

Lesson Six

My Life, My All

Luke 13:1-17:37

Lesson 6 of 8

Through the Gospel of Luke

By

Jennifer Garrett Richmond

La Mirada Christian Church

www.LaMiradaChurch.com ~ 562-943-2213 ~ Jennifer@LaMiradaChurch.com

Podcast of Lessons available at www.DwellingRichly.Podbean.com

Small Group Discussion Time

Review of Lesson Five: Luke 10:1-12:59

Group Guidelines

- ♥ We come from varying faith backgrounds, so please be thoughtful of denominational and religious differences.
- 📖 God's Word is our standard. We'll use the Bible - not personal opinion, popular teachers, or church tradition - as our guide for everything. **We are using the English Standard Version (ESV) Bible for this study.**
- 🚫 **Avoid all commentaries or study notes** in your Bible. Trust God, pray, ask for wisdom then read and answer on your own.
- 👉 We're all learning. Be gracious and patient with yourself and with others. No one has it all figured out.
- ✓ This isn't a personal opinion study. This is a **Bible study**. So, there are going to be "right" and "wrong" answers. Try your best and have a humble and teachable spirit.
- 🗣️ You don't have to share, but if you did the reading and the study this week, why not chime in? We all benefit from one another's thoughts and even questions. I bet you have something great to share! 😊
- 👂 Didn't finish the study this week? That's ok. Life gets busy. You're here! Yay you! This will be a good week for you to listen and perhaps jot down answers as others share.
- ⌚ Be considerate of your "slice of the pie" and how much time you are taking to talk. Share your thoughts, and allow time for others to do the same. Please save anecdotes and for social time. Guard your group time for the Word and learning.
- 🕒 Watch the time. Please return to our teaching session on time. (7:40pm for the evening group or 10:40am for the morning group)

1. Open in Prayer
2. Welcome new members 😊 *We're Glad You're Here!*
3. Circulate the Attendance Page & Prayer Journal
4. Review and Discuss the previous week's Bible study. Save other topics for later.

To discuss and review...Do as many as time allows.

Discussion questions are marked with "****" throughout the lesson. (See note on page 2 in the introduction pages.)

1. Why do you think Jesus sent the disciples in pairs? Why not in threes? Why not one by one? Is there any biblical precedence for partners? (pg. 162, #3)
2. List the four "no's" in this verse: (pg. 163, #11)
3. Draw a picture of the image that comes to your mind as you read write the phrase that speaks to your heart this morning: (pg. 166, opening)
4. What is Jesus' answer to the man's question? (pg. 168, #25)
5. What details can you gather from John and Luke about Martha and Mary? (pg. 169, #29)
6. Where then is the error? (pg. 170, #36)
7. What do the disciples ask, etc.? (pg. 171, #1 & 2)
8. What does this tell you about worry? (pg. 172, #15)
9. Compare Jesus' statement in Luke 11:23 with His statement in Luke 9:50. How are they similar/different? (pg. 176, #s 15 & 16)
10. What has been the reaction to Jesus' ministry up until now? (pg. 178, #3)
11. Share your verse and other observations from the Scripture mention on this page. (pg. 181, #19)
12. What character trait is God asking for? (pg. 186, #7)
13. Do you fear death? Why or why not? (pg. 190, #13)
14. Questions #18 and #20 from page 191
15. List every imperative (*command*) verb or verb phrase you find (pg. 196, #3)
16. Where else in Luke has Jesus explained what it looks like to be "us" – a follower of Jesus? (pg. 197, #10)
17. Examples we've read so far of the "division" Jesus is bringing. (pg. 198, #17)

Teaching Notes - Review of Lesson Five

True and Ready

Luke 10:1-12:59

— Day One —

Read and take notes through Luke 13:1-14:35

Today is an Active Reading Day

... Open with Prayer ...

— Day Two —

Luke 13:1-9

... Open with Prayer ...

→ **Read Luke 13:1-9 before beginning today's study.**

REMINDER: Lesson questions are based on the English Standard Version. You can find that version available for free to read on your computer or phone at BibleGateway.com, BibleHub.com, or similar webpages. I recommend the ESV Thinline or wide margin journaling edition.

Read today's headlines and you'll see that tragedy has hit somewhere in the world. A family was wiped out in a car accident. School children were killed on a field trip. A building collapsed burying all inside. A tornado swept through leveling a complete town. A terrorist blows himself up along with a café of innocents. A shooter opens fire in a crowded theater - All so saddening.

We're so inundated with news that we might become dull to the shock of tragedy and yet, when it strikes, we still gasp. We still cry. We still question it all. Whether it was a random violent act of nature or a senseless evil act of a human, we try to wrap our minds around it.

What does it say about us that when tragedy strikes we ask why? At the very core of our being, in the center of our soul as I imagine it – is a sense that God has given every person. It's not just a sense of right and wrong, but a sense of being made for something more than this world. It's a sense that something is off. The very fact that we think to ask why says that we think a bad thing shouldn't have happened at all.

C.S. Lewis put it so well when he said, *"If I find in myself desires which nothing in this world can satisfy, the only logical explanation is that I was made for another world."* The very fact that we have a sense of things not being the way they should (suffering, pain, chaos, etc.) should cause us to realize there is meaning somewhere to be found. Lewis says also, *"A man does not call a line crooked unless he has some idea of a straight line..."*

This account of the slain Galileans is unique to Luke's gospel, and it gives us deep insight into when bad things happen to people as well as the bigger picture of God's expectations for us in these circumstances.

1. The occasion for this tragedy is when the Galileans were doing what? (v. 1)

2. Sacrifices were only offered in the temple. So, the Galileans must have been in what city when this happened? _____ (Hint: Luke 2:45-46)

The fact that they were killed when they were offering their sacrifices tells us that they were doing the right thing. Offering sacrifices was a part of Jewish life. It is likely that this was during Passover since that was the time when all men were required to go to Jerusalem and offer a sacrifice. At the very least, these people were being obedient to the Laws as God had asked.

3. What is Jesus' rhetorical question for them? (v. 2) Write it out or summarize it here:

Jesus' question immediately opens up the nature of man and how we tend to think. No normal person sees a tragedy and thinks, "I'm so glad those people died." At the very least we wonder why. But, Jesus goes to the heart of the wondering when He suggests that they were thinking that the Galileans who had been murdered by Pilate must have done something wrong - that they were "worse sinners" because this had happened to them. Don't we think like this also?

When something good happens or life in general is good, we tend to think, "I must be doing something right!" When something bad happens or life in general is bad, we tend to think, "What is wrong? What did I do to deserve this? What did I do wrong?"

In the "Sound of Music", Maria is in love and can hardly believe how good things are in her life. She sings:

*Perhaps I had a wicked childhood; Perhaps I had a miserable youth
But somewhere in my wicked, miserable past; There must have been a moment of truth
For here you are, standing there, loving me; Whether or not you should
So somewhere in my youth or childhood; I must have done something good
Nothing comes from nothing; Nothing ever could
So somewhere in my youth or childhood; **I must have done something good***

Why is something good happening to Maria? According to her worldview she, "must have done something good." If something bad happens then, will she – will we – think the same way? "I must have done something bad?" Or when something bad happens do we say, "Hey! I didn't deserve that!"?

4. What do Maria's words say about how she views God?

Remember from the previous lesson that a worldview is the truth you hold about the world and the way it impacts how you live. If I think the world came in to existence by chance, and that I exist as a result of chance evolution, then that will color the way I view life and its meaning. If I think the world was created by a Creator who has a plan and expectations for my behavior – well, that too will color how I live. How I view God will also impact the way I see the world, how things happen, and what I consider to be good or bad.

5. **Review Luke 12:57-59** What does this parable teach?

So, with the thought of judgment and making things right before you go before the judge fresh on their minds, they must have been thinking about dying and what happens after death. Perhaps, with this fresh tragedy on their minds they're asking why some die tragically.

6. Do they ask Jesus why these people died? _____
7. Do they suggest that these Galileans were bad people? _____
8. Based on what we've read already about how Jesus engages with people, why do you think He answers the way He does then? (Hint: Luke 5:22, 6:8, 11:17)

9. What is Jesus' answer to the question they hadn't actually asked? (13:3) Write His words here:

"_____. I tell you; but unless you _____, you will all _____."

No. Repent. Or...Perish. Hmmm...Once again, Jesus with the upbeat motivational speeches.

10. Instead of giving them a comforting, philosophical comment to soothe the ache of “why” in their hearts, what does Jesus ask next? Sum up His question:

Yikes! Maybe some of them hadn’t even heard about this other tragedy! Now Jesus goes and brings up this sad accident. A tower falls and kills eighteen people? How awful. Surely they must have done something to deserve that? Right?

11. Similar to the rhetorical question you recorded back in #4, what does Jesus ask here? (v. 4)

12. What is Jesus’ answer? (v.5)

13. ***What is the message in His answer? *Hint: It’s not: live a good life and everything will work out for you. It’s not: Think positive thoughts and you’ll have your “best life now.” It’s not: Obey God and you’ll escape a horrific death. That’s a lot of hints. Need more? Be sure to read Hebrews 9:27-28; Luke 5:32*

Read Luke 13:6-9

Jesus wraps up this long walk and teaching time with a parable.

14. What does it mean to “repent?”

The Greek word for repent is μετανοῆτε (metanoete) and this form of the word is only used twice in Scripture – right here by Jesus in Luke 13!

15. What is the issue the vineyard owner is having with his fig tree?

16. How long had the tree been planted? _____

17. Where has the fig tree been planted? _____

18. What does the owner want to do to the tree? _____

19. What does his vinedresser say he’ll do? And for how much longer?

20. After that time what will happen and who will do it if the tree doesn’t produce fruit?

Note that he doesn’t say he’ll cut it down, but “you can cut it down.”

21. ***What does this parable say about God’s expectations? (God = Vineyard owner)

Include any character traits of God that this illustrates.

Take a moment and grasp the illustration Jesus is making here by picturing the fig tree that has been planted in a vineyard. We live in Southern California, and I'm pretty sure you can walk just about anywhere and see volunteer fig trees sprouting up. I've seen them coming out from the cracks in the sidewalk, growing in school yards, in back lots, even in my own back yard. Birds come along to one tree, eat the fruit, and then drop the seeds. Wherever a fig seed lands it's likely to begin to grow. Now think about a vineyard. While a fig tree can grow up here, there, or everywhere, a healthy vineyard needs, well...what? Tending. That soil needs great care to create the best chance for excellent fruit, right? Draw a picture here of Jesus' parable of the Barren Fig Tree.

Can you text me your picture? Why, yes! I thought you'd never ask! 562.755.4964



...In Closing...

Among the questions I get asked most frequently is: "Why did God allow [this awful thing] to happen to those [innocent people]? A shooting, a bombing, a crash, a flood...why? And my answer in the moment is to offer empathy for the person, but honestly, a dose of biblical thinking as well. Thinking biblically is when we put aside our emotional or self-serving wishes for how we think life should be (e.g. Maria in Sound of Music) and allow the word of God to do what it does best: making wise, receiving salvation, teaching, correcting, training in the right way so we can be complete and equipped for every good work. The problem is that we don't want God's word in some of these tough areas – not really. Galileans being murdered while they are offering sacrifices? Innocent people being crushed under a falling tower? No. This is not right. But that is where we err. We have assumed what is right. When we decide to align our mind with what God says, we'll be thinking biblically, and we will see better what God sees, namely that there is "no one righteous – not one." We'll see that we are all on borrowed time. We'll see that every breath we take is a gift from God and that God owes no one a single breath. The hard answer to the question of why did God allow that tragedy to happen is, "Why am I still alive?" and next, "What am I going to do with the life He has given me?" The answer then is in Jesus' words, "Repent." Live a life of repentance by being a tree that produces fruit so it won't be cut down.

Know two things: God's desire is for all to repent and God's timeline is not infinite for any one person. Our days are numbered (Psalm 90, Psalm 139). Thank God that He has delivered us from the danger of living on borrowed time. Thank Him for His mercies that are new every morning. Pray for wisdom to know His Word and for boldness to teach others in the "everlasting way." (Psalm 139)

— Day Three —

Luke 13:10-30

... Open with Prayer ...

Read Luke 13:10-17

1. When is this incident taking place? _____ *
2. Where is this incident taking place? _____ *
3. If this incident were to have taken place today, where might be the closest parallel for the when and where? (day of week - when we worship and location - where we worship)?
Day of week: _____ Location: _____
4. Who initiated the miracle? Jesus or the woman? _____

Two synagogue rulers...Two women... Compare Luke 8:40-56

5. ***Compare this encounter to the encounter with woman from Luke 8:43-48. Think about who initiated the miracle, where, when, how, end result, reactions, etc.:

6. What does Jesus do? (v. 12-13) List out His **exact** actions:

- 1) _____ her
- 2) _____ to her
- 3) _____ to her saying " _____ "
- 4) _____ on her

7. Consider this incident in light of **Luke 12:52** and **Luke 4:43**:

Jesus stated purpose is _____ but it will cause _____!

8. How does the synagogue ruler respond?

9. Is the synagogue leader thinking according to God's Word? How so or not?

Note in his accusation where he's biblically correct and where you believe he is wrong. Use Scripture to support your thoughts. Use your concordance to help you by searching the word "Sabbath."

Consider this, there are over 90 mentions of the word "Sabbath" in the Old Testament. In your searching did you find any of them associated with a law of God to "not heal on the Sabbath?"

10. Does Jesus respond to the one synagogue ruler or to others also there? (v15) How do you know?

11. Why do you think Jesus calls them all out? What might have been starting to happen for Him to have done that?

12. What does Jesus' next question reveal about this woman?

13. What does this tell you about Satan's power?

14. Two results are recorded at this incident in verse 17. List them here along with any thoughts you have about them:

1) _____

2) _____

Read Luke 13:18-20 and Matthew 13:32-35

15. REVIEW: What is Jesus' stated mission/purpose? (Hint: Luke 4:42-43)

16. Think about Jesus' disciples, their background, what they've gone through so far...think about the acceptance and/or opposition Jesus has faced so far...Describe in **honest terms** what His kingdom looks like so far – keeping in mind who He's surrounded by and what He's been doing:

17. At this point in Jesus' ministry, is the kingdom of God like any earthly kingdom (think Roman, Egyptian, Babylonian, etc.) Why or why not?

18. ***Describe the two ways Jesus explains what the kingdom of God is like: (Use the Matthew passage as well.)

1) Mustard seed* –

Key Characteristic: _____

2) Leaven –

Key Characteristic: _____

What do these two analogies have in common as they relate to the Kingdom?

How do you see them as different?

Luke 13:22-30

19. Jesus is heading where? _____ Why?

20. What question does this person ask in Luke 13:23? Write it here:

21. ***For a person to even think to ask this question, he must have assumed at least two things:
 1) Salvation is available. 2) Not everyone will be saved
What do you think he had heard Jesus say or saw Jesus do that made him want an answer to that question? Do you think he was concerned about his own salvation? ...His likelihood of "getting in?" Write some of your thoughts here and be prepared to share them in your group:
22. Jesus gives him an answer by way of a sobering metaphor in Luke 13:24-25
 What does He tell the man to do? S _____
We get our word "agonize" from this word. Paul uses it in 1 Corinthians 9:25 describing a competitive athlete. Is following Christ easy? _____
 What does He warn that many will try to do? S _____
23. Does this type of language "strive" and "seek...and not be able to" surprise you? Why or why not? Use Scripture to support your answer:
24. What are Jesus' harsh words for those to whom He says, "I do not know where you come from..." (v27-30)
25. Who do you think He is referring to when He says, "...people will come from east and west, and from north and south...some are last who will be first..."? (v. 29-30)
26. Jesus doesn't directly answer the question, "Will those who are saved be few?" with a "Yes" or a "No" – But, based on how Jesus answers and in keeping with His teachings, what would you say is the simple answer: _____ (Yes or No) Why?

...In Closing...

In high school, our basketball coach laid out the expectations of what it would be like to be on that team. He described not only the long after-school practices, but gave grueling details of the drills we'd be running, the blisters we'd better expect to earn, the fatigue, the possibility of not even getting to play, the no-nonsense approach he had and that we'd better toughen up and be prepared to be yelled at – a lot. We were not surprised one bit then when the season opened and all he had warned us of was true. We ached. We sprinted. We got blisters. We worked hard. I'm so glad he didn't paint a lollipops and sunshine picture of that season. He gave us the straight scoop, and we rose to the challenge. We ended up going to the championships that year and won. It was exhilarating. Exhausting, but exhilarating and I knew we had accomplished something special. I don't want to diminish the importance of our eternal salvation by comparing it to a basketball championship, however, I hope you'll grasp the message. Jesus came to proclaim the kingdom. He is giving it no embellishments. In fact, He is making it abundantly clear that if you want to follow Him it will cost you. If you want to join

Him – it will cost you. What is important to remember, and what we can see, but His contemporary audience had no understanding of, is that it cost Him even more. Jesus is just a few months away from His death. As He makes His way to Jerusalem He continues to sift just like John the Baptist warned that He would, “His winnowing fork is in His hand, to clear His threshing floor and to gather the wheat in to His barn...” (Luke 3:17). As you complete this day, my prayer for you has been that you would consider the seriousness of following Christ, the necessity of “striving” (Luke 13:24), and the true joy that comes from knowing Christ as a faithful disciple.

***Footnotes from Day Three**

pg. 211 #1 - Except for the Sabbath day, the individual days of the week have no names, just numbers. In Exodus 16, the Jews began their journey from Egypt to the Promised Land through the desert, manna fell every day except for one—the Sabbath. Before the Sabbath a double portion of manna fell (Fridays) so that they would have what to eat the next day as well. On the first Friday after the manna began to fall, the people were surprised to see so much manna—double that which they had received on each of the past five days. When they came to ask Moses about this, he revealed that the next day would be the Sabbath and that no manna would fall at all. The actual wording of God's message to Moses and the Jewish People is "See that God has given to you the Sabbath." Jewish teachings (the Midrash) point out that the word used is "see" and not "know." It explains: This is what G-d was saying to them: "If the idolaters will come to you and ask, 'Why do you make the Shabbat day on this day?' you will tell them, 'See, the manna does not fall on the Shabbat.'" Sabbath is important to Jews also because it is the only day of the week mentioned in the Ten Commandments. "Observe the Sabbath. Keep it holy."

pg. 211 #2 - A note on synagogues: There were hundreds of synagogues throughout the region. A synagogue (Greek συναγωγή – “sun-ag-o-gay” for meeting place) was a simply a place for the Jews to meet, hear the Torah (Old Testament), and learn. They were led by lay people - “rulers” (Remember Jairus from Luke 8? He was a synagogue ruler). The ruler or the chairman of that board was responsible to oversee a synagogue, but he was the layman not a priest. They came into existence when the Jews were taken captive into Babylon back in the 6th century BC. During this time were separated from their house of worship, which was the Temple. Before that, there was no such thing as a synagogue. Synagogues began to develop among the Jews in exile, and when they went back under Nehemiah to rebuild the city and the temple, they took back the idea of the synagogue. In Jerusalem alone there were about 500 synagogues in just that one city.

pg. 212 #18-1 - Arab culture (including Jews) use the mustard seed to refer to something that was small. For example, the Jews would talk about a drop of blood as small as a mustard seed. Or they would talk about a tiny breach of the law of God as a defilement the size of a mustard seed. Or the rabbis would speak about a spot or blemish as small as a mustard seed. Jesus later refers to having faith as small as a mustard seed.

— Day Four —

Luke 13:31-14:6*

... Open with Prayer ...

Luke 13:31-33

1. Who warns Jesus? _____ ...about what/who? _____
This is Herod Antipas – when have we last heard about him and what did he do?

2. List any others who have showed open hostility toward Jesus thus far in Luke’s gospel. Include accounts from other gospels that you recall as well (Matthew 2:13-16).

3. ***What is Jesus’ response in Luke 13:32?

What He calls Herod: _____

In Jewish culture this was equivalent to calling him both sly and worthless – Herod is the only person Jesus is recorded as having treated with utter contempt.

What He tells them He’s doing: _____ When? _____

What happens on the third day? _____

4. ***In Luke 13:32 Jesus gives a foreshadowing of what is to come. Read **John 19:30** and write Jesus’ words here: _____

The Greek root word is the same for Jesus’ words in Luke 13:32 and John 19:30 “τελέω” (tel-eh-oh). It means to bring to an end, complete, fulfill; This root (tel-) means "reaching the end (aim)." It is well-illustrated with the old pirate's telescope, unfolding (extending out) one stage at a time to function at full-strength (capacity effectiveness).] (<http://biblehub.com/greek/5055.htm>)

5. What final event is Jesus pointing them toward? _____
6. If Herod’s and the Pharisees’ goal was to frighten Him, has it succeeded? Why or why not?
7. Review Luke chapter nine. This is the pivotal chapter when Jesus sets “his face toward Jerusalem.” List key people and events in this chapter especially as it relates to what we’re reading in chapter:
8. Jesus is being both sarcastic and scornful in his comments about Jerusalem and prophets. What does He say about prophets in relation to Jerusalem? _____
The Greek phrase is used only here in the New Testament: ἐνδέχομαι “endechomai” it means “it is not fitting.”

Luke 13:34-35 and Matthew 23:37-39

9. Jesus calls out to Jerusalem twice, “Jerusalem, Jerusalem.” This is a sad, emotional, and genuine lament. Who else has Jesus called out to by repeating their name twice? _____
Who has called to Jesus by repeating His name twice? _____
Make note of this type of address. It will come up again by Jesus.

10. Jesus' words look back as much as they look forward. Jerusalem has a tender place in His heart and yet He knows the destruction that is to come (*In AD 70 Jerusalem is destroyed by Rome and the Temple is leveled.*) What does Jesus' lament reveal about His character?

11. What is Jesus' "I would...but..." statement in Luke 13:34? (ESV translates the statement "I would...and you were not...")

12. What is Jesus communicating by making this statement?

Consider how bold of a statement this is. Jesus is saying that He would gather Jerusalem to Himself, but they were unwilling to be gathered. The imagery of gathering and protecting with wings of shelter is not uncommon. But, who in the past has made such statements? A prophet? A teacher?

Read Deuteronomy 32:10-12

13. Who is the winged protector? _____

Read Ruth 2:12

14. Who is the winged protector? _____

Read Psalm 36:7

15. Who is the winged protector? _____

16. ***Jesus is making a tender statement, a compassionate statement...but so much more. By addressing Jerusalem in this He is making a bold statement. Based on your readings above, what is Jesus implying by talking in this way about His desires and lament for Jerusalem?

Keep this in mind as we move further into our study and consider Jesus' heart to gather and comfort.

17. This passage opens with a reference to what person/animal? _____
and closes with reference to what person/animal? _____
What parallel do you think Jesus is making?

18. When does Jesus say they will see Him again? (v.35)

Read Matthew 23:39 and note when in the timeline of Jesus' life He makes this statement - before or after "Palm Sunday?" _____ Keep this in mind as you consider the scope of what Jesus is saying here. We'll dig a little deeper into this later in our study.

Read Luke 14:1-6

19. For what reason was Jesus invited to this man's house? (v. 1) _____

20. Why do you suppose they were watching Him carefully?

21. Summarize the essential who, what, and when of this account:
What does Jesus do?

When does He do it? _____

Who is the audience? _____

Once again, Jesus heals. Once again, He addresses the meaning of the Sabbath.

22. What does this encounter reveal about Jesus' heart?

23. What does it reveal about the heart of the Pharisees?

24. What question does Jesus ask? (v. 3) _____

25. What previous healing encounters has Jesus had with the Pharisees on and about the Sabbath? (Do a concordance search on the word "Sabbath" to help you. There are at least three.

Note the circumstances and outcome:

1) Luke __:__ - _____

2) Luke __:__ - _____

3) Luke __:__ - _____

26. Also, note on what day of the week Jesus was first rejected and by whom? (Luke 4:16-30)

27. How do the Pharisees respond in this (final) Sabbath healing incident? (v. 6)

28. Now which of them is in fact honoring the command of God on the Lord's Day? _____

How and why?

****Bonus!****

How many times does the word "Sabbath" occur in Luke's gospel? _____

Which gospel writer mentions the Sabbath the most? _____

...In Closing...

What is the Sabbath rooted in? God's mercy. When God gave the commandment, He gave it to a nation of redeemed slaves. God had brought a nation of slaves out of Egypt who had been enslaved. Their time did not belong to themselves. At Mount Sinai He said to them, "From now on, you are going to have one day every week of rest - mandatory vacation day! You are going to have seven and a half weeks a year of mandatory rest." How do you think those slaves would have responded? "You mean we get to rest one day in seven?" It was a picture of God's liberation and mercy to them. actually the laws which God gave regarding the Sabbath were designed to make sure that having received that mercy from God, those who were in positions of privilege and power did not take advantage of servants. God's Law was meant to make sure that the Sabbath Day was a blessing to all His people. This picture of Jesus lamenting over Jerusalem – of Him wanting to gather them like a loving and protective hen - is also a picture of His mercy. His mercy is for all but His mercy is missed when we, like the Pharisees, add rules and laws or expectations of behavior that is not God's. Sister, pray today that you would have a tender heart toward Jesus and would receive His mercy today. Likewise, pray that the Holy Spirit would reveal to you any tendencies you might have to withhold mercy from others, casting judgment on them if they do not live the Christian walk in the way you think it should be lived. Be careful to always and only use God's Word as your standard.

— Day Five —

Luke 14:7-24

... Open with Prayer ...

Luke 14:7-11

1. To whom is Jesus speaking? (v. 7) _____
2. What Emily Post-like counsel does He give? (Not sure who Emily Post is? Sigh. Google her.)

While this is practical and is definitely behavior that Emily Post would have approve, Jesus isn't making advice on party etiquette.

3. What is the point Jesus is making in this parable? (v. 11)
4. Based on Jesus' past interactions with the Pharisees, how do you think this lesson addresses core issues? (Consider especially the issue of the Sabbath that Jesus has been addressing throughout His ministry.)
5. ***Consider the following verses and jot your thoughts on what each says not only about humility but where true humility begins:
 - 1) **Proverbs 3:34** –
 - 2) **James 4:6-10** –
 - 3) **1 Peter 5:5-6** –

In summary, true humility begins with a true understanding of: _____

Read Luke 14:12-24

6. Back in Luke 14:1, what was the motive behind the Pharisees' invitation to Jesus?
7. Jesus shifts His attention now. To whom does He now speak specifically? _____ (v. 12)
8. What does He tell him to do/not do? Why? (v. 14) ("Brothers" in this context is from the Greek word meaning "family".)
9. Compare Jesus' word in Luke 14:12-14 to His words in Matthew 6:1-4.
 - 1) Upon whom should be our focus?
 - 2) From whom will come our reward?
 - 3) What do these passages say to you about the heart of Jesus and the priorities He desires for us?

If you were raised going to church, you might know exactly how to respond if someone greeted you with: “He is risen!” Do you know? Go ahead and write the response here: “_____!”*

If you were raised going to church, you might also be familiar with how this one goes: “God is good, _____! All the time, _____!”*

Maybe you know of other predictable call-response sayings or just ways we say things in church that non-religious people might not know. Bring this idea with you as you continue reading in Luke. It will help you understand the context of the parable even better.

10. **Luke 14:15** A man raises his glass and offers a kind of call/response or a formula toast. Any hearer of the day would have known the response. What does the man say? (v. 15)

If you were a religious Jew sitting at table then you’d know exactly what was the expected response. This “blessing” was based on words from Isaiah 25. The traditional response was, “O Lord, may we be among the righteous and be counted worthy to sit with men of renown on that great day.” And with that everyone would have nodded in agreement and continued joyfully with their meal. But not today.

- 1) Instead of replying back with the expected *phrase*, Jesus replies back with a what?
- 2) ***When have we seen Jesus reply like this or similarly when someone needed to be redirected in their thinking? Whether it be a blessing, request, or question, how did Jesus redirect that person? Consider the following or add your own:

Luke 10:40 ff. -

Luke 11:27-28 -

Luke 12:13-15 ff. -

Jesus is continually redirecting misguided thinking, isn’t He? What about you? Do you think you have a need to be redirected in your thinking? Have you ever read Scripture, heard biblical teaching, or otherwise been given a reason to think again in your faith? Take a moment to share here and perhaps share also with your small group when we meet again:

As you read this parable, it is important to remember that you are reading it through the lens of the 21st century western culture. We don’t value invitations in our culture as they did and still do in theirs. In oriental cultures no one would RSVP to an invitation and then not come. It would have been a terrible faux pas. Arab culture is an “honor/shame” culture. In addition, giving two invitations was the norm in this culture (Esther 5:8; 6:14)

11. “But they all alike began to make _____” (v. 18) List the excuses given:

- 1) The first said (v. 18) – _____
This excuse is a flat out lie. In Oriental culture, before you could purchase property you were required to inspect it in person and memorize every detail of it. Then you’d report everything you knew about that land. This is a way of protecting the

seller from an unscrupulous buyer. For someone to say, "Hey, I just bought some land and I need to go out and see what I bought," is a blatant lie! It's offensive and insulting!

- 2) Another said (v. 19) – _____
Another lie. Like buying land, you couldn't buy a yoke of oxen without first examining them to see if they could do the work and pull together. This would be as unacceptable as emailing your boss saying, "I bought six laptops on Amazon and now I need to see if they've got screens and keyboards." Your boss would at the very least question your competence.
- 3) Yet Another said (v. 20) – _____
Yet another lie. In this culture, weddings were a week-long event. This man is saying, "Yesterday I said that I would come to your banquet, but tonight I've got plans for my new wife." This would not happen, in addition, it's offensive. It's akin to telling the host: "I have other things to do with my time that I'd much prefer over against spending it with you."

12. When these who have been given the first invitation won't attend, what does Jesus do?

Banquet imagery was common (Psalm 23, Is 55, etc.) and one that all those hearing Jesus would have related well to.

13. **Read Isaiah 25:6-9** In this passage salvation is described through the metaphor of the banquet:

- 1) Who is salvation for? _____ (v. 6)
2) What will God provide/do for the people at the feast? List several provisions/actions:

Highlight the one that speaks to you or surprises you most.

- 3) What will the people say on that day? (summarize v9)

14. What does the master of the house tell his servant to do when he hears about these excuses?

15. Ultimately, what happens to those who were given the original invitation? (v. 24)

...In Closing...

Take a moment to consider what the first group had in terms of social, political, or financial advantage over the second group. Those who made excuses for not going to the banquet had property, oxen, a spouse...they had the advantages in life, didn't they? Honestly, I think they were much like you and me. The man whose toast set off this entire parable was one of the knowledgeable religious people. He knew the *right* words to say – the *religious* response. He, along with the others were the people who came to worship, read their Scriptures. They were educated, independent, and capable, right? In the parable they found something other to do than come to the banquet. In contrast to that first group of guests you have the second who are the needy, handicapped, and outcast. They are filled with doubts, marked by baggage, marginalized, alone. They would have been the extreme outcasts in a society like this, and in a society like ours I would say as well. But at the banquet, who came? Who is set free? It's those who are invited and simply RSVP. That's the gospel, my friend. That's the good news! Religion makes salvation about what we bring to the table – our good works, our knowledge, our attendance at church, our tithing, our [fill in the blank!]. But the good news is simple, "Come!" Don't let your

agenda, your religion, your pride keep you and don't let your neediness, your brokenness, or sense of unworthiness keep you...come! Jesus says, "Come!"

*When someone greets you with "He is risen!" you reply with: "He is risen, indeed!"
"God is good..." is followed by "all the time!" and then you respond back with: "All the time..." and the response is then, "God is good!"

— Day Six —

Luke 14:25-35

... Open with Prayer ...

Luke 14:25-33

1. Three times Jesus says "cannot" – Who "cannot be My disciple"? Why?

1) _____

2) _____

3) _____

2. Try to summarize the "cannots" into three succinct musts. In order to be considered Jesus' disciple, what must one do?

1) _____ 2) _____ 3) _____

=== "Hate my family?" Yikes! – What Jesus isn't saying... ===

*An understanding of Semitic culture and language is essential here to help us avoid wrong conclusions or dismissing Jesus' teaching. Westerners use the word "hate" to mean something different than what Jesus' Jewish hearers would have understood. Biblical Hebrew lacks the wording to exactly define the comparative ideas, i.e., 'more than' or 'less than'. Instead it tends to express two things which may be comparatively of different degree like 'first' and 'second' as extremes such as 'first' and 'last'. Love and hate might appear to be opposite but the meaning is to love more and love less. When Paul says, "...Jacob have I loved, Esau have I hated..." (Romans 9:13), he's quoting Malachi when God tells of choosing Jacob over Esau. In Semitic culture this was God saying, "I've made a contract with Jacob – not Esau."
The Hebrew words for loved and hated in Malachi 1:3 don't refer to God's emotions (like you hating broccoli but loving chocolate), but they illustrate that God made a covenant relationship with one over another. The Greek root for the word for hate is μισέω (mi-seh-oh) "which centers in moral choice, elevating one value over another." (www.biblehub.com/greek/3404)
In God's case, it's about His sovereign will. In our case, Jesus is saying we must make a choice. Jesus isn't saying that we should hate our families – broccoli either, but there's room for more exegesis on the idea of broccoli, IMHO.*

3. **Read John 12:25** Jesus gives the same strong wording. What does He say here about our lives and where our love should be?

Jesus is closing in on what it means to be a disciple. Recall from our earlier lesson that the word disciple in Greek is, “μαθητής” (math-ay-tes’.) Luke is helping his reader pay close attention to Jesus’ mission and the cost ahead. In fact, when you read Luke’s account in Acts, you’ll see the word “disciple” is synonymous for “Christian” (lit. “Christ + follower.)

4. How has Jesus already demonstrated this idea of “hating” mother, father, sister, brother? Read Luke 8:19-21 and explain. Use any other verses to support your answer.

5. Jesus repeats His imagery from earlier in **Luke 9:18**. What must we be prepared to do for Jesus?

J.C. Ryle puts it this way:

“It costs something to be a true Christian. Let that never be forgotten. To be a mere nominal Christian, to go to church, that is cheap and easy work. But to hear Christ’s voice and follow Christ and believe in Christ and confess Christ, that requires much self-denial. It will cost us our sins; it will cost us our self-righteousness; it will cost us our ease and our worldliness; all, all must be given up. We must fight an enemy who comes against us with twenty-thousand followers. We must build a tower in troubled times. Our Lord Jesus would have us thoroughly understand this and count the cost.”

6. Recall what Jesus has already said about the way of following Him: The way to Jesus is through what kind of door? (Luke 13:24) _____ and how does He admonish His followers to get through it? (Luke 13:24) _____ So, He is continuing to give a very clear picture of what life as a true disciple – a true Christian – looks like. The way is narrow; the life is characterized by striving.
7. **Read Luke 14:33** – What must a disciple give up (renounce)? _____
8. Using Jesus’ own words from the beginning of His ministry until this point, write out a few specific things He must have meant by “all”:

Read Luke 14:34-35

Wrapping up His teaching about disciples and the cost, Jesus gives this short science/discipleship lesson. Yes, science.

9. Jesus asks a rhetorical question about salt. Write the question here:

10. All listening would have known the answer. But Jesus goes ahead and gives it anyway. Write His answer here:

11. ***What is Jesus saying? Think...he's been talking about disciples and what a true one looks like...now He's talking about salt that has no flavor? What is He saying?

12. Where else in Scripture has Jesus used similar language?

Jesus takes discipleship seriously and holds nothing back in describing the cost. God takes discipleship seriously as well. It is not enough, it is not acceptable in any way at all, to claim the name of Jesus and to not live accordingly.

Read Revelation 3:1-6

13. How does God characterize the church in **Sardis**?

14. What admonition (positive or negative) does He give them?

Read Revelation 3:7-13

15. How does God characterize the church in **Philadelphia**?

16. What admonition (positive or negative) does He give them?

Read Revelation 3:14-22

17. How does God characterize the church in **Laodicea**?

18. What admonition (positive or negative) does He give them?

19. What phrase is common to these verses and is also spoken by Jesus in Luke 14?

...In Closing...

In case there was any doubt, following Jesus in the way He has asked will come at great cost. So, I have a question for you, one that I had to ask myself, "What has it cost me to follow Christ?" If my decision to follow Him has had no measure of impact, then I would submit – I am no follower of Christ. If every decision, every action, every move, every breath is not taken with the weight of how this demonstrates that I am a true follower, then I am not a true follower. I'm not talking about earning salvation. That's a discussion for another day – we do not earn our salvation in any way. I'm talking about what happens after we have received the free gift of salvation. What does that look like? If God were to sum up the "Church at Richmond" in a sense, what would His assessment of my discipleship be? Like that of Sardis? Of Philadelphia? Of Laodicea? The cross of Christ came at a cost and when I consider this, I adjust my own life accordingly. Perhaps you need to do the same. Are you willing, to give up your desires, your hopes, any purpose or plan and submit them to the Will of God? The Apostle Paul said, "For to me to live is Christ and to die is gain." Is this your heart as well?

Isaac Watts, probably the greatest poet/hymn writer in Christian history, wrote what is considered by most to be the greatest hymn of all time: "When I Survey the Wondrous Cross." It is the hymn of the disciple – the true disciple. How could

we truly follow Jesus if we don't consider the cross – His and our own? I pray that you will close in meditation on these words and consider how you can be lead to truly “deny yourself, pick up your cross, and follow” Him today and every day.

*Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.*

For those who like to draw, why not create a frame around this hymn that illustrates its significance to you? The phrases in each stanza are so powerful, perhaps create an Instagram or Facebook post and share it? I'll create an Instagram post also. If you do as well, give it the hashtags #LMCCWomenBibleStudy and #HopelnTheLord

When I Survey the Wondrous Cross

by
Isaac Watts

When I survey the wondrous cross
On which the Prince of glory died,
My richest gain I count but loss,
And pour contempt on all my pride.

Forbid it, Lord, that I should boast,
Save in the death of Christ my God!
All the vain things that charm me most,
I sacrifice them to His blood.

See from His head, His hands, His feet,
Sorrow and love flow mingled down!
Did e'er such love and sorrow meet,
Or thorns compose so rich a crown?

[His dying crimson, like a robe,
Spreads o'er His body on the tree;
Then I am dead to all the globe,
And all the globe is dead to me.]

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

— Day Seven —

Read and take notes through Luke 15:1-17:37
Today is an Active Reading Day



— Day Eight —

Luke Chapter 15

... Open with Prayer ...

Re-read Luke chapter 15 before beginning today's study.

There's a year's worth of study we could do on this one chapter. I hope you'll enjoy the process of digging and studying and meditating on God's Words. You may want to divide this lesson in two sessions.

1. ***After reading through this chapter start to finish, sum up the main idea in two words:

What was lost in verses 1-7? _____ In verses 8-10? _____ In 11-32? _____

2. Who are the Pharisees grumbling about? And why?

Tax collectors were particularly hated because, in the view of the Jews, they were in league with Rome. Taxes in the day are reported by historians to have been upwards of 80%. These tax collectors were extortionists and were regarded as dishonest, greedy, and disreputable. Jews were hurting and the tax collectors were hurting them gravely. The word "sinners" is translated from the Greek "ἁμαρτωλός" (ham-ar-to-los') which means "one who has 'missed the mark'." "Sinners" in a religious Jew's mind often meant "prostitute." In Judaism, as practiced in Jesus' day, "tax collectors and sinners" were considered completely unforgivable. If they were already Gentiles, they were totally unforgivable. If they were Jews, then they had forfeited their rights and basically were now considered Gentiles – and again, totally unforgivable.

3. So, here's Jesus, and who's gathering around to hear Him? _____

In fact, among Jesus' most faithful disciples are both tax collectors and sinners. Can you name two?

Tax Collector: _____ Sinner: _____

4. Read Luke 7:34 What does this say about Jesus and the kinds of people with whom He associated?

5. Up to this point, what attitude would you say has characterized the way religious leaders (scribes and Pharisees) feel toward "tax collectors and sinners?"

6. How does this contrast with the way Jesus - even all of heaven - feels?

Luke 15:7 _____

Luke 15:10 _____

Luke 15:32 _____

7. In fact, God's desire is clear throughout all of Scripture. Read the following, and summarize what each tell us about God's heart:

1 Timothy 2:3-4 _____

2 Peter 3:9 _____

8. Who is Jesus speaking to in this opening parable of the lost sheep? _____ Jesus asks them to imagine being what (occupation)? _____

It would have been highly offensive to these Pharisees and their scribes to even imagine being a shepherd! Why? Because, in Middle Eastern culture a shepherd was considered the lowest of the low occupations. How sad. To whom did the angels come to announce the birth of the Savior? _____

9. *****Read Ezekiel chapter 34.** Make observations about the kind of shepherds the leaders of Israel have been and the response God has had.

➤ Ezekiel 34:1-4 How have they (God's leaders) failed the sheep (God's people)?

|

➤ Ezekiel 34:6 Where had the sheep gone and who was seeking for them?

|

➤ Ezekiel 34:7-16 What is God's response? List specific ways Jesus' parable is similar to God's response in this prophecy.

|

Jesus moves now from lost sheep to a lost coin. As horrible as being compared to a shepherd was, being asked to think like a woman and to imagine how she might feel would have been unthinkable for a man. In fact, every morning, religious Jews recited their prayers, one of which read: "...I thank you, God that you have not made me a Gentile, a slave, or a woman." Not only would they have gasped that Jesus uses a woman as the central figure of a parable, but they would have been beside themselves with indignation at the very suggestion that Jesus wanted them to imagine her plight.

10. Like the good shepherd, this woman does what to find her lost coin?

|

11. How does the woman feel when she finds this coin? _____ (v. 9)

12. How do the angels before God respond? _____ (v. 10)

13. What point is Jesus driving home to His audience?

|

Jesus continues along the same theme of "lost and found"...

14. What two groups of people are listening to these parables?

1) T _____ and S _____ (15:1)

2) P _____ and S _____ (15:2)

15. Who are the three people in the focus of this parable? (Luke 15:1)

| _____, Older _____ and Younger _____

16. If Jesus compares the Pharisees and scribes to the shepherd and the woman in the first two parables, who do you think He is comparing them to in this third parable? Why do you think this?

|

17. What is the younger brother's request? What would a request like this imply about how he felt toward the father?

|

18. How does the father respond? _____

19. What is the younger son's plan or desire as he heads to the "far country?"

20. What two disasters halt this son's plans?

One is his fault: _____

One is not his fault: _____

21. In Luke 15:13, we read that the younger son did what with "all he had?" _____

And then in the "far country" he did what with his property? _____

*Gathered...then scattered. The Greek word used for "gathered" is "συναγαγών" (sun-a-gay-gown) (see note on page 211)
The Greek word translated "scattered" is "διεσκόρπισεν" (die-skor-pi-sen) which means a reckless squandering.*

22. What is his plan and desire as he "comes to himself" and heads back to his father?

23. Describe the father's response to the younger son in verse 20:

At what point does the father notice the son? _____

What might this imply about what the father had been doing? _____

24. The father responds in five distinct ways in this verse:

His father _____ him... And felt _____

And _____...And _____ him...And _____ him.

25. Compare the younger son's planned speech in verses 18-19 with what he says in verse 21:

26. Does the younger son finish his speech? Why or why not?

27. What does the father do for the younger son? Give very specific ways he welcomes him home (22-24):

28. What is the older son doing when the younger returns? _____

29. How does he (the older son) feel about his brother's return? (v. 28) He specifically refers to him as "this son of yours" – not as his brother.

30. How does the father respond to the older son? (v. 28)

31. Compare the father's response to the older son in v. 28 and his response to the returning son in v. 20:

32. What does this tell you about the father's desires toward his sons?

33. ***Think about each son. Think about the attitudes and behaviors each had. In what way did each son miss out on the heart of their father?

34. In what ways could you be like one of these sons?

35. In what way does the father reveal his heart to each son?

36. What other sibling relationship has Luke written about that illustrates the heart of Jesus toward us and how He wants us to respond toward Him? (Hint: Luke 10)

37. Recall Jesus' audience, and consider who Jesus is paralleling in this parable...

➤ The Pharisees and scribes are like the _____ In what way?

What would you say is Jesus' hope for their response?

➤ The "tax collectors and sinners" are like the _____ In what way?

What would you say is Jesus' hope for their response?

➤ What about you? Are you more like the older or younger brother? _____ In what way?

What would you say is Jesus' hope for your response?

38. Who, at the end of the parable is fully reconciled to the father? The older or the younger son? Why?

39. In this parable, who does the father represent? Give clues from the parable. Also include the character traits he demonstrates that make you think this.

...In Closing...

In the past I had read this parable from a distance thinking about the tenderness of the father toward his wayward and repentant younger son. But in my studies this time, I realized something I had missed before, the older son rebelled too. The older son rebelled by trying live a righteous life and doing the right thing, but he was missing the heart of his father at the end. In my personal study of this most famous parable I had a huge ah-ha moment. I realized, honestly, how the potential is there for me to act like the older son. I have never run away from home. I've never sowed any oats – let alone wild ones! I stayed home, then went to college, got married, and have served in Christian ministry in one way or another for the past thirty years of my life. I didn't grieve my parents in any prodigal rebellious stage, and I have never shaken my fist at God in heaven by my thoughts or behaviors. If I hold on to my righteousness as evidence of my deservedness, then I am like the older brother – the Pharisees. If my personal good behavior is my I.D. badge for the Jesus Club, for the Jesus blessings, for

getting my prayers answered, my will to be done, then I am like the older brother, Martha, and the Pharisees. But, if like the younger brother, I am surrendered to the father, aware of my sin, willing to submit...if I don't want the *things that come* from the father, I just want to *be with* the father, then I will have found the heart of God like this wayward son did. My prayer for you is the same as my prayer for myself today:

Father, let me seek you, not for what you can do for me but for who you are. Show me how to surrender all, deny myself and daily pick up my cross – not so that I would look good for You, but because I want nothing but You in my life.

— Day Nine —

Luke Chapter 16:1-18

. . . Open with Prayer . . .

Re-read Luke 16:1-18 before beginning today's study.

This parable only occurs in Luke's gospel and is considered by biblical scholars to be the most perplexing and difficult to understand of all Jesus' parables. Our goal will not be to uncover some new interpretation that centuries of theologians and scholars have not been able to, but simply to read and digest what is plainly written.

Luke 16:1-9

1. Who is Jesus directing His attention to at the opening of this parable? _____
Who else would have been listening along? _____
2. What charges does the rich man bring against his manager?
_____ Note: the Greek word translated "wasted" (ESV) should be familiar to you!
3. What situation does the manager find himself in? (v. 1-2)
|
4. What dilemma is he facing if he becomes jobless? (v. 3)
|
5. What does he decide to do? (v. 4-7)
|
6. Do you think this was clever? Sneaky? Admirable? Risky? Explain...
|
7. How does his master respond?
|
8. ***Read Matthew 10:16 and Luke 10:3 How might this earlier teaching relate to the principle that Jesus is teaching in this parable?
|

9. Turning now to His disciples in Luke 16:9, Jesus tells them to use what means to “make friends”?

(a) _____

What is the goal of doing this? (b) _____

Note: not **if** but **when** “it fails” – What fails? (Hint: your answer on (a)) _____

Recall the foolish man from Luke 12? What had he spent his life and focus on? _____

The Greek word translated “unrighteous wealth” (ESV) is “μαμωνᾶ” (mam-mo-nah) or “mammon.” It was “a Semitic term for “the treasure a person trusts in.”

Luke 16:10-13

10. What does Jesus say is the opposite of “unrighteous wealth” in Luke 16:11? _____

11. What has Jesus already taught about these “true riches”? (Hint: Luke 12:21; 12:29-34)

12. ***Considering the shrewdness of an earthly manager who was dishonest, how much more is God’s expectation of His faithful servant. What is God’s expectation of His servants according to these verses?

Luke 16:14-17

13. How do the Pharisees respond having “heard all these things?” _____

14. Luke describes the scene with the Pharisees in three distinct ways.

➤ Who they were: _____

Greek word: φιλάργυροι (phil-arg-yroi) literally: Lover (philos) of silver (argos) and “in love with personal gain”

➤ What they had just done: _____

Greek word: ἠκουον (hay-koo-on) the root of the English word “acoustics”

➤ How they responded: _____

Greek word: ἐξεμυκτήριζον (ek-mook-ter-id'-zon) literally: “to hold up the nose in derision of” Only used one other time in the NT – Luke 23:35

15. *****What is Jesus’ response to the Pharisees?** (v. 15)

You do what before men? _____

But God what? _____

➤ What does the Word of God say about our hearts? Do a biblical word study on “heart” and list a few reminders here beginning with Jeremiah 17:9 _____

What do other verses say about the state of our heart before God? List some examples here:

16. What closing axiom (truth) about God does Jesus remind His listeners? Write the last sentence of Luke 16:14 here:

“For what is _____ is an _____.”

17. What have the Pharisees been consistent in accusing Jesus of throughout His ministry? (Hint: Luke 13:14; Luke 5:30; Luke 11:14-15)

Jesus wraps up (almost) His teaching with a truth about the Law and the Prophets and what it means to truly keep the Law of God.

18. When did the teachings of the Law and the Prophets end? (at whose life?): _____

19. After that, what has been preached? _____

By whom? _____ What has Jesus' stated purpose been? (Hint: Luke 4:43)

20. What will people use to get in to the kingdom of God? (16:16b) _____

Greek word is *βιάζομαι* (*biazomai*) Literally: laying hold of something with positive aggressiveness

This word is only used twice in the NT - here and in Matthew 11:12. Both times it refers to force and strength of effort. While the kingdom of God cannot be earned by our efforts, Jesus has made it clear over and over again that there is work to be done in the process, and it will come at great effort and cost. The kingdom is sought for with intensity, sacrifice, and exertion. These are the qualities that should characterize a true kingdom seeker. Do they characterize your life? Most "seek" the kingdom by attending church when they can, reading a religious book here or there, living a relatively moral life, but they leave the really intense life for the "professionals" – pastors, teachers, missionaries, etc. This is why Jesus says the "many are called, few are chosen." I have yet to see Jesus separate His disciples into the really intense followers who deny themselves, pick up their cross, and strive from those who just follow Him when they can. Intensity, "biazomai", strife...this should characterize a true Christ follower. The only separation we see is Jesus later talking about "sheep and goats." If you want to know what happens to these two groups, read Matthew 25.

21. Recall Jesus' words in Luke 13:24, what did He say would be required for those who would "enter through the narrow door?" _____

22. Jesus uses hyperbole (highly exaggerated wording) in this word picture to stress the eternal value of the Law. In fact, He points out that the heavens and earth are more likely to pass away than what?

(The smallest possible mark is a "dot", or some translations: "stroke" or "tittle.")

Greek word: κεραία (ker-ah'-yah) Literally: little horn, from which we get our word apostrophe

It was said that "the guilt of altering one of them is pronounced so great that if it were done the world would be destroyed."

23. This wording is used only one other time in the NT, and it is by Jesus when He speaks strongly about His value of the Law. What does Jesus say in Matthew 5:17-20? (Use your ESV Bible.)

- I have not come to _____ the Law or the Prophets but to _____ them.
- Until heaven and earth pass away, not an _____, not a _____ will pass until all is _____.

24. What does Jesus say about divorce and remarriage? Divorce = _____

Matthew's gospel clarifies this in Matthew 5:32. What are the acceptable grounds for divorce?

Jesus then wraps up His teaching with a reminder of the Law and a clear example of how the Pharisees had twisted it to suit themselves. To throw in a little homily about divorce and adultery seems odd – like it doesn't fit the theme of what Jesus has been talking about up to this point. But, Jesus is continuing to make his point that the Pharisees are "those who justify" themselves before men but, God knew their heart. So, of all the laws Jesus could have used to illustrate the hypocrisy and false justification of the religious Jews, He chose divorce. Why? This is a significant choice on Jesus' part because the marriage relationship was not only sacred between a man and a woman, it was the way the God had chosen to illustrate His eternal covenant with His chosen people. The Old Covenant was viewed by God as a "marriage" contract between Himself and Israel.

25. What does God say through the prophets?

- Jeremiah 3:14 -- He considered Israel to be His _____
- Ezekiel 16:8 – I [God] entered into a _____ with you, and you _____.

But the Jews continually broke this marriage covenant with God and even defiled the sacredness of marriage by creating ridiculous laws so that they could easily slip out of marriage. Rabbi Hillel (born 110BC died 10AD) taught

that a man could leave his wife for any reason: wearing her hair unbound or burning the toast. At the time Jesus was teaching, His words would have poked them right in their hypocritical eyes. Recall that in Luke 16:15 He said, "You justify yourselves before men, but God know your hearts." This is exactly what they had done with marriage and divorce. They had justified their view on divorce to make it seem right before men, when it was actually God who was going to withhold justification from them. Justification means making it right before the judge. They had made a mockery of marriage by creating their own absurd laws. Jesus says that they were all guilty of adultery for behaving this way. They had treated God's Law with contempt even while trying to make their followers think they were righteous before God. Nothing could have been farther from the truth.

...In Closing...

In Luke 16 Jesus says, "One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much...no one can serve two masters. You cannot serve God and money." While obvious as far as axioms go, it's easy to read and nod and agree and yet quite another thing to actually live this out. We're surrounded by the world of money. It's so present and feels so necessary in our daily lives. I think this exactly why Jesus so frequently reminds His disciples of two things: the priority of the kingdom and the cost of pursuing it. Seek first My kingdom...all these things will be added. Don't even try to live for God and money...it cannot be done. Deny yourself and pick up your cross – daily.

— Day Ten —
Luke Chapter 16:19-17:5

... Open with Prayer ...

Luke 16:19-31

1. What has been Jesus' teaching focus from Luke 15:11 through Luke 16:18?
In Luke 15:11-14 the younger brother loved ... _____ over his father
In Luke 16:13 Jesus warns against serving... _____ over God
In Luke 16:14 the Pharisees are described as lovers of... _____.

And now Jesus offers yet another parable on the perils of seeking money over seeking the kingdom of God.

2. Write Proverbs 22:1-2 here:
|

3. In this parable two men are described. Both are "clothed." The rich man is clothed in _____ while the poor man is "clothed" (covered) with _____.
4. Contrast two hypothetical people. The woman of Proverbs 31 and this Rich Man of Luke 16:
 - What does Proverbs 31:22 say about this woman's clothing?

 - What does Luke 16:19 say about the rich man's clothing?

 - What does Proverbs 31:20 say about her behavior toward the poor? Write the verse here:

 - What does this parable imply about the rich man's behavior toward the poor?

- What is the key difference?
-

5. After his death, the poor man is transported...
- to where? _____ This is a euphemism for heaven since that is where Abraham was.
 - by whom? _____ This is a word picture and shouldn't be taken as the literal way we get to heaven after we die. Jesus is emphasizing his poverty because the poor man wasn't even buried – instead, angels carry him to Abraham's side.
6. The poor man died and was _____ (v. 22)
7. The rich man dies and was _____ (v. 22) and is now in _____ (v. 23) and is in constant _____.

In the minds of the Pharisees, wealth was perceived as a sign that a person was favored and blessed by God. We see this mindset all the way back in the story of Job when Job's friends accuse him of sinfulness since all his wealth was taken away. He, like this poor man, was left with grotesque, oozing sores. (It's back to the "I Must Have Done Something Good" song and mindset we talked about with Maria in Lesson 6 Day 2) So, the thinking is that if you're poor, clearly you or maybe even your parents have done something wrong. It's similar to the caste system of Hinduism. God's favor and blessing is directly tied to your wealth and God's withholding of His favor and blessing to your poverty. But what does Jesus do in this parable? He totally flips the tables. The one who goes to the side of father Abraham who is in heaven is the poor man, and the one who goes to hell is the rich man. Ouch.

8. Is the rich man conscious in Hades? How do you know? List evidences from verses 23-24:
|
9. What does the rich man ask for? (v. 24) _____
10. What is Abraham's explanation for why he won't be getting this request fulfilled? (v. 25)
|
11. What does Jesus warn in Luke 6:24? _____
12. How had this rich man already "received his reward?"
|
13. ***Was it his wealth that was the problem? _____ Why or why not? Use Scripture to support your answer. (Hint: Proverbs 31:20, Job 1, Luke 16:13)
|
14. What does the rich man want done for him and by whom?
v. 24 _____ by _____
v. 27 _____ by _____

Don't miss the point here. It's not that people in hell will be able to ask favors of people in heaven. It's that even in torment, this rich man misses the point. How does he continue to treat Lazarus?

- _____
15. Sending someone to warn your brothers seems like a good and honorable thing to do. The man doesn't want his brothers to end up in hell. What does this tell us about the man's view of his brother's potential destiny?
|
16. Why do you think that the rich man expects his brothers are going to go to hell when they die? What has he become aware of on this side?
|

17. But Jesus, through Abraham in this parable, explains the truth: (v. 29 and 31)

v. 29 _____

v. 31 _____

18. What did Jesus warn of...

in Luke 11:29ff?

In Luke 13:1-5?

In Luke 13:27-28 (Who specifically is named?!) _____

19. ***Go back to Proverbs 22:1-2 that you wrote out in #1. What does this say about one's name? How would you connect this Proverb with the meaning of this parable?

Read Luke 17:1-6

20. What does Jesus warn His disciples against in verses 1 and 2?

21. It's popular in today's culture to leave all culpability for a wrong done in the hands of the person who sins. But Jesus speaks differently here. While the person who will be punished, Jesus warns who else?

_____ (v1) Give an example of someone "through whom" temptations might come in this day and age:

22. What does Jesus exhort in verses 3 and 4?

23. Write the dictionary definition of rebuke: _____

24. ***Does it seem odd or uncomfortable for you to consider rebuking someone if they are sinning? Why or why not?

25. In Judaism, forgiving someone three times was the standard. But Jesus steps it up. How many times in a day does He say to forgive? _____

26. Do you think this means that on the 8th time you can refuse to forgive? Why or why not? Support your answer with Scripture:

27. How do the apostles respond to what Jesus has just said about not leading others into sin and in living a life of forgiveness?

28. What dramatic example of faith and its relative smallness does Jesus give?

Note: the Greek word translated “mulberry tree” refers to a tree that was considered by the rabbis to have roots that could remain in the earth for 600 years. In other words, this was a deeply rooted tree and for all intents and purposes, impossible to uproot, let alone be planted in the sea.

...In Closing...

Thinking back to the story of Lazarus, Jesus isn't telling this story so that we can feel morally superior to the Pharisees. Like the rich man, we can fall into this trap of being preoccupied with the material things of this life, right? We can look at the gifts that God gives – which are every good thing we have (James 1:17) – and prefer them over the Giver who has given us those gifts. Jesus is reminding us that our love should not be in money. How do we know whether we are serving and loving money or whether we are truly serving and loving God? Are we generous? Do we help those who are less fortunate than us? What is more important? We should check our attitude towards material possessions because how we value them is the measure of whether we worship God or the things He's given us.

— Day Eleven —

Luke Chapter 17:6-19

... Open with Prayer ...

Luke 17:6-10

This is an interesting parable because the entire illustration is basically rhetorical. That is, the answer is obvious. And the answer is “no.” Be careful not to insert your western American Miss Manners sensibilities on to this parable. You'll miss the point if you do that.

1. Should a servant, after doing what was expected of him, get a thank you from his master? _____

In Oriental cultures (even today) saying “Please” or “Thank you” is not expected. In fact, in cultural studies you'll find that it might be considered rude and presumptuous to say thank you. A friend of mine returned from a mission trip to China and confirmed this. She had a hard time getting used to not saying “please” and “thank you” so often.

You can read an interesting article on this cultural difference at:

www.healthytravelblog.com/2013/12/18/is-it-bad-to-say-thank-you-and-other-cultural-no-nos/

2. Why, according to this parable, is this so?

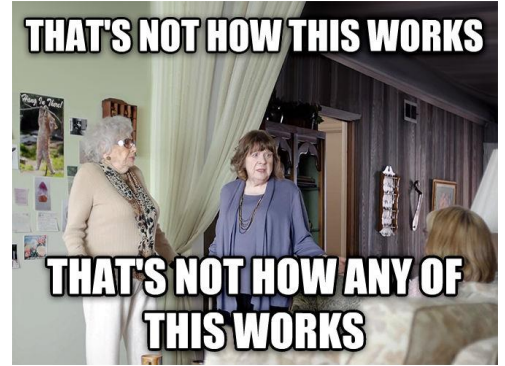
The Pharisees had made a religion of doing what was commanded and expecting God to bless them in return. This type of approach to God turns Him into a divine soda machine. In goes my coin, out comes my soda. In goes my good behavior, out comes favor from God. While God surely has said that blessings are for those who obey, by their legalism the Pharisees had taken from the God – His delight in blessing – and had taken for themselves – an attitude of entitlement to that blessing.

3. What does Jesus say is the better response after having done our duty? (v. 10)

4. What attitude (one that was severely lacking in the Pharisees) does the proper response demonstrate?

Jesus is saying here: "That's not how this works!"

And it's not that God is like a small, overworked farmer who can't even appreciate his servant. That's not it at all. Actually, it's quite the opposite, which Jesus goes on to demonstrate in the next passage.



5. Read Romans 5:8 When was God's love demonstrated to us?
|
6. So, what have we done to deserve His love? _____ ...and yet, He's given it to us! What should our response be?
|

Read Luke 17:11-19

7. By what name do the lepers refer to Jesus? _____
8. What did He ask them to do? _____
Jesus asks for obedience before they are healed and yet...
9. Had they done anything to deserve healing? _____ Is there any indication that they had done anything to deserve being lepers? _____
10. At what point are they actually healed? _____
Nothing happened to them until they acted upon hearing Jesus' word, right? Then, oh, the overflowing joy and relief they must have felt when they realized - en route - that they were healed, and yet...
11. How many lepers get healed? _____ How many of them are thankful? _____
12. Who's the hero of the story? _____ Why? _____

13. What rhetorical question does Jesus ask? (v. 17)
|
14. What clear expectation does Jesus have from those who were healed?
|
15. He makes a point of recognizing the ethnicity of the one thankful leper. How does Jesus refer to him in verse 18? "...this _____" The Greek word here is ἀλλογενής (all-o-gen-ays).
The other nine were Jews, and this was a lone Samaritan.
16. Where else have we seen Jesus lift up a foreigner as the true example of right behavior? (Hint: Luke 10:30-37) _____
17. Not only does this man get physical healing, but Jesus tells him what in verse 19? Write Jesus' words to him here: _____
This means he has received spiritual healing. He is "saved" from hell.
18. This is not the first time someone has been healed and heard these six words of grace. Who else? Not sure? Review from our study:
| Luke 7:50 _____
| Luke 8:48 _____
19. What do these three have in common in terms of how they were viewed by society and in particular by the Pharisees? _____
20. What's Jesus' point? _____
21. How does the Pharisees' idea of God and obedience impact the way they treat others?
|

22. What is Jesus saying our attitude toward God - whether it is in our expected duties or in something unexpected we've received like healing – ought to be?

23. Who is the ultimate example of this attitude? _____ Not sure? Read Luke 12:35-37, after finding the servants awake and ready, what does the master do?

24. What does Philippians 2:5-11 say about Jesus and what He has willingly done?

...In Closing...

In Psalm 19 David wrote:

*The heavens declare the glory of God,
and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.
Day to day pours out speech,
and night to night reveals knowledge.
There is no speech, nor are there words,
whose voice is not heard.
Their voice goes out through all the earth,
and their words to the end of the world.*

If the creation, that has no awareness of its own existence, proclaims God's glory, how much more should we with full awareness, acknowledge the greatness of God? If the sky day to day reveals the truth of God's handiwork, how much more should we who enjoy the beauty of the earth and His creation let our mouths pour forth praise? Rather than bitter expectation of what we think we are owed by God or an ungrateful heart of entitlement, shouldn't we to whom much has been given erupt with praise for even the smallest blessing?

Shouldn't we, whose souls could be demanded of us at any moment, live with richness toward God? David closes this Psalm with a prayer that we should consider praying every single day. As you close today's study, let this be the prayer of your heart:

*Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable in your sight,
O LORD, my rock and my redeemer. (Psalm 19:14)*

Then, take a moment to illustrate this Psalm or another aspect of today's lesson that you want to remember. As always, I will be so happy to hear the little notifications chime on my phone letting me know there's another clever creation of yours waiting for me to see! ...can't wait to hear from you! 562.755.4964

— Day Twelve —

Luke Chapter 17:20-37

... Open with Prayer ...

Read Luke 17:20-21

Luke mentions the “kingdom of God” no less than thirty-two times in his gospel. It’s an important concept and one that we have heard Jesus point to many times. The Jews were familiar with life in an earthly kingdom and living under the rule of an earthly king. Over 1000 years earlier they had surrendered their blessing to live under God as their king when, as recorded in 1 Samuel 8:5, they demanded an earthly king: “Now appoint for us a king to judge us like all the nations.” Since that time, they had lived briefly under only seven righteous kings out of forty-seven. After the final king, they were in exile either in Assyria or Babylon living in completely pagan kingdoms. Now, in the time of Jesus’ ministry, they were living under the rule of a pagan king who considered himself a god – Caesar. Jesus is now proclaiming His kingdom. He’s proclaiming that this is reason He has come. So, it’s no surprise then that He gets asked this opening question to our study: “When will the kingdom of God come?” Maybe you’ve asked the question yourself? We know Jesus came. We’ve read that He’s returning. When? Much has been written to understand and explain the words of Jesus in this chapter. Let’s dig a little deeper ourselves:

1. How is the Lord described in the following Psalms?

➤ Psalm 10:16 - _____

➤ Psalm 29:10 - _____

➤ Psalm 103:19 - _____

2. What had Jesus answered when His disciples asked Him how to pray? Matthew 6:10

3. Some manuscripts added 1 Chronicles 29:11-13 to the end of the prayer. Write the portion that is included in the Lord’s Prayer here:

To this day, observant Jews recite the same prayer on Shabbat (Friday at sundown) that includes reference to God being the king:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם

Barukh atah Adonai, Eloheinu, melekh ha'olam

Blessed are you, Lord, our God, king of the universe...

You might consider this as a special time of prayer with your family this week. Jewish custom is to light two candles, serve two loaves of challah bread, and offer this prayer at sundown at the beginning of Shabbat (Friday.)

4. What does the Pharisees’ question reveal about their expectation for what kind of kingdom Jesus was proclaiming?

Note: If you have the ESV Study Bible, there are very helpful notes in the introduction to the New Testament that give background to the views of the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Essenes.

5. How does Jesus respond to them in verses 20-21?

|

6. Where does He say that the kingdom of God is? _____ (v. 21)

The Greek phrase is “ἐντὸς ὑμῶν ἐστὶν” (entos hymōn estin) meaning literally “in the midst of you” There are several thoughts on the meaning of this phrase. Considering that Jesus is speaking to his disciples as well as the Pharisees, I believe Jesus is stating the obvious: “It’s right here! I’m right here!”

7. What had Jesus rebuked them for in Luke 12:54-56?

|

The Pharisees, who He had called out earlier for stubbornly asking for signs and then again for their stubborn unwillingness to see the sign before them, are now getting Jesus up close and personal and basically flashing a neon alert for them. He’s like the dancing air man on the street corner drawing attention to the car lot. “You want to know where the kingdom is? Open. Your. Eyes!”

But, as we have read, the kingdom of God is not just Jesus. The kingdom is the future coming kingdom as well. And so, Jesus continues speaking of the future and coming kingdom.

Read Luke 17:22-37

8. !!Extra Credit!! Before we continue, having read Luke 17:22-37, did anything strike you as odd? Explain anything you found in your reading that you thought was unusual:

|

9. Who does Jesus now direct His teaching to? (v.22) _____

10. The “Son of Man” was the most common way that Jesus referred to Himself. So, what do you think He means in verse 23?

|

11. How does He describe His return in verses 23-24? Subtle? Sneaky? Easy to miss? How...

|

12. ***Before this light show, what two things must happen first? (v. 25)

1) _____ - what do you think this is a reference to? Explain and support with Scripture: _____

2) _____ - what do you think this is a reference to? Explain and support with Scripture: _____

13. How does Jesus describe the way things will be “in the days of the Son of Man?” (Hint: He references two biblical accounts they would have all been familiar with.)

1) Noah –

|

2) Lot –

|

14. What succinct warning does Jesus give in verse 32? _____

At the mention of Lot’s wife, Jesus’ audience would certainly have shuddered. She is probably the most infamous person to have come so close to being saved and yet to have lost it. Don’t be like her!! What was at the heart of Lot’s wife issue could be in our hearts.

15. Jesus words in Luke 17:33 should be familiar. Where has He already spoken these words and to whom?

|

16. What was Lot’s wife focus on? _____

17. Jesus describes some scenarios in verse 31 basically saying what?

|

Don’t hold on to this world.

18. What scenario does Jesus describe in verses 34-35?

|

19. ***Write Luke 17:36

|

Contact me if you have any questions about this verse.

In Luke 17:37 Jesus offers a sort of local proverb by way of answer to the disciples’ question, “Where, Lord?” You may find it interesting to do a little searching for the various interpretations to this proverb. Here’s my thoughts: What did Jesus say in Luke 12:54-56? You should be able to read the signs! Have you heard the saying, “Where there’s smoke, there’s fire?” If you see smoke, you can expect there to be fire. The same is implied here. If you see vultures circling, what would you expect to see beneath them? A dead body of some kind, right? If you see seagulls circling at sea, what would you expect to see beneath them? A food source of some kind, right? Jesus is saying to be observant of obvious signs. What did He say to the Pharisees back in Luke 17:21? Basically, “I’m right here! Open your eyes!”

20. What thoughts or questions do you have from today’s reading?

|

...In Closing...

The kingdom is coming. Be ready.

Honestly, I felt like leaving those six words as the closing today. I suppose my heart for you is that you would not over-complicate the gospel. The passage we have just studied through has been interpreted and re-interpreted literally thousands of ways over the years since Luke recorded Jesus' words. Among brilliant scholars and theologians there are a myriad of views. So, for the lay person and simple disciple, like me, I just want things to be simple. True, but simple. I don't know when Jesus is returning. I don't know what all the signs will be. I do know He is coming. I do know I want to be ready. So, I'll take Him at His word and I'll do what He says to be ready. That brings me back to desire in all this: My life, my all. That's what I have for Jesus. I hope you feel the same, my friend. I love doing this study with you! I think of you all the time while I'm reading and studying and writing and I pray for you. I'll see you soon, until then...know that you are loved and prayed for. ♥

You are loved
AND
prayed for.