

Sermon Title: Reintroducing Luke: How to Study and Benefit from the Gospels, Part 1
Sermon Text: Luke 1:1-4

Getting Started: This is to help you prepare for hearing from God's Word.

- Pray
- Think about the following questions: What is a gospel? What difference should that make on the way you read it?

The Big Idea: This will give you a basic idea of what the message was about today.

I want to give you an approach that will help as you read the gospel of Luke and listen to messages on this gospel here at CBC.

Discussion Questions: This will help you think through the message.

- What were we talking about today? Why were we talking about it?
- What makes studying the gospels enjoyable? What makes studying the gospels a little difficult?
- What was the first thing we said you need to do when you pick up the book of Luke? Explain the importance of doing this properly.
- What were the three different answers we gave to that question? Explain the significance of each of those answers to our approach to Luke.
- What specifically can we learn from Luke 1:1-4 about this book?
- What was the second thing we said you need to know?
- What's the difference between a topic and a thesis and how does knowing that difference help us understand what is going on in Luke?
- In what ways is harmonizing the four gospels helpful? In what ways is it potentially unhelpful?
- Is Luke more like an informational speech or a persuasive speech and what difference does that make?
- How does knowing the main point of Luke help as you read the individual stories?
- See if you can take what you learned today and share a summary with someone else.

Quotable: The following quotes may help you reflect on this message during the week.

- "For Protestants, especially evangelicals, especially Reformed, doctrine-oriented ones, we love Paul. Give us Romans and thirteen years to preach through it phrase by phrase, and we'll be in heaven...But the gospels? Well, certainly it's nice to see Jesus in action." But we struggle to understand what the stories actually meant and the significance for our lives. We read the gospels and think they are beneficial because they give us pictures of Jesus and what he taught. But, "when it comes to doctrine and day to day living, we prefer the letters of Paul and the rest of the New Testament."
- "How we read any piece of literature depends completely on what kind of literature we think we are reading."

- “Readers or hearers in any culture naturally develop a ‘literary competence’ by which they are able to discern what to expect from a communicative event. For the person embedded in his or her own culture, this literary competence may not be something he or she is aware of or able to articulate, but it is influential nonetheless.”
- “When it comes to the question of genre, we need to beware of our own prejudicial expectations when reading and of conventional expectations that may be different from those of the original writer...”
- “Ancient biographers and historians valued interested, involved witnesses and consciously wrote for polemical, apologetic and hortatory reasons.”
- “We should be sensitive to these purposes in the gospels, not viewing them as mere clear-glass windows on the events behind the text, but receiving and listening to them as intentional and personally invested interpretations of the events.”
- “Our canonical gospels are the theological, historical, and virtue forming biographical narratives that retell the story and proclaim the significance of Jesus Christ, who through the power of the Spirit is the Restorer of God’s reign.”
- “The problem with only looking at the gospels as if they were simply reporting the facts is that it only skims the textual surface, as if the only relevant question to ask of a narrative was, “Did it actually happen?” To read only for the event is like listening to music only for the melody. However, as music is much more than a good tune, so narrative is much more than a report of who did what when.”
- “The Gospels are a beautiful and different kind of map of the truth than the New Testament letters are. They are a discourse of truth that is narrative. This means we must interpret them differently - as a different kind of genre - and it also means that we need to appreciate and revel in them in their difference from propositional statements we might find elsewhere.”
- “The goal of reading, (the gospel) and hence the goal of preaching is not simply journalistic and/or apologetic—proving the historicity of a text. Rather, the goal of preaching is letting the text speak, so that we hear the voice of God—fully inflected! This is where the power of preaching comes from, as the Word of God is rightly interpreted according to all that it has to say in the way that it says it. Biblical preaching begins by affirming the veracity of the Bible, but it must not end there. We must discern meaning based on genre and literary clues in the passage. Perhaps... the problem stems from our modern (and modern evangelical) inability to read. The problem does not come from a denial of taking the Bible literally; the problem comes from our biblical illiteracy—and again illiteracy here is not simply factual ignorance (knowing what it is in the Bible) but literary incompetence.

Sermon Notes: This is a place you can record your own notes and thoughts as you listen to the message today so that you can think about them later.