**Chapters 18:1-19:28  – Entry into Jerusalem**

*18:1-8: Persistent Prayer*

Even an unjust judge will give justice to a powerless widow who continually bothers him. How much more will God grant justice to His elect who cry day and night. While this parable may be applied generally to prayer, the specific application is to the cry for justice. This parable follows immediately after Jesus’ warnings about the sudden arrival of His Kingdom and the destruction it will bring to the unprepared. God’s justice is sure and it will come with rewards and punishments. The final question about whether He will find faith on the earth is rhetorical. We must not lose faith.

*18:9-14: The Pharisee and the Tax Collector*

The two characters are representative of two kinds of approach to God: arrogance vs. humility. The Pharisee’s prayer is marked by prideful attitude, self-congratulation. His prayer, though addressed to God is really only to himself (“Standing by himself, prayed” should be translated “stood and prayed to himself”). The other is marked by humility in its stance and brevity. It is the humble who are considered righteous by God. These two characters are stand-ins for those who have opposed Jesus and those who have followed and loved him. The keepers of “the true religion” do not fare well with Jesus, because they do not recognize their own evil (Luke 11:13).

*18:15-17: Jesus honors infants*

The Kingdom of God is for those who are like children and must be received as a child receives. The comparison is not to any innate characteristic of children (innocence, faith, etc.), or we (who lack innocence and child-like faith) would all be doomed. Rather it refers to the lowly status of children who had no rights or status in society until they were old enough. We receive the Kingdom of God only by giving up whatever status the world might grant us.

*18:18-30: Salvation and the Wealthy*

The answer to the same question in Luke 10:25-28 was "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself." In this case Jesus strikes at the issue that prevents his questioner from loving his neighbor as himself. The ruler (member of the ruling class) was confident that he had kept all of the commandments, but still had to ask how to inherit eternal life. His one lack was that he needed to give away all of his possessions and follow Jesus. It is difficult for those with wealth to receive eternal life (because of their natural attachment to their wealth), but it is not impossible for God, who can change people’s hearts. The consistent call in Luke is not necessarily to give away all possessions but to use ones possessions for the Kingdom and to store up treasures in heaven rather than earth. Examples are the parable of the good Samaritan; the story of Zacchaeus who promised to give ½ of his possessions to the poor and repay anyone he had defrauded fourfold; the parable of the man who built bigger barns and then died; the women who followed and financially supported Jesus and his disciples; and Luke 12:33-34, “Sell your possessions, and give to the needy. Provide yourselves with moneybags that do not grow old, with a treasure in the heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also.” The reward for those who abandon family and property is that they will receive many times more in this life (through the family of the Church) as well as eternal life.

*18:31-34: 3rd Prediction of Jesus’ death*

Jesus has been traveling toward Jerusalem since 9:51. Luke reminds his readers once again why. The establishment of the universal Kingdom of God is predicated on the rejection of Jesus by the ruling class in Jerusalem and accomplished by His death and resurrection.

*18:35-43: Healing of the Blind Beggar*

The beggar provides the object lesson for the parable at the beginning of the chapter. Those who are persistent in calling out to Jesus will receive his merciful justice. It is also a reminder of Jesus inaugural sermon in Luke 4:18-19:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,

because he has anointed me

to proclaim good news to the poor.

He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives

and recovering of sight to the blind,

to set at liberty those who are oppressed,

to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

*19:1-10: Zacchaeus*

Zacchaeus, a *chief* tax collector, who would have had other tax collectors working for him, serves as four examples of the teachings of Jesus:

1. of the humble tax collector who was justified because of his plea for mercy, and
2. of God’s miraculous ability to save even a rich man, and
3. of God’s desire to seek and save the lost (sheep, lamb, and son), and
4. of the salvation of the faithful children of Abraham.

*9:11-27: the parable of the nobleman who received a kingdom*

This is really two intertwined parables: one of the nobleman who received a kingdom and returned to punish his opposition party, and one of the nobleman who rewarded his servants who were entrusted with managing his money. The first borrows from the true story of how Herod the great went to Rome to be crowned King of Judea and of the delegation that went to Rome to protest the kingship of Archelaus, Herod’s son. Jesus is about to depart this world to join his Father in Heaven and be crowned King of all things. He will return, and when He does, those who have protested his Kingship will be destroyed. The second parable is again about the wise use of resources (money being the particular resource mentioned) for the sake of the Kingdom of God and the rewards to be receive for so doing. Wise use of resources, however, does not preclude risk. Hoarding our resources or failing to “do business” with them is also to be punished.

*19:28-44: Jesus reaches Jerusalem*

Since the transfiguration in chapter 9, Jesus has been on his way to Jerusalem teaching about discipleship and demonstrating the presence of the Kingdom of God. He now prepares for his “triumphal entry” and immanent rejection and death. The story reads a bit like a spy story, with the disciples retrieving a colt and gaining permission from the owner by what is almost like a pass-phrase. Jesus has apparently organized His entry as a fulfillment of Zechariah 9:9,

Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion!

Shout aloud, O daughter of Jerusalem!

Behold, your king is coming to you;

righteous and having salvation is he,

humble and mounted on a donkey,

on a colt, the foal of a donkey.

I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim

and the war horse from Jerusalem;

and the battle bow shall be cut off,

and he shall speak peace to the nations;

his rule shall be from sea to sea,

and from the River to the ends of the earth.

As for you also, because of the blood of my covenant with you,

I will set your prisoners free from the waterless pit.

Jesus positions Himself as the coming King who will restore peace to Jerusalem and set the prisoners free (again referring back to Luke 4:9-10).

As Jesus entered the city, His disciples spread their cloaks on the road (as sort of an ancient “red carpet”) and shouted out praises to God. They shout out the phrase "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord!” The next phrase, “Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!” is a reminder of the message of the angels who announced Jesus’ birth, but instead of “peace on earth” there will be “peace in heaven.” Perhaps this is to foreshadow the result of the rejection of Jesus by the ruling class of Jerusalem that has been dogging Jesus since the beginning of His mission. Although the crowds (lower classes and outcasts) shout out praises to God and symbolically accept Jesus as king, the Pharisees reject the attribution. But praise to God and recognition of King Jesus cannot be silenced.