

The Luke Journey Days 31-

Day 31 - Read Luke 10:1-24

With great privilege comes great responsibility. As Jesus sends out 72 disciples, both are true here...

- The 72 are sent out but Jesus tells them to pray for more workers. Why? (v2)
- That prayer is still needed today. Pause and pray that God would send out more workers to make Jesus known in the UK and across the world.
- Jesus recognises that when some hear the news of his kingdom, they will respond. But others will reject. Why will it be more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah (two Old Testament cities judged for their godlessness) on the last day than the towns in Jesus' day? (v13-15) What does that teach us about about our responsibility to respond to what we know about Jesus?

The cities in Jesus' day had more revelation than Sodom and Gomorrah had. They had a taste of the kingdom in the teaching and miracles of Jesus. With that greater revelation comes greater responsibility to respond to what we have heard. Those who have received more revelation will be judged more strongly on the last day. We as a nation have the Bible readily accessible, and live a society founded on a Christian worldview. We have great revelation and so have greater responsibility to respond.

- What are the disciples most excited about after their mission trip? (v17) What does Jesus says is more important? (v20)
- What privilege do we experience that even people like Moses and the prophets didn't enjoy? (v22-24) Pause and consider that privilege.
- *Dear Father, thank you that for those who trust in Jesus, our names are written in heaven. Help me to recognise the privilege of knowing Jesus. Help me respond rightly to what I know of him. Amen.*

Day 32 - Read Luke 10:25-37

Yesterday we saw that the kingdom is revealed to little children (those who recognise they have no status before God). Today we meet a meet a man who thinks he does...

- What is the man's question? What is his motive? (v25)
- How does Jesus answer the man's question? (v28) - How should that standard leave us feeling?

The man's answer is correct (v27). That is the standard required if we are to receive eternal. But far from leaving us thinking 'I can inherit eternal life', like the man, we should be thinking 'I don't do this - so how can I?' But the man pushes on. He wants to see how small a group his 'neighbour' needs to be for him to to tick the box 'Loved neighbour', and so inherit eternal life himself.

- How does Jesus' parable explode the man's thinking?

- How does Jesus explode any hope of us inheriting eternal life ourselves?

The man wants to see how small a group his 'neighbour' needs to be. Jesus ask 'who are you being a neighbour to!?' Being a neighbour means showing mercy without limits, even to our enemies. None of us do this, let alone love God with everything. Jesus pulls the rug out from any thinking that we can earn eternal life ourselves. But wonderfully that is what Jesus has come to bring for those who trust him. And for those who do, the call to love neighbour is still there (v37).

- What will it look like for you to be this kind of neighbour this week?

- Dear Father, thank you that when we were battered and bruised from sin, enemies of yours, and unable to help ourselves, Jesus didn't pass by, but bandaged us up and healed us. Help me to show mercy without limit, just as he has. Amen.

Day 33 - Read Luke 10:38-42

We heard the voice at the Transfiguration say 'Listen to him', now we see that modelled in the life of one woman...

- What is Martha's response to having Jesus in their home? What is Mary's? (v38-40)

- Why is Martha's response born out of a good desire?

- But how do the many preparations become the biggest thing? (v40-42) What do they lead to? (v40-42)

- But how is Mary commended and why? (v42)

Martha is serving Jesus - busy, busy, busy, but ironically in the midst of that she has missed out on the one thing that really matters - listening to Jesus.

- Where do you feel 'busy, busy, busy' in life? Where are they threatening to overwhelm or distract you from Jesus? How can you make listening to Jesus a priority?

- Dear Father, thank you for the reminder that listening to Jesus is the most vital thing I can do in life. In the midst of busyness, stresses and strains help me to keep listening to him. Amen.

Day 34 - Read Luke 11:1-13

Yesterday we thought about listening to Jesus. Today we learn about speaking to our Father...

- The disciples want to learn to pray. So in the 'Lord's Prayer' Jesus is not just giving words to say, but a pattern to pray, and priorities to have. With whom does all prayer start? (v2) Pause and reflect how amazing it is that the person trusting Jesus can call God, Father.

- What is to be our first priority in prayer? (v2) How is that a correction to many of our prayers?

- But though God's ways being worked out are to be our priority - Jesus still calls us to lift our needs before God. What needs in particular does Jesus call us to be praying about? (v3-4)

- Our 'daily bread' is what we need (not want) for that day (not beyond that). How is it an encouragement that we can pray for what we need - today?
- What do Jesus' first parable teach us about how we ought to pray? (v5-10)
- What is the encouragement in Jesus' second parable about the one we are praying to? (v11-13)
- *Dear Father, thank you for the privilege of calling you 'My Father'. Thank you that you love to give good gifts to your children. Help me to pray boldly and with your priorities. Amen.*

Day 35 - Read Luke 11:14-28

We prayed yesterday 'your kingdom come'. But that is not the only kingdom at work. Which kingdom will win?

- What accusation is made against Jesus and his miracles? (v14-15)
- How does Jesus answer their accusation? (v17-22)
- Jesus is driving out evil by the power of God. So what does that means is happening? (v20)
- Evil is real in this world. We might not see it necessarily in the forms that it was seen in Jesus' day. But where do we see it at work today? Who does this passage help us see is a factor behind it?
- What is the encouragement of who Jesus is, when we feel helpless or doubt in the face of evil? (v22)
- Why is simple moral transformation not enough to defeat evil? (v24-26)

The total defeat of evil by Jesus is what is needed. If evil is cast out, but not replaced by anything, it is worst after, than it was before. But the Kingdom of God doesn't do that.

- Dear Father, evil is real in this world. It hurts and destroys. I recognise at times its presence within me. Thank you that Jesus comes as the strong man who defeats Satan. Help me to cling to him. Amen.

Day 36 - Read Luke 11:29-36

Jesus ended yesterday saying 'Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it'. Today was have a test case...

- Why will those who heard King Solomon and Jonah speak stand in judgement over the crowds in Jesus' day? (v29-32)

King Solomon and Jonah preached God's message to outsiders (the Queen of Sheba travelled from a far, Jonah was sent to Nineveh). Their hearers listened and responded.

- Jesus said no more signs would be given to the people to convince them of who he is, other than the sign of Jonah. (v29-30) Jesus is speaking about the resurrection (where Jesus was three days in

the tomb, as Jonah was in the fish). Jesus says the issue in unbelief is not a lack of evidence. How does that give us confidence as we share Jesus with our community?

So why don't people believe. Jesus says it is all to do with our eyes.

- What role do our eyes have in sharing the benefits of light with our body? (v34) If our eyes are bad, what negative effect does that have?

- Our spiritual eyes really matter. If they do not see rightly, then even what light there is within us will be impacted (v35). We will not respond to Jesus or live his way. Similarly if our eyes are good, our whole being is full of light - we will respond to him. How does that change how we pray for ourselves? For the people we know and love who haven't responded to Jesus?

- *Dear Father, please open my eyes that I might see Jesus as he really is. For (add the names of people we know who don't trust Jesus yet), please open their eyes that they might see Jesus' light and respond rightly to him.*

Day 37 - Read Luke 11:37-54

We have been in a section where the tension between the Kingdom of God and human 'religion' has been clear. Now it comes to a head...

- What complaint does Jesus' host (a religious leader) have against Jesus? (v37-38) What is Jesus' complaint against the Pharisees' religion? (v39-41)

Jesus begins to expose the hypocrisy which religion without Jesus can often fall into. The 'outside' of us might look very good, but the 'inside' is very different.

- What areas of hypocrisy does Jesus condemn in v42-52?

- How does this hypocritical religion impact others? (v44; v46; v52)

- How does this hypocritical religion react to Jesus, as his light shows them up? (v53-54)

- Where are there areas in your own life where your outside religion differs from what is going on in your heart? Are there areas where you are more concerned with rules than mercy? Or human traditions rather than loving Jesus?

- *Dear Father, I recognise in myself a heart towards you and others which does not always match the appearance I give. Forgive the hypocrisy in me, and through Jesus create a new heart within me. Amen.*

Day 38 - Read Luke 12:1-12

Yesterday we saw Jesus tackle hypocritical religion, and its reaction to him. Now Jesus prepares his followers that it will reject them too...

- Will hypocrisy remain hidden for ever? (v1-3) How is that a challenge and an encouragement to us?

- Jesus' disciples might even face death for following him (v4) But why are they not to be afraid? Whom should they fear instead? (v4-5)

- Fear of the Lord in the Bible is different than being afraid of him. It means being in awe of him and respecting him. What two reasons are given why we should be in awe of God? (v5-7)

There is a fate worse than death. Jesus warns it is being separated from God's good kingdom in hell. God our maker and judge has power of our destination. But wonderfully for the one who acknowledges Jesus (v8) we can be sure of God's care (v7) and a new future with him instead. With that secure, it enables us to begin to not be afraid of other things.

- The Holy Spirit comes to be personally with the follower of Jesus. He works to enable us to turn back to Jesus, and then make Jesus known. To reject the one who comes to help us trust the Saviour puts us beyond forgiveness, for it means we are throwing back the lifebelt that is being thrown to us. (v10). But what is the promise to God people (especially persecuted people) in v11-12?

- Dear Father, I am often afraid in life. That fear holds me back from serving you and loving others. Help me to fear you, trusting Jesus to give me a new future, and his present care, that I might live unafraid. Amen.

Day 39 - Read Luke 12:13-34

Fear is a theme again today. Here it is fear around provision for our needs...

- How did the rich fool act as if life did consist in the abundance of his possessions? (13-21) What was God's verdict? (v20-21)

- Are there ways that we operate the same - building up things around us - pensions, possessions, insurance plans - thinking life and safety are ultimately found there?

- Life is more than possessing the things we need for life (v22-23). But we still need those things! What encouragements are there to trust our Father for those needs? (v24-31)

- If abundant life does not consist in having things, what does it consist in? (v31-32) How is giving to those in need an expression of trust in our Father and his kingdom? (v32-34)

- Does the way you use your money and possessions demonstrate a focus on God's kingdom? Are their things you are worried about? How do these verses help you?

- Dear Father, help me to truly believe life is found in your kingdom, not my possessions. Help me to seek your kingdom first, and be able to trust you for all my needs. Amen.

Day 40 - Read Luke 12:35-48

Yesterday we were called to focus on the kingdom - a secure kingdom - but we also see that it is a future kingdom...

- What does Jesus call us to be like? (v35-36)
 - What is the amazing promise that Jesus makes to his people when he returns? v37-38)
 - How does that change how you view of Jesus' return?
 - Why must we always be living ready ? (v39-40)
 - How does Jesus' parable show us what being faithful while we wait looks like? (v42-46)
 - God is just and fair (v47-48). What has God made known to you, and entrusted to you? What will faithfully waiting look like in your life?
- Dear Father, thank you that Jesus will return. Thank you that day will be one of joy for his people. Help me to live believing this, and serving faithfully while I wait. Amen.*

Day 41 - Read Luke 12:49-59

Jesus is the Prince of Peace, but let's not misunderstand what his mission involves...

- Did Jesus come to bring peace? (v49-51) How does that surprise you?
- Where will that division be played out? (v52-53) Why do you think Jesus brings division?
- What is the crowd's problem? (v54-56) What do they refuse to do? (57-59)

Jesus brings division, even in the closest relationships. His words and actions provoke a response. Some will 'be reconciled' to him, but others will see all the 'signs' (the evidence) and refuse to turn back.

- Have you seen this at work in your own relationships? In others'? Have you responded to the signs about Jesus? Pray for someone you know who is refusing to respond.

- Dear Father, thank you that you have enabled me to interpret the signs and respond to Jesus. I pray for (add in name). Please help them to see who Jesus is and be reconciled to him. Amen.

Day 42 - Read Luke 13:1-9

Yesterday we saw the warning to 'read the signs' correctly. Today we see how we should and shouldn't respond when we see tragedy in the world...

- What two disasters have happened? (v1; v4)
- When tragedies happen, what might people be tempted to say about the victims? (v2;4)
- According to Jesus what should we not think when we see others suffer? (v3; v5)
- When we see suffering however, how should we respond? (v3;5)

Jesus will not let us point the finger when we see disasters and say the victims suffered because they must have sinned terribly. He won't let us say 'they suffered, not me, because they must have

been worse.' But he does say when we see tragedy, we should respond in repentance. Suffering is used as a wake up call by God. A warning in the here and now of the judgement to come.

- How should we be responding as we look at our world at present? Is that how you have responded?

- What is the warning and encouragement of Jesus' parable? (v6-9)

- *Dear Father, thank you that you are merciful and give us the opportunity to repent. Help me to do so while there is time. Help me to learn the lessons you are seeking to teach me in suffering. Amen.*

Day 43 - Read Luke 13:10-21

We get to see just what a king and kingdom Jesus call us to...

- What is Jesus' response to the women's plight? (v10-13) What is the synagogue leader's? (v14)

- But how is religious hypocrisy once again shown up? (v15-17) Who does Jesus show himself to be? (v16)

- Are there areas in your life where you are more concerned with human rules or being religious, than showing mercy?

- What two aspects of the Kingdom of God do the two parables teach us? (v18-21) (Hint - what size is the mustard seed to begin, and what size is it at the end? What does a tiny amount of yeast do through dough?)

- Where do you feel that God's kingdom looks weak, insignificant or powerless? How do these parables help you think differently?

The Kingdom does at times look small and weak. But despite its small starts, it will become the biggest, lasting kingdom in the world. Its work might seem unseen, but its effects are gradually working its way through the world. One day its true value and impact will be seen,

- *Dear Father, when I think following Jesus and living for him kingdom is worthless, help me to know that one day all will see just how great a king and how great a kingdom it really is. Amen.*

Day 44 - Read Luke 13:22-35

In the next few days we will see the need to respond to the king and enter the kingdom. We will see the urgency, as well as the longing of the king...

- What is the person's question? (v22-23) How does Jesus makes things much more personal in his answer? (v24-27)

The man wants to know 'how many?' Jesus doesn't answer that. He says 'Make sure YOU have entered.'

- What two shocks will there be about who is in the kingdom on the last day? (v24-27 & 28-30)

These are shocking verses. There will be people we expect to be in God's kingdom who won't be there, and people who we don't expect who will be. Some people will have expected to have been there, yet will miss out. They thought they knew Jesus - they had connections to him and knew about him (v25-26). But he never knew them. They never had a personal relationship with Jesus.

- Are there areas in your life where you are relying on a connection to church, or a knowledge about Jesus, rather than having a personal relationship with him?

- Jesus warns some people will not be in the kingdom, but outside it in hell. But is that because of a lack of love and work on Jesus' part? (v31-35)

- *Dear Father, thank you that your kingdom is open to all. Thank you that your heart is to gather people in. Help me to have entered through the narrow door as I put my trust in Jesus alone. Amen.*

Day 45 - Read Luke 14:1-14

Hardness of heart vs God's welcoming heart are in view again today - this time at a meal table...

- Who is sitting in judgement over Jesus? (v1-4) But how do they find themselves judged? (v3,5-6)

- Jesus now seems to be handing out advice about table planning for weddings! But something much bigger is going on. What does the seat we pick show about us? (v7-10) What is the heart of Jesus' message? (v11)

- How does the attitude of humility or pride show itself in how we relate to others? (v12-14)

Never would you have thought where you sat at a meal, or who you invited would have eternal consequences. But the point is meal is just one place where our inner attitudes are shown up.

- Are there times when you think of yourself as more important than others or relate in a certain way because of their status? How should comparing ourselves against God rather than others change our attitude?

- *Dear Father, I am sorry for the times when I compare myself to others and so am proud. Help me to compare myself to you and so recognise my true state. Help me to humbly welcome others, like you have welcomed me. Amen.*

Day 46 - Read Luke 14:15-24

Jesus' meal with a message continues...

- How is God's kingdom described? (v15-17) How does that excite and encourage us?

- What are the three excuses given? (v18-20) Why are they not really excuses?

The excuses show those invited don't want to come, rather than can't come. A field is not going anywhere so you don't suddenly need to see it. You don't buy oxen before you try them. Marriage brings new obligations, but it doesn't cancel others out. They simply thought other things were more important than responding to the invitation. People are saved by responding to God's

gracious invitation, not by their own effort. But if people are lost, the parable shows it is by their own actions.

- What excuses do people make for putting off responding to Jesus? Are you making any of those?

- But God's purposes to have a full kingdom will not be thwarted. How does the rest of the parable show that? Why do you think the people in the byways needed compelling (persuading) they were invited? (v21-23)

- What do you see of God's character today which leads you to praise him?

- *Dear Father, thank you for your wide, wide love and welcoming heart. Thank you that you have done everything needed for me to be at your banquet. Help me to accept Jesus' invitation. Help me to act as your messenger today inviting others to the banquet too. Amen.*

Day 47 - Read Luke 14:25-35

We've seen God's wide welcome, and the need to accept his invitation. But what will that mean for us? Jesus now tells us of the cost of following him...

- What is the shock of Jesus' call to discipleship? (v25-27) What do you think it means?

Jesus uses strong words so that we know that following him will mean a change in everything in our life - even our closest relationships. His strong language is to make a point. Of course, we are to love our families - following Jesus should make us better family members. But we are not to lose the sting of Jesus' words. Our love for them should seem like 'hate' in comparison to our love for Jesus. He is calling us to be willing to put him first, even above our own life.

- Where currently do your family, or your own life, plans or comfort come above following Jesus?

- How do the two parables help us in weighing up the cost of following Jesus, and of not following him? (v28-33)

Jesus wants us to sit down and 'do the math' - that is work out if we can afford to follow Jesus, and whether we can afford to refuse his demands.

- Salt is good - it brings life and taste to things.(v34) Have you ever thought about your following Jesus in this way? What is the challenge here too?

- *Dear Father, thank you that Jesus was willing to give up everything for me. I can never pay him back, and neither do you ask me to. But help me be able to count the cost and give my all for him. Amen.*

Day 48 - Read Luke 15:1-10

We return to the theme of God's welcoming kingdom. We meet a group that some others think shouldn't be welcomed in...

- What is the religious leader's complaint? (v1) How do Jesus' two parables explain why he 'welcomes sinners, and eats with them'? (v3-10)

- What does each parable teach us about our condition before God? What does each teach us about our value before God, despite our sin?

In the first parable the sheep is lost - it has wandered off from safe pasture. It teaches us that is what we are like. We've turned away and wandered from God. But the coin reminds us we can do nothing at all to get ourselves found again. The coin needs someone to find it. Wonderfully Jesus has come on the Father's rescue mission - searching and finding lost sheep, sweeping and finding lost coins.

- What is heaven like when someone repents and turns back to Jesus? (v7, v10) Do you have the same joy in seeing people come to faith in Jesus?

- What is the response that God says is the most important thing before him? (v7, v10) How does this parable encourage us to repent?

- Dear Father, thank you that your heart is wide. Thank you that in Jesus you search for lost sinners. Thank you despite my sin, that I am precious to you. May the pattern of y life be one of repentance and may I share your joy in the salvation of others. Amen.

Day 49 - Read Luke 15:11-32

We often call this the 'Parable of the Lost Son', but there are two lost sons in this story. Jesus wants us to work out which we are...

- What is the first son's attitude to his father? (v11-12) What is the son's life like? (v13-16)

The son 'comes to his senses' - he realises that life is found with his father, not away from it. But he also recognises he deserves nothing from his father.

- What is the shock of the father's attitude towards the first son? (v20-24)

- What is the second son's attitude to his father? (v25-32) How does that show itself in his attitude to his brother? (v30-32)

- The second son was just as lost from the father as the first. The first rejected the father, wandering off in wild living. The second son stayed close to home, but was just as far off. He did not share his father's heart of mercy, nor did he know his father. He saw his father as a slave driver to be worked for, not a generous father to be enjoyed.

- Which son are you? Is your life far from God because of your living? Or because you feel God is a master who owes you something because of what you have done?

- How does your view of God's grace change how you view others?

- Dear Father, thank you that while I was far off, you were searching for me. Thank you that you ran to me in the Lord Jesus, and welcomed me home. Help me to share your heart of mercy, that I might rejoice in others who are lost, being found. Amen.

Day 50 - Read Luke 16:1-13

We have seen two groups emerging - those who have failed but are drawing near to Jesus; and those who think they are fine, but are rejecting him. We see how those responses show themselves in terms of our possessions...

- Who is this parable spoken to? (v1)
- What do you think the big point is? (v1-9, especially v9)

This is a strange parable and shocking. Here is a dishonest steward, but he is commended - by the master, and by Jesus! But notice what Jesus draws attention too - it is the man's shrewdness and his focus on the future, not his honesty. He looks to the future and uses his resources now to make sure he had a home on that day. Jesus says his followers are to have the same view with eternity. To use their resources with an eternal perspective, in a way which means our resources will 'welcome us' on that day. That is not earning a place in heaven, but using our resources now with that great future in mind.

- Where do we see people using their money shrewdly in our society? If we are a follower of Jesus, do we use our money with the same energy, but focused on heaven?
- Why is faithfulness to God with our resources so important? (v10-12)
- What does your use of money show that you are serving? (v14-15)
- *Dear Father, thank you for all that you have given me. Help me to love you more because of your generosity, not replace you with the generous gifts you have given me. Help me to use what I have with eternity in mind. Amen.*

Day 51 - Read Luke 16:14-31

Yesterday Jesus spoke to the disciples about their relationship to money. Today he challenges the Pharisees...

- How do the religious leader's respond to Jesus' teaching? (v14) What does it show up about their hearts? (v14-15)

Many are earnestly entering the kingdom (v16). So should the Pharisees be. Jesus' message carried authority, because the Old Testament pointed to what he brings (v16-17). Jesus demonstrates his authority by a pronouncement regarding divorce - something some Pharisees treated lightly. It goes further than the exception which Moses permitted (which Pharisees formalised into a rule) to show the deeper purposes of God - faithfulness.

- What reversal does eternity bring for these two men? (v19-25) What do you notice about what Lazarus does have, which the rich man doesn't? (v19-20)
- The rich man loved his riches, but did not use them in a way which showed he knew God - in a way which serves those in need. He reaps what he sows. Lazarus has nothing - but a name! He is known

by God and is welcomed by him. What challenge does this give to us about how we use our wealth? What is it more important to have - riches or to be known by God?

- What warnings do we receive about eternity? (v26-31)

Jesus speaks of hell and God's kingdom, as real. When we die our eternity is fixed. To be in God's kingdom is to know comfort and relationship. To be in hell is to know separation, pain and regret. There is no second chance. Now is the time to respond to God's message in Jesus - that we might be known by him and welcome home.

- Dear Father, thank you that in your love you warn me. In your mercy, turn my heart afresh to Jesus. Help me to know him, and so be known by you. Help me to use my riches in a way which shows I know you. Amen.

Day 52 - Read Luke 17:1-10

We've seen discipleship must impact how we relate to others. Today we see that in terms of relating to other Christians...

- What is Jesus' warning about how we relate to other followers of Jesus ('these little ones')? (v1-3) Why do you think it is so serious to lead another Christian into sin?

- How might we lead other Christians to go against their conscience or struggle in their faith?

- What is the shock of how we are relate to fellow Christians who have hurt us and seek forgiveness? (v3-4) Why do we often find this hard to do?

- The disciples realised the high standard called for (v5). But it is not an impossible standard. Faith's power is not about how big it is, but about where it is placed. If it is in Jesus, what are Christians enabled to do? (v6)

- By faith in Christ, Christians are enabled to do the impossible - even keep forgiving those who repent of hurting us. But sometimes when we have served Jesus well, or taken great steps forward in our faith, we think we deserve a medal from Jesus. How does Jesus' parable humble us? (v7-10)

- Dear Father, thank you that I have been called to serve you. I do not deserve this privilege. Help me to serve you humbly, and rely on Jesus. Help me to forgive others as you have forgiven me. Amen.

Day 53 - Read Luke 17:11-19

Yesterday we saw we have no claim on God. Today we see the flip-side - thankfulness for all God has done.

- Here is a group of men having to 'social distance' - but for what reason? (v11-12)

- Jesus doesn't touch them, or even say 'be healed' as in other miracles. What does he do? (v14) How was Jesus putting their faith to the test?

The priests were like public health inspectors, declaring if someone had been cured. The lepers have to go and act as if they have been.

- What happens to all ten? (v14) But what does only one do?

- What do we find out about this man? (v15-18) What else did Jesus promise to him? (v19) (Hint the word 'well' can also mean 'saved')

Here is a foreigner - the last person you would expect Jesus had come for, or that would respond to Jesus. But he is the one who trusts Jesus. A trust which shows its self in gratitude. He finds he gains not simply a mended body, but a mended relationship with God. Full life means being right with God, not simply right in our bodies.

- Are there time where you have been absorbed in gifts from God and so not thanked God from whom they came? Are times when you think Jesus is only for certain people?

- *Dear Father, I want to pause and just say thank you. I am sorry I am often slow to do so. Thank you for... Thank you most of all that Jesus offers me salvation - life with you. Amen.*

Day 54 - Read Luke 17:20-37

Jesus' kingdom is not only in the present. Our minds now begin to be turned to Jesus' return...

- The Pharisees rightly know God's kingdom will be a future coming. But what have they missed? (v20-21) Why is it in their midst now?

The Kingdom is in their midst because the King is in their midst - Jesus. The Pharisees look to the future, but have not recognised what is under their noses.

- What will Jesus' return to this earth be like? (v22-24)

- What will life be like before Jesus returns? (26-30) Why is that a challenge for us to be ready for Jesus?

In Noah's day, and Lot's day (in the Old Testament) life was carrying on just as it always had done, until the very moment God's judgement on sin fell. Life going on as normal is not a sign that Jesus won't return.

- Rather than Jesus' return, what will some people be more concerned about? (v31-35) Why is that not the wise way to live?

- What is it that stops you thinking about Jesus' return? How can you keep your eyes fixed on that day? How can you keep your trust in Jesus, rather than your things?

- *Dear Father, I find these words sobering. Thank you that Jesus will one day come back. Thank you that on that day he will right all wrongs. Help me to trust him to deal with my wrong. Help me to care more about him than the things I have. Amen.*

Day 55 - Read Luke 18:1-8

Yesterday we were called to be ready for Jesus' return. Now we begin to see what that looks like...

- What is the judge like in the parable? (v2-5) What is the lady like? (v2-5)
- How is the Lord like the judge? How is he NOT like the judge? (v6-8)
- What is Jesus looking to find when he returns to earth? (v8) What does that look like according to this parable? (v1)
- What things lead you to give up in your prayers? What things from this passage encourage you to keep praying even when it is hard?
- How does this parable encourage us to be praying for Christians in difficult situations around the world?
- *Dear Father, I am sorry that I pray and then give up. Thank you that I do not need to bother you for you to bring justice. But please help me to keep praying and not give up. Please bring justice for your children in trouble today. Amen.*

Day 56 - Read Luke 18:9-14

Entry into the kingdom is our theme for the next few days. We must be ready for Jesus' kingdom to come. But how?

- Why is Jesus telling this parable? (v9)
- What is the Pharisee like? How does he view himself, God and others? (v10-12)
- What is the tax collector like? How does he view himself, God and others? (v13)
- We know the punchline most probably. But try to forget about that for a moment. You have a religious, moral, generous, devoted member of society, and a low-life, thieving collaborator. Which would you think would be in the right with God? But what is Jesus' declaration? Why? (v14)

Jesus' kingdom turns the world on its head. The Pharisee thinks he deserves something from God because of what he has done. The tax collector knows he deserves nothing. He knows he can't offer anything to God and so throws himself on God's mercy. God wonderfully responds to that cry for help.

- Which of the characters are you? Do you need to be warned or encouraged by this passage?
- Do you look down on others in life? What does that action say about what you think of yourself and your own righteousness?
- *Dear Father, have mercy on me a sinner. Help me not to look down on others, but rather help me to see myself as I truly am, and so humbly rely on your grace. Amen.*

Day 57 - Read Luke 18:15-30

We continue to see what entering Jesus' kingdom looks like. And there are more shocks...

- Why do you think the disciples rebuke the parents bringing children to Jesus? (v15) Why does Jesus rebuke the disciples? (v16)

- Children are a pattern of those who enter the kingdom. Unless we are like a little child, we will not be able to enter. That doesn't mean being innocent (children are lovely, but they are not innocent!), or naive. It means being dependent. How are little children dependent?

- What does the man want to know? (v18) What things do we learn about this man? (v18, 21, 23)

- How does Jesus show that the man has actually broken the most important commandment - love God with everything? (v22-25)

Here is a rich ruler. He is moral and religious. If anyone looks like they would enter the kingdom, it is him. But he and we have the wrong standard of goodness. We need to measure ourselves against God (v19) He loves his wealth more than God and so has broken the commandments. If a moral man like this can't be saved by his own efforts, none of us can (v27).

- But what is the hope? (v27) Rather than the rich ruler, who are we called to be? (v17)

- What does it look like to be dependent on Jesus to enter his kingdom? How will that show itself in your life today?

- *Dear Father, thank you that Jesus welcomes little children. I come dependent on him, with nothing to offer, but simply relying on Jesus to bring me into the kingdom. Amen.*

Day 58 - Read Luke 18:31-43

Today we meet another 'model' of what it means to enter the kingdom...

- What does Jesus say will happen? (v31-33) What do the disciples understand? (v34)

- In the coming days events will increasingly look like they are in the hands of others. But what do these verses remind us about who is in control?

This is the third time Jesus has spoken of his death and rising. But the disciples cannot see this truth. But see what happens next to a man who couldn't see!

- What does the man 'see' about Jesus? About himself? (v38-41)

- How is the blind man like the tax collector (18:13) and the little children (18:17)?

Here is a man who sees his need - he can't see. He also sees that he deserves nothing from Jesus, but he depends on Jesus fully. Wonderfully Jesus loves to respond to that cry!

- If Jesus asked you 'what do you want me to do for you?', what would you say? If people are to see who Jesus is, what has to happen to their 'spiritual eyes'?

- *Dear Father, thank you that Jesus responds in mercy to those who call to him. Open my eyes that I might see who he is more and more. Please open the eyes of x, y, z (a name of someone you know who doesn't yet trust Jesus) that they might see it too. Amen.*

Day 59 - Read Luke 19:1-10

Today we see the moment an unlikely person enters the kingdom and just what a change it makes!

- Who looks like he is seeking Jesus out? What do we find out about this man? (v1-7)
- But who is the true seeker here? (v5)
- What is Jesus commanding and offering in his call to Zacchaeus?

Jesus is firm and loving. Zacchaeus must respond to his call. Now is the time to engage with Jesus. But it is also a wonderful offer of welcome, friendship and an new intimate relationship with god through Jesus. Jesus taking up residence in Zacchaeus' life. It is salvation (v9).

- How do the crowd respond to Jesus' eating arrangements? (v7) What have they failed to understand about Jesus' mission? (v10)
- Having been offered friendship with God in his encounter with Jesus, how does that change Zacchaeus? (v8)
- What will it look like for you to share Jesus' heart and mission for the 'lost' from God? (v10) If you have responded to Jesus' call, what changes has that brought (or are being brought) in your life?
- *Dear Father, thank you that Jesus came to seek and save the lost, including me. Thank you that he sought me out when I was far from you, and calls to me to welcome him in. Help me to have a heart for the lost, like Jesus, that they might come to be welcomed by him too. Amen.*

Day 60 - Read Luke 19:11-27

We continue to consider Jesus' kingdom - it will only come fully when he returns. But what will that return mean for people?

- How is this parable a picture of what will happen to Jesus? (v12-15)

Jesus is crowned king, but not everyone wants him as king over them. But that doesn't change the fact Jesus is king. In fact, to rebel against this king does not lead to life, but, tragically, to death (v27).

- What does the nobleman commission his servants to do while he is away? (v11-13)
- For those who proved trustworthy with what the king has entrusted them with, what do they find happens? For the one who proved untrustworthy, what happens? (v24)

This is a tricky parable. Some parts of it teach us about Jesus by being a parallel to him. Some parts by being the opposite of him. Jesus has gone back to heaven and is now crowned the universe's king. He will return one day, and his servants will be asked to give an account of their faithfulness with what Jesus has given them.

- What is the wicked servants excuse for not doing anything with his mina? (v20-21) Is it a good excuse?

If the servant really believed that the king was like this, the very least he would have done was put it in the bank. That way it would be safe and brought some return. He didn't even do that. The issue is not the king, but the servant. He has not made use of the opportunities put before him.

- If you are trusting Jesus, what has he entrusted you with (character, experience, gifts, resources)? What will it look like to be faithful with them until Jesus returns?

- *Dear Father, Jesus is not a harsh king who takes what he does not sow. He has kindly given me everything. Help me to enjoy having him as king over me. Make me faithful with all that I have. Amen.*