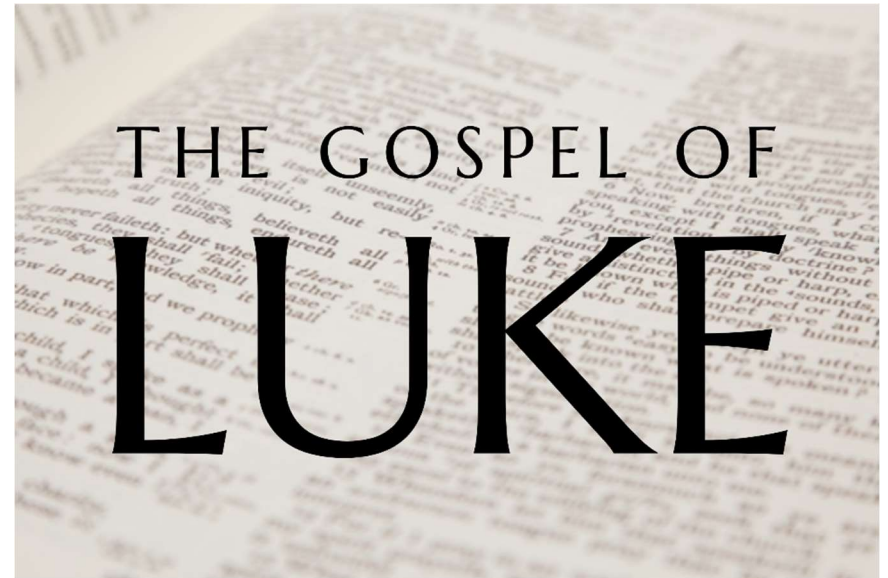


five loaves; there is more bread in his hands to break off. And so, it goes on and on, until everyone present has eaten, and is satisfied. As is always the case, some took more than what they could eat and "twelve baskets of broken pieces" are gathered up. These baskets were large, one for each of the Apostles to pick up and carry. Picture the Twelve coming back together, each with a large basket full of food, looking at each other, and shaking their heads in disbelief at what they had just witnessed.

This is our Saviour; this is our Lord. What are you hungering for in your life? Believe in Jesus and ask him to provide it for you. He has the power to do so, in accordance with his will for your life, and the glory of the Father.

## FAMILY WORSHIP BOOKLET



God tells us that Ezra read from the book of the Law, day after day, and that the people of God were filled with joy!

**Friday - Luke 9:10-17 - Believe and trust in Jesus' power.**

*V10. The Apostles report back.* Luke now calls the twelve 'the apostles', after they return from their preaching tour. Jesus, keen to know how they got on, takes them away from the constant demands they had been experiencing; and so, they set out for Bethsaida, Mark 6:31.

*V11. Jesus has compassion.* Jesus reacts with compassion when he sees the thousands of people waiting on the shore, because "they were like sheep without a shepherd", Mark 6:34. It is a beautiful thing when men and women want to be fed from the hand of the Lord, through the ministry of his Word on the Lord's Day.

How did Jesus react to the crowds? Luke says he preached and healed. But John tells us that Jesus had a conversation with Philip about how they were going to feed the people who were coming, John 6:5ff. John says that Jesus "said this to test him for he himself knew what he would do." Isn't it wonderful that there is nothing in our lives that God does not know about and has not already taken care of! That is why time spent worrying about what is going to happen, is sin. What we have to do is straightforward – trust God, obey His commands, and let Him do the rest (Matthew 6:25, Matthew 6:34, 1 Peter 5:7, 2 Corinthians 9:8).

*V12. So how are we going to feed them?* The question Jesus posed to Philip, and Philip's response (John 6:7), will have made its way round the Apostles during the day. And as evening draws in, all twelve of them come to Jesus as one man, and tell him that he's going to have to send the people home. That's their answer to Jesus' challenge to Philip.

*V13. Jesus doesn't concede.* Jesus' response isn't what they want to hear, "You give them something to eat." What is Jesus doing here? He is saying to the Twelve, how much do you believe? He knows that they don't have the money to buy enough food for the thousands of people present, but he is saying to them, what about the power you have seen me exercise, and what about things you done in my name? The same question comes to you and me about the issues in our lives, do we believe in the power of God to do what appears humanly impossible?

*V14. Jesus acts in the face of their unbelief.* Jesus has heard enough; he tells the Apostles to get the people to sit down and then he performs one of the most amazing miracles recorded in Scripture. He gives thanks to the Father, and then he breaks the bread into pieces, and he keeps breaking the bread into pieces. He keeps breaking the bread into pieces, and he keeps breaking the bread into pieces, and Jesus doesn't stop breaking the bread into pieces because the bread keeps multiplying in his hands. It doesn't matter how much he breaks off the

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### Thursday - Luke 9:7-9 - Seeking Jesus.

V7-9. *The challenge which perplexed Herod.* We step out of the ministry of Jesus for a moment as Luke tells us something about Herod Antipas, the son of Herod the Great, the man who tried to have Jesus killed as an infant. This Herod was a tetrarch, a governor of one of four regions in Palestine under Roman rule. He became tetrarch of Galilee and Perea, in 4 BC when his father died, and stayed in power until AD 39. So, he ruled for the entirety of Jesus' lifetime, and specifically in the region where Jesus spent most of his work. Hence, his interest in what he heard about Jesus and what he was doing.

What Herod hears, Luke tells us, perplexes him. The resulting discussion within his court raises three options. First, John the Baptist had been raised from the dead. Herod had been responsible for John's death, so the idea that John might have been raised from the dead is obviously going to interest him, and that is probably why he engages with it the most, i.e., verse nine. The other two options intrigue him less. They were that Elijah had been raised, or one of the other Old Testament prophets had been raised. Interestingly, all three options involve resurrection from the dead, which shows the prominence of the idea within Judaism. Although, the Sadducees denied the possibility of resurrection for anyone. The speculation concludes with Herod stating that he wants to see Jesus so that he can find out for himself who this man is.

That's the challenge for you and I as well, isn't it? To know Jesus for ourselves. To have a personal, experiential relationship with him, which means seeking him out, and learning first-hand who he is. I think that is the reason why God did not just give us a simple chronological, 'then Jesus went and did this, and this, and then this' account, and also add in explanatory comments along the way. The gospels are the way they are so as to draw us in, to engage us. So that through the actual process of studying and thinking, we are learning more about Jesus than would have been the case had we been given an easy-to-read, novel account of his life. The point is worth considering; is it through the actual search, the seeking of God for help to understand the facts, the situations, the events, in Jesus' life, that we are drawn more into the process of finding out about who Jesus is? Understanding that might help us persist in our pursuit of a growing knowledge of who the Lord Jesus is.

Q1. What was the name of the Jewish ruler who ruled during Jesus' life?

Q2. What do you think of the idea that the gospels are the way they are to engage us more in a thoughtful study of Jesus' life?

### Monday - Luke 8:49-56 – Jairus' daughter dies.

V49. As Jesus is speaking with the woman, the news of Jairus' daughter's death reaches them. This is devastating for Jairus. If only the woman had waited until Jesus was on his way back from his house to touch him. She'd had her problem for twelve years, yes it was serious, but not life-threatening; what would a few more hours have cost her? If only Jesus had not stopped but gone straight to Jairus' home. Now, because of the delay, the girl who had only had twelve years of life is dead.

The 'if onlys' of life. Sometimes they come down to the minutest details and can be devastatingly life-changing. Often turning on choices made. You are making a good choice to engage with God today. The time you and your family are investing now in the worship of God will produce good fruit and address some of the possible future 'if onlys' in your life.

V49. There's no point in Jesus coming now. The conclusion drawn by the person bringing the news to Jairus is understandable. Why bother Jesus now that his daughter is dead? What will Jesus be able to do now? How often is your response the same when faced with a difficult situation? But Jesus disregards the comment and speaks. He directs his words to Jairus and addresses the despair engulfing him. The words literally mean, 'engage in an act of faith in me', 'put your trust in me'. This is what you and I must do daily. Dwelling, quietly and steadily, in Christ is essential to our lives, as Jesus makes so clear in John chapter 15.

The statement that his daughter is going to live must have startled and excited Jairus, but it also ignites a new measure of faith in him, seen by the fact that he doesn't try to stop Jesus from going to his home. When they arrive, Jesus only permits Peter, James, and John to go in with him, a sign that Jesus is beginning to draw these three men into a closer relationship with himself.

The house is a cauldron of noise, with people weeping and mourning, because Jairus' only child has just died. Jesus takes immediate control of the chaotic scene. His instruction to stop mourning, because the child is only sleeping, is met with incredulous laughter. (Jesus, of course, knows that the girl is dead, his use of the word 'sleep' has to be understood in the sense of understanding the death of believers. John 11:11-14, Acts 7:60.) And let's not be too harsh on these people; how else would you expect them to react? They know the girl is dead. They didn't need modern medical equipment to read her vital signs. In general, people were more familiar with death than they are now.

Q1. How do you face the 'if onlys' in your life?

Q2. How was Jairus' faith going to be strengthened by this testing?

## **Tuesday - Luke 8:49-56 – Jairus' daughter is raised from the dead.**

*V54. Jesus raises the girl.* Jesus takes the girl by the hand, a gentle human gesture, and says two words, "Child, arise." Simple, unpretentious, yet powerfully effective, as is the work of God in our lives. Her departed spirit returns, and she gets up as though she had just been awoken from sleep. Life is about our 'being', our spirit. The body is merely a vessel, yes, an important vessel, and one that we should take care of and look after. But our lives are inside us. That is why God tells us to, "Keep your heart with all vigilance, for from it flow the springs of life", Proverbs 4:23. And how do we do that? "By guarding it according to your word. With my whole heart, I seek you; let me not wander from your commandments! I have stored up your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you", Psalm 119: 9-11,14.

The power of Jesus is incredible. And take care not to think that because he is no longer on the earth that his power is not being exercised today; it is. We need to be lifted out of our mundane, mediocre acceptance of life, and look to the Lord to do amazing things. We need to ask and believe that he can bring new life to the spiritually dead around us, if he so wills it.

Amid this incredible act, Jesus continues to be the epitome of measured, common-sense composure. He tells the family to give the girl something to eat. We tend not to want to eat when we are not well. In their amazement and joy, Jairus and his wife might not have thought of giving her food, but, again, we see Jesus concerned about the simple things in life.

Jesus says something else to the parents – he tells them not to publicize what has happened. Of course, people would find out. The professional mourners who had been dismissed from the home, and the wider family and friends whose weeping has turned to joy wouldn't be keeping this a secret, so what is Jesus' point? Focus on the girl and don't fall into the potential trap of becoming local celebrities because of this. The man set free from the Legion demons was sent by Jesus to tell others because he was on his own. This family is to stay focused on being a family, who will love and serve Jesus quietly in their community as they go about their everyday affairs. Jesus calls different people to different tasks. Don't crave the responsibility or task of another; be content with the task and calling he has given you.

Q1. Is Jesus still active today doing astonishing things in people's lives?

Q2. How should you approach the task Christ has given you in life?

## **Wednesday - Luke 9:1-6 - Go out with the Gospel.**

Up until now, the twelve apostles have been travelling with Jesus, listening to him preach and observing his miracles. Now, having been given authority over demons and illnesses to heal, an astonishing thing – they are being sent out by Jesus to preach the Kingdom of God – Christ's rule over those whom God has chosen. A simple but powerful message of truth, which they are neither to add to, nor take from. Two thousand years later, the church today is charged with proclaiming the same message, in the same name and in the same power – that of the risen, glorified Christ, through the work of the Holy Spirit. Where it is declared today, lives are being radically changed for time and eternity.

*V3. Sent out with nothing but trust.* The twelve were sent out with just the clothes on their backs. Why does Jesus give them such stringent directions? It was for two reasons. First, they are to concentrate solely on the task they had been given, and second, they are to rely solely on the provision the Lord would make for them in the homes of the converted. Once a home was opened to them, they were to remain there while in that community, so as to avoid the appearance of seeking the best place to stay.

The challenges for those who minister God's Word today are the same, namely, to concentrate and stay focused on the task in hand, and not to go seeking a church because of the salary and benefits package.

*V5. Shake the dust.* If the Apostles entered a village, and no one responded to the preaching of the Kingdom, they were not to persist. The instructions were clear, leave and 'shake the dust off your feet'. The act of shaking off the dust was symbolic, and spoke as a testimony against the community for their refusal to accept the good news freely offered to them. People were to get the opportunity to hear that truth of the Kingdom of God, but Jesus would not force the truth on those who did not want to listen to it. It is the same today. The truth is to be freely proclaimed, but there are those who just do not want to hear it, despite giving the impression that they do. When that happens, there is nothing that can be done. Whilst the thought is there to keep going in the hope that something will change, the reality is that it's simply best to move on.

*V6. The disciples went.* So, Jesus sent them out, six pairs of two men, and they went. Jesus commanded, and they did what he said. It is as simple as that.

Q1. The church is given what task today by the Lord Jesus?

Q2. Must we always persist with people if they refuse the gospel?