

LUCAN JOY

The Vocabulary. Many expressions in Luke—Acts indicate joy: *makários* and *makarizo* (blessed and to bless),¹ *chará* and *chárein* (joy and to rejoice),² *dóksa* and *doksázein* (glory and to glorify),³ *agalliásis* and *agalliáō* (exuberant joy and to rejoice exuberantly),⁴ *áinein* (to praise),⁵ *eulogéin* (to bless),⁶ *eirēnē* (peace),⁷ *euphráinein* (to gladden or to feast),⁸ *megalunō* (magnify),⁹ and *skirtaō* (to leap for joy).¹⁰

Aíneo, *doksázo*, *eulogéo* and *megalunō* focus more on the religious activity evoking joy than on the subjective state of the person rejoicing. These four words express joy at the recognition of salvation in progress.¹¹

Eirēnē expresses that peace which encompasses the whole man, his body and soul, as well as the relationship between himself and his world. Luke does not restrict it to an inner peace of soul.¹²

¹ *Makarios*: (exclusively Lucan texts) 1,45; 11,27; 14,14, 15; Acts 20,35; 26,2; (in common texts) 6,20, 21, 22; 7,23; 10,23; 12,43, 37, 38. *Makarizo*: 1,48.

² *Charein*: (exclusively Lucan), 1,14, 28; 10,20; 13,17; 15,32; 19,6, 37; 23,8; (common texts), 6,23; 15,5; 22,5; Acts 5,41; 8,39; 11,23; 13,48; 15,31.

Charizesthai: 7,21, 42; Acts 3,14; 25,11; 27,24.

Chara: (exclusively Lucan), 1,14; 2,10; 15,7; 24,41; Acts 8,8; 12,14; 13,52; 15,13; (common texts), 8,13; 24,52; 10,17.

³ *Doksa*: (exclusively Lucan), 2,9, 14, 32; 9,31, 32; 14,10; 17,18; 19,38; 24,26; Acts 7,2, 55; 12,23; 22,11; (common texts), 4,6; 12,27; 9,26; 21,27.

Doksazein: 2,20; 4,15; 7,16; 13,13; 17,15; 18,43; 23,47; Acts 11,18; 21,20; 3,13; 4,21; 13,48; (common texts), 5,25, 26.

⁴ *Agalliasis*: 1,14, 44; Acts 2,46. This word is not found in the other Synoptics.

Agalliao: 1,47; 10,21; Acts 2,26. This word occurs once in the Synoptics (Mt. 5,12).

⁵ *Aínein*: 2,13, 20; 19,37; 24,53; Acts 2,47; 3,8, 9. This word does not appear in the other Synoptics.

⁶ *Eulogéin*: 1,42, 64; 2,28, 34; 6,28; 24,30, 50, 53; Acts 3,26; (common texts), 9,16; 19,38; 13,35.

⁷ *Eirene*: 1,79; 2,14; 11,21; 14,32; 19,38, 42; 24,36; Acts 12,20, 7,26; 9,31; 10,36; 24,2; (common texts), 10,5; 12,51; 8,48; 7,50; Acts 16,36; 15,33; (common Lk. 2,29.

⁸ *Euphrainein*: 12,19; 15,23, 24, 29, 32; 16,19; Acts 2,26; 7,41. This word does not appear in the other Synoptics.

⁹ *Megaluno*: 1,46, 58; Acts 5,13; 10,46; 19,17. The word occurs once in the other Synoptics (Mt. 23,5).

¹⁰ *Skirtaō*: 1,41, 44; 6,23. The word occurs in Luke alone. A. Schmoller, *Handkonkordanz* (Stuttgart, 1963, 13th ed.) serves to indicate the occurrences of these words. W. F. Moulton and A. S. Geden, *A Concordance to the Greek Testament* (Edinburgh, 1926, 3rd ed.) also serves this purpose. A. Plummer, *The Gospel according to St. Luke*, Intern. Crit. Comm. (Edinburgh, 1922, 5th ed.) is an aid for the peculiarly Lucan usage of these terms.

¹¹ See especially G. Kittel and G. Friedrich eds., *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testament* (Stuttgart, 1933).

¹² Kittel, *op. cit.*, vol. II, 400ff. J. Comblin, "La paix dans la théologie de saint Luc", *Revue Biblique* 32, 1956, 439-460, finds more of a political sense in the term than can perhaps be justified.

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'*Euphráino* occurs in the parable of the merciful father (15,23; 32) where it expresses the joy of the father who has found his son.¹³ The term expresses the communal joy of feasting, of being together at a banquet.

Makários involves the external conditions that ground interior happiness.¹⁴

'*Agalliáo* and *cháirein* are more concerned with the interior dimension of personal happiness.¹⁵ '*Agalliáo*, with one exception, is found exclusively in the infancy narratives where it describes Zachary's reaction to the birth of John (1,14), John's reaction in Elizabeth's womb to the arrival of Mary (1,44), and Mary's responsiveness to the presence of God within her, "My spirit rejoices in God my Saviour" (1,47). The repetition of the same verb helps Luke to stress how these events are inner-locked in the achievement of the same divine plan.

'*Agalliáo* is an especially Lucan term. It occurs six times in Luke-Acts (four times in the Gospel) and only three times in the rest of the New Testament. This expression of jubilant and thankful exaltation is always involved with the theme of God's help.¹⁶ It refers to the eschatological act of divine salvation which is supremely the theme of rejoicing.

Cháirein and *chará* occur in the four primary Lucan contexts for the theme of joy: in the infancy narratives (3 times), in the beatitudes (once), in the travel narrative (9,51-19,27, 8 times), and in the resurrection narratives (twice).¹⁷ It expresses Zachary's joy in his son (1,14); the joy of the people in John (1,14); the angel's greeting to Mary (1,28); the message of good news to Joseph (2,10). In every case joy is related to the recognition of the present salvation process and experienced in the measure that one participates in it. Zachary, John in his mother's womb, Simeon, Anna, Joseph and Mary rejoice, because the call to salvation is also a call to joy.

Together with *skirtáo*, *cháirein* and *chará* describe the inner dimension of Luke's last beatitude: "Blessed are you when men hate you . . . Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy" (6,22f.). *Cháirein* expresses the joy of the seventy disciples in their mission (10,17); the deeper cause of joy asserted by Jesus (10,20); the people's reaction to Jesus' saving power (13,17); the joy of discovery when the shepherd finds his lost sheep (15,5); the joy in heaven over one repentant sinner (15,10); the joy of the father whose son returns (15,32); the joy with which Zaccheus

¹³ R. Bultmann in Kittel, *op. cit.*, vol. II, p. 772ff.

¹⁴ Bertram and Hauck, Kittel, *op. cit.*, vol. IV, pp. 365ff.

¹⁵ R. Bultmann, Kittel, *op. cit.*, I, 19-21; A. B. Du Toit, *Der Aspekt der Freude im urchristlichen Abendmahl* (Dissert. Univ. of Basel, 1965), pp. 24f.

¹⁶ *Art. cit.*, Kittel, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

¹⁷ M. Cambe, "La *charis* chez saint Luc", *Revue Biblique* 70, 1963, pp. 193-208.

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receives Jesus (19,6), the last occurrence of the *teru* in the travel narrative. *Chairein* conveys the disciples' joy at the resurrection appearance (24,41) and as they return to Jerusalem after the Lord's ascension (24,52).

The Travel narrative contains most of the peculiarly Lucan material. The plan for Christian joy presented in the beatitudes (6,20-23) is considerably clarified by the travel narrative.¹⁸ There are twenty references to joy and ten pericopes in which this theme is basic within the travel narrative.¹⁹

Some characteristics of joy may be catalogued as follows:

1. *Willingness to accept a mission* conditioned the joy of the seventy at the signs that the kingdom of God has wrought (10,17). The disciples rejoice that even the demons are subject to them.

2. *Belonging to God*, Jesus tells his disciples, is a deeper motive for their rejoicing rather than their power over demons. The joy of participation in the divine mission ultimately derives from the fact that the disciples belong to God, ". . . rejoice that your names are written in heaven" (10,20).

3. Mission is intimately connected with *eschatological joy*. The disciples rejoice over the signs of the coming consummation. Their joy is based on the conviction that salvation is a present reality and will be such even more in the future. Theirs is the joy of rising hopes and deepening faith in the fulfilment of the divine promises based on ever-growing evidence which is recognized by those who actively participate in their realization. Reicke writes that the travel narrative is sustained by

¹⁸ Cf. J. Dupont, *Les Beatitudes* (Bruges, 1954), 78; Cf. A. George, "Tradition et redaction chez Luc. La construction du troisieme evangile," *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* 43 (1967), p. 109; cf. X. Leon-Dufour, "L'evangile selon saint Luc", *Introduction a la Bible II* (Tournai, 1959), p. 252; "Luc, evangeliste du dessein de Dieu, est en meme temps l'homme qui precise jusqu'ou va concretement l'exigence du message evangelique. Mieux que Mt et Mc il indique qu'il faut porter la croix 'chaque jour' (9,23). Mais en meme temps il manifeste mieux le Saint-Esprit a l'oeuvre et la joie devessee au coeur des croyants."

¹⁹ *Agalliao*: 10,21; *chairein* or *chara*: 10,17, 20; 13,17; 15,5, 7, 9, 10, 32; 19,6; *euphraino*: 15,23, 24, 29, 32; *makarios*: 10,23; 11,27, 28; 12,37, 38, 43; 14,14, 15. The pericopes in which joy is a dominant motif: the apostles should rejoice that their names are written in heaven (10,17-20); Jesus' joy over the Father's self-revelation to the poor (to the *anawim* (10,21-22)); those who hear and keep the word of God are genuinely happy (11,27-28); happy is the servant who is ready for his Lord's return (12,35ff.); happy is the man who invites the poor to his table (14,12-14); the parable of the messianic banquet and its eschatological joy (14,15-24); the three parables of joy in finding what had been lost (chapter 15); Zaccheus' joy in the salvation which came to his home (19,1-10).

²⁰ B. Reicke, *The Gospel of Luke*, tr. by R. Mackenzie (Richmond, 1964), p. 79.

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a genuine ecstasy of eschatological joy which intensifies with the progressive realization of the divine plan of salvation.²²

4. *The Father's effective salvation of the anawim* brings joy to Jesus (10,21). The Father's plan and action of salvation delight Jesus. He rejoices at the revelation of grace to the poor and humble faithful. (The second half of the Parable of the Prodigal Son relates Christian joy to that of Christ. The Christian is called to participate in Christ's joy in the Father's work of salvation in ourselves and others.)

5. *The Joy of Jesus is in the Holy Spirit.* It is only Luke who refers here to Jesus' joy in the Holy Spirit: "At that time, Jesus was filled with joy by the Holy Spirit and said, O Father, who art Lord of heaven and earth . . ." (10,21). Matthew gives the same prayer (11,25-27) but not the opening phrase, which is Luke's own, and characteristic in bringing together three of his favourite themes: joy, prayer and the Holy Spirit. In prayer Jesus is closest to the Holy Spirit and to his Father in a union of ecstatic joy.

6. *Hearing and keeping the word of God* is a source of blessedness: "Blessed are they who hear the word of God and keep it!" (10,38-41). Christian joy is based on sharing the same spirit that was in Christ and not on physical ties.

7. *Joy is enduring* because the word of God from which it originates is enduring. Mary sat at the feet of Christ, listening to his words. The joy of those who hear the word of God and keep it is hers. She is wiser than Martha, because what she has "shall not be taken from her" (10,38-41); his words "will never pass away" (21,33).

8. *The work of Jesus* in healing the crippled woman is a sign of the presence of the kingdom of God and of the joy of God's benevolent reign. "All the people rejoiced" because a daughter of Abraham had been saved from the bond of Satan (13,16). Thus, the kingdom of God in the words and saving work of Jesus brings joy to the multitudes.

9. *Preparedness for the Lord's visitation* is a prerequisite for joy: "Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes; truly, I say that he will gird himself and have them sit at table, and he will come and serve them" (12,37). The Father has given Christians a kingdom (12,32) in which they may rejoice, provided that they are ready for it. Preparedness is maintained through participation in Christian life and worship (12,35; 17,26; 21,34).

²¹ W. Grundmann, *Das Evangelium nach Lukas* (Berlin, 1959), p. 213, suggests the Old Testament background (Ex. 32,32ff., Is. 4,3) of the expression, "names written in heaven".

²² B. Reicke, *op. cit.*, p. 79.

10. *Poverty and renunciation* are preconditions for Christian joy, which indicate its trans-temporal origins. Christian joy does not derive from the wealth, pleasures and esteem of this world; in fact, it is actually precluded by them. The Lucan teaching on poverty and renunciation is an invitation to free one's spirit from these bonds for a joyous participation in the benevolent reign of God within his kingdom. Jesus advises the rich ruler to sell all that he possesses and give it to the poor that he might have treasure in heaven (18,22); he adds that it is hard for the rich to enter the kingdom of God (18,24). Luke's first beatitude (6,20) promises the kingdom of heaven, and implicitly its joy, to the poor.

Inaugurating his public ministry in the synagogue of Nazareth, Jesus declares that "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me; he has anointed me, and sent me out to preach the gospel to the poor . . ." (4,18). He is quoting Isaiah's prophecy of messianic joy for the *anawim*, the faithful poor of Israel (Is. 61,1-2). The poor are the privileged of the kingdom of heaven.

The Parable of the Sower (8,5-15) teaches that the word of God cannot bear fruit if it is impeded by worldly cares, riches and the pleasures of life. Poverty and renunciation aim at freeing the Christian from these obstacles. Only then can the word of God produce Christian joy. This parable occurs in the other Synoptics; however, one or more of the same three obstacles to the word of God are found in exclusively Lucan material: Martha and Mary (10,38-42); the Rich Fool (12,16-21); the Rich Man and Lazarus (16,19-31); the Prodigal Son (15,1-31); Zaccheus (19,1-10).

The Parable of the Great Banquet (14,16-24) is followed by statements on the renunciation which a disciple must make (14,25-33). The implication would seem to be that the messianic joy of the banquet demands a corresponding preparation on the part of its participants.²⁵

²³ G. D. Dellings, *Worship in the New Testament* (London, 1962) p. 24, states that primitive Christian worship is the work of the Spirit, and that this is abundantly clear from Acts. In this context he believes that *agalliasis* (exuberant joy) or *agalliasithai* (to rejoice greatly) are technical terms with signify an action of the Spirit, even where this connotation is not explicitly given. Du Toit, *op. cit.*, 29, comments: "Vielleicht hat Lukas Wert darauf gelegt, darzulegen, dass die jubelnde Begeisterung, die er von der Urgemeinde berichtet (Apg. 2,45; vgl. 2,26; 16,34) sich schon bei Jesus offenbart."

²⁴ A. Schlatter, *Das Evangelium des Lukas*, S. 272, as quoted by Grundmann, *op. cit.*, p. 206, affirms that the following of Jesus gives his disciples a share in his work and a duty and service to fulfill. Thus, the Word of God requires a full and unconditioned dedication to its proclamation.

²⁵ J. M. Creed, *The Gospel according to St. Luke* (London, 1930), p. 193; J. Jeremias, *The Parables of Jesus* (London, 1963, English trans.), p. 196, makes much the same point as Creed: "Jesus drives home the exhortation: Do not act without mature consideration, for a thing half-done is worse than a thing never begun."

If this joy transcends every purely human joy, it is worth the sacrifice of the closest human bonds (14,26).

Lucan renunciation is basically a positive concept concerned with productivity. Its purpose is symbolized in the story of the tree which must be fertilized in the hope that it will bear fruit (13,6-9). In another context it is the quality of the fruit that is uppermost (6,43). In this case Luke implies that the quality of the fruit, of a man's way of life, is gauged by its worth and relevance to others. Good fruit gives nourishment and delight to others; it is not something which the tree keeps for itself. In this social context of renunciation, it is clear why Luke calls the rich man who "lays up treasure for himself" a "fool" (12,16-21).²⁶

Chapter 14: the Messianic Banquet and the Joy of Perfect Community. The eschatological and communitarian dimensions of Christian joy emerge especially in the fourteenth chapter where Luke presents the Parable of the Great Banquet (vv. 17-24). No evangelist has insisted so much on the banquet theme as Luke.²⁷ This entire chapter is situated in the context of a banquet.

The significance of this chapter derives from the prophetic and wisdom literature of the Old Testament, which had developed the banquet theme as an expression of the perfect happiness which God has in store for his faithful at the end of time.²⁸

The eschatological banquet is served by God himself and its festive joy stems from the perfect intimacy between God and his creatures: "On this mountain the Lord of hosts will make for all peoples a feast . . ." (Is. 25,6).

The eschatological banquet realizes man's highest aspirations of perfect friendship with God and his fellow men. The messianic meal, pre-figured by the gift of manna in the desert, represents the incomparable joy of perfect community with the Messiah and his followers. The messianic joy of the banquet is the gift of God, because the banquet

²⁶ Du Toit, *op. cit.*, p. 31, implicitly comments on the problem of security: "Der neue Inhalt des Lebens in der Umkehr ist die Freude. Sorge ist der Freude Feind. Darum dürfen Jesu Nachfolger keinem Sorgen Raum geben, weder in bezug auf Essen oder auf Kleidung (Mt. 6,25-34 par Lk. 12,22-31; vgl. Lk. 21,34) noch im Hinblick auf ihre Verteidigung, wenn sie vor Gericht stehen (Mt. 10,19 par Lk. 12,11). Die neue Lebenshaltung öffnet wieder den Weg zur Freude in Gottes Schöpfung. Jetzt ist da kein Platz mehr für eine apokalyptische Verzweiflung an dieser Welt und an der Natur. In positiver Bejahung des alttestamentlichen Gedankens, dass alles, was Gott gemacht hat, gut ist (Gen. 1,4, 10, 12, 18, 25, 31), entdeckt der Gläubige in den Lilien des Feldes eine Schönheit, die die Pracht Salomons weit überragt."

²⁷ P. M. Galopin, "Le Repas", *Assemblees du Seigneur* 55 (1962), p. 65; also H. Flender, on the table scenes, pp. 80-84.

²⁸ Galopin, *art. cit.*, pp. 59ff., comments on the abundance without end which characterized the Old Testament banquet tradition. Wisdom also offers a banquet (Prv. 9,1-6) which is another aspect of the background for the teaching of Jesus at table.

itself is the gift of God; it is a joy which God has prepared for all mankind, ". . . the Lord of hosts will make for *all peoples* a feast".

Although the eschatological banquet is for all mankind, Isaiah teaches that it is especially for the poor (Is. 55,1-3). The poor are the *Anawim*, those who remain faithful to Yahweh, as opposed to those who participate in the idolatrous and orgiastic banquets which celebrate false gods (Is. 65,3-7). There shall be a reversal of roles at the end of time; the *Anawim* shall feast and the unfaithful shall be hungry (Is. 65,13; Pr. 9,1-6).

The prophets considered the covenant between Yahweh and his people under the symbol of a marriage. The psalmists and Deutero-Isaiah inserted the theology of the covenant into the context of the banquet. The convergence of these two lines of thought gave rise to the metaphor of the wedding banquet for designating entry into the future kingdom of the Messiah and the joy of communion with God.

The eschatological banquet symbolized the accomplishment of God's plan of salvation. It is doubtful that any of Jesus' Jewish hearers would have been unaware of the banquet theme and its significance. Jesus himself employed the wedding banquet as a symbol of ultimate happiness (Mt. 22,1-14=Lk. 14,16-24; Mt. 25,1-13=Lk. 12,35-38).

Jesus' banquets were a realization of the messianic and eschatological prophecies; and at the same time they are only the beginning of the ultimate realization of these prophecies. They promise more; they are signs of the beginning of the eschatological banquet.²⁹

The banquets of Jesus are characterized by a joy which contrasts with the austerity and fasting of his precursor: "John the Baptist has come eating no bread and drinking no wine; and you say, 'He has a demon'. The Son of man has come eating and drinking; and you say, 'Behold, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners'." (7,33-34).

Other characteristics of the eschatological banquet are found in the banquets of Jesus. He dines with the poor and the humble, with publicans and sinners. This displeases the Pharisees (7,36; 11,37; 14,1-11). He dines with his friends at Bethany (10,38-42), and with Zaccheus, the chief publican of Jericho (19,1-10).

Jesus' banquets are in a salvation context. His critics complain, "He receives sinners and eats with them" (15,2). Jesus answers that only the sick need a doctor; that he has not come to call the just, rather sinners (5,31-32—Mt. 9,12). While dining with Zaccheus, Jesus declares that, "Today salvation has come to this house because he is also a son of Abraham" (19,9). He has come to seek and save those who were lost.

²⁹ Galopin, *art. cit.*, pp. 65ff., is the source for the material on Jesus' banquets.

The banquet image serves to indicate salvation for even the Gentiles: "And men will come from east and west, and from north and south, and sit at table in the kingdom of God" (13,29—Mt. 8,11).

The traditional concept of Yahweh's serving his people from his own abundance at the eschatological banquet is evoked in Jesus' feeding of the crowds who hungered for his word (9,17) and at the Last Supper. The merciful father in the Parable of the Prodigal Son prepares a banquet as a sign of joyous exaltation over his son's return (15,22-23).

The eschatological banquet is offered to all who hunger and thirst:

"So, every one who thirsts, come to the waters; and he who has no money, come buy wine and milk without money and without price. Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labour for that which does not satisfy? Listen attentively to me, and eat what is good, and *delight yourselves* in fatness" (Is. 55,1-2).

The blessedness of those who hear the word of Jesus and keep it (11, 28) is a fulfilment of the Isaian vision. The time for the banquet is now. Luke conceives of the kingdom of God as a banquet now arranged: it began with the preaching of Jesus and continues in the preaching mission of the Church: "... at the time for the banquet he sent his servant to say . . ." (14,17).

The story of the Great Banquet (14,16-24) implies that messianic joy derives from responsiveness to the words of invitation and from participation in the banquet itself. In a spirit of eucharistic joy Christians are united with their Lord in the breaking of bread: "They continued to meet daily in the temple, breaking bread from home to home, they ate with joy and simplicity" (Acts 2,46). This is the continuing *koinonia* activity of the banquet community with its Lord until the time when, "you eat and drink at my table in my kingdom" (22,30).⁸⁰

The eschatological banquet tradition in the Lucan account reveals that Christian joy is essentially communal. Messianic, eschatological joy derives from the person of Jesus through whose redemptive work communion is re-established between God and man and among all men. After the Fall, man was unable to re-establish communion with God and neighbour on purely human resources. He suffered, because it was not good for him to be alone (Gn. 2,18). The Lucan portrait of Christ, in the eschatological banquet context, is one of exuberant joy at the reversal of the human condition through the establishment of the agape-community.

Luke's banquet theology is suffused with a eucharistic joy in recognition of the gratuitous character of the invitation to enter into the eschatological agape-community. It is characterized by the joy of the

⁸⁰ Cf. R. Tannehill, "A Study in the Theology of Luke-Acts", *Anglican Theological Review*, 43 (1961), pp. 195-203.

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Anawim who, recognizing their own poverty and misery before God and man, gratefully accept the salvation invitation that is offered them.³¹ It is characterized by a universal joy in recognition of the fact that no one is excluded from the divine call to salvation within the eschatological banquet community. It is characterized by an eschatological joy, which is even now experienced in a process of salvation which is leading it to its full perfection at the end of time.³²

Chapter 15: the Invitation to the joy of God in Jesus. If the travel narrative contains the core of peculiarly Lucan thought, its fourteenth and fifteenth chapters present the nucleus of Luke's theology of joy. The eschatological banquet tradition, which dominates the fourteenth chapter and carries over into the Parable of the Prodigal Son in the fifteenth chapter, is a key to the Lucan theology of joy. The fifteenth chapter teaches that Christian joy consists in a willing, personal participation in God's own joy in effecting the salvation of mankind in Jesus.

The redactional unity of this chapter is more striking than that of the previous chapter. It is composed of three complementary parables which formulate an answer to the criticism of the Pharisees, which is expressed in the opening verses of the chapter: "Now the tax collectors and sinners were all drawing near to hear him. And the Pharisees and the scribes murmured saying, 'This man receives sinners and eats with them.'" (15,1-2).

In the opening parable of the lost sheep (15,4-7), Jesus compares the behaviour of the shepherd and his joy in finding his lost sheep, with that of God. The promise of Ezekiel is fulfilled: "As a shepherd seeks out his flock when some of his sheep have been scattered abroad, so will I seek out my sheep . . . And I will set up over them one shepherd,

³¹ Cf. P. B. Simson, *Lk. 14,1-11: Le code de bienveillance de l'assemblée chrétienne*, "Assemblees du Seigneur 70 (1965), p. 38. Jeremias, *op. cit.*, pp. 192f., comments on the pericope of places at table and the following pericope of the messianic banquet: "Is Luke 14,11 similarly intended to be a piece of practical wisdom, a rule of social etiquette? Surely not! The comparison with Luke 14,14b, with 18,14, and with Matt. 23,12 shows that Luke 14,11 is speaking of God's eschatological activity, the humbling of the proud and the exaltation of the humble on the Last Day." Jeremias sees 14,11 as an "eschatological warning", which looks forward to the messianic banquet, and is a call to renounce self-righteous pretensions and to self-abasement before God.

³² Grundmann, *op. cit.*, p. 298.

³³ Luke obviously wishes the parable of the Great Banquet to be interpreted in a messianic sense by reason of his having inserted it as Christ's response to the beatitude in 14,15. Cf. Jeremias, *op. cit.*, p. 42; R. F. Swaeles, "L'évangile (Lc. 14,16-24): la parabole des invités qui se derobent," *Assemblees du Seigneur 55* (1962), pp. 36-37: "The parable in Lk. 14,14, 16-24 will share at one and the same time in these two aspects: the messianic proclamation and the parenetic warning. It marks the summit of the discourse at table by explicitly describing the beatitude of the Kingdom of God and the requisite condition for entering it."

my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd" (34,12; 23).

Jesus seems to imply that if his critics fail to rejoice with God at the conversion of sinners, they shall have no share in God's joy. There is still time for his critics to undergo a change of heart. This may be the import of the words introduced by "I tell you" in the statement, "Just so, I tell you, there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous who have no need of repentance" (15,7).³⁴ Jesus warns the Pharisees of the danger in their attitude towards sinners and publicans. They show no mercy to those at whose salvation God rejoices. In contrast with the rabbinical saying which tells of God's joy in the destruction of the godless, Jesus affirms God's exuberant joy over the conversion of sinners.³⁵

The second parable (15,8-10) presents a woman in place of the shepherd. The identity of structure with the previous parable provides Jesus' revelation of the Father's mercy with a dual witness.³⁶ Luke recognizes the force of repetition for inculcating the importance of a key doctrine. As in the previous parable, the recovery of what had been lost is characterized by an outburst of joy which friends and neighbours are invited to share. Again, Jesus compares this to the joy of God at the return of a sinner. This time he employs the image of "the angels of God", for the heavenly court rejoices in God's own joy. Joy in God's saving mercy is the unique source of happiness. The third parable in this trilogy will make clear that those who do not share God's merciful attitude toward sinners cannot share his joy.³⁷

If the significance of these two parables is almost identical in revealing the joy of God at the return of a sinner, they are likewise most similar in asserting God's persevering efforts made for his return. The image of the lost drachma gives perhaps a greater stress to the search, so much so that it suggests that God is attached to every man as if each were the only one."³⁸

³⁴ Cf. Grundmann, *op. cit.*, p. 307; cf. also Jeremias, *op. cit.*, pp. 132ff.

³⁵ Cf. Grundmann, *op. cit.*, p. 308.

³⁶ E. Rasco, "Les Paraboles de Luc XV", *Ephemerides Theologicae Lovanienses* (1968), p. 168, presents the structures of the first two parables in a striking pattern which reveals their parallelism. The article is an excellent study of the theme of joy throughout the entire chapter. Grundmann, *op. cit.*, 306. Cf. Flender's study of what he calls, citing Morgenthauer (*Die lukanische Geschichtsschreibung als Zeugnis*, 2 vols., 1948-49) the "two-membered architectonic art of Luke," *op. cit.*, pp. 8ff.: "In Luke stories about a man are frequently paralleled by stories about a woman: these parallels mostly occur in the special Lucan material. Even if they were already arranged in this way in his source, the passages from Acts show that Luke has deliberately and extended this type of parallelism."

³⁷ Cf. E. Galbiati, "La parabola della pecora e della drachma ritrovate (Luca 15, 1-10)", *Bibbia e Oriente* 6 (1964), pp. 129-133.

³⁸ J. Cantinat, "L'evangile: Luc 15,1-10", *Assemblees du Seigneur* 57 (1965), p. 38.

The point of the Lucan parables becomes more salient when compared with the parallel text on the lost sheep in Matthew (18,12-14).³⁹ Luke stresses the joy of finding, whereas Matthew stresses the search. Luke underscores the joy of God in pardoning, whereas Matthew emphasizes Jesus' commissioning the strong, or the shepherds, to care for the weak. Luke reveals the heart of God, whereas Matthew teaches the duties of men. Luke defends the mercy of Jesus towards sinners; Matthew gives a rule for the apostles. According to Dupont, with Luke the parable retains its links with the concrete situation in the public ministry of Jesus when the Pharisees criticized his association with sinners; with Matthew the parable more directly reflects the situation of the primitive Church and of the pastoral responsibilities of its leaders.

The Parable of the Prodigal Son, the third of the trilogy, is the classical example of divine mercy.⁴⁰ This parable accentuates God's love for sinners in so far as God is compared to a father. Unlike the shepherd and housewife in the preceding parables, the father has the closest possible human relationship with what he has lost.⁴¹ It is as if he had lost a part of himself: "While he was at a distance the father saw him and had compassion, and ran and embraced him and kissed him" (15,20).

In the context of the general introduction at the beginning of the chapter (15,1-2), the meaning of the second part of the parable is apparent: God's universal saving love is the source of all joy for those who are willing to accept it for themselves and for others. He who does not rejoice with God at the conversion of sinners will never know the meaning of Christian joy. No one can object, as the eldest son (15,25-32), the pharisees and scribes, if Jesus associates with sinners in his effort to bring them back to their father.

The vocabulary of these three parables underscores the centrality of joy.⁴² Some form of *chairein* or *chará* depicts the joy of the shepherd (v. 5) and the father (v. 32), as well as the rejoicing in heaven over one who repents (vv. 7, 10). *Suncháirein* depicts the friends and neighbours rejoicing together with the shepherd and the housewife over their discover (vv. 6, 9).

Repeated images of joy occur in the third parable: *euphrainai* (feasting) in vv. 23, 32; the sound of music and singing (*sumphōnias kai*

³⁹ Cf. J. Dupont, "La brebis perdue et la crachme perdue (Lc. 15,1-10)", *Lumière et Vie* 34 (1951), Paroisse et Liturgie Suppl., pp. 15-23.

⁴⁰ L. Cerfaux-J. Cambier, "Luc", *Dict. de la Bible Suppl.*, vol. 5, c. 587.

⁴¹ No doctrinal explicitation follows the parable of the Prodigal as in the other two. The message is clear from the preceding parables and the introduction to the chapter. Cf. J. Cantinat, "Les paraboles de la miséricorde Lc 15,1-32", *Nouvelle Revue Théologique* 77 (1955), p. 264.

⁴² Rasco, *op. cit.*, p. 181.

chorōn) in v. 25. The very discovery of something that had been lost, the underlying experience of all the three parables, is itself an extended image of joy, most movingly expressed in the case of the father whose son has returned.

The frequent repetition of the notion of invitation and participation in vv. 6 and 9 (*sugkalei* and *sugchárete*) and "before the angels of God" (*chará enōpion tōn aggelōn tou Theou*) in v. 10 for example, emphasize the communitarian dimension of the Lucan theology of Christian joy. The same emphasis occurs in the father's request of the servants (v. 22) and in his repeated urging of the elder son to join in the rejoicing at his brother's return. It is a joy which one must share with others: the shepherd and the woman with their friends (cf. the prefixed verbs: *sugkalein*, *sugcháirein*); God with his angels; the father with his servants and especially with the older son.⁴³

The necessity of conversion is another underlying motif of the three parables. Conversion and the new way of life which corresponds to it are the indispensable basis of Christian joy.⁴⁴ In the first two parables two explicit references are made to the sinner who repents (*metanoiá* in v. 7; *metanoiō* in vv. 7 and 10). The third parable relates the entire process of rupture and reconciliation. Paradoxically, in the second part of the parable it is the elder son who must undergo a change of heart before he can share in the joy of salvation: "he was angry and refused to go in" (v. 28). An irony emerges from the parable's dramatic shift: the elder son is the one who runs the risk of being really lost.⁴⁵

Joy in the good news of universal salvation constitutes the theme of the entire chapter. Conversion of heart (*metanoiá*) is the human prerequisite for sharing this joy. In the form of a parable Jesus mildly rebukes the Pharisees for their criticism voiced in vv. 1 and 2; he invites them to share in his joy by changing their dispositions toward their brother and toward Him whom they are to recognize as having a father's heart to all.⁴⁶

This chapter expresses Jesus' invitation to all men, and particularly to the Pharisees who are called to be the religious leaders of the people, to share God's own joy in the person and activity of Christ. This will demand a conversion from their own proud unconcern and contempt for sinners. It is an invitation which cannot be accepted without a radical change of outlook. Jesus formulates this invitation both by his words and way of acting which reveal the spirit and joy of God in greeting the

⁴³ *ibid.* Also, C. H. Giblin, "Structural Considerations on Luke 15, *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 24 (1962), pp. 15-31.

⁴⁴ Du Toit, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

⁴⁵ Cf. W. Michaelis, *Die Gleichnisse Jesu* (Hamburg, 1956), p. 143

⁴⁶ Giblin, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

sinner.⁴⁷ He who sees Jesus sees God and hears the invitation to rejoice with him. Whoever shares the spirit of God will not condemn Jesus' approach to sinners, His person is the gospel message. He is the stronger man who overpowers Satan (11,22).⁴⁸ In his actions the merciful love of God for sinners becomes effectual. This is the claim of Jesus. Thus, without making any christological statement, the parable reveals itself as a veiled assertion of authority: Jesus makes the claim for himself that he is acting in God's stead, that he is God's representative.⁴⁹ The call to participate in God's saving love and joy is issued through Jesus, the image of the Father who performs the works of the Father.

E. Rasco notes that the last parable remains mysteriously open: we do not know whether the elder son accepted the invitation.⁵⁰ The real question concerns ourselves: do we rejoice with God and with his Christ at the entry into the kingdom of our sinful brother? The total commitment in this response, Rasco concludes, allows us to enter the heart of Christ and, through him, unites us with the Father who offers his love to all.

The joy of Zaccheus (19,1-10) is the final instance of rejoicing in the Lucan travel narrative. This story combines several of Luke's favourite themes, revealing the Lucan tendency to hold a large number of threads in his hand at once. The process of conversion (*metanoia*) begins when Zaccheus hears the words of Jesus with grateful joy; and, in typical Lucan fashion, Zaccheus evidences the sincerity of his conversion by the renunciation of his wealth in favour of the poor (19,8). The banquet motif of conversion-agape provokes the characteristic complaint of the Pharisees that Jesus dines with sinners (9,7; also 5,29-30, where the same rebuke is registered when Jesus dines with Levi).⁵¹

The joy of Zaccheus' response to the call to salvation contrasts with the sadness of the rich ruler who cannot bring himself to giving all his goods to the poor (18,18-25). It contrasts with the plight of the rich fool (12,16-21) who has completely missed the trans-temporal significance of life and has consequently closed himself off from genuine

⁴⁷ Rasco, *op. cit.*, p. 182.

⁴⁸ *ibid.*

⁴⁹ Jeremias, *op. cit.*, p. 182.

⁵⁰ Rasco, *op. cit.*, p. 183.

⁵¹ P. Minear, "Luke's Use of the Birth Stories", from *Studies in Luke-Acts*, ed. by L. Keck-J. L. Martyn (New York, 1966), p. 116, described the process of conversion in Luke: "There is a typical Lucan syndrome descriptive of the true response to God's redemption. It includes hearing, turning, repenting, praying, being forgiven, rejoicing, deeds appropriate to repentance, the gift of the Spirit, a people prepared and witnessing." See also W. C. van Unnik, "L'usage de *sodsein*, 'sauver', et des ses derives dans les evangiles synoptiques", from *La Formation des Evangiles* (Bruges, 1957), Colloquium Biblicum Lovaniense, 192.

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fulfilment. Only those who perceive the transitoriness of this world's wealth and use it for the good of the human community, like Zaccheus, find the authentic security of salvation joy. Thirdly, Zaccheus' joyful response contrasts with the attitude of the Pharisees who close themselves off from the kingdom and its messianic joy by the fact that they would exclude their fellowmen from it. They fail to recognize their own poverty and misery before God; consequently, they lack compassion for others in need of mercy (11,41, 46, 52).

Resurrectional joy is manifest when Christ appears to the stunned disciples who "disbelieved for joy" (24,41). Joy, not sorrow, was the apostles' reaction to Jesus' departure at the Ascension, and it remained a constant characteristic of the Christian life (24,52; Acts 2,46).⁵² Its presence was especially noticeable in times of persecution (Acts 5,41) and this appears natural when we see that it was closely connected with the Spirit's presence both in Jesus and in his disciples (10,21; Acts 13,52), and remember as well that the Spirit was to be present among the disciples above all in time of persecution (12,11-12). Joy in persecution underscores the trans-temporal quality of Christian joy. Persecution was to be the lot of the Christian community (21,12-18) and a source of blessedness (6,22-3, 26); it is an assurance that the Kingdom of God is present and that its future consummation is at hand. The joy of the eschatological banquet has begun, and all mankind is invited to participate.

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⁵² B. Reicke, *op. cit.*, pp. 87-88; also, A. Hastings, *Prophet and Witness in Jerusalem* (New York, 1958), 166.