

**Reading Together**  
**New Testament Daily Bible Reading**  
**August 8 - 14**

**Monday, August 08 – Luke 11: 29 – 54**

The crowds that gathered around Jesus were composed of all different kinds of people. Some really wanted to hear what Jesus had to say, and follow him. Still others, like the Pharisees and the teachers of the law, were more intent on trying to trip Jesus up and catch him in a mistake to try to discredit him. They asked for miraculous signs to prove his authenticity as the Messiah, and Jesus tells them the only sign that they will get is the sign of Jonah. In referring to what happened to Jonah as a sign, Jesus is pointing to his death on the cross and resurrection three days later, just like Jonah was in the belly of the whale for three days. Jesus tells the crowds that he has done plenty to authenticate that he is the Messiah, so when Judgment Day came, even the pagans that Jonah went to preach to will rise up and condemn these Israelites, who had been chosen by God, for their unbelief.

Next, Jesus explains to the crowds that what is most important is what is going on inside a person rather than the external actions a person takes. The Pharisees hearts were dark and so their actions brought a curse on them (woe was the way a curse was pronounced during Jesus' time). Rather than their actions earning them favor with God, their self righteous actions condemned them.

**Tuesday, August 9 – Luke 12: 1 – 34**

As the crowds continue to gather around Jesus, Jesus begins to teach them to focus on the things that are really important. In verses 1–3, Jesus tells the crowds that one day everything that is thought and said will be exposed, so don't be a hypocrite. In verses 4-5, Jesus tells the crowds that their spiritual well being is the only thing that is truly important. The importance of what happens to our physical bodies pales in comparison to what can happen to us spiritually if we focus on the wrong things. Jesus explains that we don't have to worry about our physical well being because God is caring for us (verses 6-7). Jesus concludes this section with a warning that we must remain faithful to Jesus and stand for him, if we want Jesus to stand for us on the Day of Judgment. Even in these moments of intense spiritual pressure Jesus promises us that the resources for us to stand firm will not come from ourselves, but will come from above, as the Holy Spirit will give us the words we need to say when the time comes.

To illustrate what Jesus is teaching Luke records the demand a man makes in verse 13 for Jesus to tell his brother to be fair in dividing the inheritance with him. What the man wanted was for his brother, who was the rightful inheritor of the estate, to do something he didn't have to do—share his inheritance. Rather than passing judgment on the man's request, Jesus uses the request as an opportunity to warn against greed with the parable of the rich fool in verses 16-21. Jesus concludes this parable with a warning not to worry, but to trust God in all situations. Our treasure in heaven is far more important than any treasure we might amass here on earth.

### **Wednesday, August 10 – Luke 12: 35 – 53**

As Jesus continues to address the large crowd that has gathered, he warns them to always be ready for his return. To make his point Jesus twice uses the illustration of a master and his servants. The first illustration is in verses 36-40. Jesus tells all his followers that like good servants, they must always be ready and prepared for the master to come home, even if the master is a long time in coming. The second illustration, in verses 42-46, seems to apply more to those who are leaders. Notice in verse 42 Jesus refers to a manager who is in charge of the other servants. Jesus makes the point that those who have authority over others must always be aware that Jesus could return at anytime, so they must be faithful to do what Jesus has given them to do by treating well those who are entrusted to their oversight. Jesus concludes this teaching in verses 47-48 with a stern warning that those who know what they should be doing and don't do it will be judged more severely than those who are unaware of what they ought to be doing. Jesus has entrusted us with much and given his life for us, therefore much is expected of us.

In the last few verses of today's reading Jesus talks about how his ministry will ultimately bring division to the earth. We don't often think of Jesus as a divider, but what Jesus means is that his ministry and his death will divide those who have faith in him from those who do not. Those who have faith in Jesus will follow a different lifestyle and have a different mindset than those who do not, which cause division.

### **Thursday, August 11 – Luke 12: 54 – 13: 9**

In these verses, Jesus warns his followers to repent and turn from their sin, so that their spiritual lives can be saved. In verses 54-56, Jesus tells his followers that they can forecast the weather by the things they can see in the sky, and in the same way, if they will look they can see

signs, through Jesus' ministry that the Kingdom of God has come. In verses 57-59, Jesus is warning us that we have offended God and we are on our way to judgment day where a verdict of guilty is sure to come. Rather than waiting for the trial, we should be reconciled to God now through faith in Christ's death on the cross for our sin.

Chapter 13 continues the theme of repentance before it is too late. In the opening verses of this chapter, several tragic stories are told of people who seemed to die in an unfair and unjust way. Jesus responds to these stories by telling his listeners that no matter what, we will all die one day; therefore, we must repent before it is too late. We never know when the day might come when something unexpected happens to us (like a tower falling on us). Jesus illustrates that we are all on borrowed time with his parable of the fig tree in the vineyard that does not bear fruit.

### **Friday, August 12 – Luke 13: 10 – 35**

In verses 10-17 Jesus heals a woman who is crippled on the Sabbath, which outrages the synagogue ruler. In response to the synagogue ruler's demand that people not come to be healed on the Sabbath, Jesus calls him a hypocrite, and then exposes his hypocrisy by commenting that if they would care for an animal on the Sabbath, why wouldn't they show the same care to a person?

Next, Jesus tells two short parables about the Kingdom of Heaven, and how even though it seems to be small and insignificant at its start, it will one day grow to fill the whole earth. Jesus goes on to tell his listeners that if they want to be part of that Kingdom, they have to be willing to make decisions that run counter to way the rest of the world thinks (entering through the narrow door).

This chapter ends with Jesus expressing sorrow over what was about to happen to Jerusalem following his death and resurrection. In 70 AD, the Romans would crush Israel completely and destroy the Temple. This would be the end of Israel until 1948 when Israel was reborn following the Holocaust.

### **Saturday, August 13 – Luke 14: 1 – 35**

Chapter 14 opens with another account of Jesus healing on the Sabbath. This time it is Jesus who puts the Pharisees on the defensive by asking them if it is legal and right for him to heal on the Sabbath. Jesus shows their hypocrisy by exposing the truth that they would

rescue one of their valuable farm animals on the Sabbath, so why wouldn't they also rescue a fellow human being?

In the rest of chapter 14 Jesus teaches the importance of humility and the Kingdom of God. He begins with very practical advice about picking your seat at a banquet. Rather than taking the best for yourself, take the worst and then allow the host to move you to a better place. People take the best seats because they think they are more important than they are. As we think about our place in the Kingdom of God we should all assume that we belong in the back, just barely getting in by the skin of our teeth, because that is the truth whether we like or not, and then allow God to move us to the places he wants us to be.

In verses 15-24, Jesus tells a parable about another banquet where all of the guests think they are too important to be bothered to come, even though it is the king who has invited them. So the king opens his banquet to those who are the bottom of society. In this parable, those who are too important to come represent the religious leaders of Jesus' day, and the people at the bottom of society represent lost sinners whom the Pharisees have written off. Only those who are humbly willing to drop everything can enter the Kingdom of Heaven (verses 25-27). To be part of the Kingdom of God means we must be willing to give up everything, therefore Jesus warns us to count the cost before we start to follow him.

### **Sunday, August 14 – Luke 15: 1 – 32**

In this chapter, Jesus tells three parables, which answer the Pharisees' criticism that Jesus is spending too much time with sinful people. These are very familiar parables that show us the concern that God and Jesus have for those who are lost. In the first parable, Jesus tells the story of a sheep that gets separated from the rest of the flock, and how the shepherd goes to great lengths to find the lost sheep and bring it safely home. In the second parable, a woman has lost a coin that is of great value, and goes to great lengths to find it. Both of these parables illustrate the great lengths that Jesus goes to find and save the lost.

The third parable is a bit more complex, and to really understand this parable we must understand who the characters in the story represent. The Father in the story is God, the younger brother represents sinners who are lost and have wandered away from God. The older brother represents those who are self-righteous and don't want to welcome sinners back home. Notice, at the end of all three of these parables, there is a joyous celebration as the lost are found, but also notice how the older self-righteous brother misses out on the celebration.