

Prayer and Study Guide

Daily Scripture Readings – 3/3/19

Monday – Read Luke 12:13-15. **Family Feud.** A wise man once said, “If you hate your children and want them to hate each other, then die without a will.” The implication is that greed can cause siblings to fight over money and possessions and tear apart a family. Even when there is a will, greed can drive a wedge between brothers and sisters. Jesus had no interest in settling these kinds of disputes.

¹⁵ And he said to them, “Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; for one’s life does not consist in the abundance of possessions.” When we write a will, we tell the world what is important to us. A will affirms our hopes and our dreams and protects our loved ones and cherished causes. It becomes part of our legacy which lives on and continues to bless the people and the church which we love. Have you remembered the church in your will? As you pray, thank God for your many blessings.

Tuesday – Read Luke 12:16-21. **The Parable of the Rich Fool.** What first impresses Jesus is this miraculous, barn bursting harvest. It's a gift, but the blessing is a burden. The gift becomes a big problem. And then the story becomes, “How do I manage my miracle? What should I do? I have no place to store my crops. I will do this. I will pull down my barns. I will store my grain and my goods. I will say to my soul. ‘Relax, you have ample goods laid up for many years; eat, drink, be merry.’” How do I manage my miracle? It's a story about that. How do I manage my miracle? When we remember that God owns it all, we live our lives as stewards who faithfully manages the blessings God gives us. Jesus challenges us to manage our accumulated wealth in a way that is pleasing to God. In prayer, consider how you are using the blessings God has given you to bless people now and in the future?

Wednesday – Read Luke 12:22-31. **Seek Ye First.** Seeds of greed cause us to always want a little more than we have, and many of us experience great anxiety worrying about financial matters. Jesus calls us to put our faith in God to provide for our “daily needs” which are often different than our “daily wants.” Living with a scarcity mentality turns us inward upon ourselves and keeps us from considering the abundant blessings we have received. Jesus calls us to focus on the kingdom of God. “Do not keep worrying.... ³¹ Instead, strive for his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.” Consider some of the ways God has worked through you to bless another person. Consider the way God is working through our church to give food to 300 students a week through our Neighborhood Market. Ask God to help you seek first the kingdom of God and give thanks that all these things will be given to you as well.

Thursday – Read Luke 12:32-34 and Matthew 6:19-21. **Where Is Your Treasure?** Jesus’ said, “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth... ²⁰ but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven.... ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. Where is your treasure? Who do you love? Who would you like to bless even when you are gone? What ministries would you like to strengthen in the future? Planned giving is a person’s ultimate expression of a life of faithfulness; it is a way for you to make a commitment to leave a legacy and a testimony that will endure. Planned giving is an opportunity to give out of your accumulated assets by giving to support our church’s ministry through endowments, wills, bequests, and charitable gift annuities. A simple way to do this would be to leave a tithe or ten percent of your estate to create a lasting legacy of ministry in our church. As you pray, ask God to help you think about the legacy you would like to create.

Friday – Read I Timothy 6:6-11. **You Can’t Take It with You.** The Apostle Paul tells us, ⁶ Of course, there is great gain in godliness combined with contentment; ⁷ for we brought nothing into the world, so that we can take nothing out of it. It is a simple reminder that no matter how much we have, we can't take it with us. If we fail to decide how our assets will be used when we die, the government will decide for us. Many people are reluctant to write a will or even discuss one. However, those who create a will are always glad they did. Many people are reluctant to write a will or even discuss one. However, those who create a will are always glad they did. Creating a will or trust is an act of faith that will make you feel good that you have planned to bless the people an the ministries which are most important to you. Ask God to help you think through these important decisions.

Saturday – Read I Timothy 6:17-19. **Treasure for the Future.** When you consider that over three billion people in the world live on \$2.00 a day or less, we middle class Americans are the rich of the world. This scripture is speaking to us. Paul calls us to set our hopes on God rather than on the uncertainty of riches. We are to do good, to be rich in good works, generous, and ready to share, thus storing up for ourselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that we may take hold of the life that really is life. Pray about how you can live out this teaching through the way you serve God and give to God’s ministries in our church.

Lectioary Readings: Exodus 3:19-35; Psalm 99; II Corinthians 3:12-4:2; Luke 9:28-43.

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