

1-1-2012

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Recommended Citation

Griffin, Bradley W. (2012) "The Voices of Women in Luke's Gospel," *Leaven*: Vol. 20: Iss. 1, Article 13.
Available at: <https://digitalcommons.pepperdine.edu/leaven/vol20/iss1/13>

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The Voices of Women in Luke's Gospel

ARRANGED BY BRADLEY W. GRIFFIN

*L*uke pays careful attention to the experiences of women who encountered Jesus during his infancy, childhood, and later in his ministry. He uses their stories to demonstrate the upside-down kingdom that Jesus had come to establish. This reading collects the experiences of some of these women, and it demonstrates the love that Jesus had for all people, especially those with no voice and little agency in the first century.

The reading has been designed for four readers drawn from a wide age range.

- 1 When I, Mary, first encountered Jesus, I poured out my joys and my fears in song.

My soul magnifies the Lord, and my spirit rejoices in God, my Savior, for he has looked with favor on the lowliness of his servant. Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed; for the Mighty One has done great things for me, and holy is his name. (1.46–49)
- 2 When I, Elizabeth, first encountered Jesus, I felt my baby kick inside my womb. No, not just a kick. A leap!

Blessed are you among women, Mary, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! (1.42)
- 3 When I, Anna the prophet, first encountered Jesus, I saw in this child the hope of all people. (2.36–38)
- 4 When I, the widow at Nain, first encountered Jesus, I was mourning the death of my only son. Jesus told me to dry my tears. As I dabbed at my eyes, I saw my boy restored to life. In my shock and joy, I led my friends and neighbors in proclaiming,

A great prophet has risen among us! God has looked favorably on his people! (7.11–17)
- ALL When we, followers of Jesus, first encountered him, we saw him heal—not just other people, but ourselves. (8.1–3)
- 1 *(Mary Magdalene)* From me, the one called Magdalene, he cast out seven demons. (8.2)
- 2 *(Woman with the issue of blood)* I touched him in the midst of a jostling crowd, and that touch cured what the doctors had ignored for twelve years. I thought he wouldn't notice, but

he called me out. Expecting a lecture, I received grace instead. “Daughter,” he said, “your faith has made you well; go in peace.” (8.43–48)

3 *(The Crippled Woman)* He straightened my spine after eighteen years of debilitating pain. “Woman, you are set free from your ailment.” Freedom. That’s the perfect word for it. Standing tall for the first time in nearly two decades, what could I do except praise God? Everyone around me joined in and rejoiced at the wonderful things this man was doing. (13.10–17)

ALL When others ran away, we followed Jesus all the way to the cross.

1 We saw him laid to rest, and still we weren’t through.

2 We returned to adorn his body with spices and ointments, but we found—what?

3 The tomb was empty. Instead of Jesus, two men greeted us and said,

1 & 4 Why do you look for the living among the dead?

4 He is not here, but has risen.

1 Don’t you remember how he told you, while still in Galilee, that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again?

2 We did remember, and we ran away to tell others. (23.55—24.12)

4 His mercy is for those who fear him from generation to generation. He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away empty. He has helped his servant Israel, in remembrance of his mercy, according to the promise he made to our ancestors, to Abraham and to his descendants forever. (1.50–55)

ALL These are our stories. This is the Jesus we know.

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