

Suggested Reading

A Recommended Reading

Luke 19:28 - 23:56a

B Read Carefully

Luke 22:1 - 23:56a *The Passion according to Luke*

Luke 22:35-38	<i>Purse, Bag & Sword</i>
Luke 22:61	<i>Jesus looks at Peter</i>
Luke 23:2-11	<i>Accusations & Herod</i>
Luke 23:27-31	<i>Women of Jerusalem</i>
Luke 23:39-43	<i>The Repentant Thief</i>
Luke 23:46	<i>'Into your hands ...'</i>
Luke 19:39-44	<i>Destruction of Jerusalem</i>
Luke 21:34-36	<i>Luke's ending to this passage</i>

Prayer

God of our forefathers and Lord of creation,
you have made us in your image.
As we have listened to the word of God;
may its power renew us,
and its grace refashion us,
so that in time we may assume the full likeness of Christ,
who lives and reigns for ever and ever. Amen.

(From the Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults.)

PFP v7/2026

Sacred Heart Catholic Church

Henley on Thames



The journey to Jerusalem (2)

4

Luke 15:1 - 19:27

*Rejoice with me because
I have found my
lost sheep*



The journey of Jesus to Jerusalem is a central part of Luke's Gospel. It continues in the Acts of the Apostles by the journey of the Church from Jerusalem 'to the ends of the earth.' Luke's vision of this journey is not geographical or chronological; rather it is seen as a journey for the whole Church and for each individual Christian; a journey towards suffering and glory, and a journey of discipleship.

The second part of the journey to Jerusalem (*Lk 15:1 - 19:27*) is enriched by the parables of Jesus which are unique to Luke's Gospel. The parables of the Prodigal Son, The Rich Man and Lazarus, the Pharisee & the Tax Collector have been admired for centuries as literary masterpieces. Central to this section are four themes: seeking out the lost, the danger of riches, the necessity of repentance, the presence of the Kingdom of God.

The Gospel within the Gospel.

Chapter Fifteen has been described as '*the Gospel within the Gospel*,' because of the *parables of God's mercy* proclaim a message of pardon and reconciliation. They are the parables of the Lost Sheep, the Lost Coin and the Lost Son.

These parables enforce a constant motif of the Gospel: Jesus seeks out the sinner and those who are lost. God's mercy is as foolish as the Shepherd who would abandon ninety-nine sheep to save one, as a woman who turns her house upside down to recover a paltry sum, as a Jewish Father who welcomes home his lost Son.

The joy of each character reflects the joy felt by God when he recovers those who are lost. Of all the parables the Prodigal Son is perhaps the easiest to interpret in broad outline and yet the most open to a variety of interpretation, dependant on where the main emphasis is thought to lie. The central figure is the Father, just as the Woman and the Shepherd stand at the centre of the previous parables. However, the rejection of the Father, by the Son, on receiving his inheritance, proclaims 'you are dead, to me!' However, the Father is not only constantly on the look-out for his Son but actively runs toward on his return. While, many might have sympathy for the older boy, the parable has little sympathy for those who cannot exercise mercy.

The danger of wealth.

Chapter Sixteen seems to be primarily concerned about the danger of wealth. This teaching is addressed firstly to the disciples who are encouraged to be good stewards of wealth and to avoid being enslaved by their desire for it. The second group are the Pharisees who are accused of a hypocritical attitude because their outward piety masks a greedy heart.

The parable of *the Rich Man and Lazarus (Lk 16:19-31)* can be understood on one level as a parable against covetousness (it is undoubtedly much more than this.) The parable reminds us of *the necessity of repentance* which is a constant motif throughout this section. The Law and the Prophets should be sufficient to produce repentance.

Next Week

The Passion according to Luke

Next, we will study Jesus' entry into Jerusalem, and the events of Holy Week culminating in the Passion of Jesus according to Luke. We shall concentrate upon Luke's special material throughout the Passion Narrative. We can use our previous examination of the Passion according to Matthew and Mark as a means to contrast this with Luke's Passion Narrative.

I would like you to pay particular attention to the passages *in italics* which designate Luke's material. I would also like you to try to identify the presence of Luke's themes throughout the Passion Narrative.

A miracle or the resurrection of the dead will not melt a stony heart. Faith and repentance are necessary for conversion.

The Kingdom of God = Here/Now ... Not/Yet

The faith and gratitude of the Samaritan Leper (*Lk 17:11-17*) results in something greater than his cure for Leprosy: his salvation. This miracle story, which is unique to Luke, reminds us of the universalism of the Gospel which links an acknowledgement of God's mercy and healing power, with the qualities of individual faith and gratitude.

Luke gathers a collection of teachings about the *coming of God's kingdom*, and the (delayed) return of the Son of Man. Luke emphasises that faith and patience are a necessary quality of the believer. One must be persistent in prayer. However, the Kingdom of God is already in our midst. (*Lk 17:21*) This '*here/now - not/yet*' tension is characteristic of each Gospel which grapples with the disparity between the presence of God's kingdom today and its fulfilment promised by the imminent return of Jesus at end of time.

Repentance and Riches

The parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector (*Lk 18:9-14*) underlines the qualities required by Jesus' followers. This parable is unique to Luke's Gospel. Jesus' comparison and specific judgement upon the two characters is unusual. The Pharisee, who is aware of his own righteousness which went beyond the requirements of the Law, is condemned because due to his pride, he has placed himself outside the need of God's mercy. The Tax Collector, on the other hand, who is conscious of his sin and his need for God's mercy, is considered upright, because of his genuine sorrow and humility.

The Rich Young Man/Ruler (*Lk 18:18-23*) for whom wealth is an obstacle to following Jesus can be read with greater force in Luke's Gospel than elsewhere. Within Luke's Gospel it is difficult for the rich man to enter the kingdom of God; but for God it is not impossible.

Approaching Jericho, Luke once more picks up the chronology of Mark. He contrasts the lack of understanding displayed by the

disciples, (*Lk 18:31-34*) concerning the prediction of the passion; with the spiritual insight of the blind man who understands who Jesus is, the Son of David.

Zacchaeus – the example of Repentance and Riches

Entering Jericho Jesus encounters Zacchaeus. This passage, which is unique to Luke, can be understood to be a summary of many of the themes found throughout this section of the Gospel.

Zacchaeus straddles two of Luke's symbolic worlds. He is a Tax Collector to whom God's mercy is extended, while also a rich man, for whom this invitation should exhibit a difficulty in response.

Jesus is the one who searches out the lost (*Lk 19:10 = 15:1-32*) and would dine with them despite opposition.

Zacchaeus responds with *joy*, which is linked with faith and repentance evidenced by his renunciation of his wealth and its proper use.

The rich man can get through the eye of the needle, but not without a radical change at God's invitation. (*Lk 16:9-31, 18:22-30*) Today, (a theme of Luke) salvation has come to this house. This man is also child of Abraham. The passage ends with Jesus portrayed as the shepherd who searches and finds the lost sheep and brings them into the sheep-fold of the new Israel.