

The Empty Room Class

A new class in an empty room
that we hope won't be empty for long!
Sundays 9:50 a.m. in the Fellowship Hall
Featuring Coffee & Conversation
Downtown First UMC • Lexington, KY



Week 3

Are you new to Lexington?

To Christian faith?

To Downtown First UMC?

Do you want a safe place to explore
questions or doubts about Christianity?

Do you want to grow in your faith and friendships?

Then **The Empty Room Class** is for YOU!

B10 Israel During the Time of Jesus



□ Ruled by Herod Archelaus, later by Roman Governor Pontius Pilate

□ Ruled by Herod Antipas

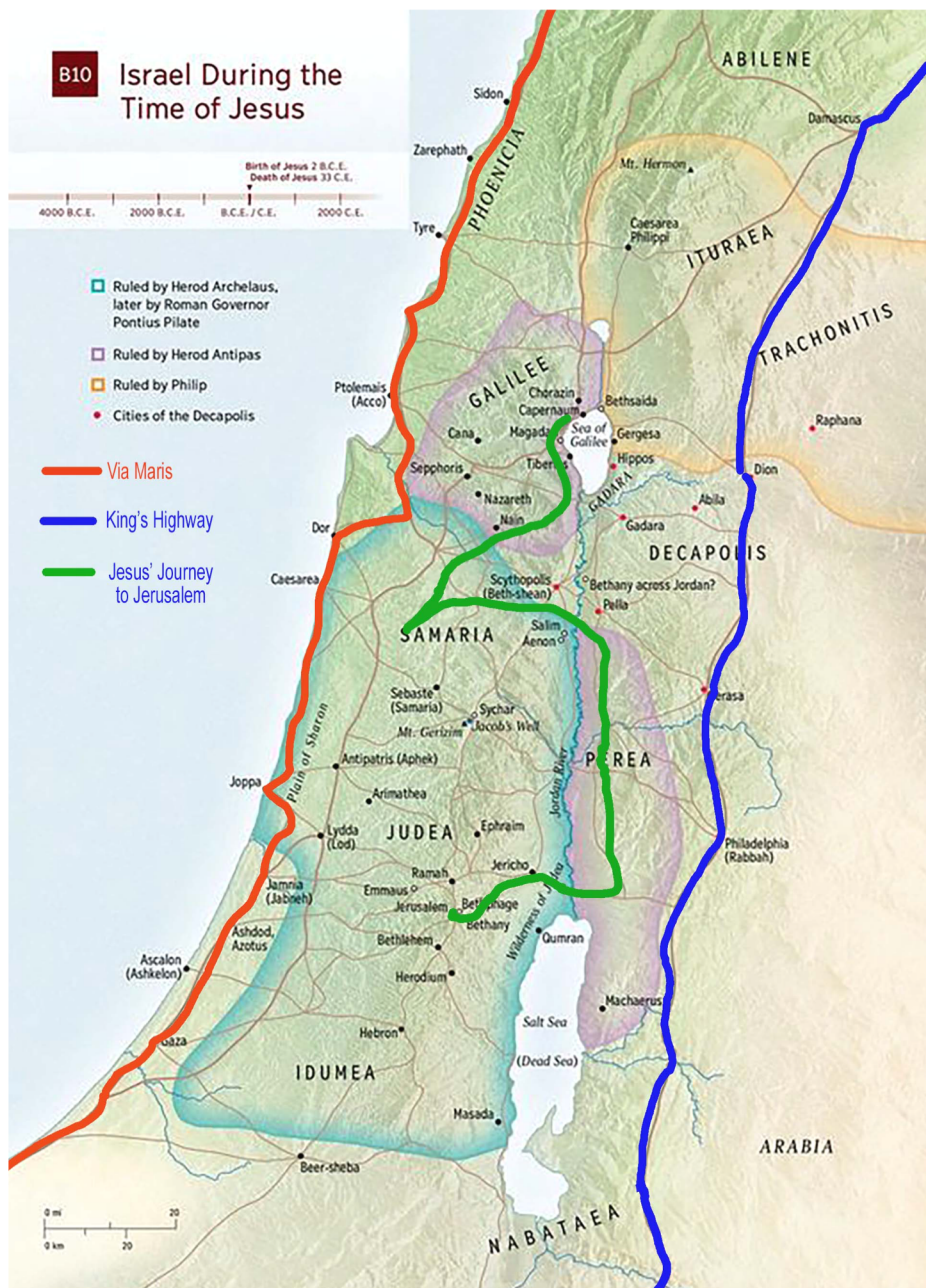
□ Ruled by Philip

• Cities of the Decapolis

— Via Maris

— King's Highway

— Jesus' Journey to Jerusalem



The Empty Room Class

Close Encounters of the Christ Kind in the Gospel of Luke - Part Three

Share this booklet, or a link to it at www.doncummings.com,
with a friend and invite them to join us in The Empty Room!

Class Leaders – Don & Bonnie Cummings
Study guides for this series are prepared by Don Cummings

The Panoramic View An Outline of the Gospel of Luke by Fred B. Craddock

Preface

Luke 1:1 - 4

Part One: Infancy and Childhood Narratives

Luke 1:5 – 2:52

Part Two: Preparation for the Ministry of Jesus

Luke 3:1 - 4:13

Part Three: The Ministry of Jesus in Galilee

Luke 4:14 – 9:50

Part Four: The Journey to Jerusalem

Luke 9:51 – 19:28

Part Five: The Ministry in Jerusalem

Luke 19:29 – 21:38

Part Six: The Passion Narrative

Luke 22:1 – 23:56

Part Seven: The Resurrection Narrative

Luke 24:1 – 53

The Closer View

Close Encounters of the Christ Kind During Jesus' Journey to Jerusalem

Luke 9:51-19:27

Luke 9:51 is a primary pivot in the Lukan narrative of Jesus. Jesus is concluding his ministry in the Galilee, and Luke clearly turns the reader's attention in a new direction "As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus *resolutely set out for Jerusalem*" (NIV) or as the NRSV puts it: "When the days drew near for him to be taken up, he *set his face to go to Jerusalem.*" On the way from Galilee to Jerusalem Luke gathers together thirty-eight stories about Jesus and the various encounters with people he had along the way. This section is the longest portion of Luke's Gospel. These stories are about Jesus' continuing instruction to the disciples about the cost of following him, rising opposition from the powers of empire and temple, a great emphasis on the kingdom of God and its radical inclusivity of all people, some more healing stories, prophetic insights about what lay ahead, and another prediction of his coming death. This section is rich with parable and metaphor which were key literary styles used by Jesus.

Here is the outline for the thirty-eight encounters Luke has preserved for the church:

Jesus turns toward Jerusalem (9:51 – 19:27)

- a) Opposition rises in Samaria over Jesus' shift in direction (9:51-56)
- b) Jesus speaks about the cost of following him (9:57-62)
- c) Jesus sends out the seventy-two (10:1-24)
- d) The Parable of the Good Samaritan (10:25-37)
- e) Jesus visits the home of Martha and Mary (10:38-42)

- f) Jesus teaches the disciples how to pray (11:1-13)
- g) Some question the source of Jesus' power to drive out demons (11:14-28)
- h) Jesus speaks about the sign of Jonah (11:29-32)
- i) The metaphor of the lamp and the body (11:33-36)
- j) Jesus pronounces six woes on the Pharisees and their opposition to him stiffens (11:37-54)
- k) Warnings and Encouragements so the disciples and the multitudes (12:1-12)
- l) The parable of the rich fool (12:13-21)
- m) Jesus counsels his disciples "Do not Worry" (12:22-34)
- n) Jesus charges his disciples to remain watchful (12:35-48)
- o) Jesus said he came not to bring peace but division (12:49-53)
- p) Jesus explains how to interpret the times (12:54-59)
- q) Jesus repeats the prophetic message "Repent or perish" (13:1-9)
- r) Jesus heals a crippled woman on the Sabbath (13:10-17)
- s) The parables of the mustard seed and the yeast (13:18-21)
- t) The metaphor of the narrow door (13:22-30)
- u) Jesus mourns over what might have been for Jerusalem (13:31-35)
- v) Jesus heals a man with dropsy on the Sabbath at a Pharisee's house (14:1-14)
- w) The parable of the great banquet (14:15-24)
- x) Jesus speaks again about the cost of being his disciple (14:25-35)
- y) Parables of the Kingdom
 - i) The parable of the lost sheep (15:1-7)
 - ii) The parable of the lost coin (15:8-10)

- iii) The parable of the lost son (15:11-32)
- iv) The parable of the shrewd manager (16:1-15)
- z) Additional teachings about the law and divorce (16:16-18)
- aa) The rich man and Lazarus (16:19-31)
- bb) Additional teachings about sin, faith and duty (17:1-10)
- cc) Jesus heals ten lepers (17:11-19)
- dd) Jesus speaks about when the kingdom will come (17:20-37)
- ee) The parable of the persistent widow (18:1-8)
- ff) The parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector (18:9-14)
- gg) The little children and Jesus provide a glimpse into the Kingdom (18:15-17)
- hh) A rich ruler seeks the way into the Kingdom (18:18-30)
- ii) Jesus predicts his death again (18:31-34)
- jj) Jesus restores the sight of a blind beggar (18:35-43)
- kk) Jesus speaks with Zacchaeus the tax collector in Jericho (19:1-10)
- ll) The parable of the ten minas (19:11-27)

The Up-Close View
A Close Encounter of the Christ Kind
The Rich Man and Lazarus
(Luke 16:19-31 NIV)

The church interprets Scripture by *listening to the texts*.
Read Scripture aloud to your own ear or listen to a free audio version of the Bible available at
<https://www.biblegateway.com/resources/audio/?recording=niv-mclean>.

The Rich Man and Lazarus

¹⁹ "There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. ²⁰ At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores ²¹ and longing to eat what fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores.

²² "The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. ²³ In Hades, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. ²⁴ So he called to him, 'Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in agony in this fire.'

²⁵ "But Abraham replied, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. ²⁶ And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been set in place, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us.'

²⁷ "He answered, 'Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my family, ²⁸ for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment.'

²⁹ "Abraham replied, 'They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them.'

³⁰ "'No, father Abraham,' he said, 'but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent.'

³¹ "He said to him, 'If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.'"

Questions to Ask of the Text

The church interprets Scripture by
seriously interrogating the texts.

In this story about Lazarus and the rich man, the rich man dies and goes to torment. Only after receiving the consequence of his sinful neglect of the poor man does he realize he should have lived his life differently. He implores father Abraham to send Lazarus back from the dead to warn his relatives they must change their ways in order to escape the fate that fell upon him. Father Abraham says “They have the Scriptures. If they don’t listen to the Scriptures, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead.”

This story underscores that the Scriptures are sufficient for the generation of faith. How is faith generated and how do the Scriptures help in the generation of faith?

Paul says, “So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” (Romans 10:17 KJV).

This session will approach this Christ encounter through the monastic practice of Lectio Divina (Divine Reading), which is a five-step process. While other approaches to Bible study tend to allow the student to remain a safe distance outside of the text, studying it with appreciation but also a degree of personal detachment, Lectio Divina asks the student to enter into the text personally, laying aside classic Bible study techniques, as they become part of the conversation represented in the text. The shift in focus is away from “What does this passage say? to “What does this person/character/event say to me?” “Where do I find myself in this text?” “What is God saying to me as I quietly meditate on this story?” “What action is this Divine Reading asking me to take?”

Usually practiced in a group setting, members are encouraged to share the insights that come to them

personally as the text is read, dwelled upon, prayed over and responses formed.

The five steps in Lectio Divina are:

- Reading. Read a passage slowly and carefully within the bible.
- Prayer. Having a loving conversation with God.
- Meditation. Thinking deeply or dwelling upon a spiritual reality within a text.
- Contemplation. Resting in Gods presence.
- Action. Go and do likewise.

The class leader will guide the group through tis process of Divine Reading.

Insights from Commentaries

The role of commentaries is to shed light on the historical, cultural, religious and theological contexts of the biblical stories. We cannot simply read them against the backdrop of 21st Century America. The culture shock for the Gospel is too great and we miss important details that are essential to our interpretation and application of Scripture. This said, commentaries are not where we begin our effort to understand Scripture. We begin with personally experiencing the persons, locations, events, challenges, threats, promises, protections and other elements conveyed to us through the story. Simply put, we put ourselves into the story before we extract meaning for our lives out of the story. Once we have formed our own insights about a passage or the people in it, we turn to commentaries to fill in the blanks.

Commentaries are equally adept at leading us into error as they are protecting us from error. So while we can be grateful for the earnest work of those who write commentaries, we must remember that they are only one

voice we listen to in our own understanding and interpretation of a text.

A worthy sequence to follow is:

What do I hear being said in this text?

What meaning do I hear and how might it apply to my life?

What do my fellow Christians hear in this passage and what meanings do they understand in it?

How has the church understood and interpreted in this passage? This where commentaries and other readings can come into our process.

What guidance do I find from broad Christian experience across the church about applying the meanings I have found in a given passage to my own life and practice of faith?

A desire to keep the focus on the reader's personal discovery of a text leads to not referencing any commentaries about Lazarus and the Rich Man at this point. Next week's lesson will take a deeper look into this passage with the help of a sermon by Fred Craddock.

Sources:

(All web links are active in the online version of the study guides at www.doncummings.com)

Barclay, William, *The Daily Study Bible: Luke*, commentary on Luke 9:18-27: Westminster Press, 1956. Find the entire Daily Study Bible series here: <https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/eng/dsb.html>

Craddock, Fred B., *Interpretation: A Bible Commentary for Teaching and Preaching Luke*, John Knox Press: Louisville, 1990

Hughes, R. Kent, *Preaching the Word: Luke Volume One*, Crossway Books: Wheaton, Illinois, 1998

Also find William Barclay's complete set of *The Daily Study Bible* commentaries for free online reading at

<https://www.studylight.org/commentaries/eng/dsb.html>

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Ray Vander Laan video course *That the World May Know*

<https://www.thattheworldmayknow.com/>

From Todd Nelson's blog at <https://jtoddnelson.com/2021/09/09/day-21-of-21/>

- [Vanderbilt](#) has a website devoted to the lectionary. It will give you the weekly readings and some other resources.
- The [Upper Room](#) is a daily devotional from the United Methodist Church and has been a regular read for many.
- [Text Week](#) is a great resource based on the lectionary with devotional guides, sermons, and other study resources.
- [Max Lucado](#) is one of my favorite authors and he does a good job with a daily devotional that can be sent directly to your email every morning.

See www.doncummings.com for copies of the weekly study guide for this class.

How to Contact Our Class Leader

Questions and suggestions are welcome

don_cummings@msn.com

Approaching the Bible Using Lectio Divina (Divine Reading)

Following the five steps in Lectio Divina, write some of your discoveries as you work through the five steps listed below:

Reading. Read a passage slowly and carefully within the bible.

Prayer. Having a loving conversation with God.

Meditation. Thinking deeply or dwelling upon a spiritual reality within a text.

Contemplation. Resting in Gods presence.

Action. Go and do likewise.