

CAPITOL STUDIES

MARCH 19, 2025 • WEEK 10



LUKE FOR LEGISLATORS

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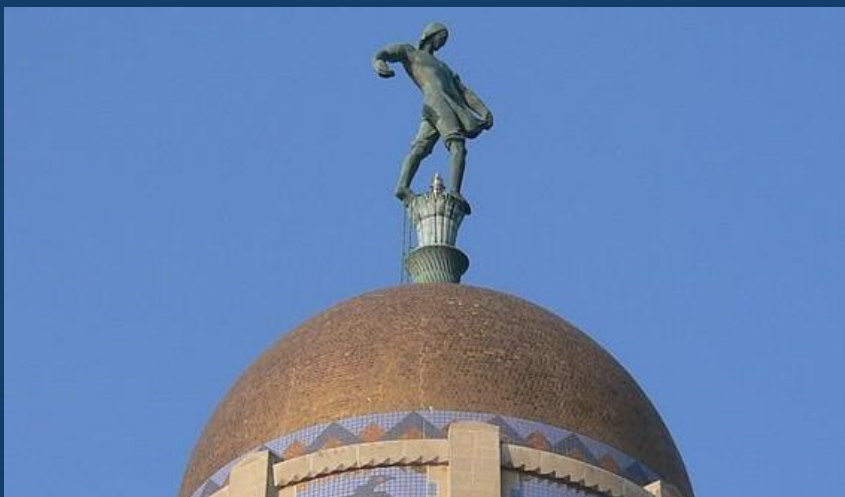
Theme Verse

Luke 19:10

For the Son of Man has come to **seek** and to **save** that which was **lost**.



Seed that Bears Good Fruit



THOSE WHO COME TO LIVE IN THE UNITED STATES from other countries are not just given all the rights and privileges of citizenship. To become a citizen, they must do things like show proficiency in English and pass certain tests. If they can do those things, they are then able to raise their hands, swearing allegiance to the United States as an official citizen with all the accompanying rights and privileges. Paul tells us as believers in Eph. 2:19, “So then you are no longer strangers and aliens [foreigners], but you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God’s household.” When you come to Jesus in faith, you renounce your old citizenship in this world and become a part of a new family, a new kingdom with a new Ruler. You are no longer governed by the wiles and wishes of your old master, the prince of this world. You are a son or daughter of God. “For we also once were foolish ourselves, disobedient, deceived, enslaved to various lusts and pleasures, spending our life in malice and envy, hateful, hating one another. But when the kindness of God our Savior and His love for mankind appeared, He saved us, not on the basis of deeds which we have done in righteousness, but according to His mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewing by the holy Spirit who He poured out upon us richly through Jesus Christ our savior, so that being justified by His grace we would be made heirs according to the hope of eternal life” (Titus 3:3-7).¹

Arin Hess

Pastor Arin Hess, *Chaplain, Capitol Studies*



INTRODUCTION

“One of the major themes in Luke 8 is how to get faith and use it in the everyday experiences of life. In the first section, Jesus laid the foundation by teaching His disciples that faith comes through receiving the Word of God into an understanding heart. In the second part, He put them through a series of ‘examinations’ to see how much they had really learned. Most of us enjoy Bible study, but we wish we could avoid the examinations that often follow the lessons! However, it is in the tests of life that faith really grows and we get closer to Christ.

“The cynical American editor H.L. Mencken defined faith as ‘an illogical belief in the occurrence of the impossible,’ and Mark Twain said (through one of his characters) that faith is ‘believin’ what you know ain’t so.’ Of course, these men are describing superstition, not faith; for the faith of a Christian rests on solid foundations.

“Everybody lives by faith in something or someone. The difference between the Christian believer and the unsaved person is not that one has faith and the other does not. They *both* have faith. The difference is in *the object of their faith*, for faith is only as good as the object. The Christian believer has put his faith in Jesus Christ, and he bases that faith on the Word of God.”²

I. JESUS’ PASSION

Luke 8:1-3

Soon afterwards, He began going around from one city and village to another, proclaiming and preaching the kingdom of God. The twelve were with Him, ²and also some women who had been healed of evil spirits and sicknesses: Mary who was called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, ³and Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod’s steward, and Susanna, and many others who were contributing to their support out of their private means.

A. Proclamation

Jesus, recognizing the shortness of His days, travels with His disciples to share the good news of the kingdom of God to all people in the surrounding villages. This kingdom belongs to God and all His family. To become part of God’s family, one must be born again by the Spirit of God (John 3:3-7). That can only happen by placing one’s trust in the Messiah, Jesus Christ, alone for salvation. He is the Lamb of God Who will take away the sin of the world. Jesus wants the whole “world” to know.

B. Provision

Rabbis were typically supported by their disciples. God used holy women to support Jesus with their finances and material possessions. These women, like the woman who “was a sinner” in chapter 7, were delivered, helped, and/or blessed by Jesus. Rescued individuals want to be a part of further rescue operations. Mary Magdalene was most likely from the



town of Magdala. She had been controlled by seven demons until Jesus intervened and cast them out. These are the only verses in Scripture that talk about Susanna, but what a beautiful way to be remembered—one who walked with Jesus! Joanna may have been a source for Luke’s details of Herod, as her husband was his steward.

C. Position of Women

Both Mary Magdalene and Joanna are mentioned again in Luke 24 as part of the group of women who brought spices for the body of Jesus. Angels greeted them with “He is not here. He is risen!” And they were told to share the news with Jesus’ disciples, whom they obviously knew, having traveled with them. Mary Magdalene and Joanna (and perhaps Susanna) followed Jesus from the beginning of His earthly ministry to the end. They loved Jesus greatly because of how He had changed their lives. “But for these women to travel with the group would have been viewed as scandalous, at least by Jesus’ detractors. Apart from some small Greek philosophic schools, adult coeducation was unheard of, and that these women are learning Jesus’ teaching as closely as his male disciples would surely bother some outsiders as well. Upper-class families had more mobility, but commoners might still talk. While a small number of philosophers had women disciples, many criticized this practice; we know of no other women disciples among Jewish teachers in this period.”³ “Jesus shatters the societal conception of the inferiority of women, raising them to the status of disciples (unheard of in Judaism) and to a place of spiritual equality.”⁴

“Luke says that there were ‘many others’ in addition to these three women. In the crowning day, when the books are opened and the names are read aloud, these women will receive their reward, as will all of those who have followed in their path.”⁵

II. JESUS’ PARABLES

Luke 8:4-8a

When a large crowd was coming together, and those from the various cities were journeying to Him, He spoke by way of a parable: ⁵“The sower went out to sow his seed; and as he sowed, some fell beside the road, and it was trampled under foot and the birds of the air ate it up. ⁶Other seed fell on rocky soil, and as soon as it grew up, it withered away, because it had no moisture. ⁷Other seed fell among the thorns; and the thorns grew up with it and choked it out. ⁸Other seed fell into the good soil, and grew up, and produced a crop a hundred times as great.”

Probably as a result of Jesus’ visits, people from the surrounding towns came to see and hear Him. Before this time, Jesus had been very direct in His teaching to the multitudes. Now, He speaks to them in parables, a common way of teaching in Judaism. Seventeen of Jesus’ thirty-nine parables are found only in the book of Luke. Jesus’ parable on this day was of a farmer sowing seed. We can picture that clearly when we look to the top of our Nebraska Capitol building. The seed was sown by hand





in soil that had been plowed. Seed sown in good, prepared soil would produce very well. But because the seed was thrown, it could easily go beyond the plowed portion on to hard roads, into rocky places, or in thorn bushes where it could not thrive.

Luke 8:8b

As He said these things, He would call out, “He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

Only Jesus used this expression. He often used it “to stress particularly important statements cast in mysterious language (cf. 14:35; Matt. 11:15; 13:43; Mark 4:23).”⁶ This “first use of the expression warns us against careless hearing of the Word of God. The final use warns against worshipping the Antichrist [Rev. 13:9]. The one instance shows where unbelief begins; the other instance shows where it ends.”⁷ “‘Hearing’ means listening with spiritual understanding and receptivity. ‘So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God’ (Rom. 10:17). With this in mind, we can understand the three admonitions Jesus gave His followers [v.15].”⁸

Luke 8:9-10

His disciples began questioning Him as to what this parable meant. ¹⁰And He said, “To you it has been granted to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest it is in parables, so that seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.”

“Parables required more explanation (cf. v. 36) and Jesus employed them to obscure the truth from unbelievers while making it clearer to His disciples (vv. 11,12). For the remainder of His Galilean ministry, He did not speak to the multitudes except in parables (v. 34). Jesus’ veiling the truth from unbelievers this way was both an act of judgment and an act of mercy. It was ‘judgment’ because it kept them in the darkness that they loved (cf. John 3:19), but it was ‘mercy’ because they had already rejected the light, so any exposure to more truth would only increase their condemnation.”⁹

A. The Sower and the Seed

Luke 8:11

Now the parable is this: the seed is the word of God.

“Initially, the Sower is Jesus Christ, but the sower represents any of God’s people who share the Word of God (John 4:35–38). The seed is the Word of God, for, like seed, the Word has life and power (Heb. 4:12) and can produce spiritual fruit (Gal. 5:22–23). But the seed can do nothing until it is planted (John 12:24). When a person hears and understands the Word, then the seed is planted in the heart. What happens after that depends on the nature of the soil.”¹⁰

B. Bad Soil

Luke 8:12-14

Those beside the road are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their heart, so that they will not believe



and be saved. ¹³Those on the rocky soil are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no firm root; they believe for a while, and in time of temptation fall away. ¹⁴The seed which fell among the thorns, these are the ones who have heard, and as they go on their way they are choked with worries and riches and pleasures of this life, and bring no fruit to maturity.

“The first kind of hearer [roadside/hard] is illustrated by the scribes and Pharisees, who ‘rejected the counsel of God against themselves’ (Luke 7:30). Judas, Herod, and Pilate belong to the same terrible company. The second kind of hearer [rocky/shallow] is illustrated by Demas, who abandoned Paul in his hour of need when the going got tough. The Lord had His share of those who ‘went back, and walked no more with him’ (John 6:66). The third kind of hearer [thorny/corrupt] is illustrated by the rich young ruler (Matt. 19:22). The fourth kind of hearer [good/fertile] is illustrated by the Lord’s own disciples, Nicodemus, Joseph of Arimathea, Cornelius, and the various Marys.”¹¹ Note the varied ways that people can be dissuaded from true belief in the Word of God: the devil’s interference (vv. 11-12), disappointment in Christianity (v. 13), and distractions of this life (v. 14).

C. Good Soil

Luke 8:15

But the seed in the good soil, these are the ones who have heard the word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance.

“This constitutes evidence of true salvation. ‘Heard’ is a reference to understanding and believing (John 8:31, 47). ‘Keep’ [Hold fast] refers to ongoing obedience (11:28)... ‘Fruit’ is good works.”¹² Is your salvation producing the fruit of good works?

III. LIGHT AND LISTENING

Luke 8:16-17

Now no one after lighting a lamp covers it over with a container, or puts it under a bed; but he puts it on a lampstand, so that those who come in may see the light. ¹⁷For nothing is hidden that will not become evident, nor anything secret that will not be known and come to light.

“A lamp is not lit to be hidden, but must be put on a lampstand, where its light will reach furthest. Still, only those with eyes to see will see it. All truth will be manifest in the judgment. Cf. 12:2,3; 1 Cor. 4:5; 1 Tim. 5:24, 25. God’s ultimate purpose is not to hide the truth, but to make it known.”¹³

“A parable starts off as a picture that is familiar to the listeners. But as you carefully consider the picture, it becomes a mirror in which you see yourself, and many people do not like to see themselves. This explains why some of our Lord’s listeners became angry when they heard His parables, and even tried to kill Him. But if we see ourselves as needy sinners and ask for help, then the mirror becomes a window through





which we see God and His grace. To understand a parable and benefit from it demands honesty and humility on our part, and many of our Lord's hearers lacked both."¹⁴

Luke 8:18

So take care how you listen; for whoever has, to him more shall be given; and whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has shall be taken away from him.

“One’s response to the light in this life is crucial, because at the throne of judgment there will be no opportunity to embrace truth that was formerly spurned (Rev. 20:11-15). Those who scorn the light of the gospel now will have all light removed from them in eternity. Cf. 29:26; Matt. 25:29.”¹⁵

Luke 8:19-21

And His mother and brothers came to Him, and they were unable to get to Him because of the crowd. ²⁰And it was reported to Him, “Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, wishing to see You.” ²¹But He answered and said to them, “My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it.”

Jesus’ mother and brothers have also joined the crowd but are unable to get close to Jesus. When Jesus hears this, He uses one more opportunity to again emphasize to the crowd what He shared in His two previous parables: the true members of Jesus’ family are those who listen and obey God’s Word.

CONCLUSION¹⁶

Light Has Purpose: Christ said, “I am the Light of the world” (Jn. 8:12; 9:5). Here He says the disciple is to be like Himself—“the light of the world.” Therefore, the disciple is to undergo a radical transformation. He is to *become like Christ* more and more and *to reflect the light* of Christ (2 Co. 3:18; 4:6–7). Light is and does several things.

1. Light is clear and pure. It is clean, that is, good, right, and true (Ep. 5:8f).
2. Light penetrates. It cuts through and eliminates darkness.
3. Light enlightens. It enlarges one’s vision and knowledge of an area.
4. Light reveals. It opens up the truth of an area, a whole new world, and it clears the way so that a person can see the truth and the life (Jn. 14:6).
5. Light guides (Jn. 12:36, 46). It directs the way to go and leads along the right path.
6. Light strips away (Jn. 3:19–20). It unclothes the darkness that blackens life.
7. Light routes the chaos (see Ge. 1:2–3). It brings peace to the disturbance caused by walking in pitch darkness.
8. Light discriminates between the right way and the wrong way (...[Eph] 5:8–10).
9. Light warns. It warns of dangers that lie ahead in one’s path.

FOOTNOTES

1. All Scripture quotations, unless noted, are taken from the *New American Standard Bible*, 1995 Update.
2. Warren Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, Volume 1, Victor Books, 1996, pg. 199.
3. Craig S. Keener, *The IVP Bible Background Commentary: New Testament*, Second Edition, IVP Academic: An Imprint of InterVarsity Press, 2014, pg. 200.
4. Mark L. Strauss, *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary: Luke*, Zondervan, 2002, pg. 74.
5. John Phillips, *Exploring the Gospel of Luke: An Expository Commentary*, Kregel Publications, 2009.
6. John MacArthur, *MacArthur Study Bible*, pg. 1528.
7. Phillips, *Exploring the Gospel of Luke*.
8. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, pg. 200.
9. MacArthur, *MacArthur Study Bible*, pg. 1416.
10. *Ibid.*
11. Phillips, *Exploring the Gospel of Luke*.
12. MacArthur, *MacArthur Study Bible*, pg. 1528.
13. *Ibid.*, pg. 1529.
14. Wiersbe, *The Bible Exposition Commentary*, pg. 201.
15. MacArthur, *MacArthur Study Bible*, pg. 1529, emphasis added.
16. Leadership Ministries Worldwide, *The Gospel according to Luke* 1996, pg. 143.

Arin Hess

Chaplain Arin Hess

WEEKLY BIBLE STUDY

Meeting during the
109th Legislature's
First Session

SENATORS

6:45 – 7:45 A.M.
Wednesdays
Capitol Office #1004

STAFF

12:00 – 1:00 P.M.
Wednesdays
NE State Office Building
Morrill Room



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