



Bible Study

LUKE 9.10-17



**Canadian Lutheran
World Relief**

CLWR BIBLE STUDIES

CLWR's Bible Studies have been designed to help congregations delve deeper into the challenges leading to injustices around the world, to explore related Bible stories, to discuss how these connect and how God calls us to act together.

These studies are meant to be adapted for your congregation's needs and are free to use. Each study includes discussion questions for children to adults, as well as suggestions to connect this discussion to action.

As CLWR continues to grow our resource collection, we would love to hear suggestions and insight from you. Please feel free to contact Heidi Van Schaik, our Church Relations Manager at heidi@clwr.org with ideas and feedback.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- This study will explore the story of Luke 9.10-17 and the feeding of the 5000, the challenges faced by many to access adequate and nutritious food and how we can combat food insecurity locally, nationally, and globally.
- The author is believed to be a Syrian physician from Antioch and is thought to be a travelling companion to Paul (Philem. 1.24, Col. 4.14).
- The author of this gospel would have had access to the gospel of Mark, already written.
- He knows Judaism well, but rather than being a Jew himself, has a more scholarly knowledge than a practiced one.
- The gospel of Luke was typically shared orally until it was written down, likely between 80-90 CE.
- The author was writing primarily to gentiles—those who were on the “outside” of the Jewish community and wanted them to know who Jesus was and is—his identity and significance.
- A secondary theme found throughout the gospel of Luke, and within this particular story, is one of discipleship.

CULTURAL CONTEXT

- In the background, Rome is always present—in this story Jesus moves away from Herod’s territory (see situational context).
- Rome would destroy the temple and Jerusalem in 70CE.

SITUATIONAL CONTEXT

- This story is found in all 4 canonical gospels and is situated as a climax of Jesus' ministry.
- John the Baptist has been killed.
- It is springtime and the cross is still a whole year away (Mk 6.39, Jn.6.4).
- At the beginning of this chapter, Jesus has called his disciples together and has given them authority to heal and cast out demons and has sent them out to do just that (9.1-6).
- Herod, hearing of the miracles of the disciples, is getting concerned about who is doing these things (9.7-9).
- Jesus' baptism and the happenings at that moment are fresh in the minds of the people.
- While Herod is uneasy, Jesus' popularity continues to grow among the people.
- Jesus chooses to move away from Herod's territory and goes to Bethsaida (v.10).
- Bethsaida is located at the north end of the lake of Galilee across the river from Herod's jurisdiction and is the home of Andrew, Philip, and Peter (Jn. 1.44).
- As the disciples return to recount their stories of success, Jesus takes them away to a 'deserted place' (v.12) and their retreat is cut short by the pressing crowds.

Luke 9.10-17

On their return, the apostles told Jesus all they had done. He took them with him and withdrew privately to a city called Bethsaida. When the crowds found out about it, they followed him; and he welcomed them, and spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and healed those who needed to be cured. The day was drawing to a close, and the twelve came to him and said, “Send the crowd away, so that they may go into the surrounding villages and countryside, to lodge and get provisions; for we are here in a deserted place.” But he said to them, “You give them something to eat.” They said, “We have no more than five loaves and two fish—unless we are to go and buy food for all these people.” For there were about five thousand men. And he said to his disciples, “Make them sit down in groups of about fifty each.” They did so and made them all sit down. And taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke them, and gave them to the disciples to set before the crowd. And all ate and were filled. What was left over was gathered up, twelve baskets of broken pieces.

Read Luke 9.10–17

When the crowds encounter Jesus and the disciples in this story, what is Jesus teaching them about?

- the Kingdom of God (v.11)

How might the Kingdom of God be connected to this event?

- the Kingdom of God provides nourishment and life

Why do you think the disciples wanted Jesus to send the people away?

- they were on retreat (maybe)
- they were genuinely concerned for their welfare—it was getting dark, and they had little food and no shelter for them

How many people were fed?

- 5,000 men PLUS women and children
- that's A LOT of hungry people in one place

In verse 14, Jesus tells the disciples to sit the people down in groups of 50.

Why do you think that is said?

- Read Exodus 18.21
- Remember this author is trying to show Gentiles and those on the outside of the Jewish community who Jesus is (a case for Messiahship)

What were the people fed with?

- 5 loaves and 2 fish was all the disciples had with them
- Luke does not say that Jesus multiplies the fish, allowing for some skepticism around ^{where the food} came from (did others have food to share as well?)¹

Why do you think the food used was loaves and fishes?

- typical food for the area
- reminiscent of the miracle of the manna (Ex. 16.15f, Dt.18.15, Jn. 6.14,31, 2 Kings 4.42-44)¹

Read verse 16. What does this remind you of?

- pre-cursor to our present-day communion
- Read Luke 22.19, 24.30
- this is a typical Jewish blessing of the time

How much leftover was collected following the meal? What might this symbolize?

- 12 baskets (v.17)
- one basket per disciple might symbolize the continuous miraculous substance of the New Israel of God²
- Note: the leftovers are not ‘recycled’ for another meal. This was NOT considered to be wasteful, as bread was used as “pushers” —to push food into the mouth—and to clean the hands following a meal. It has served its purpose.

Read verse 13.

What do you hear Jesus say? What do you think the disciples’ reaction is?

- Mark’s version alludes to the disciples being more critical of this directive, but in Luke’s gospel, they are not. For Luke, this is an example of Jesus working through his disciples.

STUDY (CONTINUED)

Read Luke 9.10, 18.

What do you notice?

- if v. 11-17 were omitted, the story would continue
- v.11-17 seem to be an inserted story
- v. 11-17 appear to be an interruption in the story

What can we learn from the way the disciples handled this disrupted time?

- no matter what is happening around us, ministry continues when needs are pressing

Knowing that the author of Luke is also believed to have written the book of Acts, read Acts 2.43-47.

What themes/ideas might connect these passages?

Jesus works through his followers and human need is responded to, and the kingdom grows

Have you or anyone you know ever experienced a time when you were hungry?

How was Jesus or the Kingdom of God experienced?

Did you know: Access to adequate food is the most basic of human needs and rights.¹

The United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights states in Article 25: Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control.²

Food not only affects people's health and well-being, but also their productivity. Food security is the consistent and reliable access to adequate and nutritious food for all people. A person's food security is affected by factors like supply and income as well as how food is distributed within households. Adverse weather conditions, political instability, or economic factors (unemployment, rising food prices) also have an impact on food security.³

What are some of the things that contribute to food insecurity?

Read verse 13 again.

What do you hear?

Listen to Matthew West's song "Do Something": youtu.be/b_RjndGoIX8

What do you hear in this? How does it inform how we respond to the gospel, specifically Luke 9.10-17?

1. <https://www.clwr.org/what/food-security> , August 5, 2023.
2. <https://www.un.org/sites/un2.un.org/files/2021/03/udhr.pdf> , August 5, 2023.
3. <https://www.clwr.org/what/food-security> , August 5, 2023.

WONDERINGS

Consider your local community, who is facing food insecurity in your community?

Consider Canada, who might be challenged in obtaining adequate nourishment in this country?

Consider the world, what factors might contribute to food insecurities globally?

ACTION BRAINSTORM

How can you/your parish support food security locally?

How can you/your parish support food security nationally?

How can you/your parish support food security globally?

ACTION SUGGESTIONS

Share Matthew West's "Do Something" in worship with an explanation as to why it is being used.

On Thanksgiving Sunday, ensure all the canned food and produce collected to decorate your worship space is donated to a local food bank.

Use resources created by CLWR or Canadian Foodgrains Bank to recognize and raise awareness of World Food Day on October 16th.

Contact your local food bank to determine what they typically run short on and collect for them on an ongoing basis.

Support a breakfast program in a local school.

Create a neighbourhood food cupboard on your church property (leave what you can, take what you need). Be prepared to include a budget line and a point-person to ensure that the cupboard doesn't go empty!

Volunteer at your local food bank, or meal program.

Create a community garden on your church property. (A few options include a plot that everyone tends and takes what they need with leftovers being donated, or rental plots for people in the community to tend for themselves with the proceeds being donated to fund CLWR initiatives or a local food bank.) Be prepared to cover any additional water bill increase.

ACTION SUGGESTIONS (CONTINUED)

Invite in a speaker to help the congregation/community understand local and global food insecurities. You can connect with local food bank organizers, Canadian Foodgrains Bank (foodgrainsbank.ca) or CLWR (clwr.org) to find speakers or ways to help support them in their ministries.

Host a FREE thanksgiving dinner for those struggling with food insecurity in your neighbourhood.

Write to your elected officials regarding food insecurity requiring action from the government to comply with Canada's obligations as a signatory and contributing drafter of the UN Declaration of Human Rights. You can find a "how to" document on writing a letter here:

<https://yl.sd53.bc.ca/mod/assign/view.php?id=12201>.

Support CLWR's food security initiatives:

- Host an event (a meal, a plant sale, a concert, etc.) and donate financial proceeds to CLWR for the purchase of Garden Tools (\$75-\$300), Crop Know How (\$100-\$400), Seeds (\$50 - \$200) at clwr.org/gift-of-food. Encourage participants to also bring items to donate to your local food bank.
- Take in a special offering during your rogation (harvest or planting) services to support food security initiatives.
- Create a personalized fundraising page on clwr.org/fundraisers and crowdfund for a larger food security initiative, such as Fighting Drought (\$250-\$1000) or Building a Well (\$2000+).

FOR CHILDREN

Ask children, ‘Have you ever been having a lot of fun playing with your friends, and got hungry, but didn’t want to stop playing to go eat?’

This is what it was like for the people in the gospel. They were so happy to see and hear Jesus, they did not want to leave, even though it was getting dark, and it was time to eat.

Talk to them about how sometimes some people are hungry and it is not because they are playing or having fun, and it’s not their fault, but it’s because of other things (like they can’t afford food, or food isn’t available to them).

Talk to them about how the disciples shared what they had and how they gave it to Jesus and there was enough to feed everyone and still have leftovers.

Ask the children about what they know about sharing what they have with others (toys, tools, food, etc.). How does it make you feel to share?

Be prepared, it might make some feel sad or uncomfortable. That’s ok. That’s a good sign to check in on them later to ensure they are not a family quietly struggling.

Talk to them about how it was with Jesus’ help that the disciples were able to take what they had and share it with others and that there was enough to go around.

Remind the children that with Jesus helping us, we can all do the same thing —share what we have and have enough for everyone.

For food security themed children's activities, visit clwr.org/wfd.

PRAYER

Eternal provider,

Thank you for abundantly providing us
everything we need.

Help us to share out of our abundance
with those who are in need.

Help us to overturn structures of greed
and replace them with generosity.

Work through us to offer nourishment
and your saving grace to those who hunger.

We pray this in the name of your Son,
our Saviour, Jesus Christ.

Amen.