

## Women in Luke's Gospel

- Which narratives that include women in Luke's Gospel do you remember and why do they resonate with you?
- The context – lives of women in C1 Palestine (Hellenistic/Roman/Jewish)
  - Ordinarily centred in the private sphere - household
  - Wealthy women - benefactors/patrons/matrons
  - Lower class/ poorest – in public places where men were considered shameful e.g. prostitutes, taverns, entertaining
- Luke and the Synoptics<sup>1</sup>

Narratives	Luke	Mark	Matthew
<b>Birth and Infancy Narratives</b>			
Promise of the birth of John the Baptist	Luke 1:5-25		
Annunciation to Mary	Luke 1:26-38		
Mary's visit to Elizabeth	Luke 1:39-56		
Birth of John the Baptist	Luke 1:57-80		
Birth of Jesus	Luke 2:1-7		Matt 1:18-25
Adoration of Infant	Luke 2:8-20		Matt 2:1-12
Circumcision/Presentation	Luke 2:21-38		
The boy Jesus in the Temple	Luke 2:41-52		
<b>Galilean Ministry</b>			
Elijah and the widow at Zaraphath	Luke 4:25-30		
Healing of Simon's mother-in-law	Luke 4:38-39	Mark 1:29-31	Matt 8:14-15
Widow of Nain	Luke 7:11-17		
Sinful woman	Luke 7:36-50		
Galilean women followers	Luke 8:2-3		
Jesus' family	Luke 8:19-21	Mark 3:31-35	Matt 12:46-50
Jairus' daughter and the woman with the haemorrhage	Luke 8:4-55	Mark 5:21-43	Matt 9:18-26
<b>Journey to Jerusalem</b>			
Mary and Martha	Luke 10:38-42		
Blessed is the womb that bore you	Luke 11:27-28		
Healing of the crippled woman	Luke 13:10-17		
Parable of the leaven	Luke 13:20-21		
If any one comes to me	Luke 14:25-26		
Parable of the lost coin	Luke 15:8-10		
Teaching about divorce	Luke 16:18	Mark 10:11-12	Matt 5:31-32 & 19:9
Parable of the widow	Luke 18:1-8		
Widow's mite	Luke 21:1-4	Mark 12:41-44	
<b>Passion and Resurrection</b>			
Daughters of Jerusalem	Luke 23:27-31		
Witnesses of the crucifixion	Luke 23:49	Mark 15:40-41	
Women at the grave and empty tomb	Luke 23:55-24:8	Mark 15:42-47 & 16 1-8	Matt 27:57-61 & 28:1-10

<sup>1</sup> Summary of Women found in Luke's gospel, including those present in Mark and Matthew, and those unique to Luke. From *Women in Luke's Gospel*, Edith Ashley, MPhil thesis, University of Sydney, 2000. <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/41229837.pdf>

➤ Two stories about Widows

<p><b>Luke 7. 11-17 – Widow of Nain</b>  <b>RCL Yr C, Proper 5: Mar 29-Jun 4</b></p>	<p><b>Luke 18. 1-8 – Widow and the Judge</b>  <b>RCL Yr C, Proper 24: Oct 16 – 22 inc.</b></p>
<p><sup>11</sup> Soon afterwards he went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a large crowd went with him. <sup>12</sup> As he approached the gate of the town, a man who had died was being carried out. He was his mother's only son, and she was a widow; and with her was a large crowd from the town. <sup>13</sup> When the Lord saw her, he had compassion for her and said to her, "Do not weep." <sup>14</sup> Then he came forward and touched the bier, and the bearers stood still. And he said, "Young man, I say to you, rise!" <sup>15</sup> The dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother. <sup>16</sup> Fear seized all of them; and they glorified God, saying, "A great prophet has risen among us!" and "God has looked favourably on his people!" <sup>17</sup> This word about him spread throughout Judea and all the surrounding country.</p>	<p><sup>1</sup> Then Jesus told them a parable about their need to pray always and not to lose heart. <sup>2</sup> He said, "In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor had respect for people. <sup>3</sup> In that city there was a widow who kept coming to him and saying, 'Grant me justice against my opponent.' <sup>4</sup> For a while he refused; but later he said to himself, 'Though I have no fear of God and no respect for anyone, <sup>5</sup> yet because this widow keeps bothering me, I will grant her justice, so that she may not wear me out by continually coming.' <sup>6</sup> And the Lord said, "Listen to what the unjust judge says. <sup>7</sup> And will not God grant justice to his chosen ones who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long in helping them? <sup>8</sup> I tell you, he will quickly grant justice to them. And yet, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?"</p>

➤ Widows in C1/Luke's Gospel – traditional and counter-cultural

Hebrew *almanah*, rooted in the word *alem* meaning 'unable to speak' / Greek *chera*, roots meaning 'without' or 'left'

- Traditional: silent, dependent on male relatives, economically vulnerable
- Counter-cultural: demonstrated to be strong and visible in public
- Recipients of special care by God – community obligation
- Many widows in early Christian communities – idealised lifestyle  
Honoured, had fulfilled conventional expectations of a woman's life, independent, able to lead a holy life e.g. prayer

➤ Golden strands of Luke's Gospel

- Which characters are we drawn to and why?
- What similarities and differences are there with the lives of those we know today?
- How are these texts 'good news' today?