

Luke: Jesus and the Outsiders, Outcasts, and Outlaws

Adam Hamilton

Chapter 5 Discussion

The Final Week (pgs. 81-107)

Biblical Foundations Luke 18-22

Opening Prayer

God Most High, you sent your Son among us as one who serves. As we study the last week of his earthly ministry, may your Spirit show us more fully how he is our Savior, and the life—not only to come, but today—for which he saves us. Amen.

Food for thought...

- Why do people enjoy parades?
- What events or individuals do parades tend to celebrate?
- What values can parades communicate?

Seeking the Savior Who Seeks the Lost

Read Luke 19:1-10

- According to Hamilton, why were tax collectors “despised by most Jews” in the first century?
- If you were writing a modern version of this story, what occupation would you assign to Zacchaeus and why?
- Luke doesn’t tell us why Zacchaeus wanted to see Jesus (verse 3). o Why do you imagine he wanted to?
- Why did the crowd “grumble” when Jesus invited himself to Zacchaeus’ home? (Verses 5-7)
- When have you heard others “grumble” at a Christlike expression of fellowship or mercy?
- When have you “grumbled” at one yourself?
- Hamilton reminds us that to eat with someone in Jesus’s society was to be their companion.
 - o The word *Companion* derives from Latin, where it has the sense of breaking bread with someone.
 - o With whom do you most often “break bread”?

- How often would others be surprised with whom your Christian faith leads you to “break bread”?
- What does Zacchaeus do that convinces Jesus “salvation has come to this household”? (Verse 9)
- If someone were looking for specific evidence salvation has come to your household, to what would you point them?
- In the book, Hamilton also discusses two stories leading up to the encounter between Jesus and Zacchaeus: a rich ruler asking about how to obtain eternal life (Luke 18:18-27) and the healing of a blind man (Luke 18:35-42).
 - How does this context shape the way we read the story of Zacchaeus?
- Hamilton describes Jesus’s mission using the words of Luke 19:10: “The Son of Man came to seek out and to save the lost” (NRSV). If the church is meant to be the ongoing presence of Christ in the world, then we must also seek out and save the lost as Jesus did.
 - How does the church identify “the lost”?
 - What ways of reaching out to “the lost” does Jesus’s example support or not support, and how?
 - What are the potential problems, if any, with thinking and speaking of others as “lost,” and how does or can the church avoid those problems?

Jesus’ Entry into Jerusalem

Read Luke 19:35-40

- Hamilton writes that Jesus rode a donkey into Jerusalem as a sign.

Read Zachariah 9:9

- How does this verse help us interpret Jesus’ sign?
- What did the action signify?
- Both Zachariah’s words and Jesus’s actions connect royalty with humility.
 - Why was this a countercultural connection in Jesus’s time?
 - To what extent is it countercultural in ours?

- Luke doesn't record a cry of "Hosanna!" though the other Evangelists do (Matthew 21:9, Mark 11:9, John 12:13).
- *Hosanna!* Means "Deliver us now!" or "Save us now!" o How do you think Jesus's disciples understood this cry?
 - The crowds watching this event?
 - Religious and political leaders who saw it?
 - How do you understand "Hosanna!" when it is said or sung at your church on Palm Sunday?
- Unlike Matthew (21:8-9), Mark (11:8-9), or John (12:12-13), Luke mentions "the whole throng of his disciples" praising God as Jesus enters Jerusalem (verse 37). And only in Luke do some Pharisees tell Jesus to quiet his disciples (verse 39).
 - How do these details, unique to Luke, add to our understanding of what being Jesus's disciple means and involves?
- Suppose someone said to you, "Maybe God's people could have used a "warrior king" back in Jesus' time—and maybe those who are like 'the lowly' Luke wrote about could use one today too.
 - How would you respond?

Weeping with Jesus

Read 19:41-44

- Why does Jesus weep when he see Jerusalem?
- How does Jerusalem not "recognize" God's "gracious visit"? (Verse 44)
- As Hamilton explains, Luke wrote his Gospel after the Roman Empire destroyed Jerusalem in the year 70, killing more than a million Jews and enslaving nearly a hundred thousand more.
 - What do you think about this scripture's interpretations of Jerusalem's destruction?
- What are "the things that lead to peace"? (Verse 42)
- What results have you seen?
- Hamilton mentions Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. as one leader who followed Jesus' way of peace.

- To what other leaders, famous or not, would you point out as examples?
- What in your city or community causes you to weep?
- What do you believe Christ calls you and your congregation to do beyond weeping?

Two Stories about Giving to God

Read Luke 20:20-25

- How are the religious leaders in this scripture trying to trap Jesus? (Verse 20)
- What's at stake in Jesus' answer to their question?
- Hamilton imagines how Jesus's answer would have sounded to Luke. Who wrote them after the Jews revolted over taxes and the Romans crushed them.
 - How do you think Jesus' response sounded to Luke, especially knowing that Luke wrote after the Jews revolted against Rome over taxes and the Romans destroyed Jerusalem?
- How do you, as a taxpayer, respond to Jesus' answer to the question the religious leaders asked him?
- How do we "identify" what belongs to God? (Verse 25) • How easy is it to know who owns what?
- How do we avoid giving what belongs to God to anyone else?
- Hamilton writes, "Genesis says that we were/are created in the "image of God." The Roman coin had an image of the emperor. Humans are created in the image of God. Give to Caesar what bears his image [the coin with which taxes are paid] and to give to God what bears God's image [your lives!] (Luke, pg. 102) ○ What does giving ourselves to God involve, specifically and practically?
 - What more of yourself do you still have to give to God?

Read Luke 21:1-4

- How does the woman in the temple who gives two coins give more than the other people making offerings?
- “Once more, in this story we see Jesus lifting up the lowly,” writes Hamilton. (Luke pg. 103) o How so?
- “Jesus didn’t diminish the offering the others gave that day,” writes Hamilton, “but he was pointing out a principle of God economics.” (Luke pg. 103) o How could we state this principle in our own words?
 - o When and how, if ever, have you recognized this principle in your own experience?
- What is the most sacrificial gift you have given God?

Reflect:

- How do these stories affect how you think about what money you give or will give to God?

Called to Humble Service

Read Luke 22:24-27

- Why do you imagine Jesus’s disciples were arguing about their status at this meal with Jesus?
- What is Jesus’ definition of greatness?
- How does it differ from that found among the Gentile (non-Jewish) authorities?
- How does Jesus exemplify greatness as he defined it?
- Are humility and service virtues in our society today?
- Would someone else examining your life, conclude they are among your values? Why or why not?
- Hamilton points out that doing what Jesus calls us to do also benefits us.
 - o What benefits to yourself have you experienced as a result of humbly serving others?

- Hamilton mentions several volunteers in his congregation whom he admires.
 - Who, other than Jesus, is a model of humble service for you, and why?
 - How do you or could you strive to emulate them?

Closing our Session

Read aloud from Hamilton's Luke (pgs. 105-106).

- Use this time to make connections between sacrament and offering ourselves to Christ, and other.
- In these observations or connections is there anything or are there any changes that maybe could or would make these more effective?

Closing Prayer

From the back of a donkey to your place at the table, Lord Jesus, you showed your disciples in the week before your death what it means to be great in God's kingdom. Send us from this study in your Spirit's power, renewed in our desire and commitment to serve you by humbly serving others. Amen.

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Opening Prayer

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As we begin...

As we come to the end of Luke 18, this is, in fact what Jesus knows: in a week, he will be put to death in Jerusalem. This in turn will save the world for darkness and sin. (That is the plan.)

Two Rich Men and a Blind Beggar

As Jesus prepared to enter Jericho. “A certain man asked Jesus, ‘Good Teacher, what must I do to obtain eternal life?’” (Luke 18:18).

This is the second time that someone had asked Jesus this question in Luke. The first was the religious lawyer, in which the Samaritan stops to help a man beaten and left for dead. He selflessly cares for him and provides for his needs. That is part of what it looks like to inherit eternal life.

The ruler approaches Jesus outside Jericho, Jesus responds to the man’s question by reciting five of the Ten Commandments:

- Don’t commit adultery.
- Don’t murder.
- Don’t steal.
- Don’t give false testimony.
- Honor your Father and Mother.

The man’s response was that he had practiced all of this since he was a boy. Jesus simply looked at him and loved him. But then Jesus gives one more command... he says this “Sell everything you own and distribute the money to

the poor. Then you will have treasure in heaven. And come, follow me” (Luke 18:22)

Luke tells us that this man was very sad to the response that he had received from Jesus for he was extremely rich. Now it is important for us to remember that our wealth in heaven is not distinguished by the amount of material possessions that we have on earth, but rather on how we treat and serve others, especially those who are in need.

It’s hard to be wealthy and enter the Kingdom of God. Jesus says “It is far easier for a camel to enter the eye of a needle. (Luke 18:24-25)

The lifeline that we are given through all this is said to be this “What is possible for humans, is possible for God.” (verse 27) Which means that we are saved by God’s grace, as noted in Ephesians 2:8-9, not by our works.

This saying, however, is troubling to everyone in our culture and time. However, if we are not troubled by these words then we have truly missed the point. But we can’t just go and sell everything we own and give it to the poor, and live homeless. This would cause an epic global crisis. The important thing is that everyone has possessions regardless of the amount. Homeless people have a shopping cart of the things that are theirs or that they need.

Example: there would be no food if we did not have farmers who own large tractors and trucks to harvest the food that we need.

Even Jesus had possessions, and people supplied him with things such as possessions and money. He ate with those who owned homes, he had women who followed him, they had money, which they used to pay for a lot of the things he needed for Him and his disciples.

So thus, we see that Jesus often spoke in hyperbole or exaggerated statements or claims that are not meant to be taken literally.

What Jesus possibly means is that we don’t need most of what we already have. Don’t let the idea of material possessions drive and motivate you. This is a false god, not something that is true to your God. It is impossible to serve both money and God, so choose the better of the two, choose to serve God instead of money- this will bring you more happiness and prosperity.

God expects us to be generous. Give and it will be given to you, pressed down, shaken together, and running over—the blessings of God come when we are generous to others. We are the means by which God lifts up the lowly and ensures the hungry go home full.

Luke 19:31-34

Jesus Predicts His Death a Third Time

³¹Jesus took the Twelve aside and told them, “We are going up to Jerusalem, and everything that is written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled. ³²He will be delivered over to the Gentiles. They will mock him, insult him and spit on him; ³³they will flog him and kill him. On the third day he will rise again.”

³⁴The disciples did not understand any of this. Its meaning was hidden from them, and they did not know what he was talking about.

Two prophecies were were being fulfilled in Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem. The way Jesus chose to enter was in fulfillment of Zechariah’s prophecy: “Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Zion! Shout, Daughter of Jerusalem! See, your king comes to you, righteous and having salvation, gentle and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey.”⁶³⁷ The reaction of the disciples and the public was according to the prophecy of Psalm One hundred eighteen.

Luke picks up the theme of Jesus’ final journey to Jerusalem, about which he had stated earlier that Jesus set out “resolutely.”⁶²⁵ The purpose of His going was evidently foremost in His mind and He voiced this to His disciples, saying that, everything the Old Testament prophets predicted about the Messiah, would happen to Him. The prophecies Jesus referred to were mainly the ones by Isaiah and Daniel.⁶²⁶ Some of David’s Messianic psalms could be mentioned also. This prediction about His suffering, death and resurrection is the most detailed and specific.

Somehow, even the best-versed Old Testament scholar of that day gave no serious consideration to those prophecies about the Messiah. It should not amaze us that those prophecies were totally lost on the disciples at this point.

Their minds were full of the recompense that had been the topic of their discussion.

The price to be paid was not under consideration. Jesus' earlier statement, that He had come to give His life as a ransom,⁶²⁷ was not foremost in their minds.

The more detailed Jesus was in His description of what would happen to Him, the more stubborn were the disciples in failing to understand what He meant. Luke is very emphatic about this by repeating three times that they had no clue what Jesus was talking about. In saying "its meaning was hidden from them," he seems to suggest that God purposely kept them from understanding. Only after the Holy Spirit came down upon them, they began to understand the meaning of the cross and the empty grave. Even for us, who can look back upon these events that mark the history of salvation, the wonder and mystery are not completely uncovered. We agree with Wesley's statement: "amazing love, how can it be, that Thou, my God, shouldst die for me!" Had the disciples understood, they would have been at Jesus' grave on the Sunday morning of His resurrection to welcome their Lord back to life.

This is what is on Jesus' mind as he enters Jericho. He has a heavy heart, he is preoccupied with the suffering to come. Although all of this weighs him down, he still stays focused on lifting up the lowly.

Luke 18:35-39

A Blind Beggar Receives His Sight

³⁵As Jesus approached Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging.³⁶When he heard the crowd going by, he asked what was happening.³⁷They told him, "Jesus of Nazareth is passing by."

³⁸He called out, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

³⁹Those who led the way rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!"

Two things are remarkable in this account. One is that Jesus is called by the crowd "Jesus of Nazareth," and the other that Bartimaeus, as Mark calls him, called Jesus "Son of David," acknowledging Him as the

Messiah. At one occasion it was a demon who addressed Jesus as “Jesus of Nazareth.”⁶²⁸ And the girl who made Peter deny his Master said: “This fellow was with Jesus of Nazareth.”⁶²⁹

Luke uses two different verbs for the blind man’s crying after Jesus. The first, *boao*, is a cry for help. We find it in the description of the ministry of John the Baptist as “A voice of one calling in the desert.”⁶³⁰ The second verb *krazo*, refers to a scream, which is what the demons did, crying: “What do you want with us, Son of God?”⁶³¹ For the blind man it was the desperation that he might not be heard that made him shout.

The more people tried to quiet him, the louder he shouted. Eventually, he succeeded to be heard over the tumult of the crowd that surrounded Jesus and it made Jesus stop in His path. Mark reports that the blind man threw his cloak aside when he went to Jesus. That in itself was an act of faith. A blind person would never do such a thing. In a world where he could only identify things by touch, he would be careful to keep things where he could find them.

We would think that Jesus’ question “What do you want me to do for you?” was rather redundant. Jesus, evidently, asked him this to test his faith. The emphasis on faith is very strong in this incident. It sounds as if the Lord would not have been able to heal this man without the cooperation of the man’s own faith. As a matter of fact, Jesus states emphatically that it was the man’s faith that allowed the miracle to happen.

There is an interesting detail in the fact that the blind man had only cried for the Lord’s mercy without being specific. It was obvious that he wanted more than alms. But Jesus wanted him to be specific, to see if he really expected healing. Jesus’ reputation as a miracle worker and healer must have gone ahead of Him and the blind man had no trouble believing that Jesus could do the miracle.

Healing was instantaneous. The blind man not only received sight, but also insight which made him decide to follow Jesus and praise God.

A Rich Tax Collector

Zacchaeus- in this parable Jesus summarizes his mission, both what he has been doing throughout the Gospel and what he was now preparing to do as he was going into Jerusalem.

This story once more captures the contrast between the supposed saints and sinners, between the pious Pharisees and the nonreligious but spiritually hungry *Am Ha-Arez*.

Jesus on his way to Jericho passed through a town where a man named Zacchaeus who was a ruler among tax collectors lived. He was trying to see Jesus but was too short to do so. He climbed the sycamore tree that was in the middle of the town square where he called out. Jesus heard his call and said to him “today I must stay in your house. Zacchaeus hurried down and brought Jesus and the disciples to his home. This did not make the townspeople or those who came to hear him teach very happy. They murmured— “he has gone to stay with a sinful man.” As Zacchaeus as a *chief tax collector*.

As Zacchaeus took Jesus in he told him that he gives to the poor, and if he takes anything he gives back four times as much. Jesus blessed him saying “Today, salvation has come to this house, because he is also a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which is lost.”

In this story Zacchaeus was not trying to buy his way into heave, but responding to the grace Jesus had shown him. Jesus didn't judge him, he didn't explain the “Roman road to Salvation,” he didn't proclaim that he was a sinner and if only he would repent, he would be saved, nor did he teach him the deepest truths of the Gospel.

He simply, called Zacchaeus by name and befriended him. He showed him grace and treated him with kindness.

This last statement indicates that Jesus came here not a whim, but with a greater purpose in mind. To lift up the lowly.

So what do we learn from this story: that most people become Christ-followers because of our superior theological arguments. They come to church, then

faith, all because someone became their friend and demonstrated love, and acceptance of Christ.

Christians have too often become the Pharisees Jesus was pushing against: to quick to judge, to exclude, to leave people feeling not love, but hurt, as if they were outsiders and outcasts.

Luke records that the Son of Man came to save the lost. (Luke 19:10). This was what motivated and drove Jesus.

What does Revelation 3:20 mean?

This verse pictures Jesus standing outside the church at Laodicea and knocking at its door to be welcomed and admitted into the church. He does not force himself upon the church, but patiently waits to be invited in. Luke 24:28-32 relates that Jesus and two of His followers were walking to Emmaus, where the two lived. When they reached Emmaus that evening, Jesus acted as if He were going further, but the two followers of Jesus urged Him to stay with them. Having received their invitation, Jesus entered their home. If the church at Laodicea had invited Jesus to enter, undoubtedly, He would have entered the church, but the church did not invite Him in. So Jesus looked for an invitation from any responsive individual. He promised to fellowship with whoever would hear His voice and open the door.

Although this verse is often used as an invitation to an unbeliever to receive Jesus as Savior, it applies directly to any church that is apathetic like the Laodicean church. Jesus is not unwilling to restore them to a better state, but they need to demonstrate their willingness to obey God.

Context Summary

Revelation 3:14-22 is Jesus' final and most strident message, addressed to the church at Laodicea. We learn from this assessment that the Laodicean church was lukewarm, smug, and self-satisfied. It boasted about its wealth and need of nothing. But the church deceived itself. In terms of its spiritual condition, it was wretched, pitiable, poor, blind, and naked. Jesus urged the church to turn to Him, as He was positioned outside the church, inviting whoever heard His

voice to open the door and welcome Him. Laodicea is the only church of seven which receives only criticism, and no positive remarks.

Chapter Summary

These final letters symbolize Church history from AD 1500 to the Rapture, the event that transports the Church from earth to be with Jesus. Sardis had a good reputation, but it was actually spiritually dead. Philadelphia had a good opportunity to spread the gospel, and it had kept Jesus' word and had remained loyal to Him. As such, Jesus promises to reward this church's conquerors. Laodicea was proud of its wealth, but was spiritually lukewarm, a characteristic that Jesus detests. He promises to fellowship with anyone in the church who would heed His voice and welcome Him. Laodicea is the only church given no praise by Christ.

Humble and Riding on a Donkey

After staying with Zacchaeus, Jesus and his disciples departed and then headed to Jerusalem. This would take them about a full days travel to make it there if not a little longer (depending on the number of stops).

Jesus sent two disciples ahead to find a Donkey's colt, one that had never been ridden before. This was likely prearranged.

Jesus is giving us a very clear and straight forward sign that he is the King, the Messiah, the Son of Man that will save and redeem all of us. Now, how can this be, well the Donkey colt was reserved for Royalty or those of Royal Authority. (Genesis 49:11)

Read Zachariah 9:9 states

The Coming of Zion's King

⁹Rejoice greatly, Daughter Zion!
Shout, Daughter Jerusalem!
See, your king comes to you,
righteous and victorious,

lowly and riding on a donkey,
on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

When Jesus requisitioned the foal of a donkey, He did not play games; he came in gentleness and all sincerity to be the King. But the people were not ready to receive Him, which is the reason why the essence of this prophecy has so far remained unfulfilled. The fulfillment of some prophecies seems to depend upon the spontaneous collaboration of man. It is difficult to comprehend how Jesus' sincere desire to enter Jerusalem as King can be reconciled with His knowledge that He had come to earth to give His life as a ransom for many but evidently the one does not exclude the other. Luke reports: "As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it and said, 'If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace-but now it is hidden from your eyes. The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side. They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God's coming to you.'"¹³⁶ And in Matthew's Gospel, we read how Jesus cursed the fig tree because it had not produced fruit.¹³⁷ These portions of Scripture can only be understood against the background of Zechariah's unfulfilled prophecy.

The donkey on which Jesus rode was the foal that was tethered next to its mother, a stallion that had never been ridden before.¹³⁸ From the complete picture Matthew and the other Gospels give us, we have the impression that both the mother and the colt were brought to Jesus. The mother donkey marched up front and the foal, on which Jesus was riding, followed the mother. The picture is full of tenderness.

In Zechariah's prophecy, the donkey is contrasted with the war-horses of Ephraim and Jerusalem. The emphasis is on a donkey, which is a beast of burden. Our Lord came as a servant to take upon Himself the heaviest load of all. "The Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve."¹³⁹ The crowd in Jesus' day never understood the glory and royal majesty of Jesus' servanthood. Humility means the cessation of wars.

These verses distinguish among four different actions that did not happen simultaneously. The Lord's entry, seated on a beast of burden, undermined man's pride, which is the basis for his rebellion against God. The taking away

of the chariots from Ephraim and the war-horses from Jerusalem, and the braking of the battle bow represent God's direct intervention, probably in the form of a war in which the nations destroy each other till none are left. The proclamation of peace to the nations must refer to Christ's return, accompanied by mass evangelization of the world and the rule that "will extend from sea to sea and from the river to the ends of the earth" stands for the Kingdom of God which rules over all nations.

Zechariah also foretells us that Jesus will come from the Mount of Olives to his people. Jesus intentionally fulfilled these prophecies. Make a dramatic and obvious statement regarding his identity. He is the ONE true Messiah, the one sent to them from God above, the true Son of Man who is the REDEEMER of the world, the descendant of David, the King.

This significance of this also indicates that he is with or is poor, lowly, afflicted, and needy. He is identifying with the lowly, those which he is constantly lifting up.

Luke 19:37-38

³⁷When he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen:

³⁸"Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!"^[a]
"Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!"

Jesus knew, on the basis of these Old Testament prophecies, that the Father intended Him to enter Jerusalem riding on the colt of a donkey. This was not the way Roman authorities would make their entry into a city. They would mount their warhorses and lead a number of captured slaves in their procession. This Jesus would do in the invisible world, as the Apostle Paul describes it, quoting Psalm 68: "When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men."⁶³⁸

Here is the Creator of heaven and earth, approaching the time and place at which He would accomplish what He had come to do on earth. The creator of all horses, donkeys and other animals, had to borrow a colt in order to fulfill

His own prophecy. He prophesied to His disciples that they would find the animal He needed, what the owner would say and how they should respond.

The animal on which Jesus would make His entry had never been ridden before and would have to be broken in. We do not read that this was the case. Animals have less difficulty recognizing their Creator than humans do. In Matthew's account of the story, we read that the disciples were told that they would find the mother donkey with her colt and that they were to untie both and bring both to Jesus. Jesus would sit on the colt, but in the procession the mother donkey would lead and the colt would follow it. There is in the way Jesus entered Jerusalem also a fulfillment of Jacob's prophecy in his blessing to Judah: "He will tether his donkey to a vine, his colt to the choicest branch; he will wash his garments in wine, his robes in the blood of grapes."⁶³⁹

Read Luke pg. 96- Last Paragraph- to top of pg. 97

The Weeping King

⁴⁴As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it⁴² and said, "If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes."⁴³ The days will come upon you when your enemies will build an embankment against you and encircle you and hem you in on every side.⁴⁴ They will dash you to the ground, you and the children within your walls. They will not leave one stone on another, because you did not recognize the time of God's coming to you."

Luke is the only one of the Gospel writers who reports this incident. The first thing that strikes us in Luke's description of Jesus' reaction upon approaching the city is the Savior's emotional character. The Greek verb used is *klaio*, which literally means "to sob," or "to wail aloud." Jesus did more than just choke up for a moment. It is the same verb Matthew uses in his quotation of Jeremiah's prophecy about the massacre of the infants of Bethlehem: "A voice is heard in Ramah, weeping and great mourning, Rachel weeping for her children and refusing to be comforted, because they are no more."⁶⁴⁴ In His prophetic mind, Jesus saw what would happen when the Romans would come some forty years later and destroy the city.

The Romans would do to the inhabitants of Jerusalem what the Babylonians did some centuries earlier.

They would take children and babies, killing them in view of their parents by dashing their heads against the wall. It is hard to image such cruelty. Yet, during the Nazi period in Europe this was done to some Jewish infants. The outcry by the psalmist stands out throughout the centuries: “O Daughter of Babylon, doomed to destruction, happy is he who repays you for what you have done to us — he who seizes your infants and dashes them against the rocks.”⁶⁴⁵ No wonder Jesus became deeply emotional at the sight of the city in which this would happen!

We could deduct from Jesus’ words that, not only the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70 was not an unavoidable necessity, but also that His rejection and, as part of that, crucifixion, were not inevitable. How do we reconcile that with His admonition to the disciples who wanted to defend Him against those who came to arrest Him in the garden of Gethsemane: “Do you think I cannot call on my Father, and he will at once put at my disposal more than twelve legions of angels? But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?”⁶⁴⁶ We must let that question rest until the moment that God reveals to us in glory the depth of His divine plan of salvation. We think of what C. S. Lewis writes in *The Chronicles of Narnia*: “We are never told what would have happened if...”

This was not the only time Jesus was overcome by emotions, seeing the lostness of man. We read earlier: “When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.”⁶⁴⁷ The Holy Spirit will communicate Jesus’ compassion to us if we allow Him to do so.

Here Jesus predicts what will happen thirty-six years after he is crucified. He doesn’t predict, but quite possibly sees it in his mind’s eye. It grieves him or makes him sad. The Temple he called “my father’s house” will be destroyed along with Jerusalem.

The destruction of the temple is not the only thing that grieves him but also that Jews will be murdered or slaughtered. This future destruction is at the backdrop of Holy Week. Jesus challenges the authorities, telling of the destruction and devastation to come. Luke later writes about the final defeat of the Jews at the hands of the Romans.

It is no wonder that this causes him to weep, the glorious post of creation that God created for us will be destroyed, ruined, and people of God will be obliterated in a war between humans, which creates a vast image of evil in the world.

Jesus says while weeping “You didn’t recognize the time of your gracious visit from God.” (Luke 19:44)

Driving out the Merchant and the Moneychangers

Jesus entered the temple, and threw out those who were selling things saying, “My house will be a house of prayer.” He overturned the tables of the moneychangers set up in the temple court and using a whip he drives out those who were buying and selling. To have the money changed the moneychangers charged premium fees. The Roman coin had Caesar’s head on it and a female deity on the backside. This was considered to be idolatrous. Religious leaders also made it clear that only animals of a certain quality could be sacrificed. They told the people that it was best to buy an animal in the temple market rather than bring their own, that way the quality of the offering would be acceptable, in order to make their required offerings to God.

This enraged Jesus because yet, once again, the lowly, the common folk, the poor were being taking advantage of by the rich.

Their response to his act was to kill Jesus.

Give to Cesar, Give to God

These rich individuals were enraged also, and they asked a question that they thought would trap Jesus. “Does the Law allow people to pay taxes to Cesar or not? (Luke 20:22)

Jesus knew that he had to be careful with what he replied with, as he knew that they would turn it against him in some way. So he avoids their trap by responding

“Show me a coin. Whose image and inscription does it have on it? “Caesar’s” they replied. He then replied, “Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God.”

Genesis tells us that we are created in God’s image “image and likeness of God.” The Roman coin had the image of the emperor. Humans are created in the image of God. Give to Caesar what bears his image, the coin, and give to God what bears God’s image which is our lives.

The Widow’s Mite

In the story of the widow who gave her last two coins as an offering, we see that the religious leaders scoffed at her offering because she could not give more, but Jesus praised her and honored her. It is important to remember in this instance that what truly qualifies as a large amount varies from individual to individual.

Jesus didn’t diminish the offerings the others gave that day, but he was pointing out a principle of God’s economics. God recognizes a relative sacrifice. This is what is truly important. She gave more in her offering than these, who out of their excess, gave to God.

The Last Supper: Who is the Greatest

The night during the Passover, Jesus said “I have earnestly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.” (Luke 22:15). This set the tone for this event. He reinterpreted the first Passover, using the bread to represent his body which will be pierced and sacrificed, and Wine to represent his blood which will be shed. The wine or blood was used to initiate a new covenant. He was freeing his people from slavery, sin, and death.

Read Pgs. 105-106- Last paragraph—In this holy meal we……. (marked by a red bracket)

Everything that was going to happen to Jesus during Holy Week, he knew. Who was going to betray him, he knew. Who would deny him, He knew. Which disciples would flee on the night he was handed over, he knew. This grieved him very much.

However, the disciples were sitting around the table talking and a debate started. Who would be considered the greatest among them all. Jesus then makes a demonstration, ending it with the following words. "To truly be the greatest among you, you just become like a person of lower status and the leader must become like servant." This was evident in his demonstration, of washing their feet, serving them, when they refused, he said you will let me wash your feet or you have no place with me.

The greatest message from this is that in order to lift up the lowly, we must become the lowly. Greatness is defined by lowering ourselves and serving others.

Closing our Session

Read aloud from Hamilton's Luke (pgs. 105-106).

- Use this time to make connections between sacrament and offering ourselves to Christ, and other.
- In these observations or connections is there anything or are there any changes that maybe could or would make these more effective?

Closing Prayer

From the back of a donkey to your place at the table, Lord Jesus, you showed your disciples in the week before your death what it means to be great in God's kingdom. Send us from this study in your Spirit's power, renewed in our desire and commitment to serve you by humbly serving others. Amen.