

A VISIT TO THE DOCTOR

Did you hear about the man who went to see his doctor with a sore throat? Of course, it doesn't matter the ailment, when a nurse walks you into a waiting room she always tells you to undress. Even though the man objected, the nurse persisted. He needed to disrobe down to his underwear. He reluctantly agreed.

That's when he looked over and saw another man in the room - also sitting in his underwear - holding a box in his hand. The disgruntled patient said, "Man, can you believe I have to take off my clothes for a sore throat?" The other guy shook his head, "Hey, stop your complaining- I only came to deliver a package."

For the next three Bible Scans we're going to the doctor - we'll visit Dr. Luke.

And he's going to ask us to strip away our prejudices, and false assumptions about Jesus. Luke was a Macedonian doctor and a friend of Paul. In Colossians 4:14, Paul refers to Luke as "the beloved physician". Many Bible scholars believe Luke traveled with Paul in order to treat the infectious eye disease he suffered.

Luke's Gospel portrays Jesus from a doctor's point-of-view. It's full of medical terminology and details of His humanity that only a doctor would notice. Luke agreed that Jesus is God,

but He also saw Jesus as *the man of all men*.

In addition to being a doctor, Luke was also a historian. During the two years Paul was in prison in Caesarea, Luke did research for his Gospel. He traveled to Galilee and Jerusalem, interviewing eyewitnesses and studying various reports.

In verses 3-4 Luke addresses his Gospel, "it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you an orderly account, most excellent Theophilus, that you may know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed."

Apparently, Theophilus was a new believer, and Luke wanted to write him an accurate and orderly account of Jesus' ministry.

Legend has it, Theophilus was an ugly man. When he was born, the doc said, "This is the awfulest looking baby I've ever seen." *The-awfulist...* the name stuck. (It's a joke!)

Notice, his title "most excellent", was used of Roman officials. Some scholars believe that the book of Luke and its sequel, the book of Acts, were written as part of Paul's legal defense before Caesar. The *longest Gospel* may have been a *legal brief*.

ZACHARIAS AND ELIZABETH

Luke 1 begins with the angel Gabriel's visit to a priest named *Zacharias*. Here's the good news... Zacharias and his wife Elizabeth, were both good and godly people. But here's the bad news... Elizabeth was barren, and time had run out. Verse 7 says, "they were both well advanced in years." A baby was impossible.

But not according to Gabe. He appears to Zacharias while he's serving his shift in the temple. He and Liz will have a son named John.

Verse 15 describes the boy: "he will be great in the sight of the Lord, and shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb." He'll also come in the spirit and power of Elijah. Tradition has it, when John the Baptist began his ministry he wore Elijah's coat.

Gabriel came to Zacharias with good news, but ol' Zack had his doubts. He answers Gabriel in verse 18, "How shall I know this? For I am an old man, and my wife is well advanced in years."

Notice, Zacharias calls himself "*an old man*" - he doesn't call his wife "*an old woman*" - rather he words it, in a more polite way, "*my wife is well advanced in years*". A good example to us.

Although Zacharias avoided insulting his

wife, he wasn't as successful with the angel. The angel says to him, "I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and was sent to speak to you..."

Because of his unbelief, God seals Zacharias' lips. Elizabeth Browning writes, "The one without faith should be silent." Sadly, we hear a lot of people today who *spout their doubts*. Guys, if you can't say a positive and encouraging word, then mute it. God pushes the mute button on ol' Zack.

And it's amazing how faith grows when you're forced to stop talking and start listening. The next words that fall from Zacharias lips will be words of praise.

When Elizabeth gives birth everyone expects them to name their son... *Zacharias, Jr.* But they remember the angels' instructions. Ol' Zack asks for a writing tablet. The moment he writes "His name is John" - the Lord loosens his tongue, and opens his mouth. Zacharias praises God.

In verses 67-79, Zacharias prophesies of the Messiah, and the role his son, John, will play in Messiah's ministry. John will go before him to prepare His way.

A SHOWDOWN IN THE SYNAGOGUE

It was a busy year for the angel Gabriel. According to Luke 1:27, six months after his appearance to Zacharias, he was dispatched by God to the town of Nazareth, "to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary."

He comes again with news of a miraculous birth. With the elderly Zacharias and Elizabeth, God birthed a child by using worn-out-man and worn-out-woman. This time He births a child through a young woman, but no man. A virgin birth! Mary will also have a Son, named Jesus, which means "*Jehovah is salvation*".

Her Son is also described in verses 32-33, "He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David. And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end." Jesus will be the Son of God and the Hebrew Messiah.

Remember, Mary was betrothed to Joseph. A betrothal was an intermediate stage. The couple was legally bound, but forbidden from having sexual relations. When Mary questions the angel, "How can this be, since I do not know a man?" The angel answers Mary with an *explanation* – an *illustration* – and an *exhortation*.

Verse 35 is Gabriel's *explanation*. "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Highest will overshadow you; therefore, also, that Holy One who is to be born will be called the Son of God." That's all we're told. Guys, try to figure it all out, and you'll blow a fuse. God's miracles aren't grasped by figuring, but by faith.

Then he brings up Elizabeth – another miracle birth – as an *illustration*.

And verse 37, Gabriel's *exhortation*, "For with God nothing will be impossible."

Devotion Box - The Dayspring

In Luke 1:78, Zacharias calls Jesus, "the Dayspring", or literally "*the sunrise*". The world is shrouded in darkness, but Jesus is the first glimmer of morning light. When Jesus was born a new day dawned for those who would trust in Him.

Devotion Box - Tandem Verses

Pastor Chuck says the two most important verses in the Bible are John 5:30, "I can of Myself do nothing", and Luke 1:37, "with God nothing will be impossible." Always keep those two verses in tandem. *I can do nothing, but God can do all things*. In and of myself I'm *vulnerable*, but in Christ Jesus I become *invincible*.

Devotion Box - Wedded To The Will Of God

Today, we gloss over the ramifications of an unmarried, teenage girl turning up pregnant in ancient Israel. Her predicament was life-threatening.

That makes her response so admirable. We're told in verse 38, "Then Mary said, "Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word." Here's a picture of total surrender!

Mary is wedded to God's will, and trusts Him with the outcome. *Is God free to interrupt your plans? Are your wishes His will?*

THE LOW ROAD

Notice the peculiar details of the birth of Jesus. Our Lord had peasants for parents. He was born in a stable. No doctors – no midwife – oversaw His birth. His first crib was a feed trough. The announcement of His birth came, not to royal dignitaries – but to despised, grungy shepherds. Hey, when shepherds came to town the sheriff was placed on high alert. Shepherds were shady characters.

Can you imagine a more ironic way to stage the most important event in the history of mankind? It was as if God was defying every human convention.

Hey, the King of Heaven came to earth – not in the midst of worldly glitter and glamour – Jesus came humbly... and He lived the same way that He came. Where do we, His servants, get off expecting special treatment, and creature comforts for serving Jesus, when our Lord Himself took such a low road?

GOD SOLVES A PROBLEM

In Luke 2:1 God solves a problem. 700 years earlier Micah, the Hebrew prophet, foretold that Messiah would be born in Bethlehem. Mary is about to deliver her Son, and she's 100 miles from the God-appointed maternity ward. A still small voice won't be enough to prompt Joseph to take his waddling wife on a three-day donkey ride. Nothing short of a royal edict will move this couple...

And that's exactly what God prescribes. The Caesar in Rome wants to inflate his ego, and demonstrate the vastness of his empire, so he orders a census – but he's merely a puppet on a string. The shots are being called in heaven, not Rome.

His order causes Joseph and Mary to head to Joseph's hometown, Bethlehem.

Devotion Box - Ponder And Praise

Luke 2:19 tells us Mary "pondered" the events surrounding Jesus' birth. Verse 20 says the shepherds went away "praising God". *Ponder and praise – think and thank – store and adore* – is always a great formula for our times alone with God.

HOW TO BE A GROWN-UP

Verse 39 tell us that Jesus grew up in Nazareth. I'm sure in Luke's research he tracked down Mary, and spoke personally with her about Jesus' childhood and early adulthood. I can picture Mary pulling out her baby book and telling Luke story after story.

But for some reason the good doctor sums up all the information with a simple statement. He says in verse 52, "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men."

Jesus grew in four ways: *intellectually, physically, spiritually, socially*. We too need to grow in the same ways. This is also how parents should help their kids grow. Help them develop their *brains, muscles, spirit, relational skills*.

HOW TO BREAK OUT

John made it clear that he was not the Messiah. He says to the crowd in 3:16, "I indeed baptize you with water; but One mightier than I is coming, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire." John's baptism spoke of repentance. He stirred up in His followers a desire to change - but he was unable to effect that change. Jesus, though, baptizes us with the Holy Spirit. Jesus not only gives us the desire, but the power to change!

In the early days of NASA, the challenge of space travel was generating an *upward explosion* strong enough to break out of the *downward pull* of the earth's gravity. This is our challenge as believers! How do we break the *downward pull of our sin*? There's only one way. We need the *upward explosion of the Holy Spirit*.

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

Years ago, a Baptist church caught on fire. The fire department arrived early and doused the flames. The next day a fire inspector, a Roman Catholic, was surveying the scene. The man tripped, and fell into the baptismal pool. It had filled with water from the fire fighters' efforts to put out the fire. When the inspector exited the building, he asked someone standing by, "Who does this church belong to?" He was told, "The Baptists." The wet fireman shook his head, "I don't know much about them, but I guess I'm one of them now."

Baptism is a way for us to identify ourselves with Jesus. When we're baptized we say to the world that we belong to Him. Likewise, when Jesus was baptized He identified Himself with us. Jesus didn't need to be baptized. He had never sinned, but He chose to be baptized to show that He wanted to be one with His people.

THE TRINITY

Luke 3:22, "And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven which said, "You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased."

Here is a beautiful picture of the triune nature of God. God is one God, but He exists in three distinct persons. Here the Son stands in the water, while the Father pronounces His blessing, and the Holy Spirit descends upon Him to empower Him.

THE INTENTIONS OF JESUS

When Jesus began His ministry, He quickly became a source of public speculation. People were asking, "*Who is this man? Is He a rabbi, a magician, a prophet, or could He be the Messiah?*" He answers their questions in Nazareth. It was a Sabbath day, and the synagogue was packed! People had come hoping Jesus would address the assembly, and clarify His intentions.

Guys, it's important we, too, understand Jesus' intentions. How can we give Him something as important as our lives if we're not sure of His intentions?

Jesus reads from Isaiah 61. It was a prophesy of Messiah's ministry. Verses 18-19 are Jesus' intentions both then and now... He's still into meeting needs - healing broken hearts - breaking oppressive habits - opening blind eyes - soothing emotional bruises. Give your life to Jesus - you won't be disappointed.

You could hear a pin drop as Jesus closed the scroll. Everyone knew the passage Jesus read referred to the Messiah. When Jesus adds in verse 21, "Today this Scripture is fulfilled in your hearing"... Hey, there was no doubt in anyone's mind Jesus was claiming to be the Messiah.

Sadly, the crowd in Nazareth refused to believe. Their problem was pride. "Is this not Joseph's son?" How can He be special, He's one of us! Jesus said, "No prophet is accepted in his own country" - and gave two Old Testament examples of how pride got in the way of miracles God wanted to work.

Are we too proud to admit we need Jesus' help? Humble yourself, and show Jesus where it hurts...

Devotion Box - Your Musts

In verse 42, the people with Jesus want Him to stay longer in their town, but Jesus tells them, "I must preach the kingdom of God to the other cities also, because for this purpose I have been sent." Understand, Jesus knew the *musts* God had placed in His life - and He refused to let other folks dictate His priorities. Jesus refused to be distracted or diverted from the purpose for which He had been sent. This is the biggest challenge in ministry. People want you to take their crisis and make it your emergency.

Campus Crusade publishes a booklet called, *The Four Spiritual Laws*. Its first law states, "God loves you and has a wonderful plan for your life." Here's a take-off on it: "God loves you and people have a wonderful plan for your life." When the *demands of people* conflict with the *commands of God*, refocus on the *musts* God has set for your life. Love people, serve people, but don't be enslaved by people.

Bible Scan - Luke 1-6

Calvary Chapel

If you have questions on tonight's study email Pastor Sandy - sandyadams@calvarychapel.org
For back issues of Bible Scan study guides: www.calvarychapelstonemountain.com/biblescan.htm

Calvary Chapel Announcements - November 11, 2001 - Please pray for the H.S. Youth Meltdown, Friday November 16, 10:00 pm at Red, White, and Brew; Next Sunday, November 18, "Small Town Poets" concert at 6:30 pm; Please pray for our trip to Haiti, December 1-6 - Sandy and James will be hosting a pastors conference; Ladies' Christmas Tea: Friday, December 7th or Saturday, December 8th—tickets now on sale.

"The Brook" - Bookstore and Café is now open Sunday AM and PM - check it out after the service tonight!

Next Bible Scan - November 25, 2001 - Luke 7-16

"For with God nothing will be impossible." - Luke 1:37

Bible Scan Memory Verse

FISHING WITH JESUS

In Luke 5, Jesus finishes His teaching and takes His disciples fishing. Did you hear about the two guys who went fishing on a Sunday morning? After a couple hours without a bite, one of the guys started to feel guilty. He confesses to his partner, "Well, I guess I should've gone to church." His buddy responds, "Hey, I couldn't have gone to church today anyway. My wife is at home sick."

When Jesus told Peter to let down his nets, Peter complained. He'd fished that spot all night without a nibble. In verse 5, Peter gives in, "nevertheless at Your word I will let down the net." To his surprise, the nets are full.

Peter *caught a school*, and *went to school*. Guys, when it comes to fishing for men we can toil all night without a nibble. We can waste time, and burn out in our efforts - or we can listen to Jesus, and let Him direct where we throw our nets.

JESUS WAS NOT A LEGALIST

Hypocrites love rules. Not God's rules, but their own rules.

The fourth commandment gave broad, general instructions to observe the Sabbath as a day of rest and worship. You were not supposed to work on the Sabbath, but the Pharisees felt compelled to define what constituted work. You couldn't wear dentures, or you'd be carrying a load. You could spit, as long as you didn't scuff it with your shoe lest you be watering and cultivating the soil.

It's said of America's legal system, "We have 35 million laws trying to enforce 10 commandments." That's also a good description of Judaism.

In Luke 6, Jesus refuses to adhere to the Jewish brand of Sabbath worship. The Jews went so far as to say that healing constituted work and was thus a sin. Jesus says in verse 9, "I will ask you one thing: Is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy?"

In other words, what's more important, keeping silly rules that make you feel self-righteous, or doing good and saving lives? Jesus told the man with the crippled hand... "Stretch out your hand." And he did.

Luke 6:11 says of the legalistic Jews, "they were filled with rage, and discussed with one another what they might do to Jesus." They could tell everyone else what to do on the Sabbath, but God. They got mad because God didn't keep their commands.

THE SERMON ON THE PLAIN

The last half of chapter 6 is Luke's version of the Sermon on the Mount. It's actually a different sermon, given on a different occasion. Verse 17 says Jesus stood on "a level place". It's sometimes called, "*The Sermon on the Plain*".

But there is nothing plain about the life it depicts. Jesus describes an attractive, winsome, genuine spirituality. Righteousness is an attitude - not an achievement. It involves being, not just doing. The blessings and woes of this chapter all deal with character.

Real righteousness is loving those who don't love you - forgiving instead of condemning. It's not merely doing *good deeds*, but having a *good heart*. This brand of spirituality is not a good deed you wear as a badge. It's a way of life that's born in the heart. It takes the Spirit to be spiritual!

And don't forget Jesus' commands in verse 37, "Judge not, and you shall not be judged." Once a man was trying to

get out of jury duty. He approached the judge and pointed at the defendant, "I know he's guilty- to me he looks like a crook, talks like a crook, even smells like a crook. I know already he's a crook. There's no way I can be unbiased." The judge replied, "Sit down. That's the district attorney."

We make huge mistakes when we make superficial judgments. Get the 2 by 4 out of your eye, before you try to remove the toothpick from your brother's eye.

Let me close with a verse that appears only in the book of Luke... Jesus says to us in verse 38, "Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you." You determine the portion of your blessing by the proportion of your gift.