

# Love Letters

Reading Through the Gospels



Reading Guide  
Week #9

Luke 5-10



NEW HORIZON  
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

## Love Letters Reading Guide for Week #9 Luke 5-10

**A Week in Review.** The Gospel of Luke is well-suited for 21<sup>st</sup> century, Western minds. First of all, Luke is writing to non-Jews, like most of us. In addition, in writing his "orderly account" (1:3), Luke groups his material in a logical, analytical progression: First, Jesus prepares for ministry (ch.1-4); second, Luke groups all of Jesus' ministry in Galilee (ch.4-9); third, Jesus moves toward Jerusalem and the cross (ch.9-19); and finally, Luke describes the week of Jesus' Passion (ch.20-24). Consider God's wisdom in providing material that suits various cultures so well.

**This Week's Reading.** Some investigation leads to interesting speculation. First, we find Luke underscoring Jesus' ministry to the "fringe" people: shepherds, tax collectors, women, Gentiles, Samaritans, the Thief on the Cross, etc. Second, Luke demonstrates an educated and masterful grasp of Greek language. These characteristics lead some scholars to conclude that Luke was writing to the Christian hierarchy to convince them to aid the poor. In what ways might this plea speak to today's church?

### ○ MONDAY—LUKE 5

**Consider.** An "epiphany" is an "ah-ha" moment when God reveals Himself to us with greater clarity. In vv.1-11, notice the "epiphanies" as Jesus calls His first disciples. What epiphanies have you experienced, and how have they shaped your walk with Jesus?

#### **Read.**

- Fred Craddock (*Interpretation—Luke*, p.71) gives insight as Jesus heals the leper (vv.12-16.) Leprosy in Jesus' day was a *social* disease, because those with this skin condition became outcasts. Instead of drawing sympathy as did the blind and lame, they *repelled* people. But not Jesus. When are you repelled by some who struggle with "social diseases" in our day?
- Most scholars feel Luke's material is probably not in chronological order. Instead, he introduces stories as he describes Jesus. For instance, so far Jesus has been growing in

popularity. Now Luke begins to reveal the conflict behind the scenes. In what ways does Jesus both comfort and "provoke" you?

**Reflect.** The Parable of *The Garment and the Wine Skins* (vv.36-39) challenges believers in every generation. Expressions of Christian faith are ever changing, and we all struggle when new methods crowd the familiar. Are you able to experience God in both old and new ways?

### ○ TUESDAY—LUKE 6

**Consider.** In Luke, we often find Jesus in synagogues. But not because Jesus only taught in synagogues, but because Jesus was challenging the religious thinking of the day. Many were justifying themselves because they observed the Sabbath and other religious customs. But Jesus calls for hearts turned towards God. Are there rituals you follow with your head but not your heart?

#### **Read.**

- Jesus' teachings in vv.17-49 are very similar to the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5-7. In Matthew, Jesus "*went up on a mountainside*" to speak (5:1). In Luke, Jesus "*went down with them and stood on a level place*" (v.17). Speculate: Why might these messages be similar in content, but different in geography?
- Scholars suggest the phrase "Jesus is Lord" was a confession of faith in the early church (c.f. Romans 10:9, etc.) In v.46, Jesus makes it clear that a confession of faith must be accompanied by obedience. What are examples of your confession of faith and demonstration of life being consistent? When do they differ?

**Reflect.** Although the Christian life is full of blessings, living for Jesus also presents its challenges. Perhaps one of the greatest is listed in today's reading: "*Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you*" (v.27). Yet Jesus is only calling us to do what He does. What are examples in your life of loving difficult people?

### ○ WEDNESDAY—LUKE 7

**Consider.** Jesus began His teaching ministry in the synagogue in His hometown of Nazareth (ch.4:16). Compare vv.22-23 in today's reading with Jesus' announcement in His first sermon, 4:18-19. Indeed, Jesus has been faithful to His promises. What are examples of His promises fulfilled in your life?

**Read.**

- In the story of the Centurion (vv.1-10), the man has never seen Jesus, but believes because of the testimony of others (v.3). Believing, therefore, does not require seeing. In what ways are you having to believe without seeing?
- When Jesus raises the widow's son from the dead, the crowd responds, "*God has visited His people*" (v.16). Luke also speaks of God visiting His people in 1:68 and 19:44. Luke is emphasizing the grace of a God Who comes for His people. At what times has God lovingly and graciously visited you?

**Reflect.** In vv.36-50, Jesus is anointed with oil by a "sinful woman." When Simon the Pharisee objects, Jesus responds, "*Her many sins have been forgiven—for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little*" (v.47). Jesus suggests there is a correlation between love and forgiveness. What is an example of your love for God prompted by His forgiveness?

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○ **THURSDAY—LUKE 8**

**Consider.** Jesus came to seek, serve, and save. Yet today's reading begins with a list of women who tended to Jesus' needs: Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Susanna (vv.2,3). In what ways do you feel you have served Jesus' needs as opposed to having your own needs met?

**Read.**

- Luke emphasizes the "power" that flows from Jesus (4:36, 5:17, etc.). In today's reading we read of power flowing from Jesus: "*I know that power has gone out from Me*" (v.46). At what times in your walk with Jesus have you experienced His "power"?
- Luke offers a series of miracles that demonstrate Jesus' outstanding abilities. First, He calms the sea, showing His power over nature (vv.22-25). Second, He drives

out a "legion" of many demons, showing His power over evil spirits (vv.26-39). Finally, He heals a woman from bleeding after doctors were unable to do so (vv.42-48). When has Jesus done for you that which was impossible for others?

**Reflect.** This chapter contains foundational stories and teachings also found in Matthew and Mark. The nearly word-for-word similarity suggests they were well known to the early church. What "foundational" lessons do these stories provide?

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○ **FRIDAY—LUKE 9**

**Consider.** Walking with Jesus is a lifetime of learning. Today Jesus sends out the Twelve to preach, heal, and announce His coming (vv.1-2). Next, Jesus uses the Twelve to feed the multitudes (v.17). Then the disciples falter. They are unable to cast out a demon and are chastised by Jesus (v.40-41). But they will learn and go on to do greater things (see 10:17). Name some of the things you've learned in your walk with Christ.

**Read.**

- O.C. Edwards (Luke's Story of Jesus, p.53) offers a powerful insight into chapter 9. Who is Jesus? Is He Elijah, or John the Baptist, or one of the prophets? (v.19). On the Mount, in the presence of Jesus, Moses, and Elijah, Peter offers to build "*three shelters,*" one for each of them (v.33). But a Voice from the cloud responds: "*This is My Son, Whom I have chosen; listen to Him*" (v.35). Jesus is not simply another prophet or leader. He is superior to all. The events of this chapter affirm and reinforce Peter's statement: Jesus is "*the Christ of God!*" (v.20). Is Jesus more than just a notable historical figure for you? If so, how do you live out this belief?
- In v.51, Luke interprets his story for us: "*As the time approached for Him to be taken to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem*" (v.51). Jesus' followers don't see the cross coming, but Luke does. What emotion do you experience knowing where Jesus is heading?

**Reflect.** v.23 is one of the strongest statements in all of Scripture describing what it means to be

a follower of Jesus: "*If anyone would come after Me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me.*" As believers, this verse can inspire a powerful daily prayer for us: "Jesus, I will deny myself and follow You today." How might this prayer challenge your life?

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○ **SATURDAY—LUKE 10**

**Consider.** Obeying Jesus is risky business. Today, Jesus sends out seventy-two more disciples to preach and heal. Yet He warns them: "*Go! I am sending you out like lambs among wolves!*" (v.3). But thankfully, Jesus also says, "*I have given you authority...to overcome all the power of the enemy*" (v.19). Do you sense faith and adventure as Jesus calls? Are you willing to respond as He calls you?

**Read.**

- Some scholars suggest that Jesus sends out the Twelve (ch.9) and the Seventy-Two (ch.10) to demonstrate inclusion of Jews and non-Jews: the number *twelve* represents the Twelve Tribes of Israel (Jews), while the number *seventy-two* is the number of Gentile nations that existed in that day. How does this message challenge your thinking?
- v.22 tells us how we come to know the Father: "*No one knows Who the Father is except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal Him.*" This is a uniquely Christian doctrine—we can only know God through Jesus. How does this challenge your thinking about other, non-Christian religions?

**Reflect.** In both Matthew and Mark we read the "Greatest Commandments"—*Love God and love neighbor* (Mt. 22:37, Mk. 12:30-31). Luke offers the same (v.27), but illustrates each. The Good Samaritan demonstrates loving our neighbor. Mary and Martha (vv.38-42) demonstrate loving God. Which is easiest for you? How might you increase your love for each?

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*Reading Through the Gospels*

Spring, 2011



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March 28-April 2  
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