

**THE GOSPEL OF MERCY ACCORDING TO LUKE**  
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**Presentation 1: Preaching mercy in Nazareth**

- *Preaching mercy in Nazareth*
- Faith in God's mercy
- Mercy is our mission
- "He was filled with compassion"
- Today of God's salvation
- Encounters of mercy

**Sequence**

- Present context
- Starting a story
- An opening scene: Luke 4
- Spirit-filled prophet
- Fulfilled in your hearing
- Luke 4 as "overture" (themes and ministry)
- And so...

**Present context**

- People turning to the Bible more
- The practice of sacred reading or "lectio divina"
- How is the word fulfilled in our hearing?

**Starting a story**

- Where would you begin?
- Mark: baptism; Matthew: birth stories; John: prologue
- Luke "starts" twice, at least!
- Luke 1-2
- Luke 3-4
  
- Luke 4:16-30
- Luke the historian - but free!
- Luke the theologian
- Compare with Mark's version

**Mark 6:1-6**

Jesus left that place and came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. On the Sabbath he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were astounded. They said, "Where did this man get all this? What is this wisdom that has been given to him? What deeds of power are being done by his hands! Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James and Joses and Judas and Simon, and are not his sisters here with us?" And they took offence at him. Then Jesus said to them, "Prophets are not without honour, except in their hometown, and among their own kin, and in their own house." And he could do no deed of power there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people and cured them. And he was amazed at their unbelief.

**Luke 4:16-30**

- When he came to Nazareth...
- "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing."
- "Truly I tell you, no prophet is accepted in the prophet's hometown."
- When they heard this, all in the synagogue were filled with rage
  
- Mark 6:1-6 / Matt 13:53-58: The return to Nazareth is a scene of rejection half way through the ministry

- Luke brings the story forward and expands it
- Now a keynote scene to define Jesus' ministry which also ends in rejection
- The ministry understood in terms of the fulfilment of prophetic hopes and expectations
- Isaiah – the fifth evangelist
- Early Christians went back to their only Bible, the “Old Testament”
- Most frequently, they had recourse to Isaiah - for patterns, concepts and theology.

### Isaiah in the New Testament

#### FIRST ISAIAH (1-39)

- Isa 1:9 As Sodom and Gomorrah (Rom 9:29)
- Isa 6:9 Closed eyes and ears (Mt 13:14, Mk 4:12, Lk 8:10, Jn 12:39, Acts 28:25)
- Isa 7:14 Virgin with child (Mt 1:23)
- Isa 8:12 Do not be in fear (1Pet 3:14)
- Isa 8:14 Stone of stumbling (1Pet 2:8, Rom 9:33)
- Isa 8:17-18 The children God has given me (Heb 2:13)
- Isa 9:1 A light in darkness (Mt 4:15)
- Isa 9:6 A child shall be born (Mt 1:23)
- Isa 10:22 Remnant shall be saved (Rom 9:27)
- Isa 11:5 A belt girding the loins (Eph 6:14)
- Isa 11:10 The Root of Jesse (Rom 15:12)
- Isa 22:13 Tomorrow we may die (1Cor 15:32)
- Isa 22:22 The key of David (Rev 3:7)
- Isa 25:8 Death swallowed up (1Cor 15:54)
- Isa 27:9 When I forgive their sins (Rom 11:26)
- Isa 28:11 Speak in strange tongues (1Cor 14:21)
- Isa 28:16 Precious corner stone (1Pet 2:6, Rom 9:33)
- Isa 28:16 Believers not disappointed (Rom 9:33, 10:11)
- Isa 29:10 A spirit of stupor (Rom 11:8)
- Isa 29:13 They worship in vain (Mt 15:7, Mk 7:6)
- Isa 29:14 The wisdom of the wise (1Cor 1:19)
- Isa 29:16 Potter and the clay (Rom 9:19-21)

#### SECOND ISAIAH (40-55)

- Isa 40:3 Voice in wilderness (Mt 3:3, Mk 1:2, Lk 3:4, Jn 1:23)
- Isa 40:6 God's word abides forever (1Pet 1:25)
- Isa 40:13 The mind of the Lord (Rom 11:34)
- Isa 42:1 Behold My Servant (Mt 12:18)
- Isa 42:4 Hope for Gentiles (Rom 15:12)
- Isa 42:6 A light for the Gentiles (Lk 2:32)
- Isa 45:23 Every knee shall bow (Rom 14:11)
- Isa 49:6 A light for the Gentiles (Lk 2:32, Acts 13:47)
- Isa 49:8 Acceptable time, day of salvation (2Cor 6:2)
- Isa 52:5 Blasphemy among Gentiles (Rom 2:24)
- Isa 52:7 How beautiful the feet (Rom 10:15)
- Isa 52:11 Come out from among them (2Cor 6:17)
- Isa 52:15 They shall understand (Rom 15:21)
- Isa 53:1 Who has believed our report? (Jn 12:38, Rom 10:16)
- Isa 53:4 Carried our diseases (Mt 8:17)
- Isa 53:5 By his stripes you were healed (1Pet 2:24)
- Isa 53:7 A lamb to the slaughter (Acts 8:32)
- Isa 53:9 He committed no sin (1Pet 2:22)
- Isa 53:12 Numbered with transgressors (Mk 15:28, Lk 22:37)
- Isa 54:1 Rejoice barren woman (Gal 4:27)
- Isa 54:13 All be taught of God (Jn 6:45)
- Isa 55:3 The sure mercies of David (Acts 13:34)

**THIRD ISAIAH (56-66)**

Isa 56:7 A house of prayer (Mt 21:13, Mk 11:17, Lk 19:46)

Isa 59:7-8 Feet swift to shed blood (Rom 3:15-17)

Isa 59:17 Breastplate and helmet (Eph 6:14-17)

Isa 59:20 Deliverer from Zion (Rom 11:26)

Isa 61:1 He anointed me to preach (Lk 4:17)

Isa 64:4 Eye has not seen (1Cor 2:9)

Isa 65:1 Found by those who sought me not (Rom 10:20)

Isa 65:2 Disobedient and obstinate people (Rom 10:21)

Isa 66:1 Heaven is my throne (Acts 7:48)

Isa 66:24 Fire is not quenched (Mk 9:48)

**Luke 4:16-20**

“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour.”

And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. Then he began to say to them, “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

- Text is not a direct quotation but is made up from Is 61:1-2 and Is 58:6
- Omits the announcement of the coming day of vengeance (Is 61:2b)
- Defines Jesus as the anointed one (messiah = Christ) — prophets and kings were anointed with oil in the OT
- Jesus is anointed with the Spirit (see 3:22, 4:1) and is thereby missioned
- Add the Year of the Lord’s Favour
- In the OT, salvation is proclaimed by the prophets in the language of this world — not the next!
  - Good news to the poor (Is 52:7)
  - Release to captives (Is 42:7)
  - Sight to the blind (Is 35:5)
  - Freedom to the oppressed (Is 51:14)
- Jesus’ ministry throughout Luke’s narrative is thus summarised as the work of the Spirit-filled prophet who brings about the promised “salvation”

**Jesus as prophet**

- Usually: Son of Man, Son of God, messiah, Lord
- Why prophet?
- Not the only “title”
- Roots Jesus in the tradition of the prophets: a this-world ministry
- Goes back to Jesus’ self-understanding
- The Gospel: a way of life, not only a way to the next life

Now Jesus was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath. And just then there appeared a woman with a spirit that had crippled her for eighteen years. She was bent over and was quite unable to stand up straight. When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said, “Woman, you are set free from your ailment.” When he laid his hands on her, immediately she stood up straight and began praising God. But the leader of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had cured on the Sabbath, kept saying to the crowd, “There are six days on which work ought to be done; come on those days and be cured, and not on the Sabbath day.” But the Lord answered him and said, “You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the Sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger, and lead it away to give it water? And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen long years, be set free from this bondage on the Sabbath day?” When he said this, all his opponents were put to shame; and the entire crowd was rejoicing at all the wonderful things that he was doing. (Luke 13:10–17)

- Unique to Luke
- Prophetic critique of religious practice
- Offer of healing / salvation
- Outreach to the excluded

### **In your hearing**

The disciples of John reported all these things to him. So John summoned two of his disciples and sent them to the Lord to ask, “Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?” When the men had come to him, they said, “John the Baptist has sent us to you to ask, ‘Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?’” Jesus had just then cured many people of diseases, plagues, and evil spirits, and had given sight to many who were blind. And he answered them, “Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have good news brought to them. And blessed is anyone who is not scandalised at me.” (Luke 7:18–23)

- John’s question and expectation(s)
- Jesus’ ministry fulfils but also scandalises
- The ministry shows God’s faithfulness to the outcast and the sinner
- When he said this, all his opponents were put to shame; and the entire crowd was rejoicing at all the wonderful things that he was doing. (Luke 13:17)
- As he rode along, people kept spreading their cloaks on the road. As he was now approaching the path down from the Mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the deeds of power that they had seen. (Luke 19:36–37)
- “Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the scriptures to us?” (Luke 24:32)

### **Overture**

- In the synagogue at Nazareth
- Themes: Jesus as spirit-filled prophet, as healer, as bearer of the Good News and God’s compassion
- Ministry: Good news, rejection, death and resurrection

### **And so...**

- Luke writes, in the light of the resurrection,
- to persuade
- to invite faith in this Jesus,
- on a path of salvation, life, joy
- ...fulfilled in our hearing today!

### **Prayer**

Lord God,  
 whose compassion embraces all peoples,  
 whose law is wisdom, freedom, and joy for the poor,  
 fulfil in our midst your promise of favour,  
 that we may receive the gospel of salvation with faith and,  
 anointed by the Spirit,  
 freely proclaim it.

### **Reflection**

- Was there anything new or startling for you?
- Can you recall a word of scripture which you felt was fulfilled in your life and experience?

**PRESENTATION 2: FAITH IN GOD'S MERCY**

- Preaching mercy in Nazareth
- *Faith in God's mercy*
- Mercy is our mission
- "He was filled with compassion"
- Today of God's salvation
- Encounters of mercy

Because of our God's tender mercy the dawn will break upon us from on high to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace." (Luke 1:78–79 NET)

**Sequence**

- Present Context
- Faith in the Bible
- Faith in Luke's teaching
  - Example: Luke 7
  - Example: Luke 17
- Salvation in Luke's teaching
- And so...

**Present context**

- People are asking questions
- Not only: why church?
- But also: why God? why Christ?
- And: what is faith?
- In part, we go back to the Bible

**Faith in the Bible**

- Emunah (whence our "amen")
- Always a response to the divine initiative and God's desire to save
- It is based on the trustworthiness of God
- Epitomised with the Abraham cycle (Gen 12-25) and present in subsequent narratives and stories of biblical heroes and heroines
- God is faithful and human faithfulness is possible only because of that
- God's faithfulness is necessarily linked to God's love
- This is the reason, ultimately, why God is to be trusted

Into your hand I commit my spirit; you have redeemed me, O LORD, faithful God.  
(Ps 31:5)

Ps 146:6      who made heaven and earth,  
                  the sea, and all that is in them;  
                  who keeps faith forever;  
7                who executes justice for the oppressed;  
                  who gives food to the hungry.  
The LORD sets the prisoners free;  
8                the LORD opens the eyes of the blind.  
                  The LORD lifts up those who are bowed down;  
                  the LORD loves the righteous.

Ps 25:10      All the paths of the LORD are steadfast love and faithfulness,  
for those who keep his covenant and his decrees.

Mic 7:20      You will show faithfulness to Jacob  
                  and steadfast love to Abraham,  
                  as you have sworn to our fathers

from the days of old.

Lam 3:18 I say, "Gone is my glory,  
and all that I had hoped for from the LORD."

19 The thought of my affliction and my homelessness  
is wormwood and gall!  
20 My soul continually thinks of it  
and is bowed down within me.  
21 But this I call to mind,  
and therefore I have hope:  
22 The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases,  
his mercies never come to an end;  
23 they are new every morning;  
great is your faithfulness.  
24 "The LORD is my portion," says my soul,  
"therefore I will hope in him."

Luke 1:52 He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,  
and lifted up the lowly;  
53 he has filled the hungry with good things,  
and sent the rich away empty.  
54 He has helped his servant Israel,  
in remembrance of his mercy,  
55 according to the promise he made to our ancestors,  
to Abraham and to his descendants forever."

Luke 1:72 Thus God has shown the mercy promised to our ancestors,  
and has remembered his holy covenant,  
73 the oath that he swore to our ancestor Abraham, to grant us  
74 that we, being rescued from the hands of our enemies,  
might serve him without fear,  
75 in holiness and righteousness before him all our days.

- Luke begins with a generation of people who witness to this Old Testament faith/faithfulness
- Zechariah and Elizabeth
- Mary
- Simeon and Anna
- Their faith is expressed in their prayerful response to what they have experienced
- Simeon: "Now let your servant depart in peace according to your word, for my eyes have seen your salvation" (2:29-30)
- Anna "Spoke about the child to all who were awaiting the redemption of Jerusalem" (2:37)
- Mary as a model of faith
- But Mary treasured all these words and pondered them in her heart. (Luke 2:19-20)
- His mother treasured all these things in her heart. (Luke 2:51) Other figures of faith in the Gospel
- "Your faith has made you well" (x4)
- "Your faith has saved you"
- Lk. 7:50 The sinful woman
- Lk. 8:48 The woman with the haemorrhage
- Lk. 17:19 The grateful Samaritan / leper
- Lk. 18:42 Blind beggar

**Luke 7:18-35**

- The overall setting in chapter 7
- “Among all those born of women no one is greater than John; yet the least in the kingdom is greater than he is”
- Who is the least in the kingdom?
- The question leads perfectly into the next story and is answered there

**Luke 7:36-50**

- Context: a meal (5:27; 11:37, 14:1-24, 22:14-38)
- A sinner : person who does not keep the moral/ ritual law as interpreted by the Pharisees
- Strong contrast between Simon’s response to Jesus and that of the woman
- To be read in the light of the previous incident and its conclusion : “a friend of tax collectors and sinners” (Lk 7:31-35)
- Your faith has saved you go in peace

**Faith in Luke’s teaching**

- The apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our faith!” The Lord replied, “If you had faith the size of a mustard seed, you could say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be uprooted and planted in the sea,’ and it would obey you. (Luke 17:5–6)
- 17:11-19 Another good Samaritan: at the heart of authentic faith is gratitude
- For, in fact, the kingdom of God is among you.” (Luke 17:21)
- Do the disciples have “faith” at all?
- Challenge to quid pro quo
- The outsider teaches the insider
- Relationship / encounter

**Salvation**

- God’s faithfulness in Jesus
- Experienced as healing and freedom
- Evoking faith and faithfulness from us
- Who are the faithful people in the Gospel?

**The God question**

- Our question: is there a God?
- Biblical tradition: Yes! An absolutely faithful God
- Our question: what should I do?
- Having faith means being faithful to the faithful love of God

**And so**

- Luke’s Gospel enriches our experience of Jesus, faith and salvation
- Jesus: spirit-filled Prophet, with a particular message to the excluded
- José Pagola: Did Jesus come to found a new religion with adherents or to open up a way with followers?

**Prayer**

O God,  
 our life, our health, our salvation,  
 look with mercy on your people.  
 Stir up in us a saving faith,  
 that believing, we may be healed,  
 and being healed, we may worthily give you thanks.

We ask this through our Lord Jesus Christ, your Son,  
 who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit,  
 God for ever and ever. Amen.

**Reflection**

- If someone were to ask for an account of “faith”, what would you say in the light of what you have heard?
- Where have I / we experienced the faithful love of God?

### PRESENTATION 3: MERCY IN OUR MISSION

- Preaching mercy in Nazareth
- Faith in God's mercy
- *Mercy is our mission*
- "He was filled with compassion"
- Today of God's salvation
- Encounters of mercy

So he called out, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" And those who were in front scolded him to get him to be quiet, but he shouted even more, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" (Luke 18:38–39 NET)

#### Sequence

- Call of the first disciples
- Luke 5: commentary
- Call of the Twelve
- Mission of the Twelve
- Luke 9: commentary
- Mission of the Seventy
- Double sending?
- Luke 10: commentary
- And so...
- Prayer
- Reflection

#### Call of the first disciples

Mark 1:16 As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen. 17 And Jesus said to them, "Follow me and I will make you fish for people." 18 And immediately they left their nets and followed him. 19 As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets. 20 Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and followed him.

Luke 5:1 Once while Jesus was standing beside the lake of Gennesaret, and the crowd was pressing in on him to hear the word of God, 2 he saw two boats there at the shore of the lake; the fishermen had gone out of them and were washing their nets. 3 He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little way from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the crowds from the boat. 4 When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into the deep water and let down your nets for a catch." 5 Simon answered, "Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets." 6 When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break. 7 So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them. And they came and filled both boats, so that they began to sink. 8 But when Simon Peter saw it, he fell down at Jesus' knees, saying, "Go away from me, Lord, for I am a sinful man!" 9 For he and all who were with him were amazed at the catch of fish that they had taken; 10 and so also were James and John, sons of Zebedee, who were partners with Simon. Then Jesus said to Simon, "Do not be afraid; from now on you will be catching people." 11 When they had brought their boats to shore, they left everything and followed him.

- Devoid of biographical detail
- Devoid of preparatory knowledge
- Left: the pure sovereignty of Jesus
- Exception: Luke and John
- The story is a combination of the call story (technically a *chreia*) and the miraculous catch of fish (technically, a *theophany*).

- As the text stands, the call story is interwoven into the account of the miracle and cannot be easily “extracted” from it. You might even notice that the call proper is more implicit than explicit.
- The miraculous catch of fish illustrates well the experience of the sacred (*mysterium*) as awesome (*tremendum*) and as inviting (*fascinans*).
- The impact of the sacred draws Peter to Jesus, while at the same time creating a sense of unworthiness and distance.

John 21:1 After these things Jesus showed himself again to the disciples by the Sea of Tiberias; and he showed himself in this way. 2 Gathered there together were Simon Peter, Thomas called the Twin, Nathanael of Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two others of his disciples. 3 Simon Peter said to them, “I am going fishing.” They said to him, “We will go with you.” They went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

John 21:4 Just after daybreak, Jesus stood on the beach; but the disciples did not know that it was Jesus. 5 Jesus said to them, “Children, you have no fish, have you?” They answered him, “No.” 6 He said to them, “Cast the net to the right side of the boat, and you will find some.” So they cast it, and now they were not able to haul it in because there were so many fish. 7 That disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, “It is the Lord!” When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on some clothes, for he was naked, and jumped into the sea. 8 But the other disciples came in the boat, dragging the net full of fish, for they were not far from the land, only about a hundred yards off.

### **Luke 5: commentary**

*Verse 1* Gennesaret = sea of Galilee or of Tiberias. “Word of God” is an expression taken from the prophets, where it appears usually as the Word of the Lord. The expression is used a few times in this Gospel: Luke 3:2; 5:1; 8:11, 21; 11:28. The presence of many people eager for the word gives a context for the preaching from a boat as well as the call of the first disciples.

*Verse 2* Two boats brings to mind Simon and his brother Andrew, although Andrew is not mentioned in Luke’s account. He is named explicitly after Simon in 6:14.

*Verse 3* The unquestioning assistance hints at the immediacy of response to the call later.

*Verse 4* Advice to a fisherman from a carpenter! There is no motive given for this advice, because as yet we do not know that they have not been successful. In later Christian reading, the invitation to “put out into deep water” is read metaphorically.

*Verse 6* The miraculous event is immediate and overwhelming.

*Verse 7* This verse also has metaphorical potential.

*Verse 8* Peter is both drawn and over-awed.

*Verse 9* “They” includes the unnamed bother.

*Verse 10* This is Luke’s reading of the second call story. The reassurance is part of all theophanies in the Bible. The call story itself implies in the previous verse: “from now on you will be catching people”.

### **Call of the Twelve**

Luke 6:12 Now during those days he went out to the mountain to pray; and he spent the night in prayer to God. 13 And when day came, he called his disciples and chose twelve of them, whom he also named apostles: 14 Simon, whom he named Peter, and his brother Andrew, and James, and John, and Philip, and Bartholomew, 15 and Matthew, and Thomas, and James son of Alphaeus, and Simon, who was called the Zealot, 16 and Judas son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.

### **Mission of the Twelve**

Luke 9:1 Then Jesus called the twelve together and gave them power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases, 2 and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal. 3 He said to them, “Take nothing for your journey, no staff, nor bag, nor bread, nor money—not even an extra tunic. 4 Whatever house you enter, stay there, and

leave from there. 5 Wherever they do not welcome you, as you are leaving that town shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them.” 6 They departed and went through the villages, bringing the good news and curing diseases everywhere.

### **Luke 9: commentary**

*Verse 1* Power and authority: matching words to describe Jesus himself (4:36; 5:17; 6:19; 8:46)

*Verse 2* Sent out: in the strong sense of “those sent with a commission”; they are to carry out the very same prophetic deeds of Jesus.

*Verse 3* Cf. Mk 6:8-9 (><Mt 10:9-10); Luke switches to silver, forbids the staff (allowed by Mk) and ignores sandals.

*Verse 4* To prevent unfocused instability. Cf. Didache 11:3-5

#### *The Didache*

Now concerning the apostles and prophets, deal with them as follows in accordance with the rule of the gospel. Let every apostle who comes to you be welcomed as if he were the Lord. But he is not to stay for more than one day, unless there is need, in which case he may stay another. But if he stays three days, he is a false prophet.

And when the apostle leaves, he is to take nothing except bread until he finds his next night's lodging. But if he asks for money, he is a false prophet. (Didache 11:3-6)

*Verse 5* Lk abbreviates purposefully Mk 6:11 and Mt 10:14; Cf. So after they shook the dust off their feet in protest against them, they went to Iconium. (Acts 13:51)

*Verse 6* Modelled on Jesus (notice the equivalents of proclaiming and healing).

### **Mission of the Seventy**

Luke 10:1 After this the Lord appointed seventy others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go. 2 He said to them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest. 3 Go on your way.

Luke 10:17 The seventy returned with joy, saying, “Lord, in your name even the demons submit to us!” 18 He said to them, “I watched Satan fall from heaven like a flash of lightning. 19 See, I have given you authority to tread on snakes and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy; and nothing will hurt you. 20 Nevertheless, do not rejoice at this, that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.”

Luke 10:3 Go on your way. See, I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves. 4 Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; and greet no one on the road. 5 Whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace to this house!’ 6 And if anyone is there who shares in peace, your peace will rest on that person; but if not, it will return to you. 7 Remain in the same house, eating and drinking whatever they provide, for the laborer deserves to be paid. Do not move about from house to house. 8 Whenever you enter a town and its people welcome you, eat what is set before you; 9 cure the sick who are there, and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’ 10 But whenever you enter a town and they do not welcome you, go out into its streets and say, 11 ‘Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet, we wipe off in protest against you. Yet know this: the kingdom of God has come near.’ 12 I tell you, on that day it will be more tolerable for Sodom than for that town.

Luke 10:13 “Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the deeds of power done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. 14 But at the judgment it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon than for you. 15 And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? No, you will be brought down to Hades.

Luke 10:16 “Whoever listens to you listens to me, and whoever rejects you rejects me, and whoever rejects me rejects the one who sent me.”

### Double sending

- This passage has some similarities with Matthew (9:37-38; 10:7-16) and Mark (6:6b-13), but the story of the sending of the seventy is unique to Luke.
- Lk 10:13-16 is difficult, bringing an element of judgment to bear.
- Throughout, however, there are authentic marks of the proclamation, such as joy and peace.
- It looks as if Luke has taken some traditional material (actually the sending out of the Twelve) and created this second, expanded missionary group in order to anticipate a similar pattern in the Acts of the Apostles.
- In the Acts, initially the Twelve a prominent but they soon give way to a second “generation” of missionaries, headed up by Paul, Barnabas and Silas.
- This second sending is then “anticipated” in the ministry of Jesus himself

So Moses went out and told the people the words of the Lord; and he gathered seventy elders of the people, and placed them all around the tent. Then the Lord came down in the cloud and spoke to him, and took some of the spirit that was on him and put it on the seventy elders; and when the spirit rested upon them, they prophesied. But they did not do so again.

Two men remained in the camp, one named Eldad, and the other named Medad, and the spirit rested on them; they were among those registered, but they had not gone out to the tent, and so they prophesied in the camp. And a young man ran and told Moses, “Eldad and Medad are prophesying in the camp.” And Joshua son of Nun, the assistant of Moses, one of his chosen men, said, “My lord Moses, stop them!” But Moses said to him, “Are you jealous for my sake? Would that all the Lord’s people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his spirit on them!” And Moses and the elders of Israel returned to the camp. (Numbers 11:24–30)

### Luke 10: commentary

- Verse 1* After what? After rejection among the Samaritans and a failed calling. The number has symbolic overtones (70 or 72). They are sent ahead and without Jesus.
- Verse 1* The motive for the second sending is the size of the harvest (an image found also in the OT for the gathering of Israel: see Isaiah 27:12).
- Verse 5* Wolves stand for danger—see Acts 20:28-31.
- Verse 4* This instruction resembles the behaviour of the popular philosophers of the day, especially the Cynic movement. Cf. 9:3.
- Verse 5* The traditional Hebrew greeting of shalom. It points to reciprocity.
- Verse 6* Notice there is not condemnation: simply the lack of receptivity is noted.
- Verse 7* Beggars are not to be choosers, in other words. The temptation would be to upgrade to better quarters and better food. Cf again Didache 11:3–6). Reward: Mt 10:10; 1 Co r 9:14; 1 Tim 5:18.
- Verse 8* This feels like a second start of a doublet of the previous instruction.
- Verse 9* The purpose of the healings is to illustrate the kingdom.
- Verse 10* A negative reception is also imagined, but this time in a tone of blame and warning.
- Verse 11* Shaking the dust off signals they take nothing from those who reject them (see Lk 9:5 and Acts 13:51).
- Verse 12* A fierce threat, given the reputation and destiny of these two cities. “In that day” is eschatological.
- Verse 17* Joy is a mark of the kingdom especially in Luke (Luke 1:14; 2:10; 8:13; 10:17; 15:7, 10; 24:41, 52).
- Verse 18* The victory over evil is also a mark of the Kingdom (4:2-13; 11:18; 13:16; 22:3, 31-32). From now on, Luke uses “Satan.” Lightning: cf. Is 14:15
- Verse 19* Snakes and scorpions symbolize evil. Cf. Lk 11:11-12.
- Verse 20* The true motive for joy lies not on apparent success but in the kingdom (see 12:33 and 18:22). The idea of a heavenly book is ancient.

**And so**

- Call of the first disciples (4)
- Call of the Twelve (5)
- Sending of the Twelve (9)
- Sending of the Seventy-Two (10)

**Prayer**

Most holy God,  
the earth is filled with your glory  
and in your presence angels stand in awe.  
Enlarge our vision,  
that we may recognise your power at work in your Son  
and join the apostles and prophets  
as heralds of your saving word.  
We ask this through your Son, Jesus Christ,  
who lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, God,  
for ever and ever. Amen.

**Reflection**

- My own sense of what God is asking of me?
- Has this changed over time?

**PRESENTATION 4: “HE WAS FILLED WITH COMPASSION”**

- Preaching mercy in Nazareth
- Faith in God’s mercy
- Mercy is our mission
- *“He was filled with compassion”*
- Today of God’s salvation
- Encounters of mercy

The Prodigal...which one?

**Sequence**

- Jesus as a teacher
- The Parables
- The Parables in Luke
- The Prodigal Son (Luke 15)
- The Prodigal Son Today
- And so...
- Prayer
- Reflection

**Jesus as a teacher**

- **Recall your own experience of a really good teacher**
- **Jesus was a teacher who taught, often in parables**
- **Parables were a distinctive feature of his teaching**

One day, while he was teaching, Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting near by (they had come from every village of Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem); and the power of the Lord was with him to heal. (Luke 5:17)

As they were listening to this, he went on to tell a parable, because he was near Jerusalem, and because they supposed that the kingdom of God was to appear immediately. (Luke 19:11)

**The parables**

- Can you recall name many parables?
- How many are there, would you guess?
- What *is* a parable?
- Parables: used to illustrate the Kingdom and to engage the Jesus’ hearers

**The parables in Luke**

- Luke has no fewer than 26 parables (20 special to him)
- Found mostly in the journey narrative (Luke 10-19)
- Among the most powerful parables are:
  - The Prodigal Son (Luke 15:8-31)
  - The Unjust Judge (Luke 18:1-8)
  - The Good Samaritan (10:25-36)

**The Prodigal Son**

- His Fall
  - Family
  - Country
  - Religion
- He came to himself
  - St Augustine

Late have I loved you, O Beauty ever ancient, ever new, late have I loved you! You were within me, but I was outside, and it was there that I searched for you. In my unloveliness I plunged into the lovely things which you created. You were with me, but I was not with

you. Created things kept me from you; yet if they had not been in you they would not have been at all.

You called, you shouted, and you broke through my deafness. You flashed, you shone, and you dispelled my blindness. You breathed your fragrance on me; I drew in breath and now I pant for you. I have tasted you, now I hunger and thirst for more. You touched me, and I burned for your peace.

- His Return
  - Speech
  - Father
  - Compassion

### **Compassion: Mark**

Mark 1:41 Moved with pity, Jesus stretched out his hand and touched him, and said to him, "I do choose. Be made clean!"

Mark 6:34 As he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd; and he began to teach them many things.

### **Compassion: Matthew**

Matt. 9:36 When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.

Matt. 14:14 When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick.

Matt. 15:32 Then Jesus called his disciples to him and said, "I have compassion for the crowd, because they

### **Compassion: Luke**

Luke 1:78 By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us,

Luke 7:13 When the Lord saw her, he had compassion for her and said to her, "Do not weep."

Mark 8:2 "I have compassion for the crowd, because they have been with me now for three days and have nothing to eat.

Mark 9:22 It has often cast him into the fire and into the water, to destroy him; but if you are able to do anything, have pity on us and help us."

have been with me now for three days and have nothing to eat; and I do not want to send them away hungry, for they might faint on the way."

Matt. 18:27 And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt.

Matt. 20:34 Moved with compassion, Jesus touched their eyes. Immediately they regained their sight and followed him.

Luke 10:33 But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity.

Luke 15:20 So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him.

### **Henri Nouwen on Rembrandt's Return of the Prodigal**

How different is the father's right hand! This hand does not hold or grasp. It is refined, soft, and very tender. The fingers are close to each other and they have an elegant quality. It lies gently upon the son's shoulder. It wants to caress, to stroke, and to offer consolation and comfort. It is a mother's hand....

As soon as I recognized the difference between the two hands of the father, a new world of meaning opened up for me. The Father is not simply a great patriarch. He is mother as well as father. He touches the son with a masculine hand and a feminine hand. He holds, and she caresses. He confirms and she consoles. He is, indeed, God, in whom both manhood and womanhood, fatherhood and motherhood, are fully present. That gentle and caressing right hand echoes for me the words of the prophet Isaiah: "Can a woman forget her baby at the breast, feel no pity for the child she has borne? Even if these were to forget, I shall not forget you. Look, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands."

### The prodigal son

- His Restoration
  - Ring
  - Sandals
  - Feast
  
- The other brother
  - His complaint
  - His disowning of his brother
  - Luke 15:1-2
  - The open ending
  
- Notice the family resemblance of the brothers
  - The younger son returns as a slave (abject guilt)
  - Older son behaves like a slave (servile loyalty)
- The Father rejects *both* ways of "being family"
  - Guilt and servility in Christian practice
  - Love and compassion are the real foundations

### And so..

- In our family life?
- In our church life?
- As a society?

### Prayer

Undaunted, you seek the lost, O God,  
 exultant, you bring home the found.  
 Touch our hearts with grateful wonder  
 at the tenderness of your forbearing love.  
 Grant us delight in the mercy that has found us  
 and bring all to rejoice at the feast of forgiveness.

### Reflection

- There are three figures in the story of the Prodigal Son. The father is a symbol of an unconditional love. Perhaps you can recall someone showing love to you in a way that showed great forgiveness and acceptance. Have there been times when you have also loved in this way?
- You may be able to identify with the younger son at different stages of his journey. Be sure to follow it to the point where it becomes a good news story for you – when you "came to yourself". Where and when have you experienced a homecoming after a time of exile and alienation.
- Do not neglect the older son. In contrast to his father he was very judgemental towards his younger brother. Perhaps you have experienced these attitudes in others towards you, or in yourself towards others. What were they like for you? Where was there life for you, or for others?

**PRESENTATION 5: TODAY OF GOD'S SALVATION**

- Preaching mercy in Nazareth
- Faith in God's mercy
- Mercy is our mission
- "He was filled with compassion"
- *Today of God's salvation*
- Encounters of mercy

**Sequence**

- Four stories of the death
- Where are we in Luke?
- Passion story in Luke
- Luke 23:26-56
- And so...
- Prayer
- Reflection

**Four stories**

- Mark: the tragic Son of God
- Matthew: Jesus' death as the turn of the age
- Luke: Jesus a prophet and martyr
- John: Jesus as the Word, revealing God's glory

**Where are we in Luke?**

- Luke 1-4                      Preparation
- Luke 5-9                     Ministry in Galilee
- Luke 10-19                 Road to Jerusalem
- Luke 20-24                 Saving events in the Holy City
  
- Luke 23:26-31 Jesus carries his cross
- Luke 23: 32-38 The mocking
- Luke 23:39-43 The Good Thief
- Luke 23:44-49 The death of Jesus
- Luke 23:50-56 The burial of Jesus

**Luke 23:26-31**

Luke 23:26 As they led him away, they seized a man, Simon of Cyrene, who was coming from the country, and they laid the cross on him, and made him carry it behind Jesus. 27 A great number of the people followed him, and among them were women who were beating their breasts and wailing for him. 28 But Jesus turned to them and said, "Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. 29 For the days are surely coming when they will say, 'Blessed are the barren, and the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never nursed.' 30 Then they will begin to say to the mountains, 'Fall on us'; and to the hills, 'Cover us.' 31 For if they do this when the wood is green, what will happen when it is dry?"

- Simon of Cyrene - a lesson in discipleship
- The Daughters of Jerusalem stand for the mother religion
- Innocence
- The closing saying makes a link with the destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70

**Luke 23:32-38**

Luke 23:32 Two others also, who were criminals, were led away to be put to death with him. 33 When they came to the place that is called The Skull, they crucified Jesus there with the criminals, one on his right and one on his left. 34 [Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing."] And they cast lots to divide his clothing. 35 And the people stood by, watching; but the leaders scoffed at him, saying, "He saved others; let him save himself if he is the Messiah of God, his chosen one!" 36

The soldiers also mocked him, coming up and offering him sour wine, 37 and saying, “If you are the King of the Jews, save yourself!” 38 There was also an inscription over him, “This is the King of the Jews.”

- Father, forgive them...
- The people stood by, watching
- The leaders and the soldiers

### Luke 23:39-43

Luke 23:39 One of the criminals who were hanged there kept deriding him and saying, “Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us!” 40 But the other rebuked him, saying, “Do you not fear God, since you are under the same sentence of condemnation? 41 And we indeed have been condemned justly, for we are getting what we deserve for our deeds, but this man has done nothing wrong.” 42 Then he said, “Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.” 43 He replied, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise.”

- Messiah . . . yes, but how?
- Unlikely bearers of the Gospel
- Today you will be with me in paradise

### Luke 23:44-49

Luke 23:44 It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, 45 while the sun’s light failed; and the curtain of the temple was torn in two. 46 Then Jesus, crying with a loud voice, said, “Father, into your hands I commend my spirit.” Having said this, he breathed his last.

47 When the centurion saw what had taken place, he praised God and said, “Certainly this man was innocent.” 48 And when all the crowds who had gathered there for this spectacle saw what had taken place, they returned home, beating their breasts. 49 But all his acquaintances, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things.

- Jesus’ last words in Luke
- The centurion’s reaction
- The people’s response

### Jesus’ last words

Mark	Luke
Around three o’clock Jesus cried out with a loud voice, “Eloi, Eloi, lema sabachthani?” which means, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Mark 15:34–35)	It was now about noon, and darkness came over the whole land until three in the afternoon, because the sun’s light failed. The temple curtain was torn in two. Then Jesus, calling out with a loud voice, said, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit!” And after he said this he breathed his last. (Luke 23:44–46)
Matthew	John
At about three o’clock Jesus shouted with a loud voice, “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?” that is, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” (Matthew 27:46)	When he had received the sour wine, Jesus said, “It is completed!” Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. (John 19:30)

- When some of the bystanders heard it they said, “Listen, he is calling for Elijah!” (Mark 15:35)
- אֵלֵי אֵלֵי = transition to trust

- Ps. 22:10; 63:2; 118:28; 140:7
- Eliatta = Eli atta = My God, it is you!
- Eliatta = Elia tha = Elijah, come!

### **Luke 23:50-56**

Luke 23:50 Now there was a good and righteous man named Joseph, who, though a member of the council, 51 had not agreed to their plan and action. He came from the Jewish town of Arimathea, and he was waiting expectantly for the kingdom of God. 52 This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. 53 Then he took it down, wrapped it in a linen cloth, and laid it in a rock-hewn tomb where no one had ever been laid. 54 It was the day of Preparation, and the sabbath was beginning. 55 The women who had come with him from Galilee followed, and they saw the tomb and how his body was laid. 56 Then they returned, and prepared spices and ointments. On the sabbath they rested according to the commandment.

- Joseph of Arimathea
- A new, unused grave
- The Sabbath was dawning (ἐπέφωσκεν / epephōsken)

### **And so...**

- Jesus the innocent / just one
- Jesus the Prophet
- Jesus the Martyr (cf. Stephen)
- Jesus died in prayer and trust

### **Prayer**

O God of eternal glory,  
 you anointed Jesus your servant  
 to bring us your forgiveness  
 to encourage the weary,  
 to raise up and restore the fallen.

Keep before our eyes  
 the paschal mystery of Christ  
 and, by our sharing in his passion and resurrection,  
 may we come to know today his love in our lives.

### **Reflection**

- Putting words on my own faith Jesus' death and resurrection
- What difference does such faith make?

**PRESENTATION 6: ENCOUNTERS OF MERCY**

- Preaching mercy in Nazareth
- Faith in God's mercy
- Mercy is our mission
- "He was filled with compassion"
- Today of God's salvation
- *Encounters of mercy*

**Sequence**

- Reading the Emmaus story
- Background
- Source
- Narrative
- Concentric layout
- Coming to Easter Faith
- And so...
- Prayer
- Reflection

**Background**

- Reference to Moses (= the Pentateuch), the Prophets (meaning both historical books and prophets) and all the Scriptures (possibly meaning the last part of the OT, "the writings"). To find out which texts resonated with the early Christians, read Luke-Acts and see which texts are consistently referred to. E.g. Isaiah 53, Psalm 110, Psalm 118 etc.
- In the programmatic scene in Nazareth, Luke 4:16-30 refers to Isaiah 61:1-2; 48:6 as well as to 1 Kings 17:1, 8-16; 18:1; 2 Kings 5:1-14.
- Perhaps the story nearest is that of Abraham's hospitality to his three guests, unaware that they are "angels" (= God really). The Graeco-Roman reader would be familiar with such stories about the gods disguised.

**Source**

Now (lit. and behold): 28-0-26-8

Two: 40-18-29-13

of them: 9-3-9-7

On the same day: 0-0-2-0

Going: 29-3-51-37

Village: 4-7-12-1

About 5-2-4-2

Jerusalem 2-0-27-37 (there are two forms in Greek for Jerusalem; the occurrence of the other form is: 11-10-4-22

Name: 23-15-24-60

Emmaus 0-0-1-0

Talking: 0-0-2-2

With each other: 0-4-8-4

Happened 0-1-1-3

Discussing: 0-6-2-2

Drew near: 7-3-18-6

Went with: 0-1-3-0

Eye: 24-7-17-7

Prevented: 12-15-2-4

Recognise: 6-4-7-13

Discussing: 0-0-1-0

Walk 7-9-5-8

Stand: 21-10-26-35

Sad: 1-0-1-0

Answer: 55-30-46-20

Only: 14-6-10-8

Stranger: 0-0-1-0

Know: 20-12-28-16

To happen: 75-55-131-125

In these days: 0-0-3-1

What?: 7-4-8-4

Jesus: 152-82-88-69

Nazarene: 0-4-2-0

Man 8-4-27-100

Prophet: 37-6-29-30

Powerful: 3-5-4-6

Word: 33-24-32-65

Deed: 6-2-2-10

Before: 0-0-3-2

Hand over: 31-20-17-13

High Priests: 25-22-15-22

Leaders: 5-1-8-11

To be condemned: 1-1-3-1

Death: 7-6-7-8

Crucify: 10-8-6-2

To hope: 1-0-3-2

To be about to do (mellō): 9-2-12-34

To redeem: 0-0-1-0

Israel: 12-2-12-15

Third: 12-7-10-14

Since: 0-0-5-0

Woman: 29-17-41-19

Astound: 1-4-3-8

Morning: 0-0-1-0

Tomb: 7-8-8-1

Find: 27-11-45-35

Body: 14-4-13-1

Vision: 0-0-2-1

Alive: 6-3-9-12

Foolish: 0-0-1-0

Slow: 0-0-1-0

Heart: 16-11-22-20

Believe 11-14-9-37

To declare: 26-21-31-59

Necessary: 8-6-18-22

To suffer: 4-3-6-5

Christ [messiah]: 16-7-12-25

To enter: 36-30-50-34

Glory: 7-3-13-4

To begin: 13-27-31-10

Moses: 7-8-10-19

To interpret: 0-0-1-1

Scripture: 4-3-4-7

To act as if: 0-0-1-0

Further (comparative): 0-0-1-0	To bless: 5-5-13-1	To return: 0-0-21-11
To urge: 0-0-1-1	To bread: 3-3-2-4	To be gathered: 0-0-1-0
To stay: 3-2-7-13	To give: 56-39-60-35	Eleven: 1-1-2-2
Evening: 0-0-1-2	To be opened: 0-1-4-3	Rise: 36-19-18-13
To be nearly over: 1-0-4-0	Vanished: 0-0-1-0	Appeared: 1-1-3-5
Already: 7-8-10-3	Not ( <i>ouchi</i> ): 9-0-18-2	Simon (meaning the apostle): 5-7-12-4
Day: 45-27-83-94	To burn: 1-0-2-0	To tell (explain): 0-0-1-4
To be at table: 0-0-5-0	Road (way): 22-16-20-20	Breading of the bread: 0-0-1-1
To take: 53-20-21-29	To open: 0-1-4-3	
Bread: 21-21-15-5	To get up: 4-17-27-45	
	Hour: 21-12-17-11	

- In the analysis of the vocabulary count, unique means that it occurs only in Luke or in Luke-Acts. Strongly Lucan vocabulary means any word which occurs in another Gospel but which occurs 50% more frequently in Luke. Non-Lucan means any word that does not occur elsewhere in Luke or Acts.
  - **Unique vocabulary:** one the same day, Emmaus, talking, discussing, stranger, in these days, before, to redeem, since, morning, vision, foolish, slow, to interpret, to act as it, further, to urge, evening, to be at table, vanished, to return, to be gathered, to tell, the breaking of the bread.
  - **Strongly Lucan vocabulary:** going, village Jerusalem, with each other, to draw near, to happen, man, leaders, to be condemned, to hope, to find, alive, necessary, to suffer, glory, to begin, to stay, to be nearly over, day, to bless, to be opened, not (*ouchi*), to burn, to open, to get up, eleven, appeared, Simon,
  - **Non-Lucan vocabulary:** (none) **Narrative**
  - It is a narrative, that is, a story with a plot
  - Within the biblical tradition, it is a theophany
  - A story unique to Luke (the story of Philip and the Eunuch in Acts mirrors it).
  - Both belong to a type of folktale in which the welcome to the unrecognised stranger turns out to be the decisive event of your life.
  - In the Jewish tradition, there are stories of Elijah, interestingly, exactly in this role.
  - The Lucan version exhibits the typical features of resurrection appearance stories: doubt, lack of recognition, revelation and mission.
  - Plot structure
    - Exposition
    - Inciting moment
    - Complication
    - Climax
    - Dénouement
  - Kinds of Plots
    - Plots of Action                    “Reversal” (they return)
    - Plots of Knowledge            “Insight” (hearts burning)
    - Plots of Character            “Growth” (“had hoped”)
  - All three kinds of plot play a role and the climax varies accordingly
  - Watch when the story “turns”
  - **Knowledge:** “At this point their eyes were opened and they recognised him.” (Luke 24:31)
  - **Character:** “They said to each other, “Didn’t our hearts burn within us while he was speaking with us on the road, while he was explaining the scriptures to us?” (Luke 24:32)
  - **Action:** “So they got up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem.” (Luke 24:33)
3. Narrative of Jesus’ condemnation and death
  2. Narrative of Jesus’ ministry
  4. Narrative of the women at the tomb

5. Narrative of “some of us” at the tomb
1. Narrative of Old Testament hopes
7. Narrative of the appearance to Peter
6. Narrative of the pilgrims’ moment of recognition

1. Narrative of Old Testament hopes
2. Narrative of Jesus’ ministry
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5. Narrative of “some of us” at the tomb
6. Narrative of the pilgrims’ moment of recognition
7. Narrative of the appearance to Peter

### Concentric

Chiastic patterns: ABB\*A\*

Concentric patterns: ABCB\*A\*

Q: is the *physical* centre the centre of *meaning*?

- A 13 (in the same/Jerusalem/going)  
 B 14 (they were talking to each other)  
 C 15ab (Jesus himself drew near)  
 D 16 (something prevented them from recognizing him)  
 E 17-19a (he makes a request which stops them)  
 F 19b-24 (ministry, death and tomb, no sight)  
 G 25 slowness of heart/ slow to believe  
 F' 26-27 (ministry, death and tomb, in the light of SS)  
 E' 28-30 (they make a request which stops him)  
 D' 31a (their eyes were opened, they recognised him)  
 C' 31b (He disappears from them)  
 B' 32 (they speak to each other)  
 A' 33a (in the same/ Jerusalem/returning) + Coda: 33-35

- Verses 13f* This sets up the story, the characters and the situation. The reader knows it is Jesus and becomes an observer of the birth of faith.
- Verses 17* He makes them stop.
- Verse 18f* Highly ironic that they should tell him, of all people, the story of his own death and resurrection!
- Verses 25f* Luke makes Jesus do what the early Christians did: look to the scriptures to understand their astounding experiences.
- Verses 28f* They make him stop. The scene does echo the Eucharist, but that is not the chief point: the Risen Lord comes in to us to stay with us when we desire it (cf. they urged him strongly).
- Verses 33f* Mutual confirmation of faith stories

- So, the centre is overcoming “slowness of heart to believe”
- Cf. “Blessed are the people who have not seen and yet have believed.” (John 20:29)
- I.e. the needs of a much later generation are being met

### Coming to Easter faith

- Awareness of longing (“We had hoped”)
- Familiarity with the Jesus story
- Jesus’ story read in light of Scripture (continuity / faithfulness)
- The witness of the early church (the women etc.)
- The sovereign self-presentation of the Risen Lord
- The fleeting character of our elusive “epiphanies”
- The key role of our desire (“Stay with us...”)
- The celebration of the risen Lord in the breaking of the bread
- The confirmation of the faith through the experience of the community

- The power of retrospective reflection

**And so...**

**Prayer**

O God of mystery, out of death you delivered Christ Jesus,  
and he walked in hidden glory with his disciples.

Stir up our faith,  
that our hearts may burn within us at the sound of his word,  
and our eyes be opened to recognise him in the breaking of the bread.

**Reflection**

- Jesus joined them and listened to them. "We had hoped..." They poured out to Jesus their disappointments. When you have been upset or disappointed who has joined you along the road? To whom have you been able to pour out your heart? Who was a 'Jesus person' to you, listening to you in respectful silence? To whom have you been a Jesus person?
- Jesus then helps them to see things in another light by opening the scriptures to them. Have you had the experience of new hopes being formed after disappointment? When has your heart been burning within you? What helped you to form new hopes in the light of the new reality? Who was with you in this?
- The disciples invite Jesus to join them at table - there follows a recognition of who he is. We meet many people on the road of life. Usually we meet and pass on. Occasionally we meet someone who we invite into our homes, into our hearts, in a deeper way, and in a way which leads us to know people and to be known by them in a way we had not done before. With whom has this happened for you? Where in these relationships have you experienced the presence of God or of Jesus?
- Jesus vanished but first he had given them life and they took up life in a new way. Can you name those moments of disclosure which enabled you to return to daily life renewed in spirit?