

VISION DAY Slide
WEEKENDER Slide

Luke Series Slide

Have you ever wondered “Why doesn’t God make his existence more obvious? If he supposedly loves us as a Father loves his children- why not do we expect of a Good Father- and that is BE OBVIOUSLY present and over communicate his love for us.

Here’s the way American novelist and poet, John Updike put it.

“If God wanted His tracks discovered, wouldn’t He have made them plainer? Why tuck them into odd bits of astronomy and nuclear physics? Why be so coy, if You’re the Deity?”- John Updike¹

And why- if God is so real, and present, and loves us so much- why is it that sometimes in our darkest and most painful moments- he doesn’t answer us when we pray- or seems distant

“[G]o to Him when your need is desperate, when all other help is vain, and what do you find? A door slammed in your face, and a sound of bolting and double bolting on the inside. After that, silence. You may as well turn away. The longer you wait, the more emphatic the silence will become. There are no lights in the windows. It might be an empty house. Was it ever inhabited? It seemed so once... Why is God so present a commander in our time of prosperity and so very absent a help in a time of trouble?”- CS Lewis, A Grief Observed.

All through Luke’s gospel there are these moments where Jesus has a perfect opportunity to shut his critics up and prove to everyone that he is the Son of God- but he doesn’t.

On multiple occasions he tells people who receive a miraculous healing to NOT say anything to anyone. One time in particular demons are coming out of a man proclaiming that he’s the Son of God and he shuts them up. (Demons are more evangelistic than JESUS?
(Luke 4:40-41, 5:12-14)

Luke 8- raises a little girl from the dead- says “Don’t tell anyone about this”

¹ https://staibabussalamsula.ac.id/wp-content/uploads/2024/01/Divine-Hiddenness-staibabussalamsula.ac_.id_.pdf pg 164

Luke 23:8- King Herod is begging Jesus to do a miracle and asking him a bunch of questions- and Jesus does nothing- he doesn't even respond to the questions about his identity.

Luke 8- Jesus says he speaks in parables SO THAT some people won't understand. Deliberately confusing them.

Luke 13:18- Jesus compares his Kingdom to a small seed- that you can't see- that eventually will grow up to be something large- but right now- its hidden.

"Why Does God Hide?"- Luke 10:21-24

So- why does God hide? Why not write in the sky "I'm YHWH...I exist"...and then explain the Trinity. Why not have every cell that appears under a microscope have Designed by God in the corner? Or why not at least bring an audible comforting voice into every hospital room that reassures people of the afterlife and tells them that trusting Jesus is the only way to live eternally?

Jesus is going to bring up the hidden nature of God specifically in our text today- just 4 verses...and we're going to ask a few questions and hopefully find some understanding.

Luke 10:21-24

21 At that time he rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, "I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and intelligent and revealed them to infants."

Its not that wisdom and intelligence are bad...Bible is FULL of wisdom and Xianity is FULL of very intelligent people... He's not telling you here if you are wise and intelligent you'll miss God...he's telling you can't rely ONLY on wisdom and intelligence. REASON alone is not REASON Enough to follow Jesus.

Rather he says- there is something about being a kid...not just a kid.. a little baby- that God is revealing himself to them.

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Yes, Father, because this was your good pleasure. 22 All things have been entrusted to me by my Father. No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son desires to reveal him."

God is revealed to us in Jesus...and Jesus reveals God to anyone he wants to. And to some- he doesn't. (Now, this is where you can lean a bit too much on your theology...

and you cut off what Jesus is saying. So before you write me off...or more importantly- write Jesus off- let's listen to what he's saying.

23 Then turning to his disciples he said privately, "Blessed are the eyes that see the things you see! 24 For I tell you that many prophets and kings wanted to see the things you see but didn't see them; to hear the things you hear but didn't hear them."

2 questions come out of this text today-

1- Why? Why does God hide himself from the wise and intelligent?

2- How can we see like a child? How can we see what these disciples saw and heard? Will God reveal himself to me?

1) Why does God hide himself from the wise & intelligent?

Here's what the Scripture gives us to answer this question.

Our problem with God didn't start with bad reasoning skills, it started with prideful desire.

Before

Now the serpent was the most cunning of all the wild animals that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say, 'You can't eat from any tree in the garden'? "

2 The woman said to the serpent, "We may eat the fruit from the trees in the garden. 3 But about the fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden, God said, 'You must not eat it or touch it, or you will die.' "

4 "No! You will certainly not die," the serpent said to the woman. 5 "In fact, God knows that when you eat it your eyes will be opened and you will be like God, knowing good and evil." 6 The woman saw that the tree was good for food and delightful to look at, and that it was desirable for obtaining wisdom. So she took some of its fruit and ate it; she also gave some to her husband, who was with her, and he ate it. 7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves. -- Genesis 3:1-7

We worshipped our way into sin's curse...we can't reason ourself out of it.

This is what you see in the cities that Jesus pronounces curses over just before this

Luke 10:13 & 15

Bethsaida is near where the feeding of the 5k happened.
Capernaum was a Jewish city famous for its religious study and learning

See- its not that they didn't have enough evidence- ITs that their prideful hearts didn't want to see him. They wanted to do what pleased them —> what gave them a sense of comfort and safety and respect and honor.

The truth is... We worshipped our way into sin, so we have to worship our way out.

Worship is not mainly fueled by reason...but by desire. By a change of heart.

Romans 1:18-25

18 For God's wrath is revealed from heaven against all godlessness and unrighteousness of people who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth, 19 since what can be known about God is evident among them, because God has shown it to them. 20 For his invisible attributes, that is, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen since the creation of the world, being understood through what he has made. As a result, people are without excuse. 21 For though they knew God, they did not glorify him as God or show gratitude. Instead, their thinking became worthless, and their senseless hearts were darkened. 22 Claiming to be wise, they became fools 23 and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man, birds, four-footed animals, and reptiles.

24 Therefore God delivered them over in the desires of their hearts to sexual impurity, so that their bodies were degraded among themselves. 25 They exchanged the truth of God for a lie, and worshiped and served what has been created instead of the Creator, who is praised forever.

To glorify God is to give proper weight to him in your life-

Again- its not that the evidence is not there- its that we don't WANT there to be a God to give weight to

"I want atheism to be true and am made uneasy by the fact that some of the most intelligent and well-informed people I know are religious believers. It isn't just that I don't believe in God and, naturally, hope that I'm right in my belief. It's that I hope there is no God! I don't want there to be a God; I don't want the universe to be like that."- Thomas Nagel, *The Last Word*

We don't reason ourselves into our desires. We follow our desires and then justify them with reason.

God has to change your heart toward him...and remove you from your pride.

...you have to repent- turn from making yourself the center of your own universe- and worship him- as your Father- your comforter- your salvation- your hope- the one who makes you honorable and worthy of respect. That doesn't come from any other source for the long haul- except from God.

1 John 2:15-17

15 Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. 16 For everything in the world — the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride in one's possessions — is not from the Father, but is from the world. 17 And the world with its lust is passing away, but the one who does the will of God remains forever.

If we could find God through achievement or intelligence- it would only contribute to our pride problem.

Scientist- We found God because of our intellect and determination!

Religious- We found God because of our moral superiority!

Paul goes through lengths in his letters to make sure you understand that God keeps men from boasting. Being saved from your sin can only come in humility- not in proving yourself.

Ephesians 2:8-9

8 For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God's gift — 9 not from works, so that no one can boast.

The heart of sin is not miseducation or lack of information.

Sin is a desire to be your own god.

Pride and sin both have an "I" at the center.

Pride makes us feel independent. We say, "I don't need God. I'm better off on my own, calling my own shots."

Pride leads to a sense of superiority. Entitlement.

Acts 4- Peter and John- Set up- Healing- proclaiming Jesus as Lord- resurrected from the dead- arrested

“Look- he was dead- and then he resurrected. Your threats mean nothing to us...were gonna go with the guy that resurrected!”

Acts 4:13-18

13 When they observed the boldness of Peter and John and realized that they were uneducated and untrained men, they were amazed and recognized that they had been with Jesus. 14 And since they saw the man who had been healed standing with them, they had nothing to say in opposition. 15 After they ordered them to leave the Sanhedrin, they conferred among themselves, 16 saying, “What should we do with these men? For an obvious sign has been done through them, clear to everyone living in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it. 17 But so that this does not spread any further among the people, let’s threaten them against speaking to anyone in this name again.” 18 So they called for them and ordered them not to speak or teach at all in the name of Jesus.

They recognize that signs are happening....but because they don’t want to lose their power- they create a lie to preserve their power and position.

Because they want the life they have.

God reveals himself to those who are like a child, those who want to know him- not use Him.

Humble. Under authority. Trusting that what the Parent wants is a good thing.

Psalm 145:18

**The Lord is near all who call out to him,
all who call out to him with integrity.**

Humble submission to God precedes knowledge of God. Knowledge is intimacy.- not facts.

He’s not your vending machine- he’s here for a relationship. For connection. And that can only happen as a child to a Father.

God sometimes seems hidden in our suffering, because we’re his art, not his math.

I’m not going to tell you today that I have solved the Problem of Evil. If God is completely good...and completely powerful- why doesn’t he stop any evil from happening.

I can't answer that question fully. The truth is I can keep asking God why, why does he allow evil...why make a world where free will is necessary? At some point I have to ask- Why make this universe at all?

If I'm going to ask about the problem of evil- I need to also be honest enough to ask about the reality of Good?

This world is not the function of our Trinitarian God- Father Son Spirit- having each other in perfect love and saying "You know what would make this better? Earth. Humanity. We are really lacking something here."

The Truth is- our entire existence is extra. Its not necessary. God did not make the world because he was lonely or deficient or needed company.

He made us because the very nature of who he is LOVE. And love ALWAYS overflows. Love is uncontainable. LOVE always moves outward from its source. Thats why when people talking about "Loving yourself"- on one hand- i get what you're saying...on the other hand- you are asking people to do the impossible. Love- by its nature- is OUTWARD moving.

Once loves becomes only INWARD- its not love anymore. In fact- That's a part of what Pride is...the very thing that broke the world.

God himself- Father Son Holy Spirit- only loves in relationship. Father outward to son and spirit. Spirit to Son and Father. and Son to Spirit and Father. And that love is so strong- so deliberate- it overflows to create.

You are not some necessary variable in an equation God needed to NOT be lonely. You are a beloved work of art. Not practical or pragmatic.

You are not primarily a math problem...or a logic puzzle.

You're art.

Ephesians 2:10

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared ahead of time for us to do.

Luke 10:21

In this passage, look how Jesus moves the conversation from Math...the wise and intelligent...to Art...A father's good pleasure to reveal things to his children.

And listen- the nature of art is that its meaning doesn't present itself as obvious. Its hidden. It has to be gazed at. Pondered. You don't figure art out...like Matt Damon solving that proof in Good Will Hunting

Parents- Make an equation that somehow can contain the love you feel for your children.

Even if you tried to do that- you know it wouldn't come close to representing how you feel.

But if I said- paint a picture, write a poem, sing a song, that represents your love.

While it never fully captures the depth of your love- you know it does a lot more than an equation or a biological explanation about your love.

Guy named Joseph in Genesis- 1st book of the Bible.

Tell story...

All the family brokenness of Genesis, leads to this point in its conclusion.

Genesis 50:19-21

19 But Joseph said to them, "Don't be afraid. Am I in the place of God? 20 You planned evil against me; God planned it for good to bring about the present result — the survival of many people. 21 Therefore don't be afraid. I will take care of you and your children." And he comforted them and spoke kindly to them.

Somehow- what humanity intends for evil- God is working for Good.

And you know what the secret sauce was for Joseph- though all that suffering?

He was like a child with a Father to God.

Repeated phrase in his life "The Lord was WITH him."

It was never about him getting the information he needed...that would be revealed. It was about trusting in his weakness that his Father was with him.

Joseph himself was being turned into a savior for his brothers through weakness and suffering and rejection. He could only save his community by being rejected by his family. He was put last. Humbled, and rejected.

And through that- he became the forgiving, loving, and providing savior for all of Egypt.

Its not a good logic puzzle- but its an incredible painting.

"I can't find God in the world" is like saying "I can't find Da Vinci in the Mona Lisa" or "Shakespeare in Hamlet" in one sense- of course you can't. He's the artist- not the art. . IN one sense- the whole painting comes from him, every stroke. Like Romans 1 says- he is evident in what he created.

God's love was active in Josephs' life in his rejection, in the pit, in his false imprisonment, in the loss of his family...God was hidden- but he was WITH Joseph.

We have a God who doesn't create the pride and evil and cruelty in the world, but he does use it, arrange it, and overwhelm, and eventually overrules it so that evil eventually destroys itself.

A God that turns deaths into resurrections.

Romans 8:28

28 We know that all things work together for the good of those who love God, who are called according to his purpose.

Luke 10:22-23

All things have been entrusted to me by my Father. No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and anyone to whom the Son desires to reveal him."

23 Then turning to his disciples he said privately, "Blessed are the eyes that see the things you see!

2) How can we see what the disciples saw in Jesus?

Now, I want to finish today by reasoning with you.

Because the nature of the gospel. Jesus' life death and resurrection- is very reasonable and filled with evidence. Remember how Luke started his gospel account?

Luke 1:1-4

Many have undertaken to compile a narrative about the events that have been fulfilled among us,

2 just as the original eyewitnesses and servants of the word handed them down to us. 3 So it also seemed good to me, since I have carefully investigated everything from the very first, to write to you in an orderly sequence, most honorable Theophilus, 4 so that you may know the certainty of the things about which you have been instructed

Our passage today says that God reveals himself through His Son.

The Scriptures are the revelation of that Son. The whole Bible is about Jesus. The old testament points to him...and the latter half of the NT tells us how to live in light of this revelation of God in Jesus Christ.

But I want to focus on the gospel accounts today- Simply because that is the most direct revelation we have- in other words- its literally biography about JESUS' life, death and resurrection.

And I think the question that thinking people usually ask about the Gospels- if we are supposed to orient our life around this idea that Jesus died and resurrected to forgive us of our sins and bring us into his Kingdom of Goodness and Life and LIght- How can I even trust that this all isn't just made up. Some legend that someone created that's no different from any other fantasy story.

Tim Keller- couple of books- Reason for God and Making Sense of God..

summarizes the reasons we can read the gospels and be confident they aren't legend.

The timing of the writing is far too early for the gospels to be legend.

Gospels (and a lot of the NT, honestly) written between 20 and 30 years after Jesus death. A legend does not form that fast.

Paul- 1 Cor 15 talking about Jesus' resurrection- appeals to people still alive- GO ASK the people who were there- they will verify.

Mark's gospel- He writes about Simon who helped Jesus carry his cross- says that he is the father of Alexander and Rufus". No reason to put that detail there except Mark is giving you people who can say "Yep- our dad was there- he saw it"

"Well- don't we just have copies of copies. Like not the original. Isn't it like the telephone game?"

Differs from Telephone- It would be like the first person is allowed to listen and say "Uh uh- thats not right"

Tertullian in the 2nd century talk about going back to Galatia to check the writings.

More manuscripts than any other ancient text by far. 5k+ compared to like 90 for Homer's Odyssey

Also- we know that all the central claims of Jesus- were believed by the earliest Xians. Paul in 1 Cor (53-55 AD) and in Philipppians (57 AD) quotes a hymn that the early church had already been circulating about Jesus' resurrection. They celebrated the Lords supper and worshipped on Sunday- Resurrection day instead of Saturday Sabbath.

What about other gospels?

My point exactly. The reason spurious gospels weren't included is because we could still check the story with eye witnesses- those things got weeded out.

The gospels are too counterproductive to be legend.

The stuff about the heroes would never be included if someone was developing a legend at this time.

Apostles look like buffoons. Arguing about who is the greatest. Peter- the leader of the church is called Satan and denies Jesus.

Jesus' family struggles to believe he is the Messiah.

Women first to report Jesus' resurrection. Relies on their testimony. You wouldn't do that if you were making it up

The gospels are too detailed to be legend.

Eyewitness accounts...and that's how it reads

Mark 14- guy who fled naked. Nothing to do with the plot. Just what you write when you see something.

"Oh I know- historical fiction"... that Genre didn't even exist. Beowulf. Illiad.

"I have been reading poems, romances, vision literature, legends, and myths all of my life. I know what they are like. I know none of them are like this. Of the gospel texts there are only two possible views: either this is historical reportage or else some unknown ancient writer without known predecessors or successors suddenly anticipated the whole technique of modern novelistic realistic narrative. The reader who doesn't see this has simply not learned how to read." C. S. Lewis

The gospel message is too costly to be a legend

The apostles did not gain power or money from this. It cost them their lives.

The church for its first 300 years of existence experienced terrible persecution.

People don't die for something they know to be untrue- because the whole point of the lie is to benefit them.

To say that they just "made up" the stories about Jesus means that they were sitting around one day after Jesus had died fishing and Peter jumps up and says, "I know! Let's tell everyone that He resurrected! And we'll get to be the leaders of this new religion. Except, let's teach everyone that Jesus' Kingdom is not one that gives you power and riches on this earth, and so when other people try to kill us we won't fight back. And we'll give away most of our money to the poor. And, then, maybe, if we're

lucky, we can all get martyred through painful, humiliating deaths.” And all the disciples are like, “That’s a GREAT idea. ME FIRST!”

Why not clearer. WHY DO I HAVE TO READ.

Because God is inviting you into the art. Into the mystery. Into a relationship. He’s not giving you the answers to a math test.

Luke 10:23-24

Here’s my question.

Are you seeking GOD as a child seeks a Father...or are you seeking God to get something from him...like ANSWERS.

Heard the phrase- Seeing is believing?

Well- faith means Believing is seeing.

Trusting Jesus brings sight.

You will never get enough information to follow Jesus? But you do have enough of his love given toward you.

Story of Joseph points to Jesus. Rejected, forsaken, but all the time. Forgiving and saving.

Do you have the childlike heart to see his love and respond to it. You won’t figure out the Problem of Evil through reason- but in Jesus- you have the artist that stepped into his painting- and took his own medicine. Experienced the pain and suffering- so he could lift you from it and use you not just as the paint, but also as brush to paint his strokes of love for others.

You are a work of art...and you are the tools for God to keep painting his picture, writing his story, and singing his song of Love.