

Jesus unplugged: Luke 9:51-19:27

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first presbyterian church kosciusko, mississippi study series

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Bring “ordinary life” and “kingdom life” together by listening to Jesus in the Gospel of Luke answering questions, Jesus conversing at the supper table, Jesus talking things over, Jesus telling stories—Jesus unhurried and interruptible.

introduction to the study guide

This study guide is an experiment in coordinating the **air war** of weekly preaching of the Word of God with the **ground war** of personal study, small group study and family worship in the midst of everyday life. In other words, the goal is to bring the sermon into closer contact with daily discipleship. To that end I am preparing material from the sermon series for you to use in personal study, family worship or small group and Sunday School class settings in preparation for public, gathered worship each week and for application to everyday life. I am doing this on a trial basis, and the study guide will be available in electronic format only, via download from fpckosciusko.org. If it works well (that is, if it blesses you and doesn't kill me!), we'll look into developing a printed notebook format for future series.

introduction : unplugged language

The four gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) record a great deal of Jesus' words in his preaching and teaching. They also many occasions where Jesus speaks *informally* in conversational give-and-take with people over a meal, walking with friends, talking with his disciples while they were all together on a fishing boat, or responding to various interruptions and questions. It is the latter category of Jesus' words in Scripture that we are going to study—Jesus when he is not “plugged into” the language of formal preaching and teaching.

Preaching is the language of proclamation. It announces what God has done, is doing, and has promised to do. It calls and convicts. It declares that the Triune God is dealing with us right here and right now. Preaching begins with God's Word, actions and presence. The Gospel according to Mark opens with Jesus preaching: *...Jesus came into Galilee, proclaiming the gospel of God, and saying, “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel”* [Mark 1:14-15]. He grabbed people's attention. He preached and applied the truth in such a way that four fishermen quit their jobs on the spot and began following him. The Gospel according to Mark is full of bright, terse summaries of Jesus' preaching.

Teaching is detailed instruction about what it means to believe and live in line with the truth. It helps us “connect the dots” between propositional truth and our everyday lives. Teaching expands on preaching, instructing us on how to walk in step with the gospel. Matthew shows us this side of Jesus most clearly, as his gospel contains lengthy sections of Jesus' teaching. He gathers Jesus' teaching into five great discourses: the Sermon on the Mount [Matthew 5-7], instructions to the disciples [Matthew 10], instructions for the community [Matthew 18], woes and warnings against hypocrites [Matthew 23] and teaching on last things [Matthew 24]. Much of our language in church is preaching and teaching. I have been trained in the language of teaching and

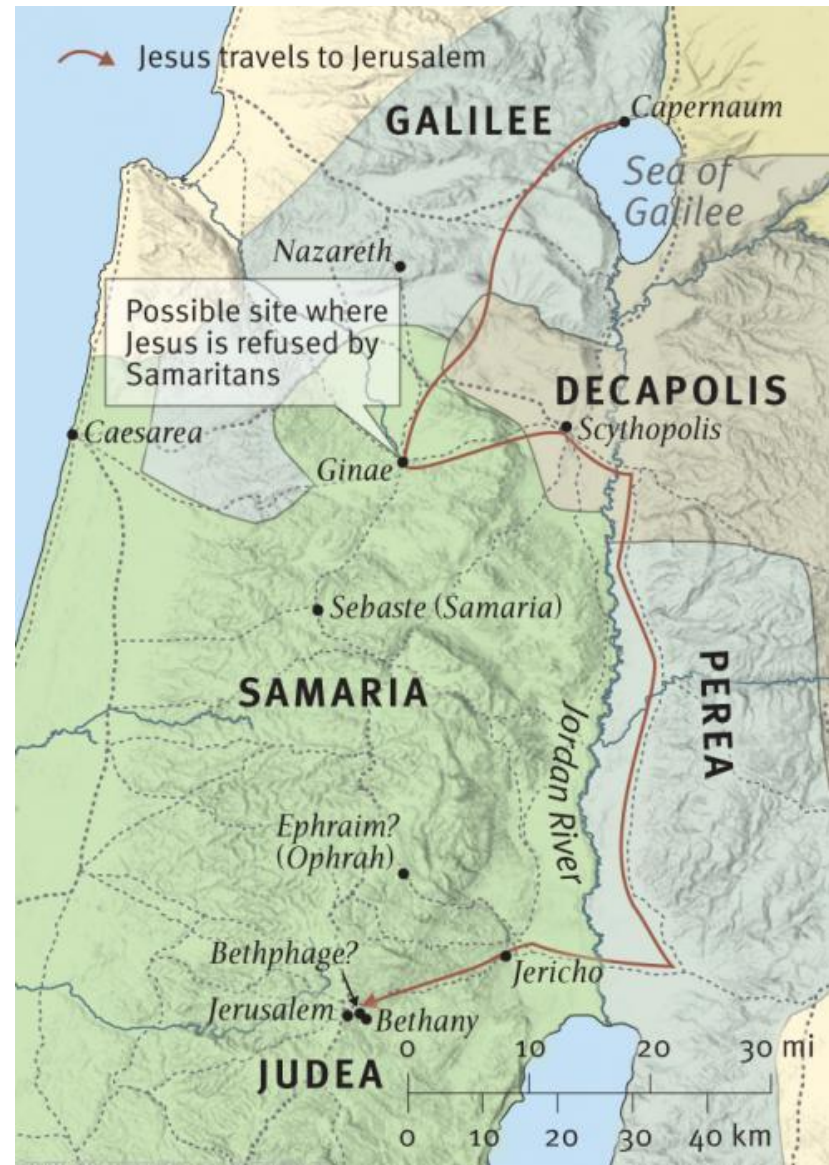
preaching. This is one of my gifts. As a church we have great heritage of preaching and teaching based on sound doctrine. We are generally comfortable with people talking to us about God in preaching and teaching.

But, as I mentioned earlier, there is another kind of language we all use. It is **everyday speech**. Most of our talking is of this kind. Unstructured, informal conversation arises from little incidents and encounters of joys and sorrows, irritations and interruptions, work and leisure, eating and drinking, shopping and travelling, remembering and making what we often call “small talk.” All the Gospel writers show us Jesus using this kind of language, but Luke seems to concentrate on Jesus in these kinds of situations. For us, this is where God and the issues of sin and grace tend to slip out of our talk. We’ve all heard people try to bring a spiritual tone to the conversation and end up killing it. How do we bring the gospel to party without ending the party? How can we talk with each other, with our children, and with non-Christians in a way that is both engaging and life-changing? The quest for answers drove me to these texts in Luke.

the travel narrative

At the center of Luke’s gospel is a section that scholars have come to call *The Travel Narrative*, from **Luke 9:51-19:27**. This section is framed by Jesus’ departure from Galilee (his native area) in 9:51 and then by his arrival in Jerusalem in 19:11. Most of the material in these chapters is found only in Luke. The first nine chapters of Luke describe Christ’s ministry in Galilee; they follow the pattern in Matthew and Mark. The final five chapters tell the story of the week leading up to Jesus’ arrest, trial, crucifixion and resurrection—also told along the same lines as Matthew and Mark.

Traveling is no big deal to us. We do it all the time. But remember that, up until the twentieth century, only the idle rich could afford to travel much at all. This was true in Jesus’ time as well, with one major exception: Jews in Galilee regularly made one



trip to Jerusalem each year for Passover. The trip would take about three or four days on foot. The Passover and the journey itself were reminders of the great journey of the Exodus, when God freed their ancestors from slavery in Egypt. The book of Exodus tells this story.

Traveling in obedience to God's call is one of Luke's pictures of what it means to be a Christian. It's all about following Jesus. Matthew and Mark cover this journey in only two chapters. Luke stretches it out to ten chapters, slowing everything down. Although Jesus was on a mission, he takes his time. He answers questions, he deals with needy people, he instructs his disciples, he eats meals with local residents and tells stories.

The journey takes them through **Samaria**, the region that separated Galilee and Judea. This will be significant from the very beginning of our study. Samaria was, if not exactly enemy turf, at least unfriendly turf. Samaritans and Jews had centuries of bad blood between them. Strict Jews, in order to avoid defilement, avoided traveling through Samaria by opting for a longer route that involved crossing the Jordan and traveling on the east side. The **Samaritans** were a racially mixed group of partly Jewish and partly Gentile ancestry, who were disdained by both Jews and non-Jews (see Luke 10:33; 17:16; John 8:48; see also 2 Kings 17:24–31, which describes how the king of Assyria brought foreign people to settle in Samaria in 722 BC; over time they intermarried with some Jews who had remained in the area). Many inhabitants of this region between Judea and Galilee were descendants of the OT northern kingdom of Israel, although from the Jewish perspective these Samaritans were not very Jewish. Samaritans had their own version of the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Old Testament), their own temple on Mount Gerizim (see John 4:20), and their own rendering of Israelite history. Tensions often ran high between Jews and Samaritans; the first-century historian Josephus recounts fighting between Jews and Samaritans during Claudius's reign in the first century AD being so intense that Roman soldiers were called in to pacify (and to crucify) many of the rebels (*Jewish War* 2.232–246).

It is while travelling to Jerusalem that Jesus takes the time to tell a lot of his best-known **parables** and prepares his disciples for the crucifixion that awaits him there. Strangely, with all the ethnic tensions in Samaria and his own impending conflict, Jesus speaks conversationally throughout nearly all of this narrative, hardly raising his voice at all. Mostly he tells stories. This sermon series is about those stories and some of the circumstances that surround them or inspired them.

Jesus unplugged

Schedule subject to change

1. The one with the plow 9:51-62 (9/13)
Dr. Jack Chinchon preaches 9/20.
2. Jesus loves missions 10:1-24 (9/27)
3. The one with the neighbor 10:25-37 (10/4)
Dr. Richard Pratt preaches 10/11 for World Mission Conference.
4. Jesus surprises people 10:38-42 (10/18)
5. The one with the pushy friend 11:1-13 (10/25)
6. Jesus despises hypocrisy 11:37-54 (11/1)
7. The one with the barns 12:13-21 (11/8)
8. "But what about...?" 13:1-5 (11/15)
9. The one with the manure 13:6-9 (11/22)
Grant Carroll preaches 11/29.
10. Jesus preaches a narrow message 13:22-30
11. The one with the invitation 14:1-14
12. The one with the lost brothers 15
13. The one with the scoundrel 16:1-13
14. The one with the invisible man 16:9-31

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| 15. Jesus expects radical service | 17:1-10 |
| 16. The one with the widow | 18:1-8 |
| 17. The one with the sinners | 18:9-14 |
| 18. Jesus pursues lost things | 19:1-10 |
| 19. The one with the minimalist | 19:11-27 |