



**BREAKING  
OPEN**

Scripture Study

**ST LUKE THE PHYSICIAN**

**October 19<sup>th</sup>, 2025**

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A weekly reflection based on the preaching at St Peter's by the Lake, Paynesville, together with a study guide based on the readings, some liturgical resources RCL Lectionary, and a weekly devotion

## Revised Common Lectionary Related

### **St Luke the Physician**

Jeremiah 8.22-9.3

Psalms 147.1-7

2 Timothy 4.5-17

Luke 1.1-4



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Book of Common Prayer (1662) Collects

Almighty God,  
who calledst 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.

## INTRODUCTION

This Sunday, we are keeping, as we have all week, the Feast of Luke, Evangelist and Physician.

In the life of our Diocese, it is a significant time of ordination, and also, an acknowledgement that the Australian Order of St Luke has a house of healing at Rhyll, Philip Island.

In the life of our Parish at St Peter's by the Lake, we are also welcoming to our honorary staff the Rev'd Sue Newcombe, Assistant Area Dean and distinctive deacon. Sue has chosen Luke 1.1-4 for her address as she 'makes sense of all that has been passed on.'

"Is there no balm in Gilead?" This ancient cry for healing echoes through Luke's Gospel, where we discover that yes, there is indeed a divine remedy for our brokenness. We explore the unique perspective of Luke—both physician and evangelist—who meticulously documented Jesus' ministry of holistic healing.

Through the story of the grateful Samaritan leper, we see how true healing transcends physical restoration to encompass spiritual and emotional wholeness. Luke's careful account, written to Theophilus (meaning "lover of God"), serves as "wholesome medicine for the soul" - offering not just historical facts, but a transformative encounter with Christ's healing power. In our post-pandemic world, where global insecurity and fragmented faith leave many searching for wholeness, we are called to follow Luke's example as carriers of divine healing.

Through simple acts of service and faithful witness in our local communities, we become agents of Christ's restoration. The urgent invitation stands: will we, like the Samaritan leper, recognise God's healing grace and return with gratitude? More importantly, will we share this healing balm with the many "Theophilluses" around us who long for wholeness?

As we walk lightly on sacred ground,  
teach us Lord to make known your kingdom,  
and let this reflect in all that we do and say.

### **Luke the Physician**

Today, we give thanks for Luke, the evangelist, storyteller, and physician.

Following Jesus' encounter with the ten lepers, a significant moment in our liturgical calendar invites deep contemplation. Only one leper returns to express gratitude for his healing, a noteworthy act for two reasons.

A Samaritan, despite the religious differences between Jews and Samaritans, recognised that Jesus' healing transcended ritualistic norms. His gratitude shows that true healing is a profound gift from God, not limited to ceremonial practices.

The returning Samaritan's story reveals a more profound theological truth: God's presence transcends the physical Temple and its rituals. His interaction with Jesus signifies a holistic healing experience that extends beyond physical restoration. By returning to Jesus, he received cleansing from his leprosy and experienced a transformation that brought him wholeness—spiritually, emotionally, and physically. This transformative power of Jesus' healing should inspire us all with hope and faith in God's grace.

This story reminds us to reflect on our responses to God's grace and healing. Are we like the Samaritan, grateful for God's deeper gifts of wholeness, or do we focus on immediate benefits? Let's actively cultivate gratitude and openness to God's transformative power. This encouragement should motivate us to embrace God's healing and share it with others.

This story, more than any other in the Gospel of Luke, emphasises this crucial point: in our lives, as we seek to understand our role in the baptised community and the kingdom of God, beyond becoming a follower of Christ.

Luke's dual calling as an evangelist and healer is captured in the prayer we said earlier. He wrote the gospel and the Acts of the Apostles, but he also carried the medicine of healing. His words remain "wholesome medicine for the soul."

That's our theme today: Luke's evangelism, our human longing for wholeness, and our call to carry that good news to the everyday Theophillusse (Theophillusse)—the "lovers of God" around us who may never open a Bible, but will read the gospel in our lives. As believers, we are not only recipients of God's healing but also carriers of it, empowered and responsible for sharing it with others.

### **Wholeness and the Cry for Healing**

Jeremiah cries, "Is there no balm in Gilead? Is there no physician there?" It's a cry from the depths of brokenness.

The psalmist answers with praise: "The Lord is faithful in all his words, gracious in all his deeds, near to all who call upon him."

Both are true. Sometimes life feels like Jeremiah's lament: no remedy, no healing in sight. Other times, we can sing the psalmist's confidence: God is near, God is faithful.

And into that tension, Luke steps. He provides us with an orderly account of Jesus, not a myth or wishful thinking, but carefully gathered testimony. His gospel is meant to steady us, to hold us, to heal us.

### **Luke's Gospel as Medicine**

Luke begins with Theophyllus. He writes: "so that you may know the truth concerning the things you have been taught."

Luke is not trying to impress us. He's offering assurance. His gospel is a remedy—a steadying hand for those who wonder if the story of Jesus holds together.

People in our generation struggle to piece together the story. They've heard fragments like Christmas carols, funeral scripture, or old sermons, but they're unsure how they relate to their lives, vocations, and search for meaning.

Luke says: Yes. Here is the truth. Here is the balm. Here is the story of Jesus, who brings wholeness.

### **Healing Beyond the Physical**

Luke loves healing stories: lepers cleansed, eyes opened, disabled people walking, outcasts restored.

However, note that the healing process often extends beyond the physical body. It's reconciliation, restoration, and dignity restored.

Luke the physician introduces us to Jesus the healer, not just curing diseases, but mending lives. The gospel's wholesome

medicine is not just for our bodies, but for our entire selves, including our relationships, vocation, and identity before God.

### **Paul's Witness – Wholeness in Trial**

We hear this again in Paul's letter. He is in prison, largely abandoned. And yet he writes: "The Lord stood by me and gave me strength, so that through me the message might be fully proclaimed."

There's no false cheerfulness here. Paul is tired and alone. But he knows he is held. Wholeness in Christ doesn't mean life without pain; it means Christ's presence in the midst of it. That is strength enough to keep proclaiming.

### **Theophyllus – The Everyday Lover of God**

Luke writes to Theophyllus. Was he a wealthy patron? Perhaps. But the name means "lover of God." It is also a stand-in for every seeker, every disciple, every one of us.

This is where the sermon lands: Luke calls us—lay or ordained, young or old—to take our place in the story. To receive the gospel as medicine, and then to pass it on.

Because here's the truth: there are Theophylluses all around us. The workmate who wonders what holds you steady. The grandchild who asks hard questions. The neighbour who longs for hope but doesn't yet know its source.

For many in our generation, faith is fragmented. They don't know how to put the pieces together. And here we stand—not as superior experts, but as ordinary disciples with a doctor's bag in hand. We carry the remedy we've received. We hold out the medicine of grace.

### **Contemporary Illustration – Gippsland Healing**

We've seen something of this in our own community.

After the pandemic, confidence has been slow to recover. People who used to attend clubs, churches, and community events easily now hesitate, are unsure, and sometimes anxious. Even our local sports grounds felt the impact—numbers are down, volunteers are stretched, and energy is fragile.

Healing is happening gradually. The Seagulls leave the oval, the netballers cheer for their teammates, and chaplains return to schools and offer listening ears and quiet prayers. These minor signs are part of the community's medicine—ordinary people bringing hope back into public life.

In a world plagued by constant global insecurity—wars, climate anxiety, economic stress—local acts of faith and service are the glue that rebuild confidence. These acts include volunteering at local community events, offering a helping hand to a neighbour in need, or simply sharing a message of hope and encouragement. They may not be grand gestures, but they are humble acts of grace, offered to every Theophyllus in Paynesville, Eagle Point, and Bairnsdale.

### **Conclusion – The Quest for Wholeness**

Life is a quest for wholeness—sometimes conscious, sometimes oblivious, but always moving toward Christ.

Luke's gospel steadies us. Paul's witness strengthens us. And Jeremiah's question—"Is there no balm in Gilead?"—finds its answer in Jesus: yes, there is balm, there is healing, there is wholeness in him.

On Saturday, during the Feast of Luke, at St Paul's Cathedral in Sale, three individuals became "Deacons in the Church of God." Here at St. Peter's by the Lake today, we warmly welcome Sue Newcombe, who, like me, is a deacon in the Church of God. Our calling is one of service, providing the healing or comfort that the community needs, desires, or may not even realise it needs.

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So may we, like Luke, share this wholesome balm of the gospel. May we be faithful witnesses to every Theophyllus around us. And may our lives speak of the Christ who heals, restores, and makes all things whole.

### **Closing Prayer**

"Almighty God, who called Luke the physician to be evangelist and healer of souls: grant that by the wholesome medicine of the gospel we may be made whole in Christ, and bring your healing love to others; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen."



## Seeking Balm in Modernity?

In the story of the ten lepers, only one returned to thank Jesus. How does this story illustrate the difference between physical healing and complete spiritual transformation?

- The sermon points out that the Samaritans' return demonstrated more than gratitude - it showed a complete transformation that brought wholeness spiritually, emotionally, and physically.
- When has God worked in your life in a way that went beyond just solving an immediate problem to create deeper spiritual growth?

The sermon mentions Jeremiah's cry, 'Is there no balm in Gilead?' alongside the psalmist's confident praise. How do these contrasting perspectives reflect our own spiritual journeys?

- The sermon explains that both perspectives are true - sometimes we experience moments of despair like Jeremiah, and other times we can confidently praise God like the psalmist.
- Think about a challenging time in your life - how did you maintain faith while wrestling with difficult questions or doubts?

How does Luke's approach of providing an 'orderly account' of Jesus' life help people who are trying to piece together their understanding of faith?

- The sermon describes how many people today have fragmentary knowledge of faith through Christmas carols, funeral scriptures, or old sermons, but struggle to connect these to their lives.
- What aspects of your faith journey would benefit from a more structured understanding of Jesus' story?

The sermon discusses Paul's experience of feeling abandoned yet sustained by God's presence. How does this demonstrate that wholeness in Christ doesn't mean a life without struggles?

- Paul writes from prison that 'The Lord stood by me and gave me strength,' showing that wholeness means experiencing Christ's presence within our difficulties.
- How has God's presence sustained you during times when you felt alone or challenged?

The sermon describes believers as 'ordinary disciples with a doctor's bag.' What does this metaphor mean for how we should share our faith with others?

- The sermon emphasises that we carry the remedy we've received and are called to share the medicine of grace with others, not as superior experts but as ordinary disciples.
- What 'medicine of grace' has God given you that you could share with others who are seeking healing or hope?

This five-day devotional will seek to dive into the sermon from this weekend. We will explore the profound themes of healing, gratitude, and wholeness found in the scriptures, guiding us on a journey toward spiritual and emotional restoration.



### Day 1 Luke 1:1-4

Our first reflection centres on Luke's dedication to his gospel as both a historian and a spiritual healer. In an era where stories are often fragmented, Luke offers an orderly account to provide assurance to every seeker. His work is a testament that the narrative of Jesus is not just a collection of stories but a healing balm for generations.

The act of writing brought unity and coherence to the message of Jesus, enabling Luke to extend healing beyond physical ailments. Through his detailed account, he transforms the story of Christ into medicine for the soul, offering readers a pathway to understanding and a foundation for faith.

- How can we use our own stories to bring healing to others?
- In what ways can we extend the 'medicine' of our faith to those around us?
- Do you find assurance in scripture? How does it guide your daily life?
- Pray for clarity and understanding when reading scripture.
- Ask for the ability to convey God's love through your personal story.

### Day 2 Jeremiah 8:22

Jeremiah mourns with a cry, "Is there no balm in Gilead?" This expresses a deep human longing for wholeness and healing. This question echoes through time, capturing the collective pain and seeking the promise of restoration.

The psalmist offers a response filled with hope: God is near, faithful, and listening. In moments of despair, we can cling to the assurance that divine presence is our true balm. This day invites us to reflect on where we seek our healing and how we respond to God's constant grace.

- Reflect on a time you felt distant from healing. How did you find your way back?

- Consider how you respond to despair. Do you recognise God's presence in those moments?
- What signs of hope have you experienced in your spiritual journey?
- Pray for an increased awareness of God's presence in your life.
- Seek strength and faith to trust in divine timing for healing.

### Day 3 Psalm 145:10-18

The psalmist celebrates God's faithfulness and grace, acknowledging that He is near to all who call upon Him. This scripture emphasises the theme of God's unwavering support as we navigate life's challenges and seek healing.

In this context, healing is more than merely physical recovery; it carries an assurance of God's grace in every facet of life, offering spiritual strength even in the direst situations. We are reminded of the importance of heartfelt gratitude and trust in God's plan during our healing journey.

- How does the recognition of God's proximity impact your daily life?
- In what areas do you seek God's healing today?
- How can gratitude play a role in your healing process?
- Give thanks for the healing already occurring in your life and relationship with God.
- Pray for patience and gratitude in your healing journey.

### Day 4 2 Timothy 4:9-17a

Paul's letter from prison reveals the depth of wholeness that comes from enduring trials with Christ's strength. Despite feeling alone and abandoned, Paul finds confidence in God's presence, showing us that spiritual wholeness forms even amidst hardship.

His firm faith is a testament to the transformative power of Jesus' presence in moments of adversity. Paul's journey encourages us to lean on God's strength and understand that we are the vessels through which His healing can flow to others.

- Reflect on a time when you felt God's strength during a challenging period.
- In what ways can you offer support and presence to others in their difficulties?

- How do you share the message of resilience and faith in your community?
- Pray for the strength and courage to persevere in trials.
- Ask for guidance to be a source of hope and support for others.

### Day 5 Luke 17:11-19

The story of the grateful Samaritan leper highlights Jesus' transformative healing, going beyond physical ailments to encompass spiritual, emotional, and relational restoration. His response to healing teaches us about gratitude and its role in experiencing deeper wholeness.

This final day prompts us to reflect on our own responses to divine grace. Do we take time to acknowledge the gifts bestowed upon us? Are we expressing gratitude and allowing it to open pathways for deeper healing and wholeness in Christ?

- How can you cultivate an attitude of gratitude in your daily life?
- Reflect on the transformations you've experienced through God's grace.
- How can expressing gratitude deepen your relationship with God?
- Pray for an open heart to recognise and appreciate God's gifts.
- Ask for the ability to witness and share the transformative power of gratitude with others.



# End notes and further reading

Sacra Pagina: The Gospel of Luke (St Paul's Press) (Johnson)

Rev Dr Andrew McGowan: Andrew's Version: <https://substack.com/@abmcg>

David Adams, Glimpses of Glory, Year C

The following authors as featured at The Worship Cloud

[www.theworshipcloud.com](http://www.theworshipcloud.com)

N. T. Wright,

Jane Williams,

P James Woodward,

Paula Gooder

Mark Pryce,

David Perry



## Brabarlung Totem

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