

## ***Luke: Jesus and the Outsiders, Outcasts, and Outlaws***

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### ***Chapter 4 Discussion***

***On the Journey to Jerusalem (pgs. 59-80)***

***Biblical Foundations Luke 9-17***

### ***Opening Prayer***

*Faithful God, your Son Jesus set his face to go to Jerusalem, where he would accomplish the work of your salvation. As we study incidents from his journey to that holy city, may your Spirit show us how we may more closely and faithfully follow him—caring for the kind of people for whom he cared, and demonstrating your power to heal, to seek, and to save—until we come, by his grace, to praise you in the New Jerusalem forever.*

*Amen.*

### ***Before We Start...***

- Why do you think Luke devoted so much of his gospel to narrating this journey?
- Christians sometimes refer to living as Jesus's disciples as a journey. Do you find this image helpful? Why or why not?

### ***Lessons from Jesus's Final Journey***

- Hamilton leads us through several stories in Luke about Jesus's final journey. The point that is made clear is that the journey, isn't linear.
  - What does the writer of Luke seem to want to emphasize on Jesus's journey to Jerusalem?

### ***SKIM Luke 9-19***

- ***Some have been encountered already in this study.***
  - Which of the stories or teachings stand out to you the most?
  - How do these stories highlight Jesus's ministry to lift up the lowly?
- Hamilton highlights the increasing tension between Jesus and the Pharisees and other religious leaders as Jesus journeys toward Jerusalem.

### ***In our study book Skim pgs. 63-68***

- Religious leaders and others in the crowd claim that Jesus casts out demons by the power of Beelzebul, the prince of demons (Luke 11:14-26).
- A Pharisee criticizes Jesus for not washing his hands before eating, and Jesus responds with a harsh criticism of his own against the Pharisees and legal experts (11:37-52).

- The Pharisees and legal experts begin to plot against Jesus and the resent him (11:53-54).
- Jesus teaches the crowd to “watch out for the yeast of the Pharisees—I mean, the mismatch between their hearts and lives” (12:1).
- Jesus heals a woman on the sabbath, leading to an exchange between him and the synagogue leader over whether healing on the sabbath is appropriate (13:10-17).

### *Food for thought...*

- Why do you think the tension between Jesus and the religious leaders was increasing at this time?
- What did the religious leaders seem to be responding to?
- What seems to be the priority for the religious leaders in these encounters?
  - What is Jesus’s priority?
- In what way do you see Jesus ministering with the outsider, outcast, and outlaws in these parables?
- Where and how does Jesus lift up the lowly?
- Who in your community or in our world would be critical of Jesus today?
  - What would they criticize about him?
  - How do you think Jesus would respond?
- Where in your life do you behave more like the religious leaders than Jesus toward others?
  - What do you hear God calling you to do in order to be more Christlike?
- Where do you find hope in these stories of Jesus’s encounter with the religious leaders and with the outsiders and outcasts?

### *The Samaritan Leper: The Ultimate Outsider and Outcast*

#### *Read Luke 17:11-19*

- Jesus meets these men in the broader region between Samaria and Galilee (verse 11).
  - Why is this in-between setting important to understanding the story?
  - Have you ever had an important encounter with someone in an in-between setting?
  - What happened?

- Why is knowing about the first-century relationship between Jew and Samaritans important for understanding the story of Jesus healing the ten men with skin disease?
  - What other parallels, if any, to these people’s relationship do you see in society today?
- The “uncleanness” skin disease caused was ritual, not moral. Yet as Hamilton shows us, the lepers had to live as outsiders—literally prohibited from living in the community. That social marginalization would have compounded their suffering from the disease.
  - Who does our society push to its margins, and why?
  - How much direct contact have you had or do you have with people on society’s margins?
- How commonly do you think people make moral assumptions about people who have been marginalized?

### *Giving Thanks*

Hamilton notes in verse 15, “Here the story shifts from Jesus’s compassion to one leper’s gratitude” (Luke pg. 76).

- Why is Jesus surprised at the Samaritan man’s return? (verses 17-18)
- Why do you imagine the nine other men didn’t return?
- What, if anything, do you imagine Jesus thought about those nine men, and why?
- When, if ever, has an expression of faith from someone outside your community of faith surprised you?
- How do you most often express gratitude to other people?
- What’s the most powerful way someone has expressed gratitude to you?

Hamilton writes, “The Samaritan leper helps us learn that the appropriate response to Jesus, to his love and grace, his friendship and mercy, his lifting up the lowly, is gratitude (Luke Pg. 76).

- How do you express gratitude in your life?
- What are you moved to give thanks to God for?
- When have you found or when do you find it most difficult, if ever, to give thanks for God’s blessings?
- Who do you know or know of who is a model of gratitude, and why?
- How do you encourage other people to give thanks to God?

- In what ways does your family or can your family give thanks to God together?

***As we come to a close...***

*As Jesus nears the end of his journey, drawing near to Jericho, we find the familiar story of Jesus welcoming the children.*

***Read Luke 18:15-17***

- *Think about the importance of children in your life—such as your children, your grandchildren, nieces, nephews, and other children you know.*
- *What hopes do you have for these children?*
- *What do you desire for those children in life?*

***Intercessions for the children and youth of today... silently or aloud.***

*Keep this in mind—Jesus lifted up the lowly—that is, those who have little power to act or speak for themselves, who are dependent on others and, too often, dismissed. Jesus saw them, valued them, and welcomed them, and calls us to do the same.*

***Closing Prayer...***

*As you journeyed to Jerusalem, Lord Jesus, you showed God's love and mercy to those whom others pushed away or overlooked altogether. Fill us with your compassion for those who are marginalized, despised, and ignored, for as we draw closer to them, you draw us closer to yourself. Amen.*