UPC Family Devotional

February – Week 4

Memory Verse of the Week

“In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

-Luke 15:10

Feb. 20 Sunday Luke 14:1-14

As Jesus dines with a group of graceless religious leaders, he sees a man in need of healing – perhaps planted there to trap him into breaking Sabbath law. What began as a mission on the part of the Pharisees to observe Jesus’ behavior and catch him in an act of impiety becomes an opportunity for Jesus to expose their pride and teach them what true religion looks like. Jesus heals the man and proceeds to teach his opponents several lessons about both the passive and active ways one can show humility and compassion. These two traits of grace-filled living result in blessings that flow in every direction, and in the end God will recognize and reward those who practice them.

In what ways do you struggle with pride and self-righteousness? What opportunities do you currently have to show compassion to those around you?

Younger Group

Jesus teaches that we should not be proud but humble. Instead of seeking attention and getting the best seats, we should have the attitude of being humble and taking the lower seats. Jesus also tells us to give to and serve those who cannot pay us back. We are blessed when we do this.

Jesus came down from heaven and humbled himself to save us. As his followers, let us humble ourselves before our friends, family and neighbors.

Dear Jesus, please forgive us for the times we considered ourselves more important than others. Open our eyes to see your humility and selflessness as we follow you example. In Your name, amen.

Feb. 21 Monday Luke 14:15-24

Jesus tells a parable about a man who invites a large number of distinguished guests to a banquet, all of whom reject the invitation. Their excuses reveal their true priorities. Today the invitation to follow Jesus and be a part of God’s kingdom challenges our priorities. It is easier than we might imagine to place our commitment to God below the many opportunities and distractions this world throws at us. But we must be willing to give up what we must, even the good things of this life, to answer God’s call. What He wants to give us is far better than the best this world has to offer. We just have to receive it with faith.

When have you found it hard to prioritize God’s kingdom over other things? What helps you remember that answering God’s call is more rewarding than anything this world can offer?

YG

In Jesus’ story, a man prepared a great banquet at his house. He sent his servant to call the guests. Sadly, the guests thought that working or enjoying their lives were more important. These guests did not come. Then the servant invited everyone in every place. Now anyone could come in. The man in the story was God. God prepared a heavenly banquet in His kingdom.

We are so happy to be with God in His kingdom. He is most important in our lives. Nothing can compare to Him.

Dear God, You are most important to me. You are greater than my work, study or play. Everything I do is for Your glory. I worship You. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Feb. 22 Tuesday Luke 14:25-35

Jesus provides his growing crowd of followers with two examples of what it means to be his disciple. In each case, one must carefully consider the potential risks and rewards of carrying this monumental burden. Both of these examples underscore Jesus’ statement about salt that has lost its flavor: it is useless. If we say we follow Christ, we cannot be half-hearted! Jesus demands nothing less than our entire lives.

Why do you suppose discipleship is so demanding? How would you encourage someone who has difficulty making a sacrifice for the sake of Christ?

YG

Jesus’ lesson here is like the one before. Jesus has the first place in our lives. When we put Jesus first, some family members may not understand. So, with love and prayer, we deny what they want and follow Jesus. We give up everything to follow him. This is the normal life of Jesus’ disciples, just like how salt is normally salty.

Jesus calls us to be his disciples. We give up everything we have because he first gave up everything for us. He gave us his life and righteousness to save us.

Dear Jesus, you are first priority in my life. I want to give up everything to follow you. Thank you for giving me everything I need out of your abundant love. In your name, amen.

Feb. 23 Wednesday Luke 15:1-10

In the parables of the lost sheep and the lost coin, the patterns are similar: the owner carefully and thoroughly seeks what is lost – far away and at home – and rejoices with others when it is finally found. Both illustrations point to the crucial work in which God seeks and redeems the lost. As God’s people, we must also participate in this work and share it with others. Not only should we make ourselves available as proclaimers of God’s redemptive work through the gospel, we must also rejoice when God finds the lost and brings them to Himself by his sovereign will and power. This is both our blessed calling and privileged duty as the church of Jesus Christ.

How is God calling you now to participate in His work of saving the lost? With whom can you share the gospel message this week?

YG

In the last story, Jesus’ last words are that everyone should hear him. Now we see that many sinners came to hear Jesus! Jesus is very happy they came. When each sinner turns from sin, they will follow him. Then Jesus will be so excited, and all his friends will be happy with him. Even everyone in heaven will have great joy.

Jesus loves sinners, and we love them, too. We really want Jesus to find them. then they will turn away from sin and follow Jesus, who is the Good Shepherd.

Dear Jesus, we were all lost but are now found by your great love and mercy. Please send me to find your lost sheep. Then I will be happy with you. In your name, amen.

Feb. 24 Thursday Luke 15:11-32

When the prodigal son returns to his father, full of love and compassion the father casts way all shame and runs to his son while he is still a long way off – a picture of God’s fatherly heart. But amid all the celebrations, his elder son has gone missing. The elder son refuses to enter the house because he is envious and embittered. And just as we would expect, the father goes out in search for him as well, imploring him to share in his joy. The end of the story mirrors much of our actual lives, where we sometimes continue to feel lost and hurt. But regardless of our state, whether our lostness is brought on by external or internal factors, our Father is always searching and waiting for us to come home.

When have you felt distant from God’s care? How does God remind you of His persistent love and affection for you?

YG

Jesus tells a story. A long father had two sons. The older son worked hard and was obedient, and the younger son was always causing trouble. The father loved both sons. The older son thought this was unfair. He said the father should bless him more because he was a better son. The father said to the older son that he loves him and has already given everything to him.

God loves all His children, no matter who we are. God’s love is not based on our response. He has already shown us His perfect love through Jesus Christ.

Dear God, thank you for always loving me. You have loved me even at my darkest times. Your love is sufficient. In Jesus’ name, amen.

Feb. 25 Friday Luke 16:1-18

More than merely a practical tool, money is a wonderful spiritual thermometer that measures the condition of our hearts. Jesus faced continual opposition from the Pharisees, who rejected his teaching and, coincidentally, were lovers of money. It turns out that pursuing worldly wealth aligns very well with the desire to be applauded by society. What God desires, on the other hand, is that we build our lives on the authority of His word even if it means missing out on the shifting pleasures and insincere praises that our sinful culture has to offer. Let us cling to his word as the source of unwavering truth in a world that constantly chases things that do not ultimately satisfy.

When are you tempted to pursue worldly pleasures and praises? How have you resolved to follow Christ, even when it hurts?

YG

Jesus is teaching about earthly riches like money. The disciples should use money wisely. For example, money is useful to help others. They should use money honestly, even if it is a little amount. Money can never be too important, or else it will control them. He says to use money wisely on this earth, so God can trust them with true riches in heaven.

Dear Jesus, please help me to use money wisely. I always want to use money to serve you, but I never want to serve money. I pray this in your name, amen.

Feb. 26 Saturday Luke 16:19-31

To further emphasize his point regarding the dangers of coveting earthly wealth, Jesus tells a story of two men who ultimately arrive at very different fates. Lazarus is welcomed into Abraham’s presence alongside the other righteous dead while the rich man is tormented in hell. Once we have passed on from this life, our earthly wealth cannot do us any good. Additionally, there is no suffering so great in this life that cannot be overshadowed by the joy found in God’s presence in heaven. Accustomed to a life of privilege, the rich man attempts to enlist Lazarus to warn his living relatives about the fate that awaits them, but it is too late – besides, no sign can move a heart that has resolutely rejected God’s word. Let us keep a soft heart toward God, always receiving His word with humility and joy.

What are some ways God is calling you to be generous with your wealth? How can you use it to bless those in need?

What are the dangers of wealth and power? How have you been storing up treasures in heaven?

YG

This story is also a lesson about earthly and true riches. Jesus talks about a very rich man. He had so much money, but he only used it to make himself more comfortable. He loved only himself. When the rich man died, he went to hell. Then he knew that he should have listened to the Bible’s teaching to love God and love others.

We have many chances to use earthly riches to serve others. God gives us more than enough so we can share with others who are in need.

Dear God, thank you for taking care of me and giving me everything I need. Please help me to share my earthly riches with those who are in need. In Jesus’ name, amen.