

Lessons for Learners: Luke 4-6
Summary of Messages

1. Luke 4:1-13: Learning to say NO to shortcuts. (April 11, '99)

2. Luke 4:14-30: Learning to expect rejection. (April 18, '99)

Jesus returns to Nazareth where he reads from Is. 61:1-2. The passage which predicts the ministry of the Messiah, Jesus says, is now fulfilled in himself. The crowd turns from acceptance to rejection b/c they are unwilling to accept that Jesus, the son of Joseph, is indeed Messiah. For us. Following Jesus will not always be popular. People will reject us, because of our association with Jesus. We must be willing to stand with Jesus - even if this means rejection by the world.

3. Luke 4:31-44: A Lesson in Authority. (April 25, '99)

Jesus demonstrates his authority through his teaching, by delivering a demonized man, when he rebukes a fever, and as he heals or delivers all brought to him. It is a kind of authority that amazes people. Authority which comes direct from God. (I'll be gone this weekend, Robb V will preach - I'll get more information on Thursday)

4. Luke 5:1-11, 27-32 (May 2, '99)

Jesus calls Simon and Levi in these texts. It is a call to follow and enter life as a disciple of Jesus Christ. I will explain how Simon comes to progressively realize just who Jesus is (note Master first then Lord). This recognition causes Simon to see his own sinfulness and feel that he is disqualified from even being in Jesus presence. But that is the very realization that is needed if one is to follow Christ. It is exactly what happens to Levi. As a tax collector he is ostracized from Jewish society - he knows he is a sinner. Yet these are the very people Jesus calls - those who are sick and know their need. I will refer to Luke 18:9-14 to emphasize that contrast. How do we view ourselves? Pretty good or in need of a physician for our sin sick soul. **THIS WOULD BE A GOOD SUNDAY TO CELEBRATE COMMUNION.** I will also emphasize leaving all to follow. Perhaps we could celebrate communion before the message. It would help make the initial focus on repentance in the right sequence (before we proceed to follow Christ).

5. Luke 5:12-26 A Lesson in Compassion and Courage (May 9, '99)

This message will combine two accounts of Jesus healing different individuals. In the first case he crosses social norms by touching the leper. Jesus willingly displays compassion to those in need. In the second account he heals a paralytic - after announcing the forgiveness of his sins. The healing is really secondary to growing conflict with the religious leaders. But Jesus never allows social norms to prevent him from addressing the needs of people. He displays courage as well as compassion. We will see Jesus as the one who forgives and heals. - that speaks to all of us. (His healing validates his claim to pronounce forgiveness). And he is not turned back from fulfilling his mission.

6. Luke 5:33 - 6:11: A Lesson in True Religion (May 16, '99)

This message revolves around the question of fasting and observance of the Sabbath. What unites those is that both had become "forms" of religion devoid of the substance - which is a dynamic relationship with the living God. Jesus teaches his disciples that "fasting" and "observing the sabbath" are only means to expressing a relationship with God. The means are secondary. Too easily - especially when lacking the real thing - we define our relationship with God through forms. The forms are secondary - the heart is primary.

7. Luke 6:12-19: A Lesson in Acceptance (May 23, '99)

This message will give a brief sketch of the different disciples. I'll emphasize that Jesus welcomes all. In the second half of the verse we hear of crowds (not just Jews) who are attracted to Jesus. It is easy to struggle accepting those who are different. Yet in Christ we are brought together. Jesus has called each one. He prays and the power of God is unleashed to send out his disciples and draw needy people from all over. As he follows we must accept those who are different and receive and serve those whom the Father is drawing to His Son.

8. Luke 6:20-26: A Lesson in Seeing who really is well-off. (May 30, '99)

This message will reveal the amazing shift that comes for those in the Kingdom of God. It is not those who are "well-off" by worldly standards (rich, happy, well-fed, socially acceptable) who we should consider "blessed". No. The kingdom is available to just the opposite. (It does not make poverty a virtue), but it says a person doesn't have to "clean themselves up" to be a recipient of the Kingdom of God. In fact, in the midst of poverty, hunger, mourning, and rejection - one can experience the blessing of God.

9. Luke 6:27-42: A Lesson in True Love (June 6, '99)

Challenging verses to love our enemies. This is what God is like and this is what Christ wants us to become like in how we treat people. It goes beyond human reactions of fairness. This kind of love is not fair - but merciful and gracious. It is forgiving and kind - even when acts of love are rejected. This is the kind of people Jesus wants to make us. Demonstrating love, refusing to judge, not holding a grudge - this is the kind of life we are called to live

**THIS WOULD BE A GOOD SUNDAY FOR COMMUNION. IT IS A SMALL STEP TO
REMEMBER THIS IS HOW GOD LOVED US - NOT JUST HOW WE ARE TO DEMONSTRATE
THIS LOVE - WE LOVE BECAUSE HE FIRST LOVED US.**

10. Luke 6:43-49: A Lesson in Obedience (June 13, '99)

This is the summary of the series. We would be fools to reject Jesus teaching and not put it into practice. And yet, that is precisely what we do much of the time. The issue is obedience and recognizing that only as we put these lessons into practice will we experience the life Jesus wants for us. As we begin to implement these lessons - we will be like a good tree - it will naturally bear good fruit. Christ-like reactions will come to characterize us and we will be able to withstand whatever storms may come in this life.