

Sunday 15 October 2023 Revd Mark Radcliffe

Today we are celebrating the feast day of St Luke – and I did a little research about him from Roman Catholic sources on line.

Luke who wrote the Gospel and the books of [Acts](#) has been identified with St. Paul's "Luke, the beloved physician" (Colossians 4:14). And we know little more about him from either scripture or early church tradition.

It is believed that [Luke](#) was born both Greek and a Gentile. In [Colossians](#) 10-14 speaks of those friends who are with him. He first mentions all those "of the circumcision" -- in other words, [Jews](#) -- and he does not include [Luke](#) in this group. Luke's gospel shows special sensitivity to evangelizing Gentiles.

Based on the language of Acts Luke probably first joined Paul's company at [Troas](#) at about the year 51 and accompanied him into Macedonia being separated from him when Paul is imprisoned before being reunited later. When everyone else deserts Paul in his final imprisonment and sufferings, it is [Luke](#) who remains with Paul to the end: "Only [Luke](#) is with me" (2 Timothy 4:11).

Luke's unique perspective on [Jesus](#) can be seen in the six miracles and eighteen [parables](#) not found in the other gospels. Luke's is the gospel of the poor and of social justice. He is the one who tells the story of [Lazarus](#) and the Rich [Man](#) who ignored him. [Luke](#) is the one who uses "Blessed are the poor" instead of "Blessed are the poor in spirit" in the beatitudes. Only in Luke's gospel do we hear

[Mary](#) 's Magnificat where she proclaims that [God](#) "has brought down the powerful from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with [good](#) things, and sent the rich away empty" (Luke 1:52-53).

In his writings Luke has a special connection with the women in Jesus' life, especially Mary. Forgiveness and God's mercy to sinners is also of first importance to Luke. Reading Luke's gospel gives a [good idea](#) of his [character](#) as one who loved the poor, who wanted the door to God's kingdom opened to all, who respected women, and who saw [hope](#) in God's mercy for everyone.

So how might that tie in with our readings today?

First, we have our reading from Isaiah with its focus on hope for those who suffer. A message for those who are lame and deaf and blind that there is hope in the Lord. This passage is not written for the Rich and the strong but for the poor and the weak just like much of Lukes work.

Second, we have the seventy sent out ahead of Jesus not in human power but like lambs into the midst of wolves. Taking the message of Peace and the Kingdom of God wherever it will be welcomed.

In the passage from Luke we read,

"The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few;".

Is this not also true in our own age with a great many people who do not know the Peace of the Kingdom of God. Jesus sent out the seventy to cover a small area with a far smaller

population than exists today so how many people would we need today and where will they come from?

Those who heard my talk at the Pizza party here last Saturday will have some idea why I think people need to know about the Kingdom of God and how to enter it.

Luke and Isaiah were clearly concerned for the least and the lost in society and we should also be. Hopefully it is the good news of Jesus that inspires us to be here this morning but how many are not here, or in another church or denomination, because nobody has ever told them that they need to be?

Paul wrote in Romans 10: 14 – 15.

¹⁴ But how are they to call on one in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in one of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone to proclaim him? ¹⁵ And how are they to proclaim him unless they are sent?

In our reading today we are told to;

ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest.

For the message of hope to be heard it has to be communicated and we are the labourers that are available for God to use. Each in our own way and using the gifts and skills that God has given us. Some are called to

communicate with convincing words and arguments, many more to demonstrate by example and lifestyle.