

Jesus: The Minister of Welcome – December 15 & 16, 2018
Follow-up Bible Studies

Written by Maggie Baxter

Day One: Isaiah 55

- Describe the experience of coming to “the waters” (1-3). Clearly, God welcomes the poor. What does this mean for you? Who will approach God’s people (5)? Why (5)? God also welcomes the stranger. Again, what does this mean for you?
- When should we seek the Lord (6)? What hope is there for “the wicked”? Describe God’s thoughts (8-9). And the fruitfulness of his word (10-11)? May this be your experience of Jesus – Word made flesh, fulfiller of every biblical promise – during Advent. Describe the picture of eternity depicted in verses 12-13.
- Consider all the invitations in this prophecy: come, buy, eat, delight, seek, call, go out, etc. What does this convey about God’s ministry of welcome? Imagine Jesus welcoming you into his home, inviting you to eat, to delight, etc. Who else is invited? This Christmas, what are some ways to welcome people as Jesus does? Pray for grace to walk this out.

Day Two: Luke 1:39-56

- Right after receiving incredible news, what did Mary do (39-40)? What happened when she greeted Elizabeth (41)? What did Elizabeth say (42-45)? How do you think Elizabeth felt? Which of her proclamations get you most excited? Why?
- With this very rare gospel vignette featuring only women, Luke showcases the universal reach of God’s welcome. In the fiercely patriarchal culture of first century Palestine, he holds up Mary and Elizabeth as models of faithfulness! Today, how can the Lord use Mary and Elizabeth to transform you? Thank God for their legacy.
- Mary was so moved by this encounter that she broke out in song. Describe the state of her soul (46-47). What did the Lord do for her (48-49)? What about his broader blessing (50-51)? What justice themes are found in her song (51-53)? What does this imply about God-style welcome? How did God bless Israel (54-55)? How does this story conclude (56)?

Day Three: Luke 7:36-50

- Set the scene (36). Who showed up at the dinner, and what did she do (37-38)? This “sinner” made herself extremely vulnerable in order to worship Jesus. Picture the scene in your mind’s eye now. May you be drawn to Jesus just as this woman was.
- How did the host react to this incident (39)? How would you describe his hospitality skills? And the state of his soul? What short story did Jesus then tell (41-42)? What was Simon’s answer to Jesus’ question (43)? Jesus flings the door wide open to sinners of all magnitudes. Take a moment now to revel and bask in his forgiveness of your own sin. Pray you’d live a life that would point others toward this incredible gift.
- Jesus makes several remarks about the woman; summarize them (44-46). What compelled her to do these things (47-48, 50)? How did other guests respond to Jesus’ pronouncement (49)? By this time, what must the woman have thought? What do *you* think?

Day Four: Luke 15:11-32

- Who are the characters in this parable (11)? What did the younger son want (12)? Where did he go, and what did he do there (13-14)? What downturn did he experience (15-16)? In your own words sum up this son’s failures.

- What did the younger son eventually realize (17)? Describe his plan (18-20). What happened “while he was still a long way off” (20)? What did the son say to his father (21)? Summarize the father’s response (22-24). How was the father able to be so welcoming? This is but a faint reflection of God’s passionate “welcome back” to those who’ve walked away. May the Holy Spirit sear this truth into your mind and heart.
- How did the older son learn of his brother’s return (25-27)? How did he respond (28-30)? What did the father say (31-32)? Ask God to reveal “older son” flaws in your own heart. Pray they’d be cast out so you never again stand in the way of God’s welcome.

Day Five: Luke 24:1-12

- Describe the scene (1-2). Once in the tomb, what did the women discover (3)? What must’ve been going through their minds at this point? Then what happened (4)? How did the women respond (5)? What amazing news did the angels then share (6-7)?
- In chapter 1, Luke depicts Mary and Elizabeth as the first to know of Jesus. Here in the last chapter women were the first to learn, “He is not here; he has risen!” Jesus’ inclusion of women and other marginalized people is amazing! Respond to the Lord.
- What did the women do next (9)? In verse 10, note that these were many of the same women, having been healed and set free by Jesus, who followed him in Luke 8, just after he was anointed by the “sinful woman.” What do you make of this? How did the male disciples respond to this news (11)? What about Peter (12)? Like the women in verse 4, Peter “wondered what happened.” In this time of Advent, speak to the Lord about your own wonderings.