



# THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

**FOLLOW**

**STUDY GUIDE**

# WELCOME TO THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

Following Jesus is easier with others. That's why we've put together this group study on Luke's Gospel. In this study, you'll find useful stuff like chapter summaries, *Pause* reflection sections to help you imagine yourself in some of the scenes in the story and also some great discussion questions. We've also included a list of some of the tricky words in Luke's Gospel to help you understand what's going on in the story. Use this glossary if you get stuck on something.

Remember, we don't just read the Bible for a good story, but to listen to what God is saying so we can follow Jesus more closely. Many people get frustrated because they struggle to hear God when they read the Bible. So, make sure you try out the *Pause* exercises each week to help you imagine yourself in the story. It's a creative way to hear what God might be saying to you. Find out more on the following pages...

# USING YOUR IMAGINATION TO ENTER THE STORY

## II

The *Pause* sections have been chosen for you to imagine yourself in the story. They'll help you encounter Jesus while you read the Bible.

With practice, imagining yourself in the story can really make it come alive. It doesn't matter how 'good' your imagination is. What matters is connecting with God - and this is one way to help you do that. It may not work for you - and that's OK. But do give it a go!

Don't worry if you think you haven't been 'good enough' to pray or if you're not used to praying. Be yourself, be honest and talk to God like you'd talk to another person (which, if you've forgotten how to have a conversation, includes *listening!*).

So if you're keen to try it out, here's how you do it.

1. Ask God to speak to you during this time.
2. Read through the passage once or twice slowly.
3. Imagine the scene as if you were there, part of the crowd or one of Jesus' followers. Work through your senses.



What can you see?



What noises do you hear?



What can you smell?



What can you taste?



What do you feel?

4. Imagine the conversations and actions you've heard and seen. How do you feel? What's the mood? How many people are there?
5. Where are you in the scene? Where are you in relation to Jesus? What does Jesus look like?
6. As the scene plays out, what catches your attention?
7. Now, within the scene, ask Jesus a question. Perhaps you could ask him, "Lord, what are you saying?"
8. Listen for a response. You could write your thoughts in a journal.

Share what you've heard with a close friend or leader and discuss if it fits with what the Bible tells us about Jesus.

Enjoy!

# WHO IS LUKE?

This Gospel (Gospel means 'Good News') was written by a doctor called Luke. Luke also wrote its 'sequel' The Book of Acts.

He wrote them for this guy named Theophilus to give him eyewitness accounts to show how Jesus was the real deal.

The Jewish people were longing for a 'Messiah', a king who would set them free from the Roman Empire. The good news is that God's plan is much bigger - it's good news for people from every race, gender, age and social standing.

One thing to remember is that this book was written nearly 2,000 years ago, in a completely different

culture. So, as you'd expect, there'll be some things you might not understand (don't be afraid to ask someone). However, just because it's old doesn't mean it's irrelevant. Jesus told lots of stories (called parables) to share his message, and the great thing about stories is that they can impact us today, even if our lives look nothing like the original hearers of his message.

The story of Jesus - the way he lived and loved, the things he talked about, how he died and his resurrection - continues to change lives two thousand years later. Jesus is still inviting people to follow him.

# WEEK 1

LUKE CHAPTERS 1–3



## Chapter 1

The whole book of Luke is a letter to a guy named Theophilus (which means 'lover of God') so that he can be certain that what he has been taught is true. The first two chapters of Luke tell the birth stories of John the Baptist and Jesus. John was foretold to be the one who would prepare the people for the Messiah. Jesus is foretold to be this expected Messiah - the one who would set the Jewish people free from Roman occupation.

We often wish that God would speak to us in spectacular ways so that there'd be no doubt in our minds that God is speaking. Perhaps we want a flash of lightning or an angelic encounter, then we'd be sure and not doubt. Zechariah showed this isn't the case! Would you have doubted? What kind of doubts do you have about the way God speaks to you?

## Chapter 2

The political details in this chapter are important. The census reinforced to the oppressed people of Israel that the Roman Empire was in power, and ensured they were taxed. Luke was contrasting the powers of the Roman Empire with what God is doing, comparing this low-born king with the Roman Caesar (ruler). The shepherds were lowly and despised members of society. Simeon and Anna were just ordinary people. These aren't the ones that the people of Israel would've expected God to announce his big news to.

Lastly, Luke tells us about how Jesus was presented at the Temple, where Simeon and Anna (two overlooked old people who hung around the fringe of the Temple) had insight into the new thing God was doing. We also get our only glimpse of the childhood of Jesus. What do you think Jesus might've been like as a kid?

## Chapter 3

Chapter three opened with John the Baptist's fiery and uncompromising call for people to turn back to God. John wasn't interested in surface performance, he wanted changed lives.

You may have wondered, what's with the long list of ancestors? Well, for a start, genealogies are very important in some cultures. Also, Luke was writing to a gentile (non-Jewish) man, who would share the letter with other gentiles. The genealogy linked Jesus back to Abraham and beyond, all the way back to the beginning of humankind to show that Jesus came to rescue all people, not just the Jewish people.

## PAUSE

Luke 2:25-35

Imagine yourself in the temple when Jesus is presented as a baby in Luke 2:21-38. Re-read over the section when the old man Simeon holds and prophesies over Jesus (verses 25-35).



The Temple was a place where sacrifices were offered for many things, including the dedication of a first-born son. Can you imagine the aroma of incense and perfumes? Can you smell the stench of animals?



Can you hear the bleating and cooing of animals and birds, and the crying of infants?

What draws your attention in this passage?

Imagine yourself as Simeon. God has revealed to you a bit about who Jesus is. How does it feel to hold the small child, knowing this is the Messiah?



Feel the soft, smooth skin of the baby in your arms. What does it mean that God made himself as vulnerable and powerless as an infant?

What might God be highlighting for you?

# GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE



## Week 1: Luke 1-3

Welcome to week one of our discussion guide. Talk about these questions to get you thinking about the last three chapters you've read. Use these questions to guide your conversations - but you don't have to answer all of them. If you've got your own questions, you can use those too.

1. Do you have any cool stories/insights from reading and praying through Luke this week?
2. What didn't you understand from your reading?
3. How did your reading challenge you?
4. What basic sin does John address in chapter 3:9-14? What injustices would John attack today?
5. How is this message of judgement and repentance also part of the 'Good News'?
6. Write down: "(your name), you are my dearly loved child, and you bring me great joy" (3:22). How does writing and reading this make you feel?
7. So what? What's God saying to you? Write in the space provided one thing you're going to do in response to this week's discussions and invite a friend to hold you to it.

WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO ABOUT IT?





# WEEK 2

LUKE CHAPTERS 4–6



### Chapter 4:

The Jews had been waiting for this Messiah-liberator to overthrow their Roman oppressors. Jesus stood up and said that it was happening now - but not how they imagined. Jesus was pointing out that he wasn't there to make political change. He was there to bring about a whole new way of being.

The Kingdom of God was the central concern of Jesus — not a place we go when we die — but God's will being done on earth here and now. Life being lived as God intended it: peace, justice, healing and love. He didn't just talk about it; he showed it through the way he lived and loved people and through healings and miracles.

### Chapter 5:

Jesus gathered a rag-tag bunch of people to be his followers - not the kind of people we'd expect. They gave up everything to follow him.

This chapter also introduced us to the Pharisees, whom Jesus clashes with for the rest of the story. The Pharisees were a movement of regular people who believed that the Messiah would only come to rescue the Jewish people from the Roman Empire if the Jewish people followed the Law of Moses to the letter. They'd also made up many detailed rules to explain how to understand and follow Moses' law.

The whole thing about clothing and wineskins can be a bit confusing, but basically Jesus was saying the new is not compatible with the old. Jesus was not doing a patch-up job - he was bringing about a whole new story.

The man with leprosy said to Jesus, "Are you willing to heal me?" Basically he was asking, "I know you can heal me, but will you?" Jesus responded with a resounding "Yes! I am willing." Do you believe it?

### Chapter 6:

Blessed are the poor! Love your enemies. You may have heard these phrases before. Sometimes we can get so used to hearing these words that we miss how radical they are. Really listen to the words and allow them to enter your mind and heart. But be ready - you might be transformed by this radical manifesto of love. Perhaps you could go back and read again - be challenged.

## PAUSE

Take 10 minutes or so to go back and read about Jesus calling the first disciples in Luke 5:1-11.



Imagine yourself in the boat with Simon and Jesus.



Listen to the sound of the water lapping against the shore and other boats.



Does the smell of fish fill your nostrils?



Help with the hauling of the nets!



How does it feel to be in a boat so filled with fish it's almost sinking?

What stands out to you?

After you're on land, and all the chaos has subsided, ask Jesus, "What are you saying to me?"



## Week 2: Luke 4-6

1. Do you have any cool stories/insights from reading and praying through Luke this week?
2. What didn't you understand from your reading?
3. How did your reading challenge you?
4. How do you understand the "Good News of the Kingdom of God"? (Luke 4:43). Get into pairs or small groups and share what you think the Good News is. Don't worry about getting it wrong.
5. When the man asked Jesus if he was willing to heal him, Jesus replied, "I am willing. Be healed." (Luke 5:12-13). Sometimes it's easier to believe that God can heal us than believe he actually will. What causes you to doubt God's love and willingness to heal?
6. So what? What's God saying to you? Write in the space provided one thing you're going to do in response to this week's discussions and invite a friend to hold you to it.

WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO ABOUT IT?



# WEEK 3

LUKE CHAPTERS 7-9



### Chapter 7:

In chapter seven, we read of John the Baptist's darkest moment. What's not mentioned here is that John had been imprisoned. No wonder he was questioning - "Is this man really the one to set us free?" Jesus sent an encouraging message to John telling him what was happening. Jesus reminded him of the words of Isaiah, "The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised to life, and the Good News is being preached to the poor."

Luke contrasted the response of the 'immoral woman' with Simon the Pharisee to show us what it looks like for someone to truly understand how amazing it is to receive God's forgiveness.

### Chapter 8:

The chapter began with a description of some women who supported Jesus' ministry. Luke's Gospel gave women prominence in the life and ministry of Jesus, which was counter-cultural to the male-dominated society of the day. We also came across the first of many parables that Jesus used to challenge people to think deeply about God, faith and life. Rather than just telling us what to do, parables challenge us to use our imaginations to work out what Jesus is saying to us.

When Jesus saved his disciples from being drowned they were terrified! A strange reaction? The disciples knew that only God could control the natural elements.

When Jesus allowed the demons to enter the herd of pigs, people's response was to plead for Jesus to leave. These pigs would have been a source of wealth and income - and the locals cared more about their finances than seeing this man being set free. Sound familiar?

## Chapter 9:



Jesus sent out his twelve closest disciples to share his message. In many ways they weren't ready. But Jesus didn't wait until they were fully ready to represent him and share his message - they learnt on the way! Jesus doesn't wait until we're fully ready either. We don't need to know it all or be perfect, just obedient in sharing what God has given us.

Luke doesn't tell us how John lost his head but you can read about it in other Gospels (Matthew chapter 14 and Mark chapter 6).

After Peter declared that Jesus was the expected Messiah, Jesus began to let his disciples know that things weren't going to play out as they expected. As the Messiah, he wasn't going to take over by force, in fact, he was going to die. But they seriously didn't get it. They even argued amongst themselves about who was the greatest, straight after Jesus told them that he would be betrayed! If we're honest with ourselves, how often do we not get the "upside-down" Kingdom? When we seek greatness or popularity for ourselves at the expense of others - that's so not Kingdom.

## PAUSE

Find a quiet spot and take some time to read about Jesus being anointed by the woman in Luke 7:36–50. You may want to have a journal with you to record your conversation with God.



Imagine yourself at the dinner party when this woman (probably a prostitute) walks in.



What are the expressions on people's faces?



Let the strong smell of expensive perfume fill your nose.



Can you hear her sobbing as she washes Jesus' feet?



Listen to the conversation between Jesus and Simon.

What stands out to you?

Does the situation make you uncomfortable? If so, ask God why.

Ask God, "What are you saying to me?"





## Week 3: Luke 7-9

You might need some extra paper for this week's discussion questions.

1. Do you have any cool stories/insights from reading and praying through Luke this week?
2. What didn't you understand from your reading?
3. How did your reading challenge you?
4. Why do you think Jesus' contact with the women in Luke 7-8 was so shocking? What was Jesus' attitude on both occasions?
5. Write a short list of the 'mistakes and misunderstandings' you see the disciples making in Luke 9. How were their attitudes different from those of Jesus here?
6. Pick out your favourite story of God's power at work in these passages. Write it out in your own words, or draw a picture depicting the event.
7. So what? What's God saying to you? Write in the space provided one thing you're going to do in response to this week's discussions and invite a friend to hold you to it.

WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO ABOUT IT?



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# WEEK 4

LUKE CHAPTERS 10-12



### Chapter 10:

Chapter ten kicked off with a very dangerous prayer. "Pray to the Lord who is in charge of the harvest to send out workers." Who was the answer to this prayer? The very disciples who were asked to pray it!

There are many things worth praying for in our world today. Are you willing for God to use you as part of the answer?

When the man asked Jesus, "Who is my neighbour?" he was looking for a rule that he could live by, a box he could tick. Jesus flipped the question on its head by making a despised Samaritan the 'hero' of the story. The question was no longer, "Who is my neighbour?" but "How can you be a neighbour to all?"

Lastly, we read about Mary and Martha, two sisters preparing a dinner party. Mary sat and listened to Jesus while Martha got stressed out with all the details. Jesus gently encouraged Martha to focus on him. There is nothing wrong with serving (in fact, Jesus loves it), but the challenge is to not let it distract us from Jesus.

### Chapter 11:

Jesus' teachings on prayer give us some insider information about what God is like. Jesus was constantly trying to get away from all the busyness and crowds to find an isolated place where he could pray and spend time with God. Even Jesus couldn't live well without spending time with the Father. He revealed to us how good the Father is, and how much he longs to give us good gifts, such as the Holy Spirit. Jesus encourages us to persevere in seeking God - perseverance reveals to us how much we actually want something.

When Jesus cast out a demon that was preventing a man from talking, some people accused him of getting his power from 'the prince of demons' - which Jesus revealed to be completely illogical. Jesus then referenced Jonah as the only sign they will get, foretelling his own death and resurrection.

We know that Jesus was willing to eat with sinners and tax collectors - but he was willing to eat with Pharisees too! Despite his harsh words to them about their personal 'righteousness' that neglected justice, Jesus wanted everyone, no matter who they were, to have an opportunity to respond to his message.

## Chapter 12:



Verse five is really intense when read on its own; *"Fear God, who has the power to kill you and then throw you into hell."* Yep, really intense. However, if we read on, Jesus tells us more about the nature of this God: the God who does not forget even a single sparrow cares about you so much that he knows the number of hairs on your head.

Jesus had a lot to say about money and our relationship with it, and his message is very relevant to us today. We live in an anxious world of getting more stuff, we're anxious consumers of everything - we even think about time as if it's running out! But our lives aren't measured by the number of things we have or even how much we experience (another form of consumerism). When asked to settle a family dispute over possessions, Jesus tells several stories to show that life is not about your possessions and comfort - therefore don't go to court over such silly things.

## PAUSE

Grab a hot drink and spend some time imagining the dinner party with Mary and Martha (Luke 10:38-42). Perhaps you could try imagining yourself as Martha, and then try to imagine yourself as Mary.



How many people are there in the house?



Are you tired, hungry, happy, stressed?



Is it noisy and busy?

How and when are you like Martha? How and when are you like Mary?



What food can you smell cooking in the kitchen?

Ask God what he might be teaching you from this story.



## Week 4: Luke 10-12

1. Do you have any cool stories/insights from reading and praying through Luke this week?
2. What didn't you understand from your reading?
3. How did your reading challenge you?
4. What does Jesus' teaching on prayer (Luke 11:1-13) reveal about what God is like and what he's not like?
5. You may have heard people say that churches are full of hypocrites. Are you ever hypocritical? How can you protect yourself from being hypocritical? (Luke 12:1-12)
6. Jesus told us not to be anxious about money and possessions but to trust in him (Luke 12:22-34). What are you anxious about? Write down a list of things you think you need but when you think about it you could totally do without. Share your list with someone.
7. So what? What's God saying to you? Write in the space provided one thing you're going to do in response to this week's discussions and invite a friend to hold you to it.

WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO ABOUT IT?



# WEEK 5

LUKE CHAPTERS 13–15





### Chapter 13:

A lot of people don't like the idea of God being a judge. However, many people are attracted to the idea 'what goes around comes around.' They want to see people get what they deserve - the universe dishing out justice here and now. Or they get upset when 'bad things happen to good people.' Jesus was saying that life doesn't always work the way we'd like it to - sometimes bad stuff happens.

The story of the fig tree was open-ended - who knew if it would produce fruit? But it was a picture of God giving second chances and not giving us what we really deserve. And the good stuff that we do, though it may be small like a seed or yeast, will become so much more in the Kingdom of God. A key verse in understanding these parables is verse 30, "Some who seem least important now will be the greatest then, and some who are the greatest now will be least important then."

### Chapter 14:

Meals like these in Jesus' time were displays of social status. There are going to be times when following Jesus means associating and standing up for those who don't improve your reputation or what people think of you. C.S. Lewis said, "True humility is not thinking less of yourself; it is thinking of yourself less." Easier said than done!

The rest of the chapter was about not taking Jesus lightly. Think about whether you're willing to do what it takes to be a disciple, and what it might cost you. Are you up for it?

### Chapter 15:

Three stories of lost and found. Lost sheep, lost coin, lost son. Three stories that show how much God longs for his children to come home to him, and delights when they do - no matter what the children have been up to. The father throws the biggest party every time someone returns to him. The parable of the lost son (which should really be lost sons, as the older brother is lost too) ends unfinished - we don't know if the older brother joins the party. The story is an invitation to those opposing Jesus, and to us, to welcome in outsiders. The father loves both sons, no matter how they've treated him.



## PAUSE

*Luke 13:10-17*

Find a comfortable position and imagine yourself in the Synagogue where Jesus is teaching on the Sabbath in Luke 13:10-17.

Where are you located in the Synagogue? Are you up the front near Jesus or towards the back?



As the events take place, are people talking and muttering, or is it so quiet you could hear a pin drop?



Imagine seeing someone whom you know has been bent over for 18 years instantly being healed and standing straight upright. How does this make you feel?



Imagine yourself as this woman who has been bent over for 18 years. What does it feel like when Jesus touches you?

What does God want to heal you of?

What is God asking you to do?



## Week 5: Luke 13-15

1. Do you have any cool stories/insights from reading and praying through Luke this week?
2. What didn't you understand from your reading?
3. How did your reading challenge you?
4. In Luke 13:34, Jesus likens himself to a mother hen protecting her chicks. How have you experienced the nurturing nature of God?
5. What is the cost for you to follow Jesus (Luke 14:25-35)? Do you know of any places where there is a huge cost for following Jesus?
6. Ask each person in your group to offer a word to describe the parable of the lost son and what it reveals about God (Luke 15:11-32).
7. So what? What's God saying to you? Write in the space provided one thing you're going to do in response to this week's discussions and invite a friend to hold you to it.

WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO ABOUT IT?



# WEEK 6

LUKE CHAPTERS 16–18



### Chapter 16:

Jesus again set his sights on wealth and money. Many people believed then, and still do, that wealth was a sure sign of God's favour. Jesus flipped this on its head and tells us to use our money for the sake of others - God is inviting us to join him in compassionate use of our money for the sake of the poor. This is a question we will face for the rest of our lives: what's more important to us, God or money? The story at the end of the chapter reminds us that what we do with what we have has implications beyond the end of our lives.

### Chapter 17:

Jesus began this chapter by talking about how our behaviour can cause others to sin. Sin is anything that hurts God, ourselves or others. It's not a popular word these days.

Jesus' talk about forgiveness prompted the disciples to ask for something that would help them forgive others. "Show us how to increase our faith," they said to Jesus. Jesus' answer about having faith the size of a mustard seed means it's not how big your faith is, but what you have faith in. Is it in a big God? In a good God?

The Pharisees were expecting the Messiah to overthrow the Roman Empire in a really dramatic way and establish a powerful Kingdom. But the Kingdom has come in a totally unforeseen way. We now live in a time where the mysterious Kingdom of Jesus is at work in and through those who follow him.

### Chapter 18:

There's a story of a Sunday School teacher who after teaching the children about the Pharisee and tax collector, ended by praying, "Thank you God that we are not like the Pharisee." The parables and encounters in this chapter emphasise the need for trust, humility and persistence in our relationship with God. This is modelled best by little children who are totally dependent on their parents.

Note how similar the prayer of the tax collector and the blind beggar are, "O God, be merciful to me, for I am a sinner," and "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" Followers of Jesus have been praying like this ever since! If you can't think of anything else to pray, this is a great place to start.

## PAUSE

Take some time to imagine yourself as a beggar on the side of the road as Jesus walks past (Luke 18:35-43).



Are you also blind?  
What can you hear?

Does Jesus come over to you?



What can you smell?

If so, what does Jesus say to you?  
Does he ask you, like he asked  
the blind beggar, what you want?



In your imagination, cry  
out, "Jesus, Son of David,  
have mercy on me."  
Perhaps say it out loud.

Write down your thoughts about  
this passage.



## Week 6: Luke 16-18

1. Do you have any cool stories/insights from reading and praying through Luke this week?
2. What didn't you understand from your reading?
3. How did your reading challenge you?
4. In Luke 17:33 Jesus said, "If you cling to your life you will lose it, and if you let your life go, you will save it." What does this mean to you?
5. Jesus challenged the rich young man on his wealth because Jesus knew it was preventing him from following Jesus (Luke 18:22). What is it that stops you from really following Jesus?
6. Jesus said that to enter the Kingdom of God you must receive it like a child (Luke 18:17). What are the implications of this?
7. So what? What's God saying to you? Write in the space provided one thing you're going to do in response to this week's discussions and invite a friend to hold you to it.

WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO ABOUT IT?



# WEEK 7

LUKE CHAPTERS 19–21





### Chapter 19:

As Jesus journeyed on towards Jerusalem, he passed through Jericho and met Zacchaeus, a tax collector. Because of his encounter with Jesus, Zacchaeus vowed to give away his wealth and return four times as much to those he'd robbed. Jesus then turned to the crowd and used the opportunity to let them know that the Kingdom of God wouldn't come right away in the political takeover they were expecting.

Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a humble donkey, not on an impressive horse that a new Caesar might have ridden. The people still tried to honour Jesus like an earthly King though, laying down their cloaks before him. Entering the Temple, Jesus drove out the people who were profiting from the Temple sacrifices.

### Chapter 20:

This chapter records a bunch of conversations with religious leaders who were trying to catch Jesus out. In some Old Testament prophecies, the nation of Israel is referred to as 'The Vineyard', and the Pharisees would've got the picture that Jesus was painting. The second group tried to get Jesus on the wrong side of the Romans by asking him if it was right to pay taxes. Lastly, the Sadducees were a group of religious elite who didn't believe in an afterlife - therefore they were quite happy to get cosy with the Romans to ensure that they lived a comfortable life here and now. They put a puzzle before Jesus, asking him whom a much-married woman would be married to in the resurrection. Jesus saw right through them, and revealed their silly puzzle was pointless - marriage is only for here and now.

### Chapter 21:

After briefly watching rich people putting money into the offering box, and commending a poor widow for giving all she had, Jesus foretold the destruction of Jerusalem. This happened at the hands of the Roman General Titus about 40 years after Jesus' death (in 70AD). Without going into the details, it was pretty horrific. Wars and trials still happen, and many Christians around the world still face the stuff described here. This stuff can seem quite overwhelming, but the basic message is this: *Things aren't going to be easy if you follow me, I won't always protect you from these things, but I will be with you in them. So keep your eyes open and keep praying.*



## PAUSE

Reflect on Jesus clearing the temple in Luke 19:45–48. This scene is crazy - I hope you've got your creative thinking hat on! Read the passage a couple of times. Now, imagine the chaos; sheep bleating, doves flying all over the place.



What can you see?

Imagine yourself as someone who was selling things in the Temple. How do you respond?



How does everyone around you respond?

What do you notice? What might God be saying to you?



What can you hear?

Ask God what he wants to cleanse from your life.

Imagine yourself as a follower of Jesus. How does this make you feel about Jesus?



## Week 7: Luke 19-21

1. Do you have any cool stories/insights from reading and praying through Luke this week?
2. What didn't you understand from your reading?
3. How did your reading challenge you?
4. Tax collectors like Zacchaeus were looked down on by everyone (Luke 19:1-10). Who are the people looked down on today? How would Jesus interact with them?
5. Why were the Pharisees and leaders so eager to kill Jesus?
6. How should the hope of our resurrection affect our daily life? (Luke 20:37-38).
7. So what? What's God saying to you? Write in the space provided one thing you're going to do in response to this week's discussions and invite a friend to hold you to it.

WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO ABOUT IT?



# WEEK 8

LUKE CHAPTERS 22–24



### Chapter 22:

Whew! That was a long and intense chapter. Over the course of one 24 hour period, we see betrayal and denial, an intimate meal, an arrest and a brutal interrogation. The Last Supper was Passover, the Jewish meal celebrating their escape with Moses from slavery in Egypt. The practice of Communion in churches (also known as Eucharist or Lord's Supper) remembers the importance of this meal, of what it symbolised and looks forward to a feast with Jesus when the Kingdom of God has come in full.

It's not the last we've seen of Peter by the way. Wait until you read the sequel!

### Chapter 23:

Before the cross became a symbol of the Christian faith, self-sacrificial love and forgiveness, it was a symbol of the power of Caesar. Crucifixion was used throughout the Roman Empire to publicly, brutally and shamefully show everyone who was boss. This was how the Empire put an end to revolutions aimed at overthrowing them. Jesus too was a revolutionary who talked about a different sort of Kingdom, a Kingdom of love. And for a moment, it seemed like this cruel form of death had brought an end to this Jesus revolution.

### Chapter 24:

*"We had hoped he was the Messiah who had come to rescue Israel."* These words sum up how devastated Jesus' followers were - that the revolution had really come to an end. But this final section of Luke showed us that this wasn't the end. In fact, in some ways it was just the beginning. "He is not here! He is risen from the dead!" Not just as a ghost or spirit either but as a physical flesh-and-bone body.

Jesus revealed himself to the disciples and explained the 'Jesus story' in the Scriptures. He told them to take this 'Jesus story' to people everywhere; and to start with this – "there is forgiveness of sins for all who repent."

In some mysterious way, Jesus' life, death and resurrection enabled the Holy Spirit to come and bring about the Kingdom in and through us. Read the second book Luke wrote, The Book of Acts, to see what happened next!

## PAUSE

Find a cosy spot, get comfortable, and read through the denial scene in Luke 22:54–62 a couple of times. Imagine yourself following Jesus alongside Peter, warming yourself by the fire in the courtyard.



How dark is it?



How much can you see of what's happening to Jesus?



How do you respond when people start accusing Peter?



Imagine yourself in Peter's shoes, having just denied Jesus three times. Hear the rooster crow. How do you feel?



Jesus looks at you straight in the eye. What look is on Jesus' face and in his eyes?

What stood out for you?

## PAUSE

Set aside a bit of time to reflect and imagine this final scene in Luke, where the resurrected Jesus appears to his followers. Imagine the scene as the two people tell their story of encountering Jesus on the road to Emmaus.



How many people are in the room?



What's the temperature?



Imagine the scene as it plays out. Do you reach out and touch Jesus to see if he's real?

What's the atmosphere as people listen? Do the others believe the two men? Do you believe them?

What stands out for you?

Ask God what he'd like you to know, perhaps write down a response.

Ask God to make the Holy Spirit more present in your life.





## Week 8: Luke 22-24

1. Do you have any cool stories/insights from reading and praying through Luke this week?
2. What didn't you understand from your reading?
3. How did your reading challenge you?
4. What's the significance of this 'Last Supper'? Why did Jesus choose bread and wine to represent his body and the new covenant?
5. If you did the *Pause* exercise in Chapter 22, you imagined yourself as Peter having just denied Jesus and seeing Jesus look at you (Luke 22:61). If you haven't done the *Pause*, imagine it now. How did it make you feel? Is it comforting to you that Jesus predicted Peter's denial?
6. What's the key message for you from these chapters of Jesus' death and resurrection?
7. So what? What's God saying to you? Write in the space provided one thing you're going to do in response to this week's discussions and invite a friend to hold you to it.

WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO ABOUT IT?



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## Glossary

**Aaron:** The brother of Moses and the very first Israelite High Priest.

**Abraham:** God chose Abraham as the beginning of Israel as a nation. He is known as the 'Father of many nations'.

**Adultery:** When someone who is married sleeps with someone else who isn't their wife or husband.

**Apostle:** Someone sent out as a representative, usually with a message.

**Baptise:** To mark someone as belonging to God, through a ceremony which uses water.

**Blasphemy:** When someone does or says things that show a lack of respect for God.

**Blessing:** A good thing that comes to us from God, often when we don't expect or deserve it.

**Burlap:** When Jewish people wanted to show that they were deeply upset or sorry they would dress in a bag-like garment made of rough, scratchy cloth.

**Caesar:** The title given to emperors of Rome. The place where Jesus lived was governed by the Romans.

**Chaff:** Fine, dry husk that is separated from edible seed (grain) during threshing. It was usually burnt once the seed was gathered.

**Circumcision:** Circumcision is a ceremony for young males to mark them as belonging to the Jewish community.

**Commandments:** The rules God gave his people so they could learn to live right.

**Conceive:** Become pregnant.

**Convulsion:** Sudden or uncontrollable movements.

**Covenant:** A binding agreement between two parties.

**Cross:** A large wooden object on which criminals were killed. They

were tied or nailed to the cross and left to die.

**Crucifixion:** To kill someone by tying or nailing them to a cross.

**Curtain in the sanctuary of the Temple:** This was the curtain at the entrance to the most holy part of the Temple in Jerusalem.

**David:** Israel's most important king and an ancestor of Jesus. He lived about 1,000 years before Jesus.

**Demon-possessed:** A phrase used to describe a person who had an evil spirit living inside them.

**Devil:** A powerful spiritual being – the enemy of God and his followers. Also referred to as Satan.

**Disciples:** Followers or students.

**Elders:** The leaders of God's people. Also a word used today for church leaders.

**Elijah:** A prophet whom God's people trusted. His story can be found in the Old Testament.

**Emperor:** The supreme ruler of the Roman Empire which controlled the then-known world, including the area where Jesus lived.

**Eternal life:** Living forever with God.

**Exalt:** To praise someone highly or to elevate someone to a higher status.

**Exodus:** The founding event of the nation of Israel when Moses led the people out of slavery in Egypt and into their identity as God's nation.

**Fasting:** To eat a small amount or go without eating or drinking for a time, for the purpose of focusing on God.

**Flogged:** To be beaten with a whip or stick.

**Gentile:** Any person who is not Jewish. In the New Testament, salvation is offered to both Jews and Gentiles.

**Good News:** The story of Jesus Christ and everything he did.

**Hell:** Being separated from God forever as a result of sin.

**Herod:** The king appointed by the Romans to govern the region where Jesus lived.

**High Council:** The High Council was the highest religious court in Jerusalem. It was very political.

**High Priest:** The leader of all the priests.

**Holy Spirit:** The Holy Spirit is God active in the world and in human beings.

**Hypocrite:** A person who claims or pretends to have certain beliefs but doesn't live by them.

**Indignant:** Someone is indignant when they are angry at something they believe is unfair or wrong.

**Isaiah:** Isaiah was a prophet, like Elijah. His story is in the Old Testament of the Bible.

**Jacob and Joseph:** Jacob and Joseph were descendants of Abraham. Their story is written in the Old Testament of the Bible.

**John the Baptist:** A close relative of Jesus who prepared the way for Jesus by calling people to turn from their wrongdoing and be ready for the Kingdom of God.

**Kingdom of God:** God's reign in heaven being also established on earth. All people who have recognised God as their king are citizens of this kingdom.

**Law of Moses:** The first five books of the Old Testament which includes instructions for right living given to Moses by God.

**Lepre:** Someone suffering from a terrible type of skin disease which was often contagious, which Luke calls 'leprosy' (though probably not what we call leprosy today).

**Merciful:** Means being kind or to forgive someone even though they might not deserve it.

**Messiah:** Refers to God's chosen king. The Jews were waiting for God to send a king to come and free them from the Romans.

**Millstone:** A heavy stone used to grind grain.

**Ministry:** This means service and usually refers to someone's work for God.

**Miracle:** A supernatural event that people believe only God can make happen.

**Moses:** A great leader who led God's people out of captivity in Egypt more than 1,400 years before Jesus. His story is in the Old Testament.

**Parable:** A story that teaches a moral or spiritual lesson.

**Paralysed:** A paralysed person cannot move some part of their body.

**Passover (also Festival of Unleavened Bread):** The Jewish Passover celebration is an annual event when Jews celebrate God freeing his people from slavery in Egypt. During Passover, people eat unleavened bread (bread that has nothing in it to make it rise).

**Pharisee:** One of the religious groups of the Jews.

**Pilate:** A Roman official who was in charge of the region of Judea on behalf of the Roman Empire.

**Pious:** Means to be religious in a very serious and respectful way.

**Priest:** A person responsible for the activities and worship at the Temple.

**Prince of demons:** Another name for the Devil.

**Prophecy:** A message from God.

**Prophet:** Someone who brings a message from God.

**Rebuked:** Means to tell someone off.

**Religious law:** A set of rules people believed they needed to follow and live by so that God would be pleased with them.

**Repent:** To feel sorry for something bad you've done and change your behaviour so that you don't do it again.

**Resurrection:** When someone who has died comes back to life.

**Roman Empire:** At the time of Jesus, the Roman Empire ruled much of the known world: Europe, Mediterranean, Middle East and North Africa. The capital city, Rome, was the largest city at the time.

**Sabbath:** The day of the week when Jewish people stopped working and rested as an act of worshipping God.

**Sacrifice:** Something offered to God to restore a right relationship with him. Sacrifices could include animals, drink, money and other possessions.

**Sadducees:** A Jewish group that opposed Jesus during his ministry. The Sadducees were made up of powerful and wealthy people and they did not believe in the resurrection of the dead.

**Salvation:** God's way of rescuing people from sin and death through faith in Jesus Christ.

**Samaritan:** A person living in Samaria in ancient Palestine. The Jews and the Samaritans didn't like each other very much.

**Sanctuary:** The central building of the Temple complex, where important rituals were carried out such as burning incense and placing the ceremonial bread.

**Satan:** Another name for the Devil.

**Scriptures:** A collection of religious writings. In the Bible they refer to writings that are trusted as being God's message to his people.

**Shepherd:** Someone who looks after a flock of sheep by finding them food and protecting them.

**Shrewd:** Intelligent, quick-witted.

**Sin:** Things we do that break God's laws.

**Solomon:** The third king of Israel (after his father David). He was considered to be very wise and was king for 40 years.

**Synagogue:** A building where Jews meet to worship God.

**Tax collector:** Someone who collected tax for the Roman Empire. They were despised because they collaborated with the Empire, and often took more money than they should have so they became rich at the expense of others.

**Temple:** A large walled complex on a prominent hill in Jerusalem that was the centre of Jewish religious life. The central building was the Sanctuary which included the Holy Place and the Most Holy Place.

**Tempted:** Being enticed to do things that may look attractive but you know are wrong.

**Testimony:** A testimony is someone's story of what they have seen, heard or experienced.

**Tithe:** The practice of giving ten percent of one's income or property as an offering to God.

**Transformed:** To be changed.

**Unleavened bread:** Bread without yeast, eaten to celebrate God's delivery of the Israelites out of Egypt. They had to eat bread without waiting for it to rise because they had to flee in a hurry.

**Winnowing fork:** A long-handled fork used to throw threshed grain into the air. The wind blew the husks away and the heavier edible seed fell into a separate pile.

**Yeast:** Also called leaven, used in bread dough to make it rise. It is symbolic of something small which has a big effect (good or bad).



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