

THE REVOLUTIONARY RULER

LUKE 5-14

Bible Studies for Ashfield Presbyterian Church
ashfieldpresbyterian.org.au

INTRODUCTION:

These studies are designed to complement the sermons at Church. Most Home Groups use them in the week **before** the Bible Talk, and find that this helps to prepare them to hear the talk. Hopefully, any unanswered questions will also be addressed.

The studies will work just as well for personal study. Perhaps you could find two or three short times during the week to work through each passage and set of questions.

THE STORY UP 'TIL NOW

Right at the beginning of his book Luke explains to his friend why he wrote this gospel, "Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us from those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. Therefore since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught."

Luke was approached this gospel with the care of a historian. He investigated the facts carefully, and knew the importance of eye-witness accounts. When he came to write he set it out in an orderly way so that his readers could understand what was going on, and the significance of certain events. As we read Luke's gospel we are not dealing with wishful thinking and fairytales.

Luke also wrote as a believer. He saw the life of Jesus as fulfilment of God's promises in the Old Testament. And his purpose was to convince his friend that the Christian faith was trustworthy and reliable. As we read Luke we ought to have our faith strengthened and be more confident to tell our friends the truth about Jesus.

As Luke gives us his orderly account (1:3) of the life of Jesus, he actually begins with John the Baptist. The births of John and Jesus both involve angelic messengers, miraculous conceptions, and songs of praise to God for sending his deliverer. Luke intertwines their stories to show the connection between John and Jesus. Luke quickly moves from Jesus' birth to adulthood (2:21-51). Once again, the story begins with John the Baptist (3:1-20). He has come to prepare the way for Jesus by calling the people to repentance. He draws a comparison between himself and Jesus - John baptises only with water, but Jesus will baptise with the Holy Spirit. The connection between the two reaches its climax when Jesus is baptised by John (3:21-22).

The insertion of the genealogy at this point (3:23-37) seems to signal the beginning of Jesus' public ministry. It also shows his dual nature as both Son of God (3:22) and son of man. As Jesus resists temptation in the wilderness (4:1-13) he shows what true humanity was designed for. He resists Satan in a way Adam was unable to do. He also demonstrates that he is the true Israel - the beginning of a new Israel. Although Israel went into the wilderness and were led astray, Jesus remains faithful.

In his home town of Nazareth, Jesus declares the nature of his kingdom by fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy (4:14-30). God's kingdom, begun in Jesus, reverses the fortunes of the poor, prisoners, and the oppressed. This reversal for the least, lost and last is a distinctive theme of Luke's gospel. When his own people realise that this will also involve those outside Israel, they are furious and try to kill him.

Luke then shows us what the kingdom looks like by describing a day in the life of Jesus (4:31-44). He drives out a demon in the morning, heals a sick woman at lunchtime, and heals many more in the evening. But the day begins and ends with Jesus preaching the good news.

LUKE 5:1-6:11: REVOLUTIONARY RECRUITS

Luke's attention now moves from the king of the kingdom to the citizens of his kingdom. Jesus' requirements for membership are unexpected and upside-down.

1. **Read Luke 5:1-26.** How does Ch 5 connect with Ch 4?
2. Interest in Jesus is growing (4:14,37,40,42; 5:15,17). Why did Jesus need to teach the people from the boat? (5:1-3)
3. How did Jesus use this interaction with Simon to invite him to follow Jesus?

What was Simon's response?

4. What did Simon mean when he said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!"? (v8)

Share how you began your Christian journey.

5. What did the leper doubt about Jesus? What did he believe? (5:12) How does this episode encourage us to pray?
6. How is the growing interest in Jesus a vital part in the episode of 5:17-26? (See verses 17,19)
7. What did the friends of the paralysed man believe about Jesus?

What did the Pharisees and teachers doubt about Jesus? (5:20-21)

8. Why does Jesus forgive rather than heal? (5:20)

What does this episode add to our picture of Jesus?

9. How does Jesus connect the two acts of healing and forgiving? (5:22-24)

10. **Read Luke 5:27-6:11.** Tax collectors were rejected by the people. They frequently collected more than was required. In Luke's account, Levi is the first of many of society's "fringe-dwellers" to experience Jesus' love. Why does Jesus choose Levi? (5:31-32)

11. What is the *only* requirement for membership in the new kingdom? (5:28)

What is *not* required? (5:34)

12. What are the connections between verses 27-32 and verses 33-39?

13. What are the characteristics of the new kingdom Jesus is bringing in? (33-39)

14. How are the two accounts in 6:1-5 and 6:6-11 examples of the principles found in 5:33-39?

To think about:

Are you willing to follow Jesus and catch men? Do you recognise that you are a sinner who needs repentance? Do you rejoice in Jesus like a guest at a wedding feast?

PRAYER POINTS

LUKE 6:12-49: REVOLUTIONARY RULES

In contrast to the growing hostility of the previous chapter, this chapter is about the people of the kingdom - they are eager to learn and be healed. The section begins with Jesus choosing the 12 apostles - his leaders in this new kingdom.

1. **Read Luke 6:12-49.** What connections can you see between Jesus' rejection by the old order (6:11) and his choosing of 12 apostles?

What is significant about the number 12?

What does Jesus do before deciding on who is chosen?

2. Who is in the crowd (6:17)?

Why were they there?

Who does Jesus direct his teaching to (20)?

3. Jesus' teaching here makes explicit the upside-down nature of his kingdom - everything will be reversed. How has this reversal already been hinted at? (See 1:48-49,52-53; 4:18-19; 5:31-32)

4. What four qualities characterize kingdom people (20-22)? Define each of these.

What blessings are promised?

When will each be experienced?

How would this section turn upside-down what people thought? (See Deut 28)

5. Which of these promises means the most to you? Which warning seems most personal?

6. In verses 27-38 Jesus draws a number of contrasts between the way the world relates, and the way kingdom-people (sons of the Most High - 35) relate. List in two columns the behaviour which Jesus expects compared with behaviour the world expects.

<u>Kingdom behaviour</u>	<u>World behaviour</u>
27	32
27	33
28	
28	
29	
29	
30	34
30	
31	

7. What rewards are promised to those who live by these principles? (See 35, 37-38)
8. Why is behaviour such as this expected from sons of the Most High? (35-36)

In verses 39-49 Jesus concludes his sermon by calling his followers to do more than just hear - they must obey! He paints a number of pictures which contrast those who follow him from those who follow the world.

9. The question of verses 39-40 is “Who will you follow?” Blind teachers aren’t worth following. Who might Jesus be contrasting himself with?

The mark of a good follower is that he is like his teacher (40). Jesus sets the standard for kingdom behaviour. This introduces the next three sections concerning behaviour.

10. In verses 41-42 Jesus points out the inconsistency of pointing out the faults of others while not recognising your own. What is the priority for a follower of Jesus?
11. In verses 43-45 Jesus highlights another area of mis-emphasis - focusing on actions before the heart. His question is “What’s your heart like? Your actions are the fruit of your heart”. How do these verses challenge those who trust their actions rather than their relationship with Jesus? How do they challenge those who are content with a relationship with Jesus, but aren’t showing its fruit?
12. Jesus’ last image (46-49) challenges us about whether our declaration to follow Jesus is real. The only evidence of true belief which can withstand any storm is obedience. In practice, how is a “hearer-and-doer” like a man who builds on a solid foundation?

To think about:

Choose two areas from these verses you are struggling to be obedient in. Pray that God would change your heart to *desire* obedience, and give you the strength to *see it through*.

PRAYER POINTS

LUKE 7: LOVING THE LEAST, THE LOST, AND THE LAST

1. Read Luke 7. How do these events reflect Jesus' agenda in 4:16-30?
2. What qualities does Jesus display towards the three people needing his help (9-10, 13, 47-48)?
3. What titles are given to Jesus in this chapter (6, 16, 34, 34, 39, 40)?
4. What was the centurion's attitude towards Jesus? (See verses 3,6-7)
5. What is the centurion saying about Jesus in v8? What is Jesus' judgment of him?
6. In verses 11-17 for whom did Jesus feel pity? For whose benefit did he perform the miracle?
7. What does Jesus do after seeing the funeral procession (14)? What was normally the result of such an action? (Numbers 19:11)

These two miracles remind us of miracles performed by Elisha (2 Ki 5:1-15) and Elijah (1 Ki 17:17-24). Yet Jesus is much more than a prophet - he heals from a distance without a word (in the case of the centurion's servant), and by commanding the dead boy rather than praying. He is God himself with authority over sickness and death.

8. Where is John the Baptist when he sends his disciples to Jesus (3:19-20)? What type of ministry did John expect from Jesus (3:7-9, 16-18)? How might Jesus' words and actions in 4:14-7:17 have caused him to doubt Jesus' identity?
9. What is Jesus response (22-23)?
10. Perhaps the disciples criticize John for his lack of faith. Jesus appears to defend John. How does he describe him (24-28)?
11. In what sense is John the greatest human born (27-28)?
12. From what we've seen already, what sort of people is Jesus including as the least in the Kingdom of God? How are they greater than John?
13. In what sense is the woman of 36-50 "least"? In what sense is she "greater than John"?
14. From this chapter, what is the right response to have toward Jesus and his kingdom?

To think about:

What attitude do I have towards Jesus? What can I learn from the "least" in this chapter?

PRAYER POINTS

LUKE 8:1-21: RULES OF ENGAGEMENT

1. Read Luke 8:1-21. Verses 1-3 set the scene. What is Jesus doing? Who is with him?
2. How do verses 1-4 provide a living example of the meaning of the parable?
3. What is Jesus inviting the people to do in v 8b? How do the disciples respond to the invitation (9)?
4. What is the result of parables (v10)? Do you know people who are happy to listen to Christian things as interesting stories, but are uninterested in seeking out any deeper, personal meaning?
5. What is the meaning of this parable? How does it serve as the key to every other parable?
6. Give examples of people (perhaps who you know) who represent each soil type.
7. Is it possible for you to be different soil types at different times? That is, can you *change* soil types? Can you bear characteristics of different soils at the same time?
8. How would the parable help the disciples to better understand what is happening in Jesus' ministry? How is it both a comfort and a challenge in the ministry we are involved in?
9. Who is Jesus talking about in v16-17? (Look at the context before and after these verses) What is he saying about the Kingdom of God?
10. The idea of "hearing" links all three sections (8:8-15; 18; 21). What is Jesus' message about hearing in each of these sections? How is v21 the culmination of this lesson?

To think about:

What traces of bad soil are in your life? How can you become better soil? What areas do you need to put what you hear into practice?

PRAYER POINTS

LUKE 8:22-56: AUTHORITY

1. Read Luke 8:22-56. What hints are there in the passage that these verses are meant to be taken as one section? Look at the following “link” verses - 8:22, 26, 40. Does 9:1 suggest a new section?
2. What might be the major theme of these verses?
3. What is the difference between the attitude of Jesus and his disciples during the storm? How do the disciples change after Jesus calms the storm?
4. What affect do the demons have on the man?
5. How does the name the demons use for Jesus answer the question of the disciples? (v28 cf 25)
6. Who ISN'T strong enough to defeat the demons (8:29b)? Who IS strong enough?
7. What does the obedience of the demons suggest about Jesus?
8. Look at the two stories of Jairus' daughter and the sick woman (8:40-56). Luke wants us to compare them. List similarities and differences between the two stories.
Jairus' daughter The Sick Woman
9. Jesus TOUCHED both the sick woman and the dead body. What NORMALLY happened when someone did this? Look at Lev 15:19-24. What happened when Jesus did it?
10. What was different about the touch of the sick woman compared to that of the rest of the crowd (8:44-48)?
11. Why does Jesus say that the girl is asleep if she's really dead? What does this mean for us?
12. What effects of evil does Jesus demonstrate his authority over?
13. In what sense is Jesus' ministry a foretaste of heaven? Read Revelation 20:7-21:4. Match up the evil effects from Luke 8 which are permanently destroyed here.

To think about:

Does this description of Jesus' authority over the effects of evil increase your longing for heaven?

PRAYER POINTS

LUKE 9:1-10:24: UNDERCOVER AGENTS

1. Read Luke 9:1-10:24. It's a long section, but don't get bogged-down on fine detail. Look at the big picture. What do we learn about the Kingdom of God?

In Ch 8 Jesus gives a foretaste of the Kingdom of God. In this section we read how he expands the disciples' understanding of the Kingdom in several ways;

- 9:1-9 The disciples help to spread the kingdom, and learn by doing.
- 9:10-17 The kingdom involves God's rich supply of need.
- 9:10-27 The kingdom will only come through the suffering of the Messiah, and his followers doing the same.
- 9:28-36 The transfiguration is a window into the future showing the exalted King of the kingdom after his suffering.
- 9:37-45 Faith in the conquering and suffering King is required to participate in the kingdom.
- 9:46-62 Humility and service are characteristics of the kingdom.
- 10:1-24 The disciples, having learned some lessons, again practice the spreading of the kingdom.

2. In 9:1-6, how are the tasks of the Twelve the same as those of Jesus?

3. What is Jesus' priority after the disciples' mission? (9:10)

What is his reaction when confronted with a different set of needs? (9:11-17)

4. From 9:18-27, what do we learn about the identity and responsibility of Jesus?

How is this connected to the identity and responsibility of Christians?

5. What do you think Jesus means by seeing the Kingdom of God (27)?

6. What do Moses, Elijah and the disciples have in common? See Ex 19:20-21; 1 Ki 19:8-13.

7. What did Jesus, Moses and Elijah talk about? Why?

8. For whose benefit did God speak? Why? (See 9:44-45)

9. From 9:46-62, what attitudes are necessary for the Kingdom of God?

10. How does the missionary journeys of 10:1-24 differ from those of 9:1-9?

What is Jesus' strategy in this section? (10:1-2)

11. What instructions does he give them? (10:3-16)

What authority does he give them? (10:16-20)

12. What is Jesus' assessment of these followers? (10:21-24)

13. What principles can we gain from this section for our own ministry?

To think about:

Do you recognise the glory of Jesus? Do you appreciate his suffering servanthood? How is this reflected in the way you follow him?

PRAYER POINTS

LUKE 10:25-42: LOVE RULES

Read Luke 10:25-42.

1. What motivates the law expert to ask his question?
2. What is fundamentally wrong with the question, “What must I DO to INHERIT eternal life?”
3. Who is testing whom in his interaction with Jesus?

The expert’s summary of the law was a common opinion - even Jesus himself agreed (Mk 12:28-32). The difference was in the definition of “neighbour”. A common definition of the time was to limit “neighbour” to “fellow-Israelite”.

4. Why does the expert ask his next question? (29)
5. How might the Pharisee and the Scribe have used the law to justify their inactivity in helping? See Num 19:11-16 and Lev 21:1-3.
6. Given the relationship between Jews and Samaritans (see Jn 4), what is the “sting in the tail” in Jesus’ story? What is Jesus’ point?
7. What activities are involved in being a good neighbour?
8. What do you think is the connection between v25-37 and v38-41? (Between v1-24 and v38-41?)
9. Who “heard” the Word of God best - the law expert or the Samaritan? The episode with Mary and Martha clarifies this teaching - doing isn’t everything. Who “heard” best - Mary or Martha?
10. Who was the focus of Mary’s attention? Who was the focus of Martha’s attention?
11. What was wrong with Martha’s service? What was the “one thing” that was needed? (v42)
12. Which would have been the expected role for a woman in this situation? What is Jesus’ point?

To think about:

What is your attitude to hearing Jesus? Who do you need to be a neighbour to?

PRAYER POINTS

LUKE 11:1-13: KINGDOM KÖMMUNICATION

1. Read Luke 11:1-13. What motivates the disciples to ask about prayer?
2. How does God's title of "Father" affect our attitude to prayer?
3. To be hallowed means to make holy. What does it mean for God's name to be hallowed?
4. In Ezekiel 36 God speaks to comfort Israel after the fall of Jerusalem. He promises to do a new work - to BRING HIS KINGDOM IN. Read Ezek 36:16-36, and find parallels with the Lord's Prayer concerning;
 - a) God's name being hallowed
 - b) God providing daily bread
 - c) God forgiving sins as people forgive each other
5. The Kingdom of God has been a theme in the last few chapters (8:10; 9:2,11,27,60,62; 10:9,11). What might it mean to pray that God's kingdom would come - for the disciples?

For us?

6. How are prayer and forgiveness related?
7. What does the parable in v5-8 teach about prayer?
8. How do v9-10 relate to the parable?
9. How do v11-13 clarify v9-10? What do we learn from these verse about God's goodness?
10. In Mt 7:7-11 the promise is that God will give good gifts to those who ask him? How might this be connected to the Holy Spirit who is promised in Lk 11:13?
11. What should be the relationship between this prayer and your own praying?

To think about:

Do you long for God's name to be held holy? Do you long for his kingdom to come? Are you praying for it? Are you working for it?

PRAYER POINTS

LUKE 11:14-12:12: KINGDOM COMING

In Luke 11:13 last week we saw that the Holy Spirit will be given to any who ask. This week we will see the power and effect of the Spirit.

1. **Read Luke 11:14-32.** What is the charge laid against Jesus?

How does Jesus show that this cannot be the case?

2. What does Jesus claim show by his miracles?

How does this relate to the part about the strong man and the one who overcomes him?

3. Who is the one who overcomes the strong man?

4. Who are the blessed ones? Why?

5. Who are those who are condemned? Why?

6. **Read Luke 11:33-12:12.** What is the source of the light?

What does it mean to be full of light?

7. What were the Pharisees concerned with?

What was the problem with this focus?

8. What were the lawyers doing?

How were they leading the people astray?

9. How does Jesus describe these leaders?

What will be the outcome?

10. How do the Pharisees and lawyers respond?

11. What instruction does Jesus give to his disciples?

12. What will your response be?

PRAYER POINTS

LUKE 12:13-13:21: KINGDOM READY

1. Read Luke 12:13-34. Define the term 'Treasure in Heaven.'
2. How do we go about building treasure in heaven?
3. List some specific ways in which you can be on your guard against all kinds of greed, understanding that one's life does not consist in the abundance of their possessions.
4. What does it mean to be rich towards God?
5. Identify the promises made in v22-34.

6. What comfort can we take from the teaching of these verses?

How does this knowledge remove the pressure of life from our shoulders?

7. Write a sentence that captures the teaching of these verses.
8. How do you intend to start living your life in response to these promises?

Read Luke 12:35-59.

9. In v35-48 Jesus is talking about being prepared. List the ways in which Jesus instructs his hearers to be prepared.
10. What does it mean for us to be prepared? (Be specific).
11. What are the benefits of being prepared? What are the consequences for being lax?
12. How will the division Christ brings be seen in this life? How will the division be seen in the next?

13. Why does Jesus go from talking of interpreting the signs of the times to making amends with your accuser?

Is he talking about earthly things or spiritual things?

14. Share specific ways in which you can grow in your preparedness as we await Jesus' return.

15. In what ways can our church as a whole become more watchful/prepared?

Read Luke 13:1-21

16. There are two current events referred to in this passage. What is Jesus' take on both these events? What is the warning?

17. How does the parable of the fig tree fit into this passage?

18. In what ways are you bearing fruit?

19. What was the objection of the synagogue leader against Jesus healing the woman?

What does this display about the synagogue ruler's understanding of being right with God?

How does Jesus challenge this understanding?

How could it be seen as most appropriate that the woman was healed on the Sabbath?

20. What attributes of the kingdom of God is Jesus teaching in the parable of the mustard seed and the leaven?

What does this passage teach us about faith?

PRAYER POINTS

LUKE 13:22-14:35: KINGDOM COMMITMENT

1. Read Luke 13:22-14:35. What does Jesus say about the way to the Kingdom of God?
2. What may have motivated the person (13:23) to ask if only a few people were going to be saved?
3. How do you “make every effort” (13:24) to enter the narrow door? Is it just about trying hard?
4. What is the point of 13:31-35? (Does “Jerusalem” connect this section with the one before?)
5. From 14:1-14, Against what attitude of the Pharisees did Jesus speak the parable?

What was the point of the parable?

What does this have to do with making every effort to enter through the narrow door (13:24)?

6. From 14:15-24, who are the ones who will be in the kingdom?

Is this more a story about the guests, or the host? What is the main point?

7. What are the characteristics of those who are on the narrow road that leads to the kingdom?

How are these characteristics formative and visible in your life?

8. What does Jesus teach about the cost of following him in this section?

9. Is counting the cost only something you do before you become a Christian, or an ongoing decision to be made?

Give an example of a practical decision you made that involved counting the cost of being a disciple.

10. Can salt that loses its saltiness be called salt anymore (14:34-35)?

Can one who claims to follow Jesus and yet does not have any of the characteristics truly be classed as a follower of Jesus?

How do these two verses fit in with the whole section? Are they a good conclusion/ summary?

11. How have you been challenged by this passage?

PRAYER POINTS