

Session 1 Come Empty: Humble to be Exalted Luke 18:1-14

Leader notes:

- Luke is written after the fall of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. While the book itself is anonymous, traditionally it is thought to be the work of Luke the physician, Paul's co-worker and companion. Luke is the only non-Jewish author in the New Testament. In truth, Luke-Acts is a volume 1 and 2 which should be studied as a continuous work.
- Luke's gospel is marked by joy, songs of praise, and an interest in the relationship of Jesus with people considered outcasts by his fellow countrymen. Luke's Gentile orientation is seen due to his tracing Jesus' genealogy back to Adam. This is a work that tells how the promised Jewish Messiah is indeed the Savior of the whole world.

Open:

- When you were in high school, what did it take for you to be with the "in" crowd? What was a guaranteed way to be "out"?

Dig:

- Read Luke 18:1-14
- If Jesus told this story today, what group of people would be the "Pharisee"? The "tax collector"?
- What would be the "Pharisee's prayer"?
- How does this parable complement the one on persistence (vv.1-8)?
- How do both demonstrate faith? What do both teach about God?

Reflect:

- When have you been like the Pharisee in this story? Like the tax collector? What do you think accounts for the difference?
- Right now, considering your attitudes toward others and why you hope God will accept you, which are you most like? Why?
- How can a humble life posture be seen in someone's life? What is the evidence of a humble heart?
- What is something you can do this week to humble yourself before God?

Session 2 Come Empty: Broken to be Made Up Luke 7:36-50

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Open:

- What is one special gift you've received from your kids or parents?
- What parties do you like to go to? Hate going to?

Dig:

- Read Luke 7:36-50
- What risk was this woman taking in coming to the house of a Pharisee? What does this tell you about her emotional state?
 - What is your impression of Simon? What do you think Jesus' purpose was in telling the parable in vv. 41-43?
 - Why didn't he just accuse Simon of not loving enough? What does that tell you about Jesus?
 - What does Jesus see in this woman that Simon does not? How does this affect Jesus' actions toward her? In this passage, what seems to be Jesus' main concern? Simon's concern?
 - How important would it be to this woman that Jesus forgives her? What does that tell you about Jesus?

Reflect:

- How difficult is it for you to be demonstrative in a relationship with Jesus? What hinders you from being more open with your love?
- When it comes to relationships, are you a "big forgiver" or a "stingy one"? Why?
- How does this tie in with your relationship with God?
- What do you learn in this story that you could apply to your life this week?

Session 3 Come Empty: Empty to be Filled Luke 14:15-24

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Open:

- What was one of your best birthday parties? How so?
- This Thanksgiving, what is one of the most favorite traditions you have? Why is it the best?

Dig:

- Read Luke 14:15-24
- Do you think the man in verse 15 understood Jesus' teaching and blessing in the previous passage? Why or why not?
 - In this parable, who are the invited guests? Why don't they come? What happens to them? Who eventually comes?
 - On what basis is one invited? How might Jesus' servant fulfill the command of verse 23? What does this parable teach about the Kingdom?

Reflect:

- From your experience, why do so many say "no" to God's "banquet"?
- What can you say or do to help people overcome their hesitation?
- What are some things you may need to leave behind in order to fully appreciate the banquet of God?