**I Love to Tell the Story**

Explore every story of Jesus in this year-long devotional guide. Go at your own pace using the online archive.

**Day 126: Parable of the unthankful servant**

**Read: Matthew 18:23-35**

Guided reflection:

In Matt.6:15, Jesus said “If you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses” and here Jesus gives a parable of what that looks like. A man owed a huge amount of money – more than he could ever repay and still care for his family. The one to whom he owed the debt had compassion and forgave the whole debt! But the one whose debt was forgiven, left and ran into someone who owed him just a little, and when that man could not pay, he put him in jail for his unpaid debt. One song goes “Jesus paid a debt he did not owe, I owed a debt I could not pay – I needed someone to wash it all away.” That is why we cannot be so harsh on our brothers and sisters – who are we to judge and demand, when we have been forgiven so much. Take a minute and think about how blessed you are and how much you have been forgiven. If you have not asked for forgiveness – this might be the perfect time to realize you cannot carry it all alone! You don’t have to!

Guided Prayer:

*“Loving and forgiving God, you offer to us forgiveness and second chances. Have I really accepted your offer? Do I really realize that I am set free? Lord, show me where I have heavy demands and expectations of others, when I have been set free from such impossible demands! Forgive me so that I might forgive others. Amen” (you might want to contact someone with whom you have been demanding and set them free!)*

**Day 127 : The Samaritan Villagers**

**Read: Luke 9:51-56**

Guided reflection:

We now will focus on some of the stories called “The Luke section” Luke 9:31-18:14. In the days to come, use the Luke reading as your main text. These four verses are only found in Luke but show the racial/political issues of the day. Jesus sent folks on before to make arrangements for them as they passed through Samaria on their way to Jerusalem. When the Samaritans heard that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem, they refused hospitality to Jesus and his entourage. Today if a Palestinian found out that a leader considered sympathetic to the Palestinians was on this way to Jerusalem for the Jews, they would not be very happy either! The Disciples were learning that Jesus came for all people and now that they are getting it, they are appalled to see racial/political tension raise its ugly head! They wanted Jesus to call down fire and burn them up! Jesus rebuked the Disciples, accepted things as they were and kept his calling and mission before him. To be the savior of the world was a bigger issue than whether the Samaritans were open or not! Does that sound at all familiar? We get so caught up in our politics and the things that divide us that we forget that Christ died for all! Not just me!

Guided prayers:

*“Open my eyes and help me see the places where I allow my prejudices cloud the fact that Jesus died for all, including those whose politics I do not appreciate. Help me see all as precious in your sight. Amen”* (Right now, why not pray for the leaders of the political party NOT of your choice.. that God will bless them and love them. Go on, try it, you need the practice.)

**Day 128: Seventy learning leaders return with good news**

**Read: Luke 10:17-20**

Guided reflection:

On Days 64 and 72, we read about Jesus’ leadership development of 70 folks who were his Disciples. He sent them on a practice run of preaching and praying for the sick. In today’s passage, they have returned and are so excited that they had demons obey them because of Jesus’ name! Whoa! Having authority is heady stuff! It is like Jesus responds: “Whoop de do! I saw Satan fall… and you will have power over Satan – but don’t go and get all pumped up about that – stay pumped up that your name is written on the very heart of God.” Are you still excited that you belong to Christ – that you are a child of God? Have you lost your enthusiasm? Our egos can get in the way when God allows us to have success in ministry – but the real success is that Jesus loves us! That is the big deal!

Guided prayer:

*“Remind me again that I am your child. Remind me again that I am forgiven. Remind me again that I have a place in the very heart of God. Remind me to walk humbly. Amen”*

**Day 129 : A lawyer’s Question**

**Read: Luke 10:25-28**

Guided reflection:

A lawyer is putting Jesus to the test – meaning, he was cross examining Jesus to see of what he was made. So, he asks what is on his mind: “What shall I do to inherit eternal life?” What is the bottom line, Jesus? Was he looking for bare minimum to still make it or was he looking for some sensational answer? Jesus does a perfect lawyer trick – he answered with a question! “What do you see written in the law?” The lawyer replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind and neighbor as yourself”. Jesus said “Right on, do this and you will live!” If you ask the same question you will get the same answer. The answer is not the issue for me, but the intentional living out of that answer! What does it mean to love with your heart… your soul… your strength… your mind?

Guided Prayer:

*“Loving God, how do I love you with my heart – how is that different from loving with my soul? Am I halfhearted with my love for you? Am I able to focus my mind on you? Help me spend my nights and my days, leaning to love you… with all of me. Amen.”*

**Day 130: The Good Samaritan**

**Read: Luke 10:29-37**

Guided reflection:

This is one of the most memorable parables in the Gospel of Luke. It answers the question: Who is my neighbor? Jesus shares that it is not about geography, nor about “the right people”… our neighbor is one who is in need – someone with whom we come in contact. We are not to be spectators or disinterested – but when we see someone hurting and in pain, we are to be the hands and feet of Jesus and get involved! We are not responsible for the whole world, but we are responsible for our response to those in our sphere of influence. Who is your neighbor today? Who needs you to be a neighbor?

Guided prayer:

*“Lord, I want to be known as a Good Samaritan and sometimes I see needs and meet them. But other times there seems to be so many in need, I wonder, how can I do my part? When is enough, enough? Help me remember, that even you took time to get away from the needs of people to gain strength and be renewed. Help me remember I am not the Savior… but I am one who desires to reflect the face of God. Keep me sensitive to others. I offer to you my resources – use me as you will. Let’s just see what you and I can do together today, OK, Lord? Amen”*