



Good News for all people.

The Gospel of Luke

Week 7 Discussion Questions

Week of 10/9/22

Text: Luke 8:4-15 (Thornton) and Luke 8:22-39 (Erie and Boulder)

Thornton Questions

Icebreaker: If you're familiar with Jesus's parables, which is one of your favorites?

1. What advantage do you think a parable could have over a more direct form of teaching? What does Jesus say about his purpose for them in verses 9-10?

Sometimes a story can capture more of the nuances of truth better than a plain equation or proposition. A parable can also be more memorable as it engages our imaginations. Jesus states his purpose, which leads to a complex theological matter. He's quoting from Isaiah 6 where Israel is facing judgment from God due to their hard-heartedness. God will speak but they won't "hear" or understand because they have stubbornly rejected God's ways. Jesus's parables can have the same effect of communicating truth to some but obscuring it from those who have their ears and eyes shut up to the gospel.

Application: What do you find more compelling—a story that illustrates a truth or a more clearly packaged piece of information? Why do you think that is?

There's no wrong answer here even though it's likely most will find a story more compelling. Engineers may disagree!! 😊

2. Jesus explains three different scenarios where the seed does not settle into good soil. How would you summarize these?

One is hindered by the devil, another by testing, and another by relative ease and comfort.

Application: Which of these scenarios seems closest to what you've witnessed in others' lives? Explain.

There's room for people to answer this differently. Some may see an apparent combination of these "soils." Commentators sometimes suggest that the third scenario is especially common in our present-day US society.

3. Jesus offsets three types of "bad" soil with just one that's "good." What does that suggest about the reasons some do not come to faith?

There's not a single scenario for unbelief (except spiritual blindness/hardness caused by sin). People have different reasons for their unbelief.

Application: Do you think the parable sufficiently covers every kind of response to the gospel? Why?

Jesus is being general in his depictions of the soil, so it's likely that we could assign unbelief to at least one of these. Even so, our vantage point on another's unbelief may reveal a greater level of detail or nuance in why someone doesn't believe.

4. The “good” soil depicts “those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patience.” From what you know about Scripture, what do you think Jesus has in mind for someone to “bear fruit with patience”?

Jesus talks elsewhere (John 15) about the importance of “remaining” or “abiding” in him so that we would bear fruit, so this is a common image he employs. Maybe the most famous passage that picks up this same idea is Galatians 5:22-24 where Paul writes about the fruit of the Spirit. In short, fruit is anything that’s visible in our lives that reflects what Jesus has done. We do this “with patience” because these works can form and “sprout” over extended periods of time as we rely on the Lord to work in us.

Application: Where or in what way do you see this kind of fruit in your own life?

This isn’t intended to make people feel ashamed but encouraged as we can help identify how God is at work in us.

5. *Application:* Jesus told his disciples in verse 10, “To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God...” What does that imply for us as we get to read those same words he originally expressed to the disciples?

They had a privileged position...but so do we today! We get to listen in to what Jesus said, which should reinforce how much we value Scripture.

Erie and Boulder Questions

Icebreaker: When have you been most afraid? What happened?

1. Whose idea was it to cross the lake? From what we can tell of who the passengers included, which of them would we expect to be most comfortable with rough seas?

It was Jesus’s idea! We would expect the professional fishermen among the disciples to be most comfortable on the water. Of course, they could also be most aware of the true danger they were in!

Application: What does this imply about the kind of expectations we should set as we too “step into the boat with Jesus”?

We might have to rethink any assumption that following Jesus will keep us in calm waters! In one sense (an eternal one), we are safest at Jesus’s side. In another, though, we may face great physical danger as we follow where he leads.

2. In verse 25, after the calm Jesus rebukes the disciples with the question, “Where is your faith?” Why are they, in-turn, “afraid” after the danger has gone away?

They realize...and are growing in their realization...just how powerful Jesus is. Even more, though, their question has the implied thought that only God is able to do what Jesus just did in front of them.

Application: Have you ever had an experience where you’ve cried out to Jesus with this kind of desperation? If so, what happened?

3. What can we observe about the demons’ impact on the man Jesus and his companions encountered on the other side of the lake?

The demons left him naked, isolated from his community, out of his mind, and they enabled him with supernatural strength.

Application: From his interaction with Jesus in verses 27-33, why can we be confident of our protection from the demonic as we follow Jesus?

The demoniac runs to Jesus and identifies who he is immediately, but he/they have no authority over Jesus, while Jesus has total authority over them. They have to beg Jesus to not destroy them, but they seem to destroy themselves once Jesus grants their request. There's no contest here. Jesus doesn't struggle or have to call for reinforcements even though he's greatly outnumbered by the demons.

4. Verses 35 and 37 tell us that the people of the region of the Gerasenes were fearful once they saw what Jesus had done. How would you compare their fear with that of the disciples back in verse 25?

The disciples' fear was productive and faith-producing. The fear of the others only separated them from Jesus. Luke doesn't tell us why they had this kind of fear. Other parallel accounts indicate that the financial loss from the pigs was an issue, but Luke doesn't make this connection. We can see that Jesus's supernatural work in both episodes rightfully led those who were present to fear, but not all fear leads us to bow at the feet of Jesus!

Application: Do you have any experience with someone reacting in "fear" to God—either in a positive or a negative sense? What happened?

5. Jesus told the man to return home. Why do you think Jesus might have done this instead of having him travel back across the lake to Galilee?

This is admittedly speculative, but we can offer a couple likely reasons. First, the man was probably a Gentile since this region was largely Gentile. He would have faced opposition in Galilee and especially in Jerusalem. Second, this was best known to the people of his town and region. His testimony would have been most powerful to all who knew about his life before Jesus showed up.

Application: What can we learn from this about what the course of our lives could look like as we follow Jesus?

Some are called to leave home and even travel across the world in foreign missions. Others, though, are called to go back home. There's no one-size-fits-all solution to what it means to "go" and make disciples of all nations. Wherever we go, though, we are called to be witnesses of what Jesus has done.