

Notes And Helps to Instructors

Thank you for volunteering to lead a group through the treasures of God's word! You may feel overwhelmed or inadequate, but you can do this! The leader notes are designed to help you grow in knowledge and love for Christ and for you to help pass what you have received to your group. Here are some suggestions to help equip you to grow in your teaching and leading ability.

- These lessons could simply be read, and a group would receive something but that is not how they are designed. The notes are designed to grow you as a leader so you might tailor the lesson for the needs of your group. Some groups may not have much of a knowledge base in the bible, so the concepts must be brought down to their level. Other groups may have a large knowledge base and you may challenge them with more information. The key is to know your group. If you begin leading a group in one way and find that it is not connecting, it is alright to modify and bring down or raise up the level of information.
- The more preparation you do the stronger you will be as a leader. Let the study material be a joy for you! Let it feed you as you prepare! The more you are fed the more you have to give to your group.
- There is no set time on how long a lesson may take. Lessons could be slowed down and take several weeks to finish. Perhaps in leading a group, one question captivates the group and leads to a fruitful conversation. If that happens, that is good! You are in no hurry. If you can finish the material in a week, then great! But if it takes several, that is great as well! The important thing is that they receive deeply from the gospel of Jesus.
- Pray about your lesson! Pray as you prepare! Pray as you teach! Remember we do not teach or exercise our gifts in our own strength. The Holy Spirit is the one who opens the heart and mind. Pray for the Spirit to move in your heart and the heart of the group.

May our merciful Triune God bless your study and your group that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith-- that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.

In Christ,

Prison Discipleship Ministry

Lessons in Luke -- Lesson 2 – “Jesus -- What Will He Do?”

Introduction:

In these lessons we will look at the ministry of Jesus found in the Gospel of Luke. One major theme in Luke is that Jesus came to help the weak and the broken. We will see how Jesus does this throughout Luke. While Jesus lifts the broken, He at the same time brings down the proud. In this first lesson from Luke 2, we will see how a prophet, Simeon, told His parents about this.

Read this passage at least five times then answer the questions as best you can:

²² Now when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him to Jerusalem to present *Him* to the Lord ²³ (as it is written in the law of the Lord, "Every male who opens the womb shall be called holy to the LORD"), ²⁴ and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord, "A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons."

²⁵ And behold, there was a man in Jerusalem whose name *was* Simeon, and this man *was* just and devout, waiting for the Consolation of Israel, and the Holy Spirit was upon him. ²⁶ And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ.

²⁷ So he came by the Spirit into the temple. And when the parents brought in the Child Jesus, to do for Him according to the custom of the law, ²⁸ he took Him up in his arms and blessed God and said:

²⁹ "Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, According to Your word; ³⁰ For my eyes have seen Your salvation ³¹ Which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, ³² A light to *bring* revelation to the Gentiles, And the glory of Your people Israel."

³³ And Joseph and His mother marveled at those things which were spoken of Him. ³⁴ Then Simeon blessed them, and said to Mary His mother, "Behold, this *Child* is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel, and for a sign which will be spoken against ³⁵ "(yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also), that the thoughts of many hearts may be revealed." (Luk 2:22-35 NKJ)

In Luke 2:22-24 Luke gives us important background. In the Mosaic Law in Leviticus 12:1-9, the “days of her purification” are 40 days after giving birth. At this time, the parents bring the child to the priest to present the child to the LORD. This requirement in the Mosaic Law was instituted about 1,400 years earlier. Despite this very old ordinance, Joseph and Mary are obedient to God’s Law. The fact that their offering was a pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons, tell us that they were poor and could not afford the more expensive offering of a lamb.

Luke explains to us what “consolation of Israel” (verse 25) means with the phrase “Lord’s Christ” (verse 26). “Christ” means “God’s anointed King on the throne of David” who will deliver His people from their enemies. What does Simeon call this baby in verses 29-30? Who will find out this and be blessed by it (verses 30-32)?

He calls the baby to come “your salvation.” And he says that he has prepared this salvation before the face of all peoples, which means he will bring spiritual understanding to the gentiles, and He will be the glory of the people of Israel. In the understanding of the Jewish people, all the world was divided into two peoples, there were the Jews, who

were those who worship the God of Israel and have been brought into his covenant. The rest of the people in the world were Gentiles. It does not matter what other nation you come from, you were considered a gentile.

The Jews thought they were a special people and God was only really interested in them. But that is not what the scripture taught. Consider these verses:

Deut 32:43, “Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people; For He will avenge the blood of His servants, and render vengeance to His adversaries; He will provide atonement for His land and His people.”

God included gentiles in the atonement for his land and people.

2 Sam 22:48-51 (also see Psalm 18),

“48 It is God who avenges me, and subdues the peoples under me; 49 He delivers me from my enemies. You also lift me up above those who rise against me; You have delivered me from the violent man. 50 Therefore I will give thanks to You, O LORD, among the Gentiles, and sing praises to Your name. 51 He is the tower of salvation to His king, and shows mercy to His anointed, To David and his descendants forevermore.”

Gentiles will be among those whom God delivers, and the gentiles will worship the Lord with David and his descendants.

Is 42:6-7, “6 I, the LORD, have called You in righteousness, and will hold Your hand; I will keep You and give You as a covenant to the people, as a light to the Gentiles, 7 To open blind eyes, To bring out prisoners from the prison, Those who sit in darkness from the prison house.”

The Lord’s servant (Jesus) will be a light to the gentiles and open the eyes of the blind to see him and come out of the darkness to his light.

Is 49:6, “Indeed He says, ‘It is too small a thing that You should be My Servant To raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved ones of Israel; I will also give You as a light to the Gentiles, That You should be My salvation to the ends of the earth.’”

Again, God speaking to his servant (Jesus) that He would be the light to the nations and the salvation of the Lord would go to the end of the earth.

Luke gives us one more example from Jesus himself. In Luke 4 starting at verse 16, Jesus comes into the synagogue where he grew up and begins to teach. He quotes Is 61:1-2a and then says this is fulfilled in their hearing. The people grumbled at him because they know him and his family, he grew up there after all. But Jesus then says that in the time of Elijah, there were many widows but none of them were fed except for a widow from Zarephath in Sidon. The prophet brought salvation to a gentile in a gentile land. And then

he says there were lots of lepers in Israel in the days of Elisha, but none of them were healed except Naaman the Syrian. Again, this is another gentile. And the people reacted against this in wrath and tried to throw him off a cliff.

God's grace is often more expansive and amazing than we can imagine. God's grace is for all people, and it comes to you in the light of the words of Christ. God's grace and salvation comes to all people groups, all backgrounds, all people. There is no one from any history, any people, any culture, any past that Jesus cannot save.

How did Joseph and Mary react to this (verse 33)?

They marveled at these things. They were amazed.

What is the destiny of this Child (verses 34-35)? What does it mean? Who will rise? Who will fall?

He is destined for the fall and rising of many in Israel and for a sign which will be spoken against. Jesus raises those who are broken by their sin, who know they can do nothing to earn salvation or save themselves. He raises those who in humility fall upon Jesus in repentance and faith. And those who fall are those who believe they can save themselves. Of course, they know they need some help, and the grace of God is good and helpful to make them all they know they are, but the grace of God is an assistance, not the necessity.

This reality is so clearly seen in Luke 18:10-14,

“10 "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11 "The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men-- extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. 12 'I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.' 13 "And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' 14 "I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

Notice the Pharisee thanked God for his not needing God. I thank you I am so great! Look at all the things I do! Thank you for making me where I don't need your grace.

But the tax collector was absolutely broken over his sin. He went to God for his mercy because he knew that is all he had to fall on. He repented and placed his trust in God alone for his salvation and he was the one, not the outward all-together Pharisee, who went away justified before God.

But Simeon also says that Jesus was destined for a sign that will be spoken against. That sign is the cross. They mocked him on the cross, and they still mock the cross today. Humans want to be able to say they did something to save themselves. But Jesus tells us to give up trying to save ourselves and trust in his work. Trust that on the cross, he bore

all your sins, and he gives you his perfect life. That Jesus, the Godman, God the Son, took off all the outward glory and rights he had as God, and instead added to himself a true human body and nature. And with that body, came to earth and died for our sins on the cross. He demonstrates that the way up is the way down. Consider Phil 2:1-11 for more on this. The cross of Christ is a stumbling block for Jews. How could the Messiah die? And for gentiles, it is foolishness. but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God (1Cor 1:22-24).

What does Simeon mean when he says to Mary “yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also” (verse 35)? See John 19:25 for the fulfillment of this prophecy.

We see in John 19:25ff that Mary was there watching her beloved son die on the cross. For any mother that would pierce her heart.

What does Luke mean when he says “that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed”?

Jesus as the God-man knows the thoughts of all peoples. Jesus is true man, but is also true God. In Luke 5:17-26 for example, a paralyzed man was brought to Jesus by his friends breaking apart the roof and lowering him down. Jesus said to the man that his sins are forgiven. The man said nothing about his sins, but Jesus knew what was in his heart, the reason he wanted to be near Jesus. The scribes and Pharisees began to think, “Who does this Jesus think he is? Only God can forgive sins!” Verse 21 says that Jesus perceived their thoughts.

Jesus, in a synagogue in Luke 6:6-10, knew the Pharisees were watching him to see if he would heal a man who had a withered hand. He knew they were looking to accuse him and use that to bring a charge against him. Verse 8 says that Jesus knew their thoughts. He knew the dark and sinful thoughts they had.

In Luk 11 Jesus cast out a demon. Some say it is by the power of the devil that he casts out demons. But verse 17, the text says, “Jesus knew their thoughts.”

Jesus knows what is in our hearts. John 2:23-25,

“23 Now when he was in Jerusalem at the Passover Feast, many believed in his name when they saw the signs that he was doing. 24 But Jesus on his part did not entrust himself to them, because he knew all people 25 and needed no one to bear witness about man, for he himself knew what was in man.”

Jesus knows what is in our hearts. He knows the depth of our sin greater than we ever could. He knows all that we are not even aware of in our own hearts. His knowing of our hearts helps us come to repentance. We don't have to try to hide our sin from him. Jesus is not shocked by anything we repent of. He knows it all and calls us to Himself in His love and grace anyway.

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