



CHRISTIANITY WITHOUT THE RELIGION

BIBLE SURVEY

THE UN-DEVOTIONAL

LUKE

Week 3

PHARISEES, SCRIBES AND SADDUCEES

PHARISEES were the leading Jewish religious sect during the time of Christ. Pharisees sought to attain holiness through scrupulous Sabbath observance, fasting, prayer, tithing and ceremonial purity. Pharisees placed great emphasis on the ancient oral traditions handed down from Moses and other Hebrew elders, in addition to the written law. Their name probably derives from the Hebrew word for “separate,” as they made a practice of separating themselves from “unclean” things and persons. Pharisees tried to keep their dealings within their own brotherhood. They avoided the common people, whom they considered lax in keeping the law.

Pharisees felt that to observe and perpetuate this strict regimen would make the nation of Israel holy. Pharisees also believed in an afterlife where the good would be rewarded and the evil would be punished eternally.

Pharisaism has become virtually synonymous with hypocrisy and self-righteousness. Although not all Pharisees were hypocritical, their practices, beliefs and hierarchy were the rich soil that produced hypocrisy.

SCRIBES were teacher-scholars with special training in the oral Rabbinic law or the written Biblical law. Both the Pharisees and Sadducees had scribes, but the majority were Pharisees. Highly esteemed, wearing special robes as a sign of their authority, they were addressed as *Rabbi* (“great one”).

SADDUCEES were the religious sect representing the Jewish aristocracy and priesthood. Not all priests were Sadducees, however. Many of the lower ranking priests were Pharisees. Politically conservative, the Sadducees maintained the status quo by collaboration with the Romans. For this reason, Sadducees were not popular with the people.

Unlike Pharisees, Sadducees rejected the oral traditions. They held that only Scriptural law was binding and that the priests were the proper interpreters of this law. Sadducees did not believe in a resurrection or afterlife because these are not mentioned in the Torah.

Light up Your Life!

DAY 15

Luke 11:29-54

How full is your inner light? (a) flaming, (b) glowing, (c) flickering, (d) dying, (e) extinguished.

1. How do these statements about *judgment* (vs. 29-36) build on Jesus' teachings concerning the power of the kingdom (vs. 1-28)? What is the intended meaning of the "sign of Jonah" (vs. 29-30)?
2. How is the light of spiritual perception to be developed (vs. 33-36; see Mt 5:13-16; 6:22-23)?
3. Analyze the three woes to the Pharisees and the three woes to the lawyers (vs. 37-52). What attitudes of the Pharisees showed their lack of spiritual perception?
4. How was correction from Jesus received by these blind guides (Lk 11:53-54)?

1. Light a candle. Does the flame seem to be alive? How powerful is it against darkness?
2. Considering the six woes in this chapter, how does love extinguish the darkness of each?
3. In this chapter, how is the inner life of a follower of Jesus to be reflected in a clean exterior?

*Jesus was outspoken against the **hypocrisy of religious leaders** and their **burdensome control** of others. The term **Pharisee** has come to be used for someone who is self-righteous, arrogantly believing themselves to be above other people because of personal merit (although not every Pharisee had this attitude).*

OPENING

up to the Word

DIGGING

into the Word

LIVING

out the Word

WINDOW

on the Word

Hypocrisy, Greed and Worry

Luke 12:1-34

OPENING
up to the Word

What is your biggest worry? (a) rent or house payment, (b) health, (c) family, (d) employment, (e) romance, (f) retirement.

DIGGING
into the Word

1. Leaven works to puff up a loaf of bread. How might the hypocrisy of the Pharisees be seen as leaven (vs. 1-3)?
2. Do faith and love conquer fear (vs. 4-7, 32; 1Jn 4:18)?
3. How could someone reject Jesus as Messiah and be forgiven? Is rejection of the Holy Spirit unforgivable?
4. Consider Jesus' warning against greed (vs. 13-21, 31-34). What's wrong with a preoccupation with possessions?
5. Worry can ruin your health. How were the disciples to control their anxieties? Does Jesus call disciples to focus on the kingdom (v. 34)?

LIVING
out the Word

1. What do you fear? How do you deal with it?
2. In what ways has your life consisted of "stuff" (vs. 15-21)? Is your self-worth based on your net worth? How can you build your life less on assets and more on Jesus?
3. Is the kingdom of God your highest priority? Has seeking the kingdom of God encouraged you to reconsider true treasure (vs. 31-34)?

WINDOW
on the Word

*Luke's Gospel shows that Jesus took his message to **the poor, the oppressed and the infirm** (Lk 4:16-19). In this chapter, God values and cares for those who confess Jesus. Hypocrisy, greed and hyper-anxiety are displeasing to God. In Luke, rather than simply denouncing the rich, both rich and poor are given equal membership in the kingdom if their priorities focus on Jesus. Blessings in this life are to be used to please God (v. 21).*

Open Your Eyes!

DAY 17

Luke 12:35-59

How do you keep your lamp burning? (a) study prophecy, (b) serve the poor, (c) overcome your problems, (d) stay focussed on Christ.

1. Do these two parables (vs. 35-48) warn Christians against trying to predict when Jesus would return? What would such Christians tend to do while they await Jesus' return (vs. 35-40)? How did Jesus define faithful stewardship (vs. 41-48)?

2. How does baptism serve as a metaphor for the suffering of Jesus (vs. 49-53)? How has he sent fire to the earth?

3. Could the crowd properly understand the "times" (vs. 54-56)? To Jesus, which was more important for a person to understand, the present or the future? Isn't it more important to discern right from wrong than it is to predict the future (vs. 49-59)?

1. Has your family been divided because of your commitment to Jesus? Have you sought to reconcile the differences?

2. Can you read the signs of changing weather? Are you alert to possible storms in your life?

*Jesus instructed his disciples to have their **waists girded and lamps burning**. In ancient times, military preparedness demanded proper armor, including protection of the midsection (Eph 6:14). A bright lamp could be used to illuminate the activities of the enemy.*

OPENING

up to the Word

DIGGING

into the Word

LIVING

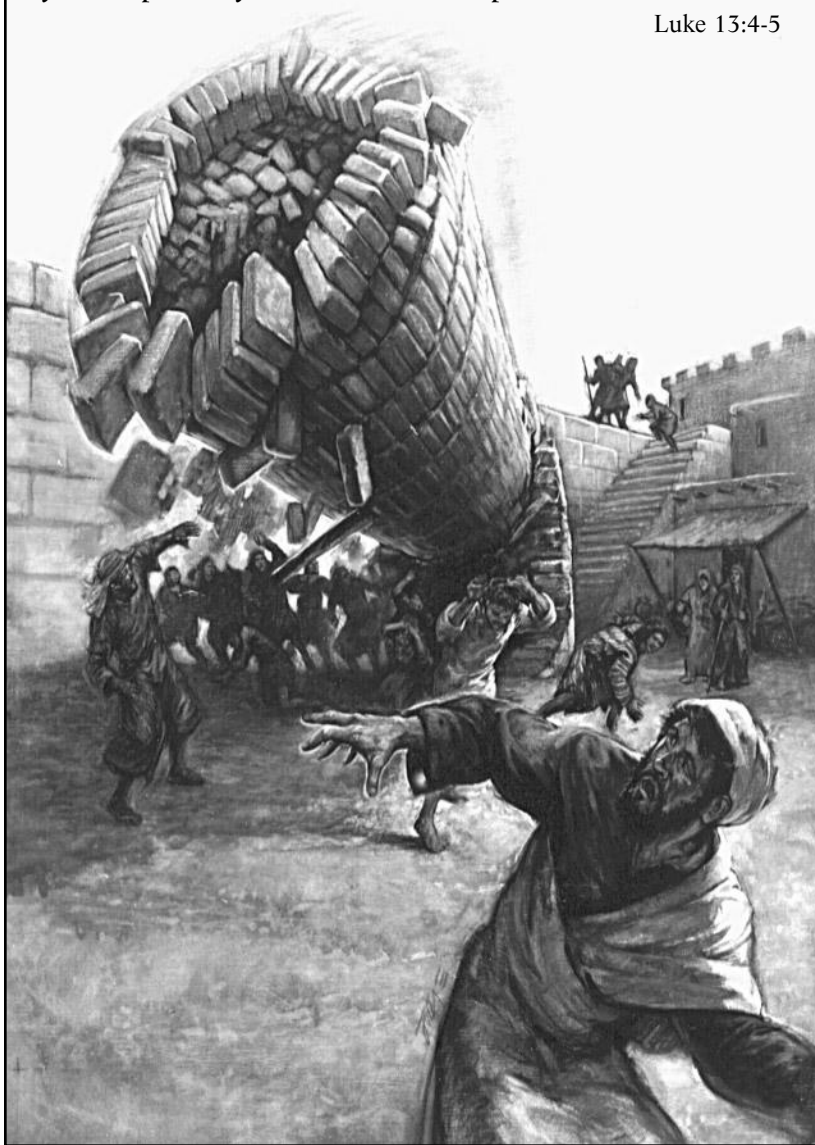
out the Word

WINDOW

on the Word

“Or those eighteen who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them—do you think they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem? I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish.”

Luke 13:4-5



Artwork by Jody Eastman

Amazing Grace: Figuring Out the Fig

DAY 18

Luke 13:1-35

Did you ever have a fruit tree that did not produce? What did you do with it?

1. Do you believe that people's sickness, financial problems or other difficulties indicate the degree of sin in their lives (vs. 1-9)?
2. How does the story of the fig tree (vs. 6-9) relate to repentance (vs. 3, 5) and to bearing fruit? What about God's patience?
3. How does the healing of the woman (vs. 10-17) help define the hypocrisy of the Pharisees (see 12:1)?
4. What comparisons to the kingdom lie in the vitality of the mustard seed and yeast (13:18-21)?
5. "Lord, are only a few people going to be saved?" (v. 23). Consider Jesus' answer (vs. 24-30). Are you surprised?
6. En route to Jerusalem, Jesus was warned of a threat from Herod (v. 31). Were the Pharisees sincere, or was this a ruse to get rid of him? Why did Jesus anguish over the people of Jerusalem and his entry into Passion Week (vs. 32-35)?

1. Do you ever feel hypocritical? Do your words seem hollow at times? How can Jesus change that emptiness?
2. Write a one paragraph synopsis of your journey to the King.
3. Have you wept lately for people who are oblivious to the fact they seem to be beating their heads against brick walls?

*At the end of this chapter we see the **resolve of Jesus** as he heads toward Jerusalem for his triumphal entry into the city. His compassion for the people of Jerusalem is depicted by the nurturing nature of a mother hen who cares for her chicks.*

OPENING

up to the Word

DIGGING

into the Word

LIVING

out the Word

WINDOW

on the Word

Amazing Love: The Wedding Story

Luke 14:1-35

OPENING
up to the Word

When did you last attend a banquet? Did you feel like you were being watched and examined? Did you find yourself being critical of anyone?

DIGGING
into the Word

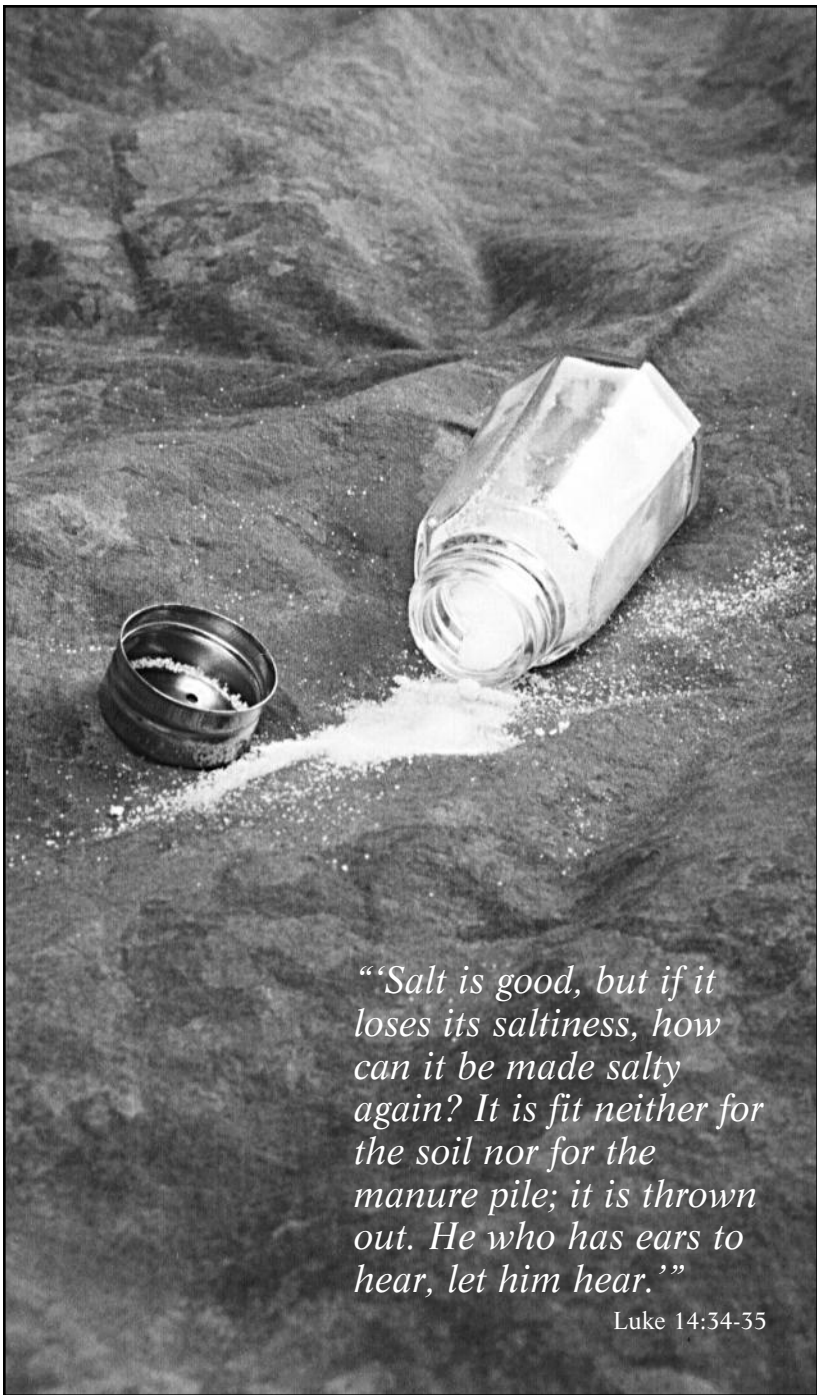
1. What attitude was behind the invitation from a ruler of the Pharisees to Jesus (vs. 1-6)?
2. How did Jesus take the initiative in this account (vs. 1-24)? Consider his questions to the lawyers and Pharisees (vs. 3-6), his parable to the guests (vs. 7-11), the advice to his hosts (vs. 12-14) and his parable about the kingdom told to the entire dinner party (vs. 15-24). How are they linked?
3. In the parable of the wedding supper (vs. 15-24), how did Jesus feel about poor excuses?
4. What expectations did Jesus have for his disciples (vs. 25-35; see Lk 9:23-27)?
5. How does “saltiness” relate to discipleship (vs. 34-35)?

LIVING
out the Word

1. Have you ever been with family or friends for a meal when someone became openly critical of someone else there? Did you feel awkward?
2. Have you ever seen anyone presume to take the best location at a dinner party or maneuver to sit next to the guest of honor?
3. Invite someone to a meal whom you do not expect will return the favor.
4. For each area of Jesus’ expectations for disciples (vs. 25-35), what specific actions in your life demonstrate your commitment as a disciple?

WINDOW
on the Word

*Being a **disciple of Jesus** is an honor that carries with it responsibility to serve him in faith. Disciples shoulder the cross, follow Jesus and have counted the cost so they remain with him eternally.*



“Salt is good, but if it loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is fit neither for the soil nor for the manure pile; it is thrown out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

Luke 14:34-35

Amazing Joy: The Lost are Redeemed

Luke 15:1-32

OPENING
up to the Word

Have you ever lost something of great value? How much was it worth? Did you find it?

DIGGING
into the Word

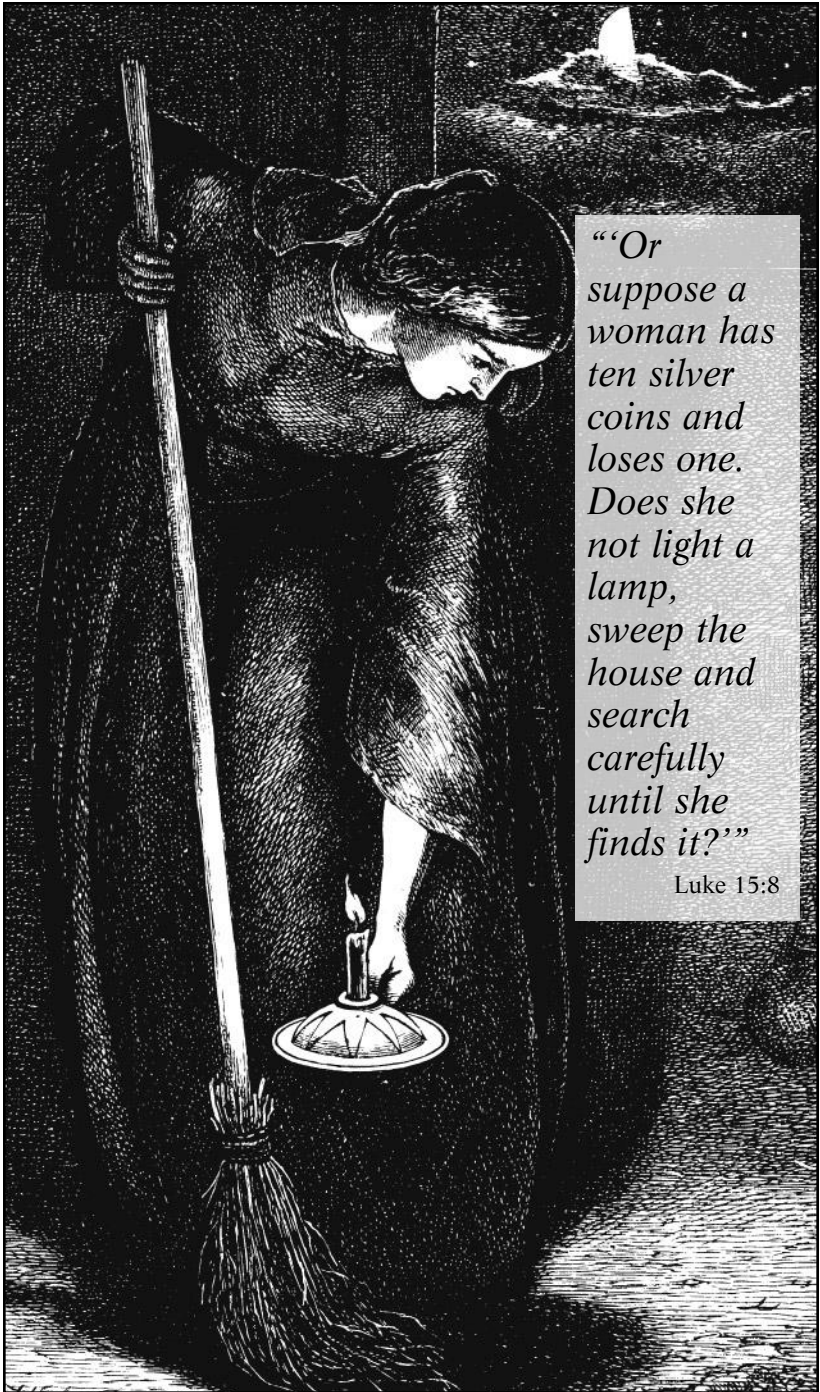
- 1.** We find three parables of Jesus in this chapter. What accusation prompted them (vs. 1-2)? Was the accusation true?
- 2.** Read the parable of the lost sheep (vs. 3-7). What happens to the 99? To the lost one?
- 3.** Of the ten coins, how much effort did the owner go through to find the one that was lost (vs. 8-10)?
- 4.** In the parable of the prodigal son (vs. 11-32), how did each party in the story respond to family responsibility?
- 5.** How did Jesus end each of the three parables (vs. 7, 10, 32)? How did this principle answer the accusations of the Pharisees and scribes (vs. 1-2)?

LIVING
out the Word

- 1.** Have you ever sought to restore a lost friendship? Were your other friends threatened?
- 2.** How careful are you with the blessings God has given you? Do you take them for granted?
- 3.** Have you been like the prodigal son? Has God received you back with open arms?
- 4.** Have you ever been like the spiteful, angry brother?
- 5.** Come before God's throne with rejoicing in prayer. Thank him for his forgiveness. Join him in a spiritual banquet, full of joy.

WINDOW
on the Word

*The **parables of Jesus** often emphasized values by reflecting on life's struggles. A shepherd's wealth lay in his flock, a woman's sustenance in her savings and a family's strength in its collective efforts and love. Sons usually worked for their father and helped support the whole family, often even after they married and had their own families.*



“Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Does she not light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it?”

Luke 15:8

Greed or Need?

Luke 16:1-31

OPENING
up to the Word

Do you know any wealthy people? Have they used their money for good causes or have they tended to be miserly?

DIGGING
into the Word

1. Was the unjust steward (vs. 1-13) unjust because he overcharged his employer's clients? Was he justified in reducing the debts they owed his boss? Did Jesus condone his *actions*, or his *shrewdness*? Was Jesus suggesting that Christians would be wise to use money to make friends of the rich or powerful (vs. 9-13)?

2. How could the love of money keep the Pharisees from entering the kingdom (vs. 14-17)? Did their greed affect their attitude toward marriage (vs. 18)?

3. What is the great gulf between father Abraham and the rich man? What do you feel is the main topic of this parable—the main lesson Jesus was imparting?

4. How does the topic of *mercy* connect these two parables?

LIVING
out the Word

1. As a Christian, your debt has been wiped out. Aren't you glad "mercy triumphs over judgment" (Jas 2:13)?

2. How is your heart cleansed (v. 15)? By the good works you produce or by the riches of God's grace?

3. How much do you cry out for God's mercy? Is now a better time than the future?

WINDOW
on the Word

The **parable of Lazarus and the rich man** is rich with meaning for us. Though it is a parable and not a systematic doctrinal statement about the afterlife, it speaks volumes about Christian responsibility in this life. One cannot wait for the afterlife to seek mercy, for the heart must soften to respond to God's call now. Moses and the prophets point us to accept Jesus as our Savior (Dt 18:15-19).

“There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores and longing to eat what fell from the rich man’s table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores.”

Luke 16:19-21

