

Study Guide

Series: Who is this Man?
“The Kingdom of God”

Monday - Read Luke 5:33-6:11. Physicists call the Big Bang a “singularity”—a unique event of huge importance. Jesus was a spiritual “singularity”—the Messiah, the anointed Savior the prophets promised. His activity and authority were like “new wine,” an active force changing things. Some religious leaders clung to their “old wineskins” with all their might. They feared and fought Jesus. Luke first uses the word “parable” in 5:36. A parable is a comparison story. It clarifies an abstract idea with everyday happenings or items. How did these parables show that old ways of thinking would find it hard to accept the new truths Jesus was teaching? How flexible are your “wineskins”? Chances are no one has bugged you of late about picking grain or healing on Sabbath. But some religious subjects still tend to make people “furious” (6:11). What subjects can generate the most internal heat in you? What causes the heat—is there an old wineskin you need to replace, by God’s grace, with a more flexible one?

Tuesday – Read Luke 6:17-49. After choosing the Twelve, Jesus laid out his “platform,” to use a modern political analogy. These are the principles of life in his Kingdom. These verses closely parallel “The Sermon on the Mount” in Matthew 5-7. It is likely that this was the core of most of Jesus’ sermons as he proclaimed “the good news of the Kingdom of God” (Luke 4:43). Jesus spoke often about what some writers call “status inversion.” For us, in a rich community in the richest country on earth, his words can be disturbing. Which parts of this sermon most challenge the world’s wisdom on how to get ahead or be a success? Which of Jesus’ promises in this sermon mean the most to you?

Wednesday - Read Luke 7:1-35. A Roman commander trusted Jesus’ implicitly. Jesus brought a widow’s dead son back to life, and the people of Nain said, “God has come to help his people.” But in prison (Luke 3:20), John the Baptist wondered. When would Jesus “clear his threshing floor,” “burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire” (Luke 3:17)? Was he “the one,” as John had preached? We tend to experience Jesus first in terms of what we know best. How did the Roman centurion use his military command and control knowledge to convey trust in Jesus’ power? How did Jesus’ reaction point ahead to a church that welcomed Gentiles and Jews as equals before God (e.g. Galatians 3:29)? How did Jesus’ words in verses 22-23 answer John’s inquiry? (Look back to Luke 4:18- 21 to see how well Jesus’ words fit the question.) Then he added a forceful, loyal defense of John’s ministry. What does Jesus’ gracious response to John tell you about his attitude toward you when you have questions or struggles?

Thursday – Read Luke 7:36-8:15. A religious leader invited Jesus to eat at his house, but he seems to have treated Jesus quite rudely (Luke 7:44-46). A woman “who lived a sinful life” found Jesus there, and poured out her love in tears and perfume. Jesus sows the seed of God’s love and grace everywhere. There’s often just no telling where it will find fertile ground in which to grow. With which character do you identify—Simon the Pharisee, the woman who wet Jesus’ feet with her tears or both? In your day-to-day life, who makes you more ill at ease—a self-righteous person, or one you would describe as “living a sinful life”? How did Jesus’ love reach out to both people in this story? When Jesus explained the parable of the farmer sowing seed, he listed four kinds of human “soil” who hear the good news (8:11-15). Which of the four types of

experience comes closest to describing your spiritual life so far? What spiritual practices can help you become more like the good soil in the months ahead?

Friday – Read Luke 8:16-39. Jesus didn't hide His light! We've seen that he healed a Roman soldier's servant, and took the side of a woman who lived a sinful life. Now he sailed to Gentile territory, on the eastern side of the Sea of Galilee. On the way, he calmed a storm on the sea. Then, in an act of even greater power, he calmed the spiritual storms of a terribly tormented man. Archeology has given us a clearer sense of the kind of small boat in which the disciples faced the storm on Galilee. (To learn more, visit www.jesusboat.com/boat.php.) What "storms" feel most threatening to you right now? In what ways can Jesus' power and love help to bring you peace as you face those storms? The story in verses 26-39 contains puzzling details. But the big picture is clear: a wreck of a man was restored. How did Jesus give the man an invitation and an opportunity to let his light shine out? Jesus promised that those who share the light will receive even more light (verse 18). How have you found that to be true in your life?