

*According
To
Luke*

CHRISTCHURCH
Homegroups
Spring 2010

HOME GROUP PROGRAMME

Wed 6 th January	The Power House 7.45 in the Parish Centre
w/b Mon 11 th January	1. <i>Prepare the Way</i>
w/b Mon 18 th January	2. <i>The Son of God</i>
w/b Mon 25 th January	3. <i>The Upside-down Kingdom</i>
Wed 3 rd February	The Power House 7.45 in the Parish Centre
w/b Mon 8 th February	4. <i>You are the Christ</i>
Wed 17 th February	Ash Wednesday Informal Communion Service 7.45 in the Parish Centre
w/b Mon 22 nd February	5. <i>Eternal Life</i>
Wed 3 rd March	The Power House 7.45 in the Parish Centre
w/b Mon 8 th March	6. <i>The Last Days</i>
w/b Mon 15 th March	7. <i>The Cross</i>
w/b Mon 22 nd March	8. <i>In all the Scriptures</i>
Thurs 1 st April	Passover Meal 6.30 in the Parish Centre

'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 by those who from the first were eye-witnesses 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 1:1-4)

1. PREPARE THE WAY

WELCOME

As a special 'New Year' gift, you are given one extra hour every day. How would you use it?

WORSHIP

One of the great privileges that Christians have is to call God 'Father'. Using either songs or words, praise God for being your Father, and for the difference that makes.

WORD

Read Luke 2:41-52

Luke records just one event from Jesus' youth. His main reason for doing this was to draw attention to who Jesus was – the Son of God (see verse 49 – *'I had to be in my Father's house'*)

But even if Jesus was the Son of God – why did he need to be in the temple?

How does Jesus' need to be in the temple find its parallel in our own lives? If we are to live as God's children, what do we need to do?

Luke seems to see a connection between Jesus' visit to the temple and his growing in wisdom and in favour with God and men.

In what ways can our growth in these areas be encouraged?

Read Luke 3:1-20.

John the Baptist was the forerunner who prepared the way for the Lord. What was the main way in which he said that his hearers could themselves be ready for him?

John tells the crowd that they must 'produce fruit in keeping with repentance.' Why is this so important?

John then pin-points key areas in the lives of three groups who ask him what they should do (verses 10-14). I suspect that none of these things he mentions are what we would necessarily think of as sin (especially the first).

So – why might these be appropriate for each group?

- The crowd
- The tax-collectors
- The soldiers.

In what areas of your own life are you most prone to sin?

Are there areas of your life where you have a blind-spot to your own sin?

Why might sin which we refuse to recognise or repent of damage our relationship with the Lord?

WORK

1. We will be looking at Luke 3:1-20 at our morning services on Sunday 17th Jan. From your study are there any issues which you would like the sermons to pick up on. If so – here is your chance. Pass the questions to the Parish Office as soon as possible (by lunchtime on Thursday at the latest) and we will try to address them on Sunday morning.
2. Jesus grew in favour with God, and with his neighbours. Of course, we are not in the business of just doing whatever will make us popular – especially as we live in a society which frequently rejects Christian values and principles.

But – are there things which you could you do, either as individuals or as a group, to win favour with your neighbours, and to make them more open to the gospel? Similarly, are there things which we need to avoid doing because they bring a bad name to the church and thus to the Lord?

Pray for wisdom to identify these things, and for practical ways to put them into action.

2. THE SON OF GOD

WELCOME

What is your favourite verse / passage in the Bible, and why?

WORSHIP

In this study we will see that when he was tempted, Jesus responded by using the words of scripture. Use words from the Bible to praise God – so many of the Psalms help us to do this. And praise God for his word, the Bible.

WORD

Read Luke 3:21-22

What 3 things are we told about Jesus in v.22?

- 1
- 2
- 3

If this is what Jesus is like, why did he need to be baptised?

Read Luke 4:1-13

3 times the devil tempts Jesus. But what would have been so wrong about doing these 3 things?

How does Jesus respond to each of the temptations?

How does Jesus' response differ from Adam & Eve's when they were tempted (see Genesis 2:16-17, 3:3-6)
(This is the significance of the long list of Jesus' family tree in Luke 3:23-38. Adam, the first son of God, failed when tempted, and so did every one of his descendents, until Jesus, the true Son of God, came and succeeded where Adam had failed.)

What does Jesus response to temptation show about his attitude to God?

In the light of this passage, why is reading and understanding the Bible so important for Christians?

Read Luke 4:14-30

What did Jesus say he had come to do? (verses 18-19)?

As Jesus had just won a battle over the devil, what do you think that ideas like 'freedom for the prisoners', and 'to release the captives' mean?

In verses 22-30, why were the people so angry with Jesus?

Are there ways today in which the message of Jesus produces anger

- a) in our society?
- b) In our own lives?

WORK

1. As with the last study, we will be looking at these passages over the next 2 Sunday mornings (24th Jan & 31st Jan). Are there things which you want the preacher to pick up on? Once again, please pass any questions to the Parish Office by lunchtime on Thursday at the latest. We can't promise to answer all the questions which our study of God's word sometimes raise, but we will try to scratch where you are itching!
2. We usually think of temptation in personal terms. But there is a corporate dimension to temptation as well. We thought last time about things we could do as a church to win favour with your neighbours, and to make them more open to the gospel? But are there temptations which we face as a church?

How do we recognise these?

And what should we do about them?

3. THE UPSIDE-DOWN KINGDOM

WELCOME

What is the happiest memory you have?

WORSHIP

We live in a world where things seem constantly to change. It is good to know that the Lord our God never changes, and that what we read of him in the Bible is still true today. Praise God for revealing himself in his word; for his love, faithfulness, mercy, justice etc.

WORD

Read Luke 6:17-26

In verses 20-22, Jesus turns conventional human wisdom upside down. Who could possibly think that being poor, hungry, weeping and hated could be a source of blessing? When Jesus said that his disciples who experienced these things would be blessed, do you think he was talking of blessing in this life, or just in heaven (verse 23)?

Have you had experiences where God has turned these sorts of bad experiences into good ones for you?

And what about the 'woes' in verses 24-26? Does this mean that it is wrong for a Christian to be rich, well fed, happy and popular?

Read Luke 6:27-36

I guess that usually we don't think in terms of having real enemies – that seems a bit extreme. But we all have those who we find it hard to get on with, those who we suspect of talking about us behind our backs, those who maybe deliberately seem to misunderstand us.

How might what Jesus says here about how we should treat enemies relate to how we should respond to those who we feel like this about?

Every now and again people turn up at the Rectory looking for me to give them money. Do you think that we are meant to take verse 30 literally (*Give to everyone who asks you*)?

Read Luke 7:18-35

John the Baptist was one of the greatest characters in the Bible – Jesus says here that *I tell you, among those born of women there is no-one greater than John*. It was John who was the forerunner of Jesus; it was John who baptised Jesus.

And yet here, John seems uncertain about Jesus – *Are you the one who was to come, or should we expect someone else?*

What things does Jesus point to in order to show John who he is? Why are these things important?

Blessed is the man who does not fall away on account of me.
(v.23)

Why might Jesus have led to people falling away?

Today, in what ways does Jesus sometimes fail to meet people's hopes? How can we help one another not to be disappointed and fall away?

Read Luke 7:36-50

The woman in this story showed her love for Jesus in a very lavish way. How does Jesus' parable show that actually the woman did all this because she appreciated what Jesus had already done for her?

How can we learn to appreciate what Jesus has done for us?

Why do we sometimes find it difficult to forgive one another?

WORK

1. As usual in this series we will be picking up some of the issues we have looked at in this study in one of our sermons. On Sundays 7th & 14th Feb, we will be looking at Luke 7:18-35 & Luke 7:36-50 – so if there is anything in these passages which you would like to have picked up, please let the Parish Office know.
2. There is a sense in which the values of the Kingdom of God turn normal human values upside-down. We live in a world which has radically different values from those Jesus talked about.

Can you think of one specific thing you could do which would show the values of the kingdom within our community?

Pray that people will see the kingdom lived out at Christ Church, and through that be drawn to Jesus themselves.

4. YOU ARE THE CHRIST

WELCOME

If you could meet one person, from the present or from history, who would it be?

WORSHIP

'But what about you?' Jesus asked. 'Who do you say I am?'

An important part of worship is recognising who Jesus is, so that we can give him the honour and praise he deserves. Praise him for what the Bible tells us about who he is and why he came.

WORD

Read Luke 9:10-17

The importance of this miracle is seen from the fact that it is the only miracle (except Jesus' resurrection) to be found in all four gospels.

What does it teach us about Jesus and his power?

What great Old Testament event does this miracle have similarities with? (see Exodus 16:1-12)

How does looking back to this Old Testament event help to explain Jesus' description of what he had come to do (see 5:32)?

Read Luke 9:18-27

Verses 18-20 are sometimes seen as the heart of Luke's gospel. Why might this be?

Now that Jesus has been recognised as the Christ, he goes on to teach his hearers what this implies.

In verse 22, what does Jesus say will happen to him? Why do you think the disciples were so surprised about this?

What do you think Jesus meant when he said that if we want to follow him, we must deny ourselves and take up our cross?

Read Luke 9:28-36

How does what happened on the mountain confirm what Peter had realised in v.20?

What do you think is significant about Jesus talking with Moses and Elijah?

What were they talking about? Why was Jesus' 'departure' so important?

Read Luke 9:57-62

What does Jesus say is involved in following him?

Jesus gives answers to 3 specific questions about following him.

How do these answers apply to us today?

Which of the three do you find the biggest challenge?

WORK

1. We will be looking at Luke 9:18-27 at our morning services on Sunday 14th Feb, and at Luke 9:28-36 on 21st Feb. As usual, if there is anything you want the speaker to pick up, please pass it to the Parish Office by Thursday 11th Feb.
2. There are many ideas about Jesus around in our society today. The book 'The Da Vinci Code' which portrays Jesus as just a man, has been one of the biggest selling books of the last decade, and the evidence is that many people who read the book believe that what it says about Jesus is true.

How can we be prepared to tell people the truth about Jesus?
Pray for opportunities to do this.

5. ETERNAL LIFE

WELCOME

What is your most treasured possession?

WORSHIP

Psalm 116 praises God for hearing and rescuing. We have even more reason to praise God for this; we know that in Jesus we have a new access to him in prayer, and that he has saved us from eternal death and given us new life. With these things in mind, use the psalm to praise God.

WORD

Read Luke 10:1-20

Jesus sends his disciples to prepare the way for him by preaching the good news of God's kingdom.

In verse 4, what shows how urgent the message is?

Why, according to verse 16, is rejecting the disciple's message serious?

In verse 17-20, what are the disciples rejoicing about?

What does Jesus say they should be rejoicing about instead?
What lessons does this have for you?

Read Luke 10:25-37

This is one of the best known passages in the Bible. But – what is the main question Jesus is answering in this passage?

What is the initial answer Jesus gives in verse 26-28?

What does the parable of the Good Samaritan say about the possibility of fulfilling these requirements?

So – how is eternal life to be obtained? Read **Luke 10:38-42**. How does this help to answer the question?

Read Luke 18:9-17

Why is the tax collector in the parable justified and the Pharisee not?

In verses 15-17, what must a person do to enter the kingdom of God?

From what we have seen so far in Luke, why is this the only way to inherit the kingdom?

Read Luke 18:18-30

What is the one key thing that the rich ruler must do to inherit eternal life?

Why must he do so?

Does the same apply to us?

WORK

I suspect that most of us know people who are resistant to the gospel because they can't see that they need salvation. As Paul writes in 2 Corinthians 4:4 *The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*

In a few weeks time we will be celebrating Easter. Although in our society Easter doesn't have such a high profile as Christmas, it still is an opportunity to talk about what Easter means, and why as Christians it is such an important celebration for us. Pray for those you would like to share this good news with over the next few weeks. Maybe you could invite them to our Easter services.

6. THE LAST DAYS

WELCOME

What country produces the best food?

WORSHIP

Colossians 1:15-20 is one of the Bible's great descriptions of Jesus. Use it to encourage you to praise him for his greatness, his power, and his grace.

WORD

Read Luke 19:1-10

Why did the crowd 'mutter' when Jesus invited himself to Zachaeus' house (v.7)?

Why do you think Jesus chose Zachaeus? After all, there was a large crowd of other people there.

How does Zachaeus' response to Jesus show us what repentance really means?

What is the condition that anyone has to fulfil if they are to be saved (v.10)?

Read Luke 19:28-48

At last the king rides into his city – Jesus rides into Jerusalem on a donkey. It is a scene full of excitement and joy – but then we find Jesus weeping.

Why did Jesus weep as he looked at Jerusalem (v.41)?

The crowds were cheering Jesus as their king, so why did Jesus say that they had failed to recognise the time of God's coming to them (v.44)?

Are there ways in which our assumptions about God might blind us to the truth?

Why was it necessary for Jesus to drive out the traders from the temple?

Read Luke 21:1-4

Jesus journey to the cross is almost over. From here on he will speak to his disciples about the future – preparing them for his death but also for his return in glory. And then Luke moves on to the Last Supper. So this little incident of the people putting their offerings into the treasury is the last time Luke records Jesus talking to the crowd.

What is the contrast which Jesus draws between the rich people and the widow?

What does it say to us about the response we make to Jesus?

Read Luke 22:7-30

How would the bread and the wine help the disciples to understand Jesus' death?

How can they help us today to remember Jesus?

How does the argument about which disciple is most important (v.24) show that they still hadn't understood what Jesus was about to do on the cross?

WORK

1. We will be looking at Luke 19 at our next 3 Sunday evening services (March 14th, 21st, 28th). So there is again a chance for you to give the preacher some input – please pass any questions on to the Parish Office by Thursday lunchtime (11th March)

2. The Communion Service, where we remember the death of Jesus for us, should be a time when we examine ourselves and our relationships, so that we can come as one body to the Lord's Table. In the Book of Common Prayer the invitation to communion contains the words: *Ye that are in love and charity with your neighbours draw near with faith.*

So – before the next communion service you attend, is there anyone with whom you need to be reconciled?

7. THE CROSS

WELCOME

What is your favourite season of the year, and why?

WORSHIP

Graham Kendrick's song 'From heaven you came' helps us to see what it meant for Jesus to serve us – by coming to earth and dying for us. Use the words of the song together.

WORD

The cross casts its shadow over the whole of Luke's gospel – right from the words which Simeon spoke to Mary when Jesus was just a few weeks old – *This child is destined to cause the falling and rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be spoken against, so that the thoughts of many hearts will be revealed. And a sword will pierce your own soul too.* (Luke 2:34-35)

Read Luke 9:18-22

Why do you think that immediately after Peter had realised who Jesus is, Jesus talks about his coming death?

Read Luke 22:47-62

How is Judas' betrayal of Jesus different from Peter's?

In what circumstances are you most tempted to be ashamed of Jesus, or to deny him?

Read Luke 22:63-23:25

Four groups or individuals are involved in Jesus' death – the soldiers, the Jewish leaders, Pilate, and Herod. How would you describe each one's attitude to Jesus?

- Soldiers
- Jewish leaders
- Pilate
- Herod

In what way do their attitudes parallel those of men and women today?

We know virtually nothing about Barabbas, except the brief comments in the gospels. But – in what way does Barabbas stand for every believer?

Read Luke 23:26-43

Why do you think that Jesus told the women who were weeping (verse 27) that they should actually weep for themselves?

How is the response of the forgiven criminal (verse 42), an illustration of what we have discovered earlier in Luke about the way to inherit eternal life?

Read Luke 23:44-56

What three things does Luke tell us about in verses 44-46?

What is the significance of each of them?

WORK

As well as being the greatest demonstration of love ever seen, the Cross also marks the greatest division in the world. Throughout Luke's gospel we have seen Luke stress the importance of recognising who Jesus is, and of responding rightly to him. It is brought out most graphically in Luke 13, where Jesus says *unless you repent, you too will perish*.

It is a serious warning. Praise God that those of us who are doing this study have heeded that warning and turned in repentance and faith to the Lord Jesus. But we will all know people – family, friends, neighbours, who have never made that response. Maybe they have heard about Jesus, but have rejected him, or maybe they never even heard that they need to respond to him.

Our theme verse for this year reminds us that *The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few*. So do what Jesus goes on to say – *ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field*.

8. IN ALL THE SCRIPTURES

WELCOME

What, if anything, would you most like to change about yourself?

WORSHIP

When I survey the wondrous cross As we approach Good Friday and Easter, focus on what the death of Jesus means for you, and then thank him for what he has done.

WORD

Our journey through Luke has taken us from Jesus' birth in Bethlehem to his death in Jerusalem. That, of course, is not the end of the story – we look forward to our celebration of Easter Day.

On that first Easter Day Luke records Jesus meeting with 2 of his disciples, and opening their minds to understand that all of the Scriptures point to him: *He said to them "How foolish you are, and how slow to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Did not the Christ have to suffer these things and then enter his glory?" And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.* (Luke 24:25-27)

So in this last study, we look at some of those passages in the Old Testament which help us to understand the death of Jesus.

Read Exodus 12:1-14

What did the lambs for Passover have to be like (v.5)?

Why was this important?

How does this relate to Jesus?

Why was the death of the lamb necessary? How does this help us to understand the death of Jesus?

Read Numbers 21:4-9

Why did God send the snakes among his people?

What did they have to do to be saved?

How did Jesus apply this to himself in John 3:14-15

Read Isaiah 53:1-12

This great chapter is one of the deepest pictures of the cross in the Bible.

What does it tell us about ourselves?

What does it tell us about who Jesus is?

What does it tell us about what Jesus did for us on the cross?

WORK

Our series on Luke is finished. But Luke goes on to record the resurrection of Jesus, and then, in his second volume (Acts), he tells us how the Good News of Jesus spread out from Jerusalem across the known world.

We are still part of that. We have a great responsibility to share the Good News that Luke wrote about with others. What have you learned from this series that might help you to do that?

CHRIST CHURCH, MORETON

We want to be a **W**elcoming Church

Because Jesus welcomed all who came to him

an **E**vangelising Church

*Because we believe that everyone has the right to hear
the Good News of Jesus*

a **L**oving Church

*Because Jesus commanded his followers to love one
another*

a **L**earning Church

*Because we are in the business of making disciples, and
disciples must always be learners*