Still the demons are cast out of the man and into the herd of swine. (The irony of a herd of pigs is not lost given the fact that Jews will not eat pork.)

This account also reminds us that no one is beyond the healing, saving touch of Jesus. No one.

And everyone saved and called is deployed for service. This man, rather than entering the relatively comfortable fold of Jesus' disciples, was sent out to tell his people how much God had done for him. Please note, Jesus directs him to tell people about how much God has done for him; the man goes about telling people how much Jesus has done for him. There is a subtle recognition in this text that Jesus is God.

What is the Holy Spirit saying to me through this passage?

In this account the Lord is reminding me that no one is beyond the touch and call of God. It does not matter where we have been or what we have done, when God touches our lives, we become changed people. What we were before Jesus is insignificant compared to the re-creation God does in our lives when He gives us a new heart and heals us and blesses us and invites us into discipleship.

Thank you, Jesus, for calling me.

Tuesday, August 3: Luke 8:40-56 NIV2011

⁴⁰ Now when Jesus returned, a crowd welcomed him, for they were all expecting him. ⁴¹ Then a man named Jairus, a synagogue leader, came and fell at Jesus' feet, pleading with him to come to his house ⁴² because his only daughter, a girl of about twelve, was dying.

As Jesus was on his way, the crowds almost crushed him. ⁴³ And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years, but no one could heal her. ⁴⁴ She came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak, and immediately her bleeding stopped.

⁴⁵ *"Who touched me?" Jesus asked.*

When they all denied it, Peter said, "Master, the people are crowding and pressing against you."

⁴⁶ *But Jesus said, "Someone touched me; I know that power has gone out from me."*

⁴⁷ *Then the woman, seeing that she could not go unnoticed, came trembling and fell at his feet. In the presence of all the people, she told why she had touched him and how she had been instantly healed. ⁴⁸ Then he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace."*

⁴⁹ *While Jesus was still speaking, someone came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue leader. "Your daughter is dead," he said. "Don't bother the teacher anymore."*

⁵⁰ *Hearing this, Jesus said to Jairus, "Don't be afraid; just believe, and she will be healed."*

⁵¹ *When he arrived at the house of Jairus, he did not let anyone go in with him except Peter, John and James, and the child's father and mother. ⁵² Meanwhile, all the people were wailing and mourning for her. "Stop wailing," Jesus said. "She is not dead but asleep."*

⁵³ *They laughed at him, knowing that she was dead. ⁵⁴ But he took her by the hand and said, "My child, get up!" ⁵⁵ Her spirit returned, and at once she stood up. Then Jesus told them to give her something to eat. ⁵⁶ Her parents were astonished, but he ordered them not to tell anyone what had happened.*

What does the passage say? (What is this passage about?)

The healing of Jairus' daughter and the woman with an issue of blood is familiar gospel territory being documented in Matthew, Mark and Luke's gospel.

Jairus, a synagogue leader, falls at Jesus' feet asking for the healing of his daughter who is dying. Jesus agrees to go with Jairus and crowds follow Him. As He makes His way to Jairus' home, a woman who has been bleeding for 12-years touches Jesus' cloak and is immediately healed.

Jesus realized that power went out from Him, so He asked, *who touched me?* Nobody came forward so Peter said to Jesus, "look at all the people pressing against you". But Jesus, convinced that someone had touched Him, pressed to the point with the crowd.

The woman realized she could not hide, stepped forward and fell at Jesus' feet. She then explained why she touched Him and that she had been instantly healed. Jesus turned to her and said, *Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace.* (Note both Jairus and this woman fell at Jesus' feet.)

There was a superstitious belief that if you touched the clothing of a healer you would be healed. Jesus, not wanting people to believe in superstition or magic, sought out the woman so that He could explain that it was her faith and not magic that had healed her.

During the goings on with the woman someone from Jairus his house came and told him that his daughter was dead and said, *don't bother the teacher anymore.*

Jesus overheard this and turned immediately to Jairus and said, *don't be afraid; Just believe, and she will be healed.* Luke sped through the remainder of the walk and they arrived at Jairus' house. Jesus took only Peter, John and James plus the girl's parents with Him as He entered the house. There were people wailing and mourning for her (these are almost assuredly

professional mourners that were part of the death ritual for Jews). Jesus ordered the mourners to stop wailing, *she is not dead but asleep*.

All the people laughed at Jesus because they knew the young girl was dead. Jesus went into her room took her hand and said *my child get up!* Immediately she came back to life and stood up. Jesus then instructed the parents to give her something to eat. The parents were astonished; surprisingly Jesus told them not to tell anyone what had happened. (This is a strange command to the parents since all the professional mourners and all the people in the crowd who had gathered at the house knew the girl was dead and surely would know in moments that she was alive again.)

What does the passage mean for all Christians? (The meaning of the passage needs to fit believers everywhere in the world.)

Certainly, one aspect of these encounters is the place of faith in opening the door for God's miraculous activity. To the woman Jesus said, "your faith has healed you". And to Jairus, Jesus said, "don't be afraid, just believe". Belief, faith, is an activating element in the miraculous.

One has to be very careful saying what I just said because it is not faith in faith that brings about a miracle, it is faith in Jesus. Secondly, just because a miracle does not happen does not mean a person lacks faith. God remains sovereign and God chooses to heal whom He chooses to heal. And those He chooses not to heal will not be healed. And none understands the mind of God completely. So, while faith is an active ingredient in God working in a person's life, God remains sovereign to work whenever He wants, and however He wants.

As the church we must maintain our faith when God shows up as we hope and dream. However when God chooses not to show up as we hope and dream, our faith must trust in the Lord in all times and in all seasons.

What is the Holy Spirit saying to me through this passage?

Through this reading God is probing my faith in Him. Do I honestly believe? Do I truly believe? Do I have the faith of the woman who wove her way through a crowd so she could just reach out and touch the hem of Jesus garment? Do I have the faith of Jairus to believe that my daughter will come back to life even though I have been told she is dead?

As I said above, God is probing the depth and honesty of my faith in Him- the Father, Jesus the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

Wednesday, August 4: Luke 9:1-9 NIV2011

¹ When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, ² and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal the sick. ³ He told them: "Take nothing for the journey—no staff, no bag, no bread, no money, no extra shirt. ⁴ Whatever house you enter, stay there until you leave that town. ⁵ If people do not welcome you, leave their town and shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them." ⁶ So they set out and went from village to village, proclaiming the good news and healing people everywhere.

⁷ Now Herod the tetrarch heard about all that was going on. And he was perplexed because some were saying that John had been raised from the dead, ⁸ others that Elijah had appeared,

and still others that one of the prophets of long ago had come back to life.⁹ But Herod said, "I beheaded John. Who, then, is this I hear such things about?" And he tried to see him.

What does the passage say? (What is this passage about?)

Today's passage has two themes. The first is Jesus calling His 12 and sending them out with power and authority to drive out demons, cure diseases, proclaim the Kingdom of God and heal the sick. The disciples are not to take anything extra for their journey, no staff, bag, bread money or extra shirt. They are totally dependent on the people to whom they go. When they go into a town, they are to stay with one family for the duration of their time there... There is no moving around from one home to a "better home" situation. They are to be content with what the first family who welcomes them gives them during their ministry tour. Throughout this time the disciples went from village to village proclaiming God's good news and confirming God's good news by healing people.

The second theme focuses on what Herod, the tetrarch, the Roman ruler of the area, is hearing. Herod must be hearing about the work of Jesus spreading through his region. But he can't quite figure out what's going on. Some people think John the Baptist has come back to life (Herod killed John so Herod knew John was dead). Some people were saying that it was Elijah or one of the Old Testament prophets come back to life. Herod could not figure out who this new personality was. The paragraph closes with a stark comment, and he (Herod) tried to see Him (Jesus). I find it interesting that Jesus has no interest in seeing the governmental ruler of the region. Jesus was focused on the everyday person to share with them the good news of God.

What does the passage mean for all Christians? (The meaning of the passage needs to fit believers everywhere in the world.)

The first paragraph reminds us that apostles and by extension all of us who've heard about Jesus through their ministry are built for service. As we read about the apostles, we are seeing in them examples of the first believers and how Jesus sent them out to do the things He Himself had been doing. We are reminded that Jesus sent them out in His power and authority. In each of these the disciples are taking on the kingdom of darkness and exerting Jesus' power and authority by being Jesus' representatives.

In the ancient world to be sent out in someone else's name or with their power and authority meant that you, the person being sent out, carried the weight authority and power of the one who sent you. So, this is a story of the apostles being the conduit of Jesus' power and authority to people they meet. Effectively Jesus is multiplying His ability to touch the world because He is multiplying Himself through sending out authorized people in His name.

This continues to be an important learning for the church. The church exists and operates in the power and authority of Jesus. If the church ever attempts to operate in its own power and authority, it has undermined the message of Jesus. It is not about us; it is about Jesus working through us touching the world with God's love.

When we watched the apostles going out without anything else we realized that Jesus is teaching a profound lesson, when we go out in utter dependence upon the Lord. God provides what we need to accomplish his ministry. The church must never lose sight of this! We are to be wholly God's.

What is the Holy Spirit saying to me through this passage?

And where is Jesus leading me today? Jesus is leading me and calling me to remember it is all about Him. It is His strength, it is His power, and it is in His authority that I do anything of significance with respect to kingdom work. It is not about me it is about Jesus.

I am reminded of the Old Testament story about Balaam and his donkey and how Balaam's donkey speaks and corrects Balaam. If God can use a donkey God can use a person; God can use me. And to be used by God I must remember my utter and total dependence is on the Lord.

Thursday, August 5: Luke 9:10-17 NIV2011

¹⁰ When the apostles returned, they reported to Jesus what they had done. Then he took them with him and they withdrew by themselves to a town called Bethsaida, ¹¹ but the crowds learned about it and followed him. He welcomed them and spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and healed those who needed healing.

¹² Late in the afternoon the Twelve came to him and said, "Send the crowd away so they can go to the surrounding villages and countryside and find food and lodging, because we are in a remote place here."

¹³ He replied, "You give them something to eat."

They answered, "We have only five loaves of bread and two fish—unless we go and buy food for all this crowd." ¹⁴ (About five thousand men were there.)

But he said to his disciples, "Have them sit down in groups of about fifty each." ¹⁵ The disciples did so, and everyone sat down. ¹⁶ Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke them. Then he gave them to the disciples to distribute to the people. ¹⁷ They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over.

What does the passage say? (What is this passage about?)

Jesus is accelerating His crash course in making disciples. Having recently sent them out in His name and with His authority, the apostles return and gather with Jesus, most likely to discuss the events of the last days. Jesus withdrew with them to the town of Bethsaida where He could have some alone time with them. Unfortunately, alone time was not part of God's schedule. Crowds heard where Jesus was going and they followed him. Jesus welcomes the people and teaches them about the Kingdom of God and to heal their diseases. (Jesus appears to be modeling for the disciples that meeting people's needs and teaching about the Kingdom is of the highest priority.)

The teaching went on for some time because late in the afternoon the disciples catch Jesus' attention explaining that the people need food and He needs to send them away so that they can go to find food since they are in a remote place.

Jesus replies with a stunning comment, *you give them something to eat.*

They responded to Jesus, "We don't have much. We only have five loaves of bread and two fish. We'd have to go and buy food in order to feed all these people"... there were about 5000 men.

Jesus has other ideas, so He directs the disciples to have the people sit in small groups of 50. Then Jesus took the five loaves and the two fish and in a very visible and deliberate gesture, Jesus looked to heaven and gave thanks for the food. He then broke up the food and gave it to His disciples to distribute to the crowd. Everyone ate and Luke emphasized everyone was satisfied, and still the disciples were able to collect 12 basketfuls of leftover broken pieces.

What does the passage mean for all Christians? (The meaning of the passage needs to fit believers everywhere in the world.)

There is so much here for the church to digest.

First, this story communicates a new dimension regarding Jesus, His authority, and His abilities. Jesus was able to stretch food and feed a multitude with what amounts to a single person's lunch. This was an implicit description of Jesus as God. After all it was the Lord God Almighty who fed the people in the wilderness for 40 years. And it was the power of the Lord through the prophet Elijah who fed the widow of Zarephath by multiplying her oil. And it was the Lord God Almighty Himself who provided the food for Adam and Eve in the garden. God has been providing food for His people for generations and now Jesus was providing food for the people. (In another respect this is a direct retort to the devil who tempted Jesus to make food from rocks for selfish reasons. Jesus refused then, but now for benevolent reasons Jesus does produce food.)

Regarding Jesus' school of discipleship, this passage teaches the church and those of us who are Jesus' present day disciples several important items. First, the very fact that Jesus would step away from the disciples and rest after ministry in order to teach and heal the crowds reminds us as disciples that sharing the good news and demonstrating the good news is the key component of our lives. It takes precedence over personal needs.

It teaches us as disciples that the simple gifts we bring to the Lord can multiply and expand to meet the need the Lord wants us to address. We offer our lunch, Jesus feeds 5000 men not counting women and children. We offer our meager gifts, Jesus multiplies them to provide ministry for thousands of people.

Finally, Jesus cannot only meet populaces need, He can also provide for His disciples to eat. This is a miracle where Jesus not only fed the 5000 He also took care of His disciples.

What tremendous learning they must have had as they watched Jesus be Jesus.

What is the Holy Spirit saying to me through this passage?

My mind is fixed on the offering of five loaves and two fish. With that small amount of food Jesus fed a multitude. What can I offer Jesus? I can offer Him my limited gifts and abilities for Him to use to advance His gospel and His message of love and reconciliation with God the Father. Whatever I offer Jesus will be enough, even providing some leftovers, to accomplish everything God would have for me to accomplish.

Will I trust Jesus to use me to advance His Kingdom? I hope so. I pray so. May the Father Almighty, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit receive glory and honor from the way I live my life.

Friday, August 6: Luke 9:18-20 NIV2011

¹⁸ Once when Jesus was praying in private and his disciples were with him, he asked them, "Who do the crowds say I am?"

¹⁹ They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, that one of the prophets of long ago has come back to life."

²⁰ "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?"

Peter answered, "God's Messiah."

What does the passage say? (What is this passage about?)

In this short vignette Jesus asks one of the most penetrating questions of the gospels.

Alone with His disciples, Jesus queries them about who the crowds believe He is. The disciples reply, John the Baptist, Elijah or one of the prophets. Jesus is setting them up.

Jesus then turns to them and asks, *Who do you say I am?*"

Peter answering for the group says, *God's Messiah*.

What does the passage mean for all Christians? (The meaning of the passage needs to fit believers everywhere in the world.)

This is the key question of faith in all generations. Who do you say Jesus is? If He is God's Messiah to you, then you have begun on the road of discipleship. If He is not then you are not yet a believer.

This is the key question of life. If you believe Jesus is God's Messiah, then life becomes about tuning how one lives into his frequency. Your first step is to learn from Him and adjust your life to follow His will and way...

Who do you say Jesus is?

What is the Holy Spirit saying to me through this passage?

I am reminded of the Friday evening October 3, 1975 when I answered that question as Peter did. It changed my life and I have never been the same. And I would never go back...

If you are reading this blog, *Who do you say Jesus is?*

If you ever want to talk just email me... I'm happy to share my story and my adventure of following Jesus...

Saturday, August 7: Luke 9:21-27 NIV2011

²¹ Jesus strictly warned them not to tell this to anyone. ²² And he said, "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life."

²³ Then he said to them all: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. ²⁴ For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it. ²⁵ What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit their very self? ²⁶ Whoever is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.

²⁷ "Truly I tell you, some who are standing here will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God."

What does the passage say? (What is this passage about?)

Despite being a short section, this passage communicates three separate ideas.

In verses 21 and 22 Jesus tells His disciples for the first time that He will suffer at the hands of the Jewish leadership and be killed. Additionally, Jesus tells them astonishingly that He will be raised to life again on the third day.

In the middle paragraph verses 23 through 26 Jesus explains the depth of discipleship that He requires. His disciples must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow Jesus.

I find it interesting that Jesus has not yet told His disciples that He will be crucified. He only told them that He would be killed and rejected by the chief priests and teachers of the Jewish law.

Still, in verse 23 Jesus uses “cross” language, which likely had little meaning for disciples prior to the events of Good Friday. Jesus moves on from the cross language to explain that in order to save one's life, His disciples must lose their life. (The inference in the whole passage is that we must lose our lives as disciples for Jesus' sake). Jesus then issues another challenge asking the disciples what good it is to gain everything in the world and yet forfeit their very self, or their soul, or their eternal life. Again, Jesus is reminding His disciples about the extent of discipleship that He requires. Lastly, He names another significant issue, explaining that if we are ashamed of Him this side of eternity He will be ashamed of us when He returns in His glory. This certainly was a strong word for the readers of Matthew's gospel. Being ashamed of Jesus is the mark of someone who has lost their discipleship.

The third element of this passage is in the singular verse 27, where Jesus declares that some people who are listening to Him we'll see the Kingdom of God before they die.

What does the passage mean for all Christians? (The meaning of the passage needs to fit believers everywhere in the world.)

Sections one and two speak about the extent of discipleship that Jesus requires. First, we are told that the Master Himself will be rejected by religious leaders and will be killed. Before reading anything else every disciple will likely shudder at these words because if that's what happens to the master there is nothing to stop the same things from happening to the disciples as well.

Jesus then begins to make His discipleship requirements even more explicit explaining that disciples need to deny themselves and carry their cross daily. And disciples must be willing to lay down their lives in order to save it. That the disciples must no longer seek worldly gain but rather be willing to forfeit or lose their very self for the sake of Jesus. And finally, disciples must never be ashamed of Jesus.

These are incredibly strong words to the church. They challenge a lackadaisical approach to faith, Christianity and following Jesus. And they call us to a life willing to give up all for the sake of our Savior Jesus.

What is the Holy Spirit saying to me through this passage?

Will I take up my cross and follow Jesus? Am I willing to lose my life this side of eternity in order to gain eternal life?

Jesus' comment about being ashamed of Him drives me to consider my verbal witness to Jesus. Sometimes internally I feel so timid, particularly in one on one conversations. Reading this passage, I wonder am I ashamed? Am I fearful of what people will think of me? Or am I overthinking this passage which is leading to a paralysis in my life and witness?

Lord God Almighty, give me courage to be Your witness and ambassador in this world. I pray in Jesus' name Amen.

Sunday, August 8, 2021 - Sunday Worship

If any of my thoughts or the Bible readings spark questions send an email reply and I will do my best to answer all questions from people on the list... I will answer personal questions privately; general questions will be answered in a subsequent email installment.

If you are reading along with me from the Living Hope website you can send questions or request being placed on the weekly email list by emailing Lisa at office@LivingHopeCT.org.

Click here for an audio link to my sermons, <https://livinghopect.org/resources/audio-sermons>. Sermons are generally posted within 2 days. We also livestream our full services which are up on our YouTube channel, <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCgKURRsX92qqIFgDF1iRWA>