

Daily God Walk

Life of Christ

His Ministry

Book - 8

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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

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Day One

Serving and Being Served

Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

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

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

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

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

"Then, Lord," Simon Peter replied, "not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!" - John 13:3-9

There is no better picture in the gospels of the servanthood of Christ than this. He states that the Father has put all things under his power, yet, when it was time, he submitted that power to become servant of all. From all power to servant of all in what was more than a gesture, but what was, in fact an example of the way all believers should live.

He took off his outer garment, wrapped the towel around his waist, bowed before his disciples and began to wash their feet. It was the role of a servant to wash the feet of the guests to a meal and Jesus was not only showing himself to be servant in this event, but he was

demonstrating the ultimate act of servanthood which would come later that night.

He concludes by saying, “Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.”

He was talking about more than washing feet. He was talking about serving one another as he had served them.

Prayer: Lord, grant me the heart of a servant. Amen.

Message: Jesus tells us that the Father has put all things under his power, yet, when it was time, he submitted that power to become servant of all. From all power to servant of all in what was more than a gesture, but what was in fact an example of the way all believers should live.

Affirmation: I have made the choice to follow the example of Christ and become a servant to all.

Reflection: Have you wondered how Jesus could actually be servant of all considering who he was? If you were to compare the leadership model of Jesus to what is common among leaders today what similarities would you see? What are the differences you would notice?

My Thoughts:

Day Two

Who Would Do the Dirty Deed?

Jesus was troubled in his spirit and testified, “I tell you the truth, one of you is going to betray me.” His disciples stared at one another, at a loss to know which of them he meant. One of them, the disciple whom Jesus loved, was reclining next to him. Simon Peter motioned to his disciples and said, “Ask him which one he means.” Leaning back against Jesus, he asked him, “Lord, who is it?” Jesus answered, “It is the one to whom I will give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish.”

- John 13:26

Jesus not only knew this was his last night with his disciples and that he would soon be betrayed, he also knew who was going to betray him. You can imagine the suspense as he told his faithful followers that one of them was going to betray him.

Denials were forthcoming and suspicion arose between them. “Who would do this dirty deed?” they wondered among themselves. Then they asked him, “Lord, who is it?”

Jesus answered, “It is the one to whom I will give this piece of bread when I have dipped it in the dish.” Then, dipping the piece of bread, he gave it to Judas Iscariot, son of Simon. As soon as Judas took the bread, Satan entered into him. “What you are about to do, do quickly,” Jesus told him (v26-28).

This was their last Passover meal together and now they were stricken with the stark reality that Jesus would soon be put to death. What would they do now? How would they be able to continue the message of the kingdom when their Lord was gone? All of these questions were going through their mind as they processed the idea of him being gone.

Most pressing however was the fact that one of the twelve would become traitor. There have been many through the centuries that have played the role of Judas and betrayed their faith for a few pieces of silver, or fame, or for just being accepted among their peers. We must guard ourselves from such things.

Prayer: Help me to never trade Jesus for this world. Amen.

Message: There have been many through the centuries that have played the role of Judas and betrayed their faith for a few pieces of silver, or fame, or for just being accepted among their peers. We must guard ourselves from such things.

Affirmation: I guard my heart against the deceitfulness of riches, popularity and concern about the opinion of others. A heart and life submitted to the will of God is goal I reach toward.

Reflection: Here is an interesting thought; Jesus bowed himself before Judas and washed his feet as a servant when he knew that Judas was about to betray him. A message in this event is that no matter how far we have fallen God is willing to serve us graciously hoping we will return to faith.

My Thoughts:

Day Three

Do This in Remembrance of Me

While they were eating, Jesus took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "Take and eat; this is my body."

Then he took the cup, gave thanks and offered it to them saying, "Drink from it, all of you. This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. I tell you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it anew with you in my Father's kingdom.

When they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. - Matthew 26:26-30

For nearly 2000 years now Christians have been celebrating the Last Supper of Christ with his disciples. It is the most solemn event in the life of a believer. The bread represents the body which was broken for us and the fruit of the vine represents the blood sacrifice which was offered for the atonement of our sins.

As we partake we are reminded of the great suffering endured by our savior as he was being made a sacrifice for our sins. This event is not portrayed anywhere in Scripture better than the prophecy of Isaiah:

"He was despised and rejected by men, a man of sorrows, and familiar with suffering. Like one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not.

Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.

We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the Lord has laid on him the iniquity of us all.” - Isaiah 53:3-6

Prayer: Thank you Father for your great sacrifice. Amen.

Message: Receiving communion is remembering the broken body and shed blood of our Savior. It is also symbolic of each believer being united to all other believers as we have each one received his life in us through faith in his death, burial and resurrection.

Affirmation: I am not only one with Christ but I am also one with his entire body on earth and I commemorate that when I receive communion.

Reflection: Take some time to reflect on the meaning of receiving the elements which represent the broken body and shed blood of our Savior.

My Thoughts:

Day Four

Love One Another – It is a Command

“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” - John 13:34-35

This Passover evening had become a very solemn event. First Jesus declares his servanthood by washing the feet of his disciples. Then he declares that one among them was going to betray him. Finally he tells them, “My children, I will be with you only a little longer.” They were confused and probably just a little frightened.

He then gave them a new command: “Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.” He was forming a band of brothers that would be so committed to each other that the enemies of the kingdom would not be able to defeat them. He was calling them to be as committed to one another as he was to them.

Perhaps that is why he showed himself their servant by washing their feet. He was trying to tell them that they must love one another in that way. They each must be willing to be servant to the others. They each must be willing to give up their own comfort for the benefit the others. And, yes, they must also be willing to give up their own lives if necessary.

Jesus had lived the perfect example of divine love and now he was calling his disciples to display the same kind of love for one another. He knew that there would always be the temptation to pursue our own agenda even when doing the work of the kingdom and he was warning them that their calling was not about themselves but it was about others.

Remember the story of the Three Musketeers? Their motto was “All for one and one for all.” That was the attitude Jesus was calling his disciples to have. Let us not forget that we are to live as one because we are but one; we are the body of Christ - we are to love one another that the world might know.

Prayer: Lord, grant a heart to be committed to the body of Christ and to put others above myself. In Jesus name, amen.

Message: Let us not forget that we are to live as one because we are but one; we are the body of Christ - we are to love one another that the world might know.

Affirmation: Loving others as Christ has loved me can only be done by the work of Holy Spirit. I am committed to allowing Holy Spirit to do his work in me that I might love others as God loves me.

Reflection: Give some thought to how you might demonstrate the love of God to others. Remember our great example. He washed the feet of the one who would betray him.

My Thoughts:

Day Five

You Can't Go Where I'm Going... Yet

Simon Peter asked him, "Lord, where are you going?" Jesus replied, "Where I am going, you cannot follow now, but you will follow later." - John 13:35

His work was almost done. He had ministered healing to the sick, he had set people free from demonic bondage and he had given hope to a people who were losing hope. Now he was entering the final phase of his life and the purpose for which he had come to earth.

When his final task was complete he was going away. He was going to a place where no one could follow at this time. The disciples couldn't yet understand what he was trying to tell them.

The disciples did not want to lose him. They still didn't understand that he came not to establish a kingdom on earth but he came to bring heaven to earth and establish the kingdom of God in the hearts of people.

This wasn't good enough for Peter. Wherever it was Jesus was going he wanted to go too so he asked, "Lord, why can't I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you."

Then Jesus shocked him by asking, "Will you really lay down your life for me? I tell you the truth, before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times."

Even though Peter thought he knew himself Jesus knew him better. Jesus knew that the love Peter had for him could not yet overcome the weakness of his flesh. He knew that when Peter had time to consider the cost he would submit to fear. Peter was not yet born of the Spirit.

Jesus would be leaving soon, and they couldn't go with him, but they would go where he was going. For 2000 years

now people have lived with the hope of going where Jesus has gone, and one by one when our life is finished here on earth we each take that journey.

Are you ready to go where Jesus has gone?

Prayer: Lord, grant me the grace to be faithful. Amen.

Message: For 2000 years now people have lived with the hope of going where Jesus has gone, and one by one when our life is finished here on earth we each take that journey.

Affirmation: I am ready to be with Jesus. Whether he returns in my lifetime, or when my life here on earth is done, I will someday stand before him and hear him say, "Well done, enter into my glory."

Reflection: We live in hope of the Lord's return and we who are his body being received into an eternal habitation. What does that mean to you as a believer? How does that hope affect your life?

My Thoughts:

Day Six

Do Not Let Your Hearts Be Troubled

Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, trust also in me. In my Father's house are many rooms; if it were not so I would have told you. And If I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the place where I am going. - John 14:1-4

The disciples had heard a lot of disturbing news in a short period of time. Jesus is trying to comfort them as they are processing the message he just delivered. They have not yet fully understood, but they were beginning to understand that he was about to be taken away and they were very unsettled about that.

“Do not let your hearts be troubled - Trust in God; trust also in me.” Disturbing news often leaves us troubled and distressed. Jesus was trying to help his disciples see that all was not bleak; there is hope, but they must trust him.

The Amplified Bible is a bit more definitive than the other translations on this passage. It reads; “Do not let your hearts be troubled (distressed, agitated). You believe in and adhere to and trust in and rely on God; believe in and adhere to and trust in and rely also on me.”

We have all faced trying circumstances in our life. Some among us have lost spouses and other loved ones to death. Some have lost marriages to divorce. Some have lost their life's savings in economic turn downs. All of us have faced loss and it does leave us a bit disturbed and unsettled.

Jesus is trying to take his disciples beyond their sense of loss at his being taken from them. He is giving them hope for tomorrow. He is reminding them that there will

indeed be a tomorrow, and though he may not immediately be with them, he will return, and when he does return he will take them to a place he has prepared for them.

His message is the same for us today. Do not be troubled by the events of this life. He is preparing a place for you.

Prayer: Grant me the faith to trust you when I am troubled.

Message: God gives us hope for tomorrow. When we are in troublesome times we are reminded that Jesus will return, and when he does return he will take us to a place he has prepared for us.

Affirmation: In my darkest hour I have hope that God is in control and I agree with the writer of Hebrews that this hope is an anchor for my soul (Hebrews 6:19).

Reflection: This devotion is not only about the disciples but the message applies to all who trust Christ. Whatever your circumstances Jesus is saying, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, trust also in me."

My Thoughts:

Day Seven

Show Us the Father

If you really knew me, you would know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.” Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us.” Jesus answered: “Don’t you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. - John 14:7-9

Jesus is revealing yet another truth to his disciples. They now understood that he was the Messiah, the Christ of God, but they as yet did not comprehend his deity. He is about to reveal a great truth to them.

Philip was probably a little confused when he said, “Lord, show us the Father,” and he most certainly was not prepared for the way Jesus responded. “Don’t you know me Philip?” Jesus asked.

It seems that Jesus had saved the best revelation for the last. There had been many prophets and many false messiahs; but there had never been one to make such a bold claim. They have just barely grown to accept him as Christ, now he is revealing that he indeed is Christ, but he is so much more; he is the very physical presence of the eternal God.

The concept of incarnation for the purpose of redemption is unique to Christianity. In mythology there are stories of gods becoming men, but none of them have the concept of God becoming man do die as a man so that all men might have access to the grace of redemption.

The apostle Paul tells us that, “God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself” (2 Corinthians 5:19 KJV). Yes, when they saw Jesus they saw very God made manifest before them.

We have hope today because God, the very God of eternity, became man, lived on earth to show us the way, died to give us the opportunity of redemption, rose again to give us hope and he is coming again to take us to our eternal home. Hallelujah.

Prayer: Thank you for the redemption that is by faith in Christ. Amen.

Show Us the Father

Message: We have hope today because God, the very God of eternity, became man, lived on earth to show us the way, died to give us the opportunity of redemption, rose again to give us hope and he is coming again to take us to our eternal home.

Affirmation: I have hope today because the very God of eternity became man to die for all men and to be raised from the dead to give all who trust him hope in eternity.

Reflection: The very core of our faith is that God became man that he might reconcile man to himself through the death, burial and resurrection of Jesus, the Christ of redemption. How many other religions can make such a claim?

My Thoughts:

Day Eight

If You Love Me Obey Me

If you love me you will obey what I command.

- John 14:15

How often we have used the word “love” carelessly. We will sometimes say to people we barely know, “I love you,” and of course we will usually mean in a *phileo* (brotherly love) sense, but even then we may not be fully sincere.

It is especially true in Christian circles that we will say, “I love you” to people we know at church or as a part of a Christian group with which we are associated.

We may use the word often, but do we really know what it means? Jesus said, “If you love me you will obey what I command.” Do we love in the sense that Jesus is asking us to love him?

Have you ever had someone tell you that they love you on Sunday then find out that they maligned you during the week? We can certainly do without that kind of love. So what does this “*agapao*” love mean that Jesus used here?

Agapao, the Greek word translated love here, is essentially the same as the familiar *agape*. *Agapao* is the verb form and *agape* is the noun form. *Agape* addresses the presence of love, as if it were a thing we could hold. When we *agape* someone there is a sense of being united in a bond of love. *Agapao* is the verb, or the action sense of the word.

Jesus was saying that when we love him our love for him will drive us to obey him. *Agapao* speaks to the responsibility love places upon us. When we *agapao* Jesus we are obeying him. It is impossible to truly love Jesus without obeying what he has instructed us to do.

It is time to examine what we mean we say, “I love you” to the Lord. Do we really mean *agapao*, or do we mean that we have this emotional attachment to him that doesn’t produce any sense of responsibility to service? Or do we mean that we are offering ourselves in complete obedience to him?

Prayer: Lord, help my love for you to be true. May my *agape* become *agapao*. In Jesus name I ask. Amen.

Message: Jesus was saying that when we love him our love for him will drive us to obey him. *Agapao* speaks to the responsibility love places upon us. When we *agapao* Jesus we are obeying him. It is impossible to truly love Jesus without obeying what he has instructed us to do.

Affirmation: I prove my love (*agapao*) by my obedience to the commands and instructions of Christ.

Reflection: Give some thought to the difference between the noun *agape* and the verb *agapao*. How is *agapao* linked to obeying the commands of Christ? Can we *agapao* (love) the Lord without obeying him? Give that some thought.

My Thoughts:

Day Nine

A New Counselor / Comforter

I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counselor to be with you forever - the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. - John 14:16-18

The Disciples are slowly beginning to understand. They are beginning to realize that Jesus is going to be taken from them. They will no longer have him with them with his words of strength and comfort and they were beginning to feel that.

That is why Jesus begins John 14 with, "Do not let your hearts be troubled." Now he is explaining why they shouldn't be troubled. He said "yes, I am going away, but you will not be left alone. The Father is sending you another to comfort you, to guide you and to give you strength."

He used an interesting Greek word to describe the one who would come to them. It is *parakletos*. This word literally means called to one's side, or to one's aid. It was used in court referring to legal counsel. It is also used to denote one who is offering aid, assistance or counsel.

Jesus seemed to be saying that I have been with you as comforter, or counselor, but now I am going. However, you will not be left without comfort. He was not referring to another who would walk with them, but he was referring to the one who now walked with them but who would then live in them.

He was relating an entirely new relationship. Jesus was with them, but the one who would come, though in a

different form, would be the same as the one who dwelt with them, except now he would be in them.

When Jesus said, “I will not leave you without comfort but I will come to you he was revealing that physically he was gone, but his Spirit would come to them. He would be in them.

Prayer: Thank you Lord for returning to live in me. Grant me the wisdom to accept the wisdom of the counselor. Amen.

Message: Jesus was with them, but the one who would come, though in a different form, would be the same as the one who dwelt with them, except now he would be in them.

Affirmation: The comforter/counselor has come and I am comforted by his presence. I also turn to him for guidance and He is my comforter.

Reflection: Jesus is teaching an interesting concept. He had been their comforter, their confidant. Now he was leaving them, but he wouldn't stay away he would return, not to be with them but to be in them. Now we do not need to go to another for Christ himself abides in us.

My Thoughts:

Day Ten

A New Kind of Peace

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

- John 14:25-27

This passage speaks of peace that is different than the peace people have in this world. Jesus contrasts the peace that comes through faith in him with the peace people experience in this world system.

Peace in the world is dependent upon the systems of this world. Peace between countries depends upon one country respecting the boundaries of another. Peace in relationships depends upon respect for others. I can respect you, but if you do not respect me we will not be at peace.

Another factor that affects peace in this life is financial. It is really difficult for us to have inner peace when we are in great financial need. Another factor is the government. When our candidate isn't elected, or when those who are elected are making decisions that negatively affect us we become troubled.

Jesus could see all of this in the eyes of his disciples. He could see that their peace was based in the physical; what they could see or hear. Their peace rested in his physical presence and they were disturbed that he was leaving them. Perhaps they felt that he was like everything else; just a promise but disappearing in time.

Jesus was assuring them that he was giving them a peace which was not based in factors affected by this world

system. He was offering peace that would last because he, the Prince of Peace, would live in them.

My friend, if life has dealt you a difficult hand, be encouraged. He promised that his peace was greater than the peace the world gives – his peace lasts because it is based in eternal principles.

Prayer: Grant me the grace to trust you in all things. Amen.

Message: Jesus promised that his peace was greater than the peace the world gives – his peace lasts because it is based in eternal principles.

Affirmation: The peace of God rests upon me because Christ lives in me and he brought his peace with him.

Reflection: Inner peace is the goal of every person. In fact, just about everything a person does beyond the necessities of life is about having inner peace. People of the world seek peace through security, wealth, relationships, activities and more, yet, so many have never found that peace. Can you relate to the quest that mankind has for peace?

My Thoughts:

We Are Branches of the Divine Vine

I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful... Remain in me, and I will remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me... If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples. - John 15:1-8

“I am the true vine.” Jesus uses the vine and branches to explain a truth he has been trying to communicate to his disciples.

“Remain in me, and I will remain in you.” Life flows from the vine to the branches and the only way life can continue to flow into the branches is for them to stay connected to the vine. Jesus was using this metaphor to show that he is not only the vine, but he is also the life which flows from the vine.

“No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine.” As we stay connected to the vine his fruit producing life flows through us. The life which flows through a healthy branch will grow healthy fruit. Branches which do not grow fruit are branches which are not healthy and have something wrong that blocks the flow of life. Jesus said the Father will prune those branches to make them healthy. It would probably be easier on us branches if we discovered the blockages ourselves and took care of the problem before we had to be pruned back.

“If you remain in me and my words remain in you...” When we are connected to the life flow (the Vine) all that

is in us is his life, therefore, anything we ask is according to his will and he will perform it.

“This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.” God glories in our fruit.

Prayer: Help me to stay connected to your life flow. Amen.

Message: “If you remain in me and my words remain in you...” When we are connected to the life flow (the Vine) all that is in us is his life, therefore, anything we ask is according to his will and he will perform it.

Affirmation: The life of Christ lives in me because I am connected to the true vine. As a branch of the true vine I am bearing fruit which brings glory to God.

Reflection: Give some thought to what it means to abide in the vine. How does a person do that? Jesus speaks of the Father pruning, or cutting off non-productive branches; what is he talking about there? What is the fruit we are to bear?

My Thoughts:

Day Twelve

Remain in the Father's Love

As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have obeyed my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. - John 15:9-14

In the previous verses Jesus was encouraging his disciples to remain in the vine. In this passage he is encouraging them to remain in his love. Is there any real difference? We will not have the love of the Father if we are not in the vine and if we are in the vine we will have the Father's love abiding in us.

Jesus gave us some perspective on why some believers do not demonstrate much love. He said, "If you obey my commands, you will remain in my love." We could conclude the opposite to also be true - If we don't obey his commands we will not have his love. Could it be those who don't love are in disobedience?

It appears that staying connected to the life-flow (remaining in the vine) also keeps us connected to the flow of love from the Father. Look at the way love flows from God: It flows from the Father to Jesus, then flows from Jesus to the believers, and finally, as we remain in Christ his love remains in us. It's just that simple. If we are in Christ we will have God's love flowing through us - If we aren't in obedience to Christ we don't have God's love flowing through us.

Then he adds another component to this matrix of the vine, the branches, love and obedience. The new ingredient is joy: "I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete." There you

have it. His purpose in all of this is so that we will have complete joy in him.

How is your joy lately? Check out your connectedness to the vine. Evaluate how freely love flows. Maybe your obedience level is hindering the love and joy flow. Something to think about.

Prayer: Lord, help me to be obedient that I may remain in the vine and your love will flow, making my joy complete. Amen.

Message: Jesus tells us to remain in the vine and bear fruit. We remain in the vine by obeying his commands. The test of whether we remain in the vine is if we continue in his love.

Affirmation: I know I am continuing in the vine because I obey his commands and his love is in me.

Reflection: The whole concept of being connected to Christ as a branch is connected to a vine is interesting. An observation: When we see a vine with many branches we do not distinguish between the vine and the branches. We say, "Look at the vine." We don't say, "Look at the branches." We see the vine and the branches as one. It is the same in Christ. We who are in the vine are one with the vine.

My Thoughts:

Day Thirteen

The Cost and Value of Love

My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this; that he lay down his life for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. - John 15:12-14

So, now we are back to obedience. Isn't it interesting that Jesus keeps linking love to obedience and to the sacrifice of our own will and ambition?

In verse 11 he reveals that the purpose of this whole line of instruction is that his joy might be complete in us, yet, he warns believers about being unproductive (v2). And he explains to them that the Father's love/life flow can only continue as they remain in the vine.

Can you see the way this unfolds? The life of God flows through Christ to believers and that life flow hinges on the believer staying connected to the vine; that is, submitted to the vine. If we are in the vine we are in obedience to God's plan.

Jesus isn't just throwing out words, he is getting to a point. He is calling them to love and he is showing them both the cost and the value of love. His command is just this, "Love each other as I have loved you." Then he further qualifies the love he is referring to when he says, "Greater love has no one than this; that he lay down his life for his friends."

Jesus was teaching them that his love for them would cost him his life, but he was also teaching them that their love for God, the kingdom and each other would cost their lives as well. The lesson seems to be that love is free but not cheap.

Finally he says, “You are my friends if you do what I command.” The cost of his love was his life – the value of his love is what was given to believers through the price he paid. Love doesn’t come cheap, but the cost is far outweighed by its value. He gives this priceless gift of love to those who follow him.

Prayer: Grant me the grace to value your sacrifice and love so that I may walk in obedience to you. In Jesus name, amen.

Message: The cost of his love was his life – the value of his love is what was given to believers through the price he paid. Love doesn’t come cheap, but the cost is far outweighed by its value. He gives this priceless gift of love to those who follow him.

Affirmation: Following Christ and obeying his commands not only brings inner peace but also releases the power of God's love.

Reflection: Give some thought to the statement that love is free, but it isn't cheap. What does it mean to love each other as Christ has loved us in the context of what Jesus is saying about love in our Scripture for today?

My Thoughts:

Day Fourteen

Jesus Prepares the Disciples for Rejection

If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. - John 15:18-19

Almost from the very beginning, as Jesus called his disciples to follow him, he warned them that they would have persecution from the people of this world. He had been persecuted, and they could expect the same thing.

In this passage Jesus gives the primary reason the disciples would be persecuted. He said, "If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world."

It is true. When we accept Christ, placing our faith and future in him, we are born into another world. We are born into the world of the Spirit. People can tell the difference. We are not interested in the same things. When we speak of things which give us pleasure it is so different than what the world turns to for pleasure that they tend to brand us as weird, or radical.

In America we are free from persecution. In fact, many believers aren't even subjected to subtle persecution and ridicule. If we aren't then maybe we are not letting the world know how different we are.

If we indulge in the same conversations that the world does; if we participate in the same recreation as the world does; if we are entertained by the same things the world is; if we have the same ambitions as the world has; if our sins are the same as the average person we meet - then what is the difference between us?

Being committed to Christ is more than a closet relationship. He has called us to let the light of his truth shine. He has said that we are the salt given to the world to season it. We are called to be Christ to the world around us. Some will hate us, but others will be eternally grateful.

Prayer: Lord, make my light so bright the world will see you.

Message: Jesus calls us to let the light of his truth shine. He has said that we are the salt given to the world to season it. We are called to be Christ to the world around us. Some will hate us, but others will be eternally grateful.

Affirmation: The light in me is stronger than the darkness in the world. Some will hate the light because their heart is corrupt, but others will embrace the light with gladness.

Reflection: It would be good to realize the source of persecution early believers faced. It wasn't the government, but it was the religious leaders. Some see a parallel between the leaders then and leaders today who are steeped in tradition and not willing to accept change.

My Thoughts:

Day Fifteen

Jesus is Leaving But the Counselor is Coming

I tell you the truth: it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you. - John 16:5-7

The disciples were beginning to realize that Jesus was leaving them and they were troubled by this. In this teaching, his last instruction before being taken to be crucified, Jesus is preparing them for the next step in God's plan.

From the time that man fell from grace in the Garden God had been guiding him to this point in time. God's will and his plan has been a progressive revelation and now he is taking man into the next phase of his plan; he would send another comforter.

In the beginning God taught man to maintain contact with him through offering animal sacrifice. Those sacrifices were a type of the great sacrifice that was to come. When Jesus, the Christ, the very Son of God, was sacrificed on the cross he opened heaven for all men to be in relationship with God.

It is also true that in the beginning God called mankind to worship and sacrifice at a specific place. Under Moses that place was the Tabernacle in the wilderness. Later Solomon built a temple in which God was expected to dwell. But God had bigger plans.

Jesus, the earthly manifestation of God, the fullness of God in bodily form, became the eternal connection between God and man by his death and resurrection.

When we make that connection through faith in Christ, another significant thing happens. The God who dwelt in the tabernacle, then later in the temple, now has come to live in his permanent home, a home not made

with hands. He has come to live in the heart of every believer. Jesus had already told them that he was with them but would be in them and now he is telling them "I can't be in you until I have ascended back to the Father."

The counselor has come and he lives in every believer.

Prayer: Thank you for the guiding hand of Holy Spirit. Amen.

Message: Jesus, the earthly manifestation of God, the fullness of God in bodily form, became the eternal connection between God and man by his death and resurrection.

Affirmation: I am connected to the Father through Jesus, the Christ, who now lives in me as Holy Spirit, the divine counselor.

Reflection: The message Jesus is giving his disciples, and to all who will believe, is that when he, the bodily fullness of God, returns to the Father that he will return in the Spirit. The Spirit which becomes alive in us when we receive Christ is the very Spirit of God. It is Holy Spirit our counselor, truth revealer and guide.

My Thoughts:

Daily God Walk Tuesday, December 16, 2014

The Holy Spirit Convicts Men

When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment. In regard to sin, because men do not believe in me; in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see me no longer; and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned. - John 16:8-11

Jesus is teaching his disciples about the primary work of the Holy Spirit in the world. He had already told them that the Holy Spirit would take the place in their life that he had taken, but in a deeper manner because he had been with them but then he would be in them (John 14:16-18).

He went on to say that the counselor would teach them all things and remind them of what he had said (14:26). Then he tells them that the Holy Spirit will testify to the world about Jesus (15:26). Are you beginning to get the picture? A primary purpose of the Holy Spirit is to reveal God's plan and purposes to man through the witness of those who believe.

The Message Bible has an interesting way of expressing our passage for today: "When he comes, he'll expose the error of the godless world's view of sin, righteousness, and judgment: He'll show them that their refusal to believe in me is their basic sin; that righteousness comes from above, where I am with the Father out of their sight and control; that judgment takes place as the ruler of this godless world is brought to trial and convicted."

The Holy Spirit has come to reveal the purposes of God and to reveal why the world is ruled by sin rather than righteousness. How does he do that? Through the witness of those who have already been renewed by the Holy Spirit.

Our lives are to be so influenced by the Holy Spirit that those around us will see him through us.

Believers are carriers of Holy Spirit and our very presence in the world expose show the world to what they are missing.

Prayer: Holy Spirit, help me to live in such a way that you can show Christ to the world around me. Amen.

The Holy Spirit Convicts Men

Principle: The Holy Spirit has come to reveal the purposes of God and to reveal why the world is ruled by sin rather than righteousness. How does that through the witness of those who have already been renewed by the Holy Spirit.

Affirmation: Holy Spirit has convicted me of sin, righteousness and judgment. Therefore his life in me is a witness to those who are around me.

Reflection: In this devotion we are told that Holy Spirit will speak to the world about Jesus. How is He to do that? What part to we, as believers, play in the revelation of God's will and purposes to the world?

My Thoughts:

not quench, or hinder, the Holy Spirit (1 Thessalonians 5:19).

The warning is that the world would hate them just as they had hated him. He warns them that if they will stay in the vine connected to him they would do well. He tells them that the world hates them because they have been born into another world and are no longer of this world.

Finally, he gives them a promise. "I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace." He cautioned and warned so that they would be prepared for the attacks which would come upon them. Jesus wanted them to remember that he had given them the Holy Spirit to comfort them.

Jesus was telling them that the way would not be easy, there would be much trouble along the way, but his peace would be with them and to always remember that he, the great example had overcome the world and they could to.

We face many trials and troubles in this life but we should take comfort from this passage remembering that because he lives in us we can endure all the world brings our way.

Prayer: Help me to ever remember that I can endure every trial because you have overcome the world. In Jesus name. Amen.

Take Heart! I Have Overcome the World

Principle: Jesus told those who followed him their path would not be easy, there would be much trouble along the way, but his peace would be with them and to always remember that he, the great example, had overcome the world and they could to.

Affirmation: The path has not been easy, but it has been very rewarding and the peace of God accompanies me on

The Glorified Christ

After Jesus said this, he looked toward heaven and prayed: “Father, the time has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you. For you granted him authority over all people that he might give eternal life to all those you have given him. Now this is eternal life; that they may know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent. I have brought you glory on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. And now, Father, glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you before the world began. – John 17:1-5

“Father, the time has come.” Those who heard this prayer had no idea of the impact this time would have on the world. The most significant event in the entire history of man was about to take place, and it had been on God’s calendar from the beginning. We can almost hear the passion in his voice as he cries, “Father, the time has come.”

Paul, in writing to the Ephesians spoke of this time when he wrote, “He chose us in him before the foundation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight” (Ephesians 1:4). Peter spoke of this time in 1 Peter 1:20, “He was chosen before the creation of the world, but was revealed in these last times for your sake.”

What was this time that had come? It was the time when the Lamb of God would be sacrificed once and for all for all the sins of mankind. In Revelation 13:8 John wrote that he was the lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

Hebrews 10 records, “Then he said, “Here I am, I have come to do your will.”... And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all” (v9-10). Yes, the time had come and the final sacrifice for sin was about to be made. This divine sacrifice

would be made once and its effect would be felt by all men of all time for all of eternity.

The result of the sacrifice of Christ is this: “Their sins and lawless acts I will remember no more” (Hebrews 10:17).

Prayer: Thank you father for that sacrifice of all sacrifices.

The Glorified Christ

Principle: The time had come and the final sacrifice for sin was about to be made. This divine sacrifice would be made once and its effect would be felt by all men of all time for all of eternity.

Affirmation: I have embraced Christ, the Lamb of God, sacrificed for the sins of all mankind. Just as he was the lamb slain from the foundations of the world I have been chosen in him since before time.

Reflection: Some very powerful concepts are addressed in this devotion which merit some very serious consideration. First is the concept of Christ being the sacrificial lamb slain from the foundation of the world. Second is the concept that the sins of the entire world, for all time, were cleansed through the shedding of his blood. And finally; all who would become believers were chosen in Him from the foundation of the world. Think on these things.

My Thoughts:

Another of the eternal mysteries is the body of Christ. We are told that those who have been born into the family of God, through being born in the Spirit, become sons of God, heirs and joint heirs with Christ. Then we are told that we who are believers are in fact the body of Christ on earth today. Though we are many members we are but one body.

Jesus has just given his final instructions to the disciples before his crucifixion and now he is making his last prayer to his Father for them. He addresses the fact that these, his followers, are the ones the Father has given to him (v6). Then he prays, "I gave them the words you gave me and they accepted them. They knew with certainty that I came from you and they believe that you sent them" (v8).

Then the mystery: "That they may be one as we are one." I am certain that we do not yet realize the full significance of that prayer, but I do believe that we are meant to be as one in faith, in unity and in service to the king and his kingdom.

We must do our part to answer this passionate plea made by Jesus on the eve of his death. We have the responsibility of being united in purpose with the entire body of Christ. Our work is cut out for us.

Prayer: Lord, help me to be one with your entire body. I don't understand the mystery of your body, but I do realize that every believer is a member of your body on earth. Amen.

We Are One in the Body of Christ

Principle: Jesus was the embodiment of the Christ anointing and we who have embraced him have become the Christ anointing in the earth today. It is that Christ anointing which has made all believers one just as Christ and the Father are one.

Daily God Walk for Saturday, December 20, 2014

That They May Have the Full Measure of Joy

I am coming to you now, but I say these things while I am still in the world, so that they may have the full measure of my joy within them. - John 17:12

The purpose behind all that Jesus taught those who would follow him is stated in this prayer to his Father: "That they may have the full measure of my joy within them."

All that Jesus taught about the life of faith in God and life in the kingdom was for this one purpose; that those who followed him would have a sense of fullness and great joy.

David wrote of this time in Psalm 16:11, "You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand."

Sometimes we become so consumed with trying to be good and to be "spiritual" we forget that Jesus showed us the primary purpose of his ministry was to bring us great joy.

Let's look at what Jesus said about Joy in these chapters of John which record of his last teaching before his crucifixion:

- ❖ John 15:11 - I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete.
- ❖ John 16:20-21 - You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy.
- ❖ John 16:22 - Now is your time of grief, but I will see you again and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy.
- ❖ John 16:24 - Ask and you will receive, and your joy will be complete.

Let us not miss the point. The focus of the entire ministry of Christ was to position believers so that the joy of the Lord would be manifest in them. David prophesied that there would be joy in the presence of the Lord. If we do not have the joy of the Lord then maybe we need to position ourselves so that we will be in his presence. The purpose of his commands and his instructions is so that our joy would be complete.

Prayer: Lord, help me to always remember that there is joy in obedience. Grant me the grace to submit to you. Amen.

That They May Have the Full Measure of Joy

Principle: The focus of the entire ministry of Christ was to position believers so that the joy of the Lord would be manifest in them. David prophesied that there would be joy in the presence of the Lord. If we do not have the joy of the Lord then maybe we need to position ourselves so that we will be in his presence. The purpose of his commands and his instructions is so that our joy would be complete.

Affirmation: The joy that I have is the result of his abiding presence. I have learned that in his presence is fullness of joy.

Reflection: There are many references to the joy of the Lord in Scripture, particularly in the Psalms. I encourage you to do a study of the joy of the Lord and reflect on the Scriptures which address the subject.

understand the concept of believers being in another world. They don't understand the teachings of Jesus because they approach understanding from the perspective of this world, and this world belief system is diametrically opposed to kingdom belief.

The world teaches that we gain power by controlling and manipulating others; the kingdom of God teaches that we gain power by serving others. The world teaches to get all you can while you can; kingdom philosophy is give to all who have need. The world philosophy is that no one is looking out for you so you have to look out for yourself; Jesus taught that the Holy Spirit is always looking out for us.

It is because of the world belief system which puts self, self-will, self-realization, and all things "self" before others that they have a difficult time accepting the concept of surrendering to a power greater than self.

In this prayer Jesus is asking the Father to protect those he had called to kingdom service. He knew they would be treading on dangerous ground and they would need his strength and guidance to make it.

Just as Jesus came to the world with purpose, so we who are his body today must live with purpose. We must not only endure the world but we must bring the joy of the Lord to the world.

Prayer: Grant me the faith to put self aside, and the strength to minister hope to this world. In Jesus name I ask. Amen.

Disciples From Another World

Principle: Just as Jesus came to the world with purpose, so we who are his body today must live with purpose. We must not only endure the world but we must bring the joy of the Lord to the world.

Daily God Walk Monday, December 22, 2014

Father, Make Us One

My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you.

- John 17:20-21

Is it possible that as Jesus was talking to the Father about those who would believe in him that he saw the future? Do you think that may have been the motivation for his prayer, "That all of them may be one?" If in fact he was looking into the future he saw a daunting task before him.

He had already seen his followers jockeying for position in the kingdom while he was ministering with them. He tried to teach them that the way of the kingdom was to serve one another rather than to rule over one another.

Somehow I don't think the fragmented body of Christ we see today is what Jesus had in mind when he went to the cross. He may have had that in mind when he prophesied that brother would turn against brother.

It is significant that one of the burdens he was carrying to the cross was the knowledge that those who would claim faith in him would be as fragmented as we are today.

Here is a challenge I am throwing out today: Help the father bring unity to the body of Christ by consciously reaching out to a believer outside of the group you normally fellowship. You have neighbors, friends or co-workers who are believers but they are affiliated with a different group than you; invite them into your circle of fellowship and inquire about their circle of fellowship.

It is said that the most segregated hour of the week is at church on Sunday Morning. That is not just true about race but the church is segregated, or divided, by doctrine, denomination, and socio-economic status. The only way the body of Christ will be united is for you and I to take the initiative and reach across those lines of segregation and invite our brothers and sisters into our hearts. Pray about it.

Prayer: Lord, help me to seek unity in your body. Amen.

Father, Make Us One

Principle: The only way the body of Christ will be united is for you and I to take the initiative and reach across those lines which divide us and invite our brothers and sisters into our hearts.

Affirmation: When I look at another follower of Christ I don't see denomination, ethnicity, doctrine, or socio-economic differences. I simply see another brother or sister in Christ.

Reflection: What did Jesus have in mind when he prayed that his followers would be one? Was he talking about the way the church is today or did he have something else in mind? In what ways is the body of Christ not as one today?

My Thoughts:

alarming news that one of them would betray him. He spoke of the blood, his blood, of the new covenant and his body that would be broken.

Finally he gave his last instructions before he would go to the cross. It was simply this: Do not fear because I will return to comfort you. I will not just be with you but I will be in you. You must love one another as I have loved you and great peace will be upon you.

Then he prayed to his Father. The entire 17th chapter of John is given to his prayer and we would all do well to read it occasionally so we don't forget his heart and his purposes for us. His desire was that we would be united in his love.

He says he has revealed the father to his followers (v6) and he prayed that they would get the message. Perhaps looking into the future he prayed that his followers would dwell in unity (v11). All of this could only happen if those who followed would continue in his love.

He concludes this prayer by sharing his desire that his love, the Father's love, which dwelt in him, would dwell in all believers, just as he would dwell in all believers.

His cry was that we would be one in love and purpose as he was one with the Father. Isn't it time for that to happen?

Prayer: Lord, help us to united as one in your love.
Amen.

Jesus Finishes His Prayer

Principle: He concludes this prayer by sharing his desire that his love, the Father's love, which dwelt in him, would dwell in all believers, just as he would dwell in all believers. His cry was that we would be one in love and purpose as he was one with the Father.

Fight or Flight – Or Just Stand in Faith

Jesus replied, “Friend, do what you came for.” Then the men stepped forward, seized Jesus and arrested him. With that, one of Jesus’ companions reached for his sword, drew it out and struck the servant of the high priest, cutting off his ear. “Put your sword back in its place,” Jesus said to him, “for all who draw the sword will die by the sword.” - Matthew 26:50-52

The bravado with which this disciple, John identified him as Peter, is replaced by fear as verse 56 records, “Then all the disciples deserted him and fled.” Peter, on an impulse relied upon his strength as a man to defend Jesus, and at that Jesus rebuked him saying, “Put your sword back in its place for all who draw the sword will die by the sword.”

When backed into a corner it is the nature of man to fight or take flight. The hardest thing to do is to stand in the face of an enemy without defense and trust the Lord. Peter, and I am sure the other disciples as well, was ready to fight to protect their Lord, but when Jesus rejected their help they ran away.

The nature of man is very well demonstrated in this event. When faced with the inability to fight we will then struggle to find a way out. Often we will back out as gracefully as we can, or we may just turn and run off as the disciples did.

Once they began to run the disciples never stopped. Peter tried to be brave and followed at a distance. Later, when Jesus was before the priests Peter cautiously approached the temple courts and there warmed himself at the fire others had built to observe the events. It was at this fire that Peter denied Jesus.

We are not called to draw a sword to protect the Prince of Peace, but neither are we to run away from our enemy. Impetuous Peter knew only fight or flight: Peter the Spirit

filled ambassador of the kingdom of God, just 50 days later, was emboldened to stand before a crowd and declare Jesus as both Lord and Christ. The only difference was the power of the Holy Spirit. We need that power.

Prayer: Embolden me with your power to declare Christ boldly with Holy Spirit power. I ask in Christ's name. Amen.

Fight or Flight - Or Just Stand in Faith

Principle: We are not called to draw a sword to protect the Prince of Peace, but neither are we to run away from our enemy.

Affirmation: I am committed to standing in faith when I am tempted by the fight or flight syndrome.

Reflection: Peter and the other disciples loved Jesus and they would have done anything he asked of them, but now they were confused. Soldiers had come to take him away and he tells them not to resist. Jesus was setting the standard for the future of his church. Do not run; do not fight; stand and contend for the faith in love.

My Thoughts:

done.” He had resigned himself to the mission for which he was sent to earth.

Paul would write of Christ, “Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man he humbled himself, and became obedient to death - even death on a cross!” Philippians 3:6-8.

It was his mission to present his human body as a sacrifice for the sins of all of mankind, even for those who had tortured and crucified him. In the midst of his pain he cried, “Forgive them.”

When the soldiers mocked him saying, “If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself,” heaven and earth rocked with the echo, “Forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.”

As they place a crown of thorns on his head heaven could still hear the words, “Forgive them.”

Centuries later when we reminded him of his wounds by the sin of our life and our rebellion against God heaven still reverberated with the echo of his words: “Forgive them.”

Prayer: Thank you Lord for showing the way to forgiveness even in the most trying times. Help me to learn that. Amen.

Father, Forgive Them

Principle: It was his mission to present his human body as a sacrifice for the sins of all of mankind, even for those who had tortured and crucified him. In the midst of his pain he cried, “Forgive them.”

Daily God Walk for Friday, December 26, 2014

Born in a Manger to Die On a Cross

From the sixth hour until the ninth hour darkness came over the land. About the ninth hour Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “*Eloi, Eloi, lama sabachtani?*” – which means, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” – Matthew 27:46

He was born in a manger because there was no place for him in the world. Where he lived, no one knew. Once he was asked, “Can I go with you?” and he replied, “I have nowhere to go. Foxes have their holes, but I have nowhere to lay my head.” Lord of the universe, Son of the Most High, yet on earth as a man he owned nothing and was held in a place of honor.

Angels rejoiced at his birth, then thirty three years later the heavens were darkened at his death. For three hours the earth darkened in mourning as Jesus, the very Word of God, the one who John declared to be the creator of all things, hung on the cross dying.

The dying words of the man we know as Jesus, the Christ, was the desperate plea of one left to suffer alone, “Why have you forsaken me?” The man felt the excruciating pain of rejection by the people he had come to help and finally abandonment by the Spirit that had empowered his ministry.

Alone and experiencing agony the extent of which we can-not even imagine, this man Jesus, known as the Christ, bore the pain and shame of the entire world as he gave himself for the sins of all mankind. Now the words of Isaiah are fulfilled:

“Surely he took up our infirmities and carried our sorrows, yet we considered him stricken by God, smitten by him, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our

transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.”

He suffered the punishment for our sins that we might have peace with God. Thank you Jesus for giving yourself so that all those who believe in you would have eternal life.

Prayer: Lord Jesus, help me to never forget the price you paid for my salvation. In your name. Amen.

Born in a Manger to Die On a Cross

Principle: The dying words of the man we know as Jesus, the Christ, was the desperate plea of one left to suffer alone, “Why have you forsaken me?” The man felt the excruciating pain of rejection by the people he had come to help and finally abandonment by the Spirit that had empowered his ministry.

Affirmation: I am so grateful that Jesus came, not to judge the world, but to redeem all who would believe from condemnation through faith in the atonement he made for us.

Reflection: There are no more sobering passages of Scripture than those which depict the suffering of Christ and his attitude toward those who were torturing him. It would be good to review the last sayings of Christ on the cross every once in a while to give us perspective on the price He paid for our salvation.

My Thoughts:

God placed an angel with a flaming sword at the entrance to the garden to keep man from going back into the garden and partaking of the tree of life. Man was separated from God and from eternal life.

This separation was further emphasized when God had Moses make a veil which would separate the common people from the presence of the Lord. God did make an exception and that was the high priest was allowed beyond the veil to effect atonement for the sins of the people but the average person was not allowed there.

The altar in the temple represented the fatal price of sin and the veil represented the separation between God and man caused by sin. For millennia man had suffered the altar and the veil with no remedy in sight.

Then Jesus came preaching that the kingdom of God was with them, but they still had the altar and the veil. The sacrifice of animals could atone for their sin, but the veil kept them separated from the glory of God

Then it was finished. The final sacrifice for sin had been made - there was no more need for sacrifice. The veil was ripped and man was finally given access to the glory of God. With the sin issue resolved by the death of Christ there was no more need for the veil.

God has released his glory to all who will receive Christ.

Prayer: Thank you Lord for the work of Calvary and the torn veil. Your grace has made the provision for my redemption.

The Veil Was Torn When It Was Finished

Principle: The final sacrifice for sin had been made - there was no more need for sacrifice. The veil was ripped and man was finally given access to the glory of God. With the sin issue resolved by the death of Christ there was no more need for the veil.

Matthew's Record of His Last Message

When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always to the very end of the age." - Matthew 28:16-20

Matthew, Mark and Luke record the final words of instruction Jesus is giving to his disciples and each has just a little different emphasis. Matthew is emphasizing making disciples.

In these few verses Jesus says four important things. First, he says, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me." He was telling them that he had been given the authority to send them into the world to fulfill his purposes.

The second thing he told them was that they were to go and make disciples of all nations. The message of Christ the Savior is not only to be preached but those who believe are to be taught the principles of living in the kingdom of God.

The third important thing he says is that those who believe are to be baptized. For two millennia now believers have been baptized in water. This Christian baptism is symbolic of putting away our old life; it is burying our old life, just as Christ was buried when he died. And, just as Christ rose from the grave with resurrection life, so we rise up from the waters of baptism with new life in Him (Romans 6:1-4).

The fourth thing Matthew records Jesus telling his disciples is that he would be with them all the way until the end of the age, or until the end of time on earth. We

call this the great commission. He was commissioning his disciples to take the kingdom message to the entire world and he was promising that he would go with.

Prayer: Lord, you have commanded believers to go into the whole world to make disciples, help me to obey that order. I ask in the name of Christ. Amen.

Matthew's Record of His Last Message

Principle: The Great Commission includes preaching the gospel message, baptizing all who believe and making disciples of them. Jesus was given authority to teach and do great miracles and he transferred that authority to all who would believe.

Affirmation: I am committed to doing all that I can to see the Great Commission fulfilled.

Reflection: Jesus was giving instructions to his followers just prior to returning to the Father. These verses contain his last instructions. He has entrusted believers with the task of carrying the message of the kingdom to the whole world. How have you responded to the Great Commission?

My Thoughts:

Matthew records Jesus saying that he would go with them as they went out, but Mark records just what that would mean to those who would accept this commissioning.

The gospel of Christ is a message that is radically different than any religious message the world had heard before. All other religions had as their primary belief the concept of appeasing their gods. The very foundation of Christianity is that God gave us Christ to answer the problem of our sin.

The message of Jesus the Christ is that we do not need to appease God because he has paid the price for our sins. All we must do to become beneficiaries of what Christ did for mankind is to believe in him and commit our life to following his teaching.

That message is so radical that there must be some evidence of its truth beyond just testifying that this is what God said. Mark gives us these evidences. After listing the supernatural things which would accompany believers Mark concludes his writing with these words: Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it" (v20).

Prayer: Lord, grant me the humility to submit to you and the grace to use me to speak words of faith to others. Amen.

Mark's Record of His Last Message

Principle: After listing the supernatural things which would accompany believers Mark concludes his writing with these words: Then the disciples went out and preached everywhere, and the Lord worked with them and confirmed his word by the signs that accompanied it" (v20).

Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high." - Luke 24:45-49

Finally, he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. The disciples were much like anyone else of that day; in fact, they were very much like people today. They believed what they saw, questioned what they heard, and understood through a mind influenced by tradition and experience.

It is after the resurrection and Jesus is giving them their last instructions. They were beginning to understand and to believe that all he told them was going to come to pass. Now he is opening their understanding to the purpose of their call: They would be preaching the forgiveness of sins through faith in the name of Jesus and this ministry would begin in Jerusalem.

These followers of Jesus were about to enter new territory. They had been sent out earlier to proclaim the kingdom of God, but at that time they thought they were heralding Jesus as the king and the king was about to set up his kingdom.

Bit by bit Jesus had been trying to introduce them to the true kingdom of God, but they had been slow to understand. Now he is opening their minds so they can understand. Isn't that like most of us today? We see, we believe, but our belief is not complete; our understanding is not fully opened.

His command to them was that they would go to Jerusalem and wait for the promise of the Father. They believed, but as yet they did not understand. When the

promise of the Father came to them God's plan would be revealed to them.

Prayer: Father, help me walk in the truth you have revealed.

Luke's Record of His Last Message

Principle: The final words of instruction to the disciples was that they were to go to Jerusalem and wait for the promise of the Father. They believed, but as yet they did not understand. When the promise of the Father came to them God's plan would be revealed to them.

Affirmation: I have been to my Jerusalem and I have experienced the promise of the Father. I am now equipped and empowered to do the works of the kingdom.

Reflection: Jesus gave a list of signs and wonders which would accompany those who believed and who preached the good news of the kingdom. The record shows that the message was confirmed with those signs and miracles. Are there still signs and wonders happening today when the gospel is preached? Why do you think that is?

My Thoughts:

Father they thought this would be the time Israel would be restored and he would be king.

Jesus responded by staying on point. He was not sidetracked with the issue they were raising. His purpose was to convince them that they must stay in Jerusalem until they were filled with the promise the Father had given. The future of the kingdom depended upon them staying in Jerusalem until they were baptized with the Holy Spirit.

He had already told them they would be witnesses to his ministry and purposes, but now he was telling them that they would be given supernatural power that would give evidence to the world that Jesus was the Christ and that salvation comes through faith in him. On the day of Pentecost he gave his followers this power and he calls men and women today to stay at their Jerusalem until they are filled with that power.

Prayer: Lord, grant me a baptism of Holy Spirit to witness with Holy Spirit power and grace. In Jesus name. Amen.

Power to Get the Job Done

Principle: Jesus had already told the disciples they would be witnesses to his ministry and purposes, but now he was telling them that they would be given supernatural power which would give evidence to the world that Jesus was the Christ and that salvation comes through faith in him.

Affirmation: Jesus promised supernatural power to those who would seek the Father for the baptism of Holy Spirit. I have received the Holy Spirit and I have access to his power.

Reflection: This series of devotions on the life and teachings of Jesus, the Christ, concludes with this

