

*If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples,
and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.*
John 8:31-32



The Daily Walk

Matthew

Matthew records Jesus' preparation and proclamation as God's Messiah (Anointed One) to the people of Israel. Opposition to His ministry grows as religious leaders deny His claims, prompting Jesus to turn increasingly to His disciples. Through miracles, parables, and sermons, He prepares them for the climax of His earthly ministry – His sacrificial death, burial, and resurrection. Prior to His ascension, Jesus commissions His disciples to continue the work which He has begun.

Focus	Preparation								Proclamation							
Divisions	Arrival of Messiah		Teaching of Messiah		Healing of Messiah		Reactions of Messiah		Sermons of Messiah		Parables of Messiah		Prophecies of Messiah		Finished Work of Messiah	
	1	4	5	7	8	11	12	15	16	19	20	23	24	25	26	28
Topics	Teaching All Men						Teaching 12 Men									
	Increasing Acceptance						Increasing Antagonism									
Place	Galilee										Jerusalem					
Time	4 B.C. - A.D. 33															

*This devotional guide is reprinted from the Daily Walk 1983 with permission from Walk Thru the Bible Ministries.

February 4

Arrival of Messiah

Scripture Reading: Matthew 1-4

Heart of the Passage: Matthew 1:18-25; 13:4-11

Overview

Matthew begins his gospel with a record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ. But this beginning is more than merely a tabulation of names, for the word “genealogy” can also mean “genesis.” The Old Testament book of Genesis traces the creation of the universe and man; now Matthew shows that the advent of Jesus inaugurates a “new creation.” From the call of Abraham, God has been moving to accomplish His great redemptive plan. Jesus, the prophesied Messiah, fulfills the Old Testament promises in every facet of His life: annunciation, birth, boyhood, baptism, and upbringing.

Chapter 1	Chapter 2	Chapter 3	Chapter 4
Jesus' Background	Jesus' Birth	John's Teaching	Jesus' Temptation
Coming of Messiah		Character of Messiah	

Your Daily Walk

How well do you obey divine directives? On an obedience scale of 1 to 10 (with 1 being “consistently disobedient,” 10 being “consistently obedient”), how would you rate yourself? _____

Today’s reading abounds with examples of the importance of *obedience*. The genealogy of chapter 1 sparkles with the names of those who obeyed God in times of spiritual decadence: Abraham, Ruth, David, Hezekiah, Josiah, Joseph. Chapter 3 describes the ministry of John the Baptist as he preached a message of repentance and fruit-bearing - a message demanding uncompromising *obedience*. In chapter 4, Jesus was *obedient* to God’s will and Word, rather than agreeing to Satan’s subtle temptations.

In what area of your life is God speaking to you about obedience? It is one thing to know what God wants you to do; it is something else to make obedience a commitment in your daily schedule. In the margin, write the acts of obedience performed by three different people in the genealogy (for example, Abraham obeyed God by leaving Ur). Now add your name to the list, and act of obedience you will undertake by faith today.

Insight: The Worldwide Impact of Messiah’s Appearing

Christ’s coming held significance not merely for the Jews, but for Gentile nations as well. Note the four alien women in chapter 1, the magi from the East, and Christ’s Gentile following in 4:25.

Four Gospel Glimpses of Christ

	<i>Matthew</i>	<i>Mark</i>	<i>Luke</i>	<i>John</i>
Christ Portrayed as	Prophesied King	Obedient Servant	Perfect Man	Son of God
Original Audience	Jews	Romans	Greeks	All Men
Key Word	"fulfilled"	"straightway"	"Son of Man"	"believe"
Key Verse	21:5	10:45	19:10	20:31
Outstanding Feature	Sermons	Miracles	Parables	Teachings
Arrangement of Material	Topical	Chronological	Chronological	Topical
Tone	Prophetic	Practical	Historical	Spiritual
Percent Spoken by Christ	60%	42%	50%	50%
Quotations from Old Testament	53	36	25	20
Allusions to Old Testament	76	27	42	105
Unique Material	42%	59%	7%	93%
Broad Division	Synoptic Gospels (humanity of Christ)			Supplemental Gospel (deity of Christ)

February 5

Teaching of Messiah

Scripture Reading: Matthew 5-7

Heart of the Passage: Matthew 5:1-20; 7:1-20

Overview

Every candidate for public office must present a platform upon which he bases his campaign. Jesus claimed to be the Messiah, the King of the Jews. The section you will read today, traditionally called the Sermon on the Mount, presents His “platform” – His statement of policy, principle, and practice for those belong to the kingdom of heaven (5:3,10). Relationship to God (not simply adherence to ritual) and inward attitude (not merely outward action) become the focus of Christ’s message. Only by building upon the sure foundation which God has provided (7:24-27) can we live a lifestyle of righteousness that exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees (5:20).

Chapter 5	Chapter 6	Chapter 7
Righteous Requirements	Reassuring Relationships	Right Responses
How to Walk	How to Worship	How to Do God's Will

Your Daily Walk

“Judge not, that ye be not judged” (7:1). “Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them” (7:20). How can you put these seemingly contradictory statements together? What is the point Jesus is trying to make?

Judging (7:1) has in mind the attaching of motives to another person’s actions. You may conclude your neighbor is *thrifty or cheap...friendly or noisy...attentive to detail or picky...*depending on the motives you ascribe to him. Snap judgements and misunderstood motives only lead to the same kind of treatment in return.

By contrast, you have a Christian responsibility to be a “fruit inspector,” to evaluate your actions (and the actions of others) by the objective standards of God’s inspired Word (7:20), and adjust your behavior accordingly. Find a piece of fruit to nibble on as you read Matthew 7:1-5, 15-20. And as you do, if you find evidence of “fruit” that doesn’t belong in your life, ask God to help you do some overdue “pruning” in your attitudes and actions. Then you’ll be doing what Jesus urged in this important memory verse:



A Bright Idea in Any Day (#40)

*“Let your light so shine before men,
that they may see your good works, and
glorify your Father which is in heaven”
(Matthew 5:16).*

February 6

Healing of Messiah

Scripture Reading: Matthew 8-11

Heart of the Passage: Matthew 8,10

Overview

Matthew concentrates on ten miracles in chapter 8 and 9 that demonstrate Jesus' power over disease, the force of nature, and the spirit world. Christ then bestows that same power and authority on His chosen apostles and sends them out as couriers of the kingdom. He first instructs them how to act, warns them of the danger they will face, and calls them to committed discipleship. When news of John's imprisonment reaches Jesus, He publicly honors John as God's messenger and prophet. The One to Whom John pointed now invites all who are burdened with cares to find rest and refreshment in Him.

Chapter 8,9	Chapter 10	Chapter 11
Divine Power Demonstrated	Divine Authority Delegated	Divine Authority Disregarded
Miracles	Messengers	Coming Miseries

Your Daily Walk

Think back to your childhood days, and try to recall one personality (from the media, entertainment, or athletic world) you wanted to be like when you grew up. Write that name in the margin. Then below it, list some of the things you did to pattern your life after that "childhood idol" in matters of dress, walk, and speech.

Without even knowing it, you had become a "disciple" of that great personality, a *follower* and a *learner* of everything he or she did and said. Every TV appearance, every word, every mannerism became an object of intense interest to you because of your commitment to be like that person...to model your life after another.

Does that help to clarify what it means to be a "disciple" of Jesus Christ? Look up the following verses to see what else Matthew has to say about the commitment and devotion which Christ demands of all who would *follow* Him and *learn* from Him today: 8:19-22; 10:35-38. Then complete this job description of your responsibilities as a disciple: "*My role as Jesus' disciple is...*"

Insight: The "Move" Every Christian Should Make

Repeatedly, Matthew mentioned that Jesus "was moved with compassion" (9:36; 14:14; 15:32; 20:34). Biblical compassion is seeing the need of someone around you, and doing something about it. It is realizing that, though you cannot do everything, you can do something, and with God's help, you will do what you can. What will you do?

February 7

Reactions to Messiah

Scripture Reading: **Matthew 12-15**

Heart of the Passage: **Matthew 12,14**

Overview

A turning point in Matthew's Gospel occurs in chapter 12. Mounting antagonism by the Jewish religious leaders erupts into open denunciation of Jesus. Attributing His miracles to the power of Satan, they demand yet another sign to substantiate Jesus' Messianic claims. Because of their hard-hearted rejection, Jesus begins to speak to them in parables—stories from everyday life whose deeper spiritual significance is explained only to the disciples. After a rude reception in His home town of Nazareth, Jesus withdraws across the Sea of Galilee to the region of Tyre and Sidon in order to escape growing opposition.

Chapter 12	Chapter 13	Chapter 14,15
Rejection by the Leaders	Instructions to the Disciples	Multiplied Loaves for the Multitudes
Pharisees	Parables	Provisions

Your Daily Walk

When someone gets particularly excited about an activity or achievement, you'll often hear the expression, "She lost her head over it!" Have you ever wondered where that phrase originated?

One suggestion is Matthew 14! There you will read the tragic ending of the life of John the Baptist, who "lost his head" over a king's immoral conduct in the palace. John, the uncompromising declarer of God's righteousness, stood fearlessly before Herod Antipas, pointing an accusing finger at the adulterous tetrarch, and declared, "It is not lawful (under Roman or divine law) for you to marry your brother's wife" (14:4). Herod was terrified (14:5); his wife was infuriated; and for John's unflinching stance, the prophet of God was beheaded.

All that is necessary for evil to prosper is for good men to do nothing. Moral issues command front-page attention: abortion, pornography, homosexuality. The Bible is not silent about each; are you?

First, do your homework in the pages of God's Word. (A concordance will help!) Then let your voice be heard for good and for God this week. Your stance may prove costly, but when you consider the alternative, can you afford to remain silent?

Insight: Matthew-A Lot of Old in the New

Repeatedly in the gospel of Matthew you will find the phrase, "...that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet..." or its equivalent. Can you find five such statements in today's section?

February 8

Sermons of Messiah

Scripture Reading: Matthew 16-19

Heart of the Passage: Matthew 16

Overview

Matthew records many crucial incidents from Jesus' life in these four chapters. Though Christ takes time to heal an epileptic boy, pay His temple tax, and confront the increasingly hostile Pharisees, it is clear that His primary concern is for His disciples – those He would soon leave behind to continue the work He has begun. Healings and discourses, miracles and parables – all focus on Jesus' faithful followers to prepare them for the difficult days just ahead.

Chapter 16			Chapter 17		Chapter 18		Chapter 19					
Preaching of the King Concerning...												
1	His Church		20	21	His Death	28	His Glory		The Lost		The Family	
Unveiling Christ's Identity						Unveiling Christ's Priorities						

Your Daily Walk

Imagine for a moment that you are Jesus of Nazareth. In one year's time your earthly life and ministry will be over. Your followers – an unlikely assortment of fishermen, politicians, and professional people – will be all you leave behind to continue the work you have begun. People like...Peter (who usually needed three reminders before he learned his lesson)...James and John (the hot-tempered "sons of thunder")...Thomas (the skeptic of the group).

Question: How optimistic are you that the task of taking the good news of the gospel to a waiting world will ever be accomplished?

And yet, today you will read some of the most significant words ever uttered by our Lord: "...I will build my church; and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it" (16:18). Down through the centuries, in spite of persecution and dispersion, satanic attack and human failure, the church of Jesus Christ has continued. Why? Because it is God's vehicle to take a message of life to a dying world.

Now how optimistic are you that what God has begun, He fully intends to complete? God has all the resources you need to do the task for which He has left you here on Planet Earth. There is just one thing He lacks: your availability. And only you can provide that.

Insight: The Way of the Cross – Groan and Glory

Following Peter's insightful confession that Jesus is the Christ (16:16), notice how Jesus carefully blends the two strands of *suffering* and *glory* in the sections to follow. True of His own life, it would be true of the lives of His followers as well.

February 9

Parables of Messiah

Scripture Reading: Matthew 20-23

Heart of the Passage: Matthew 20:17-28; 21:1-17

Overview

Peter's dramatic confession of Jesus as "the Christ, the Son of the living God" (16:16) is followed by a statement with ominous overtones: "From that time forth began Jesus to show unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day: (16:21). After preparing His disciples for the unexpected events which soon take place, Jesus begins His final journey to Jerusalem. Arriving to hero's welcome, He is hailed as King while making His humble entrance into the city. It is now the final week of Christ's earthly life – a week the world would never forget.

Chapter 20	Chapter 21	Chapter 22	Chapter 23
Position before the King	Presentation of the King	Parables of the King	Pronouncements of the King
Haughty Disciples	Humble Lord	Helpless Pharisees	

Your Daily Walk

As you read through today's section, notice the three different reactions to Christ's words: inattention, irritation, and instant obedience. (Which would characterize you?)

The disciples were *inattentive*. Three times Christ described for them what would be before Him when they arrived in Jerusalem (16:21; 17:22,23; 20:17-19). But they failed to hear and heed His words.

The Pharisees were irritated. Being the focus of someone's sermon is never very comfortable (21:45,46), especially when the preacher calls you "blind guides," "hypocrites," and "whited sepulchers." Rather than change their ways, they tried to silence the preacher.

The two blind men were *instantly obedient*. They listened to Christ's words, acknowledged His authority, admitted their need, and responded to His call. As a result, they received their sight.

Select a verse from today's section which you had formerly ignored, or which you find irritatingly convicting. How would the two blind men have responded to it? How will you? When will you?

Insight: Truly Quotable Quotes

Today's section contains at least nine quotations from the Old Testament (how many can you find?) All totaled, the gospel of Matthew contains nearly 130 allusions and quotations from the Old Testament passages – more than any other New Testament book.

Day 10/11

Prophecies of Messiah

Scripture Reading: Matthew 24,25

Heart of the Passage: Matthew 24:36-51; 25:14-30

Overview

Herod's magnificent temple captured the attention of all who passed by. Commenting on its beauty and splendor, the disciples set the stage for Jesus' Olivet Discourse, a prophetic look at future events. His followers are urged to watchful expectation coupled with faithful service because, despite the signs of His coming, the return of Christ will be unannounced. His coming will bring vengeance on His enemies, judgement on the nations, and rewards for His watchful followers.

Chapter 24				Chapter 25			
Coming Woes		Coming Warnings		Parables of Judgement		Preparations to Avoid Judgement	
1	31	32	51	1	30	31	46
Events		Expectations		Examples		Exhortations	

Your Daily Walk

Have you ever watched a young child at an airport or depot awaiting the arrival of grandparents or the return of a father from a business trip? How did that child express his eager expectation? Perhaps he stood tiptoes...craned his neck for a better look...jostled for position among the other bystanders. Every fiber of his being shouted the message, "Someone very special is coming, and I want to be ready when he gets here!"

Christians should be people walking on tiptoes, anticipating the return of the Lord (2 Timothy 4:8). But in addition to watchful expectation you have been commanded to "occupy till I come" (Luke 19:13). Anticipating His coming is no excuse for neglecting the physical and spiritual needs of the world around you. Your task in the meantime is to be the "salt of the earth" and the "light of the world" – making others thirsty for God (salt) and then guiding them to Him (light). What is the name of the one person in whose life you can "shake and shine" to God's glory today? Remember, a little salt goes a long way...but only when you spread it around!

Insight: The Stones that Stood Alone

Christ's prediction that "there shall not be left here one stone upon another" of Herod's breathtaking temple (24:2) was fulfilled to the letter. In 70 A.D., Roman soldiers, in their eagerness to recover the gold that had melted between the stones of the temple during its burning, literally tore the temple apart stone by stone and cast them into the valley below...exactly as Jesus had said.

February 12

Finished Work of Messiah

Scripture Reading: Matthew 26-28

Heart of the Passage: Matthew 27:15-28:20

Overview

The events during the final two days of Jesus' earthly life carry the shadow of the cross. Everything He says and does foreshadows that symbol of shame, sacrifice, and salvation: the anointing in Bethany, the Passover observance and Lord's supper, the prayer in Gethsemane. Jesus is arrested and tried, first by the Jews, then by the Romans; He is condemned, executed, and placed in a tomb. But the story does not end there. In glorious triumph, Jesus comes forth from the grave in resurrection power. Indeed, the King of the Jews lives again, a message of good news which His followers are commissioned to share.

Chapter 26	Chapter 27	Chapter 28
The Christ Arrested	The Christ Executed	The Christ Resurrected
Sacrificial Lamb		Glorified Lamb

Your Daily Walk

The cross of Jesus Christ has been called "the fulcrum of cosmic history." The destiny of every human being hinges on a person's relationship to Jesus and His work on the cross.

As you read today's section, think deeply about the crucifixion of Jesus and its significance. Can you say with Paul, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world" (Galatians 6:14)?

Then think of what the cross means to your neighbors...friends...family members...fellow employees. Are you sure each of them has come to the foot of the cross in faith and received the salvation which only Jesus can provide? If not, how can you be instrumental in leading one person to Calvary today?

It may involve a phone call, a letter, a luncheon invitation, an evening get-together. Ask God for a prepared heart...a door to opportunity...and a boldness as you share the life-changing message of the Gospel. That's your privilege!



A Commission to Commit to Memory (#41)

*"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations
... to observe all things whatsoever I
have commanded you: and, lo, I am
with you alway, even unto the end of
the world" (Matthew 28:19,20).*

Mark

Mark’s gospel captures the twofold purpose of Christ’s coming to earth: “to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many” (10:45). Mark describes Jesus as the Perfect Servant, emphasizing more the actions of Jesus (look for the oft-repeated term “straightway”), and gives briefer treatment to His teachings. Mark is a book of action, not words, directed to Roman audience. Jewish customs are carefully explained and the story moves briskly to the victorious completion of Jesus’ earthly life and ministry.

Focus	Servant						Sacrifice			
Divisions	Servants of the Servant		Service of the Servant		Sayings of the Servant		Sermons of the Servant		Suffering of the Servant	
	1	3	4	7	8	10	11	13	14	16
Topics	The Son of Man on the Move						The Son of Man on the Cross			
	A Living Example						A Dying Savior			
Place	Galilee & Perea						Judea & Jerusalem			
Time	A.D. 29-33									

February 13

Servants of the Servant

Scripture Reading: Mark 1-3

Heart of the Passage: Mark 1:1-2:27

Overview

Mark's writing style mirrors his purpose. The narrative is crisp, vigorous, and "on-the-spot," with the economy and efficiency of a servant at work! Jesus Christ is portrayed as a Man of action, a Servant busy about His Father's business. Mark includes only brief glimpses of the events preceding Christ's active public ministry (such as His baptism by John and temptation by Satan) before plunging into the topic that will consume nine chapters of his gospel: Christ's ministry in Galilee. Servants are constantly involved in the lives of people, and Jesus is no different. The fever-ridden and the demon-possessed, palsied and leprous feel His healing touch. And early in His ministry, He begins to select others who will be His close companions and carry on the work of preaching, teaching, and healing after He is gone.

Chapter 1		Chapter 2		Chapter 3	
The Servant's Preparation 1 13	The Servant's Preaching 14 45	The Servant's Power		The Servant's Pupils	
Baptism	Belief	Disease		Disciples	

Your Daily Walk

If all the books ever written on the subject of discipleship were gathered together in one location, they would probably fill a small library! And yet, it is difficult to find a truly satisfactory definition of just what "disciples" involves.

Mark 1:13-15 provides the first installment on an answer. In chapters 1 and 2, Christ's life is a living object lesson of a Servant at work: healing, comforting, teaching. Now it is time to select twelve "disciples" for two very distinct purposes: *to be with Him* and *to be sent out* by Him (verse 14). That is, to be *equipped* by the Master, through example and instruction, in order to be able to *minister* like the Master.

How can you profit from Christ's example in your own personal discipleship ministries as a parent, teacher, or friend? Make a point of taking someone else with you the next time you teach, preach, or counsel, that they might learn from your example.

Insight: Follow the Straight Way...Straightway!

Mark portrays Christ as instantly obedient to the Father's will. Over 40 times in the book you'll find words like *straightway*, *immediately*, *forthwith* (all translating the same Greek word)! But then, isn't that what you would expect from the Perfect Servant?

February 14

Service of the Servant

Scripture Reading: Mark 4-7

Heart of the Passage: Mark 4:1-5:20

Overview

It is one thing to make a claim of greatness; it is something else again to back up that claim with credentials. Through both His words (parables) and works (miracles), Christ proclaims His true identity to His disciples and the multitudes, confirming Who He is by what he does. At first, even His disciples are perplexed by His power and authority. “What manner of man is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?” (4:41). But Jesus patiently works with them, in anticipation of the day when their faith will be sparked to believe His claims.

Chapter 4	Chapter 5				Chapter 6	Chapter 7
The Servant's Sayings	The Servant's Signs Involving...					
	1	Demons	20	21	Death	43
					Dinner	Deafness
Parables	Powerful Acts					

Your Daily Walk

Question: What do a lead foot, “creative” arithmetic, and a pile of paper clips have in common? Answer: They can each be the undoing of a parent’s best efforts to teach a child right from wrong. Consider the following:

Scene I: It is Sunday morning. Bobby has just disobeyed his mother. But since the family is late for church already, she saves her tirade until everyone is in the car, traveling 70 miles per hour...

Scene II: It is income tax time. Two sons tangle in a game of Monopoly, and one accuses the other of cheating. The father leaves his paperwork long enough to deliver his finest homily on “Thou shalt not cheat,” then returns to the absorbing task of figuring a way to make “golf clubs” a medical deduction...

Scene III: While at work, a father receives a phone call from the police. His daughter has been picked up for shoplifting, and would he please come immediately? He hangs up the phone, pausing only long enough to grab a box of paper clips that are much needed at home...

Where are your actions drowning out your words? (Ask your spouse’s help on this one!) Remember, your talk will only be as believable as your walk.

Insight: A Peek Behind the Scenes at Jesus’ Family Life (6:3)

As was the custom of the day, Jesus learned the trade of His earthly father: carpentry. The Greek work for “carpenter” can mean a craftsman in stone and metal as well as wood.

February 15

Sayings of the Servant

Scripture Reading: **Mark 8-10**

Heart of the Passage: **Mark 8:22-38; 10:17-52**

Overview

As opposition to Jesus' ministry increases, it is no longer safe for Him to move openly in Galilee. In today's chapters Jesus traverses the regions of Decapolis (7:31-8:9), Caesarea Philippi (8:10-9:29), and Perea (10:1-52), thereby avoiding the crowds and the deadly plots of the religious leaders. In the concluding days of His earthly ministry, Jesus begins to prepare His disciples for the return to Jerusalem – an event which will mark the end of His life and the beginning of the disciples' role as servants continuing the work of the Perfect Servant.

Chapter 8	Chapter 9	Chapter 10
Irrefutable Miracles	Irrepressible Power	Irresistible Preaching
Evidence that Demands a Verdict		

Your Daily Walk

Three-year-old Billy watched with fascination as his father filled the family car with gas. A few days later, Billy decided to do the same. Removing the gas cap, he placed the end of the garden hose in the tank and was about to turn on the water when his horrified father intercepted him and scuttled the plan.

Billy's problem was a misconception about what his father was doing. Misconceptions can be humorous; often they can be harmful; occasionally they can be fatal. Jesus constantly had to deal with misconceptions about Himself and His mission in the world. Even His closest followers seemed to miss the point with frustrating regularity. After Peter's ringing testimony, "Thou art the Chris" (8:29), the very next verses record his satanic misconception about Christ's suffering and death (8:31-33). In chapter 10, after Jesus' extensive teaching about servanthood, James and John come to ask for the positions of honor in the coming kingdom (10:37)!

Insight: A Quick Quiz with a Catch

Did Jesus feed 4,000 or 5,000 at one time with a handful of fish and loaves? (To find out, check Mark 6:35-44; 8:1-9!)

February 16

Sermons of the Servant

Scripture Reading: Mark 11-13

Heart of the Passage: Mark 11

Overview

It is rare when a servant received the accolades of the crowd. Mark includes the fleeting triumph of the Servant of God as He is acclaimed by the Passover crowds upon entering Jerusalem for the final week of His life. But after driving the bankers and the merchants from the temple, Jesus faces growing opposition from the Jewish leaders. With murderous intent, they seek to silent the Servant once and for all. As Christ and His disciples leave the city one evening, they rest on the Mount of Olives, where Jesus reveals to them events related to His return in final glory.

Chapter 11	Chapter 12	Chapter 13
Delight in Jerusalem	Debate with the Leaders	Discourse on the Future
Triumphal Entry	Traps	Tribulation

Insight: Figuring Out a Fig Tree

Christ's cursing of the fig tree makes little sense until you understand the timetable for picking figs. By Passover time (late March, early April) a crop of "nob" figs appears followed by the leaves. Thus, the presence of leaves should have indicated fruit already on the tree. By being "leafy" but "fruitless," the tree became the object of Christ's curse...and an object lesson to the disciples.

Your Daily Walk

There is nothing quite as pathetic as a fruitless fruit tree, unless, of course, it is a fruitless Christian...a fruitless family...a fruitless church...a fruitless nation. Fruit on a tree is a sign of life, vitality, and reproduction. But take away the fruit and you are left with a tree that is good for firewood...and very little else! Why? Because it is not producing the very thing for which it was planted.

The barren fig tree which Jesus cursed represent the nation of Israel, who had all the outward trappings of religion but none of the fruits of true spirituality. Do you know a church like that? More important, are you like that? Is a "leafy" exterior or religious façade concealing a deep inner lack of fruitfulness in your walk with God? if so, turn to John 15:1-8 for a divine clinic on fruitbearing. Trace the four keys which Jesus mentions: "abiding...obeying...loving...knowing." Don't allow the barrenness to be the "norm" in your Christian life. For trees...and Christians...it's just not normal!

February 17/18

Sermons of the Servant

Scripture Reading: Mark 14-16

Heart of the Passage: Mark 14:53-72; 15:24-39; 16:1-8

Overview

Mark does not slacken the tempo of his action-packed gospel as the sacrifice of the Servant of God approaches. In a climatic crescendo, the plan of God blends with the plot of the enemies of Jesus. Even the peaceful evening in Bethany and the delightful fellowship of the Passover supper are saddened by the overtones of impending death. Betrayal, arrest, trial, denial, physical abuse, crucifixion, death – the mission of the Servant is at last accomplished. Redemption has been achieved, a fact confirmed by Christ's resurrection and ascension.

Chapter 14	Chapter 15	Chapter 16
Final Hours of the Servant		Final Victory
In the Garden	On the Cross	of the Servant
Prayed and Betrayed	Tried and Crucified	Resurrected

Your Daily Walk

Have you ever faced a situation where you felt you stood completely alone? Perhaps you took a stand for something you were convinced was true and right, but at the crucial moment when the opposition appeared at its strongest, you found yourself forsaken and alone. It's a terrifying feeling – perhaps a feeling you've experienced in the past or are wrestling with today.

Take courage. You are *not* alone. Your Lord and Savior went through a similar experience during his arrest, trial, and execution. It seemed *His* cause was lost and *His* enemies had won. In fact, just before He died, even His heavenly Father turned away from Him. And yet, His victory (and ours) over sin and Satan, death and hell, was confirmed by His triumphant resurrection on Easter morning.

If you have never done so before, begin today to collect a stockpile of verses for those times when you feel all alone. Verses like Hebrews 13:5 – "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee." Or Matthew 28:20 – "Lo, I am with you always." Or Hebrews 4:15,16; 12:3. Begin your collection today. Keep it handy. Use it often!

Insight: The Boy Who Got Away

Who was the "certain young man" with Jesus at His arrest who escaped from the high priest's guards by slipping out of his "linen cloth" and fleeing "naked" (14:51,52)? Many commentators believe it was Mark himself, who for obvious reasons might have preferred not to identify his name with the incident!

Luke

Luke did not write his gospel from firsthand acquaintance with Jesus Christ. Rather, he carefully researched Jesus' life and ministry from eyewitness accounts and historical records to confirm and strengthen the faith of his readers. Luke emphasizes Jesus' ability to meet every need of the rich and poor; young and old; men, women, and children. Even after His resurrection, the glorified humanity of Jesus is stressed, showing that truly He is come "to seek and to save that which was lost" (19:10).

Focus	Appearance			Activity								Affliction				
Divisions	Childhood of the Son of Man		Companions of the Son of Man		Confrontations with the Son of Man		Conduct of the Son of Man		Comparisons by the Son of Man		Counsel from the Son of Man		Conflict over the Son of man		Crucifixion of the Son of Man	
	1	2	3	6	7	9	10	12	13	15	16	18	19	21	22	24
Topics	Miracles								Parables				Plots			
	Seeking and Teaching												Suffering and Saving			
Place	Jerusalem			Galilee			Samaria & Perea			Jerusalem						
Time	5 B.C. - A.D. 33															

February 19

Childhood of the Son of Man

Scripture Reading: Luke 1,2
Heart of the Passage: Luke 1:26-56; 2:1-20

Overview

In the first four verses of his gospel, Luke describes the process by which his inspired account was composed. Not being an eyewitness himself, he diligently researched the facts so as to produce an accurate account of the life and ministry of Jesus. Known to Paul as the “beloved physician” (Colossians 4:14), Luke provides a more precise and complete narrative than the other gospel writers. Even in his opening chapters, you will discern the heart of a family doctor as he relates the life of Mary, the birth of Jesus, and the boyhood years of this remarkable “miracle baby.”

Chapter 1						Chapter 2			
Birth Announcement...				Miraculous Birth of...					
1	To Zechariah	25	26	to Mary	56	57	John	80	Jesus
John's Arrival						Jesus' Arrival			

Your Daily Walk

In the margin, make a list of all the ways you are growing. (Perhaps some unneeded desserts and long overdue exercise have caused you to grow in ways you would just as soon forget!) Try to think of at least seven ways you are growing mentally, physically, emotionally, spiritually.

Now read again how Jesus grew in 2:40,52. The perfect Son of God who became a man needed to grow just as you do.

Jesus grew physically. If you're past eighteen, then you probably aren't growing in stature. But are you keeping your body in good physical condition – that body which is God's very temple?

Jesus grew in wisdom. If you're using *The Daily Walk* each day, that shows you're concerned about growing in your knowledge of God. But are you putting that knowledge to work in your service for God?

Jesus grew in favor with God and man. Is your love for God growing? Is your circle of friends and witnessing contacts widening?

It's never too late to increase “in wisdom, stature, and favor with God and man.” And here's a verse only seven words in length to give you the confidence that, with God's help, it's never too late to grow!



Good News for People on the Grow (#42)
“For with God nothing shall be impossible” (Luke 1:37).

February 20

Companions of the Son of Man

Scripture Reading: Luke 3,6
Heart of the Passage: Luke 3:1-22; 4:1-12

Overview

From the very beginning of His ministry, Christ demonstrates His authority over every area of creation: demons, disease, nature, human laws and institutions. Later, this will produce confrontations with life-and-death importance. But for now, the main effect is to attract the multitudes, arouse curiosity, and establish a basis for individuals to believe His claims. Visible miracles and physical healings offer a way for the Son of Man to demonstrate His authority to forgive sins and heal lives spiritually. In anticipation of the day when others would carry on the work He began, Jesus makes a prayerful and careful selection of twelve men (called apostles) to be His close inner circle of friends.

Chapter 3	Chapter 4	Chapter 5	Chapter 6
Baptized by John	Tempted by Satan	Help of the Helpless	Lord of the Sabbath
Verifying Jesus' Authority		Responding to Jesus' Authority	

Your Daily Walk

Tucked away in chapter 4 is an indispensable key to facing temptation successfully. Do you know what it is?

“And Jesus being full of the Holy Ghost returned from Jordan, and was led by the Spirit into the wilderness...and Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit into Galilee” (4:1,14).

Jesus was able to handle temptation successfully because He never faced it alone. Every step He took was under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Every battle He faced was met in the power of the Holy Spirit. And the result of such a Spirit-directed, Spirit-empowered lifestyle was victory over the attacks of Satan. The same kind of victory you can experience today in your walk with God.

Carry a small battery in your pocket or purse today as a constant reminder that the Holy Spirit accompanies you wherever you go to light your path and empower you to glorify God.

Insight: Fleeting Fame with Fickle Public

In the space of today's four chapters you will find a remarkable change in public opinion regarding Christ. At first, “There went out a fame of him through all the region round about” (4:14). But only two chapters later, “They were filled with madness; and communed one with another what they might do to Jesus” (6:11). Can you account for this sudden change of heart?

February 21

Confrontations with the Son of Man

Scripture Reading: Luke 7-9

Heart of the Passage: Luke 7:36-50; 8:41-56

Overview

Preaching. Healing. Discipling. That in capsule form summarizes Christ's daily activities during much of His ministry. Luke records the healings with meticulous attention to detail, as befitting a doctor. When John the Baptist sends messengers to Jesus questioning whether He is the Messiah, Jesus has only to point to His miracles as proof of His claims. And as he preaches and heals, Jesus patiently prepares His followers to carry on the same kind of ministry. The stakes are high; the cost of discipleship is steep, demanding nothing less than self-denial and wholehearted commitment. But the goal of saving lives (9:56) makes it all worthwhile!

Chapter 7	Chapter 8	Chapter 9
A Ministry of Mercy	A Ministry of Preaching	A Ministry of Multiplication
Deliverance	Parables	Disciples

Your Daily Walk

There are few forces in the world today that can match the power of the personal testimony...and surprisingly few Christians who have learned to use its awesome power. Have you?

In chapter eight, Jesus casts the demons out of a man from Gadara – a man who, under demonic control, could neither be clothed nor chained. Once delivered, however, the man sits clothed and in his right mind listening hungrily to the words of Jesus. In sheer gratitude the Gadarene asks permission to accompany Jesus, but his request is denied. "Return to thine own house," said Jesus, "and show how great things God hath done unto thee" (8:39). Don't preach a sermon, Jesus said. Just give personal testimony of God at work in your life. And the result? "He went his way, and published throughout the whole city how great things Jesus had done unto him."

Has God made a difference in your life? Then share that testimony with one person today. Firsthand experience with God is too precious to keep to yourself!

Insight: Would the Real Thaddaeus Please Stand Up?

Luke's list of the twelve apostles (6:14-16) agrees with the lists found in Matthew (10:2-4), Mark (3:16-19), and Acts (1:13) – with one exception. Luke speaks of "Judas the brother of James" who is identified in the other lists as Thaddaeus.

February 22

Conduct of the Son of Man

Scripture Reading: Luke 10-12

Heart of the Passage: Luke 10

Overview

As Jesus moves south into the region of Judea, he focuses on the training and commissioning of His disciples. In addition to the Twelve, He now equips and sends 70 others to minister in His name. When they return, Jesus initiates a “postgraduate” program of discipleship covering such topics as prayer, hypocrisy, covetousness, anxiety, watchfulness, and His own approaching death. Along with the training of those sympathetic to the Savior, Luke also records the growing hatred of Jesus’ enemies. When the Pharisees disapprove of Jesus’ apparent disregard for their traditions, He responds with a series of woes against their hypocrisy.

Chapter 10	Chapter 11	Chapter 12
Sending Out the Seventy	Denouncing the Detractors	Training the Twelve
Proclamation	Pharisees	Priorities

Your Daily Walk

Read 10:38-42 and then ask yourself this question: “would an outside observer say my life more closely resembles that of Mary or that of Martha? Why?”

It is natural to admire the person who does so much for God. After all, anyone who can teach a children’s class, sing in the choir, bake a pie for the church potluck, visit shut-ins, and still maintain one’s sanity must be doing something right. Right?

A casual reading of the story of Mary and Martha may give you the impression Mary was lazy and unconcerned, while Martha was industrious and faithful. *But don’t miss Jesus’ evaluation of the situation!* It was Mary, not Martha, whom Jesus praised. Being with Jesus was more important than being “careful and troubled about many things” (10:41).

Are you letting some *good* things crowd out more *important* things? Do you let a TV program crowd out a better book, or even the Good Book? Do you allow a clean house to keep you from pursuing a clean heart before God? Decide to do an *important* task today, even if some *good* ones have to be postponed. Take it from Mary, you won’t really miss a thing!

Insight: Pinpointing a Popular Parable

The much-loved parable of the Good Samaritan, written as only a doctor could describe it, is found here...and nowhere else!

February 23

Comparison by the Son of Man

Scripture Reading: Luke 13-15

Heart of the Passage: Luke 14:25-35; 15

Overview

Teaching that is plain and to the point is bound to produce some enemies, and Christ's teaching is no exception. His sermons are seldom veiled, and His purpose is never simply to make truth comfortable or palatable. Consider these pointed statements:

“Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish” (13:3,5).

“Go ye, and tell that fox (Herod)...” (13:32).

“Whosoever exalteth himself shall be abased” (14:11).

“Whosoever...forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my disciple” (14:33).

But there is a tender side to Christ's teaching as well. The love of the Savior for lost sinners permeates His words. Three times in chapter 15 He illustrates the truth that there is joy in heaven over one sinner who repents.

Chapter 13	Chapter 14	Chapter 15
Admonitions from the Son of Man Concerning...		
God's Kingdom	God's Invitation	God's Love
"Enter!"	"Come!"	"Return!"

Your Daily Walk

Passers-by admiring the latest in boating equipment are confronted by an enormous, sleek, shiny new yacht with these words stenciled on the bow: "If you have to ask how much it costs, you can't afford it!" They are being admonished to count the cost.

Two army generals confront one another, with their respective troops standing toe to toe on the battlefield. The generals sit down over a cup of coffee, study each other's strengths and weaknesses, and resolve their conflict without firing a shot! Again, they are counting the cost rather than engaging in a hopeless battle.

Discipleship is costly. It means rearranged priorities, inconvenience, expense, personal sacrifice. Read 14:25-35 carefully. Then count the cost in your own personal walk with the Lord. What are you willing to give up in order to put Christ first?

Insight: Three Parables, One Point (Chapter 15)

1	The Lost Sheep	7	8	The Lost Coin	10	11	The Lost Son	32
"The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost" (19:10)								

February 24/25

Counsel from the Son of Man

Scripture Reading: Luke 16-18
Heart of the Passage: Luke 16:1-17; 17:7-19

Overview

Although Luke the physician frequently mentions ministries of healing, the focus of his narrative shifts to Christ's teaching and preaching in the final days of His life. The curriculum is varied in its scope and practical in its purpose, covering such subjects as wealth and its proper use; meekness, faithfulness, thankfulness, and watchfulness in the life of a disciple; proper priorities as illustrated in the rich young ruler (who did not have them) and blind Bartimaeus (who did).

Chapter 16	Chapter 17	Chapter 18
Counsel about Silver	Counsel about Service	Counsel about Setting Priorities
Use it Wisely	Give it Freely	Pick Them Properly

Your Daily Walk

Few parental tasks are as challenging as that of teaching your children to say "Thank you." In spite of your best intentions, you will soon discover that *ingratitude* and *thanklessness* come naturally, rather than their counterparts. It is the rare child indeed who regularly and spontaneously says "Thank you!" after enjoying an act of kindness.

Parents, take heart! If it is any consolation, the problem is at least as old as the book of Luke. In 17:11-19 Jesus heals ten lepers of their horrible disease. But upon finding themselves cleansed, only one returns to offer thanks and worship. The brief episode ends with this haunting question: "Were there not ten cleansed? But *where are the nine?*" (17:17). It's a question worth asking yourself today.

When was the last time you told your spouse...your children...your minister...or your God "thank you" for a blessing that has recently come into your life? Make today an unscheduled Thanksgiving Day at your house. You don't need turkey and dressing to say thanks to those you love.

Insight: Plenty of Priests in the Family of God

Next month you will read in Acts 6:7 that "a great company of the priests were (becoming) obedient to the faith." Such a "priestly revival" is doubly amazing in view of the high priest's role in masterminding Jesus' death. Why were the priests such a responsive group? Perhaps in part because of the numerous lepers which Jesus healed and sent their way (Luke 17:14)! In the same way, God can use your testimony of a changed life to bring others to Himself...if you'll let Him.

February 26

Conflict over the Son of Man

Scripture Reading: Luke 19-21

Heart of the Passage: Luke 19:1-27; 20:9-18

Overview

In today's section Jesus visits Jericho – the previously destroyed and accursed city – and His acceptance there is a pivotal incident in the gospel of Luke. It provides the context for 19:10, the theme of Luke's gospel and an illustration in miniature of the whole course of Jesus' earthly life. Continuing on to Jerusalem, Jesus is met by the festal crowds who hail His arrival. But even as He enters the city in triumph, Jesus' opponents are plotting His speedy and permanent exit.

Chapter 19	Chapter 20	Chapter 21
Acclamation in the Streets	Confrontation in the Temple	Predictions of the Future
Coming King	Coming Death	Coming Destruction

Your Daily Walk

Jot down the first three names that come to mind in response to the following question: *Who would you definitely not want to receive dinner invitation from?* Now examine your answers. Why did you pick those three individuals? What made them particularly undesirable as dining partners? (Caution: Your answers are being recorded by hidden camera and may appear in the next month's *Daily Walk*!)

Luke 19 records the story of Jesus dining at home of an "undesirable," a man who despised and spurned by his fellow Jews. Zaccheus was a publican, a man who had purchased from the Romans the right to tax his own countrymen. Publicans were viewed as thieves and traitors – and with good reason. They were free to stop people at will, set up roadside "taxation booths" on a moment's notice, and assess taxes as they saw fit. Little wonder public opinion was dismayed when Jesus accepted Zaccheus' invitation to dinner.

Throughout His earthly ministry Jesus associated Himself with "questionable" types: adulterers, tax collectors, the sick, poor, and disadvantaged. Why? That He might "seek and...save that which was lost" (19:10). Have you developed that habit yet? Invite someone over for dinner this week...someone you might not normally be attracted to, but who needs a listening ear and a loving friend.



Food for Thought (#43)

*"For the Son of man is come to seek
and to save that which was lost"*
(Luke 19:10).

February 27

Crucifixion of the Son of Man

Scripture Reading: Luke 22-24

Heart of the Passage: Luke 24

Overview

With his typical attention to detail, Luke now provides a full account of the arrest, trial, and crucifixion of the Son of man. In graphic word pictures Luke describes the diabolical plot of Judas, the warm fellowship of the Last Supper, the mental anguish at Gethsemane, the tragic denial by Peter, the miscarriage of justice at the trials, and the brutal agony of the Roman execution. But the dark days in Jerusalem give way to the brilliant dawning of the resurrection morning when angels ask the perplexed followers of Jesus, "Why seek ye the living among the dead?" (24:5). Luke concludes his account with Jesus' post-resurrection appearances and His ascension back into heaven.

Chapter 22	Chapter 23	Chapter 24
The Jewish Trial	The Roman Trial	The Divine Verdict
Betrayed	Crucified	Resurrected

Your Daily Walk

Today, instead of focusing upon a particular need in your life and how a principle from God's Word can help you meet that need, simply meditate upon your wonderful Savior. Rehearse in your mind the events of that last dramatic day in Jesus' life, the day in which He prayed and was betrayed...was tried and denied...was crucified and buried. Ponder the pain He suffered for you. Relive the death He died. And rejoice with those early disciples at the glorious news, "He is not here, but is risen" (24:6). Then close your time of worship by reading prayerfully the words of one or more of the following hymns (the first line is given if different from the title):

He Lives ("I serve a risen Savior, He's in the world today...")
Hallelujah, What a Savior ("Man of Sorrows! what a name...")
Christ Arose ("Low in the grave He lay...")
Crown Him with Many Crowns
At the Cross ("Alas, and did my Savior bleed...")
O Sacred Head, Now Wounded
When I Survey the Wondrous Cross
Christ the Lord is Risen Today

Insight: Daily Dividends from a Risen Savior (24:52,53)

Having trouble worshiping, enjoying, or praising God? The disciples didn't...once they saw their risen, ascended Savior!

John

Even though the book of John covers the same basic outline of Jesus' life as the other three gospels, it displays marked differences in content and viewpoint. John highlights many encounters with the Son of God that are found nowhere else: the miracle at Cana, the visit by Nicodemus, the Samaritan woman at the well, the lame man at the pool of Bethesda, the man born blind, the beloved Lazarus. Why this selectivity? "These are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ" (20:31)

Focus	Ministry to Many								Ministry to Few			
Divisions	Manifestation of the Son of God		Ministry to Individuals by the Son of God		Ministry to the Multitudes by the Son of God		Mounting Anger toward the son of God		Ministry to the Disciples by the Son of God		Manifestation of the Resurrected Son of God	
	1	2	3	5	6	8	9	12	13	17	18	21
Topics	Signs								Sermons		Sacrifice	
	Public Ministry								Private Ministry		Paschal Ministry	
Place	Galilee & Judea								Jerusalem			
Time	About 3½ Years								Only a Few Days			

February 28

Manifestation of the Son of God

Scripture Reading: John 1,2
Heart of the Passage: John 1:1-18; 2:13-25

Overview

The opening of John's gospel makes it clear he is giving a different perspective on the life and ministry of Jesus Christ than the other three gospel writers. John begins with the pre-existence and deity of the Word, the One who became flesh to show God to man and to fulfil God's promises of a Messiah to Israel. Proclaiming the identity of Jesus as the Word is the ministry of John the Baptist, who directs his disciples to become Jesus' first followers. At a wedding in Cana, Jesus demonstrates His miraculous power for the first time. Later in Jerusalem, His zeal for His father's house causes Him to overturn the status quo, an act which forces an early confrontation over His claims.

Chapter 1								Chapter 2	
The Identity of the Son of God								The Authority	
1	Affirmed	18	19	Proclaimed	34	35	Acknowledged	51	of the Son of God
By God		By John			By Disciples			Over Nature	

Your Daily Walk

Turn to Acts 1:13. There you will find the names of 11 of the 12 disciples of Jesus. Glance down the list and see if can recall once significant fact about each man. (For example, *Peter* – walked on the water, etc.) Which disciples come up “anonymous” in your mind?

Chances are, Andrew fits that category. Although he was one of the 12 disciples, he lived his life in the shadow of his brother Peter. Outside of John's gospel he is mentioned only in the lists of the apostles. Like you, Andrew was an ordinary and little-known person. And yet, Andrew was distinctive in at least one way: *he was constantly bringing people to Jesus*. First his brother (1:40-42), and later a little boy (6:8,9) came to the Savior because of Andrew's invitation.

“Witnessing for Christ” may sound like a scary assignment. But could you “invite” another person to meet a friend who has changed your life? Take the initiative this week to invite a neighbor to go to church with you on Sunday. You'll both be glad you did!

Insight: A Handy Outline in a Handy Place

Prologue	Description	Expanded in...
1:1-4	Revelation of the Son of God	1:19-6:71
1:5-11	Rejection of the Son of God	7:1-12:50
1:12-18	Acceptance of the Son of God	13:1-21:25

February 29

Ministry to Individual by the Son of God

Scripture Reading: John 3-5

Heart of the Passage: John 3:1-21; 4:1-39

Overview

Today's section centers around Jesus' encounters with three individuals: Nicodemus, the Samaritan woman at the well, and the paralyzed man at the pool of Bethesda. In each case, Christ's dealings with the individual have far-reaching impact on others as well. His contact with the Samaritan woman (chapter 4) leads to the evangelization of the town of Sychar. The healing of the lame man (chapter 5) produces an angry confrontation with Jew intent on killing Jesus. Christ's night visit from Nicodemus (chapter 3) provides the context for one of the most beloved verses in all Scripture: John 3:16 – "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son..."

Chapter 3	Chapter 4	Chapter 5
Life for the Seeker	Cleansing for the Sinner	Healing for the Sick
Nicodemus	Samaritan Woman	Paralyzed Man

Your Daily Walk

Have you ever used a freeway "on-ramp"? (If you've ever tried to enter a freeway at rush hour, you perhaps have felt like you *lived* on an on-ramp!) Though the on-ramp is not technically part of the freeway itself, without it the freeway would be virtually useless. On-ramps get you onto the freeway. They provide the access, the entrance, the "front door" to the highway.

Now think of the Gospel of Jesus Christ as a freeway. How are you at finding "on-ramps" to share that good news with others? In each of the three chapters you will read today, Jesus uses an "on-ramp" to open a door of opportunity for His listener to hear and receive the Gospel. Can you discover the "on-ramps" Jesus used? And can you suggest one you might use with a friend or fellow worker today?

Insight: Tracing the Roots of the Samaritans

The Samaritans were "a mixed race with a heathen core" resulting from the intermarriage of Jews with the pagan colonists which the Assyrians used to repopulate the Northern Kingdom after its dispersal in 722 B.C. Racial hatred ensued, causing the Samaritans to form their own national and religious identity, complete with their own holy mountain and sacred writings. Though "off-limits" to devout Jews, Jesus and His disciples passes through Samaria in order to keep a divine appointment (4:4).

March 1

Ministry to the Multitudes by the Son of God

Scripture Reading: John 6-8
Heart of the Passage: John 6:1-7:8

Overview

John relates his record of Jesus' life and ministry to the major feasts of the Jews. The feeding of the 5,000 and Jesus' discourse on the true bread of life take place during the Passover (6:4). The discourses of chapters 7 and 8 are given during Jesus' visit to Jerusalem for the Feast of Tabernacles (7:2,10). Though in each case it is a time for feasting, clearly the temperament of the Jewish leaders is more akin to *murder* than to *merriment* as they take up stones to stone Christ (8:59).

Chapter 6	Chapter 7	Chapter 8
The Bread of Life	The Water of Life	The Light of the World
Feast of Passover	Feast of Tabernacles	

Your Daily Walk

Do you stand alone in your family circle as a Christian? And do you find your home environment hard on your spiritual life and growth? Then take heart. The Lord Jesus faced the same discouraging problem in His earthly family (7:5). His mother Mary, of course, knew her Son's true identity. But none of His brothers believed Him to be the Messiah until after His resurrection. Not only were they unbelieving, but they made fun of His claims and ministry.

The way Jesus dealt with unbelief and sarcasm in His family will work for you, too. First, *He ignored their taunts*. Do not respond to scoffing either in anger or rebuttal. Response is what the scoffers want. It only feeds the fire of antagonism. Second, Jesus *quietly and consistently continued His ministry for God*. Do not be intimidated by unbelieving family members. Ask God to enable you to be faithful to Him, and to live a consistent, vibrant Christian life before them as witness. Remember, you may be the only "Bible" your unsaved family member will ever "read." Third, Jesus *drew strength and encouragement from other believers* (Matthew 12:46-50). Can you hope to grow spiritually without doing the same? Schedule a time of prayer with one of your brothers or sisters in Christ. You need it – and so do they!

Insight: "I AM" in the Old, "I AM" in the New

In Exodus 3:14 God reveals His name to Moses as "I AM", the self-existent, all-sufficient God. The claims of Jesus in today's section (6:35,48; 8:12) make it clear He is identifying Himself as the same Person – a claim which the Jewish leaders understand all too clearly.

March 2/3

Mounting Anger toward the Son of God

Scripture Reading: John 9-12

Heart of the Passage: John 10:1-11; 11:1-12:11

Overview

Continuing His ministry in Jerusalem following the Feast of Tabernacles, Jesus first gives physical sight to a blind man, then opens spiritual eyes as well. This leads to a discussion with the Jews about "the blind leading the blind," and the importance of a Shepherd who both *guides* and *guards* His sheep. Jesus' seventh and climactic miracle takes place in Bethany, where He raises Lazarus from the dead. Though Bethany is a stir with wonderment and belief, from this point on Jesus is a marked man (11:53), His every step leading closer to the cross.

Chapter 9	Chapter 10	Chapter 11	Chapter 12
"I Am the Light"	"I Am the Door"	"I Am the Resurrection"	"Here Comes the King"
Blind Man	Lost Sheep	Lazarus	Last Week

Your Daily Walk

Mary of Bethany is a woman every Christian should emulate. She is mentioned three separate times in the gospels, and each time she is described as being at the feet of Jesus (Luke 10:39; John 11:32; 12:3). In this position she worshipped Him, received instruction from Him, and experienced His comfort in the midst of sorrow. You cannot literally take the position of Mary, but in attitude you can. It is the position of submission and dependence.

Mary also was willing to sacrifice her most precious and costly possession in an act of devotion to Jesus. The alabaster jar of spikenard ointment was worth hundreds of dollars by today's standards. It may well have been her dowry in anticipation of a wedding proposal. Yet she poured it over the feet of Jesus in an offering of love.

Perhaps you are wondering, "What do I have that I can give to Jesus as an act of worship?" The most precious thing you possess is yourself. If you have never done so before, assume the posture of Mary as you read prayerfully Romans 12:1 and make it your sacrificial offering today. It's an act of worship God never grows tired of receiving.

Insight: The Door-less Door of the Sheep (10:7)

In ancient times the sheepfold was a circular stone corral with a single narrow opening. After the sheep were inside, the shepherd would lie down across the opening, using his own body to form the gate or "door" of the sheepfold. Nothing could enter or leave the fold without the shepherd knowing about it.

March 4

Ministry to the Disciples by the Son of God

Scripture Reading: John 13-17

Heart of the Passage: John 14,17

Overview

Today's section, traditionally called the Upper Room Discourse, actually takes place partly in the upper room (chapters 13,14) and partly in an unspecified location (chapters 15-17; see 14:31). These verses constitute Jesus' final instructions to His disciples before His death. In them you will read of the importance of a servant's heart, the necessity of Christ's return to heaven, and the provision of the Holy Spirit in Christ's absence. There are many spiritual insights yet to be grasped by the disciples-a realization which drives Christ to His knees as He prays for His followers both present and future.

Chapter 13	Chapter 14,15	Chapter 16	Chapter 17
Instructions to the Disciples Regarding...			Intercession for the Disciples
Footwashing	Fruit-bearing	Future Events	
Talking to the Disciples			Talking to God

Your Daily Walk

A sermon needn't be long to be powerful. Here is one of the most thought-provoking sermons-in-a-sentence you will ever read:

"If I could hear Christ praying for me in the next room, I would not fear a million enemies. Yet distance makes no difference. He is praying for me" (Robert Murray McChesney).

In John chapter 17, Jesus Christ prayed fervently and specifically for His disciples - those He would leave behind to continue the work in His absence. And that means He was praying for you. Read the chapter that way. Insert your name where it belongs, beginning with verse 6: "I have manifested thy name unto _____ which thou gavest me out of the world: _____ is thine, and thou gavest _____ to me; and _____ has kept thy word ... I pray for _____ :I pray not for the world, but for _____ which thou hast given me, for _____ is thine ... And now I am no more in the world, but _____ is in the world . . . I pray not that thou shouldst take _____ out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep _____ from the evil ... "

Insight: Mission Accomplished...Cross Yet to Come

In His prayer to God the Father, Jesus reported, "I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do" (17:4). Though Jesus' death was still a day away, victory was certain as the Savior bathed each step to the cross in prayer. You can face today with confidence, too!

March 5

Manifestation of the Resurrected Son of God

Scripture Reading: John 18-21

Heart of the Passage: John 20,21

Overview

After reading the closing events of Christ's life in each of the other three gospels, you may be tempted to skim John's account. But don't! Put yourself in the sandals of the key individuals in the narrative, and feel the emotions as the crucifixion unfolds: Judas' disillusionment...Peter's denial...Pilate's concession...the crowd's frenzied screams... the rugged cross ... the nail-pierced hands... the bleeding side ... the hurried burial. Experience with the women the shock of finding the tomb empty. Follow Thomas' transformation from a doubting disciple to a devoted believer. Listen as Peter receives his marching orders-to feed God's flock until the Shepherd returns.

Chapter 18	Chapter 19	Chapter 20,21	
Arrest and Trials	Crucifixion and Burial	Disappearance of the Corpse 20:1 20:10	Appearance of the Christ 20:11 21:25
The Crucified King		The Risen Savior	

Your Daily Walk

Read John 20:30,31 carefully to refresh your memory regarding John's purpose in writing. He is not merely trying to satisfy your curiosity about the historical person of Christ, or fill your head with little-known facts about Him, or teach you all the events from Bethlehem to Calvary in chronological order. Rather, John is seeking to move you to a point of commitment. Unless Jesus Christ has invaded your life, you are lost in your sins: without God, without life, without hope of heaven.

Becoming a Christian is not simply joining a church, or signing a card, or walking an aisle, though these can be expressions of your desire to become a Christian. Rather, it is believing on Jesus Christ, God's Son, to solve your sin problem. It is trusting Him to do something for you that you cannot do yourself. Have you done that? If not, what better way to close your reading of the Gospels than by opening your heart to the Savior of which those Gospels speak: Jesus Christ.



Take the Gospel with You (#44)

*"These are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing ye might have life through his name"
(John 20:31).*

***This devotional guide is reprinted from the Daily Walk 1983 with permission from Walk Thru the Bible Ministries.**