

New Testament Challenge

March 1 – May 2, 2009

United Baptist Church – Old Town, ME

Small Group Questions – Week #4 – Starting March 22

Ice Breaker Game Idea:

Play the “*What Do You Want to Be When You Grow Up.*” In this game go around and ask everyone in the group to share what they most wanted to be when they grew up and what they are doing now. It’s interesting to see who is doing what they dreamed about when they were kids and how people ended up with the careers they have now. You’ll learn a lot about the careers and dreams of the people in your group ☺

Quick Facts about the Gospel of Luke:

Luke was a Gentile and had the distinction of being the only New Testament writer who was not a Jew.

- As a Gentile (a non-Jewish person), Luke’s gospel is targeted primarily to Gentiles. Note that in Luke’s genealogy of Jesus in Luke 3 is different from Matthew’s in Matthew 1. Matthew traced Jesus back to Abraham because it was important for him to communicate to Jews that Jesus was the promised Messiah from the line of Abraham and David. But Luke traces Jesus all the way back to Adam. Why? So, that Gentiles can see that Jesus died for everyone from the line of Adam (everyone in the world) – not just Jews.
- Note that in Luke Jesus talks more about women and the poor than in any other Gospel writer. Luke is clear that Jesus is empowering to women and compassionate to the poor. Mary is emphasized more in Luke whereas Joseph is emphasized more in Matthew. Also note that in the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew when Jesus gives the Beatitudes (Matthew 5) Jesus says blessed are the “poor in spirit” but in Luke when Jesus gives the Sermon on the Plain in Luke 6 Jesus has a slightly different message and says blessed are the “poor.” Jesus gave two different sermons, but Matthew and Luke chose to record different ones. Although they were both concerned with both spiritual and physical redemption, Matthew was more focused on the spiritual and Luke the physical.
- Remember, Luke is also the author of Acts, and the Gospel of Luke is book 1 with Acts being book 2. Luke was a physician (which might explain his passion for what Jesus said about physical pain and suffering) who traveled with Paul on many of his missionary journeys.
- Also note as you read Luke – the special emphasis on prayer. Jesus is continually getting away from the people and commotion to find a secluded place to be with God and pray. If Jesus needed that on a continual basis – how much more do we need it?

Quick Facts about the Book of 2 Corinthians:

- Paul stayed longer with the church in Corinth than he did in any of the other churches he started. As a result, his letters to this church are very personal and straightforward.
- It was in 55 AD (25 years after Jesus' death) that Paul learned that things were not all well in Corinth and wrote to the church there from the city of Ephesus. Paul is very personal and straight-forward in this letter because he knew the people of the church so well (contrast with Romans where he didn't know them well at all).
- Paul wrote several letters to Corinth (at least 4). Remember that his letters existed on scraps of papyrus and it wasn't until 90 AD that they were all collected together. So, some authors believe that part of Paul's letters to the Corinthians got thrown in together when they were copied. In 1 Corinthians 5:9 Paul refers to a previous letter he wrote to the church. Some scholars believe it is lost. Some believe that part of it is contained in 2 Corinthians 6:13 – 7:2. (Remember, originally there were no verses and chapters – just Paul's writings grouped together.) Then in 2 Corinthians 7:8 Paul refers to a previous "severe" letter that he wrote. Some scholars believe it is lost – others believe it to be 2 Corinthians 10-13.
- So there are a couple of possibilities with the 4 letters we know Paul wrote to Corinth:
 1. We have lost the 1st one. The 2nd one is 1 Corinthians. We lost the 3rd (severe) letter. The 4th one is 2 Corinthians.
 2. Letter #1 is 2 Corinthians 6:13-7:2; Letter #2 is 1 Corinthians; Letter #3 is 2 Corinthians 10-13; and Letter #4 is 2 Corinthians 1-9.

The Temptation of Jesus (Luke 4)

1. What is the significance of Jesus being tempted after He had fasted for 40 days?
2. How does Satan's use of Scripture differ from the way Jesus uses it?
3. How do the three temptations correlate with Satan's tempting in the Garden (Gen. 3) and what John says about sin (1 John 2:16)?

The God Who Comforts Us (2 Cor. 1:3-7)

1. What is the relationship between God's ability to comfort us and our ability to comfort others?
2. What does it mean to you that Paul refers to God as the Father of compassion and the God of all comfort?
3. How can distress in your life be viewed in light of this passage?

We are the Temple of God (2 Cor. 6: 14-18)

1. What is the difference between being yoked with unbelievers and having relationships with unbelievers?
2. What does it mean that you are the dwelling place of God?

3. How does the teaching of Romans 12 about being a living sacrifice correlate with this passage?

No Longer Under the Law (Galatians 3)

1. What question does Paul ask in verse two and why is this so crucial?
2. What “additions” to faith might outsiders sense in Christian circles that would serve as barriers to their faith?
3. How is attempting to be right with God through keeping the Law like being in prison?