

(Luke)01 - Introduction

by Ed Miller

In this introduction to the Gospel of Luke, Ed Miller emphasizes the importance of understanding Luke's unique presentation of Christ and the connections it makes within the Bible.

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Topics: "Gospel Of Luke", "Jesus Christ"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of focusing on Jesus and his different aspects as presented in the four gospels. He argues against the idea of creating a harmony of the gospels, stating that God wants us to see Jesus from different perspectives. The speaker uses the analogy of a father showing pictures of his son in different roles to illustrate this point. He encourages the audience to study the Gospel of Luke specifically, highlighting the distinctive way Luke presents Jesus.

Transcript

Thank you so much for the Holy Spirit in our hearts, whoever turns us unto you. We thank you for the revelation of Christ. We know that only as we see the Lord will we ever be really changed in our character and made like Jesus.

And so we do ask for that vision. We know your people perish for lack of vision. Give us eyes to behold him.

Take the veil away, we pray. We thank you for every part of the Bible, but this fall as we meet together, we thank you in a special way for the gospel of Luke. We pray that you would burn the revelation of Christ in Luke deeply in our hearts.

To this end, we give our Bible study unto thee, and we thank you that you're going to be with us and guide us. Minister unto our hearts. You have promised no word that goes forth out of your mouth would return void.

You have never promised that the words that come out of my mouth would not return void. We see the necessity for you to speak, and so anoint, I pray, me as a speaker. Anoint, I pray, all of our ears as listeners.

And then may your Holy Spirit speak to us. To this end, we give our study to thee, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, amen. I see everyone here so far has been here before.

I say that because we were expecting, we got some calls through the summer, and so we thought there might be some new ones, but perhaps some new ones listening by tape. So though you have already heard this, let me say by way of introduction some preliminary comments that you already know, but at least those listening by tape will understand. You know in our Bible studies that we're going to, I think it's been announced that we're going to look at the Gospel of Luke, and I pray when you're finished, you'll know more about Luke than you know now.

I hope you learn a lot about the message of the book, and the book and the man, and so on. But we are not studying the Gospel of Luke to know the Gospel of Luke. We're studying the Gospel of Luke to know the Lord.

God has given us every part of his Bible in order that we might behold the Lord. So we're going to look at Luke and use the Gospel of Luke as a window, but our hearts are going to be ever focused toward the Lord. Every book in the Bible presents the Lord in a unique way, and we need that distinctive revelation of Christ, and so that's what we're going to look at.

We want to see Jesus as Luke presents him, and we're going to trust the Lord for that. So that's the first thing, understand why we've gathered. We've gathered to know the Lord together.

And then the second thing, for those that have sat under our teaching, you understand that we also stress life principles, practical life principles. I'm not going to spend a lot of time on speculation. I don't know if you've read any background material on Luke, but there's so much, just human wisdom and guesses.

Where did Luke get the sources for his book? Did he use Mark? Did he use Matthew? Did he use something else? Where was he when he wrote the book? And so on. When did he die? We don't know all of that, and quite honestly, it's not that important. I don't want to waste your time with that.

Those pieces of scholarship that would tend to make us know Jesus better, I'll stress those. But those speculations that people just guess at, I'm not going to be dealing with any of those kinds of things. We're studying Luke as a meal, not as a recipe to eat.

We're here to feed our souls and to know the Lord, and so if studying together helps us know the Lord and honor the Lord and love the Lord and want to worship the Lord and please the Lord, then we've gathered, not in vain. That's the purpose of our gathering. So we'll be stressing those principles alive.

And then one more thing that I think you are aware of, but I'll just mention it again. I'm not one of those teachers that really gets down into the detail. I use an excuse that, you know, we don't have time, I'll skip over that.

The fact is, I'm not qualified to go into those details. Some of those things make my head swim. And so we'll just look at the general overview of the book.

Some people go chapter by chapter and verse by verse and word by word, and then they break the words down. And there's a place for that. I'm not condemning that at all.

That's a wonderful thing to do. But in our study, we're going to have an overview, sort of fly over the whole thing, maybe pick up section by section in order to see how it all ties in to the revelation of Christ. So not much by way of introduction, we're here to know Jesus, we're here to find great principles of life, and our approach is going to be sort of a general approach, how does he lay out these great sections to point us to

the Lord.

So that brings us to Luke, and I'll ask you to open, please, to chapter 1. Our introduction studies are different than our week-by-week studies. In our week-by-week studies, though we don't go in great detail, we do go in order. We go to chapter 1, and then we don't jump to chapter 15, we go to chapter 2, and then chapter 3, we take the segments in order.

But in the introduction lesson, we fly over the entire book, and sort of an aerial view, and we don't have one text, we're just sort of getting a taste for the book as a whole. And so I want to give you a couple of principles, how we'll approach Luke, and then we'll go into the gospel itself. Of course, you can expect that I want to home in on the distinctive characteristic, the distinctive revelation of our Lord Jesus Christ.

What I mean by that is Luke is not Matthew, and Luke is not Mark, and Luke is not John. Matthew presents Jesus one way, Mark presents him another way, John presents him another way, and Luke presents him another way. And so we want to see, how does Luke present Jesus? And so we'll be sort of all over, no one text, we'll fly through the whole book.

And then, if God uses this introduction as I've prayed he would, then God will create a thirst in your heart tonight, to study the gospel of Luke. And I'm praying that he'll create a thirst in my heart, he's already begun to do that, to study the gospel of Luke, and to receive Christ as the Holy Spirit proposes him in the gospel of Luke. I hope when we're all done, you say, I can't wait to get into that book.

The reality is, in order to set this marvelous book before your heart, we're actually going to have two introduction studies. So tonight I'm going to introduce it, next week I'm going to introduce it, and then Lord willing, we can begin the book. So let's look at this book.

When you turn to the gospel of Luke, you opened your Bible to the third book in the New Testament, the gospel of Luke. And I don't have a problem that it belongs in the third slot. I hope you agree with me on this, I don't think I can prove it, I just happen to believe that every book in the Bible is in its rightful place, that God has providentially overseen the canon of scripture.

And there's a message. In other words, I need to see Jesus as Matthew presents him, then I need to see him as Mark presents him, and that's going to help me see Jesus as Luke presents him. It's in the order of salvation.

And to fully appreciate Christ as Luke presents him, it would have been better if we started with Matthew and Mark. I think we can step over that and trust the Lord to meet with us anywhere. Let me show you how Luke is, first of all, a unifying book.

Luke is a unifying book, it's a connector. It glues things together. And here's three things it glues together.

It glues together the Old Testament with the New Testament. More than Matthew, more than John, more than Mark. It's the connecting link between the two Testaments.

And then it connects Luke, the Gospel of Luke, with the Book of Acts. And by connecting Luke and Acts, you know, Luke wrote Acts too, and so by connecting Luke and Acts, you're actually connecting the Jews and the Church and the Gentiles. That's a tremendous connection, the ministry that Jesus had on the earth and the ministry he carries on now through his Church.

And so we need to see that connection as well. As you know, your Old Testament ends with the Book of Malachi. I have one brother that calls those the Malachi papers.

They're not the Malachi papers, it's the Book of Malachi. Micah the prophet made this prophecy. Chapter 3, he said there would be a dark night that would fall upon the people of God.

There would be no vision, no dream, no prophecy, no oracle, no word from God. Now, theologians have come to call that the 400 silent years. In other words, between the Old Testament we're in, Malachi, and the New Testament, in between that, there's 400 years and God was silent.

He did not speak. He never talked to a prophet, no light, no, it was just blackness, it was darkness, it was silence, God was not speaking. Now, wouldn't you expect if God didn't speak for 400 years, and then after 400 long years he said something, wouldn't you say, that's important, I want to know what did he say when he broke that awful silence? And wouldn't you expect to find that in the Book of Matthew? He said, there's Malachi, and for 400 years God said nothing, and now we come to Matthew.

What did God say? You don't find it in Matthew, and you don't find it in Mark. God spoke, and when he broke that 400 years, he put it in Luke. And that's what I mean when I say Luke connects the Testaments together.

For the sake of salvation, Matthew and Mark come first, but if you're going to understand Luke, you've got to see him as this connecting link between the Testaments. Now, I'm not going to steal my own thunder. When we come to Luke chapter 1, I'll show you what he said and how he broke the silence and what a tremendous thing that was.

But I'll just leave it there and let you know that it's Luke that connects the Old Testament. Just so, it also connects the Book of Acts. Follow along, please, as I read from chapter 1 of Luke.

And then put your finger in Acts chapter 1, I want to read a verse there, too. Luke chapter 1, verses 1 to 4, Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile an account of the things accomplished among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, have handed them down to us, it seemed fitting for me as well, having investigated everything carefully from the beginning, to write it out for you in consecutive order, most excellent Theophilus, so that you might know the exact truth about the things you have been taught. And that's how Luke begins.

He said, I'm not an eyewitness, but there were eyewitnesses that saw Jesus. I never saw him, Luke said, but there were those that saw him. And I've gathered together all the materials, I'm going to write it in order.

And then he addresses Theophilus, that he might be certain of what he'd heard. Now look at Acts 1, if you would, chapter 1, verse 1. The first account I composed, now see, what's the first account? That's the gospel of Luke. That's what he wrote first, he said the first letter, I composed Theophilus about all that Jesus began to do and teach, until the day was taken up.

And that's how Luke ends, the gospel of Luke, the day he was taken up. When you come to the end of Luke, he's gone up, and his hands are outstretched in priestly benediction, and he goes up that way. And so Acts is part two of Luke.

Luke did not write two books. Luke wrote one book, in two parts. It's the same book.

And if you're going to understand the book of Acts, you need to understand the gospel of Luke, because the message of Luke goes all the way to the end of Acts. You see, he said the first gospel was of all that Jesus began to do and teach. What's Acts about? All that Jesus continues to do and teach.

In Luke, he did it when he was on earth. In Acts, he's doing it from heaven. It's the same Jesus.

And so Luke divided his book into two parts, and he said, let me show you what Jesus did and taught when he was on earth. And then he went to heaven, and he said, I've got something to show you, let me show you how he's doing it still through the church, by the Holy Spirit. And you're not going to appreciate the gospel of Luke if you don't connect it to the book of Acts.

And we're going to do that as we go through the book, but it's a connecting book. It's a unifying book. And there's one message.

When Luke began the gospel of Luke, he began not where Matthew begins in Bethlehem. He began in Jerusalem, because he's going to take you from the Jews to the Gentiles. He's going to take you from Israel to the church.

He's going to take you right into the age of the church and the Holy Spirit. And so he starts at the Holy City, and he keeps moving and moving and moving and moving, and he goes to the cross. He rises, he goes to heaven.

Now where does Acts begin? It begins in the Holy City. And he starts in Jerusalem, and he moves and he moves and he moves, and he goes from Jerusalem to Samaria, he goes into Europe and into Antioch and all of those places until he ends in Rome, the capital of the Gentile world. And so he takes you from Jerusalem to Rome.

The beginning of Luke is Jerusalem. The end of Acts is Rome. And he's taking the gospel from the Jews, and he gives it to the church, and the church takes it to the ends of the world.

It's one book. And so it's a connecting book, and we need to see that. Acts begins where the gospel of Luke ends, and then it takes you to the uttermost parts of the earth.

You'll see that as we go along, what a connector the book of Luke is. As far as the man Luke is concerned, we don't have everything we know is in the Bible. There's a lot of people that make guesses and so on.

There are four references. You might want to jot these down. Colossians talks about Luke.

2 Timothy mentions Luke. Philemon mentions Luke. And of course he's in the book of Acts, in the we passages.

Every time he says we went here, we went there, because he's the author. He's talking about himself. What do we learn from 2 Timothy 4.11? The only thing we learn about Luke from 2 Timothy 4.11 was that he was Paul's loyal friend to the end.

See, Luke traveled with Paul on his second missionary journey, and on his third missionary journey. And Luke was brilliant. He was a secretary.

So who's taking notes? Luke. Luke took notes every place they went. Luke describes where they went.

So when they got shipwrecked, remember that? When Paul got shipwrecked? You know someone else that was in the water beside Paul? Luke. Luke was with him to the end. And then when he's in prison in Rome, he said everybody's gone, only Luke's still with me.

Luke is there, Luke's still here. And there's good evidence to believe that Luke stayed with him until he was martyred. So Luke, what we learn about Luke from Timothy is that he is a faithful friend of Paul.

What we learn from Luke from Philemon, Philemon 24, he's called a fellow laborer. And so all we really know there is that Luke was a servant of the Lord. He's a fellow laborer.

He's a servant of the Lord. What do we learn from Colossians? Two things. From Colossians 4.14, he's called the beloved physician.

He was a medical doctor. And we know that from the book of Colossians. We also know from Colossians 4.11 this detail.

Colossians 4.11 begins to name men. And he says, we've got men from the circumcision who are here. And he begins to name these Jewish names.

And then he says, Luke is also with us. Which means he wasn't a Jew. Luke was not a Jew.

He was a Gentile, probably a Greek. Theophilus is a Greek name. He wrote to a Greek.

And it's believed that he was a Greek. What that means is this is the only Gentile writer in your Bible. And isn't it an amazing thing that God would choose a Gentile writer to take the gospel to the Gentiles, to take the gospel to the ends of the earth.

And so we know this is the non-Jewish writer. One thing that makes this amazing is if I were to ask this question, on the level of earth, I don't mean the Holy Spirit, because that's the big answer. Who wrote most of the New Testament? Almost everyone would say Paul.

Luke wrote most of the New Testament. If you add the words in Luke and Acts together, you have more than adding together everything that the Apostle Paul wrote, all his epistles added together. So Luke is the one that we're going to study.

And he's the most voluminous, is that the word? I don't know how to say it. He's the most prolific writer. He wrote one-fourth of the New Testament.

And some would think it's Paul or John, but it's Luke. So that's what we know. We know he was Paul's loyal friend, his secretary, his doctor, his buddy.

We know he was a servant of the Lord. We know he was a non-Jew. He was a Gentile.

We know he was a doctor. And we know since he wrote Acts, there's 1,007 verses in Acts, and 315 of them talk about we. We know that when Luke says, we went here and we went there and we did this, that he's accompanying the Apostle Paul.

That's what we know for sure. You say, what else do we know? Do we know anything? Well, yes, we know he was smart. We know this man was a scholar.

He was brilliant, not only because of what he said in the first verse of his book, that I've investigated thoroughly. In the Greek word, he said, I've turned over every stone. Not only that, but he is rich in linguistics.

Now, I don't know Greek. I praise God I've got some books that tell me in English what these Greek scholars have understood. But those who know Greek say, the finest Greek in the New Testament comes from the pen of Luke.

Perfect Greek, especially in the introduction, in those first verses of Luke, that's absolutely perfect Greek. Anyone who knows Greek has studied Luke. He is amazing.

Now, you can tell how smart somebody is usually by their vocabulary. You know, people throw around 50-cent words and you have to have a dictionary to understand some people. Here's an amazing thing.

Luke, in the Gospel of Luke, uses 250 words that are not found anywhere else in the New Testament. His vocabulary is tremendous. He uses all these wonderful words.

And then in the Gospel of Acts, he uses 61 more words that don't appear anywhere else in the New Testament. In other words, more than 300 words. So you say, oh boy, it's going to be hard to study Luke.

That means he's using all these fancy words. No, he's not. Luke's one of the simplest writers to understand in all of the Bible.

He doesn't, he's not bragging and throwing around big words and requiring that you have a dictionary and all that kind of thing. This Bible, the Gospel of Luke, is written so that little children can understand. There's more stories in Luke.

Once upon a time. The story of the prodigal son. The story of the rich man of Lazarus.

You just almost go to Christian art, look at any painting, whether it's the Annunciation or whether it's one of the parables or Jesus with the sheep or finding Jesus as the shepherd or gatherings, all the pictures you see, I would say almost all of them came out of the Gospel of Luke because he is so simple and he tells stories. So we know that he was pretty smart. Church history has tried to make guesses.

Maybe you've heard some of these things. For example, remember at the end of John 12, it said some Greeks came to Philip saying, Sir, we would see Jesus. Well, some people think Luke was one of those Greeks.

I have a problem accepting that because he says he was not an eyewitness and that would have made him an eyewitness of Christ. You know the two disciples on Emmaus Road in Luke 24? After the resurrection, they walked on Emmaus Road. Some people think one of those was Luke.

There's no evidence of that, but some would say that. Luke records that he sent out 70 disciples. The other Gospels tell you about he sent out 12 in two by two.

But Luke tells you he sent out 70. And some think, well, Luke was one of the 70. We don't know those kinds of things.

He said he wasn't an eyewitness of Christ. So I would wonder about that. You study church history and they'll tell you Luke was born in Antioch.

We don't really know that. Luke never got married. We don't really know that.

They say that. Some people say Luke wrote the book of Hebrews. We don't really know that.

Is it possible? I guess it's possible. We don't know. You know, Titus was a Greek.

Did you know Luke was his brother? See, we don't really know that. But many teach that that's the same man. Some teach that, oh, Theophilus, that Theophilus was a great and rich ruler, a slave owner, and that Luke was his slave.

And after Theophilus came to the Lord, he set his slave free. That's possible. We don't know that.

That's one of those things you hear about. The Catholic Church has made Luke the patron saint of painters. They say he was an artist.

And they discovered in the 6th century a picture of Mary and a picture of some of the chief disciples and a picture of Jesus. And they say Luke painted those. We don't know if he did or not.

But he's the patron saint of painting. They say he was martyred on an olive tree in Greece. Maybe he was.

Maybe he wasn't. They say that he was 84 years old when he died. Do we know that? No, we don't know that for sure.

Those are the things that I say we won't take a stand on those things and we will perhaps celebrate October 18. October 18 is St. Luke's Day. And they say that's when Luke died.

Do we know that? No, we don't know that. What we know is he was a wonderful servant of the Lord. He was a dear friend, a loyal companion to the Apostle Paul.

We know he was a Gentile. And we know he was a very, very gifted man from God. Those are the things we know from the Bible.

The rest we guess at. So do we thank God for the man? Ah, yes. Bless the Lord for the man Luke.

Do we thank God for his book? Both parts. Indeed we do. But now here we go.

It is the message that we're after. Not the man or the book. What special revelation of Christ did God give? We thank God for the message of Luke.

For the message of Acts and that special revelation of Christ. Let me call attention to several emphases in the Gospel of Luke which we'll end up with. How does Luke present Christ? If you see these emphases, you will see how Luke presents Christ.

The first emphasis that Luke gives is missions. Missions. Evangelism.

The whole world. Not just the Jews. The whole world.

The globe. The planet. Everybody.

Luke is a big writer on everybody. Not just the Jews. You know, for 40 books in a row, you're reading it.

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus. You're reading 40 books in a row to the Jews, to the Jews, to the Jews, to the Jews, to the Jews. 40 books in a row.

And then Luke comes along and says, let me say it another way. And Luke stands up and he doesn't come from the standpoint of the Jews. He said, let me tell you the same story, not in terms of the Jews, not in terms of the temple, not in terms of the Mosaic law, not in terms of Bible prophecy.

Luke is different. That's what's so wonderful about it. He says, let me tell you about God's real heart.

Jews aside, good news for the whole planet. Many have taken chapter 19 and verse 10 as the key verse for the entire book of Luke. Luke 19, 10 says, For the Son of Man is come to seek and to say, finish it, that which was lost.

For the Son of Man is come to seek and to say that which is lost. Now watch how that's in contrast with Matthew 15, 24. Matthew 15, 24 says, I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

That's been the emphasis. Christ came for the lost sheep of Israel. Then Luke comes along and says, The Son of Man is come to seek and to say that which was lost.

Not only Israel, but the entire world. I told you how smart Luke was. Here's an illustration.

You're smart when you can be simple. If that is a key verse, For the Son of Man is come to seek and to say that which is lost. Do you realize how much is said in that verse? And do you realize it's all monosyllables? There's not a two syllable word in the whole verse.

For the Son of Man is come to seek and to say that which was lost. You couldn't get simpler than that. And that's how Luke is all the way through.

It's full, it's easy, it's simple. In Luke chapter 3, if you'll turn there please, Luke has a genealogy. You say, well Matthew gives the genealogy too.

Yes, Matthew had a genealogy and traced Jesus back, back, back, back until he got to Abraham. And then he stopped. Luke doesn't do that.

Luke says, We're not stopping at Abraham. This isn't a message for Jews. Notice verse 38 of chapter 3. The Son of Enoch, the Son of Seth, the Son of Adam, the Son of God.

He goes all the way back to Adam. You know why? Because his message is not for the Jews, it's for the whole world, for the whole race. And so he goes all the way back to the father of the race, the human race.

I love to quote chapter 3, verse 6. It's a quote from the prophet Isaiah. All flesh shall see the salvation of God. That's what Luke's all about.

Not just circumcised flesh. All flesh shall see the salvation of God. You come to Luke and you're looking at a gospel that's for all flesh.

And they're going to see the salvation of God. It wouldn't be difficult to take you by the hand and walk you through the book of Luke over and over again. Not just here and there.

He talks about the race. He talks about the planet. He talks about everybody.

He talks about all people. In Luke chapter 2, for example, and verse 30 to 32, Simeon, remember Simeon in the temple? He held the baby Jesus in his hands. And then he said, Simeon said, in verse 30, that my eyes have seen my salvation.

See, salvation is a person. We're talking about the plan of salvation. It's not a plan.

It's a person. And Simeon had this Jesus and he looked in his face and he said, My eyes have seen my salvation which thou hast prepared in the presence of all peoples. Not just the Jews.

All people. A light of revelation to the Gentiles. And then he throws in at the end, the glory of Israel.

Yes, that's true. But it's for all people. It's for the whole wide world.

In chapter 2, verse 14, when the angel Gabriel announced the birth of Jesus and he joined in that heavenly exultation of the coming of Christ, he said, Glory to God in the highest. Now, I'm going to misread it. Glory to God in the highest and in Israel, peace.

He didn't say in Israel, peace. He said on earth, peace. Peace on earth.

It's the whole earth. That's Luke's emphasis. It's the whole world.

In the last chapter, only seven verses from the end of the book, listen to this. Luke 24, 47. Thus it is written, that Christ should suffer and rise again from the dead the third day and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

That's Luke's emphasis. All nations. Everybody.

Not just the Jews. And God chose a Gentile to take the gospel to the ends of the earth. It's just a marvelous, marvelous book.

Everywhere you look in the book of Luke, God is stepping over the boundaries of Israel and God is bringing this good news, this glorious news to the entire earth. I told you Luke 2, I mean, I told you Acts is part 2 of Luke. You've studied Acts.

What is Acts about? It's a missionary book. It's filled with missionary journeys. It's taking the gospel to the whole world.

To the end, it ends up in Rome, the capital of the Gentile world. Don't think mission starts in Acts. It doesn't.

It starts in Luke. All that Jesus began to do when he was on the earth for 33 1/2 years, now he's in heaven. He continues to do it by his Holy Spirit through his channel in the church.

And he brings it all the way to the ends of the earth. It's a marvelous, marvelous thing. In fact, when you read through Luke over and over again, the Jews never get more upset than they do in the gospel of Luke.

It's because of all this emphasis on the Gentiles. They can't take it. And I'm not going to say Luke is doing it on purpose.

But sometimes it looks like he just smears especially the Samaritans in their faith. And let me tell you, there was this, you know, who's the neighbor? The good Samaritan. Let me tell you, Jerusalem, there was

this Samaritan.

And then he talks about the lepers. And one was a Samaritan. And that Samaritan comes to be the hero and so on.

All the way through the book. And you can see as you go through the book, I'll try to show you, what an anti-missionary heart Israel as a nation was growing to have. They couldn't stand the fact that God was including others and he was making the circle wider and wider.

So, when you go through Luke, that's one of the emphases, missions. In chapter 21-24, they question, What about the time of your return? When are you going to come back? He said, After the age of the Gentiles. It's the Gentiles.

All the way through this book. And he keeps stressing that over and over again. Luke starts in Jerusalem and goes through Galilee and goes through Korea and goes through Judea and then goes to Jerusalem.

Acts picks it up there. Luke even takes Jesus to America. You say, What verse is that? I don't remember Jesus went to America.

Oh, yes he did. He went to America. What does that mean? Jesus went to America when he went to the cross.

In fact, he went to France and he went to Italy and he went to Germany and he went to Russia and South America and Australia. He went to the whole world when he went to the cross. He said, If I be lifted up, I'll draw all Jews, all men.

If I be lifted up, I'll draw all men to me. On the cross he went to the world. God so loved the Jews that he gave, is that right? God so loved the world.

That's Luke. That's Luke's emphasis and we'll appreciate Luke more if we can hold that in our minds. I think we'll miss a great portion of the message of Luke if we miss missions, if we miss the Gentiles.

Here's a second observation to illustrate that the gospel is for all men. When you go through the gospel of Luke, you're going to call attention to the fact he illustrates all men by the lowest of men. In other words, Luke is a book that underscores the social outcast, the hopeless person, the despised person, the one who is rejected, the dregs of the earth.

Right from the beginning when we learn in chapter 2 there was no room for him in the inn, he began to reach out in compassion to the downtrodden. If you're going to appreciate Luke, you've got to see that he presents Jesus as the dearest friend of the downtrodden, those who are down and out. It's Luke that tells us of the publican smiting his breast and saying, God have mercy on me, a sinner.

It's Luke that talks about the harlot that came and cried and wept and washed his feet and took her hair and wiped his feet. Luke is the one that tells us that. Luke is the one that tells us about this father who longed for his son who had wasted the inheritance and gone to the pig pen and wasted it on harlots.

How he waited for him to come back and embraced him in kisses and ran out. Luke is the one that tells us that. Luke is the one that tells us that there was a thief that repented and found salvation in his dying breath.

Luke is the one that tells us about Zacchaeus, the despised tax collector. He goes down and out. And that connects, and I love this chapter 6, 35.

At the end of chapter 6 and verse 35, we read this. It's talking about God. It says, He himself is kind to ungrateful and evil men.

Aren't you glad He's kind to ungrateful and evil men? The Revised Version says, He himself despairs of no man. Isn't that precious? But you know that God will never despair of you, no matter how down and out you get. Wiest in his translation says, He himself is benevolent to those who are ungrateful and to those who are pernicious.

Praise God for that. All through Luke. You say, He's going to the whole world.

Yeah, He's going to the whole world. That's why in this book, tax gatherers and sinners were flocking to Jesus. They weren't threatened by Him.

They loved to come unto Him. They weren't condemned by Him. I think Luke 15.2 is a good summary of Luke's emphasis.

Luke 15.2 says, This man receives sinners and eats with them. Yes, he does. This man receives sinners and eats with them.

So He's not only a Savior for the world, but He's suitable for the world at its worst, at its lowest. No book emphasizes the compassion of Jesus and the sympathy of Christ more than the book of Luke. Hebrews 4 talks about we do not have a high priest who cannot be touched with the feelings of our infirmity.

Well, that's what Luke's all about. Right after his baptism in chapter 4, our Lord Jesus goes back to His boyhood town in Nazareth. And He picks up the scroll.

Chapter 4, verse 16 to 21. And on the Sabbath day, He picked up the scroll and He began to read Isaiah 6. He's anointed Me to give recovery of sight to the blind and to set free those who are downtrodden. And after He read that, He closed the book and He stood up.

He was already standing. And He said, This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears. I'm going after the poor, He said.

And I'm going after the blind, He said. And I'm going after the captives, He said. And I'm going after the downtrodden.

That's what this book is all about. In chapter 14, verse 21, when He gives that wonderful parable of the great feast, remember how He included in verse 21, He said, Now you go out into the streets, into the lanes of the city, and you bring in the poor and the crippled and the blind and the lame. And then they came back.

They said, We did. And there's still room. Then He said, You go out into the highways and go out into the hedges and compel them to come in.

That's what Luke's all about. So if you're going to understand Luke, Luke is for the whole world, especially those who are downtrodden. So when I come to Luke, why do I find 43 times in this book He emphasizes women, calls them by name and tells their story? No other gospel writer does that.

Because in those days, the woman was oppressed. He's the champion of women. Why in this book more than any other book do you read about little children? Because they were just pushed aside.

And He said, I'm not pushing them aside. This is the book about that. Why is it this book that emphasizes the poor and holds them over against the rich? Over and over again, in parable after parable, He lifts up the poor man.

And the widow. All the time. Why? Because He's emphasizing something tremendous.

The gospel is for the whole world, and especially for the rejected. Which gospel talks more about forgiveness than any other gospel? It's Luke. Luke is the one that tells us about the look of Christ after Peter had sinned.

That marvelous look of Christ. He's the one that tells us about the prodigal son and Mary Magdalene and the publican coming and Zacchaeus coming and the dying thief. It's Luke that picks up the broken man and the broken woman and the downtrodden.

He's stressing the whole world, but especially the poor. Luke is full of story. He gives us 35 parables.

And out of those 35 parables, He gives you 19 parables that you'd never have if you didn't have Luke. Matthew doesn't mention them and Mark doesn't mention them. 19 parables.

And here's the difference between Matthew and Mark's parables and Luke's parables. Matthew and Mark talk about the group. The kingdom of heaven is life.

Luke doesn't talk about the group. He talks about the individual. He talks about the person, the good Samaritan, the friend at midnight, the lost coin, the prodigal son, the rich man in life, people, individuals, over and over and over again.

In Luke, Jesus Christ is reaching down into the slums, into the dirtiest places, into the dregs of society, and He's lifting up. Come to seek and to save that which is lost. If you're going to understand Luke, you've got to see that in this Gospel, the door is open wide to everybody, not just nations, not just continents, but people, individuals.

This is the book for harlots. This is the book for drunkards. This is the book for those involved in drugs, for thieves, for murderers, for homosexuals, for widows, for the orphan, for the prisoner, for the slave, for the down and out, for the blind, and the lame, and the crippled, and the leper.

This is the book. You found someone who's just a reject. Say, I'm going to give them the Gospel of John.

Well, maybe God will use that. Try giving them the Gospel of Luke. You find someone who's down and out rejected, give them Luke.

Let them read through this Gospel and see how Jesus reached out to poor people. And I'll tell you, God's going to use that in a mighty way. This is a book addressed to the untouchables.

This is a book addressed to the outcast. This is a book that deals with those who are down and out. And in this book, nobody's left out.

Nobody is left hopeless. Nobody is alone and rejected. Christ reaches everybody.

One of my commentators calls the Gospel of Luke the most beautiful book ever written. And I agree. It's one of the most beautiful books ever written as the Son of Man reaches down to reach all of these people in society.

I'm laboring now because of its distinct contribution. Now, I'm going to develop the Revelation of Christ next time, but I want to set it before your heart now. And we'll wrap things up with this.

The Revelation of Christ, everyone who seriously studies the four Gospels has pointed out that Matthew emphasizes one aspect, Mark another, Luke another, and John another. And there have been attempts to pull it all together and give one account called the harmony of the Gospel. I have many harmonies in my library where they just put everything in chronological order.

He did this. If God the Holy Spirit wanted us to have a harmony, He'd have given us a harmony. I'm not saying they're wrong, but He would have given it to us.

He wants us to look four times at Jesus because there are four things He wants us to see. Now, let's say that a man has a son. He says, Oh, come, I'd like to show you my son.

And here's his son in a military uniform. He says, That's my son, the soldier. And he says, I don't know a picture of my son.

Let me show you my son. This time, he's standing in a suit and he's got his wife and he's got little children around. That's my son, the family man.

And then he's got another picture of the same guy. And he's in an athletic, maybe a baseball uniform. He says, Let me show you my son, the athlete.

It's still my son, but it's a different look at my son. And then there's another picture. He says, Now there's my son in a business suit.

This is my son, the professional. He's a doctor. He's a lawyer.

He's something else. It's the same one, but seeing that boy as a soldier, seeing him as a family man, seeing him as an athlete, seeing him as a professional, you get a different view of this person. And so it is.

Matthew, writing to the Jews, presents Christ as the rejected Savior King. And Mark, writing to the Romans, presents Christ as the amazing servant. When we come to John, we're going to see the Lord Jesus as God's Son from heaven.

But how does Luke present it? There's a title that's mentioned 80 times, the title of Christ, mentioned 80 times in the Bible. Seventy-nine times, it was on the lips of Jesus. In other words, nobody ever called Jesus this.

The only time this word was used was when Jesus said it himself. Jesus said, I am this. But nobody else ever used it of Jesus.

And I'm referring to the title, Pat, tell us. Son of Man. Exactly right.

Son of Man. Jesus' favorite title for himself. Jesus called himself the Son of Man.

Now, don't misunderstand that. He's not saying, man over here is woman. We're not talking gender.

It's not Son of Man, a male. It's Son of, and the Greek word is tremendous, Son of Mankind. He's the Son of all mankind.

The Son of humanity. Luke, as no other gospel writer, stresses the fact that Jesus is 100% man. He came as the Son of Man to the sons of men to seek and to save that which is lost, the most needy and downtrodden.

When you go through the book of Luke, now it's going to get a little thorny. This is the contribution that God wants to make in our hearts. He's already begun to exercise my spirit.

I'm not going to suffer alone. I'm going to drag you in with me. You can suffer too.

When you read the gospel of Luke, you will realize there was not a prejudiced bone in the body of the Son of Man. Not a prejudiced bone in his body. You see, we like to say, I'm not prejudiced.

We like those who like us and who are like us. We gravitate to those who are like us and are like us. And unless we're delivered from prejudice, we don't like to admit it, but everybody is prejudiced.

We feel so comfortable in the presence of those who are normal because we think, probably wrongly think, that we are normal. But if somebody is different in any way, if somebody is handicapped in some way, we saw it, of course, when we had a deaf son. We were amazed at how many people went the other way when John was around because it's awkward.

He talks with his hands and then he sounds funny and all of that. It's an amazing thing. We avoid them.

Our Lord Jesus avoided nobody. He avoided nobody. If somebody has a strange walk or someone has a strange habit or if they're twisted in some way, if they stutter, if their eyes are crossed, if they have bad breath or something like that, if they're a different color or a different size or they have some terrible lifestyle, we get aloof and we shy away.

We avoid them. We stand back. We keep an arm's length.

Not Jesus. Not Jesus. Would you feel comfortable if a harlot wanted to wash your feet with her tears and dry them with her hair? We're in service now.

Let's shut those kids up. Get rid of those kids. That's what they tried to do.

Get the kids out. Nothing. They don't belong here.

Jesus said, You bring those children. Of such is the kingdom of God. He put nobody out.

He put nobody down. There's a beggar. Everybody's moving along.

And this beggar's on the side of the road blind. He's crying out, Jesus, Jesus, have mercy on me. And they're trying to shut him up.

The disciples, the people of God trying to shut him up. Don't bother him. You can't bother Jesus.

There was not a prejudiced bone in his body. He said, This man eats with sinners. Yeah, he does.

And he delights in it. He loves to eat with sinners. He loves to touch the leper.

He loves to hobnob with the criminal and be in the presence of the harlot. Say, you know somebody that's a homosexual or a lesbian. Oh, I just don't want to be around that person, you know.

One of the things God wants to do is we study Luke together. As we see the Son of Man, He wants to make us sons of man. He wants to deliver us from prejudice in all of its subtle forms.

Compassion is how the gospel gets to the ends of the world. And prejudice is a hindrance to compassion. And that's why we've got to study the gospel of Luke.

And as we study the gospel of Luke and God confirms us to the Son of Man, one of the evidences that we'll get in the message is that God is going to make us compassionate and remove every form of prejudice. Jesus would not avoid somebody because he looked weird and was tattooed and had an earring in his ear and other places on his body. Jesus would not avoid that person.

How we do. How we do. Our Lord Jesus was the Son of Man.

And so, as we study together under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, if God really shows us the message of Luke, we're going to have a new heart for the downtrodden. We're going to have a new heart for those that are rejected, those that are poor, and those that are set aside. That's what God wants to do in this study.

May God help us. Just to wrap this up, you don't need to do it in your Bible, but I found some neat verses. And I wrote these Bible prophecies from the Old Testament.

I wrote one in front of Matthew. Well, actually two. A couple in front of Matthew, a couple in front of Mark, a couple in front of Luke, a couple in front of John.

Here are the verses. Zechariah 9.9 You'll see why that's in front of Matthew. It says, Behold the King.

Zechariah 9.9 Isaiah 42.1 I put that in front of Mark. Because it says, Behold the servant. Behold the servant.

Zechariah 6.12 Behold the man. And then, Isaiah 40.9 Behold your God. In front of John.

So, behold the king, behold the servant, behold the man, behold your God. There's other verses that talk about him as the branch. Jeremiah 23.5 It says, A righteous branch will reign as king.

That's Matthew. A righteous branch will reign as king. Zechariah 3.8 It says, Behold the servant, the branch.

That's Mark. And then Luke. Zechariah 6.12 Behold a man, whose name is the branch.

He will build the temple. And you've got the same thing for the gospel of John. Isaiah 4.2 In that day, the branch of the Lord will be beautiful and glorious.

So, you can just put those verses in front of your Bible. The humanity of Christ is the emphasis of the book of Luke. Don't get the idea, as I had for years, I thought Jesus was 50% man and 50% God.

No. He's 100% man and 100% God. I can't put that together.

But that's what the Bible teaches. 100% man, 100% God. So, when you come to Luke, you're going to see a man.

And you're going to see, in chapter 142, he's the fruit of the womb. In chapter 216, he's a babe. He's growing.

In chapter 227, he's a child. In chapter 240, he's a boy. In chapter 322, he's a man.

We're going to see this one grow. He's a person. Why does the gospel of Luke talk more about the prayer life of Jesus than any place else? Because he's a man.

He needs prayer. He's trusting in God. And we're going to see the prayer life of Christ.

Nine times, Luke shows us our Lord Jesus praying. And seven of those times, nobody else mentions. It's just Luke that mentions that.

Because he is a man just like we are. And why does Luke end as no other gospel ends? Everyone ends with the resurrection. He's alive.

He's alive. Not Luke. Luke goes past that.

We see him ascending to heaven with nail prints in his hand. Why does Luke take it that far? Because some people have the idea when God became a man, he became a man only for 33 1/2 years. And now he's some spirit or something.

No, when he decided to become a man, he decided to become a man forever. That was the decision. Right now in heaven, he's a man.

He only has immortality. He only has a resurrected body. He's up there now as a man.

And we need to understand for all eternity, he'll never go back to being only God. He's a man, a God-man forever. And Luke is the one that teaches us that and that brings us into that.

Let me close. I'll give you one verse. Psalm 45.

Psalm 45, verse 2. This is going to be my prayer for the gospel of Luke. Psalm 45 is that messianic psalm. It's the song of the marriage of the king's son.

It's just a marvelous psalm. And Psalm 45, verse 2 says, Thou art fairer than the sons of men. We're going to study the son of man in the gospel of Luke.

And he's fairer than the sons of men. And so that's the one we're going to study together. Now, I'm not quite finished introducing this and I want to sort of get in on the theme, but this whole idea that Luke is a Gentile.

Luke emphasizes the whole world. Luke emphasizes the down and outer. And our Lord Jesus becomes the Son of Man to go out into the whole world and to find the lost, the broken, the heartaches, and to bind them up.

If I'm conformed to that revelation of Christ, God's going to fill me with compassion. He's going to remove prejudice from me. And I will find myself, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, reaching out for that poor one, that widow, that orphan, that harlot, that awful sinner.

I won't be afraid to go near them. I won't be shy and stay back. My heart will be drawn.

That's the Son of Man. And God wants to make us sons of men. So that's the gospel we're going to study.

I hope begin to create a little taste in your heart to get into this because it's a most tremendous gospel. Tom, answer a question. For this glorious gospel, we pray as you begin to unveil yourself as the Son of all mankind, that you would transform us into the likeness of Christ and that we become the sons of all mankind as well.

We know, Lord, that we would be wrong to try to work it up. We know we need to see you this way. So as we go through the book together, will you take us by the hand and lead us and show us, Jesus, over and over and over again that we might be like Him? And now, Lord, we thank You for this fellowship and everyone who's come.

Thank You for the refreshments and those who've provided them. Nourish our bodies and the gratitude You've put in our hearts. We now return to You and ask You to accept our thanks for this food, for this fellowship.

We pray in Jesus' name, Amen.

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