

## INI

2 Timothy 4,5-15

St. Luke the Evangelist — 18 October 2015

**Greeting:** To those who are called, sanctified by God the Father, and preserved in our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ; mercy, peace, and love be multiplied to you. Amen.

We hear a portion of the Epistle lesson, which was read earlier:

Make every effort to come to me soon; <sup>10</sup> for Demas, having loved this present age, has deserted me and gone to Thessalonica; Crescens has also gone to Galatia, Titus to Dalmatia. <sup>11</sup> Only Luke is with me.

**So far the reading. Let us pray:** Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of our hearts, be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, our Strength and our Redeemer. Amen.

**Introduction:** It is around the year AD 64 or 65, and Paul is in Rome under house arrest, this being his second imprisonment in Rome. Paul is writing to his son in the faith, Timothy, whom he had left in Ephesus in order that Timothy might continue to instruct the Christians in Ephesus and also to combat “strange doctrines” (1 Timothy 1,2-3ff).

Even though it is house arrest, it is still arrest. Paul is under arrest because Nero had rounded up Christians after the great fire in Rome and made them scapegoats for the fire and was going to make an example of them.

Then and now, there is a stigma against prisoners. Not only is there supposed guilt, but there is guilt by association, and some probably do not wish to be tainted by being too close to a prisoner.

Paul even wrote to Timothy that he should

not be ashamed of the testimony of our Lord, or of me His prisoner; but join with me in suffering for the Gospel according to the power of God. (2 Timothy 1,8)

Some might ask: “Not be ashamed?” “Join in suffering?” “Is this some kind of joke?”

But it was no joke.

Indeed, one of Paul’s co-workers, Demas, who had been faithful in the past (see Colossians 4,14; Philemon 24), had deserted Paul. Demas knew how the world worked. In fact, Demas “loved this present age” and calculated that it was not worth staying around Paul and perhaps enduring the shame and even suffering with him. The King James translates “deserted” correctly as “forsaken.” And in that word “forsaken,” we also hear Jesus’ cry on the Cross, “My God! My God! Why have You forsaken Me?”

Even though others probably had gone off on missionary journeys, there was one who had not forsaken Paul. Luke stood by Paul. Stood by him, willing to endure the shame, and even share the suffering.

To stand is to be steadfast. And yet there was One who stood by them both. One Who was steadfast. One Who had endured the shame and had endured the suffering. Thus, on this day of Saint Luke the Evangelist, I come to my sermon theme: “**A Steadfast Savior For A Steadfast Evangelist.**” I’ll develop this theme in three points:

- 1) Who Was Saint Luke The Evangelist?**
- 2) Luke’s Steadfast Savior;** and,
- 3) A Steadfast Word That Continues To Give Life**

**1) Who Was Saint Luke The Evangelist?** As we readily see from our text, Luke was a companion of Paul for part of his missionary journeys.

Luke was a Gentile. In Colossians, Paul notes that he was not included among those of the circumcision (Colossians 4,11). Early Church tradition has him hailing from Antioch, and in a variant on Acts 11,27-28, it indicates that he was part of a group from Antioch. Indeed, Luke records that it was in Antioch that the disciples were first called “Christians.”

In Acts 16, the personal pronoun changes from “they” to “we,” and now we know that the author of Acts is also in the company of Paul, on part of his second missionary journey. The resumption of “they” in Acts 17,1 would indicate that the writer of Acts was left behind in Philippi. On the third missionary journey St. Luke apparently joined the company at Philippi (Acts 20,5), having spent the intervening seven or so years in Philippi preaching the Gospel.

The variant ending for 2 Corinthians indicates that the epistle was written by Titus and Luke and sent from Philippi — that means that they were Paul’s secretaries who took his dictation. But it is probably Luke of whom Paul writes:

With him [that is, Titus] we are sending the brother who is famous among all the churches for his preaching of the Gospel; and not only that, but he has been appointed by the churches to travel with us in this gracious work we are carrying on. (2 Corinthians 8,18-10)

It would appear that Luke stayed with Paul during his imprisonment in Caesarea and then sailed to Rome with after Paul had appealed to Caesar rather than face a kangaroo court ruled by his Jewish enemies.

Paul describes Luke as “the beloved Physician” (Colossians 4,14). Thus we know that Luke was an educated man, a doctor. Indeed, according to those who know better than I, along with the Letter to the Hebrews, the Greek of Luke’s Gospel and the Book of Acts is the best in the New Testament. Also, there is evidence that Luke has a doctor’s eye

for detail in his descriptions of illness. There is nothing to indicate that he gave up medicine to follow Jesus.

Luke is also the author of the Gospel that bears his name as well as the Book of Acts — thus from his pen comes more than a third of the New Testament, more than from any other writer. The early church unanimously attributed both works to Luke. The introduction to both are addressed to the same person, the “most excellent Theophilus,” which indicates that he probably was a Roman magistrate. The Gospel was written first and the Book of Acts second, so that Theophilus would know the “exact truth” of the things which he had been taught.

And to clearly show this exact truth, we now see

**2) Luke’s Steadfast Savior.** Luke as a historian was not an eyewitness to Jesus’ earthly ministry. He conducted research to write not only his Gospel, but also those parts the Book of Acts to which he was not an eyewitness. He probably wrote his Gospel and the Book of Acts during Paul’s first imprisonment in Rome, but before Paul’s trial. He probably conducted part of his research into Jesus’ life during Paul’s imprisonment in Caesarea.

Luke’s Gospel was written by a Gentile for the Gentiles, and thus he emphasizes Jesus universal appeal to all, to both Jew and Gentile.

From the very first, we hear of the angels over the fields in Bethlehem announce that they have Good News of a great joy which shall be for all people,

for unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. (Luke 2,10-11)

Then Luke goes on to tell us of incident after incident which emphasizes that Jesus is a Savior for all, showing steadfast love to all.

In the city of Jericho there was a man named Zacchaeus, a chief tax collector. Zacchaeus had in effect sold himself to a foreign power, the hated Romans. In turn, as a tax collector, he was hated, indeed, despised. Even though he was rich, he was shunned by his co-religionists. But one day Jesus came and said to him, “I must stay in your house today.” Then Jesus said, “Today salvation has come to this house.” (Luke 19,1ff) only Luke records this incident in our Lord’s life. Jesus reached out to all!

Luke is also the only evangelist to record the parable of the prodigal son (Luke 15,11ff). You know that one, I’m sure.

A man had two sons, and the younger demands his share of the inheritance. That father gives it to him and the young man promptly runs off to a foreign country and squanders every last cent on what we would call loose living. When the young man finally found himself without a cent, he hired himself out and began to feed pigs. Then he came to his senses and began the journey back to his father’s house to ask forgiveness and say he would be willing to work as a servant rather than as a son.

What does the father do? He welcomes him back as someone who had returned from the dead. Here Luke gives us Jesus’ insight into the Father’s compassionate love, even willing to accept those who had previously rejected Him.

Luke gives us the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10,29ff). Here we see a Samaritan, a race despised and hated by the Jews of Jesus’ day, being the instrument by which a robbed, beaten, and half-dead Jew was helped after having been ignored a priest and a Levite.

Luke tells us that even as Jesus was dying on the Cross, Jesus turned to the penitent thief next to Him and told that thief that today he would be with Jesus in Paradise (Luke 23,43). Even in His dying, Jesus was still powerful to save.

Jesus was not dying on the Cross for Himself. He was dying for the thief who asked for pardon. He was dying for those who crucified Him, and Jesus even prayed, “Father forgive them, for they know not what they do” (Luke 23,34). He was dying for the sins of the world.

And so He rose on the third day to prove that His victory was complete.

Only Luke tells us that on that first resurrection evening, two disciples were walking to a small town outside of Jerusalem, Emmaus. Jesus met them, but they did not recognize their risen Savior. Then Jesus opened their

understanding, that they might understand the Scriptures. And Jesus said to them, “Thus it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer, and to rise from the dead the third day. And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name among all nations, beginning in Jerusalem.” (Luke 24,45-47)

And so Luke wrote, giving us:

**3) A Steadfast Word That Continues To Give Life.** The message about Jesus, the Word of Life, is the Good News that the disciples as witnesses were to take to all nations, beginning in Jerusalem, and going to Judea, then to Samaria, and then to the ends of the earth (Acts 1,8).

Luke takes us from the cradle in Bethlehem, to the place of the skull, to the empty tomb, to a glorious Ascension, and then to the ends of the earth, culminating in Rome.

He gives us a sure and steadfast Word that is preached, bringing Jesus in Word and Sacrament to those who have never seen Him.

Luke gives us a Jesus who gathers the little children, even babies,

unto Himself and tells the disciples that no one should hinder these little ones from coming unto Him (Luke 18,15-17), and gives us Jesus' Baptism which even receives whole households unto Himself (Acts 16,33).

He gives us God the Holy Spirit who even works among both Jew (Acts 2,38) Gentile, and accepts them through the washing and regeneration of Holy Baptism (Acts 10,47-48).

He gives us the Holy Supper of the Lord, instituted by Jesus Himself (Luke 22,17-20), Jesus' true Body and Blood given and poured out for you. A breaking of the bread which opened the eyes of the Emmaus disciples (Luke 24,31).

As Luke records the aged Simeon standing of the steps of the temple looking at the baby Jesus, here

is a Light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel. (Luke 2,32)

Here we have the Light of Jesus shining through the words of the evangelist Luke and the other evangelists and prophets.

Jesus is the Light Who has shined through the darkness of death itself and risen on Easter morning to give the light of forgiveness to the world.

Jesus is the Light Who has shone in the heart of every believer, Jew and Gentile alike.

Jesus is the Light Who can brighten the darkest moments, and so Paul can write:

I have fought the good fight, I have finished the course, I have kept the faith; <sup>8</sup> in the future there is laid up for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to

me on that day; and not only to me, but also to all who have loved His appearing. (2 Timothy 4,7-9)

Jesus is the Steadfast Light which keeps shining, regardless of the darkness of personal circumstance, for His resurrection Light gives forgiveness which promises life and light eternal.

**Conclusion:** Today we can be thankful to our gracious God for calling Luke through the Gospel, and calling him not only to be a faithful and steadfast companion of Paul, but also to write a Gospel and history which permits us to know the “exact truth” of those things needful to our salvation.

We thank our gracious God for calling Luke to be an evangelist, that is, a teller of the Good News of Jesus Christ, who is steadfast unto the end, Who is

A Light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of Your people Israel.  
Amen.

Now, may the peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, our Lord. Amen.

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