**The Gospel of Luke**

**Chapters 3-9**

**Introduction**

Two distinct sections make up our Bible study for today. In Luke 3:1-4:13, Jesus prepares for his ministry. Luke is careful to include details about John the Baptist, and Jesus’ Genealogy that remind us that Jesus’ faith and work is located within the larger context of what God has been doing in the world from the very beginning. Baptism and temptation are also important moments in this section as they indicate Jesus’ calling does not exclude him from challenges that are common to all people of faith.

The second part of today’s Bible study covers Jesus’ early ministry which Luke indicates occurred primarily in the region of Galilee. This section is far too large to cover in the short time together since it includes many of the great teachings of Jesus and his miraculous healings. In our time you will be invited to break into smaller groups of 3-4 and read one of the sections looking for what God might be trying to reveal to us. Jesus tells us in his first “sermon” what his ministry is about, and we see that theme played out across each of these stories.

**Preparation for Ministry – Luke 3:1-4:13**

**Setting of John’s Ministry: Luke 3:1-6**

Luke tells us of the powerful people in charge as Jesus is about to begin his ministry and he tells us of John the son of Zechariah in the wilderness. Who among them received God’s message? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

Mary’s song from last week tells us that “He has brought down the powerful from their thrones, … and lifted up the lowly.” Luke wants us to see that this has begun at the start of Jesus ministry.

Luke reinterprets a famous passage of Jewish scripture to help explain John the Baptist. Notice how the subtle change between Isaiah 40 and Luke’s telling of this passage.

**Isaiah 40:3-5**  3 A voice cries out: "In the wilderness prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God. 4 Every valley shall be lifted up, and every mountain and hill be made low; the uneven ground shall become level, and the rough places a plain. 5 Then the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all people shall see it together, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken."

**Luke 3:4-6**  as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah, "The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. 5 Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth; 6 and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.'"

**Luke 3:7-18 - John’s Preaching**

John baptizes and issues calls for people to live their lives differently. In their context, these are words of practical advice for what repentance looks like. What might repentance look like for us?

John also indicates there is a difference between his baptism and the baptism of Jesus. “I baptize you with water… he will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and Fire.” In Acts Chapter 2, this baptism becomes a reality as the believers are sent into the world with the good news of Jesus.

**Acts 2:1-4**  NRS When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. 2 And suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. 3 Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them. 4 All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages, as the Spirit gave them ability.

**Luke 3:19-22 John’s imprisonment and Jesus’ baptism**

When John is no longer able to continue his ministry we learn that Jesus has been prepared/commissioned to advance this ministry.

Jesus’ baptism does not focus on his repentance but on his being chosen by God and the revelation of that calling.

**Luke 3:23-38 The Genealogy of Jesus**

Luke is the only gospel to record Jesus’ age at the time of his baptism: “about thirty”. This aligns fairly well with a timeline that has Jesus born about 2 years before the death of Herod the Great (4 bce), a ministry of 3 years (John has Jesus attend 3 Passover meals); and the death of Jesus at Passover in the year 30. Baptism would have been in the year 27 or 28.

Luke’s genealogy goes all the way back to Adam where Matthew’s Genealogy only goes to Abraham. The difference is important in the story they want to tell regarding who Jesus is sent to save. Genealogies tell us among other things who are our people… Luke wants us to know all descendants of Adam are Jesus’ people.

Luke 4:1-13 The temptation of Jesus

The 40 days in the wilderness ties Jesus to the people who wandered in the wilderness for 40 years. Just as they experienced hunger so Jesus will be tempted, just as they were tempted to reject devotion to God in favor of the world’s goods, so Jesus will be tempted, just as they continually tested the mercy and salvation of God, so Jesus is tempted.

* Notice that even the devil quotes scripture - faithfulness is revealed in how relationship with God is lived not just knowledge or command of the Bible.

**Ministry in Galilee – Luke 4:14 – 9:50**

**Read Luke 4:14-30 – Jesus preaching in Nazareth**

Jesus makes scriptural claims about himself:

**Luke 4:18-19**  18 "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_. He has sent me to proclaim \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, 19 to proclaim the \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_."

What did these hometown people expect from Jesus? What did they get?

Why could Jesus not do more in his hometown?

This passage is seen as one of the ways that Jesus defines his “mission”. These are the things that he believes that he is sent to do. Look for these common themes in the passages ahead.

In Luke 4:31-44, Jesus goes to a neighboring town where he casts out a demon, heals Simon Peter’s Mother –in- Law, and healed many sick people. The contrast between Nazareth and Capernaum is striking.

Small groups:

**Choose one of the following passages and respond to the questions below.**

**Luke 5:1-6:16, Calling and Training Disciples**

What is this passage about?

What do you notice about the disciples?

Jesus is criticized and engages in debate around Fasting and Sabbath. What do you take away from that conversation?

What questions do you have about this passage?

**Luke 6:17-49 – Jesus’ instruction to His Disciples (the Sermon on the Plain)**

What are some of Jesus’ instructions to his disciples?

Who is blessed according to Jesus?

What does Woe mean to you?

At the end of this Passage Jesus tells some parables – what do you take away from them?

What questions do you have about this passage?

**Luke 7:1-50 – The Messiah is Greater than a Prophet**

How is the Centurion’s request like a prayer?

Compare the raising of the dead child to what Elijah did in 1 Kings.

**1 Kings 17:10, 17-24**  10 So he set out and went to Zarephath. When he came to the gate of the town, a widow was there gathering sticks;…

After this the son of the woman, the mistress of the house, became ill; his illness was so severe that there was no breath left in him. 18 She then said to Elijah, "What have you against me, O man of God? You have come to me to bring my sin to remembrance, and to cause the death of my son!" 19 But he said to her, "Give me your son." He took him from her bosom, carried him up into the upper chamber where he was lodging, and laid him on his own bed. 20 He cried out to the LORD, … 22 The LORD listened to the voice of Elijah; the life of the child came into him again, and he revived. 23 Elijah took the child, brought him down from the upper chamber into the house, and gave him to his mother; then Elijah said, "See, your son is alive." 24 So the woman said to Elijah, "Now I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the LORD in your mouth is truth."

What are the signs that the Messiah has come?

What is the general response of the public to John and Jesus?

What is the difference between how the Pharisee responds to Jesus and how the “sinful woman” responds to Jesus? *\* This passage does not specifically say what the woman’s sin is but historically she has been understood as a prostitute. Why? The argument is that male writers were generally only interested in “sexual sin” when it comes to women.*

What questions do you have about this passage?

**Luke 8:1-21 – Hearing and doing God’s Word**

Jesus has many female disciples. How did they help Jesus’ ministry?

The Parable of the seed and soil offers different ways to respond to Jesus.

What is the “seed”? Who is the “soil” ?

What are the other factors?

What is our role/work?

Jesus also tells about light. What are we to do with light?

Who are those Jesus considers as his relatives?

What questions do you have about this passage?

**Luke 8:22-56 – The Power at Work in Jesus**

Three different stories in this section demonstrate Jesus power.

Jesus has power over 1. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 2. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ 3. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

What does faith look like in the first story – in the boat?

How does Jesus respond to the man who is possessed by demons?

What is the ultimate fate of those demons?

Jesus heals a woman and raises a child from the dead. In each of these passages consider how “helpless” the people felt. What is God’s response through Jesus?

What questions do you have about this passage?

**Luke 9:1-50 – The Messiah of God and the Son of Man**

Jesus sends out the disciples to do work that he has already been doing. Think about how this is a foreshadowing of the future role of the church. What parallels do you see to our calling?

Peter confesses that Jesus is the messiah. Jesus then gives difficult instructions about what being a follower of the Messiah will require. What do you find most difficult about this passage?

Jesus is transfigured… what stands out to you about this passage as helpful to the disciples?

What is confusing?

There are additional healings – what is most challenging about these? What is most comforting?

What questions do you have about this passage?