

Luke – Evangelist and Martyr  
18-10-2020  
St Cuthbert's Anglican Church – Tweed Heads

Jeremiah 8:22 – 9:3    God's people in need of restoration

Psalms 145:10-18      God is to be praised, God is the provider

2 Timothy 4:9-17a     Paul calls for Timothy to come and support him in jail

Luke 10: 1-9            Jesus send out the 70 in pairs

### Introduction

Today is the day set aside for us, in the Church Calendar, to remember and be encouraged by Luke the Evangelist.

Let us firstly look at the example of Luke as someone who proclaimed the Good News of Jesus, secondly let us look at what today's readings offer us about being an evangelist, and thirdly let us look at what this might mean for us in our lives.

### Luke

So why do we have days when we remember saints? We of course only worship God, so why bother with saints? The reason we have saint's days in the tradition of the church is so that we can learn from their example of following Jesus. Jesus is of course our primary role model, but we can learn and be encouraged to follow Jesus ourselves, when we see how others have done it.

So what do we know about Luke. Luke was a travelling companion of the apostle Paul, a doctor and a historian. It appears he was a gentile, (ie not originally a Jew, as were all the first followers of Jesus) and that he was not an eyewitness to the events of Jesus life, death and resurrection, but became a follower and prominent figure in the early church.

Luke wrote the Gospel bearing his name, and also the Acts of the Apostles. These two volumes go together to give us the history of the beginning of Christianity.

Luke also appears in some of Paul's letters and is mentioned in Paul's letter to the Colossians as "the beloved physician". In today's reading from Paul's second letter to Timothy we hear how Luke is the only one to remain with Paul in jail.

Luke was clearly well educated, and his gospel account is seen as the most comprehensive in terms of the aspects of Jesus earthy life.

Luke didn't think following Jesus was something to be taken lightly, or against reason or logic, but rather it was the truth and of prime importance for life itself. This is made clear in the opening four verses of his Gospel account :-

“Since many have undertaken to set down an orderly account of the events that have been fulfilled among us,<sup>2</sup> just as they were handed on to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word,<sup>3</sup> I too decided, after investigating everything carefully from the very first, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus,<sup>4</sup> so that you may know the truth concerning the things about which you have been instructed.

Luke was an evangelist. His primary concern was to let others know that the “Good News” of salvation is for all, regardless of gender, social position or nationality.

### Evangelism in Today's Readings

So what might we hear about evangelism in today's bible readings.

#### Jeremiah

Well firstly in the reading from Jeremiah, we are reminded of why we need Jesus. We hear Jeremiah, the prophet sent by God, in anguish because the people of Israel would not heed his call and return to following God's ways:-

“Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there?  
Why then has the health of my poor people not been restored?”

Just as the Israelites turned away from God, we all as human beings turn away from God, and Jesus is “Good News”, the way back to God.

#### Luke

But how are we to know about the Good News of Jesus unless we are told?

We hear in the Gospel reading today, when Jesus sends out the 70 he says :-

“The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest.”

Our world desperately needs to hear the Good news of Jesus, and as Christians we are all called to take our part in sharing it. But it is not necessarily an easy task. Jesus also tells the 70 when he says :-

“Go on your way. See, I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves.”

I don't know about you, but the image of a lamb with wolves, doesn't sound like an easy life to me. In the reading today from 2 Timothy, we also hear of Paul in jail for sharing the message of Jesus with others. From this we know that sharing the Good News of Jesus may be challenging, but we also know that it is rewarding. A little further on in Luke's gospel when the 70 return to Jesus, we hear of the Joy they had from their experiences of sharing the Good News of Jesus.

## Our Response

So what might the example of Luke the evangelist, and the aspects of our bible readings today on the need for evangelism, mean for us here at St Cuthberts in Tweed Heads today.

Well, firstly it reminds us that the Church only exists because evangelism happened in the first place. After the death and resurrection of Jesus his followers would probably only have numbered in the hundreds, with 12 leaders. Luke was a part of the early church who travelled throughout the known world to tell others about Jesus, and to establish churches. And so we know that as a Church, we are called to be evangelists. In the words of a previous Archbishop of Canterbury William Temple:- "The Church exists primarily for the sake of those who are still outside it."

Secondly, we know that the task of Evangelism is not necessarily an easy one. Following Jesus in our lives can be costly. In fact, following Jesus should be costly. It makes sense if we think about a saying that I once heard:-

A faith that costs us nothing, and requires nothing of us, is actually about nothing.

Of course we know there is nothing we can do to earn our salvation. It is a free gift from God that we can chose to accept, but we are then called to live into it. How have you been living into your faith this last week?

Thirdly we all have different roles to play. We are not all called to be evangelists like Luke, but we are all called to take our part in the life and faith of the Church. Week by week we stand and affirm that we are the Body of Christ. We are all called to live our lives following Jesus and being an example for others to see. When others see you, do they say I wish I had what she/he has, and want to know about how you follow Jesus?

## Conclusion

I'd like to conclude today with the words Jesus gave to the 70 he sent out to share the Good news of His arrival:- "The kingdom of God has come near to you."

What do you think when you hear the words,  
"The kingdom of God has come near to you."

Do you believe "The kingdom of God has come near to you."

Jesus came to call us to repentance, so that we might know that in him we have forgiveness, and that in him we are secure in God's Love for us.

In Jesus "The kingdom of God has come near to us."

Let us go out from our worship today, secure in God's Love for us in Jesus, and following the example of Luke, let us share that love with others. Amen.