

Our goal in studying the Bible is two-fold. One part of the goal as we read is to engage with our **mind**, to grow in our knowledge of who God is as he has revealed himself in his word. The other part of our goal is to engage with our **heart**, by responding to God as we read with our love, praise, gratitude, confession, needs, questions, and desires.

Engaging with our mind *and* heart as we seek the help of the Holy Spirit helps us grow in an intimate relationship with God through Jesus our Savior as we see him more clearly, know him better and love him more.

Day 1- Read Luke 13

- How is God revealed in this chapter? What is he like? Who is Jesus shown to be? What is he like?

Pray: Spend time in adoration and thanksgiving.

- What is human nature shown to be like in this chapter? Is this true of you in your life right now?

Pray: Spend time in confession and repentance.

- What does this passage of Scripture show that you need from God? How does your heart need to move to align with what you see in Scripture? Is there something you need to believe? Is there action you need to take?

Pray: Spend time asking God for what you need to live for him.

Meditation: Luke 13:24 *“Strive to enter through the narrow door. For many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able.”*

Day 2- Luke 13:1-9

1. In verse 1 and 4 we are told of two horrific events where a number of people were killed. And like us when tragedy strikes, people were looking for answers. Judging from the way that Jesus answered them in verses 2 and 4, what were the

people thinking was the reason that disaster befell these folks?

2. Jesus called the people out on their self-righteousness, pointing out that they were no better than the people who died. What did Jesus tell them to do in verses 3 and 5 and what would happen if they didn't?

For Discussion: When tragedies occur in our lives, in our communities, in our nation and in our world, instead of looking for reasons that it could never happen to us like the people in our passage did, what should the calamities cause us to remember and think about?

3. To make sure no one misunderstood the need for repentance, what it looks like, and what will happen without it, Jesus told a parable. In the story, God is the owner of the tree, Jesus is the vinedresser/caretaker, and Israel is the fig tree.

-What is God looking for as evidence of repentance?

-How is Jesus acting toward Israel?

-What do you think digging around it might represent?

-What do you think feeding it something to make it grow (manure) symbolizes?

-What will happen to those who have never borne fruit?

Digging Deeper: Read the following verses:

2 Peter 3:7,9 "But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist are stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the ungodly... The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance."

Romans 2:4 "...do you presume on the riches of his kindness and forbearance and patience, not knowing that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?"

-Why is God not bringing judgment on sin yet?

-When people mistakenly think they are getting away with their sins because God isn't judging them, what are they doing according to the Romans verse?

Day 3- Luke 13:10-21

4. Describe what Jesus did in verses 11-13, on this, the last recorded instance of him teaching in the synagogue on the Sabbath.

Picture and Ponder: "We need not doubt that this mighty miracle was intended to supply hope and comfort to sin-diseased souls. With Christ nothing is impossible. He can soften hearts, which seem hard as the nether mill-stone. He can bend stubborn wills which "for eighteen years" have been set on self-pleasing, on sin, and the world. He can enable sinners who have been long poring over earthly things, to look upward to heaven, and see the kingdom of God. Nothing is too hard for the Lord. He can create, and transform, and renew, and break down, and build, and quicken, with irresistible power. ¹

5. What impact does it make on you that this woman came to worship in her condition?
6. What was the predictable response of the synagogue ruler in verse 14?
7. Why do you suppose the synagogue ruler addressed the people and not Jesus?

8. How did Jesus respond to the ruler rebuking the people in verse 15?

-What was the effect on the ruler and his allies in verse 17?



Jesus did not shy away from confrontation with the religious rulers. In fact Luke and the other gospels record quite a few times that Jesus healed on the Sabbath, provoking their ire. We know our perfect Savior didn't do anything by chance, so why so much emphasis on healing on the Sabbath?

Jesus has already said that he is Lord of the Sabbath (Luke 6: 5) and that he did not come to abolish the law, but to fulfill it (Mat.5:17). So it wasn't that he wanted to do away with the Sabbath. This constant conflict with the religious rulers and the Sabbath was a perfect picture of the heart of their problem and the heart of the gospel.

God had provided the Sabbath for the people to rest from their work. Jesus fulfilled that law because he himself is our Sabbath. Jesus said, "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." (Matt.11:28). Jesus is our rest from working to earn our way into God's good grace. The healing work he performed on the Sabbath is a picture of the healing he does in our soul when we rest in his perfect record and saving work on the cross. The self-righteous religious people could not accept that. They were their own saviors, they worked hard to earn their way into God's favor and no one would take that from them! The problem was they could work their whole lives and never achieve the righteousness of God. Ironically their obsession with resting on the Sabbath was their own form of work.

- ❖ What are some ways you struggle with resting in Jesus?

- ❖ Jesus and Paul talk a lot about doing good deeds. How can we rest in Jesus and be at work in the world for Jesus?

- ❖ Tim Keller says that we "despise Jesus' sacrifice when we try to add to his work by beating ourselves up." How do you rest in Jesus when you fail and sin?

9. From what you've learned so far in Luke, how did the kingdom of God start out seemingly small and insignificant?

Picture and Ponder: “We see from these parables that the kingdom of God will go out to all the nations, and its effect will be vast and profound. The crippled woman stretching to her full height, standing tall, giving praise to God—that is what the kingdom does. It works individually—a life here a life there—transforming men and women—creating lovers of God who spread the good news.”²

Scholar’s Note: “The tiny mustard seed (so small it is almost invisible to the eye) produces a veritable “tree” capable of housing many birds...Yeast or leaven works silently and unseen—from the inside—but it affects everything. It wields incredible transforming power.”³

10. How is the power of the kingdom of God at work externally, in the world (the mustard seed growing into a tree where birds nest)?

11. How is the power of the kingdom of God at work internally, in individual lives (leaven working in the flour)?

Day 4- Luke 13:22-30

Scholar’s Note: “...the general understanding among the Jews was that all Jews except the very worst would be saved.”⁴

12. Instead of directly answering the question asked in verse 23, what command did Jesus give in verse 24?

Scholar’s Note: “Strive translates a form of the verb agōnizomai, from which the English word “agonize” derives. It is used only here in the Synoptic Gospels. The word means “to fight” (John 18: 36; 1 Tim. 6: 12; 2 Tim. 4: 7), “to compete” in an athletic contest (1 Cor. 9: 25), or “to struggle” (Col. 1: 29; 4: 12; 1 Tim. 4: 10).”⁵

13. In what ways do you “fight”, “compete” and “struggle” in your Christian life?

Picture and Ponder: “We should not misunderstand Jesus as saying that we must strive to pile up good works that will merit passage through the door. Instead, the point is to “labor hard at listening and responding to his message.”⁶

For Discussion: Imagine a tiny, narrow door. What are all the implications you can think of for the door to salvation being narrow (compared to a wide door)?

14. Not only is the door narrow, but what else is true about the door according to verse 25?

15. How did the people in verse 26, those who are turned away, define a relationship with Jesus?

–How would you put that same definition in today’s setting?

16. In verse 28, how does Jesus describe something of what hell will be like for those who thought they were guaranteed heaven?

Picture and Ponder: “The torment of hell will not be limited to the pain of punishment, but will include the remorse, shock, and surprise of those who ended up there despite thinking they were going to heaven. The more people in hell knew about the gospel, the more profound their remorse will be; their pain will be proportional to their level of rejection.”⁷



The majority of the Jewish people were complacent and self-satisfied because they believed that salvation was guaranteed to them because of their lineage. We have the same situation today, outside the church as well as inside. People believe they are guaranteed heaven for many reasons—they attend church, they are moral, upstanding people, they are tolerant and accepting, they were raised in church, they believe in God, they are not hostile toward Jesus...

Mercifully, Jesus doesn’t let us lounge in the complacency that leads to death. Jesus said in Matthew’s gospel, “...*the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life...*” All throughout Luke’s gospel Jesus paints a picture of what the road that leads to life looks like. It is a path of self-denial, obedience, and treasuring him above all else. Following Jesus isn’t easy; it takes

striving. Our striving to follow is not what gets us into heaven, but it is evidence that we have been transformed by God's free gift of grace and will live eternally in the presence of God.

R. Kent Hughes reminds us, "Jesus does not want to inject false fears into our minds, but he does want us to examine our lives so we will be sure to take the narrow way." With that in mind, reflect on these questions:

- ❖ What makes you complacent in your faith? Laziness, presumption (taking grace for granted), lack of awareness of your sin, preoccupation with worldly desires...

- ❖ How can you guard against a works oriented mindset, while at the same time striving to enter through the narrow door or as Paul puts it, pressing on, straining and working out your salvation?

Day 5- Luke 13:31-35

Scholar's Note: "The interjection *O* expresses the strong emotion that the Lord felt for Jerusalem (representing the entire nation, as in Ezek. 16: 2- 3; Mic. 1: 5). The phrase *Jerusalem, Jerusalem* further indicates the intensity of Jesus' emotion. Repetition is a familiar way in Scripture of expressing emphasis and pathos."⁸

17. How does verse 34 express what Jesus' heart is toward those who reject him?

18. What was the result of their rejection of Jesus stated in verse 35?

-What will Israel one day say?



- ❖ How does Jesus' compassion toward rebellious sinners challenge you?

- ❖ What is your usual emotional response toward those who reject Jesus?

- ❖ Reflect on these scriptures that reveal the heart of God toward the lost and spend some time in prayer asking God to give you a heart of compassion for those who are living in rebellion to Him.

"But if you will not listen, my soul will weep in secret for your pride; my eyes will weep bitterly and run down with tears..." Jeremiah 13:17a

"As surely as I live, says the Sovereign LORD, I take no pleasure in the death of wicked people. I only want them to turn from their wicked ways so they can live. Turn! Turn from your wickedness, O people of Israel! Why should you die?" Ezekiel 33:11

One Thing: Look back over this week's study. Pick one thing that God impressed on you, convicted you about, or something new that you learned and write it here.

How will knowing this impact the way you think and act?

¹ Ryle, J. C. (2012-07-17). *The Gospel of Luke* by J. C. Ryle (J. C. Ryle Collection Book 8) (Kindle Locations 4153-4157). Priscilla Publishing. Kindle Edition.

² Hughes, R. Kent. *Luke, That You May Know the Truth, Preaching the Word series*, (Crossway, Wheaton Ill. 2015)

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ The MacArthur, John F. (2011-02-21). *Luke 1-24 MacArthur New Testament Commentary Set (MacArthur New Testament Commentary Series)* (Kindle Locations 18824-18826). Moody Publishers. Kindle Edition.

⁶ Bock, Luke 9: 51 – 24: 53, page 1234 as quoted in McKinley, Mike (2017-05-01). *Luke 12-24 For You: For reading, for feeding, for leading (God's Word For You Book 14)* (p. 38). The Good Book Company.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

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