

Theme: Luke presents Jesus as the ox, full of strength yet submitted to suffering as a sacrifice for sin, so that we might repent and be forgiven of our sins and then serve others.

I. The Ox As A Symbol

- A. A one ton bull - full of power; yet could be petted
- B. I love the symbol that Cyndi drew - powerful
- C. Ox may be the hardest - ox or calf; strong or sacrifice?
- D. The answer - yes! It is both
- E. How can we see Jesus as an ox in Luke's Gospel?
- F. What does this mean for us today?

II. The Ox In the Ancient World

- A. The ox is in Ezekiel's vision
 - Their faces looked like this: Each of the four had the face of a man, and on the right side each had the face of a lion, and on the left the face of an ox; each also had the face of an eagle. Ezekiel 1:10
 - 1. Why these four creatures in the vision?
 - 2. In the ancient world these were all noble creatures
 - a. Man - crown of creation
 - b. Lion - King of the beasts
 - c. Eagle - greatest bird
 - d. Ox - greatest of the domesticated animals
- B. The ox - a symbol of strength and power
 - 1. Ox was a symbol of power throughout ancient world

In majesty he is like a firstborn bull; his horns are the horns of a wild ox. With them he will gore the nations, even those at the ends of the earth. Such are the ten thousands of Ephraim; such are the thousands of Manasseh." Deuteronomy 33:17

- 2. Picture of ox goring and flipping lion
 - 3. The ox was powerful and not to be trifled with!
Will the wild ox consent to serve you? Will he stay by your manger at night? ¹⁰ Can you hold him to the furrow with a harness? Will he till the valleys behind you? ¹¹ Will you rely on him for his great strength? Will you leave your heavy work to him? ¹² Can you trust him to bring in your grain and gather it to your threshing floor? Job 39:9-12
 - 4. The ox - a picture of power and might!
- C. The ox - a symbol of submission
 - 1. Ezekiel's vision - greatest domesticated creature
 - 2. Became a proverb for strength submitted to master
The ox knows his master, the donkey his owner's manger, but Israel does not know, my people do not understand. Isaiah 1:3
 - a. Donkey and ox - hard to tame - but they submit
 - b. But God's people do not - worse than ox & donkey
 - 3. Submitted strength brings blessing!
Where there are no oxen, the manger is empty, but from the strength of an ox comes an abundant harvest. Proverbs 14:4
 - D. The ox/bull was also used as a sacrificial animal

Then say to the Israelites: ‘Take a male goat for a sin offering, a calf and a lamb—both a year old and without defect—for a burnt offering, 4 and an ox and a ram for a fellowship offering to sacrifice before the Lord, together with a grain offering mixed with oil. For today the Lord will appear to you.’” Leviticus 9:3–4

E. The ox - a symbol of strength and blessing - if submitted

III. Jesus - The Ox of God

A. All the Gospels present Jesus’s strength

1. Of course we saw this in Mark the Lion
2. But we see it in all 4 Gospels - how could we not?

B. Key theme for Luke - Strong One submits to suffering

1. Luke begins with Zechariah at Temple (Jerome)

In the time of Herod king of Judea there was a priest named Zechariah, who belonged to the priestly division of Abijah; his wife Elizabeth was also a descendant of Aaron. Luke 1:5

- a. Priests - those who sacrifice animals
- b. Temple - the place of sacrifice
- c. Luke already letting us know sacrifice is key
- d. As cattle suffer and are sacrificed - so will Jesus

2. Jesus foretells his own suffering at key moment

And he said, “The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.” Luke 9:22

- a. Peter has just said Jesus is the Christ of God

b. Jesus immediately says what this means - rejection & suffering

3. Jesus’ journey to Jerusalem to suffer

As the time approached for him to be taken up to heaven, Jesus resolutely set out for Jerusalem.⁵² And he sent messengers on ahead, who went into a Samaritan village to get things ready for him;⁵³ but the people there did not welcome him, because he was heading for Jerusalem. Luke 9:51–53

- a. Jesus begins journey to Jerusalem - to suffer & die
- b. This is almost 2/3 of the Gospel of Luke!
- c. First thing - he suffers rejection at Samaria

4. Jesus speaks of His death as His suffering

And he said to them, “I have eagerly desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer.” Luke 22:15

- a. Play on words - Passover (**πάσχα**) and suffering (**πάσχω**)
- b. The Passover requires a suffering animal; Jesus will be suffering now
- c. In His death He will suffer in our place

5. The whole Scripture - Jesus will suffer for us

He said to them, “This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms.”⁴⁵ Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures.⁴⁶ He told them, “This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day,⁴⁷ and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. Luke 24:44–47

- a. This is the central message of Scripture!
- b. Jesus the King will be the Suffering Servant
- c. Jesus, the Great Ox of God will submit His strength to the yoke of suffering. The Great Lion of God will become the suffering Lamb of God - so we might live.
- d. The paradox - in His suffering is ultimate victory!
- e. This is the message we proclaim to the world

- a. As Jesus is talking about suffering - they talk of their own greatness
- b. But our 'greatness' is found in sacrificial service to others
- c. We must follow Jesus the Ox of God, allowing our strength to be strapped to the yoke of suffering and service. Only then can we inherit the Kingdom.

C. The Christian Life - the way of the Cross

1. Jesus - the Ox - strong, yet submitted to suffering
2. Christians are to walk in this way as well
 22 And he said, "The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life." 23 Then he said to them all: "If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. Luke 9:22-23
 - a. As Jesus suffers, so must we
 - b. It is impossible to follow Jesus and not walk the way of the cross
3. Christians must serve - not lord it over others
 Also a dispute arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest. 25 Jesus said to them, "The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors. 26 But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. Luke 22:24-26

IV. Applying the Word

- A. Do we see Jesus came, suffered, died and is raised for us?
 1. This is the central meaning of Scripture
 2. This is the central meaning of life
 3. Do you believe this? Have you embraced this gift?
 4. Believe and embrace it today!
- B. Do we proclaim Jesus' life, death, resurrection to others?
 1. We are to preach this to others - all of us
 2. It is not complicated - just not popular!
 3. Proclaim Jesus the Ox of God - strong, yet suffering for us
 4. Call others to repentance - & promise forgiveness!
- C. Have we submitted our strength to the yoke of God?
 1. Make no mistake - strength that is not submitted to God brings damage, like a wild bull in a china shop
 2. We must submit ourselves to the yoke of God - the cross, the way of suffering

3. To follow Christ and submit to God will bring rejection and suffering - there is no way around this

D. Our Passover Table of Suffering and Salvation

1. We now come to our Passover Table
2. This Table reminds us that our King suffered and died for us
3. It reminds us that Christ our Passover Lamb has been sacrificed for us
4. God's wrath has been quenched, and His blessing secured by Christ
5. Come, eat and drink and receive the blessings of God

Luke - The Ox

Luke 1:5; 9:22; 22:15; 24:44-47

March 15, 2015

Communion

Psalm 79:9

Teaching keywords: Lent, Christology, suffering, redemption, humility, service

“Help us, O God our Savior, for the glory of your name; deliver us and forgive our sins for your name's sake.” Psalms 79:9

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