

Monday, Aug. 24

Scriptures to read:

Luke 11:1-13

Additional Scriptures:

Matthew 6:5-15

Matthew 7:7-11

Thoughts to consider:

No, we have not had that Scripture before. Many scholars have spent hours harmonizing the gospels in order to arrange the events of Jesus' life in chronological order. Most of them agree that the Matthew passage was a part of the Sermon on the Mount in the early part of Jesus' ministry. In today's text the disciples asked Jesus to teach them to pray. No doubt they had observed Jesus praying and wanted to follow His example. The Model Prayer is given here as well as part of the Sermon on the Mount. You may want to compare and contrast the two accounts. If we follow the pattern of the Model Prayer (commonly called the Lord's Prayer) we will first acknowledge God as our Heavenly Father and pray for His kingdom and His will. Then, and only then, should we dare to pray for our needs. Any formal prayer should include adoration and praise as well as petitions and requests. The parable teaches us to be persistent in our requests, always remembering that His will is perfect.

Tuesday, Aug. 25

Scripture to read:

Luke 12:13-21

Thoughts to consider:

A man wanted Jesus to "referee" a dispute over his inheritance. This led Jesus to tell the parable of the rich fool. This man was an egoist speaking frequently of himself (I/my). He was selfish and materialistic. He was a hoarder. Not only did he have an abundance of his crop, but he was worried about storing it. Jesus tells us that the things of this world do not satisfy or make one happy. He teaches that it is folly to put one's faith in THINGS. Instead we should be concerned about the treasures we are laying up in Heaven. Perhaps we should be concerned about our closets, our attics, our storage sheds.

Wednesday, Aug. 26

Scripture to read:

Luke 12:35-59

Thoughts to consider:

The verses for today center on two words: watchfulness and preparedness. We have here a parable, an illustration, and another parable. The first parable was about servants who watched for their lord's coming. The illustration concerns the uncertainty of the hour a thief may strike. The second parable is about a faithful and wise steward who operated his lord's household properly. Christ is our Master and we are His servants. Christ will return again. We should be in a state of expectation. "Say, will He find you and me still watching, waiting...?"

Thursday, Aug. 27**Scripture to read:**

Luke 14:1-24

Thoughts to consider:

We have three distinct teachings in these twenty-four verses. In verses 1-6 we see some Pharisees involved in a plot to entrap Jesus. Jesus often healed people on the Sabbath. He insisted that the Sabbath law did not forbid acts of mercy. Sometimes we are guilty of observing the letter of the law to the extent of missing the spirit of the law. In verses 7-14 Jesus taught that pride and ambition are disgraceful. True humility leads to exaltation. In verses 15-24 we are reminded to keep our priorities straight. God cannot or will not accept lame excuses in His kingdom. Christ's house is large and none are excluded. He offers His invitation to all to partake of His banquet.

Friday, Aug. 28**Scripture to read:**

Luke 15:1-32

Thoughts to consider:

We have three very familiar parables in our Scripture today. In each something was lost, later found, causing rejoicing. We can relate best to the third parable often referred to as the "Parable of the Prodigal Son." The forgiving love of the father symbolizes the divine mercy of God. The older brother's resentment is like the attitude of the Pharisees and teachers of the law who opposed Jesus. The parable shows a contrast between the self-centered exclusiveness of the Pharisees, who failed to understand God's love, and the joy over the repentance of sinners. The words of repentance are short and simple, yet difficult to say, "I have sinned." We don't like to admit that we are wrong. But genuine repentance demands an acknowledgement of wrongful actions against others and against God. An enthusiastic "welcome home" is always available to each person through the grace and mercy of our loving heavenly Father.

Saturday, Aug. 29**Scripture to read:**

Luke 16:1-15

Thoughts to consider:

Several different titles have been suggested for this parable: Parable of the Unjust Steward; Parable of the Shrewd Manager; A Bad Man's Good Example. The parable does not teach that we should follow this man's example. All cheating is wrong and is condemned in the Bible. Some of the lessons to be learned: 1) faithfulness in little things shows that one can be responsible in greater things; 2) faithfulness with that which is another's may qualify one to handle his own things; 3) it is impossible to serve two masters. We need to remember that parables contain one basic truth. Some characters are good; some bad. We are not to imitate their actions. We are to learn and practice the central truth which is taught.

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