**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. Go to Woosterumc.org and click on the Grow tab to get started, pick up a copy in the office or outside the glass doors, or follow the QR code with your smart phone.

**Day 161 Prediction of the Death of Jesus Matt. 20:17-19; Mark 10:32-34; Luke 18: 31-34**

Guided Reflection:

All three of the gospel writers include this short passage that shows that Jesus tried to tell the disciples that they were going to Jerusalem with a particular assignment. Jesus does not say “I am going to die”, but uses a phrase he often used to describe himself: “The Son of Man.” It is in hindsight that the gospels were written, but here is where he clearly tells them what is going to happen and the end result. But they did not grasp what Jesus said. I wonder, would I have understood what Jesus was talking about? It would not have even entered my mind to accept what Jesus was saying. I do so love it that the gospels show the real humanness of the disciples.

Guided prayer:

*“Thank you, Lord Jesus, for going to the cross on my behalf and for rising from the dead for me. I know I am so much like those disciple – slow to learn, hard to teach. But, Lord, keep showing me the way, even if the way gets rough sometimes. Amen”*

**Day 162 Momma’s boys! Matt 20:20-28; Mark 10:35-45; Luke 22: 24-27**

Guided reflection:

Every mother wants what is best for her children, but the mother of James and John took this to a new level – she asked Jesus to command that they sit on the right and left side of him in Jesus’ kingdom. Now, of course, she is thinking of an earthly kingdom where a king had his best men beside him… but Jesus’ kingdom was not of this earth. She had no clue that she was really asking that they participate in his suffering. In HIS book, the greats did not have special seats, but are on their knees, serving others. I wonder, did she go away aggravated that Jesus did not grant her wish or did she go away sad, knowing that the story was going to include suffering? His ways are not our ways!

Guided Prayer:

*O Loving God, I want to be special too! Help me to match my heart with your heart… help me know that I will be great when I lose my desire for the world and begin to serve others as Christ would serve. Amen”*

**Day 163 Bartimaeus is healed Matt 20:29-34; Mark 10:46-52; Luke 18: 35-45**

Guided reflection:

 Have you noticed that these last few days, all three of the gospels have included these stories?

These days must have made a powerful impact! I love this story – a man sees his chance to be healed and starts yelling at Jesus. Others are embarrassed and try to shush him, but he

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would not be shushed! He was so close to a possible miracle, he would not allow the opinion of others to keep him for his miracle! Then, Jesus hears him and asks “what do you want me to do for you?” “Heal my sight! I want to see!” And Jesus did… and he rejoiced… and all the others rejoiced. What a day! If Jesus came close to you today, how would you respond to the question: “What do you need from me today?”

Guided Prayer:

 *“Jesus, today this is what I need from you: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_”*

 (Be gut honest as you fill in the blank from your heart’s point of view.)

**Day 164 Zacchaeus Like 19: 1-10**

Guided reflection:

The Zacchaeus story is only told by Luke. What a great story of redemption. Zacchaeus is a man hated by his neighbors because he has worked for the Romans and cheats them all in the process. But he has one of those inquiring minds that wants to know… he wants to see Jesus! But being ignored by those around him and being a short person, he climbs a tree to see Jesus. Jesus stops right under the tree, calls him by name, and invites himself to a party. Zacchaeus’ life is transformed – once the opportunist who used others for his own gain, now used what he had to help others. Isn’t that just like Jesus? Have you ever been, or you know persons that are, a Zaccheaus today? Where has Jesus turned your heart around? Have you been transformed by Jesus?

Guided Prayer:

“*Loving God, where I am like Zacchaeus in my life? What do you need to change my heart and my point of view? Am I an opportunist? Allow me to make the most of opportunities to serve you by loving others. Amen”*

**Day 165 Jesus’ parable about investments Matt 25:14-30; Luke 19: 11-27**

Guided Reflection:

This is the one story that points out that we are to cooperate and use our minds and networks for good. We are not victims. It is up to us to take what God has given us and work with it, embellish those gifts, and just see what God and we can accomplish together! I once prepared a sermon about a possible 4th servant. What if there was one who was given an amount, he invested it, worked with it and still lost it all. Would he have been a hero or tossed out? I believe it is not the bottom line Jesus is looking for, but for us to cooperate with Him in using our gifts and opportunities to do His will.

Guided Prayer:

*“Lord, where am I hiding and wasting what you have given me? Where can I invest myself and all that I have to make a difference in this world? Thank you for knowing my heart, even if it looks like I have failed. Show me the way. Amen”*

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