

Reading Through the Gospel of Luke – Part V

We recommend you have a notebook and pen for answering questions and recording your thoughts and insights. Bring this notebook with you to Faith Group for discussions and prayer times. Select a quiet place and consistent time to read and pray. We also recommend you pray for a moment before you read God's word and ask for his illumination by the power of the Holy Spirit as you read.

Abbreviations: TAI – *Think About It* PP – *Prayer Point*

Tuesday, March 1 – Luke 23:1-5

TAI: Jewish religious authorities did not have the authority to put Jesus to death, and so brought him to Pilate, who was Rome's man there. What is *false* in their charges against Jesus? What is *true* in their charges against Jesus?

PP: Rejoice that truly Jesus is our Christ, and our King of Kings! Ask God to make March a month of significant spiritual growth for you. Pray for our church's Faith Group leaders, including your own if you are part of a group.

Wednesday, March 2 – Luke 23:6-16

TAI: How does Herod seem to view Jesus? What does Luke seem to be underlining in this section, since both Pilate and Herod are recorded as affirming it (vv. 14, 15)? By their actions, as recorded carefully by Luke, what important truth about Jesus is reinforced in this passage?

PP: Thank God that Jesus died in your place as the *sinless Lamb of God*. Pray back to God the truth of I Peter 3:18 – acknowledging your sin but rejoicing that the Righteous One died in your place to bring you to God.

Thursday, March 3 – Luke 23:18-25

TAI: Why would this crowd prefer the release of a notorious criminal, Barabbas, and the execution of the innocent Jesus? What does Luke seem to want to emphasize again and again to the reader? How will this emphasis impact your personal celebration of Easter this year?

PP: In prayer, acknowledge before God that you are Barabbas (the truly sinful one) and that Jesus died in your place (as the sinless one). Humbly thank God for this substitutionary atoning death of Christ on your behalf. Pray for friends and relatives who do not know Jesus Christ as their sinless, substitutionary Savior.

Friday, March 4 – Luke 23:26-31 (also read Matt. 27:24-31 and Zechariah 12:10-14)

TAI: Matthew includes some detail omitted by Luke. After reading the Matthew passage, why do you think that Simon of Cyrene was pressed into service to carry the crossbeam of the cross? Ponder the prophetic statement of Jesus (which echoes Zech. 12). Why do you think Jesus told the mourners to weep for themselves rather than for him?

PP: Recall our reading last weekend of Psalm 53. Speak to the Father of your love for him, in light of all Jesus endured for you. Ask God to fill you with courage and boldness and faith to live for Christ no matter what hardships or trials may come your way.

Weekend, March 5,6 – Luke 23:32-43

TAI: Read this section twice. The second time, make note of all the rich detail included in the account by Dr. Luke. What is ironic about the words of the scoffers and mockers? What great and precious promise did Jesus make to the criminal crucified with him? How does that promise apply to your life and death?

PP: Pray a prayer of thanksgiving and worship, lauding Jesus *for not* saving himself or coming down from the cross, but *for submitting to it*, purchasing your redemption. Acknowledge that, like this criminal, your sins are deserving of death, but *thanks be to God*, Jesus willingly died in your place. Ask God to make the upcoming Easter season very fruitful in the life of our church.

Monday, March 7 – Luke 23:44-49

TAI: What do you think is the significance of the darkness (from noon to 3 pm) and of the temple curtain tearing in two? How does this record of the centurion's statement – "*Certainly this man was innocent*" – continue a theme which Luke has been developing throughout this section of his book? Note: Dr. Luke carefully makes note of the many eyewitnesses which saw these things occur (vv. 48-49).

PP: Thank God for your free access to his very presence through the cross of Jesus! Again rejoice that the sinless Savior took upon himself your penalty of death and died to pay the penalty for your sins. *Pray for the Prayer Gathering for pastors, missionaries, chaplains and their spouses which begins today, hosted by Faith Baptist. Ask God to make it a time of great and wholehearted worship, personal refreshment, and earnest prayer.*

Tuesday, March 8 – Luke 23:50 – 24:1

TAI: Why is it so important to Dr. Luke to include very specific details about the burial of Jesus? How many details can you count in this brief passage? What is remarkable about God's providential provision of a tomb for Jesus?

PP: Praise God for his providence in providing a member of the Sanhedrin to care for the body of our Lord, and a detailed writer like Dr. Luke to record these details, so that there would be clear answers to those who would raise suspicions regarding the resurrection of Christ. *Continue to pray today for the Prayer Gathering being held at Faith.*

Wednesday, March 9 – Luke 24:2-12 and also reread Luke 9:22

TAI: Take a few moments to reflect on the profound question, "Why do you seek the living among the dead?" Why do you think this resurrection came as a shock, despite the clear statement of Jesus in chapter 9:22? In light of Peter's earlier denial (see 22:54-62) of Jesus, imagine what thoughts must have raced through him when he found the tomb empty.

PP: Tell God how thrilled you are by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. Thank God for the clear fulfillment of prophecy. Ask him to fill you today with joy and the Holy Spirit, and to help you live in the light and truth of the resurrection of Jesus. Ask God to help you live today with Easter faith and resurrection hope!

Thursday, March 10 – Luke 24:13-35 We will spend some extra time with this extraordinary passage of Scripture.

TAI: We don't know exactly what Old Testament Scriptures Jesus would have used in his teaching concerning himself (see v. 27), but we can ponder the question. Make a list of passages from Genesis on to Malachi which might have been part of this narrative of Jesus. Try to come up with at least 10! (*Making an expanded list of possibilities would be a fun and profound exercise for your Faith Group to undertake.*)

PP: Ask God to help you learn to see the truth of Jesus the Messiah through all the pages of the Old Testament. Ask God to work profoundly in your life so that you are not "foolish and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken" (v. 25). Pray for those who preach and teach in our church family, that they would clearly present Jesus Christ from all the Bible, with wisdom and insight.

Friday, March 11 – Luke 24:13-35 Yes, read it again! You won't regret it.

TAI: Take a moment to speculate on how "their eyes were kept from recognizing him" (v. 16) and why their eyes were opened to recognize him when he took the bread and blessed it and broke it (vv. 30-31). Why do some people see Jesus clearly for who he is when they read the Bible, and others don't? Can you recall when the Bible first came alive to you, and you began to read and understand the gospel and all its teachings concerning Jesus? Share this with your Faith Group.

PP: Ask God for eyes to see clearly the truth of Jesus in the Bible. Ask God to help you clearly discern the Bible's teaching, with the help of the Holy Spirit. Ask God to help you share the gospel with others, and also to speak to others about the Bible's profound influence in your life.

Weekend, March 12-13 – Luke 24:13-35 Just one more time!

TAI: Reflect on a time in your life when the preaching, teaching, or study of the Scriptures had such an impact on you that *your heart burned within you* (see v. 32). Was that time in the distant past, or has it happened fairly recently? Imagine the joy of these two men when they heard that Jesus had also appeared to Simon Peter.

PP: Tell God of your desire to have his word "burn" in your heart and mind. Pray for your Faith U. teacher and Faith Group leader, and for the pastors of our church as they share the Bible with you. Ask God to bring revival to your life and to our church family, through the Bible, God's word. Ask God to restore the influence of the Bible in the American church today, and to spread the truth of the Bible to every people group on earth.

Monday, March 14 – Luke 24:36-43

TAI: This crucial paragraph gives us insight into the resurrection body of Jesus. Was his body "ghost-like"? Give several reasons why it was not, based on Dr. Luke's details. What do you think the phrase means "while they still disbelieved for joy and were marveling"?

PP: Rejoice in prayer for the truth of Christ's resurrection body. Rejoice as well that through Christ we have peace with God as we trust in him. Ask God to help you overcome pockets of doubt and disbelief with faith and confidence in his promises.

Tuesday, March 15 – Luke 24:44-48

TAI: Why was it so important, both on the road to Emmaus and now here, for Jesus to explicitly tie his life, death, and resurrection to the Old Testament Scriptures? Compare and contrast Luke's version of the Great Commission with Matthew's version in Matthew 28:18-20. How does proclaiming "repentance and forgiveness of sins in his name" (Luke's version) relate to "make disciples" (Matt.'s version)? Why do both Matthew and Luke emphasize "all nations"?

PP: Ask God to give you courage and boldness to share with others the gospel of "repentance and forgiveness of sins in his name." Ask God to help us be a church which makes disciples and builds them up for the glory of Christ. Pray for missionaries and international workers who are taking the gospel message to all the people groups of the world.

Wednesday, March 16 – Luke 24:48-53

TAI: What was "the promise of my Father" and how would they be "clothed with power from on high"? What additional book by Dr. Luke brings all this into clarity? Take a moment to imagine what it must have been like to receive this blessing of Jesus as he ascended into heaven. What words would you use to describe the experience? What words does Dr. Luke use to describe it?

PP: Ask God to fill you with the Holy Spirit. Ask God to fill our church leaders with the Holy Spirit – with "power from on high." Pray that God would fill our worship with true joy and delight in the greatness and love and power of God, and that our worship would truly "bless God." Tell God, "I want to be a worshipper! Help me worship you wholeheartedly."

Thursday, March 17 – Review of our Luke readings

TAI: Take some moments to reflect on these months of reading the gospel of Luke. Jot down your insights into how this great book has impacted your thoughts and actions. Page through the book, skimming over the chapters. What have you learned about Jesus? What have you learned about Dr. Luke? What have you learned about yourself?

PP: Write a prayer summarizing what God has taught you through this gospel of Luke. Thank him for his word. Ask him to continue his work of grace in you and in our church.

Friday, March 18 – Psalm 1 (We will begin a new book of the Bible on Monday.)

TAI: What does a blessed man do? Not do? How is he like a tree? How are the wicked like chaff? What is their destiny?

PP: Ask God to help you be a blessed person. Ask him to help you delight in his word.

Weekend, March 19-20 – Psalm 19 (We will begin a new book on Monday.)

TAI and PP: Turn every line of this grand poem into a prayer, and pray it to God.