

THE REAL JESUS: HIS MISSION

Week Five | August 5, 2018 | How to Preach the Gospel Like Jesus

PREPARATION

GETTING READY

Before your group meets next time, spend some time alone in God's Word reading through this week's text, Luke 13:10–14:24. Pray that God, through His Spirit, would bring to life the truth of this text and how it applies to your life.

THIS WEEK

KEY BIBLICAL TRUTH

Following Jesus' example, we must preach the gospel by emphasizing the reality and the beauty of the kingdom.

THEOLOGY APPLIED

Jesus takes the truth about the kingdom and applies it to the personal lives of those to whom He is preaching the gospel. We are called to do the same.

MEDITATE

"Oh, magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together!" Psalm 34:3.

GETTING STARTED

+ Use this section to prepare your heart and mind for the truths of this week. This section will help to introduce the focus of this week's lesson.

Q: *Who is the best evangelist you have ever known? What makes them so?*

“If sinners will be damned,” says Charles Spurgeon, “At least let them leap to Hell over our bodies. And if they will perish, let them perish with our arms about their knees, imploring them to stay. If Hell must be filled, at least let it be filled in the teeth of our exertions, and let not one go there unwarned and unprayed for.” What a passion and an urgency Spurgeon expresses in this quote. The earnestness with which he preached the gospel reveals that he viewed his earthly life through the lens of the mission of God, and that vision informed the way he viewed the time and resources given to him and the people God put in his path.

Spurgeon left a legacy as one of the greatest preachers and evangelists. Yet his ministry was so effective because it took the shape of someone greater, Jesus Himself. While many people aspire to preach the gospel and evangelize like Spurgeon, imagine how great it would be if we could learn how to preach the gospel and evangelize from Jesus Himself. The good news is, we can! Luke gives us an excellent account of how Jesus preached the gospel to the lost.

|| UNDERSTANDING THE TEXT

Today we will study Luke 13:10–14:24. In this passage, Jesus is preaching the gospel to those who are not Christians. Through it, we learn the way He talks about the gospel and what, in particular, He highlights to communicate its truth to the hearts of those before Him.

1. HELP THEM SEE THE KINGDOM

2. ENCOURAGE THEM TO COME TOO

3. SHOW THE PERSONAL RELEVANCE OF THE GOSPEL

GOING DEEPER

+ This next section will help show what God’s Word says about this week’s particular focus. Read through the Scripture passages and connect the text to this week’s biblical truth.

HELP THEM SEE THE KINGDOM

LUKE 13:10–21

Q: Describe the scene of this account. Where is Jesus, and what day of the week is it? Why is this important?

Q: Who is Jesus' audience?

Jesus is teaching in a synagogue on the Sabbath when He encounters a woman who had been disabled by a spirit for over eighteen years. She was unable to stand straight because her back was completely bent over. The text says that the problem was not a physical one, but a spiritual one. She was in bondage and it took effect on her physical body. Her presence in the synagogue implies that she was coming to Jesus for deliverance. In verses 12 and 13, Jesus sees her and calls out to her, proclaiming her free from her spiritual bondage and, consequently, her physical disability. This is another example of how Jesus restores what is broken and makes straight that which has been made crooked by sin—even backs! Through this miracle, Jesus gives onlookers a glimpse of the kingdom. He piques their interest by showing them something contrary to the world as they know it. For some, it was captivating. For others, like the religious leaders, it was offensive.

In verse 18, He begins describing the kingdom more explicitly. He compares it to a grain of mustard seed that started small and grew upward like a mighty tree. Then he compares it to yeast, which grows outward. It is expansive and visible, working through the entire ball of dough. Yet, the kingdom also grows invisibly. It is not, as one commentator says, a piece of real estate. It is not located on the soil of a particular nation of the world; it exists inside the hearts of the people who belong to it and is lived out through their lives.

Jesus talks about the theological realities of atonement and forgiveness, but He always puts them in the context of the kingdom. Sometimes we preach the gospel in a highly individualistic way. We want individuals to be set free from sin through faith in Christ. But when we isolate these truths from the broader picture of the kingdom, we only tell part of the story. God frees us from our sin to make us part of His kingdom. Liberated individuals are called to be part of a new people. Christians are to live not just in a private relationship with God, but as part of a community of faith as well. There is no such thing as a lone-ranger Christian. So, when we preach the gospel, we need to situate the theological truths of atonement and forgiveness within the broader purpose of God creating a people for Himself.

Q: *How do the parables of the kingdom as a seed and yeast increase your confidence as you preach the gospel?*

Q: *How does the way you preach the gospel shape the person's idea of what it means to live the Christian life? How can you present the gospel message within the context of God's story of redemption to welcome people into something bigger than just a private, individualistic relationship with God?*

ENCOURAGE THEM TO COME TOO

LUKE 13:22-35

Q: *Where is Jesus in these verses? Who is His audience?*

Q: *What question is He asked and how does He respond?*

Now Jesus leaves the synagogue and travels toward Jerusalem, where He will be crucified. He is in small towns and villages, preaching the gospel along the way. As He approaches His death, the most important event in history, He takes advantage of every moment to speak truth to ordinary people in even the remotest of places.

In verse 23, someone asks Jesus if there will be many or few people saved. This person seems to believe that 1) people need to be saved, and 2) that Jesus is the only way to be saved. He asks what many of us have wondered. What about all the people in remote countries who don't have access to the gospel? What about all the people who have already died? Did they have a chance to hear the gospel? Will there be many people around the throne or just a few "privileged" ones?

Jesus responds by speaking to him directly. The first question is if *you* have entered into the kingdom. Don't ask all these other questions and neglect your own need for salvation. Secure your oxygen mask first and then worry about

others. Otherwise, you'll be dead before you can do anything about anyone else. In verse 26, Jesus explains what it means to really know God. It's not knowing *about* God, no matter how profound that knowledge is. The only way we can know God in a saving way is by being united to Christ through faith. As Jesus says in John 14:6, no one comes to the Father except through Him.

Then, in verses 28–29, Jesus talks about the reality that those who do not know Him will be separated from the Father for all eternity. They will experience weeping and gnashing of teeth as they see *many* people gathering from every part of the world to be part of the banquet of the kingdom. Jesus answers the man's question, but in a different way than he probably expected. He is advancing His kingdom, faithfully revealing Himself to those who are perishing. His is an inheritance of nations. He promises there will be countless people around the throne who have been reconciled to God through Christ.

The most important questions for us are: 1) will we be counted among them? 2) are we then urging others to follow us, to be part of the kingdom with us? Do we have a sense of urgency both for our own souls and the souls of others, or are we hung up on conceptual problems? Jesus shows us that the question “are only a few people going to be saved?” should serve as a motivator for us to make sure we are in Christ ourselves and then to live a life that seeks to see as many people as possible around the throne.

After encouraging the man to not get hung up on conceptual problems but realize the need for urgency both for himself and for others, we see an example of Jesus' confidence in sharing the gospel, accompanied by a brokenness for lost people. In the face of death and a threat from Herod, Jesus stands in boldness. In verse 32, He recognizes His days are in God's hands, and Herod cannot take away anything outside of God's will. Instead of cowering when someone tells Him to stop preaching the gospel and even threatens His life, Jesus remembers who the true Authority is and continues being faithful.

Jesus also demonstrates His brokenness for the lost. He shows us that boldness without love is being a bully. But love without boldness is not true love. In verse 34, Jesus, who is about to face His death, is not weeping for Himself, but for the lost, for those who refuse to be saved because of the hardness of their hearts. To proclaim the gospel like Jesus, we need to have the heart of Jesus for those we are speaking to. We need to insist, like Spurgeon, that if they are to spend an eternity apart from God, they do so after much labor and prayer on our part.

Q: *If you are not yet a Christian, are you getting hung up by conceptual problems*

that keep you from answering the urgent and personal question about your own salvation?

Q: *If you are a Christian, are you living your Christian life as a private, individualistic relationship with God, or are you living as part of His people?*

SHOW THE PERSONAL RELEVANCE OF THE GOSPEL

LUKE 14:1-24

Q: *What is the context of this scene? Where is Jesus and who is His audience?*

Q: *What was the Pharisees' attitude toward Jesus?*

The next stop on Jesus' journey to Jerusalem is a dinner party at the house of a leading Pharisee. However, this was not a friendly environment for Jesus. The Pharisees were watching Him closely, trying to get Him in trouble. Instead of being paralyzed by fear, Jesus continues being who He is. He heals a man who was in need. The Pharisees jumped on the opportunity to accuse Him of breaking the Sabbath. Jesus responds by asking if they would let an ox die on the Sabbath. If not, how much more should they be willing to keep a man from dying on the Sabbath?

The rules they had added to God's rules have not helped them keep the Law, but have actually caused them to break it. The Law is built around the greatest commandments, to love God and to love our neighbor. The extra laws the Pharisees tacked on had distorted the Law, causing them to fail in loving their neighbor. They used the Law as an excuse. Rather than being convicted of being unloving Law-breakers, the Pharisees saw Jesus' miracle and His message as an offense. They refused to see the kingdom, and they didn't consider themselves in light of it.

What stopped them from seeing the truth and seeing themselves in light of the truth? Their pride. Jesus tells a story of a man who views himself as more important than he is. He expresses his sense of superiority by sitting at the head of the table, only to be moved to the bottom. In verse 11, Jesus says those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and

the humble will be exalted. While the world says to pretend you are more important than you are (or “fake it until you make it”), Jesus says in the kingdom of God only those who are humble are exalted by God.

Likewise, Jesus says rather than trying to advance their own importance by being connected to the rich and powerful, those who are kingdom-minded seek out those who cannot repay them or advance their status. They do not show generosity for the purpose of making a good impression or to benefit from someone else’s status.

As another example, in verses 15–24, Jesus addresses the ones who presume they will go to heaven. They assume God is happy with them, that they are worthy of His love. They never see themselves as unworthy sinners, never turn to Him in repentance. They are just as presumptuous as the people who were invited to dinner and made excuses for not attending. They felt they were in good enough standing with the man to flippantly refuse his hospitality. Instead, the man alters his guest list, inviting the poor, blind, and lame—those who do not presume to be in good standing with him. Once again, Jesus says only those who recognize they are poor, needy, and broken will be given the gift of salvation and sonship. There is no other way to salvation except through repentance and faith in Christ.

Through these stories, Jesus hits at the heart of the sin keeping the Pharisees in bondage, the same way the woman with the broken back was in bondage. He was not shaming them, He was trying to get them to see that the gospel is not just an abstract idea, but something they needed personally. The Pharisees believed they were in the right, but Jesus shows that they were actually very far from the truth. He reveals tangible evidence in their life that revealed their distance from the truth. He didn’t speak in generalized terms, nor did He say what would make them happy. Instead, He tried to help them see their personal need for the gospel and its transforming effect on their lives.

- ❓ *Do you remember the moment in your own conversion when you didn’t just see abstract ideas of the gospel but your own reality in light of the truths of the gospel? What caused that transition for you? What were the effects of that transition?*
- ❓ *Can you think of times when the same thing has happened in your walk with Christ as a Christian? Do you remember moments when a biblical concept was transformed from the abstract to the personal, allowing you to see yourself in light of that truth? How were you changed as a result?*
- ❓ *Have you added extra laws on top of God’s Laws? Do these extra laws keep you from keeping the greatest Laws, loving God and loving others?*

NEXT STEPS

+ *Connect the truths from God's Word to your daily life. Process how what you've learned this week will impact the way you live beyond today and into the future.*

- ❓ *How have you preached the gospel in the past? Is it similar or different to the way Jesus does in this passage?*
- ❓ *Consider the people in your life you've mentioned in previous weeks of this study who need to hear the gospel. Think about how you can preach the gospel to them this way.*
- ❓ *Do you feel you are both bold and broken when it comes to the lost?*

PRAY

+ *Use these prayer points to connect your time in prayer to this week's focus.*

- Jesus, thank You for being my Savior. Thank You for revealing my sin to me and showing me what You did on the cross to allow me to be reconciled with God. Thank You for the boldness and truthfulness of Your Word. Please make my words bold and truthful as well. Thank You also for the love and sacrifice You demonstrate and the deep desire You have for many to be saved. Give me this same heart. Thank You that You don't just save me as an individual, but You call me to be part of a people, a kingdom.

COMMENTARY

LUKE 13:19–21 the mustard seed was the smallest known seed to the people during Jesus' time. It grew into a large plant of eight to twelve feet. The idea is that something that seems so small and insignificant grows to something magnificent and substantial, beyond expectations. Similarly, a small amount of yeast can cause a large amount of

dough to rise. Jesus' point is that what seems small now will grow into something large and flourishing.

LUKE 13:25-26 Eating and drinking with Jesus does not mean you are actually saved. In other words, listening to Jesus' teachings and spending time with His people doesn't mean you truly know God by being united to Christ.

LUKE 13:28 Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and all the prophets are those who trusted in the coming Messiah for their righteousness before God. Therefore, they are those from Israel who will be in the kingdom of God through faith. Those who do not find their righteousness in Christ alone will be cast out from the kingdom.

**All exegetical content and commentary resourcing for this lesson was provided by the ESV Study Bible Commentary Notes, the Christ Centered Exposition (Luke), and Preaching the Word (Luke).*

