

A storm is calmed and a possessed man is set free

Luke 8:22-39

thought for the week

At the beginning of this chapter Jesus first tells his parable of the sower, then explains that in it 'the seed is the word of God'; he also tells the disciples that they have 'been given to know the secrets of the kingdom'. Jesus is continuing to deepen their spiritual understanding and awareness and his spirit is with us today, doing exactly the same (*John 16:13*). His disciples are about to discover that Jesus has authority, not only over the winds and water, but over every spirit that sets itself against God's Holy Spirit. Their lesson is to learn that only Jesus has complete power to protect and provide. Their trust and hope must be completely in him and in absolutely nothing and no-one else. As you reflect this week ask the Spirit to help this become your total reality too.

verse for the week

He said to them, "Where is your faith?" And they were afraid, and they marvelled, saying to one another, "Who then is this, that he commands even winds and water, and they obey him?"

Luke 8 verse 25

image for the week



prayer for the week

*In you, Father all-mighty,
we have our preservation and our bliss.
In you, Christ, we have our restoring
and our saving.*

*You are our mother, brother,
and Saviour.*

*In you, our Lord the Holy Spirit, is
marvellous and plenteous grace.
You are our clothing; for love you wrap
us and embrace us.*

*You are our maker, our lover,
our keeper.*

*Teach us to believe that by your grace
all shall be well, and all shall be well,
and all manner of things shall be well.*

Amen.

A prayer of Julian of Norwich

reflection for each day

day one

He got into a boat with his disciples

Think carefully about how Jesus shared everyday life with his disciples. How do you experience his presence in your everyday life? Ask him for eyes to see and ears to hear

day two

“Let us go to the other side”

The ‘other side’ meant travelling to an ‘unclean’ place for the Jew. What places would you consider as ‘the other side’? How might the Spirit be challenging your thinking and reactions?

day three

[He] rebuked the wind and raging waves, and they ceased

The disciples saw themselves as ‘perishing’, how did Jesus want them to understand their situation? Think about your own circumstances, what ‘kingdom perspective’ can you hold before you today?

day four

they were afraid and they marvelled.... “Who then is this?”

The disciples exhaust their own resources and reasoning but then find that this is the place for discovering who Jesus really is. To what extent has this been your experience?

day five

“When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell down before him”

The ‘salvation’ available in Jesus is about to take place (v36) but it is beyond Israel’s borders! The disciples need to accept new perspectives beyond their cultural and religious views – how ready and able are you to do the same?

day six

those who saw it told how the demon-possessed man had been healed

Seeing then telling – are you ready to do the same today?

day seven

“Return home and declare how much God has done for you.”

This would require courage and a developing faith; going beyond words and story into lived-out actions and reactions. How might you live similarly with your neighbours, friends and family?

for the group

as you gather...

- Share any particular insights that have struck you this week
- Try to imagine the disciples getting in the boat and leaving the shore. Now feel the terror of the waves and then the complete peace after Jesus speaks. How do you think this experience changed them?
- Have you ever experienced 'life-storms' then his incredible peace? Share your experience.
- Discuss any uncomfortable aspects the disciples may have experienced when visiting the country of the Gerasenes. In what ways would this experience have deepened their faith and understanding?
- Share circumstances where you have found your faith being 'stretched'. What effect did this ultimately have on you and your relationship with Jesus?

prayer for the group

Lord, I believe and trust in you:
 Let my faith be full and unreserved,
 Penetrating my thought and way of judging
 both divine and human things.
 Let my faith be joyful.
 Bring peace and gladness to my spirit as
 I enjoy fellowship with you
 and conversations here on earth.
 May your inner-light radiate
 both sacred and secular conversation.
 Lord, let my faith be humble
 and not presume to be based on
 the experience of my thought and feelings
 but rather take flight in sweet surrender
 to the Holy Spirit, to his calling, and his activity.
Amen.



continue the conversation

[here](#)

Apprentice

Healing and a foretaste of resurrection *Luke 8:40-56*

thought for the week

Two very different people seek Jesus out; one has status and reputation, the other does not. He gives life and removes their burdens. Jairus is on an incredible journey when he comes and humbly submits to Jesus; for he is the ruler of the same synagogue that had debated furiously what to do to Jesus (*Luke 6:11*). He now falls at Jesus' feet! Then there's the woman, who is tellingly unnamed. She has become dislocated from her community due to an ongoing discharge of blood. She is anaemic, poverty stricken and unable to attain ritual purification (*Lev.15:25*). Yet she recognises Jesus as the Christ and by touching his fringe declares, 'I recognise he's the one with all authority so I'm reaching out knowing his power can heal and overcome my sickness'. Her destiny is made secure, not only does he call her 'daughter', but his calling her out in public enables the whole town to understand she is now released of her unseen burden, fully healed and free! During this week consider how faith was expressed and stretched. How might Jesus be responding to your faith?

verse for the week

And he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace."

Luke 8 verse 48

image for the week



prayer for the week

*Father,
make me a person of peace;
helping to bring harmony where there is
strife,
light where there is darkness,
and hope where there is despair.
May your peace cover the troubled and
anxious.
Inspire me to act justly and with reverence.
May I be a voice for the broken and
despised.
Strengthen what is weak within me;
calm me into a quietness that heals and
listens.
So that I might grow into greater
wholeness
of body, mind and spirit. Amen*

reflection for each day

day one

the crowd welcomed him, for they were all waiting for him.

This crowd welcomed him in the sense that there was openness and receptivity toward him as their teacher. They were hungry for more. This is fertile ground for exploits of faith. How could you posture yourself similarly?

day two

“Do not fear; only believe and she shall be well.”

Jairus has to hold onto this promise even when everything naturally points to the opposite. What promises do you need to hold onto? Don't let go, remember God always keeps his word!

day three

They laughed at him, knowing she was dead.

How often do earth-bound realities prevent you from believing and limit the kingdom of heaven breaking in? Choose to exercise faith and believe what God has put in your heart.

day four

‘Taking her by the hand...’

Jesus is always ready to touch our death and diseases. What would you have him do for you today?

day five

She... touched the fringe of his garment.

As she grabbed the fringe she was appealing to God's authority (Numbers 15.39) and power. What would cause you to reach out and touch his fringe? How might you appeal to God's authority in your circumstances?

day six

“Someone touched me, for I perceive power has gone out from me.”

Reflect worshipfully on the flow of Christ's contagious holiness. Notice how, in a time where purity laws were safeguards toward public health, Jesus didn't get 'polluted'; rather his healing power brought change as it flowed from him.

day seven

“Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace.”

Consider how having faith opens the door to well-being and peace.

for the group

as you gather...

- Those who authentically follow Jesus will find themselves facing events that are orchestrated to challenge, test and stretch; faith becomes active as understanding moves from head to heart and action. Where are you feeling stretched?
- What struck you this week about Christ's authority and the way he dealt with people?
- We've reflected on two different circumstances where faith was exercised. Discuss the similarities and differences. Are there key lessons to learn?
- Jesus had become ritually 'unclean' according to Jewish law. Furthermore, when he takes the girl's hand, he intentionally breaks with taboo. In wholeheartedly following Jesus are there taboos (e.g. religious or political systems) that we too may need to break with?

prayer for the group

Dear Jesus,
 help me to spread Thy fragrance everywhere I go.
 Flood my soul with Thy spirit and love.
 Penetrate and possess my whole being so utterly
 that all my life may only be a radiance of Thine.
 Shine through me and be so in me
 that every soul I come in contact with
 may feel Thy presence in my soul.
 Let them look up and see
 no longer me but only Jesus.
 Stay with me and then I shall
 begin to shine as you shine,
 so to shine as to be a light to others.
Amen.

Daily Prayer of Mother Teresa



continue the conversation

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The disciples experience mission and a miraculous feeding.

Luke 9:1-17

thought for the week

We are now about a year from the crucifixion. Over the past two years Jesus has grown in popularity with the crowd and has become a threat to the Jewish leaders. Now he is intentionally getting his disciples ready for a year hence. Jesus' focus is on equipping them and the theory is going to be mixed with practice because their faith needs to be developed. So, he calls them together, briefs them, and gives each one power and authority; then sends them out to proclaim the kingdom of God with signs and wonders. They are to remain absolutely dependant on God alone, for in their poverty they will see his enabling power. They return full of it, even to the point of telling Jesus what to do with the crowd! Quickly they are brought face to face with their own impoverishment when he asks them to feed the people themselves. Slowly they're learning that God's provision is activated by their obedience to him.

This week prayerfully consider the ways you might activate God's kingdom resources as you seek to bless others with his good news.

verse for the week

*And he called the twelve together
and gave them power and
authority.... and he sent them out
to proclaim the kingdom of God
and to heal.*

Luke 9:1-2

prayer for the week

Breathe in me, O Holy Spirit,
That my thoughts may all be holy.
Act in me, O Holy Spirit,
That my work, too, may be holy.
Draw my heart, O Holy Spirit,
That I love but what is holy.
Strengthen me, O Holy Spirit,
To defend all that is holy.
Guard me, then, O Holy Spirit,
That I always may be holy.

Saint Augustine (354-430)

image for the week



reflection for each day

day one

He called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal.'

Read: *Ephesians 1:19-20* in the Contemporary English Version. Prayerfully reflect on these verses and the one above. What is God showing you?

day two

Take nothing for your journey

Jesus wants them to trust God to meet all their needs. How might you grow your trust in God?

day three

"John, I beheaded, but who is this about whom I hear such things?"

And he sought to see him.

Herod wanted to see Jesus for a sign – his motives were all wrong. When they meet, Jesus responds with silence (*Luke 23.8-9*). Ask God for wisdom and discernment as you live alongside others.

day four

... the apostles told them all that they had done. And he took them and withdrew...

After a gym workout, torn and stretched muscles need time to heal and in the process become stronger. How might you develop and deepen your spiritual muscles and rhythm?

day five

the twelve came and said to him, "send the crowd away..." But he said to them, "You give them something to eat."

In an instant the disciples are brought face to face with their own impoverishment but God is able to step in. What is it you lack? Remember what God can do!

day six

... he said to his disciples, "Have them sit down..." And they did so and had them all sit down.

God's engagement in this world often requires an act of obedience in order to access his provision. What is he saying to you?

day seven

And they all ate and were satisfied. And what was left over was picked up, twelve baskets of broken pieces.

We can't exhaust God's provision – there's always more besides but the disciples had to give what they'd received. How might you live in the same way?

for the group

as you gather...

- Share your highlights from the week? What has had the greatest impact?
- The twelve were now in active discipleship, what lessons do you suppose they were learning and assimilating?
- What new rhythms, if any, are you beginning to establish, how might you each encourage one another further in this area?
- In what ways do you see God's kingdom being proclaimed? In what ways can you support each other in this task?

prayer for the group

*Now to him who is able to do
far more abundantly than
all that we ask or think,
according to the power at work within us,
to him be glory in the church
and in Christ Jesus
throughout all generations,
for ever and ever.*

Amen.

Ephesians 3:20-21



continue the conversation

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Some searching questions

Luke 9:18-27

thought for the week

This is a pivotal moment. Up until this point Jesus has been teaching about the coming Kingdom but now he shifts to explaining who the king is and what kind of King he will be.

Jesus is preparing the twelve for the enormity of what being ‘the Christ’ really means. Ushering in his kingdom will not be through coercive power or control. In fact, he will choose instead to lay down his life, and rise again, for the freedom-benefits his citizens will receive. (*John 10:11,17-18*). The disciples will need time to process this but will also need to realise that his leadership style is very different too. He is no dictator; he elicits his followers rather than coerces them. The invitation is freely given to choose life and freedom, which is God’s way. How? By denying our own ego motivations and seeking to daily follow him. Ask God for his grace and courage as you make your journey through this week.

verse for the week

Then he said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” And Peter answered, “The Christ of God.”

Luke 9 verse 20

image for the week



prayer for the week

*Oh God, enlighten my mind with truth;
Inflame my heart with love;
inspire my will with courage:
enrich my life with service.
Pardon what I have been;
sanctify what I am;
order what I shall be
and thine shall be the glory
and mine the eternal salvation
through Jesus Christ my Lord.
Amen.*

A Morning Prayer

reflection for each day

day one

as he was praying alone, the disciples were with him

Jesus models to his disciples his need of the Father's presence and fellowship. What do you need to be aware of and model before others?

day two

Then he said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" And Peter answered, "The Christ of God."

Peter's answer was revealed to him (*Matthew:16.17*). In what ways has God been making himself known to you?

day three

And he strictly charged and commanded them to tell this to no one

Discipleship requires obedience, here the twelve are learning about times and seasons. What have you learnt about spiritual times and seasons in your journey thus far?

day four

The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised.

Now knowing he is the Christ, Jesus tells them that he will die and then rise. It doesn't make sense, does it? What faith struggles do you have? Share them with him.

day five

And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me."

This is the call to discipleship and spiritual maturity; denying the ego-self, putting to death its desires and daily choosing his path and leading. What has been your response to this invitation?

day six

"For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it."

This paradoxical statement is saying that true freedom and life is to be found in the surrender of self. In what ways have you found this to be true in your experience?

day seven

"But I tell you truly, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God."

The Kingdom of God is both partly a present and future reality. Some blessings and power are available now but many are not. Where have you seen God's kingdom?

for the group

as you gather...

- Is there something where you experienced God in your circumstances this week? Share this with the group.
- Were there any particular challenges for you in this week's reflections?
- Did you notice how Jesus' questions came from prayerfulness. Discuss the place of prayer within the Christian circles you know and belong to. Are there lessons we could learn here?
- Jesus is now very intentional about preparing and training his disciples, for this is his final year on earth. How effectively do you think individuals are discipled today? How could this be different? How would you achieve this? Is there someone you could help disciple?

prayer for the group

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name,
your kingdom come,
your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins
as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation
but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power,
and the glory are yours
now and for ever.
Amen.



continue the conversation

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Apprentice