

Monday, March 15, 2010

Written by Rich Smilo

Scripture: Luke 13: 18-21

“What is the kingdom of God like?” These are the words that basically start this , which is called the “Parable of the Mustard Seed”. And Jesus also asks, “To what should I compare it to?” This parable is different from the equally well know one about faith and the mustard seed. Here our Lord is telling us that the kingdom of God is everything that we desire or need. Home and shelter Also he speaks of yeast and bread. Again, everything we require as we give we get. These are short parables – the ones about yeast and a mustard seed, yet either together or separately they speak volumes.

Our souls will find shelter and sustenance there in the measure given, for in other sections of this chapter the message is the same; if we put forth all of our faith, good works and repent. We will see the kingdom and be welcomed as the bird returning to the nest in the mustard tree and our souls would be feed as our bodies would be with the bread leavened with your everlasting grace.

Prayer: Blessed Lord, allow us to be as the bird, looking to build a nest in your branches or the flour that, leavened with the yeast of your everlasting love to become the bread of life. We humbly pray that we will be worthy of that blessing. Amen

Tuesday, March 16, 2010

Written by Marji Hughes

Scripture: Luke 14:25-33

“The Cost”

v. 33 “None of you can become my disciple if you do not give up all your possessions”

v. 28 “For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not first sit down and estimate the cost to see whether he has enough to complete it?”

So often in the gospels Jesus speaks to us in parable and metaphor, leaving the reader (or listener) to discern his meaning, but historically this passage in Luke was often taken literally; that in order to be a true follower, you must give away all you have and leave your family behind. However, I believe this passage is also a metaphor for the kind of effort and stamina needed to be Jesus’ disciple.

The message is two-fold. First, you must give up your love of things – possessions in order to put God first. This is a familiar message to all. “You shall have no other gods before me”. Following Jesus is not as simple as speaking the words. Being a Christian is often hard, just as leaving your family would be, just as giving up all your possessions would be. In Connecticut in 2010 we do not have to worry about literally losing our lives or being imprisoned for our beliefs, but every day we are bombarded with offers and opportunities where the easy or most lucrative response is not the response Jesus requires of us.

Second, before committing yourself, you must know the requirements and the cost. Anyone who has ever been to Weight Watchers will tell you “it’s not a diet, but a lifestyle”. I think discipleship should be taken the same way – it is a life-long process, becomes an integral part of who you are, not something you take on for a while, quit for a while and come back to when you need it (as I tend to do with weight-loss). Understanding there are costs and joys to being a committed Christian help enable us to “complete” the journey. It’s a decision that is kept using everything we have: heart, soul, mind, and strength.

Prayer: Jesus, I want to be your disciple. I make the commitment to follow you, positive that you will be there when I inevitably fall to guide me back to your way. I pray safe in the knowledge that the joys do outweigh the cost. Amen.

Wednesday, March 17, 2010

Written by Sarah Buell

Scripture: Luke 15: 1-10

If you have one hundred of anything, it is a magical number and rather special on occasion – so why wouldn't you look for the lost one!

Prayer: Dear Lord – thank you for giving me the ability to see the value in all life, big or small. Help me to share my compassion. Amen

Thursday, March 18, 2010

Written by Dotty Cacchillo

Scripture: Luke 15 11-32

This is a story reminds me of how we all learn at different levels. Some of us just have to learn the hard way!

Here we have the younger son was rebellious and very immature. He wanted to be free and live as he pleased. He had to hit rock bottom before he came to his senses. It is very difficult for every parent to watch their children make mistakes.

It was also very hard for the older brother to accept his younger brothers when he returned and having his Father through him a party for his return. God's great love reaches out and finds sinners no matter why or how they got lost. The older son refused to forgive because he was bitter about the injustice of it all. His resentment rendered him just as lost to the father's love as his younger brother had been.

We should rejoice like the angels in heaven when an unbeliever repents and turns to God, like the father, accept repentant wholeheartedly and gave his support and encouragement.

Prayer: Help us to forgive others in refusing to forgive people, we are missing a wonderful opportunity to experience joy and share it with others. Make our joy grow: forgive somebody who has hurt you today.

Friday, March 19, 2010

Written by Laurie Phillips

Scripture: Luke 16 : 1-10

Here we read of the steward about to be laid off because he is not honest with his employee's goods. And sure enough, in order to make sure that he still has some friends and influence after his position is ended, he arranges with those who owe money to his employer to lessen their debt. This makes them more indebted to him and likely to receive him in the future. And it would seem that the master ends up respecting the steward - he knew that he was shrewd and cunning and had cheated him, but he seems to admire the way that he has looked out for himself.

Have you ever heard of a dishonest person and yet appreciated the value of the dishonesty? Heard tell of a fraudulent scam and wondered how they had ever thought of doing that? How often have you heard "if only that person had used his talent for good instead of evil.....".

It seems to me that this is what Jesus is thinking here. If only the person had used his resources to pursue religious convictions instead of money. If only people who had the talent and the resources could be convinced that it would be better to pursue good and contribute to the betterment of the world instead of the betterment of their own treasures. What a world it could be.

Prayer: Lord, help me to remember that money is man-made and not all there is in the world. Generosity and service to others are admirable qualities. When I am worried about not having enough, help me to remember that all I have came from you and that in my last days I am going to need your love of me more than my love of money. Make me generous with my resources and my time so that I can help serve you. Amen.

Saturday, March 20, 2010

Written by Ben Breton

Scripture: Luke 16:19-31

We must never forget how lucky we are that we have the basic necessities of life. When homeless people on the street ask us for change, we are taught by society to ignore them. Yet Jesus says, "Whatsoever you did not do for the least of these, you did not do for me." If we take to heart the words of our lord, we cannot close our hearts to suffering. The rich man in this parable, like many rich and even middle-class people today, is callous to the misery of the poor. Lacking empathy, his heart is closed, and there is therefore a great gulf between him and the world of Lazarus. That is why Lazarus cannot reach him, and why his brethren cannot hear the words of the prophets.

When disasters such as the earthquake in Haiti strike, their effects are almost always felt more by the poor than by the rich. That is, no doubt, one of the reasons why Jesus came to the poor: because among them he saw much suffering, and sought to help. This is a fact that is often overlooked by rich televangelists such as Pat Robertson, whose statements about God's judgment of the Haitians need not be repeated here. Suffice it to say that, amidst our abundance of gifts from God, we as Christians often forget how undeserving we are, and that the rain falls on the just as well as the wicked. As my favorite poet, Leonard Cohen, once said "There is a crack in everything. That's how the light gets in." Rather than see sufferings as a judgment, we must see it as a call to action, an opportunity through which God's light can shine.

Prayer: Dear God, Please humble us when we forget that your ways cannot be explained. Let our maladies make us unique, and our strengths be used to restore the Earth, revive the dying, and make peace among nations. And please let the times change for the better, so that tomorrow's Lazarus may be clothed in rich robes, without affliction. And help those who are truly gifted, when dealing with disasters in the "third world," to realize that there is only one world and that it can only be made more beautiful through the sharing of love, sustenance, and empathy, all of which come from you in more abundance than we can fathom. Amen.

Sunday, March 21, 2010

Written by Judy DeSouza

Scripture: Luke 17: 11-19

This is the parable of the 10 leprous men who asked for Jesus' mercy on them for a cure where ONLY 1 stopped and took the time to praise God when he was cured, and went back to Jesus, thanking him.

How many times during our busy days do we ask God to help us in this or that problem, but do we take time to really include prayers of appreciation to God when things are going well for us. May we thank God each day for our life and the simple good things life brings to us. The word THANK YOU is powerful.

Prayer: Please God, let me be mindful to make time each day to thank you for life, simple joys and people brought into my life. Praise be to you Lord in Jesus name. Amen.