



CROSS OF GRACE CHURCH

SPRING 2021 BIBLE READING PLAN - WEEK 9

SCRIPTURE PASSAGE: Luke 14

Start by reading Luke 14 - The Pharisees' Prideful Hard Hearts, the Gospel of Mercy & the Cost of Discipleship

In Luke 14, Jesus again confronts the hard hearts of the Pharisees. He also deals with pride, apathy, and lukewarm commitment disguised as busyness. He also teaches that those originally invited into the Kingdom will not respond (Israel), and therefore others (Gentiles) will be invited and will respond. He does this by way of parables, showing that His gospel is to be preached and shared with the poor, the lowly, the afflicted, not just the affluent, those of social status and the well-to-do, who many times will reject His message. The chapter ends with Jesus teaching about the very personal cost and evidence of following Him.

In verses 1-6, Jesus continues to confront the Pharisees over their religious, hard hearts. He heals another person on the Sabbath and again skillfully answers their religious arguments with God's wisdom, power and compassion.

In verses 7-11, He addresses pride and encourages humility by teaching a parable that very simply exposes the pride in the heart of a guest invited to a wedding by where he chooses to sit.

In verses 12-14, He teaches on unselfish motivation and the radical generosity and care His disciples should show to those who are poor and afflicted.

In verses 15-24, through another parable, one about a great banquet, He teaches that the message of the Gospel of His Kingdom will not be received by the prideful, privileged, busy, and apathetic who make excuses for God's invitation (to salvation). But it is then to be powerfully offered to the humble, the poor, needy, and afflicted who are strongly welcomed to come. This parable is also a picture of the Messiah and His gospel being rejected by Israel and therefore made available to the Gentiles who will receive Him.

In verses 25-35, the chapter concludes with Jesus teaching on the personal cost of following Him and the necessity of counting those costs. He teaches we must bear our own cross and follow Him. We, His disciples, must hate our family and our own lives (love Him much more than family and our own lives) and freely renounce all we have. He uses salt that has lost its taste as an example of the selfish, half-hearted, lukewarm 'disciple' who is not, in reality, following Jesus or effective for Him.

Questions for Reflection and Discussion:

1. Why did the Pharisees remain silent in verses 4 and 6? What were they learning about their encounters with Jesus?
2. What are some practical ways we can apply the lesson of humility Jesus teaches in verses 7-10 and summarizes in verse 11?
3. How can our family(ies) and our church reach out in more effective ways to the poor and afflicted who cannot repay our care for them (v.12-14)?
4. In the parable of the great banquet, verses 15-23, after the initial invitees make excuses as to why they cannot attend, the master orders his servants to go to the city streets and invite the poor and afflicted. Then they were to go to the highways and hedges, which are outside the city walls, and compel (strongly urge and persuade) people to come to his banquet so that his house might be full.

What can we learn from this parable and how can we apply it practically to our daily lives as we encounter, live, and work with unbelievers? What does this reveal about the Father's motivation and heart toward the lost and those He is calling? Where will we find them? How can we skillfully compel (strongly urge and persuade) them to repent and come to Jesus?

5. In verse 25, Jesus turns to the large crowd following Him and speaks. Put yourself in that crowd. You're following Jesus, He stops, turns, and starts talking...to you, about the cost of following Him. Read the rest of the chapter from this perspective. Meditate on this passage and write down what the Holy Spirit, through Jesus' words, speaks to your heart about bearing your own cross and the cost of you following Jesus. Regularly review and add to what you write down.

