

SBCOD Bible Study Notes

4-30-25

Luke 17

The Danger Of Stumbling Another – Verses 1-2

¹ Jesus said to his disciples: “Things that cause people to stumble are bound to come, but woe to anyone through whom they come. ² It would be better for them to be thrown into the sea with a millstone tied around their neck than to cause one of these little ones to stumble.

17:1-3 Jesus warned about God’s wrath for those who offend, abuse, or lead astray the little ones. Jesus warns of any predators who would hurt children in any way. How appropriate such a warning is in this day when corruption enters our homes every day in many television programs or on the internet. While Christians must guard against physical abuse, they also must be aware of and work against the mental and spiritual corruption that unfiltered television and unsupervised internet surfing can bring. Jesus’ warning envisions an additional group, however. The “little ones” can be new disciples. Indifference to the training and treatment of new Christians can leave them theologically vulnerable. Make the follow-through care of recent converts and new members a high priority in your church.

If Someone Stumbles You, Deal With It And Forgive Them – Verses 3-4

³ So watch yourselves. “If your brother or sister sins against you, rebuke them; and if they repent, forgive them. ⁴ Even if they sin against you seven times in a day and seven times come back to you saying ‘I repent,’ you must forgive them.”

17:3-4 To rebuke does not mean to point out every sin we see; it means to bring sin to a person’s attention with the purpose of restoring him or her to God and to fellow humans. When you feel you must rebuke another Christian for a sin, check your attitudes before you speak. Do you love that person? Are you willing to forgive? Unless rebuke is tied to forgiveness, it will not help the sinning person.

Great Faith Is Needed To Get Along With People Like This – Verses 5-6

⁵ The apostles said to the Lord, “Increase our faith!” ⁶ He replied, “If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, ‘Be uprooted and planted in the sea,’ and it will obey you.

17:5-6 The disciples’ request was genuine; they wanted the faith necessary for such radical forgiveness. But Jesus didn’t directly answer their question because the amount of faith is not as important as its genuineness. What is faith? It is complete trust in and loyalty to God that results in a willingness to do his will. Faith is not something we use to put on a show for others. It is complete and humble obedience to God’s will, readiness to do whatever he calls us to do. The amount of faith isn’t as important as the right kind of faith— faith in our all-powerful God.

17:6 A mustard seed is small, but it is alive and growing. Almost invisible at first, the seed will begin to develop, first under the ground and then visibly. Like a tiny seed, a small amount of genuine faith in

God will take root and grow. Although each change will be gradual and imperceptible, soon this faith will have produced major results that will uproot and destroy competing loyalties. We don't need more faith; a tiny seed of faith is enough if it is alive and growing.

We Can't Put God Into Debt To Us – Verses 7-10

⁷“Suppose one of you has a servant plowing or looking after the sheep. Will he say to the servant when he comes in from the field, ‘Come along now and sit down to eat’? ⁸Won't he rather say, ‘Prepare my supper, get yourself ready and wait on me while I eat and drink; after that you may eat and drink’? ⁹Will he thank the servant because he did what he was told to do? ¹⁰So you also, when you have done everything you were told to do, should say, ‘We are unworthy servants; we have only done our duty.’”

17:7-10 If we have obeyed God, we have only done our duty, and we should regard it as a privilege. Do you sometimes feel that you deserve extra credit for serving God? Remember, obedience is not something extra we do; it is our duty. Jesus is not suggesting that our service is meaningless or useless, nor is he advocating doing away with rewards. He is attacking unwarranted self-esteem and spiritual pride.

Jesus Heals Ten Men With Leprosy – Verses 11-14

¹¹Now on his way to Jerusalem, Jesus traveled along the border between Samaria and Galilee. ¹²As he was going into a village, ten men who had leprosy^[b] met him. They stood at a distance ¹³and called out in a loud voice, “Jesus, Master, have pity on us!” ¹⁴When he saw them, he said, “Go, show yourselves to the priests.” And as they went, they were cleansed.

17:11-14 Because leprosy was contagious, people who had leprosy were required to try to stay away from other people and to announce their presence if they had to come near. Sometimes leprosy would go into remission. If a leper thought his leprosy had gone away, he was supposed to present himself to a priest, who could declare him clean (Leviticus 14). Jesus sent the 10 lepers to the priest before they were healed—and they went! They responded in faith, and Jesus healed them on the way. Is your trust in God so strong that you act on what he says even before you see evidence that it will work?

Only One Out Of Ten Of The Lepers Return To Give Thanks – Verses 15-19

¹⁵One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. ¹⁶He threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him—and he was a Samaritan. ¹⁷Jesus asked, “Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? ¹⁸Has no one returned to give praise to God except this foreigner?” ¹⁹Then he said to him, “Rise and go; your faith has made you well.”

17:15-16 Jesus healed all 10 lepers, but only one returned to thank him. It is possible to receive God's great gifts with an ungrateful spirit— 9 of the 10 men did so. Only the thankful man, however, learned that his faith had played a role in his healing; and only grateful Christians grow in understanding God's grace. God does not demand that we thank him, but he is pleased when we do so. And he uses our responsiveness to teach us more about himself.

17:17-19 Not only was this man a leper, he was also a Samaritan— a race despised by the Jews. Once again Luke is pointing out that God's grace is for everybody.

If You Want To Know About Jesus' Kingdom, Get To Know The King – Verses 20-21

²⁰ Once, on being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus replied, “The coming of the kingdom of God is not something that can be observed, ²¹ nor will people say, ‘Here it is,’ or ‘There it is,’ because the kingdom of God is in your midst.”

17:20-21 The Pharisees asked when God's kingdom would come, not knowing that it had already arrived. The kingdom of God is not like an earthly kingdom with geographical boundaries. Instead, it begins with the work of God's Spirit in people's lives and in relationships. We must resist looking to institutions or programs for evidence of the progress of God's kingdom. Instead, we should look for what God is doing in people's hearts.

Jesus' Kingdom Won't Come Immediately In The Disciple's Day – Verses 22-25

²² Then he said to his disciples, “The time is coming when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, but you will not see it. ²³ People will tell you, ‘There he is!’ or ‘Here he is!’ Do not go running off after them. ²⁴ For the Son of Man in his day will be like the lightning, which flashes and lights up the sky from one end to the other. ²⁵ But first he must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation.

17:22-25 Many will claim to be the Messiah, and many will claim that Jesus has returned— and people will believe them. Jesus warns us never to take such reports seriously, no matter how convincing they may sound. When Jesus returns, his power and presence will be evident to everyone. No one will need to spread the message because all will see for themselves.

17:23-25 Life will be going on as usual on the day Christ returns. No warning will sound. Most people will be going about their everyday tasks, indifferent to the demands of God. They will be as surprised by Christ's return as the people in Noah's day were by the Flood (Genesis 6–8) or the people in Lot's day by the destruction of Sodom (Genesis 19). We don't know the time of Christ's return, but we do know that he is coming. He may come today, tomorrow, or centuries in the future. Whenever Christ comes, we must be morally and spiritually ready. Live as if Jesus were returning today.

The Coming Of The King Will Be A Great Surprise – Verses 26-29

²⁶ “Just as it was in the days of Noah, so also will it be in the days of the Son of Man. ²⁷ People were eating, drinking, marrying and being given in marriage up to the day Noah entered the ark. Then the flood came and destroyed them all. ²⁸ “It was the same in the days of Lot. People were eating and drinking, buying and selling, planting and building. ²⁹ But the day Lot left Sodom, fire and sulfur rained down from heaven and destroyed them all.

17:26-29 Jesus warned against false security. We are to abandon the values and attachments of this world in order to be ready for Christ's return. His return will happen suddenly, and when he comes, there will be no second chances. Some will be taken to be with him; the rest will be left behind.

When Jesus Comes Some Will Be Taken Suddenly, And Others Will Be Left Behind – Verses 30-37

³⁰ “It will be just like this on the day the Son of Man is revealed. ³¹ On that day no one who is on the housetop, with possessions inside, should go down to get them. Likewise, no one in the field should go back for anything. ³² Remember Lot's wife! ³³ Whoever tries to keep their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life will preserve it. ³⁴ I tell you, on that night two

people will be in one bed; one will be taken and the other left. ³⁵ Two women will be grinding grain together; one will be taken and the other left.” ^[36] ³⁷ “Where, Lord?” they asked. He replied, “Where there is a dead body, there the vultures will gather.”

17:30-33 Those clinging to this life are those seeking to escape physical persecution. Those who live for themselves display these common attitudes: (1) Materialism— I want it and work hard to get it. All that I see is real. Unseen things are merely ideas and dreams. (2) Individualism— I work hard for me, and you work hard for you. I may make it; you may not. That’s your problem, not mine. (3) Skepticism— Anything I’m not convinced about can’t be important. Everything important to know I can figure out. Those who have these attitudes may protect themselves, but they will lose the spiritual dimension to their lives. Keep your commitment to Christ at full strength. Then you’ll be ready when he returns.

17:34-37 To answer the disciples’ question, Jesus quoted a familiar proverb. One vulture circling overhead does not mean much, but a gathering of vultures means that a dead body is nearby. Likewise, one sign of the end may not be significant, but when many signs occur, the Second Coming is near.