

Session 1 Secrets of the Kingdom: The Cost of Discipleship Luke 14:25-33

Leader notes:

- The author of Luke is thought by most to be the physician, Paul's coworker and companion. Luke is the only non-Jewish author in the New Testament. The gospel of Luke is volume 1, while the book of Acts is volume 2, both by Luke.
- It was written probably sometime after the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.
- Luke has an interest in the relationship of Jesus with people considered outcasts by his fellow countrymen (ex: women, children, poor, tax-collectors, and Samaritans).

Open:

- If you were on a TV game show, would you try for the \$50,000 grand prize, even though you might lose the \$25,000 you had won so far? Why?
- Discuss something that cost you more than you initially thought.

Dig:

- Read Luke 14:25-33
- What does Jesus say to the crowds about family? In this context, what does he

mean by "hate"? By carrying a cross?

- How do each of the three parables (see the other 2 in chapter 14) here relate to

the necessity of giving our primary love and loyalty to Jesus?

- What does the salt analogy emphasize about discipleship?
- In summary, what kingdom values are taught? Why such tough talk from Jesus?

Reflect:

- When did you realize that following Jesus was costly? How so?
- Every wonder since then if the cost was worth it? What keeps you going?

Session 2 Secrets of the Kingdom: Real Love in Action Luke 10:25-37

Leader notes:

- The parable refers to what is cast alongside. The dramatic image of a story illustration is thrown out as a comparison of the reality of the source with its fictional representation in words.
- Jesus loves to use miniature plays to communicate his message. The word- picture of the parable creates a drama that redescribes in clear terms the reality being illustrated. The resemblance between the reality and the illustration makes an instructive comparison.

Open:

- What part of your city is considered unsafe to walk along at night? Why?
- Would you provide help for a distressed person in this area? Why or why not?

Dig:

- Read Luke 10:25-37
- Who's testing whom in this story?
- Does the lawyer seem to think he has passed the test in verse 28? How so?
- Why does Jesus answer with a story instead of a straight answer?
- How might one justify the actions of the priest and the Levite? (see Lev 21:1-3;

Numbers 19:11-22)

- Given the divisions between Jews and Samaritans, what's unusual about the plot

twist in this story? What is Jesus' point here?

Reflect:

- With whom do you identify most in this story? Why?
- Who have been Good Samaritans in your life? What makes a Good Samaritan

really good?

- To whom will you be a Good Samaritan this week? Don't be general...who?

Session 3 Secrets of the Kingdom: The Rich Fool Luke 12:13-21

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Open:

- What did you like to collect as a kid? Now? What collection were (are) you most proud of?

Dig:

- Read Luke 12:13-21
- In response to the man's plea, Jesus tells a parable. What is the man's problem?

His solution? Why is he a fool?

- In your own words, what is the punch line of this parable?

Reflect:

- When have you been like the man in this story?
- Is there anything wrong with saving for the future? Why do you say that?
- Advertising is dedicated to making us think verse 15 is wrong. What differences

in lifestyle result from believing Jesus verses the advertisements?

- In planning an investment portfolio to become "rich toward God", what will you

do this week? This year?

Session 4 Secrets of the Kingdom: The Shrewd Manager Luke 16:1-15

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- It was written probably sometime after the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.
- Luke has an interest in the relationship of Jesus with people considered outcasts by his fellow countrymen (ex: women, children, poor, tax-collectors, and Samaritans).

Open:

- Which job would best fit your personality: Ringmaster at a circus? Owner of a candle store? Construction worker? Librarian? Skydiving instructor? Gourmet chef? Church minister? Why?
- Which of these jobs would least fit and why?

Dig:

- Read Luke 16:1-15
- Why would it be important for Jesus' disciples to hear this parable?
- In what crisis does the manager find himself? What plan does he devise? In light of this deceit, why does the owner commend the manager?
 - How does Jesus summarize this parable (v.9)? What do you think he's commending here? How do vv. 10-12 help you understand his point?
 - What's the problem with trying to serve two masters? What characterizes the attitude of the Pharisees who are listening in? How does he use the parable to speak to them?

Reflect:

- How do you view your money: it's mine, keep your hands off? It's my creditor's? It's God's—I just manage it? Why? How could you use it for the sake of the Kingdom?
- Who or what are some of the masters you've served in the past? What masters scream at you for allegiance now? How do you deal with these voices in light of your commitment to Christ?

Session 5 Secrets of the Kingdom: The Rich Man & Lazarus Luke 16:19-31

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- It was written probably sometime after the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70.
- Luke has an interest in the relationship of Jesus with people considered outcasts by his fellow countrymen (ex: women, children, poor, tax-collectors, and Samaritans).

Open:

- For what occasions do you feel like dressing to the hilt? When are you permitted and content to dress just in rags?
- Do you like it when a dog/cat licks you? Why or why not?

Dig:

- Read Luke 16:19-31
- How do the lives of the rich man and Lazarus compare on earth? After death?
- What determines who enters heaven? Why does this poor man qualify while the

rich man is kept out?

- What does this story teach you about human nature? Why is it so difficult for

people to be convinced of God's ways? How does verse 31 relate to verse 13?

- In sum, what ought we do with our lives on earth?

Reflect:

- On a scale of one (the rich man & his brothers) to ten (Lazarus), where do you stand? Why there? How can you move closer to a ten?
- Since lack of knowledge is not the brother's problem, what is? How do you see that tendency in yourself?
- How do you feel about discussing "the judgement" with friends/family?