



Week Five

Reflections and Readings

Day 29—Luke 18

Jesus told many parables in the Book of Luke. In verses 9-14, he tells of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector. Both men had gone up to the temple to pray. The Pharisee, holding himself in high esteem, prayed and gave thanks that he was better than the tax collector and better than other men. The tax collector was a much more humble man, and asked God to be merciful towards him because he was a sinner. Jesus completed his parable by telling the Apostles that the tax collector went back to his house justified, because he had humbled himself before God. If we are to be justified by God, we must humble ourselves first. Our hope is that Jesus has told us that we will be exalted by first humbling ourselves before the Lord.

In verses 24-30, Jesus tells us that the rich will have a very hard time entering God's kingdom. When questioned by the Apostles as to who can be saved, He told them that the things which are impossible with men are possible with God. He tells us that those who follow Him will receive many times more in this present life, and eternal life in the age to come. How wonderful to have that hope in our hearts!! (Mike Chaney)

Day 30—Luke 19:1-27

In these verses, Jesus tells the parable of the minas (a mina was an ancient unit of weight and money, equal to one sixtieth of a talent). A certain nobleman preparing to go to a far country had entrusted several of his servants with a mina, instructing them to do business with the money while he was away. Upon his return he called together the servants to him, to get a report on their business dealings with his money. The first two servants had put the money to work and had made a profit for their master; the third servant had hid the money away and had earned nothing except the wrath of his master. The master told the other servants to take the mina away and give it to the first servant who earned the most return on the money; those who stood by thought it unfair that the servant who had invested wisely would reap the extra mina. The master told them all that to everyone who has will be given, and from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. Our hope is that we will take what God has given us (our natural talent, our time, our faith, our resources) and invest it for God and not for worldly gain, and in return we will be rewarded.

Day 31—Luke 19:28-48

Luke tells us of Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem, and of how the people had hope in Him, spreading their clothes on the road and rejoicing and praising God with a loud voice. Some of the Pharisees did not like the people giving adulation to Jesus, and asked Him to rebuke those who were praising Him. Jesus refused, saying "I tell you that if these should keep silent, the



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stones would immediately cry out.” Our hope is grounded in knowing that our faith is realized by the Lord. (Mike Chaney)

Day 32—Luke 20:1-20

Jesus tells the parable of the man who planted a vineyard and leased it to vinedressers and then went away for a long time. At harvest time he sent a servant to ask for some of the fruit. The vinedressers beat the servant and sent him away, as they did the next two servants who were sent. The man then sent his beloved son, who was killed by the vinedressers so that the son would not receive his inheritance. Jesus went on to say that the owner of the vineyard would come to destroy the vinedressers and give the vineyard to others. God sent His beloved son who was killed, and we are reminded that if we reject Him we have no hope. (Mike Chaney)

Day 33—Luke 20:21-47

In, Luke 20, Jesus said to the people “Look God is the God of the living—not the dead.” Those who are in God are alive in this life and the next. Another time, in John 10 Jesus told his listeners that, “he had come that they may have life and have it more abundantly”. God is a God of life and Jesus wants us to be fully alive in Him.

It’s kind of sad but sometimes Christians are some of the “deadest” people you meet. Cold, stodgy rigid, stiff. No fun. And that is a shame. It is especially a shame when we actually think that Christians are supposed to be boring and no fun, dull and uninteresting. Of all people on the face of the earth we ought to be the most alive, the most vibrant, and the first to celebrate and live life to the fullest...because we have the most to live for...we have Jesus in our lives and because of that we are connected to almighty God.

Our God is a God who gives us life and gives us abundance. We just have to recognize it and then celebrate it. Theologian Henri Nouwen writes, “God is a god of *life &* abundance, not a God of scarcity. Jesus reveals to us God’s abundance when he offers so much bread to the people that there are twelve large baskets with leftover scraps (see John 6:5-15), and when he makes his disciples catch so many fish that the boat nearly sinks (see Luke 5:1-7). God doesn’t give us just enough. He gives us more than enough: more bread and fish than we can eat, more love than we dared to ask for...God is a generous giver, but we can only see and enjoy God’s generosity when we love God with all of our hearts, minds, and strength. As long as we say, ‘I will love you God but first show me your generosity,’ we will remain distant from God and unable to experience what God truly wants to give us, which is life and life in abundance.” (Wade Arp)



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Day 34—Luke 21

Ever find yourself worrying...a lot? Jesus told His followers, “But make up your mind not to worry beforehand how you will defend yourselves. For I will give you words and wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to resist or contradict.” (Luke 21:14-15).

How can Jesus tell the crowds of people “Hey, don’t worry!” ...UNLESS Jesus is in control...unless God will provide; God will take care of you. How could Jesus tell the crowds, then and now,(you and me) not to worry about the things in life that we all worry about...UNLESS Jesus is in control...unless God will provide. The same Jesus who was in control then is still in control now. Maybe some of us need to hear that today. Maybe we are worried about storms in our lives right now. Maybe we are worried about problems at home, worried about problems at work/school; worried about problems within our families. Maybe some of us are worried about tomorrow and what will happen or won’t happen. Maybe some of us really need to hear Jesus say, “Don’t worry...God will take care of you

What makes you worry? What are you worried about today? What did you wake up worrying about? What are you going to go to sleep tonight worrying about? Is it because you are not in control? Is it because you are in control? Is it because you don’t know whose in control? The Bible is such a great guidebook for life. It is the owner’s manual for our lives on this earth. And the Bible actually says, Worry...yeah it is real...yeah it is out there....yeah you do it...but you shouldn’t! The Bible says, don’t ! Don’t get carried away with worry because it really doesn’t help things. Worry only sees the problems; whereas faith in God sees the solution. (Wade Arp)

Day 35—Luke 22:1-46

Here in Luke 22, we see what kind of Messiah Jesus really is. Not a military-messiah but a servant-messiah. He serves His followers, even as one goes to betray Him. Humility and obedience are what we see in Jesus. What appeared to the world to be weakness was in fact spiritual strength as Jesus faithfully lived out and fulfilled His last hours before the cross.

Stories like this give us a great glimpse of who Jesus is. But they also raise questions for us, namely “What Kind of Follower Am I?” Do I choose to be served OR, do I choose to serve? Do you choose “Serve Us” (2 words) or Service (one word)? Jesus is communicating to His followers: The Mature believer stops asking, “Who is going to meet my needs?” and starts asking, “Whose needs can I meet?” Which question do you find yourself asking?

For Jesus, the way that He approached faith and modeled faith for us was to take up the towel. By saying “God I can honor you best—not by expecting others to serve me; but I can honor you best by serving them...in your name.” As a mature believer you come to a place in your life where you stop asking, “OK who is going to meet my needs?”, and you start asking, “Whose needs can I now meet?” (Wade Arp)