



CHRISTIAN CRUSADERS

7401 UNIVERSITY AVE., CEDAR FALLS, IOWA 50613

(319) 277-0924

INFO@CHRISTIANCRUSADERS.ORG

WWW.CHRISTIANCRUSADERS.ORG

Is God Inspiring You?

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Pastor Tim Boettger

TEXT: 2 Timothy 3:12-17 (NIV)

In fact, everyone who wants to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted, while evildoers and impostors will go from bad to worse, deceiving and being deceived. But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it, and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

Luke 1:1-4 (NIV)

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 eyewitnesses and servants of the word. With this in mind, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I too decided to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.

Well as we're in the first month of this new year, the question I'm asking today is: "Is God inspiring you to anything?" I have been personally looking at the Book of Luke this year, and at the very beginning you learn that Luke himself was a man deeply inspired by God. He began saying "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 were first eyewitnesses and carried along this message about Jesus." They were servants of the word. "With this in mind, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, I, too decided to write an orderly account." Why? What's motivating Luke to do this? And so many to draw up an account of these things that have been fulfilled among them. They had a sense that something supernatural had taken place. Something very real but amazing had happened in

their time. And many were writing about it, and they were handing down the stories of those who had seen it. And so, Luke decided to do this himself. Why? What's moving Luke? I think for sure one thing would be a natural born curiosity in all of us. Luke is attempting to write an orderly account of the things that had happened at their time. He wanted to write down what was real and what was true and what had really happened. And he was motivated to do this because he has a very curious human nature, desiring to know what's true and what's real. It's inside of all of us.

I don't know about you, but I'm always curious. I mean, I hear some news about something and I want to know if it's true. Some friends introduced my wife and I to a restaurant that we have enjoyed several times over the past couple of years. And this friend texted me late last year and said this restaurant, it was named Hickory Park, had just burnt down to the ground. I couldn't believe it. I was just shocked and I didn't know whether it was true or not. I mean, he texted it to me and I went looking, I went investigating to find out what was true. And I found out it was burnt down. And sometimes we hear things that happen in the world. They're hard to believe. We want to know what's true. So our natural curiosity gets us going after trying to figure out what's really happened. And I don't know about you, but this has happened to me in a very deep way in the last couple of years. We had this virus come out, and I don't know what's true about it. I've heard so many stories like who formed this virus. Was it leaked out of a lab? Was it naturally occurring? And then there's all kinds of stories about the treatments and the different things and preventative and different kinds of medicine and what's true? And what it is hard to uncover what's true and what's real in life.

And it was the same in Jesus' time. There were so many stories floating around about what had really happened. You know, even the gospel stories give hint to us of different narratives that were being told. Mary and three ladies went to the tomb, Matthew tells us, and they got to the tomb, the empty tomb, where Jesus had lived and he was crucified. And people saw this. He was put in the tomb. It was sealed. It was guarded by guards. And these three ladies got to the tomb, who knew Jesus well, and an angel of the Lord appeared to them and told them, "Why are you looking for Jesus among the dead? He's risen." And they were just bewildered and stunned. And John tells us that one of these ladies, Mary, told others that someone had taken the body. So right away you have two stories about what really happened there. One was there was a resurrection and another from one of Jesus' closest followers was saying the body had been taken. Well, there were two guards who were there when the stone was rolled away, and they shook and became like dead men. And they must have come to at some point. And they went and told their supervisors from their perspective what had happened, and

their supervisors told them to be quiet about that. And they paid him a bunch of money to pass on a story that the disciples had come and stolen the body of Jesus.

Now, how does a person discern what's true in that time? They have to investigate and go after. And if you want to know, it's going to take some time and some energy. And Luke was a motivated man here – he was somehow inspired to do this. He said, “Many have undertaken to draw up an account of these things.” These things were handed down to us. “But I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, and I too decided to write an orderly account.” Luke gave an enormous amount of time and energy to pursue what was true and real at his time. Why was he doing this? Something deeper is going on, the Bible reveals to us. And that is, it's not just Luke's natural curiosity driving him here, but the Holy Spirit of God is working in Luke to help him uncover the truth. You know, the Scripture is very clear about this. Psalm 51 tells us that God himself desires for you and I to have truth in our innermost being. The gospel writer John says that after Jesus left and Jesus told us he was going to do this, that his spirit would come to us, this spirit, (John 16:13) was given to us to guide us into all truth.

God wants you and I to know the truth. And Paul wrote to Timothy in our Scripture reading, and he very clearly said that God has worked through history to inspire individuals to write down his word. All the scripture that's given us in the Bible is inspired or breathed into the authors by God himself, so that when we open the Scriptures, we're opening the very words of God. And so, as Luke is there in history, this man who was a doctor and was curious and was a studier, was naturally investigating these things out of his own curiosity, was also being moved by the Holy Spirit to write this book for us. We know this because Luke's Gospel is one of the four gospel writings that were inspired by God Himself for us to have. So, the Holy Spirit is moving in Luke to do all of this work, to pen out this book so that you and I might know what was true as well.

But there's more to it here. The text continues, saying, “I decided to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus.” Luke is being motivated by his own internal curiosity and his human nature. He's being inspired by the Spirit of God to pursue these things and write them down. And in God's sovereignty in the context of this situation, Luke is also being moved to do this out of his love for this friend Theophilus. “Most excellent Theophilus.” Now, I don't know how the two of them became friends. Luke is a doctor in the community and we have a hint that Theophilus was a political leader because of the title, given him, “most excellent.” We do that in our day today. A number of years ago, my mother and father were

asked if they would one of them would consider running for the Iowa Senate here in Iowa, in the United States, and they said they would pray about it for an evening. And they went to bed and prayed. And when they woke up the next morning, my dad said he knew it was not to be him running for Senate, but he thought it might be Nancy. And so, he told my mom, he said, "Nancy, really fine if you run for the Senate, I think it might be better if you run. One stipulation," he said, "as long as I don't have to call you all the time 'The Most Honorable Nancy Boettger,' if you win." And that's a unique story in my family's life that shows, you know, the political title we give to people who hold political office: right now, it's "the honorable so-and-so." But back then it was the most excellent Theophilus. And I don't know what happened and why he was writing this for Theophilus, inspired by God and his natural curiosity to know what's true. But somehow, he knew Theophilus and he cared about Theophilus. And he wrote not just Luke, but Acts to Theophilus. And the two of them may have just become friends because of their work in their community. They might have been talking about what was true. And Luke was motivated to do this out of his love for Theophilus. It says he did it so that Theophilus would know the certainty of the things that he had been taught. You see, Luke was being motivated by the Spirit of God and also by the deep love of God and the love from God.

We know from the Scriptures that as a person comes to know the truth and become convinced of the truth, that very truth will set them free and invite them to live out a life that they couldn't live without knowing the truth. It'll set them free. It'll help them be born into the eternal family of God and help them receive the Holy Spirit themselves. You see, Jesus said, "You'll know the truth and the truth will set you free." And then Jesus also said, "I am the way in the truth and the life." Ultimately, the pursuit of truth leads us to the person of Jesus, you see, and Luke knew this, and he wasn't sure if Theophilus was convinced. And so, under the inspiration of God's spirit, he penned out these words for Theophilus so that Theophilus might come to know the certainty of the things that he had been taught, the things he was hearing about, so he might come alive in Christ, be born again, operating under the influence Himself of the Holy Spirit, and help become a part of the salt and light in the world.

Can you imagine Luke's work investigating, spending time, interviewing eyewitnesses, doing the writing, the careful writing of this account, and then bringing it before his friend Theophilus, somewhere in a political office somewhere and saying to him, "You know, you and I have been discussing what really happened in our time. I have taken pains to write these things down for you, Theophilus, so that you might know with certainty the things you've been taught." Luke is concerned about the faith and the conviction and the eternal salvation of

his friend Theophilus. Great inspiration moves Luke to work, to strive, to write, to serve God and serve his fellow man.

God is still in the business of inspiring people today. I don't know about you, but I've been asking the Lord at the beginning of this year and through this first month, "Lord, what all do you have for me? Would you move in me? Would you inspire me? Would your spirit work in me to bring me down the path that you have for me? Lord, I want to know your will. And I want to do it your way. And I want to be inspired by your spirit and be infused by your word to be your hands and feet in the world today." Are you being inspired by God? Are you being stirred by him in any way? Do you sense him moving in your heart? Friends, this is what God wants to do in the world. He's still wanting to breathe into us by his spirit. All who are lead of the spirit are the sons and daughters of God. His spirit guides us into the truth. The truth sets people free. He is true; his word is life. It's as if we are ambassadors of him. And he wants to make his appeal through us, to those around us, to a lost world. It's exactly what he was doing through Luke. He was working in Luke's heart and mind in the way he made him as a researcher and a writer to be a part of being a messenger and ambassador for him to his friend Theophilus.

Now Theophilus, his name literally means lover of God. And so, in a sense, this writing is written to anyone who wants to be a lover of God. And to be a lover of God, we must experience Him and know him. And the Scriptures are written to teach us about him. And when we study Jesus, the Scripture says, "We have seen him, the one and only. When we know what He's like, we know what God is like." Friends, Luke has done not only Theophilus a great service, but he's done you and I a great service by being obedient to the Spirit of God to pen out what the Spirit was leading Him to do in his time. And many people have come to a knowledge of Jesus and been born into eternal life through the reading of these Scriptures.

Is God inspiring you to be a part of His work in some way? Is he motivating you towards truth and reality and love of neighbor? In what ways is he stirring you to serve your friends? In what ways is he stirring you to reach out to those around you who maybe don't know God as well as you do? God is still in the business of stirring hearts and minds, motivating them, inspiring them in humility and service to the world to give our best for him.

January is just about done. We'll have 11 months left in this year. What have you done thus far in surrendering to God and being open to Him and inviting him into your life to infuse you with what he has for you? Could you be more open to God? Could you be seeking him more

fully? Are you listening to his spirit and abiding with him? This is what God wants for you and I. We have a great example in Luke, who gave so much time and energy and inspiration in his service of God in penning out this book and then the Book of Acts.

Let's pray together. Heavenly Father, thank you for this chance to open your word and be reminded of how you work. Thank you for inspiring your word for us so we can spend time in it and be set free by it and be led into and convinced about what really happened in history and convinced about what you've done through your son Jesus. Inspire each of us in a way that only you can by your spirit. We pray this in Jesus' name, Amen.