



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.

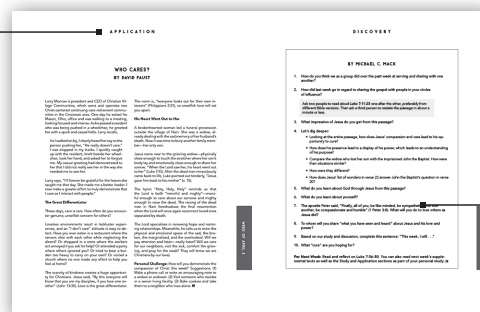
HOW TO USE

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



Tabs indicate the week of each lesson.

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



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

WEEK OF APRIL 24, 2022

LESSON AIM: **Let your compassion for those who suffer move you to action, regardless of what other people think.**

UNIT: Luke (Part 1)

THEME: Perfect Humanity

LESSON TEXT: Luke 13:10-17; 14:1-6

SUPPLEMENTAL TEXT: Isaiah 49:13-16; Ephesians 4:32

PERFECT ACTION

BY MARK SCOTT

A secular proverb says, “Your actions are speaking so loudly that I cannot hear what you are saying.” Keep in mind that the person who spun that proverb used words to spin it. But who would disagree that wrong actions can undercut right words? Jesus’ gospel of love was backed up by his compassionate actions for the hurting. Many of the religious leaders of Jesus’ day failed to rejoice when the hurting were helped. The religion police were more interested in procedures than people.

This was especially true in the two miracle stories of our lesson texts. Jesus healed a woman who was crippled for 18 years, but instead of rejoicing, the synagogue leader publicly criticized Jesus and the apostles. Jesus healed a man of dropsy (edema), but the Pharisees remained silent and indifferent. In this travel section of Luke’s Gospel (chapters 9–19) we see a loose pattern of sign (miracle) and story (parable or encounter). In between these two miracles are three parables—about the mustard seed, yeast, and the narrow door—as well as a lament over Jerusalem and a rebuke of Herod.

A Crippled Woman Set Free

Luke 13:10-17

Both narratives in our lesson texts occurred on a *Sabbath*. It is unclear when in Jesus’ final months of ministry these events happened. Jesus encountered a crippled woman in the context of his teaching. Luke used an economy of words to tell of her gender, the length and demonic nature of her pain (i.e., she *had been crippled by a spirit*), and the physical condition that made her unable to stand up straight.

Jesus called the woman forward and thus drew some attention to her disability. He spoke the words of liberation, “*Woman, you are set free from your infirmity* (weakness or sickness).” Then he compassionately touched her. The miracle was instantaneous. Luke also recorded that she *praised God*, a typical thing the Gospel writer often would share.

The synagogue leader blew a gasket (*indignant* means to become quickly angry). He viewed healing as a Sabbath violation and dished out his criticism of Jesus and the apostles by speaking to *the people*. He based his critique on creation (Genesis 2:2). God rested on day seven of creation. Are we to assume healings were taking place outside of Jesus’ ministry from his remark,

“*Come and be healed on those days*” or is that assuming too much?

Jesus quickly took the offensive. He labeled those who thought like the synagogue leader as *hypocrites* (play actors). Then he referenced how livestock were taken care of regardless of the day (Exodus 23:4-5; Deuteronomy 22:4). Finally, he vindicated the poor woman, who surely overheard this debate. He referred to her as a *daughter of Abraham* (that meant she was an insider). He acknowledged that her problem was caused by the spirit world (which was something only Jesus could have known). He defended her being liberated on the Sabbath.

The religious police were *humiliated* (overcome or overpowered), but the *people* (crowd) were *delighted* (filled with joy). One certainly sees from this text the distance between the religious leaders and the people. Did Jesus’ perfect action help this desperate woman? Absolutely. Did Jesus care that he had offended the religious leaders? Not so much.

A Man with Dropsy Healed

Luke 14:1-6

The first Sabbath miracle occurred in a synagogue. The second Sabbath miracle occurred in a *prominent* Pharisee’s house. The text said Jesus was *being carefully watched*, which might indicate the suffering man was planted there to be a point of controversy.

The *New International Version* interprets the man’s condition by saying he was *suffering from abnormal swelling of his body*. This is known as edema or dropsy. It amounts to “water swelling” (the meaning in the Greek word) in the body. Healing (ultimate rest) can take place on the Sabbath.

Jesus was no doubt burdened by the apathy of the religious elite. Twice in the text the reader’s attention is drawn to their indifference. They *remained silent* (v. 4), and *they had nothing to say* (v. 6). Silence was very cruel in this case. Jesus healed this man because of his compassion for the man and also for his anger at the Pharisees. That was why some of Jesus’ miracles were actually acts of war. Jesus’ arguments in the house and synagogue were similar. The argument could be summed up as “need leads.” Perfect action looks more to needs than rules. **■**

NAILS ON THE ROAD

BY DAVID FAUST

I noticed a rusty nail on the pavement as I walked across a parking lot the other day. The nail was more than an inch long, large enough to puncture a tire. I stooped down and picked it up, hoping to save myself or someone else from getting a flat tire.

It's unnerving to realize how many sharp objects are on the road—screws, nails, bolts, and jagged pieces of metal—that can penetrate a tire. Our cars roll over many of these hazards without harm, but even a small hole in a tire can cause a slow leak or a sudden blowout. A nail on the road can delay our travel plans, or worse, lead to a serious accident.

Eighteen Long Years

The road of life is littered with perils. Often, we manage to glide over the hazards and keep going, but a small nail can lead to a slow leak or a major blowout in our relationship with God.

Consider the plight of the woman Jesus encountered in Luke 13. Like nails on the road, her difficulties sprang from three sources.

The first nail was *physical pain*. "She was bent over and could not straighten up at all" (Luke 13:11). Back pain can be excruciating, and in those days, there were no orthopedic surgeons, chiropractors, or physical therapists available, nor could she go to a pharmacy and buy pain relievers to ease her discomfort. Her bent-over posture must have affected her state of mind as well. It forced her to keep looking down. Jewish believers customarily lifted their heads and hands in prayer, but this woman couldn't worship that way. It wasn't easy for her to see where she was going, to walk along gazing at a sunny sky, or to look her friends in the eye.

The second nail was *demonic oppression*. There are different reasons people suffer, but in this case the woman "had been crippled by a spirit for eighteen years" (v. 11). Jesus affirmed that Satan had bound

her (v. 16), so some sort of spiritual bondage evidently added to her physical pain. Satan brought Job all kinds of trouble. Our adversary tosses nails on the road, using any tools at his disposal to destroy our faith. Peter compared the devil to a roaring lion that prowls around looking for someone to devour (1 Peter 5:8).

The third nail in this woman's predicament? *Enduring years without any relief*. Her crippling condition was no temporary malady. According to Jesus, she had suffered for "eighteen long years" (v. 16, emphasis mine). Years seem longer than usual when they are filled with suffering. Imagine living with debilitating pain for the length of time it takes a baby to grow into a high school graduate. Eighteen long years indeed.

Hands That Bring Freedom

Jesus used a few short words and the miraculous touch of his hands to bring the woman physical healing, spiritual freedom, and a new perspective on life. After encountering Jesus, "she straightened up and praised God" (v. 13). That's what happens whenever sinners come to the Lord with trusting, repentant hearts. We straighten up and praise God!

On the journey through life, we encounter lots of nails on the road. That's why we need the Lord Jesus as our traveling companion. At the cross he literally took the nails in his own hands.

Personal Challenge: Jesus' compassion caused him to step outside religious norms to care for those in need. When he did such things, "he was being carefully watched" (Luke 14:1). Others watch us closely, too. They want to know if our faith is real and our love is genuine. They scrutinize our behavior to see whether we are more interested in religious rules than in human needs. What matters more to you: caring for those who hurt, or keeping up appearances? ■

DISCOVERY

BY MICHAEL C. MACK

1. What circumstances did you face last week for which you needed God's power? How did that go?
2. With whom did you start a discussion about the fact that Jesus was crucified and on the third day was raised again last week?

Ask two people to read aloud **Luke 13:10-17; 14:1-6** 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 contrasts between people's actions and reactions do you see in these passages?
4. Let's dig deeper:
 - Describe the woman's experience during the 18 years of her infirmity.
 - What would being "set free" mean for her?
 - How would you characterize the synagogue leader's reaction to Jesus' healing of the woman?
 - How would you characterize the reaction of the Pharisees and teachers of the law to Jesus' healing of the man?
 - How would Jesus' masterful use of logic (13:15-16; 14:5) help his audience understand his point (that is, the value he wanted them to understand)?
5. What do Jesus' heart and actions teach you about God?
6. What do you learn about people?
7. Would you obey God regardless of what people think or say? Why or why not?
8. Choose one of the following "greater than" statements and then share how you would use it as an introduction to tell someone about the application of our Bible study today.
 - Love > Law
 - People > Procedures
 - Relationships > Rules
9. Based on our study and discussion, complete this sentence: "This week, I will . . ."
10. From what would you like Jesus to set you free?

For Next Week: Read and reflect on **Luke 10:25-37** as we continue our study of Luke with the theme, "Jesus the Storyteller." You can also read next week's supplemental texts as well as the Study and Application sections as part of your personal study. ■