

Name: \_\_\_\_\_



## About Becoming Selfless

In chapter 9 of Luke's Gospel we are told that "*As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem.*" Therefore everything from this point until reaching Jerusalem in chapter 19 needs to be understood in the context of Jesus walking to the cross.

As Jesus teaches us about the new life he calls us to live, a life of self-denial and costly love of others — *taking up our crosses*, I pray that this term will be a great encouragement as we study Jesus' words together and learn what it means to become truly selfless in 2015.

# 1 A unique call on our lives...

Luke 9:18-36

## Key verse

"Then he said to them all: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me."  
(Luke 9:23 NIV)

## Getting started

Share: What is something unique about you?

## Going deeper

### Read Luke 9:18-27

Just as today, everyone had a different opinion about who Jesus was. And while many think he is at least worthy to belong to the religious hall of fame, it is Peter who realises that *Jesus is unique* and much more important to God's plans than a prophet of Old.

1. But why do you think Jesus would want his disciples to keep quiet about him being the Messiah (Christ)?
2. In verse 22, what does Jesus insist are the two non-negotiable aspects of his role as the Messiah?

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3. Even today some Jews believe the Messiah will come in triumph. Investigate the following passages to see for yourself that for God's Messiah *suffering would always precede glory*. (Isaiah 53:7-12; Psalm 16:9-11; Psalm 22:1-2, 24-27)
4. To take up your cross could only mean one thing in the 1st century. Exploring verses 23-26, what must anyone wanting to be Jesus' disciple be willing to do?

Practically what might this look like for us in the 21st century?

### Read Luke 9:28-36

In today's tolerant society we want all belief systems to be tolerated as equally valid or equally dismissible. And as Jesus appears in glory with Moses and Elijah how does Peter want to honour them equally?

5. What does God himself say about the uniqueness of Jesus?

## Taking it home

If Jesus is God's unique Son who's words we should listen to above all other voices, how can we obey his call to lose our lives instead of trying to hold onto what the world offers us?

*Pray* that we would accept Jesus' unique authority to speak into our lives, follow him, and not be ashamed of him or his words.

# 2 How to be a neighbour...

Luke 10:25-37

## Key verse

“Which of these three do you think was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?” The expert in the law replied, “The one who had mercy on him.” Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise.” (Luke 10:36-37 NIV)

## Getting started

Share: When do you find it difficult to love other people?

## Going deeper

### Read Luke 10:25-37

Jesus was often being spied on and tested by people who considered themselves experts in the Jewish faith. An expert in the law now questions Jesus on how we receive eternal life. Jesus throws a question back to this “expert” — what does the Old Testament Law say?

1. Is Jesus correct in confirming (vs 28) that if we love God with all our heart and our neighbour perfectly we would inherit eternal life? Circle Yes/No
2. Has anyone ever loved God and their neighbour perfectly? Circle Yes/No

In order to justify himself the ‘expert’ now tries to limit the definition of who his neighbour is — who do or don’t I have to love? And in reply Jesus tells a story that would have been absolutely shocking. Samaritans were considered half breed traitors - never good, just as some Jews might consider Palestinians today.

3. But who proves *not* to be a neighbour to the injured man?

What might Jesus be saying in having two *righteous men* pass by this man with great need?

4. Why do you think Jesus gives so much detail about the Samaritan’s saving actions?

But when Jesus asks the expert “which if these three was a neighbour”, in verse 37 what is missing in his answer?

## Taking it home

Jesus is calling us to show mercy to anyone who needs it. But even in doing this *we can never inherit eternal life by our good deeds*. In Luke 9:51 we read how Jesus resolutely sets out for Jerusalem in order to die for our failing to love God and neighbour as we should. Jesus is the one who goes to the greatest effort to bind up our wounds and provide eternal life. We need to trust Jesus!

But now, going back to your answer in *Getting Started*, how can we love God and even our difficult neighbours as Jesus calls us to?

*Pray* that we would accept Jesus who died to bind up our wounds and pray that we would now live to love whoever we find in need.



# 3 Cleaning house...

Luke 11:14-36

## Key verse

“Your eye is the lamp of your body. When your eyes are healthy, your whole body also is full of light. But when they are unhealthy, your body also is full of darkness. See to it, then, that the light within you is not darkness.” (Luke 11:34-35 NIV)

## Getting started

Share: What are your tips for a healthy happy life?

## Going deeper

### Read Luke 11:14-36

The New Testament Gospels are not embarrassed to admit that Jesus often encountered people possessed by demons. Notice how the accusation aimed at Jesus on this day is not whether these exorcisms were real but by whose authority Jesus was doing them.

1. Why didn't it make any sense for Jesus to be driving out demons with Satan's assistance? (Verses 17-19)
2. Read Luke 4:18 where Jesus quotes Isaiah for his job description. In verse 20 of chapter 11 what does it signify if Jesus is driving out demons by the finger of God?

3. In verses 21 to 22 what is Jesus saying about Satan but also about himself and the nature of his ministry?

If Christian ministry can therefore be described as rescuing people from the kingdom of Satan, why is it so important that we prayerfully depend on Jesus as we join him in this task?

4. What is the **great danger** verses 24 to 28 describe of coming to Jesus to be freed from spiritual oppression but then not actually hearing and obeying God's word from that point on?
5. In verses 29 to 32, as the crowds increase, what was the **great danger** facing that 'wicked generation' in asking for signs (vs16)?
6. The last section (33-36) also has to be read in context. If Jesus is the light of God placed for everyone to see, how do we ensure that **our** lives are healthy and not full of darkness?

## Taking it home

Jesus came to free us from darkness, calling us to turn from sin and hear and obey his words to have spiritual health.

From this study, what is the only way for us to have spiritual health?

*Pray* that we keep turning away from any dark or sinful thoughts and behaviours and keep turning to read God's word and obey it.

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# 4 Money matters...

Luke 12:13-34

## Key verse

“Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will never fail, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys.”  
(Luke 12:33 NIV)

## Getting started

Share: What’s the next big purchase that you’re saving up for?

## Going deeper

### Read Luke 12:13-34

It was John Wesley who said that *“The last part of a man to be converted is his wallet.”* And even though we can sometimes be cynical that Churches just want our money, Jesus, especially in Luke’s Gospel, has much to say about this subject.

1. A request for Jesus to help in dividing a family estate prompts Jesus to tell the parable of the rich fool. Why can this be such a damaging time for families?
2. In the parable a wealthy landowner has a bumper crop. Who does he think about when dividing his spoils?

3. In planning his comfortable future this rich man gives no thought of his family, friends, employees or even the poor. But why does God ultimately condemn this man as foolish? (vs 20-21)

What is Jesus saying to us through this story?

4. In verses 22-34 what reasons does Jesus give for why we should no longer worry about food, clothing or possessions?

How can we be certain God will care for us?

5. In Luke 9-19 Jesus is walking to the cross to win eternal life. Therefore in verses 31 to 34, if God has been pleased to give us the kingdom — how should this make a difference in where we invest our money?

## Taking it home

How should these verses affect the way we make our financial decisions?

Do you need to make any changes?

*Pray* that we would trust God to provide for us, sell our possessions to give to the poor, and invest in the kingdom.

# 5 Humility before honour...

Luke 14:1-24

## Key verse

"For all those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who humble themselves will be exalted." (Luke 14:11 NIV)

## Getting started

Share: Who do you normally socialise with? Friends, family, other?

## Going deeper

### Read Luke 14:1-14

This is not the first time Jesus is watched to see whether he will heal someone on the Sabbath (see also 6:6-11 and 13:10-17).

1. Looking at both 13:15-16 and 14:5-6, what is Jesus' criticism of the priorities of his opponents?
2. How can we reflect *God's desire for compassion* rather than be immovable in how we think things should be done?

In ancient Middle Eastern culture *honour and shame* were seen as important to a person's worth and identity.

3. In verses 6-10, what is Jesus' advice for those not wanting to be shamed but honoured at a wedding feast?

Verse 11 is a summary of how we should approach God while in verses 12-14 Jesus gives us a practical example of what this might look like in everyday life.

4. In these verses (12-14), how should our eternal perspective, *when we will be repaid*, shape who we show love, care and hospitality to today?

What are some ways we can better reflect Jesus' command to love the needy among us both at home and at church?

### Read Luke 14:15-23

Just as the servant in the story, Jesus came to announce that the Kingdom of God had arrived and that all who humbly believed in him now belonged to God's people.

3. What excuses have you heard people give today for rejecting God's invitation?
4. After being rejected by his own people, where would God go to offer people relationship with him? (vs 21-24 and Acts!)

## Taking it home

From what we've learnt in this study, how can we remain humble and embrace God's priorities as Christians and as his Church?

*Pray* that we would not exalt ourselves but show compassion and share the Gospel with the needy in our community as a priority.

# 6 A heart for the lost...

Luke 15:1-32

## Key verse

"In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents." (Luke 15:10 NIV)

## Getting started

Share: Have you ever lost something or someone precious to you?

## Going deeper

### Read Luke 15:1-10

1. What is the context and reason Jesus launches into these three parables about lost things?
2. What does the first parable teach about God's concern for the one lost person?

Who are the 99 righteous people who don't need to repent?

3. Again, how does the response of heaven in the parable of the lost coin compare to that of the Pharisees when sinners repent?

### Read Luke 15:11-32

We all know this parable so well but there is always more to ponder. For example, we should ask which son is really lost!

4. What is so rude about the youngest son's demand of his share of the estate? (Hint—when do we normally divide estates?)

How does this demand reflect how most people treat God?

5. When he comes to his senses, what is the youngest son hoping to receive from his father? How does the father receive him and what does this teach us about God?
6. Why does the older brother think he's been wronged, refusing to join the party?

## Taking it home

In Jesus' ministry we see God reaching out and welcoming sinners, even walking to the cross to embrace us.

How can we better model the heart of God to save the lost both as Christians and as a Church?

*Pray* we would have God's heart, sincerely welcoming anyone who returns to God no matter how far they've strayed.



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# 7 Using wealth shrewdly...

## Luke 16:19-31

### Key verse

“No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.” (Luke 16:13 NIV)

### Getting started

Share: What is your biggest investment?

### Going deeper

#### Read Luke 16:1-15

This is one of the most difficult of Jesus' parables to understand. But what Jesus *isn't* saying is that we should gain friends through dishonest dealings!

1. What is the dishonest manager trying to guarantee in reducing the amount each debtor owes his master?

A key to understanding this parable (and the next) is to understand “*worldly wealth*” (Gk: unrighteous mammon) as *every resource available to us in this life* - such as our time, gifts, influence and possessions; anything we can't take with us into the next life.

And so just as the dishonest manager uses every resource still under his control to secure his future, Jesus is urging us to use every resource available to us for eternity; to love people and win them for Christ. *Our whole life is a stewardship/trust from God.*

2. Therefore, in verses 9-12, how can we use every resource and prove trustworthy in handling everything God has given us?
3. In verses 13-15, what is the danger of dividing our lives into what is God's and what is mine; that I can serve God but my wealth (or any resource) is mine to do as I please?

#### Read Luke 16:19-31

4. What was the result of the rich man failing to use the ‘*good things*’ entrusted to him on the opportunity at his gate?
5. If we don't repent of our selfishness and now live to love God and others what is the grave danger this parable teaches?
6. Why would even sending Lazarus back (vs27-31) not convince them to repent?

### Taking it home

How is the use of our resources a reflection of our hearts (v15) and how can we better align the use of our resources to God's priorities?

*Pray* we would use everything we are and everything we have to glorify God and live to love, serve and share the Gospel with others.

# 8 Losing your life to keep it..

Luke 17:20-18:8

## Key verse

“Remember Lot's wife! Whoever tries to keep their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life will preserve it.” (Luke 17:32-33 NIV)

## Getting started

Share: Your house is on fire! Quick! What do you run to save?

## Going deeper

### Read Luke 17:20-37

Many Jews in the 1st century were looking forward to the imminent and glorious arrival of the kingdom of God. But were they really ready to meet God on this day? Are we ready?

1. What is the kingdom of God and why isn't it's arrival something we can observe? (vs20-21)
2. From how Jesus compares the day of his return to the days of Noah and Lot, what will this day be like?
3. How can we preserve our life (v32) and make sure we are not destroyed?

The modern idea of “the rapture”, when one person is taken and another is ‘left behind’, has come from a very literal reading of verses such as verses 34 and 35. But other places in the Bible describe the last day as a single moment, a blink of an eye or a thief in the night, (1 Cor 15:52; 1 Thes 5:2) when all people will be separated into those who have repented and trust Jesus and those who haven't and are still under God's wrath. And so we need to read these verses in Luke 17 with what the rest of Scripture teaches — a single event when the world is judged by Jesus. But it is also best not to argue about these things! (2 Tim 2:14)

### Read Luke 18:1-8

In John 5:22 Jesus explains that “the Father judges no one, but has entrusted all judgment to the Son.” Jesus is the judge of our world.

4. As the parable describes, how can we trust that God cares when we are wronged?
5. When Jesus returns though, how will he want to find us?

## Taking it home

Judgment is certainly something Jesus spoke about often.

Revising what we've learnt in this study, how can we be prepared and help others be prepared for when we met him?

*Pray* that we would be prepared for the day we meet Jesus, having repented of our sins and now living to make him known.

# 9 Responding to Jesus...

Luke 18:31-19:10

## Key verse

"But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, 'Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.'" (Luke 19:8 NIV)

## Getting started

Share: Describe a time of major change in your life?

## Going deeper

### Read Luke 18:31-43

As Jesus arrives at his destination, Jerusalem, questions still remain even among his own disciples about who he is and exactly what he came to do.

1. Who does Jesus say he is (vs31), and why he came (vs32-33)?
2. Why don't the disciples still not understand any of this?
3. How is the blind man an illustration of someone who sees who Jesus really is and why he came?

### Read Luke 19:1-10

"Jericho is located just six miles from the Jordan River, just north of the Dead Sea, and served as a **tax collection centre** on the major highway to Jerusalem, 18 miles away." Darrel Bock

4. Every step of the way people have complained about the company Jesus has kept and Zacchaeus is no exception. From what people were saying and by Zacchaeus' own admission, how do we know this was a greedy little man?
5. How does Jesus reach out to this sinner?
6. How does meeting Jesus change Zacchaeus' life?

How has meeting Jesus changed your life?

## Taking it home

From verses 9 and 10 who is Jesus and why did he come?

From everything we've heard this term, how do we need to respond to Jesus and how has even this term helped you to become less self-centred but embrace Jesus and live to serve others?

*Pray* that we would embrace Jesus, live changed lives and now help others to connect to him too as the kingdom grows.

## Notes

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