

# Gospel of Luke

Jesus, Savior of the World



# Session Three

## **Galilean Ministry: The Revelation of Jesus**

- The section highlights Jesus' activity and includes two major discourses by Jesus
- One discourse shows how Jesus presents himself as the fulfillment of God's promises (4:16-30), while the other reveals his ethical teaching (6:20-49)
- Luke focuses on who Jesus is in terms of his ministry's aims and the extent of his authority. Jesus and his power gradually awaken faith within the disciples
- The contrast between Jesus' power and the growing rejection of him is the major tension in the story



# Overview of Jesus' Ministry

- Luke summarizes Jesus' activity by juxtaposing teaching (4:16-30) with miraculous activity (4:31-44)
- The section could be summarized by the title "A Few Days in the Life of Jesus"



# Jesus in the Synagogue

- And so it begins! (sort of, Jesus has already worked in Capernaum, see v. 23)
- Jesus reads from Isaiah
  - In the synagogue
  - “anointed me” means “made me the Messiah”
  - Today!! This is happening. Jesus is the servant in this “servant song.”
- Jesus claims to be directed by God to minister and preach.
- For those looking to God for hope, Jesus was the answer



# Jesus in the Synagogue

- Jesus angers the crowd
- They are too blind to see who he is – the blindness of familiarity.
- They resent the fact that he took his work to Capernaum, with a large Gentile population.
- Jesus replies in three ways
  - he cites a proverb -"Show me"
  - proverb that a prophet is not honored in his home
  - Jesus recalls the history of Israel in the period of Elijah and Elisha



# Ministry in Galilee

- Several quick snapshots of Jesus' public ministry during one day in the Capernaum region
- Since these are the first miracles Jesus performs in Luke's Gospel, here we should stop to look at how miracles function for Jesus.

real events that evidence Jesus' authority  
miracles are audiovisuals of deeper realities  
miracles unveil the deep cosmic struggle  
between the forces of evil and Jesus. If we ask  
what the miracles show, it is Jesus' sweeping  
authority



# Ministry in Galilee

- Jesus speaks directly about God and his will. The following verses make an additional point: there is more to Jesus' authority than his ability to preach the Word; he can show the presence of God's power.
- An exorcism in a Capernaum synagogue (4:31-37)
- There was widespread belief in demons, who brought physical and mental problems, but not moral. Since the demons are from the supernatural world, they recognize Jesus for who he is.

The demon is confronted and called out. Jesus' authoritative teaching can destroy the whole realm of demons.



# Ministry in Galilee

- Healing Simon's mother-in-law (4:38-39)  
Jesus rebukes (!) the fever. This too is an exorcism.
- Healing the sick at evening (4:40-41)
- Healings & exorcisms – again, the demons know Jesus as Messiah.
- Jesus leaves Capernaum (4:42-44)
- Jesus preaches in synagogues in Judea.



# Gathering of Disciples

- The call of the first disciples (5:1-11)  
They witness Jesus' power. This is the compelling, cosmic Christ.
- But the *kind* of disciples Jesus gathers is unusual-- they are not theological professionals
- The lesson is that we need not be perfect to come to God; rather, we need to trust God and let him do his gracious work in transforming our lives.



# Gathering of Disciples

- Jesus performs a nature miracle
- picture of mission
- The event signifies not only what disciples are called to do but who disciples are as they do it.
- Peter and Jesus represent different sides of the theology that undergirds the community Jesus is forging
- Jesus calls these fishermen to fish for people rather than for finned water-dwellers. Luke presents these two truths quite dramatically and vividly.



# Gathering of Disciples

- As nice as it would be to have Jesus as a permanent fishing guide, God's messenger is in their midst, and the fisherman knows enough about God's holiness to know he is at risk
- The size of the catch tells Simon and his companions that this event has been no accident
- Simon Peter represents all disciples. His humility and awareness of his sin do not disqualify him from service; they are the prerequisite for service
- The mission is to catch persons alive.
- Healing a leper (5:12-16), a social disease



# Early confrontations with religious leaders

- Luke has shown us six vignettes to illustrate Jesus' ministry. Now he gives us some stories to show the other side – Jesus' controversies
- The healing of a paralytic (5:17-26)
  - The issue is forgiving sin.
  - Jesus ministers to the whole person
  - healing and forgiveness are linked in this story.



# Early confrontations with religious leaders

- Eating with tax collectors and sinners (5:27-32)
  - “Sinners” refers to those who broke the Law of Moses in such a way that they were excluded from the synagogue.
  - This is about including the excluded
- Debate about fasting (5:33-39)
  - There is a time to fast and a time to make merry!
  - Old rituals of fasting make no sense in this new life – though fasting still does.



# Early confrontations with religious leaders

- Debates concerning the Sabbath (6:1-11)

Jesus confronts powerful symbols that, for many, defined what it meant to be a Jew.

Keep the “fury” of the scribes and Pharisees in mind as we approach Jerusalem.

Jesus sets himself above the Law



# Choosing Twelve

- New leadership was required. Thus it is no accident that Luke places the choosing of the Twelve immediately after the remark about the beginnings of a plot against Jesus
- This text is one of several where Luke associates an event with prayer—a concrete way of expressing our necessary dependence on God.
- The twelve men Jesus chose would be specially trained to lead the church. Only Luke among the Gospel writers calls them apostles at this point



# Choosing Twelve

- Fishermen, tax collector, “Zealot” all part the same community formed by Jesus
- The number is twelve-significant
- **We now begin the period between choosing the twelve and sending the twelve (Luke 6:17-9:6).**



# The Teaching of Jesus

- Sermon on the level Plain
  - Blessings & woes (vv. 20-26)
    - Poor-rich, hungry-full, weeping-laughing, rejected-accepted
    - Back to the reversal of fortunes from Mary's Magnificat
  - On the love of enemies (vv. 27-36)
    - The Golden Rule is here! It is found often in ancient literature.
    - If God is kind to the ungrateful and wicked, how can we be any less!!



# The Teaching of Jesus

- On judging (vv. 37-42)

The kingdom is about a glorious, absurd generosity! It is not about judging and condemning
- On integrity (vv. 43-45)

Who we are, what we say, and what we do are a unity.
- On hearing and doing (vv. 46-49)

It is not just hearing Jesus' word that matters, or even believing and memorizing them. It is in hearing and doing that we show ourselves to be disciples



# Jesus Works On

- Healing the Centurion's slave (7:1-10)

This is a story of faith – the faith of a believing Gentile who lives in Jewish land. (See Acts 10 for the story of Cornelius). Note the Centurion never meets Jesus.
- Raising the widow's son at Nain (7:11-17)

This is not resurrection; it is resuscitation. This story parallels stories of Elijah and Elisha.



# Jesus Works On

- John and Jesus again (7:18-35)
  - V. 22 – what is happening explains what is going on.
  - Jesus is inaugurating the Kingdom of God. V. 28 – again, the world turned upside-down.
  - Alas, the people are blind.
- Jesus anointed by sinful woman (7:36-50)



# Jesus Works On

- Women share in Jesus' ministry (8:1-3)  
We first meet Mary, from the town of Magdala
- The Parable of the Sower (8:4-18) – Would we raise our hands to ask?
- The real family of Jesus (8:19-21)



# Jesus Visits the Gentiles

- Jesus calms a storm (8:22-25)

This is an exorcism! Jesus rebukes the wind and waves just as he rebuked the fever. The sea was about chaos. Many ancient cultures believed that the sea was home to evil spirits.

What is the opposite of faith? Not doubt, but fear. Faith is more about our hearts than our minds. We believe/doubt with our minds, but we trust/fear with our hearts.

Who then is this? – This is always Luke's question for the reader



# Jesus Visits the Gentiles

- Healing the Gerasene demoniac (8:26-39)

This is in the Gentile area.

There is much here that would drive Jews crazy. This is about as unclean a scene as Jews could imagine: gentiles, the dead, demons, and pigs!
- Raising Jairus' daughter & healing a woman with a hemorrhage (8:40-56)

Back to the Jewish land.

These healings do not generate faith; they proceed from faith. The girl is resuscitated, not resurrected. She has returned from death, not passed through death.



# Jesus sends Out the Twelve

- Jesus now sends out the twelve apostles.
- In their ministry, they are to be totally dependent on God.
- We'll see as we go forward that Luke has many warnings for the rich. Why? Because money leads us toward supposed independence.
- Hospitality was expected and was to be returned.
  - If the apostles meet inhospitality, they are not to retaliate but only perform a simple ritual of judgment
- The apostles go everywhere



# Predictions of the Passion

- Herod is perplexed about Jesus (9:7-9)
  - Jesus draws the attention of Herod – who must see Jesus as a threat.
  - “Messiah-talk” would not be well-received.
- Jesus feeds the multitude (9:10-17)
  - The feeding miracle is the only miracle in all four gospels.
  - This story prefigures the Lord’s Supper – but it is still a story of feeding those who are hungry.
  - Jesus ministers to the whole person



# Predictions of the Passion

- Peter's confession and the first prediction of the Passion (9:18-22)

Again, Jesus praying. Yes, Jesus is the Messiah, but this is going to take a very different course than Peter would expect.
- Demands of discipleship (9:23-27)

Jesus' path and that of the disciples is the path of suffering.
- The transfiguration of Jesus (9:28-36)
- The not-yet-ready-for-primetime disciples (9:37-50)

All these sketches show us that the disciples are not ready, they don't understand.



# Summation

- There is so much here that it can be hard to step back and look at where we've been.

Jesus has announced the coming of God's kingdom. He has set about to enact this by healing, welcoming, and demonstrating his complete authority over demons.
- The disciples are largely clueless  
What do we make of this? Would we really "get it" if we had been there?

Jesus' ministry and Messiahship is so different from what they expected, the disciples simply cannot see it.



# Summation

- Where might our own understanding of God's kingdom blind us to God's work today or to our own work as disciples?
- We need to see the controversies that swirl around Jesus and his confrontation with the powers of his day.
- What controversies swirl around today? Who are the powers that Jesus would confront today?
- We ought to take note of Luke's emphasis on Jesus' praying.