

# Further up, Further in

## Resources for Continued Study



LOOKOUT  
MOUNTAIN  
Presbyterian Church

### “TEMPATIONS, FAITH, AND DUTY”

For individual study or group discussion

DATE: January 21, 2024

SPEAKER: Aaron/Frank

SERIES: Gospel of Luke

PASSAGE: Luke 17:1-10

In Luke 17:1-10, Jesus shifts his focus from the Pharisees to the disciples. At first glance, the passage about millstones, mustard seeds, and mulberry trees seems disjointed and unrelated. Luke seems to be jumping from one subject to another, but the common thread with today's lesson is that, at every point, Jesus is dealing with the disciples' spiritual development. As Jesus instructs his disciples on the diverse topics of *temptations, faith, and duty*, he marks the centrality of faith and forgiveness as a fundamental posture for all that would follow him.

#### A Weighty Warning from Jesus (vv. 1-4)

Chapter 17 begins with a weighty warning from Jesus as he declares that a death by drowning with a millstone tied around one's neck is preferred to causing others to sin. According to theologian J.C. Ryle, followers of Christ should especially take heed to walk obediently and introspectively: *“Let us often ask ourselves whether we are doing good or harm in the world. If we are Christians—we cannot live to ourselves. The eyes of many will always be upon us. Men will judge the gospel by what they see—far more than by what they hear. If they see the Christian contradicting by his practice, what he professes to believe—then they are justly stumbled and offended.”*<sup>1</sup>

- Read Romans 14:13-23 and 1 Corinthians 8:7-12. How does Paul describe being a stumbling block and causing others to sin?
- Discuss verses 3-4. Why is it hard to rebuke sin? Why is it even harder to forgive? (cf. Matthew 18:15-22)
- Through forgiveness, Jesus provides the remedy to prevent bitterness from rising up in our hearts. Read Genesis 50:15-21 and Job 42:7-10. Describe how the power of forgiveness transformed the lives of Joseph and Job, as well as the impact it had on those around them.
- Read Jonah 4:1-4. Discuss the effects an unforgiving spirit had on Jonah.

#### A Misguided Request from the Disciples (vv. 5-6)

When the disciples ask Christ to “Increase our faith!” once again Jesus redirects the conversation to get to the heart of the issue. It's not the size of their faith that matters, but the object of their faith. God is the one that moves mulberry trees and mountains, not the faith itself.

- How can our faith in Christ enable us to freely forgive? (cf. Hebrews 11:6; Matthew 6:9-15)
- Read Colossians 3:12-17. Describe the character of one who readily forgives others.

#### A Humble Response of Servants (vv. 7-10)

Jesus uses a simple parable to illustrate the true relationship we have with our God. God is our Creator and Master. We are his creatures, his servants. If we live a life in perfect obedience to him, we have only done our duty. We have earned nothing from God. At the heart of the parable is a lesson in humility, and it stands in stark contrast to the Pharisaical system of earned righteousness that we have seen in previous studies. Humble faithfulness to God is the antidote for pride.

- Verse 3 of the beloved hymn *Rock of Ages* states, “Nothing in my hand I bring, simply to thy cross I cling.” Read Philippians 3:1-11. Discuss Paul's testimony. What is it that makes a person right before God?
- In light of verse 10, what does it mean to consider oneself “unworthy?” What does it mean to have the attitude of an unworthy servant? (1 Cor. 15:9-10)

## Family Dinner Table

### Forgiveness

Corrie ten Boom, a Christian lady who hid Jews from the Nazis during the Holocaust, told of not being able to forget a wrong that had been done to her. She had forgiven the person, but she kept rehashing the incident and so couldn't sleep. Finally, Corrie cried out to God for help in putting the problem to rest. *“His help came in the form of a kindly Lutheran pastor,”* Corrie wrote, *“to whom I confessed my failure after two sleepless weeks.”*

*“Up in the church tower,”* the pastor said, nodding out the window, *“is a bell which is rung by pulling on a rope. But you know what? After the bellringer lets go of the rope, the bell keeps on swinging. First ding, then dong. Slower and slower until there's a final dong and it stops. I believe the same thing is true of forgiveness. When we forgive, we take our hand off the rope. But if we've been tugging at our grievances for a long time, we mustn't be surprised if the old angry thoughts keep coming for a while. They're just the ding-dongs of the old bell slowing down.”*

*“And so it proved to be,”* she wrote. *“There were a few more midnight reverberations, a couple of dings when the subject came up in my conversations, but the force — which was my willingness in the matter — had gone out of them. They came less and less often and at the last stopped altogether.”*<sup>2</sup>

- An unforgiving heart perpetuates and amplifies sin, because we are not only hurting others by not forgiving them, we are hurting ourselves. Those who have been forgiven much, love much (Lk. 7:47).

### PRAY FOR HOME MISSIONS

Hope for the Inner City,  
strategic partner ministry

### PRAY FOR WORLD MISSIONS

Tsendee, supported national partner

<sup>1</sup>Ryle, J.C. *Expository Thought on The Gospel of Luke*. January 17, 2024. <https://www.ccel.org/ccel/bunyan/pilgrim.v.iv.html>

<sup>2</sup>Source Unknown. *Corrie ten Boom*. January 17, 2024. <https://bible.org/illustration/corrie-ten-boom>