Feast of St. Luke, Evangelist 2020

Isaiah 35: 5 – 8 2 Timothy 4: 5 – 18 Luke 10: 1 – 9

We remember one of our own today, Oct. 18. I am not sure why today but we give thanks for all that God has accomplished through His servant Luke. There is always more than we could ever know but what we do know about Luke with certainty comes from the New Testament.

Luke called as a labourer in the Lord’s harvest

God called Luke **not** as one of the twelve apostles but still as one who was sent to gather His harvest. The gospel reading records Jesus sending out the seventy-two disciples ahead of him as one of his few labourers. Luke like the rest of the Lord’s disciples, are sent out as lambs in the midst of wolves. Never an easy task! Can a lamb hunt or devour a wolf? But that is **not** why they are sent. Jesus does not send his workers to hunt or devour his enemies. No guns or swords. Never a conversion by superior force but by bringing his words which carry Him.

His is a different kind of fire power unknown to the world. The gospel is the power of God unto salvation not by blowing things up but by bringing peace to hearts troubled over sin. Remember that you too were once standing with the wolves before the grace of God came to you! But when the words of the gospel came to you either by water or spoken by one sent by Jesus, you were changed and came face to face with Jesus, who brought you His peace. He changed you into a lamb.

There is nothing like receiving the refreshing news that your sin has been taken away! You have now a loving heavenly Father by the sacrifice of His Son. As it went with him who was once like a lamb led to the slaughter, so it went with his apostles who suffered greatly in this world, and so it goes with you.

This explains your tears in the solitude of your extreme frustration, suffering from deep cuts all for carrying Christ to a world that wants Him dead. The world always wants to silence His Truth. That’s why we will not always meet with success. Hungry wolves get their catch.

Luke knew what it was to suffer for the sake of Christ. He travelled with Paul for the apostle’s second missionary journey. Having joined Paul and Silas at Troas, Luke saw and tended to Paul’s broken body. Paul had driven out a demon from a slave girl who could predict the future. After her owners incited a mob against these Christians, who ruffed them up, the local magistrate ordered for them to beaten by rods.

Luke knew the practice of medicine and the healing arts because his first vocation was a doctor. He could help to bring healing to Paul and Silas, who needed it badly.

Luke called by God as physician

God called Luke to bring healing to the body. Christian doctors know what others do not. And that is they cannot heal anybody. The good Lord who made us, also gives the gifts of medicine so that our miraculous bodies can heal. All from God who gave us life and gave us the gift of medicine.

But God was not finished with Luke, the physician. He also called Luke to write an account of the life of Jesus. The third gospel and the book of Acts we hold to come from the hand of Luke. These two books account for over 1/3 of the New Testament. God gave us a unique view through Luke’s writings because Luke is the only writer of the sacred Scriptures who is a Gentile. The bible has 66 books. All of the authors are Jewish except Luke.

Luke called as evangelist

That unique perspective of Luke’s writings shines through in the mission of Jesus to save the world, to lift up the outcasts like Zacchaeus, who was a tax collector. The Jews hated tax collectors who worked for Rome and grew filthy rich from it. They would never go near his house, yet Luke alone, records that Jesus not only visited the short Zacchaeus, but brought salvation to the entire house. As Jesus brought him salvation, Luke’s careful record brings us the same Jesus.

In this way, Luke writes of the Lord’s good news for all the people. As the Christmas angel proclaimed to terrified shepherds that the Saviour’s birth is great joy for **all the people.** Luke alone in our Lord’s infancy narrative, tells of the aged prophet Simeon holding this baby and rejoicing how he had now seen salvation in the baby Jesus, that God had prepared for all peoples, a light for revelation to the Gentiles … How impoverished our Christmas would be without Luke 2?

Then Luke alone wrote of Jesus visiting a Pharisee one night and during the meal, a fallen woman from working the streets, fell down at the Lord’s feet, wet them with her repentant tears, and wiped them dry with her hair. Simon the Pharisee was beside himself because Jesus allowed himself to be touched by this sinful prostitute. Our Lord said that she loved much because her sins which were many, had been forgiven. We owe this precious gospel to St. Luke; for which one of us, have many sins, that also need the healing medicine of the Lord’s forgiveness?

But one of the greatest parables of Jesus, if not the greatest, we hear from Luke alone. It tells of a man who had two sons. The younger said to his father: give me the share of the inheritance that is mine. And the father did so. Not many days later, the younger son gathered all he had and went to a far country, and there squandered his property in loose living and many drunken parties.

We don’t need to hear the end of the story because it is one of the most famous writings of any literature, ever. This parable reveals to us the deep compassion and tender heart of our heavenly Father, who is so eager to give his own Son to those who rejected Him. St. Luke makes clear the universal nature of God’s forgiving love.

Luke carefully researched the life of God’s Son and wrote in a scholarly way. In the Acts of the Apostles, Luke alone gives us a detailed account of what the Risen and Ascended Lord accomplished through the preaching of the apostles and the disciples.

Although this work is difficult and the wolves devour their fair share in this life, Luke also witnessed the conversion of Lydia, the Philippian jailer, and tended to Paul’s wounds, and remained loyal to the imprisoned Paul after so many were embarrassed of Paul and deserted him.

Paul named Luke the beloved Physician and rejoiced that Luke alone remained loyal to him in prison. There is so much more of what God accomplished through Luke that we do not know, but what a joy to hear of our Lord Jesus by way of Luke’s gifted pen. The same Lord calls you to share the love of Jesus and to be comforted in all your suffering for Jesus, because He is after all the Lamb, that was once slain for us, but lives as the Ascended Saviour, who is absolutely loyal to His father and to His church.

Thank God for St. Luke and for you, who believe in Jesus and spread his universal gospel.