

# Daily God Walk Life of Christ

**Ministry - 4**

A scenic garden with a stone fountain, colorful flowers, and a tree. The fountain is a three-tiered stone structure with a bird sculpture on top. The garden is filled with various flowers, including yellow, orange, pink, and white blooms. A large tree with a thick trunk and a dense canopy of green leaves stands in the background. The sky is blue with some light clouds. A stone wall and a metal railing are visible in the distance.

**Daily God Walk**  
**Life of Christ**

**His Ministry - 4**

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All Scripture quotations are taken from the New International  
Version (NIV). All other translations used will be credited using these  
abbreviations:

(KJV) – King James Version  
(NKJV) – New King James Version  
(TLB) – The Living Bible  
(TM) – The Message

New Hope Ministry Resources  
PO Box 852  
Lucerne, CA 95458  
707-739=7043  
[www.nhmresources.org](http://www.nhmresources.org)  
[paul@nhmresources.org](mailto:paul@nhmresources.org)

# 30 Scripture-based Prayers for Your Pastor

By Terry Teykl (Taken from <http://prayerleader.com>)

Pastors are under attack today as never before. That is why it is so important to hold them up in prayer. But unless they have requests or are aware of specific needs their pastors have, many people do not know what to pray on a regular basis for them.

Here are some sample Scripture-based prayers. Each one was written with a specific need in mind. You can use them one at a time, or pray all of them in the order you feel is best for the spiritual needs of your pastor. These prayers are simply models and suggestions. Use them to get started or to get ideas about what to pray.

## Sample Prayers

I thank You, Father, that Your eyes are on my shepherd and Your ears are attentive to my pastor's prayers and Your face is against those who plot evil against my pastor (1 Pet. 3:12). For I know that in all things You work for the good of \_\_\_\_\_ (insert your pastor's name) who loves You (Ro. 8:28). Who can accuse this pastor who is daily interceded for by Christ Jesus? (Ro. 8:33-34). Therefore, in all things my pastor is more than a conqueror (Ro. 8:37). Thank You, God.

Lord, I pray for discernment in exposing any schemes of the enemy against my pastor. Show our congregation how to pray against all powers of this dark world and the spiritual forces of darkness in heavenly realms. And, Lord, protect us as we wage warfare on behalf of our pastor (Eph. 6:11-12).

Father, I thank You that no weapons formed against my pastor will prosper. Every tongue raised against my shepherd will be cast down. Rumors and gossip will be turned aside. For \_\_\_\_\_ will be still before the Lord and wait on You. My pastor will dwell in the shadow of the Most High God and will be delivered from terror, darts of doubt, and diseases (Ps. 91:5-6). Set Your angels about my pastor (Ps. 91:11) and no power of the enemy shall harm \_\_\_\_\_ (Lk. 10:19). Thank God forevermore!

Lord, let \_\_\_\_\_ have a discerning mind to prioritize the precious minutes in the day. Let my pastor discern what is most important and be guarded against the tyranny of the urgent (2 Cor. 11:14, 1 Jn. 4:1).

Father, allow my pastor to glory only in the cross (Gal. 6:14). Keep my pastor from pride and pity. Let the cross be his reason for ministry.

Renew my pastor in the Holy Spirit. Let my pastor wait and mount up with wings (Is. 40:27-31). Quicken my shepherd's body with the Holy Spirit (Ro. 8:11). Renew \_\_\_\_\_'s vision and confidence (1 Jn. 5:13-14).

Jesus keep my pastor holy in every way (1 Pet. 1:16). Protect my shepherd from seducing spirits especially when he is tired and hard-pressed. Give \_\_\_\_\_ comrades to help protect him/her, and to share with in personal holiness (Jas. 4:7). As my pastor draws near to You, draw near to my pastor (Jas. 4:8).

I pray that the eyes of my pastor may be enlightened to know the hope to which we are called and know the riches of our glorious inheritance in the saints. Let my pastor know the incomparable great power which is in us who believe (Eph. 1:18-19). Let \_\_\_\_\_ see the full revelation of Jesus Christ (Gal. 1:12). Place in him/her a desire to know Christ and the power of His resurrection (Phil. 3:10).

Lord, as my shepherd spends quiet time with You, shed Your love abroad in his/her heart. Let my pastor know how much he/she is loved (Ro. 5:5). In Jesus' name let the love of God be my pastor's mainstay in ministry. So be it!

Lord, I lift up the hands of my pastor and his/her family. Place them in the shelter of the Most High to rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, You are their refuge and fortress. You will preserve their family time. You will cover their home. Your faithfulness will meet their financial needs in Christ Jesus (Phil. 4:19). You will command Your angels to guard them as they travel and win the lost. You have said, "I will be with [them] in trouble, I will deliver [them] and honor [them]. With a long life, I will satisfy [them] and show [them] my salvation" (Ps. 91:15-16). In Jesus' name I cancel all assignments of the enemy against them.

In Jesus' name I speak to church hurts, abuse, and ungrateful forces to move. I speak to mountains of criticism and inordinate expectations to be cast into the sea. I speak to stress, excessive phone counseling, and fatigue to be cast into the sea, and I believe every need, vision, and dream of \_\_\_\_\_'s will be completed (Mk. 11:22-24 , Phil. 4:19).

Forgive those who hurt \_\_\_\_\_ and speak against him/her, and may my pastor walk in forgiveness (Eph. 4:32-5:1). Guard my pastor from futile thinking (Eph. 4:17) and a vain imagination. Let every thought be taken captive to obey Christ (2 Cor. 10:3-5).

In Jesus' name I bind the fear of failure and the fear of humankind (Jn. 14:1). Let \_\_\_\_\_'s confidence not be eroded by the daily resistance to the gospel or his/her vision. Allow my pastor to fear God more than people.

Father, heal my shepherd's heart of any grief caused by ministry. Bestow on my pastor a crown of beauty instead

of ashes and anoint him/her with the oil of gladness instead of mourning. Clothe my shepherd with a garment of praise instead of a spirit of depression. I call my pastor an oak of righteousness, a planting of the Lord to display Your splendor (Is. 61:3).

Jesus, You said, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me.... Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you" (Jn. 14:1 , 27). Apply these promises to \_\_\_\_\_. Let my pastor know the plans You have for him/her, plans to prosper, plans to give hope and a future (Jer. 29:11).

Keep my pastor in the midst of good and exciting worship. Keep my pastor from the traditions of men and religion which hold the form of godliness, but deny its power (2 Tim. 3:5). Give \_\_\_\_\_ a vision of heaven (Isaiah 6, Revelation 4).

With my shield of faith I cover my shepherd's mind to quench all flaming darts of doubt or vain imagination or mental distractions (Eph. 6:16, Col. 2:6-8). Let the mind of Christ be strong in my pastor (1 Cor. 2:16).

Lord, I stand against the enemies of my pastor's prayer life: "busyness" (Acts 6:2-4), compulsions, compromise (Acts 5), unnecessary phone calls, chronic counselees, fatigue, sleepiness (Mt. 26:41), appetites, television, late meetings, over-commitments, and doubt. Let nothing hinder \_\_\_\_\_'s time with You. Let my pastor rise up to seek You (Mk. 1:35), pray with other pastors (Acts 1:14), and pray without ceasing (1 Thess. 5:17). Give my pastor the time, the desire, and the place to pray (Acts 16:16). I rebuke in the name of Jesus any distractions from my pastor's devotional life.

Send the spirit of prayer upon \_\_\_\_\_ (Acts 1:8, Ro. 8:26). Send others to join us in praying for our pastor (1 Tim. 2:1-8).

God, I say that \_\_\_\_\_ will stand firm. Nothing will move my pastor (1 Cor. 15:58). May my pastor always give himself/herself fully to Your work because my pastor's labor is not in vain.

Lord, keep my pastor from comparing himself/herself with other pastors, churches, or salary packages. Guard my pastor's heart from competition and unhealthy ambitions (2 Cor. 10:18). Deliver \_\_\_\_\_ from the numbers trap, and give my pastor a genuine concern for lost souls (Lk. 19:10). Lord, You advance my pastor. Let my pastor not be caught up in any political quicksand; keep only Jacob's ladder, not a career ladder, before my pastor (Gen. 28:12).

Bless my pastor with rich study time (Acts 6:4, 2 Tim. 2:15).

As \_\_\_\_\_ preaches, let him/her proclaim Jesus Christ (Col. 1:28). Let my pastor's preaching be in the energy of the Holy Spirit.

Lord, by Your Holy Spirit, anoint \_\_\_\_\_ to preach, and bring apostolic results (Acts 2:37). As my pastor speaks the Word, let signs and wonders follow confirming it (Mk. 16:20). Let the sick be healed; let the oppressed be set free. Anoint \_\_\_\_\_ with the truth (Mt. 16:17). Let people be cut to the heart and accept Jesus Christ.

Lord, as You have promised, grant my beloved shepherd lasting fruit (Mal. 3:11, Jn. 15:16). Let my pastor's converts become disciples who in turn disciple. Bless my pastor with disciples who grow in the grace and knowledge of Jesus Christ.

Lord, keep my pastor in the fear of God. Let my pastor not fear people (Prov. 19:23). Give \_\_\_\_\_ boldness to confront sin and church controllers. Honor my pastor's stand for You. Come to my pastor's rescue. I claim Psalm 35 for my shepherd.



○ Lord, take my pastor's hand so that he/she will not fear. Lead my pastor through difficult times. Let my pastor know that You are near and that You are his/her God. My pastor will not be dismayed. You will strengthen my pastor and help and uphold him/her with Your righteous right hand (Is. 41:10).

○ God, allow \_\_\_\_\_ to enter Your rest (Hebrews 4, Mt. 11:28). Put Your yoke on my pastor. When my pastor is heavily laden or burdened, may he/she find comfort and peace in You, refreshed and renewed by Your power in every aspect of his/her life.

Lord, make my pastor strong and filled with courage for every task (Joshua 1). Let my pastor lead us to inherit our city for You. Thank You for being with \_\_\_\_\_.

In Jesus' name, \_\_\_\_\_ shall fight the good fight of faith, fleeing from evil to God by pursuing righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance, and gentleness (1 Tim. 6:12). I praise You, Lord, that You have taken hold of this special shepherd in the personal experience of eternal life.

Expect, Stand, Yield

Finally, expect all that you have prayed, stand behind your pastor, girding him or her in prayer, and yield to the Spirit for other areas of prayer and intercession!

## Using Daily God Walk to Lead A Small Group

We publish the Daily God Walk as a tool for deepening your walk with God and is a useful tool for those who want to use this devotional for leading small groups.

There are four sections at the end of each devotion: Principle, Affirmation, Reflection, and My Thoughts. below is an explanation of how to use each of them in a small group discussion.

**Message:** This is a principle pulled out of the devotion for the day. Ask the group to express how they can see this principle in the devotion then use that to kick off the discussion.

**Affirmation:** The affirmation is an example of how we can begin to internalize the principle of the devotion. We can repeat the affirmation in a prayer making it personal. We can also just repeat it throughout the day while giving thought to the principle.

**Reflection:** These statements and questions are designed to help guide discussion and make application of the devotion in the daily life of the participant.

**My Thoughts:** This section is just blank lines. Encourage your group to "Journal" their thoughts on the devotion each day. By writing out the thoughts that come from the devotion and the discussion on the devotion the individuals will find that their walk of faith is enhanced.

We usually only make it through one or two of the devotions at one group setting, but it is good to encourage the group to work through the each daily devotion at home. Get more information on how to use this devotional in small groups:

[www.dailygodwalk.org/small-groups](http://www.dailygodwalk.org/small-groups)

Day One

## *There is a Time to Rest*

The apostles gathered around Jesus and reported to him all they had done and taught. Then, because so many people were coming and going that they did not even have a chance to eat, he said to them, "Come with me by yourselves to a quiet place and get some rest."

- Mark 6:30-31

When a person is involved in ministry there seems to be no stopping place. There is always something else which needs to be done and there is never enough help. And besides that, ministry is so fulfilling it can almost become addictive.

Jesus realized this when his disciples returned from their short missionary journey into their homeland. They had healed the sick and cast out demons as they proclaimed the message of the kingdom. They were excited about all that had happened and came to give Jesus a report. But he could tell they were getting tired.

Their reputation was growing along with the popularity of Jesus among the people and everywhere they went people were constantly coming and going. In fact, Jesus observed that they were giving so much attention to the people around them that they hadn't even taken the time to eat or rest.

Then Jesus gave an order which gives insight to the principle of rest in ministry. He saw the tiredness in his disciples and he knew that prolonged physical tiredness leads to emotional and spiritual weariness and he called them away to rest.

Jesus knew that their effect in the kingdom would be limited if they were tired and weary so he called his

disciples aside to rest. There are pastors and ministry leaders that have left serving in the ministry because they have grown too weary; they had given so much there was nothing left to give.

We are not called to kill ourselves for Christ, we are called to live for him. If we aren't conscious of our need for rest and respite we will work ourselves into a place where we are ineffective in the kingdom, with our family and with other relationships.

**Prayer:** Lord, give me the wisdom to know when it's time to stop and give me the grace to allow you to give me rest. In Jesus name. Amen.

**Message:** We are not called to kill ourselves for Christ, we are called to live for him. If we aren't conscious of our need for rest and respite we will work ourselves into a place where we are ineffective in the kingdom, with our family and with other relationships.

**Affirmation:** I will follow the example given us by Christ and set aside times for rest and refreshing so that I will not become weary in doing the work of the kingdom.

**Reflection:** The greatest cause of "burn out" is not the task but the way a person goes about the task. Question: How does a person eat an elephant? Answer: One bite at a time. How does a person complete a great task? By doing one small task at a time. Think about it.

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Two

*The People Were Sheep  
Looking For a Shepherd*

Many who saw them leaving recognized them and ran on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them. When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things. – Mark 6:33-35

I'll never forget the first time I went to Haiti. As we walked out of the airport there were many people, it seemed like hundreds, leaning against the railings, stretching their hands out asking for help. A person cannot look upon a scene like that without being moved by compassion.

These were people who had little or no hope of anything changing in their lives. They were victims of ineffective government, an economy that was in disarray, and hunger affected all of them. They were like the people Jesus saw who were like sheep without a shepherd.

The people of Jesus time were in need of something they could believe in. They followed him and his disciples from place to place trying to find some kind of hope for their future. Jesus saw them as wandering sheep needing a shepherd to be their protector and guide.

The world is not much different today. We keep getting reports that the confidence of the citizenry in government is at an all time low. The news about the economy is a mixed bag with some people saying it's getting better and some saying it's going to get worse.

People are starting to fear that their future is not very secure. The things they had put their hope in are

crumbling and their fear is that when needed most there will be no resources for them.

That is the crowd Jesus faced and that is the crowd we face today. Just as the crowd is the same so Jesus is the same. He offers himself as the good shepherd who will guide the sheep.

Jesus sees the crowd and he has compassion on them. Jesus sees you, an individual, and he has compassion on you. He knows your fears and concerns. He knows your disappointments and heartaches. He knows you and he loves you. He wants to be your shepherd guide.

**Prayer:** Thank you Lord for being my shepherd guide. Amen.

**Message:** Jesus sees you, an individual, and he has compassion on you. He knows your fears and concerns. He knows your disappointments and heartaches. He knows you and he loves you. He wants to be your shepherd guide.

**Affirmation:** Jesus is my shepherd guide. He knows my every need and is there to guide me through each one.

**Reflection:** Jesus brought hope to those who had little or no hope. What was the hope Jesus offered? Our Scripture passage for this devotion says, "So he began teaching them many things." What were some of things he taught them?

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Three

## *Jesus Feeds the Hungry Crowd*

Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to his disciples to set before the people. He also divided the two fish among them all. They ate and were satisfied... The number of the men who had eaten was 5000. - Mark 6:44

There are a couple aspects to this story that need to be observed. First, the disciples were thinking of the people and told Jesus that it was growing late and the people should be sent home to eat and rest (v35-36). They were thinking of the people, but they were thinking like we humans think - Jesus was thinking like God thinks.

Jesus answered them, "You give them something to eat" (v37). That got their attention and, as humans will think they said, "That would take eight months of a man's wages. Are we to go and spend that much on bread and give it to them to eat?" (v37). Again, they were thinking like men and Jesus was thinking like God.

He asked them what they had to eat among themselves. Now they are starting to worry. It looks like he is going to ask them to give up their dinner for the crowd. They were hungry too.

One seldom noticed aspect of this story is that when we are faced with the circumstances of life we tend to begin thinking of ways we can solve the problem. When we finally exhaust all of our resources and the problem still persists we simply say, "It must be the Lord's will," and give up. Jesus is trying to set another example for us.

When we face an impossible situation we are to expect that the God of the impossible is going to intercede. Who

ever heard of feeding 5000 people with just 5 loaves and 2 fish, but Jesus did it. We need to have the kind of faith that looks at the circumstances and declare that Jesus is Lord over every adverse circumstance and that he loves us enough to intercede.

Great faith is required to trust him when all of our instincts say it's not going to happen. God will honor the faith which holds on to his promise to be near and he will answer our call.

**Prayer:** Lord, grant me the faith to believe you for the miracle I need and not to think like humans think. In Jesus name, amen.

**Message:** Great faith is required to trust God when all of our instincts say it's not going to happen. God will honor the faith which holds on to his promise to be near and he will answer our call.

**Affirmation:** I have seen the way Jesus has answered the needs of others miraculously and I trust him to answer my needs as well.

**Reflection:** Have you given much thought to the reasons why we don't tend to trust God for the easy stuff and really only turn to him for help when we have exhausted all human possibilities? What do you suppose our faith walk would look like if we truly trusted him for our daily bread as well as trusting him to move mountains?

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Four

## *We Need Times of Rest and Solitude*

Immediately Jesus made his disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to Bethsaida, while he dismissed the crowd. After leaving them, he went up on a mountain to pray. - Mark 6:45-46

Earlier, when the disciples returned from their mission trip fired up with enthusiasm Jesus told them they needed to get away to rest. He was guarding their emotional well being as well as calling them to solitude and prayer.

They weren't able to rest because when they arrived at the place of rest the people who saw where they were going ran fast and beat them there. Moved with compassion they ministered among the people with Jesus until it was late in the day. Then the miracle of the loaves and fishes was performed and all were fed.

After the feeding Jesus immediately sent the disciples away on a boat. He knew they needed rest so he sent them away while he dismissed the crowd. Jesus knew they needed the rest and he needed to get away for his "spiritual" rest also.

There are several times recorded in the gospels when Jesus got away to pray. It was usually on a mountain and he usually prayed in solitude. Have you ever wondered why Jesus needed to pray? If in fact he was God, then why would he need to pray? Yes, he was God, but he was God robed in flesh. As a human he had all the emotional and spiritual needs that humans have. As a human he needed to pray.

The message Jesus seems to be conveying in this episode is that as humans we need times of rest and that is why he sent the disciples away in a boat. He is also

saying that as citizens of the kingdom and servants of the king we need spiritual refreshing to guard against emotional and spiritual weariness. We need physical rest and we need spiritual refreshing. We need to pray.

If you do not have a time and a place to shut yourself away for spiritual refreshing I challenge you to do so. You will find the world much less troublesome and the walk of faith much easier when you pray.

**Prayer:** Lord, grant me the wisdom to know when I need to rest and help me to establish a regular pattern prayer. In Jesus name, amen.

**Message:** As citizens of the kingdom and servants of the king we need spiritual refreshing to guard against emotional and spiritual weariness. We need physical rest and we need spiritual refreshing. We need to pray.

**Affirmation:** I am committed to guarding myself against spiritual weariness by making time for periods of solitude, prayer and reflection upon the word of God and the teachings of Jesus.

**Reflection:** In another place Jesus made the point that God did not make the Sabbath for himself but for man. God knows we need times of sabbath (rest). Have you established times of rest and refreshing in your life?

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Five

## *Take Courage! Do Not Be Afraid*

During the fourth watch of the night Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake, they were terrified. “It’s a ghost,” they said, and cried out in fear. But Jesus immediately said to them: “Take courage! It is I. Don’t be afraid.” - Matthew 14:25-27

You can almost see the look on the faces of the disciples as they saw the figure of a man walking toward them on the water. With the wind and the waves he probably seemed to hover over the water like one might imagine a ghost would do. It was enough to create a good deal of fear in them.

Most of us have been in a situation where what we saw was not in fact what was there to be seen and our imagination conjured up all kinds of things. Unfamiliar dark rooms are good for giving us some fearful imaginations.

On this night the wind was blowing, perhaps it was also cloudy, and the spray breaking off the wind driven waves made for bad visibility to start with, then they saw this image coming toward them. Was it just their imagination? Was it a ghost?

Then Jesus speaks, “Take courage! It is I.” How often in times of peril have we heard Jesus speak to our inner person, “Don’t be afraid, I am with you. It’s going to be alright.”

I was in a place like that some time ago. The doctor was doing an investigative procedure on my heart because he was convinced that I needed some serious work done. The earlier doctor’s report was causing me to have a few

fearful days, but through it all I knew that Jesus was with me and it was going to be alright.

After the procedure the Doctor's report changed dramatically. He wouldn't have to take the more drastic measures he originally thought and my condition was much improved.

In my storm Jesus came walking on the water and said, "Take courage - it is I; don't be afraid."

Are you struggling? Listen; he is saying, "Do not be afraid, it is I"

**Prayer:** Lord, sometimes I see things that scare me and I need grace to trust you in those scary situations. In Jesus name, amen.

**Message:** During troublesome, when we are seeing things as man sees them and not as God sees, and fear is gripping our hearts, the Lord speaks peace to us saying, "Take courage! It is I. Do not be afraid."

**Affirmation:** I have been through many storms and in each one I sense the presence of the Lord going with me. I will continue to trust him even in the roughest storm because I know he is there.

**Reflection:** How do you handle the storm? Do you draw back in fear? Make a desperate plea for help? Or do you continue on your journey with the confidence that the Lord is there watching and caring for you?

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Six

## *Stepping Out in Faith*

“Lord, if it’s you,” Peter replied, “tell me to come to you on the water.” “Come,” he said. Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus.

- Matthew 14:28-29

I’m not Peter, and I wasn’t in the boat that night, but I may have a little understanding of how Peter may have felt. Many years ago a ministry opportunity was being presented to us. It was a large motel which could be used for transitional housing and ministry to homeless families. The reason it was being offered to us was that the owner was losing it to the bank and we were the last resort if she was going to save it.

The motel was run down and about 80% of the rooms were not able to be used. We had no money and no funding. All of the people we went to for counsel said it was a bad deal, don’t do it. Our attorney said, and I quote, “I wouldn’t touch this deal with a ten foot pole!” In the face of all of that I could hear the Lord saying, as he said to Peter, “Come.”

Against all common sense and good advice, we went ahead with the deal on the motel. The result is that over 400 families were affected and many of those became born again believers. There are leaders in the kingdom today who would not even be in the kingdom had we not responded to the call of Jesus to step out of the boat.

Not everyone hears the voice of the Lord so distinctly and that might be because their call is not so radical. Notice, Peter was the only one who stepped out of the boat. A person should not just step out in an endeavor because it is what they want to do and call it a step of

faith. We can only take a step of faith in response to the voice of the Lord we have heard speaking to our inner person.

I would encourage you to be prepared to step out in faith when God gives you direction; and I would also warn you to be sure it is God you hear and not the desires of your own heart.

God will not call you to failure, but he may call you to a period of hardship while serving him in the kingdom.

**Prayer:** Lord, let me hear your voice and only do what I hear you ask me to do. In Jesus name, amen.

**Message:** I would encourage you to be prepared to step out in faith when God gives you direction; and I would also warn you to be sure it is God you hear and not the desires of your own heart.

**Affirmation:** I have learned that stepping out in faith is more than just having a desire to do a good thing. It is first hearing Jesus say, "Come," then following where he leads.

**Reflection:** Have you ever taken a big step "in faith" only to realize later (after things didn't work out) that you didn't actually hear God say "Come?" It is OK to step out to do something that you know you can do and feel you should do, as long as you are sure God is leading you. Don't take big steps which require you to make major changes without hearing the Lord say, "Come."

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Seven

## *Great Faith Comes From Strong Conviction*

When [Peter] saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!" Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?" - Matthew 14:30-31

Have you wondered how one who has walked with Christ on earth can still not have great faith? Peter had seen the miracles Christ performed and performed miracles himself and yet Jesus said he had little faith. How could that be?

The Greek word translated "little faith" is *oligopistes*. It is the result of combining two other words. The first word is *oligos*, which literally means puny, or small. I like puny best because it carries the connotation of being underdeveloped. The second word is *pistis* which is the word most often translated faith in the New Testament. *Pistis* means a moral conviction, or a conviction of the truth.

When Jesus told Peter he had such little faith he was literally telling him that he had very little conviction concerning the person and purpose of Jesus. Literally, his faith was puny, it was underdeveloped.

Before we chastise Peter for his puny faith, we might take a look in the mirror. We may not have walked on the water, but how many of us have had our faith tested when we thought we were in a good place spiritually and all of a sudden we are hit with an unexpected tragedy, or circumstance we could not avoid.

Puny faith is circumstantial faith. Peter quickly stepped out of the boat (and he is to be commended for doing that - how many of us would step out into deep

water as Peter did?) because he heard Jesus say, “Come.” However, when he saw the waves, a different set of circumstances began to affect him. The waves caught his attention and because his confidence in the Christ was not yet complete, his puny faith failed him.

Great faith comes from great conviction of the truth of Christ.

**Prayer:** Lord, grant me the grace to become convinced that you are greater than the waves of life and strengthen my faith. In Jesus name.

**Message:** Faith and obedience do not prevent the storm and if we do not have a strong conviction of truth the storm will overwhelm us. Great faith comes from great conviction of the truth of Christ.

**Affirmation:** My faith is not in my ability to overcome the storm, neither is it in the hope of God removing the storm. My faith is in the conviction that God will take me through the storm.

**Reflection:** Is your faith *oligopistes*, or is it just *pistes*? Puny faith is underdeveloped faith. It is faith which considers the circumstances rather than the promises of God.

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Eight

*Kingdom Principles Are Validated  
With Miracles*

As soon as they got out of the boat, people recognized Jesus. They ran throughout that whole region and carried the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. And wherever he went – into villages, towns or countryside – they placed the sick in the marketplaces. They begged him to let them touch even the edge of his cloak, and all who touched him were healed. – Mark 6:54-56

The fame of Jesus had spread throughout the region. Whether he was in Jerusalem, Galilee, across the lake in Gennesaret, or wherever he was, people flocked to him because he was known as the miracle worker. In this passage people went throughout the entire region telling everyone to bring their sick and afflicted because Jesus had come to town.

The pattern of his ministry seemed fairly consistent. When he entered a community word would soon spread that he was there. When people heard he was near they gathered around him to see the miracles. While he had their attention he would teach kingdom principles. The miracles validated his teaching. Most people did not gather around him to hear his teaching, but they were attracted by his miracles then influenced by his teaching.

We take a different tack today. We still teach kingdom principles, but very few of us have the validating miracles taking place in our ministry. In fact, most of us resort to good marketing and attractive programs to get people to come to our ministry. That's a tough sell because the competition to gain the attention of people is intense. We compete with sports, video games, TV and the great outdoors.

Perhaps it's time to resort to the method that worked for Jesus. There's no other show in town that's healing the sick, raising the dead, casting out demons and setting people free from their bondages.

What opportunities would you have to share kingdom principles if it was known in your community that miracles happened at your house? It's something to think about.

**Prayer:** Lord Jesus, grant me the faith, confidence and commitment to teach kingdom principles expecting signs and miracles to follow. Amen.

**Message:** When Jesus entered a community word would soon spread that he was there. When people heard he was near they gathered around him to see the miracles. While he had their attention he would teach kingdom principles. The miracles validated his teaching.

**Affirmation:** I have realized that teaching kingdom truth must be accompanied with kingdom manifestation or people will not hear the message.

**Reflection:** Why do you think it is that the kingdom message today is not often accompanied with miraculous signs and wonders? Give that question some thoughtful prayer.

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Nine

## *They Followed Him For Loaves and Fishes*

When they found him on the other side of the lake, they asked him, “Rabbi, when did you get here?” Jesus answered, “I tell you the truth, you are looking for me, not because you saw miraculous signs but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. – John 6:25-26

When I was in college we had a club we called Lifeline. This group of young people were committed to hands on ministry. Every Friday, Saturday and Sunday night we would go to skid row in our town to minister. We would stand on the corner singing, preaching and sharing Jesus with the passersby.

On one particularly warm night the men living in the run down hotel across the street were watching the goings on from their rooms. They had their windows open and they would drunkenly shout, “Hallelujah” as they threw hands full of coins out into the street.

The men on the street saw the chance to pick up a few coins and they might even get enough for their next bottle of cheap wine. It was a busy four lane one way street on a Saturday night and these men were running in and out of the traffic, bending down and picking up coins. It’s a wonder no one was killed.

You have to have seen this crazy scene to catch the power of it. We were standing there presenting Jesus, the giver of life; the men in the hotel were either drunkenly trying to support us with their loose change, or they were mocking us; the hungry men on the street were stopping cars and risking their lives to get a few coins to somehow preserve their life for a another day – and all the while they were being offered life that would never end.

I think this scene has some resemblance to the one described in this passage. This crowd was following Jesus from place to place hoping to be fed by another miracle. John had just described how the people were looking for him and when they realized he had crossed over the lake they got into boats and went to find him.

They were looking for him because of the loaves, not because of the eternal life that he offered. Why do you follow Jesus?

**Prayer:** Lord, help me follow you for life, not for bread. Grant me the grace to truly believe and commit my life to you. In Jesus name.

**Message:** Many followed Jesus because of the loaves, not because of the eternal life that he offered. But, because of the loaves they heard the kingdom message and many of them believed.

**Affirmation:** It was the message of the kingdom which gave me hope for a future, not the physical provisions he provided.

**Reflection:** How does the story of men risking their lives to pick up a few coins when the message of Jesus was being offered demonstrate the way many people respond to the gospel today? What can be done to get them to hear the message and be converted?

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Ten

## *Who Gave the Bread?*

They asked him, “What miraculous sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? Our forefathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written: ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’ “ Jesus told them, “I tell you the truth, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. - John 6:30-32

A problem with powerful leaders is that people tend to look to them as their source. Have you noticed how often the Law of the Old Testament is called the Law of Moses? These people who were following Jesus were looking to elevate him in the same way. And, like Moses, as long as they were pleased they would follow, but when they became disgruntled they would resist Christ like they resisted Moses.

Isn't it interesting how time changes the way we remember things? Moses was harassed by the people because he had brought them out to the desert to starve; then God gave them the manna and they complained because they had no meat. Every time they had a problem they blamed Moses and looked to him to solve it.

Jesus was trying to direct the people to the one who gave the bread and the purpose for which he gave the bread. In v27 Jesus says, “Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you.”

They wanted bread for show and Jesus was trying to give them bread for life. Hearing the remarks of Jesus they asked, “What must we do to do the works God requires?” They are starting to get the message and Jesus

challenges them with, “The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.”

Our challenge is not just to receive the bread, or the benefits, but we are challenged to receive the life of Christ which is the bread of life. If we cannot accept Christ as the one sent from the Father to redeem the world then we are not partakers of the divine bread of life.

***Prayer:*** Lord, grant me the wisdom to know that all good things come from you and they are not the works of myself or someone else. Help me not to worship the gifts, but to worship the one who gives the gifts. In Jesus name. Amen.

***Message:*** Our challenge is not just to receive the bread, or the benefits, but we are challenged to receive the life of Christ which is the bread of life.

***Affirmation:*** Just as God gave manna in the desert to sustain Israel so he gave us Jesus the very essence of life. Because he lives, and is the bread (sustainer) of life, I too can live.

***Reflection:*** Jesus revealed a truth that had not been realized before. He declared himself to be the bread from heaven the Israelites ate. How does that truth relate to us today?

***My Thoughts:***

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## Day Eleven

### *Jesus is the Bread of Life*

Jesus said to them... "The bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." "Sir," they said, "from now on give us this bread." Then Jesus declared, "I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty." - John 6:33-35

Standing on this side of the event we find it hard to understand how people who saw him and heard him had such difficulty believing in him. However, if we were there hearing him talk we might be a little skeptical too. After all this man claims to be bread that is not only equal to the manna given by Moses, but he is claiming to be bread that gives life.

We can almost hear the frustration in his voice as he says in v36, "But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe." The Jews, particularly the religious leaders, were looking at Jesus through their own biases. For some of them it was their rigid interpretation of the law. For others it was the fear of losing their influence to this mere son of a carpenter. Because of their biases and their fears, far too many of them could not see Jesus for who he was, and is today.

Jesus is the bread sent from the Father to bring life to the world. He did not come to start another religion and he did not come to present a more excellent philosophy. He came to answer the most basic needs of mankind and to offer the hope of a life that was better than the one they had known.

I am constantly amazed today as I hear people talking about the teachings of Jesus as if he were a philosopher,

but they will not accept the truth he represented and the truth that he was. If we are to participate in the kingdom Jesus offered we must come to him for something besides food and things. We must come to him because he is the truth which is the way and he is the life which is eternal.

Why do you follow Jesus?

**Prayer:** Lord, I am no different from those who followed you for the loaves. Give me a heart to follow you just because it's right and because you are the only source of life eternal. In Jesus name, amen.

**Message:** If we are to participate in the kingdom Jesus offered we must come to him for something besides food and things. We must come to him because he is the truth which is the way and he is the life which is eternal.

**Affirmation:** I am committed to Jesus because he is the Way, the Truth and the Life. All of the blessings are incidental; they are the benefits of serving him.

**Reflection:** Why do you think the religious leaders could see Jesus, see his miracles and hear his teaching about the kingdom of God, yet not believe? Jesus didn't meet their expectation of who the Messiah would be and how he would act. Why did they not accept him?

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Twelve

## *The Father's Will*

My Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day." - John 6:40

When we understand what motivates a person we can more clearly see their purpose in the things they do. An example of that is Hitler. If the world had known that he was motivated by an obsession to rule the world he would have been stopped long before he wrecked such havoc on the world and murdered millions of Jews.

On the other side of that; if the world had known the motivation of Jesus they would have received him and the world would have been changed. Unfortunately, the religious leaders did not understand that Jesus came to fulfill the will of the Father. They only saw him as a threat to their own power base.

It was the Father's will that people throughout the land would look at Jesus and see him as the Son of God and through that belief he would offer them eternal life.

Many people in Old Testament times saw God as harsh and demanding. They felt he asked too much of them and consequently they had a difficult time following him. I see a lot of the same feeling among people today.

Often we talk to people about becoming an active believer and they respond with something like, "I'm still young. I have a lot of life to live." It's as if their perception of believing in Christ is that life is now over. No more fun. No more excitement. I just sit quietly listening to the angels sing while I let my enemies hit first one cheek then the other.

Those people miss the point entirely. Jesus didn't come to take life from us but he came to give us abundant life now and eternal life in the hereafter. Receiving Christ into our life enriches our life. He gives joy, peace and contentment. He gives abundant life and that is what the world misses.

**Prayer:** Lord, I'm not much different than everyone else. At times I find it hard to trust you for life and I try to find it on my own and that doesn't work out to well. Grant me the grace to trust you. Amen

**Message:** Jesus didn't come to take life from us but he came to give us abundant life now and eternal life in the hereafter. Receiving Christ into our life enriches our life. He gives joy, peace and contentment. He gives abundant life and that is what the world misses.

**Affirmation:** Christ in my life does not mean that my life is over it simply means that I have been given freedom to enjoy life to the full without all the negatives that sin brings with it.

**Reflection:** How do you feel about fully submitting to the will of the Father? You know that means you no longer have the choice of following your own will. It means that you must learn what is the will of the Father then follow it. Are you ready to do that?

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Thirteen

## *The Father Draws Men to Me*

No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day... I tell you the truth; he who believes has everlasting life. - John 6:44, 47

Why do you think a person must be drawn by the Father in order to come to Christ? That particular question isn't directly answered in Scripture, but we can come to some interesting conclusions.

Could one of the reasons be that God reads the heart and knows the intent, or the motivation, of one who would come to Christ?

What if a person has heard of the blessing of being a Christian and he wants the blessing so he joins the church and becomes a Christian. Is "to get a blessing" the right motivation for becoming a Christian?

Some people come to Christ out of fear. They aren't particularly interested in Christianity, but they fear hell so they come to Christ in order to escape hell. Is "escaping hell" the right motivation for becoming a Christian?

Others join the church and become Christians because of the social aspect of church. They can see that the Church is a real community where people enjoy each other's company and fellowship. They want friends so they become a Christian. Is that a good reason to become a Christian?

I have seen people who came to Christ for just about every reason you can imagine, and most of them have fallen by the wayside. When they came to Christ it didn't seem to work for them; Why? They were motivated by a

selfish motive. Their mantra was, "I need \_\_\_\_\_." And you can fill in the blanks; love, fellowship, blessing, the list is long.

Those may be some of the reasons the Father must draw those who are ready to receive the Christ. I have known quite a few people who came to Christ for one of the reasons given above, but in fact God knew their heart and he was drawing them to Christ.

*Prayer:* Lord, you know we are sometimes confused between our motive and your call. Grant me grace to know the difference and not to be motivated by the blessing but by the call of God. In Jesus name. Amen.

*Message:* The Father knows our heart and draws men and women to him who will serve him with their whole heart. Others come to God, but not with a pure heart, and they fall by the wayside.

*Affirmation:* The Holy Spirit called to me and I answered. Now I seek the face of God that I might know his will.

*Reflection:* There is a big question among those who consider such things and it is this: Can a person come to God if God is not calling him? What about "whosoever will"? Do we have a choice when the Father calls us? Give some thought to these questions.

*My Thoughts:*

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Day Fourteen

## *Christ in the Communion*

I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood you have no life in you. Whoever eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.

- John 6:53-54

In the early days of Christianity the Christians were thought to be cannibals. They taught the concept of eating the flesh of Jesus and drinking his blood so vividly that people on the outside thought they were actually eating flesh and drinking blood.

In fact, the Catholic doctrine of Transubstantiation stems from that era. The doctrine of Transubstantiation teaches that when one receives the wafer and wine from the priest that those symbolic elements actually become the flesh and blood of Christ. That contributed to the belief by some that the Christians performed cannibalistic rites.

Most of us celebrate the Lord's Supper, or Communion, as symbolic of the breaking of his body and the shedding of his blood for all who will come to him in faith and trust him.

We do not partake of the elements of the Communion to literally partake of the body and blood of Christ, but we do it in remembrance of the price he paid so that we could have our sins forgiven and the doors of heaven opened to us.

When we partake of the Communion we are confessing to ourselves, to God and to the world that the life we now live is not our own. It is celebrating the fact that our old life is dead and our life now is hid in Christ:

"For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory" (Colossians 3:3-4).

The life of Christ in us is the reality of eating his flesh and drinking his blood. As this verse says, Christ is our life. That is why we are to no longer think as the natural man thinks and act as the natural man acts. The old man has died and the new, Christ-man is alive.

*Prayer:* Lord, I have surrendered my life to you, but I still struggle with being human. Grant me the grace of Christ living through me and help me to be a good representative of Christ. Amen.

*Message:* Christ is our life. That is why we are to no longer think as the natural man thinks and act as the natural man acts. The old man has died and the new, Christ-man is alive.

*Affirmation:* When I receive the Communion I am celebrating the Christ that is now my life.

*Reflection:* Give some thought to what it means to partake of the broken body and the blood of the covenant. Even if we do not teach transubstantiation we do believe in the power of the symbolic gesture in eating the bread and drinking the juice.

*My Thoughts:*

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Day Fifteen

## *There is Life in the Spirit*

The Spirit gives life; the flesh counts for nothing. The words I have spoken to you are spirit and they are life.

- John 6:63-64

Among the more difficult tasks in our journey of faith is constancy in the belief that the Spirit is life and the flesh counts for nothing. We live in a world that is bound by time and space. Our orientation is to the physical realm and that is why the will of the flesh is such a strong force.

Everything that the natural man has done since the fall from grace in the Garden of Eden has been about the physical man and his cravings. We eat often, and it isn't usually because we are hungry, it is because we like the taste of food. We use up our life with the effort to make our life more comfortable or more enjoyable.

Jesus is trying to tell us here, as he does in other places, that the human condition is life for a season then declining into the state of death. That is why he says, "the flesh counts for nothing." What is done for our flesh will only provide a temporary fix for a problem that can only be resolved by the Spirit of Christ.

Have you noticed all of the things people do trying to enhance this decaying house of clay? Fortunes are spent trying to reverse the aging process. People have literally ran themselves to death trying to stay in shape so they could live longer. Rather than aging gracefully with the hope of eternal life before us we do all that we can to hold on to this meager existence of life on earth.

All the time Jesus is trying to tell us that the flesh counts for nothing. Real life can only be found in the

Spirit. It intrigues me that even though I know the life I want is in the Spirit I still revert back to feeling like I need to gratify my human desires to have fulfillment.

That is our dilemma; we know what is best, but our natural man keeps drawing us back. Our remedy is to continually stay in the word of God. The words of God, and of Christ, are life - they are the only words that give life.

*Prayer:* Lord, your words are life, and only in your spirit can I find life, but my flesh draws me away. Help me continue in your word. Amen.

*Message:* We know what is best, but our natural man keeps drawing us back. Our remedy is to continually stay in the word of God. The words of God, and of Christ, are life - they are the only words that give life.

*Affirmation:* The words of the natural man do not speak life, but the words of God and of Christ are life - they are the only words that give life.

*Reflection:* Have you ever wondered how to tell the difference between our own good ideas and the voice of God giving us direction? One way to test is to run every "good idea" through the filter of, "What does God's word say?"

*My Thoughts:*

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Day Sixteen

## *Hard Sayings Are A Test of Discipleship*

On hearing it, many of his disciples said, “This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?”... From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him.

- John 6:60, 66

There were many people who followed Jesus wherever he went. These people considered themselves disciples. They were like the many people who follow famed evangelists today. These followers were much like the rock star groupies of a past era.

As long as there was bread being served, and the teaching wasn't too radical they could hold; but let the bread run out and the teaching get hard, these fair weather disciples suddenly go elsewhere.

Jesus had dealt these casual followers three pretty good blows. First he accused them of following him just for the bread; then he pointed out that he was the bread they had to eat (they didn't understand that at all); then he tells them the flesh counts for nothing and life was only in the Spirit and his words were spirit and life.

That was enough for the bread disciples. You can see the look on their faces as they muttered among themselves, “That's enough for me. I'm out of here.” And they left.

I can't even remember all of the people I have known who came to Christ in crisis, but when they found out that living for Christ required commitment they fell by the wayside. Remember the parable of the seed and sower? These easily discouraged disciples were seed that fell among the thorns.

When these followers began to see what it was really going to cost to be a disciple of Christ they reevaluated their commitment. It was beginning to become uncomfortable for them, but when Jesus said “the flesh counts for nothing” they could see the hand writing on the wall.

Just remember this: hard teaching is only hard on the flesh. If we are struggling with something Jesus taught it is because the flesh is resisting the death being dealt it by the Spirit.

**Prayer:** Lord, I often find it hard to live consistent with your teaching. Grant me the grace to surrender my will to your will so that I might live according to your teaching. In Jesus name, amen.

**Message:** Hard teaching is only hard on the flesh. If we are struggling with something Jesus taught it is because the flesh is resisting the death being dealt it by the Spirit.

**Affirmation:** It is a struggle to deny the way of the flesh and to follow the way of the Spirit, but I am committed to follow the Holy Spirit because he is life and the way of the flesh is death.

**Reflection:** There will always be "loaves and fishes" followers, but what is it that separates those folks from true disciples of Christ? Why did so many turn back from following Jesus when he began to teach things that were hard on the flesh?

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Seventeen

## *Where Else Could They Go?*

“You do not want to leave too, do you?” Jesus asked the twelve. Simon Peter answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.” - John 6:67-69

We don't know how many followed Jesus at various times, but there must have been many. We know that on at least two occasions he fed thousands. We also know that when he would enter an area the news would spread and people would come to be around him, hear his teaching and see the miracles.

The test of the loyalty of the crowds came when he began to teach things that they called “hard teaching.” In verse 66 we are told that, “from this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him.” They weren't ready to make the commitment necessary to continue.

As the large crowds began to leave Jesus looked at his disciples, and perhaps just a little discouraged, asked, “You do not want to leave too, do you?” You can hear disappointment in his voice as he asked the question.

Then Simon Peter spoke up, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words to eternal life.” Peter got it. He understood that even though the teaching was hard, Jesus would make a way for them to live it out. Peter was probably thinking, “I left my boat and my fishing nets to follow you - I burned my bridges to be your disciple; I have nowhere else to go, I am committed to the end.”

Peter Believed in Christ. He believed that he was the Holy One of God. He believed that Jesus alone had the ability to grant eternal life. We don't know if it happened

at that moment, or it had already taken place, but Peter along the way had made an irreversible decision to follow Jesus the Christ as long as he lived.

God is looking for men and women today who will have the same depth of commitment. He looks for people who will fully commit their lives to him. Are you one of those people?

**Prayer:** Lord, grant me the grace to stay with you through every difficult time. In Jesus name, amen.

**Message:** God is looking for men and women today who will have the same depth of commitment his true disciples demonstrated. He looks for people who will fully commit their lives to him.

**Affirmation:** The loaves and fishes are attractive, but it is the true word of God that sustains life. I am committed to following Him all the way.

**Reflection:** Peter had apparently burned his bridges. He had given up his fishing boat, his source of income, to follow Jesus. He had no place else to go. How do you see that same kind of commitment being lived out in your life?

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Eighteen

## *Their Hearts Were Not Right*

These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. They worship me in vain; their teachings are but rules taught by men. – Matthew 15:8-9

The Pharisees and teachers thought they had Jesus trapped. They had seen his disciples eating without going through the ceremonial washing their tradition required. They accused him and his disciples of breaking their law. Our passage today is part of how Jesus responded to them. I love the way the Message Bible reads on this passage:

After that, Pharisees and religion scholars came to Jesus all the way from Jerusalem, criticizing, “Why do your disciples play fast and loose with the rules?”

But Jesus put it right back on them. “Why do you use your rules to play fast and loose with God’s commands? God clearly says, ‘Respect your father and mother,’ and, ‘Anyone denouncing his father or mother should be killed.’ But you weasel around that by saying, ‘Whoever wants to, can say to father and mother, what I owed to you I’ve given to God.’ That can hardly be called respecting a parent. You cancel God’s command by your rules. Frauds! Isaiah’s prophecy of you hit the bull’s-eye:

These people make a big show of saying the right thing, but their heart isn’t in it. They act like they’re worshiping me, but they don’t mean it. They just use me as a cover for teaching whatever suits their fancy.” – Matthew 15-9

The Pharisees thought they could place their traditions on even par with the laws of God, but in doing

so they contradict God's law. The lesson we need to learn here is that we cannot use our tradition to judge others when we don't have the word of God to back up what we teach.

A second lesson being taught is that we must be careful that we don't make rules that justify our own desires. There is no value in keeping our rules if our rules are designed to side-step God's rules. Many do that by claiming "grace" to justify continuing in sin.

**Prayer:** Lord, help me to honor your law above my traditions. Amen.

**Message:** We must be careful that we don't make rules which justify our own desires. There is no value in keeping our rules if our rules are designed to side-step God's rules. Many do that by claiming "grace" to justify continuing in sin.

**Affirmation:** I have learned that God's laws are easier followed than the rules and traditions of men. I choose God's law and the grace to live out God's will for my life.

**Reflection:** Give some thought to some of the religious traditions that have affected your life. How do those traditions compare to the Word of God? When I examined my own traditions many years ago I discovered that they were considerably more harsh than God's law so I choose God.

**My Thoughts:**

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## *An Example of Great Faith*

“Yes, Lord, she said, “but even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters’ table.” Then Jesus answered, “Woman, you have great faith! Your request is granted.” And her daughter was healed from that very hour.

- Matthew 15:27-28

Many have looked at this event and wonder why Jesus treated this woman so badly when she first approached him. Some think it was a test of her sincerity and some feel that Jesus was rejecting her simply because of her national origin. My take on this event is a little different. I think Jesus was trying to teach the crowd a lesson on faith.

The popularity of Jesus had spread even to this Gentile community. Many who followed him were of mixed blood and were thought to be pagan, yet they came to see the miracles and hear his teaching. One of those came to Jesus pleading for her daughter.

Jesus ignored her. Verse 23 says, “Jesus did not answer a word.” He went on without even acknowledging her presence. At that point most people would have left offended because he ignored them. Jesus wasn’t being cruel to this woman he was teaching the crowd a lesson.

Then he rejected her. He finally answered her in verse 24, “I was sent only to the lost sheep of Israel.” How many of us would have been embarrassed by this rejection and walked away? This woman didn’t because she came with the purpose of getting the master to heal her daughter and she was not going to leave without that blessing.

Finally, he insulted her calling her a dog. “It is not right to take the children’s bread and toss it to their dogs” (v26). Ouch, I can feel that one now. Surely this woman will get the point and realize she is just bothering the master. If it were me after being ignored, rejected and then insulted I would certainly have left by now. She didn’t because she had come for a miracle and she wasn’t leaving without it.

She responded by agreeing that she might be a dog, but even the dogs get the crumbs from the table. Her tenacious faith got her miracle. The message of this event is faith, with commitment, produces miracles.

***Prayer:*** Lord grant me faith for miracles and the tenacious commitment to hold fast in faith until the answer comes. Amen

***Message:*** Tenacious faith will produce miracles. If the Gentile woman who needed healing for her daughter had been easily put off by the way she was rejected by Jesus she would not have gotten her miracle. But she was tenacious because she had great faith.

***Affirmation:*** My daily prayer is for God to give me great faith and a tenacious spirit that I might hold on to the promises of God with the hope of getting the answer.

***Reflection:*** It is interesting that Jesus complimented three people as having great faith, and none of those were Jews, or even his disciples. Why do you think those people had great faith and those who should have had faith did not?

***My Thoughts:***

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Day Twenty

## *It's What's in the Heart That Counts*

Don't you see that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and then out of the body? But the things that come out of the mouth come from the heart, and these make a man unclean. For out of the heart come evil thoughts; murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. These are what make a man unclean; but eating with unwashed hands does not make him unclean. - Matthew 15:17-20

The Pharisees were very big on how things appeared to others. They had certain ceremonies that were important to show people how righteous they were and among them was the ceremonial washing of the hands before a meal. Perhaps in the beginning of the tradition it was simply a sanitary practice, but in time it became a sign of consecration and a requirement if one was to be righteous.

Jesus was being questioned by these self-righteous Pharisees because they were trying to find something they could use to accuse Jesus of being unrighteous. The fact that Jesus did not require his followers to perform the ceremonial washing before they ate was proof in their mind that Jesus was not following the law.

Jesus perceived their intention and sidestepped their question by going to the very heart of the issue of righteousness. He declares that the manner by which one puts food in ones mouth cannot make one unclean, but the words that come out of the mouth does show whether one is unclean in ones heart.

Far too many of us are careful of how people see us act and we are too quick to judge another by how they act. We have certain well defined criteria of what a

Christian looks like, where a Christian goes and what a Christian eats or drinks and we are more than willing to judge them based upon that criteria.

Jesus is rebuking the Pharisees for that attitude, and he rebukes those of us today who try to fit others into our mold to make them acceptable. Remember: Jesus is judging all of us not by how we appear on the outside but by what we have in our heart. Think about it.

**Prayer:** Lord, grant me the grace of accepting others rather than judging them and make me clean on the inside. In Jesus name. Amen.

**Message:** God rebukes those of us today who try to fit others into our mold to make them acceptable. Remember: Jesus is judging all of us not by how we appear on the outside but by what we have in our heart.

**Affirmation:** I am determined to preach and teach the Gospel of inclusion which embraces all who come to Christ and let God sort out the acceptable and the unacceptable.

**Reflection:** Unfortunately, the religious leaders had made the law, and their interpretation of the law, their God. That was never the intention of God. Most of the laws regarding cleanliness and dietary issues were designed to help man maintain good health. Think about how these laws affect our spiritual journey.

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Twenty One

## *Signs of the Times*

The Pharisees and Sadducees came to Jesus and tested him by asking him to show them a sign from heaven. He replied, "When evening comes, you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red,' and in the morning, 'Today it will be stormy, for the sky is red and overcast.' You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but cannot interpret the signs of the times. - Matthew 16:1-3

These religious leaders had come to trick Jesus in some way. They asked for a sign from heaven, but they were really there to discredit him. Instead of discrediting Jesus they were reprimanded themselves. He told them that as religious leaders they ought to be able to discern the signs of the times.

In fact, if they had been at all sensitive to the Spirit of God they would easily have recognized Jesus as the long awaited Messiah. These religious leaders weren't interested in Messiah, they were just trying to keep their influence with the people.

If these people were truly looking for a sign from heaven they would have seen the many miracles Jesus performed as evidence that he came from God. But they missed the opportunity to share in the kingdom of God because it was more important to them to preserve their traditions than it was to follow where God was leading.

Many of us today face a similar dilemma. We are a bit skeptical of anything that is different from our tradition even if it has the obvious blessing of God upon it. I know an evangelist who was very popular in his denomination. He held mass crusades where thousands were saved. Then his life in the Spirit took on a new dimension, a

dimension that was outside of the traditions of his denomination.

This brother was ostracized from those he used to fellowship simply because God was moving in his life in a different way. His doctrine was the same, his teaching about Christ was the same, but he had strayed from his tradition so he was ostracized.

We must be aware of the signs that indicate God is moving in a new way then follow where God is leading.

**Prayer:** Lord, help me to be willing to follow you all of the way even when my own traditions are threatened. In Jesus name. Amen.

**Message:** It is easy to be so contained by our traditions that we miss what God is doing today. We must be aware of the signs that indicate God is moving in a new way then follow where God is leading.

**Affirmation:** I have purposed to not allow my religious traditions to keep me from following where God is leading today.

**Reflection:** I recently read a sign on a church marquee that read, "If you are waiting for a sign from God, this is it." A sign from God can be just that simple, but we should not be asking for a sign when God is trying to lead us into another dimension of relationship with him.

**My Thoughts:**

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## *Persistence in Faith*

A blind man begged Jesus to touch him. He took the blind man by the hand and led him outside the village. When he had spit on the man's eyes and put his hands on him, Jesus asked, "Do you see anything?" He looked up and said, "I see people; they look like trees walking around." Once more Jesus put his hands on the man's eyes. Then his eyes were opened, his sight was restored, and he saw everything clearly - Mark 8:22-25

This passage records Jesus doing a strange thing. Friends of a blind man brought him to Jesus and he begged Jesus to heal him. In other cases Jesus simply healed a person, but this time he did something different.

"He took the blind man by the hand and led him out of the village." Why did he do that? We can only speculate, but it may have been to get him away from things that were familiar to him.

Once outside the village he did a strange thing. Jesus he spit on the man's eyes then put his hands on him. We don't know why Jesus did that unless it was to test the man's sincerity and commitment to being healed. Imagine how you might feel if someone who was supposed to help you had spit in your eye.

At this point he asked the man what he saw and he reported that his eyesight was improved enough that he saw people but they just looked like tree stumps. Once more Jesus put his hands on the man's eyes, but this time his eyes were opened and he could see clearly.

I see two lessons in this story. The first is the faith of the blind man and his friends in coming to Jesus

expecting healing. The second is the persistence of Jesus in pursuing the man's healing.

The message to us is that faith produces results, but we shouldn't settle for partial results when the complete victory is there if we persist in reaching out for it. Many of us are guilty of settling for something far less than complete victory simply because the situation was improved enough so that we don't feel uncomfortable anymore.

When faced with a situation that needs a divine intervention, pray in faith and don't quit when a partial answer comes.

**Prayer:** Lord, help me to persist in faith and faithfulness. Amen.

**Message:** Faith produces results, but we shouldn't settle for partial results when the complete victory is there if we persist in reaching out for it.

**Affirmation:** Walking in faith means that we sometimes claim what we have not seen and act as though things that are not actually are. A partial victory is a sign that total victory is on the way.

**Reflection:** Can you remember a time when you were praying for something and you did not get a complete answer and you settled for a partial answer? What do you think might have happened if you held on for complete victory?

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Twenty Three

## *Who Do Men Say I am?*

When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is? They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”

- Matthew 16:13-14

Jesus knew that his disciples would know rumors of what people were saying about him so he asked, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?” I found their answer interesting. The people associated Jesus with John the Baptist, Elijah, Jeremiah or one of the other prophets, but they did not identify him as the Christ, the son of God.

When you talk to the average non-Christian person on the street today you will find that their perception of Jesus is not much different. Most people think Jesus was a prophet and a good teacher, though they can't tell you much about what he taught.

It is unfortunate, but many people think of Jesus on the same level as other “enlightened” teachers like Mohammed, Buddha, or Mahatma Gandhi. It is true that Mohammed had many good teachings as did Buddha, or Gandhi; but it is also true that those “enlightened” teachers could only instruct men on becoming what a man could become through his own efforts; Jesus is the only one who taught that one could be born again and be forever changed.

People followed Jesus because of the benefits. They thoroughly enjoyed seeing people healed, and of course, those who were healed felt pretty good too. Those he fed when hungry enjoyed being around him also. So they

would follow him from village to village and sit around in small groups discussing just who he might really be.

The teachings of Jesus are often quoted, and too often misquoted, but the depth of his teaching can only be realized by those who understand who he is.

Who is Jesus to you today? Is he “one of the prophets,” on the same level as Elijah, Jeremiah or Mohammed? Have you made him Lord of your life, or is he just like other teachers that we can choose to believe or reject?

**Prayer:** Lord, grant me the ability to see Jesus as more than just a prophet and teacher. In Jesus name, amen.

**Message:** The teachings of Jesus are often quoted, and too often misquoted, but the depth of his teaching can only be realized by those who understand who he is.

**Affirmation:** I have a good understanding of the things Jesus taught because I know who he is and what he has done for all who will believe on him.

**Reflection:** If you have studied the teachings of Jesus you should be able to discern the difference between his ministry and the work of Mohammed, Buddha or Mahatma Gandhi. What is the primary difference between what Jesus taught and what these others taught?

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Twenty Four

## *Who Do You Say I Am?*

“But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?” Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Jesus Replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven.” - Matthew 16:15-17

“But what about you - who do you say I am?” Jesus had a knack for cutting to the chase and getting right to the point. The real question is not what others think about him, but what we think about him. He knew that they would never understand his teaching and become who he intended them to be unless they knew who he was.

You have got to love Peter. When Jesus asked the question Peter did not hesitate. All at once he blurted out, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” Simon, the emotional, zealous young man was true to his nature, but it wasn’t his human nature that responded.

Peter and the other disciples had been with Jesus for some time now and they were learning as they observed his miracles and heard his teaching. They didn’t have full understanding as yet, but they were gaining spiritual wisdom as they gained experience with Jesus, whom they now could see is the Christ.

Much later the Apostle Paul was writing to the Romans and declared, “If you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.” By that time the concept had become formalized and all who were called believers in Jesus the Christ knew this confession, “Jesus is Lord.” But Peter is the first to publicly declare that truth.

Jesus complemented Peter for understanding that truth saying, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven.” We understand who Jesus is by revelation.

The good news is that God desires to give this revelation to all men. It is his good pleasure to give us the kingdom. He will reveal Christ to all who come to him sincerely seeking to know him.

**Prayer:** Lord, I thank you for the revelation that Jesus is Lord. Open the eyes of others that they may know this truth. In Jesus name, amen.

**Message:** The good news is that God desires to reveal who Christ is to all men. It is his good pleasure to give us the kingdom. He will reveal Christ to all who come to him sincerely seeking to know him.

**Affirmation:** God has revealed the Christ to me and I have committed my life to following him.

**Reflection:** Give some thought to how Simon came to the conclusion that Jesus was the Christ, the Son of God. Can you relate that to your own experience of coming to know who Jesus is?

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Twenty Five

## *I Will Build My Kingdom Upon This Rock*

Simon Peter answered, “You are the Christ, the son of the living God...” I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. - Matthew 16:16, 18

What was the rock upon which Jesus would build his church? Was it the truth that he was the Christ the son of the living God? Or was the rock Peter, which means a stone? Or, some believe they have discovered another possibility.

This entire event was taking place at Caesarea Philippi. This area was known to be the center of Idolatrous worship. There was a stone cliff into which small caves had been dug and shrines built to the various gods of the area. Many feel that this was actually a stronghold of demonic activity; the very gates of hell if you please.

It could be that Jesus had taken his disciples to this place for the purpose of challenging the devil with the promise, “I will tear down the gates of hell and I will build my church upon their ruins.”

It is true that a primary application of this passage is that the truth of Jesus as the Christ is the rock which is the foundation of our faith. It is also true that the gates of hell cannot stand against the kingdom of God. In Matthew 11 Jesus said, “The kingdom of heaven has been forcefully advancing and forceful men lay hold of it” (v12).

The kingdom of heaven has been smashing the gates of hell and disrupting the devils plan for 2000 years now, and it will continue this forceful advance into the battle

for the souls of men as long as there are forceful men who will join the battle.

Are you willing to come against the gates of hell to reclaim what the enemy has stolen? It is time for people just like you and me to unite as one mighty army and do battle against evil.

There has never been a better time to assault the strongholds of hell than there is today. The devil has made false promises that have left millions empty and disillusioned. They are ready for the real deal - are you ready to give it to them?

**Prayer:** Lord, help me to be aware of the commission to assault the gates of hell and to realize you have given me power to do that. Amen.

**Message:** There has never been a better time to assault the strongholds of hell than there is today. The devil has made false promises that have left millions empty and disillusioned. They are ready for the real deal - are you ready to give it to them?

**Affirmation:** The message of the hope that is in Christ Jesus is powerful and will penetrate the barriers of disillusionment people of this generation face. I will proclaim Christ to the lost and wandering.

**Reflection:** What do you view as the rock upon which Jesus would build his church? Was it a literal rock, or was it the rock of truth? How do you view the gates of hell?

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Twenty Six

## *Keys That Unlock the Kingdom*

I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.

- Matthew 6:19

John the Baptist had declared that the people should repent because the kingdom of God was at hand. Jesus promised the kingdom to the poor and the persecuted. Jesus told the disciples to go from village to village and preach that kingdom of heaven is at hand.

In Luke 12:31 Jesus instructs his followers to, “Seek the kingdom of God.” Throughout his ministry Jesus kept saying, “the kingdom is coming, the kingdom is near; get ready because it’s coming.” And indeed, it had come and it was among them, but there was a truth yet to be revealed and that is the kingdom of God would be in them.

In Luke 16:16 Jesus said, “The law and the prophets were proclaimed until John. Since that time, the good news of the kingdom of God is being preached, and everyone is forcing his way into it.” The battle rages at the gates of hell as men and women are forcing their way into the kingdom of God.

Then Jesus declared to the disciples, and we believe also to all who will hear, “I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven.” These valuable keys are to lock up, or “bind” the effects of sin and evil and to loose, or unlock the grace of God to forgive sin and change the nature of the sinner.

God has given you and I the keys to the kingdom of God. It is through believers who will declare the good

news of the kingdom that people are given access to the benefits of being a kingdom citizen. We have been given the responsibility of unlocking the chains that bind people to prisons of sin and undesirable behaviors; and it is our responsibility to bind up those things that are destructive to people and cast them into the devils pit.

We have the keys and we must use them to free people and to open the doors of the kingdom.

**Prayer:** Father, help me to always be aware of my responsibility to unlock prison doors and set others free. In Jesus name, amen.

**Message:** We have been given the responsibility of unlocking the chains that bind people to prisons of sin and undesirable behaviors; and it is our responsibility to bind up those things that are destructive to people and cast them into the devils pit.

**Affirmation:** The key to freedom in the kingdom of God is to bind up behaviors that are destructive and loose the Holy Spirit to enable ourselves and others to walk in freedom.

**Reflection:** The question is not whether we have the keys; it is whether we are aware of the authority and responsibility we have to lead others to freedom through faith in Christ.

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Twenty Seven

## *The Curious, The Convinced and The Committed*

If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. - Matthew 16:24

Everywhere Jesus went there were the curious who came to see what was going on. They had heard about the miracles and they wanted to see this man who could heal the sick and cast out demons. These curious ones had no real commitment to him or his ministry they were there to see the show - They were the curious.

Some who saw the miracles also began to listen to his teaching. As they heard what Jesus taught it made sense to them and they began to believe. They were drawn by miracles but as they heard his teaching they became convinced that he was the Christ. They expressed their belief and began to spread the news - These were the convinced.

The largest crowd was the curious and a smaller group was the convinced, but the smallest group was the committed. Jesus looked over the crowds and knew that he had many who would follow for the show, some who would follow because they realized who he was, and a small number would follow him all the way, even to the cross.

As the teachings of Jesus became more pointed and following him became more risky the crowds began to thin out. At one point the crowds, the curious and convinced said, "This is a hard teaching. Who can accept it?... From this time many of his disciples turned back and no longer followed him" (John 6:60,66).

At that time Jesus asked those who remained, “You do not want to leave too, do you?” (v67). Simon Peter, with the twelve, answered him, “Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.” These were the committed.

It was to this committed group that Jesus said, “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.” The question before us today is are we just curious, are we convinced, or are we committed to following him all the way?

**Prayer:** Lord, grant me the ability to fully commit my life to you and take up my cross daily. In Jesus name, amen.

**Message:** It was to this committed group that Jesus said, “If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.”

**Affirmation:** I have accepted the challenge to follow Christ and have committed myself to doing will to fulfill his purposes for me in the kingdom of God.

**Reflection:** Today's devotion deals with those who come out of curiosity, those who are convinced the message is true, and those who are committed to the message. Often the curious and the convinced become scarce when the going gets tough and only the committed remain. Which are you?

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Twenty Eight

## *What is Worth the Price of Your Soul?*

Whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it. What good will it be for a man if he gains the whole world, yet forfeits his soul? Or what can a man give in exchange for his soul?

- Matthew 16:25-26

Jesus, in his typical manner, was getting right to the point in this passage. Many who have started their walk of faith have asked questions like, "I don't have to give up\_\_\_ Do I?" Or maybe they are trying to make a deal with God and the question is, "What can I keep and still be a Christian?" Jesus answers those questions with his own question; "What can a man give in exchange for his soul?"

Remember the story of Eve in the Garden of Eden? She was set for life. Placed in a beautiful garden, the beauty of creation all around her, yet there was one thing she lacked; there was one thing she wanted. She wanted freedom to make her own choices. Freedom to choose whatever her heart desired, and she chose the forbidden fruit.

The fruit was not ugly and distasteful looking, oh no! Eve saw that it was pleasing to the eye and appeared to be good to eat, and it would make her wise as God, giving her the options to make her own choices. She chose to take control of her own destiny and in so doing she lost the very thing she wanted to have - life itself.

It is the nature of man to seek out ways to preserve his life and to make his life better. When I was young I was a pastor, but I always had at least one other business to produce additional income so I could give my family a comfortable lifestyle. At least that is what I told myself,

but the truth is I enjoyed the freedom that having the extra money gave me.

I did enjoy those things, but the cost was great. My marriage became broken and I suffered much pain along with my family. Now I am trying to live with the reality that if a person lives for this life alone he will lose those things he cherishes, but those who invest their life in a higher purpose find not only what they desired in this life but they gain eternal life as well.

**Prayer:** Help me Lord to always live with my life surrendered to your will and your purposes. In Jesus name, amen.

**Message:** If a person lives for this life alone he will lose those things he cherishes, but those who invest their life in a higher purpose find not only what they desired in this life but they gain eternal life as well.

**Affirmation:** I have learned that my soul is much more valuable than the trinkets this world offers and I am committed to the joy of serving Christ alone.

**Reflection:** What do you think Jesus was talking about when he spoke of losing your life and finding life in him? Examine your own values to see if there is something of this world that makes it difficult to consistently choose God's way.

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Twenty Nine

## *He Is Coming In Glory*

The son of man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what he has done. - Matthew 16:27

Jesus had begun to explain to his disciples that he was going to Jerusalem and there he would die. "From that time on Jesus began to explain to his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life."

His disciples, those trusted friends, were bewildered. They had accepted him as the Messiah and expected that he would establish his earthly kingdom soon. They were probably thinking, "What is wrong with him. He can't be killed. He is the hope of all Israel."

"Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. "Never, Lord! This shall never happen to you" (v22). Then Jesus said a strange thing; "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; you do not have in mind the things of God, but things of men" (v23).

It was at this point that Jesus gave his dissertation on the value of a persons' soul. He spoke of trying to save your life and being willing to surrender your life and the consequences of both. His message was that we are to be committed to a higher purpose than just preserving our life, our way of living, even our way of worship - We are to be committed to surrendering our life to his will and his purposes, even when his will goes against everything we've ever wanted in life.

As the disciples began to realize what Jesus was telling them and they were beginning to feel a bit of despair, he

began to reveal another aspect of God's plan. He was affirming that he would die, but that he would be resurrected, return to heaven and then, at some point in the future, he would come again. This time when he comes he will be coming in great glory for all the world to see. He is coming in his Father's glory.

That is the hope which gives us an anchor for our soul (Hebrews 6:19); He is coming again and he will reward those who have trusted him.

**Prayer:** Thank you Lord for the hope you have given us. Amen.

**Message:** Jesus returning in great glory is the hope which gives us an anchor for our soul (Hebrews 6:19); He is coming again and he will reward those who have trusted him.

**Affirmation:** Jesus is coming again and when he comes he won't be a babe in a manger, and he won't be put on a cross. He is returning in great glory to reward those who have trusted him. That is the hope which is an anchor for our soul.

**Reflection:** Jesus was trying to prepare his disciples for his death and his departure to heaven. Why do you think the disciples didn't seem to understand what he was telling them?

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Thirty

## *We Beheld His Glory*

Jesus took with him Peter, James and John the brother of James, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun and his clothes became as white as the light.

- Matthew 17:1-3

Throughout the ages as God has revealed himself to man there have been times when his glory was overwhelming. When Solomon was dedicating the Temple there was a great manifestation of God's glory.

"When Solomon finished praying, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices, and the glory of the Lord filled the temple. The priests could not enter the temple of the Lord because the glory of the Lord filled it" (2 Chronicles 7:1-2). What a time that must have been.

When Jesus walked among us he was the revealed glory of the Father. John writes, "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth." God's glory is revealed in Christ.

As the disciples saw the glory of the Lord being manifest on the mount of transfiguration they wanted to do something to memorialize the event. They wanted to erect a place of worship there, but Jesus wouldn't let them. It was as if he was trying to teach them that the glory of the Lord is no longer revealed in buildings made by man, but God had a better plan for revealing his glory.

God's plan was that his glory would ultimately be revealed in those who trusted him through faith in Christ. Paul wrote in 2 Corinthians, "We, who with

unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit" (2 Corinthians 3:18).

Jesus, the Christ, while on earth was the manifest glory of God. After he ascended to heaven God sent his glory back to earth to dwell in the hearts of those who would believe. Believers are the glory of God today.

**Prayer:** Thank you Lord for revealing yourself in me. Amen.

**Principle:** God's plan was that his glory would ultimately be revealed in those who trusted him through faith in Christ. We "are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit" (2 Corinthians 3:18).

**Affirmation:** The glory of the Lord was manifest in Jesus when he was here. Now, the glory of the Lord is made manifest through those who will follow him.

**Reflection:** Can you see a parallel between how the disciples responded to the glory they saw on the mount and how we want to memorialize a move of God and build our ministries around that instead of continuing to follow God where he is leading us today?

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Thirty One

## *The Law and the Prophets Agree in Christ*

Just then there appeared before them Moses and Elijah, talking with Jesus... While he was still speaking a bright cloud enveloped them, and a voice from the cloud said, "This is my Son whom I love; with him I am well pleased. Listen to him." - Matthew 17:3-5

Have you ever wondered why Moses and Elijah were standing with Jesus in the transfiguration? It was like Jesus had stepped into a time warp and suddenly was standing with these two patriarchs of the faith. In fact, it was something similar to that.

The Greek word used for "transfiguration" is *metamorphoo* from which we get the word metamorphosis. The meaning is "to be changed into another form." Jesus was literally changed into a glorified form along with the manifestation of Moses and Elijah.

What did this special event signify? There are different explanations but many see this as God signifying that Jesus is the fulfillment of the law and the prophets. Moses represented the law and Elijah represented the prophets. God seemed to be saying that Jesus is the fullness of revelation.

God has consistently revealed himself to man through his word. In the wilderness he spoke to Moses from the burning bush. He gave his word to Moses on Mount Sinai when he gave Moses the law. He spoke again to his people through Elijah and other prophets. His word has always revealed his will.

In Christ there was an even deeper revelation of himself. He, Jesus, was himself the manifestation of the word of God. It is as if God were saying, "You have heard it through the law, and you have heard it through the

prophets, now you are hearing directly from me through my manifest word which is Jesus the Christ.”

Perhaps that is why Paul, when speaking of the mysteries of God being revealed in Christ, wrote, “In Christ all the fullness of the Deity lives in bodily form” (Colossians 2:9). We should pay close attention to what Jesus said because his words are the words of God.

***Prayer:*** Again Lord, I am grateful for the manifestation of your word through the person of Jesus the Christ. Amen.

***Principle:*** Moses represented the law and Elijah represented the prophets. In the transfiguration God seemed to be saying that Jesus is fulfillment of the law.

***Affirmation:*** I am not constrained by the law because I have been transformed by the Spirit of Christ and therefore my desire is to fulfill God's will and purposes for my life.

***Reflection:*** The idea that Christ is the fulfillment of both the law and the prophets is a pretty radical concept. In what way do you think that is true? How does Jesus fulfill the law? How does he fulfill the prophets?

***My Thoughts:***

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# The Temptation Prayer

A prayer to help growing followers of Christ  
overcome the temptations in their lives

Most of us have a primary temptation that has plagued us for many years. For too many of us that primary temptation has been our downfall and for many years we were defeated in this area.

Now we are struggling to be free, but the temptation keeps coming back to us and it becomes frustrating. We agree with Apostle Paul in Romans 7:15, "I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do." Does that sound like you? If it does, this pamphlet holds good news for you.

Many years ago when I was struggling with a behavioral addiction in my life I went through a period of intensive searching. I was making a fearless and searching moral inventory of myself and was discouraged at what I was discovering.

When I became fully aware that I couldn't be victorious over my addiction alone I realized that it was only through the power of God that I would ever be free.

During that time I discovered a very important passage of scripture. It was 2 Corinthians 12:7-10. The part that stood out to me was that When Paul appealed to God concerning his weakness, or "thorn in my flesh" as he called it, God simply told him, "My grace is sufficient."

In God's answer to Paul he gave us tremendous insight into the process of living in victory over our addictions. In verse 9 God says, "My power is made perfect in weakness." God is literally telling us that the weaker we are in any area, the stronger he becomes in us and if we will rely upon his strength he will give us his power to overcome.

In gaining an understanding of this process God gave me a prayer that has been vital in my restoration process and has helped many people that have used it in their own restoration. I call it the temptation prayer. It provides a format for praying when we are in temptation in the area of our primary weakness. Here is the prayer:

### **The Temptation Prayer**

Father God, I come to you in weakness today. I am being tempted by \_\_\_\_\_ . I cannot tell you that I desire you above this thing, but I desire this thing. If I did not desire it I would not be tempted, because James wrote, "Each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed" (James 1:14).

I now make a conscious decision of my will to surrender this evil desire to you. Your Word says, "Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you" (James 4:7). Even though my desire is for evil, my decision is to submit to you. I know surrender my will to you.

I ask you to take this evil desire from me. James also wrote, “You have not because you ask not” (James 4:2). I am asking that you take this desire from me.

You have said, “Ask and you shall receive, seek and you shall find, knock and the door will be opened to you” (Matthew 7:7). Just know I am asking, seeking and knocking at your door. Receive me into your presence and take this desire from me in Jesus name.

Now I praise and thank you for answering my prayer. Paul told us “Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving present your request to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:6-7). Therefore I am giving you praise and thanksgiving for what you are doing for me this very minute.

Father God, I am thankful for your help. Thank you for answering this prayer. Thank you for receiving me. Thank you for the peace I am feeling just now. Thank you for caring friends and family. I give you praise for all things, in Jesus name, amen.

Pray this prayer as often as you need, many times an hour if necessary. You will find that the more consistently you apply this prayer in your times of temptation that the times of temptation will become less frequent.

It is not essential that you use the exact wording given in this pamphlet, but it is important that you keep the essential elements. Let’s take a closer look at the prayer.

## Examining The Temptation Prayer

Notice in the prayer that every point carries with it a passage from the scripture. It is vitally important to commit passages of scripture to memory so that you can use them in prayer and in your daily life as you grow in the grace of God.

Joshua began to realize the value of God's word when the Lord gave him this instruction; "Do not let this Book of the Law depart from your mouth; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful" (Joshua 1:8).

**"I come to you in weakness"**—we are acknowledging our inability to overcome this temptation alone. (God's power is made perfect in weakness)

**"I cannot tell you that I desire you above this thing, but I desire this thing"**—This is being honest with God. We honestly do not desire him when we are tempted. We may know that we should desire him, but we must confess that we desire the object of our temptation at that moment.

**"I now make a conscious decision of my will to surrender this evil desire to you"**—This vital step is important because we are making a conscious decision to surrender our will over to God. This step is absolutely necessary if we are to live in victory over our undesirable behaviors.

**"I ask you to take it from me"**—This part of the prayer implies that you have already become willing to have God remove this desire. Though you want it, you have, by a choice of the will, decided to surrender it to God. This is

simply the asking part. God waits for you to ask so he can do what he does so well.

**“You have said”**—When Jesus was tempted by the devil in the wilderness (Matthew 4) he said repeatedly, “It is written...” When we bring our petitions to God with his word it not only restates his promises, but it shows our commitment to him and his word.

**“Now I praise and thank you for answering my prayer”**—As we begin to praise God for his goodness and mercy His spirit begins to bring our hearts back to him. All at once we realize that the thing we desire *is him*, and that the other thing is not a temptation now.

The purpose of this pamphlet is to give you a tool to help you in your Christian walk. If you would like more information or if you desire encouragement or fellowship, feel free to call the person whose name and phone number appears below.