



Jesus' Power over Nature, Demons, and Death Luke 8

Introduction

Acts of God are awesome. Hurricanes, volcanoes, tornados, floods, lightning, fire, and earthquakes all demonstrate His power. Miracles, large and small, also demonstrate the power of God. Miracles are events that are beyond human capabilities and understanding. They transcend natural explanation. Jesus Christ performed miracles. Luke 7 recounted some miracles of compassion. Luke 8 includes miracles of power over nature, demons, disease, and death. Of course, every miracle demonstrates both His power and His compassion. When did you last experience a miracle, or need one?

Miracles test our acceptance of the Bible. They either stimulate our faith and worship of God or they evoke skepticism, which is disbelief. Every gospel tells of Jesus performing miracles. How we "hear" miracles is our choice and reveals the condition of the soil of our hearts. Chapter 8 begins fittingly with the seemingly simple parable of the sower and the soils.

Outline of Luke 8

- I. Parable of the Sower and the Soils - Luke 8:1-21
- II. Power over Nature and Disaster - Luke 8:22-25
- III. Power over Demons - Luke 8:26-39
- IV. Power over Disease and Death - Luke 8:40-56

I. Parable of the Sower and the Soils - Luke 8:1-21

- A. Setting - Luke 8:1-4
 - 1. Second Galilean tour - 8:1

Now it came to pass, afterward, that He went through every city and village, preaching and bringing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God. Jesus' first tour in the Galilee area had made Him known as a teacher, healer, and even a prophet. He had taught and healed multitudes and gathered disciples. He began the second of three circuits through the area.

- 2. The twelve with Him - 8:1

He had begun to train the twelve as apostles and they accompanied Him wherever He went.

- 3. Certain women who had been healed - 8:2-3

A group of women who had been healed and helped by Jesus *provided for Him from their substance*. "After He left the carpenter's shop to give all His time and attention to His public ministry, He was poor and had no possessions, for He had left all for Mary and her children. Furthermore, He never used His divine power to perform miracles for Himself...He humbled Himself to...accept from a little group of women...the material means to sustain life" (*The Biblical Expositor, Luke*, J. Norval Geldenhuys).

a. Mary Magdalene

The best known of the group was Mary Magdalene, from whom Jesus cast seven demons. She is never identified as an immoral woman and we are told nothing more about the demons.

b. Joanna

Joanna was the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, the manager of some or all of Herod's household and business.

c. Susanna and others

Susanna is one of those whom Jesus healed. Like others, she showed her gratitude by following Him and contributing to His support.

- 4. Multitude gathered by the sea - 8:4

As always, wherever Jesus went, a large crowd gathered. Matthew and Mark record that He stepped into a boat. The crowd stood on the shore waiting for Him to teach. On a nearby hillside a sower may have been scattering his seed.

B. The Parable - Luke 8:5-8; Matthew 13:3-23; Mark 4:3-25

Jesus began to teach the people by means of a parable about a sower who went out to sow his seed.

- 1. By the wayside - 8:5

As the sower threw the seed in handfuls from his sack, it fell in many places. One place was by the side of the path where it was trampled upon and eaten by birds.

2. "On rock" - 8:6

Some fell on rock where it sprouted, but then withered away because it lacked moisture.

3. "Among thorns" - 8:7

Some fell among thorns, or brambles. It sprouted, but the thorns sprang up with it and choked it.

4. "Good ground" - 8:8

"But others fell on good ground, sprang up, and yielded a crop." Luke simply says a hundredfold but Matthew divides the crop into *"a hundredfold, sixty, and thirty"* (Matthew 13:8). Some good ground was more fruitful than others, but all good ground was somewhat fruitful.

C. Hearing the Parable - Luke 8:8-15

1. Disciples' question - 8:8

"He who has ears to hear, let him hear!" When Jesus closed the parable with this exhortation, His disciples suspected they were missing something, so they asked the meaning of the parable. Matthew says their question was, *"Why do you speak to them in parables?"* (Matthew 13:10).

2. Jesus' answer - 8:9-10

According to Jesus, the purpose of teaching in parables was to divide the audience. Understanding would be given to the disciples, but withheld from the curious crowd. *"To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God."* Matthew further adds, *"For whoever has, to him more will be given, and he will have abundance; but whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him"* (Matthew 13:11-12). Like the seed which fell on the path, where it did not take root, understanding of the truth would be lost. Truth must not be taken lightly if it is to take root.

Luke, Matthew, and Mark all record Jesus' quote from Isaiah, that *"seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand"* (Isaiah 6:9). Jesus said this prophecy was fulfilled in the crowds to whom he had been speaking. It is about people who are unresponsive to the truth.

D. Explanation of the Parable - Luke 8:11-15

In contrast to the unbelieving crowds, Jesus called his disciples blessed because their eyes would see and their ears would hear. To them was given the understanding of what the prophets and righteous men of old had written and longed to see. See 1 Peter 1:10-12.

Since understanding would be given to the disciples, Jesus proceeded to explain the parable.

1. The seed - 8:11

"The seed is the word of God." Seed carries life-giving, reproducing properties. The word of God is living and powerful (Hebrews 4:12). We are *born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever* (1 Peter 1:23).

2. The wayside - 8:12

"Those by the wayside are the ones who hear; then the devil comes and takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved." The devil hates God's Word.

3. The rock - 8:13

"The ones on the rock are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root." They believe for awhile, but when temptation comes, they fall away.

4. Thorns - 8:14

"The ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life." It seems like they do begin to produce fruit, but they *"bring no fruit to maturity."*

5. Good ground - 8:15

These are the ones who hear the word with a noble and good heart. They obey it and *bear fruit with patience.*

Which soil represents your heart? You have heard God's Word. Is it being rooted into your life by belief, study, memorization, and obedience to it? Or are you glad to hear it but then become distracted by many things, putting off time for Bible study? What you do with what you hear makes all the difference. You only understand as much of God's Word as you obey and use. Will you take responsibility for what you know and for what you are learning?

E. "Take Heed How You Hear" - Luke 8:16-18

Jesus repeats a former warning using another parable. People light a lamp in order to see the light. They do not cover it up or hide it under the bed. The point is that Jesus taught in parables, not to hide the truth, but to enlighten those who would truly hear. Light is to be displayed, and not hidden, so others can benefit from it.

Eventually everything will be revealed and known,

including each individual's ignorance, rejection, or failure to obey God. "Therefore take heed how you hear." Whoever hears and obeys will be given more, while whoever hears and does not respond will lose what understanding he or she had of God's Word.

F. How to be His Family - Luke 8:19-21

Jesus' mother and brothers tried to break through the crowd to see Him and could not. Jesus used this opportunity to explain, "My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it." Are you in Jesus' family? You can be as close or closer to Him than His earthly relatives. Will you choose to draw near to Him by hearing and obeying what He says to you today?

II. Power over Nature and Disaster - Luke 8:22-25

A. Launching Out Across the Lake - Luke 8:22-23

On a certain day, Jesus and His disciples got into a boat to cross the Sea of Galilee. The crowds were behind them, the sun was warm, the breeze was pleasant, the disciples were happily rowing and bantering. The weary Savior fell asleep. As a human being, Jesus felt the full range of human emotions and needs. He became hungry and tired just like everyone else.

B. A Threatening Condition - Luke 8:23-24

Suddenly, a windstorm came down on the lake, and the little boat was filling with water. "The Sea of Galilee (a lake actually) is 600 feet below the level of the Mediterranean Sea, and heavy winds can swirl down with cyclonic force. The result was a storm with the force of an earthquake, and fishermen who had spent their lives on that sea were afraid. I believe that in this storm there was something devilish. Just as the devil had raised the storms that destroyed Job's property and children, I believe Satan tried again and again to destroy Christ before He could go to the cross. The simple fact that Christ "rebuked" the winds and waves shows that there were supernatural forces at work" (Mark, the Servant Gospel, Donald Grey Barnhouse).

1. Frightened disciples - 8:24

The panicked disciples thought this was the end. "Master, master, we are perishing." Matthew adds, "Lord save us" (8:25), and Mark, "Do you not care?" (4:38). Awakened, Jesus spoke to the sea, "Peace be still" (Mark 4:39). Luke says the water ceased raging and there was a calm. Matthew and Mark say a "great calm." When Jesus speaks, nature responds.

2. The rebuke of the Savior - 8:25

Jesus not only rebuked the raging waves and wind, He also rebuked the disciples. "Where is your faith?" They were again afraid and awestruck. They marveled, "Who can this be? For He commands the winds and water, and they obey Him?" Jesus may have often thought it was easier to persuade the sea to obey Him than people.

Do you have a sudden storm in your life? Is there a disaster of finances, health, family, a job loss, a misunderstanding? Does God seem to be asleep? Do you feel like you are going under? Call upon Him now. Accept His rebuke of your faith and marvel at His power. Listen to His "Peace be still" (Mark 4:39). *Cast your burden on the Lord and He will sustain you* (Psalm 55:22). *Casting all your care upon Him for He cares for you* (1 Peter 5:7). You will hasten your escape from the windy storm and tempest (Psalm 55:8).

III. Power over Demons - Luke 8:26-39

A. The Setting - Luke 8:26

The boat arrived at the eastern shore of the lake, in the area of the Gadarenes. A supposed discrepancy between the gospels is cleared up by a footnote in A.T. Robertson's, A Harmony of the Gospels and by discovery of a ruin on the lakeshore, named Khersa (Gerasa). The correct text in Luke and Mark is "Gerasenes", and if this village was included in the district belonging to the city of Gadara, some miles south eastward, then the locality could be described as either in the country of the Gadarenes, or in the country of the Gerasenes.

B. The Demon-possessed Man - Luke 8:27

As they stepped onto land Jesus and His disciples were confronted by a demon-possessed man. (Matthew 8:28 mentions two men.) He was naked, lived in the tombs, and was extremely fierce and strong. Furthermore, he had been this way for a long time.

1. The command to leave the man - 8:28-31

When Jesus commanded the demon to come out of the man, he spoke to Jesus, calling Him "Son of the Most High God." The demon fought being expelled and begged, "Do not torment me." (Isn't that ironic?) Jesus asked the demon's name and he answered, "Legion," for there were many inhabiting the man. Knowing they would be cast out, they begged Jesus not to expel them to the pit or abyss (Revelation 20:3).

2. Into the swine - 8:32-33

The fate of the demons was not postponed long. Jesus granted their request to enter a large herd of swine

feeding on the mountain. Jesus gave permission and the swine stampeded over a cliff and into the lake where they drowned.

3. Response to the miracle - 8:34-39

a. The swine keepers - verse 34

The swine keepers ran and told the story throughout the area. The demon-possessed swine should have been a sign to them that they were out of God's will by keeping unclean animals (Deuteronomy 14:8) in Jewish territory. The judgment on the pigs may have forestalled judgment on the people. But they did not heed the warning.

b. The townspeople - verses 35-37

The story seemed incredible so the people came out to see for themselves. However, unlike the Samaritans in John 4 who begged Jesus to stay with them and bless them, the Gadarenes were afraid and begged Him to leave. The swine were their business and Jesus was bad for business. It is a point of interest that during Christian revivals many bars have no customers, alcohol consumption decreases, and so does crime.

c. The restored man - verses 38-39

The people found the former demoniac looking as they had not seen him in a long time. He was seated calmly beside Jesus, clothed, and in his right mind. His gratitude knew no bounds. He begged to go with Jesus and the disciples but Jesus gave Him a charge to, "Return to your own house, and tell what great things God has done for you." This he did.

Donald Grey Barnhouse has written, "No born again person can suffer demon possession" (Mark, the Servant Gospel). However, born again persons can and do suffer obsession, depression, and outside influence from demons.

If you are emotionally and spiritually troubled, do away with unclean things that Satan uses, such as certain music, books, television programs, movies, pornography, drugs, and bad habits. These go directly into your mind and affect the way you think. Surround yourself with pure and healthy influences which glorify God (Philippians 4:8). *Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you* (James 4:7-8).

IV. Power over Disease and Death - Luke 8:40-56

A. The Woman's Touch - Luke 8:40-46

When Jesus and the disciples returned, the crowd was

waiting. Jairus, one of the leaders of the synagogue, stepped forward and fell at Jesus' feet. His little daughter was dying and he begged Jesus to come to his house.

Following Him to the home of Jairus, the crowd pressed in on Jesus. A woman came from behind Him and managed to touch the border of His robe. This desperate woman had been hemorrhaging for twelve years (the age of the dying girl) and therefore considered unclean all that time. She had despaired of any cure but believed if she could only touch Jesus' clothing she would be healed. Immediately, Jesus stopped and asked, "Who touched Me?" No one confessed and Peter reminded Him that the crowd was thronging and pressing in on Him. Anyone could have touched Him. But Jesus knew it was a touch that drew power from Him.

B. The Woman's Confession - Luke 8:47-48

The embarrassed woman fell down before Jesus and confessed that she had touched Him. She told her reason, and testified that she was immediately healed. Jesus said, "Daughter, be of good cheer; your faith has made you well. Go in peace."

C. Jairus' Daughter - Luke 8:49-56

1. Too late? - 8:49-53

Just at that time a person from Jairus' home arrived to report that his daughter was dead. Jesus assured them of three things: 1) they need not be afraid, 2) they had only to believe, 3) she would be made well.

2. "Little girl, arise" - 8:54

Jesus arrived amidst a tumult of weeping, wailing, mourning neighbors (Mark 5:38). When He told them the girl was not dead but sleeping, they laughed at Him in scorn. However, He took Peter, James, John, and the girl's parents in to the room where she lay. At His command to her, she arose. He then mentioned she had missed lunch and might be hungry, since her parents were apparently too astonished to be practical.

3. No Report

Jesus instructed the parents to *tell no one what had happened*, the opposite of what He had told the demoniac. Why the difference? First, He was not known as well across the lake and people needed to hear. Secondly, He was too well known on this side and wanted to avoid stirring up the opposition. God leads in various ways depending upon circumstances.

Applications

1. Jesus told the man from whom he had expelled the demon to return home and "*Tell what great things God has done for you*" (8:39). Have you experienced the power of God in your life? When is the last time you told others what great things God has done for you? Who will you tell today?
2. Do you believe Jesus has power over disease and death? Will you pray for His power in the life of someone suffering from an incurable disease, and someone nearing death? [Editor's note: Pearl Hamilton, the

author of the study of Luke, was suffering from acute leukemia while writing. She died while working on these lessons.]

3. There are sins that seem as incurable as diseases, such as gossip, temper, addiction, a critical spirit, jealousy, and pride. Whom do you know that needs healing from these? Some people are dead to spiritual things, to prayer, studying God's Word, and obeying God. Who do you know that is dead to spiritual things and needs healing? When will you begin to earnestly pray for that person?

QUESTIONS

Questions are based on the New King James Version of the Bible.

DAY ONE: Read lesson notes and references.

1. In Luke 8, what was most impressive about God's power?

2. In what way has faith made you well?

3. Describe some way in which you have seen the power of God at work this week.

DAY TWO: Read Luke 9:1-10; Matthew 9:35-10:10; Mark 6:5-16.

4. From Matthew 9:36-37, list some reasons for sending out the twelve.

5. What were they commissioned to do? See Matthew 10:1; Mark 6:7; and Luke 9:2.

6. In Jesus' charge to the twelve:
 - a. What were they to take and not take (Mark 6:8-9)?

 - b. Where were they to go and not go (Matthew 10:5-7)?

 - c. Where were they to stay (Mark 6:10)?

7. a. Who heard about these activities?
 - b. What did he think?

 - c. Why was he puzzled?

8. a. When the apostles returned, what did they do?
 - b. What did Jesus do?

DAY THREE: Read Luke 9:11-17; Matthew 14:13-21; Mark 6:30-44; John 6:1-13.

9. a. Near the end of a day of teaching and healing what did the apostles want to do with the crowd?

b. What did Jesus say to do (Luke 9:13)?

c. How did the apostles respond? See John 6:7 and Matthew 14:17.

10. What miracle is recorded by all four gospels?

11. a. Give some interesting details from each gospel.

b. How many baskets of fragments were collected?

c. Do you see any significance in this number? If so, what?

d. What did Jesus want people to learn from the miracle (John 6:48-51)?

e. ♥ Heart Question) What do these words of Jesus mean to you?

DAY FOUR: Read Luke 9:18-20; Matthew 16:13-20; Mark 8:27-30.

(Note: The events of Matthew 15, Mark 7 and John 7 come between verses 17 and 18 of Luke 9.)

12. a. In Mark 7:24-30, where did Jesus go the only time He ministered outside Israel?

b. Find these places on a map, ancient or modern. Where are they?

c. Why do you think He went there?

d. What did He do there?

13. a. What did Jesus ask the disciples (Luke 9:18)?

- b. How did they answer?
- c. Today who do people say Jesus is?
- d. Where did this happen? (See Mark 8:27.)
14. a. What did Jesus really want to know (Luke 9:20)?
- b. What was Peter's answer?
- c. How did Jesus commend Peter for his answer in Matthew 16:17-19?
- d. How do you answer the question Jesus asked?
- DAY FIVE: Read Luke 9:21-27; Matthew 16:21-26; Mark 8:31-37.**
15. What did Jesus reveal for the first time?
16. Give the conditions for following Jesus.
17. What future event did Jesus also reveal? Give verse.
- DAY SIX: Read Luke 9:28-36; Matthew 17:1-8; Mark 9:2-8.**
18. a. What happened about a week later?
- b. What was Jesus doing when it happened (Luke 9:29)?
- c. What did Peter, James, and John see?
- d. What were they discussing?
19. What did Peter think would be a good idea?
20. What did they hear coming from the cloud?