

My Favorite Thing About LUKE

Luke 24:5-11

October 16, 2021

And now.... Luke.

As with the other Gospels, Luke does not identify himself as the author of the book that bears his name. Biblical evidence, however, points us to Luke, the Physician, as the author {see Acts 1:1 and Colossians 4:14}.

Luke:

- Was written in Greek
- Was written to a specific believer – **Theophilus** – and the purpose of the book is spelled out at the very beginning:
Dear Theophilus.... I have been doing a lot of research into the life of Jesus, including getting eyewitness accounts. I am writing it out for you so that your faith will be strengthened and you will see the Truth in the things you have been taught.
- Was written around 60-ish AD
- Is the longest of the 4 Gospels {by words} and 60% of the book is unique:
 - Events leading up to the births of both John the Baptist and Jesus {1-2}
 - Jesus' childhood {2:40-52}
 - Luke's Genealogy is different from Matthews:
 - Matthew begins with Abraham and ends with Jesus {Matthew 1:2-16}.
 - Luke begins with Jesus and ends with Adam – son of God {Luke 3:23-38}.
 - Jesus Journey to Jerusalem {9:51-19:44}
 - Different slant on the destruction of the Temple {21:5-38}
 - Jesus' post-resurrection activities {24:13-53}
- Paid special attention to the parables and miracles of Jesus, listing more than the other Gospels.
- Included women in prominent roles, which is unique within the 4 Gospels.

My Favorite Thing About LUKE is ---- The Role of Women

Luke records a surprising number of passages involving women, specifically naming 8 - Elizabeth, Mary mother of Jesus, Anna, Mary and Martha, Mary Magdalene, Joanna and Mary mother of James + at least 14 other references to women throughout the book.

I felt it important to highlight the role of women in Luke, because the Bible is often criticized for its treatment of women. May I remind us all that not only is the Bible a revelation of God's work to restore humanity, it is also a book that does not shy away from the truth of what sin does and the absolute destruction and devastation that is left in its wake – including the relationship between men and women. Adam and Eve were equals and that changed **ONLY** as a result of sin. How women were treated in Scripture, as well as throughout history, is not a reflection of God's perfect plan, but a reflection of the choice to rebel against God – it is a reflection of sin.

Unfortunately, many Christians have adopted and even embraced the **post-sin** model rather than choosing to champion the **pre-sin** model and by doing so, have misrepresented the heart of God towards women.

Okay, let's go.....

In Matthew, most of the attention surrounding the birth of Jesus is focused on Joseph's response, the Wisemen's response and Herod's response. Mary is only mentioned by name 3 times {1:18-2:21} and the birth of John, the Baptist, is not mentioned at all.

Mark and John do not address either birth.

Luke, however, devotes the majority of his first 2 chapters to the births of Jesus and John the Baptist and both Mary and Elizabeth play significant roles in each story.

Elizabeth is mentioned **by name** 8 times in the first chapter.

Mary is mentioned **by name** 11 times in the first 2 chapters.

After the purification period was over Mary and Joseph took baby Jesus to the Temple to be dedicated. While there, Simeon **AND** Anna blessed Jesus. Luke tells us that Anna was an 84-year-old prophetess. She was the daughter of Phanuel of the tribe of Asher. She had been married and after her husband died, she lived in the Temple, devoting herself to God.

- **Luke 2:38** - And at that very moment she came up and *began* giving thanks to God, and continued to speak of Him to all those who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem.

Luke also mentions 4 women who were healed by Jesus: Peter's mother-in-law with a fever, the woman with the 12-year hemorrhage, Jarius' daughter, who was raised from the dead and the woman who had been sick for 18 years.

It was a woman, a sinful woman, who anointed Jesus' feet, while He was at dinner with a Pharisee. Quietly she came into the house. As she wept, she opened her jar of expensive perfume and mingled with her tears, she began to pour it on to Jesus' feet. This was definitely a bold move on her part because she opened herself up to a great deal of criticism by those gathered around the table – including the host.

- **Luke 7:44-48** - And turning toward the woman, Jesus said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has wet My feet with her tears, and wiped them with her hair. ⁴⁵ "You gave Me no kiss; but she, since the time I came in, has not ceased to kiss My feet. ⁴⁶ "You did not anoint My head with oil, but she anointed My feet with perfume. ⁴⁷ "For this reason I say to you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little." ⁴⁸ And He said to her, "Your sins have been forgiven."

It was Mary who left Martha to prepare the meal because sitting at Jesus' feet was more important to her – and Jesus said she had chosen what was better.

It was a woman who searched her entire house to find the lost coin and it was a persistent widow who would not give up until justice had been served.

The societal mix of the women in Luke's Gospel also reaches across the financial spectrum:

- Women were a part of Jesus' traveling party and contributed financially to His ministry.
 - **Luke 8:1-3** - And it came about soon afterwards, that He *began* going about from one city and village to another, proclaiming and preaching the kingdom of God; and the twelve were with Him, ² and *also* some women who had been healed of evil spirits and sicknesses: Mary who was called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out, ³ and Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others who were contributing to their support out of their private means. {Both Mary Magdalene and Joanna will go on to witness the empty tomb}.
- It was a widow whom Jesus praised for her sacrificial giving.
 - **Luke 21:3-4** - I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put in more than all the others. All the others gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she gave everything she had to live on.

Only Luke records all these stories.

Women were among those who observed the Crucifixion. As a matter of fact, the other Gospels report that, with the exception of John, no other male disciple witnessed the Crucifixion. While the men were MIA, the women were at the foot of the cross:

- **Matthew 27:55-56** - And many women were there looking on from a distance, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to Him, ⁵⁶ among whom was Mary Magdalene, *along with* Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.
- **Mark 15:40-41** - And there were also *some* women looking on from a distance, among whom *were* Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joses, and Salome. ⁴¹ And when He was in Galilee, they used to follow Him and minister to Him; and *there were* many other women who had come up with Him to Jerusalem.
- **John 19:25-27** - Therefore the soldiers did these things. But there were standing by the cross of Jesus His mother, and His mother's sister, Mary the *wife* of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. ²⁶ When Jesus therefore saw His mother, and the disciple whom He loved standing nearby, He said to His mother, "Woman, behold, your son!" ²⁷ Then He said to the disciple, "Behold, your mother!" And from that hour the disciple took her into his own *household*.

At dawn on Sunday, it was a group of women, including Mary Magdalene, Joanna and Mary the mother of James – **NOT** the male disciples – who went to Jesus' grave only to discover that the stone had been moved and the tomb was empty.

It was to these women the 2 angels told of the Resurrection:

- **Luke 24:5-6** - Why do you seek the living One among the dead? ⁶ He is not here, but He has risen.....

And it was these women who ran to report the news to the 11 and the rest of the group only to be dismissed because it seemed they were speaking nonsense....

In ancient Israel, women were not qualified to give testimony in a legal case unless they were the only witness or in an exceptional situation. Other texts argue a woman could not bring evidence at all. So, by putting so much emphasis on the fact that the women reported the resurrection of Jesus and not the men, Luke is actually lending more credibility to the story, which will help Theophilus ***“see the Truth in what he had been taught.”***

All of the Gospels tell us that Jesus often rebelled against cultural norms, i.e., He touched lepers, He talked to Gentiles, He invited Himself over to the Tax-Collectors house, He healed on Sabbath, He was more interested in the Law of God than the Traditions of Men, etc., etc., etc.

In Luke’s book the main focus of this rebel spirit is found in how Jesus treated and interacted with women and in turn, their undying and bold devotion to Him.

In modern Christianity, where women are often viewed as ***“less than or not equal to men”***, the book of Luke stands as a shining light regarding the truth about God’s love for and delight in women. They are equal. They are worthy. They are beloved.

That’s **My Favorite Thing About LUKE.**