



DO THE OPPOSITE OF WHAT YOU'RE DOING

Luke, a Gentile physician, is writing to other Gentiles (i.e. non-Jews) about who Jesus really is. Pastor shared that the summer of his junior year of high school, he went white water rafting with some buddies. The guide said there would be challenges, then told them about what the river looked like ahead of them. He said as long as you listen, we'll have a great day and have fun. He added, "This might be your first day on this river, but it isn't mine." As we travel into Chs. 3-4, Luke wants us to know about the Lordship of Jesus. (1) Following Jesus will challenge us and (2) We can trust Jesus' authority in the midst of the challenges. Our faith will be challenged as to our faith, our things, and our power as we follow Jesus.

- 1. In what ways has your faith been challenged?

CHALLENGE #1: FAITH

[Luke 3:8] John the Baptist was acting as a herald (i.e. someone who went before a king to let people know that the king is coming and what needed to be done to prepare for the king). John was at the River Jordan and a crowd of various types of people had gathered. John talks about repentance, which in our modern-day vernacular means to do the opposite of what you're inclined to do. A decision to follow Jesus has to be one of individual intent. No one can make that decision for you. Living and growing up in a Christian household doesn't make you a follower of Jesus. At some point, each person has to wrestle with who Jesus is and how to respond to Him.

- 2. What questions do you still have about who Jesus is and how to respond to Him?

CHALLENGE #2: THINGS

The crowds ask what they should do. John says to share their things. The emphasis isn't on the action, but on our perspective on the things we have. Our belonging are just stuff, but we can have an emotional connection to things. We can try to squeeze out of things something they aren't designed to give us. They can be a stronghold. Things aren't bad, but we can have a skewed perspective, expecting things to provide us with lasting joy, significance, hope, or control. John is trying to provide a different perspective by saying "share".

- 3. How does the willingness to share release the power things have over us?
4. How would you feel applying this perspective to your favorite thing?

CHALLENGE #3: POWER

John told the tax collectors not to take more than was due. He told the soldiers not to exercise control by intimidation or make false accusations. John's message was not to abuse their power. All of us have some degree of power of someone in some sphere. Students may have power of influence by setting an example. Parents have powerful influence over their children. Sometimes the most powerful parenting moment is to admit when you're wrong. Employees have power as they execute their responsibilities with dependability and excellence. Bosses have power when they treat employees as valuable individuals and not just cogs in a wheel.

- 5. Where are your spheres of influence? How can you best apply your power in those spheres in a God-honoring way?

JESUS' AUTHORITY IN THE WORD OF GOD

[Luke 4: 4,8,10] When core things get challenged, it can challenge our faith. As Jesus was led into the wilderness to be tempted, the Devil didn't come until the 40th day. Have you heard the acronym: Halt, Hurt, Hungry, Lonely, Tired? It's when we're most vulnerable and susceptible to temptation. Sometimes the most spiritual thing we can do it to take a nap! Jesus demonstrates an authority we have over everything in the Word of God. There's nothing we can face that the Bible doesn't cover but we need to know what the Bible says so we can be prepared. When you cave in to temptation, you made a decision because God always provides a way out. We're going to live with suffering, temptations, and losses and the truth of God is out comfort if we know what God has provided for us in the Bible.

- 6. What type of vulnerability is most prevalent in your life (hurt, hungry/wanting, lonely, tired)?
7. How can you apply what the Bible says to prepare to walk through struggles in that area?

JESUS' AUTHORITY IN HIS TEACHING

[Luke 4:31-32] Teachers can inform, inspire, and instruct, but something about Jesus also conveyed a sense of authority. We can trust what Jesus says even when it feels radical or difficult such as loving our enemies.

- 8. What is something the Bible teaches you find difficult to accept and implement? How can you better trust Jesus' authority?

JESUS' AUTHORITY OVER THE SPIRITUAL REALM

[Luke 4:35-36] We think we live in a naturalistic world where there can be supernatural occurrences, but the truth is that we live in a supernatural world but have only naturalistic perception that is incapable of seeing a majority of what's going on around us. Jesus has authority over the unseen world that we have difficulty wrapping our minds around and can't control. There is a spiritual struggle going on around us and to not understand that makes us susceptible to it. But we can take comfort that Jesus has authority and control over it.

- 9. How can we use Jesus' authority to navigate in a world where we're blind to many things that influence us?

JESUS HAS AUTHORITY OVER THE PHYSICAL

[Luke 4:38-39] Luke wants us to see the scope of the authority of Jesus. Many of us might ask why Jesus doesn't he heal afflictions now. We want God to do it in our timing. But, the world is broken because of sin, yet Christ-followers have hope that one day it will all be set right.

- 10. Do you struggle with God's answer to "wait" on healing? Does hope allows you to wait for God's timing – even to eternity?

WE CAN NAVIGATE THE RIVER WITH THE RIGHT GUIDE

At the end of the day on the river, what the raft guide said at the beginning really was true. The guide assured that just because they hadn't gone through it before doesn't mean I can't navigate us around it. It wasn't a new thing to the guide. There could be confidence in the guide even when what they saw in front of them didn't seem like they could make it through.

- 11. What are you navigating that your group can pray with you about, asking God to guide you through safely, faith intact?