



# Luke

A Careful History of Jesus

Luke 5 - 8

For Individuals, Groups and 1:1

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**Further Reading:**

IVP New Testament Commentary - available free online!  
<http://mytmb.me/ivpluke>

Luke 1 - 9 video from The Bible Project.  
<http://mytmb.me/rs11-9>



## **Read Luke 5:12 - 26**

4. What is significant about the means Jesus chooses to heal the man with leprosy?

5. How do you see the man with leprosy exercising faith in Jesus?

6. Why do you think Jesus instructs the man not to speak?

*The Pharisees were a group of religious leaders who were committed to keeping God's commands. In their concern to keep God's law, they put a "hedge" around the law, adding additional commands to what God had said. This led to a zealous legalistic approach to obeying the law.*

*Luke records five occasions on which Jesus comes into conflict with this group.*

7. What is it that the Pharisees object to as Jesus speaks to the paralysed man?

8. Why does Jesus first turn his attention to the man's sin and only later to his physical disability?

9. Who do you see demonstrating faith in Jesus in this episode?  
How?

10. What reason does Jesus give for saying to the man, “I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home” (v 25)?

11. How does Jesus demonstrate his authority to forgive sins?

*In Luke 7:22 Jesus speaks of these kinds of events as the evidence that he is the one John the Baptist spoke about. In places like Isaiah 35, the Old Testament shows us what the ministry of the Messiah would look like.*

12. What are the similarities between these two episodes?

13. What do we learn about Jesus through these episodes?

14. What does this section tell you about Jesus’ priorities for your life?

## **Study 2**

### **Luke 5:27 - 39**

1. If you could have any person from history in your home for a meal, who would you choose? What would you serve them?
2. Is there a type or category of person that is stereotyped as being unlikely to become a follower of Jesus?
3. What aspect of Jesus' character, activity, or teaching do you find most surprising?

### **Read Luke 5:27 - 39**

*In the first Century AD Jewish tax collectors were despised by their fellow citizens because they collaborated with the occupying Roman forces.*

*Jesus doesn't share the prevailing viewpoint of his day and is only too willing for tax collectors and other so-called sinners to hear and receive the good news.*

*This Levi is also known as Matthew, the author of the gospel account which bears his name.*

4. What are some of the prejudices or biases that might stop Christians sharing the good news of Jesus with particular groups of people?

5. How can we guard against those kinds of biases in our evangelism and ministry?

6. In what ways could you say that Levi is a model of discipleship?

7. The evidence that Levi is a follower of Jesus is clear. Where would people see the effects of your discipleship?

8. What does the meal at Levi's house tell us about our position in the Kingdom of God?

9. What point is Jesus trying to communicate with his discussion about the bridegroom and the guests?

10. How would you explain verses 31 & 32 to someone who says they've worked hard to lead a good life so that God will be pleased with them?



11. What is the irony in the discussion between the Pharisees and Jesus in these verses?

12. From what Luke records here, how does someone become a disciple of Jesus?  
And what does a disciple of Jesus do?

*In verses 36 - 39 Jesus tells a mini parable to explain the incompatibility of the legalistic human-devised religion of the Pharisees and the new relationship with God that he offers.*

13. In what ways is the relationship that Jesus offers incompatible with the religion of the Pharisees?

14. What picture does this section give us of Jesus' ministry?

15. How do you think someone who doesn't yet know Jesus could be encouraged by these two episodes?

### **Study 3**

#### **Luke 6:1 - 16**

1. Growing up did you tend to be a rule-breaker or a rule-keeper?

2. Can you recall a time when you deliberately broke a law?

3. Is there a habit or practice that you've observed in Christian people which you find pointless or silly?

#### **Read Luke 6:1 - 16**

*Jesus frequently came into conflict with the religious leaders of his day over the proper use of the Sabbath. Since the time that God had given the law to Moses, the religious leaders had added hundreds of additional rules and regulations to the Sabbath observance. In his interactions with the authorities, Jesus didn't just say that there were too many additional laws, he claimed his opponents had misunderstood the whole reason the Sabbath was instituted.*

4. What is it that the Pharisees object to here?

*The episode about David that Jesus refers to is found in 1 Samuel 21:3 - 6. David and his companions ate the bread that had been consecrated and was normally reserved for the priests.*

5. How does Jesus respond to the accusation that he is doing “what is unlawful on the Sabbath” (v 2)?

6. How does the example of David deny a strict legalism that puts rule-keeping above human interests?

7. What is Jesus claiming by saying “The Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath” (v 5)?

8. Why do you think Jesus deliberately heals the man in the synagogue when he knew what the Pharisees and teachers of the law were thinking?

9. What does Jesus teach about the Sabbath through his healing of the man in the synagogue?

10. What does the synagogue healing add to our understanding of the Sabbath?

11. What are the areas in which we are most likely to insist on legalistic rule-keeping at the expense of others?

12. In the light of Luke 6, what would you say is the purpose of the Sabbath?

13. How should a Christian person think about what they can do on the Sabbath?

14. In what ways have you found that following Jesus enables you to be less constrained and more flexible in your love for others?

## **Study 4**

### **Luke 6:17 - 26**

1. When people you know use the word “blessed” what experience are they trying to capture?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. What is your preferred means of celebration? A loud party? A quiet drink? All the family gathered? Something else?

### **Read Luke 6:17 - 26**

3. Why do you think Jesus teaches his newly chosen twelve apostles in a context where a large crowd of others is also present?

*Notice the great numbers of people flocking to hear Jesus. The opposition of the religious leaders that we've seen in the previous chapters hasn't yet had any effect on dampening the peoples' interest in Jesus.*

4. Make a list of those whom Jesus calls “blessed.”  
*The name “beatitude” given to these statements is from the Latin word meaning “blessed.”*

5. Make a list of all those on whom Jesus pronounces “woe.”

6. Which of these lists do you fit most naturally into?  
What do you think this means?

*Matthew records Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, his teaching for citizens of God's Kingdom, in chapters 5 - 7. Luke's sermon "on a level place" (v 17) covers some of the same themes but is substantially different and shorter. Almost certainly the two accounts cover two separate teaching occasions.*

7. What are to be the characteristics of citizens of God's kingdom?

8. How does the world generally view the people described in verses 20 - 22?

9. What if we aren't poor, or hungry? What can we do?

10. How is Jesus able to make these statements, that a poor person can be considered blessed, etc?

11. Which one of the promises of blessing in verses 20 - 22 do you find most encouraging?

12. Is it wrong to be “rich” or “well fed”?

13. How ought we respond to this teaching, when most of us fit best in the categories of people on whom Jesus pronounces woe?

14. Think about the priorities and aspirations of our culture. In which aspect of Jesus’ teaching here are they best captured?

15. How can we ensure we hear Jesus’ perspective over the perspective of the world around us?

16. If Jesus were to add an additional “blessed” and “woe” especially for our culture, what might he say?

17. How do you feel about the concept of rewards in heaven?

**Study 5**  
**Luke 6:27 - 49**

1. Did you ever get into a fist fight as a child or youth?  
Did you start it?!

2. What is (or was) your favourite item of clothing? Would  
you ever give it up?

3. Do you think that you're more prone to being judgmental  
or to not being discerning enough?  
Do you wish you were different?

**Read Luke 6:27 - 49**

4. Why is it so hard to love people who have wronged us?

5. How would you sum up Jesus' teaching on love here?

6. How could you put into practice this teaching on love?



7. What two motivations for behaviour does Jesus offer in verses 35 – 36?

Which one do you personally find most compelling?

*In verses 37 – 49, Jesus makes sure that we all feel the force of his words. We can't insist that others have a problem with sin and we don't.*

8. What does Jesus' little parable about fruit cause you to think about your own life?

9. What fruit will people see if they look at you and your life?

10. Why do you think Luke records Jesus' teaching on being judgmental right alongside his teaching on being discerning?

11. What is the necessary implication if we see bad fruit in the life of a Christian teacher?

12. What might be some helpful things to bear in mind if you're trying to be helpful to a Christian friend caught up in wrong behaviour or false teaching?

13. How would your approach differ if the friend you're seeking to help was not yet a Christian?

*The comparison of the wise and foolish builders comes at the end of this section of teaching and concludes it as a summary and application.*

14. What is the warning in the illustration of the two builders?

15. Would you be diagnosed as wise or foolish based on an examination of your:

- Fruit
- Words
- Judgment and discernment?
- Spending habits

16. What solution does Jesus offer to enable us to have wisdom and all its benefits?

## **Study 6**

### **Luke 7:1 - 17**

1. What is the most unwell you have ever been?  
And what helped you get well?
  
2. What's the most memorable funeral you have ever attended? What made it stick in your mind?
  
3. What ideas or images come to mind when you hear of someone having "great faith"?

### **Read Luke 7:1 - 17**

4. What do you notice about Jesus' character in these two episodes?

*Luke records two episodes that both demonstrate Jesus' compassion for people, and also give a taste of what life will be like in the Kingdom of God when illness and death will be done away with.*

5. What does the approach of the "elders of the Jews" (v 3) demonstrate about their understanding of Jesus?

6. How is the centurion's approach to Jesus different to the elders' approach?

7. In what ways does the centurion demonstrate faith in Jesus?

*The centurion is a Gentile, and does not even meet Jesus face to face. His experience of Jesus' healing power would be an encouragement to other Gentiles like Theophilus (1:3) who also never met Jesus, but were challenged to put their faith in him.*

8. What does the kind of faith demonstrated by the centurion look like today?

9. What are the differences between how Jesus performs these two miracles?

10. What would be the differences in your life, if you related to Jesus as the centurion does, compared to the way the elders do?

11. What is revealed to us about Jesus by these two different miracles and the way Jesus goes about them?

12. The people's response to Jesus' resurrection miracle is to call him "a great prophet" (v 16). Which other prophets were known to have performed this kind of raising from the dead?  
*See 1 Kings 17:7 - 24 & 2 Kings 4:8 - 37*

13. In what ways is Jesus' resurrection miracle similar to that of those Old Testament prophets? How is it different?

14. Nain was either very near Shunem (2 Kings 4), or may have even been the same town. What might have prompted Jesus to be so willing to perform this miracle here?

15. How does the people's response to Jesus in verse 16 fit with what Luke has already told us so far in his book?

16. How do you respond to what we've seen of Jesus so far in Luke's gospel?

17. What "news about Jesus" (v 17) do Christians today like to share with those around them?

## **Study 7**

### **Luke 7:18 - 35**

1. What is the longest you've ever had to wait for something?  
Was the wait worth it?

2. Who is the most famous person you've ever met?  
What do you remember about meeting them?

3. Is there a part of the Christian message that you think people often misunderstand or struggle to accept?  
Why?

### **Read Luke 7:18 - 35**

4. Why do you think Luke repeats John's question verbatim when his disciples come to Jesus?

5. Why might John have had some doubts as to whether Jesus truly was the promised Messiah he had spoken about?  
*See Luke 3:1 - 20*

*Isaiah the prophet spoke God's Word to his people in the 8<sup>th</sup> Century BC. He spoke of the day when God would come to his people and lead them in a new Exodus.*

**Read Isaiah 29:18 - 19 & 35:5 - 8**

6. What is Jesus communicating to John's disciples by describing the effects of his ministry as he does?

7. What reasons might Jesus have for not answering John's question with a simple "yes" or "no"?

8. How do you know that Jesus really is who he claimed to be, the eternal Son of God and Messiah?

9. What aspects of Jesus' ministry most clearly speak to you of his identity?

10. What is so special about John that Jesus can say, "there is no one greater" (v 24 - 28)?

*The quotation describing John's ministry is from Malachi 3:1.*

11. Even having commented about John's high position, what does Jesus go on to say about membership of the Kingdom of God?

12. In verse 23 Jesus promises that whoever does not stumble because of their preconceived ideas of what the Messiah will be like will be blessed. What are the preconceived notions that people today have about God, and how we relate to him?

13. Why didn't God simply turn up in the person of Jesus, but chose to promise his arrival centuries beforehand, and then preface his coming with the ministry of John?

14. The Pharisees and other leaders "rejected God's purpose for themselves" (v 30). What gets in the way of people responding to God's purposes today?

15. How does Jesus' comment about the opposite reactions to John's ministry and his (v32 - 34) prepare us for Christian witness today?



## **Study 8**

### **Luke 7:36 - 50**

1. Describe a memorable gift that you either gave or received.  
What was it about the gift or the context that fixed it in your memory?

2. Do you tend to be overly demonstrative in your affection and love for others, or more reserved?

3. How do you react when someone else is at the opposite end of the demonstrative spectrum to you and you're on the receiving end?

### **Read Luke 7:36 - 50**

4. What do you imagine is the reaction in Simon's house when this woman enters and anoints Jesus?

*Even though some of the Pharisees were violently opposed to Jesus, he was still willing to be seen with them, and receive hospitality from them. Luke records similar instances in 11:37 & 14:1.*

5. What do you notice about what this woman's actions?

6. How is Jesus' response to this woman different to the attitude of all the others in the house?

*Usually perfume was applied to someone's head. Since touching another person's feet was the task of the lowest slaves, pouring the perfume on Jesus' feet is a sign of the woman's humble approach to Jesus. She is certainly not approaching him as an equal.*

7. What is the message of the mini parable Jesus tells Simon?

8. What does Jesus say is apparent from Simon's response to Jesus?

9. What, in contrast, does the woman's attitude towards Jesus demonstrate?

10. Does Jesus suggest that the woman's sins are forgiven because "she loved much" (v 47), ie that she has done some "work" that has earned her forgiveness?  
How ought we understand what Jesus is saying?

11. Where could we turn in the Bible to confirm our understanding of how someone can have their sins forgiven and enter into a right relationship with God?

12. What will the life of a person forgiven in Christ look like?

13. Think of some ways that you can demonstrate your love for Jesus.

14. What gets in the way of you showing your love for Christ in the ways you noted above?

15. What can we learn from this woman about a right way to approach and engage with Jesus?

16. What do you think makes this kind of approach to Jesus hard for us?

## **Study 9**

### **Luke 8:1 - 21**

1. Are you much of a gardener? What's the most successful plant or crop you've ever grown? What's the least successful?

2. What's the darkest placed you've ever been? How did you feel?

3. What kinds of experiences or events make it hard for someone to grow as a Christian?

### **Read Luke 8:1 - 21**

*Luke records some of the details of Jesus' preaching ministry. Notably, he includes the names of several women who supported Jesus and his disciples. Such an inclusion was unusual in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century AD.*

*It is sometimes suggested that Mary Magdalene is the sinful woman from the previous section, but that is entirely speculation!*

4. For what reasons might Luke have included the names of the women in verses 2 and 3?

*When we read a parable, we should be aiming to pick up one major theme. The point is not to draw allegorical parallels between every element in the parable and some corresponding point in reality. In*

*this case, we have the added benefit that Jesus explains exactly what the parable means!*

*This parable, although commonly referred to as the Parable of the Sower, is perhaps more accurately called the Parable of the Soils. The primary teaching point is about the differences between the four soils, and the end result of what happens in each type.*

5. What are the four types of soil in the parable of the soils, and what happens to the seed scattered on each type?

6. According to Jesus, what reality is conveyed by what happens in each type of soil?

7. Who is the audience when Jesus tells the parable of the soils?

Who is the audience when Jesus explains the parable?

8. What reason does Jesus give for teaching in parables?

*In his Tyndale NT Commentary, Leon Morris comments that Jesus' parables "yielded their meaning only to those prepared to search for it. The parables demand thought and spiritual earnestness. They separate the sincere seeker from the casual hearer."*

9. What is Jesus trying to teach his disciples through the parable of the soils?

10. How does the parable of the soils help us understand Jesus and his mission?

11. How is Jesus' reason for teaching in parables different to what we might expect?

12. If the point of lighting a lamp is for people to benefit from its light, what is the application of the parable for Christian people?

13. How is Jesus' response to the presence of his family members related to the teaching in the parables?

14. What warnings for Christians today can you find in the two parables?

15. How are the parables an encouragement for Christian people?

16. If you had to sum up the teaching of this section in a single sentence, what would you say?

## **Study 10**

### **Luke 8:22 - 56**

1. What's the worst weather you have ever been in?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. When you think of "power" what comes to mind? Nature? Personality? Mechanical? Something else?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. Think back to your earliest understanding of Jesus. What did you think of him?

### **Read Luke 8:22 - 56**

*Some people who want to deny Jesus' power of the created order, have suggested that in this episode Jesus "calmed the disciples, not the storm?"*

4. What does Luke include in this episode that makes the explanation above unsatisfactory?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. Why does Jesus say that the disciples behaviour is a lack of faith (v 25)?

*Verse 26 gives us the geography, placing the healing of the demon-possessed man in Gentile territory, rather than in the country of the Jews (a fact confirmed by the keeping of pigs).*



6. How is this healing's location among Gentiles reflected in what Jesus says to the man in verse 39, in comparison to his words to the girl's parents in verse 56?

*For some people, the destruction of the pigs is an event that they find hard to accept. However, we could hardly argue that the pigs should have been saved and the man not healed! The loss of the pigs is a small cost in comparison to the great benefit given to the man.*

7. What do you notice in the detail of what Jesus says to the man and what the man then does?

8. When raising the girl, why does Jesus say, "She is not dead but asleep" (v 52)?

9. What aspects of Jesus' character and mission does Luke bring to the fore in these three episodes?

10. Who demonstrates faith in Jesus in these episodes? How do they do it?

11. What do we learn about what faith is through Jesus' encounters with these people?

12. In what ways could your faith be strengthened to follow the example of those in Luke?

13. How would you explain to someone what these three episodes communicate about who Jesus is?

14. What different responses to Jesus are captured in this section?

15. What do you think motivates the different responses to Jesus we see here?

16. What aspects of your picture of Jesus might need modifying or updating in the light of these episodes?





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