

# 'On the road'

## Luke's account of the life and ministry of Jesus

Luke is up front about his intention in writing his gospel record: it was to help a man called Theophilus to have the confidence to trust in Jesus as Lord and Saviour. He wanted to bolster the embryonic faith of this man in the face of both the hostility he was likely to face and the adversity which almost certainly would be his experience.

The aim of this study of Luke's gospel, therefore, is to help us all "*fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith*", to the end that we "*run with perseverance the race marked out for us*" (see Heb.12.1-2)

You can find the background to this series [here](#).

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## 5. Luke 4.31-44 [w/b Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> February 2018]

*“.. because His words had authority..”*

It was to exercise a ministry of the Word that Jesus had come. It is through the Word, in the power of the Spirit, that the rule of God is exercised in this world. Here in this passage we see what such a ministry of the Word looked like, and the impact it had on others.

Notice through these verses how frequently, and in how many different ways, this emphasis on a ‘Word’ ministry is given expression. The Word of God is released in power - and lives are changed! Pray that that may be our experience here!

*[Despite your best intentions, there may not be time for all the questions to be addressed in your Community Group! Key questions which you should certainly be covered are perhaps questions 2, 4 & 7. Do try as always to leave good time for shared prayer!]*

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1. **Read Luke 4.31-44.** The passage gives a first flavour of the nature of Jesus’ ministry: from the outset, it was very intentionally on the part of Jesus, a ministry of the Word of God.

Put yourself in the shoes of Theophilus (Lk.1.3) reading about the ministry of Jesus for the first time: what do you think would strike you most?

Have you seen the release of God's Word having such dramatic effects upon people as the impact of Jesus' ministry recorded in this passage?

Should we look more expectantly for Jesus, by His Spirit, to be ministering the Word of God today in this sort of way?

**2. Read Luke 4.31-32.** Luke underlines that the ministry in which Jesus engaged was essentially the *teaching* ministry of a rabbi.

Compare **Matt.7.28-29**: in what way(s) did the authority which Jesus shows differ from that of the 'teachers of the law'?

Our 'sabbath day' worship is a Sunday now, the day of resurrection and of the giving of the Spirit: should we be looking for the risen Jesus to come among us by His Spirit to teach us, as He did in Capernaum?

How have you experienced that in your own life?

**3. Read Luke 4.33-34.** The ministry of Jesus seemed to draw the powers of darkness out into the open: demon-possession is rarely given air-time elsewhere in the Scriptures.

Why do you think this sort of demon-possession surfaced so persistently during the ministry of Jesus?

What are the dangers of making (a) too much of the demonic, and (b) too little of the demonic?

**4. Read Luke 4.35-37.** Luke, remember, is a doctor, with a well-informed medical perspective on the afflictions people suffer. As he researched Jesus' ministry he was clearly struck by the way in which Jesus addressed individuals such as this in their need.

What was it that 'amazed' the people about the ministry of Jesus?

Jesus is exercising the rule of God as the 'second Adam': how is it that He has such authority and power?

**5. Read Luke 4.38-39.** Jesus' teaching was combined with his 'pastoral visitation', a striking example of which is recorded for us here by Luke.

What lessons do you learn from this incident?

Why do you think Luke adds the final sentence of v.39?

6. **Read Luke 4.40-41.** As word got out about Jesus, crowds were drawn to Him with those who were sick and afflicted in any number of different ways.

What would have been the significance of Jesus' laying His hands on each person who was ill?

What do you think was Jesus' concern in not allowing the demons to shout out His identity?

7. **Read Luke 4.42-44.** It would have been tempting for Him to remain in Capernaum where there was such an enthusiastic response, but Jesus had a clear focus:

What did Jesus understand to be the ministry He was sent to exercise and why was this such a priority for Him?

In what ways might a fellowship such as ours be tempted to slip away from this focus to the continuing ministry of Jesus?