

Sermon 4/26/20 – Surviving the End of Everything

This quarter we are practicing the spiritual discipline of listening prayer. However your group meets this week, spend the first few minutes of your time together listening to a worship song. Without straining or striving think about what word or lyric captures your heart. Repeat the words to yourself. Hear Jesus speaking these words to you, over you. After the song is over, write these word(s) down. Read what you wrote down and let your heart be quieted as you move through your week.

Read Luke 1:1-4 and Acts 1:1-3

Investigation...

When we read our Bibles, it can be really easy to forget that it isn't just story after story of fictional one-dimension characters. As we try to quickly pluck away the message we need in the present moment, we miss the real humanness of the writers and of the men and women who lived and breathed these hard-earned moments in time.

Luke was a trained and practicing physician. He was not a man of religion and would have been called a Gentile because he wasn't Jewish. When he was learning and practicing medicine I'm sure he never imagined that he would later leave his profession for a life of Faith, accompany his friend named Paul in ministry, survive persecution and hardship, and live a life as an investigator who would be relentless in detailing the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

The investigation for Luke was necessary and was born through hardship. He took the investigation of Jesus seriously and it included interview after interview with people who had walked with Jesus, who had been healed by Jesus, who had been included by Jesus, who had loved and been loved Jesus, and who had seen firsthand that Jesus had risen from the dead and left His Holy Spirit upon them.

Luke was a man who had a plan for his life, and then *he* was changed by God. In his changing, the plan for his life changed. Now 2,000 years later we are the benefactors of what he believed for himself and then chose to deeply investigate and write down for all of us.

- 1) What OR who are you investigating in this season of unknown? Are you investigating the news, the world, or Web MD? Are you investigating Scripture, your prayer life, or what God is doing in you? There are no wrong answers. Just observe where you tend to dig deep when things are uncertain.
- 2) Nick encouraged us to ask ourselves "Do I believe what I think I believe?". Do your thoughts, actions, and words match up with what you say you believe?
- 3) Luke's investigation through hardship shows us that as we walk a life of Faith we can also feel safe to ask hard questions. What hard questions are you wrestling with in this season and who do you feel safe to share with as you investigate?

Impressing OR illuminating?

Luke is kind of an accidental historian but his quest started out just like ours...he wanted to know that what he believed and what he was taught was the truth. The Message version of Luke 1:4 says "*I decided to write it all out for you....so you can know beyond the shadow of a doubt the reliability of what you were taught*".

We can be certain that Luke was not writing his portion of the Gospel to gain popularity or start a new religion because Luke, his friends, and his mentors suffered and were persecuted for believing and for even discussing Jesus as Messiah. At that point in world history it would not have benefited Luke's reputation or cause to include concepts of outsiders sharing their testimonies of Jesus. But, Luke was set on telling the truth no matter how controversial it was, so he included stories of women being the first sent to preach the Good News, Samaritans being a group that Jesus would welcome, and a Parable of a son lost to his own greed but welcomed home by God running to him with a kiss.

All outsiders. All investigated. All illuminating.

Luke and everyone he interviewed weren't just impressed by Jesus, they were *transformed* by Him.

Their transformation was a collection of illuminating encounters that left them in AWE, not merely impressed.

- 1) What is something new that Jesus has illuminated for you about either Himself or about you?