**Luke I**

**The Upside Down Kingdom of God**

Theme: God’s salvation, as predicted by the prophets has arrived in the coming of the Messiah—Jesus of Nazareth. He is the savior of the world and this salvation is now spreading throughout the world (including that of the Gentiles, of course).

Theme verses: Luke 2:11 Today in the town of David as Savior has been born to you: he is the Messiah, the Lord.

Luke 19:9-10 Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save the lost.”

The purpose of Luke is:

1. Assuring hearers/readers of the reality of what they have learned.

2. Calling them to continued faithfulness and participation in God’s salvation.

In Matthew Jesus fulfills the messianic expectation through fulfilling specific prophecies and prefigures. In Luke, Jesus fulfills the messianic pattern in his ministry and in bringing salvation today more than specific historical prophecies.

Features unique to Luke to note:

Historical details, including names, places and dates.

Universal appeal of the gospel (role of Gentiles in Jesus’ ministry)

Jesus’ concern for outsiders, the poor, “sinners”, women, Samaritans

Reversal of fortune (poor become rich, rich become poor, sinners are righteous and the “righteous” are sinners) The upside down kingdom of God

Emphasis on role of women in Jesus’ life and ministry

Jesus described as Savior (as well as Christ, Lord and Prophet) (as opposed to Messiah in Matthew and Son of God in John)

Narrative of the journey to Jerusalem (this theme is carried into Acts)

Jesus as a man of prayer (nine prayers of Jesus appear in Luke, of which only two are found in the other three gospels baptism 3:21, leprosy healing 5:16, before calling the Twelve 6:12, with his disciples in private 9:18, at the transfiguration 9:28, before teaching disciples to pray 11:1, prayer in view of trials 18:1, 21:36 22:40. Also, two of Jesus’ parables in Luke are about the need to pray (Luke 11:5-13, Luke 18:1-8])

Use of the word “today” in reference to salvation (rem: immediately in Mark?)

Emphasis on the Holy Spirit and its role in bringing in the Kingdom of God (1:15, 1:41-44, 1:67, 2:25-27, 3:22, 4:1,14,18, 10:21

Emphasis on the training of the apostles (In Mark they are inept, in Matthew they are faithless and in Luke they are being prepared for the mission they will complete in Acts.)

Other facts to bear in mind:Luke/Acts almost certainly a single document—written at the same time, by the same author. It may have been divided because the whole thing could not fit on a standard sized scroll.

Acts 1:1 “In my former book, Theophilus, I wrote about all Jesus began to do and to teach.” (note: Theophilus is also mentioned in Luke 1:3)

Who is Theophilus? Is he, literally, a lover of God? Is he an actual person-a recent convert to whom Luke wrote

Fun fact: Luke the longest book in the New Testament. We have more words of Luke than of Paul or John.

**I Prologue Luke 1:1-4**

Sets out the purpose of the gospel, which is to confirm the truth of the gospel, particularly its historical reliability. Very formal Hellenistic style intended to impress the Greek reader with its historical value.

Luke is writing a “carefully investigated,” “orderly account”

**II Birth Narrative.** Luke, the narrative historian, switches to a more old-fashioned Semitic-sounding style of writing.

The point of this section is that Jesus is the fulfillment of the pious Jewish messianic expectation. The best the Jews have to offer in terms of piety and righteousness are those whose expectation is fulfilled in Jesus.

Zechariah and Elizabeth (middle aged) are both priestly descendants and observe all the Lord’s commands

Joseph and Mary (very young) are humble servants of God, faithfully fulfilling the commands regarding purification and dedication

Simeon (very old) is extremely righteous and devout and is waiting for the expected Messiah.

The same holds for Anna, who is the female equivalent of Simeon. She is fully devoted to worship, fasting and prayer.

Theme of this section: The arrival of God’s promised Savior and the fulfillment of God’s prophets and promises.

Luke is setting the stage for his entire narrative.

Luke 1:5-18

v. 5 Zechariah of the order of Abijah—one of twenty-four orders (courses) of priests of Aaron. (actually, the eighth order 1 Chron 24:10).

v. 5 Note that both Zechariah and Elizabeth are of priestly descent.

v. 6 Both are very upright in observing all the Law of Moses “righteous and lived without blame”

Upright and observant. Both obedient and faithful.

1:9 Zechariah chosen by lot. God’s providence in sending the Messiah

Luke 1:7 But they had no children. Elizabeth was barren.

Luke 1:13 Your wife will bear a son.

Luke 1:18 Both old (past menopause) and barren A double whammy!

There is a pattern here: Righteous, upright people who are nevertheless childless/barren

Sarah who gave birth to Isaac (a prefigure of Jesus, only son sacrificed on Mt. Moriah)

Rachel who gave birth to Joseph (a prefigure of Jesus, at right hand, became slave in Egypt, back at right hand) (Gen 30:22-23) (note: v. 23 God has taken away my disgrace)

Hannah who gave birth to Samuel (a prefigure of Jesus: prophet, priest and judge/king)

Now Elizabeth who gave birth to John the Baptist who was the voice in the wilderness telling people to make straight the paths for Jesus to come.

Q: Can you relate to feeling “old, barren and useless”

Luke 1:19-25 God has good news for Zechariah, Elizabeth and us!

Aside: Luke 1:18, 20 Zechariah faithless—asked for a sign. God answered his prayer. The sign will be muteness for 9 months!

Message: Do not ask God for a sign!

Here is the message for us:

The old will be more productive than the young

The barren will be fruitful

You may have been poor—a reject in the eyes of the world, but if you will be upright and observant, God will make you productive and fruitful.

Luke 1:25 God has taken away our disgrace. (as in Genesis 30:23)

Luke has good news: If we will be upright and observant, we will be productive and fruitful and God will take away our disgrace!

Q: How has God taken away your disgrace? How will God make you fruitful—bearing spiritual children?

Luke 1 & 2 has parallelism between John and Jesus. John is born miraculously, of a barren woman (like Isaac, Samuel), but Jesus is born of a virgin!

Luke 1:26-38

Birth of Jesus. Matthew’s account focuses on Joseph. Luke focuses on Mary.

Here we see emphasized Luke’s theme of turning the world upside down and salvation for the Gentiles.

Facts about Mary:

1. She was very young.

2. She was female.

3. She was poor.

4. She was defenseless and vulnerable

What does God say to her? Luke 1:26-29. Talk about a turnaround!

1. You are highly favored. (Imagine that!!!)

Who is highly favored to God? The young, the female, the poor, the defenseless and the vulnerable.

2. God is with you. Talk about good news.

This is what God says to all of us who are, like Mary and Joseph, Elizabeth and Zechariah, Simeon and Ana, are pious and observant:

But think about it. What is the good news? You will be pregnant. You will be the object of scorn and great shame, and, almost certainly, your betrothed will put you away. Your life in Jewish society is OVER!

Mary’s amazing response: Luke 1:34-38

Luke 1:38 I am the Lord’s Servant. May it be to me as you have said.

Luke 1:39-45 Mary goes to be with family. To save from disgracing Joseph?

Luke 1:45 (Elizabeth to Mary) Blessed is she who has believed that what the Lord has said to her will be accomplished. A great memory verse!

Let’s say it together: Blessed is she who has believed that what the Lord has said to her will be accomplished!

Luke 1:46-56 (esp. 51-53) (Mary’s song) He has performed mighty deeds with his arm;

 He has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts

 He has brought down the rulers from their thrones

 but has lifted up the humble

 He has filled the hungry with good things

 but has sent the rich away empty.

The theme of Luke announced: Jesus is savior. This IS salvation in Luke!!!!

In Luke and Acts, “salvation” is not just about a future in heaven. In Luke, salvation is something we have today in the Kingdom of God.

Salvation: Preservation or deliverance from destruction, difficulty or evil.

Luke 1:67-79 esp. v 71 (salvation, rescue from our enemies… the Jewish expectation) and v. 77-79 (knowledge of salvation… forgiveness of sins)

Luke 2:8-12 A savior has been born.

Luke 2:11 A theme verse of Luke.

Luke 2:28-32 Q: What did Simeon see? (revelation for the Gentiles and glory for Israel.)

Luke 3:4-6 (quoting Isaiah 40:3-5) What did JTB see? Things in this life will be made right. Paths will be made straight. People will see the right way to live.

Luke 7:36-50 (read v. 48-50) Who did they think would be saved? The Pharisee. Who was actually saved? The sinful woman (or anyone who understands that they are very sinful)

Luke 18:18-30 Who were the apostles assuming would be saved? The rich! Who was saved? Acc. Jesus, who will be saved? 18:29-30. Those who give up everything.

Luke 19:5-10 The lowest of the low… A chief tax collector is saved. (read v. 9-10) *Today* salvation has come to this house. Wait a minute! He was not baptized. In what sense had salvation come to Zachaeus’ house? Jesus. When Jesus enters a house, salvation has come to that house.

Acts 2:38-40 How do we save ourselves? From what? From the corruption **in this world.**

**Q: What has Jesus saved you from? We are saved “already but not yet.”**

**Anger? Loneliness? Addiction? Legalism?**

To quote Joel Green:

Salvation embraces the totality of embodied life, including its social, economic and political concerns. For Luke, the God of Israel is the Great Benefactor whose redemptive purpose is manifest in the career of Jesus, whose message is that this benefaction enables and inspires new ways of living in the world.

**Luke II**

**A Savior, Lying in a Manger**

Theme: God’s salvation, as predicted by the prophets has arrived in the coming of the Messiah—Jesus of Nazareth. He is the savior of the world and this salvation is now spreading throughout the world (including that of the Gentiles, of course).

Theme verses: Luke 2:11 Today in the town of David as Savior has been born to you: he is the Messiah, the Lord.

In Matthew Jesus fulfills the messianic expectation through fulfilling specific prophecies and prefigures. In Luke, Jesus fulfills the messianic pattern in his ministry to the poor, women, the outcasts, the oppressed and in bringing salvation today to Israel and to the whole world.

**Today: The Birth of Jesus**

Luke 2:1-7 In those days Caesar Augustus issued a decree…

1. In this world, Caesar and Quirinius are in power. Everyone obeyed Caesar.

“Divine Augustus Caesar, son of god, imperator of land and sea, the benefactor and savior of the whole world.”

Augustus means divine one. How wrong they were.

Ironic: This is a description of the baby born in a manger. A new kind of king is born.

2. This decree includes Joseph and Mary who is nine months pregnant. But God is in control, because this action sends Joseph from Nazareth in Galilee to Bethlehem, so that Micah 5:2 will be fulfilled. But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah…

Jesus born to poverty, not royalty. Born in a manger. There was no room for him. (Luke 2:6-7)

The wealthy, the powers that be, the well-placed, the good looking, the athletic have no room for Jesus.

What about you? Do you have room for Jesus? Can you look beyond the things of the world, the politics, the push and shove, the need to get ahead and to keep up with the Martinezes to get ahead and to make your mark?

Can you see Jesus, born in poverty, not in a palace, pushed off to the side, ignored, unimportant, born in shame.

Is there room for Jesus in your heart?

This is the ultimate turn-around story. God loves turn-around stories.

Luke 2:8-20

Jesus’ birth announced first to lowly shepherds. His first converts were lowly people. Not to kings, to the landowners, aristocrats or to Pharisees or the Sanhedrin.

In Matthew it was first announced to Gentiles—the wise men.

His ministry is first announced by these same lowly shepherds (Luke 2:17 when they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them).

The shepherd’s terror (v. 9) is turned into joy (v. 10). The humble do not need to fear God.

2:11 “Today” a Savior is born. This is our theme verse of Luke. Jesus is Savior, Messiah and Lord. He is not Savior unless he is also Lord.

Q: Is Jesus your Lord?

2 Cor 6:1 Now is the time of God’s favor. Now is the day of salvation. The day you meet Jesus is the day of your salvation. Do not delay. What are you waiting for?

Isaiah 9:1,6-7 To us a child is born…

Who is this child, born in poverty, lying in a manger, with no room at the inn?

The government will be on his shoulders

We will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Prince of Peace

He will be a king forever on David’s throne

What is your response to the king Jesus?

2:12 What is the sign of this universal Savior, King, Lord and Messiah?

He will be lying in a manger/feeding trough, wrapped in cloths. This is a divine reversal of fortune!

Luke 2:22-40 Jesus presented at the temple.

Two things are happening here:

1. Jewish law required the dedication of every first-born son (Exodus 13:2, 15).

2. Jewish law also required that a woman who gave birth to go through a purification rite on the fortieth day(Leviticus 12:8).

Here both the piety of Joseph and Mary and the role of Jesus as first-born over all creation (Colossians 1:15) are emphasized. (first-born Luke 2:7)

Here we see that Mary and Joseph are pious, observant Jews. The kind who recognize the Messiah coming.

Here, Simeon and Ana are waiting for the Lord.

v. 25 Like Zechariah and Elizabeth, Mary and Joseph, Simeon is “righteous and devout,” and the Holy Spirit is on him. v. 26 the Holy Spirit revealed to him. v. 27 He was moved by the Spirit. Luke emphasizes this again and again.

1:15 John the Baptist filled with Holy Spirit from birth

1:41-44 Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit

1:67 Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit

2:25-27 The Holy Spirit was on Simeon, the Messiah was revealed by the HS

3:22 Holy Spirit descends on Jesus

4:1 Jesus full of the Holy Spirit

4:14 Jesus returns to Galilee in the power of the Spirit

His will be a ministry of salvation (Luke 2:30) When you see Jesus you see your salvation.

He will be “a light to the Gentiles” (Luke 2:32).

He will be a sign spoken against (Luke 2:34). Jesus is counted among the outcast and oppressed. This sets up a lot of conflict in Luke.

If you bring Jesus to people, you, too, will be “a sign spoken against.”

Luke 2:36-39 Ana, like Simeon, has been staying in the temple, praying and fasting for 60+ years! praising God for the coming of redemption in Jesus, the Messiah. It’s here! It’s here! This lady is sharing her faith.

She reminds me of the “old lady” Bible talk in Jakarta which is one of the most fruitful in the church. (which reminds me, Vania Salim is coming!)

Jesus at the temple Luke 2:41-52. Luke the only one who records this. It marks a transition from the birth to the ministry of Jesus. (part of Luke’s orderly account)

Luke 2:44 A parent’s worst nightmare!!! They found him 3 days later!!!!

Jesus gives his parents a look. Oh, hi, mom, dad! I was wondering when you would find me! You were worried about me? So sorry, but wasn’t it obvious that I would be here, seeking first God’s kingdom?

Then they see this astounding scene of the teachers of the law standing around Jesus!!!

a. We see Jesus beginning to get a sense of his unique role. Although he submitted to his parents (2:51), his first submission was to his Father (2:49). He is starting to realize that he is no ordinary man.

As Jesus will say later, in Luke 14:26, “If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even their own life—such a person cannot be my disciple.” And Mark 10:34 “I have not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to turn a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law—a man’s enemies will be the members of his own household.”

b. Jesus is growing in wisdom (2:52). He knows the scripture at a very young age. The priests in the temple were astounded at his wisdom (2:47). A fulfillment of Isaiah 11:2. Jesus is beginning to demonstrate his “messianic credentials” at age 12. (again, this if fulfillment by who he is more than by what he does)

[fun question: at what point in his life did Jesus actually realize that he was the Messiah—God in the flesh?]

Isaiah 11:1-10

Then a shoot will grow from the stump of Jesse, and a branch from his roots will bear fruit.

The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him—a Spirit of wisdom and understanding, a Spirit of counsel and strength, a spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the Lord.

His delight will be in the fear of the Lord. He will not judge by what he sees with his eyes. He will not execute justice by what he hears with his ears.

But he will judge the poor righteously, and execute justice for the oppressed of the land. (this is Jesus’ ministry!)

He will strike the land with the rod of his mouth, and he will kill the wicked with a command from his lips. (Simeon: a sign spoken against)

Righteousness and faithfulness will be a belt around His waist. The wolf will lie down with the lamb, and the leopard will lie down with the goat.

The calf, the young lion and the fatling will be together and a child will lead them.

The cow and the bear will graze, their young ones will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like an ox.

An infant will play beside a cobra’s pit, and a toddler will put his hand into a snake’s den (The powerful, influential and wealthy will fellowship on equal terms with the poor, the oppressed, the immigrant, the female, the humble)

No one will harm or destroy on my entire holy mountain, for the land will be as full of the knowledge of the Lord as the sea is filled with water.

On that day the root of Jesse will stand as a banner for the peoples. The nations will seek Him, and his resting place will be glorious. (Simeon: A light to the Gentiles)

2:51 Mary pondered all these things in her heart. God wants you and me to “ponder” the things of Jesus “in our hearts.”

What will this savior be like? One born in a manger to a poor, humble, pious virgin.

But also one who will strike the nations with the rod of his mouth

One who will care about and minister to the poor, the outcast, the foreigner, the women and the oppressed.

One who will bring together Jew and Gentile, rich and poor, black and white, Latino and Asian, Republican and Democrat, old and young, male and female, intellect and regular folk.

A banner to the people.

Let us, like Mary in v. 51, ponder this in our hearts.

**Luke III**

**Good News For The Poor**

In Luke’s account, Jesus’ ministry in Galilee is wildly successful. Thousands come to Jesus to see this amazing miracle-worker who spoke with such authority.

Luke 4:14-30 Jesus’ sermon at Nazareth. Luke chooses this to begin his story of Jesus’ ministry.

Luke 4:14 Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit. (theme of the Spirit again) (also Luke 4:18 “The Spirit of the Lord is on me.”)

Luke 4:16 Jesus now 30+ so qualified to read in the Synagogue.

Q: What did the locals probably think about him? v. 15 everyone was praising him. v. 22 All spoke well of him. This is our home boy. We knew he was different—a remarkable young man, but he is, after all, someone we grew up with.

Q: What about his family? Proud of our brother. He is no ordinary man, but his behavior lately has been pretty bizarre—going out into the desert 40 days, out praying all night…

Now, imagine you know nothing of this particular sermon, but bearing in mind what you know about Jesus’ message, Q: What do you think would be the content of his first lesson to those who know him in his home town?

This is a paradigmatic sermon in Luke: ie. it sets the tone for the entire book.

Why does Luke choose this particular sermon? Because if fits his theme. Jesus announces that he is the fulfillment of God’s promise—he is the Messiah and introduces his ministry of offering salvation and who he goes out of his way to offer it to. Luke 4:18-19 (not surprisingly quoting from Isaiah)

“The Spirit of the Lord is on *me*, because he has anointed *me* to preach good news to the poor.

He has sent *me* to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”

His message, His good news: (quoting Isaiah 61:1-2)

1. Good news for the poor (in spirit?)

2. Freedom/release for (spiritual) prisoners Q: How has God freed you?

3. Healing for the (spiritually) sick (specifically the blind here). Q: How has God healed you?

4. Release the (spiritually) oppressed. Q: What oppression has God freed you from?

5. The favor of the Lord. Q: How has God shown you favor?

Note: If you go to Isaiah 61:1-2 Jesus skips part of the passage. “and the day of vengeance of our God.”

Why did Jesus not include this? Because Jesus came, “I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world.” (John 12:46)

It is not that Jesus will not judge. Oh, yes he will judge, but that will happen when he returns at the end of time. (as we saw in Matthew, for example in 25:30 “And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.” Matt 25:46 “when the Son of Man comes in his glory… “Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.”

1. Good news for the poor. In the Jewish context, the “poor” are those disadvantaged by either low economic or low social status. The “poor” includes foreigners, women, “sinners.”

Jesus’ ministry is to those in our society who are disadvantaged by whatever economic or social circumstances.

Who in our culture is disadvantaged? Poor, black, brown, women, outsiders, foreigners, disabled… These are Jesus’ people.

We on the west side of Bakersfield are not the poor! But luckily Jesus loves the poor in spirit as well.

Illustration: This week, we did a drive-by bday party for Anel in the hood. Pitbulls at every house. These are Jesus’ kind of people!

2. Release of the physical or spiritual prisoners. What have you been imprisoned to? What have you been enslaved to? In Luke, salvation is release!!! (it is also forgiveness, but that is not the focus)

Ex: Will Morris and smoking!!!

3. Healing for the physically and spiritually blind. Healing in general from sickness, but Jesus uses blindness on purpose because of the metaphorical value of blindness. Have you been spiritually blind? Are you spiritually blind?

What has Jesus healed you from? What do you still need to be healed from. I have good news. Jesus came to bring healing and recovery of sight to the blind.

4. Release/deliverance from political, social or spiritual oppression. What has oppressed you? Fear? Abused? Racial bias and prejudice? Guilt? Shame?

Jesus’ ministry is to release you from this oppression—to set you free!!!

Deliverance!!!!

In light of current events, we are thinking of the oppression of women and of African Americans.

Jamal tells the story of being challenged in the parking lot.

And of being challenged at his office.

My friend in Fond du Lac

To the extent that we are unconsciously part of this oppressive system, we need to repent.

Women: planning the mission team to Merced…. We need to consciously include the voice of women!!!

5. So that you can have favor from God. Jesus’ ministry does not just relieve spiritual poverty, give freedom from spiritual or physical prisons, provide healing from spiritual blindness, and release you from every kind of oppression. It brings to us favor from God!!!

1. Good news for the poor.

2. Freedom/release for (spiritual) prisoners.

3. Healing for the sick (specifically the blind)

4. Release the oppressed.

5. The favor of the Lord.

Q: Which is most important to you?

 This is an excellent summary of Luke’s picture of Jesus.

(remember, we earlier pointed out that Jesus fulfills the messianic expectation through the pattern of his life more than through specific things he does)

Q: Is this the essence of the gospel?

v. 20 Jesus sits down, as do all rabbis who preach in the synagogue.

Q: What were people thinking when Jesus said, “Today (there is that word today) this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”

Why does Luke choose this particular sermon? Because if fits his theme. Jesus announces that he is the fulfillment of God’s promise—he is the Messiah and introduces his ministry of offering salvation—but how and to whom he shows his favor is surprising to us.

Theme of Luke: God’s salvation, as predicted by the prophets has arrived in the coming of the Messiah—Jesus of Nazareth. He is the savior of the world and this salvation is now spreading throughout the world (including that of the Gentiles, of course).

How is he received? Not all that well. (Luke 2:34 He will be a sign spoken against) He is impressive, but are we to take him seriously? This was immediately after “Everyone praised him.” (v. 15) and “All spoke well of him.” (v. 22) They try to throw him off a mountain.

A lot of people really like Jesus until he calls them to repent and to discipleship.

We like Jesus—he is really impressive—until he tells us something we do not want to hear.

Is there anything that Jesus says you do not like to hear?

“If anyone would come to me they must deny themselves”

“Get rid of all bitterness and rage.”

“Let there be not even a hint of sexual immorality.”

Why? Because, as is typical for Luke, Jesus declares that God loves the Gentiles too! (Luke 4:24-27) Elijah was sent to a widow in Zarephath, near Sidon and he healed, not a Jew, but Namaan the Syrian).

The Nazarenes/Jews will no longer get special treatment.

Brilliantly (under inspiration of course), Luke chooses a story which foreshadows Jesus’ entire ministry. His outreach to the downtrodden. His ultimate rejection and murder at the hands of his own people—the ones who, by rights ought to have received him as one of their own.

The difference: This time he walked through the crowd. (4:30). Such was not to be the case in Jerusalem.

From here, Luke proceeds immediately to Jesus’ ministry to the poor and the downtrodden, fulfilling the prophecy in Isaiah 61:1-2. In Luke he does this before he chooses the first disciples.

He frees the prisoners/the demon-possessed (Luke 4:31-37)

Jesus heals the sick (Luke 4:38-40, 5:12-14, 17-26)

Jesus releases the oppressed (Luke 4:41)

All this is used to point to the breaking out of the Kingdom of God (Luke 4:43) This is why he came.

Q: Have you been proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God?

What is your purpose and mission?

It is to bring:

Good news to the poor

Release of the spiritual and physical prisoners

Recovery of sight to the physically and spiritually blind

Release for those who have been oppressed

Announce God’s favor!

**Luke IV**

**Jesus Calls Disciples (to Follow Him)**

Luke 5:1-11 Jesus calls Simon (Peter) James and John. Luke is different from Matthew and Mark in that he records a miracle Jesus worked at the time he called the three to follow him.

This helps to explain Mark 1:17 Jesus says, “Come follow me.” At once they left their nets and followed him. “At once” they left their nets. Seems too abrupt.

Now we understand, to some extent, why. From John 1:35-51 we see that Peter Andrew and Philip had already met Jesus, hung out with him for at least a day, and saw him miraculously knowing the heart and mind of Nathanael.

From Luke we know that they had already seen with their own eyes that Jesus is the Messiah—a worker of signs and wonders. This will help explain their willingness to drop their nets.

This is a great illustration of how the gospels are independent and complimentary accounts.

v. 2 Jesus sees some young fishermen, dejected from an entire night catching zero fish. They were fruitless men.

Jesus saw us, living lives with no purpose, no goal, no meaning.

We weren’t fishing for fish. We were fishing for fun, for a thrill, for peace, for pleasure, for a secure retirement

v. 3 Jesus is very spontaneous here. He gets into one of the boats. Come on, guys, what are you waiting for! Jesus teaches.

v. 4 Go out into deep water. A metaphor? No, it was just deep water!

Jesus:Let down your nets.

Peter: I think I know a bit more about fishing than you do. Do you have some sort of radar fish locater I don’t know about? But if you say so…

Luke 5:7 “So they signaled their partners in the other boat.” This is James and John, the other two that Jesus called to follow him in Mark 1.

v. 8 I am a sinful man. Peter is starting to get it. An angel? Elijah?

v. 10b-11

Who here wants to be a disciple of Jesus?

Who here wants to follow the miracle-worker and great Teacher Jesus?

What is Jesus calling you to do?

1. Fish for people (Luke 5:10)

2. Leave everything to follow Jesus. (Luke 5:11)

How is it going? Do you have any “nets” you need to drop? If you don’t drop your nets for Jesus, then the only “fish” you are going to catch are the kind you can eat. Those kind of fish you sell in the market, get a few dollars—enough to live for the next couple of days.

Jesus gave you a new mission—to fish for people!!!

And, like in Luke 5, he is going to send fish into your nets!!!

But you have to throw the nets out!

Again, to do this, you need to drop your worldly nets.

What are these worldly nets you need to drop? Have you truly left everything and followed him? Or have you become comfortable?

Luke 5:27-32 Jesus calls Levi (Matthew). Jesus calls sinners to follow him.

Again, Jesus turns everything upside down. Who is he hanging out with? The Pharisees? No! He is hanging out with tax collectors! (5:29 a crowd of tax collectors!)

Tax collectors work for the enemy. Nearly all of them are corrupt.

What did Levi/Matthew do? (v. 28) “and Levi got up, left everything and followed him.”

Good news for the poor, freedom for the captives, sight for the blind, release for the captives.

v. 29 Note: He did not literally leave, at least not right away. He threw a big banquet!

Luke 5:31 Good news for (those who admit that they are) sinners. The good news is for the sinners, not for the righteous!!

Other discipleship passages: We are skipping Luke 9:1-6 in which Jesus trains his disciples how to evangelize. We already covered that in Matthew.

And call me crazy, but I am going to skip Luke 9:23-27 as well. Whoever would come after me, they must deny themselves, take up their cross and follow me.

We covered that in Mark.

We are going straight to Luke 9:57-62 We have read this before, let’s take a fresh look.

v. 57 “I will follow you wherever you go.”

Jesus: “Foxes have dens and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.”

Wow! Harsh! It feels like Jesus is trying to talk us out of deciding to be disciples.

Exactly! If he can talk you out of it, then you were never in it!

Jesus: Do you really understand what it means to follow me wherever I go? I am not staying in nice hotels!

Can I bring my non-Christian girlfriend along?

Will I have good internet access so I can keep up with my bros on Counterstrike?

Jesus: Seriously?

Will there be a place where I can get my nails done along the way?

Jesus: Seriously?

Will they be serving carne asada?

No! All we have to serve is good news for the poor, freedom for captives, recovery of sight for the blind, release for the oppressed, and a year of God’s favor.

v. 59-60 Follow me.

Great! I am with you heart and soul Jesus! But first, let me go and bury my father.

(Had his father just died, or is he saying wait until he dies?)

“Let the dead bury their own dead! You, go and proclaim the kingdom. Ouch!

What’s the problem? The problem is “I will follow you but…”

If you are not ready to put the kingdom of God first. Period!!!! Then let us not play religious games.

If he had said, “Amen! Let’s go. By the way, Jesus, I need some quick advice about my father’s funeral… The problem is not going to the funeral. The problem is not being a student, or working, or feeding your family or even going hunting!

v. 61-62 I will follow you, Lord, but….

Jesus: No one who puts their hand to the plow and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.

Ouch! You mean literally never look back? Yes!!!

Lot’s wife looked back, and look where it left her! (Luke 17:32 Remember Lot’s wife)

Q: Have you been looking back? Have you felt the pull of the world?

I will follow you, but…

No! I will follow you. Now, where are we going? Is that your attitude? Really? Will you stay here if that is what God wants? Will you go to Merced in 2022 if that is what God wants?

We are skipping Luke10:38-42 Jesus talks to two women disciples. Mary is the ideal disciple, not Martha, who is all caught up in doing the dishes.

Luke 14:25-35 Counting the cost of discipleship

v. 25 Large crowds. Jesus is not all that impressed with large crowds. He is looking for disciples. I am so glad you are here today. Now, are you willing to be my disciple? Jesus did not chase after people.

v. 26 (parallel passage Matthew 10:37 “Anyone who loves their father or mother more than me is not worthy of me. Anyone who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me.”

Question at my web site this week: Is God an egotist?

My answer:

For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only son so that all who believe in him would not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16).

"Oh Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who killed the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing." (Matthew 23:37)

"Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you! See, I have engraved you on the palm of my hands; your walls are ever before me." (Isaiah 49:15-16)

"What no eye has seen, what no ear has heard, and what no human mind has conceived the things that God has prepared for those who love him." (1 Corinthians 2:9)

"This is how we know what love is: Jesus Christ laid down his life for us. And we ought to lay down our lives for our brothers and sisters.." (1 John 3:16)

"And I pray that you, being rooted and established on love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ." (Ephesians 3:18)

God is not an egotist, but his standard for discipleship is super high!!! And he is not forcing anyone.

v. 27 anyone who does not carry his/her cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. We covered this in Mark.

v. 28-30 Have you counted the cost? What is the cost? v. 33 Everything!!!

Illustration. Hey Jesus, I am here and I am ready to be your disciple.

Jesus: Have you counted the cost?

Yes sir!

Do you have a bank account? I can use that for whatever I want?

Do you have a job? I can ask you to leave it to plant a church?

Do you have a house? Are you willing to sell it to fund a church planting? OK, well, I will let you keep the house for now.

OK. That’s it. I have given up everything I have.

Do you have any children?

Do you have a wife?

I hadn’t thought about that.

OK. We are done now. Let’s get going.

Wait, you have one more thing?

(looks around) I don’t see anything.

Do you have a life? v. 26 “yes, even his own life.”

v. 31-32 What are the terms? Total surrender!

v. 33 Here is the bottom line, and if you are not a disciple, then you are not a Christian, and, presumably, you are not saved.

Jesus calls us to be a disciple. If we would do so, then we must:

Leave everything behind

Fish for people

Call sinners

Put your had to the plow and don’t look back

Count the cost

Surrender to God

**Luke V Jesus and Women**

We have already seen that in Luke, Jesus is revealed as Messiah through his ministry to the outcast, the disrespected, the poor, women, “sinners,” foreigners and Samaritans.

Luke gives prominence and respect to women. He lists at least 9 women in Jesus’ life not mentioned in the other three gospels.

Elizabeth, Mary’s cousin

Ana the prophet

Widow of Nain Luke 7:12-15

Woman who anoints Jesus’ feet Luke 7:36-50

Women who supported Jesus financially Joanna, wife of Chuza, the manager of Herod’s household, Susanna Luke 8:1-3 These are prominent women.

Crippled woman “daughter” of Abraham healed on the Sabbath Luke 13:10-17

The poor widow Luke 21:1-4

Joanna, the mother of James Luke 24:10, 8:3

To us this sticks out, but in the Jewish or the Greek world this is truly remarkable.

The rabbis had a saying: “Blessed are you O God, King of the Universe, Who has not made me… a Gentile, a slave or a woman.”

In the book of Luke (and I assume in reality, as it is inspired) in Jesus’ ministry the women are always “good guys” and the men, by comparison in context, are always the “bad guys.” Why is this? Is this because men are worse? Is it because women, as a whole, exemplify more godly qualities? Or is Jesus (Luke?) trying to make a point?

I have heard “Jesus was a man’s man.” Do you agree with this? Why yes and why no?

Women are especially prominent surrounding the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus

Daughters of Jerusalem lament the death of Jesus Luke 23:27-29 Women were the chief witnesses and comforters of Jesus at the crucifixion Luke 23:49,

Women were the first to witness and announce the resurrection Luke 23:55-24:11 Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary, the mother of James and the others. But… they did not believe the women. Peter gets some cred here.

Women found in other gospels but highlighted much more in Luke:

Mary, mother of Jesus

Mary and Martha Luke 10:38-42

Woman healed of bleeding Luke 8:43-48

Women play leading roles in his birth and leading roles in his death and resurrection.

This is not just in Luke. John 4 Samaritan woman. John 8 and woman caught in adultery.

Application: We in the ICOC need to spend a lot more time praising and listening to our sisters. Do not make decisions without listening to them. We have not heard the voices of women enough.

We will not have women elders or preachers, but outside of that, women ought to have a equal place in everything.

So, let’s look at Jesus interacting with women

Luke 7:11-15 Widow at Nain

The only son of his mother, and she was a widow.

Can you imagine the scene. A woman has lost her husband. She is alone, without protection, no opportunity for remarriage, no opportunity for a career, nearly cut off from family. Then her only child dies. She is totally bereft.

Jesus walks into this scene. What happened? v. 13 His heart went out to her.

Jesus, like many men, could not stand to see a woman cry. A man’s man???

Jesus: Young man, get up!!! Imagine the emotion of this moment.

Jesus did not need to preach a sermon in Nain.

Good news for the poor, Freedom for the captives, sight for the blind, release for the oppressed, forgiveness for sinners.

Let’s add to that. Love for the outcast and for women. Compassion for the grieving.

v. 17 This news about Jesus spread throughout Judea and the surrounding country.

Imagine if they had Instagram, facebook and twitter!!!

Luke 7:36-50 Jesus anointed by a “sinful” woman.

Read Luke 7:36-43 for now.

[aside: The Catholic Church since the 6th century, have claimed that this woman is one and the same with Mary Magdalene, which is an attempted slam on women in general]

Luke 7:36 Q: Why did Jesus accept this invitation? Jesus was not unwilling to hang out with the rich and with Pharisees.

Luke 7:37-38 Q: What can you see about this woman? Why is she doing this?

She knowns almost instinctually that Jesus offers hope for sinners, the outcast, women, the oppressed and the poor. This women is in five categories!!!!

Luke 7:39 Q: How would you describe the Pharisee’s attitude? (notice the irony: “this man” is indeed a prophet and he definitely knew who was doing this)

Is he right about the woman? Who did people blame for prostitution?

Do you think that men bear any of the “fault” in prostitution? Hmmm….

What about all the sinful men who keep her employed?

This woman is oppressed, and all the Pharisee can think of is how sinful she is.

Q: What about you? How do you view “sinners?” With compassion?

I don’t like being around gay people. They make me uncomfortable. Hmmm…

Would Jesus hang out with gay people?

Luke 7:40-43 Q: What is Jesus’ point?

Q: How sinful do you feel you are? Q: Who finds it hardest to repent? a. hardened sinner b. run of the mill sinner c. relatively righteous person Why?

Correct answer: The one who recognizes how truly sinful they are is the one who will find it easiest to repent.

v. 43 Notice the tone: I suppose… He is only admitting this because of the crowd.

Read Luke 7:44-50

[providing water for foot-cleaning and a kiss were standard for guests in Jewish homes]

Simon: Look at this woman. He had totally written her off!

White person: Look at the black man in a hoodie, with his pants halfway down to his knees Look at him.

Wealthy person: look at the migrant farm worker.

Old person: look at the young person.

Educated person: look at the not-so-educated. Right into the eye.

What do you see? A human being!!!!

Should we sin a lot so we can be forgiven a lot? No!!! That is not what he is saying. Don’t you dare look down on those less sinful than you.

Remain in touch with your sin.

Key verse of this sermon and memory verse for the week:

But whoever [recognizes that they have] been forgiven little loves little.”

Can I add Whoever [recognizes that they have been] forgiven much love much.

v. 48 Your sins are forgiven.

Q: Were her sins forgiven:

a. because she loved much? (7:47) or

b. because of her faith? 7:50

Answer: Her faith led her to love, because she believed she would be forgiven (v. 47)

Luke 7:49-50 Who is this man? Jesus: Don’t look at me. Look at her. Look at her faith. He is focusing attention away from himself.

Luke 10:38-42 Mary and Martha The village is Bethany. Lazarus lives here too.

Martha opened up her home—a good thing.

But Martha was “distracted” from Jesus. Not a good thing.

Martha, Martha, Mary has chosen what is better.

Here we see the intimate friendship between Jesus and these two beloved women.

Conclusion: When in doubt do not get distracted, but sit at Jesus’ feet. Service of others is REALLY important in Christianity, but paying attention to Jesus is and always will be of first importance.

Luke 21:1-4 The poor widow. Perhaps the best example of how Luke points out the greater spirituality of women compared to men.

But we men are competitive, right? Let’s not get beaten by our wives/sisters!

The woman puts in two lepta—small copper coins. In today’s terms, it is more like $2 than 2 cents.

Jesus: Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all the others. All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty put in all she had to live on.

Jesus is watching when you write out that check.

He is more interested in the heart than the number you type,

but the number you type tells him something about your heart.

This woman, like the widow at Nain, is Jesus’ favorite kind of person to praise and point out:

Jesus came to bring good news to the poor, freedom to the prisoners, recovery of sight for the blind, release for the oppressed, forgiveness for sinners love for the outcast and women.

This woman is poor, an outcast (as a widow), oppressed, and, obviously a woman.

Q: What have you been “putting in” to the kingdom of God? She put in, literally, all she had. She had a better excuse than you or I do!!!!

Some of us have chronic disease. We hardly have any energy. Jesus understands. Use what energy you have.

Some of us are so ridiculously busy taking care of our family, we hardly have any time left to serve God.

Use what time you have (and maybe try to change your circumstances)

Summary:

Jesus has a radical level of respect, love, and compassion for women. Jesus loves the oppressed and women in our society are relatively oppressed. He showed favoritism to them because society did the opposite.

In Luke, many women set great examples for us of piety, faith, trust, generosity. Q: What woman comes to mind for you?

Mary? Elizabeth? Widow at Nain, the sinful woman, the poor widow? the women who served Jesus at the cross?

Jesus has a special love in his heart for those who understand how sinful they are. Those who understand they are forgiven much love much.

Let us give, not out of our riches, but out of our poverty.

**Luke VI Jesus and the Poor**

**Jesus and the Poor (or Jesus and the Rich)**

I will be getting in your face just a bit today. There are three areas that, in America, are off-limits to our friends and family. 1. Our marriages 2. Our parenting and 3. How we use our money. Not polite to bring these up.

Background: If you remember from the Rich Young Ruler, the Jews assumed that people are wealthy are well off because they are relatively righteous and are being blessed by God.

In America, we think the opposite, but, ironically, we wish we were rich.

Intro: The general tendency in Luke is for Jesus to turn things upside down. Reversal of fortune. Last week it was women who were the “good guys” and men the “bad guys.” This week the rich will be the bad guys and the poor will be the good guys.

Luke 6:20, 24 In the Sermon on the level place. Is this the same sermon as Matthew 5-7, in which Jesus speaks from the side of a mount to people below on the plain? Or is this a similar sermon in a different setting?

Jesus said, “Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. And

But woe to you who are rich, for you have already received your comfort. Woe to you who are well fed now, for you will go hungry.”

Q: Which group are you in?

Notice two things:

1. In Matthew, Jesus says blessed are the poor in spirit, but in Luke, not at all surprisingly, he says blessed are the poor. Full stop. The two are related, for sure, and for those of us who are not actually poor (which is probably all of us), we can be poor in spirit.

This is the upside down Kingdom of God

Remember: In Luke the “poor” are the marginalized in general. They are poor in things, but also in social capital. This would include the immigrant, the very old, etc.. Therefore the rich are the privileged in general. “The rich are those with significant resources at their disposal, yet who fail to consider the plight of others.” (Joel B. Green)

At our Bible talk Tuesday (on God and money) I asked who is rich. All raised their hands!

God gives preference to the poor, as did Jesus. What about us? I had several homeless come up to me just this week. Thankyou God.

Jesus’ message: If you seek your comfort principally for yourself in the here and now, you will not receive comfort in the final kingdom of God. “you have already received your comfort.”

**The rich fool (Luke 12:13-23)**

Luke 12:13-15 This is probably a younger son getting cheated by his older brother.

v. 14 Notice, Jesus refuses to get caught up in this even though it appears justice was with this guy. Why? Because the man’s greed was a bigger issue that the justice issue around the inheritance. Jesus goes for the heart issue, not the legal issue.

In all our dealings with one another, let’s follow this example: be concerned for the heart issue, not the legal issue. This applies especially in our marriages.

Illustration: We all know of examples of families being destroyed and ripped apart by greed as it relates to inheritance. The destruction of the family involving the inheritance is often far more tragic than the death itself. Two suggestions:

1. Write a will if you are past 50 years. 2. DO NOT, under any circumstances, be sucked into this kind of thing. If worse comes to worst, walk away from the money.

But, let’s get back to the passage.

Luke 12:15. Let’s make this be our memory verse of the week: “Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed!

Q: What are some different kinds of greed?

-desire for “toys” and fine things, the best food, the most fashionable clothing, the latest gear, etc.

-desire to get ahead at work, at the expense of others, not caring about its effect on them.

-lack of generosity toward those in need financially.

-fixation on financial matters such as retirement, financial security, etc.

-envy of those who have more than we have.

In the biblical context, “greed” includes a desire for improved social standing.

-self-focused desire to be in the best circles, to be respected, etc.

v. 15 A man’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.

 a. Q: Then why do so many people reject this rather obvious truth?

Q: Do you agree with Jesus here? Are you absolutely sure!!!!??????

Ex: The most happy countries in the world, according to surveys are either

Nigeria/Cameroon or Denmark (explain in both cases)

Do you believe that happiness and satisfaction is correlated with money?

Let’s be really honest here!!!!!!!!!!!!

We have been thoroughly sold on this idea in the US.

My proposal: depending on your attitude toward money, the correlation is a negative one.

A thought question: Then what does a man’s life consist of?

-his/her worth in God’s eyes

-relationships

-fruitfulness

Luke 12:16-23 In Luke, Jesus answers with a parable.

v. 16-21

On the surface this man is simply being wise with his possessions. It makes sense to hold back the surplus to a time of greater need and thus, both meeting the need, and earning more money from his hard labor.

The world could not possibly agree more with this man!!!!!! This is the world you and I live in, folks!!!!

This farmer’s attitude is an example of a kind of greed.

v. 20 You fool! Q: What was so foolish about this man?

Again, Kingdom ethics is the absolute complete opposite of the world’s view.

Jesus turns the world on its head!!!!!!!

Do you get it? The wisdom of the world is foolishness!!!!!

Note: v. 17-19 I, I, I’ll, I, I, I’ll, myself.

1. He failed to account for God in his plans. He found his security on things, rather than in God. (Deut 8:17-18 also v. 10-14?)

 Q: How might we, subtly, be like this fool?

2. He failed to account for the poor. Could have used his surplus to help the poor, keeping the rest of it back to still get a reasonable profit from his labor. He is putting himself in a position of ever-greater power over the local peasants. Jacking up the prices in times of scarcity is not a Christian thing to do.

What are you doing with your surplus? Making great plans to use it to your own advantage? What is the first thought that comes into your mind when some unexpected money comes into your hands?

Jesus’ summary:

“This very night your life will be demanded of you….

This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves, but is not rich toward God.

From Matthew 25 The sheep and the goats, we learned how we can be rich toward God.

Look at your life this week, this month, this year. Have you been rich toward God?

[Luke 14:7-13 Do not invite the rich to banquets. Invite the poor, the lame and the blind

Q: Should we take Jesus literally in this passage? Why will we be blessed if we invite the poor?

Q: How should we apply this passage?]

**The Parable of the rich man and Lazarus Luke 16:19-31**

[Read quickly Luke 16:13-15 This situation is about to be a reversal of fortune!]

Read Luke 16:19-31 This is not a subtle message.

v. 19-21 Describe the scene. Q: Who would you go up and talk to? Who would Jesus talk to?

There is a vast distance between the social standing of the rich man and Lazarus, but who is given a name? Who does God honor?

Purple clothes were extremely expensive—from the murex shellfish of Tyre.

Lazarus has sores—he is unclean. He is starving, right in plain view of the rich man.

Last sermon, Jesus said, Simon, look at this woman. Rich man, look at Lazarus.

All politics aside, vast disparities of wealth are an abomination to God. What does this say about us and the developing world?

We want to “Make America Great” but what about the poor?

Imagine a job outsourced to a poor country. Is that such a bad thing?

v. 22-24 This is the ultimate reversal of fortune!

Hades is the abode of the dead who are waiting for the final resurrection. There is a good and a bad place in Hades.

The rich man has not yet repented. He still expects Lazarus to serve him. The gall!!!! He is still calling Abraham his father, when Abraham is the ultimate representative in the OT of hospitality (see Genesis 18:1-10) Abraham serves the three visitors.

The rich man is the visible example of Luke 6:20,24, as is Lazarus.

v. 25-31 He still has not repented. The only ones he is concerned about is his immediate family.

The response: They have Moses. We have Luke!

God honors the exact opposite of what the world honors.

Summary:

God gives special honor to women. He also gives special honor to the poor, which includes those with less money, but also those with less social capital.

Let us honor God with our money and let us care for the poor.

Let’s remember the words spoken to the rich fool: “This very night your life will be demanded of you….

This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves, but is not rich toward God.

**Luke VII Parable of The Lost Son Luke 15:11-32**

**Today we will be looking at the Parable of the Lost Son but..**

Before this, just a little comment. Let’s remember our outline of Luke.

Ch 1-3 Birth Narrative

Ch 4-9:31 Jesus’ ministry in Galilee in which he is teaching, preaching and healing and talking about salvation, especially for the outcast, the foreigner, women, and the poor.

Remember Luke 4:16-29:

1. Good news for the poor (in spirit?)

2. Freedom for (spiritual) prisoners

3. Healing for the (spiritually) sick.

4. Release the (spiritually) oppressed

5. The favor of the Lord.

Luke 9:32-19:27 Jesus going to Jerusalem.

Luke 9:31 is the turning point in the book.

As in Matthew when Peter declared Jesus to be the Messiah—the Son of the Living God at Caesarea Philippi, and the transfiguration happens, after which he made himself toward Jerusalem.

Similarly in Luke 9:16-20 Peter confessed Jesus to be the Messiah, and then the transfiguration in 9:28-30.

Luke 9:31 “They spoke about his departure, which he was about to bring to fulfillment at Jerusalem.

Luke 9:44 “Listen carefully to what I am about to tell you: The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of men.”

Luke 9:51 As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem.

The die is cast. The end is near. The Savior must die in Jerusalem.

Luke and Jerusalem: Journey to Jerusalem repeatedly mentioned (13:22, 33-34, 17:11, 18:31, 19:11, 28)

A

Luke 9:51 A major turning point in Luke’s gospel. Even in this journey to Jerusalem, we still will see Jesus ministering largely to the poor, women and to the outcasts of Jewish society.

From this point on, Jesus still teachers, preaches and heals the sick, but there is ever-growing opposition from the Pharisees and Teachers of the Law.

**The Parable of the Lost Son Luke 15:11-32**

Also known as the Parable of the Prodigal Son. Wikipedia: prodigal = spending money or resources freely and recklessly; wastefully extravagant.

The *Return of the Prodigal Son* by Rembrandt in the Hermitage in St. Petersburg.

Some call it the greatest painting ever. Three characters:

The Lost Son

The Father

The Older Son

In “The Return of the Prodigal Son” the two chief characters are the Father and the Son who stayed home. Their characters are more thoroughly revealed in the parable than the lost son.

I. The Lost Son Luke 15:11-20a

In this parable, the Lost Son is anyone who has become estranged from the Father, but in the context it will be the tax collectors, sinners, the dispossessed, Samaritans and outsiders in general whom the Jews saw as prodigal. As evidence, look at the context in Luke 15:1-2, after which Jesus tells three parables, including this one.

In this story, the older son will be anyone who thinks they are righteous on their own merit, and the privileged in general.

A few points:

It is frightfully presumptuous for the younger son (who, by the way, get 1/3 of the inheritance) to ask for his inheritance while his father is still alive.

Imagine the audacity!

Likewise, it is frightfully presumptuous of us as human beings to not obey God and submit to him. Imagine my audacity in my youth!!!

I said to God: I do not need you. I am going to strike out on my own.

Mark Wilkinson: How is that working for you?

His father entrusted him with so much.

Thing about what God has entrusted to you. Life, breath, time, emotions, family, talents, freedom of will, self-awareness, a beautiful world.

And he has given us all these things now, not just in the afterlife!

He totally squandered it all! Like so many of us once did (and some of us still are even now)

When we leave God we go as far as possible—“to a distant country.” (v. 13) in the hope that he will not see what we are doing. (as if that worked!)

In the Jewish context, he went to a Gentile country (obvious because he was feeding pigs)

He was truly and completely lost. He literally ended up in a pig pen. This is where we always end up when we leave God and leave his family.

How low do we need to go before we realize the pigpen we are already in? What will bring us to our senses?

But to return to God, two things are required

1. He needed to “come to his senses.”

Who really loves me? Who has my best interest at heart, no matter what?

John 10: The thief comes to steal and to kill and to destroy, but I have come that they might have life, and life to the full.

2. He needed to return to God.

It’s not complicated. If you have wandered from God in your heart, or if you have REALLY wandered from God, the need is the same. Return to God.

I just finished teaching a class titled “Repent, Return, Restore, Rebuild” We repent and return, God restores and rebuilds.

v. 20a “So, he got up and went to his father.” Some of us need to do exactly that!!!

Luke 15:20b-24 II. The father. In this parable the father is the Father—God!

He did not need to come up with a speech!

Look at the Father

He let you go. He did not try to stop you. He trusted you, even when it was foolish to do so. We all cry out: “Don’t do it!!! Don’t give him his share at such a young age!!!”

What was the only thing he used to bring you back? His love!!!

There is so much theology here

God will always forgive the one who repents. He is waiting. He runs with open arms. He shows great compassion. He does not even let the Lost Son finish his speech. He almost rudely interrupts him. Stop talking. Let me just hold you.

Ring, Robe and Sandals are emblematic of restoration to full familial fellowship.

He throws a big party.

In this story, the “prodigal” one is the Father!!! “a person who spends money in a recklessy extravagant way.”

The outsider has been brought into the fold. Spare no expense!! Spare no effort!!! This son who was lost is now home. We were dead in our sins, but we are made alive in Christ!

This is how God has treated you!!!

Luke 15:25-31 III. The Older Son: The One Who Stayed Home

This son is out working in the fields, serving his father.

This is the truly lost son! Even though he stayed home. This is the son who forgot that his father loves him. He has served out of duty all these years.

Remember Gal 5:6 The only thing that matters is faith, expressing itself in love. He knows nothing of this. He needs to hear Gal 5:1. He is loved by his Father, whether he works or not, and his Father wants him to work because he is loved, not in order to be loved.

v. 28 “He became angry.” How could you treat “this son of yours” (not my brother) with love when he so disrespected you?

He has no compassion—only anger. Why? Because, even as a son, he is serving as a slave. My younger brother ought at the very least have a trial period to “test” him.

v. 29 “You never even gave me a goat.”

Reminds me of Malachi. You have not shown *hesed*. Malachi 1:13 “And you say ‘What a burden.’ Malachi 3:14 “You say ‘It is futile to serve God. What do we gain by carrying out his requirements.”

Father (v. 31-32) “son” All I have is yours… This brother of yours was dead, and he is alive. Jacob have I loved (Malachi 1:2) All I want to do is serve you and for you to offer loving faithfulness to me. All I have is yours!!!

Here God is speaking directly to you!!!!

What is the message of this parable? God will hold out his arms to any and all to be received into his royal family. This is especially true of those many of us would discount as outsiders and almost certainly not likely to come into the kingdom.

Those of us who have been serving God faithfully for many years, need to remember that we are where we are by God’s grace alone and we need to be extending that grace to the lost in general, but especially to those who are seen as far off from God.

Let us come home to the Father and accept his bountiful love.

**Luke VIII Jesus and the Samaritans/The Outcast/Outsiders**

**Luke 9:51-56, Luke 10:25-37 Good Samaritan Luke 17:11-19**

This week: Jesus and the Samaritans/Jesus and the Outcast, the Outsider and the Foreigner.

Jesus’ ministry was to the Israel. The Syro-Phoenecian woman recognized that, on Matthew 15:24 Jesus says, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel.
“even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master’s table.” To the extent that we will see Jesus interacting with “outsiders” in Luke, it will be with either outsider Jews or Samaritans. We will look at both in this lesson. Our outsider Jew will be Zacchaeus, and we will look at Jesus interacting with Samaritans both in an actual situation and in a parable.

So, who are the Samaritans?

They are half-breed Jews. Assyria defeated the Northern Kingdom/Israel, also known as Samaria in 722 BC. Sennacherib deported the elite and the wealthy, but presumably the poorer and less well-placed Jews remained behind.

Those deported are the supposed ten lost tribes, none of who were actually completely lost. (besides, Judah, Benjamin, part of Dan, Simeon and most of the Levites were in the Southern Kingdom!)

He deported people from other conquered areas into Samaria, thus forming a mixed race of Jews and non-Jews.

The Samaritans used only the Pentateuch. They worshipped, not in Jerusalem, but at Mt. Gerazim, near the city of Samaria, at Jacob’s Well.

Sanballat and Tobiah—the opponents to Nehemiah in rebuilding Jerusalem were Samaritans.

They still exist as a tiny minority in Israel today. Jan and I visited a Samaritan village.

In Acts, Philip preached and converted people in Samaria (Acts 8), and this was before Peter’s vision which caused him to go to Cornelius’ house for the first Gentile conversion. This means that the Samaritans were NOT considered Gentiles. They were half-breeds. They were semi-Jews.

But who do we hate the most? The ones who are almost like us! Palestinians hate the Jews and vice versa, but they are brothers.

Jesus will ignore all that!!!

Jesus and Outsiders. How should we treat those who know little of Christianity? What about Muslims, atheists, agnostics, Hindus, New-Agers and the like? What about foreigners and immigrants, including illegal aliens? Will you talk to them? Will you reach out to them? What will you say to them?

I am doing a class at the Campus conference next Sunday about this.

Luke 9:51-56 Jesus resolutely sets out for Jerusalem.

Will you follow Jesus as he resolutely sets out to Jerusalem? You die there!

 He could go around Samaria—through the Jordan Valley. That is what most Jews did, but he does not. Prideful Samaritans refuse him hospitality—a big thing is the Near East.

The disciples: Let’s call down fire on them! They are other! They are not us! They are different! We don’t like their culture! We disagree with them on politics, language, customs.

Jesus: Not a good idea. Jesus loved his enemies. This is not my ministry right now, but we are planning on loving them, baptizing them, not blitzing them.

Luke 10:25-37 The good Samaritan

Luke 10:25-29 Jesus: Love your neighbor. Lawyer: Who is my neighbor? Question for us: Who should I love? Who should I reach out to? Who should I invite? Who should I put myself out there and take a chance to help them into the kingdom?

v. 28 You believe the right thing, now go out there and ***do it***, and you will live.

v. 29 Who is my neighbor? But here is the question: Do you want to justify yourself, or do you want to do what God has asked you to do. When we do not do God’s will, we always have great reasons. Too busy. Not enough money. He can really mean that. No one really does that…. That’s too radical.

Luke 10:30-37 A man was going from Jerusalem to Jericho. This is done through a long canyon that heads down toward the Jordan River.

Who is this man? Was he old, young, wealthy, well-connected? Was he a white guy? Did he appear to be an immigrant? Was he a native speaker? Jesus: Does it matter? He is a person in need.

v. 31 A priest “passed by on the other side.” Q: What would you have done? Would you have gotten involved? What is more important to you? Religious duty or loving people?

A priest represents the specialness, the holiness, the separateness of the Jews. Jesus is turning that world upside down. This is, after all, the Upside-Down kingdom of God.

v. 32 A Levite “passed by on the other side.” I do not want to get involved. This is not my problem. Like Jesus said, “The poor you will always have with you.”

v. 33 But a Samaritan “took pity on him.” He was not so busy that he could not show compassion to a stranger.

He went out of his way. He went above and beyond the call of duty.

v. 36 Jesus: Which of these acted appropriately to their neighbor?

Lawyer: “The one who had mercy.”

Who is righteous? The one who goes to church? No! The one who shows mercy to his neighbor.

Literally: The one who did mercy. Mercy is something we do, not something we feel.

Jesus: Go and do likewise!!! That is the real child of Abraham.

Q: Who are you in this situation? What should you do about this? Who will God put in your path? We cannot help everyone, but we need to help someone.

Luke 17:11-19 Ten lepers healed.

17:11 Remember, Jesus is traveling to Jerusalem—something he has been doing since Luke 9:51. But Jesus is still ministering by teaching, preaching and healing. “That is why I have come.”

v. 12-13. These poor men are the ultimate outsiders. Leviticus 13:11 If it is a chronic skin disease (presumably leprosy), the priest shall pronounce them unclean. v. 45 “Anyone with such a defiling disease must wear torn clothes, let their hair be unkempt, cover the lower part of their face and cry out, “Unclean! Unclean!” They must live alone; they must live outside the camp.

These guys are the ultimate outsiders. No Jew would touch them. What did Jesus do? He healed them. Luke 5:12-13 Jesus reached out his hand and he touched the leper. Jesus made himself unclean (ceremonially) to help an “unclean” person.

Is there someone you will not touch? Is there a situation you will not go into?

Luke 17:14 Go show yourself to the priest. This was the commandment in Leviticus 13.

v. 14 Only as they obeyed were they healed. Like Namaan in 2 Kings 5.

Luke 17:15 But one of these outsiders is the ultimate outsider of all outsiders. He is a Samaritan leper!!!!!

The Samaritan (Jesus calls him a foreigner in v. 18) came back, praising God and thanking Jesus. Samaritans are more “open” to Jesus than the Jews. In Luke, Samaritans are always more spiritual than the Jews. God shows favoritism to outsiders (and outsiders show favoritism to Jesus!)

Luke 19:1-10 Zacchaeus may not be a Samaritan (heaven forbid), but his is something nearly as bad! He is not just a tax collector, he is a chief tax collector. He is a boss of the traitor Jewish tax collectors. He is rich! (note, Luke 18:35-42 Jesus had just healed a blind beggar—rich or poor does not matter to him.)

So, what will Jesus do about that? This is exactly the kind of guy I want to hang out with. Jesus bordered on provocative here. He refused to be intimidated by society’s idea of who is OK and who is not. Jesus would have hung out with tattooed people, fat-cat rich people, with gay and transgender people, with illegal immigrants…

Luke 19:3-4 Zacchaeus wanted to see Jesus. Outsiders somehow instinctively knew that there was on Rabbi who would listen to them. But he was short.

Luke 19:5 Jesus: Now this is my kind of guy. He is an outsider for sure. He is a “sinner” but he recognizes that fact and he wants to do something about it.

“I am going to stay at your house today.”

I picture Jesus stopping, in the midst of a huge crowd, and helping Zacchaeus down from the tree. The crowd: What is he doing?

Luke 19:7 “All the people” were unhappy with this. Jesus is used to opposition from the Pharisees, the Teachers of the Law and the Saducees, but now he has gone too far. Jesus has finally stepped over the line, so even the crowd are not supportive—reaching out to a chief tax collector, the most infamous man in town.

Jesus does not care about that. Why? Let’s see.

Luke 19:8 Zachaeus is ready and willing to repent. Reminds us of 2 Cor 7:11 See what this godly sorrow has produced in you: 1. Earnestness check 2. Eagerness to clear yourself check

3. Readiness to see justice done covered.

Q: What is your attitude toward your own sin? Are you like Zachaeus?

19:9-10 If so, I have good news for you. You are the reason Jesus came and took on human form. You are the reason he came.

Jesus loves Samaritans and all kinds of outsiders.

Are you a “normal” person? I am not. Are you aware that you DESPERATELY need Jesus? Then you are Jesus’ kind of person. Yeah, but I struggle with same-sex attraction. Perfect! Yeah, but no one knows the kinds of crazy thoughts that run through my head. Ideal!

Yeah, but if anyone knew the real me… Spot on.

If you feel distant from God, go ahead… Get up in a Sycamore-fig tree. Jesus would love to call you down and spend the evening in your house.

Jesus came to seek and to save the lost—You!!!!

**Luke IX Jesus Comes to Jerusalem.**

We are about to enter Jerusalem. Our story is coming to its horrible yet wonderful end.

Now. We are coming into Jerusalem but Jesus has been talking about this for a while.

Luke 9:21-22 The Son of Man must suffer, be rejected and killed.

Luke 9:43-45 The Son of Man will be betrayed

Luke 11:29-32 This wicked generation asks for a sign, but the only sign they will be given is the sign of Jonah. Like Jonah, Jesus will willingly offer his life to save sinners—even Gentile sinners!! And like Jonah, God will raise him from the dead on the third day.

Luke 13:31-35 Go tell that fox… No prophet can die outside of Jerusalem.

But then look at vs, 34-35 O, Jerusalem, Jerusalem

Luke 18:31-34 Everything written about the Son of Man will be fulfilled.

Luke 24:44-47 All prophecies fulfilled. Messiah must suffer and rise on 3rd day.

**VI. Conflict and Controversy in Jerusalem Luke 19:28-21:38**

The theme of this section is the prophesied Messiah has come to Jerusalem, fulfilling prophecy and bringing salvation through his death, resurrection and ascension.

Luke 19:28-40 Jesus enters Jerusalem as a peaceful and humble king, on a donkey (but we already covered that in Matthew)

But let’s stop there, because David preenacted this scene in 2 Samuel 6 When David brought the ark of the covenant to Jerusalem. God himself was coming into Jerusalem and David, the prefigure of Jesus brings him into the city with great rejoicing. 2 Sam 6:14-15 David dancing with all his might “leaping and dancing before the Lord” as he brought the Presence of God into Jerusalem.

What kind of king is Jesus?

I am sure Jesus has the foreshadow in mind as the people rejoice for Jesus coming into Jersualem. Zechariah 9:9 Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion! Shout, Daughter Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and victorious (as was David), lowly and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

Luke 19:41-44 After passing through Bethany, East of Jerusalem, Jesus is coming down the Mt. of Olives, and he looks down on Jerusalem. As he did so, he wept.

Why? He knows 1. That we will reject him and kill him. (but that is not why he is crying)

2. That, because of our rejection of their Messiah, God will come in judgment forty years from now and overthrow the city. Rome did this under Titus in AD 70.

We want to kill him. He wants to love us. All he wants is to be loved in return. But we would not have it that way. Romans 5:7-8 But God demonstrates his love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Jesus is fulfilling in reverse what happened in Ezekiel 11:22-23. When God leaves Jerusalem, he does so by passing out the East gate and going up the Mt. of Olives. Jesus is doing this in reverse, as God comes from the Mt. of Olives into Jerusalem.

But now God is returning to Jerusalem, where he will be rejected and killed by the people. (who do this in our place, as we are the ones who put Jesus to death) (a related in Zech 14:4-5)

But this is also the scene 2 Sam 15:13-17, 30

David, the prefigure of the Messiah is fleeing the city. There are copious parallels between David and Jesus. Born in Bethlehem, shepherds who gave their life for the sheep, offered a sacrifice on the temple mount that saved Israel. David, who wrote Psalm 22 “They have pierced my hands and my feet.” Jesus is not the only king of God’s people who had to endure the emotional agony of betrayal at the hands of those he loved and served. God’s prefigure is fleeing in disgrace. Jesus, in a move loaded with symbolism, reverses this path, this time in great joy.

But in just a few days, Jesus will come down from the Mount of Olives (where the Garden of Gethsemane is) after his arrest, for his trial and execution.

Luke 19:45-48 More conflict in Jerusalem. Jesus clears the temple.

Completing the reversal of Ezekiel 11, 2 Sam 16,30, Jesus enters the temple. And what does he see? People making a profit—right there in the temple.

Zechariah 14:21 The nearly last thing in the OT. And there shall be no merchants in the house of the Lord Almighty! No using God for profit.

Jesus drives the merchants out. He purifies the temple in a symbolic act.

Luke 20 Jesus vs the chief priests and the teachers of the Law.

Luke 20:2 By what authority? Imagine, asking God by what authority me makes demands on us.

Of course, that is what all of us did at one time, did we not?

Luke 20:21-22 Should we pay taxes to Caesar?

Luke 20:27-33 A trap question about divorce and remarriage

Luke 20:9-19 The Parable of the Tenants

Jesus tells them exactly what will happen to him! They will throw him out of the city (metaphorically the vineyard) and kill him.

v. 15 Jesus prophesies the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70. Rome built a new, pagan city on top of the ruins of Jerusalem became known as Aelia Capitolina A temple to Jupiter was built on the temple mount.

v. 17 Jesus is the cornerstone which the builders (The Jews) rejected.

v. 19 Let’s kill him as soon as we possibly can.

Lord’s supper. Acts 2:36 God has made this Jesus whom you crucified both Lord and Christ. We look at what these people did to Jesus in Jerusalem and we think: “What terrible people. How could they do this to Jesus.”

But we did all of these things at one time or another to God and, therefore, to Jesus.