

Hey Ladies! We are starting to get the portion of the study where there is so much material. Don't expect to be able to cover it all in your group. If necessary, you can pull out one or two passages read through them as a group and discuss them. The ladies are hopefully doing the homework on their own. Your time together is only meant to supplement what they are doing on their own. XOXO Alisa

Week 3 Unexplainable Jesus

Day 1

If you were like me, you wondered why Erica skipped over the temptation of Jesus. She covers it in Video Session 3- so be sure to let your ladies know that!

We then go into Luke 4:14-30. I found this passage hard to understand, so I sort of had to piece it together. This may help some of the ladies in your group:

- Jesus had a reputation with the people at this point, He performed a miracle in Cana and He was known as a teacher, but these accounts are not recorded in Luke, you have to go to John 2:1-12.
- When Jesus gets up and reads Isaiah 61, He is explicitly calling Himself the Jewish Messiah- it is a bold move.
- The people don't believe Him because they have watched Him grow up in Joseph's house and they want to see Jesus perform a miracle to substantiate His claim.
- Jesus brings up two stories: Elijah and the widow of Zarephath and Elisha and Naaman the Syrian leper- both stories are of prophets who were rejected by Israel, and are sent to help Gentiles, instead of the unbelieving Jews.
- These stories made the Jews mad and they wanted to kill Him, but Jesus was able to walk out of that situation.

In the second passage of this day, we see Jesus encounter a demon- the demon who knew exactly who Jesus was. He identified Jesus as "Jesus of Nazareth" as the "Holy One of God." Jesus demonstrates in these passages that He has power over demons and of sickness. He showed Himself to be full of compassion and to see the individual suffering of the people. The identity and authority of Jesus is clearly illustrated by Luke in these accounts following the rejection of Jesus by the people of His hometown, Nazareth.

Erica wraps up with some good questions regarding our identity. Who does God say we are? What does God say we should do? How do these directives contrast with what others say about you, or perhaps what you think of yourself?

Day 2

I like how Erica points out that the actions of Jesus in Luke 4:31-44 tie into what Isaiah said the Messiah would do (the passage Jesus quotes in the synagogue in Day 1).

Peter begins by calling Jesus “Master” (v 5) - perhaps Peter did not believe that he would catch any fish but he knew that he needed to be respectful of Jesus and obey His instructions. After the miracle, Peter calls Jesus “Lord” and is well aware of His holiness, crying “depart from me for I am a sinful man.” This type of humility and submission is a key indicator that true conversion has happened in someone’s heart. This is why Jesus begins the Sermon on the Mount with “Blessed are the poor in spirit for theirs is the kingdom of God.” Matthew 5:3

I love Erica’s insight on the healing of the leper- he may not have experienced physical touch in years, and how Jesus could relate to the loneliness that comes from rejection and isolation. Who did Jesus know that He belonged to?

After the account with the leper, we have another lesson on community- when we read the story of the paralytic being lowered to Jesus by his friends. Do not miss the exchange between Jesus and the Pharisees. It is a little bit of a logic puzzle- but if the Pharisee’s believed that sickness was a result of sin, and if Jesus just healed a paralytic, then logically, Jesus could heal sinfulness. That points to Jesus being God. It is these types of exchanges that tangle the Pharisees into knots and ultimately leads to them wanting Jesus destroyed.

Again- I like Erica’s questions of reflection: Do we remember that we were once spiritually helpless on a mat and needed to be carried to Jesus by someone else? Does this make us more inclined to help others who are spiritually helpless? How can we be stretcher bearers for others?

Keep tabs on how Jesus interacts with humanity...Jesus was openly challenging the religious leaders of the day. Jesus was compassionate and loving for sure, but He was also bold and assertive when He needed to be.

Day 3

This day is a long one! And personally, I think parts of it are hard to understand- so I want to encourage you to learn what you can and know that each time you go through a passage of Scripture you get more spiritual insight.

Erica writes out a good summary on page 74. By highlighting the three miracles that he does, Luke is pointing out that Jesus is Lord over nature (Peter’s fish), Jesus is Lord over sickness (healing of the paralytic) and Jesus is Lord over the Sabbath (eating and healing on the Sabbath).

The old/new fabric and old/new wineskins parables always mix me up and I have to revisit them every time I read them. I am not sure if I am picking up on everything that Jesus is saying but I think these are some key points He is trying to make to the Pharisees:

- Jesus is contrasting the old covenant (salvation through regular animal sacrifice) with the new covenant (salvation through surrender and loyalty to Christ- the perfect and eternal sacrifice).
- The New Covenant does not erase the Old Covenant but fulfills it. The old Covenant points to man's problem- separation from God and need for sacrifice. The New Covenant points to God's eternal solution to this problem- that man's heart cannot be corrected through their adherence to the Law, but by faith in Jesus' adherence to the Law. In a way, salvation is still by works- but is by the works of Jesus not man.
- Jesus is telling the Pharisees that they cannot resist the New Covenant- they need to cultivate new hearts and minds toward the new covenant. They cannot receive the new covenant (forgiveness for all- Jew and Gentile) into their old way of thinking (adherence to the law) any more than they can attach new fabric to patch old fabric, or put new wine in old wineskins.
- The Pharisees were resistant to this change.

Where are we resistant to change in our church or how the gospel is spread in our world? What are our long held beliefs as Christians? Are these long held beliefs theologically in line with the gospel- or just a result of our own need for comfort and dislike for change?

Day 4

Here is another big day with lots of information to work through- your group may not be able to discuss it all, so don't worry.

After much prayer before this big decision, Jesus picks His disciples. I love the point Erica makes at the bottom of page 82: Jesus gives these 12 men the authority to carry His message, but at the same time He expects absolute submission to Him at the same time. Pride is the downfall of many ministry leaders- be sure your leaders pair their authority with their submission to Christ. If you do not see that it should be a red flag. Ironically, the disciples were given an honorable task from God but at the same time, they gave up their right to an honorable life from a worldly sense.

Pride often equals control. Where are we allowing control to nudge out submission to God? Can we see evidence of the control and pride in the hearts of the Pharisees? How does Jesus speak to that?

Next, Jesus goes into Luke's account of the Sermon of the Mount (it is more expounded by Matthew in Matthew 5-7)

A lot of Erica's commentary is in line with Pastor Matt's sermons from 2/7/21 and 2/14/21. If we concern ourselves with loving others and fulfilling the great commission, we will not have time to be critical of others.

Day 5

In our look at Luke 7:1-17, we take a look at Jesus healing people and how faith does or does not play into it. I think Erica makes a good point- the widow really did not necessarily have faith in Jesus, but Jesus raised her dead son back to life out of His compassion. People do not become sick and or die as a result of our lack of faith. There may be ladies that need to process this based on what they have experienced or have had said to them in the past, so be ready for some heart felt comments.

This last passage of this day really highlights the humanity of John the Baptist. He had dedicated his life to preparing the way for the Lord, and yet he had endured terrible hardship in his physical life. John the Baptist was a faithful servant of God, but that does not mean he did not have moments of doubt when his life was hard. Jesus encouraged John to reflect on what Christ had done and was continuing to do in the world around him, even when John's own life was not going well.

Jesus' response to John the Baptist's disciples questions (Luke 7:24-30) is another passage that I always have to untangle in my head every time I come across it. Jesus is commending John the Baptist for his faithfulness to God's calling in his life. Jesus says no one greater than John the Baptist. However, Jesus says that the Gentiles (the least of these) who accept Christ under the New Covenant will be greater than John the Baptist. Why? Because the Gentiles under the New Covenant will experience the fulfillment of God's plan through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. This is an even greater blessing than what John the Baptist experienced, living under the Old Covenant.

Jesus goes on to say in Luke 7:31-34 that the religious elite were going to miss the message of Christ due to the state of their hearts. They are blind to it. The Pharisees expected Jesus to act a certain way ("we played the flute for you and you did not dance, we sang a dirge and you did not weep") and the Pharisees were shocked that Jesus interacted with the unrighteous ("Look at him; He is a glutton and a drunkard a friend of tax collectors and sinners). Because of this, they missed the message of Jesus. They were stiff necked toward Him. They would not turn their heads from their ways to His ways.

Are we acting like that? Are we missing out on what Jesus is doing in the people around us because He is acting in an unexpected way?