

'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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12. Luke 7.1-35 [w/b Sunday 29th April 2018]

“.. or should we expect someone else?”

At the risk of causing confusion, we're *back-tracking* to the beginning of this section of Luke's gospel (which I've entitled '**Miracles**': it runs from 7.1-9.50). This opening passage to the section is important, not least because it highlights the questions which the miracles of Jesus prompt.

At the heart of this passage is the pained question which John the Baptist, through his disciples, addresses to Jesus - 'Are You the One?' This may seem a strange question coming from the man who'd declared that Jesus *is* indeed 'the One', but John's experience is very real and akin in some ways to that of Job. If Jesus does miracles, how come the good guys have bad things happen to them?

[There may not be time for all the questions to be addressed in your Community Group - but try and ensure that in this study you cover questions 1, 3, 4 and 5. As always try to leave good time for shared prayer - and let the passage inform your praying together!]

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1. **Read Luke 7.1-35.** Read the whole passage and get a feel for the flow of the narrative: this whole section through to 9.50 will be full of miracles and the issues which miracles raise.

What strikes you most forcibly as you read this passage?

Have you been aware of the Lord working 'miracles'?

2. **Read Luke 7.1-10.** The centurion was a well-to-do Gentile man, whose servant was 'ill and about to die'. Luke is setting up a contrast here with the incident which follows.

Despite the line which his Jewish 'supporters' state (vv.4f) how does Luke make it clear that this miracle of Jesus is a matter of *grace*?

What is the 'insight' of faith in the centurion which amazes Jesus?

How might this incident inform your praying?

3. **Read Luke 7.11-17.** Here's the contrast to the previous verses: this is now a Jewish widow whose son has recently died - and Jesus miraculously restores the young man back to life.

What do you learn about Jesus from vv.13-15?

The centurion had recognized that Jesus needed to "*but say the word*" (v.7): how might the word Jesus which says to the woman (v.13) and the young man (v.14) speak into *our* circumstances?

4. **Read Luke 7.18-23.** John the Baptist heard about the miracles Jesus was performing: he himself, however, despite his faithful ministry, was still languishing in prison (3.19-20)

Read **Psalm 73** where the vexed question which lies at the heart of Job's (and many a faithful believer's) perplexity is voiced: what is that question, and what answer does Psalm 73 give to the question?

Read **Isaiah 29.18f, 35.5f, and 61.1f** which Jesus is here quoting: what message was Jesus sending to John?

What is the challenge and encouragement (to John and ourselves) in Jesus' final words to John (v.23)?

5. **Read Luke 7.24-28.** John's question prompts Jesus to address questions which others have been airing, not least on the back of the testimony which John himself bore to Jesus.

Read **Luke 20.1-8** to get a feel for what Jesus is on about here: why did John's ministry create such problems for the authorities?

What important truths about John the Baptist and his ministry does Jesus highlight here?

Jesus' own ministry was already proving uncomfortable for some (see Lk.5.17-6.11): why is He raising these questions about John the Baptist with the crowd?

6. Read Luke 7.29-30. Luke highlights the distinction in the crowd between many who had paid scant regard to the law yet accepted John's baptism, and those who were 'experts in the law' who had refused to do so.

Why do you think Luke is highlighting this contrast?

What might be contemporary illustrations of the contrast being drawn here by Luke?

7. Read Luke 7.31-35. Although their refusal to believe has been couched in the form of questions, Jesus exposes their disbelief for what it is.

Both John and these people are struggling to get their heads round Jesus and His ministry: in what ways are their struggles so very different?

What lessons have you learned from this whole passage?