

Study Guide

Series: Who is this Man?
“Friends in Low Places”

Monday – Read Luke 8:40-9:17. Jesus served a synagogue leader who begged for his help when his daughter was gravely ill. He served a long-suffering woman who was healed when, with shaky faith, she touched his robe. He served over 5,000 hungry people. And he sent his followers out to serve. To the trembling woman, Jesus said “Go in peace” (8:48). To Jairus, the pleading, anguished father, he said “Don’t be afraid; just believe.” In which parts of your life do you need to hear those words from Jesus today? What are the experiences or attitudes that make it harder for you to trust Jesus and rest in his care? The disciples had a prudent idea: “Send these people away, so they can get some food before dark.” Jesus jolted them by replying, “You give them something to eat” (9:13). How does the story (notably verse 16) show Jesus working through people to meet human needs? How does it stress our need to rely on Jesus’ power?

Tuesday - Read Luke 9:18-50. “Glory” means bright trophies, big winners’ smiles and cheering crowds, right? Luke saw it differently. Peter recognized Jesus as the Messiah. Heaven itself honored him. But Jesus kept saying he must suffer and be killed. The disciples didn’t get it (verse 45). But by putting these events side-by-side, Luke wanted us to see that the cross *was* Jesus’ glory. In what ways have you had to answer Jesus’ question: “What good is it for you to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit your very self?” (verse 25) What choice(s) do you face that promise gain, yet might cost you your values, self-respect or honor? How can you find the strength and self-knowledge to make the right choices?

Wednesday - Read Luke 9:51-10:20. Luke 9:51 is the center point of the Gospel. Jesus had foretold his own death, and in fury the Pharisees had begun planning what to do with this problem person. Luke saw everything he told from this verse on in this framework: Jesus was going to Jerusalem. The cross awaited in Jerusalem. Yet Satan was falling. It was a march to victory, not defeat. Jesus had a vital talk with the seventy-two when their mission ended. They were thrilled with their outward success, but Jesus changed their focus. In 10:20, how did he turn their eyes to the true basis for Christian joy, in whatever circumstances? Some people find 9:57-62 troubling. Did Jesus mean we must give up our family to serve him? No. He used tough words to get us to check our priorities. Has loyalty to family, company, school or anything else ever tugged you in a different direction than your loyalty to God? If it does in the future, who will you choose?

Thursday – Read Luke 10:21-11:13. Jesus had now turned decisively toward Jerusalem. On the way, he was “full of joy through the Holy Spirit.” He told one of his most loved parables, showing in vivid human terms what it means to love your neighbor as yourself. He relished time with his good friends Mary and Martha. He taught his disciples to pray, trusting in God’s goodness. The Samaritan in the parable didn’t just offer casual help at the roadside. He put the injured man on “his donkey” (meaning he had to walk). He brought him to an inn, cared for him, paid two days wages, and offered to pay more on his return if needed. What does the Samaritan teach you about God’s profuse generosity to you? Luke 11:11-13 shows a key aspect of “answered prayer.” Luke compared the “good gifts” parents give children with God’s gift of the Holy Spirit to all who ask. What things are you praying for? If God answers by giving you the

Holy Spirit's presence, will you thank God for that or be upset that God didn't give you what you asked?

Friday - Read Luke 11:14-36. For Jesus' enemies, it became "conclusions first, evidence later." Since they "knew" Jesus couldn't have divine power, it must be devilish power they saw. At least he ought to give them a dazzling "sign from heaven." Jesus replied to their illogical "logic." He added a solemn warning: "See to it, then, that the light within you is not darkness" (verse 35). Verses 34-35 urge us to think about how well our spiritual eyes are working, not just our physical eyes. How did Jesus' enemies blind themselves spiritually by refusing to accept any evidence that didn't fit what they wanted to be true? In what ways has God brought new light to your mind and heart over the last year? Sometimes our efforts to "clean up our life" don't work. Verses 24-26 show one reason why. Jesus says it won't help much simply to clear out the bad and to give up hurtful habits. What are some positive ways you have learned to allow God to fill your soul with God's love and purpose? Are there any "empty spots" God and you need to fill?