

# '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](#).

\*

## 25. Luke 13.1-17 [w/b Sunday 18<sup>th</sup> November 2018]

*“.., unless you repent, you too will all perish ..”*

This whole section of Luke's gospel is set in a context where there is always a suspicion about, and often an hostility towards, the message Jesus brings - in much the same way as in our land today there are often great barriers of antagonism to the gospel.

People's objections to, and difficulties with, the gospel message are very varied, of course, but one issue which invariably comes up as we engage with the people around us is the question of suffering. It's no surprise, therefore, that that's the issue which runs like a thread through the whole of this week's passage.

*[Despite your best intentions, there may not be time for all the questions to be addressed in your Community Group! It may be helpful to try and ensure that in this study you cover questions 2, 4, and 5. As always try to leave good time for shared prayer!]*

\*

**1. Read Luke 13.1-17.** Read through the whole passage and see how Jesus responds to the reality of suffering as it's variously expressed.

The fact of so much suffering in the world can often be a real stumbling block to people: why is it such a problem for so many?

How do you respond to those who struggle with this issue?

2. **Read Luke 13.1-3.** Pilate was certainly known for his brutality: there had clearly been a recent, particularly gruesome instance of such despicable butchery on his part.

What might be contemporary parallels?

What's Jesus' counter to the view that if bad things happen to us it must be because we've had it coming?

3. **Read Luke 13.4-5.** Jesus doesn't steer the conversation away from this awkward subject, but Himself now refers to the recent collapse of a tower in Jerusalem with 18 fatalities.

What tends to be your immediate when you hear of disasters such as this?

Why do such events challenge us all to repentance, according to Jesus?

How would you describe *repentance* if someone heard these words of Jesus and asked you what it meant?

4. **Read Luke 13.6-9.** The fig-tree was a familiar symbol of God's people Israel to Jesus' Jewish hearers: the parable is therefore quite pointed, and its force would have been felt by them all.

Remember that this is a parable, which generally has one basic point: what is the thrust of this parable?

In the symbolism of the fig-tree the Lord is the 'owner': what is the *'fruit'* for which He looks?

**5. Read Luke 13.10-13.** Jesus' miracles are not simply a demonstration of divine power but, more significantly, are acted parables, graphically declaring the heart of the good news.

What message did He mean to convey by this miracle?

How is the woman *'set free from (her) infirmity'*? How does that encourage or challenge you?

**6. Read Luke 13.14-16.** This miracle reveals a deep-seated malaise in the synagogue leader who objected to the fact that Jesus has healed on the Sabbath.

Why did this spark such indignation on the part of the religious leader and his cronies?

What does Jesus' answer to the man's objection teach us about 'the Sabbath day'?

**7. Read Luke 13.17.** In the last study we read of Jesus saying He had not come to bring peace but division (Luke 12.51): here we see a good example of precisely this impact of His ministry!

How might contemporary equivalents of Jesus' 'opponents' here be characterised?

What are some of 'the wonderful things' you have seen Jesus doing?