

# Prayer and Study Guide

Daily Scripture Readings – 10/7/18

**Monday** – Read Luke 14:1-6. **Healing on the Sabbath.** Jesus was invited to eat in the home of a prominent Pharisee. A man with a painful skin disease was present. It was a Sabbath. In that Jewish society, no medical treatment was to be offered on the Sabbath unless someone's life was in jeopardy. If Jesus had been a polite guest, he would have pretended not to notice the man, but Jesus called everyone's attention to the man. Jesus was sensitive to suffering. He asked if it were permissible to heal this man on the Sabbath. This was not an abstract discussion; the man was listening. No one said a word. Jesus touched the man and healed him. The diners were not happy about this. The host did not invite the man to stay for dinner, so Jesus did what the host should have done and bade the man farewell. What is the worth of a human being? God's people matter to God more than anything else. As you pray, ask God to help you find a hurt and heal it and find a need and meet it.

**Tuesday** – Read Luke 14:7-11. **The Seating Chart.** The religious leaders thought they were going to watch Jesus. It turned out that Jesus was watching them. Jesus noticed how the leaders picked places of honor at the table. This is simply one more way we value some people over others. So, Jesus gave some advice: When someone invites you to a feast, don't go for the seat of honor. Go sit in the kitchen. Humble yourself. Jesus was saying to the host, "Hey host! Let me give you some advice. Your seating chart is all wrong. You think healing the sick on the Sabbath is wrong and that competing with people for status is right. Let me redo your table assignments. Exalt someone else." The leaders were all embarrassed and furious. Now they didn't know where they should sit. As you pray, ask God to help you humble yourself so that you may be exalted.

**Wednesday** – Read Luke 14:12-14. **The Guest List.** The host was thinking, "I hope Jesus doesn't have any more advice." Jesus turned to the host and said, "Let me give you some more advice. When you give a luncheon or a dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or sisters, your relatives, or your rich neighbors. If you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous." Inviting the poor for dinner might be a possibility, but the crippled, the lame, and the blind – that's another matter. Anything malformed or defective was considered to be unable to reflect the perfect holiness of God. Jesus was telling this Pharisee to put on his guest list people whose defects offended him. Jesus didn't have compassion for people because they deserved it. He had compassion for them because they were in need. Ask God to give you a heart of compassion for people.

**Thursday** – Read Luke 14:15-24. **The Parable of the Great Dinner.** A guest tried to distract Jesus with a little platitude: "Blessed is anyone who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God." Jesus would not be distracted. He told a story about who is on the guest list for the feast in the kingdom. In Jesus' story, the man who threw the feast was insulted by expected guests who rejected him at the last minute with lame excuses. As we would expect, the master was angry. As we would not expect, he turned his anger into grace. He told his servant to go to the streets and alleys and bring in "the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame." Them again! What was it with Jesus? He just couldn't let it go! The servant did what his master said but informed him that empty spaces remained around the table. The master sent him out to the "roads and country lanes." Jesus' Church includes the insiders and the outsiders. As you pray, think about someone who does not have a church home and how you can invite that person to come to our Fall Festival or to worship with us.

**Friday** – Read Luke 14:25-35. **Count the Cost.** As Bishop Will Willimon puts it, "Jesus clearly... has no interest in 'meeting our needs.' Rather, he appears intent upon giving us needs we would not have had, had we not met him. He speaks of severance from some of our most cherished values – after all, who could be against motherhood, family, and self-fulfillment? Jesus, that's who." As you pray, consider what it will cost you to follow Jesus, and ask God to help you passionately and sacrificially follow and serve our Lord.

**Saturday** – Read Luke 24:13-35. **Made Known in the Breaking of the Bread.** Luke tells us that he was made known to them in the breaking of the bread. We believe that we experience the presence of Jesus when we gather around the Lord's Table to receive Holy Communion. John Wesley, founder of Methodism, believed that we should receive Holy Communion as frequently as possible because it is a means of grace which is one of the ways that God offers us grace and love. Spend some time thinking about the way that Jesus is made known to you in the breaking of the bread. What makes Communion meaningful to you? Spend some time in prayer thanking God for the gift of Holy Communion.

**Lectionary Readings:** Job 1:1, 2:10; Psalm 25; Hebrews 1:1-4, 2:5-12; Mark 10:2-16.

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