



Bible Discussion Groups - Autumn 2021

Life Lessons from Luke

Series outline

Session 1	Doubt and insecurity	Luke 1:1-4, 24:36-53
Session 2	Poverty and wealth	Luke 6:17-26; 16:1-13
Session 3	Conflict and relationships	Luke 6:27-42
Session 4	Anxiety and priorities	Luke 12:13-34
Session 5	Identity and worth	Luke 15:1-10; 18:9-14
Session 6	Guilt and forgiveness	Luke 15:11-32

Group discussion: what do you know about Luke's Gospel?

- How many chapters are there in the book of Luke?
a. 16 b. 21 c. 24 d. 28
- Luke's Gospel is addressed to a reader whose name is what?
a. Theophilus b. Theodorus c. Dorothea d. Philadelphus
- Which of these events in Jesus' life is NOT found in Luke's Gospel?
a. The feeding of the 5,000 b. The wise men visit baby Jesus
c. The death of Jesus d. The shepherds visit baby Jesus
- What was the name of the small man who met Jesus in Luke 19?
a. Zebedee b. Zechariah c. Zacchaeus d. Zephaniah
- Which of these parables of Jesus is found ONLY in Luke's Gospel?
a. The Parable of the Sower b. The Good Samaritan
c. The Wedding Banquet d. The Parable of the Talents
- In which chapter of Luke does Jesus teach his friends the Lord's Prayer?
a. 6 b. 11 c. 16 d. 21
- In Luke 7 Jesus raises the dead son of a widow from which town?
a. Nain b. Nazareth c. Nineveh d. Narnia
- What book did Luke write as the sequel to his Gospel?
a. Acts b. Romans c. Genesis d. Revelation

Session 1

The two passages shown here are the beginning and the ending of Luke's Gospel. Read them and then consider the questions in your small group.

Luke 1:1-4 NIV

¹ Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, ² just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eye witnesses and servants of the word. ³ With this in mind, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I too decided to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, ⁴ so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.

1. In the opening paragraph, Luke gives his reader (someone called Theophilus) an explanation of how his Gospel came about, and why he wrote it despite the fact that other people had written similar books already.
 - a. According to verse 3, what task did Luke do to prepare to write the book?
 - b. What word does Luke use in v3 to describe the account he has written? What do you think he means?
 - c. What did Luke hope to achieve for Theophilus by writing his Gospel?
 - d. If Theophilus had had doubts and told Luke about them, what advice do you think Luke would have given him?
 - e. What do you think Luke would tell us to do if we start to doubt our faith?
2. In the closing section of his Gospel, Luke describes the final days and weeks of Jesus' earthly ministry. When Jesus visited his disciples after rising from the dead, their first reactions were shock, fear and doubt (vv37-8).
 - a. What two things did Jesus tell them to do in verse 39? Why?
 - b. What did Jesus do in verse 43? How might that dispel their doubts?
 - c. How do verses 44-45 also form part of Jesus' proof of who he is?
3. Many notable Christians heroes of the past as well as in modern times have admitted having doubts about their faith. We should remember that, when the risen Jesus visited his disciples and saw that they had doubts, he tried to change the situation by convincing them. Why is this good news for us?
4. It is very striking that the same disciples who were frightened and doubting in verses 37-38 are given an important task in verses 46-48. What is the task, and why did Jesus entrust it to these men rather than others? What might be the implications for us?

Luke 24:36-53 NIV

³⁶ While they were still talking about this, Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, 'Peace be with you.' ³⁷ They were startled and frightened, thinking they saw a ghost.

³⁸ He said to them, 'Why are you troubled, and why do doubts rise in your minds? ³⁹ Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have.' ⁴⁰ When he had said this, he showed them his hands and feet. ⁴¹ And while they still did not believe it because of joy and amazement, he asked them, 'Do you have anything here to eat?' ⁴² They gave him a piece of broiled fish, ⁴³ and he took it and ate it in their presence.

⁴⁴ He said to them, 'This is what I told you while I was still with you: everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.' ⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. ⁴⁶ He told them, 'This is what is written: the Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, ⁴⁷ and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ You are witnesses of these things. ⁴⁹ I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.'

⁵⁰ When he had led them out to the vicinity of Bethany, he lifted up his hands and blessed them. ⁵¹ While he was blessing them, he left them and was taken up into heaven. ⁵² Then they worshipped him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. ⁵³ And they stayed continually at the temple, praising God.

Closing prayer (The Lord's Prayer)

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name.
Your Kingdom come, your will be done,
on earth as in heaven.
Give us today our daily bread.
Forgive us our sins, as we forgive those who sin against us.
Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power and the glory are yours
Now and for ever. Amen.

Doubt and insecurity – some quotations (not from the Bible!)

1. Our doubts are traitors, and make us lose the good we oft might win, by fearing to attempt.
— William Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*
2. If you hear a voice within you say you cannot paint, then by all means paint and that voice will be silenced.
— Vincent van Gogh
3. Inaction breeds doubt and fear. Action breeds confidence and courage. If you want to conquer fear, do not sit home and think about it. Go out and get busy.
— Dale Carnegie
4. The worst enemy to creativity is self-doubt.
— Sylvia Plath
5. A hero is someone who, in spite of weakness, doubt or not always knowing the answers, goes ahead and overcomes anyway.
— Christopher Reeve

Doubt in Scripture is viewed practically and spiritually as it relates to our trust in the Lord. It can be seen to be characteristic of both believers and unbelievers. In the unbeliever doubt is virtually synonymous with unbelief.

In the Gospels the word "doubt" consistently carries with it a negative aspect, and the object of doubt again is always the Lord in some sense. Peter doubted Christ's ability to keep him from drowning (Matt 14:31). Here doubt is small or weak faith. Peter became doubtful as to the Lord's reliability and power to sustain him. The Pharisees doubted Christ's messiahship and asked for another sign (Matt 12:38-42). If we have faith in God and do not doubt, we can move mountains and receive our request through prayer (Matt 21:21; Mark 11:23). Here doubt is the antithesis of faith. In John 14:1 Jesus encourages the disciples to not have a troubled (doubting?) heart with regards to the future, but to believe in him, to trust him for their future needs. Some of the disciples, including Thomas, doubted the reality of the resurrected Lord (Luke 24:38; John 20:27). Here doubt is not outright denial or unbelief, but an attitude or feeling of uncertainty. Thomas is not severely rebuked, but neither is his scepticism commended. "Stop doubting and believe" is the word of the Lord to his disciple.

— Daniel L. Aiken (<https://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionary/doubt>)

