

Luke – The Savior We Need

Mosaic series

by Chris Famisaran

Father in Heaven, Lord, as we close out our series on the Mosaic, Lord, the pictures, the tablets of portraits of who you are, Lord. Be with us in Jesus' name. Amen.

It was 1949, Christmas. Elizabeth English tells of a story when she and her husband, I believe his name was Herman, locked the doors of their little appliance store. Everything had been sold out. The record players, yes, the record players in 1949. Kids, you parents got vinyl. But even then, all of the bicycles, the dollhouses, and all of the games were gone, except for a little package that was on layaway. Later that evening, they went home, they shut everything off at 11, went to bed, and the next day, Christmas morning, they woke up. They opened presents, albeit their son, Tom, he was 12, he was getting older. All he asked for was some clothes and maybe a game or two, nothing big. They had breakfast, and as soon as breakfast was done, Tom went over to their neighbor to hang out and play with the kids over there. And her husband, Herman said, I'm going back to bed. And what was she to do? Her attitude was that of kind of, this is boring. I wanted more. And then she felt impressed. to go back to the store. So she went, she got her coat, her gloves bundled up and walked to, I believe she walked to their appliance store. And mind you, this was a part of the country where there was still rain and sleet and snow. Why should she be walking out on Christmas day? It's crazy. And yet when she got to the store, she saw two boys outside standing, shivering. They didn't have gloves on. Their jackets barely were keeping them warm. Their clothes looked tattered and old. And when they got there, they could see her walking. They excitedly said, there she is, there she is. And she gets there, she says, are you crazy? What are you doing out here? And the older brothers said, this is my brother Jimmy. And he did not get anything for Christmas, but I have \$3 to buy some skates. And she said, I'm sorry, but I think we sold everything else. Well, do you have anything? And suddenly she remembered that there was a

package on layaway. She went inside to the back and she opened it hoping and praying, would it be the right size? And in it were a pair of skates that magically somehow fit Jimmy's feet. They were a perfect fit. When they tried to hand over the money, Elizabeth said, no, go and get yourself some gloves and maybe a new jacket because for her, this was her reward. This was her seeing the awe and the wonder of God working in these two little boys and changing her life. And then the older son, the older brother said, I knew you would come. And she said, well, how? Because I asked Jesus to send you. And upon that Elizabeth, her, she got the tingles, the hair jumped up from her arm. This was a God moment, something that was God-ordained. When she went home to prepare Christmas dinner when all of everybody was going to come over, her day was that much better because of the fact that she was able to be used as a vessel for God that day.

So today we're closing up our series here on the Mosaic. Today we're going to be looking at the Gospel of Luke, the Savior we need to kind of get an understanding too of what does the whole book of look like in context. We see that there's a prologue, the very beginning, an introduction. And by the way, these are not on your notes that we hand out, but if you go to our website and you click on the top right, I think, you know, those little lines, or just click on sermons. And then if you click on sermons, if you scroll... down, you'll be able to see that each sermon has, at least the current ones, have a handout and also a little bit of a Bible study that will have these notes, the first section that I'm going to be talking about, because there's just too much information.

But we see that in the Gospel of Luke, it's a little different. There is kind of a prologue, but Luke starts out differently because Mark and John, John starts with an ode to Genesis in Genesis 1, and Mark has his own narrative of how he starts. And then Matthew starts with a genealogy of all things. And then it goes into the infancy narratives. They actually talk about Jesus' cousin, John, and how he came to be. And then you see that there's a time of preparation in chapters 3 and 4, and there he spends time around in Galilee through chapters 4 through 9. And there he turns his sights to the journey to Jerusalem in nine through 19. And there Jesus spent some time in Jerusalem ministering to. And then we see ultimately his death and then his appearances. So that's kind of just a broad overview of the gospel of Luke. Now, there are some key themes, though. There's 10 themes that you could also look at. You see that God's purpose, God's purpose, and we'll talk

about this today in Chapter 4, of God's purpose prevails in history. And that salvation, we kind of talked about this last week a little bit, that salvation is not just for a few people, but that God desires to save how many people? All, right?

And then there's also this theme of, who is this Jesus? People are wondering, is this not Mary and Joseph's son? Who are the leaders saying, well, how could he say these things? And then there's also this strong theme of discipleship, of Jesus' teaching, but also explaining what discipleship will really mean and also ultimately what will it cost? And then throughout Luke and also the gospel, sorry, the book of Acts is prayer, prayer, especially in Acts, and also how the Holy Spirit works is strongly within both of these books. And then we also see that Jesus reaches out to the marginalized, the outcasts. And then Jesus all talks about wealth and poverty.

And then finally, the last two, the message, the mission and the message, and also how we should come together as a church. Now, Luke's gospel is also the only account where there's an introduction. And part one of the Luke Acts narrative, because Acts is basically a continuation of Luke. If you want to see everything from Jesus being born to the church, church, going out and sharing the gospel, read Luke acts as one piece.

And in fact, let's actually go to Luke one. I don't have it in your notes, but let's just jump to Luke one. Okay, Luke one. And I want to read verses one through four. Let's get a little background on who Luke is. We know that Luke was a doctor as well. He was a physician, and he wrote very well. In fact, his Greek is probably the best not only out of all the gospels, but even some would argue even better than Paul's writing. So we have two very smart intellectual guys. And Luke is drawing a history of how the church came to be. So Luke one verse one, well there. Let's read verse four. Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been what fulfilled among us. And remember, Luke is writing this many years later, have Jesus has died, okay. And just as they were sent there, they were handed down to those from who are first eyewitnesses and servants of the Word. Remember these stories of how Jesus healed and how Jesus stood up to the Pharisees and this and that. They were all passed down through Word. And finally, we realized, hey, we need to write these down to preserve these stories for those who are going to come later. With this in mind, since I myself have carefully

investigated everything from the beginning, Luke doesn't just put something together in Kabul. He's intentionally writing. I, too, decided to write an orderly account. He's an historian for you most excellent Theophilus. Now, there's one of two ways that you could look at Theophilus. It could be a person, but some would argue it's not just a person, but a group. Because Theos, what is Theos? Theophilus, the first half of his name. It's God, OK? Theophilus, the people, the people of God. So that you may know the certainty of the things that you have been taught, OK? Now, if you also want to figure out how is Luke known to be a physician, if you look at Colossians 4 .14, it points out that Luke was a doctor. And so this is his account. He decides he wants to set the record straight.

And so now, let's actually jump over to chapter 4, where Jesus is setting out a mission statement. So we see that Luke is trying to put the best account possible to see how the church starts. And here we see that Jesus' mission is laid out before everybody, OK? So let's read chapter 4. And I want to read from 16 to 22. Actually, no, let's jump to 14, OK? All right, Jesus returned to where? Galilee. Galilee, because what had happened before? He'd been rejected from where? Nazareth. Okay, where he grew up. Jesus returned to Galilee in the power of the Spirit. Remember, I said in Holy Spirit. News about him spread throughout the whole countryside. He was teaching in their synagogues and everyone how did they respond to him? They praised him. So he has a little bit of a reputation. Okay, you want to hear what Jesus was saying. And it's here that he then goes. He sorry, he's in Nazareth. He returns to Galilee. I'm sorry, I'm getting ahead of myself. So this is where he gets rejected. But he went to Nazareth where he had been brought up and on the Sabbath day he went up to the synagogue as was his what? His custom. When we say custom, what does that mean? He went regularly. Okay, he practice. So did Jesus go to Sabbath? Did he go to the synagogue on Sunday? Tuesday? Maybe he did, but it was customary for him to go on the Sabbath. And he stood up to read. And this was common. Okay, this was you would have a rabbi or somebody come in and share a word from the scriptures. And at this point, he reads Isaiah 61 verses one through two, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him unrolling, he found the place where it is written. The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim the good news to the poor. He sent me to proclaim what? Freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set who free? The oppressed and to proclaim the year of the

Lord's favor. Then he rolled up the scroll, he gave it back to the attendant and he sat down. All the eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. They were staring him down. And he began to say to them today, this scripture is what? Fulfilled in your hearing. And all spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his lips. But isn't this Joseph's son they asked? So Jesus, this is the beginning of his ministry. His life has changed. He acknowledges that he is the Son of God. And he's here to bring sight to the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim freedom, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

So what does that look like? To proclaim the good news. When we look at the gospel of Luke, where are some stories or parables that Jesus talks about good news? One that I immediately think of is the parable of the Good Samaritan, which is also only found in Luke. You look at the parables of the lost coin, the lost sheep and the prodigal son or the lost son, also found in chapter 15 are only found in Luke. Chapter 19, we all know the story of little Zacchaeus. Did Zacchaeus find good news that day when Jesus visited him? Because ultimately his life was changed forever. He didn't know that day that his life would be changed. But Jesus says, hey, I'm going to your house. And what was the response of the leadership? Why is he hanging out with a sinner? But Jesus was in the business of healing and forgiving and bringing salvation not just to a few, but to everyone. So he brought good news. I thought about this last week. What's some good news that you heard this week? I've been thinking about this and I'm still drawing a blank. What did I hear that was good this week in the news? Not much, amen. And in the world that we live in, it's easy to be pessimistic and cynical. But if we're going to be followers of Jesus, we're going to carry on the good news that Jesus asked us to, as he proclaims in Luke the gospel, should we not have a healthy, good attitude? Shouldn't Christ be alive in our hearts and in our minds? Should we not exude joy and happiness and love? No, I'm not saying, hey, we have to then have a Pollyanna viewpoint where everything is awesome. Okay. Because look, I mean, look, we live on earth, right? But if we truly believe in Jesus, we have to have a hope for the positive future and our demeanor. We should exude that we should exude joy and positivity. We shouldn't be shackled.

And in fact, going to our next point is that Jesus proclaims freedom to the prisoners and this could be literal and it could also be metaphorical. Imagine living in Jesus time, not being able to see, having leprosy or being the woman who was

bleeding for many, many years. Their healthcare back then is not the same as healthcare today. Aren't you grateful for the gift of healthcare? All right. Even if it's for just a little boo boo, you can go to urgent care. When you broke your leg, what did you do back then? You hope for the best and you adapt. Okay. You, you tough it out. And let me tell you, I have, I have no bones admitting people back then way tougher. They didn't have AC. They walked everywhere and it was normal to them. Struggle was normal. We sometimes have to find struggle. Were people running marathons a hundred years ago? Were people lifting in the gyms? Yeah, but very little. Were they running Spartan races back then? We have to find places where we struggle. So let me put it this way. For those of us who have it well, be grateful, okay? I'm not downplaying those who are struggling. Let me be very clear about that, okay? For those who are struggling financially. But even then, for those of us who have enough, who should have no reason to complain, let's be grateful for what God has given us. If you have a car, you're doing good. If you have a roof over your head, you're doing good. If you have jeans and a T-shirt, you're doing great. If you have shoes that fit right, you're doing great. If you have a spouse and kids who love you, you're doing great, all right? If you had a mental health issue, you were considered crazy and cast aside. And here we see that Jesus brings freedom. Think about being a leper. Where did you live? On the outskirts of town. If you were blind, you had no hope because there was no ophthalmologist or optometrist to issue glasses or perform LASIK surgery. And then we also, going into that point, is Jesus gives sight to the blind. Can you imagine without living a life of being blind? Those of you who are visually challenged, you already know. For those of us who take for granted brushing our teeth, eating our food, driving somewhere, we can see, we take all of these things for granted.

I shared a story some time ago when I first started working for Lisa's father at summer camp. We would, there were a couple of weeks, a couple of summers where we had those who were visually impaired to come up and some of the staff would have to help take care of them. And we tried to figure out, well, who was gonna do that? Obviously, some of the more senior experienced staff. But we had to also know what was it like. And so we literally put stuff over our eyes to see. And we probably went probably no more than 20 or 30 minutes. But do that. Just put something over your eyes, put your sleeping mask over your eyes and just walk around for even 10, 20 minutes. And you're gonna be grateful for what you

have right away. Amen? Okay. But Jesus came to this earth to not only literally give sight to Bartimaeus, for instance, and John, but to also... open their eyes to see the good news that Jesus was bringing to them. Amen. There were many people who were blinded and intentionally stay blind because they didn't want things to change because of fear, because of arrogance, because of pride on the leadership at this point. They didn't want to see Jesus for who he was because he was a threat to their livelihood. But Jesus wanted to bring sight not only literally to those who were visually challenged but also to open their eyes to the good news that he was bringing and not just to them but also for you, for us. Jesus talks about how he wants to set those who were oppressed to be free.

You know, the other day, last Thursday we talked about we celebrated 4th of July which has its roots of independence and freedom. And we, you know, as Americans, we take that seriously. We don't like people telling us what to do, right? But ultimately, we see that Jesus desires to set us free from the burdens that we care, from the thoughts in our minds that are negative, that we question, we wonder, am I worth something? Do I want to continue on? I'm so tired. Is this ever going to get finished? How do I work out this conflict with my boss, with my neighbor? What holds us down? Jesus desires to set those who are pressed free. And the last thing that Jesus also desires is to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. And when I think about this, it's kind of an ode or reminiscent of the year of Jubilee. Do you all know what the year of Jubilee is? If you go to Leviticus, I think it's chapter 25. It talks about where every 50 years, there's one year where all debts are forgiven and all of the slaves are set free. Everything is set to be rebalanced. And we see that those who were enslaved, those who were enslaved, either literally or enslaved by debt, could find freedom to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. And I also see it as an opportunity to see the goodness of Jesus and the salvation that Jesus desires for us to be free from our burdens and the stresses that wear us down and that enslave us.

And the last thing that Jesus proclaims here we see is the fulfillment of Isaiah 61 1 through 2 because Jesus was quoting this very passage. He was fulfilling a promise that was written. many, many years ago, hundreds of years ago. And as you see through Luke, you see the different themes, but especially Jesus' mission being carried out. This, to open the eyes, to set those who are captive free, all of these things were fulfilled regularly through the gospel of Luke and what Jesus wants for

us. So as followers of Jesus, what does this mean? Jesus wants us to carry on this mission to continue to open the eyes of those, to be a vessel. Now, we're not, not everyone's here an ophthalmologist, we're not literally gonna be doing that. We can pray for people, help them, walk with them, and share the love of God with others. Quite frankly, if you treat people with respect and love, it seems like you're gonna be different, amen? It's sad in today's age where we have all of the technology and yet what does it do? It divides us, breaks us apart. I came across this beautiful quote as I was preparing this message yesterday. I don't know who wrote it or said it, but it's this. Kindness is the language that the deaf can hear and the blind can see. Kindness is the language that the deaf can hear and the blind can see. Everyone can appreciate kindness. Everyone can appreciate love. Everyone can appreciate compassion.

And so my charge to you, Downey Church, my encouragement, my exhortation, may you go with kindness, may you go with love, may you carry out Jesus' mission in your own lives. Now, it may look differently to all of us because of our different backgrounds, but we all know somebody, I'm sure, that could use some kindness and love, some compassion, because that's ultimately what Jesus brought. Amen? To love God with everything and to love our neighbor as ourselves. So the mosaic, the picture of God that what we should be leaving here with is a picture of God, of one who desires to see that there is good news in Jesus, to be set free, set the captives free, to give sight to the blind, to set the oppressed free, and to know that Jesus is the fulfillment of all that was said in the Old Testament. Amen? So where in your life, where in your life has Jesus brought good news? And set you free. Okay, you don't have to say it right now, but where has Jesus brought good news? And if you're still struggling with that, let's pray for you. to us. Let's find good news for you. Amen.

And this week, this week, I want to challenge you to go and be a vessel of unconditional love, just as Jesus was. Can we do that? Wherever you go, at the post office, at the DMV, at Vons, Ralph's, your neighborhood, your job, and especially in your own home. May you be a vessel of unconditional love. It's my hope and prayer that this series, although we could have spent a whole year or a that you will have a better understanding of what the gospels are. Amen. May you find rest in Jesus.

Father in heaven, thank you, Lord, for all that you have done for us. As we go forth, Lord, leading guide us, help us to be a vessel of unconditional love just as you practice, as you open the eyes of the blind, set the captives in the press free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, Lord, as you fulfilled Old Testament scriptures. So be with us now. Give us courage, Lord, to stand up, to be different in a positive way, though, in a holistic way. And may we know your grace and love evermore and pass that on to others. In Jesus' name, amen.

Have a great week, everyone.