

He is Christ, the Lord (Luke 2:1-24)

We have been studying the Gospel of Luke together. Today we will be studying the first half of cp. 2. The theme of today is “He is Christ, the Lord.”

It may sound a little technical but, Luke cp. 1 and 2 have exactly the same structure. By the way, the context and the structure of each chapter are two different things. And understanding the structure and understanding the outline are again two different things. Any way...

As I said before, Luke cp. 1 and 2 have exactly the same structure. When you look at cp. 1 and 2 as a pair, you will notice some interesting things. The one of them is the place, where those incidents happened. Roughly speaking, in cp. 1, it starts at the temple, then in the house, and finally in the desert. In cp. 2, it starts in the fields, then in the house, and finally at the temple. And there is a message here.

1. Where is God

First, let's look at the sequence in cp. 1, from the temple, to the house, and to the desert. Let's apply this to ourselves.

In the Worship service, at church meetings, God was surely with you. In prayer meetings, He showed you His Word and gave you His promise.

When you were having quiet time at home, God gave you His Word, encouraged you, filled you with His Holy Spirit, and gave you strength. Your faith was renewed, and you devoted yourself again to Him. God again gave you strength, encouraged you and gave you guidance.

Nevertheless, your present condition is a real desert. So many difficulties. Things don't get better. So you think, “Where is God? What is He doing?”

Psalm 143:6-9 I spread out my hands to You; My soul *longs* for You like a thirsty land. ⁷ Answer me speedily, O LORD; My spirit fails! Do not hide Your face from me, Lest I be like those who go down into the pit. ⁸ Cause me to hear Your lovingkindness in the morning, For in You do I trust; Cause me to know the way in which I should walk, For I lift up my soul to You. ⁹ Deliver me, O LORD, from my enemies; In You I take shelter.

Now look at cp. 2, God leads us from the field, to the house and to the temple, into God's presence.

Then what changes the reality, the temple- the house - the desert into the other direction, the field – the house – the temple, into God's presence.? What is the turning point?

Luke 2:4-7⁴ Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David,⁵ to be registered with Mary, his betrothed wife, who was with child.⁶ So it was, that while they were there, the days were completed for her to be delivered.⁷ And she brought forth her firstborn Son, and wrapped Him in swaddling cloths, and laid Him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

This is the turning point. The temple – the house – the desert, then from this turning point, it changes the direction, the field – the house – the temple.

Luke 1:32-33 He will be great, and will be called the Son of the Highest; and the Lord God will give Him the throne of His father David.³³ And He will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of His kingdom there will be no end.

So, Jesus came to this world as a king. But at 2:7, people didn't accept Him. This fact is the turning point that draws us from the desert into the presence of the Lord.

"There was no room for them in the inn." He who was not accepted that is Christ the Lord. He is our Savior. The Savior for you and me.

Jesus understands more than anyone else how hard it is to hold on to God's Word and keep waiting for God to work, when the situation gets worse and everything goes against him, though he listens to God's Word, and acts on it.

Jesus understands very well how hard it is for you to live in this world, following God's Word. He knows very well how fierce the battle is. He knows very well what it means to be hurt. He doesn't just know about it. But he bore all your experience on himself.

Isaiah 53:2B-4A He has no form or comeliness; and when we see Him, *There is* no beauty that we should desire Him.³ He is despised and rejected by men, A Man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. And we hid, as it were, *our* faces from Him; He was despised, and we did not esteem Him.⁴ Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows;

"There was no room for them in the inn." He who was not accepted that is Christ the Lord. He is our Savior. The Savior for you and me.

2. Where is Christ

Then, where do you invite Jesus?

Luke 2:11¹¹ For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

This verse shows us one thing very clearly. If Jesus is your Savior, He is also your Lord. You cannot separate those two.

John 1:11-12 ¹¹ He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. ¹² But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name.

Here John talks about Jesus. To believe in Jesus' name is to receive Jesus. To receive Jesus is to make Jesus my king, my ruler, my master, my owner, my Lord.

No matter what excuse we use, it is impossible just to receive Jesus as our Savior, but not to make him our Lord.

Luke 2:1-3 ¹ And it came to pass in those days *that* a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered. ² This census first took place while Quirinius was governing Syria. ³ So all went to be registered, everyone to his own city.

Caesar Augustus. He is the ruler of the country. Everyone who is in his country obeyed his word.

Someone might say, "I acknowledge that Augustus is a wonderful king. I respect him and always trust in him. Because of his rule, my life is secure and I received so many blessings. I can never thank him enough for everything he has done. I am proud that I belong to his country", but if the person doesn't obey Augustus' command, "Everyone should go back to his/her own town to register", no matter how well he speaks of Augustus, he is no better than parrot.

People in his country knew that Augustus is their ruler, so they all followed his word. Joseph went to Bethlehem to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him. At that time, she was in her last month of pregnancy. It was very inconvenient for them to travel then. But they went all the way to Bethlehem, because they followed the word of their ruler.

If Jesus is your Savior, he is also your king, your ruler, your master, your owner, and your Lord. It shows itself in your attitude toward His Word. People can see clearly who Jesus is for you by what kind of attitude you take toward Jesus' Word, than by what kind of words you speak about Jesus.

In Matthew cp. 2, it talks about King Herod. When Herod heard about the birth of Jesus, the new king, he said to Magi, "Make a careful search for him and report to me, so that I too may go and worship him." He said, "I too may go and worship him." It sounds wonderful. However, actually he was trying to find Jesus and kill him. He was very evil.

We may think, "I will never try to find Jesus and kill him. I will invite him to my place. But I have no more room where I live, so I will build a hut in the back yard where no one uses and invite him there. Once a week, I will tidy myself up, go there and worship him. I will never worship anything else. Then I will continue to live as before."

Or others may think, “I will invite him into my living room. But I don’t want him to look into this room and that room, and that closet, because it’s untidy there. Especially my room is so messy, and on my desk there are so many things only I can figure out what they are, and actually there is some secret stuff too, so I don’t want him to touch them. But I will never kick him out of my house. I will receive him as a special guest in my living room and entertain him there.”

If we think like that, we have completely forgotten why we need Savior. Remember what I spoke before. Our life is like a desert, like a little boat tossed by a storm. We face difficulty, problems and we can’t solve it by ourselves. We are spiritually thirsty. We need encouragement, guidance and strength. So, Jesus came as our Savior. If we don’t receive Him in the midst of our daily life, then what is salvation for? If we pretend to be good, just make a show of our good part before our Savior, then what on earth is Savior for?

Luke 2:10-11¹⁰ Then the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. ¹¹ For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.

Jesus came to where we were, in the completely dark desert, as Christ, our Savior. When we receive Him, we have salvation. We will be led from the desert into God’s presence. To receive Jesus is to make Jesus our Lord.

3. Where is the Word of God

Luke 2:8-9⁸ Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. ⁹ And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid.

What did the shepherds see? They saw the glory of the Lord. And what did they do? They were afraid. Before God’s glory, power and greatness, people feel fear.

Luke 2:20²⁰ Then the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told them.

At first, the shepherds were afraid when they saw the glory of God, but in the end they returned, praising the glory of God. Let’s look at how they have changed.

V.15 “this thing, which the Lord has made known to us”、 v.17 “the saying which was told them”、 v.20 “all the things that they had heard and seen, as it was told them” That is, the key is how they responded to the Lord’s Word.

The shepherds listened to the Word of God obediently and honestly. And they received all of His Word, not just a part. And, they acted on the light of the Word. As a result, they experienced God’s greatness and faithfulness. So, they praised God.

There are some errors we often make. When we hear the Word of God, we just listen to the convenient part, and ignore inconvenient part. We receive what suits our feelings and logic, but ignore what doesn't suit them, or change it to be more acceptable.

If we do that, God is always within our convenience, within our logic. Then, how can we experience God's greatness? How can we experience truthfulness of God's Word? How can we experience God's Word is really true? We can never experience God's greatness and truthfulness.

Let's look at Mary.

Luke 2:19¹⁹ But Mary kept all these things and pondered *them* in her heart.

Mary didn't just listen to the Words and forget about His works, but she "kept each and every one of them in her heart". And she didn't just keep these things in her heart and forget where they are, but she "pondered them in her heart". She thought them over and over.

You don't have to raise your hand, but how much do you remember of the message I gave you last time? I gave you three points, which I don't usually do. Do you remember at least the three points?

God created us to forget things. To forget is one of the abilities God has given us. If we remember everything, our head will be filled with unnecessary information, and our mind will be confused all the time. So, God created us to forget things. But, we also forget things which we need to keep and ponder in our heart. Then, what can we do? Very easy. We can make notes of what we heard. And over a week, looking at notes, opening the Bible, we can ponder them in our hearts, think them over again and again. Then, we will not easily forget what we learned.

Otherwise, when we hear the message, a few things might impress us, but in a few days or in a few hours we will forget what they were. But when we make notes and think them over, we can keep the whole message in our hearts. And the message we have kept in our hearts, we can ponder and think over any time.◦

Luke 2:21-24²¹ And when eight days were completed for the circumcision of the Child, His name was called JESUS, the name given by the angel before He was conceived in the womb.²² Now when the days of her purification according to the law of Moses were completed, they brought Him to Jerusalem to present *Him* to the Lord²³ (as it is written in the law of the Lord, "*Every male who opens the womb shall be called holy to the LORD*"),²⁴ and to offer a sacrifice according to what is said in the law of the Lord, "*A pair of turtledoves or two young pigeons.*"

Mary didn't just keep God's Words and ponder them in her heart, but she did what the Words instructed her to do.

Caesar Augustus issued a decree. What did people do? They listened to all of his word, understood it, and carried it out. Why did they do that? Because that was the word of the ruler.

Why did Mary not only keep and ponder the Words in her heart, but also did what the Words instructed her to do? Because they were the Words of King of kings, Lord of lords, who created heaven and earth, and are still in control of them. Moreover, He is her Lord.

If the shepherds had heard the good news of great joy, and understood it, but remained in the field, what would have happened? They might have heard about God's greatness through others, but they would never have experienced God's greatness and truthfulness for themselves.

Today, we studied "He is Christ, the Lord." For closing, let's review the study.

Where is God? God is with us, even when we are in the desert, or when we are troubled by a storm and waves. And He draws us in to the Holy of Holies.

Where is Christ? Is He sitting on the throne as your King? Or is He in a stable? If Jesus is your Savior, He is also your Lord. We cannot separate the two.

Where is the Word of God? Mary kept all the Words and pondered them in her heart and did what the Words instructed her to do. The shepherds received all the Words, understood them, and acted on them. And the fear was turned into praise.