



Devotional Booklet

Welcome to Guatemala 2018!

As we go through this week together, my hope and prayer is that God would do something powerful in us and through us.

To that end, we want to make sure we are open to what God may be doing in Guatemala: in the nation, in the communities, and in the individual people. But we also need to be receptive to what God may want to do in our lives as well.

In my experience, the more you are on the lookout for God, the more you will find him working all around you. Therefore, I am hopeful that these devotionals will change your experience of this week (and of this trip).

Of course, Mission Trips being what they are, there's always a need for flexibility: so use this booklet as you can, and as you see fit.

Included in this book are:

- Daily Devotionals (Bible studies, Questions, Reflections, and Invitations to Prayer)
- Questions to use as a group at the end of the day

Also, you aren't alone, but in many ways, you are an extension of our church. And therefore, the church will be working through these same devotionals with you, and keeping you in our prayers.

Have a Great Trip!,
-Pastor Tim

Introduction (Sunday)

PREPARATION: As we begin this week, and as we prepare ourselves to encounter God, let's recognize our need to be on the lookout for wherever God may show up.

READ: Matthew 13:44-46

⁴⁴ "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.

⁴⁵ "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. ⁴⁶ When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.

REFLECTION:

There are two short parables here, that sound similar, but are very different. Both are about the Kingdom of Heaven/God, but Jesus makes two different points about the Kingdom.

Now again, just for review, Jesus saw the Kingdom of God as a now and coming kingdom. It's a realm where God's will is done. And it becomes part of our job, as Christians, to bring this kingdom to the here and now.

Whenever we do the work of Jesus: whenever we love the least or the lost or the last, we're bringing the kingdom. Whenever we show grace or forgive, we're bringing the kingdom. Whenever we love God and love neighbor, we're bringing the kingdom. In doing these things we make this place a little more like God wants it to be.

You'll notice that in the first parable (verse 44), the Kingdom is like a treasure hidden. In other words, the Kingdom is surprisingly valuable, and yet it's hidden. It could be anywhere and yet it's not obvious (until you see it).

How might you be more on the lookout for the Kingdom this week?

What did the man experience when he found the Kingdom?

In the second parable, the kingdom isn't like the fine pearl, but it's like the merchant looking...

In other words, there's something about the kingdom that **SEEKS US!!** For some reason, the Kingdom of Heaven sees value and worth in US and in the people we'll be serving this week. And the Kingdom thinks that **YOU** (and **THEY**) are of immense value.

How might seeing others like fine pearls change our interactions and intentions?

PRAYER: Pray that God gives you open eyes this week to see value where it's hidden, to see worth where it's unexpected, and to see the Kingdom of God all around you.

Monday Morning

PREPARATION: We want to make sure that we are receptive for whatever God may want to do in us and through us. And so, before we get started, we may need to evaluate our openness and outlook.

READ: Mark 4:1-20

(Bible Passages can be found in the back of this booklet)

REFLECTION:

This is the parable of the Sower. Jesus tended to teach in parables, which were short stories with an often surprising twist that led to his point. That said, in order to get Jesus' point, you have to immerse yourself in the story, and do the work.

This parable is a good starting parable because it also includes Jesus' explanation. Jesus spoke the story to the crowds, but then he also reveals his point to the disciples.

In the parable, what are the 4 types of soil? And what do they stand for?

1.

2.

3.

4.

6

Who is the Sower? What is he sowing?

It's interesting that to receive the seed sowed, our hearts have to be ready and receptive. The soil needs to be well tilled, watered, protected and weeded.

What are some of the things that get in the way in YOUR life?

How might you be more open to what God is doing? What do you need to protect yourself from?

In the parable, God's Word is incredibly fruitful: 30x, 60x, 100x what was sown. Imagine what life would look like if God's Word could do that in you, in your work, in your community, and in your missions...

PRAYER: Pray that God would open up your heart to what God is trying to plant in it. Pray that distractions, worries, and hardness of heart won't get in the way of what God is trying to tell you (and do in you) today.

Tuesday Morning

PREPARATION: The Godly thing to do may be uncomfortable. To be neighborly, to be more like Jesus, to show love, we may need to humble ourselves so that we can respond like he would.

READ: Luke 10:25-37

REFLECTION:

This is the familiar parable of the Good Samaritan. The story begins with an Expert in the Law trying to test Jesus.

What was the expert in the law's attitude? (Why did he ask about neighbors?)

Jesus tells the story about a man going from Jerusalem to Jericho. This was a common route, but not always a safe one. And so, it's unsurprising that the man in the story is attacked.

A priest and a Levite (both holy and religious people), one by one came by, and they walked by the man. And there are many possible reasons for this:

- They were worried it was a trap/danger for them
- They were busy or distracted (Or chose to not see him)
- They didn't want to become ceremonially unclean by touching what was forbidden (dead body).
- They didn't want to involve themselves in what looked like a messy situation.

Why might you have NOT stopped either? How do you avoid even SEEING situations like this?

Then a Samaritan showed up. And Samaritans were despised by the people. They were viewed as enemies, traitors, and generally the WRONG kind of people.

And Jesus chooses to make one of them, the HERO of our story.

What does the Samaritan do for the man?
(BONUS: Don't miss verse 33 in your answer)

Why might the Samaritan have been afraid to do this?

What is Jesus' point to the Expert in the Law?

PRAYER: Pray that God would help YOU to “Go and do likewise”. Pray that you would have open eyes to see opportunities to show kindness (even to “the wrong type of people”). Pray for the courage to engage.

Wednesday Morning

PREPARATION: God has a heart for the lost. We recognize this as we see Him seeking those who are lost AND in the lengths He went to find US.

READ: Luke 15:1-32

REFLECTION:

Today Jesus puts three parables together. But before we get to them...

What is the setting of our story? Who is Jesus talking to?

In the first parable, a shepherd loses one of their sheep. And the shepherd leaves all of the other sheep to go after the one who is lost. And, when they find it, they joyfully carry it home, and rejoice at finding what was lost.

Of course, this isn't just a story about sheep, it's also about ALL who are (or have been) lost, including us. Isn't it amazing that God is willing to LEAVE and even LOSE the other 99 in order to seek and find us!

In the second parable, what lengths does the woman go to to find her coin, and how does she respond when she finds it?

The final parable is often called the Parable of the Prodigal Son. And the first thing we need to recognize is that to ask

your father for your share of the estate, back then, would have been the same as telling your dad to 'die'. And so we are shocked when the Father actually concedes to the son's demand.

When the son recognizes the error of his ways, what does he do? How does the father respond to the lost son in surprising ways?

Of course, the father doesn't just have one lost son, but two. The first son pushed the father away by doing what was wrong. But, in some ways, the older son keeps the father away by doing what's right. You don't have to deal with dad if you never do anything wrong. This is part of why he's so upset.

How does the father respond to the older son in surprising ways?

Remember, this story is being told to Pharisees and teachers of the law, as Jesus is in the presence of tax collectors and sinners. The question at the end of the parable is not just how the older son will respond to the father's lavish grace, but how the Pharisees will respond to Jesus' grace (and how we will respond too).

PRAYER: Pray that God would give you a heart for the lost. But also pray that God would reveal to you how far he goes so that YOU would know his love and grace!

Thursday Morning

PREPARATION: We want to recognize that everyone is invited to God's banquet table.

READ: Luke 14:15-24

REFLECTION:

What is the setting of this parable? What prompted Jesus' story?

The parable involves a man throwing a great banquet. And many people are invited to the party. And the sense we get is that this is a lavish party—no expense has been spared. When the day of the party arrives, everyone starts making excuses as to why they can't come.

What are some of the excuses the guests make? (Why are these excuses 'pretty lame'?)

What excuses do WE make when God invites us to do partner with him in something?

Unsurprisingly, the Host becomes angry when they all bow out of the party. One reason for this is that they already would have committed to this party, and now they're backing out. Another reason for his anger may be that he went to great expense to throw this party (he obviously wanted them to enjoy the party with him), but now they're going to miss it.

At this point, the Host does something surprising. He invites all of the people who DON'T get invited to this kind of party. And not only does he invite them, but he has them compelled to come.

This would have been scandalous back then because WHO you invite and WHO comes to a party reflects on WHO the host of the party is. (I.e. if important people are at your party, you must be important)

According to this parable, what will God's banquet be like? Who will be there?

Who does God want at his banquet? (What should the attitude of the guests be?)

PRAYER: Pray that God would help us become welcoming hosts. Help us help others know how loved and welcomed they are in the Kingdom of God (and in our lives)!

Friday Morning

PREPARATION: We want to be more aware of how we see wealth and greed. Not just here in Guatemala, but also as we go home. And, as we do that, we also want to reflect on how we might be rich towards God.

READ: Luke 12:13-21

REFLECTION:

What is the setting of this parable? And what warning does Jesus give at the outset?

Jesus says to watch out for 'different KINDS of greed'. What kinds of greed do you think there are?

Jesus tells a parable about a rich man who had an abundant harvest. The man has more than he needs and so he concludes that he should just enjoy his wealth. And, furthermore, we recognize that he sees his wealth as a means of status, sufficiency and/or security.

How do you see wealth?

Jesus then turns this situation upside down, when calamity strikes this man. The language here is that God will 'call in his debt'. As if this man's wealth is not his own to begin with... As if it's not actually the man's wealth at all... As if the man is simply a steward of all he has.

Jesus doesn't seem to be saying here that wealth is a bad thing, but he does seem to be saying that it can be dangerous because sometimes we look to wealth (whether we have it OR NOT), to be more than it should be.

How can wealth be dangerous? How can it be distracting?

Jesus tells the man in the crowd to be rich towards God. What might this mean in general?

What could this look like in your life?

PRAYER: Pray that God would help us be more rich towards God, and that we might see things differently.

Saturday Morning

PREPARATION: As we begin the journey back home, we recognize that we all have been given many different gifts to be used to God's glory. Sometimes the question is simply: how will we use those gifts?

READ: Matthew 25:14-30

REFLECTION:

Chapter 25 begins: "At that time the kingdom of heaven will be like..." And our parable is the second parable under that heading. In other words, the Kingdom of Heaven will be like a man going on a journey.

The man entrusts his wealth to his servants, in differing amounts according to their ability.

What does each servant receive, and what does each do with what they received?

Servant 1:

Servant 2:

Servant 3:

When the master returns, he calls the servants to account for how they've stewarded his wealth.

How does the master respond to the first two servants' faithfulness?

How does the 3rd servant view the Master? Why do you think he sees him this way?

The Master responds to the 3rd servant using the servant's own reasoning. 'If you really believed this, shouldn't you have tried to do something with what I gave you!'

The sense we get is that the Master was happier that the first two servants tried to do something with what they'd been given, than with their success. (In other words, if the 3rd servant had acted faithfully and yet LOST everything, I don't think the Master would have been as disappointed)

What abilities has God given you, that you might use faithfully? What material means has God given you, that you might use faithfully?

What gifts do you tend to bury, instead of use? Why?

What does this parable teach about the Kingdom of God?

PRAYER: Pray that God would help us see how to use our gifts better and faithfully.

Evening Questions

(optional)

One helpful way to grow together as a team and to process what has happened, is to share with one another what you have seen, what you have experienced, and how you have seen God at work.

These questions begin with more ‘get to know you’ questions, but proceed to deeper and more spiritual questions. That said, based on the day, you may want to move these around or ask different questions, as you see fit. (These are here if this is helpful, but feel free to choose your own questions or mix these questions based on your day.)

Sunday Night:

- Who are you and why did you come on this trip?
- What are you looking forward to and what are you a little apprehensive about?

Monday and Tuesday Nights:

- What surprised you today? Or
- What impacted you today? Or
- Where did you see God at work today?

Wednesday Night:

- What has been hard for you about this day/trip
- Where might God be messing with you, through this trip?

Thursday Night:

- Where have you seen grace, love, or God's presence on this trip?

Friday Night:

- How does this experience change how you see the world, and your place in it?
- How has this trip changed your view of home?
- How might you be different when you return?

Bible Passages

Mark 4:1-20

¹ Again Jesus began to teach by the lake. The crowd that gathered around him was so large that he got into a boat and sat in it out on the lake, while all the people were along the shore at the water's edge. ² He taught them many things by parables, and in his teaching said: ³ "Listen! A farmer went out to sow his seed. ⁴ As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. ⁵ Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. ⁶ But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. ⁷ Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants, so that they did not bear grain. ⁸ Still other seed fell on good soil. It came up, grew and produced a crop, some multiplying thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times."

⁹ Then Jesus said, "Whoever has ears to hear, let them hear."

¹⁰ When he was alone, the Twelve and the others around him asked him about the parables. ¹¹ He told them, "The secret of the kingdom of God has been given to you. But to those on the outside everything is said in parables ¹² so that, "they may be ever seeing but never perceiving, and ever hearing but never understanding; otherwise they might turn and be forgiven!"

¹³ Then Jesus said to them, "Don't you understand this parable? How then will you understand any parable? ¹⁴ The farmer sows the word. ¹⁵ Some people are like seed along the path, where the word is sown. As soon as they hear it, Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown in them. ¹⁶ Others, like seed sown on rocky places, hear the

word and at once receive it with joy. ¹⁷ But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. ¹⁸ Still others, like seed sown among thorns, hear the word; ¹⁹ but the worries of this life, the deceitfulness of wealth and the desires for other things come in and choke the word, making it unfruitful. ²⁰ Others, like seed sown on good soil, hear the word, accept it, and produce a crop—some thirty, some sixty, some a hundred times what was sown.”

Luke 10:25-37

²⁵ On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

²⁶ “What is written in the Law?” he replied. “How do you read it?”

²⁷ He answered, “‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind’; and, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’”

²⁸ “You have answered correctly,” Jesus replied. “Do this and you will live.”

²⁹ But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?”

³⁰ In reply Jesus said: “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. ³¹ A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. ³² So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. ³³ But a

Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. ³⁴ He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. ³⁵ The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. ‘Look after him,’ he said, ‘and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.’

³⁶ “Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?”

³⁷ The expert in the law replied, “The one who had mercy on him.”

Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise.”

Luke 15:1-32

¹ Now the tax collectors and sinners were all gathering around to hear Jesus. ² But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, “This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.”

³ Then Jesus told them this parable: ⁴ “Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn’t he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? ⁵ And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders ⁶ and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.’ ⁷ I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.

⁸ “Or suppose a woman has ten silver coins and loses one. Doesn’t she light a lamp, sweep the house and search carefully until she finds it?⁹ And when she finds it, she calls her friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.’¹⁰ In the same way, I tell you, there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

¹¹ Jesus continued: “There was a man who had two sons.¹² The younger one said to his father, ‘Father, give me my share of the estate.’ So he divided his property between them.

¹³ “Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living.¹⁴ After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need.¹⁵ So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs.¹⁶ He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

¹⁷ “When he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death!¹⁸ I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you.¹⁹ I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.’²⁰ So he got up and went to his father.

“But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

²¹ “The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’

²² “But the father said to his servants, ‘Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. ²³ Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let’s have a feast and celebrate. ²⁴ For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ So they began to celebrate. ²⁵ “Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶ So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. ²⁷ ‘Your brother has come,’ he replied, ‘and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.’ ²⁸ “The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. ²⁹ But he answered his father, ‘Look! All these years I’ve been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. ³⁰ But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!’ ³¹ “‘My son,’ the father said, ‘you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. ³² But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’”

Luke 14:15-24

¹⁵ When one of those at the table with him heard this, he said to Jesus, “Blessed is the one who will eat at the feast in the kingdom of God.”

¹⁶ Jesus replied: “A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests. ¹⁷ At the time of the banquet he sent his servant to tell those who had been

invited, 'Come, for everything is now ready.'

¹⁸ "But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said, 'I have just bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please excuse me.'

¹⁹ "Another said, 'I have just bought five yoke of oxen, and I'm on my way to try them out. Please excuse me.'

²⁰ "Still another said, 'I just got married, so I can't come.'

²¹ "The servant came back and reported this to his master.

Then the owner of the house became angry and ordered his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame.'

²² "'Sir,' the servant said, 'what you ordered has been done, but there is still room.'

²³ "Then the master told his servant, 'Go out to the roads and country lanes and compel them to come in, so that my house will be full. ²⁴ I tell you, not one of those who were invited will get a taste of my banquet.'"

Luke 12:13-21

¹³ Someone in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me."

¹⁴ Jesus replied, "Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?" ¹⁵ Then he said to them, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions."

¹⁶ And he told them this parable: "The ground of a certain rich man yielded an abundant harvest. ¹⁷ He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.'

¹⁸ "Then he said, 'This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store my surplus

grain. ¹⁹ And I'll say to myself, "You have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry." ²⁰ "But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?' ²¹ "This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God."

Matthew 25:14-30

¹⁴ "Again, it will be like a man going on a journey, who called his servants and entrusted his wealth to them. ¹⁵ To one he gave five bags of gold, to another two bags, and to another one bag, each according to his ability. Then he went on his journey. ¹⁶ The man who had received five bags of gold went at once and put his money to work and gained five bags more. ¹⁷ So also, the one with two bags of gold gained two more. ¹⁸ But the man who had received one bag went off, dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.

¹⁹ "After a long time the master of those servants returned and settled accounts with them. ²⁰ The man who had received five bags of gold brought the other five. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with five bags of gold. See, I have gained five more.'

²¹ "His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!'

²² "The man with two bags of gold also came. 'Master,' he said, 'you entrusted me with two bags of gold; see, I have gained two more.'

²³ “His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness!’

²⁴ “Then the man who had received one bag of gold came. ‘Master,’ he said, ‘I knew that you are a hard man, harvesting where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered seed. ²⁵ So I was afraid and went out and hid your gold in the ground. See, here is what belongs to you.’

²⁶ “His master replied, ‘You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? ²⁷ Well then, you should have put my money on deposit with the bankers, so that when I returned I would have received it back with interest.

²⁸ ““So take the bag of gold from him and give it to the one who has ten bags. ²⁹ For whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them. ³⁰ And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’



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