

New Sermon Series

A person is walking away from the viewer towards a bright, glowing doorway in a dark, cavernous space. The light from the doorway illuminates the person and the floor, creating a strong contrast with the surrounding darkness. The overall mood is one of hope and discovery.

GOD TALKS

Inspired Teen Ministry

HELLO!

What is a GOD Talk?

A TED Talk is a presentation given at the TED conference – an annual event where experts and thought leaders from various fields share their ideas in the form of short, powerful talks.

A GOD Talk is a presentation given in Scripture from God to humanity. In Luke chapters 10-19, Jesus – God in the flesh – gives many of these “GOD Talks” to His followers. In this series, we get to listen in and see what God has to say on a variety of subjects that focus on living life in His Kingdom.

This study guide is designed to be a help to you in small groups and for your personal reference so that you can get as much as possible from these “Talks” as we go through them very quickly.

Chapter 10

The Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37)

In a world where kindness often feels scarce, the Parable of the Good Samaritan shines as a beacon of compassion and empathy. Picture this: a traveler is beaten and left for dead on the roadside, ignored by those who should offer help. But it's not the expected heroes who come to his aid. Instead, it's a Samaritan, a person from a group despised by society. This unexpected savior goes above and beyond, tending to the injured stranger's wounds and ensuring his safety.

This timeless teaching from Jesus challenges us to look beyond stereotypes and prejudices, reminding us that true goodness and love for our neighbor knows no boundaries. It's about stepping out of our comfort zones to lend a hand – even when it's inconvenient or unpopular. Whether you're a Samaritan or someone in need, the lesson is clear: God's command to love your neighbor and show compassion knows no limits. So let's embrace the spirit of the Good Samaritan and strive to be a beacon of hope and kindness in our communities – one act of compassion at a time – in order to point others to the greatest act of love and compassion: Jesus' sacrifice for our sins.

BIG IDEA

Jesus teaches about loving one's neighbor through the parable of the Good Samaritan.

STUDY GUIDE

- Analyze the characters in the parable and their significance.
 - What stands out to you as significant about these characters?
- Discuss the Samaritan's actions and what they reveal about true compassion.
- Reflect on Jesus' command to "go and do likewise" in loving our neighbors.
 - What might you need to add to your daily life in order to follow this command?

Martha and Mary (Luke 10:38-42)

In a bustling household filled with chores and responsibilities, two sisters – Martha and Mary – showcase contrasting approaches to hospitality and devotion to Christ. Martha, diligent and hardworking, is consumed by the busyness of serving while Mary sits at the feet of Jesus, soaking in His teachings.

Imagine the scene: Martha is bustling around, ensuring every detail is perfect for their guest, while Mary sits in rapt attention, hanging onto every word Jesus speaks. Martha, feeling overwhelmed and burdened by her tasks, finally voices her frustration to Jesus, expecting him to reprimand Mary for her lack of help. However, Jesus surprises Martha by commending Mary's choice to prioritize spiritual nourishment over earthly concerns.

This story invites us to reflect on our own lives. Are we like Martha – constantly busy with the demands of life? Or, like Mary, do we take the time to sit at the feet of Jesus, soaking in His wisdom and presence? It's a reminder that while serving others is important, it should never overshadow our relationship with God.

So, whether you're a Martha – tirelessly working to serve others – or a Mary – seeking calm worship of Christ – the key is finding balance. Let's strive to cultivate a heart that both serves and seeks, finding harmony in our devotion to God and love for others.

BIG IDEA

Jesus contrasts the attitudes of Martha and Mary.

STUDY GUIDE

- Reflect on Martha's busyness compared to Mary's posture of sitting at Jesus' feet.
 - What stands out to you as significant in this teaching from Jesus?
- Discuss the value of both serving and spending time in worship.
- Consider how Jesus' response to Martha provides insight into priorities in discipleship.
 - What should you personally address about the way you follow Jesus?

Chapter 11

The Lord's Prayer (Luke 11:1-4):

Imagine being among a group of curious disciples, watching as Jesus withdraws to pray. When He returns, they're eager to know the secret to His powerful connection with God. So, they ask Him to teach them to pray.

Picture Jesus' gentle smile as He begins to share the words that would become one of the most cherished prayers in history: the Lord's Prayer. In these simple yet profound words, Jesus offers a blueprint for communication with God. He starts by acknowledging the holiness of God's name and the coming of His kingdom, setting the tone for reverence and awe. Then, He invites us to bring our needs and concerns before God, asking for daily provision, forgiveness, and strength to resist temptation.

But the Lord's Prayer isn't just a set of words to recite—it's a model for the posture of our hearts in prayer. It teaches us to approach God with humility, gratitude, and trust, recognizing our dependence on Him for all things.

So, whether you're facing challenges, celebrating victories, or simply seeking guidance, the Lord's Prayer is a timeless invitation to draw near to God with sincerity and faith. Let its words be a comfort, a guide, and a reminder of the boundless love of our Heavenly Father.

BIG IDEA

Jesus teaches His disciples how to pray.

STUDY GUIDE

- Examine the structure and content of the Lord's Prayer.
 - What stands out to you as significant about this model prayer?
- Reflect on the significance of addressing God as "Father."
- How does this affect the way you pray?
- Discuss the themes of provision, forgiveness, and protection in the prayer.
 - What part does Jesus play in each of those themes?

Ask, Seek, Knock (Luke 11:5-13)

Picture this: You're standing at the door of opportunity, but it's locked tight. You knock, but there's no answer. What do you do? In the Parable of Ask, Seek, Knock, Jesus paints a vivid picture of persistence and faith.

Imagine a friend knocking on your door late at night, asking for bread to feed unexpected guests. At first, you might hesitate, but because of the friend's persistence, you eventually get up and give them what they need.

Jesus uses this story to teach us about the power of persistence in prayer. He encourages us to keep asking, keep seeking, and keep knocking, knowing that our Heavenly Father hears and responds to our requests. Just as a loving friend wouldn't ignore our needs, God eagerly listens to our prayers and provides for us in His perfect timing.

So, whether you're facing a big decision, struggling with a challenge, or simply seeking guidance, don't be afraid to ask, seek, and knock. Trust that God is always ready to welcome you with open arms and answer your prayers according to His will. Let this parable be a reminder that persistence, faith, and trust in God's goodness can open doors we never imagined possible.

BIG IDEA

Jesus encourages persistence in prayer.

STUDY GUIDE

- Explore Jesus' analogy of asking, seeking, and knocking.
 - What stands out as significant in this example of persistence?
- Discuss the assurance Jesus gives regarding God's willingness to give good gifts to those who ask.
 - How might this differ from the friend who is awakened in the middle of the night?
- Reflect on the concept of persistence in prayer and how it relates to the way you pray.
 - What might you change about the way you pray based on this teaching?

Jesus and Beelzebub (Luke 11:14-23)

Envision a scene where Jesus is performing miracles, healing the sick, and setting people free from darkness. But instead of celebrating these acts of compassion and power, some skeptics accuse Jesus of being in league with the devil himself, Beelzebub.

Now, picture Jesus' response: calm, yet firm. He explains that a kingdom divided against itself cannot stand, and if He were casting out demons by the power of Beelzebub, it would mean chaos and defeat for the forces of evil. But in reality, it's by the finger of God that Jesus is bringing liberation and restoration to those oppressed by darkness.

This encounter challenges us to consider where we stand in our own beliefs. Are we quick to dismiss acts of goodness and grace, attributing them to sinister motives? Or do we recognize the power of God at work in the world, bringing healing and hope to those in need?

Ultimately, Jesus' words remind us that He will always prevail over evil. His victory over the forces of darkness is not only a testament to His divine authority but also a promise of freedom for all who believe in Him.

So when faced with doubt or skepticism, let's choose to stand firm in our faith, trusting in the power of God to overcome every obstacle and bring about His kingdom of light and love.

BIG IDEA

Jesus addresses accusations of casting out demons by the power of Beelzebub.

STUDY GUIDE

- Examine Jesus' response to the accusation.
- What stands out to you as significant about Jesus' power over the demons?
- Discuss the concept of a divided kingdom and its implications.
- Reflect on the significance of Jesus' statement that "whoever is not with [him] is against [him]."
- What must you do to ensure you are consistently "with" Jesus?

The Sign of Jonah (Luke 11:29-32)

Now picture this: a crowd gathered around Jesus, eagerly seeking a sign to validate His authority. In response, Jesus tells them about the Sign of Jonah—a mysterious yet powerful story of repentance and redemption.

Now, imagine Jonah, a reluctant prophet swallowed by a great fish and spit out onto dry land after three days and nights. This miraculous event served as a sign to the people of Nineveh, calling them to turn away from their wickedness and embrace God's mercy.

In the same way, Jesus explains that His own life and ministry are a sign like Jonah's. Just as Jonah was in the belly of the fish for three days, Jesus would be buried in the earth for three days before rising again. This ultimate act of sacrifice and victory over death would serve as a sign for all to believe in Him, calling them to repentance and new life.

This story challenges us to reflect on our own lives. We are like the people of Nineveh, in need of repentance and renewal. We must be willing to heed the signs of God's mercy and grace, turning away from sin and embracing the abundant life offered through Jesus.

BIG IDEA

Jesus rebukes the demand for a sign and points to the sign of Jonah.

STUDY GUIDE

- Discuss the significance of the sign of Jonah in light of Jesus' death and resurrection.
- What stands out to you as significant about the connection between Jesus and Jonah?
- Reflect on the importance of recognizing and responding to God's signs and messages.

Woes to the Pharisees and Lawyers (Luke 11:37-54)

Imagine a scene where Jesus is invited to dinner by a Pharisee, a respected religious leader of the time. The atmosphere is tense as Jesus takes His place at the table, surrounded by curious onlookers.

Now picture Jesus observing as the Pharisee meticulously follows religious customs, yet something is amiss. He notices the lack of genuine hospitality and compassion, masked by a facade of outward righteousness.

In a bold move, Jesus speaks out, challenging the Pharisee's hypocrisy and calling attention to the importance of inner purity and justice. He delivers a series of "woes," condemning the Pharisees and lawyers for their obsession with appearances while neglecting the weightier matters of the law—love, justice, and mercy.

This encounter serves as a powerful lesson for us today. It prompts reflection on the authenticity of our actions and the sincerity of our faith. Are we merely going through the motions, seeking validation from others, or are we genuinely living out our beliefs with compassion and integrity?

As we navigate the complexities of life, let's remember Jesus' call to prioritize matters of the heart and strive for authenticity in all that we do. Let's choose to walk in humility, love, and justice, following the example set by the One who sees beyond appearances and into the depths of our souls.

BIG IDEA

Jesus rebukes the Pharisees and lawyers for their hypocrisy.

STUDY GUIDE

- Examine Jesus' criticisms of the religious leaders' outward piety and inward corruption.
- Which one of Jesus' statements stand out to you the most?
- Reflect on the importance of genuine righteousness and integrity in discipleship.
- Discuss the warning against hypocrisy and the call to authentic faith and devotion.
- How can we be sure we do not fall into modern-day versions of the Pharisees?

Chapter 12

Beware of the Leaven of the Pharisees (Luke 12:1-3)

Envision a crowd of eager listeners gathered around Jesus, hanging onto His every word. As He speaks, His message is filled with wisdom and truth, captivating the hearts of all who hear Him.

In the midst of this scene, Jesus turns His attention to His disciples, warning them to beware of the “yeast” of the Pharisees, which symbolizes hypocrisy and falsehood. He urges them to guard against the temptation to hide their true selves behind a facade of religious piety.

Imagine the disciples absorbing Jesus' words, pondering the importance of authenticity and integrity in their own lives. They realize that true discipleship isn't about outward appearances or winning the approval of others but about being genuine and transparent in their faith.

This passage serves as a timeless reminder for us today. It encourages us to resist the pressure to conform to societal expectations or to pretend to be someone we're not. It also challenges us to embrace our true selves and to live authentically, both in our relationships with God and with others.

BIG IDEA

Jesus warns His disciples to beware of the hypocrisy of the Pharisees.

STUDY GUIDE

- Reflect on the significance of Jesus likening the Pharisees' hypocrisy to leaven.
- Why do you think Jesus used this word picture?
- Discuss the importance of sincerity and authenticity in discipleship.
- Consider how this warning applies to modern-day attitudes and behaviors within religious communities.
- How can we be sure to live according to this teaching?

The Parable of the Rich Fool (Luke 12:13-21)

Imagine a bustling marketplace where people are busy buying, selling, and making plans for the future. In the midst of this hustle and bustle, a man approaches Jesus with a request: "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me."

Picture Jesus' gentle response as He warns against greed and materialism, using a parable to illustrate His point. He tells the story of a wealthy landowner who, instead of sharing his abundance, hoards it all for himself, building bigger barns to store his wealth and secure his future.

As those around listened to Jesus' words, they were able to envision the scene, feeling the tension in the air as the landowner revels in his plans for a comfortable retirement. But then, unexpectedly, tragedy strikes, and his life is suddenly cut short.

Through this powerful parable, Jesus challenges His listeners to rethink their priorities. He reminds them that life is fleeting and that true wealth isn't measured by the size of one's possessions but by the richness of one's relationship with God and others.

In a world that often values material success above all else, Jesus' message cuts through the noise, urging us to seek first the kingdom of God and to live lives for a greater kingdom than our own.

As you reflect on Jesus' words, may you be inspired to invest your time, talents, and resources in things that truly matter, laying up treasures in heaven that will never fade away.

BIG IDEA

Jesus tells a parable about a rich man who focuses on material wealth but neglects spiritual matters.

STUDY GUIDE

- Analyze the rich fool's mindset and priorities in the parable.
- What could he have done differently?
- Reflect on the fleeting nature of worldly possessions and the importance of storing up treasures in heaven.
- Discuss the implications of Jesus' warning against greed and the pursuit of material wealth.
- What can we do differently because of this story?

You Must Be Ready (Luke 12:35-48)

Imagine Jesus sitting with His disciples, the fire crackling nearby as they listen intently to His words. With a twinkle in His eye, Jesus tells them a story about servants awaiting their master's return from a wedding feast.

Picture the scene: the servants are ready and waiting, lamps lit and robes girded, eagerly anticipating their master's arrival. When he returns, they are rewarded for their faithfulness and diligence.

But then, Jesus shifts the tone, warning His disciples to be vigilant and prepared for His own return. He speaks of the importance of staying awake and ready, like servants awaiting their master's return, for no one knows the hour when He will come.

Through this story, Jesus challenges us to live with intentionality and purpose, knowing that we are called to be faithful stewards of the time, talents, and resources entrusted to us. He reminds us that we have been given much, and much will be expected of us in return.

As you ponder Jesus' words, be inspired to live each day with passion and purpose, eagerly anticipating the day when your Master will return and reward you for your faithfulness. And in the meantime, determine to make the most of every moment, serving others with love and sharing the hope you have found in Christ.

BIG IDEA

Jesus emphasizes the importance of readiness for His return.

STUDY GUIDE

- Examine the imagery of servants waiting for their master's return and its relevance to Jesus' second coming.
- What stands out to you as significant about the way that they are waiting?
- Reflect on the concept of accountability and stewardship in light of the parable.
- Discuss practical ways to live with anticipation of Jesus' return and faithful obedience in the interim.

Repent or Perish (Luke 13:1-9)

Envision a quiet valley where Jesus gathers with a crowd of curious listeners, the warmth of the sun on their faces as they hang onto His every word. Suddenly, someone brings up a recent tragedy: the brutal killing of Galileans by Pilate's soldiers, mingling their blood with their sacrifices. As whispers of fear and confusion spread through the crowd, Jesus seizes the moment to deliver a profound message. He urges His listeners to view this tragedy not as a punishment for the victims' sins, but as a wake-up call for all.

Picture Jesus' eyes, filled with compassion and urgency, as He declares, "Unless you repent, you too will all perish." His words hang heavy in the air, a sobering reminder of life's fragility and the need for genuine transformation.

In an effort to illustrate His point, Jesus shares a parable about a fig tree that fails to bear fruit. The owner is patient, giving it one more chance to produce, but eventually, he decides to cut it down. Yet even in this final warning, there's a glimmer of hope—the gardener pleads for more time, promising to nurture and cultivate the tree in hopes of a future harvest. As you absorb Jesus' message, you should feel a tug on your hearts—a call to examine your own life and consider the urgency of repentance. Realize that each day is a gift, an opportunity to turn away from sin and embrace the abundant life that Jesus offers.

Through this encounter, Jesus invites us to heed His warning: repent or face the consequences. But He also offers us hope—a chance for new growth, forgiveness, and reconciliation. May we respond to His call with open hearts, embracing the transformative power of repentance and experiencing the fullness of life in Him.

BIG IDEA

Jesus addresses the crowd about the need for repentance.

STUDY GUIDE

- Reflect on the connection between sin and calamities such as those mentioned (the Galileans killed by Pilate and the tower of Siloam falling).
- What part does catastrophe have in reminding us about sin's presence and judgment?
- Discuss the urgency of repentance and its significance in light of eternity.
- Consider how Jesus' teaching challenges misconceptions about suffering and judgment.
- What should these things cause us to consider?
- Discuss the grace and patience of God as demonstrated in the parable.

The Narrow Door (Luke 13:22-30)

Imagine a dusty road winding through a bustling marketplace, where people from all walks of life gather to buy, sell, and exchange stories. In the midst of this lively scene, Jesus sits with His disciples, the afternoon sun casting long shadows as He imparts wisdom to those around Him.

As the crowd listens intently, one person speaks up, asking Jesus a pressing question: "Lord, will only a few be saved?" In response, Jesus offers a vivid illustration—a narrow door leading to salvation.

Picture Jesus gesturing toward the narrow doorway, urging His listeners to strive to enter through it. He warns them that many will try to enter but will not be able to, for the door will be shut tight.

In this poignant moment, Jesus paints a picture of the urgency of seeking salvation. He emphasizes the importance of striving to enter through the narrow door, rather than assuming that mere association with Him guarantees entry into the kingdom of God.

As you ponder Jesus' words, you should feel a sense of urgency and conviction stirring within you. Realize that the path to salvation is not an accidental path—it requires an intentional decision and a willingness to leave behind anything that hinders you from a relationship with God. In this parable, Jesus challenges us to consider our own lives and choices. He invites us to embrace the narrow path of discipleship, knowing that it leads to life abundant with Him. We must respond to His call to enter in through the only way - Jesus - and live life according to this decision.

BIG IDEA

Jesus speaks about entering through the narrow door.

STUDY GUIDE

- Reflect on the exclusivity of the kingdom of God and the call to enter through the narrow door.
- What do you think the "narrow door" represents? Hint: It is a Person
- Discuss the urgency of seeking salvation and the consequences of delay.
- Consider how Jesus' teaching challenges the idea that all roads lead to God.

Chapter 14

The Parable of the Wedding Feast (Luke 14:7-14)

Imagine a grand banquet hall adorned with rich tapestries and flickering candlelight, where guests eagerly await the arrival of the host. As the air buzzes with anticipation, Jesus shares a parable about humility and hospitality.

Picture Jesus observing the guests as they vie for places of honor at the table. He sees their pride and ambition, their desire to be seen and honored by others. In response, He offers a timeless lesson in humility. In the parable, Jesus describes a wedding feast where guests scramble for the best seats, only to be humbled when the host asks them to move aside for someone more distinguished. He emphasizes that those who exalt themselves will be humbled, while those who humble themselves will be exalted.

As we consider Jesus' words, we should see it as a reminder to value humility over pride and to prioritize serving others over seeking recognition for ourselves.

Through this parable, Jesus invites us to embrace a posture of humility in our relationships and interactions. He encourages us to follow His example of selflessness and hospitality, knowing that true greatness is found in serving others with love and humility.

May we heed Jesus' call to humility and hospitality, seeking to honor others above ourselves and to reflect the love of God in all we do. And may we find joy and fulfillment in serving others with grace and humility, just as Jesus did during His time on earth.

BIG IDEA

Jesus teaches about humility and hospitality using the setting of a wedding feast.

STUDY GUIDE

- Analyze the characters and their actions in the parable.
- What stands out to you as significant about the characters actions?
- Reflect on the themes of humility, exaltation, and hospitality.
- Discuss practical ways to cultivate humility and extend hospitality in everyday life.

Chapter 16

The Parable of the Dishonest Manager (Luke 16:1-13)

Alright, gather 'round for a story that's part mystery, part lesson in money management! So there's this manager who's not exactly the poster child for honesty. He's been cooking the books, but when his boss catches wind of it, he's in hot water. So what does he do? He gets crafty. He starts making deals to secure his future, using his remaining time to build relationships.

Now, you might think, “Uh, isn't that just more dishonesty?” But here's where things get interesting – Jesus uses this story to teach us a lesson about using our resources wisely. See, the manager, despite his shady past, shows some smarts by thinking ahead and making things right with others. But that's not all! Jesus dives deeper, dropping some truth bombs about money. He says, “Hey, being faithful with a little can lead to more responsibility.” It's like gaining XP points in a game—master the basics, and you'll unlock new levels of trust and opportunity.

Then Jesus hits us with a reality check: money isn't everything. Yeah, it's important, but it's not worth sacrificing our values or relationships for. It's like trying to juggle two things at once—eventually, something's gonna drop.

So, here's the deal – let's be savvy with our resources like the manager – but with integrity and honesty. Let's use our money wisely, knowing it's a tool – not our ultimate goal. And let's keep our priorities straight, putting God and others first in our lives. That's the real treasure worth pursuing!

BIG IDEA

Jesus tells a parable about a dishonest manager who acts shrewdly.

STUDY GUIDE

- Analyze the actions of the manager and their implications.
- How does his intensity to make things right relate to your experiences in life?
- Reflect on Jesus' commentary on worldly wealth and stewardship (v.9).
- If the dishonest manager was able to win friends via worldly wealth, how might we use our financial resources to advance the kingdom of God?
- Discuss the potential conflicts between serving God and wealth.
- Consider the warning against serving two masters and the call to prioritize God's kingdom.

The Rich Man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19-31)

Alright, imagine two dudes living in totally different worlds. On one side, you've got this rich guy living it up in a mansion, decked out in the finest threads, and dining like a king every day. On the flip side, there's poor ol' Lazarus, barely scraping by, covered in sores, and begging for scraps outside the rich dude's gate.

But here's where the plot twist comes in: when they die, their roles are flipped. Lazarus is chilling in paradise, while the rich dude is in torment. Talk about a switcheroo!

So why the drastic change? Jesus uses this story to show us something important - it's not about how much bling you've got in this life but how you respond to the truth of Scripture about Jesus. The rich man had it all but ignored the suffering right outside his door and did not repent; while Lazarus found comfort in his faith despite his earthly struggles.

But get this—despite being in torment, the rich man still thinks he's got it made. He begs for Lazarus to come cool his tongue with some water or at least send a warning to his family so they don't end up like him. But it's too late for him to make things right.

So, here's the takeaway - don't let wealth or status blind you to the more important kingdom of God. Treasure your faith, because in the end, that's what truly matters. Let's live out of our faith with compassion and generosity, knowing that our actions echo into eternity.

BIG IDEA

Jesus tells a parable about a rich man and a beggar named Lazarus.

STUDY GUIDE

- Analyze the characters and their outcomes in the parable.
- Reflect on the themes of wealth and poverty and their implications for the afterlife.
- What might need to be rearranged in your life in order to reflect this teaching?
- Discuss how compassion and care for the marginalized are outcomes of true faith.

Chapter 17

Faith and Duty (Luke 17:5-10)

So, picture this: Jesus is hanging out with His crew, and they're feeling the weight of everything He's been teaching them. They look at Jesus and go, "Um, we need more faith to pull this off!" They're basically saying, "Jesus, we're in over our heads here."

And you know what Jesus says? He doesn't hand out a magic potion for super-sized faith. Instead, He tells them a story. He's like, "Imagine you've got this tiny seed, like a mustard seed. It's itty-bitty, right? But even that tiny seed can grow into a big ol' tree."

What's Jesus getting at? He's saying faith isn't about the size; it's about what your faith is in. You don't need faith the size of a giant to move mountains; you just need a little bit of faith with a whole lot of trust in God.

Then Jesus drops another truth bomb. He talks about servants who do their job without expecting a pat on the back. They don't say, "Hey, look at me, I did my duty!" Nah, they just do what they're supposed to do.

So, here's the deal - it's okay if your faith feels small sometimes. What matters is what you do with it. Trust God, even when things seem impossible. And hey, serving others and doing what's right? That's where real faith shines. So let's water that mustard seed of faith and watch it grow into something amazing.

BIG IDEA

Jesus responds to the disciples' request for increased faith.

STUDY GUIDE

- Reflect on Jesus' statement about faith the size of a mustard seed being sufficient for miraculous outcomes.
- Consider how Jesus' teaching encourages reliance on God's ability rather than the magnitude of our faith.
- Reflect on Jesus' illustration of a servant's duties and the master's expectations.
- Discuss the implications of Jesus' teaching for understanding the relationship between God and His followers.

The Coming of the Kingdom of God (Luke 17:20-37)

Alright, imagine this scene: Jesus is surrounded by curious folks all wondering when this “kingdom of God” thing is gonna show up. They're like, “Hey Jesus, when's the big reveal?”

And Jesus, being His usual wise self, doesn't give them a straightforward answer. Instead, He starts talking about how the kingdom of God isn't this flashy event you can point to and say, “There it is!” It's not like waiting for the latest iPhone release.

He tells them, “The kingdom of God is already among you.” It's like this hidden treasure that's right in front of their noses, waiting to be discovered if they accept Him.

Then Jesus gets a little cryptic. He talks about how one day the Son of Man will come back in a big, unexpected way. It's gonna be like lightning flashing across the sky. There won't be any missing it.

But here's the kicker: Jesus tells them to be ready for His return. He uses the events of Noah, Lot, and Lot's wife to remind them that many will live their lives as if judgment is not coming. They will be going about the cares of this life all the way up until the last moments of their lives.

So, here's the takeaway - the kingdom of God isn't just a future thing; it's happening right here, right now. It's already begun through Christ followers and what they do for Him in this life. And yeah, one day, Jesus will come back in a big way to rule and reign over this kingdom, but until then, let's live like the kingdom is already here - because it is. Let's keep our eyes open and be ready to act as members of the kingdom we are a part of.

BIG IDEA

Jesus speaks about the nature and timing of the kingdom of God.

STUDY GUIDE

- Reflect on Jesus' response to the Pharisees' question about the coming of the kingdom.
- What stands out to you about what Jesus told them?
- Discuss how we can live as if we are a part of the kingdom of God while we wait for Christ to return and reign.
- Consider the call to readiness and faithfulness in anticipation of the kingdom's full realization.
- What must we be actively doing daily in light of this?

Chapter 18

The Parable of the Persistent Widow (Luke 18:1-8)

Consider this, you've got this feisty widow who's got a bone to pick with this judge. She's like a character from a superhero movie - determined, relentless, and not afraid to speak her mind. But here's the catch: the judge is a bit of a scoundrel. He's got no time for justice or compassion; he's all about himself.

So, what does our widow do? Does she give up? Nope! She keeps showing up at the courthouse, demanding justice, like a boss.

Now, the judge, being the selfish guy he is, tries to ignore her, but she's like a buzzing fly he can't swat away. Eventually, he's like, "Fine, whatever. I'll give you what you want just to get you off my back."

Then Jesus drops the mic with this parable saying, "Hey, check this out. If even this lousy judge will give in to persistence, imagine what our loving God will do for those who keep the faith and keep asking."

So, what's the lesson for us? It's about persistence in prayer. When we're facing tough times or praying for something important, we gotta keep at it, like the widow. God's not like some grumpy judge; He's our loving Father who wants the best for us. So, keep knocking on His door, keep pouring out your heart to Him, and watch as He comes through in His perfect timing. Persistence pays off, my friends!

BIG IDEA

Jesus teaches about the importance of persistent prayer.

STUDY GUIDE

- Reflect on the persistence of the widow in seeking justice from the unjust judge.
- What stands out to you most about this parable?
- Discuss the significance of the contrast between the unjust judge and God as a just and loving Father.
- Consider the encouragement to persevere in prayer and trust in God's timing and justice.
- Is there a prayer you have that you should be more consistent about bringing before your loving Father?

The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector (Luke 18:9-14)

There's a Pharisee - the religious big shot of the town - and a tax collector - the guy everyone loves to hate. They both stroll into the temple to pray, but they couldn't be more different.

The Pharisee, with his nose in the air, starts listing off all the good things he's done, basically giving himself a big pat on the back. He's like, "Hey God, check me out. I'm awesome!"

Meanwhile, the tax collector, feeling the weight of his mistakes, can't even look up. He's like, "God, have mercy on me, a sinner."

Now, here's the twist: Jesus flips the script. He says it's the tax collector - not the Pharisee - who is right with God. Why? Because he's humble, admitting his faults and asking for forgiveness.

So what's the takeaway for us? It's not about putting on a show or pretending to be perfect. God isn't impressed by fancy words or flashy deeds. He's looking at our hearts. So let's keep it real, like the tax collector, admitting when we mess up and seeking God's forgiveness. That's what truly counts.

BIG IDEA

Jesus contrasts the prayers of a self-righteous Pharisee and a repentant tax collector.

STUDY GUIDE

- Analyze the attitudes and prayers of the Pharisee and the tax collector.
- What stands out to you about these two approaches to God?
- Reflect on the theme of humility and repentance in approaching God.
- Discuss the implications of Jesus' teaching for understanding the nature of true righteousness and God's response to it.

The Rich Ruler (Luke 18:18-30)

Imagine you're living in a time where wealth is the ultimate status symbol. Now, picture this rich dude, decked out in designer robes, strolling up to Jesus with a burning question: "How can I get into heaven?"

Jesus, being Jesus, doesn't sugarcoat it. He lays it out straight: "Sell everything you have, give to the poor, and come follow me."

Now, you'd think this guy would be all in, right? But nope. He walks away with a heavy heart, because he's got a lot of stuff and not a lot of willingness to let it go.

And Jesus, watching him go, drops this truth bomb – "It's easier for a camel to squeeze through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God."

But here's the kicker – it's not about being broke; it's about what's in your heart. Jesus isn't saying money is evil; He's saying that when we cling to it tighter than we cling to God, we've got a problem.

So here is the takeaway for us – it's about priorities. Yeah, having stuff is nice, but it's not what brings true happiness or fulfillment. Let's loosen our grip on material things and hold on tight to what really matters – our relationship with God and our love for others. That's the path to real riches.

BIG IDEA

Jesus challenges a rich ruler to sell his possessions and follow Him.

STUDY GUIDE

- Analyze the interaction between Jesus and the rich ruler.
- What stands out to you as important in this exchange?
- Reflect on the obstacles to discipleship presented by wealth and materialism.
- Discuss the radical call to surrender all to follow Jesus and the rewards of obedience.
- What do you think most students struggle to let go of to follow Christ?

Chapter 19

The Parable of the Ten Pounds (Luke 19:11-27)

Alright, let's dive into a story Jesus told about a wealthy man who went on a journey. Before he left, he gave ten of his servants some money and said, "Do business with this until I come back."

Most of the servants got to work, investing and trading, doubling their money like it's nobody's business. But one of them, he didn't do squat. He buried his money in the ground, probably hoping it would magically double itself.

When the boss returned, he checked in on his servants to see what they'd done with the money. The ones who'd been busy got major props and rewards. But the lazy one? He got called out big time. The boss was like, "Dude, at least put it in a savings account or something!" He took the money from the lazy servant and gave it to the one who'd made the most out of his money.

Now, here's the twist: Jesus isn't just talking about money. He's using this story to teach us a bigger lesson about using our gifts and opportunities wisely.

So what's the takeaway for us? It's about making the most of what we've been given - whether it's money, talents, or time. Let's not bury our potential in the ground; let's invest it, grow it, and use it to make a positive impact in the world. Because when we do, that's when the real rewards come rolling in.

BIG IDEA

Jesus tells a parable about servants entrusted with a large sum of money.

STUDY GUIDE

- Analyze the characters and actions in the parable.
- What is significant about these characters?
- Reflect on the themes of stewardship, accountability, and reward.
- Discuss the implications of the parable for using one's talents and resources in service to God's kingdom.

Jesus Cleanses the Temple (Luke 19:45–48)

So, imagine this: Jesus rolls up to the temple in Jerusalem and what does He find? It's like a scene out of a market gone wild – people shouting, animals going bananas, and money changers hustling left and right.

But Jesus, being Jesus, isn't having it. He's like, "Um, guys, this is supposed to be a house of prayer, not a flea market!"

So, He goes full superhero mode, flipping tables and chasing out the merchants (who probably had a mix of shock and awe on their faces). After all the chaos settles, Jesus drops some truth bombs, saying, "My house shall be a house of prayer, but you've turned it into a den of robbers."

He's reminding everyone that the temple isn't just a fancy building; it's a sacred space meant for connecting with God, not making a quick buck. It's about honoring the sacred in our lives. Let's make sure we, as the temples of the Holy Spirit, reflect what's truly important – love, worship, and respect for God. Because when we keep our priorities straight, that's when we accomplish what God has made us for.

BIG IDEA

Jesus drives out the merchants from the temple.

STUDY GUIDE

- Reflect on Jesus' zeal for the purity and integrity of God's house.
- Are you zealous about keeping your life pure and devoted to Christ?
- Discuss the significance of Jesus' actions in the temple and their implications to the temple of the Holy Spirit today?
- Consider the conclusions drawn for confronting injustice and restoring worship to its rightful purpose.
- Have you been put in a place where you have had to call out unfaithful worship, perhaps even in your own life?