

Jesus' Mission



Bible studies on Luke 4 - 7

Introduction	page 2
Study 1: Jesus' priority	page 3
Study 2: The task ahead	page 6
Study 3: Authority questioned	page 9
Study 4: Jesus' challenge	page 12
Study 5: Defying expectations	page 15
Study 6: Jesus' values	page 18
Study 7: Kingdom ethics	page 21
Study 8: Wisdom worth listening to	page 24
Study 9: When all seems lost	page 27

Introduction

In these verse we see Jesus mission getting underway. In Luke 4:14-30 a critical moment is reached as Jesus addresses the synagogue in his home town of Nazareth. There, Jesus quotes from the prophet Isaiah 61:1-2 and 58:6 and says

“The Spirit of the Lord is on me,
because he has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners
and recovery of sight for the blind,
to set the oppressed free,
to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour.”

The original context of these words refers to the oppressed and exiled people awaiting God’s salvation, it refers to the marginalised groups who thirst and long for God’s deliverance. Jesus then said, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.” It was a dramatic moment for this local boy from Nazareth as he outlined his manifesto. Jesus then cautions his hearers not to follow Israel’s history of unbelief and hardened hearts. The locals were furious with Jesus and were ready to throw him off a cliff.

It is against this backdrop of rejection from his hometown that he now sets out to get this mission underway and fulfil his manifesto that was spoken to the synagogue in Nazareth.

Study 1: Jesus' priority

Luke 4:31-44

Getting Started

1. How do our priorities in life change over time? What can change our priorities?

Investigate Luke 4:31-44

2. What amazed the people about Jesus and why? (v. 31)

3. What does the demon teach us about Jesus? (v. 34)

4. Why does Jesus silence the demons? (v. 40)

5. How does Jesus view his ministry in the town of Capernaum? (v. 43)

Thinking it through

6. What do we learn about Jesus' authority in this passage?

7. How does Jesus begin to fulfil the words he spoke in Luke 4:18-21?

8. What is Jesus' top priority? How should that priority shape our priorities as disciples of Jesus and the church?

9. Read James 2:18-19. What do demons know? How is our knowing of God and Christ different from that of demons?

10. What realities of life are not part of the kingdom that Jesus is ushering in? (Read also Revelation 21:3-7)

Prayer Points

Study 2: The task ahead

Luke 5:1-16

Getting Started

1. Recall some difficult task that was required of you. What did you have to do to prepare for that task?

Investigate Luke 5:1-16

2. Why were the people crowding Jesus? How is this different from Luke 4:40

3. Why does Simon resist Jesus' instruction to let down the fishing nets? (vv. 4-5)

4. What sort of difference does Jesus make for Simon and the other fishermen? (vv. 6-7)

5. What does Simon realise about himself and Jesus? (vv. 8-9)

6. How does Jesus respond to Simon? (v. 10b)

7. How is the leper different from Simon? (v. 12)

Thinking it through

8. How do you think this event prepared Simon for task ahead?

9. How do Peter, James and John accept Jesus' authority over their lives? What parts of our life do we need to get on with simply because Jesus tells us to?

10. To be a leper in Jewish society meant that you were ceremonially unclean and cut off from God and from God's people. What is the significance of Jesus touching and healing this leper?

Prayer Points

Study 3: Authority questioned

Luke 5:17-26

Getting Started

1. In what sort of circumstances do we question the authority of others?

Investigate Luke 5:17-26

2. What did the friends of the paralysed man expect of Jesus? Why?
(v. 17)

3. What demonstrated the friends' faith in Jesus? (vv. 18-19)

4. What is Jesus' priority for the paralysed man? (v. 20)

5. Why did the Pharisees and teachers of the law regard Jesus' word as blasphemy? (v. 21)

6. What is the answer to Jesus' question in verse 23? Why?

7. How does Jesus demonstrate his authority to forgive sins?
(vv. 24-25)

Thinking it through

8. Why might people question Jesus' authority in their life today?

9. What claim did Jesus make regarding himself through this incident? (see Psalm 103:2-3 and Leviticus 16:15-16)

10. How does Jesus self identification as "the Son of Man" help his claim to have authority? (see Daniel 7:13-14)

11. Why is it good, that in Jesus, we have one who has the authority to forgive sins? (see Luke 4:1-14 and Hebrews 4:14-16)

12. What can help us to acknowledge Jesus' authority over us?

Prayer Points

Study 4: Jesus' challenge

Luke 5:27-39

Getting Started

1. What have been some of the challenges you have faced in life? What helped you through those challenges?

Investigate Luke 5:27-39

2. What challenge does Jesus give to Levi? (v. 27-28)

3. Why are the Pharisees and teachers of the law upset with Jesus? (v. 30)

4. How does Jesus describe his mission? (vv. 31-32)

5. Why is it right for the disciple of Jesus not to fast? (vv. 34-35)

6. What do verses 36-38 teach us about the new age that Jesus has ushered in?

7. How does verse 39 explain the concerns of the Pharisees and teachers of the law?

Thinking it through

8. What challenges do we face as we follow Jesus today?

9. How are Jesus' words in verses 31-32 both deeply reassuring and deeply challenging?

10. How can we mistakenly communicate that Jesus came for the healthy rather than the sick?

Prayer Points

Study 5: Defying expectations

Luke 6:1-16

Getting Started

1. What have you found to be the most surprising aspects of Jesus' life and ministry?

Investigate Luke 6:1-16

2. Read Deuteronomy 23:25. How does this help us understand the Pharisees issue in verses 1-2?

3. What point is Jesus trying to make when he refers to this incident with King David? (vv. 3-5)

4. According to Jesus, why does he surpass King David? (v. 5, see also Luke 1:32-33)

5. How would you describe the Pharisees and teachers of the law's attitude towards Jesus? (vv. 6-7)

6. How does Jesus demonstrate the claim he made in verse 5? (vv. 8-10)

7. How does the crippled man demonstrate his faith in Jesus?
(v. 10)

Thinking it through

9. Which teaching of Jesus do you think might defy Western cultural expectations today? Why?

10. What sort of attitudes today might keep people from considering Jesus' claims over their life?

11. How would you treat others who don't keep religious expectations as well as you do?

12. Given Jesus' claim to have authority to interpret God's law, how will that impact our application of the Old Testament law?

Prayer Points

Study 6: Jesus' values

Luke 6:17-26

Getting Started

1. What makes people happy and feel secure?

Investigate Luke 6:1-16

2. Who is present in this scene and who does Jesus address in this scene? (vv. 17-20)

3. According to Jesus, what kind of people are blessed? (vv. 20-22)

4. In verse 23, what sort of perspective does Jesus want his disciples to have on their lives?

5. Who does Jesus warn in verses 24-26?

Thinking it through

6. Read Matthew 5:3-12. How is this similar and different to Jesus words in verses 20-23?

7. How are Jesus' words in vv. 24-26 deeply challenging for Christians in western societies?

8. What sort of difference does eternity beyond death make to your life now?

9. Why might being rich, well fed and enjoying a good reputation, work against you in the kingdom of God?

Prayer Points

Study 7: Kingdom ethics

Luke 6:27-36

Getting Started

1. What sort of ethics do you think are at work in our world today? Which ones are we tempted to adopt into our own life?

Investigate Luke 6:27-36

2. What is Jesus' first most basic principle for how we treat other people? (v. 31)

3. How might this basic principle be worked out in practice? (vv .27-30)

4. What is Jesus' second most basic principle for how we treat other people? (v. 36)

5. How might this principle be worked out in practice? (vv. 32-35)

6. How are sinners portrayed in verses 32-36?

7. What two reasons does Jesus offer for loving our enemies? (v. 35)

Thinking it through

8. Think through the examples Jesus offers in vv. 27-30, 35. What might these situations look like in your day to day life?

9. What makes being merciful to others difficult?

10. What place does reward have in your approach to living the Christian life?

11. Read Luke 23:32-35. How did Jesus practice what he preached?

Prayer Points

Study 8: Wisdom worth listening to

Luke 6:37-49

Getting Started

1. “Who are we to judge?” In what aspects of life, does our culture question *our ability* to make judgements?

2. What aspects of life is *our culture* ready to question and make judgements?

Investigate Luke 6:38-49

3. What three ways can we show the same generosity towards others, as God has shown us? (v. 37)

4. In verse 38 Jesus uses the illustration of measuring grain out in the market place. What is Jesus trying to illustrate?

5. What is Jesus cautioning us against in verses 41-42?

6. What does the tree and fruit parable teach us about a teacher and their student? (vv. 43-44)

7. How are we like fruit trees? (v. 45)

8. Who is entitled to call Jesus “Lord”? (v. 46)

9. What sort of judgement is made between people in verses 46-49?

Thinking it through

10. What circumstances are you more likely to judge and condemn others rather than show forgiveness?

11. Should we never presume to tell a fellow Christian where or when they are not living God’s way? Discuss

12. What helpful ways can we make sure we are building our lives on the rock?

Prayer Points

Study 9: When all seems lost

Luke 7:1-17

Getting Started

1. What do people often turn to when all seems lost?

Investigate Luke 7:1-17

2. According to the Jewish elders why did the centurion deserve to have Jesus attend the servant? (vv. 4-5)

3. How would you describe the centurion's approach to Jesus? (vv. 6-8)

4. What does Jesus commend about the centurion? (v. 9)

5. How would you describe the mother's situation in verses 11-12?

6. Read Numbers 19:13. What does Jesus risk in verse 14?

7. How would you describe the reaction to Jesus in verses 16-17?

Thinking it through

8. How are we tempted to think like the Jewish elders in verses 4-5?

9. Read James 4:6-10. How do these verses explain the centurion and widow's approach to Jesus?

10. How does verse 13 add to your understanding of Jesus from Luke's gospel?

11. What sort of confidence do these verses give us as disciples of Jesus?

Prayer Points