

THE THIRD GOSPEL

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Today we begin what will be a three-month experience in the gospel of Luke. I simply want today to share with you a little bit about this gospel and especially the person who wrote the gospel. I won't have a specific scripture text as such but will make reference to numerous scriptures as we proceed today.

The author of this third gospel is one we also know wrote the book of Acts. In these two volumes of Christian history some 65 years of time are spanned. Thus if Luke were writing in 1976 he would be reaching back to the year 1910 for the origins of his story. I don't know if any of you have researched lately as to what was going on in the year 1910. Few of you remember what was happening. Most of you like me would have a hard time digging up who was even president. When you even think of writing something the magnitude of covering six and a half decades you realize to even do it precisely is quite an immense experience in undertaking. Within the span however of this writer's perspective Luke-Acts we are shown how something which began in a manger, the beginning of good news, goes from that point of obscurity to the place of Caesar's household in Rome. As the story of dominating and immense importance.

We see in this writer, Luke, how the gospel began from its Jewish setting to achieve an international audience and hearing. An audience, which extends even to us twenty centuries, removed. It is this person who reports the story of Jesus, the most significant life who ever lived. Jesus, the person who ruled millions and yet has never lifted a sword to do it. Never marched an army to be a conqueror. Never ruled by political use or force.

Simply ruling by his influence in the human heart. I could not help but compare the story of Jesus and the story of Mao Tse-Tung particularly as satellites have related to us this week the scene of Mao lying on his funeral bier and the many multitudes of people streaming by. I could not help but make some comparisons between Mao Tse-Tung, this leader of one fifth of the world's population and Jesus.

The comparisons I came up with are there:

There is a sense as you look at Mao lying there that he's not coming back. This is the final good bye. What a different sense you get when you pick up the gospel and find the story of one who is coming back. When you look at Mao you get the sense his power is broke. However great that power was it is now gone. When you pick up this gospel you find another story. When you look at Mao you have the idea that what he did he accomplished through the shedding of blood. The shedding of other's blood. Not his own. What ever sacrifices were involved as a peasant revolutionary leader it was the sacrifice of his own blood. But when you look at Jesus you realize that he never shed anyone's blood but his own. Yet it is in the power of that blood that we ourselves have salvation and safety. Mao sought to rule from power. Jesus sought to rule from love. What a context! You see it not only in such things as world leaders. But you see it in such things as sinner personal relationships on a very common and ordinary level.

Whether you are seeking to control people through your power and through your demand for subservience or whether you are seeking to live and to rule through love.

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When I look at Mao have the sense in reading also that Mao left his followers divided. Now they're contending for the position – who is the greatest? Who will now be number one and who will be number two?

Jesus remember, faced this with his followers but by the time he got done with them in the events of the resurrection, the ascension and Pentecost they were no longer wondering who was going to be the leader. They had a leader and he was in the heavens. Jesus, seated at the right had of the Father. They were united and they knew where they were going. The Spirit was outpoured. And peasant persons came to positions of lasting influence.

I also, as I look at Mao, have the sense that he offered nothing of hope beyond this life. I look at Jesus and find another story. I think we must be careful as we approach the gospel story. That we do not approach the gospel story mundanely or matter of factly. Or pick it up as if it were another book and read it dully or listen to the word preached without an attempt to grasp the awe and the reverence that should be in our heart. This after all is the greatest story ever told. And this after all is the greatest life ever lived.

So as we look at the gospel of Luke in these months together I pray that your heart will bleed with mine in a story, which is told by the hymn writer, Tell me the story of Jesus. Write on my heart every word. I tried as we go through this gospel that it be written not simply on our minds but on our hearts.

To help us look at this gospel I thought it would be a little bit helpful today if we knew something more about the man who wrote it. Church tradition is pretty unanimous in identify the person who wrote the third gospel as Luke. By church tradition I mean those Christian leaders who lived in the early and mid part and latter part of the second century. Who were but a generation or two removed from the apostles. And whose witness is pretty unanimous. Luke, the companion of Paul, was the author of this gospel.

We find just brief glimpses of some characteristics of him as we read Paul's letters. For one thing this person is called the beloved physician. Indeed as you read the gospel of Luke and Acts you find a person who has a kind of physician painstaking interest in detail.

For example where you read in the other gospels of a leper being healed it is just described that he was a leper. But when you turn to the same story in the gospel of Luke you will find Luke noting he was "full of leprosy." His way of noting that the disease was in the final or terminal stages.

When you find in the other gospels that Peter's mother-in-law had a fever, when you come to the gospel of Luke you will find that Luke notes it was a *high* fever. He was interested in such detail.

When in the other gospels you read about Jairus' daughter being ill and then dying, when you come to Luke you will see that Luke describes it as his *only* daughter. Quite a significant contrast.

When it comes to the lunatic boy at the mount of transfiguration as casting himself into the fire and his father is unable to stop his lunacy and demon possession, it is Luke again that notes alone of the gospel writers it was his *only* son.

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In that story alone found in the gospel of Luke in regard to the widow of Nain whose son had died again Luke with that interest of a person concerned for detail notes it was her *only* son.

This beloved physician, this doctor, kind of spills over in the spirit of his writing. He is identified also in Colossians as a Gentile. That is a member of the uncircumcision. Paul in Colossians 4:10-17 listed six companions who traveled with him and identifies three as being Jewish and three as non Jewish.

So he is a person who did not grow up knowing Jesus in the flesh. He did not follow Jesus. He lived in a foreign city away from Palestine yet he came to know Jesus intimately in the Spirit.

He is also, thirdly, a fellow worker with Paul, a beloved fellow worker and a companion with Paul in both of his imprisonments. His imprisonment first in Rome which we find described in the latter part of Acts, Philemon, Colossians, Ephesians and Philippians. And also Paul's last imprisonment in 2 Timothy 2 there described.

From the New Testament we may learn the kind of look at Luke and understand that it is Luke writing this gospel through some of the clues that are left. No where in Luke or Acts does Luke come right out and say, I, Luke, write this gospel. It would solve a lot of questions if he would just explicitly state it. Wouldn't have to track down who it was. But none of the gospel writers. Matthew doesn't name himself, Mark doesn't name himself, John doesn't name himself, Luke doesn't name himself. Isn't that a refreshing contrast? To find an author who writes a great book that doesn't want to name himself?

Here is a kind of key to the spirit of humility which pervaded the early church that people were not seeking to stand out as ones who had done something magnificent like writing a gospel. They were also very conscious that what they were writing was really the Lord's story and not their story. The story belonged to everybody, not just them. So they wouldn't be profane and simply say it was their story, their gospel. It was the Lord's story and it was the story for all of us.

I'm not sure I have the humility of Luke. If I were given the task by the spirit of writing a gospel, I'd kind of enjoy seeing on the masthead "I George, write this gospel." Later generations would come to know me as Saint George!

In differing generations they're having a little trouble with that. Even though Paul says we're all saints. But this person therefore who doesn't name himself we have to go on a detective search tracking down who he is. We've got some significant clues in the book of Acts. There are four passages in the book of Acts, which are called "we" sections. Which means that when they're used whoever's writing the story of Luke-Acts is at that moment a participant in the scene.

The first one we find is Acts 16:10. It's at the beginning of Paul's second missionary journey where this person "we" meets him at Troas and they go from there over to Philippi over to Europe and the second missionary journey is well underway when that happens.

The second time we find a "we" section is Acts 20:4-15. At the end of the third missionary journey Paul picks up this character called "we" and takes him to Jerusalem.

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Then a third section is in Acts 21:1-18 where Paul is in Jerusalem itself and this person “we” is with him.

Finally in Acts 27 and 28 when Paul’s on the journey to Rome and in Rome in his imprisonment again “we” is there.

This unnamed person we start using some givens. How do we find out who it was? Since he never names himself it would be unreasonable to expect that anyone who’s named in Acts would be the author. So we go through all Paul’s companions and rule out all the people that are named in Acts. This takes care of quite a bunch.

Then we go through all the letters of Paul on his second and third missionary journey when Luke wasn’t with him because he was up at Philippi we learn from the text in Acts. So we take all of those letters, like the Acts for example and any one that Paul associates being with him in greeting the church, we dismiss, and that takes care of a whole lot more.

Then we look at all the letters Paul wrote during his imprisonment. Six-seven letters in all. We find if we can see any companions of Paul that are associated with him in greetings to the church that he wrote on the second and third missionary journey.

Luke all of a sudden emerges as the person. I thought you’d be interested in that! So if you want to know where he came from it’s a process of deduction.

But we do have some sketchy details about Luke from Acts and from the letters that I really feel are important to look at and share with you today as we get into his gospel. How do we see Luke and what qualities are in his life that can even be in our own?

The first time we get a glimpse of Luke in written record of scripture is we see him as an evangelist. I use that term advisedly. I recognize that sometimes that term has fallen into disrepute by the persons who have attached that name to themselves. So that other terms come to be used. Like con-artist and money grabber and hit and run. These kind of things.

But in its highest and original and best meaning the word “evangelist” is one of the most glorious words in all the world. It means one who brings good news. And specifically the good news is the news of Jesus. And it is Luke who bears that title.

How we got it, we see him meeting Paul in Acts 16:10. Paul is coming along through what is now modern day Turkey. He’s taking with him Timothy and Silas. They’re on the second missionary journey. The missionary journey started awfully for Paul. First of all in Antioch he got into a big disagreement with Barnabas they split company. Each to go the way the Lord called them. Then Paul’s off and he wants to found churches somewhere else where he’s never been before. And the Spirit tells him he can’t go here, he can’t go there. He walks hundreds for miles over the course of several months. He finally winds up at the ancient city of Troy called Troas north of Ephesus in western modern day Turkey. There he is and he doesn’t know where to go. He can’t go up because the Lord says no. He can’t go back because he doesn’t want to retrace his steps. And ahead of him is the ocean. Where is he going to go?

It’s at that point that Luke enters the record and says that while Paul was there he had a vision of a man of Macedonia saying, come over and help us. Macedonia is in northern Greece where

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Alexander the Great was from. Luke himself may have been Greek so it may have been as some have conjectured that Luke's presence all of a sudden gave Paul some seed material to work on in his subconscious mind.

But anyway there's the man from Macedonia saying come over and help us. Luke then says "And we concluded that God had called us to preach the gospel in Macedonia." Notice, Paul saw the vision but Luke says *we concluded*. He was so sensitive to the Lord. The first time we find him he was ready to follow after a man who for the past few months had been nothing but a record of failure. His companions had to wonder on their first missionary journey (it was Paul's second) where in the world all this action was that Paul had been promising. Luke joins the company that up to that moment had known nothing but failure. They cross, a two-day journey over into modern day Europe, north Greece. They land at the city of Philippi. There is no mayor of the city waiting there ready to hand Paul the key to the city and saying, "I'm the man of Macedonia. Welcome Paul. Here's the largest auditorium in town. Begin preaching." No one. There was no meeting place they could easily get to. Except they wait a few days and go down to the river side on the Sabbath day where it was custom if there were any Jewish people in town or gentiles interested in the Jewish way of life, they'd meet outside the city, if there were less than ten men. They'd meet outside the city for prayer on the Sabbath.

Paul and Luke and the others go out there. Luke says we sat down on the ground and we talked to the women. Luke's first encounter with sharing the good news of Jesus Christ is in a conversation with some ladies or a lady sitting on the grass by the side of the river outside the town of Philippi in northern Greece.

Notice when the Lord called him he didn't say, as an evangelist I'm going to give you a wonderful task. You're going to write a gospel that's going to be read for twenty centuries by millions of people. Get excited because here's what's going to happen to you. The Lord says, are you going to be faithful, Luke, in small things. When I give you but one person to witness to and you have to get down and sacrifice some of your male ego, and there was a lot of male ego in the first century. Are you going to share the good news with who I send you to? Are you willing to do that? Luke sets down on the ground and shares. One of those who opens her heart to the Lord, the first convert in Europe, a lady by the name of Lydia. A very quiet and wonderful conversion.

It was Luke whose first impulse it was to reach out and share the good news. That quality when we see so beautifully in the gospel. A quality God calls all Christians to be involved in.

The next time we see Luke in the record of written scripture is we see him as a pastor. Paul leaves him evidently at Philippi. The "we" section comes to a close and Paul and Silas take off and Luke is left at Philippi and he isn't picked up again until about 5 or 6 years down the road when Paul's finishing up his third missionary journey and Paul meets him again. All that time Luke is evidently at Philippi. Here he is, he's called to pastor this church which has three charter members. It has Lydia whose rather wealthy and has a home big enough to lodge four people; a Greek slave girl who had been demon possessed; and a Roman jailer and his family who had been saved. Kind of a cosmopolitan church life to begin with. Luke was already finding in his experience of remaining in that responsibility the sort of breadth in the body of Christ, which the Lord was going to hold him accountable for and responsible for. Luke pitches in and stays there.

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By the way, there's something really interesting about Luke. He can be with Paul at times when Paul is most in trouble and manage to be unscathed. At Philippi Paul and Silas got in trouble, they got set upon by the magistrates, they got beaten with rods, they're put in the prison cell, at midnight their backs are bleeding and they're in stocks and they're praising God. What's Luke doing? He's either at home praying or sleeping. They're in the same town. But he wasn't taken. Paul has all these dramatic and exciting things happen to him. The Roman jailer gets saved and baptized. There's Luke kind of looking in.

Later, Paul gets arrested in Jerusalem, spends two years in kind of a stinking jail in Assyria, Luke's out trotting around the countryside, taking notes, interviewing people that had talked with Jesus, getting ready for his gospel while Paul's in trouble.

Later Paul has two imprisonments in Rome, both of which Luke was around. One in fact, the last one in 2 Timothy 4 where Paul is in desperate trouble and facing certain execution and he says Luke alone is with me. Here's Luke trotting around on the outside free. How did this guy manage to stay out of trouble and yet be as dedicated to Christ as Paul. Some people have that ability.

Maybe here you are as a Christian saying, God I wish I had something more glamorous to do as a Christian. People are smuggling bibles behind the iron curtain and what am I doing? I'm setting at home. I haven't smuggled a Bible to anyone of late. Or this dramatic thing or that dramatic thing.

Here's Luke, always the person who kind of misses out on the action but winds up with a lot of responsibility. But God called him to responsibility. The pastorate at Philippi is evidence that he led the church I feel in financially assisting Paul. Because Paul would later when he writes the Philippians notes that they twice assisted him financially when he was at Thessalonica where he went right after he left Philippi. It always seemed logical that Luke who had been left with the church had encouraged them.

Here Luke is put in a place of responsibility among a church body that was extremely diverse and immediately after that focuses their attention upon the needs of the workers of the gospel somewhere else. So it was a healthy church in terms of its inner relationship with the Lord and with one another. It was healthy also in its outreach.

A third way that we see Luke in the record of scripture is as a delegate of lot. I call him a delegate because at the end of Paul's missionary journeys around the year of 58-59 A.D. he became very concerned for the needs of the Jewish Christians who were in Jerusalem, who were going through a great time of poverty and perhaps even famine. For one year Paul manages to oversee a collection of funds that is taking place in all the churches which he encountered on his first missionary journey. This, by the way, would have included Philippi where Luke had been left.

At the end of this time Paul has all of his companions with him that are going to go to Jerusalem. They're going to sail from Corinth. At the last minute Paul gets word that there's an assassination plot against him and somebody's going to try to kill him while he's on the ship sailing out of Corinth. So Paul puts everybody else on board and he sneaks off by himself and goes up north to Philippi. There at Philippi he meets Luke and Luke gets with him – that's

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where we get another “we” section. They sail across the Aegean and meets them at Troas and goes on into Jerusalem.

I’ve read that a million times but one day it absolutely staggered me when I realized what had happened. Luke was not going to be going along with Paul on this journey to Jerusalem. That wasn’t in the original plan. But all of a sudden when Paul finds a plot against his life he says, I’ve got to go back to Philippi. He gets to Philippi and he gets Luke. I kind of have this hunch that Luke did all of his research on the origins of Jesus background in terms of his childhood and the like which we find in the first three chapters of Luke, that he did this kind of research when Paul was two years in prison in Caesarea. During that time Luke was free in Jerusalem and Palestine and the like to walk around and interview people and talk to people as he said he did.

I got to thinking the church would really be much worse off today if somebody hadn’t had an idea that they wanted to assassinate Paul. Paul wouldn’t have got Luke. And Luke wouldn’t have got to Palestine to do this kind of research that he did to write the gospel. So thank the Lord somebody wanted to kill Paul.

Luke gets there and he’s part of this delegation that’s bringing a financial offering. Paul when he writes the Corinthians in south Greece reminds them how much the northern Greeks up at Philippi and Macedonia and the like had sacrificed for this offering. Luke would have been a part of it. Paul writes, “We want you to know brethren about the grace of God which has been shown in the churches of Macedonia. For in a severe test of affliction, their abundance of joy in their extreme poverty have overflowed in a wealth of liberality on their part. For they gave according to their means as I can testify, beyond their means of their own free will, begging us earnestly for the favor of taking part in the relief of the saints.”

To me that whole passage of scripture of the kind of generosity which Luke as a person would have manifested.

Where is this offering going? It’s going to people in the church who of all parts of the church, were the most uncomely. The modern word would be *ugly*. Here was the part of the church that was the most stick-in-the-mud. Here was the part of the church that most resisted change. Here was the part of the church that was the least receptive of strangers and gentiles. Here was the part of the church that was most wrought up in rules and regulations and legalism and all these kind of things. Well might Luke have been one of those who said, They sure don’t need our money if they’re going to have that kind of attitude. Let ‘em get loosened up in their spirit. Let them be more like us. When they’re more like us, then Paul, let’s go ahead and collect the offering.

But maybe God’s trying to tell us something. Maybe he’s just trying to get through with that famine that’s coming upon them and say, You guys deserve this. Shape up. It’s easy to take attitudes toward people like that, isn’t it? That we don’t agree with. That do things differently than us. Isn’t it nice that the Lord has finally decided to do something? Put a little tragedy in their lives. That’ll shape them up a little bit!

Luke instead had the attitude that he shared with Paul that love is the Christian way. And so the greatest offering of the early church, the greatest offering of the first century, goes to help out people that have been the least susceptible to change. The most resistant to change. Because indeed the gospel writer John notes, love covers a multitude of sins.

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And indeed love makes a way. This man Luke had this tremendous experience of being delegate of love. He causes us then by looking at him to really ask ourselves what our attitude toward others is.

I think a fourth thing we see in Luke is that Luke was a faithful friend. He was a companion on Paul's journey to Rome in Acts 27. He has with him a Thessalonian by the name of Aristarchus and he has Luke who is unnamed. They get on ship together.

Ramsey, a leading scholar on the apostle Paul said as he looked at Acts 27 that it was the custom of the period that when an important prisoner was bound for Rome it enhanced the status and the Romans allowed it to let slaves of his go along with him. That would ensure him better treatment. Therefore there's this unusual situation of Paul being transferred by the Romans to the city of Rome for trial and the custom that is allowed him is that two persons can go with him. Ramsey suggests that Luke and Aristarchus volunteered to pass as Paul's slaves, his personal slaves in order to do two things – minister to Paul and enhance his status before the Roman government so that his case would be accorded the kind of gravity and seriousness that it deserved. An incredible kind of thing that a man would be so willing to humble himself in such service to another that he would take that kind of status and position. Also we learn that he is Paul's only companion when Paul is in his final imprisonment.

We see him in the record of scripture, as a writer. Indeed that is predominantly how we see him. He came to write more of the New Testament than any other writer. Granted Paul wrote more books but Luke wrote more words.

In Luke we see some strong characteristics as a writer. We see his concern for detail and reliability based upon accurate research so that he says as he begins, "I've done my research." This ought to be a word for all Christians. I think there is afloat today a thing that I call sloppy agape. That is, do anything that comes from a heart of love. It doesn't matter how you do it, it doesn't matter how well you do it. It's the intent that counts. I don't find that kind of story in the gospels. I kind of see what another writer has called Tough Love, Excellent Love.

Luke in his agape, in his love, in his way of expressing himself as a Christian is certainly not a sloppy individual. He's taken his time to do the research. Strikingly also the Spirit of God has been outpoured upon him so that he's inspired to write. But the inspiration of scripture comes in both God's working in the heart of a man and the skill of a man and causing him to go beyond his natural endowment and abilities.

Luke has a tremendous skill with language. It comes out in the first four verses. Those who read the Greek, and I know it well enough to poke my way through dictionary, but those who read it well know that Luke 1:1-4 is a single sentence in the Greek language. And it is in the New Testament the finest example of classical Greek. All the New Testament is written in the language of the street, the language of the people. But here is classical Greek in the first four verses in the tradition of great Greek historians. Luke starts off his gospel by saying, I've done the same kinds of things as other historians. I've looked at it. I've used the right methods. And I deserve to be considered. As soon as he finishes these four verses he then for the entire rest of his writing lapses into the common language of the street and language of the people. Expressing what I think is a gorgeous trait and quality. That is the quality to be willing to make one's scholarship subservient to one's purpose. So that he could have stayed if he wanted to in

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the language of the cloud. But he knows that that's not going to reach the most people. He reveals Jesus in his writings as the savior of the world in such a way that every human being can feel part of the wonderful savior's love. When Jesus is born the angels, Luke records, bring the word that the good news is to all.

In 3:6 Luke notes that it is indeed all flesh that will see the salvation of God. All nations are to be preached to, Luke 24. And as Luke begins to develop the story of how Jesus came for all persons we find that as Luke writes there is no barrier to age, there's no barrier to sex, there's no barrier in class in coming to Jesus. There's no barrier with age. Thus as you open the gospel of Luke you encounter the old people. People like Zechariah and Elizabeth and Simeon and Anna, some of the most exciting elderly people that have ever lived. They're right there in Luke. Lives lived in the fullness of the Spirit. But if there are the old people who are included in the Savior's love there are also the children. For there is the story of Jesus' birth. The story of no room in the inn. The story of shepherds and angels. And alone of all the gospel writers Luke notes how Jesus was in Jerusalem at the age of twelve – so that every other 12 year old can match themselves against Jesus and see where they are at the age of 12, the age of bar mitzpha, puberty and the like.

One writer has said of Luke's approach to children, Certain chapters of the third gospel will always be the chapters we will most delight to read to our children and the chapters that children will be most delighted to hear. They will always love best the gospel of the story of the shepherds and the angels. The gospel, which tells how Jesus allowed the mothers to bring their babies to him. The gospel written by the beloved physician who loved the little folk and so thought it worthwhile to write a part of his story for them."

Loved the little folk. If you've ever read Luke to children, you know how their eyes come open at those stories in the opening of Luke.

There is no barrier as far as Luke is concerned of sex. In a day in which women were very much nothing. In fact, considered a part of property. That doesn't happen at all today. But in Luke's gospel you find the story of Elizabeth and Mary and Anna and Mary and Martha and Mary Magdeline and Joanna and Susanna, women on the way to the cross and women at the cross and women at the resurrection. All playing a dominant part in the story of Jesus.

In Luke there is no barriers to persons in terms of their class. The poor had the good news preached to them. The wealthy and the influential as well come under the sound of the gospel. Jairus, the synagogue ruler has his only daughter healed. And the crook Zaccheus comes to Jesus and Jesus eats at his house.

No one as Luke presents the story of Jesus, is left outside the impact of Christ's great love. He sees both rich and poor, both Jew and Gentile, both slave and free coming in under the burden of Jesus' love.

One writer has said, In this gospel the harlot the criminal, the prodigal and the social outcast in whatever class or condition are freely offered the society of the purest and the best which of course is Jesus.

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The hymn writer has said it this way There's a wideness in God's mercy like the wideness of the seam, for the love of God is broader than the measure of man's mind and in this gospel one sees the wideness and the broadness of God's love.

These traits we see in Luke are in the last analysis simply traits of the Lord Jesus himself. Every quality we express as a Christian is really a quality, which the Lord Jesus himself has first expressed. For example Luke is an evangelist. Jesus himself is the best evangelist. Luke is a pastor. But Jesus himself is the chief pastor. Luke is the lover of the saints. But Jesus gave his life for the saints. Luke went to Jerusalem to bring an offering for the saints. But Jesus went to Jerusalem to lay down his life for the saints. Luke is the faithful friend but Jesus gave his life for us who were not even his friends. Luke is the writer but he had nothing to write about unless Jesus is the source.

In all of these areas of life Luke consciously expresses the Lord Jesus and puts something in our own life as well as we look at our role. As a student I have opportunity to express how Jesus would be as a student – an incredible kind of change. I don't know anything so motivational in thinking in regard to being a student than the motivation that Jesus would have me do this in a certain kind of way.

I don't know anything so motivational in being a husband or in being a wife than saying my role, Jesus would live it this way.

I don't know anything so motivational in looking at work than to say, If Jesus had my job here's how he'd do it. Here's how he would express himself.

That's his real desire – to express himself through us. I trust therefore as we look together at this beautiful gospel in these next months and all of this fall that we will treasure the experiences which Luke relates to us and that God will give us the wisdom and the understanding to see how they fit in with where we're at in life.

One of the beautiful opportunities we have now within this church fellowship over the next number of weeks is to become involved in a home Bible study. Where we can take this gospel, take our friendship and fellowship with one another, those we know and those we may not know, and together experience the Holy Spirit, prayer and community. I would like to ask you in the closing moments of this service to make a commitment to yourself, to the Lord, and to other members of this body by becoming involved in an opportunity to really learn of Luke and learn of the Lord in a very close personal relationship with others. There is in the bulletin today a little yellow card "Home Bible study." It encourages you to put down your name and check some appropriate places. Would you in this moment take that out and look at it. I want to talk about it as we conclude. This will be our form of commitment today.