

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

BETHANY LUTHERAN CHURCH

JUNE 5, 2005

ELKHORN, NEBRASKA

RICK KENNEBECK

1 MR. KENNEBECK: I'm not as prepared as the pastors
2 might be, so I apologize for having to walk around up here
3 as I'm getting ready. I'll try and keep you awake.

4 I thank you for your love. We get to fill in when
5 the pastors are gone and I think it's more of a blessing for
6 us that get to do that, Karl last week, I'm trying to help
7 out this week, and you may see some other faces up here.

8 I'm not a Bible scholar, I didn't go into the
9 ministry, so I have to use tools that are available today
10 and thankfully this "Life Application Bible" has everything
11 in it so I can lean on it and hopefully try and help you
12 understand what Jesus is trying to say through Luke.

13 And for me it's helpful when I'm doing a Bible
14 study to take a look as who is writing and what the times
15 were that they were writing.

16 Luke, you may or may not know, this Bible has
17 everything in it, everything is in here, and it talks about
18 Luke being a doctor.

19 So therefore by being a man of science he has a lot
20 of facts and a lot of things we can lean on, because it's
21 proven in his day, in the words that he studied to put this
22 book together.

23 It's by some experts the most comprehensive Gospel
24 of the four books.

25 And so we know he's a doctor. We know also that

1 he's a good friend of Paul, who wrote over half the books of
2 the New Testament.

3 So he probably has a good mentor that helped him
4 put this book together.

5 The first four verses, I'll invite you to open to
6 Luke, Chapter 1, gives us a little bit of an understanding
7 of what Luke is trying to do by writing this book.

8 He's not writing just to write a book; he has a
9 purpose in mind.

10 And I think it's helpful when we are studying his
11 writings that we understand that purpose.

12 It says, "Most honorable Theophilus," let's
13 consider us as Theophilus, so most honorable Bethany, or
14 Elkhorn, "many people have written accounts about the events
15 that took place among us. They used as their source
16 materials and reports circulating among us from the early
17 disciples and the eyewitnesses of what God has done in
18 fulfillment of his promise."

19 So he has all these documents and stories.

20 "Having carefully investigated all of these from
21 the beginning I decided to write a careful summary to
22 reassure you of the truth of all you were taught."

23 So now we understand why he's writing. Luke writes
24 in kind of a chunky way, I think.

25 He doesn't flow like a nice novel flows from one

1 issue or episode to the next.

2 It's kind of, okay, this happens, and then all of a
3 sudden we are over here and this happens.

4 It's kind of a chunky style, but it works for me.
5 I hope it works for you.

6 Luke is one of the writers that people, when they
7 are introduced to the Bible, they may ask where do I start?

8 Do I read this thing from front to back? How do I
9 go at this?

10 Luke is a great place to start. It gives you a
11 really good account and understanding of the life of Jesus
12 and what Jesus did.

13 As we flip forward toward the text for today we get
14 to about chapter four and we see that Jesus is doing a lot
15 of teaching.

16 He's assembled his clan, his disciples, and he's
17 well on his way of showing people how to live by loving,
18 serving others, miracles, raising people from the dead, he's
19 doing all these wonderful things and the disciples are along
20 for the ride.

21 By the time we get to chapter nine, which is the
22 book of the text for today, again to try and understand what
23 those verses are saying, what is leading up to that?

24 And at the start of chapter nine Jesus is sending
25 out the twelve disciples and he gave them power and

1 authority to cast out demons and to heal diseases.

2 And he sent them out to tell everyone about the
3 kingdom of God and to heal the sick.

4 And interestingly he tells them to travel light.
5 Don't take a walking stick.

6 Don't even bring a traveler's bag or food or money
7 or not even an extra coat.

8 Instead, wherever you go, stay with the people of
9 that area.

10 And so I think there is a great lesson in there.
11 Many times we think that we have to have more, but Jesus
12 teaches less is more, to take no preparations.

13 Also when they go into a village and they teach the
14 ways of Jesus they are going to get rejected, count on it,
15 just like when we sometimes make ourselves vulnerable and
16 introduce Jesus to someone, they may be resistant.

17 Jesus teaches us not to worry or pursue or argue
18 with them, but instead to move on.

19 And in fact He tells the disciples when you're
20 rejected, simply shake the dust of that town off your feet
21 and move on.

22 So don't force it, or retaliate, or argue, and move
23 on to others that may be more open to Jesus.

24 As I looked at the subsequent verses up to today's
25 reading, I couldn't help but get a sense that these

1 disciples are on quite the roller coaster ride.

2 The first up being here is Jesus telling the
3 disciples to travel light, don't worry about anything, shake
4 the dust off your feet. That's got to be a load lifted off
5 their shoulders.

6 Here they are following Jesus and wanting to live
7 like him and that takes all the pressure off, doesn't it?

8 We don't have to get bogged down on how we do
9 things; just be ourselves, love others, just serve others,
10 do as Jesus did.

11 But through the set of verses we see that Jesus is
12 taking them through a bit of up and down and I'm reminded of
13 when I was a kid, there were nine of us kids, two parents,
14 we would all load up every Sunday in the family vehicle,
15 usually a nice big station wagon with the board siding and
16 we were sometimes embarrassed by it, but that was our family
17 car.

18 And we would take off in this car with two big
19 roasters of fried chicken to grandma's house and drive for
20 about an hour to get there so we are smelling this and we
21 are wanting to get there and get out.

22 So we would ask about ten minutes into the hour
23 long journey, "Dad, are we almost there yet?"

24 Kids don't have a concept of time, and dad would
25 ignore us, because he can't keep answering that question for

1 the next fifty minutes.

2 So we would wait until maybe halfway there and we
3 would ask, "Dad, are we almost to the rocks yet?"

4 Grandma lived on a farm and so there's about ten
5 miles of roads that we had to go through that were gravel
6 roads.

7 So we would ask, "Are we almost to the rocks yet?"
8 And it was always joy when we saw that we were almost to the
9 rocks because then the ride got fun, because the roads were
10 hilly and fairly wide so dad could drive fairly quickly to
11 get there and make it even more fun.

12 And we would hit these hills and at the crest of
13 the hill you would feel your seat kind of leave the seat
14 that you are sitting on and you get that thrill.

15 There were a couple of hills that were our
16 favorites because you felt it, and it went up again and you
17 felt another one, and so those were a double bonus, right?

18 But eventually you had to go through the downs, and
19 hopefully hit another up.

20 But the disciples were going through something very
21 similar in their journey with Jesus, because he was doing
22 some fantastic, exciting things.

23 The first of which I think is that very lesson that
24 we have of travel light, don't worry.

25 That's a worry I don't have to worry about of how

1 people are going to receive us.

2 But then what happens right after that is they get
3 news that John the Baptist was beheaded for following the
4 way of Jesus, or preaching, foretelling that is Jesus
5 coming.

6 So that is kind of that bottom, there is some risk
7 here that we have to look at.

8 But Jesus takes care of that. He leads them on to
9 where he feeds five thousand people, huge miracle, okay,
10 things are going to be all right as long as I hang out with
11 him, right?

12 As long as I stick close to Jesus, if he can feed
13 five thousand and do all these miracles, then I will be all
14 right, so we are back up again.

15 The next part is, as Luke writes, that Jesus passes
16 the test, that he recognizes Jesus as the Messiah.

17 If you can pass that test, you're with Jesus, "Who
18 do they say I am?"

19 "Who do you say I am?"

20 "I say you are the Messiah."

21 So if you can pass that test, another up, but then
22 Jesus predicts his death for the first time, so we are back
23 down again in the writings of Luke.

24 It's probably confusing to the disciples, but right
25 after that he takes a few of his disciples up to a mountain

1 and he is transfigured, so we're back up again.

2 They see the glory of God and Jesus and again he
3 also then heals a demon-possessed boy, so another double up.

4 Jesus predicts his death a second time then right
5 after that.

6 So you can get the sense that we're on a roller
7 coaster ride with the disciples.

8 The last few verses right before the text for today
9 talk about how the disciples were confused.

10 They were jockeying for positions. I think that's
11 teaching us that, like us, the disciples were trying to make
12 Jesus the earthly king that they were looking for.

13 They wanted to know who is going to sit at his
14 right and left? Who is going to have the position of
15 status?

16 We, I think, a lot of times pursue that position of
17 status versus just following Jesus.

18 Then finally there is an argument about a person
19 that is using Jesus's name to heal other people, but that
20 person wasn't part of the clan.

21 In Verse 49, if you are following along, Jesus
22 tells them don't worry about people that are doing good
23 works in my name, for if they are not against us they are
24 for us.

25 So we have a pretty good feeling of who Luke is,

1 what he's writing for, and where we are at with the
2 disciples and so we get to the text for today.

3 The first thing that the text for today says is
4 that Jesus is on his way to Jerusalem and he knew the time
5 was drawing near for his return to heaven.

6 We have some understanding in this Bible that I
7 have that Jesus is a Jew, and he has disciples that are
8 Jews, and he's going from Galilee to Jerusalem, but in the
9 middle is an area called Samaria.

10 That northern region of Judea called now Samaria
11 was previously infiltrated or invaded by a group of people
12 called Assyria.

13 What happened is when Assyria then settled that
14 area they created kind of this hybrid of people with the
15 Jews and so the Jews hated them because they were considered
16 half-breeds, they weren't purebred Jews.

17 And they were stuck on the fact that you have to be
18 of the main line of Moses and so this did not settle well
19 with them.

20 And the Bible that I have tells me that because the
21 Jews hated the Samaritans, then the Samaritans decided to
22 hate the Jews, and it created an unsafe place to travel.

23 It's about a 70 mile trek from Galilee to Jerusalem
24 and most people instead of going through Samaria they would
25 go around and you have the Mediterranean Sea on the left and

1 there's a river on the right and most people chose one of
2 those routes to try to avoid the Samaritans and the danger.

3 But Jesus, he's set towards Jerusalem, and he knows
4 what is going to happen, he's fully God, he's fully man, he
5 knows he's going to die when he gets there, that's his
6 purpose.

7 But what does he do? Instead of taking the
8 considerably longer route by going around, like maybe we
9 sometimes want to do when we have a tough task ahead of us
10 or, gosh, I know I need to introduce Jesus to this person,
11 but maybe tomorrow, maybe next month.

12 Jesus says no, go straight at it, don't wait, and
13 don't hit them over the head with it, but just keep
14 traveling light, keep with the no worries.

15 And he didn't tell the disciples, okay, guys, we
16 have to go through the Samaritan area, let's pack up a bunch
17 of water, let's make sure we have enough food, we're going
18 to hit the freeway and just as fast as we can get through
19 this.

20 He does the opposite. He tells the disciples, a
21 few of you go ahead as messengers and tell them that I'm
22 coming.

23 The text does say that he was rebuked by the people
24 of Samaria because, as it points out, he was set on going to
25 Jerusalem.

1 If you are going to see those people, then I don't
2 want to have anything to do with you kind of deal, right?

3 But the disciples then, after realizing that, tried
4 to do what happened earlier in Second Kings where Elijah was
5 not accepted by some servants and a wicked king of Israel
6 where he called fire and lightning down from heaven and kind
7 of vaporized the people that didn't accept him.

8 These disciples thought, number one, I'm going to
9 show Jesus that I understand my scripture a little bit and
10 maybe braggishly say, hey, we could do this.

11 But Jesus rebuked the disciples saying no, and in
12 fact some translations say that you don't realize what your
13 hearts are like, Jesus tells them, and that the Son of Man
14 has not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them.

15 So these disciples have been on a roller coaster
16 ride and they are still not really getting it.

17 How many of us at some time, I know I have, thought
18 if I could have just lived when Jesus lived, I could ask him
19 some questions and have it all figured out, right?

20 We would know what we are supposed to do in life.
21 We would know what Jesus is all about.

22 But the disciples were there, and they were a mess,
23 I'm sorry, a lot of them, they just didn't understand.

24 Maybe it's because we have the book in its
25 condensed form and Luke is writing a summary that I think

1 helps us a great deal because we can see how all those
2 chunks fit together.

3 But thinking about being with Jesus, we are with
4 Jesus today, and we have his word.

5 It's just a matter of spending time with Jesus and
6 spending time in the word.

7 So let's simplify this. So far we have Jesus
8 saying, "Come, follow me."

9 This is the meat of the text, is what we get into
10 next.

11 Jesus is saying, "Come, be my disciple."

12 He wasn't looking to increase the numbers of his
13 convoy, the people that he was traveling with.

14 And I think the literal sense of this reading might
15 make you think that he's saying come, follow me, leave your
16 home and everybody behind and just get on the road with me.

17 I think it's important for us to realize that he's
18 saying come, follow me, to them just like he's saying it to
19 us.

20 Come, follow me. Come, be my disciple. Come, be
21 the way and live the way that I'm teaching you and do the
22 things that I'm doing, serve others, love others, don't
23 worry about things, God is going to take care of you.

24 He's asking people to become followers in the way
25 they live.

1 Along with that we know there is a roller coaster
2 ride.

3 We are going to have some up times and we are going
4 to have some down times.

5 God says he's going to be with us through all of
6 that, but there's going to be some cost in the fact that we
7 are going to have to accept the cross along with the crown.

8 And there is going to be some times when we are
9 going to feel judged by others, but God always has his mercy
10 there helping us and supporting us.

11 There is going to be a cost. We are going to be
12 giving and serving, but we are told to understand the cost,
13 but not get burdened by the cost.

14 We have to abandon everything else that is giving
15 us security, like money and whatever aspirations we have.

16 Are those our designs for our lives or are they
17 God's design for our lives?

18 Like some of you I know I have had conversations
19 with, I serve on the adult discipleship committee and one
20 of the things that we hear a fair amount is Bethany needs
21 more programs for adults.

22 We have, I think, a great program for kids, Mom's
23 Day Out, Sunday school, Wednesday night.

24 There are some programs for adults, Alpha, and
25 small groups that we encourage and so forth.

1 But I think we have to be careful with that,
2 because as we look at the text for today and we look at the
3 rest of the Bible, God doesn't say to the disciples go out
4 and set up all these churches and fill it with
5 administrative staff and put pastors in there and make sure
6 you have lots of programs for adults and everybody else.

7 He's talking about traveling light. He's talking
8 about following his way and living his way and not worrying,
9 so he's taking it to a personal level.

10 He's not saying come and show up at a Bible study,
11 or come to church once a week.

12 He's asking us and inviting us to be a disciple on
13 an ongoing basis in a 24-7 fashion.

14 I would point that out and caution you. If God is
15 putting on you, though, a call to put a ministry together,
16 whether it be at Bethany or in your community, he's going to
17 bless it if it's of Him.

18 So find others that can work on that with you and
19 build it.

20 If you do, I think that if it's of God again, He
21 will bless it.

22 It will joyous, it will grow, and it will be
23 something that is beautiful.

24 We are asked to make a daily commitment to him, to
25 never look back, and we need to be mindful that at times we

1 are going to have those valleys and that we need to lean on
2 others, to put Christian friends around us, in order that
3 our lives are balanced and healthy and stay on track.

4 We need to follow Him and get in the right
5 relationship with Him and know that we will never be alone.

6 Now, if we do these things there are some promises
7 that God gives us through the words of Bible.

8 He talks about the fruits of Spirit, and we're all
9 in different journeys and places in our lives.

10 We might be fathers, mothers, sons, daughters,
11 neighbors, friends, teachers, students, boss, employee, and
12 in all of those the fruit of the Spirit can help us be a
13 better father, be a better boss, be a better mother.

14 So we are going to get rewarded by following
15 Jesus's plan for our lives through the love, joy, peace,
16 patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and
17 self-control that will grow within us.

18 So the thing that adults need most at Bethany and
19 everywhere in the church is a deeper commitment to Jesus.

20 He's inviting us in and we know that when our life
21 is on God's track by praying and reading the Bible,
22 gathering with other Christians, holding each other up, and
23 keeping each other accountable, and when we serve others and
24 worship him, then we're going to be blessed.

25 I don't know about you, but I'm sure you can think

1 about times when you have been the most fulfilled or happy
2 in your life.

3 I know for me it's not when I'm receiving things;
4 it's typically when I'm giving things, when I take time to
5 spend time with my kids, or there are many opportunities God
6 gives us, but you can also go to a structured event like the
7 soup kitchens, or looking for ways to serve others, and when
8 you do those things you feel good.

9 You might drop a turkey off at the Hy-Vee stand
10 that goes to the food pantry, and those things feel good
11 because you know you don't have to do those things, but you
12 are doing them because you know that's something Jesus would
13 do others.

14 So the real calling for us, as Jesus says come, be
15 my disciple, is to develop a relationship with Him.

16 Study the way Jesus lives and then adjust our own
17 ways, adjust our lives according to his teaching.

18 I hope I've taught you something. I hope you've
19 learned something.

20 But more so I hope you realize God is calling you
21 into a close relationship with him. Let's us pray.

22 Father, thank you for your word. You teach us
23 clearly and bless us when we spend time with you.

24 Not one of us can take for granted the gifts that
25 you give us each moment of every day.

1 Lord, we can't control our heartbeat and so like an
2 infant we are completely dependent upon you.

3 We are humbled that everything in this world is
4 yours and yet your sole desire is a closer relationship with
5 us.

6 Jesus we ask you to come into your lives in a
7 powerful way.

8 We commit our lives to you daily and thank you for
9 your promise to bless us with the fruits of your Spirit.

10 All that we are and all that we have, Lord, please
11 use our lives for your glory.

12 Remove the scales from our eyes so that we may
13 clearly see your plan for our lives.

14 For you are all powerful and an ever-living
15 God and we trust and worship you now and forever. In Jesus
16 our Savior's name we pray. Amen.

17

18

19

20

21

22

23

24

25