

Prayer and Study Guide

Daily Scripture Readings – 9/30/18

Monday – Read Luke 16:1-9 and I Thessalonians 5:4-5. **The Shrewd Manager.** In the New Living Translation, Jesus says in verse 9, ⁹ *Here's the lesson: Use your worldly resources to benefit others and make friends. Then, when your possessions are gone, they will welcome you to an eternal home.* Some people use wealth for their own selfish interests, but Jesus calls his disciples to use wealth for Kingdom things. Jesus reminds us that you can't take it with you when you die, so Jesus tells us to use wealth in the service of love. Who is God calling you to bless? How are you using your money and your resources to make an eternal difference? Ask God to help you use your resources to make a Christian difference in our community and in God's world.

Tuesday – Read Luke 16:10-15. **Stewardship Lessons.** A Manager or Steward is a person who manages another person's property or resources. God owns it all, and God calls us to be stewards who manage the blessings and resources God gives us. Jesus says that when we are faithful with small amounts of money it is likely that we will be faithful with larger amounts of money. However, if you are dishonest in little things, you will likely be dishonest when you are given greater responsibilities. How you handle the money and resources God gives you says a lot about your relationship with God. Jesus knew that money is one of the things we are most likely to worship instead of God. As you pray consider the way you use money. Do you use it in ways that are pleasing to God and serve the kingdom of God, or do you use it in more selfish ways? Ask God to help you live as a faithful steward who uses money in ways that are pleasing to God.

Wednesday – Read Luke 12:22-34 and 16:9. **Seek Kingdom Things.** When we worry, small problems seem larger than they really are. Jesus tells us, "Do not worry." He says, "Do not be afraid." God is a generous God who provides for our daily needs. It is God's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. In response to God's faithfulness and generosity, Jesus calls us to seek first the kingdom of God. Jesus says, ³³ *"Sell your possessions, and give alms. Make purses for yourselves that do not wear out, an unfailing treasure in heaven, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys."* ³⁴ *For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.* Acts of generosity and service make a Christian difference and build an eternal treasure in heaven. When you think about your life do you ever take an eternal view or is your focus on temporal things. As you pray, ask God to help you seek Kingdom things that will make an eternal difference in your life and the world.

Thursday – Read Luke 16:14-15, 19-31. **Lazarus and the Rich Man.** Why are some people rich and other people poor? From the Pharisees' perspective, wealth was evidence of God's favor and blessing. For them, the rich man's wealth was a sign that God had favored and blessed him; likewise, the poor man's poverty was God's punishment for an unruly life. It's the idea that some people express by saying, "You get what you deserve." But Jesus didn't see these men this way. He says there will be a great reversal in the final coming of the reign of God. Jesus said that the law could be summed up this way: "Love God and love your neighbor. The rich man's sin was that he didn't care. He didn't care that Lazarus was starving at his gate. He didn't care to follow God's commandments or obey the law and the prophets. He didn't love Lazarus as himself. As you pray, consider some of the ways you might help someone who is currently in need.

Friday – Read Luke 12:35-48. **The Faithful Servant.** Jesus entrusts us with God's ministry to the world. Jesus said, *"A faithful, sensible servant is one to whom the master can give the responsibility of managing his other household servants and feeding them."* ⁴³ *If the master returns and finds that the servant has done a good job, there will be a reward.* ⁴⁴ *I tell you the truth, the master will put that servant in charge of all he owns."* He also said, *"When someone has been given much, much will be required in return; and when someone has been entrusted with much, even more will be required."* As you pray, ask God to help you faithfully do God's will.

Saturday – Read Luke 12:13-21. **The Rich Fool.** A wise person once said, "If you hate your kids and want them to hate each other, then die without leaving a will." It seems that was the case with the person who wanted Jesus to tell his brother to divide the family inheritance with him. but Jesus said, "Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one's life does not consist in the abundance of possessions." Then Jesus told a story about a man who was preoccupied with his wealth. All he talked about was "my crops, my barns, my grain, my goods, my soul." He had not made any room for God in his life. He had not thought about the needs of others. He was self-centered and greedy. Greed ignores the needs of others. Greed ignores people in need. As you pray consider who or what makes your life meaningful.

Lectionary Readings: Esther 7:1-10, 9:20-22; Psalm 124; James 5:13-20; Mark 9:38-50.

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