



Encountering the Rule of God (Luke 7:18-35)

1. Imagine you are in the car park at Southland, when you notice people gathering around an eccentric looking man who is speaking to a growing crowd in excited tones... you hear him shout “*God has come to us and is setting up his kingdom on earth!*”.

What might people imagine when they hear about a “kingdom of God”? How do you think different people in the crowd might react to this news?

2. Read Luke 3:15-17, which details John the Baptist warning people of the coming of God’s Messiah. What do you think John expects it will be like for those who are not prepared?
3. At this point in Luke’s gospel, Jesus’ continues to minister in the small towns of the Galilean region, most recently healing the servant of a centurion (7:1-10) and raising a widow’s dead son (7:11-17). This ‘*news about Jesus spread*’ (7:17) and a report about ‘*these things*’ (7:18) has made it back to John the Baptist.

Read Luke 7:18-23. What is it that John asked of Jesus, and why do you think he asked it?

What is Jesus’ response?

4. Read Luke 7:24-28. Jesus clearly had a very high view of John’s ministry, effectively declaring him to be the greatest person yet born! However John the Baptist died in prison (see Luke 9:7-9) and so never got to see full ministry of Jesus, including his crucifixion, resurrection and sending of the Holy Spirit.

As a modern Christian, in what ways is your understanding of Jesus different to that of John's?

In what ways is your standing in Jesus' kingdom different to that of John's?

5. Based on What Jesus says in these verses, which of the following people do you think has the greatest access to God and his kingdom? Why? (See also Luke 10:21-24):
 - a. Abraham
 - b. Moses
 - c. The Prophet Elijah
 - d. King David
 - e. John the Baptist
 - f. A Sunday School child with a basic understanding of the forgiveness of sins and gift of eternal life won for them by the cross of Christ?
6. How might you use verse 7:28 to encourage a Christian friend who feels that they are not very important to God? What does 7:28 suggest about how much God values you and the church?
7. Read Luke 7:29-30. John's ministry of baptism was to promote humility and repentance amongst God's people to get them ready to receive their Messiah.

What are different groups of people and their different responses to Jesus that are outlined in verses 29-30? What sets the different groups apart?

8. What different reactions to Jesus and his words have you seen amongst your friends and family?

End the study by reflecting upon what this encounter has taught you about who Jesus is, and about how you are to respond to him.