

VICTORY

***"Some people look at things that are and ask why;
I dream of things that never were and ask, why not?"***

George Bernard Shaw, Irish playwright

"Every man dies; but not every man truly lives."

Sir William Wallace, 13th century Scottish patriot

"You may have to fight a battle more than once to win it."

Margaret Thatcher, British Prime Minister 1979 to 1991

***"For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The
weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world.***

***But thanks be to God! He gives us the victory
through our Lord Jesus Christ."***

Paul, Apostle of Jesus Christ, to the Corinthians, First Century A.D.

***"You ask, what is our aim? I can answer in one word: Victory -
victory at all costs, victory in spite of all terror,
victory, however long and hard the road may be;
for without victory, there is no survival."***

Winston Churchill, British Prime Minister, 13th May 1940

VICTORY STORY

*From Eden, Nazareth and Gethsemane,
to the British Isles at the close of the 20th century*

Here in the British Isles, we have a long history. Conflicts and peace, victory and defeat, economically, spiritually and politically. The theme of the July 1997 Quiet Time series is taken from the title of the 15th Anniversary Service of the London Church of Christ - "Victory". We have had our ups and downs, but praise God that where true discipleship of our Lord Jesus is followed, the end result is always the same - "Victory!" for the gospel and the saints who proclaim it! A congregation of 8 disciples in 1982 growing to over 16,000 in 60 churches spanning the British Commonwealth, First World, Third World, Hindu, Muslim and free countries - the facts proclaim an unparalleled victory, loudly and clearly, for the spread of the gospel, for which people everywhere should give thanks to God!

The Quiet Time series is taken from the book of Luke. Lessons will be drawn from the victorious birth of Jesus and Christianity against all the odds, and quotes from Britain's history used to inspire us, not politically, but in the spiritual battle God began in 1982 in the British Isles. The war began long ago in the Garden of Eden, and in the book of Luke we see its most incredible stage unfold as the Messiah is born.

The Quiet Time series is in four parts:

	<u>Luke chapter</u>	<u>Dates</u>
1. VICTORY - THE YEARS OF PREPARATION	1 - 6	July 1st to 9th
2. VICTORY PROCLAIMED	7 - 13	July 10th to 16th
3. THE LONG ROAD TO VICTORY	14 - 19:27	July 17th - 23 rd
4. JERUSALEM: VICTORY THROUGH SURRENDER	19:28 - 24	July 24th - 31st

On our journey with the disciples and with the angels who watched this journey progress, we will learn about a God whose purposes cannot be stopped; ordinary humans whom God used to accomplish his eternal purpose; other people whose lives were changed forever by contact with Jesus, and about a Saviour who won victory for us by his submission to his Father's will.

To benefit from this series you are encouraged

- (a) to set aside enough time each day to be able to concentrate on the passages and comments. Beneficial Bible study requires not just reading but meditation (Psalm 1:2, 2 Tim 2:7). Half an hour should be sufficient.
- (b) to take your own notes as you get insights
- (c) to do the projects and challenges, not legalistically but with the word in your heart. Beneficial Bible study means Bible study put into practice daily! (James 1:25)
- (d) to pray for God to use this series to change your life for ever.

And as we follow the story, living our lives for Jesus in July 1997, let's keep on our hearts the words of that old song, Victory in Jesus!

*I heard an old, old story, how a Saviour came from glory,
How he gave his life on Calvary to save a wretch like me,
I heard about his groaning, of his precious blood atoning,
Then I repented of my sins and won the victory!*

*Victory in Jesus, my Saviour, for ever!
He sought me and he bought me with his redeeming blood!
He loved me 'ere I knew him, and all my love is due him,
He plunged me to victory beneath the cleansing flood!*

Commitments Schedule for 21st September 1997 - “Dare to Dream”

The goal for every disciple is to have 2 visitors at 21st September. We need to all commit ourselves to making this goal, with leaders leading the way.

<u>Target Date</u>	<u>Target Commitments</u>	<u>Actual</u>
Sunday 13 th July (Victory Service)	2	
Sunday 27 th July	3	
Sunday 17 th August (Sunday 24 th Aug, conference)	4	
Sunday 31 st August	5	
Sunday 7 th September	6	
Sunday 21 st September	“Dare to Dream”	

Evangelism Schedule for 21st September 1997 - "Dare to Dream"

We all share the greatest dream of all - to see a lost world evangelised in this generation. We all have a personal dream to help as many people we meet go to heaven as possible. This year as we evangelise for our service on 21st September let us dare to dream of the Victory God can bring. Just think: if every disciple shared his or her faith with at least one person every day from now until the 21st September, we would have invited at least 139,410 people! The goal for every disciple is to have 2 visitors at the service. We need to all commit ourselves to making this goal, with leaders leading the way.

June

- Week 1* Mon 23rd **“Start your Chart”** Create a chart to record all your commitments for the 21st.
- Tues 24th **“Call and Commit All!”** Follow up on all who came to Secret of Success service on 22nd, and all who promised to come and didn’t, and invite them to Dare to Dream.
- Sat 28th **“Radical Sabbatical”** Take part in your Sector’s/church’s evangelism day

July

- Week 2* Tues 1st **“Pray Day”** Pray today for everyone in your follow-up book
- Sat 5th **“Scavenger Hunt”** Take part in your Sector’s/Church’s evangelism day
- Week 3* Sat 12th **“Six O’Clock News”** Invite at least 6 people today and share about it with another disciple at 6 pm

Sun 13th “VICTORY!” LCC 15th Anniversary Service, 12 noon, Apollo Theatre, Hammersmith

- Week 4* Sat 19th **“Salvation for Old Friends on You Depends!”** Follow up on old friends e.g. with cards, phonecalls. Include old school friends, colleagues etc...

Sat 19th CHURCHWIDE CHILDRENS’ MINISTRY FUN DAY

- Week 5* Tue 22nd **“Bring God to your Job”** Talk to colleagues today about your faith, inviting them to 21st

August

- Week 6* Sat 2nd **“Happy Families”** Invite all your relatives to the 21st

Sat 2nd AFRO-CARIBBEAN DAY, venue t.b.a.

- Week 7* Sat 9th **“Love Thy Neighbour”** Introduce yourself to at least 2 of your neighbours and invite them to 21st.

- Week 8* Thur/Fri 14th/15th **“Unite in the Fight”** Share your faith with your family group tonight

- Week 9* Sat 23rd **“No Fear”** Today, do something different out of character which forces you to be radical, e.g. preaching on the tube or inviting someone who really intimidates you.

Fri 22 - Sun 24th U.K. CHRISTIAN CONFERENCE, “The God who Dares”, Wembley, London

- Wk 10* Sat 30th **“Feel and Heal”** Have a conversation today with someone you know you is hurting e.g. someone who is homeless, ill, in hospital etc.

September

- Wk 11* Sat 6th **“Follow Up by Doubling Up”** Call all your commitments again today to make sure they are definitely coming to the 21st September.

- Wk 12* Sat 13th **“Talk Everywhere you Walk”** Invite someone during every journey you make today e.g. walking to the shops, travelling on the bus etc.

- Wk 13* 14th - 21st **“Pray Days”** Pray every day for every contact and commitment you have.

Part I

Victory - the Years of Preparation

In World War II, Winston Churchill, the British Prime Minister and his Cabinet plotted Hitler's defeat from the Cabinet War Rooms in Westminster. The free world and Western Civilisation as it had been known depended on their effort.

In the first 6 chapters of Luke, we see God's plan to rescue the world and defeat Satan being put into effect. On Day 9, you will be asked to write down how you see God's plan being revealed. Keep this in mind as you do the studies over the next 8 days.

Day 1 (Tues) The Victory Story. About our journalist. 21 Sept: Pray Day

The book of Luke was written by a companion of Paul's. Look up the passages referred to as we are introduced to our journalist of the Victory Story.

Luke was a doctor (Col 4:14) and companion of Paul for many years. He was a Greek-speaking Gentile (= non-Jew) by birth, who had received a good education and possessed considerable intellectual ability. He was probably one of the early converts of the first mission in Antioch or Lystra. Nothing is known about his life until he met Paul at Troas about AD51. From Troas (the City of Troy in ancient times) he went with Paul to Macedonia, where he became the Evangelist of the church in Philippi that was distinguished by its zeal and loyalty to its founder, Paul (Philippians 4: 10-20). The "brother" mentioned in 2 Cor 8:22 may have been Luke.

When Paul returned to Philippi on his third journey, Luke rejoined him and went with him to Palestine. During Paul's two-year stay in Jerusalem and imprisonment in Caesarea, Luke is not mentioned, but then he rejoins Paul on his journey to Rome and records their shipwreck experience together in Ac 27. He is mentioned in Colossians and Philemon, both letters written from Paul in prison. From this point on, we know little, except that he was with Paul at the end of Paul's life during his last imprisonment (2 Tim 4:11).

Now read Luke 1:1-4

Was Luke merely an academic? Why was it necessary to write this book? What were Luke's sources? Why is this significant? Going through his brief life history above, when do you think he had the opportunity to interview Mary and others who give us the material in Luke's gospel that is unique to Luke?

Can you name any other Gentiles who wrote the Bible? As a Gentile, which events in Jesus' life would he most appreciate? What sort of people would he most want to write about?

Notes:

Challenge/Prayer: Pray through every name in your follow-up list. Allow 10 minutes or more for this so you can pray for them each by name properly and specifically.

Day 2 (Wed)

God's Preparation - I

“God always gives the best to those who leave the choice to him.”

Luke 1:5-25. C: Elizabeth was barren, and she and her husband were well along in years (v.7). They had lost hope for having a child. But an angel appeared to Zechariah. The angel said in v.13 that “your prayer has been heard.” Q: Wouldn’t that be encouraging, if an angel appeared to you and said that God had heard *your* prayers? C: But Zechariah was not sure of this. It can’t have been a recent prayer. Probably, he and his wife had prayed earnestly about this when they were in their 30’s, and as they grew older, they gave up hope. But God had heard their earlier prayers and decided to answer it in their old age, for his glory!

Think about it. *If you were them, would you rather have had any old child at an early age, or wait a few years, have John the Baptist and a place in the Bible as part of God’s preparation for the Messiah? Zechariah learned that God often answers later in order to answer better. God always gives the best when you leave the choice to him!*

See Daniel chapter 10, esp. 12-13 for another example of God answering prayer immediately, but it taking a while for the answer to come to Daniel! See also Psalm 84:11 and 34:10.

Where else in the Bible does God prove he is the Lord of physical fruitfulness by giving children to women who are barren? There are at least three places...

Write down when last you brought someone to the Lord who is still faithful. If never, write never.

Notes:

Challenge: Write about something you had to wait a long time for in your life.

Prayer: Thank God that he has heard every one of your prayers to be fruitful (Isaiah 65:24). Fruit comes from God. Ask him to give you 2 commitments for 21st Sept by Sunday 13th July.

Day 3 (Thur)

God's Preparation - II

1. Nothing is impossible with God. Luke 1:26-38. C: V.26 says that God sent the angel Gabriel to a town called Nazareth. God loves all our own towns. He loves Rye, Woking, Stroud, Mevagissey, Cromer, Macclesfield, Tralee, Galashiels, Bakewell and Studland. But what is the sixth month? The sixth month of what?

Mary was not sure about this angel (v.29). But the angel told her to not be afraid (v.30) and that the Holy Spirit would make her pregnant (v.35). The angel said, "nothing is impossible with God." Think about that. Nothing is impossible for God. He can solve every problem in our lives. He can take care of our futures. He can make us fruitful. He can easily give you 2 commitments for Dare to Dream by Sun 13th. He can help people even in the most hopeless situations. We need to believe this, and to help others believe it, too.

2. Babies Are Alive Even in the Womb. Luke 1:39-45. C: As soon as Elizabeth heard Mary, baby John jumped in her womb (v.41,44). Clearly, this baby was alive, and he knew that Jesus was the Son of God. In the same way, babies are alive as soon as they are conceived in the womb. Abortion is wrong. It is the murder of a child. Birth control (using measures to prevent oneself from getting pregnant) is OK for married people, but abortion is a sin. And Elizabeth was very encouraging to Mary (v.45). Let's make sure we encourage all the pregnant people we know. It is a great gift from God to be expecting a child. The pain and the money are worth it.

3. Praise God in Prayer. Luke 1:46-80. C: Both Mary and Zechariah prayed amazing prayers. Every verse in their songs of praise are full of meaning. For example: Mary glorified God and rejoiced in him (vv.46-47); she thanked him for remembering her (v.48); she said that God's name is holy (v.49); she praised him for his mercy (v.50), and for the way he helps people of all generations (v.50); she praised God for his mighty deeds, and for how God opposes the proud (v.51); she was amazed at how God can pull down rulers and lift up nobodies (v.52); she thanked God for feeding the hungry (v.53); she thanked God for his love to the nation of Israel (vv.54-55).

We can learn from these great prayers. We, too, when we pray need to praise God from our hearts. Prayer should not simply be a list of requests from us, like a beggar on the road to a man in a car. Prayer is a conversation between child and Father. We must encourage God as we pray.

Notes:

Challenge: Encourage someone who is pregnant or has just had a child today.

Prayer: Pick either Mary's or Zechariah's song, and pray it to God today, meditating on the words and themes. If you can, try making up some music from your own heart as you sing it to God!

Day 4 (Fri)

D-Day!

“veni, vidi, vici” (I came, I saw, I conquered.)

1. Born in a Manger. Luke 2:1-7. C: There was a census taken during that time, and so everyone went to his home town (v.3). Joseph went back to Bethlehem from Nazareth (v.4). He and Mary went to register there (v.5). While they were there, baby Jesus was born (v.6). Because of all the people who had come to town, there was no room in the hotel. So they had to sleep outside, with the animals, and Jesus was placed in a manger, a hay-bin for feeding cattle (v.7). It is amazing. D-Day was the code name for “Deliverance Day”, the days when the Allies landed in France to begin the liberation of occupied Europe from the Nazis. In Luke 2 we read about another D-Day - “Delivery Day” for the baby Jesus! Yet the Son of God was not born in the Cromwell Hospital, London or a BUPA hospital. He was born into a bin of ordinary hay. God is so humble.

C: Jesus never demanded expensive things, or a nice place to live. He had no place to lay his head (Luke 9:57-58). Sometimes we complain because our bills are too high, or it is too hot, or we don’t have a car. We complain because we are tired, or thirsty, or we have a long journey to work or the Central line plays up. But Jesus lived without all of these things, and he was happy. Next time you feel like complaining, remember the Son of God.

2. Sing and be happy!. Luke 2:8-20 (the shepherds),. **Luke 2:21-40** (Simeon and Anna) What did the shepherds, Simeon and Anna *have in common?* What was *different* about their situations? Why did they all rejoice, and why did the angels rejoice?

When Jesus was born, the angels had a party! It was a great day. God had come to the earth.

Q: Do you rejoice when you think about Jesus? How would you feel if you met an angel? C: It was an amazing time to be alive when Jesus was born. And today, as the gospel spreads around the world, it is also a great time to be alive. We need to appreciate how lucky we are and celebrate, just like the angels.

3. Jesus Knew the Bible! Luke 2:41-52. C: Here is a very famous story from the life of Jesus. When he was twelve, the family went to Jerusalem for the Passover (v.42), where they lost him for 3 days. When they found him, he was sitting in the temple courts, talking to the teachers, asking them questions (v.46) This little episode about Jesus tells us a lot about his early life. His family was religious—they went every year to the Feast. And he loved God’s word from the beginning.

Notes:

Challenge: Go back over these Q.T. notes so far and write in notes for any day you have missed.. Making notes daily is a good habit to help you get the most out of your study. You can write in this booklet or in a fresh notebook. And for the brothers’ 2 Tim class, our challenge is to teach the Bible to someone else in a study in the next 7 days.

Prayer: Pray about the childhood of Jesus. Praise God for his birth, and that he was saved from being killed by Herod. Praise God that he learned to be a carpenter from Mary’s husband Joseph (Mark 6:3, Matthew 13:55). Praise God for your childhood, thanking him for how he prepared you to become a disciple!

1. The Herald's Message. Luke 3:1-9. C: John the Baptist was related to Jesus (Luke 1:36). He was also Jesus' herald, telling people to be ready for what was to come. He went out and preached that people needed to repent (v.3) John was a radical prophet. He called people to produce fruit in keeping with their repentance (v.8). He warned them that God's axe was ready to cut them down if they did not change (v.9). C: John clearly taught that repentance is not just saying "sorry, bro." When we repent, our behaviour changes, and everyone can see it. There is fruit from our repentance. Q: Think about your life. What is the #1 area in your life you need to change? Are you good at confessing, but never change and then do the same things again and again? Are you discouraged, or do you believe you can change? God can do great things through you when you decide to be different.

2. Repentance Is Practical. Luke 3:10-20. C: The crowd asked John for advice (v.10). He told them that the man who has much wealth should share with poorer people (v.11). He told tax collectors not to cheat (vv.12-13). He told soldiers not to threaten people for money (v.14), and to be happy with their pay. He explained that the Messiah would come soon (v.16). John was totally humble. He admitted that he was nothing, and Jesus was everything (v.16). He said, "I don't even deserve to untie his sandals" (v.16). Very few religious leaders today would say, "I am nothing, but someone else is awesome." But John had a deep love for the truth.

C: Repentance is not a warm feeling in our hearts. Repentance leads to practical decisions in our lives. When a person becomes a Christian, his life changes. Jesus becomes #1. He starts having quiet times. He gives up sin. He starts sharing his possessions with others, and giving money to God. He starts telling others about God. But sometimes, after we start to change, we slip back into our old ways. Q: Think about it. Have you slipped back?

3. God Encouraged Jesus. Luke 3:21-38. C: Some of us did not have encouraging human fathers. Some of us did not grow up with our fathers at all. God is a father to all of us now. How did he encourage Jesus? Are you encouraged when you think of your heavenly father? He loves us even when we mess up. But when we do special things to please him, he breaks through and we feel his pleasure. Have you ever done something for God where you knew he was smiling at you?

C: Also, we see in vv.23-38 that God had been working out his plan for the salvation of the world for 1000s of years, preparing for the birth of Jesus. He's been working 1000s of years to lead to our births, too! He's loved us for a long time. You are where you are today because God has put you there. It is very encouraging to think how much God personally cared about us, and how he has worked to make sure that we are saved.

Notes:

Challenge: Take part in today's Scavenger Hunt. . (If you can't make it due to work, make sure you get a copy of the Scavenger list so you can be unified with the group and do it in on you own or with another disciple at another time today.) Later today, write down the names of 10 people you spoke to.

- | | |
|----|-----|
| 1. | 6. |
| 2. | 7. |
| 3. | 8. |
| 4. | 9. |
| 5. | 10. |

Prayer: Your life has changed in many ways since your baptism. Thank God for all the ways that your behaviour has changed since you've become a disciple.

Day 6 (Sun)

Personal Preparation

“If you can meet with triumph and disaster, and treat those two imposters just the same...

*If you can keep your head when all around are losing theirs
.. you’ll be a man, my son.”*

*Today we see Jesus facing four trials: 1. Temptation 2. Praise from men 3. Patronising family
4. Persecution They prepared him for what lay ahead.*

1. Temptation. Luke 4:1-13. C: Jesus fasted for 40 days in the desert (v.2). Q: Have you decided a day to fast yet, like we challenged you on July 2? C: Make sure you set aside a time to fast. It will change your life. C: When Jesus fasted, the devil tempted him. He told Jesus to make the stones into bread (v.3). He told Jesus that he would become wealthy if he worshipped Satan instead of God (v.7). Satan tried to make Jesus arrogantly jump off the temple (v.9). Jesus was tired, alone, and hungry. Satan chose the perfect time to tempt him. It was the beginning of his ministry. He had not yet had great victories. That is just the way Satan works. He tempts us as soon as we are baptised. He tempts us when we are sick, alone, and discouraged. He will tempt you when you least expect it. Verse 13 says that he left Jesus so that he could come again and tempt him at “an opportune time.” C: Jesus faced each of these temptations by quoting the Bible to Satan. Q: Are you resisting temptation in your life through the Word of God? Or are you giving in?

2. Praise from men. Luke 4:14-21. C: Jesus went into a synagogue and started reading the book of Isaiah (v.17). He announced that the Scripture was fulfilled by himself (v.21)! This was confident. He believed that he was the one chosen to preach good news to the poor, to proclaim freedom, and recovery of sight, and to release the oppressed (v.18). Jesus really believed that he had been chosen by God. Do you believe that God has chosen you? The Bible says in 2 Thess 2:13-14 that you have been chosen by God. When you believe this, you will share your faith confidently with everyone you meet, no matter how impressive they may seem.

3. Patronising family. Luke 4:22

4. Persecution. Luke 4:23-44. C: At first the people loved his message (v.22). But then he specifically challenged them (vv.23-27). He told them that Israel had often rejected the truth, and so God had gone outside Israel to find righteous people. Jesus was not afraid of opposition. As a result, the people angrily tried to throw him over a cliff (vv.28-29). But by God’s grace, he escaped. Make a decision never to be intimidated by opposition.

He went to a new town. Did he change his approach or conviction? (v.32) Did he ever slow down? (v.44) Why not? (v.43) Did he only preach? (v.38 -41) But what was his mission? (v.43) Remember, by next Sunday our goal is to have 2 commitments each for 21st. God can give it to us, but are we being like Jesus going out purposefully to seek and save the lost?

Notes:

Challenge: Have a visitor at Church with you today.

Prayer: Jesus did many great miracles. Praise God for all of his miracles that you can remember.

Day 7 (Mon)

Summon the Troops

*“He never marshalled an army, drafted a soldier, or fired a gun -
Yet no leader ever made more volunteers.”*

1. The Calling of the First Disciples. Luke 5:1-11. Up to this point, Jesus did it all on his own. Now he realises through the Holy Spirit that he needs to call disciples to help him spread the message and to be a model to the world of his Kingdom on earth. So he calls Peter, and later in this chapter, several others. He summons the troops!

C: What reaction did Jesus get from Peter at the beginning? (v.8). Sometimes we feel like running away from Jesus and his church. We feel like failures. We feel guilty. But that is the time Jesus says to us, “don’t be afraid, from now on you will catch men (v.10).” Peter and the guys pulled their boats on shore, left everything, and followed Jesus! It must have been incredible! Did Jesus offer them power? Money? Prestige? Just the opposite! What did he offer that made Peter and the others change their minds and sign up as his volunteer disciples?.

2. The Man With Leprosy. Luke 5:12-16. C: A man with no hope approached Jesus. He had leprosy. He asked Jesus to help (v.12). He had been rejected by the world, but the Lord did not reject him. Jesus said, “I am willing. Be clean!” (v.13). Jesus had the power even to heal the lepers. He had compassion and felt this man’s pain. In the same way, he feels your pain and my pain. The news about Jesus spread more and more (v.15). But no matter how busy he was, Jesus always took time out to pray. Q: Do you take time to pray every day? C: We all need God.

3. Jesus Heals a Paralytic. Luke 5:17-26. C: Some men tried to bring a paralytic to Jesus. But the crowd was in the way (v.19). They did not let this stop them. They really wanted their friend to get to Jesus. So they went up on the roof, and made a hole in the roof. Q: Can you imagine if someone broke into your home through the roof? C: Imagine if someone came into your family group through the roof because there were too many visitors! These guys were fired up. Jesus forgave this man because of **their** faith (v.20). If **we** really have faith, we can help others to be healed by Jesus. We’ve got to believe that the people we bring to church can change. Our faith can impress Jesus enough for him to change them.

4. The Calling of Levi. Luke 5:27-32. C: Here again we see that Jesus personally shared his faith. Jesus did not look at him in a worldly way. He saw an opportunity for God to work in a great way. So he invited Levi. And Levi came with Jesus! Then Levi invited all his friends to meet Jesus (v.29).

C: Some people complained that Jesus spent a lot of time with sinners (v.30). He explained that he was a doctor, and that he spent time only with the spiritually sick (v.31). Jesus did not come to call people who think that they are righteous, but those who know that they are in need of help (v.32).

Why did people want to spend a lot of time with Jesus? Write down at least 3 things about Jesus that made people want to follow him. Also write down who got critical. Do you think they had many friends? What sort of friends do you think they had? Were Jesus’ friends easy to get on with? Does Jesus love you?

Notes:

Challenge: Write about what made you want to follow Jesus.

Prayer: Pray to have a heart to love every kind of person, the way Jesus did.

Day 8 (Tues)

Appointing the Officers

“You have deeply ventured; but all must do so who would greatly win.”

1. Do Good Every Day. Luke 6:1-11. Why were the religious leaders upset? Was Jesus sinning? No. He simply did good every day. Q: Think about it. Are you afraid of people who criticise you? Or do you have the courage to do the right thing, even if people do not like it? Do you do things more for people, or for God? Which motivation makes you more secure? Why?

2. Appointing the Apostles. Luke 6:12-16. C: Just like we do sometimes, Jesus spent the night praying to God (v.12). He had an important decision to make, and he needed God’s guidance. He had to choose his 12 apostles, the 12 main leaders of the movement of God. Why did it take him all night to pray? Do you have peace in your heart about your future? About your children? About your dream? About your career? About your role in the Kingdom? Are there any issues in your life that you have prayed through fully and do not yet have peace about?

C: It is encouraging to see that in our movement we also have a main group of leaders, the “World Sector Leaders.” These men have a great love for Jesus, and a great love for each other. They will lead us to evangelise the world in this generation.

3. Blessings and Woes. Luke 6:17-26. Jesus told us to leap for joy if we are persecuted. Q: Do you feel happy when someone opposes you? Do you leap for joy? C: Let’s make a decision that the next time we get spiritual opposition, we will leap for joy!

4. Love Your Enemies. Luke 6:27-36. C: This passage contains some of Jesus’ most revolutionary teachings. It does not occur in any other world religion!!! Here he tells us to love our enemies and do good to those who hate us! He says to be kind to those who abuse us, and pray for those who mistreat us (vv.27-28). This is an amazing teaching! The world does not know how to love its friends. Jesus teaches us to love even our enemies. What an awesome God we serve!

What sort of people do you find it hardest to love? v.36 Are you glad God loves the ungrateful and wicked?

5. Do Not Judge. Luke 6:37-45. C: Jesus warns us against judging others here (v.37). If things are going well in our lives, we are tempted to judge and criticise others.

C: Verses 39-40 show us the key to Christian growth (discipleship). They say that a student will become like his teacher. Q: Are you changing to become more and more like your discipler? Do you imitate them? Do you think, “what would my discipler do in my situation?” Or do you criticise them, getting attitudes (v.41)? C: Bad attitudes will destroy us spiritually. Jesus warns us to take the plank out of our own eyes before we criticise others (v.42).

6. The Wise and Foolish Builders. Luke 6:46-49. C: Many people call Jesus, “Lord,” but they do not obey his words. We must make sure that we are building our Christian lives on the right foundation, Jesus Christ.

Notes:

Challenge: Do something kind for someone without them knowing. Perhaps make an anonymous gift in an envelope or clean up after someone at work or at home.

Prayer: Pray for the people who have hurt you the most in this world. Pray that God will bless them.

Day 9 (Wed)

And it will be done

“Our mandate from the Prime Minister is to destroy the Axis forces in North Africa; I have seen it written on half a sheet of notepaper. And it will be done. If anyone here thinks it can't be done, let him go at once; I don't want any doubters in this party. It can be done, and it will be done; beyond any possibility of doubt.”

Today we will be re-reading **the first six chapters of Luke**.

God had a plan. Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden (Gen 3), and were expelled. Their son Cain murdered his brother Abel. By Chapter 6, the earth was so wicked that God sent a flood to wipe out mankind because he was so grieved by man's sin. After the flood, man in his arrogance starts to build cities and towers to try to reach God, and to frustrate them, God broke up their common language in Genesis 11.

In Genesis 12, the curse is reversed. God promises to bless the whole world and rescue man from sin. He will do this through the offspring of his servant Abraham. The Bible tells us that God works out everything in conformity with the purpose of his will (Eph 1:11).

Through the OT, God taught the Hebrews the principles of sacrifice, faithfulness and righteousness and made them aware of sin. His plan was always to bring Jesus to the earth to be that sacrifice, the Lamb of God, that takes away our sins.

“Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world.” John 1:29

“you were redeemed...with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish and defect. He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake..” 1 Peter 1:18-21

“No, we speak of God's secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.” 1 Cor 1: 7,8

Could world events stop the victory of Jesus when he came to the earth? Do you believe world events can stop God's plan today? What evidence do you have that the opposite is true, that God is using world events to facilitate the evangelisation of the world in our lifetime?

As you go back over **the first six chapters of Luke**, write about all the ways you can see the hand of God

1. preparing the way for Jesus,
2. fulfilling Scripture, and
3. preparing for the evangelisation of the world after Jesus' ascension to heaven

Notes:

Challenge: Be happy today

Prayer: Pray for world evangelism. Pray especially for religious freedom to come to the Middle East and China.

Part II

VICTORY PROCLAIMED

Luke was a Gentile (non-Jew). He was the only Gentile to write part of the Bible. Prior to Jesus, all Gentiles were outsiders, and made to feel that way. That's why he really appreciated Jesus. As you would expect, he stresses in his gospel that Jesus is good news for the outsider. In this part, we will see Jesus with his disciples going about bringing good news to the poor, women, sick, hungry and outcasts of society. He sends his disciples out twice to proclaim the good news of this new kingdom.

Day 10 (Thur)

Good News for the Only Child

1. The Faith of the Centurion. Luke 7:1-10. C: This is the only man in the Bible who amazed Jesus by his faith (v.9). Let's see why. In this world, most masters would fire their servants if they were sick. But he cared. And Jesus noticed this. When Jesus came close to his house, the centurion sent friends to tell him, "Do not bother to come. Just say the word, and my servant will be healed" (vv.6-8). He knew that Jesus could do anything, though he never saw him. He really believed. Q: Do you have real faith today?

2. Jesus Raises a Widow's Son. Luke 7:11-17. Women and children receive special notice in Luke's gospel. Three times Jesus performed miracles on an only child. (Luke 7:12, 8:42 and 9:38) This was one of these. Does Jesus' compassion move you? Jesus had that special, gentle, kind touch with people. Can you see how he showed it? Q: Do you help others? Do you do special things for them? Do you comfort them when they are sad like Jesus did for this woman?

3. Even John the Baptist Doubted. Luke 7:18-23. C: The amazing thing we see here is that even a man as awesome as John the Baptist had doubts sometimes. He was weak, like you and me. But he saw the greatness of Jesus, and died as a martyr for God. The next time you have doubts, remember that even John had his doubts in his dirty prison cell. But Jesus reminded him of his miracles to help John get fired up!

4. Eating and Drinking. Luke 7:24-35. C: John was serious and hard-line, like a man singing a funeral dirge (v.33). Jesus had a great time, laughing, eating and drinking (v.34). And the people rejected both of them. C: If you spend your Christian life trying to become popular or accepted by the world, you will never succeed! However, so long as we are not sinning or becoming distracted from our purpose, God wants us to enjoy the creative, sporting and other gifts he gives us.

5. Jesus and a Sinful Woman. Luke 7:36-50. Jesus told Simon a story about two men who were both bankrupt, but for different amounts. The man cancelled the debts of both (v.42). Jesus asked Simon, "who will love the man more?" Simon said that the man who owed more money would love the moneylender more. He thought he did not owe God very much. However, both were bankrupt. The woman just appreciated it more because she was humble. Jesus made the woman feel secure

Notes:

Challenge: Find someone who is sad today and reach out to them with compassion. It could be someone you know or someone you just happen to see today in your city.

Prayer: Ask God for a miracle by a certain date. Believe he can do it, just as the centurion believed.

Day 11 (Fri)

Good News for the Outcast

“There are no setbacks in the Christian life; only lessons to be learned.”

1. The Parable of the Sower. Luke 8:1-15. C: Jesus was supported in his work from his followers' own money (v.3). We all must give our contribution so that the gospel can be preached. Q:? Do you give 10% of your income to help spread the gospel?

C: The thorns and weeds choke the seed on the third soil (v.7). Life's worries, riches, and pleasures can distract disciples from the truth, and they gradually fall away (v.14). Q: Think about it. Are you getting choked spiritually? Or are you growing stronger and stronger? The final kind of seed hear the word, and by persevering produce a crop of new souls (v.15). Q: Have you been persevering in your evangelism? Or do you quit easily? Have you been doing your follow-ups? C: We must never quit. We cannot judge who is open and who is not open.

2. The Lamp on a Stand. Luke 8:16-18. C. In the same way, God does not want those he has lighted (Christians) to be covered up. He wants us to show the world our faith! Q: Are you shining like Jesus' light in this lost world?

3. Jesus' Mother and Brothers. Luke 8:19-21. C Jesus did not allow his family to pull him away from the work God had given him. Q: Do you get intimidated by your family when they oppose you?

4. Jesus Calms the Storm. Luke 8:22-25. C Jesus can calm every storm in your life. Trust him. He is in your boat, and he won't let you sink.

5. The Healing of the Demon-Possessed Man. Luke 8:26-39. C: Jesus loved this man in a personal way. He asked him, “what is your name?” (v.30). When he had healed him, Jesus told the man to return home and preach about what God had done for him (v.39). C: In the same way, we also can share the story of how God has changed our lives.

6. A Dead Girl and a Sick Woman. Luke 8:40-56. C She had the faith to reach through the crowd and touch Jesus (v.44), and his power healed her. Jesus explained that her faith had healed her (v.48). Faith is not simply an intellectual belief in God. It is a belief that changes our behaviour. It makes us reach out for God and try to touch him. If we believe, he can do anything in our lives, too.

Notes:

Challenge: Be a lamp on a stand to a family. Invite someone with children to the Children's Ministry Fun day next Saturday 19th July.

Prayer: Pray for the mentally ill and clinically depressed, and all who are lonely.

“Every man dies; but not every man truly lives”

“Personally, I’m always ready to learn, although I do not always like being taught.”

1. Jesus Sends Out the Twelve. Luke 9:1-9. C: What was the plan? What were they told to do? What not to do? What did Jesus want to teach them? Did they use advertising?

It is exciting to see that the early disciples did the ministry in the same way that we do it today. They went to people’s homes, they preached, they ate together, and they left the people who were not open. Let’s make sure that we are active in reaching out to others today as we invite “six before six” and as we go to their homes to teach them the Bible and follow up on them.

2. Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand. Luke 9:10-17. C: It must have been so exciting to see the bread and fish multiply so that everyone could eat. They must have been so happy, sitting together with Jesus, sharing their hearts and lives together. We can see from this example that God can take the little that we have and do a lot with it if we let him.

3. Peter’s Confession of Christ. Luke 9:18-27. C The crowds weren’t sure who Jesus was, but Peter knew that Jesus is the Son of God. Being disciple is not natural for any of us. You cannot follow Jesus just as you are. You will have to deny at least some of your own desires! (v.23) V. 24 teaches that you have to die to yourself to have eternal life.

4. The Transfiguration. Luke 9:28-36. C: As usual, Jesus went to pray. But this time he took three disciples, Peter, James and John, and they went to a special place. Q: Do you have a special place to pray? Is it private? Do you have awesome times with God? Or are you like the disciples, falling asleep (v.32)?

5. Competitiveness. Luke 9:37-45. C: Jesus cared about an impossible situation. As a parent, what is your worst fear for your children? The disciples tried to heal the boy, but they failed (v.40). But Jesus healed the boy. *There is no problem Jesus cannot solve.*

Read **Luke 9:46-56.** C: The disciples were arguing about who was the greatest (v.46). Why? What had just happened in v.40? Were they humble after their failure? How can you tell?

Then in v. 49, they get self-righteous. Someone outside the group was doing better than they had done in v.40. So they got critical! Then they got harsh with the Samaritans. How do you react when someone does better than you, or when you find out you have a lot to learn?

6. The Cost of Following Jesus. Luke 9:57-62. C: Jesus cares about funerals. He raised the widow of Nain’s son from the dead (Luke 7). He went to Lazarus’ tomb (John 11). But we must never let preparations for funerals, births, and weddings come ahead of God. Similarly, in v.61, a man asked to say “good-bye” to his family. Jesus told him that we must not start ploughing in the kingdom and then look back. If we plough with our eyes looking back, we’ll make a mess of the field.

Notes:

Challenge: Reach out to 6 people today, and share about it with another disciple at 6 p.m. You could do this in person or on the phone.

Prayer: Go find a special place and have a great prayer, just like Jesus did on the Mount of Transfiguration. Pray about Moses, Elijah, Jesus, and Peter, praising God for them!

Day 13 (Sun) Good News and Rejoicing!
“Victory!” LCC 15th Anniversary service, Apollo Theatre, 12 noon

1. Jesus Sends Out the 72. Luke 10:1-16. C: There had been 12. Now there were 72. Amen! We see Jesus’ disciples multiplying. And they are not just converts who come to meetings, but real disciple who help Jesus preach the word and heal. Every true disciple must go out to preach and heal.

2. True Joy. Luke 10:17-24. C: The 72 disciples came back totally fired up. In today’s service, we will all be celebrating like these disciples did! God had blessed their work incredibly. And God has blessed us too! When Jesus heard this, he told them that God was with them (v.19). While he did not say it was wrong for them to rejoice like this, he stressed that they should have a permanent joy coming not from the results of their work, but rather from the fact that they are saved (v.20). Even if everyone we invite does not come and our friends fall away and we lose our jobs, we can still be happy because we are going to heaven.

C: When Jesus prayed in v.21, he prayed with joy that God had revealed the truth to simple people and children rather than the wise and learned. Look around you at Church today. It is amazing to think of all the educated, rich and famous people in Britain. **Yet God has chosen us to be saved and to be his messengers to Britain!** We are simple, ordinary people, but God loves us! Praise his name.

C: In vv.23-24, he reminded his disciples that many prophets and righteous men had longed to see Jesus’ day, but they did not see it. In the same way, today we are living in awesome times. The gospel is being preached all over the world. We will have churches in every country with a city of 100,000 or more people by the year 2000. We are planting churches in all the 1-million cities of the world in the next 10 years. For 2000 years people have waited for a movement like this, and now we are lucky enough to be a part of it!

3. The Good Samaritan. Luke 10:25-37. C: The religious people left this bleeding man on the side of the road (vv.31-32). But a Samaritan man came and helped the man. He felt pity on him (v.33). There is pain all around us in Britain and Ireland. We must not just be into numbers and techniques. We must feel pity on the people that we see. Are you ready to help people today? Or are you too busy with to notice their needs? Are you too overwhelmed about your own problems to think about the needs of others?

C: Jesus explained that the Samaritan had acted like a true neighbour to the injured man (v.37). He told the religious man that he should also do this if he wanted eternal life (v.37).

4. Mary and Martha. Luke 10:38-42. C (v.39,42). Q: Who are you in this story? Are you Martha, tense and busy? Or are you Mary, sitting at the feet of Jesus? C: It is possible to be busy doing things for Jesus, but still not doing the right thing. We must have good quiet times, not just run around. Q: How are your quiet times? Are you happy, or are you getting bad attitudes? C: The good news is that you can change now and become like Mary.

Challenge: Write down your name below as you would like it to appear in the book of life!

Notes:

Prayer: Pray for today’s service, for Doug Arthur and his family, for our elders and Church leaders as they seek to serve God and us.

Day 14 (Mon)

Good News for those who Pray

“It is necessary only for the good man to do nothing for evil to triumph.”

1. Teach Us to Pray. Luke 11:1-13. C: Jesus was praying, and his disciples came and asked him to teach them to pray (v.1). He gave them a sample prayer in verses 2-4. From this prayer, we can see that Jesus prayed using a structure. He started by praising God in v.2. Then he asked that the kingdom should come to earth (the church should grow!). In v.3, he prayed for daily bread. In v.4, he told them to pray about their sins, and about those who had sinned against them. C: It is difficult to just randomly pray for one hour. But if we pray with a structure, we can pray a long time.

C: In vv.5-10, Jesus told a parable to explain how we should be bold in prayer. If we go to a friend at midnight and ask him for bread, he won't get up for us out of friendship. But if we keep bothering him, he'll get up because of our boldness (v.8). In the same way, if we ask, God will answer us when we pray (v.9). If our son asks for a fish, we would not give him a snake. If he asked for an egg, we would not give him a scorpion. So God will give us, his children, the Holy Spirit and everything else when we ask him (vv.11-13).

2. Fill Up Your Life With Righteousness. Luke 11:14-28. When evil is driven out of a man, it searches for a new place to live. Then it tries to go back to the man. If the house is empty, it goes into the house with 7 other evil spirits (v.26). And the man is even worse off than before. This is what happens to us when we get rid of sin in our lives, but we don't replace it with good things. We must fill up our lives with righteousness: helping the poor, praying, loving people, serving others, evangelism, teaching others the truth. See Galatians 5: 16 - 26 if you want to study this more.

2. The Sign of Jonah. Luke 11:29-32. C: Jesus expected people to repent and change in response to his message alone. This is important for many religious people to understand. The only sign he would give was his own death and resurrection on the third day.

3. The Lamp of the Body. Luke 11:33-36. C: If your eyes are good (if they see good things), then your whole body will be full of light (v.34). But if your eyes are bad (that is, if they focus on bad things), then your whole body will be dark (v.34). The way we look at things is very important. We must assume the best about others. We must not be critical and negative, and learn to trust. We must see the good and the beauty in things, just like Jesus.

4. Six Woes. Luke 11:37-54. C: The dinner guests were into their image, doing the bare minimum, and no-one knew their hearts. They also tried to keep people who were interested from following Jesus. Often our most zealous opponents are religious people too! Let's make sure that none of these woes can describe our lives. Be open and honest, real disciples.

Challenge: Jesus taught his disciples to pray using a structure. Make a structure for your prayers, writing it below. Perhaps it might be: • Praise. • Thanksgiving. • Problems. • Sins/character. • Family group members. • Church Leaders. • Lost.

•
Members of family; people at work. Write down your structure:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Prayer: God gave us many great stories in the Old Testament, like that of Jonah. Praise God for all the great Old Testament stories that you can remember.

Day 15 (Tues)

Good News for the Poor

1. Watch Out for Hypocrisy. Luke 12:1-12. C: Thousands had gathered, but Jesus focused on his own disciples. He warned them of the danger of hypocrisy (v.1). He explained that all of our words and actions will one day be exposed (vv.2-3). We must not fear those who can kill the body (v.4), but we must fear the God who can send us to hell (v.5). But in case that overwhelms us, Jesus tells us God even knows about the sparrows (v.6); and we are worth much more than that to God! He wants us to repent.

2. The Rich Fool. Luke 12:13-21. C: This story is important for so many people in the British Isles today. A man was fighting with his brother about inheritance money (v.13). Jesus explained that he is not the judge of such things. But he told the man a parable to warn him of the danger of greed. In the parable, God called the rich man a fool (v.20). He was more concerned about money and position than God. The lessons are clear: life is more than the amount of money we have (v.15), and we must be rich and generous towards God (v.21)

3. Do Not Worry. Luke 12:22-34. C: We are all so tempted to worry about our jobs, futures, money, problems, etc. But worrying will not even add 1 hour to our lives (v.25). Lilies do not worry, but God clothes them (v.26). We must not set our hearts on food and drink (v.29). That is what pagans run after (v.30). God knows that we have needs. He takes care of these needs himself. We do not need to be tense and worried. Instead, we should seek his kingdom (v.31).

C: Verses 32-34 are very inspiring. He tells us to sell our possessions and give to the poor. He tells us that our treasure shows where our heart will also be. Let's make sure that God is our treasure, not our comfortable life.

4. Be Ready. Luke 12:35-48. C: Jesus told them to be ready for his return (v.36). Jesus explains that he will come back at an unexpected time (v.40), so we should be ready all the time

5. Jesus Brings Division. Luke 12:49-53. C: These are surprising words. Jesus says here that he has come to bring fire to the earth, not peace (v.49,51). Most people think of Jesus as a gentle peacemaker. But actually he is a radical preacher. He explains that his message will divide families (vv.52-53). Have you faced opposition from your family? At work? Your neighbours? At college? How are you reacting to the persecution? Have you compromised? Or would Jesus be proud of you?

6. Get Your Relationships Right. Luke 12:54-59. Is there anyone today that you do not like? If there is, it is time to "try hard" to make things right between you (v.58). Q: Do you have very many friends in the church? If you don't, it is time to find many great new friends in the church. Make the time to be close to several people, so that you won't have to depend on the main leaders.

Notes:

Challenge: The rich fool was worried about his money, but not his soul. God commanded that we sell our possessions and give to the poor (Luke 12:33). Go give a possession to a poor person, or sell it and give the money to the poor.

Prayer: Pray for your financial situation. Thank God for your job, your house, your money. Pray to be generous towards others. Pray about the poor in India, Pakistan and Bangladesh who we are giving to next month.

Day 16 (Wed)

No Turning Back.

“U-turn if you want to. The lady’s not for turning.”

“I am not hard - I am frightfully soft. But I will not be hounded.”

1. Expert or Example. Luke 13:1-9. C: In the newspapers today, we can read all kinds of bad news. It is interesting to discuss other people today, as it was in Jesus’ time. What challenges did he give the “discussers”? Why did he tell them twice? Why did he then tell them the parable in verses 6-9? How did it relate to them? If you have been a Christian more than a year and not been fruitful, why not? Are you more an “Expert” or an “Example” of fruitfulness in the Kingdom?

2. A Crippled Woman. Luke 13:10-17. C: A woman who had been crippled for 18 years came to Jesus. When he saw her, he healed her. The Pharisees hated this, because it was done on a Sabbath. Jesus felt her suffering (v.16—“18 long years”). Jesus saw her faith (v.16—“daughter of Abraham”), and he healed her. Don’t you feel mad at the Pharisees’ response? They were blinded by religious tradition.

3. The Spreading Kingdom. Luke 13:18-21. From last Sunday’s service and the brochure you received, how is God’s movement today like this? Is HOPE like the shelter the tree gives birds?

4. The Narrow Door. Luke 13:22-30. C: A man asked Jesus if only a few people would be saved (v.22). Jesus told him the same thing he told everyone else: **you** must make every effort to go to heaven, or **you** will not make it. Don’t discuss others’ sin or lostness: help them be saved!

5. No turning back. Luke 13:31-35. C: Jesus got the bad news that Herod wanted to kill him. But even this did not discourage him. Instead, he announced that he would continue preaching and healing people until he reached Jerusalem (v.32). He would not let anything stop him from reaching his goal. That should be our attitude as disciples: “nothing will stop me from reaching my goals as a disciple.”

In vv.34-35, as Jesus thought about Jerusalem, he cried out for it. He longed to be a parent to the city, gathering her chicks under his protective wings. But the people were not eager for it! They had missed God’s time of coming to them.

Challenge: What dreams have you prayed about this year, perhaps New Year’s Resolutions, that you have given up on? Write one down.

Notes:

Prayer: Start praying for this thing every day for the rest of July.

Part III

THE LONG ROAD TO VICTORY

“We shall fight them on the beaches, we shall fight on the landing grounds, we shall fight in the fields and in the streets, we shall fight in the hills; we shall never surrender.”

After he had said this, Churchill covered up the microphone and added, *“And if we can’t do that we’ll hit them on the head with bottles!”*

In the following chapters Jesus continues discipling, teaching about the nature of God and raising the profile of the widows, the sinners and tax collectors. He also confronts the Pharisees’ hypocrisy and re-emphasises the cost of discipleship.

Day 17 (Thur)

The Generous Host

1. Jesus at a Pharisees’ House. Luke 14:1-14. C: As Luke in 7, Jesus again went to a rich Pharisee’s house. He was being watched (v.2). So he healed a man (v.4). And then he told them that they should not fight with each other for the places of honour at the table (v.10). He explained the importance of humility, not pride.

2. The Parable of the Great Banquet. Luke 14:15-24. C: Here is a great parables about excuses. God is the master in this story. The disciples are the servants. The world are the invitees. Everyone is invited. Then it is time for the follow-ups (v.17). But people are not ready. One by one they come up with lame excuses why they couldn’t come. One wanted to see a field (he could have done that when he bought it—v.18). Another wanted to try out his oxen (he should have done that before, too—v.19.) Another just got married (he didn’t think of bringing his new wife to the banquet—v.20). God views all excuses in the same way: “all alike” (v.18). The master was upset. He told the servants to find new people. He wanted a full house (v.23). In the same way, we must keep persevering when we invite people. We must follow up with old contacts. We must challenge their excuses. We must invite many new people.

3. The Cost of Being a Disciple. Luke 14:25-35. C: This is one of the most challenging passages in the Bible. Here Jesus says that we must “hate” our families and lives to be his disciples. This does **not** mean that we should go home after our baptisms and say, “Hi mom & dad. I hate you.” But it does mean that we should love Jesus so much more than everyone and everything else that by comparison, our love for other people and things looks like hatred compared to our love for God (Matthew 10:37-38). Verse 33 is super-challenging. A disciple must give up everything to follow Jesus.

Challenge: God didn’t accept the people’s excuses when he invited them to the great banquet. Follow up on at least 3 contacts, and challenge them to overcome their excuses and come on Sunday! And tell them about 21st Sept too! (Remember our goal of having 3 commitments each by Sunday 27th July.) Write their names:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Prayer: Pray that you will never make excuses in your Christian life. Pray for personal fruit by August 31st. Pray for the contacts that you wrote down above.

Day 18 (Fri)

The Generous Father

1. Lost Sheep and Coins. Luke 15:1-10. C: Jesus was spending time with sinners, and people criticised him (v.2). So he told two stories to show how much God loves the lost. He spoke about a shepherd with 100 sheep. This man leaves the 99 sheep to find the one lost sheep. He doesn't quit easily—he goes after it “until he finds it” (v.4). And when he finds it, he carries it home and celebrates (v.6). In the same way, God has a party in heaven whenever someone repents (v.7). The second story is about a lady with 10 coins. She loses one. But she keeps searching the house until she finds her lost coin. And she also celebrates when she finds it (v.10). That is how God feels about the lost. That is how we should feel, too. We must keep searching for the lost until God gives us a fruit. If one study bombs out, we should find someone else. If someone comes once, we must get them to come twice. We must follow up zealously, and invite people persuasively. God loves the lost; so we must also love them.

2. The Lost Son. Luke 15:11-24. C: Jesus told another parable to show God's love for the lost. There was a greedy son, who got his father to give him his inheritance even before the father died (vv.11-12). This boy went off and partied, wasting all the money his father had given him (v.13). Then he was in trouble, and he had to get a job feeding pigs. He sat in the mud with the pigs, discouraged and hungry (v.16). Finally, he decided to go back and apologise (vv.17-19). But his father was already waiting for him with open arms (v.20). That is how God welcomes the lost into the kingdom. He hugs them and forgets the past completely. The waters of baptism are the beginning of a new life of forgiveness and joy.

Q: Think about it. Are you like God, searching for lost souls in the fields? Are you ready to celebrate when people get baptised in your family group? Or are you worried about money, and having a comfortable life?

3. The Older Brother. Luke 15:25-32. C: The brother had a bad attitude about the party, because he felt that his father had noticed all of his hard work (v.29). He did not love his own brother, but called him “this son of yours” (v.30). So he missed the party because of his bad attitudes. The father pleaded with him to come inside. Q: Are you like the older brother, riddled with complaints and bad attitudes? Are you always thinking about how others have mistreated you? Do you get a bad attitude when you are not mentioned in the sermons? Have you been thanking God for your salvation lately? Have you thanked the person who converted you lately? C: We must never forget the grace that God has shown us in allowing us to be saved.

Challenge/Prayer: Write a thank-you note to your father in heaven for having you back home and read it out to him.

18th July 1997

Dear Dad,

Day 19 (Sat) The Righteous Judge
CHILDREN'S MINISTRY FUN DAY

21st Sept: Salvation for Old Friends on You Depends

1. The Shrewd Manager. Luke 16:1-15. C: Jesus told an interesting parable here about a manager who was about to lose his job. Before he left the job, he called everyone who owed his boss money. He told them, "quick, come here. I'll cut your bill before I leave" (vv.5-7). This man would then have friends after he lost his job (v.4). In the same way, before we leave this world, we can help people cut their debts to God and be forgiven. Then when we go to heaven, we'll have a lot of friends (v.9). Our special contribution this year will bring souls to God. Jesus explained that we must choose between money and God. We can't serve both (v.13). Q: Who is #1 in your life? Is it your money and job, or is it God? Are you giving your contribution? Are you using your life to make disciples?

2. The Laws of God Can't Be Broken. Luke 16:16-18. C: Here Jesus reminds us that God's laws are eternal. The good news of the kingdom can't be changed. So we need to be serious in following them. In areas like divorce, we can't compromise. A disciple can't divorce and remarry, except in the case of adultery by his partner (Matthew 5:32).

3. Heaven and Hell. Luke 16:19-31. C: This parable is one of the scariest stories in the Bible. There was a poor disciple named Lazarus, who was so sick he had to beg for a living (v.20). A rich man totally ignored him, and lived in luxury every day (vv.20-21). The disciple went to heaven, the rich man went to hell. The rich man had a lovely burial. The disciple was probably just thrown into a pit (v.22). But in hell, the rich man longed for water. He was in agony. He could see heaven, but he couldn't touch it (v.23). He begged for mercy (v.24). But it was too late (v.26). And then he got evangelistic towards his brothers. He wanted someone to rise from the dead to warn them. But Abraham said that the Word of God was enough for them; he would not send someone from the dead to invite them (vv.29-31).

Think about it: seeing hell for one day would motivate a person more than all the sermons in the world combined.

Notes:

Challenge: Follow up on old friends today e.g. with cards, phonecalls. Include old school friends, in this country or overseas, former work colleagues, friends from ante-natal classes...

Prayer: Thank God for giving you the Bible.

Day 20 (Sun)

The Attitude of Gratitude

1. Forgive Again and Again. Luke 17:1-6. C: In verses 1-2, Jesus explained that we should never cause others to sin. And in vv.3-4, he tells us to challenge our brothers who sin, and forgive them when they repent. He says we must forgive again and again. This is hard, because if someone does not change, we feel that they have not really repented. In the world, if someone sins, then others will not challenge them directly. Instead, they will slander him behind his back. And they won't forgive him. But in the church, we openly confront anyone who we see is sinning. We do this not in frustration, but with Jesus' spirit of mercy in our hearts.

Hearing that they had to forgive, the apostles said, "increase our faith" (v.5). It takes trust in God to forgive people. It is hard to forgive those who have hurt us. Q: Is there anyone whom you have not yet forgiven? C: The time has come to forgive them.

2. Do Not Expect Thanks. Luke 17:7-10. C: Jesus tells a parable about a servant who was ploughing in the fields. When the servant came back, the master would not give him dinner. Instead, he would ask the servant to cook dinner for him! He would not thank the servant. It would be the servant's duty to take care of him. In the same way, when we serve God, or men, we should not expect thanks. We should do our duty. If you spend your life waiting for thank-yous, you'll be disappointed often and get very bitter.

3. Be Grateful. Luke 17:11-19. C: As Jesus travelled, ten leprosy patients met him. If you have ever met a leprosy patient, you know how bad the disease can be. It destroys the fingers, hands, toes and feet. It ruins the nose. It eventually causes blindness. Society rejects lepers and makes them live in colonies of their own. There were ten men with leprosy calling to Jesus, "have pity on us" (v.13). The world would not go near them. All of them were healed. But only one man decided to go back to Jesus. He fell at his feet to say, "thank you" (v.16). Jesus asked, "where are the other nine?" (v.17) Why didn't they come back?

Before you criticise them, think: have you said thank you to every one you should have done? For a present? For a challenge? For a sermon that helped you? To your parents for bringing you up? To your spouse? To people you see every day in the newspaper shop, those who work in the underground station you use every day? And have you thanked God for all your blessings, or are you like the nine lepers who forgot to say thanks because they had more important things to be doing?

4. The Coming of the Kingdom of God. Luke 17:20-31. C: People were asking when the kingdom of God would come (v.20). Jesus explained that the kingdom of God is within us and among us (v.21). He went on to explain that he would come back suddenly, like lightning (v.24) How much did people change in Sodom or in Noah's day when they were warned? Similarly, on judgement day, stocks will be bought and sold. Shops will be open. There will be weddings and parties. And Jesus will come back. Q: If he came back today, would you be ready? Would your family be ready? Would your neighbours and workmates be ready?

5. Don't Look Back. Luke 17:32-37. C: Jesus tells us to remember Lot's wife (v.32). She was fleeing from Sodom just as the angels were about to destroy it. She had been warned to not look back (Gen. 19:17), but she looked anyway, and became a pillar of salt. In the same way, we cannot look back at our old lives. We must flee from them and into God's kingdom. Q: Is there any sin in your old life that is calling you back? Is there any pleasure that you really miss? Are your worldly friends still pulling on you? Do you miss the success and the selfish ambition that you were chasing after?

Notes:

Challenge: Write about a storm you remember. And bring a visitor to Church!

Prayer: Thank God for all the great things he has done for you since your conversion.

Day 21 (Mon)

Victory through Persistent Prayer

“Once more unto the breach, dear friends, once more...”

1. The Persistent Widow. Luke 18:1-8. Jesus liked telling stories about widows. A widow is also the focus of Jesus’ attention at the beginning of chapter 21. He often used them as examples to encourage them and to convict the marrieds and singles. We need to share about great examples too.

Our God loves us. He is far more generous than the judge. If we keep coming to him, he definitely will hear our prayers (v.7). Yet in v.8 Jesus asked, “when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?” Even though God hears our prayers, very few of us truly believe. Q: Do you persevere in your prayers? Is there anything that you have been asking for day after day? Is there anything that you once prayed about, but now you have lost hope? We must keep on praying and not give up

Are you still praying for the recaptured dream you wrote down last Wed (Day 16)?

2. The Pharisee and the Tax Collector. Luke 18:9-14. C: This is a very convicting story. There were two men who went to pray. One was religious, like us. He gave 10% contribution, like we should also give (v.12). He fasted twice a week (more than most of us). The other man was a sinful tax collector. He knew he needed forgiveness. He simply looked down and prayed, “God have mercy on me, a sinner” (v.13). Q: As you look at these two men, which of them is more like you? Are you humble before God, confessing your sins and begging for his mercy? Or are you proud, looking down upon others?

3. The Little Children and Jesus. Luke 18:15-17. C: People kept bringing babies to Jesus. The disciples did not like this. Babies are messy. They drool, they cry and moan. Yet Jesus loved babies. The disciples were harsh. But Jesus explained that the kingdom of God was made for those who are like children. In fact, to enter the kingdom of God, we must behave like little children.

C: Sometimes we as adults can be very insensitive to the needs of children. Q: Have you been involved in the childcare of the church? Are you giving when you go there? Do you try to teach the kids about God? Or do you simply endure your weeks of service? How do you feel about the children of other Christians? Do you baby-sit for them? Do you hug the kids and reach out to them? Or do you ignore them, leaving all the loving to the sisters? What about with your own kids? Are you being spiritual with them? Do they have a friendship with you, or are they only afraid of you?

4. The Rich Young Ruler. Luke 18:18-30. Jesus asked this man to sell his possessions and give to the poor. Then he could follow Jesus (v.22). But this was too much for the young man. He went away sad.

C: The disciples were amazed. They must have thought to themselves, “Why is Jesus letting this sharp guy get away? He would be a great member for our group. He could give a lot of contribution.” But Jesus did not want half of this guy’s heart. He wanted 100%. Jesus explained that when we give up everything for God, we receive many times as much back from God in this life (v.30), and eternal life in the age to come (v.30). Q: Is there anything in your life that you are unwilling to give up for God? C: If there is, you must give it up today.

Challenge: Write down the name of one baby or pre-teen child you can encourage. It could be a child in your neighbourhood, or a child you can fellowship this midweek.

Notes:

Prayer: When you pray today, beat your breast with godly sorrow today about sin, and fall on God’s mercy, like the tax collector.

1. Zacchaeus the Tax Collector. Luke 19:1-10. Zacchaeus was a chief tax collector. Many other tax collectors worked under him. These men often were corrupt, cheating the people and accepting bribes from the people. Worse than that, they had contact with Gentiles, even were the tools of Gentile oppression of the Jews as they collected taxes from their fellow Jews to hand over to the Romans.

How many reference to tax collectors can you find in the book of Luke? Remember Luke is the gospel of the outsider. Why does Luke include so many reference to them? Are they generally his villains or heroes? What does this tell you about Jesus?

In v. 5, Jesus called Zacchaeus by name. How did he know his name? It could have been by direct inspiration. But generally Jesus did not use his powers this way. How else might he have known who Zacchaeus was? Where might he have met him before? (5:27-29) But he wasn't open then.

Read Leviticus 6:1-7 for the legal requirements for cheats wanting to repent. What can you tell about Zacchaeus' repentance from v.8? Matthew (formerly Levi) was Jesus on this journey. How do you think he felt about someone from his old profession making it? Do you have vision for your workmates to change like this? Dream a little...

2.. The Parable of the Ten Minas. Luke 19:11-27. C: This story is about God and the church. He has left us after the time of Jesus. He will come back. He left us in charge of the church. He has given each of us opportunities to make the church grow. If we do not take these opportunities, he will not be happy. It is important to remember that our purpose as disciples is to make new disciples. Let's make sure that we are being faithful with the serious responsibility God has given us.

N.B. When Jesus met Zacchaeus, he was passing through Jericho. Where was he going to? Was he going to come back? This was Last Chance Saloon for Zac! Likewise, do not wait around to evangelise at your workplace. Be intense about building up relationships, inviting them, and have a plan. You never know when they or you might move on. And you are almost certainly their best opportunity to be saved, and possibly their last.

In v. 28 Jesus arrives at Jerusalem and starts the final week of his life. This will be the scene for the final part of the Victory Story which we will start studying out the day after tomorrow.

Notes:

Challenge: Invite someone at work today to "Dare to Dream."

Prayer: Pray for at least 10 people at your work-place (or all of them if there are less than 10). If they say yes, make sure you put them on your follow-up chart for the "Dare to Dream" service.

"I do not like the atmosphere I find here. It is an atmosphere of doubt, of looking back to select the next place to which to withdraw, of loss of confidence in our ability to defeat Rommel... All that must cease. Let us have a new atmosphere....Here we will stand and fight; there will be no further withdrawal. I have ordered that all plans and instructions dealing with further withdrawal are to be burnt at once.

I understand there has been a great deal of belly-aching out here. By "belly-aching" I mean inventing poor reasons for not doing what one has been told to do. All this is to stop at once. I will tolerate no belly-aching. If anyone objects to doing what he has been told, then he can get out of it; and at once."

Day 23 (Wed)

The Road to Victory

Let's back-track for a day.

"As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem."

Luke 9:51. One of Luke's themes is Jesus' road to victory. He travelled there via Jerusalem and the grisly Place of the Skull, where he was crucified. Satan tried to keep him from this road in the temptation in chapter 4. He tempted him to leave the appointed path to Jerusalem, to persuade him that God's will lay in self-indulgence and self-glorification through miracles, to get down from his physical cross (through the mouths of the rulers 23:35) and even to do a deal with Satan! (4:6)

Read the following verses, tracing his journey from the villages of Galilee to his arrival in triumph at the gates of Jerusalem.

Luke 9:51 (above), 9:57, 10:1, 13:22, 13:33, 17:11, 18:31, 19:1, 19:28, 19:41

Record your impressions of Jesus, his handling of conflict and even his own fears along the way. What strikes you? Did he try to avoid his cross?

What progress have you made this year in your spiritual life? Is there a character weakness or sin that you are just not overcoming? Is your ministry growing and changing? Have you settled for mediocrity? **Settling for mediocrity is entering a truce with Satan himself.** We are in a war against Satan, and our spiritual blood must be spilt along the way if we are to follow God's road to victory for us.

In World War II, the road from Normandy to Berlin, from D-Day to VE Day was a long and bloody road. Hitler did not give up any of his dominions lightly. The Allies' resolve was tested all the way. How much blood, sweat, toil, tears and human life could have been saved if they had simply let Hitler keep Europe or even just Germany and had a peace. The Germans were and are a great people. However, Nazism which controlled their thinking was evil. The Allies were dedicated to stamping the evil of Nazism out in Europe. Consider the determination in the following quotes:

"We have before us an ordeal of the most grievous kind. We have before us many, many long months of struggle and suffering. You ask, what is our policy? I will say: It is to wage war, by sea, land and air, with all our might and with all the strength that God can give us: to wage war against a monstrous tyranny, never surpassed in the dark, lamentable catalogue of human crime. That is our policy. You ask, What is our aim? I can answer in one word: Victory - victory at all costs, victory in spite of all terror, victory, however long and hard the road may be; for without victory, there is no survival."

Churchill also warned against neutrality with Hitler: *"Each one hopes that if he feeds the crocodile enough, the crocodile will eat him last."* When we do not aggressively fight sin, we are allowing the crocodile Satan to live on. If he lives on long enough, he will come back and eat us.

Who has more conviction: Churchill about Hitler, or you about Satan?

Challenge: Write down one thing you have been tempted to give up on in your spiritual life. It could be weight, timidity, a relationship, quality Bible study or fruitlessness. Resolve to attack this area of your life today and talk to someone about what you intend to do about it. *(And don't forget to fellowship a child in midweek!)*

Prayer: Pray with indignation about what Satan is doing in the U.K., in our schools, through our newspapers, through music and in the lives of those who have left the Lord.

Part IV

VICTORY THROUGH SURRENDER

You could tell from the nature of Jesus' arrival in Jerusalem that this would be no ordinary king. His destiny was Calvary, and death. Here was where his greatest victory would be won. That is why the crucifixion occupies such a large part of each of the four gospels. Jesus was not here as a teacher or prophet, but as a personal sacrifice. His finest hour was the hour of his death, when he submitted to his Father's will. In this moment of surrender lay his crowning victory.

Day 24 (Thurs) The Triumphal Entry

1. The Triumphal Entry. Luke 19:28-40. Here we see Jesus coming to claim the worship and welcome of his people (20:13) Yet instead of a welcome, he walks into a showdown. In v. 40, Jesus said if the disciples kept quiet, the stones would cry out. Imagine what that would have been like!!

2. Weeping for Jerusalem. Luke 19:41-44. C: As Jesus entered the city, he started to cry. He was not thinking of the buildings, but of all the lost souls in that city (vv.41-42). Jesus loved the lost so much that he wept for them. Q: When was the last time you cried for someone other than yourself? Have you ever wept for the lost around you?

C: Jesus was especially upset because he knew that one day (in 70 AD) the Romans would attack and destroy this city (v.43). He predicted this as a sign of God's judgement against them, because they had not recognised God's messiah, Jesus Christ.

3. Jesus at the Temple. Luke 19:45-48. C: Jesus could not stand religious hypocrisy. It made him sick. Religion should help people, not extort them.. If Jesus came to the religious world today, he would be sick too. Denominations invest their congregations' money in property deals, golf-course and yachting marinas. Leaders offer to pray for you in return for donations, they sell miracle-cloths, package deals to "holy places" and religious accessories. It is all a money-making racket to them. It all makes Jesus sick.

4. Jesus is interrupted. Luke 20:1-47. From chapter 19 and on into this chapter, we see several different groups trying to intimidate Jesus or make him look foolish. (19:39, 19:47, 20:1, 20:19, 20:20, 20:27) Jesus was always being attacked by religious people who wanted to argue with him. But he never wasted his time arguing. Instead, he just kept on helping people. And he gave his attackers great answers that really made them think. He cared about the city. He was not into looking good or winning arguments to put people down. Looking through this chapter, how did Jesus handle the interruptions?

In the Parable of the Tenants (Luke 20:9-19) the religious leaders were very upset because they knew that Jesus had told this story about them (v.19). Today's world is the same. If Jesus came today he would be murdered by the religious leaders, with help from the politicians.

Notes:

Challenge: We are sending teams to our cities because they are so lost. Jesus cried over Jerusalem. In the brothers' classes this week we will be encouraged to fast for the mission teams to Oxford and Cardiff. Let's all do this one day this week. Ask God to soften your heart as you fast and see the lost with Jesus' eyes.

Prayer: Pray for the lost people of your country. Imagine their pain, and try to cry for them like Jesus did.

Day 25 (Fri)

The Widow's Might or The Widow's Mite?

1. The Widow's Offering. Luke 21:1-4. C: Again, Jesus loves a widow. Why did he say she gave more? In the same way, it does not matter if you are rich or poor; God looks at our sacrifice when we give to him. In the Old Testament, people gave at least a tenth (10%) of their income to God (Malachi 3:10). God expects us to do the same, or more. Q: How much are you giving to God? Are you more worried about your debts, your family, your expenses, than you are about God? Are you trusting God and giving? C: At the end of this quiet time, we will ask you to write down a pledge for your regular monthly contribution and let your discipler know what it is. You should plan to give what you promise in this pledge starting in August, 1997.

This passage is sometimes called "The Widow's Mite." "Mite" means a tiny coin. This widow probably never knew she made it into the pages of the Bible, or even that the Messiah had seen her. But she has inspired more sacrifice among disciples than any other person apart from Jesus! When you take a stand against materialism and sacrifice, you feel great! This widow was stronger than many men are.

2. The Destruction of Jerusalem: God is With Us. Luke 21:5-19. C: The disciples were looking at the beautiful stones of the temple (v.5). Jesus explained that this temple would be destroyed one day (v.6). The disciples asked, "when will this happen?" Jesus explained that there will be wars, revolutions, earthquakes, famines, and plagues before the destruction of the temple (vv.8-11). In the years before the destruction of the temple in 70 AD, all of these things happened. There were terrible wars and suffering in all of Israel.

3. The Destruction of Jerusalem is Near. Luke 21:20-33. C: Jesus warned the Christians to flee the city at a certain time (v.21). In fact, the historian Josephus tells us that the Christians listened to these warnings and escaped from Jerusalem before the Romans destroyed it.

4. Do Not Get Overwhelmed. Luke 21:34-38. C: Life provides us many reasons to get emotionally overwhelmed: • sickness of loved ones • lack of money to pay bills • break-up of relationships • people don't become Christians • people we love move away • family pressure • failure in exams or work • marriage stress. Q: What is burdening you right now? Have you ever been tempted to commit suicide? Do you believe that God will help you overcome your problems? Have you talked about your burdens with a brother or sister? C: Make sure you pray about your feelings, and talk about them with Christians who are close to you. No matter what you feel, Jesus will help you overcome!

C: Each day Jesus spent teaching, and each night he spent on the Mount of Olives, undoubtedly praying as well as sleeping (v.37). And then again in the morning, people came to hear him preach in the temple. Jesus did not spend the last days of his life enjoying the pleasures of this world, but in preaching as much as he could. Q: What would you do if you only had a few days left to live? Would you live as Jesus did?

Challenge: The widow gave sacrificially to God. Write down in this quiet time book a pledge to God about how much you will give him every month. Tell your discipler your pledge, and plan to start giving this amount every month starting in August.

Pledge:

Other notes:

Prayer: Verse 34 talks about the anxieties of life. Pray about everything that you are worried about.

Day 26 (Sat)

Surrender Personal Interests

“A nation at war is at peace with itself.”

1. Judas Agrees to Betray Jesus. Luke 22:1-6. C: Jesus' own disciple Judas went to the chief priests and offered to betray him for money. He did not expect that they would kill Jesus, and so later when Jesus was sentenced to die, Judas felt guilty and killed himself (Matthew 27:1-10). C: What started out in greed for money ended up in the destruction of Judas' life.

2. Jesus Prepares a Special Supper. Luke 22:7-13. C: As usual, Jesus wanted everything to be perfect for him and his disciples, so he sent Peter and John to prepare their last meal together (v.8). He gave them specific instructions about where to go, who to meet, and how to prepare the meal (vv.10-12). When we organise events for others, we must be sure to think about the details. We must think: how many people will come? Will there be children? How should we decorate the place? How can we make people feel special? C: Jesus really wanted people to feel special. We also should make sure that we make those we are close to feel special.

3. Jesus Breaks Bread for the Last Time. Luke 22:14-23. C: Jesus sat at the table with his disciples. He told them, “I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you” (v.15). He wanted them to feel close to him. He wanted them to always remember this time. Whenever you feel spiritually down, remember Jesus. His memory will lift you up!

4. Jesus Was a Servant. Luke 22:24-30. The disciples could not see the spiritual war going on. And so even at the last supper they were arguing! Sometimes we in the church squabble with each other about stupid things. In peace-time, the Army, Navy and Air Force fight each other. At war, they fight together. When the Gulf War began, crime fell in the U.S.A.! The criminals were all busy watching CNN! Let's heal old wounds and be united!

5. Jesus Prayed Before the Cross. Luke 22:31-46. C: In verses 31-32, we see that Jesus specifically prayed for his disciple Simon Peter. He prayed that Simon's faith would not fail. In the same way, we should specifically pray for others in the church. Not just, “Lord, be with _____,” but rather, “God help _____ to find a job within 10 days, and help his mother be happy with him, and solve his money problems through a gift from a relative.” Specific prayers are heard and answered by God.

6. Jesus Arrested and Disowned. Luke 22:47-62. C: Jesus was arrested by a crowd. It must have been frightening to be captured by a crowd of people. It must have hurt so bad to see his own disciple betraying him. But still, Jesus did not get angry. Verse 54 explains that “Peter followed at a distance” behind Jesus. Then Peter denied Jesus 3 times. When we follow Jesus “at a distance,” we will eventually leave him when the pressure increases. Q: Have you been following Jesus closely? Or are you starting to be like Peter, following Jesus, but at a distance? Have you been missing meetings? Keeping secrets from the Christians? Feeling small attitudes? Committing old sins again? Not coming to evangelise? Not sitting in on studies? C: If so, you are following at a distance, and it is time to change. We see in v.61 that Jesus heard Peter deny him and looked straight at him. That must have hurt Jesus a lot, since Peter was his close friend. Perhaps you have overheard someone slandering you. It hurts. Yet Jesus was willing to forgive Peter.

7. Jesus Beaten and Accused. Luke 22:63-71. C: We see Jesus being publicly spit on and beaten here. They mocked him and accused him. This is the same man who had spent 3 years healing and teaching people. But in his hour of need, there was no one who stood by his side to help him.

Notes:

Challenge: Plan well a meal or other hospitality for someone you get with today.

Prayer: Pray for people who feel guilty to be open, and be open yourself.

“...I would make three resolutions to support me through whatever was to come: no regrets, no false sentimentality, no self-pity.”

1. Jesus Unites Evil People. Luke 23:1-12. Verse 8 says that Herod had been waiting for a chance to see Jesus (Luke 9:9, Luke 13:31-35), but Jesus had not wasted his time. Now he and his soldiers mocked and ridiculed Jesus, dressing him in an elegant robe (v.11). Before this time, Herod the king and Pilate the governor had been enemies; now they became friends (v.12). Evil people unite in the face of Jesus' righteousness. Even in your life, sometimes you will see people who formerly had been enemies becoming friends because of their common opposition to your faith.

2. Pilate Lets the Crowd Make His Decision. Luke 23:13-25. C Pilate wanted to release him (v.16). But the crowd demanded that Jesus be killed, and the murderer be released (vv.18-19). Pilate tried to release Jesus again (v.20). But the people kept shouting (v.21). When someone is wrong, they will get angry and start shouting louder. Perhaps you have seen this in your home, or at work, or in your neighbourhood. Whoever gets angriest usually gets their way. Pilate gave in to the crowd here. The crowd made his decision for him! He liked Jesus, but he did not have the guts to stand up for him. Sometimes people want to follow Jesus, but their family, friends, or boss tries to stop them. Instead of standing up for the truth, they give in to fear, and they don't become Christians. This is so sad. Q: Think about your life. Are you standing up for Jesus? Or are you letting people intimidate you and control your spiritual life?

3. Jesus Doesn't Feel Sorry for Himself. Luke 23:26-33. C: Jesus was on his way to the cross. He could not carry it himself (John 19:17 says he carried it for a while, but this passage says Simon of Cyrene carried it at the end), so they gave the cross to a man passing by (v.26). Many women felt sorry for him and cried out (v.27). Jesus did not feel sorry for himself. He told the women not to cry for him (v.28), but to cry for themselves. What do you think the women saw that made them cry so much?

Even as he hung on the cross for six hours one Friday, he did not feel sorry for himself. We feel sorry for ourselves when we are too busy, something breaks or someone hurts our feelings. Jesus never fell into self-pity, even at the hardest moments of his life.

4. Jesus Forgives Even Criminals. Luke 23:34-43. C: As he hung on the cross, Jesus uttered the words that showed he is the Son of God: “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing” (v.34). These words show the tremendous grace and love of our God. If it was you or me on the cross, we would probably be cursing or complaining. But Jesus was so patient and forgiving. Tomorrow we will spend more time focussing on the thieves on the cross.

5. Jesus Dies With Dignity. Luke 23:44-49. C: Jesus died as he had lived, full of courage and dignity. He prayed to God and offered God his spirit (v.46). The Roman centurion who saw Jesus die was convinced that Jesus was a righteous man (v.47). Others watch you when you are going through hard times - and your example can make the difference!

6. Joseph Takes Care of Jesus' Dead Body. Luke 23:50-56. C: Joseph was a Pharisee, but he had not agreed to the killing of Jesus (vv.50-51). He asked for Jesus' body and put it in his own tomb (v.53). This took courage, because Jesus' murderers might also turn on him. But he wanted to do the right thing.

Notes:

Challenge: Have a visitor with you at Church to hear about Jesus' death.

Prayer: Pray about the Centurion, the thieves, Joseph, Pilate, Simon and the women and what you can learn from them.

Day 28 (Mon)

Too Small a Price (Luke 23:39-43)

I woke to hear the jailer turn the key and push the door,
“Get out of here” he shouted, but I stayed there on the floor,
Frozen in the terror - it rose and filled my brain,
I knew what they intended - I could not face the pain

Then soldiers came into the cell and dragged me to the yard,
They threw me down before a cross and brought the whip down hard,
“Carry it!” they shouted as I struggled to my feet,
I put my shoulder under it and dragged it through the street.

I stumbled through a wall of screams as they drove me through the gate,
It seemed that thousands lined the streets their voices filled with hate,
Like a wolf-pack in the night that moves in for the kill
They closed the gap behind us as we stumbled up the hill.

Then it seemed I’d barely reached the top when they grabbed me from behind,
They threw the cross down under me and tied the ropes that bind
The arms close to the beams as they nailed my feet and hands,
Then they raised the cross up in the air and dropped it in its stand.

Though a blur of pain I saw the cross there next to mine,
There were people all around it so I looked to read the sign,
It was nailed there up above his head so the world could see the news,
That the man who seemed so helpless there was the “KING OF ALL
THE JEWS”.

And the crowd that stood around his cross made jokes about his name,
They shouted, laughed and spat on him so I joined in the game.
I said “Hey, if you’re the King, why don’t you get us down from here?”
But the taunt sounded hollow. It echoed in my ear.

As he looked at me with eyes that seemed to reach into my heart,
They shone a light on all my lies and tore my life apart,
There was more that lay behind that gaze than simply blood and clay,
And that knowing was too much for me - I had to look away.

But I chanced another look at him while he was looking down,
Where the soldiers who’d just crucified us drank there on the ground,
And although he spoke them quietly, somehow his words came through,
He said “Father, please forgive them for they don’t know what they do.”

Then as if they’d heard him speaking the crowd began to roar,
Whipped to frenzy by the priests who urged them on to more,
But the worse the accusations now the plainer I could see
The guilt of the accusers, not of the one there next to me.

But the man upon the other cross began to curse and swear,
And his voice was filled with venom as he hurled it through the air,
All the horror that was in him and had laid his life to waste
Came out in every syllable he flung in Jesus face.

Jesus only looked at him - but something rose inside of me,
In spite of all that was taking place it was clear for me to see
His righteousness and innocence were shining bright and strong
And I just couldn't keep my silence when that cursing still went on,

I cried out, "Don't you fear the wrath of God even at the end?
Will you curse us both into the pit, is that you intend?
We're only getting what we're due, we've sinned our whole lives long,
But don't you talk to him that way 'cos he's done nothing wrong!"

Then with all my courage in a voice not quite my own,
I asked him "Lord, remember me when you come into your throne,"
He answered me, and even then his love was undisguised,
He said, "Before the sun has set today you'll be with me in paradise."

The shouts and curses did not stop even when the sunlight ceased,
But somehow in the midst of it my soul had been released,
And though the agony continued, it was still too small a price,
To be allowed to hear those words and to die beside the Christ.

The darkness changed to morning and I heard the sound of voices,
The air was warm around me; I stood beside a stream,
And Abraham was speaking to the multitudes before him
The unfolding of the answer to our prayers, hopes and dreams,

When far across the chasm came a rumbling like the thunder,
And the Prince of Peace came shining - from his mouth the power
streamed!
And the walls and towers crumbled and the gates of hell went under,
As thousands sang the victory, " We have been redeemed!

JESUS IS THE LORD OF LORDS, JESUS IS THE LORD OF LORDS
JESUS IS THE LORD OF LORDS, WE HAVE BEEN REDEEMED."

Challenge: Write down who you are most looking forward to seeing in heaven.

Prayer: Pray about Jesus' suffering on the cross, thanking God for what he did for us.

Day 30 (Wed)

He's back like he said!

1. Jesus Kept His Word. Luke 24:1-12. C: Early on the first day of the week, Sunday morning, the women went to Jesus' tomb (v.1). They found the stone rolled away, and the body missing (vv.2-3). Just as Jesus had promised them, he had raised up from the grave! In the same way, Jesus has made many promises to us. He will keep each one of them! Some promises he will keep: • abide in Jesus and we'll bear much fruit (John 15:1-8) • seek God first and he'll take care of you (Matthew 6:33) • be pure and you'll see God (Matthew 5:8) • ask in Jesus' name and he will hear (John 14:14) • give something up for God and we'll receive 100 times as much back (Mark 10:28-31). Jesus keeps his word.

2. On the Road to Emmaus. Luke 24:13-24. C: Two disciples were talking about Jesus, who "was a prophet, powerful in word and deed" (v.19). They were disappointed that he had been killed (v.20). They had hoped that he would save Jerusalem (v.21) Sometimes we are like these men. We thought that coming to the church would make everything great in our lives. But then things do not go as we had planned, and we are disappointed. But we do not realise that sometimes God's plans are different from our plans. We must be patient. If we do what is right, in the end God will bless us.

3. Rebuked by Jesus. Luke 24:25-35. C: Jesus listened to these men. He saw their lack of faith. He saw their refusal to believe in the resurrection, even though they had known about it from the women and he himself had predicted it. He challenged them, "how foolish you are, and how slow of heart to believe..." (v.25). How would you have felt if you had been one of these disciples at the supper table the moment the truth dawned - that "he was back like he said"?

C: Perhaps you can remember a time that you came to church, and you heard the gospel preached. Maybe someone studied the Bible with you powerfully. And your heart was burning inside you. You were so fired up! You knew that this was the truth. Yet today this feeling no longer burns in your heart. It is time to get that burning feeling back! Jesus has been raised from the dead! He **can** do miracles in our lives. The future can be much brighter than the past. But we must believe, and follow him with all our hearts.

4. Jesus Appears to the Disciples. Luke 24:36-43. Do you have any relatives who have died? If you saw one of them again, would you know it? Would you be able to tell if you had really seen them, or it was just a hallucination? What if you had a meal with them, and they ate something?! Something convinced the disciples beyond all doubt. Jesus was back like he said. Really back. He had been raised from the dead! That is why these men spent the rest of their lives in poverty, preaching about him until they, too, were killed for the gospel. And that is why we also must follow Jesus to the end. Christianity is not a legend. It is a real religion based on true historical events.

5. Jesus Opens Their Minds. Luke 24:44-53. C: Jesus opened their minds so that they could understand the Bible (v.45). In verses 50-51, Jesus blessed them and then rose into heaven. They were filled with joy, and they continually stayed at the temple, praising God (vv.52-53).

C: Our Christian lives should be filled with joy and excitement, because we realise the truth about Jesus Christ. He has been raised from the dead, and in our generation the gospel is being preached to all nations again! Let us believe in him, and join him in his great mission.

Challenge: Many times our hopes are disappointed by circumstances. Write down 3 things you had hoped for that have not yet occurred in your Christian life.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Prayer: Now pray specifically that God will bless you by granting each of the 3 items you have written above.

Day 31 (Thurs) England expects...

“England expects every man will do his duty.”

“Ordinary people can accomplish the extraordinary through the power of God.”

The Sequel. Acts 1:2-8. The Victory Story does not end with Luke 24:53. Acts is the sequel to Luke’s gospel, written by the same author to the same man, Theophilus. Jesus finished his earthly task and returned to heaven, with Elijah the only man we read about ascending to heaven in this way. However, his victory was not the end of the story. It was only the end of a crucial chapter. He gave us an example to follow and a message to preach, that God had reconciled the world to himself through the cross so that now all men could be saved. The story that began in the Garden of Eden was only now reaching its most exciting part. God is the master of language. As he multiplied languages to destroy man’s unity in Genesis 11, here in Acts he gave the apostles languages, so that all men could hear the gospel and be united again in Jesus Christ. Abraham’s seed had come: but the blessing had yet to spread to “all peoples on earth” (Gen 12:3).

The Victory Story had many crucial chapters to run. There were just 120 believers (Ac 1:15) in an occupied corner of the Roman Empire. They possessed no written record of Jesus’ teachings. They were uninfluential and academically unimpressive (Ac 4:13). They had a catalogue of personal defeats, lack of faith and rebukes from the lips of the Lord to remind them of their weaknesses.

- Their only possessions: the Holy Spirit and the knowledge of Jesus.
- Their mission: the ends of the earth.
- The plan: every disciple to be Jesus’ witness.

Truly, every man was needed. And the ordinary accomplished the extraordinary through the power of God. Today, the call is the same. Collectively, to go to the ends of the earth to so that every human being can hear the gospel in this generation. With the World Sectors in place, we in the U.K. are not primarily concerned with China, Brazil or the United States. If we can evangelise the British Isles in our lifetime, the Indian churches evangelise India, the Middle East World Sector evangelise the Middle East, and so on, we will see the Victory Story spread all over the world and the world be won for Christ in our generation..

This chapter is still to be written for future generations, if God’s will is for them to be. Every single disciple in the London church is called to witness for Jesus every day, to come to all the services, to have daily Quiet Times, to stay pure sexually, to sacrifice financially and to love one another.

**Then we will all make it to heaven, “and the saying that is written will come true:
“Death has been swallowed up in victory.”**

“Where, O death, is your victory? Where, O death, is your sting.”

**The sting of death is sin, and the power of sin is the law. But thanks be to God!
He always gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.”**

Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labour in the Lord is not in vain.”
I Corinthians 15:54-58

Notes:

Challenge: This starts with bringing someone to Church this Sunday!

Prayer: Pray for the evangelization of everyone in your country in your lifetime

***“This is not the end,
it is not even the beginning of the end.
It is perhaps the end of the beginning.”***

Winston S. Churchill

***“you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem,
and in all Judea and Samaria,
and to the ends of the earth.”***

Acts 1:8

***“Do not be terrified;
do not be discouraged,
for the Lord your God will be with you
wherever you go.”***

Joshua 1:9

VICTORY STORY

Source of quotes

Part I

- Day 2 Choice, Ronald Dunn, "Don't just stand there, pray something!" p.188
Day 4 Julius Caesar, 44BC
Day 6 From "IF", by Rudyard Kipling
Day 7 From "Jesus", author unknown
Day 8 Lord Byron, 1788 - 1824
Day 9 General Montgomery to Eighth army before Alamein, 13th August 1942

Part II

- Day 11 Setbacks: Douglas Arthur, British Commonwealth WSL, Washington D.C.
Day 12 Life: Sir William Wallace in the film Braveheart
Learning: Winston Churchill
Day 14 Edmund Burke, Ireland, 1729 -97
Day 16 U-turn, Hounding: Margaret Thatcher, British Prime Minister 1979 - 1991,
first woman P.M. in Europe

Part III

- Day 19 Beaches: Churchill 4th June 1940 to House of Commons
Day 19 Horatio, Lord Nelson, 1758 - 1805
Day 21 Shakespeare, Henry V, Act III Sc 1
Day 22 Montgomery, Alamein speech above
Day 23 Victory: Churchill, to House of Commons 13th May 1940

Part IV

- Day 26 Unknown
Day 27 Terry Waite, Taken on Trust
Day 28 Too Small a Price, by Don Francisco
Day 31 Duty: Horatio, Lord Nelson, 22nd Oct 1805, the day of Trafalgar and his own death
Extraordinary: Kip McKean, ICC International Missions Evangelist, L.A
Beginning: Churchill on the Battle of Egypt 1942

In using quotes from secular sources, we are following Paul's example e.g. quoting from Epiminides (a non-Christian) in his letter to Titus, without attempting in any way to condone the lifestyle or the military activity surrounding such quotes. Like Paul, we believe we can be inspired and learn many great things from contemporary and historical writers and speakers to apply to our spiritual lives.

JG