

Discussion Questions for “Portraits of Jesus” week 3: The Gospel of Luke

1. What insights did you gain from the message this past Sunday? What was most helpful for you? What did you find uncomfortable?
2. Read Luke 1:1-5, Luke 2:1-3, and Luke 3:1-2. Why do you think the author is so keen to set their narrative in an historical context? How might these passages encourage us to interpret Jesus in the narrative that follows?
3. Read Matthew’s account of the beginning of John the Baptist’s ministry in Matthew 3:1-12. How does this compare to the account in Luke 3:1-18? In what ways are they similar? In what ways are they different? Assuming both authors are working off the equivalent text in Mark here (a view widely accepted by scholars) what is significant about the specific way the author of Luke narrates this story?
4. Read Luke 4:14-30. Why do you think Jesus quotes the prophet Isaiah, and why this passage in particular? Why do you think Jesus seems to act provocatively with the people of his hometown and why do you think they respond the way they do? What is the author showing us here?
5. Read Luke 19:1-10. At the beginning of the story, in what way is Zacchaeus rich and in what way is he poor? At the end of the story, in what way is Zacchaeus rich and in what way is he poor? What action does Jesus take to bring about this turnaround? What action does Zacchaeus take? In the final verse here, the word for “salvation” and “save” can also be translated “healing” and “heal”. In what way is this a story of healing and how might it apply to us today both individually and socially?
6. Read Luke 13:31-35. What do you think motivates Jesus to keep going to Jerusalem even though he seems to know he will be killed there? How do you think Jesus nurtured this motivation and courage within?
7. Share about ways in which you personally feel the need to be more centered and courageous? How can you nurture this within? Then take some time to pray for one another.

Practice for the week: Centering on God’s love

Take a moment each day to center on God’s love for you and for the world. Simply sit quietly and focus on your breathing. Imagine yourself surrounded by God’s love and breathe in that love with each breath. Release fear, anxiety, judgement, and tension every time you breathe out. Sit for a moment and absorb this infinite love. Then invite God to remain with you, lead you, and give you ears to hear and eyes to see as you go through your day.