# STUDY GUIDE

# PART 2: THE MINISTRY OF THE SAVIOR

# JESUS: THE SAVIOR OF THE WORLD





#### JESUS: THE SAVIOR OF THE WORLD



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### **AUTHOR**

The Gospel of Luke does not provide the name of its author but there is strong evidence that points to Luke. Luke was a physician and a companion of Paul. He was also the author of the book of Acts. Luke was likely a Gentile convert as we can see from his Greek name and his emphasis on the Gentiles receiving access to the promises of God. He writes from the perspective of a historian and theologian, collecting eyewitness testimonies in order to provide an "orderly account" (Luke 1:4) of the life of Jesus.<sup>1</sup>

#### **AUDIENCE**

The Gospel is addressed to Theophilus (Luke 1:4). From what we can gather he is a person of high social standing who served as a patron, or supporter, of Luke's desire to put together an orderly account of Jesus' life. We do not know where he lived or his nationality, but it is likely that he has had some exposure to the faith. The fact that he needs reassurance points to him being a believer. It is also clear by the way Luke wrote that he knew Theophilus would not be the only reader of this Gospel.<sup>2</sup>

#### **GENRE**

A Gospel is a unique genre because it is both a theology and a history. Its purpose is to instruct and to exhort. It's not an exhaustive account of an individual's life, but it is an account that is ordered and presented with a particular purpose. In Luke's Gospel account, he is focused on how Jesus came to be understood as the risen, exalted King and how the Jewish rejection of Jesus takes place and gives way to Gentile inclusion.<sup>3</sup>

#### DATE

There is strong evidence that Luke and Acts were both written in the early 60s of the 1st century.<sup>4</sup>

#### **PURPOSE**

There seems to be a few purposes behind Luke's desire to write this Gospel<sup>5</sup>:

1. To Provide Certainty: Luke sets out to compile a trustworthy and orderly account of Jesus' life in order to assure his readers of the certainty of what they have been taught. (Luke 1:1-4)

# **INTRODUCTION** (continued)

- 2. To Explain the Jewish Rejection of Jesus and the Gentile Inclusion into the Kingdom of God: Luke seeks to explain that the inclusion of Gentiles into God's covenant promises are in line with God's plan from the beginning, and that Christiantiy is not a new religion but rather it is the fulfillment of the religion of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This emphasis on Gentile inclusion is what makes this Gospel account unique from the others. Luke's overarching purpose is to help his readers understand that the Gospel is for all, both Jews and Gentiles.
- **3. To Provide Clarity on the End Times:** Luke seeks to clarify that Jesus did not teach that his return would come immediately but that there would be a time between his resurrection and his return. As a result, much of Luke's gospel deals with the reality of suffering and rejection that his followers would experience as they await the return of Jesus.

#### STRUCTURE<sup>6</sup>

#### Part I: The Coming of the Savior (Luke 1-4:13)

In this section Luke presents us with the unique births of Jesus and John the Baptist and their maturity into adults. John the Baptist serves as the forerunner to the ministry of Jesus, and he preaches a message of repentance. Repentance involves recognizing your sin and then turning to God and serving others. His ministry of repentance sets the stage and points to Jesus as the one whom humanity must look to in repentance.

#### Part 2: The Ministry of the Savior (Luke 4:14-9:50)

In this section Luke seeks to answer the question: "Who is Jesus?" by highlighting the activity and power that Jesus displays while ministering in Galilee. Jesus' ministry reveals that he has power over nature, demons, diseases, and even death. The authority Jesus displays and the claims Jesus makes during this movement within Luke begin to provide the backdrop for the Jewish opposition to him.

#### Part 3: The Rejection of the Savior (Luke 9:51-19:27)

In this third movement within the Gospel, Luke gives a lot of time to Jesus' teaching on discipleship and the increased opposition that Jesus receives from the Jewish leadership. Jesus, knowing that his journey ends in crucifixion, is focused on training his disciples for life after his death. In the face of Jewish persecution and opposition, Jesus trains his disciples to

persevere in the midst of suffering and rejection. The rejection and suffering that Jesus experiences by the hands of the Jewish leaders is all part of God's divine plan.

#### Part 4: The Vindication of the Savior (Luke 19:28-24:53)

This last section details Jesus' last days in Jerusalem. It includes his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, his sacrificial death, and his victorious resurrection. Jesus' death as an innocent man and his resurrection all point to the realization that he is the promised Messiah.

# LUKE 4:16-30

#### PASSAGE

16 And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read. 17 And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written,

18 "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed,
19 to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

20 And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. 21 And he began to say to them, "Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." 22 And all spoke well of him and marveled at the gracious words that were coming from his mouth. And they said. "Is not this Joseph's son?" 23 And he said to them, "Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, "Physician, heal yourself." What we have heard you did at Capernaum, do here in your hometown as well." 24 And he said, "Truly, I say to you, no prophet is acceptable in his hometown. 25 But in truth, I tell you, there were many widows in Israel in the days of Elijah, when the heavens were shut up three years and six months, and a great famine came over all the land, 26 and Elijah was sent to none of them but only to Zarephath, in the land of Sidon, to a woman who was a widow. 27 And there were many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed, but only Naaman the Syrian." 28 When they heard these things, all in the synagogue were filled with wrath. 29 And they rose up and drove him out of the town and brought him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they could throw him down the cliff. 30 But passing through their midst, he went away. (ESV)

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1. Jesus begins his public ministry by teaching the Scriptures. What does this show us about how Jesus viewed the Scriptures? How does this inform our ministry today?
- 2. How is the gospel good news to people today? How has it specifically been good news to you?
- 3. What expectations do people have of Jesus today that make them skeptical about accepting him as the Messiah?
- 4. Why is God's word often met with rejection? How can you accept God's message humbly?

# LUKE 4:31-37

#### PASSAGE

31 And he went down to Capernaum, a city of Galilee. And he was teaching them on the Sabbath, 32 and they were astonished at his teaching, for his word possessed authority. 33 And in the synagogue there was a man who had the spirit of an unclean demon, and he cried out with a loud voice, 34 "Ha! What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God." 35 But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be silent and come out of him!" And when the demon had thrown him down in their midst, he came out of him, having done him no harm. 36 And they were all amazed and said to one another, "What is this word? For with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits, and they come out!" 37 And reports about him went out into every place in the surrounding region. (ESV)

#### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1. Does it surprise you that the unclean spirit was present in the synagogue? What does this reveal to us about how Satan likes to operate among God's people?
- 2. In this passage we see Jesus' teachings and actions go together. What does this teach us about Jesus?
- 3. How is the demon's confession of who Jesus is different from the confession a Christian makes about Jesus?
- 4. In this passage Jesus demonstrates his authority and power. What should a proper response to Jesus' authority and power be?

# LUKE 4:38-44

#### PASSAGE

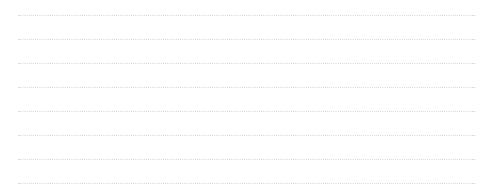
38 And he arose and left the synagogue and entered Simon's house. Now Simon's mother-in-law was ill with a high fever, and they appealed to him on her behalf. 39 And he stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her, and immediately she rose and began to serve them.

40 Now when the sun was setting, all those who had any who were sick with various diseases brought them to him, and he laid his hands on every one of them and healed them. 41 And demons also came out of many, crying, "You are the Son of God!" But he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew that he was the Christ.

42 And when it was day, he departed and went into a desolate place. And the people sought him and came to him, and would have kept him from leaving them, 43 but he said to them, "I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns as well; for I was sent for this purpose." 44 And he was preaching in the synagogues of Judea. (ESV)

#### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1. What does the woman's response to being healed teach us about how we should respond to God's activity in our lives?
- 2. What do we learn about the heart of Jesus in this passage?
- 3. How do you come to grips with the fact that God has the power to heal with the reality of suffering and sickness in our world?
- 4. What was God's purpose in sending Jesus? How does this shape God's purpose for the church?



# LUKE 5:1-11

#### PASSAGE

1 On one occasion, while the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, he was standing by the lake of Gennesaret, 2 and he saw two boats by the lake, but the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. 3 Getting into one of the boats, which was Simon's, he asked him to put out a little from the land. And he sat down and taught the people from the boat. 4 And when he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch." 5 And Simon answered, "Master, we toiled all night and took nothing! But at your word I will let down the nets." 6 And when they had done this, they enclosed a large number of fish, and their nets were breaking. 7 They signaled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both the boats, so that they began to sink. 8 But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Depart from me, for I am a sinful man, O Lord." 9 For he and all who were with him were astonished at the catch of fish that they had taken, 10 and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. And Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching men." 11 And when they had brought their boats to land, they left everything and followed him. (ESV)

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1. What does Peter's response to Jesus' instruction teach us about what it means to follow Jesus?
- 2. What makes Peter qualified to be Jesus' disciple? What qualifications must one have to be a disciple of Jesus today?
- 3. How does seeing Jesus rightly enable us to see ourselves rightly?
- 4. Why is fishing an appropriate metaphor for evangelism? How are they similar and how are they different?



# LUKE 5:12-16

#### PASSAGE

12 While he was in one of the cities, there came a man full of leprosy. And when he saw Jesus, he fell on his face and begged him, "Lord, if you will, you can make me clean." 13 And Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, "I will; be clean." And immediately the leprosy left him. 14 And he charged him to tell no one, but "go and show yourself to the priest, and make an offering for your cleansing, as Moses commanded, for a proof to them." 15 But now even more the report about him went abroad, and great crowds gathered to hear him and to be healed of their infirmities. 16 But he would withdraw to desolate places and pray. (ESV)

#### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1. Do you think the leper questioned Jesus' desire or His power? Which one do you tend to question more?
- 2. How does Jesus' response to the man inform us about our triune God's will? What are some ways we wrongly think about His will for us?
- 3. How much of the leprosy does Jesus cleanse? How should the extent of this miracle affect how we view our own redemption on a day-to-day basis?
- 4. What did the man have to do in order to be cleansed? How should this affect the way we approach God?

# LUKE 5:17-26

#### PASSAGE

17 On one of those days, as he was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting there, who had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was with him to heal. 18 And behold, some men were bringing on a bed a man who was paralyzed, and they were seeking to bring him in and lay him before Jesus, 19 but finding no way to bring him in, because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and let him down with his bed through the tiles into the midst before Jesus. 20 And when he saw their faith. he said, "Man, your sins are forgiven you." 21 And the scribes and the Pharisees began to question, saying, "Who is this who speaks blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but God alone?" 22 When Jesus perceived their thoughts, he answered them, "Why do you question in your hearts? 23 Which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven you,' or to say, 'Rise and walk'? 24 But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—he said to the man who was paralyzed—"I say to you, rise, pick up your bed and go home." 25 And immediately he rose up before them and picked up what he had been lying on and went home, glorifying God. 26 And amazement seized them all, and they glorified God and were filled with awe, saying, "We have seen extraordinary things today." (ESV)

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1. In what ways should the church resemble the paralytic's friends? What kinds of sacrifices might this require?
- 2. Why is it significant that Jesus both forgave sin and healed the physical body?
- 3. Which of Jesus' actions in this passage is most shocking to you? Why?
- 4. Take a few minutes glorifying God for the extraordinary things that you have seen him do, both physically and spiritually.



# LUKE 5:27-32

#### PASSAGE

27 After this he went out and saw a tax collector named Levi, sitting at the tax booth. And he said to him, "Follow me." 28 And leaving everything, he rose and followed him.

29 And Levi made him a great feast in his house, and there was a large company of tax collectors and others reclining at table with them. 30 And the Pharisees and their scribes grumbled at his disciples, saying, "Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?" 31 And Jesus answered them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. 32 I have not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance." (ESV)

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1. How does this encounter change your perception of Jesus' heart for sinners?
- 2. Why do you think Levi responded the way he did? Should everyone respond this way when they encounter the Lord?
- 3. How would you describe the posture of the Pharisees and scribes? What causes people to live this way? How does the gospel transform the way we view and interact with those who are labeled as "sinners"?
- 4. What principles and practices from this passage can we apply in our own efforts to love those outside the church?

# LUKE 5:33-39

#### PASSAGE

33 And they said to him, "The disciples of John fast often and offer prayers, and so do the disciples of the Pharisees, but yours eat and drink." 34 And Jesus said to them, "Can you make wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them? 35 The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast in those days." 36 He also told them a parable: "No one tears a piece from a new garment and puts it on an old garment. If he does, he will tear the new, and the piece from the new will not match the old. 37 And no one puts new wine into old wineskins. If he does, the new wine will burst the skins and it will be spilled, and the skins will be destroyed. 38 But new wine must be put into fresh wineskins. 39 And no one after drinking old wine desires new, for he says, 'The old is good.'" (ESV)

#### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1. Why do you think people resist change?
- 2. What is the purpose of fasting? How does the presence of Jesus reframe how we view spiritual disciplines?
- 3. How does Jesus provide a new way forward, and what is our relationship now with the things of old?
- 4. What are some ways that we attempt to mix the old with the new in a way that is harmful or not beneficial?

# LUKE 6:1-11

#### PASSAGE

1 On a Sabbath, while he was going through the grainfields, his disciples plucked and ate some heads of grain, rubbing them in their hands. 2 But some of the Pharisees said, "Why are you doing what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath?" 3 And Jesus answered them, "Have you not read what David did when he was hungry, he and those who were with him: 4 how he entered the house of God and took and ate the bread of the Presence, which is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and also gave it to those with him?" 5 And he said to them, "The Son of Man is lord of the Sabbath."

6 On another Sabbath, he entered the synagogue and was teaching, and a man was there whose right hand was withered. 7 And the scribes and the Pharisees watched him, to see whether he would heal on the Sabbath, so that they might find a reason to accuse him. 8 But he knew their thoughts, and he said to the man with the withered hand, "Come and stand here." And he rose and stood there. 9 And Jesus said to them, "I ask you, is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to destroy it?" 10 And after looking around at them all he said to him, "Stretch out your hand." And he did so, and his hand was restored. 11 But they were filled with fury and discussed with one another what they might do to Jesus. (ESV)

#### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1. How have you misunderstood the commands of scripture in the past? What made you change your mind?
- 2. What are some religious traditions that create barriers to enjoying Jesus and resting in him?
- 3. How have you seen law get in the way of acting with love and mercy towards others?
- 4. Are you more tempted to legalism or licentiousness when it comes to your relationship with the law?

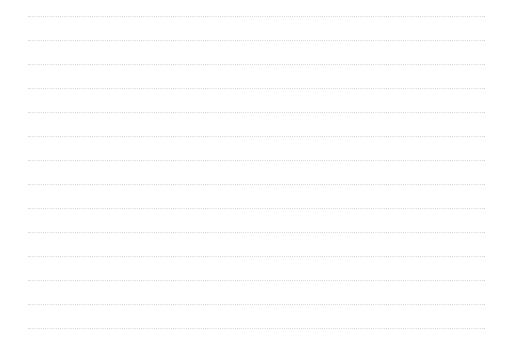
# LUKE 6:12-16

#### PASSAGE

12 In these days he went out to the mountain to pray, and all night he continued in prayer to God. 13 And when day came, he called his disciples and chose from them twelve, whom he named apostles: 14 Simon, whom he named Peter, and Andrew his brother, and James and John, and Philip, and Bartholomew, 15 and Matthew, and Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus, and Simon who was called the Zealot, 16 and Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor. (ESV)

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1. Are you more likely to act and not pray or pray and not act?
- 2. What role does prayer play in your decision making and discipleship?
- 3. Why does Jesus choose to only invest deeply into twelve individuals? How should this inform our discipleship?
- 4. God uses unlikely people to accomplish his purposes. Why do you think this is? How does this encourage you?



# LUKE 6:17-26

#### PASSAGE

17 And he came down with them and stood on a level place, with a great crowd of his disciples and a great multitude of people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon, 18 who came to hear him and to be healed of their diseases. And those who were troubled with unclean spirits were cured. 19 And all the crowd sought to touch him, for power came out from him and healed them all.

20 And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said:

"Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.

21 "Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you shall be satisfied.

"Blessed are you who weep now, for you shall laugh.

22 "Blessed are you when people hate you and when they exclude you and revile you and spurn your name as evil, on account of the Son of Man! 23 Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven; for so their fathers did to the prophets.

24 "But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation.

25 "Woe to you who are full now, for you shall be hungry.

"Woe to you who laugh now, for you shall mourn and weep.

26 "Woe to you, when all people speak well of you, for so their fathers did to the false prophets. (ESV)

# **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1. What portion of the beatitudes provide comfort for you? What portion challenges you?
- 2. How do citizens of God's kingdom view the world differently than citizens of this world?
- 3. Which of the woes distract you from living as a citizen of God's kingdom?
- 4. How do you react to being "different" from the rest of the world because of your identity as a Christian? In which environments do you struggle with this the most?

# LUKE 6:27-38

#### PASSAGE

27 "But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, 28 bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. 29 To one who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also, and from one who takes away your cloak do not withhold your tunic either. 30 Give to everyone who begs from you, and from one who takes away your goods do not demand them back. 31 And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them.

32 "If you love those who love you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. 33 And if you do good to those who do good to you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. 34 And if you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to get back the same amount. 35 But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil. 36 Be merciful, even as your Father is merciful.

37 "Judge not, and you will not be judged; condemn not, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven; 38 give, and it will be given to you. Good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap. For with the measure you use it will be measured back to you." (ESV)

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1. How is Christian love fundamentally different from worldly love?
- 2. How does the gospel free you to love all people unconditionally?
- 3. Of the four illustrations given, which one do you struggle with the most and why?
- 4. Who is someone in your life that you find it hard to love? What is a tangible way you can love him or her this week?

# LUKE 6:39-49

#### PASSAGE

39 He also told them a parable: "Can a blind man lead a blind man? Will they not both fall into a pit? 40 A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher. 41 Why do you see the speck that is in your brother's eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? 42 How can you say to your brother, 'Brother, let me take out the speck that is in your eye,' when you yourself do not see the log that is in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take out the speck that is in your brother's eye.

43 "For no good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit, 44 for each tree is known by its own fruit. For figs are not gathered from thornbushes, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. 45 The good person out of the good treasure of his heart produces good, and the evil person out of his evil treasure produces evil, for out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.

46 "Why do you call me 'Lord, Lord,' and not do what I tell you? 47 Everyone who comes to me and hears my words and does them, I will show you what he is like: 48 he is like a man building a house, who dug deep and laid the foundation on the rock. And when a flood arose, the stream broke against that house and could not shake it, because it had been well built. 49 But the one who hears and does not do them is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation. When the stream broke against it, immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great." (ESV)

#### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1. We all have blindspots in our character. What are some ways that we can be made aware of these blindspots, and how should we respond when they are brought up?
- 2. Why is it our tendency to notice sin in others before we notice our own sin?
- 3. What do our words and actions reveal about our heart? How does the gospel bring about transformation of our words and actions?
- 4. What is the danger in hearing God's word but not acting on it? What are some reasons why you fail to act on God's word?

# LUKE 7:1-10

#### PASSAGE

1 After he had finished all his sayings in the hearing of the people, he entered Capernaum. 2 Now a centurion had a servant who was sick and at the point of death, who was highly valued by him. 3 When the centurion heard about Jesus, he sent to him elders of the Jews, asking him to come and heal his servant. 4 And when they came to Jesus, they pleaded with him earnestly, saying, "He is worthy to have you do this for him, 5 for he loves our nation, and he is the one who built us our synagogue." 6 And Jesus went with them. When he was not far from the house, the centurion sent friends, saying to him, "Lord, do not trouble yourself, for I am not worthy to have you come under my roof. 7 Therefore I did not presume to come to you. But say the word, and let my servant be healed. 8 For I too am a man set under authority, with soldiers under me: and I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it." 9 When Jesus heard these things, he marveled at him, and turning to the crowd that followed him, said, "I tell you, not even in Israel have I found such faith." 10 And when those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the servant well. (ESV)

#### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1. How do you respond to "interruptions" in your life? Evaluate how you are creating space to help meet the needs of others.
- 2. Reflect on how your co-workers, family members and friends might describe you. What are some practical ways you can grow in Christ-likeness towards them?
- 3. Do you have any prayer requests that you doubt God is powerful enough to answer?
- 4. Why does Jesus speak highly of the centurion? What does this teach us about what Jesus values?



# LUKE 7:11-17

#### PASSAGE

11 Soon afterward he went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a great crowd went with him. 12 As he drew near to the gate of the town, behold, a man who had died was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow, and a considerable crowd from the town was with her. 13 And when the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her and said to her, "Do not weep." 14 Then he came up and touched the bier, and the bearers stood still. And he said, "Young man, I say to you, arise." 15 And the dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother. 16 Fear seized them all, and they glorified God, saying, "A great prophet has arisen among us!" and "God has visited his people!" 17 And this report about him spread through the whole of Judea and all the surrounding country. (ESV)

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1. Share about a time when you experienced deep grief. How did you experience the compassion of Jesus during that time?
- 2. Why are we tempted to believe that God doesn't see us or care about us when we experience suffering?
- 3. What is the relationship between fearing God and worshiping God?
- 4. What does this passage teach us about how we should respond to encounters with Christ and his word?

# LUKE 7:18-28

#### PASSAGE

18 The disciples of John reported all these things to him. And John, 19 calling two of his disciples to him, sent them to the Lord, saying, "Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?" 20 And when the men had come to him, they said, "John the Baptist has sent us to you, saying, 'Are you the one who is to come, or shall we look for another?" 21 In that hour he healed many people of diseases and plagues and evil spirits, and on many who were blind he bestowed sight. 22 And he answered them, "Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, the poor have good news preached to them. 23 And blessed is the one who is not offended by me."

24 When John's messengers had gone, Jesus began to speak to the crowds concerning John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? 25 What then did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft clothing? Behold, those who are dressed in splendid clothing and live in luxury are in kings' courts. 26 What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. 27 This is he of whom it is written,

"'Behold, I send my messenger before your face, who will prepare your way before you.'

28 I tell you, among those born of women none is greater than John. Yet the one who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he." (ESV)

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1. Have you ever struggled with doubt? How did you handle it?
- 2. How does this passage create freedom for us to bring our questions to Christ? How does Jesus' response affect how we help others wrestle through their questions?
- 3. How is John the Baptist's ministry different from Jesus'? Are there aspects of John's ministry that you would like to model your ministry after?
- 4. John the Baptist was widely popular and successful as a prophet, yet Jesus says that the least in the Kingdom of God are considered greater than he. Why is this the case, and how does this reality reframe how you view other Christians?

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# LUKE 7:29-35

### PASSAGE

29 (When all the people heard this, and the tax collectors too, they declared God just, having been baptized with the baptism of John, 30 but the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected the purpose of God for themselves, not having been baptized by him.)

31 "To what then shall I compare the people of this generation, and what are they like? 32 They are like children sitting in the marketplace and calling to one another,

"We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not weep.'

33 For John the Baptist has come eating no bread and drinking no wine, and you say, 'He has a demon.' 34 The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, 'Look at him! A glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' 35 Yet wisdom is justified by all her children." (ESV)

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1. Do you tend towards elevating or being overly critical towards spiritual leaders?
- 2. The posture of your heart determines your receptiveness to truth and correction. What is your heart posture towards God's Word right now?
- 3. What are the easiest areas of your life to become critical and demanding? Where are you prone to be critical when it comes to the church?
- 4. How should we interact with people who are resolved to reject Jesus' message?

# LUKE 7:36-50

### PASSAGE

36 One of the Pharisees asked him to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee's house and reclined at table. 37 And behold, a woman of the city, who was a sinner, when she learned that he was reclining at table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of ointment, 38 and standing behind him at his feet, weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head and kissed his feet and anointed them with the ointment. 39 Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him, for she is a sinner." 40 And Jesus answering said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." And he answered, "Say it, Teacher."

41 "A certain moneylender had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. 42 When they could not pay, he cancelled the debt of both. Now which of them will love him more?" 43 Simon answered, "The one, I suppose, for whom he cancelled the larger debt." And he said to him, "You have judged rightly." 44 Then turning toward the woman he said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. 45 You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not ceased to kiss my feet. 46 You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. 47 Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven—for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little, loves little." 48 And he said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." 49 Then those who were at table with him began to say among themselves, "Who is this, who even forgives sins?" 50 And he said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace." (ESV)

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1. Do you tend to treat Jesus like Simon or the woman?
- 2. The forgiveness of the sinful women reminds us that God forgives those who confess and believe. Are you willing to admit your own sinfulness, or is it hard for you?
- 3. What are some choices that you have made as a result of being forgiven by Jesus?
- 4. Do you find it hard to forgive others? How does understanding your own forgiveness help you offer forgiveness to others?

# LUKE 8:1-3

#### PASSAGE

1 Soon afterward he went on through cities and villages, proclaiming and bringing the good news of the kingdom of God. And the twelve were with him, 2 and also some women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary, called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, 3 and Joanna, the wife of Chuza, Herod's household manager, and Susanna, and many others, who provided for them out of their means. (ESV)

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1. What are some common views that people have of women in today's culture?
- 2. How does this passage help you understand Jesus' view of women? How is this countercultural both then and now?
- 3. How can the example of these women help us think about how to be generous with our finances?
- 4. Each woman loved much because they had received much from Jesus. What specific blessings have you received from Jesus? Share and praise God together for how he has worked in your life.

## LUKE 8:4-15

### PASSAGE

4 And when a great crowd was gathering and people from town after town came to him, he said in a parable, 5 "A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell along the path and was trampled underfoot, and the birds of the air devoured it. 6 And some fell on the rock, and as it grew up, it withered away, because it had no moisture. 7 And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up with it and choked it. 8 And some fell into good soil and grew and yielded a hundredfold." As he said these things, he called out, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

9 And when his disciples asked him what this parable meant, 10 he said, "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God, but for others they are in parables, so that 'seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.' 11 Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. 12 The ones along the path are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved. 13 And the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy. But these have no root; they believe for a while, and in time of testing fall away. 14 And as for what fell among the thorns, they are those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life, and their fruit does not mature. 15 As for that in the good soil, they are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patience. (ESV)

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1. Share about a time when you shared the Word of God with someone and it either fell on good soil or bad soil.
- 2. Who is someone you can share the gospel with this week and trust God to work in their lives?
- 3. What are some factors in your life that prevent the Word of God from taking root?
- 4. What are some ways that we as a community can help each other stay receptive to the Word of God?

# LUKE 8:16-21

#### PASSAGE

16 "No one after lighting a lamp covers it with a jar or puts it under a bed, but puts it on a stand, so that those who enter may see the light. 17 For nothing is hidden that will not be made manifest, nor is anything secret that will not be known and come to light. 18 Take care then how you hear, for to the one who has, more will be given, and from the one who has not, even what he thinks that he has will be taken away."

19 Then his mother and his brothers came to him, but they could not reach him because of the crowd. 20 And he was told, "Your mother and your brothers are standing outside, desiring to see you." 21 But he answered them, "My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it." (ESV)

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1. Why is Jesus' message described as a light? What does this teach us about the purpose of God's Word?
- 2. How does it make you feel that everything in your life will be brought to light?
- 3. Which portions of Scripture do you struggle to hear and respond to the most?
- 4. How does Jesus redefine family? How might Jesus' definition of family reframe what it looks like to live out our faith in community?

# LUKE 8:22-25

#### PASSAGE

22 One day he got into a boat with his disciples, and he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side of the lake." So they set out, 23 and as they sailed he fell asleep. And a windstorm came down on the lake, and they were filling with water and were in danger. 24 And they went and woke him, saying, "Master, Master, we are perishing!" And he awoke and rebuked the wind and the raging waves, and they ceased, and there was a calm. 25 He said to them, "Where is your faith?" And they were afraid, and they marveled, saying to one another, "Who then is this, that he commands even winds and water, and they obey him?" (ESV)

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1. Why do storms show up as we follow Jesus?
- 2. What does it look like to trust God in the midst of a storm? Is there a storm in your life currently that our "spiritual family" can support you in?
- 3. What characteristics of God provide you with comfort and stability when you encounter a storm?
- 4. What does it look like to exercise faith when you are afraid?

## LUKE 8:26-39

#### PASSAGE

26 Then they sailed to the country of the Gerasenes, which is opposite Galilee. 27 When Jesus had stepped out on land, there met him a man from the city who had demons. For a long time he had worn no clothes, and he had not lived in a house but among the tombs. 28 When he saw Jesus, he cried out and fell down before him and said with a loud voice, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg you, do not torment me." 29 For he had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. (For many a time it had seized him. He was kept under guard and bound with chains and shackles, but he would break the bonds and be driven by the demon into the desert.) 30 Jesus then asked him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Legion," for many demons had entered him. 31 And they begged him not to command them to depart into the abyss. 32 Now a large herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside, and they begged him to let them enter these. So he gave them permission. 33 Then the demons came out of the man and entered the pigs, and the herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and drowned.

34 When the herdsmen saw what had happened, they fled and told it in the city and in the country. 35 Then people went out to see what had happened, and they came to Jesus and found the man from whom the demons had gone, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind, and they were afraid. 36 And those who had seen it told them how the demon-possessed man had been healed. 37 Then all the people of the surrounding country of the Gerasenes asked him to depart from them, for they were seized with great fear. So he got into the boat and returned. 38 The man from whom the demons had gone begged that he might be with him, but Jesus sent him away, saying, 39 "Return to your home, and declare how much God has done for you." And he went away, proclaiming throughout the whole city how much Jesus had done for him. (ESV)

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1. Where are you trusting God for transformation in your life currently?
- 2. How are demonic forces at work in our world today?
- 3. Has there been a time when people were put off by Jesus working in your life like the townspeople were?
- 4. How has Jesus transformed your life? Who is someone this week that you can share your transformation story with?

## LUKE 8:40-56

#### PASSAGE

40 Now when Jesus returned, the crowd welcomed him, for they were all waiting for him. 41 And there came a man named Jairus, who was a ruler of the synagogue. And falling at Jesus' feet, he implored him to come to his house, 42 for he had an only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she was dying.

As Jesus went, the people pressed around him. 43 And there was a woman who had had a discharge of blood for twelve years, and though she had spent all her living on physicians, she could not be healed by anyone. 44 She came up behind him and touched the fringe of his garment, and immediately her discharge of blood ceased. 45 And Jesus said, "Who was it that touched me?" When all denied it, Peter said, "Master, the crowds surround you and are pressing in on you!" 46 But Jesus said, "Someone touched me, for I perceive that power has gone out from me." 47 And when the woman saw that she was not hidden, she came trembling, and falling down before him declared in the presence of all the people why she had touched him, and how she had been immediately healed. 48 And he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace."

49 While he was still speaking, someone from the ruler's house came and said, "Your daughter is dead; do not trouble the Teacher any more." 50 But Jesus on hearing this answered him, "Do not fear; only believe, and she will be well." 51 And when he came to the house, he allowed no one to enter with him, except Peter and John and James, and the father and mother of the child. 52 And all were weeping and mourning for her, but he said, "Do not weep, for she is not dead but sleeping." 53 And they laughed at him, knowing that she was dead. 54 But taking her by the hand he called, saying, "Child, arise." 55 And her spirit returned, and she got up at once. And he directed that something should be given her to eat. 56 And her parents were amazed, but he charged them to tell no one what had happened. (ESV)

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1. How do you respond when you are interrupted in the middle of something important? How can Jesus' response shape the way we view interruptions in the future?
- 2. What prevents you from reaching out toward Jesus with expectant faith?
- 3. Has there been a time that a miracle in someone else's life strengthened your faith?
- 4. If you could pray for a miracle to happen in your life, what would it be and why?

# LUKE 9:1-9

#### PASSAGE

1 And he called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases, 2 and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal. 3 And he said to them, "Take nothing for your journey, no staff, nor bag, nor bread, nor money; and do not have two tunics. 4 And whatever house you enter, stay there, and from there depart. 5 And wherever they do not receive you, when you leave that town shake off the dust from your feet as a testimony against them." 6 And they departed and went through the villages, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere.

7 Now Herod the tetrarch heard about all that was happening, and he was perplexed, because it was said by some that John had been raised from the dead, 8 by some that Elijah had appeared, and by others that one of the prophets of old had risen. 9 Herod said, "John I beheaded, but who is this about whom I hear such things?" And he sought to see him. (ESV)

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1. What is your biggest hurdle or barrier to proclaiming the gospel more consistently?
- 2. Why should word ministry (proclaiming the gospel) and mercy ministry (healing the sick) go hand in hand?
- 3. What does it look like to depend on God's provision and power as we live on mission?
- 4. How do you respond when people ridicule you or don't accept your faith?

# LUKE 9:10-17

#### PASSAGE

10 On their return the apostles told him all that they had done. And he took them and withdrew apart to a town called Bethsaida. 11 When the crowds learned it, they followed him, and he welcomed them and spoke to them of the kingdom of God and cured those who had need of healing. 12 Now the day began to wear away, and the twelve came and said to him, "Send the crowd away to go into the surrounding villages and countryside to find lodging and get provisions, for we are here in a desolate place." 13 But he said to them, "You give them something to eat." They said, "We have no more than five loaves and two fish—unless we are to go and buy food for all these people." 14 For there were about five thousand men. And he said to his disciples, "Have them sit down in groups of about fifty each." 15 And they did so, and had them all sit down. 16 And taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing over them. Then he broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples to set before the crowd. 17 And they all ate and were satisfied. And what was left over was picked up, twelve baskets of broken pieces. (ESV)

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1. How do you often respond to needy people?
- 2. What were the disciples focusing on that influenced their decision making? Why is it easy to let big circumstances cloud our vision of a big God?
- 3. How do you think the disciples' faith was strengthened through this miracle of multiplying fish and bread? What is one thing you have seen God do in the past that strengthens your faith to trust Him in the future?
- 4. Jesus provided physically for the needs of the people, and they were left satisfied. How does this portray what Jesus offers to us spiritually? How has following Jesus satisfied your hunger?



## LUKE 9:18-22

#### PASSAGE

18 Now it happened that as he was praying alone, the disciples were with him. And he asked them, "Who do the crowds say that I am?" 19 And they answered, "John the Baptist. But others say, Elijah, and others, that one of the prophets of old has risen." 20 Then he said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" And Peter answered, "The Christ of God."

21 And he strictly charged and commanded them to tell this to no one, 22 saying, "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised." (ESV)

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1. Jesus made it a regular practice to pray alone. Is this a spiritual practice you prioritize?
- 2. What does it look like to include others in your spiritual disciplines as a way of making disciples?
- 3. Who do you say Jesus is? What are some ways people would answer this question today?
- 4. Why is it necessary for Jesus to suffer, die, and be risen from the dead?

# LUKE 9:23-27

#### PASSAGE

23 And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. 24 For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. 25 For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself? 26 For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels. 27 But I tell you truly, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God." (ESV)

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1. How is Jesus' message of self-denial countercultural in our current day and age?
- 2. What area of your life do you find it hardest to carry your cross? How can we help you as a community?
- 3. When are you most tempted to feel ashamed of Jesus? Why do you think this is?
- 4. Why is it worth it to follow Jesus?

## LUKE 9:28-36

#### PASSAGE

28 Now about eight days after these sayings he took with him Peter and John and James and went up on the mountain to pray. 29 And as he was praying, the appearance of his face was altered, and his clothing became dazzling white. 30 And behold, two men were talking with him, Moses and Elijah, 31 who appeared in glory and spoke of his departure, which he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. 32 Now Peter and those who were with him were heavy with sleep, but when they became fully awake they saw his glory and the two men who stood with him. 33 And as the men were parting from him, Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good that we are here. Let us make three tents, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah"—not knowing what he said. 34 As he was saying these things, a cloud came and overshadowed them, and they were afraid as they entered the cloud. 35 And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is my Son, my Chosen One; listen to him!" 36 And when the voice had spoken, Jesus was found alone. And they kept silent and told no one in those days anything of what they had seen. (ESV)

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1. What are some challenges you face when it comes to prayer?
- 2. Jesus represents the hope and fulfillment of all of Israel's waiting. How has Jesus brought hope to your life?
- 3. Share about a time when you thought you had a great idea and then proceeded to tell Jesus what you thought was best.
- 4. Where are you prone to listen to yourself or your instincts instead of God's Word? How can you listen to Jesus right now in situations you are facing?

## LUKE 9:37-45

#### PASSAGE

37 On the next day, when they had come down from the mountain, a great crowd met him. 38 And behold, a man from the crowd cried out, "Teacher, I beg you to look at my son, for he is my only child. 39 And behold, a spirit seizes him, and he suddenly cries out. It convulses him so that he foams at the mouth, and shatters him, and will hardly leave him. 40 And I begged your disciples to cast it out, but they could not." 41 Jesus answered, "O faithless and twisted generation, how long am I to be with you and bear with you? Bring your son here." 42 While he was coming, the demon threw him to the ground and convulsed him. But Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit and healed the boy, and gave him back to his father. 43 And all were astonished at the majesty of God.

But while they were all marveling at everything he was doing, Jesus said to his disciples, 44 "Let these words sink into your ears: The Son of Man is about to be delivered into the hands of men." 45 But they did not understand this saying, and it was concealed from them, so that they might not perceive it. And they were afraid to ask him about this saying. (ESV)

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1. If you could ask Jesus to answer one prayer, what would it be?
- 2. Have you ever felt helpless? How did this period in your life strengthen your faith and dependence on God?
- 3. Has God ever led you down an unknown path where you had to trust his plan even when it scared you and didn't make sense to you?
- 4. What questions are you afraid to ask Jesus?



## LUKE 9:46-50

#### PASSAGE

46 An argument arose among them as to which of them was the greatest. 47 But Jesus, knowing the reasoning of their hearts, took a child and put him by his side 48 and said to them, "Whoever receives this child in my name receives me, and whoever receives me receives him who sent me. For he who is least among you all is the one who is great."

49 John answered, "Master, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he does not follow with us." 50 But Jesus said to him, "Do not stop him, for the one who is not against you is for you." (ESV)

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

- 1. In what areas are you tempted to strive to be "the greatest"?
- 2. How does this passage form how we see the dignity in all people?
- 3. Do you struggle to give thanks for successful ministries outside of the one you are involved in? Why do you think this is?
- 4. How can competition be unhealthy in a church? How can it be healthy?

# REFERENCES

#### **INTRODUCTION**

<sup>1</sup>Darrell Bock, *NIV Application Commentary: Luke*, pg.19 <sup>2</sup>R.T France, *Teach the Text: Luke*, pg.1 <sup>3</sup>Darrell Bock, pg.20 <sup>4</sup>Michael Wilock, *The Message of Luke*, pg.1 <sup>5</sup>*ESV Study Bible*, pg.1937 <sup>6</sup>Darrell Bock, pg.23-25

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