



WHY LUKE?

Why Luke? We've been journeying as a church through the Bible chronologically. Asking some questions of this book is a good starting point. Luke was a gentile (i.e. someone not part of the Chosen People of Israel). Luke has some truly unique things to say about Jesus, but he didn't inherit his faith, but rather chose it. He was the only author of the New Testament that wasn't Jewish. Luke was a companion to the Apostle Paul and imprisoned with Paul for a short while. Luke was by trade a physician and was educated. He was someone that was intentional about noticing things and a careful historian. The books we call the gospels—a word simply meaning the "good news"—are Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and document the life of Jesus. Luke's account was written only thirty years after Jesus' death and resurrection and was written to Theophilus, another gentile who was likely a high official in the Roman government, saying there is no reason to dismiss this account and every reason to believe in Jesus. More than in any other book, Luke is specific to explain that every barrier comes down because of Jesus and everyone has an equal opportunity partake of faith.

1. What was something new you learned about Luke? Has it influenced your viewpoint about what he wrote?

DO I BELIEVE THE STORY OF JESUS IS IMPORTANT?

[Luke 1:1] Most of the books of the New Testament start with a boring introduction if we're honest. Sometimes we want to skip to the stories but there are four questions in the introduction to Luke that we should ask ourselves. In verse one, Luke says that many have been undertaken to compile the events of the life of Jesus. We don't often hear phrases like "undertaken to compile" so what's up with the language? The idea is that when you undertake, you decide to put your time and resources behind something. It's not a light action. Compiling also speaks of intentionality and being systematic about determining the value and order of what Luke is about to convey. Luke wants us to understand that the story of Jesus is important. He wants to illustrate who Jesus is in an accurate way for us. Whether you've been with Jesus a long time or not, the question remains the same: Do I believe the story of Jesus is important? The things that are important in our lives are the things we make space and time for and have a capacity to recall and recount. Is the story of Jesus important as football stats? As important as politics? As important as the events of my current binge-TV show? As important as the latest trends?

2. What are the things in your life that demonstrate their importance to you because you make space and time for them and recall them with specificity?
3. Where and how will you elevate the story of Jesus in your life by creating space and time for His story this week?

HOW CAN I BE SURE I CAN TRUST THIS?

[Luke 1:2] This story came from eye witnesses to the life of Jesus and decided from the beginning to hand down what they saw with intentionality. They were described as Servants of the Word because of their commitment to safeguarding the accuracy of what they handed down. The skeptics among us need to deal with this question. When we go to school and hit upper grades and into college, we have history classes that present historical texts as accurate representations about what happened. Those are often based on fragments of documents and yet we create our world view of history on these documents. The New Testament has 6,000 manuscripts written across almost 1,000 years on three continents. And, when you investigate these ancient documents all having a piece of Luke in them, we find that they are consistent across different methods of transcription and different language. The only variances we tend to find are something like a dropped "s". The Bible is light years more dependable than history books, but it all comes down to faith. We have to ask if we can bet our lives on what we find in the English translation of this ancient story. It's important because we tend to part ways with things we don't truly consider to be reliable. Is the Bible as reliable as the news broadcast? As reliable as a good friend's advice?

4. What are some types of things that we rely on to make decisions about what we do? Give some examples. How reliable are those things?
5. How can you better rely on what the Bible says this week in a practical way?

DO I BELIEVE THE STORY OF JESUS IS WORTH MY EFFORT?

[Luke 1:3] Luke tells us he has carefully investigated everything from the beginning and writes in an orderly sequence. Luke has devoted significant time and resources to make what he's writing understandable and compelling. Do you believe the story of Jesus is worth your effort? As much as what's on your calendar? As much as other relationships in your life? As much as your favorite hobby? Your quest to get ahead in life? We pour our efforts into what we believe are important. We don't question the value of putting effort into those things.

6. How can you put a little more time or resource into Jesus in your life this week?

DO I BELIEVE THE STORY OF JESUS IS TRUE?

[Luke 1:4] Luke wants his readers to have certainty. Truth is what we're looking for in life so we can build our lives on something dependable. We believe in the changing of the seasons and gravity and live our lives with our understanding. But, do we believe the story of Jesus. We want to answer "yes" but this can be difficult for us. Everything else culminates into this. It's the most important question to find an answer to that you'll ever find.

7. What part of this teaching best helps your belief in the truth of the story of Jesus?
8. Will you encourage someone else in your group by sharing an example of how has the truth of Jesus been played out in your life?

PUTTING ACTION TO YOUR FAITH.

9. Will you commit to reading the Book of Luke this week in preparation for the rest of the series?