

[00:00:00] Speaker A: Welcome to the Hope Church Glasgow Sunday podcast. We pray you encounter God's love afresh today. Find out more about us@hopechurchglasgow.org or find us on Facebook and Instagram. Now, please enjoy this week's podcast.

[00:00:17] Speaker B: Yeah, so we're in Luke again. We've kind of dipped in and out over the last few months and I'm just loving this series. I think it's great. Luke's a book that kind of resonates with me quite a lot. It was written probably about 35 years after the death of Jesus, and the books of Luke and Acts are kind of a volume one and volume two written by Luke who. He was a physician, he was a doctor, and he was an educated guy, but he really honed in on kind of the miraculous.

There are more miracles and particularly healing miracles in Luke's gospel than any of the others. And. And obviously as a doctor, I guess that kind of obviously piqued his interest and blew his little mind a little bit, I would imagine. He also wrote in Greek, which was unlike some of the others. And he was actually wrote in a sort of really literary and quite erudite way. And he was obviously appealing, I think, to a particular audience.

And as well, in the verses we're going to look at today, he kind of digs in a little bit behind and he's looking at all the sort of undercurrents that were happening as well. And so I really like Luke as the gospel. And we've been following Jesus on this journey from his birth at Bethlehem to growing up in Nazareth and then moving into his ministry and some of his teaching, which was really radical.

And as we see this, we're called to be imitators of Christ. And so as we've kind of delved in and followed this journey, hopefully it's kind of kind of given us that little bit of an impetus again to, ah, yeah, Jesus. You were really radical, you know, stir some of that in me again. And so when we get this kind of window into the heart of the Father, the way that he reached out to all kinds of people, and we'll see that as we go through today.

So I've been given a couple of stories to look at in Luke 19 and Luke 22, but actually there's a whole lot going on through these chapters. And so I'm going to dip into a few other bits and pieces as well.

Just as we go through.

And as we go through, we're going to see Jesus kind of reaching out for the one we're going to see Jesus challenging the sort of the religious status quo and demonstrating his love for people as well.

So Luke 19 actually begins with a story that we all know we all love. It's a Sunday School favorite, and that's the one of Zacchaeus the tax collector. And he was probably not much liked. He was known for defrauding the people, exacting probably more taxes than they were supposed to pay.

But you know, Jesus is coming into town and Zacchaeus, he's a bit of a shorty, so he climbs a tree to try and get a view of Jesus. And just as I read that, I thought, I wonder why he wanted to do that. You know, was it just kind of, it's been a bit nosy bit about this Jesus, wonder what he's like, or was it, you know, perhaps he was wanting something to change in his life. I guess if he was not particular, particularly popular, maybe there was something in there as well. Whatever it was though, there was, you know, just this desire to see Jesus. And Jesus sees him up the tree and he responds to him and invites himself to come and stay with him.

So hoping for a wee glimpse of what was going on, actually Zacchaeus is now slap bang in the

middle of this face to face with Jesus. He got a bit more than he bargained for. And as he encounters Jesus up close and personal, we see this incredible turnaround in his life. He's obviously amassed a lot of wealth and he commits to give that away and to refund people who he's defrauded and all the rest.

So I love this story. So despite, despite knowing that there will be uproar, actually Jesus stops for this guy. You know, he was not popular. And Jesus, you know, we see it through the gospels. He kind of hooked up with the guys who were not necessarily popular.

You know, he defended the woman who was caught in adultery. He stands between her and the men who are going to stone her.

And he brings a compassion and brings freedom ultimately to her.

He was accused of being a drunkard and a glutton and he was accused of associating with sinners as well.

You know, I grew up in a sort of evangelicalism that said, you know, you don't go to the pub and you shouldn't listen to certain music and yeah, you probably should watch out who you hang around with and all the rest of it.

And you know, Jesus kind of goes completely against that sort of teaching, doesn't he? You know, he was there in the midst of all the, the broken and you know, probably not so great people.

He didn't live in fear and nor should we. You know, we walk in light and the light overcomes the darkness.

And the other thing is that actually the result of an encounter with Jesus here for Zacchaeus, for the woman caught in adultery, actually was a change of heart and of behavior. And we kind of do well to remember that. I think as we grow more and more, as we have more and more visitors through our doors, you know, we're going to encounter all kinds of people, probably living all kinds of interesting lifestyles.

But let's remember Jesus, you know, his heart of compassion for the lost.

He didn't judge, but actually as they encountered him, change came. And I just believe that actually there are going to be people who come into here who encounter Jesus in this place and change is going to come in their lives.

And then as we go through, going through Luke, there's some parables and bits and pieces and then we come to Palm Sunday. In fact, today is Palm Sunday, which is really neat. And John mentioned it just as he shared during the worship.

What I discovered this week is that actually Jesus used public transport to come into Jerusalem.

Did you know that? That actually donkeys were public transport system.

And there's this thing where actually you were allowed to go and untie a donkey, use it and take it back if you had the right credentials. But so when he sent them out and said to the guy to say to the people, the master needs it. That was him accessing this public transport system. So I didn't know that. I thought that was kind of fun.

It's a bit like those bikes you have in the middle of town. You can hop on, you can tap your credit card, you can go and cycle off and drop it back again later. So it was kind of the 2000 years ago version of that, which is kind of cool, I like that.

But I think John touched on it. You know, there wasn't anything ostentatious or showy. You know, it wasn't the open top carriage coming in, it wasn't, you know, a limo or whatever or whatever the equivalent was 2,000 years ago, but just this humble, you know, we need to get from A to B into the town and on a donkey. Nothing showy, no self promotion, not grasping power. And yet the people responded to him. And as John encouraged us to respond, yeah, it was just a beautiful thing. It says that they praised him because they'd seen the things he had done. They seen his works of power, his healings, the miracles that followed him wherever he went, and they couldn't keep it in. They were overwhelmed and in awe of him being in their midst. And that just overflowed in this praise. The palm leaves, which were actually a symbol of victory. And, yeah, it was just a beautiful sight. And when the Pharisees told him to shut the disciples up, then we have that classic response. I tell you, if these were silent, even the stones would cry out.

So just a beautiful picture. So let's remember to be people who respond with joy and praise for all the things that he's done. Whether it's been a financial miracle that Andrew and Sarah were sharing about, whether it's a healing, whether it's just situations turned around, restoration of family, all kinds of different things.

But let's be people who respond like that.

You know, I love it when Jan comes back from one of her missions trips and she's, you know, she's been to Brazil or somewhere in Europe or Cuba or whatever, and she comes back just so full and so emotional, actually, about all the things that she's seen God do.

And, you know, Andy was talking to us, I think, before Christmas now, probably about just testimony and remembering our history as a church. You know, God has moved an incredible power among us. And those things are not something to look back and think, if only. But actually it's to remind us who we are and the things that God has promised for us as well.

Okay, cool.

Yeah, so let's actually get to one of the bits I was supposed to talk about.

So let's read a few verses from Luke. So we're in, I think, Luke 19:41.

And it says, as he came near and saw the city, he wept over it, saying, if you even you had only recognized on this day the things that make for peace, but now they're hidden from your eyes.

Indeed, the days will come upon you when your enemies will set up ramparts around you and surround you and hem you in on every side, and they'll crush you to the ground, you and your children within you, and they will not leave within you one stone upon another, because you did not recognize the time of your visitation from God.

So let's just quickly pause on that, and then we'll kind of come back to the other bit that was tied with that. So, you know, Jesus doesn't mince his words, and he's actually foretelling, you know, just A.D. 70, so 30, 40 years later, the Romans will come in and actually completely destroy the temple, overrun Jerusalem. And I think the telling thing here is that it's. He's talking about recognizing what God is doing.

So he said, if only you had only recognized the day.

And again, at the end, you did not recognize the time of your visitation from God. And I don't want to say a lot about this, but just to say, let's have eyes to see what God is doing, you know, in our church, in our nation at the moment. Because I believe that is really so important for us, you know, just to be kind of constantly in the flow of what he's doing.

And then.

Yeah, so that's all I'm going to say on that little bit. I'm sure there's lots that could be said, but I'm going to move on. So it then goes on from there immediately. He says he entered the temple and began to drive out those who are selling things there. And he said, it's written, my house shall be a house of prayer, but you have made it a den of robbers.

Every day he was teaching in the temple, and the chief priests, the scribes, and the leaders of the people kept looking for a way to kill him. But they did not find anything they could do, for all the people were spellbound by what they heard.

Yeah, and these verses are headed, Jesus cleanses the temple. And they appear actually in all four of the Gospels, and each one recounts a slightly different version. John tells us that he actually makes a whip to do this. Some of them tell us about the fact that there are animals and doves and all things being sold in the temple and money being changed.

So there's quite a lot of depth to this story.

And, you know, the money changes. Actually, something else I discovered the temple in Jerusalem was unlike any other.

Lydia and I were just in Athens a few weeks ago, and there are all these temples, and they have all these statues of people and gods and things. But actually, in the Jewish temple, there were no statues of people. And they wouldn't even allow money in because money had the image of the Sea of Caesar on them. And so they actually had their own currency. And so that's why they actually had money changes in there, that people would exchange their Roman denarii for this temple money that didn't have an image of a man on it. So another little thing that you might not have known before.

And yeah, so there's the merchants selling animals. You know, they. They got to a sort of stage in their development where not everybody kept animals anymore, and so they had to buy them. So there was kind of reason for all this stuff.

But actually, I think it had become a distraction.

And in one of the accounts, the disciples remembered the zeal for your. Your house will consume me.

And I actually spoke about that in one of my more recent sermons, just how much God loves, or Jesus loves the house of God, and particularly now his church.

But as I've looked into this, actually, it's interesting. Some of the commentators suggest that Jesus was using a sort of a construction, or what you call it. Yeah, just a sort of way of using words that was actually very common in those days. So educated Jews actually would learn a lot of scripture. They would learn the whole Pentateuch, you know, in sort of elementary school, if they went to school.

And so rabbis would actually often use this kind of phrase. It's written, and would quote a little bit of a verse and kind of assume the rest. And we talk about that in terms of what Jesus said on the cross, you know, that my God, my God, why have you forsaken me?

And you can build all kinds of theology about that. But if you look back into Psalm 22, which starts with those lines, actually, the implication of the rest of the verses there were was, is it talks about, you know, his hands and feet being pierced. It talks about gambling for his clothes. And there's kind of this whole prophetic element in that psalm.

And we kind of do similar things. You know, if I was to say, you know, a bird in the hand move on, you think is worth two in the bush. You know, we all do this kind of implying thing. So we've got two verses here, actually, that he's referring to.

So the first is in Isaiah 57, and the interest is kind of in what is implied. In a sense, this whole passage in Isaiah 56 is about welcoming the foreigner and the outcast.

All who keep my. It says, all who keep my Sabbaths and choose what pleases me, who holds my covenant, to them I will give within to them I will give within My temple and its walls a memorial and a name. My house shall be called a house of prayer. So that's the bit that Jesus quoted for all nations, which is missed out.

But this was actually in contrast to what was happening in the temple at that time.

There was actually in the outer court, which is known as the court of the Gentiles. There was actually a wall built across. And actually, archaeologists have discovered that there was a plaque there which prohibits the foreigners from going across that wall into the temple.

So it's prohibiting foreigners from coming into God's presence.

But it's interesting that actually, if you go back and look in sort of the Levitical books, of the Pentateuch. Actually, there's a huge value for welcoming the foreigner and the stranger among the people of Israel. But the religion of Israel have forgotten this and they become exclusive. They become, yeah, almost xenophobic towards the foreigner. We know the antipathy between the Jews and the Samaritans, for instance.

How are we doing? Yes.

So, yeah, there was just this real sense of, Yeah, God's intent, I guess, have been lost in terms of what their community should look like. And then the other half of that thing, it talks about making it a den of robbers. And this comes from Jeremiah 7 and following verses from there, which tells us that if you really change your ways and your actions and deal with each other justly, if you do not oppress the foreigner, the father, this, or the widow, and do not shed innocent blood in this place, and if you do not follow other gods to your own harm, then I will let you live in this place, in the land I gave your ancestors, forever and ever.

And then there's sort of the opposite. If you steal, murder, etc. Etc.

And to say we're safe in your name, he then says, has your house which bears my name become a den of robbers for you?

But I've been watching.

And again, we have this kind of theme that actually obviously, of welcoming the strangers and

the widows and the orphans and so on.

But I guess the thought is that actually, you know, living to please God and dealing with all people with justice and more mercy is more important than all the religious niceties, the ceremony and the regulations.

We see through these chapters in Luke that there is kind of this narrative arc that's going on.

And if you, you know, as we're kind of reading through Luke, if you read, you know, from 19 to 22, actually, we see in the background this constant undercurrent of Jesus challenging the religious sort of hierarchy, if you like, of the day and them coming back and trying to work out how they can get rid of him because he's making things a little bit uncomfortable. I think it's fair to be said I've completely lost my place. But, Yeah, so we just need to take care in our current world that actually, you know, there's lots of people who will twist Scripture, who will use it for personal gain, for political gain, all kinds of things. And we. We just need to be really wise to keep coming back to the heart of God.

So, you know, kind of to summarize that we've got one last little bit to talk about, but just to try and summarize, I think I just picked two or three things from here. First of all, Jesus has come for everybody. You know, we saw him. You know, it's regardless of race, of social standing, age, sex, all these different things, God has come for everybody.

You know, Zacchaeus was there. He was pretty rich, but actually he was pretty bankrupt sort of morally and spiritually.

There was, you know, the woman caught in adultery. We don't know much more about her, but again, you know, she really needed a touch from God. And so God, Jesus comes for everybody.

Where are we? Yeah, and I think the other thing is that he hates it when actually the things that people do, and particularly religious people do, that prevent people from finding God, finding who God truly is, he really hates that. He really detests that.

It's my prayer that as a family, actually, we are a people who reflect God, that reflect his love for mankind, who reflects, yeah, just the goodness of God.

And then thirdly, let's be people who are open to his moving where people can come and find Jesus, where people can come and encounter his love and find the freedom that's to be found in becoming his disciple.

So lastly, the other bit I'm supposed to talk about, so we'll come to that just now. And this is the thing that we call the Last Supper. So this was Jesus last meal with his disciples before the resurrection. And, you know, the religious leaders who Jesus had been just quietly needling over those last few chapters have finally recruited Judas to betray him.

And this was coming towards the climax, really, of his purpose here on earth.

And so they gather to celebrate the Passover meal, which was a meal full of ritual and symbolism.

And it harks back to that final plague in Egypt where the angel of Death was going to pass over.

And the blood of a lamb on the lintels of the Israelite people caused the angel to pass over. Whereas if you are an Egyptian, it was sadly curtains for your firstborn.

And not only did it point back to that, but actually it was also pointing forward to the blood of the Lamb of God shed for us again to save us from death.

And what I love is that Jesus actually, again, cut through all the ritual. They did the meal with its bitter herbs and flatbreads and it's different drinks that you had at different points and the whole thing.

And at the end of the meal, he just took the bread and the wine to foretell of his impending death and his certain resurrection.

So we know these words well. So I'm going to just read, read through that.

In, I think, Luke 22:14 maybe when the hour came, he took his place at the table, and the apostles with him. He said to them, I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer. For I tell you, I will not eat it until it is fulfilled in the kingdom of God. Then he took a cup and after giving thanks, he said, take this and divide it among yourselves, for I tell you that from now on I will not drink of the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.

Then he took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to him, saying, this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.

And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying, this cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood.

And I just love this communion. It's just such a simple thing, such simple everyday elements, and yet there's such a power in it. I love too that Paul actually tells us that it's actually a body thing, that it's not just, you know, me and God, but actually he talks about sharing among yourselves. And Paul tells us to actually to recognize the body as we do this.

So, yeah, it's just a powerful, powerful remembrance.

[00:25:32] Speaker A: Thank you for listening to this podcast from Hope Church Glasgow. There are loads of more to listen to wherever you normally find your podcasts or from our website@hopechurchglasgow.org if you'd like to know more about us, we are on Facebook and Instagram. Just search for Hope Church Glasgow. Have a hopeful day.