



# INTO THE WORD

**Luke 1:1 - 2:40**

INTO THE  
WORD

# INTO THE WORD

Jesus is a little like marmite: you either love Him or hate Him. People who don't feel either way towards Him, don't understand Him at all. But if you really listen to His Words, and get to know the real Jesus, you'll either love Him or hate Him.

**Luke 2:22-40**

But Jesus doesn't go out of His way to turn people against Him. The problem isn't with Jesus; the problem is with us.

I would guess that all the Jews in Jesus' day wanted to serve God. If you had asked them, they would agree they loved Him; however, their hearts often weren't in the right place. The Pharisees had made religion more about showing how amazing they themselves were, rather than showing how amazing God was. We can do that sometimes too.

"JESUS CAN BE OFFENSIVE"

Jesus comes and shows us our true hearts. Does our heart worship God or worship ourselves? When our heart is revealed, we have two choices. We either accept that we are wrong and turn back to God, or we believe that He is wrong and turn away from Him.

We can realise that people will either love or hate Jesus and yet still believe that everyone should love the Church and respect Christian values. If we are living our lives for Jesus and sharing the Gospel accurately, we will often offend people. Your goal in sharing your faith is not to get along with everyone; your goal is to tell the truth in love. Their reaction is up to them.

## REFLECTION

Have I rejected or left out any truths in Scripture to make the Gospel more appealing to non-believers around me? Remember, the Gospel is good news. God doesn't need your help to make it better news.

## PRAY

Ask God to help you be loving to those around you, but also truthful about who Jesus is and the good news of the Gospel.

# INTO THE WORD

Luke 2:1 - 21

Think back to the most incredible experience in your life. For me, it was when we won a FREE holiday to Disney World Florida. I'm not joking. This legit happened! It was the very first time I'd been on a plane or stayed in a hotel.

It was incredible. We were upgraded to stay in the 6-star Animal Kingdom lodge, where we watched giraffes and hippos from our balcony. We were VIP's for a day: getting into the park early for a private safari, being part of the lunchtime parade, and having a golden fast track pass. It really was an experience of a lifetime. I wonder what yours was.

Right now, I can feel the joy and excitement of it all rushing back. I can almost feel the warm air hitting my face as I step out of the airplane. It makes me feel happier. That's what happens when we look back to experiences. They start to shape our feelings today.

Mary must have been having an incredible time here. Giving birth to the Son of God is a huge deal and even the angels got involved in sharing what had happened. The shepherds were amazed, and everyone the shepherds told were amazed. But it's really interesting that Mary did something different. She 'treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart.'

Harder days will come in your faith journey. On days where you might not feel excitement for God, reflect on amazing times of faith in God (like when I reflecting on my amazing holiday or Mary pondered the birth of Christ). Those reflections will start to change how you experience God today.

## APPLY

Start a journal to record the stories of what God has done in your life. When you don't feel His Presence or are struggling in your faith, read it to remind yourself of what He has done. Ask God to bring back excitement for Him.

## PRAY

Ask God to encourage you today through remembering how He has moved in your life in the past.

# INTO THE WORD

Luke 1:1 - 25

Zechariah had an incredible experience. He was promised a son, and that his son would be great. Instead of being excited, he wasn't sure it would or could happen. Doubt crept into his heart.

We can all be a little like Zechariah sometimes. We can doubt God's power and ability to do what He says He will do. God can send us the clearest, most obvious signs, but we might still disbelieve that He can and will move. He could send an angel to talk to us about specific prayer requests and depending on our mood, we'd still not be totally convinced.

But have hope; you can grow in faith. Your disbelief doesn't have to rule your life. Jesus loves to grow faith in those who follow Him, and He does this through the Bible. Luke wrote this book for people like you and me. He wrote it for those who have doubts from time to time. It's written so 'that you can have certainly concerning the things you have been taught' about Jesus (Luke 1:4).

At this moment, you may be feeling full of faith and truly believe everything you read in the Bible. That's an incredible blessing. Pray that you can continue to do so. At this moment, some of you may be struggling to believe that God is real, that He loves you or that He has the power to move in your life. Ask God to encourage you through this study of Luke and grow you in faith. He will answer.

## "YOU CAN GROW IN FAITH"

## APPLY

Think about areas in your life in which you tend to doubt God. Make a list on a piece of paper and keep it in your Bible at the end of Luke.

## PRAY

Ask God to grow faith in you as you journey through the Gospel of Luke. Pray for faith specifically in the areas you wrote down and that you would be able to see a difference by the end of the study of Luke.

# INTO THE WORD

Luke 1:26-56

There's an old story about Abraham Lincoln going to a slave market. During the market, he saw a girl being sold and started to bid for her. The bids kept coming in until he finally won ownership of the slave girl. When he went to retrieve her, he introduced himself. Unimpressed, she said, 'You're just another white guy trying to buy me.'

She could never have guessed his reply. He said, 'I have bought you at a price, but now you're free to go.' She couldn't believe what she was hearing and kept asking him what he meant; again, and again, he told her, 'I bought you at a price; you are free to go.'

## APPLY

Memorise this verse:

'and His commandments are not burdensome' (1 John 5:3)

## PRAY

Ask the Holy Spirit to help you see God's goodness and to trust in it. Ask Him to help you to deeply know His love for you so you'll obey Him in joy.

She finally got the message. She finally believed what she was hearing. But instead of going free, she told Abraham, 'If I am free to do whatever I want, then I want to come and serve you.' The thing she wasn't looking forward to doing was now the thing she wanted to do. She wanted to follow him because she knew he was good, and he'd treat her well.

## "JESUS HAS BOUGHT YOU AT A PRICE"

Jesus has bought you at a price. He set you free. God is good, and all good things come from God (James 1:17). When you believe this, you'll want to willingly serve Him like Mary in verse 38. But if you doubt His goodness, you'll feel His laws are restricting your life and stealing your happiness.

## REFLECTION

Do I find joy in obeying God, or do I feel His commandments are weighing me down?

# INTO THE WORD

Luke 1:57-80

'Repentance' – What is your first thought when I say that word? Is it a negative thought? We normally only repent after we've done something wrong. Repentance can almost always seem like a bad thing because the focus is on how we have messed up.

John had a purpose on his life from birth. His purpose was to prepare the way for Jesus, and later we'll see that he did this by calling people to repentance. God tells us what He has in mind when He thinks of repentance. Go and read verses 77-79 again. That's what God has in mind!

For God, repentance is knowing that He is ready to give salvation to those who come to Him, regardless of what they have done. Repentance is knowing that He is willing to forgive you for all your sins. Repentance is trusting that God is a God of mercy. Repentance is placing your hope in a God Who can turn the darkest places of your heart and mind into light. Repentance is returning to God and allowing Him to guide you into His peace and forgiveness.

I think it's so important to remember this because we forget so easily. We start to believe that God won't forgive us or that He won't want to hear from us. We are often too focused on the bad things we have done rather than how great, good, loving and forgiving Jesus is.

## "LET HIS LOVE BE YOUR FOCUS"

## PRAY

Ask God to help you remember all these truths about Him when you've messed up and disobeyed Him.

## APPLY

Write down that truth on a card and put it somewhere where you'll see it every day.

## REFLECTION

Spend some time reflecting on verses 77-79 again. Which one of these truths did I need to be reminded of the most today?