

First Baptist Missionary Church

Sunday School Lessons

2018 Church Theme:

“Stepping Into Greater”



*2018 First Quarter
January, February, March*



Introduction

The Gospel of Luke

The author of this Gospel, Luke, was an associate of the Apostle Paul and also the author of the book of Acts. Luke was a physician and historian. As he traveled with Paul, Luke would listen to and record stories on the life of Jesus from those who had personal encounters with the Savior. Being a keen observer and a serious writer, Luke carefully detailed the life, ministry, and miracles of Jesus Christ. He was careful to include the details of the political culture, the history, and surrounding events during Jesus' ministry.

Luke was Greek; a Gentile Christian. Luke wanted everyone to know that God offers salvation to all who would trust in His Son, Jesus. Therefore, Luke presented the life, works, the teachings, the death, and resurrection of Jesus in a way that anyone could easily understand. He begins his gospel explaining the purpose of his writing. He then describes the birth of Jesus and some events of His childhood. Later, he details the events leading to the public ministry of Jesus, including His baptism and His temptation. From there, Luke tells of Jesus' ministry, miracles and teachings. In Luke, Jesus displayed His power that validated His authority given to Him by the Father, including the authority to forgive sins and the power to heal. Further, Luke gives us lessons from Jesus including: how to pray effectively, how not to act, including being hypocritical and judgmental, how not to worry about things life but to trust God, and how we must repent from our sins.

Luke seems to show in his gospel the love and hope made available to those who appear pushed aside by society. Luke shows a compassionate Savior who communes and heals those who are sick, the children, the women, those in need of His touch. Luke's intentions are to show a Savior that is for everyone; one who desires to have a relationship with all. And with Him and through Him we can live and experience a transformed life.

First Quarter Lessons

January, February, March 2018

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. "Jesus is Tempted" | Luke 4: 1-13 |
| 2. "Blessings and Woes" | Luke 6: 17-26 |
| 3. "The Way to Treat Others" | Luke 6: 27-42 |
| 4. "Where the Seeds Fell" | Luke 8: 4-15 |
| 5. "Power and Authority" | Luke 9: 1-6; 10-17 |
| 6. "A Good Neighbor" | Luke 10: 25-37 |
| 7. "You Don't Have to Worry" | Luke 12: 22-34 |
| 8. "Jesus Teaches at a Dinner Party" | Luke 14: 7-24 |
| 9. "Finding the Lost" | Luke 15: 1-10 |
| 10. "Story of Two Sons" | Luke 15: 11-32 |
| 11. "Sacrificing for the Kingdom" | Luke 18: 18-30 |
| 12. "Jesus Enters Jerusalem" | Luke 19: 28-44 |



January 7, 2018

“Jesus is Tempted”

Luke 4:1-13

1 Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, left the Jordan and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness,

2 where for forty days he was tempted by the devil. He ate nothing during those days, and at the end of them he was hungry.

3 The devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread.”

4 Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Man shall not live on bread alone.’”

5 The devil led him up to a high place and showed him in an instant all the kingdoms of the world.

6 And he said to him, “I will give you all their authority and splendor; it has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to.

7 If you worship me, it will all be yours.”

8 Jesus answered, “It is written: ‘Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.’”

9 The devil led him to Jerusalem and had him stand on the highest point of the temple. “If you are the Son of God,” he said, “throw yourself down from here.

10 For it is written: “He will command his angels concerning you to guard you carefully;

11 they will lift you up in their hands, so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.”

12 Jesus answered, “It is said: ‘Do not put the Lord your God to the test.’”

13 When the devil had finished all this tempting, he left him until an opportune time.

Commentary:

Have you ever wondered how Luke heard the story of Jesus' temptation? Jesus was alone in the desert; no one had observed him. Jesus doubtless told his disciples about his own temptation experience to teach them how to resist temptation themselves.

In this lesson, forty days of temptation in the wilderness began when **Jesus was filled with the Holy Spirit**. The Spirit is guiding Jesus into a time of temptation and testing. During those days, Jesus ate nothing, so he was hungry at the end. Generally, it is assumed that being filled with the Spirit brings an absence of temptation and testing, and not being filled leaves one open to the devil and his temptations.

The three temptations Jesus faced were brought to Him **by the devil**. The devil tried to make Jesus do wrong things. Just as the devil, through the serpent, caused Adam and Eve to fall into sin in the Garden of Eden, he was now trying to stop God's plan of redemption in Jesus.

The first temptation seemed pretty simple. When **the devil** came to tempt Jesus, he began by recognizing who Jesus is. The devil then offered Jesus a quick way to feed his hunger. He said to Him, "If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread." This first temptation is based on the hunger of Jesus. The devil tells Jesus that to satisfy his hunger, all He had to do was **command this stone to become bread**. Jesus' intent was that the physical needs must be met God's way, not our own selfish and short-cut way. We are tempted to provide a quick fix for our physical hungers; however, God was able to supply our needs, but we must wait on him and seek to do this his way. Bread—physical fulfillment—is not more important than God's Word and way. Jesus answered by quoting Deuteronomy: "It takes more than bread to really live."

For the second temptation, the devil now recognizes that Jesus is to be the Messiah, the Son of God. The devil showed Him in

a moment of time, all the kingdoms of the world at once. He said to him, "They are yours in all their splendor to serve your pleasure. I'm in charge of them all and can give them to anyone I choose. "Worship me, and it shall all be yours." But Jesus refused and again quoted Deuteronomy saying: "Worship the Lord your God and only the Lord your God. Serve him with absolute single-heartedness."

The third temptation, the devil took him to Jerusalem and put him on top of the temple. He told Jesus "If you are God's Son, jump. It's written that "He has placed you in the care of angels to protect you; they will catch you and you won't so much as stub your toe on a stone." Jesus answered saying, "Yes", and it is also written, 'Don't you dare tempt the Lord your God.'" Having exhausted all these ways of tempting him, the devil left temporarily to wait for another opportunity.

While God does not tempt anyone, He does allow people to be and even leads people to places where they will face temptation. Three temptations today led to comfort, power, and wealth. Three ways that can take us over. Like us all, money, power and comfort can lead us astray. Temptation is not a sin. Sin is the result of our acting on the temptation. God provides the strength we need to steer clear of temptation by knowing Scripture well enough to answer our doubts and fears and temptations. You can say no to all evil because Jesus lives in you, and He has given you the Holy Spirit to lead you into all truth and knowledge. Therefore, take your stand as a child of God and claim His strength and victory!

Questions:

1. Is temptation only merely unavoidable, or is it necessary to our growth as disciples?
2. What is the importance of the first temptation, to turn stones into bread? Which temptations we face are similar?
3. What is the importance of the second temptation, to attain power and splendor? What similar temptations do we face today?
4. What is the essence of the third temptation, to throw oneself down from the temple? How do we face this temptation today?

Daily Readings

Monday, January 8	- Luke 4: 14-30
Tuesday, January 9	- Luke 4: 31-44
Wednesday, January 10	- Luke 5: 1-16
Thursday, January 11	- Luke 5: 17-39
Friday, January 12	- Luke 6: 1-16
Saturday, January 13	- Reflections
Sunday, January 14	- Luke 6: 17-26

January 14, 2018

“Blessings and Woes”

Luke 6:17-26

¹⁷ He went down with them and stood on a level place. A large crowd of his disciples was there and a great number of people from all over Judea, from Jerusalem, and from the coastal region around Tyre and Sidon,

¹⁸ who had come to hear him and to be healed of their diseases. Those troubled by impure spirits were cured,

¹⁹ and the people all tried to touch him, because power was coming from him and healing them all.

²⁰ Looking at his disciples, he said: “Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God

²¹ Blessed are you who hunger now, for you will be satisfied. Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh.

²² Blessed are you when people hate you, when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil, because of the Son of Man.

²³ “Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, because great is your reward in heaven. For that is how their ancestors treated the prophets.

²⁴ “But woe to you who are rich, for you have already received your comfort.

²⁵ Woe to you who are well fed now, for you will go hungry. Woe to you who laugh now, for you will mourn and weep.

²⁶ Woe to you when everyone speaks well of you, for that is how their ancestors treated the false prophets

Commentary:

In the 6th chapter of his gospel, Luke tells us that Jesus goes up a mountain to pray where he spent the night praying to his Father. The next morning, he gathers his disciples and chose twelve of them and called them apostles. As they were coming down from the mountain on a plain, a great crowd gathered towards him. Many who gathered came to hear him teach, some seeking for Him to heal them. Seeing this as a great teaching opportunity, Jesus begins his lesson. *It is believed that Luke here gives a shorter version to Matthew's 'Sermon on the Mount.'*

Beginning in verse 20, Jesus sets forth the contrasts of blessings and woes. In the first section, (verses 20-23), Jesus offers encouragement and instruction to the believers. He tells them that God will bless them though the world may hate them. In the first section, Jesus begins each verse with the word “**blessed**”, which means “*truly happy.*” In the second section, (verses 24-26), Jesus addressed those living according to worldly values. He begins each verse in this section with the word “**woe**”, which means “*how terrible, sadness, and great concern.*” Jesus is warning them of a coming reversal when they will be left empty and filled with sorrow if they do not repent.

In verse 20, Jesus said, “*Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.*” Yet he goes on to say in verse 24, “*But woe to you who are rich, for you have already received your comfort.*” Here, Jesus is referring to those who have recognized that the greatest need in life is spiritual, not material. Rather than pursuing a life of accumulating goods, these people have recognized their spiritual poverty before God and have come to Him for fulfilment. Those who turn to God for help we discover that He is more than ready to meet their needs. In fact, the very Kingdom of Heaven is theirs. They

become connected to all the riches and joys God has to offer. Jesus says, how blessed and happy is the person who recognizes how poor they are in a spiritual sense and who turns to God in faith. They will experience God's abundant life here on earth and find fulfilment in eternity. However, when Jesus says, "Woe to you who are rich, for you are receiving your comfort in full," He is referring to those who are living as if this world is all there is. They are living for selfish pleasures and comforts and they are relying on themselves to gain these things. And by relying on themselves to gain the riches of the world, they in turn neglect God. He is not saying that to be rich is bad, but is implying that those who rely on money and possessions for happiness are in great danger. With money and materials as their god, they mistakenly think these things will satisfy their every need. However, they do not realize that spiritually they are poor.

In verse 21, Jesus said, "*Blessed are you who hunger now, for you will be satisfied.*" In verse 25 however, he said, "*Woe to you who are well fed now, for you will go hungry.*" Again, Jesus is really talking about spiritual hunger; to have a hunger for the things of God, His Word, to fulfill His Will. who will be satisfied. As Matthew puts it in his Gospel, "*Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.*" Those who hunger after God will find that He is more than ready to satisfy the longings of our hearts. The person who hungers spiritual food will be blessed. However, Jesus says, "*Woe to you who are well fed now, for you will go hungry.*" Those who "feed" themselves on worldly pleasures and delights and who never bother to consider their spiritual well-being will one day discover that they are in fact starving. Feeding off of the world will never really satisfy the cries of the human heart.

Jesus goes to say in verse 21, "*Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh.*" Then in verse 25 He says, "*Woe to you who laugh now, for you will mourn and weep.*" Yes, those who turn to God in their sorrow will find His comfort. Those who "weep" and feel sorry over their sin, admitting their need and their unworthiness, they are the ones who will experience the wonderful joy of God's forgiveness. Moreover, those who suffer now in this world because of their faith will one day find great pleasure. On the other hand, those who laugh now, in the sense taking light in their attitude to spiritual things and in establishing a strong faith in God and are enjoying themselves in worldly pleasures and sinful living are headed for a rude awakening.

Lastly, Jesus said, "*Blessed are you when people hate you, when they exclude you and insult you and reject your name as evil, because of the Son of Man.*" He goes further and says, "*Woe to you when everyone speaks well of you, for that is how their ancestors treated the false prophets.*" He is talking about those who face ridicule, rejection, and persecution because of the faith and obedience to Him. Here, Jesus warns His followers that being one of His disciples is not a popular choice as many will treat you wrong, may feel ostracized, and insulted by others. Jesus goes to say though that despite being treated harshly by others, He himself will bless those who faithfully follow Him and will greatly reward them in heaven. However, Jesus warns those that seek popularity from people. Yes, we should make a good impression on people and be a good witness by living a life of love and integrity. Yet we should not compromise our faith and principles to win favor from people. We should always stand for what is right even if we stand alone.

Questions:

1. What were some things Jesus did right before giving this message? How did it help shape His message?
2. What is your understanding when Jesus said, “poor and rich” ... “hungry and full”?
3. Compare Jesus’ teaching here to that of the messages heard today. Are there any similarities? Are there any differences?
4. What are some blessings and “warnings” in being a disciple of Jesus Christ?



Daily Readings

Monday, January 15	- Romans 12: 9-21
Tuesday, January 16	- Matthew 5: 38-48
Wednesday, January 17	- 1 Peter 3: 8-18
Thursday, January 18	- Deuteronomy 15: 7-11
Friday, January 19	- John 8:1-11
Saturday, January 20	- Reflections
Sunday, January 21	- Luke 6: 27-42

January 21, 2018

“The Way To Treat Others”

Luke 6: 27-42

27 “But to you who are listening I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you,

28 bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you.

29 If someone slaps you on one cheek, turn to them the other also. If someone takes your coat, do not withhold your shirt from them.

30 Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back.

31 Do to others as you would have them do to you.

32 “If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them.

33 And if you do good to those who are good to you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners do that.

34 And if you lend to those from whom you expect repayment, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, expecting to be repaid in full.

35 But love your enemies, do good to them, and lend to them without expecting to get anything back. Then your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High, because he is kind to the ungrateful and wicked.

36 Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

37 “Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.

38 Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together and running over, will be poured into your lap. For

with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.”

39 He also told them this parable: “Can the blind lead the blind? Will they not both fall into a pit?

40 The student is not above the teacher, but everyone who is fully trained will be like their teacher.

41 “Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no

attention to the plank in your own eye?

42 How can you say to your brother, ‘Brother, let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when you yourself fail to see the plank in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.



Commentary:

In last week's lesson, we studied the blessings and woes of living a spiritual life versus that of an earthly life. This Sunday, we will look at how we are to conduct ourselves among people to glorify God. There's an old saying that says, "No man is an island." We are placed on earth to live among others in peace, love and harmony. As brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus, why then do some find it so hard to accomplish the desires of our Lord, which He has already put forth for us?

In today's lesson, we are told how we are to treat each other. Verse 27 begins with a profound statement, "But to you who are listening I say." Jesus prepares His audience for an important message and wants those who are listening to really pay attention. He instructed those who are to follow Him and be His disciples to love their enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, and pray for those who mistreat you. Jesus taught that we are to love, share, and disregard hurtful things.

Jesus goes further in His teaching and says, "What good is it to love those who love you as sinners do the same?" We are to love even our enemies and do good to them and lend to them not expecting anything in return if we want to make God proud of us and be considered children of God. This is the way the Lord expects us to live. Jesus Himself served as a true example and role model for us as HE lived out this teaching. He Himself was talked about, falsely accused, lied on, challenged, left alone, whipped, spat on, cursed at and humiliated. Yet, He died for all and loved all. With Christ showing us how to do love, share, and give even to our enemies, He expects us to love as well. We must remove any obstacles, selfish pride and desires to cloud our minds and hearts and be obedient to His Will.

God is pleased when we focus on Him and obey His commands. We are to love one another, pray for each other,

encourage others and be there to lend a helping hand to our friends and foes. Yes, we are all on this Christian journey together and we need one another. God made us to be in relations with each other. Therefore, are you truly listening?

Questions:

1. Are you able to treat everyone with love and kindness; even to those who may not like you? If not, have you sought God for an answer as to what the problem may be?
2. What obstacle or circumstance may be hindering you from truly listening and following God's Will in loving others?

Daily Readings

Monday, January 22	- Luke 6: 43-49
Tuesday, January 23	- Luke 7: 1-10
Wednesday, January 24	- Luke 7: 11-17
Thursday, January 25	- Luke 7: 18-35
Friday, January 26	- Luke 7: 36 - 8:3
Saturday, January 27	- Reflections
Sunday, January 28	- Luke 8:4-15

January 28, 2018

“Where the Seeds Fell”

Luke 8:4-15

4 While a large crowd was gathering and people were coming to Jesus from town after town, he told this parable:

5 “A farmer went out to sow his seed. As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path; it was trampled on, and the birds ate it up.

6 Some fell on rocky ground, and when it came up, the plants withered because they had no moisture.

7 Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up with it and choked the plants.

8 Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up and yielded a crop, a hundred times more than was sown.” When he said this, he called out, “Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear.”

9 His disciples asked him what this parable meant.

10 He said, “The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of God has been given to you, but to others I speak in parables, so that, ““though seeing, they may not see; though hearing, they may not understand.’

11 “This is the meaning of the parable: The seed is the word of God.

12 Those along the path are the ones who hear, and then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved.

13 Those on the rocky ground are the ones who receive the word with joy when they hear it, but they have no root. They believe for a while, but in the time of testing they fall away.

14 The seed that fell among thorns stands for those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by life's worries, riches and pleasures, and they do not mature.

15 But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop.

Commentary:

In this chapter Jesus is traveling through the different towns proclaiming the good news of the Kingdom of God. In doing so, a great crowd gathered and people from various towns came unto him. As they gathered, Jesus begins to share the parable of a sower. In the parable, the sower went out to sow his seed. As he sowed some seeds fell among different areas. After sharing the parable Jesus said, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear." The parable baffled the disciples so they asked Jesus what the parable meant.

First, what is a parable? A parable is a story that hides truth. Parables are designed to keep the truth hidden until a person is ready for the truth entailed within. Speaking to the disciples, Jesus said, "to you it has been given to know the secrets of the Kingdom of God, but for others they are in parables." With this statement, Jesus asserts that there are secrets to the Kingdom of God, and only those who seek His Kingdom will understand. To those who have no interest in the Kingdom, the secrets and the Kingdom message are simply viewed as stories and fables. The Kingdom message may be "too heavy" for those who prefer to religiously feast on programs, traditions, or self-centered doctrines as opposed to the Bread of Life, which is Jesus. Hence, Jesus says people who do not desire the Kingdom of God are likened to those who "see, but don't see; hear, but they don't understand."

In verse 11, Jesus himself explains the parable to his interested students. He defines the seed as the Word of God. Whenever the Word of faith is shared there are generally four groups present: (1) *by the waysides*, (2) *stony grounders*, (3) *among thorners*, and (4) *good grounders*. 1. *By the waysiders* represent those who hear the Word, but as soon as they hear it, the enemy snatches it from them so they won't believe the Word, which is needed for their deliverance. 2. *Stony grounders* represent those who listen but don't believe a word that's been spoken because they themselves do not have any roots. These individuals are inconsistent and refuse to persevere long enough to develop a strong foundation or root system. Hence, their faithlessness and personal character causes them to remain shallow and fruitless. 3. The *among thorners* represent those who receive the message, but persecution and trials, which come to make us stronger, causes them to forsake everything they've learned and give up. 4. The *good grounders* represent those who receive the Word. This group studies to show themselves approved, rightly dividing the Word of Truth. This group allows the Word to penetrate their hearts and minds through the teaching of the Holy Spirit, to destroy any form of envy or bitterness from taking root. This group applies the Word of Faith in difficult times, and overcome personal flaws to bring forth much fruit in the Kingdom.

Jesus spoke in parables to the multitudes because everyone present was not ready to receive the Kingdom message. Some people came to see what they could get, but were not interested in Jesus. However, God does not volunteer information; hunger attracts God. God will only tell you what you want to know, take you as far as you want to go, and show you as far as you want to see. Our loving Father forces himself upon no man. God is everywhere and those who seek Him shall find Him. The secrets of God are reserved for those who reverence Him (Psalm 25:14). If you are interested in God's Kingdom then get serious about your pursuit. Those who hunger and thirst after righteousness shall be filled (Matt. 5:6). Our Father has plenty to share; but the question is are we too busy, too

stressed, or too burdened with trivial matters to listen? The Father knows exactly what we are in need of even before we ask. When we seek the Kingdom of God, we will find it; for God is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him. As ambassadors of God's Kingdom we must make a conscious decision to pursue Christ and learn of him. We are called to be "*good grounders*" taking our King with us everywhere we go, impacting our environment by bringing the authority and influence of Heaven - to shine a light in dark places.

Questions:

1. Compare/contrast the 4 groups described in the parable?
2. Reflection: Which of the 4 groups would you most likely identify with?
3. What obstacles, if any, distract you from receiving, believing, and applying God's Word?
4. From the lesson what should we remember as we go out and spread God's word to others?

Daily Readings

Monday, January 29	- Luke 8: 16-25
Tuesday, January 30	- Luke 8: 26-39
Wednesday, January 31	- Luke 8: 40-56
Thursday, February 1	- Mark 6: 1-13
Friday, February 2	- Matthew 10: 1-16
Saturday, February 3	- Reflections
Sunday, February 4	- Luke 9: 1-6; 10-17

February 4, 2018

“Power and Authority”

Luke 9: 1-6; 10-17

1 When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases,

2 and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal the sick

3 He told them: “Take nothing for the journey—no staff, no bag, no bread, no money, no extra shirt.

4 Whatever house you enter, stay there until you leave that town.

5 If people do not welcome you, leave their town and shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them.”

6 So they set out and went from village to village, proclaiming the good news and healing people everywhere

10 When the apostles returned, they reported to Jesus what they had done. Then he took them with him and they withdrew by themselves to a town called Bethsaida,

11 but the crowds learned about it and followed him. He welcomed them and spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and healed those who needed healing.

12 Late in the afternoon the Twelve came to him and said, “Send the crowd away so they can go to the surrounding villages and countryside and find food and lodging, because we are in a remote place here.”

13 He replied, “You give them something to eat.” They answered, “We have only five loaves of bread and two fish unless we go and buy food for all this crowd.”

14 (About five thousand men were there.) But he said to his disciples, "Have them sit down in groups of about fifty each."

15 The disciples did so, and everyone sat down.

16 Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he

gave thanks and broke them. Then he gave them to the disciples to distribute to the people.

17 They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over.

Commentary

In our last lesson the disciples asked Jesus what a parable He had shared with the people meant. The first part of Jesus' response was "The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of God has been given to you." Wow, think of the significance of that statement. They, the disciples (students) had risen to a point that they were given superior insight and knowledge.

We know that to whom much is given, much is required, so now in today's lesson we see Jesus giving them power and authority. Up until now Jesus taught them and they witnessed Him healing the sick, casting out demons, and proclaiming the kingdom of God. Now they were to go out among the people and do the same. In this lesson we see Jesus giving the instructions that they are not to take anything with them, going only into the homes that accept them and staying there until they leave that town. If they are not accepted in a town, leave and kick the dust off of their feet (which in that time symbolized disdain). This task they completed without the presence of Jesus.

In the next part of the lesson we find the disciples with Jesus who was speaking to a very large crowd and healing those who needed healing. The disciples seeing the lateness of the day, realized that they were in a remote place, inquired if they could send the crowds away and leave to find food and lodging. Jesus replied telling them to feed the people. The disciples informed Jesus that there were only 5 loaves of bread and two fish to feed 5000 men. Jesus gave instructions to seat the people in groups of fifty each. He then took the bread and fish, lifted it up to heaven, gave thanks and broke them. After all the people were fed, close to 20,000, there were still 12 baskets of broken pieces picked up by the disciples.

With Jesus there among them the disciples did not look into themselves for a solution to feeding the multitude. The disciples only saw what was before them and forgot about the power and authority they had. How many times do we forget about the power of the Holy Spirit which is in us and look at our circumstances as overwhelming? How much sadness, depression and discontentment do we suffer as a result of not looking up and giving our issues to God? Remember Jesus looked up to heaven, gave thanks then broke the bread. God has given us all of the tools we need to overcome our trials and tribulations. God prepares and provides for us to be equipped for service. Like the disciples, He has given us the power and authority to do great things. We must remember what we possess.

Questions

1. Why do you think Jesus instructed the disciples to take nothing with them when they went out to proclaim the gospel?

2. In feeding such a large crowd, why did Jesus want the disciples to feed the group instead of sending them home to eat?
3. When facing a challenge; problem, do you use the tools you already possess or do you first look to others for solutions?
4. Are you allowing your power and authority to lie dormant or are you taking charge of your life?
5. Where are you as a student of God's Word? Can He send you out to do His will?

Daily Readings

Monday, February 5	- Luke 9: 18-27
Tuesday, February 6	- Luke 9: 28-36
Wednesday, February 7	- Luke 9: 37-50
Thursday, February 8	- Luke 9: 51-62
Friday, February 9	- Luke 10: 1- 24
Saturday, February 10	- Reflections
Sunday, February 11	- Luke 10: 25-37

February 11, 2018

“A Great Neighbor”

Luke 10: 25-37

25 On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

26 “What is written in the Law?” he replied. “How do you read it?”

27 He answered, “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind’; and, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”

28 “You have answered correctly,” Jesus replied. “Do this and you will live.”

29 But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”

30 In reply Jesus said: “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went

away, leaving him half dead.

31 A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side.

32 So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side.

33 But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him.

34 He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him.

35 The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. ‘Look after him,’ he said, ‘and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.’

36 “Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?”

37 The expert in the law replied, “The one who had mercy on him.” Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise.”

Commentary:

This year’s vision is embodied in this week’s commentary. The term “greater” is often thrown around without any thought to its implication. To be great, one must exceed all standard and expectations and still have capability for more. In the scripture lesson, an expert stands before Jesus to test Him. The “expert” or, according to the King James Version, “lawyer,” attempted to show Jesus up by trapping Him in a battle of knowledge and wit. The expert was trying to show his greatness but he challenged the One that was greater. The expert asked Jesus, “What must I do to inherit eternal life?” Jesus answered, “What does the Law say?” He responded, “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind and love your neighbor as yourself.” Jesus told him to do this and he shall live. But wanting to “justify” himself, the expert proceeded and asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” It is with this question the Lord gave a parable.

The parable tells us the story of a man who was brutally attacked and left for dead. A priest and a Levite were members of high esteem and scriptural knowledge but neither used love in this situation as they did not stop to help the man. According to the parable, the man was mistreated three times: once by the attackers, once by the priest and once more by the Levite. However, it is the Samaritan that goes the extra mile and shows greatness. Not only did the Samaritan help the man physically by tending his wounds, he also helped him emotionally by giving him peace of mind and comfort through placing him in an inn and covering the bill. The Samaritan showed greatness

in loving his neighbor and Jesus showed the expert the path to that greatness.

Questions:

1. Did the expert/lawyer really desire the way to eternal life?
2. Why did the Samaritan respond differently from the priest and Levite?
3. Why did Jesus share this parable when the expert already knew the Law?
4. In what ways can we go the extra mile to show greatness to others?

Daily Readings

Monday, February 12	- Luke 10: 38 -11:13
Tuesday, February 13	- Luke 11: 14-36
Wednesday, February 14	- Luke 11: 37-53
Thursday, February 15	- Luke 12: 1-12
Friday, February 16	- Luke 12: 13-21
Saturday, February 17	- Reflections
Sunday, February 18	- Luke 12: 22-34

February 18, 2018

“You Don’t Have to Worry”

Luke 12: 22-34

22 Then Jesus said to his disciples: “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear.

23 For life is more than food, and the body more than clothes.

24 Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds!

25 Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life?

26 Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?

27 “Consider how the wild flowers grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these.

28 If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you—you of little faith!

29 And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it.

30 For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them.

31 But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.

32 “Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom.

33 Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will never fail,

where no thief comes near
and no moth destroys.

34 For where your treasure
is, there your heart will be
also.

Commentary:

As we look at the lesson for today there is one word in the title that sticks out and that is the word WORRY. The word “worry” means to give way to anxiety or unease allowing one’s mind to dwell on difficulty or troubles. The word “worry” comes from an old Anglo-Saxon word meaning “to choke” or “Strangle”. We are all guilty of worrying about something. As humans we are concerned about bad situations in our world and in our personal lives, but if we’re not careful, the devil will cause us to worry about things that God has already made provisions. If we think back for a moment we have heard sermons on worry, as there are many scriptures that talk about worry. The Bible instructs us about worry and what to do about it. In this lesson we will focus on Jesus instructing his disciples on the subject of worrying.

Verse 22-26 Jesus addresses his disciples by telling them not to worry about having enough food to eat or about having adequate clothing to wear. At this time having enough food and clothing was having the bare essentials because this meant surviving. In today’s world we tend to worry about so much more not only having the bare essentials but so much more such as our children, our jobs, our relationships, etc. It does not matter if it was the disciples worrying about food and clothing or the worries we tend to have today as born-again believers we are to learn to cast all our care on Jesus. Jesus let’s His disciples know that there is more to life than food and clothing. Jesus gives the disciples an example of how God takes care of

the ravens who have no storerooms. Will He not care for humans, His most valuable and beloved creatures? As we all have experienced, worry does not make things better but can make things worse as it steals our peace, physically wears us out, and can even make us sick. When we worry we're doing the devil's job for him. Worry is caused by not trusting God to take care of our situations we face in life. When we don't trust God we will always come up short, unable to bring about suitable solutions.

Verses 27-32 In these verses we see another example given of how God takes care of His creation. When we look at flowers and the variety of colors, the different shapes and sizes we can't help but be captivated by the beauty of flowers that we only get to enjoy for a season because they fade away. Even the wealthy King Solomon did not dress himself as God has clothed the lilies. The illustration of grass indicates that God as cares enough to provide beauty for his creation that only has a short life, surely, He will provide us with what we need. Since God has promised that He will supply all of our needs, all we need to be concerned with is doing the will of God.

Verses 33-34 **Sell what you have.** When God meets all of our needs we should look around us and be concerned about the needs of others and give. By giving to others we are storing up our treasures in Heaven. Knowing God and investing in His purpose should be the treasure we seek.

Questions:

1. Jesus commands us not to worry. But how can we avoid it?
2. Worry or Worship? Write down your thoughts about both.
3. What does it mean to seek God's Kingdom? As a follower of Jesus what things are you spreading about the Kingdom to others?

Daily Readings

Monday, February 19	- Luke 12: 35-48
Tuesday, February 20	- Luke 12: 49-59
Wednesday, February 21	- Luke 13: 1-8
Thursday, February 22	- Luke 13: 9-21
Friday, February 23	- Luke 13: 22-35
Saturday, February 24	- Reflections
Sunday, February 25	- Luke 14: 1-24

February 25, 2018

“Jesus Teaches at a Dinner Party”

Luke 14: 7-24 (NLT)

7 When Jesus noticed that all who had come to the dinner were trying to sit in the seats of honor near the head of the table, he gave them this advice:

8 “When you are invited to a wedding feast, don’t sit in the seat of honor. What if someone who is more distinguished than you has also been invited?

9 The host will come and say, ‘Give this person your seat.’ Then you will be embarrassed, and you will have to take whatever seat is left at the foot of the table!

10 “Instead, take the lowest place at the foot of the table. Then when your host sees you, he will come and say, ‘Friend, we have a better place for you!’ Then you will be honored in front of all the other guests.

11 For those who exalt themselves will be humbled, and those who

humble themselves will be exalted.”

12 Then he turned to his host. “When you put on a luncheon or a banquet,” he said, “don’t invite your friends, brothers, relatives, and rich neighbors. For they will invite you back, and that will be your only reward.

13 Instead, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind.

14 Then at the resurrection of the righteous, God will reward you for inviting those who could not repay you.”

15 Hearing this, a man sitting at the table with Jesus exclaimed, “What a blessing it will be to attend a banquet in the Kingdom of God!”

16 Jesus replied with this story: “A man prepared a great feast and sent out many invitations.

¹⁷ When the banquet was ready, he sent his servant to tell the guests, ‘Come, the banquet is ready.’

¹⁸ But they all began making excuses. One said, ‘I have just bought a field and must inspect it. Please excuse me.’

¹⁹ Another said, ‘I have just bought five pairs of oxen, and I want to try them out. Please excuse me.’

²⁰ Another said, ‘I just got married, so I can’t come.’

²¹ “The servant returned and told his master what they had said. His master was furious and said, ‘Go

quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and invite the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame.’

²² After the servant had done this, he reported, ‘There is still room for more.’

²³ So his master said, ‘Go out into the country lanes and behind the hedges and urge anyone you find to come, so that the house will be full.

²⁴ For none of those I first invited will get even the smallest taste of my banquet.’”

Commentary:

Luke 14: 7-24

Here in Luke’s gospel, chapter 14, we see Jesus being invited to a meal at the home of one of the leaders of the Pharisees on a Sabbath. Verse 1 says that the Pharisees closely watched Jesus and it is believed they planted a man with dropsy there to trap Jesus knowing He would heal the man on the Sabbath.

Though their intentions for inviting Jesus came with an ulterior motive, Jesus would ‘turn the tables’ at the dinner party to expose how spiritually incorrect they were.

Jesus indeed heals the man with dropsy which appears to take place while the guests were assembling. After the healing takes place and the now healed man leaves, the guests start taking their seats; some rushing to sit in seats of honor. From observing this, Jesus proceeds teaching a lesson on humility. Using Proverbs 25:6-7, Jesus taught on not rushing to sit in seats of honor but rather sit in low places and be invited up. He warns the audience that running and sitting in places of honor can lead to embarrassment as one of great honor may arrive and the host may ask you to sit in a lower realm. However, the main thought Jesus was conveying to the crowd was the way of His kingdom. His Kingdom is much different for the world. In the world, people pursue titles and positions; looking for ways to see themselves greater than others. In Christ’s Kingdom, those who humble themselves and not seek positions are those who are exalted.

Jesus then turned to the host and said, “*When you put on a luncheon or a banquet, don’t invite your friends, brothers, relatives, and rich neighbors. For they will invite you back, and that will be your only reward. Instead, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind.*” Here, Jesus challenges our hearts in asking, “Do we care about those who are less fortunate than us?” While enjoying a great feast; party with our own kind, eating well and having a good time, do you ever pause and think about, do something grand for those who do not have?

It is implied that after Jesus spoke on these two topics, there was silence in the room. To break the silence, a man at the table speaks and says, “*What a blessing it will be to attend a banquet in the Kingdom of God.*” All this did was open the door for Jesus to share in another lesson.

Jesus tells a story of a man who prepared a great feast and sent out many invitations through his servant. When the banquet was ready, he sent his servant out to tell the guests that the meal was ready. In Jesus' day, when someone held a feast, the day of the feast was chosen and the guests were invited. Enough time was given for them to check their schedules and make plans to come to the feast. Those able to attend would let the host know that they would attend. On the day of the feast, when all was ready, servants were again sent to each of those who had accepted the invitation and were told to come and dine. If anyone accepted an invitation but then failed to show up when all was ready, it was considered an insult to the host. Just as today, if one accepted a dinner invitation and then at the last minute not show up is frowned upon.

Continuing in His story, Jesus said that all the guests, after accepting the initial invitation, started making excuses why they could not attend. One said, 'I have just bought a field and must inspect it. Please excuse me.' This person could have inspected the field prior to buying it and/or inspect the land after the feast. Another one said, 'I have just bought five pairs of oxen, and I want to try them out. Please excuse me.' Again, no successful farmer would make such purchase without ensuring the oxen were durable. Furthermore, they could have tried out the oxen after the feast. Lastly, another said, "I just got married, so I can't come. In that time, as it is today in some cases, time was set aside for preparations of a wedding. If this person knew they was getting married on that day, why accept the invitation to attend the banquet? Or, why not see if they could bring their spouse along with them to the banquet? With their excuses, they in turn insulted the host. Furious, the host sent the servant out again with instructions to invite all he saw: the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame." After the servant had done this, he reported, "There is still room for more." So, the host instructed the servant to go again and invite more so that the house will be full. The host said that those who were invited will not taste any of his banquet.

The meaning of Jesus' story is as follows... God is the host inviting people to the feast. The feast; the banquet is to fellowship with God, having a rich relationship with Him and enjoying the joys and blessings He has for us. The invited guests who made excuses represent the Jewish people, or at least those among them, like the Pharisees & experts in the law who were relying not on God's grace but on their own righteousness and status in society. All through their history the Jewish people were waiting on the coming of the Messiah and to the great feast of the Kingdom of God. Jesus is saying the feast is now ready, the Messiah has come, but here they are all making excuses as to why they cannot attend.

This lesson speaks to us today. Like the Jews of Jesus' day, we have been blessed with the Gospel, with opportunities to enter into the Kingdom of God. However, there are many like the Jews who offer "excuses" why not to accept His invitation. Many put things like possessions, money, other obligations and responsibilities to keep us from fellowshiping with, worshipping and serving our God. However, instead of making excuses, we should come when He calls us to come; come and accept His invitation for "everything is ready."

Jesus' teaching goes further for when He said in the story that the servant was asked to go back out and fill the house with the poor, the crippled, the blind, the lame and anyone who desired to come to the feast, meant that God welcomes all who desires to be with Him. Notice again that the host in the story invited the poor, crippled, the blind and the lame. These were the very same people Jesus said in verse 13 whom the Pharisees should invite to their feasts. It shows the wonderful truth that God welcomes those who society sometimes looks down on and despises. Jesus came into the world to seek & to save the lost.

Questions:

1. What does it mean to be humble?
2. What personal insight(s) did you get in reading verses 13 & 14?
3. What excuses do we make for our refusal to God's invitation?
4. What are the things that hinders us from completely following Him?
5. In what ways, if any, are you like the servant in verses 21-23 and inviting others to the feast of the Lord?

Daily Readings

Monday, February 26	- Luke 14: 25-35
Tuesday, February 27	- Ezekiel 18: 1-18
Wednesday, February 28	- Ezekiel 18: 19-32
Thursday, March 1	- Ezekiel 34: 1-16
Friday, March 2	- Matthew 18: 1-14
Saturday, March 3	- Reflections
Sunday, March 4	- Luke 15: 1-10

March 4, 2018

“Finding the Lost”

Luke 15:1-10

1 Now the tax collectors and sinners were all gathering around to hear Jesus.

2 But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, “This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.”

3 Then Jesus told them this parable:

4 “Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn’t he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it?

5 And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders

6 and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and

says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.’

7 I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.

8 “Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Doesn’t she light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it?

9 And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.’

10 In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

Commentary:

Have you ever misplaced something that was very valuable to you? Reflect for a moment how you felt when you could not find it. Did you give up, you kept searching until you found it and when it was found you rejoiced and couldn't wait to share the good news with others that you kept searching until you found it. Jesus came to the world to look for the lost people and save them. In our story today Jesus illustrates this with the parable of the lost sheep and the lost coin. Jesus used parables because everyone could understand them and they caused people to turn away from their sins and follow Him. As we examine the scriptures today you will see God loves sinners and delights in saving them.

One day as Jesus was teaching there were dishonest tax collectors and other notorious sinners who came to listen to Jesus' sermon. The Pharisees and the rule makers and teachers of the law were very upset with Jesus and begin to whisper and complain among themselves. They said, "This man welcomes sinners and eats with them." The Pharisees got so angry because they did not want Jesus to teach the people about God. They didn't want the "sinners" to think they were important to God. They didn't want the sinners to believe that God could save them.

The parable of the Lost Sheep and the Lost Coin shows us that God actively seeks those whose sin has taken them far away from His presence. We can see this throughout scripture. In Genesis 3:9, God searched for Adam and Eve, calling to them, "Where are you?" He didn't wait for His fallen children to come to Him, but actively pursued them. God pursued Moses from the day of his birth, finally meeting him at the burning bush and changing Moses' heart. God pursued the fugitive Jonah right into the ocean.

Jesus heard the Pharisees complaining about His willingness to hang out with sinners, so He told them a story that they all

could relate to, the Parable of the Lost Sheep. This was a perfect way to show them how wrong their thinking was. Jesus knew that sheep were very valuable and if one was lost it would be a painful loss for the owner. Jesus knew that once they found the lost sheep they would be great rejoicing because the sheep was back where it belonged. The lost sheep represent those that are unsaved and they need a savior and when they accept Jesus as their Savior there is great rejoicing because we are back where we belong with God.

Now when Jesus finished telling the Parable of the Lost Sheep, He told another similar story, the Parable of the Lost Coin. It seems as though Jesus wanted the Pharisees to understand clearly that He came to save those that were lost. This parable was about money. Money is a subject that we all are interested in, so you will have listening ears when you talk about money. Jesus knew that all the Pharisees that were present valued money and if they lost any would certainly look for it. The woman in the story lost a single coin, but she only had ten coins in all. So this coin was very important to her. So of course, she searched for it just like the Pharisees would have searched for misplaced wealth. They would look everywhere for it. They would search for it until they found it and oh what a celebration it would be. The Pharisees couldn't understand that to Jesus, every sinner is a prize worth searching for. Jesus loves every single person, whether they have wandered away from God or close to Him. Jesus is willing to do anything to find the lost sinners in this world. He is willing to hang out with them and teach them and tell them that His Father loves them more than anything. He was even willing to die on a cross so that we could be forgiven for our sins.

Questions:

1. Why were the Pharisees and teachers of the law bothered that Jesus associated with the sinners and tax collectors?
2. What keeps you away from people who need Christ?
3. What is the common element in both stories?
4. What is Jesus teaching in the importance of Evangelism? How important in “Evangelizing” to you and how much of it to you practice?

Daily Readings

Monday, March 5	- Proverbs 23: 19-22
Tuesday, March 6	- Proverbs 28: 1-6
Wednesday, March 7	- Amos 6:1-7
Thursday, March 8	- Romans 15: 1-13
Friday, March 9	- Ephesians 2: 1-5
Saturday, March 10	- Reflections
Sunday, March 11	- Luke 15: 11-32

March 11, 2018

“Story of Two Sons”

Luke 15: 11-32

¹¹ Jesus continued: “There was a man who had two sons.

¹² The younger one said to his father, ‘Father, give me my share of the estate.’ So he divided his property between them.

¹³ “Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living.

¹⁴ After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need.

¹⁵ So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs.

¹⁶ He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

¹⁷ “When he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death!

¹⁸ I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you.

¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.’

²⁰ So he got up and went to his father. “But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

²¹ “The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’

²² “But the father said to his servants, ‘Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet.

²³ Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let’s have a feast and celebrate.

²⁴ For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ So they began to celebrate.

²⁵ “Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing.

²⁶ So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on.

²⁷ ‘Your brother has come,’ he replied, ‘and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.’

²⁸ “The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him.

²⁹ But he answered his father, ‘Look! All these years I’ve been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends.

³⁰ But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!’

³¹ “‘My son,’ the father said, ‘you are always with me, and everything I have is yours.

³² But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’”

Commentary:

In this week's lesson, we look at the familiar story of the prodigal son. This parable spoken by Jesus embodies the very essence of love and forgiveness. The son in the story wasted the gifts and inheritances that were given to him. He did not value the inheritance given to him and when he really needed those gifts, they were all gone. It is a terrible thing to have had something of value and then lose it by carelessness. This is what happened to the son in this week's lesson, but he was clear headed enough to realize where he came from and that he could humble himself and go back to the life and home he left. Some people would have been stubborn and stayed for a long time suffering out of pride. However, this lesson is not about pride but about showing love. The father's love extended way past the son's mistakes and immaturity. When the son returned, the father received him with open arms and celebrated his return. The father in the story reminds us of Jesus. He is waiting with open arms for the return of the lost. When we come to Christ, we may have made many mistakes and wasted our gifts. But because of the love of God, we can always come home and partake in the inheritance that God has for all who are His.

Questions:

1. Why did the father allow the son to leave with his inheritance?
2. Was the father correct in allowing the son to return home restored to his former status?

3. Why was the elder son angry with the father?

4. How would you have handled the younger son's leaving and return? How would you have handled the older son's rejection of a party given for his brother.

Daily Readings

Monday, March 12	- Luke 16: 1-15
Tuesday, March 13	- Luke 16: 16-31
Wednesday, March 14	- Luke 17: 1-19
Thursday, March 15	- Luke 17: 20-37
Friday, March 16	- Luke 18: 1-17
Saturday, March 17	- Reflections
Sunday, March 18	- Luke 18: 18-30

March 18, 2018

“Sacrificing for the Kingdom”

Luke 18: 18-31

18 A religious leader asked Jesus, “Good Teacher, what must I do to get eternal life?”

19 Jesus said to him, “Why do you call me good? Only God is good.

20 And you know his commands: ‘You must not commit adultery, you must not murder anyone, you must not steal, you must not tell lies about others, you must respect your father and mother ’

21 But the leader said, “I have obeyed all these commands since I was a boy.”

22 When Jesus heard this, he said to the leader, “But there is still one thing you need to do. Sell everything you have and give the money to those who are poor. You will have riches in heaven. Then come and follow me.”

23 But when the man heard Jesus tell him to give away his money, he was sad. He didn’t want to do this, because he was very rich.

24 When Jesus saw that the man was sad, he said, “It will be very hard for rich people to enter God’s kingdom.

25 It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter God’s kingdom.”

26 When the people heard this, they said, “Then who can be saved?”

27 Jesus answered, “God can do things that are not possible for people to do.”

28 Peter said, “Look, we left everything we had and followed you.”

29 Jesus said, “I can promise that everyone who has left their home, wife,

brothers, parents, or
children for God's kingdom

30 will get much more than
they left. They will get

many times more in this
life. And in the world that
is coming they will get the
reward of eternal life."

Commentary:

The young man was a local official and questioned Jesus saying, "*Good teacher, what must I do to deserve eternal life?*" The young man believed he could do something to earn eternal life. To obtain eternal life means to enter the Kingdom of God. In John 3:3-5, Jesus tells Nicodemus that except a man is born again, he cannot see the Kingdom of God, and except a man is born of water and of Spirit he cannot enter into the Kingdom of God. Luke used the word *inherit* for the Gentile readers to clarify the rich young ruler's thought process. The young ruler thought that since he was a Jew, he had a good chance of inheriting eternal life based upon his ethnic relationship to Abraham.

Jesus responds to the young man with a question, "*Why are you calling me good? No one is good- only God - You know the commandments, don't you?*" The young man replied, "*I've kept them all for as long as I can remember.*" He tried to convince himself and Jesus that he was perfect since birth. He believed that through his own good works he would earn eternal life. However, it is by grace that we are saved through faith- and this is not from our own doing, it is the gift of God, not by works lest any man should boast (Ephesians 2:8-10). In other words, we cannot take credit for salvation, or eternal life. Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done. We have been created new in Christ Jesus, so that we can do the good things God prepared for us to do beforehand.

Since the young ruler did not want to live by grace, he chose to be judged by his own works. So, Jesus tells him, "*there is only*

one thing left for you to do: Sell everything you own and give it away to the poor – you will have riches in heaven, then come, follow me.” In the young ruler’s mind he was willing to follow Jesus up to a certain point; he was only willing to sacrifice only up to a certain point. So Jesus challenges him in the area where his heart was; the area that he truly valued. Jesus asked him to surrender that which he valued the most, then follow Him. When the young ruler heard this criterion he became sorrowful because he was unwilling to surrender his wealth. Why did Jesus ask him to sell all that he had and give it to the poor? Jesus knew that man can only have one master. In Luke 16:13 Jesus said, *“For neither you nor anyone else can serve two masters. You will hate one and show loyalty to the other, or else the other way around—you will be enthusiastic about one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.”* Jesus knew that wherever a person’s treasure is, that’s where their heart will be. Therefore, wherever you put the most of your time, energy, and money determines where your heart is.

The young man’s response led to Jesus’ next statement, *“Do you have any idea how difficult it is for people who have it all to enter God’s Kingdom?”* It is hard for people who think that they are self-reliant and self-sustaining to trust God and follow His leading in worship or in the everyday affairs of life. Jesus teaches his disciples that the Kingdom life requires trust in God as the source of life. Peter reminds Jesus that he and some of the other disciples have sacrificed all that they had to follow Jesus. Jesus reassures Peter that anyone who sacrifices for the Kingdom of God will be restored many times over in this lifetime – and they shall receive the bonus of eternal life.

Questions:

1. What were the young ruler's views pertaining to inheriting eternal life? What was Jesus' explanation?
2. Using this lesson, how would you encourage someone who feels burnt out in sacrificing for the Kingdom of God?
3. Reflection: Where do you invest the most of your time, energy, and money?

Daily Reading:

Monday, March 19	- Luke 18: 31-42
Tuesday, March 20	- Luke 19: 1-10
Wednesday, March 21	- Luke 19: 11-27
Thursday, March 22	- Matthew 21: 1-11
Friday, March 23	- Mark 11: 1-11
Saturday, March 24	- Reflections
Sunday, March 25	- Luke 19: 28-44

March 25, 2018

“Jesus Enters Jerusalem

Luke 19: 28-44

28 After Jesus had said this, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem.

29 As he approached Bethphage and Bethany at the hill called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples, saying to them,

30 “Go to the village ahead of you, and as you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, which no one has ever ridden. Untie it and bring it here.

31 If anyone asks you, ‘Why are you untying it?’ say, ‘The Lord needs it.’”

32 Those who were sent ahead went and found it just as he had told them.

33 As they were untying the colt, its owners asked them, “Why are you untying the colt?”

34 They replied, “The Lord needs it.”

35 They brought it to Jesus, threw their cloaks on the colt and put Jesus on it.

36 As he went along, people spread their cloaks on the road.

37 When he came near the place where the road goes down the Mount of Olives, the whole crowd of disciples began joyfully to praise God in loud voices for all the miracles they had seen:

38 “Blessed is the king who comes in the name of the Lord!” “Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!”

39 Some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, “Teacher, rebuke your disciples!”

40 “I tell you,” he replied, “if they keep quiet, the stones will cry out.”

41 As he approached
Jerusalem and saw the city,
he wept over it

42 and said, “If you, even
you, had only known on
this day what would bring
you peace—but now it is
hidden from your eyes.

43 The days will come
upon you when your
enemies will build an
embankment against you
and encircle you and hem
you in on every side.

44 They will dash you to
the ground, you and the
children within your walls.
They will not leave one
stone on another, because
you did not recognize the
time of God’s coming to
you.”



Commentary:

In today's lesson, Jesus is leading his followers right up to Jerusalem, which has been a long trip since Chapter 9. After Jesus told the parable about the three servants and the coins, He leads his followers toward Jerusalem. Luke mentions that Jesus traveled near both Bethphage which means House of Unripe Figs and Bethany, which means House of Many Figs. Both cities were situated at the foot of the mount of Olives.

In Luke 29-35, Jesus gave his followers specific instructions. He ordered two of his followers to enter the city. He told them that they will find a colt tied up on which no one has ever ridden. He instructed them to untie it and bring it back to him and if anyone asked what they were doing, they will simply respond, "The Lord needs it." As the followers approached the city, they found the colt as was told and untied it. As they untied the colt, its owners asked, "Why are you untying our colt?" The followers responded with "The Lord needs it." As they returned with the colt, they covered it with their own clothes and set Jesus on top of the colt.

As Jesus continued his journey, everyone carpeted the road with their garments. As He reached the bottom of the Mount of Olives, all his followers began to celebrate, shouting and singing as they walked along, praising God for all the wonderful miracles they had seen. Now, they are calling Jesus "King" and are hoping for "Peace in heaven and glory in the highest heaven!" In Luke 19:39, we find Jesus in the midst of conflict. Some of the Pharisees (religious leaders) in the crowd wanted Jesus to silence his followers. They may have thought that his followers were "going too far." But Jesus refused and

saying if the followers were quiet, the stones would immediately cry out.

As Jesus is near Jerusalem, he saw the city and breaks into tears. Why? Because his own people did not recognize what day it was and why he was coming. Their shouts did not reflect their understanding of who Jesus was. His heart was full at the thought of the disaster and destruction that would soon visit Jerusalem; the suffering of all Jerusalem.

Jesus had been to Jerusalem before, but this time he was coming to die. News about his “mighty works” had made him well-known, but not everyone received his arrival as good news. Sometimes, God’s coming brings peace, joy, and salvation, and other times it brings judgment. Luke himself presented both forms in this lesson.

Questions:

1. What is the significance of Jesus’ arrival at Jerusalem in this way (rather than just casually walking in)?
2. Why did the Pharisees want Jesus to command the disciples to be quiet?
3. Why did Jesus cry over Jerusalem?
4. What would it look like for us to weep and lament over our country’s pursuit of peace apart from Christ? What would we need to change? What would we need to repent of?
5. What is the one thing you want to take away from this study to remember or to make a change in your life?

Daily Readings

Monday,	- Luke 21: 1-38
Tuesday,	- Luke 22: 1-38
Wednesday,	- Luke 22: 39-71
Thursday,	- Luke 23: 1-25
Friday,	- Luke 23: 26-56
Saturday,	- Reflections
Sunday,	- Luke 24:1-12







