

BIBLE READING DAY 28, SATURDAY: MARCH 26

Jesus Meets the Jews' Challenge

John 10:22–42

In the winter, during the Feast of Dedication at Jerusalem, Jesus was walking in the temple in Solomon's porch, when the Jews surrounded him. "How long do you intend to keep us in suspense? If you are really the Messiah, tell us plainly."

"I told you," Jesus replied, "but you do not believe. The works that I do in my Father's name, they bear witness to me. But you do not believe, because you are not my sheep. My sheep listen to my voice, and I know them. They follow me, and I give them eternal life and they will never perish, and no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father who gave them to me is stronger than all, and no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. The Father and I are one."

Once again, the Jews picked up stones to stone him to death. "I have shown you many good works from the Father," said Jesus. "For which of those works are you going to stone me?"

"We are not stoning you for a good work but for blasphemy, because you—a man—claim to be God."

"Is it not written in your law, 'I said, you are gods'?" answered Jesus. "If he called them gods to whom the word of God came (and the scripture cannot be broken), how is it that you say to him whom the Father consecrated and sent into the world, 'You are blaspheming,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God'? If I am not doing the works of my Father, do not believe me. But if I am doing his works, even though you do not believe in me for my own sake, believe the testimony of the works, that you may come to know and understand that the Father is in me, and I am in the Father."

Then they tried again to arrest him, but he escaped from their hands. And he went away again across the Jordan to the place where John had first baptized, and there he remained. And many came to him, and said, "John showed us no miracle, but all that he said about this man was true." And many believed in him there.

Lost: A Sheep, Silver, a Son Luke 15:1–32

All the tax collectors and sinners were coming to hear Jesus, so the Pharisees and scribes complained, saying, "This man welcomes sinners and even eats with them."

Jesus then told them a parable: "What man of you, if he has a hundred sheep and loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the pasture to search for the one that is lost until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!' Just so, I tell you, there is more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous people who have no need to repent.

"Or what woman, if she has ten silver coins and loses one, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it? And when she has found it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin which I had lost!' Just so, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

Then he said, "A certain man had two sons, and the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of property that falls to me.' And he divided his estate between them. Not long afterward, the younger son gathered all that he had and took his journey into a far country, and there he squandered his money in riotous living. And when he had spent all, there arose a great famine in that country, and he began to be in want. And he went and hired out to one of the citizens of that country, who sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would gladly have eaten the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him anything. Then he came to his senses and

said, ‘How many hired servants of my father have bread enough and to spare, and here I am—dying of hunger! I will rise and go to my father, and I will say to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven, and against you.” I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Let me be as one of your hired servants.’”

“And he rose and went to his father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and threw his arms around him and kissed him. But the son said, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven, and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ But the father called to his servants, ‘Hurry and bring the best robe and put it on him and put a ring on his finger and shoes on his feet. And go get the fatted calf and kill it and let us eat and be merry. For this my son was dead and is alive again! He was lost and is found!’ And they began to be merry.

“Now the elder son was in the field, and as he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. And he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. ‘Your brother has come,’ said the servant, ‘and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has received him safe and sound.’

“But the elder son was angry and refused to go inside the house. So, his father came out and pleaded with him. But he answered his father, ‘Lo, these many years I have served you and never disobeyed your instructions, and you never gave me even so much as a kid, so I could celebrate with my friends. But when this your son came back, who squandered your money on harlots, for him you killed the fatted calf!’ ‘Son,’ replied the father, ‘you are always with me, and all I have is yours. But it was right to be merry and rejoice, because this your brother was dead, and is alive. He was lost and is found.’”

The Proper Use of Wealth Luke 16:1–15

Jesus said to his disciples, “There was a certain rich man who had a steward who, according to reports that came to him, was squandering his goods. And he called him in and said to him, ‘What is this I hear about you? Turn in an account of your management, for you can no longer be steward.’ Then the steward said to himself, ‘My master is taking away my job as steward, and what shall I do? I am not able to dig, and I am ashamed to beg. I know what I’ll do, so that when I have been dismissed as steward, people will welcome me into their homes.’

“And calling each of his master’s debtors, he said to the first one, ‘How much do you owe my master?’ ‘A hundred measures of oil,’ he replied. Then the steward told him, ‘Take your bill and sit down quickly and change it to fifty.’ Then he said to another, ‘And you—how much do you owe?’ ‘A hundred measures of wheat,’ he replied. ‘Take your bill and write eighty,’ said the steward.

“And the master praised the dishonest steward for acting so shrewdly. For the sons of this world are wiser in their dealings with their own kind of men than the sons of light. And I say to you, make friends for yourselves through your use of earthly possessions, so that when its usefulness is past, your friends may welcome you into the everlasting dwellings.

“He who is faithful in little things is faithful also in much, and he who is unjust in little things is unjust also in much. Therefore, if you have not been faithful in your use of earthly treasure, who will entrust to you the true riches? And if you have not been faithful in your use of what really belongs to another, who will give you anything for your own? No servant can serve two masters: either he will hate this one and love that one, or else he will be devoted to this one and despise that one. You cannot serve both God and mammon.”

Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, heard these things and scoffed at Jesus. But he said to them, “You are the ones who want to impress men with your righteousness, but God knows your hearts. Many who are highly esteemed by men are an abomination in the sight of God.”

Approximate Timeline of Jesus’s Public Ministry

EARLY LIFE	EARLY MINISTRY	1 st Feast of PASSOVER	SUMMER	1 st Feast of BOOTHS	WINTER	2 nd Feast of PASSOVER	SUMMER	FALL	WINTER	SPRING	SUMMER	FALL	WINTER	SPRING
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DEVOTIONAL DAY 28 (SATURDAY MARCH 26)

You Can Run, But So Can the Father!

Based on Luke 15:1-32

“I’m running away!” Those were the words that my wife and I heard when we told our 4-year-old that he could not have any dessert unless he ate all his vegetables. He then went to his room, grabbed his lunch box, put into it a pair of clean “Paw Patrol” underpants, and walked out our front door. My wife and I watched as he drove his Power Wheels Jeep up the driveway, through a patch of oak trees, and stopped at my grandparents’ back door. He looked back at our house, knocked on the back door, and when it opened, casually walked in without a care in the world.

After a few minutes, my phone rang with my sweet grandmother on the other end, “I think I have something that belongs to you.” I explained the situation to her, and she laughed. “Your prodigal son will be home soon.” You see, Grandma is no push over. After fixing him a plate of green beans and spinach, we soon saw our son getting back into his Power Wheels Jeep and drive back to our house, lunch box and underpants in tow.

Our son thought that life would be easier if he went someplace that allowed him the freedoms that he desired, the “wants.” He was sure that if he made the trip up to Grandma’s house, the restrictions and boundaries that surrounded him at home would be lifted and he could do what he wanted, and not what he needed.

How many times in life have you brought your “wants” before God instead of your “needs”? God knows the desires of our hearts. The young son in this story wanted it all, and he wanted it right now. Within the Jewish tradition, the youngest son is due one-third of the inheritance. The oldest son would be receiving two-thirds.

We must understand that this sort of quick exit happened during these times and still does today. A member of the family wants to take their “piece of the pie” and head out on their own. Another thing we must realize is that it was not a nice thing to do, as it was equivalent to wishing his father dead. Instead of yelling at his son, the head of the family allows him his request. If we examine this closely, we can see a picture of our loving and all-knowing God allowing a sinner to go their own way (Deuteronomy 30:19).

The God we love and serve allows us free choice. We are not puppets on a stage that are bound by strings being pulled above us. Each one of us possess this prideful want to be on our own. This independence from God is the sin that tells us we don’t need Him and we can do it on our own (Genesis 3:6; Romans 1:28). A sinful existence is a departure and distance from God (Romans 1:21) and will lead to a constant state of discontent.

“Love says: I’ve seen the ugly parts of you, and I’m staying.”

— Matt Chandler, The Explicit Gospel

We learn in Luke 12:15 to *“Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.”* This wayward son found out the difficult way that following “wants” instead of “needs” led him to an existence of dissatisfaction and disappointment. After wasting away his father’s money on “wants”, he finds himself poor and hungry in a foreign land. This broken young man decides he would rather live as a servant at home than die of starvation abroad. He makes his way back to his father’s estate beaten and humbled. As he is a long way off his father sees him coming and runs after him! Not to curse and beat him, but to embrace him and announce his love for him.

You see, God wants a relationship with us no matter how far away from Him we have wandered. He does not care about our foolish past and how we have hurt Him before. He has forgiven us through what Jesus did on the cross. We can ALWAYS come home.

Dear God, we know that there is nothing You cannot handle. Thank You for Your unlimited love and power. You came to set the captives free from the bondage of this world. You wait, arms open, for the prodigal to return. Through the power of Your grace and mercy, You welcome us home. Amen.

--By RJ Bacon

WRITE DOWN YOUR THOUGHTS IN RESPONSE TO WHAT YOU HAVE READ:

WHAT DID GOD SAY TO ME?

PRAYER: WHAT DID I SAY TO GOD?

ACTS OF PRAYER: ADORATION, CONFESSION, THANKSGIVING, SUPPLICATION (How God Can Supply Needs)

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