LUKE

Luke
Key Verse:

INTRODUCTION TO THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

Luke was the only Gentile writer of the New Testament. He was a physician by profession. He was Paul's co-worker, and he traveled with him from the time he crossed over into Europe on his second missionary journey (Ac 16) until his imprisonment in Rome. Luke's Gospel is a companion volume to Acts. Both the Gospel and Acts were directed to Theophilus, whose name means "lover of God." Luke, the historian and evangelist, carefully researched those who had been eyewitnesses of Jesus' ministry, and he recorded accurate facts--from Jesus' birth to his ascension--in an orderly way. His purpose was to plant gospel faith in his readers, and to show that God's heart is for the salvation of the whole world. He lays a foundation for world missions, for he sees the roots of Paul's mission to the Gentiles in the very heart and mind of Jesus. The Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts are tied together by a key quotation from Isaiah 42:6, "a light for...the Gentiles..." (Lk 2:32; Acts 13:47)

While this Gospel is one of the Synoptic Gospels, there are several emphases which are characteristic to Luke: the role of women; Jesus' teachings about money; his concern for the poor; the Holy Spirit in Jesus' ministry; prayer. Luke focuses on Jesus' mission and the nature of his messiahship, (4:18-20) so he records the events and teachings of Jesus that are important in understanding the way of salvation. The key verse is 19:10: "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost."

1:1-4:13--Begins in Jerusalem (birth narratives)

4:14-9:50--Galilean ministry (Who Jesus is)

9:51-19:27--Judean and Perean ministry (Why he came)

19:28-24:53--Ends in Jerusalem (Passion week)

A GODLY COUPLE

Luke 1:1-17

Key Verse: 1:13

1. An orderly account (1-4)

Luke wrote to lovers of God an orderly and well-attested account of Jesus' birth, life and death, so that we might know for certain that the gospel is true.

2. Zechariah and Elizabeth (5-7)

Luke the historian begins in Jerusalem with an old priestly couple who were living lives of faith in godless times. They were the lamp of God, burning in a dark world. They had a secret sorrow--they were childless. But they did not despair or become bitter. They were called upright in the sight of God, for they lived according to the Bible, and they prayed.

3. Your prayer has been heard (8-17)

Once Zechariah was chosen to go into the temple and burn incense. This was intercessory prayer for the people and the nation. He prayed for himself too. God's angel appeared to announce the birth of John the Baptist. They must raise him to be a man of God. Through him, God would bless many people to repent. He would prepare the way for the Messiah--God's greatest blessing for all people of all time.

Prayer: Lord, help me to be a small candle light burning in dark times.

One Word: God uses prayerful people

GOD TRAINS ZECHARIAH

Luke 1:18-25

Key Verse: 1:20

1. Because you did not believe (18-22)

When the angel Gabriel who stands in the presence of God, told Zechariah that he would have a son, he couldn't believe it--even though he had prayed for a son. He lived an upright life; he prayed and studied the Bible and never missed worship service. He thought he had faith, but in fact, he had become fatalistic. He didn't believe that God could change his situation. So God gave him "silence training" for nearly a year. Even devout men of God sometimes need to be trained in faith.

2. Elizabeth's joy (23-25)

By faith Elizabeth had accepted her barrenness, and she lived as though she had no problems. But when she became pregnant with John, "God's gift," she revealed how deeply this problem had affected her. She praised God for his favor and for taking away her disgrace. God's blessing changed her from a barren woman to a fruitful woman.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for your training in faith. And thank you for your grace and favor, which still makes barren people fruitful.

One Word: God disciplines those he loves

THE HIGHLY FAVORED ONE

Luke 1:26-38

Key Verse: 1:38

1. You have found favor with God (26-33)

When Mary heard that she had found favor with God, she was afraid and troubled. She must have known that God's favor--his grace--though beautiful, is costly. She was just a simple country girl who was engaged to a young man named Joseph. Joseph was a humble carpenter, but the blood of kings flowed in his veins, for he was a descendant of David. Mary was looking forward to their sweet home. But God had a mission for her. He had chosen her to be the mother of his Son Jesus, the promised Messiah who would rule over an eternal kingdom. God was sending his Son, Mary's Son, to be the Savior of the world.

2. I am the Lord's servant (34-38)

Mary did not hesitate because of the personal sacrifice involved; she hesitated because what God asked of her defied her human reason: It seemed impossible. But nothing is impossible with God. The angel told her about Elizabeth. And Mary made a decision of faith to give up her human dream and be totally available to God--to be the Lord's servant.

Prayer: Lord, let me serve you in any way you choose. Teach me to bear your costly grace.

One Word: I am the Lord's servant

BLESSED IS SHE WHO BELIEVED

Luke 1:39-45

Key Verse: 1:45

1. A trip to see Elizabeth (39-41)

Mary realized that she was pregnant by the Holy Spirit (35). She must have felt terribly alone. To whom could she turn? She could have sought human sympathy from Joseph or her parents or some friend, but she remembered the angel's message and decided to go to Elizabeth, her relative who lived in Judea. God had done great work in Elizabeth. Mary sought spiritual encouragement rather than human sympathy.

2. The baby in my womb leaped for joy (42-45)

When Mary arrived at the home of Zechariah and Elizabeth in the hill country of Judea, Elizabeth greeted her joyfully. She didn't need to be told what had happened. Mary was a younger cousin, but Elizabeth greeted her humbly as the "mother of my Lord." Baby John in her womb recognized baby Jesus in Mary's womb. Elizabeth blessed Mary because Mary believed

God and she believed God's word of promise. Joy and praise come from faith. Mary stayed until the time came for John to be born.

Prayer: Lord, help me to seek the council and advice of your people rather than that of worldly people.

One Word: Blessed is she who believed

MARY'S SONG

Luke 1:46-56

Key Verse: 1:47

1. My soul glorifies the Lord (46-49)

When Mary heard Elizabeth's blessing, praise flowed from her heart. She was an ordinary country girl, but God had chosen her. She was a sinner who rejoiced in God her Savior. He is the Mighty One--holy is his name! He had done great things for her. God's mighty work of sending his Son into the world was being done because one humble woman trusted and obeyed him. She recognized his grace in her life, and she praised him for calling her to be his servant.

2. God's mighty deeds for all (50-56)

God's great work in Mary was not for her sake alone. She found her place in the stream of God's redemptive history. God's mercy and forgiveness extend down through all generations to those who fear him. A quiet revolution was beginning. Rulers would be brought down and humble people exalted. The hungry would be filled and the rich sent away empty. The proud in heart would be scattered. God was keeping his promise to Abraham, to bless the world through his descendant, Jesus Christ.

Prayer: Lord, help me to obey you so that I may know your love and find my place in your history.

One Word: Rejoice in God

HIS NAME IS JOHN

Luke 1:57-66

Key Verse: 1:63b

1. Elizabeth's baby is born (57-58)

When a son was born to Zechariah and Elizabeth, all the neighbors and relatives rejoiced. Their home had been so empty and lonely. They had not complained about their childless state, but

their neighbors could guess the deep sorrow buried in their hearts. Now, God had filled their home with joy--and everyone rejoiced with them.

2. He is to be called John (59-66)

The baby was circumcised and named on the eighth day. Naming the baby "John" was an act of faith for Zechariah and Elizabeth. No one could understand why they did not name him for his father. But "John" was the name given him by the angel. To affirm this name was to acknowledge that their baby was God's gift--and that he belonged to God. So Zechariah's silence training ended as soon as he wrote the words, "His name is John." The Lord's hand was with baby John, for God had a very special mission for him.

Prayer: Lord, all I am and have are yours. Help me to obey your word--not follow my human reason or feelings.

One Word: His name is John

THE HORN OF SALVATION

Luke 1:67-75

Key Verse: 1:69

1. He has raised up a horn of salvation (67-73)

Zechariah's dumb lips opened when his son John was born. He sang a song of praise to the God of Israel who had come to redeem his people. He praised Jesus, the mighty horn of salvation. "Horn" represents power and authority (Dt 33:17; Ps 22:21). Jesus, born in the royal line of David, is the Mighty God who came to save his people. Satan also has a horn--in fact, he has 10 horns (Rev 13:1). Jesus is powerful enough to break Satan's horn, powerful enough to break the yoke of sin and save us from the strong grip of Satan.

2. To serve him without fear (74-75)

God sent Jesus to fulfill the oath he swore to our father Abraham. He sent him to rescue us from the hand of our enemy Satan. He saves us so that we can serve him without fear, in holiness and righteousness all our days.

Prayer: Lord, I am weak, and I cannot save myself. Praise Jesus, the Horn of Salvation, who pierced Satan and set me free. Help me to serve you in holiness and righteousness, without fear, all my days.

One Word: Jesus, the Horn of Salvation

TO PREPARE THE WAY

Luke 1:76-80

Key Verse: 1:76

1. To give knowledge of salvation (76-78a)

Zechariah's son was not the Christ. He was John the Baptist, the forerunner of the Messiah. He was sent by God to prepare the way for Christ's coming. How does one prepare for the coming of the Lord? John's ministry called people to repentance. He proclaimed forgiveness of sin. Our great human problem is sin. Jesus came to solve this problem by dying for our sins and rising from death. John made people aware of sin and he heralded Jesus the Savior.

2. The rising Sun (78b-80)

At the time of Jesus' coming, the world was clothed in the dark night of sin. My life was also dark and meaningless before Jesus came to me. Jesus' coming is like the rising sun. He shines his light of salvation and life on those living in the darkness of sin and fear, under the shadow of death.

Prayer: Lord, help me to be a herald of Jesus. Help me to prepare a way for him to come into the dark lives of the people of my time.

One Word: Jesus turns darkness into light

THE BABY IN THE MANGER

Luke 2:1-7

Key Verse: 2:7

1. Caesar Augustus (1-3)

Rome ruled the world; she enforced "Pax Romana"--Roman peace. She exacted taxes from all her colonial possessions. Caesar Augustus' word was law. When he ordered a census of the entire Roman world, everyone had to go and register--irrespective of personal circumstances. Caesar represents worldly power. His palace represents a selfish, pleasure-seeking lifestyle.

2. The Baby in the manger (4-7)

Joseph and Mary also had to register. They had to go to Bethlehem, even though Mary had reached the full term of her pregnancy. In Bethlehem, everything was crowded and everybody was busy. Joseph was one of the powerless people. He was poor and he had no clout; he couldn't get a room in the inn. Still, there is no room in a sinful world and no room in crooked hearts for the Savior. The Son of God was born in a stable and laid in a manger. But Jesus, not Caesar, is the ruler of the world. Only Jesus' kingdom is eternal.

Prayer: Lord, help me to love Jesus' humble lifestyle; give me eyes to see things as they really are, so that I may pity Caesar, not envy him.

One Word: The baby in the manger

GOD'S SIGN

Luke 2:8-20

Key Verse: 2:11

1. The angels' song (8-14)

An angel clothed in glory announced Jesus' birth. His birth was good news of great joy for all people of all times. He was the promised Messiah, the Savior, Christ the Lord. God sent him to bring salvation from sin, eternal life and the kingdom of God to all who trust him. The baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger was God's sign. The angels' chorus joined in: Jesus' coming means glory to God and peace to men who receive his grace. He brings joy and peace that no one else can give and no one can take away.

2. The shepherds' faith (15-20)

This world-changing announcement was made to some humble shepherds on night duty. They were terrified at the sight of the angel. God chose the shepherd as a symbol of the Messiah; he himself is the shepherd of his people. The shepherds heard the good news and went to see what had happened. When they saw the baby in the manger, they recognized God's sign and believed God's word; they rejoiced and praised God.

Prayer: Lord, give me eyes to see the humble sign of your hand working in our midst, and rejoice.

One Word: The sign of the Savior

BORN UNDER THE LAW

Luke 2:21-24

Key Verse: 2:21

1. They named him Jesus (21)

On the eighth day Jesus was circumcised. His parents claimed for him the covenant promises that God had given to Abraham in Genesis 17:3-12. Jesus' parents were godly people who wanted to raise their son according to God's law. They were people of faith. They believed what the angel told them about their precious son, so they named him "Jesus," as the angel had commanded. His name meant "salvation."

2. Presented in the temple (22-24)

According to Leviticus 12, a woman who gave birth to a son must bring him to the temple after 40 days and offer sacrifices. A wealthy family might offer a lamb; a poor family, two doves or two young pigeons. Mary brought the pigeons. Jesus' human family was poor by worldly material standards, but they were rich in love for God and in love for his laws. God entrusted his son to godly parents.

Prayer: Lord, teach me to humbly submit to your law and honor you with my offerings. Thank you for Jesus, the Savior of the world and my Savior, who learned obedience (Heb 5:8).

One Word: Learn obedience

WAITING PEOPLE

Luke 2:25-40

Key Verse: 2:30,31

1. Simeon's faith (25-35)

Simeon was one of the "waiting people." He believed God's promise and prayed for his oppressed and suffering people. He was waiting for the Messiah. God promised him that he would see the Lord's Christ before he died. God's Spirit enabled him to see with eyes of faith. He took the baby in his arms and praised God, for his eyes saw God's salvation. He saw beyond his own people to the Gentile world, and prophesied that this baby would not only be a Savior for Israel, but also a light for all the people of the world. Simeon realized that redemption for the world meant pain and suffering for Jesus and for his mother.

2. Anna's hope (36-40)

Anna was a very old woman. She had lived almost all her life with no human hope. Her only hope was in God, for she was looking forward to the redemption of Jerusalem. She was a warrior of prayer, and God blessed her prayerful life with a rich spiritual blessing: She saw Jesus; she was full of thanksgiving.

Prayer: Lord, let me set my hope fully on you, and help me to pray for the redemption of the world.

One Word: My eyes have seen your salvation

THE BOY JESUS GREW

Luke 2:41-52

Key Verse: 2:49

1. Jesus' burning desire to learn (41-47)

When Jesus was 12 years old, his parents took him with them when they made their annual trip to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. Jesus was a growing boy--eager to learn everything. He was so eager to study the Bible that he stayed in the temple, asking questions and listening to the Bible teachers there. Jesus was growing in every way. In his eager desire to learn, he forgot about his parents.

2. Jesus learns obedience (48-52)

Jesus' parents were concerned when they found him missing from the company of pilgrims from Nazareth. They finally found him in the temple, and rebuked him for causing them so much anxiety. He revealed to them that he knew his identity as God's Son. But even God's Son had to learn obedience (Heb 5:8). God's discipline is a sign of God's love (Heb 12:6). God's work for Jesus in his youth was to study and grow. And he learned obedience, for this is essential to growth (Heb 5:8).

Prayer: Lord, give me spiritual and intellectual desire, and an obedient heart.

One Word: Keep on growing

PRODUCE THE FRUIT OF REPENTANCE

Luke 3:1-14

Key Verse: 3:8

1. Make the way straight (1-6)

The word of God came to John in the desert when the times were dark, both politically and spiritually (1,2). The economic burden imposed by the Empire was too heavy. But people did not need sympathy; they needed forgiveness, so he called them to repent. He prepared the way for Jesus. Jesus can come into hearts prepared by repentance. Real repentance humbles our proud hearts and straightens our crooked thinking; it lifts up our feelings of inferiority. When we look from ourselves to Jesus, we can see God's salvation for all mankind.

2. Fruit of repentance (7-14)

John rebuked the proud. Repentance is not just words or feelings; it is turning from our selfish lives and worldly thinking to God. The fruit of repentance is seen in a changed life. One who was greedy begins to share; one who used his position for his own profit now serves others.

Prayer: Lord, straighten out my crooked heart and let me bear fruit of repentance.

One Word: Bear fruit of repentance

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

Luke 3:15-23 (-38)

Key Verse: 3:22

1. John preaches good news (15-20)

In those dark times people were eagerly waiting for the Messiah. John baptized those who repented of their sins, and he announced the coming of one who would baptize with the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit drives out evil; he purifies and indwells repentant sinners. Jesus will come again to baptize unrepentant sinners with the fire of judgment. Herod did not repent.

2. Jesus' baptism (21-23)

Jesus was baptized by John, and the Holy Spirit descended on him. It was his inauguration as the Messiah. Jesus accepted his mission, and God was pleased. John's imprisonment casts the shadow of the cross on Jesus' ministry.

3. Jesus' genealogy (23b-38)

Luke's genealogy differs from Matthew's. Matthew starts with Abraham; Luke with Adam. Luke probably records Jesus' genealogy through Mary--he was especially sensitive to the role of women. Both tell us that Jesus is the promised son of David.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for your Spirit, who cleanses us and empowers us.

One Word: Believe the good news

THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS

Luke 4:1-13

Key Verse: 4:4

1. Man does not live on bread alone (1-4)

The Holy Spirit led Jesus to a place of hard training to fight his first spiritual battle. Satan's first temptation was physical. Jesus was alone and hungry, for he had been fasting. The devil suggested that he make bread from the stones. He tempted him saying, "You don't have to suffer. You're God's Son aren't you?" Jesus showed us that God's people don't live by reasonable thinking or by feelings, but by God's word.

2. Worship the Lord your God only (5-8)

The second temptation was an offer of power and glory. Why not? He came to be king. But Jesus said, "No." First he must walk the way of the cross. He rejected the easy way. He would wait on God to give him the kingdom.

Jesus did not listen to the devil.

3. Don't test God (9-13)

The devil tempted Jesus with scripture; he tempted him to test God's love and power. Young men are sometimes restless, but the way of faith is to trust God and wait on him.

Prayer: Lord, help me to hold your word in my heart and defeat Satan's temptations.

One Word: Don't talk to the devil

JESUS REJECTED AT NAZARETH

Luke 4:14-30

Key Verse: 4:18

1. The Lord has anointed me (14-21)

Jesus was becoming very popular in Galilee. He visited his hometown to bring God's blessing to the people there. He announced his mission in the synagogue by reading from the prophet Isaiah. His life and mission were rooted in the word of God. He was the Messiah, sent by God to open people's spiritual eyes and to set them free from sin. His coming is good news to the poor--the humble in spirit. He brings great blessing to those who receive him.

2. Rejection (22-30)

The people of Nazareth had a fixed idea about Jesus. They only thought about his human background. Jesus taught them from the Bible that God does not give his grace according to human qualifications or conditions. God blesses faith. He blessed a widow of Sidon and a Syrian general--Gentiles who had faith--in preference to many needy Jews who had no faith. Human thinking blinds the eyes and destroys faith.

Prayer: Lord, give me faith to see you working even in unlikely people and places.

One Word: Good news for those who believe

THE POWER OF JESUS' WORD

Luke 4:31-37

Key Verse: 4:32

1. Jesus' word stirs up Satan (31-34)

When Jesus taught in the synagogue of Capernaum, his powerful word challenged the stronghold of Satan. Ordinary people were amazed at his teaching, but one demon-possessed man reacted violently. He recognized Jesus as the Holy One of God, but he did not want to submit to his Lordship. To know Jesus and not follow him is to reject truth and live according to the devil's lies.

2. Come out of him (35-37)

The power of God's word is stronger than Satan's grip. At Jesus' word, the evil spirit convulsed the man and came out violently. The man was free, and the onlookers were amazed at the power and authority of Jesus' words. God's love and power will set free all men who are tormented by the devil. In our spiritual struggle, we must take hold of God's word, so that he can work in and through us.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for your living and powerful word. Defeat in me the power of Satan so that I may serve you without fear.

One Word: Jesus' word has power

FOR THAT IS WHY I WAS SENT

Luke 4:38-44

Key Verse: 4:43

1. Jesus at Simon's house (38-39)

It was the Sabbath day. After leaving the synagogue, Jesus went to Simon's house to be with his disciples. Simon's mother-in-law was sick with a high fever. They asked Jesus to help her. He rebuked the fever; it left her and she got up and served them. Jesus' rebuke heals us and enables us to serve him.

2. The crowds come (40-41)

At sunset the Sabbath officially ended, and the crowds began to come. They brought all their sick, and Jesus gently laid his hands on each one; he healed them all--one by one. Demons came out shouting, for they knew their enemy.

3. A solitary place (42-44)

Jesus was almost overwhelmed by the rising tide of popularity. People wanted healing. Many pulled at him to go here and there; others begged him to stay. At daybreak he went out and found a solitary place to pray. He found God's direction. He had been sent to preach the good news of the kingdom of God to all.

Prayer: Lord, give me solitary time with you each day, and your clear leading for my life.

One Word: Pray, and preach the good news

SIMON'S BIG CATCH

Luke 5:1-11

Key Verse: 5:4,5

1. Jesus teaches the word of God (1-3)

Jesus taught God's word from early in the morning, and the crowd gathered. Simon and his friends were nearby, busy doing their own work. Jesus borrowed Simon's boat, sat in it and taught the crowd; one man, however, was in his heart.

2. Put out into deep water (4-7)

After he finished teaching the crowd, Jesus asked tired and sleepy and hungry Simon to get his clean nets dirty again. He said, "Put out into deep water.." Simon did not follow his feelings or reason--or his fisherman's experience. He obeyed Jesus' word, and caught a great catch.

3. From now on you will catch men (8-11)

Peter did not look at the fish, but at Jesus and at himself. He realized that he was a sinner, one not worthy to be in Jesus' presence. Jesus was looking for such obedient and humble men. He invited Simon to be his disciple. He said, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will catch men."

Prayer: Lord, help me to obey your word. I am a sinner, but cleanse me and make me a fisher of men.

One Word: Put out into deep water

JESUS AND A MAN WITH LEPROSY

Luke 5:12-16

Key Verse: 5:13

1. A man covered with leprosy (12)

Leprosy was a loathsome and disfiguring disease. In Jesus' day it was incurable. People thought of lepers as people today regard AIDS patients. Leprosy is like sin. It has a small and painful beginning; it gradually spreads until it consumes the whole body. It attacks the nerves, so after the initial pain, there is no feeling. It is infectious--it spreads to others. Lepers had no friends and no hope. But this man covered with leprosy came to Jesus. He fell with his face to the ground

and begged Jesus' mercy. He wondered if Jesus would shrink back from his loathsome body. Sin is not attractive; it is ugly like this.

2. I am willing. Be clean (13-16)

Jesus touched the man whom no one would touch. He spoke, and the man was cleansed. He gave him directions that would enable him to return to society. The man couldn't be quiet about Jesus, so Jesus became busier--and he spent more time in prayer.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for touching and cleansing me. Help me to love hard-to-love people, and bring them to you.

One Word: Jesus only can touch and heal

YOUR SINS ARE FORGIVEN

Luke 5:17-26

Key Verse: 5:20

1. A paralyzed sinner (17-20)

The paralyzed man had some friends who believed that Jesus could help him. They overcame all difficulties and found a way to bring their friend to Jesus. Jesus blessed their faith. He still hears us when we pray for our friends, and blesses our faith when we bring them to him.

2. Friend, your sins are forgiven (21-26)

This man was a helpless paralytic. He was totally dependant on others. Jesus saw his real problem as a sin problem. He represents one kind of sinner--the kind whom sin has made useless and burdensome. Jesus did something that only God can do--he forgave the man's sins. Then, to show to the Pharisees who criticized him the power of God and the nature of forgiveness, he made the man walk. Sin still makes spiritual paralytics of people. Jesus came to forgive sin and to make useless people useful.

Prayer: Lord, cleanse me of sin and make me a useful person. Give me the faith and love to bring others to you.

One Word: Jesus has authority to forgive

JESUS CALLS LEVI

Luke 5:27-32

Key Verse: 5:32

1. Follow me (27-28)

Levi had gotten rich by collaborating with Rome. He thought that money could make him happy, so he aggressively went after it. He became rich, but money didn't make him happy. He thought there was no way out of the lonely, selfish, miserable life he was trapped in. Then Jesus passed by his tax booth and called him. He turned from his old life, left everything and followed Jesus. This is repentance.

2. I came to call sinners (29-32)

Levi was so full of joy that he gave a party to celebrate his new life. He invited Jesus and his disciples, and all his fellow tax collectors. The Pharisees were indignant. How could a righteous man like Jesus go to such a party? But Jesus explained by telling them why he had come into the world. He didn't come for self-righteous people; he came to call sinners to repentance.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for calling me to repent and live a new life as your disciple.

One Word: Jesus came to forgive sinners

NEW WINE FOR NEW WINESKINS

Luke 5:33-39

Key Verse: 5:38

1. Jesus the Bridegroom (33-35)

Jesus and his disciples were not very "religious." They ate and drank with public sinners. When people compared their lifestyle to that of the Pharisees or to John's disciples, they couldn't understand why Jesus' disciples were different. But Jesus explained: The Christian life is like a joyful wedding feast, because Jesus our true Bridegroom is with us. Jesus ate and drank with repentant sinners like Levi the tax collector because Jesus came to save the lost, and the heavenly Father rejoices when one such man comes home.

2. New wine (36-39)

The gospel is like new wine. It cannot be contained in old habits and ways of life. When we have God's peace in our hearts, we are tempted to settle down in the rut of a selfish life. But the new wine of the gospel demands that we change and grow in Jesus' image.

Prayer: Lord, make me a new wineskin who can rejoice with Jesus my true Bridegroom.

One Word: New wine is for new wineskins

LORD OF THE SABBATH

Luke 6:1-5

Key Verse: 6:5

1. Hungry disciples (1-2)

One Sabbath when Jesus' disciples were hungry they passed through a grain field. They picked some heads of grain, rubbed them to remove the husks and ate them. The ubiquitous Pharisees saw this and rebuked them for breaking the Sabbath. The law allowed a hungry man to pluck and eat grain while passing through another man's field. But "harvesting" and "threshing" grain on the Sabbath was a violation of the law.

2. The Son of Man is Lord (3-5)

Jesus did not apologize for his disciples' behavior. He stood on their side. The Pharisees were not trying to build men up with positive Bible teaching. They were using the Bible to destroy and crush. Jesus taught them a Bible lesson about David, who considered feeding hungry men more important than keeping legalistic rules. Jesus is the Lord of the Sabbath. He is the Creator God who made the world and every thing in it in six days and rested on the Sabbath. He is the Lord of every day--including the Sabbath.

Prayer: Lord, help me to build up others' faith and lead them to Jesus the Lord through Bible study.

One Word: Jesus is Lord

STRETCH OUT YOUR HAND

Luke 6:6-11

Key Verse: 6:10

1. A man with a shriveled right hand (6)

Again, it was the Sabbath and Jesus was teaching the Bible in a synagogue. Both Jesus and the Pharisees saw the man with the shriveled right hand. He probably tried to keep it in his pocket, for it was ugly and shameful. With a hand like that, he could not live a normal, useful life. The Pharisees did not care about this man or his inner agony and sorrow. They only wanted to destroy Jesus.

2. To save life or destroy it? (7-11)

Jesus cared about this man. He needed a shepherd's love. Jesus was angry at the false shepherds who wanted to use this man for their own ends. Jesus helped him overcome shame and fear by having him stand up in front of everyone. He rebuked the Pharisees for misuse of the Sabbath. They must save life, not destroy it. They must do good, not evil. He said to the man, "Stretch out

your hand."--"Expose your life problem and the hidden sorrow in your heart." He overcame shame and fear, obeyed Jesus, and extended his ugly useless hand. It was healed.

Prayer: Lord, help me to do good, not evil. Help me to work every day to save life, not destroy it.

One Word: Stretch out your hand

JESUS CALLS TWELVE APOSTLES

Luke 6:12-16

Key Verse: 6:13

1. A night of prayer (12)

Jesus had jeopardized his whole ministry and even his own life by defying the religious leaders and healing a man's shriveled hand. He was distressed to find out how evil and heartless the leaders were. What could he do? He went to the mountainside and spent the whole night praying to God.

2. Jesus chooses twelve (13-16)

The redemptive work of God did not stop when the Jewish leaders refused to be shepherds of God's people. It did not stop when God's chosen people rejected their Messiah and their mission. God raised up a new people of God. Jesus chose 12 men to be with him. He would love them and disciple them until they could be apostles and missionaries. Then he would send them out to make disciples of all nations. Let's memorize their names and think about each one. Jesus still seeks faithful men who will obey him.

Prayer: Lord, teach me to pray and find your way when things look their worst. Help me to be a disciple-maker.

One Word: Don't give up; pray; make disciples for Jesus

BLESSINGS AND WOES

Luke 6:17-26

Key Verse: 6:20

1. Jesus' power to heal (17-19)

The crowds came to hear Jesus' word, and to be healed and set free from the power of Satan. Jesus had compassion on the shepherdless crowds. He served them with all his heart. But he knew that they needed shepherds, so he turned his attention to the 12 and began to teach them.

2. Blessings and woes (20-26)

Jesus' disciples must have a different value system from that of worldly people. Most people feel blessed when they are rich, comforted and well-fed. They think they are blessed when they can laugh a lot and be praised by people. But Jesus says that these things don't make people happy. Jesus' disciples seem to be poor, but they have everything--because they have the kingdom of God. God is the giver of every good and perfect gift. He is the source of blessing. We can expect criticism and persecution from worldly people. But we have a great joy that no one can take away.

Prayer: Lord, help me to live with your value system as a citizen of your kingdom.

One Word: The blessed life is full of joy

BE SONS OF THE MOST HIGH

Luke 6:27-36

Key Verse: 6:35

1. Love your enemies (27-31)

God wants his image restored in us. Jesus died for us while we were still his enemies. He died so that sin in us might be defeated, and our sinful natures changed. Jesus blessed those who cursed him and prayed for those who mistreated him. He said nothing to those who gambled for his clothes; he gave to all who asked of him. The standard he sets in these verses is the standard of his own life and character.

2. Even sinners love those who love them (32-36)

Christians must be different. It is reasonable to love those who love us--though even this is hard! But Jesus calls us to love those who hate us. It is normal to give presents to those who give to us, but to give, expecting nothing in return seems foolish. Jesus loved us when we were his enemies. In a world full of hatred and indifference Jesus asks his disciples to love.

Prayer: Lord, help me to be different from the world. Help me to follow Jesus, not my own sinful nature. Let Jesus' image be formed in me.

One Word: Grow in Jesus' image

JUDGING OTHERS

Luke 6:37-42

Key Verse: 6:37

1. Forgive (37-38)

A self-centered person tends to protect himself by judging others. But we who have tasted God's mercy must not judge others. We must not condemn others. We must forgive, for we have been forgiven. We must be strict with ourselves and gracious toward others. Furthermore, we must overcome our selfishness by giving generously to others. When we live in this way, God will bless us. God treats us as we treat others.

2. Don't be blind (39-42)

Judging others comes from spiritual blindness. One who is spiritually blind can't help anyone. The plank in my eye that makes me blind can be removed by repentance and by training. God trains us--sometimes through his servants and sometimes through events. When I repent, God forgives me and heals my blindness. When the plank is removed, I can see. I can come close to God and discern his way; I can be freed of my selfishness and judgmental spirit and help someone else.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for your forgiving mercy. Heal my blindness and use me.

One Word: First remove the plank

A TREE AND ITS FRUIT

Luke 6:43-45

Key Verse: 6:45

1. Known by its fruit (43-44)

The fruit a tree produces tells us what kind of tree it is. Even though a congregation meets in a beautiful building, if its ministry produces no people who love God and their neighbors, then something is wrong. On the other hand, even though a Christian fellowship does not fit the conventional cultural patterns, if it produces Christians who know God's grace and who love Jesus and love their neighbors, then that fellowship is surely pleasing to God.

2. Out of the heart the mouth speaks (45)

A good man is one whose heart is right with God. If Jesus dwells in one's heart, then Christ-like words and deeds will come from his life. If one's inner thoughts are full of worldly desire, greed, envy, anger, hatred or lust, then these things will be reflected in one's words or deeds at some time or another. If Jesus does not dwell in our hearts, then the sinful nature reigns.

Prayer: Lord, cleanse my heart and come in to live and reign.

One Word: Is your heart right with God?

THE WISE AND FOOLISH BUILDERS

Luke 6:46-49

Key Verse: 6:48

1. If you call Jesus `Lord' (46)

If Jesus is Lord, then he is King and Ruler. If I call Jesus `Lord', then I must do what he says. Like a diligent and loving servant, I must await his word of command. When he speaks through his word the Bible and gives me a command to obey or convicts me of a sin to forsake, I must do what he says. Then I may call him `Lord'.

2. Two houses (47-49)

Jesus told about two house builders. The houses they built looked alike, but the foundations were different. One house was built with deep foundations and laid on a rock. It withstood the flood. But the other was built without foundations. It collapsed when the torrent struck. Those who hear and obey God's word are building on rock. Those who hear God's word, but don't take it seriously, are building lives with no foundation. The house of their faith will collapse in the first hard storm.

Prayer: Lord, you are my King. Help me to hear your word and obey it.

One Word: Hear God's word and do it

THE CENTURION'S FAITH

Luke 7:1-10

Key Verse: 7:7b

1. A compassionate soldier (1-5)

Roman soldiers were not noted for compassion , but this centurion valued highly the life of his slave. When his slave was about to die, he did everything he could do to save him. He even curbed his Roman pride and humbly asked a favor of the Jewish elders. He did not despise the occupied people. He respected them and even used his own money to build a synagogue. His actions reveal his basic humanity, his longing to know God, his respect for people and his shepherd's heart.

2. Such great faith (6-10)

He sent for Jesus, then sent again to ask Jesus not to come--"Just say the word, and my servant will be healed." He believed the power and authority of Jesus' word. On a human level, the centurion's word carried authority. Men under him obeyed his commands. He also obeyed the

commands of his superior officers. He saw Jesus as a spiritual general whose word was absolute. Jesus was amazed at this man's faith.

Prayer: Lord, give me a shepherd's heart and faith that prays. Teach me to respect and love people and give me faith to obey your word.

One Word: Just say the word

JESUS RAISES A WIDOW'S SON

Luke 7:11-17

Key Verse: 7:13

1. Two processions (11-13)

Jesus entered Nain with a large crowd following him. They met another procession leaving the town. The crowd with Jesus was full of joy and hope; the other crowd was a sorrowful and despairing funeral procession. The dead person was the only son of a widow. Jesus' heart went out to her. He said, "Don't cry." Jesus is the compassionate shepherd who knows our sorrow and gives us his heart.

2. God has come to help his people (14-17)

Jesus spoke to the young man in the coffin and life came into his body. He sat up and began to talk. Jesus' word gives life. Only the Creator God can give life to the dead. The people praised God, and said, "God has come to help his people." Jesus is the living God who turns our despair into hope and our sorrow into joy.

Prayer: Lord, help me to give my heart to those who need your compassion. Teach me to pray to the Creator of life, and not despair.

One Word: Jesus' heart went out to her

JESUS ENCOURAGES JOHN AND HIS DISCIPLES

Luke 7:18-23

Key Verse: 7:22

1. Are you the one who was to come? (18-20)

John was in prison. He had called the people of his time to repent, and had even challenged King Herod's immoral life. He did these things to prepare for the Lord's coming. He had been arrested and soon would be killed. In the meantime, Jesus' popularity was growing. John began to wonder

if he had wasted his life. He called two of his disciples and sent them to Jesus. He did the best thing to do when doubts arise. He asked Jesus.

2. Report what you have seen and heard (21-23)

Jesus offered no words of human sympathy. He simply described his messianic ministry in terms which Isaiah had used to define it. (Isa 61:1; 35:5,6) Jesus' ministry fit God's word. This verifies God's faithfulness and his truthfulness. God doesn't promise anyone an easy life. He promises real life--eternal life.

Prayer: Lord, strengthen me with your word in times of stress and hardship.

One Word: Don't fall away--look at Jesus

JESUS TEACHES ABOUT JOHN

Luke 7:24-35

Key Verse: 7:28

1. God's way (24-30)

John taught men God's way: repent and welcome Jesus. This is the way of life and the way to the kingdom of God. John preached repentance in the desert, and people came to him. They were not seeking an easy life. They went to find the way of life. John was a man sent by God to fulfill God's promise and prepare the way for Jesus. He was great because his mission was great. Those who repent realize that God's way is right. Those who refuse to repent are rejecting God's purpose for themselves.

2. Jesus, friend of sinners (31-34)

Jesus said that the people of his generation were like children playing a game. They did not want to repent, so they saw God's servants from a human point of view. John lived an austere life, and they said, "He had a demon." They rejected Jesus because he was a friend to sinners. These wise men were fools.

Prayer: Lord, I come to repent and be forgiven. Thank you for being my friend.

One Word: God's way is right

JESUS FORGIVES A SINFUL WOMAN

Luke 7:36-50

Key Verse: 7:47

1. The Pharisee's small love (36-39)

Jesus ate with anyone who invited him, including Pharisees. Simon had invited Jesus to dinner, but he did not really love Jesus, or try to understand him. When Jesus welcomed a sinful woman, Simon was critical. He wondered why Jesus let a sinful woman touch him. Jesus' parable shows that repentance and forgiveness dig a well of love in the human heart. Simon's love was very small because he was proud and unrepentant.

2. She loved much (40-50)

This nameless woman knew her hopeless condition. She was a prisoner of sin; she could never be freed by her own strength. Her coming was repentance; Jesus' welcome was forgiveness. His forgiveness restores a person's life. His forgiveness is God's highest love. Jesus gives forgiveness, freedom and peace to all who come to him.

Prayer: Lord, I come to you just as I am. You know me. Forgive me, cleanse me, fill me and enable me to serve you today.

One Word: Jesus welcomes sinners

PROCLAIMING THE GOOD NEWS

Luke 8:1-3

Key Verse: 8:1

1. Good news of the kingdom of God (1a)

Jesus proclaimed the good news of the kingdom of God. This was the major theme of his preaching. (Mk 1:15;Ac 1:3b) When God's kingdom is in our hearts, spiritual order is restored; the tyranny of sin and death and Satan is broken; we are free, and we have peace. When Jesus comes again, he will establish his kingdom and restore God's sovereign rule over all creation; righteousness, justice and peace will cover the earth. The kingdom of God is good news.

2. Those who followed Jesus (1b-3)

Jesus was training disciples, so the Twelve were with him. The women who followed him had tasted his grace of forgiveness. They made an environment in which the work of God could be done. They provided for Jesus and the disciples out of their own means. They also were listening and learning, and they became the first witnesses to the resurrection.

Prayer: Lord, your kingdom come and your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.

One Word: Proclaim the good news

THE PARABLE OF THE SOILS

Luke 8:4-10

Key Verse: 8:10a

1. The farmer sows his seed (4-8)

Jesus is like a farmer, sowing seed of the kingdom of God. Three fourths of the sown seed were unproductive. Some fell on the hard path and never had a chance to germinate; some fell on thin, rocky soil and could not mature because of the lack of moisture; some fell among the tough weeds and could not overcome them. But Jesus was not discouraged, for some seed would fall on good soil and produce a hundred times more than was sown. Those who have ears to hear are those who receive his word and hold it in their hearts until God's kingdom grows.

2. The secrets of the kingdom of God (9-10)

Jesus focused on his disciples. They didn't understand his parable. But they wanted to learn, so they asked questions. Jesus shared the secrets of the kingdom of God with those who sought truth in order to live by it. Parables hid the kingdom's secrets from those who were only curious.

Prayer: Lord, reign in my heart so that I may know the secrets of your kingdom.

One Word: Be good soil

THE MEANING OF THE PARABLE

Luke 8:11-15

Key Verse: 8:15

1. Three unfruitful heart-soils (11-14)

The seed is the word of God. It is living and active. Some heart-soil, however, is not fruitful. The path represents hard and unresponsive hearts. Hearts become hard when one hears many good ideas but makes no commitment. Seeds that fall on rocky soil sprout quickly, but do not put down roots. Some people like Bible study, but never let it change their world view or the way they live. The thorns are those with busy minds, anxious hearts and worldly desires. The tender seed of God's word is choked out and can never bear fruit.

2. The good soil (15)

The path can be plowed, the rock broken and the thorns cleaned out. Repentance is our plow; God's word is a hammer. If we hear the word and retain it in a noble and good heart, and persevere in obedience to God, our lives will produce fruit that pleases God and blesses mankind.

Prayer: Lord, help me to have a noble and good heart and to persevere in your word.

One Word: Produce fruit by persevering

JESUS' TRUE FAMILY

Luke 8:16-21

Key Verse: 8:21

1. Listen carefully (16-18)

Jesus himself is the lamp on the stand. He proclaimed the gospel to all who would listen. He was sent by God to proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God. The secrets of the kingdom were hidden from the world during his lifetime (10). After his death and resurrection, his gospel was made known to all the world. We must listen carefully to God's word and receive it with faith, and obey him. If we do not receive Jesus' word with obedient faith, even the little understanding we thought we had will be taken away.

2. Those who hear and obey the word (19-21)

Even Jesus' human family couldn't perceive the secrets of the kingdom of God. They only saw Jesus with human eyes. Jesus' real family were his disciples. We also can be Jesus' family when we hear God's word and put it into practice.

Prayer: Lord, help me to listen to your word and hold it in my heart. Help me to obey you and be one of your true family.

One Word: Light a lamp; put it on a stand

WHERE IS YOUR FAITH?

Luke 8:22-25

Key Verse: 8:25

1. Jesus rebukes (22-25a)

Jesus gave his disciples storm training to teach them faith. One day, he said, "Let's go over to the other side of the lake." So they got into a boat and set out. Jesus fell asleep. Then, a violent squall struck, and the boat was almost swamped. They awakened him with a terrified cry: "Master, we're going to drown!" Even though Jesus was in the boat with them, they were full of fear. Fear is the opposite of faith. After calming the storm, Jesus rebuked them. Jesus wanted his disciples to have faith that sustains them in times of real crisis.

2. Who is this? (25b)

Jesus' disciples had seen him heal the sick and raise the dead; but still they did not realize who he was. He is the Creator God, the Ruler of all nature. He is the giver of life. When we know that our lives are in his hands, there is nothing to fear.

Prayer: Lord, help me to live by faith and not by fear--even in hard times.

One Word: Where is your faith?

WHAT IS YOUR NAME?

Luke 8:26-31

Key Verse: 8:30a

1. The man living in the tombs (26-29)

Jesus and his disciples reached the region of the Gerasenes and found there a man with a storm going on inside of him. He wore no clothes and lived in isolation--he wanted to be free of all restraints. Demons had entered his rebellious heart. No one could restrain him, even though many had tried. Their efforts only made him more rebellious. He was miserable and useless, and he terrified the people of that city.

2. What is your name? (30-31)

When Jesus first saw this wild man, he commanded the evil spirits to come out of him. The demoniac had reacted violently. He wanted Jesus' help; he didn't want Jesus' help. The demons recognized Jesus. Jesus asked the man, "What is your name?" He treated him like a human being, offering him friendship and a personal relationship. The man confessed his problem.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for making a personal relationship with me at great cost to yourself. Come and rule in my heart.

One Word: What is your name?

TELL HOW MUCH GOD HAS DONE FOR YOU

Luke 8:32-39

Key Verse: 8:39

1. A ruined pig business (32-37)

Jesus set the demoniac free by sending the demons which tormented him into a herd of pigs. The pigs drowned. When the townspeople came to see what had happened, they saw their pigs floating like pink corks in the lake, and one crazy man sitting at Jesus' feet, clothed and in his right mind. They didn't care about the man; they only thought about their pigs. They were afraid

of suffering more loss because of Jesus, so they asked him to leave. Jesus got into a boat and left, and the people of that city lost God's blessing.

2. Go, tell what the Lord has done (38-39)

As Jesus was leaving, the man he had saved asked to go with him. Jesus said, "no," and gave him a mission: "Go home and tell how much the Lord has done for you." The man obeyed, and the seed of the gospel was planted in that godless place.

Prayer: Lord, help me to value people above material profit. Help me to tell what you have done in me to my family and friends.

One Word: Tell what the Lord has done

SHE TOUCHED THE EDGE OF HIS CLOAK

Luke 8:40-48

Key Verse: 8:48

1. The nameless woman (40-44)

Jesus was welcomed by a huge crowd. A synagogue ruler named Jairus had a dying daughter, and the crowd melted back to let him talk with Jesus. As he and Jesus went toward his house, the crowd almost crushed them in its press. A nameless woman with an incurable bleeding problem slipped up behind Jesus and, with desperate faith, touched the edge of his cloak. Immediately, the bleeding stopped. She intended to melt into the crowd as secretly as she had come.

2. Go in peace, Daughter (45-48)

Jesus did not let her slip away with a healed body and a sin-sick heart; he persistently asked, "Who touched me?" until she came forward, trembling, and fell at his feet. Jesus wanted her to confess God's grace openly, because he wanted to heal, not only her disease, but her heart as well. He blessed her and called her, "Daughter"; he gave her healing and his peace.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for your healing and your peace in my life.

One Word: Your faith has healed you

JUST BELIEVE

Luke 8:49-56

Key Verse: 8:50b

1. Don't be afraid; just believe (49-50)

Jairus, unlike the woman, was a prominent man. But he also had come with desperate faith. His 12-year-old daughter was dying. He begged Jesus to come with him. As they pushed through the crowd, Jesus stopped to help a nameless woman. Jairus' faith was strengthened by the woman's confession, but his impatience grew as Jesus lingered. Then, someone came with bad news and bad advice: "Your daughter is dead; don't bother the teacher any more." Doubts attacked him, but Jesus' word came into his heart: "Don't be afraid; just believe."

2. She is not dead but asleep (51-56)

The people at Jairus' house had given in to sorrow. Their wailing filled the house. Jesus told them to stop wailing; they stopped long enough to laugh at Jesus. Taking with him only those who could make an environment of belief, he went in and healed the little girl by his word and touch.

Prayer: Lord, teach me to trust your word and "just believe" in any situation.

One Word: Don't be afraid; just believe

JESUS SENDS OUT THE TWELVE

Luke 9:1-9

Key Verse: 9:2

1. Jesus sends out the Twelve (1-6)

Jesus sent out his disciples to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick. He gave them spiritual equipment. He told them to travel light, and not to depend on material things. On this training mission, they were not to compromise at all. So, if people did not welcome them, they were to leave. People who reject the good news of God's kingdom are left as slaves of lust or money. The Twelve went with a message of repentance and the good news of forgiveness. This is the only way of freedom. Jesus' people are lights in dark times.

2. Herod heard about it (7-9)

The spirit of Herod dominated those times. Herod was an adulterer and a murderer. He had killed John the Baptist for speaking the truth. People who longed for righteousness and truth suffered very much. It was dangerous for Jesus and his disciples to speak the truth. The spirit of Herod is still abroad. God's people must still follow righteousness and speak the truth.

Prayer: Lord, even in these materialistic and adulterous times there are people who want to live pure lives, who long for truth. Help us find your sheep.

One Word: Preach the kingdom of God

JESUS FEEDS THE FIVE THOUSAND

Luke 9:10-17

Key Verse: 9:13a

1. He welcomed them (10-11)

When the apostles returned from preaching the gospel throughout Galilee, they hoped to have some time alone with Jesus. But they had spread the good news about Jesus so well that crowds of people came looking for the good Shepherd. Jesus did not run away and hide from the crowd. He welcomed them and taught them about the kingdom of God. He showed them God's love by healing them.

2. You give them something to eat (12-17)

His disciples decided that they had done enough for the crowd. Sending them away to find food and lodging seemed like a reasonable suggestion. But Jesus said, "You give them something to eat." Jesus wanted to teach them some important lessons in faith. They brought what they had--5 loaves and 2 fish. Jesus blessed what they brought, and with it, fed the crowd. There were leftovers--a basketful for each disciple!

Prayer: Lord, you have given us another impossible command: "Make disciples of all nations." We can't do it, but we offer you our five loaves and two fish.

One Word: "You give them something to eat"

PETER'S CONFESSION OF CHRIST

Luke 9:18-22

Key Verse: 9:20

1. Who do you say I am? (18-20)

Once, when Jesus was praying, he asked his disciples 2 questions. One was objective; the other, subjective. The crowds knew that Jesus was a good man, even a prophet. But Jesus' disciples who lived with him and had a personal relationship with him knew that Jesus was the Messiah. He is the fulfillment of all God's promises; he was sent by God to save us from sin and death. He is our hope. He is the one worthy of our worship. To confess that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah, means to commit one's heart and life to him.

2. The Son of Man must suffer (21-22)

"Son of Man" is a Messianic title (Da 7:13). The Messiah is the king God promised to send to rule; but first he must suffer and die and be raised from death, for this is God's way of conquering sin and death and winning victory over Satan.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, you are my Christ, my Savior and King. I know that your death on the cross is for me.

One Word: Jesus is my Christ and God

FOLLOW JESUS

Luke 9:23-27

Key Verse: 9:23

1. If anyone would come after me (23)

If one wants to follow Jesus he must first deny himself. This means that I must take myself from the center of my life and put Jesus there. I must regard Jesus' commands as a little better than my own plans and ideas. Second, one must take up his cross daily. This means that I must accept positively the life and the mission God has given me--and do it afresh every day. If I do not take up the cross that Jesus gives me, then I must carry the burden of my own sins and sorrows.

2. Lose life to save it (24-27)

Those who try to save their lives by protecting themselves and by seeking their own pleasure and happiness will be losers in life. But those who invest their lives, without holding back, for Jesus' sake and the gospel's, will gain real happiness. We must not be ashamed of Jesus, for he will surely come in glory to establish his kingdom and reign forever.

Prayer: Lord, help me not to be selfish. Help us to teach our children to be sacrificial, not selfish.

One Word: Selfish people are losers

THE TRANSFIGURATION

Luke 9:28-36

Key Verse: 9:35

1. Jesus appears in glorious splendor (28-31)

Jesus wanted to plant the gospel in his disciples, but they could not accept Jesus' words about his suffering and death; they had their own ideas. Jesus took his 3 top disciples up a high mountain to pray. As he was praying, he was transfigured. It was a preview of his resurrection and of his heavenly glory. Moses and Elijah, representing the Law and the Prophets, appeared to confirm that his suffering and death fulfilled God's promises.

2. Listen to him (32-36)

Peter and the others were so sleepy that they almost missed seeing Jesus' glory. But when Peter woke up and saw the glorious scene, he wanted to stay there forever. But this revelation of Jesus' glory was not to make life easy and glorious for the disciples; it was to tell them to listen to Jesus' words and obey him.

Prayer: Lord, help me to hold Jesus' glorious image in my heart and listen to your word.

One Word: Listen to him

JESUS HEALS A DEMON-POSSESSED BOY

Luke 9:37-45

Key Verse: 9:42b,43a

1. O unbelieving generation! (37-43a)

A large crowd was waiting for Jesus. A desperate father, whose only son was demon-possessed, called out to him for help. The demon had made the boy's life unbearable, and the father's heart was full of anguish, fear and despair. He had begged the 9 disciples to drive out the demon, but they could not. What did Jesus say? Read verse 41. Demons get the upper hand in men's lives because of unbelief. Jesus saw the powerless disciples and the crying father as representatives of an unbelieving and crooked generation. He said, "Bring your son here." And he healed him.

2. Listen carefully (43b-45)

The unbelieving and perverse generation would betray and kill the one who came from God to serve and save them. Jesus' disciples should hold Jesus' words in their hearts, but they were afraid.

Prayer: Lord, help me to hold your gospel in my heart so that I may not be melted into the unbelieving generation.

One Word: O unbelieving generation

THE ONE WHO IS GREATEST

Luke 9:46-56

Key Verse: 9:48

1. Welcome Jesus (46-50)

Jesus' disciples neither understand the spiritual nature of Jesus' kingdom, nor his heart. Men who lack spiritual understanding become political. Jesus taught them that they must have humble hearts that can welcome children. He said, "Whoever welcomes this child in my name welcomes

me." We must welcome humble people in Jesus' name because Jesus died for them, too. John and the others revealed their political attitude when they stopped a man from driving out demons in Jesus' name. Anyone who fights Satan is on Jesus' side.

2. Sons of Thunder (51-56)

The Samaritans didn't know that Jesus was going to Jerusalem to die for the sins of the world. James and John wanted to punish the Samaritans who didn't welcome Jesus. They didn't know Jesus' mind or his purpose.

Prayer: Lord, give me a humble heart and spiritual eyes to see your work.

One Word: Welcome others in Jesus' name

THE COST OF FOLLOWING JESUS

Luke 9:57-62

Key Verse: 9:60

1. Foxes have holes (57-58)

The cost of following Jesus is only exceeded by the incalculable worth of citizenship in God's kingdom. Disciples give up the false hope and superficial security of the world in order to have a room in the Father's house. Security in Christ is eternal; it is the only real security.

2. Go, proclaim the kingdom of God (59-60)

The most urgent business of Jesus' disciples is proclaiming the gospel. Family ties are strong and precious, but proclaiming the gospel is a life and death matter in a dying world, and our first priority must be obedience to our Lord's command.

3. One who puts his hand to the plow (61-62)

If one's decision and commitment are made before God, then there should be no inner reservations and no looking back.

Prayer: Lord, I like the easy life and I love my family and friends; but help me to put a higher priority on following you, so that I may share in your kingdom.

One Word: Discipleship--costly but worth it

SENT OUT TWO BY TWO

Luke 10:1-16

Key Verse: 10:2

1. Ask the Lord to send workers (1-7)

Jesus trained disciples to be workers in the harvest field of the world. First, we must pray, asking the Lord of the harvest to send workers into his harvest field. Workers must be sent by God. Jesus sent out 72 disciples, two by two. He sent them to prepare the way for his coming. They must not depend on money or equipment; they must not be distracted from their task. They are men of peace, going to a hostile world. Those who welcome them receive God's peace.

2. The kingdom of God is near you (8-16)

When God's servants are welcomed, they should accept whatever hospitality is offered. They come with God's blessing, to heal the sick and to announce that the kingdom of God is near--the king is coming! To welcome him means peace and healing and blessing. To refuse him is to refuse God's salvation and to invite his wrath. Jesus wants his messengers to be clear in their message, in their lifestyle and in their relations to the people they meet.

Prayer: Lord, send workers into the harvest field of your world. Help me to go, depending on you alone for what I need.

One Word: Go! I am sending you

REAL JOY

Luke 10:17-24

Key Verse: 10:21

1. Disciples' joy (17-20)

The 72 returned with joy, for they had experienced God's power working in and through themselves. Even demons were subject to them! Jesus told them that Satan's defeat was a sure thing; he would continue to give his disciples power to defeat Satan's authority. But our real joy cannot be in our successful work; God himself is our source of joy. We rejoice in our hope of sharing God's glory.

2. Jesus' joy (21-24)

Jesus rejoiced in the Holy Spirit. He praised God for the small but alive and growing faith of his disciples. In times when people are spiritually blind because they seek personal advantage instead of truth, and put their hope in material things instead of in God, Jesus' disciples are very precious. Jesus thanked God for this handful of child-like disciples.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for teaching us the meaning of spiritual joy. Give me joy in the Holy Spirit.

One Word: Rejoice in God

THE GOOD SAMARITAN

Luke 10:25-37

Key Verse: 10:37b

1. Love God and your neighbor (25-29)

When an expert Bible student asked Jesus about eternal life, Jesus countered, "What does the Bible teach?" The man knew very well. Read verse 27. But although he knew what the Bible taught, doing it seemed too hard, so he asked Jesus to set some limits on the unconditional love which God demands. Jesus answered with a parable.

2. Those who passed by (30-32)

The first 2 men to discover the injured man were religious leaders. Maybe they had urgent appointments in the city; or maybe they were afraid that the robbers were lurking nearby. Anyway, they didn't want to get involved, so they kept on going.

3. The man who had pity (33-37)

The man who stopped was not a religious man. He was a despised Samaritan. But he showed the compassion of God for the man in need. Jesus said, "Go and do likewise."

Prayer: Lord, forgive my selfish life. Help me to love you and to love others.

One Word: "Go and do likewise"

ONLY ONE THING IS NEEDED

Luke 10:38-42

Key Verse: 10:41,42

1. Martha's busy mind (38-40)

Martha opened her home to Jesus. She worked hard to prepare delicious food for him and his hungry disciples. Her sister Mary, instead of helping her, sat at Jesus' feet and listened to his words. As Martha worked, resentment grew in her heart, for Mary was sitting there, doing nothing. Martha had no joy in working for Jesus. She even became angry at him, because he didn't seem to care that she worked, while her sister loafed. Finally, she couldn't take it any longer. She rebuked Jesus for his seeming insensitivity, and asked him to tell her sister to help her.

2. Jesus' caring heart (41-42)

Jesus did care. He had come to give Martha and Mary the best gift--his word of life. Martha was busy serving him in her own way, but Mary chose the one thing that was best--she received his word and his love. This was what Jesus really wanted.

Prayer: Lord, help me to listen to your word and serve you with an obedient life.

One Word: Choose the one best thing

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Luke 11:1-4

Key Verse: 11:2

1. Father (1-2a)

Jesus prayed frequently, but his disciples usually slept. Once, they had a sense of problem, and they asked him to teach them to pray. He said, "When you pray, say ‘Father.'" God is our Father who loves us and wants to have a personal relationship with us; also, he is holy. We must approach him in love and trust. And we must fear him--love and respect him as the holy God.

2. Your kingdom come (2b)

We must make God's great prayer topic our own--"Your kingdom come." Jesus came, died and rose again so that God's kingdom might come in the hearts of men. He will come again to establish that perfect kingdom of righteousness and peace.

3. Our greatest needs (3-4)

We need bread to sustain our physical lives, and God's word to sustain us spiritually. We need to forgive and be forgiven, and we need the protection from Satan which only Jesus can give.

Prayer: Father, your kingdom come.

One Word: Learn prayer by praying

ASK AND RECEIVE

Luke 11:5-13

Key Verse: 11:13

1. Because of his boldness (5-8)

God answers bold prayers. If I go to a friend's house and rouse him in the middle of the night to ask him for a loaf of bread to feed an unexpected guest, surely he will not like it. But he will get up and give me what I ask--if not to help me, to get rid of me. How much more is God who loves us ready and eager to answer our bold prayers.

2. Pray persistently (9-10)

God wants us to pray and not give up. We do not receive because we do not ask; we do not find because we do not seek; the door does not open because we do not knock.

3. Ask for the Holy Spirit (11-13)

God gives us the best gift--himself-- when we ask. A father does not give harmful things, but good gifts to his trusting child. How much more is our heavenly Father eager to give good gifts to us! If we ask, he will give us even the Holy Spirit.

Prayer: Lord, give me your Holy Spirit to guide me and equip me to serve you today.

One Word: Ask and it will be given you

JESUS DEFEATS EVIL SPIRITS

Luke 11:14-28

Key Verse: 11:20

1. By the finger of God (14-20)

Jesus set men free from bondage to Satan by the power of the Spirit of God. Those who did not want to receive him as their Christ and Lord said that his power was not from God, but from the devil. Jesus pointed out that Satan does not fight Satan. The Pharisees were like Pharaoh, who hardened his heart to God's word and God's mighty work (Ex 8:19). If men reject his hand of love, they will feel his hand of judgment. God's kingdom is good news to those who welcome his rule and bad news to those who rebel.

2. Blessed are those who hear and obey (21-28)

Satan is like a strong man who guards his house. Only Jesus is strong enough to overpower him. When Jesus sets us free, we must invite him to come in and rule. If we try to live with an empty, uncommitted heart, Satan's demons soon find out and come in. We are blessed when we don't live by feelings but by obedience to God's word.

Prayer: Lord, I am weak but you are strong. Come and make your home in my heart.

One Word: God's kingdom in my heart

THE SIGN OF JONAH

Luke 11:29-32

Key Verse: 11:32

1. A wicked generation (29-30)

Wickedness is unbelief. Even though crowds grew in numbers in response to Jesus' ministry, they did not believe. They saw miraculous signs; they heard Jesus' gracious words; but they didn't repent or believe. Jonah was a reluctant prophet who spent 3 days in the belly of a big fish. He came out and preached repentance to the Ninevites. Jesus Christ would rise from the dead after 3 days in the tomb. This would be a sign of judgment to unbelieving people and a glorious hope to believers of all generations.

2. The witness of history (31-32)

The Queen of Sheba came to hear the wisdom of Solomon. She was moved by his words. Her simple faith is a judgment on the people of Jesus' time, for Jesus was greater than Solomon. Even the people of Nineveh repented at the preaching of Jonah. Jesus was greater than Jonah, but the sign seekers did not repent and believe.

Prayer: Lord, give me and the people of my generation repentant, believing hearts.

One Word: Repent and believe the gospel

A LAMP IS FOR LIGHT

Luke 11:33-36

Key Verse: 11:34

1. God's lamp, Jesus (33)

Jesus is the light of the world. His life and redemptive work are for all to see. Those who follow him do not walk in darkness, but have the light of life (Jn 8:12). Those who do not want to repent love darkness and do not come to the light (Jn 3:19-21).

2. Your eye is your lamp (34-36)

When we come to Jesus with repentant hearts and live in his light, he opens our spiritual eyes and we can see ourselves, others and the world from his viewpoint. When we see things with spiritual eyes, our whole body is full of light: We have God's peace; we can find his direction; we can solve our problems in God's way. If we insist on living by our human feelings and allow fear or anger or lust or jealousy or self-pity to occupy our hearts, we are living in spiritual darkness.

Prayer: Lord, give me spiritual eyes so that I may be full of light, and live as a small lamp in this dark world.

One Word: Live in Jesus' light

DINNER WITH A PHARISEE

Luke 11:37-44

Key Verse: 11:41

1. Real cleanliness (37-41)

Jesus did not follow the religious custom of dipping his hands in a bowl of water for ceremonial cleansing. When his host, a Pharisee, was surprised, Jesus taught him about real cleanliness. One whose heart is full of greed and wickedness cannot be called "clean", even though he takes a shower every day. A clean heart is full of love and is eager to give to others. It is not a selfish beggar's heart, that always seeks to get something.

2. Justice and the love of God (42-44)

A hypocrite is one whose inner life is quite different from the impression given by his words and actions. Even if he engages in many religious activities, if he doesn't love God, he only offends God. If we love God from the heart, we will also care about people and want to see justice for all. Activities not based on God's love become ways of seeking self-glory.

Prayer: Lord, purify my heart and fill me with love for you and for others.

One Word: Love God and practice justice

THREE WARNINGS FOR BIBLE TEACHERS

Luke 11:45-54

Key Verse: 11:52

1. Woe to those who burden others (45-46)

Jesus gives a stern warning to those who teach the Bible only with head knowledge. Jesus is not pleased when Bible teachers teach rules and regulations instead of helping people to know the living God. Christianity is not based on legalistic rules, but on grace and the gospel.

2. Woe to you who build tombs for prophets (47-51)

By rejecting Jesus, these teachers of the law put themselves in the stream of history of those who had rejected God's word and killed his prophets. This history started with Cain who killed Abel. The Pharisees of Jesus' day would climax that history by killing God's Son.

3. Woe to you who have taken away the key (52-54)

Bible teaching which does not lead people to repent before God and have faith in Jesus hinders those who earnestly seek God, those who want to know and obey him.

Prayer: Lord, help me to come to you through Bible study.

One Word: A Bible teacher who pleases God

THE YEAST OF THE PHARISEES

Luke 12:1-12

Key Verse: 12:4,5

1. Do not fear men (1-7)

Jesus warns his disciples not to be like the Pharisees, who were hypocrites. How can we rid our lives of hypocrisy? First, we must know that all hypocrisy will be exposed in Jesus' light. Everything hidden will be made known. Second, we must not live before the eyes of people. This makes us fearful and double-minded. Fear of people opens the door for all kinds of human thinking and calculation. We must love and fear God. He is the one who can save us from hell. He knows all about us, and he loves us.

2. Acknowledge Jesus before people (8-12)

The Christian life is meant to be simple. The Holy Spirit leads us to God. He works through the gospel. A deliberate decision not to believe the gospel is to reject God and his forgiveness. When we acknowledge Jesus as Lord and let his Spirit lead us, there is no longer any need to be anxious; there is no need for human calculations. We can live in the light, without fear. The Spirit will tell us what to do and say.

Prayer: Lord, forgive my useless fears and help me to fear you and walk in your light.

One Word: Be a Christian--not a Pharisee

THE PARABLE OF THE RICH FOOL

Luke 12:13-21

Key Verse: 12:15

1. Be on guard against greed (13-19)

A man in the crowd asked Jesus to make his brother share the inheritance. He thought he had not been treated fairly. Jesus never accepts a victim mentality, nor does he want material things to separate brothers. He rebuked the man for being greedy, and told him a parable about greed. A certain rich man had a bumper crop and he didn't know what to do with the surplus. He decided to tear down his barn and build a bigger one. He would retire and sit down and take it easy. He didn't think of sharing with those in need.

2. You fool! (20-21)

God called this man a fool--and with good reason, for that very night the life he had intended to enjoy was taken from him. He had prepared for an easy life in this world, but spiritually he was bankrupt. Someone else would enjoy the material things he had prepared for himself, and he would suffer throughout eternity. Wise men store their riches in heaven.

Prayer: Lord, help me to be generous, not greedy. Help me to seek your kingdom first and to be rich toward you.

One Word: Guard against greed

DO NOT WORRY

Luke 12:22-34

Key Verse: 12:32

1. Your Father knows that you need them (22-31)

Anxiety is a faith problem (28b). Jesus reminds us that worry cannot solve any problem--but our loving heavenly Father can. People worry about food and clothes, and about the future--their jobs, health, insurance, children's education, and other real and practical matters. But no one can add a single hour to his life by worrying. If we spend our time thinking about food and clothes we are just like the pagan world. Our Father who knows our needs is ready to supply them. If we seek his kingdom he gives us everything.

2. Your Father gives you the kingdom (32-34)

God's flock does not need to fear. Our Father is pleased to give us the kingdom. We need not clutch at the things of the world. We must seek to give rather than to get. We must live by faith and provide for ourselves treasures in heaven that will not perish, spoil or fade.

Prayer: Lord, increase my faith. Give me the best gift, your kingdom.

One Word: Don't be afraid--live by faith

THE WATCHFUL SERVANT

Luke 12:35-48

Key Verse: 12:35

1. Ready for service (35-40)

Jesus' servants must be ready to serve whenever he calls. We must be like servants, dressed and ready, with lamps lit, waiting for the master to return from a wedding banquet. We must watch and wait for Jesus' second coming. And while we wait, we must be alert to do the work he has given us to do. Being Jesus' servant requires a basic attitude of wholehearted devotion. Why? Because Jesus will return at an hour when we do not expect him.

2. Is this parable for everyone? (41-48)

Peter thought that he was already most watchful and faithful. He hoped the parable was for others. Jesus further taught that Jesus' servants are managers in charge of God's children. This is a great privilege. The servant who only enjoys his privileges, ignoring his job, will be beaten with many blows when Jesus returns.

Prayer: Lord, I have received much. Give me a ready, devoted attitude so that I may serve you anytime, anyway.

One Word: Ready to serve

NOT PEACE BUT DIVISION

Luke 12:49-59

Key Verse: 12:51

1. Fire on the earth (49-53)

Jesus' life, death and resurrection lit a fire on the earth. What does this mean? From the moment of his baptism by John, Jesus' direction was set toward the cross, his baptism of death. By his death on the cross and his resurrection, he solved our sin problem. When we repent and believe the gospel, we are forgiven. We have peace with God and peace in our own hearts. But we are often thrown into conflict with the world, for we cannot compromise with worldly values and goals, nor can we compromise with those who try to make us follow the world.

2. Judge for yourselves what is right (54-59)

We know that a cloudy sky brings rain and that God hates sin. We also know that sinful desire gives birth to sinful acts and that the consequences of sin is death. We can't afford to be double-minded hypocrites who try to stand in the middle, for there is no middle ground.

Prayer: Lord, help me to stand clearly on your side, especially with those I love.

One Word: Not peace but division

REPENT OR PERISH

Luke 13:1-9

Key Verse: 13:5

1. Repent or perish (1-5)

Jesus was talking with some people about some tragic current events. They thought that misfortunes happened to people because they were sinners and needed punishment more than others. But Jesus did not see things according to a fatalistic law of cause and effect. Every person has sinned and everyone needs to repent, for the wages of sin is death. Unless you and I repent, we will perish.

2. The unfruitful fig tree (6-9)

Jesus explained what repentance is with a parable about a fig tree in a vineyard. The vineyard owner wanted fruit not only from the vineyard, but also from the fig tree. A fruitless tree should be cut down. The farmer repented his neglect of the fig tree and begged the owner to give it another chance. God wants fruit. If our lives are rooted in Christ and we are disciplined by his word, we will be fruitful.

Prayer: Lord, give me a repentant heart. Forgive my sins and make me fruitful.

One Word: Repent and be fruitful

A DAUGHTER OF ABRAHAM

Luke 13:10-17

Key Verse: 13:16

1. A woman who was bound by Satan (10-13)

For 18 years this woman had been bound by Satan. She was so crippled that she could not straighten up. One Sabbath day Jesus saw her in the synagogue. He said, "Woman, you are set free from your infirmity." He put his hands of healing on her; she straightened up and praised God. Jesus came to set us free from whatever binds us and makes us useless and miserable. He sets us free to praise God.

2. A daughter of Abraham (14-17)

The synagogue ruler was indignant that Jesus healed on the Sabbath, and he criticized him before the people. But Jesus rebuked the hypocrites who untied and watered donkeys on the Sabbath, but could not rejoice that a daughter of Abraham was untied from 18 years of bondage to the power of Satan. Some dangerous opponents were humiliated by Jesus, but the ordinary people who longed for freedom were delighted by his wonderful deeds.

Prayer: Lord, I praise you for setting me free from bondage to sin. Give me eyes and heart to see your work and praise you.

One Word: Jesus sets us free

WHAT IS THE KINGDOM OF GOD LIKE?

Luke 13:18-21

Key Verse: 13:18

1. It is like a mustard seed (18,19)

The kingdom of God is like a tiny mustard seed that is planted in a garden. The seed grows into a large tree that changes and blesses the environment. If there is one person in a school or business or nation who has been changed by Jesus and who has God ruling in his heart, the kingdom of God will grow and spread until it makes the world a better place. One person who loves God can change a nation. This is how God works. When God's word is planted in our hearts, it grows until we are changed into people whose lives and influence are a blessing to others.

2. It is like yeast (20,21)

The amount of yeast used in making bread is insignificant, but its influence on the whole lump of dough is great. For without the yeast, the bread won't rise. When God's word is planted in our hearts, it works quietly until our whole lives are changed. God's kingdom is invisible, but its influence in the world is essential to the life of the world. May God's kingdom come on earth as it is in heaven.

Prayer: Lord, give me faith to trust your slow, steady and invisible way of working.

One Word: God's kingdom is small and growing

THE NARROW DOOR

Luke 13:22-30

Key Verse: 13:24a

1. Make every effort (22-27)

Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem to suffer and die on the cross. In every place he taught about the kingdom of God. When someone asked him if only a few people would be saved, Jesus told him not to assume that he was saved just because he was a Jew, or because he had eaten with Jesus--or even because he had engaged in many Christian activities, including Bible teaching. The narrow door is the door of repentance and faith. It is a door that leads to a personal relationship with Jesus. All who do not accept Jesus on his terms are evildoers--even those who seem to be doing good (27).

2. The great feast (28-30)

All kinds of people from everywhere will sit down with Jesus and the patriarchs at the great Messianic feast. But those who, even though they know the truth, are afraid to make a commitment will be on the outside looking in, and weeping.

Prayer: Lord, I come to you with a repentant heart, seeking only to know you and walk with you. I want to go through the narrow door.

One Word: Make every effort to know Jesus

JESUS' SORROW FOR JERUSALEM

Luke 13:31-35

Key Verse: 13:34

1. In any case I must keep on going (31-33)

As Jesus drew nearer to Jerusalem he received a message that Herod wanted to kill him. Some Pharisees advised him to escape. The threat of death did not change Jesus' plans. He considered his mission more important than his life. He would continue healing people and casting out demons. He did not fear Herod, for he knew that life and death are in God's hands--not in the hands of the Herods of the world. He knew that he would die at the time and in the place of God's choosing.

2. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem! (34-35)

Jesus loved the people of Israel even though, time after time, they had rejected God's love and God's saving grace. He loved them with the shepherd heart of God, with the heart of the father who loved his prodigal son. He could not force them to accept God's love; he could only keep on loving them with a broken heart.

Prayer: Lord, help me to trust you and not fear people. Teach me your shepherd heart and Jesus' life-giving spirit.

One word: Jesus is the Good Shepherd

DINNER WITH A PHARISEE

Luke 14:1-11

Key Verse: 14:11

1. The man with dropsy (1-6)

The man with dropsy was suffering, but the Pharisees who sat down to eat with Jesus didn't care. They only wanted to catch Jesus doing something they could criticize. It was the Sabbath, but that didn't stop Jesus. He healed the man and silenced the selfish Pharisees (5). Jesus didn't care about being politically correct. He did care about suffering people.

2. He who humbles himself will be exalted (7-11)

Jesus saw how the Pharisee guests scrambled for the seats of honor. So he told them a parable about some guests who sought the places of honor at a wedding feast. Those who seek human honor for themselves will be humiliated, but humble people will be honored. The religious leaders should have had compassion for a suffering man, but they didn't care. They only thought about getting human recognition.

Prayer: Lord, help me not to seek honor or recognition from people; give me Jesus' heart and his courage so that I can live a useful life.

One Word: He who humbles himself...

THE PARABLE OF THE GREAT BANQUET

Luke 14:12-24

Key Verse: 14:23

1. Come, for everything is ready (12-20)

Jesus told his host about the kind of banquet that would please God and bring God's blessing to him (12-14). One of the guests was reminded of the great heavenly banquet of the Messiah (15). So Jesus told a parable about the kingdom of God. What a tragedy it was that God's chosen people were too busy with private, worldly affairs to come to the great Messianic banquet which God prepared for them. Christians who neglect prayer and Bible study, or who put their own business ahead of God's, can become like this, too.

2. Those from the streets and roads (21-24)

When the Jews rejected God's Messiah, God opened the door to the Gentile world. All who need his mercy--the poor, the crippled, the lame and the blind and all sinners--are invited to come. His

grace is free. It is offered to those who cannot repay him. The guests at the great banquet in the kingdom of heaven will be those who accept his love and come to him by faith.

Prayer: Lord, help me to give you and your business top priority in my life today.

One Word: Come to the King's banquet

THE COST OF BEING A DISCIPLE

Luke 14:25-35

Key Verse: 14:27

1. To be Jesus' disciple (25-27)

Jesus did not seek popularity with the large crowds. He wanted committed disciples, so he said some challenging words. No one can be Jesus' disciple unless he puts Jesus first. Jesus must have priority over even the closest of human ties--even over one's very life. Jesus calls us to live a life of mission. Each of us must take up his cross and follow Jesus. We cannot just tag along behind with no decision of faith and no commitment.

2. Count the cost (28-35)

If one wants to go to medical school he must count the cost--the money, the effort and the time involved. Being Jesus' disciple also requires commitment and sacrifice. But it's worth it. The uncommitted life is not worth living--it is like tasteless salt. One should not try to follow Jesus without making a decision to give up everything he has for Jesus' sake and the gospel's.

Prayer: Lord, so many people think that an uncommitted life is a life of freedom. But your word teaches us that a life uncommitted to Jesus is slavery. Help me to challenge the relativism of the times and be your disciple.

One Word: Following Jesus is worth any cost

THE LOST SHEEP

Luke 15:1-10

Key Verse: 15:4

1. The shepherd's heart (1-7)

The sinners and tax collectors were thirstily drinking in the word of God, but the Pharisees criticized Jesus for welcoming them. They did not know God's heart. Jesus taught them what makes God rejoice. God is like a shepherd who cares about one lost sheep. He leaves the 99 and goes out searching for the lost one until he finds it. Then he joyfully carries the lost one home

and calls in his friends to share his joy. These sinners and tax collectors were lost sheep. When one such sinner receives God's word and repents, God and all his angels fill heaven with joyful songs.

2. One woman's urgency (8-10)

Jesus' second parable was also about something lost and found. The woman who lost one of her 10 coins could not rest until it was found. She tasted the joy of finding what was lost. Then, she called in her neighbors to rejoice. God's joy over finding one lost sinner is like this--but much greater.

Prayer: Lord, help me to know your heart. Help me to rejoice with you when your lost ones are found.

One Word: Seek Jesus' lost sheep

LOST SONS

Luke 15:11-32

Key Verse: 15:32

1. A loving Father (11-24)

The father of these two sons knew that his younger son was rebellious and wanted to be free to live his own life. So when he asked for his share of the estate, the father put aside his sorrow and anxiety and gave him what he asked. This young man thought that freedom was doing whatever he felt like doing. But after a brief, wild fling, the boy found himself in a far country, friendless and penniless. He took a most shameful job for a Jewish boy--feeding pigs; he even tried to eat the pig's food, but still he was hungry. Finally, he came to his senses. He put aside his pride, acknowledged that he had sinned and started home. His father was waiting with a heart full of compassion and forgiveness.

2. The elder son (25-31)

The elder son was like the Pharisees. He was full of self-righteousness and pride. He wanted his rights. He should have been thankful just to live with his father--but he was not. He did not know his father's heart.

Prayer: Lord, give me a repentant heart and a right view of freedom and of your mercy.

One Word: The Father's compassion

THE SHREWD MANAGER

Luke 16:1-12

Key Verse: 16:10

1. Prepare for eternity (1-9)

A certain manager was called in by his boss to account for his wastefulness. He decided that he was too weak to dig and too proud to beg, so when his boss gave him notice, he suddenly became diligent. Before he left his job, he prepared for his future survival by making some friends who would be indebted to him. Jesus challenges us, the people of light, to be as wise as this man of darkness and use our time on this earth to prepare for eternity.

2. Trustworthy stewardship (10-12)

We must be faithful stewards of the money, time and opportunities entrusted to us by God. The shrewd manager lost his job because he was not honest. If we are faithful with the little that God has entrusted to us, then God will entrust us with true riches--eternal life and a room in his eternal dwelling. We must be faithful in small things. And we must be diligent stewards of the lives God has given us.

Prayer: Lord, help me to use my time, money and opportunities to prepare for eternity.

One Word: Be faithful in small things

GOD OR MONEY?

Luke 16:13-18

Key Verse: 16:13

1. One can't serve both God and money (13-15)

Sometimes in politics or in family matters compromise may be necessary. But Jesus tells us that we cannot compromise our hearts. We cannot serve both God and money. The Pharisees thought they could serve God and money, but Luke tells us that they loved money. They loved the privileges and power that money could buy. God will not share the throne of our hearts with anything or anyone. We can't fool him, for he knows our hearts.

2. Law is law; the gospel is good news (16-18)

God's law is uncompromising. Sin is sin, and God does not call sin by any other name. But the good news of the kingdom of God is that God forgives sinners who repent and come to him. This is grace. Jesus who died to be our Savior now lives to be our King. God's people must be faithful to God and to marriage vows.

Prayer: Lord, reign as king of my heart. Keep me from the hypocrisy of compromise. Help me to make material things serve you.

One Word: Serve God, not money

THE RICH MAN AND LAZARUS

Luke 16:19-31

Key Verse: 16:26

1. The great chasm between heaven and hell (19-26)

During their lifetimes the rich man enjoyed an easy, luxurious life, while the beggar Lazarus suffered hunger and humiliation. But after these men died, their situations were reversed. Lazarus was taken to heaven to dwell in eternal joy by Abraham's side. The rich man suffered in hell. He begged Abraham to send Lazarus to him with a little water to cool his tongue, but the chasm between heaven and hell is fixed. One who, during his lifetime, puts his faith in Jesus and his hope in heaven will join Abraham there. One whose hopes are in the world will spend eternity in hell.

2. Listen to the Bible (27-31)

How could the rich man's 5 brothers escape the place of torment? They must accept God's word, repent and believe in Jesus, about whom Moses and the prophets wrote. Those who reject the Bible cannot believe in the risen Jesus.

Prayer: Lord, help me to trust in Jesus and put my hope in your kingdom.

One Word: A chasm between heaven and hell

LORD, INCREASE OUR FAITH

Luke 17:1-6

Key Verse: 17:5

1. Watch yourselves (1-4)

Some people say that what they think and do is their own business; if their words or actions tempt someone to sin, that's the other person's problem. But Jesus teaches us that we are responsible for our influence on others --"So watch yourselves." Furthermore, a Christian cannot be indifferent to the spiritual needs of others. He must care enough to rebuke his brother when he sins. And he must love his brother enough to forgive him--without limit.

2. Increase our faith (5-6)

The apostles were realists. They knew that what Jesus was commanding them to do was next to impossible. How can we care enough about others to curtail our own freedom? How can we love

a brother enough to risk a good human relationship by rebuking him? The apostles knew that it was a matter of faith. Jesus told them that they didn't need much faith--only a little!

Prayer: Lord, give me faith to forgive, and help me to be a good influence on others.

One Word: Lord, increase my faith!

WE HAVE ONLY DONE OUR DUTY

Luke 17:7-10

Key Verse: 17:10

1. The hard working servant (7-9)

When a person does his duty, he has a sense of accomplishment and inner peace. This is sufficient reward. He doesn't expect any reward or praise for doing his duty. A man who works hard all day doesn't expect his boss to cook dinner for him. He works because that's his job. He doesn't even expect to be thanked.

2. God's servants (10)

We are servants of Christ Jesus. He bought us with his blood, redeemed us from the power of sin and death, and we belong to him. Whatever we do for him is done in response to his grace. Serving Jesus is our duty and our highest joy. When he uses us in his redemptive work, even in some small way, it is a great privilege. When we have done everything we were told to do, we can only say, "We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty."

Prayer: Lord, I belong to you. I am an unworthy servant; please use me in your work in any way you choose.

One Word: Rejoice to do our duty

THE THANKFUL SAMARITAN LEPER

Luke 17:11-19

Key Verse: 17:16

1. Master, have pity on us (11-14)

Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem to die on the cross. As he was walking along the border between Galilee and Samaria, he was met by 10 men with leprosy. In those days lepers were avoided like AIDS patients are today. They did not dare to come near Jesus, but from a great distance they cried out (13). Jesus never turns away from those who humbly ask his help. He

healed them and sent them to the priests to get a clean bill of health. They could then enter society and live normal lives.

2. The Samaritan who thanked Jesus (15-19)

The men were so excited about being healed that they forgot about the man who had healed them. But one man remembered; he turned and came back, praising God. He was a foreigner. Because he remembered God's grace, he was blessed. He could have a personal relationship with Jesus.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for saving me from the leprosy of sin and making me whole. Help me to walk with Jesus today.

One Word: Remember God's grace

LORD, YOUR KINGDOM COME

Luke 17:20-25

Key Verse: 17:21b

1. The kingdom of God is within you (20-21)

The Pharisees thought they had a first class ticket to heaven. Jesus told them that the kingdom begins with God's rule within men's hearts. Those who only think about eating, drinking and getting married, who leave no room in their hearts and lives for loving and obeying God, will be swept away with unbelievers on the day of judgment.

2. The Son of Man will come like lightning (22-25)

Jesus' disciples long for God's kingdom to come. False messiahs down through the ages have tried to take advantage of this longing. But God's people must not be deceived. When Jesus comes again everyone will know it. First, Jesus must die on the cross for the sins of the world. Then, the gospel of salvation must be preached to the ends of the earth. One who gives his life to Jesus for his use seems to lose a lot. But only one who loses his life for Jesus' sake will save it.

Prayer: Lord, let your kingdom come in my heart, so that I may be ready to welcome you joyfully when you come again.

One Word: God's kingdom begins within

THE DAYS OF NOAH, THE DAYS OF LOT, AND NOW

Luke 17:26-37

Key Verse: 17:26

1. The days of Noah and the days of Lot (26-29)

There are 2 catastrophic events in Genesis which are portents of the final judgment: the flood (Ge 6-7), and the destruction of Sodom by burning sulfur from the Lord. In each case, the judgment of God came suddenly, without warning. The people were engaged in the ordinary pursuits of life. They did not make room for God, but lived on a physical and material level. God was grieved because no one thanked him and no one prayed. Lot was spared by God's grace--because of Abraham's prayer--but his wife looked back. She couldn't let go of the material things of Sodom.

2. On the day of the Son of Man (30-37)

When Jesus comes again to judge the earth, he will come suddenly. Though two people are in the same place, doing the same thing, their inner lives can be very different. Jesus sees our hearts. One will be saved, and the other lost. God can't save those who reject his grace and live like animals.

Prayer: Lord, teach me to walk with you daily as I go about the ordinary pursuits of my life.

One Word: Make room for God in your heart

THE PERSISTENT WIDOW

Luke 18:1-8

Key Verse: 18:1b

1. The widow and the judge (1-5)

Jesus told a parable to teach his disciples to pray and not give up. The widow in the parable wanted justice. She didn't give up, but came again and again to ask the judge for justice against her adversary. The judge did not fear God or care what people thought, but he couldn't endure the widow's persistent asking, so he granted her request. Like this woman, we should pray and not give up.

2. God and his chosen ones (6-8)

God is not an unjust judge; he loves justice and what is more, he loves his chosen ones. When we cry to him in prayer and keep on praying, he will surely answer. Why, then, don't God's people pray? Jesus says that it is a matter of faith. If we have faith, we will pray. When Jesus comes again he will look for men and women of faith.

Prayer: Lord, give me faith to pray persistently until you raise up from the young people of this land a nation of priests.

One Word: Pray and don't give up

THE PRAYER THAT GOD HEARS

Luke 18:9-14

Key Verse: 18:13

1. The self-righteous Pharisee (9-12)

Jesus told this parable to those who compare themselves with others and think that they are a little better. This Pharisee thought he was worthy of being heard. The self-righteous person who prays to God and expects to be answered on the basis of his own merit does not know God, and does not know himself.

2. The sinner (13-14)

Tax collectors were public sinners. This man had no illusions about himself. He came to God as a sinner, asking only the mercy of God. He knew that the righteous God is merciful to sinners who repent. He prayed the prayer that God always hears and answers: "God, have mercy on me, a sinner." God forgives and exalts those who come to him like this.

Prayer: Lord, I come to you just as I am. I am nothing but dust and ashes, but you are righteous and merciful. I come because you have promised to receive and forgive sinners for Jesus' sake.

One Word: God hears the sinner's prayer

LITTLE CHILDREN AND A RICH RULER

Luke 18:15-30

Key Verse: 18:16

1. The little children and Jesus (15-17)

Jesus' disciples didn't know the mind of Jesus. They thought that children were unimportant to him, because he was so busy. But Jesus welcomed the children--and taught us that the kingdom of God belongs to those who come to him with simple, trusting, child-like faith.

2. The rich ruler (18-30)

The young man asked the right question (18). But behind his words lay an idea that he could earn the right to enter heaven by his own good life and noble activities. He saw Jesus as a good teacher, one from whom he could learn something useful. But Jesus challenged him to make a total commitment of himself to Jesus. Jesus wanted his heart. It is hard for a person with wealth and much ability to give up everything to follow Jesus. But it is more than worth the cost.

Prayer: Lord, I come to you just as I am. Purge me of anything that keeps me from being fully committed to you.

One Word: Come like a little child

BLIND MEN

Luke 18:31-43

Key Verse:18:41

1. Blind disciples (31-34)

Jesus told the Twelve privately what would happen in Jerusalem. He was going there to die for the sins of the world. This was why he had come (Jn 1:29). The prophets had looked forward to this. But his disciples could not accept it. They were blinded by their ambition, and by their human affection for Jesus. Jesus wants his disciples to have gospel faith.

2. A blind man who received his sight (35-43)

Jesus asked the blind beggar, "What do you want me to do for you?" The blind beggar had just one prayer topic: "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me." He accepted Jesus as Messiah. He understood the purpose of the Messiah's coming--to be a real shepherd for men like himself. Jesus always hears prayers for mercy. And Jesus seeks people who long for his healing and forgiveness.

Prayer: Lord, heal my blindness and let your absolute gospel take deep root in my heart and life.

One Word: Jesus makes the blind to see

THANKFUL FOR THE BASIC GRACE OF JESUS

Luke 19:1-10

Key Verse: 19:6

1. The man who wanted to see Jesus (1-4)

Zacchaeus had reached the top. But in order to get there, he had crushed many poor people, and he had collaborated with the oppressors of his people. He was short in stature, but aggressive and able. He got what he wanted. But his success had not brought him peace or filled the emptiness in his soul. He had heard that Jesus did not despise sinners and tax collectors, and he wanted to see him. The people of Jericho showed their dislike of Zacchaeus--for no one helped him to see Jesus. So he ran ahead and climbed a tree.

2. Zacchaeus, come down immediately (5-10)

Jesus knew Zacchaeus' name and all about him. He invited himself to Zacchaeus' home. Zacchaeus welcomed him. He was thankful for Jesus' grace, and he repented. His repentance changed his life. Salvation came to his house, for he received God's love and grace by faith. He was filled with joy and thanksgiving.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for loving sinners like me. Help me to live as a repentant sinner, saved by your grace.

One Word: Give thanks for Jesus' grace

PUT THIS MONEY TO WORK

Luke 19:11-27

Key Verse: 19:13

1. As Jesus neared Jerusalem (11-13)

Many people thought that Jesus would begin his triumphal reign when he entered Jerusalem. But Jesus knew that he must first suffer and die for the sins of the world. He would go away to heaven, but he would come again in glory. He tells us in a parable how we must live until he comes again. A man went away to be crowned king. He entrusted sums of money to his servants and told each one to "put this money to work." Jesus entrusts us with small tasks and privileges, and with his word. He wants us to put everything to work for him until he returns.

2. Trustworthy in small things (14-27)

Two servants worked hard and, upon the master's return, had doubled their capital. But a third servant came with the one coin he had received--and many excuses. He had carefully kept his coin, but he made no profit for the king. He was severely rebuked. Jesus wants us to overcome fear and human calculations and live by faith. He gives faithful men more work to do. Enemies of God will receive just punishment.

Prayer: Lord, help me to work hard for you and be trustworthy in small things.

One Word: Put this money to work

THE TRIUMPHAL ENTRY

Luke 19:28-40

Key Verse: 19:34

1. The Lord needs it (28-34)

Jesus prepared carefully for his entrance into Jerusalem. He sent 2 of his disciples to bring a particular donkey colt. Their claim on the colt was simple: "The Lord needs it." Jesus is the Lord. He is the sovereign owner of all things. All of our possessions, even our very lives, should be available for his use whenever we hear the words, "The Lord needs it."

2. Blessed is the king... (35-40)

Jesus fulfilled the prophecy of Zechariah 9:9. He entered Jerusalem in a way that proclaimed his Messiahship and demonstrated the nature of his kingdom. When he entered as Messiah and King, the people shouted the words of Psalm 118:26. His entrance was humble and gentle; he is the King of peace. Jesus accepted the acclaim of the crowd. It was God's testimony to Jesus' Messiahship. If the crowd had been silent, the very stones would have cried out!

Prayer: Lord, come and rule as king of my heart. Let me and all that I have be available to you for your use.

One Word: The Lord needs it--he is King!

JESUS WEEPS OVER JERUSALEM

Luke 19:41-48

Key Verse: 19:41

1. Recognize God's coming (41-44)

Jesus entered Jerusalem amid shouts of praise, but tears were in his eyes. He was not weeping for himself, but for the people who did not know that God was visiting them. If they had welcomed him, he would have given them real peace. But they rejected him. Those who reject God's love will taste his wrath.

2. A house of prayer (45-48)

Jesus did not go to the palace; he went to the temple. He came to bring spiritual revolution. He brought prayer and Bible teaching and true worship back to the temple. But the religious leaders looked at him with political eyes and saw in him a threat to their leadership. They did not repent; instead, they sought to kill him. But the thirsty people hung on his words.

Prayer: Lord, make my heart a place where you are always welcome. Give me a repentant heart and eyes to recognize the time of your coming to me.

One Word: Jesus weeps for the lost

BY WHAT AUTHORITY?

Luke 20:1-8

Key Verse: 20:4

1. Who gave you this authority? (1-2)

Jesus displayed God's love and power as he healed the sick and taught God's word. The religious leaders were jealous of his popularity. They questioned his authority: he was not ordained; he was not a priest; he did not have a seminary degree. God's hand of blessing was evident on Jesus' ministry, but they didn't believe because they didn't want to believe.

2. What do you say about John's baptism? (3-8)

In reply, Jesus asked them about John the Baptist. John had died a martyr's death at the hands of Herod. He had spoken God's word, and people repented of sin. He had witnessed to Jesus, the Son of God, the Christ (Jn 1:29-34). The religious leaders decided that they could neither answer Jesus' question about John nor repent. There are some today who see God's hand working in people, but who know that commitment is costly, so they reject God's word and blessing. Those who know, but avoid the cross of mission and commitment can become God's enemies.

Prayer: Lord, I see your hand working and I praise your name. Use me in your work.

One Word: By the authority of God

THE PARABLE OF THE TENANTS

Luke 20:9-19

Key Verse: 20:17

1. The owner and the tenants (9-12)

In this parable, Jesus puts himself and his church in historical perspective. The owner of the vineyard is God. He planted his vineyard to have fruit. God wanted Israel to be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation (Ex 19:4-6). He wanted to bless all the nations of the world through his chosen people. The tenants were selfish. They wanted to enjoy the blessings, but they didn't want to give anything to anyone.

2. The Rejected Stone (13-19)

Just as the owner sent servants to get some of the harvest, so God sent his prophets to his people. Just as the tenants rejected and mistreated the servants, so Israel rejected the prophets. When the owner sent his Son, he thought they would surely respect him--but they didn't. They killed him and claimed ownership of the vineyard. When Israel rejected Jesus, they rejected the privilege of being God's people. God took the Rejected Stone, Jesus, and through him built a new Israel to be a kingdom of priests and a holy nation (1Pe 2:9).

Prayer: Lord, make me a good tenant in your vineyard, and a good steward of your blessings.

One Word: Give fruit to God

CAESAR'S THINGS; GOD'S THINGS

Luke 20:20-26

Key Verse: 20:25b

1. Double-minded religious leaders (20-22)

Those who rejected Jesus' spiritual authority were confident about the authority and power of Rome. But they were afraid of the people (19). They sent spies to try to catch Jesus doing or saying something wrong. Their flattery shows that they knew that Jesus taught and lived by the truth. They asked him a hard question. Should God's people pay taxes to an evil oppressor who claimed to be a god? If Jesus said, "Yes," he would be supporting evil. On the other hand, to advocate openly not paying taxes would be a crime against Rome. The authorities could arrest him.

2. Give God what is God's (23-26)

Jesus was not political. He came to forgive sin and bring men to God. Human authority and governments are necessary in a sinful world. Governments should be supported and obeyed. But it is more important for men to acknowledge that they are made in God's image and belong to him. When we accept God's sovereignty, both double-mindedness and fear are cast out.

Prayer: Lord, help me to remember that I belong to you, and do my duty to you and to my country.

One Word: Give to God; give to Caesar

GOD OF THE LIVING

Luke 20:27-40

Key Verse: 20:38

1. Marriage in heaven? (27-36)

The Sadducees did not believe in resurrection from the dead, in heaven or in hell; they were materialists. In order to prove their position, they asked Jesus about a hypothetical woman who married a succession of seven brothers. Whose wife would she be, should there really be a resurrection of the dead? They wanted to make Jesus' teaching about resurrection look absurd, but they only succeeded in revealing their own spiritual ignorance; they were under the power of death and despair. In heaven there is no death and no need for marriage; the resurrected body is a spiritual body, like that of the risen Jesus. God's people will spend eternity glorifying and enjoying God.

2. God of the living (37-40)

God's word to Moses in Exodus 3:6 reveals that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob are alive with God. This confirms our hope that though we die physically, we will live eternally with God. God is alive. He does not preside over a place full of death. Those who dwell with him are alive, not dead.

Prayer: Lord, you are my inheritance and my hope. Let me dwell with you forever.

One Word: Hope in the God of the living

CHRIST IS LORD

Luke 20:41-47

Key Verses: 20:42-44

1. David's Lord (41-44)

Jesus' question to the Pharisees pointed out that the Old Testament teaches the deity of the Christ. King David, inspired by the Holy Spirit, wrote Psalm 110. This Psalm teaches that the Messiah is David's Lord--one worthy of David's worship. He must rule until all his enemies have been put under his feet. God's enemies may seem to have won when they crucified Jesus, but in the end, they will all be put under his feet. Thanks be to God who gives us the victory in Christ Jesus our Lord.

2. Don't become an enemy of God (45-47)

God's enemies are those who reject his Messiah. Those who use religion as a cloak for taking advantage of weak people are God's enemies. Those who seek human glory and personal wealth using God's name are also God's enemies. Jesus warned his disciples not to be influenced by these kinds of men. Someday, they will be Jesus' footstool.

Prayer: Lord, come and rule every part of my heart and life so that I may not be an enemy of God.

One Word: Christ is Lord

THE WIDOW'S OFFERING

Luke 21:1-6

Key Verse: 21:4

1. The widow's offering (1-4)

The poor widow and her offering seemed insignificant. But Jesus saw her through God's eyes. He saw her sincere heart and her sacrificial life. She did not calculate or offer leftovers. She gave everything she had. In God's sight, her gift was the most expensive of all. She gave God her heart and trusted him for her future. This is faith.

2. The temple stones (5-6)

The country boys from Galilee were impressed by the beauty of the temple. Its gold-plated stones represented the gifts of the rich and powerful. But Jesus saw the temple in the perspective of history. Buildings, no matter how strong and beautiful, are not eternal. Even the temple would go the way of all buildings and all flesh. Only God's redemptive love will last; God's redemptive history will be accomplished, and God's eternal kingdom will last.

Prayer: Lord, give me eyes to see people and things and events from your point of view.

One Word: One woman's great gift to God

STAND FIRM

Luke 21:7-19

Key Verse: 21:19

1. Do not be deceived (1-9)

The destruction of the temple sounded like the end of the world to Jesus' disciples. They asked Jesus, "When?" and, "What signs?" Jesus' answer tells us how to live in a world that is in rebellion against God. Jesus warned that before the end of the age comes, many false prophets will arise to lead God's people astray. We should not listen to anyone who claims to be Christ, and we should not put our hope in people or in the false security of material things.

2. I will give you words and wisdom (10-19)

There will be many fearful events, including wars, earthquakes, famines, etc. Insurance will not protect us. The real danger, however, will come from those we thought we could trust--family, friends, religious people. Jesus says that we should witness to them. He promises to give us his word and wisdom to do so. If we stand firm on Jesus' side, we will gain life.

Prayer: Lord, help me not to be deceived, but to witness to Jesus and to stand firm.

One Word: Stand firm on God's side

THE SON OF MAN COMES

Luke 21:20-38

Key Verse: 21:27

1. The Son of Man comes on clouds (20-28)

The destruction of Jerusalem occurred in 70 AD. It was a portent of the final judgment, the day when Jesus will come again to judge the world and restore all things. The first time, Jesus came as a servant; he came to give his life as a ransom for our sins. He will come the second time as King and Judge. The first time, he came as a baby in a manger; the second time, he will come in great power and glory. His coming will be accompanied by terrifying signs in the earth and the sky. If we belong to him, we will rejoice and welcome our Redeemer (28). If we belong to the world, we will tremble in fear (26).

2. Stand before the Son of Man (29-38)

When trees sprout leaves we know that summer is near. The signs of Jesus' coming are just as clear. When Jesus comes again, everyone will know it. He will come as God promised. We must not be so weighed down by fear and anxiety that we are caught in the destruction that overtakes the world. By faith, we must overcome the world and stand before Jesus.

Prayer: Lord, help me to live by faith and be ready when Jesus comes again.

One Word: Jesus is coming again

PREPARING THE PASSOVER

Luke 22:1-13

Key Verse: 22:7,8

1. Satan entered Judas (1-6)

Judas was one of the privileged Twelve. He had heard Jesus' words--just like Peter and the others--but he never accepted them. He was full of worldly desires (Jn 12:4-6). There was no word of God in his heart (Jn 6:68-71). So when Satan knocked on the door of his heart, he opened it and let him in. He betrayed Jesus for money.

2. Go and make preparations (7-13)

The Passover celebrated Israel's deliverance from Egypt. Jesus came to die as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world (Jn 1:29). Peter and John were also among the Twelve. They didn't always understand Jesus' commands, but they obeyed anyway. A man carrying a jar of water led them to the home of a person with a heart and home prepared to accept Jesus. These men learned that God opens doors and provides what is needed for those who accept Jesus' words and move their hands and feet to obey his commands.

Prayer: Lord, come and dwell in my heart, and help me to obey your word so that Satan can find no foothold in me.

One Word: Obey Jesus' word

THE NEW COVENANT IN JESUS' BLOOD

Luke 22:14-23

Key Verse: 22:20

1. Until the kingdom of God comes (14-18)

On the evening before his crucifixion, Jesus ate the Passover with his disciples. Jesus came to be the Passover Lamb, to take away the sins of the world. Jesus wanted to plant in his disciples hope in the kingdom of God. He came, died and rose again so that those who put their faith in him might have forgiveness of sins, eternal life and the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is our eternal inheritance; it is the destination of our earthly pilgrimage.

2. The bread and the wine (19-23)

Jesus broke the bread and gave it to his disciples. It represents his body broken for the sins of the world. We must remember this basic grace. Then he gave them the cup. It represents the new covenant sealed by Jesus' blood. When we repent and accept Jesus' atoning blood for the forgiveness of our sins, we enter into a covenant with Jesus and his people. The old covenant was sealed with the blood of animals (Ex 24:8), but the people broke God's laws and the covenant, so a new covenant was needed (Jer 31:31-33).

Prayer: Lord, help me to remember your grace of forgiveness and put my hope in your kingdom.

One Word: Jesus' blood was shed for me

I CONFER ON YOU A KINGDOM

Luke 22:24-30

Key Verse: 22:27c-29

1. Worldly kings (24-27)

The disciples' standard for greatness was Caesar. They thought that the one who bossed everyone around was the greatest, and those who served were nobodies. So, no one wanted to serve. But Caesar is not the standard for greatness--Jesus is. All power in heaven and on earth was his, but he used his power to serve the weak and sick and helpless. He teaches us that we should seek to serve others, not seek to rule them.

2. Jesus promises his kingdom (28-30)

Jesus' disciples didn't need to envy worldly rulers. He conferred on them a kingdom. The Twelve are the patriarchs of the new Israel. They sit with Jesus in the heavenly kingdom and judge the twelve tribes of Israel. Jesus promised all his disciples that they would reign with him (2Ti 2:12). Our hope is in the kingdom of God, not in the kingdoms of men.

Prayer: Lord, give me the mind of Jesus, who lived among men as one who serves. Help me to put my hope in your kingdom.

One Word: Jesus confers on us a kingdom

BUT I HAVE PRAYED FOR YOU

Luke 22:31-38

Key Verse: 22:32

1. Satan asked to sift you as wheat (31-34)

Satan is always looking for the weak point of a person God wants to use. He tried to destroy Simon Peter's faith. Simon thought that his love for Jesus was strong enough, but Jesus knew that he would fail, for human love is never strong enough. Jesus prayed for him, that his faith might not fail. When Simon repented, he could be a shepherd of others. We must never despair when we fail; this is the time to come to God in faith, receive his forgiveness and do God's work.

2. Did you lack anything? (35-38)

Jesus trained his disciples to depend on God, not on material things or on the sword. Now, the time of training was over. They could take the purse and the sword, but they were not to depend on them. Jesus' death would complete his part in God's plan for world redemption. Jesus' disciples must do battle with Satan and bring the gospel to the world. This is still the task of disciples. Jesus prays for us.

Prayer: Lord, help me to depend on you. Help me to repent and not despair.

One Word: Repent, then encourage others

FATHER, NOT MY WILL BUT YOURS

Luke 22:39-46

Key Verse: 22:42

1. Father, if you are willing (39-44)

Jesus went to his usual place of prayer. He knew that suffering and death lay before him. He was a young man, full of life and passion, and he did not want to die. Confident of God's love, he called God "Father." He prayed, "...if you are willing, take this cup from me..." But he had come to fulfill his mission from God, so he prayed, "yet not my will but yours be done." This was his struggle: God's will or his human desire. He was in anguish and he sweated blood as he prayed again and again. An angel came to strengthen him. Finally, he arose with God's peace in his heart.

2. Get up and pray (45-46)

Jesus told his disciples to pray so that they would not enter into temptation, but they didn't accept his words. Their sorrowful human thoughts exhausted them and they slept. When the time of crisis came, they could only run away.

Prayer: Lord, help me to pray until I know and can accept your will.

One Word: Victory through prayer

WHEN DARKNESS REIGNS

Luke 22:47-53

Key Verse: 22:53

1. The kiss of Judas (47-48)

Judas knew all the facts about Jesus' life and teachings, for he was one of the Twelve. But actually Judas knew nothing, for his heart was dark--dark because of greed, and dark because he had no love for truth or for God or for anyone.

2. No more of this! (49-51)

Jesus' disciples loved him, but they were also in darkness because they did not understand Jesus' heart nor did they understand his mission. They were ready to fight for Jesus with swords, but this was not Jesus' way. He healed the ear of his enemy. He showed his disciples another way.

3. Why didn't you arrest me in the temple? (52-53)

The religious leaders could not arrest Jesus in the temple because they were afraid of the people (2). Their hearts were full of murder and lies. Jesus spoke the truth of God when he taught in the temple. Their hour was the hour when darkness reigned.

Prayer: Lord, help me to live in the light of your love and truth.

One Word: Live in God's light

THE LORD LOOKED STRAIGHT AT PETER

Luke 22:54-62

Key Verse: 22:61a

1. Peter followed at a distance (54-60)

Jesus prayed in the Garden and made a decision. Peter was not prepared for Jesus' arrest because he had slept instead of praying. When it happened, Peter didn't know what to do. He loved Jesus, but he loved his own life more. He had made no decision to live and die for Jesus' sake and the gospel's. He followed at a distance, then he sat down among the enemies of Jesus. When a servant girl recognized him, Peter denied even knowing Jesus. After the first denial, the next two came easily.

2. The Lord's straight look (61-62)

Jesus had told Peter that before the rooster crowed he would deny him three times (34). The rooster crowed, and the Lord looked straight at Peter. It was a look of love that reminded Peter of Jesus' words. It was a look that broke Peter's heart.

Prayer: Lord, help me to accept and remember your word each day; help me to pray until a decision to do your will is in my heart. When I fail, help me to repent.

One Word: Follow Jesus with a decision

JESUS' TESTIMONY BEFORE THE COUNCIL

Luke 22:63-71

Key Verse 22:69,70

1. The soldiers' mockery (63-65)

Jesus did not say anything to the soldiers who beat him and mocked his prophetic office. He was like a lamb led to the slaughter, a sheep silent before her shearers (Isa 53:7).

2. Jesus' testimony (66-71)

But Jesus was not silent before the Council. Most men would have trembled before them. But when they asked Jesus if he were the Christ, he rebuked them for their lack of interest in truth. He could speak boldly because his hope was in the kingdom of heaven. He was confident of victory. When they asked if he were the Son of God, he hid nothing, but freely confessed, "...I am." Jesus is the Christ. He is the Son of Man and the Son of God. He suffered shame and pain and death at the hands of sinful men. But he triumphed because his faith was in the kingdom of God.

Prayer: Lord, help me to have sure and unshakable faith in the kingdom of God, so that I may have your peace in my heart.

One Word: The Christ reigns

PILATE AND HEROD

Luke 23:1-12

Key Verse: 23:2

1. He claims to be Christ, a king (1-5)

Before Pilate the Jewish leaders accused Jesus of sedition. They said that he opposed paying taxes (a lie--see Lk 20:25), and that he claimed to be a king. When Pilate asked him if he were king of the Jews, he said, "Yes." He affirmed his Messiahship and his spiritual kingship. The revolution he proclaimed was spiritual. Pilate knew this, and tried to set him free.

2. Pilate and Herod become friends (6-12)

When Pilate heard that Jesus was from Galilee, he found a chance to dodge responsibility. He sent Jesus to Herod. Herod was bored and tried to make Jesus entertain him. Finally, to mock both Jesus and the Jews, he dressed Jesus in an elegant robe and sent him back to Pilate. Herod and Pilate both knew that the Jews were lying, and neither of them wanted to be responsible for condemning Jesus.

Prayer: Lord, let your revolution take place in me and let your kingdom come in my heart.

One Word: Jesus is my Christ and King

PILATE'S ATTEMPTED COMPROMISE FAILS

Luke 23:13-25

Key Verse: 23:25

1. No basis for charges (13-22)

Pilate examined Jesus in the presence of his accusers and found that their charges had no basis. Then, in order to save himself, he chose the way of compromise. To appease the religious leaders, he offered to punish Jesus anyway, then release him. This was unjust. If Jesus were innocent, he should be released without punishment--because of his innocence, not because of the custom of releasing one prisoner.

2. Handed over to their will (23-25)

The mob, incited by the chief priests, shouted, "Crucify him." They shouted until their will prevailed. Pilate gave in and decided to release a murderer and crucify an innocent man. There is no compromise before the cross. Jesus died in the place of a criminal. He died in my place, and in the place of all sinful people.

Prayer: Lord, I criticize Pilate, but how often I make small compromises. Jesus died for my sins. Lord, forgive me and cleanse me by his blood.

One Word: Jesus died for sinners

ON THE WAY TO THE CROSS

Luke 23:26-31

Key Verse: 23:28

1. Simon of Cyrene (26)

Jesus was physically weak from the cruel abuse he had received. The cross he carried was heavy. Simon, a pilgrim from Cyrene in Africa, was pressed into service. Perhaps he cursed his bad luck. Then he found that his "bad luck" was God's opportunity to the greatest privilege of his whole life--he could carry the cross of the Savior of the world.

2. Weep for yourselves (27-31)

Many people followed the grim procession, weeping. They saw Jesus as a young man, like their sons, and were sorrowful that his life must end so tragically. But Jesus saw how utterly corrupt the world had become because of men's sinful hearts. He would die for the sins of the world; but they must live in a world headed for destruction. They must weep tears of repentance and accept the gospel of forgiveness.

Prayer: Lord, show me my sins so that I may weep tears of repentance and accept your forgiveness.

One Word: Weep for yourselves

FATHER, FORGIVE THEM

Luke 23:32-43

Key Verse: 23:34

1. He did not save himself (32-38)

Jesus did not die for his own sins; he did not even pray for himself. Jesus prayed for those who killed him. The soldiers did not know what they were doing; they only thought of the small

material benefit they could get from his clothes. The people who watched did not know what they were saying when they mocked, "He saved others; let him save himself...." All mankind thoughtlessly contributes to Jesus' death, for Jesus died for all sinners--including those who, in their ignorance, do not take sin seriously. His prayer (34) includes me.

2. Jesus, remember me (39-43)

Jesus hung between two criminals. He took one of them to paradise with him. The other went to hell alone. The one who was saved did not excuse himself nor did he minimize his crimes. He believed that Jesus was Christ the King; he only asked his mercy.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for forgiving my sins. Help me to live as a forgiven sinner, with my hope in your kingdom.

One Word: Father, forgive them

JESUS' DEATH

Luke 23:44-49

Key Verse: 23:46

1. The hour of darkness (44-46)

The sun stopped shining from 12 noon to 3 p.m. on the day Jesus died. The light of life was extinguished by the sins of men. But Jesus did not doubt God's love even in the darkest hour. He committed his spirit to his Father God and breathed his last. The curtain that shut sinful men out from the presence of the Holy God was torn in two. Jesus' shed blood opened the way for sinners to go to God, be forgiven and be born again into his family.

2. The witnesses (47-49)

The centurion was a hardened soldier, and a Gentile--but when he saw what happened he praised God. He testified, "Surely this was a righteous man." Those who had come to mock or to sight-see beat their breasts and went away full of remorse. But those who believed in him watched and waited.

Prayer: Lord, thank you for Jesus who shed his blood on the cross so that the way into your presence might be opened for me and for all sinners.

One Word: Jesus died for me

JESUS WAS BURIED

Luke 23:50-56

Key Verse: 23:53

1. Joseph of Arimathea (50-54)

Joseph was a member of the Sanhedrin, and he was wealthy. But he loved the truth, and he had not consented to the Council's decision to kill Jesus. He put his hope in the kingdom of heaven, not in the things of the world. It took courage to go to Pilate and ask for Jesus' body, for in so doing he identified himself as a follower of Jesus. He personally took the body of Jesus down from the cross, wrapped it in a linen cloth and placed it in a new tomb cut in a rock.

2. Faithful women (55-56)

The women were powerless, but they did not run away. They waited and watched and witnessed Jesus' burial. They loved Jesus to the end and did what they could. They could testify to the fact of Jesus' death and burial. Later, they could testify to the fact of his resurrection from the dead on the third day.

Prayer: Lord, help me to have clear identity as a Christian no matter what the circumstances or the danger might be.

One Word: Be faithful to the end

WHY LOOK FOR THE LIVING AMONG THE DEAD?

Luke 24:1-12

Key Verse: 24:5b,6

1. Why look for the living among the dead?

The women who loved and had followed Jesus wanted to put the spices they had prepared on his dead body. They went to the tomb before dawn Sunday morning with the spices. They found the body gone. 2 angels told them the good news that Jesus had risen, and reminded the women of the basic facts of the gospel--facts which Jesus himself had taught them. Then the women remembered Jesus' words. Resurrection faith must rest on God's word.

2. The Eleven did not believe

Jesus' eleven apostles were still in a state of shock because of the horror and tragedy of the crucifixion. They had forgotten Jesus' words. So the woman's message of good news seemed like nonsense. Peter went to see and found the tomb empty, but he only wondered what had happened. The joy and power of the resurrection can only be catalyzed by faith.

Prayer: Lord, help me to remember Jesus' words and live by his resurrection power.

One Word: Jesus has risen! He is alive!

JESUS EXPLAINS THE SCRIPTURES

Luke 24:13-27

Key Verse: 24:27

1. Jesus walked with them (13-18)

The 2 disciples on the road to Emmaus knew everything about Jesus' life and death. They even knew about the empty tomb. But they did not believe, so when Jesus joined them in their sorrowful walk, they could not recognize him.

2. Jesus taught them the Scriptures (19-27)

First, Jesus listened to them. They told him about Jesus' powerful words and deeds, and how they had put their hope in him to redeem Israel. They told how the religious leaders had handed him over to be crucified, and how the women had discovered the empty tomb and heard the angel's message. Then Jesus rebuked them for their unbelief. He taught them from the Bible the things concerning himself. He began with Genesis and went through all the Prophets. But still they did not recognize him.

Prayer: Lord, when my heart is dull and slow because of my unbelief, come and show me the things concerning yourself in the Bible. Open my heart to your word.

One Word: The Bible tells about Jesus

THE RISEN JESUS BREAKS BREAD

Luke 24:28-35

Key Verse: 24:30,31

1. Stay with us! (28-32)

The two disciples' hearts burned as the Stranger taught them the Bible. He taught them about the Christ. They did not recognize him, but the word of God which he taught moved their hearts. When they arrived at the village, they urged their Bible teacher to come in and stay with them. As they sat around the table, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and gave it to them. Then they recognized him. They remembered other times he had broken bread with them. They felt his love. It was personal and real. As soon as they recognized him, he disappeared from their sight.

2. They found the Eleven (33-35)

They had to go back to Jerusalem. This was not the time for the disciples to return to their old, selfish lives. It was the time to meet the Risen Christ and find out what he wanted them to do.

Prayer: Lord, as I study your word, reveal yourself to me and fill me with your burning love so that I can love others.

One Word: Our hearts burned within us

LOOK AT MY HANDS AND FEET

Luke 24:36-43

Key Verse: 24:39

1. Peace be with you (36)

The Eleven heard the report of the two disciples of Emmaus. They were talking about Jesus when suddenly the Risen Jesus stood among them. He greeted them with the words, "Peace be with you." It was more than a greeting. The Risen Jesus is the only source of real peace.

2. It is I myself (37-43)

They were frightened, for they thought they were seeing a ghost. But the Risen Jesus was real. He showed them his nail-pierced hands and feet. They could touch him. When they still couldn't believe because of joy and amazement, he ate a piece of broiled fish before them. Ghosts don't eat fish. Jesus came to them to give them resurrection faith. The fact of the resurrection is the foundation of the Christian faith. This is our source of hope. These men were called to be witnesses of the resurrection.

Prayer: Lord, I believe that you died and rose for my sins and the sins of the world. Thank you for your peace.

One Word: He is risen indeed

EVERYTHING MUST BE FULFILLED

Luke 24:44-48

Key Verse: 24:45

1. He opened their minds to the Scriptures (44-45)

Jesus had come to teach them the Bible. The fact of his death and his resurrection did not rest on experience alone. It was prophesied in the Scriptures. They needed to study the Bible in order to know the meaning of Jesus' death and resurrection. Jesus opened their minds to understand the Scripture.

2. The Christ must suffer (46-48)

Jesus showed them that the gospel fulfilled all of God's promises. God is faithful. He keeps all of his promises. All of the promises of the Old Testament look forward to Christ. God's great sorrow is man's sin. His purpose and plan throughout history is to deliver mankind from bondage to sin. He sent Jesus to die on the cross for the sins of the world. This good news must be preached to all nations, and Jesus' disciples are the key witnesses to the great salvation work that God has done.

Prayer: Lord, open my mind to understand the scriptures.

One Word: Jesus is the best Bible teacher

JESUS' ASCENSION

Luke 24:49-53

Key Verse: 24:51

1. I will send what the Father promised (49)

Jesus' visit was not just to comfort his disciples. Everything did not end with his death--their task had just begun. Jesus died for all people--but all people didn't know about it. They were to preach repentance and forgiveness of sins to all nations. And he promised to send them the Holy Spirit to empower them. They were to return to Jerusalem and wait until he clothed them with power from on high.

2. He blessed them and left (50-53)

After giving them the world mission command, he took them out to Bethany, lifted up his hands and blessed them. While he was blessing them, he was taken up into heaven. He promised to return in this same way (Acts 1:11). They worshiped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. Jesus' mission and Jesus' blessing bring joy to those who accept and worship him.

Prayer: Lord, today your command comes to me afresh. Give me your Holy Spirit and fill me with joy as I worship you.

One Word: Rejoice to worship Christ