

## **LUKE'S GOSPEL IN POETRY**

By Jeannie Kendall

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### **Luke 1:1-4**

#### **The voice of Luke**

I am no writer.  
Words are not my medium,  
But stories are.  
I listen to my patients  
Hear their pain and fear,  
Do my best to diagnose,  
And, if I can,  
Alleviate their suffering.

This story  
I have to share.  
My own Physician  
Has made his analysis  
Of all that ails me  
And brought me  
Wholeness  
I had never known.

### **Luke 1:5-25**

#### **The voice of Zechariah**

I felt less of a man.

Not because I could not  
Give her a child –  
Though that was painful  
Beyond explanation.

No, it was because  
I could not reach her.  
Each month  
I saw her retreat,  
Withdraw into  
Some internal

Place of pain,  
Somewhere  
I could not decide  
If I was unwelcome  
Or simply unable to go  
Into its depths.

But I had my work;  
A place to feel worthy,  
Somewhere  
To drown out  
My inner voices  
Of accusation.

So when that one-time  
Invitation came  
To burn the incense  
I left, trying to disguise  
My relief at a respite  
From the shroud of sadness  
Encompassing our home  
And the sense of failure  
Which was nipping  
At my heels  
Like a wild dog.

And as I spoke  
My words of farewell  
I little realised  
They were the last words  
I would speak to her  
For many months,  
And that God was about  
To change the world  
Not just for us  
But for everyone,  
And for all time.

### **Luke 1:5-25**

#### **The voice of Elizabeth**

In the end

It is easier  
To let go  
Of hope,  
To simply uncurl  
Your fingers,  
And gently  
Let it drop  
Into the abyss  
Of might-have-beens,  
Feeling its absence  
Almost  
As a kind of peace.

And now he stands  
Gesturing like a madman  
Or a fool.  
Yet somehow  
I see the light of heaven  
In his eyes  
And I wonder  
If I have the courage  
To let hope  
Be reborn.

#### [Luke 1:39-45](#)

##### **The voice of Elizabeth**

Just for a moment  
We were simply two women  
Sharing our news.

Two miracle babies  
In such different ways,  
Sources of equal joy  
And apprehension.

There was heartbreak past  
For me  
And still to come  
For her.

But first,  
We were simply two women  
Sharing our news.

Just for a moment.

#### [Luke 1:57-80](#)

##### **The voice of Zechariah**

My boy:  
Words I thought  
I would never say.  
A day I thought  
I would never see.

Our John:  
Yet not ours:  
Even the name  
Not of our choosing  
Yet we do not mind,  
Glad simply  
To be a part of God's plan.

God's spokesperson:  
And as he grows  
And I see the Spirit  
In his eyes  
I fear for his future:  
An audacious prophet  
Is so rarely  
Welcome  
And truth  
Does not always  
Bring acceptance.

#### [Luke 2:1-7](#)

##### **The voice of Joseph**

She is in pain  
And I can't help her.  
The birthing women  
Speak encouragement  
And I must stand aside  
For this mystery  
Which only they  
Can fully comprehend.

But I have been  
In some ways  
At a distance  
Since she came,

So tearful,  
To break the news  
I still struggle  
To understand.

So as our future  
And, if I heard right,  
That of the whole world,  
Hangs in the balance  
In the fragility of childbirth,  
I am on my knees  
Begging God  
To keep them safe  
And give me strength to be  
All that He will ask  
Of me.

#### [Luke 2:1-20](#)

##### **A shepherd**

Mundane.  
That was my life.  
Punctuated by the rhythms  
Of day and night  
And the moods of the sheep  
As the weather changed.  
I was not discontent,  
Yet sensed within  
A gnawing questioning,  
A wondering  
If there was more.

And then one night  
A glory lit the skies  
And an encounter  
With a tiny baby  
Meant I saw my world  
Through different eyes.

#### [Luke 2:22-35](#)

##### **Simeon**

I was old,  
And hope  
Was dwindling.

Had I misheard?

Who was I  
To see the moment  
Of God's choosing?

Yet I was there,  
As much fuelled  
By a stubborn  
Holding on to Him  
As any faith.  
And, for a gracious God,  
Being there  
Was enough.

I could  
Have missed  
The moment  
For so many reasons:  
Especially my own  
Dullness of spirit  
Or their  
Simple ordinariness.

But God  
Nudged me again  
And so  
I found myself  
Gazing  
Into the new-born eyes  
Of His Messiah.

#### [Luke 2:36-38](#)

##### **The voice of Anna**

I had a choice  
The day  
My Abner died.  
I could grieve  
With God,  
Or without Him.  
And so I chose  
To weep  
And rage  
And, at times,  
Almost despair,  
But never  
Turn my back  
On my

One Hope.  
I took my grief  
To worship  
Until one day  
The years  
Of pain  
Were eclipsed  
By a glimpse  
Of God's  
Amazing plan.

### [Luke 2:41-52](#)

#### **Mary**

I had somehow  
Still thought of him  
As "my boy".  
I had nursed him  
At my breast,  
Tended his scraped knees,  
And loved him  
With every fibre  
Of my being.

But that day,  
Thinking  
I had lost him  
Then finding him  
Debating  
With the rabbis,  
I was reminded  
That he would never  
Be only mine.

### [Luke 3:1-20](#)

#### **John**

My parents told me  
I was a miracle child  
Set apart from before  
I was born  
To serve God,  
To speak for him,  
To end the long years  
Of silence.

At times  
It is a heavy load  
To carry.  
And yet  
Within my soul  
Burns a passion  
That will not  
Be silenced.

### [Luke 3:21-22](#)

#### **John**

It feels all wrong.  
I've known him  
All these years  
And sensed  
Something unique.  
My baptism, surely,  
Is not  
For him.  
Yet he stood there  
In Jordan mud  
As if he was  
Like all the others.

As if he was  
Like me.

### [Luke 3:23-38](#)

#### **All of us**

Names.  
Lots of names.  
Names  
We would not know  
If they were not  
Listed here  
With care.

And  
My name,  
Your name,  
Find  
Their place too  
Every bit as much  
In the plan of God.

There are

No exceptions.

[Luke 4:1-13](#)

**A disciple**

At first  
I could not understand  
Why he told us.  
After all  
It was before  
We met him,  
And what did we  
Need to know  
About his inner battles.

We all have our demons,  
Don't we?  
I know I do.

But this,  
This was different.

As he talked  
The air became still  
And none of us spoke  
To ask him questions –  
Not even honest Thomas.

Instead we were silenced  
By the shadows of pain –  
Somehow remembered  
From the past  
And yet also feared  
For the future -  
That, even as he held our gaze,  
Clouded his eyes.

And we knew  
That though the lure  
Of desire, of power,  
Of spectacle and celebrity,  
Lay with us all  
This struggle  
Was more than personal holiness  
But a battle  
Of more cosmic proportions.

[Luke 4:13-30](#)

**Bystander at Nazareth**

It was curiosity that drove me there.  
Joseph's boy made good, I heard,  
A preacher of all things.

So I stood on the fringes,  
Never being comfortable with religion:  
Too many rules, too many experts  
Who did not seem to live  
The way they told the rest of us  
We needed to.

He was different, Jesus.  
I'll give him that.  
He held my attention and there was...  
Well, something singular in his eyes  
That I had never seen before.

But then he blew it,  
Talking of others, outsiders,  
Who would be invited in  
To be a part of God's plan,  
And I felt a chill wind  
Blow through  
The hot and crowded synagogue.  
No, Jesus, I thought,  
You've lost the crowd now,  
Gone just one step too far.  
And so I slipped away.

I heard it turned quite nasty  
In the end.  
Who knows  
What will become of him.

But me...  
Against all odds  
Something I could not name  
Had stirred in me that day  
That somehow  
Would not be stifled.

And so I wonder too  
What will become of me?

[Luke 4:31-37](#)

**The man in the synagogue**

I cannot trace  
The origin,  
The moment I began  
To lose myself,  
Everything I was,  
To some nameless being  
Who seemed to take  
The very essence  
Of me  
Until I could not recognise  
The person  
I had become  
Or the things I did.

I have no idea  
What drew me  
To the synagogue  
That day.  
Hope  
Had long since died.

Yet somehow  
Some tiny fragment  
Longed for the goodness  
I could  
Just glimpse there  
Like a faded memory.

I do not  
Fully understand  
Who he is  
Or what he did.

But this I know:  
Now I am free.

[Luke 4:38-44](#)

**Us**

Servanthood  
Not popularity.  
Obedience  
Not public acclaim  
Calling

Not approval  
God's path  
Not ours.

[Luke 4:38-44](#)

**Peter's mother in law**

What awful timing.  
Peter -  
God bless  
My son in law  
He's an...  
Interesting character -  
Invites some rabbi for tea.

Well I want  
To show best  
Capernaum hospitality  
And here I am  
Not knowing  
Which way's up  
Feeling like  
A mangled fish.

So there  
I was  
Stewing  
With frustration  
And - horrors -  
In walks  
The rabbi himself  
As though  
He owned  
The place.

Somehow  
The protests  
Stopped before  
They could  
Be spoken  
As his  
Cool touch  
Changed everything.

Now all  
I want to do  
Is serve him

[Luke 5:1-11](#)

**Peter**

Everyone  
Is an expert  
Aren't they?

I've spent  
My whole life  
On that lake  
And yet  
Some rabbi  
Thinks  
He knows best.

It was not  
The last time  
Jesus  
Would show me  
I was not  
The man  
I thought  
I was.

[Luke 5:12-16](#)

**The leper**

I was alone  
And desperate,  
Terrified  
For my future:  
Increasing pain,  
Strangling loneliness  
All I could see.  
I was not sure  
I wanted  
To live.

Then  
A whisper  
Of a wonder-worker.  
Just a rumour,  
But any hope  
For the despairing  
Is worth  
Grasping.

So that day  
I was unashamed  
To lie in the dust.

Face down  
I was incredulous  
That he would  
Touch me.  
Yet even  
As I basked  
In the marvel  
Of blissful, forgotten,  
Human contact  
I realised  
An even  
Greater miracle  
Had taken place  
And I was clean.

[Luke 5:17-26](#)

**Friend of the paralysed man**

Friendship.  
That is  
What it was.  
Pure and simple.  
Friendship.

We'd watched  
As he became  
A shadow  
Of the man  
We had known.

We'd seen  
His pain  
Watching helpless  
As his children  
Played  
While he lay  
Trapped  
In body  
And – we somehow sensed –  
In mind.

So yes,  
We were reckless.

Some would say  
Pushy and rude.

But I would  
Do it again  
In a heartbeat.

For friendship.  
Pure and simple.  
Friendship.

### [Luke 5:27-32](#)

#### **The voice of Levi**

I was a hard man.  
Or so they thought.  
No option  
But to steel myself  
Look tough  
Lest the mockery  
And – even worse  
The threats -  
Would stop me from  
Feeding us all  
The only way  
That I could find.

So I sat there,  
Day after day,  
As they spat,  
And ridiculed,  
And jeered,  
Their contempt for me  
Written clearly  
Across their faces.

No-one,  
For a long time  
Had met my eye.

Until he did  
And I saw  
Not disdain  
But something  
It took me a moment  
To recognise.

It was love.

### [Luke 5:33-39](#)

#### **My voice/our voices**

Sometimes, Jesus  
I am content  
To just patch things over.

I want to take  
Just a small piece  
Of your gospel  
As if that  
Could cover  
The gaping holes  
That sometimes  
Are there  
In my heart,  
Fearing  
Your total makeover  
Will be too much  
For my timid soul.  
So today God,  
Which is all  
I can be sure of,  
Please don't let me  
Be prepared  
To take only  
A little of your  
Good news.

Help me  
To be brave  
And let you  
Make me new.

### [Luke 6:1-11](#)

#### **The man with the shrivelled hand**

Rules.  
I always liked them.  
Guidelines,  
I thought,  
Keep us safe.  
They are predictable.  
You know where you are.  
No nasty surprises.  
Clear parameters.



So, my whole life  
I have been a rule-keeper.  
Stayed inside the lines.

But, that day,  
I was very glad  
That Jesus cared  
More for me  
Than all the rubrics  
That might  
Have stopped him  
Making me whole.

[Luke 6:12-16](#)

**Judas**

He chose me.  
I can't believe he chose me.  
A southerner  
Among all these northerners.  
Will I fit in?

I've been hoping  
For years  
For the Messiah  
To bring  
An end  
To Roman rule.  
Is he the one?

I'm ready to fight.

[Luke 6:17-49](#)

**Any of us**

Walking the way  
That Jesus taught  
Is hard.

Sometimes  
I want a simpler way  
Where I can  
Love the loveable  
And at best  
Ignore the rest.

A way

Where I can condemn  
Those who  
Have the same faults  
I readily accept in myself.

A way  
Where my heart  
Did not need to be  
So pure  
Or soft.

But that  
Is not  
What Jesus said.

[Luke 7:1-10](#)

**The centurion**

I had found myself  
A stranger  
In a peculiar land  
Sent here  
Because those  
Were my orders.  
But as time passed  
I found myself  
Strangely drawn  
To something –  
I could not discern what –  
As though  
I was being pulled  
Towards  
A warmth and light  
My army life  
Had never possessed.

And then  
My servant,  
Who was  
More like a son,  
Was ill.

I'd heard  
Of Jesus  
And I sensed  
From every report  
I heard

That he possessed  
An authority  
Even greater  
Than mine,  
And much  
More significant.  
And so I sent  
A message.

And,  
With the healing,  
Realised I may  
Have found  
New orders  
To follow.

### [Luke 7:11-17](#)

#### **The widow at Nain**

My boy  
Is dead  
And with him  
All my hope.

I drag my weary feet  
And my battered soul  
Along the path  
To what will be  
His final resting place.  
There is no comfort  
For me now.

And then this stranger  
Approaches  
And says  
“Don’t cry”

I brace myself  
The anger  
About to tumble  
From me  
To spit  
My fury at God,  
And life,  
And death.  
Yet something  
In the love

So evident  
In his eyes  
Halted me  
In my tracks  
Before he  
Stopped  
The bearers.

The tears flow now  
As I hold my son  
And words  
Of gratitude  
And wonder  
Do not seem  
Nearly enough.

### [Luke 7:18-38](#)

#### **The voice of John the Baptist**

It is dark here.  
Damp walls  
The edges  
Of my prison,  
The air stale,  
The odours foul.

But what really eats  
At my despondent soul  
Is none of those,  
But doubt.

I was so sure  
Standing with him  
In the Jordan  
That my unusual life  
Was leading  
To that one moment.

I have to know.  
And only he  
Can tell me.

Is he the one?  
And either way  
What part am I to play  
In God’s mysterious plan?

[Luke 7:39-50](#)

**The voice of Simon the Pharisee**

I have always  
Studied hard,  
Kept the rules,  
And my reward  
Is to be admired,  
To turn heads  
When I pray.

And so  
Of course  
I needed  
To add  
This latest rabbi  
To my dinner party list  
And it was important  
That all went well.  
It was an honour  
For him  
To be invited  
And I was bathing  
In the glow  
Of my significance.

Until this woman  
Broke the rules  
Ruining my well-ordered meal  
With adoration  
Of the most flagrant kind.

I could not understand  
Her adulation  
And even  
When he spoke  
It was as though  
They lived in a world  
So very different  
From mine.

[Luke 7:39-50](#)

**The voice of the woman**

I have always  
Been the one  
On the outside:  
Heads turning

As I passed,  
The men  
With disdain,  
The women  
With contempt.

Until the day  
He saw me in the crowd  
And held my gaze  
As he spoke of love  
And forgiveness  
And I found  
A new start  
I could never  
Have envisaged.

So, caring not  
What others thought  
I poured out  
My worship  
And heard  
The words  
Which signalled  
My new life.

[Luke 8:1-21](#)

**All of us**

I so want  
To be good soil,  
The bright light.  
Yet so often  
I can be dark, stony,  
Heart-worn,  
And unwilling  
To be softened  
By the gentle rain  
Of the Spirit.

Or, at other times,  
Everything of God's goodness  
Is simply snatched away  
By busyness and distraction.

Lord,  
Keep me pliable.  
Not hardened

But hearing.

[Luke 8:22-25](#)

**The voice of a disciple**

I am unsure  
Of what I feel.  
He is  
My friend,  
Who laughs  
And eats  
With us,  
Gets tired  
As we do  
And is sometimes sad.

Yet here  
He somehow stands  
Taller than his height  
Commanding  
In every sense  
As the waves  
Do his bidding.

I love him.  
But I am also  
A little afraid.

[Luke 8:26-39](#)

**Legion**

I was alone  
In the darkness.  
Surrounded by death  
Which would  
Have been welcome:  
A silence  
From the screaming  
Of my mind  
And spirit  
That seemed  
Never to end.

At first  
When he came  
I wanted him  
To leave.

But then, somehow,  
I was drawn  
To something  
In his eyes  
I could not name.

He set me free.

I wanted  
To be  
With him  
To feel safe  
In his presence.

But instead  
He tells me  
I have work  
To do.

[Luke 8:40-56](#) **(the first in a trilogy)**

**Voice of the father**

My daughter,  
My girl,  
Is dying.

Nothing else matters:  
My whole world  
Is in jeopardy:  
The light  
Is eclipsed  
By this one fact,  
By this impending end  
To everything  
That counts.

I have held her  
As the life began  
To ebb away.  
Now, I will  
Humble myself  
At his feet,  
In one last-ditch attempt  
To hold on  
To hope.  
I am not sure  
What I believe

Of if Jesus  
Can help.

I only know  
That I  
Must try.

**Luke 8:40-56 (the second in a trilogy)**

**Voice of the woman**

It had been twelve years:  
Over four thousand exhausted days,  
More than ninety six thousand wretched  
hours.  
My body leaking all vitality  
And sapping my spirit  
As I trudged wearily through each day  
Praying for a relief which never came  
So that, in the end,  
I despised that part of me  
Which was meant to bring life.

Worse even  
Than the draining away of hope  
Was the humiliation by those men  
Year after year  
Claiming they could help  
But bringing me only shame:  
Cheeks burning as I looked  
To the empty sky:  
no rescue from their intrusive hands  
And eyes which either pitied  
Or lingered just a little too long.

Hope had long since seeped away  
The day I heard tales of the rabbi.  
But I had nothing to lose.  
And so, knowing I breached every  
convention,  
And the law of a God I no longer trusted,  
I reached out to touch Him  
And knew at once  
That everything had changed.

But healing became terror

As He exposed my desperate encounter  
And I waited  
For the rebuke  
That would reignite my disgrace.

But it never came.  
And so I told Him the truth  
And I knew He saw  
Beyond my faltering tale  
To the broken reality  
My life had become.

And, in return  
For my abject honesty  
Gifted to this stranger  
He spoke words of wholeness  
Going beyond the healing of my body  
To free me to be  
The woman  
That I was born to be.

**Luke 8:40-56 (the third in a trilogy)**

**Voice of the father**

He came.

There is  
Nothing more  
I can say.

When all hope  
Was lost  
He came.

**Luke 9:1-9**

**The voice of Herod**

I am confused.  
My people bring me rumours:  
And I am unsure  
If they are loyal  
Or plotting  
Against me,  
Or even if  
What they say is true.

I had rid myself

Of that wretched prophet  
Yet still John's words  
Echo in my mind  
And rob me of sleep.

Who is this Jesus?  
And what will I need  
To do with him?

#### [Luke 9:10-17](#)

##### **Voice of a disciple**

At first  
I was resentful  
Of the intrusion,  
Wanting time alone  
With Jesus.

Reconciled, I realised  
He does not think as I do  
Seeing something different  
In the crowd –  
Not an interruption  
But another opportunity  
To love and to provide  
Their needs.

And so,  
From the tiniest provision,  
A miracle  
Was made.

#### [Luke 9:18-27](#)

##### **Peter's voice**

It was  
Just a moment:  
The most fleeting revelation  
That he was  
Everything  
We had been waiting for,  
And suddenly  
All that  
We had seen and heard  
Fell into the most  
Wondrous place.

But then

He spoke of suffering,  
Rejection and death.  
And I was  
Not ready  
To hear.

For him,  
For me,  
I want a path  
Without  
A cross.

#### [Luke 9:28-36](#)

##### **Peter's voice**

I am tired.  
Following Jesus is hard.  
Very hard  
And this mountain  
Was tough to climb.

I love him,  
But so often  
I do not understand.

So now,  
I am fighting sleep,  
Yet something  
Has pulled me back  
To wakefulness.

Enfolded  
In a glory  
I can barely grasp  
I want  
To hold on  
To this moment  
To keep it captured.  
Something  
Just for us.

I am in awe.  
I cannot comprehend  
Who he really is  
And what this voice  
Could mean.

And so  
Though so often  
I speak -  
At times too soon -  
This time,  
When we go back down,  
I will keep silence.

[Luke 9:37-43](#)

**The voice of the father**

My boy.  
My beautiful boy.  
Ravaged  
Month after month,  
Year after year,  
By some invisible enemy.

It has been so frightening  
And I have felt  
Utterly helpless:  
Not able to save him.  
I am his father  
And I cannot protect him.

I hoped  
Jesus' disciples  
Could help him.  
But they  
Were as powerless  
As me.

But Jesus -  
That was a different story.  
One word  
From him  
And my boy,  
My beautiful boy  
Is returned to me  
Restored to life.

[Luke 9:43-50](#)

**All of our voices**

Loving actual children  
Is in some ways easier  
Than loving the child  
Within both each of us

And those around us.

That inner child  
Is so often  
Hurt, bewildered,  
Fractious, awkward  
Angry or selfish.

Yet that child too  
Jesus accepts  
And so there is the challenge  
That we must too.

[Luke 9:51-62](#)

**Our voices**

Sometimes, Jesus  
The cost  
Of following you  
Just seems  
Too high.

You require  
Too much  
Of our frail  
Selfish egos  
Who want to be right,  
Want to bask  
In our superiority  
Because we  
Have followed you  
And others  
Have not,  
Forgetting  
It is all  
Your grace.

[Luke 10:1-23](#)

**The voice of a disciple**

I could not wait  
To return to Jesus,  
Tell him  
What I had done  
And seen.

I had felt  
Special

And powerful.  
Part  
Of God's plan.

But that,  
He told us,  
Was not the  
Most important thing.

### [Luke 10:25-37](#)

#### **The voice of the expert in the law**

So many  
Have misunderstood.  
I love God,  
I love his law,  
I have spent  
My whole life  
Trying  
To get it right.

I could see  
Something different  
In this rabbi:  
A quality  
I could not  
Quite name  
But which  
Drew me to him.

Justify myself?  
Yes,  
That has been  
My life long quest:  
To be acceptable  
To the God  
I worship  
And sometimes  
Fear.

I'm thinking still  
About his reply  
To me,  
Wondering  
What it means  
For my life,  
For us –

God's chosen people.

As yet  
I do not know  
But I cannot forget  
The light  
In his eyes  
Or the way  
He held  
My gaze,  
Seeing something  
In me  
I could not yet  
See in myself.

### [Luke 10-38-42](#)

#### **The voices of the two sisters – or perhaps us**

*Mary:* I have always envied Martha.  
She is so practical:  
Seeing what needs doing  
In ways I never could.  
She loves Jesus  
Just as much as I do  
And wants him  
To be looked after  
With the best care we can lavish.  
Sometimes though, when she is tired,  
I wish she would look after herself  
And realise we value her more than all her  
service.  
She is not always good at that.

*Martha:* I have always envied Mary.  
She has this inbuilt sense  
Of what God is saying and doing:  
She is so deeply connected  
With things which the rest of us  
Cannot always see.  
She loves Jesus  
Just as much as I do  
And wants to hear  
Everything he wants to teach.  
Sometimes though, she can be single-  
minded  
And forget the rest of us.



I wish she could see  
How much I learn from her  
Even at moments when I may not seem to.

*Both:* No matter what though, we know  
Jesus sees the very best in us  
And loves us both the same.

### [Luke 11:1-13](#)

#### **The voice of a disciple**

I can see him now.  
There was such a stillness  
Yet such a power  
As though he could see  
A world that we could not,  
That for him to pray  
Was as natural as breathing.

And so we hung on  
To every word  
He taught us.

Yet still  
My words feel useless  
And I so easily  
Give up the struggle.  
Or, disappointed  
When there seems to be  
No answer,  
I stop trying  
Until, in time,  
Love draws me back.

### [Luke 11:14-28](#)

#### **Voice of the woman**

This young rabbi  
Is like no-one  
I have ever heard.  
His authority,  
His wisdom,  
And something about him  
I cannot  
Even name.

I am envious  
Of his mother.  
What a son to have!

I could not  
Help but call out  
What I felt.  
But he just turned  
My words  
Back to our need  
To hear God's Word  
And follow him.

If God,  
Who I cannot see,  
Is like this rabbi,  
Who I can,  
Well then –  
Perhaps I will.

### [Luke 11:29-54](#)

#### **The voice of the Pharisee**

I have spent my life  
On God's Law.  
Mosaic Law, yes,  
But also all  
The wise words  
Of our esteemed rabbis.

But it was not  
Dry academia.  
I wanted to be right  
With God and,  
In my youth,  
I had started  
So well.

Yet with age,  
And yes, I confess,  
An insidious need  
For status  
And recognition  
Which had  
Crept up on me unawares,

Somehow  
My search for God  
Had become  
A quest  
For respectability,  
A papering over  
Of cracks to which  
I did not wish to admit  
And certainly  
Did not want  
To address.

This young upstart  
Has held up a mirror  
Into which  
I cannot bear  
To gaze  
And so he,  
And it,  
Must be destroyed.

[Luke 12:1-12](#)

**The voice of any of us**

I don't like  
The idea  
That my every thought,  
Every rash judgement,  
Every unholy emotion,  
Every foolish word,  
Will be broadcast  
On some kind  
Of cosmic screen.

And yet,  
As the shame  
Threatens  
To overwhelm my soul,  
I remember  
That the one  
Who spoke those words  
Took the path  
To Golgotha  
For me  
And the screen  
Has only the images

Of His grace.

[Luke 12:13-21](#)

**Voice of the man in the crowd**

I did not think  
Of myself as greedy.  
I just wanted  
What I believed  
Was mine.  
I felt...  
Entitled.

So I was stung  
By his reply.  
But then  
I questioned.  
Why did it matter?  
And where  
Did my security lie,  
In God,  
Or in possessions?

I am not sure  
That I can give  
An answer.

[Luke 12:22-34](#)

**The voice of a disciple**

Do not worry?  
Really, Jesus?  
Not worry about  
The family  
I have left behind  
To follow you,  
The fishing business  
I've left in  
Someone else's hands?

Not worry  
About  
Where following you  
Will lead?

Not worry  
About  
The sense of darkness

That seems  
To be gathering  
Around you?

Life,  
You say,  
Is more than  
Food,  
Or clothes,  
Or what I see.

But that is just it.  
This *is* what I see.  
The future  
Is just a blur  
Of hope  
And your promises.

So Jesus  
Help me trust  
That you  
Will show the way  
And keep me safe.

[Luke 12:35-59](#)  
**The voice of Peter**  
Oh Jesus.  
I love you.  
I really do.

But so much  
Of the time  
I don't understand you.

[Luke 13:1-9](#)  
**Our voices**  
God, the eternal vine-keeper,  
We are so grateful  
That you will wait,  
Give us time,  
Look for  
The tiniest sign of growth,  
Of change,  
Of turning to you.

You never want

To rip up  
And destroy.

Yet you do,  
With utmost clarity,  
Call us to change.

[Luke 13:10-17](#)  
**The voice of the crippled woman**

Eighteen years.  
Two hundred and sixteen months.  
Five thousand, one hundred and eighty-  
four hours.  
More minutes than I want to count,  
Every one of them a lifetime,  
Eyes pinned to the ground,  
Hugging my children bringing pain,  
My existence a prison  
From which I longed release.

And then, one touch from Jesus  
And I was healed.

What do I care  
For their discussions of theology?  
What I know,  
With every fibre of my being  
Is that Jesus set me free  
And gave me back my life.

[Luke 13:18-30](#)  
**My voice**  
Today, writing this,  
I am making bread.  
And, as I read  
The words of Jesus  
And think again  
Of the impossible task  
Of conjuring phrases  
To express his majesty,  
The dough has grown.

I simply left it  
And it did  
What it always does,

Though at any one moment,  
If I look  
There is nothing  
To see.

So God's work in me  
And in His world  
May not always  
Be visible  
But it is certain.

#### [Luke 13:31-35](#)

##### **Voice of a disciple**

They have warned him.  
If he will not stop  
His life is under threat.

He is so desolate.  
Yet not for himself  
But for the city.  
His love pours out  
With every  
Syllable and sigh  
As if his pain  
Can find  
No other expression.  
His heart  
Is broken  
For Jerusalem  
And perhaps,  
I dimly sense,  
For so much more.

#### [Luke 14:1-14](#)

##### **The voice of the Pharisee**

Rabbi Jesus,  
You confuse me.  
I want  
To understand you  
But I don't.

If I am not  
The sum total  
Of my rule-keeping  
To please God,  
And the esteem

Of others  
Then who am I?

Can the poor and lame  
You want me  
To invite and welcome  
Bring me status  
And admiration?

You are so different  
From everything I am  
And I am drawn  
To you  
Yet fear  
The ways  
You are asking me  
To change.

#### [Luke 14:15-24](#)

##### **All of our voices**

Excuses, excuses.  
We are so very good  
At excuses.  
We are too busy  
To gather together,  
Too tired  
To seek you,  
Too distracted  
To pray.

Somehow  
There is always  
Something  
Which catches  
Our attention  
More  
Than you.

#### [Luke 14:25-35](#)

##### **All of our voices**

How can we  
Count the cost, Jesus,  
When we don't know  
What it will be?

We cannot see

The many moments  
When we must choose  
Your way  
Instead  
Of ours.

We cannot imagine  
The curve balls  
That life  
Will throw  
And how  
You will  
Challenge us  
To walk  
Through them  
With you.

You do not  
Show us  
At once  
The ways  
You need us  
To change  
Lest we become  
Discouraged.

All we  
Can do  
Is say  
That today  
We choose  
To follow you  
And live  
In the safety  
Of your grace.

#### [Luke 15:1-10](#)

##### **Voice of a tax collector**

I love listening to Jesus.  
Somehow, with him  
I sense  
A new start  
Is possible.

Today  
He talks about

A lost sheep,  
A lost coin,  
And, at last,  
I begin to hope  
That I have  
Been found.

#### [Luke 15:11-32](#)

##### **Voice of the other lost brother**

My renegade brother  
Is back.  
The smell  
Of the fatted calf  
Is a stench  
In my throat  
And the dancing  
Is too much  
To bear.

I can't forget  
The sight  
Of my father  
Running  
To greet him,  
Embracing him  
Even, to my horror,  
Honouring him.

What about me?  
What about all  
My faithful service,  
My labouring  
Year after year  
To earn  
His approval?

I cannot  
Welcome him.  
His own fault  
Brought him  
To this state.

No, however much  
My father pleads,  
I will not celebrate  
This sinner's return.

[Luke 16:1-18](#)

**All our voices**

We all think  
That money  
Does not matter  
Until  
We do not  
Have enough.

Until  
The bills mount  
And arrive  
Coloured red.

Until  
Christmas  
Is a strain  
Not a joy.

Until food  
Or heating  
Is the choice  
We face.

Lord,  
Today  
Bless those  
Who do  
Not have enough.

And help me  
To be grateful  
For what  
You have  
Provided.

[Luke 19:19-31](#)

**Voice in the crowd**

I don't understand.  
I'm drawn to Jesus  
And sometimes  
I love  
That his teaching  
Is like nothing  
That I have never heard.

Yet, at others,  
I am frightened.  
He speaks  
With such certainty  
And demands  
Nothing less  
Than everything.  
Not just everything  
I own but  
It seems,  
My life.

[Luke 17:1-10](#)

**Our voices**

Forgiveness.

An easy word to say  
And, sometimes,  
So very hard  
To do,  
When the hurt is deep  
And the scars  
Still give us pain.

But it is always  
The way of Jesus  
Even if it is  
The longest  
Of roads  
And we can only  
Take one step  
In the right direction.

[Luke 17:11-19](#)

**The voice of the Samaritan leper**

They were my companions  
These Israelites,  
Divided in nation  
But united  
In this vile disease.

Yet, as we made our way  
To the priest  
And our skin cleared  
They simply continued on.

And so  
We were divided again  
As they went home  
And I returned  
To Jesus  
To give him thanks  
For my life restored.

[Luke 17:20-37](#)

**Voice of a disciple, and us**

I don't understand, Jesus.  
What will your kingdom look like?  
When will it come?

We seem so far away.  
Violence lurks  
Children suffer  
The world looks  
Out of kilter.

When, Lord?  
When?

[Luke 18:1-8](#)

**Our voices**

Sometimes,  
I think,  
We misunderstand  
Jesus.

We think that,  
Like this judge,  
If we badger God,  
Bother him enough,  
He might just,  
Begrudgingly,  
Grant us  
Our request.

I'm not sure  
That this  
Is what  
Jesus meant.

Yes,

I think  
He wanted us  
To persist.

But not because  
God is unwilling  
Or reluctant,  
But rather  
Because  
In the process,  
We are changed.

[Luke 18:9-14](#)

**Our voices**

It is so easy  
To be a Pharisee.

To look around  
At a broken world  
And think  
That we are better  
Than the person  
Whose sin  
Is so much  
More visible  
Than our own.

But God  
Sees the truth  
And calls us  
To compare ourselves  
Only with Jesus.

And,  
In humility,  
To fall at His feet  
And beg forgiveness.

[Luke 18:15-17](#)

**The voice of a child**

I like Jesus.  
He understands me.  
He welcomes me.  
He is so pleased  
Just to be with me.  
He loves me.

And so  
I want  
To be  
With him.

If only  
Other grown-ups  
Could be  
The same.

### [Luke 18:18-30](#)

#### **The voice of the rich young ruler**

I want  
To follow Jesus.  
I really do.

But...

Everything?  
Can't I  
Follow you  
Jesus  
And give  
Just a little?

Your demands  
Are just  
Too great.

I want  
To follow Jesus.  
I really  
Do.

But...

Perhaps  
I will  
Another day...

### [Luke 18:31-34](#)

#### **The voice of Judas**

Why  
This talk  
Of death,  
Jesus?

No, no.

You will be riding  
In majesty  
Triumphant  
Over the Romans.

No death  
For you.  
Of that  
At least  
I am sure.

### [Luke 18:35-43](#)

#### **Voice of the blind man**

My years  
Of darkness  
Ended  
By Jesus.

How can I  
Do anything  
But praise  
Him?

### [Luke 19:1-10](#)

#### **The voice of Zacchaeus**

On the edge.  
That is where  
I have always been.  
On the edge.  
Not fitting in  
With the good people  
The acceptable people,  
The ones  
I was told  
God smiles at.

Then Jesus came,  
Not with a frown  
Of disapproval  
But with  
The broadest  
Of grins  
And an invitation



To draw in  
To the centre.

And to find,  
The most glorious  
Of all discoveries:  
That I was loved.

#### [Luke 19:11-27](#)

##### **Our voices**

It seems  
To me  
We misunderstand  
What kind  
Of king  
We serve.

So, like the servant  
In the story  
We are afraid  
To fail  
And so miss  
The chance  
To serve  
From the love  
That first  
We have received.

#### [Luke 19:28-40](#)

##### **A voice from the crowd**

“Hooray! Hooray!”

I shout with the crowd.  
I am not sure  
What we  
Are celebrating  
But the mood  
Is joyous.

And so  
Unsure  
Of what it means  
I too  
Will shout  
My praise.

#### [Luke 19:41-44](#)

##### **The voice of a disciple**

Jesus is weeping.  
Not gentle tears  
But wracking sobs  
As he looks at the city.  
And I wonder  
What he is seeing  
Which has so broken  
His heart.

#### [Luke 19:45-48](#)

##### **The voice of a seller**

How dare  
This upstart rabbi  
Tell me  
What to do?

Comes overturning  
Everything I do  
As if  
He knows better  
What people need  
When they come to worship.

Who does he think he is?  
God?

#### [Luke 20:1-19](#)

##### **Voice of a bystander**

I can sense  
The fury  
Of the officials  
And I am confused.

Israel is the vineyard  
But how  
Do we fit  
With the story  
He tells?

I suspect  
That he is saying  
Something  
Very important  
But I cannot

Understand.

Who is  
The son  
That God  
Will send  
And how  
Will we know  
When he  
Is here?

#### [Luke 20:20-26](#)

##### **Voice of a spy**

This time  
We have  
This blasphemer  
Trapped.  
He must  
At last  
Give us cause  
To have  
Him arrested  
By the Romans  
And our peace  
And security  
Restored.

I am waiting  
With  
An inward smile  
Of victory.

But no.  
Against the odds  
His wisdom  
Finds an answer  
I had not  
Foreseen,  
And,  
Robbed of  
Every plan  
And expectation,  
I can only  
Fall silent.

#### [Luke 20:27-47](#)

##### **The voice of a disciple**

I am  
So proud  
Of Jesus.  
He has  
An answer  
For everything  
They throw  
At him  
And,  
Despite themselves  
They are amazed  
And must  
Grant him  
Respect.

And he  
Has chosen me  
As one of the few.

And yet,  
As I hear  
His warning  
Of pride  
And showy religion  
I sense  
There is  
Something there  
That I too  
Must hear.

#### [Luke 21:1-4](#)

##### **The voice of a disciple**

No-one noticed  
Her offering.  
Only Jesus.

But he  
Understood  
The cost,  
And to him  
It was precious  
Beyond measure.

#### [Luke 21:5-38](#)

### **The voice of a disciple**

Jesus' words  
Are frightening.  
He speaks  
Of such terrifying things,  
A future  
I do not  
Wish to contemplate.

He tells us  
To stand firm  
Yet how,  
When what  
He describes  
Is everything  
Thrown into chaos.

He says  
Do not let  
Our hearts  
Be weighed down  
But I fear  
Mine already is.

So all  
I can do  
Is look  
Into his eyes  
And try  
To trust him.

### **Luke 22:1-6**

#### **The voice of Judas**

The deed  
Is done.  
Jesus will call us  
To take up arms  
And God's victory  
Will be won.

Why then  
Does my heart  
Feel dark  
And I fear  
That I may be  
Terribly wrong?

### **Luke 22:7-38**

#### **The voice of Peter**

The meal  
I so  
Looked forward to  
Has not been  
As I expected.

Firstly  
We found ourselves  
Stupidly arguing  
About who  
Was the greatest  
And, mid-flow  
I saw the sorrow  
In Jesus' eyes.

And then,  
These awful words  
That I would deny him.  
My mind  
Shouts "Never!"  
But I cannot  
Forget  
The way  
He looked at me  
Or shake  
My sense  
Of foreboding.

### **Luke 22:39-46**

#### **The voice of John**

My Jesus,  
My beloved Jesus,  
Is in agony.

I don't know  
What he  
Is seeing,  
What inner demons  
He is fighting,  
But I can see  
That he is  
In torment.

My Jesus  
My beloved Jesus,  
Is in agony.  
And I  
Cannot help him.

As I battle  
With my helplessness  
I take refuge  
In sleep.

My Jesus  
My beloved Jesus,  
Is in agony.  
And I  
Cannot help him.  
I cannot even  
Stay awake.

He comes to us,  
And I see  
The pain,  
But also understanding,  
In his eyes.

My Jesus  
My beloved Jesus,  
Is in agony.  
And I  
Cannot help him.  
I cannot even  
Stay awake.  
I have failed,  
Yet still,  
I am loved.

[Luke 22:47-53](#)  
**The voice of Judas**  
Fight, Jesus.  
Why will you  
Not fight?

I am giving you  
The opportunity.  
Declare yourself Messiah:

This is our moment.

But you will not  
And now,  
As we scatter,  
You are led away.

My God, my God  
What have I done?

[Luke 22:54-62](#)  
**The voice of Peter**

I just wanted  
To be close  
To Jesus,  
My friend,  
To see, somehow,  
If something  
Could be rescued  
From the disaster  
Of his arrest.

I knew  
I would not  
Let him down.

And yet I did.

And now,  
He has looked  
At me  
With such love  
And, out in the cold,  
My heart  
Is breaking.

[Luke 22:63-71](#)  
**The voice of an elder**  
I am uneasy.

Our law,  
Of which  
I am so proud,  
Is clear.

He has blasphemed,

And so,  
To protect  
The purity  
Of our people,  
He must be  
Condemned.  
Our God's honour  
Must be preserved.

And yet...  
Something about him  
Has planted  
A seed of doubt  
Which I have  
Neither time  
Nor inclination  
To allow to grow.

I dare not  
Let go  
Of my certainties  
For I am fearful  
Of what else  
Might be lost.

[Luke 23:1-25](#)  
**(and Matthew 27:24 ) The voice of Pilate**  
I am trapped.

Caught between  
The leaders  
Of this  
Unruly  
And unpredictable  
People  
With their subtle threats  
Of bringing  
The might of Rome  
On **my** head  
Instead of theirs,  
And this man:  
Enigmatic  
Yet fascinating,  
And the nightmares  
That he has brought

My wife.

And now the mob  
Is also baying  
For his blood.

I fear  
That, whatever  
I decide,  
For me  
There will never be  
Any hope  
Of peace.

And so,  
In this  
Futile gesture,  
I wash my hands  
Even as I sense  
I will never  
Feel clean again.

[Luke 23:26-43](#)  
**The voice of one of the criminals**

I do not think  
That I have long.  
I can  
Barely breathe  
And the pain  
Is beyond  
Anything  
I could ever  
Have imagined.

As my life  
Drains away  
So many memories,  
Countless regrets  
Wrong turns  
And might-have-beans  
Add to  
My distress.

But this man,  
Hanging between us,  
Is different.

He speaks forgiveness  
To our torturers.  
There is about him  
A quietness  
Even amongst  
The noise  
Of the throng.  
There is  
A gentleness  
Even amongst  
The violence  
Of the soldiers.  
There is  
A godliness  
Even amongst  
The God-abandoned  
Place  
In which  
We find ourselves.

Yes,  
This man  
Is from a different place  
And he has promised  
To take me there.

#### [Luke 23:44-49](#)

##### **A voice from the crowd**

He is dead.

The light  
Has returned  
After  
The frightening  
And eerie  
Midday hours  
Of darkness.

And yet  
I feel  
That a light  
Has gone out  
In our world  
And will  
Never return.

#### [Luke 23:50-53](#)

##### **The voice of Joseph of Arimathea**

Fearful -  
But determined -  
I ask Pilate  
For his body.

We were wrong  
And I could  
Do nothing.  
But I must  
Honour him  
In death  
As I tried,  
But fear I failed,  
To do in life.

#### [Luke 24:1-12](#)

##### **The voice of Mary**

They did not believe us  
And I cannot blame them.  
I do not know myself  
What to think  
And I long  
To believe  
Yet dare not.

Today  
I have felt  
Every emotion:  
Sorrow, terror,  
And now  
The tiniest glimmer  
Of hope  
Which I am almost  
Afraid to name.

Peter,  
Our dear  
And reckless friend,  
Has headed  
To the tomb.

What, I wonder  
Will he find?

[Luke 24:13-36](#)

**The voice of Cleopas' wife**

We were arguing,  
Our words echoing  
Along the path  
But I did not care.

I was angry,  
As well as so bewildered,  
And exhausted  
From the pain  
Of the last few days.

I found it hard  
To believe the words  
Of the women,  
But I was still  
Furious  
That he was  
Dismissing them,  
As men so often do,  
As mere emotional outbursts.

But I had seen  
The strange light  
In their eyes  
And I knew  
There was  
Something more here.

Little did I know  
As the mysterious stranger  
Appeared, as if from nowhere,  
To join us on the road  
That our whole lives  
Were about to be turned  
Right way up again.

[Luke 24:13-36](#) **revisited The voice of Cleopas**

She was so insistent,  
With a determination  
That I had never seen before.  
There was more to it,  
She said,  
There had to be.

But I could not believe it.  
He was dead,  
And it was the end.  
Our hopes were dashed  
And somehow,  
Though I could not see it,  
We must return to our lives.

I barely noticed the stranger  
At first  
And when I did,  
Was mildly irritated  
At the intrusion,  
And what seemed  
Such foolish questions.

So, from courtesy,  
I humoured him,  
Yet slowly  
Found myself drawn  
Into the conversation  
And, though I did not see it  
Until later,  
A flame of hope  
Was re-kindled  
Which, when we invited him  
into our home,  
And he broke the bread,  
Burst into life-giving flame

[Luke 24:36-49](#)

**The voice of a disciple**

Jesus is alive.

Words I thought  
After that Friday  
I would never say again.

There is so much  
I do not understand.

But this I do,  
And it is enough.

He is alive.  
Death did not have

The final say.

[Luke 24:50-53](#)

**The voice of a disciple**

We can  
No longer  
See him.

He is not  
With us now,  
Passed into a reality  
Deeper than  
The one we see.

Yet,  
In some way  
I do not  
Fully understand  
He is with us  
More closely  
Than he ever was  
Before.