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THE LOOKOUT

APRIL 2022

Unit: LUKE (Part 1)

Theme: PERFECT HUMANITY

Overview: Jesus' humanity and divinity were in perfect balance, and his deeds and words were in perfect harmony. The lessons from Luke over the next two months will emphasize what Jesus did (miracles and encounters) and what he said (stories). Students will learn of Jesus' care for the bereaved and broken and hindered. The resurrected Christ applies his divine nature to our human dilemma.

HOW TO USE

Each week has a **lesson aim**, **lesson text**, and **supplemental text**.

WEEK OF APRIL 2, 2022

LESSON AIM: Let your heart go out to those who are suffering; be tender-hearted and sympathetic.

UNIT: Luke 9:1-10
THEME: Perfect Humanity
LESSON TEXT: Luke 17:1-2
SUPPLEMENTAL TEXT: 1 Peter 3:2; Colossians 3:14

STUDY

PERFECT COMPASSION
 BY AARON SCOTT

In the Holy Bible, Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and the Father are described as being in perfect harmony. This is a perfect harmony of love, grace, and mercy. Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and the Father are described as being in perfect harmony. This is a perfect harmony of love, grace, and mercy. Jesus, the Holy Spirit, and the Father are described as being in perfect harmony. This is a perfect harmony of love, grace, and mercy.

Vertical tabs on the right side of the page indicate the week of each lesson.

Each week features three sections: **Study**, **Application**, and **Discovery**.

APPLICATION

WED CARET
 BY DAVID PAUST

DISCOVERY

BY MICHAEL C. PRICE

1. Study the text and answer the questions. Write your answers in the spaces provided.
2. Read the text and answer the questions. Write your answers in the spaces provided.
3. Read the text and answer the questions. Write your answers in the spaces provided.
4. Read the text and answer the questions. Write your answers in the spaces provided.
5. Read the text and answer the questions. Write your answers in the spaces provided.
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7. Read the text and answer the questions. Write your answers in the spaces provided.
8. Read the text and answer the questions. Write your answers in the spaces provided.
9. Read the text and answer the questions. Write your answers in the spaces provided.
10. Read the text and answer the questions. Write your answers in the spaces provided.

Use the **Discovery** questions to study, discuss, and apply the Scripture passages in a group or class.

WEEK OF APRIL 17, 2022

LESSON AIM: **Follow Jesus' example
to serve and love others
sacrificially.**

UNIT: Luke (Part 1)

THEME: Perfect Humanity

LESSON TEXT: Luke 23:44-49; 24:1-12

SUPPLEMENTAL TEXT: Luke 6:27-36; Ephesians 5:1-2

STUDY

PERFECT LOVE

BY MARK SCOTT

“Holy Week,” as it is called, is a demonstration of perfect love. Even while enduring the cross, sustaining the solemnity of the tomb and experiencing the victory of the resurrection, Jesus continued to love and serve others. Jesus cared for his mother (John 19:27) and the repentant thief (Luke 23:43) while on the cross. He obeyed the Sabbath (Luke 23:56) while in the tomb. And on Easter morning, he tenderly spoke Mary Magdalene’s name (John 20:16).

The first six verses of our text cover three hours. Jesus had withstood six trials (before Annas, Caiaphas, the Sanhedrin, Pilate, Herod, and then Pilate again). He had been scourged—no small thing. Simon of Cyrene helped him carry his cross to Skull Hill. He wept for the women of Jerusalem, prayed forgiveness over the whole world, and specifically extended pardon to one of the thieves who died at his side. He did all of this before the *sixth hour* of our text.

Strange Praise on Good Friday

Luke 23:44-49

David said the heavens and skies praise the Lord (Psalm 19:1-6). On this Good Friday, *darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon*. Creation knew what was going on. Luke even recorded that *the sun stopped shining*.

The temple knew what was going on. The curtain (scholars debate which one—the one at the entrance of the Holy Place or the inner one before the Holy of Holies) was torn in two. In a sermon, James S. Stewart said the torn curtain enabled the love of God to be laid bare.

Jesus certainly knew what was going on. His seventh and final statement from the cross was the “now I lay me down to sleep” psalm of the Jews (Psalm 31:5). He committed his spirit to his Father.

Out of the mouth of a Roman centurion—an oppressor of the Jews—came strange praise and a confession. He affirmed that Jesus *was a righteous man*. Matthew and Mark said the centurion called him “the Son of God” (Matthew 27:54; Mark 15:39). Are these things the same? This soldier had a virgin faith, at best. He probably was affirming more than Jesus being a good guy but doing less than fully embracing Jesus as Lord (Romans 10:9).

Regardless, this backbone of the Roman army who was in charge of 100 soldiers gave praise to God for Jesus.

Even the rogues in the crowd *beat their breasts*. They understood something big was going on when they witnessed the way Jesus died. Jesus’ followers *stood at a distance* and took everything in on this strange day. (The loyal women who had followed him for some time were specifically mentioned—Luke 8:1-3.)

Seeming Nonsense on Easter Sunday

Luke 24:1-12

The resurrection was looked at as comedy (in the classic sense in that the story ends well) during the early centuries of the church. Some still speak of it as a joke on the devil. It does seem nonsensical at first pass. The words of the women—the first witnesses to the resurrection—seemed like *nonsense* to the Jewish men (v. 11; cf. Acts 12:15).

Jesus was buried between 3 and 6 on Friday afternoon. Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus hustled to bury him before “taking Sabbath” at 6 p.m. Everyone, including Jesus, rested the next day. *Very early in the morning* (Matthew says “toward dawn,” Mark says, “When the sun had risen,” and John said, “While it was still dark”) on Sunday the women came with spices to anoint Jesus’ body. This was not embalming (the Jews did not do that). The spices were to honor the loved one and keep the stench down during the early stages of decomposition.

The women found the stone rolled back, Jesus’ body gone, and *two men in clothes that gleamed like lightning* (angels) standing by them in the tomb. Jesus did not appear at this point (though Mary Magdalene would circle back to the tomb later, and Jesus would reveal himself to her, John 20:11-18). The angels gave the Easter message to the women: “There is no sense looking for the living among the dead; Jesus is gone because he has risen from the dead as he told you in Galilee; this was all part of God’s plan.” The women remembered this promise.

They went and tried to convince the apostles, but their message was dismissed as *nonsense* (not believable). But Peter *ran to the tomb* (evidently with John, cf. John 20:3-10) to check out this seeming nonsense. He saw the same “ridiculous fact” . . . there was no one in the tomb. ■

APPLICATION

WHEN THE CROCUSES BLOOM

BY DAVID FAUST

If you survey a crowd about their favorite flowers, crocuses probably won't make the list. They aren't tall like sunflowers, elegant like orchids, or fragrant like hyacinths and lilacs. Love songs mention roses and lilies, but no songwriter compares his lover to a crocus.

Barely 2 or 3 inches tall, these little flowers grow close to the ground. Their petals bear bright colors (yellow, purple, and white) but they are easy to overlook. A creative arranger might use them as a table decoration, but crocuses are too small to display at a banquet or feature at a wedding or a funeral. I have never seen a groom with a crocus pinned to his lapel or a bride carrying a crocus bouquet.

Last fall, though, I planted three dozen crocus bulbs in flower beds near my house. These little blossoms are some of my favorite flowers because in northern regions, crocuses are one of the first signs of spring. Hardy enough to poke their way through an inch of snow, they break winter's icy grip and brighten the lifeless landscape. When the crocuses bloom, they are a harbinger of better things to come—a first glimpse of warmer days ahead. Soon the grass and trees will turn green, and more spring flowers will appear.

Spiritual Winter

It was early spring when Jesus was nailed to the cross. In the spiritual realm, it had been a long winter—cloudy and dark ever since Adam and Eve ate the garden's forbidden fruit. On that dark afternoon outside Jerusalem, onlookers moved by Jesus' brutal crucifixion "beat their breasts and went away" (Luke 23:48). Others "stood at a distance, watching these things" (v. 49). Still today, many stand at a distance—aware of the cross but choosing not to get too close.

One soldier couldn't stand at a distance. His job was to monitor the proceedings. Hardened by battles and familiar with bloodshed, he stood so close to

the cross that he could hear the gasping conversations of the three men being crucified. Two of them were known as thieves and the one in the middle was identified as "King of the Jews." What happened that day, including Jesus' dying words, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit" (v. 46), moved the centurion to praise God and exclaim, "Surely this was a righteous man" (v. 47).

In biblical times, mourners expressed their grief by tearing their garments. At Jesus' last breath, the heavenly Father reached down and tore the temple curtain in two (v. 45), opening bold new access to his presence. Spiritual spring was coming.

Spiritual Spring

What happens after our hearts stop beating and our lungs stop breathing? Is there more to come after we die? Everyone asks questions like these, but the good news found in Luke 24 changes our perspective and points firmly in the direction of hope with its bold declaration, "He has risen!" (v. 6).

At first even Jesus' disciples didn't grasp this grand miracle. They dismissed initial reports of it as "nonsense" (v. 11). It took solid evidence, including a close-up look at Jesus' hands and feet (vv. 36-40), watching him eat broiled fish (vv. 42-43), and 40 days of "convincing proofs" (Acts 1:3) for them to accept that Jesus truly had risen from the dead.

Like a bright-colored crocus emerging from the icy ground, Jesus' resurrection shows it is possible to survive the spiritual winter. More life and beauty are yet to come.

Personal Challenge: With a friend or small group, talk about the difference Easter makes in your life. Explain how Jesus' death and resurrection have transformed you from light to darkness and from spiritual "winter" to spiritual "spring." ■

DISCOVERY

BY MICHAEL C. MACK

1. What “broken” area of your life has God been mending?
2. In response to God’s forgiveness, what outrageous action did you take to honor and obey Jesus last week?

Ask two people to read aloud **Luke 23:44-49; 24:1-12** one after the other, preferably from different Bible versions. Then ask a third person to retell the passages in their own words in a minute or less.

3. What stands out to you in these passages, perhaps for the first time?
4. Let’s dig deeper:
 - What did all creation—nature, man-made things, and people—“speak” about the events of the crucifixion and about Jesus?
 - Like the women at the tomb, we are prone to forget. What things or practices help you remember Jesus’ sacrifice for us?
 - The people who were present for the events surrounding the crucifixion and resurrection had different reactions at different times. Some *watched* from a safe distance (23:49). Some *wondered* about it (24:4, 12). At least one *worshipped* (23:47). And several *witnessed* to what they had seen and heard (24:9-10). In relation to the gospel, how have you experienced any or all these four words (*watched, wondered, worshipped, witnessed*)?
 - Which one best describes your response to the gospel now?
5. What do you learn about God from these passages?
6. What do you learn about humans?
7. Jesus committed himself into God’s hands (23:46). How can you follow the example of Christ in your commitment to him?
8. People who do not yet know Christ tend to be more open around Easter. With whom could you start a discussion about the fact that Jesus was crucified and on the third day was raised again?
9. Based on our study and discussion, complete this sentence: “This week, I will . . .”
10. What circumstances will you face this week for which you need God’s power?

For Next Week: Read and reflect on **Luke 13:10-17; 14:1-6**. You can also read next week’s supplemental texts as well as the Study and Application sections as part of your personal study. **L**