

Twenty-First Sunday After Pentecost – Year A
Sunday 18 October 2026 - St. Luke's Day Alternative Readings

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Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals; and greet no one on the road.” (Luke 10:4)

Today, 18th October celebrates the feast day of St. Luke the evangelist. He wrote two books in the New Testament, i.e. the Third Gospel, and the Acts of the Apostles. Luke is believed to be a physician, born in Antioch, Syria. With his Greek medical background, Luke always saw people, especially those who are in need, with very strong compassion - which is often reflected in his Gospel. His Gospel presents a very graphic description of Jesus. For example, Luke alone tells us every details of the incarnation-nativity of Jesus in the first and second chapter of the Gospel (although he did not write anything about the day of Epiphany, a very first encounter of baby Jesus with non-Jewish faithfuls.) For Luke, Jesus is the Son of God who shows his unlimited compassion to everyone, regardless of their race, faith, and their class in the society. With his medical background, Luke includes many episodes of healing. Luke uses strong parables such as the Good Samaritan, and the loving Father (Prodigal son) to show how God restores, heals, and reconciles human dignities. His view on Jesus and his salvation always on those who are in marginalised groups, such as Samaritans, Gentiles, women, the poor and disabled, etc. Through his Gospel, Luke proclaims that God and his love is universal, inclusive and unlimited.

Different from other Gospels, Luke did not finish his writing on the day of Ascension, he continues from the day of Ascension. His ‘second book’ i.e., the Acts of the Apostles, which goes over to the day of Pentecost and beyond. He accompanied St. Paul for his second mission and much relied on by Paul. (2 Timothy 4:11)

Having looked at some major characteristics of Luke’s work as an evangelist and a historian, let’s explore today’s Gospel. ‘Travel light!’ Jesus ordered those who were sent to practice their mission and ministry. Let’s imagine how we pack up when we travel or moving house. I don’t know how you do it, but I am one of those who always try to make sure that everything is packed before I go away. ‘Clothings, passport, flight tickets, phone, cash & credit card, medications,, what about a spare pair of shoes? I used to be worrying too much to decide what to pack and what to leave. Packing more than enough to maintain a sense of security, I guess.

‘Carry no purse, no bag, no sandals’ Jesus gave this travel instructions to the seventy missionaries. Meanwhile, Luke himself was said to be one of those people - remember his name does not appear in the group of the original twelve.

After following Jesus with many others, Luke responded to Jesus. His experience on this mission gave him a strong motivation to be an evangelist.

Do we think Jesus gave them some unreasonable instructions to practice? Remember that he was sending these people to the place unknown. There might be certain risks for their security. How should they defend themselves from enemies and obstacles?

‘Go on your way. See, I am sending you out like lambs into the midst of wolves.’

(V 3) said Jesus. He reminded them that the journey might not be a safe and easy one, not a kind of picnic. The task they are asked to accomplish requires them to set their mind fully focused to this mission, without letting their mind slipped away to something else. Jesus knew how fragile our certain emotions can be. Particularly when our mind is dominated by fear of facing certain dangers, we would feel being unsettled and losing our focus into the required task. If we are concentrating too much on our own security then we would be blind to the essential purpose and motivations of our task.

The other message that comes from Jesus’ instruction is about faith and trust. By sending them out into unknown places, Jesus is testing their vocations. To represent Jesus and undertake his ministry of proclaiming the coming of the kingdom of God, they are required to be genuine for God’s mission without worrying about their own security, possessions, ambitions, and rewards. As we reflected our thoughts on the matter of priority of commitment on last Sunday, today we are given a great opportunity to continue our growth in confidence to be God’s labourers.

Then, we might have a simple question. ‘How do we do that?’ Going to visit somewhere unknown, to proclaim the Gospel, how do we do it? Already we’ve heard that there may be some great risk by facing people unknown. What kind of reaction can we expect from them when we talk to them about God and his Kingdom? Some people may be friendly enough to allow us to speak, but the others can find it uninteresting, irrelevant, or even offensive. Those negative people would show us no kind hospitalities, just slam the door in front of our nose. How should we avoid any trouble like that? Are we told to expose our vulnerabilities to those who are responding negatively?

Here’s Jesus’ instructions to such a difficult case. *‘Whatever house you enter, first say, Peace to this house!’ And if anyone is there who shares in peace, your peace will rest on that person; but if not, it will return to you.’* (Vv.5-6)

Clearly, Jesus tells us that we visit them as bearers of God’s peace. We are not causing any conflict by attempting to achieve our purpose. It is God’s purpose to declare his peace to those people. If his peace is not accepted, try someone else - just simple as that.

Then he suggests us to build up our good relationship with those who welcome you. This instruction helped St. Paul later, possibly heard from Luke, when he was confronted by Alexander the coppersmith in Troas. (2 Timothy 4:14-17)

Luke experienced God’s courage when he took his part in this group of seventy who were sent out to the land of strangers. From here on, Luke built up his confidence to proclaim the Gospel to all people, especially to the Gentiles.

Almighty God, who called Luke the Physician, whose praise is in the Gospel, to be an Evangelist, and Physician of the soul: May it please thee that, by the wholesome medicines of the doctrine delivered by him, all the diseases of our souls may be healed; through the merits of thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.