

CHRISTMAS READING OF THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

*Our Savior Lutheran Church
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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this Bible study is to lead you into the Bible itself. Many of us feel we are incapable of understanding God's Word and consequently we avoid Bible study entirely. God's Word has depth of meaning that we can study for a lifetime without fully comprehending. However, whether we are wading into the water's edge or diving deeply into the ocean, our time spent in the Word always brings blessings and discovery. May the Holy Spirit be your guide as you study God's Word and learn of His plan for you.

- Your assignment is to be in the Word on a daily basis. It is more beneficial to read one chapter every day than to cram several chapters into one day to "catch up." Even if you are currently reading your Bible on another schedule, please read one chapter of Luke each day (and read the reflection if time permits.).
- As you do your reading, ask yourself three questions. These questions will help you apply God's Word to your life.

1. What does it say?
2. What did it mean?
3. What does it mean to me today?

First, read carefully what the words say. There are many people today who make assumptions about what is in the Bible. Let this study help you know what the Word actually says.

Second, think about the impact of the words you are reading on those who first heard them. As you read of Jesus teaching in parables, think about the impact on those who heard His teaching – the religious hierarchy, the lonely, the faithful.

Third, think about how your reading can make a difference to you in your life today. When the Word of God speaks to the hopeless or the arrogant, hear His voice speaking those words to you.

- Pray. Before you begin your study say a prayer that the Holy Spirit will make these words reach your heart. Also, make sure that your devotion time includes prayer time. The Almighty God who made you and saved you wants to spend time with you in prayer. Here is a short example: “Lord, please speak to me through Your Word today. Help me grow in my faith so that I become the person you want me to be.”

THE BOOK OF LUKE

December 1 – Read Luke Chapter 1

What about you?

“Both of them were righteous
in the sight of God...” Luke 1:6

It was a time in history when humans had—once again—taken God’s plan and molded it into their own religious system of rules and laws. The religious leaders had become more concerned with politics (to keep their jobs) and power (to enjoy their jobs) than with the will of God.

Yet in the midst of this we hear of Zechariah and Elizabeth who are both “righteous in the sight of God.” Elizabeth herself would have been looked down upon in a society which felt that being childless was a sign of God’s disfavor. However, she did not become bitter, but instead remained steady in her faith.

In a society where many failed to follow the Lord, Zechariah and Elizabeth still managed to live out their faith. What about you? Can you do the same?

Pray: Lord, may my faith show in my life. May I listen to You alone and may I be a light to the lost...



December 2 – Read Luke Chapter 2

What about you?

“Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers.”

Luke 2:47

Jesus was 12 years old and was found sitting in the temple courts with the teachers. He was listening to them and asking questions. And “everyone who heard him was amazed.” The words of Jesus left people in awe then and they can leave us in awe today. We have the incredible words of Jesus in Scripture and we can “hear” Him today as we study that Holy Word.

What about you? Are you faithfully reading the precious words of your Savior? Are you allowing His words of hope and promise to work into your very being? Are you “amazed at his understanding and his answers?”

Pray: Jesus, may Your words become more precious to me each day. May I seek you diligently and daily. May Your understanding of me help me to see You as both my loving Savior and also the loving Lord of my life. May I stand in awe before You, Lord of the universe...



December 3 – Read Luke Chapter 3

What about you?

“He went into all the country around the Jordan, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.” Luke 3:3

John the Baptist spoke boldly and didn't play up to the religious hierarchy, the ruling Romans or Herod. He preached of repentance for the forgiveness of sins. And crowds flocked to him. At this time many in the religious system were simply telling people to follow commands and do good. John also spoke of good works, but in his preaching those good works are “fruit in keeping with repentance.” John first emphasized step number one: admitting our failures and sins, and truly being sorry for them.

What about you? Do you admit to God that you sin? Does your heart ache because of your failures? As you stand before God with humility and deep regret, allow His forgiveness to wash over you. And know that your sins are now “...as white as snow...” (Isaiah 1:18).

Pray: Convict me, Lord, that I may see clearly my offenses against You. Give me sadness and regret in my heart for my sins. And then, dear Savior, wash me clean by the power of Your sacrifice...



December 4 – Read Luke Chapter 4

What about you?

“Jesus answered, ‘It is written: Man shall not live on bread alone.’” Luke 4:4

Jesus had just been baptized. He was full of the Holy Spirit and was in the desert being tempted by Satan. These words were the response of Jesus to the first of the temptations recorded here. Jesus quoted from the book of Deuteronomy. The passage in Deuteronomy reads, “...man does not live on bread alone but on every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord,” (Deuteronomy 8:3). Satan tempted Jesus again and Jesus replied with another quote from Deuteronomy. On yet another temptation Satan had the audacity to quote a psalm! And Jesus used Deuteronomy to answer Satan a third time.

We should indeed thoroughly study, memorize and meditate upon the Word. It will see us through temptations and sorrows. It will be a source of joy and peace. Jesus used Scripture in every part of His life and ministry. What about you?

Pray: Lord, give me the discipline necessary to spend time in Your Word and to truly learn and meditate upon it...



December 5 – Read Luke Chapter 5

What about you?

“But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.” Luke 5:16

Luke emphasized the prayer life of Jesus throughout his Gospel. Here we have a reference to one of the times Jesus withdrew for prayer. This wasn't the corporate prayers of a congregation. This wasn't the prayers before meals or at bedtime. These were those precious times of “closet” prayer. They were times when Jesus talked to His Father and shared every one of His earthly concerns. How difficult it must have been for Jesus to be away from the throne of His Father. But while on earth He maintained a close relationship through prayer and it enabled Him to do the Father's will.

What about you? Are you experiencing fellowship with the Father (and Son and Spirit) through regular quiet time and prayer?

Pray: Father, help me to come to You regularly in prayer—long times of private closet prayer, and continual prayer as I go about my day. May I cherish that time with You...



December 6 – Read Luke Chapter 6

What about you?

“For the mouth speaks what
the heart is full of.” Luke 6:45

Jesus talked of good trees with good fruit and bad trees with bad fruit. Just like a tree and its fruit, so a person speaks what his heart is full of (good or evil). Scary thought, isn't it? When our words are less than good, when what we say is destructive to our spiritual witness rather than productive, when we complain and whine—these things should warn us to look into our hearts and to store there only what is good and God-pleasing.

What about your heart? How healthy is it, spiritually? What are you doing about storing good things?

Pray: Lord, fill my heart with what is good and pure. Heal me of any desire to gossip or to hurt. May I speak only words straight from Your wisdom and mercy and love. May every word of my mouth be fruitful to all who hear. Lord, fill my heart with Your love and truth...



December 7 – Read Luke Chapter 7

What about you?

“God has come to help his people.”
Luke 7:16

Jesus raised the widow’s only son from death. The witnesses were amazed and said, “God has come to help his people.” Have you thought about the enormity of this true statement? The God of the universe came to help us, His people. Humankind has repeatedly messed up this world and everything in it. We wallow in our sin and we are powerless to escape the wages of sin. So God Himself came to help.

Do you appreciate His sacrifice—how He Himself paid the wages of your sin? We should thank Him continually for coming to help His people.

Pray: Dear God, what can I say but, “Thank You...”



December 8 – Read Luke Chapter 8

What about you?

“Return home and tell
how much God has done for you.”
Luke 8:39

In a matter of minutes the man’s life was reclaimed—from demon possessed to sitting at the feet of Jesus. He begged to travel with Jesus, but was told to “return home and tell how much God has done for you.” Sometimes our plans do not match the plans that God has for us. Yet, our desire should be to serve God wherever we are. The rest of the verse says that the man went away and told all over town how much Jesus had done for him.

What about you? When is the last time you told someone how much God has done for you? Are you looking for opportunities to share how much God has done for all?

Pray: Jesus, let me see the opportunities You place before me. Give me confidence as I speak of Your love for me and for all...



December 9 – Read Luke Chapter 9

What about you?

“Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem.”

Luke 9:51

The original Greek text literally reads, “set His face to go to Jerusalem.” Throughout His ministry Jesus never lost sight of the ultimate purpose of His coming, and He remained resolute in His determination to walk the path necessary to save mankind.

Can you picture your loving Lord determined to fulfill God’s plan for your salvation?

Pray: Lord, help me to understand and to appreciate more fully the path You walked and the price You paid because of my sins...



December 10 – Read Luke Chapter 10

What about you?

“...you are worried and upset about many things, but few things are needed – or indeed only one.” Luke 10:41-42

Jesus spoke these words to Martha as she fretted over her duties as hostess. Meanwhile her sister Mary “sat at the Lord’s feet listening to what He said.”

So often we spend our time worried and upset about many things. But Jesus tells us that only one thing is needed.

What about you? Do you have that one thing that is needed? Is Jesus your personal Savior?

Pray: Dear Jesus, help me to understand proper priorities in my life. Help me do what is necessary to sit at Your feet and hear what You say to me. Help me to make my relationship with You the most important thing in my life...



December 11 – Read Luke Chapter 11

What about you?

“Lord, teach us to pray...”
Luke 11:1

The disciples had already spent many months with Jesus and yet they still needed to be taught to pray. So often this idea of communicating with God seems overwhelming. Because we don't want to make a mistake in our prayer time, we don't pray at all.

But we need to talk to God as we would to our best friend. He is smart enough to understand what we mean even when we say it poorly. He is patient enough to listen to us vent our innermost thoughts and feelings. He is loving enough to sift through all that we say and answer us with His gracious kindness.

What about you? Is your prayer practice active and vibrant? Do you talk with God regularly? Have you experienced the warmth of His presence as you speak to Him?

Pray: Lord, teach me to pray...



December 12 – Read Luke Chapter 12

What about you?

“Who of you by worrying can
add a single hour to your life?”

Luke 12:25

Worry. We say it's natural to be concerned about things. But when we focus too much concern—when we can't seem to let go—when we refuse to think of other things—that concern has become sinful. We should indeed be responsible individuals who consider our actions and consequences. But when we can't let go, that concern is worry and it affects our lives. It keeps us from looking forward and it eats away at our trust in God.

What are you worried about? Can you place it into the loving hands of the Lord of all? “Don't worry about anything: instead pray about everything...” (Philippians 4:6, New Living Translation).

Pray: Father, how easy it is to take upon myself the cares of the world. Help me to place my worries into Your hands and to feel Your peace replace my worry...



December 13 – Read Luke Chapter 13

What about you?

“...how often I have longed to gather your children together...and you were not willing!”

Luke 13:34

God is gentle in His dealings with us. He has not created puppets who automatically jump at His command. And the choices of humankind have landed us in all kinds of trouble. Indeed, it would serve us well to understand that His plan for our lives will bring us happiness and peace beyond anything we can imagine. His commandments are not a bunch of hoops we have to jump through to try to please God. Those commandments are an owner’s manual for the life God has given to us.

Jesus spoke of those in Jerusalem who “kill the prophets and stone those sent to you.” They were not willing to allow God to love, protect and guide them. What about you? Is Jesus your Savior and the Lord of your life?

Pray: Oh Lord, how I fight against Your will for me. Let me see clearly the path You would have me walk. And help me to walk that path without resentment or rebellion...



December 14 – Read Luke Chapter 14

What about you?

“Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear.”

Luke 14:35

Jesus was telling parable after parable. But who was listening? His followers were listening, even though they often didn't understand. But what about other individuals? Some of Jesus' teachings have warnings, but we read that instead of heeding those warnings the enemies of Jesus plotted to kill Him.

Are you listening? Do you read the words of Jesus and hear Him speak directly to you?

Pray: Jesus, how often I simply read Your words without hearing them in my heart. Help me to hear You clearly...



December 15 – Read Luke Chapter 15

What about you?

“...everything I have is yours.”
Luke 15:31

Wow! Have you ever wondered what God has in store for you? Like the father in the parable of the lost son, God says to you, “...everything I have is yours.”

What God has for you is the loving acceptance of a father waiting for the lost to repent. And when you do, He responds, “...everything I have is yours.”

What about you? Are you still lost? Or have you experienced the warm embrace of a father welcoming you home?

Pray: Father, surround me with Your love. Help me to see that You rejoice when the lost are found...



December 16 – Read Luke Chapter 16

What about you?

“If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.” Luke 16:31

The rich man was in torment and he asked that someone be sent to warn his family to repent. The response of Jesus was that those who do not listen to the Scriptures will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead. God’s plan to redeem us is in the Old Testament as well as the New. All of Scripture testifies of God’s desire to save us.

Before His resurrection Jesus said there are those who are determined not to believe. They refuse to see the testimony of the Old Testament writings. Jesus said that those individuals will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead. And then Jesus did exactly that.

What about you? Do you know someone who doubts the need for God as their Savior? Pray for them right now.

Pray: Lord, let me be convinced of Your existence and Your redeeming love for me. Help me remember to pray for those who do not understand their need for You...



December 17 – Read Luke Chapter 17

What about you?

“Has no one returned to give praise
to God except this foreigner?”

Luke 17:18

*Ten lepers were healed. One returned,
praising God in a loud voice.*

*Praising God. It's basically just praying
about how wonderful He is and how great are
His deeds. But how often is our prayer time
spent asking God for things, rather than
praising Him?*

*What about you? When did you last
spend time meditating on the goodness of God?
Think of how blessed we are in having a God
who is loving, pure, righteous, all powerful, all
knowing, holy, noble, gentle, kind, eternal,
merciful, just, faithful...*

Pray: Lord God Almighty, I praise you for You
are mighty and just. You alone maintain
goodness. You alone are worthy of my praise.
Lord, You love me with an everlasting love and
You have saved me from evil and sin. Lord,
You are faithful and eternal. You will walk
with me forever...



December 18 – Read Luke Chapter 18

What about you?

“Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”
Luke 18:38

The blind man at Jericho got it right. The title, “Son of David,” was used for the promised Messiah. It held the hope of the nation of Israel that God would restore them to a time of national prominence and prosperity. The crowd tells the blind man that Jesus of Nazareth is passing by. And the blind man changes the title to “Jesus, Son of David.” The encounter ends with Jesus’ words, “Receive your sight; your faith has healed you.”

Who do you think Jesus is? Is He just a great man who spoke wonderful words and could do miracles? Or is He the promised Messiah who redeemed Israel and all the nations—and you?

Pray: Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!
Heal my soul and teach me to understand
Your plan for my life...



December 19 – Read Luke Chapter 19

What about you?

“...all the people hung on his words.”
Luke 19:48

Oh, the intrigue! The leaders were trying to kill Jesus, but they couldn't figure out a way to do it because all the people hung on His words. Can you picture the crowds in the temple area? They flock to Jesus to hear His words. And in doing so they effectively bar the way of those who seek to kill Him.

Do you fervently seek to hear the words of Jesus? Do you hang on His every word?

Pray: Jesus, make me yearn to hear Your words and make me ready to respond...



December 20 – Read Luke Chapter 20

What about you?

“Beware.... They devour widows’ houses and for a show make lengthy prayers. These men will be punished most severely.”

Luke 20:46-47

Jesus was speaking of religious leaders. However, it is a temptation for every Christian. We may begin with righteous intent, but it is easy for hypocrisy and pride to creep in. When we fail to protect the weak, when we go through the motions of religion for the show of it—those are signs of hypocrisy.

Watch for signs of pride and hypocrisy in your own spiritual walk. Remember that your faith is a personal relationship with the risen Lord who saved you, and it is important to be humble before our Almighty God.

Pray: Lord, cleanse me of anything that is not pleasing to You. Help me to love You with sincerity and purity...



December 21 – Read Luke Chapter 21

What about you?

“When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.”

Luke 21:28

Just like people throughout history, the disciples were curious about the end of the age and they asked Jesus about timing and signs.

Today we, too, are curious about end times. Some of us worry about what is to come. Some of us spend way too much effort trying to figure out the timeline. Some of us look at the predictions of judgment and destruction, and our hearts break for a world gone wrong.

The words of Jesus should help us put all these things into perspective. If we are concerned about the end of this age, then we should get busy with our Father’s business of saving this dying world. And we should be comforted in knowing that we look forward to a day when our redemption will draw near.

Pray: Lord, give me peace in the midst of uncertainty, and keep me focused on You...



December 22 – Read Luke Chapter 22

What about you?

“The Lord turned and
looked straight at Peter.”
Luke 22:61

While being tried before the high priest, at the time of the fulfillment of everything He came to accomplish—Jesus turned and looked straight at Peter. Earlier Jesus had said to Simon Peter, “Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift all of you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail...”

We sometimes forget that everything about Jesus is personal. He is the Savior of the world; He is the Savior of you. He loves the world; He loves you. He spoke to the crowds; He speaks to you. He died for the world; He died for you.

Pray: Dear Savior, help me to see Your love for me, Your faithfulness to me, Your sacrifice for me...



December 23 – Read Luke Chapter 23

What about you?

“Now there was a man named Joseph...
a good and upright man...” Luke 23:50

At the end of the first chapter of Luke we spoke of Zechariah and Elizabeth and their ability to live out their faith in the society of their time. Here we see Joseph of Arimathea, another “good and upright man.” He was a member of the religious hierarchy, yet he had not been part of the plot to kill Jesus. Joseph had the courage to go to Pilate and request the body of Jesus. Just like the disciples, Joseph had to be wondering how the redemption of Israel could be fulfilled with the Messiah dead.

Can you put yourself in Joseph’s place? Can you picture the gruesome reality of dealing with a crucified body—removing the nails, getting the body down from the cross, seeing the marks of torture, preparing the mutilated body for an honorable burial?

Joseph is an example of behaving courageously. How do your choices stack up to the courage and honor shown by Joseph?

Pray: Lord, may my actions show Your principles even in the difficult times...



December 24 – Read Luke Chapter 24

What about you?

“Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?” Luke 24:32

On the road to Emmaus Jesus walked alongside two of His followers and “explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.” Later they said to one another that their hearts were burning within them while He opened the Scriptures to them.

What about you? Do you regularly meet Jesus in the Bible? Do you ask Him to open the Scriptures to you? Do you walk alongside Him as you read and does your heart burn within you?

Pray: Dearest Lord, please open Your Word to me. Teach me Your ways and help me walk according to Your path...



December 25 – Read Revelation Chapter 5

What about you?

“Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!” Rev 5:12

Blessed Christmas! On this Christmas morning we celebrate God stepping into history with the birth of His only son. This Son of God had one purpose—to offer His own life as a payment for our sins. Today remember that this precious babe, the Lamb of God, had a monumental battle ahead of Him. That battle included living a sinless life and then dying a horrific death paying for OUR sin.

The beauty of today is that we know the outcome. Jesus was victorious against the enemy of this world and against death itself! And someday Jesus will return in glory to establish a new heaven and a new earth where you will live forever in the glorious presence of God who has loved you from before you were born, and who will love you forever.

Jesus, the Lamb of God, is worthy to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!

Pray: Lamb of God, I thank You for all You have done for me. I offer You my worship and praise!...



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