

Luke

Carefully Investigating the Gospel ... Together

SSBC Luke Bible Study #42

Take this Bible Study home and use it to guide your exploration of the scripture passage that next Sunday's sermon will be focused on.

Passage: Luke 11:29-36

Sermon Date: July 9, 2006

Introduction:

“You gotta believe!”

What do I mean by that? Well, it depends on the context.

“You gotta believe!” is an empathetic encouragement to a die-hard Red Sox fan who is lamenting that our boys of summer have often turned from winning streaks to losing streaks at this point in the season.

On the other hand, “You gotta believe!” is an urgent plea by a Christian witnessing to a fellow traveler on a plane that lost power and is plummeting toward certain death.

You see how meaning depends on the situation – the people, place, time, values, histories, etc.? These are referred to as “context.” In studying the Bible, we are reading books and letters written in another time in another culture – so understanding that time and culture helps us understand the Bible’s meaning.

In this week’s study, we’ll work on our skills of understanding the context of a passage in order to determine its meaning. As you begin, pray for the Holy Spirit to help you in this process.

This bible study was developed by South Shore Baptist Church in conjunction with our weekly sermon series. To hear a sermon on the same scripture passage covered in this bible study, come to one of our Sunday worship services (8:30am or 11:00am) on the date listed on page 1. Or after that date you can hear it by logging on to www.southshorebaptist.com/sermons/

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Bible Study:

1. Read this week's bible passage and use the chart below to make observations and jot down your questions.

Scripture	Your Observations & Questions
<p>²⁹ As the crowds increased, Jesus said, "This is a wicked generation. It asks for a miraculous sign, but none will be given it except the sign of Jonah. ³⁰ For as Jonah was a sign to the Ninevites, so also will the Son of Man be to this generation. ³¹ The Queen of the South will rise at the judgment with the men of this generation and condemn them; for she came from the ends of the earth to listen to Solomon's wisdom, and now one greater than Solomon is here. ³² The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now one greater than Jonah is here.</p> <p>³³ "No one lights a lamp and puts it in a place where it will be hidden, or under a bowl. Instead he puts it on its stand, so that those who come in may see the light. ³⁴ Your eye is the lamp of your body. When your eyes are good, your whole body also is full of light. But when they are bad, your body also is full of darkness. ³⁵ See to it, then, that the light within you is not darkness. ³⁶ Therefore, if your whole body is full of light, and no part of it dark, it will be completely lighted, as when the light of a lamp shines on you."</p>	

Historical References to Understand:

2. Who was Jonah and what did the Ninevites believe about God after hearing Jonah's preaching? (Read Jonah 1:1-2, 3:1-10)

3. Who was the "Queen of the South" and what did she hear and ultimately believe about Solomon and his God? (Read 1 Kings 10:1-13)

Biblical Themes to Probe:

4. What do light and darkness typically refer to and symbolize in the Bible? (Explore these illuminating verses – Ps 119:105, 119:130; Prov 4:18-19, 6:23; Isa 60:1-2; John 1:1-9, 3:19-21, 8:12; Acts 26:16-18; Rom 13:11-14; 2 Cor 4:3-6; Eph 5:8-16)

a. Light refers to/symbolizes ...

b. Darkness refers to/symbolizes ...

5. What does "the judgment" in verses 31 and 32 refer to? (Consider Mt 25:31-34, 2 Cor 5:10, Heb 9:27, Jude 14-15, Rev 20:12, 15)

6. Next, use this chart to **interpret some key observations**.

a. Select a few of your observations & questions from pages 2-3 that you find most interesting or important. Rewrite these below, and interpret and apply them using the columns to the right.

b. For each observation, begin to interpret by asking yourself these kinds of questions:

- What does it mean?
- Why is this important?
- What does this tell me about the Father? Jesus? The Holy Spirit?
- Are there other scriptures that could help me understand this?

Observation What does it say?	Interpretation What does it mean?

7. Now consider how you can **apply** the Word to your life. Look for:

- **S**ins to avoid
- **P**romises to believe
- **E**xamples to follow (remember "SPECK")
- **C**ommands to obey
- **K**nowledge to share

Don't just write things to write them – listen carefully to God's Word and what he seems to be teaching you, and look for relevant things that you're truly stirred to do. Then as you do them, God will help you learn, grow, and help others grow.

Application How do I apply what it means?

Context Matters:

8. In studying the Bible, it's important to pay attention to the literary context of what is being said. In modern conversation, the phrase "it's time to go" can be a call to action toward an important cause, or it can be an effort to escape from an ultra-talkative neighbor. To determine its meaning, we need to understand what else has been said and what's been happening. An important principle of literature study is

To interpret a verse or passage, we need to do so in light of what the author has placed before and after it.

We can gain some insight about this principle in this week's study by comparing & contrasting several instances where Jesus' words in Luke 11:29-36 are found elsewhere in the gospels, but in different contexts.

- a. Compare and contrast Lk 11:29-32 and Mt 12:38-42. Scan Mt 12:22-45 and note how the order and content of these passages differ. Are these the same event or something Jesus repeated more than once? Based on the two literary contexts, do the gospel authors seem to be making the same or different points?

- b. Compare and contrast Lk 11:33, Mt 5:15 (read 5:13-16 for context), and Lk 8:16 (read 8:15-18 for context). Is Jesus making the same point each time he uses this lamp analogy? Are the authors, Luke and Matthew, making the same points in each case?

- c. In a similar way, compare and contrast Lk 11:34-35 and Mt 6:22-23 (read 6:19-24 for context).

Seek the Main Point:

9.a. Now look at how Luke puts these passages together and the overall point he is making. First outline the passage – what are the logical components of Jesus' discourse in Luke 11:29-36?

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b. Now look at the broader context of this passage. How does Luke 11:29-36 relate to what Luke shares right before and right after it? Do you see a progression of thought?

c. Based on a and b, what main point is this passage making?

d. Do all the sections you outlined above fit together in a logical way and each contribute to the main point? If you can't see how a section connects to the main point, you may not have found the true main point.

Apply the Main Point:

- 10.a. What are God's role and our role regarding the condition of our "eyes" and thus our resulting nature as full of light or darkness? (Consider Lk 10:21-24, 11:9-13, Ps 119:9-16, 105-112)

God's role:

Our role:

- b. Consider your own life – where have you placed the lamp that is Christ? In what ways have you "placed" Christ where he has influence over you? In what ways have you effectively hidden him in your cellar?
- c. What specific attitudes or practices (particularly related to God's Word) could you change in order to allow Christ to take more of a position of lordship over your life? What could you do this week to make some progress toward those attitudes & practices?

*Open my eyes, that I may see wonderful things in your law.
(Ps 119:18)*