

DAILY BREAD

FOR THE WEEK OF JULY 25, 2010

This week's assigned reading: Luke, chapters 19 and 20.

Comments on the assigned reading:

- Once again, we find Jesus teaching us something about money and wealth. In the story of Zacchaeus (19:1-10), here is an example of a rich man who Jesus lifts up as one who uses his wealth wisely. Christians are not condemned for having money and wealth, and not all rich people will go to hell. However, Jesus places great demands upon the rich, as you will discover when you read this story.
- Starting with Luke 19:28, Jesus enters Jerusalem and the story of his Passion begins. From this point through to the end of chapter 23 (5 chapters of a 24 chapter book), we have the narrative of the last week of Jesus' earthly life. While there are some differences among them, all four Gospels have much in common, and clearly they all consider this to be a very significant part of the Story of Jesus.
- In stories like the Parable of the Wicked Tenants (20:9-19), we should be careful that this story should not be seen as a rejection of all Jews as God's chosen people. Most scholars believe that the story is directed against the religious leaders of that time (see verse 19), not all Jews. The church has a sorry history of anti-Semitism that remains imbedded in some Scriptural interpretation by Christians.

Questions for reflection and discussion:

1. In the Parable of the Ten Pounds (Luke 19:11-27), we are challenged to be good stewards of the resources that God has given us. The nobleman in the parable rewarded those servants who put the money entrusted to them to a productive use. How would you evaluate your stewardship? If everything that we have is a gift from God, how productively have you put to good use those resources (money and material things, as well as time, skills and talents, and opportunities)?
2. In the controversy story in 20:20-26, Jesus is put on the spot about paying taxes. He said that we should pay to Caesar (that is, taxes) that which is Caesar's, and to God that which is God's. Where do you draw the line between that which you pay in taxes and that which is offered to God?

Suggestions for prayer:

- Pray for Pastor Ralph and Katherine who are currently in the village of La Esmeralda (The Emerald) which is located in the jungle near the border between Guatemala and Belize. Also pray for Azucena and Catarina, the health promoters in that village, as well as for the congregation there, La Iglesia San Agustín (St. Augustine Lutheran Church) and Padre José Antonio who is the pastor.
- Pray for all people in the world who suffer from malaria, and for the ELCA's Malaria Initiative that seeks to address this serious illness.

For the blog conversation on these readings, go to:

<http://web.me.com/ronald.peterson1/FAITHnrFUTURE/Blog/Blog.html>