

DAILY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE  
SPRING 2026



# COVENANT

AN INVITATION TO A RICHER  
RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD

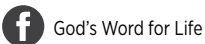
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## JESUS CHRIST

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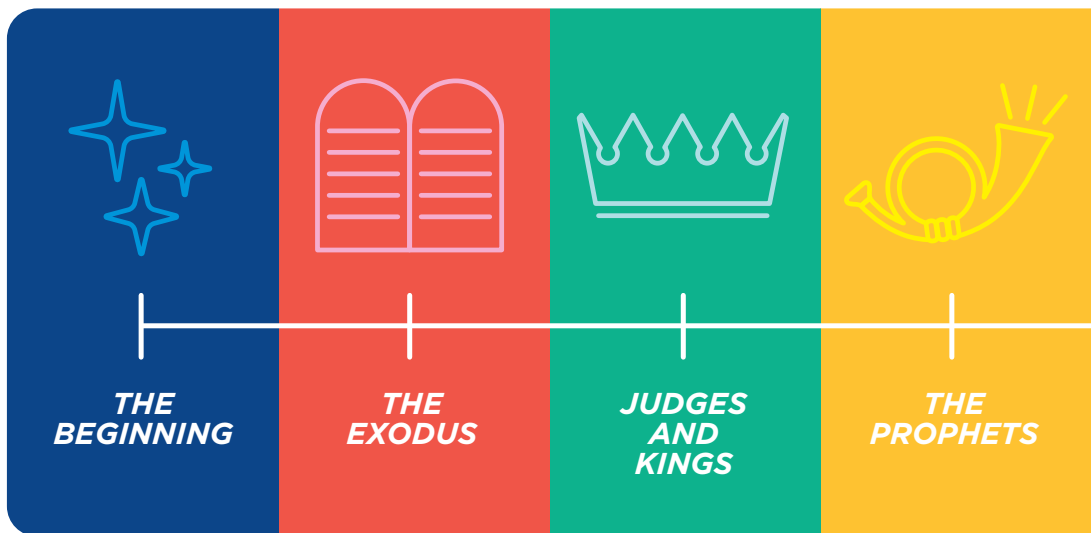
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# **WELCOME T**

## **A ONE-YEAR JOURNEY THROUGH THE BIB**

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God's Word is composed of hundreds of stories—amazing stories in fact. We read of a man who built a boat to save the world from a flood, which had never happened before. And we see a shepherd slay a giant and later be crowned king. We peer into a den of hungry lions and watch God preserve His prophet, and we stand in the marbled court of a king as we watch his Jewish wife risk her life to save her people. Those are just a handful of Old Testament stories.

But every one of those stories tell a small piece of God's big story—God wants to be in covenant relationship with us. God willingly pledges His presence and faithful love to us as we follow Him.

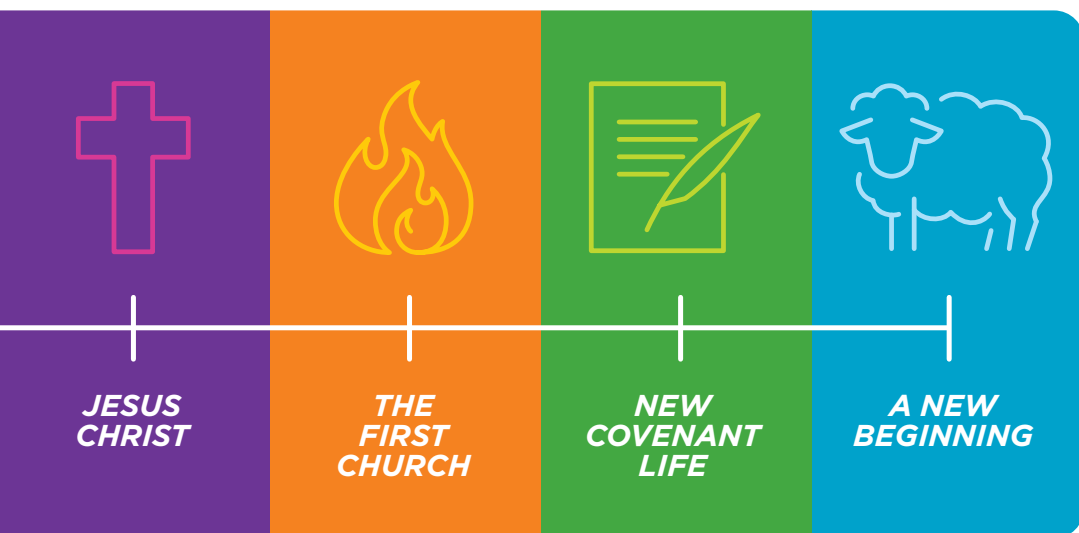
Using the above timeline as your map and compass, take a journey through God's big story as each segment of the Bible advances the story of God's covenant relationship with humanity. In the beginning, God invited the first couple into covenant in paradise. Sadly, like the steep hills on a roller coaster, God's people seemed to careen toward bottom as they broke their covenant with God over and over through the ensuing centuries. But when they cried out for a Savior, He was there to restore and redeem them.

As you learn and apply these fifty-two stories of Scripture, you will discover a faithful God, even to a faithless people. And you will learn that the same God who wanted to be in covenant with Israel and with His New Testament church is inviting you to enter into and live in covenant relationship with Him.

# O COVENANT

## LE TO A RICHER RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD.

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## WHAT'S NEW

### GENESIS TO REVELATION IN ONE YEAR

Thank you for joining us on our one-year journey from Genesis through Revelation. Each lesson is designed to build on the previous one. Because of the chronological nature of the overarching story, special Sundays such as Christmas, Easter, and Pentecost Sunday may not fit the chronology. To account for your preference to teach according to these Sundays, we will provide digital copies of lessons geared to these days for you to teach instead of the Covenant lesson for that week.

### TRUTH ABOUT COVENANT AND MY RESPONSE TO COVENANT

Since each story advances the Bible's big story of God wanting to be in covenant relationship with us, each lesson will tell a truth about covenant and what our response to God's covenant should be. The Truth about Covenant will be found in the left margin on the first page of each lesson, and My Response to Covenant will be found in creative word art on the same page.

### COVENANT CONTEXT

Each lesson will help situate you where we are in the Bible's big story. Sometimes humanity responded rightly, and sadly sometimes we didn't. Covenant context will help you know where we have come from, where we are, and even where we are heading in this grace-filled journey.

# HOW TO USE THIS DAILY DEVOTIONAL GUIDE

## GETTING STARTED

The first page of each lesson gives valuable information to help you become familiar with the Truth about Covenant, My Response to Covenant, the Focus Verses, and Lesson Text. The Covenant Context will pinpoint where you are in God's big story of His covenant relationship with humanity.



### TEACHING OUTLINE

**Icebreaker:** Share a story about a time you misunderstood what someone else was asking you and it led to a few laughs.

#### I. WHO WAS NICODEMUS?

A. Nicodemus Was a Ruler of the Jews

B. Nicodemus Recognized Jesus' Miracles

**DISCUSS:** If you were Nicodemus, how would you have opened up a conversation with Jesus?

C. I will submit my preconceptions to God's Word.

**DISCUSS:** What preconception has God ever overturned that you had about Him?

#### II. WHAT DID JESUS TEACH?

A. You Must Be Born Again

B. The Bronze Serpent Saved Israel from Destruction

**DISCUSS:** Considering how the Jews revered Moses, why do you think Jesus drew a connection between Himself and Moses while talking to Nicodemus?

C. I will be born again through the gospel.

**DISCUSS:** If you have experienced the new birth, how has it changed your life?

#### III. OUT OF DARKNESS, INTO LIGHT

A. Nicodemus Defended Jesus to the Sanhedrin

**DISCUSS:** If you have you ever been belittled for taking a stand for Jesus, how did you respond?

B. Nicodemus Helped Bury the Body of Jesus

C. I will be willing to upend my life to follow Jesus.

### PRAYER FOCUS

Lead the group in prayer and consider the following topics of focus:

- To be born again and walk in newness of life
- For God to help us testify to others about this new-birth experience

## SG TEACHING OUTLINE

The SG (Small Group) Teaching Outline is the lesson content in outline form. Each lesson main point is listed along with suggested discussion questions. This outline could be helpful in facilitating a small group for the devotion or lesson.

## BIBLICAL OVERVIEW

Lesson Text: John 3:1-21

The word Pharisees often conjures up negative connotations among Christians. A person with the spirit of a Pharisee is haughty and high-minded. The judgmental spirit of the Pharisees made living for God seem almost impossible, and they wanted everyone to pay attention to them (Matthew 23:4-13). Although they appeared to follow the letter of the Law, they neglected mercy, justice, and faithfulness. They were more concerned with outward holiness than inward holiness. Despite all these negative aspects, the Pharisees were not completely bad. In fact, some of them became followers of Jesus.

John 3:1 identifies Nicodemus as a man of the Pharisees and a ruler of the Jews. Although he approached Jesus secretly at night, he found many of the teachings of Jesus quite intriguing. Even though Christians and Pharisees were at odds in the Gospels, many Pharisees became part of the Way, one of the original designations for Christians. In fact, the apostle Paul described himself as a Pharisee in Philippians 3. However, what started as common ground devolved into division. While Paul started out adversarial to Christians but later changed, many Pharisees did not have the same experience, leading to the ultimate divide between the two groups.

Nicodemus began down the right path. As a Pharisee, he appreciated Jesus' focus on the kingdom of God. In contrast, the Sadducees emphasized earthly power. The Romans had given the authority to control the Temple to the Sadducees, who desired to maintain the status quo. They did not believe in angels or the Resurrection.

When we read the story of Nicodemus, we should do so with some appreciation of the Pharisees rather than negativity or suspicion. Nicodemus so cared about Jesus that he went with Joseph of Arimathea to ensure Jesus received a proper burial. Although Nicodemus was a Pharisee, hopefully he connected with Jesus in a way that allowed him to surpass the righteousness of the Pharisees. After all, that is what Jesus taught (Matthew 5:20).

**ALTHOUGH PHARISEES APPEARED TO FOLLOW THE LETTER OF THE LAW, THEY NEGLECTED MERCY, JUSTICE, AND FAITHFULNESS.**

## BIBLICAL OVERVIEW

The third page of each lesson will give you a “high level” Biblical Overview of the Lesson Text. The content will explore the text, its background, and any other pertinent information to help you better understand the setting, purpose, and message of the text.

## DAILY DEVOTION

The remaining pages will guide you through your week of personal devotion and study. You are encouraged to complete the Bible Reading plan for each day and explore a portion of the text with the help of a section of Biblical Insight on that part of the text. Next is a Daily Devotion to read and a prompt to reflect and pray about the principles presented.

SPRING LESSON 01

### DAY 1

John 3:1-2

1 There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:  
2 The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.

#### Biblical Insight

In John 3:2, Nicodemus stated the belief that God must be with Jesus because of the miracles He did. Jesus must have made quite an impression because other people in the first century BC were associated with miracles too. For example, Hori the Circle Maker drew a circle in the ground and refused to move until God made it rain. When a small amount of rain began to fall, Hori demanded more. While Hori represents a great man of faith, Jesus rose above all the other alleged miracle workers of His day. He performed miracles to demonstrate His power over sin.

#### Daily Devotion

Great made the arduous journey through the Egyptian desert to visit the Oracle of Ammon, seeking confirmation that he was divine. After this encounter, Alexander adopted divine titles to solidify his authority and demand worship. Though he conquered nations and shaped history, his power could not conquer death or sin. He died at the age of thirty-two, and his empire quickly fell apart.

Jesus, by contrast, did not claim deity for the purpose of power or manipulation. Jesus was God in the flesh; His kingdom is eternal. He did not perform miracles for fame or earthly power but to reveal His authority over sin, sickness, demons, and death. Where others sought favor from God, Jesus was God in flesh. Jesus is not simply greater than miracle workers; He is greater than kings because He alone grants forgiveness of sins.

• **REVIEW:** According to Nicodemus, what convinced him that God was with Jesus?

• **REFLECT:** Do you follow Jesus for what He can do or for who He is?

• **APPLY:** Take time today to identify areas where you are tempted to seek attention, control, or recognition and pray for God to help you walk humbly with Him.

# YOUTH CURRICULUM

## Daily Devotional Guide

A game-changing tool to lead students into Scripture each day of the week



# CHILDREN'S CURRICULUM

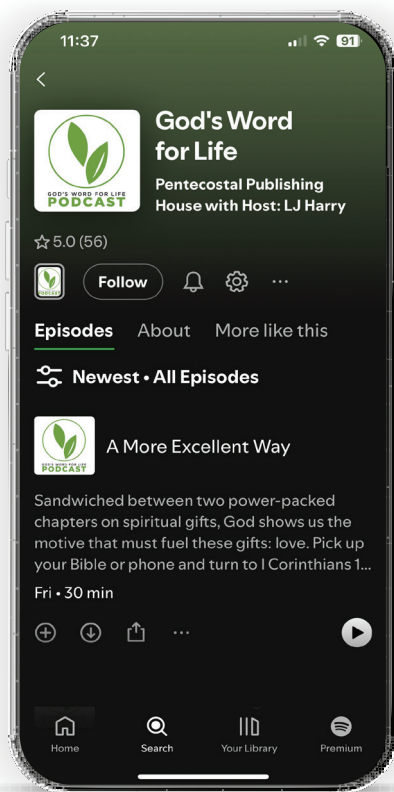


## Devotional and Activity Pages

For activities for students to complete in class and daily devotionals for parents to lead at home

Order your curriculum at [www.pentecostalpublishing.com/curriculum](http://www.pentecostalpublishing.com/curriculum).

# LEARNING AND LIVING OUT GOD'S WORD FOR LIFE



Join podcast host LJ Harry on the God's Word for Life companion podcast every week. Each episode complements the God's Word for Life Lesson Guide, Daily Devotional Guide, and the Small Group Guide as we think deeply about how God's Word impacts our lives. The podcast is a great tool for families and groups to listen to and discuss what we are learning from God's Word. The podcast shares stories and passages in Scripture with fresh insights to encourage followers of Jesus. Like the guides, each episode features discussion questions to help us apply what we are hearing and start conversations about God's Word.

Enjoy the God's Word for Life companion podcast as we learn and live out God's Word for Life.

## CONNECT ON SOCIAL MEDIA



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JESUS  
CHRIST



## SPRING 01

MARCH 08, 2026

### LESSON TEXT

John 3:1-21

### FOCUS VERSES

John 3:14-15

<sup>14</sup>And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:

<sup>15</sup>That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

### TRUTH ABOUT COVENANT

This new covenant calls us to new life through water baptism and Spirit baptism.

# *A Conversation with Nicodemus*

I WILL BE  
**BORN AGAIN**  
AND LIVE AS A  
**NEW  
CREATURE**  
IN CHRIST.

## COVENANT CONTEXT

Not long after Jesus' Sermon on the Mount, He met with an elite religious leader named Nicodemus and introduced the new covenant to him. Despite humanity's constant rebellion, God still wanted to be in covenant with us, and He was revealing what that new covenant would look like: born of water and born of the Spirit. Thankfully God is still inviting us to be born again.

## **SG** *TEACHING OUTLINE*

**Icebreaker:** Share a story about a time you misunderstood what someone else was asking you and it led to a few laughs.

### I. WHO WAS NICODEMUS?

- A. Nicodemus Was a Ruler of the Jews
- B. Nicodemus Recognized Jesus' Miracles

**DISCUSS:** *If you were Nicodemus, how would you have opened up a conversation with Jesus?*

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**DISCUSS:** *What preconception has God ever overturned that you had about Him?*

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- C. I will be born again through the gospel.

**DISCUSS:** *If you have experienced the new birth, how has it changed your life?*

### III. OUT OF DARKNESS, INTO LIGHT

- A. Nicodemus Defended Jesus to the Sanhedrin

**DISCUSS:** *If you have you ever been belittled for taking a stand for Jesus, how did you respond?*

- B. Nicodemus Helped Bury the Body of Jesus
- C. I will be willing to upend my life to follow Jesus.

## **PRAYER FOCUS**

Lead the group in prayer and consider the following topics of focus:

- » To be born again and walk in newness of life
- » For God to help us testify to others about this new-birth experience

## **BIBLICAL OVERVIEW**

**Lesson Text:** John 3:1–21

**T**he word *Pharisees* often conjures up negative connotations among Christians. A person with the spirit of a Pharisee is haughty and high-minded. The judgmental spirit of the Pharisees made living for God seem almost impossible, and they wanted everyone to pay attention to them (Matthew 23:4–13). Although they appeared to follow the letter of the Law, they neglected mercy, justice, and faithfulness. They were more concerned with outward holiness than inward holiness. Despite all these negative aspects, the Pharisees were not completely bad. In fact, some of them became followers of Jesus.

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When we read the story of Nicodemus, we should do so with some appreciation of the Pharisees rather than negativity or suspicion. Nicodemus so cared about Jesus that he went with Joseph of Arimathea to ensure Jesus received a proper burial. Although Nicodemus was a Pharisee, hopefully he connected with Jesus in a way that allowed him to surpass the righteousness of the Pharisees. After all, that is what Jesus taught (Matthew 5:20).

**ALTHOUGH PHARISEES APPEARED TO FOLLOW THE LETTER OF THE LAW, THEY NEGLECTED MERCY, JUSTICE, AND FAITHFULNESS.**

# DAY 1

## John 3:1–2

<sup>1</sup> There was a man of the Pharisees, named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews:

<sup>2</sup> The same came to Jesus by night, and said unto him, Rabbi, we know that thou art a teacher come from God: for no man can do these miracles that thou doest, except God be with him.

### Biblical Insight

In John 3:2, Nicodemus stated the belief that God must be with Jesus because of the miracles He did. Jesus must have made quite an impression because other people in the first century BC were associated with miracles too. For example, Honi the Circle Maker drew a circle in the ground and refused to move until God made it rain. When a small amount of rain began to fall, Honi demanded more. While Honi represents a great man of faith, Jesus rose above all the other alleged miracle workers of His day. He performed miracles to demonstrate His power over sin.

### Daily Devotion

Great made the arduous journey through the Egyptian desert to visit the Oracle of Ammon, seeking confirmation that he was divine. After this encounter, Alexander adopted divine titles to solidify his authority and demand worship. Though he conquered nations and shaped history, his power could not conquer death or sin. He died at the age of thirty-two, and his empire quickly fell apart.

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» **REVIEW:** *According to Nicodemus, what convinced him that God was with Jesus?*

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» **REFLECT:** *Do you follow Jesus for what He can do or for who He is?*

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» **APPLY:** *Take time today to identify areas where you are tempted to seek attention, control, or recognition and pray for God to help you walk humbly with Him.*

# DAY 2

## John 3:3-4

<sup>3</sup> Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.  
<sup>4</sup> Nicodemus saith unto him, How can a man be born when he is old? can he enter the second time into his mother's womb, and be born?

### Biblical Insight

When Jesus spoke of being born again, some individuals might have assumed He was referring to reincarnation—the idea that souls continue to be reborn. Some ancient Greeks believed a soul could inhabit a fava bean. They believed people could be born again via reincarnation because the beans' appearance made it seem they were ladders from the underworld. If a woman ate a fava bean, they believed she would give birth to that soul. Therefore, most proper Greek men did not eat beans. Jesus' teachings did not focus on the next life as in reincarnation but on entering covenant relationship to be part of the kingdom of God in this life and for eternity.

### Daily Devotion

Tokichi Ishii was a notorious criminal in Japan and was sentenced to be hanged for murder in 1918. Even on death row, he was violent and showed no remorse. Ishii was hopeless until a pair of Christian women gave him a Bible and prayed with him. When Ishii came to Jesus' words from the cross, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do" (Luke 23:34), he was pierced in the heart. Overwhelmed that Jesus could forgive His killers, Ishii realize Jesus could forgive him. In that moment, Ishii repented and was soon baptized.

Though he still faced execution for his crimes, records of his death report that he showed no fear, only peace. A once-violent, unrepentant criminal died with peace and dignity, transformed by grace. Ishii's life reminds us that being born again is not about trying harder or reincarnation; it is about being transformed.

» **REVIEW:** *What does it mean to be "born again"?*

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» **REFLECT:** *Nicodemus was confused by the idea of being born again. In what areas of your life do you still rely on human understanding rather than spiritual truth?*

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» **APPLY:** *Transformation begins when we realize we cannot fix ourselves. Reflect honestly on areas of your life that require spiritual renewal. Then pray and commit those areas to Jesus.*

# DAY 3

## John 3:5–8

<sup>5</sup> Jesus answered, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.

<sup>6</sup> That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.

<sup>7</sup> Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again.

<sup>8</sup> The wind bloweth where it listeth, and thou hearest the sound thereof, but canst not tell whence it cometh, and whither it goeth: so is every one that is born of the Spirit.

### Biblical Insight

Jesus' comparison between the wind and the Spirit seems very apropos because the words "wind" and "spirit" are the same in the Greek language. Indeed, Hebrew also uses the same word for both concepts. In Genesis 1:2, the Spirit hovered over the water and separated it like a mighty wind. After the Flood, the wind caused the water to recede. In both cases, wind and Spirit were part of creation and recreation. In order to be a new creature in Christ, we must be baptized in water and receive the Spirit. The new-birth experience requires both the water and the Spirit.

### Daily Devotion

During the golden age of sailing, mariners feared doldrums, the windless belt near the equator where ships could drift aimlessly for weeks. Even the finest vessels with skilled captains and detailed plans were powerless without wind. Crews grew desperate, not from storms, but from the stillness on the open sea because they were helpless. This mirrors the Christian life without the infilling of the Holy Ghost: all form, no movement.

Jesus compared the Holy Spirit to the wind—unseen, unpredictable, yet essential for life and direction. We can mark off the checkboxes and seem to have life all together, but without the infilling of the Holy Ghost, we are just drifting instead of moving forward into the plans and purposes of God. Just as sailors need wind to escape the doldrums, we need the Holy Ghost to live because without Him, we remain adrift and aimless.

» **REVIEW:** *What point was Jesus making by comparing the Spirit to the wind?*

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» **REFLECT:** *How do you respond when God leads you in unexpected directions?*

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» **APPLY:** *If you have not been born again of the water and the Spirit, reach out to a spiritual leader in your local church. If you have been born again, be intentional this week not just to pray for answers, but also invite the Holy Spirit to lead your decisions, emotions, and direction.*

# DAY 4

## John 3:14–17

<sup>14</sup> And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up:

<sup>15</sup> That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

<sup>16</sup> For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.

<sup>17</sup> For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.

### Biblical Insight

Jesus referenced Moses lifting up the serpent in the wilderness. To stop a plague recorded in Numbers 24, Moses made a bronze serpent. The bronze serpent was the tool for the miracle, but the instrument alone had no power. Nevertheless, people began to worship it. As a result, Hezekiah had to get rid of it to stop the idolatry (II Kings 18:4). The serpent, empowered by God, could only bring a temporary reprieve from death. In contrast, Jesus being lifted up on the cross will bring eternal life to all who believe on Him.

### Daily Devotion

During the height of the polio epidemic in the early twentieth century, the iron lung became a symbol of hope since these massive machines kept patients breathing when the polio virus paralyzed their muscles. Families trusted these machines, believing they could save their loved ones, but the iron lung only sustained life temporarily. It did not heal the disease; it simply delayed the worst. Everything changed when Dr. Jonas Salk developed the polio vaccine. This simple injection did what the iron lung could never do: It brought lasting protection and healing from the inside out. Where the iron lung offered support, the vaccine offered a solution.

In life we often place our hope in temporary solutions, much like the iron lung or the bronze serpent. We can find ourselves clinging to what comforts instead of pursuing what cures. Real transformation and healing come because of Jesus Christ. He invites us to be made whole in Him.

» **REVIEW:** *What was Jesus referring to when He mentioned being lifted up?*

» **REFLECT:** *In what ways do you need to look to Jesus as your source of life and healing, not just as a helper in crisis?*

» **APPLY:** *Reflect on what you are relying upon just to get by. Is it habits, routines, relationships? Are they truly healing you or helping you survive? Then ask God to do a deeper work in your life to transform and heal you from the inside out.*

# DAY 5

## John 3:18–21

<sup>18</sup> He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.

<sup>19</sup> And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.

<sup>20</sup> For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved.

<sup>21</sup> But he that doeth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God.

### Biblical Insight

In John 3, Nicodemus began with an assumption Jesus corrected. Nicodemus presumed God was with Jesus due to the miracles He did. While Nicodemus was not completely off base, he did not understand Jesus' full identity or the importance of deeds being examined in the light of God. Those who love the light will have their deeds verified by God. Jesus was instructing Nicodemus in the light of the truth to help him realize that the truth about Jesus went far beyond the miracles He did. In fact, Jesus later warned about those who came in His name but were not from Him (Matthew 24:5).

### Daily Devotion

In the 1840s, Dr. Ignaz Semmelweis noticed that many women were dying of “childbed fever” in one maternity ward but were surviving in another ward. After studying both groups, Dr. Semmelweis concluded that doctors were spreading disease from corpses to living patients because they did not wash their hands. So he instituted handwashing with chlorinated lime, and the mortality rates plummeted. Instead of being celebrated, Semmelweis was mocked. His peers rejected the idea because it challenged their assumptions and practices. Dr. Semmelweis died in obscurity. It was not until many years later, with the discovery of germ theory, that the medical world recognized his contributions.

Nicodemus came to Jesus with his assumptions, but Jesus pointed Nicodemus to something more profound. Like Dr. Semmelweis's peers, we can resist truth when it threatens our comfort, but Jesus calls us to surrender assumptions. God's truth may unsettle us, but it also sets us free.

» **REVIEW:** *Why do people avoid the light?*

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» **REFLECT:** *What are some areas of your life that you resist bringing into God's light?*

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» **APPLY:** *Like Nicodemus's and Semmelweis's peers, we can carry untested beliefs and assumptions about God, others, and ourselves. This week, begin your prayers with “Jesus, show me where I might be wrong.”*



JESUS  
CHRIST



SPRING

02

MARCH 15, 2026

LESSON TEXT

John 4:1-42

FOCUS VERSES

John 4:13-15

<sup>13</sup>Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again:

<sup>14</sup>But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

<sup>15</sup>The woman saith unto him, Sir, give me this water, that I thirst not, neither come hither to draw.

TRUTH ABOUT  
COVENANT

Jesus invited a marginalized woman into covenant.

# The Woman at the Well

I WILL  
**REACH**  
TO THE  
MARGINALIZED  
AND  
**INVITE**  
THEM INTO  
COVENANT.

## COVENANT CONTEXT

After Jesus' middle-of-the-night conversation with Nicodemus, Jesus broke Jewish protocol and had a middle-of-the-day conversation with a woman in Samaria. He taught her and introduced Himself to her as the Messiah. Jesus was extending covenant relationship beyond the Jews to a people group the Jewish people loathed. Clearly, God's covenant was for all people.

## **SG** *TEACHING OUTLINE*

**Icebreaker:** What should we do to welcome and love people who are largely different from us?

### I. LIVING WATER

#### A. Jesus Asked the Woman at the Well for a Drink

**DISCUSS:** *How can we emulate Jesus' example of reaching out to those on the margins?*

#### B. The Samaritan Woman Asked Jesus for Living Water

**DISCUSS:** *Why do you think the Samaritan woman recognized Jesus' spiritual language more quickly than Nicodemus did?*

#### C. I will tell everyone about Jesus' living water.

### II. BUT I'M A SAMARITAN

#### A. The Woman Disqualified Herself Before Jesus

**DISCUSS:** *How can we avoid mistakenly disqualifying ourselves based on our own preconceptions about ourselves?*

#### B. Jesus Qualified the Woman and Revealed His Messianic Identity

#### C. I will help people see that Jesus reaches to all.

### III. THE SAMARITAN HARVEST

#### A. The Disciples' Priority Was Physical; Jesus' Priority Was Spiritual

**DISCUSS:** *How can we avoid being focused more on physical desires than spiritual desires?*

#### B. Jesus Invited the Samaritans into Covenant

#### C. I will never allow prejudices to keep me from pointing people to Jesus.

**DISCUSS:** *How can we ensure we are a welcoming church for people of all backgrounds?*

## **PRAYER FOCUS**

Lead the group in prayer and consider the following topics of focus:

- » For God to spark within us a sincere love for all people, regardless of background
- » For God to help us recognize that His love for us can overcome our low opinions of ourselves

## **BIBLICAL OVERVIEW**

**Lesson Text:** John 4:1–42

**T**he Bible often features stories of sibling rivalry, including Cain and Abel, Isaac and Ishmael, Jacob and Esau, and Joseph and his brothers. These struggles between brothers represent a miniature version of larger conflicts in the Old Testament. The ultimate division between brothers occurred when the people divided into the Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah. Despite the gravity of this major disconnection, something even more disjointed occurred when the Assyrians deported some citizens of the Northern Kingdom and moved in outsiders who intermarried with those left behind in the former nation.

The Samaritans resulted from these marriages, forming a vast rupture between the Jews and the Samaritans. The eighth-century prophets Amos and Hosea fiercely warned the Northern Kingdom of the consequences of sin. Nevertheless, the northerners persisted. They even allied themselves with their perpetual enemies, the Syrians, in an attempt to defeat the mighty Assyrians. This ill-fated union failed miserably.

Second Kings 17:23–26 records the deportation of the northerners, noting the king of Assyria forcibly moved outsiders into Samaria. Because these people did not fear the Lord, God sent lions among them, causing many to perish. Therefore, the king of Assyria commanded that the new people should learn the requirements of the God of the land. This intermingling of religious beliefs and peoples led to the rise of the Samaritans, a hybrid of some of the remaining Israelites of the Northern Kingdom and outsiders.

The Samaritan desire to serve the Lord fueled further animosity when they built their own temple on Mount Gerizim. They even created their own version of the Pentateuch. Although this adaptation of the Jewish Torah is quite similar, it differs in one major aspect: Mount Gerizim is the designated place for worship instead of Jerusalem.

These differences bred deep hatred among the people. Many Jews would have objected to Jesus talking to a Samaritan woman. The fact that Jesus made a Samaritan the hero of one of His parables would have further infuriated them (Luke 10:25–37). Although much smaller than the population of Jews, Samaritans still exist today. Around eight hundred live in present-day Israel. They have their own high priest. Others who practice the religion live outside of Israel.

**THE ULTIMATE DIVISION BETWEEN BROTHERS  
OCCURRED WHEN THE PEOPLE DIVIDED INTO THE  
NORTHERN KINGDOM OF ISRAEL AND THE SOUTHERN  
KINGDOM OF JUDAH.**

# DAY 1

## John 4:1-6

- <sup>1</sup> When therefore the Lord knew how the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John,  
<sup>2</sup> (Though Jesus himself baptized not, but his disciples,)  
<sup>3</sup> He left Judaea, and departed again into Galilee.  
<sup>4</sup> And he must needs go through Samaria.  
<sup>5</sup> Then cometh he to a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar, near to the parcel of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph.  
<sup>6</sup> Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour.

### Biblical Insight

John 4 locates Jacob's well in the Samaritan city of Sychar. The Old Testament provides no specific mention of this well. Our only clue appears in the note in John 4:5 that the well was near the plot of land Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Genesis 33 records that Jacob bought land from a Shechemite. Some scholars believe Sychar is located in Shechem or a nearby city. Although we do not often read of Jacob digging wells, he may have learned from his father, Isaac, who dug several wells. (See Genesis 26.)

### Daily Devotion

Within the ancient city of Shibam, Yemen, often referred to as the "Manhattan of the Desert," people survived in the harsh desert environment due to what lay beneath the city. Beneath the centuries-old, mud brick high-rises is an ancient and ingeniously built system of wells and underground channels. These wells, dug centuries ago by unnamed workers, provided water for generations. Even after those builders were forgotten, their work still sustains life. During times of drought or war, when the surface resources ran dry, the people of Shibam survived because of hidden, foundational wells, which are a living legacy of labor that has supported generations.

We may never see the fruit of our labor. Like Jacob or the builders of Shibam's wells, our quiet investments in people, prayer, and truth may not make headlines, but they can prepare the way for divine appointments in the future. Keep being faithful to do what God called you to do. You are blessing generations.

» **REVIEW:** *What is significant about Jesus having to go through Samaria?*

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» **REFLECT:** *What legacy or foundation of faith are you building for others?*

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» **APPLY:** *This week, look for ways to serve others quietly. Write anonymous notes of encouragement, clean up without being asked, or help someone in need without telling anyone about it.*

# DAY 2

## John 4:10-14

<sup>10</sup> Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water.

<sup>11</sup> The woman saith unto him, Sir, thou hast nothing to draw with, and the well is deep: from whence then hast thou that living water?

<sup>12</sup> Art thou greater than our father Jacob, which gave us the well, and drank thereof himself, and his children, and his cattle?

<sup>13</sup> Jesus answered and said unto her, Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again:

<sup>14</sup> But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.

### Biblical Insight

In John 4, Jesus spoke of giving the Samaritan woman living water. At face value, living water refers to flowing water, water that is not stagnant. Therefore, the water from the well would not be classified as living water. While some might only associate Jesus' living water with baptism, the phrase "living water" speaks of both water and Spirit baptism. In John 7:38, Jesus spoke of rivers of living water flowing from those who believe on Him as the Scripture declares. The next verse explains that Jesus spoke of the Holy Spirit, which leads to everlasting life just as Jesus declared in John 4:14.

### Daily Devotion

An artesian well is a natural phenomenon in which water flows upward from the ground without any mechanical pumping. It occurs when underground water trapped between layers of rock is under so much pressure that once a path is opened, it bursts forth naturally and continuously. Unlike regular wells which require effort, digging, and drawing, artesian wells freely overflow from deep within the earth.

When the Samaritan woman came to draw from a traditional well that was deep, still, and dependent on human effort, Jesus offered her a spiritual spring—like an artesian well—that would always flow. This living spring is the Holy Ghost, who flows naturally and powerfully from a surrendered heart, like artesian water released from pressure.

» **REVIEW:** *Why was the water from the well not sufficient for lasting satisfaction?*

» **REFLECT:** *In what ways might you be seeking "water" that will not truly satisfy?*

» **APPLY:** *Ask God to remove anything—such as unforgiveness, pride, or bitterness—that is blocking the living waters of the Holy Ghost from overflowing in your life.*

# DAY 3

## John 4:16–19

<sup>16</sup> Jesus saith unto her, Go, call thy husband, and come hither.

<sup>17</sup> The woman answered and said, I have no husband. Jesus said unto her, Thou hast well said, I have no husband:

<sup>18</sup> For thou hast had five husbands; and he whom thou now hast is not thy husband: in that saidst thou truly.

<sup>19</sup> The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.

### Biblical Insight

Jewish readers of John 4 would have been surprised to learn of Jesus speaking with a Samaritan woman at a well. However, after getting over this initial shock, Jesus' discussion of marriage near a well would have seemed normal. Betrothals were often associated with wells, as seen in the stories of Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob and Rachel, and Moses and Zipporah. Although the Samaritan woman had gone through five husbands and was living with another man, Jesus was offering her a different kind of covenant—one that would last despite her previous relationship problems.

### Daily Devotion

In the 1800s, Sojourner Truth was born into slavery as Isabella Baumfree. She endured abuse, separation from her children, and injustice. After gaining her freedom, she had a spiritual encounter with God that transformed her identity. She changed her name to Sojourner Truth and dedicated her life to preaching, advocating for abolition, and speaking truth with boldness and compassion. Because she was poor, uneducated, and formerly enslaved, many people doubted her intelligence, her encounter with God, and her story. Yet she kept on speaking and preaching.

The Samaritan woman also had a troubled past, though broken relationships and rejection marked hers. Yet instead of judgment, Jesus offered her dignity, living water, and a new future. This encounter led the Samaritan woman to become a bold witness for Christ. Like Sojourner, the Samaritan woman was not the kind of person people expected to be a messenger of truth, but God uses unlikely voices.

» **REVIEW:** *How did Jesus graciously respond to the Samaritan woman?*

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» **REFLECT:** *When Jesus confronts you with the truth, are you open and honest, or do you tend to avoid uncomfortable conversations with Him?*

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» **APPLY:** *Journal a lie you have believed about your identity (e.g., “God cannot use me”). Then replace it with God’s truth, such as II Corinthians 5:17.*

# DAY 4

## John 4:25-29

<sup>25</sup> The woman saith unto him, I know that Messias cometh, which is called Christ: when he is come, he will tell us all things.  
<sup>26</sup> Jesus saith unto her, I that speak unto thee am he.  
<sup>27</sup> And upon this came his disciples, and marvelled that he talked with the woman: yet no man said, What seekest thou? or, Why talkest thou with her?  
<sup>28</sup> The woman then left her waterpot, and went her way into the city, and saith to the men,  
<sup>29</sup> Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did: is not this the Christ?

### Biblical Insight

Even the Samaritans were looking for the Messiah. The Samaritan woman told Jesus that the Messiah would tell her all things. The woman noted the Messiah is called Christ. The word *Christ* represents a Greek word used for Messiah. In Hebrew the word *Messiah* means “anointed one.” While we often think of anointing as spiritual, the ritual of anointing required literal oil to be poured on the heads of kings. *Christ* arose from a Greek word that expressed a similar idea.

### Daily Devotion

In 1559, Queen Elizabeth I was crowned in a grand ceremony full of pageantry, music, and coronating the queen. One aspect of the ceremony, which was hidden behind a canopy so the public could not see, was the anointing of Queen Elizabeth I. For the English Court, this quiet act was to indicate that Queen Elizabeth I had been set apart for a greater purpose: to govern with wisdom, justice, and authority under God.

Centuries before Queen Elizabeth I, the Samaritan woman spoke of the Messiah, the anointed one. Unlike earthly royals whose authority is tied to ceremonies, armies, and public spectacle, Jesus did not need a canopy, ceremony, or oil to signify His anointing. He simply spoke the truth and revealed, “I who speak to you am He” (John 4:26, NKJV). This is because Jesus’ divine anointing was rooted in His identity as God in the flesh.

» **REVIEW:** *What was the woman’s immediate reaction after Jesus revealed Himself to her?*

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» **REFLECT:** *What barriers (cultural, social, or personal) might you need to overcome to share Jesus with others openly?*

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» **APPLY:** *Reflect and journal about what you lean on for your spiritual guidance: appearances, traditions, or the clear teachings of Jesus?*

# DAY 5

## John 4:39-42

<sup>39</sup> And many of the Samaritans of that city believed on him for the saying of the woman, which testified, He told me all that ever I did.  
<sup>40</sup> So when the Samaritans were come unto him, they besought him that he would tarry with them: and he abode there two days.  
<sup>41</sup> And many more believed because of his own word;  
<sup>42</sup> And said unto the woman, Now we believe, not because of thy saying: for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world.

### Biblical Insight

The Gospel of John speaks of the power of the witness of John the Baptist. John the Baptist was not the light, but he bore witness of the power of the light (that is, Jesus). Even Jesus testified about the ministry of John the Baptist (Matthew 11:11). Based on Old Testament prophecy, John was an anticipated witness who fulfilled the role of Elijah. In contrast, the Samaritan woman was a surprise witness, testifying about everything Jesus told her. Jesus came to earth to do the expected and to fulfill prophecy, but He also appeared on the scene to do the unexpected.

### Daily Devotion

Malala Yousafzai was a young schoolgirl with no platform or fame when she stood up to the Taliban's oppression of girls' education in Pakistan. She was an unexpected witness, unlike the anticipated voices of political leaders, human rights activists, or international organizations. Malala's testimony came as she lived under constant threats. She was even shot three times by a Taliban gunman. While the world expected change to come from influential figures, a courageous young girl ignited a global movement for education and human rights.

Like the Samaritan woman in John's Gospel, Malala boldly shared her story, despite her youth and vulnerability. Her witness reminds us that courage is not about age, status, or experience; courage is about trusting God to use our voices for His purposes. If you feel small, fearful, or unqualified, remember that God can use your testimony, no matter how humble, to bring hope and transformation.

» **REVIEW:** *Why did many Samaritans believe in Jesus?*

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» **REFLECT:** *Who has come to know Jesus through your testimony?*

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» **APPLY:** *Do not be afraid to share your story of what God has done in your life. This week, look for small ways to share the story or your faith.*



JESUS  
CHRIST



SPRING  
**03**

MARCH 22, 2026

**LESSON TEXT**

Mark 2:1-8

**FOCUS VERSES**

Mark 2:5-7

<sup>5</sup>When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.

<sup>6</sup>But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts,

<sup>7</sup>Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only?

**TRUTH ABOUT  
COVENANT**

Jesus identified Himself as the Christ by forgiving sins.

# Jesus Forgave Sins

I WILL  
COMMIT TO  
UNDERSTANDING  
THE CORE  
MESSAGE OF  
JESUS' LIFE.

## COVENANT CONTEXT

Each of the four Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) contribute something special to the story of Jesus. In a previous lesson from the Gospel of John, Jesus surprised a city in Samaria when He declared He was the Messiah. In this lesson from the Gospel of Mark, Jesus angered His audience when He forgave a man's sins, proving He was more than a messiah sent from God; He is Almighty God incarnate willing to forgive and save us.

## **SG** *TEACHING OUTLINE*

**Icebreaker:** What makes for a good story? What makes for a good storyteller?

### I. JESUS' HEALING MINISTRY

#### A. Tearing Off the Roof

**DISCUSS:** *What is the most audacious action you have ever undertaken in faith?*

#### B. Your Sins Are Forgiven

#### C. I will prioritize my eternal destiny over my temporary problems.

**DISCUSS:** *If you have witnessed a healing or some other notable miracle, how did it impact your faith?*

### II. WHO CAN FORGIVE SINS?

#### A. Jesus Subverted the Scribes

#### B. How Could Jesus Forgive Sins?

#### C. I will preach the power of Jesus to forgive sins.

**DISCUSS:** *How can we effectively preach, by word or deed, the forgiveness Jesus so graciously grants?*

### III. TAKE YOUR MAT AND GO

#### A. Jesus Revealed Himself to the Scribes; the Scribes Revealed Their Hearts to Jesus

#### B. Jesus Healed the Man

**DISCUSS:** *Why do you think Jesus forgave the man's sins before He healed his body? What would you have thought if you were in the crowd?*

#### C. I will submit to Jesus to transform me both spiritually and physically.

**DISCUSS:** *Have you been able to see yourself in God's story? Perhaps more to the point, are you willing to submit to His plan for your life?*

## **PRAYER FOCUS**

Lead the group in prayer and consider the following topics of focus:

- » To prioritize eternal matters over temporal ones
- » To see Jesus for who He is, not just who we think He is

## BIBLICAL OVERVIEW

**Lesson Text:** Mark 2:1–8

**M**any cultures have taboos. Some may be easily forgiven, such as using the wrong fork during a meal. Although the “etiquette police” may raise their eyebrows at such a transgression, little to nothing may be said. Other breaches may result in a gentle correction or a mild rebuke. The breaking of some taboos, however, goes far deeper, leading to intense conflict and perhaps the threat of violence.

Blasphemy represented the ultimate taboo in the biblical world. While people might get upset if someone insulted their mother, their sister, or their wife, their blood would boil even hotter if they felt that someone had disrespected God or anything sacred. Blasphemy could even be considered a crime.

In Mark 2, Jesus faced the charge of blasphemy for claiming to be able to forgive sins. This proclamation qualified as blasphemy because only God could forgive sins. Despite the scribes believing that Jesus’ words made Him guilty of blasphemy, Jesus’ ability to heal and the forgiveness associated with it proved He was God incarnate.

Jesus faced a similar accusation of blasphemy in John 10 that led the Jews to prepare to stone Him. The holiday season made the ire of the Jews greater against Jesus. John 10:22 identifies the time as “the feast of the dedication,” also known as Hanukkah. The holiday, also referred to as the Festival of Lights, commemorates the Jewish defeat of Antiochus Epiphanes. This Greek tyrant claimed to be a god. The Jews may have equated Jesus with the false Antiochus as they perceived Jesus, being a man, but making Himself God (John 10:33). Once again, the Jews failed to realize Jesus truly was God in flesh.

Time and time again, the Jews failed to realize that God walked in their midst. Instead of seeing Jesus as the ultimate fulfillment of prophecy, they saw Him as a blasphemer. Ironically, their view of Jesus allowed Him to complete His mission and die on the cross for the sins of humanity. In the end, even those who accused Jesus of blasphemy will confess Him as Lord of all.

**MANY CULTURES HAVE TABOOS. SOME MAY BE EASILY FORGIVEN, SUCH AS USING THE WRONG FORK DURING A MEAL. ALTHOUGH THE “ETIQUETTE POLICE” MAY RAISE THEIR EYEBROWS AT SUCH A TRANSGRESSION, LITTLE TO NOTHING MAY BE SAID.**

# DAY 1

## Mark 2:1–2

<sup>1</sup> And again he entered into Capernaum after some days; and it was noised that he was in the house.

<sup>2</sup> And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive them, no, not so much as about the door: and he preached the word unto them.

### Biblical Insight

We can discern the origins of many Bible verses. Because of genre, the songs from Psalms and the wisdom of Proverbs make their identification easy. The names of certain biblical figures allow us to narrow down choices. Mark would stand out from the other books and even the Gospels due to his frequent use of the word *euthus*, meaning “straightway” or “immediately.” Mark features a fast-paced narrative. It seemed like Jesus was always on the go, accomplishing His ministry and mission in sixteen short chapters.

### Daily Devotion

Scholars have long debated the authorship of certain plays attributed to William Shakespeare. Some works, like *Hamlet* or *Macbeth*, are undoubtedly written by Shakespeare because of recurring motifs and Shakespeare’s distinctive word choice. His frequent use of rhythm in poetry, rich metaphors, and word choices like “wherefore” and “thou art” are his literary signature. For literary historians, linguistic fingerprints help them determine authorship.

Similarly, we can recognize the voice of Mark in his Gospel, not only by the title, but by how he wrote. Mark’s writing moves quickly, and his voice is so distinct that it shapes how readers and translators experience the story. This demonstrates to us the beauty of Scripture: God uses real people with their voices, styles, and experiences to tell His story.

» **REVIEW:** *What happened when the people heard that Jesus was in the house?*

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» **REFLECT:** *When was the last time you were so hungry for God’s Word that you sought Him with urgency and determination?*

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» **APPLY:** *While reading the Bible this week, instead of rushing, take time to notice repeated words, phrases, or tones. This will help you recognize how God used the writer’s voice and personality.*

# DAY 2

## Mark 2:3-4

<sup>3</sup> And they come unto him, bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four.  
<sup>4</sup> And when they could not come nigh unto him for the press, they uncovered the roof where he was: and when they had broken it up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay.

### Biblical Insight

The popularity of Jesus caused many people to throng Him. Mark 2:4 speaks of the press preventing four friends from bringing the man who was sick of the palsy to Jesus. Mark 3:10 refers to many pressing against Jesus because they had plagues; they were so desirous of healing that they mobbed Him. In Mark 5, the woman with the issue of blood had to find her way through the press to touch Jesus. Today many VIPs face crowds, but few would want to be near diseased individuals. Jesus was getting “good press” because of His healings and people with pressing needs pressed to meet Him.

### Daily Devotion

During the American Civil War, Clara Barton, the founder of the American Red Cross, became known as the “Angel of the Battlefield.” When most people were fleeing the front lines due to danger and disease, Barton pressed toward the wounded soldiers. Through gunfire, disease, and chaos, she pressed forward with medical supplies and mercy to the wounded soldiers crying out for help in the muddy fields or makeshift field hospitals. Barton’s compassion moved her toward people and their pain.

Throughout Jesus’ earthly ministry, He never retreated from the sick, desperate, and broken. He never retreated from the mess. He was touchable to the untouchable, compassionate to the marginalized, and a deliverer to the oppressed. Today Jesus still draws near to the hurting and He calls us to do the same. Like Clara Barton, we are invited not to run away from the hurting but to be moved with compassion to the hurting.

» **REVIEW:** *Why couldn’t the men take the paralyzed man directly to Jesus?*

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» **REFLECT:** *Who in your life needs help being brought to Jesus?*

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» **APPLY:** *Reflect on those around you: Who is hurting physically, emotionally, or spiritually? Then reach out to them with a text, a visit, or an act of service.*

# DAY 3

## Mark 2:5

When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.

### Biblical Insight

Jesus often worked miracles to demonstrate His identity. Jesus said He was the Bread of Life, and He fed the multitude to confirm it. He said He was the Light of the World, and He healed a blind man to provide evidence to support His claim. In Mark 2 Jesus demonstrated that He could forgive sins by healing the sick of the palsy. Healing and forgiveness of sins are connected. James 5:15 states that the prayer of faith not only saves the sick, but if that individual has committed any sins, they will be forgiven.

### Daily Devotion

Corrie ten Boom's life was marked by incredible hardship during World War II. Imprisoned in a Nazi concentration camp, she endured loss, suffering, and cruelty. After the war, she faced a defining moment in her faith journey when a former Nazi guard, who became a Christian, asked for her forgiveness. In that moment, years of bitterness and pain rose inside her until she prayed, "Jesus, help me." Then she was able to forgive. In that moment, she experienced profound spiritual healing that freed her heart from years of anger and pain.

Corrie ten Boom later said this was the most remarkable healing she had ever received, even greater than physical restoration. Her story reminds us that while physical healing is necessary, Jesus desires for us to experience a deeper kind of healing—healing from trauma, hatred, and sin through His transformative power.

» **REVIEW:** *What did Jesus offer the paralyzed man first: healing or forgiveness?*

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» **REFLECT:** *In your prayers, are you more focused on physical or spiritual healing? Why?*

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» **APPLY:** *Today, when praying for yourself, invite God to begin doing a healing work on you spiritually.*

# DAY 4

## Mark 2:6-7

<sup>6</sup> But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts,  
<sup>7</sup> Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only?

### Biblical Insight

When the scribes heard Jesus proclaim the man's sins were forgiven, they were angered. They believed Jesus was guilty of blasphemy for claiming to forgive sins when only God could do that. The KJV declares they were reasoning in their hearts. Other translations state they were "questioning." Another possible translation is "debating." Like the others in attendance, the scribes must have heard of Jesus' miracles and desired to see Him in person. They were not completely given over to doubt. However, they were not sure about His claim. Although some scribes openly debated with Jesus, these scribes were debating internally.

### Daily Devotion

In ancient Athens, Socrates was renowned for his wisdom and bold questioning of established beliefs, which often disturbed many Athenians. At Socrates's trial, many jurors were torn between admiration for his wisdom and fear of his ideas. Plato's detailed accounts of the trial record how the jury was conflicted. Although they questioned Socrates openly during the trial, their conflict was internal as they struggled to balance the tension between honoring tradition and embracing a new way of understanding the world. Eventually, Socrates was sentenced to death when his challengers could not fully reconcile their doubts.

Like the scribes who reasoned, or debated, in their hearts about Jesus, people often face moments of internal debate about our faith. Doubt and questioning do not mean rejection of Jesus; they can be a part of growing closer to Him. The key is to turn to Jesus with the doubts and questions and never turn away from Him.

» **REVIEW:** *What were the teachers of the Law thinking to themselves?*

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» **REFLECT:** *In what ways can you be honest with God about your doubts or uncertainties instead of keeping the doubts internal?*

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» **APPLY:** *In prayer this week, recognize and name your doubts before God. Then look to His Word and ask for wisdom, peace, and guidance through your internal struggle.*

# DAY 5

## Mark 2:5–8

<sup>5</sup> When Jesus saw their faith, he said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.

<sup>6</sup> But there were certain of the scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts,

<sup>7</sup> Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but God only?

<sup>8</sup> And immediately when Jesus perceived in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, he said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts?

### Biblical Insight

Mark 2 reveals Jesus' ability to see with both natural eyes and spiritual eyes. In the natural world, Jesus could see the faith of those who broke through the roof. Perhaps He also saw their faith through spiritual eyes. Jesus supernaturally knew the thoughts of the scribes who were reasoning in their hearts. When Jesus perceived their thoughts, He addressed their concerns. Jesus answers us whether we approach Him boldly and make our needs known, or if we are just thinking about a problem without voicing it.

### Daily Devotion

In medicine, diagnosing a patient cannot be based solely on what the eyes can see or what the patient says. Doctors rely on tools—such as stethoscopes, MRIs, and blood tests—to uncover hidden conditions beneath the surface. These tools enable doctors to detect things the human eye cannot perceive; such as silent heart murmurs, internal injuries, or illnesses within the body. Beyond the use of technology, the best doctors also listen carefully to the unspoken fears, anxieties, and hopes of their patients. They read their patients' emotions and thoughts, sensing what is not openly expressed but deeply felt.

Similarly, Jesus does not only respond to what we say or do outwardly. He perceives the invisible: the silent prayers, the hidden struggles, and the doubts. Like a skilled physician who understands both the seen and unseen, Jesus meets people fully, understanding hearts even when we cannot put our feelings into words.

» **REVIEW:** *What did Jesus first say to the paralytic when He saw the faith of his friends?*

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» **REFLECT:** *Are you more comfortable “performing” your faith than being vulnerable before Jesus?*

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» **APPLY:** *In prayer today, ask Jesus to reveal any areas of your life where you may be pretending. Ask Him to help you live with honesty and freedom.*



JESUS  
CHRIST



SPRING

04

MARCH 29, 2026

**LESSON TEXT**

Mark 4:30-5:43

**FOCUS VERSES**

Mark 5:18-20

<sup>18</sup>And when he was come into the ship, he that had been possessed with the devil prayed him that he might be with him.

<sup>19</sup>Howbeit Jesus suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the Lord hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee.

<sup>20</sup>And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis how great things Jesus had done for him: and all men did marvel.

**TRUTH ABOUT COVENANT**

Jesus has authority over anything that comes against us.

# The Miracles of Mark 4 and 5

I WILL  
PUT MY  
**FAITH IN**  
**JESUS**  
NO MATTER  
WHAT I FACE.

## COVENANT CONTEXT

In these early days of Jesus' ministry, He had already forgiven sins. In Mark 4-5, Jesus demonstrated complete authority over the foes we face: nature, the devil, disease, and even death. God was suspending natural laws, and even His own Law He gave to Moses, to work miracles to show that the man Christ Jesus is Almighty God in flesh and the kingdom of God was finally here.

## **SG** *TEACHING OUTLINE*

**Icebreaker:** Recount the busiest time you can remember in your life.

### I. JESUS CALMED THE STORM

- A. Jesus Taught the Disciples About the Kingdom of God
- B. The Disciples Feared the Storm

**DISCUSS:** *If you have ever wondered if Jesus cared because of what you were going through, how did He show you He does?*

- C. Jesus Demonstrated Complete Control over the Natural Realm
- D. I will rely on Jesus in the storms of life.

**DISCUSS:** *Over what areas of your life do you need Jesus to speak peace?*

### II. JESUS DELIVERED THE MAN POSSESSED BY DEMONS

- A. The Man Was out of Control
- B. Jesus Demonstrated Complete Control over the Spiritual Realm
- C. Jesus Was Rejected Although He Worked a Miracle
- D. I will actively share my testimony and look for opportunities to pray for miracles, even if I am rejected by others.

**DISCUSS:** *How often do you actively share your testimony?*

### III. JESUS HEALED A WOMAN AND RAISED A GIRL FROM THE DEAD

- A. A Woman Was Healed When She Touched Jesus

**DISCUSS:** *Where do you suppose the level of faith came from for the woman to believe touching Jesus could heal her?*

- B. Jesus Raised a Little Girl

**DISCUSS:** *What “dead” situation in your life needs Jesus’ touch? Are you willing to pray for Him to work today?*

- C. I will put my faith in Jesus, no matter what I face.

## **PRAYER FOCUS**

Lead the group in prayer and consider the following topics of focus:

- » For God to help our faith become stronger than our feelings
- » For God to give us the grace to harness the potential of our faith

## BIBLICAL OVERVIEW

**Lesson Text:** Mark 4:30–5:43

**A**lthough well known for the narrative of Jesus casting the devils out of the demoniac, Gadara was also celebrated because of the learned individuals who lived in the area. Philodemus of Gadara (first century BC) was an Epicurean philosopher and poet. Menippus of Gadara (third century BC) was a slave who joined the Cynics and became a writer of philosophy. Meleager of Gadara (first century BC) was another Cynic philosopher. Although not from Gadara, one of the most famous Cynic philosophers was Diogenes, who lived a life of poverty. When Alexander the Great met him, the great conqueror declared that if he were not Alexander, he would be Diogenes, complimenting the Cynic on his way of life.

Although he was not a Cynic, the demoniac lived like them in a certain way because he had a very meager existence. The Cynics rejected the pursuit of wealth and status and ignored social conformity. They were not interested in the latest trends or in making money; their goal was to achieve virtue. Although the demoniac's impoverished lifestyle made him somewhat like the Cynics, he was not pursuing virtue. In fact, the demoniac did not seek until he met Jesus.

The demoniac lived in the tombs and behaved erratically. The people in Gadara might have thought his best hope for deliverance would have been Poseidon, the god of the sea, who had a temple at Gadara. When Jesus calmed the winds and the waves on His way to help the demoniac, He proved Himself to be greater than Poseidon. Jesus could calm the raging storm in a very real sea or the emotional turmoil in a tormented individual.

***ALTHOUGH HE WAS NOT A CYNIC, THE DEMONIAK LIVED LIKE THEM IN A CERTAIN WAY BECAUSE HE HAD A VERY MEAGER EXISTENCE.***

# DAY 1

## Mark 4:30-34

<sup>30</sup> And he said, Whereunto shall we liken the kingdom of God? or with what comparison shall we compare it?

<sup>31</sup> It is like a grain of mustard seed, which, when it is sown in the earth, is less than all the seeds that be in the earth:

<sup>32</sup> But when it is sown, it groweth up, and becometh greater than all herbs, and shooteth out great branches; so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it.

<sup>33</sup> And with many such parables spake he the word unto them, as they were able to hear it.

<sup>34</sup> But without a parable spake he not unto them: and when they were alone, he expounded all things to his disciples.

### Biblical Insight

In the Bible the choicest trees provided fruit and shade. Vines and fig trees were considered the best a kingdom could offer because they provided economic prosperity (fruit) and protection (shade). First Kings 4:25 describes the ideal kingdom under Solomon where everyone dwelt safely under a fig tree or vine. The mustard seed seemed far less important than the fig tree or vine. Nevertheless, it had great potential. It would grow up, provide shade, supply safety for birds, and be a source of food. Jesus' parable revealed the importance of allowing faith to grow, even if it seems insignificant at first.

### Daily Devotion

In 1928 Alexander Fleming returned from vacation to find mold had contaminated one of his petri dishes. At first he thought it was worthless, but upon closer examination, he noticed the mold had killed the surrounding bacteria. This accidental discovery led to penicillin, the world's first antibiotic. Much like the mustard seed, what began as small and easily overlooked has become a source of healing and life for millions. Penicillin revolutionized medicine, saved countless soldiers during World War II, and remains a cornerstone of modern healthcare.

Similarly, faith may start small, but when entrusted to God, strengthened through prayer, and immersed in the Word of God, it has the potential to grow significantly. Just as penicillin transformed lives, our developing faith can impact others. One day your faith may become part of someone else's miracle, demonstrating that even the smallest beginnings can lead to extraordinary outcomes.

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» **REVIEW:** *What purpose does the grown mustard plant serve?*

It provides shade for the fowl of the air and lodging, the seed provides seasoning for food.

» **REFLECT:** *What small step of faith can you make today that might grow into something greater in the near future?*

—Be a light to some one so they may see Jesus.

» **APPLY:** *This week, watch for small growth moments. Reflect each evening on where you saw God in your life each day.*

# DAY 2

## Mark 5:2, 5-7

<sup>2</sup> And when he was come out of the ship, immediately there met him out of the tombs a man with an unclean spirit,

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<sup>5</sup> And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying, and cutting himself with stones.

<sup>6</sup> But when he saw Jesus afar off, he ran and worshipped him,

<sup>7</sup> And cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not.

### Biblical Insight

One key feature of the Gospel of Mark is the Messianic Secret in which Jesus often told others not to reveal His identity. In Mark 1 in the synagogue, Jesus rebuked an unclean spirit, expressly telling it not to speak. In contrast, Jesus allowed the legion of demons to identify Him, possibly because He was not in Judea. Jesus also allowed the man to tell his friends his testimony. However, Jesus did not allow the formerly possessed man to accompany Him because he needed to testify to people who knew him best. The Messianic Secret in Mark challenges readers to recognize the true identity of Jesus and share it.

### Daily Devotion

Locals in Burlington, Vermont, only knew them as “layaway angels.” In December 2011 a generous woman offered to help pay off families’ layaway bills. She especially wanted to pay for the accounts with toys and children’s clothes. When the families showed up to pay off their bill and take their gifts home to wrap, they discovered they only owed \$1. Soon, layaway angels sprang up around the country. One Kmart employee told reporters, “They don’t want thanks. They just want kids to have a Christmas.”

Similar to these anonymous but generous givers, Jesus was also staying hidden. In places like Judea, people were expecting a conqueror, not a Savior who would die and rise again. If they had known who Jesus really was, they might have allowed His background and possibly failed expectations to distract them from Jesus’ message. Jesus revealed Himself, not through spectacle, but through preaching the truth.

» **REVIEW:** *What title did the demons use to address Jesus?*

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» **REFLECT:** *How do you refer to Jesus when speaking to Him versus talking about Him?*

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» **APPLY:** *Pray and ask for any false expectations you have of Jesus to be revealed. Then ask Him to reshape your view of who He is.*

# DAY 3

## Mark 5:7-10

<sup>7</sup> And cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with thee, Jesus, thou Son of the most high God? I adjure thee by God, that thou torment me not.

<sup>8</sup> For he said unto him, Come out of the man, thou unclean spirit.

<sup>9</sup> And he asked him, What is thy name? And he answered, saying, My name is Legion: for we are many.

<sup>10</sup> And he besought him much that he would not send them away out of the country.

### Biblical Insight

James 2:19 is a popular Oneness Scripture verse, declaring that the devils believe there is one God, and they tremble as a result. We see further evidence of demons believing in the one true God when the man with the legion of demons worshiped Jesus and declared Him to be the Son of the Most High. By this declaration, the demons revealed the supremacy of Jesus above all other gods. The phrase “Most High” hearkens back to Genesis 14, which speaks of Melchisedec being the priest of the Most High.

### Daily Devotion

Napoleon Bonaparte, one of history’s greatest military minds, created an empire through conquering much of Europe. Yet, near the end of his life, while in exile on the island of Saint Helena, he reflected upon the lasting impact of Jesus Christ. He said that while he and other great rulers had built kingdoms on power and fear, Jesus built His kingdom on love—a love so great that people would still willingly die for Jesus.

Napoleon’s recognition of Jesus’ supremacy demonstrates that true power is not merely about force or influence, but rather a deeper, spiritual authority. Like Napoleon and the demons within today’s text, many acknowledge Jesus’ power but stop short of surrendering to it. Belief without submission leaves us trembling, aware of something greater but not fully trusting it. True faith means more than recognition; it requires wholehearted obedience and trust.

» **REVIEW:** *How did the demons respond to Jesus’ authority?*

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» **REFLECT:** *Are you acknowledging who Jesus is without fully surrendering to Him?*

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» **APPLY:** *Pick one area where you have struggled to trust God’s direction, such as finances, forgiveness, relationships, or time. This week, take one clear step of obedience in that area.*

# DAY 4

## Mark 5:25–29

<sup>25</sup> Now a certain woman had a flow of blood for twelve years,  
<sup>26</sup> And had suffered many things from many physicians. She had spent all that she had and was no better, but rather grew worse.  
<sup>27</sup> When she heard about Jesus, she came behind Him in the crowd and touched His garment.  
<sup>28</sup> For she said, “If only I may touch His clothes, I shall be made well.”  
<sup>29</sup> Immediately the fountain of her blood was dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of the affliction.

### Biblical Insight

The woman with the issue of blood pressed through the throng in an attempt to touch the hem of Jesus’ garment. While present-day readers might assume she was reaching for the lowest stitching of His clothing, Jewish tradition suggests a greater truth. Jewish men wore tassels known as *tzitzit*. Numbers 15:37–41 contains the commandment to make tassels on the four corners of a garment. (See also Deuteronomy 22:12.) As men donned their clothing, *tzitzit* were a daily reminder to obey the commandments. For the woman with the issue of blood, Jesus’ *tzitzit* may signify the end of twelve long years of suffering.

### Daily Devotion

In the mid-1800s, during the Crimean War, wounded soldiers endured bleak conditions in overcrowded hospitals. Many lost hope, yet each night a quiet figure with a small oil lamp walked among them. The soft glow of her light became a symbol of comfort and healing, and the men would whisper, “She’s here.” Florence Nightingale, known as “the Lady with the Lamp,” did not perform miracles, but her dedicated care and presence significantly changed outcomes as she tended to wounds and restored dignity.

In Mark 5 a woman reached for the *tzitzit* on Jesus’ garment, a reminder of God’s commandments. Her faith transcended the simple act of touching the hem; it connected her to the promise behind the symbol. Like Nightingale’s lamp, the *tzitzit* held no inherent power but pointed to something greater. When you feel too weak, remember to reach for reminders of God’s promises—they can illuminate your path in dark times.

» **REVIEW:** *What happened immediately when the woman touched the hem of Jesus’ garment?*

» **REFLECT:** *If you are feeling tired of hoping and praying for healing or change, how will you draw inspiration from this woman’s testimony in Mark 5?*

» **APPLY:** *Create reminders—on paper, on screens, or in your routines—of God’s promises to keep your heart focused on His faithfulness.*

# DAY 5

## Mark 5:38–42

<sup>38</sup> And he cometh to the house of the ruler of the synagogue, and seeth the tumult, and them that wept and wailed greatly.

<sup>39</sup> And when he was come in, he saith unto them, Why make ye this ado, and weep? the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth.

<sup>40</sup> And they laughed him to scorn. But when he had put them all out, he taketh the father and the mother of the damsel, and them that were with him, and entereth in where the damsel was lying.

<sup>41</sup> And he took the damsel by the hand, and said unto her, Talitha cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, I say unto thee, arise.

<sup>42</sup> And straightway the damsel arose, and walked; for she was of the age of twelve years. And they were astonished with a great astonishment.

### Biblical Insight

The Old Testament was written in Hebrew and Aramaic; the New Testament in Greek. Many of the quotations of the Old Testament that appear in the New Testament are from the *Septuagint*, a Greek version of the Old Testament, named after the belief that seventy individuals translated it. Another Semitic language, Aramaic, became the common language during the Persian Period and appears in two Old Testament books. Despite the prevalence of Greek in His world, Jesus spoke Aramaic. The tender words Jesus spoke to Jairus's daughter, "Talitha cumi," are Aramaic.

### Daily Devotion

Nelson Mandela believed in the power of language. He famously said, "If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his language, that goes to his heart." During his presidency in South Africa, Mandela chose to learn Afrikaans, the language of many who had oppressed him and his people. His motivation was not a love for the language, but the understanding that communicating in someone's language can touch their heart.

Similarly, when Jesus entered the room of Jairus's daughter, He spoke Aramaic rather than Greek, the common language of power. By doing so, He connected with the child and her family in a way that was familiar to her. Jesus speaks our language, meeting us not only in authority but also tenderly, showing His desire to touch our hearts.

» **REVIEW:** *What did Jesus say about the girl that made the people laugh at Him?*

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» **REFLECT:** *How can you maintain your belief even when others mock you?*

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» **APPLY:** *This week, consider the way you speak to others. Choose words that connect and communicate in a way that feels personal and relatable.*



JESUS  
CHRIST



SPRING

05

APRIL 05, 2026

LESSON TEXT

Mark 6:4-13;  
Luke 10:1-24

FOCUS VERSES

Mark 6:7, 12-13

<sup>7</sup>And he called unto him the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two; and gave them power over unclean spirits;

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<sup>12</sup>And they went out, and preached that men should repent.

<sup>13</sup>And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed them.

TRUTH ABOUT  
COVENANT

Jesus grants us His authority when we live in covenant with Him.

# *Disciples Called and Sent*

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I WILL  
EXERCISE THE

**AUTHORITY**

JESUS GIVES ME  
WHEN I AM IN

**COVENANT**

WITH HIM.

.....

## **COVENANT CONTEXT**

After several chapters of Jesus' disciples witnessing His miracles, Jesus sent out seventy faithful followers to work miracles as He worked through them. Jesus was giving us a glimpse into what covenant relationship looks like when He empowers and sends us to do His work for His glory.

## **SG** *TEACHING OUTLINE*

**Icebreaker:** Why is humanity often enamored with celebrity and fame?

### I. JESUS EMPOWERED AND SENT THE TWELVE

#### A. Jesus Gave Authority to His Disciples

**DISCUSS:** *What specific work or ministry do you feel God calling you to do? If you have the power to do it, do you have His authority?*

#### B. Jesus Gave Detailed Instructions to Those He Sent

**DISCUSS:** *In what ways may we better reflect outwardly the inner work of the Holy Spirit in our lives?*

#### C. Empowerment and Obedience Are Necessary in Our Lives and Ministry

**DISCUSS:** *How can you multiply your influence in the lives of others for the glory of God?*

### II. JESUS EMPOWERED AND SENT THE SEVENTY

#### A. Jesus Sent More Than Just the Twelve

**DISCUSS:** *What does it mean to you that Jesus is more interested in your faithful obedience than in your religious pedigree?*

#### B. I will live in covenant with Jesus and go where He sends me.

### III. BY WHAT POWER

#### A. Jesus Has Power to Do the Miraculous

#### B. We Have Power Through Covenant Relationship with Jesus

#### C. I will exercise the authority Jesus gives me for the miraculous when I am in covenant with Him.

**DISCUSS:** *Are you willing to be a vessel through whom God can work miracles and be glorified?*

## **PRAYER FOCUS**

Lead the group in prayer and consider the following topics of focus:

- » For God to make us sensitive to hear His voice calling us and sending us
- » For God to give us boldness to become active in His kingdom

## **BIBLICAL OVERVIEW**

**Lesson Text:** Mark 6:4–13; Luke 10:1–24

In Luke 10 Jesus sent forth the disciples two by two to take the kingdom of God to various cities. If a city did not receive the two disciples, Jesus' followers were to shake the dust off their feet as a witness against that city. Jesus declared that on the Day of Judgment, it will be more tolerable for Sodom than for the offending city.

Sodom represented the ultimate place of sin in the Old Testament. New York is known as the Big Apple; Sodom might have been called the bad apple. Sodom was more infamous than famous. In Genesis 19 we read of the horrors of the city as Lot and his daughters encountered the vile lusts of the men of the city. They were only saved by the angels sent to retrieve them and bring them to safety, thanks to the prayers of Abraham. Tyre and Sidon also represented wicked cities, although they did not garner the negative publicity of Sodom. These Phoenician cities, however, drew the wrath of God because they betrayed God's people after a time of alliance and peace.

Both David and Solomon looked to the expertise of Hiram king of Tyre in preparing to construct the Temple. Hiram provided the cedars of Lebanon and skilled craftsmen for building. Despite the good will between the two kingdoms, relations soured between them. To pay Hiram, King Solomon gave him several cities, but Hiram was not pleased with them (1 Kings 9:12–14). Hiram questioned the gift. He called Solomon "brother," revealing their relationship. But he called the land "Cabul," meaning "as good as nothing." Ironically, Jesus grew up in Nazareth in the area Hiram called Cabul. Perhaps that is why Nathaniel wondered if anything good could come out of Nazareth (John 1:46).

Strife arose due to the area of Cabul, leading to the distance between the Phoenicians and the Hebrews. The eighth-century prophet Amos pronounced judgment on the Phoenicians. In Amos 1:9–10, the prophet declared that Tyre had delivered up the captivity to Edom, likely referring to the Phoenicians trading Hebrew slaves to the Edomites. Amos condemned Tyre for failing to remember the brotherly covenant. In the Book of Amos, Tyre received the judgment of fire on its wall. Yet the wrath for a city refusing to receive the disciples would prove even worse on the Day of Judgment.

**SODOM REPRESENTED THE ULTIMATE PLACE OF SIN IN THE OLD TESTAMENT. NEW YORK IS KNOWN AS THE BIG APPLE; SODOM MIGHT HAVE BEEN CALLED THE BAD APPLE.**

# DAY 1

## Mark 6:2-6

<sup>2</sup> And when the sabbath day was come, he began to teach in the synagogue: and many hearing him were astonished, saying, From whence hath this man these things? and what wisdom is this which is given unto him, that even such mighty works are wrought by his hands?

<sup>3</sup> Is not this the carpenter, the son of Mary, the brother of James, and Joses, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his sisters here with us? And they were offended at him.

<sup>4</sup> But Jesus said unto them, A prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house.

<sup>5</sup> And he could there do no mighty work, save that he laid his hands upon a few sick folk, and healed them.

<sup>6</sup> And he marvelled because of their unbelief. And he went round about the villages, teaching.

### Biblical Insight

When Jesus declared a prophet received honor except in his own country, among his own relatives, and in his own house, He may have thought of the call of Isaiah in Isaiah 6. Despite the prophet's reluctance to prophesy due to his inadequacy, the Lord sent a seraphim to touch Isaiah's mouth and remove his iniquity. After this amazing encounter, Isaiah asked the Lord to send him to speak for the Almighty. Regardless of the miraculous experience in his calling, Isaiah's preaching went to people with spiritually blinded eyes who could not see or understand in order to be converted and healed.

### Daily Devotion

Galileo Galilei, the famous seventeenth-century astronomer, faced rejection and hostility from his community and the Roman Catholic Church. After observing the heavens through his telescope, Galileo advocated the revolutionary idea that the Earth revolved around the Sun, directly challenging the deeply rooted beliefs of his time. Galileo was condemned, silenced, and placed under house arrest by the very people who should have welcomed his insight. His community rejected him, not because he lacked evidence, but because the truth was uncomfortable.

God calls us to speak the truth of His Word to others, even loved ones, who do not want their comfort to be disrupted. Do not lose heart because rejection does not mean failure. Faithful messengers, like Isaiah and Jesus, are often rejected. Simply remember that we are called to be faithful, not popular.

» **REVIEW:** *Why were the people amazed by Jesus, yet still rejected Him?*

» **REFLECT:** *If you are more concerned with being accepted by others than being faithful to God's calling, what do you learn from this passage?*

» **APPLY:** *Before sharing a hard truth this week, pause to pray and speak with compassion. Let your tone reflect both truth and love.*

# DAY 2

## Mark 6:7-11

<sup>7</sup> And he called unto him the twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two; and gave them power over unclean spirits;

<sup>8</sup> And commanded them that they should take nothing for their journey, save a staff only; no scrip, no bread, no money in their purse:

<sup>9</sup> But be shod with sandals; and not put on two coats.

<sup>10</sup> And he said unto them, In what place soever ye enter into an house, there abide till ye depart from that place.

<sup>11</sup> And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrhah in the day of judgment, than for that city.

### Biblical Insight

When Jesus commanded the disciples to go forth two by two, He made them live by faith. They could not take anything for their journey—no bread, no bag, no money. They could only take a staff and sandals. They could not wear two coats. Jesus wanted them to depend on the generosity of others. Some suggest wearing two coats might have made them seem wealthy. Others have argued they would have to borrow clothing while cleaning their one coat. This dependence on others would open the gospel to hungry hearts as these people opened their homes and formed friendships with the disciples.

### Daily Devotion

During the early twentieth century, Sadhu Sundar Singh gave up Sikhism, wealth, comfort, and family ties to follow Jesus. At the age of sixteen, he donned a simple robe, took up a staff, and traveled barefoot across India and Tibet. Inspired by Mark 6, Singh carried no money or extra clothes. Often sleeping under trees and relying on strangers for food, he was rejected by some and welcomed by others.

In a country where Christians were often British or the wealthy elites, Singh's simplicity resonated with the impoverished majority of the nation. His lifestyle of radical humility, simplicity, and sacrifice demonstrated that Jesus was relatable and approachable. Through his radical dependence on Jesus, doors that might otherwise have remained closed opened. Like the disciples and Sadhu Sundar Singh, we are called to trust in Him who sends us, not in material possessions.

» **REVIEW:** *What actions did the disciples carry out during their mission?*

» **REFLECT:** *In what ways might your vulnerability and simplicity open doors for the gospel in your community?*

» **APPLY:** *This week choose a day and try going without something you usually rely on, such as takeout food, social media, music, or electronics. Use that time or discomfort as an opportunity to pray and listen to God.*

# DAY 3

## Luke 10:1-6

<sup>1</sup> After these things the Lord appointed other seventy also, and sent them two and two before his face into every city and place, whither he himself would come.

<sup>2</sup> Therefore said he unto them, The harvest truly is great, but the labourers are few: pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he would send forth labourers into his harvest.

<sup>3</sup> Go your ways: behold, I send you forth as lambs among wolves.

<sup>4</sup> Carry neither purse, nor scrip, nor shoes: and salute no man by the way.

<sup>5</sup> And into whatsoever house ye enter, first say, Peace be to this house.

<sup>6</sup> And if the son of peace be there, your peace shall rest upon it: if not, it shall turn to you again.

### Biblical Insight

Great kings have emissaries who go before them and announce their arrival. When Jesus sent forth the seventy two by two, they were preceding His arrival in various places. Just as John the Baptist served as the forerunner of Christ, these duos prepared the way for Jesus. However, these ambassadors did not appear as if they served a royal. Their meager possessions and lack of food or money demonstrated the vast difference between earthly kings and the King of kings. Yet only those who met the Prince of Peace's emissaries with peace would receive peace.

### Daily Devotion

In 27 BC, to consolidate power, Emperor Augustus visited various provinces within the Roman Empire. Imperial envoys were sent ahead to prepare each province for the arrival of royalty. These emissaries arrived with military fanfare, pomp, and circumstance, serving as more than mere messengers; they represented the power and might of the emperor. The arrival of these envoys instilled fear and urgency in the provinces, as everyone knew what awaited them.

But Jesus does not assert His rule through force or fear. His ambassadors do not resemble royalty, nor do they arrive bearing swords. While Roman emissaries showcased glory, power, and conquest, Jesus' emissaries—then and now—embody humility, dependence, and reconciliation. Which kingdom still stands?

» **REVIEW:** *Where did Jesus send the seventy?*

» **REFLECT:** *How can you live more like an emissary of Jesus Christ in your speech, posture, and presence?*

» **APPLY:** *Consider the areas of your life where you feel pressure to impress others, and release that pressure to God through prayer. Focus on living more like an emissary of Jesus Christ this week.*

# DAY 4

## Luke 10:7-9

- <sup>7</sup> And in the same house remain, eating and drinking such things as they give: for the labourer is worthy of his hire. Go not from house to house.
- <sup>8</sup> And into whatsoever city ye enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you:
- <sup>9</sup> And heal the sick that are therein, and say unto them, The kingdom of God is come nigh unto you.

### Biblical Insight

In Luke 10:7, Jesus set a precedent for caring for the needs of the ministry. When He sent forth the seventy disciples two by two, He declared they were to eat and drink what the hosts provided in the house where they stayed. He reasoned that the laborer is worthy of his hire. In I Timothy 5:17-18, Paul made the same argument, noting that elders who rule well and labor “in the word and doctrine” should be honored (i.e., remunerated). Paul referenced Deuteronomy 25:4 which states, “Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn.”

### Daily Devotion

In ancient Israel, threshing grain was a vital task. Oxen would walk in circles over harvested stalks laid on a threshing floor to crush the grain heads and separate the kernels. It was hard, repetitive labor, but essential. As the ox worked, it naturally reached down to eat some of the grain it was uncovering. Some owners muzzled their oxen to prevent them from eating as they worked, but God deemed this practice unjust. God insisted the animal be allowed to eat from the grain it was helping produce.

The principle applies to those who labor in ministry. Those who preach, teach, and serve God’s church are doing sacred work, but it is still work. When we neglect to support those who shepherd us spiritually, we “muzzle the ox.” Let us honor those who labor in God’s Word.

» **REVIEW:** *What reason did Jesus give for accepting food and lodging from others?*

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» **REFLECT:** *In what ways are you honoring those who labor in the Word?*

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» **APPLY:** *Compile a list of individuals who are investing in you spiritually. Take time this week to express to them specifically how their ministry has positively impacted you.*

# DAY 5

## Luke 10:21-24

<sup>21</sup> In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight.

<sup>22</sup> All things are delivered to me of my Father: and no man knoweth who the Son is, but the Father; and who the Father is, but the Son, and he to whom the Son will reveal him.

<sup>23</sup> And he turned him unto his disciples, and said privately, Blessed are the eyes which see the things that ye see:

<sup>24</sup> For I tell you, that many prophets and kings have desired to see those things which ye see, and have not seen them; and to hear those things which ye hear, and have not heard them.

### Biblical Insight

Jesus often encouraged humility. In Matthew 18:1-3, Jesus sat a child in front of the disciples and told them they must be converted and become as little children in order to enter the kingdom of Heaven. Similarly, in Luke 10:21, Jesus declared the Father had hidden things from the wise and the prudent and had revealed them unto babies. Both passages allude to Psalm 8 where God ordained strength out of the mouths of little children. Becoming like a child means being humble and avoiding the usual trappings of wealth associated with worldly kingdoms.

### Daily Devotion

During World War II, King George VI chose not to flee London during the Blitz. Instead, he walked among the bombed neighborhoods, sharing in the suffering of his people. On one visit, he knelt down to speak face-to-face with frightened children. During this encounter, a small, dusty, wide-eyed boy offered the king a sticky piece of candy. The king knelt, smiled, and accepted the gift with genuine gratitude, treating the child's gesture with dignity.

This image of a king kneeling to accept a humble gift from a child serves as a powerful reflection of the kingdom of Heaven. Just as King George VI valued the child's offering, God honors the humble, trusting, sincere heart of a child. In God's eyes, greatness is not measured by crowns or palaces but by humility and sincerity.

» **REVIEW:** *Why were the disciples considered blessed?*

» **REFLECT:** *In what ways do you identify with the wise and understanding, and in what ways do you identify as the little children in this passage?*

» **APPLY:** *Start cultivating a daily habit of confessing your reliance on God by saying, "Jesus, I need You." This should not be a cliché but a sincere acknowledgment of your dependence on Him.*



JESUS  
CHRIST



SPRING

06

APRIL 12, 2026

LESSON TEXT

Matthew 16; Luke 22;  
John 21

FOCUS VERSES

Matthew 16:13-16

<sup>13</sup>When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am?

<sup>14</sup>And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets.

<sup>15</sup>He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?

<sup>16</sup>And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.

TRUTH ABOUT  
COVENANT

God's covenant is based on His faithfulness, not our faithlessness.

This is the next  
*Peter's Confession  
and Denial*

I WILL  
TRUST JESUS  
EVEN WHEN  
I DON'T  
UNDERSTAND  
HIS WAYS.

COVENANT CONTEXT

Much like the nation of Israel in the Old Testament, God's people in the New Testament broke covenant with God. Even after all the miracles Simon Peter had witnessed, and even worked when Jesus sent him out, he broke covenant when he forsook Jesus and denied knowing Him. But the mercy of God still reached for him to repent so God could forgive and restore him. Mercy is still part of covenant relationship with Jesus.

## **SG** *TEACHING OUTLINE*

**Icebreaker:** What is the most embarrassing fall (literally speaking) you have suffered in your life?

### I. PETER'S FAITH

#### A. Jesus Asked His Disciples About His Identity

**DISCUSS:** *Where do your ideas of who Jesus is come from? Are they rooted in God's Word?*

#### B. Peter Declared Jesus Is the Christ

#### C. I will proclaim Jesus is my Messiah.

**DISCUSS:** *Where do you find it most difficult to share your faith? How do you still testify there despite the difficulties?*

### II. PETER'S FAITHLESSNESS

#### A. Peter Abandoned Jesus in the Garden

**DISCUSS:** *If your faith has ever wavered because you could not comprehend the plan of God, how did He reassure you?*

#### B. Peter Denied Knowing Jesus Three Times

#### C. I Will Not Deny My Identity in Christ under Any Circumstance.

### III. PETER'S TRANSFORMATION

#### A. Jesus Restored Peter

**DISCUSS:** *Why do we still sometimes struggle with our faith even after witnessing the miracles and wonders God works?*

#### B. Jesus Empowered Peter to Preach at Pentecost

#### C. I will submit to the Holy Ghost to transform me.

**DISCUSS:** *Besides Simon Peter, who else in Scripture was transformed by the mercy of God? Who else in your life has been transformed by the mercy of God?*

## **PRAYER FOCUS**

Lead the group in prayer and consider the following topics of focus:

- » For God's mercy to help us stand after we fall
- » For mercy to help others stand after they fall

## **BIBLICAL OVERVIEW**

**Lesson Text:** Matthew 16; Luke 22; John 21

**T**he New Testament often focuses on typologies. Stories from the Old Testament become keys to understanding New Testament events. Paul explained this method of biblical interpretation in I Corinthians 10. Paul mentioned several narratives from the Exodus and the Wilderness Wanderings. He compared going through the Red Sea to baptism. He referred to manna as spiritual meat. God was not pleased with many of the people in the wilderness, and in I Corinthians 10:6, Paul declared all these things occurred as examples to Christians later. The apostle offered several important teachings the Corinthians could glean from the narratives.

Other typologies are connected to fulfilled prophecy. When the Pharisees and Sadducees tempted Jesus to show them a sign from Heaven, Jesus told them that only a wicked and adulterous generation seeks after a sign. Only one sign will be given—the sign of the prophet Jonas (Jonah).

Jonah volunteered to have the crew of the ship throw him into the sea, acting as a sacrifice to save the others. Even so, Jesus offered Himself as a sacrifice to ensure salvation to anyone who believes on Him. When the great fish swallowed Jonah, the prophet spent three days in the creature's stomach. Similarly, Jesus was in the tomb and rose again on the third day.

The two narratives have an even more significant connection because Jonah described the belly of the fish as Sheol—a shadowy existence in the afterlife; the place of the dead. Jesus spent time in Sheol before being resurrected. While the Pharisees and Sadducees probably thought they were righteous, they were more like the wicked Ninevites to whom Jonah prophesied. However, the Ninevites repented in sackcloth and ashes, but these Jewish leaders rejected Jesus.

Thankfully, the typology breaks off here. Unlike Jonah, who waited for all Nineveh to be destroyed, Jesus died for our sins. He brought hope and salvation, instead of the death and destruction Jonah wished God had rained down on the Ninevites.

**THE NEW TESTAMENT OFTEN FOCUSES ON  
TYPOLOGIES. STORIES FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT  
BECOME KEYS TO UNDERSTANDING NEW TESTAMENT  
EVENTS.**

# DAY 1

## Matthew 16:6-7, 11-12

<sup>6</sup> Then Jesus said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

<sup>7</sup> And they reasoned among themselves, saying, It is because we have taken no bread.

.....

<sup>11</sup> How is it that ye do not understand that I spake it not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees?

<sup>12</sup> Then understood they how that he bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

### Biblical Insight

Leaven is the substance that causes bread to rise. Jesus warned the disciples to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees. Jesus later explained that leaven represents the doctrine of these groups. The Jews would have especially understood the significance of leaven since the Passover was the Feast of Unleavened Bread, when the Israelites got rid of the leaven in their homes. Jesus was concerned about the disciples being swayed by false teachings. As Paul noted in Galatians 5:9, “A little leaven leaveneth the whole lump,” meaning only a small amount of false doctrine can corrupt the whole.

### Daily Devotion

In culinary science, one of the most fundamental food safety principles is to prevent cross-contamination. In the kitchen, even a tiny smear of raw chicken juice on a cutting board can contaminate fresh vegetables and cause serious illnesses. This is why chefs and food safety professionals go to great lengths to use separate cutting boards, sterilized utensils, and gloves to carefully separate raw and cooked foods. A small impurity can harm the entire dish.

The same is true spiritually. A slight misbelief or harmful attitude can quietly infect the heart and spoil one’s faith. Just as food safety requires vigilance, so does guarding your spiritual life. Protect your faith like a chef protects the kitchen by keeping it pure and free from contamination.

» **REVIEW:** *What did Jesus mean by leaven in this passage’s context?*

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» **REFLECT:** *How can you better guard your heart and mind from subtle spiritual compromise?*

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» **APPLY:** *Review the voices, media, and influences you regularly allow into your life. Ask yourself: “Does this draw me closer to the truth or blur my convictions?”*

# DAY 2

## Matthew 16:15-19

- <sup>15</sup> He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?
- <sup>16</sup> And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God.
- <sup>17</sup> And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven.
- <sup>18</sup> And I say also unto thee, That thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.
- <sup>19</sup> And I will give unto thee the keys of the kingdom of heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven.

### Biblical Insight

Responding to Jesus’ question about His identity, Peter declared that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of the living God. Jesus replied, “Thou art Peter, and upon this rock I will build my church.” The name *Peter* means “a small stone,” so Peter cannot be the “rock” the church is built upon. Perhaps Jesus physically pointed to Himself as the rock, but the New Testament does not give us any stage directions. Another possibility is that Peter’s confession of Jesus’ identity as the Christ is the “rock” the church will be built upon. In any case, knowing Jesus is the Rock is foundational.

### Daily Devotion

Construction on the Tower of Pisa began in 1173, but the structure began to lean almost immediately. It was not designed to lean, but the tower was built on soft, unstable soil composed of sand, clay, and silt. The architects had not taken the time to dig down to the solid bedrock. As a result, the weight of the building caused the tower to sink unevenly. Only after a massive effort involving soil extraction and counterweights was the tower stabilized, but it was never fully fixed.

Just like the tower, our lives and churches will begin to tilt, shift, and eventually crumble if built on anything other than the solid Rock, Jesus Christ. Jesus is the only unshakable foundation strong enough to support the weight of faith, family, ministry, and eternity.

» **REVIEW:** *What promise did Jesus make about the gates of Hell?*

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» **REFLECT:** *Upon what foundation are you truly building your life?*

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» **APPLY:** *In prayer, invite God to reveal areas where your foundation is shallow, and ask Him to dig deeper into your heart.*

# DAY 3

## Luke 22:20–23

<sup>20</sup> Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.

<sup>21</sup> But, behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table.

<sup>22</sup> And truly the Son of man goeth, as it was determined: but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed!

<sup>23</sup> And they began to enquire among themselves, which of them it was that should do this thing.

### Biblical Insight

During the Persian Period, the prophet Zechariah offered several prophecies connected to Jesus. The celebration of Palm Sunday when Jesus rode a donkey hearkens back to Zechariah 9:9 when he spoke of rejoicing because the king would be enthroned on a donkey and bring salvation. While this prediction proved positive, another one was very negative. In Zechariah 11:12, the prophet foretold the Messiah being betrayed for thirty pieces of silver. While the disciples argued about who was the greatest, the truly greatest among them was about to be betrayed for a paltry sum.

### Daily Devotion

During World War II, Oskar Schindler, a German industrialist, saved over one thousand Jews by employing them in his factories and protecting them from the Nazis. He spent his entire fortune bribing officials and buying supplies to keep his workers safe. After the war, when those he saved came to thank him, Schindler broke down in tears. Looking at his expensive car, he said, “Why did I keep this? I could have saved ten more people with it.” Looking at a gold pin on his coat, he said, “This could have saved at least one more life.”

To Schindler, the value of a human life was greater than money or possessions. What do we value most? Sometimes we forget what truly matters—people. Schindler’s story reminds us that life is precious. Judas’s betrayal shows how easily we can fail to recognize true value, even when it is right in front of us.

» **REVIEW:** *How did the disciples respond to Jesus’ statement about betrayal?*

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» **REFLECT:** *What does it say about Jesus’ character that He would share a meal with the person who would betray Him?*

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» **APPLY:** *This week, practice being present. Give people your full attention. Listening deeply shows that you value them.*

# DAY 4

## Luke 22:47-51

<sup>47</sup> And while he yet spake, behold a multitude, and he that was called Judas, one of the twelve, went before them, and drew near unto Jesus to kiss him.

<sup>48</sup> But Jesus said unto him, Judas, betrayest thou the Son of man with a kiss?

<sup>49</sup> When they which were about him saw what would follow, they said unto him, Lord, shall we smite with the sword?

<sup>50</sup> And one of them smote the servant of the high priest, and cut off his right ear.

<sup>51</sup> And Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye thus far. And he touched his ear, and healed him.

### Biblical Insight

While Christians know that Jesus fulfilled prophecy to die for the sins of humanity and bring salvation, various factors contributed to Jesus fulfilling His mission. Jewish leaders from various groups were upset with Jesus because they felt He blasphemed due to His claims of divinity. The Sadducees worried that Jesus would take away from the power the Romans had granted them. The Romans were worried about anything that might incite the Jews to riot, and the zealots were of particular concern. To show the true reason for His sacrifice, Jesus mercifully reattached the ear Peter cut off and willingly accepted His own death.

### Daily Devotion

In 1956, missionary Jim Elliot and four missionaries set out to share the gospel with the Waorani people in Ecuador, a tribe known for violence. They prayed, prepared, and made friendly contact from the air. When they met the tribe face-to-face, they were speared to death. Remarkably, the missionaries had guns but chose not to use them. Elliot wrote before his death, "We're ready to die. They aren't ready for eternity." For Elliot and the other missionaries, they believed the eternity of others was worth more than their own lives.

Jesus' sacrificial love exemplifies that eternity is more valuable than life on earth. Jesus did not resist arrest. On the cross, Jesus did not call down angels to free Him or to punish His executioners. Jesus was not a victim of politics or angry crowds; He willingly chose the cross and our eternities, knowing it would cost His life.

» **REVIEW:** *How did Jesus respond when His disciples wanted to fight back?*

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» **REFLECT:** *In what area of your life is God calling you to love even when it costs something?*

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» **APPLY:** *Look for ways to love people when it costs something, such as your time, comfort, or pride. This could mean forgiving someone, listening patiently, or lending a helping hand to someone in need.*

# DAY 5

## John 21:18-22

<sup>18</sup> Verily, verily, I say unto thee, When thou wast young, thou girdedst thyself, and walkedst whither thou wouldest: but when thou shalt be old, thou shalt stretch forth thy hands, and another shall gird thee, and carry thee whither thou wouldest not.

<sup>19</sup> This spake he, signifying by what death he should glorify God. And when he had spoken this, he saith unto him, Follow me.

<sup>20</sup> Then Peter, turning about, seeth the disciple whom Jesus loved following; which also leaned on his breast at supper, and said, Lord, which is he that betrayeth thee?

<sup>21</sup> Peter seeing him saith to Jesus, Lord, and what shall this man do?

<sup>22</sup> Jesus saith unto him, If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? follow thou me.

### Biblical Insight

In John 21, Jesus provided information about Peter dying. Curious to know John's fate, Peter asked about his demise. Jesus declared that if He willed the beloved disciple to tarry until Jesus returned, it should not matter to Peter. Some misunderstood Jesus' words, believing John would not die. Tradition declares that John did not die as a martyr like the other apostles, but John did eventually pass away. Some have connected Jesus' words to the fact that John wrote the Book of Revelation and prophetically saw the return of Jesus.

### Daily Devotion

In the nineteenth century, George Mueller was known for his incredible faith in God's provision. He operated orphanages in England and never asked for money directly, trusting God to provide. Mueller's ministry was quiet, humble, and centered on care and prayer. At the same time, Dwight L. Moody was a fiery American evangelist, preaching to large crowds and starting big revival meetings. Moody's ministry was loud, public, and fast-moving.

Although their ministries looked very different, both men had a lasting impact on others for decades. If Mueller had compared himself to Moody, or Moody to Mueller, they might have become discouraged or proud. Instead, each embraced his unique calling. It is easy to compare our ministry, gifts, or influence to someone else's. God does not ask us to copy someone else's calling; He calls us to focus on faithfully following the plan and calling He has for us.

» **REVIEW:** *What was Jesus' response to Peter questioning John's future?*

» **REFLECT:** *Where might comparison be stealing your joy in following Jesus?*

» **APPLY:** *Find time this week to celebrate other people's successes through words of encouragement and prayer.*



JESUS  
CHRIST



This is for the next week.

SPRING

07

APRIL 19, 2026

LESSON TEXT

Luke 15:11-32

FOCUS VERSE

Luke 15:20-21

<sup>20</sup>And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

<sup>21</sup>And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.

TRUTH ABOUT  
COVENANT

Jesus is passionate about covenant inclusion.

# *The Lost Sheep, Coin, and Son*

I WILL  
SEARCH  
FOR THE LOST AND  
WELCOME  
THEM HOME.

## COVENANT CONTEXT

Throughout the Gospels, Jesus continually reached for people the religious leaders excluded, such as sinners and tax collectors. Jesus intentionally invited them into covenant relationship with Him and taught the religious leaders that He came for all, not just for them. In order to prove this principle, Jesus told three signature parables in Luke 15.

## **SG** *TEACHING OUTLINE*

**Icebreaker:** If you have ever found it difficult to include someone new in your group of friends, how did you make it work?

### I. THE TEMPTATION TO EXCLUDE

**DISCUSS:** *How did you feel when you were excluded and saw yourself as an outsider? If someone helped you feel welcome, what did they do?*

- A. The Pharisees' Complaint
- B. Jesus' Response
- C. I will resist the temptation to exclude others.

**DISCUSS:** *How do you treat people others may consider "less than?" How can you love people as Jesus loves them?*

### II. THE FIRST TWO PARABLES

- A. The Lost Sheep and the Rejoicing Shepherd
- B. The Lost Coin and the Rejoicing Searcher
- C. I will join in the Savior's mission to seek for the lost.

### III. THE PARABLE OF THE PRODIGAL

- A. The Undeserving Prodigal

**DISCUSS:** *What do you think of the younger son in this parable based on how he treated his father and his inheritance?*

- B. The Running Father
- C. The Frustrated Older Brother

**DISCUSS:** *To which of the three parables in Luke 15 do you feel the greatest connection? What about the story resonates with you?*

- D. I will extend the Father's lavish mercy to others.

**DISCUSS:** *Think of a time in your life when Jesus Christ "received you" (welcomed and accepted you). What was that experience like?*

## **PRAYER FOCUS**

Lead the group in prayer and consider the following topics of focus:

- » For God to help us remember the mercy He has given us
- » For God to show us how to extend His mercy to others

## **BIBLICAL OVERVIEW**

**Lesson Text:** Luke 15:11–32

**T**he Parable of the Prodigal Son has similar themes and ideas to those in other portions of Scripture. First, the genre of the parable reflects Jesus' tendency to teach in this manner. Jesus consistently spoke to His disciples in parables and later explained them in private (Mark 4:34). Even though this story commonly receives the designation "parable," the practical nature of the narrative could point to real events as in other parables. For example, as in the Parable of the Sower, those sowing would have seed fall by the wayside, among thorns, amid rocks, and on good ground. Many preachers today use real-world illustrations with spiritual applications. So it is possible the Parable of the Prodigal Son represents actual events, even though Jesus told the story to focus on rejoicing when what is lost is found.

The prodigal son story also features sibling rivalry, but with a twist. In Old Testament stories, the younger brother often proved superior to the older brother, as seen in the stories of Isaac and Ishmael, Jacob and Esau, and Joseph and his brothers. In the case of the prodigal son, the older brother faithfully remained at home.

The situation of famine often appears in the Old Testament with many of the aforementioned characters facing this challenge. The prodigal returned home to escape famine. The prodigal, however, took an action we do not see others doing in famine; he tended pigs and even considered eating the husks they fed on. The pigs were not his property (and if he still held to his Hebrew convictions, the pigs would be unclean); therefore, the prodigal did not eat any of them.

The story of the prodigal has many larger connections to Scripture, but it is also context-specific with Jesus relating stories about loss earlier in Luke 15. Jesus told a parable about a lost sheep and the rejoicing when the shepherd found it. He also told of a woman who found her lost coin and rejoiced. Therefore, Luke 15 serves as a solid introduction to many important themes in the Bible, being context-specific while also shining light on the larger picture of Scripture.

***JESUS CONSISTENTLY SPOKE TO HIS DISCIPLES IN PARABLES AND LATER EXPLAINED THEM IN PRIVATE (MARK 4:34).***

# DAY 1

## Luke 15:11–13

<sup>11</sup> And he said, A certain man had two sons:

<sup>12</sup> And the younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falleth to me. And he divided unto them his living.

<sup>13</sup> And not many days after the younger son gathered all together, and took his journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living.

### Biblical Insight

Those hearing the opening of the Parable of the Prodigal Son might have assumed a great teacher like Jesus was relating a cautionary tale to teach about the value of diligence. They may have thought about doing anything their hands found to do with all their might. Jesus, however, had a larger point in mind. The main idea was not the failure of the prodigal, but the redemption he received from the father. We too should be careful not to miss out on God's saving grace in the midst of our mistakes.

### Daily Devotion

During the Civil War, Private William Scott of Vermont was caught asleep at his guard post, which was a serious offense punishable by death. The army prepared for his execution, but when President Abraham Lincoln read the case, he was moved by Scott's youth, remorse, and good record. Lincoln granted him a full pardon. Scott returned to his unit, served faithfully, and gave his life in battle. Today Scott is not remembered for his failure, but for his redemption.

While many would have focused on Scott's mistakes, President Lincoln looked beyond the failures to who Scott could become. This echoes the heart of the Parable of the Prodigal Son. God looks beyond our failures, sees what we can become, and gives us the gift of grace.

» **REVIEW:** *What did the younger son do with his inheritance?*

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» **REFLECT:** *If you are caught in shame because of your past, what do you learn from this story?*

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» **APPLY:** *Shame whispers, "You are not enough" or "you will never change." Fight those lies by rereading this story and writing down verses like Romans 8:1.*

# DAY 2

## Luke 15:14–17

<sup>14</sup> And when he had spent all, there arose a mighty famine in that land; and he began to be in want.

<sup>15</sup> And he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed swine.

<sup>16</sup> And he would fain have filled his belly with the husks that the swine did eat: and no man gave unto him.

<sup>17</sup> And when he came to himself, he said, How many hired servants of my father's have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!

### Biblical Insight

Scholars provide different theories for why Jews do not consume swine. The Torah certainly forbids consuming swine (Leviticus 11:7; Deuteronomy 14:8), but practical reasons may exist for why God forbade the practice. Some have argued that not completely cooking the meat could lead to serious sickness. However, ancient peoples could have cooked the meat hot enough to avoid this medical issue. Others have pointed out that pigs compete with humans for the same food. For example, cows eat grass, but humans do not. Therefore, cattle were preferable livestock, and swine were not the best animals to raise. Whatever the reason, Jesus' audience would have been revolted by the thought of a Hebrew tending swine.

### Daily Devotion

In the early twentieth century, the Soviet Union launched massive agricultural reforms under Stalin's rule. To modernize food production, the government encouraged widespread pig farming. Initially, this seemed like a good plan because pigs grow rapidly and produce a substantial amount of meat. However, it became clear that pigs consumed large quantities of grains. As a result, the pigs diverted valuable grains away from the people, making food shortages worse and leading to widespread famine.

Pigs are a poor long-term choice for a society where grain is precious. While we do not know if God's instructions to Israel were linked to the necessity of grain in Israel, the principle remains: God's commands were not arbitrary, but protective. Sometimes God's "no" feels unnecessary or confusing, but what may seem restrictive is protective. God sees what we cannot see. Trust that His wisdom is for both righteousness and our well-being too.

» **REVIEW:** *What actions did the prodigal son take once he ran out of resources?*

» **REFLECT:** *How have difficult moments in your life helped you recognize your deeper need for God?*

» **APPLY:** *This week, when you sense a warning in Scripture or through conviction from the Holy Ghost, do not rush past it. Stop and ask, "What might God be protecting me from?"*

# DAY 3

## Luke 15:20–22

<sup>20</sup> And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him.

<sup>21</sup> And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son.

<sup>22</sup> But the father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet.

### Biblical Insight

Although the prodigal son felt unworthy to be called his father's son, his father treated him like royalty, giving him the best robe, a ring, and shoes. The parable brings to mind the reward Belshazzar offered for the individual who could read the writing on the wall. Not only was Daniel to receive a robe and a golden necklace, but he also was to be made a ruler in the kingdom. The prodigal did nothing worthy of royal honors, but his father's love looked past his faults. Nevertheless, the prodigal's brother would one day be ruler over the house.

### Daily Devotion

During the Vietnam War, Admiral James Stockdale was shot down over North Vietnam and captured. For over seven years, he endured relentless torture, starvation, and solitary confinement in the infamous "Hanoi Hilton" prison camp. He could have been forgotten and discarded as a casualty of the war. Instead, he became the unofficial leader of the American POWs, resisting enemy propaganda and keeping morale alive under impossible conditions. When Stockdale was released in 1973, the United States Navy offered him a hero's welcome with medals, ceremonies, and promotions.

He confessed in his writings that he did not feel worthy of the honors. Although he had always stood firm, he felt like a failure because he had not saved every man. Similar to the prodigal son, Stockdale returned home thinking of his failures and brokenness. Yet both men were honored, not for perfection but for returning home. Grace sees beyond guilt and shame.

» **REVIEW:** *What does the father's response reveal about his attitude toward his son before any words were spoken?*

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» **REFLECT:** *In what ways can you model the father's compassion and forgiveness in your own relationships?*

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» **APPLY:** *This week, think of one person who has walked away from God, and reach out to them to let them know you care.*

# DAY 4

## Luke 15:23-24

<sup>23</sup> And bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat, and be merry:  
<sup>24</sup> For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found. And they began to be merry.

### Biblical Insight

Upon the prodigal's return, the father commanded the staff to prepare the fatted calf. In the ancient world, calves were set aside and given a great deal of food to ready them for celebrations. Some of these events were scheduled. On other occasions, calves might need to be ready for impromptu parties, such as when an important person arrived unexpectedly. Therefore, the returning prodigal was treated like a dignitary. Today "killing the fatted calf" symbolizes the happiness one feels at someone's long-awaited return, based on the powerful message in the biblical story.

### Daily Devotion

Louis Zamperini, once a United States Olympian, was declared missing during World War II after his plane crashed in the Pacific Ocean. For forty-seven days, he drifted at sea before being captured and held in a Japanese prison camp. For over two years, his family, unsure if he was alive, feared the worst. When word finally came that Louis was alive and coming home, his hometown of Torrance, California, rejoiced. His mother cooked his favorite Italian meals. Streets were lined with banners. Reporters gathered. It was the homecoming of someone who had been lost and was now found.

Louis's hometown and the father of the prodigal son both realized that restoration is always worth a celebration. God does not simply tolerate our return to Him; He rejoices in it. No matter how far we may have wandered, our Father is preparing a feast instead of a lecture.

» **REVIEW:** *Who else did the father include in celebrating his son's return?*

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» **REFLECT:** *How do you celebrate someone's return to God?*

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» **APPLY:** *Today, reflect on and make a plan for ways you can begin celebrating someone's progress in their walk with God.*

# DAY 5

## Luke 15:28–32

<sup>28</sup> And he was angry, and would not go in: therefore came his father out, and intreated him.

<sup>29</sup> And he answering said to his father, Lo, these many years do I serve thee, neither transgressed I at any time thy commandment: and yet thou never gavest me a kid, that I might make merry with my friends:

<sup>30</sup> But as soon as this thy son was come, which hath devoured thy living with harlots, thou hast killed for him the fatted calf.

<sup>31</sup> And he said unto him, Son, thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine.

<sup>32</sup> It was meet that we should make merry, and be glad: for this thy brother was dead, and is alive again; and was lost, and is found.

### Biblical Insight

Although the Parable of the Prodigal Son is one of the most famous stories Jesus told, readers often miss a key point at the beginning. When the younger son asked the father for his inheritance, the Bible states the father divided his living to “them.” The elder brother also received his inheritance and could have left just like the prodigal. Instead, he stayed with his father. Despite his loyalty to his father, the older son still felt left out. The father reassured the elder son that all the father’s possessions belonged to the elder son.

### Daily Devotion

R. G. LeTourneau was a successful businessman in the 1900s. Early in his career, he believed his business and faith should remain separate until he heard a sermon reminding him that everything he owned was already God’s. LeTourneau chose to begin living as though everything in his life—wealth, success, and struggles—was entrusted to him by God. He committed to living on only 10 percent of his income and donating 90 percent to charity. “It’s not how much of my money I give to God,” he once said, “but how much of God’s money I keep for myself.”

Unlike the elder brother in the parable, LeTourneau realized he had already received everything he needed to live fully in the Father’s house. Sometimes we act like we are still waiting for God’s blessing, when in truth, we are already holding keys to the Father’s house. Remember, we are heirs, not hired hands.

» **REVIEW:** *Why was the older son angry and unwilling to join the celebration?*

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» **REFLECT:** *When people come back to God, do you rejoice or judge them?*

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» **APPLY:** *This week, be intentional in praying from a place of sonship. Instead of begging God for what He has already promised, thank Him in faith.*



SPRING

08

APRIL 26, 2026

# Raising Lazarus



LESSON TEXT

John 11:17-44

FOCUS VERSES

John 11:23-25

<sup>23</sup>Jesus saith unto her,  
Thy brother shall rise  
again.

<sup>24</sup>Martha saith unto  
him, I know that he  
shall rise again in the  
resurrection at the  
last day.

<sup>25</sup>Jesus said unto her,  
I am the resurrection,  
and the life: he that  
believeth in me,  
though he were dead,  
yet shall he live.

TRUTH ABOUT  
COVENANT

The ultimate hope  
of covenant is  
resurrected life in  
Heaven.

I WILL HAVE  
FAITH IN  
JESUS FOR  
HEALING  
AND  
RESURRECTION.



## COVENANT CONTEXT

We have seen that part of being in covenant with Jesus gives us access to miracles of healing. But our ultimate hope of covenant with God is a promise of a resurrected life in Heaven. In this story, Jesus demonstrated absolute authority over death when He raised a four-days-dead man from the grave with just the power of His spoken word.

## **SG** *TEACHING OUTLINE*

**Icebreaker:** What do we do when God does not meet our expectations?

### I. THE UNTHINKABLE

#### A. What They Expected

**DISCUSS:** *When you see someone go through something you wish they did not have to go through, how do you reach out to them?*

#### B. What Happened

#### C. I will trust Jesus, even when He does not do what I expect.

**DISCUSS:** *In your life when God delayed His answer, what did you do in the waiting? What would you do differently?*

### II. JESUS' ARRIVAL

#### A. Two More Days

#### B. The Sisters' Responses

**DISCUSS:** *What do the different ways Jesus related to Mary and Martha tell us about how He knows us?*

#### C. I will welcome Jesus into my desperate situation.

**DISCUSS:** *How has difficulty in your life brought you closer to Jesus?*

### III. THE MIRACLE

#### A. Raising Lazarus

#### B. Responding to the Miracle

#### C. I will have faith in Jesus for healing and resurrection.

**DISCUSS:** *How have you experienced resurrection power since coming to Christ?*

## **PRAYER FOCUS**

Lead the group in prayer and consider the following topics of focus:

- » For God to help us see His resurrection power even in broken situations
- » For God to bring life and wholeness to every part of who we are

## BIBLICAL OVERVIEW

**Lesson Text:** John 11:17–44

**W**hile mourners at present-day funerals include family, friends, and acquaintances, it was customary for Jews to hire professional mourners, which is likely who was in the house with Mary (John 11:31). These individuals sang, wailed, and led rituals, calling for family and friends to grieve. They demonstrated the sense of loss the community felt for a valued member.

Professional mourners appear in various ancient Near Eastern cultures and in the Old Testament. An Egyptian stone monument known as “Relief of the Mourning Women” (1319–1204 BC) depicts a group of women behaving dramatically: Some are falling to the ground, and many are throwing dust on their heads. (See Job 2:12.) In Egypt, the occupation of being a wailing woman was only open to childless women. Men did not participate due to the indignity associated with males weeping in public.

Despite being a man, Job behaved somewhat similarly to these mourning women as he grieved the loss of his children and all the other calamities that had befallen him. He tore his robe and shaved his head. While the wailing women fell to the ground in distress, Job bowed down in an act of worship.

Even if the family of the deceased found themselves shell-shocked into silence, the wailing women could help them. Jeremiah 9:17–18 speaks of calling for the mourning women, asking them to make haste and mourn so eyes may be filled with tears and gush with water. The eighth-century prophet Amos spoke of those skillful in mourning (Amos 5:16).

We can trace professional mourners back to the time of Amos in ancient Greece. Some of the wailing women pulled out their hair. Professional mourners still participate in funerals in Greece today. However, they merely pull on their hair instead of uprooting it. Jesus encountered professional mourners at the death of Jairus’s daughter in Mark 5:38–40. Jesus asked those who wept and wailed intensely why they made such ado. He declared the damsel was not dead but was sleeping. Because Jesus interfered in their work and they did not believe, they mocked Him.

When Jesus showed up after the funeral of Lazarus—after his friend had been dead for four days—Jesus groaned and wept. This time He chose not to confront the professional mourners. Instead, He raised Lazarus from the dead. While Jesus cared about the loss of His friend, He was not a professional mourner—He was a professional healer.

***IN EGYPT, THE OCCUPATION OF BEING A WAILING WOMAN WAS ONLY OPEN TO CHILDLESS WOMEN. MEN DID NOT PARTICIPATE DUE TO THE INDIGNITY ASSOCIATED WITH MALES WEEPING IN PUBLIC.***

# DAY 1

## John 11:17, 38–39

<sup>17</sup> Then when Jesus came, he found that he had lain in the grave four days already.

....

<sup>38</sup> Jesus therefore again groaning in himself cometh to the grave. It was a cave, and a stone lay upon it.

<sup>39</sup> Jesus said, Take ye away the stone. Martha, the sister of him that was dead, saith unto him, Lord, by this time he stinketh: for he hath been dead four days.

### Biblical Insight

Jewish ideas about life and death shaped this narrative, particularly noting Lazarus being dead for four days. The Jewish teacher Ben Kaphra commented on the afterlife. Although Kaphra lived after the time of Jesus, his ideas may reflect earlier beliefs. He believed that after death, the spirit of the deceased hovered around the tomb trying to return to the body, but because the form of the face would change on the fourth day, the spirit would leave the body. Even if it were true that the spirit of Lazarus noticed his own face had changed, he still heard the voice of Jesus and responded to His call.

### Daily Devotion

In a village plagued by drought, a group of people gathered daily in their temple to pray for rain. Weeks passed and the hope of the villagers slowly faded—except for little Mandy, who brought an umbrella to every prayer. “Why?” they asked. Mandy smiled, “God is never late.” On the fiftieth day, clouds gathered. As the first drops fell, Mandy opened an umbrella and danced in the rain. The villagers wept in awe, realizing faith isn’t just waiting—it’s expecting. God, indeed, was right on time.

The God we serve is eternal: He doesn’t have a beginning or an ending. He is not confined in time like we are. As we wait for the things we are praying for, let us have confidence in God’s timing, for He makes all things beautiful in His time.

» **REVIEW:** *How many days had Lazarus been dead before Jesus arrived?*

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» **REFLECT:** *What are some things you are praying for and waiting on God for?*

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» **APPLY:** *Journal about an experience that testifies to God’s perfect timing.*

# DAY 2

## John 11:21–25

- <sup>21</sup> Then said Martha unto Jesus, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.
- <sup>22</sup> But I know, that even now, whatsoever thou wilt ask of God, God will give it thee.
- <sup>23</sup> Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again.
- <sup>24</sup> Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.
- <sup>25</sup> Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live.

### Biblical Insight

Many Jews were not sure about resurrection. The Sadducees did not believe in it, but the Pharisees embraced it. The Sadducees wondered how marriage might work in the resurrection (Matthew 22:23–30). Jesus taught that anyone who made a feast and invited the poor, maimed, lame, and blind would be recompensed in the resurrection (Luke 14:12–14). In most cases, the resurrection seemed like something in the distant future. Martha knew that Lazarus would rise again in the resurrection, but she failed to notice the reality of the resurrection standing right in front of her. Jesus was the resurrection and the life.

### Daily Devotion

In a quiet barrio in the Philippines, Jaimee found her grandfather’s broken radio—silent since the war. She cleaned it, rewired the parts, and set it on the kitchen table. One stormy night the radio crackled and then played an old folk song. Her grandfather, now frail and fading, wept. “Your grandmother’s favorite,” he said. The radio’s voice stirred memories, laughter, and love long buried. Jaimee hadn’t just fixed a machine—she had brought a lifetime of memories back to life.

We rejoice when what was once broken is restored, when what was lost is found. But on the day Jesus returns, He will do far more than repair what is broken; He will transform us completely, changing our perishable bodies into glorious ones. Let us cling to this promised inheritance, our blessed hope, as we eagerly await the day of His return.

» **REVIEW:** *Who is the resurrection and life?*

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» **REFLECT:** *What things in your life would you like Jesus to resurrect? Write them down.*

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» **APPLY:** *As you pray today, ask God to resurrect those things you wrote down.*

# DAY 3

## John 11:23–27

<sup>23</sup> Jesus saith unto her, Thy brother shall rise again.

<sup>24</sup> Martha saith unto him, I know that he shall rise again in the resurrection at the last day.

<sup>25</sup> Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live:

<sup>26</sup> And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?

<sup>27</sup> She saith unto him, Yea, Lord: I believe that thou art the Christ, the Son of God, which should come into the world.

### Biblical Insight

John 11:27 includes most of the key ways Christians would later view Jesus. Martha declared that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. Christians would use the symbol of the fish to let others know they were Christians and to mark gatherings. The Greek word for “fish” is *ichthus*. The initials of the Greek words form the acronym: “Jesus Christ, Son of God, Savior.” Martha did not yet know if Jesus would save her brother or if He would save the world, but she was well on her way to having the complete revelation that appears in the word *ichthus*.

### Daily Devotion

Phebe stood in her family’s backyard in front of a dying mango tree, its branches bare, its bark brittle. Her neighbors mocked her as she whispered, “You will bear mangoes again.” Every day, she spoke words of faith, hope, and sweetness. Months passed, yet nothing happened. Then one morning, blossoms appeared. By harvest time, the tree was overflowing with fruit. The neighbors were in awe. “What magic is this?” they asked. Phebe smiled, “Not magic—just words spoken in faith.”

Scripture tells us that death and life are in the power of the tongue. Words (especially those spoken in faith) can carry eternal impact, both in this world and the one to come. Like Martha, let us choose to speak words of hope and truth. Even when our circumstances seem to be unfavorable, declaring God’s promises in faith positions us to witness His faithfulness unfold before our eyes.

» **REVIEW:** *What did Jesus promise Martha in John 11:23?*

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» **REFLECT:** *Think of a time someone’s encouraging words motivated or inspired you.*

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» **APPLY:** *Prayerfully share words of encouragement with someone who could use some kindness.*

# DAY 4

## John 11:32-36

- <sup>32</sup> Then when Mary was come where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying unto him, Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died.
- <sup>33</sup> When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews also weeping which came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled,
- <sup>34</sup> And said, Where have ye laid him? They said unto him, Lord, come and see.
- <sup>35</sup> Jesus wept.
- <sup>36</sup> Then said the Jews, Behold how he loved him!

### Biblical Insight

John 11:5 declares Jesus loved Martha, Mary, and Lazarus, using the Greek word *agape* to describe His affection. *Agape* is the highest form of love and is selfless and unconditional. In John 11:36, the Jews responded to Jesus' weeping over Lazarus's death by exclaiming, "Behold how he loved him!" They used a form of the Greek word *philia*, which speaks of friendship or affection. As a human, Jesus felt friendship for Lazarus. As God of the universe, He expressed the ultimate love for this grieving family.

### Daily Devotion

Rain tapped the hospital window as Connie held her friend's hand. Silence filled the hospital room when they heard the bad news. Tears welled in her friend's eyes, and soon Connie's own vision blurred. She hadn't known the man well, but his pain seeped into her heart too. They cried together for several minutes. In that shared sorrow, something softened. Connie soon realized that sometimes, healing begins not in words, but in crying beside someone who is broken.

People often search for the right words to comfort someone who is grieving. Yet more often than not, the grieving really need someone to sit with them as they cry. In those moments, empathy speaks louder than words. Being present—quietly, compassionately—is one of the most powerful and meaningful gifts we can offer to someone in pain.

» **REVIEW:** What did Jesus do in John 11:35?

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» **REFLECT:** Whom do you call when you are sad? Who calls you for encouragement?

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» **APPLY:** Call someone who is grieving today and ask if you could visit with him or her this week.

# DAY 5

## John 11:40-44

<sup>40</sup> Jesus saith unto her, Said I not unto thee, that, if thou wouldest believe, thou shouldest see the glory of God?

<sup>41</sup> Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead was laid. And Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me.

<sup>42</sup> And I knew that thou hearest me always: but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou hast sent me.

<sup>43</sup> And when he thus had spoken, he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth.

<sup>44</sup> And he that was dead came forth, bound hand and foot with graveclothes: and his face was bound about with a napkin. Jesus saith unto them, Loose him, and let him go.

### Biblical Insight

In Luke 18:22, Jesus informed the rich young ruler that despite his knowledge and observance of the commandments, he lacked one thing. Jesus challenged him to sell everything he had and give it to the poor. Then the young ruler could obey the ultimate command of discipleship and “come” and follow Jesus. The Greek word translated “come” is *deuro*. This New Testament word also appears in John 11:43 when Jesus told Lazarus to “come” out. Ironically, a living man refused Jesus and missed out. In contrast, a dead man responded to Jesus’ command and revived.

### Daily Devotion

One October day in 1987, eighteen-month-old Jessica McClure was walking through the backyard where she fell twenty-two feet underground down a narrow well shaft. Rescuers worked for fifty-eight straight hours to rescue her. During those two and a half days, paramedics arranged for Jessica’s mother to speak to her through a microphone they lowered. When Jessica heard her mother’s voice, she perked up, responded, and tried to talk. Her mother’s voice gave her hope that she would be saved. And she was.

When Jesus arrived at Lazarus’s tomb, the community was already in the midst of their seven-day mourning period. Lazarus’s death had been accepted as final. Yet Jesus stepped up to the tomb and called out to His friend: “Lazarus, come forth.” That was all Lazarus needed to know he was going to live again. The power of Jesus’ words revealed His power over death and brought Lazarus from darkness back into light.

» **REVIEW:** *What did Jesus command the people to do in John 11:44?*

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» **REFLECT:** *Do you have personal stories that prove God is always on time?*

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» **APPLY:** *In your prayer today, listen for the Lord’s voice to strengthen your faith for the things you are praying about.*



JESUS  
CHRIST



SPRING

09

MAY 03, 2026

**LESSON TEXT**

Matthew 21; Mark 11;  
Luke 19; John 12

**FOCUS VERSES**

Luke 19:36-38

<sup>36</sup>And as he went, they spread their clothes in the way.

<sup>37</sup>And when he was come nigh, even now at the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen;

<sup>38</sup>Saying, Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest.

**TRUTH ABOUT COVENANT**

Jesus is the messianic King who sits on David's throne.

# *The Triumphal Entry*

I WILL  
SERVE AND  
PLEDGE MY

**ALLEGIANCE**

TO JESUS  
AS MY KING.

## **COVENANT CONTEXT**

As Jesus neared the end of His life on earth, everything had been pointing to that final week as He entered Jerusalem. Rather than enter as a conquering king on a white horse, Jesus fulfilled Zechariah's prophecy by riding on a colt, showing Himself to be a meek Messiah for all humanity. At the end of that week, Jesus would introduce the new covenant based not on Jewish law, but on His death, burial, and triumphant resurrection.

## **SG** *TEACHING OUTLINE*

**Icebreaker:** What is the most memorable parade you have been to or involved in?

**DISCUSS:** *What part of a parade is your favorite? How do our parades compare to the triumphal entry of Jesus?*

### I. JESUS' PREPARATIONS

- A. Jesus Fulfilled Prophecy
- B. Jesus Came as a Peaceful King
- C. I will see Jesus for who He really is, not who I want Him to be.

**DISCUSS:** *As we look at the Bible from beginning to end, how can we see the prophecies and their fulfillments are part of God's ultimate plan?*

### II. JESUS' ARRIVAL

- A. The People Cried Hosanna
- B. The People Proclaimed Jesus as the Son of David

**DISCUSS:** *Given that God's covenants were given over a span of four thousand years, what do you think when you realize God remembered and kept His covenant the entire time?*

- C. The Pharisees Complained
- D. I will choose to follow Jesus wherever He leads me.

**DISCUSS:** *If you feel comfortable, recount a dark time when you felt God's presence holding you up and seeing you through it.*

### III. JESUS' SORROW

- A. The People Rejoiced, But Jesus Wept
- B. The New Covenant Is Bigger Than Jerusalem
- C. I will serve and pledge my allegiance to Jesus as my King.

**DISCUSS:** *How can we serve Jesus by honoring Him as the King of glory in practical ways today?*

## **PRAYER FOCUS**

Lead the group in prayer and consider the following topics of focus:

- » For God to help us understand He is Jesus, the author of the New Covenant
- » For God to help us receive everything He has promised us according to His Word

## **BIBLICAL OVERVIEW**

**Lesson Text:** Matthew 21; Mark 11; Luke 19; John 12

**M**atthew 21 is a veritable treasure trove of allusions to other portions of Scripture, including fulfilled prophecy, a quotation from Psalms, and a song from the prophet Isaiah. The chapter reveals the significance of the Old Testament. Readers of the New Testament cannot understand the text without having a strong understanding of and appreciation for the Hebrew Scriptures.

Jesus' command to find the foal of a donkey fulfills the prophecy of Zechariah from the Persian Period. Zechariah 9:9 contains the exhortation to rejoice and shout because the King is coming, bringing salvation while riding a donkey. Jesus fulfilled this prophecy by being enthroned on the beast of burden. The people who shouted on Palm Sunday identified Jesus as the "Son of David" who appeared "in the name of the Lord," showing that the Messiah would be a descendant of David (Matthew 21:9).

The happiness of the scene soon shifted to Jesus' frustration as He cast out those who bought and sold in the Temple, and He overthrew the tables of the moneychangers and the seats of those who sold doves. Jesus quoted the prophet Jeremiah in which the house that bore the name of the Lord had been transformed into a den of robbers. The Lord declared that He had seen what was going on. During the days of Jeremiah, the Lord watched from above. In the New Testament age, Jesus was fully present to observe the problem.

When the chief priests and scribes criticized the children crying in the Temple, "Hosanna to the Son of David," they were extremely displeased. In response, Jesus quoted Psalm 8:2, which spoke of praise being perfected "out of the mouth of babes and sucklings." Later in Matthew 21, Jesus told a parable about a householder who planted a vineyard and left husbandmen in charge while he went into a far country. The husbandmen killed the servants and then later killed the son of the owner in order to claim the vineyard.

Although the parable points to the death of Jesus, it also hearkens back to the Song of the Vineyard in Isaiah 5:1-7. The eighth-century prophet compared Israel to a vineyard that brought forth wild grapes. When the Lord looked for righteousness among the grapes, He only found oppression instead.

**READERS OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CANNOT UNDERSTAND THE TEXT WITHOUT HAVING A STRONG UNDERSTANDING OF AND APPRECIATION FOR THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES.**

# DAY 1

## Matthew 21:8–11

<sup>8</sup> And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strawed them in the way.

<sup>9</sup> And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David: Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord; Hosanna in the highest.

<sup>10</sup> And when he was come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, Who is this?

<sup>11</sup> And the multitude said, This is Jesus the prophet of Nazareth of Galilee.

### Biblical Insight

The word *Hosanna* in the Gospels is a transliteration of the Hebrew phrase meaning “please save” or “save us now.” The exact phrase appears in Psalm 118:25. Leading up to this verse, several verses in the psalm contain messianic implications. Verse 21 speaks of God becoming “my salvation,” a nod to Isaiah 12:2. Verse 22 speaks of the rejected stone becoming “the head of the corner,” a verse Peter quoted in Acts 4:11. Palm Sunday was the day the Lord had made for people to “rejoice and be glad in it” (Psalm 118:24).

### Daily Devotion

On February 23, 1945, atop Iwo Jima’s Mount Suribachi, six United States Marines raised a large American flag—replacing a smaller one hoisted earlier—to signal capture of the high ground. The powerful image became the symbol of victory and unity amid a brutal battle. That dramatic flag-raising echoed worldwide, embodying courage, sacrifice, and triumph. It remains one of history’s most iconic moments, when a simple cloth aloft spoke louder than words.

As the raised flag atop Mount Suribachi symbolized victory and triumph, palm branches held similar meaning in ancient Jewish culture—signs of celebration and rejoicing. Today we lift our hands in gratitude for every battle Jesus Christ has already won on our behalf. We may not hold flags or palm branches, but we use our hands and our voices to honor and remember the goodness of God in our lives.

» **REVIEW:** *What did the people cry aloud in Matthew 21:9?*

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» **REFLECT:** *What good things has God done for you this past week?*

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» **APPLY:** *In your prayer today, lift up your hands and thank God for the blessings He has poured into your life.*

# DAY 2

## Mark 11:27–30, 33

27 And they come again to Jerusalem: and as he was walking in the temple, there come to him the chief priests, and the scribes, and the elders,  
28 And say unto him, By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority to do these things?  
29 And Jesus answered and said unto them, I will also ask of you one question, and answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things.  
30 The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men? answer me.  
.....  
33 And they answered and said unto Jesus, We cannot tell. And Jesus answering saith unto them, Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things.

### Biblical Insight

The question of Jesus’ authority arises frequently in the Gospel of Mark. In the opening chapter, Jesus’ teaching set Him apart because He proclaimed the word with authority and not as the scribes, leading to astonishment. Jesus extended His authority beyond teaching because He commanded unclean spirits and they obeyed Him (Mark 1:21–27). Jesus generally kept the nature of His authority secret, allowing others to receive the revelation for themselves. That is why He did not proclaim the origin of His authority to the chief priests, scribes, and elders.

### Daily Devotion

During science class, Rosie raised her hand to ask a question. “Why does the moon change shape?” she asked. The teacher smiled, glad someone finally attempted to participate. The question led to a lively discussion. After class the teacher told Rosie, “One good question can unlock a world of understanding.” That day Rosie realized curiosity wasn’t just welcome—it was powerful. Asking the right questions didn’t just help her learn; it helped everyone see the world more clearly.

The chief priests asked Jesus a question, but their motives were not sincere. Still, their story reminds us of the importance of asking the right questions in our journey as disciples of Jesus. We shouldn’t be afraid to dig deeper—especially in God’s Word—pursuing truth until it takes root in our hearts. Honest questions lead to deeper understanding, and a sincere search draws us closer to the heart of God.

» **REVIEW:** *Whose baptism did Jesus ask the religious leaders about in Mark 11:30?*

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» **REFLECT:** *Is there a question you once asked that, looking back, you are grateful you did?*

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» **APPLY:** *Write down a few questions you would like answered. Begin researching them, one by one.*

# DAY 3

## Luke 19:35–38

<sup>35</sup> And they brought him to Jesus: and they cast their garments upon the colt, and they set Jesus thereon.

<sup>36</sup> And as he went, they spread their clothes in the way.

<sup>37</sup> And when he was come nigh, even now at the descent of the mount of Olives, the whole multitude of the disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen;

<sup>38</sup> Saying, Blessed be the King that cometh in the name of the Lord: peace in heaven, and glory in the highest.

### Biblical Insight

In Luke 19:38, the people declared glory to God “in the highest.” Some translations speak of the highest heaven. This idea goes back to Psalm 115:16, which in Hebrew literally begins with the words “the heaven of heavens.” Hebrew forms the superlative in this way, as in King of kings and Lord of lords. Therefore, “highest heaven” is an accurate translation in both the Old and New Testaments. The Greek word for “highest” also appears in Luke 2:14, where the angels declared, “Glory to God in the highest.” What the angels proclaimed at Jesus’ birth, the people declared on Palm Sunday.

### Daily Devotion

The first Guinness world record was born from an argument in 1951. Sir Hugh Beaver, managing director of Guinness Brewery, debated whether the golden plover was Europe’s fastest game bird. Realizing no book existed to settle such disputes, he commissioned Norris and Ross McWhirter to compile facts. The first edition was published in 1955 and became an instant bestseller. It began as a marketing idea but grew into a global authority on record-breaking achievements.

Jesus is greater than anyone who has ever held a Guinness world record. When the Bible describes Jesus as the highest, it means He surpasses every person in every possible way. That is why Paul declared we are complete in Him (Colossians 2:10). In Christ, we find everything we need. His greatness is unmatched, and His sufficiency reaches every corner of our lives.

» **REVIEW:** *What mountain is described in Luke 19:37?*

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» **REFLECT:** *What word would you use to best describe God?*

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» **APPLY:** *As you pray for your needs today, declare the greatness and goodness of God over your requests.*

# DAY 4

## John 12:3–7

<sup>3</sup> Then took Mary a pound of ointment of spikenard, very costly, and anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped his feet with her hair: and the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.

<sup>4</sup> Then saith one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, which should betray him,

<sup>5</sup> Why was not this ointment sold for three hundred pence, and given to the poor?

<sup>6</sup> This he said, not that he cared for the poor; but because he was a thief, and had the bag, and bare what was put therein.

<sup>7</sup> Then said Jesus, Let her alone: against the day of my burying hath she kept this.

### Biblical Insight

People initially equate Mary of Bethany with the sinful woman who anointed Jesus in Luke 7. Based on further review, they appear to be different women. The anointing in Luke 7 occurred at Simon the Pharisee's house in Galilee, and the anointing in John 12 happened in Bethany. Mary of Bethany may have had access to the ointment of spikenard due to her family's wealth. In contrast, the sinful woman would not have had the same means. Since it appears that separate anointings occurred, with one perhaps inspiring the other, the narratives reveal that both the wealthy and the poor showed great affection for Jesus.

### Daily Devotion

Under dim candlelight, Derek kissed his sleeping daughter's forehead and quietly slipped out of her room. As a soldier, his country needed him—their freedom had a cost. For years he hid in the mountains, sending letters home and missing his daughter's milestones. When peace finally came, Derek returned with gray in his beard and tears in his eyes. His daughter ran to him, now twelve years old. He had missed so much. Sacrifice had a price, but he made that sacrifice out of love for his daughter and his country.

Just as Mary poured expensive perfume on Jesus' feet, true worship always involves sacrifice. In I Chronicles 21:24, David said he could not offer to God something that cost him nothing. Genuine worship happens when we offer God something we truly value—whether it's time, money, relationships, or dreams. In the end, love always makes the cost worth it.

» **REVIEW:** *Who objected to Mary's act of worship in John 12:4?*

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» **REFLECT:** *What have you given God that was truly valuable to you?*

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» **APPLY:** *List things you hold dear in your life. Then ask yourself, If God asked for any of these, would I be willing to surrender them?*

# DAY 5

## John 12:27-30

<sup>27</sup> Now is my soul troubled; and what shall I say? Father, save me from this hour: but for this cause came I unto this hour.

<sup>28</sup> Father, glorify thy name. Then came there a voice from heaven, saying, I have both glorified it, and will glorify it again.

<sup>29</sup> The people therefore, that stood by, and heard it, said that it thundered: others said, An angel spake to him.

<sup>30</sup> Jesus answered and said, This voice came not because of me, but for your sakes.

### Biblical Insight

The question of Jesus' hour appears often in the Gospel of John. In John 2:4, Jesus initially refused to turn the water into wine because His hour had not yet come. In John 4:23, Jesus declared the hour "now is, when the true worshipers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth." John 5:25 speaks of an hour coming "when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God: and . . . shall live." In John 7 and 8, they could not take Jesus because His hour had not arrived. And in John 12:27, Jesus prayed to be saved from this hour.

### Daily Devotion

Michael sat beside the river, torn between his plans and a quiet nudge in his heart. He had dreamed of opening a business, but each time he prayed, he felt God leading him to be a preacher instead. After weeks of prayer, he listened to the nudge in his heart. Thirty years later, surrounded by all the disciples he had made, Michael realized God's voice had led him to purpose, not just profit. Listening hadn't been easy, but it changed his eternal destiny.

God still speaks today—through dreams, visions, a still small voice, or godly people. Are we willing to listen? As we consider our response, it's important to remember that the Bible is filled with examples of how God blesses those who listen to His voice, trust His guidance, and walk in obedience. Listening isn't just hearing; it's the first step toward a life of faithful surrender.

» **REVIEW:** *Who heard the voice from heaven in John 12:29?*

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» **REFLECT:** *How does God usually speak to you?*

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» **APPLY:** *In your study, look for Bible characters who heard from God in ways similar to your experience.*



SPRING  
**10**

MAY 10, 2026

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**LESSON TEXT**  
Luke 22:7-27

**FOCUS VERSE**  
Luke 22:19  
And he took bread,  
and gave thanks, and  
broke it, and gave  
unto them, saying,  
This is my body which  
is given for you: this  
do in remembrance  
of me.

**TRUTH ABOUT  
COVENANT**  
Jesus called His  
church to remember  
His sacrifice until He  
returns.

# *The Lord's Supper*

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I WILL  
**REMEMBER  
AND SERVE**

JESUS AND  
OTHERS WITH

**SACRIFICIAL  
LOVE.**

.....

## **COVENANT CONTEXT**

The week that began with so much pomp and praise for Jesus ended with so much vitriol and hatred against Him. But knowing all that would befall Him, Jesus humbled Himself and served His followers. And during the Passover meal, He announced the new covenant He was instituting: they would no longer need to sacrifice a lamb for their sins, for He would be the sacrificial Lamb for all sins for all humanity for all time.

## **SG** *TEACHING OUTLINE*

**Icebreaker:** Think about the most amazing dinner you have ever had. What is the best thing you remember about it?

### I. FOOTWASHING

- A. Jesus Took the Role of the Lowest Servant
- B. Jesus Taught Us How to Live with One Another

**DISCUSS:** *If you were at the Passover dinner and no one offered to wash the guests' feet, what do you think you would have done?*

- C. I will serve with humility.

**DISCUSS:** *What can you do today to serve someone in humility?*

### II. REMEMBERING JESUS' SACRIFICE

- A. Symbolism of the Bread and the Cup
- B. Jesus Is the High Priest and the Lamb of God

**DISCUSS:** *What do you think it was like for the high priest to be in the awesome presence of Almighty God inside the Holy of Holies?*

- C. I will remember Jesus' sacrifice.

**DISCUSS:** *What do you remember most when you participate in a Communion service?*

### III. NOW AND FUTURE KING

- A. Jesus Promised the Holy Spirit Outpouring
- B. Jesus Promised He Would Come Back for His Church
- C. I will live in covenant and look for Jesus' coming.

**DISCUSS:** *What about the condition of our world shows signs to you that Jesus' coming is near?*

## **PRAYER FOCUS**

Lead the group in prayer and consider the following topics of focus:

- » For God to help us learn how to serve others with sacrificial love
- » For God to help us always live in covenant with Him

## BIBLICAL OVERVIEW

**Lesson Text:** Luke 22:7–27

When we read about all the preparations made for the Passover in Luke 22, we may think of the efforts required to put together feasts for Thanksgiving and Christmas. Passover, however, greatly differs from these holidays due to the sadness naturally infused in its observance. Passover is a time of remembrance. The holy day calls on Jews from all generations to remember the horrors of slavery and the blessings of redemption.

Most people know the importance of the lamb sacrificed so its blood could cover the doorframe of the house in order to prevent the Lord from judging the family and slaying the firstborn. Some Jews still eat lamb for Passover, but others choose chicken or brisket. The rabbis also made provision for the poor, allowing a beet or potato as a substitute.

The Passover Seder is an extremely long ceremony, and Jews follow the ritual very carefully. They eat *charoset*, a relish dish that is usually made of diced apples mixed with cinnamon and wine. *Charoset* symbolizes the bricks the Israelites used in Egyptian building projects. (Note: Many historians believe the pyramids were built long before the Hebrews arrived in Egypt.)

Other foods include *maror*, which symbolizes the terrible taste of slavery as seder participants eat horseradish or bitter herbs. *Chazeret* is romaine lettuce, also used as a bitter herb. Similarly, *karpas* consists of parsley or another green vegetable that participants dip in salt water to symbolize tears. The green of the vegetable can also symbolize the new growth of spring.

Passover not only represents death passing over houses, but also food the Jews might normally pass over in their daily meals. Despite the sadness represented, these items are necessary reminders of the history of the Hebrews and God's redemptive plan. When we remember the horrors of sin in our lives, we should also taste and see that the Lord is good because He redeemed us like He redeemed the Israelites.

**PASSOVER IS A TIME OF REMEMBRANCE. THE HOLY DAY CALLS ON JEWS FROM ALL GENERATIONS TO REMEMBER THE HORRORS OF SLAVERY AND THE BLESSINGS OF REDEMPTION.**

# DAY 1

## Luke 22:9-12

<sup>9</sup> And they said unto him, Where wilt thou that we prepare?

<sup>10</sup> And he said unto them, Behold, when ye are entered into the city, there shall a man meet you, bearing a pitcher of water; follow him into the house where he entereth in.

<sup>11</sup> And ye shall say unto the goodman of the house, The Master saith unto thee, Where is the guestchamber, where I shall eat the passover with my disciples?

<sup>12</sup> And he shall shew you a large upper room furnished: there make ready.

### Biblical Insight

While we may think the upper room for the Passover in Luke 22 was the same as the upper room in Acts 1-2, they may have been different. The Greek words are not even the same. Any difference in location may reflect the difference between Passover and Pentecost, two of the three feasts Jews were required to observe. Passover represents repentance and the death of the lamb. Pentecost represents the harvest and the great infilling on the Day of Pentecost, when first one hundred and twenty and later three thousand souls received the gift of the Holy Spirit.

### Daily Devotion

As her fingers traced the worn pages of her grandpa's journal, Anne smiled. Each entry held a story—hardship, faith, love, and hope from years past. Her grandpa had written them so his family would remember where they came from. As she faced her own trials, Anne found hope in his words. Remembering wasn't just nostalgia—it was a source of strength for her in the present. Closing the journal, she realized she could overcome. In remembering, she found perspective, purpose, and the courage to keep going.

For the Jewish people, Passover is one of the feasts that commemorates key moments in their history as God's chosen people. These celebrations weren't man-made; God Himself commanded them. Remembering holds great power, especially when it comes to remembering God's goodness and faithfulness. As with Anne's story, remembering can be a profound source of strength in the present.

» **REVIEW:** *Who would meet the disciples in Luke 22:10?*

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» **REFLECT:** *What holiday is most important in your family?*

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» **APPLY:** *Write down some key testimonies and milestones in your life so far.*

# DAY 2

## Luke 22:17-20

<sup>17</sup> And he took the cup, and gave thanks, and said, Take this, and divide it among yourselves:

<sup>18</sup> For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come.

<sup>19</sup> And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.

<sup>20</sup> Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.

### Biblical Insight

Both Luke 22 and I Corinthians 11 record the events of the Lord's Supper that we often read for communion services. Given the textual placement of Luke earlier in the Gospels, many might assume Luke's account was first. In actuality, scholars claim the apostle Paul wrote I Corinthians around AD 55. Some scholars date Luke's Gospel to AD 62-70. Therefore, Paul's version was likely written earlier. Events in the life of Jesus, especially His last days, may have circulated among Christians. Paul could have heard the story from a fellow Christian or even an eyewitness.

### Daily Devotion

A high school student struggled to memorize Robert Frost's poem, "The Road Less Traveled." He started off well: Two roads diverged in a yellow wood, And sorry I could not travel both." Later his mind went blank. He continued, less confidently: "I asked a squirrel which way to go, he shrugged and said, 'Man, I don't know.'" Remembering can be challenging, but it's worth it, especially when we remember what God has done.

Communion helps believers remember Jesus Christ's sacrifice on the cross. The repetition and deep emotional significance of this biblical custom keep the meaning of the cross fresh in the memory of the church. It serves as a continual reminder that Christ's atonement is at the very center of the church's life, purpose, and mission on earth.

» **REVIEW:** *What did Jesus break in Luke 22:19?*

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» **REFLECT:** *How does Christ's sacrifice on the cross impact your life?*

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» **APPLY:** *In your prayer today, reflect on the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. Thank Him for its impact on your life.*

# DAY 3

## Luke 22:18–22

<sup>18</sup> For I say unto you, I will not drink of the fruit of the vine, until the kingdom of God shall come.

<sup>19</sup> And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.

<sup>20</sup> Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you.

<sup>21</sup> But, behold, the hand of him that betrayeth me is with me on the table.

<sup>22</sup> And truly the Son of man goeth, as it was determined: but woe unto that man by whom he is betrayed!

### Biblical Insight

When Jesus referred to Himself as the “Son of man,” the phrase appeared to have a dual meaning. In Ezekiel, God called the prophet “Son of man” in a nod to his humanity. In contrast, the Book of Daniel describes the Son of man as a figure who appears in the clouds and will reign in glory. Jesus emphasized His humanity by serving the disciples. He emphasized His deity by speaking of the kingdom of God. During the events of the Last Supper, the Son of Man revealed Himself to be both the least and the greatest.

### Daily Devotion

In 44 BC, Julius Caesar was betrayed by those he trusted most—his own senators. Among them was Brutus, whom Caesar considered a friend. As Caesar entered the Senate, conspirators surrounded him and stabbed him twenty-three times. Shocked and heartbroken, he is said to have uttered, “*Et tu, Brute?*”—“You too, Brutus?” This betrayal marked the fall of a leader and the end of the Roman Republic, forever remembered as one of history’s most famous acts of treachery.

When the Bible says Jesus was tempted in every way as we are, it also means He experienced one of the deepest emotional wounds: betrayal. Yet He showed us how to respond with forgiveness. Jesus washed Judas’ feet, knowing Judas would betray Him. On the cross, Jesus carried Judas in His heart, just as He did the rest of humanity. Jesus’ example calls us to forgive, even in the face of deep personal pain.

» **REVIEW:** Who would go (do what God had planned), as determined in Luke 22:22?

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» **REFLECT:** When you have experienced betrayal, what Bible stories or passages helped you?

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» **APPLY:** In your prayer today, ask the Lord to help you forgive those who hurt you.

# DAY 4

## Luke 22:24–25

<sup>24</sup> And there was also a strife among them, which of them should be accounted the greatest.  
<sup>25</sup> And he said unto them, The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and they that exercise authority upon them are called benefactors.

### Biblical Insight

During the disciples’ dispute about who was the greatest, the mention of the rulers and benefactors in the context of ancient Rome revealed the patronage system in the culture. An ordinary individual without support could not expect to climb the social ranks unless he had assistance. Patronage created a symbiotic relationship. A man of means would guard a client and back him financially. The client responded by demonstrating loyalty and providing service. Jesus, who could have ruled as the most influential individual of all time in an earthly kingdom, instead chose to take on the unexpected role of servant.

### Daily Devotion

In 1783, after leading America to victory in the Revolutionary War, General George Washington did something rare—he resigned his military commission to Congress. Many expected him to seize power, but instead, he humbly returned to his farm in Virginia. His decision shocked the world and set a powerful precedent for civilian leadership. King George III reportedly said, “If he does that, he will be the greatest man in the world.” Washington’s humility shaped a newborn nation’s future.

Jesus exemplified a key Kingdom principle about leadership: Those who desire to lead are first called to serve. Though Jesus knew He was the Messiah, He chose to wash His disciples’ feet. Whenever He entered a room, He looked for people to serve, not for people to serve Him. In the kingdom of God, true greatness is found in humility. The way up is down; leadership begins at the feet of others.

» **REVIEW:** *Whose kings lord over their own people, according to Luke 22:25?*

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» **REFLECT:** *Which leaders in your life have influenced you the most?*

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» **APPLY:** *Write down some of the key characteristics you admire in effective leaders.*

# DAY 5

## Luke 22:26–27

<sup>26</sup> But ye shall not be so: but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve.

<sup>27</sup> For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? is not he that sitteth at meat? but I am among you as he that serveth.

### Biblical Insight

Jesus' challenge to the disciples to be as the younger (the least) reflects an important theme in the history of Israel. When we read the Old Testament, especially the Book of Genesis, we often observe the younger brother triumphing over the elder. One story in particular fits the setting of the Lord's Supper. Jacob, the younger brother, served a meal to Esau. In so doing, he set the stage to steal his brother's birthright. The one who served became the greater brother. Perhaps the disputing disciples remembered this important narrative and allowed it to redirect their ambitions.

### Daily Devotion

Every Saturday, Mr. Noel quietly mowed his elderly neighbor's lawn. He never asked for thanks or payment; he just showed up. When Mr. Noel fell ill one summer, the entire block took turns caring for his yard, meals, and errands. One neighbor said, "He taught us how to serve by example." His small acts of kindness rippled through the community. In serving others, he had unknowingly built a legacy, proving that humble service leaves a lasting impact.

Scripture calls the church to serve one another. This command is deeply connected to the work of the Holy Spirit in us. When we are filled with the baptism of the Holy Ghost, God imparts His nature (especially humility), which is fruit of His Spirit. As we grow as disciples of Christ, let us continually pursue humility in all we do, allowing it to shape our service, our relationships, and our witness to the world.

» **REVIEW:** *What question did Jesus ask in Luke 22:27?*

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» **REFLECT:** *Recount a time when humility brought blessing into your life.*

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» **APPLY:** *In your prayer today, ask the Lord to help you grow in the fruit of the Spirit, allowing His character to be formed in you more each day.*



JESUS  
CHRIST



SPRING

11

MAY 17, 2026

#### LESSON TEXT

Luke 22:39-46;  
Romans 5:12-19

#### FOCUS VERSES

Luke 22:41-42

<sup>41</sup>And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed,

<sup>42</sup>Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.

#### TRUTH ABOUT COVENANT

Jesus was fully human and had to surrender to fulfill covenant.

# Jesus in the Garden



## COVENANT CONTEXT

In this lesson, we come full circle from the beginning. Adam disobeyed and broke covenant with God in the Garden of Eden, but Jesus obeyed the will of God in the Garden of Gethsemane and extended the new covenant to us. Much of the Old Testament and even the New Testament come to an apex as we see Jesus willingly kneel to carry the weight of the world's sins and sorrows.

## **SG** *TEACHING OUTLINE*

**Icebreaker:** What is the biggest decision you have made in your life so far?

### I. THE ARREST

- A. “That Thou Doest, Do Quickly”
- B. “As He Was Wont”
- C. I will prioritize prayer in every situation.

**DISCUSS:** *Recount a time when you prayed and God gave you everything you needed in that moment.*

### II. ANOTHER GARDEN, ANOTHER ADAM

- A. Jesus Had a Choice

**DISCUSS:** *What differences do you see between Adam and Jesus? Do you see some of those same differences in your own life?*

- B. Jesus Chose to Obey
- C. I will pray to seek God’s will.

**DISCUSS:** *What decision are you making right now that you should make a matter of faithful prayer?*

### III. JESUS’ PRAYER

- A. “Great Drops of Blood”

**DISCUSS:** *In times when you feel alone, how does knowing Jesus went through what you go through help encourage you?*

- B. “Nevertheless Not My Will”
- C. I will surrender my will to God’s will.

**DISCUSS:** *What area(s) of your life do you need to fully surrender to God? Are you willing to surrender to Him today?*

## **PRAYER FOCUS**

Lead the group in prayer and consider the following topics of focus:

- » For God to grant us the faith to believe in both the deity and humanity of Jesus Christ
- » For God to help us fully accept that just as Adam spread sin to all people, Christ’s righteous act made righteousness available to all

## **BIBLICAL OVERVIEW**

**Lesson Text:** Luke 22:39–46; Romans 5:12–19

**T**he “Lord’s Prayer” appears two times in Scripture. We read the shorter version in Luke 11:2–4. Matthew 6:9–13 contains the extended, familiar version. Many people can quote the prayer by heart. Congregations often recite it together. Many have described the text as the model prayer, following its order to move from praise to request to accepting the will of God. Although many people know the prayer, its application is most significant. In Luke 22, when we read about Jesus’ prayer amid one of His greatest spiritual battles, we see He incorporated key aspects of the Lord’s Prayer.

As was His custom, Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. However, this time was not an ordinary trip with His disciples. He began fighting for His life, only to surrender that the only way to save others was for Him to give up His life. The familiarity of the setting is also reflected in Jesus’ return to the principles in the Lord’s Prayer. In times of distress, we often go back to places and things that bring comfort. The Lord’s Prayer was a foundational part of Jesus’ life. He began by telling the disciples to pray that they would not enter into temptation, reiterating the Lord’s request, “lead us not into temptation.”

Next, Jesus moved away from the disciples and prayed that the cup (the need to give His life) might pass from Him. Despite His human protestations, He stayed true to His own teachings and requested God’s will be done instead of His own. Here the humanity of Jesus was shown to be subject to deity. The flesh did not want to die, but Jesus entered the world of humanity as a flesh and blood human being for that very purpose. For the kingdom of God to appear on earth, Jesus had to pray for the will of God to be done. In doing so, He relinquished any claims to an earthly kingdom. He even gave up His right to call ten thousand angels to save Him from the cross.

When Jesus returned to the disciples and found them asleep, He again warned them about temptation. Jesus had already overcome temptation because He omitted a key part of His earlier prayer. Although Jesus wanted the cup to pass from Him, He did not pray to be delivered from evil. Very soon, Judas, possessed by the evil one, appeared to betray Jesus.

***IN TIMES OF DISTRESS, WE OFTEN GO BACK TO PLACES AND THINGS THAT BRING COMFORT.***

# DAY 1

## Luke 22:40–43

<sup>40</sup> And when he was at the place, he said unto them, Pray that ye enter not into temptation.

<sup>41</sup> And he was withdrawn from them about a stone's cast, and kneeled down, and prayed,

<sup>42</sup> Saying, Father, if thou be willing, remove this cup from me: nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done.

<sup>43</sup> And there appeared an angel unto him from heaven, strengthening him.

### Biblical Insight

We often associate Elijah with John the Baptist since the last book of the Old Testament, Malachi, prophesies the arrival of a messenger who would prepare the way of the Lord. Plus, John the Baptist dressed somewhat like Elijah. But Elijah also had many connections to Jesus. Both performed miracles. Both mentored others. Both received strength from angels: In I Kings 19:7–19, the angel of the Lord awakened Elijah to eat and drink due to the strength needed to journey to Mount Horeb (a.k.a. Mount Sinai). At the Mount of Olives, Jesus received strength from angels to journey to Calvary.

### Daily Devotion

During a stormy night, two missionaries were stranded on a dark, rural road. Because they were unfamiliar with the area, they both started to panic. A man in a glowing white coat appeared and offered to help. He calmly repaired their stalled car and disappeared before they could thank him. Later, a mechanic confirmed no one could have fixed the issue without special tools. They believe it was an angel sent by God—protection in their time of need, vanishing without a trace.

The Bible teaches that angels are ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit the kingdom of God. Throughout Scripture we see them acting as messengers and protectors, always operating under God's command. As God's people, we can take great comfort and confidence in knowing we are not alone. We are surrounded by the presence of God and His heavenly angels.

» **REVIEW:** *Who strengthened Jesus in Luke 22:43?*

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» **REFLECT:** *Have you ever experienced an encounter with an angel? What happened?*

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» **APPLY:** *In your Bible study today, explore passages that describe angelic manifestations.*

# DAY 2

## Luke 22:44–46

<sup>44</sup> And being in an agony he prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground.

<sup>45</sup> And when he rose up from prayer, and was come to his disciples, he found them sleeping for sorrow,

<sup>46</sup> And said unto them, Why sleep ye? rise and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.

### Biblical Insight

The portrait of Jesus in the Garden pulls back the veil on the raw emotions He felt so acutely, much like Scripture records in the agonizing final moments of the Crucifixion. Interestingly, Jesus brought His close circle of followers with Him. Had they stayed awake, they would have witnessed His cries of agony in prayer. He had taught them to pray and provided a structure of words to say; now He showed by example the necessity of raw honesty before the Lord in our time of need. When we confess our thoughts and emotions to Jesus in honest, earnest prayer, we follow His own example and position ourselves in place to be strengthened supernaturally.

### Daily Devotion

Jadon stared out the window, numb from another tough day. He felt drained and unmotivated, wondering what was wrong with him. Then he remembered something his pastor once said: “Even Jesus wept.” That truth settled into his heart. Feeling down didn’t mean he lacked faith; it meant he was human. He whispered a quiet prayer, not for strength, but for rest. And in that honesty, he found peace, knowing it’s okay not to be okay sometimes. We won’t stay “not okay” as Jesus helps us, but first we must bring our cares to God.

The Book of Psalms is filled with songs and prayers that honestly reflect the emotions of godly men like David. His psalms express joy, sorrow, anger, hope, and many other human feelings. This reminds us that it is perfectly okay to experience a wide range of emotions—even difficult or negative ones—as long as we bring them before God and surrender them to Him. In doing so, we find a deeper connection with our Creator.

» **REVIEW:** *What emotion did Jesus feel in Luke 22:44?*

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» **REFLECT:** *Do you believe it is okay to express your anger, sorrow, or anguish in prayer? Why or why not?*

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» **APPLY:** *Today in your prayer, be completely honest with God. Share with Him exactly how you feel.*

# DAY 3

## Romans 5:12–13

<sup>12</sup> Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

<sup>13</sup> (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law.)

### Biblical Insight

Some cultural relativists claim that each culture is so unique that it has its own special set of laws. While that is true to a certain extent, many cultures share similar ordinances. Societies cannot function properly with rampant theft, murder, and adultery. When Paul spoke about sin being in the world before the Torah, he recognized universal law. In Romans 2:14, Paul declared that the Gentiles who did not have the Law naturally did the things in the Law. God endowed cultures without the Torah with basic concepts of right and wrong that could lead them to a relationship with Him.

### Daily Devotion

Tommy was about to slip a candy bar into his pocket at the store when a strange feeling tugged at him. His heart pounded and a quiet voice inside whispered, “This isn’t right.” He looked around and then slowly put it back. Walking out empty-handed, he felt oddly proud. Later, his teacher spoke about conscience—the inner voice that helps us choose right over wrong. Tom smiled, realizing he had already heard it speak . . . and he had listened.

When God created us, He placed a conscience within us: a godly voice that helps us discern right from wrong. It serves as a “warning light” to help keep us safe. When we yield to God, He can speak to us through our conscience, just as He speaks through His creation, through dreams and visions, and in many other ways.

» **REVIEW:** *What came to all people because of sin in Romans 5:12?*

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» **REFLECT:** *What is your earliest childhood memory of when you realized you had done something wrong?*

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» **APPLY:** *In prayer today, thank the Lord for providing everything you need to know Him—your conscience, His Word, and the gentle prompting of His Spirit.*

# DAY 4

## Romans 5:12–18

<sup>12</sup> Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

<sup>13</sup> (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law.

<sup>14</sup> Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression, who is the figure of him that was to come.

<sup>15</sup> But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many.

<sup>16</sup> And not as it was by one that sinned, so is the gift: for the judgment was by one to condemnation, but the free gift is of many offences unto justification.

<sup>17</sup> For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ.)

<sup>18</sup> Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.

### Biblical Insight

In the King James Version, Romans 5:13–17 appear in parentheses. Theoretically, we could read verse 12 and move to verse 18 to maintain the continuity. However, the parenthetical verses provide key explanations about the Law and sin. Scholars refer to such verses as asides. We might think of verses 13–17 as Paul taking the time to explain the Law and sin.

### Daily Devotion

Maya felt unworthy—lost in her mistakes and ashamed of her past. She avoided church because she thought God would not want someone like her. One evening she opened a Bible and read, “While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.” Tears fell. God had not waited for her to be perfect—He loved her at her worst. That truth broke through her guilt. She whispered, “Thank You,” and for the first time in years, she felt loved and seen.

It is easy to love someone who treats us kindly, but the love of Jesus is far greater. Before we knew Him, He loved us and proved His love by dying on the cross for us. While we were still lost and hopeless, He came to us with grace, paying the price for our salvation. His love isn't based on our goodness, but on His unfailing grace.

» **REVIEW:** *What is the result of Jesus' righteous act according to Romans 5:18?*

» **REFLECT:** *When have you experienced what it's like to forgive someone before they asked for forgiveness?*

» **APPLY:** *Ask God if someone needs you to ask for or extend forgiveness, and then do so.*

# DAY 5

## Romans 5:18–19

<sup>18</sup> Therefore as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation; even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life.

<sup>19</sup> For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous.

### Biblical Insight

When Paul discussed the existence of sin in the pre-Torah world from Adam to Moses, he revealed the very real consequences of sin. Note that Paul did not blame Satan for sin. His interpretation reflects the rabbinical idea that evil inclinations give rise to sin. Genesis 6:5 blames sin on the evil imaginations of the human heart. Genesis 8:21 speaks of the imaginations of humanity being evil from youth. Deuteronomy 31:21 also references the evil inclinations of humanity. Therefore, Jesus appeared in the flesh to overcome evil human imaginations and provide salvation.

### Daily Devotion

Samantha was struggling to make ends meet after losing her job. One morning she found an envelope in her mailbox with no name on it—just the words “God sees you.” Inside was two hundred dollars in cash. Overwhelmed, she cried, knowing only God could have prompted someone to do that. It wasn’t just the money; it was the reminder that she was not forgotten. That unexpected gift met more than a need; it restored her faith and reminded her that God truly provides.

Before Jesus came, humanity was hopeless and helpless. We needed grace—something we could never earn or deserve. Scripture describes our salvation as a “gift.” That is exactly what it is: an undeserved, unexpected expression of God’s love and favor. We did not earn it, and we never could. Yet in His mercy, God freely offered it to us. Mercy is a gift that changes everything.

» **REVIEW:** *What is the result of one man's obedience in Romans 5:19?*

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» **REFLECT:** *What is the most unexpected gift you have ever received?*

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» **APPLY:** *Call someone who needs prayer, and let that person know you are thinking about and praying for him or her. Sometimes prayer is the best gift a person can receive.*



JESUS  
CHRIST



SPRING

12

MAY 24, 2026

**LESSON TEXT**

Matthew 27:27-31,  
33-37, 45-50

**FOCUS VERSES**

Matthew 27:29-31

<sup>29</sup>And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand; and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews!

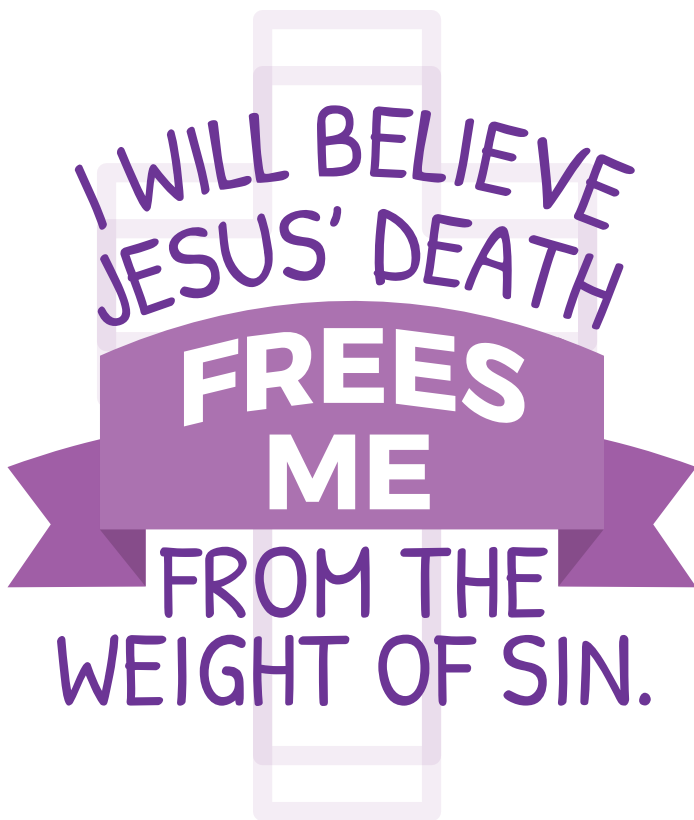
<sup>30</sup>And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head.

<sup>31</sup>And after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify him.

**TRUTH ABOUT  
COVENANT**

Jesus' death atoned for our sins so we could enter a greater covenant with God.

# The Cross



## COVENANT CONTEXT

All the Old Testament sacrifices and ceremonies have been pointing to this day in history: the day the sinless Lamb of God laid down His own life to save us. This is what we know as the gospel—that Jesus died for us, was buried, and rose from the grave. Because of the gospel, we can be made right with God and brought into a new and better covenant with Him that will stand until Jesus returns for His church.

## **SG** *TEACHING OUTLINE*

**Icebreaker:** What is your favorite hymn or song about the Cross?

### I. THE SCOURGING OF JESUS

#### A. Rejected

**DISCUSS:** *Since fear of rejection often holds us back from doing what we know we should, what can we learn from Jesus' example when He was rejected?*

#### B. Mocked

#### C. I will remember that Jesus was humiliated to save me.

**DISCUSS:** *Based on Hebrews 12:2, what is the joy that is set before us, and how can we use it to motivate us to self-sacrifice like Jesus did?*

### II. ATONING FOR THE BROKEN COVENANT

#### A. Jesus Died for Everyone

**DISCUSS:** *Share a testimony (yours or someone else's) of God reaching people who were far away from Him.*

#### B. I will enter into covenant with Jesus.

### III. THE CROSS

#### A. The Death of the Testator

#### B. Bondage and Freedom

**DISCUSS:** *Before coming to God, if you ever tried to break a sinful habit by your own strength, how different was it when you had God's help?*

#### C. I will thank Jesus for being bound to make me free.

**DISCUSS:** *Even after Jesus sets us free, why do we sometimes still act like we are enslaved by sin?*

## **PRAYER FOCUS**

Lead the group in prayer and consider the following topics of focus:

- » For us to be thankful for Jesus' sacrifice
- » For us to be motivated by Jesus' sacrifice to sacrifice for others

## **BIBLICAL OVERVIEW**

**Lesson Text:** Matthew 27:27–31, 33–37, 45–50

**A**lthough Jesus knew Hebrew and could likely speak Greek, He conversed in Aramaic, the common language) of the day. Right before Jesus breathed His last breath, He cried out with a loud voice in Aramaic, “Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?” (Matthew 27:46). The quote is from the highly messianic Psalm 22:1, which translates as “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?”

Upon hearing Jesus’ cry, some bystanders wrongly assumed Jesus was calling for Elijah. They may have felt they had good reason for this conjecture since “Eli” is short for Elijah. The full name Elijah means “my God is Yahweh,” a significant testimony given the prophet’s many tussles with Baal worshipers. The very sound of Jesus’ words made it seem to some that Jesus was indeed calling for the Old Testament prophet.

Their comments may have added to the mockery because the Jews believed the prophet Elijah would return to herald the coming of the Messiah. Christians associate the return of Elijah with the appearance of John the Baptist, who had a ministry similar to Elijah based on Malachi’s prophecy of the Lord’s messenger appearing to prepare the way of the Lord. But not all Jews believed John fulfilled the prophecy, so some of them mocked Jesus.

Since Elijah was caught up to Heaven in a fiery chariot, he did not die, leading to the idea that he would return. Jesus, along with Peter, James, and John, had seen Elijah at the Transfiguration (Matthew 17). Even today some Jews set out an empty chair at Passover because they believe the prophet attends all seders. These Jews and the Jews at the Crucifixion do not realize Jesus was the true Passover Lamb.

***THE VERY SOUND OF JESUS’ WORDS MADE IT SEEM TO SOME THAT JESUS WAS INDEED CALLING FOR THE OLD TESTAMENT PROPHET.***

# DAY 1

## Matthew 27:27-31

<sup>27</sup> Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band of soldiers.

<sup>28</sup> And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe.

<sup>29</sup> And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews!

<sup>30</sup> And they spit upon him, and took the reed, and smote him on the head.

<sup>31</sup> And after that they had mocked him, they took the robe off from him, and put his own raiment on him, and led him away to crucify him.

### Biblical Insight

Pontius Pilate ruled as governor of the province of Judea from AD 26–36. A member of the equestrian order, Pilate had political connections. He faced a volatile situation in Judea and attempted to keep the peace. However, he was unsuccessful. The violence of his soldiers against Jesus proved unsurprising. He was recalled for his forceful suppression of the Samaritan revolt at Mount Gerizim, according to Josephus. The authorities for Syria sent Pilate to Rome to answer for his crimes, but Emperor Tiberius died before Pilate arrived. Pilate presumably escaped punishment, ironic given he crucified the world's most innocent man.

### Daily Devotion

The crown of thorns placed on Jesus' head was likely made from the Ziziphus spina-christi plant, native to the Middle East. This plant has long, sharp thorns capable of puncturing skin and causing severe pain. From a medical standpoint, the crown could have caused bleeding, nerve damage, and intense inflammation. Combined with the stress of crucifixion, this would have intensified Jesus' suffering.

The crown, meant to mock Jesus, came to symbolize all of humanity's pain, sin, and suffering. When Jesus wore the crown of thorns, it declared Him the King over every form of brokenness. In other words, we can come to Him in our moments of pain, trusting He understands—and has authority over—every circumstance we face. His suffering was not just *for* us; it was *with* us, making Him our refuge in every trial.

» **REVIEW:** *What kind of crown did the mockers put on Jesus' head in Matthew 27:29?*

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» **REFLECT:** *Is there suffering in your life that feels too heavy for even Jesus to carry?*

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» **APPLY:** *In your prayer today, ask the Lord to help you believe you can trust Him with your pain because He has already carried it all.*

# DAY 2

## Matthew 27:33–35

<sup>33</sup> And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull,

<sup>34</sup> They gave him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when he had tasted thereof, he would not drink.

<sup>35</sup> And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.

### Biblical Insight

Due to its appearance and location, Golgotha was an obvious choice for the crucifixion of Jesus and the two thieves. Golgotha, the place of the skull, originally would have been outside the city because dead bodies could not be buried inside Jerusalem. The Church of the Holy Sepulchre is the traditional site of Golgotha. Some, however, have disputed identifying it with Golgotha since it is inside the city. Archaeologists have argued that the boundaries of the city were moved. Because six graves were found near this church, archaeologists believe this confirms the original location. More important than the physical location is the eternal significance of what happened at Golgotha.

### Daily Devotion

As a young missionary, Gordon prayed for years for a town that had never heard the gospel. Rejected, mocked, and nearly expelled, Gordon trusted God's promise: "My word will not return void." Twenty years passed. One day the town mayor fell ill, and Gordon cared for him. When the mayor recovered, he asked about Gordon's God. That year the town built its first Apostolic church. Through persistence and faith, Gordon saw firsthand that God is always true to His promises.

The events surrounding Christ's death were filled with fulfilled prophecies. From the crown of thorns to the soldiers casting lots for His robe, every detail was part of God's sovereign plan. These moments remind us that God can use even the darkest and most painful experiences in our lives to accomplish His purposes and fulfill His promises. Nothing is wasted in His hands, not even suffering.

» **REVIEW:** *Who cast lots for Jesus' robe in Matthew 27:35?*

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» **REFLECT:** *How have you maintained your faith during difficult or painful things in your life?*

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» **APPLY:** *Search the Scriptures for people who have dealt with similar trials, and read how they responded.*

# DAY 3

## Matthew 27:35–37

<sup>35</sup> And they crucified him, and parted his garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted my garments among them, and upon my vesture did they cast lots.

<sup>36</sup> And sitting down they watched him there;

<sup>37</sup> And set up over his head his accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

### Biblical Insight

Psalms 22 contains many prophecies of the crucifixion and the life of Jesus. Verse 16 includes the piercing of Jesus' hands and feet, an obvious nod to the future practice of crucifixion. Verse 18 predicts they would divide Jesus' garments and cast lots for them. Psalm 22 foreshadows some of the insults hurled at Jesus. The psalm is also the source of one of the most important quotations of Jesus on the cross: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Matthew 27:46).

### Daily Devotion

The "Footprints in the Sand" poem, often seen on paintings and prints, originated in the twentieth century, though its authorship is widely debated. The poem tells of a person walking with the Lord along the beach, seeing two sets of footprints until the hardest moments, when only one set appears. The person questions why God left during trials. The Lord replies, "It was then that I carried you." This comforting message has inspired millions worldwide.

Just like the story behind the poem, we experience moments in life when it feels as if God has abandoned us. Difficult seasons may tempt us to question His promises and presence. Yet God is often closest in these moments, carrying us through the pain. In times of suffering, may we remember that His silence does not mean absence. His love remains constant even in our darkest hours.

» **REVIEW:** *What was written on the sign fastened above Jesus' head?*

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» **REFLECT:** *If you have ever felt ashamed to be a Christian, how did you respond in those times?*

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» **APPLY:** *In your prayer today, ask the Lord to remind you that He is always there.*

# DAY 4

## Matthew 27:47-50

- <sup>47</sup> Some of them that stood there, when they heard that, said, This man calleth for Elias.
- <sup>48</sup> And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled it with vinegar, and put it on a reed, and gave him to drink.
- <sup>49</sup> The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save him.
- <sup>50</sup> Jesus, when he had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.

### Biblical Insight

Jesus’ excruciating time on the cross made Him thirsty. The Roman soldiers gave Jesus sour wine to drink when He was on the cross. Sour wine known as oxos was a regular beverage choice among the Roman military and the lower class. The drink may have included water, vinegar, and wine. Some conclude that the soldiers gave the wine to Jesus in order to mock Him. Others, however, believe the soldiers wanted to show mercy to Jesus. Whatever the case, the scene fulfills the Psalm 69:21 prophecy of the Messiah being given vinegar to drink.

### Daily Devotion

After the accident, Sierra felt overwhelmed by grief and loneliness. One night as she was unable to sleep, she prayed quietly, pouring out her heart to God. In the stillness, she felt a gentle peace wash over her—a silent reminder that God fully understood her pain. Though He did not remove her suffering immediately, God was walking beside her in every tear and sorrow. Sarah learned that God’s empathy is real, offering comfort only He can provide.

Scripture tells us we have a High Priest who is touched by the feelings of our infirmities. Jesus experienced hunger, thirst, betrayal, abandonment, and many other hardships. Knowing this helps us understand that God truly knows our pain. Because He overcame these trials, we can be confident that, through Him who strengthens us, we too can overcome any challenge we face.

» **REVIEW:** *When did darkness fall across the whole land in Matthew 27:45?*

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» **REFLECT:** *What do you think Jesus was like when He was a young boy?*

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» **APPLY:** *In your Bible study today, find passages in the Scripture that talk about the humanity of Jesus.*

# DAY 5

## Matthew 27:27-29

<sup>27</sup> Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the common hall, and gathered unto him the whole band of soldiers.

<sup>28</sup> And they stripped him, and put on him a scarlet robe.

<sup>29</sup> And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon his head, and a reed in his right hand: and they bowed the knee before him, and mocked him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews!

### Biblical Insight

The twisting of the crown of thorns into Jesus' head brought Him physical pain, but the thorns also had a symbolic function. Vines and figs symbolize effective leadership and safety in the Old Testament (1 Kings 4:25). In contrast, thorns symbolize poor and ineffectual leadership. In Judges 9, the thorn bush is made king instead of the olive, the fig, or the vine. The bramble does not provide fruit or shade like the other trees, revealing its terrible leadership. In Matthew 27, the soldiers, however, did not realize that Jesus was the true vine.

### Daily Devotion

In a small village, a young gardener noticed some grapevine branches drying up. When he investigated, he discovered the branches had been cut off from the main vine. He carefully grafted them back, and soon green leaves and fruit began to appear.

Like branches, we need to remain connected to Jesus, who declared Himself the “true vine” (John 15:1). There are important reasons for this connection. First, Jesus is the source of our life. Without Him, we cannot truly survive. Second, we can only bear fruit when we abide in Him. Without God's guidance and purpose, our lives would lack direction and meaning. Staying connected to Jesus is essential for a thriving, purposeful life.

» **REVIEW:** *What did the soldiers put in Jesus' right hand?*

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» **REFLECT:** *What experiences in your life have reminded you of your need for God's help?*

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» **APPLY:** *In your prayer today, ask the Lord to remind you of your need to depend on Him every day.*



JESUS  
CHRIST



SPRING  
13

MAY 31, 2026

#### LESSON TEXT

Matthew 28:1-20

#### FOCUS VERSES

Matthew 28:6-8

<sup>6</sup>He is not here: for he is risen, as he said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay.

<sup>7</sup>And go quickly, and tell his disciples that he is risen from the dead; and, behold, he goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see him: lo, I have told you.

<sup>8</sup>And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word.

#### TRUTH ABOUT COVENANT

Jesus' resurrection conquered our final enemy, death.

# Jesus' Resurrection

I WILL FIND  
HOPE  
AND ETERNAL  
LIFE  
THROUGH  
JESUS' GOSPEL.

## COVENANT CONTEXT

Although all founders of history's religious leaders have died, only Jesus has resurrected. His resurrection is at the heart of who we are as Christians. Without it, the gospel would not be good news, for sin and death would still reign. However, Jesus conquered sin, death, and hell and invites all humanity into this new and better covenant with Him.

## **SG** *TEACHING OUTLINE*

**Icebreaker:** What is the closest you have ever come to a near-death experience?

### I. THE RESURRECTION

#### A. Conquering Death

**DISCUSS:** *What are some reasons people may fear death? What is Jesus' answer to these fears?*

#### B. New Life

#### C. I will respond to the gospel and be born again.

**DISCUSS:** *What is one thing you are very happy to leave in the past?*

### II. LIVING IN COVENANT WITH CHRIST

#### A. The New Covenant

#### B. I will maintain my covenant with Jesus Christ.

**DISCUSS:** *What are some ways you prioritize your relationship with Jesus in your daily life and for your family?*

### III. THE GOSPEL AND FAITH FULFILLED

#### A. Our Faith Is Not in Vain

**DISCUSS:** *How do you think the disciples felt that day when the risen Jesus suddenly appeared to them?*

#### B. Fear Not

#### C. I will find hope and eternal life in Jesus.

**DISCUSS:** *What is one way your life has changed as Jesus trades fear for hope in your life?*

## **PRAYER FOCUS**

Lead the group in prayer and consider the following topics of focus:

- » For God to bring our families, friends, neighbors, and coworkers to new birth
- » For God to replace fear with hope in our lives and in the lives of others

## **BIBLICAL OVERVIEW**

**Lesson Text:** Matthew 28:1–20

**P**eople might have expected the Messiah to appear in Jerusalem or on a mountaintop. Instead, Jesus appeared to the women at the tomb and told them He would appear to His disciples in Galilee in order to make good on a promise. Jesus had spent His early life in the area. Being warned of God in a dream, Jesus' earthly father had turned aside into the parts of Galilee and dwelt in the city of Nazareth, fulfilling the prophecy that Jesus would be called a Nazarene (Matthew 2:23).

Recognizing the safety provided by the area, Jesus also sought refuge in Galilee when He heard that John was cast into prison. The people who sat in darkness in Galilee would see the great light of Jesus, fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah who declared that Jesus would bring light to Galilee (Isaiah 9:1–2; Matthew 4:16).

Jesus called Simon Peter and his brother Andrew by the Sea of Galilee. Matthew 4:23 records: “Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease.” Multitudes of people from Galilee followed Jesus. Unfortunately, Jesus could not do many miracles in Nazareth due to the unbelief of the people (Matthew 13:58; Mark 6:5).

Galilee was so important in the life of Jesus that He even predicted His betrayal, death, and resurrection there. In Matthew 26:32, Jesus promised that after He had risen again, He would go before them into Galilee. The connections between Galilee, Jesus, and His disciples made it impossible for Peter to hide his association with the Messiah. While Peter sat in the palace, a damsel declared he was also with Jesus of Galilee. Peter denied knowing Jesus. Thankfully, Peter would find his way back to a right relationship with Jesus when the Master appeared in Galilee.

Galilee figured mightily in the plans of God. Because the Jews who returned to Jerusalem for Pentecost could not fathom Galileans would know so many different languages, they asked questions that led to the truth of Jesus. The Galilean Simon Peter, who had denied Jesus, now preached a mighty sermon, allowing the gospel message to spread from Galilee to Jerusalem to the uttermost part of the earth.

**THE PEOPLE WHO SAT IN DARKNESS IN GALILEE WOULD SEE THE GREAT LIGHT OF JESUS, FULFILLING THE PROPHECY OF ISAIAH WHO DECLARED THAT JESUS WOULD BRING LIGHT TO GALILEE (ISAIAH 9:1–2; MATTHEW 4:16).**

# DAY 1

## Matthew 28:1-2

<sup>1</sup> In the end of the sabbath, as it began to dawn toward the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.

<sup>2</sup> And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.

### Biblical Insight

The Ten Commandments famously declare, “Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy” (Exodus 20:8). As a result, Jews observe the Sabbath very carefully with the Orthodox even refusing to use electricity. Some Christians, such as Seventh Day Adventists, believe that worship should be conducted on Saturdays, making it a day of rest. However, most Christians worship on Sunday instead of Saturday. This change of day resulted because Jesus rose on the first day of the week and God poured out His Spirit on the first day of the week. The rest connected with the Sabbath came to be associated with the Spirit (Acts 3:19).

### Daily Devotion

Rest is essential for both body and mind. During rest, the brain processes memories, repairs tissues, and balances hormones. Sleep, a key form of rest, supports immune function and reduces stress. Without adequate rest, cognitive function declines, mood worsens, and health risks increase. Science shows that regular rest improves productivity, creativity, and overall well-being.

When God established the Sabbath as a holy day for His people, He was teaching a Kingdom principle about rest. Choosing to rest—not working—is not laziness, as many might think. Instead, resting is an act of worship and a step of faith, trusting that God remains sovereign and faithful even when we pause from our labor. In rest, we honor God’s provision and acknowledge His control over all things.

» **REVIEW:** *Who visited Jesus’ tomb in Matthew 28:1?*

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» **REFLECT:** *Do you ever feel guilty when you take days off and do nothing?*

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» **APPLY:** *Check your calendar today, and schedule times of rest.*

# DAY 2

## Matthew 28:2-4

- <sup>2</sup> And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it.
- <sup>3</sup> His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow:
- <sup>4</sup> And for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead men.

### Biblical Insight

Matthew 28 describes the angel of the Lord who rolled back the stone and sat on it as having a face like lightning with clothing as white as snow. His countenance and general appearance caused great fear in those who saw him. The description of the angel is similar to the one Daniel saw in Daniel 10:2-6 after a time of intense fasting and seeking God. Daniel provided a more extensive description than Matthew, noting the angel's eyes were as lamps of fire with arms and feet like polished brass.

### Daily Devotion

In 1990 a massive earthquake struck Luzon, shaking the heart of the Philippines. The 7.8-magnitude tremor devastated Baguio City and nearby towns. Buildings crumbled, roads split, and lives were lost. Rescue teams worked tirelessly amid the chaos. Survivors united to share food and hope. The nation mourned but also showed resilience, rebuilding stronger than before. That earthquake became a powerful reminder of nature's force, resulting in the country's better programs for its infrastructure.

Matthew 28:2 declares the angel of the Lord, who rolled away the stone, caused an earthquake. If an angel alone could unleash such a force of nature, imagine the magnitude of God's presence. Moses himself experienced this power when he was placed in the cleft of a rock. Let this be a reminder of the awe-inspiring strength and majesty of God's presence.

» **REVIEW:** *How is the angel described in Matthew 28?*

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» **REFLECT:** *When is the last time you were in awe in the presence of the Lord?*

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» **APPLY:** *In your prayer today, ask the Lord to help you live in awe of Him.*

# DAY 3

## Matthew 28:8-10

- <sup>8</sup> And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring his disciples word.
- <sup>9</sup> And as they went to tell his disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held him by the feet, and worshipped him.
- <sup>10</sup> Then said Jesus unto them, Be not afraid: go tell my brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see me.

### Biblical Insight

On three different occasions in the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus told the disciples not to be afraid. In Matthew 14:26-27, they feared when they saw Jesus on the sea, thinking Him to be a spirit. In Matthew 17:1-7, Peter, James, and John were afraid when they heard the voice at Jesus' transfiguration. In Matthew 28:10, the women were afraid when they saw the risen Christ. In none of these cases was Jesus a spirit, which is of particular importance because we must confess that Jesus appeared in the flesh (1 John 4:2) to avoid heresies that He was only divine but not human.

### Daily Devotion

In a quiet barrio in Mindanao, missionary Nomer arrived with a Bible and a heart full of faith. He listened, learned the language, and lived among the people. One day under a mango tree, he shared the story of Jesus. An elder wept, saying, "We've waited for this hope." Soon the entire barrio, with over two thousand people, gathered weekly for services. Nomer realized the importance of sharing the gospel for people to know Jesus.

The first command Jesus gave to those who saw Him after His resurrection was "go tell my brethren." In the same way, when we experience the resurrection power of Jesus, we are called to share the good news with others. Jesus has already done His part: He died on the cross for our sins. Now it is our turn to do ours by proclaiming the same gospel we experienced.

» **REVIEW:** *What did the disciples do when Jesus met and greeted them after His resurrection in Matthew 28:9?*

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» **REFLECT:** *Who was the first person to tell you about Jesus?*

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» **APPLY:** *Write down all the names of the people with whom you could share the gospel.*

# DAY 4

## Matthew 28:11-15

- <sup>11</sup> Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the city, and shewed unto the chief priests all the things that were done.
- <sup>12</sup> And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers,
- <sup>13</sup> Saying, Say ye, His disciples came by night, and stole him away while we slept.
- <sup>14</sup> And if this come to the governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you.
- <sup>15</sup> So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.

### Biblical Insight

The soldiers guarding Jesus' tomb would have expressed great fear, not only because of the earthquake and the appearance of the angel, but also because of the missing body of Jesus. At best, they could expect to be court-martialed and imprisoned. The broken Roman imperial seal on the tomb would have sealed their fate. The soldiers would be deemed worthy of the death penalty. Therefore, the chief priests acted to prevent the true story from being revealed. Despite their efforts, they could not stop the powerful message of the Resurrection.

### Daily Devotion

In 2010, doctors declared a young Brazilian boy brain-dead after a severe head injury. His devout mother prayed nonstop. Days later, the boy woke up, fully alert—an unexplainable recovery. News spread. One skeptical nurse believed it was a misdiagnosis, yet medical records confirmed it: no brain activity, then full function. Later, the nurse admitted, "I doubted, but something beyond science happened." Her heart opened as she was reminded that miracles often defy logic before belief.

Many people tend to doubt, even after a miracle has taken place. It's natural for us to question the miraculous, especially when it seems too good to be true. Yet we are called to move beyond doubt and step into faith. When we choose to live by faith, the miraculous becomes part of our daily reality, reminding us that with God, nothing is impossible.

» **REVIEW:** *Who bribed the soldiers who were guarding Jesus' tomb?*

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» **REFLECT:** *Have you ever doubted someone else's testimony? Has someone doubted yours?*

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» **APPLY:** *Share your testimony with someone, no matter if they believe or reject it.*

# DAY 5

## Matthew 28:16–20

<sup>16</sup> Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where Jesus had appointed them.

<sup>17</sup> And when they saw him, they worshipped him: but some doubted.

<sup>18</sup> And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.

<sup>19</sup> Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:

<sup>20</sup> Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world. Amen.

### Biblical Insight

Some Gospels provide key information that others do not. For example, only Luke records the Parable of the Good Samaritan. Only Matthew includes the story of the Magi. And John's Gospel is very different from the others. Therefore, we need to read all the Gospels to gain complete understanding. In Matthew 28:17, we read that some of the disciples doubted when they saw the resurrected Jesus. When we turn to John 20, we see a more complete picture when the beloved disciple described Jesus addressing Thomas's unbelief.

### Daily Devotion

In 1948, Saskatchewan farmer Cecil George Harris became trapped beneath his own tractor. Believing he wouldn't survive, he carved into its metal fender: "In case I die in this mess, I leave all to the wife. Cecil Geo. Harris." Though he later died in hospital, that fender—serving as his final will—was accepted by probate and remains on display at the University of Saskatchewan Law Library.

The Lord's Great Commission, given just before His ascension, can be seen as His final will and testament. Spoken on the Mount of Olives, these parting words hold deep significance and should remain at the heart of the church's mission. At the center of this divine charge is Jesus' clear command to make disciples of all nations. It is a calling we must remember, honor, and faithfully carry out in every generation.

» **REVIEW:** *What was given to Jesus in Matthew 28:18?*

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» **REFLECT:** *Who was the first person to teach you a Bible study?*

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» **APPLY:** *Meet with a friend this week and offer to teach him or her a Bible study.*

# LOOKING AHEAD TO SUMMER 2026

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## ***THE FIRST CHURCH***

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|-----------|---------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>01</b> | June 7, 2026  | Jesus' Great Commission     |
| <b>02</b> | June 14, 2026 | The Day of Pentecost        |
| <b>03</b> | June 21, 2026 | Revival in Samaria          |
| <b>04</b> | June 28, 2026 | Paul's New-Birth Experience |
| <b>05</b> | July 5, 2026  | The Gentile Revival         |
| <b>06</b> | July 12, 2026 | The Council in Jerusalem    |



## ***NEW COVENANT LIFE***

- |           |                 |                            |
|-----------|-----------------|----------------------------|
| <b>07</b> | July 19, 2026   | Paul and Silas in Philippi |
| <b>08</b> | July 26, 2026   | Reminders from Ephesians   |
| <b>09</b> | August 2, 2026  | Paul's Testimony           |
| <b>10</b> | August 9, 2026  | The Fruit of the Spirit    |
| <b>11</b> | August 16, 2026 | The Armor of God           |



## ***A NEW BEGINNING***

- |           |                 |                        |
|-----------|-----------------|------------------------|
| <b>12</b> | August 23, 2026 | The Throne Room        |
| <b>13</b> | August 30, 2026 | The Covenant Fulfilled |

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