



grow. pray. study.

March 15, 2020 “Choosing the Better Part”

Questions in this GPS marked with an arrow bullet point are particularly recommended for group discussion. Group leaders may add other discussion questions, or substitute other questions for the marked ones, at their discretion.

Family Activity:

A great way to cultivate your child’s spiritual growth is to make church attendance a weekly habit. Regular attendance helps both you and your child experience the community and fellowship church has to offer. Commit with your child to worship (join us at www.rezonline.org). Make it fun by planning an activity to do together before or after church each week like stopping at the park, eating pancakes, playing a game, or reading a book. Then carry the momentum through the week, finding times to discuss church together. We provide discussion resources each week in KiDSCOR that you can use, or you can download the Parent Cue app from your App store for immediate access to videos and ideas you can use throughout the week.

Note to readers:

During Lent, the GPS will lead us to read the entire gospel of Luke. To reach that goal, some daily readings are longer than usual. Mondays will highlight the “meal” passage from the previous Sunday’s sermon. Tuesdays through Saturdays will cover the rest of the gospel. Have an extra cup of coffee, or maybe use your lunch break—make the time to read the whole gospel with us.

Choosing the better part

MONDAY 3.16.20 Luke 10:38-42

Jesus’ friend Martha was very busy with good, sensible things! She wanted to be a good host, to offer her guest a good meal and restful lodging. We, too, often feel hurried and stressed, because we’re trying to do too many good (not bad) things. In Jesus’ day, to “sit at someone’s feet” meant becoming that person’s disciple. (The apostle Paul described his student days with the literal Greek phrase “at the feet of Gamaliel”—[Acts 22:3](#)) In this story, “Martha did what the culture valued in women: cleaned the house and cooked the food. Mary did what the culture valued in men: became a disciple.” *

- This story would have shocked many of Luke’s readers. To listen at a rabbi’s feet was for the rabbi’s main followers—an honor their culture kept for men. (They truly thought women’s place was “in the kitchen.”) Jesus did not put down Martha’s caring. He did say, “Mary has chosen the better part.” As you set your priorities, how can you put “listening to Jesus” above even mowing the lawn or increasing your 401k balance?
- Another time, Jesus told a story about seed falling among thorns (we will read that whole story on Wednesday). In some lives, he said, God’s seed is “choked by the concerns, riches, and pleasures of life” (Luke 8:14). In what ways are the current worries about coronavirus affecting your focus on deepening your walk with God? What other distractions at times choke out your desire to connect with God?

Prayer: God of the universe, it seems amazing that you want me to listen “at your feet.” Give me a “Mary” heart, eager to receive all the love and grace you wish to communicate to me. Amen.

Jesus: different than John the Baptist expected

TUESDAY 3.17.20 Luke 7:1-35

A Roman commander afraid for his valued servant trusted Jesus' implicitly, and Jesus used his healing power to help. Jesus brought a widow's dead son back to life, and the people of Nain said, "God has come to help his people." In prison ([Luke 3:19-20](#)), stalwart John the Baptist felt some fear. "Jesus' reported acts (v. 18) were praiseworthy, but differed from the expected baptizing in fire ([Luke 3:16-17](#))." * When was Jesus going to deal with evil Herod? John sent two men to ask Jesus if he really was the awaited Messiah.

- Do you ever wonder what God is up to when God seems to be doing little or nothing about evil or suffering? You are not alone. John the Baptist surely thought freeing him from Herod's prison and cleaning out that corrupt family was a good idea, but saw no signs that Jesus intended such an assault. So he asked. How does John's story let you know that it's okay for you to ask God whatever questions you have? How did Jesus' caring answer echo the inner answer the apostle Paul got: "My grace is enough for you" (cf. [2 Corinthians 12:7-10](#))?
- John was in prison, but his loyal followers visited him and delivered messages for him. Elijah, his "role model," nearly gave up when he felt as if he was alone (cf. [1 Kings 19:9-10](#)). John was the charismatic "point man," but his unnamed followers were a vital support in his unfair captivity. Who helps you at tough times? Who do you help?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, your mission reached an amazing range of people and needs. Help me to see the world more and more through your eyes, and to use my gifts to play a part in your mission. Amen.

* HarperCollins Christian Publishing. *NIV, Cultural Backgrounds Study Bible, eBook: Bringing to Life the Ancient World of Scripture* (Kindle Locations 232935-232936). Zondervan. Kindle Edition.

Where faith can take root

WEDNESDAY 3.18.20 Luke 8:1-21

(Note: We already read [Luke 7:36-50](#) on March 2.)

Jesus (perhaps watching a farmer tossing handfuls of seed) told a parable about four kinds of soil. His story asked his hearers (and each of us) to consider what kind of soil heaven's seed finds in our heart. And remember: the women in verses 2 and 3 were examples of good "soil," despite their unusual backgrounds or life situations! In verses 19-21, Jesus said people like them were part of his heavenly family.

- What kind of soil are you—how receptive are you to God's message of transforming grace? Or perhaps it's better to ask, as you read through Jesus' description of the four kinds of soil, which aspects of each type can you identify in yourself? Are there ways in which Jesus' story challenges you to become more open to God's work in and through you?
- Today's passage quietly introduced Mary Magdalene, who became one of the first witnesses to the risen Jesus. Stories like hers still happen. Resurrection partners with Kansas City's Healing House, founded by Bobbi Jo Reed (www.healinghousekc.org). Our Women's Conference featured Becca Stevens, who founded Thistle Farms (www.thistlefarms.org), a similar healing community in Nashville. Ask God to guide you, like Mary Magdalene, Bobbi Jo and Becca, into a life that extends Jesus' healing, uplifting work into your world today.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, you keep sowing the seed of your kingdom even though not everyone responds to it. Keep teaching me how to keep the soil of my heart receptive to you. Amen.

Jesus' power to calm any kind of storm

THURSDAY 3.19.20 Luke 8:22-56

The Sea of Galilee sat in a kind of geologic “bowl,” and was always subject to sudden, severe storms. Jesus calmed one of them and amazed his disciples. Yet he showed a different, even greater kind of power as he calmed the inner demons tormenting an unstable man, healed a woman ailing for 12 years and gave life and hope back to a synagogue leader, his wife and their deathly ill child.

- Archaeologists found a boat from Jesus' time in mud at the bottom of the Sea of Galilee (to learn more, visit www.jesusboat.com/boat.php). Such a small boat, with only a sail or oars for power, must have seemed terribly inadequate to deal with a violent storm. Do your human resources seem inadequate to deal with any “storms” you are facing? How can you open yourself to Jesus' power and love, letting him help bring you peace as you face those storms?
- Whether facing a violent, disturbed outcast, a leading yet frantic synagogue ruler, or a milling crowd in which one fearful invalid had touched him with timid faith, Jesus remained calm. How could Jesus resist fear in situations that triggered it in most people? As fear sweeps our world, how can Jesus' peace (cf. [John 14:27, 16:33](#)) help you avoid panic while taking wise precautions?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, in this troubled world, storms come in so many different forms and intensities. I thank you that you've promised that I don't ever have to face any of them on my own. Amen.

The self-giving essence of true greatness

FRIDAY 3.20.20 Luke 9:1-9, 18-50

(Note: We already read [Luke 9:10-17](#) on March 9.)

In answer to Jesus' penetrating question, Peter said Jesus was the Christ (Greek for “anointed one,” like the Hebrew Messiah). Jesus did not reject the idea—but did say bluntly that being the Christ meant suffering, not earthly power. And then Moses, Elijah, a flash of light, God's voice—THAT looked like greatness. It left Peter, John, and James speechless. But when they came down from that experience, Jesus again defined greatness as childlike trust in God, healing the sick and broken, serving people's needs, and even suffering at human hands.

- Peter, John and James probably expected Jesus to descend the mountain, call in the cavalry and drive out the Roman oppressors! They couldn't yet grasp that greatness in God's kingdom often looks very different from the world's idea of greatness. Jesus, far from pursuing status or power, served others, trusted God fully and gave himself to save the world. How do you define greatness? In what specific ways do God's ideas of greatness differ from human ideas?
- In what ways have you had to answer Jesus' question, “What advantage do people have if they gain the whole world for themselves yet perish or lose their lives?” (verse 25) What choice(s) have you faced, or face now, that promise gain at the cost of your values, self-respect or honor? In what ways can you gain the spiritual strength and self-knowledge to make the right choices?

Prayer: Humble Jesus, like Peter I can say you are “the Christ sent from God.” But keep me from thinking that following a king like you is always easy and comfortable. Build in me the backbone it takes to serve you faithfully. Amen.

A journey guided by mission, not popularity

SATURDAY 3.21.20 Luke 9:51-10:37

From Luke 9:51 on, Jesus was purposefully going to Jerusalem. (He arrived in [Luke 19:28-30](#), on what we call Palm Sunday.) Luke used this to frame every event after 9:51: Jesus was going to Jerusalem, where the cross awaited. Yet as he traveled, he said Satan was falling (10:18). This was a march to victory, not defeat. That was true even though part of what it meant for Jesus to “determine to go to Jerusalem” was the growing presence of legal experts and Pharisees testing him with questions that sought to trap him. He answered the question in 10:29 with a story showing in vivid human terms how he defined loving your neighbor as yourself.

- Luke 9:57-62 (like Luke 8:19-21) may feel troubling. Was Jesus against family love and loyalty? No (cf. [Luke 2:51-52](#), [John 19:26-27](#), for example). But he did say, as scholar N. T. Wright put it, “That’s how important the kingdom is: it’s even more important than the claims of family, which are themselves the most important normal claims a person can have.” * Has family, company, school or any other loyalty ever tugged you to let go of your loyalty to God? If that happens, which loyalty will you choose? The Samaritan in Jesus’ story didn’t just offer casual help. He put the injured man on “his own donkey” (i.e. he walked), brought him to an inn, cared for him, paid two days wages, and offered to pay more if needed. How did Jesus’ picture of the Samaritan (a man Jewish leaders would automatically despise) reflect God’s vast liberality to us? How can God’s giving move us to be generous to others in ways we never would achieve out of our own goodness?

Prayer: Lord Jesus, at every turning point in your life, you went in the direction that God’s mission for you pointed. Help me, like the Samaritan in your story, to make your inner compass the one that sets the direction for my life, too. Amen.

* Wright, N. T. *Luke for Everyone* (New Testament for Everyone) (p. 98). SPCK. Kindle Edition.

Prayer Requests – cor.org/prayer *Prayers of peace and comfort for:*

Ken Sylvester and family following the death of Vernon Sylvester (father), 2/15/2020

Charles Cannon and family following the death of Derrick Cannon (brother), 3/1/2020

Jennifer McAuley and family following the death of Marilee Coffman (mother), 3/2/2020

Tanya Childress and family following the death of Jill Cissell (mother), 3/2/2020

Carolyn Lynn and family following the death of Leslie M. Lynn (son), 3/3/2020

Jane Peterson and family following the death of Douglas (Doug) Peterson (brother), 3/3/2020

Linda Pepin and family following the death of Vitaly Pepin (son), 3/7/2020