



Women Restored, Women Restoring

**A Study Guide to the
Theme of Women in Luke – Acts**



THE ANÁSTASIS CENTER
FOR CHRISTIAN EDUCATION & MINISTRY



*Women Restored, Women Restoring:
A Study Guide to the Theme of Women in Luke – Acts*

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‘Why also did it not prefer to make its attack upon the man instead of the woman? And if thou sayest that it attacked her as being the weaker of the two, [I reply that], on the contrary, she was the stronger, since she appears to have been the helper of the man in the transgression of the commandment. For she did by herself alone resist the serpent, and it was after holding out for a while and making opposition that she ate of the tree, being circumvented by craft; whereas Adam, making no fight whatever, nor refusal, partook of the fruit handed to him by the woman, which is an indication of the utmost imbecility...’

Irenaeus of Lyons, *Fragment, Ante-Nicene Fathers*, volume 1, paragraph 14

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Purpose & Summary

This series of studies was designed for use with people of college age and older. It serves several purposes. First, though it does not make a comprehensive statement about all positions of leadership, it is a defense of women in ministry and leadership generally, and is intended to be an encouragement to women with such responsibilities. In a multi-denominational parachurch ministry, I've found it necessary to explicitly affirm women in leadership positions in our ministry since many Christians do not come from like-minded church traditions. The advantage of studying the theme of women in Luke's Gospel and Acts is that the theme is not incidental to Luke's concerns. It is demonstrably a major motif that Luke is working with.

Second, it is an introduction to a more systematic technique of studying biblical narrative. It consists of a complete set of notes including illustrations, intro questions, and inductive study questions on various passages out of Luke's Gospel and Acts. It encourages creative ways to illustrate the bible study and make it accessible, such as using songs, movie clips, references to literature, art, etc. In fact, it uses movie-going terms for the bible study process itself. These suggestions are only starting points to encourage further creativity from the bible study leader.



Part 1: Leader's Notes

Session One: Thesis Statement #1: Jesus Reverses the Fall, Returns Us to Eden

Literary Outline of Luke's Crucifixion-Resurrection Narrative: Luke 22:49 – 24:53

1. Jesus' arrest, his surrender to the chief priests after being continually in the temple. 22:49-53
2. Prophecy fulfilled: Simon Peter betrays Jesus. 22:54-62
3. Jesus reveals himself obliquely as the Son of God. 22:63-71
4. Two do not understand Jesus' identity: Herod and Pilate. 23:1-25
5. Simon of Cyrene witnesses and shoulders the Cross. 23:23-26
6. Women, the daughters of Jerusalem. 23:27-31
7. Jesus crucified. 23:32-34
8. Unbelieving Jews: The rulers of the Jews sneered at Jesus. 23:35
9. Unbelieving Gentiles: The soldiers mock Jesus. 23:36-38
10. Unbelieving Criminal: Criminal hurls curses at Jesus. 23:39
- 10'. Believing Criminal: Criminal believes Jesus, receives **paradise**. 23:40-43
- 9'. Believing Gentiles: The centurion praised God. 23:44-49
- 8'. Believing Jews: Joseph, a member of the council, cares for Jesus' body. 23:50-52
- 7'. Jesus buried. 23:53-54
- 6'. Women, who had followed Jesus. 23:55-24:11
- 5'. Simon Peter witnesses the empty tomb. 24:12
- 4'. Two eventually understand Jesus' identity: Emmaus disciples. 24:13-35**
- 3'. Jesus reveals himself as the risen Messiah. 24:36-43
- 2'. Prophecy fulfilled: Moses, Prophets, Psalms testify to Messiah. 24:44-49
- 1'. Jesus' departure, promise of the Holy Spirit; disciples continually in the temple. 24:50-53

Foreground Action: An Encounter with the Resurrected Jesus

^{24:13} And behold, two of them were going that very day to a village named Emmaus, which was about seven miles from Jerusalem. ¹⁴ And they were talking with each other about all these things which had taken place. ¹⁵ While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself approached and began traveling with them. ¹⁶ But their eyes were prevented from recognizing him. ¹⁷ And he said to them, 'What are these words that you are exchanging with one another as you are walking?' And they stood still, looking sad. ¹⁸ One of them, named Cleopas, answered and said to him, 'Are you the only one visiting Jerusalem and unaware of the things which have happened here in these days?' ¹⁹ And he said to them, 'What things?' And they said to him, 'The things about Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word in the sight of God and all the people, ²⁰ and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to the sentence of death, and crucified him. ²¹ But we were hoping that it was he who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, it is the third day since these things happened. ²² But also some women among us amazed us. When they were at the tomb early in the morning, ²³ and did not find his body, they came, saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. ²⁴ Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just exactly as the women also had said; but him they did not see.' ²⁵ And he said to them, 'O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into his glory?' ²⁷ Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, he explained to them the things concerning himself in all the Scriptures. ²⁸ And they approached the village where they were going, and he acted as though he were going farther. ²⁹ But they urged him, saying, 'Stay with us, for it is getting toward evening, and the day is now nearly over.' So he went in to stay with them. ³⁰ When he had reclined at the table with them, he took the bread and blessed it, and breaking it, he began giving it to them. ³¹ Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. ³² They said to one another, 'Were not our hearts burning within us while he was speaking to us on the road, while he was explaining the Scriptures to us?' ³³ And they got up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found gathered together the eleven and those who were with them, ³⁴ saying, 'The Lord has really risen and has appeared to Simon.' ³⁵ They began to relate their experiences on the road and how he was recognized by them in the breaking of the bread. ³⁶ While they were telling these things, he himself stood in their midst and said to them, 'Peace be to you.' ³⁷ But they were startled and frightened and thought that they were seeing a spirit. ³⁸ And he said to them, 'Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts?' ³⁹ See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; touch me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see that I have.' ⁴⁰ And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. ⁴¹



While they still could not believe it because of their joy and amazement, he said to them, ‘Have you anything here to eat?’⁴² They gave him a piece of a broiled fish;⁴³ and he took it and ate it before them.⁴⁴ Now he said to them, ‘These are my words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.’⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures,⁴⁶ and he said to them, ‘Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day,⁴⁷ and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in his name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.⁴⁸ You are witnesses of these things.⁴⁹ And behold, I am sending forth the promise of my Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.’⁵⁰ And he led them out as far as Bethany, and he lifted up his hands and blessed them.⁵¹ While he was blessing them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven.⁵² And they, after worshiping him, returned to Jerusalem with great joy,⁵³ and were continually in the temple praising God.

Questions

1. Who were these two disciples? Cleopas and another, possibly Mary his wife. Jesus first appears (in Luke) to a pair whose genders are unspecified. The literary vagueness on this point allows us to see them as a man and woman.
2. How are these two disciples feeling?
3. To the extent that we can generalize, how are the hopes of these two Israelite disciples similar to the hopes of the Asian American immigrant community? The black American community? The white American community?
4. Why do they not recognize Jesus? What’s wrong with their sight?
5. What was their understanding of Jesus?
6. What was their definition of “redeem Israel” in v.21?
7. Why did they disbelieve the women? Whose sight were they believing in v.24?
8. What does this mean about the relation between believing in Jesus and seeing him? In what sense do we ‘see’ Jesus?
9. Why does Jesus call the two disciples foolish? What should they have known, according to Jesus?
10. What should their definition of “redeem Israel” have been? Victory over sin and death, precisely what the women reported.
11. What does Jesus have to do in order for them to recognize him?
12. Why do they recognize Jesus in the breaking of the bread? If eating is a major motif from the Old Testament, what kind of meal is this breaking of bread? Why does it cause their sight to be opened?

Soundtrack/Background Music: Eating With God

- Gen.2:16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “From any tree of the garden, eating you will eat.”
- Ex.24:9 Then Moses went up with Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, 10 and they saw the God of Israel, and under His feet there appeared to be a pavement of sapphire, as clear as the sky itself. 11 Yet He did not stretch out His hand against the nobles of the sons of Israel; and they beheld God, and they ate and drank.
- Ps.23:5 Thou dost prepare a table before me.
- Isa.55:1 Ho! Every one who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. 2 Why do you spend your money for what is not bread, and your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourself in abundance.

13. Where did eating cause Adam and Eve’s eyes to be opened? How are these two events related?

Soundtrack/Background Music: The Fall into Self-Centered Sight

- Gen.3:6 And she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate. 7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked...

14. What happens to their hearts and minds by encountering the resurrected Jesus?



15. How does that feel?
16. In 1964, Harvard graduate and Rhodes scholar Jonathan Kozol moved to a poor black Boston neighborhood and became a fourth grade teacher. Three years later, he wrote *Death at an Early Age*, which chronicled his first year as a teacher. It won a National Book Award. He has written nine books since then. In his newest, *Ordinary Resurrections: Children in the Years of Hope*, he writes, “Like many overeducated people, I have tended for many years to pretend that I had a detached, ironical attitude about religion. This is a typical pretense of many people who imagine themselves to be sophisticated. When I was very young, I was deeply religious. I went to synagogue. I had a bar mitzvah. My grandmother was an immigrant from Russia and an Orthodox Jew; she was a strong religious force in my life... When I went to Harvard, it all got washed out of me. The students at Harvard were very supercilious about religion – if you said you believed in God, they would look at you cynically. If you wanted to be urbane and truly intellectual you didn’t speak about religion except with that ironical detached tone that is so familiar in newspapers like the New York Times. So when I met these children at St. Ann’s, they gave me back something that had been stolen from me. It was the first time I felt I could give in to those religious feelings that had been there all along.” Why might Kozol have titled this book *Ordinary Resurrections*? What is a resurrection?
17. Who really needed resurrecting? These disciples.
18. What is the power from on high that they will be clothed in?
19. Discuss the parallel. What’s going on here?

The Fall	The Restoration
Two people, a couple	Two people, probably a couple
Walking with God	Walking with Jesus
Knowing Him	Not recognizing him
Eat what was forbidden	Eat what Jesus encouraged them to eat
Their eyes were opened	Their eyes were opened
They focused on themselves	They focused on Jesus
They disobeyed God’s word and ‘gained wisdom’	They understood God’s Word and gained true knowledge
Fell into separation from God	Reunited with God
Recognized they were naked	Clothed with power from on high
Could not eat with God as freely as before	Are encouraged to have table fellowship with God and eat with God often
Commanded to spread over the earth to proclaim their rule over it	Commanded to spread over the earth to proclaim Jesus’ rule over it

20. What did Jesus restore on the Cross as shown by his promise to the thief? What was Jesus doing on the Cross?
Opening paradise, making it available to sinful humanity
21. What happens to people after Jesus’ Resurrection? They experience paradise again. They experience an undoing, in some sense, of the fall. The poetic significance of the Cross-Resurrection event is big. Jesus alone ushers us back into paradise, back into God’s presence!!!
22. Is there a reason, do you think, why the women are the first witnesses of the empty tomb?
 - a. In what order did things happen in the fall? In what order do things happen in the resurrection?

Fall	Woman	Man	Death
Restoration	Women	Men	Life

- b. What does this tell us? Eve was the first to start the momentum towards sin, and women are the first to start the momentum towards the redemption. Eve led Adam into sin and death through her word, and women lead men into restoration and life through their word, which is the word of Jesus’ resurrection. The chronological order of redemption matches the chronological order of the fall. Women are thus redeemed and restored first, chronologically, and then men. That’s why women (Elizabeth and Mary) are highlighted first in the Gospel – they are the first people through whom God really ushers in the fullness of redemption.
- c. But why don’t the male disciples believe the women?
- d. Notice that the dynamics are not identical.



Fall	Woman	Speaks a lie	Persuades Man	Leads to Death
Restoration	Women	Speak truth (of the empty tomb)	Does not persuade Men; Jesus has to intervene	Leads to Life

- In the fall, the man believes the woman. In the restoration, however, the men do not believe the women (24:11, 22-24). This suggests the stubbornness of sin and need for God's personal intervention in every case.
 - Does it mean that men are less spiritually intuitive than women? They are indeed presented that way in Luke's Gospel (e.g. Elizabeth). Though people of both genders are honored, women do seem to have an intuitive spiritual advantage towards the gospel.
 - Furthermore, because women are filled with the Holy Spirit and speak starting from the first episode of Luke's Gospel, because they are heralds and faithful word-bearers, it seems appropriate that women be encouraged to speak, prophesy, exhort, etc.
 - So regardless of how one falls in the gender issues categories, this has implications for how men and women relate.
23. More fundamentally, and moving back to what this means for our understanding of God: What does this pattern mean about how God works? That God works to undo sin in the order *in which it has happened*. In relation to humanity in general, He started the kingdom proclamation with women because a woman precipitated the fall from paradise. In relation to any given individual, He starts at the core, moving that core identity issue, and then continues to work outward. How does this apply to you right now?



Session Two: Thesis Statement #2: Your Sons and Daughters Will Prophecy

Your Sons and Daughters Will Prophecy

Acts 2:1 When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. ² And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³ And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. ⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance. ⁵ Now there were Jews living in Jerusalem, devout men from every nation under heaven. ⁶ And when this sound occurred, the crowd came together, and were bewildered because each one of them was hearing them speak in his own language. ⁷ They were amazed and astonished, saying, ‘Why, are not all these who are speaking Galileans?’ ⁸ ‘And how is it that we each hear them in our own language to which we were born?’ ⁹ ‘Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰ Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya around Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, ¹¹ Cretans and Arabs--we hear them in our own tongues speaking of the mighty deeds of God.’ ¹² And they all continued in amazement and great perplexity, saying to one another, ‘What does this mean?’ ¹³ But others were mocking and saying, ‘They are full of sweet wine.’ ¹⁴ But Peter, taking his stand with the eleven, raised his voice and declared to them: ‘Men of Judea and all you who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you and give heed to my words. ¹⁵ For these men are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only the third hour of the day; ¹⁶ but this is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel: ¹⁷ ‘And it shall be in the last days,’ God says, ‘That I will pour forth of My Spirit on all mankind; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; ¹⁸ even on My bondslaves, both men and women, I will in those days pour forth of My Spirit and they shall prophesy.

	At the Beginning of the Story	A Major Character	Quotes from the OT	To Summarize How the Spirit Will Empower Proclamation	And Then It Happens!
Luke	Luke 4	Jesus	Isaiah 61	‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon me... to preach...to proclaim... ’ (Luke 4:18 – 19)	Jesus preaches and proclaims. (Luke 4:20ff.)
Acts	Acts 2	Simon Peter	Joel 2	‘And it shall be in the last days that I will pour forth of My Spirit on all mankind and your sons and daughters shall prophesy... I will in those days pour forth of My Spirit and they shall prophesy. ’ (Acts 2:17 – 18)	The apostles and other leaders proclaim and prophesy. (Acts 2:19ff.)



Session Three: The First Witness to the Restoration: Elizabeth

Foreground Action: Elizabeth's Joy

Lk.1:5 In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah; and he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. ⁶ They were both righteous in the sight of God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and requirements of the Lord. ⁷ But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both advanced in years. ⁸ Now it happened that while he was performing his priestly service before God in the appointed order of his division, ⁹ according to the custom of the priestly office, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense. ¹⁰ And the whole multitude of the people were in prayer outside at the hour of the incense offering. ¹¹ And an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the altar of incense. ¹² Zacharias was troubled when he saw the angel, and fear gripped him. ¹³ But the angel said to him, 'Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your petition has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will give him the name John. ¹⁴ You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. ¹⁵ For he will be great in the sight of the Lord; and he will drink no wine or liquor, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit while yet in his mother's womb. ¹⁶ And he will turn many of the sons of Israel back to the Lord their God. ¹⁷ It is he who will go as a forerunner before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers back to the children, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous, so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.' ¹⁸ Zacharias said to the angel, 'How will I know this for certain? For I am an old man and my wife is advanced in years.' ¹⁹ The angel answered and said to him, 'I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. ²⁰ And behold, you shall be silent and unable to speak until the day when these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their proper time.' ²¹ The people were waiting for Zacharias, and were wondering at his delay in the temple. ²² But when he came out, he was unable to speak to them; and they realized that he had seen a vision in the temple; and he kept making signs to them, and remained mute. ²³ When the days of his priestly service were ended, he went back home. ²⁴ After these days Elizabeth his wife became pregnant, and she kept herself in seclusion for five months, saying, ²⁵ 'This is the way the Lord has dealt with me in the days when He looked with favor upon me, to take away my disgrace among men.'

1:39 Now at this time Mary arose and went in a hurry to the hill country, to a city of Judah, ⁴⁰ and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. ⁴² And she cried out with a loud voice and said, 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! ⁴³ And how has it happened to me, that the mother of my Lord would come to me? ⁴⁴ For behold, when the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby leaped in my womb for joy. ⁴⁵ And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what had been spoken to her by the Lord.'

1:57 Now the time had come for Elizabeth to give birth, and she gave birth to a son. ⁵⁸ Her neighbors and her relatives heard that the Lord had displayed His great mercy toward her; and they were rejoicing with her. ⁵⁹ And it happened that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to call him Zacharias, after his father. ⁶⁰ But his mother answered and said, 'No indeed; but he shall be called John.' ⁶¹ And they said to her, 'There is no one among your relatives who is called by that name.' ⁶² And they made signs to his father, as to what he wanted him called. ⁶³ And he asked for a tablet and wrote as follows, 'His name is John.' And they were all astonished. ⁶⁴ And at once his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he began to speak in praise of God. ⁶⁵ Fear came on all those living around them; and all these matters were being talked about in all the hill country of Judea. ⁶⁶ All who heard them kept them in mind, saying, 'What then will this child turn out to be?' For the hand of the Lord was certainly with him.

Questions

1. What is Zacharias' role as a priest? Elizabeth's as a priest's wife? What kinds of needs would they have seen and known about in their community? How did this awareness affect them?
2. How does v.6 contrast with v.7? Why might it have been jarring for Jews to be righteous but childless?
3. Did Elizabeth ever think she would have a child? Or would she have given up hope?
4. This childlessness was a major disappointment for them. In what areas of life do you feel like God has disappointed you?



5. The angel Gabriel reminds Zacharias that he and Elizabeth have prayed about this, but what makes it hard for Zacharias to believe?
6. What could have been hard for Elizabeth to believe? What personal risks might she have been taking?
7. Yet Elizabeth seems to be joyful. Her baby leaps for joy in v.44 and her neighbors rejoice with her in v.58. In light of the rejoicing her neighbors do with her, how does that affect your understanding of the kind of woman Elizabeth was and how she was regarded in the community?
8. What would a supernaturally born son mean to Zacharias and Elizabeth?
 Personally: Joy, gladness, new life
 Corporately: God resuming the prophetic line anointed by the Holy Spirit, restoration of exile for the faithful in Israel, the coming of the Lord.
9. Why is temporary silence a fitting or strange consequence for Zacharias' lack of faith?
10. What could Zacharias' ministry have been if he had believed? Preparing, announcing, proclamation, very important. The Israelites were bereft of God's Word for 400 years, and of Zacharias' preaching for another nine months. Zacharias could have been useful in ministry.
11. What was Elizabeth's ministry to Mary like? Preparing, announcing, proclamation, very important encouragement to Mary.
12. What was Elizabeth's basic hope for her life? To have a child and to see her people redeemed by God.
13. Does God surpass her expectations?
14. What Old Testament couple(s) do Zacharias and Elizabeth, an old couple with no children, remind you of? Elkanah and Hannah.

Soundtrack/Background Music: Old Couples and Supernatural Sons

Abraham and Sarah	Elkanah and Hannah	Zacharias and Elizabeth
Genesis 11:27 – 22:24	1 Samuel 1:1 – 2:10	Luke 1:5 – 80
Age: elderly	Age: unknown	Age: elderly
Abraham and Sarah long for a child; want to bestow an inheritance, and nurture faith and hope in God	Hannah longs for a child; Elkanah indifferent because he has children by a second wife	Zacharias and Elizabeth long for a child
God speaks to Abraham and Sarah (directly)	God speaks to Hannah (through Eli)	God speaks to Zacharias (through Gabriel)
Abraham believes first, Sarah believes second	Hannah believes first, Elkanah's belief seems irrelevant	Elizabeth believes first? Zacharias believes second?
Abraham bears witness first, Sarah bears witness second	Hannah bears witness	Elizabeth bears witness first, Zacharias bears witness second
Isaac born supernaturally	Samuel born in response to prayer	John the Baptist born supernaturally (Jesus born supernaturally)
	Hannah sings a song of praise	(Mary sings a song of praise) Zacharias sings a song of praise
Isaac anoints Jacob, the father of the twelve tribes of Israel	Samuel anoints David, the king of Israel	John anoints Jesus, the last king of Israel

15. Compare Elizabeth to Sarah and Hannah, the two other women in Israel's history who had supernaturally born sons.
16. With Abraham and Sarah, who believed and who didn't?



17. With Zacharias and Elizabeth, who believed and who didn't? Their story reversed the story of Abraham and Sarah, Elizabeth is a better Sarah.
18. What are the similarities between Isaac and John? Supernaturally born, represents a covenant people, promise fulfilled, newness of life
19. Who was Hannah's supernaturally born son? Samuel the prophet.
20. What was so special about Samuel? (answer to prayer, supernaturally born, he was a Nazirite) Who did Samuel anoint to be king? David
21. Who was Elizabeth's supernaturally born son? John the Baptist.
22. Who did John anoint to be king? Jesus
23. What does it mean about what God is doing with Elizabeth?
24. Thought: Sometimes when we hope in God and wait for Him a long time, it's because He is waiting for a time where He can bless us beyond what we had hoped for. Elizabeth had ordinary expectations for herself and God. God had higher purposes for her. He brings her into an old pattern of honor and hope, honoring her more than Sarah and Hannah!
25. Does this story of Elizabeth bring you some hope?

Session Four: Mary, Mother of the King, a Second David

Foreground Action: Gabriel Visits Mary

^{1:26} Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ And coming in, he said to her, 'Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.' ²⁹ But she was very perplexed at this statement, and kept pondering what kind of salutation this was. ³⁰ The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God.' ³¹ And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give him the throne of his father David; ³³ and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and his kingdom will have no end.' ³⁴ Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?' ³⁵ The angel answered and said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God.' ³⁶ And behold, even your relative Elizabeth has also conceived a son in her old age; and she who was called barren is now in her sixth month. ³⁷ For nothing will be impossible with God.' ³⁸ And Mary said, 'Behold, the bondservant of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word.' And the angel departed from her. ³⁹ Now at this time Mary arose and went in a hurry to the hill country, to a city of Judah, ⁴⁰ and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. ⁴² And she cried out with a loud voice and said, 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! ⁴³ And how has it happened to me, that the mother of my Lord would come to me? ⁴⁴ For behold, when the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby leaped in my womb for joy. ⁴⁵ And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what had been spoken to her by the Lord.'

Questions

1. What did Mary expect her engagement to be like?
2. What must her reaction have been to Gabriel? Do you think Luke is humorously understating it in v.29?
3. Why has she kept herself a virgin? To fulfill some romantic ideal? To obey God?
4. What is promised to Jesus, as Mary hears it? The throne of his father David; and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and his kingdom will have no end. An eternal kingdom.
5. Could Mary have hoped for the fulfillment of the following prophecy?

Soundtrack/Background Music: The Seed of the Woman

- Gen.3:14 The LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; on your belly you will go, and dust you will eat all the days of your life; 15 and I will put enmity between you and the



woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel.”

6. What impresses you about Mary’s response to Gabriel?
7. How do you think Mary is thinking about Joseph, her fiancé?
 - a. What kind of risk was she introducing into her engagement?
 - b. What is Mary’s identity statement? Bondslave/handmaiden of God.
 - c. How is she risking her marriage and her entire future by obeying God?
 - d. What do you think enables her to be so open to interruptions like this?
 - e. What makes uncertainty hard to take for you?
 - f. In what ways do you sense God challenging your desire for certainty and stability to give you greater things?
 - g. What inspires Mary’s trust in and obedience to God?
8. Since Mary is the mother of the Messiah, the ‘seed of the woman,’ let’s compare her to Eve.
 - a. What was Eve’s sin all about?
 - b. Eve disregarded God’s word, and convinced her husband to disregard God’s word. What relation to God’s word does Mary take? Mary trusts God’s word, and presumably, eventually convinces her husband to trust God’s word too.
 - c. Eve’s disobedience led to the fall of humanity. What does Mary’s obedience lead to? The restoration of all humanity.
 - d. Eve wanted to be like God, perhaps greater than God. What relation to God does Mary take? Mary says that she is the Lord’s bondslave or handmaiden; she takes the opposite route.

Eve	Mary
Disregarded God’s word	Obedient to God’s word
Distrusted God’s word and intention	Trusted God’s word and intention
Wanted to be greater than God	Humbled herself before God as His bondslave
Led to the Fall of humanity	Led to the Restoration of humanity
Her son Cain succumbed to Satan	Her son Jesus triumphed over Satan

9. Why does Mary hurry to see Elizabeth? To share a common experience. To be reassured of God’s working. To help Elizabeth in her older age deal with her pregnancy. Interesting that God gives Mary community.
10. How does the Holy Spirit in Elizabeth comfort Mary?
11. What might Mary’s emotional state have been like at this point?
12. What does Mary’s song ‘the Magnificat’ reveal about her? When you compare it to Dido’s *Thank You*, what are the similarities? (gratefulness) Differences? (Dido is focused on herself. Mary’s focus includes herself, but is more big picture. She thinks of the past and the future and the whole world.) What impresses you about Mary’s song?

Thank You by Dido, from the album No Angel My tea’s gone cold, I’m wondering why I got out of bed at all the morning rain clouds up my window and I can’t see at all And even if I could it’d all be grey, but your picture on my wall it reminds me that it’s not so bad, it’s not so bad I drank too much last night, got bills to pay my head just feels in pain I missed the bus and there’ll be hell today I’m late for work again and even if I’m there, they’ll all imply that I might not last the day and then you call me and it’s not so bad, it’s not so bad and I want to thank you for giving me the best day of my life Oh just to be with you is having the best day of my life Push the door, I’m home at last and I’m soaking through and through	Mary’s Magnificat by Mary of Nazareth, from the Gospel of Luke ⁴⁶ And Mary said: ‘My soul exalts the Lord, ⁴⁷ And my spirit has rejoiced in God my Savior. ⁴⁸ For He has had regard for the humble state of His handmaid; For behold, from this time on all generations will count me blessed. ⁴⁹ For the Mighty One has done great things for me; And holy is His name. ⁵⁰ And His mercy is upon generation after generation toward those who fear Him. ⁵¹ He has done mighty deeds with His arm; He has scattered those who were proud in the thoughts of their heart. ⁵² He has brought down rulers from their thrones, And has exalted those who were humble. ⁵³ He has filled the hungry with good things; And sent away the rich empty-handed.
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then you handed me a towel and all I see is you and even if my house falls down now, I wouldn't have a clue because you're near me and I want to thank you for giving me the best day of my life Oh just to be with you is having the best day of my life	⁵⁴ He has given help to Israel His servant, In remembrance of His mercy, ⁵⁵ As He spoke to our fathers, To Abraham and his descendants forever.'
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13. What is the sense you get of Mary as a person? Her identity/sense of being is firmly rooted in God.
14. How does this story of Mary make you feel?
15. Now we'll look at other key episodes in Mary's early life.



Session Five: Mary Previews the Life of Her Son: His Glory, Mission, and Teaching

Possible Introductory Questions (choose one)

1. What is it like to see a sneak preview of a movie that hasn't come out, or an advance screening of a play that hasn't been released? Or to be someone who gets to hear news before it's publicized? Or to be the first person to taste the wonderful food at a party before anyone else?

Foreground Action: Mary Previews the Life of Her Son – His Glory

^{2,1} Now in those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth. ² This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³ And everyone was on his way to register for the census, each to his own city. ⁴ Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, ⁵ in order to register along with Mary, who was engaged to him, and was with child. ⁶ While they were there, the days were completed for her to give birth. ⁷ And she gave birth to her firstborn son; and she wrapped him in cloths, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. ⁸ In the same region there were some shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; ¹¹ for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.' ¹³ And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, ¹⁴ 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased.' ¹⁵ When the angels had gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds began saying to one another, 'Let us go straight to Bethlehem then, and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known to us.' ¹⁶ So they came in a hurry and found their way to Mary and Joseph, and the baby as he lay in the manger. ¹⁷ When they had seen this, they made known the statement which had been told them about this Child. ¹⁸ And all who heard it wondered at the things which were told them by the shepherds. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured all these things, pondering them in her heart. ²⁰ The shepherds went back, glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen, just as had been told them.

Foreground Action: Mary Previews the Life of Her Son – His Mission

^{2,21} And when eight days had passed, before his circumcision, his name was then called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb. ²² And when the days for their purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord ²³ (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, 'Every firstborn male that opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord,'), ²⁴ and to offer a sacrifice according to what was said in the Law of the Lord, 'A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.' ²⁵ And there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Spirit was upon him. ²⁶ And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. ²⁷ And he came in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to carry out for him the custom of the Law, ²⁸ then he took him into his arms, and blessed God, and said,

²⁹ 'Now Lord, You are releasing Your bond-servant to depart in peace,
According to Your word;

³⁰ For my eyes have seen Your salvation,

³¹ Which You have prepared in the presence of all peoples,

³² A light of revelation to the Gentiles,

And the glory of Your people Israel.'

³³ And his father and mother were amazed at the things which were being said about him. ³⁴ And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, 'Behold, this Child is appointed for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and for a sign to be opposed - ³⁵ and a sword will pierce even your own soul--to the end that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed.' ³⁶ And there was a prophetess, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years and had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, ³⁷ and then as a widow to the age of



eighty-four. She never left the temple, serving night and day with fastings and prayers. ³⁸ At that very moment she came up and began giving thanks to God, and continued to speak of him to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem. ³⁹ When they had performed everything according to the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own city of Nazareth.

Foreground Action: Mary Previews the Life of Her Son – His Teaching

^{2:40} The Child continued to grow and become strong, increasing in wisdom; and the grace of God was upon him. ⁴¹ Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. ⁴² And when he became twelve, they went up there according to the custom of the Feast; ⁴³ and as they were returning, after spending the full number of days, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. But his parents were unaware of it, ⁴⁴ but supposed him to be in the caravan, and went a day's journey; and they began looking for him among their relatives and acquaintances. ⁴⁵ When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem looking for him. ⁴⁶ Then, after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷ And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. ⁴⁸ When they saw him, they were astonished; and his mother said to him, 'Son, why have you treated us this way? Behold, your father and I have been anxiously looking for you.' ⁴⁹ And he said to them, 'Why is it that you were looking for me? Did you not know that I had to be in my Father's house?' ⁵⁰ But they did not understand the statement which he had made to them. ⁵¹ And he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and he continued in subjection to them; and his mother treasured all these things in her heart. ⁵² And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

Questions

1. What impresses you about Mary in these episodes?
2. What would it be like for Mary to:
 - a. Hear the shepherds praise her baby boy?
 - b. Hear these venerable, godly elders praise her baby boy?
 - c. Hear the greatest teachers in Israel, in the Temple, praise her son?
3. How is Mary going through the pains of childbirth and childrearing in these episodes? What kinds of things are difficult for her?
 - a. Uprooted and traveling during labor?
 - b. Hearing that "a sword will pierce your own soul?"
 - c. Losing Jesus for 3 days?
4. What kind of positive things does God bring for her to experience? What is that like for her?
5. (repeat from above) What is it like to see an advance screening of a movie that hasn't been released? Or to be someone who gets to hear news before it's publicized? Or to be the first person to taste the wonderful food at a party before anyone else?
6. If you're familiar with the life of Jesus, how was this a small display of the things to come? How might Mary have felt getting a 'sneak preview'?

Mary's Sneak Preview	The Full Blown Showing
Mary sees Elizabeth, who tells her that John the Baptist has leapt in her womb in response to Jesus in Mary's womb. (1:41)	How else did John the Baptist acknowledge Jesus?
Mary meets the shepherds who glorify and praise Jesus, and tell her that angels have also glorified and praised Jesus (2:8-20)	Who else glorified and praised Jesus?
Mary meets Simeon and Anna in the Temple, who tell her that Jesus will be a light to the entire world and bring about the redemption of Jerusalem. (2:21-38)	Who else learned that Jesus would be a light to the whole world, and would redeem Jerusalem to its original purpose as the point from which the Messiah's word would go forth?
Mary finds the child Jesus in the Temple, and the rabbis and teachers are surprised by Jesus and awed at his learning. (2:39-52)	Who else would find Jesus in the Temple teaching and be astonished at him?



Mary's Sneak Preview	The Full Blown Showing
Mary sees Elizabeth, who tells her that John the Baptist has leapt in her womb in response to Jesus in Mary's womb. (1:41)	John the Baptist calls himself (1) the forerunner of the Lord, and (2) the one who baptizes with water but not the Holy Spirit (3:1-20).
Mary meets the shepherds who glorify and praise Jesus, and tell her that angels have also glorified and praised Jesus (2:8-20)	Many other men and women praise Jesus. In the spiritual realm, demons shudder and flee from Jesus, and other angels praise and glorify Jesus at his resurrection (24:1-7).
Mary meets Simeon and Anna in the Temple, who tell her that Jesus will be a light to the entire world and bring about the redemption of Jerusalem. (2:21-38)	Jesus announces his world-wide mission in Nazareth (4:16-30) and heals Jew and Gentile in couplets (7:1-17, 8:26-56). Jesus also claims Jerusalem as the site of much of his teaching, and as the central point from which his teaching goes out to the world. (24:44-53)
Mary finds the child Jesus in the Temple, and the rabbis and teachers are surprised by Jesus and awed at his learning. (2:39-52)	Jesus goes to the Temple and teaches there, and his word goes out from Jerusalem through the apostles. (24:44-53)

7. Often we feel like what we do in ministry by caring for a few people doesn't amount to much. It doesn't seem like we or they are the future leaders of tomorrow. It doesn't seem like we're impacting the world very much. But how does God look upon faithfulness? Especially faithfulness with small things or individuals?

The earliest, most individual, and least obvious part of God's work is often the most important.



Session Six: Simeon and Anna: The Godly Elders in the Temple

Foreground Action: Anna the Widow

²¹ And when eight days had passed, before his circumcision, his name was then called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb. ²² And when the days for their purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord ²³ (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, 'Every firstborn male that opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord,') ²⁴ and to offer a sacrifice according to what was said in the Law of the Lord, 'A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.' ²⁵ And there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Spirit was upon him... ³⁶ And there was a prophetess, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years and had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, ³⁷ and then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple, serving night and day with fastings and prayers. ³⁸ At that very moment she came up and began giving thanks to God, and continued to speak of him to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

Questions

1. What might Anna's life have been like? Recall that Anna had probably gotten married at age 15. She had lost her husband at age 22. Now she's 84 years old. She has served in the Temple at least 60 years.
2. If you can imagine losing your husband, or if you have lost something incredible significant to you, how would you feel about God?
3. After Anna lost her husband, why might she have dedicated herself to serving in the Temple?
4. What kind of community does Anna have? Recall that Anna's friend in the Temple was the old Simeon (in v.23-35). There were probably other devout Jews in the Temple regularly, too.
5. Why might serving in the Temple have been satisfying to Anna?
6. What reward does Anna have for her service? How has God provided for her?
7. What might Anna have felt when she saw the infant Jesus?



Session Seven: The Roman Centurion and the Jewish Widow

Foreground Action: The Widow, a Transformed Woman

^{7:1} When he had completed all his discourse in the hearing of the people, he went to Capernaum. ² And a centurion's slave, who was highly regarded by him, was sick and about to die. ³ When he heard about Jesus, he sent some Jewish elders asking him to come and save the life of his slave. ⁴ When they came to Jesus, they earnestly implored him, saying, 'He is worthy for you to grant this to him; ⁵ for he loves our nation and it was he who built us our synagogue.' ⁶ Now Jesus started on his way with them; and when he was not far from the house, the centurion sent friends, saying to him, 'Lord, do not trouble yourself further, for I am not worthy for you to come under my roof; ⁷ for this reason I did not even consider myself worthy to come to you, but just say the word, and my servant will be healed. ⁸ For I also am a man placed under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to this one, 'Go!' and he goes, and to another, 'Come!' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this!' and he does it.' ⁹ Now when Jesus heard this, he marveled at him, and turned and said to the crowd that was following him, 'I say to you, not even in Israel have I found such great faith.' ¹⁰ When those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the slave in good health. ¹¹ Soon afterwards he went to a city called Nain; and his disciples were going along with him, accompanied by a large crowd. ¹² Now as he approached the gate of the city, a dead man was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow; and a sizeable crowd from the city was with her. ¹³ When the Lord saw her, he felt compassion for her, and said to her, 'Do not weep.' ¹⁴ And he came up and touched the coffin; and the bearers came to a halt. And he said, 'Young man, I say to you, arise!' ¹⁵ The dead man sat up and began to speak. And Jesus gave him back to his mother. ¹⁶ Fear gripped them all, and they began glorifying God, saying, 'A great prophet has arisen among us!' and, 'God has visited His people!' ¹⁷ This report concerning him went out all over Judea and in all the surrounding district.

Introduction Questions

1. What areas of your life do you feel like have 'died' or are on the verge of 'dying'? What hopes and dreams?

Questions

1. Focus on the centurion
 - a. So what's going on? What strikes you as interesting? (how much the centurion cares for this slave)
 - b. Who might the slave be? Perhaps an elderly person that is a tutor to the centurion's children, perhaps a trusted household servant of some sort.
 - c. How is this centurion probably feeling at the start of the story?
 - d. Why does the centurion search for Jesus? He has heard that Jesus is clearly powerful.
 - e. What early indications did this centurion give of faith in Israel's God? He had Jewish elders as friends. He helped build the synagogue in Capernaum.
 - f. So what might he think of Jesus?
 - g. Why might he send Jewish elders first? Perhaps because he respects the existing authority, and thinks that will be influential with Jesus.
 - h. What do you think about the Jewish elders' line of reasoning with Jesus? They emphasize his worthiness, but what worthiness? It's almost as if they're saying he's as close to being Jewish as you can get, because he loves the nation and helped build the synagogue. But he's not Jewish after all, is he? How confident are the elders that Jesus will come? Probably not 100%.
 - i. What major barrier do the elders think they need to overcome? Jewish hatred of Romans, especially centurions. Maybe Jesus shares that hatred.
 - j. When Jesus turns to go to the centurion's house, would the disciples and the crowds have been surprised? (how would the disciples have felt?) Maybe a little, that he would go to a Roman's house. After all, Romans are the enemies of Israel. But on the other hand, the centurion had been good to Israel. So probably mixed.
 - k. Why does the centurion show such respect for Jesus in v.6? humility and respect for Jesus' power.
 - l. Why does the centurion send another delegation, this time of friends? Maybe because he knows how the Jewish elders reasoned on the basis of his worthiness, and is uncomfortable with that. He knows he's unworthy because he's one of the enemy. Maybe because he is respectful of Jewish scruples about a Jew stepping into a Roman's house (it may have been seen as unclean); he doesn't want to make Jesus uncomfortable, though Jesus would have probably come in anyway.



- m. What do you think of the difference in the two appeals, the appeals of the Jewish elders and the centurion's closer friends?
 - n. Why does he have a high regard for Jesus' verbal authority?
 - o. When Jesus praises the Gentile centurion at the expense of the Israelites, how would the Jewish disciples and crowd have felt?
 - p. Briefly, how do you feel about authority in general, and about Jesus' authority in particular?
 - q. In 7:1, the discourse Luke is referring to is the Sermon on the Plain (Lk.6:20ff.) addressed to the disciples and the multitude. What is the implication that a Roman centurion, not an Israelite, is praised immediately afterwards for faith in the authority of Jesus' word?
2. Focus on the widow
- a. Think about the song by Leanne Womack, *I Hope You Dance*, about the hope a parent has for a child. Then consider the pain of having that child die unexpectedly.
 - b. How important was the son to the widow? How much did the widow depend on her only son? A lot. Henceforth the widow is without resources. She is helpless.
 - c. Name what the son means to the widow? Strength, life, sustenance, hope for the future, the center of her life.
 - d. Did the center of your life (or dreams, or hopes, or source of strength) ever collapse or die? Has it ever seemed fragile to you?
 - e. If you were a Jewish onlooker, how would you feel about Jesus touching the coffin? Surprised – it's an unclean thing, and it would make him unclean to touch that.
 - f. Where else have we seen Jesus touch an unclean thing or person? The leper in Lk.5:13: And Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, "I am willing; be cleansed."
 - g. Why do you think Jesus goes out of his way to touch unclean things? Not just "to dispel the myths" as if uncleanness wasn't real. It was real to the Jews. It was to show his power over the Law that defined uncleanness. And also to foreshadow the time when he will take on all of the uncleanness of the world onto himself, and not just touch it, but become it and have it overwhelm him: the Cross.
 - h. What's surprising about this miracle? Jesus doesn't even ask for faith – he is simply compassionate. Jesus touches the coffin when he doesn't need to. Jesus stops his crowd of disciples, which is probably jubilant, to go to the widow's crowd, which is mourning.
 - i. How did the son feel towards Jesus? Was the son devoted to Jesus henceforth? Probably.
 - j. Was the widow devoted to Jesus henceforth? Probably.
 - k. So the widow's strength, life, and hope were now reoriented around Jesus. What does that mean for her? Does she get the same son back? Or a different son?
 - l. In what sense does Jesus give you your strength, life, and hope for your future?
 - m. In what sense does Jesus reorient and redefine your strength, life, and hope?
3. So what might be the possible reasons these two incidents are put together?
- a. Are there limitations on who can approach Jesus? No. In these back to back stories, a Gentile and a Jew are honored. That signifies all humanity.
 - b. How does Jesus heal the centurion's slave and the widow's son? By his word
 - c. How bad of a condition was the centurion's slave in? S/he was almost dead.
 - d. How bad of a condition was the widow's son in? He was dead.
 - e. What forces do Jesus confront in both stories? **Death**. It's almost as if Jesus didn't get a chance to fully demonstrate his power over death in v.1-11, so he raises the widow's son from death as the very next thing he does. Also, **Uncleanness**. It's almost as if Jesus didn't get the chance to touch or penetrate the uncleanness issue in the centurion's house, so he deliberately touches the coffin.
 - f. The son to the widow is even more important than the slave is to the centurion. What does that tell you about Jesus' compassion? It intensifies as we see his power intensify.
 - g. What feels dead in your life? Can you bring those before Jesus in prayer and ask him to speak life into them? Especially if they are words from other people that have really served to define you or really hurt you. Let Jesus' word counteract that.
 - h. Are you – like the widow – willing to let Jesus reorient and redefine what feels dead when he speaks life to you? Are you – like the Roman centurion – willing to trust Jesus' authority?

Centurion	Widow
Gentile (Roman)	Jewish



Loses a slave	Loses a son
Slave is on the verge of death	Son is already dead
His loss is significant	Her loss is more significant
He asks for Jesus	Jesus comes to her
Jesus doesn't get to enter his house, an unclean place	Jesus does touch the coffin, an unclean thing
Jesus heals from a distance	Jesus heals from up close
Jesus heals by his word	Jesus heals by his word
Jesus shows his power to avert death	Jesus shows his power over death



Session Eight: Simon the Pharisee and the Sinful Woman

Transition between Luke 7:1 – 17 and 7:36 – 50

We've just seen that we can trust Jesus with what is close to us, in the examples of the centurion and the widow, people close to us, on our hearts. Now we're about to see that we can trust Jesus with what is core to us, our very identity.

In preparation for this, let's listen to Don Henley's 1987 song, *The End of the Innocence*. Comment on the hopelessness expressed in the song. Have you ever experienced it?

<i>The End of the Innocence</i> by Don Henley Remember when the days were long And rolled beneath a deep blue sky Didn't have a care in the world With mommy and daddy standin' by But "happily ever after" fails And we've been poisoned by these fairy tales The lawyers dwell on small details Since daddy had to fly But I know a place where we can go That's still untouched by men We'll sit and watch the clouds roll by And the tall grass wave in the wind You can lay your head back on the ground And let your hair fall all around me Offer up your best defense But this is the end This is the end of the innocence	O' beautiful, for spacious skies But now those skies are threatening They're beating plowshares into swords For this tired old man that we elected king Armchair warriors often fail And we've been poisoned by these fairy tales The lawyers clean up all details Since daddy had to lie But I know a place where we can go And wash away this sin We'll sit and watch the clouds roll by And the tall grass wave in the wind Just lay your head back on the ground And let your hair spill all around me Offer up your best defense But this is the end This is the end of the innocence	Who knows how long this will last Now we've come so far, so fast But, somewhere back there in the dust That same small town in each of us I need to remember this So baby give me just one kiss And let me take a long last look Before we say goodbye Just lay your head back on the ground And let your hair fall all around me Offer up your best defense But this is the end This is the end of the innocence.
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Commentary on the song: This is how a victim becomes a victimizer. Once upon a time, Mommy and Daddy were standing by as he played and didn't have a care in the world. But then Daddy had to lie, and the lawyers dwelled on small details, the details of who gets what, who's to blame, who gets custody. It's the ugly reality of a divorce that shatters a child's innocence, that tells him the 'happily ever after' spoken of in fairy tales are just that: fairy tales. So he runs with a girlfriend away from home to a field where they can try to be kids again, try to be innocent again. There's a bit of disillusionment with this country as he goes to war. Then finally, there's one last kiss, a long last look before he says goodbye to his woman. He had blown it. *The victim had become a victimizer*, and now he was leaving the woman that he had made promises to; he was hurting the very woman who had trusted him with her innocence. What's left? Offer up your best defense, get ready to have a public legal battle over the fragments of this shattered relationship. They're going through the divorce proceedings. And the third stanza doesn't contain the line, "I know a place where we can go," because there is nowhere left to go. This, indeed, is the end of the innocence.

Foreground Action: The Sinful Woman, a New Identity

^{7:36} Now one of the Pharisees was requesting him to dine with him, and he entered the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. ³⁷ And there was a woman in the city who was a sinner; and when she learned that he was reclining at the table in the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster vial of perfume, ³⁸ and standing behind him at his feet, weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears, and kept wiping them with the hair of her head, and kissing his feet and anointing them with the perfume. ³⁹ Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, 'If this man were a prophet he would know who and what sort of person this woman is who is touching him, that she is a sinner.' ⁴⁰ And Jesus answered him, 'Simon, I have something to say to you.' And he replied, 'Say it, Teacher.' ⁴¹ 'A moneylender had two debtors: one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. ⁴² When they were unable to repay, he graciously forgave them both. So which of them will love him more?' ⁴³ Simon answered



and said, 'I suppose the one whom he forgave more.' And he said to him, 'You have judged correctly.' ⁴⁴ Turning toward the woman, he said to Simon, 'Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. ⁴⁵ You gave me no kiss; but she, since the time I came in, has not ceased to kiss my feet. ⁴⁶ You did not anoint my head with oil, but she anointed my feet with perfume. ⁴⁷ For this reason I say to you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little.' ⁴⁸ Then he said to her, 'Your sins have been forgiven.' ⁴⁹ Those who were reclining at the table with him began to say to themselves, 'Who is this man who even forgives sins?' ⁵⁰ And he said to the woman, 'Your faith has saved you; go in peace.'

Questions

1. Describe the tension between Simon the Pharisee and the sinful woman.
 - a. Who is named in the story? Who is not? What does that mean about social prominence?
 - b. How would Simon the Pharisee describe his identity? Being part of the right crowd that is supposedly truly Jewish, right, proper, upstanding.
 - c. What has his life likely been like?
 - d. What is the woman's identity built around? How would this woman describe her identity?
 - e. What has her life likely been about?
 - f. What was the alabaster vial of perfume worth? If she was a prostitute, would she have used it for her profession?
 - g. When did women typically let down their hair? On their wedding night, for their husbands only.
 - h. What does it mean that she lets down her hair in public to wipe Jesus' feet? That she is totally devoting herself to him.
 - i. Why is she so emotional at Jesus' feet?
 - j. What kind of tensions does her presence cause at the gathering?
 - k. Does Simon the Pharisee speak out loud, or keep his thoughts to himself? Simon talks to himself in v.39. Notice how Jesus 'answered' Simon. How is this similar to what we've seen Jesus do earlier in the story of the paralytic?
2. Describe the tension between Simon the Pharisee and Jesus.
 - a. Why has Simon not treated Jesus with due respect and honor as a guest? He believes he's the one who should be honored.
 - b. Simon thinks Jesus is ignorant of the woman's character and background. He's guessing into Jesus' internal knowing. What's the irony of the situation?
 - c. What does Jesus' parable show? That the woman loves him and Simon doesn't. The internal condition of both of them!
 - d. How does Jesus turn the tables on Simon? Exposing what Simon was thinking. Demonstrating he is a real prophet, a greater one than Simon thought. He not only knows who this woman is, he knows what Simon was thinking. And he makes her identity as forgiven superior to his identity of self-reliance.
 - e. Why is the self-concept of Simon the Pharisee so attractive and yet so dangerous? Why does he refuse to believe Jesus? What's in it for him to continue in unbelief?
3. How does the relationship between the woman and Jesus build?
 - a. Trace the theme of welcoming through the story. Who welcomes who?
 - b. What happens when the woman welcomes Jesus? He restructures the party around her. He says, "This is where the party is really happening." This is awesome: We come to Jesus with basically nothing, owing stuff and coming with less than nothing, but he takes that and turns it into a private party.
 - c. How would you describe the faith of the woman?
 - d. When was the last time we saw the word "faith?" When Jesus praised the centurion for believing his word and rescued the centurion's servant from death. In what sense has this woman been rescued from death? In what sense is being forgiven of sin like being rescued from death?
4. Jesus knowing us. Building the themes through Luke's Gospel
 - a. How does Jesus teach on forgiveness of sins here? How is this similar or different to how he taught about it when he healed the paralytic man? There is no miracle, but there is supernatural knowing (like 5:20-22). Jesus demonstrates that he is a true prophet of God.
 - b. What does Jesus want both of their identities to be built around? Being forgiven, and loving him.
 - c. How does he know where our identities are? He knows unerringly better than we do, and read our hearts and minds.



- d. Why does the question of “Who is Jesus?” lead immediately to “And who am I?” How does this passage make you feel?
- e. (tough application) If it’s hard to believe that you’re a in debt by \$50,000,000 vs. in debt by \$50, where do those self-perceptions come from?

Reflect on Anne Lamott’s conversion (p.49 – 50 from her book *Traveling Mercies* (Pantheon Books: New York, 1999)). What is surprising about the way she encounters Jesus? What impresses you about how Jesus relates to her?

“I didn’t go to the flea market the week of my abortion. I stayed home, smoked dope and got drunk, and tried to write a little, and went for slow walks along the salt marsh with Pammy. On the seventh night, though, very drunk and just about to take a sleeping pill, I discovered that I was bleeding heavily. It did not stop over the next hour. I was going through a pad every fifteen minutes, and I thought I should call a doctor or Pammy, but I was so disgusted that I had gotten so drunk one week after an abortion that I just couldn’t wake someone up and ask for help. I kept on changing Kotex, and I got very sober very quickly. Several hours later, the blood stopped flowing, and I got in bed, shaky and sad and too wild to have another drink or take a sleeping pill. I had a cigarette and turned off the light. After a while, as I lay there, I became aware of someone with me, hunkered down in the corner, and I just assumed it was my father, whose presence I had felt over the years when I was frightened and alone. The feeling was so strong that I actually turned on the light for a moment to make sure no one was there – of course, there wasn’t. But after a while, in the dark again, I knew beyond any doubt that it was Jesus. I felt him as surely as I feel my dog lying nearby as I write this.

“And I was appalled. I thought about my life and my brilliant hilarious progressive friends, I thought about what everyone would think of me if I became a Christian, and it seemed an utterly impossible thing that simply could not be allowed to happen. I turned to the wall and said out loud, “I would rather die.”

“I felt him just sitting there on his haunches in the corner of my sleeping loft, watching me with patience and love, and I squinched my eyes shut, but that didn’t help because that’s not what I was seeing him with.

“Finally I fell asleep, and in the morning, he was gone.

“This experience spooked me badly, but I thought it was just an apparition, born of fear and self-loathing and booze and loss of blood. But then everywhere I went, I had the feeling that a little cat was following me, wanting me to reach down and pick it up, wanting me to open the door and let it in. But I knew what would happen: you let a cat in one time, give it a little milk, and then it stays forever. So I tried to keep one step ahead of it, slamming my houseboat door when I entered or left.

“And one week later, when I went back to church, I was so hungover that I couldn’t stand up for the songs, and this time I stayed for the sermon, which I just thought was ridiculous, like someone trying to convince me of the existence of extraterrestrials, but the last song was so deep and raw and pure that I could not escape. It was as if the people were singing in between the notes, weeping and joyful at the same time, and I felt like their voices or something was rocking me in its bosom, holding me like a scared kid, and I opened up to that feeling – and it washed over me.

“I began to cry and left before the benediction, and I raced home and felt the little cat running along at my heels, and I walked down the dock past dozens of potted flowers, under a sky as blue as one of God’s own dreams, and I opened the door to my houseboat, and I stood there a minute, and then I hung my head and said, “F--- it: I quit.” I took a long deep breath and said out loud, “All right. You can come in.”

“So this was my beautiful moment of conversion.”



Session Nine: The Female Disciples: Mary, Joana, Susanna, and Others

Foreground Action: The Women Who Supported Jesus

^{8:1} Soon afterwards, he began going around from one city and village to another, proclaiming and preaching the kingdom of God. The twelve were with him, ² and also some women who had been healed of evil spirits and sicknesses: Mary who was called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, ³ and Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others who were contributing to their support out of their private means.

Questions

1. Why might these women have been drawn to Jesus?
2. Would these women have naturally befriended each other? Recall that there was enmity between the Jews and Herod's administration (they were Edomites, descended from Esau – though Jacob and Esau made up, the two nation-families weren't always on friendly terms afterwards.). Would Joanna have normally been welcomed by Jewish women?
3. What are the factors that draw you to Jesus?
4. Are there interpersonal, social or even political issues that affect your relationships? How might Jesus help with those?



Session Ten: A Tale of Two Daughters: Jairus' Daughter and the Bleeding Woman

Foreground Action: A Tale of Two Daughters

^{8:40} And as Jesus returned, the people welcomed him, for they had all been waiting for him. ⁴¹ And there came a man named Jairus, and he was an official of the synagogue; and he fell at Jesus' feet, and began to implore him to come to his house; ⁴² for he had an only daughter, about twelve years old, and she was dying. But as he went, the crowds were pressing against him. ⁴³ And a woman who had a hemorrhage for twelve years, and could not be healed by anyone, ⁴⁴ came up behind him and touched the fringe of his cloak, and immediately her hemorrhage stopped. ⁴⁵ And Jesus said, 'Who is the one who touched me?' And while they were all denying it, Peter said, 'Master, the people are crowding and pressing in on you.' ⁴⁶ But Jesus said, 'Someone did touch me, for I was aware that power had gone out of me.' ⁴⁷ When the woman saw that she had not escaped notice, she came trembling and fell down before him, and declared in the presence of all the people the reason why she had touched him, and how she had been immediately healed. ⁴⁸ And he said to her, 'Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace.' ⁴⁹ While he was still speaking, someone came from the house of the synagogue official, saying, 'Your daughter has died; do not trouble the Teacher anymore.' ⁵⁰ But when Jesus heard this, he answered him, 'Do not be afraid any longer; only believe, and she will be made well.' ⁵¹ When he came to the house, he did not allow anyone to enter with him, except Peter and John and James, and the girl's father and mother. ⁵² Now they were all weeping and lamenting for her; but he said, 'Stop weeping, for she has not died, but is asleep.' ⁵³ And they began laughing at him, knowing that she had died. ⁵⁴ He, however, took her by the hand and called, saying, 'Child, arise!' ⁵⁵ And her spirit returned, and she got up immediately; and he gave orders for something to be given her to eat. ⁵⁶ Her parents were amazed; but he instructed them to tell no one what had happened.

Introduction Questions

1. Do you ever feel like who you project on the outside is not who you are on the inside?

Questions:

1. Divide the story up into three parts: (1) Jairus and his daughter; (2) the hemorrhaging woman; (3) Jairus and his daughter). How is Jairus feeling in the first third of the story?
2. What's going on with the hemorrhaging woman?
 - a. What is her need for Jesus? I have been suffering for years with a condition that is humiliating and limiting.
 - b. How is she regarded by other people? As unclean, untouchable, outcast.

Soundtrack/Background Music: Bleeding and Uncleaness

- Lev.15:25 Now if a woman has a discharge of her blood for many days, not at the period of her menstrual impurity, or if she has a discharge beyond that period all the days of her impure discharge she shall continue as though in her menstrual impurity; she is unclean. 26 Any bed on which she lies all the days of her discharge shall be to her like her bed at menstruation; and every thing on which she sits shall be unclean, like her uncleanness at that time. 27 Likewise, whoever touches them shall be unclean and shall wash his clothes and bathe in water and be unclean until evening.
- c. How come she can approach Jesus in a crowd? Probably because, as a Middle Eastern woman, she's cloaked and veiled. No one can recognize her. Otherwise people would not let her through.
 - d. How does she feel in approaching Jesus? Timid, afraid, nervous, self-conscious
 - e. Why does she touch the fringe of Jesus' cloak? What does the fringe or hem symbolize? The Authority of that person. That's why David cut off the fringe of Saul's garment in the cave, initially to show his authority over Saul (1 Sam.24:4), but immediately felt bad that he had violated the king's authority (1 Sam.24:5-15).
 - f. So what is she trusting in? Jesus' authority.
 - g. Where else have we seen Jesus touch an unclean thing or person? The leper in Lk.5:13 and the coffin of the widow's son in 7:14.



- h. Why does Jesus keep touching unclean things? To demonstrate his power over the uncleanness. To show that he reverses the order of things; because he is super-clean, he can make unclean things clean. To foreshadow the Cross, when he touches sin and becomes it.
 - i. How does she know that Jesus healed her? Probably some internal awareness.
 - j. So what's going through her mind right after she got healed?
 - k. How does she feel that Jesus suddenly sought her out when she was healed? Terrified, afraid, nervous, self-conscious
 - l. Why does she become afraid? She is afraid what was hidden inside her will be revealed and known by all.
 - m. So why do you think she eventually comes forward?
 - n. What is she risking by speaking up? People feeling repulsed from her for her uncleanness.
 - o. She comes forward, and tells him and everyone around the whole truth about herself. Why do you think Jesus had her share that? What might that have been like for her?
 - p. Describe what her life feels like afterwards? (listen for 'a new life' as a response – we'll come back to that)
3. How does **Jairus** see the situation, especially while his daughter is on his mind? Fill in the two columns on the right

Jairus' Perspective on...	My daughter	The hemorrhaging woman
How do I know each woman?	<i>She is my daughter. I've loved her for 12 years.</i>	<i>She's known to be unclean. Perhaps even, I told her to keep her distance from my synagogue.</i>
Who do I think is more worthy of being attended to?	<i>My daughter is clean.</i> <i>My daughter is an outstanding hope for Israel, having high status because she is part of the leading synagogue family.</i>	<i>This woman is unclean, and has been an unknown outcast for the past 12 years.</i> <i>She is an outsider in Israel because of her ceremonial uncleanness. She doesn't amount to anything, except that she should be avoided.</i>
Which woman is more needy? Which situation is truly urgent?	<i>My precious daughter is desperately needing help. She is dying and needs healing.</i>	<i>This woman can wait. Her situation may be important, but not urgent. Why is Jesus stalling with her?</i>

- a. How does Jairus feel about the interruption of Jesus healing the hemorrhaging woman? My daughter is more urgently in need than this woman. Why didn't Jesus put her off until later? Maybe also: That was an annoyance, and endangers my daughter. Maybe also: How can Jesus heal her uncleanness like that, and not become unclean himself?
 - b. Jairus is surely familiar with the Old Testament principle that uncleanness is transmitted, but cleanness is not. We see it in the Leviticus passage above. What might surprise Jairus about Jesus letting himself be touched by an unclean woman?
 - c. Why does Jairus become afraid? Because I know my precious daughter is dead and I doubt Jesus' ability to do anything at this point.
 - d. What does he do when Jesus asks him to believe? Maybe: He holds on to hope beyond hope. Maybe: He thinks about the hemorrhaging woman who was just healed miraculously, and hopes that it's possible for Jesus to raise her from the dead.
4. How does **Jesus** see the two situations?

How does Jesus see...	Jairus and his daughter	The hemorrhaging woman
How has each woman been affected?	<i>She is on the verge of death. Jairus is panicking.</i>	<i>She has suffered 12 long years alone and in pain.</i>
Who is clean or unclean?	<i>They are ceremonially clean on the outside, but unclean on the inside (because of sin).</i>	<i>She is ceremonially unclean on the outside, and unclean on the inside.</i>



Which woman is more needy? Which situation is truly urgent?	<i>Both are needy</i>	<i>Both are needy</i>
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- a. Why does Jesus stall with the hemorrhaging woman, for her sake?
- b. Jairus calls his little girl, “Daughter.” But who calls the hemorrhaging woman that? What does Jesus call her? Who does it make Jairus think of?
- c. When the woman tells her whole life story about how she has been unclean for 12 years, what does the significance of the 12 years have on Jairus? Who does it make him think of?
5. What might Jesus be wanting Jairus to see about himself? That he is too in a rush to care about others. That he is underestimating Jesus’ power. But there is more.
 - a. When did the woman start being sick? When Jairus’ daughter was born. The woman has been unclean ever since the girl was born.
 - b. Who does Jairus think of when Jesus calls the woman “Daughter”? His own daughter.
 - c. What two females is Jesus paralleling? The woman and the daughter.
 - d. Does Jesus want Jairus to make the parallel? What does Jesus want Jairus to see about these two females?
6. Fill in the following chart:

Which female?	Socially – Who is the Insider? Outsider?	In order of appearance in the story – Who is on the inside of the story? The outside?	What is the problem they have?	How does Jesus heal this problem?
Jairus’ daughter	Insider	Outside	Sick, dying	
Hemorrhaging woman	Outsider	Inside	Bleeding, unclean	Heals the woman’s bleeding, gives her a new life
Jairus’ daughter	Insider	Outside	Dead	Raises the girl, gives her a new life

7. If Jesus wanted Jairus to see the hemorrhaging woman as a parallel to his own daughter, then what would he see? What is the irony of the parallel? That the woman on the outside is really the inside story of the girl. That his daughter has a problem with uncleanness just like the woman.
8. Also, what do uncleanness and sickness unto death symbolize? Sin.
9. What happens if we see the two females as one woman?

Which female?	Socially – Who is the Insider? Outsider?	In order of appearance in the story – Who is on the inside of the story? The outside?	What is the problem she has?	How does Jesus heal this problem?
Jairus’ daughter	Insider	Outside	Sick, dying	
Hemorrhaging woman	Outsider	Inside	Bleeding, unclean	Heals the woman’s bleeding, gives her a new life
Jairus’ daughter	Insider	Outside	Dead	Raises the girl, gives her a new life
ONE WOMAN WITH TWO PERSONAS	She’s an insider (clean) on the outside	But she’s an outsider (unclean) on the inside	SIN, symbolized by sickness, uncleanness, death	NEW LIFE

Jesus is inviting Jairus to see his daughter and himself in the hemorrhaging woman. (Similarly, we wanted to teach our 6 year old CJ about not throwing temper tantrums. We had him watch with us the movie *The Miracle Worker* about Helen Keller, which showed her throwing temper tantrums. He recognized that this story was like himself, and we could talk to him about it.)



10. Personalize this. Pick one or more of the following questions.
- Go back to the introduction question: Do you ever feel like who you are on the outside is not who you are on the inside?
 - What do you think of the following? “This one is very close to me,” says Jim Carrey of *The Majestic*, the film he’s making about a blacklisted writer who gets in a car accident, loses his memory, and becomes a small-town hero. “I’m growing up, and there’s a lot of me I haven’t shown yet to people. In a way, this is the first time I’ll ever reveal the wounds... Acting is always about finding out what your character wants, and this character, not unlike myself, is dying for self-respect. I grew up wanting to be this special miracle, and I’ve tried to prove that my whole life because of this black hole that is my need.” -Jim Carrey, *TIME* magazine June 25, 2001, p.79
 - Nicholas Cage in the movie *The Family Man* is a high powered finance arbitrage expert in New York City. He has left his college girlfriend behind to pursue his career. He is 35, single, deeply attached to his Ferrari, carelessly shallow in his womanizing, and ruthlessly careerist. He says at the beginning of the movie, “I’m fine. I don’t need anything.” He doesn’t really see into himself. Why does his opinion of himself change? (Because he sees how flawed his life has been.)
 - This passage tells us some bad news about ourselves. What is on the inside of us? If we don’t know Jesus, then what’s on the inside
 - What does the hemorrhaging woman’s life suggest is on the inside of us? We are unclean. Life is slowly but steadily bleeding away. No one has been able to help.
11. (optional) Who is this? Specifically, Israel (link to 12 tribes?). Perhaps even the disciples, too (12 disciples?) before the Resurrection. Generally, all who are not ‘in Christ.’ Jairus, a synagogue leader, should have known. Although the daughter is ceremonially clean on the outside, she is unclean on the inside (spiritually dead). That is why she ‘dies’ before she reaches her adulthood: She has not yet begun to live because of an internal sickness, an ailment which is incurable. Her internal healing, because it is so deep, must be accomplished by being raised back to life. Inner healing requires a resurrection!

Close: (option 1) I love the original version of THE WIZARD OF OZ not just because it’s fun but because it’s a great social commentary. One of the great themes of the movie is man’s inability to change himself. As the lion, the scarecrow, and the tin man follow Dorothy to find the Wizard, they are all seeking something. Desperately!! The lion wants courage so that he could be brave. The scarecrow wants a brain so that he could be wise, and the tin man wants a heart so he can be loving! When they get to the Emerald City of Oz, the Wizard gives the lion not courage, but a medal. He gives the scarecrow not a brain, but a diploma. And he gives the tin man not a heart, but a watch that ticks and a testimonial with nice things written on it about him. You see, one of the things that the Wizard of Oz is pointing out is that what other people see is more important than what’s really there!! And we’re cursed to be that way, because man is absolutely powerless to change the fundamental inner things that are wrong with us!! All our world can do, all anyone can do, is to add to the cheap external decoration. We can try to make people believe in our facade, but on the inside, we could weep over the reality.

Close: (option 2) The Christmas cartoon classic, “How the Grinch Stole Christmas.” The song comes on, “You’re a mean one, Mr. Grinch. With that evil leering smile...” Then Dr. Seuss pulls up an X-ray of the Grinch’s heart, and sure enough, his heart is three sizes too small. He was too evil and cold. So true to his nature, just before Christmas, the Grinch slithers through the town of Whoville and steals everyone’s presents. He drags his heavy sleigh up to the top of Mount Crumpet. There, just before pitching the sled over the edge, his ears hear the sound of singing: the far away singing of the Who’s down in Whoville singing Christmas songs even though they didn’t have any presents. Then, suddenly, the Grinch’s scowling face softens and his heart is changed. It goes from being three sizes too small to literally bursting through the X-ray screen. Then he turns around and slides down Mt. Crumpet just in time to carve the Roast Beast. I think that is an apt analogy for what happens to our hearts when Jesus Christ brings his righteousness into us. God’s very life floods into us, filling our hearts to overflowing.



Session Eleven: A Tale of Two Sisters: Mary and Martha

Foreground Action: Mary and Martha

^{10:25} And a lawyer stood up and put him to the test, saying, 'Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?' ²⁶ And he said to him, 'What is written in the Law? How does it read to you?' ²⁷ And he answered, 'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.' ²⁸ And he said to him, 'You have answered correctly; do this and you will live.' ²⁹ But wishing to justify himself, he said to Jesus, 'And who is my neighbor?' ³⁰ Jesus replied and said, 'A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers, and they stripped him and beat him, and went away leaving him half dead. ³¹ And by chance a priest was going down on that road, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. ³² Likewise a Levite also, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³ But a Samaritan, who was on a journey, came upon him; and when he saw him, he felt compassion, ³⁴ and came to him and bandaged up his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them; and he put him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn and took care of him. ³⁵ On the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper and said, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I return I will repay you.' ³⁶ Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the robbers' hands?' ³⁷ And he said, 'The one who showed mercy toward him.' Then Jesus said to him, 'Go and do the same.'

Possible Introductory Questions (Choose one)

1. Think about some things that other people have said (not done, but said) to you that have been really meaningful. Do you feel like any of those words have contributed to who you are? (after some sharing) Have any of those words been hurtful? How have hurtful words contributed to who you are?

Questions

1. What do you think about these two sisters? Know anybody like them?
2. Describe Martha and Mary using two columns. (typically you'll get responses that Martha is too controlling, judgmental of Mary, etc. while Mary is laid-back and not performance oriented, etc.)
3. (This often confuses an audience who thinks they know what the story is about) But how important was hospitality in that culture? Shouldn't Mary have been serving? Isn't Martha right?
4. What is the main contrast that Jesus makes?
5. What is Mary doing while in table fellowship with Jesus? Listening to Jesus' word. She is not praised for being 'laid-back' in general, and so forth. She is very focused.
6. Why is Mary doing what she's doing? She values what Jesus has to say.
7. What is Martha doing that Jesus thinks she should stop for the moment? Serving, hospitality.
8. Why is Martha doing what she's doing? She thinks first of what she has to give to Jesus, perhaps. More precisely, because she doesn't realize the significance of Jesus' word.
9. How is it that Jesus breaks gender roles here to empower Mary? Teaching her and valuing her learning, which is something only men usually got. Approving of her decision to sit and have conversation, which breaks the gender role that women had to serve while men sat and talked.
10. Why is this a gesture of love on Jesus' part... To Mary? To Martha?
11. Imagine yourself sitting at the table with Jesus, engaging in conversation with him while he explains himself and God's love to you. Would this be helpful for you? Especially if the words that define who you are have been hurtful words?
12. What are some things that distract you from this?
13. Notice that the placement of this story comes right after the parable of the good Samaritan. What two commandments had Jesus just mentioned? Love neighbor, love God. How does Jesus explain loving your neighbor? How does he explain loving God? With this story about sitting and listening to Jesus' word.

Literary structure of Luke 10:25 – 42

- a. Love God
- b. Love neighbor
- b'. Love neighbor redefined: Good Samaritan
- a'. Love God redefined: A woman listening to Jesus' word



Issue	Jewish portrait	Jesus' portrait
Loving God	(a) A man sitting in the Temple reading Moses	(a') A <i>woman</i> sitting at Jesus' feet listening to him
Loving neighbor	(b) Loving a fellow Jew, staying within your national/ethnic boundary	(b') A <i>Samaritan</i> loves a Jew, crossing the national/ethnic boundary

14. How can we value women like Jesus does here?



Session Twelve: Jesus Restores Abraham's Daughter

Foreground Action: Jesus Restores Abraham's Daughter

^{13:10} And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. ¹¹ And there was a woman who for eighteen years had had a sickness caused by a spirit; and she was bent double, and could not straighten up at all. ¹² When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said to her, 'Woman, you are freed from your sickness.' ¹³ And he laid his hands on her; and immediately she was made erect again and began glorifying God. ¹⁴ But the synagogue official, indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, began saying to the crowd in response, 'There are six days in which work should be done; so come during them and get healed, and not on the Sabbath day.' ¹⁵ But the Lord answered him and said, 'You hypocrites, does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the stall and lead him away to water him?' ¹⁶ And this woman, a daughter of Abraham as she is, whom Satan has bound for eighteen long years, should she not have been released from this bond on the Sabbath day?' ¹⁷ As he said this, all his opponents were being humiliated; and the entire crowd was rejoicing over all the glorious things being done by him.

Questions

1. Why does Jesus go to the synagogues? To witness to the Jews.
2. Who does he encounter this time?
3. Have you ever had back pain? What is it like?
4. What must have it been like for this woman to not stand straight for 18 years?
5. As she went around with other people who walked straight, how do you think she felt?
6. How much effort did it take her to live life?
7. What must she have wanted? Healing, freedom from the spirit, rest, completion. To be 'fully human.'
8. In creation, when was humanity brought to fullness, rest and completion? The seventh day, on the sabbath.
9. Who robbed humanity of fullness, rest, and completion? Satan.
10. So was the Sabbath just something past to be remembered? No. It was a state of blessing that was going to be restored to humanity.
11. Why was it appropriate for Jesus to heal this woman on the Sabbath?
12. On what day did the synagogue leader want Jesus to heal this woman?
13. Why? He thinks it's work to heal this woman.
14. Is it work for Jesus?
15. Why does Jesus seem to want to perform miraculous healings on the Sabbath?
16. What did the synagogue leaders not understand about the meaning of the Sabbath?
17. Who has tried to keep humanity from being fully healed and completed through Jesus?
18. In what areas of life do you feel like you don't stand straight? Where you feel slanted towards others in an unhealthy way? Think about C. S. Lewis' and Leanne Payne's images of the bent person, bent because their sense of self is damaged and defined by other people.
19. In what areas of your life do you want more healing from Jesus?



Session Thirteen: Jesus is Like a Woman Searching for Her Lost Inheritance

Foreground Action: Like a Woman Searching for Her Inheritance

^{15:1} Now all the tax collectors and the sinners were coming near him to listen to him. ² Both the Pharisees and the scribes began to grumble, saying, 'This man receives sinners and eats with them.' ³ So he told them this parable, (...Jesus gives the parable of the shepherd seeking the lost sheep...) ⁸ Or what woman, if she has ten silver coins and loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? ⁹ When she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin which I had lost!' ¹⁰ In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents." (Then Jesus gives the parable of the father of the two lost sons...)

Questions

1. Who are the tax-collectors and sinners?
2. Who might the religious establishment regard today with equal hostility?
3. What is the woman searching for?
4. Why is one coin out of ten so valuable to her? It is part of her dowry inheritance, and is often worn on a necklace as a set. So the loss is more than the value of a single coin. Like losing one baseball card from a set makes the set lost a lot more value.
5. Describe the intensity of the woman's search.
6. Why does the woman want to celebrate? Why is she filled with joy?
7. What kind of celebration is this? A party with a meal.
8. What is the significance of a person to God?
9. How is a woman's valuing of her inheritance a small representation of God's love?
10. Are you comfortable with God pictured as a shepherd? A father? A housewife?
11. How does Jesus dignify women by using a woman as a metaphor for his own ministry?
12. How can we better honor women as examples of Jesus' own mission?



Session Fourteen: The Generous Widow: The Most Devoted Person in the Temple

Foreground Action: The Devoted Widow

^{21:1} And he looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury. ² And he saw a poor widow putting in two small copper coins. ³ And he said, 'Truly I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all of them; ⁴ for they all out of their surplus put into the offering; but she out of her poverty put in all that she had to live on.'

Question

1. Why does Jesus commend this widow?
2. How could Jesus commend a person in her financial situation for giving? Why not give her her money back?
3. In what ways is she being rich towards God? What kind of treasure in heaven does she have?
4. In what ways is the widow a model for us?

Throughout this session, we've seen four stories, all of which have women as examples. Women are examples of listening (and not listening) to Jesus. A woman is an example of what it means to be bent, and to be healed. A woman is an example of Jesus' own ministry. And a woman is an example of faithfulness to God. How do you feel about these four stories?



Session Fifteen: Witnesses to Jesus' Burial and Resurrection

Foreground Action: The Crucifixion

²⁷ And following him was a large crowd of the people, and of women who were mourning and lamenting him. ²⁸ But Jesus turning to them said, 'Daughters of Jerusalem, stop weeping for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. ²⁹ For behold, the days are coming when they will say, 'Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never nursed.' ³⁰ Then they will begin to say to the mountains, 'Fall on us,' and to the hills, 'Cover us.' ³¹ For if they do these things when the tree is green, what will happen when it is dry?' ³² Two others also, who were criminals, were being led away to be put to death with him. ³³ When they came to the place called The Skull, there they crucified him and the criminals, one on the right and the other on the left. ³⁴ But Jesus was saying, 'Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.' And they cast lots, dividing up his garments among themselves. ³⁵ And the people stood by, looking on. And even the rulers were sneering at him, saying, 'He saved others; let him save himself if this is the Christ of God, His chosen one.' ³⁶ The soldiers also mocked him, coming up to him, offering him sour wine, ³⁷ and saying, 'If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!' ³⁸ Now there was also an inscription above him, 'This is the King of the Jews.' ³⁹ One of the criminals who were hanged there was hurling abuse at him, saying, 'Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!' ⁴⁰ But the other answered, and rebuking him said, 'Do you not even fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation?' ⁴¹ And we indeed are suffering justly, for we are receiving what we deserve for our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong.' ⁴² And he was saying, 'Jesus, remember me when you come in your kingdom!' ⁴³ And he said to him, 'Truly I say to you, today you shall be with me in Paradise.' ⁴⁴ It was now about the sixth hour, and darkness fell over the whole land until the ninth hour, ⁴⁵ because the sun was obscured; and the veil of the temple was torn in two. ⁴⁶ And Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said, 'Father, into your hands I commit my Spirit.' Having said this, he breathed his last. ⁴⁷ Now when the centurion saw what had happened, he began praising God, saying, 'Certainly this man was innocent.' ⁴⁸ And all the crowds who came together for this spectacle, when they observed what had happened, began to return, beating their breasts. ⁴⁹ And all his acquaintances and the women who accompanied him from Galilee were standing at a distance, seeing these things. ⁵⁰ And a man named Joseph, who was a member of the Council, a good and righteous man ⁵¹ (he had not consented to their plan and action), a man from Arimathea, a city of the Jews, who was waiting for the kingdom of God; ⁵² this man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. ⁵³ And he took it down and wrapped it in a linen cloth, and laid him in a tomb cut into the rock, where no one had ever lain. ⁵⁴ It was the preparation day, and the Sabbath was about to begin. ⁵⁵ Now the women who had come with him out of Galilee followed, and saw the tomb and how his body was laid. ⁵⁶ Then they returned and prepared spices and perfumes. And on the Sabbath they rested according to the commandment. ^{24:1} But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared. ² And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, ³ but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. ⁴ While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men suddenly stood near them in dazzling clothing; ⁵ and as the women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, 'Why do you seek the living One among the dead? ⁶ He is not here, but he has risen. Remember how he spoke to you while he was still in Galilee, ⁷ saying that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.' ⁸ And they remembered his words, ⁹ and returned from the tomb and reported all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. ¹⁰ Now they were Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James; also the other women with them were telling these things to the apostles. ¹¹ But these words appeared to them as nonsense, and they would not believe them.

Questions

1. Is this interesting to you? In what ways? (spend about 10 minutes on this, and transition to the literary structure of the passage)
2. Look at it again in a literary form. Now what gets your attention?



Literary Outline of Luke's Crucifixion-Resurrection Narrative: Luke 22:49 – 24:53

1. Jesus' arrest, his surrender to the chief priests after being continually in the temple. 22:49-53
 2. Prophecy fulfilled: Simon Peter betrays Jesus. 22:54-62
 3. Jesus reveals himself obliquely as the Son of God. 22:63-71
 4. Two do not understand Jesus' identity: Herod and Pilate. 23:1-25
 5. Simon of Cyrene witnesses and shoulders the Cross. 23:23-26
 - 6. Women, the daughters of Jerusalem. 23:27-31**
 7. Jesus crucified. 23:32-34
 8. Unbelieving Jews: The rulers of the Jews sneered at Jesus. 23:35
 9. Unbelieving Gentiles: The soldiers mock Jesus. 23:36-38
 10. Unbelieving Criminal: Criminal hurls curses at Jesus. 23:39
 - 10'. Believing Criminal: Criminal believes Jesus, receives paradise. 23:40-43
 - 9'. Believing Gentiles: The centurion praised God. 23:44-49
 - 8'. Believing Jews: Joseph, a member of the council, cares for Jesus' body. 23:50-52
 - 7'. Jesus buried. 23:53-54
 - 6'. Women, who had followed Jesus. 23:55-24:11**
 - 5'. Simon Peter witnesses the empty tomb. 24:12
 - 4'. Two eventually understand Jesus' identity: Emmaus disciples. 24:13-35
 - 3'. Jesus reveals himself as the risen Messiah. 24:36-43
 - 2'. Prophecy fulfilled: Moses, Prophets, Psalms testify to Messiah. 24:44-49
 - 1'. Jesus' departure, promise of the Holy Spirit; disciples continually in the temple. 24:50-53
-
3. Pay special attention to points 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and their counterpoints. We are going to look closely at three pairs of people.
 4. How do the unbelieving Jews respond to Jesus?
 5. Why do they respond that way?
 6. How do they define power and how does Jesus seem to fail that definition?
 7. How do the unbelieving Gentiles respond to Jesus?
 8. Why do they respond that way?
 9. How do they define power and how does Jesus seem to fail that definition?
 10. How does the unbelieving criminal respond to Jesus?
 11. Why does he respond that way?
 12. How does they define power and how does Jesus seem to fail that definition?
 13. The believing criminal:
 - a. Why does the believing criminal believe Jesus? He sees the way Jesus is dying, and admires him for his composure and innocence.
 - b. What crime did the criminal probably commit? He was a *lestes*, a revolutionary.
 - c. How serious is that crime? More severely punished than murder, even today.
 - d. Why would he believe that someone also being sentenced to death could be the Messiah?
 - e. In what sense was Jesus a revolutionary also?
 - f. How does the criminal drop his notion of revolution and identify himself with Jesus' idea of true revolution?
 - g. What keeps the unbelieving criminal in the state of unbelief?
 - h. What does Jesus say to the believing criminal in return?
 - i. How does the believing criminal 'evangelize' his unbelieving friend?
 - j. Both criminals die but what difference will the believing criminal experience?
 14. The centurion who praised God:
 - a. Why does the Roman centurion praise God after watching Jesus on the cross?
 - b. How does this contrast with the other Romans?
 - c. By suggesting that Jesus is righteous and innocent, what does the centurion suggest about the Roman system of justice? That it failed and made a profound mistake here.
 - d. How patriotic of a statement is this? Not at all.
 - e. So how is this centurion disidentifying with his world?
 - f. What did the Roman centurion go home thinking about?
 15. Joseph of Arimathea
 - a. Why does Joseph care for Jesus' body?



- b. Imagine Joseph taking Jesus' body off the cross. How does he drape Jesus' limbs over himself? How much of Jesus' blood does he get on himself?
 - c. What statement is Joseph making in public about his relationship to Jesus?
 - d. What is Joseph giving up to do this? His career, his social position. Joseph dies with Jesus.
 - e. Joseph identifies himself with Jesus' death. Have you done so, too? Have you identified yourself with Jesus' death?
16. What division does the Cross introduce in humanity? Why? The Cross divides humanity up into two groups. This division is more fundamental than any other division that previously existed, including that of race, ethnicity, socioeconomic class, political party, warring peoples, human religion. How do you feel about this?
17. Do you ever notice that you can tell when non-Christians are on the verge of accepting Jesus when they're the most against him? Notice that the progression of feelings against Jesus gets higher from the top to the center?
18. The women
- a. Why does Jesus speak to the daughters of Jerusalem? Who are they? Why are they doing what they're doing?
 - b. What do they expect to happen?
 - c. What does Jesus say will happen?
 - d. What do you think their reaction was?
 - e. Why do the women at the tomb get to see the angels and the empty tomb? Who are they? Why are they doing what they're doing?
 - f. What do they expect to happen?
 - g. What do they find? What do the angels say has happened?
 - h. What do you think their reaction was?
 - i. When darkness falls on the land in 23:44, where is the next mention of darkness/light? The angels' dazzling clothes the women see in 24:4. They are the first to see spiritual light.
 - j. What do the two groups of women represent in the story? Israel's despair and the church's hope.
 - k. So what? Let's read on...



Session Sixteen: A Lesson in Lying and Integrity: Sapphira

^{4:32} And the congregation of those who believed were of one heart and soul; and not one of them claimed that anything belonging to him was his own, but all things were common property to them. ³³ And with great power the apostles were giving testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and abundant grace was upon them all. ³⁴ For there was not a needy person among them, for all who were owners of land or houses would sell them and bring the proceeds of the sales ³⁵ and lay them at the apostles' feet, and they would be distributed to each as any had need. ³⁶ Now Joseph, a Levite of Cyprian birth, who was also called Barnabas by the apostles (which translated means Son of Encouragement), ³⁷ and who owned a tract of land, sold it and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet. ^{5:1} But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, ² and kept back some of the price for himself, with his wife's full knowledge, and bringing a portion of it, he laid it at the apostles' feet. ³ But Peter said, 'Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back some of the price of the land? ⁴ 'While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control? Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God.' ⁵ And as he heard these words, Ananias fell down and breathed his last; and great fear came over all who heard of it. ⁶ The young men got up and covered him up, and after carrying him out, they buried him. ⁷ Now there elapsed an interval of about three hours, and his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. ⁸ And Peter responded to her, 'Tell me whether you sold the land for such and such a price?' And she said, 'Yes, that was the price.' ⁹ Then Peter said to her, 'Why is it that you have agreed together to put the Spirit of the Lord to the test? Behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out as well.' ¹⁰ And immediately she fell at his feet and breathed her last, and the young men came in and found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her beside her husband. ¹¹ And great fear came over the whole church, and over all who heard of these things.



Session Seventeen: When Your Ministry Isn't Done: Tabitha

When Your Ministry Isn't Done

Acts 9:36 Now in Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (which translated in Greek is called Dorcas); this woman was abounding with deeds of kindness and charity which she continually did. ³⁷ And it happened at that time that she fell sick and died; and when they had washed her body, they laid it in an upper room. ³⁸ Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, having heard that Peter was there, sent two men to him, imploring him, 'Do not delay in coming to us.' ³⁹ So Peter arose and went with them. When he arrived, they brought him into the upper room; and all the widows stood beside him, weeping and showing all the tunics and garments that Dorcas used to make while she was with them. ⁴⁰ But Peter sent them all out and knelt down and prayed, and turning to the body, he said, 'Tabitha, arise.' And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter, she sat up. ⁴¹ And he gave her his hand and raised her up; and calling the saints and widows, he presented her alive. ⁴² It became known all over Joppa, and many believed in the Lord.



Session Eighteen: When You're a Launching Pad: Lydia

When You're a Launching Pad

Acts 16:1 Paul came also to Derbe and to Lystra. And a disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek,² and he was well spoken of by the brethren who were in Lystra and Iconium.³ Paul wanted this man to go with him; and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those parts, for they all knew that his father was a Greek.⁴ Now while they were passing through the cities, they were delivering the decrees which had been decided upon by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem, for them to observe.⁵ So the churches were being strengthened in the faith, and were increasing in number daily.⁶ They passed through the Phrygian and Galatian region, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia;⁷ and after they came to Mysia, they were trying to go into Bithynia, and the Spirit of Jesus did not permit them;⁸ and passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas.⁹ A vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing and appealing to him, and saying, 'Come over to Macedonia and help us.'¹⁰ When he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.¹¹ So putting out to sea from Troas, we ran a straight course to Samothrace, and on the day following to Neapolis;¹² and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia, a Roman colony; and we were staying in this city for some days.¹³ And on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to a riverside, where we were supposing that there would be a place of prayer; and we sat down and began speaking to the women who had assembled.¹⁴ A woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God, was listening; and the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul.¹⁵ And when she and her household had been baptized, she urged us, saying, 'If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and stay.' And she prevailed upon us.¹⁶ It happened that as we were going to the place of prayer, a slave-girl having a spirit of divination met us, who was bringing her masters much profit by fortune-telling.¹⁷ Following after Paul and us, she kept crying out, saying, 'These men are bond-servants of the Most High God, who are proclaiming to you the way of salvation.'¹⁸ She continued doing this for many days. But Paul was greatly annoyed, and turned and said to the spirit, 'I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her!' And it came out at that very moment.¹⁹ But when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the market place before the authorities,²⁰ and when they had brought them to the chief magistrates, they said, 'These men are throwing our city into confusion, being Jews,²¹ and are proclaiming customs which it is not lawful for us to accept or to observe, being Romans.'²² The crowd rose up together against them, and the chief magistrates tore their robes off them and proceeded to order them to be beaten with rods.²³ When they had struck them with many blows, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to guard them securely;²⁴ and he, having received such a command, threw them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.²⁵ But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God, and the prisoners were listening to them;²⁶ and suddenly there came a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison house were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were unfastened.²⁷ When the jailer awoke and saw the prison doors opened, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped.²⁸ But Paul cried out with a loud voice, saying, 'Do not harm yourself, for we are all here!'²⁹ And he called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas,³⁰ and after he brought them out, he said, 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?'³¹ They said, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.'³² And they spoke the word of the Lord to him together with all who were in his house.³³ And he took them that very hour of the night and washed their wounds, and immediately he was baptized, he and all his household.³⁴ And he brought them into his house and set food before them, and rejoiced greatly, having believed in God with his whole household.³⁵ Now when day came, the chief magistrates sent their policemen, saying, 'Release those men.'³⁶ And the jailer reported these words to Paul, saying, 'The chief magistrates have sent to release you. Therefore come out now and go in peace.'³⁷ But Paul said to them, 'They have beaten us in public without trial, men who are Romans, and have thrown us into prison; and now are they sending us away secretly? No indeed! But let them come themselves and bring us out.'³⁸ The policemen reported these words to the chief magistrates. They were afraid when they heard that they were Romans,³⁹ and they came and appealed to them, and when they had brought them out, they kept begging them to leave the city.⁴⁰ They went out of the prison and entered the house of Lydia, and when they saw the brethren, they encouraged them and departed.



Session Nineteen: An Example of a Missional Couple: Priscilla and Aquila

An Example of a Missional Couple

Acts 18:1 After these things he left Athens and went to Corinth. ² And he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, having recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome. He came to them, ³ and because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and they were working, for by trade they were tent-makers. ⁴ And he was reasoning in the synagogue every Sabbath and trying to persuade Jews and Greeks. ⁵ But when Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia, Paul began devoting himself completely to the word, solemnly testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ. ⁶ But when they resisted and blasphemed, he shook out his garments and said to them, 'Your blood be on your own heads! I am clean. From now on I will go to the Gentiles.' ⁷ Then he left there and went to the house of a man named Titius Justus, a worshiper of God, whose house was next to the synagogue. ⁸ Crispus, the leader of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with all his household, and many of the Corinthians when they heard were believing and being baptized. ⁹ And the Lord said to Paul in the night by a vision, 'Do not be afraid any longer, but go on speaking and do not be silent; ¹⁰ for I am with you, and no man will attack you in order to harm you, for I have many people in this city.' ¹¹ And he settled there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them. ¹² But while Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews with one accord rose up against Paul and brought him before the judgment seat, ¹³ saying, 'This man persuades men to worship God contrary to the law.' ¹⁴ But when Paul was about to open his mouth, Gallio said to the Jews, 'If it were a matter of wrong or of vicious crime, O Jews, it would be reasonable for me to put up with you; ¹⁵ but if there are questions about words and names and your own law, look after it yourselves; I am unwilling to be a judge of these matters.' ¹⁶ And he drove them away from the judgment seat. ¹⁷ And they all took hold of Sosthenes, the leader of the synagogue, and began beating him in front of the judgment seat. But Gallio was not concerned about any of these things. ¹⁸ Paul, having remained many days longer, took leave of the brethren and put out to sea for Syria, and with him were Priscilla and Aquila. In Cenchrea he had his hair cut, for he was keeping a vow. ¹⁹ They came to Ephesus, and he left them there. Now he himself entered the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. ²⁰ When they asked him to stay for a longer time, he did not consent, ²¹ but taking leave of them and saying, 'I will return to you again if God wills,' he set sail from Ephesus. ²² When he had landed at Caesarea, he went up and greeted the church, and went down to Antioch. ²³ And having spent some time there, he left and passed successively through the Galatian region and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples. ²⁴ Now a Jew named Apollos, an Alexandrian by birth, an eloquent man, came to Ephesus; and he was mighty in the Scriptures. ²⁵ This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he was speaking and teaching accurately the things concerning Jesus, being acquainted only with the baptism of John; ²⁶ and he began to speak out boldly in the synagogue. But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately. ²⁷ And when he wanted to go across to Achaia, the brethren encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him; and when he had arrived, he greatly helped those who had believed through grace, ²⁸ for he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, demonstrating by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.



Session Twenty: The Four Prophetesses, Daughters of Philip

^{21:1} When we had parted from them and had set sail, we ran a straight course to Cos and the next day to Rhodes and from there to Patara; ² and having found a ship crossing over to Phoenicia, we went aboard and set sail. ³ When we came in sight of Cyprus, leaving it on the left, we kept sailing to Syria and landed at Tyre; for there the ship was to unload its cargo. ⁴ After looking up the disciples, we stayed there seven days; and they kept telling Paul through the Spirit not to set foot in Jerusalem. ⁵ When our days there were ended, we left and started on our journey, while they all, with wives and children, escorted us until we were out of the city. After kneeling down on the beach and praying, we said farewell to one another. ⁶ Then we went on board the ship, and they returned home again. ⁷ When we had finished the voyage from Tyre, we arrived at Ptolemais, and after greeting the brethren, we stayed with them for a day. ⁸ On the next day we left and came to Caesarea, and entering the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, we stayed with him. ⁹ Now this man had four virgin daughters who were prophetesses. ¹⁰ As we were staying there for some days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. ¹¹ And coming to us, he took Paul's belt and bound his own feet and hands, and said, 'This is what the Holy Spirit says: 'In this way the Jews at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.' ¹² When we had heard this, we as well as the local residents began begging him not to go up to Jerusalem. ¹³ Then Paul answered, 'What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but even to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.' ¹⁴ And since he would not be persuaded, we fell silent, remarking, 'The will of the Lord be done!'



Women Restored, Women Restoring **A Study Guide to the Theme of Women in Luke – Acts** Part 2: Manuscript for Participants

Thesis Statement #1: Jesus Reverses the Fall, Returns Us to Eden (Luke 24:13 – 53)

The Fall	The Restoration
Two people, a couple	
Walking with God	
Knowing Him	
Eat what was forbidden	
Their eyes were opened	
They focused on themselves	
They disobeyed God's word and 'gained wisdom'	
Fell into separation from God	
Recognized they were naked	
Could not eat with God as freely as before	
Commanded to spread over the earth to proclaim their rule over it	

Fall	Woman	Speaks a lie	Persuades Man	Leads to Death
Restoration	Women	Speak truth (of the empty tomb)	Does not persuade Men; Jesus has to intervene	Leads to Life

Thesis Statement #2: Your Sons and Daughters Will Prophesy (Acts 2:1 – 18)

	At the Beginning of the Story	A Major Character	Quotes from the OT	To Summarize How the Spirit Will Empower Proclamation	And Then It Happens!
Luke	Luke 4	Jesus	Isaiah 61	'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me... to preach...to proclaim... ' (Luke 4:18 – 19)	Jesus preaches and proclaims. (Luke 4:20ff.)
Acts	Acts 2	Simon Peter	Joel 2	'And it shall be in the last days that I will pour forth of My Spirit on all mankind and your sons and daughters shall prophesy ...I will in those days pour forth of My Spirit and they shall prophesy .' (Acts 2:17 – 18)	The apostles and other leaders proclaim and prophesy. (Acts 2:19ff.)



Abraham and Sarah	Elkanah and Hannah	Zacharias and Elizabeth
Genesis 11:27 – 22:24	1 Samuel 1:1 – 2:10	Luke 1:5 – 80
Age: elderly	Age: unknown	Age: elderly
Abraham and Sarah long for a child; want to bestow an inheritance, and nurture faith and hope in God	Hannah longs for a child; Elkanah indifferent because he has children by a second wife	Zacharias and Elizabeth long for a child
God speaks to Abraham and Sarah (directly)	God speaks to Hannah (through Eli)	God speaks to Zacharias (through Gabriel)
Abraham believes first, Sarah believes second	Hannah believes first, Elkanah's belief seems irrelevant	Elizabeth believes first? Zacharias believes second?
Abraham bears witness first, Sarah bears witness second	Hannah bears witness	Elizabeth bears witness first, Zacharias bears witness second
Isaac born supernaturally	Samuel born in response to prayer	John the Baptist born supernaturally (Jesus born supernaturally)
	Hannah sings a song of praise	(Mary sings a song of praise) Zacharias sings a song of praise
Isaac anoints Jacob, the father of the twelve tribes of Israel	Samuel anoints David, the king of Israel	John anoints Jesus, the last king of Israel

- Elizabeth is a greater Sarah because she believes and her husband doesn't.
- Elizabeth is a greater Hannah because her son anoints the final Davidic king, not the first.

Eve	Mary
Disregarded God's word	Obedient to God's word
Distrusted God's word and intention	Trusted God's word and intention
Wanted to be greater than God	Humbled herself before God as His bonds slave
Led to the Fall of humanity	Led to the Restoration of humanity
Her son Cain succumbed to Satan	Her son Jesus triumphed over Satan

- Mary is the reversal of Eve because she takes her identity as God's handmaiden/bonds slave
- Mary's faithfulness leads to the Restoration of humanity

Centurion	Widow
Gentile (Roman)	Jewish
Loses a slave	Loses a son
Slave is on the verge of death	Son is already dead
His loss is significant	Her loss is more significant
He asks for Jesus	Jesus comes to her
Jesus does not get to go into his house, an unclean place	Jesus does touch the coffin, an unclean item
Jesus shows his power to avert death	Jesus shows his power over death

- Jesus does a greater miracle for the widow than for the centurion.

Issue	Jewish portrait	Jesus' portrait
Loving God	(a) A man sitting in the Temple reading Moses	(a') A woman sitting at Jesus' feet listening to him



Loving neighbor	(b) Loving a fellow Jew, staying within your national/ethnic boundary	(b') A <i>Samaritan</i> loves a Jew, crossing the national/ethnic boundary
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- Jesus redefines loving God with a portrait of a woman, not a man.

Fall	Woman	Speaks a lie	Persuades Man	Leads to Death
Restoration	Women	Speak truth (of the empty tomb)	Does not persuade Men; Jesus has to intervene	Leads to Life

- In the fall, the man believes the woman. In the restoration, however, the men do not believe the women (24:11, 22-24).
- What does this tell us? Eve was the first to start the momentum towards sin, and women are the first to start the momentum towards the redemption. Eve led Adam into sin and death through her word, and women lead men into restoration and life through their word, which is the word of Jesus' resurrection. The chronological order of redemption matches the chronological order of the fall. Women are thus redeemed and restored first, chronologically, and then men. That's why women (Elizabeth and Mary) are highlighted first in the Gospel – they are the first people through whom God really ushers in the fullness of redemption.
- All this is not to say that God does a greater work for women than He does for men. But it is to say that God works to undo sin in the order *in which it has happened*. In relation to humanity in general, He started the kingdom proclamation with women because a woman precipitated the fall from paradise. In relation to any given individual, He starts at the core, moving that core identity issue, and then continues to work outward.



Women Restored, Women Restoring The Theme of Women in Luke – Acts

Session One: Jesus Reverses the Fall, Returns Us to Eden

Foreground Action: An Encounter with the Resurrected Jesus

Literary Outline of Luke's Crucifixion-Resurrection Narrative: Luke 22:49 – 24:53

1. Jesus' arrest, his surrender to the chief priests after being continually in the temple. 22:49-53
2. Prophecy fulfilled: Simon Peter betrays Jesus. 22:54-62
3. Jesus reveals himself obliquely as the Son of God. 22:63-71
4. Two do not understand Jesus' identity: Herod and Pilate. 23:1-25
5. Simon of Cyrene witnesses and shoulders the Cross. 23:23-26
6. Women, the daughters of Jerusalem. 23:27-31
7. Jesus crucified. 23:32-34
8. Unbelieving Jews: The rulers of the Jews sneered at Jesus. 23:35
9. Unbelieving Gentiles: The soldiers mock Jesus. 23:36-38
10. Unbelieving Criminal: Criminal hurls curses at Jesus. 23:39
- 10'. Believing Criminal: Criminal believes Jesus, receives **paradise**. 23:40-43
- 9'. Believing Gentiles: The centurion praised God. 23:44-49
- 8'. Believing Jews: Joseph, a member of the council, cares for Jesus' body. 23:50-52
- 7'. Jesus buried. 23:53-54
- 6'. Women, who had followed Jesus. 23:55-24:11
- 5'. Simon Peter witnesses the empty tomb. 24:12
- 4'. Two eventually understand Jesus' identity: Emmaus disciples. 24:13-35**
- 3'. Jesus reveals himself as the risen Messiah. 24:36-43
- 2'. Prophecy fulfilled: Moses, Prophets, Psalms testify to Messiah. 24:44-49
- 1'. Jesus' departure, promise of the Holy Spirit; disciples continually in the temple. 24:50-53

^{24:13} And behold, two of them were going that very day to a village named Emmaus, which was about seven miles from Jerusalem. ¹⁴ And they were talking with each other about all these things which had taken place. ¹⁵ While they were talking and discussing, Jesus himself approached and began traveling with them. ¹⁶ But their eyes were prevented from recognizing him. ¹⁷ And he said to them, 'What are these words that you are exchanging with one another as you are walking?' And they stood still, looking sad. ¹⁸ One of them, named Cleopas, answered and said to him, 'Are you the only one visiting Jerusalem and unaware of the things which have happened here in these days?' ¹⁹ And he said to them, 'What things?' And they said to him, 'The things about Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word in the sight of God and all the people, ²⁰ and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered him to the sentence of death, and crucified him. ²¹ But we were hoping that it was he who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, it is the third day since these things happened. ²² But also some women among us amazed us. When they were at the tomb early in the morning, ²³ and did not find his body, they came, saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said that he was alive. ²⁴ Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just exactly as the women also had said; but him they did not see.' ²⁵ And he said to them, 'O foolish men and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into his glory?' ²⁷ Then beginning with Moses and with all the prophets, he explained to them the things concerning himself in all the Scriptures. ²⁸ And they approached the village where they were going, and he acted as though he were going farther. ²⁹ But they urged him, saying, 'Stay with us, for it is getting toward evening, and the day is now nearly over.' So he went in to stay with them. ³⁰ When he had reclined at the table with them, he took the bread and blessed it, and breaking it, he began giving it to them. ³¹ Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him; and he vanished from their sight. ³² They said to one another, 'Were not our hearts burning within us while he was speaking to us on the road, while he was explaining the Scriptures to us?' ³³ And they got up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found gathered together the eleven and those who were with them, ³⁴ saying, 'The Lord has really risen and has appeared to Simon.' ³⁵ They began to relate their experiences on the road and how he was recognized by them in the breaking of the bread. ³⁶ While they were telling these things, he himself stood in their midst and said to them, 'Peace be to you.' ³⁷ But they were startled and frightened and thought that they were seeing a spirit. ³⁸ And he said to them, 'Why are you troubled, and why do doubts arise in your hearts? ³⁹ See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; touch me and see, for a spirit does not



have flesh and bones as you see that I have.’⁴⁰ And when he had said this, he showed them his hands and his feet.⁴¹ While they still could not believe it because of their joy and amazement, he said to them, ‘Have you anything here to eat?’⁴² They gave him a piece of a broiled fish;⁴³ and he took it and ate it before them.⁴⁴ Now he said to them, ‘These are my words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things which are written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.’⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures,⁴⁶ and he said to them, ‘Thus it is written, that the Christ would suffer and rise again from the dead the third day,⁴⁷ and that repentance for forgiveness of sins would be proclaimed in his name to all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.⁴⁸ You are witnesses of these things.⁴⁹ And behold, I am sending forth the promise of my Father upon you; but you are to stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high.’⁵⁰ And he led them out as far as Bethany, and he lifted up his hands and blessed them.⁵¹ While he was blessing them, he parted from them and was carried up into heaven.⁵² And they, after worshiping him, returned to Jerusalem with great joy,⁵³ and were continually in the temple praising God.

Soundtrack/Background Music: Eating With God

- Gen.2:16 And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “From any tree of the garden, eating you will eat.”
- Ex.24:9 Then Moses went up with Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel, 10 and they saw the God of Israel, and under His feet there appeared to be a pavement of sapphire, as clear as the sky itself. 11 Yet He did not stretch out His hand against the nobles of the sons of Israel; and they beheld God, and they ate and drank.
- Ps.23:5 Thou dost prepare a table before me.
- Isa.55:1 Ho! Every one who thirsts, come to the waters; and you who have no money come, buy and eat. Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost. 2 Why do you spend your money for what is not bread, and your wages for what does not satisfy? Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourself in abundance.

Soundtrack/Background Music: The Fall into Self-Centered Sight

- Gen.3:6 And she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate. 7 Then the eyes of both of them were opened, and they knew that they were naked...

The Fall	The Restoration
Two people, a couple	
Walking with God	
Knowing Him	
Eat what was forbidden	
Their eyes were opened	
They focused on themselves	
They disobeyed God’s word and ‘gained wisdom’	
Fell into separation from God	
Recognized they were naked	
Could not eat with God as freely as before	
Commanded to spread over the earth to proclaim their rule over it	

Fall	Woman	Speaks a lie	Persuades Man	Leads to Death
Restoration	Women	Speak truth (of the empty tomb)	Does not persuade Men; Jesus has to intervene	Leads to Life



Session Two: Thesis Statement #2: Your Sons and Daughters Will Prophecy

Foreground Action: Your Sons and Daughters Will Prophecy

Acts 2:1 When the day of Pentecost had come, they were all together in one place. ² And suddenly there came from heaven a noise like a violent rushing wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. ³ And there appeared to them tongues as of fire distributing themselves, and they rested on each one of them. ⁴ And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit was giving them utterance. ⁵ Now there were Jews living in Jerusalem, devout men from every nation under heaven. ⁶ And when this sound occurred, the crowd came together, and were bewildered because each one of them was hearing them speak in his own language. ⁷ They were amazed and astonished, saying, ‘Why, are not all these who are speaking Galileans?’ ⁸ ‘And how is it that we each hear them in our own language to which we were born?’ ⁹ ‘Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and residents of Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, ¹⁰ Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the districts of Libya around Cyrene, and visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, ¹¹ Cretans and Arabs--we hear them in our own tongues speaking of the mighty deeds of God.’ ¹² And they all continued in amazement and great perplexity, saying to one another, ‘What does this mean?’ ¹³ But others were mocking and saying, ‘They are full of sweet wine.’ ¹⁴ But Peter, taking his stand with the eleven, raised his voice and declared to them: ‘Men of Judea and all you who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you and give heed to my words. ¹⁵ For these men are not drunk, as you suppose, for it is only the third hour of the day; ¹⁶ but this is what was spoken of through the prophet Joel: ¹⁷ ‘And it shall be in the last days,’ God says, ‘That I will pour forth of My Spirit on all mankind; and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, and your young men shall see visions, and your old men shall dream dreams; ¹⁸ even on My bondslaves, both men and women, I will in those days pour forth of My Spirit and they shall prophesy.

	At the Beginning of the Story	A Major Character	Quotes from the OT	To Summarize How the Spirit Will Empower Proclamation	And Then It Happens!
Luke	Luke 4	Jesus	Isaiah 61	‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon me... to preach...to proclaim... ’ (Luke 4:18 – 19)	Jesus preaches and proclaims. (Luke 4:20ff.)
Acts	Acts 2	Simon Peter	Joel 2	‘And it shall be in the last days that I will pour forth of My Spirit on all mankind and your sons and daughters shall prophesy ...I will in those days pour forth of My Spirit and they shall prophesy. ’ (Acts 2:17 – 18)	The apostles and other leaders proclaim and prophesy. (Acts 2:19ff.)



Session Three: The First Witness to the Restoration: Elizabeth

Foreground Action: Elizabeth's Joy

Lk.1:5 In the days of Herod, king of Judea, there was a priest named Zacharias, of the division of Abijah; and he had a wife from the daughters of Aaron, and her name was Elizabeth. ⁶ They were both righteous in the sight of God, walking blamelessly in all the commandments and requirements of the Lord. ⁷ But they had no child, because Elizabeth was barren, and they were both advanced in years. ⁸ Now it happened that while he was performing his priestly service before God in the appointed order of his division, ⁹ according to the custom of the priestly office, he was chosen by lot to enter the temple of the Lord and burn incense. ¹⁰ And the whole multitude of the people were in prayer outside at the hour of the incense offering. ¹¹ And an angel of the Lord appeared to him, standing to the right of the altar of incense. ¹² Zacharias was troubled when he saw the angel, and fear gripped him. ¹³ But the angel said to him, 'Do not be afraid, Zacharias, for your petition has been heard, and your wife Elizabeth will bear you a son, and you will give him the name John. ¹⁴ You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth. ¹⁵ For he will be great in the sight of the Lord; and he will drink no wine or liquor, and he will be filled with the Holy Spirit while yet in his mother's womb. ¹⁶ And he will turn many of the sons of Israel back to the Lord their God. ¹⁷ It is he who will go as a forerunner before him in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers back to the children, and the disobedient to the attitude of the righteous, so as to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.' ¹⁸ Zacharias said to the angel, 'How will I know this for certain? For I am an old man and my wife is advanced in years.' ¹⁹ The angel answered and said to him, 'I am Gabriel, who stands in the presence of God, and I have been sent to speak to you and to bring you this good news. ²⁰ And behold, you shall be silent and unable to speak until the day when these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled in their proper time.' ²¹ The people were waiting for Zacharias, and were wondering at his delay in the temple. ²² But when he came out, he was unable to speak to them; and they realized that he had seen a vision in the temple; and he kept making signs to them, and remained mute. ²³ When the days of his priestly service were ended, he went back home. ²⁴ After these days Elizabeth his wife became pregnant, and she kept herself in seclusion for five months, saying, ²⁵ 'This is the way the Lord has dealt with me in the days when He looked with favor upon me, to take away my disgrace among men.'

1:39 Now at this time Mary arose and went in a hurry to the hill country, to a city of Judah, ⁴⁰ and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. ⁴² And she cried out with a loud voice and said, 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! ⁴³ And how has it happened to me, that the mother of my Lord would come to me? ⁴⁴ For behold, when the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby leaped in my womb for joy. ⁴⁵ And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what had been spoken to her by the Lord.'

1:57 Now the time had come for Elizabeth to give birth, and she gave birth to a son. ⁵⁸ Her neighbors and her relatives heard that the Lord had displayed His great mercy toward her; and they were rejoicing with her. ⁵⁹ And it happened that on the eighth day they came to circumcise the child, and they were going to call him Zacharias, after his father. ⁶⁰ But his mother answered and said, 'No indeed; but he shall be called John.' ⁶¹ And they said to her, 'There is no one among your relatives who is called by that name.' ⁶² And they made signs to his father, as to what he wanted him called. ⁶³ And he asked for a tablet and wrote as follows, 'His name is John.' And they were all astonished. ⁶⁴ And at once his mouth was opened and his tongue loosed, and he began to speak in praise of God. ⁶⁵ Fear came on all those living around them; and all these matters were being talked about in all the hill country of Judea. ⁶⁶ All who heard them kept them in mind, saying, 'What then will this child turn out to be?' For the hand of the Lord was certainly with him.

Soundtrack/Background Music: Old Couples and Supernatural Sons

Abraham and Sarah	Elkanah and Hannah	Zacharias and Elizabeth
Genesis 11:27 – 22:24	1 Samuel 1:1 – 2:10	Luke 1:5 – 80
Age: elderly	Age: unknown	



Abraham and Sarah long for a child; want to bestow an inheritance, and nurture faith and hope in God	Hannah longs for a child; Elkanah indifferent because he has children by a second wife	
God speaks to Abraham and Sarah (directly)	God speaks to Hannah (through Eli)	
Abraham believes first, Sarah believes second	Hannah believes first, Elkanah's belief seems irrelevant	
Abraham bears witness first Sarah bears witness second	Hannah bears witness	
Isaac born supernaturally	Samuel born in response to prayer	John the Baptist born supernaturally (Jesus born supernaturally)
	Hannah sings a song of praise	(Mary sings a song of praise) Zacharias sings a song of praise
Isaac anoints Jacob, the father of the twelve tribes of Israel	Samuel anoints David, the king of Israel	John anoints Jesus, the last king of Israel



Session Four: Mary, Mother of the King, a Second David

Foreground Action: Mary's Story

^{1:26} Now in the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city in Galilee called Nazareth, ²⁷ to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the descendants of David; and the virgin's name was Mary. ²⁸ And coming in, he said to her, 'Greetings, favored one! The Lord is with you.' ²⁹ But she was very perplexed at this statement, and kept pondering what kind of salutation this was. ³⁰ The angel said to her, 'Do not be afraid, Mary; for you have found favor with God. ³¹ And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall name him Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High; and the Lord God will give him the throne of his father David; ³³ and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and his kingdom will have no end.' ³⁴ Mary said to the angel, 'How can this be, since I am a virgin?' ³⁵ The angel answered and said to her, 'The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; and for that reason the holy Child shall be called the Son of God. ³⁶ And behold, even your relative Elizabeth has also conceived a son in her old age; and she who was called barren is now in her sixth month. ³⁷ For nothing will be impossible with God.' ³⁸ And Mary said, 'Behold, the bondservant of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word.' And the angel departed from her. ³⁹ Now at this time Mary arose and went in a hurry to the hill country, to a city of Judah, ⁴⁰ and entered the house of Zacharias and greeted Elizabeth. ⁴¹ When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby leaped in her womb; and Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit. ⁴² And she cried out with a loud voice and said, 'Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the fruit of your womb! ⁴³ And how has it happened to me, that the mother of my Lord would come to me? ⁴⁴ For behold, when the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the baby leaped in my womb for joy. ⁴⁵ And blessed is she who believed that there would be a fulfillment of what had been spoken to her by the Lord.'

Soundtrack/Background Music: The Seed of the Woman

- Gen.3:14 The LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, cursed are you more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; on your belly you will go, and dust you will eat all the days of your life; 15 and I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed; he shall bruise you on the head, and you shall bruise him on the heel."

Eve	Mary
Disregarded God's word	
Distrusted God's word and intention	
Wanted to be greater than God	
Led to the Fall of humanity	
Her son Cain succumbed to Satan	



Session Five: Mary Previews the Life of Her Son: His Glory, Mission, and Teaching

Foreground Action: Mary Previews the Life of Her Son – His Glory

^{2:1} Now in those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus, that a census be taken of all the inhabited earth. ² This was the first census taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria. ³ And everyone was on his way to register for the census, each to his own city. ⁴ Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and family of David, ⁵ in order to register along with Mary, who was engaged to him, and was with child. ⁶ While they were there, the days were completed for her to give birth. ⁷ And she gave birth to her firstborn son; and she wrapped him in cloths, and laid him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn. ⁸ In the same region there were some shepherds staying out in the fields and keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ And an angel of the Lord suddenly stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened. ¹⁰ But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; ¹¹ for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. ¹² This will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.' ¹³ And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying, ¹⁴ 'Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased.' ¹⁵ When the angels had gone away from them into heaven, the shepherds began saying to one another, 'Let us go straight to Bethlehem then, and see this thing that has happened which the Lord has made known to us.' ¹⁶ So they came in a hurry and found their way to Mary and Joseph, and the baby as he lay in the manger. ¹⁷ When they had seen this, they made known the statement which had been told them about this Child. ¹⁸ And all who heard it wondered at the things which were told them by the shepherds. ¹⁹ But Mary treasured all these things, pondering them in her heart. ²⁰ The shepherds went back, glorifying and praising God for all that they had heard and seen, just as had been told them.

Foreground Action: Mary Previews the Life of Her Son – His Mission

^{2:21} And when eight days had passed, before his circumcision, his name was then called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb. ²² And when the days for their purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord ²³ (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, 'Every firstborn male that opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord,') ²⁴ and to offer a sacrifice according to what was said in the Law of the Lord, 'A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.' ²⁵ And there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Spirit was upon him. ²⁶ And it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit that he would not see death before he had seen the Lord's Christ. ²⁷ And he came in the Spirit into the temple; and when the parents brought in the child Jesus, to carry out for him the custom of the Law, ²⁸ then he took him into his arms, and blessed God, and said,

²⁹ 'Now Lord, You are releasing Your bond-servant to depart in peace,
According to Your word;

³⁰ For my eyes have seen Your salvation,

³¹ Which You have prepared in the presence of all peoples,

³² A light of revelation to the Gentiles,

And the glory of Your people Israel.'

³³ And his father and mother were amazed at the things which were being said about him. ³⁴ And Simeon blessed them and said to Mary his mother, 'Behold, this Child is appointed for the fall and rise of many in Israel, and for a sign to be opposed - ³⁵ and a sword will pierce even your own soul--to the end that thoughts from many hearts may be revealed.' ³⁶ And there was a prophetess, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years and had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, ³⁷ and then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple, serving night and day with fastings and prayers. ³⁸ At that very moment she came up and began giving thanks to God, and continued to speak of him to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem. ³⁹ When they had performed everything according to the Law of the Lord, they returned to Galilee, to their own city of Nazareth.



Foreground Action: Mary Previews the Life of Her Son – His Teaching

^{2:40} The Child continued to grow and become strong, increasing in wisdom; and the grace of God was upon him. ⁴¹ Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the Feast of the Passover. ⁴² And when he became twelve, they went up there according to the custom of the Feast; ⁴³ and as they were returning, after spending the full number of days, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. But his parents were unaware of it, ⁴⁴ but supposed him to be in the caravan, and went a day's journey; and they began looking for him among their relatives and acquaintances. ⁴⁵ When they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem looking for him. ⁴⁶ Then, after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the teachers, both listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷ And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. ⁴⁸ When they saw him, they were astonished; and his mother said to him, 'Son, why have you treated us this way? Behold, your father and I have been anxiously looking for you.' ⁴⁹ And he said to them, 'Why is it that you were looking for me? Did you not know that I had to be in my Father's house?' ⁵⁰ But they did not understand the statement which he had made to them. ⁵¹ And he went down with them and came to Nazareth, and he continued in subjection to them; and his mother treasured all these things in her heart. ⁵² And Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men.

Mary's Sneak Preview	The Full Blown Showing
Mary sees Elizabeth, who tells her that John the Baptist has leapt in her womb in response to Jesus in Mary's womb. (1:41)	How else did John the Baptist acknowledge Jesus?
Mary meets the shepherds who glorify and praise Jesus, and tell her that angels have also glorified and praised Jesus (2:8-20)	Who else glorified and praised Jesus?
Mary meets Simeon and Anna in the Temple, who tell her that Jesus will be a light to the entire world and bring about the redemption of Jerusalem. (2:21-38)	Who else learned that Jesus would be a light to the whole world, and would redeem Jerusalem to its original purpose as the point from which the Messiah's word would go forth?
Mary finds the child Jesus in the Temple, and the rabbis and teachers are surprised by Jesus and awed at his learning. (2:39-52)	Who else would find Jesus in the Temple teaching and be astonished at him?



Session Six: Simeon and Anna: The Godly Elders in the Temple

Foreground Action: Anna the Widow

²¹ And when eight days had passed, before his circumcision, his name was then called Jesus, the name given by the angel before he was conceived in the womb. ²² And when the days for their purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to the Lord ²³ (as it is written in the Law of the Lord, ‘Every firstborn male that opens the womb shall be called holy to the Lord,’), ²⁴ and to offer a sacrifice according to what was said in the Law of the Lord, ‘A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.’ ²⁵ And there was a man in Jerusalem whose name was Simeon; and this man was righteous and devout, looking for the consolation of Israel; and the Holy Spirit was upon him... ³⁶ And there was a prophetess, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was advanced in years and had lived with her husband seven years after her marriage, ³⁷ and then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple, serving night and day with fastings and prayers. ³⁸ At that very moment she came up and began giving thanks to God, and continued to speak of him to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.



Session Seven: The Roman Centurion and the Jewish Widow

Foreground Action: The Widow, a Transformed Woman

^{7:1} When he had completed all his discourse in the hearing of the people, he went to Capernaum. ² And a centurion's slave, who was highly regarded by him, was sick and about to die. ³ When he heard about Jesus, he sent some Jewish elders asking him to come and save the life of his slave. ⁴ When they came to Jesus, they earnestly implored him, saying, 'He is worthy for you to grant this to him; ⁵ for he loves our nation and it was he who built us our synagogue.' ⁶ Now Jesus started on his way with them; and when he was not far from the house, the centurion sent friends, saying to him, 'Lord, do not trouble yourself further, for I am not worthy for you to come under my roof; ⁷ for this reason I did not even consider myself worthy to come to you, but just say the word, and my servant will be healed. ⁸ For I also am a man placed under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to this one, 'Go!' and he goes, and to another, 'Come!' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this!' and he does it.' ⁹ Now when Jesus heard this, he marveled at him, and turned and said to the crowd that was following him, 'I say to you, not even in Israel have I found such great faith.' ¹⁰ When those who had been sent returned to the house, they found the slave in good health. ¹¹ Soon afterwards he went to a city called Nain; and his disciples were going along with him, accompanied by a large crowd. ¹² Now as he approached the gate of the city, a dead man was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow; and a sizeable crowd from the city was with her. ¹³ When the Lord saw her, he felt compassion for her, and said to her, 'Do not weep.' ¹⁴ And he came up and touched the coffin; and the bearers came to a halt. And he said, 'Young man, I say to you, arise!' ¹⁵ The dead man sat up and began to speak. And Jesus gave him back to his mother. ¹⁶ Fear gripped them all, and they began glorifying God, saying, 'A great prophet has arisen among us!' and, 'God has visited His people!' ¹⁷ This report concerning him went out all over Judea and in all the surrounding district.



Session Eight: Simon the Pharisee and the Sinful Woman

<i>The End of the Innocence</i> by Don Henley Remember when the days were long And rolled beneath a deep blue sky Didn't have a care in the world With mommy and daddy standin' by But "happily ever after" fails And we've been poisoned by these fairy tales The lawyers dwell on small details Since daddy had to fly But I know a place where we can go That's still untouched by men We'll sit and watch the clouds roll by And the tall grass wave in the wind You can lay your head back on the ground And let your hair fall all around me Offer up your best defense But this is the end This is the end of the innocence	O' beautiful, for spacious skies But now those skies are threatening They're beating plowshares into swords For this tired old man that we elected king Armchair warriors often fail And we've been poisoned by these fairy tales The lawyers clean up all details Since daddy had to lie But I know a place where we can go And wash away this sin We'll sit and watch the clouds roll by And the tall grass wave in the wind Just lay your head back on the ground And let your hair spill all around me Offer up your best defense But this is the end This is the end of the innocence	Who knows how long this will last Now we've come so far, so fast But, somewhere back there in the dust That same small town in each of us I need to remember this So baby give me just one kiss And let me take a long last look Before we say goodbye Just lay your head back on the ground And let your hair fall all around me Offer up your best defense But this is the end This is the end of the innocence.
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Foreground Action: The Sinful Woman, a New Identity

^{7:36} Now one of the Pharisees was requesting him to dine with him, and he entered the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. ³⁷ And there was a woman in the city who was a sinner; and when she learned that he was reclining at the table in the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster vial of perfume, ³⁸ and standing behind him at his feet, weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears, and kept wiping them with the hair of her head, and kissing his feet and anointing them with the perfume. ³⁹ Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, 'If this man were a prophet he would know who and what sort of person this woman is who is touching him, that she is a sinner.' ⁴⁰ And Jesus answered him, 'Simon, I have something to say to you.' And he replied, 'Say it, Teacher.' ⁴¹ 'A moneylender had two debtors: one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. ⁴² When they were unable to repay, he graciously forgave them both. So which of them will love him more?' ⁴³ Simon answered and said, 'I suppose the one whom he forgave more.' And he said to him, 'You have judged correctly.' ⁴⁴ Turning toward the woman, he said to Simon, 'Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. ⁴⁵ You gave me no kiss; but she, since the time I came in, has not ceased to kiss my feet. ⁴⁶ You did not anoint my head with oil, but she anointed my feet with perfume. ⁴⁷ For this reason I say to you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little.' ⁴⁸ Then he said to her, 'Your sins have been forgiven.' ⁴⁹ Those who were reclining at the table with him began to say to themselves, 'Who is this man who even forgives sins?' ⁵⁰ And he said to the woman, 'Your faith has saved you; go in peace.'



Reflect on Anne Lamott's conversion (p.49 – 50 from her book *Traveling Mercies* (Pantheon Books: New York, 1999)). What is surprising about the way she encounters Jesus? What impresses you about how Jesus relates to her?

"I didn't go to the flea market the week of my abortion. I stayed home, smoked dope and got drunk, and tried to write a little, and went for slow walks along the salt marsh with Pammy. On the seventh night, though, very drunk and just about to take a sleeping pill, I discovered that I was bleeding heavily. It did not stop over the next hour. I was going through a pad every fifteen minutes, and I thought I should call a doctor or Pammy, but I was so disgusted that I had gotten so drunk one week after an abortion that I just couldn't wake someone up and ask for help. I kept on changing Kotex, and I got very sober very quickly. Several hours later, the blood stopped flowing, and I got in bed, shaky and sad and too wild to have another drink or take a sleeping pill. I had a cigarette and turned off the light. After a while, as I lay there, I became aware of someone with me, hunkered down in the corner, and I just assumed it was my father, whose presence I had left over the years when I was frightened and alone. The feeling was so strong that I actually turned on the light for a moment to make sure no one was there – of course, there wasn't. But after a while, in the dark again, I knew beyond any doubt that it was Jesus. I felt him as surely as I feel my dog lying nearby as I write this.

"And I was appalled. I thought about my life and my brilliant hilarious progressive friends, I thought about what everyone would think of me if I became a Christian, and it seemed an utterly impossible thing that simply could not be allowed to happen. I turned to the wall and said out loud, "I would rather die."

"I felt him just sitting there on his haunches in the corner of my sleeping loft, watching me with patience and love, and I squinched my eyes shut, but that didn't help because that's not what I was seeing him with.

"Finally I fell asleep, and in the morning, he was gone.

"This experience spooked me badly, but I thought it was just an apparition, born of fear and self-loathing and booze and loss of blood. But then everywhere I went, I had the feeling that a little cat was following me, wanting me to reach down and pick it up, wanting me to open the door and let it in. But I knew what would happen: you let a cat in one time, give it a little milk, and then it stays forever. So I tried to keep one step ahead of it, slamming my houseboat door when I entered or left.

"And one week later, when I went back to church, I was so hungover that I couldn't stand up for the songs, and this time I stayed for the sermon, which I just thought was ridiculous, like someone trying to convince me of the existence of extraterrestrials, but the last song was so deep and raw and pure that I could not escape. It was as if the people were singing in between the notes, weeping and joyful at the same time, and I felt like their voices or something was rocking me in its bosom, holding me like a scared kid, and I opened up to that feeling – and it washed over me.

"I began to cry and left before the benediction, and I raced home and felt the little cat running along at my heels, and I walked down the dock past dozens of potted flowers, under a sky as blue as one of God's own dreams, and I opened the door to my houseboat, and I stood there a minute, and then I hung my head and said, "F--- it: I quit." I took a long deep breath and said out loud, "All right. You can come in."

"So this was my beautiful moment of conversion."



Session Nine: The Female Disciples: Mary, Joana, Susanna, and Others

Foreground Action: The Women Who Supported Jesus

^{8:1} Soon afterwards, he began going around from one city and village to another, proclaiming and preaching the kingdom of God. The twelve were with him, ² and also some women who had been healed of evil spirits and sicknesses: Mary who was called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, ³ and Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others who were contributing to their support out of their private means.

Session Ten: A Tale of Two Daughters: Jairus' Daughter and the Bleeding Woman

Foreground Action: A Tale of Two Daughters

^{8:40} And as Jesus returned, the people welcomed him, for they had all been waiting for him. ⁴¹ And there came a man named Jairus, and he was an official of the synagogue; and he fell at Jesus' feet, and began to implore him to come to his house; ⁴² for he had an only daughter, about twelve years old, and she was dying. But as he went, the crowds were pressing against him. ⁴³ And a woman who had a hemorrhage for twelve years, and could not be healed by anyone, ⁴⁴ came up behind him and touched the fringe of his cloak, and immediately her hemorrhage stopped. ⁴⁵ And Jesus said, 'Who is the one who touched me?' And while they were all denying it, Peter said, 'Master, the people are crowding and pressing in on you.' ⁴⁶ But Jesus said, 'Someone did touch me, for I was aware that power had gone out of me.' ⁴⁷ When the woman saw that she had not escaped notice, she came trembling and fell down before him, and declared in the presence of all the people the reason why she had touched him, and how she had been immediately healed. ⁴⁸ And he said to her, 'Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace.' ⁴⁹ While he was still speaking, someone came from the house of the synagogue official, saying, 'Your daughter has died; do not trouble the Teacher anymore.' ⁵⁰ But when Jesus heard this, he answered him, 'Do not be afraid any longer; only believe, and she will be made well.' ⁵¹ When he came to the house, he did not allow anyone to enter with him, except Peter and John and James, and the girl's father and mother. ⁵² Now they were all weeping and lamenting for her; but he said, 'Stop weeping, for she has not died, but is asleep.' ⁵³ And they began laughing at him, knowing that she had died. ⁵⁴ He, however, took her by the hand and called, saying, 'Child, arise!' ⁵⁵ And her spirit returned, and she got up immediately; and he gave orders for something to be given her to eat. ⁵⁶ Her parents were amazed; but he instructed them to tell no one what had happened.

Soundtrack/Background Music: Bleeding and Uncleaness

- Lev.15:25 Now if a woman has a discharge of her blood for many days, not at the period of her menstrual impurity, or if she has a discharge beyond that period all the days of her impure discharge she shall continue as though in her menstrual impurity; she is unclean. 26 Any bed on which she lies all the days of her discharge shall be to her like her bed at menstruation; and every thing on which she sits shall be unclean, like her uncleanness at that time. 27 Likewise, whoever touches them shall be unclean and shall wash his clothes and bathe in water and be unclean until evening.



Jairus' Perspective on...	My daughter	The hemorrhaging woman
How do I know each woman?		
Who do I think is more worthy of being attended to?		
Which woman is more needy? Which situation is truly urgent?		

How does Jesus see...	Jairus and his daughter	The hemorrhaging woman
How has each woman been affected?		
Who is clean or unclean?		
Which woman is more needy? Which situation is truly urgent?		

Which female?	Socially – Who is the Insider? Outsider?	In order of appearance in the story – Who is on the inside of the story? The outside?	What is the problem they have?	How does Jesus heal this problem?
Jairus' daughter				
Hemorrhaging woman				
Jairus' daughter				

Which female?	Socially – Who is the Insider? Outsider?	In order of appearance in the story – Who is on the inside of the story? The outside?	What is the problem she has?	How does Jesus heal this problem?
Jairus' daughter				
Hemorrhaging woman				
Jairus' daughter				



Session Eleven: A Tale of Two Sisters

Foreground Action: Mary and Martha

^{10:25} And a lawyer stood up and put him to the test, saying, ‘Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?’ ²⁶ And he said to him, ‘What is written in the Law? How does it read to you?’ ²⁷ And he answered, ‘You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your strength, and with all your mind; and your neighbor as yourself.’ ²⁸ And he said to him, ‘You have answered correctly; do this and you will live.’ ²⁹ But wishing to justify himself, he said to Jesus, ‘And who is my neighbor?’ ³⁰ Jesus replied and said, ‘A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among robbers, and they stripped him and beat him, and went away leaving him half dead. ³¹ And by chance a priest was going down on that road, and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. ³² Likewise a Levite also, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³ But a Samaritan, who was on a journey, came upon him; and when he saw him, he felt compassion, ³⁴ and came to him and bandaged up his wounds, pouring oil and wine on them; and he put him on his own beast, and brought him to an inn and took care of him. ³⁵ On the next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper and said, ‘Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I return I will repay you.’ ³⁶ Which of these three do you think proved to be a neighbor to the man who fell into the robbers’ hands?’ ³⁷ And he said, ‘The one who showed mercy toward him.’ Then Jesus said to him, ‘Go and do the same.’

Session Twelve: Jesus Restores Abraham’s Daughter

Foreground Action: Jesus Restores Abraham’s Daughter

^{13:10} And he was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. ¹¹ And there was a woman who for eighteen years had had a sickness caused by a spirit; and she was bent double, and could not straighten up at all. ¹² When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said to her, ‘Woman, you are freed from your sickness.’ ¹³ And he laid his hands on her; and immediately she was made erect again and began glorifying God. ¹⁴ But the synagogue official, indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, began saying to the crowd in response, ‘There are six days in which work should be done; so come during them and get healed, and not on the Sabbath day.’ ¹⁵ But the Lord answered him and said, ‘You hypocrites, does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the stall and lead him away to water him?’ ¹⁶ And this woman, a daughter of Abraham as she is, whom Satan has bound for eighteen long years, should she not have been released from this bond on the Sabbath day?’ ¹⁷ As he said this, all his opponents were being humiliated; and the entire crowd was rejoicing over all the glorious things being done by him.



Session Thirteen: Jesus is Like a Woman Searching for Her Lost Inheritance

Foreground Action: Like a Woman Searching for Her Inheritance

^{15:1} Now all the tax collectors and the sinners were coming near him to listen to him. ² Both the Pharisees and the scribes began to grumble, saying, ‘This man receives sinners and eats with them.’ ³ So he told them this parable, (...Jesus gives the parable of the shepherd seeking the lost sheep...) ⁸ Or what woman, if she has ten silver coins and loses one coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? ⁹ When she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin which I had lost!’ ¹⁰ In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.” (Then Jesus gives the parable of the father of the two lost sons...)

Session Fourteen: The Generous Widow: The Most Devoted Person in the Temple

Foreground Action: Like a Devoted Widow

^{21:1} And he looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the treasury. ² And he saw a poor widow putting in two small copper coins. ³ And he said, ‘Truly I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all of them; ⁴ for they all out of their surplus put into the offering; but she out of her poverty put in all that she had to live on.’



Session Fifteen: Witnesses to Jesus' Burial and Resurrection

Foreground Action: The Crucifixion

^{23:27} And following him was a large crowd of the people, and of women who were mourning and lamenting him. ²⁸ But Jesus turning to them said, 'Daughters of Jerusalem, stop weeping for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. ²⁹ For behold, the days are coming when they will say, 'Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never nursed.' ³⁰ Then they will begin to say to the mountains, 'Fall on us,' and to the hills, 'Cover us.' ³¹ For if they do these things when the tree is green, what will happen when it is dry?' ³² Two others also, who were criminals, were being led away to be put to death with him. ³³ When they came to the place called The Skull, there they crucified him and the criminals, one on the right and the other on the left. ³⁴ But Jesus was saying, 'Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.' And they cast lots, dividing up his garments among themselves. ³⁵ And the people stood by, looking on. And even the rulers were sneering at him, saying, 'He saved others; let him save himself if this is the Christ of God, His chosen one.' ³⁶ The soldiers also mocked him, coming up to him, offering him sour wine, ³⁷ and saying, 'If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!' ³⁸ Now there was also an inscription above him, 'This is the King of the Jews.' ³⁹ One of the criminals who were hanged there was hurling abuse at him, saying, 'Are you not the Christ? Save yourself and us!' ⁴⁰ But the other answered, and rebuking him said, 'Do you not even fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation?' ⁴¹ And we indeed are suffering justly, for we are receiving what we deserve for our deeds; but this man has done nothing wrong.' ⁴² And he was saying, 'Jesus, remember me when you come in your kingdom!' ⁴³ And he said to him, 'Truly I say to you, today you shall be with me in Paradise.' ⁴⁴ It was now about the sixth hour, and darkness fell over the whole land until the ninth hour, ⁴⁵ because the sun was obscured; and the veil of the temple was torn in two. ⁴⁶ And Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said, 'Father, into your hands I commit my Spirit.' Having said this, he breathed his last. ⁴⁷ Now when the centurion saw what had happened, he began praising God, saying, 'Certainly this man was innocent.' ⁴⁸ And all the crowds who came together for this spectacle, when they observed what had happened, began to return, beating their breasts. ⁴⁹ And all his acquaintances and the women who accompanied him from Galilee were standing at a distance, seeing these things. ⁵⁰ And a man named Joseph, who was a member of the Council, a good and righteous man ⁵¹ (he had not consented to their plan and action), a man from Arimathea, a city of the Jews, who was waiting for the kingdom of God; ⁵² this man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. ⁵³ And he took it down and wrapped it in a linen cloth, and laid him in a tomb cut into the rock, where no one had ever lain. ⁵⁴ It was the preparation day, and the Sabbath was about to begin. ⁵⁵ Now the women who had come with him out of Galilee followed, and saw the tomb and how his body was laid. ⁵⁶ Then they returned and prepared spices and perfumes. And on the Sabbath they rested according to the commandment. ^{24:1} But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared. ² And they found the stone rolled away from the tomb, ³ but when they entered, they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. ⁴ While they were perplexed about this, behold, two men suddenly stood near them in dazzling clothing; ⁵ and as the women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, the men said to them, 'Why do you seek the living One among the dead? ⁶ He is not here, but he has risen. Remember how he spoke to you while he was still in Galilee, ⁷ saying that the Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.' ⁸ And they remembered his words, ⁹ and returned from the tomb and reported all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. ¹⁰ Now they were Mary Magdalene and Joanna and Mary the mother of James; also the other women with them were telling these things to the apostles. ¹¹ But these words appeared to them as nonsense, and they would not believe them.



Literary Outline of Luke's Crucifixion-Resurrection Narrative: Luke 22:49 – 24:53

1. Jesus' arrest, his surrender to the chief priests after being continually in the temple. 22:49-53
2. Prophecy fulfilled: Simon Peter betrays Jesus. 22:54-62
3. Jesus reveals himself obliquely as the Son of God. 22:63-71
4. Two do not understand Jesus' identity: Herod and Pilate. 23:1-25
5. Simon of Cyrene witnesses and shoulders the Cross. 23:23-26
- 6. Women, the daughters of Jerusalem. 23:27-31**
7. Jesus crucified. 23:32-34
8. Unbelieving Jews: The rulers of the Jews sneered at Jesus. 23:35
9. Unbelieving Gentiles: The soldiers mock Jesus. 23:36-38
10. Unbelieving Criminal: Criminal hurls curses at Jesus. 23:39
- 10'. Believing Criminal: Criminal believes Jesus, receives paradise. 23:40-43
- 9'. Believing Gentiles: The centurion praised God. 23:44-49
- 8'. Believing Jews: Joseph, a member of the council, cares for Jesus' body. 23:50-52
- 7'. Jesus buried. 23:53-54
- 6'. Women, who had followed Jesus. 23:55-24:11**
- 5'. Simon Peter witnesses the empty tomb. 24:12
- 4'. Two eventually understand Jesus' identity: Emmaus disciples. 24:13-35
- 3'. Jesus reveals himself as the risen Messiah. 24:36-43
- 2'. Prophecy fulfilled: Moses, Prophets, Psalms testify to Messiah. 24:44-49
- 1'. Jesus' departure, promise of the Holy Spirit; disciples continually in the temple. 24:50-53



Session Sixteen: A Lesson in Lying and Integrity: Sapphira

Foreground Action: A Lesson in Lying and Integrity: Sapphira

^{5:1} But a man named Ananias, with his wife Sapphira, sold a piece of property, ² and kept back some of the price for himself, with his wife's full knowledge, and bringing a portion of it, he laid it at the apostles' feet. ³ But Peter said, 'Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back some of the price of the land?' ⁴ 'While it remained unsold, did it not remain your own? And after it was sold, was it not under your control? Why is it that you have conceived this deed in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God.' ⁵ And as he heard these words, Ananias fell down and breathed his last; and great fear came over all who heard of it. ⁶ The young men got up and covered him up, and after carrying him out, they buried him. ⁷ Now there elapsed an interval of about three hours, and his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. ⁸ And Peter responded to her, 'Tell me whether you sold the land for such and such a price?' And she said, 'Yes, that was the price.' ⁹ Then Peter said to her, 'Why is it that you have agreed together to put the Spirit of the Lord to the test? Behold, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out as well.' ¹⁰ And immediately she fell at his feet and breathed her last, and the young men came in and found her dead, and they carried her out and buried her beside her husband. ¹¹ And great fear came over the whole church, and over all who heard of these things.



Session Seventeen: When Your Ministry Isn't Done: Tabitha

Foreground Action: When Your Ministry Isn't Done: Tabitha

Acts 9:36 Now in Joppa there was a disciple named Tabitha (which translated in Greek is called Dorcas); this woman was abounding with deeds of kindness and charity which she continually did. ³⁷ And it happened at that time that she fell sick and died; and when they had washed her body, they laid it in an upper room. ³⁸ Since Lydda was near Joppa, the disciples, having heard that Peter was there, sent two men to him, imploring him, 'Do not delay in coming to us.' ³⁹ So Peter arose and went with them. When he arrived, they brought him into the upper room; and all the widows stood beside him, weeping and showing all the tunics and garments that Dorcas used to make while she was with them. ⁴⁰ But Peter sent them all out and knelt down and prayed, and turning to the body, he said, 'Tabitha, arise.' And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter, she sat up. ⁴¹ And he gave her his hand and raised her up; and calling the saints and widows, he presented her alive. ⁴² It became known all over Joppa, and many believed in the Lord.



Session Eighteen: When You're a Launching Pad: Lydia

Foreground Action: When You're a Launching Pad: Lydia

Acts 16:1 Paul came also to Derbe and to Lystra. And a disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a Jewish woman who was a believer, but his father was a Greek,² and he was well spoken of by the brethren who were in Lystra and Iconium.³ Paul wanted this man to go with him; and he took him and circumcised him because of the Jews who were in those parts, for they all knew that his father was a Greek.⁴ Now while they were passing through the cities, they were delivering the decrees which had been decided upon by the apostles and elders who were in Jerusalem, for them to observe.⁵ So the churches were being strengthened in the faith, and were increasing in number daily.⁶ They passed through the Phrygian and Galatian region, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia;⁷ and after they came to Mysia, they were trying to go into Bithynia, and the Spirit of Jesus did not permit them;⁸ and passing by Mysia, they came down to Troas.⁹ A vision appeared to Paul in the night: a man of Macedonia was standing and appealing to him, and saying, 'Come over to Macedonia and help us.'¹⁰ When he had seen the vision, immediately we sought to go into Macedonia, concluding that God had called us to preach the gospel to them.¹¹ So putting out to sea from Troas, we ran a straight course to Samothrace, and on the day following to Neapolis;¹² and from there to Philippi, which is a leading city of the district of Macedonia, a Roman colony; and we were staying in this city for some days.¹³ And on the Sabbath day we went outside the gate to a riverside, where we were supposing that there would be a place of prayer; and we sat down and began speaking to the women who had assembled.¹⁴ A woman named Lydia, from the city of Thyatira, a seller of purple fabrics, a worshiper of God, was listening; and the Lord opened her heart to respond to the things spoken by Paul.¹⁵ And when she and her household had been baptized, she urged us, saying, 'If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house and stay.' And she prevailed upon us.¹⁶ It happened that as we were going to the place of prayer, a slave-girl having a spirit of divination met us, who was bringing her masters much profit by fortune-telling.¹⁷ Following after Paul and us, she kept crying out, saying, 'These men are bond-servants of the Most High God, who are proclaiming to you the way of salvation.'¹⁸ She continued doing this for many days. But Paul was greatly annoyed, and turned and said to the spirit, 'I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her!' And it came out at that very moment.¹⁹ But when her masters saw that their hope of profit was gone, they seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the market place before the authorities,²⁰ and when they had brought them to the chief magistrates, they said, 'These men are throwing our city into confusion, being Jews,²¹ and are proclaiming customs which it is not lawful for us to accept or to observe, being Romans.'²² The crowd rose up together against them, and the chief magistrates tore their robes off them and proceeded to order them to be beaten with rods.²³ When they had struck them with many blows, they threw them into prison, commanding the jailer to guard them securely;²⁴ and he, having received such a command, threw them into the inner prison and fastened their feet in the stocks.²⁵ But about midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns of praise to God, and the prisoners were listening to them;²⁶ and suddenly there came a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison house were shaken; and immediately all the doors were opened and everyone's chains were unfastened.²⁷ When the jailer awoke and saw the prison doors opened, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped.²⁸ But Paul cried out with a loud voice, saying, 'Do not harm yourself, for we are all here!'²⁹ And he called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas,³⁰ and after he brought them out, he said, 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?'³¹ They said, 'Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household.'³² And they spoke the word of the Lord to him together with all who were in his house.³³ And he took them that very hour of the night and washed their wounds, and immediately he was baptized, he and all his household.³⁴ And he brought them into his house and set food before them, and rejoiced greatly, having believed in God with his whole household.³⁵ Now when day came, the chief magistrates sent their policemen, saying, 'Release those men.'³⁶ And the jailer reported these words to Paul, saying, 'The chief magistrates have sent to release you. Therefore come out now and go in peace.'³⁷ But Paul said to them, 'They have beaten us in public without trial, men who are Romans, and have thrown us into prison; and now are they sending us away secretly? No indeed! But let them come themselves and bring us out.'³⁸ The policemen reported these words to the chief magistrates. They were afraid when they heard that they were Romans,³⁹ and they came and appealed to them, and when they had brought them out, they kept begging them to leave the city.⁴⁰ They went out of the prison and entered the house of Lydia, and when they saw the brethren, they encouraged them and departed.



Session Nineteen: An Example of a Missional Couple: Priscilla and Aquila

Foreground Action: An Example of a Missional Couple: Priscilla and Aquila

Acts 18:1 After these things he left Athens and went to Corinth. ² And he found a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, having recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had commanded all the Jews to leave Rome. He came to them, ³ and because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and they were working, for by trade they were tent-makers. ⁴ And he was reasoning in the synagogue every Sabbath and trying to persuade Jews and Greeks. ⁵ But when Silas and Timothy came down from Macedonia, Paul began devoting himself completely to the word, solemnly testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ. ⁶ But when they resisted and blasphemed, he shook out his garments and said to them, 'Your blood be on your own heads! I am clean. From now on I will go to the Gentiles.' ⁷ Then he left there and went to the house of a man named Titius Justus, a worshiper of God, whose house was next to the synagogue. ⁸ Crispus, the leader of the synagogue, believed in the Lord with all his household, and many of the Corinthians when they heard were believing and being baptized. ⁹ And the Lord said to Paul in the night by a vision, 'Do not be afraid any longer, but go on speaking and do not be silent; ¹⁰ for I am with you, and no man will attack you in order to harm you, for I have many people in this city.' ¹¹ And he settled there a year and six months, teaching the word of God among them. ¹² But while Gallio was proconsul of Achaia, the Jews with one accord rose up against Paul and brought him before the judgment seat, ¹³ saying, 'This man persuades men to worship God contrary to the law.' ¹⁴ But when Paul was about to open his mouth, Gallio said to the Jews, 'If it were a matter of wrong or of vicious crime, O Jews, it would be reasonable for me to put up with you; ¹⁵ but if there are questions about words and names and your own law, look after it yourselves; I am unwilling to be a judge of these matters.' ¹⁶ And he drove them away from the judgment seat. ¹⁷ And they all took hold of Sosthenes, the leader of the synagogue, and began beating him in front of the judgment seat. But Gallio was not concerned about any of these things. ¹⁸ Paul, having remained many days longer, took leave of the brethren and put out to sea for Syria, and with him were Priscilla and Aquila. In Cenchrea he had his hair cut, for he was keeping a vow. ¹⁹ They came to Ephesus, and he left them there. Now he himself entered the synagogue and reasoned with the Jews. ²⁰ When they asked him to stay for a longer time, he did not consent, ²¹ but taking leave of them and saying, 'I will return to you again if God wills,' he set sail from Ephesus. ²² When he had landed at Caesarea, he went up and greeted the church, and went down to Antioch. ²³ And having spent some time there, he left and passed successively through the Galatian region and Phrygia, strengthening all the disciples. ²⁴ Now a Jew named Apollos, an Alexandrian by birth, an eloquent man, came to Ephesus; and he was mighty in the Scriptures. ²⁵ This man had been instructed in the way of the Lord; and being fervent in spirit, he was speaking and teaching accurately the things concerning Jesus, being acquainted only with the baptism of John; ²⁶ and he began to speak out boldly in the synagogue. But when Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they took him aside and explained to him the way of God more accurately. ²⁷ And when he wanted to go across to Achaia, the brethren encouraged him and wrote to the disciples to welcome him; and when he had arrived, he greatly helped those who had believed through grace, ²⁸ for he powerfully refuted the Jews in public, demonstrating by the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.



Session Twenty: The Four Prophetesses, Daughters of Philip

Foreground Action: The Women Who Prophesied

^{21:1} When we had parted from them and had set sail, we ran a straight course to Cos and the next day to Rhodes and from there to Patara; ² and having found a ship crossing over to Phoenicia, we went aboard and set sail. ³ When we came in sight of Cyprus, leaving it on the left, we kept sailing to Syria and landed at Tyre; for there the ship was to unload its cargo. ⁴ After looking up the disciples, we stayed there seven days; and they kept telling Paul through the Spirit not to set foot in Jerusalem. ⁵ When our days there were ended, we left and started on our journey, while they all, with wives and children, escorted us until we were out of the city. After kneeling down on the beach and praying, we said farewell to one another. ⁶ Then we went on board the ship, and they returned home again. ⁷ When we had finished the voyage from Tyre, we arrived at Ptolemais, and after greeting the brethren, we stayed with them for a day. ⁸ On the next day we left and came to Caesarea, and entering the house of Philip the evangelist, who was one of the seven, we stayed with him. ⁹ Now this man had four virgin daughters who were prophetesses. ¹⁰ As we were staying there for some days, a prophet named Agabus came down from Judea. ¹¹ And coming to us, he took Paul's belt and bound his own feet and hands, and said, 'This is what the Holy Spirit says: 'In this way the Jews at Jerusalem will bind the man who owns this belt and deliver him into the hands of the Gentiles.' ¹² When we had heard this, we as well as the local residents began begging him not to go up to Jerusalem. ¹³ Then Paul answered, 'What are you doing, weeping and breaking my heart? For I am ready not only to be bound, but even to die at Jerusalem for the name of the Lord Jesus.' ¹⁴ And since he would not be persuaded, we fell silent, remarking, 'The will of the Lord be done!'