

Commentary on Luke 10:25-11:13

Chapter 10 of Luke's Gospel continues as we encounter a lawyer who confronts and tests Jesus. This expert in the law – likely a Pharisee – would have been well versed in Scripture and asked a common question that was on the minds of many Jews of the day. His motives were not good and yet we can relate to his mindset. "What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus answers the question with a question in what would be a typical manner of rabbinical exchange: "What is written in the Law? How do you read it?" The lawyer responds in a true smarty-pants, know-it-all way pointing to the *Shema* ("Shema" is the Hebrew word of "hear" and these original verses can be found in Deuteronomy 6:4-5.) and Leviticus 19:18. The significance of loving the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength and mind for eternal life exemplifies God's desire for our total devotion on Him. Loving your neighbor as yourself shows how that total devotion to God is lived out in one's life. The lawyer knows the right answer to the question as Jesus affirms, but he doubles down in his trickery tactics and asks a follow up question, "And who is my neighbor?" To which Jesus responds with a parable.

Jesus begins: a man was traveling on the road down from Jerusalem to Jericho. The road connecting these two cities was about 18 miles long descending down over 3,000 feet from one city to next. It was notoriously treacherous and a hotspot for robbers who had convenient places to hide. Jesus continues the parable stating that the traveling man encountered a band of robbers who beat him, stripped him and left him for dead on the road. By chance, a priest was coming along the road but stepped to the other side to avoid the beaten man. The priest, a descendant of Aaron, had likely completed his duties in the temple and was returning home to Jericho or to one of the other cities or villages in the surrounding area where he resided. Yet, he ignored the beaten man and avoided him. The next passerby was a Levite who did the same thing – when he came across the beaten man he crossed to the other side of the road. The Levite, like the priest, was a temple insider. The Levites assisted the priests in the temple by preparing sacrifices, caring for the sanctuary, courts and vessels, serving in various ways such as porters, gatekeepers, singers, and musicians and by interpreting the Torah.¹ Jesus then moves from these two examples of the expected godliest of godly Jewish leaders to a Samaritan. Animosity and hostility between the Jews and Samaritans was well known at the time – they hated one another. Yet, the Samaritan who is on a journey is the compassionate, sympathetic one who assists the beaten man. He binds up and treats his wounds, places the beaten man on his own donkey and takes him to an inn to recover. The Samaritan even gives extra money to care for the beaten man promising to cover any additional expenses incurred. Jesus concludes the parable by asking the lawyer which of these three men were a neighbor to the man who was beaten. The lawyer slyly answers, "The one who showed him mercy." Jesus once again exposes his upside-down Kingdom. The lawyer asked the wrong question. It is not "Who is my neighbor?"² that is the important question, but rather "How can I be a neighbor?" Living out the answer to that question, Jesus shows, is the benefit, blessing, and exhibition of eternal life.

¹ Edwards, James, The Gospel According to Luke Commentary (Eerdmans: Grand Rapids, 2015), 321.

² Edwards, 323. Also ESV Study Bible note on Lk 10:36.

In Luke 10:38, we see a transition, as Jesus and his posse of followers enter a village (likely, Bethany) where they were welcomed into the home of Martha who was there with her sister, Mary. Martha is fussing around prepping the house for the visitors who have just arrived while her sister sits at the feet of Jesus listening to His teaching. Martha gets irritated by this – clearly she either wants or needs an extra set of hands – and she goes to Jesus demanding that He make her sister Mary help her with the preparations. Jesus responds endearingly. “Martha, Martha,” repeating her name shows Jesus’ affection for her and His understanding of her predicament.³ He tenderly acknowledges her anxiousness and her distractedness but gently points her to the more necessary thing. The good portion Mary chose which will not be taken away from her is sitting at Jesus’ feet and absorbing His teaching. Jesus extols Mary for her desire for close fellowship with Him. And yet, again, here we see the ways of Jesus’ upside-down Kingdom. Typically at a banquet, participants would recline at the table but focused disciples would sit at the feet of their teacher – a role not typically permitted for women. “In joining the company at Jesus’ feet, Mary has not betrayed her ‘place’ as a woman or jeopardized the ‘place’ of men. She has chosen the rightful place open to her as well as to men, a place that supersedes all culturally conditioned places for men or women, a place that will not be taken from her.”⁴

Chapter 11 opens with Jesus at a certain place praying. His disciples approach him as he finishes, asking “Lord, teach us to pray as John taught his disciples.” Without hesitation, Jesus launches into the instruction which we know as one version of the Lord’s prayer. Matthew 6:9-13 has a longer version of the prayer. The prayer begins with “Father” which underscores the intimate approach Jesus wants us to take in our prayers. The Greek word for Father “pater,” points to the Aramaic word, “abba.” “Father” never occurs in a Scriptural quotation, a narrative description, the discourse of any speaker other than Jesus, or Jesus’ words to his adversaries. All references to God as Father come from Jesus, either in his prayers or in his teaching of disciples.⁵ The next phrase, “hallowed be thy name,” voices a sense of praise and acknowledgement of God’s holiness and sanctifying nature. “Your kingdom come,” points to the desire for God’s presence to be made known and the acknowledgement that God’s in-breaking reign is present in King Jesus.

Three petitions follow which each point to the ongoing work of God in believers’ lives. The first petition begins, “Give us each day our daily bread,” which is a request for God’s daily and ongoing provision in our lives and an acknowledgement of His faithful promise to fulfill all of our needs. The second petition, “Forgive us our sins, for we ourselves forgive everyone who is indebted to us,” points us beyond physical provision to ongoing spiritual provision. As the Father forgives us of our sins, we become ambassadors of forgiveness in our relationships with others. The third petition, “Lead us not into temptation,” acknowledges our weaknesses and potential pitfalls while acknowledging a call to faithfulness.⁶ The word for “temptation” can mean either temptation or test and this

³ Edwards, 327.

⁴ Edwards, 329.

⁵ Edwards, 332.

⁶ Edwards, 335.

phrase likely means something like, “Allow us to be spared from difficult circumstances that would tempt us to sin.”⁷

Jesus then launches into another parable, this time focused on persistence in prayer. Jesus invites us into the parable with the phrase “Which of you,” allowing us to relate to the characters. Someone comes to our house at midnight and the cupboards are bare, so we go to a friend looking for three loaves of bread, only to be turned away by our friend declaring that his doors are shut, his kids are in bed and he can't give us anything. Verse 8 sounds a bit obscure – our friend won't meet our request but he ultimately does so not out of friendship but out of our impudence – the insistent persistence or “shameless audacity”⁸ of our continuing to ask despite our friend's response. So is Jesus saying here that God will hear and answer our prayers when we have a “squeaky wheel” way of our prayer life? Will we see answers because of obnoxiously and incessantly lifting up our continual prayers over and over again? No, Jesus is highlighting the need for the desperation of our hearts and our total reliance on the Father as we turn to Him in prayer.

God hears our prayers and wants to give us our hearts desires as He sees fit which is emphasized beginning in the concluding verses of 11:9. Ask, seek and knock and it will be given, it will be found, and it will be opened for you. Once again, Jesus puts us in these verses by saying, “What father among you...” inviting us to consider what we do in the scenario. If our child asks for fish or an egg (or maybe for a reference today we should say: if our child asks for Chick-fil-a...), we're not going to give our child a serpent or a scorpion (or a caterpillar or a spider). No! Of course not. We're going to do our best to give our kid what he or she wants (within reason, of course!) Jesus concludes by pointing out that if even we, who are sinful and broken, know how to give good gifts to our children, then imagine how even more so will our Father in heaven give to us His Holy Spirit that we might be drawn up closer into relationship with Him.

Today's verses are ALL about Jesus' upside-down Kingdom! A Samaritan, a hated foreigner to the Jews, becomes the hero of the story in what it means to be a neighbor and to love God and others. Martha from the world's view is doing everything she should to offer the deepest sense of hospitality in her home. But her sister, Mary, is the one who is admired by Jesus because of her counter-cultural heart to sit at His feet, learn from Him, and be drawn closer and closer to Him. And finally, we pray not to some far-off distant God, but to the Triune God whom we call Father. Jesus teaches us how to pray for the ongoing sustenance of our journey in faith and teaches us to pray desperately seeking the Father and in confidence of God's love and care for us.

⁷ ESV Study Bible note on Matthew 6:13.

⁸ This phrase is found in the NIV translation in Lk 11:8.

Discussion Questions for Luke 11:14-36

For today’s study, we will do Observations and Interpretations for 11:14-26, then 11:27-28, 11:29-32, and 11:32-36. After all the Observation and Interpretation questions, we will wrap up the entire lesson with the Application Questions.

Jesus and Beelzebub: Luke 11:14-26

1. Look at 11:14-17. What is happening? What did Jesus do? How did the crowds respond? What are the responses to what Jesus did?

2. In 11:17-18, Jesus answers the first response about how he casts out demons by using a parable. Fill out the chart below:

<u>Condition</u>	<u>Result</u>
_____ Divided	
_____ Divided	
_____ Divided	

3. In vs. 18-20 Jesus then presents two If...Then constructs. Fill out the chart below with these constructs.

<u>If...</u>	<u>Then...</u>

4. Look at the next parable about the Strongman in vs. 21-22. Who is the Strong Man? Who is the Stronger Man? What is the spoil?

5. Look at the statement in 11:23. What is Jesus referring to? (Think about the context of what he was just defending.)

6. In 11:24-26, Jesus tells another parable about an unclean spirit. Describe its journey.

7. What does Jesus mean in vs. 25 when he says, “Swept clean and in order” and then in vs. 26 “the last state of the person?”

True Blessedness - Luke 11: 27-28

8. During Jesus’ response above, a woman interrupts him. What does she proclaim?

9. How does Jesus respond to her?

The Sign of Jonah - Luke 11:29-32

10. Jesus then responds to the second response of the crowd in vs. 16. How does he respond in vs. 29?

11. What was the sign of Jonah to the Ninevites?? What parallel is Jesus making about Himself to this generation?

12. Jesus then makes two statements about judgement upon this generation. Use the chart below. Read the passages listed to help you.

<u>O.T. Passages</u>	<u>Character(s)- what were they like?</u>	<u>What did they do in Passage</u>	<u>What will they do to this generation?</u>	<u>One Greater ></u>
1 Kings 10:1	Queen of the South (Sheba)			

Jonah 1:2, 3:5	Ninevites			
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The Light in You- Luke 11:32-36

13. Use the chart below to compare the light and the darkness images Jesus makes.

<u>Light</u>	<u>Dark</u>

14. What is Jesus communicating to His followers (see vs. 35).

Application:

15. Jesus performed a miracle with a demon possessed man and the crowds discredited Him and His authority. What are ways you try to discredit the work of Jesus and His upside-down Kingdom in you and around you?

16. In what areas/situations in your life do you demand signs from Jesus?

17. How is it hard for you to hear the word of God and obey it?

18. Jesus spoke about light and darkness and commanded His followers to see to it that the light within us is not darkness. Why is this important as we seek to follow Jesus in His upside-down Kingdom? How can we be fully bright?