



19 - 25 June 2022 Healed – inside and out

**Related Bible reading(s): Luke 8.26-39**

## Bible study on Luke 8.26-39

*This study can be used by a small family/household group, or by an online group, or – sometimes with a little adaptation – by an individual.*

See our [Guidelines for a weekly Bible study](#).

### **Begin with an opening prayer**

Healing Lord,  
we come with wounds that often only you know;  
we bring weariness and fears as well as hopes and aspirations.  
Heal us and refresh us; restore your image in us.  
In the name of Jesus we pray.

**Amen.**

### **Read the passage**

*Consider different ways to read the text. For example, hearing it in more than one version of the Bible.*

*In an online group, you could share parts between those present, or use/adapt this week's Share the Word suggestion: Use the Jump to this week's menu on the right to go to Share the Word and scroll down to find the Gospel reading.*

### **Explore and respond to the text**

*Start by reading the Bible notes below. You may want to read them more than once, or pause after each paragraph to reflect on what you have read.*

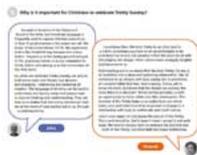
### **Bible notes**

Jesus crosses the Sea of Galilee into Gentile territory, where he meets a man ostracised by his own community. This strange story is a heady mix of fear, destruction and renewal. Perhaps we should start at the end, with the man delivered from his living death. Once uncontrollable, noisy and naked, he is now at peace, 'sitting at the feet of Jesus' like a true disciple, 'clothed and in his right mind' (v.35). What has brought this about?

That depends whose story we hear. The swineherds tell of destruction and destitution: the man shouting as he and his demons argued with Jesus, terrifying their pigs into throwing themselves off the cliffs into the lake, where they drowned. Not surprisingly they dismiss Jesus, the instigator of their ruin. The man has a different tale to tell, now that he's been freed from the forces that invaded his life when a legion of Roman soldiers occupied his town. Jesus' disciples have passed on a tale of pigs as acceptable collateral damage in their world: unclean spirits driven to possess what Jews regarded as unclean animals, a sign that healing damaged lives and a divided world is rarely straightforward and cost-free. Today we might say that the man had been traumatised by military occupation, his psychosomatic condition evidence of the way social problems become visible on the body (see Suzanne O'Sullivan, *The Sleeping Beauties: And Other Stories of Mystery Illness*, Picador 2021).

However the story is told, the significance of its beginning and ending is clear enough. Jesus is willing to cross every imaginable boundary – geographical, racial, cultural, spiritual –to enter a damaged and divided world and heal one of its most vulnerable victims. If the liberating God is to be credited with the man's release, he alone will be able to convince his community that his inside-and-outside healing will only be complete when they finally welcome him home.

See also: [In conversation: Fit for the kingdom](#)



[John Parr and Hannah Currin discuss the importance of celebrating Trinity Sunday, identifying your neighbour and the restfulness \(or not\) of prayer](#)

## Reflection

*Spend a few moments thinking about what stands out for you from the Bible reading. This idea may help.*

We know very little about the man whom Jesus healed. We are given a picture of before and after and it is quite a contrast. We do not have an in depth explanation as to why he behaved in the way he did. That may well be the case with people we encounter in contemporary society who have mental health issues. We may experience their impact but have no understanding of their context. Jesus did not judge. He simply got alongside the man, and through his caring the man's life was transformed. He was healed. Jesus did not wait to be asked. He instinctively knew what was needed and reacted accordingly.

## Questions for reflection

*You may wish to use these questions and the picture to help you think about or discuss issues arising from this week's Bible passage.*

Click on the image to view a larger version  
or use the *Jump menu* to go to *This*



*week's images.*  
For artist's details, see [this issue's illustrators](#).

### Questions

- In what ways is the world damaged and divided?
- How does Jesus bring healing to our world?
- How might we offer God's healing to those who are in pain – physically, mentally or emotionally?

### A simple activity

#### Find out how alike you are

Being different is not the same as being divided.

- We are all different and yet we are one in Christ – and in other ways too. Get into pairs, but not with someone you are closely related to or a close friend. For two minutes one of the pair says things about themselves – anything that comes to mind. If something that is said is also true of the other person, the two should shake hands (or bump fists, or similar). Keep a count of the handshakes. After two minutes swap roles.
- When this is done, ask people to share their number of handshakes. Is there a winner? More importantly, perhaps, ask everyone if there were things in common that surprised them. Were there things they did not have in common that surprised them? Do such differences matter?

*Use the Jump to this week's menu on the right to go to more activities in Explore and respond.*

### Prayer

*Adapt to your local context.*

#### A prayer of thanksgiving

We thank you, Lord, for the journeys of healing you take us all on. Whether we begin with baby steps or great strides, thank you for walking with us at the pace we can cope with.

We thank you for your healing peace on those fleeing conflict in this damaged world.

We thank you for your healing presence when illness and brokenness drive us into solitary places, physically or mentally.

We thank you for your healing strength in times of stress, or when we feel vulnerable and in need of support.

What a transformation you bring about in us, Lord, radiating from the inside out; you offer us many blankets of blessing.

And thank you for the opportunities to share the story of your healing with those who only know us healed.

**Our hearts swell with thankfulness and joy for all your blessings. Amen.**

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*Use the Jump to this week's menu on the right to find more prayers, including up-to-date intercessions.*

### **A prayer to end the Bible study**

Come with us, Lord, in our brokenness and bring healing.  
Come with us, Lord, into our divided world and unite us.  
Come with us, Lord, and cast from us that which is not of you,  
that we may live as your children in your world,  
today and always.

**Amen.**

### **Go with God 24/7**

*Encourage everyone to put their faith into action.*

Think of and pray daily for someone you believe to be damaged and/or in need of healing. If it is appropriate, let them know that you are thinking of them (e.g. send a card).

*Encourage everyone to explore their faith this week with the **ROOTS at home** resource.*