

Luke: Jesus and the Outsiders, Outcasts, and Outlaws

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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).
 - 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.
 - The word *Companion* derives from Latin, where it has the sense of breaking bread with someone.
 - 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!”
 - 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)
 - 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)
 - How could we state this principle in our own words?

- 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.
 - 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 our selves 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.