

Reading Through the Gospel of Luke – Part IV

We recommend you have a notebook and pen for answering questions and recording your thoughts and insights. Bring this notebook with you to Faith Group for discussions and prayer times. Select a quiet place and consistent time to read and pray. We also recommend you pray for a moment before you read God's word and ask for his illumination by the power of the Holy Spirit as you read.

Abbreviations: TAI – *Think About It* PP – *Prayer Point*

Tuesday, February 1 – Luke 18:9-14

TAI: What would you say is the main point of this parable? (Hint: look for it in the final verse.) Would you say that your prayers more resemble the Pharisee's or the tax collector's? How does pride manifest itself in your life?

PP: Ask God to help you identify points of pride in your thoughts and actions. Confess this pride to God as sin. "God is opposed to the proud, but gives grace to the humble." Thank God that he lifts up the humble.

Wednesday, Feb. 2 – Luke 18:15-17

TAI: A short but very powerful passage of Scripture! What does it mean to "receive the kingdom of God like a child"? Why does the kingdom belong to "such" as these children? How do these words of Jesus apply to us today?

PP: Ask God to give you childlike faith – an instinctive, committed confidence in his love, mercy, power, and grace. Ask God to fill you with his Holy Spirit. Ask God's blessing on the children in your life – your own, grandkids, nieces, nephews, neighbors – whomever!

Thursday, Feb. 3 – Luke 18:18-30

TAI: What is the grand promise that concludes this section? Why does Jesus ask the question, "Why do you call me good?" What has been the cost of following Jesus in your life? Jot down some thoughts about that, and be ready to share them with your Faith Group. Why does Jesus say it is difficult for wealthy people to enter the kingdom of God? Is it impossible?

PP: "Lord, deliver us from the love of money or other distractions which draw us to the world and away from your kingdom. Thank you for the grand promise that all who follow you will receive 'many times more' in your kingdom family. Help us to be ready to follow Jesus, no matter what the cost."

Friday, Feb. 4 – Luke 18:31-43

TAI: How could the disciples miss the clear statements Jesus was making about his suffering and death? What do these statements of Jesus help you understand about his journey to the cross? The blind man (called Bartimaeus in the gospel of Mark, chapter 10) is asked by Jesus, "What do you want me to do for you?" Is Jesus asking us this same question today?

PP: Tell the Lord very plainly in prayer “What you want him to do for you.” Trust him as you do, with your whole heart! Thank God for the suffering and death of Jesus Christ, God the Son, on your behalf. Rejoice in prayer and give God all the glory, honor, and praise.

Weekend, Feb. 5-6 – Luke 19:1-10

TAI: Why do you think people love this narrative of Zacchaeus so much? What details make it stand out? Why do you think Zacchaeus repented so clearly and profoundly? How does Jesus’s statement “For the Son of Man came to seek and save the lost” apply to our church?

PP: Ponder first if there is any area of life where you have not repented, as Zacchaeus did. Then pray a clear prayer of repentance, indicating what changes you are willing to make in your life. Be thankful that in Christ all people can become “sons of Abraham”!

Monday, Feb. 7 – Luke 19:11-27

TAI: What do you think is the main point Jesus is making with this parable? Who is he addressing with this story? Is there a passage of Scripture from the epistles which comes to mind when you think about this parable? How do we apply this parable to our own lives today?

PP: “God, we thank you for the gift of your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior. Thank you for giving us spiritual gifts. Thank you for providing so generously for our needs. God, please help us be faithful stewards of all you have given – our spiritual gifts, our earthly treasure, our divine opportunities and appointments. Help us invest our lives wisely for your kingdom!”

Tuesday, Feb. 8 – Luke 19:28-40

TAI: First, read the prophecy of Zechariah 9:9. How many details of this prophetic word are fulfilled in Jesus Christ? How did Jesus know this colt would be there? Why did Jesus respond to the Pharisees’ criticism the way he did? What is ironic about the exuberant occasion of great praise?

PP: Thank God for the many explicit fulfillments of prophecy in the life and ministry of Jesus Christ, confirming the truth of God’s word and the reality of Christ’s deity. Like the crowd that day, spend time rejoicing and praising and honoring God for all that he has done for us in Jesus Christ, and that Jesus is the Messiah sent from God to save his people!

Wednesday, Feb. 9 – Luke 19:41-48

TAI: What actual historic event is Jesus predicting here in this passage? Why is Jesus weeping over the city? Jesus is revealed here by Dr. Luke to be both a man of action and a powerful teacher. What does his cleansing of the temple reveal about him? Why do you think people “were hanging on his words”?

PP: Ask God to break your heart with the things which break his heart. Ask God to give you a heart for the lost. Pray that God would help us turn Faith Baptist into a true “house of prayer.” May the Lord help us to eagerly read and obey his word, literally “hang on every word” of Scripture.

Thursday, Feb. 10 – Luke 20:1-8

TAI: Jesus is masterful here! How did he turn the tables on the religious leaders who questioned his authority? What dilemma did they face when he asked his question? What was revealed about these religious leaders in this encounter? What is your answer to this question asked by these men?

PP: Should we not be thrilled at the authority and power of Jesus preaching and teaching? Express that joy in prayer. Tell God of your complete allegiance to Jesus Christ as your Lord. Pray for your Sacred Seven to also believe and follow the Lord Jesus, by the power of the Spirit.

Friday, Feb. 11 – Luke 20:9-18

TAI: With this remarkable story, Jesus recounts the entire biblical narrative! Creation, fall, prophets, incarnation, the cross, condemnation are all accounted for in this story. What is shocking in this story? What grabs your attention? What Old Testament scripture does Jesus quote near the end? How does this parable apply to us today?

PP: Humbly thank God for the knowing sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. Express your thanks that “there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” Pray again for the people on your Sacred Seven list.

Weekend, Feb. 12-13 – Luke 20:19-26

TAI: How does this passage relate to the one just prior to it? Were the scribes and Pharisees sincere in what they said to Jesus in v. 21? How did Jesus “marvel” the listeners into silence? What application do Jesus’s words have for us today? What passage of Paul is brought to mind?

PP: Pray for those who are in governmental authority over us. Pledge your allegiance to Jesus Christ, first and foremost, in your life. Ask God to help you respond honestly to human government and obediently to his divine authority over you.

Monday, Feb. 14 – Luke 20:27-40 Valentine’s Day! Tell someone you love them today – especially someone who needs some encouragement and care.

TAI: Why were the Sadducees “sad you see”? (My father always said that!) What was behind their unique question? How would you have answered it? Once again Jesus shows great wisdom and discernment in his answer. What truth did Jesus affirm? How did it “silence” his questioners?

PP: Pray a prayer of thanksgiving for the resurrection of Christ and the promise of *your* resurrection! Rejoice in the future God has for all who believe. Pray for the other members of your Faith Group today, and for your leader.

Tuesday, Feb. 15 – Luke 20:41-47

TAI: Jesus explicitly criticizes two leadership groups of the Jews with these comments. The first is a further challenge to the Sadducees: how did he challenge them? You’ll need to recall one distinctive belief of the Sadducees from the last reading. The second is another challenge to

the scribes: what did he expose about them? How can we apply these words of Jesus in our own lives today?

PP: Ask God to help you understand and apply his word with insight and discernment, as Jesus does so masterfully here (vv. 42-44). Ask God to keep you from the love of the spotlight and from hypocrisy. Humble yourself before the Lord in prayer and express your trust in him.

Wednesday, Feb. 16 – Luke 21:1-4

TAI: How was the poor widow's offering greater than the offerings of the rich? What lessons can we learn from her example, and the response of Jesus to her gift?

PP: Pray today about your attitude in the worship of giving. Ask God to help you fully realize that it is "more blessed to give than to receive." Thank God for providing funds so that we were able to eliminate our mortgage at Faith. Rejoice in his abundant goodness to us as a church!

Thursday, Feb. 17 – Luke 21:5-19

TAI: Did you know that the end of the world has been predicted for May 21, 2011? How do we respond to this type of thing, in light of this passage? Identify several great realities in this teaching of Jesus, and the instructions Jesus gives to accompany those realities. How can we apply those instructions in our lives today? If some of his followers are going to die for their allegiance to him, how can he say, "not a hair of your head will perish"? How do we "gain our lives" – according to Jesus?

PP: Ask God to give you discernment about teachers who rise up with end times predictions. Ask God to help you live a life of confident faith in him and endurance, no matter how hard the circumstances. Rejoice that not one hair on your head will eternally perish! Praise God!

Friday, Feb. 18 – Luke 21:20-28

TAI: Has the destruction spoken of here by Jesus taken place, or is it future? Could it be both? Note: there was a destruction of Jerusalem in AD 70, a time of severe persecution. Why should believers not succumb to the temptation to fear? What hope assures us that we do not need to fear the future?

PP: Jesus is coming again! Rejoice with thanksgiving that this is so. Give all your fears (even ones very different from what is spoken of here) to the Lord. Pray for friends or relatives who seem to live in great fear, that they will find their hope and confidence in Christ Jesus.

Weekend, Feb. 19-20 – Luke 21:29 – 22:2

TAI: As we read this, it is winter! As it is written, we are facing zero degree temps on this night, with large amounts of snow on the ground. Yet, spring is just weeks away! What principle of the seasons does Jesus speak from in this passage? What temptations do we feel when life circumstances are extremely difficult? How do we overcome these?

PP: As Jesus said, "Pray that you may have strength to escape all these things that are going to take place, and to stand before the Son of Man." So help us, God! Help us trust in you!

Monday, Feb. 21 – Luke 22:3-13

TAI: What did the Passover meal signify for the Jewish people? Who is truly behind the betrayal of Jesus by Judas, according to Dr. Luke? How did Jesus know that a certain man would appear, carrying a jar of water?

PP: Thank God for the Old Testament truth behind the Passover meal. Further, rejoice that there has been, in Christ, an even greater “Passover” through the blood of Jesus, shed for you! Praise God for both the deity and humanity of Jesus Christ, our Savior.

Tuesday, Feb. 22 – Luke 22:14-23

TAI: With these actions at Passover, Jesus introduced to the church the “ordinance” of the Lord’s Supper. In our taking of communion (which we at Faith currently do once per month), what does the taking of the bread signify? The taking of the cup? Why did Jesus not partake with the disciples that night? Who “determined” that these things be (see v. 22)?

PP: We will praise God today for the marvelous truth behind both the original “Passover” celebrated by the Jewish people and the sacrifice at the cross through which God “passes over” our sins through Christ’s blood. Thank God for his grace in your life. Pray for Christians all over the world, rich and poor, Asian, African, Latino, prisoner and free, wherever they may be, who join us in the celebration of the Lord’s supper. Pray especially for the persecuted church.

Wednesday, Feb. 23 – Luke 22:24-34

TAI: Why is it silly to debate over who is the greatest? What unique teaching is Jesus giving us here about leadership in the kingdom? How is it different from leadership in the world? Jesus knows that Simon Peter is going to betray him, yet what assurance does he give Peter? Is Jesus praying for you today?

PP: Thank God for the ascension of Jesus to glory, where even now he is interceding for us! Think about that: Jesus is praying for you! Ask God to instill humility and joy into your service to others and leadership through serving.

Thursday, Feb. 24 – Luke 22:35-46 *What is unique about this day in history?*

TAI: What is Jesus saying to the disciples about the hour that has now arrived for him, and for them? What insight do you draw from the prayers of Jesus in the garden, recorded here by Luke? Why do you think the disciples slept now, in this critical hour?

PP: The sword represents the violent response sometimes faced by followers of Jesus. Pray for those who even today are plotting violence against believers around the world. Submit your life completely and earnestly to God, “not my will, O God, but yours be done.” Pray, asking God to deliver you from today’s temptations.

Friday, Feb. 25 – Luke 22:47-62

TAI: What unique details does Luke include in this narrative of the betrayals? What strikes you as you read this powerful account? How does Dr. Luke (a physician) note the compassion of our

Lord in this moment? Even now, the chief priests and officers are caught by Jesus in their evil plotting – how does Jesus expose this? How could Peter, who spoke so valiantly to Jesus of his loyalty, now betray him so thoroughly?

PP: “Lord God, I do not want to betray my Lord Jesus! Fill me with your Holy Spirit! Give me courage and boldness to stand firm for Christ. Thank you for your promises to help me in times when I don’t know what to say or how to say it! I love you, God!”

Weekend, Feb. 26-7 – Luke 22:63-71

TAI: What is blasphemy? How did the men holding Jesus commit this sin? According to the religious authorities, what wrong did they hear from Jesus “own lips”? What powerful truths does Jesus declare in his words before them?

PP: Confess to God any sin of blasphemy in your life. Acknowledge humbly to God that in our nation and world today, Jesus is often mocked and belittled. Express your sorrow at this sin. Praise God that Jesus is now seated at his right hand in glory!

Monday, Feb. 28 – Isaiah 53

TAI: Before we begin the reading of the final two chapters of Luke, it seems like a good idea to review the powerful prophecy of the Suffering Servant Messiah in Isaiah 53. Note the detail included in Isaiah’s prophecy concerning Jesus. Make a list of those details, to marvel at it!

PP: Prayerfully ask God to prepare you for the reading of the last two chapters of Luke. Thank God for all you have learned thus far, including insights gained and strengthening your prayer life. Pray a prayer of praise for the Suffering Servant and Messiah, Jesus Christ!