

STEPPING OFF

From the series *The Outsiders Guide to Jesus*

Luke 1:1-4 // Stepping Off

Introduction // 5 minutes

Which decade had the best style? Give examples and reasons.

Leader Note: You may want to use a transitional statement after this question such as... “Isn’t funny how quickly things change? We can be so sure of one thing in a moment and then find ourselves thinking and believing the exact opposite!”

Observation // 20 minutes

Read Luke 1:1-4

A Brief Background On Luke

As we begin to look at Luke’s Gospel there are few key points, which would be beneficial to highlight with you group. This information is intended to create a deeper understanding of Luke and enrich your discussion during the course of the series.

1. **Luke Was An Outsider:** Luke’s Gospel was written around 30 years after Jesus’ earthly ministry (about 60 AD). Luke was not a direct eyewitness to the accounts of Jesus. Additionally, he is the only author in the New Testament who was not Jewish. He writes as an outsider primarily to other outsiders (Gentiles) to give them assurance and confidence in who Jesus is and the things they have heard and been taught about Him.
2. **Luke Was Well Schooled:** A trained doctor, Luke took a very detailed almost investigative approach of writing in his gospel. Although not personally an eyewitness, he was very well acquainted with the persons and works of those who were with Jesus. Luke carefully examined all other accounts of Jesus and set out to give an “orderly” and historical account of His life and teaching. (Orderly meaning a complete historical account as opposed to a complete and chronological historical account). Ancient historical biographers did not record events in the same way that modern historians do. While the events recorded in Luke are historical, he pieces them together in the fashion of a narrative as to emphasize his purpose for writing.
3. **Luke Wrote With A Very Specific Purpose In Mind:** Luke writes to give believers (mainly Gentile believers as himself) a foundational confidence in the person and Deity of Jesus Christ. Luke wants his readers to have certainty in the things they have heard and have been taught concerning Jesus. This certainty is more than an intellectual assent or knowledge-based certainty. It is the kind of certainty that leads one to place their entire life in something and expresses that conviction through their actions. It is a belief or conviction that is lived out no matter what the cost. Theophilus, to whom the book is addressed, was most likely Roman official who

commissioned Luke to give him an account of Jesus so that he himself could be certain in what he had been taught about Jesus.

Read through the passage again and ask...

What are the phrases that stand out to you the most?

What is it about those phrases that intrigue you?

Sample Answers May Include...

- Many have undertaken: Many were not only aware of Jesus but were so intrigued with Him that they set out to document His life and teaching.
- Things that have been fulfilled: Jesus was seen as the fulfillment of biblical prophecy. He validates the Old Testament and backs up the promises of God.
- Carefully Investigated: Luke is intentional in what he records.
- An Orderly Account: Accurate, clear and concise historical narrative on Jesus.
- The certainty of what you have been taught: Certainty that does more than inform thought. It is a certainty that directs action.

Leader Note: Sample answers are not only things you may expect to hear from your group but are provided for you as a leader to help guide and lead the conversation as needed.

Understanding // 15 minutes

Leader Note: The next question will need some set up. You may wish to say something along the lines of... “Belief is typically divided into three categories, public, private and core convictions.” Go on to define each category and ask for as many examples as possible for each.

What are all the examples you can think of for these three types of conviction?

Public Conviction: The things I say even if I don’t really believe it

Sample Answers May Include...

- Does this make me look fat?
- Politicians playing the game of political correctness
- Calling a child’s drawing the best piece of art you’ve ever seen!

Private Conviction: The things I think I believe but can change over time

Sample Answers May Include...

- Falling “in” and “out” of love
- My favorite food, movie, city ect...

Core Conviction: Not what I say or think but what I actually do



Commentary: Luke's aim is to make us a people who live out what we say we believe. He wants us to place all certainty in the person of Jesus and live lives that fully reflect our trust in who He is and what He has called us to become.

Application // 20 minutes

Read James 2:14-20

An Exercise In The Apostles Creed

Read the following statement to your group...

The Apostles Creed is one of the earliest doctrinal statements on Christianity. It stands this day as one of the most complete and concise declarations on Christian belief. These statements have stood the test of time and are held as truth across a large number of denominations and churches... including Mariners Church!

Read the Apostles Creed...

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried; he descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again; he ascended into heaven, he is seated at the right hand of the Father, and he will come to judge the living and the dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic (catholic meaning universal) Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

Leader Note: Kenton posed a challenging question in his message this weekend, which we encourage you to now put forth to your group. This section will require a great deal of honesty and vulnerability. As the leader we encourage you to take some time before hand with this question so that you can answer first, leading by example and modeling that it is safe to share for others to answer.

Where in your life have you seen a disconnect between your convictions and actions?

If a person were to record your actions and turn them into a creed, what might it say?

Sample Answers May Include...

- I believe that power and success are the most important things in this life
- I believe that I earned my money and it is mine to do with what I please
- I believe it's ok to seek out revenge on those that mistreat me
- I believe that I'm owed certain pleasures and that they can bring me happiness
- I believe that the better I am, the more God will love me

What prevents you from fully living out the "certainty" of your faith?

Live It Out // 10 minutes

How might the world around you be influenced by you living out your convictions?

Prayer: Lord we know that you alone are holy and worthy of the praise of our lives. We thank you for Jesus. We thank you that in seeing Him we have seen you and can know you. We ask that you would help us by you Holy Spirit to be a people who live out what we say we believe in confidence and with great conviction so that others may see and know you through our lives. We confess that we don't always get this right and that we are daily in need of your strength to empower us and to remind us of what we are called to be. Help us we prayer. Guide us and lead us into your truth, Amen.

This entry was posted in [Outsiders](#) and tagged [Luke 1:1-4](#) on [October 5, 2013](#) by [Mariners Church](#).