

DEEP PREP GUIDE

DISRUPT | JANUARY 4 | BIG GOD STORY

SCRIPTURE | Luke 2:21-38

BOTTOM LINE

Jesus disrupts the status quo.

MEMORY VERSE

For my eyes have seen your salvation prepared in the sight of all nations: a light for revelation to all, and the glory of your people." Luke 2:31-32

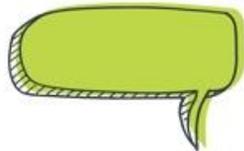
LIFE APP

Can you identify something that was disrupted in the past and it became something positive?

"Do not disrupt the class" was something you heard growing up, right? Well, I (Tim) sure heard it. Disruptions are supposed to be negative, so why are we thinking that Jesus is a disruption? That's the tension we are wrestling with today. 'Disrupt' is a word that we are using to describe what Jesus does when he reveals the Kingdom of God. It's a word that hopefully will stir some imagination with students, plus will give us more of an active understanding of how God's Kingdom "messes" with the world as Jesus saw it and as we see it today.

An understanding of Jesus revealing God's Kingdom was not something that I was taught growing up. So even as I write this, I am excited to be able to share with students a theme of God's story that was foreign to me growing up in church. The idea that Jesus disrupts what is known, normal, and understood is meant to transition to us understanding that life with God is holistically different than life without God.

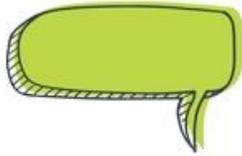
What exactly does Jesus disrupt? Everything. We celebrated welcoming Jesus to the world in Christmas, and now Jesus has come to disrupt the status quo, and usher in a new way of life. The best way to do this for students is to illustrate with words, pictures, and stories of what this looks like. How has Jesus disrupted your world, your way of thinking, your feelings, and how might Jesus be disrupting our students? Those are the questions.



TENSION

An obvious tension is the use of the word "disrupt" or "disruption". It's typically a word reserved for students who are causing havoc in a classroom environment and are promptly removed and sent to the principal's office. We are in the business of redeeming words, disruption will be used as a positive explanation of what Jesus does with the world, for God's good kingdom. While the whole of the passage centers on characters hearing of the birth of Jesus, and anticipating what he will be doing in the world, it sets up a great picture of the fact that people were anticipating a Savior, a Chosen One, and "Disruptor" to come and shake things up in the world.

For students, the tension lies in the connection to this passage to their worlds. While we can look at this as a story of something that happened, we can also see it as a dramatic expression of people experiencing all the emotions of their waiting/preparing for the arrival of God's Son, Jesus Christ. What must it have been like? What can we expect to see? How can we expect to be changed from this?



TEXT [CONTEXT]

In what is almost an aside, Luke 2:23 explain that the firstborn male is set aside as holy. The quotation from Exodus 13:2, 12 takes the reader to the Exodus story. God delivered Israel from the stubborn clutches of Pharaoh after the death of all of the Egyptian firstborn males, but God spared the Israelite firstborns whose doorposts were covered by lamb's blood. This story is remembered in the sacrifice that Jewish parents make on behalf of their firstborn male children.

Jesus, like other firstborn males, is set apart for God as part of the special relationship that God solidified through his deliverance of Israel from slavery. However, this firstborn with the name Jesus, "God saves," opens up a new chapter in the relationship between the God who delivers and all of God's people -- both Jews and Gentiles. There are two characters that take center stage in the rest of the passage: Simeon and Anna. As will happen throughout Luke, both men and women are shown as significant actors in the story of God. These two are described in ways that highlight their righteous and devout living. Simeon has been given special insight by the Holy Spirit along with a promise that before he dies, he will be allowed to see the one whom God has chosen to rescue the world.

Simeon is a man under the influence of the Holy Spirit. He is described as one who the Holy Spirit rests upon, it is the Holy Spirit who gave the promise of revelation to him, and it is the Holy Spirit who brings Simeon to the temple at the right time. This continues an emphasis on the role of the Holy Spirit that began in Luke 1. John the Baptist will be filled with the Holy Spirit while in the womb (1:15), Mary will conceive by the power of the Holy Spirit (1:35), Elizabeth is filled with the Holy Spirit and enabled to recognize the significance of Mary and her unborn baby (1:41), Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and prophesied (1:67).

Simeon is part of this unfolding work and direction of the Holy Spirit, a work that will be a significant part of both Luke and eventually Acts. It will be the Holy Spirit that rests on Jesus and enables his ministry (4:1-18) and who will give power for witness and growth to the church (Acts 1:8). When Simeon lifts up Jesus, he makes an amazing declaration about this six-week-old baby.

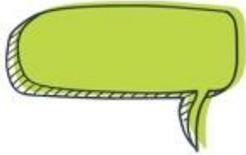
This baby is the one who will be the salvation of the whole world -- not just Jews but also Gentiles. This theme has already been prominent in Luke. Mary sings to "God my Savior" (1:46). Zechariah sings of "a horn of salvation" and being "saved from our enemies" and the "knowledge of salvation" (1:69, 71, 77). Simeon now declares that Jesus is the salvation of the world -- the rescuer from enemies, the source of knowledge about salvation.

But immediately after this declaration of salvation, Simeon turns to Mary and tells her that this salvation will not come easy. Jesus will be the source of rising and falling for people in Israel. This reminds us of Mary's own song, in which she sang, "[God] has put down the mighty from their thrones, and exalted those of low degree" (1:52). Jesus' salvation will not be equally received. Joel Green states that "we gain sight of an ominous cloud, the first explicit manifestation of the reality that God's purpose will not be universally supported, and the first candid portent that the narrative to follow will be a story of conflict" (149).

Light is characterized in the Old Testament as both a source of deliverance but also as a source of judgment.² This saying about rising and falling prepares us for incidents in the life of Jesus where secret thoughts of the heart are revealed. In Luke 5:22 Jesus will perceive the questioning of the scribes and Pharisees -- their doubt about his identity and his capacity to forgive sins -- and will show by a sign his capacity to forgive sin.

In this way Jesus' presents a challenge to the leaders of Israel, a conflict that will raise up some and bring down others. This conflict will be a reality not only among the people of Israel, some of whom will oppose the ministry of Jesus, but also in the life of Mary herself who will find her heart pierced, perhaps because of the opposition faced by her son's life and ministry.

Anna confirms the salvation message of Simeon by giving thanks to God and speaking about this child to all those who were looking for "the redemption of Jerusalem." The metaphor of redemption is taken from the slave marked and indicates purchasing freedom. Early on, Jesus is seen as the one who will purchase redemption for his enslaved people and for the holy city of Jerusalem. (Excerpt taken from www.workingpreacher.org)



TRUTH

The truth of this passage may be a little complicated, as the truth of the story is in fact a story of what happened after Jesus was born. Our theme for the night connects on a deeper truth with what Jesus came to do: disrupt the status quo. Jesus came to disrupt what was accepted and normal people to show that life with God is different and better than life without God.

The truth can be illustrated in different ways, but the best way to illustrate it is with personal experience: how has Jesus disrupted your world? The conversation will be how Jesus disrupted the world that the Bible takes place in, but we need to cross the bridge to see how Jesus disrupts our world as well.