

That You May Know The Certainty

LESSON 14: JESUS'S JOURNEY TO JERUSALEM, PART 4 (LUKE 12:35-13:21)

Jesus had been addressing His disciples and warned them not to worry about temporary wealth and possessions. Instead, they were to put their focus on Heavenly treasures. Building on this, Jesus now begins by teaching them about their need to be ready for His coming.

BE READY FOR THE LORD'S COMING (LUKE 12:35-48)

12:35-40. Jesus's disciples must stay in a constant state of readiness to serve Jesus, with their loins girded and lamps lit. They must be watching for His return (as if coming from a wedding) and open the door to Him at once. These ready servants will be blessed, as the Master will invite them to recline at the table and He will serve them (evidently a reference to being welcomed into Heaven, Luke 13:29; 14:15-24). Even if it is the middle of the night or early morning (second or third watch of the night), Jesus expects to find His servants alert. These will be blessed (favored in God's sight). Just as a homeowner does not know when a thief is coming and must stay alert, those who want to be ready for Jesus's second coming must stay ready since they do not know when He will come (Matthew 24:36, 42-44; 1 Thessalonians 5:1-3)!

12:41-48. When Peter asked whether the parable Jesus taught was for His disciples or everyone, Jesus emphasized the need for everyone to be faithful (trustworthy, dependable) and sensible over whatever has been entrusted to them (as managers of a household; Matthew 24:45-51; 25:14-30). The responsibility of each manager (steward) is to be found doing his job when the Master comes. This one will be greatly rewarded. However, if he fails in his Master's service seeing that the Master is delayed (i.e. beating servants, getting drunk) and the Master comes unexpectedly and catches that manager, he will be punished (i.e. cut in pieces) and placed among the unfaithful/unbelievers. The servant who knew the Master's will but did not prepare himself will be severely beaten; while the one who did not know yet still did what deserved punishment will receive a light beating. So, those who have greater knowledge and ability will be more strictly judged (James 3:1) and all will be judged fairly (Romans 2:6-11).

LIVING IN THE PRESENT TIME (LUKE 12:49-13:9)

12:49-53. Jesus had fire to bring to the earth (i.e. division). This division was evident during His life but would spread even further (set the world ablaze) after He accomplished His mission (His suffering is referenced as a "baptism"). The gospel Jesus and His followers preached would be like fire that purified those who accepted it and destroyed those who did not. Thus, Jesus's mission would result in people (even those in the same household) being divided – some who would accept the gospel and others who would not (Micah 7:6). Those who wanted to please Jesus, therefore, must stand with Christ even when it resulted in division (Matthew 10:34-39)!

12:54-59. The people often understood how to interpret the sky as it related to weather patterns (e.g. storms coming in from the west, warm weather from the south) but failed to properly understand what was happening with Jesus. They were hypocrites in this and failed to embrace Jesus as the Messiah despite all the signs He accomplished and the presence of His kingdom. Then, Jesus taught them to judge for themselves what was right and try to reach settlements with those they were indebted to before going before the judge. Otherwise, they would be thrown into prison and not get out until they paid all that was owed. Perhaps there was some lesson for people to consider their spiritual debt with God and do whatever they could to make things right with Him before standing in Judgment (e.g. rejecting His Messiah). For, it will be too late to reach an agreement with Him when Jesus comes again!

13:1-5. Two tragic events are mentioned in this text. The first involved Pilate (Roman governor of Judea) mixing people's blood with their sacrifices, indicating this tragedy took place at the temple in Jerusalem. The second involved 18 people being killed when the tower in Siloam (also in Jerusalem) fell. Although people often attribute such tragedies to the greater presence of sin (Job 4:7-8; John 9:1-2), this is not always the true explanation. Instead, Jesus urged all people to repent or perish because of their sins (Acts 17:30)!

13:6-9. Jesus told a parable about a man with a fig tree in his vineyard that was not producing fruit. Since it used up resources in the vineyard without yielding fruit, the man wanted it cut down. The vineyard worker, though, wanted to give it a little more time to be cultivated. But, if there was still no fruit, then it would be cut down. Perhaps there is an application of this parable to the Jewish nation which had largely

rejected God, and Jesus was providing more opportunity for them to accept Him. Then, there are greater applications to the expectation God has for all people to produce fruit in His service (John 15:1-8). If anyone does not (despite God's patience), God will eventually punish them.

HEALING A DISABLED WOMAN ON THE SABBATH (LUKE 13:10-17)

13:10-17. As Jesus was teaching in the synagogue on the Sabbath, a woman was there who was disabled (bent over and could not straighten up) for over 18 years. Jesus saw her and told her she was free of her disability, laid His hands on her, and she was instantly and fully restored; and she glorified God. However, the leader of the synagogue was furious and criticized Jesus for healing on the Sabbath, saying the woman should have come on another day to be healed. Jesus rebuked the man's hypocrisy, as they would untie their ox or donkey and allow it to drink on the Sabbath but criticized Jesus for untying this woman from the bondage she had been in on the Sabbath (John 7:21-24)! Jesus's enemies were humiliated at this (having no answer) and the crowd rejoiced for all the wonderful things He was doing.

THE PARABLES OF THE MUSTARD SEED AND THE LEAVEN (LUKE 13:18-21)

13:18-21. Two parables are used to describe God's kingdom. The first is that of a mustard seed (a notably small seed) planted in a garden that grew and became a tree so that birds could nest in its branches (reaching potentially 10 feet in height, Matthew 13:31-32). Similarly, God's kingdom would begin small and grow, impacting many throughout time. The second is that of leaven (yeast) mixed into about 39 liters of flour (roughly 50 pounds) until it was all leavened (Matthew 13:33). Similarly, God's kingdom works within individuals and communities (often in unseen ways at first) until it has a great impact. Therefore, despite the appearance of humble beginnings of Jesus's kingdom, it would have a tremendous impact throughout the world!

CONCLUSION

Jesus has taught that people need to be ready for His coming. This should result in people living according to the ways He was instructing. Furthermore, Jesus continued to work miracles, even on the Sabbath. He also demonstrated the powerful effect God's kingdom would have.

DISCIPLESHIP QUESTIONS

Why does Jesus expect His disciples to stay in a constant state of readiness?

What does Jesus expect of His servants while they are waiting for His return?

How would following Jesus result in division?

How were the people hypocrites in failing to embrace Jesus as the Messiah?

What is the importance of repentance?

What lessons are taught in the parable of the barren fig tree?

How did Jesus answer the criticism for healing on the Sabbath?

What lessons are taught in the parables of the mustard seed and leaven?

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