*DAILY DEVOTIONS*

October 24 - 29

“The Rich Fool”

**Monday, October 24 Luke 12:1-5**

*“Beware the yeast of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy”*

 Jesus turns his attention to the disciples, as they deal with the huge crowds pressing around them. Their press raises an issue that becomes a temptation to the disciples: hypocrisy. An effort to maintain popularity easily leads to hypocrisy, like that of the Pharisees who say they do all that they do in order to obey God, but in reality are doing it for the praise of their fellow Jews. To enhance the warning, Jesus emphasizes that everything will be disclosed before God in the coming Day of Judgment, when our lives will be evaluated.

 On that coming day, disciples will have their stewardship of God’s gifts and opportunities examined, and they will be rewarded accordingly, though forgiveness and eternal life come only through drawing on the forgiveness Christ provides. We should be in awe of a being who knows all our secrets. Therefore, Jesus declares, we should fear the One who has the power to place us in hell, not someone who can merely kill the body. The latter means only the end of this life, while the former means permanent separation from God.

*May I never turn away from you, Lord, in order to please others. Amen.*

**Tuesday, October 25 Luke 12:6-12**

*“You are of immense value to God”*

 Our Lord is aware of the needs of those who belong to him, knowing even the minutest details of our life. This message about fearing God is reinforced in remarks about Jesus as the Son of Man. To acknowledge him is to be acknowledged by God; to disown him is to face disownment later. The importance and consequences of choosing to believe are evident throughout this passage.

 The sin of denying the Son of Man can be forgiven, but to the person who blasphemes the Spirit there will be no forgiveness. Many choices as plausible definitions for this blasphemy have been put forth. I find the most likely to be this: persistently rejecting the message of the gospel. Speaking a word against the Son of Man refers to a specific act of rejection, while rejecting the testimony of the Spirit refers to a permanent rejection of that message of salvation. A good example of this principle is Saul, who agreed with Stephen’s execution in Acts 7, but who later came to faith and thus received forgiveness for his previous act of denying the Son of Man.

*If there was a time when I denied you, Lord, thank you for forgiving it. Amen.*

**Wednesday, October 26 Luke 12:13-21**

*“The parable of the rich fool”*

 Before he goes into the parable, Jesus issues a warning to everyone, not just the brother, against all forms of greed. To “be on your guard” calls for constant vigilance against greed, for the purpose of life is not abundance of possessions. The main issue in this parable is not wealth itself. Rather, it is one’s attitude to wealth. The man in the story happens to have a fruitful harvest, and he must decide what to do with the overflow. He decides to build in order to store what has been provided.

 His error is in how he views what has come to him. Five times in verses 17-19 he speaks of what “I” will do, as if he owns it all. Moreover, he speaks about “my” fruit, “my” barn, “my” goods, and “my” soul. He will not share his abundance, but keeps if for his own private use. His goal is to ease back and withdraw from life. He will “eat, drink, and be merry.” He feels no concern or responsibility for anyone else. The essence of greed is keeping what resources God brings your way for yourself.

*May I use all with which you have blessed me, Lord, to serve you and others. Amen.*

*DAILY DEVOTIONS*

October 24 - 29

“The Rich Fool”

**Thursday, October 27 Luke 12:22-26**

*“Do not worry about everyday life”*

 Jesus begins with a call not to worry. The Greek present imperative used here implies that we should be constantly free of anxiety. We are subject to God’s care, so we should rest in his hands. The issue in this passage concerns the basics of life: food, health, and clothing. We should not be excessively distracted about our physical circumstances, for food and clothes are but the wrapping paper around which true life revolves. The first example Jesus gives involves an unclean creature, ravens. This choice is significant, since ravens were among the lower rank of living creatures. In their coming and going, God is aware of their needs. If he cares for them, how much more will he care for us!

 From this illustration Jesus takes up some practical considerations about anxiety. What does worry contribute? Does it add any length to one’s life? If not, then why worry about the things of life? Anxiety, though perhaps a natural response to sensing events that are beyond our control, is a profitless activity.

*When I become anxious about life, Lord, I will look to you for assurance. Amen.*

**Friday, October 28 Luke 12:27-32**

*“Seek the kingdom of God”*

 Worry casts doubt on God’s care. So Jesus addresses them as people of little faith. The essence of trust is to recognize that God will take care of what is in his hands. Thus, there is no need to worry about food and clothing. This approach to life is different than that of unbelievers who go through life without awareness of God’s presence. They scurry after physical concerns, but the Father knows what Jesus’ disciples need.

 Jesus calls for a single issue to be a disciple’s major concern: God’s kingdom. God will care for the rest. To seek God’s kingdom means to live as his representatives. As members of his household and the citizens of his community, we must represent him and reflect his righteousness in a world unconcerned about knowing God. That is the constant call of the disciple. The pastoral image in verse 32 is informative, since sheep can be among the more skittish of creatures and tend to be frightened easily. Jesus casts God as a shepherd who cares for his own and gives them what they need in order to do what he has called them to do (see Psalm 23).

*Life in your kingdom, Lord, is lived by trusting in your provision. Amen.*

**Saturday, October 29 Luke 12:33-34**

*“Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also”*

 If we do not need to worry about the provisions of life, then we can be generous with what God has given us. So Jesus calls for selling possessions and being generous by giving to the poor. Such generosity God honors; he gives us treasure in heaven. Such treasure involves God’s commendation and reward for service that pleases him.

 Being generous involves more than merely supplying aid to others. Where our treasure is, there our heart will be as well. In other words, how we use our resources communicates our values. If we invest in earthly possessions, we show we care about things. If we invest in and care for people, we demonstrate our love for others. God’s kingdom is about people. That is where our investments of time and resources should be, especially with those who have needs to be met. Additionally, a life attached to possessions becomes a stumbling block, because it leads to high anxiety. Jesus indicates that one way in which disciples can be different in their testimony is to reflect that people and needs have priority over possessions and ownership.

*May the way I use my resources, Lord, communicate your kingdom values. Amen.*