

TEXT: Luke 1:1-4

THEME: I LOVE TO TELL THE STORY

1. One Who Loved Jesus
2. One Who Loved All

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

When was the last time you've read the first four verses of Luke's gospel? Some sections in Scripture we almost skip over because they don't seem to say much to us, like the first half of chapter one of Matthew's gospel. There we find name after name, some of them very hard to pronounce, listed in a genealogy that appears to have little meaning for us. But when we stop to read more carefully, we discover those names show that Jesus is the promised Messiah, who indeed did come from the house of David, the tribe of Judah, and is the seed of Abraham, just as God had promised.



Abraham, Isaac, Jacob,  
Judah, Perez, Hezron,  
Ram, Amminadab, Nahshon,  
Salmon, Boaz, Obed, Jesse, David,  
Solomon, Rehoboam, Abijah, Asa,  
Jehoshaphat,...Azor, Zadok, Akim,  
Eliud, Eleazar, Matthan, Jacob,  
Joseph

When we stop to reread the first four verses of Luke's gospel, we also find much. **Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught. (Luke 1:1-4)** From these personal words with which Luke begins his gospel, we gain a sense of what Jesus meant to him and how much Luke wanted to share him with others.

This gospel was written by ONE WHO LOVED JESUS. Who was this Luke mentioned by name only three times in the Bible, all of them in Paul's epistles? His name means "belonging to the light," though we don't know how he came to know the one and only light, Jesus Christ. By birth he was a Gentile and by profession, a medical doctor, perhaps even the apostle Paul's personal physician (Colossians 4:10-14). More so, he was Paul's valued companion and valuable coworker (2 Timothy 4:11; Philemon 24), as we heard in our second lesson today. With Paul on both the second and third missionary journeys, Luke also remained at the apostle's side during the imprisonments and right up to the end of Paul's earthly life in Rome. Luke sounds like the kind of loyal, capable person we would want at our sides.



Above all, Luke was one who loved Jesus. How do we know? He wanted to share all that he could about the Savior with an acquaintance whom he calls "**most excellent Theophilus.**" And for the best reason of all, that Theophilus, probably a high Roman official, might "**know the certainty of the things you have been taught.**" Was this man in Luke's adult instruction class? How much had he already been taught? How much did he already believe? We aren't told, but what we do know is that

Luke wanted to tell him more of the story, the only story that counted, of Jesus and his love.

What Luke the evangelist, inspired by the Holy Spirit, wrote for Theophilus has been preserved by the same Holy Spirit for us today.

My father loved animals, raising them, working with them, at times earning his living with them. From little on he took me along, with my short legs dangling off the truck seat or hustling to keep up with him in the cow barns at the county fair. Again and again he would point to an animal and say to me, “Do you see that? That’s what you look for in a cow.” Or, “That’s what makes a horse good.” What he loved he wanted others to love. What he knew, he wanted others to know also. He did the same thing to me with Jesus!



What will people say about us someday? Will it be, he or she knew how to run a computer and do spreadsheets? How to be a police officer or an administrator? How to manage a family? It could be, depending on what the Lord gives us and where he puts us. But even more so, wouldn’t we want people to say, he or she knew Jesus and wanted others to know him too? Or he or she loved to tell the story wherever and in whatever way God indicated?

Luke wrote not only for Theophilus but for the world. Luke was ONE WHO LOVED ALL. Reading his gospel, we quickly catch his concern for presenting Jesus as the Savior who came for all, rich and poor, high official and outcast sinner, Jew and Gentile, man, woman, and child. He wrote to present a Savior of whom everyone could claim, “He is my Savior.”

It’s in Luke’s gospel that we find the parables of the lost sheep, lost coin, and lost son, illustrating Jesus’ concern for the recovery of the straying. It’s in his gospel too where we find the woman with the shadowy past whose tears washed Jesus’ feet because of his tender mercy for her. From Luke’s account of Jesus’ loving, forgiving dealings with tax collector Zacchaeus comes the sweet, succinct summary of Jesus’ mission, “**The Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost**” (Luke 19:10). Jesus’ tears over stubborn Jerusalem, his prayer for those who crucified him, his promise for the thief hanging next to him are found nowhere else but in the gospel of Luke. Doctor Luke, from his medical background, recorded many of the healing miracles of Jesus so that we would know they were really miracles. Throughout his book plays the sweet refrain of Jesus’ love for all kinds of people in all kinds of needs. Is it any wonder that the Holy Spirit also used Doctor Luke to write the book of Acts, in which we find detailed how the story of this Savior of all was carried out into all the world?

Luke’s work is not complete until you and I know and love this Savior. Praise God he moved Luke to tell us about the friend of sinners and the redeemer of the lost. Thank God he sends his Holy Spirit to work through what Luke has written so that we also can say, “He is my Savior!” Pray to God that he would fill us with the same zeal to tell others the story of Jesus and his love. We pray together: Thank you, Lord, for telling us the story of Jesus and his love. Please help us love to tell it to others, till in heaven it is our theme in glory. Amen.