

## **The Gospels: Luke**

Luke

Rev. Cameron D St.Michael – July 26, 2020

8<sup>th</sup> Sunday After Pentecost

**Readings:** Luke 1:1-4, 2:1-7, 7:6-9, 13:1-5, 17:11-19, 23:6-12,32-46, 24:1-16,28-36,50-53

**Reflection:** Psalm 138

**Greeting:** May the grace and peace of our Lord, Jesus Christ, be with you on this day! I pray that as we join together in worship, in whatever way we join together, that we be united by one Spirit, serving the Father, in the truth of the Son. Let us celebrate the love of Christ that brings us together in God's care. Praise the Lord!

**Prayer:** O Lord our God, help us this day. Help us live a life more and more like the example set for us in Christ Jesus. Help us to see with new eyes so that we may strive to be more and more like our Risen Savior. Guide us in all that we are and all that we do, that we may serve you, Lord, that all be for you. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

**Reflection:** Psalm 138

*Of David. I give you thanks, O Lord, with my whole heart; before the gods I sing your praise; I bow down toward your holy temple and give thanks to your name for your steadfast love and your faithfulness; for you have exalted your name and your word above everything. On the day I called, you answered me, you increased my strength of soul. All the kings of the earth shall praise you, O Lord, for they have heard the words of your mouth. They shall sing of the ways of the Lord, for great is the glory of the Lord. For though the Lord is high, he regards the lowly; but the haughty he perceives from far away. Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve me against the wrath of my enemies; you stretch out your hand, and your right hand delivers me. The Lord will fulfill his purpose for me; your steadfast love, O Lord, endures forever. Do not forsake the work of your hands.*

*(Psalm 138 NRSV\*)*

We read the words of Psalm 138 and we hear praise for the God of all nations. That wherever we go, God is there. Wherever we are, God's love is there. God's saving grace is available wherever we are and whatever happens. That our prayers are heard and answered by God. How do you praise God in your heart? How do you show praise in your life? Do you feel God preserving you in your trials? Do you see God's hand in your life?

**Prayer:** God, our King and Creator. Help us to never forget the wonderful things you have done. Let us remember that your steadfast love is always with us. That your caring hand is always upon our shoulder. Let us always call up the Father who guides us. Help us to always seek the Holy Spirit that leads us. And let us always celebrate the salvation of the Son, our Lord Jesus Christ. May praise always be on our tongues and love in our hearts. Amen.

Now let the words of our mouths, and the meditations of our hearts be acceptable in your sight, O Lord, our Rock and our Redeemer. Amen.

**Sermon:**

Our scripture readings for today come from the Common English Bible. All of our readings come from the Gospel of Luke today. We begin with chapter 1, verses 1 through 4.

*Many people have already applied themselves to the task of compiling an account of the events that have been fulfilled among us. They used what the original eyewitnesses and servants of the word handed down to us. Now, after having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, I have also decided to write a carefully ordered account for you, most honorable Theophilus. I want you to have confidence in the soundness of the instruction you have received.*

*(Luke 1:1-4 CEB+)*

Next, we turn to chapter 2, verses 1 through 7.

*In those days Caesar Augustus declared that everyone throughout the empire should be enrolled in the tax lists. This first enrollment occurred when Quirinius governed Syria. Everyone went to their own cities to be enrolled. Since Joseph belonged to David's house and family line, he went up from the city of Nazareth in Galilee to David's city, called Bethlehem, in Judea. He went to be enrolled together with Mary, who was promised to him in marriage and who was pregnant. While they were there, the time came for Mary to have her baby. She gave birth to her firstborn child, a son, wrapped him snugly, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the guestroom.*

*(Luke 2:1-7 CEB+)*

And now, chapter 7, verses 6 through 9.

*Jesus went with them. He had almost reached the house when the centurion sent friends to say to Jesus, "Lord, don't be bothered. I don't deserve to have you come under my roof. In fact, I didn't even consider myself worthy to come to you. Just say the word and my servant will be healed. I'm also a man appointed under authority, with soldiers under me. I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes, and to another, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and the servant does it."*

*When Jesus heard these words, he was impressed with the centurion. He turned to the crowd following him and said, "I tell you, even in Israel I haven't found faith like this."*

*(Luke 7:6-9 CEB+)*

Then, chapter 13, verses 1 through 5.

*Some who were present on that occasion told Jesus about the Galileans whom Pilate had killed while they were offering sacrifices. He replied, "Do you think the suffering of these Galileans proves that they were more sinful than all the other Galileans? No, I tell you, but unless you change your hearts and lives, you will die just as they did. What about those eighteen people who were killed when the tower of Siloam fell on them? Do you think that they were more guilty of wrongdoing than everyone else who lives in Jerusalem? No, I tell you, but unless you change your hearts and lives, you will die just as they did."*

*(Luke 13:1-5 CEB+)*

We continue with, chapter 17, verses 11 through 19.

*On the way to Jerusalem, Jesus traveled along the border between Samaria and Galilee. As he entered a village, ten men with skin diseases approached him. Keeping their distance from him, they raised their voices and said, "Jesus, Master, show us mercy!"*

*When Jesus saw them, he said, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." As they left, they were cleansed. One of them, when he saw that he had been healed, returned and praised God with a loud voice. He fell on his face at Jesus' feet and thanked him. He was a Samaritan. Jesus replied, "Weren't ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? No one returned to praise God except this foreigner?" Then Jesus said to him, "Get up and go. Your faith has healed you."*

*(Luke 17:11-19 CEB+)*

And now, chapter 23, verses 6 through 12 and 32 through 46.

*Hearing this, Pilate asked if the man was a Galilean. When he learned that Jesus was from Herod's district, Pilate sent him to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem at that time. Herod was very glad to see Jesus, for he had heard about Jesus and had wanted to see him for quite some time. He was hoping to see Jesus perform some sign. Herod questioned Jesus at length, but Jesus didn't respond to him. The chief priests and the legal experts were there, fiercely accusing Jesus. Herod and his soldiers treated Jesus with contempt. Herod mocked him by dressing Jesus in elegant clothes and sent him back to Pilate. Pilate and Herod became friends with each other that day. Before this, they had been enemies.*

*They also led two other criminals to be executed with Jesus. When they arrived at the place called The Skull, they crucified him, along with the criminals, one on his right and the other on his left. Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they're doing." They drew lots as a way of dividing up his clothing.*

*The people were standing around watching, but the leaders sneered at him, saying, "He saved others. Let him save himself if he really is the Christ sent from God, the chosen one."*

*The soldiers also mocked him. They came up to him, offering him sour wine and saying, "If you really are the king of the Jews, save yourself." Above his head was a notice of the formal charge against him. It read "This is the king of the Jews."*

*One of the criminals hanging next to Jesus insulted him: "Aren't you the Christ? Save yourself and us!"*

*Responding, the other criminal spoke harshly to him, "Don't you fear God, seeing that you've also been sentenced to die? We are rightly condemned, for we are receiving the appropriate sentence for what we did. But this man has done nothing wrong." Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."*

*Jesus replied, "I assure you that today you will be with me in paradise."*

*It was now about noon, and darkness covered the whole earth until about three o'clock, while the sun stopped shining. Then the curtain in the sanctuary tore down the middle. Crying out in a loud voice, Jesus said, "Father, into your hands I entrust my life." After he said this, he breathed for the last time.*

*(Luke 23:6-12,32-46 CEB+)*

And finally, chapter 24, verses 1 through 16, 28 through 36, and 50 through 53.

*Very early in the morning on the first day of the week, the women went to the tomb, bringing the fragrant spices they had prepared. They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, but when they went in, they didn't find the body of the Lord Jesus. They didn't know what to make of this. Suddenly, two men were standing beside them in gleaming bright clothing. The women were frightened and bowed their faces toward the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He isn't here, but has been raised. Remember what he told you while he was still in Galilee, that the Human One must be handed over to sinners, be crucified, and on the third day rise again." Then they remembered his words. When they returned from the tomb, they reported all these things to the eleven and all the others. It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them who told these things to the apostles. Their words struck the apostles as nonsense, and they didn't believe the women. But Peter ran to the tomb. When he bent over to look inside, he saw only the linen cloth. Then he returned home, wondering what had happened.*

*On that same day, two disciples were traveling to a village called Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. They were talking to each other about everything that had happened. While they were discussing these things, Jesus himself arrived and joined them on their journey. They were prevented from recognizing him.*

*When they came to Emmaus, he acted as if he was going on ahead. But they urged him, saying, "Stay with us. It's nearly evening, and the day is almost over." So he went in to stay with them. After he took his seat at the table with them, he took the bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he disappeared from their sight. They said to each other, "Weren't our hearts on fire when he spoke to us along the road and when he explained the scriptures for us?"*

*They got up right then and returned to Jerusalem. They found the eleven and their companions gathered together. They were saying to each other, "The Lord really has risen! He appeared to*

*Simon!” Then the two disciples described what had happened along the road and how Jesus was made known to them as he broke the bread.*

*While they were saying these things, Jesus himself stood among them and said, “Peace be with you!”*

*He led them out as far as Bethany, where he lifted his hands and blessed them. As he blessed them, he left them and was taken up to heaven. They worshipped him and returned to Jerusalem overwhelmed with joy. And they were continuously in the temple praising God.*

*(Luke 24:1-16,28-36,50-53 CEB+)*

This is the word of God for the people of God. Thanks be to God.

We begin the next installment in our series about the Gospels by turning to Luke. Like the other Gospel authors, we don't know much about the author. The name Luke is attached to them but is not actually mentioned by the author. We do have a few things that the author tells us. The account is not an eyewitness account. Luke opens with an explanation of compiling the Gospel account. He has taken the testimony of others and the other records available and then composed a carefully ordered account for Theophilus, his apparent benefactor. We get a purpose for Luke. Interestingly, Luke is the only Gospel author that has another book that we know is from the same author. The opening of the Acts of the Apostles has another reference to Theophilus and a reference to the first work done, the Gospel. This makes Luke's story a two-part story, one about the ministry of Christ and the other about the early church. Today we focus on the Gospel.

Luke also follows much of the timeline of Mark, our oldest Gospel. Luke does a little bit of rearranging, with a flow going from the start of Christ's ministry along the path to Jerusalem. As we look at the unique parts of Luke, we open with a birth narrative. This is the familiar story of traveling to Bethlehem and Christ being laid in a manger. Luke alone goes into the birth of John the Baptist and his family relationship to Jesus, through Elizabeth and Mary. Luke also covers Jesus being dedicated and circumcised and the one account of Christ as a child, being found in the temple teaching. Other than this account, nothing about Jesus' childhood is mentioned by any Gospel author.

There are a lot of familiar parts of Luke that we will find, and the events largely line up with Matthew and Mark. So the readings for today were selected to try to highlight those unique sections that are only found in Luke's Gospel account. There are some very well-known parables that are only found in Luke, such as the Prodigal Son and the Good Samaritan. Early in the Gospel we get something that helps to inform us about Luke's narrative purpose. We get the genealogy of Jesus, but unlike Matthew's genealogy, Luke goes back to Adam. Matthew was concerned with being connected to the patriarch of Israel. Luke wanted to go back to the beginning of humanity. This helps to set up Luke's purpose, of making Christ the savior of all mankind. Jew and Gentile alike are united by the figure of Jesus. This is key to our understanding of Luke's message, and might be seen as a contrast to Matthew. We can see this further as we jump ahead to our next reading from today. Jesus is impressed by the faith of the centurion when he is headed to him to heal his servant. The centurion basically tells him

that he knows Jesus has the authority to heal him from where he is at and doesn't have to come all the way to him. Jesus is so impressed, he says that "even in Israel I haven't found faith like this." We begin to get an opening up of the idea that people outside Israel having a great faith.

We see this again in chapter 17 when we get the account of Jesus traveling between Samaria and Galilee. Ten men with skin disease approach him and beg for healing. The only one to return to praise God and throw himself at Christ's feet was a Samaritan. The others all continue on their way, while a foreigner comes back to be grateful. This is a pattern of Luke highlighting the outsiders being faithful and being praised by Jesus. This theme shows that the faith isn't just for the Israelites, but it is now for all. Luke wants to highlight that gentile and Jewish believers have more in common than they might think. He's dealing with a divide between the Israelite faithful who are following Christ and the new gentile converts in his own day. Luke is building a bridge to ensure that those outside the Israelite community are included. He also wants to make sure that the gentiles respect the Jewish traditions and customs.

We also see new teachings in Luke. In chapter 13, Jesus is in a discussion about some people that were killed by Pilate. He notes that the thing people have in common, if they die at the hands of another or in an accident, that they will die. And that everyone he's talking to will die just as they did unless they change their hearts and lives. Now, this doesn't mean you won't die, but that unless you turn your heart to God your life ends like any other life. Jesus erases the idea that sin caused their demise, but instead states that things happen and the important thing you can do is be prepared for what happens next. It is an important idea that goes to the heart of Christianity that we have today. That not everything that happens is tied to what we have done, but an understanding that things happen. And that the important part is how we live our lives in order to serve God and be ready for death and life after death.

Just as in the other Gospel accounts, Luke gives a unique account of the trial and crucifixion of Christ. The first of the things that stands out is that when Pilate has Jesus on trial, he asks Jesus if he's a Galilean. When he finds out he is, he sends him to Herod. Herod can get nothing out of Jesus and sends him back to Pilate. But Pilate and Herod become friends after this. Interestingly, this then goes on to show Pilate and Herod finding Jesus innocent. But it is the corrupt religious leaders that insist upon Jesus' death. This only happens in Luke, and perhaps was a way to show both Roman and Jewish authorities finding Jesus innocent. They still did nothing to save him, but it once again shows a connection between gentile and Jewish followers of Christ.

As we move into the crucifixion, Luke's account is drastically different from the accounts of the last two weeks. Jesus now is speaking to women along the road. In the last two weeks, we had only a despondent cry before death. As we open up the account, we get the famous line of forgiveness "Father, forgive them, for they don't know what they're doing." This act is a tremendous one, even seeking forgiveness for the people actively killing him. We also have the two criminals being crucified with Jesus, but in Luke they have a dialogue. One decries and mocks Christ. The other rebukes the first criminal and defends Jesus. He asks Jesus to

remember him in his kingdom. Jesus replied, “I assure you that today you will be with me in paradise.” This is important for multiple reasons, but one of the biggest is that it shows that there is something immediate about the coming kingdom. Not just a waiting for the final day, but Jesus says “today.” After this, instead of the cry of abandonment we get in Mark and Matthew, Luke offers the final line of Christ’s life as “Father, into your hand I entrust my life.” Or, as it is well known, “Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit.” Luke’s picture is of a Christ much more accepting and trusting in his fate. His entire demeanor on the cross and on his way to the cross is much more concerned with comforting and forgiving others and showing Christ’s trust in God’s plan.

The resurrection also has a unique take on it in Luke. There are two messengers at the tomb. The women go to the tomb, hear the message from the two men there, and they go and report to the men. Peter runs to see for himself, but only finds an empty tomb. The rest do not believe the women. We then get the story of the trip of two disciples to Emmaus. This is a unique account only found in Luke. They are traveling when they are joined by Jesus, but they do not know it is him. They talk, they discuss, Jesus teaches them. When they stop for the night, Jesus reveals himself in the breaking of bread, and then he’s gone. The two head back to Jerusalem to tell the others. When they get there, Jesus appears to all of them. There is a lot of dialogue and a lot more than prior Gospel accounts. With this, I do have to make a note that it seems the longer ending of Mark greatly mirrors Luke’s account. In Luke, the disciples follow Jesus out to Bethany. He blesses them and then he leaves them, taken up to heaven: the ascension. In Mark’s original ending, the women tell no one. In Matthew, it ends with the Great Commission in Galilee. In Luke, it ends near Jerusalem, with the ascension of Christ to Heaven and the followers head back into Jerusalem. Acts picks up from here and begins an account of the early church. There is an important note about the location change. In Acts, the central group of the Israelites is the church in Jerusalem. Outside Israel, we get many of the churches made up of gentile converts. Much of Luke’s narrative is about bringing people together under the one banner of Christ, finding ways for the two different groups to interact. This is a major concern for Luke, wanting to bridge the divides in the church of his day.

I want to leave you with a few thoughts about Luke. Luke very much tells a story that is crafted to help deliver a message of unity. Luke lays out a biography of Jesus Christ, telling where he came from, how his ministry started, going to his death, resurrection, and ascension. That Jesus is the savior of all people. That the God of Israel is the God of all people. When we read Luke, we get a narrative that includes many of the people on the fringes of society being seen in a positive light. That foreigners are included, that all of those who are usually left behind are part of God’s plan. Luke writes the story of Christ as it pertains to the community he is in and the struggles that they have. He wants to help both gentile and Jewish followers of Christ come together to really become disciples of Jesus. Luke is researched knowing that it wasn’t the only account, but that it was the story Luke wanted to tell. That we read the Gospel of Luke as a book unto itself, telling a unique story. And we see how the Gospels can be opened when you take each one and let the author speak to their own experience with Jesus Christ with their own voice standing alone. Amen.

**Prayer of Confession and Pardon:** Lord, forgive us we pray. We come before you as those who have sinned against you in what we say and do. We come before you as those who have sinned against you in what we do not say and what we do not do. It is in our doings and our failings that we seek your grace and your mercy. We haven't loved you how we should. We haven't loved each other how we should. We are a people who are sorry, who humbly seek your forgiveness. Help us to live with one another in your mercy and your grace. Let us always remember the sacrifice made by our Risen Savior, Jesus Christ, that we may understand your deep love for us. May we honor that love by sharing it with one another, loving as you love and caring as you care. Help us to be of one body redeemed by one blood, serving one God. Amen.

**Offering:** If you are so moved to make an offering, you may send it to the church treasurer, or you may send it to the PO Box listed in the weekly update. If you are interested in online giving, please contact me. We are still the church, and the church still needs your support to keep doing all the important work that we do.

### **Lord's Prayer**

**Dismissal with Blessing:** We go forth now that we may be ministers of the good news wherever we go. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Until we meet again. **Amen.**



**Prayer List**

Rev Charliam Renner	Bishop Frank Beard	Our Conference	Our Healthcare Workers
Angie Veach	Diane Washburn	Bill Calvert	Eric Veach
Cathy Devall	Brock McMorris	Ed & Verna Titus	Hayden Kanizer
Henry Catey	Jake Kiser	Laura Eubank Allison	Nancy Sowers
Aaron Carrell	Cindy Cisney	Patti Corder & Crew	Nancy Hoke
Don Wells	Tricia Adkins	Ty Bradley	Ronnie & Elaine Carlen
Pat Nebel	Don Stewart	Earlene Shupe	Brenda Hurt
Anne Winkler Heinrichs	Robert Fryman	Susan Shoot	Lamar Family
Family of Dean Swim	Family of Jean Webster		
Richard Durham	Kathy Hanks	Nora Werner & Family	Wayne & Charlotte Carrell
Gary & Mary Winterrowd	Lois Woolever	Mary White	Nick Nichols
Family of Novella Claiborn			
Greg Williams	Eloise Buffenmeyer	Martha Roberts	Charlie & Charlotte Baxter
Paul Schulte	Lyle Whitley		

Offerings may be mailed to your local treasurer or addressed to:

Rev Camron D St. Michael

PO Box 54, Charleston IL, 61920

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## **7/26/2020 Update from Pastor Cameron**

Greetings! Time for a weekly update!

We are continuing in both online and in person worship at this time. I am thankful for all of the work that everyone has done to make this possible. As we return to in person worship, please contact me for details or see prior weekly updates for all of the current safety precautions.

Prayers for our schools would be greatly appreciated, as schools across the country are figuring out how to safely begin soon.

There are copies of the Upper Room available in Greenup in the box and at Cottonwood. You can also find the current issue online. The new Sunday school quarterly is also in the box for whoever is interested.

I will be continuing to have our worship services online and in print! A printed copy of the service including the weekly sermon will be available online and in print. The sermon audio will be uploaded weekly as well. If you'd like to be updated when it is available, it is on Spotify, Google Play, and iTunes. I will also post updates to the church Facebook pages every week. If anyone you know is not getting a copy and would like one mailed, please let me know. I am trying to get them mailed out weekly.

Also, in this time we are still working to keep the bills paid, our missions supported, our apportionments met, and our outreach working. As such, we do need your continued financial support as part of the church. Offerings may be sent to your local treasurer or to the PO Box listed below. I can also arrange to pick them up if I am delivering anything to you. I am personally grateful for all your continued support in this difficult time. I cannot stress enough that the church is still active and we are still together.

Please see the CDC website for information on the Coronavirus.

Please stay safe. You are all in my prayers. I will keep you updated as best I can. If you have any questions, feel free to contact your Church Council Chair or myself.

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