

## 1. Jesus Came for the Small as Well as the Great

- a. Luke strongly connects the previous passage to this one by the words (and it came to pass in the order of things).
  - i. 'soon afterwards'
  - ii. He seems to be purposefully trying to indicate that this summary of Jesus' travelling came immediately after this interaction with Simon and the woman and Jesus' authoritative statement to forgive sins
  - iii. The King has arrived with the authority to forgive sins, save from God's wrath, and establish "shalom" (wholeness/peace)
- b. 'he went through cities and villages'
  - i. iterative verb - he was continually travelling throughout
  - ii. he didn't only go to cities, but also to villages
    1. it is important to note that Jesus didn't skip the small and insignificant places, just as he didn't the small and insignificant people
    2. He wasn't merely interested in the powerful or the popular or the prosperous or the plurality, he went to all.
    3. He didn't appear to be concerned about numbers or sizes "of events", He wanted people to hear the announcement of the kingdom and then he would move on to another town (Mark 1:38/Luke 4:43)
- c. In our missionary endeavors we should not strategize to cities alone, but also to villages
  - i. Some are called to cities and some are called to rural areas, and both are necessary complements in the kingdom proclamation work of Christ Jesus
  - ii. We should never strategize to reach the powerful only, but also the marginal

## 2. Jesus Came to Proclaim God's Reign and Redemption Through Him

- a. 'proclaiming and evangelizing the kingdom of God'
- b. two active words used:
  - i. proclaiming (preaching) - *kerusso*
  - ii. announcing good news (heralding) - *euangelizo*
- c. the content of his preaching and his heralding was the kingdom of God
  - i. What is the kingdom of God?
  - ii. The kingdom of God is God's rule. He rules through the king who is worthy of all honor because he created all that is, because he redeemed for himself a people from among all peoples, and because he is restoring all that is broken by sin and its curse
    1. Revelation 4:9-11; 5:9-14
    2. Revelation 21:5
  - iii. It is the message of the final King who saves his people (Deut 33:26-29) and places them in his safe keeping forever and always, brings them wholeness and peace and joy in His presence by the knowledge of Himself so their joy is always full because they shall know God (Ps 16:11; 1 John 3:1-3; Rom 14:17; Jude 24; Rev 22:5).
- d. We must note that when Luke summarizes Jesus' travels and ministry here he summarizes it as preaching, proclaiming, and announcing.
  - i. Note, though I'm sure there is an appeal (Repent and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ!), the decision is not the final goal, but the proclamation is the goal
  - ii. *Decisionism* has greatly harmed the church
  - iii. When one accepts Jesus truly, he or she receives Him as Lord, as the Lord Jesus Christ in whose kingship we are redeemed

## 3. Jesus Honors and Values Men and Women Equally in His Kingdom Work

- a. The Twelve (Apostles whom he had called)

- i. Notice that they are not yet doing the proclaiming, but only Jesus ("he went about preaching and announcing the gospel")
    1. Note also that there was a betrayer amongst them, indicating that simply because one travelled with Jesus did not indicate their full submission to Him
  - ii. They were observers, watching and serving the crowds who came to listen
    1. Remember the feeding of the thousands? They collected and distributed food.
    2. Remember the "little children"? They were running crowd control.
  - iii. The 12 were quite a diverse group themselves
- b. "some women who had been healed"
- i. of evil spirits and/or of infirmities
    1. "healed" - *therapeuo* - "to restore"
    2. This is in the imperfect form, indicating that it was a process: Jesus restored them and is holding them up in restoration
      - a. I'm sure that they struggled, even though healed and restored, with the implications of their former difficulties and former lives
      - b. The point is that they found in Jesus their help for today, not just yesterday
  - ii. Mary Magdalene
    1. She was from the Magdala region of Galilee, a native of Jesus' home region (western shore of Galilee)
      - a. Fishing (called "place of fish preparation" by the Romans)
      - b. Fortress (Magdala means "tower")
        - i. City to which Josephus escaped and fortified when General Titus had destroyed Jerusalem (67-70)
        - ii. It is said that 30-40,000 people were living there
      - c. The "Jesus boat" excavated in the mid 1980's and now in the museum of Capernaum was discovered near Magdala
    2. She was "restored" from many demons
      - a. There is no indication that her demonic-possession was due to sin
        - i. She is not the same woman as mentioned in chapter 7, who washed Jesus' feet
        - ii. Her spiritual oppression and suffering was not due to her sin, but it would have dominated her life
      - b. 7 demons indicates a totality or fullness to her oppression - she was dominated by evil spirits before Jesus
        - i. What was her life like?
      - c. She seemed to have family wealth (resources to help in the kingdom proclamation travelling group), but was unmarried
        - i. Did she miss out on marriage because she was "undesirable" due to demonic influences?
        - ii. What would it mean to her that Jesus gave her freedom and a continuing freedom?
        - iii. Do you and I respond the same way with the freedom that Jesus has given to us?
    3. Upon being restored she completely gave her life to Christ Jesus, here seen following him and supporting his ministry
      - a. She was at the crucifixion (Matt 27:55-56)
      - b. She followed to his burial tomb and purchased the spices for his burial (Luke 23:55; 24:10)
      - c. She was among the first to see the empty tomb (Luke 24:1-10)
    4. In Mary we see another example like the woman who washed Jesus' feet with her hair: a complete surrender to the rule and provision and security that Jesus alone offered
  - iii. Joanna
    1. Wife of Chuza, one of Herod's stewards

- a. Joanna was of a powerful family, unlike Mary who would have been ostracized, she had great influence
  - b. It is unclear if Chuza is still living or if Joanna is a widow
    - i. If a widow, she is following Jesus and helping out of the resources left to her by her husband
    - ii. If Chuza is married, it would be safe to say that he was supportive of his wife travelling with Jesus because he also loved and trusted Jesus
  - c. Manaen was Herod's foster brother who also followed Christ according to Acts 13:1
    - i. Jesus' influence reached the lowest villages to the lowest outsiders as well as to the greatest cities to the most powerful influencers in the society
2. Joanna may be included by name because Theophilus, as a Roman official, may have been familiar or even had dealings with Herod's agents
    - a. This may be a way for Luke to provide Theophilus verifiable evidence of the veracity of this gospel writing
  3. What is important is to see the extreme ends of the spectrum of these women who were made whole by Jesus and gave their lives and their resources to His purposes
    - a. Joanna is of the higher ruling class and Mary of the lower ostracized variety
    - b. Both were accepted and recognized by Luke as travelling companions of Jesus *mentioned alongside yet distinguished from the 12*
    - c. These women are honored by Luke as having great love for Christ and being just as dedicated, appreciated, and participatory as the apostles were
- iv. Susanna and many others
    1. Nothing else is known of Susanna, for she is only mentioned here in the NT
    2. There were others who also were included in this group who served Jesus and this group of believers who followed him around the countryside
- c. These women provided for the group out of their resources
    - i. They "served" (*diakoneo*) them
      1. This is the same word that is used of the office from Acts 6, from which we derive the term "deacons"
      2. It means "to serve" and is used of providing for other people's needs, much like a servant would bring out food or wash basins or Downton Abbey style "turn out your clothes"
    - ii. Literally, "out of what they were possessing"
      1. This is most likely financial, but it may also be referring to whatever gifts that they possessed
    - iii. The point is that they used what they had (gifts, talents, physical resources, networks) to aid Jesus in his goals to preach the gospel of the kingdom of God

#### 4. What do we learn from this brief passage?

- a. God's kingdom is just as much for the powerless in our society as for the powerful
- b. God's kingdom is simply true, not a probability but a reality, and we invite people to receive Jesus as their King-Savior because He simply is the King who saves those who entrust themselves to Him
- c. Every man and woman is made for the glory of God through Christ Jesus
  - i. Neither the 12 nor these women are defined by their marriages or families, their intellectual prowess or their career success, or their spiritual endeavors or moral purity
  - ii. They are defined by Christ and for Christ through the work of Christ to the glory of God
    1. Eph 1:4-6 – "adopted as sons [positional, not gender] ...to the praise of the glory of his grace which he bestowed upon us in the Beloved One."
    2. It is in the bestowing of His grace, "making a wretch his treasure", that we find our salvation, our hope, the fullness of our joy, and this comes through our Husband being slain

3. The ultimate purpose of God is to display the glories of Christ Jesus to all Creation for all eternity through purchasing and purifying his bride for Himself
4. Their loving response of following their Lord and giving to His renown is like the woman in the previous story – restored first by his grace, then loved him in return
- iii. Anything else is far too low a definition of manhood or womanhood, for God is too great and Christ is too glorious for anything else to take our center
- d. Women are equally valuable and necessary for the Church’s proclamation of the gospel
  - i. They fully participated in glorifying Jesus and in the building of His kingdom through their efforts
    1. Our culture wants women to take their stand on glorifying themselves, exalting their strengths, and fighting for their rights
    2. What we see here, however, is that these women glorified Christ Jesus, exalted Him and His kingdom, and served one another for His sake
    3. When Peter instructs women in the early church “not to adorn themselves” with items of mere physical beauty but rather with the good works of a gentle and humble spirit he refers to the major reason: “those who hope in God”
      - a. These women hoped in God through Christ Jesus
      - b. They were not being “fearful” of what men thought of them or what other women thought of them, but they submitted to Christ Jesus because their hope was in Him, not in their own power or in the approval of others
  - ii. Frankly, the Church has done a poor job of valuing the ministry and work of faithful women within the body of Christ throughout its history
    1. Luke shows us that these women were faithful, grateful, hard-working, sacrificial, edifying, and invaluable to the ministry of Christ Jesus
    2. Do we, O Church, and particularly you who are men, consider the value and honor and glory that Christ Jesus gives to women?

“Perhaps it is no wonder that the women were first at the Cradle and last at the Cross.

They had never known a man like this Man—there had never been such another. A prophet and teacher who never nagged about them, who never flattered or coaxed or patronized;

who never made arch jokes about them, never treated either as “The women, God help us!” or “The ladies, God bless them!”;

who rebuked without querulousness and praised without condescension;

who took their questions and arguments seriously, who never mapped out their sphere for them, never urged them to be “feminine” or jeered at them for being female;

who had no ax to grind and no uneasy male dignity to defend;

who took them as he found them and was completely unself-conscious.”

—Dorothy L. Sayers, “The Human-Not-Quite Human,”

- e. Every gift and resource is used *together* for the goal of Christ Jesus in the proclamation of the kingdom of God
  - i. Every gift is needed as we *together* proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ
    1. The proclamation of the gospel is a community endeavor, not merely an individual one
    2. Some are gifted to preach or evangelize and others are gifted to cook or organize or balance books
    3. All these gifts are equally valuable in the overall goal of gospel proclamation as we all, individually and corporately, seek to know him better and love him more
  - ii. Sometimes we think that we are all supposed to be preachers, or cross-cultural missionaries, or teachers
    1. But Scripture shows us that we ought not to think of gospel proclamation as primarily an individual effort, but a corporate effort

2. One person provides hospitality by which the teacher teaches a group and thus is necessary to the gospel proclamation
  3. One person provides food by which the missionaries eat as they travel and proclaim the gospel
  4. One person provides the house repair so that the widow can provide the time to walk with a younger woman and point her to Jesus
  5. This is all part of proclaiming the gospel together
- iii. If your strength is balancing books, then balance books for the kingdom of God
  - iv. If your strength is automobile maintenance, then maintain cars to accomplish the proclamation of the kingdom of God
  - v. If your strength is organization and network administration, then do it for the kingdom of God together!

Conclusion: Jesus has restored us by becoming sin for us that we would be forgiven and accepted by God, and He is restoring us through His Holy Spirit's sealing and transforming work. He is worthy of everything! He was dishonored, that you might be honored. He was excluded that you might be included. Through his work you and I are given great value and under his rule you and I find great joy in participating in his continuing work as he continues to go from city to village to announce his freedom reign throughout all the earth. Let us work together in whatever ways that we are able to see his kingdom proclaimed that the king's renown might grow until the day he returns and leaves no doubt.