

(S) Welcome to **Discipleship training On The Air**. In this teaching series, you will have an opportunity to learn to know the Bible. As you listen to this programme, make notes in a notebook or record the programme. First, we will learn about the origin of each Bible book: who wrote it and when and where he wrote it. Second, we will learn about how the Bible book may be divided into parts. Third, we will learn the main contents and messages of each Bible book. Finally, we will learn how to understand some difficult parts of the Bible book.

Today's teaching is: THE INTRODUCTION OF LUKE - PART 3. Today we will learn the main messages of the Gospel of Luke.

POINT 9. THE MAIN MESSAGES OF THE GOSPEL OF LUKE

First. The Gospel of Luke teaches that Jesus is the sympathetic High Priest.

Although each of the Four Gospels picture Jesus Christ as the long-awaited Messiah, sent by the Father and anointed by the Holy Spirit to be the people's great Prophet, sympathetic High Priest and eternal King, each Gospel has its own emphasis. Matthew emphasises Jesus as the Prophet, Mark emphasises Jesus as the King and Luke emphasises Jesus as the High Priest, his tender love and far-reaching sympathy.

One. The sympathy of Jesus towards the less privileged, the weak and the rejected.

In Hebrews 4:15 we read, "We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathise with our weaknesses." The Gospel of Luke abound with stories, parables and teachings in which the mercy, kindness and love of Jesus Christ toward the less privileged, the weak, and the rejected come into expression. His love in action is revealed to the poor and the social outcasts, to children and women, to tax-collectors and sinners, to the sick and the handicapped, and to Samaritans and Gentiles.

Two. The sympathy of Jesus towards women.

It is noticeable how much is written about Jesus' tenderness and high regard towards women. Note the large place he gives in chapter 1 and 2 to Mary and Elizabeth, the mothers of Jesus and John the Baptist. In chapter 2, he records the dedication to prayer of Anna the prophetess. In chapter 7, Jesus raises the only son of the widow of Nain and he compares the great love of a woman whose many sins had been forgiven to the lack of love of a self-righteous Pharisee. In chapter 8, only Luke mentions the names of Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Susanna and the other women who were loyal followers of Jesus. Jesus regarded women and men, who put God's word into practice, with equal esteem (8:21). Jesus raised the daughter of Jairus from the dead. In chapter 13, he heals a woman who was crippled for 18 years. In chapter 15, he tells a parable of a woman who lost one of her ten coins and in chapter 18, a parable of a widow who persevered. In chapter 21, Jesus compared the gifts people give out of their wealth with the gift of a widow out of her poverty. In chapter 23, only Luke mentions that the women prepared spices and perfumes for the body of Jesus just after he died.

Three. The sympathy of Jesus towards people in distress, regardless of their race.

In chapter 10, Jesus tells the parable of the Good Samaritan to teach us that our real neighbour is anybody who is in distress; anybody whom God places on our way. In chapter 15, he tells the parable of the lost son to teach us that God the Father is merciful to everyone who repents of his sinful life and returns to him. In chapter 18, he tells the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector to teach us that God regards those who humble themselves before God as righteous.

Four. The sympathy of Jesus towards prominent leaders.

At least three times in the Gospel of Luke, in chapters 7, 11 and 14, we read that when Jesus was invited to eat with the Pharisees, he accepted. He did not avoid contact with anybody. He associated with despised sinners and he met with prominent leaders. Every relationship was an opportunity to have influence for the kingdom of God and to glorify God.

Second. The Gospel of Luke teaches that rejection of the sympathy and mercy of Jesus results in judgement.

Jesus is not portrayed as only a good man, but as someone who demands that people repent, believe in him and follow him! In Luke 5:32 Jesus says, "I have come to call ... sinners to repentance." In Luke 15, he says that there is joy in heaven over even one sinner who repents (10). In Luke 3, all the people who repent, will be forgiven and should bear fruit in keeping with repentance (3:3,8). However, all the people who do not repent and are thus not gathered into his barn will be burned up with unquenchable fire (3:17). If people refuse to repent and reject his sympathy and mercy, then judgement will certainly follow. For example, in Luke 10, Jesus condemns the cities of Galilee for failing to repent and warns that their judgement will be unbearable. He says, "He who rejects me rejects him who sent me" (13-16). In Luke 11:32 Jesus says, "The men of Nineveh will stand up in the judgement with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah and now one greater than Jonah is here." In Luke 12, Jesus warns that the servant

who does not do his will, will be cut to pieces and assigned to a place with the unbelievers (46). In Luke 13:2-3 he warns, "Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this way? I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish." Therefore Jesus says in Luke 13:24, "Make every effort to enter through the narrow door, because many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able to." Luke pictures Jesus Christ as the Sympathetic High Priest in order to encourage people to repent and turn to him! However, Luke records both God's mercy and God's sternness. If the kindness and mercy of God remains unanswered, then God's sternness and judgement will follow unfailingly. One of the purposes of God's sternness is to lead people to repentance. If people only preach the kindness of God and omit God's sternness, then they preach only half a gospel, which ultimately is no gospel at all, because it misleads people.

Third. The Gospel of Luke teaches that Jesus calls people to discipleship.

One. The calling to discipleship.

In Luke 6, after a night of prayer, Jesus chooses 12 people, whom he wants to be his disciples. A *disciple* means a follower of Jesus who learns from Jesus. In Luke 9:23 Jesus says, that anyone may choose to come after him. Jesus makes it clear that anyone may become his disciple. There is no barrier of age, sex, race or education.

Two. The requirements for discipleship.

In Luke 9:23 he says, "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me." Jesus makes it clear that there are requirements for becoming his disciple. In Luke 14, he states three such requirements: In Luke 14:26 Jesus says that a disciple must not allow any of his family members to hinder him from following Jesus. In Luke 14:27 he says that a disciple must be willing to suffer rejection and persecution for the sake of Jesus. And in Luke 14:33 he says that a disciple must not allow worldly possessions to hinder him from doing the will of Jesus.

Three. The training to discipleship.

In Luke 6:40 Jesus says, "A student is not above his teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher." The purpose of Jesus is to train his disciples to become more and more like himself. That is why he trains their character. For example, in Luke 6:42 he says, "First take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother's eye." He trains his disciples to hear the words of God and to put them into practice (6:47). He challenges them to try out the truths that he teaches them. For example, after teaching them in the parable of the Good Samaritan who their neighbour really is, he says, "Go and do likewise" (10:37). After warning them that they will be persecuted in the world, he says, "Whoever acknowledges me before men, the Son of Man will also acknowledge him before the angels of God. But he who disowns me before men will be disowned before the angels of God" (12:8-9). And he sends them out two by two to preach the kingdom of God (9:2; 10:1).

Four. The commitment to discipleship.

In Luke 9:62 he warns, "No one who puts his hand to the plough and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God." And in Luke 14:28 he challenges his disciples to first sit down and estimate the cost of discipleship, so that they would not be like a man who began to build a tower, but was not able to finish it. Jesus challenges his disciples to be finishers!

Fourth. The Gospel of Luke is a book of truth and doctrine, teaching us what to believe.

Apart from God's special revelation in the Bible, people are living in darkness. The ultimate question that faces all people in life and after death is written in Job 9:2, "How can a man be just before God?" People must know the truth about God, about themselves and about how to relate to God. What people everywhere in the world need is the truth, true doctrine! The Gospel of Luke is a book of doctrine. What are some doctrines people must believe?

One. The answer to the question, "Who is Jesus?"

The Gospel of Luke teaches that Jesus is born of the woman Mary, but also that Mary was a virgin and that her conception of Jesus was brought about by the work of God. Thus Luke teaches that Jesus is completely man and completely God (1:35).

Two. The answer to the question, "Who will save me?"

Luke 19:10 teaches that Jesus came to seek and to save people that are lost. Only Jesus can save them from the guilt and shame of sin, from the power of sin in this world, from the eternal judgement in hell and from the presence of sin and all evil when believers enter heaven. Only Jesus Christ can bring people into paradise.

Three. The answer to the question, "What must I do to be saved?"

Luke 8:12 teaches that a person must believe the words in the Bible in order to be saved.

Four. The answer to the question, “How much does God care for my life here on earth?”

In Luke 18:7-8, Jesus teaches that God will quickly answer the prayers of his people and help them in their need. In Luke 22:31 Jesus promises that he will pray for Peter so that his faith may not fail. Luke stresses that God is sovereign and will fulfil his plan of salvation for his own people! He teaches what Paul says in Philippians 1:6, “He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus”!

Fifth. The Gospel of Luke is a book of practical ethics, teaching us how to live.

Apart from God’s special revelation in the Bible, people live in spiritual and moral darkness. They would not be able to know how to live in order to please God. Although people tend to boast about their religious accomplishments, they cannot please the God of the Bible. For example:

One. The answer to the question, “How should Christians treat their enemies?”

In Luke 6:27-28 Jesus teaches, “Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.”

Two. The answer to the question, “How should Christians treat those who wrong them?”

In Luke 6:37 Jesus teaches, “Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.”

Three. The answer to the question, “How should Christians treat Christians from another Christian group?”

In Luke 9:50 Jesus teaches, “Do not stop him, for whoever is not against you is for you.”

Four. The answer to the question, “How should Christian leaders lead their people?”

In Luke 22:24-30, Jesus teaches that a real Christian leader does not lord it over those entrusted to him, but always serves his people.

Sixth. The Gospel of Luke is a book of comfort, teaching us why we should rejoice.

Christians live in a world full of despair. Most of the songs in the world are superficial and fail to satisfy. But the gospel brings joy! The angel said to the shepherds, “Do not be afraid. I bring you *good news of great joy* that will be for all the people. Today... the Saviour, Christ the Lord, has been born!” (2:10-11).

One. In the beginning of the Gospel of Luke

there are five songs: *The song of Elizabeth is about love*: Although she is much older than Mary, she genuinely rejoices in the joy of her much younger relative. This is an example of 1 Corinthians 13:4, “Love does not envy”. *The song of Mary is about faith*: She rejoices in God as her Saviour, the Mighty God, the Holy God, the Merciful God, the Helper in time of need, the God who fulfils his covenant to Abraham. Mary professes her faith in song. *The song of Zechariah is about hope*: He praises God for the hope which Jesus Christ is bringing. By his presence, his teaching, his forgiveness, his tender mercy and his deeds of power, Jesus Christ will take away the despair and hopelessness of people, so that they will be able to serve God without fear and in holiness and righteousness as long as they live. *The song of the angels is about adoration*: They glorify God for his indescribable gift of his only Son to save fallen man. And *the song of Simeon is about resignation*: He recognises God’s absolute sovereignty in his personal life and in the lives of Jews and Gentiles.

Two. In the middle of the Gospel of Luke

Jesus himself rejoices in the joy of his disciples about their salvation. He says to his disciples, “Rejoice that your names are written in heaven”. And he says to his Father in heaven, “I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the learned, and revealed them to little children” (10:20-21). And he says to the tax collectors and sinners gathered around him, “I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents” (15:10).

Three. In the end of the Gospel of Luke

there is a statement that the disciples had *great joy* and continually praised God (24:52-53).

Seventh. The Gospel of Luke is a book of prophecy, teaching us what to expect in the future.

One. Jesus himself proves that the Old Testament prophecies about the coming Messiah are being fulfilled in him.

Particularly, the prophecy of Isaiah 53. In Luke 22:37 he says, “It is written: ‘And he was numbered with the transgressors’; and I tell you that this must be fulfilled in me. Yes, what is written about me is reaching its fulfilment.”

Two. Jesus himself emphasises the need to study prophecy with a believing heart.

In Luke 24:25-27 he says, “How foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe all the prophets have spoken! Did not the Messiah, the Christ, have to suffer these things and enter his glory?” And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself. This is why the apostle Matthew could quote so many prophecies in his Gospel that had been fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

Three. Jesus reveals certain things about life after death, which otherwise would have remained unknown.

In Luke 12:47-48, he teaches that in the final judgement, people will be judged according to their knowledge of God’s will. He teaches, “The servant who knows his master’s will and ... does not do what his master wants will be beaten with many blows. But the one who does not know and does things deserving punishment will be beaten with few blows.” In Luke chapter 16, he teaches the reality of heaven and hell after death. He teaches that there will be comfort in heaven and torment in hell. He also teaches that it is impossible for the dead to make any contact with the people still living on earth.

ASSIGNMENT FOR NEXT WEEK

First. During the next week, read through Luke chapters 21-24.

Second. See the workbooks “Go and build Christ’s Church” and Internet on www.dota.net

Third. Listen every SATURDAY to WEDNESDAY on the radio to “Discipleship training on the air”.