

LUKE

Chapter 8

Women Accompanying Jesus

Soon afterward he went on through cities and villages, proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God. And the twelve were with him, 2 and also some women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, 3 and Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's household manager, and Susanna, and many others, who provided for them out of their means.

8:1 *went through.* Jesus' ministry had been centered in Capernaum, and much of his preaching was in synagogues, but now he traveled again from town to town on a second tour of the Galilean countryside. For the first tour see 4:43–44; Mt 4:23–25; Mk 1:38–39. (CSB)

Jesus' Galilean ministry was ever on the move. (TLSB)

Saying that Jesus was “making *his way* through” towns and villages suggests that Jesus is not now journeying toward one specific goal or destination. In contrast, shortly he will dramatically “set his face in order to journey to Jerusalem” (9:51). But for now his intent is to visit many locations throughout Galilee. Jesus' constant movement from place to place during this part of his Galilean ministry indicates that Jesus is saturating the area with his teaching and miracles in fulfillment of 4:18–19. (CC p. 333)

kingdom of God. τὴν βασιλείαν τοῦ θεοῦ—See comments at 4:43. The meaning of “the kingdom of God” must always be determined by the context. This preaching of the kingdom must be seen in terms of Luke 7, where forgiveness and peace, the content of salvation, are clearly illustrated by Jesus in his teaching about the relationship between John the Baptist and himself. The hearer would see that the Twelve and the women are like the sinners and tax collectors who acknowledge that God is righteous by being baptized with the baptism of John (7:29–30). (CC p. 331)

His chief work is again brought into the foreground, proclaiming and gospeling the kingdom of God, preaching the good news of the salvation of mankind. This fact cannot be emphasized often enough, especially in these days of the perversion of the doctrine of redemption. (Kretzmann)

twelve were with him – The twelve apostles were with the Lord on this tour; they were the theological students, receiving both theoretical and practical training in the school of Jesus. (Kretzmann)

This is the first time since they were first chosen in 6:13–16 that “the Twelve” are mentioned. Immediately after their selection, they heard the Sermon on the Plain (6:20–49). It is also most likely that they, along with the “crowd,” witnessed the healing of the centurion's slave (7:1–10), as well as the raising of the young man at Nain (7:11–17). It is also reasonable to assume that the Twelve and other disciples were present when Jesus responded to John's disciples and spoke to the crowds about John (7:18–35). And while the Twelve may not have been present at the meal in the house of Simon the Pharisee (7:36–50), they could well have heard reports of what had transpired there. Thus they have already been able to learn much about Jesus and what kind of kingdom he brings. He is the promised OT Messiah; the power of his kingdom extends also to Gentiles. In his kingdom, the dead are raised and sinners receive forgiveness and peace. The

ministries of John and Jesus bring the means through which one enters that kingdom: preaching, baptism, and Jesus' table fellowship with sinners. (CC p. 333)

The Twelve are now "with Jesus" (σὺν αὐτῷ) to hear his teaching about the kingdom. The opening of Luke 8 prepares the hearer for 9:1–6, where Jesus commissions the Twelve (and the seventy[-two] in 10:1–12) to go and do what he does: to "preach" the kingdom, to "proclaim the Good News," and to "heal" (9:2, 6), but not to "teach"; they will "teach" only in Acts after they receive the Spirit (see comments on 9:2). This chapter is their final catechesis before they go and do what the Master does. (CC p. 334)

8:2 some women – The mention and listing of the women in Jesus' company is unique to Luke. Jesus included women in his ministry and honored them by making them witnesses of his death and resurrection. (CC p. 334)

The mention and listing of the women in Jesus' company is unique to Luke. Jesus included women in his ministry and honored them by making them witnesses of his death and resurrection. In fact, Luke reports here the news that some women put their possessions at the disposal of Jesus and the Twelve ("were serving them" [8:3]). Thus they helped make it possible, both financially and logistically, for Jesus to travel about with his disciples, teaching and performing miracles. Those named here in Luke 8 appear again prominently as witnesses of Jesus' death and resurrection. According to the principle of the Great Reversal to serve is to be great in God's kingdom. Jesus himself will describe his own ministry as one of serving, using the same verbs as used for the women here (διακονέω; 22:24–27). God made Eve for Adam as "a helper suitable for him" (Gen 2:18, 20). That such "help" is not demeaning is shown by God himself furnishing "help" to people (God's help is described using the same root, עָזַר, in e.g., Gen 49:25; Ex 18:4; Deut 33:26, 29; 1 Sam 7:12; Ps 121:1–2). Now women are facilitating the ministry of the second Adam (Rom 5:12–21), and by becoming the "least," they are among the "greatest" (Lk 22:24–27). Of the eight occurrences of διακονέω, "serve," in Luke, the first three are of women who serve Jesus: Peter's mother-in-law (4:39), these women (8:3), and Martha (10:40), who also is the only one in the gospel to provide "service" (διακονία; 10:40). (CC pp. 334–335)

The women's service is of great import, particularly in the context of the attitude prevailing in Judaism of Jesus' day regarding the inclusion—or exclusion—of women in religious matters. For example, the Herodian temple in Jerusalem in the NT era had a separate "court of women" outside the "court of Israel," which was accessible only to Jewish men. "Non-conformist that he was, Jesus refused to permit tradition to make second-class citizens of women, whom he considered his sisters." In the kingdom he brings, the Spirit is poured out on his male servants and his female servants alike (Acts 2:18) and whoever does the will of God, which is to believe in him, is his brother and sister and mother (Mk 3:35). (CC p. 335)

Women followed Jesus, support the ministry of Jesus and the apostles. This is striking, because females did not normally follow Jewish rabbis. (TLNB)

Mary (called Magdalene). Her hometown was Magdala. She is not to be confused with the sinful woman of ch. 7 or Mary of Bethany (Jn 11:1). (CSB)

Μαρία ἡ καλουμένη Μαγδαληνή, ἀφ' ἧς δαιμόνια ἐπτὰ ἐξεληλύθει—In Lukan lists of people, the most important are usually placed first, and this would be the case with Mary Magdalene. We know little about her or her place of origin, except the hopelessness of her situation before the demons were cast out, presumably by Jesus. She is probably not the sinful woman in the previous pericope, but it is significant that a sinful woman and a demon-possessed woman are juxtaposed

here in the narrative, reminding the hearer of the various categories of release that Jesus brings. See 4:18–19 in the context of Luke 4–5: demons, sickness, sin, and death. Mary Magdalene will appear again in 24:10. (CC p. 331)

Mary was present at the crucifixion, witnessed Jesus’ burial, helped anoint His body (24:1). (TLSB)

8:3 *Joanna* – Ἰωάννα γυνὴ Χουζᾶ ἐπιτρόπου Ἡρώδου καὶ Σουσάννα καὶ ἕτεραι πολλαί—Joanna appears here and in 24:10, but little else is known of her. She may be included here because she is the wife of someone in Herod’s service, indicating that Jesus’ message is reaching into high places in terms of the secular realm. J. Nolland, *Luke 1–9:20*, 366, notes that “Luke is quick to mention the fact that Christian influence has penetrated to high places (cf. Acts [8]:26–39; 13:1, 7, 12; 18:8; 19:31; etc.).” ἐπίτροπος could be an economic or a political office: “manager, foreman, steward,” “governor, procurator.” An attractive conjecture is to identify the royal officer (βασιλικός; Jn 4:46) whose son was healed with this Chuza. (CC 331)

Accompanied Mary to anoint Jesus’ body. As the wife to the household manager of Herod Antipas, she would have belonged to a higher social class. (TLSB)

Susanna. Nothing more is known of her. (CSB)

provided for them them. Jesus and his disciples did not provide for themselves by miracles, but were supported by the service and means of such grateful people as these women. (CSB)

Female disciples make important contributions to Jesus’ ministry and God’s unfolding plan of salvation for all people. (TLSB)

διηκόνουν αὐτοῖς ἐκ τῶν ὑπαρχόντων αὐταῖς—The imperfect tense and the juxtaposition of serving and possessions clearly indicates that the women supported and financed Jesus and the Twelve (αὐτοῖς) out of the women’s (αὐταῖς) own possessions over a long time. The proper use of possessions, including money, is a Lukan theme. ὑπάρχω is used for possessions at 7:25; 11:21; 12:15, 33, 44; 14:33; 16:1; 19:8; Acts 3:6; 4:32. “Serve” does not mean only “wait on table,” but “help” or “assist” in more general ways. (CC p. 332)

8:1–3 Jesus breaks with rabbinic tradition and allows women to become disciples. The Church likewise calls all its members to various forms of service. The Lord has appropriate forms of service for every member of His Kingdom, regardless of gender, ethnicity, or social standing. He serves one and all by taking away their sins and giving them His Holy Spirit. • Give Your Church wisdom, O Lord, that she may be a faithful steward of all people baptized in Your name. Give me zeal for my own vocation and service, as well as the grace to encourage others. Amen. (TLSB)

The Parable of the Sower

4 And when a great crowd was gathering and people from town after town came to him, he said in a parable, **5** “A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell along the path and was trampled underfoot, and the birds of the air devoured it. **6** And some fell on the rock, and as it grew up, it withered away, because it had no moisture. **7** And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up with it and choked it. **8** And some fell into good soil and grew and yielded a hundredfold.” As he said these things, he called out, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

8:4-18 The section 8:4–18 is Jesus’ programmatic introduction to his teaching in parables, which will constitute a large proportion of Luke’s gospel in chapters 8–20. The importance of this section for introducing the central portion of Luke is equal to the importance of Jesus’ sermon at Nazareth (4:16–30) in defining the two phases of Jesus’ prophetic ministry: first teaching and healing, then suffering and rejection. The parables relate to the two phases of prophet Christology because they too function to divide Israel as with a sword (2:35). For those who are given the mystery (8:10), the parables open their eyes and ears to a better understanding of God’s kingdom. These are the ones who benefit from Jesus’ teaching and healing. But for “the rest” (8:10), the parables close their eyes and ears so that they do not understand, and these are the people who end up rejecting and crucifying Jesus. (CC p. 339)

Lk 8:4–15 is a chiasmic unit consisting of a parable (8:4–8), Jesus’ theological explanation of the purpose of all his parables (8:9–10), and then the interpretation of the earlier parable (8:11–15). The parable and its interpretation are like a picture frame around the brief but vitally important explanation of God’s intent in parables. (CC p. 340)

While several parables occur earlier in Luke (4:23; 5:36; 6:39), the parable of the sower may be considered the prototype or model of all parables because it explains the mixed reception all of Jesus’ parables will receive. It also is a model of simplicity and clarity to those who believe, but incomprehensible to those who do not recognize that Jesus is bringing the kingdom of God. (CC p. 340)

Rejection of Jesus by the religious establishment is growing. But also the crowds keep growing. They hear the preaching and see the miracles, but the response is mixed. Lk 8:4–8 opens by establishing the mixed response (the message is mainly for disciples) and the miraculous yield (many believe the preaching). (CC p. 340)

There is a reason some hear the Word but do not become believers and are not saved. (It is the same reason why in 7:39, 49 some ate with Jesus but were not in fellowship with him, and why in 7:18–35, especially 7:22–23, many saw his signs but did not recognize that Jesus is the Messiah.) The reason is that they were not given to know the mysteries of the kingdom Jesus brings. Lk 8:9–10 explains this with the Isaiah 6 quote. (CC p. 340)

The devil, temptations, trials, and the cares, riches, and pleasures of this life are the chief barriers that keep the crowds who hear the Word from believing and becoming a miraculous yield. These are also dangers for Christian disciples, as shown in the ensuing chapters. Lk 8:11–15 explains clearly the blockages and names the barriers to faith. It also focuses again on the miraculous fruit. (CC p. 340)

For the sake of evangelizing the crowds, it is important for the disciples not to flag in zeal in preaching. They must keep on sowing (cf. 8:1). Lk 8:16 reinforces the need to keep preaching so as to provide light, that people may be enabled to see and enter the kingdom. In the eschaton, all that is mystery now will be evident to those in the kingdom (8:17). Disciples continue to need warning and exhortation to be kept in the faith as pilgrim hearers and catechumens, lest they lose what they have (8:18). (CC p. 340)

The whole section is a lesson for the disciples about the need to keep on preaching, both for the sake of evangelizing new converts and for maintaining believers already in the kingdom (cf. Phil 2:15–16). (CC p. 340)

8:4 *a great crowd was gathering* – συνιόντος ... ἐπιπορευομένων—The participles complement one another. As the preaching spreads and the crowds grow, Jesus undertakes to address the fact that his word is seen to produce varying responses. (CC p. 336)

Alongside the Twelve and the women, a considerable crowd has assembled and is journeying with Jesus. While the words of 8:9–10 and (most likely) 8:11–18 are between Jesus and his disciples, it is assumed that this parable of 8:4–8 is not only *about* the crowds but is also told *to* the crowds. This is corroborated by ἐφώνει, “he kept raising his voice and calling out ...” (8:8). This crowd is like the earlier crowds that sought to hear Jesus and be healed by him (5:1, 15; 6:17, 19). In Matthew and Mark, other parables stand next to this one, but the parable of the sower stands alone in Luke. It is followed by Jesus’ discourse on the meaning of parables. Thus this parable is programmatic for Jesus’ parables in Luke and for Luke’s gospel at this point in the narrative. (CC p. 341)

town after town – κατὰ πόλιν—This phrase recalls 8:1, where Luke says that Jesus “was making his way through from city to city ...” (CC pp. 336-337)

The fame of Christ was still spreading so rapidly that people from all the cities and towns from near and far came together to see and hear Him. They came out to Him as He was on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, and He used a boat as His pulpit, in order that He might reach them all, Matt, 13, 2; Mark 4, 1. He spoke to the people of the mysteries of the kingdom of God through parables, of which one is given by Luke. There went out a sower to sow his seed. (Kretzmann)

parable. From this point on Jesus used parables more extensively as a means of teaching. They were particularly effective and easy to remember because he used familiar scenes. Although parables clarified Jesus’ teaching, they also included hidden meanings needing further explanation. These hidden meanings challenged the sincerely interested to further inquiry, and taught truths that Jesus wanted to conceal from unbelievers (see v. 10). From parables Jesus’ enemies could find no direct statements to use against him. The parable of the sower is one of three parables recorded in each of the Synoptic Gospels (Mt 13:1–23; Mk 4:1–20). The others are those of the mustard seed (13:19; Mt 13:31–32; Mk 4:30–32) and of the vineyard (20:9–19; Mt 21:33–46; Mk 12:1–12). (CSB)

παραβολῆς—The term “parable” occurs eighteen times in Luke, but this passage is the most significant for understanding the purpose of the genre. The first occurrence is in 4:23, where it denotes a proverb. Every other Lukan instance denotes a parable in the usual sense: an illustrative simile or story. (Lk 5:36; 6:39; 8:4, 9, 10, 11; 12:16, 41; 13:6; 14:7; 15:3; 18:1, 9; 19:11; 20:9, 19; 21:29) In addition to these passages, Luke also contains stories that seem to be parables but are not labeled as such. For example, the stories of the Good Samaritan (10:30–37) and the prodigal son (15:11–32) are almost universally called parables, even though they lack the label. Many of these stories may have some historical elements. Some might even be true historical accounts that Jesus uses as illustrations; the historical reference to the tower of Siloam (13:4) occurs just before a parable (13:6). For example, 16:1–8 and 16:19–31 *might* describe actual incidents. Moreover, some clearly labeled parables may contain historical allusions. One “parable” (19:11) speaks of a nobleman who went to a distant country to be appointed king, and in fact, Herod the Great (in ca. 40 B.C.) and later (ca. 4 B.C.) three of his sons had journeyed to Rome for that very purpose. The historical events would have been fresh in the minds of Jesus’ hearers. As another historical example, the parable of the sower (8:4–8) describes commonplace events that likely took place every time a typical farmer sowed seed. *In conclusion, then, the relationship between parables and history may be complex, and one should not assume that parables are entirely fictitious or hypothetical. Also the illustrative stories of Jesus that are not*

labeled as parables may contain historical elements, and some may in fact be actual incidents. (CC p. 337)

Luke has the simplest version of the parable. It emphasizes the Word of God and the hearing of that Word. Inside the introduction (8:4) and conclusion (8:8b), the parable itself has to do with four different eventualities (8:5b–8a) that may follow the sowing of the seed (8:5a). (CC p. 341)

This parable does not tell us about the content of the message—what is conveyed in “the Good News of the kingdom” (8:11). Rather, it teaches something about the *process* and *results* of the *preaching* of the kingdom. (CC p. 341)

The hearers now include “a great crowd” and people from many cities (8:4). The Twelve and the company of Jesus’ intimate disciples, as well as a novice hearer of Luke’s gospel, might assume that the larger numbers are a sure indication of success and mass conversions. God’s kingdom now seems to be coming visibly and in power with all the throngs of people. Since the disciples were so terribly “slow in heart” (24:25) to understand that the Christ must first be rejected, perhaps some even surmised that Jesus’ earthly enthronement and the restoration of the nation of Israel were imminent (cf. Acts 1:6). (CC p. 341)

The increasingly “great crowd” raises a number of questions for Jesus’ disciples and the hearer of the gospel. Will the larger numbers of hearers (in the physical sense) necessarily translate into larger numbers of believers (hearers in the spiritual sense)? Does the visible growth of the crowds correspond to actual growth of God’s kingdom? Are we to expect them all to become disciples or catechumens, “hearers of the Word” in early church terminology? Should we be confident that the entire number of those now following Jesus will continue to journey with him all the way to Jerusalem and the cross? (CC p. 341)

The economy of the kingdom is something the disciples, in particular, need to understand. For eventually they (the Twelve in Lk 9:1–6; the seventy[-two] in 10:1–12) will be sent out to broadcast this same Good News of the kingdom in the same way Jesus is now doing—and their preaching will meet with the same kind of results. (CC p. 341)

8:5 sower. A farmer planting seed. (TLSB)

to sow his seed. In Eastern practice the seed was sometimes sown first and the field plowed afterward. Roads and pathways went directly through many fields, and the traffic made much of the surface too hard for seed to take root in. (CSB)

ὁ σπείρων τοῦ σπεῖραι τὸν σπόρον—The repetition of the same root three times accents the major theme of the parable: the sowing of the seed by the sower. τοῦ σπεῖραι is an articular infinitive of purpose. (CC p. 337)

This is the thematic opening sentence: “A sower went out in order to sow his seed” (8:5). As Jesus will explain, the seed is the Word of God (8:11), so the process of sowing is the broadcasting of the Word of God. This Jesus has been doing in preaching and proclaiming the Good News of the kingdom (8:1). As he said, “Also to other cities *it is necessary* that I proclaim as Good News the kingdom of God, *because for this purpose I was sent*” (4:43). (CC pp. 341–342)

as he sowed – καὶ ἐν τῷ σπείρειν αὐτόν—This is a temporal phrase and not the main verb (the main verbs are ἔπεσεν and κατέπεσεν), but it modifies the action of all the following verbs.

Therefore, conceptually the main action is the sowing because the rest of the parable is about details and consequences of the sowing. (CC p. 337)

The picture is that of a farmer casting forth the seed broadcast over the land, every year with new diligence and hope, just as the longsuffering and kindness of the heavenly Sower does not become weary in spite of much apparently lost work, Is. 49, 4. His work is an example to the present day. (Kretzmann)

Perhaps the first question to arise in the hearer of the parable is this: Why isn't the sower a better steward of the precious seed? Why does he cast it about indiscriminately—for example, on rocks and among thorns that presumably he could see? Isn't he a bit like the prodigal (“wasteful, squandering”) son in Jesus' later parable (15:11–32)? (CC p. 342)

When Jesus called the first apostles-to-be (5:1–11), one of the central points of the narrative was that Jesus was teaching his catchers of “men alive” (5:10) to fish in “the deep” (5:4)—in the most unlikely places, where an experienced fisherman would expect no fish to be caught. They are to follow Jesus' own example of ministering to sinners and tax collectors, the outcasts and disenfranchised—even Samaritans and Gentiles! As the sower is a prodigal broadcaster, not a careful marksman, so Jesus will tell the apostles to preach the Gospel “to all nations” (24:47; cf. “even to the ends of the earth” [Acts 1:8]). They are not to be stingy or to rely on their own ability to target the most promising hearers. Instead, they are to disseminate the God-given seed, trusting God to give the growth where and when he wills according to the mystery of his good pleasure (Lk 10:21). (CC p. 342)

The simple phrase “and while he was sowing” (8:5) governs the consideration of the four types of ground on which the seed falls. After sowing, the seed remaining on tillable ground will be plowed under, and, depending on the nature of the ground, some of the plowing will be ineffective. In essence, the four kinds of ground indicate four types of reception or reaction to the Gospel. The disciples will encounter these when preaching. Some hearers are like the hard, bare road, and the preaching yields nothing because the seed is not allowed even to begin to grow. Some are like the rocky soil, and the preaching will be heard at first, but the catechumens will quickly wither. Some are in the midst of thorns; the cares, riches, and pleasures of this world choke out the life generated by the Gospel. Some are the good soil; the preaching takes root and miraculous fruit results. This is a comfort to the disciples—and to any preacher or catechist in the church. (CC p. 342)

fell along the path – As the sower, in the patient work of his calling, cast his seed, some of it overshot the mark, falling on the path which crossed the field. This was a feature of the landscape in Palestine, that the paths between the various towns and hamlets followed the nearest way and the easiest slopes, without regard for grain-fields. The result was that the travelers that used the path trod the seed to pieces, and the winged animals of the air, the fowls, came and devoured it. (Kretzmann)

Packed-down soil. Farmers cast seed in all directions while walking along the paths through their fields. (TLSB)

birds of the air – τὰ πετεινὰ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ—On the birds of the air, see 9:58; 13:19; Acts 10:12; 11:6. (CC p. 337)

8:6-8 *fell...fell...fell* – φυέν ... συμφουεῖσαι ... φυέν—These three participles, from the same root, describe another circumstance: the seed has grown up (in Lk 8:7, the thorns have grown up with the seed). (CC p. 337)

8:6 *on rock*. On a thin layer of soil that covered solid rock. Any moisture that fell there soon evaporated, and the germinating seed withered and died (see Mt 13:5–6). (CSB)

Other grains fell upon the rock, upon rocky soil, where the bedrock came to within a few inches of the surface. Here was moisture and warmth, the best conditions for quick germination, but not enough moisture and soil to support a growing plant. The stone below caught the heat of the sun, causing every bit of moisture in that spot to evaporate. (Kretzmann)

8:7 *among thorns* – Still other seeds fell into the midst of the thorns, where the preparation of the soil had not succeeded in grubbing out the roots of the weeds. When the seed, therefore, had sprouted, and the blades grew up, the hardier thorns absorbed both sun and air and thus choked the tender plants. (Kretzmann)

8:8 *into good soil* – ἀγαθὴν—The “good” quality is God’s verdict as a result of his grace. (CC p. 337)

Jesus’ words at the conclusion support the view that the parable is about the different ways the Gospel will be received: “The one who has ears to hear, let him hear” (8:8). Jesus goes on to interpret the four kinds of ground with reference to four categories of hearers (8:12, 13, 14, 15). For some, the result will be to hear, but not to understand (cf. 8:9–10). In only one of the four scenarios is there the miraculous fruit of eschatological salvation. Jesus exhorts the disciples to “take care how you hear” (8:18) and then tells them that “my mother and my brothers are those who hear the Word of God and do it” (8:21). The power that produces faith is entirely in the seed, the Word. But the condition and situation of some hearers hinders the seed of the Word from achieving its goal of life. (CC pp. 342-343)

Undoubtedly the hearer will ask the perplexing question raised by this parable, its interpretation, and Jesus’ frequent use of the genre (8:9–10): *Why are only some given “ears to hear” (8:8) and understand Jesus’ parabolic teaching? Why do others see but not see, hear but not understand (8:10)? Why do only some bear fruit for the eschatological harvest (8:15)?* (CC p. 343)

The answer is bound up in the mystery of election. The mystery of the kingdom is given to the disciples *with the result that they see and hear and understand that the kingdom comes in Jesus*. But neither the disciples nor the hearer of Luke’s gospel are given a full explanation of the mystery itself. Instead of revealing the mystery, Jesus emphasizes the crucial importance of listening and hearing, for it is the Word—not human wisdom or insight—that gives understanding. (See comments on Wisdom in 7:35.) (CC p. 343)

The comments on 2:30 outlined the Lukan theme of the opened and closed eyes. This theme involves the messianic passion secret. Only after the resurrection are the disciples’ eyes opened to recognize Jesus as the suffering and risen Christ (24:31, 35). But the issue here is not the partial and temporary blindness and deafness of the disciples during Jesus’ earthly ministry. Rather, it is the issue of why some see and hear and (eventually) believe, while others do not and finally end in destruction. (CC p. 343)

The easy answer would be to point to differences *within people*, as if some hearers were “good” (8:8), that is, more fertile ground, while others have harder hearts, rockier spirits, or poorer soil.

That explanation is humanly appealing, especially to those who have heard and believed, since with subtle pride they could thank God that they are not like others; they have been less resistant, more hospitable recipients of his Word because of some inner quality. However, that line of reasoning overlooks the fact that by nature all children of Adam are equally sinful and corrupt (see, e.g., Rom 3:9–20, 23). The “good” quality of the soil (Lk 8:8, 15) is based only on God’s own grace in Christ, like the “good man” (6:45) who is a “good tree” (6:43) with a “good treasure” (6:45) in his heart; the treasure is Christ, and the goodness of the tree results from being grafted into Christ. In other words, the receptivity and fertility of the soil is pure Gospel gift. The appeal to human differences renders one guilty of hypocrisy (12:1) and puts one in the same category as the unjustified Pharisee, rather than the justified tax collector, in the parable of 18:9–14. Luke’s gospel accents the theme of the Great Reversal (e.g., the Magnificat [1:46–56]; the blessings and woes of the Sermon on the Plain in 6:20–26), according to which it is the lowly, the undeserving, the abject sinners with no claim to worthiness or merit whatsoever who are raised up and forgiven by grace, while the “righteous” receive no absolution (e.g., 7:36–50). (CC p. 343)

Another possible answer to the question of why some do not see or hear would be to fault God. Perhaps the quality of the seed varies, or God does not send sufficient rain and sun on some. That leads down the path to the erroneous doctrine that God predestines some to damnation and hell. No, the seed of God’s Word contains the miraculous power to yield a hundredfold. The parable offers no hint that some of the seed was dead or insufficient. Nor does the parable fault him who sends the sun and the rain. True, God created the birds of the air, but they represent the devil (8:12), who fell by his own act of rebellion. And the choking thorns (8:7) are the result of Adam’s disobedience (Gen 3:18). God cannot be blamed for people’s evil desires (Lk 8:14; cf. James 1:13–15). Nor do the rocks of temptation offer an excuse to shift the blame from humanity, who succumbed to the tempter in Eden (Lk 8:13; cf. 1 Cor 10:1–13). (CC p. 344)

Finally, the only answer given the disciples and the hearer of Luke’s gospel is that *the mystery is according to God’s good pleasure*. That answer will have to be sufficient until such time in eternity when God may choose to reveal more. But a bit more can be said now: *the mystery of election is consistent with the revelation of God’s grace in Christ*. This becomes apparent a bit later in Luke, where the topic again surfaces. In 10:21, the seventy(-two) have just returned from their mission of preaching, which, like the sowing of the sower, met with mixed results. At that point Jesus rejoices that the Father has hidden “these things” (the contents of the preaching) from the wise but has revealed them to children, *for this is God’s good pleasure*. Thus the pleasure of God in election has to do with his good pleasure in his Son (3:22; cf. 9:35), and God’s pleasure results in the Great Reversal, which shows so clearly that all good comes solely by God’s grace in Christ, not by any human merit or worthiness. (CC p. 344)

a hundredfold. Luke’s version is more abbreviated than Matthew’s (13:8) and Mark’s (4:8), but the point is the same: The quantity of increase depends on the quality of soil. (CSB)

ἐκατονταπλασίονα—The normal yield would be about tenfold, so the yield in this parable is ten times the normal harvest—a miracle. (CC p. 337)

With three of the four instances documenting failure, the parable does not appear optimistic. The odds seem against the success of the preaching. But that is not the focus. When there *is* growth and fruit, it is miraculously abundant, a hundredfold. This is the main point and should not be lost here. If one speaks about the production of fruit, one speaks about the harvest, and therefore the final thrust of the parable has to do with the Last Day. By God’s grace manifest in the power of the seed to grow, *preaching will be successful*, says Jesus. Moreover, its *eschatological* impact will be stupendous, a hundredfold. As the disciples concern themselves with the *sowing*, that is,

with preaching and catechesis, they will see the Word encounter many obstacles. But there will always be catechumens who hear the Word in faith, come to Baptism, and feast at the Eucharist. These will be present at the heavenly banquet and will bear abundant fruit for God's harvest. The kingdom, though hidden, will triumph. (CC pp. 344-345)

he called out – ἐφώνει—The imperfect suggests repeated pronouncement of this phrase. (CC p. 337)

let him hear. A challenge for listeners to understand the message and appropriate it for themselves. (CSB)

ἀκουεῖν—An exegetical infinitive describes the ability of these ears “to hear.” Only the ears of some are able to hear and understand. See the commentary below. This expression is also used at 14:35. On ἀκούω as a technical term for catechumens. (CC p. 337)

After having told this parable, Jesus added a warning and pleading word that the people should hear in truth, not only with the ears of the body, but also with their spiritual ears, to get the full understanding of the lesson which He wished to convey to them. (Kretzmann)

8:4–8 Jesus warns that not everyone hearing God's Word will have an enduring faith. Tragically, some hear the life-giving Gospel of Jesus but fail to produce the fruit of a Christian life, eventually dying in unbelief. Genuine faith, however, so transforms our lives that we joyfully serve the Lord in this world and enjoy eternal life. • “On what has now been sown Thy blessing, Lord, bestow; The pow'r is Thine alone To make it sprout and grow. Do Thou in grace the harvest raise, And Thou alone shalt have the praise!” Amen. (LSB 921:1) (TLSB)

The Purpose of the Parables

9 And when his disciples asked him what this parable meant, 10 he said, “To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God, but for others they are in parables, so that ‘seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.’ 11 Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. 12 The ones along the path are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved. 13 And the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy. But these have no root; they believe for a while, and in time of testing fall away. 14 And as for what fell among the thorns, they are those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life, and their fruit does not mature. 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.

8:9 *His disciples.* They included “the Twelve and the others” (Mk 4:10). (CSB)

The disciples now ask Jesus a question about the parable he just told them. Luke's report, with the optative for an indirect question, echoes the report of Mary's pondering about the angel's word, “what sort of greeting this might be” (ποταπὸς εἶη ὁ ἀσπασμὸς οὗτος; 1:29). Both Mary and the disciples confront a great puzzle. The crowds were present to hear the parable of the sower, but they recede into the background now. These words are for the disciples only. The disciples here would include the Twelve and the women of 8:1–3, and perhaps also other faithful followers who in Luke 10 will be called the seventy(-two). They are catechumens, “learners” as they hear the Word. Here they want to know the meaning of this parable, and Jesus gives them even more than they ask for. His answer is threefold: the overall reason for parables (8:9–10); the meaning of the parable of the sower (8:11–15); and the parables of seeing (8:16–18). (CC p. 345)

8:10 *secrets of the kingdom of God.* Truths that can be known only by revelation from God (cf. Eph 3:2–5; 1Pe 1:10–12). (CSB)

Jesus clarifies His parables with the disciples, though not always with the crowds, which contain some insincere and hostile individuals. (TLSB)

has been to know – δέδοται—This perfect passive is a theological passive: “it has been given” by God. (CC p. 338)

Jesus clearly divides people into two categories: those who have been given *by God* knowledge of the mysteries of the kingdom, and the rest, who do not know the mysteries. Jesus compacts the first three scenarios of sowing from the parable into one category. The resulting two categories remind the hearer of the frequent “two ways” catechetical theme in Luke (e.g., 6:20–26). Just as some persons eat food at the same table as Jesus but do not receive him and his salvation (cf. 7:39, 49), so also there are some on whose physical ears fall the sound of the preaching of the Word, but who do not receive it in faith (see also Heb 4:2). It is Jesus’ goal to bring all hearers the saving knowledge of the mysteries of the kingdom. The very purpose of Luke’s gospel is stated in terms of knowledge or recognition: “in order that you come to recognize completely [ἐπιγνώσῃς] the reliability concerning the words by which you have been catechized” (1:4). *To know the mysteries is to recognize in them that God is present for salvation.* This knowledge is always given by God as an act of grace and is commonly called faith (see comments at 24:13–35). (CC p. 345)

But what are “the mysteries of the kingdom of God” (8:9)? This exact phrase occurs only here, though Mt 13:11 has the equivalent with “heaven” in place of “God.” Mark has the singular “mystery,” which would suggest Jesus himself; he would also be included in Matthew and Luke’s plural “mysteries.” The mysteries of the kingdom are really no different from the kingdom itself and its contents. The mysteries involve the startling announcement that Jesus has been preaching since his first sermon in Nazareth, that all of God’s saving activity is *present in him, since he is God himself in the flesh.* When Jesus speaks, the kingdom becomes a present reality, and when Jesus performs his messianic deeds, already now the kingdom is being revealed in the creation. The mystery (CC pp. 345-346)

is the fact of the coming of the kingdom, which only faith can grasp. The eyes of the disciples are open to the dawn of the messianic age (Mt. 13:16–17). Hence the parables teach them about the incursion of God’s rule in the word and work of Jesus. By grace they perceive that the mystery is Jesus himself as the Messiah. The parables are ultimately a veiling of the mystery because they are so simple. (CC p. 346)

It is in analogy with this that the early church spoke of the sacraments as the mysteries: veiled in these elements and actions are the presence and work of God, bringing his kingdom. Wherever the sacraments are, there also is the mystery of Jesus and the messianic deeds of salvation. (CC p. 346)

As a sort of riddle, then, a parable is an ideal form for this teaching that is both revelatory but yet also veiled in a mystery. It calls for faith in Jesus as the bringer of the kingdom and so wields the sword of division that passes through the crowds of Israel in fulfillment of Lk 2:34–35. (CC p. 346)

It can thus be seen that Isaiah 6 (especially 6:9–10) and Jesus’ application of it to his teaching in parables are part of the biblical doctrine of election. The elect one is Christ (ἐκλεγμένος [Lk 9:35]; ἐκλεκτός [23:35]). This he is from all eternity, and he abides in that calling through his perfect obedience. Those who are one with him by faith and Baptism thereby are elect too (cf. 6:13; 18:7; Rom 8:33; Eph 1:4), but by grace, not by merit of any kind. The Gospel is the seed, preached to all. It has in itself the power to create the fruit of faith and salvation, and through it God calls the elect to faith (Rom 8:29–30). But the Gospel can be resisted and opposed. Some who hear it exclude themselves from its benefits through their refusal to believe. Humans have no way of knowing who will believe and who will refuse. For this reason, the continued sowing of the seed by preaching the Gospel *to all the world* is an urgent part of the church’s mission. (CC pp. 346-347)

The message of the kingdom is to be preached to all. Jesus phrases it in parables, simple but mysterious stories that must be heard with a “hearing mixed with faith” (Heb 4:2). The kingdom is so contrary to human expectations and human wisdom that it is *in and of itself* a mystery. The meaning of the parables, which compare the mysterious things of God to the things of this world, will be hidden from those whose eyes and ears are closed. They do not understand because they have rejected the gift of God in Jesus. There is a purpose and a result of parables that teach about the mysteries of the kingdom: “so that [ἵνα] ‘seeing they may not see and hearing they may not understand’ ” (Lk 8:10). Yet those to whom is given the mystery of the kingdom receive “ears to hear” (Lk 8:8) and eyes to see. Seeing (βλέπω) or not seeing with eyes of faith is an important Lukan theme in this chapter (cf. 8:16, 18) and throughout the gospel (cf. 6:41, 42; 10:23, 24; 11:33; 21:8, 30; see the discussion on “eyes” [ὄφθαλμός] at 2:30 when Simeon says his eyes now see God’s salvation). (CC p. 347)

It is hard to ignore that there are numerous instances in Luke’s gospel where God keeps human beings from understanding the meaning of the passion, e.g., the last two passion predictions, where the passion is hidden from the disciples (9:45 and 18:34 and Luke’s use of the theological passive). The eyes of the Emmaus disciples are closed by God (24:16 and another theological passive) and then opened by him (24:31). Luke’s fuller quotation of Isaiah 6 at the end of Acts (28:26–28) is also consistent with this outlook. “This people,” the Jews as a this-worldly ethnic entity, did not trust in God’s offered salvation. But there is always hope for the repentance of individual Jews, and so there is always a mission posture and mission thrust toward the Jews, even in the doing of mission work among the Gentiles. This also is part of the mystery of the kingdom, why some hear with understanding and others reject. (CC p. 347)

Thus the parable of the sower and Jesus’ explanation about the reason for teaching in parables come together. The disciples are to recognize the obstacles that the world presents to the kingdom. But despite these obstacles, they are simply to sow the seed and light their lamps “in order that those journeying in might see the light” (8:16). (CC p. 347)

THAT – ἵνα—This introduces either a purpose clause or one of result. Since God achieves his purposes, there is little difference here. It suggests that God works in a veiled way through Jesus, and this “veil” (cf. 2 Cor 3:14–16) keeps people from understanding “the mysteries of the kingdom,” unless they receive Jesus in faith. (CC p. 338)

And so Jesus patiently explains to them the meaning of the parable, since to them it was given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, not by their merit or worthiness, nor because they had been interested in Christ or His work by their own reason and strength. In case of the others, however, that did not want to believe, the parables served a different purpose. (Kretzmann)

though seeing, they may not see. This quotation from Isaiah (6:9) does not express a desire that some would not understand, but simply states the sad truth that those who are not willing to receive Jesus' message will find the truth hidden from them. Their ultimate fate is implied in the fuller quotation in Mt 13:14–15. (CSB)

Spoken to Isaiah as he accepted his call to prophetic office. The quote stresses that the prophetic proclamation of God's Word is always met with rejection by some. St. Bernard of Clairvaux: "For His friends how different!... The Lord knows who are His. Here is His great secret and the counsel which He has made known unto men.... Who, except he be called, may approach God's counsel? Those whom He called, them also He justified" (*SLSB*, p 151). (TLSB)

βλέποντες ... ἀκούοντες—These participles are concessive, i.e., they may be translated "although seeing they may not see, and although hearing they may not understand." (CC p. 338)

Seeing they should not see, and hearing they should not understand. The eyes of their bodies might behold all that was going on in miracles and other happenings, and yet they would not recognize the power of God, the Messiah-ship of Jesus. Their ears might hear the sounds of the words, but their meaning was hidden from them. What Isaiah had been obliged to say with regard to the hardening of Israel was being fulfilled, Is. 6, 9, 10. The judgment of God upon a disobedient people had begun in the days of Isaiah, and was completed in the days of Christ and the apostles. It is an earnest warning for all times, 2 Cor. 2, 15, 16; 4, 3, 4. (Kretzmann)

8:11 *the word of God.* The message that comes from God. (CSB)

Jesus equates the dynamic seed with the Gospel and its sowing with the proclamation of the kingdom of God. (TLSB)

Jesus himself here demonstrates how to interpret a parable. It is to be seen as a whole. One key comparison opens the riddle: the seed is the Word of God. The explanation of what happens when the seed falls on the four types of soil involves assigning meaning to various details. The extent of these details leads some commentators to say that Jesus is engaging in allegory. The usual modern distinction is that a parable conveys one central truth, while an allegory extends the interpretation to details and assigns significant meaning to most elements of the picture. However, this distinction is somewhat artificial. Jesus' parables range from short, simple comparisons with one main point (6:43–45; 8:16; 13:18–21) to longer parables with interpretations extending to details (the parable of the sower [8:11–15]; also 12:35–48; 14:15–24; 15:11–32; 16:1–13; 19:11–27; 20:9–19). There is no sharp dividing line between parable and allegory. Instead, in the gospels, we find a continuous range of parables with different amounts of significant details. Jesus himself shows us how to interpret them. Usually one central truth "unlocks" the parable, and there may be a number of related truths that support or apply the truth to various kinds of people in various stations in life and in the church. (CC p. 348)

Jesus is selective in assigning meaning to the elements of the parable. One would expect him to identify the sower, but he does not, and properly so, since the sower is anyone who disseminates the Word of God. For the hearer who is attuned to Luke's prophet Christology, this would include all the OT prophets including John the Baptist; Jesus as the final, eschatological prophet, who inaugurates the NT; and all apostles, pastors, Christian teachers, and other disciples who follow after Jesus in proclaiming the Good News of the kingdom of God. Thus, in this parable, the hearer should have Jesus foremost in mind. (CC p. 348)

8:12 *may not believe.* The devil’s purpose is that people will not hear with understanding and therefore will not appropriate the message and be saved. (CSB)

Where hearts are as impenetrable as a hard-packed footpath, the Gospel message does not enter. (TLSB)

μὴ πιστεύσαντες σωθῶσιν—The aorist participle πιστεύσαντες refers to coming to faith. “Be saved” refers to final salvation, which would come to the believer should he persevere in the faith until death. But μὴ negates both the participle and the subjunctive, which are here combined in something of a coordinate relationship. (CC p. 338)

In addition to identifying the seed as the Word of God (i.e., the Gospel), Jesus also implies that the birds are the devil. The sprouts on the rocks that wither away stand for those who succumb in the time of temptation and trial. The thorns represent the anxieties, riches, and pleasures of life. The good earth represents those whose hearts God has made receptive to his Word. The heart of these explanations is the comparison of four eventualities when a sower sows to four scenarios of what happens when people hear the Word. The application, then, focuses on four types of hearers of the Word, or four types of catechumens. (CC pp. 348-349)

As the very next chapters (Luke 9–10) describe, Jesus will soon send out the Twelve and the seventy (-two), and they will experience different responses to their preaching of the Word. Some will receive them and some will reject them. Already now, Jesus is preparing them for this work. It would not surprise a first-century hearer that Jesus envisioned a catechumenate patterned after Jewish catechesis and that people would hear the Word in various ways. For the church to prepare for this work of preaching and catechesis, she must simply follow the pattern according to which Jesus prepared his disciples. (CC p. 349)

Jesus explains the four different “case histories” of what happens when the Word is preached and heard. In the first case, no “sprouting” is mentioned; the enemy hinders even the coming to faith. In the remaining three cases, the seed of the Word sprouts in faith. The question then becomes whether that faith will survive the threats that are laid against it. This describes perfectly the situation faced by the early church in the task of preaching and catechizing. Faith is wrought through the preached Word, but a long sustained effort is necessary to nurture that faith and support it *in the context of the community*. Faith comes from hearing the Word (cf. Rom 10:17), but faith needs to stand the test of temptation and trial by steadfast endurance (Lk 8:15; cf. Heb 10:36) for the seed’s fruit to be borne in the eschatological harvest, the salvation of the hearer. (CC p. 349)

In the first three scenarios, Jesus outlines the major impediments to the Word’s working its saving purpose. They correspond well to the unholy trinity often named by Luther: the devil, the world, and the flesh. Together they recall Jesus’ temptation in the wilderness (Lk 4:1–13). In the first case, the enterprise never gets started. For even though the Word is heard, it is immediately snatched away by *the devil*. (The account of Jesus’ temptation [Luke 4] is the only other place in Luke where διάβολος, “devil,” occurs.) The devil does not want the Word to germinate and produce faith and its fruits, for he knows that those in whom the Word lives through faith will be saved on the Last Day. Jesus, the perfectly faithful, has already faced the devil in the wilderness and showed how the Word of God was his weapon to defeat him. The church should continue to preach the Word in confidence, undaunted by the devil’s opposition. (CC pp. 349-350)

8:13 *hear the word and receive it with joy – δέχονται*—The Word is received by receiving one of the Twelve or the seventy(-two), who are sent by Jesus to preach the kingdom of God and to heal

(10:8). This even means that those who receive a child in Jesus' name receive Jesus (9:48). Conversely, those who do not receive the ones sent by Jesus thereby reject Jesus himself (9:5; 10:10; Jesus himself is not received in 9:53). J. Nolland, *Luke 1–9:20*, 385, observes that δέχονται τὸν λόγον “regularly indicates a believing response to the preaching of the gospel (Acts 8:14; 11:1; 17:11; 1 Thess 1:6; 2:13; Jas 1:21).” (CC p. 338)

They believe for a while. This kind of belief is superficial and does not save. It is similar to what James calls “dead” (Jas 2:17, 26) or “useless” faith (Jas 2:20). (CSB)

testing fall away – ἐν καιρῷ πειρασμοῦ ἀφίστανται—Both Matthew (13:21) and Mark (4:17) use the two nouns θλίψις and διωγμός and the verb σκανδαλίζομαι. Conditions in life, which become worse as the end draws near, put the believers in danger of falling away and not attaining the goal. Luke's wording emphasizes the need for constancy (cf. ὑπομονή; 8:15). The verb ἀφίστημι means “fall away, become apostate.” The people in this scenario separate themselves from the body of those who receive Jesus (1 Jn 2:19). The meaning is essentially the same as that of “apostasy,” which comes from the nominal form of the verb here. (CC p. 338)

The second scenario represents those who hear with joy but do not have the roots of faith to be the channels for life-sustaining moisture in the times of trial, which they will experience in this world. These include the persecutions that the disciples, as catechumens, will experience for following Jesus. The end of the Gospel will portray the testing of the disciples. Following the institution of the Lord's Supper, Jesus will say to them, “You are the ones who have remained with me in my trials” (22:28). Then, on the Mount of Olives, he says, “Pray not to come into temptation” (22:40). And after they fall asleep, he exclaims, “Why are you sleeping? Rising up, pray, in order that you may not come into temptation” (22:46). The hearer would also recall at this point the theme of persecution from the Sermon on the Plain, particularly the conclusion to the beatitudes: “Blessed are you when men hate you and when they exclude you and insult you and throw out your name as evil on account of the Son of Man. Rejoice on that day and skip around, for behold your reward is great in heaven; for according to the same things their fathers did to the prophets” (6:22–23; cf. also 6:27–34, 46–49). (CC p. 350)

The second class of hearers are those that have a mere veneer, a shallow covering of Christianity. With them the “getting religion” is merely an incident, and they are able to change their profession like their clothes. There is no idea of indoctrination in their case; they are not firmly grounded and rooted in Scriptures. They are violent enthusiasts while it lasts, but the excitement does not last. For a time, and usually a short time, at that, they are prominently identified with the work of the Church. But then their interest flags and departs as suddenly as it came into being. In the time of temptation, when there seems to be danger of suffering for the sake of their convictions, they are no longer among those present. The second class contains those that accept with joy, but they do not hold out. This is also a great crowd, that hear the Word properly and accept it in its purity, without any sects and schismatics and enthusiasts; they are glad also that they may know the right truth and find how we may be saved without works through faith; also because they have been delivered from the imprisonment of the Law, the conscience, and human doctrine. But when it comes to the battle, that they should on that account suffer harm, contempt, loss of life and goods, then they fall away and deny it all. (Kretzmann)

8:14 GO ON THEIR WAY – πορευόμενοι—“Going through life's journey” suggests that these dangers assail pilgrims. This is part of Luke's catechetical vocabulary. (CC p. 338)

OF LIFE – τοῦ βίου—This genitive governs all three nouns: the anxieties *of life*, the riches *of life*, and the pleasures *of life*. (CC p. 338)

In the third case, the thorns represent the anxieties, riches, and pleasures of life (*the flesh*). Along with persecution, possessions pose a serious temptation to the catechumen, a threat that Luke carefully notes in his theme of the proper use of possessions (cf. 12:13–34; 16:1–31; 18:18–30). Perhaps this is the most subtle of the dangers. The life God’s Word gives through faith might survive alongside these things for a while (8:13: πρὸς καιρόν, “for a time”), but obsession with possessions can lead to its slow death by suffocation. The key to survival is perseverance. (CC p. 350)

The final case is one in which the Word is heard and held in perseverance. Such hearers bear fruit for the eschatological harvest. Salvation is the *goal* of hearing and believing the Word (8:12). The second and third cases demonstrate that reaching the goal does not come easily or quickly. Holding fast to the Word with persevering faith is necessary. That is the reason for living in a community that regularly hears the Word of God. Jesus himself is the paradigm of the good soil, who through steadfast endurance withstood the temptations of the devil, overcame the temptations of the world, and eschewed the desires of the flesh. He is the one whose heart is noble and good because he heard the Word of God from his Father in heaven and was perfectly obedient in every way. (CC pp. 350-351)

The third class includes such as also hear the Word, in whose hearts the seed finds a proper lodging. But later they, being taken possession of by the cares of riches and the pleasures of life, suffocate, so far as their faith is concerned, and do not bring their fruit to maturity. This is properly called suffocation, for the process is not brought to a climax at once, but takes much time. Very gradually the love of money and the deceitfulness of riches creeps into the heart; or just as unostentatiously the liking for the pleasures of this world takes possession of the mind, until the lingering spark of faith is extinguished almost without their noticing it. The third class that hear and accept the Word and yet fall to the wrong side, that is, to the pleasure and ease of this life, also bring forth no fruit according to the Word. And their number is also very large; for though they do not establish heresies, as the first ones, but always have the pure Word, and also are not attacked on the left side by opposition and temptation, yet they fall on the right side, and that is their ruin, that they enjoy peace and good days. Therefore they do not earnestly regard the Word, but become lazy and sink into the care, riches, and lust of this life, that they are without use. (Kretzmann)

8:15 honest and good heart – ἐν καρδίᾳ καλῇ καὶ ἀγαθῇ—The phrase “with a noble and good heart” goes with “having heard the Word,” not with “hold it fast.” Like “ears to hear” (8:8) and “opened eyes” (see comments on 2:20), this good heart is a gift of God. The phrase “noble and good heart,” unique to Luke among the synoptics, is interpreted by some to refer to an inner human quality; supposedly it “conveys the Hellenistic ideal of an honorable character” and also is used in writings of Hellenistic Judaism. But Luke’s gospel implies that goodness is from God alone. Jesus is the “good teacher” who affirms that God alone is “good” (18:18–19). The good soil is like the “good man” (6:45) who is a “good tree” (6:43) with a “good treasure” in his heart (6:45); the man is “good” only because he is grafted into Christ, who is the treasure in his heart, and Christ is the one who makes him fruitful. God is the one who gives “good things” (1:53). (CC pp. 338-339)

A humble faith dwelling in a repentant heart is able, by God’s grace, both to endure persecution and to avoid the trap of self-absorption. (TLSB)

Thus, the fourth and final case has Christological implications. For the early church, Jesus is the “ideal catechumen,” whose fidelity and perseverance are a model to all who hear the Word of

God. But Jesus is far more than the model; he is the one who makes possible the response of faith and the bearing of fruit, *for the true secret of the mystery is Christ in the believer* (Col 1:27). Those who bear fruit in maturity do so because Christ is in them (Rom 8:10; 2 Cor 13:5; Gal 4:19) and they are in him. And those who hold fast to the Word in perseverance do so because he faithfully *holds them* in his hand and through his Spirit in the life and ministry of the church *keeps them* steadfast in the true faith. (CC p. 351)

Finally, the hearer may note some examples of each of these scenarios within the gospel itself. Many who heard Jesus and his disciples rejected them immediately, as with the seed eaten by the birds. Judas appears to have been one who believed “for a time” (Lk 8:13) but apostatized at the time of temptation. The rich ruler (18:18–23) and the Pharisees heard the Word but their concern for worldly wealth and position choked whatever faith may have sprouted. The disciples, as well as individuals such as Mary, Elizabeth, Simeon, Anna, and Zacchaeus, stand as examples of those who received the Word in faith and yielded abundant fruit. (CC p. 351)

Only the last class of hearers, in whose case the seed of the Word falls into hearts that have been properly prepared by the preaching of the Law, is of value in the kingdom of God. There the meekness of the knowledge of self is replaced by the nobleness and generousness of the regenerated soul. The Word which they hear they also keep; they hold firmly to its glory and power, and are thus enabled to bring forth fruit well pleasing to God, with all perseverance. (Kretzmann)

fruit. Deeds of faith. (TLSB)

with patience. Given the incredibly high ethical standard Jesus set for His followers (e.g., 6:27–42), patience, determination, and divine grace are required. (TLSB)

8:9–15 Jesus uses an agricultural metaphor to explain how the Gospel ministry works and why it is sometimes thwarted. As our own experience bears out, the sinful nature, the world, and the devil all resist the Holy Spirit, who calls people to faith and would lead them into committed discipleship. By God’s grace, however, our faith not only withstands trial and temptation but even grows stronger. The Christian’s faithful endurance is a testimony to Christ’s constant love. • “To Thee our wants are known, From Thee are all our pow’rs; Accept what is Thine own And pardon what is ours. Our praises, Lord, and prayers receive, And to Thy Word a blessing give.” Amen. (LSB 921:2) (TLSB)

A Lamp Under a Jar

16 “No one after lighting a lamp covers it with a jar or puts it under a bed, but puts it on a stand, so that those who enter may see the light. 17 For nothing is hidden that will not be made manifest, nor is anything secret that will not be known and come to light. 18 Take care then how you hear, for to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he thinks that he has will be taken away.”

8:16–18 Stresses the practical implications and public nature of faith in Jesus. Whoever becomes Jesus’ disciple will be scrutinized. The presence (or lack) of Christian fruit is plain for all to see. (TLSB)

8:16 *lighting a lamp.* Although Jesus couched much of his message in parables, he intended that the disciples make the truths known as widely as possible. (CSB)

In Jesus' day, nighttime truly was a time of darkness. With no electricity, no lamp posts, no flashlights, the darkness was real, almost palpable. In the Roman-style houses of that time, a lamp placed in the vestibule furnished light for all who entered. (LL)

puts it on a stand – On the surface, the meaning of 8:16 is simple and conforms to common sense. But to what does the picture correspond? Jesus has been speaking of preaching the Gospel, sowing the seed. The Lukan hearer will connect the light to Christ and his Gospel. The one who places the Gospel on a lampstand is Christ, working in the Christian community through those who have been catechized and baptized. After having heard and believed the Word, the baptized are not to hide Christ's Gospel. The illuminating Word that is in them should light up the house church and shine from it, like a beacon, to others journeying toward it. And when the others come after a long journey, the baptized will illuminate the house church for them when they enter in. This illumination would involve the interpretation of the Word of God within the community of the baptized. A first-century hearer might very naturally think of those guests who enter the Christian church, a community gathered in a house. In other words, what Jesus pictures here is the community of the baptized gathered together around his Word for worship and catechesis in the house. The light of Christ's presence in the faithful community shines out from the house church so that those who would leave the world and enter the church may learn how to hear the Gospel by observing the faithful community at worship. (CC pp. 351-352)

who enter – οἱ εἰσπορευόμενοι—“Those journeying in” are those who enter a house after a day of rigorous traveling to find rest. The light attracts them and allows them to see the way in and their hosts. (CC p. 339)

8:17 This verse explains v. 16. It is the destiny of the truth to be made known (cf. 12:2). The disciples were to begin a proclamation that would become universal. (CSB)

nothing is hidden. Ultimately, everything about a person—esp his or her attitude toward Jesus—will be made public on Judgment Day. (TLSB)

come to light – οὐ μὴ γνωσθῆ—οὐ μὴ with the subjunctive “is the most definite form of negation regarding the future.” However, with the negative οὐδέ in the main clause (“nor [is there anything] secret”), this strong negative becomes a positive, yielding the sense: “and that which is secret will certainly be made known and come into the open.” (CC p. 339)

Corresponding to this picture, the next verse describes further what Christ does through the baptized Christian community. He reveals the secrets (mysteries) of the kingdom of God to those who are hearers of the Word, those enrolled in catechesis. Jesus' preaching begins the revelation of the mysteries of the kingdom. On the Last Day, everything hidden will surely be manifest. Meanwhile, it is the task and purpose of the house church to reveal the secrets of the kingdom to those who enter the house. They are to continue the preaching and teaching begun by Jesus. The mysteries of the kingdom will not remain hidden in a community that interprets the Gospel for all so that hearers may enter it. (CC p. 352)

8:18 *take care then how you hear*. The disciples heard not only for themselves but also for those to whom they would minister (see Mk 4:24; cf. Jas 1:19–22). Truth that is not understood and appropriated will be lost (19:26), but truth that is used will be multiplied. (CSB)

βλέπετε ... πῶς—Since the topic is the faculty of hearing, not of sight, the meaning is “take care” instead of “watch.” πῶς is “how”; Mark has “Take care *what* you hear” (τί; 4:24). (CC p. 339)

Thus the admonition: “Take care *how* you hear” the Word (8:18). The hearer has already been told *how* to hear the Word—with persevering faith—through the parable of the sower and its interpretation. But there is an added benefit that the final verse describes for those who gather as a community around the Word of God and share that Word with catechumens. To those who have, i.e., to those who have faith and life and perseverance—all gifts of God through his Word—more will be given to them by God: salvation on the Last Day. But from the one who does not have that life that comes from the Word by faith, even the temporal life and blessings he thinks he can retain will be taken away from him. The Last Day will reveal that some have been deceiving themselves, thinking themselves secure while continuing in complacent resistance to the Gospel of Jesus. This stern warning not only summarizes the parable but exhorts the community that proclaims the Gospel to outsiders to note that they have a responsibility to illuminate *how* to hear the Word. (CC p. 352)

whoever has – ὅς ἄν γὰρ ἔχη—In this context, this phrase and the corresponding ὅς ἄν μὴ ἔχη would appear to refer to the fourth scenario’s hearers (8:15) and those of the first three scenarios (8:12–14), respectively. *What* they have is the life given by the Word, received through faith. (CC p. 339)

it will be given – δοθήσεται ... ἀρθήσεται—These are both theological passives: “it will be given to him” and “taken away from him” *by God*. A verb with a similar meaning (ἀφαιρέω) will be used at 10:42 to promise Mary that the “good portion” she has chosen will not be taken away from her. (CC p. 339)

Not saying that the rich get richer. Rather, in the economy of God’s kingdom, those who faithfully put into practice the teachings of Jesus will be given more faith. Conversely, those who do not receive His Gospel will see spiritual life and blessings slip away. (CC)

8:16–18 Jesus calls His followers to be just as transparent in their attitudes and irreproachable in their behavior as He is. However, we often fare poorly under such a glaring light, where our failures seem magnified. Nevertheless, when we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive our sins and cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1Jn 1:9). • Draw us ever to Your light, O Lord. Although it makes clear our unworthiness to stand in Your presence, it also removes our darkness and, by Your forgiving grace, restores us to the glory for which You created us. Amen. (CC)

Jesus’ Mother and Brothers

19 Then his mother and his brothers came to him, but they could not reach him because of the crowd. 20 And he was told, “Your mother and your brothers are standing outside, desiring to see you.” 21 But he answered them, “My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it.”

8:19 *Jesus’ mother and brothers came.* More is known about their motive from Mk 3:21, 31–32. The family, thinking he was “out of his mind,” probably wanted to get him away from his heavy schedule. (CSB)

This brief encounter between the crowds, Jesus, and his mother and brothers is a fit conclusion to Jesus’ teaching in 8:4–21. These words, addressed to the crowd, who has now returned, summarize well the parable of the sower: “My mother and my brothers are those who hear the Word of God and do it” (8:21). “What is termed ‘hearing and doing’ here corresponds to faith in other parts of the NT.” The statement parallels the conclusion to Jesus’ Sermon on the Plain,

where he says, “Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you whom he is like” (6:47). He is like the person who built his house on the firm foundation of the catechetical teaching of Jesus and the church. The theme of Jesus’ parables and his Sermon on the Plain is likewise the proper reception of God’s Word in faith and the working of that Word in one’s life through faith. This short passage is structured around the three references to Jesus’ mother and brothers, one in each verse. (CC pp. 254-355)

brothers. Did not believe in Jesus at this time (Jn 7:5). Various interpretations concerning their relationship to Jesus arose in the early church: They were sons of Joseph by a previous marriage (according to Epiphanius) or were cousins (said Jerome). The most natural conclusion (suggested by Helvidius) is that they were the sons of Joseph and Mary, younger half brothers of Jesus. Four of these brothers are named in Mk 6:3, where sisters are also mentioned. Since Joseph is not mentioned here, it is likely that he had died. (CSB)

Probably refers to the natural children of Joseph and Mary, i.e., Jesus’ younger half brothers. However, there is a later tradition that Joseph was widowed before marrying the Virgin Mary. If that is so, these siblings could be Jesus’ older stepbrothers, born to Joseph by his first wife. (TLSB)

8:20–21 Families of flesh and blood last only for a lifetime, but the family of God endures forever and calls people to commit to the eternal Word. (TLSB)

8:21 Jesus’ reply was not meant to reject his natural family but to emphasize the higher priority of his spiritual relationship to those who believed in him.

μήτηρ μου καὶ ἀδελφοί μου—The lack of articles here as opposed to 8:20 suggests that this refers not only to Mary and Jesus’ brothers, but to anyone who hears the Word and does it. (CC p. 354)

The point is that the Word of the Gospel incorporates the hearer into Christ, and thereby into God’s kingdom, which Christ brings, and into the body of Christ, which is a new community that comes not through bloodlines, but by faith. It is the congregation of those who hear the Word of God and do it, that is, who receive it and believe it (cf. Jn 6:29). Thus the hearer is encouraged to go back and read the parable of the sower in light of this new and radical statement by Jesus. Those who hear the Word of God in God-given faith and persevere “in steadfast endurance” (Lk 8:15) are part of the miraculous fruit produced by the Word. They are part of a family that is bound together by the one who preaches that God’s kingdom is now present in him. The Word of God, heard in faith, creates this new family of God, which will be the Christian church. Jesus consciously overturns the OT kinship laws that defined one’s identity as a member of Israel through genealogy and family relationships. In the old covenant, one’s lineage determined such things as one’s tribal land, or even one’s vocation as a priest or Levite. But Jesus now says that in the kingdom he brings, family is not by natural birth, but through rebirth by the life-giving Word. Luke has already shown that the genealogy of Jesus *includes* David and Abraham but goes back beyond them to “the son of Adam, the son of God” (3:38). Luke also stressed there (3:23) and earlier (1:31–35) that Jesus’ true lineage is as the Son of God. In the Son of God, children of Adam are one family. Jesus will be the end of the old kinship laws. His very life (style) shows this:

The domestic life of the prophet is a sign of the judgment and redemption he preaches, exactly as in scripture ([Isaiah 8:1–4](#); [Jeremiah 16:1–13](#); [Ezekiel 24:15–27](#); [Hosea 1:2–9](#)). Jesus’ mother is the virgin Mary. His father is the Holy Spirit. He has neither home nor family in any conventional sense. He says so in both Matthew ([8:20](#)) and Luke ([9:58](#)): “Foxes

have holes and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of man has nowhere to lay his head.” (CC p. 355)

Jesus will unite both Jews and Gentiles in his new family. Perhaps the fact that in Luke Jesus’ genealogy immediately follows his baptism even suggests that the new family lines will be drawn by rebirth into Jesus’ family through Holy Baptism. (CC pp. 355-356)

By shifting the attention from his blood mother and brothers, Jesus is not suggesting that natural family relationships are no longer important. But they are put in perspective. Mary is important to Luke, for example, not just as the particular woman who gave birth to Jesus. For Luke, Mary is the perfect catechumen (see the comments at the annunciation in 1:26–38; cf. also 1:45). Her relationship to Elizabeth is also significant (1:36). Later on in the gospel, a woman will declare to Jesus: “Blessed the womb that carried you and the breasts that you sucked,” a clear reference to Mary. But Jesus’ response to this woman also clearly includes Mary: “Rather, blessed those who hear the Word of God and keep it” (11:27–28). Mary has treasured God’s Word in her heart in accord with 8:15, from the time Gabriel first announced that Word to her and including Jesus’ preaching of that Word. She is the first one to abandon her blood relationship with Jesus to join the new family of God through faith in him. In “steadfast endurance” (8:15), she will be a pillar in the post-ascension church (Acts 1:14). (CC p. 356)

8:19–21 By faith, we inherit the kingdom of God. Yet, fewer and fewer people break away from earthly cares and make time for the Church and the eternal fellowship God bestows through it. Those attending the Lord’s Table, however, enjoy an eternal family fellowship and a foretaste of the feast that goes on forever in God’s presence. • Lord, show us the need for both our earthly and Church families. By Your Spirit, increase our commitment to both our temporal and eternal relations; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen. (TLSB)

Jesus Calms the Storm

22 One day he got into a boat with his disciples, and he said to them, “Let us go across to the other side of the lake.” So they set out, 23 and as they sailed he fell asleep. And a windstorm came down on the lake, and they were filling with water and were in danger. 24 And they went and woke him, saying, “Master, Master, we are perishing!” And he awoke and rebuked the wind and the raging waves, and they ceased, and there was a calm. 25 He said to them, “Where is your faith?**” And they were afraid, and they marveled, saying to one another, “**Who then is this, that he commands even winds and water, and they obey him?**”**

The miraculous calming of the storm begins a series of miracles that follow upon Jesus’ parable of the sower and associated teachings (8:4–21). The same pattern occurred when the Sermon on the Plain was followed by two miracles: the healing of the centurion’s slave (7:1–10) and the raising of the widow’s son at Nain (7:11–17). *Jesus often follows teaching with mighty acts that demonstrate the present reality of his teaching*, thus fulfilling the program of his Nazareth sermon (4:18–19). (CC p. 358)

8:22 *one day* – ἐγένετο δὲ ἐν μιᾷ τῶν ἡμερῶν—This general time reference loosely ties this passage (and perhaps the following miracles as well) to what went before. This is part of Jesus’ “making his way through from city to city and village by village” (8:1). (CC p. 357)

let’s go across – ἀνήχθησαν—ἀνάγω normally means “to lead or bring up,” but here it is the technical term for setting sail that Luke will use frequently in Acts. (CC p. 357)

Cf. Matt. 8, 23-37 ; Mark 4, 35-41. It was at the close of a strenuous day that Jesus embarked in a boat with His disciples, and He gave the command to sail across the sea to the other side. (Kretzmann)

so they set out – The disciples, some of whom were expert navigators, having spent a large part of their life on the lake, immediately launched forth, setting sail for the center of the lake. (Kretzmann)

8:23 *he fell asleep* – The disciples, some of whom were expert navigators, having spent a large part of their life on the lake, immediately launched forth, setting sail for the center of the lake. (Kretzmann)

windstorm – κατέβη λαίλαψ ανέμου εις την λίμνην—“A squall of wind came down on the lake” captures the sense of the wind sweeping down the hills surrounding the lake and then onto the lake, making for a great storm. The geographic setting of the Sea of Galilee largely encircled by high hills makes such storms not unusual. Luke consistently refrains from using θάλασσα, “sea,” in this pericope, speaking only of the λίμνη, “lake,” and the ὕδωρ, “water.” In contrast, Mt 8:24, 26, 27; Mk 4:39, 41 all have θάλασσα, which only occurs in Luke’s gospel at 17:2, 6; 21:25, though it occurs ten times in Acts. Luke seems to reserve the term θάλασσα for the Mediterranean Sea, a true saline ocean; for the Red Sea (Acts 7:36); and for the earth’s oceans in general (Lk 17:2, 6; 21:25; Acts 4:24; 14:15). In keeping with Luke’s knowledge of nautical terms, apparent in Acts, he calls the Sea of Galilee by the more accurate term “lake,” λίμνη. (CC p. 357)

The raging sea has OT parallels that imply that Jesus must be greater than the OT prophets, such as Moses in Ex 14:15–16, Joshua in Josh 3:10–13, Elijah in 2 Ki 2:8, and Jonah. There are several verbal and narrative parallels to Jonah 1:1–16, including the recurrence of κλύδων, “waves,” κινδυνεύω, “be in danger,” and ἀπόλλυμι, “perish,” in the captain’s awakening of the sleeping Jonah. (Among the synoptic accounts, the first two Greek words occur only in Luke.) Probably the most significant parallel to Jonah is God’s miraculous rescue. Jesus will liken himself to Jonah in Lk 11:29–32. A theme in Psalms is that God (Yahweh) has power over the chaotic waters. The chaotic motion of the waters signals that they are the primordial place of disorder, in which dwells the devil. *Therefore, Jesus must be Lord over creation and the one who has come to defeat Satan*, as shown also by his exorcism in the following pericope (Lk 8:26–39), where the demons are associated with the lake. (CC pp. 358-259)

Suddenly a tornado-like storm came down upon the lake, accompanied with such a turbulent upheaval of the waters of the sea that they rushed in upon them from all sides, filling the boat and placing them all in the greatest peril of their lives. And yet Jesus slept. The powers of nature are in His hand. They may storm and threaten, but they cannot harm Him. Note: If a Christian has Jesus with him in all his work and in all his play, then he is secure in spite of all threatening of the enemies. Not a hair of his head may be harmed without the will of his Lord. (Kretzmann)

8:24 *master, master* – ἐπιστάτα ἐπιστάτα—This title is only found in Luke’s gospel. R. Tannehill, *Narrative Unity I*, 213, notes that “this title always appears in situations in which the disciples fail to understand Jesus’ power or purpose.” This could be another sign of the disciples’ inability to respond in faith to a crisis, a “time of trial” (cf. 8:13). (CC p. 357)

Why is it so difficult for the disciples to understand who Jesus is and what he came to do? Signs were there for the disciples: Jesus’ preaching and teaching about the kingdom of God, healing

diseases, exorcising demons. And now, Jesus is in the boat with his disciples as in 5:3–11, where Luther linked it to Jesus’ presence in his church. Jesus is sleeping when a huge storm comes upon them, endangering the ship. The disciples panic and wake him up, saying, “Master, Master, we are perishing!” This suggests a faith that has been tempted by fear and succumbed. (CC p. 359)

The disciples were at their wits’ end. They rushed over to Him, they awakened Him with the anxious call that they were perishing. And He heard their frantic cry and gave them such an exhibition of His almighty power that they must have felt the greatness of their unbelief on this account more than by the reproving words of the Lord. (Kretzmann)

he awoke and rebuked the storm – And in the midst of the storm, Jesus “rebuked the wind and the wave of the water; and they stopped and it became calm.” By rebuking the wind and the water, Jesus continues his pattern of *rebuking creation gone awry*: he rebuked a demon that possessed a man and it came out (4:35), and he rebuked a fever in Peter’s mother-in-law and it left her (4:39). In fact, there seems to be a clear parallel between the disciples’ response to the calming of the storm and that of the people when Jesus cast out the demon: “And amazement [θάμβος] came over all, and they were conversing with one another, saying, ‘What is this word—because with authority and power he commands [ἐπιτάσσει] the unclean spirits and they come out?’ ” (4:36). Similarly, the Gerasenes will react in fear (8:35, 37). In all these cases, the word of Jesus has the power to halt evil and restore creation. (CC p. 359)

Means “reprove, censure, or punish.” Jesus speaks to the natural forces as if to a person. Jesus previously rebuked evil spirits during exorcisms (4:35, 41) and a fever while healing (4:39). (TLSB)

8:25 *where is your faith* – The faith of the disciples needs to grow so that they may see in Jesus the presence of the Creator and Re-creator of all things. He is the Christ, the Messiah, and as such he is the very presence of God himself in creation to work redemption. But at this time, none of the human characters in the story knows who Jesus is. The only indication of the disciples’ faith is their fear and amazement in the presence of Jesus’ supernatural miracle. The disciples will again respond with inadequate faith when they misunderstand the passion predictions (cf. 9:45; 18:34) and when they again experience a time of testing at the passion (22:31–34). Finally, Jesus will rebuke the Emmaus disciples as “foolish and slow in heart to believe” (24:25). In each case, the disciples perceived Jesus from a human point of view. (CC pp. 359-360)

Given all the miracles the disciples have witnessed, Jesus expects a greater degree of trust. (TLSB)

afraid...marveled – φοβηθέντες δὲ ἐθαύμασαν—This is the only place in Luke’s gospel where fear and amazement occur together. Fear is a theme in the rest of chapter (8:35, 37, 50). (CC p. 357)

Who then is this. This question encapsulates the point of the story, which revolves around Jesus’ identity. Left unanswered, this question effectively challenges Luke’s audience to respond. (TLSB)

even the winds – What does it mean that “even the winds he commands and the water, and they obey him”? This is the vital question for the disciples. The answer is a matter of creation and redemption and faith, as confessed by the church in the First, Second, and Third Articles of the Creed. Jesus releases creation from the bondage of its fallenness. The kingdom Jesus proclaims releases creation from its bondage to sin and evil and begins a new era of salvation under the

gracious rule of God. That was the message of Jesus' first sermon in Nazareth (4:18–19) and is the message repeated throughout his ministry. Jesus whispers to the whirlwind on the lake of Galilee, and his creation obeys. That is the power of the word from the presence of the Word, who is Jesus. When Jesus calms the wind and waves, he transforms turmoil into tranquility and chaos into paradise. (CC p. 360)

8:22–25 After calming a storm, Jesus challenges His disciples to consider the answer to their question, “Who then is this?” Though any Christian can answer this question correctly while sitting in an armchair, it is a different matter altogether when facing trouble. Yet, when we are similarly overwhelmed, the risen Christ comes to our aid. • “Yea, though I walk in death’s dark vale, Yet will I fear no ill; For Thou art with me, and Thy rod And staff me comfort still.” Amen. (LSB 710:3) (TLSB)

Jesus Heals a Man with a Demon

26 Then they sailed to the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. 27 When Jesus had stepped out on land, there met him a man from the city who had demons. For a long time he had worn no clothes, and he had not lived in a house but among the tombs. 28 When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell down before him and said with a loud voice, “What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, do not torment me.” 29 For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. (For many a time it had seized him. He was kept under guard and bound with chains and shackles, but he would break the bonds and be driven by the demon into the desert.) 30 Jesus then asked him, “What is your name?” And he said, “Legion,” for many demons had entered him. 31 And they begged him not to command them to depart into the abyss. 32 Now a large herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside, and they begged him to let them enter these. So he gave them permission. 33 Then the demons came out of the man and entered the pigs, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and drowned. 34 When the herdsmen saw what had happened, they fled and told it in the city and in the country. 35 Then people went out to see what had happened, and they came to Jesus and found the man from whom the demons had gone, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind, and they were afraid. 36 And those who had seen it told them how the demon-possessed man had been healed. 37 Then all the people of the surrounding country of the Gerasenes asked him to depart from them, for they were seized with great fear. So he got into the boat and returned. 38 The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with him, but Jesus sent him away, saying, 39 “Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you.” And he went away, proclaiming throughout the whole city how much Jesus had done for him.

Luke follows the calming of the storm with the second of Jesus' mighty acts that come after the parable of the sower. For Jesus' disciples this is reinforcing the pattern of Jesus' ministry of teaching and miracles—the pattern of ministry they themselves will soon be sent to perform (9:1–6; 10:1–20). The hearer recalls that Jesus' sermon in Nazareth (4:16–30) was followed by an exorcism (4:33–37), and a similar sequence exists here. Both exorcisms begin with the demon addressing the same question to Jesus, “What is there to us/me and to you?” (4:34: τί ἡμῖν καὶ σοί; 8:28: τί ἐμοὶ καὶ σοί). Both include remarkable confessions of who Jesus is (4:34: “the Holy One of God”; 8:28: “Son of God the Most High”). Both show that Jesus releases those who are in bondage to the demonic forces. In both, the crowds respond in amazement at the power of Jesus' word over the demons (4:36–37; 8:34–37). The difference between the two exorcism accounts is that this one includes the response of the one freed from demon possession. This response must

be a focus of the interpretation of this miracle, especially in light of the context of the parable of the sower. (CC p. 364)

Certainly there are details in the miracle that may sound strange to the ears of a modern hearer who has never encountered a person possessed by demons: the nakedness, the chains, the madness, the abyss, and the destruction of the pigs. But for the first-century hearer, and particularly a catechumen in the infancy of the church, this miracle of Jesus would further confirm that in Jesus, God is present working *already now* his mighty acts of salvation. Ever since the Nazareth sermon, the hearer would be alert for clues that Jesus' prophecy about his own messianic deeds was coming true. This miracle is such an indication—perhaps more. It is the bringing of salvation (8:36) even to the unclean Gentiles. (CC p. 365)

8:26 *region of the Gerasenes*. The Gospels describe the location of this event in two ways: (1) the region of the Gerasenes; (2) the region of the Gadarenes. Some manuscripts of Matthew, Mark and Luke read “Gergesenes,” but this spelling may have been introduced in an attempt to resolve the differences. (CSB)

Cf. Matt. 8, 28-34; Mark 5, 1-20. Luke's description is graphic: They sailed down from the deep sea to the land. There was not the faintest indication of the recent tempest, and they had no difficulty about putting in near the shore. The country where they landed belonged to a strip of Gaulanitis, which was variously called the country of the Gadarenes or the Gerasenes, Gadara being a town farther inland, and Gerasa, or Gergesa, being situated near the Sea of Galilee. The strip of the country where the disciples cast anchor was comparatively wild and uninhabited, the hilly section just east of the lake, opposite Galilee. (Kretzmann)

which is opposite Galilee – ἀντιπέρα τῆς Γαλιλαίας—Even though this episode takes place “opposite Galilee” and therefore outside of Galilee, Luke takes pains to describe its relation to Galilee. This could be a subtle indication of Jesus' mission to pagans, since this was non-Jewish territory, specifically the loose federation of Hellenistic city-states called the Decapolis (cf. Mk 5:20). (CC p. 362)

8:27-29 Salvation and healing through the word of Jesus create faith in this demoniac; he is made a disciple. But what is extraordinary about this new disciple/catechumen is that he was once possessed by unclean spirits, *and* that he was an unclean Gentile from outside Israel (“opposite Galilee” [8:26]). No chain or human guard was as strong as Satan's grasp. The demon forced him into “deserted places” (8:29), which were considered the haunts of evil spirits, and into the tombs (8:27), probably caves or clefts used as burial places. This man therefore is the epitome of Gentiles doomed to death, caught in the futility of their pagan worship (cf. Acts 14:16), which really is the worship of demons (1 Cor 10:20). The man's rescue by Jesus foreshadows the Gentile mission in Acts. God *will* raise up from stones children to Abraham—by faith. Jesus goes to the most unclean of the unclean and cleanses. God can overcome any obstacle to create a hearer and doer of the Word. Look at the change that takes place in the demoniac through his conversion! Formerly he was driven into the abodes of demons, but now he is found sitting at Jesus' feet. No longer chained, he is in his right mind. “The demons' prisoner had been freed from their oppression” (cf. 4:18). (CC pp. 365-366)

8:27 *who had demons* – Matthew (8:28) refers to two demon-possessed men, but Mark (5:2) and Luke probably mention only the one who was prominent and did the talking. (CSB)

Social isolation and an attraction to burial sites were symptoms of this man's demon possession. (TLSB)

δαιμόνια—Luke describes the man in two slightly different ways: he was possessed by demons (8:27) and by an unclean spirit (8:29; τῷ πνεύματι τῷ ἀκαθάρτῳ; cf. Mk 5:2). This second description provides the narrative with symmetry when the unclean spirit enters into unclean animals (swine). (CC p. 362)

worn no clothes – καὶ χρόνῳ ἱκανῶ—The textual evidence is stronger for this word order, which places this phrase with οὐκ ἐνεδύσατο ἱμάτιον instead of ἔχων δαιμόνια: “for a considerable time he had not been wearing clothes.” (CC p. 362)

tombs. An isolated burial ground avoided by most people. (CSB)

ἐν τοῖς μνήμασιν—The man with the unclean spirit lived among the tombs, which, in harmony with the OT, the Jews considered to be unclean. It is appropriate for the unclean spirit (8:29) and the unclean animals (swine [8:32]) to dwell in an unclean place. See Num 19:11, 14, 16; Ezek 39:11–15. (CC p. 362)

He would also not remain in a house, but preferred to live in the tombs which were hewn into the rock on the lake shore. He had almost been stripped of the attributes of a human being, and rather resembled a wild beast in appearance and habits. (Kretzmann)

8:28 *Son of the Most High God*. Cf. 1:32; 4:34. The title “Most High God” was commonly used by Gentiles; its use here perhaps indicates that this man was not a Jew. (CSB)

Demons often recognized Jesus’ divinity before humans did. Fully aware of Jesus’ authority, the demons pleaded for mercy. (TLSB)

The identity of Jesus is the main issue in this section of Luke (cf. 8:25). Luke continues to show his hearers that the demons know what human observers do not yet understand. A demon has already announced that Jesus is the “Holy One of God” (4:34), but now a demon declares that he is “Son of God the Most High” (8:28), the designation of Jesus first announced to Mary by the angel at the annunciation (1:32, 35). In fact, the hearer may also recall that John the Baptist was a “prophet of the Most High” (1:76) and that those who follow in the footsteps of Jesus by loving their enemies, doing good, and lending expecting nothing in return will be “sons of the Highest” (6:35). (CC p. 366)

That was the demon, one of their number speaking. The devil knows who Jesus of Nazareth is, was aware of it during the entire lifetime of Jesus, and tried everything in his power to frustrate the work of the Lord. If Christ had been a mere man, the devil could easily have conquered him. But He was the Son of the most high God, and therefore Himself true God from eternity. He had the power, if He so chose, to let the last terrible judgment upon the devils begin at any time, to chain them in the abyss of darkness and keep them there. The devil and his angels have been condemned by God, they are reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the Great Day, Jude, v. 6. The very fact that they are excluded from the bliss of heaven is for them a species of hell torture. In the meantime, however, and especially during these last days of the world, the devil is loosed for a little season, Rev. 20:3. Until the Day of Judgment Satan and his demons still have permission to move here on earth and to torment God's creatures. But their chains are upon them. And on the Day of Judgment they will enter their eternal prison and feel the tortures of the fire which is prepared for the devil and his angels, Matt. 25:41. (Kretzmann)

do not torment me – μή με βασάνισις—The demon pleads with Jesus not yet to begin the eternal torture that is the eschatological destiny of the devil and his minions according to Rev 14:10; 20:10, where βασανίζω occurs again; this is its only occurrence in Luke-Acts. (CC p. 362)

No sooner, however, did he see Jesus than he screamed aloud and threw himself down at His feet and begged with a loud voice that Jesus should not torment him. (Kretzmann)

8:29 *for* – γάρ—This suggests that 8:29 be taken as parenthetical. The man’s condition is described in a literary “flashback.” (CC p. 362)

he had commanded – παρήγγειλεν—This aorist form refers to a “valid command whose execution is taken for granted.” It describes a past specific utterance of an individual. The imperfect form παρήγγελλεν could signal the speaking of a command not yet accomplished or a focus on the contents of the speech. (CC p. 362)

Besides social isolation and a preoccupation with graveyards, superhuman strength was another characteristic of demoniacs. (TLSB)

For Jesus was about to command (conative imperfect) that the unclean spirit should come out of the man, hence the cry of fear. The disease was not permanently and continually of a violent nature, but rather took hold of this victim with intermittent spells of acute mania, followed by intervals of comparative quiet and sensibility. But when the devils seized him in their powerful grip, all efforts at keeping him under guard were fruitless. People had tried to keep him bound and in subjection by means of fetters and chains on hands and feet, but these were like strips of gossamer in the hands of the demoniac. At such times the poor victim was driven into the deserts, and no one could hold him. (Kretzmann)

had seized – συνηρπάκει—“Seizing by violence. (CC p. 362)

seized...bound...with chains and shackles – συνηρπάκει ... έδεσμεύετο ... ήλάνετο—These are iterative imperfects that suggest repeated action in the past, at a time prior to the event (Jesus’ order) mentioned in the context. (CC p. 362)

8:30 *What is your name?* Jesus asked the man his name, but it was the demons who replied, thus showing they were in control. (CSB)

τί σοι όνομά έστιν ... — This is the only place in the synoptics where Jesus carries on a conversation with a demon. (CC p. 362)

Since the man appeared to have a rational interval, Jesus asked him his name. The poor man being the victim, not only of one or of a few devils, answered accordingly that his name was Legion, thousands of demons having taken possession of him. But the devils were growing restive, knowing that their time for torturing this man was over. (Kretzmann)

Legion – λεγιών—A Roman legion consisted of three thousand to six thousand foot soldiers with cavalry. J. Nolland, *Luke 1–9:20*, 414, notes that this Latin term “reflects the military might of the Roman occupying forces and perhaps the cruelty of their practices.” (CC p. 363)

him. The demon-possessed man. (TLSB)

8:31 *Abyss*. A place of confinement for evil spirits and for Satan. (CSB)

Note from Rev. 9:1: Conceived of as the subterranean abode of demonic hordes (see 20:1; Lk 8:31). The Greek word means “very deep” or “bottomless,” and is used in the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the OT) to translate the Hebrew word for the primeval deep (see Ge 1:2; 7:11; Pr 8:28). Seven of the nine NT references are in Revelation.

Cast into hell. As numerous and powerful as these demons were, they knew Jesus had dominion over them and so again begged not to be cast into hell. (TLSB)

εἰς τὴν ἄβυσσον—The “abyss” (a transliteration) is described in various ways in Rev 9:1, 2, 11; 11:7, 17:8; 20:1, 3. It is pictured as a place of destruction, torment, and utter despair, the place where Satan dwells. It is the place of destiny for these demons. Rom 10:7 is the only additional verse where it occurs. The suggestion that the raging Sea of Galilee in Lk 8:22–25 represents the demonic forces of evil is supported by the comments of J. Fitzmyer, *Luke I–IX*, 739:

It is used often in the LXX to translate Hebrew *tehom*, which designated in OT cosmology the “watery deep,” or cosmic sea under the earth, the symbol of chaos and disorder conquered by the creator. Aware that this was their final destination, the demons now beg not to be sent there yet. Meanwhile, ... they ... wander the earth, seeking an abode in desert places, tombs, or even in demented persons. Hence they (violently) resist ejection and even seek to return to garnished abodes (Luke 11:24–26). Here they even request to be sent into pigs, unclean animals that will receive them. (CC p. 363)

8:32 *pigs*. Pigs were unclean to Jews, and eating them was forbidden (Lev 11:7–8), but this was the Decapolis, a predominantly Gentile territory. (CSB)

The presence of these ceremonially unclean animals makes it likely that this was Gentile territory. (TLSB)

he gave them permission – ἀγέλη χοίρων ἱκανῶν—Mark (5:13) tells us there were about two thousand pigs. The unclean swine are more appropriate hosts for unclean spirits than clean animals would be, but certainly even when swine are possessed, evil has corrupted God’s good creation. J. Nolland, *Luke 1–9:20*, 411, summarizes the three main views as to what happened when the demons entered the pigs:

(i) The pigs go to the abyss after all, because they go into the sea: Jesus has got the better of them. ... (ii) The demons take their revenge on Jesus by ensuring that he will be unpopular with the residents of Gerasa. ... (iii) The demons unleash the same destructive powers upon the pigs that have up to that point brought misery to the possessed man. Beyond the destruction of the pigs we lose sight of the demons.

Each of these has an element of truth, but the greatest significance of the incident is that the eschatological victory over Satan is proleptically present in Jesus; this scene anticipates Rev 20:3, 10. (CC p. 363)

8:33 *rushed down a steep bank* – The demons drop out of sight and are not mentioned again. The hearer may wonder what happened to them after the swine drowned. While the narrative provides no answer to that question, several observations may be offered. First, and most striking, is the *mercy* of Jesus. He takes no pleasure in prematurely torturing the demons (cf. Ezek 18:32; Jn 3:17). Even though they are beyond redemption, Jesus still shows them compassion by allowing their request. (CC p. 366)

Second, the fate of the *unclean* spirit(s) (Lk 8:29) now in *unclean* animals is an *unclean* death: they are literally “choked” (ἀποπνίγω). This word occurs only one other time in the NT: in the parable of the sower, the thorns choke some seed (8:7). *Thus the fate of the swine illustrates the fate of hearers of the Gospel who let worldly cares choke their faith.* (CC p. 366)

Finally, the wording of 8:33, “the herd rushed down the precipice,” recalls 4:29, where the Nazareth crowd intended to “throw [Jesus] over the precipice.” The suicidal stampede of swine is similar to the hometown crowd that rejected Jesus. To reject Jesus is to reject life and choose death. The demonic impulse behind such rejection may be seen in the parable of the sower, where in the first scenario *the devil* robs the hearers of salvation (8:12). (CC p. 366)

From a Jewish perspective, this was a fitting end for both the unclean spirits and the defiling animals. (TLSB)

8:34 *they fled and told* – These men were not merely reporting the loss of the pigs to their owners, but also recounting an amazing show of divine power. (TLSB)

8:35 *went out see* – And the people, undoubtedly with some resentment, went out to the spot to see what had happened. They came to Jesus, not in a gentle, receptive, but in an aggressive mood. (Kretzmann)

sitting at the feet of Jesus – παρὰ τοὺς πόδας τοῦ Ἰησοῦ—In the language of Jewish rabbis, to sit at the feet of someone is to listen to his teaching as a student or disciple. To the early church, the picture here might call to mind catechetical instruction. Cf. Mary, who sits at the feet of Jesus and listens to his word (Lk 10:39). Contrast the defeated enemies of the seated Messiah who are placed under his feet in Ps 110:1, quoted in Mt 22:44; Mk 12:36; Heb 1:13. (CC p. 363)

Now free of his possession, the man sits in the posture of a disciple. Clothed, rational, and enjoying the company of other people, this fellow has been fully restored. (TLSB)

8:36 *had been healed* – ἐσώθη—The man released from demon possession is brought under God’s reign of grace in Jesus. He is spiritually healed, or saved. Here, healing and cleansing from the unclean spirit (Lk 8:29) and salvation are all part of Jesus’ liberation. (CC p. 363)

They found many things which should have set them to thinking and praising God. He that formerly roamed over the country without rest was now quietly sitting at the feet of Jesus; he that formerly was plagued with the devils was now freed from that scourge; he that had scorned shame and clothing was now fully dressed; he that had been a raving maniac was in full possession of rational powers of thinking and speaking. (Kretzmann)

8:37 *as him to depart* – ἠρώτησεν αὐτὸν ... ἀπελθεῖν ἀπ’ αὐτῶν—Rejection (and reception [8:35, 38, 39]) of Jesus is also the mixed response when the Gospel goes to the Gentiles (cf. 8:4–15). (CC pp. 363-364)

—Jesus “turned away” to depart and return whence he had come; in the process, he was interrupted by the former demoniac. Cf. 8:40, where the same verb indicates that Jesus did return. (CC p. 364)

The reaction of the townspeople is understandable on two counts. First, they had just heard about the destruction of an entire herd of pigs, which represented a huge economic loss. Second, Jesus' show of divine power frightened them. (TLSB)

8:38 *sent him away* – Apparently, Jesus wanted him to witness to his hometown. There, his testimony would be most persuasive among those who knew him. (TLSB)

8:39 *Return home and tell how much God has done for you.* Although the man wanted to follow Jesus, he was directed to make the miracle known in his own native territory. There was no danger here of interference with Jesus' ministry. (CSB)

Luke subtly equates Jesus' miracle with something God has done. Cf 17:15–16, where the healed leper praises God by worshiping at Jesus' feet.

Further reinforcing this identification of Jesus, Luke concludes this passage with a startling affirmation that Jesus is God. Jesus tells the healed man to narrate “as many things as *God* has done for you” (ὅσα σοι ἐποίησεν ὁ θεός; 8:39), and then the demoniac went to his town proclaiming “as many things as *Jesus* had done for him” (ὅσα ἐποίησεν αὐτῷ ὁ Ἰησοῦς; 8:39). What God does and what Jesus does are one and the same. God acts through Jesus; Jesus is the presence of God. This is also why the demoniac desires to continue to remain with Jesus *in his presence* by sitting at his feet and begging to be with him (εἶναι σὺν αὐτῷ; 8:38). It is the *presence of Jesus* that wields such power over demons. But this also frightens other people and causes them to reject him. Ironically, it is not what the people *hear* (the word of Jesus), as in Nazareth, but what the people *see* (the miracle) that produces fear and rejection. The presence of Jesus, who is identified by the demon as “Son of God the Most High,” is met with faith by some and with rejection by others—the two reactions explained by the parable of the sower. (CC pp. 366-367)

The healed demoniac knows who Jesus is from the perspective of saving faith and goes throughout his home territory to proclaim what Jesus has done. Jesus, likewise, returns to his home territory, Galilee, to continue his preaching and healing. Soon, the Twelve and the seventy(-two) will be sent to do the same. Through this preaching of the Word, the demons are vanquished, as Jesus will remark to the seventy(-two) when he tells them that through their preaching, “I was watching Satan falling like lightning from heaven” (10:18). Preaching the Word of Jesus—the message of the kingdom—conquers the demons. Through this activity, the kingdom is coming. The final banishment and eternal torture of the demons is yet to come (see textual note on 8:28). But they are in retreat. The preaching of the Word sends them from where they ought not be—inhabiting man, created to be son of God (3:38)—into temporary refuge in places more appropriate: unclean swine and chaotic water (see comments on 8:22–25). Let the seed take root in the hearer, producing confident faith: Jesus is the one sent from God to bring salvation to all people, and when the church proclaims his words and his deeds, the “Son of God the Most High” (8:28) rolls back the reign of demons and ushers in God's kingdom. (CC p.367)

ὑπόστρεφε— Just as Jesus was to return to Galilee to preach the Gospel (8:37, 40), so this man is to return to his home to do the same thing. Evangelism begins at home (Acts 1:8). (CC p. 364)

διηγοῦ— Luke termed a Gospel report as a “narrative” (διήγησις; 1:1). Here is the verb form, “narrate.” The demoniac is to narrate the mighty deeds of Jesus; he is an evangelist! (CC p. 364)

the whole city – πόλιν—Gerasa officially is a πόλις, a city-state, with territory (farms and hamlets) surrounding it under its administration. (CC p. 364)

The man, following the order of Christ, promptly became a missionary throughout the city and region, declaring what Jesus had done for him. His faith would not permit him to remain silent; he must needs declare the great works of God. Every Christian has received such wonderful gifts of God in and through Christ, though perhaps not in the body, yet surely in the soul. And it behooves every one that loves the Lord Jesus to speak of the great things which God has done for him, as far as his personal influence reaches. (Kretzmann)

8:26–39 Luke’s lengthiest report of an exorcism is also his most dramatic: in the Gerasene region, Jesus frees a deranged and menacing demoniac. The magnitude of this man’s suffering leads some—especially the pious—to dread evil spirits and wonder what prevents any of us from being the object of their attacks. Though we do well to take note that demons exist, we may also trust in Jesus, whose resurrection has disarmed the forces of sin, death, and even Satan. • “The pow’rs of death have done their worst, But Christ their legions hath dispersed. Let shouts of holy joy outburst. Alleluia!” Amen. (LSB 464:2). (TLSB)

Jesus Heals a Woman and Jairus's Daughter

40 Now when Jesus returned, the crowd welcomed him, for they were all waiting for him. **41** And there came a man named Jairus, who was a ruler of the synagogue. And falling at Jesus' feet, he implored him to come to his house, **42** for he had an only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she was dying. As Jesus went, the people pressed around him. **43** And there was a woman who had had a discharge of blood for twelve years, and though she had spent all her living on physicians, she could not be healed by anyone. **44** She came up behind him and touched the fringe of his garment, and immediately her discharge of blood ceased. **45** And Jesus said, **“Who was it that touched me?”** When all denied it, Peter said, “Master, the crowds surround you and are pressing in on you!” **46** But Jesus said, **“Someone touched me, for I perceive that power has gone out from me.”** **47** And when the woman saw that she was not hidden, she came trembling, and falling down before him declared in the presence of all the people why she had touched him, and how she had been immediately healed. **48** And he said to her, **“Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace.”** **49** While he was still speaking, someone from the ruler's house came and said, “Your daughter is dead; do not trouble the Teacher any more.” **50** But Jesus on hearing this answered him, **“Do not fear; only believe, and she will be well.”** **51** And when he came to the house, he allowed no one to enter with him, except Peter and John and James, and the father and mother of the child. **52** And all were weeping and mourning for her, but he said, **“Do not weep, for she is not dead but sleeping.”** **53** And they laughed at him, knowing that she was dead. **54** But taking her by the hand he called, saying, **“Child, arise.”** **55** And her spirit returned, and she got up at once. And he directed that something should be given her to eat. **56** And her parents were amazed, but he charged them to tell no one what had happened.

The series of mighty works that follow upon the parable of the sower now culminates in a healing and a resurrection from the dead. These third and fourth miracles show that Jesus is present in creation to release it from its bondage to disease and death. (CC p. 370)

8:40 when Jesus returned – ἐν δὲ τῷ ὑποστρέφειν τὸν Ἰησοῦν—This phrase links this passage directly to the preceding one about the demoniac, cf. 8:37 and also 8:39. (CC p. 368)

To Capernaum, Jesus’ headquarter for His Galilean ministry. (TLSB)

crowd – ὁ ὄχλος—This is the same crowd that heard the parable of the sower (8:4) and prevented Jesus' mother and brothers from coming to him (8:19). They were waiting for him on the Galilean side of the lake while he was healing the demoniac. Compared to the crowds on the pagan Gentile side of the lake, this crowd reacts positively to Jesus, hoping to witness more miracles, and they are not disappointed. (CC p. 369)

The return of Jesus to Galilee was apparently hailed with delight by the majority of the people, though the scribes and Pharisees were again a thorn in the flesh, Matt. 9, 18. Whether they had expected the Lord to come back this soon or not, they were eager to see Him. Their minds were turned toward Him, mainly on account of the recent healings, for but few of them realized His real office. Their carnal hopes concerning a Messiah with an earthly kingdom were still dominant in their hearts. (Kretzmann)

8:41 *man name Jairus – καὶ ἰδοὺ ... Ἰάϊρος*—Although we know nothing of Jairus beyond what is said here, not even his town in Galilee, Luke's introduction, "and behold" (καὶ ἰδοὺ), suggests that he is a significant person, and indeed Luke immediately adds that he was a leader of the synagogue. (CC p. 369)

But now a man by the name of Jairus, an elder of the local synagog, came to Him, greatly excited. Falling down at the feet of Jesus, he begged Him most earnestly to come into his house, for his daughter, an only child of about twelve years, was dying, yea, as Matthew relates, she may even now be dead. Luke adds that when Jesus turned to go away, the great multitudes thronged Him to suffocation. (Kretzmann)

ruler of the synagogue. The ruler was responsible for conducting services, selecting participants and maintaining order. (CSB)

ἄρχων τῆς συναγωγῆς—A ruler of the synagogue could participate in the liturgy, handle the finances, or be a member of the elders. L. T. Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 141, notes that here is "a leader of a local community who seeks the prophet's [Jesus'] help, not a member of the religious elite who tend to reject him." How ironic, in the context of Luke's gospel, that a leader in the Jewish religious community should come to Jesus and fall at his feet just as the pagan demoniac had done in the previous passage (8:28). The raising of Jairus' daughter recalls both the healing of the centurion's slave (7:1–10) and the raising of the widow's son at Nain (7:11–17). (CC p. 369)

The layman responsible for the local house of worship. (TLSB)

falling at Jesus feet – An act of humility and respect, this posture also reflected his desperation. (TLSB)

8:42 *twelve – ἑτῶν δώδεκα*—At twelve years old, Jairus' daughter is not yet at the age of eligibility for marriage (and childbearing). Her death would be doubly tragic, for she is her father's only daughter (perhaps his only child) and has not yet been given to have children. She will be juxtaposed with the woman with a flow of blood (probably an impediment to childbearing) for twelve years. J. Fitzmyer, *Luke I–IX*, 746, sees the reiteration of the number twelve as meaning that "what happens to the woman sick for twelve years becomes a sign of what will be done for the twelve-year-old girl." (CC p. 369)

The girl was almost of marriageable age. As such, the promise of family and children lay just ahead of her. (TLSB)

8:43 *blood discharge*. The hemorrhage had made her ceremonially unclean for 12 years (see Lev 15:19–30). (CSB)

Plainly, this was a chronic problem. Note that “twelve years” (v 42) intertwines the accounts of the healing of Jairus’s daughter and the woman. (TLSB)

ἐν ῥύσει αἵματος—The flow of blood is most likely a menstrual problem that would render the woman unclean (cf. Lev 15:19–27; Ezek 36:17). As a result, she should not even be in the crowd. (CC p. 369)

no one could heal her. Comparison with Mk 5:26 shows the restraint of Luke the physician in describing the failure of doctors to help her. (CSB)

Two clauses describe the situation of the woman: “being with a flow of her blood for twelve years” and “was not able to be healed.” In addition, there is a parenthetical concessive clause about her attempts to buy a cure (ιατροῖς προσαναλώσασα ὅλον τὸν βίον. ιατροῖς προσαναλώσασα ὅλον τὸν βίον—Some very good manuscripts omit this phrase, but the great preponderance of witnesses include it. (CC p. 369)

She had made every effort to be cured, to the extent of giving up to the doctors, expending upon physicians, all her living, all her means. And yet, as even Luke the physician writes, she could not be healed of any of them. A true picture of human misery and helplessness! (Kretzmann)

8:44-47 To touch Jesus is the major concern for the woman with the hemorrhage. Four times in four verses, there is a reference to touching Jesus: The woman *touches* the tassel of Jesus’ garment (8:44). Jesus asks, “Who is the one who *touched* me?” (8:45). Responding to Peter’s observation concerning all the people crowding around, Jesus insists, “Someone *touched* me, for I knew that power had gone out from me” (8:46). And the woman confesses that she *touched* Jesus and was immediately healed (8:47). What the catechumen must see in this focus on the *touching* of Jesus is a strong incarnational and Christological theme: salvation and healing come from Jesus, who is physically present in the flesh. He is the one from whom the “power” (δύναμιν; 8:46) comes forth. Like the demoniac before her, this woman must testify before “all the people” (8:47) that her healing comes from contact with God, who has come in human flesh in Jesus. (CC p. 372)

8:44 *touched* – καὶ γυνὴ ... ἤψατο ... ἔστη ἡ ῥύσις τοῦ αἵματος αὐτῆς—The subjects and main verbs of this compound/complex sentence are “the woman ... touched” and “the flow of blood stopped.” Together, they describe the action of the text. Two clauses describe the situation of the woman: “being with a flow of her blood for twelve years” and “was not able to be healed.” In addition, there is a parenthetical concessive clause about her attempts to buy a cure (ιατροῖς προσαναλώσασα ὅλον τὸν βίον; see below). A participial phrase that is adverbial and dependent on ἤψατο describes her movement to position herself in order to touch Jesus (προσελθοῦσα ὀπισθεν). (CC p. 369)

fringe – κράσπεδον—This is the word the LXX uses in the OT commands that the Israelites place “tassels” on the hems of their garments to remind them of God’s commands (תִּצְיָצָ, Num 15:38–39; דָּלָתָ, Deut 22:12). Later Jewish tradition said that such a tassel should consist of six hundred thirteen threads, one for each command supposedly contained in the Torah. The Greek word is also in the LXX of Zech 8:23 (for תִּצְיָצָ). (CC p. 369)

In 8:44 Luke records the detail that the woman touched the “tassel” of Jesus’ garment (see textual note on 8:44). This has two-fold significance. First, by wearing a tasseled garment Jesus was fulfilling God’s command in Num 15:38–39; Deut 22:12, even as Jesus fulfilled the entirety of the OT. God stated that the foundation for that command (like that of the entire Torah) was God’s redemption of his covenant people. The purpose of the tassels was so the Israelites would remember to do all God’s commands and be holy, even as God is holy (Num 15:37–41). Jesus is the Holy One of God who has come to redeem all people. That leads to a second observation: the miracle also is in fulfillment of the prophecy of Zech 8:20–23, which speaks of *foreigners grasping the tassels of a Jew to entreat the favor of Yahweh and learn about the true God from him*. We are not told that the hemorrhaging woman was a foreigner (cf. the Roman centurion in 7:10), but a missionary emphasis is prominent in the context: the parables of the sower and of the lamp on a stand (8:1–18); Jesus’ new definition of kinship (8:19–21); and the sending out of the Twelve (9:1–10). (CC pp. 372–373)

8:45 *Who touched me?* For the woman’s good and for a testimony to the crowd, Jesus insisted that the miracle be made known. (CSB)

Jesus felt the woman’s need for healing. His question singles out the woman from the crowd, so that He can praise her amazing faith. (TLSB)

τίς ὁ ἀψάμενός μου ... —Mark reports Jesus’ inner awareness of this (Mk 5:30), reflected in Luke in the aorist ἔγνω (8:46). Luke does not report the disciples’ reply to Jesus but gives leadership to Peter. (CC p. 370)

Peter – ὁ Πέτρος—Many manuscripts have “Peter and those with him,” but those words are omitted by. It appears to be an attempt by some scribes to harmonize Luke with Mark’s “disciples.” Luke has more references to Peter alone than Matthew and Mark have, and the shorter reading, “Peter,” is the better choice here. (CC p. 370)

master – ἐπιστάτα—This title is only found in Luke’s gospel. (CC p. 370)

crowds surround You. Humorous confusion from the apostles because dozens of people would have touched Jesus as He made His way. The Gospels repeatedly depict Jesus as besieged by those seeking help (e.g., Mk 3:9–10; Lk 5:18–19; 6:17–18). (TLSB)

8:46 *power has gone out*. Luke uses power in connection with healing at 5:17 and 6:19. (CC p. 370)

8:47 Though the woman had tried to escape notice, she was now the focus of attention, both of the crowd and of Jesus. (TLSB)

8:48 *Daughter*. A tender address used nowhere else in Jesus’ recorded words (cf. 23:28). (CSB)

By virtue of her faith, this woman was part of God’s family; Jesus addresses her in familial terms. (TLSB)

Θυγάτηρ—By calling the woman “daughter,” Jesus declares that she is restored to Israel; the greeting connects her healing with the raising of Jairus’ daughter (8:49). (CC p. 370)

Go in peace. Cf. 7:50. (CSB)

faith has saved – ἡ πίστις σου σέσωκέν σε—See comments at 7:50. The phrase is identical in 7:50; 8:48; 17:19; 18:42. (CC p. 370)

Following the woman’s confession of Jesus’ mighty deed of healing, Jesus proclaims, “Your faith has saved you” (8:48). The wording of this phrase is identical in 7:50; 8:48; 17:19; 18:42. The woman now rests in the peace first proclaimed by the angels at the birth of Jesus (see 2:14). (CC p. 373)

This is another theme in these two miracles: faith grasps that God incarnate—God come in the flesh of Jesus—frees from bondage. Luke wants the catechumen to know that this incarnate Jesus creates the community into which these outcasts are now incorporated. This, of course, returns the catechumen to the parable of the sower. Those whose hearing is combined with faith are brought into a community through the body of Christ, whose Word has the power to free creation from the bondage into which it has fallen. For the later church, this power will come through his resurrected body. This is foreshadowed here when the woman merely touches his garment and is healed, and when he *takes the hand* of the young girl and by his word of command to “arise” (8:54) gives her back her life. (“Arise” translates the same Greek verb regularly used in the NT for Christ’s own resurrection.) Both individuals come into physical contact with Jesus’ incarnate body—and are saved. (CC p. 373)

Faith is essential. Only by faith does one grasp the mystery that salvation in all its ramifications comes through Jesus, God made flesh. When the storm raged and the boat started to sink, the disciples were weak in faith. But they knew to whom they should turn. When the demoniac was healed, he became a faithful disciple. Now Jesus says to the woman healed of a twelve-year flow of blood, “Daughter, your faith has saved you. Go in peace” (8:48). Faith is the means by which *anyone* now may enter the family of Jesus (8:19–21). Essentially, this is the same word Jesus spoke to Jairus: “Do not fear, only believe, and she will be saved” (8:50). To believe in the possibility of resurrection for his daughter takes faith. But for the disciples, the demoniac, the bleeding woman, and Jairus, the greatest act of faith is to believe that their own eternal resurrection depends on the bodily resurrection of Jesus. (CC pp. 373-374)

Jesus is preparing his disciples for this revelation in Luke 24 and Acts 1–2. Likewise, the evangelist St. Luke is preparing the hearers and students of his gospel for their resurrection when he recounts the parable of the sower and these four mighty acts of salvation. Jesus’ command to silence now, before his own resurrection, alerts catechumens to the significance of Jesus’ resurrection as central to the mystery of the faith and to those mysteries—the sacraments—through which their bodies as well as their souls are touched with Christ’s resurrection power. (CC p. 374)

Hereupon Jesus, ever kind and sympathetic, gave her the further assurance that her faith had brought her the priceless boon of health. He takes great pleasure in commending again and again the qualities of faith, by which it is able to do such great things. Her health was a reward of grace for the firmness of her trust. She should not fear or be uneasy in her mind over the incident, but go to her home in peace. Note: Such faith is needed in the Church and in its individual members even today; there is too much stereotyped sameness in the lives of the church-members in merely moving along a broad Christian way. Victories of faith are not so frequent in our days because the conquering faith is absent. (Kretzmann)

8:49 *daughter is dead* – τέθνηκεν—The perfect “is dead” is placed at the beginning of the Greek sentence for emphasis. (CC p. 370)

The matter with the woman had delayed Jesus for some time, and this was altogether in line with His plans. For now one of the servants of the ruler of the synagog came and told Jairus that his daughter had really died, adding that he should no longer vex the Master, should in no way bother Him anymore. (Kretzmann)

Teacher. Title of honor shows respect, even where full-blown faith may be lacking (cf 7:40). (TLSB)

8:50 *only believe.* A call to trust God, even in the face of insurmountable problems. The same Jesus who can calm storms, exorcise hosts of demons, and heal the incurable can also help this dead girl. (TLSB)

All help was now too late. But Jesus wanted to strengthen the faith of the distracted father, and therefore calmly told him: Fear not, only believe. Mistrust, suspicion, fear is an enemy of faith. For faith demands a trust with all the heart, with all the soul, and with all the mind. Even when the last breath has been drawn and one of our loved ones lies quiet in death, even then trust must not be thrown away. Faith reaches beyond the grave. (Kretzmann)

8:51 *Peter, James and John* – Πέτρον καὶ Ἰωάννην καὶ Ἰάκωβον—Peter, John, and James are singled out from among the Twelve to witness the mystery of Jesus’ raising the dead, a miracle which is a parable of the new creation (see 8:10). Jesus will command the girl’s parents to tell no one of the miracle. This is the first time these three apostles are listed together. Luke’s word order associates Peter with John (cf. 9:28; contrast Mk 5:37). (CC p. 370)

8:52 *weeping and mourning.* In the house of Jairus everything was in commotion. The official mourners had arrived as early as this and were making the day hideous with their noises, with their weeping and wailing. (Kretzmann)

not dead but sleeping. Jesus meant that she was not permanently dead (see Jn 11:11–14 for a similar statement about Lazarus). (CSB)

8:53 *laughed at him* – κατεγέλων—A cognate of this word is used in the beatitudes and woes: “Blessed [you] crying now, for you will laugh [γελάσετε]. ... Woe, you who laugh [γελῶντες] now, for you will mourn and weep” (Lk 6:21, 25). (CC p. 370)

3:54 *taking her by the hand* – αὐτὸς δὲ κρατήσας τῆς χειρὸς αὐτῆς—This is a gesture reminiscent of the OT. “For I, Yahweh, your God, hold your right hand” (Is 41:13). “I am Yahweh; I have called you in righteousness; I have taken you by the hand and kept you” (42:6). (CC p. 370)

Child. Gk *pais*, a term often noting affection. (TLSB)

8:55 *spirit returned* – ἐπέστρεψεν τὸ πνεῦμα αὐτῆς—L. T. Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke*, 142, notes that “when Jesus dies, he gives up his spirit (*pneuma*, 23:46), and his resurrection life is signaled by his giving the *pneuma* to others (Acts 2:33). So the departure and return of the girl’s *pneuma* signals her death and life.” There is also an allusion here to 1 Ki 17:21–22, where Elijah raises from the dead a widow’s son. (CC p. 370)

Flesh and spirit—separated by death—were now reunited in life. (TLSB)

give her something to eat – διέταξεν αὐτῇ δοθῆναι φαγεῖν—That the girl is to be given (food) to eat is a sign of the reality of the new life (cf. Lk 24:30, 41–43; Acts 10:4). (CC p. 370)

Jesus shows concern for this girl's recovery of strength, but also commands an act that proves she is bodily alive (cf 24:41–43). (TLSB)

8:56 *parents were amazed* – The parents were extremely amazed at the miracle which was done before their eyes to their beloved daughter. But Christ retained His calm manner, merely impressing upon them the necessity of keeping the fact for themselves. (Kretzmann)

charged them not to tell. Further publicity at this time concerning a raising from the dead would have been counterproductive to Jesus' ministry. (CSB)

Jesus wanted to continue preaching from town to town until it was time to give His life as a ransom on the cross. If people came only for His miracles, they would miss out on what mattered most. (TLSB)

8:40–56 After displaying His mastery over nature and demons, Jesus shows His authority over incurable illness and even death. Just as the disciples despaired in the face of danger (v 25), we also sometimes despair as catastrophe looms. But Jesus can deal with any problem. His sacrificial death and victorious resurrection prove that He can overcome even the gravest threat. • “O Lord God, the just Judge, strong and patient, You know the frailty and wickedness of men. Be my strength, and all my trust, for my own conscience does not suffice for me. Although I know nothing by myself, yet I cannot hereby justify myself; for without Your mercy, in Your sight shall no man living be justified. Amen.” (Thom K, *TLWA*, p 231) (TLSB)