

# The Gospel of Luke 3:1-20

Discussion for week of January 10, 2021

For a COVID Update for Life Groups, visit [www.nlcc.ca/lgcovidupdate](http://www.nlcc.ca/lgcovidupdate).

*the gospel according to*

# LUKE

## Begin with Prayer

Beginning with silence, invite the Holy Spirit to guide your time. Consider Mary's prayer: **"I am the Lord's servant. May your word to me be fulfilled"** (Luke 1:38).

## Reconnecting and Debriefing

Take a few minutes to briefly check in with one another. Suggestions:

- *Share one high and one low from the holiday season.*
- *In 2-3 words, describe how you are doing this week, and briefly explain your choice.*
- *Share something that God used to encourage or speak to you since we last met.*

## Listening to God's Word

Repentance is a fundamental practice of apprenticeship, in which we look continually to Jesus and say, "I'm not good enough, Lord, but you are," and we return to him as our first priority. || Luke tells us very little about Jesus' youth and young adulthood. In **Luke 3:1-20**, we pick up the gospel story on the banks of the Jordan river, where the ministry of John (whose birth was described in chapter 1) is, in a sense, "going viral." He is "preparing the way" for Jesus to emerge as the promised Messiah. Yet his message is hard to accept. Surprisingly, at the height of the attention, John is already planning for his "fade-out." Let's learn more about the humility that makes a way for Jesus to do his work in our lives.

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## Option I: Lectio Divina

**Leader:** Slowly lead your group through this meditative exercise. DO NOT RUSH. Leave a few periods of silence (i.e. >30 sec) *between each sentence* of these instructions. Before you begin, have the group open their Bibles to **Luke 3:1-20**.

1. **Ready:** Spend a few moments in silence. Let it be long enough to let your mind, breathing and heart rate slow down. Pray silently and simply, in 2-3 words expressing your desire to hear from God. (~ 2 minutes)
2. **Read:** Have someone read **Luke 3:1-20** slowly, out loud. (~ 3 minutes)
3. **Ruminate:** Individually, silently, slowly and prayerfully re-read the text. (~ 10 minutes for this section)
  - *What word, phrase, image or character catches your attention?*
  - When something in the passage catches your attention, ask God: "Why do you want me to hear those words?"
  - Then be still and listen. *What ideas, memories, hopes, faces, feelings emerge?*
  - When something comes to mind, ask God: "Why did you want me to pay attention to this Scripture and these thoughts/feelings?"
  - Then be still and listen. *What insight (idea, feeling, principle) emerges?*

**Pause to Share:** *Invite all to briefly share what they heard in this time.*

4. **Respond:** Invite each person, if they are comfortable, to express a brief prayer of response to the insight they sensed – ex. thanksgiving, praise, confession, repentance, request, desire, love.
5. **Rest:** Sit silently in the quiet. Feel God's loving gaze on you. He is happy to be with you. (~2 minutes) Close with a simple, "Amen."

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## Option 2: Small Group Discussion

Read **Luke 3:1-20** twice. Then discuss together:

- In your own words, summarize the problems that John identifies in the lives of his audience. What similarities do you see with our own time?
- As some of John's listeners must have been doing, how might we excuse ourselves from responding in repentance (see v 8)?
- John warns his listeners to "produce fruit in keeping with repentance" (v 8). What does this mean?
- What is the link between baptism and repentance (v 3; see Matthew 3:6,11)?
- What can we learn for our own lives from the examples of obedience John calls his listeners to take (v 10-14)?
- John recognizes how the importance of his work (calling people to repentance) is still only a precursor to the work of Jesus (v 15-16a).
  - What are some ways that we can seek to steal the spotlight from Jesus?
  - What is Jesus' work (v 16b-17), and why is it essential in God's kingdom agenda?
- What does John's demise (v 19-20) tell us about the risks of the gospel message?
- How is God speaking to you in this Scripture? How do you intend to respond?

### Practicing the Way of Jesus: A New Beginning for 2021

At the beginning of 2021, NLCC has heard two invitations: to **seek the Father's presence** (Jan 3, Luke 2:41-52), and to **repent from those things that get in the way of the coming of Jesus' kingdom in and around us** (Jan 10, Luke 3:1-20). This week, take 30-60 minutes to respond to these invitations. Begin with a few minutes of silence, praying Mary's prayer in Luke 1:38. Then pray or journal through the following questions.

1. *What is one practical habit I can implement in these early weeks of the year to seek the Father's presence in 2021? (e.g. Life Journaling, Nights of Worship and Prayer, Apprentice Group, etc.)*
2. *What attitude, behaviour, habit or excuse is God asking me to "leave behind" in 2020?*
3. *How might God want to use me to prepare the way for Jesus (and not for myself) in the lives of my neighbours in 2021?*

*Close by inviting Jesus to do his work in your life in 2021: "Lord Jesus, ignite the kingdom life, a fire, the Holy Spirit within [me], changing [me] from the inside out. ... Clean house—make a clean sweep of [my] life. ... Place everything true in its proper place before God; everything false ... put out with the trash to be burned." (see Luke 3:16-17, MSG).*

### Caring for One Another

- *What help do you need to overcome anticipated challenges in doing this practice?*
- *Do you or your family have a need that the Life Group can help meet?*

Using **Luke 1:38** or **the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13)** as a guide, based on what you've shared together, spend time listening to God and praying for one another.