

**Sowing Seeds**  
**A Sermon by Rev. Frances Savill**  
**Sunday December 4, 2022**

**Luke 8:1-15**

This morning I'd like to give us a recap where we are in the Gospel of Luke from the Bible Project. <https://bibleproject.com/explore/video/gospel-luke-2/>

This morning we are in Chapter 8, and we have this portrait of people who are with Jesus. We have the 12 who are made up of fishermen and a zealot freedom fighter, a tax collector, and other unlikely men, and in chapter 8 we read about this group of women who travelled with Jesus, as his disciples and provided for him.

The list of women is equally strange. We have a Mary Magdalene, who is described as the one who was delivered from 7 demons. Jesus healed her and drove out the demons, as he did for several other people.

Then there is Joanna, wife of Chuza, Herod's manager. Herod is the puppet ruler, installed by Rome, one of his top officials Chuza, his wife is numbered as a disciple.

Luke describes these women as one's who were healed by Jesus. Normally, Rabbis didn't have women disciples, and women would not have travelled with him. But Jesus is not a normal Rabbi, and certainly is not acting in the way the Messiah should. These women had wealth and were patrons, providing for Jesus and his mission. As they travelled from town to town, many people joined the group, listening to Jesus' teachings, seeing the healings and new life that he brought.

And Jesus told the parable of the sower. This parable is a kind of commentary on what is happening.

There are a whole lot of people hearing Jesus' message and being invited into the new kingdom. Some people respond and some people don't. Some people follow Jesus for a while, but when things get difficult, they fall away. And we

see this still.

There are all kind of responses to Jesus and his message. There are those who are hostile to it, and those who see greatly enthusiastic for a short time. There are those who walk away when things get difficult, and those who walk away when things are great. But there are always some who persevere, who receive the word – the message of the gospel, the good news of the kingdom, with joy, and they produce a harvest.

Jesus speaks in parables to the people because parables grasp hold of us, and cause us to think, if we let them.

One of the things I reflected on in this passage is that the seed is the same everywhere. Seed grows- it's the nature of seed. What's different is the soil- hearts that are or are not prepared. It seems to me that it is a hopeful parable because hard soil can be plowed and softened. Weeds can be pulled. Birds can be driven away, and weak plants nurtured to grow stronger roots. And we see hearts closed to the gospel message one day, open and eager for God's word another day because something has happened.

And then through the rest of chapter 8 we see some of the most unlikely people receive Jesus and his message.

Jesus says his true family are those who obey God. Do you want to be numbered as one who is close to Jesus- follow his teaching.

The disciples, those who heard Jesus daily, lived with him, saw his miracles, constantly underestimated Jesus and didn't fully understand who he was. When Jesus stilled the storm in Vs 8:25 the disciples' reaction was: they were afraid, and they marveled, saying to one another, "Who then is this, that he commands even winds and water, and they obey him?" The waters of chaos that threatened to overwhelm and destroy, were stilled and calmed.

Next Jesus headed to the land of the Gergesenes. This is a Gentile area, across from Galilee. And it seems that Jesus' trip is especially for this one man, who was possessed by a mob of demons. This is Gentile territory, not a place a Jewish rabbi would normally venture.

Once on land, Jesus is encountered – many would say “accosted” – by a man possessed by an unclean spirit. Moreover, this young man no longer abides among the living in the local town but rather dwells among the dead in the tombs. Tombs, we should note, are another place considered ritually unclean. All of which means that Jesus, the Jewish itinerant Rabbi proclaiming the coming kingdom of God, goes to an unclean land to meet a man possessed by an unclean spirit living in an unclean place. This is, in short, the very last place Jesus should be.

Uncleanness creates a separation from God. The God of life is separated from death. Except that Jesus continuously brings life out of death, order out of chaos, new life and wholeness out of brokenness. Jesus does the work of our Creator God.

Jesus shows up in the places you least expect to find God, bringing the healing love of God. Jairus, a Synagogue leader, desperate came to Jesus to heal his daughter.

A woman desperate because she had suffered so long with a flow of blood, reached out and touched Jesus.

Jesus didn't have a great track record with Synagogue leaders. Mostly they were angry at him and looked for ways to discredit or get rid of him. Yet Jesus didn't hesitate to help Jairus and his daughter.

The desperate woman was another who was unclean. Jesus stopped after healing her to let her know that she was a beloved daughter, commending her for her faith. Jesus brought Jairus' daughter from death to life.

Good seed, good news, life out of death, creation out of chaos, seed spread generously by Jesus. Some hearts turned away; some hearts responded with a bumper crop after enduring with patience.

Thanks be to God.

**Prayer:** Gracious God, we thank you for your word, but this morning we are deeply thankful for Jesus. What gracious, generous love Jesus poured out upon

rich and poor, clean and unclean, men and women, young and old, Jew and Gentile. We turn to you in love and praise, trusting that we will bear fruit for you, because of your love for us. Amen.

### **Luke 8:1-15 The Message**

<sup>1</sup> Soon afterward he went on through one town and village after another, proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God. The twelve were with him, <sup>2</sup> as well as some women who had been cured of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, <sup>3</sup> and Joanna, the wife of Herod's steward Chuza, and Susanna, and many others, who ministered to them out of their own resources.

<sup>4</sup> When a large crowd was gathering, as people were coming to him from town after town, he said in a parable: <sup>5</sup> "A sower went out to sow his seed, and as he sowed some fell on a path and was trampled on, and the birds of the air ate it up. <sup>6</sup> Some fell on rock, and as it grew up it withered for lack of moisture. <sup>7</sup> Some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew with it and choked it.

<sup>8</sup> Some fell into good soil, and when it grew it produced a hundredfold." As he said this, he called out, "If you have ears to hear, then hear!"

<sup>9</sup> Then his disciples asked him what this parable meant.

<sup>10</sup> He said, "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God, but to others I speak in parables, so that 'looking they may not perceive and hearing they may not understand.'

<sup>11</sup> "Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.

<sup>12</sup> The ones on the path are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved.

<sup>13</sup> The ones on the rock are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy. But these have no root; they believe only for a while and in a time of testing fall away.

<sup>14</sup> As for what fell among the thorns, these are the ones who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life, and their fruit does not mature.

<sup>15</sup> But as for that in the good soil, these are the ones who, when they hear the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart and bear fruit with endurance.

*This is the word of the Lord.*