

An open book with blank pages lies on a rustic, light-colored wooden surface. A pair of hands with light-colored nail polish is clasped together over the left page of the book. The background is a close-up of the wood grain, showing natural knots and textures. Overlaid on the image is the title 'Ladies' Night Out' in a white, elegant script font. Below the title, the subtitle 'ENJOYING JESUS THROUGH THE GOSPELS' is written in a smaller, white, sans-serif font.

# Ladies' Night Out

ENJOYING JESUS THROUGH THE GOSPELS

# LET'S BEGIN

## AN INTRODUCTION

As we begin our journey through the Gospels, there are a few important things to know. The Gospels are not the beginning of the story of Jesus. Our Bible starts and ends with Jesus. He was present at the beginning at Creation. There is evidence of His presence all throughout the Old Testament. There is foreshadowing of His embodied presence throughout the story of God's people in the Old Testament.

When Jesus comes on the scene as a baby in the New Testament...it was as author Rebecca McLaughlin says, "the first scene after a long intermission".

## JESUS FROM COVER TO COVER

Hints of Jesus are seen in Scripture from beginning to end. It's important to see where the gospels are in the big story of God's redemption plan laid out in the Bible, in order to fully comprehend why the Gospel accounts matter.

### *Jesus – Cover to Cover*



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# THE OLD TESTAMENT

The Old Testament is filled with prophecies of the coming Messiah, a promised King named Jesus. Knowing what these ancient Jewish people would have known about this coming King is important to understanding the story of Jesus' birth, ministry, death, and resurrection as told in the Gospels.

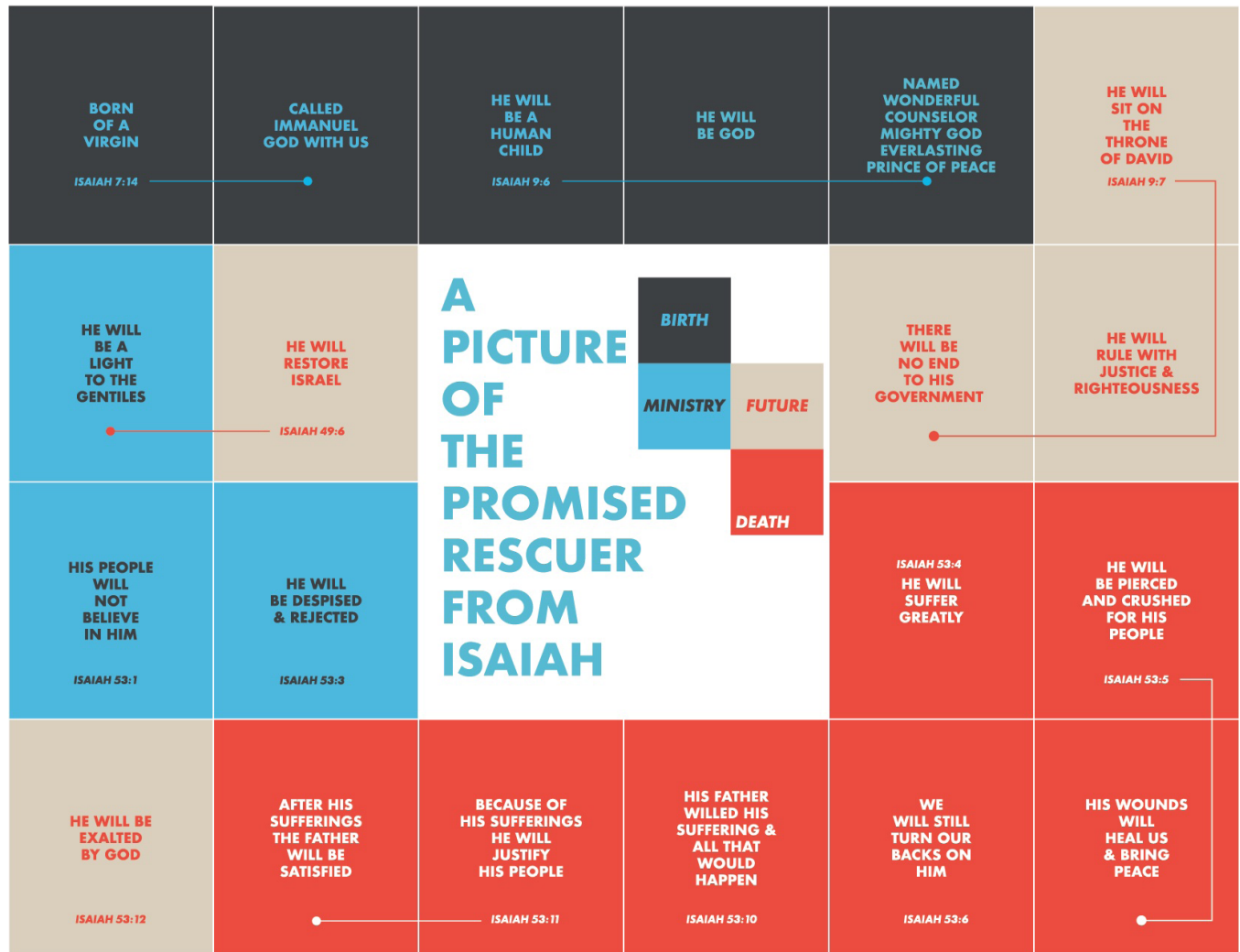


Image used with permission. © 2019 Visual Theology

We highly encourage you to watch the following BibleProject videos at some point during your reading of the gospels.

**The Gospels** - [graceintheword.cc/gospels](https://graceintheword.cc/gospels)  
**Matthew Chapters 1-13** - [graceintheword.cc/matthew1](https://graceintheword.cc/matthew1)  
**Matthew Chapters 14-28** - [graceintheword.cc/matthew2](https://graceintheword.cc/matthew2)  
**Mark** - [graceintheword.cc/mark](https://graceintheword.cc/mark)  
**Luke Chapters 1-9** - [graceintheword.cc/luke1](https://graceintheword.cc/luke1)  
**Luke Chapters 10-24** - [graceintheword.cc/luke2](https://graceintheword.cc/luke2)  
**John Chapters 1-12** - [graceintheword.cc/john1](https://graceintheword.cc/john1)  
**John Chapters 13-21** - [graceintheword.cc/john2](https://graceintheword.cc/john2)

# UNDERSTANDING THE CONTEXT & WRITERS OF THE GOSPELS

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To really understand the context of the gospels, we have to set the stage for where the gospels begin.

The end of the Old Testament marks the beginning of a period known as the four hundred years of silence. During that time, God doesn't send prophets, and we have no written records of His engagement with mankind. But we know He's there, working out His plan in and through His people, and that a lot is happening historically and politically. This is important because it tells us the kind of political climate Jesus was born into. At the end of the Old Testament, the Jews are home in Israel after being driven out by the Babylonian Empire, but now they're under the control of the Persian Empire—the ones who defeated Babylon. A few hundred years later, another empire, Rome, rises up and takes control of Israel in 63 BC. Here's all you need to remember for when we launch into the Gospels and the New Testament: The Jews are tired and they're ready for rescue. They've been driven from their land, had their cities destroyed, lived as exiles and as slaves, and had to rebuild their cities, and they are now living back in their homeland under the oppression of one of the cruelest empires in the history of mankind. They remember God's promise to send them a new King who will conquer all their enemies, but they have no idea yet what that means or how or when that promise will be fulfilled. When our New Testament reading opens, we open in Israel in 7 BC, approximately a year before Jesus is born, and the Jewish people are both ready for their new king and they're understandably skeptical of anyone with power. In the Gospels, we'll be reading some of the stories multiple times. Three of the four gospels overlap often: Matthew, Mark, and Luke. They're called the Synoptic Gospels, meaning they cover a lot of the same territory. John is the non-Synoptic gospel; John takes a different approach to storytelling, writing like a movie director more than a biographer. Each of the gospels has its own style and gives us a unique lens through which to see Jesus, so there's something new to learn or look for, even when we're reading the same story for the second or third time.

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The gospels of **Matthew, Mark, and Luke** are referred to as the synoptic Gospels because they include many of the same stories, often in a similar sequence and in similar or sometimes identical wording. They stand in contrast to John, whose content is largely distinct.

"Each gospel writer has a unique lens on who Jesus is. Matthew's unique lens on Jesus is "Jesus as King," and this book is likely written by the apostle who was a tax collector before Jesus called him. Luke's primary lens is "Jesus as man," and John's primary lens is "Jesus as God." Jesus was 100 percent human and 100 percent divine, so it's fitting to start with those two books. Mark's unique lens on Jesus is "Jesus as servant." The four lenses present ideas that seem juxtaposed—king and servant, man and God—but they work together to show us a fuller picture of Jesus."

Adapted from *The Bible Recap* by Tara-Leigh Cobble



When reading the gospels like this side by side, the goal is not to point out the differences, but to use the different perspectives of each gospel writer to get a fuller understanding of who Jesus was and a fuller vision of his time on earth.

	<b>Author:</b>	<b>Audience:</b>	<b>Focus:</b>	<b>Unique Lens:</b>	<b>Approx Date Written:</b>
<b>Matthew</b>	Jewish Tax Collector who saw, lived & walked with Jesus	Jews who knew the Scriptures & are awaiting a coming King	Jesus as the Prophesied King; the anticipated Messiah	Detail oriented, most prophetic gospel with over 130 OT references to how Jesus fulfilled prophecies	55-60 AD
<b>Mark</b>	Jewish Missionary to Rome who was mentored by Peter & served as his scribe recording Peter's encounters with Jesus	Romans - an audience that is largely unfamiliar with Jewish scriptures & customs	Jesus as the Obedient Suffering Servant	Narrative driven & practical, hitting the high points of the actions of Jesus that present his ministry and mission in order for them to understand God's redemptive story.	50-55 AD
<b>Luke</b>	Gentile Physician, a highly educated travel companion of Paul during his missionary journeys	Gentiles (non-Jews), specifically the Greeks/Romans with whom he would have influence	Jesus as the Son of Man, focused on His perfect humanity	Historical account filled with political background & eyewitness testimony, seems to center around the humanity in Jesus' encounters & the message that Jesus came for	58-60 AD
<b>John</b>	Jew who saw, lived & walked closely with Jesus	Everyone	Jesus as the Son of God, focused on His divine nature	Theologically rich account showing that Jesus was "God in the flesh" and centers on how faith is to be lived out	80-90 AD

# WEEK 1

## THE BEGINNING OF JESUS' EARTHLY LIFE & MINISTRY

### The Genealogies of Jesus

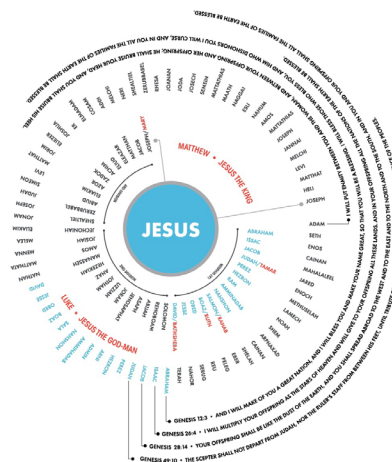
Every name in Matthew's genealogy opens up a storyline that is marked by high points of Israel's history starting with Abraham and coming to a pinnacle with David's reign, before ending on the tragedy of the exile. Matthew's hope as a Jew writing to a Jewish audience is to prove that Jesus is the promised Messiah that the Jews have been waiting on. But it's important to note that this isn't just a boring list of names, there is a specific message being given in who is included in this list. Matthew's genealogy includes women, which is unheard of in ancient Jewish genealogies, Jesus came to restore honor to women. It's also notable that he includes Gentiles to be sure the Jews know the message of Jesus is not exclusively for them and he includes people with scandalous histories to send the message that Jesus is a redeemer.

Luke's genealogy functions as a transition point in his narrative and intentionally goes all the way back to His divine origins from God & His human origins from Adam, pointing to Jesus being fully God and fully human. Luke's hope as a Gentile writing to a Gentile audience is to emphasize Jesus as a Savior that came for all of mankind, not solely the Jews, but for the Gentiles as well.

Adapted from *The Bible Recap* by Tara-Leigh Cobble

## BOTH JESUS' DIVINITY AND ROYALTY ARE MADE CLEAR FROM HIS BIRTH

  
**LUKE**  
**JESUS THE GOD-MAN**



  
**MATTHEW**  
**JESUS IS THE KING**

# DAY 1

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*John 1:1-18, Luke 1, Matthew 1:1-17, Luke 3:23-38*

## In the Beginning

The Book of John opens by taking us back to the beginning of time and putting Jesus at the start of it all. John 1 echoes Genesis 1, where God the Son (Jesus) does the manual labor of creation. God the Son wasn't created. He has always existed as God the Son; He took on the name Jesus when He was born on earth. Even though Jesus made the world, the world doesn't recognize Him.

Luke's primary lens is "Jesus as man," and John's primary lens is "Jesus as God." Jesus was 100 percent human and 100 percent divine. The book of Luke opens with an angel of the Lord predicting the birth of John the Baptist. God has a special assignment for John, he'll be filled with the Spirit of God, even when he's in the womb! At this time, God the Spirit doesn't dwell in people yet, so this is a big deal. In fact, Gabriel says John the Baptist's life will be like Elijah's, which recalls what Malachi 4:5-6 says. Essentially, his life will be a flashing arrow pointing toward the Messiah.

The songs of Mary and Zechariah demonstrate that they know what matters. Mary rejoices even though she gets something she didn't ask for, because it's far greater than her wants or desires. On the other hand, Zechariah just got a yes to a long-prayed prayer, but he skips past praising God for the birth of his son and goes straight to praising God for the upcoming birth of Jesus. He knows what's most important—it's not the yes to his own desires, it's the yes to all humanity's long-awaited redemption. The birth of Christ is the yes that surpasses all our prayers and the peace that surpasses all our fears!

By giving us two genealogies from different vantage points in Matthew and Luke, Scripture gives us a fuller view of Christ. (See previous page for explanation of the genealogies)

Adapted from *The Bible Recap* by Tara-Leigh Cobble

## » What stood out to you in today's reading?

This week, we encourage you to watch these short videos from BibleProject to gain context.

**John Chapters 1-12 -**

[graceintheword.cc/john1](http://graceintheword.cc/john1)

**Matthew Chapters 1-13 -**

[graceintheword.cc/matthew1](http://graceintheword.cc/matthew1)

**Mark -**

[graceintheword.cc/mark](http://graceintheword.cc/mark)

**Luke Chapters 1-9 -**

[graceintheword.cc/luke1](http://graceintheword.cc/luke1)



# DAY 2

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*Matthew 1:18-25, Matthew 2, Luke 2*

## **Jesus' Birth, Visit from the Wise Men, & Fleeing from Herod**

Matthew's account of Jesus' birth is written to intentionally show the cohesiveness with the Old Testament prophecies that the Jews would have been familiar with. Luke 2 tells us of Christ's birth, which unfolds far differently than it does in most imagery we've seen. Everyone has to go to their ancestral hometown for the census, so Mary and Joseph likely travel in a large group of extended family, not alone. They probably aim to stay with distant family in Bethlehem, but because everyone is in town for the census, the guest room is full. The word translated as inn isn't a hotel; it's likely a basement cave. Most homes in this day are built on caves, which serve as basements and animal pens. The feeding troughs are often hollowed-out stone, because wood isn't abundant in Israel. The shepherds are likely Levitical shepherds who raise sheep used in temple sacrifices. When a sacrificial lamb is born, they wrap it in swaddling cloth to keep it from getting bruised or injured, because only a perfect lamb can be a sacrifice. So when an angel tells them the Savior is wrapped in swaddling cloths, this points to Him as the perfect, sacrificial lamb.

Most scholars say the wisemen were astrologers who worked for a king. They have access to the Hebrew Scriptures, because they're quoting from Micah 5:2 when they talk to King Herod. Their journey probably takes several months, which means neither the wise men nor the star are at the cave on the night of Jesus's birth. They worship Him and give Him gifts. Then God warns them in a dream not to go back to Herod, so they take another route. When they don't come back, Herod makes an order to kill all the boys age two and under in the whole region, because apparently, they'd said the new King would be about two years old. But God warns Joseph in a dream, so they move to Egypt, outside Herod's jurisdiction.

Today we see that God goes to great lengths in order to provide for and protect His people according to His plan. He sends dreams and angels and angels in dreams, and not just to Joseph and his family, but to the wise men too. We're already seeing how Jesus is the King of people from among every nation—these wise men come from a foreign country to worship Him. These non-Jews follow a star and travel for months to give expensive gifts to a toddler, because they believe God's Word. Jesus is already drawing people from among every nation, and He's still in diapers! Then God protects the wise men on their way home, and God protects Joseph's family when Herod turns to murder. Does God's protective nature mean bad things won't ever happen to His kids? No—in fact, He spared the life of His Son at age two, but thirty-one years later, things go quite differently. God's protective nature means that whatever comes our way, He can be trusted. He's attentive. He's at work on our behalf in all things.

*Adapted from The Bible Recap by Tara-Leigh Cobble*

## **Jesus' Childhood**

Luke tells us Jesus took annual trips with His whole family to the temple. On one of those trips, His obedience to God seemed to cause trouble for His parents. He explained that He was faithful to what God was asking of Him, and they still did not really understand. Jesus knows what it's like to be misunderstood. Twice Luke tells us that Jesus grew in wisdom. Today's reading tells us Jesus grew physically and mentally. He had growing pains as His limbs stretched. He got taller and older. He discovered truths in God's Word and learned about life. He grew in wisdom. Jesus knows what it is like to change and grow. Jesus is 100% God and 100% human. He is not the hero that appears to be like us; He is the Savior who knows what it's like to be us. That makes Him uniquely able to sympathize with the broad range of human experiences.

*Written by Jamin Roller - He Reads Truth, Life of Jesus*

» **What was your biggest takeaway from today's reading?**

# DAY 3

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*Matthew 3, Matthew 4:1-11, Mark 1:1-13, Luke 3:1-22, Luke 4:1-13, John 1:19-34*

If you want a deeper dive into Jesus' baptism, watch [graceintheword.cc/jesusbaptism](http://graceintheword.cc/jesusbaptism)

## Jesus' Baptism & Temptation

The identification of Jesus in Matthew 3 is so pivotal to the gospel story. Present at Jesus' baptism were those who were skeptical of Him, such as the Pharisees, as well as some who believed, such as John the Baptist. In front of them all, the Father answered everyone's question: "This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well-pleased." The declaration of Jesus' authority mattered greatly that day. Jesus was beginning His ministry. He would go on to perform miracles and heal countless numbers of people. If He was doing so by any name other than the Father's, if His miracles were performed through anyone other than the Holy Spirit, His authority during His ministry would be undermined, as well as the work that was done on the cross.

Authority matters. Later in chapter four, Satan tempts Jesus. What was Satan's strategy? To question Jesus' authority. You can't turn this rock to bread...The angels don't really answer to you...You are not actually in control of anything here. It's the same strategy Satan uses to tempt us. He wants us to question Jesus' authority, to look outside of Christ for guidance. To bow down to other idols. To look for fulfillment in other things. If Jesus is not the authority in our lives, something else will be, someone else will be.

Scripture says the devil left Jesus when Jesus quoted these words from the law: "Worship the Lord your God, and serve only him". Satan knew he stood no chance against someone who was clear about the authority in His life. He stands no chance against us, if we are clear about the authority that is ours in Christ Jesus. May our authority be the Son of God, and may we say with boldness today, "Him only do I serve."

Written by Andrea Lucado - *She Reads Truth, Matthew*

- » **Who is Jesus to you?**
- » **Does He get to tell you how to live?**

Jesus tells John that He must be baptized "to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15). We see several times in the Old Testament story that going through the waters signified the people of Israel being set apart as a unique people with a redemptive purpose. Over and over again, they failed to live up to their unique identity and fulfill their redemptive purpose. In His baptism, Jesus stood where Israel was supposed to stand, but where they failed, Jesus succeeded. He perfectly represented God and faithfully fulfilled His purpose. What Israel was unable to do, Jesus did for them. In His temptation, Jesus faces the choice that every human has faced since Genesis 3. Listen to God's voice or listen to the voice of the enemy. Live depending on yourself and what you can secure; or depend on God, and be sustained by His words. Out of our sinful condition, we reject God's voice, and give in to temptation. In His temptation, Jesus stood in the place all humanity stands, but where we fail, Jesus succeeds. What we are unable to do, Jesus does for us. In His life, Jesus is a righteous representative for all of us who, because of sin, cannot be what God intended for us to be. The beauty of Jesus's life is that He then shares His righteous life with all who, through repentance and faith, belong to Him. As Christians, we get to share in the victory that He alone earned, that through His grace becomes our victory.

From *She Reads Truth, The Life of Jesus*

- » **Jesus' baptism & temptation show his willingness to stand in our place. What does it mean to you that you stand in victory that He has earned?**

The enemy's weapon of choice is Scripture—twisted Scripture. He pulls verses out of context, shifting their meaning, making promises he has no power to fulfill. The enemy knows Scripture and knows how to use it to his advantage. But Jesus fights with Scripture too, speaking truth to the false accusations.

Adapted from *The Bible Recap* by Tara-Leigh Cobble

- » **What are some ways that you use scripture to combat the enemy's lies?**
- » **Did God reveal anything new to you in today's reading?**

# DAY 4

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*Matthew 4:18-22, Mark 1:16-20, Luke 3:19-20, Luke 5:1-11, John 1:35-51, John 2:3*

## Calling the Disciples & Public Ministry Begins

Luke recounts the story of when He calls some of His first disciples. They're fishing by the lake of Gennesaret (the Sea of Galilee) and are failing miserably at their job until Jesus says to throw the nets out in the deep. They catch so many fish that the nets are breaking and the boats are sinking. They immediately know there's something special about Him. The disciples are still young enough to follow a rabbi, which usually happens at age twelve, but it appears they've been rejected by other rabbis, so they've started working in their family businesses. Now they're following thirty-year-old Jesus, who keeps referring to them as little children. Within a few days, Jesus' new disciples see Him preach with more authority than Torah scholars, be recognized by a demon, silence the demon, heal the man with the demon, and heal Peter's mother-in-law! They're awestruck by His obvious power and must be so grateful He handpicked them.

At His mother's request, Jesus performs His first public miracle: turning water into wine. It's clear she knows what He's capable of, so she asks Him for help. His response seems harsh in English, but woman is a common way to address a female in His day, and His words are more along the lines of "You and I don't need to get involved with this." He's measured and intentional about when, where, and in front of whom He displays His power. His primary concern is keeping the Father's timeline for revealing His identity as the Messiah. The Jews revere Moses, whose first public miracle was turning water into blood. Blood symbolizes death. And here we have Jesus's first miracle: turning water into wine, which symbolizes life. Moses was the lawgiver, and these Jews don't know it yet, but Jesus is the life giver and the law fulfiller. This is God announcing, "Ladies and gentlemen, the greater Moses has arrived. The fulfillment has arrived."

It's unclear, but John might have possibly jumped ahead in the story here...as we see Jesus going to the temple during Passover in Jerusalem. It's a standard practice to sell animals outside the temple—it provides a service to travelers. The problem isn't necessarily that people are selling animals; it seems to be that (a) they're selling them inside the temple complex, instead of outside, disrupting what's supposed to be peaceful, and (b) they're price gouging the tourists, being greedy in the very place that most represents God's generosity. So Jesus sits down and makes a whip, then drives them out of the temple. He loves the place where God in His holiness comes to dwell with mankind, so He hates what's happening to it. And in the very next paragraph, He compares His body to that place—they're both ways God came to dwell with mankind. And these people have no respect for either. All of this happens a few days before Jesus goes to the cross. Today, Jesus uses a whip, and in a few days, they'll use a whip. Both whips reveal that they don't get it; they've missed the Truth.

Adapted from *The Bible Recap* by Tara-Leigh Cobble

» **What do you think it would be like to have left everything to follow this rabbi Jesus?**

» **What was your biggest takeaway from today's reading?**



# DAY 5

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Matthew 4:12-17, Mark 1:14-15, Mark 1:21-34, Luke 4:14-41, John 4

## First Public Sermon

He preaches His first public sermon in Nazareth, reading from Isaiah 61:1-2 about how God has sent Him to proclaim good news to the poor and liberty to the captives. Then He says, “I am it. I’m the fulfillment of this prophecy.” The locals are thrilled about this at first, but things take a turn when He starts recounting stories of God’s love for outsiders—Suddenly they don’t like the idea of proclaiming good news, freedom, and favor, because they want it to apply only to them, not to people of other nations, not their enemies. One minute they’re praising Him, and the next they’re trying to throw Him off a cliff, but He passes through their midst.

Adapted from *The Bible Recap* by Tara-Leigh Cobble

He opens up the scroll of Isaiah and he reads: “The Spirit of the Lord is upon me because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor.” Why to the poor? Well, in Hebrew culture, being poor wasn’t just about money. It was more about low social status, so women, children, and the sick, people on the margins. And surprisingly, this could include people who had money, like tax collectors. They were considered outsiders too, and so Jesus is here for them. Then Jesus continues reading. “The Lord has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” Freedom seems like a big deal for Jesus. Yes. Jesus was freeing people from their sicknesses, from their past, from their shame. And he was freeing them to become a part of God’s new Kingdom that Jesus said he was bringing into reality.

From *BibleProject* Luke Video Series

» **What do Jesus’ words in Luke 4:18-19 mean to you?**

## Encounter with a Samaritan Woman

Jesus chose to go through Samaria because he wanted to bring restoration to a deep and ancient 700 year old schism between the Jews and Samaritans. Jesus came to bring justice and righteousness to a Samaritan woman. He named her pain and sat with her in it. He sat at a well and waited for her. He started talking about living water with her while sitting at a well, a source of living water. It was an ordinary day that would become extraordinary in her life and story. He reached all the way into her story, saw into her soul, and likely named the hardest and most shameful thing she had ever lived through. He entered into her world with compassion and empathy. Jesus seeks to enter into your world with compassion and empathy too. She was the first person whom He told He was the Messiah. The Samaritan woman left the well and was never the same. She became the missionary for her entire village—telling them she had met the Messiah.

Adapted from *Jesus and Women* by Kristi McLelland

Jesus sought out the people who were rejected by rabbis and hated by locals. He’s seeking out the unwanted and the unloved, He’s pointing to Old Testament stories of healing and provision for the foreigners, and He’s saying He has come to bring freedom for prisoners and liberty for the oppressed and sight for the blind and good news for the poor. This is encouraging if you’re the oppressed or imprisoned, but it’s not good news for jailers and oppressors. When you set prisoners free, the jailers grow even more furious, entitled, and self-righteous. When Jesus points this out to the people of Nazareth, they try to kill Him. He knew they would reject Him—He prophesies it in Luke 4. He knew it from the beginning, yet still He came to be rejected by the people He loved, to feel their pain so He could lead them out of bondage and into joy—to lead them to Himself.

Adapted from *The Bible Recap* by Tara-Leigh Cobble

» **What was your biggest takeaway from Jesus’ encounter with the Samaritan woman at the well?**

# WEEK 2

## JESUS BEGINS TEACHING

Jesus was known for his teachings because of the methods that he used and the message that he preached. Throughout his teaching ministry, Jesus used a variety of methods that made his teachings both striking and memorable, understandable and provoking. These methods included many well-known methods of his day, as well as qualities that we are still familiar with—poetry, proverbs, exaggeration, parables, similes, riddles, and paradoxes. However, what set his teachings apart from others was the message that they contained. Jesus taught that the kingdom of God had come, and that he, as the incarnate and divine Lord, was its ruler. This kingdom challenged the standards of the kingdoms of men and called its citizens to live in radically different ways.

Jesus was known for his ability to teach. He is called “teacher” forty-five times in the New Testament. The Aramaic title “Rabbi” is used fourteen times of Jesus, even though he was not formally trained as a Rabbi. The people, however, recognized that Jesus was indeed a teacher sent from God. Like other teachers/rabbis, Jesus had disciples, announced divine commands, infused his teaching with Scripture, debated with others, was questioned about legal disputes, and employed various techniques to make his teaching more memorable. He taught both in the countryside and in the cities. He taught in the synagogues and, on at least one occasion, from a boat. He often was able to gather large crowds who could be so enthralled by his teaching that they simply forgot about their need for food. What made Jesus’s teaching unique was not only what he taught but also how he taught it.

Written by Benjamin L. Merkle

*"Anyone who listens to my teaching and follows it is wise, like a person who builds a house on solid rock. Though the rain comes in torrents and the floodwaters rise and the winds beat against that house, it won't collapse because it is built on bedrock. But anyone who hears my teaching and doesn't obey it is foolish, like a person who builds a house on sand. When the rains and floods come and the winds beat against that house, it will collapse with a mighty crash." When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, for he taught with real authority - quite unlike their teachers of religious law.*

- Matthew 7:24-28

# DAY 1

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*Matthew 4:23-25, Mark 1:35-45, Mark 2:1-22, Luke 4:42-44, Luke 5:12-39*

## **What We Want or What We Need?**

A leper defies the cleanliness laws by kneeling at Jesus's feet and asks for healing, which shows that Jesus is known for His kindness and humility. Jesus heals him but says to keep it quiet. He did this in Luke 5:12-14 too, but the woman in John 4 was allowed to tell everyone about Him. Why does He respond differently in these situations? He tells people to spread the news when He's in Gentile regions or dealing with non-Jews. But with the Jews, He says to keep quiet. There's a danger in having them know He's the Messiah, because they'll want to crown Him as King, they'll expect Him to overthrow the Roman oppressors, and Rome will want to kill Him. In order to preserve the specific timing God has planned for His revealing and His death, Jesus is measured in His approach. Every healing exposes Him and brings Him one step closer to death.

In Mark 2, Jesus is at home in Capernaum, likely living at Peter's house. A paralytic man wants in, but he can't get there on his own. Four friends carry him over, but the place is too full, so they remove part of the roof! Jesus is moved by the man's situation and says his sins have been forgiven. Some people aren't pleased about this—who does Jesus think He is? So Jesus shows them by healing the man's legs, not just his future. He shows mercy to the paralytic man, who can't even seek Him on his own. Jesus seems to have a great affection for those who are desperate. "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners". Our only hope of finding the deep healing and joy of knowing Jesus is to realize we were born sick sinners.

He also calls Matthew the tax collector. In the text, he's named Levi, but evidence points to this being the same person as Matthew the gospel writer. Tax collectors like Matthew are especially hated in Jesus's day. This is not only because they overcharge people, but primarily because their job is to collect money from the Jews to fund the Roman army—the occupying army that has moved into their country and is oppressing them, making their lives miserable, and even killing their family members. When Jesus calls Matthew the tax collector to follow Him, the Pharisees are outraged that He'd keep company with a tax collector. The Pharisees' traditions and rules extend beyond God's commands, so Jesus continually pushes on them.

*Adapted from The Bible Recap by Tara-Leigh Cobble*

In Jesus's encounter with the paralyzed man in Mark 2, this guy and his friends thought they knew what he needed, and they went to incredible lengths to get it done. But Jesus saw a bigger need—both for the man and for the crowd in the house. While everyone else saw their dogged determination to help their friend, Jesus saw their faith. And faith opens the door for forgiveness. The man wanted to walk, but he needed salvation more than anything else. He was going to get what he wanted, but only after he got what he needed. As for the crowd, they got what they needed, as well. They had filled the house to hear Jesus teach, but they walked away understanding that He was so much more than a miracle-working rabbi. He did what only God could do—forgive sins—because He is God. Jesus heals, but Jesus also forgives. As the Son of God and Savior of the world, neither is more difficult for Him than the other, but one is ultimately more important than the other. So, while He stands ready to give people what they think they want, His driving passion is to meet their deepest need!

*Written by Bob Bunn - He Reads Truth, The Life of Jesus*

- » **What stood out to you in the healings of Jesus today?**
  
- » **What strikes you about this idea of Jesus giving these people what they want and what they need? (physical healing & forgiveness of sin)**



# DAY 2

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Matthew 12:1-21, Mark 2:23-28, Mark 3:1-12, 13-19, Luke 6:1-16, John 5

## Missing the Point

When the Pharisees accuse the disciples of breaking the Sabbath, Jesus creates a teaching opportunity. He says the temple is important, but there's something more important than the dwelling place of God: God Himself. God made the Sabbath law to serve people, so even the people's needs are greater than the Sabbath law. The law reveals our brokenness and what righteousness looks like, but it never terminates on itself; it points to Him. When the Pharisees misinterpret and misapply God's law, they twist it into a version that no longer points to His heart. He presses on their legalism when He heals a man at the synagogue with a withered hand on a Sabbath. The Pharisees likely planted this man to trap Jesus. Sabbath is about bringing rest and well-being, and healing is consistent with that. The Pharisees conspire against Him, so He leaves. He can't be distracted from His current assignment to let the Gentiles know He's the Messiah and that He's for them too. The Gentiles don't know to expect a Messiah like the Jews do. In another account of Jesus healing on the Sabbath, we see a man at the pool of Bethesda. When Jesus shows up there, He asks a man who has been there for thirty-eight years if he wants to be healed, and the man responds by telling Jesus why healing seems impossible for him. But Jesus meets him in his hopelessness and gives him the thing he can't even hope for. The first place he goes with his new legs is the temple. He hasn't been allowed to go there because he's considered unclean. But the minute he's healed, he goes to worship God. When the Pharisees find out that Jesus was the one who healed the man, they wanted Him dead. So Jesus pushes back. Jesus tells the Pharisees they don't know God's Word at all, because the Old Testament Scriptures point to Him, and they don't even see Him there. But knowing Scripture without knowing Christ is pointless. The Pharisees have built their hope on the law, but all those laws were given to show how impossible they are to keep, to humble mankind into seeing our great need for Him, the law fulfiller and the life giver. The law-checked boxes and moral uprightness—will never have the power to save.

Adapted from *The Bible Recap* by Tara-Leigh Cobble

» **What stood out to you today about those who were insistent on keeping the Sabbath law?**

» **What stood out to you about Jesus' responses to the Pharisees?**

It's often easy to miss God's hand at work, just as many did when Jesus walked the earth. I'm astounded when I read of the man Jesus healed by the pool of Bethesda because of the scene afterward. People had seen this man lying around for thirty-eight years, and suddenly he was walking. Yet, no one asked, "Wow! What happened? How were you cured?" No one praised God that he'd been delivered from decades of infirmity. Instead, the healed man is chastised for carrying his pallet on the Sabbath. And the Jewish leaders want to know, not who cured him, but who had the audacity to tell him to pick up his pallet and walk with it. Jesus, the Son of God, was there among them. A miracle had been done in their midst. Yet, focusing on the rules of the Sabbath, they missed the Lord of the Sabbath. Jesus, the author of life. Jesus is always working in every facet of our lives and the lives of those around us. Let's pray to keep our eyes fixed on Him so that we can behold every moment.

Written by Kim Cash Tate - *She Reads Truth*, John

» **Do you ever miss out on a genuine encounter with Jesus by focusing on the rules of your faith?**

» **Do you ever find yourself so focused on one side of a circumstance that you miss God's purpose in the circumstance altogether?**

# DAY 3

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*Matthew 5-7, Luke 6:17-49*

## Sermon on the Mount

During His earthly ministry, He taught a lot about what it means to be a part of His kingdom. In fact, the Gospel of Matthew is built on five sermons about living as kingdom people. The first is the Sermon on the Mount in chapters 5-7, which opens with one of the most famous lists of kingdom markers in Scripture: the Beatitudes (5:3-12). And there, nestled in the middle of the Beatitudes, is His blessing on those who “hunger and thirst for righteousness”. We understand the search for purpose and satisfaction. We know what it’s like to try to win the race or climb the ladder. Since we were children, we’ve been challenged to accomplish much because that’s how many define success and happiness in life. But in the Beatitudes—and throughout the Sermon on the Mount—Jesus painted a much different picture. He taught that God’s kingdom is upside-down. Kingdom living runs counter to everything we’ve learned and heard. According to God’s agenda, true satisfaction doesn’t come from getting more, doing more, or even being more. It comes from desiring the right things. When we hunger and thirst for righteousness, we are pursuing the things of God. The stuff culture wants us to chase will only leave us empty, while walking with Christ produces satisfaction and peace beyond description. That’s the kind of kingdom living Jesus taught the crowds throughout His time on Earth. It’s still what He’s teaching His people today.

Written by Bob Bunn - *He Reads Truth, The Life of Jesus*

In His Sermon on the Mount, Jesus opens with eight blessings, and many scholars believe they’re cumulative—the first blessing is the foundation of the rest of the sermon. It all starts with poverty of spirit, recognizing that we’re spiritually poor. We have nothing to offer God, no reason for Him to choose us or love us. That’s square one. Life in the kingdom begins with recognizing your desperate need for God. Here’s how these blessings might accumulate in a person’s life: When we realize our spiritual poverty, we mourn it, which produces meekness in us as we engage the world. Meekness gives way to a desire for God to increase our righteousness. It becomes easier to show mercy to others, because we know what it’s like to struggle. God continues to purify us as we engage with Him. We become people who don’t run from conflict, but who enter into the chaos and create peace. Peacemakers, not peacekeepers. The life of a humble, hungry, meek, merciful, and pure peacemaker won’t be easy—Jesus knows that personally—but despite trials, it’ll be the most joyful life we can imagine, especially because it doesn’t end when the end comes. The best reward is still ahead!

It’s easy to turn this sermon into a checklist, but we desperately need it not to be. The requirements are impossible. Jesus says to fix our eyes and time and efforts on something that will last. If we value the eternal things above all else, our concerns about the temporary things will be displaced. If you’re focused on fleeting things, you’ll be filled with fear. And fear usurps your allegiance to God’s kingdom because it never stops demanding your attention. Instead, remember who your Father is. He’s providing for you. Jesus says we should be careful not to act like God, the Judge of all mankind. God’s judgment happens at a heart level and we don’t have eyes to see that, so it’s best to direct our discernment toward an action being right or wrong instead of a person being good or bad. We inspect the fruit, because we can’t see the root. When we venture into that territory, it becomes far too easy to lose sight of square one: our own spiritual poverty.

Adapted from *The Bible Recap* by Tara-Leigh Cobble

- » **What stood out to you in Jesus’ words as you read today?**
- » **Did you notice any themes or repeated thoughts?**
- » **If you could narrow these teachings down to just a few sentences what would they be?**

# DAY 4

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Matthew 8:1-22, Matthew 11, Luke 7:1-35

## Physical & Spiritual Healing - The Temporary vs The Eternal

Who is Jesus in the healing of the centurion's servant (vv.1-10)? He is an Israelite teacher who crosses racial boundaries to heal a Gentile servant. He demonstrates His power and omnipresence over the physical world by curing a sick body from a distance.

Who is Jesus when He raises the widow's son back to life (vv.11-17)? He is one who is powerful not only over sickly bodies; He can raise even the dead to life. He has compassion for the vulnerable and lowly.

Who is Jesus when he encourages John the Baptist while in prison (vv.18-30)? He is not just a prophet who can perform signs and miracles. As He quotes the Old Testament prophet Isaiah, Jesus declares He is the Messiah and is here to fulfill the Old Testament and proclamations of John the Baptist.

He is a friend of sinners. He can raise our bodies from the dead, but more than that, he raises our souls from death. He perceives the sin of this prostitute and Pharisee as equally deadly. They both owe a debt they cannot pay.

So how, then, is radical forgiveness possible in our lives? By having a right view of God and of sin. We owe a debt we cannot pay to an eternal, omnipresent, compassionate, merciful Messiah. This knowledge will lead us to deeper worship of God and mercy for our brothers and sisters. Even if we have been profoundly sinned against, we can love as Jesus loved.

Written by Kasey Moffett - *She Reads Truth, The Life of Jesus*

John the Baptist (JTB) seems to be having an internal struggle. He's seen the Spirit descend on Jesus like a dove, and he's heard the voice of the Father affirm Jesus as His Son, but then Jesus went away into the wilderness and he got thrown into prison. Surely if Jesus is the Messiah, He'll miraculously get him out of prison, right? He sends messengers to ask Jesus to confirm or deny that He is the Messiah. Jesus sends word back, telling the messengers to let John The Baptist know they've seen Him do the things Isaiah said the Messiah would do when He comes. As they go on their way, Jesus praises JTB to His disciples. He says JTB is the fulfillment of Malachi's prophecy about the coming of Elijah. Jesus seems to be pointing to a future kingdom, one that has already been inaugurated but hasn't been fulfilled. Sometimes He talks about the kingdom in the present tense, and sometimes He talks about it in the future tense. It's not uncommon to read the words of Jesus and think, "So is it now or is it coming?" Scholars say the answer is yes; they call this the "already but not yet." The tension is intentional and hopeful.

Adapted from *The Bible Recap* by Tara-Leigh Cobble

In our glance into Jesus's life today, we see how there are no circumstances where we are too far gone, too sinful, or too lost for His love and forgiveness. Jesus has just walked through towns performing miracle after miracle. People have seen Him heal a centurion's servant, heal diseases, heal plagues and banish evil spirits, give sight to the blind, and even raise a widow's son from the dead.

No matter how overwhelmed you are; no matter how far you think you are from Jesus; no matter how many sins you have on your list; no matter how much you believe that you are unlovable or unforgivable: No single person is too far gone because Jesus looks at you, knows all of you, and still went to the cross to shed His blood to wipe sin away. That's the power of God's love and forgiveness.

Written by Jameson Barker - *He Reads Truth, The Life of Jesus*

- » **Do you struggle with seeing past the temporary to the eternal?**
- » **How do you reconcile the idea of the "already but not yet" of God's Kingdom?**
- » **How do you see God's love and forgiveness on display in today's reading?**



# DAY 5

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*Matthew 12:22-50, Mark 3:20-35, Luke 8:1-3, Luke 8:19-21, Luke 11:14-32*

## All Who Hear and Obey are Family

When Jesus heals a man who is blind and mute because of a demon, they wonder if He might be the Messiah, so the Pharisees start a rumor that He can only cast out demons because He's possessed by a demon too. Jesus essentially says, "If I were possessed by a demon, why would I drive out My own team?" He mentions blasphemy of the Holy Spirit, which seems to refer to the Pharisees' repeatedly and insistently attributing His work to Satan. The Pharisees are rejecting the truth that Jesus is God.

This view of Jesus as a sorcerer that was practicing magic by Satan's power was common among Jews even into the early centuries of Christianity. Jesus' amazing power over demons was due to the power of the Holy Spirit working through him. Jesus is not only the messianic Son of David, but the King who exercises God's own kingdom power against Satan and overcomes the kingdom of Satan through his much greater power. Beginning with Jesus' victory over Satan during the temptation in the wilderness, Jesus demonstrated that Satan was powerless to prevent him from proclaiming the good news of the kingdom. Satan's house represents the sinful world over which, until the coming of Christ, he had such power. Jesus has come to plunder his house and rescue people for the kingdom of God

- *ESV Study Bible*

The crowds ask Jesus for a sign to prove He's the Messiah, and He rebukes them. When Jesus performs miracles, it's to help people in need, not to prove Himself. His miracles weren't enough for the people of Capernaum or the other cities. Signs don't soften hearts. Jesus says the only sign they'll get will be the one of His death and resurrection—the "sign of Jonah." In Matthew's account, Jesus said He'll spend three days and nights in the grave just like Jonah spent three days and nights in the fish (Mt. 12:38-41).

In today's passages, Jesus handpicks twelve disciples to follow Him closely, but His family thinks He's lost His mind. Maybe they disbelieve He's the Messiah or think He needs to stop inciting the Pharisees—we don't know. The people with Him say, "Your family is outside looking for you," and He says, "You are My family. My family is everyone who does the will of God." This sounds harsh, but we'll see an encounter with His brothers soon that gives more context to this. Also, this is probably less of a downgrade for His blood relatives and more of an upgrade for all believers. He emphasizes the connection of the kingdom over the connection of genetics. In addition to the twelve apostles, there are a few women who likely travel with them too—Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Susanna, and many more. This is remarkable, especially in His day. It's clear that He values the contributions of women in the kingdom. These women seem to be caretakers because they "provided for them out of their means" (Lk 8:3). Some of these women probably have great wealth and status—like Joanna, who is married to King Herod's household manager; and others have poor social standing—like Mary Magdalene, who had seven demons before Jesus cast them out.

There is great diversity among Jesus's closest followers. He travels with poor fishermen, wealthy tax collectors, family members of the king's entourage, and a formerly demonized woman. He keeps a wide range of company. Jesus isn't just for all nations of people, but all types of people—rich, poor, polished, and unkempt. One of the beautiful things about a sovereign God is that He can take the most unlikely soil and turn it into a garden.

*Adapted from The Bible Recap by Tara-Leigh Cobble*

» **What were your biggest takeaways from today's reading?**

# WEEK 3

## JESUS' PARABLES AND MIRACLES

We encourage you to watch this short video from BibleProject to gain context. - [graceintheword.cc/parables](https://graceintheword.cc/parables)

### Understanding The Parables of Jesus

One of Jesus's most well-known methods of teaching is the parable, which accounts for about one-third of all his teaching. Unfortunately, the parables are not only some of Jesus's most cherished teachings, they are also some of his most misunderstood teachings. Parables are stories with a point. They are designed to make us think about what is being said, why, where, to whom, and in what context. To get to the heart of Jesus' parables, we need to pull them apart and take a careful look at the details He gives us. Jesus taught using everyday imagery that those walking with Him in that day would understand, so it's important that we seek to step into their ancient culture to understand rather than trying to impose our own culture onto these parables.

- » **When reading parables, try to ask yourself, "What situation or problem is Jesus addressing in this parable? What is the central point Jesus is trying to make? How can I draw near Jesus to gain insight & clarity?"**

If I choose to read the parables of Jesus as 2,000-year-old folksy wisdom, then I will be like the people in the crowd who only received an oblique version of the message. But if I opt instead to draw closer to Jesus, as only a tiny portion of the crowd seems to have done, then I can trust that He will take me deeper than the surface significance of the stories themselves and "explain everything" If I open my eyes, ears, and heart to the full depth of what Jesus would reveal, I run the risk of actually being "healed". As much as it may hurt, I do not want the words of Jesus to fall on deaf ears. Even if it pains my heart to perceive the truth, I do not want to be blind to what Jesus wants me to see.

Written by Alex Florez - *He Reads Truth, The Life of Jesus*

### Women in the Stories of Jesus

Rabbis and Pharisees in this day rarely used women as the subject matter of their parables and stories. Jesus was extremely unique in that He often included women in His stories and parables. It was not unusual for Jesus to share two stories or parables: one featuring a man, the other featuring a woman. He wanted women to find their place in the story. In the first century world, before Jesus upended all things, all spiritual teaching was for the men. Imagine a woman, hearing the teaching of God's Word with your family, to only find spiritual application directed at your male relatives. In His approach to teaching and His earthly ministry, Jesus said to women in the first century, you are part of this story, too. Take notice of the times that Jesus speaks to both the male perspective and the female perspective, once you start to see, you will see so many. (ex. Luke 5:36-39, Luke 13:18-21, Luke 17:34-35, Luke 18:1-14, Luke 20:45-21:4)

Adapted from *Jesus and Women* by Kristi McLelland

### Understanding The Miracles of Jesus

Jesus performed many miracles to reveal Himself as the Messiah, to put His glory on display, and to prove that the Kingdom of God truly had come with Him. Jesus doesn't do miracles on command. He isn't anybody's trick pony. In fact, He blesses those "who do not see, and yet believe" (Jn 20:29), and He rebukes a generation that "seeks for a sign" (Mt 12:39). It's so much easier to ask for a sign instead of looking to the person of Christ, to hunt after what He can do for us instead of who He is. His miracles aren't His message, but rather a testament to who He is. Think about what Jesus' miracles tell us about the character of God.

He is supreme and omnipresent. He is sovereign and omnipotent. He is merciful and good. He is holy and omniscient. Miracles are one of the ways God expresses His "otherness" to us. They reveal Him in His power, and show us He is not like us. Remember that these are nothing less than acts of God performed by Immanuel, "God with us." Although signs and wonders may not accompany every moment of our lives, the One who makes signs and wonders possible does.

Adapted from *She Reads Truth, Miracles of Jesus*

- » **When reading miracles, try to ask yourself, "What is God showing me about His character in this miracle?"**

**If you find a parable or miracle particularly confusing, stop and pray. Ask the Lord to reveal Himself to you in His Word, and thank Him that we can know Him without knowing all the answers to our questions.**

# DAY 1

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*Matthew 13, Mark 4:1-34, Luke 8:4-18*

When Jesus taught in parables, He was speaking to two audiences. Some, like His disciples, understood what He was teaching. And if they didn't understand, they would ask Jesus to explain. Others belonged to the "you will hear but never understand" camp. Much like being a part of a conversation about a movie you've never seen or a book you've never read, the latter audience could tune out Jesus' message.

Jesus knew that by speaking in parables, His message would get through to the right people—the people who would open their hearts to Him and who would work to see the kingdom of God flourish. He also knew that the people who were out to get Him (the Pharisees, the Romans) would not understand the parables, and so to some degree, parables were a protective measure.

*Adapted from She Reads Truth, Matthew*

Jesus taught using everyday imagery to an agricultural community—the seed and soil, the lamp on a stand, growing seed, and mustard seed—to describe the deep spiritual truth that His followers needed. Unless people had "ears to hear," they missed out on the reality Jesus taught about the kingdom of God.

But in order to hear, we need to listen more closely—and that takes more time. After time with Jesus, the crowd scattered, but the disciples stayed. They walked with Jesus and asked questions. They pondered and marveled. They didn't rush off to fill their schedule with their favorite distraction (what's yours?). Their top pursuit this day was Jesus. And in their pursuit, Jesus shared the purpose of the day's message. The soils described the hearts of people. Some hear the Word but do not believe. Some hear the Word but fall away. Some hear the Word but never produce fruit because they're choked out by worries and distractions. But for some, they hear and produce a crop many times over.

*Written by Seana Scott - She Reads Truth, The Life of Jesus*

In today's reading, we see parables that represent the kingdom of God. Starting with the parable of the four soils, which he immediately follows with a question about the purpose of a lamp. You don't hide lamps—you display them. These two illustrations back to back suggest that Jesus wants the light and the seed to go everywhere. Some people may hide their eyes from the light, but it shines in the darkness nonetheless. The seed must fall even on the three bad soils, not just the one good soil. Everyone who has eyes to see and everyone who has soil to receive will see and will receive, and they'll respond accordingly. In several other parables, He explains the kingdom of heaven—not describing the experience but describing its unstoppable power despite its small beginnings. It's a seed that grows into ripe grain, but no one knows how it happens. Like a mustard seed, which is practically impossible to kill, it slowly takes over everything.

*Adapted from The Bible Recap by Tara-Leigh Cobble*

- » **Do you take time to press in, ponder, and consider the Word of God? Or are you more like the crowds that listened, then dispersed?**
  
- » **Take time today to ponder and process these parables. What truths do you take away from Jesus' teaching today?**

# DAY 2

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Matthew 8:23-34, Mark 4:35-41, Mark 5, Luke 8:22-56

## Tests of Faith

A storm hits, and the boat starts to fill with water. Meanwhile, Jesus is asleep. He rebukes the storm—which carries the idea of a sharp response—but He encourages His disciples. He has compassion on them in the midst of their fears, despite their false accusations that He doesn't care about them. He reminds them to lean into their faith in Him when scary things happen and remember what they've learned about Him. He leans into compassion. He chooses not to rebuke them because of their fear, but to rebuke the cause of their fear instead. If you battle with your own fears and even feel shame over your inability to quiet them, remember that He doesn't shame you. He's in the storm with you. And He cares. When things go sideways in our life and our boat starts to fill with water, it's common to wonder what we've done wrong. But this trial was the result of obedience, not sin or error. In the storm, the disciples learn something about Him they wouldn't know otherwise: He's sovereign over whatever comes their way. They need to see this repeatedly because they'll all face much bigger storms in their lives—from watching their leader die on a cross to facing their own horrible deaths. He's slowly but surely growing their hearts of faith from tiny mustard seeds into something that takes over and can't be killed. They're probably relieved to hit the shore on the other side, until they meet up with a bunch of demons. Jesus has been demonstrating complete power over various domains: beverages, human bodies and diseases, weather, and now spiritual forces of darkness. Demons recognize Him and are afraid of Him. They know what awaits them in the future, and they ask, "Have you come here to torment us before the time?" (Mt 8:29). He casts them out, they go into the pigs, the pigs run into the sea, and the locals are furious—those pigs were costly! They forget that two men are no longer demonized. They don't understand the upside-down kingdom. A few times in today's reading, Jesus says things like, "Your faith has healed you." In order to see what He's communicating, not just what He's saying, we have to look at the whole story He's telling us. If their faith healed them, Jesus wouldn't need to show up or act, because their action of belief would be sufficient. But it wasn't. Jesus is necessary. He has to make it happen. He heals people who don't ask for it but do have faith, and people who do ask for it but don't have faith. There's no formula. This isn't a combination lock; it's a relationship with a compassionate God. Faith, no matter how strong, can't heal on its own. But the object of our faith can—and it's not what we're believing for, it's whom we're believing in. Faith in our faith is foolish. But faith in our God, who is powerful and loves us, is worship.

Adapted from *The Bible Recap* by Tara-Leigh Cobble

I've never witnessed a miracle like the ones described in these Scriptures. Yet, I have witnessed different kinds of miracles. I've witnessed the miracle of people turning from darkness to light. I've seen friends heal from wounded identities only through the power of Jesus's love. Even my own experience of being saved by Jesus is a miracle. Jesus is in the business of healing people physically and spiritually. Just because I have never seen lame people walk again doesn't mean I don't believe Jesus can do it. Yet, for many of us, we are waiting for our miracle, and that can cause us to doubt if Jesus is the true healer. Some of us have family and friends we have prayed for hoping they will receive the gift of Jesus into their lives. We are still praying for them... There are others of us who have wrestled with our love life, our health, our job status, or our fertility. We are still waiting for these unmet desires to be fulfilled... The bleeding woman was desperate for relief! And with one touch of Jesus's robe, she was cured. But was the actual touching of Jesus's robe some sort of magic? No. "'Daughter,' [Jesus] said to her, 'your faith has saved you. Go in peace'". A synagogue leader asked Jesus to heal his daughter and Jesus told him to do what? To "only believe". Today, it is by faith that we are saved. I don't have a fluffy, cute answer for the miracles we are waiting on, but I have faith in Jesus as my rescuer. For He saved me from the gravest thing, my sin. And He restored my soul. This is a miracle.

Written by Bailey Hurley - *She Reads Truth, The Life of Jesus*

- » **How would you describe faith?**
- » **What is the difference between having faith in our faith and having faith in our God?**
- » **What does it look like to have faith over fear?**

# DAY 3

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Matthew 9:10, Mark 6:1-13, Luke 9:1-6

## The Call of Jesus' Disciples - Then & Now

Jesus sends the twelve out but first gives them authority over things He knows they'll encounter: demons, disease, and affliction. He instructs them as they set out. **First, He gives directions:** Go only to Jews, not Gentiles or even Samaritans (Samaritans are half-Gentile, half-Jew). God's plan has always involved getting the message to the Jews first, then to the Gentiles. Jesus does roughly 90 percent of His miracles in the Jewish town of Capernaum. But He has a specific timeline and a specific mission to fulfill before His death, and the more He speaks among the Jews, the more their leaders recognize Him as a threat and try to eliminate Him. His followers, however, can heal and help people without being in the same danger. **Second, He gives them a message and mission:** Proclaim the kingdom of God, heal the sick, and raise the dead. **Third, He gives them limits:** Pack light and choose lodging wisely. They're learning to trust Him for all their provision—food, bills, and beds. He'll be providing for them through other people, which is both faith building and humbling; in order to rely on Him, they have to rely on others. What they're doing will result in persecution. People will falsely accuse them, and they'll be mistreated, questioned, and brought to trial. And He says, "Don't try to plan ahead for this. You won't be able to. But don't worry either—when the time comes, you'll know exactly what to say. God the Spirit will equip you with words." God is calling them and equipping them. And what God initiates, He will sustain and He will fulfill. So those who endure to the end are the ones He has called and equipped—endurance serves as evidence of His relationship with them. Otherwise they'd bail when persecution comes. Their families may turn against them and people may hate them, but nothing their enemies can do to them is eternal. It's not wrong to love our families—God loves them too. But Jesus says commitment to God should always take precedence. That'll be especially important when their families turn against them. If they're driven by fear of man, people pleasing, or peacekeeping, their allegiance will be divided. But if they're driven by fear of God and peacemaking, they can move forward without being distracted by or hindered by conflict.

Adapted from *The Bible Recap* by Tara-Leigh Cobble

Jesus sends His band of brothers out, reminding them what they paid to become His disciples: absolutely nothing. They didn't earn it. They weren't selected because of their prestige, influence, or liquid cash to make things happen. They didn't pay a premium to get in the room with Jesus. The Twelve freely received the message of the kingdom. Their discipleship with Jesus was free of charge. Freely they received, so they should freely give, expecting nothing in return. **Jesus operates on the currency of grace with His people, and this is to be our currency with others too.** There is no fitting exchange rate for grace. Once we try to exchange grace for something else—swap it out for works, mere morality, or self-righteousness—we get zero back. Brothers, we've freely received, so we freely give. We've been forgiven, so we forgive. We've been loved, so we love. The message of grace came to us, so we can give it to others. Jesus wants us function and serve from a place of grace, freely given to us by Him. Remember, there is no such thing as a free lunch. It will cost you to give to others. Maybe you'll have to spend money to help someone who is down. Perhaps you'll spend time over lunch evangelizing. Or maybe you'll rack up weekends serving in a prison or a pregnancy center. But these operating costs are joyfully spent because the kingdom is worth it. Jesus is worth it. It cost Jesus His blood—His very life—to free us from our sins and give us new life. We did nothing but believe. And today, the risen Jesus invites us to freely give as we've freely received, to share a no-strings-attached gospel. To serve as you've been served by Jesus. In your day-to-day, invite others in to the experience of freely receiving the grace of Christ through you from Him.

Written by J.A. Medders - *He Reads Truth*, Matthew

- » **What parallels do you see between Jesus' call on these disciples and His call on our lives as disciples now?**
- » **Did anything else stand out in your reading today?**



# DAY 4

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Matthew 14, Mark 6:14-56, Luke 9:7-17, John 6

## Feeding them Physically and Spiritually

When Jesus gets word of JTB's death, He and the disciples go off in a boat alone. He likely wants to grieve and talk to the Father about everything that's happening. But the locals see them on the water and run to meet Him when He docks. Scripture records the five thousand men, but there are also women and children to account for. They're probably there for a variety of reasons. Some probably just want healing. Others have likely heard about what happened to JTB, and their first thought is to go to Jesus—maybe to offer Him their condolences or maybe they want to know the plan for moving forward now that one of the leaders of this new kingdom has been executed. Rome just killed one of their Jewish leaders. Jesus just got news of the unjust death of the man who was His forerunner, and now people want something from Him. Despite all that, He leans in. He doesn't send the crowd home, as the disciples suggest. Instead, He tells the disciples to do something impossible: feed them. As they begin to take steps of obedience, they see that He is the one doing the feeding. He does the miraculous. Then He wants more time to pray, so He sends the disciples away. At three in the morning, a storm hits. Jesus can see them from the spot where He's praying, so while the wind is giving them a beating, He strolls past their boat, walking on the water. Until they realize it's Him, they're terrified. Peter says, "If it's really You, invite me out there." But the moment Peter pays more attention to the frightening things around him than to the God who is sovereign over those things, his fears overtake him. Jesus rescues him, and immediately the wind stops. For the disciples, the storm is bad enough. They're tired, they're sad, and now their lives are in danger. Just when they think things can't get worse, they see a ghost coming toward them! But what they perceive as tragic or terrifying is actually God moving in their lives to show them He's with them, to show them He's powerful, and for a moment, to bring them some joy.

Adapted from *The Bible Recap* by Tara-Leigh Cobble

Matthew 14:27 says "Have courage! It is I." It's easy to dismiss these as a much needed encouragement, and little more. The disciples, after all, are frightened. To calm their anxieties, Jesus says, "It is I," clarifying who He is. But the truth is, this verse is a bombshell. Jesus is making a monumental claim, one that Matthew's Jewish listeners certainly would have noticed. Jesus is not just identifying Himself as the man they know and love. He is identifying Himself as God. "It is I"—translated from the Greek words *ego eimi*, which literally means "I am"—is a clear reference to an Old Testament story. In other words, Jesus isn't simply identifying Himself in the midst of the storm; He is identifying His place in human history. Jesus is God Himself, the God who delivered the Israelites and parted the Red Sea. He is the God who is more than able to command the threatening waves below Him. It's an audacious claim, blasphemous even, had it not been true. And it's a claim that continues to assert its power over our storms today, promising that Jesus is not simply with us, but as God of the universe He is reigning over all creation. We are guaranteed both the intimate presence of the Son, and the almighty authority of the Father.

Adapted from *She Reads Truth*, Matthew

In John 6, we see that when more and more people discovered that Jesus had been healing the sick and feeding the hungry, they began to follow Him from place to place. Jesus called their motives into question. They were looking for Him in order to get free food. Jesus encouraged them to set their sights higher, calling them to look for food that would give them eternal life—namely, the Bread of Life Himself.

- » **What do these interactions between Jesus and his followers mean to you?**
  
- » **What does it mean to you that Jesus is "the bread of Life"?**

# DAY 5

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Matthew 15-16, Mark 7-8, Luke 9:18-21

## A Patient God

After rebuking the Pharisees and Sadducees, Jesus turns the experience into a teaching tool. He often uses things around them in His metaphors, but sometimes it confuses the disciples because they take Him literally. He compares the teachings of the Pharisees and Sadducees to leaven—even getting a little bit mixed in with what you believe will impact everything. The teachings of both groups focus on morality. When morality is the goal, we focus on our actions instead of on the saving action of Christ. And that mentality infects everything. When His disciples misunderstand, He fills them, but not the Pharisees and Sadducees, in on the truth. He has warned His disciples, “Do not throw your pearls before pigs, lest they trample them underfoot and turn to attack you” (Matthew 7:6), and He demonstrates this here. Not even a good and true argument can change a hard heart. Later, they go to Caesarea Philippi—the site of pagan worship rituals, including bestiality and child sacrifice. Pagans believe the mouth of a cave there is the gate to the underworld; they call it the Gates of Hell. They throw babies into it as an offering to the gods. Jesus brings His disciples here to make a point. He starts by asking a question: “Do people think I’m the Son of Man?” That title comes from Daniel 7:13 and refers to the Messiah. Then He gets personal and asks who they think He is. He’s asking for them, not for Himself. Peter says He’s the Christ, and Jesus says God blessed him with that information because there’s no way he would’ve figured it out on his own. Then He continues: “And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it” (16:18). The name Peter is petras, which means “a fragment of loose rock, a pebble.” The word for rock is petra, which means “a mass of earth that is rock, a mountain.” The sentence basically says, “You are a pebble, and on this mountain I will build My church.” Peter isn’t the foundation of everything; he can’t be. But His statement of Christ’s divinity is. But Jesus says His church will outlast everything because it’s built on His divinity. Peter’s role in the early church is important; Jesus gives him a significant amount of authority, but we see immediately and repeatedly that he isn’t infallible.

Adapted from *The Bible Recap* by Tara-Leigh Cobble

In today’s reading, the early followers of Jesus were themselves unsure. One day Jesus posed two questions to His followers: “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” (Matthew 16:13). They responded with a variety of answers which they’d heard along the way. But it is the second question which is the most crucial: “But you?... who do you say that I am?”. I can almost hear a drumroll as we wait for their answer to this most important question. Simon Peter is quick to respond, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God”. Jesus responds first by telling him that His Father in heaven is the one who has revealed this to him. He goes on to call him Peter. He says that He will build His church upon the truth that Peter has perceived, which is the rock upon which we stand. Can you imagine how this affirmation and calling must have been for Peter, even though he did not know what it meant? Peter then quickly hits a low. When Jesus explains his coming death, Peter’s response is basically, “no way!” I see myself in Peter. Perhaps you do too. One minute I see Jesus for who He is, I want to follow Him wholeheartedly. I am full of confidence and of faith. But it’s not long before my issues and fears overwhelm my faith. It is easy to forget that He is the Messiah, the Son of the living God. The good news is that in Jesus’s handling of Peter, He is patient. Growth takes time. God is patient. As He was with Peter, He is very patient with us.

Written by Susan Yates - *She Reads Truth, The Life of Jesus*

» **What was your biggest takeaway from today’s reading?**

# WEEK 4

## JESUS HINTS AT THE FUTURE

*After they gathered again in Galilee, Jesus told them, "The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into the hands of his enemies. He will be killed, but on the third day he will be raised from the dead." And the disciples were filled with grief.*

**- Matthew 17:22-23**

*As Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve disciples aside privately and told them what was going to happen to him. "Listen," he said, "we're going up to Jerusalem, where the Son of Man will be betrayed to the leading priests and the teachers of religious law. They will sentence him to die. Then they will hand him over to the Romans to be mocked, flogged with a whip, and crucified. But on the third day he will be raised from the dead."*

**- Matthew 20:17-19**

*He said to them, "The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men. They will kill him, and after three days, he will rise." But they did not understand what he meant and were afraid to ask him about it.*

**- Mark 9:30-32**

### **JESUS SAYS THE MAIN REASON HE CAME TO EARTH WAS**



**TO DIE**

This week, we encourage you to watch this short video from BibleProject to gain context.  
Matthew Chapters 14-28 - [graceintheword.cc/matthew2](https://graceintheword.cc/matthew2)  
Journey to Jerusalem - [graceintheword.cc/luke9-19](https://graceintheword.cc/luke9-19)  
Luke Chapters 10-24 - [graceintheword.cc/luke2](https://graceintheword.cc/luke2)

# DAY 1

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Matthew 17, Mark 9:1-32, Luke 9:22-45

## Help My Unbelief

In Mark 9, Jesus says, “*There are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the kingdom of God after it has come with power.*” Most scholars say this points to one of the following: the transfiguration, which happens about a week later, the resurrection, which is about six months away, or the Holy Spirit showing up at the Feast of Pentecost, which is still about eight months away. All three events are times when God’s power and His kingdom are displayed in unique ways. At the resurrection, God demonstrates His power over death and the grave. At Pentecost, the Holy Spirit comes to indwell believers. And the transfiguration is what we encounter next in today’s reading. About a week after He tells them He’s going to suffer and die, He takes Peter, James, and John up on a mountain and lets them see behind the curtain of the spiritual dimension. They see things human eyes can’t see. Jesus physically transforms or reveals some aspect of His deity that is normally hidden. His face shines like the sun, and His clothes turn white. Then two Old Testament leaders, Moses and Elijah, show up to talk with Him. As the lawgiver, Moses represents the law, and Elijah represents the prophets, since he was one of the most prominent prophets. Whenever Jesus summarizes the Old Testament Scriptures, He refers to them collectively as “the Law and the Prophets.” So these two men represent the whole thing—all of the words that testified to Jesus all along. Peter doesn’t want this to end. He throws out ideas about how they can stay there but gets interrupted by God the Father. And just like He did at Jesus’s baptism, the Father affirms the person and work of the Son. The disciples are facedown; Jesus tells them not to fear and to get up. Then suddenly, Moses and Elijah are gone. Jesus says to keep this a secret until after He dies. Again, He’s telling them He’s going to suffer and die, and later, He tells them He’ll be killed then raised from the dead, but they don’t grasp any of this. Luke’s account of this story indicates that God keeps them from understanding—quite likely because they can’t handle it. Finally, Matthew, the former tax collector, includes a story we don’t get in any other gospel, and it’s about tax season. The tax collectors approach Peter and ask if Jesus plans to pay His taxes. This is a temple tax required by God’s law in Exodus 30, and Jesus hasn’t paid it yet. Jesus tells Peter that He personally shouldn’t have to pay a tax to fund His Father’s house, but His language also indicates that all sons of God, all the people who are adopted into God’s family, should be exempt from this tax. Still, He lays down His rights and privileges and says, “I’ll pay it anyway. I don’t want to offend anyone by opting out. It would set a bad example.” He has no problem breaking the Pharisees’ traditions, but He always honors God’s laws.

In Mark 9:24, we hear the famous words of the father of the demonized boy confessing his doubt to Jesus—“I believe. Help my unbelief.” Both components are there, belief and unbelief, and he asks Jesus for help believing. God can grant faith! The disciples seem to have a faith problem too. One account says the demon can only be driven out by prayer, and the other says the demon wasn’t driven out because the disciples didn’t have faith. This seems to add up to show that they had faith in themselves but not in God, and their self-reliance meant they didn’t even ask God for help; they tried to access the power of God without connecting to the person of God. God wants us to ask Him for help.

Adapted from *The Bible Recap* by Tara-Leigh Cobble

- » **Do you ever find that you have faith in yourself but not God, trying to access the power of God without accessing the person of God?**
  
- » **Can you relate to the father’s statement of “I believe. Help my unbelief.”?**

# DAY 2

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Matthew 18:1-35, Mark 9:33-50, Luke 9:46-62

## Greatness and Humility

The disciples ask Jesus which one of them is the greatest. Jesus says humility is connected to greatness, and if they aren't humble, they won't be in the kingdom at all, much less be the greatest there. In stark contrast to the cultural mind-set, God values humility. He says we should take notice of things that tempt us to sin and avoid them at all costs. He uses some pretty intense hyperbole for these illustrations—cutting off your hand, plucking out your eye—because sin is a big deal, and those who love God take their own sin seriously. Matthew 18:12 says, “If a man has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go in search of the one that went astray?” God pays individual attention to His kids. He notices what's happening, and He acts. He moves toward us when we run away. He comes to carry us back. And He rejoices over us! He's not far off, and He's not inattentive. He's actively working on our behalf, even when we're running away from Him. He finds us and brings us back so that we can see He's where the joy is! Then He tells us how to respond to people when we've been sinned against. Step one: Try to resolve it one-on-one with the person. By the way, there's no step zero—there's no space allotted for us to talk to others about that person and how they've sinned against us. If step one doesn't resolve things, then step two is our first opportunity to involve others in a conversation with the person. This isn't an ambush; they should know it's coming based on the conversation you had with them in step one. If step two doesn't resolve things, take it to the church for resolution—and again, the person should know this is coming. If step three doesn't resolve things, then the church exercises their discretion and wisdom. Jesus promises to be with them in their effort to reach unity on how to handle the situation. When Jesus says to treat the person like a Gentile or a tax collector, it's helpful to recall that we've seen Him ministering to both kinds of people, associating with them, eating with them, seeking them out. So while this does seem like a call to remove them from the church, it doesn't seem to endorse wholesale excommunication. This is a call to love them well and share the gospel with them and to prevent them from being divisive in the church until they repent or the problem is resolved.

Adapted from *The Bible Recap* by Tara-Leigh Cobble

In Matthew chapter 18, Jesus shared the parable of a servant who owes his master a huge sum—a sum so huge that he would need several lifetimes to pay it back. But then that servant turns around and finds somebody who owes him a couple of nickels, and starts choking him to give back his money. Although we don't literally put our hands around the throats of those who owe us something, we do choke others with our lack of mercy and forgiveness. Jesus' parable forces me to look at the truth: Even when I actually want to be merciful and forgiving, in my own strength, my best efforts prove my ability to forgive is forever lacking. The vastness of God's never-ending mercy shows us our need for forgiveness is enormous. Grasping that need is the first step to understanding the gospel. It's difficult to remember mercy when someone hurts us. The very thought of the offense can fill us with fear and loathing. But we do well to remember this: In order to forgive us, Christ had to die for us. This is staggering. True forgiveness costs everything. But God loves us so much, He freely gave everything. While this passage does remind us that we are like the unforgiving slave, the bigger truth here is that God is our compassionate Master, and He piles love and forgiveness on us all. The gospel is true! God's great love and mercy for us are greater than all our sins.

Written by Rebecca Faires - *She Reads Truth*, Matthew

» **What principles did you take away from today's reading?**



# DAY 3

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John 7-9

## Jesus' Divinity on Display

Jesus's choice of words was purposeful. The Jewish people knew that God had promised to send a Savior. It's amazing to me that Jesus would tell them so plainly, so many times, that He was the sent One. In chapter 7 alone, those words appear five times: "My teaching isn't mine but is from the one who sent me"... but he who seeks the glory of the one who sent him is true..." I know him because I am from him, and he sent me" ... "I am only with you for a short time. Then I'm going to the one who sent me"... "I have not come on my own, but the one who sent me is true..." Yet, many who walked and talked with Jesus—who heard Him repeatedly testify that He was the sent One—did not believe. So many precious truths are repeated this way throughout the Bible, and I can't help but wonder at just how often I'm slow to believe them. God trumpets His love for us, unconditional and eternal, a love unsurpassed by any human love we could ever experience. God keeps His word. With faith, we can stand on those promises and believe because there is another promise that's often repeated: our God is true (John 7:28-29).

Written by Kim Cash Tate - *She Reads Truth*, John

The Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They were not concerned with the Law being broken, or they would have brought the man involved in the adultery too. They were trying to trap Jesus in a public moment with lots of people around. Jesus said the ones among them without sin should be first to throw a stone at her. The religious leaders began walking away. Jesus had shifted the wrath off of the woman and onto Himself. Jesus told the woman He would not condemn her. He literally saved her life from the religious leaders who would certainly have stoned her to death if it were left up to them. Jesus atoned for (covered) her, generously lifted her up out of her sin and shame and sent her away in peace—encouraging her to live forward in a new way.

Adapted from *Jesus and Women* by Kristi McLelland

Jesus says He's the Light of the World, the very thing by which we can see. Most scholars say Genesis 3:15 is the first prophecy about Jesus in Scripture; it talks about His victory over the enemy. But perhaps the first prophecy is actually in Genesis 1:3, where God the Father looks out over the dark, chaotic world, knowing all the brokenness that will take place after He finishes creating it, and says, "Let there be light." Maybe that's more than just a creation command. Maybe it's a promise, as if He's saying, "Things are about to get very dark, but Light is coming. Hold on—Light is coming." If that's a prophecy, Jesus is certainly the fulfillment of it. In this culture, people associate sickness or physical disability with sin. When Jesus's disciples display the cultural mind-set instead of biblical truth, He sets them straight. They ask who's to blame for a man's blindness, and He says, "He's blind because this will be used to glorify God." Fortunately, God is still at work in this man's story to heal and redeem. Jesus begins talking about spiritual eyes. Those who think they can see—who aren't aware of their own spiritual poverty—He's going to blind them. He condemns the religious and saves the lost.

Adapted from *The Bible Recap* by Tara-Leigh Cobble

» **What does it mean to you that Jesus is "The Light of the World" and that He "brings sight to the blind"?**

# DAY 4

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*John 10, Luke 10, Luke 11:33-54, Luke 12*

## **Our loving guiding Shepherd**

In John 10, Jesus gently paints a picture for his disciples of what it means to be led by the Good Shepherd. He is not bored or annoyed with His work, guiding helpless creatures to safety. He is wholly invested, ready to lay down His life if danger presents itself. He is not running after us with anxiety, but He calls us to His side with the distinct, loving timbre of His voice. He is the doorway and the one leading us through it. He protects us, keeps us in, and feeds us, leading us out. The picture He paints is not a scene of confusion but of peace. The scripture says He knows us by name and that He doesn't run away when there is danger, but steps in front, shielding us and taking every blow. I know how seductive the world can be. I know that my warped instincts often lead me further into the heart of sin when all I want is to hear the Lord's voice. Today, I pray that we will slow down and listen for the still, calm sound of our Shepherd's voice. That we will turn away from the chaos of the world and look deep into the steady gaze of His Word. Jesus Himself tells us the truth: He knows us by name, He leads us and guides us, and He lays down His life and takes it back up. To this, some said, "He's crazy" (v.20). But to those who know their own hearts and who long for a Good Shepherd, these words are the very source of life.

Written by Claire Gibson - *She Reads Truth, John*

### » **What does it mean to you that Jesus is the "good shepherd"?**

Jesus's teachings in Luke 10 would've presented a series of radical paradigm shifts for His initial listeners. Between commissioning the seventy-two, describing unrepentant cities, and offering up a shocking definition of the term "neighbor" in His parable of the good Samaritan— Jesus was really rocking the boat big time. I imagine some of His Jewish listeners were left wondering, Who does this guy think He is? How dare He diminish our cities in comparison to the unrighteous and licentious Gentile cities! How dare He diminish the Levites and priests in favor of a foreign and unclean Samaritan! At first glance, Jesus's declaration of oneness with the Father in verses 21-24 might come across as informative, but perhaps unrelated to what comes before and what follows after. But this passage's placement could not be more intentional. Unlike you or I trying to direct traffic with no authority, no training, and no positive impact, Jesus enters the intersection of human history to bring order to the chaos. He's not just making a profound theological statement; He's declaring His authority. My prayer is that we'd remember Jesus is directing traffic for a reason. If we want to know the Father, we have to put our lives under Jesus's loving course correction.

Written by Andrew Stoddard, *He Reads Truth, Luke*

### » **Who is the authority in your life? Who/what helps you make decisions each day?**

This particular passage in Luke 12 features a lot of anxiety, from the revelation that nothing hidden won't eventually be known, to the fear of death, to the "unforgivable sin," to Jesus's famous command not to worry because we are worth more than the wildflowers and the sparrows. I tend to read Luke 12 as if it's all about me: what I worry about, what I value, what I should or shouldn't do. Don't be like the Pharisees; fear God. Don't be afraid; acknowledge Jesus as the Christ and don't deny Him. Don't store up treasure for myself. Don't worry about clothes or food—and on and on. While I do think Jesus is teaching us a lot about ourselves, He is also revealing much about God, His character, and His work. In a passage known for its treatment of anxiety, Luke assures us that God the Father, Son, and Spirit are working together in perfect unity, to care for us in perfect knowledge, perfect advocacy, and perfect provision.

Adapted from *She Reads Truth, Luke*

### » **What does Luke 12 teach us about the character of God?**

# DAY 5

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Luke 11:1-13, Luke 13-16

## The Holiness of the Father

There are a few things worth noting in the prayer Jesus teaches His followers in Luke 11. First, Jesus says to pray to the Father, not to Him. If we aren't careful, we end up putting the three persons of the Trinity in a blender and mixing them all up, as though they're the same. While they are one and are unified in their will and purpose, they're also distinct in their roles. In Scripture, the normative prayer model is to pray to the Father, through the Son, by the Spirit. The Father is the supreme authority, Jesus is the mediator between us and the Father, and the Spirit empowers our prayers through the Son to the Father. Jesus prioritizes the Father and His kingdom, giving everything else its proper landing spot. While prayer is submitting to God, it's primarily talking with God. As Luke 13 opens, Pilate recently killed some Jews. The people tell Jesus about this, and He gives a parallel account of mass death saying, "Your level of suffering doesn't tell us anything about your heart. You can't look at trials and tragedies and assume they're punishment from God." But He ends with a warning: Judgment is coming, and the only way to survive it is to turn to God. Then he tells a parable: A man plants a tree and has a gardener tend to it, but it's fruitless for three years. This is a metaphor for Israel—Israel is the fig tree, Jesus is the vinedresser, and the Father owns the vineyard. It's been three years since Jesus began His ministry, but Israel shows no signs of repenting. God is willing to chop down a fruitless tree, but He's also patient with a tree that hasn't yet produced fruit. Fruit takes time, so He tends to us, waters us, and fertilizes us. Jesus closes with a parable that says we may be surprised to know who is, and who isn't, in God's kingdom, because it's not about your race, nationality, or deeds—it's about who you know.

Adapted from *The Bible Recap* by Tara-Leigh Cobble

Luke 13:30 says "*Some who are last will be first, and some who are first will be last.*" Each of Jesus's teachings, interactions, and healings in Luke 13 tells us something unique about what the kingdom is like. The kingdom is built on humility and selflessness, knowing that God is the one to lift people up. Even if you're a follower of Jesus, the temptation will be to jockey for power, and race to the front of the line, but let's embark on a journey to the back of the line. In Luke 14, Jesus can sound a bit gruff or perhaps even harsh. However, this served as a compassionate wake-up call to His followers, those anticipating a cushy role in His kingdom. It was the common expectation of many first-century Jews that the Messiah would overthrow Rome and restore prosperity and comfort back to the land. For someone in the crowds with that expectation, the idea of dying to self would've made little sense. We sometimes expect that following Jesus will open doors to comfort, prosperity, and easy living. While following Jesus, there are certainly seasons of joy and celebration along the way, but we need to be prepared to daily hoist our own crosses.

Written by Andrew Stoddard - *He Reads Truth, Luke*

Luke 15 includes three parables each having to do with someone or something lost—a sheep, a coin, and a son. The lost sheep and lost coin are fairly neutral examples, but that last parable gets specific for those listening. The younger son is a prime example of the riff-raff, a sinner. But the genius of Jesus comes into play as He introduces a third character in that familiar parable: the older brother, the brother who had done everything right, the one who always played by all the rules. But Jesus's parable reveals both brothers were lost. The younger knew his lostness, while the older did not. His self-righteousness left him blind to his own need of rescue. God loves us and is running toward us to wrap us in his love and forgiveness. Staying lost in self-righteousness leads to bitterness, but recognizing our lostness is an important step to being found and welcomed home. Jesus tells two parables in Luke 16, both beginning with a common line: "There was a rich man. Although Jesus's parables initially diverge somewhat, they both arrive back at the same conclusion: "You cannot serve both God and money."

Written by John Blase - *He Reads Truth, Luke*

» **What was your biggest takeaway for today's reading?**

# WEEK 5

## THE PLOT TO KILL JESUS

We are about to turn the corner in Jesus' life and earthly ministry. You see all along it was God's plan for Jesus to come to earth to die. This week, we will begin to see the plot to kill Jesus start to unfold.

*They were now on the way up to Jerusalem, and Jesus was walking ahead of them. The disciples were filled with awe, and the people following behind were overwhelmed with fear. Taking the twelve disciples aside, Jesus once more began to describe everything that was about to happen to him. "Listen," he said, "we're going up to Jerusalem, where the Son of Man will be betrayed to the leading priests and the teachers of religious law. They will sentence him to die and hand him over to the Romans. They will mock him, spit on him, flog him with a whip, and kill him, but after three days he will rise again."* - Mark 10:32-34



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This week, we encourage you to watch this short video from BibleProject to gain context.  
**Luke Chapters 19-23** - [graceintheword.cc/luke19-23](http://graceintheword.cc/luke19-23)

# DAY 1

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*Matthew 19:1-15, Mark 10:1-16, Luke 17, Luke 18:1-17, John 11*

## The Holiness of the Father

No area of our lives is untouched by God; there's no space He's restricted from or inactive in or that He doesn't have plans for. Sovereignty knows no bounds. So when Jesus gives a sermon on divorce, He can be trusted. If you haven't lived up to His words, it just means you're human. "There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus" (Rom 8:1). The Pharisees ask Him, "Is it lawful to divorce one's wife for any reason?" This could mean, "Are there any circumstances under which divorce is acceptable?" or "Can we divorce our wives for any reason we want?" Typically, they add to God's laws with their own traditions, but they also ignore His laws when it serves their own purposes. Where they add to God's law with their traditions, Jesus breaks those traditions. Where they subtract from God's law, Jesus dials it back in. With divorce laws, they tend to loosen the reins, so He dials in, pointing out that God's standard is higher than the law—it goes to the heart. Moses allowed men to divorce their wives if their wives were unfaithful, but only because the men's hearts were hard. The goal isn't hardness of heart; the goal is a soft heart. According to Jesus, divorce wouldn't be an issue if hearts were soft. His disciples say, "That's pretty strict stuff. Sounds like we're better off staying single!" He says, "You're right. Both marriage and singleness are tough paths, but thankfully we don't walk either path alone. In Luke 17, The Pharisees want to know when God's kingdom will be established. The Hebrew Scriptures promise a Messiah, an eternal kingdom, peace on earth, and the elimination of their enemies, so they expect God to set up a political or military leader to make this happen. But Jesus says it won't be like that. Then He makes a statement that's frequently taken out of context, misquoted, and misapplied: "The kingdom of God is in the midst of you." Jesus is saying, "I am the kingdom of God. I'm right here in front of you—among you, in the midst of you." But He's definitely not saying, "The kingdom of God is within you," because (a) He's talking to Pharisees, whom He has previously called whitewashed tombs and children of Satan, and (b) even if He were talking to His disciples, the Holy Spirit hasn't come to dwell in people yet. In Luke 18, Jesus tells a parable of a wicked judge who finally caves to the persistent nagging of a widow. He isn't drawing a direct parallel—He's portraying God as better than the example. This judge doesn't fear God or man, so if he relents and hears the widow's cry, how much more would a loving Father hear and respond to the cries of His kids? Jesus knows His disciples need to be reminded that God is attentive, because it's the awareness of God's attention and love that will invite their own faithfulness. If they feel forgotten by God, they won't walk closely with Him, which is why Jesus ends this parable with a question about His return: "Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?". As usual, He asks this question for them to think, then He tells a parable about a Pharisee and a tax collector, and He's telling it to people who have completely missed square one: spiritual poverty. While praying in the temple, the Pharisee thanks God for all his good works—and he has certainly found the right person to thank, because God is the source of all his good works. The problem is that his words carry a tone of arrogance. Meanwhile, the tax collector, who has no good works to speak of, is wailing, acknowledging his sin, and begging God for mercy. Jesus says the tax collector is the one God justifies, not the Pharisee. The gospel is an inversion of religion. Then we finish with Mary & Martha asking Jesus to come to Lazarus. Jesus loves this family, so why doesn't He go when they call Him? He's waiting for Lazarus to die. You can't raise a person who isn't dead. He intentionally designs a situation where things get far worse in order for His power to be made known all the more. He's always pointing to the Father and His glory. And this miracle sets in motion the plan to crucify Him. He knew this would be costly. Perhaps that's even part of what moved Him to tears—the tomb, the stone, and the graveclothes aren't too far off for Him, and He knows it. He's about to put death to death and this is a preview. From His intentional timing that somehow always seems too late, to His sweet, personal interaction with the sisters, to His power over death and the grave, He's where the Joy is!

Adapted from *The Bible Recap* by Tara-Leigh Cobble

» **What did you learn about Jesus in today's reading?**



# DAY 2

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*Matthew 19:16-30, Matthew 20, Mark 10:17-52, Luke 18:18-43, Luke 19:1-27*

## The Upside Down Kingdom

What a collection of characters appear in this reading: a rich and pious ruler who can't yet give all, disciples who have already left home behind, a poor man with persistent faith in the Messiah's compassion, a rich extortionist ready to leave it all behind, and a crowd following each step of the journey toward this fateful moment of the Son of Man's ministry. Each encounter is different and often surprising. We are struck by trying to imagine a camel shoved through a needle or a short man from his treetop vantage point being invited to host a famous person. If "the Son of Man has come to seek and save the lost", then it seems there's no formula. Jesus's response to each is individualized. For instance, we're not all called to sell all our possessions, but we all are called to find freedom from the perceived security of riches. We're not all given our sight immediately; it takes the disciples experiencing what is written about Jesus before they see. Zacchaeus wanted to see Jesus. Despite all the obstacles, Zacchaeus found a way. When he does get a glimpse, he finds he is already seen and known. Jesus is willing to sacrifice His reputation to be with Zacchaeus. Zacchaeus finds he is willing to sacrifice to be with Jesus too. The bond to his wealth is broken. A higher allegiance has been found. In the parable that follows, we are reminded that our resources are a gift from God and are meant to be used. Everyone was expecting Jesus to soon take up His reign. Yet this parable reminds us that while He has been given all authority, we are entrusted with responsibility and resources to care for His world as He would until He returns to reign. Resources are not meant to be the source of our security, they are given to us to do God's business. When they become used for our business alone, then we have begun to follow ourselves and not Jesus. This surprising reversal of who is the fortunate one reminds us that there is greater wealth to be had than what's in our wallets.

Written by Aurora Eagen - *She Reads Truth, The Life of Jesus*

So in Matthew 19, when Jesus says, "*Many who are first will be last, and the last first*" This is the illustration Jesus gives us, but its main purpose is to point to something even greater: His own measure of success. God's goal isn't helping us to get ahead—it's helping us get to Him. His redemption does not work within the constraints of the world's standards, but within the bounds of eternity. In the parable of the vineyard workers in Matthew 20, the workers hired at the beginning of the day are angry by the end of it. They are complaining because the other workers had done nothing, yet had been made equal to them. None of the workers were underpaid or overworked. Some of them had just experienced "undeserved" kindness, leaving others to feel less superior. At least, that's how it looks from our perspective. But these aren't just rules and concepts Jesus wants us to unlearn from the ways of the world. Christ is showing us that His kingdom is wholly better. In it, we will be fully loved by Him, forever united. This is the message that all of Jesus' teachings in these passages point to: unity over divorce, children inheriting the kingdom, poor over rich, last before first. Jesus came to serve the undeserving with kindness; this is the heart of God's economy. As Tim Keller says, "The gospel is this: We are more sinful and flawed in ourselves than we ever dared to believe, yet at the very same time we are more loved and accepted in Jesus Christ than we ever dared hope."

Written by Kaitlin Wernet - *She Reads Truth, Matthew*

Mark 10:45 says "*For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.*" In dying, Jesus is taking Himself away from their physical presence but leaving them something eternal. By saying no to the requests of James and John, He's giving them something better—they just don't understand at the time. They'll realize in retrospect that no was the best response to their request. God is always doing what is eternally best. He's always serving us and giving the best gifts.

Adapted from *The Bible Recap* by Tara-Leigh Cobble

» **What did you learn about God's Eternal Kingdom today?**

# DAY 3

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*Matthew 21:1-27, Mark 11:1-33, Luke 19:28-48, Luke 20:1-8, John 12:12-50*

## The Promised King

Zechariah 9:9 prophesied of the promised Redeemer...“Shout in triumph, Daughter Jerusalem! Look, your King is coming to you; he is righteous and victorious, humble and riding on a donkey”. When this prophecy was ultimately fulfilled in Jesus’s entry into Jerusalem, He was surrounded with shouts of praise and rejoicing. The people recognized that He was the long-awaited Son of David. And so, they cried out accordingly. “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!” The word “Hosanna” literally means, “Come save us now!” There was no outward pomp to encourage such a joyful reception. The throngs crowding around Him were fisherman and tradespeople. Yet, they saw something that their religious leaders could not see. They saw the incarnate Son of God coming and they praised God for sending the long-expected Messiah. Sadly, in a matter of days, the shouts of praise would be drowned out by cries for the blood of the Son of God. Instead of “Hosanna”, the crowds would cry, ‘Crucify him!’. But in the rejection of this King, God worked to forever fill the hearts of His people with joy. There is nothing that ought to stir our hearts more than to know that the King who rode into Jerusalem on a donkey, shed His blood for our eternal redemption and reconciliation to God. We have every reason to constantly shout, “Hosanna!”

Written by Nick Batzig - *He Reads Truth, Mark*

And as He inched closer to Jerusalem, Luke tells us that Jesus wept. But this time, instead of crying over something that had already happened, this time Jesus’s tears flowed for future days when the beautiful city would be crushed by its enemies. Jesus said these enemies would not “leave one stone on another in your midst, because you did not recognize the time when God visited you”. Jesus sheds tears because Jerusalem did not see Him for who He was. Yes, there were some disciples who knew who He was. But most people missed the One whose love drove Him to tears, and in the days to follow, to a cross. If there had been no crowds that Sunday when Jesus entered Jerusalem, He would have entered the city all the same, because Jesus’s love for His people is greater than any force that would try to stop Him.

Written by John Blase - *He Reads Truth, Luke*

Jesus continues heading to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover and be crucified. His actions and parables intensify during His final days. When He curses a fig tree because it’s fruitless, it withers immediately. Jesus knows it’s not fig season—that’s still months away. So why is He so angry? Remember the parable of the fruitless fig tree in Luke 13, Israel is this fig tree. Prophets have been making this comparison for hundreds of years, painting Israel as a fruitless fig tree. Jesus desperately wants Israel to bear fruit, but it hasn’t. Jesus knows how this all unfolds. It probably breaks His heart to see that Israel hasn’t produced fruit. He goes to the temple to teach—putting Himself in front of the very people who will arrest Him soon. The chief priests and elders question His authority, and He turns the tables on them. He gives them a riddle about John The Baptist’s ministry, asking where it came from. John’s ministry and Jesus’s authority both come from heaven. The chief priests and the elders can’t accept and receive these truths, but they can’t refute them either.

Adapted from *The Bible Recap* by Tara-Leigh Cobble

Jesus walked into the temple, flipping over tables and tossing money to the floor. The hosanna-shouters must have been shocked to see the man on the donkey driving the sellers out of the temple with such authority. But it’s what He did next that was truly radical: He invited the least inside. He cleared out those who had profaned the temple and ushered in those who humbly sought after God. He welcomes in the defenseless, becoming their defense. He desires not the shiny sacrifices our pride wishes to bring, but only a heart that is stayed on Him.

From *She Reads Truth, Matthew*

- » **Put yourself in the shoes of those seeing this entrance into Jerusalem. What images & messages stand out to you?**

# DAY 4

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*Matthew 21:28-46, Matthew 22-23, Mark 12, Luke 20:9-47, Luke 21:1-4*

## Religious Leaders Try to Trick Jesus

The final two parables in Matthew 21 represent condemnation for those Jews who have rejected Jesus as Messiah. First is the parable of the two sons. One takes his time in being obedient, while the other pretends to be obedient right away but is actually disobedient. Jesus says tax collectors, sinners, and prostitutes may seem to take the long way around, but if they eventually repent, that's better than faking obedience. The parable of the wicked tenants is a picture of Christ's death. The tenants of the vineyard don't want to give the master what's rightfully His, so they kill everyone who comes to get it so they can have the inheritance instead. Herod and Satan have already tried to kill Jesus to benefit themselves, and soon Judas Iscariot will do the same. But here, Jesus is talking to the chief priests and Pharisees, who also play a role. He says they're producing lots of fruit, but it's human fruit, not kingdom fruit. As the Pharisees and other leaders grow more desperate to accuse Him, they try to trap Him with a question about taxes. The Jews hate giving money to Rome—it funds the army that oppresses. But Jesus says it's lawful to pay taxes and to submit to the authorities God has placed over you, even if they're wicked and you're in the process of opposing them. It's possible to humbly honor God by keeping the law while rebelling against wicked authorities. Next, the Sadducees try to trap Him by creating a hypothetical scenario built around resurrection. As they're talking, a Pharisee scribe is impressed with Jesus, so he asks which commandment is the most important. Jesus encapsulates all 613 Old Testament laws into just two—the vertical, man-to-God law and the horizontal, man-to-man law. Jesus isn't eliminating any laws; He's just summarizing them. Jesus says to beware of those who do things to be seen and admired. Long robes and long prayers aren't wrong, but arrogance is. Jesus knows the Pharisees' hearts when they do these things. He contrasts them with a widowed woman who doesn't have anything to show off but who gives generously from her heart.

### » What stands out to you about the way Jesus handles those who are looking to trap him?

It's possible that Matthew has collected all His sayings to the Pharisees and put them in one convenient filing cabinet labeled chapter 23. Woe to (1) those who don't enter the kingdom and who, by their lies, prevent others from entering too; (2) those who make converts to false religions, taking them from one lie to another; (3) the blind guides who value the symbol over the source and the creation over the Creator; (4) those who neglect the weightier things, who tithe religiously while oppressing others; (5) those who try to look righteous though they're greedy and selfish; (6) those who work hard to seem perfect on the outside when they're full of sin and death; and (7) those who repeat the sins of their fathers, killing the prophets. Jesus tells the crowds to follow the commands of the scribes and Pharisees but not their actions. He doesn't wholesale condemn their practices—they're teaching the Hebrew Scriptures, after all. The primary problem is that their hearts are off, and because of that, they're adding to God's laws to prove themselves. So Jesus doesn't throw the baby out with the bathwater. He knows that obedience to the truth is a good thing, even if the truth is preached by hypocrites. They "make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long". Phylacteries are small leather boxes that hold Scripture, and they are worn on the forehead or arm. The fringe refers to the four tasseled ends of a prayer shawl, Jesus isn't condemning wearing a prayer shawl. He wears one...He's condemning using these things to show off.

Adapted from *The Bible Recap* by Tara-Leigh Cobble

### » What can we learn from these "woes" to the Pharisees?

### » What was Jesus addressing as their main issue?

# DAY 5

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Matthew 24-25, Matthew 26:1-16, Mark 13, Mark 14:1-11, Luke 7:36-50, Luke 21:5-38, John 12:1-11

## **Trials are Coming**

In the final week of His life, Jesus tells His inner circle that the temple will be destroyed, Jerusalem will fall to Rome, and they'll endure trials and struggles. He seems to list things chronologically in conjunction with His return to earth after His death, resurrection, and ascension to heaven. He pulls back the curtain a bit on what will happen after that, but we still don't see it clearly. There are a few major perspectives on how things unfold, but in general, this is one place in Scripture where it's wise to hold things with an open hand. We don't want to scream where Scripture whispers. When He returns, there'll be some strange astronomical phenomenon—Will the actual stars fall? Or is this one of the times when He speaks of things in spiritual terms, not physical terms? Perhaps this refers to kings and kingdoms? Or to spiritual forces of evil? After that, Jesus will send His angels to gather His elect from the four corners of the earth and the four corners of heaven, and we'll be united with Him through eternal life, a merging of heaven and earth. Luke's account of this in chapter 21 says people will faint with fear when this happens. But God's kids don't need to fear. The so-called end times are the beginning times for believers! In Luke 21:28, Jesus says, "When these things begin to take place, straighten up and raise your heads, because your redemption is drawing near." Some people are so consumed by the hard parts that they try to determine when it will happen, but Jesus says that's an impossible task. By the way, the phrase "straighten up" isn't a call to get your act together—it's His way of saying we don't have to cower in fear. Then He says something that isn't clear: "This generation will not pass away until all these things take place." Most scholars believe "this generation" refers either to humanity itself or to the line of descendants of God's family. What they're building is eternal. The gospel isn't going to die out. It's going to keep reaching the peoples and the nations, then He'll return. Along with "don't be afraid" Jesus also calls His followers to "stay awake." He never says, "Try to figure out when I'm coming back." Instead, He says, "Stay awake. Don't be lulled to sleep by the world. And when things get crazy, don't be afraid. Share the gospel no matter what." Knowing Jesus helps us live with open hands, no matter what happens. Jesus warns His disciples about wars and persecution that they will encounter soon. Some will be put to death, but "not a hair on your head will perish." This is only possible if He's pointing to eternal life. Endurance in the faith is what marks the believer, but perseverance is His doing, not ours. He promises to finish what He started in us. Don't get caught up in too much of anything and don't let your attentions and affections fall on fleeting things—the cares of this life—because the things that matter are eternal.

Adapted from *The Bible Recap* by Tara-Leigh Cobble

Jesus is invited into the house of Simon, a Pharisee. While He is reclining at his table, a woman approaches who is a prostitute and known in the city. She begins to use her hair and tears to clean Jesus's feet and then anoints His feet with expensive perfume. This is culturally significant for many reasons. First, attending to someone's feet was a task set aside for servants—she purposefully took that servanthood posture. Second, anointing someone on the head was a sign of respect; however, this woman anointed His feet. Another sign of humility. Lastly, wiping His feet with her hair meant she took her hair down and that was rarely done in public. You see, Simon invited Jesus into his home but didn't do any of these things for Him. His posture was not that of humility but of notability. She was acting out of deep emotions because she knew that Jesus was the very Son of God. She was moved to seek forgiveness from Jesus because she knew she was in the presence of the only One who could offer forgiveness. As she is seen from the outside as someone who is unforgivable because of her profession, Jesus sees her for her humility and deep brokenness. He then looked at her and commended her faith because that faith saved her. Faith in Jesus is what saves us all.

Written by Jameson Barker - *He Reads Truth, The Life of Jesus*

» **What did you learn about Jesus in today's reading?**

# WEEK 6

## JESUS' FINAL DAYS ON EARTH

As we enter Holy Week, this graphic might help you with the order that these events happened. In order to finish the entirety of the gospels this week, we will not read them exactly on the days they would have occurred, but this might be a great visual to help you see what Jesus' final days on earth were like.

THE PASSION WEEK		MATTHEW	MARK	LUKE	JOHN	LOCATION
SUN	TRIUMPHAL ENTRY INTO JERUSALEM	21:1-11	11:1-10	19:29-44		MOUNT OF OLIVES
	JESUS LOOKS AROUND THE TEMPLE		11:11			JERUSALEM
	JESUS RETURNS TO BETHANY		11:11			BETHANY
MON	JESUS CURSES THE BARREN FIG TREE	21:18-19	11:12-14			MOUNT OF OLIVES
	JESUS CLEANSSES THE TEMPLE	21:12-13	11:15-18	19:45-48		JERUSALEM
	CERTAIN GREEKS ASK TO SEE JESUS				12:20-35	
TUE	JESUS REBUKES UNBELIEF				12:37-50	
	JESUS RETURNS TO BETHANY		11:19			BETHANY
	DISCIPLES SEE THE FULLY-WITHERED FIG TREE	21:19-22	11:20-26	21:37-38		MOUNT OF OLIVES
WED	JESUS' AUTHORITY QUESTIONED BY LEADERS	21:23-27	11:27-33	20:1-8		JERUSALEM
	PARABLE OF THE TWO SONS	21:28-32				
	PARABLE OF THE VINEDRESSERS	21:33-46	12:1-12	20:9-19		
THU	PARABLE OF THE WEDDING FEAST	22:1-14				
	PHARISEES' QUESTION ABOUT PAYING TAXES	22:15-22	12:13-17	20:20-26		
	PHARISEES' QUESTION ABOUT THE RESURRECTION	22:23-33	12:18-27	20:27-40		
FRI	SCRIBES' QUESTION ABOUT THE GREAT COMMANDMENT	22:35-40	12:28-34			
	JESUS' QUESTION ABOUT DAVID'S LORD	22:41-46	12:35-37	20:41-44		
	WOE TO THE SCRIBES AND PHARISEES	23:1-39	12:38-40	20:45-47		
SAT	POOR WIDOW'S MITE		12:41-44	21:1-4		
	PROPHECY - DESTRUCTION OF JERUSALEM, LORD'S COMING	24:1-51	13:1-37	21:5-36		MOUNT OF OLIVES
	PARABLES - TEN VIRGINS, TALENTS, SHEEP AND GOATS	25:1-46				
SUN	SANHEDRIN PLOT TO KILL JESUS	26:3-5	14:1-2	22:1-2		JERUSALEM
	JUDAS AGREES TO BETRAY JESUS	26:14-16	14:10-11	22:3-6		
	PREPARATION FOR THE PASSOVER	26:17-19	14:12-16	22:7-13		
MON	JESUS & THE DISCIPLES ASSEMBLE FOR THE PASSOVER	26:20	14:17	22:14-16	13:1	
	DISCIPLES ARGUE OVER WHO IS THE GREATEST			22:24-30		
	JESUS WASHES THE DISCIPLES' FEET				13:2-17	
TUE	JESUS IDENTIFIES HIS BETRAYER	26:21-25	14:18-21	22:21-23	13:18-30	
	JESUS INSTITUTES THE LORD'S SUPPER	26:26-29	14:22-25	22:15-20		
	THE COMMANDMENT OF LOVE				13:31-35	
WED	JESUS PREDICTS PETER'S DENIAL	26:31-35	14:27-31	22:31-38	13:36-38	
	JESUS GIVES THE UPPER ROOM DISCOURSE				14:1-30	
	JESUS AND THE DISCIPLES SING A HYMN & DEPART	26:30	14:26		14:31	
THU	JESUS' DISCOURSE ON THE WAY TO GETHSEMANE				15:1-16:33	
	JESUS PRAYS FOR HIS DISCIPLES				17:1-26	
	JESUS PRAYS IN GETHSEMANE	26:36-46	14:32-42	22:39-46	18:1	MOUNT OF OLIVES
FRI	JESUS IS BETRAYED AND ARRESTED	26:47-56	14:43-52	22:47-53	18:2-12	
	JESUS IS BROUGHT BEFORE ANNAS				18:13-14	JERUSALEM
	JESUS IS BROUGHT BEFORE CAIAPHAS				18:24	
SAT	JESUS IS CONDEMNED & MISTREATED THROUGH THE NIGHT	26:57-68	14:53-65	22:54-72		
	PETER DENIES JESUS THREE TIMES	26:58-75	14:54-72	22:54-62	18:15-27	
	SANHEDRIN FORMALLY CONDEMN JESUS	27:1	15:1	22:66-71		
SUN	JUDAS GOES OUT AND COMMITTS SUICIDE	27:3-10				
	JESUS APPEARS BEFORE PILATE	27:2-14	15:1-5	23:1-7	18:28-38	FIELD OF BLOOD
	JESUS APPEARS BEFORE HEROD			23:8-12		JERUSALEM
MON	JESUS APPEARS BEFORE PILATE AGAIN	27:15-23	15:6-14	23:13-22	18:39-40	
	JESUS IS SCOURGED AND MOCKED BY THE ROMANS	27:27-31	15:16-19		19:1-3	
	PILATE CONSENTS TO JESUS' DEATH	27:22-26	15:12-15	23:20-25	19:4-16	
TUE	JESUS IS LED AWAY TO BE CRUCIFIED	27:31-34	15:20-23	23:26-32	19:16-17	
	JESUS ON THE CROSS FOR THE FIRST THREE HOURS	27:35-44	15:24-32	23:33-43	19:18-24	
	JESUS ON THE CROSS FOR THE FINAL THREE HOURS	27:45-50	15:33-37	23:44-46	19:25-30	CALVARY
WED	MIRACLES ACCOMPANYING THE CRUCIFIXION	27:51-56	15:38-41	23:45-49		
	JOSEPH BURIES THE BODY OF JESUS	27:57-61	15:42-47	23:50-55		GARDEN TOMB
	JEWISH LEADERS SECURE THE TOMB	27:62-66			19:31-42	
THU	THE WOMEN OBSERVE THE SABBATH DAY			23:56		AT HOME
	MARY MAGDALENE, JOANNA, & MARY THE MOTHER OF JAMES COME TO THE TOMB AND FIND JESUS RISEN	28:1-8	16:1-8	24:1-8	20:1	GARDEN TOMB

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This week, we encourage you to watch these short videos from BibleProject to gain context.  
**John Chapters 13-21** - [graceintheword.cc/john2](http://graceintheword.cc/john2)  
**Death & Resurrection** - [graceintheword.cc/resurrection](http://graceintheword.cc/resurrection)



# DAY 1

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Matthew 26:17-35, Mark 14:12-31, Luke 22:1-39, John 13-14

## There's Room for You at His Table

Jesus feeds them the Lord's Supper (i.e., Communion), giving them a physical action that connects them to a spiritual reality. The Lord's Supper is the best feast we'll eat on this side of eternity. It helps our forgetful hearts remember that His body was broken and His blood was poured out for many. The Passover dinner is a big deal, but there's no mention of them eating anything here besides bread. We never see them eat the Passover lamb, which is a command. Why isn't it mentioned? Here's a theory: Exodus 12 gives us a picture of what happens at Passover. It's a weeklong celebration, but some scholars say that it lasted eight days in Jesus's time, with the extra day serving as a chance to finish off any existing leaven in their homes before the event starts. So it may just be the first day of the feast, on which they eat the leavened bread. The Greek reflects this too; *artos* is leavened bread. Jesus and His disciples are eating *artos*. So if this isn't the Passover Feast, that explains why they haven't eaten lamb—and the reason that's important is because Jesus is the Passover Lamb. In the four days prior to Passover, each family selects their own lamb to sacrifice. They bring it into their home, live with it, feed it, and inspect it for flaws—because it has to be perfect—then on the day of Preparation, they sacrifice it and eat it. They paint its blood on the doorways of their homes to commemorate what their ancestors did in Egypt when God “passed over” their homes and saved their lives. Palm Sunday is the only day Jesus lets people publicly affirm and approve of Him as the Messiah King. Then He lives in Jerusalem, is interrogated and inspected, and is put through trials and questioning, and He's still found to be without blemish. The perfect, spotless, sacrificial Lamb of our Passover. And on the day of Preparation, He's sacrificed. He is the Passover Lamb. This is a foretaste—as He tells them to eat His flesh and drink His blood in the elements, they are, in a way, eating the sacrificial Lamb. And by His blood our sins are covered. And by His provision, we can know that He's where the joy is!

Adapted from *The Bible Recap* by Tara-Leigh Cobble

Every time my attention is drawn to the scene of Jesus' last meal with His disciples, my thoughts are filled with awe over the guest list. Even though Jesus knew Judas was preparing to betray three years of friendship for a purse filled with silver, He didn't disinvite him or ask him to leave before He administered what we've come to know as the Lord's Supper. Instead, He still extends Judas a piece of bread representing His body that would soon be broken. Then, there is Peter. Jesus knows, despite Peter's current undying devotion to Him, that in a matter of moments, when Jesus's defeat seems imminent, Peter will desert Him. I'm not sure whose betrayal was worse. How could he deny knowing Jesus after seeing Him raise Jarius's daughter from the dead? How, after witnessing Jesus's transfiguration as He spoke privately with Moses and Elijah? Yet, Jesus extends to Peter the cup representing His blood and bids him to drink. The other ten who would moments later fight over which one of them should be the greatest in God's kingdom. What a trainwreck! Jesus's body was broken for those who betray Him for lesser temporal goods and experiences. Jesus's blood poured out for those whose devotion to Him will wane under unpleasant and frightening circumstances. His body exalted to a cross for those seeking to exalt themselves before the eyes of others. He was humiliated by those filled with vain and self-centered pursuits. These are the ones on His guest list. No matter what you have done, Jesus extends you an invitation at His table. He bids you to bring your sins to Him and feast on the salvation He has brought about through His body and blood. There is more than enough bread and wine to cover it all. So, lift up your shameful head and take your seat at Christ's table, rejoicing in the one whose body was broken and blood was poured out for you. If you struggle to believe Christ's grace is sufficient for forgiveness and your salvation, turn your eyes to this guest list, allowing it to stand as a testimony that there is enough room for you at the table. Take a seat and eat.

Written by Yana Conner - *She Reads Truth, The Life of Jesus*

» What stood out to you in today's reading?

# DAY 2

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John 15:17, Matthew 26:36-75, Mark 14:32-72, Luke 22:40-71, Luke 23:1-12, John 18:1-27

## Not My Will, but Yours, Lord

Jesus spends a lot of John 15 on an image: He's the vine and we're the branches, and God is glorified when we bear fruit. He compels the disciples to be engaged with what He's doing because bearing fruit will lead to their joy! Knowing all their strengths and weaknesses, all their fears and failures, He still chose them. He prays for them to be upheld when the world persecutes them. Jesus keeps reiterating in John, the joy and peace He has for us: "Let not your hearts be troubled...Peace I leave with you...that my joy may be in you...In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world... We have fullness of joy, forevermore, because He's where the joy is! John 17 is the High Priestly Prayer, where He prays for all believers, including you. He prays for unity among us, and for the Father to be glorified. The glory of God is our shared purpose! When Jesus goes to Gethsemane to pray, Jesus asks the Father for what He wants and acknowledges that the Father has the power to do it. Jesus is fully God and fully man. It's not His divinity that wants to avoid the cross—it's His humanity. The will of His divinity is perfectly aligned with the will of the Father, but His humanity overcomes temptation by submitting to the Father's will. His humanity submits to His divinity, just like our humanity must submit to His divinity. He's so troubled and sorrowful that He sweats blood. Gethsemane means "olive press." It's where olives are crushed to produce their most valuable resource: oil. In Scripture, oil often represents God the Spirit. An oil press is where the crushing of Jesus begins, and it's through this process that we receive the thing He says is most valuable to us: the Holy Spirit, the very presence of God dwelling in His kids forever. He never leaves us. Meanwhile, the disciples keep falling asleep. He invites them into His pain, even knowing they're moments away from turning their backs on Him. They take Jesus to the high priest's house, and Peter follows. As he waits, people associate him with Jesus, and he denies it three times. When Jesus catches his eye, Peter leaves to weep. Those holding Jesus in custody blindfold, beat, and mock Him. He undergoes six trials in eight hours—three religious trials before the Jews and three civil trials before the Romans. Jesus has been tried, mocked, beaten, and crowned with thorns, and then Pilate has Him flogged. Isaiah 52:14 says He's beaten beyond human recognition. He's so weak that Simon has to carry His crossbeam. He not only asks the Father to forgive His crucifiers, but He spends His final moments inviting sinners into the kingdom. Two criminals are crucified beside Him—one mocks Him, but one hails Him as King and asks Him to remember him when He comes into His kingdom. And Jesus says, "That's today. I'll see you there." This man spent his life in sin but turns to Christ at the last possible moment, and Jesus says, "You are welcome in My kingdom."

Adapted from *The Bible Recap* by Tara-Leigh Cobble

"Father, if you are willing, take this cup away from me," Christ pleads in His prayer. "Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done" It's hard to imagine this kind of anguish being real. I don't want to. During His life and ministry, Jesus also faced trials and great suffering that brought Him to the end of Himself. He endured disciples who fell asleep in the middle of praying, endured physical and psychological abuse, and went through moment after moment of betrayal and rejection from those who had just met him and those who were close enough to call friends. In Luke, we read that Pilate couldn't find fault with Jesus. Yet mockery and abuse continued. Even in the midst of this, God gave Jesus the strength to keep going. On the hardest days, but also the ordinary days, may you be strengthened by God's love. May you receive whatever trials He allows into your life with trust and surrender, knowing that God will meet you right in the midst of it. Not my will, but yours, be done.

Written by Bailey Gillespie - *She Reads Truth, The Life of Jesus*

» What did God reveal to you in today's reading?

# DAY 3

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*Matthew 27:1-32, Mark 15:1-21, Luke 23:13-43, John 18:28-40, John 19:1-16*

## **Forgive Them, For They Know Not What They Do**

Jesus undergoes six trials in eight hours—three religious trials before the Jews and three civil trials before the Romans. One of these trials was to the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, because only Rome can hand down the death penalty. To Pilate, the people accuse Him of claiming to be a king, since that poses a threat to Roman authorities. In Luke, they say He forbade them from paying taxes to Caesar, but we know that's a lie. Pilate asks Him about being a king, and in John, Jesus explains that His kingdom is not of this world because otherwise His followers would be fighting. He's not there to fight but to speak truth. In Luke, Pilate seems to be trying to avoid making a judgment, so he sends Jesus to King Herod, a higher authority. The king and his soldiers shame Jesus, putting a purple robe and a crown of thorns on Him, mocking His royalty—then send him back to Pilate. So Pilate is required to make a judgment call. Pilate's wife had a nightmare about Him and she told Pilate to leave Jesus alone. Pilate declares Jesus innocent but offers the people an option: "I can release Jesus or Barabbas. Who should it be?" Barabbas is a convicted felon who committed multiple crimes, including robbery, insurrection, and murder. The people choose to set Barabbas free. We are Barabbas—set free because Christ is the sin offering. The people demand that Jesus be crucified. As the people respond, they accidentally speak a truth that is everyone's only hope: "His blood be on us and on our children!" They don't realize it, but that is the only hope for any of us—that the blood of His sacrifice would cover our sins. He is sovereign over every trial Jesus encounters and every ruler who hands down a verdict and even the verdict that results in Christ's death. The cross has always been the plan (Rev 13:8). While all the trials are taking place, Judas realizes the magnitude of what he's done in handing over an innocent man. He feels like he can't live with the weight of that guilt, so he throws the money back into the temple. Judas dies by suicide. Jesus displays such humility as He submits to the Father's plans, receiving false accusations and mocking and the rejection of the people He loves so much—the people He wept over not long ago. And we have done this to Him just as much as Judas, just as much as Pilate, just as much as the crowds. And still, He covers us with the blood of His sacrifice, bringing us the peace and hope that He promised before this all started.

*Adapted from The Bible Recap by Tara-Leigh Cobble*

In this narrative of Jesus's last hours, we encounter a slew of hard hearts. Sin has clouded with unjust vengeance the vision of those who once saw Jesus heal the blind and broken. The officials treated Jesus as a joke, a troublemaker, a heretic—unable to see true power in humility. When everyone around Him was mocking Him, Jesus was a calm presence, offering mercy: "Father, forgive them, because they do not know what they are doing". Instead of asking for justice and wrath—even as the officials tempted Jesus to ask for God's help to bring him down from the cross—He goes so far as to ask God to forgive them. Amid pain and persecution, Jesus offers forgiveness. The only truly innocent one showed us how we can be merciful when we experience persecution, rejection, and hurt—we pray. Only through Jesus's blood can we hold the pain our enemies bring us and God's free gift of forgiveness simultaneously. With a knowledge of God's saving grace through Jesus, we can pray for our enemies knowing it is not within our power to offer forgiveness, but God's. As we wrestle with our limitations to forgive, we can trust that God can carry us gently through the process of healing and reconciling. When we are the wrongdoer waiting anxiously for someone to accept our apology, we can come to Jesus knowing that he has already canceled out our debt and called us "free." Jesus is merciful. He has the capacity to have compassion in our pain and extend a hand, offering a second chance to those who "do not know what they are doing."

*Written by Bailey T. Hurley - She Reads Truth, The Life of Jesus*

» **What do today's passages teach us about Jesus' love for humanity?**

# DAY 4

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*Matthew 27:33-66, Matthew 28:1-15, Mark 15:22-47, Mark 16:1-11, Luke 23:44-56, John 19:17-42*

## It is Finished

Rome typically crucified people on main roads going into the city to serve as a warning not to defy Rome. Jesus is likely crucified eye to eye with people walking past. In fact, He's close enough to talk with onlookers at a time when He hardly has breath in his lungs from the torture. The soldiers cast lots over His clothes, fulfilling prophecy. This happens at Golgotha ("The Place of the Skull," Calvary in Latin). Some say that name describes any place of death, while others say it refers to a hill that resembles a skull. On the road to Damascus, there's a hill just outside the city gates that looks like a skull face, and some believe this could be the spot; it's adjacent to the Garden Tomb site. Others say He was crucified on the west side of the city, marked by the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. The Garden Tomb and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre are both on Mount Moriah—the hill where Abraham offered Isaac as a sacrifice, foreshadowing this event two thousand years later when God provided the true sacrifice, His Son. As He hangs on the cross, He quotes the first line of Psalm 22, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" referencing a Psalm about the Messiah and identifying Himself as such. He commits His Spirit into the Father's hands and cries out, "It is finished," letting us know we can add nothing to His saving work. When they come to make sure He's dead, they pierce His side and blood and water pour out, which often indicates a heart attack. The sun is setting, and the new day is about to start—one when the Jews can't work—so they get Him off the cross quickly. A wealthy man named Joseph asks for His body and moves Him to his own tomb nearby, then Joseph, Nicodemus, and a few women wrap and anoint Him and then roll the stone over the tomb's entrance. God does miraculous things in each gospel account that barely get a sentence. In Matthew 27:52-53, there's a great earthquake and people who are dead and buried suddenly rise and walk through the city. He brings the dead to life! In John, Pilate accidentally prophesies, writing that Jesus is the King of the Jews. And Matthew, Mark, and Luke all say the sky goes dark at noon, and in the temple, the curtain is torn from top to bottom, from heaven to earth—indicating that it's an act of God, opening up His presence to His people in a way they haven't had access to before. Roughly three days have passed since Jesus was crucified, and it's now the predawn hours of Sunday morning. Mary Magdalene, another Mary, Joanna, and Salome come to visit the tomb. The timeline of the four gospel accounts isn't clear, but a rough outline seems to be that the women show up and see the angel and the empty tomb, they leave and tell the disciples, Peter and John run back to check things out, and then Mary goes back and some other women join her later. Mary is outside sobbing, probably dealing with a mixture of emotions. She looks in the tomb and sees two angels sitting where Jesus's body had been—one at the head, one at the foot. This parallels the description of the mercy seat, the cover for the ark of the covenant, where God's presence dwelled in the temple. The mercy seat has two cherubim, one on each end. In Exodus 25:22 God told the Israelites, "I will meet with you there above the mercy seat, between the two cherubim that are over the ark of the Testimony." And there, between those two angels, God's presence had been made manifest not only in the death of His Son but in the raising of His Son. If someone were making this story up, they would've chosen a more reliable witness than a woman, because in this culture women aren't even allowed to testify in court. But Jesus has always gone to the rejected, the outcasts, those considered "less than." It's such a Jesus move to have His first resurrected revealing be to a formerly demonized woman. Jesus tells Mary to let His brothers, the disciples, know He's alive. The last time we saw them all together, He told them they'd all fall away on account of Him. And they did, and it was in the moment of His deepest need. But despite their betrayals, He still calls them His brothers, and He still can't wait to see them. What great love and forgiveness He has for the sinners in His family!

Adapted from *The Bible Recap* by Tara-Leigh Cobble

» What do the words and actions of Jesus in these final days reveal to you about who He is?

# DAY 5

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Matthew 28:16-20, Mark 16:12-20, Luke 24:1-53, John 20:1-31, John 21

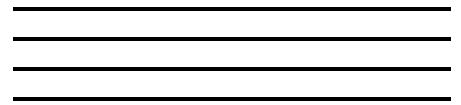
## He is Risen Indeed!

Jesus's followers are buzzing about the recent events. Two of them are making the seven-mile trip from Jerusalem to Emmaus on Sunday—resurrection day—and they run into Jesus, but God keeps them from recognizing Him. Maybe His resurrection body is different somehow, or maybe it's because His old tunic and turban, which cover most of a man's body, have been replaced with new clothes and the body that was utterly destroyed a few days ago has miraculously healed. He asks what they're talking about. They say, "What is anyone talking about?" and explain the resurrection. Jesus says all of this was necessary. He unpacks the story for them from the beginning. As they get closer to Emmaus, they convince Him to stay for dinner, and when He blesses the food, their eyes are opened to recognize Him. He loves surprising people—first Mary, now these guys. As soon as they recognize Him, He vanishes! They go back to Jerusalem to tell the disciples about this, and as they're talking, Jesus appears in the room despite the locked doors. They think He's a ghost, so He shows His wounds and even eats fish. He explains that the whole Old Testament is about Him. They couldn't see it then, but it's clear now. Thomas isn't there, so when word gets back to him, he says, "Show me and I'll believe it." All the disciples doubted until they saw Jesus with their own eyes. Jesus never shames Thomas for questioning things; instead, He meets Thomas in his doubts and questions. Then He blesses us all: "Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." Yesterday, the angel said Jesus would go before the disciples to Galilee, and the time has come for that to happen. We again see the disciples fishing in the Sea of Galilee and don't have a single catch. As the sun rises, Someone calls from the shore, "Children, do you have any fish?" They say no, and Jesus says, "Throw the net on the other side of the boat." They do, and their nets are nearly bursting with fish. This is like what He did on the day He recruited them. It feels a bit like He's making an inside joke with His friends, pointing back to the start of their relationship. When they pull up the net and it's breaking, they realize who the Man is. Peter jumps in the water and swims to shore to meet Him. When Jesus filled their nets in Luke 5, He said He'd make them fishers of men from now on; these fish serve as a reminder that they'll be catching people from every nation, that the gospel net will pull in fish of every kind. Jesus cooks them breakfast over a charcoal fire, like the one Peter was at when he denied Him. They have a beautiful moment of restoration. Jesus asks Peter if he loves Him three times to meet with Peter's three denials. Peter's responses indicate he may feel shame or insecurity, but Jesus gives him a weighty assignment: "I'm putting you in charge of things now. Steward this well." He reminds Peter, just like He reminds all His followers at the end of every gospel, that His gospel must go to all nations. When He tells Peter how he'll die—he'll be crucified too—Peter starts comparing his assignment to John's. Jesus reminds Peter to stay in his lane: sheep feeding and Christ following. A few weeks later, forty days after His resurrection, Jesus ascends to heaven from the Mount of Olives. The men on the road to Emmaus say, "Did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road, while he opened to us the Scriptures?" (Luke 24:32). Talking to God, opening Scripture—that's prayer and Bible study! Those two things set their hearts aflame because God is in them. God is the one who makes His Word come alive! God is the one who makes our relationship with Him so rich and beautiful. It's nothing without Him—it's a sad, dry, seven-mile walk through the desert. But with Him, our hearts burn within us. May you feel it and know it and live it—He's where the joy is!

Adapted from *The Bible Recap* by Tara-Leigh Cobble

- » **As we come to the end of Jesus' Earthly Ministry, what is your biggest takeaway from your time in the Gospels?**

# WHAT NOW?



## WE ARE DISCIPLES OF THE RABBI

In the time of Jesus, the Jewish people were quite used to the idea of following a rabbi, but for us in the Western culture, this idea seems very foreign. We don't quite understand what it means. To help us know what it looks like to go forward in our own journey of following as a disciple of Jesus, we have to step back into Jewish culture to understand what it looked like to follow a rabbi.

In Jesus' day, rabbi literally means "my master", the word was used as a way to address a trusted wise teacher, or sage. The rabbi almost always had a normal job from which he derived his livelihood, but then also functioned much like a traveling teacher that helped to interpret and teach the Hebrew scriptures. At the time, the rabbi had to travel from place to place if he wanted to communicate to the masses his teachings and interpretations of Scripture. The rabbi's stay in the community might last from only a few days to weeks, or even months. If one wanted to learn all the ways of a rabbi, one had to "follow after him." and become a disciple of the rabbi. However becoming a disciple of a rabbi meant sacrifice, it meant traveling with the rabbi, leaving behind their old life for a new one.

### **A clear picture of Jesus as a rabbi emerges from our time in the Gospels.**

- At the beginning of His ministry, Jesus calls His disciples to "Come, follow me" in Matthew 4:1, (literally, "walk after me"), this is often what would happen once you chose a rabbi to follow, you literally walked with them as they traveled.
- The teaching of a rabbi was called his "yoke", so the disciples were to take on the "yoke of Jesus" which is why in Matthew 11:28-30, Jesus tells his disciples "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."
- As they traveled, many were called to open their homes and hearts to the rabbi. As we see in the story of Mary and Martha, Martha was opening her home and Mary was opening her heart by sitting at the feet of Jesus.
- At the end of his earthly ministry, Jesus gave His disciples a final call as He left them: "Go and make disciples of all the nations."

In her study, *Jesus and Women*, author Kristi McLelland talks about what it meant to be a disciple in the first century when Jesus lived. She said that being a disciple of the rabbi looked like "walking in the dust" with a rabbi so close to the rabbi that the dust of his feet got on you. Being a disciple also often meant "sitting at the feet" of a rabbi while He was teaching because you didn't want any of the rabbi's words to "fall to the ground." Note: Jesus was the first rabbi to allow women to sit at His feet.

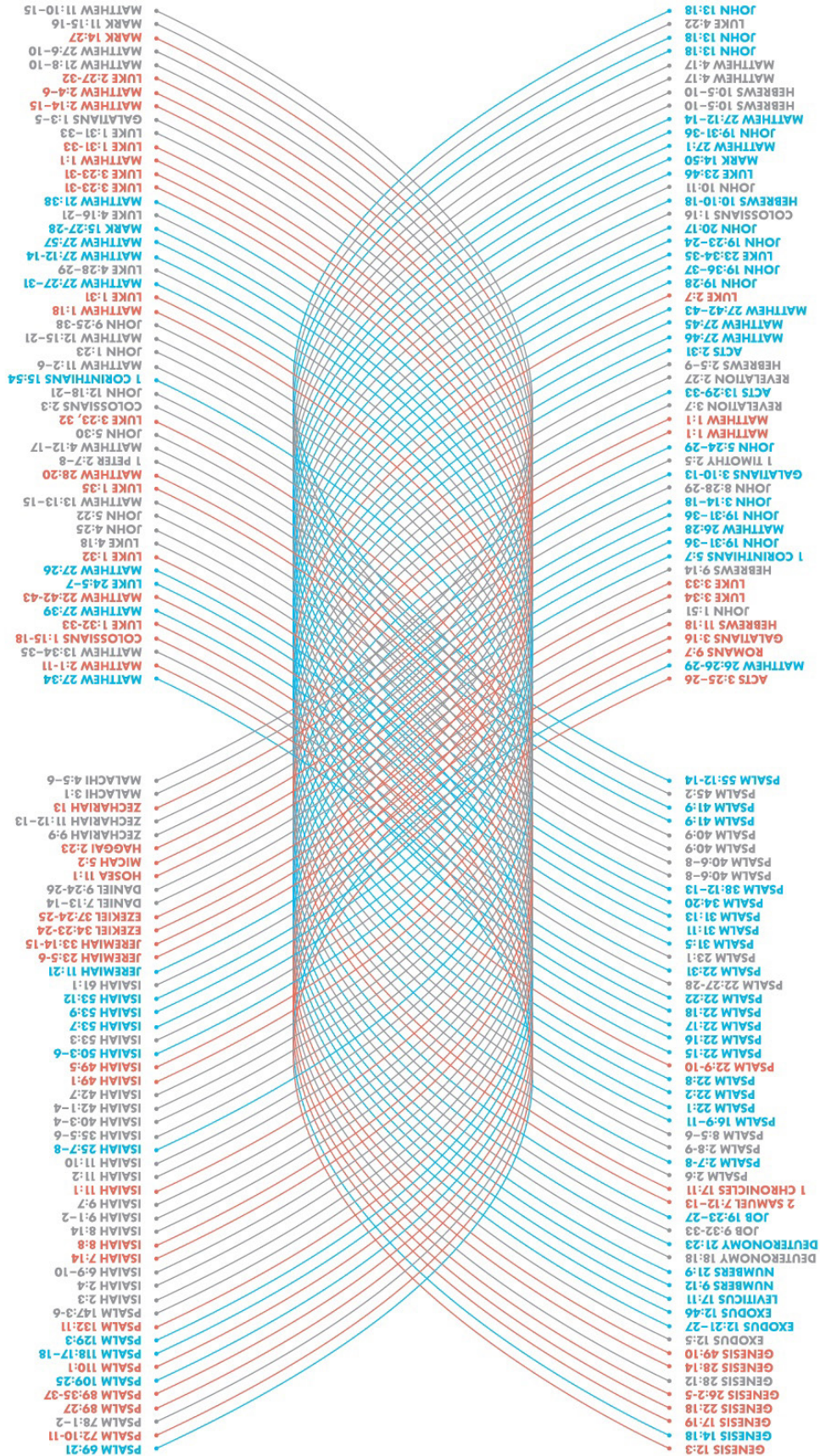
### **So:**

- May we be women who walk so closely with our rabbi Jesus that His dust gets all over us. May people be able to see Jesus in our words and actions.
- May we be women who sit daily at His feet so that His words are in us rather than falling to the ground. May we be able to fight back against the world's temptations with the power of His Word and receive wisdom, strength, hope, love, peace and joy from Him for all of our days.
- May we be women who invite others on this journey with us becoming disciples of Jesus knowing that He is with us equipping us every step of the way.



# 100 REFERENCES, PROPHECIES, & FULFILLMENTS

*The life of Jesus is woven throughout the Scriptures*







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