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**Adult
Bible Study
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Simplified
English**

**Study
Guide**

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The Gospel of Luke:

Good News of Great Joy

AN 18-LESSON STUDY FOR CHRISTMAS THROUGH EASTER

Adult Bible Study in Simplified English Teaching Guide

The Gospel of Luke

Good News of Great Joy

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Introduction

The Gospel of Luke: Good News of Great Joy

From beginning to end, joy is an important message in the Gospel of Luke. The angel said to Zechariah concerning Zechariah's promised son, "You will be glad and have much joy. Many people will be happy because he is born" (Luke 1:14). Elizabeth said to Mary, "As soon as I heard your voice, the baby in my body moved for joy" (1:44). Mary sang, "...And my spirit is happy in God" (1:47). The angel told the shepherds, "Do not be afraid. See! I bring you good news of great joy which is for all people" (2:10).

Jesus told His disciples when they were facing persecution to "be glad in that day. Be full of joy for your reward is much in heaven" (6:23). Later, "the seventy returned with joy" after their successful mission (10:17). Jesus told of the joy among the angels of God. "If one sinner is sorry for his sins and turns from them, the angels are very happy" (15:10). He told of the joyous celebration led by a father whose long-lost son returned (15:24).

The Gospel of Luke further tells of the joy when the disciples realized Jesus had been resurrected (24:41). Indeed, in the final scene of Luke's Gospel, the disciples "worshiped him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy" (24:52).

Luke's Gospel shows Jesus reaching out to all kinds of people. In Luke, Jesus shows special concern for people who were considered unimportant, the poor, women, and people who were treated badly. Jesus included people who were sinners. Some religious leaders were not joyful about this, but Jesus shows us that God was—and is.

This unit of study is different from any unit we have written before. First, there are 18 lessons, where the usual number is about 13. Second, these 18 lessons are planned so you may start this study in December in Luke 1 with the birth of Christ and continue learning about Christ's life, ministry, death, and resurrection through Easter Sunday, finishing in Luke 24.

Our prayer is that it will bless you and your study group in a new way as you learn about Jesus' life from beginning to end—and to resurrection!

Overview

The Gospel of Luke: Good News of Great Joy

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Word List

Unit 1

Lesson 1

disgrace: to lose honor and experience shame

gospel: the good news from God about His Son, Jesus Christ

Messiah: the One sent by God to be the Savior of all people

research: to study something carefully to know the facts

Lesson 2

confirm: to strongly agree with something true

edicts: an order or decision given by someone who has power

everlasting: without ending

immediately: without delay or waiting

Lesson 3

conquer: to take control of by power or force

implies: to suggest something

ponder: to think about something for a long time

proclamation: an official announcement

Lesson 4

ancestors: forefathers or early family members

committed: doing something with great effort, with all your heart

submit: to follow without question

temple: a house which was the center of all Jewish religious activity in a town

Unit 2

Lesson 5

baptize: to immerse or dip in water

convict: to prove or find guilty

excuses: something offered as a reason for being forgiven

generous: unselfish, ready to give money, help, and kindness

reject: to refuse something

repent: (verb) to be sorry for your sins and to make up your mind not to sin again

repentance: (noun) wanting to obey God and lead a better life after telling God you are sorry for your sins

Lesson 6

anointed: to set apart

commitment: a promise

ministry: service to God

symbol: something that stands for an idea

worthy: deserving

Lesson 7

circumstance: condition or event

provide: to supply what is needed or useful

take matters into his own hands: an idiom meaning to do it yourself

tempt: to try to persuade someone to do something sinful

temptation: the act of being tempted

twist: to distort the meaning of

Word List

Unit 3

Lesson 8

deliver: to set someone free from difficulty

favor: goodwill or kindness

synagogue: a Jewish place of worship and teaching God's laws

Lesson 9

prejudice: not liking others before you know them; thinking you are better than others

prophet: someone who speaks to people for God and who delivers messages from God

proverb: a saying that expresses a truth not spoken clearly

widow: a woman whose husband has died

Lesson 10

ashamed: a feeling that you are bad and have done wrong

demanding: a job or task that is hard to do and takes much time

Kingdom of God: the place where God rules in the hearts and lives of people

risk: the possibility of loss or harm

Lesson 11

disciples: people who do what their teacher does and follow the teachings carefully

maneuvers: movements that follow a plan or pattern

motivate: to cause a person to want to act

reward: something given for living right

Lesson 12

acknowledge: to say something is true

custom: a practice followed by people in a particular area

grumbled: to complain in a low voice

Pharisee: a Jewish religious leader of Jesus' time

Unit 4

Lesson 13

automatic: sure to happen

claim: to declare to be true

requirement: something demanded

responsibility: things which someone is called to account for

resurrection: Christ's rising from the grave

Lesson 14

blind: unable to see

distract: to take a person's mind off what he or she should be doing

mislead: to lead into error

priority: something that is more important than other things

ritual: a set pattern of behavior; ceremonies used in worship

unreachable: beyond reach; specifically in this lesson, beyond the reach of Christianity

Lesson 15

celebrate: to observe an occasion with joy

immoral: having bad behavior or character

interrupted: to break the flow of speech

righteous: morally good, just

unacceptable: not good enough

Word List

Lesson 16

evidence: information that proves or makes clear

impress: to cause someone to feel admiration or respect

indulged: allowed to do or have what is wanted

neglect: to fail to give proper attention

Unit 5

Lesson 17

charges: blame, accusation

crucify: to kill someone by nailing or binding to a cross and leaving him to die

guilty: having broken the Law of God, the laws of a state, or a moral or social rule

Lesson 18

accused: to charge someone with doing wrong, to blame

burial: putting a dead body into a grave

prophecy: a statement telling something that is to happen in the future

resurrection: the rising of Christ from the grave

witness: to be present at the time of an event and see it



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

UNIT 1

Jesus' Birth
and Childhood

Lesson 1

Ending the Long Wait
Luke 1:1-25

Lesson 2

Bringing Fullness
of Hope
Luke 1:26-56

Lesson 3

Proclaiming the
Savior's Birth
Luke 2:1-20

Lesson 4

Committed to
God's Purpose
Luke 2:39-52

UNIT 1 INTRODUCTION

Jesus' Birth and Childhood

This study begins with events we usually think of at Christmas. However, that shouldn't keep us from discovering new truths about Jesus' early years. Unit 1 has four lessons dealing with Jesus' birth and childhood (Luke 1:1 to 2:52).

Luke began by telling of his careful study of the things which happened in Jesus' life. Luke was a historian who presented the facts as they happened. He wanted to discover the truths of Jesus' life and pass them on.

Luke described two visits the angel Gabriel made—appearances to the father of John the Baptist and to Mary the mother of Jesus. Then Luke told the familiar story of Jesus' birth. He told how the angel appeared to the shepherds. He wrote of the shepherds' visit to see baby Jesus. Next, Luke told an important story from Jesus' childhood.

In this unit, the Gospel of Luke shows us how God came into the everyday activities of Jewish people. We will understand that God still wants to speak and act in us today.

The writer for Units 1 and 3 is Jim Gayle. A native Texan, Jim and his wife, Margaret, served as missionaries in Vietnam and Indonesia for more than 24 years. He retired after serving with the Baptist General Convention of Texas as Coordinator of the International Friendship Corps for five years. He pastored several churches and worked as minister of missions. Jim and Margaret live in Plano and are members of First Chinese Baptist Church of Dallas. They work through the church with international students at University of Texas at Dallas and Southern Methodist University. They have three adult sons and 10 grandchildren.



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

Bible Text

Luke 1:1-25

Memory Verse

“This is what the Lord has done for me. He has looked on me and has taken away my shame from among men.” (Luke 1:25)

Word List

disgrace: to lose honor and experience shame

gospel: the good news from God about His Son, Jesus Christ

Messiah: the One sent by God to be the Savior of all people

research: to study something carefully to know the facts

Ending the Long Wait

Have you ever waited a long time for something you really wanted to happen? When I was 15 years old, I waited for a place to call home. I was an orphan and lived with relatives but I felt uncomfortable in their home. I wanted a different place to live. My younger brother and sister were accepted in a Christian orphanage but I was too old to live there.

I visited a ranch for boys. They said they would call when there was a place for me. I waited for weeks and then months. I became very unhappy and decided I would go out on my own. I would become a homeless teenager. The very day I decided to leave my relatives' home, a call came inviting me to live at the boys' ranch. As I look back on the experience I know God opened that door. God gives us what we need in His own time. But often we must wait for God to act.

In this lesson we will see how God entered the everyday activities of Zachariah to fulfill his desires when he thought they would not be fulfilled. God would act in His own time.

Luke Introduces the Story (Luke 1:1-4)

Luke was the writer of the Bible passages in all these lessons about the life of Jesus. Luke was careful to **research** all that happened from the time Jesus was born until He went back to heaven. He wrote so his friend, Theophilus, and others could know about Jesus. He knew people would need to know the true facts about Jesus' life just as they happened. The Gospel of Luke has been passed down for almost 2,000 years as part of the Bible. It tells the good news of great joy for all people.

Things to Think About

1. Why do people think God doesn't hear if their prayers are not answered quickly?
2. Is God working in the world today? What do you see Him doing?
3. What unfulfilled desires are you waiting for God to fulfill?
4. List some ways we can benefit when we must wait on God.

The story begins in the daily activities of the real world. A man named Herod the Great was king in Israel. This is the world into which Jesus was born. Many religions tell stories about their gods that are not part of the real world. Luke's writing is a **gospel**, the good news of what God has done through Jesus Christ in our world.

Unfulfilled Desires (Luke 1:5-7)

For 400 years God's people, the Jews, had no prophet from God to speak to them. These are called the silent years in Jewish history. The people were waiting for God to fulfill His promise and send the **Messiah**. The Jewish people had unfulfilled desires about His coming.

Zachariah was an elderly priest. He and his wife Elizabeth had prayed for many years asking God to give them a child. They believed God and followed Him, doing what was right. But now they were both past the age and time to have children. In their time, people believed a woman who didn't have children was being punished by God. Elizabeth probably felt ashamed. Like the Jews, Zachariah and Elizabeth had unfulfilled desires too.

Zachariah Meets an Angel (Luke 1:8-25)

One day Zachariah was serving as a priest in the place of worship. He was chosen to enter a special room where only priests could make an offering to the Lord. Many people stood outside praying while he presented the offering.

But when Zachariah went in, an angel from God stood beside the offering table. Zachariah was surprised and fearful but the angel said, "Do not be afraid, Zachariah." The angel was a

messenger from God. He had not come to frighten Zachariah but to bring good news.

God often has entered the history of the world when people have given up hope of having their desires fulfilled. God works in everyday activities to do on earth what He has promised to do. We must not be frightened when God begins to work.

The angel told the old priest that his prayers had been heard and would be answered. Perhaps Zachariah felt God had not heard his and Elizabeth's requests for a child. Sometimes we may think if God doesn't answer quickly He doesn't hear us.

The angel said Elizabeth would soon give birth to a son. He was to be named John. He would be a special boy and become a great servant of God. John's words would turn many people to God and prepare them to receive God's promise. He would prepare the way for the promised Messiah. In this one act in history, God began to fulfill the unfulfilled desires of an old couple and the Jewish people.

Zachariah had trouble believing the angel. He thought it was too late for God to do what he had so often prayed for. Wasn't his wife too old to have children? How

often does doubt fill our hearts when things seem impossible?

The angel replied, "My name is Gabriel. I stand in the presence of God." Gabriel said as a sign his message was true, Zachariah would not be able to speak until the child was born.

After Zachariah finished his work in the special room, he went out to the people. When he came out, he couldn't speak to them but made signs with his hands. They knew something special had happened.

Zachariah went home to be with his wife. In time, Elizabeth had a son. She praised God for what He had done. The **disgrace** of being childless was gone. God fulfilled their unfulfilled desires.

Through the birth of John, God acted in the everyday events and activities of Zachariah to begin to fulfill His promise to the Jewish people.

Luke 1:1-25

1 Many people have written about the things that have happened among us.

2 Those who saw everything from the first and helped teach the Good News have passed these things on to us.

3 Dear Theophilus, I have looked with care into these things from the beginning. I have decided it would be good to write them to you one after the other the way they happened.

4 Then you can be sure you know the truth about the things you have been taught.

5 When Herod was king of the country of Judea, there was a Jewish religious leader named Zacharias. He worked for Abijah. His wife was of the family group of Aaron. Her name was Elizabeth.

6 They were right with God and obeyed the Jewish Law and did what the Lord said to do.

7 They had no children because Elizabeth was not able to have a child. Both of them were older people.

8 Zacharias was doing his work as a religious leader for God.

9 The religious leaders were given certain kinds of work to do. Zacharias was chosen to go to the house of God to burn special perfume.

10 Many people stood outside praying during the time the special perfume was burning.

11 Zacharias saw an angel of the Lord standing on the right side of the altar where the special perfume was burning.

12 When he saw the angel, Zacharias was troubled and afraid.

13 The angel said to him, "Zacharias, do not be afraid. Your prayer has been heard. Your wife Elizabeth will give birth to a son. You are to name him John.

14 You will be glad and have much joy. Many people will be happy because he is born.

15 He will be great in the sight of the Lord and will never drink wine or any strong drink. Even

from his birth, he will be filled with the Holy Spirit.

16 Many of the Jews will be turned to the Lord their God by him.

17 He will be the one to go in the spirit and power of Elijah before Christ comes. He will turn the hearts of the fathers back to their children. He will teach those who do not obey to be right with God. He will get people ready for the Lord."

18 Zacharias said to the angel, "How can I know this for sure? I am old and my wife is old also."

19 The angel said to him, "My name is Gabriel. I stand near God. He sent me to talk to you and bring to you this good news.

20 See! You will not be able to talk until the day this happens. It is because you did not believe my words. What I said will happen at the right time."

21 The people outside were waiting. They were surprised and wondered why Zacharias stayed so long in the house of God.

22 When he came out, he could not talk to them. They knew he had seen something special from God while he was in the house of God. He tried to talk to them with his hands but could say nothing.

23 When his days of working in the house of God were over, he went to his home.

24 Some time later Elizabeth knew she was to become a mother. She kept herself hidden for five months. She said,

25 "This is what the Lord has done for me. He has looked on me and has taken away my shame from among men."



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

Bible Text

Luke 1:26-56

Memory Verse

“...God can do all things.” (Luke 1:37)

Word List

confirm: to strongly agree with something true

edicts: an order or decision given by someone who has power

everlasting: without ending

immediately: without delay or waiting

Bringing Fullness of Hope

In 1976 we were told our request to work as missionaries in the nation of Indonesia had been approved. We were very happy. But then we were told the Indonesian government decided no new visas would be issued for religious workers.

This was very disappointing news especially since we were not permitted to return to Vietnam where we had worked for 10 years. I felt there was no hope for continuing our missionary work. A few days after we received the discouraging news I was reading the Bible in the early morning. I read Proverbs 21:1 which says, “The heart of the king is like rivers of water in the hand of the Lord. He turns it where He wishes.”

God spoke to me to assure me that He was stronger than **edicts** made by governments. Peace came into my heart and mind. I knew God could do all things. A few months later we were in Indonesia beginning our new work.

God brings hope in hopeless situations. In this lesson we will study how God brought hope to the hopeless Jewish nation and the world when Jesus was born.

Gabriel's Announcement to Mary (Luke 1:26-38)

Mary was surely a very happy young woman. She was to marry Joseph. Her family had promised her to Joseph's family and made plans for her marriage. Can you imagine the happiness everyone felt? Soon she would become Joseph's wife.

As Mary waited for her wedding day, Gabriel, the angel who had come to Zachariah, met and greeted her. The angel said Mary was an honored woman chosen from among many women.

Things to Think About

1. What are you expecting God to do in your life? Are you willing for Him to work in you?
2. Mary was young; Elizabeth was old. How did Mary's visit to Elizabeth affect Mary?
3. How do you express joy and thankfulness to God when you experience His goodness?
4. In what ways do you see God working in your daily activities or job? How does this give you hope?

Gabriel's greeting troubled Mary. Then he said, "Mary, do not be afraid." Gabriel had said the same words to Zachariah. Gabriel explained that Mary was going to have a baby. The baby would be named Jesus, meaning *the Lord saves*.

When God enters our lives, He doesn't want us to fear. God wants to do something special to bless and help others.

Jesus would be a very special person. His work or mission would be important to God and all people. God had planned for Jesus' work long before Gabriel told Mary about it. The results of Jesus' work would be **everlasting**.

The announcement changed many things for Mary. She wondered how she could have a baby. She had never been with a man. Gabriel told her that God would do a miracle in her body. She would have a child without an earthly father. Jesus would be called the Son of God.

Then Gabriel said that Elizabeth, even though she was old, was miraculously going to have a baby too. God had planned this for Elizabeth, and she was already in her sixth month of pregnancy. The angel said, "For God can do all things."

Mary was willing for God to work in her life even though many things would change. Mary trusted God as a willing servant. A servant does not tell the master what to do. Rather the servant simply obeys what the master wants. This is why God chose Mary. She had a servant's heart.

Mary's Visit to Elizabeth (Luke 1:39-45)

When Gabriel left Mary, she made plans to visit Elizabeth **immediately**. Mary probably wanted to talk to Elizabeth because

she too was experiencing a miracle from God. The visit greatly affected both Mary and Elizabeth.

When Mary arrived at Elizabeth's home, she greeted Elizabeth. When Mary spoke, God's Spirit gave Elizabeth great joy, and the baby in her jumped with joy. Elizabeth understood God was working in both her and Mary in a special way.

Elizabeth said Mary was honored among all women. God was fulfilling His promise and bringing hope to a nation. The people had lost hope that God cared for them. Now she and Mary were filled with joy because of what God was doing.

Mary's Song (Luke 1:46-56)

Mary was very happy because Elizabeth **confirmed** the message Gabriel had given her from God. She sang a song of praise to the Lord. Mary sang about God's greatness, His goodness, His holiness, and His love for servants who are unimportant in the world. She sang because she was filled with joy. She was filled with joy because of God's work in her.

Mary understood that God had chosen her to give birth to the Savior of mankind. God had greatly honored her, a

poor and unimportant person. She knew that because of what God had done for her, other people would have hope that God could do great things for them too.

She also knew God was fulfilling His promise to His people, the nation of Israel. This was a promise God gave to Abraham many years earlier. Even though God had waited for hundreds of years to fulfill His promise, He was now acting in the everyday events of the world.

Let us praise God as Mary did for He is still acting in history to fulfill His promises. God will work in any person who has a servant's heart like Mary. He works in the poor and helpless as well as in the rich and important when they say yes to God's plan for them.

Luke 1:26-56

26 Six months after Elizabeth knew she was to become a mother, Gabriel was sent from God to Nazareth. Nazareth was a town in the country of Galilee.

27 He went to a woman who had never had a man. Her name was Mary. She was promised in marriage to a man named Joseph. Joseph was of the family of David.

28 The angel came to her and said, "You are honored very much. You are a favored woman. The Lord is with you. You are chosen from

among many women.”

29 When she saw the angel, she was troubled at his words. She thought about what had been said.

30 The angel said to her, “Mary, do not be afraid. You have found favor with God.

31 See! You are to become a mother and have a Son. You are to give Him the name Jesus.

32 He will be great. He will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give Him the place where His early father David sat.

33 He will be King over the family of Jacob forever and His nation will have no end.”

34 Mary said to the angel, “How will this happen? I have never had a man.”

35 The angel said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come on you. The power of the Most High will cover you. The holy Child you give birth to will be called the Son of God.

36 “See, your cousin Elizabeth, as old as she is, is going to give birth to a child. She was not able to have children before, but now she is in her sixth month.

37 For God can do all things.”

38 Then Mary said, “I am willing to be used of the Lord. Let it happen to me as you have said.” Then the angel went away from her.

39 At once Mary went from there to a town in the hill country of Judea.

40 She went to the house of Zacharias to see Elizabeth.

41 When Elizabeth heard Mary speak, the baby moved in her body. At the same time Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit.

42 Elizabeth spoke in a loud voice, “You are honored among women! Your Child is

honored!

43 Why has this happened to me? Why has the mother of my Lord come to me?

44 As soon as I heard your voice, the baby in my body moved for joy.

45 You are happy because you believed.

Everything will happen as the Lord told you it would happen.”

46 Then Mary said, “My heart sings with thanks for my Lord.

47 And my spirit is happy in God, the One Who saves from the punishment of sin.

48 The Lord has looked on me, His servant-girl and one who is not important. But from now on all people will honor me.

49 He Who is powerful has done great things for me. His name is holy.

50 The loving-kindness of the Lord is given to the people of all times who honor Him.

51 He has done powerful works with His arm. He has divided from each other those who have pride in their hearts.

52 He has taken rulers down from their thrones. He has put those who are in a place that is not important to a place that is important.

53 He has filled those who are hungry with good things. He has sent the rich people away with nothing.

54 He has helped Israel His servant. This was done to remember His loving-kindness.

55 He promised He would do this to our early fathers and to Abraham and to his family forever.”

56 Mary stayed with Elizabeth about three months. Then she went to her own home.



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

Bible Text

Luke 2:1-20

Memory Verse

“The angel said to them, ‘Do not be afraid. See! I bring you good news of great joy which is for all people.’”

(Luke 2:10)

Word List

conquer: to take control of by power or force

implies: to suggest something

ponder: to think about something for a long time

proclamation: an official announcement

Proclaiming the Savior's Birth

The doctor came into the room and said, “The tests show there is no more cancer.” That was a very good **proclamation**. Our three-year-old granddaughter, Hallie, had been treated for liver cancer for over a year. She had two-thirds of her liver cut out. Then she was given chemo treatments for several months. The day the doctor told us the cancer was gone, we were filled with great joy. This was great news for our family.

Long ago an angel from God made a proclamation that was much greater. It was for all people. In this lesson we will study the good news proclaimed by the angel. This news brings great joy to all who believe. It changes lives forever. It is the news of the Savior's birth.

Names Written in the Books of the Nation (Luke 2:1-5)

Caesar Augustus was the ruler of Rome. He not only ruled over that nation but also over many other nations **conquered** by Rome. Israel, the country where Joseph and Mary lived, was under the control of Caesar Augustus.

A man named Quirinius served as governor of Syria for Caesar Augustus. Caesar sent word that everyone living in countries ruled by Rome must have their names written in the books of the nation. This was to make sure everyone paid taxes.

Joseph and Mary left their home in Nazareth and traveled about 85 miles to the small town of Bethlehem. Joseph's family was from Bethlehem. He had to return there to have his name written in the books of the nation. Mary was ready to give birth to her first child, Jesus, the Son of God. Only a few people knew

**Things to
Think About**

1. What does the “Good News” mean to you?
2. In what way is Jesus the Savior of all people? (See v.11)
3. How would you explain to someone why Jesus was born in humble circumstances?
4. Why were the shepherds so frightened and then so joyful? Have you ever had such an experience?

the Messiah was about to be born.

The Jewish people were waiting for God to send the promised Messiah. Long before Caesar Augustus lived, God’s preachers had said the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem. Now, in a very unusual way, God was using the command of Caesar Augustus to cause Joseph to go to Bethlehem. Mary would give birth to Jesus there. The promise would be fulfilled just as it was told by God’s preachers long ago.

God used the everyday events in history to fulfill His promises. He works in the same way today. We can look for God to work in everyday events even now. His work on earth is not finished. He wants to work in and through you and me.

The Birth of Jesus (Luke 2:6-7)

Luke tells about Jesus’ birth in very simple words. Even though Jesus’ birth was the most important birth in history, not much is said about it. Mary gave birth to her firstborn son. This **implies** that Mary had other children later. The Bible says that Jesus had brothers and sisters.

When Jesus was born, Mary wrapped cloths around her new baby boy. This was how mothers cared for their newborn babies in that day. She laid Jesus in a place where animals ate—a feeding trough. Luke explains that Joseph and Mary had to stay with the animals. There was no room anywhere else.

It’s hard to think that as a newborn baby, God’s Son must be laid in an animal’s feeding trough. Jesus came into the world, born to unimportant, simple parents. He lived in a very humble way, so He knew what life was like for poor people. He entered

the real world where people have many kinds of needs. Jesus was as human as we are. But He was God's Son, too.

Angels Announce Jesus' Birth (Luke 2:8-20)

Jesus was born in very humble conditions, yet God sent angels to announce His birth.

Shepherds were looked upon as very unimportant people. A group of shepherds were keeping their sheep out in open fields near Bethlehem. It was night, and the shepherds were doing their work, guarding the sheep.

An angel from God appeared to them in a bright, shining light. Nothing had ever happened like this before! Can you imagine the great fear they felt? But like the angel who had brought news to Zachariah and Mary, this angel also said, "Do not be afraid." The angel announced, "I bring you good news of great joy which is for all people."

The angel told the shepherds they could find Jesus wrapped in cloths, lying in a feeding trough. Then they would know that truly God had done a wonderful thing. He had sent His Son to become the Savior

of all people.

Again, we see God working in the everyday events of unimportant people, telling of the fulfilling of His promise. Here is the good news, "A Savior is born who is Christ the Lord." This is called the gospel. It is still good news to all people today.

After the announcement, other angels joined the first angel. They praised God for the birth of the Savior. They said, "Peace on earth among men who please God." The grassy fields became a place of worship.

When the angels left them, the shepherds hurried to Bethlehem to find Jesus. Many things must have gone through their minds. They were thankful for all they had experienced in hearing the announcement by the angels. They were happy to find baby Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, just as the angel had said.

The shepherds were so joyful they could not keep the good news to themselves. They told everyone they met the good news of great joy that God had made known to them that night.

Mary **pondered** all the things that the shepherds told her. She would continue to experience God's wonderful working in

her life and in the life of Jesus as He grew to adulthood.

We should be joyful about knowing Jesus, too. The good news of His birth is good news to us, too. We can share the good news, just as the shepherds did.

Luke 2:1-20

1 In those days Caesar Augustus sent out word that the name of every person in the Roman nation must be written in the books of the nation.

2 This first writing took place while Quirinius was ruler of Syria.

3 So all the people went to their own cities to have their names written in the books of the nation.

4 Joseph went up from the town of Nazareth in the country of Galilee to the town of Bethlehem. It was known as the city of David. He went there because he was from the family of David.

5 Joseph went to have his and Mary's names written in the books of the nation. Mary was his promised wife and soon to become a mother.

6 While they were there in Bethlehem, the time came for Mary to give birth to her baby.

7 Her first son was born. She put cloth around Him and laid Him in a place where cattle are fed. There was no room for them in the place where people stay for the night.

8 In the same country there were shepherds in the fields. They were watching their flocks of

sheep at night.

9 The angel of the Lord came to them. The shining-greatness of the Lord shone around them. They were very much afraid.

10 The angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. See! I bring you good news of great joy which is for all people.

11 Today, One Who saves from the punishment of sin has been born in the city of David. He is Christ the Lord.

12 There will be something special for you to see. This is the way you will know Him. You will find the Baby with cloth around Him, lying in a place where cattle are fed."

13 At once many angels from heaven were seen, along with the angel, giving thanks to God. They were saying,

14 "Greatness and honor to our God in the highest heaven and peace on earth among men who please Him."

15 The angels went from the shepherds back to heaven. The shepherds said to each other, "Let us go now to Bethlehem and see what has happened. The Lord has told us about this."

16 They went fast and found Mary and Joseph. They found the Baby lying in a place where cattle are fed.

17 When they saw the Child, they told what the angel said about Him.

18 All who heard it were surprised at what the shepherds told them.

19 But Mary hid all these words in her heart. She thought about them much.

20 The shepherds went back full of joy. They thanked God for all they had heard and seen. It happened as the angel had told them.



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

Bible Text

Luke 2:39-52

Memory Verse

“Jesus grew strong in mind and body. He grew in favor with God and men.”
(Luke 2:52)

Word List

ancestors: forefathers or early family members

committed: doing something with great effort, with all your heart

submit: to follow without question

temple: a house which was the center of all Jewish religious activity in a town

Committed to God's Purpose

A famous picture shows a small boy wearing ragged clothes. The boy carries a larger boy on his back. From the picture, it looks like the boy being carried is crippled. The words written under the picture say, “He ain’t heavy, he’s my brother.” This shows the commitment of the smaller boy to his brother.

When we are **committed** to someone or something, it never seems like a heavy load. Commitment changes the way we see things we are committed to. In this lesson, we will study how Jesus was committed to God, His heavenly Father. Jesus’ commitment made Him obedient to His earthly parents, too. It also meant He gave time and attention to knowing God’s truths.

Jesus, the Growing Boy (Luke 2:39-40)

Mary and Joseph were careful to do all that the Law of God said to do. When Jesus was only eight days old, they took Him to the **temple** to dedicate Him to God. While they were there, they met a man named Simeon and a woman named Anna, two old people who stayed in the temple. Both said to Mary and Joseph that Jesus was God’s promised Messiah.

Mary and Joseph were **committed** to follow everything according to God’s Law. After they had done everything, Mary, baby Jesus, and Joseph returned to the town of Nazareth. Jesus’ life was shaped by His parents’ commitment. This is why Luke said Jesus grew and became strong in spirit, filled with wisdom and God’s favor was on Him. Parents are always an important part of the growth and wisdom of their children.

**Things to
Think About**

1. Who has helped shape your life because of their commitment to God?
2. Are you committed to God's mission for your life?
3. What gifts and abilities have been given to you by God to serve Him and others?
4. What things are important to help a child become strong in body and mind?

A Trip to the House of God (Luke 2:41-44)

Even though Jesus was a special boy, God's Son, He grew into a young man and did all the things the other children in Nazareth did. He probably learned to be a carpenter as He worked alongside Joseph, His earthly father.

Growing up in the town of Nazareth, Jesus would go to the Jewish place of worship. This was where children learned about God and God's Laws. Here Jesus became more aware of God's mission in the world.

At least once a year, Jewish families who were committed to God would make a trip to Jerusalem. They attended a special religious celebration to remember how God rescued their **ancestors** from slavery in Egypt. When Jesus was 12 years old, He went with His parents to this celebration.

When the celebration was over, Joseph and Mary started back to Nazareth, but Jesus didn't leave with them. They didn't know Jesus had stayed behind in Jerusalem. The people walked together in a large group as they traveled back home. Joseph and Mary walked with their friends and family for one whole day. When they stopped for the night, they couldn't find Jesus. They thought Jesus had been walking together with His young friends.

Searching for a Missing Son (Luke 2:45-52)

The next morning Joseph and Mary went back to Jerusalem to look for Jesus. They searched for another day without finding Him. Then on the third day, they went to the temple. They may have wanted the priests to pray for them because they couldn't find their son. They were surprised to find

Jesus in the temple listening to the teachers and asking questions.

For at least three days, Jesus had been talking very seriously with the religious teachers. He was very aware that God had a special mission for Him. Jesus' time at the temple with the teachers shows that even as a boy, He was committed to God in a way different from other boys. The teachers also could see that Jesus was special. He understood what they talked about and asked questions that even adults would have difficulty answering.

Mary and Joseph were happy to find Jesus. But they didn't understand why He stayed behind when all the others left Jerusalem.

Mary asked, "Why have you done this to us?" She meant that Jesus had caused them hurt and trouble. Jesus' answer showed He was surprised by her question. He replied, "Why were you looking for me? Do you not know that I must be in My Father's house?"

Jesus didn't intend to hurt His parents. He thought they would know He was in God's house. Mary and Joseph knew that Jesus was the promised Messiah. The

angel had told them before Jesus' birth. They had heard the shepherds' story, and they had listened to the words of Simeon and Anna. Why didn't they remember He would be learning how to fulfill God's mission? But they didn't fully understand what that meant. Their job was to care for Jesus. They may have felt they had failed by leaving Jerusalem without Him.

Jesus knew He was to **submit** to God's mission. Even if others did not understand, He was committed to do His Father's work. This is the first time Jesus' words show that He was aware of His relationship to God as His Heavenly Father. It is the beginning of the story of His earthly life that always put God first. His life was one of unending commitment to the Father.

In the Jewish nation during Jesus' time, a boy of 13 years of age was considered a man. He was almost a man in the eyes of the people.

However, Jesus returned to Nazareth with Joseph and Mary. He continued to respect and obey His parents. He was committed to them as well as to His Father in heaven. After this, nothing more is

mentioned about Joseph. The next 18 years of Jesus' life are not told about in the Gospels. These are the silent years of Jesus' life.

We are told once again that Mary pondered all this in her heart. God was preparing her for what she would experience as Jesus began His mission in public. During the silent years, Jesus grew strong in body and mind. People liked Him, and He was blessed by God.

Even though we don't know what happened during these middle years of Jesus' life, we see the commitment He had when He reached the age of 30. Like the picture of the young boy who carried his crippled brother, it was a load Jesus took on willingly.

Luke 2:39-52

39 When Joseph and Mary had done everything the Law said to do, they went back to Nazareth in Galilee.

40 The Child grew and became strong in spirit. He was filled with wisdom and the loving-favor of God was on Him.

41 His parents went to Jerusalem every year for the special religious gathering to remember how the Jews left Egypt.

42 When He was twelve years old, they went

up to Jerusalem as they had done before.

43 When the days of the special supper were over, they started back to their town. But the boy Jesus was still in Jerusalem. His parents did not know it.

44 They thought Jesus was with the others of the group. They walked for one day. Then they looked for Him among their family and friends.

45 When they could not find Jesus, they turned back to Jerusalem to look for Him. **46** Three days later they found Him in the house of God.

He was sitting among the teachers. He was hearing what they said and asking questions.

47 All those who heard Him were surprised and wondered about His understanding and at what He said.

48 When His parents saw Him, they were surprised. His mother said to Him, "My Son, why have You done this to us? See! Your father and I have had much sorrow looking for You."

49 He said to them, "Why were you looking for Me? Do you not know that I must be in My Father's house?"

50 They did not understand the things He said to them.

51 He went with them to Nazareth and obeyed them. But His mother kept all these words in her heart.

52 Jesus grew strong in mind and body. He grew in favor with God and men.



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

UNIT 2

Preparing for Ministry

Lesson 5

Are You Ready
for This?

Luke 3:1-14

Lesson 6

Who's the Greatest?
(Luke 3:15-23a)

Lesson 7

When Temptation
Comes
(Luke 4:1-13)

UNIT 2 INTRODUCTION

Preparing for Ministry

After the exciting story of Jesus' birth, Luke told very little about Jesus' boyhood. He quickly moved to the story of preparation for Jesus' ministry. Luke began with John the Baptist, who prepared people for Jesus' coming. Jesus began to prepare for ministry, too. His baptism and temptation in the wilderness confirmed His commitment to God's plan. Jesus was ready for three powerful years of ministry.

The joy of relationship shines through these lessons. In "Are You Ready for This?" (Lesson 5), John's message calls us to repent. Repentance brings joy and a new relationship with God. "Who's the Greatest?" (Lesson 6) reminds us of the joy of giving Christ our full commitment. His love gives us the power to do what He asks us to do. "When Temptation Comes" (Lesson 7) shows us the joy of victory over sin. Jesus' victory over sin is our victory, too. His example gives us a pattern to follow when we are tempted. Repentance, commitment, and victory over sin fill us with His joy.

This study of Luke made me look at my commitment to Christ. Have I really prepared myself? Can God truly work in and through me? I pray your study of this unit helps you prepare for God's work in your life.

The writer for Units 2, 4, 5 is Judy Hughes. She is a member of Emmanuel Baptist Church in Waco, Texas, where her husband is pastor. Judy is an educator with over 30 years of experience, has worked with ESL students in the public schools, and has been active in the literacy ministry of Emmanuel for the last 15 years. She trains volunteers to teach English and share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with internationals. Randy and Judy have two children and seven grandchildren. They live near Moody, Texas, where they have a farm and are developing a ministry of rest to ministers. This is Judy's first time to write this curriculum, and we welcome her to the team.



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

Bible Text

Luke 3:1-14

Memory Verse

“And all men will see
God saving people
from the punishment
of their sins.”

(Luke 3:6)

Word List

baptize: to immerse
or dip in water

convict: to prove or
find guilty

excuses: something
offered as a reason for
being forgiven

generous: unselfish,
ready to give money,
help, and kindness

reject: to refuse
something

repent: (verb) to be
sorry for your sins and
to make up your mind
not to sin again

repentance: (noun)
wanting to obey God
and lead a better life
after telling God you
are sorry for your sins

Are You Ready for This?

Bertha Smith was a missionary in the early 1900s. She worked in the Shantung province of China. The people of Shantung didn't care about God's Word. Some of them said they believed in Jesus. But they just wanted to get rice or something from the missionaries.

The missionaries moved to the city of Chefoo because of war. While they were there, a missionary's wife had an eye disease. They prayed for one week and repented of their sin. God healed the woman's eyes. Then God **convicted** Bertha. She knew the missionaries had never prayed that hard for the souls of the Chinese people.

So the missionaries **repented** of their sins and prayed for the Chinese. Then they saw God work. Hundreds came to know Jesus. **Repentance** brought the missionaries to a new relationship with God. Repentance prepared the way for God to work.

In this lesson, the gospel writer Luke tells about John the Baptist. John's mission was to prepare the way for Jesus to begin His work. We will see how repentance prepared the way for Jesus. Repentance brings joy and a new relationship with God.

God Speaks (Luke 3:1-2)

Luke dates the story of John the Baptist by listing several leaders. Some of these leaders would later meet Jesus. Herod, Pontius Pilate, Annas, and Caiaphas put Jesus on trial in their courts at the end of His life (Luke 23:1-25; John 18:13,24). Some were not important, and some were powerful. God wants to have a relationship with all of us. He sent His Son for all people.

Things to Think About

1. Have you seen God at work around you? Would you like to see His power in your life?
2. How does sin affect our relationships with others? with God?
3. Whom do you know who is in need? How could you use your blessings to help?
4. Is sin keeping you from a relationship with God?
5. When has God convicted you of sin? When have you repented? What changes did repentance bring in your life?

Steps in Repentance

- Agree with God that you have sinned. Tell God about your sin. Read what the Bible says about your sin. Refuse to make excuses.
- Understand that sin has broken your relationship with God. Ask for God's forgiveness.
- Change your actions. Ask God what changes you need to make. If you hurt someone, make it right.

It was during the time of these leaders that God spoke to John. We know John from the story of Zacharias and his wife, Elizabeth. Zacharias was told his son, John, would be a special blessing from God (Luke 1:14-17).

Get Ready (Luke 3:3-6)

Isaiah, the Old Testament preacher, wrote about John hundreds of years before John was born. He said John would be a voice in the desert. He said John's message was to make the road ready for the Lord. Isaiah was right about John. Luke tells how John was in the desert near the Jordan River. He was preaching the message which Isaiah said he would bring.

John preached a simple message. He said people should be sorry for their sins and turn from them. This is what it means to repent. John said God forgives our sins when we repent. It isn't enough to feel sorry for our sins. We show we have really repented when our actions and attitudes have changed. When we repent, we agree with God that what we have done was wrong. We **reject** sin and turn to God instead. John said we should be **baptized** to show others that we have changed.

The religious leaders practiced a kind of baptism, a symbol of washing away sins (Leviticus 16:4,24). But this action didn't make them clean. Baptism alone doesn't bring us forgiveness. We can't earn God's forgiveness by doing a religious act. God offers forgiveness to people who repent and turn to Him.

Isaiah said John would make the road straight. When a king was coming, the roads were made straight and smooth. John's message was to prepare the way for Jesus, the King, to

come. He knew the hearts of the people had to be right. Then they would “see God saving people from the punishment of their sins.” We cannot see God’s salvation until our hearts are turned from sin to Him.

When Jesus came to earth, it changed everything forever. A valley that is filled is not a valley anymore. A mountain that is made low is not a mountain anymore. When Jesus changes our hearts, we are changed forever. Jesus didn’t choose the high and powerful people. He chose humble hearts turned to Him. No one is too small for God. Repentance is for all. It is one way to get ready for what God is doing.

God Is Near (Luke 3:7-14)

Repentance is both a change of heart and a change of action. John knew some people had not really repented. He compared them to snakes that run from a fire. Snakes do not change. They always act like snakes. John wanted to see that the people had truly changed. He said when their actions changed, it proved their hearts had changed. John said the people couldn’t make **excuses**. They couldn’t depend on their family or culture to save them. God wanted them to turn from sin to Him.

Some trees died in the woods behind our house. My husband cuts down the trees unless he sees leaves or fruit on them. God’s judgment is like that. John said God’s ax is at the root of the tree. If we repent, we can have a new relationship with God. If we don’t, we face God’s judgment.

The people asked John, “Then what should we do?” This showed their hearts had changed. When we repent, God changes us so we want to do right. When we are **generous** and kind, we show our hearts have changed. Some tax-gatherers and soldiers asked John how they could show their repentance. John told them to do their jobs honestly. Don’t take what isn’t really theirs. He told the soldiers to be happy with their wages. When we want wrong things, our actions are wrong. Sin comes from wanting wrong things.

It was repentance that brought God’s healing to a missionary’s wife in China. It was repentance that brought hundreds of Chinese to accept Jesus. It was repentance that prepared the way for Jesus. Today, it is repentance that prepares our hearts to see God at work. A new relationship with God is ours when we repent.

Luke 3:1-14

1 Tiberius Caesar had been ruler for fifteen years. Pontius Pilate was ruler of the country of Judea. Herod was the ruler of the country of Galilee. His brother Philip was the ruler of the countries of Ituraea and Trachonitis. Lysanias was the ruler of the country of Abilene.

2 Annas and Caiaphas were the head religious leaders.

The Word of God came to John the Baptist, the son of Zacharias. John was in the desert.

3 He went into all the country around the Jordan River. He preached that people should be baptized because they were sorry for their sins and had turned from them, and they would be forgiven.

4 The early preacher Isaiah wrote these words: “His voice calls out in the desert. ‘Make the way ready for the Lord. Make the road straight for Him!

5 Every valley will be filled and every mountain and hill will be brought down. The turns in the road will be made straight and the rough places will be made smooth.

6 And all men will see God saving people from the punishment of their sins.’ “

7 John said to the people who came to be

baptized by him, “You family of snakes! Who told you how to keep from the anger of God that is coming?”

8 Do something to let me see that you have turned from your sins. Do not begin to say to yourselves, ‘We have Abraham as our father.’ I tell you, God can make children for Abraham out of these stones.

9 Even now the ax is on the root of the trees. Every tree that does not give good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.”

10 The people asked him, “Then what should we do?”

11 He answered them, “If you have two coats, give one to him who has none. If you have food, you must share some.”

12 Tax-gatherers came to be baptized also. They asked him, “Teacher, what are we to do?”

13 He said to them, “Do not take more money from people than you should.”

14 Also soldiers asked him, “What are we to do?” He answered them, “Take no money from anyone by using your own strength. Do not lie about anyone. Be happy with the pay you get.”



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

Bible Text

Luke 3:15-23a

Memory Verse

“Commit your way to the Lord, trust also in Him, and He will do it.” (Psalm 37:5, NASB)

Word List

anointed: to set apart

commitment: a promise

ministry: service to God

symbol: something that stands for an idea

worthy: deserving

Who's the Greatest?

On July 26, 2009, gangs of men burned churches in three areas of northern Nigeria. Twelve Christians were killed. They captured believers and tried to make them reject Christ. Three pastors refused to reject Christ. The guards cut off the heads of these three faithful pastors. What gives believers the courage to be true to God, even to the point of death?

In this lesson, we will learn that John the Baptist was a believer like those Nigerian pastors. He knew Jesus was **worthy** of his full **commitment**. He was not afraid of the leaders. We will learn of the commitment Jesus had to God. He knew God loved Him and was pleased with Him. That gave Him courage to do all God called Him to do. When we live a committed life, God is pleased with us, too. That joy gives us courage to do what God asks us to do.

One Who Is Greater Than I (Luke 3:15-18)

Rome controlled Palestine in the days of Jesus. The Jews were unhappy under Roman rule. They knew God had promised to send a Messiah from the family of King David to deliver them. Some thought he would lead an army to overthrow Rome. Others thought he would be a priest. Some even thought the Messiah would make the land rich.

The crowds wondered if John might be the Messiah. *Christ* is the Greek word for the Jewish word *Messiah*. But John didn't want anyone to misunderstand. John made it clear that he was not the Messiah. His job was to prepare the way for the Messiah.

Things to Think About

1. What are some ways we can show our commitment to Christ?
2. Have you ever shared the good news of Jesus with someone? Have you ever had someone reject Jesus after you shared with him or her?
3. If you have been baptized, what did it mean to you? Have you grown in your relationship with God since then? If you have not been baptized, consider why.
4. How has God confirmed His love for you?
5. Is there anything God has asked of you that you have been unwilling to do? What do you need to do to make it right?

Christ would come and be greater than John. In fact, John said he wasn't worthy to help the Messiah take off His shoes. This was a picture of the work of a slave. Jewish slaves could not be told to help their master take off his shoes. But John did not consider himself worthy even for the lowest job.

Christ would have a greater **ministry** than John. John baptized his followers with water as a **symbol** of their repentance. Jesus' followers would receive the Holy Spirit. This power from God had never been available before Jesus came.

Luke told the story of the early church receiving the Holy Spirit in another book he wrote, the book of Acts. Acts 2 tells how the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit. They could minister in new ways because of the Holy Spirit's power. We can have this power today, too. When we repent of our sins and commit our lives to Christ, the Holy Spirit enters our lives.

John said Christ would also baptize His followers with fire. He told a picture story of a wheat harvest. Throwing the wheat into the air cleans the grain of the part that is not useful. The useless pieces blow away, and the grain is collected. Then the farmer burns the useless pieces.

Christ will do the same with His followers. He will clean His followers. He will take away the part that is not good and burn it. John says this fire cannot be put out. When we put our trust in Christ, He will clean us. But if we do not trust Christ, we will face God's judgment one day.

Commitment at All Costs (Luke 3:19-20)

Luke tells how John used strong, sharp words to tell Herod

that he was wrong. Herod had divorced his wife and taken his brother's wife as his own. John told Herod this was wrong. In fact, John told Herod about all the wrong things he had done. This made Herod very angry. Instead of repenting of his sins, he added another sin. He put John in prison. Later, Herod even ordered men to cut off John's head. He did this wicked thing to please his niece (Luke 9:9, Mark 6:14-29).

Sometimes when we are told the truth, we accept it and repent. Sometimes we reject the truth and attack the messenger. This is what Herod did. John could have softened his words. He could have avoided Herod and not spoken truth about Herod's sin. But John kept his commitment to God to prepare the way for the Messiah. Herod attacked the messenger, John, and killed him. But even death could not stop the truth that John preached.

Most of us do not face this kind of danger. We will probably never be threatened with death for loving Christ. But we may face other conflicts. Maybe our friends will not understand our commitment to Christ. They may want us to do things we know are wrong. Coworkers may think

we are too strict when we say Jesus is the only way to salvation. Are we committed to Christ even when it's hard?

Set Apart for Service (Luke 3:21-23a)

The first thing Jesus did in His ministry was to be baptized. He didn't need to be baptized as a sign of repentance. Jesus was holy and without sin. But He wanted to be baptized to show people His commitment to God. He wanted to do the work God set before Him.

He began with prayer. While He was praying, "the heaven opened." Luke tells how often Jesus prayed (6:12; 9:18, 28; 22:25-46; 23:34-46). Prayer was a special part of Jesus' relationship with God. It showed how He depended on God. Jesus set an example for us in prayer. Through prayer, we are given power to serve God.

Luke says the "Holy Spirit came down on Him in a body like a dove" (3:22). In this way, God set Jesus apart as the Messiah, the Christ. Then an amazing thing happened. God spoke from heaven. He said, "You are My much loved Son. I am very happy with You."

God told everyone that Jesus was His Son, the King. And this King came to serve. God was very pleased with Jesus' commitment to Him. It must have made Jesus very happy to hear His Father was pleased with Him.

Today we are baptized to show our commitment to Christ. When we are put under the water, we show the death of our old life. Our old way of life is gone forever. When we are raised up from the water, we show our new life in Christ. We belong to God. Being baptized does not save us. But it is a strong symbol of the commitment we already have in Christ.

Like John, we have a choice to make about whether we will be committed to Jesus, no matter the cost. The Nigerian Christians made the choice. They stood bravely. Some paid with their lives. Some lived to tell others of the strength and forgiveness found in Christ. Their commitment to God was greater than their fears.

Luke 3:15-23a

15 The people were looking for something to happen. They were thinking in their hearts about John the Baptist. They wondered if he might be the Christ.

16 But John said to all of them, "I baptize you with water. There is One coming Who is greater than I. I am not good enough to get down and help Him take off His shoes. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.

17 He comes ready to clean the grain. He will gather the grain and clean it all. He will put the clean grain into a building. But He will burn that which is no good with a fire that cannot be put out."

18 John spoke much more as he preached the Good News to the people.

19 He had also spoken sharp words to Herod the ruler because of Herodias. She was his brother Philip's wife. And John spoke to Herod about all the wrongs he had done.

20 To all these, Herod added another sin by putting John in prison.

21 When all the people were being baptized, Jesus was baptized also. As He prayed, the heaven opened.

22 The Holy Spirit came down on Him in a body like a dove. A voice came from heaven and said, "You are My much loved Son. I am very happy with You."

23 Jesus was about thirty years old when He began His work. People thought Jesus was the son of Joseph, the son of Heli.



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

Bible Text

Luke 4:1-13

Memory Verse

“You have never been tempted to sin in any different way than other people. God is faithful. He will not allow you to be tempted more than you can take. But when you are tempted, He will make a way for you to keep from falling into sin.”

(1 Corinthians 10:13)

Word List

circumstance:

condition or event
provide: to supply what is needed or useful

take matters into his own hands: an idiom meaning to do it yourself

When Temptation Comes

Josie came from the Philippines to Texas. She met Jesus and accepted Him as her Savior. Her life changed. She wanted to be close to God in everything she did. When she saw her family again after many years, they had a party. They wanted Josie to drink some alcohol with them. But Josie said, “I can’t drink that. My body is the temple of God’s Holy Spirit. He doesn’t want that stuff in me.” Josie resisted temptation by quoting Scripture.

In this lesson, we will learn how Jesus was able to resist **temptation** by quoting Scripture. We will see how God understands our struggle with sin. We will see how our Savior was able to face temptation and not sin. We can resist temptation when we follow the pattern of Jesus.

Depend Only on God (Luke 4:1-4)

The last part of Luke 3 tells the family tree of Jesus. We know Jesus is God because God just spoke from heaven during the baptism of Jesus. But Luke wanted us to know that Jesus is human, too. If Jesus can resist temptation, we can, too.

When Jesus left the Jordan River after His baptism, He was “full of the Holy Spirit.” He went to the desert with the love and pride of His Father fresh on His mind. But His relationship with God did not mean Satan could not tempt Him. Instead, He was now Satan’s biggest target.

While Jesus was in the desert, He did not eat anything. After 40 days, He was very hungry. That is when Satan came to Him. The Greek word “if” means *since*. If Jesus could **provide**

tempt: to try to persuade someone to do something sinful
temptation: the act of being tempted
twist: to distort the meaning of

Things to Think About

1. How does it make you feel to know that Jesus was tempted and that He was able to resist temptation? What can you learn from Jesus' example?
2. Satan likes to attack us where we are weakest. What are some areas of your life where you could be tempted? What can you do to become stronger in these areas?
3. How can we know when someone is **twisting** Scripture?
4. What are some Scripture verses that help you to resist temptation? When have you been successful at resisting temptation? What happened? What did you learn?

His food by turning stone into bread, He would not be depending on God.

Jesus quoted Scripture to remind Satan that food is not the only thing we need (Luke 4:4). Jesus refused to **take matters into His own hands**. He trusted God to provide for Him.

Sometimes we must say no to ourselves to resist temptation. Our own desires aren't the most important things. When God calls us to do something, He provides what is needed. Taking matters into our own hands always leads us away from depending on God completely.

Worship Only God (Luke 4:5-8)

Satan showed Jesus all the nations of the world at one time from a high mountain. Maybe this was a vision. Satan said he had power over the world. He said he could give it to whomever he wanted. This was a lie. Satan has only a little power. Jesus called Satan the "leader of this world" (John 14:30). Jesus also said Satan "is a liar and the father of lies" (John 8:44b). Satan couldn't do what he said he would do.

Satan didn't want Jesus to worship him for only one moment. Satan wanted to break the relationship Jesus had with God. If Jesus sinned, He could not save us from our sins.

Again, Jesus remembered Scripture. He quoted Deuteronomy 6:13. Jesus wouldn't give in to Satan because He was determined to follow God's way. One day Jesus would say, "All power has been given to Me in heaven and on earth." (Matthew 28:18). Jesus was willing to wait and receive His power from the hand of God. He refused any way except the

will of God and the way of the cross.

This looks like a simple choice. Who would choose to bow down to Satan? But when we let anything become more important than God, we sin. When we settle for good over best, we are taking Satan's way. We sin when we are too busy to pray and read God's Word. God wants our relationship with Him to come first.

Satan makes sin look good. But giving in to sin breaks our relationship with God. That's what Satan wants most. No matter what Satan says he will do, he really wants to destroy us.

Only Trust God (Luke 4:9-13)

This time, Satan quoted Scripture to Jesus. But he **twisted** it. Satan suggested Jesus jump off the highest point of the Temple and see if God would send angels to catch Him.

Satan didn't fool Jesus. Satan was suggesting Jesus test God's love and care for Him. If Jesus had tried to force God to save Him, He would not be trusting God. He would be trying to control God. Jesus didn't need to ask God to prove His love. He already knew God loved Him.

Do we test God? Sometimes we honestly seek to know God better. Other times we demand that God prove His love for us. God knows our hearts when we ask these things. He knows if we are asking out of humble need or pride. God wants us to know Him. If we ask with a humble heart, God always shows Himself true. When we remember God's Word, we know how much He loves us.

We should remember that Satan knows the Bible and can quote it. We must always read the Bible for ourselves. Read the whole passage to know what was said before and after the quote. If we pray before reading His Word, the Holy Spirit will show us the truth.

Satan tempted Jesus "in every way," then went away for awhile. Satan may have tried many other things. This was not the only time Satan tempted Jesus. But Jesus was always able to resist Satan. Jesus never sinned. Then Jesus defeated Satan at the cross forever. Satan doesn't tempt us only once either. We must always be close to our Lord to defeat Satan.

Jesus' example shows us how to resist temptation. Depend only on God.

Refuse anything that would break our relationship with God. Know God by knowing His Word. Wait in faith on God's victory.

Jesus knew that one day He would win the battle over Satan forever. He would have all power, and Satan would lose. We can know that one day we will see the final victory over Satan, too. One day we will stand beside our Savior in victory.

Luke 4:1-13

- 1** Jesus was full of the Holy Spirit when He returned from the Jordan River. Then He was led by the Holy Spirit to a desert.
- 2** He was tempted by the devil for forty days and He ate nothing during that time. After that He was hungry.
- 3** The devil said to Him, "If You are the Son of God, tell this stone to be made into bread."
- 4** Jesus said to him, "It is written, 'Man is not to live by bread alone.'"
- 5** The devil took Jesus up on a high mountain. He had Jesus look at all the nations of the world at one time.
- 6** The devil said to Jesus, "I will give You all this power and greatness. It has been given to me. I can give it to anyone I want to."
- 7** If You will worship me, all this will be Yours."
- 8** Jesus said to the devil, "Get behind Me,

Satan! For it is written, 'You must worship the Lord your God. You must obey Him only.'"

9 Then the devil took Jesus up to Jerusalem. He had Jesus stand on the highest part of the house of God. The devil said to Jesus, "If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down from here."

10 For it is written, 'He has told His angels to care for You and to keep You.'

11 In their hands they will hold You up. Then Your foot will not hit against a stone."

12 Jesus said to the devil, "It is written, 'You must not tempt the Lord your God.'"

13 When the devil finished tempting Jesus in every way, he went away from Jesus for awhile.

13 Jesus went back to Galilee in the power of the Holy Spirit. People talked about Him so much that He was well-known through all the country.



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

UNIT 3 Jesus' Ministry in Galilee

Lesson 8
Fulfilled Today?
(Luke 4:14-21)

Lesson 9
Jesus' Radical Message
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(Luke 7:36-50)

UNIT 3 INTRODUCTION

Jesus' Ministry in Galilee

Unit 3 focuses on Jesus' ministry in Galilee. In lessons 8 and 9, we look at the importance of Jesus' sermon at the synagogue in His hometown of Nazareth. In lesson 10, we study the story of Jesus' call to Peter to gather people for Jesus' kingdom. In lesson 11, we learn about Jesus' "Sermon on the Plain." Lesson 12 leads us to study Jesus' instruction to Simon the Pharisee about forgiveness and love.

The Scripture passages in this whole unit of lessons show that Jesus did not follow what the religious leaders taught. Jesus' teachings spoke out against how the people lived. He was not the kind of Messiah the people were looking for because He helped poor people and foreigners.

Jesus challenges all who follow Him to live a life that is different from the way others live. Jesus' followers should not pay back evil for evil. His followers must be motivated by love for all people. He commands that the world's way of thinking about righteousness and sinfulness be changed because we all need God's forgiveness.



Adult Bible Study in
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Bible Text

Luke 4:14-21

Memory Verse

“The Spirit of the Lord is on Me. He has put His hand on Me to preach the Good News to poor people. He has sent Me to heal those with a sad heart. He has sent Me to tell those who are being held that they can go free. He has sent Me to make the blind to see and to free those who are held because of trouble.” (Luke 4:18)

Word List

deliver: to set someone free from difficulty

favor: goodwill or kindness

synagogue: a Jewish place of worship and teaching God's laws

Fulfilled Today?

Has anyone ever said to you, “Oh, you missed the point”? When we teach English to international students, they often misunderstand the meaning of an American idiom. When they do, some students feel bad, others just laugh. Idioms are important to understand the meaning of what is said.

The people of Jesus' hometown, Nazareth, did not understand who He was. They misunderstood the mission God had given Him to do. It is very sad when people are blind to God's work. They will never have the kind of life God wants them to enjoy.

In this lesson, we will study how Jesus began His mission. Jesus explained to the people of Nazareth that God had put His hand on Him to do a special work. The work that Jesus began has been given to every one of His followers to continue doing today.

Filled With the Spirit (Luke 4:14)

Jesus had been away from Nazareth for some time. He had visited the area where John the Baptist was preaching. He was baptized by John. Then Jesus went to be alone in the desert for 40 days. There He was tempted by the devil. Jesus refused to follow the devil's suggestions. After that, God's Spirit came to be with Jesus and strengthen Him.

Jesus returned to the area of Galilee where He had grown up. He was filled with the power of God's Spirit. He began to teach in **synagogues** about God's mission. In Galilee, they liked what Jesus taught. Many people praised Him as a wise teacher.

**Things to
Think About**

1. What does it mean to be empowered by the Holy Spirit?
2. Who are the poor in your community? Who gives them help?
3. How can God show His love and care to the needy people in the world today?
4. What can you do to be on mission for God where you live?

Jesus Went Home to Nazareth (Luke 4:15-17)

Nazareth was a town in Galilee. When Jesus arrived back home, He followed the customs just as He had done growing up. He went to the synagogue on the proper day. People in Nazareth heard He was a wise teacher, so they wanted to hear what He would say to them.

The leaders in a synagogue could ask visiting teachers to take part in worship. Jesus was invited to read the Scriptures and then to tell what it meant. He was handed the writing of the early preacher, Isaiah. He found the place to read easily because Jesus knew God's Word well.

Explaining God's Mission (Luke 4:18-19)

Jesus stood up to read the Scriptures to show honor to God's words. He read the words of the early preacher, Isaiah, who told about God's promise to help His people in trouble and pain. Some people believed this promise also talked about the coming Messiah. Because the Jewish people were suffering under Caesar's rule, they prayed for God to send the Messiah to **deliver** them.

The Scriptures which Jesus read tell about His mission on earth. It is important to think about what is said in these Bible verses. It helps us better understand Jesus' mission. Consider each phrase carefully:

“The Spirit of the Lord is on Me. He has put His hand on Me.” When someone is on mission for God, that person must depend on God's Spirit to lead him. The statement also may mean God has called someone to a special mission for Him. Jesus

was on a special mission for God. All who follow Jesus must be on that mission too.

“...to preach the good news to poor people.” The mission is to poor people who have nothing and need many things. God cares for all people, but we are told here that He gives special attention to people who are poor. They may need a job, money, food, or a place to live. God cares about these people and their needs.

“He has sent Me to heal those with a sad heart. He has sent Me to tell those who are being held that they can go free.”

God's mission is to people who are sad because of hard times. The Jewish people were being treated very badly by Roman rulers. They wanted to be set free. Isaiah wrote that God would free those kinds of people and give them joy.

“He has sent Me to make the blind to see....” People who are blind have a special need. God's mission includes them. He will give them sight. There is a blindness that is different than not being able to see with our eyes. People are sometimes spiritually blind. They cannot see God's love and truth. God wants to cure their spiritual blindness.

“He sent Me to tell of the time when men can receive favor with the Lord.” This part of God's mission tells about people celebrating. God not only wants to bring relief to all who suffer and have trouble, but He wants us to experience His favor. We can celebrate and be happy because of His promises.

The good news of Jesus' love and forgiveness affects every part of a person's life. But greater still, it touches all the problems for all the people of the world. God's mission is to love and care for the physical problems and the spiritual needs of all people.

A Surprise Announcement (Luke 4:20-21)

After Jesus read the Scripture, He gave it back to the leader and sat down. In that day, teachers sat and explained the meaning of what was read. In the synagogue the people looked at Jesus and waited for Him to explain the meaning of what He read.

He said, “The Holy Writings you have just heard have been completed today.” Jesus meant that God's mission was His mission. He was the One who fulfilled

the promise God spoke through Isaiah. Jesus was announcing openly that He was the Messiah. The people were surprised at what He said.

They had known Jesus since He was a small child. He lived in their town. How could He claim to be the promised Messiah? He was one of them. How could He be the Promised One?

When you know Jesus, you will not be surprised by what He said. He is the promised Messiah who came from God. We know He is the Savior of all people.

Jesus wants every person who believes and follows Him to join God's mission. It is a mission that reaches every need that people have. We can become Jesus to hurting, needy people today.

Luke 4:14-21

14 Jesus went back to Galilee in the power of the Holy Spirit. People talked about Him so much that He was well-known through all the country.

15 Jesus taught in their places of worship and was honored by all people.

16 Jesus came to Nazareth where He had

grown up. As He had done before, He went into the Jewish place of worship on the Day of Rest. Then He stood up to read.

17 Someone handed Him the book of the early preacher Isaiah. He opened it and found the place where it was written,

18 "The Spirit of the Lord is on Me. He has put His hand on Me to preach the Good News to poor people. He has sent Me to heal those with a sad heart. He has sent Me to tell those who are being held that they can go free. He has sent Me to make the blind to see and to free those who are held because of trouble.

19 He sent Me to tell of the time when men can receive favor with the Lord."

20 Jesus closed the book. Then He gave it back to the leader and sat down. All those in the Jewish place of worship kept their eyes on Him.

21 Then He began to say to them, "The Holy Writings you have just heard have been completed today."



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

Jesus' Radical Message

A young pastor announced to his church that he was moving to a foreign country to tell the people there about God's love. One of the church members said, "Why are you going to foreign people? There's enough for you to do here among our people. Those people have their own religion. They don't even like us. You should just stay here."

Sometimes even followers of Jesus don't like people who are different from them. Some people feel that God likes them more than He does others. That is **prejudice**. This is the wrong way to think about people who are different from us. God loves all people, and He wants us to tell them about His love. Jesus came to save everyone, no matter who they are or where they live.

The people of Jesus' hometown were prejudiced toward people who were not Jews. Jesus' mission was to all people. In this lesson, we will learn that He had to face the prejudice and anger of His own people because His mission was for all people.

Jesus Teaches in the Synagogue (Luke 4:22)

Jesus had been in the area of Galilee working and teaching. Then He came home to Nazareth. He was invited to take part in the worship in the synagogue. The people were happy to see Jesus. They heard what a good teacher He was. People were saying Jesus was a **prophet** from God.

The people in Jesus' hometown listened to Him. They were happy and agreed with what He said. They may have thought Jesus had come home to do the miracles like He did in

Bible Text

Luke 4:22-30

Memory Verse

"Do for other people what you would like to have them do for you." (Luke 6:31)

Word List

prejudice: not liking others before you know them; thinking you are better than others

prophet: someone who speaks to people for God and who delivers messages from God

proverb: a saying that expresses a truth not spoken clearly

widow: a woman whose husband has died

**Things to
Think About**

1. How does the prejudice of people keep others from knowing God's love?
2. Why do we sometimes think God does not love all people?
3. How do Christians you know show God's love to people in need?
4. What will you do to be on mission with Jesus?

Galilee. No one famous had ever lived in Nazareth. They were proud that Jesus was one of them.

When Jesus finished reading the Scriptures, He said something that surprised everyone. He said Isaiah's words from God, written long ago, were written about Him. He was Messiah for all people.

Some of the people wondered how this could be. Was Jesus a prophet sent from God? How could He be the Messiah? They asked, "Isn't this Joseph's son?" They had known Jesus since childhood. They had watched Him grow up. Surely the Messiah would be someone else.

When they heard Jesus say He was the promised Messiah to all people, they probably began to talk among themselves. They began to doubt His words.

The People Change Their Minds (Luke 4:23-24)

Jesus knew the people's thoughts about Him were changing. He asked them if they were thinking of a **proverb** that was often used: "Doctor, heal yourself." The proverb meant they wanted Jesus to do some mighty work in Nazareth just as He had done in other places. They wanted Him to prove what He said. They wouldn't believe He was the Messiah if He didn't show it by doing something amazing.

Then Jesus told them another proverb. He said, "A man who speaks for God is not respected in his own country." They understood this proverb. It meant family and friends do not accept a prophet they have known since childhood. How can that prophet teach them? They were his teachers before He became famous. Jesus knew some of the people were thinking this way.

Jesus Speaks about His Mission (Luke 4:25-27)

Jesus did not come home to please the people. He wanted them to understand His mission and to work with Him. He refused to do something to prove that He was the Messiah. God's Messiah must be received by faith. They would see His power if they believed Him and followed Him.

His mission was greater than just helping the people of Nazareth. It was bigger than the area of Galilee. His mission was for the entire world.

The Jewish people thought God loved them more than He loved people of other nations. They believed God favored them above others. They thought the Messiah would come and overthrow the cruel Roman rulers. The Messiah would punish their enemies. He would make them a great nation above all other nations. The people were prejudiced toward other nations.

Jesus told the people two stories from their history written in their Scriptures. They knew these stories well. The stories would show what Jesus'

mission was going to be like. They were stories that showed God loved and cared for people who were not Jews.

Jesus told them about two honored Jewish prophets, Elijah and Elisha. These prophets helped and healed people who were not Jews. Elijah raised a foreign **widow's** son from death. The widow was from Zarephath, a city outside of Israel. God sent Elijah to help this widow with food, even when Jewish people did not have food. Elisha healed a foreigner named Naaman who had a very bad skin disease. Many of the Jewish people had the same disease, but Elisha only healed the foreigner.

The People Become Angry with Jesus (Luke 4:28-29)

When the people in the synagogue heard these stories, they became angry with Jesus. He said outsiders received help from God's prophets even when many Jews with the same needs did not. Their prejudice caused them to become very angry. Why would God help people who were not like them? They thought they were God's favorites.

Jesus had refused to show His power to them as He had for other people. Now He said God helped others before He helped them. They thought Jesus could not be the Messiah. They wanted to kill Jesus because He said He was the Messiah. They thought He was lying and should die. They threw Jesus out of the synagogue. They were going to kill Him by throwing Him off a cliff.

Jesus Moves On (Luke 4:30)

Jesus remained very calm. He did not fight or argue with the angry people. He was able to get away. He moved on to other people who would accept Him as Messiah.

His message was radical because it offered love and forgiveness to everyone. Today, Jesus still cares for all people and wants them to know God's love. Everyone who joins Jesus' mission must live like Jesus lived. Our commitment to Him must include our commitment to sharing His love with everyone.

Luke 4:22-30

22 They all spoke well of Jesus and agreed with the words He spoke. They said, "Is not this the son of Joseph?"

23 He said to them, "I wonder if you will tell this old saying to Me, 'Doctor, heal Yourself. What You did in the city of Capernaum, do in Your own country!'"

24 He said, "A man who speaks for God is not respected in his own country.

25 It is true that there were many women whose husbands had died in the Jewish land when Elijah lived. For three and a half years there was no rain and there was very little food in the land.

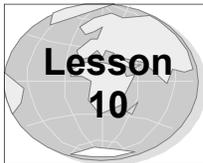
26 Elijah was sent to none of them, but he was sent to a woman in the city of Zarephath in the land of Sidon. This woman's husband had died.

27 There were many people in the Jewish land who had a bad skin disease when the early preacher Elisha lived. None of them was healed. But Naaman from the country of Syria was healed."

28 All those in the Jewish place of worship were angry when they heard His words.

29 They got up and took Jesus out of town to the top of a high hill. They wanted to throw Him over the side.

30 But Jesus got away from among them and went on His way.



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

Bible Text

Luke 5:1-11

Memory Verse

“They left everything
and followed Jesus.”
(Luke 5:11b)

Word List

ashamed: a feeling
that you are bad and
have done wrong

demanding: a job or
task that is hard to do
and takes much time

Kingdom of God: the
place where God rules
in the hearts and lives
of people

risk: the possibility of
loss or harm

Called to Gather People for God

We have a friend who was a successful architect for many years. He made plans for buildings and houses. He also watched over the builders as the buildings were being built. His job was very **demanding**. He and his wife have a daughter in college and a son in high school. He must pay for their education as well as provide for the needs of his family.

Recently, he quit working as an architect and started to take classes at a Bible school. I asked him why he quit his successful job. He replied that planning buildings and watching as they were built did not help people know about God's love. He felt God calling him to serve and tell others of God's love. He knows that God is leading him to take such a **risk**.

In this lesson, we will see that Jesus called Simon to leave his job as a fisherman and follow Him. Simon could have said no to Jesus' request. By following Jesus, Simon risked losing everything he had gained as a fisherman. When a person follows Jesus, many things will change in that person's life. Jesus' mission will become his/her mission.

The Crowds Come to Jesus (Luke 5:1-3)

As Jesus moved about the area of Galilee, crowds of people came to hear Him. They watched as He helped people. They were amazed that Jesus could heal sick people just by speaking or touching them. The crowds grew larger each day.

**Things to
Think About**

1. What does it mean to gather people into the Kingdom of God?
2. Why was it important for Peter, James, and John to leave everything to follow Jesus?
3. Many people wanted to crowd around Jesus, but only a few wanted to follow Him. Why?
4. Have you ever felt you were in the presence of God? What did you do?

One day, Jesus was standing on the shore of Lake Gennesaret. This lake is also called the Lake of Galilee. The people pushed each other to get close to Him. Two boats were on the shore near where Jesus was standing. He got into a boat so He could stand above the crowd and speak to them more easily. They would be able to hear His words better. They would no longer push each other to get near Him.

The boat belonged to a man named Simon. Jesus asked Simon for help to solve a problem. Simon moved the boat a short distance away from the shore. This act of helping Jesus began a friendship that would change Simon forever. Jesus sat down in the boat and spoke to the people. He used every opportunity to help people know about God's love for them.

A Strange Command (Luke 5:4-7)

When Jesus finished talking to the people, He said to Simon, "Go to deeper water and let the nets down to catch some fish." Simon was a skilled fisherman. He knew when and how to catch fish. Simon may have thought, "Jesus is a teacher. What does He know about fishing?"

Simon and his friends fished at night when the fish came up from the deep water. Nighttime was when fishermen expected to catch fish. They had already fished all night, yet they had caught nothing.

Even though Simon thought Jesus was wrong, he obeyed the command. He may have thought, "You'll see, there are no fish to catch during the day." When we doubt the command of Jesus, our willingness to obey is tested. Will we obey and do what God says to do or do what we think is right?

Simon let the nets down into the water. The nets filled with fish. He was amazed. The nets couldn't hold all the fish. Simon called his friends in the other boat to come help. They filled both boats with fish. The nets were breaking, and the boats were sinking from the weight. When we obey Jesus' command, we will be amazed at the results, too.

In the Presence of the Holy One (Luke 5:8-9)

Up until this time, this had been just a time of fishing. But now things changed. Simon and his friends had never experienced anything like this before. They could not explain what had happened. Simon realized he was not just catching fish. He was in the presence of the Holy One, God's Son, Jesus.

Simon, whom Luke now calls Simon Peter, did two things: He got down on his knees before Jesus, and he confessed he was sinful. Peter said, "Go away from me, Lord." Peter was aware that he was unworthy to be in Jesus' presence. Peter felt **ashamed**. He understood that Jesus is Lord.

Isaiah, the preacher who lived many years before Jesus' day, had an experience

like Simon Peter. Isaiah was in the presence of God and was afraid. (Read about it in Isaiah 6:1-8.) We often feel afraid when we are in God's presence. We want to leave, but we also want to stay near such a holy God.

Simon Peter was both obedient and honest with Jesus. These are two important qualities to become a disciple, a true follower of Jesus. When Jesus first got into Simon Peter's boat to teach the people, Simon Peter had no idea that this was the beginning of a change of direction in his life.

A Call to Follow (Luke 5:10-11)

Jesus saw beyond Simon Peter's shame and sinfulness. He said to this fearful fisherman, "Do not be afraid." Whenever we humbly come to Jesus, we do not need to be afraid. Jesus said to Peter, "From now on you will fish for men." Jesus was calling Simon Peter to join Him in the mission of gathering people into the **Kingdom of God**.

Gathering people into God's Kingdom is like fishing. You must have the same kind of character to gather people as you do to gather fish. You must be

committed to the task, and go where the fish are. You must keep on trying, no matter what happens. You must be able to accept failure and wait for the good results to come.

Jesus wants people who have a character like that to join Him in His mission. Peter and his friends, James and John, sons of Zebedee, accepted Jesus' call to join Him. When they reached the shore, they left everything and followed Jesus. They took action.

The person who follows Jesus must also be willing to leave everything and let Jesus be Lord and King of their life. They must take the risk of being a follower of Jesus Christ.

Luke 5:1-11

1 While Jesus was standing by the lake of Gennesaret, many people pushed to get near Him. They wanted to hear the Word of God.

2 Jesus saw two boats on the shore. The fishermen were not there because they were washing their nets.

3 Jesus got into a boat which belonged to Simon. Jesus asked him to push it out a little

way from land. Then He sat down and taught the people from the boat.

4 When He had finished speaking, He said to Simon, "Push out into the deep water. Let down your nets for some fish."

5 Simon said to Him, "Teacher, we have worked all night and we have caught nothing. But because You told me to, I will let the net down."

6 When they had done this, they caught so many fish, their net started to break.

7 They called to their friends working in the other boat to come and help them. They came and both boats were so full of fish they began to sink.

8 When Simon Peter saw it, he got down at the feet of Jesus. He said, "Go away from me, Lord, because I am a sinful man."

9 He and all those with him were surprised and wondered about the many fish.

10 James and John, the sons of Zebedee, were surprised also. They were working together with Simon. Then Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid. From now on you will fish for men."

11 When they came to land with their boats, they left everything and followed Jesus.



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

Bible Text

Luke 6:17-46

Memory Verse

“The follower is not more important than his teacher. But everyone who learns well will be like his teacher.... And why do you call Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ but do not do what I say?”

(Luke 6:40,46)

Word List

disciples: people who do what their teacher does and follow the teachings carefully

maneuvers: movements that follow a plan or pattern

motivate: to cause a person to want to act

reward: something given for living right

Jesus' Life-Changing Instructions

Writer Dallas Willard begins one of his books with the story of a pilot. The pilot was practicing high-speed **maneuvers** in a jet airplane. She pulled the control back for what she thought was a steep climb upward and flew straight into the ground. She never realized she had been flying upside down.

People go through life with wrong ideas about how life works best. But only God can give the right instructions. People think living for themselves will make them happy. One day, they will find they were like the pilot—flying upside down.

In this lesson, we will learn that Jesus taught His **disciples** to live according to God's Kingdom. The disciples listened to Jesus and followed His example. Jesus came not only to forgive our sins. He came to show and teach us how to live right. His teaching was very different from what the world teaches. He wanted us to know how God intends life to be lived.

Caring for the People (Luke 6:17-19)

Jesus took time to be alone and pray. He spent the whole night with God in prayer (Luke 6:12). Afterwards, Jesus chose 12 followers to become His disciples. Jesus taught them how to live His kind of life in God's Kingdom.

When Jesus and His disciples came down from the mountain, He found a large crowd waiting. They came from many cities and towns. They knew He could heal sicknesses and free them from demons.

**Things to
Think About**

1. Why did Jesus pray all night?
2. What can make a person happy even if he or she has a very difficult life?
3. How should we treat our enemies?
4. What did Jesus mean when He said, "The mouth speaks of what the heart is full of"?

Happy People and Sad People (Luke 6:20-26)

Jesus gave His disciples special instructions for living.

These were very different from how other people lived.

Jesus said the poor can be happy. The hungry can be happy. Even those who are in sorrow can be happy. Those who are hated and put to shame can be happy. How? They can be happy if they trust in Jesus no matter how hard life is. Difficulties do not have to keep us from living God's way. These people can be glad because God has a **reward** for them in heaven.

Jesus said that later it would be bad for the rich, for those who are full and need nothing, for those who laugh now, and for those who are well liked by everyone. They only think about what makes them happy now. They don't want to live God's way or to trust in Jesus. At the end of their lives, they will be very sad. They will not be able to be with God in heaven.

Live Life Motivated by Love (Luke 6:24-36)

Some people say, "Don't get mad; get even." Pay someone back for the bad they did to you. Jesus taught just the opposite. Love must **motivate** the way you live. His words are not hard to understand, but they are hard to follow. Love those who work against you. Do good to those who hate you. Give thanks for those who do bad things. Pray for those who make life hard.

Most people say this is foolish. No one can really live like this. But Jesus did. And we can, too, with His help.

Jesus said we should treat our enemies the same way we want them to treat us. Many people didn't follow Him because of this hard teaching. Even His disciples struggled to learn this way of life.

Do Not Judge Others (Luke 6:37-45)

It's easy to point out the bad that other people do. We might see one bad thing a person does and say he or she is bad. Jesus taught His followers not to judge. If we judge others, we will be judged the same way. We don't need to judge. A bad person's life will show he is bad. A good person's life will show he is good.

Jesus gave an example of trees. A good tree cannot have bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot have good fruit. We can tell what kind of tree it is by the fruit it produces. If our heart is full of God's love, our life will produce good. If our heart is full of sin, our life will produce bad things. The way we live shows what is in our heart.

Follow Jesus' Way (Luke 6:40, 45)

Jesus told His followers something very important to help them live God's way. He said, "The follower is not more important than his teacher. But everyone who learns well will be like his teacher... And why do you call Me, 'Lord, Lord,' but do not do what I say?"

It is not enough to just listen to what Jesus taught. We must put it into practice. We must become like Jesus in the way we

think and act. If we call Jesus Lord and do not do what He says, we are not following Him. We cannot produce good fruit.

Luke 6:17-46

17 Then Jesus came down and stood on a plain with many of His followers. Many people came from the country of Judea and from Jerusalem and from the cities of Tyre and Sidon. They came to hear Him and to be healed of their diseases.

18 Those who were troubled with demons came and were healed.

19 All the people tried to put their hands on Jesus. Power came from Him and He healed them all.

20 He looked at His followers and said, "Those of you who are poor are happy, because the holy nation of God is yours.

21 Those of you who are hungry now are happy, because you will be filled. Those of you who have sorrow now are happy, because you will laugh.

22 You are happy when men hate you and do not want you around and put shame on you because you trust in Me.

23 Be glad in that day. Be full of joy for your reward is much in heaven. Their fathers did these things to the early preachers.

24 "It is bad for you who are rich. You are receiving all that you will get.

25 It is bad for you that are full. You will be hungry. It is bad for you who laugh now. You will have sorrow and you will cry.

26 It is bad for you when everyone speaks well of you. In the same way, their fathers spoke

well of the false teachers.

27 “I say to you who hear Me, love those who work against you. Do good to those who hate you.

28 Respect and give thanks for those who try to bring bad to you. Pray for those who make it very hard for you.

29 Whoever hits you on one side of the face, turn so he can hit the other side also. Whoever takes your coat, give him your shirt also.

30 Give to any person who asks you for something. If a person takes something from you, do not ask for it back.

31 Do for other people what you would like to have them do for you.

32 “If you love those who love you, what reward can you expect from that? Sinners also love those who love them.

33 If you do good to those who do good to you, what thanks can you expect from that? Sinners also do good to those who do good to them.

34 If you let people use your things and expect to get something back, what thanks can you expect from that? Even sinners let sinners use things and they expect to get something back.

35 But love those who hate you. Do good to them. Let them use your things and do not expect something back. Your reward will be much. You will be the children of the Most High. He is kind to those who are not thankful and to those who are full of sin.

36 “You must have loving-kindness just as your Father has loving-kindness.

37 Do not say what is wrong in other people's lives. Then other people will not say what is wrong in your life. Do not say someone is guilty. Then other people will not say you are guilty. Forgive other people and other people

will forgive you.

38 “Give, and it will be given to you. You will have more than enough. It can be pushed down and shaken together and it will still run over as it is given to you. The way you give to others is the way you will receive in return.”

39 Jesus used a picture-story as He spoke to them. He said, “Can one blind man lead another blind man? Will they not fall into the ditch together?”

40 The follower is not more important than his teacher. But everyone who learns well will be like his teacher.

41 “Why do you look at the small piece of wood in your brother's eye and do not see the big piece of wood in your own eye?”

42 How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take that small piece of wood out of your eye,’ when you do not see the big piece of wood in your own eye? You pretend to be someone you are not. First, take the big piece of wood out of your own eye. Then you can see better to take the small piece of wood out of your brother's eye.

43 “A good tree cannot have bad fruit. A bad tree cannot have good fruit.

44 For every tree is known by its own fruit. Men do not gather figs from thorns. They do not gather grapes from thistles.

45 Good comes from a good man because of the riches he has in his heart. Sin comes from a sinful man because of the sin he has in his heart. The mouth speaks of what the heart is full of.

46 “And why do you call Me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ but do not do what I say?”



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

Bible Text

Luke 7:36-50

Memory Verse

“I tell you, her many sins are forgiven because she loves much. But the one who has been forgiven little, loves little.”
(Luke 7:47)

Word List

acknowledge: to say something is true

custom: a practice followed by people in a particular area

grumbled: to complain in a low voice

Pharisee: a Jewish religious leader of Jesus' time

The Joy of Sins Forgiven

John Newton, who lived in England in the 1700s, was a very wicked young man. He became the captain of a ship which carried slaves from Africa to other countries. He was cruel to the slaves and didn't care how much he did wrong. Then one day John Newton's ship was in a storm. He feared he might die. He prayed and asked God to save him and forgive him of all his wickedness.

John's life was completely changed. He was so thankful and joyful because God forgave him of his sins. He began to serve God and help others. John became a great preacher in England. He wrote many songs that express the joy of sins forgiven. The most well-known is “Amazing Grace.”

In this lesson, we will study the story of how Jesus forgave the sins of a woman. She was so joyful she did something to show Jesus how much she loved Him. A religious law-keeper was unhappy with the woman. He thought Jesus should not accept the woman's act of love. Jesus taught how important it is for each person to say he or she is a sinner and receive God's forgiveness.

Jesus, an Invited Guest (Luke 7:36-39)

Jesus was often invited as a guest in people's homes. One time, a proud religious **Pharisee** named Simon invited Jesus to his home for a meal. It's not clear why Simon invited Jesus to his home. The Jewish religious leaders were becoming unhappy with Jesus' teaching. They were angry that so many people were

**Things to
Think About**

1. Why did Simon invite Jesus to his home and not show kindness to Him?
2. How do you feel toward people who judge you as if you are not as good as they are?
3. Why does forgiveness lead to love, joy, and gratitude to those who are forgiven?
4. What have you done to show Jesus your love for His forgiveness?

following Jesus. Some people think that Simon wanted to question Jesus and to try to stop Him from teaching.

Simon didn't receive Jesus the way he normally greeted other guests. The **custom** for greeting guests was to give them water to wash the dust from their feet, to give them a kiss on the cheek as a sign of peace and to put a little oil on their head to show they were a welcomed guest. Simon did none of this for Jesus. The way Simon received Jesus shows he did not consider Jesus as a welcomed guest.

A woman came into Simon's home, too. She was not a guest at the meal. In the town, this woman was known as a sinner. In those days, people often came uninvited into a home where something special was happening. They would stand and listen to what the guests were saying as they ate. But this woman was there because she wanted to honor to Jesus.

The guests around the table would put their feet behind them as they ate. The woman did an unusual thing to Jesus. She stood at His feet crying. Her tears fell on Jesus' feet. She wiped His feet with her hair. She kissed His feet continually and then poured costly perfume on Jesus' feet.

A Story of Forgiveness and Love (Luke 7:39-43)

Simon became upset when he saw the woman honoring Jesus. Simon thought if Jesus was a man sent from God, He would know that she was a sinner. He would not let the woman act this way, but would tell her to go away. But Jesus knew the woman was a sinner, and He knew what Simon was thinking.

Jesus asked Simon if He could say something to the group. He told a story about two men who owed money to their master.

One owed about 10 times as much as the other. Neither man could pay his debt. Simon may have thought the story would end with the men being put in jail because they could not pay their debts.

But Jesus said the master forgave both of them. They no longer owed anything. Simon must have been surprised how the story ended. He may have wondered why Jesus told the story. Simon did not owe anyone anything.

Jesus wanted to open Simon's mind. He wanted to help him understand his need for forgiveness. He asked Simon which of the two men loved the master most. Simon said he thought the one who owed the most would love the master more. Jesus said that was the right answer.

Understanding the Need for Forgiveness (Luke 7:44-50)

Jesus used this story to show Simon how his pride was wrong. Jesus pointed to the difference in how Simon had greeted Him and how the woman had treated Him. She was known to everyone as a sinner, yet she was not ashamed to stand in front of all the guests and show honor to Jesus. Yet Simon did not honor Jesus as a guest whom

he invited to eat in his home.

Simon looked down on Jesus and the woman. No doubt he thought Jesus was not from God. He may have thought Jesus' teaching was wrong, too. Simon thought he was better than the woman. She was a sinner, and he was a religious leader. He did not see his sins. Simon was proud and judged others. He thought he didn't need to ask God to forgive his sins.

Jesus said the woman honored and loved Him much because she had been forgiven much. It is clear the woman met Jesus at some time before coming to Simon's house. She knew Jesus had forgiven her sins, so she showed love and honor to Him in that unusual way.

Jesus compared Simon to the man in the story who had been forgiven little. He was not saying that Simon had only a little need of forgiveness. Simon did not **acknowledge** his need for forgiveness. That is why he loved little. People cannot experience great forgiveness if they continue to say they do not need God's forgiveness.

Jesus said to the woman, in front of all who knew her as a sinner, "Your sins are

forgiven.” He released her from the guilt and pain of her past. That was part of Jesus’ mission to those who received Him as Messiah.

Some of the people who ate with Jesus **grumbled** and asked, “Who is this man who even forgives sin?” Jesus did not try to argue with them or make them believe He could forgive sin. He said to the woman who believed that her faith had saved her. He said for her go her way and live in God’s peace. Jesus wanted her to experience the joy of forgiveness.

You can experience the joy of forgiveness, too, when you receive Jesus as your Savior. Whether our sins are little or much, we all need His forgiveness.

Luke 7:36-50

36 One of the proud religious lawkeepers wanted Jesus to eat with him. Jesus went to his house and sat down to eat.

37 There was a woman in the city who was a sinner. She knew Jesus was eating in the house of the proud religious law-keeper. She brought a jar of special perfume.

38 Then she stood behind Him by His feet and cried. Her tears wet His feet and she dried them with her hair. She kissed His feet and put the special perfume on them.

39 The proud religious law-keeper who had

asked Jesus to eat with him saw this. He said to himself, “If this Man were One Who speaks for God, He would know who and what kind of a woman put her hands on Him. She is a sinner.”

40 Jesus said to him, “I have something to say to you, Simon.” And Simon said, “Teacher, say it.”

41 There were two men who owed a certain man some money. The one man owed 500 pieces of silver money. The other man owed 50 pieces of silver money.

42 Neither one of them had any money, so he told them they did not have to pay him back. Tell Me, which one would love him the most?”

43 Simon said, “I think it would be the one who owed the most.” And Jesus said to him, “You have said the right thing.”

44 He turned to the woman and said to Simon, “Do you see this woman? I came into your house and you gave Me no water to wash My feet. She washed My feet with her tears and dried them with the hairs of her head.

45 You gave me no kiss, but this woman has kissed my feet from the time I came in.

46 You did not put even oil on My head but this woman has put special perfume on My feet.

47 I tell you, her many sins are forgiven because she loves much. But the one who has been forgiven little, loves little.”

48 Then He said to the woman, “Your sins are forgiven.”

49 Those who were eating with Him began to say to themselves, “Who is this Man Who even forgives sins?”

50 He said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you from the punishment of sin. Go in peace.”



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

UNIT 4 Journeying to Jerusalem

Lesson 13
A Narrow Door,
a Limited Time
(Luke 13:22-35)

Lesson 14
Priority Matters
(Luke 14:1-24)

Lesson 15
Coming to the Party?
(Luke 15:1-2, 8-32)

Lesson 16
A Fatal Mistake
(Luke 16:19-31)

UNIT 4 INTRODUCTION

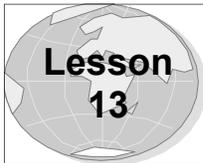
Journeying to Jerusalem

This unit is about Jesus' journey to Jerusalem and the cross. Large crowds followed Jesus. They wanted Him to heal them. They wanted to hear His teaching. Some of the people who were attracted to Jesus were outcasts. They were not included in the normal Jewish society. But in Jesus, they saw love and power. But the religious leaders became more and more angry with Jesus. They looked for ways to trap Him.

Again and again in these chapters of Luke, Jesus rebuked the religious leaders. He used parables to teach about the kingdom of God. He said the kingdom of God is like a celebration. Jesus knew He was getting closer and closer to the cross. But He never stopped reaching out in mercy. He wanted to gather the crowds to Himself.

Listen to these last lessons of Jesus. He challenges us to examine our own hearts. Unless we enter the kingdom by the rules God sets, we cannot be part of the celebration in heaven.

The church today must listen to what Jesus said to the religious leaders. Too often, we are critical of the lost. We fail to reach out to those Jesus came to save. Sometimes we fail to celebrate their return. Jesus calls out to the church to join Him at the celebration. He welcomes the poor, the sick, and the sinful. He wants us to welcome them with joy.



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

Bible Text

Luke 13:22-35

Memory Verse

“Go in through the narrow door. The door is wide and the road is easy that leads to hell. Many people are going through that door. But the door is narrow and the road is hard that leads to life that lasts forever. Few people are finding it.”
(Matthew 7:13-14)

Word List

automatic: sure to happen

claim: to declare to be true

requirement: something demanded

responsibility: things which someone is called to account for

resurrection: Christ’s rising from the grave

A Narrow Door, a Limited Time

Flerida came from Mexico to the United States in 1995. Living here didn’t make her a citizen. She couldn’t become a citizen until she had been a legal resident for five years. In 2007, Flerida took the oath of U.S. citizenship. Now she has all the rights of an American citizen. Citizenship also gave Flerida important **responsibilities**.

Flerida’s neighbor, Janie, invited her to English classes and to worship at her church. Flerida wanted to improve her English skills, so she went to church with her friend. Attending church didn’t make her a part of the kingdom of God. That happened when Flerida accepted Jesus as her Savior. She began a new relationship with Jesus Christ. Now she has all the privileges of God’s kingdom. She also has the responsibility to help others.

In this lesson, we will learn of the **requirements** for entering the kingdom of heaven. Jesus tells us not everyone will enter the kingdom. We must all make the decision to follow Christ for ourselves. This decision must be made while we are here on earth. We will learn that a great price has been paid for our salvation.

A Narrow Door (Luke 13:22-30)

Jesus kept teaching as He went on His way to Jerusalem and the cross. Someone asked Him a question that all people want to know. What happens to us when we die? Are we punished for our sins? Will there be only a few who go to heaven?

**Things to
Think About**

1. What do you think “the narrow door” means in Luke 13:23?
2. Jesus said, “Some are last who will be first. Some are first who will be last” (Luke 13:30). What did He mean?
3. What is your relationship with Christ?
4. Who lives in your neighborhood and needs to know Christ? How can you develop a friendship with this person?
5. How can we take the hope of Christ to the world?

Every religion deals with this question. Most religions say something happens to us after death. Some say there is nothing after death. Others say no one can know. Most Americans believe in God. Most believe only the really wicked people will go to hell. If someone dies, we say “he’s in a better place” no matter what his life was like.

Jesus’ answer tells us that salvation is *not automatic*. We have to meet God’s requirements to be saved. We choose heaven or hell when we accept or reject Christ. In Matthew 7:13-14, Jesus said, “Go in through the narrow door. The door is wide and the road is easy that leads to hell. Many people are going through that door. But the door is narrow and the road is hard that leads to life that lasts forever. Few people are finding it.”

Jesus made it clear that we must decide about heaven for ourselves. Many people will follow the easy road. It’s not hard to follow the crowd. But this road leads to hell.

There are few people who find the narrow door of salvation. This road leads to life that lasts forever!

A Limited Time (Luke 13:25- 30)

In Luke 13:25, Jesus tells a story about an owner of the house. We know the owner is God and the house is heaven. Once God closes the door, it’s too late for those still outside. They will beg to come in. They will **claim** to know God and even to have eaten with Him. But they didn’t have a relationship with Him. God says He doesn’t know these people.

It will be a sad day when God says some people will not enter heaven because of their sins. Those left outside will not celebrate in heaven. Jesus says heaven will be filled with people

from all parts of the world. Salvation is offered to all people, no matter where they live on the earth.

Jesus ends this story with a shocking piece of news. “Listen! Some are last who will be first. Some are first who will be last.” We will be surprised when we see who is in heaven. The things we think are important now don’t count in God’s kingdom. Only God can set the requirements for heaven.

Do you stay busy so you don’t have to think about what happens when you die? Do you spend time developing your relationship with God?

If God doesn’t know you when He closes the door, you can’t sit at His table. Once the door closes, it’s too late to develop that relationship with Him. You will be left outside for all time.

A Price to Be Paid (Luke 13:31-35)

Jesus knew that God’s gift of grace came at a big price. Nothing would stop Him from going to Jerusalem to pay the price for our sins.

Some religious leaders warned Jesus that Herod wanted to kill Him. Jesus wasn’t afraid of Herod. He called Herod a fox. We

usually think of a fox as clever and dishonest. But early Jews used this figure of speech to describe someone who was not important. How could the King of Kings be afraid of the king of Galilee?

Jesus said He *must* continue until His work was finished. Jesus would die in Jerusalem on a cross for our sins. Herod couldn’t stop God’s plan to save us. Jesus’ work required His service on earth, His death, *and* His **resurrection**. Jesus was determined to continue reaching out in mercy. He was determined to give His life for our sins. He was determined to win the victory over death by being raised from the grave.

It made Jesus sad to think about Jerusalem. God had sent early preachers to Jerusalem. But the people of Jerusalem had killed them. Now God was sending His Son to Jerusalem, and they refused Him. But Jesus wasn’t angry at Jerusalem. He used a word picture of a hen gathering her young under her wing to protect them. This is the way Jesus felt about Jerusalem. He longed to reach out in mercy to the city that rejected Him. But Jerusalem would not let Jesus save her.

God calls us to come under His wings of protection. We cannot find eternal life anywhere but in relationship with God. Have you accepted His offer? Are you enjoying a close relationship with Him? If not, what are you waiting for? Are you thankful for the great price Jesus paid to save you? Have you accepted your responsibility and shown others the way to salvation?

Luke 13:22-35

22 Jesus taught the people as He went through the cities and towns on His way to Jerusalem.

23 Someone asked Jesus, “Lord, will only a few people be saved from the punishment of sin?” Jesus said to them,

24 “Work hard to go in through the narrow door. I tell you, many will try to go in but will not be able to go in.

25 The owner of the house will get up and shut the door. You who are on the outside will knock on the door and say, ‘Lord, let us in.’ Then He will say, ‘I do not know you.’

26 Then you will say, ‘We ate and drank with You when You taught in our streets.’

27 But He will say, ‘I tell you, I do not know you. Go away from Me. You are sinful.’

28 “There will be loud crying and grinding of teeth when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the early preachers in the holy nation of God, but you will be put out.

29 Those who sit at the table in the holy nation

of God will come from the east and west and from the north and south.

30 Listen! Some are last who will be first. Some are first who will be last.”

31 That same day some of the proud religious law-keepers came to Jesus. They said, “Go away from here! Herod wants to kill You.”

32 Jesus said to them, “Go and tell that fox, ‘See. I put out demons and heal the sick. I will do these things today and tomorrow. And the third day My work will be finished.’”

33 But I must go on My way today and tomorrow and the day after. One who speaks for God cannot die except at Jerusalem.

34 “Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you kill the early preachers and throw stones on those sent to you. How many times I wanted to gather your children around me, as a bird gathers her young under her wings, but you would not let Me.

35 See! Your house is empty. And I tell you, you will not see Me again until the time comes when you will say, ‘Great and honored is the One Who comes in the name of the Lord.’”



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

Bible Text

Luke 14:1-24

Memory Verse

“Whoever makes himself look more important than he is will find out how little he is worth. Whoever does not try to honor himself will be made important.”

(Luke 14:11)

Word List

blind: unable to see

distract: to take a person’s mind off what he or she should be doing

mislead: to lead into error

priority: something that is more important than other things

ritual: a set pattern of behavior; ceremonies used in worship

unreachable: beyond reach; specifically in this lesson, beyond the reach of Christianity

Priority Matters

Some of my most delightful parties have included our international friends. Friends from China arrive promptly with a gift. My Mexican guests come 15 to 30 minutes later. Yet my dinner party would not be the same without each one at the table.

In this lesson, Jesus tells of a great dinner party. Some missed it because of misplaced **priorities**. For them, God’s invitation was not as important as religious **rituals**, selfish ambitions, or busy lives.

Don’t Be Misled by Religious Rituals (Luke 14:1-6)

Jesus was invited to a religious leader’s home on the Day of Rest. A man was there whose arms and legs were very swollen. Clearly, he was very ill. The host didn’t care about the man’s feelings. The religious leaders watched to see what Jesus would do. They were angry with Him (Luke 11:53). This meal and this man were a trap to catch Jesus doing something wrong.

Jesus wanted to help the man. He asked the teachers if the Law had anything to say about healing on the Day of Rest. These teachers had spent their lives studying, yet they had no answer.

So Jesus touched the man, healed him, and sent him away. What a joyful time for that man, for Jesus, and for those who loved Him. But the religious leaders weren’t happy.

Their religious rituals on the Day of Rest had misled them. They thought rules were more important than a sick man. Jesus said they cared more for their animals than they cared for that man. Again, they couldn’t think of an answer for Jesus.

Things to Think About

1. Why did the religious leader invite Jesus to his house?
2. What were the priorities for the religious leaders?
3. Do any of our religious rituals make it harder for the church to share the love of Christ?
4. Are your ambitions leading you to a closer walk with Christ?
5. Are you too busy to participate in God's kingdom?

The Day of Rest

The Sabbath law is found in the Old Testament. (See Exodus 20:8-11; 23:12; 31:12-17; 34:21; 35:2-3; Deuteronomy 5:12-15; Leviticus 19:3; 23:3; 26:2.) God wanted everyone to rest, even the servants and animals. On the Sabbath and the new moon, all business was to stop. Offerings were to be made. Feasts were held.

Later, religious leaders decided on a long list of things not allowed on the Day of Rest. Jesus had many conflicts with the religious leaders over it (Mark 2:27-28).

Don't Be Blinded by Selfish Ambitions (Luke 14:7-15)

Jesus watched the dinner guests. They tried to sit in places of honor at the tables. Jesus gave them some advice: Do not be blinded by selfish ambitions. This reminds us of what Jesus said in Luke 13:30: "Listen! Some are last who will be first. Some are first who will be last." Most people try to find ways to look important. But Jesus said what *we* think is important really isn't important to God. Things are different in God's kingdom.

Then Jesus gave some advice to the host. He suggested that at the next dinner party, the host should invite outcasts. This must have shocked the man. He wanted to impress people with his dinner. The poor people couldn't make him feel important. Yet Jesus said, "You will be happy if you do this" (Luke 14:14).

Our selfish ambition blinds us to the true rewards God offers. Jesus said happiness comes from serving others, even those who cannot pay us back. Have we become selfish even in our churches? Do we refuse to serve others who cannot return service to us? Are we blind to the rewards of humble service?

Someone sitting at the table with Jesus said, "Everyone is happy who will eat in the holy nation of God." Jesus didn't correct this man. It's true, being included in the kingdom of God brings happiness. The hard part is that some will not be there because they are blinded by selfish ambition.

Don't Be Distracted by Busy Lives (Luke 14:16-24)

Jesus told another picture story about a big dinner. Several days before the dinner, the host sent out invitations. This meant the guests had plenty of time to plan ahead. On the day of the dinner, the man sent a second invitation. Everything was ready.

But at the second invitation, each invited guest gave a weak excuse. The first person said he had bought some land and needed to go see it. Who would buy land without seeing it first? The second person boasted about buying ten cows. This was a way of telling the host of his own riches. The third excuse was even better. This man had gotten married. Did he forget he was getting married when he accepted the invitation to the dinner? The guests had accepted the host's invitation without making the dinner a priority.

Do we do that? Have you accepted God's invitation to be a part of His fellowship? Have you made fellowshiping with His family a priority?

When the first people refused to come, he invited the outcasts. But his servant returned saying there was still room for more. So the owner invited foreigners. He wanted a full house. Then he swore that none of the first guests would be welcome.

The religious leader must have understood Jesus' message. If the important people refuse to come, invite the outcasts. If the outcasts don't come, go to those who have never heard the message before. The

outcasts were coming to Jesus in large crowds. But the religious leaders were opposing Him. Now Jesus was offering His message to anyone who would accept it.

Even today, the ones most open to Christ are those who are hurting. The Christian church is growing fastest in areas we once thought **unreachable**. China, Asia, and Africa are hot spots of Christian growth. Yet many churches in America and Europe are struggling. The good news of Luke 14 is about a great banquet prepared for us. The bad news is that many will choose not to attend. Many are misled by religious traditions. Others have allowed their own ambitions to blind them to God's work. Most are distracted by busy lives.

When God's kingdom is not a priority, we miss the opportunity to celebrate at God's banquet table.

Luke 14:1-24

1 On the Day of Rest Jesus went into the house of one of the leaders of the proud religious lawkeepers to eat. They all watched Jesus to see what He would do.

2 A man who had very large arms and legs because of a sickness was put before Jesus.

3 Jesus asked the teachers of the Law and the proud religious lawkeepers, "Does the Law say it is right to heal on the Day of Rest, or not?"

4 They did not answer. Jesus took hold of the man and healed him and sent him away.

5 Then Jesus said to the leaders, “If one of you had a cow or donkey that fell into a hole, would you not go at once and pull it out on the Day of Rest?”

6 And they were not able to answer His questions.

7 Jesus had been watching those who were asked to come to supper. They were all trying to get the important seats. He told them a picture-story, saying,

8 “When you are asked by someone to a wedding supper, do not take the important seat. Someone more important than you may have been asked to come also.

9 The one who asked both of you to come may say to you, ‘The important seat is for this man.’ Then you will be ashamed as you take the last place.

10 But when you are asked to come to the table, sit down on the last seat. Then the one who asked you may come and say to you, ‘Friend, go to a more important place.’ Then you will be shown respect in front of all who are at the table with you.

11 Whoever makes himself look more important than he is will find out how little he is worth. Whoever does not try to honor himself will be made important.”

12 Then Jesus said to the man who asked Him to eat in his house, “When you have a supper, do not ask your friends or your brothers or your family or your rich neighbors. They will ask you to come to their place for a supper. That way you will be paid back for what you have done.

13 When you have a supper, ask poor people. Ask those who cannot walk and those who are blind.

14 You will be happy if you do this.

They cannot pay you back. You will get your reward when the people who are right with God are raised from the dead.”

15 When one of those eating at the table with Jesus heard this, he said, “Everyone is happy who will eat in the holy nation of God.”

16 Then Jesus said to the leader of the proud religious lawkeepers, “There was a man who was giving a big supper. He asked many people to come to eat.

17 When it was about time to eat, he sent one of the servants he owned to tell those he had asked, saying, ‘Come, everything is ready now.’

18 They all gave different reasons why they could not come. The first said, ‘I have bought some land and I must go and see it. Do not expect me to come.’

19 Another one said, ‘I have bought ten cows to use for working in my fields. I must go and try them out. Do not expect me to come.’

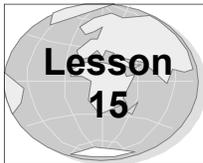
20 And another one said, ‘I have just been married and I cannot come.’

21”The servant went back to his owner and told him these things. Then his owner became angry. He said to his servant, ‘Hurry into the streets and narrow roads of the city and bring poor people here. Bring those whose bodies are diseased. Bring those who cannot walk and those who are blind.’

22 The servant came back and said, ‘Sir, what you told me to do has been done. But there are still some empty places.’

23 Then the owner said to his servant, ‘Go out along the roads leading away from the city and into the fields. Tell them they must come. Do this so my house will be filled.

24 I tell you, not one of those I had asked will eat of my supper.’”



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

Bible Text

Luke 15:1-2, 8-32

Memory Verse

“For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost.”

(Matthew 18:11)

Word List

celebrate: to observe an occasion with joy

immoral: having bad behavior or character

interrupted: to break the flow of speech

righteous: morally good, just

unacceptable: not good enough

Coming to the Party?

Many years ago my husband wore hard contact lenses. Randy could not see farther than six inches without them. We took a group of young people on a mission trip. We went to an Indian Reservation to share Christ. One morning, Randy was outside putting his contacts in his eyes. A breeze blew the contact off his finger and into the dirt nearby. We had to find that contact. All the youth got on their knees and helped search. It was difficult work. The contact was tiny among the rocks and dirt. Finally, someone shouted out, “I found it!” All of us cried out in joy! Randy could see again!

In this lesson, we will see that Jesus says the angels in heaven rejoice when one lost soul returns to the Father. How long has it been since you helped seek the lost? Have you rejoiced at their coming home to the Father?

The Ministry of Christ (Luke 15:1-2)

The outcasts of society were always around Jesus. Some of them lived **immoral** lives. Others had jobs that were considered **unacceptable**. The religious leaders of the day thought these people were sinners. They thought Jesus was a sinner, too, because He was around them. But they were proud to be **righteous** because they kept the law. They kept themselves clean. They fasted and prayed three times a day. And most importantly, they proudly stayed away from sinners.

Jesus was different. He noticed the outsiders. He touched the unclean. He ate with the immoral. Jesus knew their names. He hated their sin and would one day take their sins on Himself.

Things to Think About

1. Who were the sinners Jesus spoke of in Luke 15?
2. Who were the righteous?
3. Who are the lost in your community?
4. Is your church reaching out to the lost with the hope of Christ?
5. Do you know three people who do not know Christ? What can you do to share Christ with them?

Sinners or Righteous?

In Romans 3:23 we are reminded that we are all sinners. New Testament teacher Joachim Jeremias described sinners as people who led immoral lives. But sinners were also people who had dishonorable jobs, like donkey drivers, tanners, shepherds, and tax collectors. These people were the outcasts of society.

Jesus probably meant the religious leaders were the righteous—at least on the outside. They dressed well. They did the right things. They were respected in their community. But Jesus said they needed to repent, too. Like the older son in Jesus' story, they thought they were obedient and right. But Jesus knew their hearts were full of wrong. The forgiving love of the Father was needed for everyone.

He sought them out and called them to repent. That's the reason He came. Jesus told three stories to help us understand.

The Lost Sheep (Luke 15:3-7)

The religious leaders thought shepherds were sinners. They couldn't keep themselves clean by the rules set by the leaders. But God had a plan for shepherds. Abraham, Moses, and David were shepherds. Shepherds were the first to witness Jesus' birth.

Shepherds knew their sheep and counted them. If one was missing, he searched the dangerous places until he found it. He carried it home on his shoulders. The shepherd held a party to **celebrate** the return of his lost sheep. Jesus said the angels in heaven celebrate when a lost sinner returns to God. In John 10:14a, Jesus said, "I am the Good Shepherd."

The Lost Coin (Luke 15:8-10)

Next, Jesus told the story of a woman who lost a silver coin. This would have been a whole day's pay for the woman. Her family would suffer without it. So the woman searched carefully. Her floor was probably covered with reeds. The house was dark. So she lit a lamp and swept the floor. When she found the coin, friends and neighbors celebrated with her. Jesus said this is what the angels do in heaven when a sinner repents.

The Lost Son (Luke 15:11-32)

The third story was about two sons. These boys were very different from each other. The older son always followed the rules. He would receive two-thirds of his father's wealth. The younger son wanted his share now. He rebelled against his father. So his father divided everything he owned between the two sons.

The younger son went far away and lived foolishly. He lost all his money, and there was no food in the land. He got a job on a farm feeding pigs. He wasn't the owner's son. He was the lowest worker. He was hungry and thought about eating with the pigs. Yet no one gave him anything. Finally, he realized what he had left behind. He knew the workers at his father's farm were not hungry. So he decided to return to his father. He would not make excuses. He would say he was sorry. He would not ask to return as a son. He would ask for the lowest job in his father's house.

The father saw the son coming from far away. "The father was full of loving pity for him" (Luke 15:20). He ran to his son, hugged him, and kissed him. The son tried to tell his father how sorry he was. But the father **interrupted** him. He told his servants to dress his son in the best clothes. He told them to kill the fat calf so they could have a party and celebrate.

The older son had been working in the field. When he saw the party, he was full of envy and bitterness. The loving father went to his angry son. He asked him to come in and celebrate. Instead, the older

son complained to his father. He refused to celebrate his brother's return.

A Mission from Heaven

The church should have the same heart for sinners as Jesus has. We must be as brave as the shepherd to rescue the lost. We must work as hard as the woman to find them. And we must be as loving as the father to welcome them home. Jesus knew the religious leaders weren't happy when He was around sinners. But He had to do it. That was the reason He came. That was His mission. In Matthew 18:11, Jesus said, "For the Son of Man has come to save that which was lost."

How much effort does your church put in seeking the lost? Do we condemn them when we should be helping them find Jesus? Do we fill our time with activities that bring others to Christ? Are we busy with the message of salvation?

God has already prepared the hearts of the lost to know Him. He has prepared heaven to celebrate. Jesus has paid the price for all our sin. Our mission is to find the lost and tell them of God's love. The celebration has begun. Will we be a part of the party?

Luke 15:1-2, 8-32

1 All the tax-gatherers and sinners were coming to hear Jesus. **2** The proud religious lawkeepers and the teachers of the Law began to speak against Him. They said, “This man receives sinners and eats with them.”

8 “What if a woman has ten silver pieces of money and loses one of them? Does she not light a lamp and sweep the floor and look until she finds it? **9** When she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together. She says to them, ‘Be happy with me. I have found the piece of money I had lost.’ **10** I tell you, it is the same way among the angels of God. If one sinner is sorry for his sins and turns from them, the angels are very happy.”

11 And Jesus said, “There was a man who had two sons. **12** The younger son said to his father, ‘Father, let me have the part of the family riches that will be coming to me.’ Then the father divided all that he owned between his two sons. **13** Soon after that the younger son took all that had been given to him and went to another country far away. There he spent all he had on wild and foolish living. **14** When all his money was spent, he was hungry. There was no food in the land. **15** He went to work for a man in this far away country. His work was to feed pigs. **16** He was so hungry he was ready to eat the outside part of the ears of the corn the pigs ate because no one gave him anything.

17 “He began to think about what he had done. He said to himself, ‘My father pays many men who work for him. They have all the food they want and more than enough. I am about dead because I am so hungry. **18** I will get up and go to my father. I will say to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. **19** I am

not good enough to be called your son. But may I be as one of the workmen you pay to work?’”

20 “The son got up and went to his father. While he was yet a long way off, his father saw him. The father was full of loving-pity for him. He ran and threw his arms around him and kissed him. **21** The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am not good enough to be called your son.’ **22** But the father said to the workmen he owned, ‘Hurry! Get the best coat and put it on him. Put a ring on his hand and shoes on his feet. **23** Bring the calf that is fat and kill it. Let us eat and be glad. **24** For my son was dead and now he is alive again. He was lost and now he is found. Let us eat and have a good time.’

25 “The older son was out in the field. As he was coming near the house, he heard music and dancing. **26** He called one of the servants and asked what was happening. **27** The servant answered, ‘Your brother has come back and your father has killed the fat calf. Your brother is in the house and is well.’ **28** The older brother was angry and would not go into the house. His father went outside and asked him to come in. **29** The older son said to his father, ‘All these many years I have served you. I have always obeyed what you said. But you never gave me a young goat so I could have a supper and a good time with my friends. **30** But as soon as this son of yours came back, you killed the fat calf. And yet he wasted your money with bad women.’

31 “The father said to him, ‘My son, you are with me all the time. All that I have is yours. **32** It is right and good that we should have a good time and be glad. Your brother was dead and now he is alive again. He was lost and now he is found.’”



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

Bible Text

Luke 16:19-31

Memory Verse

“Do not gather together for yourself riches of this earth. They will be eaten by bugs and become rusted. Men can break in and steal them. Gather together riches in heaven where they will not be eaten by bugs or become rusted. Men cannot break in and steal them. For wherever your riches are, your heart will be there also.”

(Matthew 6:19-21)

Word List

evidence: information that proves or makes clear

impress: to cause someone to feel admiration or respect

A Fatal Mistake

Hold your wrist and find your pulse. For every beat you feel, someone somewhere on earth dies without Christ. Someone goes to hell every time your heart beats. Somewhere in the world, millions of people are hungry today. Somewhere someone is dying alone. It could be across the street from your home.

Have you ever asked yourself, “Why am I so blessed?” In this lesson, we learn that God wants you to use these blessings for His kingdom? He has not given you so much just to spend it on yourself. There are people who need to know Christ. There are people who are hurting. What will you do to help?

Life for The Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-21)

Jesus was speaking to “the proud religious law-keepers” who “loved money” (Luke 16:14). They thought God blessed those who feared Him with riches. They thought being poor or sick was God’s punishment for sin. Jesus told a story that disagreed with their ideas.

In this story, Jesus tells the name of a poor man. Lazarus may have been someone Jesus knew. The rich man’s name is not given. He could have been one of the law-keepers. The rich man thought his riches were for his own enjoyment. He wore fancy clothes and ate rich foods every day.

When we have money we feel safe. When rich people die, they leave everything. Poor people leave everything, too. Money can buy food and clothing for this life. But money can do nothing for us in the life after death.

indulged: allowed to do or have what is wanted

neglect: to fail to give proper attention

Things to Think About

1. Was Jesus teaching that the wealthy cannot go to heaven?
2. What do we learn about heaven and hell in this story?
3. What was the rich man's sin that caused his separation from God?
4. What have I done in the last month that shows I have compassion for the poor?

Lazarus's life was very unhappy. He was sick and covered with sores. No one seemed to care for Lazarus. He was "thrown out" at the door of the rich man. Lazarus was hungry, too. People did not use napkins in those days. They ate with their hands. They used bits of bread to clean their fingers. Then they threw the bread under the table for the dogs to eat. Lazarus wanted to eat the food meant for the dogs.

Jesus didn't say the rich man hurt Lazarus. The rich man even knew Lazarus's name. But he didn't help Lazarus. He dressed in fancy clothes while Lazarus was in rags. He ate fancy food while Lazarus starved to death.

Death for the Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16:22-26)

Both the rich man and the poor man died. When Lazarus died, no one mourned. There was no burial. No one noticed. But God was always aware of him. Angels came for Lazarus. They brought him to Abraham's arms.

Jesus was always aware of people no one noticed. He saw Zaccheus, the hated tax gatherer in the crowd of people. At the temple, He saw the widow when everyone was watching the rich men. Jesus touched the sick. He blessed the children. He ate with the sinners. Jesus even called ordinary fishermen to be His special helpers. It isn't surprising that heaven rejoiced when Lazarus arrived in Abraham's arms.

When the rich man died, he had a burial. His family and friends probably celebrated his life. But he was thrown into hell. Hell must be a terrible place. The rich man cried out in pain. He could see Lazarus in the arms of Abraham. He begged for relief from his pain. The flames of hell burned him. He thought one

drop of water would cool his tongue and bring relief. But Abraham told him there was nothing he could do to help him. Salvation must be chosen before death, not after death.

What was the rich man's sin that sent him to hell? He was probably one of the law-keepers. Jesus doesn't tell us that he had done some terrible thing. He wasn't a criminal. He was respected. All we know is that he was selfish. He **indulged** himself and **neglected** Lazarus.

Jesus described the judgment in Matthew 25. The righteous and the unrighteous were separated at judgment. The **evidence** of righteousness was a person's answer to the needs of others. Does this mean acts of kindness will earn our salvation for us? No!

The righteous ones didn't do good things to **impress** God. Their good deeds were evidence of how God had changed their hearts. The unrighteous had failed to help others because the love of Christ did not live in their hearts.

A Warning to the Living (Luke 16:27-31)

The rich man saw he could get no help. It was too late for him, but maybe his

brothers could be helped. He begged Abraham to send Lazarus to warn them. Abraham said they had the Scriptures. The rich man knew he had ignored the Scriptures. He was sure his brothers would do the same. If someone came back from the dead, maybe his brothers would believe and repent. Abraham's answer is difficult. "If they do not listen to Moses and to the early preachers, they will not listen even if someone is raised from the dead."

Did the law-keepers remember this story when Jesus was raised from the dead? Did they believe then? Abraham's answer to the rich man seems to say that miracles don't lead us to repent. Jesus raised His friend, Lazarus, from the dead. Yet some of the people who saw Jesus' miracle still planned to kill Him. They didn't repent. If God's Word doesn't convict us of sin, miracles will not either.

Apply the Lesson

How do we know that we know God? Will our good lives save us? Will we go to heaven if we are members of a good church? Are we lovers of money? Do the poor and sick move us to action? Do we share food with those who are hungry?

We must say *no* to our selfishness and *yes* to Christ. We must trust Christ to change our hearts. God's blessings in our lives are meant to be shared. When Christ is in us, His love will cause us to love others as He has loved us.

Luke 16:19-31

19 “There was a rich man who dressed in purple linen clothes everyday. He lived like a king would live with the best of food.

20 There was a poor man named Lazarus who had many bad sores. He was put by the door of the rich man.

21 He wanted the pieces of food that fell from the table of the rich man. Even dogs came and licked his sores.

22 “The poor man who asked for food died. He was taken by the angels into the arms of Abraham. The rich man died also and was buried.

23 In hell the rich man was in much pain. He looked up and saw Abraham far away and Lazarus beside him.

24 He cried out and said, ‘Father Abraham, take pity on me. Send Lazarus. Let him put the end of his finger in water and cool my tongue. I am in much pain in this fire.’

25 Abraham said, ‘My son, do not forget that when you were living you had your good things. Lazarus had bad things. Now he is well cared for. You are in pain.

26 And more than all this, there is a big deep place between us. No one from here can go there even if he wanted to go. No one can come from there.’

27 “Then the rich man said, ‘Father, then I beg you to send Lazarus to my father’s house.

28 I have five brothers. Let him tell them of these things, or they will come to this place of much pain also.’

29 Abraham said, ‘They have the Writings of Moses and of the early preachers. Let them hear what they say.’

30 But the rich man said, ‘No, Father Abraham. If someone goes to them from the dead, they will be sorry for their sins and turn from them.’

31 Abraham said to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and to the early preachers, they will not listen even if someone is raised from the dead.’”

Applying This Scripture

- Are there people near your church who have special needs? They might be hungry, homeless, elderly without families, prisoners, children, immigrants, and military families.
- Which of these needs could you help meet? How can you build relationships with these people? Can you give time and money to help?
- Are you willing to get training to minister effectively?
- Who are some people from your church who will help you with this ministry?



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

UNIT 5 Jesus' Death and Resurrection

Lesson 17
Crucified—for Us
Luke 23:1-25,32-49

Lesson 18
Resurrected—for Us
Luke 24:1-10,
33-39,44-48

UNIT 5 INTRODUCTION

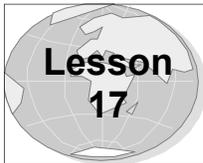
Jesus' Death and Resurrection

Unit 5, “Jesus’ Death and Resurrection,” is a two-lesson study of Luke 23-24. Luke tells what happened when Jesus died on the cross and was raised from the grave. As Jesus headed toward Jerusalem, He knew the time had come for Him to die. His joyful welcome to Jerusalem turned to shouting for His death. A group of religious leaders asked Him about the belief in life after death. They didn’t believe it could happen. Yet Jesus proved there is life after death when He rose from the grave!

Luke asks the question, *Who is Jesus?* His death and rising from the grave show who Jesus is. In Luke 22:67,70, the Jewish religious leaders asked Jesus, “Are You the Son of God then?” Jesus answered and said, “Yes, I am.” This was the charge against Jesus at His trial. He was put to death because He said He was the Son of God. Jesus had also said the Christ would rise on the third day. He did just that! Jesus really is the Christ. The disciples who saw Jesus after He rose were filled with happiness. This is good news of great joy (2:10; 24:52).

In our study of Luke 23, Jesus is the innocent Christ. He took the place of Barabbas. Indeed, Jesus took *your* place. He was mocked, He suffered, and He died on the cross for you and me.

The rising of Christ from the grave is the focus of our study in Luke 24. Luke shows how the women were the first to see the empty tomb. The rest of the disciples and the Scriptures also witness to Jesus’ rising. Today we are witnesses for our risen Lord.



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

Bible Text

Luke 23:1-26, 32-49

Memory Verse

“But God showed His love to us. While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

(Romans 5:8)

Word List

charges: blame, accusation

crucify: to kill someone by nailing or binding to a cross and leaving him to die

guilty: having broken the Law of God, the laws of a state, or a moral or social rule

Crucified—for Us

Sylvia sat in jail. Her husband had been beating her. Her daughter called the police. But the police took Sylvia to jail. Her husband who hurt her was free. But Sylvia was in jail.

Many times Sylvia had heard the story of Jesus' death for our sins. Many times Sylvia had refused to accept Christ. But in jail, Sylvia understood what Jesus had done for her. When she sat in jail for her husband's crimes, she knew. Jesus died on the cross for what Sylvia had done. In jail, Sylvia gave her heart to Jesus.

In this lesson, we learn about Jesus' death on the cross. He took our place when He died. Jesus had done nothing wrong. In fact, His life was filled with good. Jesus' death made it possible for us to have a relationship with God. The most important thing that has ever happened on earth was the death of Jesus.

Jesus Is Not Guilty (Luke 23:1-16)

All the religious leaders took Jesus to Pilate, the Roman leader. Rome ruled Israel. The Jewish leaders could not put anyone to death. They wanted Pilate to **crucify** Jesus. But they knew Pilate would not do this because of their religious reasons. So they made up some false **charges** against Jesus. They wanted Pilate to believe Jesus would start trouble for the Romans. Pilate wanted to know the truth. He asked Jesus if He was the King of the Jews. Jesus wanted Pilate to know the truth, so He said, “What you said is true.” Pilate found nothing wrong with Jesus.

But then the Jewish leaders became angry. When Pilate heard Jesus was from Galilee, he sent Jesus to Herod. Herod ruled of Galilee. He had heard of Jesus. He wanted to see Jesus

Things to Think About

1. Was Jesus crucified for a real crime? Why or why not?
2. Why did Jesus answer Pilate's questions, but not Herod's?
3. If you had been there, would you have cried for the release of Barabbas or Jesus?
4. Maybe the religious leaders stirred up the crowds to shout for Jesus' death. Have you ever been stirred to do wrong things? Are you ever afraid to stand up for Jesus?
5. Imagine you are Barabbas. What must he have felt to know Jesus died in his place? How does it feel to know Jesus died in your place, too?

do something powerful. He asked Jesus many questions. But Jesus said nothing. To make the religious leaders happy, Herod ordered his soldiers to treat Jesus badly. But Herod could find no reason to put Jesus to death. So he sent Him back to Pilate.

Again, Pilate did not find Jesus **guilty** of anything worthy of death. Pilate offered to punish Jesus and let Him go free.

Jesus Replaces Barabbas (Luke 23:17-26)

Every year at this time a criminal would be set free. Pilate wanted to set Jesus free. The crowd shouted for Barabbas to be set free. Barabbas had killed some people. He had done the things the people said Jesus had done. Pilate tried again to talk to the people. This time they shouted, "Crucify Him!" Pilate asked them, "Why? What bad thing has He done?" (Luke 23:22). He offered again to punish Jesus and let Him go free.

Maybe Pilate was afraid of the crowd. "Their loud voices got what they wanted" (Luke 23:23). Pilate gave Jesus to the crowd to do what they wanted. They wanted Him crucified.

Jesus is Crucified (Luke 23:32-43)

Luke tells us that two other men were crucified that day.

Jesus was nailed to a cross between these two men. Both of them had done crimes worthy of death.

On the cross, Jesus had pity on those who were treating Him so badly. Jesus taught that we should love our enemies (Luke 6:22-23,27,35). This is a hard thing to do. But Jesus showed us the way. Jesus knew these people didn't understand. He didn't want even the bad people to suffer for their

Jesus' Crucifixion

Crucifixion was a shameful thing. The person died a slow death in front of many people. The people passed by and made fun of the criminal. Even the place where they were crucified was a place of shame.

Hebrews 13:11-13 explains this. "The head religious leader takes the blood of animals into the holy place to give it on the altar for sins. But the bodies of the animals are burned outside the city. It was the same with Jesus. He suffered and died outside the city so His blood would make the people clean from sin. So let us go to Him outside the city to share His shame."

sins. So He prayed to God, “Father, forgive them. They do not know what they are doing” (Luke 23:34).

They gambled to see who would get to keep Jesus’ clothes. David had written about this in Psalm 22:18.

Those who stood watching had hard hearts. The leaders, soldiers, and even one of the men on a cross next to Jesus made fun of Him. They didn’t feel sorry when they saw Jesus bleeding and dying. But Jesus loved His enemies. The other man on the cross next to Jesus repented. He confessed he was guilty and asked Jesus to remember him. Jesus promised, “Today you will be with Me in Paradise” (Luke 23:43). In the New Testament, paradise is the last home of the righteous.

Jesus Dies (Luke 23:44-49)

The brightest part of the day is from noon to 3:00 P.M. But on the day Jesus died, the earth was dark at this time. Then the curtain in the Temple was torn in two pieces. God was no longer behind the curtain. God was available to every man. Jesus had done away with the old Temple system. A new day had come.

The Romans or Jews didn’t kill

Jesus. Jesus died because He gave His spirit into God’s hands (Luke 23:46). One soldier praised God. He knew Jesus wasn’t guilty. The people left “beating themselves on their chests” (Luke 23:48). This was a sign of sorrow for sin or guilt. They knew they were the guilty ones that day.

Apply the Lesson

The death of Jesus opened the way for us to know God. God lives in us because Jesus died in our place. This is the most important thing to ever happen on earth. How thankful we are for God’s love as shown through Jesus’ actions. We must share this good news with all the earth. Everyone must know God’s salvation is free because of what Jesus did for us.

Luke 23:1-26, 32-49

1 Then all the many people got up and took Jesus to Pilate. **2** They began to tell things against Him, saying, “We have found this Man leading the people of our nation in a wrong way. He has been telling them not to pay taxes to Caesar. He has been saying He is Christ, a King.”

3 Pilate asked Jesus, “Are You the King of the Jews?” He said, “What you said is true.” **4** Then Pilate said to the religious leaders and to the people, “I find nothing wrong in this Man.” **5** They became more angry. They said, “He makes trouble among the people. He has been teaching over all the country of Judea, starting in Galilee and now here.”

6 When Pilate heard the word, Galilee, he asked, “Is the Man from Galilee?” **7** As soon as

Pilate knew Jesus belonged in the country where Herod was king, he sent Him to Herod. Herod was in Jerusalem at that time also.

8 Herod was very glad when he saw Jesus because he had wanted to see Him for a long time. He had heard many things about Him and had hoped to see Him do some powerful work. **9** Herod talked to Jesus and asked many things. But Jesus said nothing. **10** The religious leaders and the teachers of the Law were standing there. They said many false things against Him.

11 Then Herod and his soldiers were very bad to Jesus and made fun of Him. They put a beautiful coat on Him and sent Him back to Pilate. **12** That day Pilate and Herod became friends. Before that they had worked against each other.

13 Pilate called the religious leaders and the leaders of the people and the people together. **14** He said to them, “You brought this Man to me as one that leads the people in the wrong way. I have asked Him about these things in front of you. I do not find Him guilty of the things you say against Him. **15** Herod found nothing wrong with Him because he sent Him back to us. There is no reason to have Him put to death. **16** I will punish Him and let Him go free.”

17 *Every year at the time of the special supper, Pilate would let one person who was in prison go free. **18** They all cried out together with a loud voice, “Take this Man away! Let Barabbas go free.” **19** Barabbas had killed some people and had made trouble against the leaders of the country. He had been put in prison.

20 Pilate wanted to let Jesus go free so he talked to them again. **21** But they cried out, “Nail Him to a cross! Nail Him to a cross!” **22** Pilate said to them the third time, “Why, what bad thing has He done? I have found no reason to put Him to death. I will punish Him and let Him go free.”

23 But they kept on crying out with loud voices saying that He must be nailed to a cross. Their loud voices got what they wanted. **24** Then Pilate said that it should be done as they wanted. **25** Pilate let the man go free who had made trouble against the leaders of the country and who had killed people. He gave Jesus over to them to do with as they wanted.

26 They led Jesus away. A man named Simon was coming in from the country of Cyrene and they

made him carry the cross following behind Jesus.

32 Two other men were led away with Jesus to be put to death also. These men had done things making them guilty of death. **33** When they came to the place called Calvary, they nailed Jesus to a cross. The other two men were nailed to crosses also. One was on the right side of Jesus and the other was on His left side. **34** Then Jesus said, “Father, forgive them. They do not know what they are doing.” And they divided His clothes by drawing names.

35 The people stood around looking on. The leaders were there with them making fun of Jesus. They said, “He saved others, let Him save Himself if He is the Christ, the Chosen One of God!” **36** The soldiers made fun of Him also. They put sour wine before Him. **37** They said, “If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself.” **38** These words were written in the Greek and Latin and Hebrew languages above His head: “THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.”

39 One of the men who was guilty of death who was on a cross beside Jesus spoke bad words to Him. He said, “If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us.” **40** But the other man on a cross spoke sharp words to the one who made fun of Jesus. He said, “Are you not afraid of God? You are also guilty and will be punished. **41** We are suffering and we should, because of the wrong we have done. But this Man has done nothing wrong.” **42** And he said to Jesus, “Lord, remember me when You come into Your holy nation.” **43** Jesus said to him, “For sure, I tell you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.”

44 It was dark over all the earth from noon until three o’clock. **45** The sun did not shine. In the house of God the curtain was torn in two pieces. **46** Then Jesus cried out with a loud voice, “Father, into Your hands I give My spirit.” When He said this, He died.

47 When the soldier saw what had happened, he thanked God. He said, “For sure, He was a good man.” **48** All the many people who came together to see the things that were done, went away beating themselves on their chests. **49** All His friends and the women who had come with Him from Galilee stood a long way off watching these things.



Adult Bible Study in
Simplified English

Bible Text

Luke 24:1-10,
33-39, 44-48

Memory Verse

“It must be preached that men must be sorry for their sins and turn from them. Then they will be forgiven. This must be preached in His name to all nations beginning in Jerusalem. You are to tell what you have seen.” (Luke 24:47-48)

Word List

accused: to charge someone with doing wrong, to blame

burial: putting a dead body into a grave

prophecy: a statement telling something that is to happen in the future

resurrection: the rising of Christ from the grave

Resurrected—for Us

Ronnie Hood was an English teacher in a public school in Moscow. He was a missionary too. Ronnie wanted to tell the people of Moscow about Jesus. One day the teachers asked him about his belief in Christ. He was surprised they would ask. Most people in Russia didn't believe in God. The school principal wanted to know about Jesus. She was hopeless. She said, “Show me now why you believe that I might believe!”

The answers she wanted to hear are in our Scripture passage today. We can believe Jesus is the Christ because He rose from the grave. Death could not hold the Lord. The witness of the women and disciples is confirmed in Scripture. Jesus is alive! He rose from the grave. He is Lord.

Women Witnessed the Resurrection (Luke 24:1-11)

Joseph was a member of the group of leaders who **accused** Jesus. He did not agree with their actions. When Jesus died, Joseph asked Pilate if he could take His body. The laws of the Jews required **burial** of the dead as quickly as possible. Joseph quickly wrapped the body in a cloth and put it in a new tomb. The tomb was a cave with a large round stone over the opening. The women watched where he put the body. They got spices and perfumes ready to rub on Jesus' body. They rested on the Day of Rest before going to the tomb (Luke 23:50-56).

Jews believed touching a dead body made them unclean. It was the women's job to take care of a dead body. Very early in the morning on Sunday, women came to the tomb with the spices. The women were surprised to see the large stone rolled

witness: to be present at the time of an event and see it

Things to Think About

1. How do you think the women were feeling as they went to the tomb Sunday morning?
2. How did their feelings change when they found Jesus was alive?
3. Would you have believed the women when they reported that Jesus had risen? Why or why not?
4. Do you tell the good news of Jesus? Are you sharing with your friends and family?
5. How does Jesus' victory over death change your ideas about death? What happens when a Christian dies?

away. They went inside the tomb, but Jesus' body was not there.

The women were wondering what had happened when two men in shining clothes appeared. The women were afraid. They fell with their faces to the ground. The men questioned the women. The angels told them Jesus had been raised by God from the dead. They reminded the women that Jesus had said He would rise. Then the women remembered Jesus' words (Luke 9:22).

They left the grave and rushed to tell the disciples what had happened. The disciples didn't believe them. It sounded like foolish talk. Women were not important in those days. They could not be witnesses in a court. They had to do the work no one else wanted to do. But women were the first to see Jesus. In Luke 13:30, Jesus said. "Listen! Some are last who will be first. Some are first who will be last." Jesus thought the women were important. He wanted the women to know and tell the good news of His resurrection.

Disciples Witnessed the Resurrection (Luke 24:33-39)

When Peter heard the witness of the women, he ran to the grave. He saw only the cloth lying there. He left very surprised. Two other disciples who heard what the women had said left

Without Jesus' Resurrection

- We are hopeless (Acts 24:15)
- We are liars (1 Corinthians 15:15)
- Our faith is worth nothing (1 Corinthians 15:17)
- We are still in our sins (1 Corinthians 15:17)

With Jesus' Resurrection

- We are dead to the power of sin and have new life in Christ (Romans 6:11)
- We have power over sin (1 Corinthians 15:57)
- We have a hope that never dies (1 Peter 1:3)
- We are happy and holy (Revelation 20:6)

Jerusalem. They were very sad. Jesus walked with them on the road. They didn't know who He was. He explained the Scriptures to them. When they saw it was Jesus with them, their hearts were filled with joy! They rushed back to Jerusalem to tell the other disciples. They said, "For

sure the Lord is risen!” (Luke 24:34). They confirmed what the women had said. While they were telling what happened, the Lord Jesus Himself stood among them.

Jesus' first words were, “May you have peace.” But the disciples were filled with fear. They thought Jesus was a spirit. Jesus showed them His hands and feet where the nails had been. He said they could touch Him. Jesus wanted them to know for sure that He was really alive. It was hard for the disciples to believe that Jesus had been dead and now was alive. But surely their hearts were happy.

Scriptures Witness to the Resurrection (Luke 24:44-48)

Jesus had told the disciples what would happen to Him. “The Son of Man must suffer many things. The leaders and the religious leaders and the teachers of the Law will have nothing to do with Him. He must be killed and be raised from the dead three days later” (Luke 9:22).

He reminded them of all the **prophecy** in the Old Testament that told of the Messiah. (See Micah 5:2, Isaiah 40:3, Isaiah 28:16 for a few.) Even the Psalms told things that would happen in Jesus' life

and death (Psalm 16:10, Psalm 22). The Scriptures confirmed that Jesus is the Messiah. Jesus “opened their minds to understand the Holy Writings” (Luke 24:45). The disciples may have read the Holy Writings before, but they didn't understand. Jesus had done what the Scriptures said the Messiah would do.

Now, Jesus said the story must be told. He told them to start telling the wonderful story in Jerusalem. He said they would tell this story to all the nations: People must be sorry for their sins and turn from them. We can only have forgiveness through Jesus Christ.

Apply the Lesson

Can you see yourself in Luke's story of Jesus' death and resurrection? Can you see how your fears are eased when the Living Lord comes in? Have you had your heart and mind opened by Jesus? Do you see the clear link between Jesus and the Messiah of the Old Testament? The Messiah of the Old Testament is alive. Jesus of the cross is alive today.

Our world is full of hopeless people. They need to hear the Gospel of the Living Lord. Witnesses can share their story of

how Jesus changed their lives. Jesus' resurrection really happened. It proves Jesus is alive. Jesus is the answer to sin. Jesus is the only way for people to come to God.

Luke 24:1-10, 33-39, 44-48

1 Early in the morning on the first day of the week, the women went to the grave taking the spices they had made ready.

2 They found the stone had been pushed away from the grave.

3 They went in but they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus.

4 While they wondered about what had happened, they saw two men standing by them in shining clothes.

5 They were very much afraid and got down with their faces to the ground. The men said to them, "Why do you look for the living One among those who are dead?"

6 He is not here. He is risen. Do you not remember what He said to you when He was yet in Galilee?

7 He said, "The Son of Man must be given over into the hands of sinful men. He must be nailed to a cross. He will rise again three days later." "

8 They remembered what He had said.

9 When they came back from the grave, they told all these things to the eleven followers and to all the others.

10 They were Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James. Other women who were with them told these things to the followers also.

33 Then they got up at once and went back to Jerusalem. They found the eleven followers together and others with them.

34 They said, "For sure the Lord is risen and was seen by Simon."

35 Then they told what had happened on the road and how they came to know Him when He broke the bread.

36 As they talked, Jesus Himself stood among them. He said, "May you have peace."

37 But they were afraid and full of fear. They thought they saw a spirit.

38 Jesus said to them, "Why are you afraid? Why do you have doubts in your hearts?"

39 Look at My hands and My feet. See! It is I, Myself! Touch Me and see for yourself. A spirit does not have flesh and bones as I have."

44 Jesus said to them, "These are the things I told you while I was yet with you. All things written about Me in the Law of Moses and in the Books of the early preachers and in the Psalms must happen as they said they would happen."

45 Then He opened their minds to understand the Holy Writings.

46 He said to them, "It is written that Christ should suffer and be raised from the dead after three days.

47 It must be preached that men must be sorry for their sins and turn from them. Then they will be forgiven. This must be preached in His name to all nations beginning in Jerusalem.

48 You are to tell what you have seen.