

1 And it came about soon afterwards, that He began going about from one city and village to another, proclaiming and preaching the kingdom of God; and the twelve were with Him, 2 and also some women who had been healed of evil spirits and sicknesses: Mary who was called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, 3 and Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others who were contributing to their support out of their private means.

Luke the story teller uses transitions to move his narrative along smoothly from one section to the next.

We are in one of those transitions just here. In the big picture, we are at a point in Jesus ministry where He has been at it long enough that there is impact, both positive and negative.

He moved His operation from the Jordan river area of John the baptist's influence that included all of Judea including Jerusalem, up into Galilee because Herod had imprisoned and later murdered John, and sought to find Jesus.

In moving the operation to Galilee, the area surrounding the sea of Tiberias and points north and west, but sometimes also east, Jesus effectively left the cultural elites behind and moved His operations out to what our current elites call "fly-over country".

To our current culture's elite thinkers and movers and shakers, the 2 coasts are important culturally but the vast area in between doesn't matter. You fly over that vast wasteland of ordinary folk who don't count culturally to get to the other coast where culture again has a foot hold.

That metaphor works for Galilee and that entire northern region of Israel. It was backwater country that didn't matter. The cultural elites in their religious culture were at Jerusalem. No one else mattered. In fact

the elite's in Jerusalem segregated themselves from the hayseeds up north.

In John chapter 7:32 The Pharisees heard the multitude saying things about believing in Jesus; and the chief priests and the Pharisees sent officers to seize Him.

People were starting to believe and the pharisees were at a breaking point so they send officers out to seize Jesus. It's on that occasion that Nicodemus causes the cultural elite pharisees to show their true colors regarding the region and ministry of Jesus in Galilee.

Jn. 7:45 The officers therefore came to the chief priests and Pharisees, and they said to them, "Why did you not bring Him?" 46 The officers answered, "Never did a man speak the way this man speaks." 47 The Pharisees therefore answered them, "You have not also been led astray, have you? 48 "No one of the rulers or Pharisees has believed in Him, has he? 49 "But this multitude which does not know the Law is accursed." 50 Nicodemus said to them (he who came to Him before, being one of them), 51 "Our Law does not judge a man, unless it first hears from him and knows what he is doing, does it?" 52 They answered and said to him, "You are not also from Galilee, are you? Search, and see that no prophet arises out of Galilee."

They have utter contempt for Jesus and for Galilee. And that contempt is contagious for anyone who even sympathizes with disagreeing with the pack think. Group think. They have a pack mentality that ostracizes anyone with an open mind. *You are not also from Galilee, are you? But this multitude which does not know the Law is accursed.*

People in fly-over country are accursed. As Solomon said, there's nothing new under the sun.

The transition we are in here in Luke's gospel is not that Jesus is leaving

Galilee behind, he will continue the galilean ministry through most of chapter 9. In 9:51 He sets His face toward Jerusalem and the final six months close in.

But our transition here is that the scribes and pharisees, the cultural and religious elite class has heard enough and their minds are set like stone. Jesus at this point removes Himself from them.

In the gospel of Matthew, it's at this point that the elite's say He does miracles because He is getting His power from Satan. And it's also at this point that Jesus introduces us to the unforgiveable sin.

When you've had full revelation, backed up with miracles and all you can come up with is He is working together with Satan, game over. Nothing further will be possible that might save you.

That's where we're at, and you'll see next week, the teaching changes radically. He begins to teach with parables. Plain truth is over. After this, it becomes more difficult for the nation to understand and receive the truth, and within a few months He will be gone. Crucified.

But Luke's transition is by no means a throw-away. There's important truths to learn in this beautiful little section.

1 And it came about soon afterwards,

After what? After the conflict with the pharisees which for Luke is exemplified by the comparison of the rejection and condescension of Simon the pharisee and the woman who was a sinner.

The pharisees have utterly rejected Jesus. They loathe Him. They make Him the center of a dinner that shows Him every dis-respect possible. In fact it may have been a set-up with the woman, the sinner.

They gave Him rope and they hoped He'd hang Himself. In their minds, He did. They were willing to go with, He's a sinner by association and a non prophet since He doesn't have a clue about the sinner lady, but He made it even better for them. After reading their thoughts, He forgave the sinner's sin. Something only God can do.

Now they have Him for blasphemy. He's a lunatic who thinks He's God. That hopeless dis-belief, in spite of all the evidence, that closed mindset is the "after this" that Luke refers to. In Matthew we learn it's also at the same time frame that they explain the miracles by power from Satan. That time.

And it came about soon afterwards, that He began going about from one city and village to another, proclaiming and preaching the kingdom of God;

Jesus keeps right on doing what He's been doing. Moving from village to village, city to city, in the region of Galilee, and we have two words here that describe His method.

He's proclaiming and He's teaching. A proclamation is a broad term that describes getting new information out to as many people as possible. Shouting from the house tops, if you will. Shouting the good news!

Teaching is a little more intimate. Teaching includes details concerning the greater proclamation. Jesus was doing both as He traveled from place to place, and His message was both simple and profound.

*proclaiming and preaching the **kingdom of God**;*

The authority to reign of God as opposed to the current ruler of this world, has come. Wrapped up within that proclamation is that freedom from slavery to sin and the spiritual death it brings has arrived.

It is now possible for people to be delivered from sin and all of it's

effects, and belong to God. Free at last. Forgiven at last. Righteousness at last. All of that is built into His proclamation. The kingdom of God is at hand.

Satan is put on notice. His kingdom is in jeopardy. The kingdom of God has arrived. That's Jesus message. Come unto me, all ye that are weak and heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

and the twelve were with Him,

Jesus has a dual purpose. He's teaching and proclaiming that the authority to reign of God has come, and He's also training 12 painfully ordinary men to accomplish the task of implementing God's kingdom in the middle of Satan's realm, after He is gone.

This is where you insert the joke about the angels asking Him, how will this happen? How will the kingdom come? And Jesus says, I've got these 12 galilean's. And the angels say, mercy, what's plan B, and Jesus says, there is no other plan. It's up to these 12 men.

Jesus has selected 12 men that He's going to pour His life into, and when He's gone, they will take the message of salvation to the world. Sound unlikely? Pinch yourselves, here we are. . . . *and the twelve were with Him. 2 and also some women*

OK, that explains it. One thing I learned when we had our own business. Women can get more work done by accident than men can on purpose.

This company has become a traveling feast. It isn't just Jesus and the twelve. We're introduced to some women who were part of that company, and we'll also see in vs. 3 that there were many others.

This has become a traveling company of people who are all pulling for a

common purpose. It's a traveling company with Jesus and the 12, and some women, and many others.

I've been reading a book about the missionary John Paton who went to the cannibals of the south seas islands off Australia. And those islands where there was simply no word from God available, they were at the mercy of Satan who has no mercy, and the degradation of the women was sad to behold in a culture left to just fallen humans and Satan.

The men could have multiple wives. And if a wife ran away, when they caught her, because there's really no place to go, they would take a rock out of a fire and put it behind her knee and bend her leg over it and tie it that way until the rock cooled on it's own. Lame for life.

Beatings were ordinary. And when the husband died they would kill his wives too. They would remove the top two center teeth of females. Marked for life. There was one story where a husband got tired of his wife being sick and he digs a hole and buries her alive. Problem solved.

Such is the plight of women in a world without any input from God. This book is the ground zero for women. In this book there is equal dignity for women. They bear the dignity of being the image bearers of God equal with men.

This book tells us that men and women are different, they have different roles to play, different jobs to accomplish as they glorify their creator, but there is no difference in dignity or intelligence.

And in this company traveling with Jesus, unlike the religious elite's in Jerusalem, the women are there, ministering to the common good.

At the crucifixion, in Mark 15 the women are mentioned again; *40 And there were also women watching from a distance. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James the younger and of Joseph,*

and Salome. 41 These women had followed Jesus and ministered to Him while He was in Galilee, and there were many other women who had come up to Jerusalem with Him.

The women ministered to the needs of this group, enabling them to complete work that changed the world. This didn't end with Jesus. We find Lydia ministering to Paul. And women working hard for the advancement of the kingdom continuously for 2000 years.

Women are just as important in the kingdom of God and it's accomplishments in this world as men. They help, they minister, they work hard, but they don't preach. They are enablers. They do what they can to be helpers. They work to provide the every day comforts and necessities. Food and care. Little ones. Family.

It pleased God that men would be the elders and the preachers, but we find women accomplishing a lot of the heavy lifting that enables the traveling feast to move about in this world. The teaching and preaching would not be possible without them working hard in the background.

Luke mentions some of them by name. This little transition section is about how God's work in this world is underwritten by caring, ministering partners including, but not exclusive to; women.

This is a preaching teaching tour and also a 12 apostle school. Who pays for such an enterprise? These 12 men have families to care for, wives and little ones.

How do missionaries, normal men, with wives and children to care for quit their normal occupations and go on the road with Jesus to observe and learn and hear the good news of the Kingdom?

The enterprise is underwritten by those who God has gifted with an over-abundance. God owns the sheep on a thousand hills. He gives

extra to some faithful stewards who can underwrite and pay for others to bring the good news of salvation to others still.

This is no problem for God who owns everything, and it's a blessing for those who He trusts to distribute His wealth faithfully for Him.

Jeremiah 27 is a good reminder for us; *‘Thus says the LORD of hosts, the God of Israel, thus you shall say to your masters, 5 “I have made the earth, the men and the beasts which are on the face of the earth by My great power and by My outstretched arm, and I will give it to the one who is pleasing in My sight.*

I made it, I own it, I give it to whomever I want. It's no problem for God to underwrite His own purposes. What a privilege to be used by Him in some small way to accomplish His Kingdom in this world.

2 and also some women who had been healed of evil spirits and sicknesses: Mary who was called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, 3 and Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod’s steward, and Susanna, and many others who were contributing to their support out of their private means.

The women who were traveling with Jesus and His apostles and companions had in common that He had healed them of sicknesses and in some cases delivered them from demonic attack.

Mary Magdalene who had seven demons cast out of her. What a black eye to those pharisees who charge Jesus with doing His miracles with satanic power.

Jesus cast seven demons out of Mary Magdalene and she is on the road with Him, ministering to Him and the rest of the group.

In Mark 16:9 there is a reminder that will stand forever of the

importance of women in God's economy in this world;

9 After Jesus had risen, early on the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, from whom He had driven out seven demons.

It wasn't Peter or John who had the first resurrection sight of Jesus. It was Mary.

Joanna - wife of Chuza who is steward for Herod. Suzanna and many others pooling resources to fund Jesus and His apostles who would later build the church - acting as it's foundation.

How interesting and fun to think of God calling Jo-anna; the wife of the comptroller of the Herod enterprise and fortune, killer of John the baptist.

God has a sense of humor. Can you imagine the conflict of interest possibilities when God calls and saves the wife of the man who controls Herod's interests and wealth.

Your wife crosses over to the enemy camp. She's taking money that originated from Herod and supporting the cause of Jesus. Herod's money underwriting Jesus and the apostles. When God says it all belongs to me and I give it to whomever I please, He means exactly what He says.

and many others who were contributing to their support out of their private means.

2000 years later, this model is still in force exactly as it was when Jesus was touring Galilee with the message of the Kingdom.

God still gives us more than we need so that we can underwrite His work in this world.

And women still glorify the Saviour by doing much of the unseen heavy lifting. Women work tirelessly for the advance of the Kingdom of God. It pleased Him to mention some of them by name in His book that will outlast all of the worlds to come.

I'm going to do something a little different than usual this morning to illustrate how God uses women to advance His kingdom in this world. My mom was one of those women. I'll just read directly from a few pages in her book, Yesterday in Haiti.

She was a missionary nurse who took her skills, paid for by caring christian people, no frills, to the poorest people perhaps on this earth. She did what she could for their sicknesses and comfort, but underlying the hard work of being a missionary nurse was the gospel. The message of the kingdom.

Because while sometimes hundreds waited in line to get an interview with the clinic, they had the gospel shared with them. That was the end view for it all. They were a captive audience to hear the message about Jesus while they waited in line with their sicknesses.