

**JUBILEE YEAR OF MERCY 2015-2016**  
**Dublin Diocese**  
*Mercy in the Gospel and Parables of Luke*

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**Welcome**

- Resources: Luke
  1. To have compassion
  2. Jesus in Nazareth
  3. Mercy in the Parables
  4. Compassionate disciples
- Synthesis
- For today

**Resources: Luke**

- Definitely post 70 because he uses Mark; the destruction of Jerusalem is already a past event.
- Many scholars: 85-90 AD.
- Probably a good deal later, because:
  - The author uses Josephus, so later than 93 AD.
  - The author has access to the Pauline corpus.
- Early second century.
  - Cf. Reaction to Jewish revolts in the Diaspora (115-117).
  - Cf. Context of the Pastorals (“wolves”, heresy, rejection of the OT, uneasy with the empire, yet no direct persecution).
- Who was “Luke”?
  - Well-educated.
  - Well-travelled.
  - Good Greek.
- At home in the upper middle class of the Hellenistic world.
  - Admirer of Paul but does not share Paul’s view of himself, has a very different theology and does not represent Paul’s theology with accuracy.
  - For convenience “Luke”, but really unknown.

**1. To have compassion**

- The noun: *splangchna*
- Literally inward parts of the body, the viscera (Acts 1:18!)
- Metaphorically: the heart or compassion
- NT: Luke 1:78; Acts 1:18; 2 Cor 6:12; 7:15; Phil 1:8; 2:1; Col 3:12; Phlm 1:7, 12, 20; 1 John 3:17
- The verb *splangchnizomai*
- Feel pity, sympathy; to have compassion for.
- Gospels: Matt 9:36; 14:14; 15:32; 18:27; 20:34; Mark 1:41; 6:34; 8:2; 9:22; Luke 1:78; 7:13; 10:33; 15:20
- Cf. *rachum* in the OT

Luke 1:78 By the tender (*splangchna*) mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us,

Luke 10:33 But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity (*splangchnizomai*).

Luke 7:13 When the Lord saw her, he had compassion (*splangchnizomai*) for her and said to her, “Do not weep.”

Luke 15:20 So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion

(*splangchnizomai*); he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him.

- God and Jesus
- A character in a parable representing God
- A remarkable consistency across the Synoptic gospels

“And you, child, will be called the prophet of the Most High; for you will go before the Lord to prepare his ways, to give knowledge of salvation to his people by the forgiveness of their sins. By the tender (*splangchna*) mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.” (Luke 1:76–79 NRSV)

Soon afterwards he went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a large crowd went with him. As he approached the gate of the town, a man who had died was being carried out. He was his mother’s only son, and she was a widow; and with her was a large crowd from the town. When the Lord saw her, he had compassion (*splangchnizomai*) for her and said to her, “Do not weep.” Then he came forward and touched the bier, and the bearers stood still. And he said, “Young man, I say to you, rise!” The dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother. Fear seized all of them; and they glorified God, saying, “A great prophet has risen among us!” and “God has looked favourably on his people!” (Luke 7:11–16 NRSV)

But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, he was moved with pity (*splangchnizomai*). (Luke 10:33 NRSV)

So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion (*splangchnizomai*); he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. (Luke 15:20 NRSV)

## 2. Jesus in Nazareth

- Luke 4:14-15, 16–30
- Lectionary: Sundays 3C and 4C
- January 24: Luke 1:1-4,4:14-21
- January 31: Luke 4:21-30
- One scene in Luke 4
- Taken from Mark 6:1-6 (very likely historical)
- Expanded by Luke
- Moved to the front of the ministry (Capernaum!)

Mark 6:1 Now Jesus left that place and came to his hometown, and his disciples followed him. 2 When the Sabbath came, he began to teach in the synagogue. Many who heard him were astonished, saying, “Where did he get these ideas? And what is this wisdom that has been given to him? What are these miracles that are done through his hands? 3 Isn’t this the carpenter, the son of Mary and brother of James, Joses, Judas, and Simon? And aren’t his sisters here with us?” And so they took offense at him. 4 Then Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his hometown, and among his relatives, and in his own house.” 5 He was not able to do a miracle there, except to lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. 6 And he was amazed because of their unbelief.

Luke 4:16 When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, 17 and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written: 18 “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, 19 to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favour.”

Luke 4:20 And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. 21 Then he began to say to them, “Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.” 22 All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came

from his mouth. They said, "Is not this Joseph's son?" 23 He said to them, "Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, 'Doctor, cure yourself!' And you will say, 'Do here also in your hometown the things that we have heard you did at Capernaum.'" 24 And he said, "Truly I tell you, no prophet is accepted in the prophet's hometown. 25 But the truth is, there were many widows in Israel in the time of Elijah, when the heaven was shut up three years and six months, and there was a severe famine over all the land; 26 yet Elijah was sent to none of them except to a widow at Zarephath in Sidon. 27 There were also many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and none of them was cleansed except Naaman the Syrian." 28 When they heard this, all in the synagogue were filled with rage. 29 They got up, drove him out of the town, and led him to the brow of the hill on which their town was built, so that they might hurl him off the cliff. 30 But he passed through the midst of them and went on his way.

- Missing from Mark: powerlessness of Jesus
- Added in Luke: citation from Scripture; affirmation of fulfilment; unprovoked attack on the congregation; the examples of Elijah and Elisha; outreach to non-Jews; filled with rage
- NB: outside the city to kill him; "he passed through the crowd"
- Symbolic tableau, providing a key to the whole ministry and destiny of Jesus in the light of classical OT prophets.
- NB the confirmation in Luke 7

Luke 7:18 The disciples of John reported all these things to him. So John summoned two of his disciples 19 and sent them to the Lord to ask, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?" 20 When the men had come to him, they said, "John the Baptist has sent us to you to ask, 'Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?'" 21 Jesus had just then cured many people of diseases, plagues, and evil spirits, and had given sight to many who were blind. 22 And he answered them, "*Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have good news brought to them.*" 23 And blessed is anyone who takes no offence at me."

### 3. Mercy in the Parables

Luke 10:29 But wanting to justify himself, he asked Jesus, "And who is my neighbour?" 30 Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. 31 Now by chance a priest was going down that road; and when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. 32 So likewise a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. 33 But a Samaritan while traveling came near him; and when he saw him, *he was moved with pity.* 34 He went to him and bandaged his wounds, having poured oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. 35 The next day he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said, 'Take care of him; and when I come back, I will repay you whatever more you spend.' 36 Which of these three, do you think, was a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?" 37 He said, "The one who showed him mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

### 4. Compassionate disciples

- Luke 6:27-38
- For example: Jesus
- For example: St Paul

Luke 6:27 "But I say to you that listen, Love (*agapaō*) your enemies, do good (*charis*) to those who hate you, 28 bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. 29 If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. 30 Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. 31 Do to others as you would have them do to you.

Luke 6:32 "If you love those who love you, what credit (*charis*) is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. 33 If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit (*charis*) is that to you? For even sinners do the same. 34 If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit (*charis*) is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again.

35 But love (*agapaō*) your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for he is kind (*chrēstos*) to the ungrateful and the wicked. 36 Be merciful (*oiktirō*), just as your Father is merciful (*oiktirō*).

Luke 6:37 “Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive (*apoluō*), and you will be forgiven (*apoluō*); 38 give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.”

Cf. Matthew 8:28-35

- And if the same person sins against you seven times a day, and turns back to you seven times and says, ‘I repent,’ you must forgive.” (Luke 17:4)
- Then Jesus said, “Father, forgive them; for they do not know what they are doing.” (Luke 23:34; cf. Acts 7:60)

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of mercies and the God of all consolation, who consoles us in all our affliction, so that we may be able to console those who are in any affliction with the consolation with which we ourselves are consoled by God. For just as the sufferings of Christ are abundant for us, so also our consolation is abundant through Christ. If we are being afflicted, it is for your consolation and salvation; if we are being consoled, it is for your consolation, which you experience when you patiently endure the same sufferings that we are also suffering. Our hope for you is unshaken; for we know that as you share in our sufferings, so also you share in our consolation. (2Corinthians 1:3–7)

- And you became *imitators* of us and of the Lord, for in spite of persecution you received the word with joy inspired by the Holy Spirit (1Thessalonians 1:6)
- I appeal to you, then, be *imitators* of me. (1Corinthians 4:16)
- Be *imitators* of me, as I am of Christ. (1Corinthians 11:1)

### Synthesis

- Compassion: God (YHWH) in the Hebrew Bible
- Compassion: the tender mercy of our God
- Compassion: Jesus reached out in compassion
- Compassion: the events of salvation
- Compassion: in discipleship and ministry

### For today

- Compassion is not “a soft sell” on God
- The compassion of Jesus was costly
- As disciples, we are recipients of God’s compassion
- The practice of compassion is / will be costly for us too
- As bearers of God’s compassion, we in any kind of ministry must live what we teach and be what we proclaim
  
- The huge variety of everyday pastoral situations
- Those who feel excluded
- People in “irregular” relationships
- LTBG
- And so forth...
  
- Card. Walter Kasper’s book: *Mercy: the essence of the Gospel and the key to Christian Living*.
- Smart phone app: “365 Days to Mercy”

**NUMBER ONE**

Luke 15:1 Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming near to listen to him. 2 And the Pharisees and the scribes were grumbling and saying, “This fellow welcomes sinners and eats with them.”

Luke 15:3 So he told them this parable: 4 “Which one of you, having a hundred sheep and losing one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one that is lost until he finds it? 5 When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders and rejoices. 6 And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.’ 7 Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance.

Luke 15:8 “Or what woman having ten silver coins, if she loses one of them, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it? 9 When she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, ‘Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin that I had lost.’ 10 Just so, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

*Questions to help us get into the parable*

1. Is there a “surprise”?
2. Why would Luke have retained such a parable, do you think?
3. How does the parable speak today?

## NUMBER TWO

Luke 15:11 Then Jesus said, “There was a man who had two sons. 12 The younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me the share of the property that will belong to me.’ So he divided his property between them. 13 A few days later the younger son gathered all he had and traveled to a distant country, and there he squandered his property in dissolute living. 14 When he had spent everything, a severe famine took place throughout that country, and he began to be in need. 15 So he went and hired himself out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed the pigs. 16 He would gladly have filled himself with the pods that the pigs were eating; and no one gave him anything. 17 But when he came to himself he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired hands have bread enough and to spare, but here I am dying of hunger! 18 I will get up and go to my father, and I will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; 19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son; treat me like one of your hired hands.”’ 20 So he set off and went to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion; he ran and put his arms around him and kissed him. 21 Then the son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ 22 But the father said to his slaves, ‘Quickly, bring out a robe—the best one—and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. 23 And get the fatted calf and kill it, and let us eat and celebrate; 24 for this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!’ And they began to celebrate.

Luke 15:25 “Now his elder son was in the field; and when he came and approached the house, he heard music and dancing. 26 He called one of the slaves and asked what was going on. 27 He replied, ‘Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound.’ 28 Then he became angry and refused to go in. His father came out and began to plead with him. 29 But he answered his father, ‘Listen! For all these years I have been working like a slave for you, and I have never disobeyed your command; yet you have never given me even a young goat so that I might celebrate with my friends. 30 But when this son of yours came back, who has devoured your property with prostitutes, you killed the fatted calf for him!’ 31 Then the father said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. 32 But we had to celebrate and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has come to life; he was lost and has been found.’”

### *Questions to help us get into the parable*

1. Is there a “surprise”?
2. Why would Luke have retained such a parable, do you think?
3. How does the parable speak today?

**NUMBER THREE**

Luke 7:36 One of the Pharisees asked Jesus to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee's house and took his place at the table. 37 And a woman in the city, who was a sinner, having learned that he was eating in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster jar of ointment. 38 She stood behind him at his feet, weeping, and began to bathe his feet with her tears and to dry them with her hair. Then she continued kissing his feet and anointing them with the ointment. 39 Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw it, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what kind of woman this is who is touching him—that she is a sinner." 40 Jesus spoke up and said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." "Teacher," he replied, "Speak." 41 "A certain creditor had two debtors; one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. 42 When they could not pay, he canceled the debts for both of them. Now which of them will love him more?" 43 Simon answered, "I suppose the one for whom he canceled the greater debt." And Jesus said to him, "You have judged rightly." 44 Then turning toward the woman, he said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has bathed my feet with her tears and dried them with her hair. 45 You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not stopped kissing my feet. 46 You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. 47 Therefore, I tell you, her sins, which were many, have been forgiven; hence she has shown great love. But the one to whom little is forgiven, loves little." 48 Then he said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." 49 But those who were at the table with him began to say among themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?" 50 And he said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

*Questions to help us get into the parable*

1. Is there a "surprise"?
2. Why would Luke have retained such a parable, do you think?
3. How does the parable speak today?

**NUMBER FOUR**

Luke 16:19 “There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and who feasted sumptuously every day. 20 And at his gate lay a poor man named Lazarus, covered with sores, 21 who longed to satisfy his hunger with what fell from the rich man’s table; even the dogs would come and lick his sores. 22 The poor man died and was carried away by the angels to be with Abraham. The rich man also died and was buried. 23 In Hades, where he was being tormented, he looked up and saw Abraham far away with Lazarus by his side. 24 He called out, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am in agony in these flames.’ 25 But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that during your lifetime you received your good things, and Lazarus in like manner evil things; but now he is comforted here, and you are in agony. 26 Besides all this, between you and us a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who might want to pass from here to you cannot do so, and no one can cross from there to us.’ 27 He said, ‘Then, father, I beg you to send him to my father’s house— 28 for I have five brothers—that he may warn them, so that they will not also come into this place of torment.’ 29 Abraham replied, ‘They have Moses and the prophets; they should listen to them.’ 30 He said, ‘No, father Abraham; but if someone goes to them from the dead, they will repent.’ 31 He said to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.’”

*Questions to help us get into the parable*

1. Is there a “surprise”?
2. Why would Luke have retained such a parable, do you think?
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