



For the week of March 20

Monday, March 21 — Luke 12



Chapter Summary: Jesus preaches first just to His disciples but then to the entire crowd. He speaks of hypocrisy and fearing God more than man. He tells the parable of the Rich Fool to illustrate that we should not worry but rather trust God. Using imagery from their day, He talks about a faithful servant and an evil servant and encourages everyone to choose which side they will serve. While faith in Christ may cause unavoidable division, Christ urges us to pursue unity wherever possible in any other matter.

Devotional: A man received a calendar free in the mail one day and promptly threw it in the trash. The next day his son brought home a calendar full of pictures he had drawn and colored. The father proudly displayed the calendar in a place of honor in the kitchen. One was a treasure, the other was trash. What made the difference? It was the giver. In verse 32 of our reading Jesus says that our treasure and our heart are permanently linked. One will draw the other. If we invest our “treasure” (time, talents, or money) in spiritual things, our heart will naturally follow. How can I make a bigger investment in spiritual things at church and in my personal life to help me love the Lord and His church more each day?

Questions for more thought/discussion: Jesus says that faith should cancel out worry. In light of the parable of the rich fool, how can we plan for the future while still trusting in God?

Tuesday, March 22 — Luke 13



Chapter Summary: Jesus teaches that it is better to repent and be right with God than to worry about what is fair or unfair in how we are treated in this life. He tells three more parables to further illustrate the kingdom of Heaven. He heals a woman on the Sabbath and deals with the criticism that comes from it. He encourages His disciples to walk the narrow way even if it is unpopular. He weeps for Jerusalem.

Devotional: Jesus compares the Kingdom of God to a mustard that starts out so small but grows into something large. Think about how the church has grown in the world today and how the gospel grew in your heart. What is the “mustard seed” of the gospel? How are you growing in your faith? How can you spread the good news about Jesus and help the church to grow?

Questions for more thought/discussion: While Jesus says the kingdom of God grows and spreads like leaven or a mustard plant, He also encourages us to repent and make sure our lives are not like the barren fig tree. What is the right balance between good works and salvation by faith? Can you have one without the other?

Wednesday, March 23 — Luke 14



Chapter Summary: Jesus heals a man on the Sabbath. He encourages His followers to take the lowly place in a social situation. He tells the parable of the great banquet and teaches that following Him is worth whatever cost must be paid. He closes by showing the importance of our influence with a lesson on salt that is not salty.

Devotional: In the parable, Jesus tells of a host who plans a meal and invites his guests. The guests accept the invitation, but then make excuses when it is time to show up for the meal. Instead, the invitation is offered to others who do get to enjoy the banquet. His message is aimed at Jewish leaders who had initially accepted God’s invitation to be people of faith, but now are rejecting Christ. As Christians, we are those who have accepted God’s invitation today. How do we show our acceptance in our daily lives? Who are the “outsiders” that Christ wants us to reach with the gospel today?

Questions for more thought/discussion: This is the second miracle in as many chapters that Jesus has performed on the Sabbath. Do you think He goes out of His way to do them on the Jews sacred day? What lesson is He trying to teach the Jewish leaders? Is Jesus truly in violation of the Sabbath laws? If so, what lessons can we learn as we seek to do ministry today? What is the relationship between helping people and maintaining doctrine?



Thursday, March 24 — Luke 15

Chapter Summary: Jesus tells three parables that all have the same point. The parable of the lost sheep teaches us that God cares about lost people. The parable of the lost coin also teaches us how God cares for sinners. In the final parable about the lost (prodigal) son, Jesus again teaches that God cares for the lost, but then shows that we, as His people, must care for the lost, too.

Devotional: We have all had the experience of losing something that is valuable to us. Think back to a time when you misplaced something that was a treasure. How determined were you to find it? How hard did you look for it? Did all your hard work pay off? If not, how upset were you to lose the item.

Jesus says we should have that same intensity in how we seek out the lost. We should be just as determined to leave no stone unturned in winning others to Christ or in bringing the erring back to the body of Christ. And even if our hard work does not pay off, we can know that we did all we could to reach those who need the gospel.

Questions for more thought/discussion: In these three parables something is lost each time. One item is misplaced, one wanders away, and one leaves in rebellion. How does that illustrate the way souls are lost today? In each parable a different method is used to find the lost items. How does illustrate how God (and His people) should seek lost people today?

In the final parable, the older brother grumbles about his younger brother being found and redeemed. This part of the parable is specifically directed against the religious leaders of they day. In what ways can we find ourselves in the older brother's shoes today?



Friday, March 25 — Luke 16

Chapter Summary: Jesus tells the parable of the unjust steward before declaring that we must declare whether we will serve God or serve money. Jesus challenges the Pharisees to have pure hearts before telling the story of the rich man and Lazarus.

Devotional: This entire chapter revolves around the desire we have to serve God or to serve money. Many of our decisions are based on our priorities. When we have made a choice, we have also ruled out other alternatives. Jesus says we will often have to decide to serve God OR serve money.

Think of some decisions you face and how they reflect your priorities. How does Satan and the world challenge us to put things ahead of God? How can we practice putting God first in our life, especially in those situations?

Questions for more thought/discussion: The unjust steward is commended for being “shrewd” even though he does something that was unethical. In light of what Jesus says about serving God and money, why is the steward commendable?

The story of the rich man and Lazarus is designed to teach us that there are more important things in this life than money. But we may not realize just how important they are until after this life is over. What things in your life have eternal value?

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