

Small Groups Curriculum

Week of January 31, 2021

OPENING PRAYER

Shine in our hearts, O Master Who loves mankind, the pure light of Your divine knowledge, and open the eyes of our mind that we may comprehend the proclamations of Your Gospels. Instill in us also reverence for Your blessed commandments so that, having trampled down all carnal desires, we may lead a spiritual life, both thinking and doing all those things that are pleasing to You. For You, Christ our God, are the illumination of our souls and bodies, and to You we offer up glory, together with Your Father, Who is without beginning, and Your all-holy, good, and life-creating Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Prayer Before the Reading of the Gospel
Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom

THIS SUNDAY'S SCRIPTURE READINGS

For the 15th Sunday of Luke

SUNDAY EPISTLE

St. Paul's First Letter to Timothy 4:9-15

SUNDAY GOSPEL

The Gospel According to Luke 19:1-10

All readings are available at goarch.org or the Daily Readings app.

EPISTLE READING

Timothy, my son, the saying is sure and worthy of full acceptance. For to this end we toil and suffer reproach, because we have our hope set on the living God, who is the Savior of all men, especially of those who believe. Command and teach these things. Let no one despise your youth, but set the believers an example in speech and conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. Till I come, attend to the public reading of scripture, to preaching, to teaching.

Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophetic utterance when the council of elders laid their hands upon you. Practice these duties, devote yourself to them, so that all may see your progress.

GOSPEL READING

At that time, Jesus was passing through Jericho. And there was a man named Zacchaios; he was a chief collector, and rich. And he sought to see who Jesus was, but could not, on account of the crowd, because he was small of stature. So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for he was to pass that way. And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaios, make haste and come down; for I must stay at your house today." So he made haste and came down, and received him joyfully.

And when they saw it they all murmured, "He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner." And Zacchaios stood and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have defrauded any one of anything, I restore it fourfold." And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man came to seek and to save the lost."

Discussion

INTRO NOTES

1. Being Seen by God

- A. In the Gospel, we read that Zacchaios was “short of stature”
- B. Even though he was too small to be seen through the crowd, he put himself in a position to be seen by the Lord
- C. Similarly, in the Epistle, Timothy’s was short on years (ie, young)
- D. St. Paul tells him to put himself in a position to be seen by the Lord by “attending to the public reading of scripture, to preaching, to teaching”
- E. Doing so will also allow others to “see your progress”

2. The Lord’s Invitation

- A. After speaking with Zacchaios, Jesus invites Himself into his home
- B. Jesus doesn’t expect Zacchaios to come to him, but rather goes to him in love
- C. Similarly St. Paul, as Timothy’s spiritual father, also doesn’t expect Timothy to come to him
- D. He gives him advice “till he comes” to visit him

3. Making Time for Spiritual Practices

- A. St. Paul advises Timothy to “attend to the public reading of scripture, to preaching, to teaching”
- B. He tells his spiritual son to focus on concrete practices, the “duties” of the spiritual life
- C. Similarly, Zacchaios’ conversation with Jesus leads to concrete spiritual practices
- D. He gives half of his goods to the poor, and repays those who he’s defrauded in the past

For more on this Sunday’s Gospel reading, watch:

[Live the Word #18 | Why You Need to Read the Bible](#)

Discussion

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How are you feeling right now?
2. What are you doing to put yourself in a position to be seen by God? Consider that some ways things we try might actually lead us away from Him. Do you try to make yourself look “taller” (more important, more pious) than you are? Do you do all you can to overcome the obstacles?
3. How do you respond when the Lord invites Himself into “your home?” Does it scare you that it might be messy? Do you bring yourself down from the tree and back to earth (i.e., humble yourself) to meet the Lord? What in “your house” are you most worried He’d see? What are you most desperately longing for Him to see?
4. How can concrete spiritual practices (like reading Scripture or giving alms) become a bigger part of your life?

If you don't get through all the questions, that's ok!

Discussion

WRAP-UP NOTES

Each Wrap-Up should be personal and based on your time together as a Small Group. These three questions can help you, as a Small Group Leader, wrap up your weekly meeting:

1. What are you grateful to have learned or heard in the conversation?
2. What simple statement or question from the conversation can you share again that would be most helpful to hear again three years from now?
3. If you could share up to twelve words on the topic of “being seen by God” what would you say?

AT THE END OF MEETINGS

We give thanks to You, invisible King, Who by Your boundless power fashioned the universe, and in the multitude of Your mercy brought all things from nothing into being. Look down from heaven, O Master, upon those who have bowed their heads before You; for they have not bowed before flesh and blood, but before You, the awesome God. Therefore, O Master, make smooth and beneficial for us all, whatever lies ahead, according to the need of each: Sail with those who sail; travel with those who travel; heal the sick, Physician of our souls and bodies. Through the grace, compassion, and love for mankind of Your only-begotten Son, with whom You are blessed, together with Your all-holy, good, and life-creating Spirit, now and forever and to the ages of ages. Amen.

Prayer Following the Lord's Prayer
Divine Liturgy of Saint John Chrysostom