



LUKE: WEEK 3

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Created by Ministry to Youth
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LUKE – SMALL GROUP SERIES

WEEK 3: THE JOURNEY OF JESUS

Bottom Line: There is joy for those who embrace Jesus and misery for those who reject him.

Bible: *For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost.* **Luke 19:10 (NLT)**

INTRODUCTION

We started the series on Luke looking at a letter from the physician to Theophilus. Luke wrote not only the Book of Luke to Theophilus but also, its sequel, Acts.

Luke wrote to give an in-depth and accurate detailed account of the birth, life, ministry, and death of Jesus.

He wanted Theophilus to be certain about the things he had been taught were true; he wanted him to know without a doubt that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God.

In week 2, we took a deep dive into the teachings of Jesus through multiple parables and the calling of the disciples.

We learned there is a cost to following Jesus and the price is high. However, a life in Christ is worth the cost and sacrifice it takes to be with Him.

Luke emphasizes and strengthens the theme of salvation throughout his book.

Whether it is Jesus calling common, everyday people to be His disciples, having dinner with sinners and a tax collector, or not only healing but touching a man deemed unclean and cast away by society, Luke makes sure we know the Jewish Messiah is not just a Messiah for the Jews.

He is the Son of Man and the King of us all.

1. Thinking back over Week 1 and 2, is there a passage of scripture or a concept that you would like clarified?
2. Why do you think Luke included the names of the women who followed and supported Jesus' ministry in chapter 8? What is the significance of this today?
3. Given what we have read, what changes do you think God would want you to make in your attitude, words, or actions?

LESSON

Read Luke 13:22–17:10.

In **chapters 13 through 17**, we find numerous examples of Jesus' healing power, teachings, and reminders of what it cost and what it means to be a disciple of Christ. Chapter 15 contains three parables with a common theme: "lost."

Here we find the parable of the lost sheep, the parable of the lost coin, and the parable of the lost son also known as The Prodigal Son.

It is important to note that, although Jesus uses three individual parables, He has a singular message. Those who are lost and in need of salvation are important to Him. He is willing to invest the time that it takes to bring back the lost to Himself.

We see the context of the parables in the first three verses. Jesus is teaching, as was common during this time. In the audience are tax collectors and other sinners. As usual, the Pharisees and other religious teachers of the law discussed fact that Jesus associated with such sinful people. This is the backdrop for the beginning of the parables of The Lost.

Verse 3 states, "So Jesus told them this story." Jesus begins with the parable of the lost sheep. **Verse 8** transitions with the word "or" and begins the parable of the lost coin. We then pick up in **verse 11**, "to illustrate the point further, Jesus told them this story:" which is where we find the beginning of The Prodigal Son parable. Three parables, but one message: Christ came to seek and save the lost.

We can draw parallels between the characters in the parable of The Prodigal Son and the people in the setting where Jesus was teaching. The main character in the parable is the father, who is a picture of God. He is constant throughout the story.

The younger son represents the lost—the tax collectors and the sinners of that day (**Luke 15:1**)—while the elder brother represents the self-righteous—the Pharisees and teachers of the law (**Luke 15:2**). These connections further support the concept that all three parables are one message.

The parable begins in verse 12 where we have a younger son coming to his father requesting his inheritance before the father dies. Although the son is within his rights to make the request, it does not make it any less disrespectful.

The implication is that the son wished his father were dead.

Despite the lack of respect shown on behalf of the younger son, the father grants his request and gives the son his portion of his inheritance.

We see in **verse 13** that the younger son wastes no time packing his belongings and leaving his father's home to a distant land.

Once out on his own, the young son lives a wild lifestyle and uses up all his money on selfish pleasures. In the middle of financial trouble, comes natural trouble as well. A famine strikes the land, and the young son finds himself in a desperate position.

In **verses 15 and 16**, the young son goes to work in the fields feeding the pigs, a job despised by the Jewish people. He was so hungry, even the pig's food looked good to him.

Reflecting on his current situation, the son realizes that the servants in his father's house we're leaving better than he was at this moment. His circumstance allowed him to see and appreciate his father in a new way. This is the same way a sinner comes to realize the condition of his or her life due to sin.

We see in **verse 18** that the young son has a conversation with himself about what he will say to his father and how he will apologize and repent for what he has done. The son is not returning home hoping to be restored to his previous position with his father. He only seeks to be a servant to his father. If we look at the parallel between the son and a sinner, that is the same way conversion happens—going from a life of slavery to sin to a life of salvation and becoming a servant of Christ.

Verse 20 illustrates the reunion of the son and father: “So, he returned home to his father. And while he was still a long way off, his father saw him coming.”

This passage indicates that the father was waiting for the son. Whether he had been watching daily or whether he sent servants to search, he was watching, waiting, hoping for the return of his son.

The scripture tells us that the father ran to greet his son, that he hugged and kissed him. In today's time, this would be nothing out of the ordinary; however, during that time it was not customary for men to run. The father broke cultural norms to greet his son.

Going back to the parallel of Jesus as the father, Jesus broke cultural norms and conventions as well: eating with sinners and tax collectors so that they might repent and be welcomed into the kingdom of God.

Both the actions of the father and Jesus are the results of their love for their children. Not only does the father greet the son with open arms, but he also fully restores him to the family. He commands his servants to bring him a robe, a ring, and sandals and to prepare for a party.

Despite all the young son had done, the father gives his reasons for celebrating in **verse 24**: “For this son of mine was dead and has now returned to the life. He was lost and now he's found.”

As in our everyday lives, not everyone is happy about a sinner's transformation. Some people cannot get over the past to allow a person to have a future in Christ. The

Pharisees were such a group of people and are represented by the older brother in the parable.

Verses 25-30 detail the older son's response to the celebration for his younger brother. Filled with anger over what's happening, he refuses to go into the house. He outlines a list of actions by the young son that makes him unworthy of being celebrated.

Chapter 15 closes with the father's response that echoes the words of Christ earlier in the chapter: "The angels celebrate when even one sinner repents" (**verse 10**).

The focus of this parable is not so much the conversion of the sinner, as in the previous two parables but rather the restoration of a believer into fellowship with the Father.

In the first two parables, the owner went out to look for what was lost; in contrast, the father waits and watches for his son's return.

All of us need God's grace—His unearned, unmerited love.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Is there something in this chapter that surprised you? If so, how were you surprised?
2. Who did Jesus tell this story to? Why?
3. How have churches today been like the older brother in the story?

Read Luke 17:11–19:27.

Chapters 17, 18, and 19 continue to describe Jesus's Ministry. We find teachings on repentance, forgiveness, additional parables, and healings. However, a key focus in this section is found in Luke chapter 18 when Jesus predicts His death again.

When we come to **verse 31 in chapter 18**, we are at the third conversation Jesus has with the disciples regarding His death and Resurrection.

Once again, the disciples fail to understand the message Jesus is sending them. Jesus takes the disciples aside and tells them that everything written by the prophets about the son of man will be fulfilled (**verse 31**).

In week one, we were introduced to Luke's themes of the fulfillment of the kingdom of God. Everything about Jesus from His birth to His death and resurrection in the New Testament reveals that the promises made in the Old Testament have been and will be fulfilled.

Jesus again explains to the disciples that what was about to happen to Him was necessary so that the promises could be kept.

He goes on in **verses 32-33** to explain in detail what is about to happen to Him. Yet the disciples—like many of us today—still did not understand.

They were so fixed on the prophecies that talked about Christ's glory that they either overlooked or ignored the ones about His sufferings.

Too often, people run into mistakes, because they read their bibles seeing only half the story.

SUMMARY

The best way to summarize this passage is to look at the symbolism in the Prodigal Son of the father watching and waiting to restore the repentant believer in fellowship. At the end of **chapter 18**, we see Jesus attempting to prepare the disciples for what's to come, like any loving father who tries to prepare his children for the life ahead.

Read Luke 19:28–21:38.

Starting at **verse 28 of chapter 19** we come to what is known as Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem.

The word *triumphant* means “having won a battle or contest, being victorious.” If you're wondering how riding into Jerusalem to ultimately meet His death is a triumph for Jesus, it is because we know how the story ends.

Jesus enters Jerusalem the same way He entered the world: humbly on a donkey. Unlike most kings who arrive at a town or village, He did not come on a gallant horse; He came in on a lowly animal.

As He rode along into town, the crowd threw garments on the road ahead of him. Luke's record does not mention palm branches as in Matthew and Mark.

This could be because Luke is a gentile, and his audience would not have understood the palm branches to be a symbol of Jewish victory.

Jesus' purpose in riding into Jerusalem was to make public His claim to be their Messiah and King of Israel in fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy. Many times, in previous chapters, He stated that His time had not come yet. His entry into Jerusalem marked the coming of His time.

As He entered, all the followers began to shout and sing praises, which may seem like a wonderful thing; however, their shouts were for all the wonderful miracles they had seen.

They had not yet realized the need to praise Jesus for being the Messiah that they had long waited for.

Traveling along the same road at the time of Jesus's entry are the Pharisees. They are not pleased with all the noise from the followers and demand that Christ quiet them down (**verse 39**).

Jesus responds, "If they kept quiet, the stones along the road would burst into cheers!" Jesus enters Jerusalem and seeing the city, He begins to weep. Most often we think of the death of Lazarus when we think of Jesus weeping (**John 11:35**), but Jesus wept over the city of Jerusalem on this day (**Luke 19:41**).

The rejection of Jesus by the city of Jerusalem brings so much pain. Jerusalem has missed the opportunity to have peace with God.

Peace with God is not possible for anyone who rejects Jesus.

Starting in **verse 43**, Jesus states what is about to happen to Jerusalem at the hands of its enemies. He concludes **verse 44** with, "Your enemies will not leave a single stone in place because you did not recognize it when God visited you."

Luke ends **chapter 19** with a scene of Jesus in the temple. When Christ entered the temple, He began driving out the people who were selling.

He declares that God's house is to be a House of Prayer instead of the Den of Thieves (**verse 46**).

We close with a common occurrence in Luke, Jesus teaching, and the priest, teachers, religious leaders plotting against Him.

Read Chapter 20.

Chapter 20 begins as **chapter 19** ends: with Jesus in the temple.

On this occasion, they make no secret about their intent. Before they questioned Jesus merely in the hopes of tripping Him up. This time they directly question His authority in **verse 2**.

Jesus answers their question with a question of His own (**verse 3**). However, the religious leaders could not come up with an answer after talking amongst themselves. No answer they could have given would have been sufficient.

Jesus tells them that if they did not know where John's authority came from, then He was not telling them by what authority He came.

Throughout the Book of Luke, he is continually reinforcing the principle that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God. In **verses 27-40**, Jesus is approached by the Sadducees, a group of religious leaders who said there was no resurrection from the dead, who again try to trap Him with a question on marriage.

Jesus, knowing their intent, was able to use their question on marriage and teach on the resurrection.

Chapter 20 concludes with Jesus presenting a question of his own. He asked why they thought the Messiah was the son of David when David himself wrote in the Psalms about the Messiah and called Him Lord (**verses 41-44**).

At this, He warns the disciples to beware of false teachers of religious law who only seek self-glorification yet treat people poorly. He says these will be punished severely (**verses 45-47**).

This week's lesson concludes in **chapter 21** was Jesus telling of the things to come including the fate of Jerusalem and the return of Christ. He concludes the chapter with the parable of the fig tree

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Jesus weeping is not something we often think of, but He was a man as well as God and loved humanity.

What is something happening in our world that breaks God's heart? How can you pray in this area?

2. Do any of these truths written thousands of years ago apply today? If so, which ones? How do they apply?
3. Jesus cautions the disciples to beware of the religious teachers who seek popularity and honor but live in dishonor.

Do those teachers/preachers exist today? How do we recognize those we should beware of?