



my grandma time

...doing simple things together!

Week 45, Day 1 --- Mark 12 - Matthew 22

Week 45, Day 2 --- Luke 20-21 - Matthew 23

Week 45, Day 3 --- Mark 13

Week 45, Day 4 --- Matthew 24

Week 45, Day 5 --- Matthew 25

Week 45, Day 6 --- Mark 14 - Matthew 26

Week 45, Day 7 --- John 13 - Luke 22

Week 45, Day 1 --- Mark 12 - Matthew 22

The parable of the wedding banquet is very sad to me. The Jewish leaders are the ones who were invited to the banquet, but refused to attend. Then Jesus broadens the invitation to the poor and people the leaders would have classified as sinners. It seems unjust that the king would throw out a man not properly dressed. It seems unjust, but it wasn't. At this time it was typical for the king to provide special clothes for those he invited to a special function. The man had refused to put on the clothes that the king had provided. How incredibly sad. He could have enjoyed a wonderful party and better food than he had ever eaten if he had simply been willing to put on the wedding clothes of the king.

Jesus is talking to everyone at the end of this parable. God has invited us to an incredible party that we call heaven. We are dressed in sin and don't have clothes that are good enough to go to the party. Fortunately, God has provided new clothes for us. He has provided white robes for us to wear if we are willing to put them on. These robes are incredibly expensive. They cost Jesus His life. It makes me sad to realize that I know many people who think they will get into the party wearing their own clothes. All they have to do is put their trust in Jesus and they can put on a white robe. Why do you think so many people refuse God's invitation and God's wedding clothes?

Week 45, Day 2 --- Luke 20-21 - Matthew 23

There is almost too much to think about in today's reading. Fortunately, much of it is repeated so there are multiple opportunities to comment. I'm going to leave my comments on Jesus' discussion of end times until you get to Matthew 24.

Matthew 23 explains why Jesus has been so opposed to the Pharisees during his ministry. His words are harsh, but they are true. We must pay attention because it is tempting to repeat their mistakes. There is no question that the Pharisees looked good. They kept the ceremonial law very well. Unfortunately, their hearts were evil.

Luke 20:47 "They devour widows' houses and for a show make lengthy prayers. Such men will be punished most severely."

Luke actually gives us a perfect example of what Jesus is describing. These men would never think of violating the law, but at the same time they had no mercy on a widow who could not pay for her lodging. They would throw the widow out in the street to beg or worse. The bottom line is that they did not love.

It is important to understand that Jesus is love and that He loved these men with these words. Love is not soft. Love does not avoid confrontation. Love can be hard and it can be confrontational. If these men did not repent they were going to die and go to hell. Jesus did not want that for them. He wanted them to understand and to repent. In a very few days He was going to die for them.

What did Jesus have to do to get your attention? How would you respond if Jesus said these things to you?

Week 45, Day 3 --- Mark 13

Tomorrow's reading will have more detail, but Mark captures the core of this important conversation Jesus has with some of the disciples. The key to understanding this is that they ask Jesus two questions and the answers to the questions are woven together. The first question is when will the temple be destroyed. The second question is when will Jesus come again, basically when will the world as we know it come to an end. Jesus provides some specific warning signs for each. In the case of the temple the abomination of desolation is an idol that will be setup in the Holy Place of the temple. Titus, a Roman general, does this in 70 A.D. and the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple immediately follows. It is a terrible time for the Jews.

The second series of event have not all happened yet. Here's the really important verse.

Mark 13:32 "But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. <sup>33</sup> Be on guard! Be alert!<sup>34</sup>! You do not know when that time will come.

We don't know when Jesus is going to come again. It could be today or it could be in a thousand years. People have been trying to figure this out since Jesus spoke these words, and book after book has been written with the answer. At least so far every one of those books has been wrong as the earth is still here. I believe that there will be no doubt when the end is near. We'll look at this more when we reach the last book in the New Testament. For now, the important thing is to be alert. Focus each day on walking with Jesus and His coming will not take you by surprise. You'll be ready.

Week 45, Day 4 --- Matthew 24

The Boy Scouts motto is "be prepared". That is the message I don't want you to miss from this chapter. I think that is Jesus reason for providing this information to us through His disciples. He wanted them to be prepared for the destruction of Jerusalem. They were and the church survived that horrible event. Jesus wants all of us to be prepared for His return. We won't miss it, but we could be unprepared for it. Most of the world today is not prepared. It saddens me that I'm not a better witness for the hope that is in Jesus and the disaster that is prepared for those who don't know Him.

Take some time and go through the chapter. Write next to each paragraph whether you think it answers question 1 (When will the temple be destroyed?) or question 2 (When will this world end?).

Week 45, Day 5 --- Matthew 25

This chapter makes it very clear that there are two paths. Three parables make three different points about the choices we make to determine our path. The first parable is about being prepared. In a Jewish wedding celebration the people who escorted the bridegroom were required to have lamps that

were burning. This required oil. I think the oil represents God's Spirit. Those people who keep the light of God shining by allowing the Holy Spirit to flow through them will be prepared to shine when Jesus returns. Some will not have the Holy Spirit and they will not be ready to shine.

The second parable explains the significance of how we handle the resources that God has provided us to manage. Remember, God owns everything. The gold is His and He simply gives it to the men to manage. We generally apply this parable to talents or abilities. Every ability you have came from God and God expects you to use your abilities. God has blessed many people with financial resources. He expects us to invest those in His kingdom to produce a return. Not using a God given ability or hoarding financial resources will not lead to God's kingdom and eternal life.

The third parable explains the reason behind jail ministry. We don't come just to be rewarded, but we do come because we love Jesus and we see Jesus in the men and women we visit. Jesus is really just repeating the great commandment. The people who really love Jesus will demonstrate by loving other people as well, regardless of who they are.

So the choice is eternal life or eternal punishment. Which will you choose?

Week 45, Day 6 --- Mark 14 - Matthew 26

The story that begins in these chapters is called the passion of the Christ. It begins with a very special meal that Jesus makes even simpler, but even more important. Every year the Jews celebrated the Passover to celebrate God bringing them out of Egypt. Every item included in the meal and the order in which it is eaten has great meaning. Jesus took two of the things from that meal and gave them new meaning. He took the bread that was made without yeast, and used it to represent His body. When we eat the bread we are reminded that God became like us and took on a real physical body. He then took wine and used it to represent His blood. The wine is a specific reminder of the fact that Jesus died by pouring out His blood. He did not die a natural death. He died a horrible painful death. These two things have become two of the most important symbols to those who believe in Jesus. Where I worship we have a time in each service where we eat bread and drink grape juice to remind us of the sacrifice that Jesus made.

What could you use in your situation to remind yourself of the sacrifice that Jesus made for you?

Week 45, Day 7 --- John 13 - Luke 22

John 13 – Washing Feet

This chapter begins the story of the crucifixion and resurrection. It is probably Thursday evening. Jesus and the disciples are preparing to eat the traditional Passover meal. Jesus clearly knows what is coming, but the disciples are clueless.

How would you define a leader? Most of us have experienced leaders and celebrities as people who are to be served. They demand things and they get what they demand. This is what makes them powerful and famous. Jesus is different. He knows He is the most powerful human being ever to walk the face of the earth and He still kneels down and does the worst job a servant could be asked to do. To understand this you need to know that there wasn't any sewage

system and the disciples probably wore open sandals. Their feet would have been covered with dust and sewage. It was important that they be washed, but it was a messy smelly job that generally went to the lowest servant in the house. Jesus could have commanded that His disciples wash His feet, but He didn't.

John 13:35 is one of the most important verses in all the New Testament. It tells us how people will know that we are followers of Jesus. People will be able to identify Jesus' followers because they demonstrate in very visible ways their love for one another. Sadly, many people who say they are Christians do not demonstrate love toward one another.

As you read this chapter notice how much Jesus cares for those who follow Him. He knows that He is going to be betrayed, but still He doesn't lash out in anger or violence. Judas will betray Him and Peter will deny that he knows Jesus. Peter will be forgiven and I have no doubt that Judas could have been forgiven also if he hadn't taken his own life.

As you think through the decision to become a follower of Jesus please focus on Jesus and not on any of us who claim to be His follower. We're trying to be like Jesus, but we will always fall short. Jesus will never fall short and never disappoint.