

Was Jesus a Feminist? | Luke 8:1-3 Sermon Discussion Participant Guide

Leader Note: It is possible that this topic will be challenging or even potentially controversial for some people based on their experiences in churches or what they see in media. As always, it's wise to realize people may have strong opinions and that you should encourage your group to show grace by listening well, respecting others, and sharing humbly.

Purpose of Discussion: To recognize that Jesus treated women with dignity and respect and insists His followers do the same. As a result, Christianity has always elevated the status of women.

Icebreaker: Who is a woman that has had an impact on your life? In what way?

Warm Up: Does the question, "Was Jesus a feminist?" make you uncomfortable? What connotations does feminism have in your mind?

Discussion

Read:

Genesis 1:26-27 (NIV)

²⁶ Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground."

²⁷ So God created mankind in his own image,
in the image of God he created them;
male and female he created them.

1. How does this passage lay a foundation for how we think about men and women?

Transition: Keith shared some ways the Greeks and Romans devalued women in the ancient world. Today in our culture you can see a division between men and women. This began with the first sin in the Garden of Eden when Adam and Eve turned on one another.

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2. What are some ways the culture has undermined the value of women, both in the past and today?

Transition: Jesus arrived on the scene and launched a movement that revolutionized how society thinks about and treats women.

Read:

[Luke 7:39, 44 \(NIV\)](#)

³⁹ When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he (Simon) said to himself, “If this man were a prophet, he (Jesus) would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is—that she is a sinner.”

⁴⁴ Then Jesus turned toward the woman and said to Simon, “Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair.

4. What did Jesus ask Simon?

5. Why is this significant? Or rather, how does Jesus see this woman that is different from how other people most likely have seen her?

Read:

[Luke 8:1-3 \(NIV\)](#)

¹After this, Jesus traveled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. The Twelve were with him, ²and also some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases: Mary (called Magdalene) from whom seven demons had come out; ³Joanna the wife of Chuza, the manager of Herod’s household; Susanna; and many others. These women were helping to support them out of their own means.

6. What do we learn about these women?

Transition: Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Susanna and the others supported Jesus financially out of their own means. Let’s look at two additional passages where we see women doing the same thing.

Phoebe is a wealthy woman who is a part of Paul’s ministry team. She delivered, read and interpreted Paul’s letter to the Romans. Lydia was a

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businesswoman who hosted Church in her home, indicating she most likely had a larger home than most people did.

Read:

[Romans 16:1-2 \(NIV\)](#)

¹I commend to you our sister Phoebe, a deacon of the church in Cenchreae. ²I ask you to receive her in the Lord in a way worthy of his people and to give her any help she may need from you, for she has been the benefactor of many people, including me.

[Acts 16:13-15 \(NIV\)](#)

¹³ On the Sabbath we went outside the city gate to the river, where we expected to find a place of prayer. We sat down and began to speak to the women who had gathered there. ¹⁴ One of those listening was a woman from the city of Thyatira named Lydia, a dealer in purple cloth. She was a worshiper of God. The Lord opened her heart to respond to Paul's message. ¹⁵ When she and the members of her household were baptized, she invited us to her home. "If you consider me a believer in the Lord," she said, "come and stay at my house." And she persuaded us.

7. A couple weeks ago Keith's sermon referenced Jesus's warning to rich people.

[Luke 18:24-27 \(NIV\)](#)

²⁴ Jesus looked at him and said, "How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God! ²⁵ Indeed, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God." ²⁶ Those who heard this asked, "Who then can be saved?" ²⁷ Jesus replied, "What is impossible with man is possible with God."

Now we see these wealthy women follow Jesus and funding his ministry. What can we learn from them about wealth?

Optional Dig Deeper:

Read

[John 4:27 \(NIV\)](#)

²⁷ Just then his disciples returned and were surprised to find him talking with a woman. But no one asked, "What do you want?" or "Why are you talking with her?"

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There is a traditional Jewish prayer found in the Talmud that devout Jewish men would pray daily. "Blessed are you, Lord, our God, ruler of the universe who has not created me a gentile, a slave, or a woman."

Based on John 4:27 and this Jewish prayer, how do you think 1st century Jews felt about Jesus having women among His disciples?

8. Have you or anyone you know ever been turned off by Christianity based on a misconception on how Christianity treats women?

What would you say to a person based on our discussion and the sermon to someone who raised those objections?

9. What would you say to a man (husband) who used the Bible to control or manipulate a woman (wife)?

10. What would you say to a woman who was unsure if she could use her spiritual gifts in the church?

Sharing and Prayer:

Take time to thank God for the women He has placed in your life.

Men, perhaps think and ask God how you can support the women in your life to serve God with the gifts He has given her.

Women, perhaps think and ask God how He wants you to serve God's Kingdom with the gifts He has given you.

Both men and women, think and ask God how He wants you to use the resources He has given you to bless others.

Last note: No one sermon can say everything on a topic that the Bible says about it. If you have questions about how men's and women's roles work in the church, feel free to ask about our position paper on the topic.