

Study Guide

Series: Who is this Man?
“The Healing Ministry of Jesus”

Monday - Read Luke 11:37-12:12. The Pharisees fixated on washing for ritual purity, not for hygiene. (No one knew about germs in their day.) Jesus strongly disputed their sense that outward rituals matter more than inner candor and openness. To those who were willing to be honest with themselves and with God, he said, “Don’t be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows” (12:7). Jesus called hypocrisy “the yeast of the Pharisees” (12:1). Then he said that nothing is hidden from God. In the end, it will all be laid open. How does it affect you to realize that God sees any parts of your life you would rather keep hidden—and loves you anyway? Jesus says, “Don’t be afraid—do not worry.” How can you live into that? In Luke 11:39-42, Jesus does not fault the Pharisees’ rigorous religious practices per se. What troubled him was that they seemed to think those rituals were all it took to serve God. How broad or narrow is your personal definition of generosity? What spiritual practices might help you see the world more as God sees it?

Tuesday - Read Luke 12:13-40. Luke 8:1-3 showed us that Jesus was not unaware of material needs. He received support from a group of women who had means, including the wife of Herod’s household steward. Still, he lived and taught a way of life focused, not first on goods and money, but on God’s kingdom. True wealth, he said, is not material, but spiritual. What attitudes and practices have you found most helpful in shaping your life in ways that make you “rich toward God”? In what ways do movies and TV, financial reporting, advertising and other things make it harder for you to “be on your guard against all kinds of greed”? How does God help you deal with those challenges? When you read Jesus’ words about being ready for his return (verses 35-40), what kinds of feelings do they trigger in you? How does Jesus’ imagery, notably verse 37, point toward a sense of eagerness and trust, rather than fear? How are you learning to live more fully in the spirit Jesus encouraged in verse 32?

Wednesday - Read Luke 12:41-13:9. At several points in this passage, Jesus used examples based on Roman laws about slavery and punishment. They sound harsh to us; they no doubt sounded harsh to his Jewish hearers too. Jesus was not endorsing those practices. The point of his teachings was that it is a matter of eternal life or death that we make the right choices about God. In 13:6-9, Jesus told what could be called “The Unfinished Parable.” He never said what happened as a result of the vineyard keeper’s plea. It seems clear from 13:5 that he knew each of his hearers would decide the parable’s outcome. So what about you - how will you finish this unfinished parable in your life? Jesus’ words about bringing division rather than peace (12:51-53) may seem odd. Isn’t Jesus “the prince of peace”? Yes—but his kingdom’s principles were so unlike the world’s that sometimes division would follow. Have family, friends or co-workers ever misread or censured some choice you made based on your loyalty to God?

Thursday - Read Luke 13:10-35. The healing in verses 10-17 doubly upset the synagogue leader. Jesus healed a woman and her case was no crisis—she’d suffered for 18 years. For Jesus, that made healing, now, all the more vital. Still going to Jerusalem (verse 22), he mourned over a spirit that loved rules above people. One commentary calls verses 31-35 “Lament of the Rejected Lover.” Jesus’ mustard seed and yeast parables (verses 18-21) say big things can come from a

small start. What small things have blessed your life? What small thing could you do that might have big results in God's Kingdom? Verses 33-35 are the first of four laments Jesus speaks for Jerusalem in Luke. (The others are in 19:41-44, 21:20-24 and 23:27-31.) What do Jesus' sorrowful words over 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 you might consider an enemy?

Friday - Read Luke 14:1-35. By now, the watching Pharisees surely knew Jesus would defy their Sabbath healing rules. But Jesus still shocked them. They loved to talk about the end-time banquet for God's people (verse 15). In Jesus' feast story, the chosen said "no." So God called street people instead. Choosing him as Lord, Jesus said, is costly. Be ready to commit to the Journey. The picture of a divine banquet for God's people came from Isaiah 25:6-10. Isaiah said this banquet would be for "all peoples," "all nations," "all the earth." What does Luke's picture of inviting people from the streets and alleys, the roads and country lanes, tell you about the spirit of the church Jesus sought to create? Last week we noted that Jesus used extreme words at times to get his hearers to focus on priorities. "Hate" (verse 26) was a Middle Eastern way of saying "love less." It's still challenging. Spend time in prayer asking, "Lord, what things or people do I love more than you?" Are you willing to shift priorities to honor any insights you get?