

What's Your Type: Luke  
Fourth in a Series on Discipleship  
Luke  
February 6, 2022  
Rev. Dr. Jenothy Irvine

Prayer - May God speak to us now. May we have ears to hear and hearts to understand.  
Amen

Message

I am a huge Olympic fan! So when the 2022 Winter Olympics started last Friday, I was super excited. It is time to cheer on the underdogs, witness heroic efforts, triumphant wins, tragic defeats, personal bests, and the breaking of world records. Although not an Olympic sport, there is one world record that caught my attention while prepping for this sermon: the world record for rock-skipping. It's true. On September 6, 2013 in Pennsylvania's Allegheny National Forest, Kurt Steiner achieved the Guinness World Record for "the most consecutive skips of a stone on water" when his skipping stone touched the water 88 times. Yes, eighty-eight. After thinking about this, what stuck in my mind was the idea that every time that rock made contact with the water, it left its mark - and then that mark left another mark, and another. The impact of that one rock and its connection to the water made something bigger than itself; something that started at the point of contact and extended out from there. We call it a \_\_\_\_\_? A ripple. I have thought for a long time that a ripple is one of the most overlooked and underrated forces in the universe. A force, I believe God is using all the time in ways we cannot see, do not always understand, and are a part of God's divine conspiracy (Dallas Willard) to restore all creation. Sometimes called the "butterfly effect."

When it comes to our discussion on Gospel Discipleship, that is the image I want us to have in mind for this week's focus on the Gospel of Luke.

Using the book, Gospel Discipleship, the author suggests that the ending of each Gospel provides a way to understand how and why we live out our faith the way we do; how we carry out Jesus' command to go into the all the world. Thus far we have looked at the first two types of discipleship: Markan and Matthean.

Markans are known for their compelling love of the Holy Spirit. They look for and expect to find the presence of God in both the ordinary and the extraordinary; the

mundane and the miraculous. If they cannot sense or see God's presence at work in a project, ministry, or group of people, they become frustrated and angry. They go where the Spirit leads and bring with them a heart to make space for everyone, a language to speak to those living in the margins, the ability to stand up to the bullies and snakes of our day, and the presence to bring healing and hope to the hurting and lonely. Mark is a gospel that presents a Spirit-led discipleship, miracle-making power, and life-changing faith.

We learned last week that Mattheans carry an intense drive to get things done. They catch the vision, create the plan, make their lists, assign the tasks, and layout the expectations. Mattheans don't know the word stop, no, or slow down. They seek what the Kingdom of God is supposed to be, they understand what God / Jesus expects of the church, they feel everyone has a responsibility and obligation to carry out the work of God as modeled by Jesus, and can have little patience for those who process ideas, projects, and plans at a slower pace, or need more time to get on board. For Mattheans, you have a job, do it.

Today we take a look at the Lukan disciple. It is important to remember a few things about the gospel of Luke. First it has been called the loveliest book of the world. When asked to make a recommendation for a book on how to live a Christ-like life, one theologian responded, "Have you tried the book of Luke" (Barclay). We have a pretty good idea that Luke was written mainly for gentiles, those who were outside the Jewish tradition and not Jewish converts. One indicator of this is the fact that when the author of Luke traced the lineage of Jesus, it was traced not to Abraham, the founder of the Jewish race, as Matthew does, but to Adam, the founder of the human race. Because of this, it is often said that the gospel of Luke then is the universal gospel. More than any other gospel, Luke highlights the encounters of Jesus and those considered unclean, unworthy; the outsider, the poor, and the lost. He tells us that "people will come from east and west, and from north and south, and sit at the table in the kingdom of God (13:29). Above all, Luke shows Jesus as the friend of outcasts and sinners. Luke's Jesus is for everyone. (Barclay)

Again we turn to the end to find how to begin. Reading from Luke 24 and Acts 1, we read yet another unique perspective on the final words of instruction left by Jesus to his followers. If one listens closely, a song of building relationships emerges from the pages. READ TEXT Luke 24:46-49; Acts 1:6-8

Roger sings, “People who need people, are the luckiest people in the world.” One of two things just happened in your brain: You either thought that it was the hokiest thing to do, to have Roger sing part of Barbara Streisand’s song, “People,” or you thought it was a powerful thing to do.

For the Lukan disciple, living out the gospel is about people. The discipleship journey is focused on the relationships they build and maintain and not necessarily attendance and programs. They are defined by the Greatest Commandment: love God and love people. It may be tempting to say that Lukans focus on people *over* the mission of spreading the good news of Jesus, however, it is more accurate to say that people ARE the mission of the good news of Jesus.

Markans come in proclaiming the need for action based on a divine holy spirit inspired plea that something must be done, and Mattheans then take that plea, organize it into manageable steps, design the plans, hire the crew, and schedule a slew of volunteers, Lukans make sure everyone feels at home, heard, connected, involved, and like they matter no matter where they are or what circumstances they find themselves in.

These are our process-oriented people. The “how does that make you feel” people. The “where do you see God,” “What do you need to tell God today,” and “What do you need to hear from God today” people. Their approach to discipleship is rooted in fellowship; getting to know others who are on the path of faith and walk alongside them on the journey; encouraging, challenging, growing and caring together. They serve by listening, being available, gathering, creating safe places for people to be heard, accepted, and seen; a space that allows for transformation.

Do you want to see a Lukan disciple in their element? Give them a small group, an intimate gathering, a retreat designed for spiritual growth and connection. Let them create fresh expressions of the time-honored practice of house-church, which today looks like people meeting in coffee shops, book clubs, dog parks, zumba classes, cycling clubs, at the park, or on the ball field. They will create space with and for people who are willing to do life together; ask the hard questions; go deep with others and make lasting intimate connections. Watch them “work the crowd” during church picnics, coffee hour, and before and after worship. They are the ripple effect disciples. .

All of us have been influenced by the contact or ripple of a Lukan disciple. Otherwise, we wouldn’t be here. Geri Oster. Anita Bieber Morneau. Judith Todd. Bill

and Lisa Moss. Eric Perkins. Kent and Jeanne Neubert. Soozie Ford. Tonie Hudson. Patti and Del Hessling. Bob Reidel. Bill Griffin. These names mean nothing to you, but without the people who go by these names, there is a very good chance I would not be one of your pastors.

Who was it that made you feel heard when you had questions or struggles? Who showed you what following Jesus really looked like? Who assured you that you were not alone in your pain, not crazy for thinking or feeling the way you were, and not so far lost that God couldn't find you? Who empowered you? Gave you a chance? Who celebrated even the smallest of victories? Who gave you space to find your way? Who showed you God was bigger than what other people told you, held you to, or that you yourself imagined God could be? Who stayed with you through the most difficult time of life assuring you God was there?

Mother Teresa is quoted as saying, "I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the water to create many ripples."

Lukan disciples create the kind of ripples that last. A Lukan church casts things like hope, comfort, hospitality, support, acceptance, and service into a community and be a part of ripple making servants. A ripple that started in my life has reached the life of Grace church, and by God's grace that ripple will go on to reach someone else through your life, and then another and another and *together* we do life.

A significant part of that life together is symbolized here at this table. A table that is meant for relationship, connection, and gathering. It is at this table we recognize the common ground we all stand on; the need we all have to belong, to be accepted for who we are and the need we all have for God's grace no matter what we have or have not done. It is here we sit with one another, we put down our to-do lists and drive to get things right, and we connect through Jesus' greatest act of love; we take time to remember the ripple effect of his life and how it still impacts lives today. It is here we celebrate, honor, and remember the grace of Jesus, one person, one conversation, one connection, one relationship at a time.

AMEN