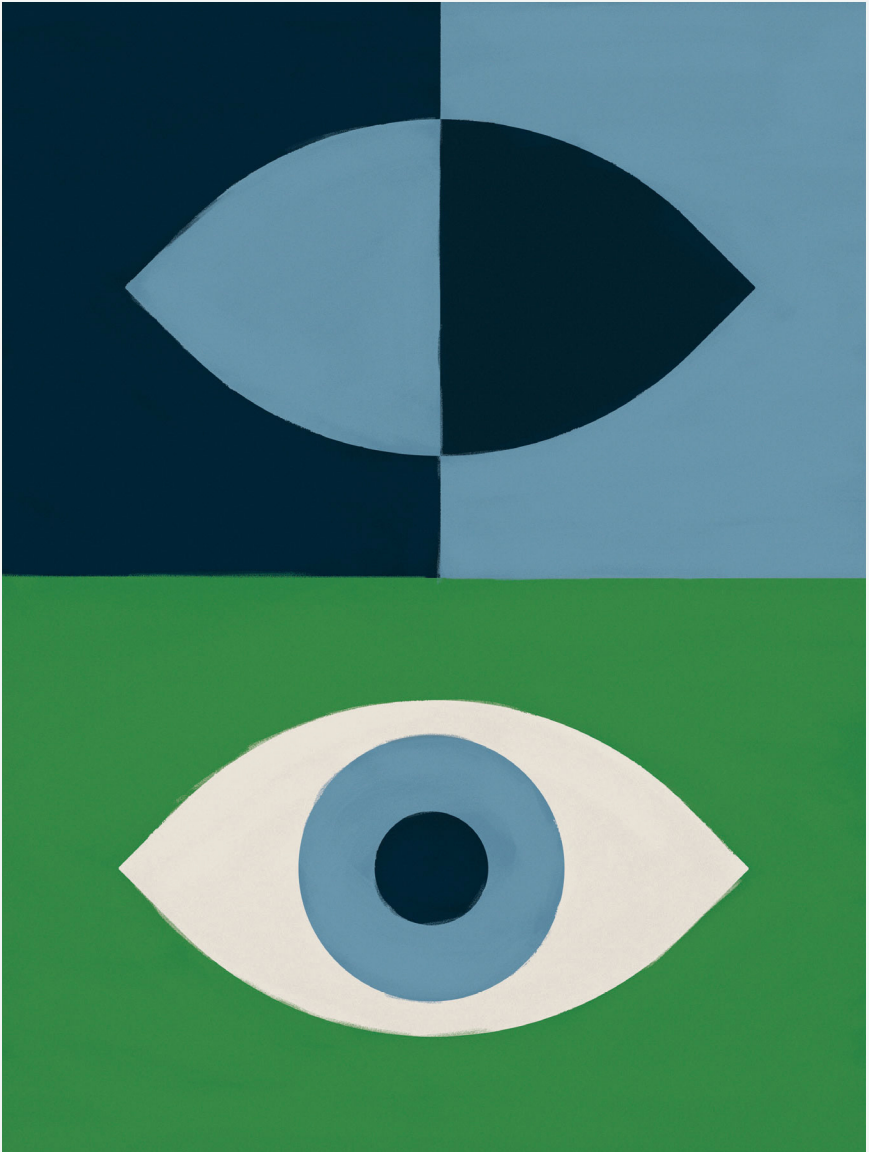


Luke

Stories of Mission and Mercy



David Murray

A StoryChanger Devotional

“Any good devotional book should do two things: drive us to the Scriptures, and help us see Christ and our need for him more clearly. David Murray’s *Luke: Stories of Mission and Mercy* does just that. Each day’s reflection will help individuals, families, and small groups see Christ more clearly in the Gospel of Luke as they read the text and see Jesus more and more in all the Scriptures. May the Lord use it to encourage many to read and understand Luke’s Gospel in a deeper way.”

Chris Bruno, Global Partner for Hawaii and the Pacific Islands,
Training Leaders International; Pastor, Kailua Baptist Church;
author, *The Whole Story of the Bible in 16 Verses*

“In fifty daily five-minute devotionals, David Murray manages to pack the transforming power of the gospel into bite-sized pieces that can change readers’ lives. If you are ready to get to know God and yourself better on a simple, concise, but profound journey through the story of Jesus in Luke, this resource is going to be an enormous blessing to you! David doesn’t shy away from tougher subjects like death and temptation, and he handles them so pastorally that you can’t help but walk away encouraged.”

Adam Griffin, Lead Pastor, Eastside Community Church,
Dallas, Texas; coauthor, *Family Discipleship*

The StoryChanger Devotional Series

By David Murray

Luke: Stories of Mission and Mercy

Luke



Luke

Stories of Mission and Mercy

David Murray

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*Dedicated to David Faasse,
my wise mentor, my constant
encourager, and, above
all, my beloved friend.*

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Introduction to the StoryChanger Devotionals

Do you want to know the Bible's Story better, but don't know how? Do you want to change your story, but don't know how? Do you want to share the Bible's Story and the way it has changed your story, but don't know how? The StoryChanger Devotional series is the answer to this triple *how*.

How can I know the Bible better? At different points in my Christian life, I've tried to use various helps to go deeper in personal Bible study, but I found commentaries were too long and technical, whereas study Bibles were too brief and not practical.

How can I change my life for the better? I knew the Bible's Story was meant to change my story but couldn't figure out how to connect God's Story with my story in a transformative way. I was stuck, static, and frustrated at my lack of change, growth, and progress.

How can I share God's Story better? I've often been embarrassed by how slow and ineffective I am at sharing God's Story one-on-one. I know God's Story relates to other people's stories and that God's Story can change others' stories for the better, but I'm reluctant to seek out opportunities and hesitant when they arise.

So how about a series of books that teach us the Bible's Story in a way that helps to change our story and equips us to tell the Story to others. Or, to put it another way, how about books that teach us God's Story in a way that changes ours and others' stories?

After writing *The StoryChanger: How God Rewrites Our Story by Inviting Us into His* as an introduction to Jesus as the transformer of our stories, I thought, "Okay, what now? That's the theory, what about the practice? That's the introduction, but what about the next chapters? Jesus is the StoryChanger, but how can his Story change my story in practical ways on a daily basis? And how do I share his life-changing Story with others?"

I looked for daily devotionals that would take me through books of the Bible in a way that explained God's Story, changed my story, and equipped me to tell God's Story to others in a life-changing way. When I couldn't find any resources that had all three elements, I thought, "I'll write some devotionals for myself to help me know God's Story, change my story, and tell the story to others."

A few weeks later COVID hit, and I decided to start sharing these devotionals with the congregation I was serving at the time. I wanted to keep them connected with God and one another through that painful period of prolonged isolation from church and from one another.

I found that, like myself, people seemed to be hungry for daily devotionals that were more than emotional. They enjoyed daily devotionals that were educational, transformational, and missional. We worked our way verse-by-verse through books of the Bible with a focus on brevity, simplicity, clarity, practicality, and shareability. The StoryChanger started changing our stories with his Story, turning us into storytellers and therefore storychangers too.

Although these devotionals will take only about five minutes a day, I'm not promising you quick fixes. No, the StoryChanger usually changes our stories little by little. But over months and years of exposure to the StoryChanger's Story, he rewrites our story, and, through us, rewrites others' stories too.

To encourage you, I invite you to join the StoryChangers community at www.thestorychanger.life. There you can sign up for the

weekly StoryChangers newsletter and subscribe to the StoryChangers podcast. Let's build a community of storychangers, committed Christians who dedicate themselves to knowing God's Story better, being changed by God's Story for the better, and sharing God's Story better. We'll meet the StoryChanger, have our stories changed, and become storychangers. I look forward to meeting you there and together changing stories with God's Story.¹

1 Some of this content originally appeared on the *Living the Bible* podcast, which has since been replaced by *The StoryChanger* podcast, <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/the-storychanger/id1581826891>.

Introduction to *Luke: Stories of Mission and Mercy*

Luke wrote his Gospel to introduce his readers, especially Gentile readers, to Jesus. Luke was a physician, so we're not surprised that his account emphasizes Christ's double mission of suffering *with* others in sympathy and his suffering *for* others to heal them. Story after story shows us Jesus's love and compassion for sick sinners, and Luke's Gospel gradually moves deeper and deeper into Christ's suffering for sick sinners. We see mission and mercy in Jesus's mission of mercy.

Although there are fifty daily devotionals in this book, we will not cover every story or passage in Luke's Gospel. The passages I've omitted are repeated in one of the other three Gospels and will be covered in the other StoryChanger Devotionals.¹ Once you have read all four devotionals on the Gospels, you will have covered the whole Gospel story.

May these stories of mission and mercy change our stories so that we continue Christ's mission and mercy in the world.

¹ You'll find a table showing which Gospel passages are covered by each daily devotional at www.thestorychanger.life/gospels.

**Confidence in the
Scriptures builds
confidence in
our salvation.**



Hear
God's Story

Change
Your Story

Tell
the Story

Change
Others' Stories

1

Soul Sandpaper for a Smooth Finish

LUKE 1:1–23

Why does God sometimes sandpaper our souls? Because preparation perfects painting. Painters spend five times longer preparing a surface than painting it because the better the preparation, the better the paint looks and lasts. If that's true for making a surface beautiful, how much more for making a soul beautiful? Although it can be excruciating, soul preparation is vital for soul perfection. If we want a perfect salvation that looks good and lasts long, then we must prepare for some painful sandpapering.

How should we respond when our heavenly painter prepares us for perfection? Let's visit the perfect painter's workshop in Luke 1:1–17.

Preparation Requires Careful Records 1:1–4

When I read a biography, I'm not interested in the author's qualifications or research methods. I just want to get into the story, leaving technical details to the scholars. But we can't do that when it comes to something as important as the biography of Jesus Christ. Unless we're convinced that the Gospel record has been carefully prepared, that it is true and accurate, our faith will not last long or look good.

That's why Luke began his biography of Jesus by assuring us of how carefully he prepared his account: "It seemed good to me also, having followed all things closely for some time past, to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, that you may have certainty concerning the things you have been taught" (1:3–4).

God prepares us for soul perfection by persuading us of the Bible's perfection.

Confidence in the Scriptures builds confidence in our salvation.

What do these perfect records reveal about soul preparation?

Preparation Requires Convicting Repentance 1:5–23

My son, Allan, has a painting business, and he has shown me what happens if he paints without sandpapering first. The paint doesn't stick, or, if it does, it looks awful. Allan hates sandpapering because it's long, hard, dusty, sweaty, and exhausting work; but he loves the results—painted surfaces that look great and last long.

God sent John the Baptist to sandpaper people, to rough them up, to convict them of sin, so that when Jesus came with his salvation, it would stick, look great, and last long. John was a sandpaper man with a sandpaper ministry who would “make ready for the Lord a people prepared” (1:17).

This unique preparatory task required a uniquely prepared character. God turned John the Baptist into a great man because he was going to turn a great many to God (1:15–17). No wonder God said to his parents, “You will have joy and gladness, and many will rejoice at his birth” (1:14). Sandpapering isn't glamorous work, but it is great work.

Zechariah doubted God's word and therefore was silenced by God until John's birth (1:18–23). Zechariah was unprepared for the preparer, so God prepared him more thoroughly by disabling the tongue that doubted God's promise. The Lord compassionately sandpapered him with discipline to perfect him.

Submit to spiritual sandpaper for a smooth soul.

Changing Our Story with God's Story

In my childhood story Bibles, John the Baptist always looked ugly and rough. I especially disliked his disgusting locust sandwiches. However, in my early twenties, God brought a couple of John the Baptist type ministers into my life (minus the locusts). They convinced me of the reliability of the Bible and sandpapered my soul with conviction of sin until I was ready for the smooth finish of salvation. I didn't enjoy these painful months, but they prepared me for a salvation that stuck better and looked better. When God wants to change our story, he starts with spiritual sandpaper. It doesn't feel good, but it sure looks good when he's done.

Summary: How should we respond when our heavenly painter prepares us for perfection? *Submit to biblical truth and spiritual sandpaper for a smooth and beautiful finish.*

Question: When God sandpapers you, what helps you to submit rather than resist?

Prayer: Heavenly Painter, use your word to prepare me for Jesus and sand me so that your salvation sticks forever and looks better. Amen.