

# Read through the Bible



## The Gospel of Luke Week 2



*Monday, February Twenty-Sixth*

Every day, Bo Paske, a boy with autism, sits down at a table to eat his lunch in the cafeteria at Montford Middle School in Tallahassee. And every day, his mom's heart sinks when he comes home and tells her he ate lunch alone. But one early afternoon, a group of FSU football players came to visit the school, and wide receiver Travis Rudolph noticed Bo sitting at a table alone. Travis immediately sat down with him and began eating a slice of pizza. After receiving a photo from a friend of the exchange, Bo's mom was stunned at how kind Travis had been to her son, especially when the wide receiver could have easily sat at a table full of popular, athletic kids asking for his autograph. In today's passage, Jesus makes it clear which table He's sitting at.

*Read:* Luke 5:1-38

*Reflect:* Use the passage to work through these questions

- Why does Simon (later named Peter) decide to throw his nets out into the deep water? (see verse 5)
- Why were the Pharisees and teachers of the law appalled by what Jesus said to the paralytic? (see verses 20-21) How does Jesus respond to them? (see verses 22-24)

Whoa! Did Jesus just forgive someone's sins? How could He say such a thing? While it may make perfect sense to us today, people back then didn't fully understand yet that Jesus was God. They knew He could teach. They knew He could heal. But to forgive sins? That's something only God could do. Bingo!

- How did the Pharisees and teachers of the law view Jesus' association with 'sinners' and tax collectors? (see verses 29-30) How does Jesus respond to them? (see verses 31-32)

*Respond:* Apply what you've learned in prayer and action

Who is somebody you know that often gets overlooked or goes unnoticed? How might you "sit" with that person this week?

## Tuesday, February Twenty- Seventh

Every summer, in preparation for the beginning of the academic year, college student employees are trained on a variety of different situations they may encounter while on the job. One of those situations is when a student passes out or needs medical attention. Typically, the student employees are trained to not touch the passed-out student, but instead, to call 911. But what would you do if that student needed immediate CPR, and the paramedics wouldn't arrive for at least five minutes? Would you stick to your training and not touch the student? Or would you abandon the protocol and do everything you could to save that student's life? In today's passage, Jesus proposes a similar dilemma to the Pharisees.

*Read:* Luke 6:1-26

*Reflect:* Use the passage to work through these questions

- In what ways do the Pharisees accuse Jesus and His disciples of breaking the Sabbath? (see verses 1-2 and 6-7)
- Why does Jesus find these actions on the Sabbath to be permissible? (see verses 3-5 and 9-10)

The Pharisees were so caught up in keeping with their traditions and laws that they failed to see that doing good and meeting the needs of the lowly were of more importance.

- What words does Jesus have for the poor, hungry, and sorrowful? (see verses 20-23) What words does He have for the rich, well-fed, and happy? (see verses 24-26)

Remember, Jesus had been talking to the Pharisees before speaking to the crowd. These religious leaders were rich, well-fed, and happy. They had all they needed. Why would they need Jesus? Jesus reminds them that the world's comforts will not fully satisfy.

*Respond:* Apply what you've learned in prayer and action

Take a moment to thank God for considering us above our sin.

## Wednesday, February Twenty- Eighth

Think about a teacher or mentor who taught you some of your most important life lessons. What did she or he say? How did she or he challenge you to do the things she or he said? Chances are, those words have stuck with you for most of your life, and at times, have caused you to do the very things your teacher or mentor challenged you to do. In today's passage, Jesus has some important things to say to the people gathered around Him, but He doesn't stop there. In addition, He challenges them to *do* the things He is talking about.

*Read:* Luke 6:27-49

*Reflect:* Use the passage to work through these questions

- How are we to respond to those who do harm to us? (see verses 27-29)

When people wrong us, our first instinct is often not to pray for them or to find a way to bless them. And yet, that is exactly what Jesus calls on His followers to do. Consider some practical ways you can consciously pray for and help these people in your own life.

- Why is it not really much of a sacrifice to love those who already love us? (see verses 32-34)

You can imagine some of the people listening to Jesus thinking, "Oh, I already do this stuff! I love my family, I'm good to my coworkers, I even lend money to my friends!" But Jesus throws a new challenge out to them – now do those things to your enemies!

- Why does Jesus caution us against judging others? (see verses 37 and 41-42)
- How is a Christian recognized? (see verses 43-45)

*Respond:* Apply what you've learned in prayer and action

Jesus tells us to hear His words and put them into practice (see verses 46-49). Take something Jesus said from today's passage and put it into practice today. See how you did at the end of the week.

## Thursday, March First

Kids pick up pretty quick whether a teacher or caregiver means business. For example, if a teacher tells her misbehaving students that she's going to put them in timeout, but never does, the kids will learn to ignore her empty threats. But, if a teacher warns her class of the consequences of their behavior and follows through on them, they will quickly learn to follow her rules. In today's passage, Jesus demonstrates power and authority with His words. He doesn't just say things; He follows through on what He says!

*Read:* Luke 7:1-35

*Reflect:* Use the passage to work through these questions

- How does the centurion's military background help him to understand that Jesus can heal his servant? (see verses 6-8)

When a commander tells his soldiers to move, they move. Why? Because his words carry power and authority. In the same way, the centurion knew that Jesus' words carried power and authority. All He had to do was tell the servant to be healed, and he'd be healed.

- According to Luke, why does Jesus heal the dead son? (see verse 13)
- How did the people perceive Jesus and John the Baptist? (see verses 31-35)

Can you imagine the people coming upon a man wearing tattered clothes eating locusts and honey and thinking, "This is the person who is supposed to pave the way for the Messiah?" Can you also imagine them coming upon Jesus eating with sinners and tax collectors and thinking, "Wait...this is the Messiah?" For many people at that time, John and Jesus did not fit the profile for what they would have expected them to be like. Jesus' observation reminds us that God reveals Himself to us on His terms, not ours.

*Respond:* Apply what you've learned in prayer and action

Jesus had compassion for the mother of the dead young man. Take a moment today to thank Him for having compassion on you too.

## Friday, March Second

For the past decade, the city of St. Petersburg has budgeted for a "Family Reunification" program. The idea is to provide the homeless with a one way ticket out of St. Pete to their destination of choice. However, over the years, critics have pointed out some problems with this program. The most cited critique is that it is simply a way of getting the homeless out of the area only to then 'dump' them onto other communities around the country. To add fuel to the fire, critics also point out that the city never follows up to make sure these folks arrived at their final destination. In our passage today, a Pharisee faces a dilemma of what to do with a woman who shows up at his meal with Jesus.

*Read:* Luke 7:36-50

*Reflect:* Use the passage to work through these questions

- How did the Pharisee expect Jesus to react to the sinful woman? (see verse 39)
- How does Jesus contrast what the woman did for Him with what the Pharisee should have done for Him? (see verses 44-46)

Imagine the surprise of the Pharisee and the sinful woman upon hearing Jesus' words. Here was a woman who had nothing, and yet she gave so much to Jesus. At the same time, here was a man who had plenty, and yet he gave so little to Jesus. The Pharisee began the evening thinking the woman was in the wrong, but now, he was beginning to see that perhaps it was he himself who needed to take a long look in the mirror!

- What does Jesus say is the relationship between being forgiven and showing love? (see verse 47)

*Respond:* Apply what you've learned in prayer and action

In what ways do you show Jesus love for what He has done for you? Take some time in prayer to thank Him for His words of promise – "Your sins are forgiven" (verse 48).

## Saturday, March Third

This past winter was a cold one, even for us down here in central Florida! In fact, many local fruit farmers had to take a variety of precautionary measures throughout December and January to try and save their crops from the freezing temperatures. By the beginning of February, most of the crops had survived, but some were not so lucky. What was the difference? Why was it that some crops made it through the tough temperatures while others did not? In today's passage, Jesus shares a parable detailing why some seeds flourish while others do not.

*Read:* Luke 8:1-25

*Reflect:* Use the passage to work through these questions

- How does the parable of the sower show us the many different ways people respond to God's Word? (see verses 5-15)
- How does Jesus redefine family? (see verses 19-21)

For Jesus, family isn't just a title demonstrating relation to one another. It also connects those who take their faith seriously.

- What caused the disciples to be amazed by Jesus? (see verses 24-25)

Of everything we experience on this earth, the natural elements are often believed to be the most untamable of all. For example, you can control how much air you blow into a balloon, but you cannot control how much wind a tornado creates. While Jesus' disciples had seen Him heal people of many diseases and illnesses, the fact that He could even tame the natural elements was absolutely bewildering to them.

*Respond:* Apply what you've learned in prayer and action

Jesus tells us to let our light shine for others to see. Are people able to see the light of Jesus in your life on a daily basis? Why or why not might that be the case?

## Sunday, March Fourth

By now, you've probably started to pick up on the fact that Luke's Gospel heavily illustrates Jesus' ability to heal those around Him. In today's passage, Jesus continues to heal people of demons, disease, and even death!

*Read:* Luke 8:26-56

*Reflect:* Use the passage to work through these questions

- What does Jesus tell the man to do after being healed of his demons? (see verses 38-39)
- How does Jesus respond to the sick woman who touched his clothes? (see verses 45-48)

Did Jesus have somewhere He needed to be? Yes. Did He have a task that He needed to perform? Yes. And yet, in a moment when His disciples and the crowd surrounding Him were trying to push Him onwards, Jesus stopped and prioritized His time to meet a woman who now shared in a healing, restorative, life-giving relationship with Him. Because now, for this woman, the old life was gone, and the new was here!

- What does Jesus say to the little girl? (see verse 54)

Imagine how powerful this experience must have been for the little girl's father and mother. Jesus takes the mother and father into the room, they stand beside the little girl's bed, Jesus takes her hand, holds it firmly, and tells her to get up! And suddenly, what was once the worst day of these parents' lives became the most beautiful, wonderful, and miraculous day they would ever experience. Jesus' words have the power to heal!

*Respond:* Apply what you've learned in prayer and action

Take some time to go to God in prayer and ask Him to prepare your heart for the coming week.

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