



Theme: The Art of Salvation – Jesus in the Gospel of Luke


“Salvation in the Kingdom”


Weekly Memory Verse:

“That is why I tell you not to worry about everyday life—whether you have enough food to eat or enough clothes to wear. ²³ For life is more than food, and your body more than clothing.” – Luke 12:22b-23

During Lent, the 40 days and 7 Sundays before Easter, the Meditation Moments will lead us to read the entire gospel of Luke. To reach that goal, some daily readings are longer than usual. Have an extra cup of coffee, or maybe use your lunch break, to make the time to read the whole gospel with us.

Monday, March 28 – Read Luke 11:1-36. Jesus’ disciples saw his spiritual power and wanted to know how to pray the way he did. But the religious leaders, sure they were upright, slandered Jesus. They claimed Jesus set people free from the effects of evil because he was in league with the ruler of demons! Jesus’ response was forceful. In Luke 12:10 (we’ll read its context tomorrow) he said they were insulting the Holy Spirit. Attributing the Holy Spirit’s work to an impure spirit is roughly tantamount to calling God Satan.


 Jesus taught his disciples the Lord’s Prayer and gave them an insight into “answered prayer” in Luke 11:11- 13. He compared the “good gifts” parents give their children with God’s gift of the Holy Spirit to all who ask. But often we ask for something other than the Holy Spirit. What are you praying for today? If God answers by giving you the Holy Spirit’s presence, will you thank God for that or be upset that you didn’t receive whatever else you asked for?


 Verses 34-35 urged us to examine the health of our eyes—not just physical, but spiritual. Jesus’ enemies blinded themselves spiritually by refusing to consider any evidence that didn’t fit what they wanted to be true. In what ways has God brought new light to your mind, to your ways of thinking, over the last year?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, give me the bread I need for today. And give me your presence, too, because that is the true inner bread of life I urgently need. Amen.

Tuesday, March 29 – Read Luke 11:37-12:34. Jesus challenged his day’s religious and political leadership structures. In today’s reading, we see that they fixated on washing for ritual purity, but not for hygiene as they didn’t yet know about viruses. Jesus taught that faith and trust flow from


the inside out. He gave a wide-ranging set of warnings against a “mismatch between...hearts and lives” in verse 12:1.


 The tension between the status quo and God’s kingdom kept building. Jesus 1) warned his disciples about opposition, and 2) reminded them that God knows and cares about every part of our lives. He challenged his followers, then and now, to avoid a casual, half-hearted faith. How wholehearted is your faith? What does it look like for you to follow Jesus with your whole heart?

 In verse 34, Jesus said, “Where your treasure is, there your heart will be too.” True security and satisfaction, he taught, came from prioritizing our connection with God even over important externals like food, clothing, or material possessions. How does Jesus’ teaching challenge the messages our culture sends about how much security and satisfaction “stuff” can bring you?

Prayer: *King Jesus, it’s hard for me to make the inside of me match the outside sometimes. Help me desire your kingdom of eternal security and fulfillment above all else. Amen.*


Wednesday, March 30 – Read Luke 12:35-13:9. At the start of this passage, Jesus compared his followers to servants. Good ones are always ready to respond to their master’s commands and wishes. Bad ones lose their jobs or, in Roman times, even worse. Jesus was not endorsing those cruel practices but using them to point out that choosing to serve God is a matter of eternal life or death. The section ended with a haunting parable. Jesus didn’t even give it an ending.


 Jesus’ words about bringing division rather than peace in 12:51-53 may strike us as odd. Isn’t Jesus “the prince of peace”? Yes, but his kingdom’s principles, including peace, were so unlike the world’s that he knew at times division would follow. Have family members, friends or co-workers ever misunderstood or criticized choices you’ve made based on your loyalty to God?

 Jesus told what we could call “The Unfinished Parable” in 13:6-9. The gardener pleaded for one more year to help the tree bear good fruit, but Jesus never said whether the tree did or didn’t bear fruit. Verse 13:5 showed what kind of “fruit-bearing” was really on his mind. What about you? How will you finish Jesus’ unfinished parable?

Prayer: *Lord Jesus, you dig up the soil around me, water and fertilize, and watch eagerly for your fruit to appear in me. Keep me open to you so that I may indeed bear fruit to your glory. Amen.*


Thursday, March 31 – Luke 13:10-35. Jesus ended eighteen years of disability for one woman “at once.” He did it on the Sabbath, which upset the synagogue leader. To him, her case was no crisis. She’d already suffered for 18 years. But for Jesus, that made healing, now, even more vital in verse 16. Still going to Jerusalem, as we read in verse 22, he mourned over a spirit that loved rules above people. One commentary called verses 31-35 a “Lament of the Rejected Lover.”


 Someone asked an abstract question in verse 23, “Lord, will only a few be saved?” Jesus’ answer was completely personal. *The Message* rendered it as, “Whether few or many is none of your business. Put your mind on your life with God. The way to life—to God!—is vigorous and requires your total attention.” Do abstract religious questions ever distract you from a focus on your own relationship with God? What spiritual practices most help you keep things personal with God?

 Verses 33-35 were the first of four laments Jesus spoke for Jerusalem in Luke. The others are in 19:41-44, 21:20-24 and 23:27-31. What do Jesus’ sorrowful words about the fate of the city that was rejecting him tell you about his heart? How do you react when trouble comes to a person or group that treats you like an enemy?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, you said you wanted to gather the people of Jerusalem “as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings.” Most of them didn’t want that—but I do. Shelter and nurture my life, that I may grow strong in your grace. Amen.


Friday, April 1 – Luke 14:1-24. Jesus surely didn’t shock the watching Pharisees by again ignoring their Sabbath healing rules. But he gave them a different shock in verse 15. They loved to imagine God’s great end-time feast. That picture of a divine feast came from Isaiah 25:6-10. Isaiah said this banquet would be for “all peoples,” “all nations,” “the whole earth,” but the religious leaders wanted it to be just for their own group of Israelites. Yet in Jesus’ story, the chosen said “no,” and God called street people instead!

 Have you ever known (or maybe even been) a person like the ones Jesus noticed who “sought out the best seats at the table”? In what ways can that attitude show itself in school, games, the workplace, even church work? What’s the difference between healthy boldness, so that you can use your gifts to bless others, and the kind of self-promotion Jesus warned against?

 Writer and preacher Brennan Manning wrote, “After reading the entire Gospel of Luke for the first time, a post-Valley girl said: ‘Wow! Like Jesus has this totally intense thing for ragamuffins.’” We are all spiritually “poor, crippled, blind and lame,” and we all need God’s grace to come to God’s “banquet.” Can you see the degree to which you are a ragamuffin before God, one more person who desperately and gratefully needs God’s grace and mercy?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, of course I want to be a guest at your great end-time feast. Give me a heart that will rejoice in being there even if some of the other guests might at first surprise me. Amen.

Saturday, April 2 – Read Luke 14:25 – 15:32. Making him your Lord, Jesus said, is costly. Jesus asks us to count the cost before we set out. Then he heard a familiar charge: “This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.” With sinners and tax collectors gathering to listen to him, Jesus could hardly deny that charge, and he didn’t want to. He embraced the accusation with three vivid stories in which finding a lost sheep, a lost coin, and a lost boy set off big celebrations. To the last story, he pointedly added an older son who didn’t want to welcome the lost boy home.

 The Pharisees believed “bad people” didn’t change. Jesus saw people much more as “lost” (like the sheep, coin or boy), and God can always find a lost heart. When have you spiritually lost your way and needed finding? Jesus said God rejoiced each time a heart responded. What has most helped you see God as more eager to find the lost than to punish the bad? Jesus left the older son’s story open-ended like the fig tree parable we read in Luke 13:6-9. It ended with the father’s plea to his angry older boy: “We had to celebrate and be glad because this brother of yours was dead and is alive. He was lost and is found.” We know most of the “older brothers” who heard Jesus stayed outside, not willing to welcome prodigal sons or daughters home. Now you’re at the party of faith. How do you respond to the Father’s appeal to welcome lost people home?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, it’s true—you always had friends in low places. It’s also true you were always eager to draw them to higher ground. Give me the heart and insight to live out both parts of your example. Amen.