



Bible Discussion Groups - Autumn 2021

Life Lessons from Luke

Session 6: Guilt and forgiveness

A Quiz about... this course!

Circle the right answers

1. When the disciples saw the risen Jesus in Luke 24:43, what did he do to prove he was not a ghost?
 - a. *He appeared among them even though the doors were locked*
 - b. *He ate a piece of fish in their presence*
 - c. *He explained from the Scriptures that the Christ had to die*
2. What was the rich man's manager accused of in Luke 16:1?
 - a. *Defrauding the rich man*
 - b. *Treating the rich man's debtors unfairly*
 - c. *Wasting the rich man's possessions*
3. In Luke 6:41-42 Jesus challenges people who try to take the speck out of their brother's eye while they have what in their own eye?
 - a. *A tear*
 - b. *A plank*
 - c. *A proud look*
4. According to Jesus' words in Luke 12:34, where will your heart be?
 - a. *Where your treasure is*
 - b. *Behind the breastbone slightly to the left of centre*
 - c. *In San Francisco where you left it*
5. Which of these things is NOT lost in Jesus' parables in Luke 15?
 - a. *A coin*
 - b. *A donkey*
 - c. *A sheep*
6. Which of these best summarises the message of Jesus' story in Luke 18:9-14 about the Pharisee and the tax collector?
 - a. *We should remember with thanks to God that there is always someone worse than us*
 - b. *We should be confident of our righteousness*
 - c. *We all need God's mercy and he gives it willingly to all who ask*

Passage for small group study

Luke 15:11-32 NIV

15 ¹¹ Jesus continued: ‘There was a man who had two sons. ¹² The younger one said to his father, “Father, give me my share of the estate.” So he divided his property between them.

¹³ ‘Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. ¹⁴ After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. ¹⁵ So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. ¹⁶ He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

¹⁷ ‘When he came to his senses, he said, “How many of my father’s hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! ¹⁸ I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. ¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.” ²⁰ So he got up and went to his father.

‘But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms round him and kissed him. ²¹ ‘The son said to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.”

²² ‘But the father said to his servants, “Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. ²³ Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let’s have a feast and celebrate. ²⁴ For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.” So they began to celebrate.

²⁵ ‘Meanwhile, the elder son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶ So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. ²⁷ “Your brother has come,” he replied, “and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.”

²⁸ ‘The elder brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. ²⁹ But he answered his father, “Look! All these years I’ve been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. ³⁰ But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!”

³¹ “My son,” the father said, “you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. ³² But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.”

Now consider these questions in your small group:

1. What was wrong with what the younger son said to his father in v12? How much do you think he cared about his father?
2. Does the younger son’s decision in vv17-20 make sense? How did he expect his father to respond?
3. How did the father respond and why?
4. What is wrong with what the older son says to his father in vv29-30? How much do you think he cared about his father?
5. How did the father respond and why?
6. Many people feel that Jesus’ commands in this passage are very challenging, but they are designed to apply to everyday situations. Choose one or two of these scenarios and try to work out how you would respond in line with the Bible passage we have been studying:
 - a. Mr A tells you in confidence that he has committed a sin so serious that he does not believe God could ever forgive him.
 - b. Mrs B does not like the use of father/child language in church services, having had a bad relationship with her own father. She prays a version of the Lord’s Prayer beginning “Our Lord, who art in heaven...”
 - c. Miss C has been a church member for over 60 years and has served on every committee and team at one time or another. She finds it difficult to get on with some of the people who joined the church recently, and would like there to be regular social events designed just for long-standing members of the congregation.
 - d. Mr D is a new Christian and joined the church in the last six months. He finds it difficult to get on with some of the long-standing members of the congregation, and would like there to be regular social events designed just for those who are new.
 - e. Young Mr E damaged Mrs F’s parked car late one night while riding his new motorbike down her private road. He has apologised and agreed to pay for the damage but it will take him six months to save up enough. Mrs F says she is not satisfied and wants to take him to court. Both are church members and each has supporters within the congregation.

Guilt and forgiveness – some quotations (not from the Bible!)

1. Always forgive your enemies - nothing annoys them so much. Oscar Wilde (1854-1900), Irish poet and playwright
2. The weak can never forgive. Forgiveness is the attribute of the strong. Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948)
Indian independence leader
3. I have no regrets. I wouldn't have lived my life the way I did if I was going to worry about what people were going to say. Ingrid Bergman (1915-1982), Swedish actress
4. You can ask forgiveness of others, but in the end the real forgiveness is in one's own self. Maya Angelou (1928-2014)
American poet, singer and civil rights activist
5. Forgiveness is giving up the hope that the past could be any different. Oprah Winfrey (born 1954)
American talk show host, actress and philanthropist
6. Never regret anything from your past because one day, you'll look back and thank it for hurting you so much that you decided to become a stronger human being.
Faith Starr, author of 2015 book
Stop Self-Sabotaging and Shift your Paradigm to Success

And finally...

Before the end of this final meeting, there may be an opportunity to offer our individual prayers of thanksgiving for all that God has taught us. What have you learned on this course? What has particularly struck you? What would you like to remember? What will you thank God for?

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