HOMEWORK: Read Luke chapters 17 & 18

**Main Point**

God calls His people to seek His kingdom over the things of earth.

Read Luke 17:1-19.

* **What is the meaning of Jesus’ warning in verses 1-2? What might be an example of this?**
* **What are some things we may do—even accidentally—that cause other people to sin? Why do we do those things?**

Jesus turned to the strong language of grief and mourning to express His woe upon anyone who is an agent of temptation, who causes someone else to sin. The emphasis in Luke’s writings on caring for the underprivileged, the crippled, the blind, the widow, and the poor continues in this passage. It is these “little ones” in life on whom we have influence and who will follow our lead in sinning.

Read Luke 17:20-37.

* **In answering the Pharisees’ question, what does Jesus say about the kingdom—as to when, how, or where it is?**
* **Why did Jesus’ answer to the Pharisees’ question surprise them?**

The focus of Luke 17:20-37 is on the Pharisees. They had asked Jesus a question of great interest to them: When would God’s kingdom come? Many Jews of that era believed the Messiah’s coming would usher in a glorious political kingdom that would restore Israel’s national prominence. The Pharisees apparently believed certain signs would accompany the kingdom’s arrival and enable them to see it taking place.

* **What does Jesus warn against in these verses, and why? How does this warning apply to us today?**

The Lord’s coming will be so evident that one person will not have to report it to another person. Jesus’ return will be as visible as lightning that flashes across the sky. In 17:24, Jesus emphasized the visible nature of His return more than its suddenness. Jesus’ unmistakable presence on that day would leave no doubt as to the event’s nature. There would be no need for someone with special knowledge, and the disciples therefore should reject any such report.

First, however, Jesus would have to suffer many things, meaning His rejection and death in Jerusalem. Although Jesus would suffer and experience rejection, He nevertheless would come in His glory at the consummation of the age. Jesus encouraged His disciples and prepared them for difficult days. He indicated the kingdom involved more than the present and declared any announcement of its secret fulfillment would be false. Christians can be encouraged because the kingdom’s fulfillment has yet to occur; and that fulfillment will occur openly, not secretly.

* **What is meant by the warning about Lot’s wife (see Gen. 19:17-26)? Do you ever look back to your pre-Christ lifestyle? In what way?**

The words “turn back” in verse 31 led naturally to the illustration of Lot’s wife. Although Lot’s wife did not turn back but looked back (Gen. 19:26), the point is she had temporal and material things on her mind. The warning encouraged people to seek without hesitation the escape from future judgment by trusting and following Jesus. The kingdom’s coming will be self-evident and unquestionable. The world will know when and where the Son of Man returns. The kingdom’s fulfillment is certain and will come with unexpected swiftness. This truth demands, therefore, that people enter the kingdom now and thus escape the coming judgment day. Because we don’t know when Jesus will return, and He expects us to be ready when He does, we must endure in our faith until the end, living each day as if Jesus is returning now.

Read Luke 18:1-17.

* **What did Jesus say is the point of this parable? What is your main take-away from this parable?**
* **What characteristics of God encourage us to be persistent with our prayers?**

For a period of time, the judge ignored the widow’s requests. Following the widow’s latest request, the judge had second thoughts. He was honest with himself. He admitted his lack of reverence for God and regard for other people. The judge, however, valued his comfort and peace of mind. The widow was constantly pestering him. Literally, she continued to cause him trouble; her unending requests were exhausting him. In order to get rid of the widow before she wore him out, the judge decided to rule in her favor. The phrase “wear me out” can be translated “give me a black eye” (in the sense of annoying him). The judge’s decision was not made because he cared that the widow have her day in court and receive a fair judgment; his decision was completely self-serving. He wanted relief from this lady.

Read Luke 18:18-43.

* **Why would riches hinder a person from entering the kingdom?**
* **What possible losses did Jesus mention that one might experience by following Him? What are the rewards of choosing Jesus?**

Those who have an abundance of material wealth often are blind to their spiritual needs. To place that wealth under the lordship of Christ proves a higher price than many wealthy people are willing to pay. Jesus used the illustration of something that was impossible from a human perspective—a camel going through the eye of a needle—to emphasize that wealthy people had extreme difficulty in choosing to follow Him. To come to Christ, one must recognize one’s personal need and then be willing to trust one’s life to Christ.