

The Rock, the Road, and the Rabbi

Session 4: Galilee

Recommended Reading: Chapters 9, 12, & 14

Opening Discussion

- Please share something you learned about scripture, or yourself, over the past week.
- What images, feelings, or thoughts come to mind when you think of the region of Galilee?

Watch Video

- What caught your attention most as you viewed the video?
- What is your first impression of the woman who is so bold as to touch Jesus' garment?
- By tradition, her uncleanness would have made Jesus unclean, she risked a lot and what was her reward for her courage? What might we receive if we had the same courage in our lives?
- Jesus asks the disciples to do the illogical. Rolling their eyes at the Lord, they do what they know will not work, and instead of failure, they encounter abundance. How does their faith help us when we feel Jesus is asking us to do something equally illogical?

Read Luke 8:22-39 as a group

- If you had been on the boat with the disciples, how do you think you would have reacted in the face of the storm, and in Jesus' ability to bring peace and calm to a terrifying situation?
- What do we learn from the story, told in verses 22-25, that has application in our lives today?
- What differences, or similarities, do we notice between the story of a man possessed by many demons and the woman who touched Jesus' garment? About Jesus' response to their plight? About the reaction of those who witnessed their healing?

Closing Discussion

At the crossroads of trade, it is not hard to imagine the farmers and fishermen of Galilee hard at work, and the hustle and bustle of the markets. Some of the most fertile land in all of Israel, fed by the springs coming down from the hills, it is no wonder Jesus picked this location to begin his ministry. Not only because of its strategic location, but as one looks around, whether on the shore, or standing on a hill, one cannot help but see the lushness of the land and feel its surrounding peace. In the midst of our busy lives, where do we find similar beauty and peace; beauty and peace that reveals not only the power and majesty of God, but that opens our very being to the transforming depth of God's love for us?

Staying Connected

Day 1: Read Luke 8:43-48

- What aspects of the Jewish emphasis on purification might limit our ability today to see one another as Jesus saw the bleeding woman? How might we avoid letting them do so?

Day 2: Reflection

- What drives us to reach out for Jesus? What holds us back?

Day 3: Read John 21:1-8

- During our group session, we heard about a cultural view between the left and the right. While this may be useful in analysis of their mindset, what do you think motivated the disciples to do what seemed totally illogical?

Day 4: Reflection

- In what areas of life do you feel Jesus is asking you to do the illogical? How do you respond?

Day 5: Read John 21:15-19

- Despite Peter's previous lack of courage, Jesus asks him to take on something that seems impossible, and if we are honest, a bit overwhelming. What does this story say to us about how the way Jesus sees us, is different than the way we see ourselves?

Day 6: Prayer

- Spend some time in prayer today, reflecting on what you have learned from scripture and about yourself. Ask God to help you discern what role you may have in helping others to know what you have learned.

Day 7: A Day of rest.

Galilee

Galilee occupies the northernmost territory of the land of Israel. Lebanon borders it on the north, the Jezreel Valley on the south, the Upper Jordan River and Sea of Galilee on the east, and the Plain of Acre on the west. With the highest elevation in Israel, Galilee enjoys the coolest climate with abundant winter rains and numerous springs to keep the land well-watered.

The territory is divided into two sections—Upper and Lower Galilee—with a deep valley running between. Upper Galilee climbs to heights more than 3,000 feet above sea level, while Lower Galilee contains broad valleys with rich soil well-suited to agriculture and farming.

The first mention of Galilee in the Bible refers to the location of Kedesh, a city of refuge in the hill country of Naphtali (Joshua 20:7; 21:32; 1 Chronicles 6:76). In the allotment of land among the tribes of Israel, Galilee is associated initially with the tribes of Naphtali, Asher, Issachar, and Zebulun (Joshua 19). Later, the tribe of Dan moved to the outskirts of Upper Galilee (verses 40–48).

The name Galilee derives from two Hebrew words meaning “circuit” or “district.” The region has been called Galilee since at least the seventh century BC. In the Old Testament, Galilee lacked significance in the story of the Israelite people, but by New Testament times, the area came into the spotlight as it had grown into a major population center.

Abundant streams flow from the northern highlands to supply the well-watered and fertile terrain of Lower Galilee, making it the ideal setting for densely populated settlements. Also, the Sea of Galilee is in Lower Galilee. As the only substantial freshwater lake in the region, the Sea of Galilee added a flourishing fishing industry to the region’s other lucrative commercial activities including the exportation of olives and grains.

Upper Galilee is sometimes referred to as “Galilee of the Gentiles” in Scripture (Matthew 4:16), probably because it hosted various non-Jewish inhabitants, including Phoenicians, Syrians, and Sidonians. Jews living in other parts of Israel often looked askance at the Galileans as backward, unsophisticated people; sometimes their contempt for Galileans was recorded in Scripture (e.g., John 7:52). Not helping matters was the fact that the Galileans had a distinctive dialect, readily discerned by the Judeans (Mark 14:70).

Jesus’ boyhood years were spent in Nazareth, a town in Lower Galilee. Most of the Gospel narratives are also set in Lower Galilee. With several major roadways of the Roman Empire crossing through Galilee, the land provided Jesus and His disciples with a strategic initial mission field to launch the gospel message into the world.

Numerous recorded miracles of Jesus took place in Galilee (Matthew 4:23–25; 28:16; John 1:46; 7:41–42). His first miracle—turning water into wine at the wedding in Cana (John 2:1, 11; 4:46)—happened in Galilee. And from the shores of the Sea of Galilee, Jesus called the first of His disciples to become “fishers of men” (Mark 1:16). Peter, Andrew, James, and John were all working as fishermen earning a living on the Sea of Galilee when Jesus called them up for service (Matthew 4:13–22).

More than 700 years before our Savior walked the land of Galilee, the prophet Isaiah foresaw the region as the gateway of salvation and peace for the nations through the preaching of Jesus Christ: “Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honor Galilee of

the nations, by the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan” (Isaiah 9:1). We know the person spoken of here refers to Christ because this same passage is cited in Matthew 4:13–15 and applied to Jesus. The lands of Zebulun and Naphtali had been devastated by the Assyrian army but were uniquely honored by the presence of the Messiah and His loving ministry, which brought light, joy, and salvation to the people of the world.

Excerpt from: <https://www.gotquestions.org/Galilee-in-the-Bible.html>