



the**GOSPEL**PROJECT
FOR STUDENTS

THE GOSPEL PROJECT FOR STUDENTS
DAILY DISCIPLESHIP GUIDE

VOLUME 9

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

UNIT 25 JESUS BRINGS TRUTH

SESSION 1 • Secrets of the Kingdom	6
SESSION 2 • The Kingdom of Heaven	14
SESSION 3 • The Wind and the Sea Obey	22
SESSION 4 • Your Faith Has Saved You	30

UNIT 26 JESUS BRINGS LIFE

SESSION 1 • Five Loaves and Two Fish	38
SESSION 2 • Walking on the Sea	46
SESSION 3 • The Children's Crumbs	54
SESSION 4 • Resurrection and Life	62

UNIT 27 JESUS IS THE WAY

SESSION 1 • Now I Can See	70
SESSION 2 • To Seek and Save the Lost	78
SESSION 3 • The Stones Would Cry Out	86
SESSION 4 • The Time Is Coming	94
SESSION 5 • Surely Not I?	102

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Intended for group and personal use, this section contains the main point of the session, questions to interact with as a group, and the key components found in the Leader Guide—Christ Connection, Theology Connection, and Cultural Connection.



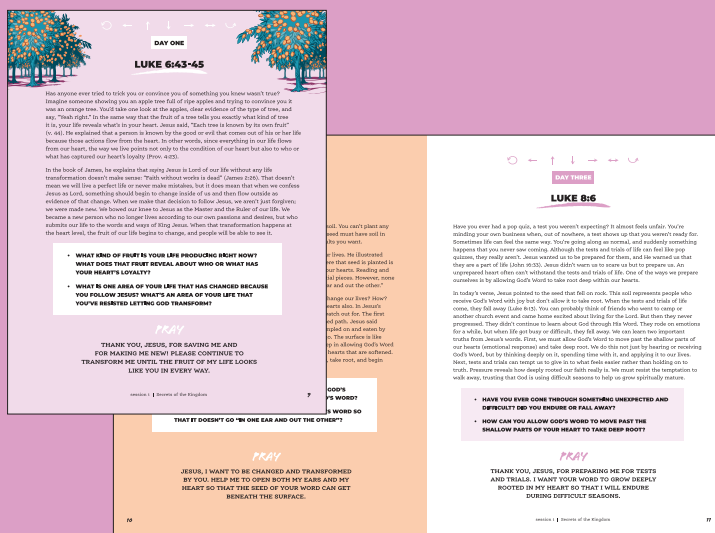
The **Christ Connection** specifically points out how the Scripture passage for that session points to Jesus, connecting the dots and helping you understand how the books of the Bible fit together.



The **Theology Connection** contains an important biblical doctrine for each lesson. Each of these doctrines directly relates to the Bible study material. Knowing these doctrines will help you be more grounded in what Christianity teaches and celebrates and better equipped to explain to others what you actually believe.

DAILY DEVOTIONS

In addition to the group portions of this study, the **Daily Discipleship Guide** also includes five days of devotions following each session. As we journey through the storyline of Scripture over the course of three years, we won't have time to cover some sections of the Bible. These devotions will help with that, filling in the gaps in the biblical storyline and allowing more opportunities to cover biblical themes and insights not discussed during group time. These devotions help you know how to read and interpret the Bible for yourself. Symbols for the Seven Arrows reading method are provided at the beginning of each week's devotions as a reminder of common questions to ask about Scripture as you read each day. The devotion pages are perforated so that you can take them home with you.



SEVEN ARROWS

OF BIBLE READING



What does this passage say?



What did this passage mean to its original audience?



What does this passage tell us about God?



What does this passage tell us about man?



What does this passage demand of me?



How does this passage change the way I relate to people?



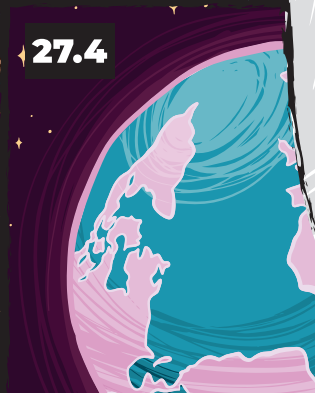
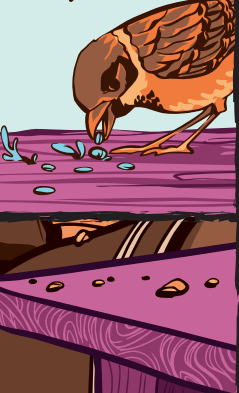
How does this passage prompt me to pray?

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THE SON HAS TRUTH

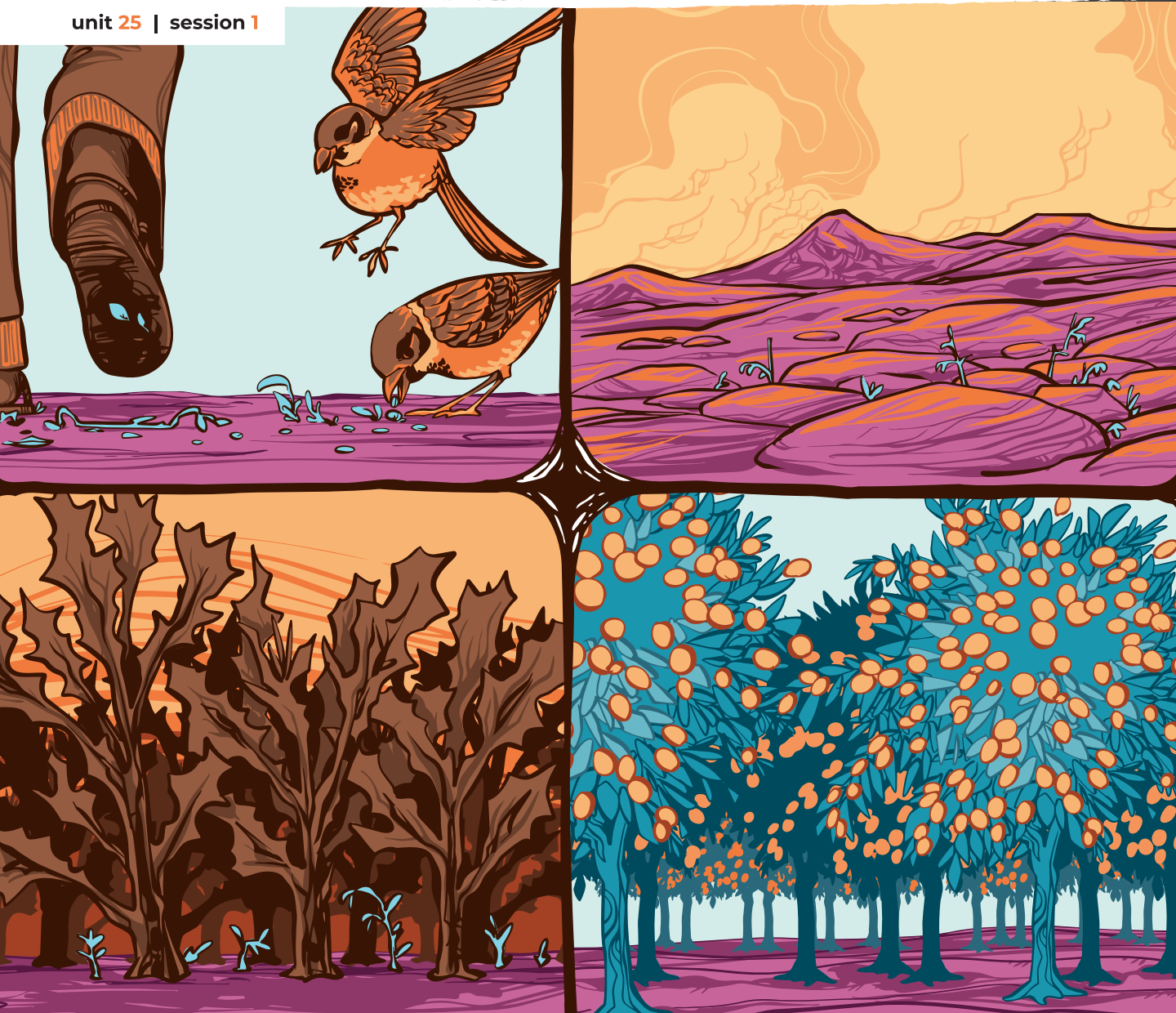


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|-------------|---------------------------|-------------|---------------------------|
| 25.1 | SECRETS OF THE KINGDOM | 26.3 | THE CHILDREN'S CRUMBS |
| 25.2 | THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN | 26.4 | RESURRECTION AND LIFE |
| 25.3 | THE WIND AND THE SEA OBEY | 27.1 | NOW I CAN SEE |
| 25.4 | YOUR FAITH HAS SAVED YOU | 27.2 | TO SEEK AND SAVE THE LOST |
| 26.1 | FIVE LOAVES AND TWO FISH | 27.3 | THE STONES WOULD CRY OUT |
| 26.2 | WALKING ON THE SEA | 27.4 | THE TIME IS COMING |
| | | 27.5 | SURELY NOT I? |



SECRETS OF *THE KINGDOM*

unit 25 | session 1



CHRIST CONNECTION

Jesus used parables to describe the nature of God's kingdom on earth. Word of the kingdom is spread widely but received differently based on the condition of one's heart. For those with hearts of fertile soil, the Word produces extraordinary fruitfulness, causing the kingdom to grow into all of the world. When Jesus returns, we will experience the fullness of God's kingdom.

PLANTING THE WORD

This week, we're covering the passages and main points below. But we encourage you to dig in and read all of the content on this timeline.

Luke 8

GOD'S WORD IS A SEED

LUKE 8:4-10

4 And when a great crowd was gathering and people from town after town came to him, he said in a parable, 5 "A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell along the path and was trampled underfoot, and the birds of the air devoured it. 6 And some fell on the rock, and as it grew up, it withered away, because it had no moisture. 7 And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up with it and choked it. 8 And some fell into good soil and grew and yielded a hundredfold." As he said these things, he called out, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear." 9 And when his disciples asked him what this parable meant, 10 he said, "To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of God, but for others they are in parables, so that 'seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.'"

GOD'S WORD GROWS IN GOOD SOIL

LUKE 8:11-15

11 "Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. 12 The ones along the path are those who have heard; then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved. 13 And the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear the word, receive it with joy. But these have no root; they believe for a while, and in time of testing fall away. 14 And as for what fell among the thorns, they are those who hear, but as they go on their way they are choked by the cares and riches and pleasures of life, and their fruit does not mature. 15 As for that in the good soil, they are those who, hearing the word, hold it fast in an honest and good heart, and bear fruit with patience."

MAIN POINT.

We are changed when we allow the Word to take root in our heart.



THEOLOGY CONNECTION

THE GOSPEL

The Bible teaches that the gospel is both an event and a story. First, it is an event that took place at a specific point in history: the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ for the redemption of sinners (1 Cor. 15; 2 Cor. 5:21).

Second, the gospel is the story of redemption that God planned since “before the foundation of the world” (Eph. 1:4), running through Scripture and culminating in a restored and redeemed creation—a new heaven and new earth where sin, death, and suffering will never again plague humanity and where God’s people will live with Him forever (Isa. 25:8; 2 Pet. 3:13; Rev. 21). The event and story do not exist apart from or in conflict with one another but together inspire us to a life of devotion and mission.

DISCUSSION

GOD’S WORD IS A SEED

LUKE 8:4-10

- What does a seed need to grow? How is God’s Word like a seed? Why don’t we always see growth?
- ✝ • What do you notice about where the sower scatters seeds? What does this show us about the Word?
- 📖 • Why do you think Jesus taught in parables? What does this help you understand about God’s character?

GOD’S WORD GROWS IN GOOD SOIL

LUKE 8:11-15

- 🧠 • Underline the four types of soil. Why do you think people respond so differently to the Word? Which soils do you relate to most?
- ♥ • What “thorns” keep our hearts from being good soil?
- Why is having a heart of “good soil” difficult? What does “good soil” look like in someone’s life?



WHAT HABITS CAN YOU BEGIN SO THAT YOUR HEART IS A PLACE FOR GOD’S WORD TO GROW AND PRODUCE FRUIT?

CULTURAL CONNECTION

Do you ever feel like you struggle to understand or apply the Bible? You aren’t alone. But many of us use these struggles as excuses and never try to understand Scripture. We’ll make strong efforts to improve in sports or hobbies, but we give up easily in the struggle to know and understand the Bible. Isn’t this what the enemy would want, though—to deter us from even trying? Maybe you understand the Word but struggle to allow God’s commands to affect the small and big pieces of your life. God’s Word is like a seed; it takes root in our hearts and completely transforms us. But we have to nurture it. God has given us the Holy Spirit to help us because He wants us to understand His Word! The Lord promised not to leave us unfinished; He continues to sanctify us, making us more like Jesus until we are with Him in eternity (Phil. 1:6). You can find hope in the truth that God will continue to help you grow. As you seek to obey God faithfully and make efforts to know His Word, the Holy Spirit will strengthen you from the inside out, helping you understand and transforming you in the process.



DAY ONE

LUKE 6:43-45



Has anyone ever tried to trick you or convince you of something you knew wasn't true? Imagine someone showing you an apple tree full of ripe apples and trying to convince you it was an orange tree. You'd take one look at the apples, clear evidence of the type of tree, and say, "Yeah right." In the same way that the fruit of a tree tells you exactly what kind of tree it is, your life reveals what's in your heart. Jesus said, "Each tree is known by its own fruit" (v. 44). He explained that a person is known by the good or evil that comes out of his or her life because those actions flow from the heart. In other words, since everything in our life flows from our heart, the way we live points not only to the condition of our heart but also to who or what has captured our heart's loyalty (Prov. 4:23).

In the book of James, he explains that saying Jesus is Lord of our life without any life transformation doesn't make sense: "Faith apart from works is dead" (James 2:26). That doesn't mean we will live a perfect life or never make mistakes, but it does mean that when we confess Jesus as Lord, something should begin to change inside of us and then flow outside as evidence of that change. When we make that decision to follow Jesus, we aren't just forgiven; we were made new. We bowed our knee to Jesus as the Master and the Ruler of our life. We became a new person who no longer lives according to our own passions and desires, but who submits our life to the words and ways of King Jesus. When that transformation happens at the heart level, the fruit of our life begins to change, and people will be able to see it.

- **WHAT KIND OF FRUIT IS YOUR LIFE PRODUCING RIGHT NOW? WHAT DOES THAT FRUIT REVEAL ABOUT WHO OR WHAT HAS YOUR HEART'S LOYALTY?**
- **WHAT IS ONE AREA OF YOUR LIFE THAT HAS CHANGED BECAUSE YOU FOLLOW JESUS? WHAT'S AN AREA OF YOUR LIFE THAT YOU'VE RESISTED LETTING GOD TRANSFORM?**

PRAY

THANK YOU, JESUS, FOR SAVING ME AND
FOR MAKING ME NEW! PLEASE CONTINUE TO
TRANSFORM ME UNTIL THE FRUIT OF MY LIFE LOOKS
LIKE YOU IN EVERY WAY.



DAY TWO

LUKE 8:5

When you want to grow a plant, you must have two things: seed and soil. You can't plant any kind of tree, flower, or grass without the right kind of seed, and that seed must have soil in which to grow. You need the right seed in the right soil to get the results you want.

Jesus used this picture to explain how spiritual growth happens in our lives. He illustrated that the seed for spiritual growth is the Word of God, and the soil where that seed is planted is our heart. If we want to grow in Christ, we must plant God's Word in our hearts. Reading and studying Scripture and listening to accurate Bible teaching are essential pieces. However, none of this produces spiritual growth if God's Word is just going "in one ear and out the other."

Did you know it's possible to read and hear God's Word and it not to change our lives? How? Because it's not only our physical ears that need to be open but our hearts also. In Jesus's illustration, He warned us about different conditions of the heart to watch out for. The first condition He described isn't really soil at all but is more like a hardened path. Jesus said that when the seed of His Word is sown in this kind of heart, it is trampled on and eaten by the birds. Why? Because it stays on the surface and has nowhere to go. The surface is like concrete, and nothing can penetrate it to put down roots. The first step in allowing God's Word to change and transform our lives is to open our hearts to it—to have hearts that are softened. When our hearts are open, God's Word can move beneath the surface, take root, and begin producing real change and transformation.

- **WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE IN HAVING EARS TO HEAR GOD'S WORD AND A HEART THAT IS OPEN TO RECEIVE GOD'S WORD?**
- **HOW CAN YOU OPEN YOUR HEART TO RECEIVE GOD'S WORD SO THAT IT DOESN'T GO "IN ONE EAR AND OUT THE OTHER"?**

PRAY

JESUS, I WANT TO BE CHANGED AND TRANSFORMED BY YOU. HELP ME TO OPEN BOTH MY EARS AND MY HEART SO THAT THE SEED OF YOUR WORD CAN GET BENEATH THE SURFACE.



DAY THREE

LUKE 8:6

Have you ever had a pop quiz, a test you weren't expecting? It almost feels unfair. You're minding your own business when, out of nowhere, a test shows up that you weren't ready for. Sometimes life can feel the same way. You're going along as normal, and suddenly something happens that you never saw coming. Although the tests and trials of life can feel like pop quizzes, they really aren't. Jesus wanted us to be prepared for them, and He warned us that they are a part of life (John 16:33). Jesus didn't warn us to scare us but to prepare us. An unprepared heart often can't withstand the tests and trials of life. One of the ways we prepare ourselves is by allowing God's Word to take root deep within our hearts.

In today's verse, Jesus pointed to the seed that fell on rock. This soil represents people who receive God's Word with joy but don't allow it to take root. When the tests and trials of life come, they fall away (Luke 8:13). You can probably think of friends who went to camp or another church event and came home excited about living for the Lord. But then they never progressed. They didn't continue to learn about God through His Word. They rode on emotions for a while, but when life got busy or difficult, they fell away. We can learn two important truths from Jesus's words. First, we must allow God's Word to move past the shallow parts of our hearts (emotional response) and take deep root. We do this not just by hearing or receiving God's Word, but by thinking deeply on it, spending time with it, and applying it to our lives. Next, tests and trials can tempt us to give in to what feels easier rather than holding on to truth. Pressure reveals how deeply rooted our faith really is. We must resist the temptation to walk away, trusting that God is using difficult seasons to help us grow spiritually mature.

- **HAVE YOU EVER GONE THROUGH SOMETHING UNEXPECTED AND DIFFICULT? DID YOU ENDURE OR FALL AWAY?**
- **HOW CAN YOU ALLOW GOD'S WORD TO MOVE PAST THE SHALLOW PARTS OF YOUR HEART TO TAKE DEEP ROOT?**

PRAY

THANK YOU, JESUS, FOR PREPARING ME FOR TESTS AND TRIALS. I WANT YOUR WORD TO GROW DEEPLY ROOTED IN MY HEART SO THAT I WILL ENDURE DURING DIFFICULT SEASONS.



DAY FOUR

LUKE 8:7

No matter how much you try to smash it shut, a suitcase that has been overpacked just won't zip all the way. You can step on it, sit on it, or even jump on it, but until you take something out, it won't close. Have you ever considered that our hearts might be like this: suitcases that can't function as they should because of how much we've overpacked them?

The world fights for our attention. School, hobbies, family, friends, jobs, social media, pressure, and expectations can feel like the most important parts of life. God becomes just another part of our schedule—if we can fit Him in. Could it be that part of the reason we aren't growing in Christ or feeling spiritually alive the way Jesus promised is because of a crowded heart? A heart that, like a jam-packed suitcase, has been filled with too many other things.

Jesus explained how spiritual growth happens. The third kind of soil is overcrowded soil. Jesus said the seed that falls there gets choked out by the worries of this life and the desire for the things of this world, like riches and pleasures (vv. 7,14). In other words, our hearts only have so much capacity, or room. When we allow everything that life has to offer to fill our hearts and to consume our time, the seed of God's Word is pushed aside. Our crowded hearts leave little room for spiritual growth. We struggle to mature, not because God isn't working, but because we're not giving Him room. What this teaches us is that we must be intentional about what we allow to fill our hearts and minds. When we make space for God's Word and for His work in our lives, He changes our hearts and we thrive spiritually.

- **WHY DO WE EASILY LET OUR HEARTS GET CROWDED? WHAT'S OVERCROWDING YOUR HEART, TAKING UP TOO MUCH ROOM?**
- **HOW CAN YOU MAKE ROOM IN YOUR HEART FOR GOD'S WORD AND GUARD AGAINST FILLING IT WITH THINGS OF THE WORLD?**

PRAY

**GOD, HELP ME TO SEE ANYTHING THAT IS CROWDING
YOUR WORD OUT OF MY HEART. I WANT MY LIFE AND
MY HEART TO HAVE ROOM FOR YOUR WORD BEFORE
ANYTHING ELSE.**



DAY FIVE

LUKE 8:8

Have you ever had someone say something like, “Wow, you have really grown”? Usually aunts and uncles or well-meaning people at church say this when they haven’t seen you in a long time. The last time you were around them, you were a few years younger and a few inches shorter, so in their eyes, you’ve changed. You may not always see how you’ve grown because you see yourself in the mirror every day.

Spiritual growth happens a lot like this—not all at once but little by little. One day at a time, one small step at a time, God quietly works in our lives, shaping us and helping us become more like Him. Sometimes, we don’t notice. But over time, the growth becomes obvious.

How does it happen? Spiritual growth happens as we come to Jesus daily, receive His words, and put them into practice in our lives. Spiritual growth doesn’t come just from hearing God’s Word occasionally but from daily receiving God’s Word and then faithfully living it out. In Jesus’s illustration, the fourth kind of soil is the good soil. The other three types of soil don’t allow the seed of His Word to take root and produce spiritual maturity. But the fourth type is good ground, where the seed of God’s Word grows and produces fruit in our lives. Jesus described this soil as a heart that hears His Word, receives it, and holds onto it with perseverance (Luke 8:15). If we want to grow and mature spiritually, we must nurture the soil in which God’s Word is planted. We nurture our hearts to be a place of growth when we spend time in prayer and in worship, when we surround ourselves with godly community and accountability, and when we keep the soil free from weeds that choke out growth.

- **WHAT ACTIONS CAN YOU TAKE TO NURTURE A HEART OF GOOD SOIL WHERE GOD’S WORD CAN GROW?**
- **WHAT ARE THE BIGGEST OBSTACLES TO YOU TAKING THESE STEPS ON A DAILY BASIS?**

PRAY

**GOD, I WANT MY HEART TO BE GOOD SOIL WHERE
YOUR WORD CAN GROW AND PRODUCE FRUIT IN
MY LIFE. HELP ME TO RECEIVE YOUR WORDS, HOLD
ONTO THEM, AND APPLY THEM TO MY LIFE.**

THE KINGDOM *OF HEAVEN*

unit 25 | session 2



CHRIST CONNECTION

Jesus told parables to describe the nature of God's kingdom on earth. No earthly kingdom is like God's kingdom, a kingdom of exceeding value. When Jesus returns, we will experience the fullness of God's kingdom.

TREASURE

This week, we're covering the passages and main points below. But we encourage you to dig in and read all of the content on this timeline.

Matthew 13

THE KINGDOM IS GROWING

MATTHEW 13:31-33

31 He put another parable before them, saying, "The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed that a man took and sowed in his field. 32 It is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown it is larger than all the garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches." 33 He told them another parable. "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven that a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, till it was all leavened."

THE KINGDOM IS PRICELESS

MATTHEW 13:44-46

44 "The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which a man found and covered up. Then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. 45 "Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls, 46 who, on finding one pearl of great value, went and sold all that he had and bought it."

MAIN POINT.

Nothing has more worth than God's kingdom.



THEOLOGY CONNECTION

CHURCH AND KINGDOM

The church and the kingdom of God are closely related, though not identical.

When the Bible speaks of the kingdom of God, it is referring to God's reign in the world. The church is the people of God who live under His loving rule now, anticipating the fullness of God's kingdom in the future.

The church's mission is to share about God's kingdom, proclaiming God's message of salvation through Jesus and demonstrating the power of the gospel through good works so that others may be brought to live under God's reign.

DISCUSSION

THE KINGDOM IS GROWING

MATTHEW 13:31-33

- Why do you think Jesus used the image of a seed to describe the kingdom of God? What does it help us know about God's kingdom?
- How is God's kingdom unlike earthly kingdoms? How would you describe it today?
- How can we help grow the kingdom of God? What holds us back from doing this?

THE KINGDOM IS PRICELESS

MATTHEW 13:44-46

- What makes something priceless? Why is God's kingdom a priceless treasure?
- Why should our lives reflect that God's kingdom is priceless to us? Where do you struggle with this?
- Why should the kingdom of God give you joy, like the men in the parable felt for their treasures?



HOW CAN YOU PRIORITIZE GOD'S KINGDOM OVER WORLDLY KINGDOMS IN YOUR DAILY LIFE? WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE SO THAT FOLLOWING JESUS IS MOST IMPORTANT?

CULTURAL CONNECTION

What do you treasure—really treasure? Here's how to know: Look at how you live; look at what consumes your time, your attention, your devotion; look at what you protect. We may say that we treasure our relationship with God because it feels like the right thing to say. But our lives reveal our greatest treasure. Do they show that we love Jesus? For believers, treasuring the Lord will conflict with what the world says is important. Our identity first comes from belonging to God's kingdom, not worldly ones. We can easily lose sight of this and think the best treasures in life are the teams we are on, the clubs or friend groups we are a part of, or the possessions we own; however, we can do nothing more significant with our lives than faithfully living as citizens of God's kingdom, growing in our relationship with the Lord, and pointing others to Him. If the Lord is our greatest treasure, then our love for Him will show up in every part of our lives.



DAY ONE

MATTHEW 13:10-16



Most of us have a list of places in the world we'd like to see one day. Even if we've traveled a lot, there are places where our feet have never touched the ground and our eyes have never physically seen. We can't understand fully what it would be like to live there. In an even greater way, we can't understand fully what God's kingdom is like.

The Bible tells us that we can't comprehend the thoughts of God through our natural understanding but through spiritual understanding (1 Cor. 2:13-15). Just like those places we've never visited, we have only lived in this natural world; we don't have the ability to even envision fully what God's kingdom or heaven is like. The truth is that it will be better than anything we can imagine.

When Jesus revealed glimpses about God's kingdom to His followers, He taught in parables (v. 10)—stories used to illustrate an idea. Jesus's parables revealed how God's kingdom works and taught spiritual truths. Jesus used objects and situations the people already understood and had seen in the natural world to explain spiritual realities; He wanted to help them (and us) begin to understand the way of the kingdom (v. 11). As we seek to know God and understand His kingdom, Jesus's parables are greatly valuable. With the help of the Holy Spirit to give us wisdom and understanding, we can understand the ways of God's kingdom. Even today, God continues to use what we can see and understand in the natural world to teach us about His kingdom and to reveal more of Himself, if we will have eyes to see and ears to hear (Matt. 13:9).

- **CAN YOU THINK OF A STORY OR AN ILLUSTRATION THAT HELPED YOU UNDERSTAND GOD MORE? HOW DID IT HELP YOU?**
- **HOW CAN WE KNOW THAT GOD DESIRES FOR US TO UNDERSTAND BIBLICAL TRUTH?**

PRAY

THANK YOU, JESUS, FOR USING STORIES AND ILLUSTRATIONS TO SHOW ME WHO YOU ARE AND WHAT YOUR KINGDOM IS LIKE. HELP ME TO SEE AND HEAR ALL YOU WANT TO TEACH ME THROUGH WHAT IS RIGHT IN FRONT OF ME.



DAY TWO

MATTHEW 13:47-50

When you are writing, speaking, or presenting something, knowing your audience is critical. How you say something would be very different for a well-educated adult than for a five-year-old child. What is relevant and what makes sense to them is different, so how you communicate must be different. Jesus understood this and intentionally tailored both what He said and how He said it to His audience.

In this parable, Jesus used a fishing illustration. Why? Because many of the people listening were fishermen or were very familiar with fishing. Jesus compared what will happen at the end of the age to hauling in a large catch of fish. In the same way that fishermen separate the good fish from the bad, those who place their faith in Jesus will be separated from those who reject Him. Those who placed their faith in Jesus will be saved from eternal judgment, while those who reject Him will face eternal judgment (v. 50).

This parable not only teaches us about what will happen at the end of the age and urges us to place our faith in Jesus, but it also reminds us that God speaks to us in ways we can understand. Just as Jesus used a fishing illustration for fishermen, God speaks to us in ways that make sense to us. The Holy Spirit reveals truths of God's Word to us in ways we can comprehend and apply. And this is great news! We don't have to be intimidated when reading the Bible, praying, or seeking to know God more. He loves us; He wants us to know Him; and He teaches us in ways that are personal and intentional.

- **WHAT DOES JESUS USING PARABLES SHOW US ABOUT HIS LOVE FOR US AND HIS DESIRE FOR US TO KNOW HIM?**
- **WHEN HAS GOD SPOKEN TRUTH TO YOU IN A WAY YOU COULD UNDERSTAND? HOW DID THE HOLY SPIRIT HELP YOU?**

PRAY

**JESUS, THANK YOU FOR SPEAKING TO ME
AND REVEALING TRUTH IN A WAY THAT I CAN
UNDERSTAND. I OPEN MY HEART TO HEAR YOUR
VOICE AND TO GROW IN MY UNDERSTANDING OF
YOUR KINGDOM.**



DAY THREE

MATTHEW 5:13-16

Have you ever found yourself singing lyrics to a song you didn't realize you knew? Music can play around you and amazingly make its way into your heart and mind without you noticing. Then suddenly, that song comes on, and you sing every word. What once was unnoticed had been getting into you all along.

Whether we like to admit it or not, small things really can make a big difference. We see this truth throughout the Bible. Jesus taught this concept through the parable of the mustard seed. Although the mustard seed is tiny when it is planted, it grows into a large tree (Matt. 13:31-32). While this principle applies to several areas of our lives, it is especially important when thinking about impacting our world for Christ. We often feel like we aren't making much of a difference when we're trying to be a good influence or share the gospel with others, especially when we don't see immediate results. We can feel like we're trying so hard but not accomplishing anything. Jesus explained that we are the salt of the earth and the light of the world. As salt, we bring flavor and preservation, and as light, we shine in the darkness so others can see the hope of Christ. When we can't see the impact, we can't become discouraged and lose our flavor or our light. Instead, we remember that, like a mustard seed, what seems small today is something God can cause to grow tomorrow. Just like the songs we didn't know we knew, God can use us to plant seeds in people's hearts and lives that, over time, grow for His glory without us ever seeing it happen.

- **DO YOU KNOW ANYONE WHO NEEDS TO HEAR THE GOSPEL? WHAT ARE PRACTICAL WAYS YOU CAN BE SALT AND LIGHT TO THIS PERSON?**
- **HAVE YOU EVER BEEN DISCOURAGED WHEN TRYING TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE FOR CHRIST? HOW CAN REMEMBERING THE MUSTARD SEED HELP YOU OVERCOME THIS?**

PRAY

**GOD, I PRAY FOR BOLDNESS TO BE SALT AND LIGHT
IN THE WORLD. HELP ME PLANT SMALL SEEDS IN
FAITH, KNOWING THAT YOU CAN CAUSE THEM TO
GROW AND MAKE A BIG DIFFERENCE.**



DAY FOUR

PHILIPPIANS 3:7-9

Have you ever heard the expression, “You can’t have your cake and eat it too”? The phrase basically means that in life, you must often make a choice. You can’t both keep your cake and eat it, for if you eat your cake, you no longer have it, and if you keep your cake, you cannot eat it. You must choose one or the other. Confusing, right?

This phrase applies to following Jesus too. How? You can’t both follow Jesus and, at the same time, embrace all this world has to offer and chase the desires of your own heart. No, following Jesus means bowing our knees to Him as the Lord of our lives and dying to ourselves. This is what the apostle Paul meant when he wrote that he was willing to lose what was once so valuable to him for the sake of knowing Jesus.

This can be difficult, though, because we live in the here and now while many of God’s promises are eternal. Turning away from what the world has to offer and denying ourselves the worldly pleasures and comforts that are right in front of us aren’t easy; it feels like they matter so much. But we must remember that everything the world offers is temporary—here today and gone tomorrow. What Jesus offers, however, can’t be taken away and lasts forever. Jesus taught against storing up treasures on earth and investing in what is eternal instead (Matt. 6:19-20). Like the apostle Paul, we can choose to embrace what Jesus offers us, what will last and can’t be taken or destroyed. What this world offers is rubbish compared to the excellence of knowing Jesus, experiencing His love, and receiving the promise of life, both now and forever with Him.

- **WHEN OR WHERE DO YOU FIND IT MOST DIFFICULT TO TURN AWAY FROM WHAT THIS WORLD OFFERS TO FULLY FOLLOW JESUS?**
- **HOW CAN YOU REMIND YOURSELF THAT WHAT THE WORLD OFFERS IS ONLY TEMPORARY?**

PRAY

GOD, HELP ME TO SEE THE GIFT OF SALVATION AND THE PROMISE OF ETERNAL LIFE AS MOST VALUABLE. HELP ME SEE THAT EVERYTHING ELSE PALES IN COMPARISON TO KNOWING YOU.



DAY FIVE

COLOSSIANS 3:1-4

Do you know what we don't like to talk about? Personal responsibility. Counting on someone else to do something for you or blaming someone else for something we did is so much easier! But personal responsibility? Uncomfortable. It forces us to take accountability, to do things the right way.

But personal responsibility is important. Throughout Scripture, God gives us instructions and commands that, if we follow, lead to the life God wants for us. An example of this is found in today's passage: The apostle Paul tells us to set our minds on things above. This is an intentional action step—just like if you decided to set a plate on your table. You would have to grab the plate, walk to the table, and then set it down. In a similar way, we must intentionally set our minds on the things of God.

Did you know that your mind goes where you lead it? Through the content we look at, listen to, and the daily habits we form, we set our minds somewhere—on something—every day. The question is: Where are we setting them? When we choose to read the Bible, to pray, to be involved in church, to hang out with godly people, and only to consume what glorifies God, we are setting our minds on things above. God, His ways, His kingdom, and the eternal promises He has given to us become the focus of our thoughts. So, let's take personal responsibility for what consumes our minds. Since we have been given new life in Christ, let's set our minds on the Lord and on His kingdom.

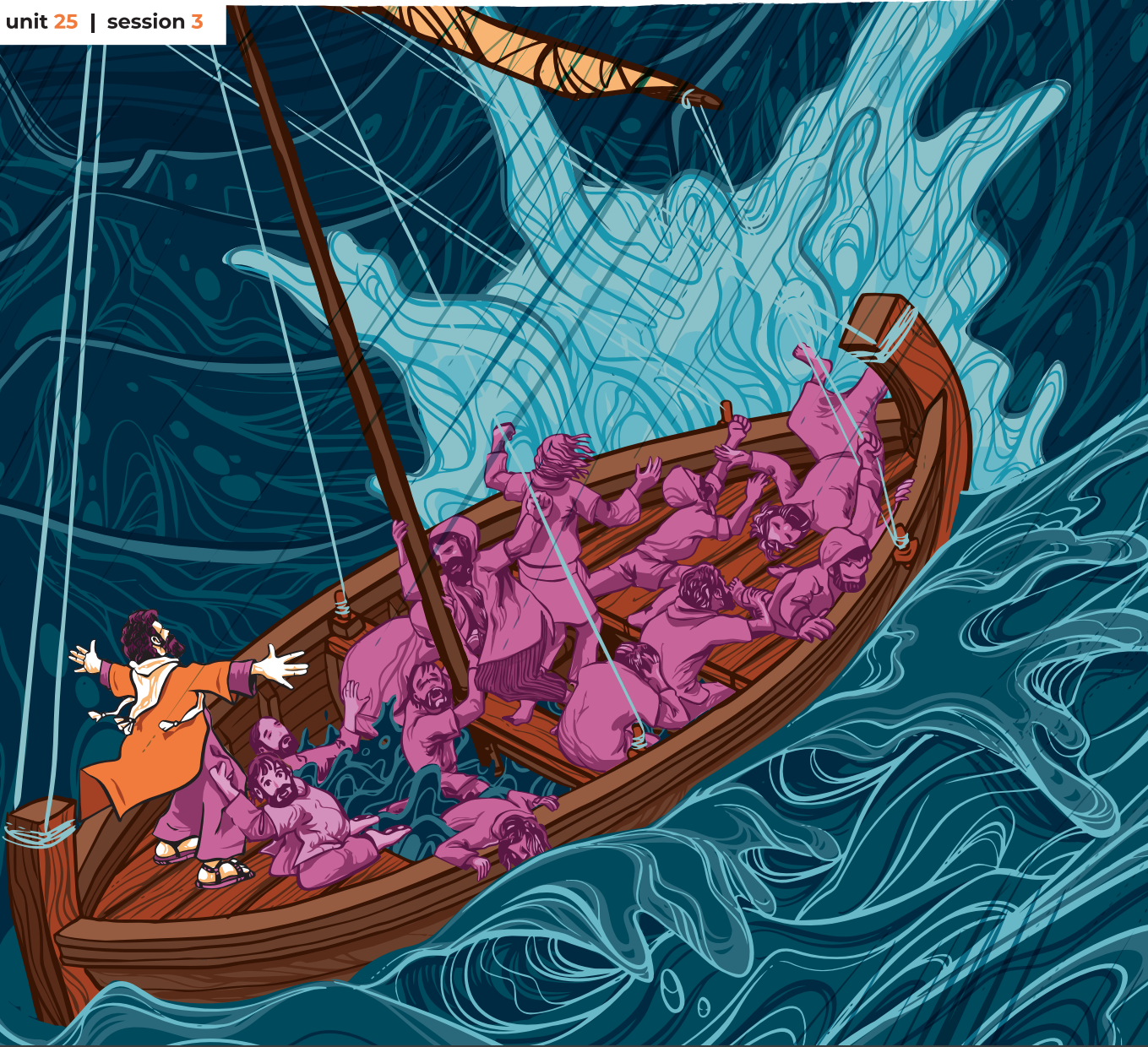
- **WHERE ARE YOU CURRENTLY SETTING YOUR MIND? WHAT DO YOU ALLOW TO CONSUME YOUR THOUGHTS?**
- **WHAT CHOICES AND HABITS CAN YOU CHANGE TO SET YOUR MIND ON THINGS ABOVE, ALLOWING THE THINGS OF GOD TO CONSUME YOUR THOUGHTS?**

PRAY

**GOD, I REPENT FOR THE WAYS I'VE SET MY MIND
ON THINGS THAT DON'T HONOR OR GLORIFY YOU.
GIVE ME THE STRENGTH AND WISDOM TO PLACE MY
THOUGHTS ON YOU EACH DAY.**

THE WIND AND THE *SEA OBEY*

unit 25 | session 3



CHRIST CONNECTION

Jesus demonstrated sovereign power over nature by calming the storm. Through His miracles, teaching, and most clearly, His death and resurrection, Jesus proved Himself to be worthy of our faith and worship. He alone is able to save us.

***PRESENCE* AND POWER**

This week, we're covering the passages and main points below. But we encourage you to dig in and read all of the content on this timeline.

Mark 4

STORMS ARE NOT GOD'S ABSENCE

MARK 4:35-38

35 On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side."
36 And leaving the crowd, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. And other boats were with him. 37 And a great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking into the boat, so that the boat was already filling. 38 But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion. And they woke him and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?"

STORMS REVEAL GOD'S AUTHORITY

MARK 4:39-41

39 And he awoke and rebuked the wind and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" And the wind ceased, and there was a great calm. 40 He said to them, "Why are you so afraid? Have you still no faith?" 41 And they were filled with great fear and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"

MAIN POINT.

Jesus is worthy of our trust.



THEOLOGY CONNECTION

JESUS'S DEITY

The person of Jesus Christ has two natures—the divine and the human. Scripture teaches He is fully divine and fully human. His divinity is on display in passages that describe Him as being equal with God (John 1:1-18; Phil. 2:5-11; Col. 1:15-20; Heb. 1:1-3). The New Testament also points to the deity of Christ by showing how He possesses attributes that only God possesses, how He performs works that only God performs (Mark 2:5-12; John 10:28; 17:2), and how He Himself claims to be the Son of God (Matt. 26:63-64; John 8:58; 10:30; 17:5).

DISCUSSION

STORMS ARE NOT GOD'S ABSENCE

MARK 4:35-38

- What was the disciples' main fear? What did they not remember?
- When have you struggled to feel God's presence during a storm in your life?
- Do you think that the storm was a surprise to Jesus? Why would He sleep if He knew a storm was coming?

STORMS REVEAL GOD'S AUTHORITY

MARK 4:39-41

- Why is the way Jesus calmed the sea significant?
- Why do we struggle to trust God when storms come? How can storms either help or hurt our understanding of God's character?
- Why do you think the disciples responded the way they did to Jesus calming the storm?



HOW CAN YOU PAUSE TO REFLECT ON GOD'S SOVEREIGN CARE IN YOUR LIFE? HOW CAN YOU LIVE IN GRATITUDE TO HIM THIS WEEK?

CULTURAL CONNECTION

We don't enjoy difficult situations; usually, we do anything we can to avoid them. Regardless, bad things do happen. Sometimes, we want to blame God or ask why He wasn't there when we needed Him. We naturally question why God allows pain. Satan may even attempt to use our pain as twisted evidence that God isn't real or that He doesn't care. Storms do come—but not because God is uncaring or absent. Storms come because we live in a broken world. Sin entered the world in Eden and touched every part of humanity. Even nature experiences the effects of sin. While this may be difficult for us to see in our moments of pain, God hates our pain more than we do. He sent Jesus to make right what sin destroyed. The Lord is present with us in our pain. He walks with us through difficult times. He has ultimate authority over the world! God doesn't keep His children from experiencing struggles, but He sustains us as we depend on Him, and through Jesus, we have assurance of an eternity free from pain and sorrow.



DAY ONE

JOHN 15:18-20

The picture in a restaurant's menu almost always looks better than the actual meal that arrives at your table. You order something off the menu because the picture looks so good, but when it arrives, you think, "What is that?" Many people can feel like this when it comes to their faith.

People often make the decision to put their faith in Jesus and think all their problems will go away, everyone will like them, and they'll never go through anything difficult. They think that following Jesus will exempt them from the harsher realities of this life. While Jesus does promise life, and life to the fullest, He was also transparent about our fallen and broken world and our very real enemy (John 10:10). Jesus assured believers that they'd face trials and tribulation, but He also assured us that He has overcome the world and will be with us in it (John 16:33). If we follow Jesus, and if He is our example, then we shouldn't be surprised when we face difficulties. Jesus faced persecution and hate. Jesus told His disciples that since the world hated Him, it would also hate them—and us, His disciples today (John 15:18-20). When we follow Jesus, persecution, trials, and tribulation may be a part of our lives. But we don't have to live in fear or discouragement. Instead, we can take heart knowing that Jesus promised never to leave nor forsake us. We already have victory in Jesus's name, and every trial is an opportunity for God to receive glory because of His power and faithfulness to us.

- **HAVE YOU EVER BEEN SURPRISED BY A DIFFICULT SITUATION OR SEASON? HOW DID IT AFFECT YOUR FAITH?**
- **HOW CAN KNOWING BELIEVERS WILL FACE PERSECUTION PREPARE YOU TO TRUST GOD AND ENDURE?**

PRAY

THANK YOU, JESUS, FOR NEVER LEAVING ME.
GIVE ME THE STRENGTH AND ENDURANCE TO
TRUST AND FOLLOW YOU NO MATTER WHAT I
FACE IN THIS LIFE.



DAY TWO

PSALM 23

Have you ever gotten caught in a storm without an umbrella? You probably got absolutely drenched. People often refer to the difficulties of life as storms, even saying the expression, “When it rains, it pours.” But what if we have an umbrella available to us when it rains and when it pours?

In this psalm, David wrote from the experience of a shepherd. He knew the lengths shepherds go to in caring for their sheep: They stay close; they lead them to safety; and they provide for their needs. David explained that even when we walk through the darkest valleys, we don’t have to fear because God is with us (v. 4). God’s presence and His power not only keep us safe, but they also comfort us. Why? Because if God is for us, then who can be against us (Rom. 8:31). Not only does God go with us and protect us, but He also provides what we need in every circumstance (v. 5). Therefore, no matter the storms we go through or what trials we face, we can have both confidence and comfort, knowing God sees, cares, and stays close.

While this is true, something is required from us. Even if you have an umbrella in the middle of a rainstorm, it does you no good if you don’t open it and use it. Although God has promised to never leave us and to be our Protector and Provider, we must choose to come under His covering. How do we do this? We intentionally run to God, call on Him, and rest in His presence. We remain close to our Shepherd. No matter what rainstorm you find yourself in, remember that an umbrella is available to you—one that is more than capable to handle the weather and one that will always keep you safe. His name is Jesus.

- **HOW HAVE YOU EXPERIENCED GOD’S COMFORT AND CARE FOR YOU DURING A DIFFICULT TIME?**
- **WHAT ELSE ARE YOU TEMPTED TO RUN TO DURING LIFE’S STORMS? HOW CAN YOU GO TO GOD INSTEAD?**

PRAY

**GOD, I KNOW YOU PROMISED TO NEVER LEAVE ME.
HELP ME RUN TO YOU SO THAT I MAY EXPERIENCE
YOUR PRESENCE AND POWER IN THE MIDST OF
LIFE’S DIFFICULTIES.**



DAY THREE

2 TIMOTHY 1:7

When we're afraid, we don't act like our normal selves. Fear has a way of weakening us from the inside out. We can feel vulnerable and exposed. Our perspective becomes distorted, our attitudes shift, and our ability to make wise decisions is compromised. How we react to fear matters because we'll face many situations that make us afraid. And in those moments, a wrong perspective or attitude can lead us to make really unwise choices. So what do we do when fear shows up?

The apostle Paul explained that God didn't give us a spirit of fear; He gives us a spirit of power, love, and good judgment. This verse is more than encouragement; it is truth that we can apply to our lives! The Spirit of God who lives within us as believers gives us the ability, even in the presence of fear, not to be ruled by it. Fear may lurk nearby, but it doesn't have control. Instead, the Spirit empowers us to stand in God's strength, to respond in love, and to make wise, steady decisions that are grounded in the truth of who God is and in what He says in His Word. And though fear sometimes feels very loud, God's voice is louder. The Holy Spirit continually reminds us that God is with us and that He is our good heavenly Father (Gal. 4:6). As our good heavenly Father, God has promised to never leave us. He has promised to care for us, to guide us, and to be present with us in every moment. Knowing all of this should give us great confidence and help us to stand firm when fear tells us to run and hide. We can maintain a godly perspective, choose life-giving attitudes, and take faithful steps forward when fear would tell us to do the opposite. The next time fear creeps in, pause and remember that God is with you. Invite the Holy Spirit to strengthen you, to help you walk in love, and to guide you into wise and faithful choices.

- **HOW DOES FEAR AFFECT YOU? WHEN HAS FEAR MADE YOU ACT NOT LIKE YOURSELF?**
- **HOW CAN YOU RELY ON GOD AND CALL ON THE HOLY SPIRIT THE NEXT TIME YOU'RE AFRAID?**

PRAY

**GOD, WHEN I FEEL AFRAID, EMPOWER ME WITH
YOUR SPIRIT SO THAT FEAR DOES NOT TAKE
CONTROL OF MY LIFE.**



DAY FOUR

PROVERBS 3:5-6

Have you ever seen someone walk around with a “kick me” sign taped to his back without that person knowing? Because the sign is placed on his back, he can’t see it; so, he wonders what’s going on when people start laughing, or worse, kicking him! We don’t have eyes in the back of our heads, right?

So, what’s the lesson? Well, in life, we can’t see or know everything. While we may understand this in theory, if we’re honest, we often live as though we can see and know everything. Living this way makes following Jesus more difficult because following Jesus requires faith (2 Cor. 5:7). Living by faith is often admitting we don’t know the way, we don’t understand, we can’t see what’s next. When we operate like we do see and know everything, we begin to trust only what we can see and what we can understand, a mindset in tension with a life of faith.

God warns us against building a life that rests on our own understanding; instead, He urges us to build a life of full trust and confidence in Him. God promises that when we demonstrate this kind of trust by seeking His will in every area of our lives, He will lead and guide us, even when we can’t see or understand what lies in front of us—especially then! Shouldn’t this type of love and guidance give us great confidence? Yes! We get to rest; the pressure is off our shoulders to figure everything out because we have great confidence in our good God. When we rely on Him, He faithfully directs our steps and shows us the way.

- **WHY CAN IT BE DIFFICULT TO TRUST GOD WHEN WE CAN’T SEE WHERE HE IS LEADING US?**
- **HOW CAN YOU DAILY RELY ON GOD’S GUIDANCE RATHER THAN ON WHAT YOU CAN SEE AND UNDERSTAND? WHO CAN HELP YOU DO THIS?**

PRAY

GOD, I MAKE THE CHOICE TODAY TO TRUST IN YOU FULLY. LEAD AND GUIDE EVERY PART OF MY LIFE AND GIVE ME THE STRENGTH AND COURAGE TO FOLLOW AS YOU DO.



DAY FIVE

1 PETER 4:12-19

A soldier who goes to war is fully prepared for what lies ahead. They are prepared to face an enemy, prepared to face resistance, prepared to fight, and even prepared to die. They are not civilians; they are soldiers on a mission who've said "yes" to an assignment. In the same way, as Christians, we are not civilians but soldiers.

The Bible clearly explains that we have an enemy and that we are engaged in a battle of faith (1 Tim. 6:12). Though we live in this world, we're citizens of God's kingdom; in a very real way, this world is not our home (Phil. 3:20). As believers, we live like soldiers—fighting the good fight of faith, representing God's kingdom, and carrying an assignment or mission (Matt. 28:19-20). Therefore, like soldiers who face an enemy, we too should be prepared for resistance, prepared to fight, and even prepared to die to ourselves.

We often don't think about life in this way; we don't often view ourselves as soldiers from another kingdom. Then, when we face resistance or faith feels like a fight, we act surprised. Not only do we act surprised, but we also begin to wonder if we are doing something wrong! Peter wrote that we shouldn't be surprised when we face trials and tribulations, as if something strange were happening to us (v. 12). Trials are often evidence that we're in the battle. Instead, we should consider it great joy because we're on mission with Christ and are guaranteed victory in Him. So, like soldiers, let us prepare ourselves for what lies ahead. Yes—a fight. But also a victory! Jesus defeated sin, death, hell when He rose from the grave, and as we fight the good fight of faith, we can know His victory is our victory too!

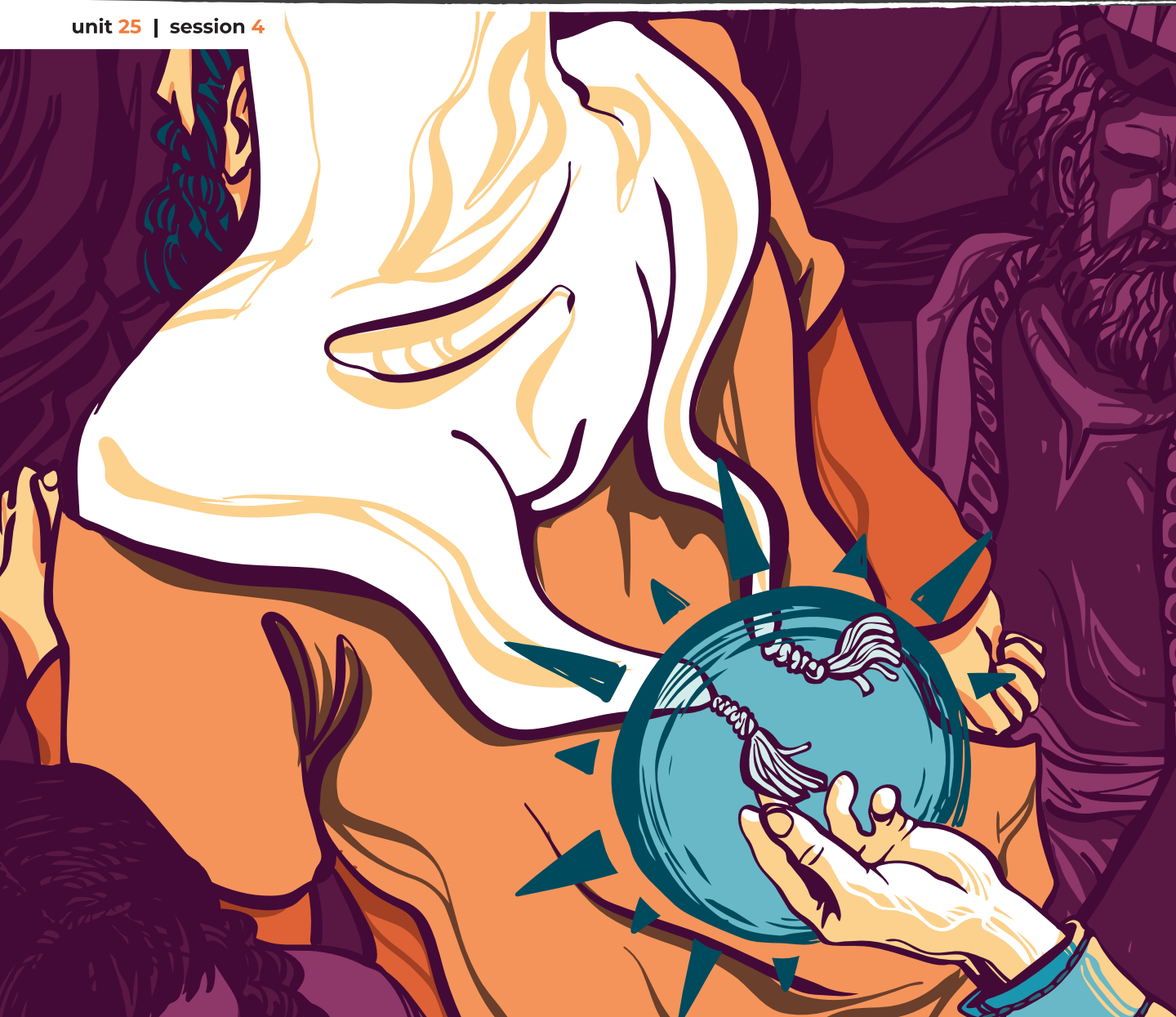
- **AS A CHRISTIAN, DO YOU EVER FEEL SURPRISED WHEN YOU GO THROUGH HARD TIMES? IF SO, WHY?**
- **HOW CAN THIS PASSAGE GIVE YOU STRENGTH AND CONFIDENCE DURING DIFFICULT TIMES?**

PRAY

GOD, HELP ME TO REMEMBER THAT I AM ON MISSION WITH YOU, AND THAT I AM ENGAGED IN THE GOOD FIGHT OF FAITH. REMIND ME OF THE VICTORY I ALREADY HAVE IN JESUS!

YOUR FAITH HAS *SAVED YOU*

unit 25 | session 4



CHRIST CONNECTION

Jesus responded to those who came to Him in faith for physical healing. In a greater way, Jesus forgives and restores all who come to Him in faith for salvation from sin.

DESPERATE FAITH

This week, we're covering the passages and main points below. But we encourage you to dig in and read all of the content on this timeline.

Luke 8

WE CAN TAKE OUR DESPERATION TO JESUS

LUKE 8:40-45

40 Now when Jesus returned, the crowd welcomed him, for they were all waiting for him. 41 And there came a man named Jairus, who was a ruler of the synagogue. And falling at Jesus' feet, he implored him to come to his house, 42 for he had an only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she was dying. As Jesus went, the people pressed around him. 43 And there was a woman who had had a discharge of blood for twelve years, and though she had spent all her living on physicians, she could not be healed by anyone. 44 She came up behind him and touched the fringe of his garment, and immediately her discharge of blood ceased. 45 And Jesus said, "Who was it that touched me?" When all denied it, Peter said, "Master, the crowds surround you and are pressing in on you!"

OUR FAITH SAVES US

LUKE 8:46-56

46 But Jesus said, "Someone touched me, for I perceive that power has gone out from me." 47 And when the woman saw that she was not hidden, she came trembling, and falling down before him declared in the presence of all the people why she had touched him, and how she had been immediately healed. 48 And he said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace." 49 While he was still speaking, someone from the ruler's house came and said, "Your daughter is dead; do not trouble the Teacher any more." 50 But Jesus on hearing this answered him, "Do not fear; only believe, and she will be well." 51 And when he came to the house, he allowed no one to enter with him, except Peter and John and James, and the father and mother of the child. 52 And all were weeping and mourning for her, but he said, "Do not weep, for she is not dead but sleeping." 53 And they laughed at him, knowing that she was dead. 54 But taking her by the hand he called, saying, "Child, arise." 55 And her spirit returned, and she got up at once. And he directed that something should be given her to eat. 56 And her parents were amazed, but he charged them to tell no one what had happened.

MAIN POINT.

Jesus doesn't turn us away when we go to Him in faith.



THEOLOGY CONNECTION

FAITH

Biblical faith is the resting, or trusting, in Jesus alone for salvation (John 3:16-21). More than being simply a mental agreement of historical facts, genuine faith begins with a recognition and confession of the truth of the gospel (1 John 4:13-16), followed by a receiving of Jesus as Lord and Savior of one's life (John 1:10-13). Biblical faith is not blind faith, for it rests on the historical life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.

DISCUSSION

WE CAN TAKE OUR DESPERATION TO JESUS

LUKE 8:40-45



- What does it mean to be desperate? Where do you turn when you feel desperate for help?
- Why did Jesus stop to ask who touched His robe?
- What does Jesus stopping for both a shunned woman and a Jewish leader help us understand about Him?

OUR FAITH SAVES US

LUKE 8:46-56



- Jesus said the woman was saved by her faith. What does it mean to have this type of faith?
- What do you think helped Jairus have faith, even after the news of his daughter's death? How do you continue to have faith in difficult times?
- Do you ever struggle to be open with God about your problems or fears? Why or why not?



HOW CAN YOU PRACTICE RELYING ON JESUS IN BOTH BIG AND SMALL MOMENTS? HOW COULD THIS HELP SOMEONE ELSE'S FAITH TO GROW?

CULTURAL CONNECTION

Have you ever prayed for something and been disappointed that God didn't answer the way you hoped He would? Jesus has all power and authority to heal every sickness, but as you probably know, He doesn't always heal people physically. You may wonder why the Lord didn't heal someone you begged for Him to heal, someone you loved deeply. You've seen Him heal others, so you may feel hurt—like He didn't hear your prayers or He simply didn't care. God loves us more than we could ever imagine, and He is going to do what is best for His glory and our good (Rom. 8:28). In fact, Jesus willingly experienced suffering and death to free us from both forever. In the moment, Jesus's death couldn't have looked like glory; it couldn't have looked like what was best for His followers. But what God does is always best for His kingdom and for His people. We'll experience disappointment, grief, and pain, but we can trust the Lord is faithful even then. Because of Jesus, believers have hope that is greater than the disappointment, grief, and pain we experience now. God hears you; He sees you; He cares for you.



DAY ONE

HEBREWS 11:1-2



We live in a “prove it” kind of world. People don’t often believe without evidence, unless you can show it or demonstrate it. You claim you can do a backflip, but your friends need you to prove it. The problem with this mindset is that it stands in contrast to how things work in God’s kingdom.

The Bible tells us that faith is evidence of something that is not yet seen (v. 1). Think about that for a moment. Our faith is the evidence of a reality that cannot be seen right now, a reality that is very real and alive within us. As Christians, we live with hope, or a confident expectation, of an eternal reward, as well as God’s present help right here and right now. Neither of these can be seen with our physical eyes, yet our faith is the evidence of their reality. All the heroes we read about in the Bible had this kind of faith. It was by this faith that God approved of them and by this faith that they made an impact on the world (v. 2). These men and women had a confident expectation of something to come and something unseen, but something real and alive within them.

This is how God wants us to live right here and now. Like the heroes of faith, God calls us to live not based on what we can see but based on what we know is real and alive within us—our faith and our hope in Jesus.

- **WHAT ARE EXAMPLES OF THINGS YOU BELIEVE IN BUT CAN’T SEE? HOW IS THIS LIKE YOUR FAITH IN JESUS?**
- **WHY DO WE LEAN TOWARD THE NEED TO SEE BEFORE BELIEVING? HOW CAN GOD HELP YOU OVERCOME THIS?**

PRAY

GOD, I DECIDE TODAY TO LIVE BASED ON WHAT I KNOW TO BE TRUE, NOT ON WHAT I CAN SEE WITH MY EYES. HELP ME REST IN YOU AND WHAT I KNOW TO BE TRUE.



DAY TWO

HEBREWS 11:6

Have you ever really wanted to make someone happy? Maybe you wanted a friend or family member to have the best day possible on their birthday. Or maybe you wanted someone to be proud of you. Think about a coach, teacher, or parent that you wanted to see your effort and think you were doing a good job.

Did you know that this should be our heart toward God? As Christians, our highest aim should be to honor God, to please Him, and to live in a way that brings Him joy. The Bible tells us exactly how we do this! Through faith. Not through striving or checking boxes or putting on a good face. Faith! Without faith, we can't please God. Faith isn't optional but essential in pleasing the Lord. Why? Because faith believes that God exists, that He is who He says He is, and that His promises are true. Faith trusts that God really does reward those who seek after Him. When we believe God and respond by seeking Him in obedience, our lives honor Him.

When the way we live reflects that we believe God is real and we choose to follow Him, God is pleased, overjoyed, proud. And He promises to reward this kind of faith-filled life! So, in the same way that we desire to bring our friends and loved ones joy, we should live with that same intentionality toward God. Live by faith. Trust Him. Seek Him. Walk with confidence that He is who He says He is and that He will do everything He has promised to do.

- **BASED ON HEBREWS 11:6, HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE WHAT FAITH IS AND HOW TO WALK IN IT?**
- **WHAT ARE PRACTICAL WAYS THAT YOU CAN DEMONSTRATE FAITH IN GOD AND LIVE A LIFE THAT PLEASES HIM?**

PRAY

**GOD, I WANT TO MAKE YOU PROUD. I WANT MY LIFE
TO GIVE YOU JOY. HELP ME TO LIVE A LIFE THAT
IS ROOTED IN FAITH AND IN YOUR PROMISE TO
REWARD THOSE WHO SEEK AFTER YOU.**



DAY THREE

GALATIANS 3:19-29

Have you ever failed at something you tried really hard to do? You gave it your best effort, yet you still couldn't accomplish it. No matter how talented or dedicated we are, we all fail at times. We have all fallen short of what we hoped to accomplish.

This goes for sin too. No matter how much we've tried to live according to God's commands, we have all sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Rom. 3:23). So, what is sin? Sin is simply missing the mark God has for us, like aiming at a target and failing to hit it. God has set a perfect standard, and even in our best efforts and on our best days, we miss the mark. No matter how hard we try, we can't reach God's standard because He is perfectly holy. This is why we need a Savior, someone to lift the burden of God's law off our shoulders by living it perfectly, someone to free us from the consequences of our sin by paying our penalty.

God's perfect law reveals what is required for eternal life and a right relationship with God. The law is good; it points us to God and reveals His nature to us (v. 24). But because of our inability to keep God's law perfectly, it also exposes our sinful nature and shows us that we are imprisoned by our sin and its consequences (v. 23)—that is, until Jesus came and did for us what we could never do for ourselves. He lived the life we cannot live. He became the perfect sacrifice for sin, died the death we deserved, and through His resurrection, freed us from the power of sin. Now, through faith in Christ, we are sons and daughters of God and are declared righteous before Him! What an exchange! As sons and daughters who have been fully and freely forgiven, we can now live in intimate relationship with God, both today and forevermore.

- **WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SHOW US ABOUT GOD'S NATURE, HIS STANDARD FOR US, AND HOW WE FALL SHORT?**
- **WHY IS JESUS'S LIFE, DEATH, AND RESURRECTION GOOD NEWS?**

PRAY

**JESUS, THANK YOU FOR YOUR FINISHED WORK
ON THE CROSS. THANK YOU FOR LOVING ME, FOR
TAKING MY PLACE, AND FOR BRINGING ME INTO A
RIGHT RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD.**



DAY FOUR

JAMES 2:1-9

Comparison may be more damaging to us socially than anything else. Many people live their whole lives comparing themselves to others: how they look, how they dress, their achievements, their abilities, and even their morality. We compare ourselves to others to see how we measure up and how others measure up to us.

Comparison is such a normal part of our culture that even followers of Jesus are often trapped in it. But Jesus doesn't want us to live this way. Why? Comparison can cause us to show favoritism to one person and mistreat another person. When we live in comparison and people don't measure up to the standard we have decided they must meet, we treat them differently than those who do meet our standard.

One way we can guard our lives from comparison and favoritism is by remembering that we are all sinners in the same position of need before God. God chose the least and the lowly to be heirs of His kingdom (v. 5). When we remember our common ground at the foot of the cross, that we are all in need of a Savior and saved by grace and grace alone, comparison and favoritism have no room in our hearts. Instead of looking at everyone else to see how we compare, we should live with our eyes fixed on Jesus, recognizing our constant need for Him. When we stop measuring ourselves and others by human standards and instead measure everything by the grace of God, comparison loses its power. Grace levels the ground, frees our hearts, and teaches us to love people, not for how they measure up but for who they are—people created in God's image and deeply loved by Him.

- **IN WHAT WAYS DO YOU COMPARE YOURSELF TO OTHERS? HOW ARE YOU TEMPTED TO SHOW FAVORITISM?**
- **WHAT ARE WAYS YOU CAN YOU GUARD YOUR HEART AGAINST COMPARISON AND FAVORITISM?**

PRAY

GOD, I REPENT FOR THE TIMES
I HAVE SHOWN FAVORITISM TO
SOMEONE OVER ANOTHER. HELP
ME REMEMBER THAT WE ARE
SAVED BY GRACE AND NOT BY
OUR OWN GOOD WORKS.





DAY FIVE

JAMES 2:14-26

Imagine this: You are sitting in a restaurant enjoying your food when suddenly someone starts shouting. As you look up and begin to listen, you hear these words: “Anyone who comes to the front and gets in line gets a million dollars!” Now let’s imagine that you really needed some money. In fact, you were thinking about it before all the commotion. If you believed that person, you would get up, get in line, and excitedly wait for your fortune.

Okay, so that probably will never happen. However, it is a great illustration of how faith and works go hand in hand. We are not saved by our good works because our efforts and abilities will always fall short. We are saved by placing our faith in Jesus and in His finished work on the cross (Eph. 2:8-9). However, our faith should be evident in our actions. In the imagined scenario of getting a million dollars just for standing in line, your faith in the person’s promise is proven by your action of getting in line. In the same way, our faith in Jesus is exhibited by our obedience to Him. When we say that we believe Jesus is Lord, what proves our faith is following Him as Lord. When we claim Jesus is the Lord of our lives yet continue to live as if we are the rulers of our lives, then we exhibit what the Bible calls “dead” faith (v. 17). In other words, our claim is empty; our faith isn’t revealed in our lives. Not only are we called to live out our faith, we have every good reason to do so. God is good; His Son died for our sin. Why would we live any other way? Why would we settle for lives that only pledge faith in our words and not our actions? Let’s demonstrate our faith through daily obedience to Jesus. When we do, people won’t need explanations or arguments. Our lives will be the evidence—faith in action (v. 18).

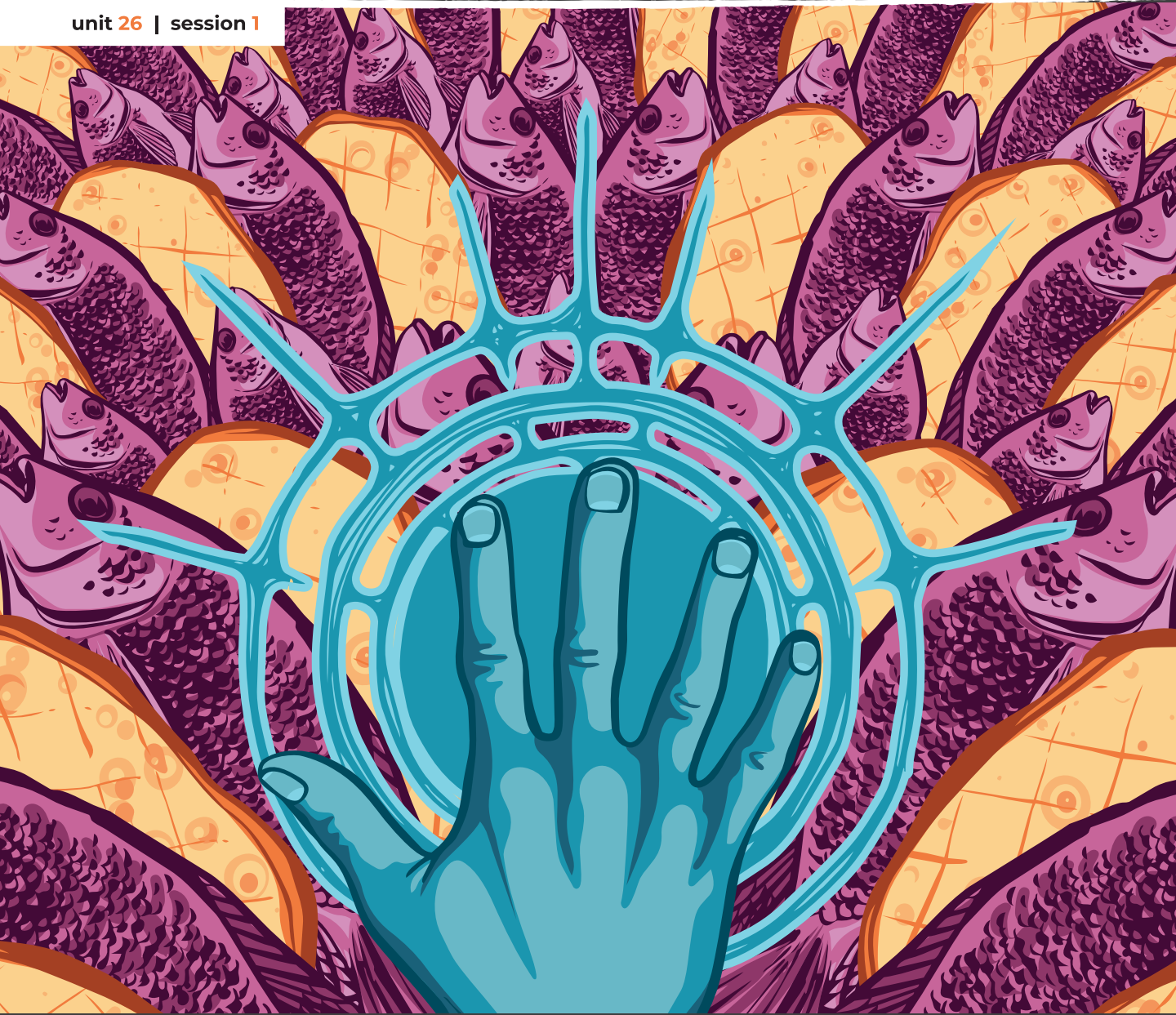
- **HOW DO ACTIONS REFLECT BELIEF?**
- **WHAT AREAS OF YOUR LIFE DON'T ALIGN WITH WHAT YOU SAY YOU BELIEVE?**

PRAY

**GOD, HELP ME TO SEE ANY AREAS OF MY LIFE
WHERE WHAT I SAY I BELIEVE DOESN'T LINE UP
WITH HOW I LIVE. HELP MY FAITH IN YOU GROW,
AND AS IT DOES, LET MY LIFE REVEAL IT.**

FIVE LOAVES AND *TWO FISH*

unit 26 | session 1



CHRIST CONNECTION

When the Israelites were hungry in the wilderness, God provided manna from heaven. Jesus is the greater Moses, the One who not only provides bread from heaven but who also speaks of Himself as the Bread who gives life to the world.

This week, we're covering the passages and main points below. But we encourage you to dig in and read all of the content on this timeline.

Matthew 14

JESUS CARES ABOUT OUR NEEDS

MATTHEW 14:13-16

13 Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a desolate place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. 14 When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them and healed their sick. 15 Now when it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a desolate place, and the day is now over; send the crowds away to go into the villages and buy food for themselves." 16 But Jesus said, "They need not go away; you give them something to eat."

JESUS HAS THE POWER TO MEET OUR NEEDS

MATTHEW 14:17-21

17 They said to him, "We have only five loaves here and two fish." 18 And he said, "Bring them here to me." 19 Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass, and taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing. Then he broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. 20 And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up twelve baskets full of the broken pieces left over. 21 And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

MAIN POINT.

Because of Jesus's authority, we can trust Him to meet all our needs.



THEOLOGY CONNECTION

GOD IS IMMANENT

When we say that God is immanent, we mean that God is personable and relatable to those made in His image, while remaining completely distinct and unique from all of His creation. It means that God is not a distant deity who only sits on His heavenly throne with no interaction; instead, God created people in His image for personal relationship with Him.

DISCUSSION

JESUS CARES ABOUT OUR NEEDS

MATTHEW 14:13-16

- ✝ • Even while mourning, how did Jesus respond to the crowd? What does this show you about how He responds to us?
- ♥ • How did the disciples view the people (vv. 15-16)? How can we be more like Jesus?
- Why do you think Jesus told the disciples to feed the large crowd?

JESUS HAS THE POWER TO MEET OUR NEEDS

MATTHEW 14:17-21

- 🧠 • How do the disciples view Jesus's power (v. 17)? How do we limit His power too?
- 📖 • Why would Jesus bless the food before serving it?
- The people ate and were "satisfied" (v. 20). What does it look like to be satisfied in Jesus? Why do we struggle to be satisfied in Him?



WHAT NEEDS DO YOU NEED TO BRING TO JESUS, TRUSTING HE WILL DO WHAT'S BEST FOR YOU?

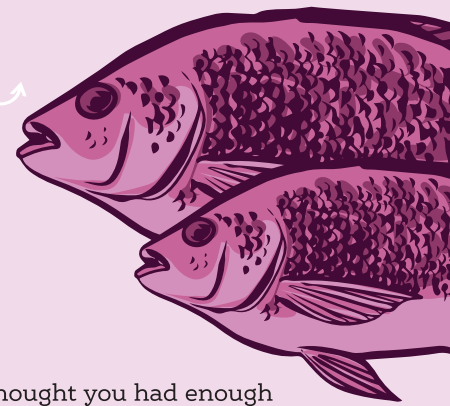
CULTURAL CONNECTION

Seeing God meet other people's needs may give you joy. But sometimes we feel something else: jealousy. We watch as God takes care of other people's needs, but we don't feel like He is meeting our needs. We begin to ask the question, "Does God really care about me?" Like Adam and Eve in the garden, instead of trusting God and taking Him at His Word, we believe the lies of the enemy: "If God really loved you, He would give you ____." We question if He is withholding good things from us. We allow the thought to settle down into our hearts. And then, we usually progress into taking matters into our own hands, attempting to meet our needs apart from Jesus. What we must realize is that when we look to anything or anyone but Jesus to meet our needs, we'll come up empty. He has met our deepest need for salvation, and He cares for and sees our other needs as well.



DAY ONE

JOHN 6:1-15



Have you ever run out of something you really needed? Maybe you thought you had enough money to last you through an entire trip, but you ran out way before the trip ended. In this story, while we see Jesus as the Great Provider, we also see Him choosing to use an unlikely candidate and multiplying the boy's offering for His glory. Notice that John specifically writes that the five loaves and two fish belonged to a young boy. Why would he include that information? In His great plan, Jesus doesn't use people based on their qualifications alone. He uses all who are willing, and He qualifies them to serve.

Jesus's ability to provide for the crowd did not fluctuate based on what the young boy could bring. The boy was willing to offer everything he had for Jesus to use. Surely he knew that the five loaves and two fish he had would not be enough to feed a crowd of 5,000 men (plus women and children), yet he still brought all he had to offer. Jesus was faithful to multiply what the boy brought; Jesus took what could never be enough and transformed it into abundance. This idea doesn't just apply to the young boy but to all of us who are willing to bring what we have to the feet of Jesus, even if what we have seems like "not enough." When we let Him, God uses our talents, our passions, our abilities, our possessions, our money and multiplies them for His glory. There is no person too unequipped and no offering too small for God to use. Just surrender what you have today.

- **HAS THERE EVER BEEN A TIME WHEN YOU STRUGGLED TO BELIEVE THAT WHAT YOU HAD TO OFFER WAS VALUABLE ENOUGH TO BRING TO GOD? WHY DID YOU FEEL THAT WAY?**
- **WHAT IS OUR FOCUS ON WHEN WE STRUGGLE TO BELIEVE THAT GOD CAN USE US? HOW SHOULD WE REDIRECT OUR THOUGHTS?**

PRAY

**THANK YOU FOR THE GIFT OF BEING INVOLVED
IN YOUR STORY. EVERYTHING YOU'VE GIVEN ME,
BIG OR SMALL, BELONGS TO YOU. HELP ME BRING
WHATEVER I HAVE TO YOUR FEET, FOR YOU ARE THE
ONE WHO QUALIFIES AND MULTIPLIES MY OFFERING.**



DAY TWO

1 PETER 5:7

In Matthew 14, we saw Jesus supernaturally meet a physical need of the crowd. We saw His great compassion for people and His desire to provide for them. While this alone is comforting, Jesus is better and more loving than we could ever imagine.

Not only does Jesus care for the physical needs of our body, but He cares for our soul, our heart, and our mind as well. This is why we are told to “cast” all of our anxieties or cares on Him. But what does it look like to “cast” anxiety on Jesus? Think of it like this: In Luke 19, the disciples had been sent for a donkey for Jesus to ride into town on Palm Sunday. Luke explained that they cast their cloaks on the colt and set Jesus on it (v. 35). Those that placed their cloaks on the donkey were no longer responsible for carrying them. They set their belongings on the donkey and trusted it to carry the load. In the same way, when we cast anxiety on Jesus, we are handing over a situation and our desired outcome and trusting Him to take care of it. We place it on Jesus’s capable shoulders; we trust Him to carry our worry and anxiety; we don’t pick it back up. Why can we do this? We can trust Him because He cares for us! He proved His love for us in giving His life for our sin. Casting our worries on the Lord looks like first trusting that He loves and cares for His children and then choosing to release control of the situation to Him because of His great love for us.

- **WHY IS IT HARD TO TRUST GOD WITH SITUATIONS WE’RE WORRIED ABOUT, EVEN THOUGH WE KNOW HE LOVES US?**
- **DOES GOD ALWAYS PROMISE THAT HE WILL WORK SITUATIONS OUT IN THE WAYS WE WANT? WHY OR WHY NOT? WHAT DOES HE PROMISE BASED OFF OF 1 PETER 5:7?**

PRAY

FATHER, THANK YOU FOR CARING ABOUT THE WELL-BEING OF MY SOUL, MIND, BODY, AND HEART. FORGIVE ME FOR THE TIMES I’VE FAILED TO TRUST YOU AND TRIED TO CONTROL A SITUATION. HELP ME TO REMEMBER YOUR UNENDING LOVE FOR ME AND TO CAST MY CARES ON YOU.



DAY THREE

MATTHEW 11:28-29

After hearing about the death of John the Baptist, Jesus retired to a remote place to be alone, but the people followed Him. He had every right to send them away, but instead, He felt compassion for the people. His compassion led Him to heal those in the crowd who were sick.

Jesus allows people to come to Him with all kinds of needs—physical needs, emotional needs, and ultimately, spiritual needs. But Jesus doesn't just allow us to come to Him; He actually invites us to Himself, and He tells us that He will give us rest! What kind of rest is He talking about? In this passage, Jesus invited those “who labor and are heavy laden” to come to Him and receive rest. Jesus addressed those who had not believed in Him and were weary from their human efforts to be right with God. Many of us know this type of weariness; we've tried to reach God on our own too. It's exhausting.

All people are born with a spiritual sickness called sin. Sin separates us from God. But Jesus came, lived a perfect life, and died on a cross to pay the penalty of sin so that those who were separated from God could be restored to a right relationship with Him. Outside of trusting in Jesus and His victory on the cross, we must do nothing else to be made right with God. We don't have to earn approval from God because Jesus earned it for us! He invites those who are willing to come to put their faith in Him and to receive rest from the burden of sin and the weight of trying to earn God's love. This invitation is for us today. Jesus invites us to bring all of our failures and our striving to Him and to trust that His finished work on the cross was enough. We don't have to strive wearily for what Jesus has already done.

- **EVEN THOUGH TRUSTING IN JESUS FOR SALVATION IS ALL WE MUST DO TO BE MADE RIGHT WITH GOD, MANY BELIEVERS STRUGGLE TO REST IN THIS TRUTH. WHY?**
- **WHAT CAN THIS REST LOOK LIKE IN YOUR DAILY LIFE?**

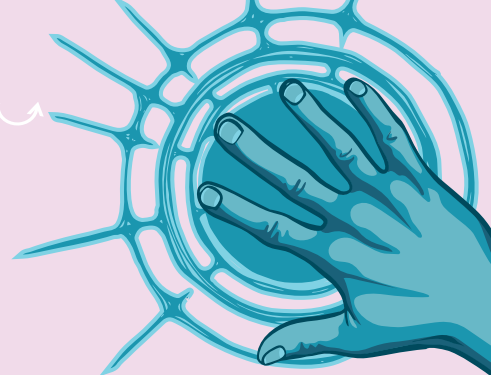
PRAY

**JESUS, THANK YOU FOR GIVING YOUR LIFE AND
DEFEATING DEATH TO MAKE A WAY FOR BELIEVERS
TO BE MADE RIGHT WITH GOD. HELP ME TO
REMEMBER THAT TRUTH WHEN I'M TEMPTED TO TRY
TO EARN YOUR LOVE.**



DAY FOUR

1 JOHN 3:16-18



In Scripture, love is not defined as a fleeting emotion but as an action. This means that when we love others, we might not always feel love for them, but we are moved to show them that love with our actions. In Matthew 14, Jesus not only feels compassion for the people in the crowds, but those feelings of compassion move Him to meet their physical need.

We learn from Jesus's example that love isn't complete without action. Jesus is love personified, and His ministry and message are based on His ultimate act of love: death on a cross to give His followers everlasting life. We, too, are called to show compassion to the people God places around us. In this passage, John encouraged believers not only to love others with their words but to love them "in deed and in truth" as well. What does this look like for followers of Christ? Well, John explained it as laying our lives down for others (v. 16). Just as Jesus sacrificially met our greatest need out of love for us, we are to look for and sacrificially meet the needs of those around us whenever possible. This may mean we donate time and money to help people in need; it may look like caring for a sick sibling; it may mean that we give away something we desperately wanted to someone who deserves it more. When we call ourselves children of God, we express that we have been given a new identity in Christ. With this new identity comes a new way of living; this is called fruit of the Holy Spirit and is proof of the change that has taken place (Gal. 5:22-23). When we say we love Jesus, then we're saying that we obey Him. And obeying Him will lead us to loving others through our actions and our words—proof that the love we have for them is genuine.

- **WHAT DO YOUR WORDS AND ACTIONS REVEAL ABOUT THE WAY YOU LOVE OTHERS?**
- **IS IT POSSIBLE TO TRULY LOVE OTHERS WITHOUT EXPRESSING LOVING ACTIONS TOWARD THEM? WHY OR WHY NOT?**

PRAY

**JESUS, THANK YOU FOR BEING THE GREATEST
EXAMPLE OF LOVE, SO MUCH SO THAT YOU GAVE
YOUR OWN LIFE FOR THE PEOPLE YOU LOVE. OPEN
MY EYES TO SEE WAYS THAT I CAN ACTIVELY LOVE
THE PEOPLE YOU HAVE PLACED AROUND ME.**



DAY FIVE

EPHESIANS 3:20

The boy who offered his food learned a very valuable lesson on the day that Jesus used his lunch to feed over 5,000 people: Nothing given to Jesus is too small for Him to do something miraculous with it. This truth applies also to us, even as believers two thousand years later.

God can do “far more abundantly than all that we ask or think”; however, for God to do more than we could imagine, we must be willing to surrender our simple desires and allow Him to carry out His greater plan. This is easier said than done. You may wonder, “What does it mean for me to surrender everything I have to God?” Surrendering means submitting to someone else’s authority—to let someone else have control and to trust that person with that control. When it comes to what type of things we should surrender, simply put, everything means everything: your friendships, your efforts, your talents, your goals, what sports you choose to play, what clothes you choose to wear, and the list goes on for each of us. When we come into a relationship with Jesus, we die to our old selves and are given new life in Him. In our first act of surrender, we confess Jesus as Lord and Savior, and we agree to walk in the ways that He says are right. God’s plan to use your life for His glory is better than your own plans, and His ways lead to abundant life. In other words, living surrendered wholly to God leads to meaningful life. When we recognize that everything we have truly belongs to the Lord for Him to use for His glory and trust that He can do immeasurably more than what we ask or imagine, we can live open-handedly before God and walk in confident joy.

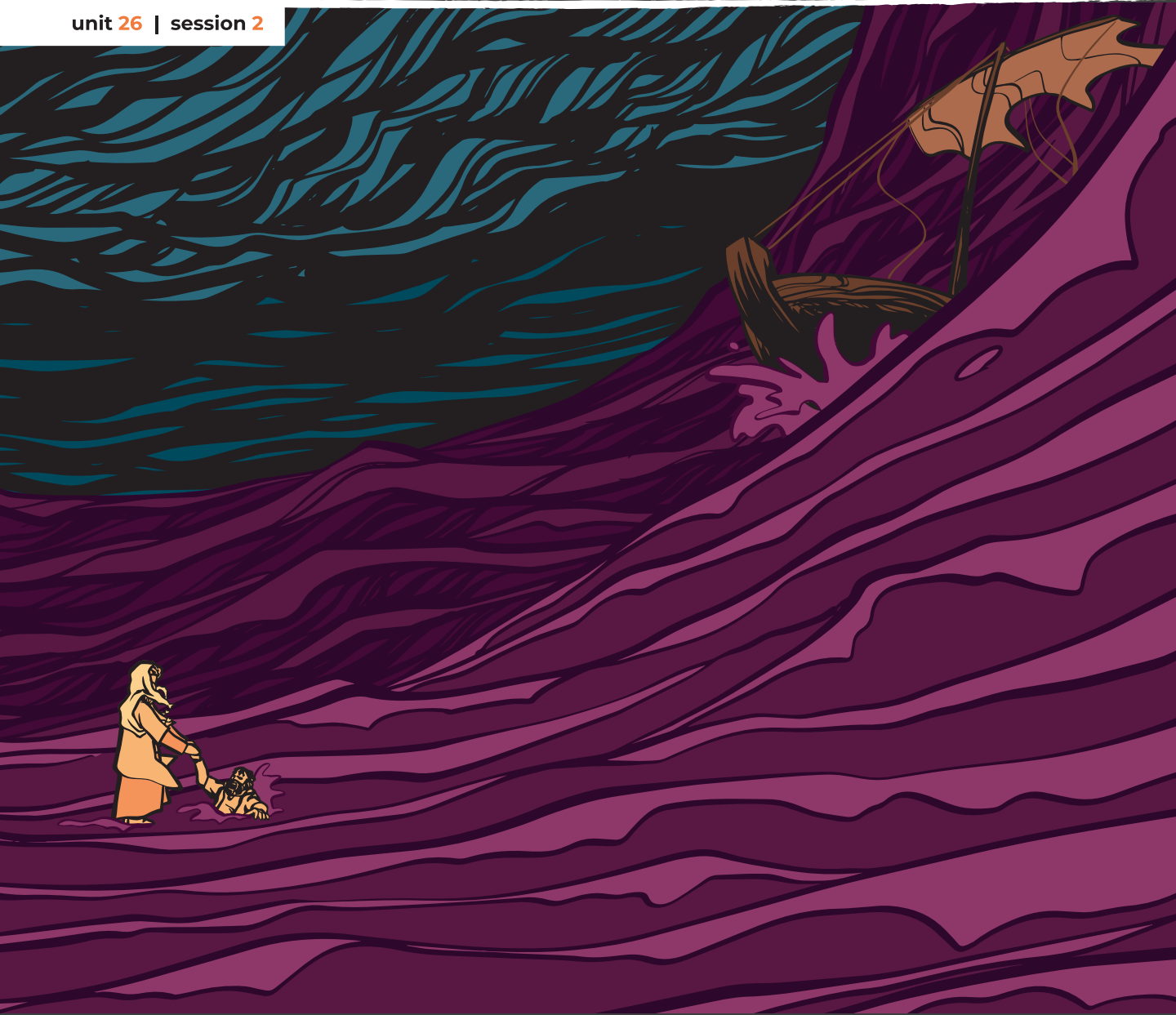
- **IS THERE ANYTHING YOU MIGHT BE HOLDING BACK FROM GOD? WHY DOES THE IDEA OF SURRENDERING THAT THING CAUSE YOU TO FEAR?**
- **JUST LIKE THE BOY IN THE STORY, GOD WANTS TO TAKE YOUR OBEDIENCE AND USE IT FOR MORE THAN YOU CAN IMAGINE. WHY IS THIS DIFFICULT TO BELIEVE?**

PRAY

FATHER, THANK YOU FOR BEING PATIENT WITH ME WHEN I STRUGGLE TO HOLD MY DESIRES AND PLANS WITH OPEN HANDS. HELP ME TO TRUST THAT YOUR PLANS ARE GREATER THAN MINE SO THAT I CAN LIVE SURRENDERED TO YOU.

WALKING ON *THE SEA*

unit 26 | session 2



CHRIST CONNECTION

Jesus showed that He cared for His disciples by calming the storm that threatened their lives. He then called on them to have faith in Him. Jesus would later demonstrate God's love in a greater way by laying down His life to provide salvation from sin and death. All who have faith in Him have eternal life.

BY FAITH

This week, we're covering the passages and main points below. But we encourage you to dig in and read all of the content on this timeline.

Matthew 14

JESUS MOVES FIRST

MATTHEW 14:22-26

22 Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go before him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. 23 And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, 24 but the boat by this time was a long way from the land, beaten by the waves, for the wind was against them. 25 And in the fourth watch of the night he came to them, walking on the sea. 26 But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, and said, "It is a ghost!" and they cried out in fear.

JESUS CALLS US TO WALK BOLDLY

MATTHEW 14:27-33

27 But immediately Jesus spoke to them, saying, "Take heart; it is I. Do not be afraid." 28 And Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." 29 He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water and came to Jesus. 30 But when he saw the wind, he was afraid, and beginning to sink he cried out, "Lord, save me." 31 Jesus immediately reached out his hand and took hold of him, saying to him, "O you of little faith, why did you doubt?" 32 And when they got into the boat, the wind ceased. 33 And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

MAIN POINT.

Because Jesus is with us, we can take bold steps of faith.



THEOLOGY CONNECTION

GOD IS OMNIPOTENT

God is all-powerful: There is nothing God cannot do so long as it does not contradict His own nature or moral law. God has power and authority over the universe He created, from the largest solar system to the smallest particle. Affirming that God is all-powerful does not mean that God can sin—since that would go against His perfect moral nature. As Christians, we rest in the belief that the God who has all power is good, and we gain great comfort by knowing that an all-powerful God is working for our good and joy.

DISCUSSION

JESUS MOVES FIRST

MATTHEW 14:22-26



- Why do you think Jesus sent the disciples ahead of Him?



- Jesus moved toward the fearful disciples before they saw Him. Why is this an important detail?



- How can fear affect the way we view a situation? How does our fear keep us from seeing Jesus?

JESUS CALLS US TO WALK BOLDLY

MATTHEW 14:27-33



- Why did Jesus ask Peter to come to Him before settling the storm? When have you had to do something similar?
- Why do you think the men worshiped in the boat?
- What does boldly living for Jesus even look like today? What keeps us from living this way?



HOW IS JESUS CALLING YOU TO LIVE MORE BOLDLY?
HOW WILL YOU RESPOND?

CULTURAL CONNECTION

Fear comes in a lot of forms, not always contained to darkness, heights, or dark water. In fact, many of us fear being embarrassed, standing out too much, not standing out enough, being found out, or the unknown. Phones and social media heighten these fears because our failures and embarrassing moments can be shared with the world. If we mess up, people will know; people will see. So, we live in a worried state of asking, “What if I fail and everyone sees?” “What if I don’t do this right and everyone knows?” “What if I don’t measure up to their expectations?” We set a goal to look like what the world says we should look like, at least on our socials—a goal of meeting the world’s standards. Want to know the truth? We’ll never reach that goal. When we live from this place of fear, we miss out on how God created us to live. He designed us to know Him, and when we know Him, we can confidently live in our identity as His children. Instead of striving for acceptance, we can rest because our Creator accepts us through Jesus’s blood. We can walk away from fearing what others think or what may happen because our future is certain.



DAY ONE

PSALM 46:1-3



In this week's lesson, we read that Peter got out of a boat and walked on water in the middle of the waves and wind. We also saw him take his eyes off Jesus and begin to sink. Instead of fixating on Peter's failure to focus on Jesus, let's first turn our attention to the reason he got out of the boat.

What could cause someone to believe they could walk on water? The reason had nothing to do with Peter and everything to do with the One who commanded him to "come." Peter watched Jesus perform miracles and teach with authority, proving Jesus was exactly who He said He was. Peter knew Jesus was worthy of his trust, even when it came to the impossibility of walking on water. He got out of the boat because his faith in Jesus was greater than his fear of sinking; however, when he took his eyes off Jesus and saw the wind, he began to sink. Peter saw something that caused him to fear—something that diminished his trust in Jesus and caused him to forget what he had seen and heard.

In the same way, when we are afraid of the outcome of a situation, we can forget the truth that God is trustworthy; we can attempt to take control or put our trust in someone or something else besides the Lord. The problem with this is that no person's faithfulness can compare to God's. Psalm 46 describes God as being "our refuge and strength" and "a very present help in trouble." He has proven Himself trustworthy over and over again. He is sovereign over the wind and the waves and everything else in all creation. He cares for His children, and He does what He says He will do; Jesus's life, death, and resurrection are proof! If you're facing circumstances that cause you to fear, you can apply truth and rest, knowing that God is the only One who is completely trustworthy. He will never fail. He will never let you sink.

- **HOW HAS GOD BEEN TRUSTWORTHY IN YOUR LIFE?**
- **WHEN YOU STRUGGLE TO BELIEVE THAT GOD IS TRUSTWORTHY, HOW CAN YOU REMIND YOURSELF OF THE TRUTH?**

PRAY

FATHER, THANK YOU FOR BEING A REFUGE THAT I CAN TRUST TO PROTECT AND STRENGTHEN ME. YOU CARRY ME THROUGH EVERY CIRCUMSTANCE. YOU ARE GREATER THAN ANYTHING I FACE, AND YOU ARE MORE WORTHY THAN ANYTHING ELSE I COULD TRUST.

DAY TWO

ISAIAH 26:3-4

Have you ever struggled to know who or what you can depend on? Who or what will be steady when life is unstable? What lasts when everything seems to end? This passage offers a comforting promise about the peace God gives to those who depend on Him. These verses are especially powerful when you know the context in which Isaiah wrote. He prophesied during the height of Assyria's power. Israel lived under the constant threat of invasion, and the nation was unstable in every way. However, instead of focusing on the strength of Assyria, Isaiah spoke of a coming day, a day in which there is a strong city ruled by God alone. In this city, peace is ever-present because the Creator of peace resides there. Isaiah's words were in anticipation of deliverance, while waiting for deliverance. He reminded the people that security didn't come from circumstances but from trusting in God.

We're waiting for deliverance in many ways too. We live in broken world and walk through suffering, pain, sickness, and sorrow. The peace Isaiah speaks of is available to those whose minds and hearts are fixed on God. This peace won't come to us accidentally or passively. We see this played out in our main lesson this week. Peter trusted Jesus enough to step out of the boat, but when he noticed the wind and the waves, he began to sink and was overcome with fear. Both passages remind us that God calls us to be anchored fully in Him. Scripture reminds us that with the help of the Holy Spirit, we can take our thoughts captive and make them obedient to God's Word. This means that when our thoughts linger on what causes us to fear, doubt, or believe lies about ourselves or God, we are to remind ourselves of the truth about who God is. Our world, circumstances, and feelings constantly change; we can't lean on them because they're unsteady. But our heavenly Father gave us His Word and His Spirit so that we can cling to His unchanging character and promises, even when the chaos swirls around us.

- **WHEN HAVE YOU STRUGGLED TO DEPEND ON GOD?**
- **KNOWING WHAT YOU KNOW NOW, WHAT WOULD YOU GO BACK AND TELL YOURSELF?**

PRAY

HEAVENLY FATHER, THANK YOU FOR BEING A GOD OF HOPE. HELP ME TO FIX MY EYES ON YOU IN ALL SITUATIONS AND NOT DWELL ON WHAT CAUSES ME TO FEAR OR DOUBT YOUR GOODNESS.



DAY THREE

HEBREWS 12:2

How good are you at focusing on a task or a conversation? When the environment is loud or chaotic, do you struggle? Some of us can laser focus on a book or a task with no issue, but many of us can't separate what we're seeing or hearing from what needs our attention.

Just like Peter in our lesson this week, we all have things in our lives that can make focusing on Jesus difficult at times. And what competes for our attention isn't always bad. Oftentimes, what distracts us and causes us to take our focus off of Jesus are good things. Sports, school, hobbies, friends, and interests may make it hard for us to keep our eyes fixed on Jesus. The issue with these things is that they could never compare to Jesus—and they aren't supposed to! Our heavenly Father is the best gift-giver. All of these things mentioned are gifts from God for our enjoyment, but they were never meant to take Jesus's place. They aren't designed to give us peace. If we look to sports, school, or hobbies to find our identity or worth, we will find answers that change based on circumstances. If we look only to friends for approval and guidance, we can be led astray and left confused and hurt, even if our friends have good intentions. This is why Hebrews 12 reminds us to keep our eyes on Jesus, "the founder and perfecter of our faith." When we look to Jesus for our identity and approval, for our hope and our peace, we find the unchanging truth that we, who are in Christ, are loved beyond measure and have been made daughters and sons of the living God. When we look to Him for guidance, we will find that His Word is active, applicable, and will lead us only in the way we should go, for our good and for His glory.

- **WHY IS KEEPING YOUR EYES ON JESUS DIFFICULT?**
- **WHAT THINGS IN YOUR LIFE ARE COMPETING WITH JESUS FOR YOUR FOCUS? KNOWING THIS, HOW SHOULD YOU RESPOND?**

PRAY

JESUS, THANK YOU FOR BEING PATIENT WITH ME WHEN I STRUGGLE TO FIX MY EYES ON YOU. HELP ME TO BE AWARE OF WHAT I GIVE TOO MUCH ATTENTION TO AND KEEP ME FROM STUMBLING OVER THEM AS I FOLLOW YOU.



DAY FOUR

2 TIMOTHY 2:11-13

When Jesus instructed Peter to walk on the water, He wasn't instructing Peter to walk in his own power. Jesus told Peter to come to Him because He had the power to make Peter's footsteps solid and keep him from harm. The possibility of walking on water rested in Jesus's ability, not in Peter's. When Peter took his eyes off Jesus and began to sink, did that make Jesus any less powerful? Of course not! Jesus's ability to do the impossible does not waver based on our actions.

In the same way, we see in today's passage that God's faithfulness doesn't change based on how faithful we are to Him. When we believed in Jesus and trusted Him for the forgiveness of our sins, we died to our old selves and were given new life through the Holy Spirit. This new life was a promise that He kept. Since we've been given this new life, we get to look forward to eternal life with Him in heaven. This is another promise that doesn't rely on our ability to follow Him perfectly until then. The promise relies wholly on who God is: He said it, so He will do it, and nothing can change that. Why is this the case? Faithfulness is one of God's key traits. He is unchanging even when we change. Knowing this truth shouldn't cause us to take advantage of His faithfulness but should move us to desire to be faithful to Him! God is trustworthy, and all of His promises are true. He isn't good on His Word because of what we can do but because He "cannot deny himself." Isn't this amazing? This truth should not only lead us to worship Him but to be faithful to Him in return.

- **HOW DOES IT IMPACT YOU TO KNOW THAT GOD WILL BE FAITHFUL TO YOU WHETHER OR NOT YOU ARE FAITHFUL TO HIM?**
- **IN RESPONSE TO THIS TRUTH ABOUT GOD'S FAITHFULNESS, HOW SHOULD YOU BE MOTIVATED TO LIVE?**

PRAY

HEAVENLY FATHER, THANK YOU FOR STAYING THE SAME, EVEN WHEN MY FAITHFULNESS TO YOU WAVERS. HELP ME TO SEEK YOU FIRST IN ALL SITUATIONS BECAUSE OF YOUR GOODNESS TO ME.



DAY FIVE

JAMES 1:2-4

Think of the worst storm you've experienced. Maybe you knew it was coming because the weather service predicted it and prepared everyone. But sometimes, horrific storms come out of nowhere, with no warning. These storms often rattle us more. Jesus wasn't surprised by the storm in this week's lesson. In fact, He intentionally told His disciples to get in the boat and go before Him to the other side of the water. Jesus knew the storm was coming and used it for the good of His disciples. But how was this good? The storm made the disciples desperate. In the middle of the waves and wind, the disciples were powerless to save themselves. Jesus showed up, walked on water, got in the boat with the disciples, and calmed the storm. In this moment, the disciples more clearly understood who Jesus was, and they worshiped Him as the Son of God. Jesus used this trial to increase their faith and show them His power.

In the same way, God can use trials we go through to increase our faith in Him and to help us to see Him more clearly. When we go through difficult times, the illusion that we are self-dependent is stripped away because we recognize our need for help—that we can't save ourselves. When we are forced to depend on God to do what we cannot, His compassion, faithfulness, and power are revealed. In these moments of our weakness, we more deeply understand His strength and rely on it to carry us. Our faith in who God is strengthens. God will use difficult moments in our lives to show us more clearly who He is and to draw us nearer to Him. We experience His steady presence in our struggles. James instructs us to "count it all joy" when we go through trials! Why? Because joy comes from experiencing God's presence and knowing Him more deeply than we did before.

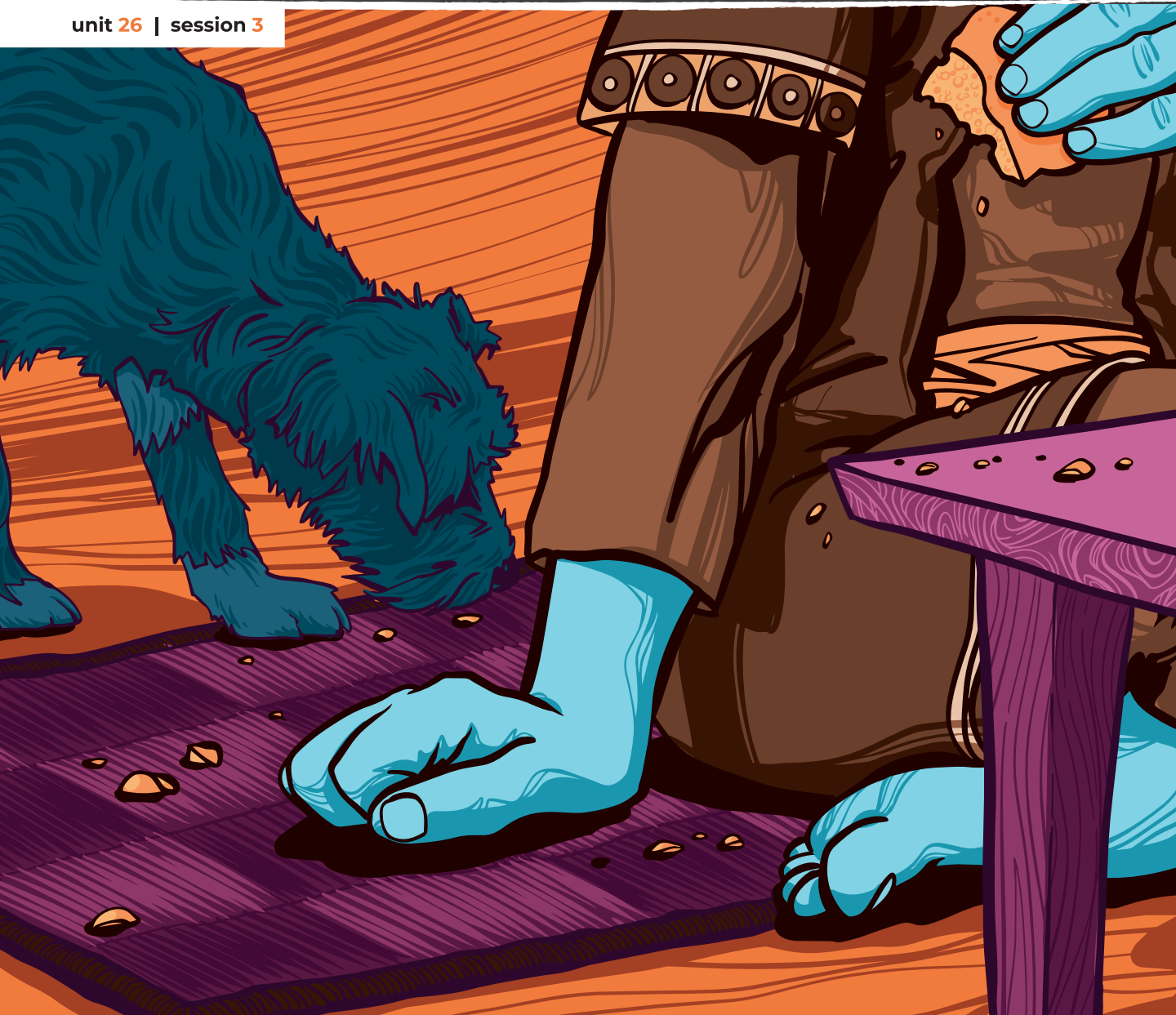
- **HOW CAN THIS STORY ENCOURAGE YOU TO LOOK DIFFERENTLY AT THE STORMS YOU FACE?**
- **WHEN HAVE YOU WALKED THROUGH SOMETHING DIFFICULT BUT GOD USED IT TO GROW YOUR FAITH? IF SO, WHAT CAUSED YOU TO TRUST HIM MORE?**

PRAY

**LORD, THANK YOU FOR CONTROLLING THE WIND
AND THE WAVES AND USING THEM FOR YOUR
GLORY. WHEN I GO THROUGH TRIALS, HELP ME TO
REMEMBER THAT NOTHING IS OUTSIDE OF YOUR
CONTROL, AND I CAN LOOK TO YOU FOR HELP.**

THE CHILDREN'S *CRUMBS*

unit 26 | session 3



CHRIST CONNECTION

Jesus showed His authority over the demonic spirit that tormented the Gentile girl, but this miracle only pointed to the truth that all evil will one day be defeated with Jesus's second coming at the end of the age. Believers can walk in hope, trusting by faith that this victory will come.

OUTSIDERS NO MORE

This week, we're covering the passages and main points below. But we encourage you to dig in and read all of the content on this timeline.

Mark 7

JESUS BRINGS US OUT OF DARKNESS

MARK 7:24-30

24 And from there he arose and went away to the region of Tyre and Sidon. And he entered a house and did not want anyone to know, yet he could not be hidden. 25 But immediately a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit heard of him and came and fell down at his feet. 26 Now the woman was a Gentile, a Syrophenician by birth. And she begged him to cast the demon out of her daughter. 27 And he said to her, "Let the children be fed first, for it is not right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." 28 But she answered him, "Yes, Lord; yet even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs." 29 And he said to her, "For this statement you may go your way; the demon has left your daughter." 30 And she went home and found the child lying in bed and the demon gone.

JESUS HEALS US

MARK 7:31-37

31 Then he returned from the region of Tyre and went through Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, in the region of the Decapolis. 32 And they brought to him a man who was deaf and had a speech impediment, and they begged him to lay his hand on him. 33 And taking him aside from the crowd privately, he put his fingers into his ears, and after spitting touched his tongue. 34 And looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, "Ephphatha," that is, "Be opened." 35 And his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly. 36 And Jesus charged them to tell no one. But the more he charged them, the more zealously they proclaimed it. 37 And they were astonished beyond measure, saying, "He has done all things well. He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak."

MAIN POINT.

Because Jesus accepts and heals us, we can accept and love others.



THEOLOGY CONNECTION

NEW IDENTITY OF THE BELIEVER

When we place faith in Jesus, we go through a change of identity—from being enemies under God’s wrath (Eph. 2:1-3) to members of God’s family as beloved children (Eph. 2:19). Believers are declared righteous on account of Jesus’s perfect life and substitutionary death and resurrection. No longer are believers slaves to sin, defined by past failures or present struggles. Believers are delivered from the realm of darkness and belong to the kingdom of light (Col. 1:13). Anyone who is in Jesus is a “new creation”; the old, sinful self is passed away and the new, redeemed self is alive, becoming more and more like Him (2 Cor. 5:17).

DISCUSSION

JESUS BRINGS US OUT OF DARKNESS

MARK 7:24-30

- How do you think the woman felt as she approached Jesus? What stops us from going to Him like this?
- How do Jesus’s words make you feel (v. 27)? Why did He respond like this?
- Who are the outsiders in our culture? In your life? As believers, what is our role in helping them leave darkness?

JESUS HEALS US

MARK 7:31-37

- What stands out about how Jesus healed the deaf man? How should this shape our heart for others?
- How does this passage give us hope when so much brokenness surrounds us?
- What are ways you need Jesus’s healing today?



WHAT NEED OR STRUGGLE HAVE YOU BEEN AFRAID TO BRING TO JESUS? HOW CAN YOU TAKE STEPS TO SURRENDER IT?

CULTURAL CONNECTION

Labels are everywhere: labels that situate each of us into certain groups; labels that say we belong in some places but not others; labels of approval and disapproval. Most of us are just struggling to fit somewhere. We don’t want to stand out, but we don’t want to blend in either. At the heart of this struggle is a surprising truth: God created us with a desire to belong. The very fact that we are created beings means we belong to someone, right? We try so hard to find acceptance here. The issue though? We weren’t created to root our sense of belonging in anyone but God. Do you ever wonder, “Does Jesus actually see me, and if He does, am I actually welcome?” And the loudest, most incredible answer is “Yes!” Sure, God desires each of us to have community here with people to encourage us and walk with us. But the labels, the striving to belong, the disappointment when we don’t—we can let all of that go. The only label that will ever matter is that you’re God’s child, deeply loved and wholly accepted.



DAY ONE

1 PETER 2:9-10



If you had to choose to live in total darkness all of the time or total light all of the time, which would you choose? Most of us would choose the light. We need light to see, and though darkness is great when we're sleeping, we don't necessarily want to live in darkness.

The truth is that we were all born children in darkness because of the fall that took place in Eden. We are saved by grace through faith, and the moment that we believe and confess that Jesus is the Son of God and trust in His work on the cross for the forgiveness of our sins, something miraculous happens; our spiritual citizenship is transferred from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of light. Peter explained that while we were formerly not people of God, "now [we] are God's people." We are not simply "made better," but we are given a completely new identity as children of God and citizens of heaven. This changes our lives in every single way. We no longer have to hope in the things of this world, but we can find our hope in the promises of God! The way we walk changes. No longer do we only walk in the confidence that comes from what we can do, but we can walk in confidence that comes from who our Father is and what Jesus has done. The way we talk changes. No longer are we only representing ourselves, but when we become children of light, we become representatives of God here on earth. With the help of the Holy Spirit, we can use our words to reflect Christ to the world. The way we think about the future changes. The way we see and love other people changes. When we walked in darkness, we had no choice but to look like the world. When we were called into light, everything changed, and we began transforming to be like Christ!

- **HOW WOULD YOU DESCRIBE "LIVING IN DARKNESS" COMPARED TO "LIVING IN THE LIGHT"?**
- **WE CAN STRUGGLE TO LIVE IN LIGHT—IN OUR NEW IDENTITY. WHAT CAN YOU DO WHEN YOU'RE TEMPTED TO CONFORM TO THE WORLD INSTEAD OF WALKING AS A CHILD OF GOD?**

PRAY

GOD, THANK YOU FOR LOVING ME SO MUCH THAT YOU DIDN'T LEAVE ME THE SAME. HELP ME TO REMEMBER DAILY THAT BECAUSE YOU CALLED ME OUT OF DARKNESS AND INTO LIGHT, I CAN WALK IN FREEDOM FROM THE THINGS OF THIS WORLD.



DAY TWO

ROMANS 10:11-13

In the lesson this week, we read about a non-Jewish woman who begged Jesus to heal her daughter. Prior to Jesus's ministry, non-Jewish people, or Gentiles, could enjoy some of God's covenant blessings if they lived by faith according to God's laws, but this was not the norm. Gentiles weren't part of God's chosen nation, Israel. Jesus came and fulfilled God's promise not only to offer salvation to the Jews but also to extend the invitation of salvation to the world! Paul wrote that "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." Jesus's life, death, and resurrection made a way for all people to be called children of God, not just the nation of Israel. God wants all people to know Him. He actually desires that so much that He sent His only Son to the cross to make a way for everyone to be brought into His family. This is good news, not only for those who don't know Jesus but also for believers with family and friends who don't know the love of Christ. While we are called to love non-believers, this love can often come with great sadness and heartache. We want them to share in the hope we have in Christ. However, we can take comfort in knowing that God also wants our friends and family members to know Him, more than we could ever want that for them! This truth should change the way we interact with others. Every person is someone for whom Jesus died. Each person we interact with is either someone who has been saved or who God desires to save. This should motivate us to share God's love and the message of the gospel with people we encounter. Since Jesus died for all people, we must treat every person as someone worth sharing the gospel.

- **HOW DOES THE TRUTH THAT GOD DESIRES FOR ALL PEOPLE TO KNOW HIM ENCOURAGE YOU?**
- **JESUS DIED FOR ALL PEOPLE, WHICH MEANS THAT EVERY PERSON IS WORTH SHARING THE GOOD NEWS WITH. HOW DOES THIS CHALLENGE YOU?**

PRAY

JESUS, THANK YOU FOR MAKING A WAY FOR ALL PEOPLE TO KNOW YOU. HELP ME TO SHARE THE LIFE-CHANGING STORY OF YOUR LOVE WITH THOSE AROUND ME OUT OF GRATITUDE FOR WHAT YOU HAVE DONE.



DAY THREE

MATTHEW 15:21-28

In this passage, after the woman asked Jesus for help, He was silent. Let's imagine how the woman felt in this moment. She was desperate for her daughter's healing, and she asked the only person capable for that healing. As she waited for a response, we can imagine that she was filled with questions: "Does Jesus care? Will He help me? Is what I've heard about Him true? If He doesn't help, what will happen?"

The questions that may have filled her head in that moment are questions some of us have asked as well. In times when we don't understand what God is doing and we cannot physically see evidence of His work, we can feel like God is silent or distant. But just like the "silence" we may experience, Jesus's silence toward the woman was not unloving; His silence served a purpose. Jesus set up a teaching moment for those witnessing the event. The disciples filled the silence and suggested that Jesus send her away. Jesus's response created an opportunity for a dialogue between Him and the woman, in which she humbly acknowledged her status as a Gentile and begged for the leftover scraps of Jesus's blessings. In other words, this woman recognized Jesus's worth, and she recognized her own unworthiness in comparison. Jesus immediately healed the woman's daughter because of her great faith. Let's not miss the lesson that Jesus taught His disciples in this moment. Previously, God's blessing was only for the nation of Israel, but here we see that His blessings were extended to even non-Jews who declared faith in Him! In His silence and in repeating what His disciples were likely thinking, Jesus revealed their lack of compassion and corrected them, helping them learn that God's love is for all people.

- **DOES GOD'S SILENCE MEAN HE ISN'T WORKING IN A SITUATION? WHY OR WHY NOT?**
- **LOOK BACK AT A TIME WHEN YOU FELT GOD WAS SILENT. WHAT LESSON DID HE TEACH YOU?**

PRAY

LORD, THANK YOU FOR BEING A GOD WHO PROMISES TO NEVER LEAVE NOR FORSAKE HIS CHILDREN. HELP ME TO REMEMBER THAT YOU ARE ALWAYS WITH ME AND ALWAYS WORKING, EVEN WHEN I CAN'T SEE IT.



DAY FOUR

PSALM 13

Have you ever been in desperate need of an answer? Maybe you had no clue what the answer was to a question on a test. Or maybe you needed an answer with a difficult decision. In this psalm, David expressed longing for God to answer him. He felt as though God had hidden His face and left him to find help elsewhere. Notice that this prayer of David's is not light and optimistic at first. His words are raw, and his feelings are unfiltered. He is transparent and unafraid to bring his feelings and questions before God.

Oftentimes, we can feel like bringing our feelings before God in this way is unacceptable, but the Lord created us with intention, as complex beings with all types of feelings and the ability to ask questions. Our heavenly Father never intended for us to wait to come to Him when our thoughts are aligned with His, when our feelings can be tied up and packaged into a beautiful box, or when we have everything figured out. Our God is a loving God, and He desires for us to bring our doubts, emotions, and questions to Him at times when He feels near and at times when He feels distant. The end of this psalm reminds us that even when God feels silent, we have a reason to rejoice. Scripture teaches us that God's character remains the same even in times of trouble. God cannot forsake Himself. He is faithful and loving. He is a good and compassionate Father. Nothing can change those truths about God. When it feels like God isn't speaking, run to Him. Lay your worries before Him and trust that He is still faithful and good. In difficult moments, like David, let's remember who God is and the hope we have in Him.

- **DAVID HONESTLY BRINGS HIS FEELINGS BEFORE GOD INSTEAD OF HIDING THEM. WHAT EMOTIONS OR QUESTIONS DO YOU STRUGGLE TO BRING TO GOD? WHAT HOLDS YOU BACK FROM BEING TRANSPARENT WITH HIM?**
- **HOW CAN FOCUSING ON GOD'S UNCHANGING CHARACTER HELP YOU TRUST HIM, EVEN WHEN YOUR CIRCUMSTANCES REMAIN DIFFICULT AND YOU FEEL LIKE GOD IS SILENT?**

PRAY

HEAVENLY FATHER, THANK YOU FOR BEING A GOD WHO LISTENS. YOU NEVER CHANGE, AND YOU PROMISE TO NEVER ABANDON YOUR CHILDREN. HELP ME REMEMBER AND TRUST YOUR CHARACTER WHEN I WALK THROUGH THE VALLEYS OF LIFE.





DAY FIVE

ISAIAH 35:5-6

In the main passage this week, Jesus performed one of His many miraculous signs, in which He restored the ability to hear and speak to a man who was deaf and mute. At first glance, this may seem like another amazing act of compassion. While the healing that took place was life-changing for the man who received it, this event carried more significance than the healing alone. This miracle directly fulfilled prophecy recorded centuries earlier in the book of Isaiah, when God promised that the coming Messiah would unstop the ears of the deaf and make the mute's tongue shout for joy. With this miracle, Jesus not only healed the man's physical body but also revealed His true identity as the long-awaited Messiah according to the Scriptures. This truth should increase our faith! Our faith in God isn't blind; it's proven repeatedly by the consistent faithfulness of God and the countless examples in Scripture of God doing exactly what He said He would. In fact, during His thirty-three years on earth, Jesus fulfilled over 350 prophecies with His life, death, and resurrection, many of which were completely outside of human control. Because we can see that Jesus has faithfully fulfilled God's promises in the past, we can have hope for the future and confidently trust that He will bring all of God's promises to pass. Reading about all of the prophecies that have come to pass and have been recorded should remind us that God's faithfulness is unending, He is always at work, and His Word will never fail.

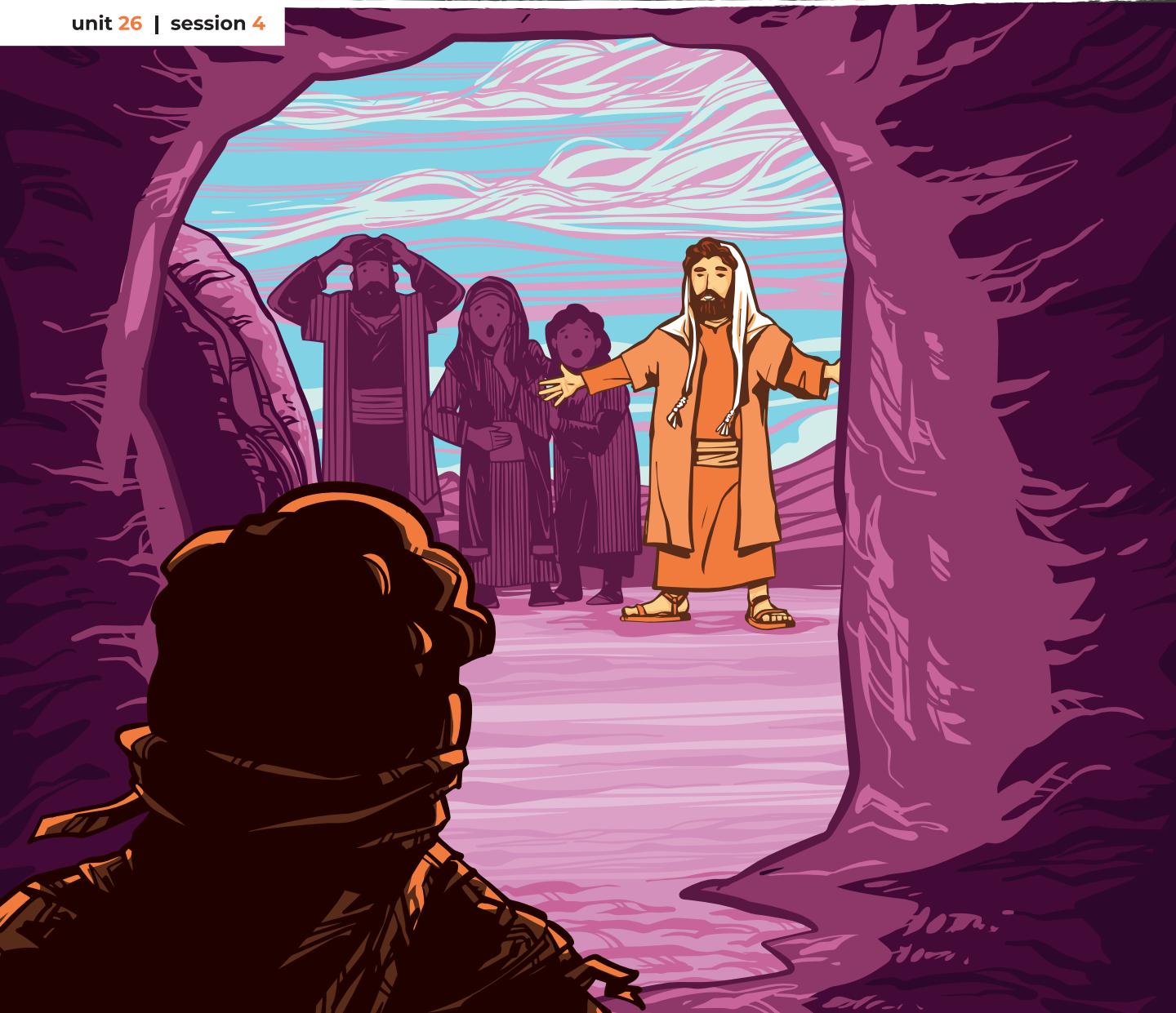
- **HOW DOES THIS STORY IN SCRIPTURE INCREASE YOUR FAITH IN JESUS AS THE ONE TRUE SAVIOR?**
- **HOW DOES FOCUSING ON PROMISES GOD HAS ALREADY FULFILLED SHAPE YOUR TRUST IN HIM AS YOU WAIT ON UNANSWERED PRAYERS AND HIS OTHER PROMISES?**

PRAY

LORD, THANK YOU FOR GIVING US YOUR WORD
TO SHOW US YOUR UNFAILING FAITHFULNESS.
WHEN I DOUBT, HELP ME TO LOOK AT WHAT
YOU'VE ALREADY DONE SO THAT I CAN WAIT WITH
CONFIDENCE ON YOUR OTHER PROMISES.

RESURRECTION AND *LIFE*

unit 26 | session 4



CHRIST CONNECTION

When Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead, He showed that He has power over death. Jesus said, “I am the resurrection and the life” (John 11:25). Because Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead, we have full assurance that Jesus will one day defeat death forever and resurrect us from the dead.

This week, we're covering the passages and main points below. But we encourage you to dig in and read all of the content on this timeline.

John 11

DEATH STINGS NOW

JOHN 11:17-37

17 Now when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. 18 Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off, 19 and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother. 20 So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, but Mary remained seated in the house. 21 Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. 22 But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you." 23 Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." 24 Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day." 25 Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, 26 and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?" 27 She said to him, "Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world." 28 When she had said this, she went and called her sister Mary, saying in private, "The Teacher is here and is calling for you." 29 And when she heard it, she rose quickly and went to him. 30 Now Jesus had not yet come into the village, but was still in the place where Martha had met him. 31 When the Jews who were with her in the house, consoling her, saw Mary rise quickly and go out, they followed her, supposing that she was going to the tomb to weep there. 32 Now when Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet, saying to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." 33 When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled. 34 And he said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Lord, come and see." 35 Jesus wept. 36 So the Jews said, "See how he loved him!" 37 But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man also have kept this man from dying?"

DEATH HAS LOST

JOHN 11:38-44

38 Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay against it. 39 Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the sister of the dead man, said to him, "Lord, by this time there will be an odor, for he has been dead four days." 40 Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?" 41 So they took away the stone. And Jesus lifted up his eyes and said, "Father, I thank you that you have heard me. 42 I knew that you always hear me, but I said this on account of the people standing around, that they may believe that you sent me." 43 When he had said these things, he cried out with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out." 44 The man who had died came out, his hands and feet bound with linen strips, and his face wrapped with a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unbind him, and let him go."

MAIN POINT.

Because Jesus has authority over life and death, we can trust Him entirely.



THEOLOGY CONNECTION

RESURRECTION

Both the Old and New Testaments teach that one day believers will experience a resurrection of the body from the dead (Isa. 26:19; Ezek. 37:12-14; John 11). The promise of the resurrection is found in the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, and it will take place at His return in the future. Because Jesus was the firstfruits of the resurrection, Christians can be assured that their resurrection will be both bodily and glorious (Phil. 3:20-21; Rom. 8:22-23). The hope of the future resurrection gives Christians confidence that death has been defeated in Jesus's death and resurrection.

DISCUSSION

DEATH STINGS NOW

JOHN 11:17-37

- ♥ • How did Mary and Martha react to Jesus's delay? How did they feel?
- 📖 • Why do you think Jesus wept (v. 35)?
- Read verse 37. When have you wrestled with thoughts like these—that God could've prevented suffering but didn't? Why doesn't He?

DEATH HAS LOST

JOHN 11:38-44

- 🧠 • What does Martha's comment about the odor reveal about her thoughts (v. 39)?
- ✝️ • What does Jesus calling Lazarus out of the tomb reveal about His authority over death?
- How should believing Jesus defeated death change the way we live now?



HOW WOULD YOUR LIFE LOOK DIFFERENT IF YOU LEANED ON FAITH INSTEAD OF HUMAN LOGIC? HOW DOES THIS PASSAGE STRENGTHEN YOUR FAITH?

CULTURAL CONNECTION

Our world moves quickly. We order fast food and within minutes, the meal is ready. We live fast-paced lives. How has this affected us? Well, many of us aren't good at waiting. Moving slowly or patiently isn't our preference. But our desire for instant gratification harms us when it comes to our relationship with God. We wrestle with praying to and trusting in a God who may not give us what we ask for immediately—or at all. We especially struggle when God's answer results in discomfort, pain, loss, or disappointment. We may question if God is good and if He can be trusted. But we must remember that God is eternal in His nature and understanding. When His timing or His answer doesn't meet our expectations, we can actually breathe a sigh of relief. Why? Because God sees what we don't see and knows what we don't know. More importantly, God does what is good because He is good (Ps. 119:68). When our circumstances don't feel good in the moment, we can know that our good God will do only what is good and what brings Him glory.



DAY ONE

PSALM 34:17-18



If God delivers His children from “all of their troubles,” then why do we still experience pain? “All their troubles” does not mean a life free from suffering; it points to the faithful compassion of God, His steadfast presence, and the ultimate rescue of His children that will take place when He comes back. The Lord doesn’t ignore pain. He is a God who listens. He hears every cry and sees every hardship. He promises that rescue will come, but it does not always look the way we think it should. Deliverance can take place in many different ways: strength to persevere through a trial, comfort in the midst of pain, or ultimate restoration found in eternity with Christ. While we cannot expect to see total deliverance from all our troubles here on earth, we can expect to be held and seen by a loving God until we experience that ultimate deliverance. We see a clear picture of the nearness of God and heartache coexisting in John 11. When Jesus arrived after the death of His friend, Lazarus, we see that Mary and Martha are grieving deeply. Both Mary and Martha suggested that if Jesus had made it to them faster, Lazarus would still be alive. Jesus knew what was coming next. He knew that He had the power to raise Lazarus from the dead, but His knowledge of the future did not stop Him from entering into Mary and Martha’s sorrow and being “deeply moved” by it. This should remind us of the beautiful truth that God is not distant while we are hurting; He intentionally draws near and enters our sorrow. Just like Mary and Martha, we don’t always understand or agree with God’s timeframe, nor do we see the whole picture, but we can trust in His promises. While God’s Word doesn’t guarantee that His love will come in the form of instant solutions, we are promised that His love will show up in the form of His presence, no matter the circumstance.

- **HAVE YOU EVER FELT LIKE GOD WAS DISTANT FROM YOU WHILE YOU WERE HURTING? WHAT MADE YOU FEEL THAT WAY?**
- **HOW DOES KNOWING THAT GOD PROMISES TO BE PRESENT AT ALL TIMES CHANGE THE WAY YOU VIEW SUFFERING?**

PRAY

HEAVENLY FATHER, THANK YOU FOR NOT ALWAYS ANSWERING MY PRAYERS IN THE WAY I THINK YOU SHOULD. YOUR WAYS AND YOUR THOUGHTS ARE FAR HIGHER THAN MINE, AND I TRUST THAT YOUR PLANS FOR ME ARE GOOD EVEN WHEN I CAN’T SEE THE GOOD IN MY CIRCUMSTANCE.



DAY TWO

ISAIAH 53:1-3

We're often surprised when our expectations are wrong. Jews had expectations for the Messiah, and Jesus was not the Messiah the people expected. Instead of coming in power with prestige and popularity, He was rejected. Jesus was no stranger to suffering and pain. He was not hidden from hardship; He entered fully into a broken world and took on the total penalty of sin. When we are hurting, it is easy to feel like God is far off and doesn't understand what we are going through, but that couldn't be further from the truth. Isaiah 53 shows us that Jesus not only understands our feelings, but He experienced them. He is familiar with the pain of being misunderstood, mocked, dismissed, and rejected. Not only did He feel emotional pain, but He experienced spiritual and physical anguish as well. We don't serve a distant and blind God. We commune personally with a Savior who walked through deep suffering. In the main passage from this week, we see a connection to Isaiah 53. The Son of God chose to bear the weight of emotional pain alongside those He loved who were grieving. Seeing Jesus weep in John 11 and described as the Suffering Servant in the book of Isaiah helps us to realize His empathy for us. When we feel that we don't belong and our pain doesn't matter, we can rest in the fact that Jesus understands and sees us. Because we serve a risen Savior who knows our pain, we can bring every hurt to Jesus and trust that we will be met with compassion and with the promise that our suffering will not have the final word.

- **WHAT EFFECT DOES THIS DESCRIPTION OF JESUS HAVE ON YOU?**
- **INSTEAD OF COMING AS THE POWERFUL KING ISRAEL EXPECTED, JESUS WAS BORN AS A BABY AND EXPERIENCED ALL TYPES OF SUFFERING WHILE HERE. WHY IS THE TRUTH THAT JESUS WAS NOT SHIELDED FROM SUFFERING COMFORTING?**

PRAY

JESUS, THANK YOU FOR EXPERIENCING ALL TYPES OF SUFFERING, EVEN DEATH ON A CROSS, SO THAT WE COULD HAVE A SAVIOR WHO UNDERSTANDS US. HELP ME TO REMEMBER YOUR EMPATHY SO THAT I CAN RUN TO YOU MORE QUICKLY IN TRIALS.



DAY THREE

ISAIAH 53:4-9

This passage shifts the focus from Jesus understanding what we walk through to Him carrying what belonged to us. Jesus didn't come only to walk with those who were suffering, but He stepped into our brokenness and took our suffering upon Himself. Isaiah points out that Jesus's suffering was not punishment for His own mistakes but ours. This truth has the power to set us free. We don't have to carry the weight that Jesus died to release us from. Mistakes we wish we could unmake, the pressure to perform perfectly, guilt over wrong choices, shame from hidden darkness in our lives—Jesus took the weight of all this and more on Himself and carried it to the cross. Isaiah prophesied: "He was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities." The punishment that we deserved fell on Jesus, not by accident, but because He willingly accepted it in obedience to the Father. Jesus was completely innocent, yet He willingly took on the pain and consequences He didn't deserve because of His great love for us. Unlike many of the people who witnessed Jesus's crucifixion, we know that His suffering wasn't meaningless or random. His suffering was God's plan, making His desire for restoration possible and available to all people. Jesus died in our place and made a way for us to have freedom from the weight we were never designed to carry alone. Because of this, we must stop trying to pick back up and carry what He already left in the grave. Jesus not only understood our pain; He took it upon Himself so we could walk in the freedom He won for us instead of the condemnation we deserved.

- **WHAT WEIGHT ARE YOU CARRYING EVEN THOUGH JESUS TOOK IT ON HIMSELF?**
- **HOW SHOULD THE TRUTH THAT JESUS DID NOT EARN THE PUNISHMENT HE RECEIVED, BUT HE TOOK THE PENALTY WE DESERVED, CHANGE THE WAY WE LIVE?**

PRAY

JESUS, THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE PUNISHMENT I DESERVED AND THE WEIGHT OF GUILT AND SHAME ON YOURSELF. HELP ME TO LIVE IN THE FREEDOM YOU WON FOR ME.

DAY FOUR

ISAIAH 53:10-12

Have you ever been deceived by how something looked? Maybe the way it appeared was drastically different in person than you expected. Appearances can be deceiving, and Jesus's death certainly appeared like loss. Isaiah 53 reminds us that Jesus's suffering did not end in defeat but in victory. This passage shows us that even in death, God was working out the greatest redemption story to ever be written. The perfect Son of God gave His life as a final sacrifice for sin. Although He had done no wrong, "it was the will of the LORD to crush him" so that many would be brought into right standing with God. Just like the death of Lazarus wasn't final, Jesus rose from the grave, claiming victory over death and changing the end of the story for those who would put their trust in Him. Because of the victory of Christ, suffering no longer has the final word, and sin and death no longer have power to define the ending of our story.

Let's think back to Mary and Martha. While they had heard of the ending of the story, they had no idea what the next chapter held for them and for their brother, for whom they were grieving. As far as they knew, their brother's death was final, and all hope was lost. They were confused and hurt that Jesus had not gotten there in time to heal him. In the same way, we may walk through times when life feels confusing, unfair, lonely, and disappointing, but because Jesus bore our sin and conquered the grave, we know that life exists even in situations that seem like loss. This prophecy written in Isaiah and fulfilled in the Gospels reminds us that God is always moving in ways that we cannot see and may not understand, but we can walk with hope knowing that He has already won the ultimate victory for us.

- **WHY DOES JESUS'S DEATH AND RESURRECTION GIVE US THE ABILITY TO WALK WITH HOPE, EVEN WHEN WE SUFFER?**
- **GOD IS FAITHFUL TO KEEP HIS WORD. HOW DOES REFLECTING ON THE FULFILLED PROPHECIES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT ENCOURAGE YOU IN DIFFICULT TIMES?**

PRAY

LORD, THANK YOU FOR BEING A GOD WHO IS ALWAYS WORKING BEHIND THE SCENES TO BRING ABOUT YOUR PLANS AND PURPOSES. HELP ME TO TAKE JOY IN REMEMBERING THAT BECAUSE OF WHO YOU ARE, SUFFERING ISN'T FINAL.





DAY FIVE

JOHN 11:1-4; ROMANS 8:28

When Jesus was told that His friend, Lazarus, had become sick, He said something that would have shocked anyone who heard it: Lazarus's illness was for the "glory of God." Jesus then intentionally waited two days before traveling to see Lazarus and his sisters, and during this timeframe, Lazarus died. To those who were mourning, this death felt confusing, unnecessary, and painful. Jesus deeply loved Lazarus, yet He allowed his death to happen in order that God's glory was revealed, even through pain. God's glory through our pain is something that can be hard to see and understand when our own pain often feels pointless. While walking through loss, disappointment, mental health struggles, or family issues, we understandably question why God would allow us to hurt. Jesus, when He wept over Lazarus's death, shows us that while we shouldn't deny the existence of pain, we should remember that pain and death do not have the final word. Romans 8:28 reminds us that God works all things together for the good of those who love Him. This "good" should not be misinterpreted as the absence of pain because, as believers, Jesus promised we will have trouble in this world (John 16:33). Instead, we should remember that this "good" represents God's greater purpose of making us more like His Son, which He can accomplish through working all things together. His plans are good, and they cannot be stopped. In the story of Lazarus's death, the "good" accomplished was God's glory revealed and lives changed through belief in Jesus. God is not the author of pain, but like we see in this passage, He does use it to draw people to faith. Even when we don't understand why difficult things happen, we can be confident that God is present in our pain with us and that our suffering isn't the end.

- **MANY PEOPLE BELIEVED IN JESUS AS A RESULT OF LAZARUS'S DEATH. HOW DOES THIS CHALLENGE YOU TO REFRAME YOUR THOUGHTS ABOUT YOUR OWN TRIALS?**
- **KNOWING THAT THE "GOOD" IN ROMANS 8:28 REFERS TO GOD'S WILL, HOW CAN THE TRUTH THAT HE WORKS ALL THINGS TOGETHER FOR GOOD ENCOURAGE YOU?**

PRAY

FATHER, THANK YOU FOR BEING THE ONLY ONE WHO IS CAPABLE OF WORKING ALL THINGS TOGETHER FOR GOOD. WHEN I FEEL LIKE SOMETHING IS TOO DARK TO BE USED FOR GOOD, REMIND ME THAT NOTHING IS OUTSIDE OF YOUR CONTROL.

NOW I CAN SEE

unit 27 | session 1



CHRIST CONNECTION

Satan has blinded the eyes of the world to the truth of God, offering false hope in the things of the world while also opposing God through its powers and influences. Jesus came so that the eyes of the blind might be opened to the truth. All who trust in Him find true hope in God's kingdom.

OF DARKNESS

This week, we're covering the passages and main points below. But we encourage you to dig in and read all of the content on this timeline.

John 9

WE ARE SPIRITUALLY BLIND

JOHN 9:1-7,13-16,24-34

1 As he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. 2 And his disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" 3 Jesus answered, "It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be displayed in him. 4 We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. 5 As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world." 6 Having said these things, he spit on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then he anointed the man's eyes with the mud 7 and said to him, "Go, wash in the pool of Siloam" (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing. . . . 13 They brought to the Pharisees the man who had formerly been blind. 14 Now it was a Sabbath day when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. 15 So the Pharisees again asked him how he had received his sight. And he said to them, "He put mud on my eyes, and I washed, and I see." 16 Some of the Pharisees said, "This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath." But others said, "How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?" And there was a division among them. . . . 24 So for the second time they called the man who had been blind and said to him, "Give glory to God. We know that this man is a sinner." 25 He answered, "Whether he is a sinner I do not know. One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see." 26 They said to him, "What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?" 27 He answered them, "I have told you already, and you would not listen. Why do you want to hear it again? Do you also want to become his disciples?" 28 And they reviled him, saying, "You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. 29 We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from." 30 The man answered, "Why, this is an amazing thing! You do not know where he comes from, and yet he opened my eyes. 31 We know that God does not listen to sinners, but if anyone is a worshiper of God and does his will, God listens to him. 32 Never since the world began has it been heard that anyone opened the eyes of a man born blind. 33 If this man were not from God, he could do nothing." 34 They answered him, "You were born in utter sin, and would you teach us?" And they cast him out.

JESUS GIVES US SIGHT

JOHN 9:35-41

35 Jesus heard that they had cast him out, and having found him he said, "Do you believe in the Son of Man?" 36 He answered, "And who is he, sir, that I may believe in him?" 37 Jesus said to him, "You have seen him, and it is he who is speaking to you." 38 He said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshiped him. 39 Jesus said, "For judgment I came into this world, that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind." 40 Some of the Pharisees near him heard these things, and said to him, "Are we also blind?" 41 Jesus said to them, "If you were blind, you would have no guilt; but now that you say, 'We see,' your guilt remains."

MAIN POINT.

We're incapable of seeing the truth about Jesus without His help.



THEOLOGY CONNECTION

WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Spirit's work in the life of a Christian begins in the work of salvation in bringing a person to faith in Jesus and is continued through the work of sanctification in helping the Christian to become progressively more like Jesus throughout the course of his or her life. He also empowers and indwells believers, intercedes on their behalf, and equips them with special gifts for the service of God's kingdom. He is the Comforter to the believer and aids us in properly interpreting the Bible.

DISCUSSION

WE ARE SPIRITUALLY BLIND

JOHN 9:1-7,13-16,24-34

- Why didn't the Pharisees rejoice over the miracle? What mattered more to them? How do we fall into this mindset too?
- What does it mean to be spiritually blind? How do we get spiritual sight?
- If you were the man Jesus healed from blindness, would it matter to you how or when it happened? Why or why not?

JESUS GIVES US SIGHT

JOHN 9:35-41

- What would your response be if you realized you were standing right in front of Jesus? How did the blind man respond?
- How can having everything we want or need make it hard for us to see how much we need Jesus? How can being in need be a gift?
- Read verse 41. What does Jesus's response show us about accountability when it comes to sin?



WHO IN YOUR LIFE IS SPIRITUALLY BLIND AND NEEDS JESUS? WHAT CAN YOU DO TO HELP THEM SEE JESUS?

CULTURAL CONNECTION

Have you ever struggled to believe something because you couldn't see it with your own eyes? Whether or not you realize it, you already believe in many things you can't see. You can't see gravity or wind with your eyes, but you see and feel their effects. Sometimes, our spiritual sight—our ability to see and know the Lord—is limited because we don't position ourselves to see. Are the friends you've surrounded yourself with helping you to see and believe in God, or are they encouraging you to walk in darkness? Does the content you watch and listen to help open your eyes to truth, or does it feed you worldly ideas instead? Jesus desires for us to know Him. He desires for us to live with clear vision. When you draw closer to the Lord and position yourself to see Him, He opens your eyes; He helps you see the world and other people the way He sees them. Here's the truth: You can choose spiritual blindness. You can position yourself to stay in the dark. But if you draw near to Jesus, He promises to come close and help you see.



DAY ONE

PSALM 139:1-6

Have you ever felt alone in a crowded room? Sometimes we feel like we don't fit in, that people don't understand us, that if we were truly known, no one would like us. We might compare ourselves to others who seem to have it together—who are smarter, funnier, more popular than us. They have more money, more style, more opportunity. We can often feel alone, forgotten, and dismissed. But God always sees us. He knows us. And despite knowing all of our sins and flaws, He loves us still.

In this week's main passage, Jesus saw the blind man as He and His disciples were passing by. This man had been blind from birth, which in Jewish tradition, meant that his blindness was likely the consequence of sin, so he was shunned and forgotten. To survive, he was forced to beg. But even engulfed in a crowd of people, Jesus saw the blind man and personally went to him. He had not forgotten him. He knew who he was and why he was there—to reveal God's glory.

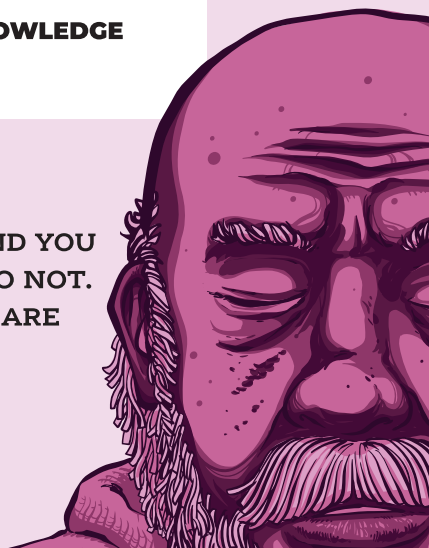
In today's passage in Psalm 139, David acknowledged that the Lord knows us intimately. He knows everything about us. He knows where we are, where we're going, and even what we're going to say before we say it. He knows our hearts and our minds. He knows our personality quirks, our deepest hurts, and our greatest fears. He knows our desires, our dreams, and our greatest hopes. He knows it all. He knows you. All of you.

No one knows us like God does. He created us, formed us, and continues to shape us for His glory. His intimate knowledge of us comforts us when we do feel alone, forgotten, and dismissed. And we can trust that He sees us—all of us—and loves us deeply.

- **WHAT SINS, FLAWS, FEARS, OR COMPARISONS DO YOU TRY TO HIDE FROM OTHERS? WHAT ABOUT FROM GOD?**
- **HOW ARE YOU ENCOURAGED BY GOD'S INTIMATE KNOWLEDGE OF YOU?**

PRAY

LORD, I KNOW YOU SEE ME. YOU KNOW ME, AND YOU LOVE ME. YOU SEE WHAT SO MANY OTHERS DO NOT. REMIND ME WHEN I FEEL ALONE THAT YOU ARE RIGHT HERE WITH ME.





DAY TWO

PSALM 139:7-12

Statistically, most violent crimes happen at night because darkness offers concealment for the offenders. That's why one of the first methods of crime prevention is to illuminate the area you're trying to protect. Light deters crime because light exposes what darkness hides.

We continue today in David's psalm to learn that not only does God know us thoroughly, but He is everywhere. The theological term for this is "omnipresent," which means that God is in all places at the same time. David asked, "Where shall I flee from your presence?" (v. 7). The truth—we can't. We see this truth play out in the very beginning, when Adam and Eve sinned and ran in shame to hide from the Lord (Gen. 3:8-9). The Lord called out to them, not because He couldn't find them, but to draw them out of hiding and to restore them.

Jesus called Himself "the light of the world" (John 9:5). Because He is the Light, we can't hide in darkness. All those sins we think we're getting away with in secret will come to light. A relationship with "the light of the world" means that His presence will pierce any darkness in us and reveal what is hidden—like an LED floodlight into our hearts. Proverbs says, "Whoever conceals his transgressions will not prosper, but he who confesses and forsakes them will obtain mercy" (28:13). Can we hide our sin, our shame, our mistakes from Jesus? Absolutely not. So, we confess them—not because He doesn't know—but because through confession and repentance, He brings us healing. David rejoiced, "Your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me" (v. 10). While God knows when we sin, knows what we try to hide, knows our shame, He still holds on to us and leads us in His light. Just as we saw in this week's passage with the blind man, Jesus is the Light that brings healing, hope, and salvation to a dark and blinded world.

- **WHAT DARK PARTS OF YOUR HEART IS THE "LIGHT OF THE WORLD" REVEALING TO YOU?**
- **HOW HAS CONFESSION AND REPENTANCE BROUGHT HEALING AND HOPE TO YOU? HOW HAVE YOU SEEN THIS IN OTHERS?**

PRAY

**JESUS, SHINE YOUR LIGHT ON MY SINS. LEAD ME TO
REPENTANCE, HEALING, AND HOPE BECAUSE THESE
CAN ONLY BE FOUND IN YOU.**



DAY THREE

PSALM 139:13-16

Defective. Broken. Damaged. All words that the blind man from this week's main passage probably heard and felt about himself. While you may not have the same physical issues as the blind man, you've probably had moments where you felt like him. Perhaps you've felt unworthy, incapable, weak, imperfect, or just not enough. Comparing ourselves to others is easy, especially with social media, but we must measure our worth against the truth of God's Word—and He tells us we are "fearfully and wonderfully made" (v. 14).

Continuing in the psalm, David said that God created and knew him (and us) from the very beginning. He knit all of our atoms and particles together, constructed our DNA and genes, and infused us with our personalities, talents, and strengths. You are a masterpiece, fashioned by the hand of the God of the universe!

Maybe you need to know today that God created you on purpose. You are not a mistake. You are not an accident. God had a plan when He created you. Your days were written down and outlined before you were ever even created. The blind man probably had several days of asking God, "Why me?" He may have felt like a mistake—God's accident. But we know from John 9 that while he might have felt broken, God used him so "that the works of God might be displayed in him" (v. 3). This man was created with a purpose to bring glory to God and to draw others to Jesus. The day of his healing, recorded in the Bible for so many people to read, was planned and written in God's book before the blind man was ever born. Likewise, God made you on purpose for His purposes. You were made to bring glory to God and to draw others to Jesus as well—so that God's works can be displayed in you!

- **HOW DO YOU COMPARE YOURSELF TO OTHERS?**
- **DOES KNOWING THAT GOD MADE YOU ON PURPOSE CHANGE THE WAY YOU VIEW YOURSELF? THE WAY YOU SEE OTHERS?**

PRAY

**LORD, YOU HAVE KNOWN AND LOVED ME SINCE YOU
PUT ME TOGETHER—BEFORE I WAS EVEN BORN.
WHEN I LOSE SIGHT OF YOUR PURPOSE FOR ME,
DRAW ME BACK TO YOU AND REMIND ME OF YOUR
PERFECT PLAN.**



DAY FOUR

PSALM 139:23-24

Have you heard of a “blind spot”? A blind spot is when something obstructs your vision. If you’ve learned to drive, you probably know that checking the blind spots of your vehicle is a necessary step before backing up or changing lanes. Did you know that everyone actually has a blind spot in their vision? In each eye, where the retina connects to our optic nerve, our field of vision is obstructed. But we don’t notice because our brain fills in the missing visual information. So, even though we think we can see everything in front of us, we actually don’t!

David wrapped up this psalm with a bold prayer. He asked God to search him and test him. David understood that he had blind spots. He knew that he was sinful, and he humbly pleaded with the Lord to find anything offensive in him because “the heart is deceitful above all things” (Jer. 17:9). The Pharisees from the main lesson this week had huge blind spots. Jesus gave a blind man sight, yet they could not see who He was. But Jesus came—as He told the blind man—“that those who do not see may see, and those who see may become blind” (John 9:39). While the blind man saw the long-awaited Messiah, they could not. They were blind to Him. Our hearts, our feelings, our brains will often lie to us. Sin has taken what should have been perfect and warped it, but through a relationship with Jesus, we are made new. And one day, our blind spots won’t be there anymore. But until then, we must ask the Lord, like David, to show us what we’re missing. As uncomfortable as it may be to have our eyes opened to our sin, we must invite Jesus into our hearts and minds to remove the offensive ways (our sin) and make us more like Him. Walking with Jesus isn’t just a prayer and an aisle walk but a daily relationship with Him, where He knows us and we get to know Him more intimately. He removes blind spots in our lives so that He can use us and lead us in His ways.

- **WHAT ARE SOME BLIND SPOTS THAT THE LORD HAS SHOWN YOU?**
- **SPEND SOME TIME PRAYING DAVID’S PRAYER, MAKING IT YOUR OWN. WHAT DOES THIS PRAYER INVITE GOD TO DO WITHIN YOU?**

PRAY

SEARCH MY HEART, LORD. REMOVE ANY BLIND SPOTS IN MY LIFE SO THAT I MAY SEE YOU CLEARLY, AND “LEAD ME IN THE WAY EVERLASTING.”





DAY FIVE

2 CORINTHIANS 4:1-6

We are often surprised by the disbelief of the Pharisees toward Jesus when we read about their interactions in the Gospels. Why? Because these men had spent their entire lives studying and teaching Scripture. They knew the words of the Old Testament backward and forward. They knew all 300-plus prophecies about Jesus's coming. They had the answer key right in front of them and still managed to fail the exam. They should have known! But they didn't.

Today's passage explains why. Satan, "the god of this world," blinds the minds of unbelievers and keeps them from seeing the gospel. If you are a believer, your spiritual eyes have been opened and you have seen the light of the gospel. You have been given "the light of the knowledge of the glory of God" (v. 6).

So, what do we do with this knowledge? With this light? We shine it in the darkness so that others can see the Light—Jesus. Paul reminds us that we have been shown mercy, and because of that, we have the responsibility to bring that knowledge to others. We have been given a ministry of being light-bearers. In Matthew 28:19-20, Jesus commissioned us to go and carry His good news of salvation into the world. And He promised to go with us! The Pharisees had the Light of the world right in front of them, yet they were so consumed and blinded by laws and rituals that they missed Him. The reality we sometimes want to ignore is that those who don't believe and confess Jesus as Lord will perish; they'll be separated from God for eternity. So, light-bearer, go and shine His light in dark places, share the hope of the gospel, watch Jesus remove the veil of blindness from the lost!

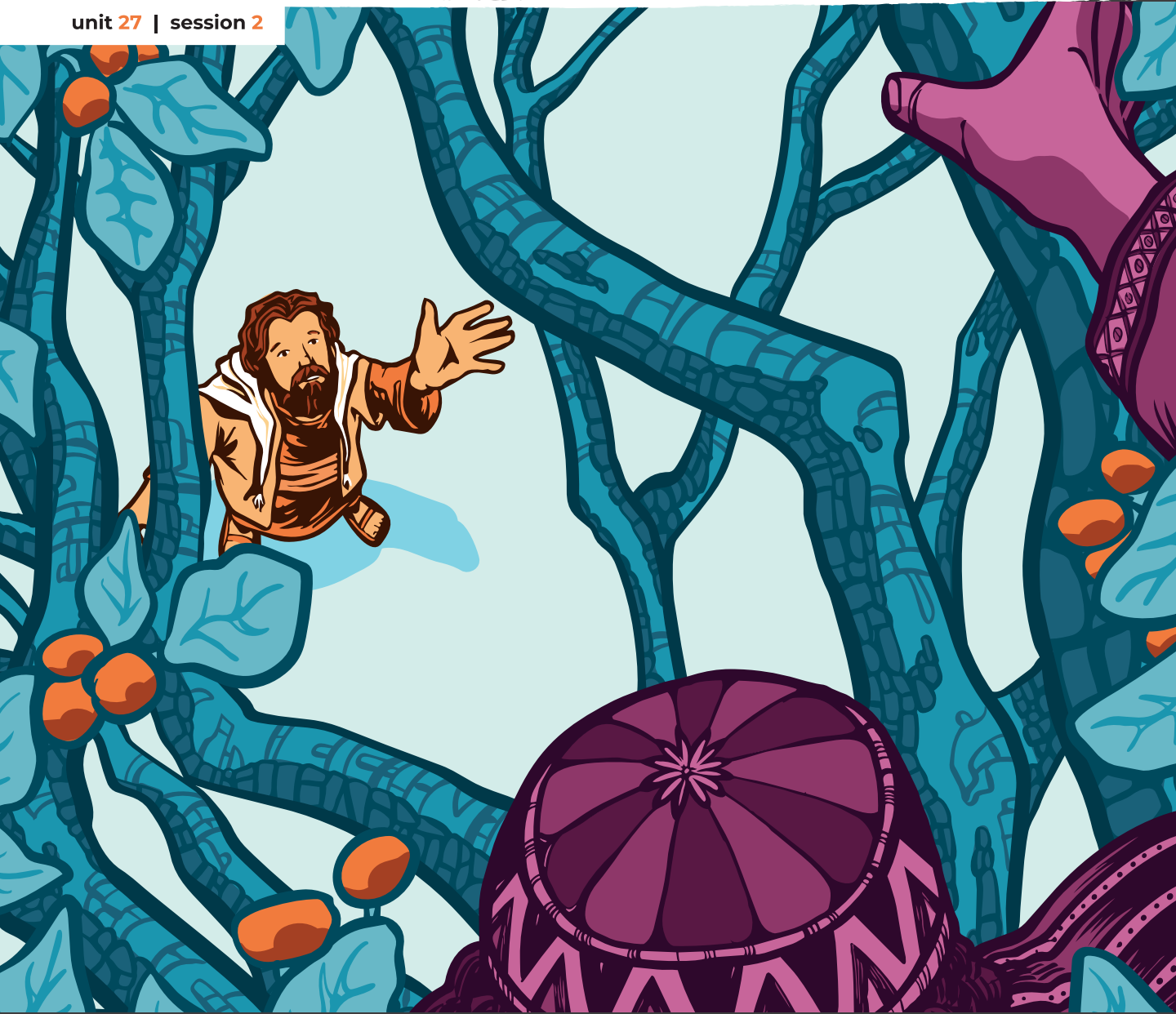
- **WHAT EMOTIONS DOES BEING A "LIGHT-BEARER" BRING UP FOR YOU? HOW DOES KNOWING JESUS PROMISES TO BE WITH US COMFORT YOU?**
- **DO YOU FEEL THE RESPONSIBILITY TO SHARE JESUS WITH THE LOST? WHO DO YOU NEED TO SHARE IT WITH NOW?**

PRAY

**LORD, THANK YOU FOR YOUR LIGHT AND THE
MINISTRY TO SHARE IT WITH OTHERS. HELP ME BE A
BOLD AND COURAGEOUS LIGHT-BEARER FOR YOU!**

TO SEEK AND SAVE *THE LOST*

unit 27 | session 2



CHRIST CONNECTION

Just as Jesus saw Zacchaeus, He sees each of us. He calls us out of our sin and into a life of faithful obedience.

called BY NAME

This week, we're covering the passages and main points below. But we encourage you to dig in and read all of the content on this timeline.

Luke 19

JESUS MEETS US WHERE WE ARE

LUKE 19:1-5

1 He entered Jericho and was passing through. 2 And behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus. He was a chief tax collector and was rich. 3 And he was seeking to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was small in stature. 4 So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for he was about to pass that way. 5 And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today."

MEETING JESUS TRANSFORMS US

LUKE 19:6-10

6 So he hurried and came down and received him joyfully. 7 And when they saw it, they all grumbled, "He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner." 8 And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold." 9 And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. 10 For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost."

MAIN POINT.

A real encounter with Jesus changes our hearts and our actions.



THEOLOGY CONNECTION

GUILT AND SHAME

Guilt refers to the objective status of someone being found guilty for a wrong committed, as well as the incurring of punishment that comes with it (Matt. 5:21-22; James 2:10). Shame is the emotional pain that comes from sinful actions. Scripture teaches that humans are guilty before God and often experience deep feelings of shame.

DISCUSSION

JESUS MEETS US WHERE WE ARE

LUKE 19:1-5



- Why do you think Luke included Zacchaeus's job and social status?
- What keeps us from making an effort to get to Jesus—to see Him and know Him?
- ✝ • What's the significance of Jesus calling Zacchaeus by name?

MEETING JESUS TRANSFORMS US

LUKE 19:6-10



- How did the people in the crowd view Zacchaeus?
- Why was Zacchaeus willing to give away his money so freely? How is he an example for us?
- ♥ • What difference has meeting Jesus made for you?



WHEN HAVE YOU FELT STUCK BECAUSE YOU DIDN'T WANT TO LET JESUS CHANGE A PART OF YOUR LIFE? WHAT WOULD SURRENDERING IT LOOK LIKE?

CULTURAL CONNECTION

First impressions really do matter. Think of someone you didn't have a great first impression of: Has that carried over into how you view that person now? Once we put labels on people, removing them is difficult, even if we misunderstood their character. The label leaves a sticky residue that takes a lot of time and effort to remove. If someone we've labeled has something amazing happen, we may struggle to feel he or she deserves it. We tend to have a hard time forgetting first impressions, even when we're wrong and the labels are unfair. See if you can turn this situation around and put yourself in their shoes. Would you hope others would remove an inaccurate label much sooner if circumstances had changed in your life? If you changed? Sure. So, when we realize that our first impression of someone was wrong, or when we realize the person has changed, let's remove those labels and choose to see others the way God sees them. Let's take it one step further and resist placing labels at all.



DAY ONE

EZEKIEL 34:16



Most of us have probably completed seek and find puzzles. You have to meticulously look for items within a larger picture, and these items may be hidden within other items or drawn in a way that disguises them as something else.

In our main lesson this week and in today's passage, we see that seeking and finding is what Jesus came to earth to do, but He seeks and finds us for salvation and a relationship with Him. When Jesus told Zacchaeus that He was going to stay at his house, the crowd following Jesus was displeased because Zacchaeus was a chief tax collector. Tax collectors were Jewish men who collected taxes for Rome but also took above what was required to fill their own pockets. As a chief tax collector, Zacchaeus was the worst of the worst—a betrayer of his people and a crook. But Jesus explained to the crowd that He came "to seek and save the lost" (Luke 19:10).

Jesus was quoting directly from today's passage. He answered the crowd's complaints with Scripture about the Messiah—about Himself. Those who made the connection would recognize that the Shepherd Messiah came to seek out the stray sheep—those who had lost their way—to heal and strengthen them. Zacchaeus was exactly that. Like a lost sheep, he had lost his way—extorted his fellow Jews, worked for the oppressing government, and lived for himself. But he repented and believed, and Jesus welcomed Zacchaeus into His flock.

Jesus, our Good Shepherd, sought Zacchaeus out, bringing salvation to him. Jesus does the same for us. He seeks us out and offers us salvation, but He doesn't just save us. He brings us into His flock, heals our wounds, and strengthens us.

- **WHAT DOES THIS PASSAGE ABOUT THE SHEPHERD MESSIAH TELL YOU ABOUT JESUS'S CHARACTER?**
- **HOW DOES KNOWING THAT JESUS SOUGHT YOU OUT, LIKE ZACCHAEUS, DEEPEN YOUR LOVE FOR HIM?**

PRAY

JESUS, YOU ARE THE GOOD SHEPHERD. YOU SOUGHT ME AND FOUND ME. YOU BROUGHT ME INTO YOUR FLOCK, AND I AM SO GRATEFUL.



DAY TWO

EPHESIANS 2:1-7

Zacchaeus's encounter with Jesus was life-changing. He was a new man, giving away his riches and attempting to generously right those he wronged. Encountering Jesus changes us in ways we would never even imagine. Paul explained in today's passage that before salvation, we were dead. But God loves us so much that, through Christ, He makes us alive!

So what does that mean? Without Jesus, we walk like the world. But in Christ, we walk according to His ways. For example, before knowing Jesus, maybe you didn't see the problem with a little gossip, but after Christ, you work to build others up (Eph. 4:29). Before Christ, obeying your parents wasn't cool, but after Christ, you really work to honor them (Col. 3:20). Before Christ, you used foul language, but after Christ, you choose words that honor the Lord (Col. 3:8). Before Christ, you may have cheated on your homework, project, or test, but after Christ, you do your work with integrity (Eph. 4:28).

Living in our new identities as Christ-followers can be difficult sometimes. Our lives are conformed to a different worldview. The Holy Spirit works in us, teaching, correcting, and growing us to be more like Christ every day. We must constantly say "no" to our flesh, which we used to say "yes" to. Growth can be painful, but God loves us too much to leave us in the state we were in. He doesn't just want us to live barely alive, but He wants us to thrive and to make an eternal impact. The good news? We don't do this alone. We do it with the power of Christ who lives in us (Phil. 4:13).

- **HOW HAS KNOWING JESUS CHANGED YOU? HOW DOES HE CONTINUE TO MAKE YOU NEW? WHAT DO YOU NEED TO GIVE TO THE LORD TO WORK ON?**
- **WHY IS IT SOMETIMES DIFFICULT TO FOLLOW JESUS? HOW DO YOU KNOW A RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM IS WORTH IT?**

PRAY

**JESUS, YOU ARE WORTH ALL THE GROWING PAINS
BECAUSE YOU HAVE BROUGHT ME FROM DEATH TO
LIFE. GROW ME TO BE MORE AND MORE LIKE YOU
EVERY DAY.**



DAY THREE

EPHESIANS 2:8-10

Zacchaeus promised to give half his possessions to the poor and pay back those he stole from, but this wasn't how he was saved; He did this because Jesus saved him. He believed Jesus was who He said He was—the Messiah. And because of this, the greed and selfishness that once defined Zacchaeus's reputation and life were immediately changed and he couldn't help but give his possessions away.

Paul, in today's passage, said that we are saved by faith, not works. Salvation is a gift from God; we can never do anything to deserve it. But, when we join the family of God, Jesus works in us, changing us to be more and more like Him. And the evidence of His work in us is good works. He continually molds and fashions us for His kingdom work.

You might be thinking, "I'm just a teenager. How in the world can the Lord use me for His good works?" The Bible is full of young people who God used for His glory—Joseph, David, Esther, Daniel, Mary, Jeremiah. He didn't save you just to say, "Okay, hang tight until you're an adult. Maybe I can use you then." God has prepared ahead of time and the Holy Spirit is working in you now for His good works. You weren't just saved from something but for something!

- **THINK THROUGH THE YOUNG PEOPLE NAMED IN THE BIBLE. HOW DID GOD USE THEM FOR HIS GOOD WORKS?**
- **HOW CAN GOD USE YOU NOW FOR HIS GOOD WORKS? WHERE IS THE HOLY SPIRIT PROMPTING YOU TO JOIN GOD'S KINGDOM WORK THIS WEEK?**

PRAY

**LORD, YOU CREATED ME FOR A PURPOSE. USE ME
FOR YOUR GOOD WORKS. WHEN I DON'T FEEL READY
FOR THE TASK, REMIND ME THAT YOU ARE THE ONE
DOING THE WORK THROUGH ME!**



DAY FOUR

COLOSSIANS 1:9-14

Just as we saw in this week's main lesson, Zacchaeus's faith in Jesus transformed his mind and heart, and as a result, his actions. Likewise, our actions should reflect the transformation Jesus has done in us. Paul urged the Colossian church, and us, to "walk worthy of the Lord" (v. 10). And he tells us what that looks like in the following verses: bear fruit in good works, grow in the knowledge of God, be strengthened in endurance and patience, and give thanks to the Lord. This isn't a complete list, but Paul was encouraging Christ-followers to live their lives in a manner that shows we are citizens of Jesus's kingdom.

What does it practically mean to "walk in a manner worthy of the Lord"? Our actions should match our words. When we "walk worthy," we choose to live our lives in a way that brings honor and glory to God and points others to Jesus. We're kind, loving, joyful, patient, and gentle with others (Gal. 5:22-23). We study God's Word so that we can know Him better. The Bible is God's revelation of Himself and His work in this world. We must know it to know Him. When difficult times come, we persevere and lean into Jesus. He will help us endure and develop patience. And we live a life full of gratitude as children of God. Because of our inheritance in the family of God, we aren't just saved from hell but we are coheirs of God's kingdom (Rom. 8:16-17)!

We were dead, headed to hell, entrapped in darkness, and hopeless, but God, in His great love for us, sent His perfect Son to exchange our punishment for His redemption. Our sins are forgiven and we are now part of the kingdom of Jesus. God's love is the only reason this happened, and in our overwhelming gratitude for our great rescue, we choose to walk in His ways. We choose to live a life worthy of His sacrifice. We choose to live a life that pleases Him.

- **WHAT DOES WALKING WORTHY LOOK LIKE IN YOUR LIFE?**
- **WHAT DAILY HABITS NEED TO CHANGE SO THAT YOU ARE LIVING A LIFE THAT PLEASES THE LORD?**

PRAY

LORD, HELP ME TO LIVE MY LIFE WITH GRATITUDE
FOR ALL YOU HAVE DONE. HELP ME WALK WORTHY
SO THAT I MAY PLEASE YOU.



DAY FIVE

COLOSSIANS 1:15-23

Zacchaeus climbed a tree to “see who Jesus was” (Luke 19:3), and later in the passage, Jesus told everyone exactly who He is—the Son of Man. Today’s passage includes what many call a “Christ Hymn,” which is simply a passage that magnifies Jesus and His work.

How would you answer the question, “Who is Jesus?” Paul wrote that He is the Lord and Redeemer of creation. He is the visible expression of God. He is the Creator—all things were made through Him. While God might be viewed as the architect of creation, Jesus is the foreman. Creation came about through His power and ability. All things were also made for Him, which means creation exists to display His glory. Jesus is the Redeemer of creation. Everything that was once warped by sin will now be touched by His grace—and He is the head of it. Creation had to be reconciled, or pay the penalty for sin, but Jesus paid the penalty instead. And because He did, we are reconciled back to God, back to the relationship that the Lord created us for way back in the garden of Eden.

What Jesus has done for creation through His death on the cross is the only way we could ever have true peace and true fellowship with God. We are now holy, faultless, and blameless before Him! This is the good news of the gospel! Paul dedicated his life to sharing the gospel because of its greatness, and we are called to do the same. We have the benefit of the New Testament writers and their explanations of who Jesus is, but Zacchaeus wanted to see who He was for himself. And with the eyes of his heart, he recognized Jesus as his Lord and Redeemer and chose to trust in Him. For those of us who have done the same, we must dedicate ourselves in service of the gospel, declaring Jesus’s greatness throughout His creation.

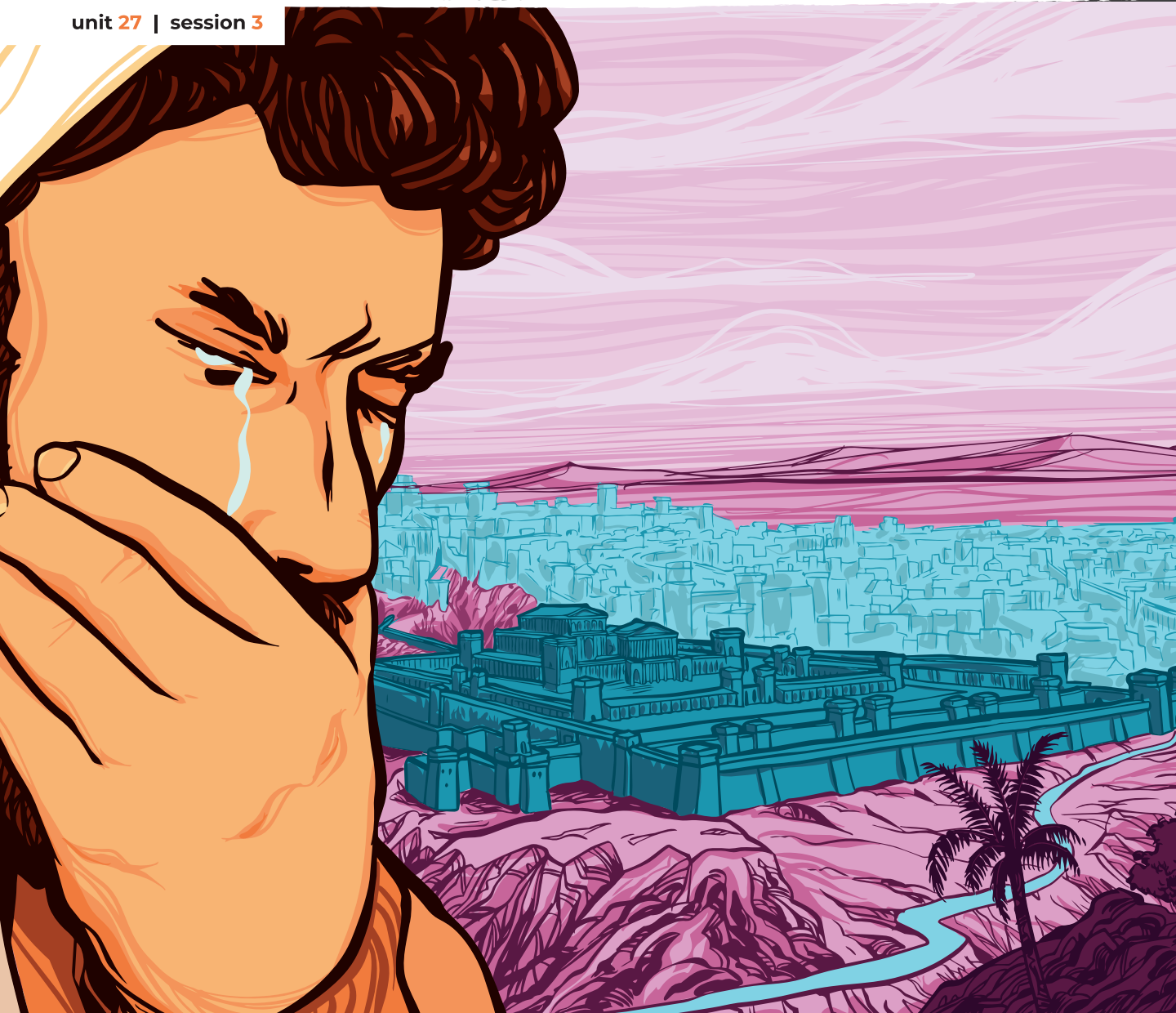
- **FROM THIS PASSAGE, WRITE OUT HOW YOU WOULD DESCRIBE WHO JESUS IS AND WHAT HE DOES.**
- **WHAT DOES A LIFE IN SERVICE TO THE GOSPEL LOOK LIKE PRACTICALLY FOR A TEENAGER?**

PRAY

JESUS, YOU HAVE MADE ME HOLY, BLAMELESS, AND FAULTLESS. YOU HAVE REDEEMED YOUR CREATION FOR YOUR GLORY. TEACH ME TO LIVE AS A SERVANT OF THE GOSPEL.

THE STONES WOULD *CRY OUT*

unit 27 | session 3



CHRIST CONNECTION

When Jesus entered Jerusalem on a donkey, He fulfilled Old Testament prophecies about the coming Messiah and proclaimed He was the One God had promised to send. The people praised Jesus, but they praised Him for the wrong reasons.

KINDNESS OF A KING

This week, we're covering the passages and main points below. But we encourage you to dig in and read all of the content on this timeline.

Luke 19

JESUS IS WORTHY OF WORSHIP

LUKE 19:28-40

28 And when he had said these things, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. 29 When he drew near to Bethphage and Bethany, at the mount that is called Olivet, he sent two of the disciples, 30 saying, "Go into the village in front of you, where on entering you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever yet sat. Untie it and bring it here. 31 If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' you shall say this: 'The Lord has need of it.'" 32 So those who were sent went away and found it just as he had told them. 33 And as they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, "Why are you untying the colt?" 34 And they said, "The Lord has need of it." 35 And they brought it to Jesus, and throwing their cloaks on the colt, they set Jesus on it. 36 And as he rode along, they spread their cloaks on the road. 37 As he was drawing near—already on the way down the Mount of Olives—the whole multitude of his disciples began to rejoice and praise God with a loud voice for all the mighty works that they had seen, 38 saying, "Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord! Peace in heaven and glory in the highest!" 39 And some of the Pharisees in the crowd said to him, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples." 40 He answered, "I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out."

JESUS LONGS FOR US TO KNOW HIM

LUKE 19:41-44

41 And when he drew near and saw the city, he wept over it, 42 saying, "Would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace! But now they are hidden from your eyes. 43 For the days will come upon you, when your enemies will set up a barricade around you and surround you and hem you in on every side 44 and tear you down to the ground, you and your children within you. And they will not leave one stone upon another in you, because you did not know the time of your visitation."

MAIN POINT.

Jesus, our true King,
deserves all of our praise.



THEOLOGY CONNECTION WORSHIP

While many reduce worship to an event or the singing of worship songs, worship is first and foremost something of the heart and extends to all areas of life. The aim and focus of worship are God, giving Him the praise and adoration that He deserves. Worship should be carried out not only at a personal level within a Christian's life but also in joining with other Christians in the corporate act of worship and stewarding our gifts for the glory of God. Corporate worship serves to edify and strengthen other Christians, but it also serves as a witness to non-believers of the greatness of God.

DISCUSSION

JESUS IS WORTHY OF WORSHIP

LUKE 19:28-40

- What is worship, and why is it an important part of our lives?
- What made Jesus worthy of the people's praise? Of our praise?
- Jesus said if those praising Him fell silent, "the stones would cry out" (v. 40). What was He trying to get the Pharisees to understand?

JESUS LONGS FOR US TO KNOW HIM

LUKE 19:41-44

- What can we learn about Jesus from His weeping over Jerusalem? Dig deep: What do you see?
- Why couldn't the Pharisees see who Jesus was? How can we avoid making the same mistake?
- What does it take for people to see Jesus?



HOW CAN YOU KEEP YOUR EYES FIXED ON JESUS AND HIS MISSION, EVEN WHEN DOING SO ISN'T EASY?

CULTURAL CONNECTION

Have you ever thought about what you would do if you knew you only had a little bit of time left to live? We often feel a sense of urgency when we know an end is coming, changing the way we function and think. What would be different? What would stay the same? Would you put your phone down and quit doomscrolling? Who would you spend time with? What conversations would you need to have? The decisions you'd make would say a lot about who you are and what's most important to you. Some of us might spend time with our family and our friends. We might ditch school and work to take a trip somewhere we've always wanted to see. We might eat all of our favorite foods and watch all of our favorite movies. Some of us might have important conversations with people we love, expressing forgiveness or offering an apology. Here's the truth: Our lives here are brief in light of eternity, and living like eternity is close will help us live wisely.



DAY ONE

ZECHARIAH 9:9

When we think about military war heroes or even championship teams, they usually return home to a hero's welcome. A parade greets them at the edge of town to usher them back to a ceremony full of cheering crowds and grateful spectators. Speeches are given, confetti is thrown, flags are waved, and a chorus of praise and adoration is shouted. During biblical times, armies would parade on great war horses as they entered a conquered city. But as we read in this week's main passage, our conquering King paraded into Jerusalem on a humble donkey. Zechariah prophesied about this exact moment hundreds of years before it ever happened.

Why a donkey and not a horse? In the ancient Middle Eastern world, kings rode to war on horses, but they rode on donkeys if they came in peace. For example, Solomon rode on King David's donkey to be anointed as king, following his father's death (1 Kings 1:33-40). Jesus entering Jerusalem was a public declaration that He was the long-awaited King and Messiah. He was the promised One that Israel had been looking for. But what they missed, what they didn't understand, is that Jesus came not as a King of war but as the King of peace. By riding the prophesied donkey, He declared Himself as our peaceful King.

The initial crowd waving palm branches missed that Jesus came to conquer their sin, not Rome. He came to bring reconciliation, not war. He came to call them to salvation that He was about to provide on a cross at Calvary. By His death and resurrection, Jesus was indeed a conquering King as He defeated death and sin, but what the Jews missed was that Rome was not the enemy that needed to be conquered; their sin was. And sin is our great enemy too. Praise God for sending His Son to conquer what we never could!

- **HOW HAS JESUS BROUGHT PEACE TO YOUR LIFE?**
- **HOW HAVE YOUR EXPECTATIONS OF JESUS CHANGED AS YOU'VE GROWN TO KNOW HIM?**

PRAY

**JESUS, YOU ARE MY PEACEFUL KING. THANK YOU
FOR MY SALVATION AND FOR DEFEATING DEATH.
CONTINUE TO TEACH ME ABOUT WHO YOU ARE AS I
GROW IN MY FAITH AND KNOWLEDGE OF YOU.**





DAY TWO

ISAIAH 55:8-9

Have you ever been given instructions that didn't make sense? When Jesus told two disciples to go get a colt for Him to ride into Jerusalem, they probably scratched their heads, checking and rechecking with each other what exactly those instructions were. Because they were odd instructions: "Go into the village in front of you, where on entering you will find a colt tied, on which no one has ever yet sat. Untie it and bring it here. 31 If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' you shall say this: 'The Lord has need of it.'" While it may sound a little like the crime of stealing a car, this colt (or donkey) was meant for just this moment. We don't know all the details that were left out, but the disciples successfully secured the donkey for Jesus's triumphal entry to Jerusalem.

In today's passage, the Lord reminds us that He sees the big picture. While we may not have the details, He has all of them. Our limited minds cannot comprehend all that God does, but we can trust that He works all things for our good and His glory (Rom. 8:28). So how do we do this? How do we trust His guidance even when we don't understand His instructions or His instructions feel difficult? First, we surrender to His lordship. We have faith in Him, even when it's hard. Secondly, we get into His Word. God will never tell us to do something that contradicts His Word. And thirdly, we pray. God wants an intimate, daily relationship with us. He wants to reveal Himself and His ways to us.

When God gives us instructions that we don't understand, we can trust His wisdom. We trust in His unfailing knowledge and in His power and strength. And when God gives us instructions that seem really hard? We obey. We lean into His strength and power. Those disciples probably looked at each other and said, "We're supposed to do what?" Jesus's instructions may not have made sense in the moment, but they obeyed because they trusted their Messiah.

- **HOW DO GOD'S INSTRUCTIONS FEEL HARD, UNPOPULAR, OR EVEN WEIRD ACCORDING TO THE WORLD?**
- **HOW DO WE ALIGN OUR THOUGHTS CLOSER TO GOD'S?**

PRAY

LORD, YOU ARE SO MUCH GREATER THAN MY BRAIN UNDERSTANDS. MAKE MY THOUGHTS MORE LIKE YOURS. TEACH ME TO TRUST YOUR INSTRUCTIONS.



DAY THREE

PSALM 24:7-10

What's your walk-up song? If you play baseball or softball, you may already have one. If you don't, what would you choose? Walk-up songs started in professional baseball in the 1970s and are now a staple in almost every league of baseball and softball. They announce a player and get the crowd energized. Some players use them to intimidate their opponents. Some use them to get focused on the task ahead. In many ways, today's psalm is a bit like a walk-up song.

David's psalm is believed to be written about the Ark of the Covenant's return to Jerusalem from battle (2 Sam. 6; 1 Chron. 13). The song, or hymn, enthusiastically announced the return of the King. The lyrics tell the sanctuary to "open up" for the King's arrival. And who is this King? Yahweh, the King of glory who is a mighty warrior, entering the sanctuary!

In this week's main session, Jesus entered Jerusalem on His way to the cross. This hymn could have been Jesus's walk-up song as He entered the city. Riding on a donkey, fulfilling prophecy, being worshiped by His disciples—the energy was definitely there. While Jesus wasn't about to go to bat, He was about to enter the final days of His ministry on earth. The spiritual battle that was about to take place would be the ultimate fight over sin and death—and Jesus would come out on top. King Jesus, the mighty yet humble warrior King, was entering the sanctuary. He battled for us at the cross, taking on all of our sin, and when He died and resurrected three days later, death was defeated.

- **HOW DOES THIS PSALM SHAPE HOW YOU READ LUKE 19:28-44?**
- **WHAT EMOTIONS DOES THE DESCRIPTION OF GOD AS A MIGHTY WARRIOR STIR UP IN YOU? HOW DOES KNOWING JESUS BATTLED AND DEFEATED DEATH FOR YOU IMPACT HOW YOU UNDERSTAND YOUR SALVATION?**

PRAY

**JESUS, YOU ARE A MIGHTY YET HUMBLE WARRIOR.
THANK YOU FOR DEFEATING SIN AND DEATH SO
THAT I CAN BE WITH YOU FOREVER.**



DAY FOUR

2 PETER 3:9

We read this week, after Jesus's triumphal entry, about a moment where Jesus wept for Jerusalem. He grieved for the fate of Jerusalem and the people of Israel. He knew that the destruction of Jerusalem was near (AD 70). Pain. Ruin. War. It was all coming to these people because they rejected the Messiah who walked among them. Israel failed to submit to God's rule, and the consequences—God's judgment—were devastating. And in His goodness and compassion with the knowledge of what was to come, Jesus wept for them.

God's heart for us is freedom and salvation, not judgment. He longs for us to turn to Him. We see in today's passage that Jesus's compassion and love for us is what delays His return. He's coming back as He said, but He wants everyone to have the chance to repent and turn to Him. He loves us so much that He came to earth, died, and resurrected so that no one would perish (John 3:16). Our culture often paints God as a cold and unreasonable judge who looks for any opportunity to punish sinners. And while God is the God of justice, He is also the God of compassion, love, peace, goodness, kindness, and so much more. While we were still sinners, Christ died for us (Rom. 5:8). He took our place and the punishment that we deserved on Himself. That's a love far bigger and better than anything we can comprehend.

We too should have compassion and love for the lost. Our hearts should break for those who don't know Jesus, who aren't in a saving relationship with Him, because if they reject Him, they will also perish. And we show love to the lost by sharing His gospel with them. How can you do this today?

- **ARE YOU SURPRISED BY JESUS'S EMOTION FOR JERUSALEM? WHY OR WHY NOT?**
- **WHO DO YOU NEED TO SHARE THE GOSPEL WITH? HOW IS SHARING THE GOSPEL AN ACT OF LOVE?**

PRAY

JESUS, I AM SO GRATEFUL FOR THE LOVE YOU'VE SHOWN ME. GIVE ME COURAGE AND BOLDNESS TO LOVE THE LOST ENOUGH TO SHARE YOUR GOSPEL WITH THEM.





DAY FIVE

ISAIAH 55:1-7

Status, relationships, accomplishments, wealth—these are just some of the things the world tells us will bring us joy, contentment, inner peace, and purpose. But do they really? They may provide temporary satisfaction, but they will never satisfy us permanently. The only true peace—satisfaction—is found in Jesus.

In today's passage in Isaiah, God called out to the thirsty and hungry who have no money and offered to quench their thirst and provide "rich food" without cost to them. This Scripture is a picture of Jesus's invitation to us. He offers water, a symbol of life; wine, a metaphor for joy and celebration; and milk, representing nourishment—all the things our souls truly desire. Jesus extended an invitation for us to come and feast. We will only ever find true peace, complete satisfaction, lasting contentment, and genuine purpose in Him.

Verses 6-7 remind us that this invitation will not last forever. We do not have all the time in the world, and if you've experienced the death of someone you love, you know the truth of this. We must turn to Jesus today! In our main lesson for the week, Jesus grieved for Jerusalem and the people of Israel. They didn't know it, but they were about to run out of time. God's judgment, which destroyed the city, the temple, and so many people, was drawing near. Let us not make the same mistake by rejecting Jesus's invitation. He invites us to seek Him, and in Him alone will we find what our souls thirst and hunger for!

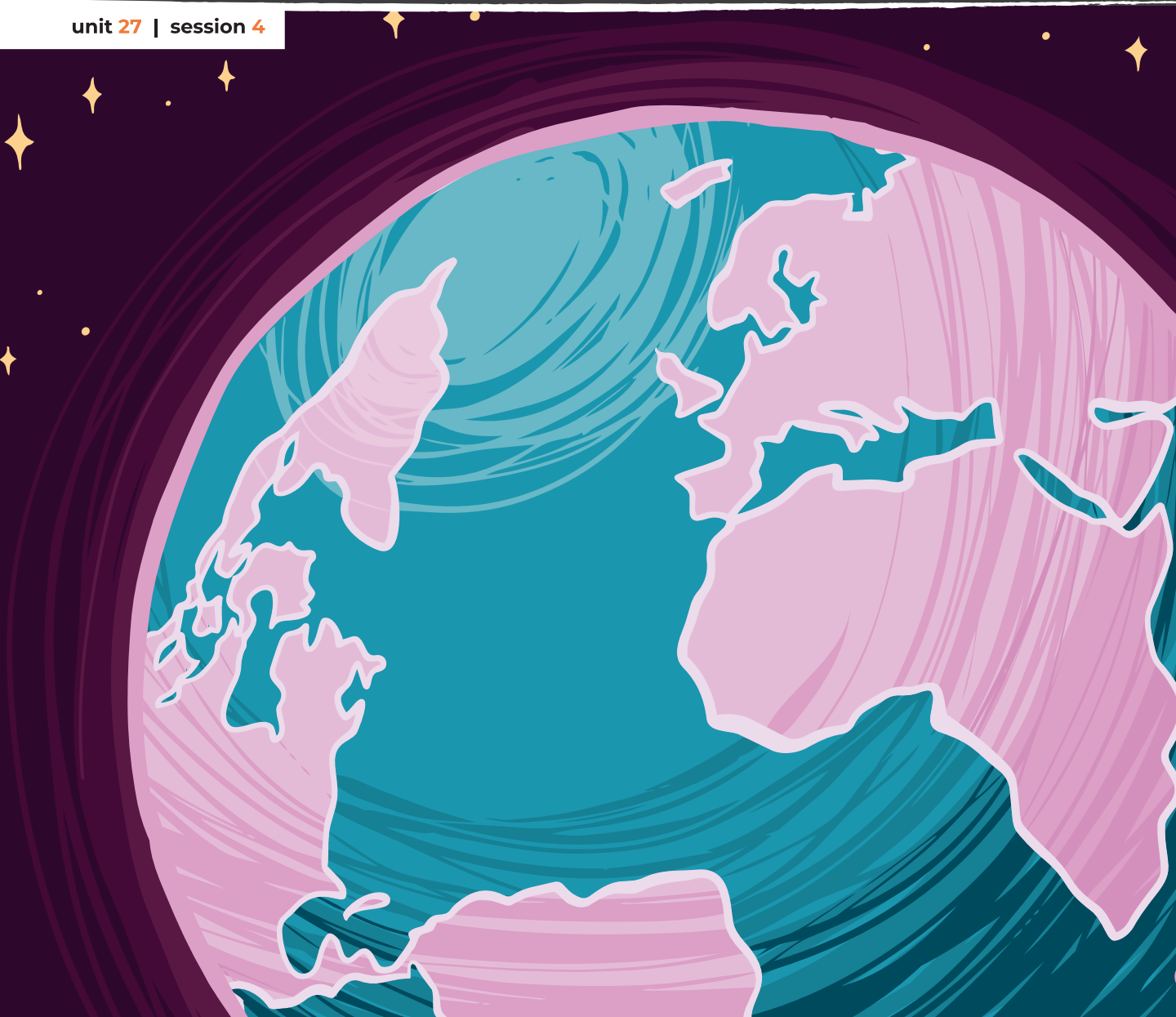
- **WHAT HAVE YOU TRIED TO FIND PEACE AND CONTENTMENT IN OTHER THAN JESUS? HOW DID THAT WORK FOR YOU?**
- **HOW DOES THE WARNING IN VERSES 6-7 ENCOURAGE YOU TO SHARE THE GOSPEL WITH THE LOST?**

PRAY

**JESUS, I WILL ONLY FIND WHAT I AM LOOKING FOR
IN YOU. THANK YOU FOR THE INVITATION TO COME
AND FEAST WITH YOU.**

THE TIME *IS COMING*

unit 27 | session 4



CHRIST CONNECTION

Jesus promised that one day He will return and fully establish God's kingdom. Until that day, Jesus instructed His followers to make the most of their time, living as His ambassadors and telling others how to be part of the coming kingdom.

IN EXPECTATION

This week, we're covering the passages and main points below. But we encourage you to dig in and read all of the content on this timeline.

Mark 13

WE CAN EXPECT PERSECUTION

MARK 13:5-13

5 And Jesus began to say to them, "See that no one leads you astray. 6 Many will come in my name, saying, 'I am he!' and they will lead many astray. 7 And when you hear of wars and rumors of wars, do not be alarmed. This must take place, but the end is not yet. 8 For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places; there will be famines. These are but the beginning of the birth pains. 9 "But be on your guard. For they will deliver you over to councils, and you will be beaten in synagogues, and you will stand before governors and kings for my sake, to bear witness before them. 10 And the gospel must first be proclaimed to all nations. 11 And when they bring you to trial and deliver you over, do not be anxious beforehand what you are to say, but say whatever is given you in that hour, for it is not you who speak, but the Holy Spirit. 12 And brother will deliver brother over to death, and the father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death. 13 And you will be hated by all for my name's sake. But the one who endures to the end will be saved.

WE CAN EXPECT JESUS'S RETURN

MARK 13:21-27,32-33

21 "And then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'Look, there he is!' do not believe it. 22 For false christs and false prophets will arise and perform signs and wonders, to lead astray, if possible, the elect. 23 But be on guard; I have told you all things beforehand. 24 "But in those days, after that tribulation, the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, 25 and the stars will be falling from heaven, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. 26 And then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. 27 And then he will send out the angels and gather his elect from the four winds, from the ends of the earth to the ends of heaven. . . . 32 But concerning that day or that hour, no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. 33 Be on guard, keep awake. For you do not know when the time will come.

MAIN POINT.

We must be rooted in God's Word and ready for Jesus's return.



THEOLOGY CONNECTION

LAST THINGS

God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end. According to His promise, Jesus will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth; the dead will be raised; and Jesus will judge all people in righteousness. The unrighteous will be condemned to hell, the place of everlasting punishment. The righteous in their resurrected and glorified bodies will receive their reward and will dwell forever with the Lord.

DISCUSSION

WE CAN EXPECT PERSECUTION

MARK 13:5-13

- ♥ • How can you tell if what someone teaches about Jesus is true? What should you do if it isn't?
- What does persecution look like for Christians today?
- Why does Jesus say it's "necessary that the gospel be preached to all nations" (v. 10)? What is our role in this command?

WE CAN EXPECT JESUS'S RETURN

MARK 13:21-27,32-33

- 📖 • Should we be afraid of Jesus's return? Explain.
- 🧠 • How should we respond if someone claims to know the exact time when Jesus will return?
- ✝ • What would it look like for you to "watch!" and to live "alert!" (v. 33)?



HOW CAN YOU PRACTICALLY LIVE OUT YOUR FAITH IN JESUS WITH ETERNITY IN MIND? WHO IN YOUR LIFE NEEDS TO KNOW ABOUT JESUS?

CULTURAL CONNECTION

Has someone ever lied about you? Not only is being lied about hurtful, but it's hard to recover from and can damage our reputation beyond repair. Many people lied about Jesus and His ministry and they still do today. As Christians, we should expect persecution, but that's hard to wrap our minds around in today's culture. Jesus prepared His disciples for rumors, persecution, difficulty, challenges, and pain. He never promised that we would live easy, peaceful lives, but He has given us reason to believe and trust in His goodness and faithfulness, no matter the circumstance. If you've been lied about, mistreated, misquoted, or anything else along those lines, you're not alone. Jesus experienced all of those things and never wavered as an example for us today. You may not expect certain struggles, but Jesus will be with you through them all. Instead of asking, "Why me?" ask, "How can God use this?" to shift your perspective.

DAY ONE

2 TIMOTHY 4:2

What time of the day are you most alert? Do you do your best thinking in the morning or late at night? In this week's main lesson, Jesus offered His disciples a good bit of advice and warnings about events that were to come: false prophets, persecution, and the end of the age. Jesus's advice was: Be ready! Be alert! Pay attention!

This week, we'll read Paul's second letter to Timothy, which is full of advice and encouragement. Paul's message is similar to the one Jesus gave His disciples: Be ready! Be alert! Pay attention! In today's passage, Paul told Timothy (and us) to "preach the word," meaning simply to communicate the truth of God's Word. Does this mean that we have to shout in the cafeteria or preach to crowds of people? No. It means that we each have the responsibility to speak God's truth and to share the gospel. When? "In season and out of season" means always—not just at church, at camp, or on our good days, but in all seasons. We never know when God will give us an opportunity to share the truth of God's Word, but we can always be prepared. Maybe you'll be asked to share about your faith in youth group. Maybe a friend will ask you why you read your Bible. Maybe you'll have the opportunity to pray with someone who is hurting. Maybe that family member you've been praying for is finally ready to hear the gospel. Will you be ready at any time? Paul told Timothy to "reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching." Only a few verses earlier, Paul explained that this is exactly what Scripture does (2 Tim. 3:16). God's Word corrects, rebukes, and encourages us. Scripture and the Holy Spirit do the work, but we communicate the Word patiently, teaching and helping where we can. So, we must be ready to do exactly that. How? By growing in your knowledge and understanding of God's Word and always being ready to share God's truth.

- **HOW HAS SCRIPTURE CORRECTED, REBUKED, OR ENCOURAGED YOU IN YOUR OWN FAITH?**
- **ARE YOU READY TO "PREACH THE WORD" IF AN OPPORTUNITY COMES TODAY? WHAT DO YOU NEED TO DO TO GET READY?**

PRAY

JESUS, WHEN THE TIME COMES TO "PREACH THE WORD," HELP ME TO BE READY. GIVE ME THE WORDS TO SAY AND THE COURAGE TO SAY THEM.



DAY TWO

2 TIMOTHY 4:3-4

“God helps those who help themselves.” “Everything happens for a reason.” “Cleanliness is next to godliness.” “God wants you to be happy.” “God won’t give you more than you can handle.” “Follow your heart.” “Live your truth.” “All roads lead to heaven.”

You’ve probably heard at last some of these phrases and maybe even said them yourself, but are they true? Or are they just phrases we repeat? In today’s passage, Paul wrote that a time is coming—and really is already here—when people won’t listen to sound doctrine, accurate biblical teaching. Instead, people will listen only to whatever they want to believe rather than the actual truth. Does this sound like our culture?

Reread those quotes. They all sound good, right? But if we know God’s Word, we know that none of these popular phrases are accurate. They’re popular because they are what people want to hear. These myths (and so many others like them) make us feel better about our sin rather than convicting us. They put our selfish desires over real need. They allow feelings to dictate our actions over sound truth. They paint Jesus as an accepting Friend only rather than a Savior, God as an equal rather than the Creator, the Holy Spirit as emotional support and justification rather than the Counselor and Truth-Teller. When we listen to myths like these over biblical truth, we ignore the seriousness of sin, the holiness of God, and our neediness for redemption. So, how do we keep from being deceived? How do we know what is truth and what is a lie? We must commit to knowing God’s Word, not simply reading it. We must spend enough time with the Lord and in His Word to meditate on who He is.

- **WHAT OTHER MYTHS HAVE YOU NOTICED PEOPLE, EVEN BELIEVERS, ACCEPT AS TRUTH?**
- **HOW CAN YOU PRACTICALLY TAKE STEPS TO KNOW GOD’S WORD SO THAT YOU CAN KNOW WHAT IS TRUE?**

PRAY

LORD, YOUR TRUTH IS LIFE-GIVING. WHEN I’M
TEMPTED TO BELIEVE THE LIES OF THIS WORLD,
REMIND ME OF YOUR TRUTH.



DAY THREE

2 TIMOTHY 4:5

Paul's letter to Timothy continues today with four pieces of advice that are really helpful for us. First, Paul said to "be sober-minded." When we face opposition or discouragement, we are to practice keeping a clear head. The idea is to be levelheaded, not hot-tempered. We must remain steady and stable, focused on the task of representing Jesus.

Paul also told Timothy to "endure suffering." Listen, Satan won't let the lost go quietly; he won't surrender without a fight. Making disciples is hard work and we will run into difficult times. Quitting is easy when living the way God calls us to live is costly. We easily think, "This is too hard. It must not be from God," but Jesus told us to expect difficulty as His followers (Mark 13:13). Paul also advised Timothy to "do the work of an evangelist." Paul simply means that we must be faithful in sharing the gospel with the lost. Evangelism—sharing the gospel—is work, but it is rewarding! Whether we share the gospel one-on-one or to a group, we are called to reach unbelievers with the good news of Jesus. Finally, Paul said to "fulfill your ministry." In other words, he encouraged Timothy to keep going, to finish. And he says the same to us. The Christian life isn't always easy, especially when we get outside the walls of our churches. But we're called to endure, to keep going, to be faithful. But we can't do this in our own strength. We depend on the Lord's power and strength. You may or may not be called to be a professional pastor or minister, but every Christian is an ambassador for Christ (2 Cor. 5:20). We each have a mission—to make disciples (Matt. 28:19-20). Even as a teenager, you are a disciple-maker, and God has called you to share the gospel in your ministry setting, whether that is your school, church, team, job.

- **WHEN LIFE IS TOUGH, HOW DO YOU USUALLY RESPOND? HOW CAN YOU SEE HARDSHIP WITH "SPIRITUAL EYES"?**
- **WHAT'S YOUR MINISTRY? WHO ARE YOU SUPPOSED TO BE REACHING WITH THE GOSPEL? HOW DO YOU NEED TO BE MORE INTENTIONAL IN YOUR MINISTRY SETTING?**

PRAY

JESUS, HELP ME FULFILL THE MISSION YOU HAVE GIVEN ME. HELP ME BE MORE SENSITIVE TO THE SPIRITUAL WORK AROUND ME.



DAY FOUR

2 TIMOTHY 4:6-8

Imprisoned in Rome, Paul knew the end of his life was near. Paul said, “For I am already being poured out as a drink offering.” In the Old Testament, the drink offering was the final part of the sacrificial process. After the sacrifice was placed on the altar, the drink offering—usually wine—was poured over it. In Romans 12:1, Paul urged believers to present their bodies as living sacrifices, and Paul certainly did. Paul explained to Timothy that he had given his life to the cause of Christ and was in the final stage of his sacrifice to the Lord. The end was close.

But Paul wasn’t worried. He looked forward to receiving “the crown of righteousness” from the Lord. He was confident in the salvation that awaited him. Reflecting on his life and ministry, Paul said, “I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith.” At the end of his life, Paul could confidently say that he worked and sacrificed in a way that not only was he proud of but he used every ounce of energy for the Lord. He held nothing back.

Can we say the same? When we come face to face with Jesus, when this life is done, can we confidently say that we poured out every bit of strength for Him? Will the people we leave behind be confident that we are in heaven? Do they desire to be where we are because of how we lived? The world constantly tells us to live for ourselves, to do what feels good now, to live in the moment. But as believers, we don’t live for ourselves. We live for Jesus, His kingdom, and His mission. The worldly things we might try to live for will fade away. They’ll change with trends. They’ll dissolve into distant memory. But our eternal life with the Lord will never fade. When you get to the end of your life, do you want to say, “I lived my best life for me,” or “I lived sacrificially, giving all my effort for His kingdom. I’m ready for my faith to be sight”? Paul was ready to go home, knowing he gave everything he had to the Lord. Will you one day say the same?

- **HOW DO YOU WANT TO BE REMEMBERED?**
- **HOW CAN YOU LIVE YOUR LIFE SACRIFICIALLY? IN WHAT WAYS ARE YOU HOLDING BACK?**

PRAY

JESUS, AT THE END OF MY LIFE, I
WANT TO SAY THAT I’VE EXHAUSTED
EVERY OUNCE OF MY BEING FOR
YOU. SHOW ME HOW TO LIVE MY
BEST LIFE FOR YOU AND YOU ALONE.





DAY FIVE

1 THESSALONIANS 5:1-11

In today's passage, Paul was answering the Thessalonians' question about Jesus's return. But honestly, they had been given all the information that was available. We have too. Jesus told His disciples that only the Father knows when He will return (Mark 13:32). Talking about "end times" can feel scary. The imagery we're given in Daniel, Revelation, and other books sounds like it came straight from a scary movie. For those who don't put their faith in Jesus, the end will be terrifying. But for those who believe, the end is really the beginning.

As believers, the idea of scary "end times" isn't our future. The Day of the Lord is all good news for us! It's like watching a ball game that you recorded and already found out the score. The tension and fear of who wins just isn't there. It's still interesting to see how the winner will win, but we don't experience the anxiety and stress of those who watched the game live. Here's the good news: We know who wins in the end!

We're all curious people, aren't we? We want to know the exact date and time, so we'll be ready for that moment. But what Paul was saying is that we don't have to worry about that. We should live as if Jesus is returning any moment. So how do we do that? We live with purpose. We share the gospel so our friends and family won't be in the darkness. We rest in the fact that we have salvation, so we don't have to worry about what's to come. We protect our hearts and our minds from false teaching, from people or things trying to distract our hearts and minds away from Jesus and His mission. And we encourage our brothers and sisters in Christ. Team Jesus wins, and since we're on His team, we do too.

- **WHAT ARE SOME OF YOUR WORRIES OR CONCERNS ABOUT JESUS'S RETURN?**
- **WHY SHOULD WE LIVE AS IF JESUS WILL RETURN ANY MOMENT? WHAT NEEDS TO CHANGE SO THAT YOU LIVE IN THIS WAY?**

PRAY

JESUS, I'M SO GRATEFUL THAT I DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT THE JUDGMENT THAT COMES AFTER YOUR RETURN. I'M SO GRATEFUL FOR MY SALVATION IN YOU. HELP ME WALK IN THE LIGHT WITH YOU.

SURELY *NOT* I?

unit 27 | session 5



CHRIST CONNECTION

Jesus's teachings about eating His flesh and drinking His blood weren't literal, so they were difficult to understand. Many turned away from Jesus because of these words, but it is in them that we find eternal life made known to us in Jesus's death and resurrection.

BREAD AND BETRAYAL

This week, we're covering the passages and main points below. But we encourage you to dig in and read all of the content on this timeline.

Mark 14

JESUS ENDURED BETRAYAL

MARK 14:17-21

17 And when it was evening, he came with the twelve. 18 And as they were reclining at table and eating, Jesus said, "Truly, I say to you, one of you will betray me, one who is eating with me." 19 They began to be sorrowful and to say to him one after another, "Is it I?" 20 He said to them, "It is one of the twelve, one who is dipping bread into the dish with me. 21 For the Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that man if he had not been born."

JESUS KNEW THE COST

MARK 14:22-31

22 And as they were eating, he took bread, and after blessing it broke it and gave it to them, and said, "Take; this is my body." 23 And he took a cup, and when he had given thanks he gave it to them, and they all drank of it. 24 And he said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. 25 Truly, I say to you, I will not drink again of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God." 26 And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. 27 And Jesus said to them, "You will all fall away, for it is written, 'I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.' 28 But after I am raised up, I will go before you to Galilee." 29 Peter said to him, "Even though they all fall away, I will not." 30 And Jesus said to him, "Truly, I tell you, this very night, before the rooster crows twice, you will deny me three times." 31 But he said emphatically, "If I must die with you, I will not deny you." And they all said the same.

MAIN POINT.

Jesus endured betrayal for our salvation.



THEOLOGY CONNECTION

GOD'S PURPOSE OF GRACE

All true believers endure to the end. Those God has accepted because of Jesus and sanctified by His Spirit will never fall away from the state of grace but will persevere to the end. Believers may fall into sin through neglect and temptation, grieving the Spirit, impairing their graces and comforts, and bringing shame on the cause of Christ and temporary judgments on themselves, yet they will be kept by the power of God through faith for salvation.

DISCUSSION

JESUS ENDURED BETRAYAL

MARK 14:17-21

- How could Jesus casually bring up someone betraying Him?
- How did the disciples respond to what Jesus shared?
-  • Read John 13:1-5. If Jesus knew He would be betrayed by Judas, why did He still let Judas be so close to Him and do ministry with Him?

JESUS KNEW THE COST

MARK 14:22-31

-  • What did Jesus mean by saying we're supposed to eat His body and drink His blood?
-  • Why was Jesus committed to sacrificing Himself?
-  • How can the way we live deny that we know Jesus? What can we do when we fall?



WHO DO YOU HAVE IN PLACE TO HOLD YOU ACCOUNTABLE SO THAT YOU ARE GUARDED FROM FALLING AWAY OR DENYING JESUS?

CULTURAL CONNECTION

Let's talk about trust. Can you really be trusted? If you made a list of the most important qualities you want in a friend, trust is probably on your list. Finding friends who are trustworthy is crucial in a culture where betrayal can happen on social media in an instant, but we must be trustworthy too—especially if we claim to love Jesus. If you've ever had a friend or family member betray your trust, you know how much it hurts. The sting of betrayal lasts a long time and isn't repaired easily—sometimes, not at all. How you handle betrayal says a lot about who you are and what you believe. If you run to the nearest person who will listen to gossip and complain, then you're reacting more like the world. Jesus showed us a better way. The amazing truth is that God will never betray you; He is perfectly trustworthy. We learn from Him what trust looks like! Though we may have great friends, Jesus is our greatest Friend. The more you depend on Him, the more you realize He is the only One capable of never letting you down.



DAY ONE

JOHN 14:1-11

In school, it feels like everything has a barrier to entry. Want to be in the Honors Society? You need the GPA. Want to play varsity? You need the skill. Want to sit at “that” table? You need the right clothes, the right personality, or the right last name. These groups are exclusive because they are designed to keep people out based on qualifications. If you don’t check the boxes, you don’t get in.

Christianity is also exclusive but for a completely different reason. It’s not exclusive because of who gets in—it’s exclusive because of how we get in. In John 14, the disciples were spiraling. Jesus was talking about leaving, and they were confused and anxious. Thomas, being the honest one in the group, basically said, “Lord, we have no idea where you’re going, so how can we know the way?” Jesus’s response changed everything: “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” Here is the shift: Most exclusive clubs invite a select few but offer many ways to fail. Jesus invites everyone (John 7:37) but offers only one way to succeed. He is the Way, the path itself. He is the Truth, the ultimate reality. And He is the Life, the source of meaningful, full life we are all searching for.

When Philip asked Jesus to “show us the Father,” Jesus said: “I am in the Father and the Father is in me.” By using the phrase “I Am,” Jesus used the ancient, holy name of God (Yahweh) that was revealed to Moses. He was telling the disciples—and us—that He isn’t just a good teacher or a life coach. He is God in the flesh. He has the authority to promise us a place in heaven because it’s His throne room. You don’t have to be wealthy, good enough, or from the right family to belong to God. The invitation is open to all, but the entrance is singular. We don’t get to the Father by being a better version of ourselves; we get to Him by trusting the One who is the Way.

- **HOW DOES IT FEEL TO KNOW GOD’S REQUIREMENT ISN’T BASED ON YOUR PERFORMANCE, GPA, OR POPULARITY?**
- **JESUS SAYS HE IS *THE* WAY, NOT JUST A WAY. WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE, AND WHY IS IT SO IMPORTANT?**

PRAY

JESUS, YOU ARE THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE. THANK YOU FOR MAKING A PATHWAY TO ETERNAL LIFE WITH YOU. HELP ME WALK WORTHY OF YOUR GIFT OF SALVATION.





DAY TWO

JOHN 14:15-26

Jesus was preparing His disciples for His departure, but He promised they wouldn't be alone. He was sending help. Why? Because He loved them. And those who love Him show it by keeping His commands. We don't obey Jesus to get His love; we already have it. We obey Jesus to show Him that we love Him in return.

You might want to be obedient, but you ask, "How will I know if I'm being obedient or disobedient?" Two things help you obey: (1) Knowing God's Word. If you know it, you'll know when you stray from it. (2) Seeking His help—the Helper, actually! Jesus promised that when He left the disciples, He would send the Holy Spirit as a Counselor. He will teach and remind His followers of His commands.

The Holy Spirit fills a lot of roles: Counselor, Helper, Comforter, Advocate, Spirit of Truth, Spirit of God, and more. The Greek word here is *paraclete*, which means to come alongside. Jesus was sending the disciples (and us) someone to walk alongside them, just as He had, to continue to teach them and remind them of what Jesus had already taught them. He does this for us too. If you are a follower of Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit doesn't just walk alongside you, but He lives in you and works daily to teach and remind you of Jesus's commands.

If you don't recognize the Spirit's work in your life, you may want to take a step back and ask yourself some honest questions: Have I truly made Jesus the Lord of my life? Have I surrendered to His will for me? Am I listening? Am I ignoring the teaching and leading of the Holy Spirit? The Holy Spirit's job is to come alongside us in our sanctification—a lifelong process where we grow more and more like Jesus. He teaches us and reminds us of the commands we've been given. In return, we listen and follow the commands. Why? Because obedience is the evidence of a faith-filled love for Jesus. If we love Him, we obey Him.

- **WHEN HAVE YOU SENSED THE HOLY SPIRIT WORKING IN YOUR LIFE?**
- **HOW CAN YOUR OBEDIENCE BE EVIDENCE OF YOUR LOVE FOR JESUS?**

PRAY

JESUS, THANK YOU FOR SENDING ME THE HOLY SPIRIT, WHO WORKS IN MY LIFE, DAILY TEACHING ME TO BE MORE LIKE YOU. HELP ME GROW AND LEARN FROM HIM ALWAYS.



DAY THREE

JOHN 15:9-17

In our world, most “love” is conditional—based on how you look, how you perform, or what you can do for someone else. But in John 15:9-17, Jesus described a kind of love that is completely different. It doesn’t start with you; it starts with the Father, flows through Jesus, and ends up in your heart.

Jesus started by saying, “Abide in my love.” To remain means to make your home there, to stay, to abide. Imagine your phone—it only works if it’s charged. If left unplugged, it eventually dies. Staying connected to Jesus through prayer, His Word, and worship is how we stay “charged” with His love. We don’t have to manufacture kindness or patience on our own; we just have to stay plugged into the Source.

This is one of the most mind-blowing shifts in the Bible. Jesus told His disciples—and us—that He no longer called them servants, but friends. Servants just do what they’re told without knowing the “why.” A friend is brought into the inner circle. Jesus has shared His heart, His mission, and His life with you. You are a personal friend of the Creator of the universe.

Jesus gives a specific instruction: “Love one another as I have loved you.” How did He love us? Sacrificially. He laid down His life. As Jesus’s friend, you might not die on a cross, but it might mean laying down your pride to apologize first, laying down your time to help a struggling friend, or laying down your reputation to stand up for someone being bullied.

- **HOW CAN YOU REMAIN IN JESUS THIS WEEK? WHAT CAN YOU DO TO STAY “PLUGGED IN” TO THE SOURCE?**
- **WHAT IS ONE THING YOU CAN LAY DOWN THIS WEEK (LIKE YOUR PHONE, YOUR TIME, OR YOUR EGO) TO SHOW SOMEONE THE LOVE OF CHRIST?**

PRAY

**JESUS, HELP ME TO REMAIN IN YOU, TO STAY
PLUGGED IN TO YOU. I WANT TO LOVE OTHERS IN A
WAY THAT BRINGS YOU GLORY AND HONOR—IN THE
WAY THAT YOU LOVE ME.**



DAY FOUR

MARK 14:32-42

We often see Jesus as the calm, collected hero who has every answer. But in today's passage, we see a side of Him that is raw, overwhelmed, and deeply relatable. In the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus told His friends that He was "very sorrowful, even to death." Jesus didn't just say a polite, one-sentence prayer and move on. He fell to the ground and begged God for another way. Mark wrote that He went back three separate times to ask God for another way. He used the word *Abba*—an intimate, childlike term for "Daddy"—while asking for the "cup" of suffering to be taken away. Don't miss this: Jesus begged for another way.

If you've ever prayed the same prayer over and over, crying until you ran out of words, Jesus has been there. He understands the desperation of wanting a different outcome. God can handle your honesty. You don't have to "clean up" your prayers or pretend you're okay with a hard situation. Repetition isn't a lack of faith. Jesus asked three times. You can keep knocking on heaven's door when your heart is heavy.

The most powerful part of Jesus's prayer is the pivot: "Yet not what I will, but what you will." Even in His agony, Jesus trusted that the Father's plan was bigger than His temporary pain. God's will was for the Son to suffer, and Jesus surrendered obediently to His will.

Following Jesus doesn't mean we always get what we ask for. It means we have a Savior who knows exactly how it feels to hurt, who advocates for us when we're desperate, and who gives us the strength to trust God's will—even when it differs from our own desires.

- **WHEN HAVE YOU CALLED OUT TO GOD WITH A "VERY SORROWFUL" HEART?**
- **HOW DOES TODAY'S PASSAGE BRING YOU COMFORT IN DIFFICULT MOMENTS?**

PRAY

**JESUS, YOU GET IT. YOU KNOW THE PAIN I'VE FELT,
BUT I CHOOSE TO TRUST YOUR WILL. I CHOOSE
TO TRUST THAT YOUR PLAN IS BIGGER THAN MY
TEMPORARY PAIN.**



DAY FIVE

MARK 14:43-50

Life is full of “ride or die” friendships—until things actually get messy. We all like to think we’d be the one friend who stays when everyone else runs, but today’s passage gives us a brutal reality check on loyalty. Jesus was in the garden, physically and emotionally exhausted, when Judas showed up with a literal mob. Imagine the scene: torches flickering, swords drawn, and the tension at a breaking point. Then comes the “signal.” Judas uses a kiss—the ultimate sign of affection and deep friendship—to identify Jesus for arrest. It’s the ultimate “fake friend” move. Judas wasn’t just a bystander; he was an insider using his intimacy with Jesus as a weapon. In the panic, one of the disciples swings a sword, cutting off an ear. It’s a gut-reaction move: fight. But Jesus shut it down immediately. He pointed out the irony: They had come after Him like He was a dangerous criminal, yet He sat teaching in the temple every day in plain sight.

Jesus wasn’t surprised. He knew this wasn’t an accident or a lapse in security; it was the fulfillment of Scripture. He stayed in total control, even as He surrendered His freedom. Then comes the most horrific moment in the passage: “And they all left him and fled.” Just hours earlier, these guys promised they would die for Jesus. But when the swords came out and the “VIP” status of being a disciple turned into a “Most Wanted” status, they checked out. They chose safety over Savior.

We often judge the disciples, but we do the same thing. We’re “with” Jesus when it’s cool, when the worship music is loud, or when life is easy. But what happens when following Him makes us look “weird” or costs us a social connection? Jesus knew He would walk the road to the cross alone. He could have stopped it all, but He didn’t because the cost was worth it to Him. Our eternal lives were worth it to Him.

- **WHY DO YOU THINK IT’S EASIER TO FIGHT (LIKE THE DISCIPLE) THAN TO TRUST (LIKE JESUS)?**
- **THE DISCIPLES RAN BECAUSE THEY WERE AFRAID. HOW HAS FEAR MADE YOU WANT TO “FLEE” FROM YOUR FAITH?**

PRAY

LORD, FORGIVE ME WHEN MY LOYALTY TO YOU IS WEAK. THANK YOU FOR BEING MORE FAITHFUL TO ME THAN I COULD EVER BE TO YOU.



PUBLISHING TEAM LEAD

ALECIA BRYANT

Once you see something spectacular, you can't unsee it. Once your eyes take in the details of a mountain or a sunrise, you will still see those details even when your eyes close. Why? What you see becomes a part of you, altering your mind forever. Before we see Jesus, we're spiritually blind. We don't realize our need for God, for healing, for forgiveness. But once God opens our eyes—once we see Jesus and call on Him to save us—we're never the same. We may run in disobedience, but we can never return to the state of blindness He found us in. We've seen truth, and no matter how far we run or how far we fall, we can't unsee it. Really, it's amazing. In the same way that Jesus miraculously opened the eyes of the blind, the Holy Spirit opens our eyes. And what we see should astound us—the beauty of God's gift of salvation, the details of His love, the reality of Jesus's sacrifice. Let your eyes take it in, every bit. Let what you see change you forever. You were blind, and now you see!

Alecia Bryant



THE WRITERS

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(Unit 25)

Brandon Dirmann is a local church pastor who has spent the last 17 years walking alongside kids and youth. He's passionate about helping young people discover who Jesus is and grow in a real and life changing relationship with Him. Brandon loves equipping the next generation to live out their faith with confidence and purpose.

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Payton Malone lives in central Louisiana with her husband, Gannon, their son, James William, and their golden retriever, Honey Mae. She serves as the Girls Student Ministry Associate at her local church, where she encourages teen girls to live devoted to Jesus and helps equip leaders to disciple them. She is passionate about seeing students come to know Christ and make an impact for the gospel in their communities.

ANGELA REED

(Unit 27)

Between wrangling her two girls and supporting her pastor husband, Angela Reed can usually be found defending the Oxford comma or happily lost in a literary world. This punctuation pundit and devoted bibliophile's passion for words began as a teenager, when she felt called to write and edit Bible studies to help others truly know and value God's Word. She earned an MDiv from New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary, and she and her family live and serve in Booneville, MS.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal orange ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins or other markings on the paper.