

THIS YEAR: THE GOSPEL OF LUKE



In this year "Year C", we hear primarily from the Gospel of Luke each Sunday. The writer of the Gospel of Luke also authored the Acts of the Apostles, where he continued the story. While the author does not write his own name, from the early church on this book was known to be written by a man called Luke, who accompanied Paul on some of his journeys. St. Paul writes about him in his letter to the Colossians (4:14). This is where we learn that Luke was a physician.

Luke's Gospel emphasizes the history and the plan of God. It is said that Luke writes in the mode of the Greek historians like Herodotus and Thucydides and that his Gospel was written primarily for a Gentile (primarily Greek) audience. In the beginning of his Gospel Luke writes that he has "undertaken to compile a narrative of the things that have been accomplished among us, just as those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word have delivered them to us" and to "write an orderly account". (Luke 1:1-4).

Luke clearly states he has composed his narrative by talking with those who were involved in the life and ministry of Jesus "from the beginning." Luke himself was not an apostle; he probably did not personally know Jesus. Of the Gospel writers, Matthew and John were two of the Twelve Apostles, but Mark and Luke were traveling companions of St. Paul. Luke tells us this himself in the Acts of the Apostles. (Mark also traveled with Peter.) Thus Luke would have gotten his knowledge of Jesus from the apostles, from sitting with them and from listening to their preaching.

There are many stories in the Gospel of Luke which only appear there. Primarily these are what are called "the infancy narratives" - the stories of Jesus' conception, birth and childhood. Luke tells us that he has talked to all of the key eyewitnesses of Jesus' life. And the closest witness, the chief witness - the only one who would be able to tell all of these stories, would be the Blessed Virgin Mary. This is why many saints and theologians throughout the centuries have believed that St. Luke knew and consulted with the Blessed Virgin in the writing of his Gospel.



In the Gospels the best portrait of Mary is undoubtedly painted by Luke. This may be why a legend arose in the middle ages that Luke actually painted Mary's portrait. Around the twelfth century one icon in particular came to be identified with Luke's image: a half-length portrait of Mary holding the child and pointing toward him as the way of salvation. Kept in a monastery in Constantinople, it disappeared during the fall of the city, but many copies appeared and all seemed to be as venerated as the original.

Luke's symbol is an ox. The choice of the ox for Luke is thought to relate to the sacrifices offered in the Temple and the fact that Luke's Gospel begins and ends in the Temple. Plus, only St Luke's Gospel includes the stories of the child Jesus presented in the Temple and later found there among the learned men. It may also refer to Jesus' once and for all sacrifice on the cross.



GROWING CATHOLICS

Leaflet 

Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time

Sunday Gospel • February 13, 2022 Luke 6:17, 20-26

Jesus came down with the Twelve and stood on a stretch of level ground with a great crowd of his disciples and a large number of the people from all Judea and Jerusalem and the coastal region of Tyre and Sidon. And raising his eyes toward his disciples he said:

"Blessed are you who are poor,
for the kingdom of God is yours.
Blessed are you who are now hungry,
for you will be satisfied.
Blessed are you who are now weeping,
for you will laugh.
Blessed are you when people hate you,
and when they exclude and insult you,
and denounce your name as evil
on account of the Son of Man.

Rejoice and leap for joy on that day! Behold, your reward will be great in heaven. For their ancestors treated the prophets in the same way.

But woe to you who are rich,
for you have received your consolation.
Woe to you who are filled now,
for you will be hungry.
Woe to you who laugh now,
for you will grieve and weep.
Woe to you when all speak well of you,
for their ancestors treated the false prophets in

this way."



EVERYONE SHOULD KNOW

Some modern translations use the word "happy" instead of "blessed" to translate *makarioi*. Some call this an "unhappy" choice. The word "blessed" means more than happiness; it means favored and approved by God... In God's kingdom, a person who is "blessed" experiences hope and joy, independent of his or her outward circumstances.

MOUNTAIN OR PLAIN?

Today's Gospel is known as the "Sermon on the Plain." Almost all the words of Jesus reported by Luke are found in Matthew's "Sermon on the Mount". Because Matthew includes sayings that were related to specifically Jewish Christian problems that Luke did not find appropriate for his Gentile (Non-Jewish) Christian audience, the "Sermon on the Mount" is quite a lot longer.



SEEDS FOR CONVERSATION

What social justice issues does Jesus address to the crowds in today's Gospel?

What are the 'blessings' Jesus promises to those who have suffered in this life?

What are the four curses that Jesus pronounces and what will be the ultimate consequence of the curses?

Do these things seem relevant today?

Before going to Confession, how could we include these concerns in our examination of conscience? What questions can we ask ourselves?

Does The Message translation (see right) help clarify the Beatitudes for you? How so? If not, how come?

Rethink



The Beatitudes used to seriously disturb me because the meaning seemed so obscure. Then I stumbled on this version in *The Message* (see sidebar) and it was my lightbulb moment. In hopes that this idiomatic paraphrase helps you - here it is.

Coming down off the mountain with them, he stood on a plain surrounded by disciples, and was soon joined by a huge congregation from all over Judea and Jerusalem, even from the seaside towns of Tyre and Sidon. They had come both to hear him and to be cured of their diseases. Those disturbed by evil spirits were healed. Everyone was trying to touch him—so much energy surging from him, so many people healed! Then he spoke:

You're blessed when you've lost it all.
God's kingdom is there for the finding.
You're blessed when you're ravenously hungry.
Then you're ready for the Messianic meal.
You're blessed when the tears flow freely.
Joy comes with the morning.

Count yourself blessed every time someone cuts you down or throws you out, every time someone smears or blackens your name to discredit me. What it means is that the truth is too close for comfort and that person is uncomfortable. You can be glad when that happens—skip like a lamb, if you like!—for even though they don't like it, I do and all heaven applauds. And know that you are in good company; my preachers and witnesses have always been treated like this.

Give Away Your Life

But it's trouble ahead if you think you have it made.

What you have is all you'll ever get.

And it's trouble ahead if you're satisfied with yourself.

Your self will not satisfy you for long.

And it's trouble ahead if you think life's all fun and games.

There's suffering to be met, and you're going to meet it.

There's trouble ahead when you live only for the approval of others, saying what flatters them, doing what indulges them. Popularity contests are not truth contests—look how many scoundrel preachers were approved by your ancestors! Your task is to be true, not popular.

The Message

Eugene Peterson was a Presbyterian pastor and a scholar of the Greek and Hebrew languages. While he knew that the original readers were excited about the Bible's message, he often saw that contemporary readers had lost that lively connection to God's Word. While working from the original languages, Peterson aimed at an idiomatic translation, using contemporary slang from the US rather than a more neutral International English. The Message is certainly not a "study Bible", nor should it be your primary Bible, but it can offer a "rethink" - and help familiar passages come alive in new ways.