

**EVERY DAY WITH JESUS** (October 19 – October 25)

Savor a segment of the gospel each day so that you may...

*“...grow in the grace and knowledge of our LORD and Savior Jesus Christ.” “II Peter 3:18)*

**October 19, Luke 16:1-13** Did you catch Jesus’ not so subtle criticism of us believers? When it comes to working with our own brothers and sisters in faith, we aren’t the brightest bulbs around (v. 8, no pun intended!), as the older brother in yesterday’s reading readily proved! A friend of mine used to say, “You use them up as they come.” By this she was not saying that we are to *use* people, but that we are to recognize their gifts, realize their limitations and work with what is there instead of complaining about what is not in that person. Be shrewd and work with people as they are, especially believers – you will be amazed at the gifts and wonders God has created them to be! Do this especially as you find inventive ways to bring people to Christ and invest your earthly wealth (time, talents, and wealth) in them so they are there to greet you in heaven. One way to invest your wealth wisely is to be faithful in the use of whatever wealth God has given *you* so that it is clear to all that there is only one Master in your life, and that that Master is not worldly stuff.

**Prayer:** Lord God, my only Master, forgive me for being so dim at times about being shrewd in how I may interact and respond to all people, especially fellow believers. Open my eyes to see the blessings you have given them, my heart to understand their needs, my mind so I am wise in making use of the opportunities I have as we live and work together. Especially open my mouth to tell them about you and your Son. Amen.

**October 20, Luke 16:14-31** Jesus continues his lesson on money in today’s reading. The Pharisees thought that the level of one’s wealth was an indicator of a person’s spiritual well-being – those with more money, *obviously*, so they thought, were closer to God. But Jesus taught and teaches that earthly wealth is not the indicator of spiritual health, but rather one’s wealth in the Word is that indicator. To prove the point he talks about the Law, and quotes one provision of it. While that provision may seem least (“one dot”), it will never become void. How does Jesus powerfully prove his points in verses 16-31?<sup>1</sup> How rich am I? And is it the right wealth?

**Prayer:** Lord, how foolish I am to think money and stuff gives me wealth. All that wealth, as we have so powerfully learned in these past years, can so quickly be taken from us. Help me to be rich in those treasures that none can remove and which last forever. Grant that you and your Son and your Word are the treasure I love to revel in day after day. Make me rich in you. Amen.

<sup>1</sup> A) The rich man went to, shock of all shocks and contrary to contemporary theology and expectations, hell! While a poor, seeming totally unblessed, man is carried by angels to heaven. B) The rich man proves his condemnation is just by the chutzpah he shows in hell. He thinks he can 1) boss around the father of believers, Abraham (“have mercy on me, send”); 2) have poor Lazarus, for whom he had done nothing to ease his needs while here on earth, minister to his discomfort; 3) and he tells Abraham, of all things, that God’s Word (“Moses and the Prophets”) is not enough to convert his brothers (he was at least thinking about them!), even though this is God’s ordained and professed way of bringing people to faith.

**October 21, Luke 17:1-4** “Temptations to sins” is perhaps better translated “stumbling blocks”. We may think putting a stumbling block before a believer is a minor thing. But what if that act drives a person from Jesus? Our judgment is not important in that situation, Jesus’ is. We dare not think that such tripping is a minor matter in his eyes! Jesus tells us exactly what he thinks of such in verse 2. A horrible drowning death is much to be preferred when compared to that which one reaps for causing someone to fall from faith. For good reason Jesus says, “Pay attention to *yourself*.” When we see a brother or sister stumble in faith, don’t increase the fall! Rebuke that person for his or her sin – seek his/her soul! And when he/she repents, forgive, forgive, forgive, forgive, forgive, forgive.

**Prayer:** O God, how often I have not thought that an unwise or unloving word, look, or act may hurt a brother or sister for whom Jesus laid down his life, shed his blood and died! Worse yet, I have not considered that I, by such actions, may have caused them to fall from faith. In your mercy, do not treat me the way my sins deserve. In your mercy forgive. In response to the loving way you have dealt with me, let me likewise deal with others, so by my acts they see your love. Amen

**October 22, Luke 17:5, 6** We ask God for a lot of things: help in crises, peace; good weather; good government; health; wealth; guidance; help and protection for self, family and friends; world peace; how to face family and marital challenges; direction on whom to marry and what career to go into, etc. etc. etc. These all come under the term “daily bread”. When was the last time we asked for something really truly substantial and really huge like an increase in faith?<sup>1</sup> What benefit comes as we ask for an increase in faith?<sup>2</sup>

**Prayer:** God of the universe, Creator of the universe, how often I treat you like a cosmic ATM / vending machine. In doing so, I have treated you totally disrespectfully and not sought for the higher good of your name and kingdom. Forgive me. In mercy allow me to humbly ask for what is truly important – Lord, increase my faith. Amen

<sup>1</sup> Answers will vary, but if our prayers are mostly ‘gimme’ prayers, one thing we should pray for is forgiveness for thinking about and caring for self and material and temporal blessings while giving little, if any, thought to seeking that God’s name be kept holy among us as we teach and live his word in its truth and purity, that his will be done, and that his kingdom spreads to more and more souls around the world. <sup>2</sup>Jesus said, “Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and the rest will be given unto you.” (read Mt. 6:19-34) When we ask for an increase in faith, we have our priorities straight and can be sure that other aspects of our lives, by his promise, will fall into place, be cared for.

**October 23, Luke 17:7-10** Oh, what a mighty opinion we have of ourselves. All are to kowtow to us, serve us, help us, defer to us. And what rage breaks out if we don’t get our way! Sadly our prayer life and our response to God’s answers to our prayers (or lack thereof) might show that we also think HE is to do the same – after all we are so high and mighty! “You had better,” some ‘pray’. In today’s reading the word ‘servant’ appears. The ESV, as do many other translations, uses ‘servant’ to translate the Greek word ‘doulos’. Perhaps a better term, in all its connotations, would be ‘slave’. Whichever translation one prefers, who is the High and Mighty in the house, the Master or the servant/slave? As the Bible reminds us, there is something strange going on when the house is run by the slave and not the Master (Pro. 19:10, 30:21, 22, Ecc. 10:5-7). In today’s reading Jesus gives us a Gospel centered lesson in house etiquette – gently and humbly putting us in our place.

**Prayer:** Lord, give us hearts of faith that believe and accept that we are your humble servants, and that even in our ‘great’ acts, we have only done our duty. Amen.

**October 24, Luke 17:11-19** “Call upon God’s name (reputation) in every trouble, pray, praise and give thanks,” so Luther wrote in his explanation to the 2<sup>nd</sup> commandment. How do we see all four of these things taking place in today’s reading?<sup>1</sup> What can we learn from this account for our own daily lives?<sup>2</sup>

**Prayer:** Lord, Master, Teacher, my God, how often I have failed to use your name properly! Forgive me, especially for the times I have abused your name for evil by using it to curse, swear, lie and deceive. Cleanse my tongue and mouth that I may declare before all your praise. Amen

<sup>1</sup> All ten lepers were physically and socially in trouble, so with the other nine the Samaritan went to Jesus trusting he could help (called upon God), asked for help (prayed), and when he saw he was healed, he proclaimed, told to others, the wonders of God (praised) and told God how appreciative he was for God’s answer (gave thanks). <sup>2</sup>Aren’t we, as God’s people, to do the same thing, really???

**October 25, Luke 17:20-37** False preachers, throughout the ages, have said “The end of the world will be. . . .” They sit and plot and make up all kinds of charts and schemes to figure out *the* date. Instead of listening to them, listen to the Son of Man, God robed in flesh, who never lies, who says, “Don’t listen to them. I don’t even know the time of the end. So just be ready, whenever. See and take note of the signs and be ready.”(Mark 13:21-37) Am I listening?

**Prayer:** Let me see the signs of the end, Lord, and bless me so I am wise concerning what I see. Let me be ready to see you face to face. Amen