



“Good News”  
Luke 8:1-3

**Idea:** The good news of the gospel changes the lives of those who receive it.

**Intro:** There is great power in the word spoken. Words can build a person up or tear that person down. If you do not agree with me, then go back in your memory to the playground when you were a child. As you recall, kids can be brutal to one another on the playground. More than likely at some point you were on the receiving end of harsh and unkind words from a peer. You might have even been the dispenser of such words. In any case, surely you remember the phrase, “Sticks and stones may break my bones, but words will never hurt me.” Kids sarcastically respond to their criticizer with this kind of statement as a defense mechanism. They are attempting to show strength by acting like those words just glance off them. In most cases, however, the spoken words hit their mark and wound their target. Unfortunately, this harshness does not stay behind in childhood. Adults can be brutal with their words too.

Words can also strengthen and bring encouragement to others. When a husband affirms his wife by telling her that she is beautiful, his words build her up. When a supervisor points out and rewards the great job her employee did on a project, her words encourage the worker. There is tremendous power for good in a spoken word. This truth is seen most clearly in the proclamation of the gospel. As we move through the Gospel of Luke, we are seeing the power of the spoken Word and its effect on the people who received it. For example, James, John, Simon, and Andrew are fishermen who have heard and been affected (5:1-11). Levi, the tax collector, has heard and been encouraged (5:27-32). The centurion, the widow, and the sinful woman have all heard gracious words and been blessed (7:1-50). What was the message they heard? It was the gospel that built them up and brought transformation. The good news of the gospel changes the lives of those who receive it.

As we begin the eighth chapter of Luke’s Gospel, the first few verses show us that Jesus’ mission of kingdom preaching changes the lives of those who receive the gospel.

Read Luke 8:1-3.

**Inquiry:** This brief summary is unique to Luke, and it begins a new section in the doctor’s telling of Jesus’ life and ministry. This new section (8:1-9:50) is often referred to as the “tour” section. It precedes Jesus’ journey to Jerusalem, which begins in 9:51. During this tour, the Lord ministers in a large area and to a variety of people. Teachings and miracles alternate throughout the two chapters, with the high point being Peter’s confession of Jesus as the Christ (9:20). The burden of the section offers additional consideration to the question of who Jesus is, and Peter’s messianic confession articulates the answer that Jesus will use to explain His mission to His disciples.

In the initial few verses, Luke introduces the reader to some of the people who had responded to Jesus. In these verses, we learn just how the good news of the gospel changes the lives of those who receive it. There are four things on display.

### **1. The good news rescues people in spiritual bondage.**

According to verse 2, some of the people traveling with Jesus were “*women who had been healed of evil spirits.*” They are women who had at once been possessed by demons, but Jesus had freed them from spiritual bondage. Mary Magdalene was one of these women. Luke tells us that seven demons had gone out from her. There are two ways to interpret this description. First, there literally were seven demons dwelling within and controlling her. And second, the number seven is used often in Scripture to convey the idea of fullness or completion, so Luke could be denoting the severity of her possession. She was completely dominated by demonic spirits. Both interpretations are probably correct.

“*Mary, called the Magdalene*” (Μαγδαληνή) suggests that she was from Magdala, a town on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee. It is located approximately three miles north of Tiberias. After experiencing miraculous healing from demon possession, Luke tells us that she followed and supported Jesus’ ministry. We also know she was a key witness to Jesus’ death (Matt 27:56; Mark 15:40), burial (Matt 27:61; Mark 15:47), the empty tomb (Matt 28:1; Mark 16:1; Luke 24:1-10), and the first to encounter the risen Christ (John 20:1-18). None of these things would have been possible if Mary Magdalene was not first rescued from spiritual bondage.

While not everyone is possessed by demons, everyone apart from Christ is in spiritual bondage. Paul explains in Ephesians 2 that prior to receiving the good news of the gospel, every person is spiritually dead in sin and a slave to Satan and his demonic host.

Read Ephesians 2:1-3.

Apart from Christ, sinners follow their master who is Satan. It is his spirit that is “*at work in the sons of disobedience.*” This was true of Mary Magdalene and the others mentioned in Luke 8:1-3. They were cut off from God and without hope, having no desire in and of themselves to seek after God. Their futures seemed bleak, but then God stepped into their stories with mercy and grace.

Read Ephesians 2:4-10.

“*But God...*” These are two of the greatest words in the entire Bible. Sinners are doomed and dead in their sin, but God by His grace has saved them through faith in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The good news of the gospel changes the lives of those who receive it as Jesus rescues people in spiritual bondage. Today, if you know Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, then you have been rescued from spiritual bondage. You were dead in your sin, but God, being rich in mercy and grace, made you alive in Christ. You were once enslaved to the passions of the flesh and by nature children of wrath, but God freed you and seated you in the heavenly places in Christ.

You have been rescued! The good news of the gospel has changed your life.

### **2. The good news transforms people physically impaired.**

With Jesus, there were “*women who had been healed of...infirmities.*” One of the marks of Jesus’ ministry in the Gospels is the miracle of healing. In the first seven chapters of Luke, we have seen Him heal the sick, give sight to the blind, and raise the dead. The miracle of healing validated His claim as

the Son of God and Messiah (7:22-23). The miracle also portrayed the reversal of the curses God placed on humanity and creation in Eden (Gen 3). Jesus would reverse them through His death, burial, and resurrection.

As believers we understand this reversal as another aspect of the already but not yet concept of the kingdom of God. Jesus can and many times does heal people in this fallen world. The power of the kingdom is an already presence that heals and brings the dead back to life. There are other times, however, that He chooses not to do so. Regardless, we are assured that the kingdom is coming. It has not yet fully come. One day, when Jesus returns, He will bring a finality to the coming of the kingdom. On that day, there will no longer be pain, suffering, and death. No one will ever again come down with a cold or be diagnosed with cancer. The former things will have passed away. All infirmities and diseases will be cast into the lake of fire. Along with them will be death itself (Rev 20:14; 21:4).

The good news of the gospel changes the lives of those who receive it as Jesus transforms people who are physically impaired. Today, are you sick, battling cancer, struggling from the effects of a stroke, or wrestling an injury? Jesus cares for you. Please know that the good news of the gospel is transforming your life. He might heal you in this life, or He might use your struggle to transform you on the inside. Either way, Jesus is working on you, and there will be a day when you will be made whole.

### **3. The good news welcomes people regardless of gender, ethnicity, or lifestyle.**

As Jesus preached through the cities and villages, He traveled with many people. Luke tells us the twelve apostles (6:13-16) were with the Lord. There were also “*some women*” accompanying them, such as Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Susanna. In addition, “*many others*” had partnered along the journey.

We have already discussed Mary Magdalene. In Luke’s Gospel, she is listed here and in 24:10. Joanna is also mentioned in these two verses. She represents the scope of Jesus’ ministry. His message had reached into the world of the powerful, for Joanna was the wife of Chuza. He served as an administrative official in Herod’s court. He very well could have been the manager of Herod’s estate. I will say more about Chuza in a minute. Finally, Luke mentions Susanna. She is only mentioned here in the New Testament, so we know nothing more about her.

Luke leaves many others unnamed. These might have all been women or a mixture of men and women. Either way, Luke has purposely put women out front in these three verses and described them as “servants” (διακονέω) who served Christ and His mission. The term used can be translated “to wait tables.” It is the same root word from which we get the word deacon. It is interesting that of all the Gospels, Luke records the most prominent appearances by women. I think he is making the point that Jesus’ attitude toward women was much different than the rabbis of His day. He included, elevated, and welcomed the ministry of women.

Joanna was the wife of Chuza (Χουζᾶς). His name seems to have Syrian and Nabatean roots. If so, he might have been a non-Hebrew living and working within Israel. In this name, we are reminded that the good news of the gospel welcomes all ethnicities. It does not matter if your skin is black, brown, red, or white. The Lord does not care about the shape of your eyes or what your heart language is. You are a son or daughter of Adam; therefore, you are the special creation of God.

Not only does the good news of the gospel welcome both men and women and all ethnicities, it also welcomes all lifestyles. We do not know any specifics about the women mentioned here. We know a little more about the twelve apostles and some of the followers that might have been there. What we do know, however, is that Jesus welcomed the cheating tax collectors, the scandalous prostitutes, the rough fishermen, the invading military officers, and the pious seekers. This eclectic compilation of sinners

were all welcomed by Jesus, which means that it does not matter what your lifestyle is, He welcomes you too.

Read 1 Corinthians 6:9-11.

We like to quote these verses, and rightly so, to show God's displeasure and unacceptance of a sinful lifestyle. It is important we understand that a person cannot live in ongoing sin and assume he or she is a believer. But we must not make the mistake and begin to think that no one living this kind of life can or will be redeemed. Paul says, "*And such were some of you.*" His point was that many of the Corinthians had come to Christ out of those particular lifestyles. Hey, do you battle same-sex attraction, or have you decided to live as a homosexual? I must tell you that your life choices are sinful and unnatural, but God loves and will welcome you. Are you a drunkard? God welcomes you. This is also true of all other forms of sexual immorality, greed, addiction, and even religiosity.

The good news of the gospel changes the lives of those who are welcomed by Jesus.

#### **4. The good news spreads to people through the generosity of believers.**

The Christian church would never have gotten off the ground without the beautiful service of women. They were crucial in the spread of the gospel as they partnered with the apostles and other believers to take the message of the kingdom to the corners of the earth. Partnership may be the best way to look at the cooperative work of the Church. Some go preaching. In the early church, we see this in Jesus and the apostles. Some give for preaching. In the early church, we see this in Mary, Joanna, Suzanna, and many others. Everyone does one or the other or both. The entire aim is to spread the gospel to those who have not yet heard and to disciple those who have believed.

Spreading the gospel here and there is one of the reasons Red Lane Baptist exists. We are here to spread the gospel to our neighbors and the nations, and we dare not fail in this holy calling. The work is great, and the need is enormous. Therefore, the only way to fulfill our calling is to work together in partnership. As believers in Christ and members of His local church, we must assume collective responsibility for supporting the ministry of the word among our neighbors and throughout the nations. We need to provide for the work out of our means. Do you tithe through the church? I am convinced that if every member of the local church would tithe (10%), then the church would never lack a thing. We could fully fund missions and church planting without ever collecting a special offering.

Luke informs us that those who were following and partnering with Jesus in the gospel work did so financially. There is no doubt that they gave their time and used their talents in the work of the gospel, but they also clearly gave out of their treasure. As a church, we are extremely generous. The last few years, we have averaged around \$750,000 given each year through our regular and special offerings. This is a tremendous number for our size of a church. I commend you for your generosity. I also call you to excel in generosity. Allow the Lord to stretch you in your giving by being willing to move to a new level. If you are not tithing, then begin to give the tithe (10%). If you are tithing, then consider moving your giving to 12% or 15% of your income. Write the church into your will and leave a portion of your estate to the church. Take on special projects with the IMB or missionaries.

The good news spreads to people through the generosity of believers. Church, you are never more like Jesus than when you give (John 3:16), so let's give "*out of our means*" to support the spread of the gospel.

**Conclusion:** There is great power in the word spoken. If you know Jesus as your Lord and Savior, then you have been transformed through the Word of Christ. Your ears and heart were opened to the truth of the gospel, and through it your eyes were opened to the condition of your life. The gospel revealed your spiritual bondage

and need of a Savior. You were dead in sin, but through the preaching of the gospel, Jesus made you alive to God. He transformed you and continues to transform you through His Word and Spirit. Are you not grateful for the good news of the gospel?

Perhaps, today you realize that you need this new life in Christ. You recognize the sin in your life and the condemnation it brings. If this is so, then I call you to faith in Jesus. What would keep you from confessing your sin and in faith turning to Jesus for forgiveness and new life? Is it your lifestyle? It does matter because Jesus welcomes you just as you are.

Good news: God loves you. He created you and desires to know you.

Bad news: You are a sinner in rebellion against your Creator.

Best news: God has done everything necessary to justly deal with your sin and bring forgiveness and restoration to your life. Today, He calls you to turn from your sin and self and turn to Him as Savior and Lord. Do you need to be forgiven?