

## Thoughts for Christian Life from Luke Gospel

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### Luke 1

When Gabriel informed Zechariah (very old in age) that he would be blessed with a child, he doubted the message from God, looking in human perspective. We would overlook the instructions and promises by God by looking at our situations due to the diverse experiences and different exposures we have. **When God commands He expects us to obey and when he promises He expects us to believe.**

In Jewish culture, Woman found conceived before marriage is considered adulteress and would be stoned to death. Mary after being informed by Gabriel that she would be with child before marriage, she had two choices - either to surrender to God's will or to save her life from terrible consequences. **Mary chose to obey God sacrificing her life and that made all the difference. If we chose to obey God, God will bless us and all our needs will be met at the right time.**

### **Luke 2**

The early days of Jesus is summarized as that He grew in Wisdom, Stature, in favor with God and Men. Like wise we also have to grow multi dimensional - Spiritually, Physically, socially and mentally. Instead of focusing on one part of our life and leaving the rest, we need to be balanced.

There were few prophecies concerning the birth place and genealogy of the expected Messiah. He has to be descendant of David and He is to be born in Bethlehem. Evidently, Joseph and Mary were descendants of David. They stayed in Nazareth. God had to move Caesar Augustus to pass a decree regarding Census, to move Joseph and Mary out of Nazareth. This led Joseph to go to his hometown, Bethlehem with Mary (Pregnant, expecting the delivery of baby at any time, long travel not advised during that period). Since it was decree of the Caesar, they had to go and baby Jesus was born in Bethlehem. At times God allows hardships and difficulties in our lives ( which would even prompt us to doubt His mercy and existence), to direct us towards His will.

### Luke 3

The constant messages from the God by the Messengers/Preachers in the Bible is "Repentance from Sin towards God". Repentance have two sides - turning away from sinful life and turning towards God.

The message from the John the baptist was unique and was different from the religious leaders of those times. He did not have time to speak comforting messages to those who live careless and selfish lives. He did not preach to please people and to reap their favor. He preached the word of God (without adulteration) to people (not for people) for God. His message was simple but thought provoking. His exhortation included sharing what one have with those in need, doing well in the assigned job/responsibility and being content with whatever one has.

#### Luke 4

After Jesus being filled by the Holy spirit, the Spirit of God led Him to Wilderness for a time of fasting (40 days) and temptation. Satan tempted Jesus to use unusual means to meet the normal needs related to his body, to misapply the word of God (through misquoting and misinterpretation) and to give away the worship belonged to God ( by worshipping the powers and pleasures belonged to Satan and his worldly system). Filling of the Holy Spirit and a constant prayer does not guarantee freedom from temptation but it would prepare us to overcome temptations. **The proper understanding of the word of God and the unconditional obedience to Him would make us victorious in times of temptation**

When Jesus taught to the People in Synagogue in Nazareth, those listened to Him were amazed at His teaching. Little later when they heard that the message is not favoring them the same congregation were furious and drove Him out. **While standing for the truth even our close friends would dislike and disassociate from us but we have to stand firm for the truth and ought to preach without fear or favor for people**

#### Luke 5

Jesus went to Galilee seashore and lot of People followed Him. He used the boat of Peter as platform to teach to the crowd. After finishing the sermon, He asked Peter to let down his net for a miraculous catch at a unfavorable time (Peter, an experienced fisherman and his friends tried the whole night in vain without any catch). The catch contained multitude of fishes to everyone's astonishment around there. The experienced fisherman obeyed to irrelevant instructions of Jesus (Jesus was carpenter by profession) and he experienced the miracle of his life time. Jesus called him for ministry and he became the leader of the early church. Now the big question is "Are all these things happened by accident or by God's plan?". Even though everything looks like coincidence, the fact is that the God had special plan for Peter's life. He could have easily missed the plan of God if he had looked on experiences and expertise instead of obeying God unconditionally

Jesus called Levi (Mathew) to follow him. Mathew was tax collector, working for Roman government in that province. Jews disliked tax collectors and they were considered as sinners by them. After experiencing the touch of Jesus, he wanted to give feast to Jesus and he invited his friends (tax collectors) for the feast along with Jesus. Jesus ate with them and communicated the care and love of God to them. Should we not opt to use our special occasions as opportunity to share the love of God to our friends and acquaintances like Mathew?

#### Luke 6

The pharisees had listed 39 activities forbidden on the day of sabbath. They had been strictly following the religious system and traditions rather than looking at the personal needs of the individuals. Jesus emphasized the significance of caring for those in need over the traditions. Let us ensure not to use our religious rituals and traditions as excuses to cover up our failure to attend to the immediate needs of the people around us. Jesus had spent the whole night in prayer before He selected twelve apostles. Jesus had spent considerable time in prayer before every important decision He made. "In prayer, it

is better to have heart without words, than words without heart. Prayer will make a man cease from sin, or sin entice a man to cease from prayer. The spirit of prayer is more precious than treasures of gold and silver. Pray often, for prayer is a shield to the soul, a sacrifice to God, and a scourge for Satan.”(John Bunyan). Jesus showed his concern for the neglected in society by stating that those who are poor/hungry/weep as blessed. His message was LOVE IN ACTION. We are asked to love the unlovable, forgive the unforgivable, to do good to those who hate us and to lend without expecting so that we will be called as sons of most high and we will be rewarded by God.

As every fruit is decided by the nature of the tree, our life style is influenced by the character we possess and what is stored in the heart. The good man brings out good thing out of good stored in his heart.

#### Luke 7

One day when Jesus was in His hometown, Capernaum, few Jewish elders (sent by Centurion) met Him and pleaded for the restoration of the Jewish servant worked with a Roman centurion. The centurion (Roman citizen and official) expressed unusual faith in the power Jesus had and have his needs met. Without faith it is impossible to please God; for he that comes to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him

When John the baptist (who introduced Jesus to the crowd at the bank of river Jordan) was in prison, he had serious doubt concerning Jesus (If Jesus is the expected Messiah). He sent out his disciples unto Jesus to get his doubts clarified. Jesus reacted in a very different way. He did not list out the reasons why He is the expected messiah. He asked them to report to John what they have seen and heard (The life style and ministry of Jesus). Our genuinity as a child of God and our association with the true and living God could be witnessed effectively only by letting our life speak. We need to let our lives speak rather than our lips. When Jesus was in Simon's ( a Pharisee) house for a feast. A sinful woman (neglected and rejected in society because of her sinful habits and life style) sat at the feet of Jesus and applied alabaster on his feet. By moral standards, the woman was too far from Jesus. When the whole world watched on her lustful behaviours, Jesus see through her (the mental agony and the forgiveness and the freedom from the penalty and power of sin, she desperately needed) and offered her a brand new life. The same God still cares for us and knows our present status. He is not only the saviour to save us from the punishment of sins but also from the power of sins. Is Jesus Christ really the saviour of your life?

#### Luke 8

The purpose of hearing the word of God is not complete unless we practice it. Jesus very clearly explained why we do fail to produce what (the word of God) is sown in our hearts through a parable (Parable of a sower). The possible causes that make the word of God ineffective in our lives are poor understanding of the word of God, lack of determination/commitment to live godly life and our focus on worries, riches and pleasures of this world.

The disciples of Jesus Christ faced storms as they traveled in the midst of sea. When

caught up in the storms of life, we may tend to doubt the presence and compassion of Jesus Christ in our lives. Instead of fearing about the consequences of the storms, if we can look on to Jesus in faith, He would subside and calm down the great storms of our life.

In the region of Geresenes, Jesus delivered a demon possessed man to the astonishment of everyone around there. Jesus directed the delivered man to return to his hometown and to tell what God had done for him. The man went and told all over the town how much Jesus had done for him. Should not the life of this man challenge us to tell others what God has done for us?

#### Luke 9

Jesus said: If any man would come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow me. Many people come to Jesus Christ for blessings and healings but only few come after (follow) Him. Coming to Jesus is easy but Coming after Jesus is difficult because it is new way of life and different life style. **Self denial and cross bearence are conditional steps to come after Jesus** . Jesus did not compel any one to come after Him rather He asked the people, who came to Him to choose whether they would come after Him or not. Walking with Christ does not guarantee fortunes and riches (as we would have misunderstood) but daily dying to self, its will and pleasures and bearing insults, suffering and persecutions.

After empowering His disciples for the gospel work, He instructed them not to defend if some one offend them by not accepting them. When Jesus and His disciples entered Samartian village, they did not accept them and as the result, His disciples asked Him to bring fire from Heaven to consume them. Jesus gently rebuked them for their ungodly behaviour. At times, when we would desire to misuse our power/privilege/position to defend our life and ministry, let us remember the specific instruction from Master to forgive and forget.

Herod misunderstood Jesus as John the baptist. Few others acknowledged Him as a mighty prophet like Elijah. Only the closest disciple could understand Him as the Son of God. **When we walk closer with God we would be able to understand the reality of God in better and clearer way.**

#### Luke 10

Jesus appointed 84 persons (72 +12) to go and do the ministry on His behalf in different villages and towns. He instructed them to pray and intercede before being sent. The significance of intercession for the lost souls is emphasized here. The disciples went, ministered and joyfully reported the field news/miracles happened. In turn, He warned them not to indulge in pride (which brought down angel as Satan) but to focus on their position in Christ (our inheritance with God in heaven)

To the question ” What must I do to inherit the eternal life?”, Jesus explained that one can have the eternal life if he/she love the God (with all mind, heart, strength and soul) and love the neighbour (as one love themselves). Jesus explained through a story (Samartian helping a poor wounded Jew when the Jewish priest and the Jewish levite failed to help) that the neighbour is not just our friends, relatives and acquaintances but any one who is

in need irrespective of caste, colour, race and religion. The love that was in his heart made him a neighbour to any one who was in need.

#### Luke 11

Jesus Prayed regularly. The disciples had been watching Jesus' prayer life, its outcome and it in turn inspired them to pray. When disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray, He taught them the contents of prayer, the persistence required in prayer and the faithfulness of God to answer prayer. The prayer is the source of power in a Christians' life. Are we praying to the expected level? Is our prayer life inspiring others to pray?. Do we persist in prayer? When a Christian shuns fellowship with other Christians, the devil smiles. When he stops studying the Bible, the devil laughs. When he stops praying, the devil shouts for joy(Corrie Ten Boom).

Heart is the store house and eye is the light of the body. When we give up our eyes to watch lustful things and our hearts to keep evil desires, our vision will be blurred and blinded towards the guidance of God. Satan will have dominion on us and will drive us away from God. **What/Where we are depends on what we watch, what we listen and what we store in our heart.**

#### Luke 12

Jesus while talking with His disciples in a friendly manner, He warned them to fear God (who can decide our eternal destiny). He also stated not to let the fear for men make us to act in hypocrisy or to fail to confess Jesus openly before others. Solomon concluded "Fear God, and keep his commandments; for this is the whole duty of man". Fear of God can be defined as the acute awareness of the presence of God's power that produces in us a sense of awe and calls forth from us honor, respect and reverence. Fear God, and you need never fear man

Jesus asked us not to worry about our needs for our earthly life but to seek the kingdom of God. When we give priority to God, His will and commit to obey, we can experience our needs being met at the right time. Worry is interest paid on trouble before it is due. Worry is different from having concern, Worry sees the problem but Concern sees the solution. ***We can be tired, weary and emotionally distraught, but after spending time alone with God, we find that He injects into our bodies energy, power and strength. Let us turn to God when situations presses us to worry.***

Jesus used the parable of faithful servant to teach the importance of accountability and stewardship to His disciples. Jesus want each one of us to be the Wise and faithful steward, knowing His Will, doing as per His will and waiting for His return. **A steward acts in the best interest of his master. He demonstrates his dependability, sensibility, and trustworthiness by conscientiously caring for his master's affairs.** He cares for his master's affairs with as much devotion in the master's absence as in the master's presence. The steward has enormous privileges and much power, but he abuses none of them.

#### Luke 13

When some one referred the calamity happened to a group of Galileans and to those on

whom the tower of Shiloam fell, **Jesus warned the listeners to REPENT from their sins and encouraged them to bear fruits of repentance.** Whatever weakens your reason, impairs the tenderness of your conscience, obscures your sense of God, or takes off the relish for spiritual things then it is sin for you, however, innocent it may be in itself.(Suzanna Wesley)

Jesus healed a person who was crippled for 18 years but a synagogue ruler was indignant about what happened and expressed his unhappiness over the healing being done on Sabbath considering it as anti-religious. Jesus helped him to understand that the **people's needs are more important than the religious rules and regulations.**

Narrow is the gate that goes to eternal life and wide is the way which leads to eternal destruction. Jesus advised His followers to make every effort to enter through the narrow door because many will try to enter and will not be able to enter. **They earnestly desire to know Jesus, diligently strive to follow Him but would be pulled back when they are seduced by the attractive lifestyle and the living conditions offered by the broad way.**

Luke 14

Jesus pointed out that one who hates self and the family members only can become His disciples (The same Jesus told to love your neighbor as yourself ). Is it contradicting? No. The passage can be better understood in the context of the parable of the great feast (where invitees responded negatively for the invitation to the feast by giving excuses, stating that their priority is to take care of their family and themselves). **Unless one love God MORE than himself/herself and others, He/She cannot be a follower of Jesus Christ.**

Jesus taught that we should exercise humility either when we go for feasts/functions/parties or when we host feasts/parties/functions. Whatever makes us feel superior to other people, whatever tempts us to convey a sense of superiority, that is the gravity of our sinful nature, not grace. (Phillip Yancey)

Jesus said, “whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me, he cannot be My disciple”. The cross stands for the expression of the world's hatred and for a life that is voluntarily surrendered to the will of God. To take up the cross was a vivid illustration of the humility and submission that Jesus was asking of his followers.

Luke 15

When Publicans and sinners drew nearer to Jesus, the pharisees and the scribes were filled with resentment and murmured against Him. On seeing their reactions, Jesus explained them through the parable of lost coin and lost sheep that there would be joy in heaven over the one sinner who repents and he showed them the love of God over the lost ones through a story of a Father and two sons. The elder son represents the Pharisees and Scribes while younger one represents the sinners and publicans. At times, when we see wicked persons being blessed and prospered, we tend to doubt the presence of God and would show resentments over the sinners. Resentment or grudges do no harm to the person against whom you hold these feelings but every day and every night of your life,

they are eating at you (Peale Norman). Jesus advised us to love our enemies so that we may be sons of our Father who is in heaven (for He make sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the just and the unjust).

#### Luke 16

Jesus taught the importance of Stewardship in whatever the things granted to us, through the parable of the shrewd servant. **Whatever we have, the property of it is God's; we have only the use of it, according to the direction of our great Lord, and for his honour.** Jesus also cautioned about not being driven/mastered by love for money. Money may be the husk of many things, but not the kernel. It brings you food, but not appetite; medicine, but not health; acquaintances, but not friends; servants, but not faithfulness; days of joy, but not peace and happiness(Henrik Ibsen)

Through the story of the rich man and Lazarus, Jesus acknowledged the reality of Hell and Heaven. Our life is determined by two choices we make - choosing heaven or hell. Choosing heaven means living a supernatural life of faith in Jesus Christ, trusting Him to live and love through us here and throughout eternity. Choosing hell means faithlessly rejecting Christ — living a life of self-indulgence with difficult consequences here on earth and excruciating punishment for all time. The story also emphasize the significance to care for the poor and downtrodden. **We think sometimes that poverty is only being hungry, naked and homeless. The poverty of being unwanted, unloved and uncared for is the greatest poverty. We must start in our own homes to remedy this kind of poverty (Mother Teresa).**

#### Luke 17

Forgiveness is an essential quality of Christian life. Forgiveness has to be unconditional and unlimited. Our forgiveness of each other has to do more with the attitude .The forgiving person does not attempt to take revenge upon those who have wronged him.The forgiving person does not hate the offender.The forgiving person is kindly disposed and tenderhearted toward his adversary.

Even with small faith (like mustard seed) in God, we can do wonders and we can be a blessing to many. Faith is total dependence on God and the readiness to do His will. Faith is not meant for demonstration but for the complete and humble obedience to the all powerful God. Jesus taught through the parable of the master and the servant that we should not take pride or seek honour for we being obedient to God. Obedience to God is our duty and obligation.

Jesus stated the necessity of a grateful heart through the story of 10 healed lepers. God does not demand thanksgiving but He is pleased when we thank him. Gratitude ... goes beyond the “mine” and “thine” and claims the truth that all of life is a pure gift. In the past I always thought of gratitude as a spontaneous response to the awareness of gifts received, but now I realize that gratitude can also be lived as a discipline. The discipline of gratitude is the explicit effort to acknowledge that all I am and have is given to me as a gift of love, a gift to be celebrated with joy(Henri J. M. Nouwen).

#### Luke 18

Jesus taught the significance of prevailing prayer through the parable of the widow and

the unjust judge. Prevailing prayer is the constant knocking at the door with the expectation that it will be opened. The widow in the parable asked in faith and with expectation. **The prayer has to be specific, unselfish, consistent and persistent.** Jesus pointed out the necessity of humility in prayer through the parable of Pharisee and publican. God resists the proud but give grace to the humble. The meaningful prayer is simple one which comes from honest and humble heart with absolute reverence towards God.

The eternal life from God is free and is given to anyone who believes in Jesus Christ but it is conditional. He communicated the requirements to inherit eternal life during His interaction with the earnest Jewish seeker. **Those who seek to inherit eternal life have to be completely obedient to the revealed commandments of God, loose the grip over material things and have to follow Christ.** Even though living such a life is difficult, it is possible by the enablement of God. Many will come to Jesus but very few will be able to follow Him. Are you one among the selected few to inherit eternal life?

Luke 19

Zacchaeus, a chief tax collector was hated by the Jews for his close association with the Romans who ruled over Jews. The fellowship with Jesus transformed his life for ever. He demonstrated the inward change with the outward actions. Do we have and keep the right fellowship with God?

Through the parable of king's ten servants, Jesus communicated His expectations on the disciples between His ascension and His second advent. Each one of us is provided with different amount of time, talents and treasures. We are expected to live for God and to get involved in the job of extending His kingdom all over the world irrespective of caste, creed, race and religion. **We are accountable for whatever we do in this life on earth and would attract either honour from God or condemnation. Could you be found as Good and faithful servant by God?**

Luke 20

While refuting a crafty question from Saduccess concerning resurrection, Jesus confirmed the certainty of Resurrection. The hope of resurrection from the dead to live eternally is the central belief of Christianity. If we are convinced about the reality of the resurrection that would happen to us in future, our perspective would change. We would not be choked by the worries and problems of our daily life. **We would live a life with eternity in mind - making every efforts to obey to the creator and would be influencing others towards the eternal life found in Jesus Christ. Do you believe in the resurrection?. Does your life style acknowledge that you believe in Resurrection?**

Luke 21

When asked about the sign of endtimes, Jesus foretold few things concerning the destruction of then temple (destroyed by Romans in AD 70), presecution of those who follow Christ (Have been happening ever since the begining of the church), unusual happenings in the Sun, moon, stars and sea (Recent times witnessed more calamities).

Amidst this, we are encouraged not to be carried away by the false Christs/Prophets, to stand firm in faith for God in persecutions and betrayals, to watch and pray so that we would be able to escape all that is about to happen and that we would be able to stand before God. Heaven and earth will pass away but the word of God will not pass away. May God grant us grace to prepare ourselves for the eternal life.

#### Luke 22

Judas and Peter were two among the few who have got the privilege to have close fellowship with Jesus (God in flesh). Despite seeing the miracles, hearing to the living words every day, they had their setbacks in their spiritual walk. One have failed so badly without any hope for return (considering the things of the world are more worthier than the God Himself) and the other have disowned his guru, fearing persecution and social rejection. Peter depended more on his strength and overlooked the warning sign (about denying Jesus) and underestimated the advice by Jesus to watch and pray to overcome temptation. If these costly mistakes could happen to the close associates of Jesus, it can happen to us as well. **We will be safer and better when we devote ourselves to regular prayer and closer walk with God.**

In the last passover with the disciples, Jesus conveyed the rejection and the sufferings that He would be going through. Foreseeing the need of the leader to lead the group after the departure of Jesus, the disciples fought themselves very badly to know who is the greatest and fit enough to emerge as future leader. **Jesus clarified to them that the type of leader sought by God is one who is humble (not arrogant ) and devote his life for serving (not ruling) others.**

#### Luke 23

Endurance is an important virtue required by any christian who wants to become a matured one. The way that Jesus endured the persecution teaches us the importance of patience and endurance. Jesus was tried, tied and whipped. He was mocked, insulted, spitted. Jesus neither threatened nor cursed nor resisted but endured. Endurance is the act of sustaining prolonged stressful effort. Endurance cannot come automatically, it need to be desired and developed. We are advised to run the race set before us with endurance.

Jesus not only have taught about forgiveness but also exhibited even at the hardest part of His life. The religious leaders accused Him for their own benefits. Political leaders passed illegal judgment. The disciples who walked closer with Him walked away. Even the criminal hanging with Him hurled insults mercilessly. Jesus forgave everyone who acted against Him. Forgiveness is not to be considered as an occasional act but to be built up as a permanent attitude. Needless to remind that our forgiveness from God depends upon the forgiveness extend to others (Lord's prayer). Some one stated that forgiveness is the oil of relationships. Let us desire and demonstrate the forgiveness in our daily life.

#### Luke 24

As written in the scriptures, Jesus rose from the dead on the third day. Even though Jesus taught and predicted to the disciples about His Crucifixion and Resurrection while he was with them, the disciples found it difficult to believe that Jesus rose from the death. Not

only they had doubts but also they wanted convincing proofs to accept the fact of resurrection. Jesus appeared to them personally and they could experience personally and they were convinced. We too can experience the presence and the reality of Jesus when we seek Him earnestly.

Today, we have the fulfilled prophecies of Old testament, witnesses of New testament apostles and two thousand years old church history to confirm the fact of resurrection. Do you live as if you believe in Resurrection?

The resurrected Jesus after revealing Himself to His disciples with convincing proofs, asked His disciples to preach REPENTANCE and FORGIVENESS OF SINS to all nations, after receiving the power of Holy Spirit. Resurrection is the central point of Christian belief. We cannot be a Christian without believing in resurrection. We cannot be a Christian without practicing true repentance and assurance of the forgiveness of sins. If we believe in new life available through Christ, we would ensure to live up to the expectations of God and would influence our near and dear ones towards this eternal life.