

2020

George Costanza, Michelangelo And Jesus

LUKE

GOSPEL FOR EVERY ONE

Luke 8:22 – 9:27

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CHESMONT CHURCH

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INTRODUCTION

- I George Castanza Saves His Life
 - A. Welcome back to our journey through the gospel of Luke.
 - B. We still have copies of the Gospel of Luke Scripture Journals available
 - C. Ive been told that this is a different study technique than some of us have used before. I hope that you are being blessed in this journey
 - D. My friend Chris Seidman said it this way, "It can be life changing to walk through the story of Jesus and allow the story of Jesus to walk through you."
 - E. I've said this before – "Its shallow enough for a baby to walk through in parts, and in other parts, its deep enough for an elephant to drown in."
 - F. This is NOT a history lesson.
 - G. This is NOT simply a story telling us how powerful Jesus was.
 - H. These are story's that testify how powerful Jesus IS.
 - I. These are NOT stories telling us of how loving Jesus once was.
 - J. These are a set of stories that confess how loving Jesus IS.
 - K. Because the ONE that was – is also the One that IS – and the One that IS TO COME! Praise be to God!
 - L. So, I hope this is blessing you as much as it is blessing me.
 - M. We will be on page 64 in our journals, also known as Luke 8:22.

We pick up our journey in the gospel of Luke by way of an episode from a favorite show of the 90's – Seinfeld. It involves the character George Castanza, played by Jason Alexander, who usually comes off quite foolish in most episodes. But he may be the character most everybody identifies with in his foolishness. (Video)

Slide #1 – Title Slide

George is an illustration of someone who is desperate to save his life. He pushes everyone out of the way, women and children included, to get out the door first in a fire. But then spends all this energy trying to justify and rationalize his actions. In the end, he'll lose his fiancé and the respect of her family and friends.

- N. We'll circle back around to Castanza later.

- O. Today we're going to cover the biggest chunk of Luke yet that we've covered in a sermon in this series.
- P. So, I'm going to fly at a little higher altitude to cover a little more ground and give us a different perspective on the way events unfold.
- Q. But this higher altitude will also give us a context for appreciating the part we will zoom in on for a closer look.
- R. We begin in Luke 8:22.
- S. Beginning here, there are 4 stories back-to-back where we are again reminded of the authority and power of Jesus.
- T. We won't read them all but the references are all up on the screen.

Slide #2 - Header

BODY

II **Jesus Calms A Storm (Luke 8:22-25)**

- A. In the first story, the disciples are in a boat with Jesus and caught in the middle of a storm that is so terrible, even the commercial fishermen like Peter are terrified.
- B. The boat is taking on water.
- C. Jesus rebukes the wind and the waves and everything goes completely calm.

Slide #3 – Add Scripture

- D. The story concludes this way in Luke 8:25 –

He said to them, "Where is your faith?" And they were afraid,

Check this out – first they were afraid of the storm – now they're afraid of the one that just calmed the storm.

and they marveled, saying to one another, "Who then is this, that he commands even winds and water and they obey him?"

- E. A couple of things about this story.
- F. Jesus asks them where their faith is.
- G. Faith is an important thing to Jesus.
 - 1. If you remember in chapter 7 – there's a Roman centurion that has a faith in Jesus that amazes Him.

2. And at the end of chapter 7 – there's a woman from the streets who He says has a faith that saves her.
- H. Now he's looking for faith from the people He's spending the most time with.
 - I. Which brings me to the storm.
 - J. Sometimes it takes a storm to reveal the quality of your faith.**
 - K. Sometimes you don't know where you really are in your faith, until there's a storm that rolls in on you.
 - L. And sometimes it takes you going through a storm to personally experience Jesus in a new way and increase your faith.
 - M. If I were to ask you to tell me of a time when your faith grew the most, your story would probably include a storm of some kind.
 - N. Often it takes big storms to reveal just how much bigger Jesus is.
 - O. This is what happens with the disciples.
 - P. They're on a learning curve of just how much authority Jesus has.
 - Q. They've seen Him cast out demons, heal the sick, command schools of fish to swim into commercial fisherman's nets, raise the dead, and now they see Him have authority over the wind and the waves.
 - R. The Great Physician becomes the Great Meteorologist. This guy can even control the weather.
 - S. The story closes with them asking that question – **"Who then is this, that he commands even winds and water and they obey him?"**
 - T. Which just goes to show you...
 - U. Following Jesus DOES answer a lot of questions in your life. But its gonna raise a whole lot of new ones as well.
 - V. When you start following Jesus it'll just lead you to bigger and more important questions.
 - W. If your waiting on a decision to follow Jesus until you have all the answers, you'll still be waiting when you're 6-foot under and pushing up daisies.
 - X. You haven't even started asking the right questions until you start following Jesus.
 - Y. When you start following Jesus, He has a way of
 - a. clarifying all the questions.

- b. Raising the big questions
- c. Raising the most important questions.
- Z. The Disciples have been following him and they're still asking questions. WHO IS THIS?
- AA. And then they get yet another answer to that question which is really a repeat lesson for them.
- BB. Which brings us to the next story.

Slide #4 - Header

III Jesus Heals A Man With Demons (Luke 8:26-39)

- A. You have to feel for the disciples because they go from one traumatic experience to another.
- B. If you've ever been on a boat in rough waters – dry ground is a little slice of Heaven.
- C. They get off the boat in Gentile country – the region of the Gerasenes.
- D. This is enemy territory for the Jews.
- E. But Jesus is the Savior for all people and crossing all kinds of lines.
- F. Who does Jesus and the disciples get for a welcoming committee?
- G. A raving lunatic of a man – possessed by a multitude of demons, unclothed, and living in a graveyard.
- H. The disciples go from one terrifying experience to another.
- I. And then they quickly find out that Jesus' authority over demons extends into Gentile country as well.
- J. The Disciples are gonna see that Jesus has a free global pass to conquer demons everywhere.

Slide #5 – Add Scripture

- K. The story ends with the delivered man being told by Jesus – **"Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you." (Luke 8:39)**
- L. He becomes the first evangelist in Gentile country.
- M. By the way, that's a simple definition of a testimony – **telling someone what God has done for you.**

- N. Some of you need to update your testimony – you’re still talking about stuff that happened a long time ago (WHICH IS GOOD)
- O. Sometimes your testimony can be what God saved you from a long time ago, but another part of your testimony is, “What is God saving you from TODAY?”
- P. And then we move to a third story.

Slide #6 - Header

IV **Jesus Heals A Woman Chronically Bleeding (Luke 8:42-49)**

- A. I touched on this story last week with you, so I won’t return to it other than to say **this story features Jesus’ authority over sickness.**
- B. We’ve seen 3 stories
 - a. Authority over the Winds and the Waves
 - b. Authority over a multitude of demons in one man.
 - c. Now – Authority over sickness.
- C. This sets us up for the fourth story.

Slide #7 - Header

V **Jesus Raises Jairus’s Daughter From The Dead (Luke 8:49-56)**

- A. This is the second person Jesus has raised from the dead in the gospel of Luke.
- B. But what we have here is 4 stories back-to-back illustrating Jesus’ power and authority– **over wind and waves, demons, sickness, and death.**
- C. Some of these are things the disciples have seen before.
- D. But now they happen more rapidly and in succession.
- E. There’s one more story about Jesus’ authority we’ll get to, but first we cut to a story where the 12 apostles experience the authority of Jesus flowing through them.

Slide #8 - Header

VI **Jesus Sends Out the Twelve Apostles (Luke 9:1-6)**

- A. After watching Jesus do one incredible thing after another, the 12 apostles are called together by Jesus and He gives them authority and power to drive out demons, heal the sick, and proclaim the presence of the kingdom of God.
- B. Jesus is gonna share His authority

- C. Jesus isn't a Hoarder – He's a multiplier.
- D. So they fan out and begin to do what Jesus did.
- E. What's funny is there's so much they still don't understand about Jesus as you'll see in just a moment.
- F. But that doesn't stop Jesus from using them to minister to others.
- G. ISN'T THAT GOOD NEWS???**
- H. Jesus doesn't wait for you to have a full understanding of Him before He uses you to minister to others. THANKS BE TO GOD!
- I. That should be a great comfort to us.
- J. You don't have to fully understand everything about Jesus in order to be used by Him.
- K. Now, instead of one-person healing and casting out demons and proclaiming the kingdom of God, there are 12 doing it.
- L. And Jesus and His followers are beginning to make news.
- M. In the next story, in Luke 9:7-9, we find out that Herod begins to hear about the commotion and wonder who this guy Jesus is.
- N. He's asking the same question Jesus' disciples were in chapter 8 – "Who is this?"
- O. So the disciples are asking "Who is this?" and now Herod is asking "Who is this?"
- P. And Luke then piles on a 5th story about Jesus' authority.

Slide #9 – Header

VII Jesus Feeds The Five Thousand (Luke 9:10-17)

- A. This is the miracle in which Jesus multiplies five loaves of bread and two fish to feed five thousand men plus women and children.
- B. Now we see Jesus having authority over food supplies.
- C. The story closes with Luke talking about all the leftovers.

Slide #10 – Add Scripture

- D. He writes – **And what was left over was picked up, twelve baskets of broken pieces. (Luke 9:17b)**
- E. One basket for each apostle to stare at.

- F. This is significant because the apostles earlier in the story were wondering how in the world they were going to feed everyone when Jesus told them to.
- G. Now each one of them has a basket to stare at.
- H. It's the broken pieces though that gets me.
- I. Because each one of the apostles are broken pieces themselves.
- J. They don't have it all together when it comes to really understanding who Jesus is yet - which we'll see in just a moment.

Slide #11 through 13 - Header and Scripture

VIII Confession And Job Description (Luke 9:18-27)

A. Luke 9:18-20 –

Now it happened as he was praying alone; the disciples were with him. And he asked them, "Who do the crowds say that I am?"

#12

And they answered, "John the Baptist. But others say, Elijah, and others, that one of the prophets of old has risen."

#13

Then he said to them, "But who do you say that I am?"

And Peter answered, "The Christ of God."

- B. Finally, someone has said it outright.
- C. The term "Christ" means "Anointed One" – it was his way of saying that Jesus is the "King" or the "Messiah".
- D. Peter's got the right title for Jesus.
- E. But then Jesus does something strange.

Slide #14 - Scripture

F. Luke 9:21 –

And he strictly charged and commanded them to tell this to no one....

- G. Now, why did Jesus tell Peter and the crew not to tell anyone yet?
- H. Probably because He knows that Peter and the crew still have the wrong job description in their heads for the Christ.

- I. They're expecting something else out of Jesus and Jesus doesn't want them advertising something about Him that's not true.
- J. No one suffers more from False Advertising than Jesus – Then and Now!
- K. That's why the church needs to Listen to Jesus.
- L. That's the reason why we look at these stories so much.
- M. The church today MUST have a clear picture of Jesus so that they can paint it for the world that we live in.**
- N. They have the right title but wrong description.
- O. So He's about to enlighten them as to what His job description is.

Slide #15 - Scripture

- P. Let's read on – **Luke 9:21-22**

And he strictly charged and commanded them to tell this to no one, saying, "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised."

- 1. Now this was not what they had in mind or were expecting.
- 2. This is not what the Messiah does who has all this authority and power over everything that they've been seeing.
- 3. This is not what a MESSIAH does that's a...
 - a. Miraculous Caterer.
 - b. Incredible Exorcist
 - c. Divine Meteorologist.
 - d. One that has authority over sickness.
- 4. The Messiah shouldn't be planning on suffering and being rejected by His own people, and then being killed.
- 5. They probably didn't even hear or understand what He said about being raised on the 3rd day – which I'll talk about later.
- 6. The bottom line is, they have a completely different job description in mind for Jesus - one that involves overthrowing the Roman Empire and Israelites.
- 7. Jesus is more than a weather-controller, exorcist, healer, resurrection-specialist, and miraculous caterer.

8. Can you imagine how all those powers could be used in launching a revolution against Rome?

9. But Jesus is out to deliver them and all of us from something far bigger than that.

10. And to do that – He's headed for death on a cross and not a throne in Jerusalem .

Q. But if that wasn't hard enough to swallow - this next thing will be.

R. Jesus goes on to tell them about the job description of anyone who would follow Him.

Slide #16 - Scripture

S. Luke 9:23 –

And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me."

1. I cannot tell you how shocking this would have been for the disciples to hear.
2. Today crosses are seen as signs of victory and hope.
3. Today, people wear them.
4. Back then crosses wore people.
5. If you saw a person carrying a cross you knew that would be the last time you see them alive.
6. Jesus saying "take up his cross daily" let them know he's talking about something different from physical death – He's talking about some kind of death to themselves daily.
7. Jesus makes clear that they're not going to be able to follow Him without denying themselves.
8. It's not just that it's a requirement – it's that it's inevitable.
9. There will be times when what Jesus wants and what they want will not be the same thing and something will have to give.
10. It will either be His will or yours.
11. We cannot follow Him and ourselves.
12. A choice must be made daily.
13. But it's not death for death's sake.

14. It's death for the sake of your life.

Slide #17 - Scripture

T. Luke 9:24 –

"For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it."

1. Jesus gives some incentive for denying ourselves and following Him.
2. If your priority is wanting to save your life – you're going to wind up losing it.
3. Which brings us back to that image of George Castanza pushing people out of the way to save his life.
4. George's top priority is to save his life and yet the irony is he loses it – he loses his fiancé and the respect of his family and friends.
5. There are a lot of people who live their lives by the George Castanza playbook.
6. Eventually they'll even push Jesus out of the way.
7. Jesus said it – "if you're gonna follow me, you - have to take up your cross – Daily!"
8. At some point – Your will and the Will of Jesus aren't going to be the same... which one is gonna win?
9. But whoever loses their life for Jesus' sake will save it.

Slide #18 and #19 – Lewis Quote

C.S. Lewis writes –

Give up yourself, and you will find your real self. Lose your life and you will save it. Submit to death.... submit with every fiber of your being. Keep back nothing. Nothing in you that has not died will ever be raised from the dead.

#19

Look for yourself, and you will find in the long run only hatred, loneliness, despair, rage, ruin, and decay. But look for Christ and you will find Him, and with Him everything else thrown in.

10. The life Jesus calls us to – the life of denying ourselves and instead following Him will actually lead us to life.

11. Jesus wants His followers to think through this.
12. So He asks a question next.

Slide #20 - Scripture

U. Luke 9:25 –

"For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself?"

1. Just think about how many people have lost themselves in the midst of trying to gain the whole world?
2. They tried to gain the world to "save" themselves and wound up losing themselves.
3. What's so interesting is that it's in denying ourselves and following Jesus that we wind up gaining ourselves – we become the person God made us to be all along.

Slide #21 - Picture

Once the great artist Michelangelo was hammering and chiseling away at a block of marble. He was asked what he was making. (pic) He said, "I'm releasing the angel imprisoned in this block of marble. I see the angel inside here and I carve until I've set him free."

I think about that when I think about the hammering and chiseling that takes place to our lives and will - as we follow Jesus. We deny ourselves in following Him only to find the person in Him we were made to be.

4. Some of the greatest gifts you'll ever receive by denying yourself and following Jesus... You get back the You - You were supposed to be.
 - a. Not the Self the world has shaped you to be
 - b. The lies you've lived in light of
 - c. The titles you've inherited
 - d. And the negative experiences you've had.
5. But there's more than just our life and ourselves at stake when it comes to denying ourselves and following Jesus.
6. He gives us more incentive than that.

7. He's coming again!

Slide #22 - Scripture

V. Luke 9:26 –

"For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels."

1. The fact that Jesus brings up being ashamed of him and his words tells us this is going to be a temptation.
2. That's why one has to choose – will they deny themselves – in this case, their fear of what others think – and follow Jesus?
3. And as extra incentive Jesus reminds them – He's coming back.
4. But I'm coming back with the Angels and the glory of Heaven
5. But He also says this to them.

Slide #23 - Scripture

W. Luke 9:27 –

"But I tell you truly, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God."

1. This is probably in reference to His resurrection and other miraculous things they will see before they die.

IX "I Didn't Sign Up For This"

- A. Now this is all so much for the disciples to swallow.
- B. The disciples had to be thinking, "I didn't sign up for this."
- C. In fact, while Luke doesn't mention it, but the gospel of Mark tells a story about Peter actually rebuking Jesus for talking this way.
- D. It clashed with the disciples' job description for Jesus.

Slide #24 – Heifetz Quote

- E. There's a Harvard business professor named Ron Heifetz who said – **Leadership is the art of disappointing people at a pace they can stand.**
- F. And I would venture to say that the disciples at this point had all they could stand when it came to what Jesus just said.

- G. The good news is God is about to give the disciples a little help when it comes to standing.
- H. But that's where we'll pick up next week.
- I. Our tour this week is completed, so let me leave us with one question that I think this particular part of Luke leaves us with.

Slide #25 – One Question . . .

- **Wind, Sea, Demons, Disease, Death, And Food Supplies All Follow Jesus' Lead; Will We?**

- A. That's the question then and today.
- B. Wind, sea, demons, disease, death and food supplies all surrendered to Jesus.
- C. Let's join them.
- D. The wind and waves still know His name – the question is - do you?
 - a. He is LORD
 - b. He is KING
- E. But so often our surrender **to** Him has something to do with our trust **in** Him.
- F. Trusting Jesus involves multiple dimensions.
- G. For instance, trusting Him means first we trust that He's capable – that He knows what's best.
- H. According to Him it's in our best interest to deny ourselves, take up our cross daily, and follow Him.
- I. We won't surrender to following Him if we don't think He's capable or knows best.
- J. I love what Dallas Willard writes.

Slide #26 through #33 (Willard Quote) - Whew! – keep up!

Our commitment to Jesus can stand on no other foundation than a recognition that he is the one who knows the truth about our lives and our universe. It is not possible to trust Jesus, or anyone else, in matters where we do not believe him to be competent.

#27

Can we seriously imagine that Jesus could be Lord if he were not smart? If he were divine, would he be dumb? Or uninformed? Once you stop to think about it, how could he be what we take him to be in all other respects and not the best-informed and most intelligent person of all, the smartest person who ever lived?

#28

That is exactly how his earliest apprentices in kingdom living thought of him. The biblical and continuing vision of Jesus was of one who made all of created reality and kept it working, literally "holding it together" (Colossians 1:17). And today we think people are smart who make light bulbs and computer chips and rockets out of "stuff" already provided! He made "the stuff!"

#29

At the literally mundane level, Jesus knew how to transform the molecular structure of water to make it wine. That knowledge allowed him to take a few pieces of bread and some little fish and feed thousands of people. He knew how to transform the tissues of the human body from sickness to health and from death to life.

#30

He knew how to suspend gravity, interrupt weather patterns, and eliminate unfruitful trees without a saw or an ax. He only needed a word. Surely he must be amused at what Nobel prizes are awarded for today.

#31

In the ethical domain he brought an understanding of life that has influenced world thought more than any other. And one of the greatest testimonies to his intelligence is surely that he knew how to enter physical death, actually to die, and then live on beyond death. He seized death by the throat and defeated it.

#32

All these things show Jesus' practical mastery of every phase of reality: physical, moral, spiritual. He is Master only because he is Maestro. "Jesus is Lord" can mean little in practice for anyone who has to hesitate before saying, "Jesus is smart."

#33

He's not just nice, he is brilliant. He always has the best information on everything and certainly also on the things that matter most in human life.

Slide #34 – Blank Slide

- K. But trusting Him doesn't just come from believing that He knows what's best.
- L. It also comes from believing that He cares for us.
- M. He's not out to use us or hurt us or drown us in the midst of our storms.
- N. Perhaps that's one of many reasons why it was so important that He fulfilled the job description He had and not the one everyone wanted Him to have.
- O. Because it's through His death we realize how deeply He cares for you.
- P. If He didn't care for you why in the world did He endure so much suffering when He could have easily prevented it through all the authority He had?

Slide #35 - Scripture

- Q. As I John 3:16 says – **This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us.**
- R. And that love could not simply be seen by...
 - a. By lording over the wind and the waves
 - b. By multiplying food supply
 - c. By casting out demons
 - d. Or even by raising a dead person
- S. The greatest expression of His love is when He laid down His authority and died on a cross.
- T. Not only does he know what's best for you, He wants what's best for you.
- U. And he Died to let you know it...
- V. Listen to a story from a Pastor friend of mine about laying our vices at the feet of the Lord....

A few years ago, during our prayer and ministry time at the end of the service, a man came forward and told me, "I have a strange request."

I said, "Go ahead."

He said, "It's time I surrender to Jesus. It's time I deal with my addiction. I'd like to go to my car and get it all and place it on the communion table as a start."

I said, "Ok."

He ran out to his car, came back in and put all his drugs on the communion table right next to the bread and cup.

That was some sight – drugs next to the body and blood of Christ. Right here on the communion table from 1906.

Part of me wanted to yell - DON'T PUT THOSE THERE!

But it was an expression of his self-denial as a response to Jesus' self-denial on his behalf.

He wound up surrounded by others who were fellow addicts which was so important because none of us can carry our cross alone. Not even Jesus did which you'll see later.

But that's another story for another time.

Slide #36 – Communion Questions

W. Communion –

***Is there a storm you're in right now? Where is your faith?**

***What's a particular way you're denying yourself and following Jesus?**

***How has following Jesus "saved" your life up to this point?**

LET'S PRAY

You who have authority over the wind and the waves. Who has authority over natural resources - who has authority over Every demonic force - who has authority over death - who has authority over disease.

Jesus, we confess your authority over these things. We also confess you as the one who laid down your authority and died upon a cross because you are out for more than just to heal bodies and feed bellies.

You are out for more, then to bring your kingdom into this world - You are also out for us to experience forgiveness. For us to experience redemption, for us to know we are dearly loved and to begin living our life from that place. You are out for the forgiveness of our sins. And we're so grateful you did what the father asked you to do.

We honor you and we consider our lives going forward, and we thank you for your love through Christ. Amen.