



CHRIST ON CAMPUS

Ron Pickell

Leader's Guide

Christ on Campus – Leader's Guide

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Journey... Christ on Campus Studies in the Gospel of Luke

...is about Christ on the street, Jesus in person, God on campus! It's about the great reversal of God's kingdom; the leaven of God's grace permeating the dough of common life impacting and elevating our daily existence.

Have you ever wished that things were different - that even if the rich got richer the poor didn't get poorer? What if there was a real Prince and the Pauper story where those on top learned what life was like for those on the bottom and the poor were able to experience the good life?

As I am writing this, I recently had my own story reversal when I looked at my bank account to discover that several thousand dollars had made its way back into my checking account from a bank fraud recovery. I had been scammed through an elaborate computer fraud protection scheme and lost thousands that I had little hope of retrieving. Imagine my surprise and relief to find my money had been refunded to my account safe and sound. The scammers were stopped, and my bank account saved.

Luke, the author of the gospel ascribed to him, taps into this surprising life turnaround theme. The good news of Jesus is a real Robinhood story where rich and poor trade places. He lays out his purpose in the introduction. He's writing an orderly account about the things that have been fulfilled among them. Orderly, in the well-organized fashion that Luke tells the story of Jesus beginning with the introduction in chapters 1-2, followed by an account of Jesus and His mission in chapters 3-9. Chapters 9-19 take us on a discipleship journey with Jesus toward Jerusalem ending with chapters 19-24 in Jerusalem where Jesus is rejected, crucified, and rises again.

The things fulfilled among them place emphasis on how Jesus brought good news to those who had been left out of God's blessing to Abraham intended for all. Luke presents Jesus as the Suffering Servant messiah that set His course toward Jerusalem at the very start of His ministry in order to give His life for the world (Luke 9:51).

Another important theme in the story of Luke about Jesus is His emphasis on the "unimportant." People like Joseph and Mary, Zachariah, and Elizabeth, and old saints like Anna and Simeon. He weaves the account of Jesus' life around tax collector outcasts, female disciples, and 12 young men that no rabbi would have accepted as their students. In chapter 6 where Luke records Jesus' famous Sermon on the Mount, the unlikely blessed are the poor, the hungry, those who weep, and the hated. It is the story of the upside-down kingdom where the last have become first and the first are now in last place.

Luke's account of Jesus is unique and necessary by providing a perspective on Jesus and His mission that others only touch on. It's necessary because it's true, but it also describes Luke's own experience with Jesus as a non-Jewish outsider - the topic for the first lesson in this series. A kingdom for the unexpected and undeserved was personal for Luke, but also true to the very core of the Jesus narrative. It was so central that Luke ends the account of Jesus with a story about seeing Jesus for who He really is - Messiah for the unknown and unimportant.

Following the tragic crucifixion two of Jesus' lesser-known disciples are walking away from Jerusalem downcast and discouraged because of His demise. Jesus shows up and walks with them toward the small town of Emmaus where they are headed for the night. He talks with them along the way and reminds them of how the scriptures foretold that the Messiah had to suffer, would be rejected, crucified, and rise again on the third day. While they clung to their own false messianic assumptions, He remained eclipsed from their view. It wasn't until they reached the inn where they were staying and they watched Him break the bread reminiscent of His own broken body on the cross that their eyes were opened, and they finally recognized Him. While they clung to the messiah of their own willful dreams the real messiah predicted in the scriptures was opaque and hidden from their view.

There are many narratives of Jesus on campus today. There is the church Jesus compelling students to form a connection with a church or campus fellowship during their years in college. There's the prophetic Jesus with wild spokesmen out on the corner yelling at students about their sins and unless they change their ways they're going straight to hell. There is the moral Jesus that college professors refer to - the One who performed no miracles but shared great moral teachings. But where is the Jesus that Luke was introducing to Theophilus? The Jesus that welcomed children and young people? The Jesus that valued the marginalized? The Jesus that proclaimed a blessed kingdom for all? This is the Christ needed on today's campus. It is the Jesus that students must hear about because He is the Christ that they need but He is also the real Jesus, the historical Jesus - the Jesus that Luke wanted the whole world to know and love!

This is the Jesus we want to learn more about in this Journey series. Luke admits that there have been many who undertook to write an account of Jesus and His ministry but this one is different. This is the story of Jesus for today's student and campus. It is an orderly account of the things that Jesus fulfilled and is continuing to fulfill in students' lives today.

Titles and
Topics
Covered in
*Christ on
Campus*

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Breaking
Down *Journey*

Journey was created for larger weekly on or off campus meetings in a teaching format and small group discussion. The beginning story or illustration introduces the topic of study.



- **Journey Together** helps ease participants into the topic through ice-breaker related questions.



- **Road Map** is the main passage for discussion followed by questions that help draw out the topic. If you are leading *Journey*, feel free to depart from these as needed and come up with your own questions, while staying on track with the main direction of the study laid out in the leader's guide.



- **My Story** has been prepared as a continuation of the larger group meetings for smaller groups that meet during the week to check in with one another and reflect on how God is using Journey in their daily life. We recommend these groups be flexible in terms of location and meeting time. Also, the amount of questions are limited in the My Story section, allowing for more personal interactions and life application.



- **Back Story** is a helpful guide for those leading out in the Journey Series and is only included in the leader's book.

Getting the most out of *Journey*

Here's what you're going to need for Christ on Campus:

- Good soil – an open and receptive heart
- Working the soil - Determination and diligence
- Hunger and thirst - Desire to follow God as He leads
- We also strongly advise reading the entire book of Luke since Journey only zeros in on selected episodes. Use this study guide for your group reading/discussion. The important thing is to really lean into Luke's testimony. In fact, set it aside if it's getting in the way of hearing Luke's story. Remember, Jesus is the real study, not Journey!

Best Practices: The five S's of hearing and discerning God's voice

- **Seek:** Pray for God to open up the passage for you. Is there a promise for you to claim, a sin to confess, a word for you to follow, an insight to share?
- **Soak:** Read the passage each day and write down any observations, thought's, questions, connections or anything God speaks to you about the passage.
- **Seal:** Seal God's word to you deep within your heart by taking some time to meditate on the most important truth to you this week. Ask God to open the deeper recesses of your heart to teach you what you need most for your life this week.
- **Script:** Journal or write if even a few lines, noting the ways that God spoke to you from the passage, your meditation, or our group time together. This will help you keep better track of God's voice and the way He is speaking through scripture.
- **Share:** Share with someone what you are learning from your time with God. As you share what yoShare with someone what you are learning from your time with God in Journey. As you share what you are learning, it will help drive God's word home to you even more and you will notice how God will use what He has revealed to you to bless others.

Journey
Covenant

I want to follow Jesus in the noble purpose He has for me. I want to participate in Journey to enhance my own relationship with God this year. I will commit to doing the weekly assignments and small group meetings.

Signature _____

My best times of availability are

Morning: _____

Evening: _____

Email address _____

Cell Phone _____

Who Was Luke?

Formalism in literature is a study of the text without any outside influence. It disregards or ignores the author's intent or purpose. It was a movement away from Romanticism which centered on the artist and individual creative genius. The goal of formalism like most reactive movements had its positive intent but has been argued by some to have shifted the pendulum too far. This would certainly be the case in the reading of Luke and Acts if we were to completely disregard who Luke was or why he was writing his two-volume set on the mission and message of Jesus. His own conversion, background as a Jewish outsider, and shared ministry with the apostle Paul are integral to both volumes. Let's prepare to learn what we can in this first study about this interesting author who felt the need to add his personal account of the story of Jesus!



1. Who's your favorite author and why?
2. Which of the four gospels have you read most and why?



Colossians 4:14/Acts 16:6-10

According to Paul, Luke was a Greek physician. The verses in Acts 16 are the first reference we have in his writing of the transition from "they" to "we," indicating where Luke joined Paul early in his second missionary tour as they left modern-day Turkey and entered Europe. Was Luke the "man from Macedonia" Paul saw in his dream inviting them to share the gospel in the territory of Greece? We will probably never know this side of eternity.

1. What is significant about Luke's participation in the missionary efforts of Paul? What influence do you think Paul might have had on Luke and his writings?
2. What is important to note about Luke's Greek ethnicity or his career as a physician? How might these contribute to his participation in Paul's missionary tour or his account of Jesus' mission and message?

Luke 1:1-4

3. What conclusions might we draw about Luke from his introduction?
4. What explanations that Luke gives for providing an orderly account of the story of Jesus stand out to you and why?
5. How confident or comfortable are you with Luke's intent on sharing his own detail of the eyewitness accounts of what happened among them from the beginning?
6. What do you hope to learn or experience from Luke's careful telling of the story of Jesus and His mission? What influence are you expecting Luke's story will have for your witness on campus?
7. How can this group pray for you today?

"The things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others."

2 Timothy 2:2



1. How has God been using Journey in your life this week on campus?
 2. What impresses you most about Luke?
 3. What are you praying to learn about Jesus from Luke?
-



Back Story

One of the most important books I read early on in my Christian experience was *The Cost of Discipleship* by Dietrich Bonhoeffer. The book is about costly grace versus cheap grace and explains Bonhoeffer's application of Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. I remember reading and re-reading this book since it was so challenging. I found myself quoting from it often. Still, I have to admit that much of what Bonhoeffer was writing about failed to hit home until I spent more time reading about his own story and the life backdrop from which he was writing.

Bonhoeffer was a German theologian during Hitler's takeover of Europe. Reading about his firm stand against the Third Reich, bravely speaking out about it and his subsequent death in Flossenburg, the Nazi concentration camp where he was hanged just a few days before it was liberated by allied forces all for his commitment to the mission and message of Jesus, gives meaning and context for his words about cheap grace. Similar to Luke and his writings, understanding the background of Bonhoeffer's works gives meaning and clarity to his words.

Truth is, Bonhoeffer and Luke had many things in common. Both were deeply committed to a careful understanding and practice of the teachings of Jesus. Both emphasized the marginalized - Luke in the outsiders he included in both Luke and Acts and Bonhoeffer in his attention to the African American church during his time in the United States and his efforts to bring seminary training to the laity. And, of course, they both held advanced degrees - Bonhoeffer in theology and Luke as a physician.

Luke mentions "investigating everything from the beginning" and learning from "eyewitnesses and servants of the word." If Mark's gospel is the closest we will get to a gospel according to Peter - taking into account that Mark was a disciple of Peter in his later years (1 Peter 5:13) - we can also assume Paul's influence on Luke and his writings especially as it relates to the details before Luke joined Paul's entourage into Greece. This makes Luke's account of the mission and message of Jesus a bit more objective as a second-hand witness and may also be another factor contributing to his orderly account of the story. (For further background on Luke's association with Paul see 2 Timothy 4:11; Philemon 1:24).

Perhaps the most impressive and surprising thing about Luke and his writings is how compelled he became with the story of Jesus leading him to leave his life as a physician to become a follower and a missionary with Paul and to write a detailed account of His own experience. Jesus' life, death, resurrection, and ascension made such a powerful impact on him that despite the accounts already in circulation of the things fulfilled among them, he was compelled to add his own record of these events.

The fact that four of the early followers of Jesus were so moved by His life and ministry that each of them were inspired to compile their individual account of His story is remarkable. Then when we add the thousands of books written about Jesus and His impact on those who never saw Him personally it is truly remarkable. It has been said that the life and ministry of Jesus is the greatest story every told. If that is true, then it is a story that needs to be read and understood on campus. Even more, it is a story that needs to be seen and shared by Jesus' followers today. As with Luke, this is how others will come to "know with certainty the things they have been taught."

Who Was Theophilus?

Billy Graham, favorite American preacher and evangelist, had great spiritual influence in the White House over presidents from Richard Nixon to Barak Obama, but he never held a public office. He was once asked by a television anchor why he had not run for president with the notoriety and respect he had across the nation. He replied, "I had a higher calling."

The responsibility of speaking truth to power is never easy – just ask Elijah who led perhaps the greatest revival and reformation in Israel's history but ran from Queen Jezebel when she threatened retribution. We don't know for sure who Theophilus was, but we do know that Luke was compelled to write to him about "the things that had been fulfilled among us." Theophilus (Greek) meaning "friend of God" may have been a title or a surname. We wish we had more information about this mysterious individual, but even the little information we have is enough inspiration to see how God can use us on campus to share with faculty, staff, or the people God places in our path.



1. What famous people have you had the opportunity to meet?
2. Who would you want to write the biography of your life?



Luke 1:1-4/Acts 1:1-5

1. Why is it important to learn about who Luke is addressing his letters to?
2. Between the two volumes of Luke and Acts which one do you favor and why?

Acts 28:17-30

3. How do you feel about Paul's ministry ending in Luke's two-volume set?
4. What does the last verse in Acts tell you about Luke's central concern for writing both Luke and Acts?
5. What impact do you imagine Paul's statement that "God's salvation has been sent to the Gentiles and they will listen" had on Theophilus?
6. Theophilus means "friend of God." What would it take for some of your closest friends to become a friend of God? How could God use you to introduce them to Jesus?
7. The book of Acts trails off with no clear ending, implying that the story of Jesus' mission and message continues. What stories are being written on your campus to add to the continuing story of Acts?
8. How can this group pray for you today?

"Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone."

Colossians 4:5, 6



1. How has God been using Journey in your life this week?
 2. How does Jesus mean even more to you after this week's lesson?
 3. How can you help your friends understand more about the greatness of Christ?
-



Back Story

Who was Theophilus? Coptic Christians claimed he was a prominent Jew from Alexandria. Others consider him to be an influential Roman official. Probably the most common explanation is that Theophilus is a general name meaning "friend of God" and could refer to anyone interested in the story of this new Jewish sect. Whoever he was, the title of Luke's two volume set could just as well have been Theophilus I and II as both letters are addressed to him.

Theophilus may have been the legal counsel representing Paul before Caesar. The theory is that Luke wrote both Luke and Acts to inform Theophilus of "the things that have been fulfilled among us," in order to provide him with a thorough background of the movement and the role that Paul played in it. This would explain why Acts leads right up to Paul's house arrest in Rome while awaiting trial and goes no further in explaining how his trial turned out and what happened following it. It would also explain why Luke is so concerned to give such an "orderly account" of the mission and message of Jesus and why Luke is so careful to include prominent Jewish and Roman officials providing dates and places that help verify the historicity of his message.

In the end, we simply do not know, and all these theories are just that - theories that cannot be fully substantiated. The important thing is that Luke felt it necessary to compile an account of Jesus' mission and share it among people of influence and power. It is a reminder that the story of Jesus is a story for today's college campus and a story we should not be ashamed to tell in the best way we can with fellow students and university professors.

It is important to remember Paul's calling to share "God's name among Gentiles, their kings and to the people of Israel" (Acts 9:15). Paul was clear eyed about his mission and was able to give his defense of the gospel before the Jewish crowd in Jerusalem (Acts 21), before the Sanhedrin (Acts 22), before Felix Roman Governor in Caesarea (Acts 23), before Ananias ruling Jewish High Priest and Tertullus Jewish attorney (Acts 24), before Porcius Festus Felix's replacement (Acts 25), before the Jewish King Agrippa and his sister Bernice (Acts 25), and later before Nero who ordered him beheaded in the Mamertine prison. This is of course to say nothing of the many, many local officials Paul was brought before and had to give a defense of his belief in Jesus' death and resurrection including the wise philosophers on Mars Hill (Acts 17).

Jesus told all the disciples to be prepared to give an account of their faith in Him when they were brought before governors and kings (Matthew 10). He told them not to worry about what they were to say because the Holy Spirit would give them the words they were to speak (Matthew 10:18-20).

Luke was a convert to Christianity and not even Jewish. He was an outsider. He was also educated. This helped prepare him for his special calling to clarify the mission and message of Jesus for educated outsiders who needed an orderly account of all that God was doing among them. We can all learn from Luke about providing an authentic, intelligent explanation of God's work in our lives.

We simply do not know how many of the people Paul shared the story of Jesus with became followers or whatever happened to Theophilus after reading Luke's account of Jesus and His ongoing mission and possibly defending Paul before Nero. What we do know is that God used these men to embody the message of Christ to very influential people. We can be sure that He wants to use students on college campuses today to do nothing less! Christ is calling us to share God's name among faculty, staff, and even college administrators. I pray we are all up to the challenge!

Who Was Jesus?

Imagine my surprise meeting someone in the Piggly Wiggly grocery store with a similar last name as mine. Pickell is not a common name. Bob not only had a similar name - Pickle - but his face was tear-shaped like my dad's. Bob was the manager of the store and we talked often since the store was in walking distance from our house. According to him we were related. The original family name was Pickshill and indicated where we came from in England. The family eventually migrated to Pennsylvania. One branch of the family settled in Michigan (my dad's family) and another branch traveled south to Tennessee (his family). Both families did a name change. Mine took Pickell while his just went with Pickle.

I was happy to have met Bob and discover something about my family history until my son was doing some digging and turned up a family tree for both my father's side and my mother. I learned that I had no connection to Bob whatsoever even though we had similar last names. Luke wanted to be clear about who Jesus was and why it mattered. We've learned a little about the author, who he was addressing in the letter. Now it's time to learn about the person he was writing about.



1. What do you know about your family tree?
2. What would you most like to learn about Jesus?



Luke 3:21-38

1. What surprises you most about Jesus' genealogy?
2. What difference does it make that Luke places Jesus' baptism and mission pronouncement before His human genealogical record?
3. According to John 8:19-30 there was ongoing discussion about Jesus' father. The Pharisees implied Jesus was illegitimate. How does Luke's presentation of Jesus' background help settle this issue?
4. Matthew also records a genealogical record of Jesus that links Him to King David and Abraham. Luke goes back further linking Jesus all the way to Adam. What do you think he might be saying about Jesus and the first man?
5. If Jesus is the new Adam, how have you experienced the newness of belonging to Him and joining His family?
6. How can this group pray for you today?

"The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together."

Colossians 1:15-17



1. How has God been using Journey in your life this week on campus?
 2. What can you share with others that you are learning about Jesus?
 3. How does it feel to belong to the family of the New Adam?
-



Back Story

Luke has the auspicious challenge of introducing Theophilus and everyone else to Jesus. Each of the four gospel writers have the same task. Mark begins with John the Baptist as Jesus' forerunner. John is the last of the prophets before the kingdom of God and represents the culminating word of God introducing us to the Messiah. Matthew and Luke both utilize a familiar grammatical tool of Jesus' genealogy. Matthew traces Jesus back to Abraham while Luke refers all the way back to Adam - the first man. John goes back even further focusing on Jesus' pre-existence and the agent of creation itself. Jesus is the Word who has always existed with God and was God.

Luke, however, helps solve the long-standing problem of Jesus' birth. Mark, considered to be the earliest account of Jesus and His mission, records nothing about Jesus' birth beginning the story of Jesus at His baptism and anointing for mission. The focus early on appeared to be on Jesus' mission, but later questions began to surface about His nature and where He came from. Luke, Matthew, and John address this question. Luke incorporates the answer within the genealogical record by linking it to His baptism. We learn who Jesus really is from the anointing of the Holy Spirit and the voice of God announcing from the heavens that "You are my Son, who I love. With you I am well pleased." Then follows Jesus' earthly genealogical record tracing Him all the way back to Adam.

What are we to make of this? It is one of the strongest Christological statements of Jesus in all of scripture. Luke is verifying that Jesus is first of all God. God's beloved Son, but He is also human - a child of Adam. Jesus is both God and man. By tracing Him back to Adam, Luke employs a common theme in biblical genealogies. Genealogies trace lineage and establish pedigree, but they also provide a grand sweep of history and move the reader from one important person to the next. We see this clearly in Matthew's genealogical record where we cross 14 generations from Jesus back to the Babylonian captivity, then another 14 generations back to King David, then the third set of 14 generations back to Abraham. In this sequence we learn that Jesus is the promised son of Abraham, the predicted Son of David, and the One to lead God's people out of bondage. But the real message of Jesus is the beginning of a new Israel as the genealogical record jumps from Abraham to Jesus.

Luke is doing a similar thing by tracing Jesus back to Adam. Jesus is the not only the beginning of a new people of God. He is the start of a new humanity - the seed of Eve that will crush the serpent's head (Genesis 3:15). Luke also adds much to the story of Jesus' birth in connecting it with the birth of John the Baptist and detailing the story of how He came to be born in Bethlehem.

As already mentioned, Luke's account of Jesus is the story of great reversal. He is the glorious child that angels sing over yet was greeted by common shepherds. He drives out evil spirits and heals many but was rejected by His own hometown. His blessings are for the poor, while the rich are left empty handed. His entourage of disciples include both men and women. He calls out the hypocrisy of religious leaders and Pharisees yet dines with tax collectors and sinners.

This is the Jesus that Luke wants to tell us about. This is the Jesus that he came to know secondhand by those who knew Him personally. It is his own account as one of the earliest of Paul's converts. It was a story he felt compelled to tell. It's a story he would like all of us to hear so we can tell it again filtered through our own story that others might know the Jesus he encountered as others lived and shared it with him!

The Mission of Jesus

Mission statements matter. I Googled some good ones:

- TED: Spread ideas
- United Airlines: Connecting people, Uniting the world
- Tesla: To accelerate the world's transition to sustainable energy
- Google: To organize the world's information and make it universally accessible and useable

I really like Target's mission statement:

- To help all families discover the joy of everyday life

Willow Creek Church's statement is impressive:

- Love God. Love people. Change the world.

Here's the Adventist Christian Fellowship mission statement:

- Reach the campus. Change the world.

Did Jesus have a mission statement?



1. What's the most important thing you've done in your life?
2. What would you like your mission statement to be?



Luke 1:26-38

1. What surprises you most about Jesus' birth?
2. What does Son of the Most High, Son of David, and everlasting kingdom reveal about Jesus' mission?

Luke 17:20, 21

3. Why were the Pharisees asking Jesus about the kingdom of God? What is the kingdom of God and what does it have to do with the mission of Jesus?
4. What does Jesus mean that the kingdom of God was already in their midst?
5. Jesus instructed His disciples to pray for the coming of the kingdom. How can you help advance God's kingdom on your campus?
6. How can this group pray for you today?

"Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom."

Luke 12:32



1. How has God been using Journey in your life this week on campus?
2. What are you learning about the mission of Jesus?
3. Where are you experiencing God's kingdom on campus?



Back Story

Our key verse for this Journey series is Luke 17:20, 21.

"Once, on being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, 'The coming of the kingdom of God is not something that can be observed, nor will people say, 'Here it is,' or 'There it is,' because the kingdom of God is in your midst.'"

It could be argued that the coming kingdom of God and subsequent suffering of Jesus and His followers is the theme of both Luke and Acts. Bringing glory to His Father in establishing His kingdom on earth was the heart of Jesus' mission. According to Luke the kingdom of God was a kingdom for the undeserved, the disenfranchised, those on the margins. It is the upside-down kingdom, the great reversal. We are introduced to the contrasting images of what the Bible often refers to as "this present evil age" and the "coming kingdom of God" right from the beginning of Luke. The very fact that Luke is addressing the story not to a Jewish audience as clearly intended in Matthew and Mark but to a Gentile official is already a radical shift.

Justo Gonzalez comments, "From the manger outside the inn to the right hand of God – that is the great reversal which is at the very foundation of all the other reversals to which Luke refers!" *González, Justo L. The Story Luke Tells (p. 44). Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. Kindle Edition.*

The upside-down kingdom appears again and again throughout Luke and Acts, but especially in the stories that Luke tells like the Good Samaritan, the marriage feast and the heavenly banquet, prodigal son, 10 lepers, Pharisee and the publican, invitation to Zacchaeus, walk to Emmaus, Luke's mention of female followers, and the sending out of the 70 additional disciples. These are all stories unique to Luke and in their own way help to illustrate the great reversal of God's kingdom.

In our key text the Pharisees come to Jesus asking where is this kingdom you say has come? They ask this because it is not the kingdom they were expecting. They had visions of a powerful kingdom of force that would have put Israel back on top. They would have welcomed and heralded a militaristic messiah – a King David type figure who would lead them to victory over the Romans and would honor them by the magnification of the temple. But Jesus talked of the destruction of the temple, doing good to your enemies, and a kingdom in which the first would be last and the last would be first. It was a mustard seed kingdom – small in comparison to the kingdom they were looking for – but would fill the whole earth. It was so small that standing right in front of these leaders they failed to recognize Jesus their Messianic king.

What impact could this kingdom have on campus? What if the kingdom of God has already begun? What if the seed of the eternal kingdom of love and grace has already been planted on earth in the mission and message of Jesus? What if God's kingdom is the great reversal and we are not only saved by the death and resurrection of Christ from our personal sin, but have been invited into God's great mission of advancing His kingdom on earth? Jesus said His kingdom would not fail. It will involve sacrifice as Luke makes abundantly clear, but it will turn the world inside out and we have our part to play in it.

Jesus invites us to give away His kingdom on campus through academic excellence, in our relationships with others, being generous with our time, by connecting what we are learning with God's mission, by realizing the very purpose of why we are on campus preparing for our role in the upside-down kingdom. This is what it's all about. If we catch the vision that Luke had of Jesus and embrace his story our campus will look different. When people ask, "Where is the kingdom?" we will say, "Right here, right now!"

The Mind of Jesus

What was your spiritual barometer like at the age of 12? My family and I had undergone a major move from Michigan to Florida and my whole world was turned upside down. Major life transitions can affect big changes in heart and mind. The family move provided an opportunity for entirely new experiences and direction. I started preparing for baptism with our new pastor who I had a great deal of respect for. I remember looking up each verse and filling out each question in the Bible study guides to prepare for my weekly instruction. My dad bought me a big black King James Version study Bible with HMS Richards study notes for my twelfth birthday. I took it all very seriously which was a far cry from the way I had represented myself to my old friends from back home. In a discussion we had about church as grown-ups I said that I would most likely not stay involved, yet here I was preparing for the big commitment.

In comparison with most of us, Jesus' interest and depth concerning spiritual things at such a young age is remarkable. His keen interest and spiritual rigor at the age of 12 is an indicator to the mental and spiritual bent of His life. What can we learn from the mind of Jesus?



1. What do you think about when you think about God?
2. Describe your first personal encounter with God.



Luke 2:41-52

1. What interests you most in this story?
2. What can we learn about Jesus and His interests at this young age?
3. Jesus' parents found Him sitting with the teachers in the temple courts listening and discussing with them. What do you think Jesus might have been discussing with them?
4. It was the Jewish feast of Passover, the most important of all the annual feasts in the Jewish calendar. Jesus, age 12, was attending for the first time. What questions might Jesus have had for the rabbis concerning Passover?
5. "Everyone was amazed at Jesus' understanding and His answers," Luke says. What do you think Jesus understood and what answers do you imagine was He providing?
6. What do we learn from Jesus in this story that He has already comprehended about His Father?
7. How do you think Jesus' first time in the temple helped shape His life and mission?
8. How can we pray for you today?

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind"; and, "Love your neighbor as yourself."

Luke 10:27



1. How has God been using Journey in your life this week on campus?
2. What are you learning about the mind of Christ?
3. What does it mean to love God with our mind?



Back Story

Luke is the only one who includes this story of Jesus' early teen years. There is much to learn about Him from this brief snapshot of His younger life. We see His interest in the temple services, the probable questions about Passover and the sufficiency of the sacrificial lamb. We get an insight into His mental and spiritual capacities. There would be much to absorb the attention of a young 12-year-old boy in His first visit to Jerusalem and to temple services, especially when we consider His childhood from the small northern Jewish town of Nazareth, yet questions about the temple, its services, and the Passover service specifically is what seemed to capture His attention.

Much is made of the compassionate heart of Jesus, His integrity, intuition, dedication, devotion, and magnanimous spirit. But more could be said about His wisdom and intelligence. Jesus was smart! *"Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and answers"* (Luke 2:47). But the Passover visit was only the beginning of how people would marvel at what Jesus knew and comprehended.

This first Passover was most likely a part of His Bar Mitzvah celebration - a Jewish boy's coming of age ceremony. It marks the period when a boy or girl becomes an adult and is now responsible for their own actions and will decide for themselves how they will practice their faith.

I can only imagine the questions He put to the temple scribes. One day the teachers of the law would do their best to catch Him with an infraction of Jewish law enabling them to issue the death warrant, but for now Jesus was both listening to them and asking questions. Questions about how a lamb could substitute for a human being. Questions about Passover and the Jewish Exodus. Questions about why sin demanded a sacrifice. Clarity about His heavenly Father and His own role in the greater mission of God.

Jesus' mind was sharp and undivided. We see it when He spoke to the crowds as He entered Jerusalem in the triumphal entry. When the temple guards went to arrest Him, they reported back to their supervisors, *"No one ever spoke like this man!"* (John 7:46). As they tried to trip Him up in the temple courts after a prolonged barrage of questions and failed entrapments (See Matthew 21, 22) His accusers gave in and Matthew records how *"They were amazed. So, they left Him and went away"* (Matthew 22:22).

Jesus was the incarnation of the God we know throughout scripture who not only appeals to the heart but also to the mind. He encourages us to reason with Him about our sinful condition (Isaiah 1:18). Because of this we are not only encouraged but admonished to *"give a reason for the hope within us"* (1 Peter 3:15). Jesus was not afraid of questions and was never stumped. He even challenged Pilate the Roman governor about the Truth.

We have nothing to apologize concerning our faith in Jesus. The Bible presents a clear and concise answer to the ultimate human dilemma. Why are things the way they are in the world with a mixture of good and evil? The biblical answer to this question is our moral fall from God's divine plan and purpose. What is the way back? God, like any good and responsible Father, took the fall by becoming human and accepted the result of our sin. He forgave the human family and offered the only way to be reconciled to His original plan and purpose. Jesus was God's wise and only solution for human salvation and the curse which we brought on the world by trusting the serpent and doubting God.

From the mind of God came the heart and mind of Jesus!

"It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption."

I Corinthians 1:30

Christ in Community!

I suffered a major heart attack last year. They call it the “widow maker.” It’s a massive heart attack that occurs when the left anterior descending artery (LAD) is totally or almost completely blocked, and the heart cannot beat or pump normally. I was very fortunate since the survival rate of such an attack outside a hospital is only 12%. I am now a heart patient, on several meds and on a low cholesterol diet. But the good news is that my cardiac care doctor assures me that I suffered almost no real damage to the heart muscle.

I’ve read that Jesus died of a heart attack. Was it the widow maker? When they went to break his legs, which would have caused Him to slump down and finally die of asphyxiation, they found He was already dead. To confirm His death, they pierced His side and out seeped water and blood plasma indicating that His heart had stopped. Jesus had a heart problem. It beat way too hard for God and the human family and the crushing sin of the world caused His divine/human heart to break. What can the heart of Jesus teach us about the heart of God?



1. What do people mean by the phrase “Bless your heart”?
2. Who is the best hearted soul that you know and why?



Luke 5:12-16

1. What do you appreciate most about this story?
2. Why did Jesus touch the man before healing him?
3. When have you felt shunned like a leper? How did Jesus touch you?
4. We know that God has the power to heal, but is He willing? What do we learn about the heart of God when Jesus responds to the man, “I am willing”?

Luke 6:17-36

5. What can we learn from the Sermon on the Mount about the heart of Jesus?
6. How was Jesus the very example for loving our enemies? How difficult do you find this command and why?
7. What surprises you and impresses you most about the heart of Jesus?
8. How can we pray for you today?

“I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord’s holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.”

Colossians 3:17b-19



1. How has God been using Journey in your life this week on campus?
2. What are you learning about the heart of Christ?
3. When did you first experience God’s great love for you?



Back Story

When Jesus climbed out of the boat and went ashore to a great crowd gathered to see Him the Bible says he had *splagchnizomai* on them, meaning compassion (Mark 6:34), because they were like sheep without a shepherd. The Greek word here is much more guttural - emotion felt in the inward parts.

Doctors tell me that the branch of nerves covering the chest and heart also stretch over the abdomen. What is often just abdominal pain can mimic chest pains and be confused as a heart attack. I experienced this very thing one time when I was a bit younger and under a lot of stress. When the Bible writers described emotions felt in the bowels, *splagchnizomai*, this may be what they were referring to.

This is what Jesus felt. He was moved in His gut as He looked out over the crowd that day. It hurt to think that these people had no one watching over them. Two things moved the heart of Jesus: His Father and us. No one ever loved God like Jesus did. The thing that impressed God most about David was that he was a man after His own heart. If that was true of David it was even more true of Jesus because Jesus loved God so much that unlike David He refused to disobey Him even when it came down to the ultimate surrender to His cruel death on the cross.

Of course, this is what we would expect of the Son of God, but the surprising thing is that equal to the intensity and devotion Jesus had for His Father He had the same for fallen human beings. Paul reminds us that "Nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:39), nothing! These are powerful words, but even more surprising is that Jesus liked us. We see it in the time He spent with people like Zacchaeus, prostitutes, the disciples, and the way He touched people and invited little children onto His lap. Jesus was not only moved by human suffering, but He also actually enjoyed our company.

On the surface these qualities of Jesus seem mutually exclusive. How can one love God completely and love fallen human beings at the same time and with similar intensity? The answer is agape - God's divine unconditional love. At the core of God's being is a heart of unfathomable love. A love so vast that humans cannot comprehend it. It is a galaxy of love that stretches beyond the cosmos and across eternity. We simply do not have the words or the images to describe it. This love of God was expressed to us in the beloved Son of God that we might see, touch, hear, and feel it. A love so profound to the apostle John that he did his best to put it into words.

"This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins." 1 John 4:9, 10

The worst pain I have ever experienced came in the ambulance as my heart was trying desperately to push blood through my blocked arteries. It felt like an army tank rolling over my chest as I fought to catch my breath. I knew I was dying and could do absolutely nothing about it. This is the pain that Jesus must have felt hanging between heaven and earth for us - only the weight of humanity was worse. He died of a broken heart - a heart determined to obey His Father which moved Him to suffer for us. To paraphrase Henri Nouwen, the cross didn't convince God to love us. It only put it on public display for the universe.

This is why Jesus told the leper, "I am willing to make you clean." It's why His blessings were for the rejected because no one deserves such love. It's why He loved even those who nailed Him to the cross. It's also why love is His calling card in a world full of selfishness, hate, and greed. It's how all will know who His true followers are. God has a heartbeat for our world and our campus and we are the beat of His heart!

The Joy of Jesus

It was 3 a.m. when my wife was suddenly awakened from an exhausted sleep by the sound of a distant wailing. We were camped out on a church school gym floor with our youth group after a day of tubing down the Ichetucknee River in North Florida. My wife instinctively reached out her hand to the ground beside her where our eighth-month-old son had been sleeping - nothing... "Ryan is gone!" Now I was awake. "Ryan's gone?" I followed the wailing across the gym and out into the street where in the moonlight I found our son crawling back and forth very distraught and alone. Imagine our joy and relief to find him, hold him, and know that he was safe in our arms again.

This is the joy that Jesus describes from the very heart of God when the lost are found. I invite you to experience His joy with me in a fresh look at the three parables of grace.



1. Have you ever been lost? What did that feel like?
2. What has brought you the most joy in life?



Luke 15:1-32

1. Describe the circumstances that prompted these parables?
2. Who do you most identify with, the Pharisees and teachers of the law or the tax collectors and sinners, and why?
3. What do you appreciate most about these stories?
4. How would you contrast the "muttering" of the Pharisees and teachers of the law with the rejoicing in heaven, rejoicing before the angels, and the homecoming banquet prepared by the Father?
5. What comparisons can you make between the lost coin and the older son, between the lost sheep and the prodigal son? How do these illustrate the tax collectors and sinners and the Pharisees and teachers of the law?
6. What surprises you most about the waiting, watching, running father? Which son do you most relate to and why?
7. According to these parables what brings joy in heaven and to the heart of God? How does Jesus describe that joy?
8. How can we pray for you today?

"At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit, said, 'I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this is what you were pleased to do.'"

Luke 10:21



1. How has God been using Journey in your life this week on campus?
2. Where are you experiencing joy in your life right now?
3. Who are the lost men or women in your life that you are compelled to pray for?



Back Story

I have a sketch of Jesus with a full-bodied grin. It reminds me of Luke 10:21 where Jesus was full of the joy of the Holy Spirit.

What gave Him such joy at the disciples' return? It was seeing their enthusiasm in providing hope for the hopeless. Apparently, there is nothing that gives God greater joy than finding and redeeming lost people. It's the same message we glean from the lost sheep, lost coin, and lost boys in Luke 15. Heaven rejoices when people are returned to God's family!

The setting of the story is paramount for understanding their meaning and force. Tax collectors and sinners are drawing near to Jesus which is revolting to the Pharisees and teachers of the law. They didn't say anything out loud. They just muttered to themselves. Jesus told these stories to illustrate how God feels about such people. It's important to remember how these parables illustrate God's feelings for anyone estranged from Him.

The sheep wandered away. It left on its own and strayed from the flock. It's the prodigal son who left home and squandered his father's goods. This son is likened to the tax collectors and sinners who have wasted the life God gave them.

The coin was lost in the house. It was only a coin, but the woman swept the whole house in search of it. Money is something these religious leaders would value and appreciate. The coin is likened to the son who never left home but nevertheless was still estranged from his father. It represents the Pharisees and teachers of the law who in many ways were even farther from God than the tax collectors and sinners since they considered themselves righteous and not in need of grace.

But the real surprising character in the story is the father. His eyes are searching for his wayward son. When he saw him, he ran to him, kissed him, covered him with a robe, and placed the family ring on his finger. He then called the household together to celebrate as a typical Jewish family would with a roasted calf on account of his son's return.

Heaven's joy and rejoicing illustrated by the joy of the father contrasts with the mutterings of the Pharisees, teachers of the law, and the older son. Jesus' stories are emphatic. Three parables are linked together something not seen anywhere else in scripture or in Jesus' teaching. The lesson of God's lavish grace must not be misunderstood!

Hebrews 12 describes the joy before Jesus as He endured the cross looking forward to the victory ahead of Him. Knowing that His sacrifice would accomplish our salvation brought Him His greatest joy. He invites us to find the same joy in our mission on campus when one person comes to faith in Him and discovers their way back home. It matters not to Jesus if we are lost in the house or away from it. Heaven rejoices over anyone who returns to the Father!

The Followers of Jesus

The friends I made in college were the best I ever had. In fact, a few of my college friends are still some of my closest friends today. What was so different about my college friends? Maturity. My friends in college were ready for deeper and more mature relationships. We were preparing for life now and our conversations and associations were more focused. I found myself able to be more open to people and more vulnerable. Dating was also easier. There were less expectations in comparison to any relationships I had in high school. College also provided an opportunity to remake myself and choose my own social group. I learned about the importance of our friend choice in college. It's true that your friends can make or break you - pull you down or build you up.

Scripture says that Jesus chose His followers and yet He also called them His friends (John 15:15, 16). What can we learn about Jesus from those closest to Him?



1. Who are your closest friends and what do they say about you?
2. What's the most important thing you have learned about being a good friend?



Luke 8:1-15

1. What surprises you most about these verses?
2. What do you imagine it was like traveling with Jesus as a woman? What do these women followers teach us about Jesus?
3. Would you consider this list of women as additional disciples? Why or why not? Why do you think Luke mentions these women when none of the other gospel writers do?
4. What is the main point of Jesus' parable of the sower? What is the connection between it and the list of followers Luke has provided?
5. What kind of follower is indicated by each type of soil? What kind of soil best describes your relationship to the mission of Jesus right now?
6. What other surprising followers of Jesus are you aware of? How important are Jesus followers to His overall mission?
7. What is the most important thing you have learned or been reminded of in today's study about Christ on campus?
8. How can we pray for you today?

"Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom."

Luke 12:32



1. How has God been using Journey in your life this week on campus?
2. What do you appreciate most about the team of students you live and minister with?
3. What is God teaching you about being a true friend?



Back Story

Luke has done it again by surprising us with this list of female followers of Jesus. He even points out that it was these women that were helping to financially underwrite His ministry. Turns out women played a big part in Jesus' mission. They show up strong in Luke's account of Jesus' life. We begin with Elizabeth who gives birth to John the Baptist, the forerunner of Jesus. Luke does another surprising thing of pairing men and women like Elizabeth and Zechariah together. Both are righteous before God, not just Zechariah. Of course, there is Mary, who is the example of complete surrender when others like Zechariah are more dubious of God's promise. In Matthew's account of Jesus' birth, Mary receives not much more than a footnote. The focus is more on Joseph, while Joseph isn't even mentioned in Luke and all the attention goes to Mary who gets her own Magnificent!

We must remember that the great reversal in Luke's gospel also shows up in the reluctant Peter and John, who could have been the first to witness and proclaim Jesus' resurrection, but that privilege instead goes to Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James, Joanna, and the other women.

Are these female followers of Jesus in Luke 8 disciples? Some would not consider them so, but Luke includes them as a definite part of Jesus' entourage. In "The Story That Luke Tells," Gusto Gonzalez suggests that the women followers of Jesus have been intentionally juxtaposed beside the 12 disciples. They too were examples of the good soil producing some 30, 60, and 100 times invested in them.

Jesus' followers included a vast array of unlikely characters. People like Matthew (tax collector), Judas (Jesus' betrayer), Zacchaeus (chief tax collector), and of course all the disciples since no other rabbi would have selected any of them as their followers. These people all say more about Jesus than about themselves. Aside from Judas, Jesus' followers reveal Him to be a good judge of character since all these people remained with Him until the very end.

The parable of the sower has been argued as Jesus' foundational story since it illustrates how people respond to Jesus and His kingdom. In Matthew and Mark, the sower illustrates a turning point in the presentation of His message. The disciples are surprised that Jesus is speaking to the people in parables instead of His usual straightforward teaching. Jesus quotes Isaiah the prophet and laments that people are no longer open to His message. Parabolic stories may help them finally hear what He's trying to tell them. But to the disciples the secrets of the kingdom have been given to them, meaning they don't need parables.

What is the secret of the kingdom? The secret is that it has come, and it has taken a surprising shape like that of a small mustard seed instead of a large powerful tree. It is like leaven that is working its way through society in unobtrusive ways, transforming everything in its wake.

How are we to receive this kingdom? Certainly not like the hardened path hearers who are so rigid and conformed that they are not open to anything new. Not like the stony ground hearers who only provide a surface acceptance. Not like the soil entrapped with weeds ready to choke out any growth potential. We are to receive Jesus' new world order like these unlikely followers who received His message with great acceptance and gave the message room to grow in their lives.

Jesus is calling us to join His surprising entourage of life on campus spreading everywhere the fragrance and knowledge of God!

"For we are to God the pleasing aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. To the one we are an aroma that brings death; to the other, an aroma that brings life. And who is equal to such a task?"

II Corinthians 2:15, 16

Who Is My Neighbor?

Who is my neighbor? There is probably no better teacher or example for this question than Fred Rogers, director and star of his own second longest running children's television show, Mr. Rogers' Neighborhood. As a Presbyterian minister, Rogers most likely took his cue of being a neighbor from Jesus' parable of the Good Samaritan since the program focus was more on being a good neighbor than who belonged or who did not.

The truth is that making neighbors did not come easy for Mr. Rogers. Wikipedia reveals he had a difficult childhood. Shy, introverted, and overweight, he was frequently homebound after suffering bouts of asthma. He was bullied as a child for his weight and called "Fat Freddy." According to Morgan Neville, director of the 2018 documentary *Won't You Be My Neighbor?*, Rogers had a "lonely childhood ... I think he made friends with himself as much as he could. He had a ventriloquist dummy, he had [stuffed] animals, and he would create his own worlds in his childhood bedroom."

Like all of us, Mr. Rogers needed a good neighbor or two, especially in his challenging years as a young student. His rough childhood taught him how important it is to love ourselves for who we are and to extend the hand of friendship.



1. Have you ever been helped by a stranger? (Describe.)
2. What qualities do you hope for in a good neighbor?



Luke 10:25-37

1. Why do you think Jesus told this parable in response to the lawyer's question?
2. Why do you think the priest and Levite didn't stop to help the man who had been robbed?
3. What do you think motivated the Samaritan to stop and help the man?
4. What does a Good Samaritan on campus look like? How often do you keep a look out for those needing a Good Samaritan?
5. Who has been a Good Samaritan to you?
6. After reading this parable who would you say is your neighbor?
7. What is the most important thing you have learned or been reminded of in today's study about Christ on campus?
8. How can we pray for you today?

"Suppose a brother or a sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, 'Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,' but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead."

James 2:15-17



1. How has God been using Journey in your life this week on campus?
2. Who does the Good Samaritan most remind you of?
3. What is God teaching you about being a good neighbor on campus?



Back Story

Seinfeld, a popular television series, ended its final episode (#179 and 180) with the “Good Samaritan Law.” Jerry, Elaine, George, and Kramer were on a layover in Latham, Massachusetts on their way to launch the fictional *Seinfeld* TV pilot series. While waiting for some repairs on their NBC private jet they witnessed a crime and refused to help. Instead, they stood there watching and filming a man being robbed. They were arrested for breaking the Good Samaritan Law by refusing to help and making fun of someone in need.

I’m glad that such a law doesn’t exist to punish people for not lending a hand, but if it did how many times would I be guilty of not getting involved? In the *Seinfeld* episode they make fun of the man for being overweight. My reason for not getting involved is usually due to being short on time or just not wanting to get mixed up in someone’s else’s drama. The priest and Levite at least thought they had better reasons for staying clear. According to Levitical law they were not permitted to touch anything dead or unclean (Leviticus 21:17/Numbers 19:11).

However, passing by on the other side of the road prevented them from knowing the man’s true condition. How could they know from their safe distance if the man was dead or alive? What a contrast between them and the Samaritan who stopped to help. Luke says the Samaritan “came to where he was.” The man in need was a fellow Jew, but it took the despised foreigner to lend assistance.

The issue begins with the lawyer’s effort to test Jesus with a question that he obviously hoped would trip Him up. It’s hard to say what was behind his question. Did he hope to involve Jesus in a debate about the afterlife? There was much disagreement between the Sadducees and the Pharisees about a future resurrection. Was he hoping to get Jesus tangled up in their debate? He was a lawyer, so he knew the law. It was no surprise then that Jesus referred him back to the law and asked him what the law said.

It is interesting that the lawyer quotes not only from the Shema - the part of the commandment about loving God - but also the additional reference from Leviticus 19:18 that Jesus often quoted about loving your neighbor as you love yourself. The lawyer didn’t have to quote this verse, but I wonder if this is where he intended to trip Jesus up knowing Jesus’ emphasis on loving others. How can I love my neighbor if I am not clear on who my neighbor is?

Jesus does an amazing thing by having the man respond to his own question. The Good Samaritan parable forces the dilemma by making it oh so clear on what a good neighbor is instead of who should be included or excluded as our neighbor. The question, according to Jesus, is not who, but how. How can I be a good neighbor rather than who will I embrace as my neighbor?

The parable is another example of the great reversal of God’s kingdom. It should be the Jew helping the wounded man, but instead it is the hated Samaritan reaching out to the Jew. Notice the action steps here. The Samaritan came to where the man was, saw him (the priest and Levite didn’t want to see him), had compassion on him, went to him, bound up his wounds pouring oil and wine on them, put him on his donkey, brought him to the inn, took care of him, covered his expenses with two days wages, and left him in the care of the innkeeper until he could return and cover any additional expenses.

This man is more than a Good Samaritan. This is a picture of Jesus Himself. He is despised, came to where we were, saw us, bound up our wounds, and will one day return to settle our account.

How can we make the greatest impact on campus? “Go and do likewise.” Follow Jesus’ example and be the outsider caring for anyone in need. This is how Christ will be revealed on campus and everywhere as we show how much God cares for them!

Prayer on Campus

Red Moon Rising is the story of a prayer movement that has swept over many countries spawning 24-hour houses of prayer with stories of changed lives in every situation. Red moon comes from the prophecy in Joel 2 about young men receiving visions and old men having dreams and the moon turning blood red in the last days. The Apostle Peter indicated that Joel's prophecy was being fulfilled at Pentecost when Jesus' followers were filled with the Holy Spirit and speaking to others about God in languages they were not familiar with. God was breaking down the language barrier to share the good news of His kingdom.

Does prayer work on campus? Can God ignite students with answers to prayer that will cause the entire campus to become aware of His presence? The truth is all great American revivals started with students gathering to pray. Most of the great movements in our world have originated on college and university campuses. What could happen today if students turned their hearts toward God in prayer for the transformation of their friends and campus? Everycampus.com is a prayer movement of Christian students on campuses just like yours with this very mission. Check it out and join the mission of God on campus!



1. What are some of your most surprising prayer experiences?
2. What is the thing you have found hardest to pray for?



Luke 11:1-13

1. What are your first thoughts or questions from this passage?
2. What motivated the disciples to ask Jesus to teach them how to pray?
3. What are the first elements in Jesus' model prayer? Why are these the priority?
4. How important was prayer to Jesus? Why does Jesus encourage us to not give up on prayer?
5. What encouragement does Jesus give that our prayers are heard and will be answered?
6. What other things does Jesus remind us to pray for?
7. What are you praying for on your campus?
8. What is the most important thing you have learned or been reminded of in today's study about Christ on campus?
9. How can we pray for you today?

"This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him."

I John 5:14, 15



1. How has God been using Journey in your life this week on campus?
2. How is prayer changing you and your friends?
3. What is God leading you to pray for and what can we pray about together?



Back Story

Prayer was Jesus' lifeline. It was His two-way connection to reality. Prayer is a dominate factor in Luke and Acts. It's hard to imagine the ministry of Jesus or the success of the early church devoid of prayer.

What is prayer? It's a vehicle. Nothing more than an instrument of communication much the same as our cell phones, computers, or letter writing today. Prayer doesn't do anything. But God can do the impossible and prayer is our connection with Him. It's how we stay in dialogue together. Jesus viewed connection with His Father as absolutely vital and prayer was the spiritual technology that kept Him in touch.

Compared with our modern modes of communication, prayer is quite advanced. We don't need a computer screen, no extra devices. Prayer gives us immediate connection with the throne of God. All we have to do is speak our request and listen for God's voice and there it is. It's just that advanced and simple. The good news is that no matter where we are or what our circumstances Heaven is listening. There are no long delays and there is more than a computer-generated voice on the other end. We have direct access not to an angel, but to God Himself.

So why don't we pray more? Why don't we take advantage of this amazing divine technology like Jesus did? It could be that the resource is so spiritually advanced we don't know how to use it. That's the situation we find the disciples in. As they watched Jesus' pattern of communion with His Father they could see the stark contrast between themselves and Him. In fact, they were aware that prayer was also vital to John the Baptist. So much so that John had given special instruction to his disciples about how to pray. This led the disciples to ask Jesus to teach them how to pray.

So, what do we learn from Jesus' tutorial on prayer?

1. Simple prayer - address prayers directly to God and pray first for His glory on earth and for the advancement of His kingdom. This is the foundation of our approach to God. We first need to know who we are addressing and give Him the honor and respect He is due. Second, we need to know His priorities. The priority for God and Jesus is the same. Their priority is extending heaven to earth.
2. Don't give up - Jesus encourages us to keep talking with God and keep asking. Even neighbors annoyed with us respond to repeated requests and God is much more responsive than a disgruntled neighbor.
3. Pray for the Holy Spirit - God wants to give us His Spirit so keep asking. This is a request God will not deny!

Luke gives many examples of how vital prayer was to Jesus and includes stories that the other gospel writers have left out that encourage us to pray. Acts is a treasure house of prayer. First, we learn that we now have a man (Jesus) representing us in heaven and the Spirit of God has been poured out on earth. The early church understood this great reversal and it affected both how and how often they prayed. With Jesus in heaven for them and God on earth with them, prayer was intimate and immediate. They would not have even considered moving forward with the mission and message of Jesus without it.

We don't need God to organize a meeting. We can purchase snacks for our campus group without the Holy Spirit. We can even lead a praise service without God if all we are doing is organizing a song service. But if we want to change the campus or help someone come to know God and experience revival we will need the Spirit of God to move on our campus. How will that happen? We have to ask, and we have to keep on asking. We have to pray for God's Spirit on our campus - something God is ready and anxious to give!

The Best Deal Ever

A friend's husband passed away and she needed to get rid of his car that had been sitting in the driveway for years. Bob had some health issues and hadn't driven his vehicle for a long time. It was a blue grey 1996 Toyota 4Runner with 27,000 original miles. She was selling it for a very reasonable price, and I needed another vehicle. Someone else had already expressed interest. In fact, people were stopping by asking if it was for sale. Fortunately, she wanted to sell it to me. The truck was literally like new. How could I pass up such a deal? I went down to the bank and drew out the money and paid her in cash.

Good deals like this don't come around all the time and when they do, you must act fast. Truth is, what looks like a good deal often turns out bad. Recognizing a bargain from a scam takes cunning and craft. Jesus compares acting on the gift of God's kingdom with the kind of shrewdness needed in good business. What can we learn from Jesus about taking advantage of the best deal in life that will ever come our way?



1. When have you ever lost a job?
2. What's the best deal you've ever made?



Luke 16:1-12

1. What surprises you about this story?
2. Why do you think Jesus told this parable?
3. What do you think about the shrewd manager? Was he wise, foolish, or a swindler?
4. Why did the master commend the dishonest manager? How would you like to have someone like this working for you?
5. What does Jesus mean by gaining friends for ourselves by worldly wealth so that when our wealth is gone, we can be received into eternal dwellings? This doesn't seem to fit with Jesus' ethics.
6. How does the maxim of being a trustworthy servant in verses 10-12 seem to contradict the parable that honors the dishonest manager? What is Jesus' point in this parable?
7. What is your personal take-away from today's reading and discussion?
8. What is the most important thing you have learned or been reminded of in today's study about Christ on campus?
9. How can we pray for you today?

"Come, all you who are thirsty, come to the waters;
and you who have no money, come, buy and eat!
Come, buy wine and milk without money and without cost.
Why spend money on what is not bread, and your labor on what does not satisfy? Listen,
listen to me, and eat what is good, and you will delight in the richest of fare."

Isaiah 55: 1, 2



1. How has God been using Journey in your life this week on campus?
 2. How have you been acting this week on God's best deal ever?
 3. Who does God want you to share His offer with?
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Back Story

The story of the dishonest manager is one of the most challenging of Jesus' parables. It's challenging because it seems to go against everything Jesus stood for – honesty, faithfulness, integrity. On the surface it seems like He is commending dishonesty and dereliction of duty. Of course, this can't be true because it's Jesus and because it contradicts His moral that follows about being faithful in little things.

So, what is Jesus' point? This is one of those places where Jesus is using a bit of sarcasm. It's not the first time. Sarcasm was used already in the parable of the Sower. In His explanation to the disciples about why He is now teaching in parables Jesus references the prophet Isaiah and a time when God's people would not listen to straight teaching. In Isaiah's case the people had closed their eyes and shut their ears and were no longer listening. God sent Isaiah anyway to warn the people of what God was going to do. Isaiah's entire family became a kind of parable of God's actions. Jesus' explanation to the disciples is that the time has come again when people are not listening or hearing the message so He is resorting to telling the message in stories that they may be able to hear.

The sarcasm here is, *"The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those on the outside everything is said in parables so that, 'they may be ever seeing but never perceiving, and ever hearing but never understanding; otherwise, they might turn and be forgiven!'"* Mark 4:11, 12

Did Jesus not want them to turn and be forgiven? Of course, He did, but it is as in the days of Isaiah when people have shut their ears so God must take another route to get through to them.

The sarcasm in the dishonest manager story is that sometimes the people of this world are shrewder in their dealings and decision making than people who are deciding about God's kingdom. When the dishonest manager realized the trouble he was in he acted. He didn't wait around for his master to let him go. He did what he could and got some of his master's money returned even though some of it was lost. At the same time, he improved his position with the master's creditors in case he was let go.

The rub comes when Jesus says, *"I tell you, use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings."* Luke 16:9

Some have argued that the man is not really stealing from his master but only dropping his manager fee from the bill. Whether that is the case or not, it seems that verse 9 is a side bar on the proper use of money to help ourselves and others. Don't hoard it. Use it! When this world comes to an end the friends we have blessed and made on earth may be our friends in heaven. It's a reminder that whatever we do now has eternal implications.

As with all of Jesus' parables, the main point is to take hold of the kingdom while it is being offered. Get in on the best deal of your life! Jesus reminds us to not be afraid, *"It is the Father's good pleasure to give us the kingdom"* (Luke 12:32). Like Taco Tuesdays, students know a good deal when they see one and this is the best deal any of us will get on planet earth. The message is clear, *"Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you."* Luke 6:38

Heaven's Table

Some of my best memories in campus ministry have been around a table eating with a single student, gathered with students for a celebration meal, or weekly Friday Night Fellowship dinners beginning Sabbath together. One meal I will always cherish was a gathering with students from MIT and Harvard. I was in the Boston area attending a church committee meeting and was scheduled to sit for my doctoral defense. Since I was traveling, I planned to defend online from my hotel room. The defense went well, but as doctoral defenses go, I was drained and feeling a bit anticlimactic so far away from home and no one to celebrate with.

Then I remembered my good friend Andrew, Adventist campus minister for the Boston area. I called him up and told him I was in town and shared my circumstances. He invited me to a Bible study they were having on campus. Afterwards we all went out for a celebration meal at a nearby Mexican restaurant. It was great to be with old and new friends on this very important occasion.

The table is almost as important as the cross in Christian theology. What does Luke have to teach us about Christ on campus from the banquet table of Jesus?



1. If you were planning a banquet, what foods would you serve?
2. What are some of your best table celebrations?



Luke 14:15-24

1. What are your first impressions from this story?
2. What connection do you make between the parable and the man's opening comment concerning the feast in the kingdom of God?
3. Who is represented by those making excuses not to attend?
4. Who are the secondary guests out in the streets and alleys? What about those from the roads and country lanes? Who are they and who might they represent?
5. How is this another story about the great reversal of God's kingdom?
6. How do you think Jesus' parable sat with the guy who made the comment about someday feasting in God's kingdom?
7. How does a great banquet represent the Kingdom of God? How can sharing a meal with someone be an example of the kingdom?
8. What is the most important thing you have learned or been reminded of in today's study about Christ on campus?
9. How can we pray for you today?

"Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me."

Revelation 3:20



1. How has God been using journey in your life this week on campus?
 2. Who can you bless by sharing a meal with this week?
 3. What is God teaching you about the ministry of hospitality?
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Back Story

Food occupies a central theme in the gospel of Luke. In fact, there are references to Jesus eating with someone in a meal He has provided or has been invited to in chapters 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 14, 15, 19, 22, and 24. Luke refers to Jesus around a table more often than all the rest of the gospel writers combined. Gusto L. Gonzalez in *The Story That Luke Tells* points out that many of these dinner gatherings were in a reclining position and were referred to as a symposia or extended meal conversation. No fast food for Jesus! Often the thing He is criticized for is eating and drinking with the wrong people like the feast at Matthew's house and the muttering of the Pharisees and teachers of the law for hanging out with tax collectors and sinners before the Prodigal Son story.

Food is a wonderful way to engage with others. In this story the heavenly banquet is a metaphor of God's kingdom. After being invited to dine at the house of a prominent Pharisee and ensuing discussion about who was invited and who was not guests looked for the best seats around the table. A man reclining at the table, and I imagine him with a far off look in his eye, says, "Won't it be wonderful to sit down and feast at the great banquet in heaven" (my paraphrase). This prompts the story of the great banquet from Jesus where guests have been invited but gave excuses not to attend. The invitation is then given to the sick and lame and finally to those out in the roads and country lanes and there is still more room at the table.

The main point of the parable is that the kingdom feast is not far away in some distant undisclosed time. The feast this guy is imagining has already been prepared and the invitations given. The master of the feast was inviting people to the table of God's grace and the leaders were giving excuses not to attend.

The banquet Jesus describes perfectly fit His own ministry commanding people to repent and receive the good news of His kingdom. However, people were declining His invitation, so the disciples were extending the invitation to the poor, sick, and the lame. The invitation continues in the book of Acts when the Gentiles, illustrated by those on the road and country lanes, will be compelled to come in. The banquet will culminate at the master's return. The role of Jesus' followers, like that of the disciples, is to invite all to join the feast.

The table is a metaphor for the kingdom, but it is also a great way to get to know someone and engage in spiritual conversations. Mealtimes were some of Jesus' best interactions. *In Surprise the World* by Michael Frost we learn about five habits of highly missional believers. BELLS stands for Bless others, Eat with others, Listen to the Holy Spirit, Learn the ways of Christ, and Share what God is doing through you in testimony and by keeping a journal.

Of all five habits, eating is the most communal. We all must eat. Don't eat alone. Choose to eat with three people each week and make sure that at least one of them is not a member of your religious circle. Eating can lead to spiritual conversations or not, but at least a relationship is being established.

Food is one of the easiest ways God can use you on campus. Eating with others is the gift of hospitality. God is inviting everyone to join Him at His table and food can be an amazing avenue for others to learn about the banquet we are all invited to. Sitting at table with someone is one of the best opportunities for experiencing Christ on campus.

"Tell those who have been invited that I have prepared my dinner: My oxen and fattened cattle have been butchered, and everything is ready. Come to the wedding banquet!" Matthew 22:4

