

40 DAY

LENTEN DEVOTIONAL

By Pastor Teresa Quinn

NB NEWBREAKCHURCH

Table of Contents

Introduction to the Lenten Season.....	4
Day 1: Jesus Anointed at Bethany (John 12:1-7)	6
Day 2: Jesus’ Triumphant Entry (John 12:12-19)	8
Day 3 Jesus Predicts His Death (John 12:20-36).....	10
Day 4: Jesus Sees Their Unbelief (John 12:37-43).....	12
Day 5: Jesus Speaks to the Crowd (John 12:44-50).....	14
Day 6: Jesus Washes the Disciples Feet (John 13:1-17).....	16
Day 7: Jesus Predicts His Betrayal (John 13:18-30).....	18
Day 8: Jesus Declares a New Commandment (John 13:31-38).....	20
Day 9: Jesus Doesn’t Want Your Heart to be Troubled (John 14:1-4).....	22
Day 10: Jesus is The Way, The Truth and The Life (John 14:5-8).....	24
Day 11: Jesus is in the Father (John 14:9-14).....	26
Day 12: Jesus is Not Leaving You as an Orphan (John 14:15-18).....	28
Day 13: Jesus is in You (John 14:15-21).....	30
Day 14: Jesus Has a Gift for You (John 14:22-27).....	32
Day 15: Jesus is Coming Back (John 14:22-31).....	34
Day 16: Jesus is Your Vine (John 15:1-8).....	36
Day 17: Jesus is in Love with You (John 15:9-17).....	38
Day 18: Jesus is Hated (John 15:18-25).....	40
Day 19: Jesus is Depending on You (John 15:26-27).....	42
Day 20: Jesus is Warning Us (John 16:1-4).....	44
Day 21: Jesus says, “I Am Going Away” (John 16:5-11).....	46
Day 22: Jesus is Leaving You a Guide (John 16:12-15).....	48
Day 23: Jesus Turns Our Sadness into Joy (John 16:16-24).....	50
Day 24: Jesus is from God (John 16:25-30).....	52
Day 25: Jesus Has Overcome the World (John 16:31-33).....	54
Day 26: Jesus is Praying for Himself (John 17:1-26).....	56
Day 27: Jesus is Praying for His Followers (John 17:1-26).....	58
Day 28: Jesus is Praying for You (John 17:1-26).....	61
Day 29: Jesus’ Night of Terror (John 18:1-14).....	63
Day 30: Jesus Had Predicted Peter’s Denial (John 18:15-18).....	66
Day 31: Jesus Is Speaking the Truth (John 18:18-24).....	68
Day 32: Jesus Heard The Rooster’s Crow (John 18:25-27).....	70
Day 33: Jesus Before Pilate (John 18:28-40)	72
Day 34: Jesus hears, “Crucify Your King” (John 19:1-16).....	75
Day 35: Jesus is Crucified (John 19:17-27).....	78
Day 36: Jesus, King of the Jews (John 19:17-27).....	81
Day 37: Jesus said, “It is Finished” (John 19:28-42).....	83
Day 38: Jesus Leaves an Empty Tomb (John 20:1-18).....	85
Day 39: Jesus Appears to the Disciples (John 20:19-31).....	88
Day 40: Jesus Restores (John 21:1-19)	91
Appendix 1 (NIV Bible, John 12-21).....	94
References	111

Lenten Season Introduction

Welcome to the Lenten season! Lent started in the 4th century. Because it is a spiritually life-changing journey for so many people, it has continued through today. It's important to have a clear understanding of Lent as you enter into this wonderful time of year. Here are answers to a few common questions to help you in making the most out of this season.

Why is Lent celebrated for 40 days?

- It is modeled after Jesus' 40-day fast. After Jesus was baptized, he went away to the Judean desert to fast and pray. During these 40 days in the desert, Jesus was being tempted by Satan and was preparing Himself for His public ministry.

Why do the Lent season dates change each year?

- According to John 12, Jesus' death and resurrection occurred around the time of the Jewish Passover celebration. The Passover is in remembrance of the final plague in Egypt before the Israelites were freed from slavery. This plague was that the firstborn son of every family in Egypt would die. The Israelites were instructed to mark the doorposts of their homes with the blood of a lamb so that when the angel of death came to an Israelite's home marked with the lamb's blood on the doorpost, the angel would pass over that home and the eldest son survived.
- Passover is celebrated on the first full moon following the vernal equinox (the time of year when the sun is directly above the equator). Therefore, we always celebrate Good Friday and Easter Sunday after the first full moon following the vernal equinox. This would be the most accurate time of Jesus' death and resurrection. The Lenten period is designed to end on the Saturday after Good Friday.
- Lent technically lasts more than 40 days, but Sundays are not included in the overall count. The six Sundays are not counted because each one is seen as a "mini-Easter" celebrating Jesus' victory over sin and death. Accordingly, our devotional will be provided for you six days per week and Sundays (or Saturday nights) are celebrations in gatherings at your Newbreak Church campus.

What is the purpose of Lent?

- The purpose of Lent is to open your heart more to the ways of God and grow closer to Jesus. The goal is to honestly examine your life in light of God's Word and to get a fresh start in making new changes during your Lenten spiritual journey.

What are ways I can participate in Lent?

- Begin by setting aside a time each day for 46 days to examine areas of your life so you can begin this growing process. Newbreak is providing you with a 40-day Lenten devotional (Monday through Saturday) and church services on the weekends to help you in the journey. The devotional will take you about 10 minutes each day.

You will be given a short scripture to read, a reflection on the verses, and an opportunity to respond to God with what you've read. You can do it in the privacy of your home or any place that's comfortable for you. It's best to find a consistent time to read the devotional. Maybe while you are eating breakfast, when you first get up, while the kids are napping or before you go to bed at night.

- Fasting is a common practice during Lent. When you fast something ("fasting" means to give something up that is part of your normal routine), it helps you to focus more on God and hear His voice. Some people give up watching TV, playing video games, social media, drinking alcohol, eating sweets, meat, coffee or foregoing one meal a day. The choice is up to you. If you are fasting certain foods and have any medical issues, please consult your health expert first.

What can I do to prepare for Lent?

- Make a commitment to read the Lenten devotional for 40 days and go to church on the six Sundays (or watch Newbreak Church on Facebook live if you are out of town). If you miss a day, just pick it up the next day.
- Mark on your calendar the time you will have devotions each day.
- Pick one thing that you would like to fast during the Lenten season, anything that's safe and achievable for you.
- You can start an examination of your life today by praying Psalm 139:23-24, *"Search me, O God, and know my heart; test me and know my anxious thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends you, and lead me along the path of everlasting life."*

A special thanks to Pastor Mike Quinn, Steve (Burley) Thompson, JoJo Thompson and Carey Meier for using their amazing gifts in editing the Newbreak Lent Devotional.

Our Newbreak staff prays that as you read the words in this devotional, you grow closer to Jesus in your spiritual journey and are reminded how much you are loved by God.

**God bless you,
Teresa Quinn**

Day 1

JESUS ANOINTED AT BETHANY

Read: *John 12:1-8*

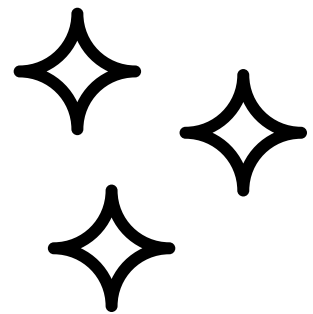
Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus lived, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. Here a dinner was given in Jesus' honor. Martha served, while Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with him. Then Mary took about a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. But one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, who was later to betray him, objected, "Why wasn't this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year's wages." He did not say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it. "Leave her alone," Jesus replied. "It was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial. You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me."

Reflect: Jesus and His disciples are at the home of His dear friend, Lazarus, whom Jesus had raised from the dead (John 11:1-44). Martha, Lazarus' sister, is serving the guests dinner. The gang is eating their meal together. While they are still at the table, Lazarus' other sister, Mary, decides to give a treasured gift to Jesus. She begins to pour a pint of sweet perfume onto Jesus' feet. This perfume was valued at about 300 denarii – equal then to one year's worth of wages. It had probably been in her family for quite some time and only used in small portions for special occasions, but she uses all of it to anoint Jesus. Jesus confirms (in verse seven) that this anointing is to prepare Him for His burial. What a beautiful sight the disciples were able to experience with all of their senses and hearts as they observe the moment that Mary was down on her knees, in total humility, pouring this expensive family ointment on Jesus' feet and wiping them with her hair. Mary could not have fully understood the impact of what she was doing, but was prompted by God to anoint Jesus and obeyed. She didn't worry about what others would think. She concerned herself with an audience of One, God.

Respond:

Is there something in your life that God has been prompting you to do? What is it? Has something been holding you back? Doubt? Fear? Even if it is costly, if God is calling you, what do you need to do or release to take that step of faith? You can start on this first day of Lent by asking God to help you make movement forward in doing for Him what He is prompting you to do in your heart. You can do it, one day at a time.

Here's a simple prayer, *“Jesus, please help me to boldly and courageously do what you have been prompting in my heart to do. Over this season of Lent, I ask that you will remove fears and roadblocks and replace them with strength, wisdom and courage. As I journey through this 46 days of Lent, let me be transformed more into your image. In Jesus’ name. Amen.”*



Day 2

JESUS' TRIUMPHANT ENTRY

Read: *John 12:12-19*

The next day the great crowd that had come for the festival heard that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem. They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting, “Hosanna!” “Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!” “Blessed is the king of Israel!” Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, as it is written: “Do not be afraid, Daughter Zion; see, your king is coming, seated on a donkey’s colt.” At first his disciples did not understand all this. Only after Jesus was glorified did they realize that these things had been written about him and that these things had been done to him. Now the crowd that was with him when he called Lazarus from the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to spread the word. Many people, because they had heard that he had performed this sign, went out to meet him. So the Pharisees said to one another, “See, this is getting us nowhere. Look how the whole world has gone after him!”

Reflect: The next day, after Jesus had been anointed by Mary with expensive perfume, he begins His triumphant entry into Jerusalem. The triumphant entry is one of the few events in Jesus’ ministry that is recorded in all four Gospels (Matthew 21:1–11; Mark 11:1–11; Luke 19:28–40 and John 12:12–19).

In these few verses, there are many hidden treasures and **fulfillments of prophecies** from the Old Testament about Jesus the Messiah.

- Jesus was riding on a donkey, which was symbolic of royal authority coming in peace. Jesus could have easily made the walk, as was His normal custom, but He is making a statement here to fulfill the prophecy in Zechariah 9:9, “Do not be afraid, O Daughter of Zion; see, your king is coming, seated on a donkey’s colt.”
- The people made a path of branches for Jesus to enter the city as royalty. They are waving palm branches, which were considered symbols of peace and victory (Nehemiah 8:15).

- Palm branches were also used as symbols of victory and kingship. By meeting Jesus with palm branches the crowd showed they were welcoming Him as king. Earlier in His ministry, Jesus avoided crowds who wanted to make Him king (John 6:15), but now He is accepting their gesture and its significance.
- The crowd shouts, “Hosanna” in Greek, which is adapted from a Hebrew expression that means, “save now” and “help now!” They also shout, “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!” (Psalm 118:25-26)

Respond: Sit back and soak in the Palm Sunday experience. Imagine the swarms of people in the energized crowd; clamoring over each other to see Jesus. Jesus is riding on a colt, people are laying down palm branches before Him and others are waving palm branches towards Him. The shouting of blessings and hope about Jesus are ringing in the air. Optimism and joy are flooding the streets of Jerusalem. Join in the celebration of Jesus being your King of Kings by spending a few minutes praising Jesus for what He has done in your life thus far and what is to come. Carry this thought of celebration and praise towards Jesus with you throughout the day. You can do this through **breath prayers**. A breath prayer is an ancient Christian practice dating back to at least the sixth-century. They are short, simple prayers that can be said in a single breath and repeated numerous times throughout the day.

Here are some ideas of breath prayers to get you started. Inhale, “Blessed is He,” and then exhale, “who comes in the name of the Lord.” Inhale, “Jesus,” and then exhale, “You are my King.” Inhale, “Jesus,” and then exhale, “I praise you.” Inhale, “He is good;” and then exhale, “His love endures forever.” Inhale, “I will give thanks to you, Lord,” and then exhale, “with all my heart.”



Day 3

JESUS PREDICTS HIS DEATH

Read: *John 12:20-36*

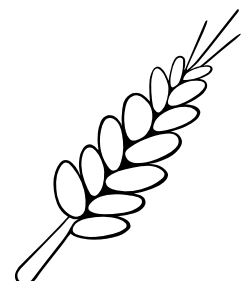
Now there were some Greeks among those who went up to worship at the festival. They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, with a request. “Sir,” they said, “we would like to see Jesus.” Philip went to tell Andrew; Andrew and Philip in turn told Jesus. Jesus replied, “The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life. Whoever serves me must follow me; and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me. “Now my soul is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name!” Then a voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it, and will glorify it again.” The crowd that was there and heard it said it had thundered; others said an angel had spoken to him. Jesus said, “This voice was for your benefit, not mine. Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die. The crowd spoke up, “We have heard from the Law that the Messiah will remain forever, so how can you say, ‘The Son of Man must be lifted up’? Who is this ‘Son of Man’?” Then Jesus told them, “You are going to have the light just a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, before darkness overtakes you. Whoever walks in the dark does not know where they are going. Believe in the light while you have the light, so that you may become children of light.” When he had finished speaking, Jesus left and hid himself from them.

Reflect: As an agrarian community, the crowd listening to Jesus intimately understood the life cycle of wheat. Wheat needs to grow to its full height and develop flowers to allow reproduction to take place and to ensure the plant’s genetic future through the formation of seeds. Once its seeds are produced and matured, the plant begins to wither and die, which allows each seed to fall to the ground and grow out of the soil into a new

wheat plant. Now, with this perspective, re-read verse 24, *“I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat is planted in the soil and dies, it remains alone. But its death will produce many new kernels—a plentiful harvest of new lives.”* Jesus is using a metaphor here, referring to Himself as a grain of wheat. If he dies, His life will produce a harvest of new lives. Jesus is willing to suffer and die for God’s will and to produce a harvest. Even today we are still part of this harvest. In verse 26, *Jesus says that we are to follow Him.* The Greek word here is **akōlōuthēō**. It means to accompany down the road, to be the same with Him. When you were little did you ever play follow the leader? The leader would do different actions, like put his hand on his head as he move around the room. As you followed, you would put your hand on your head and walk directly behind the leader. That’s how we should follow Jesus -- looking at His example and doing what He did. Read verses 27 – 33 out loud. Notice how Jesus struggled with having to sacrifice His life, but knew He wanted God’s will and to live out God’s purpose for His life. This is how we are to follow Jesus. We are to give our lives and wills over to God. In doing this, we will begin to live out His purpose for our lives and produce a harvest.

Respond: What in your life are you holding on to that is keeping you from fully following Jesus and living out the purposes that God has created for you? Sit and ask God about it. When Jesus’ soul was in anguish, he submitted to God by saying, “Father, glorify your name.” He was willing to die to Himself so that a new harvest of lives could have eternal life. We all battle at times with holding on to something that we struggle with fully giving over to God. It is often the thing that causes us stress and worry. It may be a difficult relationship, a child you are obsessed over, a shattered dream, finances, loneliness, addiction, anger, exhaustion, or stubbornness. It could be a number of different things. Would you like to respond as Jesus did and give yourself completely over to God...even that one area you struggle with holding on to? If so, tell God about it.

Example: *You may want to put your palms up, imagine placing whatever it is that’s holding you back, in the palms of your hands and allowing Jesus to lift it from you. Then, sit quietly and allow Him to reassure you that He is for you and will help you.*



Day 4

JESUS SEES THEIR UNBELIEF

Read: *John 12:37-43*

Even after Jesus had performed so many signs in their presence, they still would not believe in him. This was to fulfill the word of Isaiah the prophet: “Lord, who has believed our message and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?” For this reason they could not believe, because, as Isaiah says elsewhere: “He has blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts, so they can neither see with their eyes, nor understand with their hearts, nor turn—and I would heal them.” Isaiah said this because he saw Jesus’ glory and spoke about him. Yet at the same time many even among the leaders believed in him. But because of the Pharisees they would not openly acknowledge their faith for fear they would be put out of the synagogue; for they loved human praise more than praise from God.

Reflect: Most people imagine that Jesus felt disappointed and frustrated when he had done so much for the people he loved and they still would not believe. Their hearts were hardened and calloused because of their repeated decisions not to follow God’s will. Jesus’ heart’s desire was that they would turn to Him so he could heal them from their hurts, guilt, shame, all their hang-ups; thus bringing them into a life of peace and wholeness. Many wouldn’t admit to being Christ-followers because they loved the praises of men over the praise from God. On the other hand, you see the miraculous work of God when you read in verse 42, *“Yet at the same time many even among the leaders believed in him.”*

Respond: My maternal grandparents were godly people. My grandmother died from cancer at age 62. Lying beside her, at her passing, was the *“Our Daily Bread,”* devotional she had read the prior day. Five years later, my grandfather died of a massive heart attack while sitting in his chair. His hand was still clenching his Bible, which was opened

to Exodus 2, when he transitioned to heaven. Though my grandparents both left this world being close to the Lord, they left behind their adult son, Georgie, who had hardened his heart towards the ways of God. My mother told me that my grandma would pray and worry over her son's wild lifestyle. No doubt, my grandparents were saddened by their son's lack of spiritual fervor. My uncle was a handsome man standing at 6'4" and weighing in around 280 pounds. He had wavy, thick red hair, accompanied by a beard and sky blue eyes. His laugh was contagious which was well matched with his hearty voice, his tremendous array of friends and fun parties.

Even though I was only four when my maternal grandmother passed, God remembered her prayers and when I became an adult, He blessed me with a burden to pray for my Uncle Georgie. A few years back, my uncle was dying of cancer. A dear friend, Pam, and I drove to Pismo Beach to say our final goodbyes to him. When we entered his home, my uncle was resting on a couch in his family room. After a short time of chatting, I asked him about going to church growing up and what his relationship was like with Jesus. It was intimidating for me, but the burden God laid on my heart was greater than my fears. My uncle, who was now quite weak and had lost a lot of weight from his illness, began to weep. He could hardly talk as he broke into a sob. I got down on my knees next to him, took his hand and asked him if he would like to pray to give his heart back to Jesus. Through his tears, he said, "yes." After we prayed and hugged, he told me how thankful he was that I drove to see him. I responded with the truth, "I am an answer to your mom's prayers, Uncle Georgie. I know she adored you and was always praying for you." My uncle lived about 90 days longer; then entered the gates of heaven to join his parents and meet Jesus face to face.

Respond: Maybe you have loved ones that you have poured your life into and yet they have chosen to harden their hearts. You are probably feeling frustrated and disappointed like Jesus and my grandparents did. Take time during this Lenten season to pray in faith for them.

Example: Today, pray that Jesus would soften their hearts, open their eyes and bring them into the freedom that He has had planned for them since the beginning. God is in the business of doing miracles. I promise you, God answers prayers. Even if you don't see the answer in your lifetime, your prayers are heard by God. Pray and believe in the miracle of changed lives.

Day 5

JESUS SPEAKS TO THE CROWD

Read: *John 12:44-50*

Then Jesus cried out, “Whoever believes in me does not believe in me only, but in the one who sent me. The one who looks at me is seeing the one who sent me. I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness. “If anyone hears my words but does not keep them, I do not judge that person. For I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; the very words I have spoken will condemn them at the last day. For I did not speak on my own, but the Father who sent me commanded me to say all that I have spoken. I know that his command leads to eternal life. So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say.”

Reflect: Have you ever walked into a completely black, dark room? When you did, were you thinking, “I hope I don’t trip and where is the light switch?” Everywhere we go, people in our lives are walking around in spiritual darkness – e.g., in our neighborhoods, at work, where we shop. Even when someone looks like he has it all together, there can be a yearning in them, an empty part in his soul that is dark and longs for the light of Jesus. In this passage, Jesus calls Himself the light of the world. In Matthew 5:14, *He also calls us the light of the world*. The word in Greek for light is “**phōs**”. It means to shine or make manifest the brightest light; luminous; like fire.

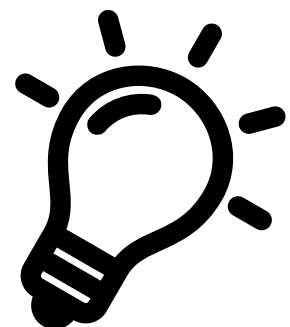
Even as Christ-followers, we are all still messy -- I wish it were different, but it’s the truth. The wonderful difference is that even in our messiness we are the ones in the dark room with a bright flashlight in our hands because the light of Christ lives within us. We are to bring the bright light of Jesus into the conversations and relationships we experience. God has put a variety of unique people around you so that you can show them God’s kindness and share the light of Jesus with them. There may not be anyone else in that person’s life that knows the light – you’re it! Remember, the darker the room, the more powerful the light, especially God’s light. Helen Keller, though deaf, mute and blind, saw light in her darkness.

It was a gifted teacher, Anne Sullivan, who was living out her life calling, that helped Helen make sense of her world and see the light. Helen learned that even though she was blind in her physical body, she could still have 20/20 vision with her spiritual eyes. Helen put it this way, “I can see, and that is why I can be happy, in what you call the dark, but which to me is golden. I can see a God-made world, not a man-made world. I thank God for my handicaps, for through them, I have found myself, my work and my God.” The key to Helen Keller’s life story is that it was Anne Sullivan’s willingness to do what God had called her to do; something that no one else could do.

Respond: God has put you in relationships to do what no one else can do. Ask the Lord, “Who is in my life that you want me to pray for that needs your light? Please open the eyes of my heart to see who it is and open the door for me to share the light with that person.” If you are willing, God will do the work and show you what to do. You are significant and God wants to use you in this person’s life. There may be no one else who can touch this person’s life in the way you can.

You may want to pray this prayer that Brennan Manning shared in his book, *Finding Rest in Abba’s Embrace*:

“Lord, when I feel that what I’m doing is insignificant and unimportant, help me to remember that everything I do is significant and important in your eyes, because you love me and you put me here, and no one else can do what I am doing in exactly the way I do it.”



Day 6

JESUS WASHES THE DISCIPLES' FEET

Read: *John 13:1-17*

It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him. He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand." "No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me." "Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!" Jesus answered, "Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you." For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean. When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

Reflect: During the first-century, men wore opened-toed shoes as they walked down dirt roads. It was common for a slave to wash the feet of guests when they entered a home because most of the time they had dirty, sweaty feet. It was unusually profound in that day and age for the Rabbi or teacher, as Jesus was to His disciples, to wash the guests' feet. Why would Jesus take on the chore of a slave and wash His disciples feet? Jesus is role modeling, for all of us who are followers of Christ, to be humble, servant

leaders in all circumstances. He even tells us in verse 15 that He has set an example for us. You see this again in Mark 10:45, “Even as the Son of God, he didn’t come to be served, but to serve, and give his life as a ransom for many.” Martin Luther King, Jr., spoke on servant leadership in this way, “Not everybody can be famous. But everybody can be great, because greatness is determined by service. You don’t have to have a college degree to serve. You don’t have to make your subject and verb agree to serve. You don’t have to know about Plato or Aristotle to serve. You don’t have to know Einstein’s theory of relativity to serve. You don’t have to know the second theory of thermodynamics in physics to serve. You only need a heart full of grace and a soul generated by love.”

Do you want to be more like Jesus and take steps on the road to be a servant leader? If so, spend time asking Jesus, “Who do you want me to serve today? How should I serve? What should be the attitude of my heart when I serve?” Maybe you serve dutifully, because you have to, and God is calling you to serve from a heart of love and compassion.

Respond: Look for opportunities today to serve someone and set an example for others as Jesus did for us. Maybe you can even wash someone’s feet. If you are married, what would happen if you washed your spouse’s feet and prayed for him/her while doing so? It would probably break down barriers and begin to create a new atmosphere of love and humility in your home. Newbreak’s mission statement is: **Connecting** people with God, through **authentic** relationships, to **serve** communities. Newbreak takes serving others seriously because we want to be servant-leaders like Jesus. One way we do this is by serving communities locally and globally.

Example: A possibility for you to serve could be to get involved with serving the community through Newbreak’s many service projects. These are all meaningful ways to serve that impact and change lives right here in San Diego. To find out more information, you can ask your Campus Director or go to the information table this weekend at church.



Day 7

JESUS PREDICTS HIS BETRAYAL

Read: *John 13:18-30*

“I am not referring to all of you; I know those I have chosen. But this is to fulfill this passage of Scripture: ‘He who shared my bread has turned against me.’ “I am telling you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe that I am who I am. Very truly I tell you, whoever accepts anyone I send accepts me; and whoever accepts me accepts the one who sent me.” After he had said this, Jesus was troubled in spirit and testified, “Very truly I tell you, one of you is going to betray me.” His disciples stared at one another, at a loss to know which of them he meant. One of them, the disciple whom Jesus loved, was reclining next to him. Simon Peter motioned to this disciple and said, “Ask him which one he means.” Leaning back against Jesus, he asked him, “Lord, who is it?” Jesus answered, “It is the one to whom I will give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish.” Then, dipping the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him. So Jesus told him, “What you are about to do, do quickly.” But no one at the meal understood why Jesus said this to him. Since Judas had charge of the money, some thought Jesus was telling him to buy what was needed for the festival, or to give something to the poor. As soon as Judas had taken the bread, he went out. And it was night.

Reflect: Have you ever been betrayed by a friend? In verse 21, Jesus expresses His feeling of being betrayed as, “troubled in spirit.” The word in Greek for troubled is “**etarachthē**”. This can be translated as troubled and also as causing inner perplexity (emotional agitation) from getting *too stirred up inside* (upset). Jesus knew all along that Judas would betray Him; but the time was at hand and He was grieved, stirred up inside, emotionally agitated, upset by the betrayal of a friend. Much like the emotions we feel when betrayed by someone. Maybe someone has betrayed you or hurt you in some way. You probably felt or still feel like Jesus did when He was betrayed by Judas. The difference is that Jesus was perfect, so knew how to process the pain, but not let it turn into bitterness. At times, when we are hurt, we don’t process it appropriately and hold on to the pain.

If we continue to hold on to the resulting hurt or pain for too long, it will turn into bitter roots and bitter roots will grow bitter fruit. The person you are hurting most, if you hold on to the hurt, is yourself.

Respond: Would you like to begin to walk in freedom from these hurtful emotions? What would happen if today you chose to forgive as Jesus did and to release those feelings to God? Refusing to forgive someone is like drinking poison and expecting the other person to die. But if you choose to forgive, you can have the poison removed from inside of you. Jesus understands what you are going through. He is not condemning you, but He does want to help you.

Example: Ask Jesus, “Do I have any unforgiveness in my heart from being hurt or betrayed by a friend, acquaintance or family member?” If the answer is, “yes,” take time now and talk to Jesus about it. Ask Him to begin the healing process in your heart and mind, to remove the poison and help you to walk in the freedom of forgiveness. You may have to go back day after day to ask for help in forgiving, but it will be worth it. Jesus suffered like you do so He understands all things and is available 24-7.



Day 8

JESUS DECLARES A NEW COMMAND

Read: *John 13:31-38*

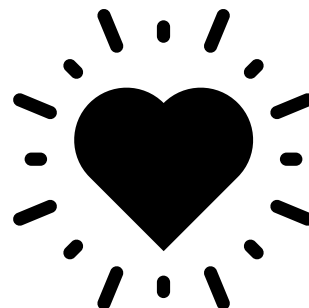
When he was gone, Jesus said, “Now the Son of Man is glorified and God is glorified in him. If God is glorified in him, God will glorify the Son in himself, and will glorify him at once. “My children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now: Where I am going, you cannot come. A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” Simon Peter asked him, “Lord, where are you going?” Jesus replied, “Where I am going, you cannot follow now, but you will follow later.” Peter asked, “Lord, why can’t I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you.” Then Jesus answered, “Will you really lay down your life for me? Very truly I tell you, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times!

Reflect: The block of teaching recorded in John 13:31–16:33, is known as Jesus’ farewell discourse. In these chapters, Jesus instructs His disciples about loving one another, the significance of His upcoming death, resurrection, and the coming of the Holy Spirit. Let’s focus in, and reread, John 13:34–35. The new commandment, in these verses, is that Jesus’ disciples are instructed to love other people the way Jesus loved them—serving them like a slave would, even to the point of laying down their lives for others. It is in this new way of living that others will know His disciples are followers of Christ because they love each other unto death, like Jesus loved them. The Greek word Jesus uses for love in verse 34 is **agape**. It means to have a strong, non-sexual affection and love for a person and his goodness, as understood by God’s moral character; a sacrificial love that voluntarily suffers inconvenience, discomfort and even death for the benefit of another without expecting anything in return. When my husband and I became parents, we couldn’t take our eyes off this wiggly little 6lb. 11oz. love of our lives. Our precious newborn could only cry, eat, spit up, wake us up from sleeping and require lots of diaper changes. But, our love for him was unconditional. We gave to him, adored him and expected nothing in return. That was the closest moment that either of us had

experienced an agape type of love. It's easy for people to have an agape love for a newborn, but Jesus wants us to have this love towards other adults and our teenagers too, even if at times they have infantile behavior.

Respond: What would it take for us to have this love that Jesus is talking about? For us to be able to love others with this **agape** love we need a pure heart that is committed to Jesus. It is impossible for us to have a pure enough heart to love this way on our own. It should be comforting to know that God knows every detail of your heart (Acts 15:8). Nothing about you or what you want to say to Him will surprise Him. He loves you just as you are at this very moment, but has greater things for you.

You may want to take a few minutes and sit with Jesus, have a conversation with Him like a good friend and ask Him these questions: “Jesus am I loving others in my life in the way you intended? What do I need to change?” (Pause and allow a few minutes of quiet so that the Spirit of God can speak to you.) Then continue, “Jesus, will you please purify my heart and help me to love with agape love? Lord, will you help me to see someone that I can show this love to today?”



Day 9

JESUS DOESN'T WANT YOUR HEART TO BE TROUBLED

Read: *John 14:1-4*

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going.”

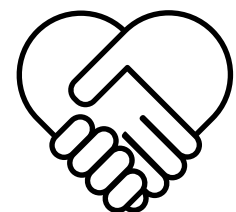
Reflect: Janet was a dear friend and workmate of mine. We experienced a lot of life together including times of prayer, lunches, laughing, strategic planning, co-teaching workshops, going to conferences and having heartfelt conversations about being moms. We had so much in common with obtaining the same degree in college, our careers, our passions and being born less than 48 hours apart from each other.

In a routine mammogram, Janet was diagnosed with a very aggressive breast cancer. She was unable to win the battle. A couple of days before her passing to heaven, another friend and I went over to her house. While she lay there, we sang over her, anointed her with oil, held her, prayed for her and then we all just sat in the silence of sorrowful sadness. The greatest heartbreak for Janet was the pain it was going to cause her children. She feared it would make them mad at God. One of the last things Janet asked of me was that I would pray for her precious children after she passed. I have kept that promise. In the midst of our pain, we talked about seeing each other again in Heaven. Janet began to smile and even chuckled at the great hope of eternal life with a mansion in heaven and seeing everyone she loved reunited there. Janet could smile and had this great hope of eternal life because she believed the truth of these verses. She believed in Jesus just like this passage says. The Greek word “believe” in verse one is **pistēuō**, and can be translated as: have faith; believe; to entrust one’s spiritual well-being.

Janet entrusted Jesus with her spiritual well-being, which gave her the ability to embrace the truth and have comfort that there was a place prepared for her in our Heavenly Father's house. As we talked about heaven, we had tears of sorrow about the end of life in this world and tears of comfort and joy knowing that we'd see each other again.

Any of us who have lost a loved one, knows the agonizing pain in our hearts when someone we love passes. Heaven is going to be an amazing final destination for us, but the pain in getting there is often difficult.

Respond: Maybe as you approach Easter you are facing the death of a loved one, mourning a loved one or even looking at your own transition to eternity. Jesus understands the fear and pain we go through in a season of passing from this life to the next. Read this passage, John 14:1-4, a few times. Be still and meditate on the words that speak to your heart. Do you need your heart to be comforted? If so, invite Jesus in to your pain and to comfort you.



JESUS IS THE WAY, THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE

Read: *John 14:5-8*

Thomas said to him, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?” Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.” Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.”

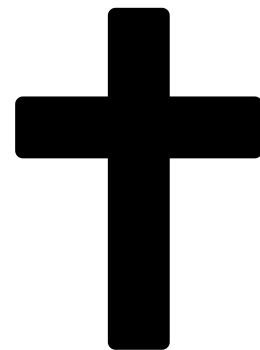
Reflect: The words, “I am” in the Greek are “**Egō eimi**”. The “I am” sayings in John’s gospel are a way in which Jesus teaches about His divinity (i.e., that He is God). The religious leaders of His day understood what Jesus was saying and that is why, in some cases, they tried to execute Him. They believed that Jesus should be punished for speaking blasphemy. (John 5:17-18; John 8:19; John 17:20-21). Let’s look at the three ways Jesus identifies Himself in this passage.

- **The Way:** In the Greek, the word “way” is “**hodos**,” meaning a path or route. Jesus used the definite article to distinguish Himself as “the only way.” The disciples had expressed their confusion about where He was going and how they could follow. As He had told them from the beginning, Jesus was again telling them (and us) “follow me.” There is no other path to heaven, no other way to the Father. Jesus is not just a guide or a good teacher. He is Himself the door, the road, the only way through whom we must go to access God.
- **The Truth:** In the Greek, the word “truth” is “**alētheia**.” Again, Jesus used the definite article to emphasize Himself as “the only truth.” He is not “a” truth or an “option” to eternal life, but He says **He is the only truth**.
- **The Life:** In the Greek the word “life” is “**zōē**.” Again, Jesus uses the definite article to say that He is the life, not one of many options to follow.

Previously, Jesus had just been telling His disciples about His impending death, but now He was claiming to be the source of all life. When someone decides to follow Jesus, Jesus becomes the root of that person's life, in both soul and body (Colossians 2:7).

How do you respond to someone making the claim that He is the only way, the only truth and the only source of all life? This is what Jesus is saying about Himself. Many in the world today say that Jesus was a prophet, a good man or one of the many ways to eternal life. But, Jesus is saying that He is the only way. Was Jesus in fact God incarnate and the **only** way to eternal life or was He a liar?

Respond: Spend a few minutes and meditate on what Jesus is saying to you about who He is. If you do believe, as Jesus says, that He is the only way, how does that impact your life today? Are you rooted in Christ as written in Colossians 2:7? "Let your roots grow down into him, and let your lives be built on him. Then your faith will grow strong in the truth you were taught, and you will overflow with thankfulness." How does it help you in sharing with others about eternal life? Thank Him for being the way, the truth and the life for you. *Example:* Write John 14:6 down on a piece of paper or your electronic device and take it with you today. Read it throughout the day to meditate on the truth Jesus said about Himself.



Day 11

JESUS IS IN THE FATHER

Read: *John 14:9-14*

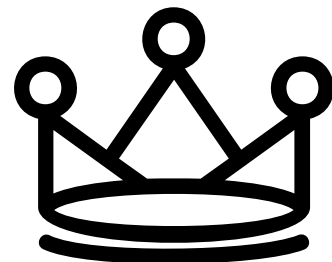
Jesus answered: “Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves. Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

Reflect: What Jesus’ heart desires for His disciples is expressed in verse 11, “*Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me.*” He wanted the disciples to understand He was not just a prophet, or a teacher, or their disciple-master, and not only the Messiah; but He was something more - He was the Word made flesh (John 1:14), God incarnate. To be in His presence was to be in the presence of the Father. Recognizing that it was stretching the faith of the disciples to accept this teaching, Jesus added, “or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves.” The word translated “miracles” (**erga** in the Greek) means, in fact, “works.” On several occasions, Jesus urged the Jewish people to view His works as evidence that the Father had sent Him (5:36), that He was the Christ (10:25), and that the Father was in Him and He in the Father (10:37–38). Now He urged His disciples also to believe on the basis of His works if they could not believe His word. (*John: An Introduction and Commentary, by Colin Kruse*)

Respond: Meditate on verse 11 for several minutes; let it soak into your soul. Jesus is proclaiming to be one with the Father. He is saying that He is God. It's hard at times for us to comprehend, but this truth is crucial to our Christian faith. This is how much you are loved. You are loved so much that God the Father was willing to send His Son, Jesus, to become incarnate. The incarnation means that while remaining God, Jesus took upon a new nature - a human nature. The incarnation was uniting the divine and the human into one being, one person. Jesus was fully God and fully human so He could live a sinless life here on earth and die for you and me because He wants to have a relationship with each of us that lasts through eternity.

Many people have a voice inside their heads that say, "I am not _____ enough." Each person can fill in their own blank. The word you put in the blank might be: "good," "smart," "pretty," "handsome," "educated," "godly," "creative," "fun." The list goes on and on of what we might say to ourselves. Please understand this and meditate on its truth, to Jesus, **you are enough**. Enough for Him to leave His place in Heaven, come to earth as a baby, live a life of sinless servant-hood and die a horrific death for your sins, hurts, habits and hang-ups. None of us will ever have it all together, but you are loved enough for Jesus to give His human life for your eternal life.

Spend time today thanking Jesus for loving you so much that He was willing to become fully human while remaining fully God so that you could be united in relationship with God the Father. It is because of Jesus that you are enough. You are always enough and deeply loved. Today, write down this passage and mediate on it to be reminded how much you are loved. Jeremiah 31:3, *"I have loved you, my people (fill your name in here), with an everlasting love. With unfailing love I have drawn you to myself."*



JESUS IS NOT LEAVING YOU AS AN ORPHAN

Read: *John 14:15-18*

“If you love me, keep my commands. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.”

Reflect: In this passage, Jesus tells us He is not going to leave us as orphans because He is sending us His Spirit. The Holy Spirit is referred to as the “Counselor” who will be with the disciples forever (14:16). Note that Jesus called the Holy Spirit “another” Counselor, suggesting that the work of the Holy Spirit would take the place of His role in their lives. The Greek word is “**Paraclete,**” which suggests an adviser, encourager, exhorter, comforter, and intercessor. The idea is that the Spirit will always stand alongside the people of God (that’s you). The Holy Spirit is also referred to as the “Spirit of truth” (14:17). The Spirit testifies to the truth of God in Christ and brings people toward that truth through conviction leading to repentance and faith. (*John: An Introduction and Commentary, by Colin Kruse.*) Another important point in these verses is to know that in Judaism, disciples who had lost their rabbis (the disciples would call Jesus their rabbi) were often called orphans (v. 18). This will not be the case for Jesus’ followers since He is sending them His Holy Spirit to live in them and be with them forever. When I was a teenager, and in my freshman year of college, my father died by his own hand. It was exactly two weeks and one day after Easter. My father had just begun to go to church. We were not a church-going family so this was astonishing to me. Five days before his passing he invited me to go to a Wednesday night Bible study with him at church. Thankfully, I accepted the offer and accompanied him. It was the last time I saw my dad. The last time we hugged and said, “Bye, I love you,” was in the foyer of The Church on the Way in Van Nuys, California. I’ll never forget that one last wave as he was standing on the sidewalk watching me get in my V.W. Bug. Because of the tragic way in which he died, by taking

his life, I felt a bit like an orphan and would often reflect on our last good-bye.

My heart was shattered and I was searching to make sense of the pain that I was in and that my dad must have been in to die so tragically. That next Sunday, I went back to The Church On The Way. Every time I walked into the church, I felt a relief from the emotional turmoil, so I kept going to church week after week. The pastor (Jack Hayford) shared how I could have hope in a personal relationship with Jesus and the Holy Spirit would live in me as a wise counselor and comforter. After much research, thought and Bible reading, I decided to take that step of faith and began a personal relationship with Jesus. The Holy Spirit really did come and live within me. Eventually, I no longer felt like an orphan, but a child of God and part of a church family. For over 40 years, this wise, comforting Spirit of God has lived in me and guides me into all truth.

Respond: Maybe you are in pain or turmoil today and are at a place where you want to begin or renew your relationship with Jesus. It's beautiful and simple. Romans 10:9, tells us, "If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved."

If you are ready to take that step, here's a prayer you can say, *"God, please forgive me for all my sins. I am sorry. I believe in my heart that Jesus, who is your Son, lived here on earth, died for my sins and you raised Him from the dead. I want to be your child. I want the Holy Spirit to live in me and guide me in all things. In Jesus' name, amen."* Welcome to the family of God! Please tell a friend or pastor this week if you have begun your relationship with Jesus.



JESUS IS IN YOU

Read: *John 14: 19-24*

“Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them.” Then Judas (not Judas Iscariot) said, “But, Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?” Jesus replied, “Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. Anyone who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.

Reflect: Notice the stress on love and obedience in verses 15, 23 and 24. Jesus uses **agape** as the word for love here (day 8 of this devotional gives you the full definition). It is basically the most amazing, sacrificial, unconditional love one can have for another person. The word in Greek used for “obey” is **“tērēō”** which means to guard, watch, keep your eye upon. Jesus is saying here to love Him with an unconditional love and keep guard over the actions in your life by obeying His word (this is a heart, head and hands connection). When Jesus spoke of the Father and the Son making their ‘home’ with the believer (verse 23), He used the same word (*monē*) as in 14:2, where He said that in His Father’s house there are many rooms (*monai*). This word means a close, intimate residing together. As the disciples looked forward to a place in these rooms, in God’s presence in Heaven, the Father and the Son would make their home (*monē*) with them in the here and now by the coming of the Holy Spirit dwelling in us after we begin a relationship with Jesus. This connection is designed to teach that Jesus desires His Spirit to live in us (make His home in us) with our hearts filled with that love toward Him which lives actively for Him in obedience. It’s a radical thought to think that as a Christ-follower, everywhere we go and everything we do, the Spirit of God goes too because He lives in us. With that in mind, when we are tempted to do things that might not be pleasing to God (which is common to all of us), we can ask the Spirit of God, that lives in us, to help us make good choices.

Respond: Take a few minutes and ask Jesus, “What area in my life am I not guarding and being obedient to you and not making good choices?” This isn’t about legalism and white-knuckling to obey. This is about loving Jesus and choosing to show that love by obeying Him and keeping watch over one’s own behavior. Talk to Jesus about it, “Jesus, please help me to hear your Spirit of truth about the condition of my heart and mind. Reveal areas that are not aligned in obedience to you, areas in my behavior that are displeasing to you and ways that I can make the best home for you in my heart.” Confess disobedient areas to Jesus and ask Him for help in loving and obeying Him fully (1 John 1:9).

Pause for a few minutes to reflect about ways to please Jesus and tell Him how much you love Him.



Day 14

JESUS HAS A GIFT FOR YOU

Read: *John 14:22-27*

Then Judas (not Judas Iscariot) said, “But, Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?” Jesus replied, “Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. Anyone who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me. “All this I have spoken while still with you. But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

Reflect: How do you feel when someone is going to give you a beautifully wrapped gift? Curious and excited to see what’s in the box? In this passage, Jesus tells us of an amazing gift He is leaving us. In the Message version of the Bible, verse 27 reads, “I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don’t be troubled or afraid.” In New Testament times the *Pax Romana*, the Roman peace, was won and maintained by force. When people of the world say, “Peace be with you,” it is an expression of hope and goodwill. When Jesus said He would give His peace to His disciples (and us), much more was involved. He is offering a peace of mind in the midst of trials and persecutions, a peace we experience because of the Holy Spirit living in us (Galatians 5:22).

As a Jesus follower, you have the Spirit of God alive and active in you. You can have this amazing gift of peace on a daily basis regardless of personal circumstances and trials. In Philippians 4:7, Paul tells us this peace is beyond our comprehension. So, this peace isn’t something you are cognitively going to figure out – no matter how high your IQ. This is a peace that surpasses all of your understanding. It is a miraculous type of peace even with a fantastic military presence or all the money in the world. The type of peace Jesus offers is a deep inner peace that reaches down to the core of your soul.

Respond: Today, is your heart troubled (distressed, afflicted, agitated, anxious) or afraid? Do you want help in this area of your life where you don't have peace? Jesus is offering you a beautifully wrapped gift of peace. Put out your hands, palms up and receive the gift. Open the package labeled, "peace" that He is handing you. Talk to Jesus about the peace that you need. Now, put back in the box all of your heart's troubles, anxiety and fears. Hand that box back to Jesus. If you take back your box of troubles, anxieties and fears later today, put them back in the box and hand it again to Jesus. He offers the gift of peace over and over again. There is no limit. He loves you, He gets you and continually offers you the gift of peace.



JESUS IS COMING BACK

Read: *John 14:28-31*

“You heard me say, ‘I am going away and I am coming back to you.’ If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. I have told you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe. I will not say much more to you, for the prince of this world is coming. He has no hold over me, but he comes so that the world may learn that I love the Father and do exactly what my Father has commanded me.

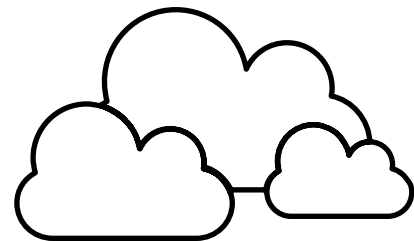
Reflect: Let’s focus in on verse 28 in the Message version of the Bible, “You’ve heard me tell you, ‘I’m going away, and I’m coming back.’ If you loved me, you would be glad that I’m on my way to the Father because the Father is the goal and purpose of my life.”

Jesus wants His disciples to know that His impending experience on the cross is not the end of His ministry; it is the beginning of His ministry’s final purpose and the completion of God’s will for His life. Jesus was living out His life purpose and leaving a legacy that glorified God.

Jesus left a legacy of fulfilling the mission in life that God had planned for Him from the beginning. God has a plan, a mission for your life and a legacy He wants you to leave too. “It’s in Christ that we find out who we are and what we are living for,” Ephesians 1:11. A current example of someone who lived out his life purpose would be our 41st president of the United States. On November 30, 2018, President George H.W. Bush, joined his wife in Heaven. It has been said that he wrote his own eulogy with his life. He authored no formal autobiography, but he lived with such courage, patriotism, and integrity that his life became his legacy. This is true for all of us whether positive or negative, our lives become our legacies by the choices we make each day. Billy Graham puts it this way, “The greatest legacy one can pass on to one’s children and grandchildren is not money or other material things accumulated in one’s life, but rather a legacy of character and faith.”

Respond: Ponder these questions with Jesus today. He would love to join you in developing the answers to live out your life plan and to help you leave a meaningful legacy. If you typically journal, you may want to write your answers down, or share them with someone who is close to you:

- Are you living out the life purpose God has planned for you? If not, ask Jesus to help you articulate more clearly what it is.
- What do you want people to say at your eulogy?
- What is the legacy that you want to leave?
- What is one change you can you make today to begin the journey in leaving the legacy that you desire?



Day 16

JESUS IS YOUR VINE

Read: *John 15:1-8*

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me. “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

Reflect: Did you notice a primary thought that Jesus is communicating in these verses? The words abide or remain are used interchangeably eight times – that’s significant. In Greek the word for “abide/remain” is **mēnō**. It is a verb meaning to stay in a given place, continue, dwell, endure, be present, remain, stand, tarry. In verse seven we are told that if we remain (**mēnō**) in Jesus as a branch does to its vine, then we can ask for anything we want and it will be granted. The word “ask” in the Greek is **aitēō**. Other words it encompasses are to beg, call for, crave, desire, require, insist, request. Let’s put these two ideas in this passage together. If you are abiding in, staying present, continuing in your relationship with Jesus, then you are allowing God’s Word to take an authoritative role in your heart and mind, and you are growing in Him. You are being transformed in your thinking and will. Now, you are ready to experience this **aitēō** kind of prayer where you boldly, courageously and confidently come to God’s throne and ask for anything. Why? Because your heart and mind are aligned with God when you are abiding in Him and you are praying in His will. It is usually dry rot, lack of water or other diseases between a branch and a vine that breaks the abiding relationship the branch needs to survive. When we sin and make bad choices (which we all do), , it creates

this dry rot and disease between us (as branches) and Jesus (as the vine). Are you remaining and abiding as a healthy branch on the vine?

Here's a good way to do a check-up and determine if you are connected to the vine in a healthy way. A healthy branch produces healthy fruit. In our lives it is demonstrated by showing love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23). If your fruit is smelling or appearing a bit rotten it may be shown by actions such as: cursing, pride, rage, lying, judging, hatred, intolerance, or out-of-control behavior.

Respond: Do you want to begin on a journey to produce good fruit? Ask Jesus to help you stay connected to His vine and He will help you make right choices so you can grow spiritually and bear great fruit. *Example:* If there is unconfessed sin between you and God, confess it to Him, ask Him to forgive you, clean you off and prune you so that your heart feels the freedom of living in His vine of grace. Don't hold on to old, past mistakes, thoughts or shame. As a Christ-follower, you are God's child and He sent His only Son to die for you, which sets you free from the condemnation of your past. Romans 8:1, tells us "*So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus.*" 1 John 1:9, says "*If we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*" Now, if you are already abiding in the vine and there is something that you need from God, come boldly to His throne with your requests. He wants to bless you and help you. As His child, He wants you to come and ask so He can give to you in abundance (v. 7). Be bold, believe and be a branch connected to the Vine.



JESUS IS IN LOVE WITH YOU

Read: *John 15:9-17*

“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. This is my command: Love each other.”

Reflect: Yesterday, we looked at the analogy of Jesus, as the Vine, and us, as the branches (disciples). Remember, healthy things grow. As a living branch that is attached to the vine, your life will be spiritually growing from the Vine. Jesus’ life is running through the veins of your life as a branch – He is the source of life. What are some of the outcomes of a living branch that is attached to the Vine? The fruit Jesus expects from the branches is first and foremost, love. **Jesus said that He loves us** as the Father loves Him (v. 9); to remain in His love (v.9); that if we remain in His love, we will obey His commands (v.10); we are to **love each other** as He has loved us (v.12); the greatest love is laying down one’s life for a friend (13); Jesus says that His command is that we love one another. Notice the love connection is not just with Jesus, but with others. We are to love each other. In loving each other, we need to be socially connected to one another, do things together (e.g., life groups, ministry, church, meals). Jesus is telling us all of this for our benefit. He wants our joy to be made full. A recent research review, published in Nature Neuroscience, suggests that social disconnection may be processed in the brain in the same way as the threat of physical harm. The brain responds to threat of a broken relationship or social disconnection by activating a basic ‘alarm system’.

This alarm system sets in motion a range of neurophysiological processes that are the same, whether the threat is physical and in the environment, or perceived and based on individual judgment of a threat to social connectedness. What happens when this alarm system is activated? The sympathetic nervous system goes into overdrive, increasing inflammation, compromising the immune system and contributing to many diseases such as diabetes, aging and cancer.

On the other hand, how does social connectedness improve health? Research shows that being socially connected activates basic reward-related circuits that are also activated when learning to respond to beneficial environmental cues. Belonging and feeling cared for are critical to good health.

Respond: Are you feeling unloved or socially disconnected from other Christ followers? Jesus loves you and His heart's desire is to see you connected for your emotional, spiritual and physical well-being. Take a moment and ask Jesus to help you feel His love and find ways to connect with others. Newbreak offers a lot of opportunity for you to be connected and in loving relationship with others. We center this around three B's.

- **Begin** your week in worship – in other words, at church. Watching on line is fine when you are sick or out of town, but otherwise, you need to be present in church with other people (Hebrews 10:25).
- **Belong** to a life group (Acts 17:11). This is a place where you can be known and know others, be loved and love others, celebrate and be celebrated, grow and help others grow.
- **Be** the church by serving (Hebrews 6:10). There are a lot of opportunities each month to join a team of people doing community outreaches. It's a great place to get to know others.

Another way you can serve is to do something in ministry. There are many options available to you: e.g., greeting and/or assisting people at church; preparing for various aspects of the weekly service; helping children; serving at community events; hosting or leading a life group. Ask your Campus Director or go to the information booth to get help on connecting in a group, ministry or outreach. Pray and ask Jesus how and where you can get connected. It is vital to your life.

JESUS IS HATED

Read: *John 15:18-25*

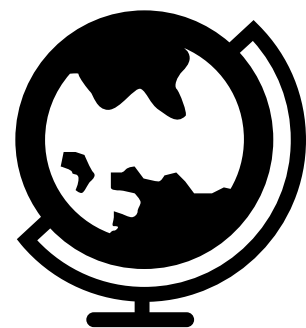
“If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. Remember what I told you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’ If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also. They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the one who sent me. If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin. Whoever hates me hates my Father as well. If I had not done among them the works no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin. As it is, they have seen, and yet they have hated both me and my Father. But this is to fulfill what is written in their Law: ‘They hated me without reason.’”

Reflect: Just as the word “love” dominated yesterday’s passage, the prevailing word in today’s verses is “hate.” In the Greek, the word used is *misēō* and it means to hate, denounce, and even detest enough to persecute. Imagine being hated that much for your faith in Christ.

Last week, I was in the car, of a ride-sharing service, Lyft. The driver’s name was Haab. As soon as I entered the car, a chain with a cross hanging from his rearview mirror caught my eye. Haab’s very heavy accent was a clear indicator that he was a recent refugee from the Middle East. I asked him how long he’d been in the United States. He responded with a smile, “I left Iraq five years ago, went to Turkey and have been in San Diego for two years.” Following my curiosity, I asked him the details of leaving Iraq. He said that he was raised as a Christ-follower and often Christians in Iraq will have a cross on their vehicles to take a stand for Christ. While Haab was still in Iraq, his brother-in-law had a cross on his rearview mirror. He was told to take it off. He refused to do so. The next day Haab’s brother-in-law got in his car, turned on the engine and the car exploded with him in it. Haab’s sister was now a widow, and her children fatherless for their faith. A few weeks later Haab was kidnapped and kept in the trunk of a car for three-days while his family scurried to gather a \$100,000 ransom. At the exchange of money for his

release, the kidnappers told him, “Next time, we will kill you and your family for being Christians.” The next day, Haab, his wife, and children packed up a few belongings and left for Turkey. After two years in Turkey, he eventually qualified for religious asylum in the United States. It took another year for him to relocate to San Diego where he now lives freely as a Christ-follower. This story broke my heart, to hear about other brothers and sisters in Christ, dying for their faith. It brings reality to verse 20, “If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also.” The treatment that Haab and his family experienced is the type of hatred Jesus is talking about in this passage.

Reflect: Today, thank Jesus for your religious freedom. We may not always have it, so let’s appreciate today’s freedom to worship Jesus. The top 10 countries persecuting Christians today are: Afghanistan, North Korea, Somalia, Sudan, Pakistan, Eritrea, Libya, Iraq, Yemen and Iran. *Could you please take a few minutes to pray for those at risk of persecution even unto death, for their faith throughout the world?*



JESUS IS DEPENDING ON YOU

Read: *John 15:26-27*

“When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father—he will testify about me. And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning.”

Reflect: There are two key points in these two verses. The first is that The Spirit will testify about Jesus. The second is that Jesus says, “you **must testify** about me.” The word testify in the Greek is *marturēō*. It means to bear and give witness. This has the same root word as martyr. We are to give witness, share the hope of Jesus even if we have to suffer a bit to do so.

In verse 26, Jesus reminds us that the Advocate (the Holy Spirit) will be testifying with you too. The Greek word Advocate, *paraklētōs*, is made up of the participial form of the verb “to call” and the preposition “beside” and thus means one who has been summoned or called to the side of another—literally, an “advocate,” or, by extension, a helper or legal representative in a trial or other arena of judgment. You are not alone in sharing your story or testifying about Jesus, but the words “you also must testify” in verse 27, makes it pretty clear you aren’t to hide it either. Jesus is depending on you to share your faith. Thom Rainer, in his book, *The Unchurched Next Door*, reported 70% of unchurched people proclaim they have never been invited to church in their whole lives. The Apostle Paul writes in Philemon 1:6: “*I pray you may be active in sharing your faith, so that you will have a full understanding of every good thing we have in Christ.*” In other words, don’t keep your faith and relationship with Jesus a secret. The people in your circle of life need to hear. If it’s not you, then who?

Respond: Spend time being quiet before the Lord and ask Him, “Who is it, Lord? Who am I suppose to reach out to that is far from you or doesn’t know you at all and share my story or invite to church?” Then, write that name down, pray every day for the

opportunity and then continue to “P.U.S.H.” – Pray Until Something Happens.

It’s almost Easter. This is a great time to invite someone to church. All of us at Newbreak are praying for you to be bold and for you to know the Holy Spirit, your Advocate is with you. If it is fear that is holding you back from sharing with others, remember, God says, “Fear not, for I have redeemed you. I have called you by name, you are mine, (Isaiah 43:1).” “Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you (Deuteronomy 31:6).” God is for you. His Spirit lives in you. Be bold, be courageous and be blessed.



Day 20

JESUS IS WARNING US

Read: *John 16: 1-4*

“All this I have told you so that you will not fall away. They will put you out of the synagogue; in fact, the time is coming when anyone who kills you will think they are offering a service to God. They will do such things because they have not known the Father or me. I have told you this, so that when their time comes you will remember that I warned you about them. I did not tell you this from the beginning because I was with you...”

Reflect: Today, read the passage in *The Message*. “I’ve told you these things to prepare you for rough times ahead. They are going to throw you out of the meeting places. There will even come a time when anyone who kills you will think he’s doing God a favor. They will do these things because they never really understood the Father. I’ve told you these things so that when the time comes and they start in on you, you’ll be well-warned and ready for them.”

The Bible was written for all the people, in every culture, for all times. You may not personally be someone who is being killed or imprisoned because of your faith, but as part of the body of Christ, each of us still has a responsibility for our sisters and brothers that are being persecuted.

Respond: A few years ago, my husband and I went to Vietnam to speak at a Bible training conference for pastors. We were supposed to speak at one location, but the gathering was tipped off to government officials and the conference was going to be shut down. We decided to leave our hotel in Ho Chi Minh City immediately that morning. The pastors and their spouses attending the conference, along with us, travelled for over two hours to a different location in another part of the country. We arrived at a rugged retreat site with peaceful surroundings and settled in to our rooms. Clearly, this group had lots of experience in avoiding the government’s raids on religious gatherings and had a “Plan B” from the beginning. We got settled in to our new location and continued

teaching that evening.

In reflecting with the conference organizer, he told us we weren't in danger. If we were captured, the government would only confiscate our Christian materials and compel us to leave the country. In addition, the owners of the conference site would lose their business license and be unable to continue their livelihood. There was great financial risk for the owners and their families.

Through the next five days, I began to interact with the pastors and their spouses. One beautiful, humble person after another, shared with me about their time in prison for being Christ-followers. A lovely woman I met, Ruth (she changed her name because she loved the Old Testament book of Ruth), was arrested for having a house church in her home and was in prison for almost a year. I didn't get all the details of what she experienced while in prison, but she indicated it was a season of great suffering.

For Christ-followers, in many high-risk countries like Vietnam and many countries in the Middle East, Lenten season is particularly dangerous. Just two years ago, on Palm Sunday 2017, suicide bombings at two Coptic Christian churches, one in Alexandria and the other in Tanta, left 45 people dead and many more wounded. Although there has been an uptick in violence against Christians in the region, Egypt is hardly alone in a long list of countries that are violently hostile towards Christians.

John 16:1 teaches us to prepare for rough times ahead, but as you see many Christ-followers are already in those rough times. Today, could you please join others to pray for our brothers and sisters in Christ who are being actively persecuted throughout the world?



JESUS SAYS, “I AM GOING AWAY.”

Read: *John 16:4-11*

“I have told you this, so that when their time comes you will remember that I warned you about them. I did not tell you this from the beginning because I was with you, but now I am going to him who sent me. None of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’ Rather, you are filled with grief because I have said these things. But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. When he comes, he will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment: about sin, because people do not believe in me; about righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; and about judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.”

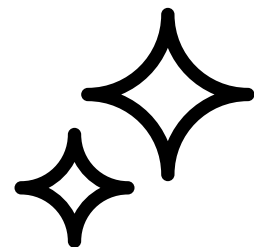
Reflect: Like the disciples, on the surface level, if most Christians were asked to choose between the physical presence of Jesus on a daily basis or the presence of The Holy Spirit, most would choose the physical presence of Jesus. It’s easier to believe and feel secure with a physical being next to you in which you can look at each other eye to eye and have a conversation – especially, if it is the Son of God. Yet, before sacrificing His life on the cross, Jesus shared these profound words with his disciples, “But in fact, it is best for you that I go away, because if I don’t, the Advocate won’t come.”

The disciples hadn’t yet experienced this relationship with the Holy Spirit, the Advocate. Even as Jesus was telling them the good things His Spirit would do, after His departure, they couldn’t quite grasp all that He was saying. It was important for Jesus to leave because His bodily presence could only be in one place at one time. Remember, when he lived on earth he was fully God, but He was limited by being also fully man. His leaving the earth would allow His Spirit to come into the world. His Spirit would be in each of them (and us) and is everywhere, in all places, at all times. There was also a shift in the way sin would be experienced in a person’s life. The Spirit would now convict individuals of sin that would lead them to repentance so they could turn to God and be healed

(Acts 3:19). The word “convict” is a translation of the Greek word **ἐλέγχω**, which means “to convince someone of the truth; to reprove; to admonish, convict, or tell a fault.” You know that twinge you feel after you tell a little white lie, are rude in a conversation, maybe give someone the silent treatment or go into a rage over a small matter? That’s the Holy Spirit convicting you of your sin so that you will go to God, repent and be forgiven.

For some of us, we think it’s wonderful how the Spirit reveals our sins so we can repent and be taught the ways of God. For others of us, when convicted by the Holy Spirit of our sins, we begin to condemn ourselves, turn it into shame and run from God. That is not the response that God intended. If you are running from God, what would happen if instead of running, you stopped, humbled yourself, repented and ran to Him as your rescuer and the lover of your soul? 2 Corinthians 7:10 tells us, “For the kind of sorrow God wants us to experience leads us away from sin and results in salvation. There’s no regret for that kind of sorrow. But worldly sorrow, which lacks repentance, results in spiritual death.” It is God’s loving kindness that leads us to repentance (Romans 2:4).

Respond: Maybe today you have a habitual sin that you are struggling with and are running from God. If you are feeling convicted, go to God, confess and repent of your sins. He will help you. He loves you and sent His Spirit to convict you, guide you and comfort you for such a time as this. You are deeply loved by God. Go to Him today to find your healing and hope. Then, praise Him for giving you a hopeful future. When you enter His presence with praise, He enters your circumstances with power. You can do it.



JESUS IS LEAVING YOU A GUIDE

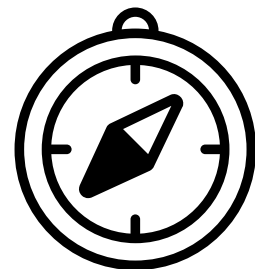
Read: *John 16:12-15*

“I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you.”

Reflect: Did you drive before there was a GPS to guide us? For a short time in life, I was an insurance claims adjuster. Part of this job was driving to various claimants’ homes to inspect and estimate their property losses. I have no sense of directions, so would consistently get lost, even after routing my destination from a paper map. I was pondering this one-day and thought how much time and energy I used to waste driving around lost. Getting my first GPS changed my life. Often, we go through life’s journey trying to figure complex situations out on our own without any type of roadmap. We miss left turns, go down unnecessary winding streets, and can spend years on a dead end road. It’s like we’re looking at a paper Thomas Bros. map in the dark when Jesus has given a GPS that lights up and can direct us on our life’s journey. The Holy Spirit wants to guide us through all of our circumstances today and tomorrow, as we walk into the future. In verse 13, Jesus tells us the Spirit will guide us in all truth. The word “guide” in the Greek, *hōdēgēō*, is the word used for a guide who shows a traveler the safest course through an unknown country. This means Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to be your Guide through the unknown twists, turns and decisions you need to make in life - especially when it’s unknown territory. He wants to show you the safest way to go. The Greek word for “all” is *pas* and it means: all, any, every, the whole, always, as many as, thoroughly, whatsoever, whole, whosoever. This word makes it pretty clear that you have access to this awesome Guide in anything and everything you are going through in life.

Reflect: What journey are you on in your life right now where you need guidance and wisdom for the safest and best course of action? Is it your marriage, kids, singleness, finances, career, a large project, what type of medical care to receive, addiction, emotional turmoil? The list can go on because there is a constant stream of situations in our lives where we need guidance in regards to which road to take. Of course, we know that it is important to include other wise people in our big decisions, but don't leave out the Holy Spirit whom Jesus sent to guide you in everything.

Today, thank the Lord for the Holy Spirit as your Guide. Talk to Him about the situation where you need direction. Then, sit and ask the Holy Spirit to guide you. Stay quiet and still for a bit as you begin to wait upon Him for direction. He may prompt you with an idea, clarity or someone you can talk to who will have good insight on what to do. To learn more about the guidance of the Holy Spirit, read the book of Acts. It's the fifth book in the New Testament.



JESUS TURNS OUR SADNESS INTO JOY

Read: *John 16:16-24*

Jesus went on to say, “In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me.” At this, some of his disciples said to one another, “What does he mean by saying, ‘In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me,’ and ‘Because I am going to the Father?’” They kept asking, “What does he mean by ‘a little while’? We don’t understand what he is saying.” Jesus saw that they wanted to ask him about this, so he said to them, “Are you asking one another what I meant when I said, ‘In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me’? Very truly I tell you, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy. A woman giving birth to a child has pain because her time has come; but when her baby is born she forgets the anguish because of her joy that a child is born into the world. So with you: Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy. In that day you will no longer ask me anything. Very truly I tell you, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.”

Reflect: In this passage, Jesus is preparing His disciples for a world that is going to come crashing down around them. Within a short time, they would experience overwhelming fear, difficulties and sorrow with as they watched Jesus get arrested, mocked, scourged and crucified. He is telling His disciples how they are going to grieve, but that grief is going to be turned into a type of joy that no one can take away. In verses 23-24, of today’s reading, Jesus repeats the promise to answer the disciples’ prayers offered in His name (see John 14:13-14; 15:7,16). This is how they will have their joy made complete or full. To ask in Jesus’ name is to make a request in alignment with His will, that will further His kingdom and His glory and be best for you. It is the equivalent of asking for what Jesus would want to happen in the given situation. After we ask, in Jesus’ name, we are to receive the answer. The word “receive” in the Greek is, *lambanō*.

It means to take hold of, receive, to catch. When our prayers are answered choose to take hold of them, catch them like a ball in a catcher's mitt and go forward in the fullness of joy. Sometimes people catch or receive the answer and don't take hold of it (they drop the ball) because it wasn't the answer they wanted. They think it means getting the answered prayer in the way they think it should be. We don't always see the big picture, so it can be difficult at times for us to receive an answer that we don't want and be joyful about it. Let's clarify what the Bible means by the word, "joy." The late author, Henry Nouwen, describes joy being made full this way:

"Joy is essential to the spiritual life. Whatever we may think of or say about God, when we are not joyful, our thoughts and words cannot bear fruit. Jesus reveals to us God's love so that his joy may become ours and that our joy may become complete. Joy is the experience of knowing that you are unconditionally loved and that nothing - sickness, failure, emotional distress, oppression, war, or even death - can take that love away. Joy is not the same as happiness. We can be unhappy about many things, but joy can still be there because it comes from the knowledge of God's love for us... Joy does not simply happen to us. We have to choose joy and keep choosing it every day. It is a choice based on the knowledge that we belong to God and have found in God our refuge and our safety and that nothing, not even death, can take God away from us."

Respond: Can you relate with the disciples when circumstances in your life come crashing in on you? Maybe there are difficult situations that you have no control over yet impact your life. Do you need God's joy in the midst of difficulties? On a scale of 1 – 10, how would you rate your joy meter? What area in your life is low on the joy meter? There's an old rhyme that says, "Two men looked out from prison bars. One saw mud, the other saw stars." In other words, one inmate looked down in despair, but the other one looked up in hope. Today, look up in hope. Ask God, in Jesus' name, to help you align your heart and mind in this area of your life that lacks joy so that you can have God's perspective and His complete joy in your situation.

Over and over in the Bible, we see this phrase: "Lift up your eyes." (Psalm 121:2; Luke 21:28; John 4:35) It's another way to say, "Look up. Take your eyes off your problem and put them on God." When we look up and see how big God is, it shrinks the size of our problems so we can live out our lives experiencing God's joy. My prayer for you today is that you will experience God's joy and inner peace in the midst of your trials and difficulties.

Day 24

JESUS IS FROM GOD

Read: *John 16:25-30*

“Though I have been speaking figuratively, a time is coming when I will no longer use this kind of language but will tell you plainly about my Father. In that day you will ask in my name. I am not saying that I will ask the Father on your behalf. No, the Father himself loves you because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God. I came from the Father and entered the world; now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father.” Then Jesus’ disciples said, “Now you are speaking clearly and without figures of speech. Now we can see that you know all things and that you do not even need to have anyone ask you questions. This makes us believe that you came from God.”

Reflect: Jesus had been with His disciples for three years, teaching them, traveling, doing life together and experiencing miracles. Yet, His disciples still struggled with fully believing all that Jesus was saying. It is in verse 30 that Jesus’ disciples finally answer the question that He has been asking thus far in His Farewell Discourse (John 14-17). The question, “Do you now believe?” He wanted to know if they believed enough to be willing to follow Him based on the knowledge that He had shared with them about His death, resurrection, and that He is one with God. What is the disciples’ response to Jesus? In verse 30, they said, *“This makes us believe (**pistēuō**) that you came from God.”* Remember on Day 9, of this Lenten Devotional, we looked at the Greek word, **pistēuō**, which means: have faith; believe; to entrust one’s spiritual well-being. In John 14:1, Jesus had been saying to them, “You believe in God; also believe in me.” Finally, it is unanimous. The disciples all agree with one heart and one mind to believe (**pistēuō**) that Jesus came from God and is God.

Respond: Maybe you or someone you know has a hard time believing, like the disciples did. There is a man named Josh McDowell who had a hard time believing the truths of Jesus. One of his goals was to refute Christianity from an intellectual perspective. Through his journey, he came to the conclusion that the Bible was true and Jesus was

God's Son. He is now a Christ-follower and wrote the classic book, *Evidence Demands a Verdict*.

This book is an incredibly thorough reference guide to the questions, challenges, and critiques that Christians are faced with from both honest seekers and harsh skeptics. It is broken down into four main parts. **(1)** Evidence for the Bible: This portion covers the uniqueness of scripture and how the Bible was formed (canonized). **(2)** Evidence for Jesus: This section offers compelling answers to challenges about whether Jesus was a real historical figure, His claims to deity (being one with God), a defense of the resurrection and evidence which exonerates Christianity from the accusation of plagiarism from other religions. **(3)** Evidence for the Old Testament: This portion discusses evidence that the Old Testament is a reliable historical record. **(4)** Evidence for Truth: Pilate's famous question to Jesus in John 18 continues to be asked today, "What is truth?" This section creates a discussion of the nature of truth, so that it can be known. Maybe you struggle with fully believing what Jesus said about Himself. There's no shame in that, it took the disciples time to believe too. It took me nine months of seeking God, asking questions, attending Bible studies and going to church before I made my decision. If you are stuck in your decision, or are in a conversation with someone who is feeling stuck, Josh McDowell's book might be good for you to read. Although, I will warn you, it is almost 800 pages in length. The key is not getting stuck in your inability to make a decision about your relationship with Jesus. What is it that you need in order to finalize your decision? Dig deeply within your own soul so you can decide. Joshua 24:14, says it this way, "But if serving the LORD seems undesirable to you, then choose for yourselves this day whom you will serve, whether the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates, or the gods of the Amorites, in whose land you are living. But as for me and my household, we will serve the LORD."

It is each person's own responsibility to know why they believe what they believe. In Matthew 10:33, Jesus said, "*If you deny me before men, I will deny you before my Father who is in heaven.*" Your eternity is dependent upon you making a decision. The Bible tells us in Hebrews 9:27, "*And just as each person is destined to die once and after that comes judgment...*" This isn't a scare tactic; this is just bringing to the forefront what the Bible teaches us about making a decision to serve the Lord. If you are feeling stuck on your decision for Christ, I would encourage you to go to the information area at your Newbreak campus next weekend and ask to talk with a leader to find the resources you need to answer your questions.

Day 25

JESUS HAS OVERCOME THE WORLD

Read: *John 16:31-33*

“Do you now believe?” Jesus replied. “A time is coming and in fact has come when you will be scattered, each to your own home. You will leave me all alone. Yet I am not alone, for my Father is with me. “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

Reflect: Jesus tells His disciples that they can have peace and to take heart because He has overcome the world. He says this because He will overcome the powers of darkness (John 1:5) through His death and resurrection. He proclaims this now because He has already healed people, raised others from the dead (Luke 7:15, Mark 5:42, John 11:44), and driven out demons, proving He is able to overpower what people consider unmovable forces. Jesus makes this claim as though it has already happened because He is confident in His prophetic proclamation and life purpose that He will rise again after suffering and dying for the sins of all people.

It is interesting that Jesus speaks of both peace and trouble in the same breath. This is because he is saying that the peace He wishes for you does not depend on the absence of all difficulties; but rather, His peace brings freedom from anxiety while struggling with difficulties. We will most certainly have struggles, but as we stay close to Jesus and follow His ways, He will give us an inner peace in the midst of our struggles. Jesus also says to “take heart.” The Greek word is, **“tharsēō.”** It means to have and/or take courage. Jesus doesn’t want us to shrink back in fear when things don’t go our way or we are unsure of the future, He wants us to have faith in Him so we can have inner peace and be courageous. He used this same Greek verb, **“tharsēō”** with His disciples when there was a great storm and He was walking towards them on the Sea of Galilee. The disciples were terrified thinking He was a ghost so he responded to them, **“(tharsēō) Take courage!”** (Mark 6:50). Jesus did not overcome the world for His own sake.

Because He is the Son of God His victory of overcoming the world is now offered to us as a victory to overcome everything we face in the world as we embrace Him in faith. He was offering genuine good news to the disciples in the first-century and us today, “Take courage! Choose faith so you can have inner peace! I have faced your enemy and vanquished him. I have fought your battle on the battleground of human experience where you must fight. I have routed the foe. You can’t do it on your own, but I have done it and I can do it again in you. Abide in me and my victory is yours.” (NIV Application Commentary).

Respond: Do you want to have greater inner peace and be more courageous in your life? The two go hand-in-hand. In areas where we don’t have peace, we often have fear or unsettled hurt. Fear or unsettled hurt makes us shrink back where inner peace gives us confidence to be courageous.

In one of my favorite childhood movies, *The Wizard of Oz*, one of Dorothy’s companions is the Cowardly Lion. He believes that his lack of courage makes him inadequate. I could relate with the Cowardly Lion, as I struggled with fear, anxiety and feelings of inadequacy. When the lion meets Dorothy, he has no inner peace and is so full of fear and anxiety he proclaimed to her that he hadn’t slept for weeks. The Tin Man, Scarecrow and Dorothy decide to let him join their group and to go meet the Wizard of Oz so he can get courage. Only during the aftereffects of the Wizard’s gift, giving him the medal of courage, does he realize he’s courageous. God is offering you your own medal of courage. It’s in relationship with His Son, Jesus, and allowing Him to take all of your hurts and fears. Jesus lived a victorious life and overcame the world so we can live a courageous life in Him. Jesus is handing you a medal that reads, “Take courage!” You didn’t earn it or deserve it, but he his handing it to you because you believe in him and he loves you.

Is there an area in your life where you are shrinking back with fear or hurts and you need inner peace and courage? What is it? Talk with Jesus about it. Then, reach out your hands and take the medal of courage Jesus is handing you today. Take courage, put your medal on, put your head up, shoulders back and walk in a new life of victory.

JESUS IS PRAYING FOR HIMSELF

Read: *John 17:1-5*

After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: “Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.”

Reflect: This entire chapter in John 17 is one prayer that Jesus prayed. If you have time, it would be best to read the prayer in its entirety each day over the next three days. The prayer is broken down into three segments: Jesus praying for Himself (vs. 1-5); Jesus praying for His followers (vs. 6-19); Jesus praying for us (vs. 20-26). First, note that when Jesus prays, He begins by addressing God as “Father.” Even though we are used to hearing God referred to as Father, this was revolutionary in the first-century. The word, “Father” in Greek is “*Pater*” and in Aramaic it is, “*Abba*” which is translated as, “daddy, da-da or papa.” Jesus began His prayer by addressing God with the most intimate word for a father there is. He was calling out to Him, “Daddy.”

Usually, a child’s first word is “da-da” then, eventually, daddy. In Aramaic it’s “ab-ab” and matures into the word “Abba.” Jesus is going to God in His final time here on earth by calling out to Him, “da-da, daddy, pa-pa” like a 15-month old toddler. Think about little ones in need and the way they look up as they call out to their fathers, exclaiming, “daddy” with their little hands raised high to be lifted up. This is the intimacy, dependency and love that Jesus had towards His Heavenly Daddy. He is reaching out to Him asking for what He needed at that moment. He asked that His life would be magnified through His death so that His Daddy would be glorified (v1-2). Secondly, He longed for everyone living on earth (present and future) to experience eternal life through believing in Jesus (v.3). Thirdly, Jesus is asking God to place Him back in the position He had before He

came to earth, which is at the right hand of God, the Father (v.5).

Jesus had needs while He lived here on earth as a human and went to Abba for everything He needed. He didn't think God was too busy to ask Him for what He needed, or that His needs were too big or small, and thus, He prayed with confidence. He could have prayed this prayer quietly to Himself, but He prayed out loud to model this to His disciples and to us. He wants us to know that we can go to God as our Abba (papa, daddy) in all our vulnerability, like a small child, because His love for us is impeccable - it's perfect in every way.

Respond: Maybe you didn't have a great relationship with your biological father – indeed, no one's biological father was ideal because our dads were fully flesh and messy just like us. But our Abba Father is perfect and He loves you perfectly and unconditionally for exactly who you are.

Jesus modeled for us throughout His whole life that we can go to Abba with everything we need whether it is big or small. If it's important to you, it's important to Him. Plus, He already knows your needs, but He wants you to humble yourself and go to Him. *“Your Father knows what you need before you ask him.”* (Matthew 6:8)

What are you in need of today? Is it wisdom in your singleness, marriage, or with raising children? Is it peace over a deep hurt or loss of a loved one? Maybe it's a frustration with your career or discontentment with life in general. Whatever it is, you can ask Abba. What would happen if you reach your hands up and go to Abba like a child going to his empathetic, loving daddy then asking expectantly for what you need? It may feel a little awkward at first, but God is kind, understanding, patient, and loves you more than you can imagine. He wants to give you peace and guidance in every area of your life.



JESUS IS PRAYING FOR HIS FOLLOWERS

Read: *John 17:6-19*

“I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word. Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me. I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours. All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them. I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one. While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled.” “I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.

Reflect: With Jesus’ impending death, He was reflecting upon the three years of ministry and life He experienced with His followers. They were His tribe, who became family to Him and whom He loved. He summarized it to His Abba, Father as He prayed to Him. In verse six, He says, “Father, I have manifested who you really are and I have revealed you to the men and women that you gave to me. They were yours, and you gave them to me, and they have fastened your Word firmly to their hearts (TPT – The Passion Translation).” This passage indicates that Jesus taught and displayed to His followers the loving character of His Father and how to live a life that would be pleasing to God. He taught them the importance in having a heartfelt, spiritually fervent life. Then, He brought them

alongside Himself to experience that life by helping others, healing people, living in unity, and every day to depend on God. This is how Jesus revealed to His followers this new way of living that included integrating their hearts, hands and minds. In Jesus' time, the Pharisees and Sadducees (religious people of the day) were prideful, legalistic and their lives were centered around rules and regulations. They kept their religion in their heads and their acts were about looking good to others. Then, Jesus comes along and reveals this radical life of serving others from the heart and intimacy with a loving Father. This is the new type of mindset and lifestyle in which Jesus lead and taught His disciples. The Apostle Paul puts it this way in 1 Corinthians 5:17, "This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!"

Imagine if every Christian picked even one person to disciple in this new way of living? The world's values and attitudes would be turned inside out and upside down, by touching one life at a time. The influence you can have through discipleship of even one person can be a world-changer, as we see in this story of one mom who was extremely intentional about discipling her daughter to live this way. There was a little girl born in Albania. Her mother had a heart for helping those going through hardships.

When a neighbor was ill or having difficulties, the mother would take her little girl with her bringing with them prepared meals. They would feed the ailing people and take care of other needs that individuals had. The little girl grew and by the time she was 12, she knew that she was called to the mission field to help those less fortunate than herself. At age 19, the girl, was living a life as a missionary in Calcutta. She would eventually become known as Mother Teresa, and she would impact the world greatly with her love for God and the poor. Imagine if her mother had told her to stay at home while she went alone to help her neighbors? Mother Teresa's mom was a great role model in discipling her daughter like Jesus modeled for us.

Respond: You may not have a biological son or daughter, but who is it in your life that you are feeling called to disciple as your spiritual son or daughter? Disciple-makers who allow God to work in and through their lives from the center out make the greatest impact in the world as they disciple others. Being a disciple-maker is a natural and intentional way for us to reveal God to others. Opportunities for discipleship can include bringing your disciple with you when you go to church, when you go to visit a sick person in the hospital, visit a sick person in the hospital, take a meal to someone, lead or host a life group. You could do a variety of things together: serve at the Newbreak Hope Center, become a greeter during a church service, or go through a book. Remember, you always want to have someone ahead of you, someone alongside of you and

someone behind you. Today, I encourage you to ask God, “*Who is it that I am suppose to disciple and raise up? Please show me how to be intentional in my discipleship process.*” You never know. You may be raising up the next Billy Graham, Mother Teresa, Rick Warren, or a person who is passionate about the ways of God and will continue to pass the baton of raising up another generation of Jesus followers.



JESUS IS PRAYING FOR YOU

Read: *John 17:20-26*

“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one— I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. “Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world. “Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. I have made you known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.”

Reflect: Have you ever been near someone before they transitioned to heaven? When you are, you often discover the importance of listening well because a dying person’s words are coming directly from the depths of his heart. People will share profound insights and things that are most near and dear to them during those final weeks and days. Jesus is saying this prayer on the evening of His arrest. What’s near to Jesus’ heart? He wants us to be in complete unity (verse 23).

The Greek word complete is **těľěiōō**, which can also be translated perfect. Jesus wants us to live in **perfect unity** (or oneness) with each other. What does it mean to live in perfect unity? In Henri Nouwen’s book, *In the Name of Jesus: Reflections of Christian Leadership*, he describes unity in relationship with one another to be, “...vulnerable brothers and sisters who know and are known, who cared and are cared for, who forgive and are being forgiven, who love and are being loved.” He goes on to say, “We are sinful, broken, vulnerable people who need as much care as anyone we care for.”

Respond: Living in perfect unity starts with us allowing our vulnerable selves to be exposed. For some of us, this can feel threatening because we have shame or fear lingering over us, creating an invisible wall that we stay hidden behind. **Can you identify any shame or fear that keeps you hidden?** One time when speaking at a women's retreat, I asked that question. Then, I asked the women (if they felt comfortable) to write their answers on 3" x 5" black notecards. They tacked the notecards to the wall, as if they were nailing it to the cross of Jesus. There were about 400 women in attendance so there was enough anonymity to leave the cards on the wall all weekend. The women loved going around the room between sessions reading what others wrote. It made them feel connected and unified because so many shared similar responses. Maybe you can identify with some of the fear and shame they were experiencing: e.g., twice divorced; fear of rejection; abuse; abortion; lying; self-hatred; cutting; infertility; molested; affair; drinking again; my kids are a mess; pornography; living with my boyfriend; fired from my job. These are not light-hearted struggles, fears or shame; they usually aren't. They are very real and painful. We spent time praying for one another as God began to lift the veils of shame and fear that were keeping people trapped and feeling alone. Many told me as they began to remove the veil of their shame or fear, they could begin to be their authentic, vulnerable selves. This is how we move towards perfect unity.

Maybe today you want to allow your more vulnerable self to show up with others so you can move toward perfect unity in relationships. You no longer have to hide behind the veil of guilt or shame. Talk to God about it. That's what He wants you to do. We see it in Isaiah 1:18, *"The Lord says, 'Come, let us talk about these things. Though your sins are like scarlet, they can be as white as snow. Though your sins are deep red, they can be white like wool.'" You see, Jesus already paid the price for sin. He is saying to you, "Come to me and let's talk about it so you can receive forgiveness and be set free."* For those of you who carry shame because of something that happened to you, my heart hurts for you. You can also walk in this freedom of letting go of the veil of shame and it turning from red or black to white as snow. Jesus wants to talk with you about it and comfort your pain. His shed blood on the cross was for your wholeness and healing. He loves you and will bring you peace. Healing and being vulnerable in perfect unity, takes time and is a process. If you don't have a life group or person you can trust or talk to, you may want to seek out a professional Christian therapist to help you on the road to being your vulnerable self.

JESUS' NIGHT OF TERROR

Read: *John 18:1-14*

When he had finished praying, Jesus left with his disciples and crossed the Kidron Valley. On the other side there was a garden, and he and his disciples went into it. Now Judas, who betrayed him, knew the place, because Jesus had often met there with his disciples. So Judas came to the garden, guiding a detachment of soldiers and some officials from the chief priests and the Pharisees. They were carrying torches, lanterns and weapons. Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to him, went out and asked them, "Who is it you want?" "Jesus of Nazareth," they replied. "I am he," Jesus said. (And Judas the traitor was standing there with them.) When Jesus said, "I am he," they drew back and fell to the ground. Again he asked them, "Who is it you want?" "Jesus of Nazareth," they said. Jesus answered, "I told you that I am he. If you are looking for me, then let these men go." This happened so that the words he had spoken would be fulfilled: "I have not lost one of those you gave me." Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the high priest's servant, cutting off his right ear. (The servant's name was Malchus.) Jesus commanded Peter, "Put your sword away! Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?" Then the detachment of soldiers with its commander and the Jewish officials arrested Jesus. They bound him and brought him first to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year. Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jewish leaders that it would be good if one man died for the people.

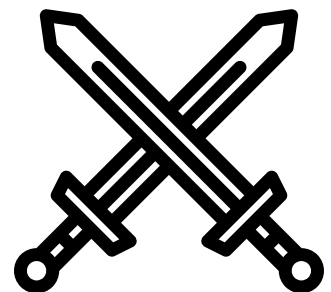
Reflect: After Jesus had served His disciples communion, He walked to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray. John 18:2 tells us that it was common for Jesus and His disciples to pray there, so Judas knew exactly where to find Him. Verse 3 records that there was a "detachment of soldiers" in the Garden to arrest Jesus. The Greek word for "detachment" is "*spēira*". This is the word that describes a Roman military cohort, mass of men or band of men, equaling a group of around 300-600 well-trained soldiers. There were also highly trained temple guards who worked for the chief priests and Pharisees alongside the Roman military to capture Jesus.

Can you picture this hillside garden where Jesus was praying literally covered with soldiers, officers and guards to arrest the Son of God? Why did they send so many armed men to arrest one? Were they fearful that He might use His extraordinary powers to do something? Notice that the men were carrying lanterns and torches. The word “lantern” comes from the Greek word **“lampas”**. The word refers to a bright, shining light that was bright enough to light up a room. The torches were oil-based with a long wick that could burn all night. They were ready for a night of hunting Jesus down. The soldiers were also equipped with weaponry. The Greek word here is **“hoplos.”** This depicts the full soldier attire from helmet to breastplate and swords. Verse 4 reads, “Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to him...”

Jesus knew in painstaking detail the events that were to follow soon after His arrest and after He was betrayed by one of His very own. He knew He was about to undergo several trials where all of the witnesses against Him would lie. He knew that many who had been waving palm branches and praising Him as the king of Israel and the one who saves, only days earlier (John 12:12-13), would now be screaming for His crucifixion. He knew He would be flogged with metal spikes to His flesh. He knew the prophetic words of Isaiah, spoken seven centuries earlier, that He would be beaten so badly that He would be “disfigured beyond that of any man” and “beyond human likeness” (Isaiah 52:14). He knew He would go through the most excruciating death possible, that of crucifixion. How do you think He was feeling knowing all of this?

In Luke’s gospel, he describes Jesus’ time of praying just prior to His arrest in Luke 22:44, *“And being in agony, He prayed more earnestly. Then His sweat became like great drops of blood falling down to the ground.”* This phenomenon of sweating blood is known as hematohidrosis. It is a rare, but very real, medical condition in which capillary blood vessels that feed the sweat glands rupture, causing them to exude blood, occurring under conditions of extreme physical or emotional stress. Certainly, Jesus knowing what was to come factored into His great emotional anguish and sorrow causing Him to sweat drops of blood. Pause for a moment and reflect on what Jesus was going through during this night of terror. Jesus could have done anything. He could have sent an army of angels to wipe out the men that were about to arrest Him or with a single command make them fall to their death. Jesus kept about His mission to instead go to the cross because of His tremendous love for us. He knew that the only way for us to be in a right relationship with His Heavenly Father was to die for our sins. He went willingly with the band of men. He stayed calm. When they said they were looking for Jesus. He replied, “I Am he.” When Jesus utters the divine name (“I AM,” v. 5), the band of men fall prostrate because of the power of His name.

Respond: Spend time being silent. Embrace Jesus' night of terror. The moments when Jesus was filled with anguish while praying and sweating blood and then the band of armed men hunting Him down, surrounding Him and arresting Him. Imagine how Jesus felt knowing what was next, and His disciples struck with fear not understanding. Thank Jesus for going through this step towards the cross for you. Throughout your day, say breath prayers to help you focus on Jesus. These simple, easily repeated prayers can slowly empty out the crowded interior of our lives and create the quiet space where we can be in touch with God. Maybe you can write some down on your device or sticky notes to meditate on through the day. Here are some breath prayer examples: "Thank you, Jesus." "Lord, have mercy on me." "Speak, Lord, for your servant is listening." "Not my will, but yours." "My help comes from the Lord, the maker of heaven and earth." "Here I am, Jesus." "When I am afraid, I will trust you." "I love you, Jesus." "You died, so I can live."



JESUS HAD PREDICTED PETER'S DENIAL

Read: *John 18:15-18*

Simon Peter and another disciple were following Jesus. Because this disciple was known to the high priest, he went with Jesus into the high priest's courtyard, but Peter had to wait outside at the door. The other disciple, who was known to the high priest, came back, spoke to the servant girl on duty there and brought Peter in. "You aren't one of this man's disciples too, are you?" she asked Peter. He replied, "I am not." It was cold, and the servants and officials stood around a fire they had made to keep warm. Peter also was standing with them, warming himself.

Reflect: It is most likely that John was the "other disciple" in this passage. It is thought that he was related to the high priest and thus was able to get inside the courtyard where Jesus was being taken to see Annas (who was a former high priest), and the father-in-law of the current high priest, Caiaphas. Peter was left alone, cold, fearful and shivering in the outside grey of the dark night. Peter was spun out and overwhelmed with emotions and fear from all that he'd experienced that evening - Jesus being hunted down, arrested and then being reprimanded by Jesus for cutting off the ear of Malchus with his sword.

When John realizes that Peter is not behind him and still in the outer area, he tells the servant-girl to let Peter in. Clearly, the servant-girl knew that John was a follower of Jesus. This is why the servant-girl asked Peter if he was a follower **too**. Caught up in his emotions of being overwhelmed with anxiety and fear, Peter defaults to his old ways of living and disclaims his relationship with Jesus by responding, "No I am not." When I was growing up, with six siblings, my mom needed something to do with all of us during the summer. We lived a short distance from the beach, so I spent many sunny summer days body surfing in the ocean. On one occasion, as a teen, I went to the beach with some friends. I decided to go out body surfing, but my two girlfriends didn't like to swim in large waves. Believing I was an experienced body surfer, I went out by myself.

After a short while, I got caught in a rip current. The long, narrow bands of water began to pull me further and further away from the shore. I completely panicked and started swimming against the current and was pulled underneath the water tossing and turning out of control. I came up for a short breath and was once again pulled down by her strong arms and being thrown around like a ragdoll. When I was able to come up for another breath, I could hear a voice inside of me saying, “Stay calm.”

Once I made a decision to stay calm, my mind cleared enough to remember I needed to swim parallel to the shore. As I began to do this, I was able to free myself from being pulled underneath the water and had to be okay that I was swimming further down the beach and away from my friends sitting by the shoreline. Within a short time, a couple of men, who saw me struggling, came to my rescue and assisted me in getting back to the shore. They walked me to my friends who were very concerned over my state of affairs. I sat on my beach towel trembling and being comforted by my friends because I was so overwhelmed by the experience.

Respond: When things don’t go the way we expect and events in our lives get out of our control, it can feel like we are out in the ocean, caught in a rip current. We will do anything to survive. Peter was experiencing a rip current of emotions during the tumultuous time of Jesus’ arrest. He was feeling fearful for his life, doubting he had what it takes, not wanting to be noticed, shaming himself for striking the ear of the high priest’s servant and anxious that he’d be arrested too.

We all have rip currents going on in our lives at times. What are the rip currents in your life? Are you able to name them? Are you allowing your emotions to be controlled by these rip currents? Take a few minutes and talk to God about them. Then, allow Him to bring you that calm like the lyrics of this old hymn, *He Will Calm The Troubled Waters*. “When your heart is broken up with grief or trouble, you don’t have to bear it all alone; for you have a friend who knows about your struggles, He is standing by when other friends are gone. He will calm the troubled waters of your soul. Take your broken heart and make it whole. When the storms of your life are dark and cold, He will calm the troubled waters; the dark and troubled waters, of your soul.”

JESUS IS SPEAKING THE TRUTH

Read: *John 18:19-24*

Meanwhile, the high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching. “I have spoken openly to the world,” Jesus replied. “I always taught in synagogues or at the temple, where all the Jews come together. I said nothing in secret. Why question me? Ask those who heard me. Surely they know what I said.” When Jesus said this, one of the officials nearby slapped him in the face. “Is this the way you answer the high priest?” he demanded. “If I said something wrong,” Jesus replied, “testify as to what is wrong. But if I spoke the truth, why did you strike me?” Then Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

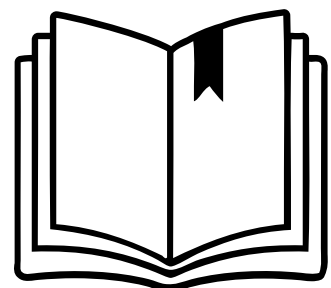
Reflect: John now shifts the scene from Peter’s first denial, to what is transpiring inside. To give a historical perspective, let’s look at what The New NIV Application Commentary says about this encounter between Jesus and Annas (the High Priest’s father-in-law and a previous High Priest).

“In a formal Jewish trial, the judge never asked direct questions of the accused but rather called forth witnesses whose words determined the outcome. If two or more agreed with the charges, the verdict was sealed. But Annas may not see himself engaged in such a trial. If it were a genuine trial, Caiaphas (the High Priest) would be presiding, but he is not present. This is like a ‘police interrogation’ of someone recently arrested. Yet if Jesus does utter something incriminating, Annas himself will become a witness against him. The words recorded here no doubt represent the barest summary of Jesus’ meeting with Annas, who probes two things: Jesus’ teachings and his disciples. To what extent is he a genuine threat? Does he have a strong following? Is he promoting some sort of conspiracy? Jesus’ sharp answer—pointing out that Annas should be talking to witnesses—unmasks the priest’s attempt to make Jesus’ incriminate himself. Twice Jesus demands that Annas produce witnesses and evidence; in other words, Jesus is demanding a trial. Nothing he has said can be construed as incriminating.

Annas is at an impasse. His probing has been unsuccessful. Therefore Jesus is sent on to the reigning high priest, Caiaphas.”

Respond: Earlier in the evening, when Jesus was praying, He had been so anxious about what was going to happen, He was sweating drops of blood (Luke 22:44). Yet, here Jesus is in the beginning of his inquisition responding with such dignity, confidence and calm. He was able to set aside his own emotions for the greater cause of doing God’s will by being sacrificed for our sins. Imagine being slapped across the face by someone in front of a group of people when you had done no wrong and were totally innocent of an accusation. Jesus stays calm and authentic because He has us in mind – the hope of the world to be reconciled with God the Father and have eternal life.

Reflect on what happened in your life yesterday. How did your thoughts, feelings or words either hinder or expand the Kingdom of God? Pray about what God has in store for you in your day ahead. Be aware of your thoughts, feelings and emotions. 2 Corinthians 10:5, is a great reminder of what to do with our thought life, “We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.” *Example:* When you have a negative, fearful or toxic thought, instead of letting it drive your behavior, what would happen if you pray about it and take it to God? How would it change your day?



Day 32

JESUS HEARD THE ROOSTER'S CROW

Read: *John 18:25-27*

Meanwhile, Simon Peter was still standing there warming himself. So they asked him, "You aren't one of his disciples too, are you?" He denied it, saying, "I am not." One of the high priest's servants, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, challenged him, "Didn't I see you with him in the garden?" Again Peter denied it, and at that moment a rooster began to crow.

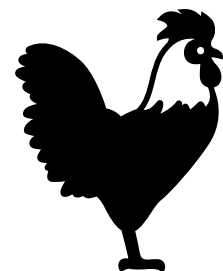
Reflect: After the author, John, tells us about what's going on inside the room where Jesus is being interrogated, he jumps back to talk about Peter. Here Peter denies knowing Jesus a second and third time. Let's look at this same account in another New Testament book, Luke 22:58-61, "After a while someone else looked at him and said, 'You must be one of them!' 'No, man, I'm not!' Peter retorted. About an hour later someone else insisted, 'This must be one of them, because he is a Galilean, too.' But Peter said, 'Man, I don't know what you are talking about.' And immediately, while he was still speaking, the rooster crowed. At that moment the Lord turned and looked at Peter. Suddenly, the Lord's words flashed through Peter's mind: 'Before the rooster crows tomorrow morning, you will deny three times that you even know me.' And Peter left the courtyard, weeping bitterly."

Most of us can relate with Peter. We all make mistakes (Romans 3:23). There is absolutely no one who has led a perfect life outside of Jesus. We have good intentions but when we are encapsulated with fear or following only our emotions, we do and say things that we regret. Mark 14:31, records that the evening when Jesus was arrested Peter had said, "Even if I have to die with you, I will never disown you." Now, being overwhelmed with fear, Peter is denying three times that he even knew Jesus. Clearly, after Peter heard the rooster crow and made eye contact with Jesus, he was extremely sorrowful and repented as he wept over his choices.

Respond: Like Peter, when we do something wrong, we can repent and find forgiveness, mercy and love from our gracious Abba, Father. We don't ever have to stay as a prisoner – held captive to our past mistakes, fear, guilt and shame. We can follow Peter's example of getting back in a right relationship with God. He repented, surrendered his heart to God, turned to Him in prayer and gave up his sin. The result was that his sin and shame were washed away, and he was set free to become a confident and fearless leader.

His story became his ministry. He could now tell people not to be afraid when they are threatened (which he had done during his denial), but instead to share the hope that's in you. Here's what he wrote in 1 Peter 3:14-17, "So don't worry or be afraid of their threats... And if someone asks about your hope as a believer, always be ready to explain it... Remember, it is better to suffer for doing good, if that is what God wants, than to suffer for doing wrong! (NLT)"

Are you holding on to guilt or shame about your past mistakes? Would you like to live in freedom and confidence like Peter did? If the answer is, "yes," you can begin that journey today. Talk to Jesus about the past mistakes or regrets that are holding you captive. Here's a great scripture from Job 11:13-18 that instructs us on how to do this, "**Surrender** your heart to God, **turn** to him in prayer, and **give up** your sins—even those you do in secret. Then you won't be ashamed; you will be confident and fearless. Your troubles will go away like water beneath a bridge, and your darkest night will be brighter than noon. You will rest safe and secure, filled with hope and emptied of worry." You may want to write this verse down on a 3x5 card and be reminded of it throughout the day. You are set free to be confident and fearless!



JESUS BEFORE PILATE

Read: *John 18:28-40 / Matthew 27:11-31*

John 18:28-40 // Then the Jewish leaders took Jesus from Caiaphas to the palace of the Roman governor. By now it was early morning, and to avoid ceremonial uncleanness they did not enter the palace, because they wanted to be able to eat the Passover. So Pilate came out to them and asked, "What charges are you bringing against this man?" "If he were not a criminal," they replied, "we would not have handed him over to you." Pilate said, "Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law." "But we have no right to execute anyone," they objected. This took place to fulfill what Jesus had said about the kind of death he was going to die. Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" "Is that your own idea," Jesus asked, "or did others talk to you about me?" "Am I a Jew?" Pilate replied. "Your own people and chief priests handed you over to me. What is it you have done?" Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place." "You are a king, then!" said Pilate. Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me." "What is truth?" retorted Pilate. With this he went out again to the Jews gathered there and said, "I find no basis for a charge against him. But it is your custom for me to release to you one prisoner at the time of the Passover. Do you want me to release 'the king of the Jews'?" They shouted back, "No, not him! Give us Barabbas!" Now Barabbas had taken part in an uprising.

Matthew 27:11-31 // Meanwhile Jesus stood before the governor, and the governor asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?" "You have said so," Jesus replied. When he was accused by the chief priests and the elders, he gave no answer. Then Pilate asked him, "Don't you hear the testimony they are bringing against you?" But Jesus made no reply, not even to a single charge—to the great amazement of the governor. Now it was the governor's custom at the festival to release a prisoner chosen by the crowd. At that time they had a well-known prisoner whose name was Jesus Barabbas. So when the crowd had gathered, Pilate asked them, "Which one do you want me to release to you: Jesus Barabbas, or Jesus who is called the Messiah?" For he knew it was out of self-interest that they had handed Jesus over to him. While Pilate was sitting on the judge's seat, his

wife sent him this message: “Don’t have anything to do with that innocent man, for I have suffered a great deal today in a dream because of him.” But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus executed. “Which of the two do you want me to release to you?” asked the governor. “Barabbas,” they answered. “What shall I do, then, with Jesus who is called the Messiah?” Pilate asked. They all answered, “Crucify him!” “Why? What crime has he committed?” asked Pilate. But they shouted all the louder, “Crucify him!” When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere, but that instead an uproar was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd. “I am innocent of this man’s blood,” he said. “It is your responsibility!” All the people answered, “His blood is on us and on our children!” Then he released Barabbas to them. But he had Jesus flogged, and handed him over to be crucified. Then the governor’s soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole company of soldiers around him. They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on his head. They put a staff in his right hand. Then they knelt in front of him and mocked him. “Hail, king of the Jews!” they said. They spit on him, and took the staff and struck him on the head again and again. After they had mocked him, they took off the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.

Reflect: The Jewish people had authority to take care of their own legal issues when it came to religion. There is good evidence that at this time the Jewish Sanhedrin did not have authority to carry out capital punishment. This is why the Jewish leaders brought Jesus to Pilate (the governor), who had the authority under the Roman law to crucify. But, if this was a religious matter that the Jewish leaders were having with Jesus, then the Roman authorities did not want to get involved. Nevertheless, Jesus goes before Pilate. Notice what is said in Matthew 27:14, “But Jesus made no reply, not even to a single charge—to the great amazement of the governor.” In Greek this phrase “to the great amazement” is *thausmadzo*.

It means wonder; to be at a loss of words; or to be shocked and amazed. Pilate was at a loss by Jesus’ silence because Roman law permitted an accused prisoner three chances to say something to defend one’s self. If a prisoner did not say anything to defend himself, then he would be charged as “guilty.” Jesus’ three opportunities to defend Himself are in Matthew 27:11, 12 and 14. Jesus not defending Himself is a fulfillment of a prophecy written about His death in Isaiah 53:7, “He was oppressed and treated harshly, yet he never said a word. He was led like a lamb to the slaughter. And as a sheep is silent before the shearers, he did not open his mouth.” Pilate determines Jesus is innocent of breaking any Roman law and sees this as a religious matter. He responds to the crowd

of leading priests and people that have gathered, *“I find nothing against this man. (Luke 23:4)”* Pilate sees a legal loophole to release Jesus – the custom of setting a prisoner free at Passover. Thinking there is a way out for Jesus, Pilate offers the crowd a choice between the worse criminal, Barabbas, a known violent revolutionist or Jesus to be set free. But, the accusers would rather see Barabbas, the murderer set free. The tension grows and the crowd comes close to starting a riot as they begin to shout louder and louder, *“Crucify him! Crucify him!”* Pilate washes his hands as a response and tells the crowd, *“I am innocent of this man’s blood. The responsibility is yours”* (Matthew 27:24) What is the response of the angry crowd? *“And all the people yelled back, ‘We will take responsibility for his death—we and our children!’”* (Matthew 27:25)

Respond: What are you feeling and thinking after reading these passages? Does it break your heart? Does it leave you feeling silent and reflective? Can you imagine hearing the screams of the mob being caught up in their angry emotions and saying that they will take the responsibility of Jesus’ blood on themselves and their children? When emotions run deep, our words and behavior can get out of control. Sometimes, our words and actions cost us a high price. It’s best if we can take a breath and pause before speaking out of our emotional biases. Billy Graham put it this way, “We should ask ourselves three questions before we speak: Is it true? Is it kind? Does it glorify Christ?” Today, allow yourself to be quiet and reflective as you think about Jesus before Pilate. He was full of emotions, yet able to stand in silence. The crowd was full of emotions and shouted words that many of them no doubt regretted. These are two very different responses to emotional turmoil. As you have conversations with others, before you speak, think about how your words and actions influence people around you and have consequences. Jesus loves you so much that He suffered for you, and He wants to help you make good decisions. You can ask Him to help you with your emotions and responses.

JESUS HEARS, “CRUCIFY YOUR KING.”

Read: *John 19:1-16 / Matthew 27:26-31*

John 19:1-16 // Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head. They clothed him in a purple robe and went up to him again and again, saying, “Hail, king of the Jews!” And they slapped him in the face. Once more Pilate came out and said to the Jews gathered there, “Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no basis for a charge against him.” When Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe, Pilate said to them, “Here is the man!” As soon as the chief priests and their officials saw him, they shouted, “Crucify! Crucify!” But Pilate answered, “You take him and crucify him. As for me, I find no basis for a charge against him.” The Jewish leaders insisted, “We have a law, and according to that law he must die, because he claimed to be the Son of God.” When Pilate heard this, he was even more afraid, and he went back inside the palace. “Where do you come from?” he asked Jesus, but Jesus gave him no answer. “Do you refuse to speak to me?” Pilate said. “Don’t you realize I have power either to free you or to crucify you?” Jesus answered, “You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above. Therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin.” From then on, Pilate tried to set Jesus free, but the Jewish leaders kept shouting, “If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar. Anyone who claims to be a king opposes Caesar.” When Pilate heard this, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judge’s seat at a place known as the Stone Pavement (which in Aramaic is Gabbatha). It was the day of Preparation of the Passover; it was about noon. “Here is your king,” Pilate said to the Jews. But they shouted, “Take him away! Take him away! Crucify him!” “Shall I crucify your king?” Pilate asked. “We have no king but Caesar,” the chief priests answered. Finally Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified.

Matthew 27:26-31 // Then the governor’s soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole company of soldiers around him. They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, and then twisted together a crown of thorns and set it on his head. They put a staff in his right hand. Then they knelt in front of him and mocked him. “Hail, king of the Jews!” they said. They spit on him, and took the staff and struck him on the head

again and again. After they had mocked him, they took off the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.

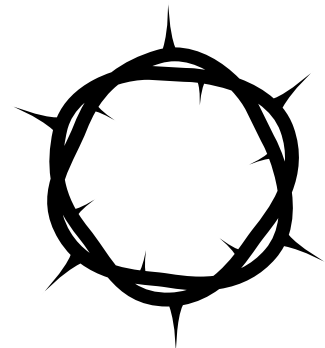
Reflect: Reading the description of Jesus being beaten and mocked is one of the most heart-wrenching passages in the Bible. There were three different levels of flogging in Rome. The flogging Jesus' received was called the verberatio and it was the worst one used for the most horrific crimes prior to someone being crucified. "Victims were stripped and tied to a post, then beaten with a whip of leather thongs fitted with pieces of bone or metal. These savage beatings sometimes resulted in the victim's death, and eyewitnesses report details of how victims were left with bones and entrails exposed. (Faithlife Study Bible)" After this horrific beating, the torturers put a crown of thorns on Jesus' head to instill more pain on Him and mock Him. Because He claimed that He was indeed the King of Jews, they put a purple robe on Him, which was a symbol of royalty, and continued the mocking. Jesus was almost beaten to death and suffered greatly. Another sad prophecy was fulfilled about Him through this tragic experience. Isaiah 50:6, *"I offered my back to those who beat me and my cheeks to those who pulled out my beard. I did not hide my face from mockery and spitting."*

After the beating and mocking, once again Pilate presented our Jesus, Messiah and King, to the people. The crowd started going wild with anger, shouting once again, "Crucify him!" Pilate was extremely fearful that there would be a Jewish uprising against the Roman rule and a potential revolution, thus he gave Jesus over to be crucified.

Respond: It's important for us to embrace the pain, of this moment in time, which is one of the darkest days in the history of our world. God's beloved Son was beaten almost to death and mocked, Jesus' followers were full of fear and in disharmony, Jesus haters were angry and out of control. There was an array of pain being displayed in all directions. Jesus could have called a league of angels to stop the beatings and with one word have the governor, the entire legion of Roman guards and accusers drop dead. But, it would have been sin for Him to back down from His life purpose. He committed to God, to live and die for our eternal lives, because of His incredible love for us.

Jesus can relate with us in every way – no matter what we are experiencing. Hebrews 4:15, *"Our High Priest is not one who cannot feel sympathy for our weaknesses. On the contrary, we have a High Priest who was tempted in every way that we are, but did not sin."* When you are tempted, it is often times because you are in pain. People usually have less strength to endure temptation because pain whether it is emotional, mental, spiritual or physical can wear them down.

In Celebrate Recovery, for co-dependency, I learned an acronym **H.A.L.T.** It stands for **Hungry, Angry, Lonely, and Tired.** Each one of these four physical or emotional conditions, if not taken care of, leaves an individual vulnerable to pain and relapse. Jesus understands our pain and vulnerability because He suffered and was tempted too. C.S. Lewis said, “God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks to us in our conscience, but shouts in our pains; it is his megaphone to rouse a deaf world.” Example: When you are in pain (**H.A.L.T.**), look to Jesus, give him your attention and ask him to help you process and grow through it. He already paid the price and desires to heal you or give you peace and wisdom as He holds your hand and walks through the pain with you.



JESUS IS CRUCIFIED

Read: *John 19:17-27*

Carrying his own cross, he went out to the place of the Skull (which in Aramaic is called Golgotha). There they crucified him, and with him two others—one on each side and Jesus in the middle. Pilate had a notice prepared and fastened to the cross. It read: jesus of nazareth, the king of the jews. Many of the Jews read this sign, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and the sign was written in Aramaic, Latin and Greek. The chief priests of the Jews protested to Pilate, “Do not write ‘The King of the Jews,’ but that this man claimed to be king of the Jews.” Pilate answered, “What I have written, I have written.” When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes, dividing them into four shares, one for each of them, with the undergarment remaining. This garment was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom. “Let’s not tear it,” they said to one another. “Let’s decide by lot who will get it.” This happened that the scripture might be fulfilled that said, They divided my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment.” So this is what the soldiers did. Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, “Woman, here is your son,” and to the disciple, “Here is your mother.” From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.

Reflect: All four gospels, which are the first four books of the New Testament - Matthew, Mark, Luke and John – report the details of Jesus’ crucifixion. If you have time, it would be an enriching experience for you to read these four accounts today or tomorrow. You could read John 19:17-24 in the morning; Matthew 27:33-44 at lunchtime; Mark 15:22-32 during dinner and Luke 23:33-43 before you go to bed. Throughout all the gospels, it is noted that Jesus was crucified. It’s important to know what, why and how the Roman government crucified people. Crucifixion was meant to inflict the maximum amount of shame and torture upon a victim. Roman crucifixions were carried out in public so that all who saw the horror would be deterred from crossing the Roman government. Crucifixion was so horrible that it was reserved for only the worst offenders. Yesterday’s reading described the severe beating and flogging Jesus went through prior to being led to the place of His crucifixion.

Jesus was forced to carry the large wooden crossbeam to the site of the crucifixion, as did all people being crucified. The reason the Roman government had criminals carry their own crosses was to create more pain after the beating, and add more shame as the victim was carrying the instrument of his own torture and death. It was like digging one's own grave. (Mark 15:21 tells us that Simon from Cyrene, was forced to carry Jesus' cross. It is because Jesus was near death from the beatings.)

At the cross location, for Jesus it was Golgotha, it would be normal for a person, who was being crucified, to be stripped of his clothing to further shame him. Once Jesus was at Golgotha, He was forced to stretch out His arms on the crossbeam, where they were nailed in place. Jesus' nails would have been made of heavy, probably square, iron material, 7-9 inches long. The nails were hammered through the wrists, not the palms, which kept the nails from pulling through the hand. (In ancient times, the wrist was considered part of the hand.)

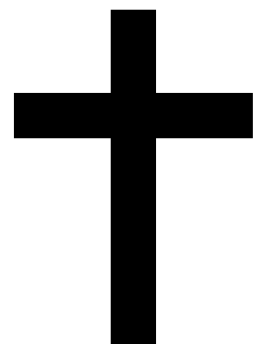
The placement of the nails caused more excruciating pain to our precious Savior as the nails pressed on large nerves running to His hands. With nails in place, a crossbeam was then hoisted up and fastened to an upright piece that would normally remain standing between crucifixions.

After fastening the crossbeam, the executioners nailed Jesus' feet to the cross as well—normally, one foot on top of the other, nailed through the middle and arch of each foot, with the knees slightly bent. The primary purpose of the nails was to inflict pain. Once Jesus was fastened to the cross, all His weight was supported by three nails, which would cause pain to shoot throughout His body. Jesus' arms were stretched out in such a way that it would cause cramping and paralysis in the chest muscles, making it impossible to breathe unless some of the weight was borne by His feet. In order to take a breath, He would have had to push up with his feet. In addition to enduring excruciating pain caused by the nail in His feet, Jesus' raw back would rub against the rough upright beam of the cross. There He hung on the cross, in pain and agony. (gotquestions.org)

Respond: As you meditate upon the horror of Jesus' crucifixion, consider the prophetic word, written in 800 BC, that spoke about why He chose to be crucified. Isaiah 53:4-6, *"For sure He took on Himself our troubles and carried our sorrows. Yet we thought of Him as being punished and hurt by God, and made to suffer. But He was hurt for our wrong-doing. He was crushed for our sins. He was punished so we would have peace. He was beaten so we would be healed. All of us like sheep have gone the*

way. Each of us has turned to his own way. And the Lord has put on Him the sin of us all (NLV).” His crucifixion was so we could live a life of freedom. Isn’t that amazing! Are you stressed out? Are you carrying guilt? Do you need to be healed? Need wisdom? Are you longing for some peace? Jesus suffered so we can live in freedom from all of our hurts, habits, stress, pain, wrong-doings and brokenness. Most of us need to ask for something on a daily basis because we are humans. I encourage you to go to Jesus daily and ask Him for what you need.

Example: If it’s peace you need from anxiety, you can pray, “Jesus, I realize that you were punished, so I can be healed from this anxiety I am suffering from and have peace. I ask that today, as I trust in you, you will bring me your peace. I ask in your name, Jesus. Amen.”



JESUS, KING OF THE JEWS

Read: *John 19:17-27*

Carrying his own cross, he went out to the place of the Skull (which in Aramaic is called Golgotha). There they crucified him, and with him two others—one on each side and Jesus in the middle. Pilate had a notice prepared and fastened to the cross. It read: jesus of nazareth, the king of the jews. Many of the Jews read this sign, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and the sign was written in Aramaic, Latin and Greek. The chief priests of the Jews protested to Pilate, “Do not write ‘The King of the Jews,’ but that this man claimed to be king of the Jews.” Pilate answered, “What I have written, I have written.” When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes, dividing them into four shares, one for each of them, with the undergarment remaining. This garment was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom. “Let’s not tear it,” they said to one another. “Let’s decide by lot who will get it.” This happened that the scripture might be fulfilled that said, They divided my clothes among them and cast lots for my garment.” So this is what the soldiers did. Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, “Woman,[b] here is your son,” and to the disciple, “Here is your mother.” From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.

Reflect: When a person was being crucified, it was customary to place a sign on the cross, above the person’s head, describing the crime and criminal’s name. Pilate had a sign made and fastened to Jesus’ cross, “Jesus of Nazareth. The King of the Jews.” Remember, this was during the Passover celebration in Jerusalem. According to a first century Jewish writer, Josephus, there was a count taken indicating there were up to 2,700,000 attendees there from all over the Roman Empire. This means 1,600,000 people had pilgrimaged to Jerusalem for Passover. This could be one of the reasons that Pilate had the sign written in three languages – so everyone was able to understand what it said in their own language. Imagine being Jesus, in the worst most excruciating pain possible and gasping for each breath as the paralysis in your chest muscles increases, and in the midst of it people are mocking you and shouting abuse (Matthew 27:39).

What was Jesus' attitude towards the mockers and haters? *"Jesus said, 'Father forgive them for they do not know what they are doing.'" (Luke 23:34)* Even to the end our Redeemer is offering grace, mercy, love, empathy and forgiveness towards imperfect people. His perfect forgiveness was portrayed as the criminal next to Him hanging on the cross said, *"We deserve to die for our crimes, but this man hasn't done anything wrong.' Then he said, 'Jesus remember me when you come into your kingdom.'* And Jesus replied, *'I assure you, today you will be with me in Paradise.'" (Luke 23:41-42).*

Respond: After reading the account of Jesus' beating and being mocked on the cross, yet in the midst of it all showing empathy and **agape** love to others, does it make you love Jesus even more? Are you more driven to live the best version of yourself to please God because of His incredible suffering and love for you? Let this sacrificial experience that Jesus went through remind you every day of God's attitude of grace, mercy, love, empathy and forgiveness towards you. If you can change your perception about yourself, to how God views you, you will be forever changed to become the best version of yourself and grow in your love relationship with Jesus. Take a few moments and read the following about how God views you and let these truths go deep into your soul.

1) You're completely accepted. *"Jesus...made us acceptable to God."* (Titus 3:7 CEV) What Jesus did on the cross made you completely acceptable to God—no matter what you've done or will do.

(2) You're unconditionally loved. God doesn't say, "I love you if . . ." or "I love you because . . ." He says, "I love you—period!" You can't make God stop loving you, because His love is not based on what you do but on whom He is. Isaiah 54:10 says, *"The mountains and hills may crumble, but my love for you will never end"* (GNT).

(3) You're totally forgiven. Because Jesus died on the cross and gave His life as a payment for your sins, you are totally forgiven when you accept the gift of forgiveness from God. Think about the criminal next to Jesus on the cross. Romans 8:1 says, *"There is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus"* (NLT). God doesn't rehearse your sins. He releases them.

(4) You're extremely valuable. There are two things that create value: who the owner is and what somebody's willing to pay for it. You are a child of God and *"have been bought and paid for by Christ"* (1 Corinthians 7:23 TLB). Jesus loves you so much that He paid for you with His life. That's how valuable you are. (Adapted from Rick Warren's Daily Hope.)

Day 37

JESUS SAID, "IT IS FINISHED."

Read: *John 19:28-42*

Later, knowing that everything had now been finished, and so that Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, "I am thirsty." A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus' lips. When he had received the drink, Jesus said, "It is finished." With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. Now it was the day of Preparation, and the next day was to be a special Sabbath. Because the Jewish leaders did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath, they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down. The soldiers therefore came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Jesus, and then those of the other. But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus' side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water. The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe. These things happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled: "Not one of his bones will be broken," and, as another scripture says, "They will look on the one they have pierced." Later, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jewish leaders. With Pilate's permission, he came and took the body away. He was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night. Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds. Taking Jesus' body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs. At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had ever been laid. Because it was the Jewish day of Preparation and since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

Reflect: As Jesus hung on the cross, He was experiencing the absolute worst physical pain imaginable. He had been given 39 harsh lashes, a crown of thorns had pierced the top of his head, He was spit on, ridiculed and iron spikes driven through His hands and His feet. Then, he hung on the cross for three hours, being mocked, dehydrated,

and tortured as He was gasping for each breath. With Jesus last breath He pronounced, “It is finished.” The Greek word here is **“teleioō.”** It means to become thoroughly or entirely accomplished; becoming perfect or complete. The prophecies that were spoken about Him up until his death were completed. Let’s look at some of the fulfillments of Old Testament prophecies referring to Jesus’ death. These are important to note because it is evidence that God is who He says he is and does what He says He will do. Three of these fulfillments of prophecy that were in these verses are:

• *Psalm 22:15, “My strength is dried up like a piece of a broken clay pot. My tongue sticks to the roof of my mouth. And You lay me in the dust of death.” This refers to Jesus saying on the cross when He said, “I am thirsty,” in verse 28.*

• *Psalm 34:20, “He keeps all his bones safe. Not one of them is broken.” John 19:33, “They did not break His legs.”*

• *Zechariah 1:10, “And I will pour out on the house of David and the inhabitants of Jerusalem a spirit of grace and supplication. They will look on me, **the one they have pierced**, and they will mourn for him as one mourns for an only child, and grieve bitterly for him as one grieves for a first born son.” John 19:34, “... one of the soldiers pierced Jesus’ side with a spear...”*

Respond: Billy Graham once said, “... the thing that kept Christ on that cross was love, not the nail.” There is a short story told from long ago, “I asked Jesus, ‘How much do you love me?’ He stretched out his arms on the cross and said, ‘This much.’ Then, he died.” In John 15:12-13, it is noted that Jesus said, “Love each other just as I have loved you. No one can have greater love than to give his life for his friends.” This is what He did for you, my friend, He gave his very life. You are loved. I encourage you to remember every day about what happened on the cross: the prophecies fulfilled and the price Jesus paid for your salvation because He longs to be with you for eternity and thinks you are amazing. You are deeply valued and loved for who you are, created for a purpose to live out on earth and through eternity that are better than you can imagine. Today, let the reality of the cross sink deeply into your heart. In doing so, it will cause you to love Jesus even more and desire to live out your life purpose for Him each day. Maybe you want to pray and renew your commitment to Jesus. *Example:* “Jesus, thank you for suffering and dying on the cross for all of my sins. Let me remember today, and every day, the price you paid for me on the cross. Please forgive me for all of my broken ways and the times I have hurt your heart. I recommit my ways to you. Help me grow closer to you day by day as you direct me to live out the plans and purposes you have for my life. I love you and I give every area of myself over to you. Amen.”

Day 38

JESUS LEAVES AN EMPTY TOMB

Read: *John 20:1-18*

Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!" So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. Then Simon Peter came along behind him and went straight into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, as well as the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus' head. The cloth was still lying in its place, separate from the linen. Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.) Then the disciples went back to where they were staying. Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot. They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?" "They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know where they have put him." At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus. He asked her, "Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?" Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him." Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means "Teacher"). Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'" Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: "I have seen the Lord!" And she told them that he had said these things to her.

Reflect: Let's look at the three responses of Peter, John and Mary at Jesus' tomb. John, pauses at first, even though he was at the tomb ahead of Peter (which he makes a point to tell the reader). But, Peter runs headlong into the tomb to see if Jesus is in

The Greek word for “saw” is **“theaomai”** which is where we get our word theater. It means to be a spectator that fully sees or fully observes, like a person who is carefully watching a live play. Peter noticed the cloth was lying separately from the linen. This is significant because the word cloth in Greek is **“sōdariōn.”** It is a napkin or handkerchief that could be used for wiping sweat off one’s face and was also used to cover someone’s face after death. The cloth was still lying (folded) in its place (which would be where Jesus’ head had been laid). The body of a corpse was wrapped in strips of linen. The strips of linen were lying in place where Jesus’ body would have been, separate from the cloth that had been on His face. Luke 24:12 tells us what Peter was thinking after his careful observations, “he went away, wondering to himself what had happened.” John indicates in verse 8, that he finally goes into the tomb (so it took some time for him to enter). But, when he saw, he believed. The Greek word “saw” here is **“ēidō”** which means perceived, had knowledge, to understand. The Greek word for believe is, **“pistēuō”** a verb, “to believe” which can be translated as: have faith; believe; to entrust one’s spiritual well-being. Elsewhere in the gospel any absolute use of the verb “to believe” indicates a robust, complete faith in Jesus. John took a look and immediately understood and believed that Jesus had risen from the dead. Verse 9 makes it clear that he didn’t understand from the Old Testament scriptures, on a theological basis, but He was convinced Jesus must have risen from the dead.

Mary Magdalene had been the first at the tomb and when she saw the stone rolled away, she ran back to tell others. Mary is stricken with sorrow because she thinks someone has stolen Jesus’ body so she returns to His tomb to mourn. Matthew 28 tells us that another Mary was with her. As they weep and cry out in front of the tomb, Jesus appears to them. Although, Mary Magdalene didn’t recognize Him (this could have been because it was still dark out in the early dawn or His body was transformed and unrecognizable), she knew His voice when He called her by name, “Mary.”

Respond: These are three very different responses by three of Jesus’ followers. God made us each unique. We will respond differently to a similar experience depending on our personalities and our spiritual growth stage. Which one can you identify with the most? Peter, who is brave, runs right in to the tomb, observes all the details and wants to go tell others Jesus isn’t in the tomb as he wondered what was going on. His spiritual growth stage would be: **spiritually curious**, but not completely sold out to believing in God for all things in life. John, who hesitates, but finally goes in and as soon as he sees, quickly believes and comes to the conclusion that Jesus has risen from the dead. His spiritual growth stage would be: **sees and believes**, but needs to study the scriptures more to fully understand. Or, Mary, who stays at the tomb to process her deep

feelings and tries to decide what's really going on. Her growth stage would be: **emotionally driven and trusts God**, but needs to hear His voice. Jesus meets us where we are and understands us completely. It isn't that one is better than another, it's embracing and knowing who God is and who we are in Christ so we can grow in our relationship with Him.

Which spiritual growth stage are you in and how can you grow more in Christ? Examples:

- **Spiritually curious:** Your growth point could be to believe God by taking greater steps of faith and trusting Him. God made you brave, but you could be at this stage because you are a bit spiritually stuck – spiritually coasting through life. In what area of your life do you need to take a step of faith? Helpful growth points for you could be: joining a life group, having an accountability partner, going on a mission's trip, sharing about your faith with a neighbor. In Luke 17:5, the apostles asked Jesus to increase their faith. You could pray to Jesus, "I ask you in the same way the apostles did that you will please increase my faith in you so I can better live the purposes you have for my life."
- **See and believe:** Your growth point may be that you need to take additional time to study God's Word and become more Biblically astute. In addition to being in the weekend worship experience and in a life group, it would be helpful for you to dig in to God's word more deeply on your own. Maybe get an NIV Application Bible Commentary to study through along with your Bible.
- **Emotionally driven and trust God:** Your growth point could be to take the time to sit quietly with God. Try reading a passage of scripture and meditating on it as you listen to God's voice and what He is saying to you through His Word. Try journaling and memorizing God's word. Memorizing a verse of scripture each week will help fill up your heart.

For additional reading on the sequence of Jesus' resurrection and harmony of the accounts in the four gospels, you may want to review:

<http://www.tektonics.org/harmonize/greenharmony.htm>

<http://www.jesuswalk.com/resurrection/resurrection-parallels.htm>

JESUS APPEARS TO THE DISCIPLES

Read: *John 20:19-31*

On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven." Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe." A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe." Thomas said to him, "My Lord and my God!" Then Jesus told him, "Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed." Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe[b] that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

Reflect: Why were the disciples so frightened that they were hiding in a room with the doors locked and in self-preservation mode? First, the chief priests and elders had paid off the Roman guards that were by the tomb to lie, asserting that the disciples stole Jesus' body (Matthew 28:11-15). If this were believed, the disciples would potentially be put to death. The city was in turmoil with all that had transpired over the three days from Jesus' crucifixion until His resurrection: There were the angry mobs and mockers; the sky turning dark in the middle of the day during Jesus crucifixion (Luke 23:44-45); the veil of the temple torn in half at Jesus' death (Luke 23:44-45); there was a violent earthquake shaking the entire area (Matthew 28:2). In addition, Jesus had appeared to a few

people. I think anyone would be a bit frightened and unsure about what was coming next.

Now, we see in this passage, Jesus miraculously appears in the room where the disciples are hiding out. Notice the empathy Jesus has towards His fearful disciples. The first words out of his mouth are, “Peace be with you.” The Greek word for “peace” used here and predominantly in the New Testament is “*irēnē*” in Hebrew it is “*shalōm*.” As with *shalōm*, *irēnē* could be used as a greeting or farewell. *Shalōm* is one of the key words and images for salvation in the Bible. In the New Testament, *shalōm* is revealed as the reconciliation of all things to God through Jesus. “He (God) made peace with everything in heaven and on earth by means of Christ’s blood on the cross. (Colossians 1:19-20)” The *shalōm* experience is multidimensional, a complete well-being—physical, psychological, social, and spiritual; it flows from all of one’s relationships being put right—with God, with(in) oneself, and with others. It is a state of peace that is a blessing or favor from God. Jesus is bringing them this *shalōm* from their fears. Next, He shows His best friends, His tribe (disciples), the wounds on His hands and side. Can you picture Jesus’ tribe excitedly shifting from fear to peace and excitement as they see with their eyes and talk about the miracle of what God has done?

Again, Jesus says to his disciples, “peace.” This time it came with a commission for His disciples to be sent out for a specific purpose and mission. In Matthew 28:19-20, we see the commission specified, “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” This is referred to as the, “The Great Commission” which is a calling on all Christ-followers’ lives.

Lastly, Jesus breathes on them to receive the Holy Spirit. This is the only time in the New Testament where this Greek word, “*ēmphusaō*” for breathe is used. It is the same word that is used when God is breathing life into Adam, formed from the dust (Genesis. 2:7).

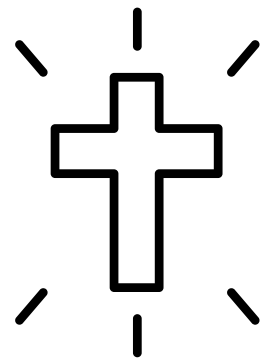
Respond: There are three main messages in this passage that Jesus is offering you just as He did His disciples: **peace, purpose and power**. Which one can you identify with most?

1. Do you struggle with fear, resentment or rejection and thus to protect yourself you have locked the door of your heart? Jesus offers you His *shalōm (peace)*. Ask God to check your heart and choose to make peace with Him in any area of your life where

you don't feel connected, are struggling with fear, resentment or have feelings of shame. He will bring you **shalōm** (Philippians 4:7).

2. Are you confused about what to do with your life and feeling stuck or purposeless? Jesus offers you a specific **purpose** and mission. Ask Jesus to help you see your life mission. A great place to start is by helping in a ministry at Newbreak. What helps you feel alive? Is it people, working behind the scenes, helping kids, serving the community, teaching, hospitality? Whatever it is, God has a mission for you, but you have to take the step of faith to get involved. Ask your Campus Director or a ministry leader for help in finding your place and living out your life mission. You belong and there's a spot waiting for you.

3. Are you feeling timid, too tired, too old, or burned out and not living in the power of the Holy Spirit? Maybe you feel like you've already done enough or are in a place of life where you have raised your kids or retired, so you've gotten detached and isolated from regularly going to church, serving at church or being connected in a life group. Jesus offers you the **power** of His Holy Spirit to live in you, strengthen you and guide you in all things. Ask the Lord to breathe new life into you and to fill you afresh and anew with passion, power and energy that comes from His Holy Spirit. "You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me" (Acts 1:8)



JESUS RESTORES

Read: *John 21:1-19*

Afterward Jesus appeared again to his disciples, by the Sea of Galilee. It happened this way: Simon Peter, Thomas (also known as Didymus), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples were together. I'm going out to fish," Simon Peter told them, and they said, "We'll go with you." So they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing. Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus. He called out to them, "Friends, haven't you any fish?" "No," they answered. He said, "Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some." When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish. Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, "It is the Lord!" As soon as Simon Peter heard him say, "It is the Lord," he wrapped his outer garment around him (for he had taken it off) and jumped into the water. The other disciples followed in the boat, towing the net full of fish, for they were not far from shore, about a hundred yards. When they landed, they saw a fire of burning coals there with fish on it, and some bread. Jesus said to them, "Bring some of the fish you have just caught." So Simon Peter climbed back into the boat and dragged the net ashore. It was full of large fish, 153, but even with so many the net was not torn. Jesus said to them, "Come and have breakfast." None of the disciples dared ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord. Jesus came, took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. This was now the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the dead. When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?" Yes, Lord," he said, "you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my lambs." Again Jesus said, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" He answered, "Yes, Lord, you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Take care of my sheep." The third time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my sheep. Very truly I tell you, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go." Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, "Follow me!"

Reflect: Jesus knew Peter was still feeling uncomfortable and embarrassed about denying Him three times. It is not so uncommon for people to return to what felt comfortable in their old life when the pressure is on and circumstances aren't going the way they expected. Peter returns to his original occupation as a fisherman. As a leader of the group, he leads the others to do the same (John 21:2, Mark 1:16–20). Jesus showed His tremendous mercy towards Peter. He goes to where Peter and the other disciples are fishing. After Jesus helps them catch a giant net full of fish and eats with them, He begins to address Peter. He asks Peter three times whether He loves Him, matching the number of times Peter had denied Him. First, he is asking if Peter loves “these” more than Him. When Jesus uses the word “these,” it could be that He is asking if Peter loves Him more than fishing or more than the other disciples. Jesus shows great mercy towards Peter and reinstates Him as the leader by saying, in verse 16, *“take care of my sheep.”*

“Take care of” in the Greek is **“*pōimainō*.”** It means to tend as a shepherd; supervise; rule. As Jesus continues to ask Peter about his love towards Him, Peter is grieved by being forced to remember his denial which compromised his calling as Jesus' disciple (v.17). Then, Jesus says to Peter, “Feed my sheep.” He clearly has forgiven Peter, and in plain view of the other disciples, Jesus reinstates him to lead the church like a shepherd would his sheep.

Respond: Jesus lived his life as an example for us and wants us to be agents of mercy in the same way He was merciful towards Peter. It is said that mercy is like a diamond; it is multi-faceted. What do the multi-facets of a mercy look like? Examples:

- Mercy values relationships over rules. Jesus helps Peter catch a large amount of fish (v. 6).
- Mercy builds bridges of love. Jesus invites Peter to eat with Him (v. 12).
- Mercy offers others a second chance. Jesus tells Peter to feed his sheep (v. 15).
- Mercy sees hope and a positive future for the offender. Jesus still sees Peter as a leader by telling him to take care of his sheep (v.16).
- Mercy delivers patience. Jesus asked Peter three times, if he loved him (v. 17).
- Mercy grants new beginnings. Jesus tells Peter, “Follow me” (v.19).

The first person you need to have mercy towards is yourself. You can't give away what you don't have and you do give away what you have. If you don't have mercy towards yourself, it's hard to give it to others. Have you made past mistakes and haven't had mercy towards yourself? Ask Jesus to help give you this multi-faceted mercy towards yourself in whatever it is you are judging yourself so harshly about. Now, ask the Lord if

there is anyone that you need to extend mercy towards. It will free both of you up. The last thing Jesus tells Peter in this passage is, "Follow me." How would your life look differently if today, and everyday forward, you chose to have mercy towards yourself and others and wholeheartedly follow Jesus?

My prayer for you is that you continue on a journey of growing in Jesus, having daily devotions and living out the amazing life purpose that God has for you!

God bless you,
Pastor Teresa Quinn

APPENDIX 1

JOHN 12-21

New International Version (NIV)

John 12 – 21 NIV

Jesus Anointed at Bethany

John 12 Six days before the Passover, Jesus came to Bethany, where Lazarus lived, whom Jesus had raised from the dead. 2 Here a dinner was given in Jesus' honor. Martha served, while Lazarus was among those reclining at the table with him.3 Then Mary took about a pint of pure nard, an expensive perfume; she poured it on Jesus' feet and wiped his feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume.

4 But one of his disciples, Judas Iscariot, who was later to betray him, objected,5 "Why wasn't this perfume sold and the money given to the poor? It was worth a year's wages." 6 He did not say this because he cared about the poor but because he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to help himself to what was put into it.

7 "Leave her alone," Jesus replied. "It was intended that she should save this perfume for the day of my burial. 8 You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me."

9 Meanwhile a large crowd of Jews found out that Jesus was there and came, not only because of him but also to see Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead.10 So the chief priests made plans to kill Lazarus as well, 11 for on account of him many of the Jews were going over to Jesus and believing in him.

Jesus Comes to Jerusalem as King

12 The next day the great crowd that had come for the festival heard that Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem. 13 They took palm branches and went out to meet him, shouting, "Hosanna!"

"Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"

"Blessed is the king of Israel!"

14 Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, as it is written:

15 "Do not be afraid, Daughter Zion;
see, your king is coming,
seated on a donkey's colt."

16 At first his disciples did not understand all this. Only after Jesus was glorified did they realize that these things had been written about him and that these things had been done to him.

17 Now the crowd that was with him when he called Lazarus from the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to spread the word. 18 Many people, because they had heard that he had performed this sign, went out to meet him. 19 So the Pharisees said to one another, "See, this is getting us nowhere. Look how the whole world has gone after him!"

Jesus Predicts His Death

20 Now there were some Greeks among those who went up to worship at the festival. 21 They came to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee, with a request. "Sir," they said, "we would like to see Jesus." 22 Philip went to tell Andrew; Andrew and Philip in turn told Jesus.

23 Jesus replied, "The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. 24 Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. 25 Anyone who loves their life will lose it, while anyone who hates their life in this world will keep it for eternal life.26 Whoever serves me must follow me; and

and where I am, my servant also will be. My Father will honor the one who serves me.

27 “Now my soul is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save me from this hour’? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. 28 Father, glorify your name!” Then a voice came from heaven, “I have glorified it, and will glorify it again.” 29 The crowd that was there and heard it said it had thundered; others said an angel had spoken to him.

30 Jesus said, “This voice was for your benefit, not mine. 31 Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. 32 And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself.” 33 He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die.

34 The crowd spoke up, “We have heard from the Law that the Messiah will remain forever, so how can you say, ‘The Son of Man must be lifted up’? Who is this ‘Son of Man’?”

35 Then Jesus told them, “You are going to have the light just a little while longer. Walk while you have the light, before darkness overtakes you. Whoever walks in the dark does not know where they are going. 36 Believe in the light while you have the light, so that you may become children of light.” When he had finished speaking, Jesus left and hid himself from them.

Belief and Unbelief Among the Jews

37 Even after Jesus had performed so many signs in their presence, they still would not believe in him. 38 This was to fulfill the word of Isaiah the prophet:

“Lord, who has believed our message

and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?”

39 For this reason they could not believe, because, as Isaiah says elsewhere:

40 “He has blinded their eyes

and hardened their hearts,

so they can neither see with their eyes,

nor understand with their hearts,

nor turn—and I would heal them.”

41 Isaiah said this because he saw Jesus’ glory and spoke about him.

42 Yet at the same time many even among the leaders believed in him. But because of the Pharisees they would not openly acknowledge their faith for fear they would be put out of the synagogue; 43 for they loved human praise more than praise from God.

44 Then Jesus cried out, “Whoever believes in me does not believe in me only, but in the one who sent me. 45 The one who looks at me is seeing the one who sent me. 46 I have come into the world as a light, so that no one who believes in me should stay in darkness.

47 “If anyone hears my words but does not keep them, I do not judge that person. For I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. 48 There is a judge for the one who rejects me and does not accept my words; the very words I have spoken will condemn them at the last day.

49 For I did not speak on my own, but the Father who sent me commanded me to say all that I have spoken. 50 I know that his command leads to eternal life. So whatever I say is just what the Father has told me to say.”

Jesus Washes His Disciples' Feet

John 13 It was just before the Passover Festival. Jesus knew that the hour had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

2 The evening meal was in progress, and the devil had already prompted Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. 3 Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God;⁴ so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. 5 After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

6 He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

7 Jesus replied, "You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand."

8 "No," said Peter, "you shall never wash my feet."

Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no part with me."

9 "Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!"

10 Jesus answered, "Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you." 11 For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean.

12 When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. "Do you understand what I have done for you?" he asked them. 13 "You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and rightly so, for that is what I am. 14 Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. 15 I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. 16 Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. 17 Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.

Jesus Predicts His Betrayal

18 "I am not referring to all of you; I know those I have chosen. But this is to fulfill this passage of Scripture: 'He who shared my bread has turned against me.'

19 "I am telling you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe that I am who I am. 20 Very truly I tell you, whoever accepts anyone I send accepts me; and whoever accepts me accepts the one who sent me."

21 After he had said this, Jesus was troubled in spirit and testified, "Very truly I tell you, one of you is going to betray me."

22 His disciples stared at one another, at a loss to know which of them he meant.²³ One of them, the disciple whom Jesus loved, was reclining next to him.²⁴ Simon Peter motioned to this disciple and said, "Ask him which one he means."

25 Leaning back against Jesus, he asked him, "Lord, who is it?"

26 Jesus answered, "It is the one to whom I will give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish." Then, dipping the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas, the son of Simon Iscariot. 27 As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him.

29 Since Judas had charge of the money, some thought Jesus was telling him to buy what was needed for the festival, or to give something to the poor. 30 As soon as Judas had taken the bread, he went out. And it was night.

Jesus Predicts Peter's Denial

31 When he was gone, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man is glorified and God is glorified in him. 32 If God is glorified in him,[c] God will glorify the Son in himself, and will glorify him at once. 33 "My children, I will be with you only a little longer. You will look for me, and just as I told the Jews, so I tell you now: Where I am going, you cannot come. 34 "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. 35 By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." 36 Simon Peter asked him, "Lord, where are you going?" Jesus replied, "Where I am going, you cannot follow now, but you will follow later." 37 Peter asked, "Lord, why can't I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you." 38 Then Jesus answered, "Will you really lay down your life for me? Very truly I tell you, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times!

Jesus Comforts His Disciples

John 14 "Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me.² My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. 4 You know the way to the place where I am going."

Jesus the Way to the Father

5 Thomas said to him, "Lord, we don't know where you are going, so how can we know the way?" 6 Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. 7 If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him." 8 Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us." 9 Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? 10 Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you I do not speak on my own authority. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. 11 Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the works themselves. 12 Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. 13 And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. 14 You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

Jesus Promises the Holy Spirit

15 “If you love me, keep my commands. 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another advocate to help you and be with you forever— 17 the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be[c] in you. 18 I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. 19 Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live. 20 On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. 21 Whoever has my commands and keeps them is the one who loves me. The one who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I too will love them and show myself to them.”

22 Then Judas (not Judas Iscariot) said, “But, Lord, why do you intend to show yourself to us and not to the world?”

23 Jesus replied, “Anyone who loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. 24 Anyone who does not love me will not obey my teaching. These words you hear are not my own; they belong to the Father who sent me.

25 “All this I have spoken while still with you. 26 But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. 27 Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

28 “You heard me say, ‘I am going away and I am coming back to you.’ If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. 29 I have told you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe. 30 I will not say much more to you, for the prince of this world is coming. He has no hold over me, 31 but he comes so that the world may learn that I love the Father and do exactly what my Father has commanded me.

“Come now; let us leave.

The Vine and the Branches

John 15 “I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. 2 He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. 3 You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. 4 Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

5 “I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. 6 If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. 7 If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. 8 This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

9 “As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. 10 If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commands and remain in his love. 11 I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. 12 My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. 13 Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one’s life for one’s friends. 14 You are my friends if you do what I command. 15 I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. 16 You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. 17 This is my command: Love each other.

The World Hates the Disciples

18 “If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. 19 If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. 20 Remember what I told you: ‘A servant is not greater than his master.’^[b] If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also. 21 They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the one who sent me. 22 If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not be guilty of sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin. 23 Whoever hates me hates my Father as well. 24 If I had not done among them the works no one else did, they would not be guilty of sin. As it is, they have seen, and yet they have hated both me and my Father. 25 But this is to fulfill what is written in their Law: ‘They hated me without reason.’

The Work of the Holy Spirit

26 “When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father—the Spirit of truth who goes out from the Father—he will testify about me. 27 And you also must testify, for you have been with me from the beginning.

John 16 “All this I have told you so that you will not fall away. 2 They will put you out of the synagogue; in fact, the time is coming when anyone who kills you will think they are offering a service to God. 3 They will do such things because they have not known the Father or me. 4 I have told you this, so that when their time comes you will remember that I warned you about them. I did not tell you this from the beginning because I was with you, 5 but now I am going to him who sent me. None of you asks me, ‘Where are you going?’ 6 Rather, you are filled with grief because I have said these things. 7 But very truly I tell you, it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. 8 When he comes, he will prove the world to be in the wrong about sin and righteousness and judgment: 9 about sin, because people do not believe in me; 10 about righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; 11 and about judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned.

12 “I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. 13 But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. 14 He will glorify me because it is from me that he will receive what he will make known to you. 15 All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you.”

The Disciples’ Grief Will Turn to Joy

16 Jesus went on to say, “In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me.”

17 At this, some of his disciples said to one another, “What does he mean by saying, ‘In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me,’ and ‘Because I am going to the Father?’” 18 They kept asking, “What does he mean by ‘a little while’? We don’t understand what he is saying.”

19 Jesus saw that they wanted to ask him about this, so he said to them, “Are you asking one another what I meant when I said, ‘In a little while you will see me no more, and then after a little while you will see me’? 20 Very truly I tell you, you will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy. 21 A woman giving birth to a child has pain because her time has come; but when her baby is born she forgets the anguish because of her joy that a child is born into the world. 22 So with you: Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy. 23 In that day you will no longer ask me anything. Very truly I tell you, my Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. 24 Until now you have not asked for anything in my name. Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.

25 “Though I have been speaking figuratively, a time is coming when I will no longer use this kind of language but will tell you plainly about my Father. 26 In that day you will ask in my name. I am not saying that I will ask the Father on your behalf. 27 No, the Father himself loves you because you have loved me and have believed that I came from God. 28 I came from the Father and entered the world; now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father.”

29 Then Jesus’ disciples said, “Now you are speaking clearly and without figures of speech. 30 Now we can see that you know all things and that you do not even need to have anyone ask you questions. This makes us believe that you came from God.”

31 “Do you now believe?” Jesus replied. 32 “A time is coming and in fact has come when you will be scattered, each to your own home. You will leave me all alone. Yet I am not alone, for my Father is with me.

33 “I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”

Jesus Prays to Be Glorified

John 17 After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed:

“Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you.² For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. ³ Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. ⁴ I have brought you glory on earth by finishing the work you gave me to do. ⁵ And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began.

Jesus Prays for His Disciples

⁶ “I have revealed you to those whom you gave me out of the world. They were yours; you gave them to me and they have obeyed your word. ⁷ Now they know that everything you have given me comes from you. ⁸ For I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you, and they believed that you sent me. ⁹ I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours. ¹⁰ All I have is yours, and all you have is mine. And glory has come to me through them. ¹¹ I will remain in the world no longer, but they are still in the world, and I am coming to you. Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name, the name you gave me, so that they may be one as we are one. ¹² While I was with them, I protected them and kept them safe by [c] that name you gave me. None has been lost except the one doomed to destruction so that Scripture would be fulfilled.

¹³ “I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. ¹⁴ I have given them your word and the world has hated them, for they are not of the world any more than I am of the world. ¹⁵ My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one. ¹⁶ They are not of the world, even as I am not of it. ¹⁷ Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. ¹⁸ As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. ¹⁹ For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified.

Jesus Prays for All Believers

²⁰ “My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, ²¹ that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. ²² I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one— ²³ I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

²⁴ “Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.

²⁵ “Righteous Father, though the world does not know you, I know you, and they know that you have sent me. ²⁶ I have made you [e] known to them, and will continue to make you known in order that the love you have for me may be in them and that I myself may be in them.”

Jesus Arrested

John 18 When he had finished praying, Jesus left with his disciples and crossed the Kidron Valley. On the other side there was a garden, and he and his disciples went into it.

2 Now Judas, who betrayed him, knew the place, because Jesus had often met there with his disciples. 3 So Judas came to the garden, guiding a detachment of soldiers and some officials from the chief priests and the Pharisees. They were carrying torches, lanterns and weapons.

4 Jesus, knowing all that was going to happen to him, went out and asked them, “Who is it you want?”

5 “Jesus of Nazareth,” they replied.

“I am he,” Jesus said. (And Judas the traitor was standing there with them.)⁶ When Jesus said, “I am he,” they drew back and fell to the ground.

7 Again he asked them, “Who is it you want?”

“Jesus of Nazareth,” they said.

8 Jesus answered, “I told you that I am he. If you are looking for me, then let these men go.”⁹ This happened so that the words he had spoken would be fulfilled: “I have not lost one of those you gave me.”

10 Then Simon Peter, who had a sword, drew it and struck the high priest’s servant, cutting off his right ear. (The servant’s name was Malchus.)

11 Jesus commanded Peter, “Put your sword away! Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?”

12 Then the detachment of soldiers with its commander and the Jewish officials arrested Jesus. They bound him¹³ and brought him first to Annas, who was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest that year. 14 Caiaphas was the one who had advised the Jewish leaders that it would be good if one man died for the people.

Peter’s First Denial

15 Simon Peter and another disciple were following Jesus. Because this disciple was known to the high priest, he went with Jesus into the high priest’s courtyard,¹⁶ but Peter had to wait outside at the door. The other disciple, who was known to the high priest, came back, spoke to the servant girl on duty there and brought Peter in.

17 “You aren’t one of this man’s disciples too, are you?” she asked Peter.

He replied, “I am not.”

18 It was cold, and the servants and officials stood around a fire they had made to keep warm. Peter also was standing with them, warming himself.

The High Priest Questions Jesus

19 Meanwhile, the high priest questioned Jesus about his disciples and his teaching.

20 “I have spoken openly to the world,” Jesus replied. “I always taught in synagogues or at the temple, where all the Jews come together. I said nothing in secret. 21 Why question me? Ask those who heard me. Surely they know what I said.”

22 When Jesus said this, one of the officials nearby slapped him in the face. “Is this the way you answer the high priest?” he demanded.

23 “If I said something wrong,” Jesus replied, “testify as to what is wrong. But if I spoke the truth, why did you strike me?” 24 Then Annas sent him bound to Caiaphas the high priest.

Peter’s Second and Third Denials

25 Meanwhile, Simon Peter was still standing there warming himself. So they asked him, “You aren’t one of his disciples too, are you?”

He denied it, saying, “I am not.”

26 One of the high priest’s servants, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, challenged him, “Didn’t I see you with him in the garden?” 27 Again Peter denied it, and at that moment a rooster began to crow.

Jesus Before Pilate

28 Then the Jewish leaders took Jesus from Caiaphas to the palace of the Roman governor. By now it was early morning, and to avoid ceremonial uncleanness they did not enter the palace, because they wanted to be able to eat the Passover.²⁹ So Pilate came out to them and asked, “What charges are you bringing against this man?”

30 “If he were not a criminal,” they replied, “we would not have handed him over to you.”

31 Pilate said, “Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law.”

“But we have no right to execute anyone,” they objected. 32 This took place to fulfill what Jesus had said about the kind of death he was going to die.

33 Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked him, “Are you the king of the Jews?”

34 “Is that your own idea,” Jesus asked, “or did others talk to you about me?”

35 “Am I a Jew?” Pilate replied. “Your own people and chief priests handed you over to me. What is it you have done?”

36 Jesus said, “My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jewish leaders. But now my kingdom is from another place.”

37 “You are a king, then!” said Pilate. Jesus answered, “You say that I am a king. In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me.”

38 “What is truth?” retorted Pilate. With this he went out again to the Jews gathered there and said, “I find no basis for a charge against him. 39 But it is your custom for me to release to you one prisoner at the time of the Passover. Do you want me to release ‘the king of the Jews?’”

40 They shouted back, “No, not him! Give us Barabbas!” Now Barabbas had taken part in an uprising.

Jesus Sentenced to Be Crucified

John 19 Then Pilate took Jesus and had him flogged. 2 The soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and put it on his head. They clothed him in a purple robe 3 and went up to him again and again, saying, “Hail, king of the Jews!” And they slapped him in the face.

4 Once more Pilate came out and said to the Jews gathered there, “Look, I am bringing him out to you to let you know that I find no basis for a charge against him.” 5 When Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe, Pilate said to them, “Here is the man!” 6 As soon as the chief priests and their officials saw him, they shouted, “Crucify! Crucify!” But Pilate answered, “You take him and crucify him. As for me, I find no basis for a charge against him.” 7 The Jewish leaders insisted, “We have a law, and according to that law he must die, because he claimed to be the Son of God.” 8 When Pilate heard this, he was even more afraid, 9 and he went back inside the palace. “Where do you come from?” he asked Jesus, but Jesus gave him no answer. 10 “Do you refuse to speak to me?” Pilate said. “Don’t you realize I have power either to free you or to crucify you?” 11 Jesus answered, “You would have no power over me if it were not given to you from above. Therefore the one who handed me over to you is guilty of a greater sin.” 12 From then on, Pilate tried to set Jesus free, but the Jewish leaders kept shouting, “If you let this man go, you are no friend of Caesar. Anyone who claims to be a king opposes Caesar.” 13 When Pilate heard this, he brought Jesus out and sat down on the judge’s seat at a place known as the Stone Pavement (which in Aramaic is Gabbatha). 14 It was the day of Preparation of the Passover; it was about noon. “Here is your king,” Pilate said to the Jews. 15 But they shouted, “Take him away! Take him away! Crucify him!” “Shall I crucify your king?” Pilate asked. “We have no king but Caesar,” the chief priests answered. 16 Finally Pilate handed him over to them to be crucified.

The Crucifixion of Jesus

So the soldiers took charge of Jesus. 17 Carrying his own cross, he went out to the place of the Skull (which in Aramaic is called Golgotha). 18 There they crucified him, and with him two others—one on each side and Jesus in the middle. 19 Pilate had a notice prepared and fastened to the cross. It read: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. 20 Many of the Jews read this sign, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and the sign was written in Aramaic, Latin and Greek. 21 The chief priests of the Jews protested to Pilate, “Do not write ‘The King of the Jews,’ but that this man claimed to be king of the Jews.” 22 Pilate answered, “What I have written, I have written.” 23 When the soldiers crucified Jesus, they took his clothes, dividing them into four shares, one for each of them, with the undergarment remaining. This garment was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom. 24 “Let’s not tear it,” they said to one another. “Let’s decide by lot who will get it.” This happened that the scripture might be fulfilled that said, “They divided my clothes among them

and cast lots for my garment.”[a]

So this is what the soldiers did.

25 Near the cross of Jesus stood his mother, his mother’s sister, Mary the wife of Clopas, and Mary Magdalene. 26 When Jesus saw his mother there, and the disciple whom he loved standing nearby, he said to her, “Woman, here is your son,” 27 and to the disciple, “Here is your mother.” From that time on, this disciple took her into his home.

The Death of Jesus

28 Later, knowing that everything had now been finished, and so that Scripture would be fulfilled, Jesus said, “I am thirsty.” 29 A jar of wine vinegar was there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put the sponge on a stalk of the hyssop plant, and lifted it to Jesus’ lips. 30 When he had received the drink, Jesus said, “It is finished.” With that, he bowed his head and gave up his spirit. 31 Now it was the day of Preparation, and the next day was to be a special Sabbath. Because the Jewish leaders did not want the bodies left on the crosses during the Sabbath, they asked Pilate to have the legs broken and the bodies taken down. 32 The soldiers therefore came and broke the legs of the first man who had been crucified with Jesus, and then those of the other. 33 But when they came to Jesus and found that he was already dead, they did not break his legs. 34 Instead, one of the soldiers pierced Jesus’ side with a spear, bringing a sudden flow of blood and water. 35 The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe. 36 These things happened so that the scripture would be fulfilled: “Not one of his bones will be broken,” 37 and, as another scripture says, “They will look on the one they have pierced.”

The Burial of Jesus

38 Later, Joseph of Arimathea asked Pilate for the body of Jesus. Now Joseph was a disciple of Jesus, but secretly because he feared the Jewish leaders. With Pilate’s permission, he came and took the body away. 39 He was accompanied by Nicodemus, the man who earlier had visited Jesus at night. Nicodemus brought a mixture of myrrh and aloes, about seventy-five pounds. 40 Taking Jesus’ body, the two of them wrapped it, with the spices, in strips of linen. This was in accordance with Jewish burial customs. 41 At the place where Jesus was crucified, there was a garden, and in the garden a new tomb, in which no one had ever been laid. 42 Because it was the Jewish day of Preparation and since the tomb was nearby, they laid Jesus there.

The Empty Tomb

Chapter 20 Early on the first day of the week, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been removed from the entrance. 2 So she came running to Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one Jesus loved, and said, “They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don’t know where they have put him!” 3 So Peter and the other disciple started for the tomb. 4 Both were running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first.

5 He bent over and looked in at the strips of linen lying there but did not go in. 6 Then Simon Peter came along behind him and went straight into the tomb. He saw the strips of linen lying there, 7 as well as the cloth that had been wrapped around Jesus' head. The cloth was still lying in its place, separate from the linen. 8 Finally the other disciple, who had reached the tomb first, also went inside. He saw and believed. 9 (They still did not understand from Scripture that Jesus had to rise from the dead.) 10 Then the disciples went back to where they were staying.

Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene

11 Now Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb 12 and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot.

13 They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?"

"They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know where they have put him." 14 At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realize that it was Jesus.

15 He asked her, "Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?"

Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him."

16 Jesus said to her, "Mary."

She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means "Teacher").

17 Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"

18 Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: "I have seen the Lord!" And she told them that he had said these things to her.

Jesus Appears to His Disciples

19 On the evening of that first day of the week, when the disciples were together, with the doors locked for fear of the Jewish leaders, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" 20 After he said this, he showed them his hands and side. The disciples were overjoyed when they saw the Lord. 21 Again Jesus said, "Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you." 22 And with that he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive anyone's sins, their sins are forgiven; if you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

Jesus Appears to Thomas

24 Now Thomas (also known as Didymus), one of the Twelve, was not with the disciples when Jesus came. 25 So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord!"

But he said to them, "Unless I see the nail marks in his hands and put my finger where the nails were, and put my hand into his side, I will not believe." 26 A week later his disciples were in the house again, and Thomas was with them. Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you!" 27 Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger

here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.”

28 Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!”

29 Then Jesus told him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.”

The Purpose of John’s Gospel

30 Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. 31 But these are written that you may believe^[b] that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

Jesus and the Miraculous Catch of Fish

Chapter 21 Afterward Jesus appeared again to his disciples, by the Sea of Galilee. It happened this way: 2 Simon Peter, Thomas (also known as Didymus), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples were together.³ “I’m going out to fish,” Simon Peter told them, and they said, “We’ll go with you.” So they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing.

4 Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus.

5 He called out to them, “Friends, haven’t you any fish?”

“No,” they answered.

6 He said, “Throw your net on the right side of the boat and you will find some.” When they did, they were unable to haul the net in because of the large number of fish.

7 Then the disciple whom Jesus loved said to Peter, “It is the Lord!” As soon as Simon Peter heard him say, “It is the Lord,” he wrapped his outer garment around him (for he had taken it off) and jumped into the water. 8 The other disciples followed in the boat, towing the net full of fish, for they were not far from shore, about a hundred yards.^[c] 9 When they landed, they saw a fire of burning coals there with fish on it, and some bread.

10 Jesus said to them, “Bring some of the fish you have just caught.” 11 So Simon Peter climbed back into the boat and dragged the net ashore. It was full of large fish, 153, but even with so many the net was not torn. 12 Jesus said to them, “Come and have breakfast.” None of the disciples dared ask him, “Who are you?” They knew it was the Lord. 13 Jesus came, took the bread and gave it to them, and did the same with the fish. 14 This was now the third time Jesus appeared to his disciples after he was raised from the dead.

Jesus Reinstates Peter

15 When they had finished eating, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?”

“Yes, Lord,” he said, “you know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Feed my lambs.”

16 Again Jesus said, “Simon son of John, do you love me?”

He answered, “Yes, Lord, you know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Take care of my sheep.”

17 The third time he said to him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?”

Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, “Do you love me?” He said, “Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Feed my sheep. 18 Very truly I tell you, when you were younger you dressed yourself and went where you wanted; but when you are old you will stretch out your hands, and someone else will dress you and lead you where you do not want to go.” 19 Jesus said this to indicate the kind of death by which Peter would glorify God. Then he said to him, “Follow me!”

20 Peter turned and saw that the disciple whom Jesus loved was following them. (This was the one who had leaned back against Jesus at the supper and had said, “Lord, who is going to betray you?”) 21 When Peter saw him, he asked, “Lord, what about him?”

22 Jesus answered, “If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? You must follow me.” 23 Because of this, the rumor spread among the believers that this disciple would not die. But Jesus did not say that he would not die; he only said, “If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you?”

24 This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down. We know that his testimony is true.

25 Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written.

References

1. Barry, J. D., Mangum, D., Brown, D. R., Heiser, M. S., Custis, M., Ritzema, E., Bomar, D. (2012, 2016). Faithlife Study Bible. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press.
2. Burge, G. M. (1995). John: Evangelical Commentary on the Bible. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House.
3. Burge, G.M. (2000). The NIV Application Commentary Series: John. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
4. Kruse, C. G. (2003). John: An Introduction and Commentary. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press.
5. Renner, Rick (2003). Sparkling Gems from the Greek. Tulsa, OK: Teach All Nations.
6. Strong, J. (2009). A concise Dictionary of the Words in the Greek Testament and the Hebrew Bible. Bellingham, WA: Logos Bible Software.
7. Warren, Rick (2018). Daily Hope. <https://pastorrick.com/devotional>.
8. Holy Bible, New International Version Study Bible. Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1985. Print.
9. Holy Bible. New International Version. Bible Gateway, version 42, Bible Gateway/Zondervan, 2016.