



Life of Christ

A study of the life and teachings of Jesus

Star Wars Steward

by Bridget Keylor

I loved Star Wars before I was a “man-cub” mom. The first Star Wars movie came out the year I was born, so my childhood was filled with Hans Solo and Princess Leia, and I loved it! The next round of three movies was released in my twenties, sharing the story leading up to the Skywalker twins’ arrival. Another installment of three films was released in my forties, explaining what happened after those adorable Ewoks danced around the fire celebrating victory. Every few decades or so, I have been reminded of the fight between good and evil and the need to release anger to gain peace and life. And I remember that our power is not grown, but given, and used to fight against oppression and evil in this world.

As I read the parable of the Unjust Steward in Luke 16:1-9, my mind wandered to a Star Wars scene in Episode III: Revenge of the Sith. Anakin (Darth Vader) has let fear and an evil influence convince him to give way to anger rather than release himself to the Force. He has killed a friend, slaughtered an entire village, and killed a group of baby Jedi. Clearly, he is no longer the cute, pod-racing kid from Episode I. But his closest companions, Padmé and Obi-Wan, still believe there is good in him and continue to try to reach him.

During a fight on a lava-filled planet, Obi-Wan finally takes the high ground, knowing he has defeated Anakin. You can feel the sorrow and clearly see the confusion on Obi-Wan’s face as he cries out, “You were supposed to be the chosen one!” He then walks away, leaving Anakin wounded, surrounded by his sea of mistakes beside an actual sea of lava.

One of the reasons this scene has stuck with me for so long is that I see myself in Obi-Wan. When confronted with a stranger or acquaintance living in their poor choices or addictions, it is easy for me to offer compassion, empathy, and encouragement. Their situation is separate from my own. But when someone who I know and love deeply falls short, it hurts deeply. I know who they are, and I am fully aware that they are better and brighter than their darkest decision. There are moments where I just want to stand on my high ground and scream, “You were supposed to be the chosen one!”

My greatest issue in these moments is that I have taken the moral high ground. I became uncomfortable with their failure because I could easily be in their place. But rather than recognize my own need for the Father’s forgiveness, I want to put space between us and tell myself I won’t make the same mistakes.

But Jesus never took the high ground. Jesus, fully God, sat with sinners. He even seemed to gravitate toward sinners, knowing they were better and brighter than their darkest decisions. But Jesus didn't just tell them. He showed them. He forgave debts and restored their hope.

I wonder what it would have been like if Obi-Wan hadn't walked away? I wonder if—in the depths of Anakin's anger, pain, and defeat—Obi-Wan had scooped him up and taken him home?

As I read Luke 16 and reflect on Obi-Wan, I am challenged by the "who" and the "how" of mercy. Who do I sit with? How easily do I overlook their shortcomings and issues? How comfortable am I forgiving someone's debt? How am I showing others, whether close or far from me, that they are valued and accepted for the God-creation that they are?

I also wonder what would have happened in those high-ground moments if I had chosen to recognize my own need for mercy and forgiveness.

Jesus left the highest of grounds and stooped into our muck to erase our debts and bring hope into our dark places. And in this parable, all He asks us to do is leave our perceived high ground, sit with those who need to be seen, and bring His hope through loving community.

Question Who are you taking the moral high ground with? What would it look like for you to leave the high ground and extend compassion to that person this week?

Family Chat When we are young we have to be careful that most of our time is spent with people who will make us more like Jesus, but we still need to spend time with people who need to know Jesus. Who do you hang out with? Do you spend time only with those who are like you, or only those who aren't?

Take Action Talk with your group about an adjustment you will make to be a better conduit of God's mercy to others, especially those who don't know Him.