



LUKE

THE GOSPEL FOR BUSINESS

Leader's Guide

YOUNG BUSINESS LEADERS

In the marketplace, as in all of life, there is never a substitute for God's Word, Guidance and Truth. In today's world of compromise and mediocrity, it is YBL's desire to help men discover the true standard, one by which we will all be measured. Young Business Leaders helps you discover God's perspective, His power, His integrity, and His truth.

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LUKE – THE GOSPEL FOR BUSINESS

How to use this book: The goal of this workbook is to help you have greater success in your personal study and application of the Bible. During the week, you should read through the lesson questions, and then read the text and attempt to answer the questions in preparation for your small group. The lined pages on the right hand side are given to provide room for your answers.

In the actual group you may choose to cover all the questions of the study (which may result in the group taking longer than thirteen weeks) or the group leader may select 2–4 specific questions that they believe will be most profitable for discussion. Please use the method which is most fruitful for your group!

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LESSON 1: INTRODUCTION

Why Luke is the Gospel For Business

It probably seems strange to so designate a book as 'For Businessmen' that was so clearly written for everyone. After all, Paul said to Timothy, 'All scripture is God breathed and useful for teaching, reproof, correcting and training in righteousness.' (2 Tim 3:16) However, every scripture that was written had a specific time and place, and a specific audience. There were reasons in the author's mind (even as those reasons were guided and inspired by the Holy Spirit-2 Peter 1:20-21) as to why he was writing to his audience. The author of the gospel of Luke is, by evidence and church tradition, Luke the Doctor. He is the author of Luke and Acts, and ministry companion with Paul the Apostle. His experiences and the situations of His time and the needs of his audience (Theophilus--Luke 1:3) shaped the message. It just so happens that the needs of that day and of his audience coincide well with the problems and experiences of many who work in the business realm. We will examine some of those here in the introduction in order to prepare you for the journey through this amazing book.

DISTINCTIVES IN LUKE

An Orderly Account: Luke was not an eyewitness of the resurrection. However, as he indicates in 1:1-4, his account was carefully researched and documented by eyewitness accounts. Perhaps it was his medical training, but whatever the reason, Luke exhibits a meticulous care for dates, times and details which sets him apart from other gospel writers (Luke 1:5, 2:1-2, 3:1-2) . This has to do with priorities, and Luke may go into greater detail because he was not an eyewitness. He sought to establish the truthfulness of these events beyond question or doubt.

Luke traveled with Paul extensively throughout the Roman world. As such, Luke carries a remarkable understanding, both from spending years traveling with a Jewish rabbi (Paul) and from encountering all manner of pagan cultures and their associated false religious distortions. His gospel, therefore, exhibits a keen understanding of both the Jewish and Roman worlds.

In a fast paced and high pressure world, businessmen are accustomed to reasoning and decisions substantiated by evidence. As such, the logical and footnoted style of Luke helps to speak clearly to an environment that requires such information for decisions.

The Responsibilities and Nature of Wealth: Luke's audience, Theophilus, may have been a specific person, or a generic title. The name, after all, means 'friend of God.' Whichever it was, both in style and content, the audience was from the middle or upper class of society. More than any other gospel, there are unique parables and emphases which call to attention the role and importance of using wealth well (Luke 16:1-14/19-31, 19:1-27, 21:1-4), and avoiding the ensnaring nature of money and greed (Luke 12:19-31, 18:18-30).

A Thorough Defense of The Value of Humility: The Greek and Roman Cultures of the first century did not value humility. There was a society in which demonstrating the wealth and power you had was an ordinary and praiseworthy thing. If you had wealth and power, there was nothing wrong with letting everyone know it—hosting grand celebrations in your own honor, and the like. In such an environment, Jesus' life and work utterly refuted the cultural norm of the grand and powerful benefactor (see Luke 14:1-14, especially 12-14).

The same challenges existed within the Jewish Culture. It was a common prayer of the Jewish man of that day to pray, 'God I thank you that I am not a Gentile, a slave, or a woman.' Into that world, we find Jesus pouring out blessing to Gentiles, the poor and crippled, and women (Luke 5:12-32, 7:1-10 & 11-17, 10:25-37, 13:10-17, 18:1-10, 21:1-4). Women, whose word would not even be accepted in a Jewish Court of Law, were the first eyewitnesses of the resurrection (Luke 24:1-2). Truly God has chosen the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, and the weak things of this world to shame the strong. (1 Corinthians 1:28-30)

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

- 1.** In what ways does Luke's professional background impact the way he wrote his gospel?
- 2.** Why would a book written to upper class people (as the initial audience) have such an emphasis on the poor?
- 3.** As discussed, humility was not a virtue in Jesus' time. What Christian virtues are not seen as praiseworthy today?
- 4.** Which of the mentioned distinctives of Luke's gospel is most intriguing to you? Why?

FOR FURTHER READING

Ferguson, Everett. *Backgrounds in Early Christianity*. Eerdmans Press, Grand Rapids, 2003. • Dickson, John. *Humilitas*. Zondervan, Grand Rapids, 2011.

1. Luke, as a doctor, was used to careful observation and documentation. His attention to detail makes his gospel especially helpful to businessmen, who are used to making decisions based on carefully researched information.

2. Luke focuses on the poor even though the book is written to upper middle & upper class people because the wealthy were in the best position to initiate the removal of the barriers between rich and poor.

LESSON 2: ORIGINS

Luke 1-2

PREPARATION: Read over Luke, chapters 1 & 2

CONTENT IN CHAPTERS 1 & 2:

Luke's introduction (1:1-4)

John the Baptist's Birth Foretold (1:5-25)

Jesus' Birth Foretold (1:26-38)

Mary/Elizabeth & Jesus/John Meet (1:39-45)

The Song of Mary (1:46-56)

The Birth of John (1:57-66)

The Song of Zechariah (1:67-80)

The Birth of Jesus (2:1-21)

The Presentation of Jesus at the Temple – Testimony of Simeon and Anna (2:22-40)

The Young Jesus at the Temple (2:41-52)

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

- 1.** Notice the parallels Luke creates with the birth of John and Jesus. (Angelic Announcement & Naming / Birth Narrative / Song of Celebration) Why do you think Luke chooses to create this parallel format? Amidst the similar format, what are the differences that are revealed about the two children?
- 2.** Mary responds to the announcement from the angel Gabriel with humility and acceptance. It can make us miss how most would perceive her situation. What would the average person assume about Mary, and how would she be treated? How does that frame your understanding of her visit to Elizabeth (1:39-56), and how do you think Elizabeth's words in v.45 impacted her?
- 3.** Mary patterned her song after the song of another biblical saint, Hannah. (Read 1 Samuel 2:1-10) What are the themes which both songs emphasize? How do these women view the birth of their children having meaning for the larger community?
- 4.** The birth of Jesus in Luke 2:1-21 is a famous passage, recited regularly by many at Christmas. In keeping with our distinctive themes discussed in lesson 1, what are some of the noteworthy details in this birth account?
- 5.** What does the account of Jesus as a boy in 2:41-52 teach us? Consider v.52. How do you process Jesus, the divine son of God as growing in stature with God and man?
- 6.** What is the purpose of this account of John and Jesus' birth, in terms of Luke's overall narrative? Consider, for example, the testimonies of Simeon and Anna in 2:22-40. How do these two chapters inform our understanding of who Jesus is?

1. In parallels, differences are more clearly shown. The doubt of Zechariah and the faith of Mary, the servant role of John and the primary role of Jesus.

Though both are divinely sent, Jesus is divinely conceived, and divine in nature. John shows himself even in the womb to have the role of announcing and celebrating Jesus' coming.

The birth of John is momentous—it is the end of the period of silence, which was prophesied as judgment on Israel in Amos 8:11. God is once again speaking to His people!

2. They would assume this child came from an immoral relationship out of wedlock, and she would be shunned and mocked—much more so then than today. This extraordinary honor Mary was given would be a difficult one. She likely got out of her hometown to get a break from the mocking and awkward conversations as her belly grew while unmarried. Elizabeth's belief in Mary's innocence, and even more, her faith would have been a huge encouragement.

3. Both songs emphasize God's divine power to humble the proud and to work justice for the poor and lowly. Both songs have hope in God's establishing His Authority and recognize the birth of the child as the fulfillment of God's royal promise to Abraham. (Luke 1:55 and 1 Samuel 2:10)

4. Specific details about time and rulers and circumstances surrounding the birth, the humble circumstances of the birth, the surprising nature of the shepherds as witnesses – members of a marginalized class in Israelite society.

5. He was a faithful and obedient son, He was exceedingly wise even as a boy, and He was already aware of His full identity. Jesus, though complete in His deity, grew and learned as a human being.

6. Jesus is more than a mere man, whose birth was divinely announced and miraculously accomplished. Luke is establishing Jesus' credentials as the one who fulfills the promises to save Israel, and who will be the savior of all men who believe.

BUSINESS BLOCK

Consider Mary's damaged social status, and the honor accorded to the shepherds as witnesses of Jesus' birth. Everything is not always as we think it is. How can this affect our decisions in the marketplace, for example, in regards to hiring and business relationships?

LESSON 3: QUALIFICATIONS

Luke 3-4

PREPARATION: Read over Luke, chapters 3:1-4:13

CONTENT IN CHAPTERS 3-4:

Ministry of John the Baptist (3:1-20)

The Baptism of Jesus (3:21-22)

The Genealogy of Jesus (3:23-3:38)

The Temptation of Jesus (4:1-13)

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. In chapter 3, Luke moves to describing another place and time—fast forwarding almost thirty years. What do you notice about verses 1-2?
2. Verse 3 explains John's activities –what did he do? How does Luke interpret those activities in verses 4-6?
3. In verses 7-14, people ask John specific questions as they are coming to Him to be baptized. What questions do they ask?

BUSINESS BLOCK

Consider Mary's damaged social status, and the honor accorded to the shepherds as witnesses of Jesus' birth. Everything is not always as we think it is. How can this affect our decisions in the marketplace, for example, in regards to hiring and business relationships?

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4. What were the people wondering about John? How does he answer them? (15-17)
 5. How did it cost John to tell the truth? What might it cost you? (18-20)

Looking at Jesus – 3 Key Evidences of His Qualification to be the Messiah

6. Luke begins to give evidences of Jesus' qualifications for his unique ministry. What evidence is given in verses 21-22?
7. For what reason do you think Luke includes this genealogy at this point in his gospel? (23-37)

Read the section on the temptation of Jesus in 4:1-13.

8. How is Jesus described in verse 1? How does that relate to his baptism in 3:21-22?

1. a) *The details. Very specific and verifiable. Again, we see the priority of Luke to establish the authenticity of the account he is giving beyond all doubt.*

b) *The call of John. 'The Word of the LORD came to John the Son of Zechariah. Note that the description of John's calling is consistent with Old Testament prophets – Ezekiel (Ezekiel1:3), Zechariah (Zechariah 1:1,7:1), Jonah (Jonah 1:1), Haggai (Haggai 2:1), among others. John's work is that of a prophet—to call the people back to God and covenant relationship with Him.*

2. A) *John baptized and called people to repent, giving them hope that they could be forgiven by God of their sins.*

B) *Luke explains that John's ministry was a fulfillment of prophecy – a coming to pass of words that Isaiah had spoken seven hundred years earlier. In this way, John was not just a preacher, but a called prophet. His message was fulfillment that God was ready to reveal the one who would save Israel (The Messiah—The Final & Greatest Jewish King).*

3. *They ask what they should do. John tells them not to trust in their Jewish ancestry, but to live lives that demonstrate a changed heart. He tells the crowds to 'bear fruit in keeping with repentance', and to be generous and giving to those who have need (7-11). He tells people who have position and power not to use those positions unjustly (12-14). First, He tells the tax collectors to be honest in their work, as it was common practice of these collectors to add to the required taxes an extra amount for personal gain (12-13). He tells the soldiers to be honest and not to use intimidation or threats to gain a bonus to their regular wages. (14)*

4. *They wanted to know if he was the Christ. He says he is not – he makes clear that the Messiah will have much greater authority and power than he does.*

5. *John was arrested by Herod for refusing to compromise the truth, and as we will later see, it will lead to his execution. We do not know what being faithful might cost us—but we should ask the question so that, when faced with the choice, we will not be shocked or shrink back at the expectation that we must suffer to follow God's call on our lives.*

6. *Jesus' baptism is attended by a visual confirmation—some kind of visible phenomenon that looked like a dove, which Luke explains was the Holy Spirit of God descending on Him. It is also attended by an audible confirmation—God the Father speaking from heaven about how pleased He is with His Son. It becomes clear Jesus is authorized by the Father and empowered by the Holy Spirit, as the three persons of the triune God are active in the ministry of Jesus.*

7. *Luke traces Jesus' descent all the way back to Adam. Luke is showing clearly that Jesus was descended of David, and thus qualified to be the Messiah (see II Sam 7:14), Jesus was descended from Abraham (see Genesis 12:1-3) and thus qualified to receive and spread God's blessing to the nations. Jesus, as the son of Adam and a true human being, was qualified to represent men and to crush the head of the serpent through His ministry (see Genesis 3:15), a work he accomplishes throughout the rest of the book—beginning in the very next section with His temptation.*

8. *Jesus is described as full of the Holy Spirit. The baptism was a moment in time in which Jesus received God's power for His appointed ministry.*

9. Why do you think 40 days? What is significant about 40 in the bible? (2)

10. Verse 2 mentions that after 40 days, Jesus was hungry. As God and man, we often downplay how difficult these trials were for Jesus. What do you think about that? How does Jesus' humanity help you understand Him?

11. Consider each of the three temptations of Jesus. Interestingly, they parallel the temptations of the Israelites in the wilderness--to grumble for bread (Exodus 16:2), to worship false gods (Exodus 32:4) and to put God to the test (Exodus 17:7). Why do you think Luke shows that parallel? What is this section saying about Jesus?

12. What is instructive about the way Jesus resisted temptation? What is needed in order for us to respond in the same way?

13. Which temptation of Jesus do you particularly identify with?

9. *The number forty is significant in the bible, particularly because the Israelites wandered in the wilderness for 40 years (Numbers 14:34). (It also rained for 40 days/nights during the flood—Genesis 7:12, and Moses was on the mountain 40 days/nights--Exodus 34:28). This time period signifies a significant trial or testing in the bible.*

10. *Jesus was really human. He had real pain and real human feelings, which it is so easy to ignore when we think about his trials and difficulties. It helps us to know that he truly was a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief (Isaiah 53:3). He understands and is able to intercede for us, as he was tested in every way as we were, and yet without sin. (Hebrews 4:15)*

11. *Luke includes this parallel to show Jesus succeeds in his testing where Israel failed in theirs. Jesus is a fit representative for men because He has overcome the temptations that all men face.*

12. *Jesus always fought temptation with God's Word. In order to fight back with God's Word, we must know it—and know it well enough to use it.*

13. *1 Corinthians 10:13 says no temptation befalls us except those which are common to man. None of us is above temptation, and the logic of temptations are common—which is important because one of the most common thoughts when we are tempted is to consider how our temptations have a unique set of circumstances which make them more understandable.*

Summary: Jesus was qualified for His unique role through the authorization of God the Father and the empowering of the Holy Spirit. He was qualified to represent men as the son of Adam and uniquely so as the Son of David and the Son of Abraham. Jesus was qualified because he endured and passed the extraordinary temptations he faced in the wilderness.

LESSON 4: FIRST MINISTRY

Luke 4:14-6:49

PREPARATION: Read over Luke, chapters 4:14-6:49

CONTENT IN CHAPTERS 4-6:

Jesus First Ministry in Galilee (Nazareth & Capernaum) (4:14-43)

The Calling of Peter, James & John (5:1-11)

Miraculous Healings of the leper and paralytic (5:12-26)

The Calling of Levi (5:27-32)

Questions on Fasting and the Sabbath (5:33-6:11)

The Calling of the Twelve Disciples (6:12-16)

The Sermon on the Plain (6:17-49)

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. After learning all of Jesus' qualifications, and Luke's note that He was working in the power of the Holy Spirit (14), how would you expect his ministry to be received by His hometown?(16-30)
2. How was He received? Why? (4:22, 28-29)
3. How can familiarity with Jesus cause us to miss truly knowing Jesus?
4. What was astonishing to the people about the teaching of Jesus? How was it different from what they were used to? (4:32)
5. What do the demons in both 4:33-34 & 4:41 have in common? Why do you think Jesus did not want them to speak?
6. Notice the alternation between preaching (4:16:22, 31-32, 43-44) and miraculous works (4:33-36, 38-41, 6:17-19, 20-49) that mark Jesus' ministry. How do the miracles connect with the preaching and teaching?

In chapter 5:1-11, Jesus calls the first three disciples, Peter, James and John.

7. How does Jesus get their attention? Who would reasonably be expected to know more about fishing – the carpenter or the professional fishermen? How does Peter interpret this enormous catch of fish?

BUSINESS BLOCK

Are you tempted to think that Jesus does not know how to help you in your vocation? Do you ever ask Him?

- 1. With wonder and excitement – after all, He is their miracle worker.*
- 2. Jesus was not received well because He explained that the Jews had a long habit of rejecting the truth—and that even in the Old Testament, God blessed Gentiles (non-Jews) who recognized Him ahead of those who grew up in the religious climate of Israel.*
- 3. We can be so sure we know someone or something that we refuse to look at it more deeply. In the church, we can grow up around Christianity and dismiss it, never realizing that what we rejected was not even the real Jesus to begin with.*
- 4. Jesus taught as one with authority. He did not refer to a long list of rabbis and previous interpretations. He interpreted and applied the scriptures directly, which was not done in that day.*
- 5. In both cases, the demons give a true confession of Jesus' identity. He does not want to plainly state His identity, because it would limit His freedom to minister and keep from an escalating conflict before the proper time.*
- 6. The miracles validate the teaching as authoritative and true.*
- 7. Jesus helps them with an extraordinary catch of fish. Certainly the professional fishermen should know more about fishing than the carpenter. For this reason, Peter immediately recognizes this event, not as dumb luck, but a true miracle.*

8. As with the demons, so Jesus tells the leper to keep the news of his healing quiet. Why would Jesus want to keep this news secret? (12-15)

Jesus heals the paralytic (17-26)

9. Jesus asks the people whether it is easier to say 'your sins are forgiven' or 'rise take up your mat and walk'? Which is easier? Why?

10. Jesus calls Levi (also know as Matthew, the tax collector and writer of the first gospel). Jesus does not get good press for eating with these people. Why does Jesus say that he eats with them? Do you think that he means that the Pharisees and religious people are 'well'? (30-32)

11. Notice that the questions on fasting and the Sabbath relate to how the ministry of Jesus changes things. The question: Is it wisdom to apply the same answer to different situations, or wisdom to know that the answers may be different if the situation is different? (5:33-6:11) How does the idea of Jesus' teaching with authority become evident in these interactions?

12. Notice that Jesus withdraws to desolate places three times in these chapters (4:42, 5:16 & 6:12). What was He doing there? How does this example instruct our own practice?

13. Why did Jesus appoint twelve disciples? What is the significance of twelve?

Similar in content to Matthew 5-7, Luke 6:17-49 is called the 'Sermon on the Plain' (17).

14. Again we see miracles (17-19) that precede teaching (20-49). Considering that pattern, what do you think are the purpose(s) of these miracles?

15. Notice the contrast between verses 20-23 and 24-26. What is Jesus telling these people to expect if they follow Him?

16. Verses 27-36 have some of the most astounding words ever uttered about forgiveness. We are to forgive our enemies and those who oppose us. These are people who have nothing to offer and would not give it if they could. Look at verses 35-36. On what basis does Jesus command this remarkable forgiveness of others?

17. There is an important tension between verses 37-42 and 43-45. How do you keep the two in balance?

18. Keeping in mind the previous sections of Jesus' teaching, why do you think he concludes with 46-48 concerning the parable about the houses on the rock and sand. What is Jesus saying about all that He just taught?

8. *Jesus knows that the motivations of the people who would make Him famous are not right. He has not come to be a sideshow or a king who rules by brute force. He seeks to delay the spread of hysteria so that He might have more time to teach the truth.*

9. *It is easier to say your sins are forgiven—because no one can see if they are really forgiven. If you tell someone to walk and they don't walk, everyone will know you are a fake. For this reason Jesus enables the man to walk—so that they will all know the unseen condition (his sin) has also been forgiven.*

10. *Jesus says He eats with the tax collectors and sinners because they know they need help. The religious leaders were not better—they were in denial of their own sins, and as such, not in a position to be ready to receive the truth that Jesus was teaching.*

11. *Jesus wants them to realize that the religious teachers were unwisely applying principles in the wrong situations. It is not so much that Jesus was changing things, but that he was showing how the religious leaders had failed to understand the real significance of things like the Sabbath all along. Jesus does not quote the rabbis or refer to others, but speaks by directly applying scriptural passages to life.*

12. *Jesus prayed. Jesus spent time alone with His Father. This was the foundation for His public ministry: His communion with God. If this was important for Jesus, being God, then certainly we also need habitual prayer and time with God.*

13. *Twelve disciples correspond to the twelve tribes of Israel. Jesus was appointing a symbolically new Israel as He was initiating a New Covenant.*

14. *The miracles are done to validate Jesus' words as authoritative. They get our attention so that we will realize that this is not just another man's opinion, but God-given wisdom. At the same time, all miracles serve the purpose of helping to establish the kingdom of God in a real and tangible way—relieving suffering, forgiving sin, driving out the devil.*

15. *People who follow Jesus can expect to suffer now and receive their reward in the future. Rejecting Him may give temporary comfort now, but will lead to judgment to come.*

16. *Jesus says that this is the kind of forgiveness the Father has shown to us—to ungrateful and wicked men. If we follow Him in this, we prove to be true sons, and will be called Sons of the Most High.*

17. *We are not to take a perverse pleasure in criticizing or judging others. At the same time, each person's life can be evaluated by the 'fruits' or products coming out of their life. Personal humility and even suspicion of our own motives should always be our attitude, which will help any corrections we offer come from the proper spirit.*

18. *These people may have marveled at His words. Yet these words would not help them unless they built their lives upon them. We must depend upon and act according to the truth Jesus teaches in order to receive any benefit from them. Otherwise, we may look similar to others who profess to believe in Jesus, but when real trials come, our profession will crumble like a house without a foundation.*

LESSON 5: THE ONE WHO WAS TO COME

Luke 7-9:50

PREPARATION: Read over Luke, chapters 7-9:50

CONTENT IN CHAPTERS 7-9:50:

Healing of the Centurion's Servant and the Widow's Son (7:1-17)

Jesus and John the Baptist (7:18-35)

Jesus Forgives a Sinful Woman (7:36-8:3)

Parables: The Sower & The Lamp (8:4-21)

Jesus' Authority – Over Storm, Demons, Death (8:22-56)

Jesus Sends out The Twelve (9:1-9)

Feeding of 5,000 (9:10-17)

Jesus' Identity and Mission (9:18-50)

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

Healing of the Centurion's Servant and the Widow's Son (7:1-17)

1. Consider Luke 7:1-17. There are two separate instances here of people receiving help from Jesus. Who are they? What makes them noteworthy, in terms of the people and priorities of that day and time? Why do you think Luke includes their stories in His gospel?

BUSINESS BLOCK

Jesus had compassion on a woman who was destitute. She could offer Him nothing. Are there any similar situations or people groups that your business interacts with? How can Jesus' compassion inform your dealings with these people or groups?

John the Baptist (7:18-35)

2. Previously, John the Baptist clearly declared that Jesus was the Messiah, the King that the people of Israel had been waiting for. (3:15-17) If that is so, what situation prompted John to ask his question in verse 19? How does Jesus answer him?

3. Though Jesus has a gentle rebuke personally for John, how does He speak of John in public (26,28)? How might that instruct us to speak of others?

A Pharisee and A Sinful Woman (7:36-8:3)

4. Jesus interacts with two people of very different social standings, Simon the Pharisee (40) and a sinful woman. Who had a better reputation? Yet according to Jesus, who was better off spiritually? Why?

1. The Centurion was a Roman—part of the conquering occupying force. He also was not a Jew in terms of His full participation in Judaism—he is what they would call a ‘God Fearer’, someone who believed the Jewish doctrines, but was not a full Jew in terms of celebrating the feasts or holy days or taking part in circumcision.

The widow was a woman—as such, she was a second class citizen. Not only that, she was likely poor. As a widow, she had no one to provide for her, particularly as we learn her only son had just died (7:12). She would be destitute.

Neither of these people would seem to be likely candidates for Jesus’ attention—they did not fit with the highest religious or social classes. Luke is showing that Jesus did not show favoritism to rich or poor, or to those who fit traditional categories of goodness or worthiness. The blessings of the gospel belong to all.

2. John was languishing in prison. He was wondering, most likely, why Jesus had not already gotten him released. Jesus reminds him that all the promises of the Messiah in the OT are being fulfilled, and tells John not to doubt.

3. Jesus honors John and his ministry. We also should publicly seek to speak honorably of others where we can.

4. Simon had a better reputation – wealthy, respected. The woman was disgraced—we do not even learn her name, only her shame, as many of the people likely thought of her sin before they considered anything else. Yet Jesus indicates she is better off spiritually, because she displayed great humility and brokenness over her sin, and great thankfulness for her forgiveness. Simon saw no need and therefore received no grace. The woman recognized her need and therefore received grace and forgiveness of sin.

8:1-3 Notice that there are women following and supporting the ministry. Jesus was not ashamed of these women, though culturally they were second-class citizens.

Parables (8:4-21)

- 5.** Jesus tells two parables—the parable of the sower (8:4-8) and the parable of the lamp (8:16-18). Why, according to verse 10, does Jesus tell parables?
- 6.** What is the point of the parable of the sower?
- 7.** What is the point of the parable of the lamp? How does that tie in to the section with Jesus' mother and brothers (8:19-21)?

Miracles (8:22-56)

- 8.** Luke records three remarkable miracles in 8:22-56. What things do each of the miracles demonstrate Jesus' authority over? This has the effect of a mounting argument. What is the conclusion you think Luke would like his readers to come to concerning the person of Jesus?

Disciples on Mission (9:1-9)

- 9.** Jesus' authority was established in the previous section. How does that tie into His commissioning of the disciples?
- 10.** Based on what the text says, why do you think Herod might have wanted to see Jesus?
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BUSINESS BLOCK

Have you ever said or heard someone say they would believe if they saw a miracle? Does this section on Herod suggest that people can exhibit religious curiosity that is not a real spiritual interest?

Feeding the 5,000 (9:10-17)

- 11.** What does Jesus ask the disciples to do, and how do they respond? Why do you think Jesus asks them? How does the feeding of the 5,000 tie into the mission of the disciples?

Jesus' Identity and Mission (9:18-50)

- 12.** Jesus asks the disciples two questions. What are they? How do they answer? How are the answers different?
- 13.** In light of Jesus' identity, what is shocking about the next section (21-27)?
- 14.** In light of this shocking revelation, what does the section on Jesus' transfiguration (28-36) serve to do?
- 15.** The disciples are thoroughly confused at this new revelation. In what ways are their limitations and misunderstandings highlighted in verses 37-50?

5. *They reveal truth to those who believe, but they hide the truth in plain sight from those who do not.*

6. *Desire to be the good soil – it is incredibly fruitful!*

7. *God gives you light so it can be displayed to others. Do not merely hear it—live out the truth! It is not blood relation, but obedience that enables intimacy with Jesus.*

8. *22-25: Jesus calms a storm – authority over nature*

26-39: Jesus heals a demon possessed man – authority over demons

40-56: Jesus raises Jairus' daughter – authority over death

The disciples ask the question in verse 25, 'Who then is this?' The answer should be clear. Jesus has power which is only attributable to God.

9. *Jesus gives them power which, by virtue of who He is, He has the right to give – authority over demons and sickness. Jesus gives them the same message—the proclamation of the Kingdom of God.*

10. *Possibly he was guilty over the murder of John the Baptist, or he had a fascination and desire to see the extraordinary. Jesus makes no effort to see him, for Herod's interest is not out of a real spiritual hunger.*

11. *Jesus asks the disciples to feed the crowd of 5,000. They say they cannot do it.*

This request brings them back to Jesus, who sent them on the mission they received—the power is His to give, and He demonstrates it by the miracle. This may have been done to keep them humble, so they would not be tempted to a spiritual pride at the great success of their previous mission.

12. *Question 1—Who do the crowds say I am? Answer 1—John the Baptist/Elijah/Prophet
Question 2—Who do you say I am? Answer 2—The Christ of God (The Messiah)*

To be a prophet was to be noteworthy, but they saw him as only another prophet. Peter confesses that Jesus is something greater—the Christ, which is a title for the Messiah, the Jewish King of the line of David, who was to come and restore/rescue Israel.

13. *Jesus reveals that Peter is correct, that He is the King who was to come. Yet He is not going to conquer Jerusalem or the Romans by force, as they expected. Rather He tells them His mission is to be suffer, be killed, and on the third day be raised. If the disciples will really follow Him, they must follow Him into that reality of humiliation and death.*

14. *To three disciples—James, John and Peter, Jesus reveals the glory which was hidden throughout His time on earth. This remarkable vision served to confirm that, though it was shocking that the King of Israel and all the Earth was about to suffer shame, disgrace and death, that it was truly the design of God.*

15. *v.40—The disciples cannot cast out the demon from the boy.*

v.45—They do not understand that Jesus is about to be betrayed. Afraid to ask.

v.46—They argue over which one is the greatest.

v.49—They do not recognize who is together with them on mission with Jesus.

LESSON 6: TOWARD JERUSALEM

Luke 9:51-10:42

PREPARATION: Read over Luke, chapters 9:51-10:42

CONTENT IN CHAPTERS 9:51-10:42:

Clarifying the Mission (9:51-62)

A Micro-mission and Jesus' Assessment (10:1-24)

The Priority and Scope of Love (10:25-42)

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. Earlier in chapter 9, Jesus made clear both His identity and His mission (9:18-22). What indications in 9:51-62 seem to indicate that His disciples and others have not understood what He has told them?

A Micro-mission and Jesus' Assessment (10:1-24)

2. Jesus said to His disciples, the harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. (10:2) Do you still believe that is true today? Are you praying God will send workers to the harvest? How does Jesus equate His messengers with Himself? (10:16)

3. What is Jesus' assessment of the three cities where He did many of His miracles? Why? (13-15)

4. Jesus cautions the disciples after their jubilant return (17-20). What temptation is He protecting them from? How does Jesus' prayer in verses 21-24 form a positive application of His own caution?

The Greatest Commandment (Luke 10:25-42)

5. What is the point of the parable of the Good Samaritan? How does it answer the question of the lawyer?

6. How does the story of Mary and Martha connect with the Mission of Jesus?

1. First, James and John take rejection from a town as a call for wrath and destruction (54). Then, others come to Jesus wanting to follow, but with restrictions on comfort level (57-58), timing (59), and willingness to be separated from family (61). Jesus makes clear that to follow Him, you have to leave earthly priorities of revenge, and even 'normal' life behind.

2. Yes. Yes! Jesus says if someone rejects their message, they are rejecting Jesus Himself.

3. He condemns them—because they received great evidence of Jesus' power and person, and yet they did not repent. He says wicked cities in the Old Testament, like Sodom, Gomorrah, Tyre and Sidon who were infamously evil were less guilty because they never had such clear evidence of the Truth presented to them.

4. Jesus is protecting them from the sin of pride and the idolatry of power—both of the sins which ensnared the devil. We too should be mindful that God's eternal blessing and promises are weightier than any benefits received on Earth.

Jesus prayer rejoices in God's work and glorifies Him for the blessings of their trip—in so doing, it takes the focus of the disciples off of themselves and their contribution, and draws their focus to God, who enabled them to do these extraordinary things.

5. Neighborly kindness is due to all men—even those who would traditionally be thought of as our enemies. This makes clear that the command to love our neighbor extends to all the people we have opportunity to do good to. Galatians 6:10 prioritizes that in the order first of believers and then others, but nonetheless, includes all people.

6. Mary understands the mission because she makes Jesus the priority. Martha, an honorable and hard working woman, gets distracted with worthy but ultimately inferior priorities. The ordering of our priorities will be the focus of the next lesson in Luke 11-12.

LESSON 7: PRIORITIES

Luke 11-12

PREPARATION: Read over Luke, chapters 11-12

CONTENT IN CHAPTERS 11-12:

Priority: Pray Persistently (11:1-13)

Priority: Recognize the Kingdom of God (11:14-36)

Priority: Flee Hypocrisy (11:37-12:3)

Priority: Value the Kingdom above all Else (12:4-34)

Priority: Be Ready! (12:35-59)

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

1. At the end of the previous lesson, Jesus was teaching Mary and Martha that a relationship with himself was of higher priority than the dishes and housekeeping. How does that theme continue in 11:1-13? What is the priority and focus of these verses?
2. What prompted the disciples to ask Jesus about prayer? (11:1) How is that instructive?
3. What is the logic with which Jesus assures us it is a worthwhile practice to ask God in prayer?

APPLICATION

What do you think of the access to God that Jesus is teaching here? Do you feel that you can approach God as your Father and be welcomed? What helps or hinders you in thinking this way? Discuss.

4. In 11:14-23, Jesus makes the point that you cannot take the goods of a strong man until you overpower him. How does this relate to the Kingdom of God and the Kingdom of Satan? What is Jesus saying His miracles are demonstrating?
5. In relation to this idea of two conflicting Kingdoms, what is the point of verses 24-26?
6. What does Jesus mean by the sign of Jonah (11:29)? Why is it a wicked generation that seeks signs?
7. Why do you think the Pharisees and Religious Leaders receive such harsh words from Jesus? (11:37-12:3)
8. As opposition to His teaching begins to mount (11:53-54), Jesus teaches even more clearly that to follow Him involves making a choice. How do 12:6-7 and 12:11-12 help us to be confident even in serious danger?
9. How does this parable warn the businessman in regards to His activities?

1. Jesus teaches the disciples to pray, showing that it is both a high priority and deserving of their persistence.

2. Jesus' behavior and pattern of prayer prompted the question. If we want to teach things to others, we should model it ourselves.

3. The logic proceeds from the lesser to the greater—if even evil and selfish people help each other, how much more will God help you when you ask of Him?

4. The two kingdoms are at war with each other—not themselves. Jesus' miracles demonstrate that He is overpowering the devil and his kingdom, as Jesus frees people from the curses of sin (like the inability to speak properly).

5. There is no such thing as neutrality. If you are not filled with the Spirit of God, you will be filled with demons and under their influence.

6. Jesus means that just as Jonah was three nights and three days in the belly of the fish, so He will be under the power of death for a time—and then raised again. (See Matthew 12:39-41)

A wicked generation seeks a sign because they are not truly looking for a reason to believe, but to rationalize their already determined rejection. They will not believe no matter how many signs are given.

7. By virtue of their access to the scriptures and in their special role as teachers, it was their responsibility to teach the truth and help lead others out of the kingdom of darkness. Their hypocrisy was instead helping to lead people into it. (see esp. 11:52)

8. If God has compassion on the little sparrows, how much more will He care for you when you are in danger and trouble! (12:6-7)

God through His Holy Spirit will give you the words to speak when confronted. (12:11-12)

9. It is a greedy quarrel that prompts the parable (12:13). Likewise we must beware of pouring our energy into accumulation of a self-created earthly facsimile of heaven. It is not the hard work or the fruitfulness of the man which makes Him a fool—it is the fact that, having given all his effort to the accumulation of wealth for an earthly rest, he is utterly unprepared to stand before God.

As Martin Luther once said, 'There are two days on my calendar, this day and That Day.' We should conduct all our labors with a mind and heart that are ready to meet God whenever He chooses to call us.

10. Having just warned us of the danger of being wholly consumed with earthly priorities (12:13-21), how does 12:22-34 help us resist the temptation to be the fool in the parable? List at least three ways.

11. 12:35-40 and 12:41-48 are two parables about being ready to meet Jesus and give an account. Peter asks who the parable is for in 12:41. Jesus answer is in 12:42-43. Who is the parable for?

BUSINESS BLOCK

Jesus drives home the priority of readiness by explaining the intensity of the conflict (49-53), the immanence of it (54-56) and the importance of it (57-59). How prepared are you to give an account to Jesus? If you are not, what needs to change?

10. 2. Logic #1 -- God feeds the ravens who do not do any of the storing work we do, and you are worth more than the birds! (24)

(3.) Anxiety Accomplishes Nothing! (25-26)

(4.) Logic #2 -- God clothes the lilies in splendor, and you are worth more than them. (27-28)

(5.) God knows what you need. (30)

(6.) God is happy to give to you—not just a little, but the kingdom! (31)

(7.) If your treasure is in a safe place, your heart will be safe too. (34)

11. It is for the servant who is ready. Essentially Jesus is telling Peter—and us—it is for everyone who will listen and obey by being ready.

LESSON 8: THE GOSPEL FOR ALL

Luke 13-15

PREPARATION: Read over Luke, chapters 13-15

CONTENT IN CHAPTERS 13-15:

All Must Repent and Bear Fruit! (13:1-9)

The Kingdom of God and Its Recipients are Surprising (13:10-14:6)

The Kingdom of God Inverts Worldly Wisdom (14:7-35)

Rejoice In the Recovery of the Lost—Lost Sheep, Coin, Son (15:1-32)

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

The Gospel is Open to ALL (Luke 13:1-14:6)

1. Look at 13:1-5. What is the background of the people whom Pilate (The Roman Governor) killed? Based on Jesus' response, what does it appear that these people are assuming about people who suffer? What does Jesus say should be our perspective on suffering and judgment?
2. Look at Luke 13:6-9. Then skim over Isaiah 5. Is this parable really about fig trees and gardening? What is it about?
3. Who is healed in 13:10-17? What are some of the perceived obstacles of this healing in the minds of the religious leaders? Look at 14:1-6. How is this passage similar?
4. Jesus explains that the kingdom of God will begin almost unnoticeably, and then it will expand to fill the earth. (13:18-21) What is unexpected (at least to the Jewish Leaders) about the way this Kingdom will be filled? (13:22-30) How does Jesus feel about this reality? (13:34)

BUSINESS BLOCK

The culture of Jesus' day—both Jewish and Greco-Roman—felt that if you were important, it was appropriate to let everyone know it. What does Luke 14:7-11 say about that mindset? What is the advantage of purposely choosing the lowest place?

How does this concept relate to business? How do you advertise your qualifications, your company and services without this kind of inappropriate self-honoring? How might this relate to sales and the way you speak about your competitors?

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5. Who do we typically invite to dinner? Who does Jesus say we should invite over? Why? (14:12-14)

1. The people were Galileans—definitely considered rural, and even though they were Israelites, those in Jerusalem regarded them as a less significant part of the community.

When Jesus chooses the tower of Siloam as an example, it becomes even more evident that these people assumed that those who suffered must have done something to deserve it. Showing a similar mindset, check out the question Jesus' disciples ask in John 9:1-2.

Jesus does not deny that these people are sinners, but shockingly (at least to that audience!) makes the point that --- everyone is a sinner and everyone must turn from their sin, or they too will perish.

2. No. The fig tree is an ongoing image of Israel. In keeping with the last section, Jesus is telling all of Israel they must repent – and bear evidence of that change through behavior, or God's judgment will fall on them.

3. This was a woman, and so she was already second class. Then this was on a Sabbath, which they assumed was a day for rest. Jesus explains that we never need to wait to show mercy when we can offer it. In 14:5, Jesus shows their hypocrisy, that when it matters to them, they will rescue their own animal or child in need on the Sabbath (which they should!).

4. The Kingdom of God will be filled by Gentiles (non-Jews) from everywhere beyond of Israel—North, South, East and West (13:29). Many of the Jews will come into the Kingdom very late-or not at all (30). Jesus weeps over the blindness of Jerusalem and its leaders—he does not mock or laugh at their hardness of heart.

5. We typically invite people like ourselves. Jesus says we should invite those of a low standing, and of limited means. He says we should do this because we will be repaid by God at the resurrection (14) rather than by others – we should want a better repayment!

- 6.** What is peculiar about the guests and their excuses in Jesus' story in 14:15-24?
- 7.** Everyone ought to want to come to a banquet—how does 14:25-33 help explain why not everyone is entering the Kingdom of God?
- 8.** What are the three parables Jesus tells in chapter 15?
- 9.** What was the issue that prompts Jesus to tell these stories (15:1-2)?
- 10.** Even though there are three parables, there is only one main point to them all. What do you think Jesus is trying to teach through them?

6. *The guests were invited to a great feast—it was an honor, and yet they did not want to come. They make absurd excuses. A man would be a great fool to buy a field without seeing it first, or oxen without testing them. A man who had gotten married would normally be happy to show off his bride and treat her to a special feast. All these people (who are symbolically the Jewish upper class) failed to see or appreciate the honor of the banquet—and so they will be left behind. Others will be invited and they will come.*

7. *There is a cost. You should not begin a journey or a project without assessing whether or not you will be able to complete it—and there will be a cost to follow Jesus.*

8. *Parable of the lost sheep (3-7), lost coin (8-10), lost son (11-32)*

9. *The Pharisees and Scribes—the religious professionals—were upset Jesus was eating with and associating with disreputable people.*

10. *We should be happy when the lost are found—not resentful like the older brother in the story of the prodigal son. (25-32) This is a gentle word of rebuke, hoping that the Pharisees will change their heart—and just like in Luke 13:1-5, see that we all need grace, we all need repentance, and we all need Jesus.*

LESSON 9: THE PATH OF THE KINGDOM

Luke 16-19:27

PREPARATION: Read over Luke, chapters 16-19:27

CONTENT IN CHAPTERS 16-19:27:

Stewardship: Be Faithful with Money & Marriage (16:1-31)

Forgiveness: You Must Forgive! (17:1-10)

Thankfulness: Express Your Thankfulness to God (17:11-19)

Preparation: The Kingdom Comes Unexpectedly (17:20-37)

How to Come to God: Persistently, Humbly & Without Reservation (18:1-30)

Who can Come to God: Anyone! Beggar & Zaccheus the Tax Collector (18:31-19:10)

Faithfulness: Parable of the Ten Minas (19:11-27)

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

Stewardship (Read Luke 16:1-31 & Luke 19:11-27 together)

- 1.** What makes stewardship different from ownership? In what ways are they the same?
- 2.** How does our perspective of seeing ourselves as stewards of God's resources change the way we think about them?
- 3.** Consider how the steward in the parable (16:1-13) used his last days of authority to win favor with others. Was that wise of Him? Why do you think Jesus says that worldly people are more shrewd in their dealings than 'the sons of light'?
- 4.** Consider the rebuke to the Pharisees in 16:14-15. How does the story about the Rich Man and Lazarus (16:19-31) serve as a warning to them?
- 5.** According to 16:30-31, if someone does not believe the Bible, will they believe if they see miracles?

Forgiveness & Thankfulness (17:1-19)

- 6.** Consider the section in 17:1-10. Jesus commands them to forgive—as many times as a person repents, without limit (3-4). The disciples say, 'increase our faith!' (5) Jesus' answer is basically that even a tiny faith is enough (6). What then does Jesus say is the issue for the disciples?
- 7.** Jesus heals ten lepers. What is noteworthy about the healing, in terms of the details in the story?
- 8.** Are there people today that you think it would be unlikely or hard for God's grace to reach?

1. *They are different because goods do not ultimately belong to a steward the way they do an owner.*

They are the same because both stewards and owners must care for what is entrusted to them.

2. *We realize we must give an account for what has been entrusted to us.*

3. *Yes—he understood he could build relationships through generosity. Jesus says the sons of light are not as shrewd because oftentimes believers (perhaps because they are not as manipulative) do not realize how their generous use of money can have such a lasting impact.*

4. *The Pharisees were from a wealthy class. They were receiving their comfort now, and acting like things would continue forever that way. Jesus warns them that if they do not prepare for the future now (like the steward), they will find the tables have turned and they are unprepared and poor concerning the things of God, without remedy.*

5. *No.*

6. *Obedience. That is why he tells them the story of the obedient servant (7-10). They are to do as they are commanded, and to forgive. That is their—and our—responsibility as servants of Jesus. We must forgive—it is not an option.*

7. *Only one returns—a shocking lack of thankfulness. The one who returns is the one whom everyone would expect to be ungrateful—the half-breed Samaritan. Jesus calls attention to this to again show that His grace goes to—and thankfulness comes from—unexpected people. The Kingdom is bigger and includes more people than they think.*

8. *Perhaps we think it true of people who are Muslim, or Homosexuals or Communists, maybe it is the proud or the wealthy. Their pre-commitments make it seem hard for them to change. In Jesus' day, the Samaritans were beyond hope. They were born as half-breed Assyrian Jews, and as such seemed impossibly compromised in culture and blood. There is no one who is beyond the grace of God, or beyond displaying the fruit of thankfulness which is the mark of God's work in the heart.*

Preparation (17:20-37)

9. The Pharisees ask about the Kingdom of God and its coming (20). How does Jesus describe its coming?

How to Come—and Who is Accepted By God (18:1-19:10)

10. Look at the parable Jesus tells in 18:1-8. There is logic operating here. What is the logic in the parallel between the story of the unjust judge and God?

11. Concerning the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector (18:9-14), which one of these men would be socially acceptable? Which one is socially unacceptable? So then what makes the conclusion of Jesus surprising in this story?

12. Look at 18:15-17. What are the qualities of children that make them socially unacceptable, and yet welcome to Jesus? What does that say about our mindset in seeking Jesus?

13. Consider the story of the rich ruler. Jesus asks him to give away all his possessions. Does Jesus ask everyone to give up their wealth to follow him? Why do you think he asks this man to do so, and what does that teach us?

14. How does the story of the rich ruler connect with verses 31-34?

15. What is the significance of the beggar calling Jesus ‘Son of David’?

16. Look at the story of Zaccheus in 19:1-10. Zaccheus was a tax collector—even a chief among tax collectors. Tax collectors of that day often made extra money by collecting more than the required amount—all with the threat of Roman force if you refused to pay. Such people were seen as the worst traitors in the Jewish Community—Jews who served the Romans to make money off their brothers. Knowing this was the typical mindset of tax collectors, what do you find surprising in this account?

9. *The coming of the Kingdom will be: seemingly delayed (22-23), plain for all to see (24), after Jesus' sufferings (25), and suddenly (26-30). Therefore, people must be ready, for it will come unexpectedly.*

10. *Logic from the lesser to the greater. If even a wicked judge finally gives in to a woman who is persistent in coming to him, how much more can we be confident that God who loves us will give us what we ask?*

11. *Jesus shows that contrition is more important than social position in determining whether or not God hears your prayers. So called good men cannot be saved because they do not ask to be saved—but rather to boast in the ways they have saved themselves (11-12). Even the worst man can be heard by God if he repents (13-14).*

12. *Persistent, needy, even loud. They pursue Jesus shamelessly and are unconcerned with how they appear to others. While it is not our goal to imitate the immaturity of children, we should desire to pursue Christ and His favor with the same reckless abandon.*

13. *No. Jesus asks this man because his wealth was his idol. To follow Jesus means to have no other gods before Him. Our idol might be money, or it might be something else—but we will not be able to follow Christ until we see Him as more valuable and worthy than anything else in our life.*

14. *Jesus makes clear to the disciples the path of suffering and sacrifice he is on. Just like the rich ruler, the disciples must be prepared to follow Jesus into difficult places.*

15. *It is a declaration of faith and belief in Jesus. The 'Son of David' title shows that this beggar believes Jesus is the messiah, the rightful heir to the Kingdom of Israel as David's son. Jesus stops and makes time for this crippled man, an afterthought in the community, to listen to and grant his request. Jesus accepts those who believe—regardless of their social standing or even their physical utility.*

16. *Jesus ate with him—even though it would be perceived as social disgrace. Further, Zaccheus willingly repents and parts with his possessions—in direct contrast of the rich ruler in 18:18-30. Jesus celebrates over his repentance, and declares him to be a recovered son of Abraham—for it is those who have the faith of Abraham who are truly Abraham's children (Galatians 3:9).*

LESSON 10: AUTHORITY

Luke 19:28 – 20:47

PREPARATION: Read over Luke, chapters 19:28-20:47

CONTENT IN CHAPTERS 19:28-20:

Authority Asserted: Jesus' Royal Entrance into Jerusalem (19:28-44)
Jesus' Authority Demonstrated and Challenged (19:45-20:47)

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

Jesus' Authority Asserted (19:28-19:44)

- 1.** Look at 19:28-40. Compare also Zechariah 9:9. What is significant about Jesus riding on a colt, specifically one that no one has ever sat on?
- 2.** Look at 19:41-44. Jesus weeps over the city because he knows they will not receive Him. Even more He weeps because their rejection will lead to their eventual judgment and destruction by the Romans in 70 AD. Why would their failure to recognize Jesus' mission lead directly to their destruction?

Jesus' Authority: Demonstrated and Challenged (19:45-20:47)

- 3.** Jesus was upset by the moneychangers and salesmen in the temple. According to 19:46, what purpose does he say has been subverted by their commercial activity? Look at the parallel account in Mark 11:15-18. Consider verse 17. What word is added to Jesus' statement about prayer?

Jesus is angered by the moneychangers not because they are selling goods, which pilgrims from Jerusalem would legitimately need, rather than to carry their sacrifices from distant places. Rather, Jesus is angered because they were conducting their business in the area of the temple known as the court of the Gentiles, which is the only place that foreigners were permitted to go and pray. Jesus is upset because these salesmen did not care about Gentiles being able to pray and meet with God in the temple.

- 4.** Frustrated with Jesus thwarting their plans, the religious leaders ask Jesus a question (20:1-8). What is tricky about this question? How does Jesus answer?
- 5.** In the parable of the tenants (20:9-18), who do you think are the tenants, the servants and the son of the vineyard owner? What is Jesus telling the people with this parable?
- 6.** Look at 20:19-26. Consider the trap in the question about paying taxes. What happens if Jesus says it is right to pay taxes to Caesar? What if He says it is wrong? How does Jesus avoid the trap?
- 7.** The Sadducees were a wealthy and powerful group that controlled the Sanhedrin

1. Not only is Jesus fulfilling the scripture of Zechariah prophesied about the Messiah, but he is entering into the city on an animal which no one else has ever sat on. That was clearly the type of thing reserved for royalty. Also, he comes in on a young donkey—not a war horse. Jesus has not come for the type of physical conflict that most expected the Messiah to initiate (and to overthrow their Roman oppressors). Jesus has come in peace.

2. This judgment is not mere human judgment, but God's judgment on the people for their rejection of Jesus. At the same time, the people's assumption that the salvation they needed was from Rome—not sin— would lead them to revolt from Rome in 66 AD. That action would cause their destruction.

3. A place dedicated to prayer. The Mark account says, 'A house of prayer for all nations'.

4. The religious leaders intend to show that either Jesus lacks the authority—and get Him to confess it, or to say that God has given Him the authority, in which case they would accuse Jesus of blasphemy and arrest Him.

Jesus refuses to fall prey to the binary trap of their question and instead asks them a question. His question about John the Baptist turns their hostility around and exposes their own unwillingness to consider Jesus' responses or identity fairly. As a result, he need not answer a question that is just a trap.

5. Tenants—The people of Israel, especially their leaders

The Servants- The prophets

The Son—Jesus

Jesus is telling them that the history of their leadership is one of mismanaging the vineyard they have been given (Israel), and so far from heeding those sent from God (the prophets), they have rejected them and their words. You would think they would listen to the son (Jesus), but their wickedness is only more evident when they have an opportunity to attack the Son of God. This is why they reject Jesus and His authority—they are not God's servants, but wicked rebels who will soon be judged by the vineyard owner (God) for their rebellion.

6. He is caught either way. If He says it is right, then they will accuse Him of being disloyal to Israel. If He says it is wrong, they will get the Roman authorities to arrest Him on grounds of treason and inciting rebellion. Jesus refuses to answer another binary question. Through the object lesson with the coin, He is able to give an answer that not only avoids the trap, but calls the leaders—and everyone else—to obedience to God.

7. Jesus answers their question by exposing their ignorance to the nature of the resurrection. More importantly, He moves through that quickly to expose the real issue, which is their denial of the resurrection. He then quotes from one of the few books they held to as inspired, Exodus, and shows that the resurrection is clearly taught from it – that God is not the God of the dead, confirming that Abraham and others live on in their spirits, awaiting their bodily resurrection.

(Jewish Supreme Court). They did not believe in a resurrection from the dead, and they only accepted the first five books of Moses as authoritative. Knowing these things, what is so wise about Jesus' answer to their question about the resurrection?

8. Jesus asks the leaders a question (20:41-44). This quotation is from Psalm 110. What does this question demonstrate, which the religious leaders were not willing to accept?

BUSINESS BLOCK

Jesus handled many difficult questions in this section, demonstrating His authority with divine wisdom. Are there current questions being asked of Christians in general, or you in particular, which seem like loaded or trap questions?

How does Jesus' way of answering help to instruct our approach in responding to hostile questions?

8. David in Psalm 110 addresses the coming Messiah, whom they all knew would be David's son (generations removed). David would never call his own son, 'Lord', unless he was more than merely a man. This Psalm proves that the Messiah would have a divine origin—that He would be God.

Business Block: Whether on topics like miracles or the infallibility of scripture or the deity of Jesus or the resurrection, or contemporary issues like abortion or egalitarianism or homosexuality, many questions are phrased in such a way as to trap Christians.

Jesus seldom answers a question the way it is phrased—not because he is being evasive, but often because the assumptions of the questions are wrong. Jesus goes deeper in his answers, often answering both the question that is asked, and even the more important ones which are not being asked. We need to pray for the same kind of wisdom to answer well!

LESSON 11: PREPARING FOR A DIFFICULT FUTURE

Luke 21

PREPARATION: Read over Luke, chapter 21

CONTENT IN CHAPTER 21:

The Widow's Offering (21:1-4)

Judgment and Difficulties are Coming (21:5-28)

Be Ready (21:29-39)

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

The Widow's Offering (21:1-4)

1. Consider the widow's offering in verses 1-4. If she truly gave more than all the others in the temple treasury with her two copper coins, what principle is Jesus teaching about our giving?

Judgment and Difficulties are Coming (21:5-28)

2. Look at Jesus' words in 21:5-28. To people in Israel, their temple was an enormous source of pride, and they were very confident that their nation could never be destroyed. Knowing that, what does Jesus foretell and how would it be shocking to his audience?

3. In the middle of this section, look at 13-19. What can Jesus' disciples expect to happen to them amidst all this upheaval? What are they—and we—called to do?

4. How does Jesus encourage His disciples as they might anxiously imagine being put on trial for their faith before a hostile audience (14-15)? How does that encourage you for those times when you have to bear witness?

5. What do you think it means that verse 16 says some Christians will be killed—but then in verse 18 Jesus promises 'not a hair of your head will perish'? How does this encourage us?

6. In what way does Jesus explaining about the timing of His return help strengthen the disciples?

Be Ready (21:29-39)

7. In verses 29-36, Jesus urges them to put to use all that He has told them. What is the application?

1. God is not primarily concerned by the amount we give, but the sacrifice it costs us to give it.

2. To hear the glorious temple would be destroyed and Israel itself would be wiped out would make the average Israelite, whose ideas of salvation were wrapped up in nationalism, wonder what possibly could be secure. It might be similar today to someone saying the dollar will collapse or antibiotics cease to work or that 911 is no longer available. This is important, because Jesus is trying to prepare His disciples to trust in things that are truly secure and not offer false hope.

3. Those who follow Jesus will be arrested, put on trial, jailed and persecuted, even killed (12, 16).

We are to bear witness of Jesus (13) and to endure—stand firm (19). Note that ‘enduring’ is only meaningful when it is hard to endure.

4. The promise is that Jesus (we know now, through the Holy Spirit) will give them irrefutable words of wisdom. They will be able to make a good testimony, because He will enable it.

This promise is given to all who follow Jesus. What God did for the apostles, He continues to do for us today. He will enable us with His wisdom.

5. There can be no understanding this without the concept of the resurrection.

Just as Jesus laid down His life and lives forevermore, even if we are killed for our faith, God will preserve us and raise us again—with a body that will never die or decay again. That confidence makes us courageous to risk our lives for Jesus—because we are truly immortal in Him.

6. Just as knowing the hardships that will come helps ease the anxiety when it happens, so knowing there is a set time for Jesus’ return helps them to wait patiently and expectantly. It is similar to someone explaining the physical markers (Gas station, train tracks, stop sign, big oak tree, etc...) along an unknown road to help you find your destination.

7. Be ready! Do not let the seemingly routine progress of things cause you to forget that history—and our lives—are moving toward a conclusion. Even more, it is a conclusion fully under God’s control. We can trust Him!

LESSON 12: WHEN DARKNESS REIGNS

Luke 22-23

PREPARATION: Read over Luke, chapters 22-23

Content in chapters 22-23:

The Plot to Kill Jesus (22:1-6)

The Passover with the Disciples (22:7-38)

In the Garden (22:39-46)

The Arrest and Trials of Jesus (22:47-23:25)

The Crucifixion and Death of Jesus (23:26-49)

The Burial of Jesus (23:50-56)

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

The Plot to Kill Jesus (22:1-6)

1. What made it difficult for the chief priests to arrest Jesus publicly? Why was Judas' help valuable to them in this regard?

The Passover with the Disciples (22:7-38)

2. Luke 22:7-20 explains Jesus celebrating the Passover with His disciples. The Passover was the Jewish celebration of their deliverance from Egypt. In Exodus 12, God commanded them to sacrifice a lamb and spread its blood over their doorposts. When God judged the people of Egypt by the death of every firstborn son, he would 'see' the blood of this lamb and 'pass over' the houses protected by the blood. How does this significant event connect with Jesus' mission?

3. What is shocking about the disciples' transition in conversation from 22:21-23 to 22:24?

They are worried and wondering who might betray Jesus, and in the next moment, asking which one of them is the greatest. So much like us, they swing from fear to self-confidence.

4. Jesus asks a question in 22:27: "Who is greater? The one who reclines at the table or the one who serves?" Answer his question.

5. Jesus then says that He is among them as the one who serves. What does that mean for the disciples and for their argument about who is the greatest?

6. Look at 22:31-38. Jesus warns Peter that he will deny Him, and he warns the disciples that in the future they will be without Him. Do they believe or understand Him?

7. Jesus wrestles in prayer in the Garden. (22:39-46) We have seen a pattern of Jesus' prayerfulness throughout this book. Do you find this hard to grasp—either that Jesus needed to pray, or that He could be so conflicted in His prayer to the Father? How can this encourage us?

- 1. They were afraid of the people (2). Knowing the places Jesus went at night, Judas would be able to lead them to Jesus when there were no crowds around (4).*
- 2. Jesus has come to be the Passover lamb (7) for the people. The lamb chosen had to be perfect, without blemish to be an acceptable sacrifice to cover sin. Jesus explains His sacrifice will bring about a new covenant relationship with God (20). As the lamb's blood covered their doorposts, so Jesus' blood will now cover over the sins of His disciples and all who believe.*
- 3. They are worried and wondering who might betray Jesus, and in the next moment, asking which one of them is the greatest. So much like us, they swing from fear to self-confidence.*
- 4. Clearly, the one who reclines at the table.*
- 5. Jesus, though the rightful king, has not taken the position of honor which belongs to Him, but has humbled Himself to serve the disciples. How wrongheaded, then is their argument grasping at their own honor and greatness. Jesus teaches them to be great they should be like Jesus – and serve. This flips on its head all of the conventional wisdom of Jesus day, whether Jewish or Roman. They need not honor themselves. In due time, Jesus will honor them (28-30).*
- 6. No. Peter affirms his loyalty (33), and the disciples take him literally about the swords, when he was speaking figuratively. (38)*
- 7. It is hard to understand how Jesus, as God, needed to pray—but it points to the reality of the Trinity – that even as God, Jesus relates to the Father as a separate and distinct person. Likewise, Jesus was submitted to the Father's will, but He experienced the same desires we do—to seek comfort, to avoid pain. He triumphed over His own bodily weakness—Hebrews 12:2 says for the joy set before Him.*

8. Luke 22:47-53. Luke records the arrest of Jesus. Peter tries to kill a guard and cuts off his ear. Jesus rebukes Peter and heals the guard. In your opinion, who is in control of this situation?

9. Look at the beginning of Jesus' trial before the Sanhedrin (Jewish Supreme Court). In 22:67, they ask Him to tell them if He is the Christ. How does Jesus' answer (67-68) expose their dishonesty? What can this also say about the receptiveness of our own hearts and the hearts of others?

10. Pilate was the Roman Governor. He had final authority, as the Jewish Court (The Sanhedrin) and Herod (Jewish King) ruled under Roman permission. Pilate first determines that Jesus is not guilty (4). The chief priests were persistent in lobbying Pilate. With the idea of getting a clearer grasp of the charges, Pilate sends Him to Herod. Herod mocks Jesus, but likewise does not condemn Him (11-12). Pilate attempts to release Jesus under the Roman custom of releasing one prisoner to the Jews during the Passover as a sign of goodwill (16-18). Pilate tries one more time to release Jesus by appealing to the crowd (22). Finally, Pilate gives in to the crowd and hands Jesus over to be crucified (24-25).

Does the evidence indicate that Jesus was guilty, according to this account? Why was Jesus handed over to be executed? Matthew 27:24 adds the detail that Pilate publicly washed his hands before the people concerning this decision. Do you think Pilate is innocent or guilty in this matter?

BUSINESS BLOCK

Consider Pilate in relation to your own experience. Are there times when you have 'passed the buck' in your workplace or family? Discuss.

11. People are weeping for Jesus as he is being led out to be executed (27-31). What does he tell them they ought to weep for?

12. We have talked a lot in this book about God's grace coming to places and people that are unexpected. How does that continue in Luke 23:32-43? What works was this man able to do to make himself more acceptable to God? How does this affirm the way we are saved from our sins?

13. Who witnessed Jesus' death, and what was his assessment of it? What makes his testimony insightful?

14. In 23:50-56, Jesus is buried. Why is the person who buries Jesus significant? Why is it significant that no one else had ever been laid in this tomb? And why is it significant that the women followed and saw the tomb and where the body was laid?

8. *Though the guards have come to arrest Jesus, and Judas has betrayed, it becomes clear that Jesus is totally in control of what is happening. His arrest and His death are not an accident—they are the design of God (See Acts 2:23-24).*

9. *Jesus says they won't believe in spite of evidence. Nothing would induce them to admit the truth. We too, but for God's grace, have hard hearts and deaf ears. Therefore when we share about Jesus we should pray for Him to open their eyes and hearts, because apart from that work, there is no such thing as a fair trial concerning the person and identity of Jesus. True to Jesus' prediction, they condemn Him without evidence (71).*

10. *Jesus was innocent. He was handed over to be executed because the crowds and leaders were demanding it, in spite of the evidence. Pilate is guilty because he abdicated his responsibility to do what was right.*

Business Block: Though we can see Pilate's fault fairly easily, we have all experienced similar temptations (1 Cor 10:13). We must resist the temptation, out of weariness or weakness, to abdicate the positions of responsibility which God has given us. Consider the often quoted proverb, 'All that is needed for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing.'

11. *A people ready to do something so wicked when they are receiving the favor of God's presence will do much more evil when their situation is truly difficult. The hardness of the hearts of these people is the really sad reality. Jesus is hinting again at the coming judgment of Israel for its rejection of Him, and how difficult that time will be for the people.*

12. *Jesus shows compassion to one of the executed criminals who believes Jesus is being executed unjustly. All this man was able to do was believe, and yet he was promised that he would be with Jesus in Paradise that very day. In the same way, we are also saved by grace, prior to any works. Ephesians 2:8-10.*

13. *The Roman Centurion (47). A Roman Centurion would have witnessed the death of many men. As an outsider, the centurion had nothing to gain from this testimony—and possibly much to lose, as he implies they had just killed an innocent man. To see the manner of Jesus' suffering and dying more firmly confirms what we already knew—Jesus had done nothing wrong. He was an innocent sacrifice.*

14. *Luke is setting up the case for the certainty of the resurrection. First he names the specific man whose tomb it was, so that he could be interviewed and the tomb identified. Secondly, the fact that there are no other bodies confirms that, when the tomb is empty, it is not just a mixup of bodies. Third, the women saw where the tomb was, so there is no chance they went to the wrong tomb.*

Additionally, the fact that Joseph was a rich man and a member of the Jewish Court, the Sanhedrin, shows that not all the wealthy or influential people were opposed to Jesus. If Luke is speaking to such a class of people, he is affirming that members of their own class have believed in and followed Jesus, regardless of the potential personal or social costs.

LESSON 13: ALL THAT THE PROPHETS HAVE SPOKEN

Luke 24

PREPARATION: Read over Luke, chapter 24

CONTENT IN CHAPTER 24:

The Resurrection (24:1-12)

The Road to Emmaus (24:13-35)

Appearance to the Disciples (24:36-49)

The Ascension of Jesus (24:50-53)

QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION:

The Resurrection (24:1-12)

- 1.** The women going to pay honor to Jesus find the tomb empty (1-8). Is it possible these women were just ignorant and went to the wrong tomb? What evidence is here and in the end of the previous chapter that makes the suggestion seem foolish?
- 2.** A common modern criticism of the Bible is that people from years ago were superstitious and would believe anything. Does that appear to be the mindset of the disciples (10-12)?
- 3.** Women were not considered reliable witnesses in Jesus' day. How does this account honor women?

The Road To Emmaus (24:13-35)

- 4.** Consider the account of the road to Emmaus (13-35). Were Cleopas or his fellow disciple convinced of the resurrection yet (13-24)?
- 5.** How does Jesus (whom they do not recognize) chide them? What evidence were they not paying attention to in considering the resurrection?
- 6.** Jesus explains the prophecies about Himself in the Old Testament. Where does He begin? What does this confirm about the Old Testament?
- 7.** Consider what this means for our reading of the Old Testament. How should we read it?
- 8.** Jesus appears to all the disciples (36-43). In spite of seeing Jesus in His resurrected body, they still do not believe He is actually there. What evidence does Jesus give to confirm that He is really alive?
- 9.** Jesus is not just content to prove He was raised. Once that matter is resolved, He gives the disciples their mission. They are to be Jesus' witnesses. Summarize what they are supposed to testify about Jesus.

1. We know the women already had been to the tomb and saw where Jesus was buried. Secondly, there were two angelic messengers who gave testimony that Jesus had been raised—which would seem to be an obvious confirmation of the fact they were at the right tomb.
2. Most of the disciples thought the women were speaking nonsense. Peter did not fully believe it either, but then went to check out the situation for himself. Still he is marveling at it, but not immediately believing that Jesus was raised. Likely he imagined any number of other possible scenarios. All of this seems to contradict the idea that people who lived 2,000 years ago were more naturally gullible or supersititious than we are.
3. They were given the privilege of being the first witnesses of the resurrection. Whether or not society considered them reliable, God did.
4. No. They are curious about the events and the evidence, but they are sad (17).
5. resurrection because they only saw the Messiah as a political figure that would rescue Israel from the Romans, not a savior who would take away their sins.
6. He starts with the first five books of the OT, the books of Moses. He goes through all the prophets. This functionally means that the entire Old Testament anticipates and foretells Jesus.
7. The entire Old Testament whispers Jesus' name. From the promise of the child which will crush the head of the serpent (Genesis 3:15), to the promise given to Abraham that through his offspring (one of his children) all the nations of the world will be blessed (Genesis 12:3), to the hope of a sacrifice that will take away sins for all time (Leviticus 16—Day of Atonement, Zechariah 3:9), to the hope of a King who will rule righteously forever (2 Sam 7:11,16). The Old Testament is full of grace, because it is full of the hope of Jesus.
8. He lets them touch His hands and His feet (39-40). Then He eats a piece of fish to show them that his body is real and solid and can interact with things (41-43).
9. They are to testify that Jesus was the Messiah, who fulfilled everything spoken about Him in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms (in sum the entire Bible—verse 44). They are to testify about Jesus' life and suffering and resurrection (45-46). They are to testify to the purpose for which it was accomplished—so that people can repent and receive forgiveness in the name of Jesus—first in Jerusalem, but then spreading to all nations (47).

10. There is one thing before beginning this mission (48-49). What are the disciples told to wait for?

11. What is the final proof the disciples have finally believed the resurrection and understood the scriptures(52-53)? How does that impact the way we think about the evidence of our own faith?

10. They are to wait for the Promise of the Father, that they will be clothed with power from on High. We learn from Acts, the second part of Luke's message, that this power comes from God's own presence, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit (Acts 1:8).

11. They worshipped and were filled with great joy (52) , and it led to their continual praising of God (53).

