

Suggested Reading

A Recommended Reading

Luke 15:1 - 19:27

B Read Carefully

Luke 15:1-18:14	To Jerusalem
Luke 15:1-10	<i>The Lost Sheep / Lost Coin</i>
Luke 15:11-32	<i>The Prodigal Son</i>
Luke 16:1-13	<i>The Crafty Steward</i>
Luke 16:19-31	<i>Rich Man & Lazarus</i>
Luke 17:5-10	Faith & Dedication
Luke 17:11-19	Ten Lepers
Luke 18:1-8	<i>The Unjust Judge</i>
Luke 18:9-14	<i>Pharisee & Tax Collector</i>
Luke 18:15-19:27	Entering Jericho
Luke 19:1-10	<i>Zacchaeus</i>

Prayer

O God, who by the pages of both Testaments
Instruct and prepare us to celebrate the Paschal Mystery,
Grant that we may comprehend your mercy,
So that the gifts we receive from you this night
may confirm our hope of the gifts to come.
Through Christ our Lord Amen.
(From the Easter Vigil)

PFP v7/2026

Sacred Heart Catholic Church

Henley on Thames



The Journey to Jerusalem (1)

3

Luke 9:51 - 14:33



*And was moved to pity at the sight.
He approached him and dressed his wounds*

'Now it happened that as the time drew near for him to be taken up, he resolutely turned his face towards Jerusalem and sent messengers ahead of him.' (Lk 9:51).

These are the first words of the largest section of the Gospel of Luke and offer a neat summary of Jesus' intentions. This is described as '*the Journey to Jerusalem*' because we are constantly reminded of this fact. (Lk 9:51-56; 9:57; 10:1; 10:38; 11:53; 13:22; 13:33 17:11; 18:31; 18:35; 19:1.)

'as the time drew near for him to be taken up' = this reference to the Passion reminds us that Jesus travels to Jerusalem to suffer and die, as all prophets suffer in Jerusalem. On the way, Jesus will teach his disciples concerning the challenges of discipleship, in particular, perseverance under persecution.

'he resolutely turned his face towards Jerusalem' = There is a forcefulness and resolute nature in Jesus' intention to travel towards Jerusalem. It would be good to keep this in mind throughout the next chapters.

'and sent messengers ahead of him' = We are aware of the call and mission of the Twelve. Only Luke recounts the call and instruction of the 72.

The Journey to Jerusalem. The journey/travelling theme is far more important than the route or location, which seems confused and secondary. We are to understand this journey as the transition from Galilee to Jerusalem and the beginning of way of the Church which will lead to the ends of the earth.

(Acts 1-2)

The importance of this section lies in the teaching given by Jesus, which can be summarised as, **perseverance under persecution**, the **importance of prayer** and the **requirement of poverty**.

Therefore, as the journey is as much a theme of discipleship, rather than route in itself, we shall examine the journey thematically, rather than chronologically.

Perseverance under persecution. The challenge of discipleship.

Jerusalem is now the focal point, which is emphasised by the Samaritan inhospitality. *Luke 9, 51-56.*

Travelling on the way to Jerusalem, to suffer and die; Jesus is presented in controversy with the Pharisees. The question at issue is Jesus' authority to exorcise demons and the request for a sign. He also attacks the hypocrisy of the Pharisees whose concentration upon secondary matters of the Law place barriers before many people. *Luke 11, 37-54, 12,1-12, 12, 49-53, 13,11-17.*

The result of Jesus controversies with his opponents is their confusion and his acclaim by the crowds. His teaching is revealed to be so much greater than theirs, just as his actions reveal the compassion of God, which false observance of the Law would stifle.

We are reminded of the journey as Jesus laments over the city of Jerusalem, *'you that kill the prophets and stone those who are sent to you!'* *Luke 13, 34-35.* As he will at the beginning and end of his ministry there (*19, 14-44, 23, 28-32*).

Jesus demands absolute commitment of those who would follow him. This is linked to the mission they undertake, as well as the authority and divine power which they receive. Duty and privilege go together. Luke alone tells us about the Mission of the Seventy-Two disciples. However, he stresses the instructions of

Next Week

The Journey to Jerusalem (2)

We continue to travel with Jesus to Jerusalem. We will continue our examination of the special themes of Luke which are evident within this section of the Gospel. We will concentrate upon the teaching of Jesus, with reference to those parables which are found in Luke's Gospel alone: The Prodigal Son; The Crafty Steward; The Rich Man and Lazarus; The Pharisee and the Tax Collector. These parables have contributed towards our understanding and judgement of this Gospel, for which it is so highly acclaimed.

Jesus rather than the mission of the disciples. They are ambassadors who not only prepare the way, but also are the embodiment of him whom, they represent. Their word is his word to reject them is to reject Jesus. The result is jubilation. They rejoice in their deeds; Jesus calls them to rejoice that their names are written in heaven. It is at this point 'filled with joy by the *Holy Spirit*' that Jesus praises his Father. Here we may identify two of Luke's themes. (Joy & Holy Spirit)

The importance of prayer

Luke's version of the Lord's prayer is shorter than Matthew's. It is followed by teachings on the importance of persistence in prayer. A central characteristic of the disciple is as one who is attentive to God's word. The disciple is one who prays as Jesus prays to his Father. Persistence is necessary, but prayer is answered because God loves us more than we love our own children. He will grant all we need: the gifts of the Spirit, courage, strength joy, are necessary for the Christian mission.

Luke reminds us that this is as possible for Martha & Mary as well as Peter & John. Culturally Jesus universalism towards women is shocking. He is alone with women who are not his relatives; a woman serves him; Jesus teaches a woman in her own house. Here we can see several of Luke's themes: *Women, Prayer, and the Holy Spirit*.

There is no limitation upon the loving-kindness and compassion expected of a disciple.

The question of the Greatest Commandment and the Parable of the Good Samaritan are clearly linked. (*Lk 10:25-38*) They remind us of the characteristic of a disciple as well as the contrast between upholding the letter of the law and the demands of compassion and love. The question: who is my neighbour? is central to this distinction.

The Lawyer correctly identifies the heart of the Law. (*'The Shema' Deut 6:5*) However, Jesus inverts this question from who is my neighbour, to who was the neighbourly? This is at the heart of the matter. The Lawyer cannot bring himself to say '*the Samaritan*' because a 'good Samaritan' is a contradiction of terms, he doesn't exist. Jesus teaches him that adherence to the Law is not a substitute for compassion and pity. The Priest & Levite pass the man, not out of a lack of compassion, but to avoid making themselves unclean in deference to the Law. Here, Luke reveals the universalism of the Gospel, by which the Samaritan is the example to us all. Our neighbour is no longer limited to those within the chosen people, each of us are called to be neighbourly.

The requirement of poverty.

At a time when Jesus' teaching is well received by the crowd, Jesus warns his disciples that they will face persecution and controversy. *Luke 11,29-32*. They must place their trust in God and not rely upon material wealth and possessions which is an illusionary foundation. *Luke 12, 13-21*.

Riches may weaken their relationship with God and their necessary concentration upon the coming of the Son of Man. *Luke 12, 22-48*. The universality of the Kingdom is stressed. The Kingdom like a wedding feast is open to all, especially the poor and the lowly. Once again, we see Luke's theme of the new people of God and Jesus as the rejected prophet who goes to his destiny in Jerusalem. The theme of discipleship is repeated. The absolute commitment of the disciple is stressed. He should consider his decision carefully; the cost of discipleship may be self-sacrifice, particularly of possessions. *Luke 14, 15-24, 15, 25-33*.