

Luke

THE PEOPLE
AROUND JESUS

SECTION II

WEEKS 5-12

WEEK 5:

REASONS YOU MIGHT WANT TO KILL JESUS

PRIMARY SCRIPTURE:

Luke 4:14-30

RELATED SCRIPTURES:

1 Kings 17:1-16 (Elijah and the widow from Zarephath) 2 Kings 5:1-14 (Elisha and Naaman),
Philippians 3:1-14, Mark 2:13-17, Matthew 9:9-13

“[People who are not sure] that God loves and accepts them in Jesus, apart from their present spiritual achievements, are sub-consciously radically insecure persons [...] Their insecurity shows itself in pride, a fierce, defensive assertion of their own righteousness, and defensive criticism of others. They come naturally to hate other cultural styles and other races in order to bolster their own security and discharge their suppressed anger.”

- Richard Lovelace

PERSONAL STUDY:

Read Luke 4:14-16. What details does Luke give us about the nature and rhythm of Jesus' early ministry?

Read Luke 4:16-22 and Isaiah 61:1-7. In your own words describe the promises prophesied about in Isaiah 61. Why would these words specifically have caused the crowd to respond so well in Luke 4:22? (Refer to "The Cultural Landscape in the Time of Luke's Gospel" at the beginning of this study guide for historical context.)

What is interesting about where Jesus stops reading in the Isaiah passage? What promises does He leave out? Are there any times in your life where you feel like God has failed to remember or uphold His promises? Why?

Read Luke 4:23-30. Why does the crowd's response change so drastically? What is significant about the two stories Jesus tells in v. 25-27? What is different about the people God took care of in these two stories and the people in the crowd?

What kinds of things are you tempted to believe help you earn or deserve God's favor or blessing? If you had to make one, what kind of things would you put on your spiritual resume?

Read Philippians 3:1-16. Why is Paul free to reject his own spiritual resume? Ask Jesus to set you free to adopt Paul's attitude toward your spiritual resume.

SERMON NOTES:

LIFEGROUP DISCUSSION:

When in your life have you been mad at God? Why? What did you believe in that moment would have helped you not be mad at Him?

Luke 4:17-21. What kind of people come to mind in the verses Jesus reads from Isaiah 61? How much do you tend to identify yourself in and with these groups of people?

What kinds of things do you tend to think belong on your spiritual resume? What attributes make someone spiritually impressive or spiritually inadequate in your mind? What determines if people are good people or bad people?

What are you insecure about? In what arenas of life do you believe it's most important to prove yourself and perform well?

Read Galatians 2:19-21. Why is it hard for us to believe that in Jesus there is nothing left to earn from God? Why is it hard for us to believe there is nothing good in ourselves by which we can or must earn God's favor?

WEEK 6:

REASONS YOU MIGHT GIVE YOUR LIFE TO JESUS

PRIMARY SCRIPTURE:

Luke 5:1-11 and 5:27-32

RELATED SCRIPTURE:

Matthew 4:18-22, Matthew 10:34-39,
Acts 4:13, 1 Corinthians 1:26-31

“Are you willing to say, ‘Lord Jesus, I am not worthy. You don’t owe me a good life. You don’t. You owe me nothing but wrath.’ The minute that happens, He rushes in to eat with you. If you say, ‘You owe me a good life,’ ... the minute that happens, He says, ‘I have not come for you.’ Wow! That’s Christianity. That’s the gospel. That’s simple. That’s profound.”

– Tim Keller

PERSONAL STUDY:

Throughout your life, have you mostly been picked first, last or in the middle? Do you tend to self-identity positively as being smart, accomplished and successful or do you think of yourself as unintelligent, struggling and/or more of a failure?

Read Luke 5:1-5. What would you guess Peter is feeling and thinking when Jesus tells him to put the nets back out? What do you think when a non-expert gives you advice on how to do something but you are actually more informed on that topic?

Read Luke 5:6-9. When in your life have you seen God overwhelm you with grace and undeserved blessing? What stands out to you about Peter's response?

Read Luke 5:10-11. In v. 10, what does Jesus mean when he tells Peter, Andrew, James and John, "from now on you will be catching men"? Why does Jesus consistently use concrete analogies and images from people's everyday life?

Read Luke 5:27-32. How does Jesus leverage Levi's relationships for the kingdom? Why does Jesus feel no shame about hanging out with "sinners and tax collectors"?

Read 1 Corinthians 1:26-31. How does this passage relate to the idea of tearing up our spiritual resumes that we talked about last week?

SERMON NOTES:

LIFEGROUP DISCUSSION:

Read Luke 5:1-11, 27-32 and Acts 4:13. What insight do you get from Jesus calling a variety of people to be His disciples, including uneducated, blue-collar folk?

In both of these passages in Luke 5, Jesus calls His disciples to put everything in the backseat compared to following Him; including family and career. What factors made this calling so difficult?

Do family and career tempt you to ignore, minimize or domesticate Jesus' calling on your life? How so?

How does Jesus in the gospel fully provide for us everything that we think we need family and career to provide?

Read Luke 5:27-32. What posture does Jesus take towards Levi's sinful friends? Why doesn't he warn Levi to stop hanging out with his old friends so he won't fall back into sin?

Who are people Jesus has put in your life that your LifeGroup can pray for and seek to love and serve (by throwing parties to help invite them in and/or any other means)?

WEEK 7:

CLEANSING FOR SHAME

PRIMARY SCRIPTURE:

Luke 5:12-16

RELATED SCRIPTURE:

Genesis 2:25, Leviticus 13:40-46, Isaiah 61:7-10,
Romans 7:21-8:4, 2 Corinthians 12:5-10

“Jesus stops his teaching, stops answering questions, and for a moment, devotes all of his attention to this desperate man... he’s begging Jesus, ‘Please heal me.’ Now, what he’s expecting is a word from Jesus, and what he gets is a touch from Jesus. Jesus touches this man. He feels Jesus touch him... Jesus touches those who are unclean. That’s what he does. [And in his touch] Jesus is being affectionate to this man; and he’s blessing this man; and he’s encouraging this man; and he is publicly dignifying this man.”

– Mark Driscoll

PERSONAL STUDY:

Read Luke 5:12-16. What do you know about leprosy? When v. 12 says the man was “full of leprosy” it means he had a severe case. Where in your life have you or people in your life dealt with debilitating diseases? What different aspects of your life were affected (physical, social, emotional, etc.)?

In Luke 5:12, what do the leper’s actions and statement reveal to you about him? When have you experienced this kind of desperation?

Read Luke 5:13. Why are Jesus’ words “be clean” so important? How does Jesus cleaning the leper’s physical ailment reflect a deeper spiritual reality?

What in your life has caused you to feel the most shame, embarrassment, unworthiness or dirtiness? Who in your life has been the most crippled by shame?

What behaviors and emotions have been birthed out of shame in your life?

What advice have you been given in life for how you should deal with your shame? Why does fixing external conditions fail to solve the depths of our shame issues?

Read Romans 7:21-8:4 and 2 Corinthians 12:5-10. How does the gospel deal with and free us from our shame?

SERMON NOTES:

LIFEGROUP DISCUSSION:

Read Luke 5:12-16. How is the man's leprosy more than just a physical problem? Where have you seen physical ailments or circumstances connect to much deeper social and spiritual issues in your soul?

How much do you deal with shame in your daily life? What in your life has caused you the most shame?

What behaviors and emotions have been birthed out of shame in your life?

Read Luke 5:12-13. The man asks to be made clean and Jesus offers to cleanse him. Why is cleansing important in regards to leprosy and the deeper issue of shame?

Read Jeremiah 33:8, 1 John 1:7 and Colossians 1:21. How does the gospel deal with our sin and set us free from shame at every level?

WEEK 8:
OUR DEEPEST NEED

PRIMARY SCRIPTURE:

Luke 5:17-26

RELATED SCRIPTURE:

Lamentations 3:19-27, Psalm 51:1-5,
Matthew 13:44-45, Proverbs 18:24, Proverbs 27:6

“Whatever else is or is not true, this one thing is certain—man is not what he was meant to be.”

– G.K. Chesterton

“Beneath the great accomplishments of our time there is a deep current of despair. While efficiency and control are the great aspirations of our society, the loneliness, isolation, lack of friendship and intimacy, broken relationships, boredom, feelings of emptiness and depression, and a deep sense of uselessness fill the hearts of millions of people in our success-oriented world.”

– Henri Nouwen, *In the Name of Jesus*

PERSONAL STUDY:

Read Luke 5:17-19. Try to picture yourself in the midst of this interaction. We aren't given a lot of detail about the paralyzed man, but what do you think his life is like? What are his pains and frustrations? What are his hopes and dreams?

Read Luke 5:18-19. Look at the actions of the paralyzed man's friends. What insight can we gain about the nature of true friendship from them? How can you apply these insights to your friendships with people?

Read Luke 5:20 and Psalm 51:1-5. What is the significance of Jesus claiming the right to forgive sins? What is significant about Jesus ignoring the man's need of physical healing to deal with his sins first?

Read Luke 5:17-21. Describe the Pharisees actions and/or inaction throughout this story. What do we learn about them from their behavior?

Read Luke 5:22-26. According to v. 24, what is Jesus' goal in healing the man's paralysis? What did He desire most for the paralyzed man? What did He desire most for the Pharisees and the teachers of the law?

SERMON NOTES:

LIFEGROUP DISCUSSION:

Have you ever had an affliction, struggle or desire that you believed “If God gave me _____ or changed _____, then life would be ok”?

Read Luke 17-20. Why does Jesus first focus on the paralyzed man’s sin issue instead of his physical need? Why do we often focus on our physical needs over and above our spiritual needs and sin issues?

Read Luke 5:21. The Pharisees are correct that God alone can forgive sin. In what ways do you struggle with the idea of Jesus claiming outright to be God?

Why do you think the Pharisees are fundamentally concerned with the theology of Jesus’ statement, but not concerned at all with loving the paralyzed man?

Read Matthew 13:44. If God offered you two options:

- 1) Anything in your life that you want and perceive as a need or
- 2) Forgiveness for your sins...

Which would you pick? Why? What is the real trade-off in this situation?

How does the gospel set us free to love, sacrifice for, and work to help our friends? In your friendships, do you tend to care about sin issues and spiritual needs or do you focus more on other things?

WEEK 9:

JESUS' UPSIDE-DOWN COMMUNITY: VALUES

PRIMARY SCRIPTURE:

Luke 6:17-26

RELATED SCRIPTURE:

Matthew 5:1-12, Isaiah 25:1-8, James 5:1-6

“‘Chronological snobbery,’ [is] the uncritical acceptance of the intellectual climate common to our own age... Our own age is also ‘a period,’ and certainly has, like all periods, its own characteristic illusions. They are likeliest to lurk in those widespread assumptions which are so ingrained in the age that no one dares to attack or feels it necessary to defend them.”

– C.S. Lewis, *Surprised By Joy*

PERSONAL STUDY:

Read Luke 6:20-26. Is it hard to understand why Jesus said that those who are poor, hungry, sad and hated are those who are truly blessed? Why does Jesus say woe to the rich, the full, those who laugh, and those who are well-respected? How do His teachings conflict with our cultural values?

Read Matthew 5:1-12. What differences do you notice between these two accounts of Jesus' teaching? How do the two passages help bring a fuller picture and shine more light on each other?

Read Luke 6:20+24 and 1 Timothy 6:6-10. What does Jesus mean when He says, "blessed are the poor"? What is the difference between loving money and having money? Why is the love of money such a temptation?

Read Luke 6:21+25, Matthew 6:33 and Philippians 3:17-21. Where in life are you driven by your appetites and cravings (hunger)? In Philippians 3, how does Paul describe the focus of someone whose "god is their belly"?

Read Luke 6:22-23+26 and John 12:42-43. How does the desire for people's approval hinder your love of Jesus? Have you ever been mocked or even hated for identifying your life with Jesus?

SERMON NOTES:

LIFEGROUP DISCUSSION:

Have you ever thought or heard anyone say that the Bible is irrelevant and outdated? What do you think?

Read Luke 6:20-26. What are the four issues that Jesus teaches on in this passage? How does Jesus' teaching oppose our culture's deeply held values?

By cultural standards, are you poor or rich? Are you hungry or full? Are you one of those who weep or those who laugh? Are you hated or do people speak well of you? Do your love and devotion to Jesus factor into these issues? How so?

Read Luke 6:20+24 and 1 Timothy 6:6-10. Where as a LifeGroup are we most tempted by the love of money? What steps of repentance do we need to take?

Read Luke 6:21+25 and Philippians 3:17-21. What appetites and cravings regularly distract us from Jesus? What steps of repentance do we need to take?

Where are we tempted to act happy and like everything in life is fine? What steps of repentance do we need to take?

Read Luke 6:22-23+26 and John 12:42-43. Where do we struggle the most with fear of man? What steps of repentance do we need to take?

WEEK 10:

JESUS' UPSIDE-DOWN COMMUNITY: RELATIONSHIPS

PRIMARY SCRIPTURE:

Luke 6:27-36

RELATED SCRIPTURE:

Matthew 27:32-50, Psalm 22, Romans 5:6-11,
Romans 12:14-21, Ephesians 2:11-19, John 15:12-17

“You can safely assume you’ve created God in your own image when it turns out God hates all the same people you do.”

- Anne Lamott, *Bird by Bird*

“When we come to terms with the fact that before God we are, because of what Jesus has done, forever loved, forever approved, forever accepted – our meaning, worth, value and security has been secured by Jesus and given to us – that sets us free ... to live without needing to get from people, so now you’re free to give to people.”

- Tullian Tchividjian, *One Way Love*

PERSONAL STUDY:

Read Luke 6:27-31. List out the specific commands Jesus gives in these verses. Which is the most difficult for you to comprehend? Which is the most difficult to apply?

How do these commands contradict the natural way we tend to relate to people? Think about how you tend to interact with different types of people. What different factors play into your motivations in how you treat people?

Read Matthew 27:32-50, Psalm 22 and Romans 5:6-11. How does Jesus' crucifixion relate to the commands Jesus gives in Luke 6:27-31?

What thoughts and emotions do you experience as you dwell on the idea that Jesus became God's enemy on the cross so that you could become God's friend? What thoughts and emotions do you experience as you meditate on Jesus' perfect love and grace for His enemies displayed on the cross?

In Luke 6:28, Jesus says "pray for those who abuse you." Who has caused you the most pain in your life? Spend some time praying for them. How does praying for those who have hurt you bring freedom and healing to your own soul?

Read Luke 6:32-36. Where do you see examples of God's merciful, undeserved love and grace throughout the Bible? Where has God's mercy to you motivated your love toward others? Who do you need to forgive and show mercy to?

SERMON NOTES:

LIFEGROUP DISCUSSION:

When in your life have you had outright enemies? What caused the situation? Has it resolved? If so, how? If not, why not?

Read Luke 6:27-29. Is there anyone in your life right now that Jesus is asking you to be merciful, gracious and loving toward and you are unwilling for some reason?

Read Luke 6:30. How do we think through a situation where someone is asking us for money? What other verses help shape our thinking?

Read Luke 6:32-36. How do you personally understand God's mercy towards you as one who is "ungrateful and evil"? What factors prevent us from loving people with the same mercy that God has shown to us?

Read Matthew 27:32-50 and Psalm 22. How does Jesus relate to us when we are mistreated and struggling to love our enemies?

Read Psalm 7:11 and 2 Corinthians 5:21. What does it mean that Jesus became God's enemy so we could become God's friends? What sin and ungratefulness did Jesus become for you so that you could become God's friend?

WEEK 11:

JESUS' UPSIDE-DOWN COMMUNITY: LOVE & JUDGMENT

PRIMARY SCRIPTURE:

Luke 6:37-42

RELATED SCRIPTURE:

Ecclesiastes 7:5, Proverbs 12:1, Luke 17:1-4,
John 7:24, Romans 2:1-11, 1 Corinthians 15:1-13,
2 Corinthians 2:5-8, James 4:11-12

“One cool judgment is worth a thousand hasty counsels. The thing to do is to supply light and not heat.”

- Woodrow Wilson

“What the gospel does is remove our ability to judge others harshly.”

- Matt Chandler

“If Satan ever laughs, it must be at hypocrites; they are the greatest dupes he has; they serve him better than any others, and receive no wages.”

- Charles Caleb Colton, Lacon

PERSONAL STUDY:

When in your life have you felt judged, slandered, or gossiped about? What kind of pain did it cause?

When in your life have you received helpful rebuke, instruction and/or correction? What were the differences between these moments and those that you perceived as damaging?

Read Luke 6:37-38. How do judgment, condemnation and forgiveness relate to each other? How do we know that Jesus isn't outright saying, "never use your judgment or make any judgments about people"? (Reference John 7:24.)

Read James 4:11-12 and Romans 2:1-11. How do James and Paul compare our judgment to God's judgment? What is the difference between assuming the position of judge and making judgments in regular, everyday life?

Read Luke 6:39-42. What does Jesus mean when He says to "first take the log out of your eye, and then you will see clearly to take out the speck that is in your brother's eye"? How do you test your motives when you see sin in a brother's life?

Read John 7:24, 1 Corinthians 15:1-13 and 2 Corinthians 2:5-8. What is the purpose of judgment for Christians? What is the end goal for a person who is in sin? How does a pattern of confession and confrontation among God's people reflect God's love toward us?

SERMON NOTES:

LIFEGROUP DISCUSSION:

Who are the most judgmental people you've interacted with in your life? What issues or types of people tend to bring out a judgmental attitude in you?

Read Luke 37-42. What is Jesus' overall point in this passage? How do we focus on our own sin first and fight against self-righteousness?

John Wesley developed a culture of accountability and self-critique where they asked these questions regularly:

- Am I consciously or unconsciously creating the impression that I am better than I really am?
- Am I self-conscious, self-pitying or self-justifying?
- Did the Bible live in me today? Do I give it time to speak to me?
Am I enjoying prayer?
- When did I last speak to someone else of my faith?
- Do I pray about the money I spend?
- How do I spend my spare time?
- Am I proud? Am I jealous, impure, critical, irritable, touchy or distrustful?
- Do I grumble or complain constantly?
- Is Christ real to me?

Which of these should we begin asking ourselves on a regular basis? Are there any other questions we should add to the list?

Read John 7:24. Is it possible to truly love someone without helping them see their sin? What would a culture of love-motivated and helpful judgment look like for our community?

WEEK 12:

JESUS' UPSIDE-DOWN COMMUNITY: AM I IN IT?

PRIMARY SCRIPTURE:

Luke 6:43-49

RELATED SCRIPTURE:

Ezekiel 36:25-27, Matthew 13:1-23,
John 14:15 and 23-24, 2 Corinthians 5:14-21,
Ephesians 2:1-10, Hebrews 10:19-39, Revelation 21:1-8

“Advent creates people, new people.”

- Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *God Is in the Manger:
Reflections on Advent and Christmas*

“Christian holiness consists not of trying as hard as we can to be good but of learning to live in the new world created by Easter, the new world we publicly entered in our baptism. There are many parts of the world we can't do anything about except pray. But there is one part of the world, one part of physical reality, that we can do something about, and that is the creature each of us call 'myself.'”

- N.T. Wright

PERSONAL STUDY:

Read Luke 6:43-45 and 2 Corinthians 13:5. Where in your life have you seen Jesus give you a new heart, new mind, and new actions/behaviors? Does the pattern of fruit in your life indicate that you've been given a new heart by Jesus?

Read Matthew 23:25-28. Where in your life do you struggle with the religious game of cleaning up your external actions and ignoring the internal condition of your heart? Why is this tempting?

Luke 6:45 says that an evil heart produces evil and that evil words are the abundance of an evil heart. Where is your heart of flesh revealing itself through your actions and your words? What do you need to be consistently confessing and repenting from?

Read Luke 6:46-49. People build their foundation for relationship with God on all kinds of things (good works, good morals, a family affiliation, church attendance, an emotional decision, etc.). What does Jesus say will expose what our real foundation is? How does Jesus' grace give a solid foundation in the midst of pain?

Read Ephesians 2:1-10. What are the good works that Jesus has created you for? How fully are you walking in and serving people with what God has given you?

SERMON NOTES:

LIFEGROUP DISCUSSION:

Do you ever struggle with doubt about whether or not you are a really a Christian? If so, what causes these doubts? If not, why not?

Read Luke 6:43-45, 2 Corinthians 13:5 and Hebrews 10:19-23. What does it look like to examine our faith while at the same time having an assurance of faith because of what Jesus has done for us?

In light of Luke 6:45, how is Jesus pressing us deeper than a religious “don’t use bad language” rule? What types of sinful conditions in your heart are exposed by your mouth?

Read Luke 6:46. Jesus questions the hypocrisy of calling Him Lord and failing to do what He commands. What sins of inaction and omission are currently present in your life?

Read Ephesians 2:9-10 and Hebrews 10:24-25. How can we encourage each other towards serving in ways Jesus has wired us? What fears or hesitations or selfishness hinder you? How can we help press you to grow?

Read Luke 6:47-49. When seasons of pain and suffering have come in your life, have you been able to stand or have you tended to fold spiritually? Why does hardship expose areas of hypocrisy and/or unbelief in our lives?