

LUKE

20-24



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LUKE 19-24

Luke put together 1 of the 4 gospels accounts of Jesus' life, death and resurrection. Why did he write it, when there were already other versions?

Luke tells us why he writes his book in his very 1st sentence...

*Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been **fulfilled** among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. With this in mind, since I myself have **carefully investigated** everything from the beginning, I too decided to write an **orderly account** for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the **certainty** of the things you have been taught. (Luke 1:1-4)*

1. To strengthen Christians in their faith, by showing them the certain and solid foundation for their trust in Jesus.
2. To show that trusting Jesus is valid. Jesus is the climax of God's plans all through history and we're included in that story.

Here's what we've seen so in Luke so far...

- In Luke 1-8 Jesus appears on stage, announcing salvation, healing and teaching like no-one ever had before.
- In Luke 9-19 Jesus travels to Jerusalem, ready to bring salvation and calling people to follow him. We saw that his death and resurrection will be *how* he becomes the saving King.
- In Luke 19-24, Jesus has arrived. His crowning moment is here. He goes to the temple, but instead of finding God's people worshipping, eager and ready to accept him as the long awaited Messiah he finds corruption, opposition and rejection that will lead to his death.

Luke 19-24 shows us what Jesus is most on about...

These chapters slow right down to cover just the last week of Jesus' life before his death. Luke 1-19 starts a year before Jesus' birth and covers his childhood, the start of his ministry round age 30, and his 3 years travelling, healing and preaching all across Israel. Luke 19-24 covers just one week - the most important week of his life on earth.

This is the week where Jesus' prediction unfolds before our eyes:

"We are going up to Jerusalem, & everything written by the prophets about the Son of Man will be fulfilled. He will be delivered over to the Gentiles. They will mock him, insult him & spit on him; they will flog him & kill him. On the third day he will rise again." (Lk 18:31-33)

Luke goes out of his way to show how undeserved this suffering and death was - Jesus is innocent of all wrong. Yet Jesus is not simply caught up in the political power-moves of the religious leaders and Gentile rulers. Jesus willingly submits to God's plan for the salvation of human souls and gladly walks to his death. The reason?

"Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms." Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, "This is what is written: The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem." (24:44-47)

Our King saves through his death and resurrection, just as it is written, just as God planned from before the creation of the world. Repentance for the forgiveness of sins is being preached in him. We have taken hold of it, and we hold it out to the Illawarra, so they might become disciples of Jesus too. **In this series we'll discover what Jesus is most on about from the most important week of his life on earth.**

SERIES BREAKUP

DATE	BIBLE	DATE	BIBLE
3-7 Feb	Kick off the Year!	9-13 Mar	Luke 22:47-71
10-14 Feb	Luke 20:20-21:4	16-20 Mar	Luke 23:1-25
17-21 Feb	Luke 21:5-37	23-27 Mar	Luke 23:26-49
24-28 Feb	Luke 22:1-38	30 Mar - 3 Apr	Luke 23:50-24:42
2-6 Mar	Luke 22:39-46	6-10 Apr	Luke 24:44-53

LUKE 20:20-21:4 • 10-14 FEB

DIRECTION: This is our 1st week looking at Luke in Small Group. This section continues a conflict between Jesus and the religious leaders that oppose him, that starts when Jesus enters the temple. In this section we'll see the sinfulness of these leaders and the perfect nature of our eternal Leader.

PRAY TO START: Pray we can see Jesus' goodness clearer.

LAUNCH: What have you tried over and over again without finishing?

CONTEXT: What can you remember from Luke 19-20?

From 19:45-46 Jesus is in the temple reacting to the corruption of the religious rulers. In 20:1-8 they're trying to trap Jesus. This passage continues the pattern of the episodes in this chapter: (a) An attempt to trap Jesus with a question designed to undermine his message before the people; (b) Jesus eludes the snare and in doing so silences his opponents and turns their allegations against them.

OBSERVATION & MEANING:

- **Read Luke 20:19-26.** Why do the Chief Priests and scribes send spies to ask questions of Jesus instead of asking the questions themselves?
- What do you think Jesus' answer in v25 means?
- What do you think it looks like to submit to earthly rulers (e.g. Caesar) and our heavenly ruler God? What happens when they clash?
- **Read Luke 20:27-40.** 'If at first you don't succeed, try again.' The priests attempted to trap Jesus and now the Sadducees arrive to help. Why do you think the Sadducees ask this particular question of Jesus?
- What does Jesus' answer teach us about...
 - 1) God?
 - 2) The Resurrection?
 - 3) Marriage?

- **Read Luke 20:45-47.** Why does Jesus warn his disciples about the religious rulers?

The religious rulers were loved by many and people looked to them to see what it meant to follow God & keep the law. However, they were actually outwardly clean but inwardly dead. See Luke 11:37-54 for an even longer list of their failures.

- **Read Luke 21:1-4.** What have you been taught about these verses? What do you notice from the broader context (especially v45-47)?

Usually we have heard about the widow's generosity. Given her two copper coins is a sign of her complete devotion to God, her obedience and generosity, which is a model to us. That's true, but there's more to this story...

The religious leaders are 'devouring widow's houses' by exploiting this widow, who gives 'all she had to live on'. The OT is filled with commands about loving widows (e.g. Deut 25:12-13, Isaiah 10:1-3), as God was protective of those in deep need. If the religious leaders had a heart for the down-trodden they would've cared and protected the vulnerable in their midst. Jesus on the other hand is not afraid to call out the sin of the religious leaders as he truly does care.

- Compared to the corruption & sinfulness of the religious leaders in this whole chapter, what do you notice about Jesus' good character?

APPLY: Have you ever had people trying to trap by asking hard questions about Christianity? How did you respond? What does Jesus' example encourage you to do in the future?

- Corruption in churches is unfortunately common and widespread. How do we combat corruption in churches?

PRAY TO END: Praise God for our good loving eternal leader Jesus, who cares for our souls.

LUKE 21:5-37 • 17-21 FEB

DIRECTION: Not going to lie - this passage is gnarly. There's 4 options of what it could describe: 1) the events that happened when Jerusalem was destroyed in 70 AD; 2) events that will happen when Jesus returns to judge; 3) events that already happened when Jesus died on the cross & was raised back to life; 4) some combination of all of the above.

As you work through these verses it's ok if you don't land on any 1 of those 4 options, or end up disagreeing. Just dig into the passage & wrestle with it together. The timing of the events is tricky, but what is crystal clear is that Jesus knows & controls the future, & tells us how to act (v34-36).

PRAY: That we'd hold onto Jesus' words over anything else in this world.

LAUNCH: What is the most impressive/significant landmark you've visited?

- What do you tend to do when you read a challenging or confusing part of the bible? What tools can you use to make sense of it?

OBSERVATION & MEANING: Read **Luke 21:5-7**. Why does Jesus launch into this big explanation? What questions do the disciples ask Jesus?

- **Read 21:8-11.** What does Jesus warn them about?

Not to be deceived by people claiming that they're God's Christ or that God's kingdom has come, and not to be frightened by troubles that seem like the end but aren't.

- **Read 21:12-19.** The disciples are told what the future holds for them. How would you feel if Jesus told you this?
- **Read 21:20-24.** How would you feel if you were an Israelite hearing this? What event do you think this is describing?
- **Read 21:25-32.** What event do you think this is describing? Why?

It sounds like this is describing Jesus' second coming - and it could well be doing that. There are some pointers to another possibility though: that it's describing what is about to happen as Jesus dies on the cross & is raised back to life. For example...

- 1) In v27 the 'Son of Man coming...with power and great glory' quotes Daniel 7:13-14 where the Son of Man comes to God at his ascension rather than to us – this seems to be what Jesus is saying in 22:69 too.
- 2) The descriptions in v25-26 did happen in some sense at Jesus' crucifixion, like in 23:44-45 and Matthew 27:51-53.
- 3) In v32 it seems like these things will happen in the lifetime of Jesus' disciples.
- 4) In v36 it 'about to happen'

Or perhaps it points to both of these timings – to Jesus' death & resurrection which began / inaugurated his reign, and to his second coming which finalises / consummates his reign.

APPLY: **Read Luke 21:34-36.** How are we meant to respond to all of this? How can we help each other to do/not-do what these verses say?

- How do you feel about the promises in v15, v18 and v19?
- How does Jesus' knowledge of the future – either the future of the cross, 70 AD, his second coming, or all of the above – comfort you when you feel uncertain about your future?

PRAY TO END: Praise God that he controls the future and it will not take him by surprise. Ask for God's help to 'stand firm' (v19) rather than having 'hearts weighed down' (v34).

LUKE 22:1-38 • 24-28 FEB

DIRECTION: This is Jesus' last meal & last moment with all of his disciples before the cross. He takes the opportunity to show his power, teach them about true service, and explain the significance of what he is about to do for them. Jesus is the Passover Lamb who saves us by being betrayed, rejected and killed in our place.

PRAY TO START: For God's help to understand who He is.

LAUNCH: What's something you do often but forget how significant it is?

Read Luke 22:1-38

OBSERVATION & MEANING: How is Jesus' power on show in this section?

In a couple of hours Jesus will be stripped naked, spat on and it'll look like he has no power at all. However, in this story Jesus knows all the details of the Passover and everything that is about to happen to him and his disciples. He's not taken by surprise. He shows his followers he's in complete control of all things that will happen in the future.

- From what you know in the OT, what is the Passover? Why is the Passover Lamb significant?
- Jesus says he brings the 'new covenant in my blood' (v20). What do you think that means?

In Jeremiah 31:31-34 God promises a new & better covenant. This comes about by Jesus being, essentially, a new & better Passover Lamb, being betrayed, rejected & killed in our place to protect us from God's wrath. It is Jesus' blood that brings about this new covenant.

- We do "The Lord's Supper / Communion" in church because of what Jesus says here. But in v17-20 it seems as though we're to 'take the cup' (v17), 'take the bread' (v19) & 'take the cup' again (v20). Are we doing the Lord's Supper wrong?!
- What is true greatness according to Jesus (from v24-30)? How does Jesus live this truth?

Paradoxically to be great is to put others before yourself – exactly like Jesus is doing.

- Satan enters Judas in v3. Can a Christian have Satan enter them today?

This section raises a few big questions for us, like was Judas a believer and Satan took away his faith? Can Satan enter me? A few thoughts...

1st, Judas was never a Christian. In John 12:4-6 we see he wasn't a saved guy sinning; he used his connection to Jesus for personal gain. In John 13:2 the devil was working on his heart. Then Satan enters him – which doesn't mean he was 'over-powered' & no longer in control of his actions & choices, but rather that he chose to be influenced by & work with Satan's evil plan.

2nd, a Christian cannot be possessed by demons or evil spirits. We are 'possessed' by the Holy Spirit instead. There's no example in Scripture where anyone casts out demons from believers. In every instance it is from unbelievers. Christians have new natures & the Holy Spirit living in them. He'd never give up his residency to Satan or demonic spirits. Satan is our enemy. However, he doesn't have authority over us because Christ has conquered him & we're in Christ. To explore this more look up: 2 Cor 6:15-16, Col 1:13, 2:13-15.

- Why do you think Jesus prayed for Peter to be protected from Satan, but let Judas be handed over?

This is part of the mystery of God's sovereign will and our human responsibility! Judas is totally responsible for what he did, as is Satan, yet in God's plan Jesus had to suffer & Judas' betrayal was the means by which he would. Whereas for Peter, Jesus humbled him by allowing him to fail, & then showed him great mercy by restoring him to lead his church.

APPLY: Do you fear the power and work of Satan? Should you?

- How does Jesus as your Passover Lamb comfort you today?
- Why should Christians continue to take the Lord's Supper?

PRAY TO END: Praise God that our Passover Lamb has served us & freed us from Satan's power! Pray that we would remember Christ always.

LUKE 22:39-46 • 2-6 MAR

DIRECTION: In the Garden of Gethsemane Jesus drinks the cup – which means he takes God’s wrath for us. He does this because he loves his Father & submits to his Father’s will in everything.

PRAY TO START: For God to help us be people who submit to our loving Father and His will in all things, even when it’s hard and uncomfortable.

LAUNCH: What is something you’ve unsuccessfully tried to get out of?

Read Luke 22:39-46

OBSERVATION & MEANING: This is an intense moment in Jesus’ life! How do you react to these verses / how do they affect you?

- What do you think ‘the cup’ is in v42?
- **Read Jeremiah 25:15-16, Isaiah 51:17, Revelation 14:9-11.** How do these passages fill in the picture of what ‘the cup’ is?

The cup is the idea of experiencing the full amount of God’s wrath against sin. Those who ‘drink the cup’ experience God’s wrath. Here, Jesus drinks God’s wrath that we deserve. Also, for your bonus interest, in Matt 20:22-23 Jesus tells his disciples they ‘will drink my cup’ - Jesus drank the cup of eternal wrath to save his disciples, but he also invites his disciples to drink the cup of suffering & death for his sake & for the sake of the Gospel.

- Why did Jesus have the Father’s wrath poured out upon him?
- Jesus knows he has to suffer. But in v42 he asks for the cup to be removed. Does Jesus try and get out of what awaits him?

Jesus’ mission from the onset was to redeem sinners to his Father & he knew his blood would be the means this was to be achieved. However, Jesus knew pain, torture and brutality was awaiting him, & that he would have the entirety of God’s wrath poured out on him. It would make anyone cry out ‘Oh God, if there is any other way may it be so.’ But yet, in his humility & obedience he clings to his Father’s will, as he has always done for all eternity.

- What does this passage teach us about the relationship between God the Son & God the Father?

The Son of God is eternally obedient to his Father, & as the incarnate Jesus Christ is 'obedient to death - even death on a cross! (Phil 2:8)

- Luke writes many times about Jesus' prayer life (e.g. 3:21, 5:16, 6:12-16, 9:18-22, 9:29, 22:32). Why do you think Jesus, the Son of God, prays to his Father constantly?

APPLY: Does the prayer life of Jesus encourage you or rebuke you?

- How does Jesus' obedience to his Father inspire or challenge you?
- **Read James 4:13-16.** How often do you make plans without submitting them to God's will? How does Luke 22 and James 4 encourage you to change that? How could you change that?

PRAY TO END: God, make us more like your Son, who was humbly obedient to you to the point of death, even death on a cross.

LUKE 22:47-71 • 9-13 MAR

DIRECTION: Jesus reigns in glory as the King of the cosmos. That happens though *as* he's rejected & opposed by everyone, even his closest followers.

PRAY TO START: Help us understand you deeper & in a fresh way today.

LAUNCH: What's the worst lie you have ever told?

CONTEXT: **Read Luke 18:31-33.** What are we expecting to happen to Jesus?

OBSERVATION & MEANING:

- **Read Luke 22:47-53.** What's backwards & ironic about these verses?

The crowds have been portrayed in a generally positive light in Luke's Gospel (e.g. 19:48); yet here they come to arrest Jesus in v47. Judas shows a symbol of affection to Jesus, yet it's the way he betrays him. The crowd is acting as if they're arresting a dangerous criminal, but Jesus doesn't fight back & heals the high priest in v51. God's so-called chosen people are acting as children of the darkness not the light.

- **Read Luke 22:54-62.** How do you react to Peter's denial of Jesus?
- **Read Luke 22:63-71.** What does this show us about Jesus' identity?

Jesus is the very Messiah they accuse him of being. He is God's long-awaited King, mocked & rejected by those who were waiting for him. He is the Son of Man of Daniel 7:13-14, who is 'given authority, glory and sovereign power' and a 'kingdom... that will never be destroyed'.

- What differences do you notice between Peter's responses when he's questioned (in v54-62) & Jesus' responses (in v63-71)?
- Peter plays a crucial part in the growth of the church after Jesus rises from the dead, but dramatically fails here. What are we meant to make of him / how should we respond to Peter's denial?

Peter is an amazing man. He is one of Jesus closest followers, an eyewitness of the resurrection, he plants & grows the church, will be a prolific proponent of Christianity after Jesus ascends, & will ultimately be crucified upside down for his faith in Christ. However, he is merely a human, a sinful creature in need of saving like all of us. His sin is a reminder we are to worship the sinless redeemer of the world. Jesus is our Saviour, our comfort and our joy.

APPLY: Have you ever publicly denied Jesus, similar to what Peter does?

Or perhaps the question should be how many times have we denied Jesus, as we have all been ashamed of Jesus at some point – whether in public, in private or simply in our hearts!

- What comfort is there for us when we fail?
- **Read Luke 9:23-26.** How can we help each other not to be ashamed of Jesus, but join in suffering for his sake?

PRAY TO END: Praise God we follow a King who endured public hatred to save sinners. Help us Lord to follow him no matter the cost.

LUKE 23:1-25 • 16-20 MAR

DIRECTION: Jesus starts the next round of trials – this time before Gentile rulers instead of the Jewish leaders. Though clearly innocent he doesn't take matters into his own hands but entrusts himself to his Father's care and perfect plan. Jesus steps ever-closer to the cross, where he will take the place of guilty sinners (somewhat like what he does for Barabbas).

PRAY TO START: That we'd model our lives on Jesus' perfect example.

LAUNCH: When have you gotten into trouble, even though you knew you didn't do anything wrong?

CONTEXT: **Read Luke 18:31-33.** What are we expecting to happen to Jesus?

Read Luke 23:1-25

OBSERVATION & MEANING: What do the Jewish leaders accuse Jesus of? Do you think those are fair accusations?

In beautiful irony, the religious leaders had previously tried to trap Jesus about paying taxes to the Romans (in Luke 20:25) since they didn't want to submit to Caesar. Here they twist his words & hurl them as a charge against him. Not only this but these leaders, rulers and scribes are the true mis-leaders who subvert the nation & lead it astray, not Jesus.

- Why was Herod keen to see Jesus? Why do you think Jesus was unwilling to do a sign for Herod?

Jesus does signs to demonstrate his authority: that he speaks and acts for God, and is the Son of God. He won't do signs, however, when they're demanded from him, as he doesn't trust people who only want to see spectacular things but who won't believe in who he is & what he's saying & won't repent. You can read more in: Mark 8:11-13. Luke 16:27-31, John 6:25-29.

- Why do you think the crowd is so determined to see Jesus killed?

- It seems as though Pilate didn't want to execute Jesus and tried to free him. Why might he have wanted to do that?

The Romans ruled over the Jews at this time & were the only ones allowed to enforce capital punishment - Pilate might have wanted to release Jesus as a means of power, not bowing to the demands of his enemies. He might also have been trying to keep the somewhat-peace between the Jews & Romans - as the Jewish crowd gathered & worked themselves into a frenzy, Pilate might've feared mob violence & a riot. He may also have been genuinely convinced of Jesus' innocence & not wanted an innocent man to receive the death penalty.

- It's often pointed out that Jesus trading places with Barabbas gives us a great picture of what Jesus has done for Christians.

How does it show us what Jesus has done?

Is anything missing from the picture / is anything different between us and Barabbas?

Jesus the innocent takes the place of Barabbas the guilty; the perfect Son of God lays down his life for the sinful & defiled. But there's no indication Barabbas repents & believes in Jesus, so that Jesus' death in his place would be effective to save his soul.

APPLY: Jesus, the innocent, has taken the place for us, mere sinners. How does this make you feel?

- **Read 1 Peter 2:19-23.** How is Jesus a model for us? How are you going at following his example when you're 'treated unjustly' or 'suffer for doing good'?

PRAY TO END: Many Christians are persecuted daily for their faith. Pray for Christians in these countries to stand firm amidst opposition. Pray for God to change the hearts of leaders in these countries so they don't oppose the name of Jesus.

The countries with the highest levels of Christian persecution are North Korea, Somalia, Libya, Afghanistan and Pakistan.

LUKE 23:26-49 • 23-27 MAR

DIRECTION: Jesus' death saves guilty people. He is the King of the Jews, the Messiah, who begins to rule by willingly refusing to save himself, in order to save us. He saves people like the criminal on the cross, who simply trusted in him for salvation and turned to obey him as Lord.

PRAY TO START: That we'd marvel at our saviour today.

LAUNCH: Have you ever been totally sure about something then changed your mind really quickly after?

Read Luke 23:26-49

OBSERVATION & MEANING: This is a fairly intense description of what happens to Jesus. What's your initial reaction?

- Why do you think Jesus says what he does in v26-31?

Similar to 19:41-44, Ancient Israel's rejection of Jesus (especially from the leaders) means they will be judged by God. This came to pass in 70 AD when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem.

- What's the irony in the insults of the rulers (v35), soldiers (v36), 1st criminal (v39), and in the notice written above Jesus (v38)?

He is King of the Jews, & begins to rule by willingly not saving himself, in order to save them.

- Given how badly Jesus is treated, how do you react to v34 and v46?
- What do you make of the 2nd criminal – how would you describe his response to Jesus?
- **Read Matthew 27:44.** What's different between Matthew's & Luke's accounts of the two criminals?

Sometimes we remember the story in Luke but forget this verse in Matthew. Both criminals were hurling abuse Jesus' way. At some point on the cross though, God worked in the 2nd criminal & he repented & believed. Jesus is pinned to a cross & physically unable to move, yet he still works within this man's heart to save this sinner.

- In v43 Jesus tells the criminal 'today you will be with me in paradise.' What do you think this means?

Check out Revelation 2:7 where 'paradise' is used again. Although note that the emphasis is that you will be with me! Our great hope is – yes, a resurrected body; yes, no more sin or suffering – but above all it is eternal life with God our Father & our resurrected Lord Jesus: 'God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God' (Rev 21:3)

- What might v43 tell us about where Jesus went after he died? For example – did Jesus go to heaven then come back to earth when he was resurrected? Did he go to hell? Does it even matter?

Here's a few options Christians have put forward...

- 1) *Jesus went to hell (as in the place all unbelievers will end up under God's judgement) for three days then was resurrected.*
- 2) *Jesus went to heaven (as in the place God dwells) with the criminal then came back to earth to be resurrected.*
- 3) *Jesus went to the temporary dwelling place where all the dead are before the resurrection at the end of history (aka Hades or Sheol) that isn't either hell or heaven, and then was resurrected from it.*

For more see: www.thegospelcoalition.org/reviews/confess-jesus-descended-into-hell

- What might be the significance of the curtain in the temple tearing?

It probably points to 2 things. 1st that Jesus has made the temple obsolete. Jesus is now the place where God is present & atonement for sin is made – as Jesus alludes to in John 2:19-22.

2nd it highlights the broader access now available to God. Previously only a very few people could enter the temple, & only the High Priest could pass through the curtain into the Most Holy Place, & only once a year. The curtain being torn symbolises access to God's presence is now available to all who trust & believe in Jesus – in the words of Hebrews 10:19-20, 'we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body'.

APPLY: Does the converted criminal encourage you? Why, why not?

- How does secure access to God through Jesus comfort you?

PRAY TO END: Praise our Lord Jesus who 'was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification' (Rom 4:25).

LUKE 23:50-24:42 • 30 MAR-3 APR

DIRECTION: Jesus' resurrection was witnessed. Paul says Jesus '*appeared to Peter, & then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers & sisters at the same time... Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, & last of all he appeared to me*' (1 Cor 15:5-8).

It matters that Jesus is alive: for '*if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless & so is your faith... & you are still in your sins*' (1 Cor 15:14, 17).

This part of Luke shows us the 1st eyewitnesses & 1st reactions to meeting the risen Lord Jesus. It shows us the *reliability* of the resurrection – that it's reasonable and necessary to believe the eyewitnesses. Jesus is truly alive!

PRAY TO START: God, may we believe your words from your Bible and may they comfort us in times of unbelief.

LAUNCH: What's the most surprising unbelievable thing you've ever seen?

OBSERVATION: Quickly skim **Luke 23:50-24:42** on your own or in pairs and break it into scenes like if it was a TV show. Give each scene a title.

You might have something like this: 23:50-54, 23:55-24:9, 24:10-12, 24:13-35, 24:36-42. Don't spend too long on this, as you'll split people up to look at each bit closer next.

MEANING: Now split into pairs and look at 1-2 of those scenes each.

- What does this section tell you about what has happened to Jesus?
- How believable is it?
- **Read 1 Corinthians 15:12-20.** Why does it matter that Jesus has risen? Why does it matter that people saw him alive?

APPLY: Do you ever doubt that Jesus is risen? How does Luke's account of the resurrection appearances address your doubts?

- What confidence does Jesus' resurrection give you about the future?
- What particular things are stopping your friends from trusting Jesus? Is the reliability of the resurrection 1 of them? How could you use this section of Luke to show them the eyewitness evidence?
- How does Jesus being alive change the way you pray?

PRAY TO END: Praise God that Jesus truly is alive, and that he appeared to so many eyewitnesses so we can trust that fact. Ask for help to believe.

LUKE 24:44-53 • 6-10 APR

DIRECTION: This our last week in Small Group for the term and last week in Luke's gospel. We finish on an epic highpoint as we see the *reason* for the resurrection: repentance for the forgiveness of sins is on offer in Jesus' name for all nations now!

PRAY TO START: The Resurrection changes everything! Praise God we don't worship a dead idol but a living powerful Saviour.

LAUNCH: What is some good news you've received in the last month?

Read Luke 24:44-53

MEANING: What needed to happen to Jesus? What is still left to do? What do you think 'repentance for the forgiveness of sins' means?

- Can you think of places in the OT where things like v46-47 are 'written'?

You could check out: Hosea 6:1-2, Isaiah 53:3-5, Psalm 16:8-11, Matthew 12:40

- Why did the disciples need their minds opened to understand?

The Bible is merely a book to those who haven't had their minds opened by the Spirit of God to understand spiritual realities. But for the one who has been regenerated by the Spirit of God, it leads us to have faith in Jesus. Also check out 1 Corinthians 2:12-14.

- How might this shape the way we evangelise our unbelieving friends?
- In v44 when Jesus says the 'things that are written about me' need to be fulfilled – do you think he's talking about specific promises about him in the OT, or is he saying the whole OT is about him?

See also v27 and 2 Cor 1:20. It could either be that 1) the various verses and promises specifically pointing to Jesus in the OT have been fulfilled; or 2) Jesus might be saying that in some sense the whole OT points to, anticipates and finds its fulfilment in him.

- Does it make a difference to how we read the bible?

In both cases God is a promise giver & keeper, Jesus' death & resurrection has always been the plan, and Jesus is crucial to understanding the bible. However, in the 2nd case Jesus is at the centre of the story the whole way through – it's all about him. So we'd read every part of the bible 'cross-eyed' – 1st of all seeing what it means in context for the original audience, & then also seeing it in relation to Jesus & how that passage is ultimately about & fulfilled by Jesus.

- What do you think the 'promise of the Father' is, in v49?

As Luke's Gospel comes to a close, readers can head into Luke's 2nd volume, the book of Acts. At Pentecost (9 days after Jesus' ascension) the Spirit of Christ comes on his followers to empower them to witness to him, and to live within them to unite them to Christ Jesus.

- How is the resurrection good news for people?

Our God lives! Death has been defeated. Forgiveness is available in Jesus. He is risen!

APPLY: Is the message of v46-47 different from Gospel presentations you've heard, or ones you've shared? Is that a problem – why / why not?

- How might v48-49 apply to Christians today?
- The only thing left to do is 'preach repentance for the forgiveness of sins' to everyone. How does that give you confidence as you try and share about the hope of Jesus with your unbelieving friends?
- What have you been most encouraged or struck by in Luke 20-24?

PRAY TO END: Jesus has died, risen and ascended - praise God for forgiveness in him! Ask for God's help to be on mission – God, enable your servants and your church to proclaim the wonderful news of forgiveness.

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The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. (Luke 24:46-48)