

09

THE SON HAS TRUTH

PERSONAL STUDY GUIDE


the **GOSPEL**PROJECT

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ADULTS



FALL | 2026

GOD'S WORD FOR YOU

A SUMMARY OF THE BIBLE

In the beginning, the all-powerful, personal God created the universe. This God created human beings in His image to live joyfully in His presence, in humble submission to His gracious authority. But all of us have rebelled against God and, in consequence, must suffer the punishment of our rebellion: physical death and the wrath of God.

Thankfully, God initiated a rescue plan, which began with His choosing the nation of Israel to display His glory in a fallen world. The Bible describes how God acted mightily on Israel's behalf, rescuing His people from slavery and then giving them His holy law. But God's people—like all of us—failed to rightly reflect the glory of God.

Then, in the fullness of time, in the person of Jesus Christ, God Himself came to renew the world and to restore His people. Jesus perfectly obeyed the law given to Israel. Though innocent, He suffered the consequences of human rebellion by His death on a cross. But three days later, God raised Him from the dead.

Now the church of Jesus Christ has been commissioned by God to take the news of Christ's work to the world. Empowered by God's Spirit, the church calls all people everywhere to repent of sin and to trust in Christ alone for our forgiveness. By God's grace in Christ, repentance and faith restores our relationship with God and results in a life of ongoing transformation.

The Bible promises that Jesus Christ will return to this earth as the conquering King. Only those who live in repentant faith in Christ will escape God's judgment and live joyfully in God's presence for all eternity. God's message is the same to all of us: repent and believe, before it is too late. Confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe with your heart that God raised Him from the dead, and you will be saved.

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THE EDITOR

For some of us, the events of Jesus's life seem like stories in a children's book that we have gotten used to over the years. Yet if we truly shape our minds to visualize the complications, the confrontations, and the controversies surrounding all He did, we would be reminded of the truth and the power to which He spoke and lived.

Jesus spoke with precision in His parables. He wanted the crowds, the Pharisees, and His disciples to seek the truth of His words.

He revealed His authority over all—over this earthly domain, over disabilities, over diseases, over demons, over death. They all submit under His command and control.

He brought physical and spiritual healing with compassion and care like only God could and would. The way He lived is an example for us to follow.

Jesus's life of ministry was a picture of love and sacrifice even before His crucifixion. He endured temptation, opposition, hunger, fatigue, and grief as a human because of His desire to rescue us from sin.

As Paul stated in Philippians, Jesus “who, existing in the form of God, did not consider equality with God as something to be exploited. Instead he emptied himself by assuming the form of a servant, taking on the likeness of humanity” (Philippians 2:6-7).

In His humanity and deity, He is our King. He proved His authority and godhood through miracles only He could do. And as we shall see, He gave up His life for us and overcame the power of death for our salvation. That is the Jesus we worship and trust in truth.

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The Gospel Project for Adults

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(Unit 25, Sessions 1-4)

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SCOPE AND SEQUENCE

The Gospel Project for Adults aspires to point people to the gospel of Jesus Christ through weekly group Bible studies and additional resources that show how God's plan of redemption unfolds throughout all of Scripture, from Genesis to Revelation. This curriculum provides theological yet practical studies that immerse your group in the STORY of the gospel, helping to develop a gospel CULTURE that leads to gospel MISSION.

GOSPEL STORY

Our aim is to help people understand the storyline of Scripture and to see the thread from the beginning to the end that weaves through it all—God's plan to rescue and redeem His creation through His Son, Jesus Christ.

GOSPEL CULTURE

Our hope is that the message of the gospel saturates our understanding of Christ, increasing our joy in Him and helping doubters become believers who become declarers of the gospel.

GOSPEL MISSION

Our desire is to encourage believers to live on mission, declaring the good news of the gospel in word and deed for God's glory and the growth of His kingdom.

VOL 01:
CREATION AND COVENANT

(Genesis; Job)
Fall 2024

VOL 02:
LAW AND LIFE

(Exodus–Deuteronomy)
Winter 2024–25

VOL 03:
LAND AND LOSS

(Joshua–1 Samuel)
Spring 2025

VOL 04:
FOOLISHNESS AND WISDOM

(1 Samuel–1 Kings; Wisdom Literature)
Summer 2025

VOL 05:
DIVISION AND DEFIANCE

(1 Kings–2 Chronicles; The Prophets)
Fall 2025

VOL 06:
PROPHETS AND PROVISION

(The Prophets; Ezra–Esther)
Winter 2025–26

VOL 07:
THE SON HAS COME

(The Gospels)
Spring 2026

VOL 08:
THE SON HAS AUTHORITY

(The Gospels)
Summer 2026

VOL 09:
THE SON HAS TRUTH

(The Gospels)
Fall 2026

VOL 10:
THE SON HAS RISEN

(The Gospels; Acts)
Winter 2026–27

VOL 11:
THE CHURCH HAS A MISSION

(Acts; The Epistles)
Spring 2027

VOL 12:
THE CHURCH HAS A FUTURE

(The Epistles; Revelation)
Summer 2027

HOW TO USE THE PERSONAL STUDY GUIDE

The Personal Study Guide is a vital tool in your personal and group experience with The Gospel Project for Adults. Here's how to make the most of your time with it:

1) READ THE WORD DAILY

Begin each week by reading the Scriptures according to the Daily Readings. These Bible readings will help you mentally and spiritually prepare for the group experience each week while also building healthy Bible study habits for personal growth. The daily readings will help you understand the context of the Bible story for each week's session and fill in the gaps between sessions. The weekly psalm reading will help you think worshipfully and prayerfully about the story's place in the greater redemptive narrative of the Bible. And the timeline will give you a visual perspective so you can place the Bible story in the larger context of the Bible's storyline.

- **Daily Readings**
- **Chronological Timeline**



TIMELINE

Jesus Appoints His Twelve Disciples (Luke 6:12-16)

Jesus Delivers His Sermon on the Plain (Luke 6:17-49)

SESSION STUDY:
Jesus Teaches and Explains the Parable of the Sower (Luke 8:4-15)

Jesus Calms a Storm (Luke 8:22-25)

Jesus Heals Two Daughters (Luke 8:40-56)

Daily Readings

☐ Day 1: Luke 8:1-8	☐ Day 4: Mark 4:10-12
☐ Day 2: Luke 8:9-15	☐ Day 5: Mark 4:13-20
☐ Day 3: Mark 4:1-9	☐ Day 6: Psalm 81



Scan this QR code to access this session's Scripture passages.

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2) STUDY THE PERSONAL PREPARATION

The Personal Preparation section contains the Scripture passages you will examine and discuss with your Bible study group. As you read each Scripture passage, a Bible study prompt will help you highlight, underline, or jot notes to help you engage with the Scripture and to provoke discussion with your group on the following Sunday. A brief commentary with thought-provoking questions will help you dig deeper into the text and reflect on what the text teaches you about God and yourself. You have the full week to work on your personal preparation, so whether you prefer to break it up into parts or do it all in one day, the flexibility is there for your schedule.

- Scripture
- Commentary
- Questions

PERSONAL PREPARATION

LUKE 8:11-15

GOD'S WORD NEEDS TO BE HEARD AND INTERNALIZED FOR TRANSFORMATION.
Highlight how Jesus defines these parts of the parable: seed, seed along the path, seed on the rock, seed among thorns, and the seed on good ground.

11 "This is the meaning of the parable: The seed is the word of God. **12** The seed along the path are those who have heard and then the devil comes and takes away the word from their hearts, so that they may not believe and be saved. **13** And the seed on the rock are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy. Having no root, these believe for a while and fall away in a time of testing. **14** As for the seed that fell among thorns, these are the ones who, when they have heard, go on their way and are choked with worries, riches, and pleasures of life, and produce no mature fruit. **15** But the seed in the good ground—these are the ones who, having heard the word with an honest and good heart, hold on to it and by enduring, produce fruit."

VOICES FROM THE CHURCH

"We win the [spiritual] war for the Word when we look to bear fruit with patience (Gal 1:2-4). We're not trying to rush into maturity or skip the things that produce growth. We just steadily read, believe, and apply the Bible, and let patience have its perfect work in our lives."
—Thabiti Anyabwile

Key Concept: Jesus taught the importance of receiving the Word and producing fruit from doing so.

Jesus explained that the seed in the parable represents God's Word. A sower scatters seed with a purpose—he intends for the seed he scatters to germinate, thrive, and produce fruit. Although Jesus knew that not every gospel seed would be received, He preached with the expectation that some would bear fruit. For others, there would be obstacles.

Seed sown on hardened hearts cannot bring salvation, as Satan quickly snatches the truth away to prevent understanding and belief. The gospel offers abundant life, but the thief seeks to steal, kill, and destroy (John 10:10). Seed sown on shallow hearts, though received joyfully, cannot endure for lack of nourishment ("no root"; Luke 8:13). Without the work of the Holy Spirit to transform the heart, shallow belief falls away during testing. Seed sown on a heart rife with thorns—"worries, riches, and pleasures of life" (v. 14)—is slowly strangled as worldliness and misplaced priorities prevent living faith.

Which of these obstacles to receiving the gospel have you encountered in yourself or a loved one?

GOSPEL CONNECTION

Scripture teaches us that Jesus is the way to salvation, and following Him by faith with the Holy Spirit will lead to true transformation.

With such powerful obstacles at war against the gospel, it is a miracle that any seeds of faith survive to bear fruit. Yet that is exactly what happens with the fourth seed—this person receives the Word and holds fast to it, so that it endures and bears plentiful fruit. The difference lies in the soil of the heart. But how is it possible to have "an honest and good heart" (v. 15) suitable to receive God's Word and bear fruit? This requires the work of the Holy Spirit, who exchanges a heart of stone for a heart of flesh, enabling believers to trust God and obey with a heart of love (Ezekiel 11:19-20).

How should the expectation that some seeds will bear fruit motivate us to spread gospel truth?

3) PARTICIPATE IN THE GROUP EXPERIENCE

The Group Experience for each session includes an activity and interactive questions designed to make the most of your group experience. Depending on your leader, he or she may have you do the activity on your own before doing it together as a group, or your leader may want you to wait until group time. Either way, the personal prep you've put into the days leading up to your group time will provide a richer discussion and more thoughtful theological applications to mutually encourage each other during group time.

GROUP EXPERIENCE

FOUR SOILS, FOUR RESPONSES

Read Luke 8:4-15. Record what Jesus said each type of soil represented, any corresponding obstacles to faith, and how to overcome those obstacles.

THE SEED ALONG THE PATH	THE SEED ON THE ROCK
THE SEED AMONG THORNS	THE SEED IN GOOD GROUND

How should this parable encourage us as we share the gospel with others?
What "fruit" should we expect to see in our lives as believers in God's Word?



- Group Activity
- Interactive Questions
- Theological Applications

4) TAKE THE NEXT STEPS

At the conclusion of your group time, consider how to apply the day's Scripture lesson by walking through the Head, Heart, and Hands application questions. Share and discuss answers to the questions for the mutual benefit of everyone in the group. Then take time in your group, and during the week after, to read and pray through the designated psalm, focusing your thoughts and words once more upon God's Word. And finally, record prayer requests and praises as you wrap up your group time. Space is provided to jot those down in your guide for prayer during the following week.

Key Concept: Jesus taught the importance of receiving the Word and producing fruit from doing so.

**HEAD**

What are some ways we can keep God's Word in our mind and heart?

**HEART**

What evidence do you see in your life that the Holy Spirit has given you "an honest and good heart"?

**HANDS**

For whom will you pray and share the gospel this week?

PRAYING SCRIPTURE

As you read Psalm 81, pray that you would not have a stubborn heart that refuses to listen to God. Ask God to help you listen, to walk in His ways, and to be satisfied with the richness of His goodness.

PRAYER REQUESTS AND PRAISES



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- Application Questions
- Scripture-Based Prayer
- Prayer Requests

THE SON HAS TRUTH

By David McLemore

Theologian A. W. Tozer wrote, “What comes into your mind when you think about God is the most important thing about you.”¹

That statement raises an important question: Where did you get your thoughts about God?

There will come moments in your life when your ideas about God won’t remain theoretical. You will suffer, and in suffering, what you believe about God will either sustain you or crush you. And what’s more, one day you will face death, and what you believe about God will either be your hope or your terror.

So, where can you find thoughts about God that are true to who He actually is? The answer is from His self-revelation. God wants you to know Him. He doesn’t want you walking through life in the dark about the most important questions. He wants you to know way down deep that at the very bedrock of your existence is the everlasting arms of the good God who loves you and wants you to know how deep His love for you really is. That’s what the whole Bible is about. This volume draws our attention to that reality by showing how God’s truth is revealed most fully and finally in His Son.

THE SON

We worship a triune God, so what we see in Jesus, the Son, is who God is. In other words, there is no version of God that doesn’t look like Jesus.

The passages explored in this volume show how Jesus reveals God not in fragments but in fullness. He is the Word of God (John 1:1). He is the King of God’s kingdom (Luke 19:28-40). He is the Creator of all (Mark 4; Matthew 14:22-33). He is the divine Healer (Luke 8:41-56; Mark 7:24-37). He is the gracious Provider (Matthew 14:13-21). He has power over death (John 11:38-44). He gives sight to the blind (John 9). He’s the Seeker of the lost (Luke 19:1-10). He is coming again (Mark 13). He is the Mediator of the new covenant (Mark 14:22-24).

In Jesus we see the truth of God’s personhood through His words, compassion, and authority. We see His heart. We see who He really is way down deep. And what we find explicitly in Jesus, backed up by His Word, is a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, who won’t let injustice reign but will settle it once and for all (see Exodus 34:6-7).

THE SON HAS TRUTH

In Jesus, truth puts on flesh. Jesus said: “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6). In Jesus, truth became visible, touchable, knowable. And the amazing thing is not just that Jesus revealed truth but the beauty of the truth He revealed. He is not just a creator; He’s a redeemer. He’s not just sovereign; He’s loving. He’s not just powerful; He’s tender. He’s not just transcendent; He’s immanent. He’s not just a judge; He’s a just and merciful one.

In Jesus we see
the truth of God’s
personhood through
His words, compassion,
and authority.
We see His heart.

The truth is that God is not just a god but the best possible God. He’s perfect. There is no flaw in Him. There is no downside to Him. There is nothing in Him that should turn our hearts away from Him. There is nothing in Him that our hearts don’t long for and desperately need. Again and again, the passages in this volume show us God’s heart toward sinners and sufferers. When

we sin, He forgives. When we mourn, He comforts. When we stray, He seeks. When we are betrayed, He stands by us. When we die, He welcomes us and will one day resurrect us.

Consider what Jesus shows us of God’s heart for sinners and sufferers like us. He welcomes the weary and heavy laden (Matthew 11:28-29). He receives all who come to Him (John 6:37). He has compassion on the broken (Luke 7:13; Mark 1:40-41). He lays down His life for us (John 10:11; 13:1). He intercedes for us now (Romans 8:34; Hebrews 7:25). He one day will make all things new (Revelation 21:5).

Jesus is good and does good, and He loves you. He wants you to know that way down deep. That’s not just written in the Bible but proved on the cross. What is there in God that you don’t need? What do you need that doesn’t have an answer in God?

God’s revelation not only corrects our view of Him but, perhaps more importantly, reveals His view of us. He loves us. He wants to save us. The truth of God is His lovingkindness toward us. That’s a truth worth believing and obeying.

David McLemore aims through his teachings and writings to help believers read the Bible faithfully and see how every part of Scripture points to Jesus Christ. He writes on his website, *Things of the Sort*, and serves as an elder at his church.

THE GOSPEL PROJECT

UNIT 25

THE TRUTH OF HIS POWER



MARK; LUKE



MEMORY VERSES

“He got up, rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, ‘Silence! Be still!’ The wind ceased, and there was a great calm. Then he said to them, ‘Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?’ And they were terrified and asked one another, ‘Who then is this? Even the wind and the sea obey him!’”

—Mark 4:39-41



POWER OF GOD'S WORD

CORE PASSAGE: LUKE 8:4-15

CONTEXT

Jesus traveled from town to town preaching the good news of the kingdom with His disciples. Jesus's preaching ministry was both the context and the subject of His parable of the sower. As Jesus traveled, He indiscriminately spread the seeds of the gospel far and wide. The four Gospels record a diversity of responses to Jesus's teaching: rejection, doubt, fear, joy, sadness, anger, and belief. In the parable of the sower, Jesus classified people's responses into four general categories as He illustrated the power of the Word and the danger of rejecting it.

KEY CONCEPT

Jesus taught the importance of receiving the Word and producing fruit from doing so.

As you examine Luke 8:4-15:

- Discover why Jesus taught in parables: to expose who truly was seeking truth.
- Recognize that we are transformed and bear fruit when we hear and trust the gospel.



TIMELINE

Jesus Appoints His Twelve Disciples (Luke 6:12-16)

SESSION STUDY:
Jesus Teaches and Explains the Parable of the Sower (Luke 8:4-15)

Jesus Heals Two Daughters (Luke 8:40-56)

Jesus Delivers His Sermon on the Plain (Luke 6:17-49)

Jesus Calms a Storm (Luke 8:22-25)

Daily Readings

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Day 1: Luke 8:1-8 | ☐ Day 4: Mark 4:10-12 |
| ☐ Day 2: Luke 8:9-15 | ☐ Day 5: Mark 4:13-20 |
| ☐ Day 3: Mark 4:1-9 | ☐ Day 6: Psalm 81 |



Scan this QR code to access this session's Scripture passages.

PERSONAL PREPARATION

LUKE 8:4-10

IF WE TRULY SEEK GOD'S WISDOM, HIS TRUTH WILL BE REVEALED TO US.

Circle the four types of soil on which the seed is scattered. Then underline the phrases that describe what happened to the seed in each soil type.

4 As a large crowd was gathering, and people were coming to Jesus from every town, he said in a parable, **5** “A sower went out to sow his seed. As he sowed, some seed fell along the path; it was trampled on, and the birds of the sky devoured it. **6** Other seed fell on the rock; when it grew up, it withered away, since it lacked moisture. **7** Other seed fell among thorns; the thorns grew up with it and choked it. **8** Still other seed fell on good ground; when it grew up, it produced fruit: a hundred times what was sown.” As he said this, he called out, “Let anyone who has ears to hear listen.” **9** Then his disciples asked him, “What does this parable mean?” **10** So he said, “The secrets of the kingdom of God have been given for you to know, but to the rest it is in parables, so that ‘Looking they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.’”

THEOLOGY CONNECTION

ILLUMINATION OF SCRIPTURE: Because of the vast difference between God's wisdom and ours and because of humanity's sinful state, human beings are incapable, on our own, of fully grasping spiritual truth without being aided by the Holy Spirit through illumination. When it comes to understanding the meaning of God's Word, Christians do not rely ultimately upon human reason in interpretation, nor do we rely solely upon an institution or body of scholars. Instead, a Christian's ultimate reliance is upon the work of the Spirit of God, who illuminates the Scriptures in the heart and mind (John 14:15-18; 16:7-15).



As crowds gathered around Jesus, He told them a parable about a sower who scattered seed. The agricultural setting would have been familiar to Jesus's audience, and the simple descriptions easy to follow. The sower and the seed remain the same in each example, but the condition of the soil changes throughout, producing drastically different results.

A path consisted of very hard, packed-down soil. The seed that fell there could not penetrate the soil and was trampled or eaten by birds. Likewise, neither the seed scattered on rocky ground nor the seed sown among thorns survived for long due to the constraints of their environments. By contrast, the final seed nurtured by good soil grew and produced fruit in abundance. After reciting the parable, Jesus said, "Let anyone who has ears to hear listen" (v. 8).

What does Jesus's exhortation to listen tell us about Jesus's desire for His audience?

At the conclusion of the parable, the disciples realized that though they heard Jesus's words, they did not understand Jesus's spiritual point, so they asked Him to explain it. Before answering, Jesus briefly explained the purpose and limitation of parables.

Jesus's parables contain within them nuggets of kingdom truth, but these mysteries cannot be unlocked merely by hearing or personally dissecting their component parts. Their wisdom must be given, and only Jesus holds the keys to their riches (Colossians 2:3). The disciples were granted this wisdom because they asked Him. Like Lady Wisdom in Proverbs 8, Jesus called out and invited all to pay attention. The disciples came to Him in faith and were rewarded with understanding. The rest only heard a story about a sower scattering seed.

How does the fact that wisdom must be sought in a Person change the way we approach Bible study?



PERSONAL PREPARATION

LUKE 8:11-15

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VOICES FROM THE CHURCH

✕ ————— ✕

“We win the [spiritual] war for the Word when we look to bear fruit with patience (Jas 1:2-4). We’re not trying to rush into maturity or skip the things that produce growth. We just steadily read, believe, and apply the Bible, and let patience have its perfect work in our lives.”¹

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GOSPEL CONNECTION

Scripture teaches us that Jesus is the way to salvation, and following Him by faith with the Holy Spirit will lead to true transformation.

With such powerful obstacles at war against the gospel, it is a miracle that any seeds of faith survive to bear fruit. Yet that is exactly what happens with the fourth seed—this person receives the Word and holds fast to it, so that it endures and bears plentiful fruit. The difference lies in the soil of the heart. But how is it possible to have “an honest and good heart” (v. 15) suitable to receive God's Word and bear fruit? This requires the work of the Holy Spirit, who exchanges a heart of stone for a heart of flesh, enabling believers to trust God and obey with a heart of love (Ezekiel 11:19-20).

How should the expectation that some seeds will bear fruit motivate us to spread gospel truth?



FOUR SOILS, FOUR RESPONSES

Read Luke 8:4-15. Record what Jesus said each type of soil represented, any corresponding obstacles to faith, and how to overcome those obstacles.

THE SEED ALONG THE PATH	THE SEED ON THE ROCK
THE SEED AMONG THORNS	THE SEED IN GOOD GROUND

How should this parable encourage us as we share the gospel with others?

What “fruit” should we expect to see in our lives as believers in God’s Word?

Key Concept: Jesus taught the importance of receiving the Word and producing fruit from doing so.



HEAD

What are some ways we can keep God's Word in our mind and heart?

PRAYING SCRIPTURE

As you read Psalm 81, pray that you would not have a stubborn heart that refuses to listen to God. Ask God to help you listen, to walk in His ways, and to be satisfied with the richness of His goodness.

PRAYER REQUESTS AND PRAISES



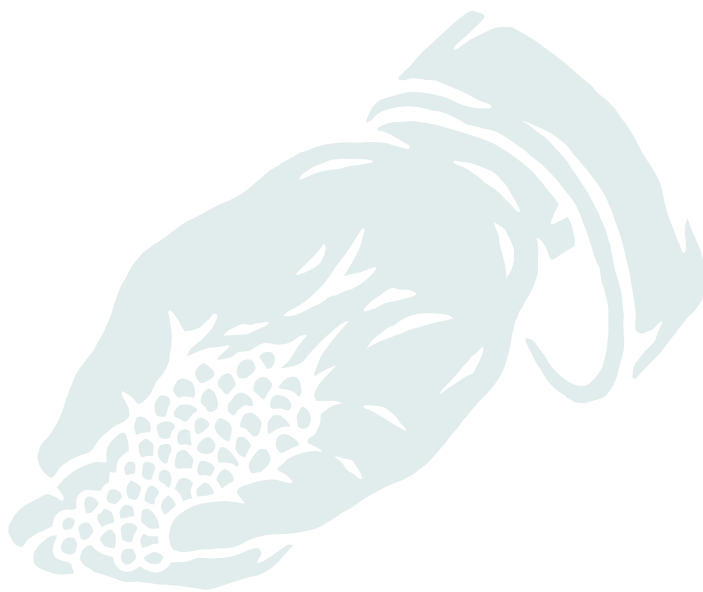
HEART

What evidence do you see in your life that the Holy Spirit has given you "an honest and good heart"?



HANDS

For whom will you pray and share the gospel this week?



POWER OF THE KINGDOM

CORE PASSAGE: MARK 4:21-34

CONTEXT

After Jesus taught and explained to His disciples the parable of the sower and the importance of letting the gospel sink deep roots into our lives, Jesus delivered several short parables about the kingdom of God. He again emphasized the importance of truly listening to His words and living out their powerful implications in the world. Jesus knew His kingdom would start off small in this world, but it also would grow and cover the whole earth.

KEY CONCEPT

The kingdom of God may start small but will be revealed and grow in power.

As you examine Mark 4:21-34:

- Reflect on the truth that God's kingdom grows in this world in God's power and timing, not ours.
- Contemplate that Jesus's ministry started small but would usher in a worldwide kingdom for His glory and purposes.



TIMELINE

Jesus Appoints His Twelve Disciples
(Mark 3:13-19)

SESSION STUDY:
Jesus Teaches Parables on the
Kingdom of God (Mark 4:21-34)

Jesus Heals Two Daughters
(Mark 5:21-43)

Jesus Teaches and Explains the
Parable of the Sower (Mark 4:1-20)

Jesus Calms a Storm
(Mark 4:35-41)

Daily Readings

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Day 1: Mark 4:21-25 | ☐ Day 4: Luke 8:16-18 |
| ☐ Day 2: Mark 4:26-29 | ☐ Day 5: Luke 8:19-21 |
| ☐ Day 3: Mark 4:30-34 | ☐ Day 6: Psalm 9 |



Scan this QR code
to access this session's
Scripture passages.

PERSONAL PREPARATION

MARK 4:21-29

WE ARE MEANT TO REVEAL THE MESSAGE OF THE POWERFUL KINGDOM OF GOD.

Underline the final outcome or goal in each of Jesus's three illustrations.

21 He also said to them, “Is a lamp brought in to be put under a basket or under a bed? Isn’t it to be put on a lampstand? **22** For there is nothing hidden that will not be revealed, and nothing concealed that will not be brought to light. **23** If anyone has ears to hear, let him listen.” **24** And he said to them, “Pay attention to what you hear. By the measure you use, it will be measured to you—and more will be added to you. **25** For whoever has, more will be given to him, and whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken away from him.”

26 “The kingdom of God is like this,” he said. “A man scatters seed on the ground. **27** He sleeps and rises night and day; the seed sprouts and grows, although he doesn’t know how. **28** The soil produces a crop by itself—first the blade, then the head, and then the full grain on the head. **29** As soon as the crop is ready, he sends for the sickle, because the harvest has come.”

THEOLOGY CONNECTION

MISSION OF THE CHURCH: The church is a sign and instrument of the kingdom of God, a people united by faith in the gospel announcement of the crucified and risen King Jesus. The mission of the church is to go into the world in the power of the Spirit and make disciples by proclaiming this gospel, calling people to respond in ongoing repentance and faith, and demonstrating the truth and power of the gospel by living under the lordship of Christ for the glory of God and the good of the world.

Key Concept: The kingdom of God may start small but will be revealed and grow in power.

Jesus continued to teach the crowds using everyday examples in surprising ways. “Would you bring a light into a room only to hide it?” He asked. Likewise, did God send Jesus into the world only to hide His light? Of course not. Although at this point, it may have appeared that way.

When Jesus spoke, He often concealed His truths in parables, similar to how He often tried to conceal His miracles (Mark 1:44; 5:43). In the series of short sayings in Mark 4, Jesus explained that though His kingdom was now largely hidden, it would soon be revealed in the Father’s perfect timing. But how would people respond to that revelation? “Pay attention” (4:24), Jesus warned, because God’s revelation comes to us to the extent that we listen and receive it. As in the parable of the sower, the person who fails to receive the Word soon discovers that it has been stolen away. But the one who receives the Word by faith is rewarded with greater understanding.

How are you putting the kingdom of God on a lampstand through your life?



VOICES FROM CHURCH HISTORY

“The point of Jesus’ analogy is clear: Those who have received the light of the gospel are not to conceal it; rather they are to let it shine for others to see.”¹

—John MacArthur (1939–2025)

Jesus expanded on these truths about the kingdom of God with another brief parable about a farmer scattering seed. The emphasis of this parable, however, is on the sure growth of the seed rather than the soil’s condition. Once sown, the seed sprouts and grows, independent of the farmer’s understanding or attention. The sun, rain, and soil nourish the plants to maturity, and then the harvest comes. Likewise, believers sow God’s Word with the confidence that God is the One germinating, maturing, and readying His people for the harvest at Jesus’s return (1 Corinthians 3:7; Romans 8:30).

What role does the church play in the certainty of God’s coming kingdom?

PERSONAL PREPARATION

MARK 4:30-34

GOD'S KINGDOM MAY HAVE STARTED SMALL AND HUMBLY BUT WILL GROW TO BE A BLESSING FOR ALL.

Underline how the mustard seed starts out, and circle its final form.

30 And he said, “With what can we compare the kingdom of God, or what parable can we use to describe it? **31** It’s like a mustard seed that, when sown upon the soil, is the smallest of all the seeds on the ground. **32** And when sown, it comes up and grows taller than all the garden plants, and produces large branches, so that the birds of the sky can nest in its shade.” **33** He was speaking the word to them with many parables like these, as they were able to understand. **34** He did not speak to them without a parable. Privately, however, he explained everything to his own disciples.

PHRASE STUDY

KINGDOM OF GOD: Jesus’s miracles, preaching, forgiving sins, and resurrection ushered in God’s sovereign rule. Jesus chose and sent out His followers with kingly authority (Matthew 28:18-20). Whether Jew or Gentile, those who trust in Jesus are transferred from the dominion of darkness into the kingdom of the Son of God (Colossians 1:13).²

Key Concept: The kingdom of God may start small but will be revealed and grow in power.



Jesus's next parable compared the kingdom of God to a mustard seed and plant. Considered the tiniest of seeds in the region, mustard seeds could grow to produce plants as tall as ten feet. Comparing God's kingdom to this plant would have surprised many of Jesus's listeners, who may have expected God's kingdom to begin with a dramatic overthrow of the Roman Empire. That was not God's plan, however.

The kingdom of God started with the death of one small seed, a death that would bear much fruit (John 12:23-24). In Jerusalem alone, thousands came to faith in Christ after Jesus's death and resurrection (see Acts 2; 4). The good news of what Jesus accomplished spread throughout Judea and Samaria and then through the entire Roman Empire. It continues to spread today on all continents and will not be stopped until people from all nations have come to find refuge in Christ (Matthew 24:14; Revelation 5:9), like birds nesting in a humble mustard bush.

What are some blessings bestowed on those who find shelter in God's kingdom?

Jesus's parables illustrated God's kingdom. The development and characteristics of His kingdom contrast so profoundly with the kingdoms of humankind that Jesus graciously prepared His followers for its in-breaking with many parables. Jesus was wise, though, not to overwhelm the people with more truth than their hearts could take in (Mark 4:33; cf. John 16:12). Little by little, He taught the crowds and explained to His disciples about His kingdom that would, little by little, topple earth's kingdoms and establish everlasting righteousness (Daniel 2:44; 9:24).

How should our teaching model Jesus's teaching, both in what we teach and in how we teach it?

CHURCH CONNECTION

✕ ————— ✕

Jesus ushered in the kingdom of God, and we are blessed to have a part in revealing the message of His kingdom, seeing God's glory grow.

THREE PARABLES

Read Mark 4:21-34. Write out the beginning of each parable, how it ends, and summarize its meaning in your own words.

	BEGINNING	RESULT	MEANING
LAMP Mark 4:21-25			
GROWING SEED Mark 4:26-29			
MUSTARD SEED Mark 4:30-34			

Which parable encourages you the most? Why?

How do these parables illustrate what success looks like in faith and ministry?

Key Concept: The kingdom of God may start small but will be revealed and grow in power.



HEAD

What are some dangers of misinterpreting and misapplying God's Word?

PRAYING SCRIPTURE

As you reflect on the kingdom of God depicted in Psalm 9, praise God for His just, righteous, and gracious rule. Thank Him for being your refuge, and pray for opportunities to proclaim His deeds among the nations.

PRAYER REQUESTS AND PRAISES



HEART

What obstacles or distractions keep you from desiring God's kingdom and God's Word, and how will you address those?



HANDS

How will you point people to God's kingdom through your words and actions this week?



POWER OVER NATURE

CORE PASSAGE: MARK 4:35-41

CONTEXT

Jesus taught in parables to a large crowd of people by the Sea of Galilee. Using the natural amphitheater-like acoustics of the lake, He sat on a boat near the shore while the crowd listened. That evening, Jesus decided that He and His disciples should cross to the other side of the sea in the boat, taking time to rest after a long day with the crowds. A powerful storm broke through the calm night, however, testing the disciples' faith in Jesus. Who indeed was this Man whom they had left everything to follow?

KEY CONCEPT

We can have faith in Jesus because He is God, sovereign over all things, including nature.

As you examine Mark 4:35-41:

- Take comfort that Jesus knows everything and is never surprised or anxious.
- Recognize that Jesus, being God, is sovereign over all things, including nature.



TIMELINE

Jesus Appoints His Twelve Disciples (Mark 3:13-19)

Jesus Teaches Parables on the Kingdom of God (Mark 4:21-34)

Jesus Heals Two Daughters (Mark 5:21-43)

Jesus Teaches and Explains the Parable of the Sower (Mark 4:1-20)

SESSION STUDY:
Jesus Calms a Storm
(Mark 4:35-41)

Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand (Mark 6:30-44)

Daily Readings

☐ **Day 1:** Mark 4:35-41

☐ **Day 4:** Luke 8:22-25

☐ **Day 2:** Mark 5:1-13

☐ **Day 5:** Luke 8:26-39

☐ **Day 3:** Mark 5:9-20

☐ **Day 6:** Psalm 44



Scan this QR code to access this session's Scripture passages.

PERSONAL PREPARATION

MARK 4:35-38

JESUS IS NOT ANXIOUS ABOUT WHAT WE ARE ANXIOUS ABOUT.

Underline the disciples' reaction to the storm, and highlight Jesus's reaction.

35 On that day, when evening had come, he told them, "Let's cross over to the other side of the sea." **36** So they left the crowd and took him along since he was in the boat. And other boats were with him. **37** A great windstorm arose, and the waves were breaking over the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. **38** He was in the stern, sleeping on the cushion. So they woke him up and said to him, "Teacher! Don't you care that we're going to die?"

PLACE STUDY

THE SEA OF GALILEE: At almost 700 feet below sea level, the Sea of Galilee is the lowest freshwater lake on earth. Surrounded by steep mountains and hills, it can encounter powerful wind events when the cool air from the higher regions rushes down upon it, producing violent winds and waves.



Jesus and His disciples decided to take a boat across the Sea of Galilee after a long day teaching the crowds. Sometime during the night, “a great windstorm” blew up, producing powerful winds and dangerous waves that began to swamp the boat (v. 37). Yet despite the perilous environment outside the boat, Jesus slept soundly within.

These details mirror Jonah’s turbulent voyage on the Mediterranean Sea from Joppa to Tarshish, where the prophet also was found sleeping through a storm (Jonah 1). Unlike the rebellious prophet fleeing from God’s mission, however, Jesus slept peacefully within the perfect will of His Father. And indeed, He did sleep. Jesus, sharing the same fullness of humanity that we have, needed sleep the same way He needed food and water. Just like every human being, Jesus experienced temptation, felt pain, and was susceptible to death. It was because of this shared humanity that Jesus can sympathize with our weaknesses as sinful human beings, yet in His experience of human weakness, Jesus never sinned (Hebrews 4:15).

How can the fact that Jesus is fully man bring comfort to us during times of difficulty?

Jesus may have been sleeping peacefully during the storm, but the disciples definitely were not. Ironically, the disciples, several of whom were professional fishermen, came to Jesus for help when the waves began to spill over into the boat. Abrupt storms on the Sea of Galilee were not uncommon, so the disciples’ concern about this particular storm must have been warranted. The danger was real, and so was their fear. Previously, the disciples had witnessed Jesus’s use of supernatural power for the welfare of others in the healing of diseases and ailments and the casting out of demons. But their question for Jesus on the waterlogged boat in this storm exposed the doubt that often arises when believers experience difficulty: “Don’t you care?” (Mark 4:38).

How can you ensure that what you believe about God on sunny days does not unravel on stormy days?

VOICES FROM CHURCH HISTORY

✕ ————— ✕

“The ship carried his humanity, but the power of his Godhead carried the ship and all that was in it.”¹

—Ephrem the Syrian (c. 306–373)

PERSONAL PREPARATION

MARK 4:39-41

JESUS CONTROLS ALL THINGS, SO WE CAN TRUST HIM IN ALL THINGS.

Identify the source of the disciples' fear before and after the miracle.

39 He got up, rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Silence! Be still!" The wind ceased, and there was a great calm. **40** Then he said to them, "Why are you afraid? Do you still have no faith?" **41** And they were terrified and asked one another, "Who then is this? Even the wind and the sea obey him!"

THEOLOGY CONNECTION

JESUS'S DEITY: Within the person of Jesus Christ, there are two natures—the divine nature and the human nature. 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; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:15-20; Hebrews 1:1-3). The New Testament also points to the deity of Christ by showing how He possesses attributes that God alone possesses (Micah 5:2; John 1:4), 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 (Matthew 26:63-64; John 8:58; 10:30; 17:5).

Key Concept: We can have faith in Jesus because He is God, sovereign over all things, including nature.

Jesus seemed surprisingly passive up to this point. Once awakened, however, His actions and words produced profound results. Jesus spoke to the sea and “rebuked” the wind as He previously had rebuked a demon, showing His authority over the natural as well as the supernatural realms (v. 39; see 1:25).

In the Old Testament, as an act of the Lord’s judgment upon His idolatrous people, the prophet Elijah prayed it would not rain on the land, and for three-and-a-half years, it didn’t. Then Elijah prayed again and it rained (1 Kings 17:1; 18:41-45; James 5:17-18). Unlike Elijah, Jesus commanded the elements directly by His divine power. He silenced and stilled them with the same voice that spoke creation into being. God alone controls the winds and seas (Job 28:25; Psalm 107:25-30; Nahum 1:3-4), so they obeyed Jesus immediately. In the stillness of the subsequent moment, the disciples faced the truth of Jesus’s deity.

Why does Jesus’s divine nature demand a response from each of us?

After rebuking the wind and sea to silence and stillness, Jesus turned to gently rebuke His disciples. He identified the source of the disciples’ doubts and fear: not the presence of a storm but the absence of faith. Jesus noted that His gospel seeds had not yet produced in them a faith that endured testing (Luke 8:13).

Failing to understand Jesus’s limitless power and sovereign care over the storm, the disciples’ hearts produced fear rather than faith. They were even more terrified after the miracle. Although the storm exerted a strength that overwhelmed the disciples’ own, Jesus’s power over that force was more potent than any power on earth. But did they need to fear Jesus’s power? In the sense of respect, yes, but beyond that, the One who wielded power over wind and sea had not come to condemn them but to save them (John 3:17).

What is the relationship between faith in Jesus and fear regarding our circumstances in life?

CHRIST CONNECTION

Jesus demonstrated His deity by calming the storm. As God, He is omnipotent and sovereign over all.

THE PROPER PERSPECTIVE

Read Mark 4:35-41. In the columns below, write down words or phrases that reveal the disciples' and Jesus's perspectives on the storm.

THE DISCIPLES' PERSPECTIVE

JESUS'S PERSPECTIVE

What will faith in Jesus's power over creation mean for our perspective on the natural phenomena in our world, whether beautiful or dangerous?

Key Concept: We can have faith in Jesus because He is God, sovereign over all things, including nature.



HEAD

How would you answer the disciples' question about Jesus: "Who then is this?"

PRAYING SCRIPTURE

As you reflect on Psalm 44, pray that God would help you trust Him even when life is hard and He seems silent. Thank Him for the steadfast love and redemption He has already provided in Jesus Christ.

PRAYER REQUESTS AND PRAISES



HEART

How would you answer Jesus's question to the disciples: "Why are you afraid?" What threatens your faith today?



HANDS

What are some ways you can provide comfort and support for those who are fearful of or suffering under the effects of this fallen world?



POWER OF HEALING

CORE PASSAGE: LUKE 8:41-56

CONTEXT

Jesus and His disciples sailed across the Sea of Galilee to the predominantly Gentile region of the Gerasenes. After Jesus cast demons from a man into a herd of pigs, the people there asked Him to leave. Jesus and the disciples then returned to the Galilean side of the lake, where a crowd awaited His return. The crushing crowd's needs and expectations heightened the urgency of the moment as two people captured Jesus's attention. One was a respected leader of the local synagogue and the other was a woman who was ceremonially unclean—yet their stories intersected when they met Jesus.

KEY CONCEPT

Faith assures us that Jesus, as God, has the power to heal and resurrect.

As you examine Luke 8:41-56:

- Notice that the woman had faith that she would be healed just by touching Jesus's clothes.
- Contemplate that even in times of hopelessness, hope prevails through Christ.



TIMELINE

Jesus Teaches and Explains the Parable of the Sower (Luke 8:4-15)

SESSION STUDY: Jesus Heals Two Daughters (Luke 8:40-56)

Jesus Walks on Water (Mark 6:45-52)

Jesus Calms a Storm (Luke 8:22-25)

Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand (Luke 9:10-17)

Daily Readings

☐ **Day 1:** Luke 8:40-48

☐ **Day 4:** Mark 5:35-43

☐ **Day 2:** Luke 8:49-56

☐ **Day 5:** Mark 6:1-13

☐ **Day 3:** Mark 5:21-34

☐ **Day 6:** Psalm 4



Scan this QR code to access this session's Scripture passages.

PERSONAL PREPARATION

LUKE 8:41-48

FAITH ASSURES US THAT JESUS CAN HEAL.

Underline words or phrases that highlight the desperation of both Jairus and the woman.

41 Just then, a man named Jairus came. He was a leader of the synagogue. He fell down at Jesus's feet and pleaded with him to come to his house, **42** because he had an only daughter about twelve years old, and she was dying. While he was going, the crowds were nearly crushing him. **43** A woman suffering from bleeding for twelve years, who had spent all she had on doctors and yet could not be healed by any, **44** approached from behind and touched the end of his robe. Instantly her bleeding stopped. **45** "Who touched me?" Jesus asked. When they all denied it, Peter said, "Master, the crowds are hemming you in and pressing against you." **46** "Someone did touch me," said Jesus. "I know that power has gone out from me." **47** When the woman saw that she was discovered, she came trembling and fell down before him. In the presence of all the people, she declared the reason she had touched him and how she was instantly healed. **48** "Daughter," he said to her, "your faith has saved you. Go in peace."

THEOLOGY CONNECTION

FAITH: Biblical faith is the resting, or trusting, in Christ 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 Christ 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 Christ.

Key Concept: Faith assures us that Jesus, as God, has the power to heal and resurrect.



The news of Jesus's power to heal and teach had spread throughout the region. Imagine the constant demands placed on Jesus, who could heal people with a touch or a word. For example, a leader of the nearby synagogue came and fell at Jesus's feet, pleading for Jesus to go with him and save his dying daughter. Could anything be more urgent?

Yet as Jesus was on the way to his house, another desperate soul availed herself of the crowd pressing against Jesus to sneak in and touch the edge of His robe. This woman's chronic medical condition undoubtedly had left her weak, hopeless, ceremonially unclean, and unable to worship at the temple (Leviticus 15:25-31). Her hope reawakened, however, when Jesus passed by, so she reached out in faith that just one touch would heal her.

How have you experienced hope in Christ in the midst of a hopeless situation?

The woman's faith was immediately rewarded with complete healing. The flow of Jesus's divine power stemmed the flow of blood in her body. Despite the urgency of other needs, Jesus was not content to let this faith encounter end there. So, He asked, "Who touched me?" and waited for a response (Luke 8:45-46).

Trembling, the woman approached Jesus, in awe of His power and fearful of being exposed. Would the good Teacher be angry that an unclean woman had touched Him? Jesus did not wish to reproach her, though, but to reward her faith with the gift of personal relationship. The brief conversation that followed revealed to her that Jesus was more than her Healer—He was her Savior. It also made public both her confession of faith (Romans 10:9-10) and Jesus's inclusion of this once-outcast woman as a daughter of the kingdom.

What things keep you from confessing publicly what Christ has done for you?



PERSONAL PREPARATION

LUKE 8:49-56

FAITH ASSURES US THAT JESUS CAN RESURRECT.

*Underline the words and actions of the mourners, and
circle Jesus's words and actions in comparison.*

49 While he was still speaking, someone came from the synagogue leader's house and said, "Your daughter is dead. Don't bother the teacher anymore." **50** When Jesus heard it, he answered him, "Don't be afraid. Only believe, and she will be saved." **51** After he came to the house, he let no one enter with him except Peter, John, James, and the child's father and mother. **52** Everyone was crying and mourning for her. But he said, "Stop crying, because she is not dead but asleep." **53** They laughed at him, because they knew she was dead. **54** So he took her by the hand and called out, "Child, get up!" **55** Her spirit returned, and she got up at once. Then he gave orders that she be given something to eat. **56** Her parents were astounded, but he instructed them to tell no one what had happened.



Key Concept: Faith assures us that Jesus, as God, has the power to heal and resurrect.

A woman suffering from a disease for twelve years received new life at the same time we hear that a girl, only twelve years old, died of a disease. At first, it seems that Jesus's conversation with the woman, rewarding her faith, delayed Him from reaching the girl in time. News of this tragedy threatened to overshadow the joy of the woman's recent healing and Jairus's own faith.

Jairus's servant who brought the devastating news suggested, "Don't bother the teacher anymore" (v. 49). What could Jesus possibly do now? But Jesus encouraged Jairus to choose faith over fear. Jesus's divine power can reverse sin's curse on all aspects of our broken world—death included. Just as He had saved one "daughter" from disease (v. 48), so Jesus promised to save another daughter from death.

How should we re-evaluate our understanding of urgency and interruptions in light of these two accounts?

By the time Jesus and Jairus arrived at the house, mourners had begun their weeping in earnest. Shockingly, Jesus told the crowd there was no need to mourn, but being very familiar with the reality of death, they mocked Him. By contrast,

when Jesus told the dead girl to get up, she immediately heeded His words and got up! The mourners correctly perceived that the girl had died, but they were wrong to laugh at the One who redefined death as sleep, something that could be temporary rather than final.

Since the time when humanity first sinned in the garden of Eden, death has reigned on earth. Jesus came to reverse that curse, as the resurrection of Jairus's daughter showed. Ultimately, Jesus accomplished this victory by defeating death Himself and becoming the "firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep" (1 Corinthians 15:20). Those who belong to Christ by faith also will rise at His return, never to die again (vv. 23-26).

Why is "sleep" a true and comforting metaphor for the death of a believer in Christ?

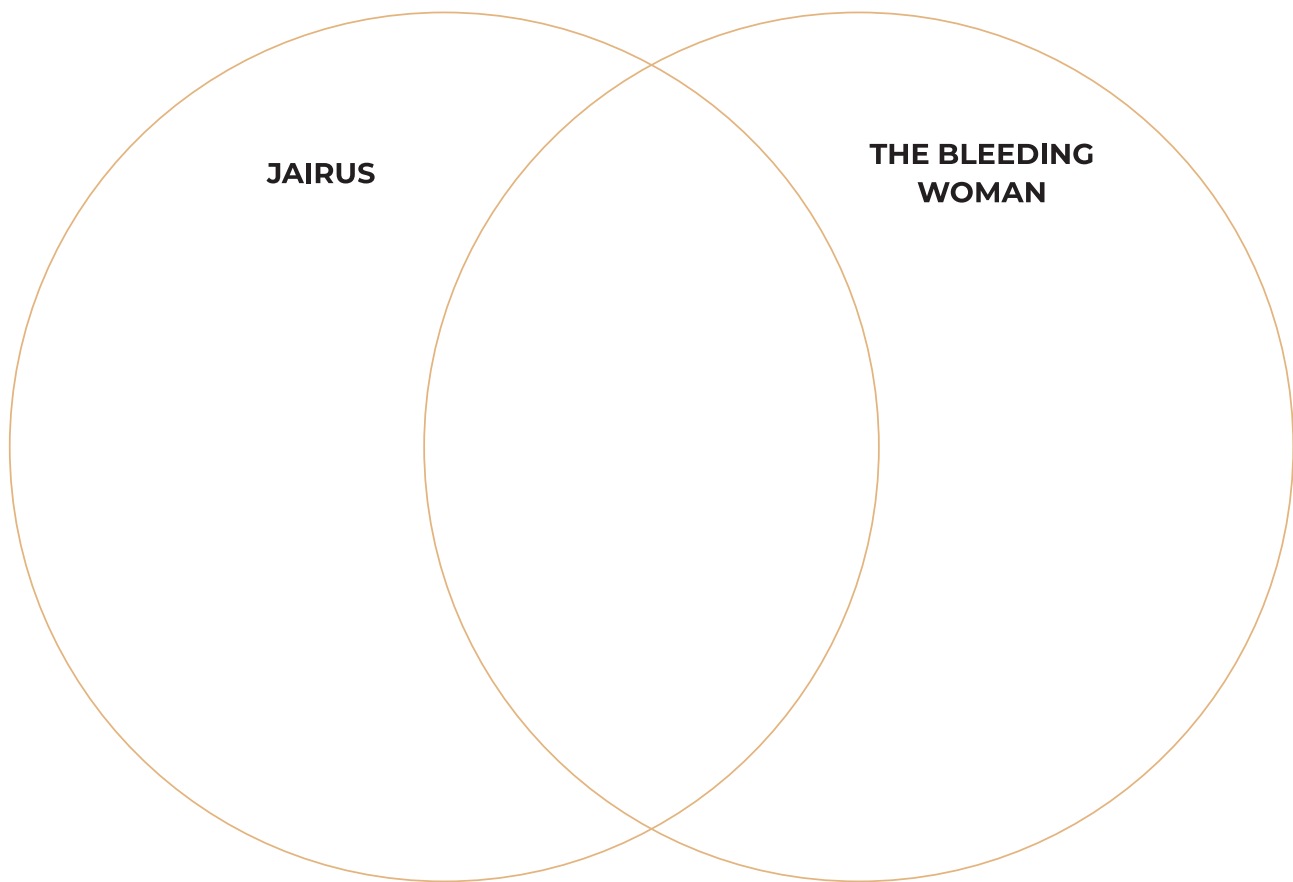
CHRIST CONNECTION

✕ ————— ✕

Jesus demonstrated His divine power by healing and resurrecting others. His power to physically heal and resurrect points to His power to spiritually heal and resurrect souls.

TWO NEEDS FOR HEALING

Read Luke 8:41-56. Use the diagram below to compare and contrast the situations of Jairus and the bleeding woman.



What should we make of Jesus's commendation of the woman's faith and His encouragement to Jairus to believe?

Key Concept: Faith assures us that Jesus, as God, has the power to heal and resurrect.



HEAD

What influences in your life lead you toward doubt? What influences lead you toward faith?

PRAYING SCRIPTURE

As you read Psalm 4, pray that God would help you truly trust Him and not let other people's doubts and disbelief sway you from steadfast faith in Christ. Thank Him for being your joy and peace.

PRAYER REQUESTS AND PRAISES



HEART

How do fear and faith influence your approach to Jesus for the things you need and the relationship you desire with Him?



HANDS

Whom will you tell this week about what God has done for you through faith in Him?



THE GOSPEL PROJECT

UNIT 26

THE TRUTH OF HIS ACTIONS



MATTHEW; MARK; JOHN



MEMORY VERSES

“Jesus said to her, ‘I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me, even if he dies, will live. Everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?’ ‘Yes, Lord,’ she told him, ‘I believe you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who comes into the world.’”

—John 11:25-27



JESUS PROVIDES

CORE PASSAGE: MATTHEW 14:13-21

CONTEXT

Each Gospel writer told the story of Jesus, but the Holy Spirit inspired them to put their own unique emphasis on it. Mark focused on the action. Luke focused on detailed, eyewitness accounts. Matthew narrated Jesus's life by alternating between a specific event and teaching. Matthew 14 begins with John the Baptist's disciples informing Jesus of his execution at the command of King Herod. Jesus then withdrew to a desolate place, presumably to grieve, but the crowds followed Him. Instead of frustration, Jesus responded with compassion, and the people witnessed His power to provide.

KEY CONCEPT

Jesus is always able to provide for His people beyond what is needed.

As you examine Matthew 14:13-21:

- Take comfort that Jesus's compassion and love motivate His actions.
- Give Jesus glory because He is "able to do above and beyond all that we ask or think according to the power that works in us" (Ephesians 3:20).



TIMELINE

Jesus Teaches with Many
Parables (Matthew 13:1-53)

Jesus Walks on Water
(Matthew 14:22-33)

Jesus Raises Lazarus from
the Dead (John 11:1-44)

SESSION STUDY:
Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand
(Matthew 14:13-21)

Jesus Heals in Gentile Regions
(Matthew 15:21-31)

Daily Readings

☐ **Day 1:** Matthew 14:1-12

☐ **Day 2:** Matthew 14:13-21

☐ **Day 3:** Mark 6:14-29

☐ **Day 4:** Mark 6:30-44

☐ **Day 5:** Luke 13:1-35

☐ **Day 6:** Psalm 100



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Scripture passages.

PERSONAL PREPARATION

MATTHEW 14:13-17

JESUS ACTS WITH COMPASSION AND LOVE IN HEALING AND PROVIDING FOR HIS PEOPLE.

Underline all the reasons the disciples wanted to send away the crowd.

13 When Jesus heard about it, he withdrew from there by boat to a remote place to be alone. When the crowds heard this, they followed him on foot from the towns. **14** When he went ashore, he saw a large crowd, had compassion on them, and healed their sick. **15** When evening came, the disciples approached him and said, “This place is deserted, and it is already late. Send the crowds away so that they can go into the villages and buy food for themselves.” **16** “They don’t need to go away,” Jesus told them. “You give them something to eat.” **17** “But we only have five loaves and two fish here,” they said to him.

THEOLOGY CONNECTION

STEWARDSHIP: God’s intention for mankind is that we serve Him as faithful stewards of His creation (Genesis 1:28; 1 Corinthians 4:1-2). We are to invest the time, talents, and material possessions God has given us for His kingdom work (Matthew 25:14-29), knowing that God is the true owner of all we have, and that our true treasure is found not on earth but in heaven (Matthew 6:19,21; Luke 12:16-21). Motivated by God’s generosity to us made most clear in the gospel, we are to give God the best of what we have (Proverbs 3:9), regularly (1 Corinthians 16:2), sacrificially (Matthew 12:41-44), humbly (Matthew 6:1-4), and cheerfully (2 Corinthians 9:6-7), praying that God may be glorified in our stewardship of His provisions.

Key Concept: Jesus is always able to provide for His people beyond what is needed.

Jesus wanted to be alone, either grieved by the death of John the Baptist, wary of Herod's interest in Him, or perhaps both. Yet despite His desire for silence and solitude, the desperation of the crowds wouldn't allow it. What was a relatively short trip by boat for Him and His disciples was matched by the crowds taking the long way around on foot. Jesus couldn't escape the mass of people. But rather than be annoyed by the presence of the crowds, Jesus had compassion on them. This compassion was a visceral emotion, a pulling on the heart strings. Jesus cared.

Jesus had compassion for the crowd and healed their sick, but the disciples eventually noticed some logistical issues. It was late, and the people hadn't eaten. Dispersing the crowds would take time, and the nearest village was a distance away. The disciples had no idea how the crowd of people would eat, and they didn't want the responsibility of trying to feed them. They saw their situation through the eyes of reality: lots of people and little food on hand.

What challenges keep you from showing compassion like Jesus?

Jesus responded to the disciples' logical concerns with what sounded like a problem-solving challenge: "You give them something to eat" (v. 16). Jesus involved the disciples in what was to come by putting the initial responsibility on their shoulders. Again, the disciples looked around at the reality of their situation and saw it for what it was: "We only have five loaves and two fish here" (v. 17). The disciples were being truthful. The cost to feed this crowd would be over half a year's salary (John 6:7). Obviously, more than five thousand people could not be fed with five loaves and two fish.

Yet for all their human logic, the disciples failed to take into account Jesus's power: Jesus had healed diseases, cast out demons, and calmed a storm at sea (see Matthew 8–9). Here, Jesus was involving the disciples in His solution to the problem at hand, but He would supply what they needed. Jesus wanted His disciples to understand their role and acknowledge that He could provide for them even with the little they had. Jesus wanted His disciples to see reality through the eyes of faith.

What might having eyes of faith mean for your present reality?



PERSONAL PREPARATION

MATTHEW 14:18-21

JESUS CAN PROVIDE ABOVE AND BEYOND WHAT WE NEED.

Circle descriptions of the extent to which Jesus provided for the people and His disciples.

18 “Bring them here to me,” he said. **19** Then he commanded the crowds to sit down on the grass. He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, he blessed them. He broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. **20** Everyone ate and was satisfied. They picked up twelve baskets full of leftover pieces. **21** Now those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.



VOICES FROM CHURCH HISTORY

“One basket for each apostle: . . . This was to manifest and magnify the miracle, and to show that the provision Christ makes for those who are his is not bare and scanty, but rich and plenteous.”¹

—Matthew Henry (1662–1714)

Key Concept: Jesus is always able to provide for His people beyond what is needed.



With the five loaves of bread and two fish in hand, Jesus said a blessing, thanking God for the miracle He was about to perform. Matthew would have expected his readers to recall the Old Testament connections for this miracle. First, the miracle would have called to mind the manna in the wilderness that was announced by Moses. God led the Israelites through the barren desert without food so they would learn to trust Him. In response to their hunger, God promised to “rain bread from heaven” (Exodus 16:4). Like the Israelites, the crowds were in a desolate place without food, and Jesus miraculously provided bread.

Second, Matthew alluded to the story of Elisha recounted in 2 Kings 4:42-44. After a man brought twenty loaves of bread, Elisha told his servant to feed the people. The servant, like the disciples, saw only the small amount of bread compared to the large number of mouths to feed. But Elisha commanded him: “Give it to the people to eat . . . for this is what the Lord says: ‘They will eat, and they will have some left over’” (v. 43), and it happened as the Lord promised. Sound familiar?

Why do you think Matthew wanted his readers to remember these stories from Israel’s history?

It would be miraculous enough for the five loaves and two fish to barely feed the crowd, but they were “satisfied,” or full (Matthew 14:20). And then there were leftovers—twelve baskets full—a number generally used for completeness, like the twelve tribes and twelve disciples. Jesus doesn’t provide the bare minimum—He satisfies; He fills; He completes.

Just as this miraculous feeding recalled the past, it also foreshadowed the future. Both in the Old Testament (Isaiah 25:6-10) and in the New Testament (Luke 14:12-24; Revelation 19:6-9), the kingdom of God is compared to a feast. Jesus gave the crowd—and us—a glimpse of what His kingdom will be like: satisfaction, and even more, salvation.

How have you experienced satisfaction in Christ?

GOSPEL CONNECTION

Jesus is a provider, providing salvation from sin and death.

FROM SCARCITY TO SURPLUS

Read Matthew 14:13-21. Write down the problems as the disciples saw them. Then record what Jesus did to overcome the obstacles and meet the need.

WHAT THE DISCIPLES SAW

WHAT JESUS DID

MATTHEW 14:13-17

MATTHEW 14:18-21

Why do you think Jesus asked the disciples to bring what they had, even though it wasn't enough?

Where do you tend to see "what the disciples saw" in your own circumstances?

Key Concept: Jesus is always able to provide for His people beyond what is needed.



HEAD

What are some needs that you should entrust to God's care?

PRAYING SCRIPTURE

Read and pray through Psalm 100. Praise God as your loving Creator and Sustainer (vv. 3-5), and pray for opportunities and a heart of dependence to serve the Lord with gladness (v. 2).

PRAYER REQUESTS AND PRAISES



HEART

What keeps you from trusting God to provide for all your needs?



HANDS

How will you make yourself available this week to be used by God to meet the needs around you?



JESUS OVER CREATION

CORE PASSAGE: MATTHEW 14:22-33

CONTEXT

Jesus's popularity surged when He miraculously fed over five thousand people with just five loaves of bread and two fish. Unsurprisingly, the crowds wanted more of Jesus. To experience some much needed silence and solitude in the wake of John the Baptist's death, Jesus dismissed the crowds and retreated to a mountain by Himself after having sent His disciples on a boat across the Sea of Galilee. What happened next led the disciples to fear and then worship Jesus as the Son of God.

KEY CONCEPT

Because Jesus can do all things, we don't need to be afraid when following in His steps by faith.

As you examine Matthew 14:22-33:

- Recognize that when trouble arrives, we need not fear because Jesus is with us.
- Focus on Jesus as being worthy of your faith and being the source of your salvation from sin and death.



TIMELINE

Jesus Teaches with Many
Parables (Matthew 13:1-53)

**SESSION STUDY: Jesus Walks
on Water (Matthew 14:22-33)**

Jesus Raises Lazarus from
the Dead (John 11:1-44)

Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand
(Matthew 14:13-21)

Jesus Heals in Gentile Regions
(Matthew 15:21-31)

Daily Readings

☐ **Day 1:** Matthew 14:22-36

☐ **Day 4:** Luke 14:15-24

☐ **Day 2:** Mark 6:45-56

☐ **Day 5:** Luke 14:25-35

☐ **Day 3:** Luke 14:1-14

☐ **Day 6:** Psalm 46



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PERSONAL PREPARATION

MATTHEW 14:22-27

WITH JESUS, WE NEED NOT FEAR.

Underline the reasons the disciples were afraid.

22 Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. **23** After dismissing the crowds, he went up on the mountain by himself to pray. Well into the night, he was there alone. **24** Meanwhile, the boat was already some distance from land, battered by the waves, because the wind was against them. **25** Jesus came toward them walking on the sea very early in the morning. **26** When the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified. “It’s a ghost!” they said, and they cried out in fear. **27** Immediately Jesus spoke to them. “Have courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.”

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 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.



After feeding the five thousand, Jesus sent His disciples ahead of Him to the other side of the sea. For the next several hours, Jesus prayed alone on a mountain while His disciples made their trip without Him. Several details are necessary to keep in mind for the following narrative.

First, the disciples' boat "was already some distance from land" (v. 24). John's Gospel states the disciples had "rowed about three or four miles" (John 6:19). The Sea of Galilee is seven-and-a-half miles wide, so being some distance from land placed them in the middle of the sea.

Second, the disciples were some distance from land while "well into the night" (Matthew 14:23), and Jesus came to the disciples "very early in the morning" (v. 25). This would have been between three and six in the morning. So the disciples were rowing in the dark and dead of night.

Third, the disciples' boat was "battered by the waves, because the wind was against them" (v. 24). The Sea of Galilee is below sea level, surrounded by steep hills and mountains. This combination of geographic features causes rapid wind shifts and violent weather. With no land nearby, these conditions alone could have been terrifying.

What circumstances can cause you to experience fear?

In this "perfect storm" of fear, the disciples saw someone walking on the water. While we read this story knowing exactly who was walking on the sea, the disciples did not yet fully grasp Jesus's identity, so "they were terrified" (v. 26). Since no human can walk on water, they thought they were seeing a ghost. To address their fears, Jesus responded simply: "Have courage! It is I. Don't be afraid" (v. 27).

Why could Jesus tell the disciples to not be afraid?



PERSONAL PREPARATION

MATTHEW 14:28-33

WITH FAITH FOCUSED ON JESUS, WE CAN WALK AS HE WALKED.

Underline the reasons Peter began to sink under the waves.

28 “Lord, if it’s you,” Peter answered him, “command me to come to you on the water.”

29 He said, “Come.” And climbing out of the boat, Peter started walking on the water and

came toward Jesus. **30** But when he saw the strength of the wind, he was afraid, and

beginning to sink he cried out, “Lord, save me!” **31** Immediately Jesus reached out his hand,

caught hold of him, and said to him, “You of little faith, why did you doubt?” **32** When they

got into the boat, the wind ceased. **33** Then those in the boat worshiped him and said,

“Truly you are the Son of God.”



CHRIST CONNECTION

x

Jesus’s divinity makes Him all-powerful, able to do all things. He invites us to live by faith in His power.

x



After seeing what they thought was a ghost and hearing Jesus's voice, Peter did the unthinkable—he himself dared to walk on water. Remember: Mere mortals cannot walk on water; that's God's prerogative alone. But Peter was ready and willing if the faint shadow he saw on the water was in fact Jesus.

What Jesus did next not only displayed the power of His presence but also the power of His voice. At the command of Jesus, Peter stepped out of the boat. Peter could have done this for no one else. Only Jesus has the authority to demand faithful obedience.

And notice the direction Peter walked—directly “toward Jesus” (v. 29). His gaze was fixed on Jesus. Peter understood he could not walk on water by himself. This miracle was a result of Jesus's power over creation, and Peter had faith in Jesus's power over creation.

What does faith in Jesus look like for you today?

With his eyes on Jesus, Peter's steps stayed on the surface of the billowing sea. But what caught Peter's attention next weakened his faith. He saw “the strength of the wind” and “was afraid” (v. 30).

Peter's faith immediately turned to fear because he took his eyes off the source of his faith. In response to Peter's cry for help, Jesus wasted no time reaching out His hand, once again doing what only God can do: “Reach down from on high; rescue me from deep water” (Psalm 144:7). Jesus used His divine power not only to allow Peter to walk on water but also to save him from the water.

We might assume Peter had zero faith, given his sinking outcome, but Jesus didn't say that. Peter's faith wasn't bankrupt. “Little faith” is not the same as no faith (Matthew 14:31). Peter's response of “Lord, save me!” (v. 30) was similar to that of the man who cried to Jesus in Mark's Gospel: “I do believe; help my unbelief!” (Mark 9:24).

After Jesus and Peter got into the boat, the wind finally ceased, and then the disciples “worshiped [Jesus] and said, ‘Truly you are the Son of God’” (Matthew 14:33). Their confession foreshadowed the later confession of Simon Peter the doubter: “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God” (16:16).

What are some ways we can grow in our faith in Jesus?

FROM FEAR TO FAITH

Case Study: Read Matthew 14:22-33. Consider Simon Peter's responses to his situation, how you might respond, and what we learn.

FEAR (vv. 24-26)	FAITH (vv. 27-29)	FOCUS (vv. 30-31)
WHAT SHOULD WE LEARN FROM PETER AND THE DISCIPLES' RESPONSE TO JESUS (vv. 27,32-33)?		

Where do you most identify yourself right now—fear, faith, or focus—and why?

How does Jesus's response to Peter give you peace of mind during hardship?

Key Concept: Because Jesus can do all things, we don't need to be afraid when following in His steps by faith.



HEAD

How does this story help you grasp the deity and humanity of Jesus?

PRAYING SCRIPTURE

Read and pray through Psalm 46. Thank God for His power to carry you through any trial life might bring. Ask God to strengthen your faith in Him for what's next.

PRAYER REQUESTS AND PRAISES



HEART

Looking at the trials in your life, what barriers to faith and obedience are keeping you from following Jesus more closely?



HANDS

What might God be calling you to do with your faith and focus on Jesus?



JESUS HEALS

CORE PASSAGE: MARK 7:24-37

CONTEXT

In Mark 7, Jesus journeyed to locations most Jews would not step one toe in. The regions of Tyre and Sidon were Gentile territories. The Decapolis too was comprised of ten Greek cities. These places, and the people in them, would have been viewed as unclean and therefore avoided by Jews. Mark, however, highlighted Jesus's perspective that differed greatly from the traditions of mere humans. Even in this stage of His ministry, Jesus was revealing His fulfillment of the law, and that meant correcting people's understanding of what was clean and unclean.

KEY CONCEPT

Jesus's willingness to heal all people points to His desire to bring salvation to all people.

As you examine Mark 7:24-37:

- Recognize that while Jesus first came to the Jews, His message and gift of salvation would be for all who believe in Him.
- Contemplate that people who encountered Jesus proclaimed all the miracles that He did, even though Jesus told them not to.



TIMELINE

Jesus Teaches with Many
Parables (Mark 4:1-34)

Jesus Walks on Water
(Mark 6:45-52)

Jesus Raises Lazarus from
the Dead (John 11:1-44)

Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand
(Mark 6:30-44)

SESSION STUDY: Jesus Heals in
Gentile Regions (Mark 7:24-37)

Daily Readings

☐ **Day 1:** Mark 7:1-37

☐ **Day 2:** Mark 8:1-38

☐ **Day 3:** Matthew 15:1-39

☐ **Day 4:** Matthew 16:1-28

☐ **Day 5:** Luke 15:1-16:31

☐ **Day 6:** Psalm 117



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PERSONAL PREPARATION

MARK 7:24-30

JESUS'S MESSAGE OF SALVATION, HOPE, AND HEALING IS FOR BOTH JEW AND GENTILE.

Circle the words of Jesus, noting specifically how Jesus treated the Syrophenician woman.

24 He got up and departed from there to the region of Tyre. He entered a house and did not want anyone to know it, but he could not escape notice. **25** Instead, immediately after hearing about him, a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit came and fell at his feet. **26** The woman was a Gentile, a Syrophenician by birth, and she was asking him to cast the demon out of her daughter. **27** He said to her, "Let the children be fed first, because it isn't right to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." **28** But she replied to him, "Lord, even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs." **29** Then he told her, "Because of this reply, you may go. The demon has left your daughter." **30** When she went back to her home, she found her child lying on the bed, and the demon was gone.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

DOGS: In Jesus's day, dogs were half-wild scavengers. Yet domesticated dogs would sit under the table and eat what fell to the floor.¹ In using this term, Jesus was not denigrating the Gentile woman but emphasizing His ministry priority for the lost children of Israel. After Jesus's death and resurrection, the gospel of salvation would be extended freely to all who believe, both Jew and Gentile (cf. Acts 13:46; 26:23; Romans 1:16; 2:9-10).

Key Concept: Jesus's willingness to heal all people points to His desire to bring salvation to all people.

Jesus did the unthinkable! Rather than travel around the Gentile region of Tyre or quickly through it, Jesus intentionally made His way to this region and even entered a house there, contrary to all Jewish expectations of faithfulness to God's law. Gentiles didn't have to do anything "unclean" to offend the Jews. The Jews considered them unclean for simply not being descendants of Abraham.

Jesus was becoming increasingly popular, even in this Gentile area. Unsurprisingly, then, the Syrophoenician woman came searching for Him. Not only did the woman enter the same room as a Jew, she fell at Jesus's feet, no doubt getting extremely close to Him. But she was desperate—her daughter was demon-possessed. Don't miss how "unclean" this woman was: She was a Gentile woman, ethnically Syrophoenician, and she had a demon-possessed daughter!

How do you think Gentiles might have felt around Jews in Jesus's day?

Jesus's response to the woman's plea for help wasn't shocking to the original readers of Mark's Gospel. Jesus's ministry was first to Israel, "the children" (v. 27). He was the Jewish Messiah, who came to set free the Jewish people from the curse

of their broken covenant. The woman's response to Jesus, however, was shocking. She accepted and affirmed the priority of the Jews in Jesus's ministry, but she appealed to His mercy nonetheless.

The woman understood that Jesus's ministry was to the Jew first, but that didn't mean He couldn't serve the Gentiles too. Jesus had fed (6:30-44) and would feed again (8:1-10) the Jews with bread, yet this Gentile mother believed that even a crumb of the blessings God had for the Jews could save her daughter, and her faith in Jesus was rewarded. Jesus healed the woman's daughter of the unclean, demonic spirit.

How has God revealed His care for the Gentiles throughout the Scriptures?

GOSPEL CONNECTION

Jesus ushered in a kingdom that would fix what was broken by sin, including illnesses, diseases, and disabilities. He healed both Jew and Gentile in His earthly ministry, which pointed to His death and resurrection that brings salvation to all who believe.

PERSONAL PREPARATION

MARK 7:31-37

JESUS HEALED THOSE WHO WERE DEAF AND MUTE, A SIGN OF HIS MESSIAHSHIP.

Circle Jesus's actions and underline the results of His actions.

31 Again, leaving the region of Tyre, he went by way of Sidon to the Sea of Galilee, through the region of the Decapolis. **32** They brought to him a deaf man who had difficulty speaking and begged Jesus to lay his hand on him. **33** So he took him away from the crowd in private. After putting his fingers in the man's ears and spitting, he touched his tongue. **34** Looking up to heaven, he sighed deeply and said to him, "Ephphatha!" (that is, "Be opened!"). **35** Immediately his ears were opened, his tongue was loosened, and he began to speak clearly. **36** He ordered them to tell no one, but the more he ordered them, the more they proclaimed it. **37** They were extremely astonished and said, "He has done everything well. He even makes the deaf hear and the mute speak."

THEOLOGY CONNECTION

MIRACLES: A miracle is an event in which God makes an exception to the natural order of things, or supersedes natural laws, for the purpose of demonstrating His glory and/or validating His message. Miracles are recorded throughout Scripture; miraculous signs and wonders were oftentimes evident when a prophet or an apostle was speaking God's message to the people. Because we believe God to be all-powerful and personally involved in this world, we believe He can and does perform miracles.



Once again, Jesus was in Gentile territory. The Decapolis, a region comprised of ten or more cities, was a center for Greco-Roman thought and culture and was no friend to Judaism. Yet even in this region, the Gentiles were aware of Jesus and what He could do (Matthew 4:25). Perhaps they had heard of His power from the man whom Jesus had freed from a legion of demons some time before (Mark 5:20). Despite being Gentiles, the people of this region had heard that Jesus healed everyone who came to Him. So like the Syrophoenician woman seeking help for her daughter, some Gentiles brought to Jesus a deaf man and begged Him for healing.

What must the Gentiles have believed about Jesus to bring the deaf man to Him?

Instead of healing the man then and there, Jesus took him to a private place. In Mark's Gospel, Jesus often performed miracles in private or at the very least requested that the healed individual tell no one what happened. There would be a time for people to spread the good news of Jesus's healing and power—after His resurrection.

Mark here described Jesus's healing technique in great detail. Jesus often healed with touch, but here He healed by touching the organs affected. Moreover, it seems Jesus even put His spit in the man's ears and/or on his tongue. Mark also recorded Jesus's attitude and declaration to accomplish this miracle. Jesus looked up, demonstrating His attitude of prayer toward His Father. Mark said Jesus "sighed deeply" (7:34), referring to the intense emotions He felt toward this man and his condition. And finally, Jesus uttered this Aramaic word: "Ephphatha!" This was not a magic incantation; rather, Jesus accomplished this healing with an authoritative command: "Be opened!"

Instantaneously the man was healed! The man who could not hear and who struggled to speak now spoke clearly in the presence of many witnesses. The Gentiles were amazed by Jesus's abilities, and they wanted to tell everyone what they had seen and heard. More than just an account of Jesus's miracle of healing the deaf and mute man, the people shared their evaluation of Jesus: "He has done everything well" (v. 37). We too should share of Jesus's work on our behalf and praise Him for His holiness and perfection and salvation.

What will it mean for you to believe that Jesus "has done everything well"?

FROM HOPE TO HEALING

Read Mark 7:24-37. Compare and contrast the circumstances surrounding the Gentile man and woman, and see the breadth of Jesus's love for all.

	SYROPHOENICIAN WOMAN (vv. 24-30)	MAN IN THE DECAPOLIS (vv. 31-37)
THE NEED		
THE BARRIERS		
JESUS'S RESPONSE		

How does seeing Jesus cross cultural, social, and physical boundaries challenge the way you think about the church's gospel mission?

Key Concept: Jesus's willingness to heal all people points to His desire to bring salvation to all people.



HEAD

How has Jesus crossed cultural, social, and physical boundaries to minister to you?

PRAYING SCRIPTURE

✕ Read and pray through Psalm 117. Like the Gentile crowds, praise God for all that He has done in your life. Thank God that He reaches all nations. And because the Lord's faithfulness endures forever, ask God to heal you of whatever is ailing you spiritually or physically. ✕



HEART

How do you need to grow in your persistence and humility in prayer and faith?

PRAYER REQUESTS AND PRAISES



HANDS

How will you lead people to Jesus this week so they might find the healing and salvation only He can provide?



JESUS RESURRECTS

CORE PASSAGE: JOHN 11:17-27,38-44

CONTEXT

The book of John is unique among the four Gospels. John's Gospel highlighted seven signs Jesus performed that pointed to His identity as not only the promised Messiah but God Himself. John also included seven "I am" statements that intentionally connected Jesus's identity to the God who revealed Himself to Moses as "I AM" at the burning bush (Exodus 3:14). In John 11, Jesus performed both a miraculous sign and declared an "I am" statement to show His power over life and death.

KEY CONCEPT

Jesus has the power to resurrect the dead and give eternal life to those who believe.

As you examine John 11:17-27,38-44:

- Notice that Martha understood that Jesus could do whatever He wanted, including resurrect her brother.
- Affirm that Jesus's desire was for people to believe in Him and His mission.



TIMELINE

Jesus Teaches with Many Parables
(Mark 4:1-34)

Jesus Walks on Water
(Mark 6:45-52)

SESSION STUDY:
Jesus Raises Lazarus from
the Dead (John 11:1-44)

Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand
(Mark 6:30-44)

Jesus Heals in Gentile Regions
(Mark 7:24-37)

Daily Readings

☐ **Day 1:** John 11:1-16

☐ **Day 4:** John 11:38-57

☐ **Day 2:** John 11:17-27

☐ **Day 5:** John 12:1-11

☐ **Day 3:** John 11:28-37

☐ **Day 6:** Psalm 21



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PERSONAL PREPARATION

JOHN 11:17-27

ANYONE WHO BELIEVES IN JESUS WILL LIVE FOREVER WITH HIM.

Circle Jesus's "I am" statement. Then underline Martha's response.

17 When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days.

18 Bethany was near Jerusalem (less than two miles away). **19** Many of the Jews had come

to Martha and Mary to comfort them about their brother. **20** As soon as Martha heard that

Jesus was coming, she went to meet him, but Mary remained seated in the house. **21** Then

Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother wouldn't have died. **22** Yet

even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you." **23** "Your brother

will rise again," Jesus told her. **24** Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the

resurrection at the last day." **25** Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one

who believes in me, even if he dies, will live. **26** Everyone who lives and believes in me will

never die. Do you believe this?" **27** "Yes, Lord," she told him, "I believe you are the Messiah,

the Son of God, who comes into the world."

THEOLOGY CONNECTION

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

Key Concept: Jesus has the power to resurrect the dead and give eternal life to those who believe.



The siblings Mary, Martha, and Lazarus were no strangers to Jesus. These were some of Jesus's closest friends. Jesus Himself was grieved to know Lazarus had died and his sisters were mourning. Nevertheless, Jesus understood Lazarus's death was an opportunity for revelation. In ancient Judaism, a belief persisted that a dead person's soul hovered over his body hoping to reunite, but the soul only stayed for three days. Lazarus had been dead for four days, which meant his soul was gone and it was too late for hope.¹

Mary and Martha responded to Jesus uniquely in a previous encounter (Luke 10:38-42), and they did so here as well. This time Mary remained in the house, possibly angry at Jesus, but Martha came to Him on the road, grieving but hopeful. Martha believed Jesus could have healed Lazarus, and though her brother was now dead, she still had faith in Jesus, saying: "Whatever you ask from God, God will give you" (John 11:22).

How are you prone to respond to Jesus when circumstances don't work out how you think they should?

Jesus's response to Martha, promising her brother's resurrection, was not a surprise to her. Like most Jews in the first century, Martha believed in a future resurrection. But what Jesus said and Martha heard were two different points. Martha was thinking about the future—"the last day" (v. 24)—while Jesus was planning to act in the present.

Next, Jesus uttered perhaps His most popular "I am" statement: "I am the resurrection and the life" (v. 25). Notice what Jesus was and wasn't saying. He was not saying He can provide resurrection and life but that He is the resurrection and the life. These are not gifts Jesus provides but qualities of His divine identity (see 1:1-4). Resurrection and life are experienced by those who are in Christ.

Of course, to experience resurrection and life requires faith, specifically faith in who Jesus is. Martha believed in Jesus, saying: "I believe you are the Messiah, the Son of God" (11:27). But it does seem Martha was confused about what Jesus was intending to do next, bringing the future into the present.

What does it mean to be united with Christ and share in His resurrection?



PERSONAL PREPARATION

JOHN 11:38-44

BY RESURRECTING THE DEAD, JESUS POINTED TO HIS MISSION FOR THE FATHER'S GLORY.

Highlight Jesus's purpose for this resurrection miracle.

38 Then Jesus, deeply moved again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone was lying against it. **39** "Remove the stone," Jesus said. Martha, the dead man's sister, told him, "Lord, there is already a stench because he has been dead four days." **40** Jesus said to her, "Didn't I tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?" **41** So they removed the stone. Then Jesus raised his eyes and said, "Father, I thank you that you heard me. **42** I know that you always hear me, but because of the crowd standing here I said this, so that they may believe you sent me." **43** After he said this, he shouted with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" **44** The dead man came out bound hand and foot with linen strips and with his face wrapped in a cloth. Jesus said to them, "Unwrap him and let him go."

VOICES FROM CHURCH HISTORY

"Death reigns everywhere, for the death of the soul is alienation from God. So people who believe in Christ, although they had been once dead, begin to live; for faith is a spiritual resurrection of the soul and, as it were, brings the soul alive, that it may live for God."²

—John Calvin (1509–1564)

Key Concept: Jesus has the power to resurrect the dead and give eternal life to those who believe.



John wanted his readers to know that Lazarus was really dead. A stench of rot was in the air. Nonetheless, Jesus said, “Remove the stone” (v. 39). Unlike our burial customs, ancient Jews often placed their dead in above-ground tombs. These tombs often were caves with a slab to lay the body upon. After one year, the body would have decayed and the deceased’s bones would be placed in a small ornamental box called an ossuary.³

Jesus was undeterred by the stench of death. Again He referenced belief as He told Martha that with faith she “would see the glory of God” (v. 40). Each of the seven signs Jesus performed in John were meant to reveal the glory of God in Jesus to the witnesses of Jesus’s works. But the active ingredient of such sight and recognition was faith. Without faith, the people missed the meaning of the miracle.

What are some ways we can witness the glory of God today?

Next, John gave us a glimpse into Jesus’s prayer life. A couple of features of Jesus’s prayer are worth noting. First, Jesus prayed to God. By looking up and addressing God as Father, we get a glimpse into the intimate relationship between Father and Son. Second, Jesus

wanted the crowd to hear Him pray to the Father. He wanted them to get a picture of the Son’s relationship with the Father. Jesus wanted the crowd, including Martha and Mary, to know the Father sent the Son to do His will.

As God the Son, Jesus exercised His divine authority and commanded Lazarus to come out of the grave. With words, Lazarus was resurrected back to life. This final sign revealed the glory of God in Jesus. As Creator, God is life itself and therefore the source of life. In an instant, Jesus was able to extend life back to Lazarus. No one else could do this but God!

What hope do you find in Jesus’s power to resurrect Lazarus from the dead?

GOSPEL CONNECTION

Jesus’s power to resurrect the dead means He was also able to resurrect Himself, through which He secured victory over sin, death, and the powers of darkness. He did this also to give eternal life to those who believe.

FROM GRIEF TO GLORY

Read John 11:17-27,38-44. Write down how the people in the narrative experienced grief, confession, compassion, and then Jesus's glory.

GRIEF

CONFESSION

COMPASSION

GLORY

How does seeing Jesus turn grief to glory challenge your fears and assumptions in your own sufferings?

Key Concept: Jesus has the power to resurrect the dead and give eternal life to those who believe.



HEAD

How can you grow in your knowledge of and faith in Jesus?

PRAYING SCRIPTURE

Read and pray through Psalm 21. Thank God for the eternal life He has given you now through faith in Jesus and the future life He will give you in the resurrection. Ask God to strengthen your trust in His resurrection power and to act with appropriate boldness and faith.



HEART

What doubts, fears, and sins might you need to confess to grow in your faith?

PRAYER REQUESTS AND PRAISES



HANDS

How will your life look different because you believe Jesus will resurrect you?



MARY AND MARTHA

By Leslie Hudson

The Gospel narrators focus on Jesus's closest circle of His disciples, the twelve apostles. But those weren't Jesus's only close friends. We know He was also tight with a trio of siblings in Bethany: Lazarus, Mary, and Martha. Though Lazarus takes the spotlight in John 11—being raised from the dead tends to do that—we should take a few minutes to get to know Lazarus's sisters a little better. Their story is an integral part of Lazarus's story and walks Jesus right up to the cross.

A STRONG FRIENDSHIP

The first time we come across this family as we consider the Gospels chronologically, Lazarus wasn't even mentioned. In Luke 10, Jesus sent out His disciples in groups of two (vv. 1-12) and celebrated their victories (vv. 21-24), preached rejection to towns that were unrepentant (vv. 13-16), and shared the story of the good Samaritan (vv. 25-37). Then we read a story of Jesus entering a village, where "a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home" (v. 38). Martha was caught up in entertaining Jesus's entire entourage, but even though "they" were traveling, Martha welcomed "him," meaning Jesus.

Often the story is told that Martha was too busy entertaining, but we're not sure that was the case. Luke reported that she was "distracted by her many tasks" (v. 40), and considering that it was Martha's house (v. 38), any homeowner can understand. Hear her question again, not with a nagging tone but with the sound of an exhausted woman: "Lord, don't you care that my sister has left me to serve alone? So tell her to give me a hand" (v. 40). Maybe Martha truly wanted to sit at Jesus's feet as Mary did, but she carried the burden of a household. (And all the Type A people shouted "Amen!") Jesus's gentle answer (v. 41), acknowledging her stress and high emotions, revealed He wasn't mad at her, and neither should we be. Rather, we, like Martha, should see that more than any responsibility, we need to sit at Jesus's feet and hear His Word, giving us the soul-care we desperately need.

A FAMILY TRAGEDY

Lazarus's name appears in Scripture only when it's practically too late. In John 11:1, we read: "Now a man was sick—Lazarus from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha." Naturally, the sisters sent a message to Jesus: "Lord, the one you love is sick" (v. 3). Jesus explained to His disciples

that the sickness “would not end in death but is for the glory of God, so that the Son of God may be glorified through it” (v. 4). At Jesus’s instruction, they waited two more days before heading to Bethany. By the time they arrived, Lazarus had been dead four days.

The sisters heard separately that Jesus had arrived, and both approached Him with the same statement: “Lord, if you had been here, my brother wouldn’t have died” (vv. 21,32). We hear the faith of these sisters burning through their tears of grief. Yes, they believed, but they wondered, “Why didn’t Jesus come sooner?”

MARTHA’S FAITH

Though Martha’s grief was certainly overwhelming at the time of Lazarus’s death, she kept her faith grounded by saying aloud what she knew to be certain: “I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you . . . I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day. . . . I believe you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who comes into the world” (John 11:22,24,27). We can find comfort in our own lives by also choosing to believe and therefore speak (2 Corinthians 4:13) what we know to be true of Jesus.

MARY’S LOVE

In Mary’s final mention in Scripture, she demonstrated her love for the Lord and her understanding of what He had done. She “took a pound of perfume, pure and expensive nard, anointed Jesus’s feet, and wiped his feet with her hair” (John 12:3). Though Matthew and Mark also recounted this

story, only John revealed Mary’s identity. He also pointed out that this happened “six days before the Passover” (v. 1). Passover would have been Jesus’s last supper on the night He was betrayed. John connected the dots for us: In raising Lazarus, Jesus risked His safety by returning to the Jerusalem area. Through that miracle, the Jews had been pushed to the breaking point; raising Lazarus from the dead was the final straw to make them decide that Jesus must die (11:45-57). Jesus’s prophecy that Lazarus’s death would end in glory (v. 4) was fulfilled in a way no one could have predicted—in Jesus’s death so that we might have everlasting life (3:16).

We can’t identify Mary’s thoughts, but in sitting at Jesus’s feet (Luke 10:39), she had captured His worthiness and His passion. She heard Him say He would die when the disciples missed it, and she didn’t waste the opportunity to honor Him.

As you reflect on these sisters from Bethany, open your heart to their hospitality, grief, compassion, and faith. They knew Jesus, loved Him, believed Him, knew His Word, and devoted their lives to Him. Invite the Holy Spirit to give you a heart like theirs even today.

Leslie Hudson worships with her family at First Baptist in Dickson, Tennessee. She teaches high school youth Sunday school, plays in the praise band, and is active in women’s ministry. She’s passionate about counseling women biblically and pointing people to Jesus.

THE GOSPEL PROJECT

UNIT 27

THE TRUTH OF HIS KINGDOM



MARK; LUKE; JOHN



MEMORY VERSES

“Today salvation has come to this house,”
Jesus told him, “because he too is a son
of Abraham. For the Son of Man has come
to seek and to save the lost.”

—Luke 19:9-10



BLIND TO SEEING

CORE PASSAGE: JOHN 9:24-27,35-41

CONTEXT

John's Gospel contains seven "I am" statements in which Jesus assumes the divine name of God found in Exodus 3:14. The second of these appears in John 8:12 and 9:5, where Jesus proclaimed, "I am the light of the world." What comes next is a demonstration of His light breaking into the darkness. Christ's light healed and saved a man born blind while also revealing the blindness of those who refused Him. The conflict between Jesus and the religious authorities intensified as evidence of Jesus's divinity and messiahship grew.

KEY CONCEPT

Jesus opens people's eyes to the fact that He is the Messiah, but we can choose to believe or not.

As you examine John 9:24-27,35-41:

- Contemplate that Jesus makes blind people see, both literally and metaphorically.
- Recognize that the Pharisees were able to see with their physical eyes but still chose to sin in their spiritual blindness by not believing who Jesus was.



TIMELINE

Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand (John 6:1-15)

SESSION STUDY: Jesus Heals a Blind Man (John 9:1-41)

Jesus Raises Lazarus from the Dead (John 11:1-44)

Jesus Walks on Water (John 6:16-21)

Jesus Encounters Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10)

Jesus's Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem (John 12:12-19)

Daily Readings

☐ **Day 1:** John 7:1-52

☐ **Day 4:** John 9:24-41

☐ **Day 2:** John 8:12-59

☐ **Day 5:** John 10:1-42

☐ **Day 3:** John 9:1-23

☐ **Day 6:** Psalm 82



Scan this QR code to access this session's Scripture passages.

PERSONAL PREPARATION

JOHN 9:24-27

JESUS BRINGS LIGHT TO THOSE IN DARKNESS.

Circle the statement that gives glory to God.

24 So a second time they summoned the man who had been blind and told him, “Give glory to God. We know that this man is a sinner.” **25** He answered, “Whether or not he’s a sinner, I don’t know. One thing I do know: I was blind, and now I can see!” **26** Then they asked him, “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?” **27** “I already told you,” he said, “and you didn’t listen. Why do you want to hear it again? You don’t want to become his disciples too, do you?”

VOICES FROM THE CHURCH

“Believers don’t need to know all the answers before they can share Christ with others. All they must know is how Jesus changed their lives. . . . We should tell people what Jesus did for us, and trust God to help our words draw others to him.”¹

—Bruce B. Barton

Key Concept: Jesus opens people's eyes to the fact that He is the Messiah, but we can choose to believe or not.

The story of the man born blind starts in verse 1, and it is a story about responding to Jesus. The Pharisees' searching question, "What did he do to you?" (v. 26), lies at the heart of every conversion story. When God saves a person, He changes them at the deepest level of their being, transferring them from the domain of darkness to the kingdom of His Son (Colossians 1:13). Such life change becomes obvious, like a man born blind who can suddenly see, and it demands an explanation.

John's Gospel offered that explanation not only to the man born blind but to the world blinded by sin that regains its spiritual sight in Christ. Before healing the man, Jesus said, "I am the light of the world" (John 9:5). As the light of Christ shines in the darkness, there are two possible responses: go toward the light or flee from exposure. The gospel never leaves room for ambiguity. There are no "neutral" reactions to it.

Light is an exposing element. It reveals what is truly there. In the darkness, we can only guess what's there. When Jesus came as "the light of the world" (John 9:5), the natural response was to step into His light and trust Him as Savior. But not all responses were so favorable. Some, like many Pharisees and religious leaders, refused to see what the light exposed.

GOSPEL CONNECTION

Jesus opens people's eyes to His messiahship, but they can choose to believe in Him or not. Those who recognize their sin and need for a Savior will believe; the hard-hearted will not.

How have you experienced the light of Christ exposing the darkness in your own heart?

When commanded to "give glory to God" (v. 24), the healed man did just that, proclaiming what Jesus had done for him. He had been blind, and now he could see, and Jesus was the cause. He could tell the Pharisees his story again—and no doubt he would tell it the rest of his life—but he would not come up with a narrative that didn't involve Jesus opening his eyes. There was no other explanation for him, and there isn't for any Christian. The only question left is this: Do you want to become His disciples too?

If you were asked, "What did Jesus do to you?" how would you answer?

PERSONAL PREPARATION

JOHN 9:35-41

JESUS CAME TO JUDGE THOSE WHO CHOOSE NOT TO SEE THAT HE IS THE MESSIAH.

Circle the words referring to sight in this passage.

35 Jesus heard that they had thrown the man out, and when he found him, he asked, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” **36** “Who is he, Sir, that I may believe in him?” he asked. **37** Jesus answered, “You have seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you.” **38** “I believe, Lord!” he said, and he worshiped him. **39** Jesus said, “I came into this world for judgment, in order that those who do not see will see and those who do see will become blind.” **40** Some of the Pharisees who were with him heard these things and asked him, “We aren’t blind too, are we?” **41** “If you were blind,” Jesus told them, “you wouldn’t have sin. But now that you say, ‘We see,’ your sin remains.”

THEOLOGY CONNECTION

NEW IDENTITY OF THE BELIEVER: When a person places faith in Christ, that person undergoes a fundamental change of identity. He or she goes from being an enemy under God’s wrath (Ephesians 2:1-3) to being welcomed into God’s family as a beloved child (Ephesians 2:19). The believer in Christ is declared righteous on account of Christ’s perfect life and substitutionary death and resurrection. No longer is the person a slave to sin, defined by past failures or present struggles. The person has been delivered from the realm of darkness and now belongs to the kingdom of light (Colossians 1:13). Anyone who is in Christ is a “new creation” in whom the old, sinful self is passed away and the new, redeemed self is alive and progressing, becoming more and more like Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17).



The Gospels present Jesus as a man who always went to the outcasts. Verse 34 tells us the Pharisees, unhappy with the response to their inquiry, cast out the once-blind-now-sighted man from the synagogue. When Jesus heard the news, He went and found the man. Imagine the emotional rollercoaster! The man experienced a miracle that resulted in his excommunication. One kind of suffering was relieved only to be cast into another kind. Was his physical sight now a spiritual problem? No, and Jesus wanted him to know that.

Jesus found the man and asked, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” (v. 35). Jesus often used the phrase “the Son of Man” to refer to Himself as the One who reveals God to man.² Seeing Jesus, the man now saw his God. His response was immediate and profound—“I believe, Lord!” (v. 38). He then worshiped Jesus, the only right response to the revelation of the Messiah. The man’s physical blindness had already been healed, and to the man’s delight, Jesus healed his spiritual blindness too.

How does Jesus’s miracle and pursuit of the man relate to our gospel mission as believers in Christ?

While the man worshiped Jesus, some Pharisees stood in judgment. Yet in the end, it is not their judgment that matters—it is Jesus’s. In verse 39, Jesus said, “I came into this world for judgment.” By that He meant He came to show the truth of things, to which some will respond with faith and worship while others respond with rejection.

Some are blind and know it, and some are blind but don’t know it. What a warning this is to all who read John 9. We can have the gift of physical sight and not see our spiritual need, and we can be physically blind and see Jesus clearly. This is why Paul prayed in Ephesians 1:18-19 that “the eyes of your heart may be enlightened so that you may know what is the hope of his calling, what is the wealth of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power toward us who believe, according to the mighty working of his strength.”

What do we need to “see” in order to be saved by faith?



SEEING JESUS

Read John 9:1-41. Write in the appropriate space how the man born blind and the Pharisees identified Jesus.

HOW THE MAN BORN BLIND SAW JESUS	HOW THE PHARISEES SAW JESUS
(v. 11)	(vv. 16,24)
(v. 17)	(v. 28)
(vv. 30-31)	(vv. 39-41)
(vv. 35-38)	

What is our role as believers in Christ to help others see, know, and believe in Jesus as the Messiah, the Son of God?

Key Concept: Jesus opens people's eyes to the fact that He is the Messiah, but we can choose to believe or not.



HEAD

What are your sources of authority for your beliefs about Jesus?

PRAYING SCRIPTURE

Read Psalm 82. Pray along with the psalmist that God would rise up and reveal His Son to a world in darkness. Pray for those in your life who do not yet believe in Jesus. Pray that God would open the eyes of their hearts to trust Him.



HEART

How does Jesus's pursuit of the man change the way you see the heart of Christ for you?

PRAYER REQUESTS AND PRAISES



HANDS

Who will you pursue with the gospel of Jesus or follow up to see if they need more understanding?



GETTING TO GIVING

CORE PASSAGE: LUKE 19:1-10

CONTEXT

Luke's Gospel is broken into roughly three sections. Luke 1:1–9:50 is the initiation of Jesus's public ministry, including His teachings and miracles. Luke 9:51–19:10 tells of Jesus's journey to Jerusalem under the shadow of the cross. Luke 19:11–24:53 tells of Jesus's arrest, death, and resurrection. In today's passage, Jesus was making His way to Jerusalem for the joy set before Him, prepared to endure the cross (Heb. 12:2). But on His way, He needed to make a stop for the salvation of a sinner.

KEY CONCEPT

Jesus came to seek and save the lost.

As you examine Luke 19:1-10:

- Notice that Jesus saw Zacchaeus's eagerness and invited him to fellowship with Him.
- Contemplate that like Zacchaeus, we should respond to Jesus with joy, submission, and repentance.



TIMELINE

Jesus Feeds the Five
Thousand (Luke 9:10-17)

Jesus Heals a Blind Man
(John 9:1-41)

Jesus Raises Lazarus from
the Dead (John 11:1-44)

Jesus Walks on Water
(John 6:16-21)

SESSION STUDY:
Jesus Encounters Zacchaeus
(Luke 19:1-10)

Jesus's Triumphal Entry into
Jerusalem (Luke 19:28-40)

Daily Readings

- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ Day 1: Matthew 17:1-18:35 | ☐ Day 4: Luke 17:1-18:43 |
| ☐ Day 2: Matthew 19:1-20:34 | ☐ Day 5: Luke 19:1-27 |
| ☐ Day 3: Mark 9:1-10:52 | ☐ Day 6: Psalm 49 |



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Scripture passages.

PERSONAL PREPARATION

LUKE 19:1-5

JESUS INVITES ALL WHO ARE EAGER TO FIND HIM.

Circle the details Luke offers about Zacchaeus, and underline Zacchaeus's actions in this passage.

1 He entered Jericho and was passing through. **2** There was a man named Zacchaeus who was a chief tax collector, and he was rich. **3** He was trying to see who Jesus was, but he was not able because of the crowd, since he was a short man. **4** So running ahead, he climbed up a sycamore tree to see Jesus, since he was about to pass that way. **5** When Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, hurry and come down because today it is necessary for me to stay at your house."

VOICES FROM CHURCH HISTORY

"The door of hope which the Gospel reveals to sinners is open very wide. Let us leave it open, as we find it; let us not attempt, in narrow-minded ignorance, to shut it. We should never be afraid to maintain that Christ is able to save completely (Hebrews 7:25) and that the vilest sinners may be freely forgiven if they will only come to him."¹

—J. C. Ryle (1816–1900)

The Gospels show us that Jesus often extended grace to unexpected people. Zacchaeus is a perfect example. Notice how Luke introduced him as a rich chief tax collector. Zacchaeus, a Jew, would have collected taxes from his fellow Jews to give to Rome. While today an accountant might be given a salary, in Jesus's day, tax collectors routinely collected more than was due, skimming off the top and cheating the people to build their own wealth. As a chief tax collector, Zacchaeus was the boss, which meant his opportunity to collect was large. From his later confession, he made it clear that he made a lot of money through dishonesty and theft.

It should come as no surprise that Zacchaeus was a despised man as a traitor and a cheat. In the eyes of the Jews, he was the worst of sinners. Yet in Luke's Gospel, some tax collectors respond positively to Jesus's teachings, including Matthew the disciple (5:27-32; cf. 3:12; 7:29; 15:1-2; 18:9-14). Luke indicated that Zacchaeus, like the tax collectors who previously accepted Jesus's teaching, was eager to see Him.

What kinds of people might we be tempted to classify as the worst of sinners to despise and avoid today?

The text reveals another important detail: Zacchaeus was a short man. Given his reputation, the crowd was unwilling to make room for this short sinner so he could see Jesus walking by. Zacchaeus's desire to see Jesus was so strong that he climbed a tree, a highly unusual act for a man of his social status that exposed him to public shame and humiliation. His eagerness was rewarded, however, as Jesus walked his way. Upon seeing him, Jesus said that it was necessary for Him to stay at Zacchaeus's house that night.

This was a divine appointment. Jesus considered His visit with Zacchaeus as part of His mission. So even though Zacchaeus climbed the tree looking for Jesus, Jesus also was looking for Zacchaeus. More than mere chance or circumstance, this necessary encounter held a redemptive purpose—Jesus came to seek and save sinners, of whom Zacchaeus was one of the foremost of his city.

How can we determine if we are experiencing a "necessary" encounter with someone for the sake of the gospel?



PERSONAL PREPARATION

LUKE 19:6-10

JESUS OFFERS SALVATION TO THOSE WHO ARE LOST AND WANT TO BE FOUND.

Underline the response of the crowd, and circle Zacchaeus's response.

6 So he quickly came down and welcomed him joyfully. **7** All who saw it began to complain, "He's gone to stay with a sinful man." **8** But Zacchaeus stood there and said to the Lord, "Look, I'll give half of my possessions to the poor, Lord. And if I have extorted anything from anyone, I'll pay back four times as much." **9** "Today salvation has come to this house," Jesus told him, "because he too is a son of Abraham. **10** For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save the lost."

THEOLOGY CONNECTION

REPENTANCE: Repentance is a response to God's gracious call to salvation. It includes a genuine sorrow for one's sin (Luke 5:1-11), a turning away from one's sin toward Christ (Acts 26:15-20), and a life that reflects lasting change and transformation (Psalm 119:57-60). It is the human counterpart to God's work of regeneration; in other words, the human side of our conversion.

Key Concept: Jesus came to seek and save the lost.

Grace is scandalous. It is unfair, and that bothers us, especially when we see someone getting something good that we think they don't deserve. The crowd in Jericho the day Zacchaeus climbed a sycamore tree struggled with what they saw when Jesus met and talked to that sinful man. They complained because a tax collector like Zacchaeus should not have received the benefit of salvation coming to His house. Of all the people in the city that day, why would Jesus focus on perhaps the most sinful and despised person? Didn't others deserve it more? Well, that's the problem with grace. It's not dependent on what we deserve. Jesus came to seek and save the lost. No wonder He found Zacchaeus.

Do you find yourself identifying with the complainers or with Zacchaeus in this passage? Why?

While the crowd complained, Zacchaeus rejoiced. Meeting Jesus was the greatest moment of his life. His heart longed to meet Jesus, even if he didn't realize how earnestly until Jesus came to him and invited Himself to his house. His life was now changing, and the change would become evident to all. That's what grace does. It comes to an undeserving soul, changes it entirely, and new works flow

out. We can struggle to hold this order clear in our minds, but we cannot obey into salvation; rather, obedience flows from salvation. The truly changed life can only flow from a truly changed heart.

The evidence of Zacchaeus's repentance is shocking. We must not forget his status. He was rich. He had a certain lifestyle he was used to. And there is no indication that he struggled with his occupation before he met Jesus. Yet when he met Jesus, he gave it all up immediately. He repented on the spot—perhaps even before Jesus came to his house.² The encounter with Jesus was grace enough to move Zacchaeus to give sacrificially to the poor and to vow to repay what he had extorted—four times as much. The rich man was willing to become poor to have Jesus.

How have you seen the grace of Jesus produce true change in your own life?

GOSPEL CONNECTION

Jesus's ministry and mission was to bring salvation to those who are lost and looking to be found.

SALVATION HAS COME TO THIS HOUSE

Read Luke 19:1-10. In the diagram below, write in each section the steps Zacchaeus and Jesus took to reach the point of Zacchaeus's salvation.

ZACCHAEUS		JESUS
	S	
	A	
	L	
	V	
	A	
	T	
	I	
	O	
	N	

What is our response, knowing Jesus seeks to fellowship with us?

How might Zacchaeus's salvation story compare to your own testimony?

Key Concept: Jesus came to seek and save the lost.



HEAD

What does Zacchaeus's story teach us about the transforming power of meeting Jesus?

PRAYING SCRIPTURE

Read Psalm 49. This is a wisdom song, calling us to lay aside earthly treasures for heavenly ones. As you read, pray that God would do the same work in your heart that He did in the psalmist's.

PRAYER REQUESTS AND PRAISES



HEART

What might joyful repentance look like in your own life as Jesus calls you into deeper intimacy with Him?



HANDS

What will it look like for you to lay aside self-focused desires and follow Jesus with joy wherever He leads?



SERVANT TO KING

CORE PASSAGE: LUKE 19:28-40

CONTEXT

Since Luke 9:51, the Gospel writer had been preparing his readers for Jesus's entry into Jerusalem. In Luke 19, the time had come. Jesus went to Jerusalem unafraid, knowing what would happen to Him. This was the moment for which He came into this world—to go to the cross to redeem His people from their sins. Everything was prepared, even down to the servants who would provide the donkey for His entry and the upper room for His last supper. Jesus was fully in control.

KEY CONCEPT

Jesus is the humble King as prophesied, bringing peace and glory to God.

As you examine Luke 19:28-40:

- Recognize that Jesus rode into town on a colt, fulfilling prophecy.
- Praise Jesus, the humble King, who is worthy of all praise from all of creation.



TIMELINE

Jesus Heals a Blind Man
(John 9:1-41)

Jesus Raises Lazarus from
the Dead (John 11:1-44)

Jesus Foretells the Destruction of
Jerusalem and the Temple (Luke 21:5-36)

Jesus Encounters Zacchaeus
(Luke 19:1-10)

SESSION STUDY:
Jesus's Triumphal Entry into
Jerusalem (Luke 19:28-40)

Jesus Institutes the Lord's
Supper (Luke 22:7-38)

Daily Readings

☐ **Day 1:** John 12:12-50

☐ **Day 4:** Matthew 23:1-39

☐ **Day 2:** Luke 19:28-21:4

☐ **Day 5:** Mark 11:1-12:44

☐ **Day 3:** Matthew 21:1-22:46

☐ **Day 6:** Psalm 150



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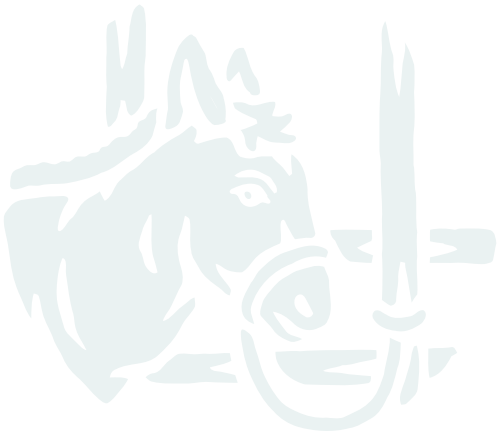
PERSONAL PREPARATION

LUKE 19:28-35

JESUS RODE INTO TOWN ON A DONKEY, REVEALING HIS HUMILITY.

Underline Jesus's instructions to His disciples, and circle their obedience.

28 When he had said these things, he went on ahead, going up to Jerusalem. **29** As he approached Bethphage and Bethany, at the place called the Mount of Olives, he sent two of the disciples **30** and said, "Go into the village ahead of you. As you enter it, you will find a colt tied there, on which no one has ever sat. Untie it and bring it. **31** If anyone asks you, 'Why are you untying it?' say this: 'The Lord needs it.'" **32** So those who were sent left and found it just as he had told them. **33** As they were untying the colt, its owners said to them, "Why are you untying the colt?" **34** "The Lord needs it," they said. **35** Then they brought it to Jesus, and after throwing their clothes on the colt, they helped Jesus get on it.



CHRIST CONNECTION

Jesus was prophesied to come as the Messiah on a donkey (Zechariah 9:9), revealing His humility and His sovereignty as Lord.

Key Concept: Jesus is the humble King as prophesied, bringing peace and glory to God.

Even though the Jews were already seeking information about Jesus's whereabouts to kill Him, Jesus rode into Jerusalem like He owned the place.¹ Notice how in control He was over everything. Preparations were made in advance. People were waiting. A colt was ready. His disciples were told where to go, what to say, and to whom to say it. The Lord was running this show down to the smallest detail. Yet there is no hint of pride in anything the Lord did. Instead, His humility shines in the text.

How does seeing Jesus in full control even as He walked toward suffering and death strengthen your trust in His control over your own life?

Since Luke 9:51, Jesus has set His face toward Jerusalem. Now, finally, Jesus was on the outskirts of the city. The time had come. His hour—the hour when He would redeem His own—was near. The King was about to enter His city. As He did, He knew He was walking right into the grip of His enemies. Yet He did not enter on a war horse with sword drawn. He entered humbly, fulfilling ancient prophecy.

Though Luke did not quote this reference like Matthew and John did, Zechariah had prophesied: “Look, your King is coming to you; he is righteous and victorious,

humble and riding on a donkey, on a colt, the foal of a donkey” (Zechariah 9:9). It was no accident that Jesus chose a donkey to finish His journey into Jerusalem, the city of peace. He came as the Prince of Peace, not a warrior ready to slay but the Savior ready to be slain to make peace between God and man on the cross (Colossians 1:20).

The glory of God came down to this world in Jesus, His Son. And waging war on the sin that ruined His creation, Jesus first fought not by trampling underfoot those who rebelled but by being trampled to death by His enemies—by us all—to save the rebels who would turn to Him.

As followers of Jesus, the Prince of Peace, what weapons do we have for our fight against sin and our gospel mission in the world?

VOICES FROM CHURCH HISTORY

“Our Redeemer is the sovereign Lord and King of all the universe. He did not come to Jerusalem to be made a king. He came into Jerusalem triumphantly as the King. He was going, by way of the cross, to receive his kingdom.”²

—Don Fortner (1950–2020)

PERSONAL PREPARATION

LUKE 19:36-40

JESUS IS KING AND WAS WORSHIPED AS THE MESSIAH.

Circle the way the crowd praised God during Jesus's triumphal entry.

36 As he was going along, they were spreading their clothes on the road. **37** Now he came near the path down the Mount of Olives, and the whole crowd of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the miracles they had seen: **38** Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord. Peace in heaven and glory in the highest heaven! **39** Some of the Pharisees from the crowd told him, "Teacher, rebuke your disciples." **40** He answered, "I tell you, if they were to keep silent, the stones would cry out."

THEOLOGY CONNECTION

CHRIST AS KING: God has always been King over His creation, whether in heaven or on earth. Yet some of His creatures in both realms have rebelled against Him, leaving destruction in their wake. To restore His broken world, God promised a King who would deliver His people and restore all of creation. The promise of a coming King finds its fulfillment in Jesus Christ and looks forward to its perfection when Jesus returns for His bride, the church.



As Jesus rode the donkey into Jerusalem in His triumphal entry, He was greeted by a whole crowd of disciples who both understood and misunderstood the meaning of this event. Here was the King who would bring peace to the city, making it an abiding reality. No doubt nationalistic hopes began to soar: The Messiah had come, and He would establish His rule on the earth—God would finally get His glory.

Although the crowd rightly praised Jesus as God's promised King, they did not fully understand the true meaning of His entrance. How could they? Who would imagine victory and peace would come through death? Who could comprehend that the cross would lead to the crown?

What are some ways you have seen God and His gospel defy worldly wisdom?

Jesus had accomplished a lot in His public ministry so far. The disciples had seen the miracles with their own eyes. They knew the prophecies. They recognized Jesus for who He was. So they praised Him on His humble and triumphant ride into Jerusalem. They gave glory to God for His gracious provision of the promised Savior and King.

But not all who saw Jesus praised Him. The Pharisees were disgusted by what they saw and heard. They too grasped the significance of Jesus's riding in on a donkey, but they didn't believe it was right. How could a mere man receive the praises due only to God? So they commanded Jesus to rebuke His worshiping disciples.

Jesus's response to the Pharisees says a lot about who He is. Some skeptics say Jesus never claimed to be God during His life, but no one who understands the Old Testament can read this account and not see that Jesus was boldly claiming to be God's equal. He willingly received praise as God, something that would have been considered blasphemy if He were just any other man. So confident was Jesus in His response that He declared the stones would cry out if the disciples remained silent because He deserved to be praised.

What are some ways we might be guilty of stifling praise for God and His Son?

THE KING REVEALED

Read Luke 19:28-40. In the columns below, write down how these actions of Jesus point to His earthly and/or heavenly identity.

	EARTHLY IDENTITY	HEAVENLY IDENTITY
INSTRUCTIONS TO THE DISCIPLES (vv. 29-31)		
PREDICTING THE FUTURE (vv. 32-34)		
RIDING A COLT (v. 35)		
RECEIVING PRAISE FROM THE CROWD (vv. 37-38)		
REBUTTAL TO THE PHARISEES (vv. 39-40)		

How do Jesus's humility and royal identity encourage and challenge us to live as we follow in His footsteps?

Key Concept: Jesus is the humble King as prophesied, bringing peace and glory to God.



HEAD

What practices could help you read the Bible in a way that sees its bigness and leads your heart to burn with worship for Christ?

PRAYING SCRIPTURE

Read Psalm 150. Consider the praises of God's people as Jesus rode into Jerusalem. There are so many reasons to praise God, and one way we can do that is through prayer. Use Psalm 150 as a guide to help you praise Him in prayer right now.



HEART

How does seeing Jesus's humility change the way you see yourself and others?

PRAYER REQUESTS AND PRAISES



HANDS

How will you praise Jesus as your King with your words and actions this week?



PERSECUTION TO GATHERING

CORE PASSAGE: MARK 13:5-11,14-16,24-27,32-33

CONTEXT

In the final days before His betrayal, Jesus told His disciples what to expect upon His return at the end of the age. His looming death on the cross would not be the end of the story. There would be much more to come for His followers: The gospel must be preached, people must be saved, and Jesus will return in glory. Though Jesus's message can be difficult to understand, it is a gift of grace to us all. He told us what to expect in the future. He assured us that, come what may, He is in control, He is coming back, and He will make all things right.

KEY CONCEPT

We stay alert, knowing Jesus will one day return, though we don't know when.

As you examine Mark 13:5-11,14-16, 24-27,32-33:

- Take comfort that though persecution will come during the end times, the gospel will still be preached and Jesus will come again for His people.
- Recognize that no one knows when Jesus will return, so we always need to be alert and ready for Him.



TIMELINE

Jesus Heals a Blind Man
(John 9:1-41)

Jesus Raises Lazarus from
the Dead (John 11:1-44)

SESSION STUDY:
Jesus Foretells the Destruction of
Jerusalem and the Temple (Mark 13:1-37)

Jesus Encounters Zacchaeus
(Luke 19:1-10)

Jesus's Triumphal Entry into
Jerusalem (Mark 11:1-11)

Jesus Institutes the Lord's
Supper (Mark 14:12-26)

Daily Readings

☐ **Day 1:** Mark 13:1-13

☐ **Day 2:** Mark 13:14-37

☐ **Day 3:** Matthew 24:1-51

☐ **Day 4:** Matthew 25:1-46

☐ **Day 5:** Luke 21:5-38

☐ **Day 6:** Psalm 10



Scan this QR code
to access this session's
Scripture passages.

THE END TIMES WILL BRING FALSE RUMORS AND PERSECUTION.

Circle the commands to be ready that Jesus gives His followers.

5 Jesus told them, “Watch out that no one deceives you. **6** Many will come in my name, saying, ‘I am he,’ and they will deceive many. **7** When you hear of wars and rumors of wars, don’t be alarmed; these things must take place, but it is not yet the end. **8** For nation will rise up against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be earthquakes in various places, and famines. These are the beginning of birth pains. **9** But you, be on your guard! They will hand you over to local courts, and you will be flogged in the synagogues. You will stand before governors and kings because of me, as a witness to them. **10** And it is necessary that the gospel be preached to all nations. **11** So when they arrest you and hand you over, don’t worry beforehand what you will say, but say whatever is given to you at that time, for it isn’t you speaking, but the Holy Spirit.”

THEOLOGY CONNECTION

THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST: The Bible is clear that one day Christ will return in bodily form (Matthew 24–25) to rule and reign over all creation. Scripture gives no timeline as to when it will occur (Acts 1:7), only assuring that it will be unexpected (Matthew 25:8-10) and glorious (Matthew 24:30). Because of the mystery of these events, several views have emerged in the attempt to understand everything the Bible teaches about His coming reign. One view holds that upon His return, Jesus will begin a literal 1000-year reign on earth. Another holds that this millennium occurs in this church age, to be followed by His return. Another still holds that the millennium symbolizes Christ’s reign in heaven and in the hearts of Christians while we wait for His return. Despite differences, all views agree that the imminent return of Christ is the hope of every Christian, knowing that when He returns, all things will be made new.

Key Concept: We stay alert, knowing Jesus will one day return, though we don't know when.

On account of sin and the sinful nature we inherit from Adam, people's hearts are bent away from God. Even disciples of Jesus are prone to believe lies, conspiracy theories, and rumors. Jesus knew this, so He prepared His followers for what was and is to come, not to stir fear in our hearts but to give comfort. Many may be deceived in the end times, but His people must not be.

Yet deception is only one part of the difficulties to come. Persecution is another. There will be wars, earthquakes, and famines, but more personal challenges lay ahead. God's people will be handed over to courts, flogged, demanded to bear witness, and even to deny the faith. We have seen many such instances in the history of the church. Jesus wants us to know that such things are not glitches in the system but features for the Christian life. Why? Because through the suffering of His saints, His gospel is proclaimed and goes forth.

How does Jesus's warning strengthen your confidence to remain faithful when trials come?

Warnings of persecution can cause intense anxiety, even in believers. When dragged before governors and kings—important and powerful judges—what can a Christian say? Should we prepare our speeches now? Should we take courses in apologetics to have all the answers at the ready? What if the judges and magistrates ask a question we can't answer or make a demand we cannot meet? The good news is that Jesus told us we need not worry about what we will say in those moments. The Holy Spirit will speak for us and through us. When everything is on the line for you, you will not be alone!

How can we know this is true? Because just a little while after Jesus said these things, He went through the ultimate, unfair trial. He stood before the Sanhedrin, the Roman governor, and the Judean king. He was beaten and sentenced to death on false charges. More than mere sympathy, Jesus is the One who has conquered everything that makes us afraid. He is the only One who, after judgment and execution, rose from the dead never to die again, and He will come again. So He can truly say to us: "You will have suffering in this world. Be courageous! I have conquered the world" (John 16:33).

Does the promise of the Holy Spirit with you in persecution give you comfort or raise questions? Why?

PERSONAL PREPARATION

MARK 13:14-16, 24-27, 32-33

THOUGH WE KNOW NOT WHEN, JESUS WILL RETURN.

Highlight the poetic imagery in the passage below.

14 “When you see the abomination of desolation standing where it should not be” (let the reader understand), “then those in Judea must flee to the mountains. **15** A man on the housetop must not come down or go in to get anything out of his house, **16** and a man in the field must not go back to get his coat. . . . **24** But in those days, after that tribulation: The sun will be darkened, and the moon will not shed its light; **25** the stars will be falling from the sky, and the powers in the heavens will be shaken. **26** Then they will see the Son of Man coming in clouds with great power and glory. **27** 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** Now concerning that day or hour no one knows—neither the angels in heaven nor the Son—but only the Father. **33** Watch! Be alert! For you don’t know when the time is coming.”

VOICES FROM CHURCH HISTORY

✕ ————— ✕
“The Son of Man is coming in the midst of both calamities and promises, both the grief of nations and the longing of the saints. He is the common element in both. He who is common to both will end the one by inflicting judgment on the nations, and will commence the other by fulfilling the longings of the saints.”¹

—Tertullian (c. 155–220)

Key Concept: We stay alert, knowing Jesus will one day return, though we don't know when.



Verse 14 opens with an allusion to Daniel 9:27; 11:31; 12:11 regarding “the abomination of desolation.” Jesus was pointing to days not long after His ascension when the temple in Jerusalem would be destroyed in AD 70 by the Romans and the Jews would have to flee from Jerusalem. Of course, Jesus’s apostles didn’t know that would happen when He spoke these words to them. They did not have the advantage of hindsight that we do.

Yet Jesus also spoke beyond AD 70. The passage is filled with Old Testament imagery. Joel 2:10; 3:15 speak of the sun, moon, and stars darkening. On the great day of the Lord, at the end of this present age, when the Lord returns to finally redeem and restore this broken world, there will be a kind of de-creation. Everything will be shaken so that what remains are only the things that cannot be shaken—the everlasting things of God (Hebrews 12:25-29).

What “shakable” things are you tempted to cling to, and how might Jesus be inviting you to rest more deeply in what cannot be shaken?

After all these things, the Lord will appear in glory! He will gather His people into His everlasting kingdom in a renewed heavens and earth, and we will be with the Lord forever in joy and gladness. This will be utterly amazing! But we don’t know when it will happen, nor can we know. God has not revealed that information. Our part isn’t to try to figure it out. How could we ever know if Jesus Himself didn’t know? Our part is to stay alert, to keep close to Jesus, and to await His return eagerly. Watching and waiting is not revolutionary. Anyone can do it. He’s not asking too much from us. He’s only asking us to be ready when He comes. The great day of the Lord will be awful for those who oppose Him, but for those who love Him, it will be marvelous.

When you imagine Christ appearing in glory to gather His people, what stirs in your heart?

CHURCH CONNECTION

Jesus spoke of the end times when He will return, gathering His people after a time of hardship and persecution. No one knows when He will come, so in the meantime, we stay alert and preach the gospel.



UNTIL THEN

Read Mark 13:5-11,14-16,24-27,32-33. Write down Jesus's instructions for what His disciples should know, watch for, and do as they await His return.

What are some wrong ways to respond to the Bible's end times prophecies?

What are some ways we should respond to Jesus's warnings in Mark 13?



Key Concept: We stay alert, knowing Jesus will one day return, though we don't know when.



HEAD

How can you be sure that no one will deceive you about Christ's return?

PRAYING SCRIPTURE

Read Psalm 10. Looking out at the injustice of this broken world makes us long for things to be set right. We know that when Christ returns, He will judge this world and make all things good and right. Psalm 10 gives us a model to pray for such things.



HEART

How does the promise of Christ's return fill you with hope today?

PRAYER REQUESTS AND PRAISES



HANDS

In the ordinary rhythms of your life, what will it look like to watch and wait for Jesus's return?



THE OMNISCIENCE OF GOD

By Greg Kilgore

What would you do if you knew everything? What would you do if you knew all the possible outcomes of every situation in circumstances past, present, and future? Many people likely would use this knowledge for their own personal benefit and gain. Thankfully, this ability to know all things is not an attribute that humans possess.

The word omniscience comes from the Latin *omni* meaning “all” and *scientia* meaning “knowledge.” Omniscience is the attribute of God where He possesses all knowledge. Nothing can surprise God or catch Him off guard. Nothing is hidden from His sight. Psalm 147:5 says, “Our Lord is great, vast in power; his understanding is infinite.” First John 3:19-20 says, “God is greater than our hearts, and he knows all things.” The God of the universe knows “all things.”

GOD’S OMNISCIENCE IS A BLESSING

God’s vast knowledge is a wonderful blessing to His people. Psalm 139 is full of references to God’s infinite knowledge. This infinite knowledge of God causes David to respond in worship: “This wondrous knowledge is beyond me. It is lofty; I am unable to reach it” (v. 6). Thus, the omniscience of

God should lead us to worship God for how great and knowledgeable He is.

This key doctrine serves as a great comfort to the believer. We belong to the One who knows all! That means that God knows us better than we know ourselves. That is a frightful thought when we think about our sinfulness in light of God’s holiness. However, this gives us great hope because He has defeated sin and death. God knows how sinful we are, yet He still has made a way for us to know Him through His Son, Jesus Christ. In His perfect wisdom and knowledge, God knew that a plan of redemption through Christ was needed to redeem us from our sinfulness.

JESUS IS OMNISCIENT AS GOD THE SON

Jesus, being fully God, possesses this attribute of omniscience. John stated, “Jesus . . . did not need anyone to testify about man; for he himself knew what was in man” (John 2:24-25). Jesus having the ability to know what is in the hearts of human beings is an example of His divine omniscience on display. Often He displayed that He knew what people were thinking in their hearts (Matthew 9:4; 12:25; Mark 2:6-8; Luke 6:8). After the resurrection, when Jesus asked

Peter a third time if he loved Jesus, Peter replied, “Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you” (John 21:17).

Additionally, Jesus revealed that He had divine foreknowledge. In John 11, Jesus assured His disciples that Lazarus’s sickness would “not end in death” but would glorify God (v. 4). He later had to tell His confused disciples: “Lazarus has died. I’m glad for you that I wasn’t there so that you may believe” (vv. 14-15). After Lazarus’s death, Jesus told Martha, “Your brother will rise again” (v. 23). John also indicated that “Jesus knew from the beginning those who did not believe and the one who would betray him” (6:64). At the triumphal entry, Jesus again displayed His divine foreknowledge to instruct His disciples about the colt that He would ride into Jerusalem (Luke 19:30).

JESUS ACCEPTS THAT ONLY THE FATHER KNOWS THE HOUR

Jesus is clearly shown in the Gospels to be omniscient as fully God and fully man. But Jesus also accepted that God the Father knows when Jesus will return to earth, yet Jesus does not. Jesus stated: “Now concerning that day or hour no one knows—neither the angels in heaven nor the Son—but only the Father. Watch! Be alert! For you don’t know when the time is coming” (Mark 13:32-33). Does this contradict the other sections of the Gospels that clearly portray Jesus as possessing equal omniscience as God the Son? No, Jesus is fully God and fully man. His deity and humanity (a mystery to our finite human minds) are preserved perfectly in Him.

How Jesus could know all things and have limited knowledge on the specific date of His return will remain a mystery to us humans. However, we can trust the Lord and think through this topic as a theological exercise where Jesus here is likely speaking in terms of His human nature, not His divine nature.

We could get caught up in some of these important theological topics and debates and yet miss the point of God’s omniscience. Praise the Lord He is the One who knows all! We can trust Him and His perfect plan for our life. If we return to Psalm 139, at the end of the psalm, David reminded us that the purpose of God’s infinite knowledge is to drive us to the Lord in repentance and faith. David wrote: “Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my concerns. See if there is any offensive way in me; lead me in the everlasting way” (vv. 23-24). Jesus is the One who perfectly knows and has made known this everlasting way.

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BETRAYAL TO BLESSING

CORE PASSAGE: MARK 14:17-26

CONTEXT

Jesus “triumphantly” entered Jerusalem, humbly riding on a donkey. Over the next week, He cleansed the temple of thieves, denounced the Jewish authorities, and taught about the future destruction of Jerusalem and its temple. Near the end of the week, in the upper room, before Jesus celebrated and transformed the Passover meal, He had a startling message for His disciples: one of them would betray Him. This betrayal was not a surprise to Jesus. He knew it all along, and as He neared the day of His death, it was time for the traitor to do what he had been appointed to do.

KEY CONCEPT

Jesus endured betrayal, remaining faithful to the mission of establishing a new covenant.

As you examine Mark 14:17-26:

- Recognize that at the last supper, Jesus knew He would be betrayed by one of His disciples.
- Rejoice that even knowing Judas’s coming betrayal, Jesus remained focused on sacrificing His life for the salvation of all.



TIMELINE

Jesus Raises Lazarus from the Dead (John 11:1-44)

Jesus Foretells the Destruction of Jerusalem and the Temple (Mark 13:1-37)

Jesus Is Betrayed and Tried (Mark 14:27-15:15)

Jesus's Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem (Mark 11:1-11)

SESSION STUDY:
Jesus Institutes the Lord's Supper (Mark 14:12-26)

Jesus Is Crucified and Buried (Mark 15:16-47)

Daily Readings

☐ **Day 1:** Mark 14:1-26

☐ **Day 2:** Matthew 26:1-30

☐ **Day 3:** Luke 22:1-30

☐ **Day 4:** John 13:1-14:31

☐ **Day 5:** John 15:1-17:26

☐ **Day 6:** Psalm 55



Scan this QR code to access this session's Scripture passages.

PERSONAL PREPARATION

MARK 14:17-21

JESUS ENDURED THE SUFFERING OF BETRAYAL.

Underline the hints Jesus gave for the identity of His betrayer.

17 When evening came, he arrived with the Twelve. **18** While they were reclining and eating, Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me—one who is eating with me.” **19** They began to be distressed and to say to him one by one, “Surely not I?” **20** He said to them, “It is one of the Twelve—the one who is dipping bread in the bowl with me. **21** For the Son of Man will go just as it is written about him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for him if he had not been born.”

GOSPEL CONNECTION

Jesus suffered more than just the cross. He suffered humiliation and betrayal. Yet He endured because of His love and commitment to His mission to bring salvation and establish a new covenant with God’s people.



In this moment, Jesus and the Twelve were observing the Passover feast as commanded in the law of Moses. What should have been a joyous remembrance of God's deliverance, however, suddenly became somber as Jesus declared that one of them would betray Him. Imagine the shock in the room. Sure, Jesus had enemies, but did He have one in this room? It was only reasonable for them to be distressed and to ask for clarification.

Mark said each of the Twelve—one by one—asked Jesus, “Surely not I?” Why one by one? Perhaps they all had some self-doubt. They loved Jesus, but they had seen how people reacted to Him. Perhaps they knew their own weak and sinful hearts. Each thought, “Will I be the one to betray Him?” Even if unintentional, they each worried they might be the cause of Jesus's downfall, except surely the one who had already made the arrangements with the chief priests (vv. 10-11).

What are some ways you might have the potential to betray Jesus?

To the disciples' self-searching query, Jesus gave a non-answer: “It is one of the Twelve” (v. 20). One eating with them now in that intimate setting would be the one to betray their Lord. Why didn't

Jesus tell the other disciples it was Judas? We can't be sure, but Jesus said later in His prayer: “I guarded them and not one of them is lost, except the son of destruction, so that the Scripture may be fulfilled” (John 17:12). If the rest of the disciples knew, would Judas have made it out of that room? But the Scripture had to be fulfilled, and the path was already laid out. Jesus would go “just as it is written about him” (Mark 14:21), possibly a reference to Psalm 41:9, where David said, “Even my friend in whom I trusted, one who ate my bread, has raised his heel against me.”

Even though it was foretold, Judas was still responsible. Divine sovereignty and human responsibility coexist. God is in control of everything, and we are morally responsible for our actions. Judas's betrayal was not excused because it was a fulfillment of prophecy. His sin was his own, as was his judgment. It would have been better, in fact, if he were never born at all, for his eternity apart from Jesus will be far worse than never existing. Such a sobering reality highlights the seriousness of sin.

How does Judas's fulfillment of prophecy challenge your understanding of the nature and authority of Scripture?

PERSONAL PREPARATION

MARK 14:22-26

JESUS ENDURED TO THE CROSS BECAUSE OF HIS FAITHFULNESS TO THE NEW COVENANT.

Highlight the elements of the Lord's Supper and what they represent.

22 As they were eating, he took bread, blessed and broke it, gave it to them, and said, "Take it; this is my body." **23** Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks, he gave it to them, and they all drank from it. **24** He said to them, "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many. **25** Truly I tell you, I will no longer drink of the fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new in the kingdom of God." **26** After singing a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.



VOICES FROM CHURCH HISTORY

"There is a reality in the celebration of the Lord's Supper beyond a memorial. Yes, Jesus in His humanity is in heaven, but in His deity, He is not restricted by time and space. So, we can have full assurance when we come to the Lord's Table that we come into His real presence. He is there."¹

—R. C. Sproul (1939–2017)



In 1 Corinthians 11:28, the apostle Paul said we ought to examine ourselves before partaking in communion, or the Lord's Supper. That is the model Jesus gave us in this passage. Jesus announced His coming betrayal, and each disciple asked Jesus if he were the one who would betray Him. Then Jesus took the bread and wine and served the first communion meal.

What weaknesses and sins are revealed through your own self-examination right now?

Such examination humbles us to receive the gift of Christ's body and blood offering. The disciples that evening were not aware of the deep meaning behind Jesus's words, but soon they would see. The offering Jesus made in the Lord's Supper symbolized the offering He made on the cross. The bread represented His body, the wine His blood. The broken body and shed blood of Christ for the forgiveness of sins—a beautiful reality!

Like Judas's betrayal, Jesus's death on the cross would be a fulfillment of Scripture. Through it, Jesus, our Prophet, Priest, and King, would institute the new covenant as prophesied in Jeremiah 31:31-34. Christ would sacrifice Himself as the final offering for the forgiveness of sins to fulfill the old covenant and initiate the

new covenant (Hebrews 8:13). In the Lord's Supper, this is exactly what we celebrate. Jesus took, He blessed, He broke, He gave, He offered Himself—body and blood—to save His disciples and us.

The brevity of the passage must not be taken to mean this is an unimportant event. Here Jesus began something new, meaningful, and long-lasting. We still celebrate the Lord's Supper today. It is one of the ordinances enjoyed by churches around the world and throughout the centuries. This is one reminder of the dying and resurrecting love of Christ. It is a gift from our Savior to taste and see that He is good (Psalm 34:8).

How should Jesus's sacrifice of His own body and blood shape the way we come to the Lord's Supper?

THEOLOGY CONNECTION

THE LORD'S SUPPER: The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members of the church, through partaking of the bread and the fruit of the vine, memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming.

LAST SUPPER, LAST WORDS

Read Mark 14:17-26. From the passage, write down phrases that reveal Jesus's suffering or His faithfulness.

JESUS'S SUFFERING

JESUS'S FAITHFULNESS

As you look at Jesus's words of suffering and faithfulness, how does this shape your understanding of the cross and your salvation?

Key Concept: Jesus endured betrayal, remaining faithful to the mission of establishing a new covenant.



HEAD

Why was it important for Jesus to institute the Lord's Supper as a remembrance of both His death and the new covenant?

PRAYING SCRIPTURE

✕ ————— ✕
Read Psalm 55. Feel the emotion of it and consider that the God of the universe took on flesh to experience such pain Himself for our sake. Meditate on the wonder of the gospel, thanking Jesus that His grace is greater than our sin.



HEART

How does Jesus's sacrifice for your sins encourage you to repent and come to Him for grace and forgiveness?

PRAYER REQUESTS AND PRAISES



HANDS

What would you say to a fellow believer who thinks they need to skip the Lord's Supper until they are "worthy"?



FOUR WAYS TO DEAL WITH ELEPHANTS IN THE ROOM

By Darren Wiedman

It's that thing in your small group that nobody wants to talk about but everyone knows is there. The odd behavior. The unique personality. Or more than likely, the touchy subject. According to social media, the earth is flat or round, vaccines help or harm, and the media is lying or telling the truth. This is a difficult time to be alive if you like definitive answers. And it can make for some tense exchanges and hurt feelings, even in churches and small groups, where you'd think everyone would be on the same page.

But even in biblical times, there was conflict. The apostles argued about which of them was the greatest? Mary and Martha disagreed about how to serve guests. And Pilate asked the ultimate question (although rhetorically), "What is truth?"

Today's small groups continue the tradition. When we can't see eye to eye, it may be time to have a heart to heart. Here are four ways to overcome the dreaded elephant in the room.

1) IGNORE IT

Is your elephant the small porcelain type that rests on a corner shelf or a large smelly one that sits in the circle? If it's the former, you may be able to divert attention away from it by emphasizing the other positive aspects of group life: discussions about the Bible, fellowship, laughter, and food.

2) CONFRONT IT

Often the elephant comes in with one particular person. You don't want to appear to take a side against someone in front of everyone, so a private discussion will be best. Keep in mind that it's difficult to convince anyone that their thinking is incorrect or goes against all factual evidence. So don't bother trying to persuade someone they're wrong; rather, remind them about the purpose of the group: to focus on Christ and biblical learning. In other words, leave your elephant at home, or take it to a different circus.

3) EMBRACE IT

If your group has an elephant that can't be ignored, maybe it's time to bring it out into the middle of the group and take a good look. This would require permission beforehand if it's one particular person's elephant. But if it's a group issue like politics (elephants and donkeys), perhaps you can all come to an agreement that both of them need to stay outside. Or maybe, if you're brave, you can devote an entire group session to discussing each side of the various issues from a biblical perspective. (I can think of very few scenarios where that would end well, but maybe your group is spiritually mature enough to take that on.) But for many other issues—someone's obnoxious laugh, the woman who cries about everything, the overly expressive worshiper—acknowledging the elephant in front of everyone can greatly reduce its size and impact.

4) PRAY ABOUT IT

This really should be the first thing you do. Every elephant is different. And only God knows the best way to deal with them. In reality, the elephant in the room is less of a challenge than the humans in the circle. The whole point of small groups is discipleship. And sometimes God will use an elephant to train a person. After all, Jesus helped the apostles understand the unexpected requirements for anyone wanting to be the greatest; He helped Martha get a better perspective on priorities; and He proved that He, in fact, is the truth, even if Pilate never understood.

Continually encourage
your group to
fix their gaze on
the gigantic love of Jesus.
Everything else
is small by comparison.

And maybe that's the ultimate solution to the elephant in your room. Continually encourage your group to fix their gaze on the gigantic love of Jesus. Everything else is small by comparison.

Darren Wiedman is a copywriter for Lifeway's Adults Ministry team who relies heavily on God's grace and Jesus's atoning work on the cross.

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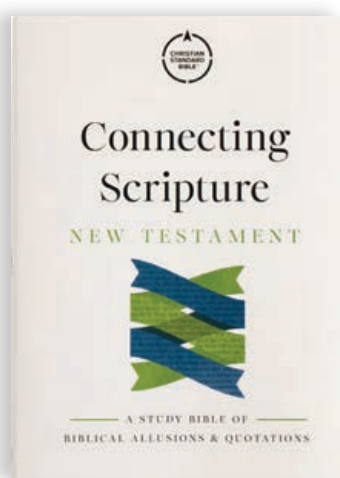
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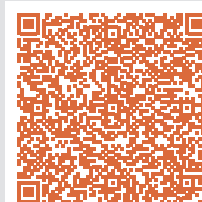
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