

THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

Preparing for Lectionary Year C

Luke was an evangelist, a doctor and a gifted writer. All three characteristics of his personality shine through his Gospel and the portrait he gives of Jesus and his Mission.

As a writer and literary man you see his skill in the telling of the birth narrative of Jesus and in his eye for the great stories Jesus told – the Prodigal Son and the Good Samaritan are in this Gospel alone. Luke’s perception of Jesus’s mission being for the healing of divisions, relationships and for the whole world, not just God’s people, comes through in his telling of Jesus’s encounters with outsiders. Most notably we see this with his befriending of Zacchaeus- the despised little tax collector, the healing of the ten lepers and their restoration into normal society and his words of comfort to the penitent thief on the cross – ‘I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise’ - restoring this criminal to God’s company and kingdom.

Each of the Four Gospels has a sending text, where Jesus sends the disciples out to carry on his mission to the world (Matthew 28:19; Mark 16:15; John 20:21). These focus mainly on the call to share the good news and make disciples. However, Luke’s Gospel has *two* sending texts; one at the end of the gospel, like the others, which commissions the disciples but also another in Luke chapter 4: 18 which demonstrates Jesus’s vision of his calling, through the lens of the prophet Isaiah, as a wide and universal mission : ‘he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor...to proclaim release to captives...to recover the sight of the blind and to free the oppressed’.

Luke, both Doctor and Evangelist, sees, in Jesus, God’s holistic mission –for humanity and the entire created order. I also, particularly like Luke’s focus on Jesus’s mentoring and nurturing of the disciples. From their call in chapter 6 to their being sent out in Chapter 9 preaching the good news of the kingdom, to their training of the 72 others in Chapter 10, Luke gives us a frank and honest insight into the disciples’ failures and Jesus’ extreme patience and persistence. Luke shows us how God, in a very human Jesus, does not give up on them. He takes ordinary folk and does extraordinary things through them. Just like with us today.

Mark Rylands, Bishop of Shrewsbury

Study Day

Saturday 28th November 2015

10am – 4pm

Preaching from the Gospel of Luke

**Prof. Stephen Barton
and Dr Lindsey Hall**

St Thomas and St Andrew's,
Doxey Rd, Stafford ST16 1EQ

Please book by contacting Becky Harrison
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All clergy, Readers and preachers are welcome

Timetable for the day:

10.00 – 11.00: Session 1: Luke's Good News

11.00 - 11.30: Coffee break

11.30 – 12.30: Session 2: Luke's Radical Story

12.30 – 1.15: Lunch (bring your own)

1.15 – 2.15: Session 3: Discipleship according to Luke

2.15 - 2.30: Tea break

2.30 – 3.30: Session 4: Luke as the Gospel of Joy

3.30 – 4.00: Session 5: Q&A

Suggested resources for the study day on Luke:

Stephen C. Barton, *The Spirituality of the Gospels* (SPCK, 1992; Wipf and Stock, 2006): an easy-to-read account of what each of the gospels say about following Christ. Chapter 3 is on the spirituality of Luke-Acts.

Stephen C. Barton, ed., *The Cambridge Companion to the Gospels* (Cambridge University Press, 2006): a multi-authored set of essays by top scholars, with a very nice, clear chapter by John Squires on Luke, and also one by Gordon Mursell (former Bishop of Stafford) on 'Praying the Gospels'.

Christopher F. Evans, *Saint Luke* (SCM, 1990): a commentary full of insights by a top Anglican scholar.

Joel B. Green, *The Theology of the Gospel of Luke* (Cambridge University Press, 1995): a very readable survey of Luke's theology by the author of one of the best commentaries on this gospel.

Joel B. Green, *The Gospel of Luke* (Eerdmans, 1997): a first-class commentary that's comprehensive, accessible, and spiritually profound, with a special eye on how Luke's gospel works as narrative.

Luke T. Johnson, *The Gospel of Luke* (Liturgical Press, 1991, 2nd ed.): an excellent, readable commentary by a top Roman Catholic biblical scholar.

Other recommended resources on Luke:

Michael Wilcock *The Message of Luke: The Saviour of the World* (1988) IVP

Recommended by: Mark Ireland, Vicar of All Saints, Wellington

“For the preacher rather than the scholar, *The Bible Speaks Today* is always a reliable series, and this is a well written volume in the series.”

I. Howard Marshall *Gospel Of Luke: A Commentary on the Greek Text* (1978) Paternoster

Recommended by: Mark Ireland, Vicar of All Saints, Wellington

“My best and most comprehensive commentary on Luke is still Howard Marshall. He was professor of New Testament at Aberdeen University, and his writing is both scholarly and evangelical in heart.”

Henry Wansbrough *Luke: A Devotional Commentary for Study and Preaching* (1998) BRF

Recommended by: Mark Ireland, Vicar of All Saints, Wellington

“Using this Wansbrough's commentary for daily personal use would be a good way for a preacher to get into the mind of Luke at the start of the new lectionary year.”

Leslie Francis and Peter Atkins *Exploring Luke's Gospel* (2000) Continuum

Recommended by Matthew Parker, Archdeacon of Stoke

“This offers four separate approaches to the lectionary readings for each Sunday based on Jung's personality types -

sensing, intuition, thinking and feeling, familiar to many from the Myers Briggs Type Indicator. Even if you have doubts about Myers Briggs, this approach to reading Luke's gospel offers up a stimulating range of perspectives and reminds me that my preferred preaching style needs to be varied if I am to communicate with personality types that differ from my own."

Keith F. Nickle's book *Preaching the Gospel of Luke , Proclaiming God's Royal Rule, (2000) Westminster Knox*
Recommended by Mandy Walker, Vicar of All Saints, Streetly
"For me it brings scholarship and practical help for preachers together in one book! Each section has exposition followed by several ideas for preaching from the word."

Darrell Bock *Luke: The NIV Application Commentary (1996)*
Zondervan
Recommended by Stephen Pratt, CF Padre 22 Signal Regt MOD Stafford

"This commentary has some of Bock's more in depth exegesis from his other commentaries, but it also has the bridging and modern day application sections that are a feature of this commentary series. For the preacher these latter two sections are most helpful in provoking thoughts about how to apply a passage for a congregation and so keep the sermon earthed."

Sharon H Ringe *Luke, in the Westminster Bible Companion series (1995) WJKPress, Louisville, Kentucky,*
Recommended by Pauline Shelton, Director of Reader Training

"It is lively and informative with a light touch, being deliberately geared to help readers to apply the theological

and moral issues raised by Scripture to their daily lives. WKJ produce a parallel series (the Interpretation series) intended specifically for preachers and teachers, the Luke volume of which is by Fred B Craddock (1990). In this instance, though, if I could only afford one of them, I would prefer Ringe because I find she's better at suggesting contemporary applications.

Bruce Malina and Richard Rohrbaugh (2nd Ed 2003)

Minneapolis: Fortress Press,

Recommended by Pauline Shelton, Director of Reader

Training

“It offers such different insights from most other commentaries, and from traditional preaching – ones that enable us to re-envision the ministry and teaching of Jesus in his context, and thus to interpret it for our own context more truthfully and faithfully.”

Darrell Bock. *Luke Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (2 volumes) (1994 and 1996) Baker Academic

Recommended by Shaun Morris, Resident Minister at

Hanford and Associate Minister at Trentham

This is a serious commentary that will satisfy those who want a detailed exploration of the Greek text, but is also very accessible to non-academics like me. It is long (almost 1000 pages per volume) but Bock writes in an easy to read style. Each section covers questions of source and historicity, followed by a detailed exegesis and exposition (comprehensively covering alternative understandings of the text). Very helpfully he starts each passage with an introduction telling you what to look out for, and ends with a summary paragraph bringing out the main points. A superb commentary.

David Gooding *According to Luke* (2013) Myrtlefield House
Recommended by Shaun Morris, Resident Minister at
Hanford and Associate Minister at Trentham

Still in print, but it can be downloaded as a free pdf from the author's website: www.keybibleconcepts.org

Gooding's is not a 'technical' commentary, he simply walks us through the book of Luke helping us get to grips with the storyline of the whole gospel. His premise is that Luke, very simply, splits his account into: The 'Coming' of the Lord from heaven to earth; and then his 'Going' from earth to heaven. (The turning point between them is Chapter 9 verse 51). Gooding unpacks the gospel showing how every passage fits into Luke's aim for each of the two halves. I wouldn't have this as my only commentary on Luke; but it is easy and enjoyable to read, contains some fresh insights, and is a real help in preparing sermons and talks.

Various people recommended **Tom Wright's *Luke For Everyone* (2001) SPCK** and **William Barclay's commentary:**

Sue Weller, Archdeacon of Walsall: The commentary is very readable and includes new insights into often very familiar passages, allowing the reader/preacher to see new aspects of the text. The commentary includes discussion as well as explanation and thoughts as to how each passage is relevant in our lives today. Tom Wright uses his clear style to give the background and implications without the use of jargon, in ways that are open to new readers of the Bible and those who have explored it for many years.

George Fisher, Director of Mission: Wright gives a Good theological basis and his own translation. He often comes at

the passage from a new perspective and gives good insights and ideas to develop as well as the implications for life today. Barclay is a treasure trove of background information and insights into life at that time which provide an excellent basis for understanding and interpretation. Barclay is often looked down upon but I find him invaluable.

For those looking for new resources, but not necessarily focused on the lectionary:

Nick Page *The Wrong Messiah / the Longest Week / Kingdom of Fools* (2012, 2010, 2010) Hodder and Stoughton
Recommended by Phil Cansdale, Vicar of Trinity Churches, Meole Brace

“My favourite author of the moment is Nick Page, who is a strange mixture of very well read, theologically eclectic, and suitably dry / sarcastic humour. His trilogy is an attempt to tell the story of Jesus / passion / Acts etc.”