THE ANGLICAN DIOCESE OF BUNBURY: SERMON FOR SAINT LUKE'S DAY 18/10/2026:GEOFF CHADWICK
LUKE

Gospel Reading
Luke 10.1-9
1 After this the Lord appointed seventy others and sent them on ahead of him in pairs to every town and place where he himself intended to go. **2** He said to them, 'The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest. **3** Go on your way. See, I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves. **4** Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; and greet no one on the road. **5** Whatever house you enter, first say, "Peace to this house!" **6** And if anyone is there who shares in peace, your peace will rest on that person; but if not, it will return to you. **7** Remain in the same house, eating and drinking whatever they provide, for the labourer deserves to be paid. Do not move about from house to house. **8** Whenever you enter a town and its people welcome you, eat what is set before you; **9** cure the sick who are there, and say to them, "The kingdom of God has come near to you."

Mark Allan Powell, in his book *What Are They Saying about Luke?* (New York; Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1989), makes the following opening comment:

> *One way to appreciate the impact that Luke's Gospel has had on Christianity is to try to envision what things would be like without it. Can we imagine Christmas without shepherds or a baby in a manger? Liturgy without any Magnificat, Gloria, Benedictus, or Nunc Dimmitis? A church year without Ascension or Pentecost? How many favorite Bible stories would we lose? Zacchaeus, the Prodigal Son, the Good Samaritan … all would be gone forever.*[1]

On top of this we would not have the book of *Acts*, which, of course, was written by Luke. So we would be without the sermons of Peter, the story of Steven, the adventures of Paul and the description of the early spread of the Gospel. Just imagine how incomprehensible Paul's letters would be without some of the background we have in Acts!

[1] Mark Allan Powell, *What Are They Saying about Luke?* (New York; Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1989), 1.

Luke's true identity is not known to us. He was not one of the original disciples, and probably not a physician. The title *Doctor Luke* whilst attractive, is merely applied to him because of the many healing stories he has placed in his Gospel.

His writing style indicates that he was probably a Gentile, and the fact that he has copied (with editing) most of Mark's Gospel into his own, dates him as later than AD70. It's probably around AD90. This means that Acts is recounting the adventures of the Early church some 40 years after Paul.

How good it is that we have Luke's writings. They give us a broader perspective of the Jesus story and help us understand our early church origins. Our church story would be poorer without Luke!

To get a perspective on Luke's unique qualities it is common to analyse how he has edited Mark, and to look at the unique material he has put into his Gospel. When we do this the following features are revealed:

- He has a unique view on the Birth of Jesus. Without Luke the census, the shepherds, the angels and the manger would be absent!
- He has a particular interest in Jesus' healing stories.
- He has a particular interest in the well-being and empowerment of women.
- He has a focus on the Gospel's relevance to the Gentiles.
- He champions the work of the Holy Spirit.
- He emphasises that ideally, Christianity is a religion of community.
- He has an emphasis on social justice.

This is quite a list!

One wonders what our faith would be without his writings.

Luke wrote at a time when it was feared that the oral stories of Jesus and the early church might be lost. He gathered as much information as he could to write what he calls an *orderly account* (Lk 1:3, NRSV)

The letter is addressed to *Theophilus*, which means *lover of God*. Just who this person was is not known. Nevertheless, it may not a particular person at all, but rather the church in General! If so, this includes us! Wouldn't Luke be surprised to know that his writings are still being read, 2000 years later in a part of the world he didn't know existed!

But that's the point.

Luke took the time to write so the stories of Jesus and the early church would not be lost. He wrote, not just to give a chronology, but to proclaim a Christian philosophy never to be lost. To remind all who would hear that in Jesus; healing, the dignity of women, the outsider, the Holy Spirit, communities of faith and Social Justice are the stuff of Godly living!

Luke wrote a book so we could read all about it!

So how's your book going? As you write the book of your life, what are others going to read? Will they:

- Read you like a book?
- Wonder what real truth lies behind you "poker-face"?
- Wonder if there is anything of substance between your covers?
- Or recognise that the person they see and the story they tell are authentically one and the same?

Importantly, the world is looking for people of authenticity. Hopefully, as they read us as Christians, they may get a glimpse of God's good news in Jesus!

Perhaps Luke can have the last say:

> *36 There was also a prophet, Anna the daughter of Phanuel, of the tribe of Asher. She was of a great age, having lived with her husband seven years after her marriage,*

37 then as a widow to the age of eighty-four. She never left the temple but worshiped there with fasting and prayer night and day.
38 At that moment she came, and began to praise God and to speak about the child to all who were looking for the redemption of Jerusalem (Lk 2:36-38, NRSV)

The Lord be with you.

And also with you.