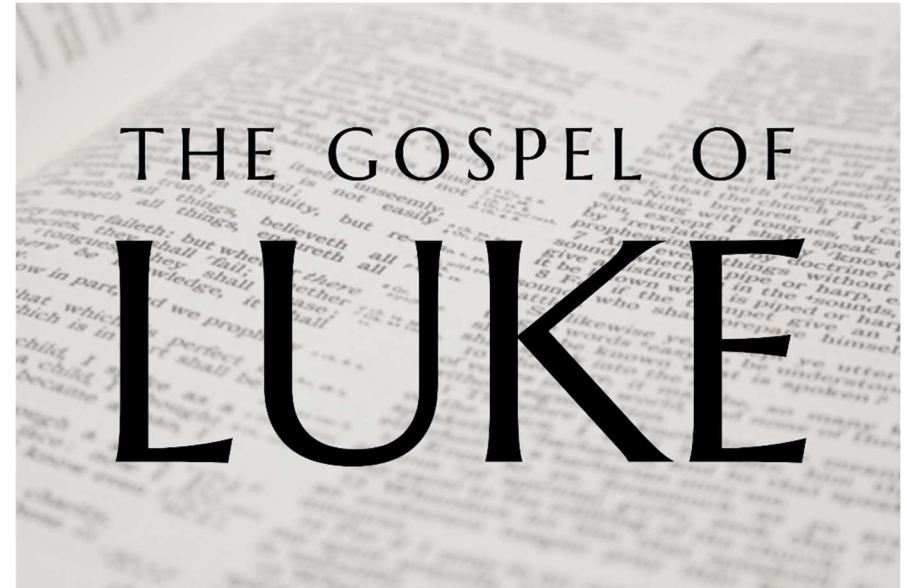


Q1. What is interesting about how Luke gives us information?

Q2. How should that help us to think and meditate?



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!

- Q1. What does Jesus do to the demons and what does this show?
Q2. Where does Jesus go the next morning and why?
Q3. How does Jesus respond to the people's request to stay and why?

Friday - Luke 5:1-11 – Jesus prepares to call Simon.

V1. The passage opens with the words 'on one occasion'. Previously, when Luke has been introducing the next event in Jesus' life, he has said things like; 'and Jesus full of the Holy Spirit returned from the Jordan...', 'And Jesus returned...', 'And he came to Nazareth...', 'And he went down to Capernaum...', but this is different. Why? Because Luke is now speaking of events that aren't in chronological time order. This is interesting because it shows that while the gospels' writers were being 'carried along' by the Holy Spirit, they were also writing as they remembered things and wanted to reflect them. With the result that the gospels are not a formulaic, static record of the life and ministry of Jesus. A fact that speaks to both their authenticity, but also gives us a license to take our time to consider, mull over, give thought to, and meditate upon what we have. V1. The crowd is pressing in on Jesus. Again, his life is marked by both constant and immense demands. On this occasion it is to hear him preach. Imagine if we had such a desire for the preaching of God's Word in Canada. Luke always calls this body of water a lake, whereas, the other Synoptics follow the Old Testament in calling it a 'sea'. This is the only place where it is called Gennesaret, after the area of land that jutted out into it. It is usually called the Sea of Galilee, although John does call it the Sea of Tiberias twice, after the nearby city of that name. It is an expanse of water that we will come across again in the journeyings of Jesus.

V2. Jesus sees two boats and some men who were cleaning the nets in preparation for the next day's fishing. It is important to prepare in life. As the saying goes, 'fail to prepare, and you prepare to fail'.

V3. Jesus gets into one of the boats owned by Simon and asks Simon to take him out a little from the land. Jesus wants the people at the back of the crowd to be able to see him, and the water will act as a good conduit for his voice. He sits down, the customary position for teaching. Luke doesn't tell us what Jesus taught on this occasion; his focus is not what Jesus is going to do with Simon as he calls him to be one of his disciples. But that will have to wait until next week, God willing.

Thursday - Luke 4:38-44 – Work, prayer, and focus on what’s important.

V41. As we saw yesterday, Jesus had been healing many people at the end of what had been a long day. Luke is the only one to tell us that the expelled demons, and he says that there were many of them, cried out, 'You are the son of God!' This is a repeat of what had happened with the demon-possessed man in the Synagogue. It is just remarkable how these demons always recognize and speak of Jesus in terms of his deity. There are two reasons for this. First, for them, this is a supernatural battle; and second, they know that Jesus does not want his deity to be revealed. The time for the revelation of Jesus as the Son of God and Messiah will come, but it will come in the fullness of God's time, not in the Devil's. Nonetheless, even though he is defeated, Satan and his cohorts are determined to do all they can to try and agitate, and disrupt, the plan and purpose of God. As with the demon earlier in the day, Jesus issues a rebuke and refuses them the liberty to speak; literally, he orders them to 'be muzzled'. He silences them instantly. Finally, the day comes to an end. Time for a night's rest and, if possible, a bit of a lie-in in the morning. V42. Mark tells us that doesn't happen. He writes about Jesus that "rising early in the morning, while it was still dark, he departed and went out to a desolate place and there he prayed." Mark 1:35. Luke says 'and when it was day, he departed'. But why did Jesus need to pray? He has just taught the first of what is going to be five phenomenal sermons and, in a few hours, he had healed every sick person in Capernaum. Why is Jesus getting up before the sun rises to pray? Because as a man this communion with the Father was his lifeblood. Which begs the question - how can we expect to cope without such seeking of God in our lives?

V42. The people go looking for Jesus and they find him. They want him to stay with them, but Jesus refuses their passionate request. Why? Because he needs to preach the good news of the Kingdom of God in other towns? Why is Jesus so focused on preaching? Surely, his healing could transform thousands of people's lives in the region, not only in terms of their health, but also socially and economically for generations to come. Why is he not driven by that goal? Because preaching is God's chosen means of transforming people's souls, and that has both lifetime and eternal consequences, for the body and the soul.

Monday - Luke 4:23-30 - Unbelief leads to God’s judgement

Jesus is in his home town of Nazareth, it's the Sabbath day, and he has just read from the Prophecy of Isaiah and confronted his hearers with the truth that he is the Messiah. They're astonished. The preaching has certainly affected them, yet they refuse to accept what Jesus has to say. Why? Because the idea of Joseph's boy being the Messiah is just not possible.

V23. Jesus reads their hearts and calls them out. He tells them that in the future when they hear about his miracles in Capernaum, they are going to say to him "Physician heal yourself," in other words, 'why did he not heal his own people in Nazareth before running off and doing it elsewhere?' V24. He continues using the word 'amen' or truly. It is a stark word, calling attention to what he is about to say. His hearers are to sit up and listen. The problem, Jesus says, is not with his ability to do miracles, but with their refusal to believe him. He has lived among them for thirty years; they have witnessed his life first-hand, but they refuse to countenance the idea that he is the Messiah. This is the reason for his inability to do miracles among them. V25. It's what God has done previously. In the Old Testament He didn't send the prophets Elijah and Elisha to those in need in Israel, but to those outside of His chosen people. Why? Because Israel rejected them and their message from God. The lesson is simple - do as God says and be blessed; don't do what God says and God will be taking His blessing elsewhere.

V28. Those listening are filled with rage. Joseph's son is not only claiming to be the Messiah, he's also saying he won't be doing any miracles among them because they won't believe him; and to top it all off, he is telling them that God is going to use him to bring blessing to the gentiles.

V29. So, they drive Jesus out of the synagogue, out of the town to the brow of the hill; and that's it, the end for him. V30. No, Jesus is not going to die at the hand of anyone before the appointed time. No crowd, no matter the size, or the level of rage, is going to do what God does not want done. Jesus just stops walking towards the cliff top; he turns around and, like a hot knife cutting through melting butter, he walks through the roaring, baying, mass of people and leaves. As far as we know, Jesus never returned to Nazareth. Their rejection of him through unbelief resulted in a severe judgement upon their community.

Q1. Why did the people not accept what Jesus was telling them?

Q2. How did they respond to what he said?

Q3. What did Jesus do?

Tuesday - Luke 4:31-37. Jesus preaches in Capernaum.

V31, 32. Jesus goes down to Capernaum, 'down' because Capernaum is a town. As his practice will become, Jesus goes into the synagogue on the Sabbath to teach. Mark says of Jesus' teaching that it is 'not as the scribes', i.e., not about the traditions of men (Mark 1:22.) The people hear the truth of God's Word preached and are astonished because of its authority. While no minister can teach with such authority today, nonetheless, when the Word of God is truly preached, Christ's voice will be heard, and the Holy Spirit will work in saving and sanctifying power.

V33-37. Demonic activity has always been present in the world, but it is clear that there was a definite surge in such activity focused on the person and work of Jesus. Satan, unaffected by his failure to tempt Jesus, has taken hold of this man's life, through an unclean demon, and is controlling his words and physical movements. The demon cries out to Jesus identifying him as the 'Holy One of God'. It's an unusual phrase, but one that reveals that the demon knows who Jesus is. There is, of course, no faith or hope contained in the words of the demon - he is merely expressing his knowledge of who Jesus is. As James said when he wrote, "You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe, and shudder." James 2:19.

V35. Note the simplicity of Jesus' rebuke to be silent and come out. God is the one who brings peace, calmness, and contentment to our life. The devil seeks to generate noise and chaos, in order to create dysfunctionality and destruction. A fact evident in the last act of the demon as he throws the man down. Mark writes of "the unclean spirit convulsing him" (Mark 1:26). No harm is permitted to come to the man.

V36. Those watching this are just amazed. They are dumbfounded. It is not just his teaching that is raising eyebrows, but his power over the demons. Christ does rule over all creation.

Q1. What town does Jesus now go 'down' to and what does he do?

Q2. Who interrupts him and why? What happens to the man?

Wednesday - Luke 4:38-41 - Jesus gives of himself.

Interestingly, Luke tells us of this before he informs us of the calling of the first disciples. By this time, Jesus had called Simon (Peter), his brother Andrew, and James and John, the sons of Zebedee. Mark tells us that all four men were present for the events that will now unfold (Mark 1:29).

V38. All of the Synoptists, Matthew, Mark, and Luke, state that Simon's mother-in-law had a fever, but only Luke tells us that she had a high fever, a sign of his medical training. The cause of the high fever is not given but clearly the point is that her life is in serious threat. (As an aside, this reminds us that at least some of the disciples were family men with the demands which that entailed.)

V39. In a few words, Jesus declared his will, and his will was done. As with each of the miracles Jesus did, the person was healed instantly and entirely, as is clear from what Simon's mother did. V40. This is the day when Jesus has taught the sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5-7), healed the demon-possessed man, a leper, the centurion's servant, and now Peter's mother-in-law. The sun is setting, but the day isn't over for Jesus. It is the end of the Sabbath rest, and having seen or heard about events earlier in the day, people are determined to bring their sick relatives and friends to be healed by Jesus. Mark says that the whole city gathered at Peter's door (Mark 1:33).

Note the total lack of self-regard on Jesus' part. He must have been exhausted. Yet, he stands as, one by one, people are brought to him. He lays his hands on each person and, no matter what the sickness, illness, or disease, he heals every single one of them. What love and care this man has for these people, as with one gentle personal touch he performs one miracle after another, restoring each life to its full health and strength. What an impact these miracles would have had, not only on the individuals involved, but also on their families and on those who had invested themselves in caring for them. Jesus transformed this entire community in one beautiful Sabbath evening. We do well to consider the sheer extent of the demands on Jesus' life, a life of perpetual daily giving.

Q1. Whose home does Jesus go to, and who does he heal and how?

Q2. What happens that evening?

Q3. What does this tell us about Jesus' life?