

Week Three

Conversations with God

LUKE 13–18

READ

We previously noted how Jesus' entry into the world was accompanied by *power* and *authority*. Interestingly, we are told in Scripture that Jesus had a reputation among the people as being "*powerful in word and deed*" (Luke 24:19). It is perhaps unsurprising that Jesus was known for being powerful in deed given his miraculous healings, but what does it mean to be powerful in word?

In one place we're told that Christ's listeners were "*amazed at his teaching, because his message had authority*" (Luke 4:32). So this same *power and authority* that Jesus displayed in his actions was also present in the very words that he spoke. His teaching was more than good, sound advice. His very words were infused with the power to transform the world around him.

What, then, was Jesus speaking and teaching? At first glance, the red letters of Scripture seem to be nothing more than a random collection of witty thoughts and interesting stories. In one place, we see Jesus talking about the principles of farming (Luke 8:4-8); in another, about big banquet feasts (Luke 14:15-24); and in yet another, about lost sheep and lost coins (Luke 15:4-10). He seems to be all over the map. Closer examination, however, reveals one very clear and unwavering theme that Jesus repeatedly delivers to three consistent audiences. In short, over and over again, Jesus makes known the *kingdom of God* to the *religious leaders*, the *crowds*, and his own *disciples*.

As you read the next six chapters of Luke this week, listen for the kingdom of God and listen for authority and power in Christ's words. How does he speak to his different audiences? What is the difference in the way Jesus communicates with his disciples? How does he address hardheartedness of religious leaders, and how does he build up the knowledge of the kingdom of God with the one "*who has ears to hear*" (Luke 14:35)?

Most importantly, listen for how Jesus might want to speak powerfully in word to you. Consider which of Jesus' audiences you relate to the most in your current season. Have you become like the religious leaders interested in external conformity rather than internal transformation? If not, maybe you relate most to those in the crowd who are intrigued by Jesus but are not yet convinced by this kingdom of God message. Or maybe it's neither the religious leader nor the crowds; maybe you find yourself in the midst of Jesus' disciples. You are convinced of his promises and are authentically following him, but you need to be taken deeper and trained in co-laboring with Jesus for the kingdom of God.

MEMORIZE

This week's memory verses:

Matthew 16:24-25 *“Then Jesus said to his disciples, ‘If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it.’”*

Philippians 3:7-8 *“But whatever was to my profit I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss compared to the surpassing greatness of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whose sake I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ.”*

MEDITATE

Meditating is simply talking and listening to God. Your conversation with God will be inspired and informed by reading and memorizing Scripture, but your conversation should also be personalized. Carefully consider the passages, but don't *just* consider the passage. Talk and listen. Pour out your thoughts, concerns, frustrations, and joys. Or just sit in silence before God. Some talk best with God in a quiet room. Others prefer to talk with God while running or walking. Most importantly, engage God in a way that is authentic and personal.

Use the space below to record memorable thoughts or highlights from your Conversations with God to share with your Small Group or Running Partners.



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