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# Luke

9-19

**A JOURNEY TO REMEMBER**

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This study owes several helpful insights to *Luke For You* (The Good Book Company, 2016) by Mike McKinley, *Luke* (Tyndale New Testament Commentaries, 1988) by Leon Morris, and *Luke 9:51–24:53* (Baker Exegetical New Testament Commentaries, 1996) by Darrell L. Bock.

# SERIES OVERVIEW

## The Gospel of Luke

Luke's Gospel is the third account of Jesus' earthly life and ministry, as we have the canonical New Testament arranged. Of all the Gospel writers, Luke provides the greatest variety of teaching, parables and events from the life of Jesus.

The book was written by Luke, a companion of Paul the apostle. He was probably a Gentile, and also a medical doctor. The Gospel of Luke is really his first of two volumes, the second being Acts. It was possibly written in A.D.59 to 63, although some think it may have been 15 to 20 years later.

## Luke 9-19

Aside from the birth narratives in chapters 1 and 2, the first half of Luke's Gospel largely concerns itself with Jesus' public ministry in and around Galilee, in the north of Israel. However, at a certain point, Luke notes that Jesus 'resolutely set out for Jerusalem' (9:51). Jerusalem was a place he'd been to several times before, but this time would be different: this time he would go to Jerusalem one last time – to die, rise, and then ascend to heaven. In chapters 9-19, Luke characterises this as one long 'journey to remember'. Everything we read in this journey needs to be interpreted in light of its destination.

## How To Use These Studies

Like all of our studies, these ones follow a general pattern of establishing *context*, *observing* what's in the passage, discussing the *meaning* of that content, then relating (or *applying*) that truth to our lives. Some things to remember (whether leaders or not!):

- *Bullets are (mostly) application questions.* From a formatting standpoint, generally a bulleted question will be an application question flowing from the previous 'meaning' question. The final questions are also often application questions.
- *You do not have to do every question.* Indeed, you don't have to do any of the questions! This is designed as a guide, and since every group is different, what works in one group may not work in another.
- *Reading the Passage.* study-wise, most passages are broken into sections. However, it is a good idea to read the entire passage first, in order to get a sense of the whole and the flow, then look closely at the sections.

# 1 DON'T LOOK BACK!

Luke 9:51-62

Much of Jesus' ministry, as recounted in the first half of Luke's Gospel, took place in Galilee, in the north of Israel – i.e. away from Judea/Jerusalem. Over the course of this ministry many truths about Jesus have been revealed bit by bit, culminating in Peter's confession that Jesus is 'the Messiah' (9:18-21), and the remarkable moment known as the Transfiguration, where Jesus' divine glory and his centrality to God's salvation plans are momentarily revealed to Peter, James and John (9:28-36). Luke also records Jesus' speaking of his necessary suffering and death at the hands of the Jewish authorities, and his eventual resurrection (9:22; 44). The stage is set for Jesus to go to the cross and complete the work he came to do.

**READ** | Luke 9:51-56

1. What 2 bits of information do we learn about Jesus in v.51?
2. What does it mean for Jesus to be 'taken up'? Why does this make him 'determined' to journey to Jerusalem?

The Samaritans were a mixed race of Israelite and non-Israelite. They were despised by many pure-blooded Israelites because they believed that the Samaritans compromised the Jewish faith. This enmity was mutual, demonstrated by the hostility Samaritans tended to show to Jews on their way to observe religious festivals in Jerusalem. This is what happens to Jesus and his disciples here.

**3.** What is James and John's response to the Samaritan rejection? Why do you think this was their response?

**4.** Why do you think Jesus rebukes them for this?

- Would you say you have been/are too quick to wish God's judgment on those who treat you (or him) badly?

**READ | Luke 9:57-62**

Here Luke records 3 interactions Jesus has at some point in his journey with people over the question of following him - the phrase 'as they were travelling along the road' is intentionally general. Whether they happened at the one time, or have been grouped together here by Luke, they collectively highlight several key questions about discipleship.

**5.** What does the first person 'offer' to Jesus?

**6.** What is the point of Jesus' response?

**7.** The second two men also show interest in following Jesus but offer reasons for not doing so straight away. What are their reasons?

**8.** What do you make of Jesus' responses to these second two men? Why do you think Jesus says what he says to each of them?

## **FINAL THOUGHTS AND APPLICATION**

**9.** What are some ways we might 'look back' after having 'put our hands to the plough' in service of God?

**10.** What are some ways we can encourage one another as we follow Jesus?

## 2 Being a Mary in a Martha World

Luke 10:38-41

This episode comes after Jesus has sent out a large number of disciples on something of a 'mission trip' to proclaim that the kingdom of God is near (10:1-24) – that is, that it's come in Jesus. Immediately prior to this episode is Jesus' interaction with a Jewish law expert, who tests him about what one must 'do' to inherit eternal life. It's revealed that this is a self-justifying exercise for the lawyer, who thinks that 'loving God with all your heart and loving your neighbour as yourself' is something he can achieve by his faithful, Jewish religious observance. Jesus' response is his famous parable of the Good Samaritan, which highlights our moral duty to care for anyone in need, as well as our ultimate inability to 'do' what is needed to gain eternal life.

**READ** | Luke 10:38-41

1. Who are the two women Luke describes?
2. What are each of them doing?
3. What is Martha's reaction to the situation – and her solution to it?
  - What about Martha's situation and response resonates with you?

4. What do you notice about the tone of Jesus' response?
5. In what ways is Jesus' response an answer to Martha's concerns?
6. Why do you think sitting at Jesus' feet and learning from him the 'right choice'?
- Do you agree with Jesus that only 'one thing' is truly necessary each day, and what that thing is? Why/why not?

## FINAL THOUGHTS AND APPLICATION

7. What are some ways we're tempted to fall into Martha's trap?
8. In what ways are we able to 'sit at Jesus' feet, listening to him'?
9. Why is it liberating to know that the only thing that the Lord says we must do each day is relate to and spend time with him?



# 3 How To Pray

Luke 11:1-13

This account follows directly from the story at Martha and Mary's house. That short account helps us to be prepared for what is about to come. The disciples' request in 11:1 illustrates what we might call 'the Mary principle'; they want more of Jesus' teaching! Moreover, off the back of Mary's 'right choice' we're reminded that prayer is a key way that we relate to and spend time with God.

**READ** | Luke 10:1-4

1. What prompts the disciple to ask about prayer?
2. What specifically does the disciple ask Jesus to instruct them about?
  - Is that a request you've ever felt like making before?

Jesus responds positively to the disciples' request, but instead of a lesson, he gives them a **model** for prayer.

3. What are the main themes/sections of this 'model' prayer?

**4.** Reflect on the various sections of the prayer. What do they teach us:

- About God?
  
- About Us?

**5.** How do you think we're to use this prayer? As something we should repeat verbatim? Or more like a 'user's guide' – simply showing us the kinds of things we should take to the Lord in prayer?

- If you were to pray this prayer, are there parts of it you would find easier or harder to pray? Why?

**READ | Luke 10:5-13**

**6.** Briefly summarise the parable Jesus tells in vv.5-8.

**7.** What is the main point?

**8.** What's the parable's connection with Jesus' teaching on prayer (cf. vv.9-13)?

## FINAL THOUGHTS AND APPLICATION

9. How does Jesus' teaching on prayer here:

- Help you *want* to pray?
  
- Help you with *what* to pray?

# 4 A House Divided

Luke 11:14–28

Luke locates this event directly after the Martha-Mary incident and the Lord's Prayer discussion. Why should one sit at Jesus' feet? Why should one adopt the attitude reflected in Jesus' distinctive prayer – even to the extent of encouraging a community prayer? What gives Jesus the right to form his own band of followers? This event gives the answer. Thus, the issue at the heart of this section is the source of Jesus' authority, and it poses a key question to us: how will you respond to Jesus?

## READ | Luke 11:14–16

1. What does Jesus do, and what is the effect?
2. While many in the crowd are amazed (v.14c), others are not. What is the claim of those in v.15? To what particularly sinister source do some attribute the act?
  - This almost commonplace talk of demons is foreign to our culture. What do you make of it?

The origin of the name 'Beelzebul'/'Beelzebub' isn't entirely clear. Most likely it's derived from the name of a Canaanite deity. Our best understanding of the evidence seems to be that the Jews took this name of a heathen god and understood it in terms of the similar-sounding Hebrew, Baal-Zebul, meaning 'lord of the dung' – or, as some texts have it, Baal-Zebub ('lord of the flies'). They applied this appropriately vulgar term to a prominent demon, perhaps to Satan himself. Jesus clearly understood it to refer to Satan (11:18).

## READ | Luke 11:17-23

3. In responding to these claims, what analogies does Jesus draw on in v.17?
4. Jesus likens these to Satan and his domain. In doing so, what is his point?
5. How does the second illustration, of the strong man being attacked and plundered by a stronger man, add to what Jesus is saying?

## READ | Luke 11:24-28

6. What's the final scenario Jesus describes?
7. Despite the man's spiritual state having been made better with the demon gone, it is able to resettle. What does this suggest?
8. While it is difficult to know just how literal the details are, it's unlikely that this scenario Jesus describes is purely metaphorical, since all this has come off the back of a literal exorcism.  
  
Either way, as a culmination of this event/teaching, what do you think Jesus' point is? (Consider v.23 and v.28)

## FINAL THOUGHTS AND APPLICATION

**9.** Embodied demonic possession is unlikely to be our experience. Yet, the point remains that anyone who is not for Jesus is, spiritually, against him - along with the Lord of demons.

How does the fact that there is no spiritual 'middle ground' shape the way you see the world around you?

**10.** What are some ways that we can 'demonstrate' our allegiance to Christ?

# 5 The Danger of Religion

Luke 11:37–54

This section again takes place at an indeterminate time ‘along the road’. After the Jesus and Beelzebub incident, we’re told that ‘the crowds were increasing’ (11:29); as the reputation of Jesus the teacher becomes more widely known, there is a great and diverse number of people interested in him. In response to this growing interest, Jesus strongly criticises the crowds (‘this evil generation’) for their superficial faithlessness – asking for signs while being unwilling to discern the ones God has already provided in Jesus. Luke then records Jesus’ criticism of another form of superficial faithlessness.

**READ** | Luke 11: 37–44

1. Who invites Jesus to lunch/dinner? What does this tell us about the crowds around Jesus?
2. What about Jesus’ actions ‘amazes’ the Pharisee (not in a good way)?
3. Jesus responds with a critique. What is it (note the three ‘woes’)?

Jewish graves were typically cave-like tombs. Because Old Testament law warned that contact with the dead would make a person ceremonially unclean, the Jews frequently marked their tombs (usually by ‘whitewashing’ them) so no one would accidentally touch a grave site and thereby defile him or herself.

**4.** What do you think Jesus means when he compares the Pharisees to 'unmarked graves'?

- While we don't live in quite the same religious society as first century Jews, we have our own not-dissimilar pressures within the church community (and the wider Christian community) to appear spiritually and morally upright.

What are the easiest ways we're tempted to live as religious hypocrites?

**READ | Luke 11:45-54**

**5.** What is the objection of the expert in the law? Is it fair? Why/why not?

**6.** In response Jesus gives the experts in the law three 'woes' of their own. What are they?

**7.** What do you think each criticism/each 'woe' means?

- What are some ways that church leaders and Christians today might be tempted to act like the experts in the law did?
- How does the gospel challenge the unhealthy hypocrisy of the Pharisees and the unhelpful legalism of the experts of the law?



## READ | Luke 12:1-3

8. To what does Jesus liken the Pharisees, and what's his point in doing so?
  
9. What does Jesus say in v.2 (and 3) is the solution to hypocrisy?

## FINAL THOUGHTS AND APPLICATION

10. How does it make you feel that 'there is nothing covered that won't be uncovered' (12:2)?
  - Where in your life does this truth motivate you towards obedience?
  
  - How does it make you grateful for forgiveness?

# 6 The Danger of Riches

Luke 12:13–34

In between the dinner at the Pharisee's house (where Jesus criticised the empty religiosity of the Pharisees and experts in the law) and this passage, Luke includes an account of Jesus' teaching to a crowd of thousands gathered about him (we dipped into this incident at the end of the last study) about the dangerous and pervasive influence of the Pharisees, and the reality that, if people are to listen to and 'fear' anyone, it's God, who has given authority to the Son of Man (i.e. himself). The conversation that follows occurs somewhere in the journey, and Luke has chosen to place it here. And so we move from the danger of religion to the danger of riches.

**READ |** Luke 12:13–21

1. What is asked Jesus to do (v.13)?
2. What is Jesus' initial response (v.14)?
3. What reason does Jesus give for warning his listeners against 'all kinds of greed'?
4. How does Jesus' parable of the rich fool in vv.16–21 drive this point home?
  - While we all (likely) agree that 'life does not consist of an abundance of possessions', what are some ways that we still finding ourselves living as if it did?
  - How might we be 'rich toward God'?

It's interesting what this request from the man reveals about people's perception of Jesus. On a more general level, it highlights that by this time Jesus was viewed as a compelling and popular public figure. More specifically, however, it's worth noting the immediate context of 12:1-12 (which we skipped over) where Jesus asserts his authority to judge (as the Son of Man). That authority to judge is embraced here, but it's done so misguidedly – in a self-focussed way about non-spiritual things.

## READ | Luke 12:22-34

**5.** What does Jesus go on to say in v.22? Note how he starts. What does this tell us?

**6.** Jesus asks his disciples in vv.24-28 to 'consider the ravens' and 'how the wildflowers grow'. What lessons does he draw from each of them, and what point is making overall?

**7.** What contrast does Jesus draw in vv.29-31?

- In what ways do you see/have you seen this contrast play out in your life?

**8.** Is Jesus saying there's no place for financial or material concern? Why/why not?

## FINAL THOUGHTS AND APPLICATION

**9.** (If you're comfortable sharing) What worries you the most?

**10.** How has this passage given you reason not to worry in those (or other) ways? How will you go about putting this into practice in:

- your thinking?
- your praying?
- your living?

# 7 The Narrow Way

Luke 13:22-30

This account takes place somewhere 'not out on the road', but in 'the towns and villages'. However, we're not told location names; this is all still while Jesus is generally 'making his way to Jerusalem' (v.22). There is a large amount of narrative we have skipped – virtually a whole chapter. The general theme of Jesus' teaching in this section has been about being ready to respond to him in faith and repentance in order to be a part of the kingdom of God. The question that prompts Jesus' teaching here is a logical one in the context of this message.

## READ | Luke 13: 22-30

1. What question about salvation is Jesus asked?
2. Jesus doesn't respond directly to the man's question. Instead, he responds generally (the phrase 'make every effort' is plural) and uses an illustration. What is the illustration(s)?
3. How do these door metaphors relate to the man's question?

Without giving into allegory, it seems from the identity of the questioner, and from Jesus' references to the prophets, the patriarchs, and the kingdom of God in vv.28-30, that those trying to enter are Jews, and that the homeowner is Jesus himself – which is yet another subtle claim to divinity.

4. In Jesus' illustration, what pleas are given to the homeowner by those who are shut out? What are his responses (vv.25–27)?
5. What do you make of the homeowner's response? What is Jesus communicating to his listeners?
6. What does the homeowner's/Jesus' response tell us about who will be in the kingdom?
7. Why might this have been a surprise to his listeners?

## FINAL THOUGHTS AND APPLICATION

8. How does this 'narrow door' view of salvation sit with our contemporary culture? How does it sit with you?
9. There is a degree of 'urgency' to this parable (the sense of being 'too late' and 'missing out').
- What was the urgency for Jesus' listeners at the time?
  - What is the urgency for us today?

# 8 Whom Do You Trust?

Luke 18:15–30

This is the largest amount of narrative we will skip in these studies – all told, close to 5 whole chapters. The main reason for this is that in these chapters Luke slows down his narrative and, in particular, focusses on a number of Jesus' parables (8 all up). While these parables do connect with Jesus' overall teaching in the second half of Luke, they are also somewhat self-contained, and as such have less to do with Jesus' overall journey to Jerusalem. Immediately prior to this section involving the little children and the rich young ruler, Jesus has told the parable (the Pharisee and the Tax Collector) directed towards those 'who trusted in themselves that they were righteous and looked down on everyone else' (18:9).

## READ | Luke 18:15–17

1. According to Luke, for what reason were people bringing infants to Jesus? What do you think they meant by it?
2. Jesus' disciples 'rebuke' those bringing the children – that is, they seem to think that it's inappropriate for their busy rabbi to waste time with young children. Jesus' response is the complete opposite – he 'invites' the little children.

What reason does Jesus give for welcoming them (v.16)?

- What does this tell you about how Jesus views, not just children, but the generally 'less important' in society?
3. What conclusion does Jesus draw in v.17? What do you think it means?

- What do you find encouraging about this? What do you find challenging?

## READ | Luke 18:18–30

The second interaction is between Jesus and ‘a ruler’ (in Matthew’s account we also learn that he was a young man; Matt 19:20). The term ‘ruler’, as well as the later description of him as being ‘very rich’ suggests that he was from the ruling classes – society’s elite.

**4.** What is the rich young ruler’s question? What does it suggest about his view of eternal life/the Kingdom of God?

**5.** Consider the back and forth between the rich young ruler and Jesus in vv.19–23. How do Jesus’ responses meet the ruler’s expectations? How do they upend the ruler’s expectations?

- How do Jesus’ answers meet or upend your expectations about eternal life and entering the Kingdom of God?

**6.** Following the man’s sad response, what does Jesus say in vv.24 and 25?

**7.** What do you think Jesus means by this? Is he saying it’s impossible to enter the Kingdom of God if you’re rich – that you must become poor to gain eternal life? Why/why not?



Those listening express as much surprise at Jesus' teaching as the rich young ruler ('who then can be saved?'). They similarly assumed that wealth was a sign of God's favour, and so surely a wealthy Jewish elite who has kept all the commands is a 'shoe in' for the Kingdom. But if they're not – then who is?

**8.** How do Jesus' words in v.27 answer the rich young ruler's question and that of those listening in v.26?

## FINAL THOUGHTS AND APPLICATION

**9.** What are some of the 'religious credentials' you have been (or might be) tempted to 'rely on' ?

**10.** How do vv.29–30 encourage you to be wholehearted and sacrificial in your discipleship?

# 9 Salvation Has Come to This House

Luke 19:1–10

Narratively, Jesus is nearing the end of his long, 'circuitous but sure', journey south to Jerusalem. The beginning of Luke chapter 19 locates him in the ancient city of Jericho – about 40km north-east of Jerusalem. Thematically, the focus has been on spiritual need: who is able to enter the Kingdom of God, and on what grounds. Immediately prior Jesus has met a blind man's need for restored sight. Here Luke shows us another encounter with a person in need.

## READ | Luke 19:1–4

1. What is Jesus doing in Jericho? What does this detail contribute to the narrative?
2. What are we told about Zacchaeus?
  - What's your impression of Zacchaeus from this opening verses?

Zacchaeus's being short is often his most memorable characteristic. But his being chief tax collector and rich are the more significant details. Tax collectors were typically wealthy because they used their position to charge a bit extra and keep it for themselves. As chief tax collector Zacchaeus would have been obscenely rich – and equally as despised by his fellow Jews. In the words of Mike McKinley 'Zacchaeus was not a cute or cuddly man. He was a wildly successful thief and traitor to his people; this was the kind of "sinner" (v.7) that seemed to be obviously outside of God's program of salvation. This was a man in deep need of mercy and forgiveness for his sins.'

**3.** What do you notice about Jesus' words to Zacchaeus? What does this tell us about Jesus?

**4.** Zacchaeus responds enthusiastically to Jesus' invitation. How do the bystanders respond? What does this tell us about them/their attitude?

- Who in our community/society do we instinctively see as/feel are 'beyond the pale', morally and spiritually?

It's not clear exactly what the sequence of events is between the sycamore tree and vv.8-10 (have Zacchaeus and Jesus actually gone to Zacchaeus's house, or are they still at the tree? Have the bystanders followed Zacchaeus to his house? The most likely scenario is that Jesus and Zacchaeus have in fact gone to his house, and that the 'But' in v.8 points to a thematic/topical connection rather than a strictly sequential one.

**5.** What is Zacchaeus's declaration to Jesus in v.8?

**6.** What does Jesus tell Zacchaeus (and those listening) in vv.9-10?

**7.** What do you think it means that:

- 'today salvation has come to this house'? In what way is this connected to Zacchaeus's pledge to give away/give back so much money?

- Zacchaeus 'is a son of Abraham'?

**8.** 'The Son of Man' was Jesus' way of talking about himself (as God's promised King). How does Jesus' final comment in v.10 help you understand, not just this account, but Jesus' whole mission?

## FINAL THOUGHTS AND APPLICATION

**9.** In Zacchaeus we see that truly receiving the love of Jesus has a truly profound impact on people's lives. How have you experienced this in your own life, and seen it in the lives of those around you?

**10.** Are there people around you who seem to have given their lives to amassing wealth? Do you see them as potential Zacchaeuses (willing to respond in repentance and faith), or do you assume they would not see their need of the gospel? How will you seek to share the gospel with them?

# 10 The King Arrives

## Luke 19:28–48

The end of chapter 19 sees Jesus entering Jerusalem. Having ‘determined to journey to Jerusalem’ in order to complete his earthly mission (9:51), Jesus has at last arrived at his destination. Although no palm waving is mentioned in Luke’s account (see John 12:13), Jesus’ arrival the week before his resurrection has become known in the church calendar as ‘Palm Sunday’, and the contrast between his arrival treatment and that of his subsequent arrest, trial, and crucifixion could not be more stark.

### READ | Luke 19: 28–36

1. What does Jesus ask his disciples to get?
2. What do you make of Jesus’ instructions – how specific they are, as well as the fact that they unfold just how he described?

This kingship symbolism isn’t lost on the disciples, who ‘laid their cloaks on the donkey’ and ‘helped Jesus get on it’, like a king on his throne. They then laid cloaks on the road as he rode along. This was a common custom to show respect and honour for conquerors or royalty – an ancient world version of ‘rolling out the red carpet’.

### READ | Luke 19:37–44

3. Who is ‘the whole crowd of the disciples’ praising, and why (vv.37–38)?

4. What is the reaction of some of the Pharisees? Why might this be so?

Jesus' heart for Jerusalem is laid bare in the words Luke records in vv.41-44. He longs for the city to embrace him and experience God's peace, yet he knows they won't. His graphic descriptions of future siege and destruction in vv.43-44 amount to predictions that came to pass in A.D. 66-70, when the Jews revolted against Rome, Rome responded by laying siege to the city for 3 years, before ultimately capturing and destroying it in A.D. 70.

**READ | Luke 19:45-48**

5. The whole temple area was vast – countless people coming and going through the various outer and inner courts. What does Jesus do when he enters the temple complex?

6. Buying and selling was a necessary part of temple commerce (e.g. worshippers purchasing an animal for sacrifice, etc.). This being so, why do you think Jesus does what he does (and says what he says)?

7. What do we learn from the various responses of:

- Jesus (v.47a)?
- The religious authorities (v.47b)?
- The people (v.48)?

## FINAL THOUGHTS AND APPLICATION

8. How might we fall into the trap today of the same empty religiosity Jesus condemned at the temple?
  
9. What are some of the reasons you've heard people give – or even which you yourself have – for not accepting Jesus' kingship?
  
10. Consider the joyous praise of the disciples in vv.37-38. How has submitting to and embracing Jesus' kingship over your life brought you joy? What are some practical differences Jesus' kingship makes to your life?

