**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 171: The Parable of Two sons**

**Read:Matthew 21: 28-32**

Guided reflection:

Jesus tells an interesting story. One said he would not help, yet repented and did help the other said he would help yet did not! Jesus is telling the Pharisees and anyone else listening, don’t just talk about what you are going to do. DO what the Heavenly Father requests and if at first you do not do what God wants, if you repent and do it, that is what is most important! It is not your intentions, but you heart that is open to repent and do the right thing after all that is most important. Have you ever said one thing and done another or changed your mind to do the right thing?

Guided Prayer:

*“My heart is open, O God, to have you show me what you would have me do, even if I have said I would not do it. Help me see your will and where I am missing the point. Most of all, keep my heart open to repent and go in a new direction. Just for practice, where shall I make a change today? Amen”*

**Day 172:The Parable of the Wicked Tenants**

**Read: Matt 21: 35-46; Mark 12: 1-12; Luke 20: 9-19**

Guided reflection:

Read the Matthew passage, it has the fuller story. Jesus, of course, is saying that the Pharisees are the wicked tenants – they have been given the chance to be in God’s vineyard, yet they take advantage of others and even kill the son predicting what they plan to do with him. Jesus is predicting that their influence in the kingdom is taken away from them for their wickedness. Matthew ends this portion by saying that the Pharisees seemed to get it that they were the brunt of Jesus’ stories, but could Jesus be speaking to us too? God has blessed us with so much. Have we taken advantage like the tenants and not been faithful with what God has shared with us? Our gifts? Our Family? Our influence? Our green earth?

Guided prayer:

*“OK, Lord, I know that I squander what you have given me and sometimes I think that all you have shared with me is really mine and you are not a part of the scheme of my life. Forgive me for my arrogance. Remind me again that I am living for you. Amen.”*

**Day 173: Are we to pay taxes?**

**Read: Matt 22: 15-22; Mark 12: 13-17; Luke 20: 20-26**

Guided reflection:

Don’t you wish Jesus would have answered this differently? The Pharisees were trying to trick Jesus by posing a question that pit Jesus either against the temple leaders or Caesar but Jesus gives a life lesson instead. We are IN the world, even though we are not OF this world. As long as we live here, work here, and make our livelihood here, we are to open the laws of our land. Separation of church and state!

Guided prayer:

*“Since this story is about taxes, right now I thank you for allowing me to be born at this time in history, in the United States of America and when I pay my taxes this year, I will try to not complain but see it as rent for being “in” this world on my way to be with you in the next world. Amen”*

**Day 174: The Question Concerning the Resurrection**

**Read: Matt 22:23-33; Mark 12: 18-27; Luke 20: 27-40**

Guided reflection:

Now be honest, haven’t you thought of this? I had a friend whose first wife died and then remarried. He has wondered aloud about what it will be like to be in heaven with both wives - whose husband will he be! He was quite relieved to read this passage – marriage and our sexual issues are things of this earth not a heavenly issue! Not sure if I am happy or sad about that, but Jesus would not be tricked again by the Pharisees and their details! One less thing to worry about!

Guided prayer:

*“Thank you, God, for being God of all life – earthly and heavenly. Thank you for handling all the details that worry us so! Amen!”*

**Day 175: The Great Commandment**

**Read: Matt 22: 34-40; Mark 12:28-34; Luke 10: 25-28**

Guided reflection:

Read Mark’s passage. Remember the 10 commandments of the Old Testament? Well, the religious leaders of Jesus’ day had made their job not only watching for the Big Ten, but had added pages and pages of extra rules on the poor Jews of the day. Trying again to trick Jesus, they asked him which was the most important and Jesus summed all of their rules up in one rule: Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and with all your strength, and your neighbor as yourself. Think about it – go over the list of commandments – doesn’t loving God cover the first 4 and loving others and self are covered in the rest of them? No biggie, the rule is LOVE! We need to quit making it so complicated! Do this and you will live, Jesus says!

Guided prayer:

*“You keep it so simple and we make it so difficult. The sole purpose of our lives on this earth is to be the center of your love and share that with others. Why do we try to make it so hard sometimes? Forgive me, and show me where and how to love today. Amen”*