



STORIES OF LIFE!

The Gospel of Luke

That You May Know!

Luke 1:1-25

Message #1 of 50 – S773

Sermon given on January 7, 2018



Sunday Morning Service

Pastor Rick Lancaster

That You May Know!

Luke 1:1-25

Opening Comments

- Turn to **Luke**
- Here we are on the first Sunday of 2018
- We begin a study through the Gospel of Luke – **The Stories of Life**
- Luke is the longest of the four gospels, and may take us most of 2018 to get all the way through it
- This gospel is unique in a number of ways
- First, Luke, it's human writer was the only Gentile, non-Jew to write in the New Testament
- He wrote two books, the gospel bearing his name and the book of Acts – between the two – more than a quarter of the new Testament
- He was a doctor by trade, and because of his writing of the gospel and Acts he is regarded as the church's first historian
- Let's get into the text, and then I will share a few more things with you about Luke and this gospel
- **Pray**

Teaching

- **That You May Know!**
- Luke opens his gospel telling us why he wrote and to whom he wrote it
- **Luke 1:1-3**
- Luke's objective was to write an orderly narrative of the things 'fulfilled among us'
- Luke is going to tell us a story
- The primary subject of this story is the life and ministry of Jesus Christ
- Storytelling is one of the most impactful ways that humans communicate
- We typically respond to and retain information through the telling of stories, better than we do through other medium

- Everyone is different, of course – I like short stories – Kelly likes long narratives, detailing every sound, smell, feeling, and sight
- Stories can be very powerful
- Just before Christmas, I met with Andy Deane, the Director of the Bible College
- I have known him for a number of years, but not very well
- I asked him to tell his story – started off fairly plainly, until he got to the pivotal moment of his life – sitting in a coffee shop just blocks away from Ground Zero on September 11, 2001
- I was mesmerized as I listened for thirty minutes about how God used him to help people, and about how God used that terrible event to open Andy’s heart up to the God he had been running away from
- Stories are powerful ways of communicating
- We all have stories, maybe not all as radical as Andy’s, but your story can be used just as powerfully to communicate something about God to others
- Luke is going to tell us a story, and not just any story, but the Stories of Life, the story of Jesus
- Luke was not an eyewitness of these things he writes about, he says so in verse two
- He got his information from eyewitnesses and ministers of the word
- Luke was a companion of the Apostle Paul starting in Acts 16 and appears to have been with him up to the end of Paul’s life **2 Timothy 4:9-11**

Be diligent to come to me quickly; for Demas has forsaken me, having loved this present world, and has departed for Thessalonica—Crescens for Galatia, Titus for Dalmatia. Only Luke is with me. Get Mark and bring him with you, for he is useful to me for ministry.

- During his travels with Paul he would have met many of the eyewitnesses of Christ, including Mark, the writer of the gospel of Mark
- There is a lot of similarity between this gospel and Matthew and Mark, but there is about 30% that is unique to Luke, including the first two chapters
- We wouldn’t have the Christmas story if it wasn’t for Luke

- Verse 3 tells us that Luke wrote the gospel for Theophilus = lover of God
- He is only mentioned here and in Acts 1:1 – He is a Greek, he had been taught about God and the life and ministry of Christ
- The phrase ‘most excellent’ suggests that he was someone of importance
- And then, verse 4 tells us what Luke was hoping would be the result from his narrative
- **Luke 1:4**
- It was Luke’s desire that through this gospel, that Theophilus would have no doubts about the things he had been taught
- Theophilus had questions, and so Luke wrote this so that he would be convinced of the truth of what he had learned
- Nowhere does the bible tell us to live by blind faith **John 17:17**
Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.
- God’s word can stand up to any investigation, examination, interrogation, and honest questioning
- The world would have us to believe that truth is some vaporous, feelings-based, abstract thing
- And then we wonder why people seem to be wandering through this world as if what they do doesn’t matter
- Listen – **if there is no truth, then nothing matters! If there is truth, then everything matters!**
- We study the Bible because it is truth, and because this life matters to God – personally, I want my life to matter
- That is Luke’s introduction – he then jumps right into his first story
- Jesus’ story doesn’t begin with Jesus, but with the man who would someday introduce Him to the world
- First, we are introduced to his parents
- **Luke 1:5**
- There were approximately 8,000 priests in Israel at this time
- Divided into 24 divisions – served two weeks per year at temple in Jerusalem
- **Luke 1:6-7**

- ‘blameless’ does not mean perfect – lived according to God’s standards, including doing what they needed to do if they made mistakes
- Even though they were both blameless, Elizabeth was barren – incapable of having children – and they were both old
- Often viewed as a curse from God
- **Luke 1:8-10**
- This is a once-in-a-lifetime privilege for Zacharias
- Out of hundreds of priests in his division, only one was picked per day to do this
- Many went whole lifetime without getting to do this
- He is alone in the temple, burning incense and praying
- And then suddenly, he is not alone
- **Luke 1:11-14**
- Gabriel’s appearance is not described to us, but this supernatural being gets Zacharias’ attention
- Gabriel says, ‘your prayer is heard’
- What was Zacharias praying about?
- He was in the temple to pray for the people of Israel, the whole nation
- But it appears that he is praying about his own circumstances also
- Elizabeth is probably miserable – all her family, friends, and neighbors are having babies and grandbabies – she is barren
- Every new baby reminded her of what she didn’t have
- Everyone would look at her and wonder what was wrong with her
- And if Elizabeth was miserable, guessing Zacharias was struggling too
- Gabriel says, God heard your prayer – going to have a son
- His name is to be John = ‘God has been gracious’
- Not going to be like other children
- **Luke 1:15-16**
- God was going to do something new with this child
- From the womb John would be filled with the Holy Spirit
- He would have a special relationship with God, the Holy Spirit
- Though, interestingly, he did not do any miracles, or speak in tongues
- He did have a powerful gift to preach a message of conviction
- ‘to turn many...to the Lord...’

- Most Jews were birthright Jews – born into the nation of Israel, but no faith in God – true today
- Also, true of a lot of ‘Christians’ – birthright Christianity will not get you to heaven – only a true faith in Christ can do that **Romans 10:9** ...if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.
- The next verse ought to be the slogan for Men’s Ministry
- **Luke 1:17**
- I was born into the generation that witnessed the beginning of what would become a worldwide epidemic – absentee fathers
- When a man walks in the power of the Holy Spirit, it changes the way he looks at his family
- Ladies, want to see a change in your husband, sons, father, any man – pray this verse over him until something happens
- John’s ministry was to ‘go before Him’ – to go before Christ – ‘to make ready a people prepared for the Lord’
- We’ll see how he did that starting in chapter 3
- Zacharias doesn’t respond well to this supernatural visitor and announcement
- **Luke 1:18**
- NLT ‘How can I be sure this will happen?’
- Zacharias doubted! His own Scriptures had examples of miraculous conceptions to old couples – Isaac, Sampson, and Samuel
- His unbelief costs him
- **Luke 1:19-20**
- Gabriel gave Zacharias nine months to reflect upon his lack of faith
- A lack of faith will always cost you something
- For Zacharias, it cost him the opportunity to share this amazing story with others
- **Luke 1:21-22**
- They could tell something had happened, but Zacharias couldn’t tell them what it was
- **Luke 1:23-25**
- God kept the promise that He made through the angel Gabriel to Zacharias – Elizabeth gets pregnant in her old age with John, who will come to be known as ‘The baptist’

- Zacharias had a story to tell, but no way to tell it
- There is some indication that not only was he mute, but also deaf
- Couldn't hear the joy of his wife and neighbors over this miracle
- He had a story – but because of his unbelief, he couldn't tell it
- We all have stories – maybe not as dramatic as Andy Deane's or as supernatural as Zacharias
- But it is a story about your encounter with the living God
- Share story of God getting us out of debt
- God did that – oh, we did our part, but God did the hard stuff
- That's just one of our stories
- What's your story? What's keeping you from telling it?
- Listen, no matter how small or huge your story is, it is a powerful tool in the hands of God
- Next time we will pick up Luke's story with the account of the announcement of the miraculous conception of Mary
- In the meantime, tell someone your story this week
- Tell us your story – send it in, we'll share it with the church – we all love a good God-story
- Let's pray!