



LUKE 8

Be Still

"Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever." – Psalm 136:1

Lord, you are good... everything you do comes from a pure heart and is for our good. Your love endures forever... no matter how we have failed, your heart toward us always overflows with love. As I open your word, help me to receive it and to trust it as a child who is wholly loved by her good and gracious Father.

Hear His Voice

Read along as you listen to Luke 8 in the ESV. Press the Listen icon at the top of this link:

<https://www.esv.org/Luke+8/>

Consider His Ways

READ LUKE 8:1-3

DAY 1

WOMEN SUPPORTING JESUS.

1. While Jesus is drawing large crowds everywhere he goes, the fact that his ministry is attracting women should not go unnoticed. Jesus consistently treats women in ways that break cultural expectations and religious stereotypes. Read Luke 8:1-3.
 - a. From verses 1-3, list all the people who traveled with Jesus as he moved from city to city and village to village. Write out what you learn, or may know, about them. Note the use of the words "some" and "many."
 - b. How do the backgrounds of the three named women compare to the backgrounds of some of the twelve disciples before they met Jesus?
 - c. Some of the same women who traveled and served with Jesus during the height of his popularity stayed with him to the bitter end. At what events were these women found, according to the following passages?

MATT 27:50, 55-56 And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit...There were also many women there, looking on from a distance, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to him, among whom were Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Joseph and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.

JOHN 19:25 but standing by the cross of Jesus were his mother and his mother's sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene.

MARK 15:46-47 And Joseph bought a linen shroud, and taking him down, wrapped him in the linen shroud and laid him in a tomb that had been cut out of the rock. And he rolled a stone against the entrance of the tomb. Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joseph saw where he was laid.



MARK 16:9 Now when he rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven demons.

LUKE 24:9–11 and returning from the tomb they told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. Now it was Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James and the other women with them who told these things to the apostles, but these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them.

2. **REFLECT & RESPOND** Having experienced the mercy, compassion, and salvation of Jesus firsthand, many women remained at his side from beginning to end.
 - a. Where are you struggling to remain faithful in your service, zeal, or devotion to Jesus?
 - b. Write down three words or phrases that describe the way Jesus has impacted your life. How does remembering who Jesus is to you encourage you to persevere in faithfulness to him?
3. Healed, freed, and forgiven women were some of the most loyal followers of Jesus. They traveled with him day in and day out—listening, learning, supporting, serving, and being disciplined in the Word of God.
 - a. Luke is the only writer to note the women who traveled with Jesus. These women were part of the daily ministry of the gospel and became eyewitnesses to the life of Jesus Christ. What encourages you about this?
 - b. Jesus and the disciples readily accepted the women who loved them and served with them side by side, without sexualizing these women or questioning their motives. What does this tell you about the way men and women should serve together in the church?
4. One of the unique aspects of Luke’s Gospel is the special attention he gives to women. As Luke recounts the various events and teachings in Jesus’s life, he uses certain literary devices, such as male-female pairs and parallelisms, to highlight the role of women in the ministry of Jesus.¹
 - a. Review the chart, *Male-Female Literary Structures*, in the Appendix on p. A–11. What is your first impression about the scope of Luke’s use of male-female pairs and parallelism?
 - b. What do you think Luke intended for us to learn about women through his use of male-female pairs and parallelism?
 - c. **REFLECT & RESPOND** How does the view of women in Luke’s Gospel compare to your experiences of the way women are viewed in the church? How does it compare to the way you view yourself as a female disciple of Christ?



PARABLE OF THE SOILS.

- 5. No one present at this point in Jesus’s ministry would have believed that the crowds flocking out to see him would soon be yelling, “Crucify him!” Aware that people followed him for different reasons, Jesus teaches them with his first major parable in the Gospel of Luke. Read Luke 8:4–8.
 - a. The scene Jesus describes in the parable would have been entirely familiar to his audience. Small family farms filled the land, and it was common to see farmers scattering grain seeds across a field that had already been prepared for planting. Around the edges of the field, there would have been walking paths which the farmer or passersby used to avoid damaging the seedlings or the growing crop. In the chart below, write what happened to the seed cast on each type of soil.

TYPE OF SOIL	WHAT INITIALLY HAPPENED TO THE SEEDLINGS?	WHAT HINDERED THE SEED’S GROWTH?	YIELD
HARDENED PATH			
ROCKY SOIL			
THORNY SOIL			
GOOD SOIL			

- b. Without explaining the parable, Jesus calls out to the crowd, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.” What does this phrase mean? Why would he say this to the crowd before he explains what the parable actually means?

WHY JESUS TEACHES IN PARABLES.

- 6. There is something oddly comforting about the fact that Jesus’s own disciples did not really grasp what Jesus was saying! Read Luke 8:9–10.
 - a. Who is the “you” and who are the “others”?
 - b. What has been given to “you” and not to the “others” (v. 10)?
 - c. What does it tell us that the disciples desire to know what the parable means and ask Jesus to teach them, but the crowd does not?



7. Talking to his disciples, Jesus explains that he teaches with parables so that one group would understand, and another group would not (v. 10).
- a. The phrase “so that ‘seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand’” is an allusion to Isaiah 6:9–10. The prophet Isaiah saw the Lord, high and lifted up, sitting on his throne in the Temple, and it is there God instructs Isaiah to rebuke the stubborn, rebellious leaders of Israel. Compare the passages below. What connection do you see between the condition of a person’s heart and their level of understanding? What do you learn from this?

Is 6:9–10 And he said, “Go, and say to this people: “‘Keep on hearing, but do not understand; keep on seeing, but do not perceive.’ Make the heart of this people dull, and their ears heavy, and blind their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and turn and be healed.”

ROM 1:21 For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened.

ZECH 7:12A They made their hearts diamond-hard lest they should hear the law and the words that the Lord of hosts had sent by his Spirit through the former prophets...

MATT 5:8 Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God.

- b. The “secrets of the kingdom” are spiritual concepts that are not revealed in the Old Testament but are now revealed in the New Testament. Summarize, in one sentence, why some of Jesus’s listeners will not understand the “secrets of the kingdom” that Jesus is teaching.

- c. **REFLECT & RESPOND** The precious truths of Jesus fall on deaf ears to those whose hearts are hardened toward him. Think about someone you know whose heart is hard to the things of the Lord. Stop and pray for this person now, using the passages below as you bring them before the Lord.

ACTS 16:14B ...The Lord opened her heart to pay attention to what was said by Paul.

EZEK 33:11 Say to them, As I live, declares the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live; turn back, turn back from your evil ways, for why will you die, O house of Israel?

EZEK 36:26–27 And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.

PS 119:67 Before I was afflicted I went astray, but now I keep your word.

JOHN 14:6 Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”



MANY HEAR THE SOUND OF GOD’S WORD,
BUT DO NOT FEEL THE POWER OF IT.

– MATTHEW HENRY



THE MEANING OF THE PARABLE.

8. The gift of divine understanding is given to true followers of Jesus whose hearts long for him, not to curiosity seekers, pretenders, and hypocrites.² To his disciples, Jesus now explains the meaning of the Parable of the Soils. Read Luke 8:11–15.

- a. What does the seed represent?
- b. Fill in the chart below using the explanation Jesus gives.

TYPE OF SOIL	WHO DOES THIS SOIL REPRESENT?	WHAT HINDERS THE GROWTH OF THE SEED?	SPIRITUAL RESULTS
HARDENED PATH			
ROCKY SOIL			
THORNY SOIL			
GOOD SOIL			

- c. On what does the success of the sower and the seed depend?
- d. As you think about what hinders the growth of the gospel in someone’s heart and life, describe in today’s terms the kind of life each person lives and what you think their eternal destiny might be.
 - Hard-as-Brick Types –
 - Shallow-and-Rocky-Soil Types –
 - Choked-with-Thorns Types –
 - Good-and-Willing-Heart Types –



9. **REFLECT & RESPOND** We all long to have a heart that is receptive to the gospel, allows the truths of God to sink down deep in our lives, and bears much fruit for the kingdom. And yet even for genuine believers, the same problems that plague the soils can interfere with our growth too. Read the descriptions of the soils below and then answer the questions that follow.
- a. **Hardness.** Sometimes we feel we cannot overcome our sins, so we stop fighting them altogether. Other times, we simply don't want to hear what the Lord has to say about a particular sin or problem in our lives. We might also sense our spirit becoming dull or indifferent to the Word.
Is there some place in your life where you sense yourself growing unconcerned or resistant to the Lord's ways and instruction?
- b. **Troubles.** It is easy to trust when life is good, but when trials and troubles mount with no end in sight, our confidence and joy in the Lord can be shaken. Sometimes, the suffering seems unfair or the Lord seems unmoved by our circumstances, and our faith grows battered and weakened.
How are the trials in your life impacting your faith? Do you sense your confidence or joy in the Lord being threatened by the difficulties you face?
- c. **Distractions.** There are so many things that occupy our attention and take our focus off the Lord and his word. We can easily become distracted by the busyness and demands of life—the unpaid bills, the unresolved conflicts, the unceasing activities of family life, but we can also be lead off course by the good things in life—vacations, traveling, projects in the home, or planning special events.
What things threaten to distract you from a thriving spiritual walk with the Lord?
- d. We all fail in so many ways! God, be merciful to me, a sinner! Take time to confess the ways in which you have neglected the Lord, and then stop and rejoice in his forgiveness. What one step do you feel the Lord prompting you to take?

Ps 51:4A Against you, you only, have I sinned and done what is evil in your sight...

Ps 103:10–14 He does not deal with us according to our sins, nor repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his steadfast love toward those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far does he remove our transgressions from us. As a father shows compassion to his children, so the Lord shows compassion to those who fear him. For he knows our frame; he remembers that we are dust.

EPH 5:15–17 Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be foolish, but understand what the will of the Lord is.



HIDE IT UNDER A BUSHEL, NO!

10. What goes on in the heart of those who hear the Word of God is of utmost importance. What you do with it is equally important. Read Luke 8:16-18.
- In verse 16, what contrasting uses of a lamp does Jesus use in his mini-parable?
 - Natural logic says if you have something of benefit you use it! As you read the passages below, how is the light of the good news of Jesus Christ to be used?

LUKE 1:79 to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.

LUKE 2:32 a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and for glory to your people Israel.

MATT 5:16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.

- REFLECT & RESPOND** Just as we put a lamp in an open area to light up a room, so we should display the gospel and our faith in an open manner to be seen by others. As you consider your relationships, work, activities, social media, and other places where you interact with unbelievers, what are you doing to let the light of your faith shine where others can see? What could you do differently to make your faith more open and public?

TAKE CARE HOW YOU HEAR.

11. Sadly, there are those who hear the gospel and reject it. There are even those who sit under the teaching of the Word every Sunday, but do not make good use of it. Read Luke 8:17-18.
- Make a list of things people think they can hide from others and from God.
 - From the following passages, what will remain hidden when they stand before the Lord?

ECCL 12:14 For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil.

ROM 2:16 on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus.

12. We all can tell when someone is really listening to us or not.
- How would you describe the kind of hearing Jesus is wanting of his disciples?

HEB 3:7-8 Therefore, as the Holy Spirit says, "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion, on the day of testing in the wilderness..."

LUKE 8:15 As for that in the good soil, they are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patience.

HEB 2:1 Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it.

LUKE 6:47-48 Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like: he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built.



- b. From verse 18, what are the consequences of failing to truly hear the truth of God?
- c. **REFLECT & RESPOND** Hearing the truth of God is useless if it is not put into practice. The Holy Spirit regularly impresses upon us ways that we need to receive and apply God's Word. As you think about what God has spoken to your heart recently, is there a sin you need to forsake, a promise you need to keep, an apology you need to make, forgiveness you need to grant, time you need to spend with someone, help you need to extend, or a step of faith you need to take? What will you do to show that you are a careful hearer?

13. The crowds around Jesus kept his mother and other family members from getting near him. Read Luke 8:19–21.

- a. What does Jesus say to clarify how anyone can gain access to him?
- b. Jesus was not being disrespectful toward his mother—he simply used the opportunity as a teachable moment. After reading the passages below, what kind of relationship do you have with Jesus if you have a faith that both hears and obeys?

1 JOHN 3:1A See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are.

GAL 3:26 for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.

EVEN THE WIND & THE WAVES.

14. Continuing his itinerant ministry in northern Israel, Jesus travels back towards the Sea of Galilee. The Sea sits nearly 700 feet below sea level and is surrounded by hills, especially on the eastern side where they reach 2,000 feet high. The cool air of the heights contrasts with the generally warm, moist air over the sea, enabling strong winds to funnel through the hills and race across the surface of the lake. Read Luke 8:22–25.

- a. Where are Jesus and his disciples going? What crisis arises on the way?
- b. Based on the passage, describe in your own words just how serious the situation was. Given that many of them were experienced Galilean fisherman, what does this tell you?
- c. What is Jesus doing during this crisis (v. 23)? List all the physical, emotional, and spiritual reasons you can think of that explain his behavior.



15. In a state of panic and afraid they are going to die, the disciples hurry to wake Jesus up!
- Who did Jesus speak to first, and what was the result? See the parallel account in Mark below.

MARK 4:39 And he [Jesus] awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!"

 - Jesus then turns to his disciples with a gentle rebuke. What did he say to them?
 - Why do you think Jesus was more troubled by the disciples' unbelief than he was by their fear of the storm?
16. The disciples had already seen Jesus heal the sick, cause the blind to see, and raise the dead. From our perspective as readers who know the end of the story, it is way too easy for us to privately laugh at how slow they are to wrap their heads and hearts around who Jesus is!
- Read Psalm 107:24–30 below.

Ps 107:24–30 they [Israel] saw the deeds of the Lord, his wondrous works in the deep. For he commanded and raised the stormy wind, which lifted up the waves of the sea. They mounted up to heaven; they went down to the depths; their courage melted away in their evil plight; they reeled and staggered like drunken men and were at their wits' end. Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble, and he delivered them from their distress. He made the storm be still, and the waves of the sea were hushed. Then they were glad that the waters were quiet, and he brought them to their desired haven.

 - What similarities do you see between the emotions of the people of Israel in their crisis and the emotions of the disciples in the storm?
 - How do Jesus's actions for his disciples parallel what God did for his covenant people Israel?
 - Who does the New Testament declare Jesus to be according to the following passage?

COL 1:16-17 For by him [Jesus] all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

17. **REFLECT & RESPOND** It is easy to trust Jesus when life is smooth sailing—the skies are clear, the sun is shining, and the destination is sure. But when a storm suddenly descends in our lives and all we can see are the raging wind and crashing waves, our faith is put to the test.
- What storm have you faced recently?
 - How did you respond in the midst of your storm? Would you characterize your response as fear or faith?



- c. While the disciples called Jesus “Master,” they seem to have forgotten that he is Lord. From the passages below, what aspects of the identity of Jesus do you need to remember to help anchor your faith in future storms?

MATT 28:18 And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.”

JOHN 17:12A While I [Jesus] was with them [his disciples], I kept them in your name, which you have given me. I have guarded them, and not one of them has been lost...

JOHN 10:27-28 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand.

JOHN 13:1 ...Jesus...having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

- d. Like the disciples, we often allow our fear of the storm to overcome our faith in the all-powerful Son of God. How are you encouraged by the fact that despite the disciples’ shaky faith, Jesus still chose to calm the storm?

READ LUKE 8:26-39

DAY 4

DEMONS & PIGS.

18. With the raging Sea of Galilee calmed by the mere word of her Creator, Jesus and his disciples sailed to the country of the Gerasenes, also known as the region of Decapolis. They likely landed just north of the town of Hippos, on the western shores of the Sea. Find Hippos and the region of Decapolis on the map in the Appendix, *Jesus’s Ministry in Galilee & Beyond*, on page A-8. Read Luke 8:26-33.

- a. From the Luke passage and Mark 5:5 below, describe the bizarre actions of the man who had demons.

MARK 5:5 Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains he was always crying out and cutting himself with stones.

- b. When Jesus asked, “What is your name?” the demon who spoke through the man said, “Legion.” A Roman legion was around 6,000 soldiers, so the level of spiritual oppression and domination on this man was catastrophic! Roaming the tombs, this man was naked, lonely, violent, disfigured by masses of bleeding cuts and infections, and he lived in a delirium of fear and pain.³ Considering his condition and the passages below, what do you learn about the goals of the devil and his demonic forces?

1 PET 5:8 Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.

JOHN 10:10A The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy...

2 COR 4:4 In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.

JOHN 8:44B ...He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies.

REV 12:9 And the great dragon was thrown down, that ancient serpent, who is called the devil and Satan, the deceiver of the whole world—he was thrown down to the earth, and his angels were thrown down with him.



- c. The demons had such utter control over this man, they even spoke to Jesus using the man’s own body. What were the first words of the demons to Jesus? Why do they fear Jesus? Read the passages below for help.

REV 20:10 and the devil who had deceived them was thrown into the lake of fire and sulfur where the beast and the false prophet were, and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

MATT 25:41 Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.’

- 19. Jesus commands the demons to leave the man. Fearing their final doom, the demons beg Jesus to let them enter a herd of pigs instead, which Jesus allows.

- a. What happens to the herd of pigs?
- b. Imagine watching as thousands of screaming pigs violently plunge into the depths of the Sea. What does this picture communicate to us about the nature of demonic forces and the nature of Christ’s authority?
- c. Jesus healed for many reasons—out of compassion, to reveal his Father’s glory, and to fulfill prophecy. From the passages below, for what other reason did Jesus heal?

1 JOHN 3:8B ... The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the works of the devil.

HEB 2:14 Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil,

- 20. A violent spiritual storm raged in this man’s heart and soul for years, maybe decades. What Jesus did for him was simply unbelievable! Read Luke 8:34–39.

- a. Describe the man “who had demons” now! What does this tell you about the extent of the miracle Jesus performed?
- b. Jesus reversed what Satan had done, totally and completely! This tortured soul had become a brand-new man! What are some of the ways we are made new in Christ?

PASSAGE	NEWNESS IN CHRIST
EZEK 36:26 And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.	
2 COR 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.	
2 TIM 1:7 (NKJV) For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind.	
PHIL 4:7 And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.	



Ps 40:3A He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God...

ROM 6:4 We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

NOTE: *The question below is for your personal reflection and will not be shared inside the small group. We encourage you to talk to a qualified mental health professional if you are struggling.*

21. **REFLECT & RESPOND** Having confronted a violent storm on the Sea of Galilee, Jesus now confronts a violent storm inside a demon-possessed man. While mental illness today is not the same as demon possession, we live in a fallen world where our mental health is subjected to disease and decay. Like this tormented man, many believers struggle with an inner turmoil of their own... chaotic emotions, intrusive thoughts, distorted reality, and urges to self-harm. Whether these are symptoms of an ongoing mental illness or an acute time of emotional distress, the resulting scars run deep across body and soul.

- a. Have you ever experienced a time where your emotions, thoughts, or behaviors felt overwhelming, chaotic, or even frightening to you? Describe your experience.
- b. While Christians may be afraid or even ashamed to talk about these deep mental and emotional struggles, Jesus is not. Just as he did with the suffering man, Jesus walks toward us, receives us, and stands ready to help. The One who reigns over heaven and earth, also rules over body and soul. From the story of the demon-possessed man and the passages below, what comfort in your affliction do you find in the person and work of Christ?

Ps 57:1-3A Be merciful to me, O God, be merciful to me, for in you my soul takes refuge; in the shadow of your wings I will take refuge, till the storms of destruction pass by. I cry out to God Most High, to God who fulfills his purpose for me. He will send from heaven and save me...

Is 46:4 even to your old age I am he, and to gray hairs I will carry you. I have made, and I will bear; I will carry and will save.

JOHN 6:37 All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never cast out.

ROM 8:38-39 For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

- c. Through the story of the demon-possessed man, Jesus gives us a taste of the total victory over evil he has already won. While we may not experience full healing in this life, we can be certain that our Savior knows us, keeps us, and will one day set us completely free and full of joy for all eternity.

JOHN 8:36 So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.

Is 25:9A It will be said on that day, "Behold, this is our God; we have waited for him, that he might save us."

REV 21:4-5A He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away. And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new."



22. No one could deny what Jesus had done to this man! They all saw it, but not all of them loved it.
- Compare the response of the people in the surrounding countryside with the man’s response to Jesus.
 - Why do you think the townspeople felt this way?
 - The freed man pleaded to go with Jesus. What did Jesus ask the man to do instead? How did the man respond?
 - Consider the “mission field” facing this demon-possessed man: all the people of the town and surrounding areas had seen Jesus, were afraid of Jesus, and had asked Jesus to leave. And yet these are the very people Jesus commands the man to seek out, declaring “how much God has done for you.” What might have motivated the man in spite of the resistance he would face?

1 PET 2:9 But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.

 - REFLECT & RESPOND** The man “who had demons” (v. 27) had become the man “from whom the demons had gone” (v. 38). His encounter with Jesus had changed his life! Ask the Lord to give you an opportunity this week to declare what he has done for you!

23. While some people see the devil around every corner, others dismiss this idea and remain ignorant of the destructive actions of evil around them.
- From the following verses, write down how Christians should view and respond to Satan and his activity.

PASSAGE	SPIRITUAL WARFARE
1 PET 5:8 Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour.	
JAMES 4:7 Submit yourselves therefore to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.	
1 JOHN 4:4 Little children, you are from God and have overcome them, for he who is in you is greater than he who is in the world.	
EPH 6:11–12 Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil. For we do not wrestle against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the cosmic powers over this present darkness, against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly places.	



- b. **REFLECT & RESPOND** Do you tend to emphasize or ignore the demonic activity around you? What one response to Satan from the table above will you apply to your life?

READ LUKE 8:40-56 DAY 5

BLEEDING FOR 12 YEARS.

- 24. Rejected and asked to leave by the Gentile people living in the 10-city region of Decapolis, Jesus returns to Galilee, likely to his home base of Capernaum, where a crowd is waiting for him. Read Luke 8:40-48.
 - a. Upon his arrival, Jesus encounters two particular individuals. Describe these people in the chart below, using the information in verses 40-44.

	NAME & PROMINENCE	THE DESPERATE SITUATION	HOW EACH APPROACHES JESUS
MAN			
WOMAN			

- b. What kind of social, relational, marital, and spiritual rejection would the bleeding woman have been experiencing for the past 12 years? Consider the passage below.

LEV 15:25-27 "If a woman has a discharge of blood for many days, not at the time of her menstrual impurity, or if she has a discharge beyond the time of her impurity, all the days of the discharge she shall continue in uncleanness. As in the days of her impurity, she shall be unclean. Every bed on which she lies, all the days of her discharge, shall be to her as the bed of her impurity. And everything on which she sits shall be unclean, as in the uncleanness of her menstrual impurity. And whoever touches these things shall be unclean, and shall wash his clothes and bathe himself in water and be unclean until the evening."

- c. Daring to touch just the fringes of Jesus's garment, what happened to this woman immediately afterward? What does this tell you about the power of Jesus?

- 25. Jesus immediately senses a touch that was very different from the normal jostling and maneuvering of the enthusiastic crowds. Read Luke 8:45-48.

- a. What question did Jesus ask the crowd? How did they respond?
- b. While Peter remarked that many people were crowding in, Jesus was not going to let this woman remain invisible. What did Jesus say to describe how he sensed her touch?



- c. What did the woman do when she realized Jesus would not allow her to remain hidden?
- d. Why do you think Jesus basically forced the person who touched him to step forward and admit it?
- e. With what tender words did Jesus address this woman? What do you learn from this?

26. **REFLECT & RESPOND** Bleeding for 12 years, this woman had exhausted all her resources and all her hope. No matter where she went or what she did, she could not escape her condition... she was untouchable, undesirable, unlovable, and unwanted. Sometimes we feel that way too. We struggle with shame and rejection due to debilitating conditions, bodies that are less than perfect, deep sins that continue to haunt us, words and actions of others that damage our soul, failures in public for all to see, or our own limitations that seem to prove we can never measure up.
- a. In what way can you relate to the social or emotional experiences of the bleeding woman? Include the ways your situation impacted your relationships with others and your view of yourself.
 - b. Seeing her faith despite her shame, Jesus turns toward this unwanted woman and calls her “daughter.” What does it mean for your situation that you also, having placed your faith in Jesus, are a daughter of the King?

Is 43:1B Fear not, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine.

1 JOHN 3:1A See what kind of love the Father has given to us, that we should be called children of God; and so we are.

ROM 9:25B ...“Those who were not my people I will call ‘my people,’ and her who was not beloved I will call ‘beloved.’”

ROM 8:16–17A The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ...

THE SYNAGOGUE LEADER & HIS DAUGHTER.

27. It is hard to imagine how Jairus must have felt. While his daughter is dying, Jesus has stopped to work out who in the crowd has touched him! Read Luke 8:49–56.
- a. What news was Jairus given as Jesus was still speaking to the bleeding woman?
 - b. What were Jesus’s words to Jairus at this news? What two options did Jesus’s words give to Jairus?
 - c. What connection do you see between Jesus’s words to Jairus and the last words Jesus spoke to the bleeding woman (v. 48)?



- d. **REFLECT & RESPOND** Jairus's situation seemed hopeless—his daughter had gone from dying to dead—and yet Jesus asks him to believe rather than give in to fear. In what situation is Jesus asking you to choose faith over fear? What would it look like to believe that the power, compassion, and love of Jesus was enough for your situation?

28. Faith is not a blind, ignorant leap into the dark. Ours is a reasonable faith! God values our thinking and intellect, challenging us to test all things and hold fast to that which is good.

- a. On what evidence did Jesus expect Jairus's faith to rest?
- b. While we may never see someone rise from the dead or be instantly and completely healed, our faith is not the result of baseless, wishful thinking. It is a life of certainty that is grounded in evidence. In fact, the evidence surrounding the claims of Christianity are simply overwhelming. Read the following summary of the major points of evidence for the Christian faith (see also Appendix, p. A-12 & A-13).

EVIDENCE FOR THE CHRISTIAN FAITH

BIBLE: Our faith is built on the textual and manuscript evidence for the reliability of the Bible, proving it to be the Word of God. With more than 10,000 Old Testament manuscripts and over 25,000 early manuscripts of the New Testament, the textual evidence for the Bible is greater than any other ancient document.⁴ Even more convincing, Scripture contains thousands of fulfilled prophecies given over the span of more than 2,000 years, including 500 specific prophecies about the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Christ and nearly 2,000 prophecies concerning almost every nation surrounding Israel.⁵ The corroborating textual, prophetic, historical, and archeological evidence for Scripture is a testimony to the divine nature of the written Word.

CREATION: Our faith is built on the biblical and scientific evidence for creation—of both the universe and mankind—and the existence of an all-powerful Designer of this creation. The universe we live in is “fine-tuned” to make physical life possible: there are at least 38 different characteristics of the universe and 150 characteristics of our solar system that must fall within specific values for life as we know it to exist.⁶ In fact, the odds that any planet could meet these parameters and support intelligent physical life are less than one in 10^{173} —a number so large, it might as well be infinity!⁷ The human body is composed of 37 trillion cells, including 100 billion neurons that transmit information throughout the body, and it processes more than 10^{24} pieces of information every day.⁸ The existence of the universe, its irreducible complexity, and its intricate beauty are not by accident, and neither are we.

RESURRECTION OF JESUS: Our faith is built on the historical evidence and eyewitness accounts of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Jesus lived in the public eye, and his teachings and miracles were witnessed by people from diverse social, ethnic, demographic, and spiritual backgrounds. The Gospels record at least three dozen miracles that Jesus performed while he walked on earth, all of which were done publicly.⁹ His very real physical death followed the brutality of a Roman flogging, the excruciating torment and asphyxiation of crucifixion, and finally a spear being driven through his side. And yet the certainty of his resurrection was established by an empty tomb! Even the enemies of Jesus acknowledged this fact, accusing the disciples of stealing his body (Matt 28:11–15). Subsequently, the risen Christ appeared to more than 500 individuals over a period of 40 days, even eating meals with them, confirming his physical resurrection. The apostle Paul knew that if Christ did not rise from the dead, then the Christian faith is false and those who believe it are to be most pitied (1 Cor 15:14–19). But the overwhelming weight of historical and eyewitness testimony proves that Christ has risen indeed!¹⁰

CHANGED LIVES: Our faith is built on the evidence of changed lives as a result of faith in Jesus Christ. At the crucifixion, the disciples fled in fear and Peter denied three times that he was a follower of Jesus. Yet, after his resurrection, these same men dedicated their lives to sharing the truth about Jesus, even to the point of being martyred for their faith!¹¹ Throughout history, God has changed the lives of paupers and kings, slaves and slave owners, atheists and religious zealots... even lives like yours and mine! The gospel of Jesus Christ forgives sinners and makes impossibly-broken lives whole.



- c. **REFLECT & RESPOND** From the summary above, what did you learn that gives you greater certainty about your faith?

29. By all outward appearances, Jesus arrived too late to save the girl. But even in the face of his daughter's death, Jairus was asked by Jesus to believe. Re-read Luke 8:51–56.

- a. How does the text demonstrate the girl was most certainly dead?
- b. The girl was definitely dead. From whose perspective do you think Jesus is speaking when he says, "She is not dead but sleeping"? How could he say this?

JOHN 11:25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live"

- c. Read the following passages. Why do you think Christians who have died are referred to as having "fallen asleep"? What does this tell you about the power of God relative to the power of death?

1 COR 15:20 But in fact Christ has been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.

1 THESS 4:13–14 But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep.

- d. **REFLECT & RESPOND** One thing is certain... even death responds to the command of Jesus! It is no harder for God to raise someone from the dead than it is for us to wake up from a nap! What personal significance does this truth have for you?

THAT YOU MAY HAVE CERTAINTY

30. After studying this portion of the book of Luke, what have you learned about Jesus that gives you a fresh confidence in him? How will you let this truth shape your heart and actions?



Internalize

Heavenly Father, thank you that despite our sin, despite our tendency to be distracted by the worries and cares of this life, and despite our fear when we should have faith, you never abandon us. In the midst of our storms, we can rest in the sovereign care of the One who rules every wind and wave. When our thoughts and emotions are in turmoil, you are the God who restores a right mind. When we feel ashamed and rejected by the world, you seek us out and remind us that we belong to you. And when life gets desperate and all hope seems gone, you call us to trust you and your perfect timing. Father, even in the valley of the shadow of death, we can be confident that you are with us, that you will sustain us, and that because of your Son, we will one day wake from death to life, as daughters of the King for all eternity.

“Whoever has the Son has life...”
— 1 John 5:12A

¹ Marg Mowczko. “Gendered Pairs and Parallelism in Luke’s Gospel.” *Marg Mowczko*, www.margmowczko.com/gendered-pairs-and-parallelism-in-lukes-gospel.

² Charles R. Swindoll, *Swindoll’s Living Insights Luke* (Carol Stream, IL: Tyndale House, 2017), 215.

³ R. Kent Hughes, *Luke: That You May Know the Truth*, Preaching the Word Commentary (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2015), 313.

⁴ “The Manuscripts.” *Institute for Creation Research*, www.icr.org/bible-manuscripts.

⁵ Hank Hanegraaff. “Fulfilled Prophecy as an Apologetic.” *Christian Research Institute*, www.equip.org/article/fulfilled-prophecy-as-an-apologetic.

⁶ Hugh Ross. “Anthropic Principle: A Precise Plan for Humanity.” *Reasons to Believe*, www.reasons.org/explore/publications/facts-for-faith/read/facts-for-faith/2001/12/31/anthropic-principle-a-precise-plan-for-humanity.

⁷ Ross. “Anthropic Principle.”

⁸ Joseph Paturi. “The Human Body—God’s Masterpiece.” *Creation Ministries International*, www.creation.com/the-human-body-gods-masterpiece.

⁹ Don Stewart. “Why Should Anyone Believe in the Miracles of Jesus?” *Blue Letter Bible*, www.blueletterbible.org/faq/don_stewart/don_stewart_783.cfm.

¹⁰ Matt Perman. “Historical Evidence for the Resurrection.” *DesiringGod*, www.desiringgod.org/articles/historical-evidence-for-the-resurrection.

¹¹ J. Warner Wallace. “The Commitment of the Apostles Confirms the Truth of the Resurrection.” *Cold-Case Christianity*, www.coldcasechristianity.com/2015/the-commitment-of-the-apostles-confirms-the-truth-of-the-resurrection.