

When the City Doesn't Love You Back

October 16, 2022

Lesson Summary

Main Passages

Luke 19:35-44

Session Outline

1. Entering Jerusalem (Luke 19:35-40)
2. Mourning over the City (Luke 19:41-42)
3. Coming Destruction (Luke 19:43-44)

Theological Theme

It is tempting to hold back from caring about others to the point that their suffering or sin causes us heartache and grief. Jesus experienced extreme grief over the city of Jerusalem that led Him to weep and mourn.



Leader Guide

When the City Doesn't Love You Back

Introduction

Times of rejoicing and celebration can turn quickly. Have you ever been part of celebrating something or someone when something happened that shifted the atmosphere quickly? It may have been a sporting event where it seemed as if one player was going to be the catalyst for a big win, yet in the final seconds of the game a mistake caused your team to lose. A person who was being celebrated suddenly became the brunt of all the unmet expectations of victory.

The contrast between the two emotional extremes creates a paradox that most of us have experienced at some point. Think about the emotional high that comes from watching your team fight for victory but then in the last few seconds, they end up suffering defeat. Today we will see a much more significant shift than any sports outcome. The people celebrated Jesus as He entered Jerusalem, but He knew well that their celebration would soon turn on Him, leading to His death on the cross.

- ❓ When have you ever experienced a celebration that turned into sorrow? What was the catalyst that changed your rejoicing to mourning?
- ❓ How would you describe the connection between those extreme emotions?

Session Summary

Making His final entrance into the city of Jerusalem, Jesus knew He would be rejected. He knew the time for the cross had come, but He still loved the city and its people fiercely. Though this is often called the triumphal entry, Jesus wept as He approached Jerusalem because He also knew what was to come for this beloved city.


The emotions Jesus felt were likely tied to the coming events of His betrayal and crucifixion as well as the destruction and punishment that the people who rejected Him would experience. His love for His people and the holy city were so strong that as He gazed over Jerusalem, He

wept. Jesus's weeping over the punishment of the same people who were about to betray and crucify Him is a beautiful display of unconditional love that believers should strive for as we encounter the lost and broken world around us.


1. Entering Jerusalem (Luke 19:35-40)

Jesus and His disciples prepared to go into Jerusalem for what would be the last time in His earthly life. Every detail was in place, even down to the animal Jesus rode on. Jesus chose a humble yet victorious approach to the city. The disciples followed instructions to the letter even though they still were not totally clear about Jesus's words regarding these final days.

The triumphal entry of Jesus into Jerusalem was an extravagant celebration honoring Him as the long-awaited King. The crowd celebrated, sang praises, and rejoiced much like they would when a conquering military hero returned after defeating a major foe. This was the first time Jesus had allowed any type of public celebration or affirmation of Himself. Spreading their garments out before Him was an expression of the people's joy at seeing Jesus and their praise for all the things He had done. Word of His miracles had spread, and the people responded in gratitude and celebration for Jesus.

 How do you respond in rejoicing and praise when you think about all that Jesus has done for you?

The crowd lifted their voices in praise and celebration based on all they had witnessed and been part of. They used strong words of praise hailing Jesus as the King who had come in the name of the Lord. They also shouted for peace in heaven and on earth. Whether they knew it or not, truly Jesus was the Prince of Peace and deserved all glory.

 Why does Jesus deserve all the glory in your life? How do you seek to give that to Him?

The Pharisees, religious leaders of the day, were observing Jesus's entry along with the celebrating and rejoicing people. They were not inclined to join in the celebration but instead were disturbed by everything happening. They challenged Jesus to put an end to the celebration. The praises of the people did not deter their feelings and motivated them to act. The enemy cannot stand the praises of God's people and will go to extreme measures to stop glory from being ascribed to the Lord. The Pharisees mistakenly believed that if they could get the people to stop then it would stop the work of Jesus from going forth.

Jesus's response to the Pharisees was classic. They wanted Him to shut down the crowd from praising Him and receiving Him as King. Jesus replied that creation itself would cry out if the people didn't. It was the right time for Him to be recognized for who He was and to receive some of the glory and praise He was due. Jesus often discouraged people from public displays of praise, but on this day, at this time, He did not turn away their praise. Their praise stemmed from remembering the various miracles and great deeds He had done. There was no holding back praise that day.

- Application: What do you need to praise and celebrate Jesus for today? What tempts you to hold in your praise for Him?

2. Mourning over the City (Luke 19:41-42)

Though Jesus knew the fate that awaited Him in Jerusalem, His distress was not about Himself but about the future that awaited the city and its people. What is it that enables someone to care more about the fate of others over his or her own difficult situation? It is love. Jesus had such love for Jerusalem that it caused Him frustration and anguish, knowing what their future held. Although He would face physical pain and suffering Himself, the fate of Jerusalem was what moved Him to tears.

- When has someone else's situation moved you to strong emotion even more than your own difficulties?

Reading how Jesus was moved over the city and its coming destruction gives us an insight into the heart of God. He is a perfect and just God who will administer punishment or judgment as promised but He does not enjoy the suffering of His people. His heart is always for people to be in right relationship with Him. Yet, He also allows us to make our own choices. Those choices can be accompanied by severe consequences at times. The Jewish people had plenty of opportunities to make the right choice and yet they rejected their chance to avoid the coming destruction. Even though the people made decisions that led to the consequences they would face, God would not delight in their difficulties. Jesus demonstrated God's great love for His people when He wept over those who would soon call for His crucifixion.

- What would it take for you to weep over the suffering of someone who has done you wrong as Jesus did?

Jesus mourned over the fact that the people did not recognize His coming and take note of the defining moment it was. They had searched for peace in many ways. They placed their faith in the wrong people and things and now they were going to reap the consequences of that misplaced trust.

Blind does not always mean without sight. You can be blind to something right in front of you that you just don't see correctly. These people were blind to the truth and that was connected to the grief Jesus experienced on their behalf. Imagine the frustration He felt as He considered all the ways the people had missed out on living in the truth and accepting Him as the Messiah. The Prince of Peace was at their city gates, and they missed Him, choosing instead to pursue things that would always disappoint. Jerusalem had been called the "city of peace," yet this city was anything but a city of peace because the people did not see clearly.

Have you ever been blinded to the truth around you? Any one of us can find ourselves believing a lie and missing out on the truth found only in Jesus. It is tragic and yet is also reversible. We can ask God to open our eyes to see the truth. We can seek to know His Word so that we will not be vulnerable to believing the lies of the enemy. We can also learn to love like Jesus so that we care about the plight of others and are willing to be part of God's kingdom work. We can commit to trusting in Jesus to bring us peace instead of searching for it in all the wrong people, places, and things. But in our text today, destruction was coming to the city of peace, and it broke Jesus's heart.



Application: Where are you tempted to look for peace outside of Jesus? Why is that enticing?

3. Coming Destruction (Luke 19:43-44)

There are things in life that cannot be avoided. It is common to say death and taxes are two of those. Add to those the fact that because our God is just and righteous, we will answer for the choices we make. Jesus knew this was true, and He also knew the terrible destruction that was coming for Jerusalem because of their rebellious and sinful ways. Though they had heard the truth and received impassioned teaching and preaching, they had been blind to it. Their hearts were hard to the gospel, they turned away from Jesus, and soon would pay the price for their sin.



When was a time you missed the truth and believed a lie until your eyes were opened?

Jesus named specific attacks they would experience from their enemies. In predicting a barricade around the city, Jesus warned that Rome would build an embankment or enclosure around the city to trap them. Their freedom to go and come as they pleased would be gone.

The enemy would surround the city and lay siege to them, taking away their trade routes and avenues of provisions. The city was to be destroyed and the people within would be killed. The details of this attack were horrendous and all encompassing. The children would not be spared,

and the city would be absolutely devastated. It was complete, terrible, and certain. This knowledge weighed on Jesus even as He entered the city amid praise and celebration. He looked around and saw the happy joyful faces of the day as well as the devastation to come. Consider how that would affect His emotions as He rode into Jerusalem.


 How did Jesus's grief over Jerusalem show His love and grace toward them?

Jesus Wept

Jesus wept before Lazarus's tomb (Jn 11:35), and here he wept at the thought of his rejection by the city of Jerusalem. True, lasting peace with God comes through faith in Jesus Christ (Rm 5:1). The Jews enjoyed a temporal though imperfect peace under Roman rule, but such a peace cannot be secured forever, as the destructive events of AD 70 proved. Due to their unbelief, many Jews did not open their eyes to see Christ as Messiah (2Co 4:4) or recognize his coming as the time (Gk *kairos*, "opportune time") of God's visitation and offer of salvation.

Because He knew the vastness of the coming punishment, Jesus's heart was heavy, and it affected Him greatly. He warned the people about what would happen, and the destruction would include the people, the city, and the temple. When He referred to not leaving "one stone on another," He was predicting the absolute destruction of the temple itself. This special place meant for meeting the Lord and listening to teaching would be attacked to the point that no stone would be left in place. Nothing would be left to represent the house of God that had meant so much to the people and the city.

Jesus ended His remarks with the reminder that all the destruction and coming devastation could have been avoided had they recognized the Messiah among them. History showed that Rome went on to attack Jerusalem and carry out every one of these predictions. Every detail was correct and the timing of all these events happened just as Scripture foretold. Though we cannot fix the problems with Jerusalem that Jesus wept over that day, we can learn from their plight. There are still predictions and prophecies in Scripture that are yet to be fulfilled. How will we as the body of Christ be prepared for those to take place? Jesus mentioned that they didn't recognize the time of His coming. He is coming back, and Scripture tells us to live in anticipation of His return. What we do with the time we have until then matters greatly.

 Application: How is the destruction of Jerusalem a warning for us to heed as we choose how to live in light of Jesus's second coming?

Conclusion

As He approached Jerusalem, Jesus looked the city and was so overcome with emotion that He wept. He loved Jerusalem, even though He knew what awaited Him in the coming days. He also knew what punishment awaited the people for their rebellious ways. Though the people shouted with joy and praise as He entered the city, Jesus knew it would change quickly.

Before long the same people who were praising Him would be calling for His crucifixion. They would reject Him, and that rejection would bring destruction. This broke His heart and caused Him to mourn for His beloved people and city. It weighed heavy on His heart that the blindness of the people caused them to miss who He was and the peace that comes with trusting Him as the Messiah. Likewise, we will answer for the way we respond to Him. He is coming again, and the wise person will be ready when He does.

- ❓ How much does it impact you to recognize the lostness of other people? What would it look like to imitate Jesus in this?
- ❓ How might God be calling you to care enough to act on behalf of those in need of Him?
- ❓ How should this motivate us toward gospel conversations with others?

Prayer of Response

Thank God for His love that is unconditional. Ask for sensitivity to care enough about others that you are moved to action like Jesus. Pray that your eyes will be open to opportunities around you in which you can be used for kingdom work.

Additional Resources

- *Exalting Jesus in Luke* by Thabiti Anyabwile
- *Be Courageous* by Warren Wiersbe
- *Luke* by R.C. Sproul

Disciples Multiplying Disciples



For Next Week

Session Title

- How Much Longer Can We Take This?

Main Passages

- Revelation 5

Session Outline

1. Unworthy and Overcome (Revelation 5:1-4)
2. Only One Is Worthy (Revelation 5:5-7)
3. Praise Jesus (Revelation 5:8-14)

Memorize

As he approached and saw the city, he wept for it.

- Luke 19:41

Historical Context of Luke

Purpose

The Gospel of Luke is a carefully researched (1:3), selective presentation of the person and life of Jesus Christ, designed to strengthen the faith of believers (1:3–4) and to challenge the misconceptions of unbelievers, especially those from a Greek background. Its portrait of Jesus is well balanced, skillfully emphasizing his divinity and perfect humanity.

Author

The author of the Third Gospel is not named. Considerable evidence points to Luke as its author. Much of that proof is found in the book of Acts, which identifies itself as a sequel to Luke (Ac 1:1–3). A major line of evidence has to do with the so-called “we” sections of the book (Ac 16:10–17; 20:5–15; 21:1–18; 27:1–37; 28:1–16). Most of Acts is narrated in third-person plural (“they,” “them”), but some later sections having to do with the ministry of the apostle Paul unexpectedly shift to first-person plural (“we,” “us”). This indicates that the author had joined the apostle Paul for the events recorded in those passages. Since there are no “we” passages in the Gospel of Luke, that fits with the author stating that he used eyewitness testimony to the life of Jesus (1:2), indicating he was not such an eyewitness himself.

Setting

Traditionally, the Gospel of Luke is believed to have been written after both Matthew and Mark. Those who date Matthew and Mark in the AD 60s or 70s have tended to push the dating of Luke back to the AD 70s or 80s.

Since Luke wrote both the Third Gospel and the book of Acts (Ac 1:1–3), it is relevant to consider the dating of both books together. The events at the end of Acts occurred around AD 62–63. That is the earliest point at which Acts could have been written. If Acts was written in the early AD 60s from Rome, where Paul was imprisoned for two years (Ac 28:30), the Third Gospel could date from an earlier stage of that period of imprisonment. The other reasonable possibility is during Paul’s earlier two-year imprisonment in Caesarea (Ac 24:27). From that location, Luke would have been able to travel and interview the eyewitnesses to Jesus’s life and ministry who were still alive.

Special Features

The Gospel of Luke is the longest book in the New Testament. Focusing on the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, this Gospel is part one of a two-part history, the book of Acts being part two. Both were dedicated to “most honorable Theophilus” (Lk 1:3; Ac 1:1).

Extended Commentary

Luke 19:35-44

19:32–35. Events occurred just as Jesus described. So the disciples brought the donkey to Jesus, threw their robes on it as a saddle, and set Jesus on it (cf. 1 Kgs. 1:33 for the coronation of Solomon on a mule). Zechariah 9:9 used poetic parallelism to describe the messianic king riding on a donkey to bring salvation to his people. His coming would break all instruments of war and bring peace to the city of peace.

19:36. The disciples also spread their robes on the street, signifying a royal procession (cf. 2 Kgs. 9:13).

19:37. The crowd of disciples, indicating a group beyond the Twelve, joined the procession, praising God for all the miraculous signs Jesus had given (cf. 7:22; 13:10–17; 14:1–6; 17:11–19; 18:35–43).

19:38. They praised Jesus as king, citing Psalm 118:26. Finally, Jesus' glory was openly recognized (cf. 1:32; 18:38–39). He was more than the babe of Nazareth or the Galilean rabbi. He was more than a miracle worker. He was a royal figure entering the royal city down the royal road. He came as God's representative, God's chosen king. He showed that the hopes of Israel are being fulfilled. God has sent the messianic king to bring peace, a peace that only heaven can establish, and a peace established in heaven that cannot be negated on earth. This means that the angels who rejoice over one sinner who repents now see all the heavenly glory of God's plan of salvation brought to fruition. As earthlings praise the king on a donkey, so heaven glories in God's great work of salvation.

19:39. This was too much for the Pharisees. They came to crucify Jesus, not to praise him. They asked Jesus to silence the disciples. Do not let such blasphemy continue, they said. They showed themselves to be the enemies opposing Jesus so aptly described in the previous parable.

19:40. Impossible, replied Jesus. This is the moment God ordained for me to receive praise. If human voices were silent, nature would shout its praise. The Pharisees just do not understand the nature of the God they spend so much time talking about. They are evil servants as in the parable. The king has come. They see only a false teacher on a donkey. But for those who do see the king, praise is the language of the day. Such language will lead to eternal rewards and responsibility.

19:41. Luke has begun the Jerusalem story (19:28), but he has not yet let Jesus reach Jerusalem. The recognition and praise of Messiah comes from disciples outside the city, not from the religious crowds or religious power brokers inside the city. Jesus knew that the city of Jerusalem and its power structure—both Jewish and Roman—would reject him. They would take him to the cross. So he wept, not for his immediate fate but for the stubborn, sinful blindness of the city. The city God loves had no love for him.

19:42. He had come with peace from heaven. They could not see or understand. They did not act responsibly and intelligently, just as the parable described. Why? It was hidden from their eyes. Here is the biblical teaching on hardening in another guise. Irresponsible use of religious power finally separated the Jerusalem establishment from God. Thus, his revelation no longer came to them. He hid his plans from their eyes. As in the parable, they would rise up in outrage: unfair! No, God was just giving them what they deserved, taking away responsibility and privilege from those who misused it because they could not learn to recognize him and how he acted.

19:43–44. Hidden revelation was only the beginning of Jerusalem’s troubles. Jesus looked ahead to a.d. 70, when the Roman government would have enough of Jewish rebellions and would destroy the city. The inhabitants would not escape. Jesus made special mention of the children, since caring for the helpless was the center of his ministry. God had visited his people as he had promised. Messiah had come to seek and to save the lost. They refused to recognize they were lost. They refused to see God’s glory in Jesus or to give God glory for sending Jesus. Their beloved temple and all the glorious architecture of Jerusalem would fall, not one stone attached to another, no hope for rebuilding and renewal.¹

References

1. Trent Butler, *Holman New Testament Commentary: Luke* (Nashville: Broadman and Holman Publishers, 2000).

Author Bio

Thabiti Anyabwile (Exalting Jesus in Luke)

Thabiti M. Anyabwile (MS, North Carolina State University) serves as a pastor at Anacostia River Church in Washington, DC, and is the author of numerous books. He serves as a council member of the Gospel Coalition, is a lead writer for 9Marks Ministries, and regularly blogs at The Front Porch and Pure Church. He and his wife, Kristie, have three children.

Warren Wiersbe (Be Courageous)

Warren W. Wiersbe, former pastor of the Moody Church and general director of Back to the Bible, has traveled widely as a Bible teacher and conference speaker. Because of his encouragement to those in ministry, Dr. Wiersbe is often referred to as “the pastor’s pastor.” He has ministered in churches and conferences throughout the United States as well as in Canada, Central and South America, and Europe. Dr. Wiersbe has written over 150 books, including the popular BE series of commentaries on every book of the Bible, which has sold more than four million copies. At the 2002 Christian Booksellers Convention, he was awarded the Gold Medallion Lifetime Achievement Award by the Evangelical Christian Publishers Association. Dr. Wiersbe and his wife, Betty, live in Lincoln, Nebraska.

R.C. Sproul (Luke)

R.C. Sproul (1939–2017) was founder of Ligonier Ministries in Orlando, Fla. He was also copastor of Saint Andrew’s Chapel, first president of Reformation Bible College, and executive editor of *Tabletalk* magazine. His radio program, *Renewing Your Mind*, is still broadcast daily on hundreds of radio stations around the world and can also be heard online.