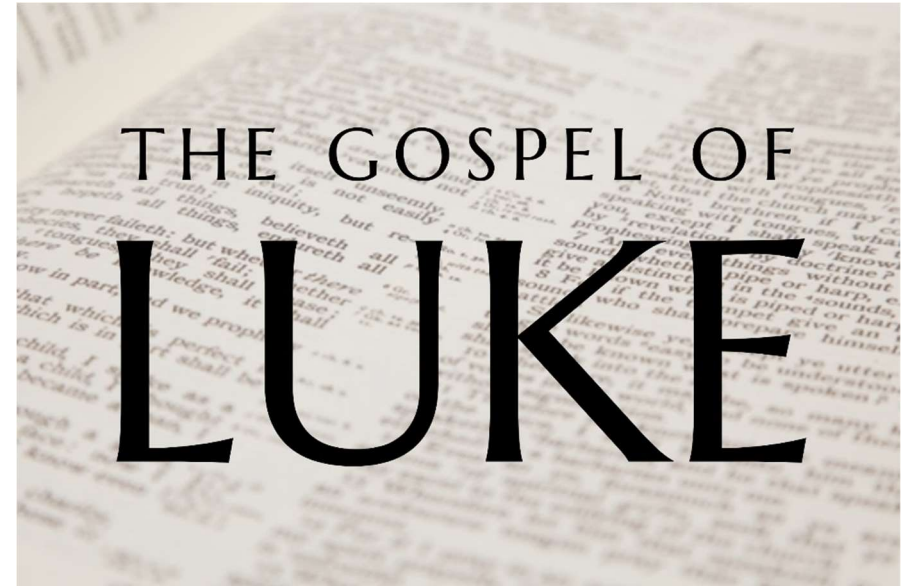


of compliance for a while, but if the core heart issue isn't addressed, then the outward behaviour will always fall back into line with the default sinful position. Jesus addresses Martha's heart when he speaks to her and says, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things".

Q1. What is Martha's issue with Mary?

Q2. What does she ask Jesus to do?

## 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!

Produced by Ottawa RPC to help family worship.  
These notes have been prepared by  
Rev. Dr. Andrew Quigley.

#### **Friday – Luke 10:38-42 – Martha asks for help.**

V40. Martha is none too pleased with what she sees as Mary's dalliance with playing the pupil's role. To conclude from what Martha says, that she isn't interested in what Jesus has to say, would be wrong. As soon as everything is sorted, there is no doubt that Martha would show herself to be just as interested as Mary is in Jesus' teaching. But for now, Martha is all too aware of the demands upon Jesus' life, and she wants him to have the best, even if it is only for an hour or two. It is her love for Jesus that is leading Martha to want to provide for him. This means that there is work to be done, food needs to be prepared; that is why Martha leaves what she is doing and goes to Jesus. She looks him in the eye and says, "Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone?" Martha isn't angry at Mary, per se, she is just wanting help. Nor is she blaming Jesus for not telling Mary, of his own initiative, to help her. That would be at odds with her use of the term "Lord". A term that speaks of Jesus as the divine Lord and Ruler over all, and, in a special sense, as the divine Messiah. The simple fact is that Martha just wants her sister's help so that things can get done more quickly, and she is asking Jesus to tell Mary to give her the help she is seeking, so that they can all sit at his feet. In her mind, Jesus will obviously understand that and comply with her request.

V41. Jesus does understand what Martha is asking, but he doesn't comply with her request. His response is tender and gentle. The use of "Martha, Martha", conveys that. The stating of a name twice is frequent in God's Word. Here are some occasions: Abraham in Genesis 22:11, Jacob in Genesis 44:2, Moses in Exodus 3:4, Samuel in I Samuel 3:10, Simon in Luke 22:31 and Saul in Acts 9:5. One commentator writes, "it voices love in an intense way". Interestingly and pertinent, Martha is the only female to whom God's love is shown in this way. It is because Jesus loves her that he doesn't just tell Martha what to do, but rather explains to her where her heart is. In his response, he is saying, 'I understand where you are at, and I am talking to you at that place.' It is so much easier just to tell a person what to do, than seek to engage with their heart. The reason is simple; we like to be told what to do. Why? Because, if it turns out as we want, then we are good with that, and if it turns out 'wrong', then we can blame the one who told us to do it. Having the nerve to speak directly to someone's heart takes courage because it is so prone to misunderstanding. The retort can so often be, 'how do you know what I am thinking?' But I have found, by bitter experience, that telling people what to do, unless it is calling them to be who they say they are as lovers of God, tends to be a pointless exercise. Yes, you can get a response, a degree

#### **Thursday – Luke 10:38-42 – Jesus is invited into a home.**

Again, this is one of those stories that is only found in Luke's gospel. Also, there is no connection with what has just preceded. It is as if Luke collected information about all the events, teaching, miracles, etc., of Jesus' life, and then wrote his gospel based on what he thought should go together, regardless of chronology. If it so happened that events turned out to be in chronological order, well and good; but if it wasn't in chronological order, well and good. The flow of the content was more important to Luke than the flow of time. So what thought is Luke working off here? This chapter focuses on hearing, seeing, receiving, and responding to the Word of God, e.g., verses 10,16,21,23 and 37.

V38. Although not stated, this probably takes place in Bethany because that is where Mary and Martha had their home (John 11:1). Luke's brevity excludes any mention of Lazarus their brother, but he does tell us that the disciples left Jesus and that he went into the village on his own. We're not told where the disciples went, but since Bethany is only two miles from Jerusalem, it is possible they went there. The idea that Martha is just some random woman who welcomed Jesus into her home is dispelled by the fact that John makes clear - that Jesus was a close family friend (John 11). Whether Jesus had gone to the home to visit, or Martha had met him on his way through the village on the street and invited him back to the home, we can't tell; but Jesus is welcomed into a home he has been in before.

V39. The scene quickly moves to Martha's sister, Mary, and we see her sitting at Jesus' feet, listening as he is teaching. Her attention is completely on him. She hears every word that he is speaking because they are the words of life to her. Interestingly, this is all we are told about Mary here, and yet it is the one thing that the whole story hinges on. How encouraging it is when the Holy Spirit is at work, and the people of God are sitting forward in their seats listening, drinking in the Word of God. There is nothing that delights the heart of the preacher more, because he knows that those before him have been moved beyond just hearing the sermon because it is interesting and well constructed, or contains a good illustration or example. He can see that God is at work. There is a Spirit engendered, heightened awareness, and the resulting focus is clear.

Q1. Whose home is Jesus invited to and by whom?

Q2. What is Mary doing?

Q3. How should we give ourselves to the hearing of God's Word preached?

#### **Monday – Luke 10:25-37 – Love God and your fellow man.**

As we saw last week to the question, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?", Jesus very astutely asks two questions of his own, "What is written in the Law?" and "How do you read it?" The man responded by citing Deuteronomy 6:4,5, and Leviticus 19:18, stating how you must love God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength, and their neighbour as themselves.

This response meets with the clear approval of Jesus; in fact, one could not get a better response for an answer to a question than - 'you are perfectly correct'. The challenge, though, is in the doing of it perfectly. To do it perfectly, it must not only be done perfectly once, but there must be an ongoing doing of it perfectly, without ever failing to do so. Of course, this was and is impossible, and Jesus' response, without stating it directly, made that self-evidently clear. He isn't telling the man how to attain eternal life through his works-righteousness; he is showing the man the futility of trusting in his observance of the Law as a way of salvation.

We are surrounded by people who think they are good, and they imagine that if, somehow, they just don't make the grade for heaven, God will let them in because 'well, that's what a loving God does'. They have absolutely no understanding of what the holiness and the justice of God demands in respect of His Law. That is because their minds are darkened (Ephesians 4:18). That is why we must pray for the Holy Spirit's renewing and regenerating work in their minds and hearts.

It's interesting to think, though, that the reply of Jesus may have surprised the Lawyer, possibly catching him off guard. It's not the answer he would have expected. Jesus was not known for his agreeing with the Scribes and the Pharisees, nor the Sadducees. Maybe the apparent simplicity of Jesus' answer left him feeling a bit exposed, in the sense that everyone is thinking, 'well, that was an obvious reply, why did the Lawyer even bother asking the question?' So, the man asks a follow-up question - "And who is my neighbour?" This time Jesus doesn't respond with a question of his own, well not immediately. While it is good to respond to a question with a question, to do so in quick succession would have had the crowd thinking that Jesus was avoiding the issues and just getting at the man. Jesus takes a different route to drive home his point and tells him a parable which we will consider, God willing, tomorrow.

Q1. What question did the Lawyer ask Jesus?

Q2. How does Jesus respond? What is the problem for the Lawyer and for us?

Q3. What follow-up question does the man ask? How would you answer that?

## **Tuesday – Luke 10:25-37 – The Levite and Priest pass by.**

This parable is probably one of the most famous and oft quoted when referring to someone who has gone out of their way to help another person. The scenario Jesus paints is a common, well-known one. Jesus never engaged in teaching that people could not relate to. The story is about a man travelling down from Jerusalem to Jericho. This journey, of about seventeen miles and involving a descent of 3,000 feet, required the traveller to go through a rugged, uninhabited, mountainous region that was known for the threat of robbery. The unnamed man, a Jew, is attacked and receives a particularly bad beating, being stripped of his clothes, and whatever money he has on him. Jesus' point – this man was in real need of help.

V31. By “chance” a Priest is passing by; of course, we know that everything is providentially ordered, but for the sake of the parable, Jesus uses the thinking of the ordinary man in the street as he tells the story. Possibly having completed his week of Temple service in Jerusalem, the Priest is on his way to Jericho where a lot of Priests lived. So, here is a religious man who knows that he is bound by the Law to help one in need. What else could 'love your neighbour as yourself' mean, but step in and do your best to help in this situation. But for all his knowledge of the Law, the Priest ignores the demands it lays upon him. The view that he crossed to the other side of the road because he wanted to avoid possible Levitical contamination if it turned out that the man was dead, is irrelevant conjecture. Such contamination only happened if the person was touched, and the Priest didn't need to touch the man to find out if he was dead or not. The bottom line is, the Priest crossed over to the other side of the road because he didn't want to help the man, even though he had probably come from the Temple where the Law of loving God and your neighbour was taught daily.

V32. The next person along the road is a Levite. A man who, like the Priest, was familiar with the teaching of the Law, and showed that he also shared the Priest's attitude to its real demands. Of course, their excuses could have been many. 'What could they do for the man?' 'Why put themselves in harm's way by trying to help him?' 'What if someone else came along and thought they were one of the perpetrators?'

For both the Levite and the Priest, it was a case of too much risk, all-round; best just to leave well alone.

Q1. What happens to the man who is travelling?

Q2. Who is the first person to find him and what does he do?

Q3. Who is the second person who passes by?

## **Wednesday – Luke 10:25-37 – The Samaritan.**

V33. Jesus now introduces a Samaritan. The difficulty for you and me is that we don't really understand the level of animosity between the Jews and the Samaritans. The Samaritans were of heathen, not Jewish, blood. One commentator writes that they "were cursed publicly in the synagogue with the prayer that they might have no part in the resurrection; were never accepted as proselytes; it was better to suffer than accept their help; the Jew never wished to see a Cuthite (base name for the Samaritan)." The fact that the name 'Samaritan' was hurled at Jesus, when the Jews were accusing him of being a son of the Devil (John 8:39-48), is an indication of just how much the Jews hated the Samaritans.

So, when Jesus introduces this Samaritan and describes what he does, it is just unthinkable, it's off the page, you wouldn't have believed it even if you had been there and seen it with your own eyes. Why does Jesus say the Samaritan does it? It is 'out of compassion'. This Samaritan is gripped in the pit of his stomach with pity for the Jew lying naked, blood pouring from him, in a terrible state, and so he stops. None of the blindness of the Jewish religious legalists. He is endued with love for his neighbour. Ambivalent to the fact that the man is a Jew, the Samaritan gets off his donkey and begins to tend to the man's desperate needs. He applies the wine first, as an antiseptic, and then the oil to ease the pain. After the man's immediate needs were addressed, the Samaritan lifts him carefully onto his donkey and then slowly makes his way to Jericho, keeping a watchful eye on the state of the man as he does so. Reaching an inn, he helps the man off his donkey and into the public dwelling, where he continues to care for him. The next day he invests further in the man's care by giving two denarii to the innkeeper, what is estimated to be enough for two months care, to allow the man to stay until he has recovered. The promise is made that, if it turns out not to be enough, he will settle the bill the next time he passes through.

When Jesus' asks the question as to which of these three men proved to be the man's neighbour, the answer is obvious. The command to the Lawyer 'to go and do likewise', is a call for him to seek God, who alone can provide the grace and love needed to fulfil the Law. Did the man get it? We're not told. The question, though, is – do we get it?

Q1. How would you describe the relationship between the Jews and the Samaritans?

Q2. What does the Samaritan do? Why did the Samaritan help the Jewish man?

Q3. What must we do if we are to fulfil God's Law?