

FROM BETHLEHEM TO CALVARY

Meeting Jesus through His story in the Gospel of Luke

Have you ever said to someone, "I would really like to get to know you"? What would be some of the reasons that would make you feel that way about another person? What are the ingredients that are intrinsic for moving an acquaintance to a cherished and very special friend? In addition to intentionally spending time with each other, there is the process of discovering what you each admire and respect, the beliefs that you share in common, the goals that motivate each of you, the idiosyncrasies that become apparent, the willingness to forgive and to accept weaknesses or failures, and the mutual desire to have a loving and honest relationship. Real and true friendships can begin in surprising ways, but making them meaningful, supportive and deep is a lifelong process.

Isn't it amazing that Jesus invited people to become His friend while He was walking this earth? John writes in his Gospel that Jesus said to His followers, "I've named you friends because I've let you in on everything I've heard from the Father." (John 15: 25 - The Message) It's actually God's desire that we, too, choose to spend time with Him so that we can get to know and understand His desires, His plans, and His purposes. Would you agree that it is in reading God's Word and meditating on Jesus' story that you and I move from simply being acquainted with the Savior to counting Him as the friend above all others.

Wouldn't you like to get to know Jesus better and better by traveling with Him during His journey from Bethlehem to Calvary? This is your invitation to join us this winter in our 12 week study as we explore the events which Luke described in his Gospel. There will be time for fellowship and prayer, as we share together week by week what God is teaching us about His great love for us, demonstrated through the life, death and resurrection of His Son, Jesus.

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EASTER SUNDAY – April 12, 2020

Study Time suggestions for this series –

These lessons are designed for you to use in the way that best fits your own schedule and preferences. Whether you schedule a regular and predictable hour each week as your study time or you prefer to have shorter and more spontaneous times to do the lesson is entirely up to you. The important goal is that week by week you find time to focus and concentrate on God's Word and your relationship with The One Who loves you and longs for you to spend time with Him through the study of the Bible. If at all possible, find a quiet and uninterrupted time and place to meet with JESUS.

- Reflect** - As you begin your study time, it is always wise to quiet your heart and mind – to be still. Put aside the details of your life and focus on God who is waiting to meet you and to communicate with you through His Word.
- Read** - It is helpful to read the passage a few times and in various translations. You might want to jot down some of your observations or questions as you read.
- Receive** - God has promised that He will open the eyes of your understanding and teach you His truth. He has promised that the Holy Spirit will guide you and give you understanding, so be ready to receive from Him. What is it that Jesus would like you to understand about who He is and what He is accomplishing?
- Respond** – In the honesty and intimacy of this time, why don't you talk over your concerns and your questions with Jesus. You can tell Him exactly what you are thinking and feeling. He will meet you at that point and walk with you on Your journey as you learn to believe in Him and to trust Him will all of your life. He just may even give you some opportunities to share your experience with others so that they, too, may meet the Savior.

These study guides have been designed to assist you in the "Three R's" of your own Bible study – reading, receiving, and responding. There are introductions to each lesson posted each Friday morning for this study, beginning on January 10, 2020, on the following interactive internet study site – www.westudytogether.com **You can subscribe on the website to receive them automatically by e-mail each week.**

You will also find this study and many other ones on our website – www.westudytogether.com or www.women-in-the-word.com

FROM BETHLEHEM TO CALVARY

Meeting Jesus through His story in the Gospel of Luke

Lesson 1 - HIS Story Begins

The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary, you have found favor with God. You will be with child and give birth to a son, and you are to give Him the name Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High.' Luke 1: 30 - 32

It's the most incredible story ever told and at the same time it is the most credible story that you will ever choose to believe! God took on humanity and chose to be born from the womb of an ordinary young woman. The impossible is always possible when God acts. And when this little baby boy was given the name *JESUS*, people who had the ears to hear and eyes to see realized that He was the long-awaited Messiah. Others probably considered the name He had been given and came to believe that His destiny was to be the Savior. The Jews knew that the name Jesus meant "Yahweh is salvation" or "God has become salvation". Luke is the only gospel writer who recorded for us just a few encounters that people had with Jesus before He began His public ministry at the age of 30, but these stories give us a glimpse into those years of His life. Have you ever wondered what it would have been like to meet Jesus as a child or a teenager or a young man?

REFLECT – As you find a quiet spot, spend some time thinking about the name "Jesus". Perhaps you know some songs about that name that will help you focus on Him. Then ask Him to teach you the things that He wants you to understand and to know about who He really is and why He came to bring salvation.

READ - Luke 1 – 4: 13 –

Luke wrote this biography of the life of Jesus for his friend, Theophilus. He wanted him to understand clearly who Jesus was and what He came to do while He lived on earth so that he would "know with certainty" the things that he had heard about Jesus. As you re-read these opening chapters of this Gospel, make a list of the various names for Jesus, as well as the qualities and characteristics which God impresses on your mind about His Son.

RECEIVE - Following the story of Jesus' birth in chapters 1 and 2, Luke tells of 4 events in the life of Jesus when He interacts with others. As you read each of these encounters, think about the setting, the interaction and why this particular story was included in this biography.

1. Luke 2: 21 – 40 – A visit with Simeon and Anna at the temple in Jerusalem
2. Luke 2: 41 – 51 – Talking with the teachers in the temple courts in Jerusalem
3. Luke 3: 15 – 3: 22 (Matthew 3: 13 – 17) – John the Baptist baptizes Jesus
4. Luke 4: 1 – 13 – The devil tempts Jesus in the desert

RESPOND –

1. As you review each of the 4 scenarios above, think about what each of the people learned about Jesus through their interaction with Him. What would they remember? What would they tell their friends? How do these stories impact your own understanding of who Jesus really is?
2. "At the name of Jesus" – Take some time to ponder the words written in Philippians 2: 5 – 11 – words that summarize the Gospel of Luke. What would it mean for you to "bow down" and "confess" that Jesus is Lord today?

FROM BETHLEHEM TO CALVARY

Lesson 2 - HIS Public Ministry Begins

"Jesus said, 'I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent.'" Luke 4: 43

Have you ever noticed that when you travel with someone, you really get to know them? Being with someone "24 hours a day" gives insight into your friends little peculiarities and the daily routines that are important to them. As the days pass, you learn so much about the way that they simply look at life, people, and adventure. Then looking back at that trip together, you have all the memories that create a strong bond between you. Both the hard times and the challenges that you faced together, as well as the surprises, laughter and delightful times will be meaningful to you. As you come to the Gospel of Luke, why don't you enter into this story of the life of Jesus in that same way? Can you become a traveling companion to the Savior as He interacts with people and performs miracles? Will you purposefully notice His attitudes and His interests and think about the things that are most important to Him? As you get to know Him, the Holy Spirit may just choose to instill in your mind and heart the ways that He would like to help you become like Him!

REFLECT – There is a hymn that says "Oh to be like You! Blessed Redeemer, This is my constant longing and prayer." As you begin your study time, what is your longing and prayer?

READ - Luke 4: 14 – 5: 11

Jesus has been in the area of Jerusalem and now He is returning to Galilee and the area where he grew up. His fame was quickly beginning to spread throughout both of these regions and His name would soon be very well known. It would be helpful to begin a "travel journal" noting your impressions of Jesus day by day.

RECEIVE - As you read each of these encounters, think about the setting, the interaction and why Luke might have chosen to include this particular event.

1. Luke 4: 14 - 30 – Teaching at the synagogue in Nazareth
2. Luke 4: 31 - 37 – Teaching and healing at the synagogue in Capernaum
3. Luke 4: 38 – 44 – At the home of Simon –
4. Luke 5: 1 – 11 – By the Sea of Galilee (Gennesaret) as He meets Simon Peter, James and John

RESPOND –

3. As you review each of the 4 scenarios above, think about what each of the people learned about Jesus through their interaction with Him. What would they remember? What would they tell their friends? How do these stories impact your own understanding of who Jesus really is?
4. What do you think God would like to impress upon your mind and heart through these stories about His Son, Jesus? As you spend some time going back to a phrase or one section, listen for His still, small voice inviting you into a more intimate understanding of the One who came to show you the Father's love.

FROM BETHLEHEM TO CALVARY

Lesson 3 - HIS Authority Becomes Clearer and His Fame Increases

“But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins, Jesus said to the paralyzed man, ‘I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.’” Luke 5: 24

Did you start your “traveling with Jesus” journal? Yes – good for you. Here’s an idea which might inspire some of the rest of you. Make a note of each time that Jesus makes an “I” statement. These are the basic and fundamental truths that He wants His disciples, His antagonists, the individuals and everyone else in the crowd to know and to believe. Here are some examples for you.

“I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God . . . – Luke 4: 43

“I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.” Luke 5: 24

“I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.” Luke 5: 32

When you’re with someone that you greatly admire, it is wise to listen to the things that they reveal about themselves.

REFLECT – “Let all that I am praise the LORD. With my whole heart, I will praise HIS HOLY NAME” – Psalm 103: 1.
As you quiet your mind, come to Jesus with your praise and your thanksgiving. Enter into His presence.

READ - Luke 5: 12 – 6:11

Busy, busy, busy – it feels like every day is filled with more miracles and messages, more crowds and some individuals. But Luke regularly includes those simple reminders that Jesus also knew that He needed time alone with His Father. You might want to make a notation in the margin of your Bible whenever you come to a verse that indicates the priority that Jesus gave to prayer. I simply put a capital “P” - Luke 4: 42 & 5: 16.

RECEIVE – As you read and re-read these stories, think about the setting, the various people and their interaction with Jesus, and some of the reasons that Luke might have had for including that particular event in his biography of the Savior.

1. Luke 5: 12 – 16 – A Leper is Healed
2. Luke 5: 17 – 26 – A Paralytic is Healed and His Sins Forgiven
3. Luke 5: 27 – 39 – The Pharisee and teachers question Jesus at the home of Levi
4. Luke 6: 1 - 11 - The Pharisees and teachers look for ways to accuse Jesus

RESPOND –

1. As you review each of the 4 scenarios above, think about what each of the people learned about Jesus through their interaction with Him. What would they remember? What would they tell their friends? What are the qualities or attributes that you see in Jesus in these stories? What attracts you to Him?
2. Wherever Jesus goes, the response to Him seems to vary widely. There are those who are threatened by His new and strange ideas. Some are very antagonistic. Some are curious and interested. Some experience healing and restoration. Some are filled with wonder and awe. And a few leave everything at His invitation and follow Him. Where do you think you fit in?

FROM BETHLEHEM TO CALVARY

Lesson 4 - HIS Influence Spreads

"Looking at His disciples, Jesus said, 'Blessed are you. . . Woe to you . . .'" Luke 6: 20 - 26

The people were coming from long distances to hear what this man, Jesus, had to say and to be cured of their diseases and delivered from the evil spirits. He had life-changing ideas that He wanted them to hear and new concepts that He wanted them to grasp. Isn't it amazing that these principles for living are still as true today as they were 2000 years ago? The sermon that Jesus preached to His disciples and to the great number of people who had gathered that day is recorded in a condensed version by Luke. (The longer version is found in Matthew 5 - 7.) What do you think the people were asking each other as they listened to this man speak with such authority and power? What truths do you think were clear enough for them to grasp at that point in time? What would they look back on and come to understand in the future?

REFLECT – "Jesus, Name Above All Names. Beautiful Savior. Glorious Lord. Immanuel. God is with Us." How do you want to express to Him your adoration and praise for His being willing to come and show you God's love?

READ - Luke 6: 12 – 49

Read Luke 6: 17 - 49 out loud, as if you were delivering a speech and you really wanted to convey your thoughts and feelings to the listeners. How would you summarize this sermon? What did Jesus want them to understand?

RECEIVE –

1. Give a title to the 5 sections of Jesus' sermon.
 - Luke 20 - 26
 - Luke 6: 27 - 36
 - Luke 6: 37 - 42
 - Luke 6: 43 -45
 - Luke 6: 46 - 49
2. What are some other words for "blessed" and for "woe" in verses 20 – 26?
3. The Jews were waiting for the day when the Messiah would come and deliver them from the tyranny and rule of Rome. No doubt, they had this in mind as they listened to the prophet Jesus describe the Kingdom of God. Does He give them any clues about His own identity in this speech? What does He make clear to them?
4. Jesus is introducing some new concepts into the Jewish mind. What might some of these be?

Great is your reward in heaven – verse 23

RESPOND –

We are very familiar with the Beatitudes – the statements which explain the path to blessing. What do the contrasting ideas add to your understanding of the present and the future. Which one would Jesus like to explain in more detail to you personally? Will you wait quietly for Him to talk with you?

FROM BETHLEHEM TO CALVARY

Lesson 5 - HIS Message and Miracles Continue

"In fear and amazement the disciples asked one another, Who is this? He commands even the winds and the water, and they obey Him." Luke 8:25

It would be interesting to read the Gospel of Luke and trace what happens to people when they have faith in the power and person of Jesus. It has always been true! It was Abraham's faith that God honored and it was Joshua's faith that enabled him to lead the people into the land of promise. Certainly Mary exercised great faith as she responded to the message of the angel and Zechariah's lack of faith that got him into a bit of trouble. As the disciples watched those who came to Jesus believing that He could meet their need, their own sense of trust began to increase. As they listened to His messages, they began to understand more about The One who had invited them to leave everything and go with Him. And then, just when they were feeling comfortable, He put them in a situation where they really needed to trust Him. Isn't that what we experience quite often?

REFLECT – "For by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God." "It's God's gift from start to finish" – Eph. 2:8 (Message). How is your faith quota today? Talk with the Lord about the places in your life where it is hard for you to give up your own control and to trust His promises. What are the desires of your heart?

READ - Luke 7 and 8

Take note of what part faith had in several of these events.

RECEIVE – As you read each of these 9 stories, think about why Jesus chose to interact with each individual or group of people. What happened because people had the opportunity to meet or listen to Jesus?

1. Luke 7: 1 – 10 – The Faith of a Roman Centurion
2. Luke 7: 11 – 17 – The Compassion of Jesus for a Widow
3. Luke 7: 18 – 35 – Jesus Clarifies Who He Is to John's messengers and the crowd
4. Luke 7: 36 – 50 – The Faith of a Forgiven Woman
5. Luke 8: 1 – 18 – Two Parables about the Kingdom of God
6. Luke 8 : 19 – 21 – Jesus' responds to his family
7. Luke 8: 22 – 25 - In the storm with Jesus
8. Luke 8: 26 – 39 – The Power of Jesus over the demons
9. Luke 8: 40 – 56 - The Faith of a Sick Woman and a Ruler of the Synagogue

RESPOND –

As Jesus traveled around to the various towns and villages, his disciples heard Him speak truth which would impact their lives in the future. Check out some of these quotable statements and let the Holy Spirit speak to you through one of them or through another truth that He has especially for you at this time.

- "My mother and brothers are those who hear God's Word and put it into practice." 8:21
- "Return home, and tell how much God has done for you." 8: 39
- "Don't be afraid; just believe . . ." 8:50

What would you add to this list? Why? Spend some quiet moments reflecting on these thoughts.

FROM BETHLEHEM TO CALVARY

Lesson 6 - HIS Focus is on the Disciples

"Jesus strictly warned them not to tell this to anyone.

And He said, 'The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and He must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.'" Luke 9:21 –22

Do you know the title that Jesus most often used for Himself while He was here on earth? If you said, "Son of Man", you would be correct. Perhaps you can think of some of the reasons that He chose this name from among the many that He could have used. Certainly, He could have called Himself the Messiah or the Son of God, but He chose to identify Himself with humanity. Whenever He had the opportunity to agree with those who identified Him as the Son of God, He did so, but His words were consistent with His actions. He came to identify Himself with those that He loved and to show His mercy to those in need. It's a total mystery to us, isn't it? He was completely the Son of God and at the very same time He was totally the Son of Man. That's the reason that He could become our Savior and our Redeemer. "Amazing love, how can it be that Thou, my God, should die for me!"

REFLECT – What does God's mercy really mean to you? Think about it and express your gratefulness to Jesus.

"He left His Father's throne above, so free, so infinite His grace!

Emptied Himself of all but love and bled for Adam's helpless race!

'Tis mercy all, immense and free, For, O my God, it found out me." Hymn by Charles Wesley

READ - Luke 9 – 10: 24

It's time for the disciples and others to take on some responsibilities. What does Jesus want them to do?

RECEIVE – As you go back to study these stories, ask God to show what truths He is teaching to those who are with Him. What do the disciples need to learn before they reach Jerusalem? What does Jesus want them to understand?

1. Luke 9: 1 – 9 – The disciples are sent out to preach and heal
2. Luke 9: 10 – 17 – The disciples watch Jesus perform an amazing miracle
3. Luke 9: 18 – 27 – The disciples learn about Jesus' future
4. Luke 9: 28 – 36 – Three disciples experience the glory of God
5. Luke 9: 37 – 45 – The disciples learn more about the Son of Man
6. Luke 9: 46 – 50 – The disciples learn another lesson about humility
7. Luke 9: 51 – 62 – The disciples listen and learn through many conversations
8. Luke 10: 1 – 24 – The disciples are joined by others and sent out to preach and heal

RESPOND –

1. The disciples have so much to learn. As they start on their way to Jerusalem, what are a few of the most important things that Jesus is now revealing to them about His mission? About their relationship to Him?
2. As a follower of Jesus today, what might be some of the same truths that you and I need to hear? To know? To grasp and live out as His disciples?

FROM BETHLEHEM TO CALVARY

Lesson 7 - His Teaching Gives Life Lessons

"Jesus said, 'Blessed are those who hear the Word of God and obey it.'" Luke 11: 28

Have you ever wondered how much the disciples knew about the Holy Spirit? All of the Gospel writers referred to the Holy Spirit throughout their Gospels, but seldom did Jesus actually talk about His reality until the last week of His life. The apostle, John, recorded those last solemn words of comfort and instruction that Jesus gave His disciples on the night before His crucifixion when he told them about the coming of the Holy Spirit. However, Luke tells us that as Jesus talked with His close associates about how to pray, He reminded them that those who ask, and keep on asking, will always receive good gifts from their Heavenly Father and the Holy Spirit will be one of those good gifts that God gives to His children. The day was coming soon when the disciples would remember this conversation, no doubt.

REFLECT - The disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray – Luke 11: 1 – 4
Why not ask Him to do the same thing for you as you begin your study time this week?
Use each line of His prayer and expand upon that idea in your own words. It's a great way to talk with Jesus.

READ - **Luke 10: 25 – 11:54**
As you read, take note of all of the different people with whom Jesus interacts. How does He treat them?
How does He help them? How does He teach them?

RECEIVE – The messages and events in the life of Jesus that Luke records for us in chapters 10 through 17 are not found in any of the other gospels. The disciples had been traveling with Jesus for more than two years now and Jesus knows that His time with them is limited. Everywhere He goes now, it seems that Jesus is focused on teaching people how to live and showing them His power and authority as the Son of God. What are the life lessons that you think He is trying to explain in each of the following stories?

1. Luke 10: 25 – 37 – Answering the question of the expert in the law
2. Luke 10: 38 – 42 – Answering Martha's question
3. Luke 11: 1 – 13 – Answering the disciple's question about how to pray
4. Luke 11: 14 – 28 - Answering their concern about His identity
5. Luke 11: 29 – 36 – Teaching some new concepts to the crowd
6. Luke 11: 37 – 54 – Harsh words of judgment at the home of a Pharisee

RESPOND –

1. Jesus spoke very harsh and clear words to the Pharisees and the experts in the law, didn't He? Why do you think that He did this? What were the specific things that He criticized about them? Are there lessons that can be learned from this interaction or was it only for them?
2. What comforting thoughts or encouraging words did Jesus give to those who were listening and could hear them? Take some time to focus on His gifts and promises to them and to you.

FROM BETHLEHEM TO CALVARY

Lesson 8 - HIS Messages Comfort and Convict

"Jesus said, 'Whoever acknowledges Me before men, the Son of Man will also acknowledge him before the angels of God.'" Luke 12: 8

We shy away from anything that sounds harsh and judgmental, don't we? For most people, even the suggestion that God has the right, the obligation, or the desire to punish those who turn their back on Him or who worship other gods is almost more than they can even acknowledge. When you are confronted with these realities in Scripture, it is wise to remind yourself that the question you need to be asking is "why does He not punish all of us?" or "why is He willing to redeem any of us?" rather than the reverse. In His amazing sovereignty, He created us with the ability to make choices and while, it is very uncomfortable for us to realize that many will be judged for their willful disregard of Him, the greater enigma is that He will reward those who receive the Savior, the Son of Man.

REFLECT – "Come unto Me all you who are weary and heavy laden." That was Jesus' invitation then and it is still is His invitation to you today, so as you prepare to learn from His Word, why don't you have a conversation with Him about the things that are on your mind? Talk them over and then get ready to listen to the Holy Spirit.

READ - Luke 12

Comfort and conviction – both of these are realities in this chapter of Luke. One Bible uses the subtitle "Warnings and Encouragement" for this chapter. Why do you think we need both of them?

RECEIVE – It's a little bit hard to imagine what it might have been like to be among the thousands that came to hear what Jesus had to say. Sometimes Luke pointed out that He was talking only to His disciples, but often the energy was high and the crowds were pressing in on Him. It is no wonder that in those final weeks, the Pharisees were increasingly antagonistic and threatened by Jesus. As you read and imagine the setting, try to summarize the content of each speech so that you could explain it to someone else.

1. Luke 12: 1 – 12 – Fear God, not man
2. Luke 12: 13 – 21 – The Parable of the Rich Fool - (Notice how many times the word "I" is used.)10: 99 - 10
3. Luke 12: 22 – 34 – "Where your treasure is, there our heart will be also."
4. Luke 12: 35 – 48 – Parable of the Faithful Servant
5. Luke 12: 49 – 59 – Very strong warnings

RESPOND –

1. Which of the first 4 stories do you think is the one that you should consider thoughtfully? Jesus was always interested in the response of the individual. His words are meant for you personally.

Story # 1 – Romans 10: 9 – 10, Acts 4: 31 and 5: 33 - 42

Story # 2 – Matthew 6: 33, I Timothy 6: 17 – 19

Story # 3 – Matthew 6: 28 – 34, I Peter 5: 7

Story # 4 - John 14: 1 – 4, II Peter 3: 8 – 14

2. What do you hear the Holy Spirit's voice whispering into your mind or your heart? Ask the Lord Jesus your questions. Tell Him your concerns. Let Him reassure you of His love and mercy.

FROM BETHLEHEM TO CALVARY

Lesson 9 - HIS Focus Remains Clear

“Jesus said, ‘They will come from the east and the west, from the north and the south, and sit down in the Kingdom of God. And indeed there are last who will be first and there are first who will be last.’”

Luke 13: 29

If you have a “red-letter Bible”, the kind that prints all of the words of Jesus in red print, then perhaps you have noticed that there has been a change of content in this biography that Luke wrote about Jesus. In the first nine chapters we learned about many of the activities of Jesus and read some of His speeches, but in chapters 10 – 18, almost all of the pages are in red. Luke explains the setting or the situation, but we get to listen in as Jesus talks with individuals, preaches to the crowds and interacts with his adversaries, those who are looking for a way to use what He says against Him. Find your way through the crowds, so that you can hear everything He has to say. That’s always a good way to get to know someone.

REFLECT – “Praise the name of Jesus. He’s my Rock. He’s My Fortress. He’s My Deliverer. In Him will I trust.”
Take some time, maybe a great deal of time, and praise the name of JESUS.

READ - Luke 13 –

There is 1 miracle of healing, 3 parables, and 3 teaching topics in this chapter. Just as the disciples had to do, listen carefully to Jesus. Some things will be clear and other ideas will not easily be understood. But, focus on those concepts that you can grasp. Ask the Holy Spirit to clarify other things. Then just enjoy the presence and power of the One who has called you to follow Him.

RECEIVE – With the 3 parables, try to summarize what you think might be the point of the story.
With the messages, consider the setting, the content, and the response. Then try to summarize it.

1. Luke 13: 1 – 5 – Repentance
2. Luke 13: 6 – 9 – Parable of Fig Tree
3. Luke 13: 10 – 17 – Healing on the Sabbath
4. Luke 13: 18 – 21 – Parables – Mustard Seed and Leaven
5. Luke 13: 22 – 35 – “Who will be saved?”

RESPOND –

1. Do you ever feel like Jesus seems too exclusive or that His way seems too narrow? How do you explain that repentance is the only way? How do you explain that good works will not satisfy God?
2. What do you think was on Jesus’ mind when He talked about His coming death and resurrection?
Luke 9: 21 – 22 and 43 – 45
Luke 13: 31 – 33
3. “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!” – Psalm 118: 26 and Luke 19: 38
As Jesus entered Jerusalem on that Palm Sunday, that was the greeting of praise that the people shouted to their Messiah, Jesus. He was God’s Son indeed. Give Him your acclamation of praise!

FROM BETHLEHEM TO CALVARY

Lesson 10 - HIS Priorities Are Explained

"Jesus said, 'For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled and he who humbles himself will be exalted.'" Luke 14: 11

What is a parable? In the final weeks of His ministry, Jesus purposefully used them in His times of teaching. They are earthly illustrations of spiritual truths. People heard them, but did not necessarily understand them because of the hardness of their hearts. The religious leaders were often threatened by them, but those who humbled themselves before God have always been given insight into both the truth and the application that Jesus intended His listeners to grasp. It's still true today for you and me.

REFLECT - Isaiah predicted the coming of Jesus by calling Him "Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace - Isaiah 9: 6 How many names can you give to Him today?

READ - Luke 14 and 15 -

As you read these stories that Jesus is telling His friends and His foes, imagine yourself sitting in the home of a prominent Pharisee and ask yourself why Jesus was even invited there that day. Imagine yourself in the middle of the large crowds that were following Him around. Why would you choose to go and be there in order to hear what this prophet had to say? Do you think you would be trying to stand near Him or would you be standing on the edge? Imagine yourself as one of His disciples. What might you be thinking or wondering?

RECEIVE - As you focus on each of these parables, think about what Jesus is trying to explain to His listeners. What is the main truth that He wants them to grasp through each story? What is important to Jesus?

1. Luke 14: 1 - 14 - A Parable Illustrating _____
2. Luke 14: 15 - 24 - A Parable Illustrating _____
3. Luke 14: 25 - 35 - Discipleship Means _____
4. Luke 15: 1 - 7 - A Parable Illustrating _____
5. Luke 15: 8 - 10 - A Parable Illustrating _____
6. Luke 15: 11 - 32 - A Parable Illustrating _____

RESPOND -

1. There are some truths that seem to be especially important to Jesus such as humility, discipleship, repentance, acceptance of other nations? What can you learn about them through His actions, His conversations and His parables? Can you remember other times when He has discussed these themes with the crowds or His disciples?
2. What do these parables tell you about Jesus - His identity and His calling?
3. What do they reveal to you about yourself and your relationship to the Son of Man, Jesus?

FROM BETHLEHEM TO CALVARY

Lesson 11 - HIS Disciples Have More to Learn

“Jesus said to the Pharisees, ‘You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of men, but God knows your hearts. What is highly valued among men is detestable in God’s sight.’” Luke 16: 15

When Jesus came, He turned many ideas upside-down, didn’t He? The disciples listened and learned. The crowds remained curious and inquisitive with some believing and others still questioning His authenticity. At the months go by, it became clear that the majority of the Pharisees and teachers of the law were becoming more cynical and defensive. Many of His stories were quite obviously an indictment against their attitudes and their behavior. While some of them realized the errors of their way, most of them remained unrepentant and were set on destroying the One who came to give them life.

REFLECT – “His name is wonderful. His name is wonderful – Jesus, My Lord.

He is the mighty King, master of everything.

His name is wonderful – Jesus, my Lord.”

He longs to hear you express your love and gratefulness to Him. Will you take time to do that?

READ - **Luke 16 and 17** –

These particular conversations are recorded only in the Gospel of Luke. As you read them, perhaps God will give you some insight into a possible reason that Luke included them in His biography of Jesus. Is there some new information? Is there something that needed emphasis or repetition? What insight does Jesus give to the disciples about the Kingdom of God?

RECEIVE – Try to summarize each story. What might be the important concept that Jesus is illustrating?

1. Luke 16: 1 – 18 - Story #1 – The rich man and his manager
2. Luke 16: 19 – 31 – Story #2 – The rich man and the beggar, Lazarus
3. Luke 17: 1 – 10 – A conversation (see Matt. 18: 1-7) with his disciples
4. Luke 17: 11 – 19 – A Miracle and One Thankful Leper
5. Luke 17: 20 – 37 – Another conversation with his disciples about the future

RESPOND –

1. Here are a few thought provoking phrases that Jesus said. Can you find any more of them in these chapters? Try to express the ideas in your own words.
 - “No servant can serve two masters. You cannot serve both God and Money. ”
 - “If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be uprooted and planted in the sea and it will obey you.’” (Black mulberry trees have vast root systems that allow them to live to 600 years.)
 - “Rise and go; your faith has made you well.”
2. The disciples asked Jesus to “increase their faith”. They seemed to know that He could and would do this for them. Do you? How would really believing God’s promises impact you?

FROM BETHLEHEM TO CALVARY

Lesson 12 - HIS Purposes Are Explained

"Jesus said, 'For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.'" Luke 19: 10

In that one simple statement "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save those who are lost", Jesus explains His entire reason for coming to earth. It's the theme of His life and His story. So simple. So direct. So amazing. The song says it so well. "He came from heaven to earth, to show the way. From the earth to the cross, my debt to pay. From the cross to the grave, from the grave to the sky." (Rick Founds – 1989) He came to find you and to find me and to offer the gift of forgiveness so that we could live forever with Him. Do you believe in Him?

REFLECT – "Lord, I lift your name on high."

He came – *thank Him.*

To seek – *praise Him.*

To save – ***bow down before Him.***

READ - Luke 18 – 19: 27

There are just a few more parables and experiences before Jesus' final week in Jerusalem. They're almost there and Jesus is preparing them for what is ahead, but the disciples will only understand in hindsight the meaning of His words. Read these stories out loud – one by one.

RECEIVE – As you journey with Jesus and His disciples on their way to Jerusalem, look and listen carefully. Notice once again the great variety of people with whom Jesus interacts as He goes from place to place. What do you think they are learning from Jesus? What are the disciples observing and thinking?

1. Luke 18: 1 – 8
2. Luke 18: 9 – 14
3. Luke 18: 15 – 17
4. Luke 18: 18 – 30
5. Luke 18: 31 – 34
6. Luke 18: 35 – 43
7. Luke 19: 1 – 10
8. Luke 19: 11 - 27

RESPOND –

1. Choose one of these parables or experiences and prepare a devotional to share with someone else.
2. Is there any one of these stories that the Holy Spirit wants to use in your own life – a new reality to believe or an attitude to change? That's what the Holy Spirit can do for you as you meditate of the Word of God.

FROM BETHLEHEM TO CALVARY

Lesson 13 – HIS Story Ends and Begins Again

**“Jesus said to His disciples, ‘This is what is written:
The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day,
And repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached *in His name* to all nations,
beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things.’”** Luke 24: 46 - 47

How many times did you put the letter “P” in the margin of your Bible as you read the biography of Jesus written by Doctor Luke? It seems clear that Jesus not only wanted to pray, to be alone to talk to His father, but He needed to pray. He knew that prayer would enable Him to finish the work that He had been sent to do. As the pressure increased and the intensity of the opposition grew, He could find solace and courage and hope in only one place – in the presence of the One who loved us enough to send His only Son to take on Himself the punishment for my disobedience. As the Son of God, He came. As the Son of Ma, He obeyed and trusted in the goodness and purposes of God, His Father.

REFLECT – “Amazing love! How can it be that Thou, my God, should die for me?

He left His Father’s throne above – so free, so infinite His grace!

Emptied Himself of all but love and bled for Adam’s helpless race!

It’s mercy all, immense and free. For, O my God it found out me.

“Amazing love! How can it be that Thou, my God, should die for me?

(Charles Wesley – 1739)

Write down some of your thoughts . . .

READ - Luke 19: 28 – 24: 52

After you have read the entire “end to the story”, focus your attention on chapters 22 – 23.

Jesus came into Jerusalem in a parade of glory, but He did not revel in the acclamation. His heart was broken as He looked at Jerusalem and mourned its future. Each day that week He taught in the temple courts. The people listened eagerly, but the religious leaders wanted only to kill Him. Later that week, as the time for the celebration of the Passover approached, the final chapter is written. But wait, it is not the final chapter, is it? He really is the Son of God and all that He said about His destiny would really come true!

RECEIVE – Ask God to touch your life through the reading of His Word this week. Enter in to these events with your heart.

Read the story of Jesus’ betrayal, trial and crucifixion every day – morning and night if possible – Luke 22 and 23

What are your impressions? Try to identify with each of the individuals pictured in this event.

1. What events took place just before His last supper with His disciples? Luke 19:28 – 21:38
2. Luke describes those final hours before Jesus arrest and crucifixion. What were they like for Him, for the disciples, and for His accusers? Luke 22 and 23
3. Finally – on Easter morning, get up early enough to go to the tomb – Chapter 24

RESPOND –

1. Did you realize that there is a sequel to Luke’s Gospel? It is the Book of Acts.
Read Acts 1: 1 – 11. What is the good news that Jesus shares with His disciples and with all of us
2. Jesus is HIS name and He is coming back again – John 14: 1 – 3 and I Peter 4: 7 – 11.
Until then, what does He want you to do? How does He want you to think and to live? What are your desires?