

Luke 1

by John McGregor

The Gospel of Luke is a book that gives us a sense of security through the detailed and consecutive account of Jesus' life, and it helps us to understand our identity in Jesus.

Duration: 42:04

Scripture: Matthew 6:33, Luke 19:10, John 20:31, Acts 1:8, Romans 10:9, Ephesians 2:8

Topics: "Repentance And Forgiveness", "Jesus And Humanity"

Description

In this sermon, the preacher emphasizes the importance of recognizing our spiritual deadness and the need for life through repentance and forgiveness of sins. The Gospel of Luke is highlighted as the Gospel of the Son of Man, showcasing Jesus' humanity and his attitude towards the poor, lonely, and outcast. The sermon also mentions the joy and praise that comes from the forgiveness of sins and the closeness with Jesus. Additionally, the prominence of women in the Gospel of Luke is highlighted as a distinctive feature. The sermon concludes with an invitation to study the Word of God together and a prayer for those seeking assurance of their relationship with God.

Transcript

Thank you, Pastor Brad. And it is always fun to get together, to open the word of God, and to enjoy his presence, isn't it? Well, a couple of things I need to mention. First of all, there are two group leaders not here this morning, and so they asked me if I would say a word for them.

And the first one is Sean Oliver, and Sean is going to be teaching on Thursday nights here at the church in the sort of boardroom upstairs on spiritual gifts. So if you're wondering about spiritual gifts or seeking to know what your spiritual gift might be and how to connect into serving the Lord in the church and those kind of things, come on along on Thursday nights. I'm actually filling in for him the first one this Thursday night, so you'll be stuck with my Irish accent as we start the subject Thursday here at seven.

And the groups just run for eight weeks, so they'll be done in good time for Christmas, so you'll be free for all of those Christmas activities. And a second one is from Bruce Nickel, and Bruce is doing a study also on Thursday. Every second week, he'll start this coming Thursday at his home, and his home address is 23 University Park Drive.

He told me on the phone yesterday there will be refreshments, and it's entitled A Night with C.S. Lewis. So there'll be lots of good things to think about and talk about there on every second Thursday night. And

then lastly, there's another small group leader in that I am leading one Sunday nights here at the church, and it's entitled The Deeper or Victorious Christian Life.

And so if you're thinking about how do I get to the place of seeing victory, and what is all this talk about deeper life, higher life, sanctified life? There's about a million terms that try to describe it, but I guess I would just say if you're looking for more, come out Sunday nights at seven, and we'll study the word of God together, and we'll pray together as well. Wonderful. I'm also happy to say that as of last weekend, my traveling is done for a great number of weeks, and I praise the Lord for that.

So this morning in our kickoff Sunday, we're gonna start our look at the gospel of Luke. That's a play on words if I ever heard one. That's look at Luke.

It's only with my accent. Ah, sure, I don't have an accent. So if you want to turn in your Bibles to Luke chapter one, and just while you're turning there, let me mention a couple of people.

Joan and Jerry Van Noos, would you just stand up for a minute? And would you be interviewed by the pastor for a minute? Would that be okay? Have we had the privilege of working together for the kingdom of God, you and I? We have. Been actually quite a few years that we've done that, and I wanted just to use this as a means to make them known to you. They're a wonderful couple.

They've just moved to Regina, and we'll let them sit down. I'll say, Jerry, you shouldn't have hit her so hard. As you, and Joan and Jerry often ran the prayer room for me in meetings here and there and everywhere, and if you like prayer, you're welcome to ask the pastor, but if you'd really like to get prayed for, go and ask Jerry and Joan.

They are a wonderful couple with great counseling skills and abilities just to lead people to the throne of grace. So I'm delighted to welcome them here this morning. Luke chapter one, and our first segment is the first four verses, and that's what we're going to look at this morning.

It's the introduction to the gospel of Luke, and so just follow along as I read. Excuse me. Inasmuch as many have undertaken to compile an account of the things accomplished among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, 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 may know the exact truth about the things you have been taught.

Heavenly Father, thank you for your word, and thank you for the opportunity to worship you this morning. Thank you for the Glencairn family, and for each family that is represented within the church body here. Lord, as we come before you this morning, we come confessing our need.

We need you, Lord. Many are the challenges of our days and our times, and we need you, Lord. And many, too, are the opportunities that you set before us, and we need you, Lord.

And so this morning, as we come to worship you in the word of God, we're praying, Father, that you would take your word and bring it to our hearts with strength and truth, and that you would bring about life change in each one of us because of the time that we take just to meet you, the living word, here in the written word, in the power of your Holy Spirit. So, Father, we surrender these moments to you, and we ask you just to take them, to minister to our hurts and challenges, and to lift us above the things of this world, and to focus our eyes and our attention upon Jesus. For, indeed, Lord, we need you.

And so may this be a time, in these next few moments, where we encounter you in the word of God. In Jesus' name we pray, amen. Excuse me.

Luke is called the Beloved Physician by Paul, as he writes in Colossians 4 and 14, he says, Luke, the Beloved Physician is with me. And that's kinda neat to know, isn't it? We know that some people who were fishermen and tax collectors and all kinds of things were involved with the Lord, and some who wrote various accounts of his life. But Luke was a physician, and so I thought I'd title the thoughts this morning, The Beloved Physician.

And I remember a few years ago doing a crusade in Saskatoon with the Billy Graham people. I had walking pneumonia, and my doctor up there gave me some stuff, kinda big red depth charges to try to blow that out, I think. And nothing was happening, and so he eventually looked at me and said, you need to talk to the Great Physician.

And that's so true of Jesus, isn't it? He is the Great Physician. But Luke is the Beloved Physician. And as you think about Luke and this book that we're beginning to study Sunday mornings, what are some of the distinctive things about it? And so let me just give you a brief look at things that make this book distinctive from Matthew and Mark and John.

First of all, this is the only book that was, in human terms, authored by a Gentile. The others were written by Jews, and it shows to us just that the gospel is for everyone. And that's one of the distinctives about this book in particular.

It's the gospel of grace, and it's extended to all people. Now, there is a teaching, you know, these days that we're all good people, and we're just getting better, and education and other things help us to get better. And let me just clearly say this morning, the Bible doesn't teach that.

The Bible gives us the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, and it's a gospel of grace. It's not about the things that we can do, nor the things that we can perform. It's about the Lord Himself.

Thank you, Brother Gary. That's great. At the chance of being accused of being a water-driven windmill, I'll have a sip.

His grace. The Bible, in fact, teaches us not only are we not good people, but spiritually we're dead people, and we need life. And that is the truth of His gospel.

And it comes to us through repentance and the forgiveness of sins. The gospel of grace. And as Luke writes the account about the life of Jesus, it's all about His grace in touching hearts and lives, and changing them.

The gospel of Luke is the gospel of the Son of Man. In Matthew, He's the King. In Mark, it's about the servant, Lord.

In Luke, it is the Son of Man. And it reminds us of His humanity. And we'll look at that a bit further in a moment or two.

His attitude toward people, and the poor, and the lonely, and the outcast, and those who nobody would bother with. Jesus is the Son of Man who identifies with you and me. It's also the gospel that shows us a devotional life.

Now you know, this is kind of interesting to me, because usually when I sit with someone and they're saying, well, I'm having trouble. We're having trouble in our marriage, or we're having trouble as individuals. And one of the first questions I like to ask is what is your devotional life like? And most of the time, you know, we're mad at somebody else because we have no peace ourselves on the inside.

And that goes back to that sense of meeting with the Lord day by day, and knowing His word, and knowing how He changes lives, and brings His touch to marriages, and so on. And here, there's an emphasis on prayer. And Becky can say, woo-hoo, there in the back row.

In Luke's gospel, there are three parables about prayer, and there's a great deal of a picture for us of the prayer life of the Lord Jesus Himself. And if you ever feel like studying prayer, that's the very best place to begin, just to look at Jesus. And if the Son of God needed to pray, oh, how we need to pray also.

It's also the gospel of joy and praise. And I like this because it lets me do a little woo-hoo in there again. You ever notice in this gospel, Brad, it's all about singing, isn't it? Zachariah sang, Mary sang, the angels sang, the angels sing again in chapter 15 over one who repents of sin and comes to the Lord.

There is so much joy and praise in this book and in this gospel. And one of the things I love about Glen Cairn is as I look at you on Sunday mornings, you're not sucking on a lemon. We better not maybe put this sermon on the internet.

Sometimes some places I go, you know, I get up and look at the faces and say, God help me. There is great joy, is there not, in the forgiveness of sins and of knowing that closeness with Jesus and that nearness with Jesus. And it's such a thing that just raises praise within us.

There's another distinctive in the gospel of Luke. It is that gospel that shows forth women with prominence. They appear prominently in the life of the Lord Jesus in the account of Luke.

And that's something that you don't always find in the other three gospels. He's given to us a biography of Jesus under the influence of the Holy Spirit as he put these words that we study together. And there are four things I want to say thanks to Dr. Luke for this morning.

And so here's the first of those four things. Because as I look at this account, and see verse one, he says, I've written an account of what was accomplished. And it is what Jesus accomplished, not what Luke accomplished.

He says, I've written this account. And I'm thankful that he wrote this account because out of it comes great security. And that's the first thing I'd thank him for.

Security comes as we consider this gospel. Why would I say that? What's the gospel of Jesus got to do with security? Well, in these first four verses, he's writing to a man called Theophilus. We don't know a lot about Theophilus.

We know he was an important person because of how Luke describes him. Most excellent Theophilus. And Luke also penned the Acts of the Apostles, and they're written to the same man, Theophilus.

But they are also written to you and me. He writes that he says in verse four, so that you may know the exact truth about the things you have been taught. And those things that we are taught give us a sense of security.

Those things that the Bible teaches us. Now, there's all kinds of confusion and all kinds of ideas out there. But if you want to be secure, there's only one place that you'll find it.

And that is to come to a security in a relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ and to base your life upon Scripture. Because as you think about this book that is written for us, it is Christ from Genesis through to Revelation. It is all about the work of God.

And it is to give us a standard whereby to live and to walk. And then I don't have to be tossed around with every idea. At my ordination many years ago, I remember a lot of the questions were about the second coming of Jesus.

And there are different opinions about when that will happen. And one dear brother was honest in the midst of it. He sort of got up and said, I don't think you should persecute John for the position he takes.

Personally, he said, I read a new book and I become a windmill. I just shift direction every book that I read. And I thought, well, that's really honest, isn't it? But the fact is that the Bible is given to you and me so that we can have a sense of security through the detailed and consecutive account that Luke has written.

And you know, there's a searching that goes on in the human heart. Maybe you're sitting here this morning and there's a searching going on. What really is the truth? Pilate asked that question long ago as he looked at Jesus.

What is truth? But Jesus is the truth and the way and the life. We read in John 14, six. He is solid and true.

It gives me and you a sense of security as we meet the Lord Jesus and see how He worked with people and how He changed lives and hearts and how He continues to do that even to this day. You see, religion cannot save anyone. In fact, some years ago, I wrote a newspaper article called Religion Stinks.

What was I talking about? I was talking about the fact that sometimes people put their trust in tradition and in religion, things that they do religiously, but religion cannot save anyone. Security only comes in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. And you see, I believe that's one of the reasons why Luke wrote this Gospel.

So that you and I could know beyond a shadow of a doubt that Jesus saves and that He has saved me, that He has saved you. And if you're here this morning and you're not sure, let me just encourage you with every ounce of fiber that I can muster, don't leave this place without Jesus. It's great to come and to worship, but if we go away unchanged, we've missed it.

And the Lord, through His Word, changes our hearts and our lives. So I am thankful that as this account was written, it brings security. I have a friend who labors in a Bible school in Toronto for the Lord.

And a young Islamic man from a different land got a job as a cleaner there, and he asked my friend for a Bible one day. And then a little bit later, he said to my friend, can I come to the school chapel? And Dennis said to him, well, sure you can, but why do you want to come to the chapel? He said, well, I've been reading the book and your God speaks. My friend Dennis said, what do you mean? He said, as I've been reading the Word, God has been talking to me.

And I know that I'm a sinner. I know that I need a Savior. I'd like to come to chapel because maybe could somebody help me to find Him.

Woo-hoo! We will find great security for life as we study the Scriptures. They make us wise to salvation. They make us equipped for every good work and for all the other things that life can bring.

I thank Luke this morning also because there's a sense of identity. This is apostolic truth. It is from the apostles.

It's a realistic portrait of the humanity of Jesus by those who were there. It's not hearsay. It's not secondhand, adjusted.

It's not reformatted to fit your screen. It's just apostolic truth from those who walked with Him. That is the strength and the power that changes our lives.

And there is one, you know, in Jesus. There is one who experienced everything that you and I experience. Yet, He remained sinless.

Brad's gone, so I can't pick on him. I wouldn't pick on my friend Ben. No, I won't pick on anybody in the front row.

I just think about this one who experienced everything. Do you have challenges in your life? Are there people who get in your face? Are there difficulties in relationships and struggles that go so deep? Is it not so wonderful this morning to stop and think that Jesus, this Savior that Luke is writing about, this Jesus, understands it all. You ever talk to somebody and you get the idea that they really don't understand what you're talking about? I've had a few of those kind of conversations and I see I'm not alone this morning as I look around, see a few smiles and nods, yeah.

But oh, how much different it is when you go to someone who really understands. You know, I smile as I say that because Henry Hildebrand used to be the chancellor at Briarcrest Bible School. And I remember him telling me of a student who came to see him one day and he said, I have a recurring sin in my life, Dr. Hildebrand, I just can't get rid of it.

And Henry said to him, well, why don't you talk to your professor about that? And he said, you know, I would, Dr. Hildebrand, but he's such a holy man. I don't think he would understand, Dr. Hildebrand, but you, on the other hand, yeah. It's something about going to someone who understands.

And not only does he understand, but he has the power to do something in you and through you about the circumstances that you face. So when Luke is writing about the Son of Man, he's writing about Jesus who understands, who knows what it is to have that humanity that you and I walk in every single day. And you read and discover that Jesus knew what it was to be tired.

And he knew what it was to cry and to grieve. And he knew what it was to be rejected. Seven times in Scripture we see the rejection of Jesus.

Understood all of these things and pressures. And he's one that we can go to and he will help us. He cares about the needs and the hurts that we face.

And there's testimony after testimony about the One who identifies with us. Now when we baptize people, we say they are identifying with Jesus as they go into the water with His death and as they come out of the water with His resurrection. But do you ever stop to think that Jesus also identifies with you and with me? And in the challenges and fears and struggles, He knows.

He understands. We can come to Him for that very reason. And really our identity is only found in Jesus.

I used to think as a young fellow that my identity would be found in playing soccer. And so I climbed a ladder of sports fame. And when I was about the size of Ben here, come on up beside me for a minute.

Thank you. You make me feel like a giant this morning. But I have a complaint.

You're getting a little close here, buddy. When I was young like Ben and playing soccer, I got to play in the second division of Irish League football. Woo-hoo! I could see the dollar signs except they were pound signs over there.

I mean, the big money and the stardom and woo! But I only played there for three weeks and then they invited me to leave. Thanks, Ben. You never find fulfillment there.

You never find identity in those things. They just come and go. And the greatest of people just seem to vanish off the scene in very little time.

But real fulfillment is found in identifying with Jesus, even as He identifies with you and me. And when you're in the throes of the most difficult things of life, He is there. If you know Him as Savior, He is there.

He will not desert you. He will not disappoint you. He will be there through every valley and every mountaintop as well.

You know, we tend to think of Jesus as Savior. But there's so much more. Not only will He save us from our sins and give us the gift of eternal life, but He gives Himself to us.

And it takes a while to really come to understand this. The funder of our denomination put it in the form of a hymn. Let me read you the words and see if it doesn't ring in your heart so true this morning.

He's talking about Jesus, and he said, once it was the blessing, now it is the Lord. Isn't that where we start? Lord, bless me. But as Jesus gave Himself to Him, He was more interested in Jesus than just the blessings that Jesus could give.

Once it was a feeling, now it is His word. Oh, boy, I'll tell you, feelings are great, aren't they? Somebody comes along and says, you can really play guitar, man. And we feel, oh, yeah, I can.

Or you can really play soccer. Yeah. And somebody comes along and says, you missed a note in there.

And we live life like this roller coaster ride up and down with the feelings. But away beyond the feelings, there is the Lord Himself and His word. How good it is in these times when there's so much depression and discouragement around to just come to rest on what Jesus says.

I had a man one time in a series of meetings. He said to me, I want you to pray for me. I don't want you to read any Scripture, and I don't want you to give me any pat answers.

I've been looking at the music industry and I've been down in Tennessee making a new CD and I'd like to just vomit because it's all about money and it's all about politics and it's all about this and that and the other thing. And he said, it's supposed to be Christian, but I don't see anything of Christ in it. So I said, OK, let me just read you a few verses from the end of the Gospel of John.

And I read them. And Peter, you know, is saying about John, what about him? What's he going to do? And Jesus says, don't worry about him. You follow me.

So here's this sense of, oh, don't worry about him. You follow me. That's what Jesus calls us to do as individuals.

You follow me. Very quickly, because we want to be ready for our barbecue and be able to visit together. And Brad is hungry.

There is so much more in Jesus. There's acceptance there as well. You look at the record.

There's so much of his compassion and how he in compassion touches lives. It's so much need that supernatural touch. Those who are blind, he gives sight.

Those who are sick, he gives healing. Those who are struggling, he gives help. He doesn't turn them away.

There's an acceptance as we come to him in repentance and truth. And time and again we see him do that. And, you know, it's a wonderful thing to be accepted, isn't it? I'm glad that no matter where you go in the world, there's a family of God, because no matter where I go, I know there's brothers and sisters there.

I know there's some help there. I know there's people who'll pray there. Pastor Tom and I were in Ireland together a few years ago, and we were in an Irish church in southern Ireland where they speak a fair amount of Gaelic.

And, you know, from the north of Ireland, we didn't bother with those people from the south. In fact, you were told, don't even go across the border. That's kind of a betrayal to go down there and do anything.

And you get these precepts and so on, you know. And as we came to the end of the series of meetings that Tom and I shared, we were given a word of thanks in that church. And I thought, I'm going to try to respond in Irish.

That's a difficult language. And I did my best with it. And as I responded in Irish, I got some smiles from the congregation.

The pastor's wife teaches Irish in the local school. And it had been a long time since I'd spoken any Irish. We had soup and sandwiches after the service.

And with the soup and sandwiches, we were tucking in, Tom and I, because we were going to run to the train and go to the north. And do some more ministry. Lo and behold, they're gathered around us a group of people.

And Fidelma, the pastor's wife, is in the center. And as I looked up at the circle around me, I thought, uh-oh. She's going to correct my Irish.

And I looked and smiled and Fidelma smiled. And this is what she said. John, just want you to know something before you leave.

I said, okay. And I'm waiting for the correction. You know, you didn't say that right.

She said, we're quite sure that somebody should tell you this. First of all, you're not British. Now, the north of Ireland is British.

And she's telling me I'm not British. And then she said, second of all, you're not Canadian. And then she looked and cracked a smile and said, we want you to know you're one of us.

I wish I could put into words this morning the sense of what that acceptance did in my heart. You're one of us. Isn't it like that when we come to think about the acceptance of Jesus? You know, there are times when people accept us and times when they don't.

But there is one to whom we can go who accepts us, who loves us. Luke will remind us of Jesus all the way along. And lastly, I'm thankful to Dr. Luke because in his account, which he wrote so well, we find forgiveness.

We find that the simple truth that no matter who we are and no matter what we've done, there is forgiveness in Christ Jesus. Luke 19.10 says, He came to seek and to save the lost. So there's in this book an account of the life of Jesus.

The accomplishments that Jesus has done. It's apostolic truth. It's from the apostles who worked and walked with him.

It's acceptable truth. Carefully investigated, set out for us in consecutive order. And it is trustworthy so that we can know the salvation of God.

Let's pray together. Father, we are grateful this morning that as we open the Gospel of Luke, You too have a word for us here. A word that brings security.

A word that shows the identity of Jesus as a man and as God. A word that shows us acceptance and forgiveness. And Father, as we close the worship session this morning, we just want to come before you.

And perhaps under the sound of my voice this morning, there is someone who would say deep in their heart, Oh, I wish I knew for sure that things were right between me and God. I wish I knew for sure the saving grace of God. Perhaps under the sound of my voice, there are those who would say, Pastor, my heart hurts this morning because of the circumstances of my life.

And oh, how I need a touch from Jesus to bring healing and to bring help. Father, I pray this morning that for each of us, we would just take this quiet moment with you and that you would speak to our heart. Dear friend, if you're here this morning and you long to know for sure the forgiveness of God, that new life in Jesus Christ, that this book speaks about, you need simply to come to him and to speak to him in prayer.

Just as we're at the place of prayer right now. Just to cry out from your heart to God and to say, Lord, I long to know, are you real? Lord, can you forgive? And so I come to you and ask you, Lord, forgive me and give yourself to me, Lord. Live in my heart and guide me and help me.

Father, we would just pray that you would make yourself real and known in every heart in these moments. Now, as we just pause, we want to thank you, Father, that you're so able to touch our lives. You know our hurts.

You can help us with every difficulty. So, Lord, we ask that in the power of your spirit, as this service closes, that you would minister to hurts and to hearts. In Jesus' name, amen.

Now, as we come to our benediction, I want to just mention that some have been running the barbecues and the food will be ready out there in just a moment or two. But let's stand together and receive the Lord's benediction. And we'll also pray a blessing upon the meal together.

If you are here this morning and you would like prayer, we want to encourage you just as others leave to get the food, you step this way. And our elders and wives will be here to pray with you and to meet that need for you. So let's pray together as we dismiss.

Dear Heavenly Father, thank you that we live in a land where there is plenty. And thank you that you are the one who meets our needs. And as we go from this place out into another busy week at work or at school or wherever we may go, thank you for Jesus who has pledged himself to walk with us no matter where we go.

Thank you, Lord, for the opportunity to fellowship together around this meal. And we ask that you would bless the food to our bodies and our conversation around it. Cause us, Lord, to know what it is to love you and to love one another in the things of Christ.

Would you bless us, Father, as your people with that blessing that makes rich spiritually and adds no sorrow. And would you send us forth from this place with the blessing of God, the Father, and God, the Son, and God, the Holy Spirit. In Jesus' name and God's people said, amen.

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