



Summarizing Luke: The Man, The Message, The Mission

The Gospel of Luke

Study Helps and Application

This week is a big picture summary of the main thrusts of the gospel of Luke's revelation of Jesus Christ. We focus on Jesus Christ's identity and nature (The Man), his teachings (The Message), and what he accomplished and is accomplishing through his people and by his Spirit (The Mission).

Discussion 1: The Man

- *Who is Jesus? ... and so what?*

[Go through the sermon notes list. Why do these matter?]

- *Are you comfortable articulating Jesus' identity to people?*

[Two basic problems: ignorance and fear. Both are sin. I know that sounds tough, but it is true. Ignorance because we are called to study God's Word, and let's face it, many of us would do a better job of explaining the infield fly rule than the basics of what the Bible says about who Jesus is. Fear, though we all struggle with it, is also sin. Read Rev. 21:8 noting who "the cowardly" are counted with. It is the responsibility of the elders to equip and exhort you--and only to a lesser extent of you CG leaders to equip and exhort those in your flock. Be Strong and Courageous!]

- *"I just believe he was a great teacher [guru, philosopher, lover, ...]"*

[Review the "Lord-Liar-Lunatic" trilemma. Summary: If Jesus claimed to be God/ the Son of God (He did--Matt 16:15-17; Matt 26:63-64; John 10:30-33; John 5:58-59...), What he was claiming is true (Lord), or false. If false, he either knew it was false (Liar) or didn't know it (Lunatic).]

I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about Him: 'I'm ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don't accept His claim to be God.' That is one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of thing Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic—on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg—or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at his feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to. [C.S. Lewis in *Mere Christianity*]

- *In what ways ought we to be like Jesus?*

[These will come easily. Holiness, sacrificially loving, speaking the truth ...]

- *In what ways are we **not** called to be like Jesus?*

[You may have to lay down your life for your friends, but you will never be their atoning sacrifice. You may speak the word of God with its inherent authority, but you will not be the authority: "... *but I say unto you* ..." You may cast out demons in Jesus' name, but never in your own. You will rise again on the Last Day, but not by your own power... and you certainly will not approach God the Father in your own righteousness (without being consumed...) ... essentially we are showing that Jesus is far more than an example to us (but not less)]

Discussion 2: The Message

^{ESV} **2 Corinthians 5:17** Therefore, if anyone is ^ain Christ, he is ^ba new creation. ¹^cThe old has passed away; behold, the new has come. ¹⁸ All this is from God, ^awho through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us ^bthe ministry of reconciliation; ¹⁹ that is, in Christ God was reconciling ¹the world to himself, ^anot counting their trespasses against them, and **entrusting to us ²the message of reconciliation.** ²⁰ Therefore, ^a**we are ambassadors for Christ, ^bGod making his appeal through us.** We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. ²¹ ^aFor our sake he made him to be sin ^bwho knew no sin, so that in him we might become ^cthe righteousness of God.

- *Can you clearly and confidently explain the gospel? [you've been entrusted with it!]*

[It is frightening how often we hear long-time Christians revert to pop-evangelical jargon "...ask Jesus into your heart... make Jesus your Lord ..." when attempting to explain the gospel. Take some time this week or in the coming weeks to practice this. *Hints: If the words "sin," "judgment," "cross," (what was accomplished there) and especially "repent and believe" aren't prominent in the explanation, it's not the gospel. As for the two I jargon examples... both are foreign to Scripture and put the sinner "in charge" ...]*

If you believe what you like in the Gospel, and reject what you don't like, it is not the Gospel you believe, but yourself.

— Augustine

- *Do you find your identity and refuge in the Message? [... or in your work, family, ... or even ministry...]*

Discussion 3: The Mission

– *Jesus' Mission--The Atonement. Mission Accomplished.*

[Jesus died to save sinners and secure the salvation of his people rather than simply make salvation available. It may sound like Reformed nit-picking, but it is important to understand that our salvation is a work of God. It does not depend upon our faithfulness, but God's. Isn't this a source of comfort? Yes, we are totally responsible and will demonstrate the fruits of repentance. It is not a license to sin, but rather a (the only) source of assurance that the Christian can depend on.]

– *Our Mission--The Great Commission*

[Jesus died to save sinners and secure the salvation of his people rather than simply make salvation available.]

- *Review some examples of things that people confuse with the gospel mission*

[Politics, pro-life, creationism, cleaning up Hollywood, ... did I mention politics? Engagement in all of these areas is good and important, but they are not the gospel. If unwisely engaged, they can inhibit rather than commend the gospel.]

- *What is your role in the great commission?*

[See if you can turn the conversation to our role corporately as well as individual disciple making through gospel proclamation. Mutual encouragement and accountability... pooling of gifts and resources in church planting ...]

- *Do you find your identity in the Mission?*

[This is a little different than the previous identity question. The first is more about what you are, this one is more about what you do ... Again, think corporately as well. Use lots of "we" and "us."]

Memory Verse

^{ESV} **Luke 1:3-4** it seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, ⁴ that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught.



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The need for the big picture--we can easily miss the forest for the trees. We need the wide angle as well as the telephoto lens view.

Summarizing Luke:

1. The Man

- The Son of David
- Messiah
- The Fulfillment of the whole OT (Lk 24)
- God in the flesh - truly man and truly God
- Miracle worker
- Object of worship
- Teacher/prophet
- The one we should listen to and follow
- Friend of sinners / Servant

2. The Message

- *We are sinners*--The first step toward rescue is to recognize our need
- Sin is loathsome rebellion that deserves *judgment*
- The means of being reconciled to God is through a substitute sacrifice - *the cross* is the key
- We all must face these realities personally and make a decision - *repent and believe*

The implications:

- Those who repent and believe are forgiven, reconciled with God, in his kingdom, his children (Luke 15)
- And now they are to be about their father's work - to be like him.

3. The Mission

- There are some things Christians are to do that shouldn't be considered part of the *Mission* - e.g., engaging the culture and transforming the culture (politics, arts, education, care for the poor, love neighbor ...)
- The *Mission* is the proclamation of the gospel - the gospel is the only means by which we make disciples.

There are no kingdom realities, there is no kingdom living, without first entering the kingdom by the gospel.

- The Mission is not just the announcement that the kingdom has arrived without an announcement about *how* to enter the kingdom. The coming of the kingdom, in fact, isn't good news but very bad news for those who resist the gospel or try to enter in another way.
- The four gospel accounts end with the "capital-M" Mission – the mission is proclamation of the gospel
- Other things support or confirm or validate or demonstrate the gospel (caring for the poor or seek the good of city or doing all things under Jesus' lordship)
- A good test case for what the "capital-M" Mission is to think about the purpose of Jesus' miracles in the gospels. Miracles aren't the "capital-M" Mission. They confirm, support, and validate Jesus and his mission.
- Another indication of this is the example of the early church in Acts where witness was central

Elyse Fitzpatrick, *The Transforming Power of the Gospel* (The Gospel Coalition website)

*Because of the **incarnation**, Jesus Christ knows exactly what it is to live in a sin-cursed world with people who break the rules...like me. I am a rule-breaker but He's loved me and he's experienced every trial I face. He's with me. He sympathizes with my weakness (Hebrews 4:15). This understanding of His love in the face of my sin drains my anger at my rule-breaking neighbor. I can love her because I've been loved and I am just like her.*

*Because of His **sinless life**, I now have a perfect record of loving my neighbor. He perfectly loved rule-breakers. This record of perfect love for my rule-breaking neighbor is mine now; knowing this relieves my guilt. Even though I continue to fail to love, His record is mine.*

*Because of His **substitutionary death**, I am completely forgiven for my sin...even the sins that I seem to fall into at the slightest provocation. God has no wrath left for me because He poured it all out on His Son. He's not disappointed or irritated. He welcomes me as a beloved daughter.*

*Because of His **resurrection** (and the justification it brings), I know that the power of sin in my life has been broken. Yes, I've failed again, but I can have the courage to continue to fight sin because I'm no longer a slave to it. This replaces despair with faith to wage war against my selfishness and pride.*

*Because of His **ascension and reign**, I know that this situation isn't a mere chance happening. He's orchestrated it so that I will remember Him and be blessed by the gospel again. He's ruling over my life and interceding for me right now. I'm not a slave to chaos or chance. He's my Sovereign King and I can rest in His loving plan today and rejoice in Him.*

*And, because of His **promised return**, I know that all the doubt, injustice and struggle will one day come to an end. This line in this grocery store and my plans for dinner isn't all there is. There's the great good news of the gospel. I can go home now and share with my family and guests how Jesus met me at the grocery store and we can rejoice together in His work on our behalf.*



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– *Can you clearly and confidently explain the gospel?*

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– *Do you find your identity and refuge in the Message?*

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– Our Mission--The Great Commission

- Review some examples of things that people confuse with the gospel mission
- What is your role in the great commission?
- Do you find your identity in the Mission?

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