

August 30 - September 5

(Monday) Matthew 13: Kingdom Tales

In verse 10, the disciples ask Jesus why he speaks to the people in parables. Explain his reply (v. 11-17).

Wheat and weeds look similar until the harvest. How does this parable explain God's delayed judgment of the wicked and righteous (v. 24-30, 36-43)?

What do the parables of the mustard seed and yeast tell us about the way the kingdom grows (v. 31-35)?

What kind of response is Jesus calling you to through these parables?

Prayer Focus: Ask for understanding, and the discipline to act on that understanding

Family Devotional: Read verses 24-30. The wheat represents people who love God, and the weeds represent people who don't. How can we tell the difference? What will happen to people who don't love God?

(Tuesday) Mark 6: Contrast in Power

What do Jesus' instructions to the twelve tell us about the kind of ministry they were to have (v. 6-13)?

Mark is deliberately contrasting the banquet of Herod (v. 21-29) with the banquet of Jesus (v. 32-46). How are they different?

What differences are there between Jesus' approach to the crowd and that of the disciples (v. 30-44)?

The disciples, like Herod, seem more interested in their own comfort and security than in the plan of God. How can this tendency be seen in your own life?

Prayer Focus: Pray for a radical commitment to the purposes of God

Family Devotional: Read verses 30-44. What surprises you about this story? What kinds of things has God provided for your family?

(Wednesday) Luke 16: Of Two Worlds

While Jesus does not commend the dishonesty of the manager, what does he commend and instruct us to emulate (v. 8-9)? What does it mean for us to use money to gain friends in heaven?

What does our management of money have to do with our standing before God (v. 10-15)?

In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (v. 19-31), what does Jesus want the Pharisees to see about our relationship to money in this life and in the life after death?

How should these parables affect your present use of money? What practical steps can you take?

Prayer Focus: Pray for wisdom to use our resources for eternal things

Family Devotional: Read verses 9-13. How can we use our money to gain friends in heaven? What does it mean for us to be trustworthy in handling money? How can we stop loving money and stuff so much?

(Thursday) Luke 12: Jesus on Money

Nowhere does Jesus condemn possessions. But he does have much to say about how to use them. From verses 15, 22-23, and 31, how would you summarize Jesus' teaching on material things in this life?

The parable in verses 35-48 illustrates priorities Christians should have in view of Jesus' return after his departure, or in any crisis situation. What priorities apply to all of us?

All three parables speak or hint of God's judgment on the choices we make (v. 20, 40, 46-48). In light of these warnings, what hope does Jesus offer to the wise (v. 57-59)?

If you own a \$2000 car, you're in the wealthiest 50% of adults in the world. What dangers do you see in this chapter for rich people like yourself?

Prayer Focus: Ask God to mold your values and priorities into his own.

Family Devotional: Read verses 15-21. What does it mean to be rich toward God? How can we make this a priority in our family more than storing things up for ourselves?

(Friday) Luke 18: Underdogs

The initial focus on persistence in praying (v. 1-8) is balanced by the caution in the second parable not to be presumptuous about God (v. 9-14). How do the two men reveal different concepts of God?

Children were insignificant in ancient society (v. 15). How does Jesus give significance to them?

In verses 35-45, Luke introduces us to another nobody. What is unusual about the beggar's attitude and title that catches Jesus' attention?

What "nobody" in your life might God be calling you to approach with gospel love and truth?

Prayer Focus: Pray for those considered insignificant in your community

Family Devotional: Read verses 35-43. Beggars were mostly ignored in those days. What are some similar people you've noticed in your community? How can your family bring God's love and truth to them?