



Lesson 109 Be Your Best

10/23/12 CT – *Simplicity, on course, be all that I would have you be. In other words, be your best. Are you being your best? Analyze yourself and then make changes. Take a self-review. Read of Me in a gospel and then apply what you've learned to your life. Start with the gospel of Luke. Read and reflect. Grow. Prepare yourself. Become refined gold, crafted in the Master's hands. You can do this. These actions will help you prepare for the future. A future set in Me. Walk the course. That is all for now. Go in peace.*

Introduction

As I was preparing for this lesson today I began by researching the book of Luke. What I found is that the book of Luke attempts to present a historically, verifiable account of Jesus. Luke said, *"it seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you an orderly account...hence from the physician Luke we receive an account of our Lord. Much of the information contained within Luke's book goes right along with the other gospels. However, Luke does contribute new information, information relating to, for example, the "Prodigal Son", the good Samaritan, even the ten lepers.*

Luke is believed to be the only non-jewish writer of a gospel. His approach is fresh and in many cases unique. For example, Luke includes stories of women as disciples. He revealed that women helped to finance Jesus' ministry but he also included stories of that day's outcasts, like Samaritans, the poor and crippled, tax collectors and as mentioned above he included stories of women as well! I think Luke wanted to make us aware that Jesus came for all of us. He wanted to teach us of the "humanity" of Jesus, you could say, of the heart of Jesus. This is why he included these stories of that day's outcasts. He wanted us to be aware that Jesus interacted with all of them. Luke wanted to teach us that Jesus loved all humanity.

Luke 19:9-10 *And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he also is a son of Abraham; for the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."*

In the verse above Jesus was interacting with Zacchaeus. This surprised many because Zacchaeus was a tax collector. Zacchaeus was of Jewish ancestry, but he was disliked because he was a tax collector. Many were surprised that Jesus who interact with a hated tax collector, a pariah of the day, but this did not matter to Jesus because He explained that He came for the lost. By His actions, I believe, He was implying that He came for all men, even the hated ones, the pariahs, and the outcasts.

Luke 5:32 *"I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance."*

It did not matter to Jesus if you were a Samaritan, a tax collector, poor, whatever the case may have been with you, it did not matter because Jesus said that He came to call us to repent. This is the story that Luke wanted to tell. He wanted to provide an accurate account of Jesus

as Savior not only for Jewish males but for woman, Samaritans, tax collectors, Gentiles, Luke most definitely wanted us to know that Jesus is Savior of all.

Be Your Best

Now that we have a greater understanding of Luke and his motives, let's continue on with this lesson by focusing on the instructions we received this week from the Lord and how they go along with the gospel of Luke. I think a good place to start would be with these words received on the 23rd: **be your best**.

The definition of Best is:

- of highest quality, excellence or standing;
- most advantageous, suitable or desirable;
- largest

Therefore when we are told to be our best we may think that we should work towards excelling in our field of work, or in our community. Some may work towards having the fanciest clothing, house or vehicle. Some would want to make sure they have the biggest of everything. But this is not what the Lord meant when He instructed us to be our best. We can get a better understanding by reviewing several stories as presented in the gospel of Luke.

Be Your Best -For God

Luke relates just such a tale as this. It begins when Jesus went to eat at the house of a Pharisee. The Pharisee was surprised that Jesus had not washed before He ate. So the Lord said this to him:

Luke 11: 39-44 *Then the Lord said to him, Now you Pharisees make the outside of the cup and the dish clean, but your inward part is full of greed and wickedness. Foolish ones! Did not He who made the outside make the inside also? But rather give alms of such things as you have; then indeed all things are clean to you. But woe to you Pharisees! For you tithe the mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass by justice and the love of God. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone. Woe to you Pharisees! For you love the best seats in the synagogues and greetings in the marketplaces. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like graves which are not seen, and the men who walk over them are not aware of them."*

In the verse above from Luke 11 the Pharisees were robbing God because they were giving Him their very least. Their hearts were not in the right places. They wanted the best seats in the synagogues. They wanted praise and acknowledgement when they were out and about. They wanted the best yet they were *full of greed and wickedness*. They were not giving the Lord their best.

As stated in the passage above the Lord admonished those who sought the very best for themselves but then would turn around and give their very least to the Lord. You could say that they gave their very least in service to Him. They were selfish. It rather reminds us of these verses from Malachi:

Malachi 3:8-10 *Will a man rob God? Yet you have robbed Me! But you say, in what way have we robbed you? In tithes and offerings. You are cursed with a curse, for you have robbed Me,*

even this whole nation. Bring all the tithes into the storehouse, that they may be food in My house, and try Me now in this," says the Lord of hosts, "If I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you such blessing that there will not be room enough to receive it."

We humans evidently do not learn very quickly because the Lord is still teaching us about this very same behavior isn't He? It is in fact spoken of on the THH website at http://www.takehisheart.com/pdf/mec_of_tithing.pdf . In this excerpt the Lord teaches us about serving Him through the tithe.

The religious people of the time were trying to trick Jesus (so they asked Him this question):

Matthew 22:17-21

Tell us therefore, What thinkest thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not? But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye me, ye hypocrites? Show me the tribute money. And they brought unto him a penny. And he saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? They say unto him, Caesar's. Then saith he unto them, Render therefore unto Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and unto God the things that are God's.

The people of the world pay tribute to people and other things by putting images on money. Jesus tells us to render what we should to governments and heads of state (remember Jesus said we shouldn't offend those in government). But He also said, **“. . . and unto God the things that are God's."** One thing that is God's is His tithe. So if we- **give it to a church that is unknowingly spending it for harlotrous purposes – we have robbed God and man, even this whole nation!**

From this you can see that we are not giving the Lord our best when we allow His funds to be distributed inappropriately. Even though our intentions may have been good ultimately we would not be rendering unto the Lord those things that are His. We would be taking something that was not ours to begin with and then using it for our own purposes. We would not have learned the lessons He taught in Malachi, Matthew and Luke, we would instead be serving the Lord inappropriately. We would be behaving harlotrously. Remember it is our acts that determine whether or not we are a harlot. Consequently, it is our acts that determine whether or not we are serving the Lord or serving ourselves. Who do you want to serve?

Be Your Best - Humility

But the story of seeking after the best seat in the synagogue was not the only story in the book of Luke that describes those who seek out the best. Here is another story from Luke that described people who are seeking to be the best. It is from the fourteenth chapter of Luke.

Luke 14:7-11 *So He told a parable to those who were invited, when He noted how they chose the best places, saying to them: "When you are invited by anyone to a wedding feast, do not sit down in the best place, lest one more honorable than you be invited by him; and he who invited you and him come and say to you, 'Give place to this man,' and then you begin with shame to take the lowest place. But when you are invited, go and sit down in the lowest place, so that when he who invited you comes he may say to you, 'Friend, go up higher.' Then you will have glory in the presence of those who sit at the table with you. For whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."*

This passage is about humility versus pride isn't it? The Lord has taught us a lot about humility. Here He said it would be better to be honored by another than to exalt oneself unto embarrassment. But before we look at what else the Lord has had to say about humility, let's look at the definition of its root word humble.

Humble means:

- not proud or arrogant,
- modest
- having a feeling of insignificance, inferiority, subservience
- low in rank, importance, status or quality
- courteously respectful

At this point it would also be good to note that some of the **synonyms** for humble are **unpretentious, meek, unassuming, polite**. Therefore, there is absolutely nothing in the definition of humility that includes elevating oneself or exalting oneself.

And here are some other examples of what the Lord has said in regards to humility:

2 Chronicles 7:14 *"if my people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.*

Proverbs 22:4 *By humility and the fear of the LORD are riches and honor and life.*

Proverbs 15:33...*before honor is humility.*

James 4:6...*He gives more grace. Therefore He says: "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble." Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you. Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. Cleanse your hands, you sinners; and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Lament and mourn and weep! Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and He will lift you up.*

1 Peter 5:5-7...*be clothed in humility, for "God resists the proud, but gives grace to the humble." Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time, casting all your care upon Him, for He cares for you.*

Philippians 2:5-8 *Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.*

As we read these verses we again came to see that humility in no way includes elevating or exalting oneself. In fact the Lord says that He resists the proud. He says that we don't need to exalt ourselves for He will exalt you in due time. And in **1 John 2:16** the Lord teaches us that pride does not come from the Father but from the world. Therefore we cannot be our best and have pride. We cannot be our best and be pretentious. We cannot be our best and be anything other than what the Lord would have us be. As mentioned in the introduction Luke wanted to make us aware that Jesus came for all of us. He wanted to teach us of the "humanity" of Jesus, you could say, of the heart of Jesus. It was not in His heart for His children to be prideful not pretentious. Luke included these stories to help us understand this about Him.

Simplicity

This week the Lord said, **Simplicity, on course, be all that I would have you be.** In other words, **be your best.** I thought His use of the word simplicity was interesting. I guess it is because the word simplicity reminds me of the word humility, in fact, one of the **definitions of simplicity is the absence of luxury, pretentiousness, or ornamentation.** And if you recall **unpretentious** was a **synonym** for humble. From this we can see why the Lord joined the gospel of Luke together with the words He gave this week as the gospel of Luke provides multiple demonstrations of the Lord's treatment of others. It also provided multiple demonstrations of the value He placed upon humanity. Remember He said this in:

Luke 6:31 *"And just as you want men to do to you, you also do to them likewise.*

Luke 6:37-38 *"Judge not, and you shall not be judged. Condemn not, and you shall not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven. Give, and it will be given to you; good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over will be put into your bosom. For with the same measure that you use, it will be measured back to you."*

From these verses you can see that He placed a lot of value on humanity and how we treat each other. I guess that is why humility is important. After all we will not be treating our fellow brothers and sisters very well if we are spending all of our time exalting ourselves. Hence the value of simplicity is revealed. Paul also spoke of simplicity in:

2 Corinthians 1:12 *For our boasting is this: the testimony of our conscience that we conducted ourselves in the world in simplicity and godly sincerity, not with fleshly wisdom but by the grace of God, and more abundantly toward you.*

Here Paul helps us to understand simplicity by contrasting it to fleshly wisdom. This idea of worldliness being the opposite of simplicity is reinforced in these verses from:

Matthew 6:19-21 *"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal; but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.*

1 Timothy 6:3-10 *If anyone teaches otherwise and does not consent to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which accords with godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but is obsessed with disputes and arguments over words, from which come envy, strife, reviling, evil suspicions, useless wranglings of men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. From such withdraw yourself. Now godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.*

This week the Lord equated **simplicity** with **be all that I would have you be.** From the verses above we have come to understand that the Lord's ways do not involve the love of money or earthly treasures. The Lord's ways do not involve greed, obsessions or the worldly quests for honor or fame. In fact the Lord's ways are the exact opposites of all of these. Jesus was a humble. He lived a simple life. It is important for us to keep our focus in the right place.

Crafted in the Master's Hand

This week the Lord also encouraged us to **Become refined gold, crafted in the Master's hands.** We can learn how to become refined gold, crafted in the Master's hands by reading and reviewing the THH website in addition to the gospel of Luke. In this site the Lord teaches us about growing up into Him. He teaches us about getting rid of "self" and in turn about "fusing" with Him. Here are a few links to these articles: <http://www.takehisheart.com/pdf/fusion.pdf> and <http://www.takehisheart.com/selfobediencetogod.htm>

In October 2004 the Lord said, *"You cannot walk hand-in-hand with me as My bride and have **"Self."*** It is important that we understand this statement because it is an absolute truth. It is not about the Lord not making exceptions for anyone; it is just a fact. Walking means moving with the Lord. One can move with the Lord, but walking hand-in-hand is moving perfectly with Him. "Self" will keep you from moving perfectly with Him!

And speaking of "self" as we are working towards becoming refined, as we are being crafted in the Master's hands the Lord suggested that we facilitate this process by **Analyze yourself and then make changes. Take a self-review.** I think we can all see how this process of self-examination, self-review is important. After all, isn't that very similar to what we just experienced during the Day of Atonement. I think the point the Lord is making here is that this should be an ongoing process not merely a one time a year thing. We are to continually be working towards our goal of refinement. This is why the Lord said, **Read of Me in a gospel and then apply what you've learned to your life. Start with the gospel of Luke. Read and reflect. Grow. Prepare yourself. Become refined gold, crafted in the Master's hands.** Therefore, we are to continually apply what we learn from the Lord whether from the Take His Heart website or from the gospel of Luke. All that the Lord says is important. It is to be valued and applied to our lives. This is how we are crafted in the Master's hand.

Summation

In closing, the Lord offered this, He said, **These actions will help you prepare for the future. A future set in Me. Walk the course.** From our study we have learned that the Lord is encouraging us to live a life of simplicity, being our best, which will in turn help to prepare us for the future. But not only that for He also offered a guarantee that it will be a future set in Him when we walk this course.

Therefore remember His words this week which said, **Simplicity, on course, be all that I would have you be. In other words, be your best. Are you being your best? Analyze yourself and then make changes. Take a self-review. Read of Me in a gospel and then apply what you've learned to your life. Start with the gospel of Luke. Read and reflect. Grow. Prepare yourself. Become refined gold, crafted in the Master's hands. You can do this. These actions will help you prepare for the future. A future set in Me. Walk the course. That is all for now. Go in peace.**

Today we learned that the book of Luke attempts to present a historically, verifiable account of Jesus. Luke wanted to make us aware that Jesus came for all of us. He wanted to teach us of the "humanity" of Jesus, you could say, of the heart of Jesus. This is why part of what he included in his gospel were stories of that day's outcasts. He wanted us to be aware that Jesus interacted with all of them. He wanted to teach us that Jesus loved all humanity. As you read through the gospel of Luke may the Lord help each of us to apply what we have learned from it to our lives.

May the Lord Bless You,
Cindy

<http://www.takehisheart.com>