

**EVERY DAY WITH JESUS** (September 7—13)

Savor a segment of the gospel each day so that you may...

*"...grow in the grace and knowledge of our LORD and Savior Jesus Christ." "II Peter 3:18)*

Each day's questions are numbered and their answers are after the prayer of the day.

**Sept. 7 Luke 8:26-39** To be possessed by a demon is a very real and terrible thing, but what kind of 'possession' is worse than what we see here?<sup>1</sup> What is so remarkable about the people's response to Jesus (vv. 34-37), and his response to their request?<sup>2</sup> There is a great evangelism lesson in Jesus' refusal, of all things, to the man's request to let him go with Jesus. While Jesus could not effectively witness in that area due to the peoples' fearful response to his mighty act performed there, the man, for whom this act was performed, could stay and be an effective witness of what God had done for him. How might this same be true in your life and witness for Jesus?<sup>3</sup>

**Prayer:** Jesus, let me see the dangers of being 'sin possessed'. Satan would have me believe that such 'possession' is minor in comparison to his demon(s) possessing a body. But by sin, satan possesses, poisons, corrupts, torments and kills souls. Drive such possession from my heart, then open my mouth to tell tormented souls "your ways" so "sinners will return to you." Amen.

<sup>1</sup> Being possessed by sin, while less spectacular, is more dangerous because sin can possess and control us so subtly that we are not aware of it, or do not care about it. We fear the spectacular and tend to under-rate sin's threat. Let's not make that mistake. <sup>2</sup>They asked him, who is able to drive out demons, to leave! If they thought about it, as he had power and the ability to drive out demons, what power did they think they possessed that enabled them to ask him to leave? And note – Jesus lovingly complied! <sup>3</sup>People around you may be afraid of going 'to church', or so ashamed of their sin they think they can't go to church, or so hurt by a 'church' experience in the past, etc. that to have Jesus, as it were, come to them would not work. But it is another thing to have you, who are not seen as a threat, come to them and in ordinary language tell them of what God has done for you. Something that 'ordinary' might do more than our wildest dreams might imagine.

**Sept. 8 Luke 8:40-56** Some people say, "I pray knowing that Jesus is busy and he will get to me when he can." What do we learn from this account that proves that statement wrong?<sup>1</sup>

The act of the woman was very bold and faith-filled; for she, a person ceremonially unclean because of her discharge, was not allowed to touch a clean person, yet she did. And her faith was not disappointed, nor was Jairus'. What beautiful words he heard when, upon news of his daughter's death, Jesus said to him, "Do not fear; only believe, and she will be well." In the face of death, how may this same blessing be ours?<sup>2</sup>

**Prayer:** Savior, you are more than the healer of the ill and raiser of the dead. You are a Friend who cares; whose heart goes out to the troubled and sorrowing. Be here for me in my need as well. Then, in response to your caring, let me be there for others to share with them the comfort I have received from you in times of trouble. Amen.

<sup>1</sup>While Jesus is busy, he is also, we must remember, more importantly, true God. Here we see him in action, caring at the same time about and for Jairus, Jairus' daughter and an ill woman. What he did then, he is more than able to do in our lives - no matter 'how busy' he is. <sup>2</sup>It is ours by believing that Jesus is the Christ, he has the power over life and death, he is the Resurrection and the Life, he has removed our sin and guilt, he is working all for our good. It is ours by believing God when he says, "Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints" (Ps. 116), "Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on, . . . that they rest from their labors, and their deeds follow them." (Rev. 14) and "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted." (Mt. 5)

**Sept. 9 Luke 9:1-6** It is easy to think enviously of the disciples, “Oh, to have been among the twelve blessed disciples sent personally out by Jesus! To have Jesus’ implicit promise they would be provided for, ‘Take nothing for your journey’. To have the right to shake off dust from feet when people would not receive them and their message. Boy, those must have been heady days.” But nothing has changed - these still are heady days We still have the same Jesus and we have the same gifts as Jesus gave the disciples! We too have been sent out personally by him, “Go and make disciples of all nations.” We too have his explicit promise to care for us “I am with you always, to the end of the age.” We too have the right to ‘shake off the dust’ as Paul and Barnabas did in Acts 13:51. So what’s stopping us from stepping out boldly as Christ’s witnesses today?<sup>1</sup>

**Prayer:** O Lord, open my lips, and my mouth will declare your praise. (Ps. 51:15) Amen.

<sup>1</sup>A weak faith that fails to see that Jesus is just as real and as much with me today as he was with the disciples back then, and the conviction that he and his Word are true. We too need to pray with the man in Mark, “I believe. Help my unbelief.”

**Sept. 10 Luke 9:7-9** Herod “sought to see (Jesus).” Why didn’t he? After all, he was the king. He had troops and spies. He could do and get whatever he desired, so why couldn’t he see Jesus? A related question: What keeps a lot of people from ‘seeing’ Jesus?<sup>1</sup> What is Jesus to me?<sup>2</sup>

**Prayer:** Lord, you justly rebuked those who desired to see you for the earthly ‘thrill’, but not because they realized your works showed you to be the Son of Man upon whom God the Father had set his seal. Give us such eyes of faith that we long to see you as you really are and thereby possess the eternal life that you alone are able to give. Amen.

<sup>1</sup>Herod and so many other people want to see Jesus with their eyes, to see a pop-icon and to be part of the buzz and excitement of the latest media hype. But when it comes to having Jesus be more to them than just a passing curiosity, when it comes to having a personal, caring, one-to-one relationship with him – well, that’s going too far. Such ‘seeing’ is not the seeing of faith, therefore it cannot save. <sup>2</sup>For each of us, may he be the heart and core of our soul and our life. Where he isn’t, let’s prayerfully repent, and seek more than just a passing relationship with him.

**Sept. 11 Luke 9:10-17** Having five loaves of Wonder Bread, two small cans of tuna and 5,000 people to feed (and more, if women and children were along with the men) is a host’s worst nightmare, but not Jesus’. He took what he had at hand, truly gave thanks for it and then faithfully used what God had given him. While it is true that Jesus is true God and so he could multiply the ‘meager’ fare he had; we can learn more from this reading than just that it teaches that Jesus is true God. There’s a lesson here for each of us to learn about the importance of seeing and knowing God and being thankful for who he is and *all he has given us* (instead of focusing in on who *we* are, our weakness and bemoaning what *we* don’t have), and then faithfully using whatever he gives to honor him. That’s the difference, isn’t it, between a life of peace and contentment and one of chaos and turmoil. How often we have done the opposite, and ended up panicking over what we don’t ‘have’.

**Prayer:** Bread of life, knowing you and the Father, grant me a heart that is grateful for whatever ‘bread’ you give me here on earth. Then, as you did, let me use it to honor you and bring blessing to others. Amen.

**Sept. 12 Luke 9: 18-20** It is easy to think that religion is just a set of beliefs, and then to pick and chose which one(s) I like and reject the ones I don’t like or don’t agree with. But notice Jesus’ question: “Who do you say *I* am?” (Emphasis added.) Martyn Lloyd-Jones wrote:

The Bible itself makes it very plain and clear that the whole essence of the Christian position is dependent upon the person of the Lord Jesus Christ.

. . . This is the one thing that separates the Christian faith from all other religions. Their founders, while important, are not absolutely essential to them. . . . In other religions it is the teaching that matters and the person (founder) is not essential; other persons might have done it equally as well, and the teaching would remain unaffected.

But that is not the case with the Christian faith. Christianity, as has often been pointed out, is Christ Himself. He is not only central, He is absolutely vital, and therefore we have to see that we are concerned primarily, and always about Him. . . . the touchstone of anybody’s profession of the Christian faith is, of necessity, such a person’s relationship to the Lord Jesus Christ. What proclaims at once that

so many people who call themselves Christian are not Christian is that Christ *as a person* is not all essential to them. *God the Father, God the Son*, pp. 245, 246 (Emphasis added).

We need to be very, very careful here – Christianity is not a bunch of old, cold, dead theoretical theological facts; how could it be, when all the Bible’s teachings are about a very real, eternal, living being who became flesh for us to save us. Christianity is not about a theological bureaucracy; how could it be when it’s about a *person*. To reject Christianity, or a teaching of Christianity, therefore, is not to reject a *thing* or a *teaching*, but a *person* – Christ. When one does that, one rejects the Father and eternal life (Lk. 10:16, John 3:31-36, 12:47-50. See also 1 Thes. 4:8) So what is my personal confession of Jesus? If I say he is “the Christ of God”, the heart and core of my faith, true God and Man; does my life, worship, obedience to him and my interaction with others, and especially with fellow members of his body, mirror that? If it doesn’t, what does that say about my faith?<sup>1</sup>

**Prayer:** Jesus, let me never have a relationship with you that is one just of impersonal awareness. Be the One I desire to be near constantly, the One I talk to about everything, the One I confide in, the One I flee to, the One I desire to be with me in every act and activity I participate in. When you speak, let me be attentive and humble myself before your will. In response to who you are and all that you have done for me, let me never be ashamed to tell anyone that you are “the Christ of God”, my Lord and God, my Savior and my Friend. Amen.

<sup>1</sup>Each of these important questions can only be answered by us individually. Where we see a healthy relationship with Jesus, we give thanks. Where there are troubles; in faith let’s humbly go to him in prayer and talk to him about that and confess what we are allowing to keep us from having a meaningful relationship with him. After all, that’s what we would do to restore a broken relationship with a good friend whom we have distanced ourselves from either by letting lines of communication break down or by our behavior.

**September 13 Luke 9:21-22** Why would Jesus, after he accepted the disciples’ testimony about who he is, as we saw in yesterday’s reading, strictly charge and command his disciples to be quiet about the fact that he is “The Christ of God,”? After all, isn’t any kind of press good, especially *positive* press?<sup>1</sup>

**Prayer:** Lord Jesus, may my awareness of you be a complete awareness, seeing you both as King and Suffering Servant, as Priest and Lamb, as Man and God, as Prophet and the Word made flesh. Wherever my Christology is faulty, let your Spirit teach me so I boldly believe in and confess you as “the Christ of God” in all your fullness and glory. Amen.

<sup>1</sup>Jesus knew that many in his day thought of the Messiah who was to come in *their* terms; so they thought of him as a secular Champion, Deliverer, King, Savior who would overcome *worldly* oppressors. They did not understand that Messiah’s’ person was both/and, and his work was *spiritual*. Therefore they didn’t realize that this Champion, Deliverer, King, Savior, to truly be such, needed to “suffer many things”. With these misconceptions ruling their theology, if the people were told at this point that Jesus was “the Christ of God” and then saw his subsequent arrest, trial, suffering and death, without understanding the complete story about his person and work, they would have been scandalized, tripped up, in their faith. We should not be surprised at their confusion, even the disciples had trouble with this. It was only after his ascension and by the working of the Spirit that they began to understand the fullness of the Bible’s testimony about Jesus, his person and his work (John 16:12-15, Acts 1:6-8).