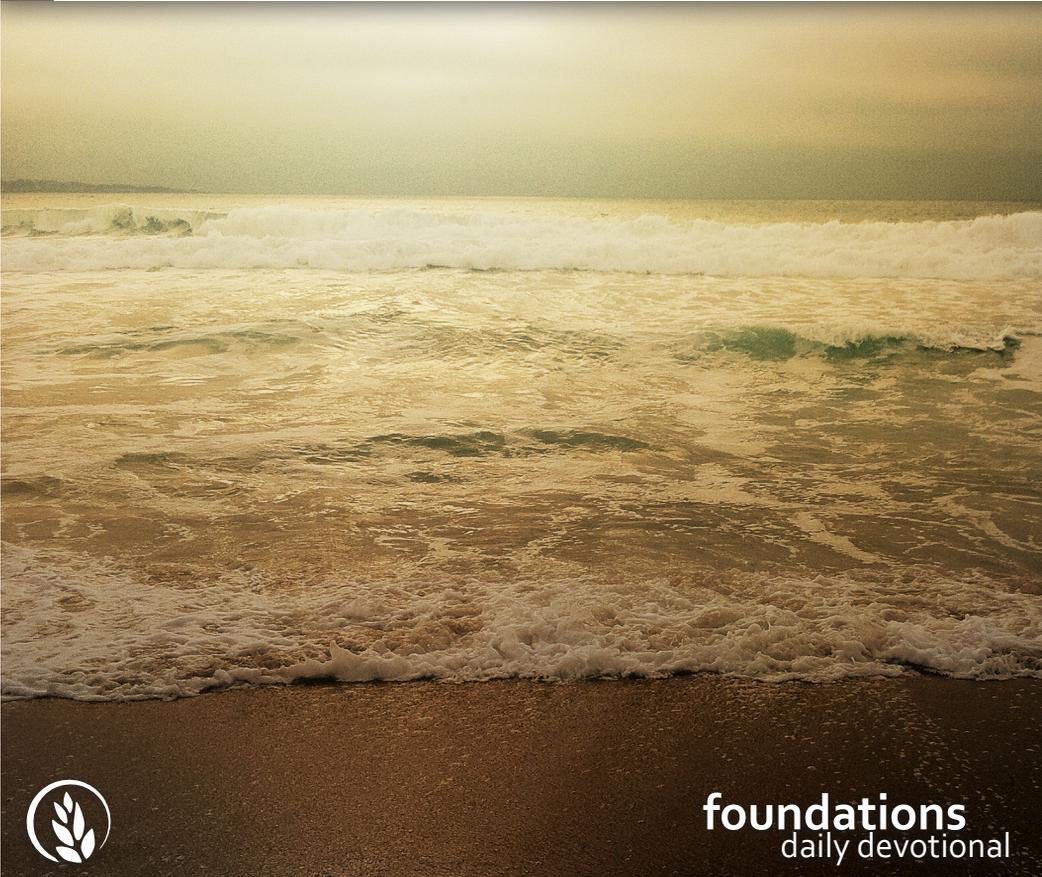


SOUTHLAND CHURCH

THE GOSPEL OF
LUKE

30 Day Devotional



foundations
daily devotional

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LUKE

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DAY 1 **READ:** Luke 1

It is a few decades after Jesus' death and news of Him is spreading rapidly throughout the Roman Empire. A well-educated Gentile has devoted himself to discovering as much as possible about this man from Nazareth. The result was the Gospel of Luke. In this account of Jesus' life we see a great hope for people today. Luke wasn't Jewish and he didn't know Jesus personally. Despite this, he wrote with a great intimacy of Jesus. As Luke grew to know more about Jesus, he grew to know Jesus personally. As we study Jesus' life we too can build a personal intimacy with Him.

In the first chapter we are given a detailed account of the birth of John the Baptist as well as the blessing of Mary as the future mother of Jesus. From the beginning of his Gospel, Luke develops a key theme: people's responses to God matter. We are given a great amount of detail about how Zacharias (v 12, 18) and Mary (v 29, 34, 38) each responded to the angels' announcements of their sons (John the Baptist and Jesus). Further, Luke chose to include some of the most beautiful, poetic responses of praise to God found in the Bible. Mary praised God for His mercy and how He acts toward people (v 46-55). Zacharias offered God grateful praises revolving around salvation and the forgiveness of sin (v 68-79).

**JOURNALING AND PRAYER**

1. Luke earnestly desired to get to know Jesus. Do you have the same desire? Ask God to help you hunger for a deeper intimacy with Jesus as you study the Book of Luke.
2. We are so blessed to see how people responded to God in Scripture! Look back over Mary's and Zacharias' responses to God. They make some great declarations about God's character: He is holy, merciful, deliverer, saviour, righteous, and forgiving. Do you believe this? If you have trouble believing any of these confess it to God and ask Him to help you know these areas of His character.
3. Pray for each member of your family by name. Ask that God would give them a hunger to get to know Him. Ask that He would teach them about Himself and His Word. Ask that He would reveal Himself in the midst of their struggles (for example, if someone struggles with feelings of sadness you can pray that God would reveal His joy to them).

DAY 2 **READ:** Luke 2

The second chapter of Luke's gospel describes Jesus' birth and early life. Caesar Augustus had decreed a mandatory census for the entire Roman Empire. This census would have been a painful reminder to Israel that they were subject to Rome. However, even in the midst of Israel's humiliation, God was at work in their favour. God used this census to bring Joseph and Mary to Bethlehem – the prophesied birthplace of the Messiah (Micah 5:2).

There was great joy and wonder upon the arrival of Jesus. Heaven was excited (v 13-14), the shepherds were excited (v 15-18, 20), Mary was excited (19), and those who'd been praying and fasting for the arrival of the Messiah were excited (v 27-32, 34-35, 38). Everyone marvelled at Jesus because the prophecies about Him revealed that He would change the course of human history. He was to be the Saviour and Christ the Lord (v 11, 26). He was the revelation of salvation to Gentiles and the fulfillment of God's promises to Israel (v 32). He would also cause division – some "rising" to follow Him, others "falling" by

rejecting Him (v 34). Imagine their sense of awe: because of this fragile, seemingly helpless baby, nothing would ever be the same.



JOURNALING AND PRAYER

1. This chapter is filled with wonder and awe at Jesus. Even his own mother had to “treasure up all these things, pondering them in her heart” (19, 51). Reflect on the statements about Jesus’ identity in this chapter. Don’t rush – consider the impact of each declaration of who Jesus is (for example, what does it mean that He is Saviour and Lord? What does it mean that He causes some to rise and others to fall?). Worship and thank Him for who He is. As you pause to think about each characteristic, ask the Holy Spirit to give you more insight and understanding about who Jesus is. Write down any thoughts or observations in your journal.
2. Pray for our region. There is a history of faith in Southern Manitoba, but to many it has become dry and dull. Ask God to fill the churches in our region with wonder and joy over who Jesus is and what He has done.

DAY 3



READ: Luke 3:1-23

Now that Jesus has been fully introduced, the focus of the story is temporarily shifted to another man: John the Baptist. John’s role was to prepare people to receive the coming Saviour (v 4-6). God used John to open people’s eyes to the weight and severity of sin (v 9, 17) as well as the importance of repentance (v 8). But there was a problem: people are not capable of living sinless lives on their own. We are fallen and broken. Those who were truly sorrowful over their sin recognized that they needed help to overcome their sin and brokenness. Their hearts were ready to receive the Messiah. They were ready for another person to enter the story, Jesus of Nazareth (v 16, 21).



JOURNALING AND PRAYER

1. Repentance is a key first step in following Jesus. Ask the Holy Spirit to search your heart for any sin (actions, attitudes, etc.). Confess these to God (1 John 1:9). If this sin is a recurring problem in your life or if you can’t seem to feel release from private confession to God commit to confessing it to a mature, godly person. Mature believers can help guide us and help us learn to walk out repentance.
2. A key verse in this passage is “Then what shall we do?” (v 10 NASB). Repentance requires not only acknowledgement of and sorrow for our sin; it requires a change of lifestyle. Ask God for a practical step in repenting from the sin you just confessed.
3. Pray that the Church in Canada would be broken over her sin. Pray that she would realize how much she’s offended God and that she would come to genuine repentance.

DAY 4



READ: Luke 3:21-4:13

Before describing Jesus’ ministry, Luke pauses to explain why Jesus is qualified to be the Messiah. First, and perhaps most importantly, God approved Jesus as His Son (3:22). This event echoed Messianic prophecies found in the Jewish Scriptures (Psalm 2:7 and Isaiah 42:1-4). Second, Jesus had the correct lineage. He was a descendant of David, as the Messiah was promised to be (2 Samuel 7:13-16, Psalm 89:3-4). Further, Luke ties Jesus’ lineage all the way to Adam. This indicates that Jesus was qualified to represent all people before God – not just the Jews (as all people descend from Adam, but not all descend from Abraham). Finally, Luke points to Jesus’ perfection, giving Jesus moral authority to be the Messiah. Jesus descended from Adam just as we did. He emptied Himself of His divinity (Philippians 2:6-7) and functioned as a normal human being. However, He did not fall to temptation (4:1-13). He resisted the devil by trusting wholeheartedly in the Word of God. In this passage we see Jesus contrasted to the rest of humanity. People were baptized by John to symbolize their repentance from sin. Jesus did not need to be baptized to turn from His own sins as He had none! Rather, in being baptized Jesus identified Himself with regular people and demonstrated His readiness to lay down His life for them.



JOURNALING AND PRAYER

1. 1 Corinthians 10:13 says “No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide the way of escape, that you may be able to endure it” (ESV). Look back at how Jesus responded to temptation. What can you learn from Him?
2. The enemy often chooses to tempt us when we are at our weakest (hungry, tired, lonely, etc.). The enemy used this same strategy on Jesus (4:2). Think about the times when you are at your weakest. Ask God for His wisdom on how to withstand temptation at those times.
3. Pray for our government. They have a crucial role in society and there is great pressure on Christians to lay down their values and take up the opinions of the world. Ask God to empower these leaders with strength, wisdom and boldness in the face of temptation. Ask that they would place their hope and confidence in God alone.

DAY 5



READ: Luke 4:14-44

This passage illustrates the beginning of Jesus’ ministry. We see Jesus standing up in the synagogue and reading a well-known Messianic prophecy from Isaiah (v 17-19, Isaiah 61:1-2). It was commonplace for male congregants to read from the Scriptures in the synagogues of Jesus’ day. However, what happened next was unheard of. Jesus looked at the people and said “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing” (v 21). This is the first time Jesus declares Himself to be the Messiah (all of Luke’s previous allusions to Jesus’ messianic role came from other people). From that point forward, people were forced to make a choice: Was this man from Nazareth telling the truth, was he lying or was he a lunatic? Many chose to take offense at Jesus and harden their hearts to His message of salvation (v 22-29). Jesus did not let this opposition stop Him. The introduction to His

ministry continues with examples of miracles He performed (v 33-41). These miracles serve as both evidence of Jesus' authority/power and examples of Jesus' compassion for those in need.



JOURNALING AND PRAYER

1. Jesus came to preach good news to the poor, proclaim freedom to the captives, give sight to the blind and release the prisoner (v 18). Ask God how He wants to do this in your life.
2. Jesus is powerful. The miracles we read about in the Gospels are real, historical accounts. However, our culture teaches us to not believe in miracles. It says that only what can be seen, touched and scientifically proven is true. Ask God to search your heart. Do you believe in miracles? Confess to Him any unbelief and ask for His help to know the truth.
3. Pray for Israel. It was from the Jewish nation that the Church was born. From the same nation much of Jesus' greatest opposition came. Today Israel's people have the same choice: love and follow Jesus or harden their hearts to Him. Pray that many would see that the Jewish Scriptures point to Jesus.

DAY 6



READ: Luke 5:1-26

These stories describe something fascinating about Jesus' interactions with people. Unlike the leaders of the world, Jesus chooses followers based on their hearts, not their talents, abilities or social status. Simon Peter was a blue-collar fisherman, not a young rabbinical student. But through his actions we see that he was obedient and humble. Simon Peter knew that, because he was a sinful man, he had nothing to offer Jesus (v 8). The leper was an outcast. He was probably afraid of rejection because he had never experienced another person's compassion. However, he moved past his fears to ask Jesus for help (v 13). In the third story Jesus could have chosen to interact with the powerful Pharisees who were present (v 17). Instead, He healed the paralytic who was willing to do whatever it took to get closer to Jesus (including going through a hole in the roof! [v 19]). Jesus responds to people who have willing, tender hearts toward Him. He does not require social status or perfection; He asks only that we would come.



JOURNALING AND PRAYER

1. After the greatest catch of his life, where all his monetary needs would be completely taken care of, Simon Peter left everything to follow Jesus. A modern equivalent would be receiving a big promotion or making a major business deal and walking away for Christ. Peter could have said, "Thanks," and done his own thing. But Jesus had spoken a deeper dream into his heart: "From now on you will be catching men" (v 10). Jesus spoke to that place in the Simon Peter's heart that longed for more than wealth. Ask God if there's anything in your life that He wants you to walk away from in order to get closer to Him. If He shows you something ask Him to reveal why He wants you to walk away from this.
2. In the midst of His ministry's busyness, Jesus often went on His own to pray (v 16). Connecting with God regularly helps us to become more compassionate. It teaches us

to hear and obey the Holy Spirit's promptings to love others. Ask God for one practical way you can show compassion to someone today.

3. Pray for Christians in the marketplace. There is great temptation to pursue riches and power instead of Jesus. Ask that God would rid these Christians of their idols. Pray that they would follow Jesus in their professions. Pray that as these people forsake the goals of the world in favour of the goals of Jesus, many people would take notice and submit their hearts to Christ.

DAY 7



READ: Luke 5:27-6:12

Along with stories of people wholeheartedly following Jesus, Luke shows how many rejected Him. In this passage we see two ways people respond to Jesus. People with soft hearts will turn from their sinful ways and follow Jesus. We are given Levi the tax-collector (later referred to as Matthew) as an example of this type of person. While we cannot know for certain what was going on in Levi's heart, one imagines he was plagued with guilt for taking advantage of others. He had probably heard about Jesus but felt too stained, too sinful to be accepted by this man of God. Imagine his reaction when Jesus said, "Follow Me" (5:27). What a joyous occasion that must have been! That he, a sinner among the worst, would not only be addressed by Jesus, but be chosen as part of His inner circle! Levi was not only forgiven, he was called to join Jesus' ministry!

In contrast, the Pharisees represent people with hard hearts. They refused to submit to Jesus because it would require them to give up their power and prestige. In this passage we see them repeatedly challenging Jesus (5:30, 33; 6:2, 7, 11). Jesus wisely responds by declaring that the old and the new cannot mix together. Jesus knew His presence ruined the old way of thinking and that, for this reason, some would reject Him (5:39). However, He also knew that clinging to old customs and laws would ruin the Gospel (5:36-38). The power of the Gospel to save and redeem was more important than the legalism and death of the old system.



JOURNALING AND PRAYER

1. Jesus does not discriminate based on our pasts. He does not choose followers based on their résumés. He looks at the heart. Do you ever feel unworthy to be called His follower? Do you desire to live a life pleasing to Him, but feel like your past prohibits you from doing so? Share your heart with God. Ask Him to reveal how He sees you.
2. Meditate on 5:36-39. What do you think Jesus meant when He said this? How does this apply to your life? Write down your thoughts.
3. Pray for Church leaders. Ask God to give them soft, humble hearts and to protect them from pride and legalism. Ask that their love for Jesus would dwarf any temptation to submit to man-made religion.

DAY 8



READ: Luke 6:12-49

Jesus' popularity was increasing. Multitudes of people were coming to Him, desiring to hear what He had to say, to receive teaching, and be cleansed from unclean spirits (v 17-

18). Jesus has never been interested solely in the quantity of followers He has. He desires followers of the best quality. Thus, He launched into His famous Sermon on the Mount. He was effectively saying, “If you’re going to follow me, this is what you’re committing to.” As Jesus’ modern-day followers, we are also called to commit to the lifestyle He described. This lifestyle flies in the face of worldly “wisdom.” Jesus taught that negative circumstances can work in our favour, while positive ones can harm us eternally (v 21-26). We are called to love the people who are least deserving of our love (v 32-33). We are called to give up our rights for the sake of others (v 29-30). As people who call ourselves Christians, we must live lives radically set apart from the world around us.

JOURNALING AND PRAYER

1. Living this kind of life requires great trust in God. We must trust that He is faithful and all-knowing. We must trust that He is merciful and will repay everyone according to their deeds (v 37-38). If these are not true statements of God, then a radical lifestyle is purposeless. Do you really trust that God knows best? Ask the Holy Spirit to search your heart on this.
2. Jesus spent an entire night in prayer before finalizing His group of twelve apostles (v 12-13). Spend some time praying about any decisions you are facing right now.
3. We are called to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us (v 27-28). Our world is filled with people who hate Christians and the Church. Pray that God would soften these people’s hearts to the Gospel. Pray that they would be able to discern between true believers and false ones (much damage to the Church’s reputation is done by false believers/teachers). Pray that they would see the good things done by the Church. Pray that God would place true believers in these people’s lives to provide an influential testimony to them.

DAY 9

 **READ:** Luke 7

Chapter 7 contains two major themes. They are the importance of faith (responding to Jesus by trusting Him) and Jesus’ compassion. The centurion is commended for his faith (v 9). Jesus then heals the centurion’s slave – an act of compassion (v 10). Later on Jesus sees a widow weeping at the funeral of her only son. This woman had nobody in her life to support her. Jesus’ heart goes out to her and He raises her son from the dead (v 15). The passage goes on to describe, in a shockingly honest way, John’s the Baptist’s questions about Jesus. John, who was imprisoned at the time, began to doubt whether Jesus was the Messiah. Jesus recognized that John was an imperfect human. Rather than rebuking John, Jesus sent the messengers back with a sign that He was, indeed, the foretold Messiah (v 20-23). Jesus goes on to rebuke the Pharisees for their lack of faith (v 30-35). Their hearts were hard and un-repentant (“not having been baptized by John”). Rather than acknowledging their doubt and seeking the truth, they rejected Jesus entirely (v 30). We are given yet another illustration of a person’s faith and Jesus’ compassion in the story of the sinful woman anointing Jesus’ feet (36-47). Luke sums up this section by quoting Jesus: “Your faith has saved you.” We are all saved by trusting in Jesus, who forgives our sins out of His compassion.

JOURNALING AND PRAYER

1. Ask Jesus where in your life He wants to show His compassion. Then ask where He wants you to show someone else compassion.
2. John the Baptist had doubt, but He brought it to Jesus seeking truth. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal any areas of doubt in your heart. Maybe you have unbelief regarding some biblical truth. Confess this to God and ask Him to reveal the truth to you through the Word.
3. Pray for your family today. Ask God to reveal His compassion to them in the midst of their circumstances. Ask that they would be given a greater measure of faith.

DAY 10

 **READ:** Luke 8

Luke 8 begins with a description of following Jesus. First we are given a brief description of some of Jesus’ followers (v 1-3). Then, we are told how to follow Jesus. It is not about saying the right words or obeying the correct practices – it is about the heart (v 4-15). We are warned that following Jesus isn’t an easy job. Many will reject Jesus’ message immediately (v 12). Others will receive it, but turn due to temptation (v 13) or the worries, riches or pleasures of this life (v 14). Those who truly follow Jesus “have heard the word in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance” (v 15). We are then reminded of one major reason why we should follow Jesus: He is Yahweh. He has authority over the weather (v 22-25, Psalm 107:28-30). He has authority over evil (v 26-39). He has authority over disease, and even death (v 40-56).

JOURNALING AND PRAYER

1. Meditate on the Parable of the Sower and the Seed. What kind of soil is your heart? Ask God to show you what the next step is for you, in improving the quality of your soil.
2. Jesus still has the kind of authority seen in Luke 8 today. Spend some time worshipping Him for this.
3. Pray for schools. Ask God to raise up many godly teachers, administrators and support staff. Pray that Christian students would grow in boldness and courage in witnessing to their friends. Ask God to reverse the tide of wickedness that has been moving into our schools (ex. teachers being forced to teach immoral curriculum, students being bullied by peers).

DAY 11

 **READ:** Luke 9:1-27

In this passage we begin to see the cost of following Jesus. Jesus sent out the twelve, warning them that they would face rejection (v 5). However, this did not shake them. Approval from Jesus was more important to the twelve than approval from the world. Later, we see that thousands gathered to hear Jesus speak and receive His healing – even if it meant they might go without food (v 12). Having the benefit of hindsight, we can see

that Jesus is more than capable of providing for the needs of those who follow Him (v 13-17, Matthew 6:25-33). Peter spoke the truth about Jesus’ identity, even though it meant rejecting the world’s beliefs (v 18-20). From this point on in the Gospel of Luke, we will see Jesus preparing the disciples for His death and their rejection by the world (v 22-26). We also see Jesus giving His disciples a beautiful promise: “whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it” (v 24).

 **JOURNALING AND PRAYER**

1. “The earth is the Lord’s, and everything in it” (Psalm 24:1 NIV). Jesus is our provider. Everything we have comes from Him. This includes material things (money, homes, etc.) as well as non-material things (relationships, gifts/abilities, time, etc.). Write down ten things the Lord has provided for you in the last few months. Spend time in thanksgiving for this.
2. A serious Christian walk requires a daily choice to live for Jesus. If we want to be completely committed to the kingdom of God, we must set our resolve on Him every day. Memorize Luke 9:23-24. As you do so, ask the Holy Spirit to imprint this truth on your heart.
3. Pray for the congregation at Southland. Ask God to increase our devotion to Him. Ask God to teach us how to be wholly submitted to Him. Pray for a greater revelation of God’s love and character. This is the key motivation for a life that truly follows Jesus.

DAY 12

 **READ:** Luke 9:28-62

As we’ve seen, much of Luke’s gospel can be organized into two categories: why we should submit ourselves to Jesus and what following Him looks like. This passage follows suit. We are to trust Jesus because He has divine approval. God commands us to listen to Jesus (v 28-36). To love God means obeying His commands (1 John 5:3). Therefore, we cannot love God if we’re not actively listening to Jesus! Listening to Jesus means becoming the kind of person He asks us to be. Luckily, Jesus wants us to succeed. He repeatedly tells us what He requires of His disciples. We are to trust Him and not rely on our own power in ministry (v 37-45). We are to lay aside all desires for power and authority, and instead become humble servants of all (v 46-48). We are to love children (v 48). We are to recognize that all followers of Jesus are able to minister, not merely those employed by a church (v 49-50). We are to love others and offer them Jesus’ salvation, even when they reject us (v 54-56). Above all, we are to reset our priorities. Things that were once crucially important to us must now become “rubbish” to us (Philippians 3:8). Our utmost priority must be knowing and following Jesus (v 57-62).

 **JOURNALING AND PRAYER**

1. Are there any areas of your life where you are relying on yourself instead of on God? Confess this to God. Ask God how you can change this. Ask Him to empower you to live in reliance on Him. (You can also ask for the desire to rely on Him!)
2. Review Luke 9:23-24 (yesterday’s memory verses). Did you intentionally set your eyes on Jesus today?

3. Pray for the volunteers at Southland. Ask God to show them the importance of their work. Ask God to increase their love for people and their ability to fulfill the tasks set before them. Pray that God would call many more people who love Him to serve in the church.

DAY 13

 **READ:** Luke 10:1-24

Our mission as believers can be summed up as these: share the Gospel with others, love God and others, serve people, and rejoice in our salvation (and, by extension, rejoice in God). Luke 10:1-24 expands on this. First, we see Jesus sending out the seventy-two, requiring them to trust God. He asks them to pray, which implies a trust that God will answer (v 2). He also sends them out without provisions to display that God will provide for their needs along the way (v 7-8). He requires that these ministers not only preach the Gospel, but that they also heal the sick (v 9). Proclamation of the Gospel is tied to compassion and service. Upon returning, the seventy-two celebrate the authority that Jesus has given them over demons (v 17). Jesus, while acknowledging that this gift is good, points them toward a greater gift – salvation. While we should be grateful for the spiritual gifts we are given, nothing compares to the joy of knowing that “your name is recorded in heaven” (v 20). We are to take a cue from Jesus and celebrate the Father and what He has done (v 21-22). We have the amazing privilege of knowing Jesus (v 23-24)! What a cause to celebrate!

 **JOURNALING AND PRAYER**

1. Jesus taught that sharing the Gospel is tied together with serving people and having compassion for them. Ask God for one practical step you can do this week in each of these areas (sharing the Gospel, serving and compassion). It might be one step that encompasses the three or a step in each area. Write whatever He shows you down and ask the Holy Spirit to help you follow through.
2. Review how Jesus praised God in verses 21-22. Worship not only glorifies God, it also changes our hearts. Spend some time worshipping God. Ask the Holy Spirit to show you how to do this. You can praise God for who He is and what He’s done.
3. The Holy Spirit empowered Jesus’ followers to minister in Luke 10. Ask the Holy Spirit who you should pray for today. Pray for the first person who comes to mind, regardless of how you feel about it. God desires to partner with you in loving this person! If you don’t know how to pray ask the Holy Spirit to show you what to pray for or just pray over the person the same things you would like to receive.

DAY 14

 **READ:** Luke 10:25-11:13

Luke 10:25-11:13 describes how disciples of Jesus are supposed to act in three key relationships: with other people, with Jesus Himself, and with God through prayer. Jesus gave the parable of the Good Samaritan in response to the law expert’s questioning (10:25-37). The moral of this parable is that anyone in need is our neighbor, so we should love them as ourselves (10:37). Next we see Jesus interacting with Mary and Martha (10:38-42). He says that, while other things may be important, they are nothing compared to having a

relationship with Jesus (v 42). When setting our priorities in life, Jesus must be at the top of our list. Finally, we see Jesus teaching His disciples how to pray (11:1-13). First, Jesus teaches what we call the Lord’s Prayer to show the importance of worshipping God and depending on Him for everything (11:2-4). Then Jesus teaches about persistence in prayer and the Father’s generosity and goodness toward people (11:9-13).

 **JOURNALING AND PRAYER**

1. The Jews of Jesus’ day hated Samaritans. Jesus used a Samaritan in His parable to show that *anyone* can be our neighbor and *anyone* can be justified before God. Search your heart – are there any groups you discriminate against in your heart? Are you biased based on ethnicity, age, gender or any other criteria? Confess this to God. Ask Him to show you His heart for these people. Spend some time praying blessings over this group.
2. Spend some time meditating on Jesus’ teaching on prayer (11:1-13). Write down 5 things we can learn from this passage.
3. In Luke 11:8 the word translated as “persistence” implies shameless boldness. Think of a strong desire of your heart. Spend some time praying with “shameless boldness” for this desire. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you pray this way (ex. by giving you specific things to pray for related to this desire).

DAY 15

 **READ: Luke 11:14-54**

In this passage we see some of the different ways people oppose Jesus. First, Jesus heals a demon-possessed man. Upon seeing this, some people reject Jesus, saying He is allied with evil powers. Others refuse to take this miracle as evidence to believe in Jesus – they ask for “a sign from heaven” (v 15-16). Jesus uses this as an opportunity to declare, yet again, who He is (v 17, 20). Jesus casting out demons in God’s name is a sign that the kingdom of heaven had begun to arrive (v 20). Then Jesus warns the crowds about their response to Him. He teaches about the foolishness of turning back to sin after repenting of it (v 24-26). It is also foolish to ignore Jesus, as He is more significant than anyone else in history (v 29-32). In the second half of the passage we see one of Jesus’ most direct rebukes recorded in the Gospels. In the manner of Old Testament prophets, Jesus declares the coming judgment for those who practice hypocrisy (v 37-54).

 **JOURNALING AND PRAYER**

1. In verses 24-26 Jesus gives us a strong warning against returning to sin after we have confessed and repented. Proverbs 26:11 (NIV) puts it this way: “As a dog returns to its vomit, so fools repeat their folly.” Both passages strongly say that it is foolishness to return to past sin. Ask God to show you any areas where you have returned to past sin. Confess this to Him and ask for help in permanently repenting.
2. Jesus gave six warnings to the religious leaders. Ask God to search your life – do you do any of these things? Confess anything He reveals to you. Ask the Holy Spirit to give you godly sorrow over your sin (2 Corinthians 7:10-11).
 - focussing on religious practices while neglecting justice and the love of God

- seeking honour and privilege for oneself
- putting on a religious front, while hiding sin in your heart
- weighing others down with burdens and laws, but not helping them live these out
- hiding disobedience with “good” deeds
- refusing to walk in the knowledge of Jesus and, in so doing, preventing others from getting to know Him.

3. Pray for the Christian leaders you know. Ask that God would prevent them from falling into the traps Jesus warned of. Ask God to give them integrity and steadfastness. Ask that they way they live their lives would lead people to Jesus instead of away from Him.

DAY 16

 **READ: Luke 12**

In Luke 12, Jesus warns His disciples of things that may lure them away from Him. Jesus gives His disciples this message while a crowd is present (v 1). He wants to ensure that, no matter what happens, they will fear God and not man (v 4-5). He warns them that they must protect their hearts, for nothing is hidden that will not be revealed (2-3). Both the hidden good and the hidden bad are seen by God. Jesus knew that a revelation of God’s love would strengthen the disciples in times of trouble (v 6-7). He also promised them that the Holy Spirit would give them words when they would be put on trial for their faith (v 11-12). Jesus then continues His description of snares that lie in wait to trip up His followers. One major trap is greed (v 13-21). The disciples are told to be rich toward God (v 21) and guard themselves against every type of greed (v 15). Again, the knowledge of God is the best protection. We can defend ourselves against greed and worry by clinging to the truth that God lovingly provides for our basic needs (v 22-34). The final stumbling block that Jesus describes is a lack of knowledge or preparation. Those with emergency kits are more likely to survive a natural disaster. So too, those armed with knowledge of what is to come are more likely to survive with their trust in God intact. Jesus teaches us about His return so that we might be prepared (v 34-59). We must take these teachings to heart. If we do so, when we see these things happening we can rejoice that His coming draws near, rather than becoming bitter toward God because of the hardships we see.

 **JOURNALING AND PRAYER**

1. Look at your life based on verses 22-34. Do you have any worry in your life? How can you grow in trusting in God?
2. Luke 12:35 (NASB) says, “Be dressed in readiness, and keep your lamps lit.” What does this mean?
3. Pray for parents you know. They have the God-given opportunity to shape their children’s character. Ask God to grow parents’ relationships with Him, that they might model this to their children. Ask God to grow their character (ex. not worrying, not displaying greed). Ask God to teach them how to pray for their children (even parents who already pray regularly can grow).

DAY 17 **READ:** Luke 13

Luke 13 centers on the kingdom of heaven. It opens with a discussion on repentance (v 1-5). Jesus makes it clear that only those who repent of their sins will enter the kingdom of heaven (v 3). To please Jesus we must “bear fruit, in keeping with repentance” (v 6-9, also 2:8). Next we see Jesus healing a woman on the Sabbath (v 10-16). Jesus uses the attention He received as a result of the miracle to teach people about the kingdom of heaven (v 17-18). The Jews expected the Messiah’s kingdom to come quickly and powerfully. Jesus illustrated the differing reality through two objects: a mustard seed and yeast (v 19-21). While Jesus’ kingdom had small, unassuming beginnings, it would prove to be the most powerful, influential kingdom ever seen on earth. However, entry into this kingdom is not guaranteed (v 23-30). Chapter 13 ends with Jesus lamenting over Jerusalem (v 31-35). Because He loved them, Jesus desired to lead the Jews. He longed to see His kingdom established among God’s chosen people, but they rejected Him (v 34). The invitation to enter the kingdom of heaven is open to all, but only those who accept it with the whole hearts may enter.

 **JOURNALING AND PRAYER**

1. Jesus taught these things because He wanted to spark a desire for the kingdom of heaven in His listeners. Having an eternally-focussed mindset can help us faithfully endure whatever comes our way. Look back at what Jesus said about the kingdom of heaven. While you are doing this, ask God to grow your desire for heaven.
2. Jesus had compassion even when He faced opposition for it (v 12-16). Are you compassionate? Are you compassionate even when it is inconvenient? Pray for one practical way you can show compassion today.
3. Pray for Israel. In Luke 13:31-35 Jesus lamented for Jerusalem because He loved them so dearly. He still feels this way today. Ask God to bring many Jews to Him through Jesus. Ask that God would build and strengthen Messianic churches in Israel, giving them boldness and power to preach the Gospel.

DAY 18 **READ:** Luke 14

Luke 14 begins with Jesus dining in the home of a Pharisee on the Sabbath. He brings up a topic that most dinner guests would not venture into with these Pharisees. He asks, “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?” (v 3). As the Pharisees were unable to respond, Jesus took the opportunity to teach the other guests, while rebuking the Pharisees. First He talked about humility. “Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted” (v 11). Then Jesus taught that it is best to give expecting nothing back (v 12-14). Next he shares the Parable of the Wedding Banquet, indicating that we must respond correctly to Jesus now before it is too late (v 15-24). Each of these topics was an area where the Pharisees failed regularly. Then Jesus turned to His disciples to give them special teaching. He talked about how our love for Him should be so great that, in comparison, it makes our love for others seem like hate (v 26). He says those who are wise will count the cost of following Him before beginning their journey (v 28-32). He teaches that we must give up our own rights and not become attached to anything (v 33). We must

be willing to give anything required of us to follow Jesus. He will settle for nothing less than everything.

 **JOURNALING AND PRAYER**

1. Jesus commands us to count the cost of following Him (v 28-32). He does not want half-hearted followers. He does not want people who give up when it is too hard. He wants followers who have looked at what a devoted Christian life could cost them and recognize that any loss is nothing in comparison to walking intimately with Jesus. Spend some time counting the cost of following Jesus in your own life. Is there anything you’ve lost as a result of following Him? (If not, you should question how seriously you are actually following Him). What could you potentially lose?
2. Make a list of everything you have learned about Jesus while reading through the Gospel of Luke. Aim for five to ten points. Spend some time praising Him for each of these points. As you meditate on this, pray that this intimacy with Jesus would be far more important to you than the things you might lose for following Him. Ask that your love for Him would grow more and more each day.
3. Pray for the Church in Canada. Many believers have not counted the cost of following Jesus. This has resulted in a lukewarm, half-hearted Church that gives a poor testimony to our nation. Pray that Jesus would purify His bride, the Church, and draw her lovingly into a wholehearted relationship with Him. Pray that people would come to know God in His love, holiness, mercy and justice. Pray that the Church would stand to fight against injustice and to love those in need. Pray that Canadians would walk away from empty religion and, in its place, embrace a pure faith in Jesus.

DAY 19 **READ:** Luke 15

Luke 15 opens with the Pharisees and scribes grumbling because Jesus is associating with sinners and tax collectors. It is in response to this grumbling that Jesus gives three parables that contain moving descriptions of God’s heart. In the Parable of the Lost Sheep, the shepherd (a picture of Jesus) leaves 99 sheep to go looking for one (v 4-6). We are told “there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance” (v 7). This heavenly joy is also illustrated in the Parable of the Lost Coin (v 8-10).

The Parable of the Prodigal Son (v 11-32) is unique to Luke’s gospel. Most Christians today can identify with the Prodigal Son when he says, “I will get up and go to my father, and will say to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight; I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me as one of your hired men’ ” (v 18-19). Many believers walk in shame over their sin. We think we are unworthy to experience intimacy with God. He could never be proud of us. Maybe He isn’t outwardly angry, but He must be inwardly disappointed in us. So we relegate ourselves to the place of servants. If only we could work for God, maybe this would pay back enough of the wrong we’ve done to allow us access to heaven. How far this is from the truth! As soon as someone turns to walk toward God, regardless of how much shame and guilt he carries, God runs toward him! The heavens celebrate! Jesus doesn’t call us to lives of shame; he calls us to rejoice over our acceptance into God’s family!

 **JOURNALING AND PRAYER**

1. Think back over what you’ve just read. What does it say about God’s heart? Write down anything that comes to mind, no matter how silly it may seem. Ask God to make it personal – how do these parables apply to your life? If God rejoiced over the people in the parables, how does He look at you? Spend some time praising God for what He shows you.
2. Meditate on the reaction of the older son and the father’s response (v 25-32). Ask God what He wants to speak to you through this section of the parable.
3. Pray for specific people you know who have walked away from the Lord. Ask God to show you His heart for them and pray this over these people. Ask God to call them home and reveal to them that you are never too sinful to come back to Him.

DAY 20

 **READ:** Luke 16

The parable of the shrewd manager is probably the most difficult parable in Luke to understand. But its point is clear to see —be generous and responsible with your resources. The parable centers on a steward who is accused of wasting the master’s goods. This leads the master calling for an accounting and the steward is fired. Facing unemployment and having no marketable skills beyond being a steward, he is in a dilemma, since he does not wish to beg or resort to demeaning physical labor. He decides on a course of action that will bring him into his neighbors’ good graces. He cuts the price that the Master is owed in order to remain in the good books of the debtors. Many commentators believe that he is cutting his own commission in reducing the price. In this case, it seems that the dishonest steward has learned something by his failure and comes up with a generous solution. He has given up his commission now so that he can receive gain later. This parable teaches the importance of thinking about how we are using our resources, especially the long-term benefits of how we are using them. True disciples should apply themselves to honor and serve God by their use of resources. They should think through their actions, both short and long term.

Jesus’ teaching in Luke 16 is briefly interrupted by this remark: “Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, were listening to all these things, and they were scoffing at Him (v. 14).” Jesus chose to address the Pharisees’ hearts. He knew that the love of money reflected inner wickedness and lack of submission to God. This was the real problem. Luke 16 ends with the Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus – yet another warning against greed (v 19-31). The rich man’s greed so consumed him, that it prevented him from gaining access to eternal life.

 **JOURNALING AND PRAYER**

1. What are 2-3 practical applications of the Parable of the Shrewd Steward (v 1-13) in your life?
2. Re-read Luke 16:31. Then read Romans 1:18-21 and 2:14-16. God reveals Himself to us constantly. Two important ways He does this are through the Law (both the written law and our consciences) and through nature. Praise God for supplying us with all we need to come to know Him.

3. Look back at the action steps God gave you on day thirteen (Luke 10:1-24). Did you follow through? If yes, thank God for helping you. If not, ask Him if this is still something you should do.
4. Pray for Christians in the marketplace. Ask God to protect them from greed. Pray that they would recognize that everything they have comes from God. Pray that they would grow in generosity. Pray that through this generosity they would lead many people to Jesus.

DAY 21

 **READ:** Luke 17

In Luke 17 Jesus continues to prepare His disciples for His coming departure. First, He briefly highlights four concepts. We are to guard ourselves against becoming stumbling blocks to others (v 1-2). We are warned to guard against sin and extend forgiveness to people (v 3-4). We are reminded that although our faith may seem very small, it can still be big enough to accomplish great things (v 5-6). Finally, we are reminded of the importance of serving God (v 7-10). The story continues with Jesus on the road to Jerusalem. Here we see Jesus healing ten lepers. It is noted that only one turns back to praise God for the miracle (v 11-19). The chapter concludes with Jesus teaching about His Second Coming (v 20-37). Jesus put a great deal of effort into preparing His followers for His departure, both through prophetic teaching and intentionally training them in righteousness. People spend their time and energy on what is most important to them. It is clearly Jesus’ highest priority that those who follow Him would remain steadfast to the end.

 **JOURNALING AND PRAYER**

1. Forgiveness is extremely important in the Christian walk (v 3-4). Is there anyone you need to forgive? If so go through the following steps:
 - a. Choose forgiveness. Forgiveness is first a choice. Often the feelings don’t follow for a while (especially if the offense was severe). Tell God that you want to forgive this person and ask for His help in doing this.
 - b. Pray for this person. You can ask God how to pray or you can simply pray over them what you would like prayed over yourself.
 - c. Bless this person. Again, you can simply bless this person how you would like to be blessed or you can ask God to give you a specific idea.
2. What are some lessons that come from the story of the ten lepers? Ask God what He wants to teach you personally through it.
3. Pray for our media. Specifically, ask God to raise up many Christians in news media who are willing to speak honestly about events in the world. As Jesus’ return draws nearer deception will increase (v 20-23). Ask that God would call people in media to boldly share the truth about events. Pray also for the church that we would grow in discernment while we are studying world events. Pray that we would not be swayed by ungodly news media.

DAY 22 **READ:** Luke 18

Luke 18 focuses on two topics: prayer and the kingdom of heaven. First we are told the parable of the persistent widow (v 1-8). We are reminded of the effectiveness of bold, persistent prayer. This is not to say that we can merely pray whatever we want repeatedly and we will get it. It is the heart of our prayers that matters. Are we willing to lay down our own desires to seek God's heart on a matter? God will bring justice (v 7), but only God knows what justice truly is. This heart is illustrated in the story of the praying Pharisee and the tax collector (v 9-14). The Pharisee was confident in his own righteousness and looked down on everybody else (v 9). People with this kind of heart do not have the humility required to seek God's will in prayer. In contrast, the tax collector was aware of his sin and cried out for God's mercy (v 13). This story reminds us that it is not necessarily those who are powerful or respected on earth who will enter the kingdom of heaven. Jesus gives the example of children, who were looked down upon in His day. He says that "the kingdom of God belongs to such as these" (v 16). On the other hand, it will be nearly impossible for the rich and powerful to enter the kingdom (v 25). Only God's mercy can save us. Unfortunately, many people are too captured by their wealth and power to cry out to Him. Jesus reminded His disciples of the urgency of obedience by continuing to teach them about His coming death (v 30-34). Chapter 18 closes with yet another reminder of the importance of bringing our needs to Jesus in the story of the blind man's healing (v 35-43).

 **JOURNALING AND PRAYER**

1. "When the Son of Man comes will He find faith on the earth?" (v 8). If Jesus were to return today would He find faith in your heart? Confess any doubt or distrust to Him.
2. What do you think it means to have faith like a child? Write down anything that comes to mind. Does your life match up with this? Ask God to help you grow in childlike faith.
3. Pray for children you know. A child's faith can provide an excellent testimony of God. Ask that many children would come to know Jesus. Ask God to make them steadfast in their faith. Children are bombarded with lies every day (in schools, from friends, through TV and media). Ask God to plant His truth firmly in their hearts that they would not waver as they grow up.

DAY 23 **READ:** Luke 19:1-27

Jesus always gives hope. In Luke 18 states that it was nearly impossible for rich men to enter the kingdom of heaven (18:25). Luke 19 opens with the story of Zaccheus, a rich chief tax collector (v 1-10). Jesus calls out to Zaccheus in the crowd. Zaccheus is so moved by Jesus that he repents of his sinful ways. He promises not only to repay any money he has swindled, but to give back four times the amount. He is willing to sacrifice his livelihood, financial security and reputation to be in good standing with Jesus. Riches, when submitted to God's guidance, do not have to prevent someone from entering the kingdom of heaven. In the Parable of the Minas we see that while Jesus' hope is offered to everyone, we must intentionally take hold of it (v 11-27). We cannot assume that when Jesus comes back we'll be able to explain away our lack of faithfulness to him on earth. We are required to be obedient to what He commands. Those who are obedient will receive their reward in heaven.

 **JOURNALING AND PRAYER**

1. Everything we have is from God. Are you handling your finances in a manner that reflects this? Do you regularly submit your budget (spending, saving, and giving) to God's guidance? A good test in this is would you be willing to be obedient if tomorrow God called you to do something radically outside of your comfort zone (ex. if you are by nature a saver and God asked you to make a large purchase to bless someone). Ask God what He wants your financial life to look like.
2. Jesus saved Zaccheus from a life marked by taking advantage of people for his own gain. What has Jesus saved you from? Thank Him for this. Is there anything currently in your life that He wants to save you from?
3. Pray for your each of your family members by name. Look at the lessons Jesus gave in this passage (ex. repentance, submitting our possessions to His control). Ask God to grow your family members in these areas. Also spend a few moments listening for any specific things that you should pray over your family today.

DAY 24 **READ:** Luke 19:28-48

The second half of Luke 19 describes Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem. Days later Jesus would be crucified. Jesus intentionally sent His disciples to get a donkey for Him to ride (v 30-31). This was to fulfill the Messianic prophecy in Zechariah 9:9. As He rode into Jerusalem crowds gathered, laying down their garments before Him and rejoicing (v 35-38). They quote Psalm 118, a psalm of praise for God's salvation. Despite this adoring reception, Jesus wept as He approached the city (v 41). He longed for the people to be reconciled to God through Him. However, He knew that because the Jews rejected Him, they would be faced with tragedy (v 42-44). Upon entering Jerusalem, Jesus cleaned out the temple (v 54-46). Moneylenders and merchants were taking advantage of worshippers. Jesus, in a fit of righteous anger, drove them out. Jesus does not withhold punishment from people that prevent others from worshipping God. At this point, Jesus had crossed a line in the religious leaders' minds. He was repeatedly rebuking religious leaders, the people were praising Him and some were even alluding to Him as a Saviour. At this point, the chief priests, scribes and leaders systematically sought out a way to destroy Jesus (v 47-48).

 **JOURNALING AND PRAYER**

1. Jesus' disciples were obedient to His commands (v 30-35). Has there ever been a time in your life when Jesus asked you to do something you didn't particularly want to do? What was the result? Ask God to grow you in obedience to Him.
2. Mediate on verse 38: "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord; Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" What does this teach us about Jesus? If it helps you can read Psalm 118, which the people in this passage are quoting.
3. Jesus wept over Jerusalem because its people denied Him. Spend some time praying for the lost. Jesus still weeps over these people. Ask God to show you His heart for them. As you pray think of specific people you know who don't know Jesus. Let God show you what you can pray for them. Also, ask if there is any way He would have you reach out to someone you know.

DAY 25 **READ:** Luke 19:47-20:47

This passage is full of opposition to Jesus. Jesus reveals Himself as the ultimate overcomer. Every time Jesus is challenged He uses it as an opportunity to reveal His character more. First the Pharisees challenged Jesus. Jesus knew that their question was a trap, so He responded with a question of His own. The Pharisees were left with two options: give account for why they have not put their faith in Jesus (which would mean admitting their greed and pride) or upset the masses (20:5-6). The Pharisees kept quiet (20:7). After this interaction, Jesus gave the Parable of the Wicked Tenants (20:9-16). It is a clear rebuke to Israel and its leadership. It also has a prophetic aspect as Jesus revealed what was about to happen to Him. The Pharisees were infuriated because they knew that Jesus was speaking against them (20:19). Once again, they used a question to try to find fault in Jesus. The question was designed to get Jesus in trouble with Rome (for teaching people to evade taxes) or with the Jews (for promoting a tax that symbolized their suppression by Rome). Again, Jesus revealed His blameless wisdom: we must honour both God and government (20:24-25). Next, we see a new group challenging Jesus. The Sadducees were a Jewish sect that did not believe in the resurrection. Jesus, again, responds wisely to their questioning (20:34-35). This montage of opposition to Jesus is concluded with a warning to be on guard against hypocritical religious leaders (20:46-47). We should seek to follow only those whose hearts are truly submitted to God and who bear fruit according to their relationship with Him.

**JOURNALING AND PRAYER**

1. Jesus is full of wisdom. He knows the perfect solution to every problem. Ask Him to reveal His wisdom for a question you have or a circumstance you are facing.
2. Jesus taught us that we are to submit to government as well as to God (v 25). We need to submit to our governing authorities as long as they don't ask us to do anything that contradicts the Bible. Are there any ways that you do not submit to government? For example, are you honest in your taxes, do you follow the rules of the road? Confess this to God and repent of it.
3. Pray for our government. Pray that rather than resisting Jesus' ways our governors would work diligently to implement God's truths in our land. Ask that our leaders would find strength and rest in Jesus. Ask that God would empower them to love and serve their families. Ask that they would be steadfast in righteousness, even when under pressure. Pray that God would place many people in government who would fight for God's justice in areas such as abortion, education and human trafficking.

DAY 26 **READ:** Luke 21

This chapter begins with an account of an extremely poor woman. Jesus held her up as an example for us. Although the amount she gave was miniscule in terms of dollars and cents, it was a sacrifice for her (v 1-4). Jesus could see that her priorities were with God. After this short story, we see Jesus' third recorded teaching on the End Times in Luke. Jesus knew that He was just a few short days from His crucifixion but His disciples did not yet understand what was going to happen (18:34). Imagine the pain in Jesus' heart. He had

to carry the burden of knowing what was to come, but could not share it with His closest friends. He knew that the disciples would not yet understand His teaching. However, He trusted that they would store His words up in their hearts. After Jesus' crucifixion, resurrection and ascension, the disciples would understand what Jesus was talking about in these times. They couldn't understand Jesus' need to come back a second time until they'd seen Him leave.

**JOURNALING AND PRAYER**

1. Sometimes Jesus gave the disciples teaching that did not necessarily benefit them in the present, but would be critical knowledge in the future. This still happens today. Sometimes we wholeheartedly go through our devotional times and do not feel like we got anything profound from Him. Often in these times God is placing His Word in our hearts for later use. The Psalmist wrote, "I have hidden your word in my heart, that I might not sin against you" (Psalm 119:11). Pray that God would plant the truths that you have been reading in Luke deep in your heart, that you might not sin against Him. God knows the future. Ask Him if there is anything you should go back and review in order to prepare yourself for something to come. For example, He may ask you to study a parable of Jesus so that you can answer a co-worker's question next week or He may give you a verse to memorize that will help you withstand temptation.
2. Jesus taught about the End so that we would be prepared to serve Him throughout any situation. How is your heart regarding Jesus' return? Are you fearful? Are you more interested in gaining knowledge about the End Times or in growing in intimacy with Jesus? Ask Jesus to reveal why He taught so much about His Return. Ask the Holy Spirit to help you love Jesus more and to grow in anticipation of His Return.
3. Pray for our leaders at Southland. Ask God to give them wisdom in preparing our church for Jesus' Return. Ask that God would guide them in their teaching, shepherding and praying so that we as a Body would love Jesus more. Pray that God would strengthen their marriages and empower them to be better parents.

DAY 27 **READ:** Luke 22:1-38

This passage intimately portrays Jesus' last supper with His disciples. It is the night before Passover (v 1). Shortly after this meal, Jesus would be taken before the authorities and crucified. It is no coincidence that Jesus' crucifixion happened over the Passover. Passover was celebrated to remember when God saved the Israelites out of slavery in Egypt. As the events of the next days unfolded, Jesus wanted His disciples to realize the connection between what was happening to Him and the coinciding Passover Festival. So Jesus used much of His precious little time with His disciples to re-interpret the symbolism of the Passover. The true meaning of the Passover was to point to Jesus – the Messiah who would ultimately save Israel (and the world) from their sins. Two of the symbols involved in a Passover meal were the bread and the cup. Jesus said that now the bread would symbolize His body, which would be broken for us (v 19). The cup was to symbolize how Jesus' death paid for our sin, establishing a new covenant (v 20). Although He does not outwardly say it, Jesus is alluding to one thing: He is the Passover Lamb who will be sacrificed to atone for sins. Because of their familiarity with Jewish feasts, the disciples would likely have made this connection. Imagine how Jesus must have felt. He had lived closely with these men

for years. He taught them, ministered with them, and built friendships with them. One can only imagine what a bittersweet moment this was for Jesus. He was about to entrust them with His beloved Church. He used their final moments together to remind them to follow His example (v 25-27). The disciples were to follow Jesus by leading in a spirit of humility and service.

JOURNALING AND PRAYER

1. Jesus was intentional with His disciples. He used these friendships to teach, encourage and challenge them. Think over your circle of influence (family, friends, co-workers, neighbours, etc.). How can you encourage someone today? Ask God if He has any words of encouragement He would like you to share with them.
2. We all lead somewhere. This might be at home, school, work, church or elsewhere. Often we lead without having a formal position of leadership. For example, when we chose to live righteously our testimony will silently encourage others to do the same. Ask God where He has made you a leader. Pray that you would grow in humility and service in these areas.
3. Pray for the Church in Canada. Pray that we might grow in the fear of the Lord. We can only understand the all-surpassing nature of His love to the degree that we also understand His holiness. Ask that the Canadian Church would grow in our understanding of the cross. Pray that we would worship Jesus for what He had done for us. Ask that the Church would be refined and become more submitted to God's leadership.

DAY 28

 **READ:** Luke 22:39-71

In this passage we see some of the final moments of Jesus' life. Jesus had just eaten His last meal with His disciples and chose to go to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray (v 39). Jesus knew what was about to happen. He knew that, being fully human, He could not bear the cross on His own. We all face circumstances that are too much for us to properly bear on our own. In these times we should look to Jesus as our role model. We should pour out our hearts to God. It is even okay to ask God to take away difficult circumstances, so long as we are willing to endure if He does not take them away (v 42). It is in this garden that Jesus was betrayed (v 47). Jesus bore His betrayal and trial process brilliantly. He spoke only when necessary, using brief and truthful words (v 48, 51-53, 67-70). He knew when to speak and when to remain silent. He graciously accepted His fate, knowing that God would make Him victorious in the end. Jesus modeled how we can let God be our justifier. Jesus knew that He was blameless, but He chose to trust in God rather than fighting back. What a wonderful model for us.

JOURNALING AND PRAYER

1. Place yourself in Jesus' shoes in the Garden of Gethsemane. You just had your last meal with your closest friends. You know that you are about to face an agonizing death and your flesh cries out against this. Yet, you know that, because of your death, an indescribable good will come. You love people more than they'll ever understand and you long to be reconciled to them. You wished there was another way, but are

willing to do whatever it takes to win people back. How do you feel? What are your thoughts? Write down what you're imagining. Ask Jesus to use this exercise to reveal to you how He felt as He approached the Cross. Spend some time responding to this. Praise God for His great love!

2. Jesus didn't defend Himself. The key to this was His trust in God. Jesus knew that God had a larger plan, which in the end would reveal Jesus' blamelessness. Sometimes God's plan for our lives includes events and seasons that seem wrong to us. But He knows the end from the beginning. God knows how each situation is intended for the good of those who love Him and are called according to His purposes (Romans 8:28). Search your heart. Do you trust God? Is He your defender or do you feel the need to justify yourself? Ask Him to show you how to grow in this area.
3. Pray for believers around the world who face persecution for their faith. Pray that they would fully trust God to be their justifier. Pray that God would continually strengthen their faith. Ask the Holy Spirit to empower them to be blameless before their persecutors. Ask that they would be able to love and forgive instead of harbouring bitterness.

DAY 29

 **READ:** Luke 23

Luke 23 tells the story of Jesus' trial and crucifixion. As a chapter it seems unimposing – fifty-six verses containing a few stories. But this chapter speaks of the most important event in the history of mankind. Since Adam and Eve man had been locked in a constant struggle with sin. We were separated from God and from His purpose for our lives. Jesus came to die on the cross to fix this. Jesus was an innocent sacrifice (v 4, 14-15, 22) so He could atone for our sins in a way that no other human could. Jesus offered redemption to mankind – even the criminals crucified next to him (v 43). He offered forgiveness to mankind – even His very persecutors (v 34). Even before he actually dies or is resurrected, we see Jesus enacting His plan of salvation for humanity.

JOURNALING AND PRAYER

1. Jesus' death on the cross is the central event in our faith. Why did Jesus have to die for us? What did His death do for mankind? Write down anything you can think of, big or small. Ask God to help you understand this. If you are unsure of the answer, commit to seeking it out in Scripture and by asking godly people you know.
2. Spend some time in thanksgiving for the cross.
3. Pray for the lost. Jesus desires that everyone might come to Him to have eternal life. There are many people in our world who are hungry for something more in their current life. Pray that they would recognize that the answer to their hunger for more is Jesus. Pray that the Holy Spirit would soften many hearts to the Gospel. Pray that God would prepare and call many Christians to share His message with the lost. Spend some time interceding for people in your life who don't know Jesus.

DAY 30 **READ:** Luke 24

Luke 24 completes the story of Jesus' crucifixion with the story of His resurrection. The resurrection confirmed that Jesus was who He said He was: the Messiah and the Son of God. It also confirmed that He had accomplished what He set out to accomplish: the salvation and redemption of mankind. 1 Corinthians 15:17 (NASB) says, "if Christ has not been raised, your faith is worthless; you are still in your sins." Without the resurrection of Jesus, our faith would be in vain. In Luke 24 we see Jesus' patience with His followers. He understood that they would not immediately understand what had happened. He sent angels to explain it to the women (v 4-7). He revealed Himself on the road to Emmaus (v 13-32). Just as the men from the road to Emmaus ran to tell the eleven that they'd seen Jesus, Jesus Himself appeared in the room (v 36). Jesus then offered proof of His real, physical resurrection by eating in front of the eleven (v 41-43). Jesus did not expect His disciples to immediately understand the importance of the crucifixion and resurrection. He gave them time and offered them proofs. Jesus spent forty days with the disciples before ascending into heaven (Acts 1:3). In that time He "opened their minds to understand the Scriptures" (v 45). God is faithful. If we seek His truth He will answer.

 **JOURNALING AND PRAYER**

1. As long as we are genuinely seeking truth, God is patient with us. He understands that we are merely humans so sometimes we cannot fully grasp things. Central tenets of Christianity like miracles, the resurrection and the Trinity contain a degree of mystery even for the most wise and learned people. Is there something about your faith that you have questions about? Ask God to reveal His truth to you in a deeper way. Ask if there are any steps you can take to study this area. Our church library is a great starting point. It contains many resources to help people grow in their faith and knowledge of Jesus.
2. Jesus conquered death. As Christians we often take the resurrection for granted. It becomes commonplace for us, so we lose our sense of wonder. Spend some time thinking about the resurrection. Picture yourself as one of Jesus' disciples when He revealed Himself. What would your reaction have been? Worship God for the miracle of Jesus' resurrection.
3. Pray for Southland. Ask God to grow our sense of wonder and awe at Jesus. Pray that we would never take Jesus and what He has done for granted. Pray that we would grow in our love for the Bible. Ask God to reveal Himself to the people in our Church through the Word.

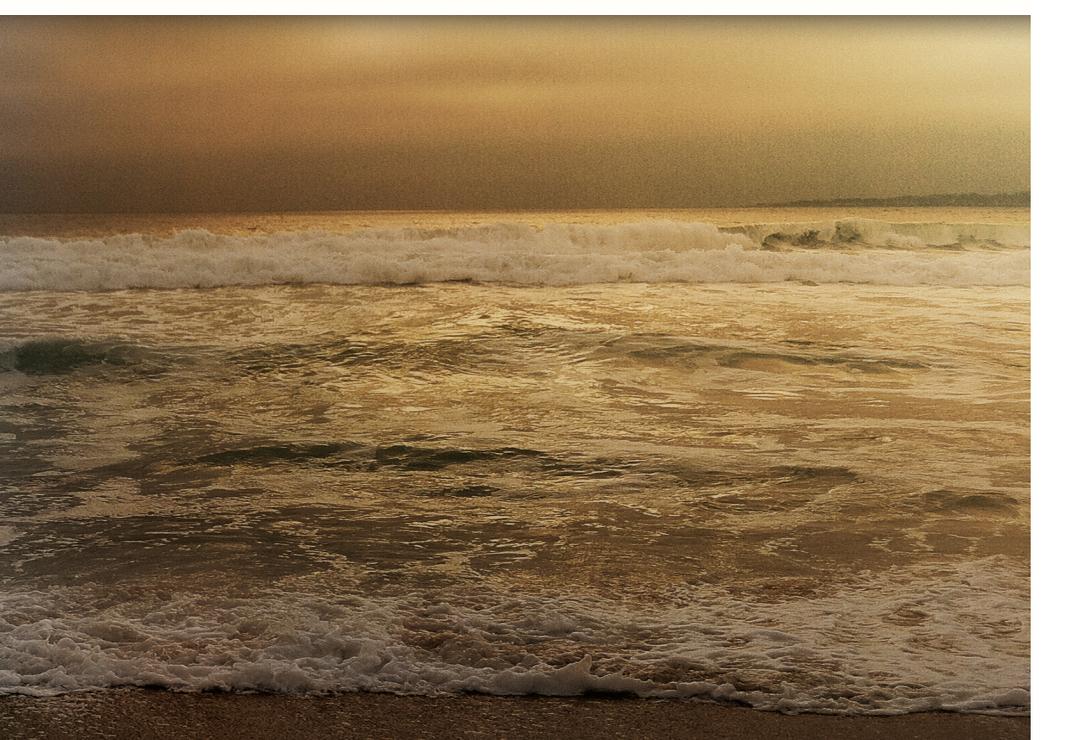


The Gospel of Luke

Luke was a Gentile who didn't know Jesus personally but grew to know Him intimately. Much of his gospel account centers on Jesus' interactions with Gentiles, women and outcasts. Luke's message is clear; Jesus came to redeem all people, regardless of their position in this world.

Luke 15:24 (NIV)

"For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found."



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