

Series: Luke  
Text: Luke 8:1-3  
November 8, 2015: Gospel Community Study Guide

*This Study Guide is based on a sermon by Dr. Joshua Mack. You will find the link to the sermon here.*

<http://www.sermonaudio.com/sermoninfo.asp?sid=11915528551>

### **Getting Started:**

It is tempting as Christians to think about life just like the people around us. The Bible actually warns us about this. Read Romans 12:2. What does Paul tell us not to be? What does that mean? What does he say that we must be instead? And what is the purpose or goal of this happening?

If you were to summarize this verse in your own words, what would you say?

### **The Big Idea:**

One of the ways we are tempted to think like the people around us has to do with what it means to be a man and especially about what it means to be a woman. We need to go back to God's Word and evaluate the way we think about women in light of what God actually says.

### **For Discussion:**

In your culture, what are some of the common ways people think about women?

Are there any good things in your culture about what it means to be a woman? Are there any things people in your culture tend to think about the role of women that you are concerned about?

Can you remember back to the message on Sunday? What were some of the things you heard about how the Jewish culture in Jesus' day thought about women? (If you are struggling to come up with some, perhaps look at John 4:27, what were the disciples amazed about? What does this say about the common attitudes of the day towards women?) What was the Grecian and Roman perspective on women?

God has a very different attitude towards women than we find in these cultures. We see God's attitude illustrated in the way Jesus treated and ministered to women.

### **Into the Bible:**

**Read Luke 8:1-3**

This doesn't seem like a very shocking passage at first. But let's see if we can catch the surprise by making some observations about what Luke writes here.

What is this section doing? How does it fit into the way Luke is telling his story?

On Sunday we summarized Luke's ministry report with four points:

1. This passage tells us a bit about the scope of Jesus' ministry. (What does it tell us specifically?)
2. This passage tells us a bit about the nature of Jesus' ministry. (What did Jesus do?)
3. This passage also tells us a little about the content of Jesus' ministry. (What did Jesus preach? What does that statement mean?)
4. And this passage also tells us a little about the participants in Jesus' ministry. (Who does Luke say traveled with Jesus?)

There are a number of things Luke mentions here that he has already mentioned before. What is the new piece of information that he draws our attention to?

He tells us about a number of women who were followers of Jesus. Now this is radical, so let's think about this.

- What is surprising about these women following Jesus?
- What exactly does Luke tell us about the women who followed Jesus?
- What is astounding about what these women did as they followed Jesus?

It's clear Jesus recognized a difference in the roles of men and women, in that he only appointed men to serve as apostles. At the same time, it's also very clear that Jesus assumed women could serve as real, legitimate disciples with an important ministry to fulfill. To illustrate this on Sunday we looked at two other passages. First, we talked about the story of Mary and Martha which is found in Luke 10:38-40. Can anyone remember what was surprising about that passage? Second we mentioned Matthew 12:46-50. What does Jesus say here that indicates he had women as disciples?

To demonstrate this wasn't something unique to this passage in Luke 8, we took a step back and considered some of what Luke has to say about women in the rest of his gospel. Specifically we mentioned three main points:

1. Luke assumes we can learn from the example of godly women. (How so?)
2. Luke shows us that Jesus respected women and treated them as people who should think and have an individual relationship with him. (What are some examples of how Jesus treated women with respect?)
3. Luke identifies the women as some of the greatest heroes among his followers? (In what ways?)

**Going Deeper:**

If the way Jesus related to women was surprising, perhaps what Paul says is even a bit more shocking. Read Galatians 3:25-29. What does Paul say here? What do you think is his main point?

While I don't think this passage is saying there is no such thing as male or female, clearly it is saying, that no matter what your background, we are all saved the same way, through faith in Christ, and as a result we all have a great future hope and are equal recipients of the great promise God made to Abraham.

How should that impact the way we relate to one another at Living Hope as men and women?

### **Bringing it Home:**

What are some common mistakes churches make in the way they treat women? What are some ways we can improve at Living Hope? What are some important ministries women can have in the church? (See if you can make a list of at least 10) What are some reasons women don't always step up and use their gifts for the glory of God and the good of others?

### **Summing Up:**

Read through the following challenge to women by John Piper and share any thoughts you have as a result. He says he is praying:

1. That all of your life — in whatever calling — be devoted to the glory of God.
2. That the promises of Christ be trusted so fully that peace and joy and strength fill your soul to overflowing.
3. That this fullness of God overflow in daily acts of love so that people might see your good deeds and give glory to your Father in heaven.
4. That you be women of the Book, who love and study and obey the Bible in every area of its teaching. That meditation on biblical truth be the source of your hope and faith. And that you continue to grow in understanding through all the chapters of your life, never thinking that study and growth are only for others.
5. That you be women of prayer, so that the Word of God would open to you, that the power of faith and holiness would descend upon you, and that your spiritual influence would increase at home and at church and in the world.
6. That you be women who have a deep grasp of the sovereign grace of God undergirding all these spiritual processes, that you be deep thinkers about the doctrines of grace, and even deeper lovers and believers of these things.
7. That you be totally committed to ministry, whatever your specific role, that you not fritter your time away on soaps or ladies magazines or aimless hobbies, any more than men should fritter theirs away on excessive sports or aimless dawdling in the garage. That you redeem the time for Christ and his kingdom.

8. That, if you are single, you exploit your singleness to the full in devotion to Christ and not be paralyzed by the desire to be married.
9. That, if you are married, you creatively and intelligently and sincerely support the leadership of your husband as deeply as obedience to Christ will allow. That you encourage him in his God-appointed role as head. That you influence him spiritually primarily through your fearless tranquility and holiness and prayer.
10. That, if you have children, you accept responsibility with your husband (or alone if necessary) to raise up children who hope in the triumph of God, sharing with him the teaching and discipline of the children, and giving to the children that special nurturing touch and care that you are uniquely fitted to give.
11. That you not assume that secular employment is a greater challenge or a better use of your life than the countless opportunities of service and witness in the home, the neighborhood, the community, the church, and the world. That you not only pose the question: Career vs. full-time mom? But that you ask as seriously: Full-time career vs. freedom for ministry? That you ask: Which would be greater for the kingdom, to be in the employ of someone telling you what to do to make his business prosper, or to be God's free agent dreaming your own dream about how your time and your home and your creativity could make God's business prosper? And that you make your choices not on the basis of secular trends or yuppie lifestyle expectations, but on the basis of what will strengthen the family and advance the cause of Christ.
12. That you step back and (with your husband, if you are married) plan the various forms of your life's ministry in chapters. Chapters are divided by various factors: age, strength, singleness, marriage, employment choices, children at home, children in college, grandchildren, retirement, etc. No chapter has all the joys. Finite life is a series of tradeoffs. Finding God's will, and living for the glory of Christ to the full in every chapter is what makes it a success, not whether it reads like somebody else's chapter or whether it has in it what chapter five will have.
13. That you develop a wartime mentality and lifestyle. That you never forget that life is short, that billions of people hang in the balance of heaven and hell every day, that the love of money is spiritual suicide, that the goals of upward mobility (nicer clothes, cars, houses, vacations, food, hobbies) are a poor and dangerous substitute for the goals of living for Christ with all your might, and maximizing your joy in ministry to people's needs.
14. That in all your relationships with men you seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit in applying the biblical vision of manhood and womanhood. That you develop a style and demeanor that does justice to the unique role God has given to man to feel responsible for gracious leadership in relation to women — a leadership which involves elements of protection and care and initiative. That you think creatively and with cultural sensitivity (just as he must do) in shaping the style and setting the tone of your interaction with men.
15. That you see biblical guidelines for what is appropriate and inappropriate for men and women in relation to each other, not as arbitrary constraints on

freedom, but as wise and gracious prescriptions for how to discover the true freedom of God's ideal of complementarity. That you not measure your potential by the few roles withheld but by the countless roles offered.