St. Luke, Evangelist — Luke 1:1-4; 24:44-53
October 18, 2020 — 284-288-385/387-552

What Can We Learn from the Good Doctor?
I. Pay meticulous attention to the details.
II. Turn things over to the Specialist.

Dear Christian friends,

We are going to start this sermon with a SHORT QUIZ to see how much we know about St. Luke. **All set?**

#1. Was Luke an apostle or a **disciple**? (Explain the difference.)

#2. Was Luke a Jew or a Gentile? (Paul tells us he was a Gentile.)

#3. Why is Luke called an **"evangelist"**?

#4. What book/**books** of the Bible did Luke write? (Luke and Acts)

#5. What was Luke's occupation? If you read the **sermon theme** in the bulletin you already know the answer.

That's about all that we know about Luke. He's only mentioned three times in the Bible. That's all we know ABOUT Luke – but what can we LEARN FROM Luke? WHAT CAN WE LEARN FROM THE GOOD DOCTOR? Our text provides two answers. 1)Pay **meticulous attention** to the details and 2)turn things over to the **Specialist**.

I. Pay meticulous attention to the details.

PAY **meticulous attention** to the details. Meticulous means being VERY CAREFUL and exact – **paying attention** to the TINIEST details. We expect that from our doctors. **We know** doctors aren't perfect. Doctors make mistakes. But when doctors are INTENTIONALLY or STUPIDLY careless that's **malpractice**. When doctors don't pay **meticulous attention** to the details we can really suffer – EVEN DIE from that.

Dr. Luke - as he wrote his gospel - PAID **meticulous attention** to the details. ***"I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning."*** Luke was not an EYEWITNESS to our Lord's miracles. Luke didn't hear Jesus **preach** or teach. From what we **can gather** Luke didn't even live in the **Holy Land**. Luke's home was the city of ANTIOCH **north** of Palestine. A **Christian** congregation had been formed in Antioch when persecutions in Jerusalem had **forced Christians** to flee there. As that **young** congregation reached out to its neighbors **with the gospel** Luke was converted. **From those active** Christians Luke learned the **gospel** and heard about his **Savior**.

Luke wrote his gospel around **60 AD**. That's about 30 years after Jesus' ascension into heaven. In the intervening years Luke tells us, ***"Many have undertaken to compile an account of the events that have been fulfilled among us, an account like those handed down to us by those who were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word from the beginning."*** As the church grew and spread it was IMPOSSIBLE for the apostles to serve in all the different places. So gospels – HISTORIES of Jesus' life – were written. Luke was about to join those **ranks**.

But Luke was not about to REHASH **second-hand** information. **You know** what can happen to a story after it's **been passed on** three or four times. Details – **names**, **places**, dates, words, etc., - can get changed. Luke wanted to MAKE SURE he had **everything right**. So he PERSONALLY ***"investigated"*** everything. Luke went back to the FIRST SOURCES. He interviewed those who had BEEN EYE AND EAR witnesses of Jesus. THEN – and **only then** – did Luke begin to write his gospel for **Theophilus**.

PAY **meticulous attention** to the details. Look what we CAN LEARN just from these **opening verses** of Luke's gospel. They give us an INSIGHT in the doctrine of **inspiration**. Scripture teaches that GOD SO GUIDED the writers so that they WROTE EXACTLY what God wanted them to and they wrote WITHOUT MAKING **any mistakes**.

Inspiration is a miracle. We can't explain it. But these verses keep us from GOING OVERBOARD in **teaching** this miracle. **Inspiration** doesn't necessarily mean the apostles **sat down** at their desks and STARTED WRITING God's Word. That wasn't the case with Luke. Luke spent a lot of time CHECKING OUT the facts. THEN God inspired Luke so that he wrote everything correctly and EXACTLY AS God wanted him to.

ANOTHER point. EACH ONE of us must also pay **meticulous attention** to the details of **God's Word**. The Reformation reminds us of what can happen if we don't pay attention. Look at the STATE of the **visible church** in Luther's day. False doctrine – **teachings** that were LIES – hadn't just POPPED UP **here and there**. It had taken over. **False doctrines** – LIES! – were obscuring and denying the **most basic truths** of the Bible. HOW could that happen? The PEOPLE LET IT happen. They didn't pay **meticulous attention** to God's Word. They figured somebody else – their **priests** and **bishops** – could TAKE CARE of that for them. They weren't going to get involved in DETAILED STUDY of God's Word. **As long as** a Bible verse or two were thrown in **now and then** then WHATEVER WAS SAID must be true. Nobody bothered to CHECK it out. **If you want** you can make the Bible **say anything** you want. Just pull a verse OUT OF CONTEXT. How can you know if whatever is something GOD REALLY SAID? You must pay **meticulous attention** to the details!

One more point. ALSO PAY **meticulous attention** to people! Luke originally wrote his gospel and Acts for a man named ***"Theophilus."*** Luke calls him ***"most excellent Theophilus."*** That could mean he was RICH or powerful or a nobleman. **Somehow** or other he was IMPORTANT. Luke still wrote to him. Luke reached out to him with **God's powerful Word**.

With our **conservative, solid stand** on the Bible we might figure most people DON'T WANT to be Wisconsin Synod. If they did they would come and **find** us. Plus were **basically** middle class. WITH THAT THINKING **Theophilus** was too rich for our blood. We wouldn't even bother with Luke. Say a doctor moves in **down the block** from you. He's RICH and **well-educated**. He'd never put up with our **meticulous attention** to God's Word. He'll go join some **liberal** church. So we write him off **without even talking** to him. We JUST WROTE OFF St. Luke! We've got to remember that NOBODY – none of us or **our neighbors** – are FIT TO BE Christians. **That we are** Christians is solely by God's **grace** and **power**. When we write people off **as prospects** we are in fact LIMITING God's **power** and His mission command to teach **all** nations.

Our text is the opening and closing verses of Luke's gospel. It's a long gospel – **24 chapters**. There are a LOT OF DETAILS in it. As we read and **study** Luke's gospel WHAT CAN WE LEARN from the **good doctor**?

II. Turn things over to the Specialist.

You're familiar with **specialists**. The days of the GOOD OLD-FASHIONED general practitioner are over. Today you're almost automatically referred to a specialist. You have your cardiologist – **dermatologist** – **urologist** – **hematologist** – **oncologist**, etc. Rarely do you JUST SEE your doctor. Whatever you have IS MORE than he can handle. He turns you over to a **specialist**.

That's JUST WHAT the **good doctor Luke** does in his gospel. Luke refers us to THE SPECIALIST, Jesus. Dr. Luke knew that Jesus is THE GOOD Doctor – the GREAT PHYSICIAN of body and soul. Luke realizes that our spiritual problems are WAY BEYOND what he can handle. ONLY JESUS can take care of us.

What kind of a **specialist** is Jesus? He's a SINOLOGIST. Jesus specializes in sin – diagnosing and **treating** it. It's not a PRETTY FIELD. You could compare it to being an **oncologist** – a cancer doctor. There are a LOT OF SIMILARITIES. **Nobody** wants to hear or **admit** that they **have cancer**. That's a DEVASTATING DIAGNOSIS. So is sin! And **like cancer** sin untreated is TERMINAL. Sin CAN KILL you. **Worse yet**, it can result in ETERNAL death.

Diagnosing sin is the EASY PART. There are no fancy tests – CAT-SCANS, **blood work**, etc. JUST AN HONEST LOOK at your heart and life **in the light** of God's 10 commandments. Can I HONESTLY say I have loved God ***"with all my heart, soul and mind"***? Can I HONESTLY say I have ***"loved my neighbor as myself"***? The answer is no. The diagnosis is in. SIN IS RAVAGING – **eating away** - at my soul. The PROGNOSIS is **not good** – terminal if **left untreated**. Thank God **Dr. Luke** turns us over to the Specialist, to Jesus.

Cancer treatments – **chemotherapy**, radiation – can SEEM LIKE HELL for the patient. But that hell can't compare to the **hell of treating sin**. But there's a BIG DIFFERENCE here. God's treatment for sin SPARES THE PATIENT. Our **Specialist** – Jesus, underwent the treatments for us. Jesus TOOK OUR THERAPY. And it LITERALLY was hell for Jesus.

First Jesus had to perfectly obey all the commandments for us. NEVER ONCE could Jesus think of Himself FIRST and put His Father second in His life. NEVER ONCE could Jesus gossip about some sinner or get even with His enemies. Jesus did live that sinless life for us. THEN God took all our **sin and guilt** off of us and PUT IT ALL on Jesus. Jesus was punished IN OUR PLACE for **all** our sins – for the sins of the **whole world**! Jesus endured the hell we had coming. Jesus shed His precious blood – sacrificed His innocent life – to ***"take away the sin of the world."***

These verses take us to Easter evening. It was three days after Jesus had been PRONOUNCED DEAD and **then buried**. But Jesus is no longer dead! He's ALIVE! The treatment was a STUNNING SUCCESS. We are forgiven. **All our sins** have been washed away in Jesus' blood. Jesus has reconciled and reunited us with God. We have peace with God. Jesus promises us that we are GOING STRAIGHT to heaven when we die. And you know what REALLY TOPS it all off? There's NO BILL to pay. Our **specialist** Jesus PERSONALLY covered all the costs of **saving us** from sin and hell.

Luke concluded his gospel with **Jesus' ascension** into heaven. Our **specialist** is not off ON SOME VACATION until Judgment Day. Jesus is now busy ruling this world for our eternal good. Jesus hands are lifted high **in blessing** over us. Jesus has given our lives now NEW MEANING and **purpose**. ***"You are witnesses of these things,"*** He tells us. Then He equips us with **His Word** and the **Holy Spirit**.

"So they worshipped Him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. They were continually in the temple courts, praising and blessing God." Is that really ANY WONDER? How's that for a VISIT to the **doctor's office**! Amen.

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