



# Transformed for Mission

## Summary and Goal

This passage recounts the riveting episode of a demon-possessed man who was isolated and mad. He believed that Jesus came to destroy him. Instead, Jesus freed him from demonic oppression so that he would be clothed and in his right mind. Though he desired to go with Jesus, he was called by Christ to “Go back to your home and tell all that God has done for you.’ And off he went, proclaiming throughout the town how much Jesus had done for him.”

### **Main Passages**

Luke 8:26-39

### **Session Outline**

1. The Demoniac Delivered (Luke 8:26-33)
2. The Strong Man Plundered (Luke 8:34-37)
3. The Healed Man Sent (Luke 8:38-39)

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### **Theological Theme**

Jesus, the God-man, is more powerful than any natural or spiritual force. The wind and waves obey Him. Even demons bow before Him and flee from His presence.

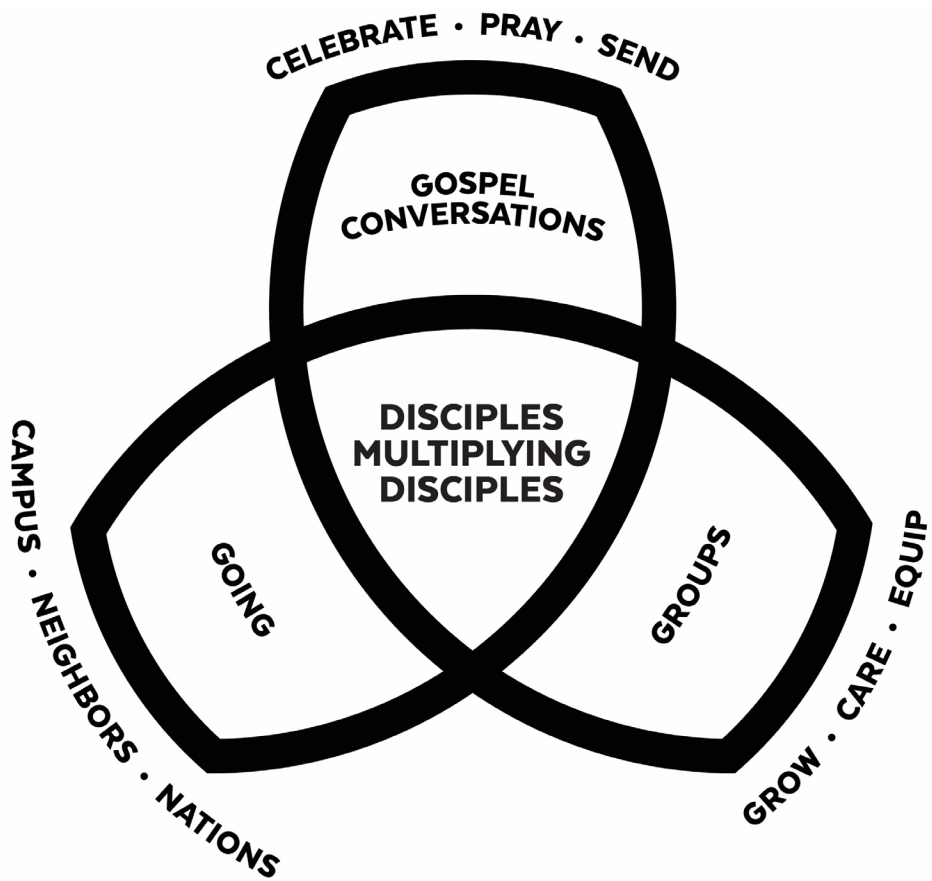
### **Christ Connection**

No one could help the demon-possessed man, except God Himself. Jesus Christ arrived on the scene and set things right in the life of a broken man. Christ still works miracles in the souls of sin-dead people today.

### **Missional Application**

All souls who are set free from captivity by Christ are sent out to call others to come and seek life from Him.

# Disciples Multiplying Disciples



## DxD This Week

### ***For the Leader***

Pre-enlist a group member who has been on a mission trip to share their experience.

Go: Mission projects can come from a concerned member of your Group or from the church initiated projects found here:

<https://brentwood.church/local-missions-opportunity-finder/>

Mission Trip experiences are expected for every Group every 24 months. Who in your group has gone on a trip? Who could go next?

# 5

## Session Plan

# Transformed for Mission

### Introduction

- ❓ What does it mean to plunder? What comes to mind when you hear this word?
- ❓ Why do you think it is common for a conquering army to plunder their defeated foes?

This event recorded by Luke is a shocking scene. As Jesus and His disciples descended from the boat, a demon-possessed man, naked, living among tombs saw Jesus, fell to his knees and cried out, “What do you have to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, don’t torment me!” What happened next was nothing short of amazing. Jesus commanded the demons to leave the man. They obeyed and entered a nearby herd of pigs that immediately went thrashing into the lake and drowned. Meanwhile the man, now completely healed, begged Jesus that he might accompany Him. Jesus, however, had other plans for him.

### 1. The Demoniac Delivered (Luke 8:26-33)

Our passage today is a part of a series of three stories that all relate to each other. As Jesus and His disciples sailed to the region of the Gerasenes, a fierce windstorm descended upon them. The wind and the waves battered the boat to the point that the disciples thought they might drown. Amazingly, Jesus rebuked the storm and then there was calm (Luke 8:22-25). After Jesus healed the demoniac in today’s passage, Luke recorded the account of Jesus healing the woman with an issue of blood and raising Jairus’ daughter from the dead (Luke 8:40-56).

- ❓ What is the overarching theme of these three episodes?
- ❓ What can the healing of the demoniac teach us today? Are there any principles or applications that we should make for our context?
- ❓ Application: How does this story and others like it in the Gospels bolster your faith in your Savior, Christ? Where might you have grown cold toward the glory and power of His earthly ministry?

## 2. The Strong Man Plundered (Luke 8:34-37)

Let's consider more carefully the miracle that Jesus realized in the life of the demoniac. We know nothing about him other than the fact that he lived a completely ruined and miserable life because he was indwelt by a number of evil spirits. We don't know anything about his past or how he came to be taken over by demons. We don't even know his name. We do know, however, that he had a spiritual problem that he could not himself fix. We also know that his life was void of any peace, joy, or purpose. Only God Himself could do anything for the man.

- ❓ If you are honest, with which of the characters in this story do you most closely associate? Why?
- ❓ What does this parable mean? Who is the strong man? Who ties him up? What is our part?
- ❓ Application: Do you remember what it was like to be possessed by the enemy? When did Christ rescue you from the domain of darkness? How did your life change?

## 3. The Healed Man Sent (Luke 8:38-39)

The text says, "The man from whom the demons had departed begged him earnestly to be with him." Of course he did! Here was a man who had absolutely nothing. He was barely human, and Jesus restored him. Any one of us would have had the same response. We can be sure that the man was brimming with thanksgiving and joy. He wanted to stay with the one who had given him his life back.

- ❓ What did Jesus tell this man to do instead? Why?
- ❓ How are all Christians sent similarly to the way the man was sent in this account?
- ❓ Application: Have you been faithful to fulfill the mission that Jesus sent you on after saving you? With whom can you share the gospel this week?

## Conclusion

- ❓ What can you do to keep your heart humbled before the power and authority of your Savior?
- ❓ How does it make you feel to consider that you have been plundered from the house of the strong man (Satan)? How should this knowledge affect your life and perspective?
- ❓ Are you known as a person who loves Jesus and talks about Him with others? When was the last time you shared Christ with someone? Is there someone close to you that needs the gospel? When can you share it with them?



## Expanded Session Content

# Transformed for Mission

### Introduction

- ❓ What does it mean to plunder? What comes to mind when you hear this word?
- ❓ Why do you think it is common for a conquering army to plunder their defeated foes?

Plundering is when a person or group steals goods from a place or person, usually by force and in a time of war or civil disorder. Plunder serves as motivation for soldiers to enter into battles. It also further cripples a defeated enemy, making recovery more difficult. Imagine if this happened in competitive sports. What if the winners of a little league baseball team ran into the losing team's dugout after the game and grabbed all of the equipment? It would probably make baseball games a bit more interesting. Also, it would make a losing team much weaker for the next go around. In fact, they might stop playing games altogether.

In today's passage, Jesus went into the enemy camp, exerted His power over the enemy, and righteously carried out plunder as a victorious warrior.

### Session Summary

This event recorded by Luke is a shocking scene. As Jesus and His disciples descended from the boat, a demon-possessed man, naked, living among tombs saw Jesus, fell to his knees and cried out, "What do you have to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, don't torment me!"

What happened next was nothing short of amazing. Jesus commanded the demons to leave the man. They obeyed and entered a nearby herd of pigs that immediately went thrashing into the lake and drowned. Meanwhile the man, now completely healed, begged Jesus that he might accompany Him. Jesus, however, had other plans for him.

### 1. The Demoniac Delivered (Luke 8:26-33)


Our passage today is a part of a series of three stories that all relate to each other. It would be helpful to understand the big picture of what Luke intended by considering those briefly as well. As Jesus and His disciples

sailed to the region of the Gerasenes, a fierce windstorm descended upon them. The wind and the waves battered the boat to the point that the disciples thought they might drown. Jesus was sleeping, of all things, so the disciples awakened Him and asked Him to do something. Amazingly, Jesus rebuked the storm and then there was calm (Luke 8:22-25). After Jesus healed the demoniac in today's passage, Luke recorded the account of Jesus healing the woman with an issue of blood and raising Jairus' daughter from the dead (Luke 8:40-56).

 What is the overarching theme of these three episodes?

These three accounts taken together give the reader an undeniable apologetic of the unique power and authority of Christ. Jesus demonstrated His power over nature when He commanded the waves to cease. He proved His authority over evil spirits when He cast Legion out of the afflicted man. He showed His power over sickness when the woman with the issue of blood was healed simply by touching the hem of His garment. And He asserted His authority over death when He raised Jairus' daughter.

So, what is the reader to conclude? The only possible conclusion is that the author was inventing fairy tales or that Jesus Christ really is the Son of God, the Messiah. And since four written accounts and multiple eyewitnesses verify these events, then we can only conclude that Christ is God in flesh. Furthermore, we should respond in the manner of Peter when he "fell at Jesus' knees and said, 'Go away from me, because I'm a sinful man, Lord!'" (Luke 5:8).

 What can the healing of the demoniac teach us today? Are there any principles or applications that we should make for our context?

The four Gospels are an invaluable gift to the world. They testify of the person and work of Christ to an unbelieving world. They comfort Christians as they read about the work of the Savior on their behalf. This specific episode does both of those things. A person who is an unbeliever is confronted with a compelling example of the power and authority of this person who claimed to be the Messiah and the solution for the problem of sin. When Christians read this account, their faith is bolstered and their joy is increased because they are reminded of the power and ability of the one they look to for salvation.

A common misapplication that Christians make when they encounter a story like this is to conclude that they should seek to replicate the works of Christ. The four Gospels of Jesus Christ weren't written to be manuals

## Gerasenes

The region of the Gerasenes was probably around the town of Gergesa (or Khersa), on the eastern coast of the Sea of Galilee. The name for this predominantly Gentile region came from the city of Gerasa, located about thirty-five miles to the southeast.

for Christian ministry. Those works were composed so that weary souls would see the person and work of Christ and cry, “I believe!” and so that weakened believers would be assured of the certainty of their Savior and His work on their behalf (John 20:31; Luke 1:4). Don’t look to Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John primarily for instruction for Christian living and ministry. Instead, we should read these accounts and see the surpassing glory of Jesus.

- ❓ Application: How does this story and others like it in the Gospels bolster your faith in your Savior, Christ? Where might you have grown cold toward the glory and power of His earthly ministry?

## 2. The Strong Man Plundered (Luke 8:34-37)

Let’s consider more carefully the miracle that Jesus realized in the life of the demoniac. We know nothing about him other than the fact that he lived a completely ruined and miserable life because he was indwelt by a number of evil spirits. We don’t know anything about his past or how he came to be taken over by demons. We don’t even know his name.

We do know, however, that he had a spiritual problem that he could not himself fix. We also know that his life was void of any peace, joy, or purpose. Only God Himself could do anything for the man.


- ❓ If you are honest, with which of the characters in this story do you most closely associate? Why?

When Christians reads this account, they have three vantage points that they may choose from. They may see themselves as one of the disciples. They may see themselves as Jesus. Or they can choose to associate most closely with the demoniac. A person who sees the Gospels as a template for Christian ministry may be tempted to place themselves in the role of Christ. They might see this story as a call to go and seek to cast devils out of tormented souls.

Whether readers are comfortable admitting it or not, they can all closely associate with the demoniac. The purpose of this testimony of Christ is to bolster the faith of Christians by showing them afresh the power and authority of Jesus Christ. Readers will also see close parallels between what Christ did for them and what Christ did for the demoniac. Jesus’ deliverance of the demoniac is an illustration of Jesus’ deliverance of the sin-dead unbeliever.

After all, what Christ did for the demoniac is a parable for what Christ does for all those who are born again. In fact, Jesus told a parable that tied His work of casting out demons to His work of saving sin-dead souls. In


Matthew 12:29, Jesus said, “How can someone enter a strong man’s house and steal his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man? Then he can plunder his house.”

 What does this parable mean? Who is the strong man? Who ties him up? What is our part?

Sadly, this verse has been taken out of context and misinterpreted to mean that Christians must tie up or “bind” Satan. That’s not at all what Jesus meant. In this parable Jesus sought to explain both His authority and His mission. There are three primary elements in the parable, and each one corresponds to the work of Christ in the world. There was a strong man, plunder, and someone who ties up the strong man.

The strong man is Satan, and Jesus is the one who binds him. Jesus is the only one who has that authority and role. It is a misapplication of this passage when Christians put themselves in the place of Christ and “bind” Satan. There is no need to bind Satan because Christ accomplished that at the cross (Col. 2:15). Christians do, however, make an appearance in this illustration. We are the plunder that Jesus carries out. Jesus bound Satan and rescued us from his domain! Every person on earth is either a captive of the strong man or has been plundered by Jesus. There are no neutral people.


The strong man (Satan) had the man in our text captive. He was a slave in the house of the strong man and he had no ability to rescue himself. Jesus, however, arrived on the scene and bound Satan. Jesus was the stronger man. Christ carried the demoniac out of the domain of Satan as plunder. Christians today were like that demoniac. They were held captive to sin and Satan and did not have the strength to free themselves. Then, Christ arrived and bound up the strong man and carried out the plunder. If you are in Christ today, know and remember that you were once held captive without hope.

 Application: Do you remember what it was like to be possessed by the enemy? When did Christ rescue you from the domain of darkness? How did your life change?

### **3. The Healed Man Sent (Luke 8:38-39)**

The text says, “The man from whom the demons had departed begged him earnestly to be with him.” Of course he did! Here was a man who had absolutely nothing. He was barely human, and Jesus restored him. Any one of us would have had the same response. We can be sure that the man was brimming with thanksgiving and joy. He wanted to stay with the one who had given him his life back.




 What did Jesus tell this man to do instead? Why?

Luke reported that Jesus told him, “Go back to your home, and tell all that God has done for you.” Jesus sent the man to give testimony of the power and authority of Christ to those in his home and community. Can you imagine the looks on the faces of the people who knew this man before he lived among the tombs possessed by demons? They must have been incredulous, then stunned.

The reason that Jesus sent the man to be a witness was because Jesus knew that it was the Father’s will that more people from that region come to Him, not only for physical healing but for spiritual healing. Jesus had more plunder to carry out.

Not only does the demoniac’s deliverance mirror the work that Christ does in the life of a lost person, but His command to the man to go and testify also mirrors the commission that all Christians have.

 How are all Christians sent similarly to the way the man was sent in this account?

Just as Christ sent the demoniac after He saved him, so He sends those whom He saves today. All Christians are called to share the good news of Jesus Christ to a lost and desperate world. It is important that Christians keep clear in their minds what the mission actually is. Throughout church history up until today Christians, have shown themselves more than able to twist the mission of God and create a mission of their own design.

The fact is, however, God’s mission for His disciples is simple and straightforward. Jesus said, “Go and make disciples of all nations.” This, of course, may leave some questions unanswered, so let’s allow the Scriptures to interpret the Scriptures. The following passages prove helpful:

*He also said to them, “This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead the third day, and repentance for forgiveness of sins will be proclaimed in his name to all the nations, beginning at Jerusalem.”*  
(Luke 24:46-47)

*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come on you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.* (Acts 1:8)

It’s clear that the mission of Christians is to make disciples by proclaiming the gospel of Jesus Christ. They must be careful not to assume that “proclaiming the gospel” necessarily refers to being behind a pulpit or standing on a street corner. Those certainly are proclamations of the

gospel, but there are many other contexts in which the gospel may be proclaimed. A proclamation of the gospel may take place when a Christian shares the gospel with their seatmate on an airplane. The gospel is proclaimed when a believer reads a gospel tract with their neighbor.

- ❓ Application: Have you been faithful to fulfill the mission that Jesus sent you on after saving you? With whom can you share the gospel this week?

## Conclusion

The healing of the demoniac serves as a template for the story of every Christian. The demoniac was captive to the enemy and unable to help himself. Christians were also once enslaved to their sins and Satan and did not have the power to free themselves. Christ arrived and overpowered Satan and carried out the demoniac as plunder, whole and healed. Christians are only free now because Christ arrived and bound up Satan and carried them out as plunder, cleansed and justified. Christ sent the healed man out to testify of the wonderful things that God had done for him. Likewise, Christians are sent out by Christ to share the good news of the gospel with the world.

- ❓ What can you do to keep your heart humbled before the power and authority of your Savior?
- ❓ How does it make you feel to consider that you have been plundered from the house of the strong man (Satan)? How should this knowledge affect your life and perspective?
- ❓ Are you known as a person who loves Jesus and talks about Him with others? When was the last time you shared Christ with someone? Is there someone close to you that needs the gospel? When can you share it with them?

## Prayer of Response

*Spend time praying in light of this passage now. Worship Jesus recognizing His power and authority over demons. Rejoice that Jesus has carried you out of the strong man's house as plunder. Pray that you would respond to this great grace by going to tell others about the mercy that they too might experience if they would look to Him with faith and repentance.*

## Additional Resources

- *What is the Gospel?* by Greg Gilbert
- *Luke: Swindoll's Living Insights Commentary* by Charles Swindoll
- *Luke* by Trent C. Butler

## For Next Week

### Session Title

- The Parable of the Sower

### Main Passages

- Luke 8:4-8

### Session Outline

1. The Word (Luke 8:4-5a)
2. The World (Luke 8:5b-8,11-15)
3. The Heart (Luke 8:5b-8)

### Memorize

<sup>38</sup> *The man from whom the demons had departed begged him earnestly to be with him. But he sent him away and said,* <sup>39</sup> *“Go back to your home, and tell all that God has done for you.”*

- Luke 8:38-39a

### Daily Readings

- Monday - Luke 8:16-18
- Tuesday - Luke 8:19-21
- Wednesday - Luke 8:22-25
- Thursday - Luke 8:26-39
- Friday - Luke 8:40-48
- Saturday - Luke 8:49-56

# Historical Context of Luke

## Purpose

The Gospel of Luke is a carefully researched (1:3), selective presentation of the person and life of Jesus Christ, designed to strengthen the faith of believers (1:3–4) and to challenge the misconceptions of unbelievers, especially those from a Greek background. Its portrait of Jesus is well balanced, skillfully emphasizing his divinity and perfect humanity.

## Author

The author of the Third Gospel is not named. Considerable evidence points to Luke as its author. Much of that proof is found in the book of Acts, which identifies itself as a sequel to Luke (Ac 1:1–3). A major line of evidence has to do with the so-called “we” sections of the book (Ac 16:10–17; 20:5–15; 21:1–18; 27:1–37; 28:1–16). Most of Acts is narrated in third-person plural (“they,” “them”), but some later sections having to do with the ministry of the apostle Paul unexpectedly shift to first-person plural (“we,” “us”). This indicates that the author had joined the apostle Paul for the events recorded in those passages. Since there are no “we” passages in the Gospel of Luke, that fits with the author stating that he used eyewitness testimony to the life of Jesus (1:2), indicating he was not such an eyewitness himself.

Since Luke wrote both the Third Gospel and the book of Acts (Ac 1:1–3), it is relevant to consider the dating of both books together. The events at the end of Acts occurred around AD 62–63. That is the earliest point at which Acts could have been written. If Acts was written in the early AD 60s from Rome, where Paul was imprisoned for two years (Ac 28:30), the Third Gospel could date from an earlier stage of that period of imprisonment. The other reasonable possibility is during Paul’s earlier two-year imprisonment in Caesarea (Ac 24:27). From that location, Luke would have been able to travel and interview the eyewitnesses to Jesus’s life and ministry who were still alive.

## Setting

Traditionally, the Gospel of Luke is believed to have been written after both Matthew and Mark. Those who date Matthew and Mark in the AD 60s or 70s have tended to push the dating of Luke back to the AD 70s or 80s.

## Special Features

The Gospel of Luke is the longest book in the New Testament. Focusing on the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, this Gospel is part one of a two-part history, the book of Acts being part two. Both were dedicated to “most honorable Theophilus” (Lk 1:3; Ac 1:1).

## Extended Commentary

### Luke 8:26-39

8:26. The boat ride continued. Destination: Gentile country among the Gerasenes or the Gadarenes or the Gergasenes, depending on which Greek manuscript one follows. The exact location is not central to our understanding. Whatever the precise place was, it was in the midst of the Decapolis, the collection of Gentile cities beside the Sea of Galilee. In this region, pigs could be raised, sold, and eaten—something unimaginable in Jewish territory.

8:27-28. Jesus' welcoming committee consisted of one man, but what a man! Totally possessed by demons, he lived in the cemetery never bothering to wear clothes. Seeing Jesus, he fell down in the normal posture of reverence and worship. Then he shouted at Jesus, begging to be ignored. The demon inside him was talking, not the man.

8:29-31. The demon knew what he was talking about. He knew who Jesus was—Son of the Most High God. He had already heard Jesus' demand that he leave the possessed man. He knew his power over the man, a power that defied all efforts to restrain him. Jesus recognized the demon's presence and addressed him directly, asking his name. Jesus' power forced the demon to reveal his identity and thus submit to Jesus' demands. His name was really a number; a legion was a military unit of five or six thousand soldiers. A whole army of demons had invaded the possessed man. No wonder he suffered so severely and displayed such strength. Aware that Jesus knew their name and so controlled them, the demons sought to name their own punishment. Anything but the Abyss! The Abyss was the underworld, the place of the dead, but especially a place where demons and evil spirits were kept in prison. Even demons want freedom.

8:32-37. The viewpoint shifted to the hillside, where pigs were eating. For Gentile country this represented nothing unusual, just a standard way of making a living. For Jewish readers, this brought immediate revulsion. Pigs were unclean and despised (Lev. 11:7; Deut. 14:8). A Jew never touched a pig, much less ate one. Such a viewpoint made pigs the proper receptacle for demons. But this situation also made it the perfect platform for one of Jesus' miracles. He paid attention to what came from the heart of man, not what a person might touch outwardly. He gladly entered the world of demons and pigs, whereas the Jewish religious leaders regarded them with hate and disdain.

Continuing to determine their own punishment, the demons asked for the pigs as their new residence. Why pigs? Scripture gives no reason. Perhaps they were the only form of life visible at the moment.

Jesus let them have their way for the moment. Bad news for the pigs. Demon possession meant unrest, uneasiness, and thus movement among the pigs. Such movement roused by the demons stirred the pigs to panic. They rushed over the cliffs, into the sea, and drowned. Bad news for the pig farmers. Those "shepherding" the pigs ran off to tell the owners the bad news. It spread throughout the town. Everyone had to see what was happening—a new type of crowd for Jesus. Everyone knew the man who had been possessed. Now they saw him in a new light—clothed,

settled in front of Jesus, perfectly lucid. The crowd's reaction? Fear, almost panic! Who could this be? What would happen next? Eyewitnesses explained the scene.

They reacted differently than other crowds. People who saw a healing or exorcism usually crowded Jesus with still more people to heal and help. Not the Gerasenes. They demanded that Jesus leave their region immediately. The cares of the world and the world's riches were too much with them. Their livelihood took precedence over human need. They expelled the most powerful and most caring person the world ever knew without seeking his help for any of their friends and neighbors.

8:38-39. The cured man had an entirely different attitude. He wanted to answer Jesus' call to follow. Jesus surprised him. Following for this man meant going back home and telling the fearful friends and neighbors what Jesus had done for him. The man obeyed instantly. He took the good news to a town that had expelled Jesus, telling everyone exactly what Jesus had done for him. Following Jesus on the nomadic road would have been easy compared to that assignment. The call to faith is a call to commitment to the mission Jesus defines for us, not a call to a task we want to do. Have you heard the mission Jesus has for you? Are you committed to testify where he leads you?<sup>1</sup>

## References

1. Butler, Trent C., and Max Anders. *Luke*. Holman New Testament Commentary. Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 2000.

## Author Bio

### Trent Butler (Luke)

Trent C. Butler is a freelance author and editor. He served ten years on the faculty of the International Baptist Theological Seminary in Ruschlikon, Switzerland, and for twenty-two years as editor and editorial director for Holman Bible Publishers and LifeWay. He wrote the Word Biblical Commentary volume on Joshua, the Layman's Bible Book Commentary on Isaiah, the Holman Old Testament Commentaries on Isaiah and Hosea through Micah, and the Holman New Testament Commentary on Luke. He served on the editorial Board of the Holman Christian Standard Bible, and edited the Holman Bible Dictionary. Dr. Butler has a Ph.D. in biblical studies and linguistics from Vanderbilt University, has done further study at Heidelberg and Zurich, and has participated in the excavation of Beersheba.

### Max Anders (Luke)

Dr. Max Anders is the author of over 25 books, including the bestselling *30 Days to Understanding the Bible*, and is the creator and general editor of the 32-volume Holman Bible Commentary series. He has taught on the college and seminary level and is a veteran pastor. Max provides resources and discipleship strategies at [www.maxanders.com](http://www.maxanders.com) to help people grow spiritually.

### Greg Gilbert (What is the Gospel?)

Greg Gilbert (M.Div., The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary) is senior pastor at Third Avenue Baptist Church in Louisville, Kentucky. He is the author of *What Is the Gospel?*, *James: A 12-Week Study*, and *Who Is Jesus?*, and is the co-author (with Kevin DeYoung) of *What Is the Mission of the Church?*

### Charles Swindoll (Luke: Swindoll's Living Insights Commentary)

Charles R. Swindoll is the founder and senior pastor–teacher of Stonebriar Community Church in Frisco, Texas. But Chuck's listening audience extends far beyond a local church body, as *Insight for Living* airs on major Christian radio markets around the world. Chuck's extensive writing ministry has also served the body of Christ worldwide, and his leadership as president and now chancellor of Dallas Theological Seminary has helped prepare and equip a new generation of men and women for ministry. Chuck and his wife, Cynthia, his partner in life and ministry, have four grown children, ten grandchildren, and six great-grandchildren.