

Following Jesus With Luke
Taking Disciples, Male & Female,
on a New Exodus
(session 6 of 9)

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Claire: Welcome back to our study on Luke. This is our sixth session and we're in a race because there's so much wonderful material to cover. We can't possibly cover it all. As John's Gospel says, if we were to tell all the things that Jesus had done, all the books in the world couldn't hold it. We're just going to look at highlights of Luke as we walk with him and Jesus through this gospel.

In our last session, we had concluded with the anointing of Jesus by an anonymous, sinful woman in the Galilee, and we're going to continue right from Chapter 7 verse 53 into Luke 8:1.

Now, it's a wonderful passage. "Soon afterwards, he went on through the cities and villages, proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God. The 12 were with him, as well as some women who had been cured of evil spirits and infirmities. Mary called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, and Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna and many others, who provided for them out of their means."

Because of the close proximity of the story of the woman who anointed Jesus, to the list of the women disciples of Jesus, one of the Popes, back in the Middle Ages around the year 1000 suggested that this woman, the sinful woman was actually Mary Magdalene.

In the Western Church, in the Lutheran, Anglican, Catholic, and all Protestant denominations, we picked up a tradition of thinking of Mary as a former prostitute depicted with red hair, with her clothing falling off, sometimes holding a red egg, and looking quite young and dewy-faced. It all evolved into her being Jesus's girlfriend and all kinds of confusion.

You would be interested to know that in Orthodox Christianity, in the Greek Orthodox, Russian Orthodox, Syrian, Armenian, Eastern Rites, they never ever thought of Mary Magdalene as a former prostitute girlfriend of Jesus. In fact, in their iconography, Mary Magdalene is depicted as a middle-aged woman, modestly dressed, holding a vessel of myrrh and a red egg for resurrection as well.

How did we go so wrong? Well, first of all, we need to think about these women disciples, and I'm going to try to keep this short and give you the pithy part of it but I love this study. Women who could travel with an itinerant preacher, who could travel with a rabbi who heals and goes from town to town and village to village, are certainly not women who are at home taking care of children. They have no responsibilities to tie them down. They are women who have discretionary time and discretionary wealth. The fact of the wealth is something that is underscored here in the Gospel of Luke.

It says that these women, Mary Magdalene, Joanna, who is married to an administrator in the royal household of Herod Antipas, and Susanna, provide for Jesus's movement out of their means. That means that they are helping to underwrite the expenses of the movement. These are not just people who come along and do the laundry and cook the meals. These people are from a level in society where they're past the age of childbearing, they are not taking care of little people. They have money that they can use, and they know how to use it wisely. They have life experience and administrative skills.

As we follow these women who follow Jesus, we see that they follow him from the Galilee, through the Jordan Valley up to Jerusalem on his epic journey which is his way of the cross. They are standing at the foot of the cross. They see where he is laid in the tomb, and how he is laid there. They are the ones who come back on that Sunday morning and find the tomb empty

and to whom the angel speaks. They're the unbroken witness to the great passion events of Jesus and to his resurrection.

As we compare the list of women who are out the cross and at the tomb, we see that among them are mothers of the disciples, and Mary the mother of Jesus is also there. Rather than thinking of a cute girlfriend standing at the cross, we should be thinking of mature women; Mary the mother of Jesus, Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Salome, the mother of the sons of Zebedee. If they're the mothers of the disciples, that means we're not talking about teenagers, we're talking about women in their 40s and above, who are accompanying the entire group of disciples. All of them walked down with Jesus from the Galilee to Jerusalem.

They're a support group and they may contribute gifts of wisdom and administrative helps, and of course, become preachers of the gospel themselves. This is a picture that we need to help shift our perspective because what happened in the Middle Ages when the Pope superimposed the woman with the ointment on Mary Magdalene, actually does a disservice to what the gospel tells us about Mary Magdalene.

Her life was a wreck before she met Jesus. He restored her to wholeness. It says seven demons went out of her, I can only imagine that she was mentally ill, emotionally ill, and physically ill because of what was going on in her life and he restored her life completely. She became his number one female disciple and supported him. She's not identified by husband, father, or brother. She is an independent businesswoman and she has financial resources.

The thing that to me is most compelling about why she is not the woman with the ointment is because when you tell a story about someone who is a known figure in your community, you put the name of the person on it. If I tell you a story about Bill Clinton, you need to know it's a story about Bill Clinton. If I say there was a boy who rode a bike, fell down, cut his face, and got stitches in Arkansas, well, who cares? If I say did you know that Bill Clinton when he was seven, rode a bike, fell down, and got stitches, all of a sudden, you're going to remember that story. It's vivid because this is a person who is part of your life.

A story about an anonymous woman doesn't tell me anything about Mary Magdalene. There's no reason for me to think that it's Mary Magdalene. If this was Mary Magdalene, Luke would have said, here's Mary Magdalene's backstory. We're not supposed to second-guess from anonymity who this person is. She is part of our community and we want to know everything about her but she isn't the woman of Luke 7.

It is so important to recognize how Luke values the female disciples of Jesus, and how they're part of the group and how they're acknowledged. It was a little bit uncomfortable for the early Christians to put their weight on the testimony of women. In Jewish society, women are seen as secondary, they're not supposed to give testimony in a court of law and yet the unvarnished truth was that it was the women who went to the tomb, who saw that it was empty, who encountered the angels, who told them that he has risen, he's not here, go back and tell the disciples. Like Augustine said, Mary Magdalene was the apostle to the apostles.

The sad thing is that we don't really know what happened to Mary Magdalene after the close of the Gospels and in the period of the Acts of the Apostles. We don't have traditions that tell us much, except to associate her perhaps living with Mary the mother of Jesus, and the two of them setting up households together perhaps in Ephesus and maybe she didn't live long, maybe she passed away. We don't have further accounts of Mary that are credible that give us actual historical detail. Her primary role, the most that we know about her comes from the Gospels themselves.

We've got Jesus, he is gathering this group, he has male disciples, he has female disciples. We understand the importance in his community of love, of sharing possessions. He's gathering a group of followers and then what happens next in Luke's Gospel is quite surprising because, at this point, there are many stories that occur in Matthew and Mark, which Luke completely omits. Scholars call it Luke's great omission. For example, in Matthew and Mark, we have the feeding of 5,000 and the feeding of 4,000, but in Luke, we only have the feeding of 5000.

In Matthew and Mark, we have the Syrophenician woman who's the Canaanite woman in Matthew. Luke completely bypasses that story but we would think that he would have shared it, it would have been in his sources, but story after story that occurs in Matthew and Mark in this next sequence is not included by Luke because Luke has something else to do. He's saving space. A scroll can hold just so much weight, so much material, and then you run out of space. Luke is working on something much bigger, which is going to be his huge travel narrative. Much of what is found from Mark 6-8 is omitted in or not included in the Gospel of Luke.

I want to jump ahead then to where they pick up the same stories and begin to share again. That would bring us to the story of Jairus' daughter and the woman with the hemorrhage, a very, very important episode. I like it so much because it tells us, again, about Jewish society, about Jesus' encounters with three different people in their society and their roles. This is in your gospel parallels. ([*Gospel Parallels*](#), Burton Throckmorton)* Section 107 on page 83. In the story of Jairus' daughter and the woman with the hemorrhage, Jesus has just returned from across the sea of Galilee.

Of course, since I'm interested in women's stories, I always used to just read this about the woman and about the daughter, and I used to ignore Jairus and yet he's the beginning of the whole story. I owe it to Darrell Bock's commentary on the Synoptic Gospels, written by a man who then pointed out all of the problems that Jairus is facing to help me appreciate the complexity of this story. It tells us so much, and it prepares us for what is coming ahead. When Jesus returns to Capernaum, as he comes off the boat, a crowd waits for him, all are waiting for him, and there was a man named Jairus.

Now, Jairus is the Greek form of the name Yair, who was one of the judges of Israel. He is a man who is a ruler of the synagogue. Jairus has status. Jairus has power. Jairus is a benefactor of their town. He has wealth, he represents the status quo of religion. He comes and he falls at

Jesus's feet in a crowded public environment. Who is Jesus? Jesus is that faith healer, the guy who's traveling around the Galilee, stirring things up and starting his own little group. The guy who never went to seminary and was never ordained.

Can you imagine what it would mean for Jairus to come in a public space and throw himself down at Jesus's feet? It means that Jairus is desperate. It means he has no hope for his daughter. Whatever resources he has, which include power, money, and connections, are exhausted, and his last hope is the faith healer. Jesus is, of course, full of compassion. He invites him to get up, and says, "Of course, I will come to your daughter. She's dying, I'm on my way."

As they walk through the town, we are introduced to another character in this study, another character in this story, the woman with the hemorrhage. She is the social opposite of Jairus. She is sick with a chronic illness that no doctor can cure. She has a flow of blood which renders her unclean. Her participation in synagogue, her access to the temple, her social interactions have all been cut off or severely limited. She experiences physical distress, emotional and psychological isolation. She is impoverished now, she is marginal, she has no protector. She does not have a father or a husband or a brother who is acting on her behalf to approach the faith healer. She is a marginal person.

She comes up from behind Jesus, reaches out, and touches the tassel of his garment, his tzitzit in Hebrew, the actual tassels that are commanded in the books of Moses, and instantly, she's healed. She wants to be anonymous, but Jesus stops, and she is going to be found out, as he says, "Who touched me?" and the disciples say, "Oh, please, everybody touched you. What do you mean who touched me?" "No, no," he says, "I felt power go out from me." Somebody touched him with a touch of faith. She's found out and she throws herself down because what she's done is taboo.

A gynecological flow of blood puts a person in a state of uncleanness and uncleanness which is not sin but is just part of life, but uncleanness is contagious. If you touch somebody else, you can communicate your uncleanness to them and render them unclean. Here she is, she's touched the holy man, theoretically rendering him unclean. This is a taboo thing to do, but she's reached out in faith because she is also desperate. She expects to be rebuked. Jesus turns and has compassion on her. She confesses everything and says how when she touched him, she was instantly healed.

This is an amazing healing when you think about it because Jesus is not mentally engaged in the healing when it happens. He's walking along, talking to Jairus, pushing through the crowd to go save the life of the little girl. He is not mentally engaged, but I like to think of Jesus, he's like the electricity running through these walls. That electricity is always there. You don't see it. It's there and if you plug into the outlet, that electricity is going to flow to your device. Jesus is this reactor, he's like a nuclear reactor of life and purity. Instead of her uncleanness going into him, his life and power flow out to her, rendering her clean. It is just breathtakingly beautiful.

This picture of him having so much life that those who reach out in faith are healed. He blesses her, and he calls her daughter, kinship language, restoring her to community, bringing her back into society, into religious life, into all interaction. He says her faith has made her well. She has been healed. Okay, but what about Jairus? Can you imagine, they were on their way to save his daughter who is about to die, and they get stopped by this woman, and he's standing there, and he's trying to be polite, but his daughter is dying, and Jesus is taking time for this woman. He has time for her.

The worst thing that Jairus can imagine actually happens as a result. They come to him and they say, "Your daughter's dead. Never mind. Don't trouble the teacher." Of course, Jesus in his compassion turns to Jairus and he says, "Just ignore them." He says, "Just have faith. Don't be afraid, have faith, it's going to be all right," but we sense as they move along and they go to the house, that people don't really expect that Jesus is able to raise the dead. He is able to heal, but raising the dead is a whole different caliber of miracle, and he's not going to be able to do this.

They get to the house and they say, "Never mind, she's already dead." Jesus says, "She's just sleeping," and they laugh at him. Luke wants us to know that she really is dead. He tells us that even though Jesus says he's asleep, they know that she's really dead. Jesus ignores them. He brings the father and mother and the three in, and now he faces what is an even greater situation of uncleanness because the uncleanness of a flow of blood renders you unclean for a day and you go and you immerse and then you're clean, but corpse contamination, touching a dead body, that's going to give you a much longer 10-day cycle of immersion before the corpse contamination leaves you.

What is so remarkable when Jesus comes into that child is not that the child reaches out to him, or the lady reaches out to him, but Jesus he doesn't speak the miracle alone. He reaches out and he takes the child by the hand, and he says, "Talitha Koum", "Little girl, I say to you, arise." Once again, the life, the purity, the power of Jesus flow out from him to the child. Her corpse contamination does not flow into him. He is touched and he heals. He touches and he heals and a little girl sits up of course at once, and they give her something to eat so that we all know that it's really her and she's really alive. The people are amazed, but Jesus says, "Don't say anything to anybody. Keep it a secret. Don't share it."

Now, when the story is told, we're supposed to read the two women together. The woman with the hemorrhage and the daughter, they are both females, and they're both in dangerous situations. The girl is 12 years old, and the woman has been suffering for 12 years. As long as that woman has been suffering, that's the entire lifespan of that child. She's on the verge of puberty where she will enter situations of uncleanness that could be challenging for her as well, so they share that. They share the aspect of being called daughter. They share the aspect of healing by faith, but they're unlike in that the girl has a defender, a father, and a mother who love her. Someone will go out on her behalf, and the woman has no one. She's marginal alone and impoverished.

In this story we see these three types, we see the man of power and authority, we see the marginal woman, we see the vulnerable child and we see the mercy of Jesus extended to all of them. It's a picture of Jewish society in the time of Jesus, and of how he extends God's love to each one of them. It's a very powerful, amazing healing, and an amazing story. We want to go from there as Jesus is gathering more and more followers in the Galilee.

We want to go to the confession at Caesarea of Philippi. The confession at Caesarea Philippi is on page 100 in your books.* If I am not mistaken, Section 122 on page 100. This is where the disciples after they've witnessed all these miracles; walking on the sea of Galilee, calming the storm, healing the woman with the hemorrhage, raising a child from the dead, raising the widow's son at Nain. All of these miracles they're gaining momentum, and bringing the disciples to a new recognition of who Jesus just might be. In the confession at Caesarea Philippi which is very familiar to all of you we want to notice one thing in Luke's account in Luke 9:18, how does the passage begin?

"Now, it happened as he was praying alone, and the disciples were with him that then he asked them," so he takes them apart, he goes off in prayer, and then he launches this discussion which is a discussion about who do you think that I am. As they answer him who do you think that I am? Of course, we have Matthew, Mark, and Luke all saying that you're the Messiah. The Messiah of God in Luke. He tells them to keep quiet and not to tell it to anybody. He predicts his suffering. He begins to teach them about what it means to be the Son of Man, and he calls them to suffering discipleship.

He also says in Luke 9:26, "Whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels. I tell you truly there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God." Now the disciples have gotten the right answer. Jesus is the Messiah, but he's a suffering Messiah, and they're called to suffer with him. He says, you either accept this interpretation, or you're not part of my group, and he says, some of you will see the glory. You will see the glory before you die which brings us to Section 124 the transfiguration. You remember the transfiguration.

When I was younger, I used to ask why? Why? What is this miracle about? Why does Jesus have to stand on a mountaintop and glow? I never could figure it out, and then finally already after I'd moved to Jerusalem one day it clicked for me, the transfiguration is a Moses miracle. The transfiguration like the feeding of the 5,000 is a Moses miracle. The setting in the background as they walk up on the mountain, Luke has very subtle changes, little differences.

They go up on the mountain in Luke, but on a mountain in Matthew and Mark. The mountain in Jewish thought is Sinai. We're using the language of Sinai and in fact, if we were to sit and look at Exodus 24 and Exodus 34 in the Greek, we would see that he echoes Exodus 24 and 34 in phrases verbatim and so Luke is writing to make you think of Moses going up to see God, to

receive the 10 Commandments, to have that revelation of the Lord's name, and what happened when Moses came down off of the mountain? His face glowed and people could not look at it.

That's the background for this miracle, that Jesus is the prophet like Moses greater than Moses and his face is going to glow, but Luke does a few extra things with this story that are so unique and so special that the other two do not include, and we want to look at one of them in particular. All of the gospel writers are struggling with how to describe what happened. Glowing, white, nobody could bleach clothes like this, et cetera.

We have Moses and Elijah who are talking with him, and Luke tells us what they're talking about. In Luke 9:31, "Moses and Elijah appeared in glory and spoke to him of his departure." Do you know what that word really is in the Greek? They spoke to him of his Exodus that he was going to accomplish at Jerusalem. The word is not simply departure, but it's his Exodus which of course for the reader connects you immediately back to the first Exodus, to the first Passover.

When Jesus goes up to Jerusalem, he will be the Passover lamb. It will be the preparation for Passover. He will accomplish an Exodus that will save not just the Jewish people as the Exodus of Moses did, but that will save all humanity. This is his Exodus, and who better to talk to him than Moses and Elijah who are both in heaven, who are both on the other side of death, who somehow can talk to him and inform him about his Exodus.

Peter and those who were with him were heavy with sleep and when they wakened, they saw his glory and the two men with him and Peter said, "Master, it's good that we are here. We will make three booths; one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." Not knowing what he said. In this little account by Luke, our Gentile physician who's probably a God fear, we see all three feasts of Israel. We have the Exodus which is Passover, we have Mount Sinai which is Pentecost, and we have let's make booths which is Sukkot or the Feast of Tabernacles. He sees in Jesus's exodus the fulfillment of all things. He doesn't know what he's saying, because of course, you can't capture the moment.

You can't just start the eschaton because you're experiencing this glorious moment, but as he said this a cloud came and overshadowed them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. Notice that only Luke says that the disciples entered the cloud. If you remember back in the books in Exodus 24, no one wanted to go with Moses. They were afraid. They were afraid of the cloud. Only Moses enters into the cloud, but with Jesus, the disciples enter into the cloud as well. The narrative concludes with the voice of God. The cloud represents God's presence on the mountain.

The narrative concludes with the statement from God, "This is my son, my chosen, listen to him." That listen to him is critical because Jesus is defining for the disciples what can kind of Messiah he is. A suffering Son of Man who will go to the cross on their behalf. It's not what they think Moses and the prophets teach, Moses being the greatest prophet and five books of Moses and Elijah being the greatest prophet of the prophets, but it is Jesus's interpretation that we are

to listen to when it comes to the Messiah, not all of the people who think they know the law and the prophets, but it's how Jesus interprets the law and the prophets which is to give to us a true understanding of his Exodus.

Well, that is part of the excitement of this book. When we come back, we're going to join Jesus on that long pilgrimage journey from the Galilee to Jerusalem looking at highlights along the way. We hope that all of you will join us for the next session.

[00:30:48] [END OF AUDIO]

** For all of her classes on the Gospels, Claire is using the helpful reference tool, Gospel Parallels by Burton Throckmorton. Here is the link to the book on Amazon:*

<https://www.amazon.com/Gospel-Parallels-Comparison-Synoptic-Standard/dp/0840774842>

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