**Luke VI Jesus and the Poor**

Review: Jesus and Women:

In Luke God gives prominence and respect to women. He lists at least 9 women in Jesus’ life not mentioned in the other three gospels.

Women are especially prominent surrounding the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus.

Luke 7:11-15 Widow at Nain

The only son of his mother, a widow has died. She is alone, without protection, no opportunity for remarriage, no opportunity for a career, nearly cut off from family. Then her only child dies. She is totally bereft.

v. 13 Jesus’ heart went out to her. He raised her son.

Good news for the poor, Freedom for the captives, sight for the blind, release for the oppressed, forgiveness for sinners. Love for the outcast and for women. Compassion for the grieving.

Luke 7:36-50 Jesus anointed by a “sinful” woman.

Simon shows disdain for this woman, failing to notice that men are the “cause” of prostitution—taking advantage of the vulnerable. Jesus honors her

Simon: Look at this woman. He had totally written her off!

But whoever [recognizes that they have] been forgiven little loves little.”

Can I add Whoever [recognizes that they have been] forgiven much love much.

Luke 21:1-4 The poor widow. Jesus: Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all the others. All these people gave their gifts out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty put in all she had to live on.

**Jesus and the Poor (or Jesus and the Rich)**

I will be getting in your face just a bit today. There are three areas that, in America, are off-limits to our friends and family. 1. Our marriages 2. Our parenting and 3. How we use our money. Not polite to bring these up.

Background: If you remember from the Rich Young Ruler, the Jews assumed that people are wealthy are well off because they are relatively righteous and are being blessed by God.

In America, we think the opposite, but, ironically, we wish we were rich.

Intro: The general tendency in Luke is for Jesus to turn things upside down. Reversal of fortune. Last week it was women who were the “good guys” and men the “bad guys.” This week the rich will be the bad guys and the poor will be the good guys.

Luke 6:20, 24 In the Sermon on the level place. Is this the same sermon as Matthew 5-7, in which Jesus speaks from the side of a mount to people below on the plain? Or is this a similar sermon in a different setting?

Jesus said, “Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. And

But woe to you who are rich, for you have already received your comfort. Woe to you who are well fed now, for you will go hungry.”

Q: Which group are you in?

Notice two things:

1. In Matthew, Jesus says blessed are the poor in spirit, but in Luke, not at all surprisingly, he says blessed are the poor. Full stop. The two are related, for sure, and for those of us who are not actually poor (which is probably all of us), we can be poor in spirit.

This is the upside down Kingdom of God

Remember: In Luke the “poor” are the marginalized in general. They are poor in things, but also in social capital. This would include the immigrant, the very old, etc.. Therefore the rich are the privileged in general. “The rich are those with significant resources at their disposal, yet who fail to consider the plight of others.” (Joel B. Green)

At our Bible talk Tuesday (on God and money) I asked who is rich. All raised their hands!

God gives preference to the poor, as did Jesus. What about us? I had several homeless come up to me just this week. Thankyou God.

Jesus’ message: If you seek your comfort principally for yourself in the here and now, you will not receive comfort in the final kingdom of God. “you have already received your comfort.”

**The rich fool (Luke 12:13-23)**

Luke 12:13-15 This is probably a younger son getting cheated by his older brother.

v. 14 Notice, Jesus refuses to get caught up in this even though it appears justice was with this guy. Why? Because the man’s greed was a bigger issue that the justice issue around the inheritance. Jesus goes for the heart issue, not the legal issue.

In all our dealings with one another, let’s follow this example: be concerned for the heart issue, not the legal issue. This applies especially in our marriages.

Illustration: We all know of examples of families being destroyed and ripped apart by greed as it relates to inheritance. The destruction of the family involving the inheritance is often far more tragic than the death itself. Two suggestions:

1. Write a will if you are past 50 years. 2. DO NOT, under any circumstances, be sucked into this kind of thing. If worse comes to worst, walk away from the money.

But, let’s get back to the passage.

Luke 12:15. Let’s make this be our memory verse of the week: “Take care! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed!

Q: What are some different kinds of greed?

-desire for “toys” and fine things, the best food, the most fashionable clothing, the latest gear, etc.

-desire to get ahead at work, at the expense of others, not caring about its effect on them.

-lack of generosity toward those in need financially.

-fixation on financial matters such as retirement, financial security, etc.

-envy of those who have more than we have.

In the biblical context, “greed” includes a desire for improved social standing.

-self-focused desire to be in the best circles, to be respected, etc.

v. 15 A man’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.

a. Q: Then why do so many people reject this rather obvious truth?

Q: Do you agree with Jesus here? Are you absolutely sure!!!!??????

Ex: The most happy countries in the world, according to surveys are either

Nigeria/Cameroon or Denmark (explain in both cases)

Do you believe that happiness and satisfaction is correlated with money?

Let’s be really honest here!!!!!!!!!!!!

We have been thoroughly sold on this idea in the US.

My proposal: depending on your attitude toward money, the correlation is a negative one.

A thought question: Then what does a man’s life consist of?

-his/her worth in God’s eyes

-relationships

-fruitfulness

Luke 12:16-23 In Luke, Jesus answers with a parable.

v. 16-21

On the surface this man is simply being wise with his possessions. It makes sense to hold back the surplus to a time of greater need and thus, both meeting the need, and earning more money from his hard labor.

The world could not possibly agree more with this man!!!!!! This is the world you and I live in, folks!!!!

This farmer’s attitude is an example of a kind of greed.

v. 20 You fool! Q: What was so foolish about this man?

Again, Kingdom ethics is the absolute complete opposite of the world’s view.

Jesus turns the world on its head!!!!!!!

Do you get it? The wisdom of the world is foolishness!!!!!

Note: v. 17-19 I, I, I’ll, I, I, I’ll, myself.

1. He failed to account for God in his plans. He found his security on things, rather than in God. (Deut 8:17-18 also v. 10-14?)

Q: How might we, subtly, be like this fool?

2. He failed to account for the poor. Could have used his surplus to help the poor, keeping the rest of it back to still get a reasonable profit from his labor. He is putting himself in a position of ever-greater power over the local peasants. Jacking up the prices in times of scarcity is not a Christian thing to do.

What are you doing with your surplus? Making great plans to use it to your own advantage? What is the first thought that comes into your mind when some unexpected money comes into your hands?

Jesus’ summary:

“This very night your life will be demanded of you….

This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves, but is not rich toward God.

From Matthew 25 The sheep and the goats, we learned how we can be rich toward God.

Look at your life this week, this month, this year. Have you been rich toward God?

[Luke 14:7-13 Do not invite the rich to banquets. Invite the poor, the lame and the blind

Q: Should we take Jesus literally in this passage? Why will we be blessed if we invite the poor?

Q: How should we apply this passage?]

**The Parable of the rich man and Lazarus Luke 16:19-31**

[Read quickly Luke 16:13-15 This situation is about to be a reversal of fortune!]

Read Luke 16:19-31 This is not a subtle message.

v. 19-21 Describe the scene. Q: Who would you go up and talk to? Who would Jesus talk to?

There is a vast distance between the social standing of the rich man and Lazarus, but who is given a name? Who does God honor?

Purple clothes were extremely expensive—from the murex shellfish of Tyre.

Lazarus has sores—he is unclean. He is starving, right in plain view of the rich man.

Last sermon, Jesus said, Simon, look at this woman. Rich man, look at Lazarus.

All politics aside, vast disparities of wealth are an abomination to God. What does this say about us and the developing world?

We want to “Make America Great” but what about the poor?

Imagine a job outsourced to a poor country. Is that such a bad thing?

v. 22-24 This is the ultimate reversal of fortune!

Hades is the abode of the dead who are waiting for the final resurrection. There is a good and a bad place in Hades.

The rich man has not yet repented. He still expects Lazarus to serve him. The gall!!!! He is still calling Abraham his father, when Abraham is the ultimate representative in the OT of hospitality (see Genesis 18:1-10) Abraham serves the three visitors.

The rich man is the visible example of Luke 6:20,24, as is Lazarus.

v. 25-31 He still has not repented. The only ones he is concerned about is his immediate family.

The response: They have Moses. We have Luke!

God honors the exact opposite of what the world honors.

Summary:

God gives special honor to women. He also gives special honor to the poor, which includes those with less money, but also those with less social capital.

Let us honor God with our money and let us care for the poor.

Let’s remember the words spoken to the rich fool: “This very night your life will be demanded of you….

This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves, but is not rich toward God.