



Theme: The Art of Salvation – Jesus in the Gospel of Luke

“Salvation in the Crowd”


Weekly Memory Verse:

[Jesus said] ...when someone comes to me, listens to my teaching, and then follows it. ⁴⁸ It is like a person building a house who digs deep and lays the foundation on solid rock. When the floodwaters rise and break against that house, it stands firm because it is well built. – Luke 6:47b-48


Spiritual Formation or Family Activity Ideas for the Week: Jesus asks us to take care of other people. One of the ways we can do this is by providing food for those who need it. If you have children, talk with your child about the need for food in our community. Ask your child what some of their favorite foods are to eat. Think about your favorite foods you would like to donate to our community. Make a list and then go to the grocery store to select the foods from their list. Ask for a paper grocery sack when you check out. When you get home, decorate the paper sack and then deliver the decorated sack of food to our church for Native Hope or to a community food bank of your choice.

During Lent, the 40 days and 7 Sundays before Easter, the Meditation Moments will lead us to read the entire gospel of Luke. To reach that goal, some daily readings are longer than usual. Mondays will highlight the passage from the previous weekend’s sermon. Tuesdays through Saturdays will cover the rest of the gospel. Have an extra cup of coffee, or maybe use your lunch break, to make the time to read the whole gospel with us.

Monday, March 14 – Read Luke 9:10-17. When Jesus met people with problems (hunger, illness or any other human challenges), his pattern was not to scold them for what they’d done wrong, say God was teaching them a lesson, or try to be too busy to help. Jesus was about meeting needs. Facing a large, hungry crowd, his disciples pragmatically said, “Send these people away.” But Jesus’ reply was “You give them something to eat.” Jesus regularly worked with his followers to make things better.


 The disciples’ “practical” idea gave them an “out”: “Send the crowd away so that they can go...find lodging and food.” Most of us think, “Somebody should do something about...” It’s


true—no one of us can solve all the world’s problems alone. But Jesus’ words to the disciples, “You give them something to eat,” challenges us, too. How did the story in verse 16 show Jesus’ power flowing through his human followers? Does he call you today to be a channel for his power to flow? How can you discern when you are the “somebody” God is calling to do something?

 Any gardener or farmer knows one planted kernel of corn can bear several ears with a few hundred kernels each. God built many multiplying dynamics like that into the “natural” world. Jesus multiplied “five loaves of bread and two fish” to feed 5,000 people, the same power at work in a more unusual way. Knowing what Jesus did with that small lunch, what talents or resources might you offer to Jesus, trusting his power to multiply your gift to bless others?

Prayer: *Lord Jesus, keep my inner “ears” open to the ways you call me to let your power flow through me. Multiply my small gifts into life-changing outward or inner nourishment to uplift others. Amen.*


Tuesday, March 15 – Read Luke 3:23-4:13. Most of us think “so what?” about the “genealogies” (lists of names and relationships) in the Bible. But Luke made a key point with his genealogy of Jesus. Unlike Matthew 1:1-17, Luke took his genealogy all the way to “the son of Adam, the son of God.” It said Jesus was the Savior for all people. All the temptations tried to get Jesus to do things to make his life easier by matching popular hopes of what the Messiah would do. But Jesus refused the urge to prove his identity in self-serving ways.


 Our culture tends to keep (and add to) the medieval idea of a horned devil in red tights. Would a figure like that in any way have tempted Jesus? Has temptation ever come to you, not as a big “devil” figure, but as a tiny inner whisper urging you to choose a path other than God’s? How can knowing your identity as God’s child help you resist that whisper?

 In Luke 4:10-11, the tempter quoted from Psalm 91. Jesus didn’t just say, “From the Bible? Must be right.” Scholar Scot McKnight wrote in his book, *The Blue Parakeet: Rethinking How You Read the Bible*, that at times we, “read the Bible as a collection of... sanctified morsels of truth.” How can you learn to discern the Bible’s core principles to guide your life? How can it be spiritually (as well as physically) unsafe to take all Bible verses literally, as the tempter urged Jesus to do?

Prayer: *Loving God, continue teaching me how to hear and apply the Bible’s principles to my life. Let me learn, not just fragments, but your overall message to empower me to resist temptation. Amen.*

Wednesday, March 16 – Read Luke 4:14-44. Jesus defined his mission by claiming that his healing, liberating actions fulfilled the words of Isaiah 61:1-2. In Nazareth, he met rejection and anger. In Capernaum, on the other hand, we read in verse 42 the townspeople wanted him to stay there and be their local healer. Jesus steadfastly followed a course he and God chose. He did not allow either human rejection or popularity to govern his actions.


 Jesus laid claim to Isaiah 61:1-2 as his “job description.” We know that he later told his followers in John 14:12 and 20:21 that his job description is also the job description for all who follow him. Re-read verses 18-19 in today’s Scripture. Which parts of this task stir the most passion in your heart? Will you accept Jesus’ “job offer” and sign on to actively join him in carrying out God’s mission in our hurting world?


 Jesus was a supreme example of servant leadership. As part of that he practiced good self-care and paid attention to soul care. In verse 42 (and again in Luke 5:16 tomorrow), Luke

said Jesus left the crowds to pray in solitary places. Solitude—just you and God—is hard for most of us. How could you intentionally create ten or fifteen minutes of solitude each day? How might you find longer periods of solitude as needed?

Prayer: *Lord Jesus, condemned or praised, you set your steady course by living out God's purpose for your life. Guide me in nurturing the inner springs of life so that I, too, can live out your purpose for me. Amen.*


Thursday, March 17 – Luke 5:1-32. Luke (likely Paul's companion, "the dearly loved physician" of Colossians 4:14) named many different ills Jesus healed. No wonder people were "filled with awe" as we read in verse 26. Awe-inspiring spiritual power was clearly at work in Jesus. And we know that in Jesus' day, illness was not just physical. Many people saw it as a sign of God's curse. Jesus' healing acts bore powerful witness to God's love and forgiveness, as well as God's power.


 The spiritual gift healing is thought of as a divine ability to bring wholeness—physical, emotional or spiritual—to others. What signs can you find in these stories that Jesus healed in all these ways? In which of these ways do you most need healing right now? How can you more fully open your life to Jesus' healing power?

 We read in verses 17-21 and 30 that many religious leaders watched Jesus with a critical spirit. Jesus told the upset Pharisees, "I didn't come to call righteous people, but sinners." Paul writes in Romans 3:23 that this means all of us as we all fall short. Scholar Hans Küng wrote in this book, *On Being a Christian*, "A Church that will not accept the fact that it consists of sinful [people] and exists for sinful [people] becomes hard-hearted, self-righteous, inhuman...the Church must always dissociate itself from sin, but it can never have any excuse for keeping any sinner at a distance." How open are you to the fact that to include you, Jesus' church must accept and minister to a sinner?

Prayer: *Lord Jesus, thank you for offering me your healing, restorative power. Guard my heart against ever thinking I am "too good" to associate with any of your beloved children. Amen.*


Friday, March 18 – Luke 5:33-6:16. Jesus used a parable to express his challenge to the status quo. The word "parable" occurs about 14 times in Luke, but here in 5:36 it shows up for the first time. People often used goatskins to hold wine and other fluids in Palestine. As new wine fermented it would burst a rigid old skin. Through Jesus, God was starting new ways of working in the world that would burst old cultural norms. The response to Jesus' Sabbath healing showed that his message could burst old, rigid spirituality.

 Old ways of doing things aren't necessarily bad, but they aren't necessarily good, either. With the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, God was setting up new ways to pursue his age-old mission. It was new wine that required new wineskins. Reflect on your own spiritual journey: how has God transformed you from old ways of living to new ways?

 Israel had 12 tribes. When Jesus chose, not 6, 8 or 10, but 12 of his followers as "apostles," the symbolism was clear—he was creating a new Israel. Scholar Robert Mounce wrote in, *Mounce's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words*, that the word "apostle" meant, "an emissary of God...with special authority and status in Christ for the sake of the gospel." Luke said Jesus spent an entire night in prayer before finalizing his choice. Do you make prayer as crucial as Jesus did when you face a significant decision?

Prayer: *Lord Jesus, help me to respect and value all that is good in tradition. And guide me to also value and respect the newness and fresh energy you keep bringing to human life. Amen.*

Saturday, March 19 – Read Luke 6:17-6:49. After choosing the Twelve, Jesus laid out the principles of life in his kingdom. Luke used much, but not all, of the material from, “The Sermon on the Mount,” in Matthew 5-7 in this passage. But Jesus did not just preach the Sermon on the Mount once, and then move on to other topics. Scholar William Barclay wrote in, *Daily Study Bible Series: The Gospel of Matthew—Volume 1 Chapters 1–10*, that the verb translated “taught” in Matthew 5:2 used the Greek, “imperfect tense,” and meant, “repeated and habitual action, and the translation should be: ‘This is what he used to teach them.’ Matthew has said as plainly as Greek will say it that the Sermon on the Mount is not one sermon of Jesus, given at one particular time and on one particular occasion; it is the essence of all that Jesus continuously and habitually taught his disciples.”

 Like Mary’s song in Luke 1:46-55, this sermon offered God’s favor and comfort to people we usually see as unfortunate and warned those we see as particularly fortunate. In a rich county like ours, Jesus’ words can be disturbing. Which parts of his message most challenge your ideas of “success”? From Francis of Assisi to his namesake Pope Francis, from Martin Luther King, Jr. to Mother Teresa, many Christ followers have stood with the poor and oppressed. In The Message, Luke 6:46 says, “Why are you...always saying ‘Yes, sir,’ and ‘That’s right, sir,’ but never doing a thing I tell you? These...are words to build a life on.” Which of Jesus’ promises in this sermon mean the most to you? How are you building your life on Jesus’ values?

Prayer: *King Jesus, rule over my life. Imprint the great principles of your kingdom deeply on my mind and heart and shape me into the person you want me to be. Amen.*