

Luke's Gospel

First Parish Church
Manchester By The Sea
March 16, 2023 – Session Two

Meeting at 4:00 p.m. Thursdays on Zoom

**Straight Talk for Real People,
Then ... and NOW!**

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Straight Talk for Real People, Then ... and NOW!!

Opening Prayer

Holy God, we gather together as believers ... seeking solace and encouragement. We gather to hear yet again your calling for us, just as you have called so many before us. We long for our calling to be that clear, that unequivocal. Lord, we ask that as we study your Word may we hear and feel again your guiding spirit stirring our souls. Amen.

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Straight Talk for Real People, Then ... and NOW!!

Last week we ...

- We looked at the biblical account of Judas and maybe some of his motives.
- He may have thought he was doing what was right, maybe even, what God might have wanted him to do?
- And he was very wrong!
- We explored the meaning of Lent for all of us.
- We began to explore what it may mean for "Straight talk for Real People."

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Straight Talk for Real People, Then ... and NOW!!

We now move into the Gospel of Luke.

- What do we know about Luke?
- Luke was a member of the early Christian community, but was probably not an "eye witness".
- He was writing sometime after the death of Jesus, maybe as late as 90 C.E.
- He writes about what has happened and what has been passed on "to us".

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Straight Talk for Real People, Then ... and NOW!!

- Writer appears to be well educated and may have been a Gentile Christian.
- Early on Luke was speculated to be a physician.
- Maybe this is true, but we really don't know.
- The writer had access to other written sources, including the Gospel of Mark and maybe "Q."
- The Gospels, including Luke, became authoritative for the early Christian Church when they came to cherish these writings.
- In the Gospels people met God revealed in Christ.

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Straight Talk for Real People, Then ... and NOW!!

- We place Luke's Gospel writing around 80-90 CE after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 CE.
- The author also wrote *Acts of the Apostles* making Luke the most prolific author in the New Testament (27%).
- Themes found in Luke include:
 - Universality of the message of Jesus;
 - Social relationships between rich and poor;
 - Concern for outcasts, sinners, and Samaritans;
 - Concern for women;

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- Themes found in Luke: (continued)
 - Role of prayer, especially Jesus' prayers;
 - Role of the Holy Spirit;
 - The fulfillment of the Old Covenant;
 - Cost of Discipleship.
- What do you remember about Luke?
- Do you remember a special story, parables, etc.?
- You love it when we read the birth story from Luke 2 at Christmas?

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Straight Talk for Real People, Then and NOW!!

Read 5:1-11, calling of the first disciples.

- We can picture this scene: Jesus recruiting the fishermen to join in his ministry.
- We read a series of activities, but all of it providing reasons for the early popularity of Jesus in the Region of Galilee.
- What do you hear in these verses?
- The writer wants to reveal Jesus to his readers so they might come to believe.

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Straight Talk for Real People, Then and NOW!!



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Straight Talk for Real People, Then and NOW!!

Let's go on to 5:12 – 6:17.

- This section is like "a day in the life of Jesus: teaching, preaching, healing, exorcising demons, and calling disciples."
- (Vs. 12-16) The leper comes up to Jesus seeking healing, but will Jesus respond?
- By touching the man Jesus enters into his isolation and shame.
- There is a clear "Straight Talk" message to the cultural values of his day.

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Straight Talk for Real People, Then and NOW!!

- To the leper, now healed, Jesus gives two instructions.
- First: "tell no one."
- Second, "go... and show yourself to the priest, and, as Moses commanded, make an offering for your cleansing, for a testimony to them."
- That is the requirement under Jewish Law found in Leviticus 14.
- How is this "Straight Talk" from Gospel?

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Straight Talk for Real People, Then and NOW!!

Now we get into the controversies (5:17-6:11)

- There are six controversies and four issues.
 - Forgiving sin;
 - Socializing with publicans and sinner;
 - Fasting;
 - Sabbath observance.
- We have gone from six stories to six confrontations.
- This Jesus is going to be an advocate who confronts and "straight talks" cultural values.

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Straight Talk for Real People, Then and NOW!!

The Healing of the Paralytic (5:17-26)

- Who are the “players” in this story and what happens? Why?
- The man on the “bed” is both healed and forgiven.
- But later in Luke, Jesus denies any connection between illness and sin ... the text seems to be arguing with itself.
- It is a claim that Jesus had the power of God to heal and forgive sin.
- Is this “Straight Talk” from the Gospel?

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Straight Talk for Real People, Then and NOW!!

Eating with Tax Collectors and sinners (5:27-32).

- Jesus sits at table with persons regarded as social and religious outcasts.
- It is a story of a rich man responding to the word of Jesus that radically changes his life.
- The words of Jesus are “Straight Talk” to Levi’s present life and *“He got up, left everything, and followed him.”*

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Straight Talk for Real People, Then and NOW!!

- *“Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?”*
- What do we know about tax collectors (or publicans) in those days?
- Jesus is including those who would be excluded by the community.
- In the early church, common meals were a way of meeting physical needs but in such a manner as to embarrass no one.
- Do we still use eating together as expression of inclusion?

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Straight Talk for Real People, Then and NOW!!

“Owning our story can be hard
but not nearly as difficult as
spending our lives running from it.
Embracing our vulnerabilities is risky
but not nearly as dangerous as giving up on
love and belonging and joy—the experiences
that make us the most vulnerable.
Only when we are brave enough to
explore the darkness will we discover
the infinite power of our light.”

Brene Brown

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Straight Talk for Real People, Then and NOW!!

The question of fasting (5:33-39).

- The issue is not the right or wrong of fasting.
- In Judaism there were three good works: fasting, prayer, and alms giving.
- *“The days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast in those days.”* (vs. 35)
- The short parable is very straight forward.
- *“And no one after drinking old wine desires new wine, but says, ‘The old is good.’”*

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Debate concerning Sabbath (6:1-11)

- Two events happen on the Sabbath and the very laws of Sabbath are challenged by Jesus.
- In the first story Jesus challenges the hypocrisy of the Sabbath interpretations.
- In the second story Jesus comes down hard on the value of doing good and healing the man.
- It is never wrong to help another person and to minister to human need.
- *Straight Talk for Real People ... then and now!*

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Straight Talk for Real People, Then and NOW!!

The Good Samaritan (10:25-42)

- We go to one of the most well-known parables in the Gospels.
- Who has helped to act this story out in a Sunday School class years ago?
- What is the context? A lawyer asks: "Teacher," he said, "what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

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- Jesus turns it back to the lawyer and he responds: "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself."
- Jesus does not answer by saying "great answer", but rather says, "Go and do."
- The Samaritans were people who lived in the Northern Kingdom of Israel. Samaria, the name of that kingdom's capital, was located between Galilee in the north and Judea in the south.

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- The Samaritans were a racially mixed society with Jewish and pagan ancestry.
- They worshiped Yahweh as did the Jews, but their religion was not mainstream Judaism.
- Because of their imperfect adherence to Judaism and their partly pagan ancestry, the Samaritans were despised by ordinary Jews.
- Jews who were traveling from Judea to Galilee or vice versa would cross over the river Jordan, bypass Samaria, and cross over the river again as they neared their destination.

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- Ceremonially unclean, socially outcast, and a heretic religiously, the Samaritan is the opposite of the lawyer ... and the priest and the Levite.
- What does this story say to you?
- Who are the characters in story ... in life today?
- When have you been the "priest" or the Levite?
- It offers an example of acting in love which is without partiality and which expects nothing in return.

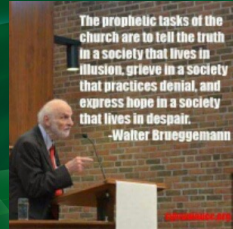
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- The shock of the story comes down to the third character, the despised Samaritan.
- The lawyer cannot even say the word: "The one who showed him mercy."
- The one who represents the way of God is not the one who knows the right answers, but the one who does the right actions.
- It is about actions of love and mercy.
- *Straight Talk for Real People ... then and now!*

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Straight Talk for Real People, Then and NOW!!



The prophetic tasks of the church are to tell the truth in a society that lives in illusion, grieve in a society that practices denial, and express hope in a society that lives in despair.
-Walter Brueggemann

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Straight Talk for Real People, Then and NOW!!

➤ Watch the video
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5YnV3UGdA3o>

Homework: Read Luke

- 4:14-30
- 11:14-12:1
- 12:13-21
- 8:5-15

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Closing Prayer

Let us go forth, as the hands and feet, and eyes and ears for the very presence of Christ. We have been given the gift of service - go and serve! We have been given the gift of encouragement - go and encourage! We have been given the gift of generosity - go and be generous! We have been given the gift of mercy - go be merciful! Each of us has been given a gift; each of us has a responsibility. God is depending on you. Amen.

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