

Family Worship Booklet



God tells us that Ezra read from the book of the Law,
day after day, and that the people of God
were filled with joy!

Friday - Luke 12:49-53 - The fire Jesus cast on the earth!

This is a challenging passage of Scripture because of what it says about Jesus and peace. Numerous verses in the Bible speak of Jesus and peace, but this passage doesn't. It opens with a statement about fire and how Jesus came to cast, or throw, fire upon the earth. This is highly significant for it speaks to the purpose of Jesus coming to the earth, and yet in doing so, it is at odds with much of how we view Jesus' work. This 'throwing of fire', what does it mean? The next statement about His having a "baptism to be baptized with" sheds light. Jesus is obviously not talking about another baptism like the one He experienced in the river Jordan. This baptism is the 'baptism of death' that awaits Him on the Cross. Since the day when He stood in the Jordan, Jesus had been on a distressing journey. A daily torrent of suffering because of the sin around Him in the world. There was also the suffering due to the disciples' inability to understand His teaching and ultimate life purpose, e.g., Matthew 15:16. Not to speak of the suffering associated with knowing every day that He was destined for the Cross. And what of the Cross itself - it is a baptism that will end with His death. It is the Cross, His death, that will ignite the fire, for it is this that will be the offense that will set the world ablaze.

We seldom think about it, but the Cross entirely changed things in the world. Before the Cross, it was a national issue with the Jews and the odd Gentile, living in Palestine, believing in the coming Messiah. Since the Cross, it has become a global issue and one that is marked by conflict, because the Cross speaks of only one way of salvation. It is exclusive, and the world hates exclusivity. We tend to think that the world has shifted in recent years from a long-held position of accepting the Cross's exclusiveness, but that is not the case. The world has always demanded inclusiveness; it's just that western civilization has become more vocal in the past twenty years, in expressing the increasingly dominant Marxist rooted critical theory and its various spawning's. The reality is, the fire that Jesus cast with His death on the Cross, has been raging since that hour and it will not be extinguished until the day He returns.

Q1. What idea lies at the heart of these verses?

Q2. When did the fire, that Jesus cast, originate and when will it end?

Thursday - Luke 12:41-48 – ‘Everyone to whom much was given ...’

Of the three synoptic accounts, only Luke tells us that it is Peter who asked the question in verse 41, “Lord, are you telling this parable for us or for all?” In other words, will the disciples alone sit at the table, or does it apply to others as well? Jesus' answer is caringly informative and indicates that everyone in his household will sit at the table, with the caveat that they must be productively watchful. To drive home his point, Jesus draws their attention to the role of a steward – someone given the task of managing all the household affairs. By fulfilling their role well, such a steward would free the master of the house to pursue his career or business, and would be handsomely rewarded. However, if the individual took 'advantage' of his master's absence, abusing those who worked with him, and indulged himself, the consequences of such behaviour would be serious.

The point - we cannot play at being a believer in Jesus Christ. We cannot say we love him with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength, and then do as we generally please. We must pursue Him and His Kingdom with daily, diligent readiness, because, as we've seen, we don't know when He will be returning.

What are we to make of the statements about the servant getting a beating in verses 47 and 48? Well, the first thing it shows is that the things we are reading about are serious. The second thing to note is the heart of the statement. It's about culpability. If you know you are to do something and don't do it, that is far more serious than if you don't know that you are to do something, and you don't do it. When you apply that to what you and I know about God and the Lord Jesus, we are incredibly privileged. There are billions of people who will never experience what you have just done in reading these fourteen verses in the Bible. They will never be exposed to the Spirit of God working through the preaching of God's Word. You and I should be constantly aware of, and thinking about, our response to the words – "Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required, and from him to whom they entrusted much, they will demand the more."

Q1. What was a steward's responsibility and how does it apply to us?

Q2. How should we respond to what we have heard about Jesus?

Monday – Luke 12:22-34 – Do not fear!

Last week we considered verses 22-31 in which God tells us that we must not be anxious about our lives; what we will eat, the clothes we will wear, where we will live, etc., because He loves us and will provide for us. What's the point of being anxious about anything in our lives, if we can't even add a single hour to our lives?

Now we come to v32 and we ask the question, so where does this leave us? Well, it's not only about letting go of being anxious and worrying, but it also has implications for how we look at what we own and what we see as being important in our lives. You see, if you are anxious about the future and not having enough to live, then obviously you're going to try and address that concern. Now, we do need to work and provide for ourselves and those dependant upon us. God gives us six days specifically to work (Exodus 20:9). The Psalmist tells us that we shall eat because of the labour of our hands (Psalm 128:2) and Solomon writes in Proverbs 21:25 of the consequences of not working. So, we must work, but as we do, we must fight against the sin of not trusting in God's love and care. We must ask God our father in Heaven to give us a heart that will be consumed with a passion to be obsessed with pursuing Him and the riches of His Kingdom.

When Jesus says in verse 33, 'sell your possession and give to the needy' does he actually want us to do that? If he does, it would mean that every believer would voluntarily place themselves in a position of being in constant need, and that doesn't make sense. So, how are we to understand this statement? Well, Jesus is speaking to his 'little flock', i.e., his closest disciples, and addressing them specifically. However, in light of the context of the rich man who desired to tear down and build up for his own gratification, the general principle is clear - we are not to work all the hours God gives us at the expense of our relationship with Him, to hoard material wealth which one day we will be separated from by our death. Rather, we are to pursue God and His Kingdom out of a heart's desire that understands that we have a treasure that is kept in heaven for us, one that will never be stolen, fade or perish.

Q1. What is the issue with not accepting God's provisions?

Q2. How are we to respond to Christ's command to sell all we have and give to the poor?

Tuesday - Luke 12:35-40 – The Table prepared by the Master!

Jesus is still speaking to his disciples. He has been instructing them to set their heart on the treasures of the Kingdom, which the Father, in His good pleasure, will give them. But when should they begin setting their heart in that direction; after all, there is much to do in life? Jesus' response is - Today! There must be no delay. The staying dressed, the keeping of lamps burning, the waiting on the master coming from the wedding feast so they can open the door when he knocks - these are all pictures of readiness. Like the disciples, we are to live today as though the full consummation of the Kingdom is about to happen. And when tomorrow morning dawns, we are to live that 'today', as though the full consummation of the Kingdom is about to happen. For those who are ready when the Lord returns, they will be blessed.

The picture in verse 37 is of the owner of a large household coming home late at night, ordinarily everyone would be asleep, but there are servants who are awake, anticipating his return. On his arrival, he doesn't go to bed tired from his labours and journey; instead, he changes into the clothes of a servant, and invites those who have waited up for him to have a seat at his table, and then he serves them the best meal of their lives. What a picture! And what an experience we will have, by faith in the Lord Jesus, in heaven, as the apostle John writes in Revelation 19:6-9.

"Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the roar of many waters and like the sound of mighty peals of thunder, crying out,

"Hallelujah! For the Lord our God, the Almighty reigns.

Let us rejoice and exult and give him the glory,
for the marriage of the Lamb has come,
and his Bride has made herself ready;

it was granted her to clothe herself with fine linen, bright and pure"

– for the fine linen is the righteous deeds of the saints.

And the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb." And he said to me, "These are the true words of God."

Q1. When are we to begin setting our hearts on the Treasures of the Kingdom?

Q2. What awaits those who trust in the Lord Jesus?

Wednesday - Luke 12:35-40 – The Master is returning - are you ready?

V38. The Lord Jesus is going to return as the Master of the house. It's true that we don't know when it will happen, but these verses teach us that the critical thing is for us to be ready. The Romans divided the night into four watches, the Jews three (Judges 7:19). Whatever the number, the task was the same, men would stand watch on the city walls looking for any attempts by an enemy to encroach. These servants are not waiting on an enemy attack, they are watching for the master of the house to return.

The hour of the Lord Jesus' return is unknown, but what we do know is that we are to be ready. Every thought we think, every word we speak, and every single thing we do must be undertaken in that light. We must ask ourselves daily, yes daily, 'am I ready today if the Lord returns?' and if not, what do I need to do to be ready? Is there a sin I need to confess and repent of? Is there a decision that I need to make to place myself in a better state of readiness? Everything in your life and mine should flow through the single desire of readying ourselves for the King's return.

Not to be ready has consequences. As if the positive illustration to be ready is not powerful enough, Jesus follows it up in v39 with a picture that paints a warning. This warning sounds a note of judgement for the one who does not watch. Jesus says he or she is like a man who, despite knowing that their home is under threat of burglary, doesn't stay awake to guard it. Why? Because the information they have is not specific enough for them. And what happens is that they lose valuable possessions because of their unwillingness to apply themselves, despite the good information they had. Jesus says, 'don't be like that man!'

The Son of Man is coming. Remember that the Son of Man is coming! We don't know when, but that is irrelevant; the issue is, are you ready? There have been thousands of pages printed, and numerous hours of programs broadcast speculating on when Jesus is going to return. It's all pointless; nobody knows when Jesus is going to return; what we do know is that the Son of Man is coming. The only thing that matters is whether or not you are ready for Him coming. Ready through salvation and staying ready through pursuing His Kingdom in everything you are and do.

Q1. What must we do in light of the fact that Jesus is going to return?

Q2. Who will we be able to blame if we are not getting ready?