



Easy-to-read overview of the Bible

Daily Devotionals for July

<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>	<u>3</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>
<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>14</u>
<u>15</u>	<u>16</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>20</u>	<u>21</u>
<u>22</u>	<u>23</u>	<u>24</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>28</u>
		<u>29</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>31</u>		

July 1

Living for an Audience of One – Sincere Faith in Giving, Praying, and Fasting (Matthew 6:1-18)

Have you ever done something good just to be noticed? Maybe helped someone, gave a gift, or said a kind word—hoping someone would see and be impressed?

In Matthew 6:1–18, Jesus talks about this very thing. He reminds us that real faith isn't about showing off. It's about connecting with God from the heart. Whether we're giving, praying, or fasting, Jesus invites us to live for an audience of One—God Himself.

Let's take a closer look at what He said.

Give Quietly and Humbly

Jesus starts by warning us not to give to others just to get attention. Some people in His day made a big show of their generosity. They wanted to be praised for how kind and spiritual they looked.

But Jesus says, don't be like that. Instead, give in secret. Help others quietly. Don't worry about applause or recognition—God sees everything, even what's done in private. And His reward is better than any praise people can give.

Pray with a Real Heart

Next, Jesus talks about prayer. He says not to pray in public just to be noticed, or to use long, fancy words to sound important. God isn't impressed by how loud or “spiritual” we sound.

Instead, Jesus says to find a quiet place and talk to God honestly. He knows what we need before we even ask—but He still wants to hear from us, like a loving parent who cares about their child.

Then Jesus gives us a simple prayer to guide us. You might know it as the Lord's Prayer. It helps us:

- Remember who God is and honor Him.
- Ask for His will to be done.
- Trust Him for what we need each day.
- Ask for forgiveness—and forgive others too.
- Ask for help to stay strong and avoid temptation.

This prayer isn't just something to recite—it's a model for how to talk to God with trust, honesty, and humility.

Fast Without a Show

Fasting is when we give something up—usually food—for a time, to focus more on God. But even this can become a way to show off. Some people in Jesus' time made themselves look miserable so everyone would know they were fasting.

Jesus says, don't do that. Keep yourself looking normal. Fasting is a private thing between you and God. It's not about looking super-religious. It's about growing closer to Him with a humble heart.

What's the Point?

In all these things—giving, praying, and fasting—Jesus is asking a simple question: Who are you doing this for?

Is it for God? Or is it for the approval of others?

When we live to impress people, the reward stops there. But when we live to honor God, even in quiet, unseen ways, He sees it—and He rewards it in His perfect way and timing.

Final Thoughts

Jesus isn't asking us to hide our faith. He's asking us to live it sincerely. Real faith doesn't need a spotlight. It grows strongest in the quiet moments when no one else is watching—except God.

So today, take a moment to ask yourself:

- Am I giving, praying, or fasting to be seen—or to know God better?
- What small act of kindness or prayer can I do today, just between me and God?

Remember, we don't need the world's approval. We already have something better—the love and attention of our Heavenly Father.

Let's live for Him.

July 2

Treasure, Trust, and a Worry-Free Life (Matthew 6:19–34)

Have you ever found yourself stressed about money, the future, or what you don't have? You're not alone. In Matthew 6:19–34, Jesus talks about what we value, who we trust, and

how we can live with less worry and more peace. His words are both comforting and challenging.

Let's walk through what He said—and what it means for us today.

Choose the Right Treasure

Jesus starts by talking about treasure. Not the kind you dig up from the ground, but the kind we chase after in life.

He says not to store up treasure on earth. Why? Because it doesn't last. Things can break, wear out, or be stolen. Instead, Jesus tells us to store up treasure in heaven—things that will never be lost.

What does that mean? It means living for things that matter forever—like loving people, doing good, helping others, and growing closer to God. Those are the things that have real, lasting value.

Jesus also makes a powerful point: *"Where your treasure is, your heart will be too."* In other words, what you care about most will guide your life.

What Are You Focusing On?

Next, Jesus talks about the eye being like a lamp for your body. If your eyes are healthy—if you're focused on good things—your whole life will be full of light. But if your focus is off—if you're always chasing after money or selfish things—your heart will feel dark and heavy.

What we choose to focus on shapes the way we live. Are we looking toward things that bring joy, peace, and purpose—or things that drain us?

You Can't Serve Two Masters

Jesus makes it clear: You can't serve both God and money. You'll end up loving one and ignoring the other.

That doesn't mean money is bad. It just means we can't let it take the top spot in our hearts. We can only have one true boss in life—and Jesus invites us to choose God.

When we put God first, everything else finds its right place.

Don't Worry—God's Got You

Now Jesus moves into something many of us deal with every day: worry.

He says not to worry about what you'll eat, drink, or wear. Why? Because your life is more than food and clothes. Then He gives two simple examples:

- Look at the birds. They don't plant or store food, yet God takes care of them.
- Look at the flowers. They don't work or stress out, yet God makes them beautiful.

Jesus reminds us: *You are worth so much more to God than birds or flowers.* If He takes care of them, He'll take care of you too.

He also points out that worrying doesn't add anything to our lives. In fact, it usually steals our joy and peace.

What Should We Do Instead?

Jesus tells us to seek first God's kingdom—to focus on loving Him and living the way He wants us to.

When we do that, everything else we need will be taken care of. Not always in the way we expect, but in the way God knows is best.

And finally, Jesus says: *Don't worry about tomorrow. Today has enough to deal with.* Focus on what's in front of you, and trust God with what's ahead.

Final Thoughts

Jesus isn't saying life will be easy or that we'll never face hard times. But He is saying that we don't have to carry the weight of it all on our own.

When we stop chasing temporary things, when we stop trying to control everything, and when we start trusting God with our hearts, our focus, and our future—that's when we find real peace.

So today, ask yourself:

- What am I treasuring most?
- What has most of my attention each day?
- What worries do I need to hand over to God?

Let's choose to trust, to let go of worry, and to live for the things that truly last.

July 3

Judging Less, Praying More, and Living with Kindness (Matthew 7:1–12)

We all want to be treated fairly, loved deeply, and heard when we speak. In this part of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus gives us practical advice on how to live well with others and how to connect with God. His words in Matthew 7:1–12 remind us to stop judging, start praying, and treat people the way we want to be treated.

Let's take a closer look.

Stop Judging and Start Looking at Yourself First

Jesus begins with something we all need to hear: “Do not judge.” It's easy to point out what's wrong in someone else's life, but Jesus warns us to be careful. If we're harsh with others, we'll be judged the same way.

He uses a powerful image: someone trying to take a tiny speck out of another person's eye while ignoring the big plank in their own eye. That's a funny but serious way of saying—take care of your own issues first before trying to fix someone else.

The message? Be humble. Be kind. Look at yourself honestly before judging anyone else.

Be Wise with What You Share

Right after talking about judging, Jesus gives a short but wise warning. He says not to give what is valuable to those who won't appreciate or respect it. That doesn't mean we shouldn't help others—it means we should be wise about when, how, and to whom we share advice, truth, or personal things.

In other words: use good judgment, not harsh judgment.

Keep Asking, Keep Seeking, Keep Knocking

Next, Jesus talks about prayer. He encourages us to ask, seek, and knock. That means we can come to God with our needs, our hopes, and our questions.

Why? Because God is a loving Father. Just like any good parent loves giving good things to their children, God loves to help us when we ask Him sincerely.

Jesus wants us to know that prayer isn't just a ritual—it's a relationship. God hears us. God cares. And God answers.

The Golden Rule

Jesus ends this section with one powerful sentence:

“Treat others the way you want to be treated.”

This is often called *the Golden Rule*, and it sums up how we should live every day. Imagine how different the world would be if everyone lived this way—being kind, patient, forgiving, and respectful.

We all know how we want to be treated. So Jesus tells us—go and do the same for others.

Final Thoughts

In just a few short verses, Jesus teaches us how to live with humility, how to pray with trust, and how to treat others with love.

So let's ask ourselves:

- Am I quick to judge, or do I take a look at my own heart first?
- Am I bringing my needs to God in prayer, trusting Him to care?
- Am I treating others the way I'd want to be treated?

These are simple truths, but they can make a huge difference in our lives and relationships.

Let's judge less, pray more, and live with kindness—just as Jesus taught.

July 4

The Narrow Path and a Firm Foundation (Matthew 7:13–29)

As Jesus finishes His famous Sermon on the Mount, He leaves us with a choice. Actually, He gives us several choices—about which path we'll take, who we'll listen to, and how we'll build our lives. These final words are powerful and direct. Jesus doesn't just want us to hear His teaching—He wants us to live it out.

Let's break down what He says and what it means for us today.

Two Roads—One Leads to Life

Jesus begins by talking about two gates: one is wide and easy, and the other is narrow and more difficult. Most people go through the wide gate because it feels comfortable and doesn't require much effort. But Jesus says that road leads to destruction.

The narrow gate, though harder to find and follow, leads to real life. It's the way of love, honesty, forgiveness, and trusting God.

Jesus is gently warning us: Don't just follow the crowd. Choose the road that leads to life—even if it's harder.

Be Careful Who You Follow

Next, Jesus talks about false teachers. These are people who might look and sound good on the outside but lead others in the wrong direction.

How can we tell who to trust? Jesus says to look at their fruit—their actions, their character, and the impact they have on others.

A good tree produces good fruit. A bad tree produces bad fruit.

So, instead of just listening to fancy words, we should ask: Does this person live out love, truth, and humility?

Words Alone Aren't Enough

Jesus then gives a strong warning: not everyone who calls Him “Lord” will enter the kingdom of heaven.

Some people may do impressive things—like preaching or performing miracles—but if they don’t do what God wants, their words won’t mean much in the end.

It’s a reminder that real faith is shown through obedience—by living out God’s ways, not just talking about them.

Build Your Life on a Solid Foundation

Jesus ends with a simple story about two builders. One builds his house on a rock, and the other on sand. When the storms come—and they always do—the house on the rock stands strong. The house on the sand falls apart.

The rock is Jesus’ teaching. When we not only hear His words but do what He says, we build a strong life that can handle whatever comes our way.

The sand represents any other foundation—when we live only for ourselves, or based on what feels good in the moment.

The Crowd Was Amazed

After Jesus finished speaking, the crowd was amazed. Why? Because He didn’t teach like everyone else. He spoke with authority—like someone who really knew what He was talking about.

And He did. Jesus wasn’t just another teacher—He was offering people a whole new way to live.

Final Thoughts

Jesus ends His sermon by asking us to make a choice:

- Which path will we walk?
- Who will we listen to?
- What kind of foundation are we building our lives on?

These are big questions, but they come with a beautiful promise:

If we choose His way, we can live with peace, strength, and purpose—no matter what storms we face.

So today, let's take a moment to check our path, watch who we're following, and make sure our lives are built on something solid.

July 5

Faith, Compassion, and the Power of Jesus (Luke 7:1–17)

Sometimes we wonder: Does God care about my problems? Does my faith really matter? In Luke 7:1–17, we find two stories that give us a powerful answer. One is about a Roman officer whose servant was about to die. The other is about a grieving widow who had just lost her only son. In both cases, Jesus steps in—not only with power but with deep love and care.

Let's take a closer look.

A Roman Officer Who Truly Believed

The first story happens in the town of Capernaum. A Roman army officer (called a centurion) had a servant who was very sick and close to death. The officer cared deeply for this servant, so he asked some Jewish leaders to speak to Jesus on his behalf.

What's interesting is that the officer didn't ask Jesus to come to his house. In fact, he said he didn't feel worthy for Jesus to enter. He believed that if Jesus simply said the word, his servant would be healed.

Jesus was amazed by this man's faith. He said that He hadn't found this kind of trust even among the people of Israel! And just like that, without ever visiting the house, Jesus healed the servant from a distance.

What can we learn?

Real faith is about trusting Jesus, even when we can't see how things will work out. This Roman officer believed in Jesus' power, and Jesus responded.

Jesus Comforts a Grieving Mother

Soon after, Jesus went to a town called Nain. As He arrived, He saw a funeral procession. A young man had died—the only son of a widow. In that time, losing your only son meant losing everything: family, support, and hope.

When Jesus saw the woman, His heart was filled with compassion. He told her, “Don’t cry.” Then, He walked up to the coffin, touched it, and said, “Young man, get up.”

And the young man sat up and started talking!

The people watching were stunned. They were filled with awe and began praising God, saying, “God has come to help His people!”

What does this show us?

Jesus doesn’t just have power—He has compassion. He sees our pain, and He cares deeply. Even when things seem beyond hope, He can bring life and healing.

What These Stories Teach Us Today

These two miracles might seem very different, but they teach some important lessons that still apply today:

- Faith matters. The Roman officer believed Jesus could help—even without seeing it happen—and his faith amazed Jesus.
 - Jesus cares deeply. He wasn’t too busy or distant to stop and comfort a brokenhearted mother.
 - Jesus has real power. He healed sickness and even raised the dead. That same power is still at work today.
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A Few Questions to Think About

- Do I believe that Jesus can help me, even when I don’t understand how?
 - Am I willing to bring my needs to Him with humble faith?
 - How can I show compassion like Jesus did to those around me?
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Final Thoughts

Whether you feel like the Roman officer—hoping for a miracle—or like the widow—heartbroken and out of options—Jesus meets us with both power and love. He doesn't just solve problems; He cares about the people behind them.

These two stories remind us that no matter who we are or what we're going through, we can come to Jesus. He sees us, He hears us, and He acts with kindness and strength.

So today, let's bring our faith, our needs, and our hearts to Him—and trust that He's still working in powerful and personal ways.

July 6

Questions, Warnings, and Rest: What Jesus Says to the Weary (Matthew 11:1–30)

Have you ever had questions about your faith? Felt ignored when you tried to do the right thing? Or maybe you're just tired—mentally, emotionally, or spiritually?

In Matthew 11, we see Jesus responding to all of this: doubt, rejection, and weariness. His words remind us that He understands what we're going through—and He invites us to find rest in Him.

Let's walk through this chapter together.

When Faith Has Questions

John the Baptist was a strong and faithful man. He had prepared people for Jesus' arrival. But now, he's in prison. Life hasn't gone the way he thought it would. So he sends his friends to ask Jesus a big question:

“Are you really the one we've been waiting for?”

Instead of saying “yes” or “no,” Jesus points to what's happening around Him—people are being healed, hope is being restored, and lives are being changed.

Lesson:

It's okay to ask questions. Jesus isn't upset by John's doubt. Instead, He gently reminds him to look at the evidence of God at work.

Jesus Honors a Humble Servant

After the messengers leave, Jesus turns to the crowd and speaks about John. He doesn't criticize him for having doubts. Instead, He praises John's courage and calling. He even says John was more than a prophet—he had a special job preparing the way for Jesus.

Lesson:

God honors those who serve faithfully, even when they struggle or don't understand everything. He sees the heart.

A Warning to Hard Hearts

Next, Jesus talks about how people respond to truth. He compares His generation to kids who won't join in the game, no matter what it is. Some rejected John for being too serious. Others rejected Jesus for being too friendly. No matter what, they just wouldn't listen.

Jesus also calls out some towns where He had done many miracles, but the people still didn't change their hearts or turn to God.

Lesson:

When we see or hear God at work, we need to respond. Ignoring His message or putting it off has real consequences.

An Invitation to Rest

At the end of the chapter, Jesus shifts the tone completely. He says that true understanding doesn't come from being proud or trying to figure it all out ourselves. Instead, it comes from a humble heart that's willing to learn.

Then Jesus gives one of the most comforting invitations in the Bible:

“Come to Me, all of you who are tired and carrying heavy loads, and I will give you rest.”

He promises a gentle way of living—not always easy, but filled with peace and grace.

Lesson:

If you're tired from life's pressures, or weighed down by guilt, stress, or worry—Jesus offers you rest. Not just physical rest, but deep rest for your soul.

Final Thoughts

Matthew 11 is full of truth for every stage of life:

- If you have doubts like John, Jesus welcomes your questions.
- If you feel overlooked, He sees and honors your faithfulness.
- If you're resisting what God is doing, it's time to open your heart.
- And if you're tired and worn out—Jesus says, “Come to Me.”

You don't have to carry it all on your own. His arms are open, and His rest is real.

July 7

Love, Forgiveness, and Following Jesus (Luke 7:36–8:3)

Have you ever felt like your past disqualified you from being close to God? Or maybe you've seen others treated as “too far gone” to be forgiven? In this beautiful part of Luke's Gospel, Jesus shows us something powerful: no one is beyond His love and grace—and those who know they've been forgiven deeply often love Him the most.

Let's walk through this moment together.

A Dinner Invitation and an Unexpected Guest

One day, Jesus was invited to dinner by a religious leader named Simon. It was a formal setting, likely full of important guests. But something surprising happened. A woman—known around town for her sinful past—walked into the room.

She brought a jar of expensive perfume. Standing behind Jesus, she began to cry. Her tears fell on His feet. She knelt down, wiped them with her hair, kissed them, and poured the perfume over them.

It was an act of love, humility, and worship. But not everyone saw it that way.

A Quiet Judgment and a Gentle Lesson

Simon, the host, didn't say anything out loud—but in his heart, he judged both the woman and Jesus. He thought, “If this man were really a prophet, He'd know what kind of woman

this is.”

Jesus knew what Simon was thinking. So He told a simple story:

Two people owed money—one owed a small amount, the other a lot. Neither could pay, so the lender forgave both debts. “Which one will love the lender more?” Jesus asked.

Simon answered, “The one who had the bigger debt forgiven.”

Exactly.

Forgiveness Fuels Love

Jesus then pointed out the difference between Simon and the woman. Simon hadn’t offered Jesus the usual kindness—no water to wash His feet, no kiss of greeting, no oil for His head. But this woman had done all those things, not out of duty, but out of deep love.

Why? Because she knew how much she had been forgiven. Her heart was full of gratitude.

Jesus then said something amazing: “Your sins are forgiven... Your faith has saved you. Go in peace.”

Faithful Women on the Move

Right after this powerful scene, Luke mentions some of the women who traveled with Jesus and helped support His ministry. They included Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Susanna, and others. These women had experienced healing from Jesus and were now using their lives and resources to follow Him.

It’s a reminder that everyone—men and women, rich and poor, past mistakes or not—is invited to be part of what God is doing.

What This Means for Us

This passage teaches us a few simple but life-changing truths:

- When we realize how much Jesus has forgiven us, our love for Him grows.
The woman wasn’t trying to earn forgiveness—she was responding to it.
- God doesn’t turn away people with a messy past.
Jesus welcomed the woman with love, not shame. He saw her heart, not her history.

- Anyone can follow Jesus.

The women who supported Him were once hurting or broken, but now they were part of His mission.

Final Thoughts

Maybe you feel a little like the woman—ashamed of your past, unsure if God could accept you. Or maybe, like Simon, you're struggling to understand how grace works. Either way, this story reminds us that Jesus looks at the heart. He honors humble love. And He offers peace to anyone who comes to Him in faith.

So wherever you are today, know this: you are not too far from His love. And when you realize how much you've been forgiven, your heart can be filled with love, just like hers.

July 8

Seeing Clearly: Healing, Words, and the Family of God (Matthew 12:22–50)

Sometimes we can be so close to the truth and still miss it. In this part of the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus performs a powerful miracle, speaks some strong words about the heart, and explains who really belongs in His family. It's a story full of deep lessons—and encouragement—for anyone who wants to follow Him with open eyes and an open heart.

Let's take a look.

A Miracle That Divided the Crowd

Jesus healed a man who couldn't see, speak, or find freedom because of a demon. When the people saw the man healed, they were amazed. Some even asked, "Could this be the promised Savior?"

But not everyone was happy. The religious leaders, who didn't like how people were drawn to Jesus, accused Him of using evil powers to do good.

Imagine that—Jesus heals someone completely, and they say He's doing it with the devil's help.

A House Divided Can't Stand

Jesus calmly explained their mistake. “If I’m using Satan’s power to cast out demons,” He said, “that means Satan is fighting against himself—and that doesn’t make any sense.”

He made it clear: His power came from God. And if that was true, then it meant God’s kingdom was right there, breaking into the world through Him.

Then Jesus gave this strong warning: You can’t sit on the fence. You’re either with Him or against Him.

Be Careful What You Say About God’s Work

Jesus also talked about something serious: when people constantly reject God’s Spirit—even after seeing His work clearly—they’re closing the door to forgiveness. It’s not that God isn’t willing to forgive, but that their hearts have become too hard to receive it.

Words Show What’s Inside

Next, Jesus spoke about our words. What we say reveals what’s going on in our hearts. A good heart brings out good words. A hurting or selfish heart brings out harmful words.

He reminded everyone that someday, we’ll give an account for the words we speak—because words matter.

Looking for a Sign

Some of the leaders asked Jesus to prove Himself with another miracle. But Jesus didn’t give them what they wanted. He said, “You’ll get one sign—the sign of Jonah.”

Just as Jonah was in the belly of the fish for three days, Jesus would be in the tomb for three days before rising again. That would be the biggest sign of all.

He also warned them about spiritual emptiness. If someone pushes evil out of their life but doesn’t fill that space with God, worse things can return. In other words, cleaning up your life on the outside isn’t enough—you need to be filled with God on the inside.

Who’s in Jesus’ Family?

At the end of this chapter, Jesus' mother and brothers come to see Him. Someone tells Jesus they're outside waiting.

But instead of rushing out, He uses this moment to teach: "Who is My mother? Who are My brothers? It's those who do what God wants."

Jesus wasn't rejecting His family. He was showing that anyone—no matter who they are—can be part of His spiritual family by listening to God and following Him.

Final Thoughts

This passage challenges us to think about a few important things:

- Are we open to seeing God at work, or are we too focused on what we think should happen?
- Do our words reflect love, kindness, and truth—or something else?
- Are we just cleaning up our lives on the surface, or are we being filled with God's Spirit?
- And finally, are we part of Jesus' family—not just by name, but by doing what God wants?

Jesus invites everyone to see clearly, speak with love, live with purpose, and belong in His family. That invitation is open to you today.

July 9

Listening to Grow: Parables of the Kingdom (Mark 4:1–29)

Have you ever planted something and watched it grow—maybe a flower, a tomato plant, or even just a seed in a cup as a kid? Growth can seem slow, but it's steady and full of life. In Mark chapter 4, Jesus uses stories—called parables—to help us understand how God's word and His kingdom work in our lives. These stories are simple, but the lessons go deep.

Let's take a look at three of them.

The Story of the Farmer and the Seeds

Jesus begins by telling a story about a farmer. This farmer goes out to plant seeds, scattering them across the ground. But the seeds don't all grow the same way. Here's what happens:

- Some fall on a hard path and birds quickly eat them.
- Some land on rocky ground, where they sprout up fast but can't grow strong because there's not enough soil.
- Some fall among thorns, where they grow a little, but the thorns choke them out.
- Some fall on good soil, and they grow well, producing a big harvest.

This story shows us that people respond to God's message in different ways. Some ignore it, some get excited but quickly fall away, some are too distracted by worries or chasing success, and some take it in and let it grow into something beautiful.

Why Did Jesus Use Stories?

After this parable, Jesus' followers asked Him why He spoke in stories. He explained that these parables help people who really want to learn—but they also reveal who's really listening. If someone's heart is open, they'll understand more. But if someone isn't interested, they might miss the point completely.

What the Seed and Soils Really Mean

Jesus kindly explained the parable more clearly: The seed is God's word—His truth, His teaching. The different soils are different kinds of hearts:

- The hard path represents people who hear but don't understand or accept it.
- The rocky ground shows people who believe at first but fall away when life gets tough.
- The thorny soil stands for those who hear God's word but let worries or money take over.
- The good soil is a heart that truly hears, accepts, and grows in faith.

The main question is: what kind of soil are we?

Light Meant to Shine

Jesus also talked about a lamp. He said you don't light a lamp and then hide it—you put it up high so it lights the room. In the same way, God's truth is meant to be shared and seen. It's not something to keep to yourself.

He encouraged people to really listen—to lean in and pay attention. The more we listen to God, the more we’ll understand.

The Quiet, Steady Growth of God’s Kingdom

Lastly, Jesus told another short story about a farmer planting seeds. This farmer does his part by planting, but then the seed grows on its own. The farmer doesn’t really know how—it just happens, little by little, until it’s time to harvest.

This reminds us that God’s kingdom grows in quiet, steady ways. We might not always see it, but that doesn’t mean it’s not happening. God is always at work, growing something beautiful in our lives and in the world.

What Can We Learn?

Here are some simple takeaways:

- Be good soil. Open your heart to God’s word. Let it take root and grow.
 - Keep listening. Don’t just hear—really pay attention. The more we do, the more we understand.
 - Trust the growth. Even if we can’t always see results right away, God is doing something in the background.
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God invites all of us to be part of His growing kingdom—not through big, flashy moments, but often through quiet trust, steady growth, and hearts that are willing to listen.

Are you ready to grow?

July 10

Wheat, Weeds, and the Work of God (Matthew 13:24–43)

Jesus was a master storyteller. He often used short stories, called *parables*, to help people understand what the Kingdom of Heaven is like. In this part of Matthew’s Gospel, He shares three powerful parables—each with an important message about how God works in the world and in our lives.

Let's take a closer look.

The Story of the Wheat and the Weeds

Jesus tells a story about a farmer who plants good seed in his field. But while everyone is sleeping, an enemy sneaks in and plants weeds among the wheat. When the plants start growing, the weeds show up too.

The farmer's workers ask if they should pull out the weeds right away. But the farmer says no—if they do, they might accidentally pull out the wheat too. He tells them to wait until harvest time. Then the wheat and the weeds will be separated: the wheat gathered into barns, the weeds thrown away and burned.

What does this mean?

Jesus later explains that the wheat represents people who belong to God, and the weeds represent those who choose to follow evil. God is like the farmer—patient and wise. He doesn't rush to judge or punish. He waits for the right time, when everything will be made clear and justice will come.

The Mustard Seed and the Yeast

Next, Jesus tells two short parables:

- The Mustard Seed: It's tiny, but it grows into a large plant where birds can rest.
- The Yeast: A small bit of yeast spreads through a whole batch of dough and makes it rise.

These stories show that God's kingdom often starts small. You might not notice it at first, but it grows quietly and powerfully. A small act of faith, a simple prayer, a kind word—these little things can make a big difference over time.

Why Parables?

Jesus used parables to help people think more deeply. Not everyone understood right away, but those who were really listening—those who were open—would discover the truth. It was His way of reaching people's hearts, not just their minds.

Jesus Explains the Parable of the Weeds

Later, when Jesus is alone with His disciples, they ask Him to explain the parable of the weeds more clearly. He tells them:

- The field is the world.
- The good seed is the people who belong to God.
- The weeds are those who follow the enemy (the devil).
- The harvest is the end of time.
- The workers are angels who help carry out God's plan.

At the end of time, God will sort everything out. Evil will be removed, and those who belong to Him will shine like the sun in His kingdom.

What Does This Mean for Us?

Here are a few things we can take away:

- God is patient. Even when we want things fixed right away, He knows the best timing.
 - God's kingdom grows quietly. We may not always see it, but it's working in the background.
 - We are called to grow and stay faithful. Even if we're surrounded by challenges or negativity, we can still be "good wheat" and live for God.
 - God will make things right. In the end, justice and peace will come. He hasn't forgotten.
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Final Thought

Jesus ends this teaching with an invitation: "Whoever has ears, let them hear." In other words—pay attention. God is speaking through His Word, His Spirit, and even through the small things in life. Let's listen, trust, and grow—just like the mustard seed, the yeast, and the wheat.

July 11

Treasure, Pearls, and the Net: What God's Kingdom Is Worth (Matthew 13:44-52)

Have you ever found something so special that you were willing to give up something else to have it? Maybe it was a job opportunity, a lifelong dream, or something you knew deep

down was worth the sacrifice.

In Matthew 13, Jesus tells a few short stories—called parables—to explain what the Kingdom of Heaven is like. These stories might seem simple, but they carry powerful lessons about what truly matters in life.

Let's take a closer look.

The Hidden Treasure

Jesus tells us about a man who finds a hidden treasure buried in a field. He's so excited that he hides it again, then goes and sells everything he owns so he can buy that field and keep the treasure.

What's the point of this story? It shows that God's kingdom is like a treasure—so valuable that it's worth giving up everything else to have it. And the man does it with joy. He's not sad about losing what he had—he's thrilled to gain something far better.

The Pearl of Great Value

Next, Jesus shares a similar story. A merchant is searching for fine pearls. One day, he finds a pearl that's more valuable than any he's ever seen. So, just like the man with the treasure, he sells everything he owns to buy that one pearl.

Again, Jesus is saying that knowing God and being part of His kingdom is the most valuable thing in life. When we realize just how good it is, we'll gladly let go of lesser things to hold on to it.

The Net Full of Fish

Jesus then tells a story that's a little different. A large fishing net is thrown into the sea and catches all kinds of fish. When it's full, the fish are sorted. The good ones are kept, and the bad ones are thrown away.

This parable reminds us that one day, God will sort everything out. There will be a time of judgment, and He will know who truly belongs to Him. It's a serious message, but also a hopeful one—God sees what's real in our hearts.

Treasures Old and New

Jesus finishes this group of parables by asking His followers if they understand what He's been saying. When they say yes, He compares them to a wise teacher who brings out treasures both old and new.

That means a follower of Jesus learns from the past and continues to grow with new understanding. They share God's truth in ways that help others, using both what they've known and what they're still learning.

What Can We Take Away?

Here are a few things to think about:

- God's kingdom is priceless. There's nothing more valuable than knowing Him and being part of His family.
 - True joy comes from choosing what matters most. Sometimes that means giving something up, but the reward is far greater.
 - God sees everything. Even when the world feels unfair, He will bring justice in His perfect time.
 - We are called to learn and share. As we grow in our faith, we can help others understand too.
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Final Thought

These parables may be short, but their meaning is deep. They invite us to ask: *What do I value most? What am I holding on to?* And most importantly, *Am I willing to give up anything to truly follow Jesus?*

God's kingdom is not just something far away—it's something we can be part of today. And according to Jesus, it's worth everything.

July 12

**Faith in the Storm: Trusting Jesus in Every Situation
(Luke 8:22-56)**

Life can feel overwhelming at times. Storms come in many forms—fear, pain, loss, or confusion. But in Luke 8:22–56, we see that no matter what the challenge is, Jesus has the power to help. This chapter tells four amazing stories where Jesus steps into difficult moments and brings peace, healing, and even life.

Let's explore these powerful moments together.

Jesus Calms the Storm

One day, Jesus and His disciples got into a boat to cross a lake. As they sailed, Jesus fell asleep. Suddenly, a strong storm rolled in, and the boat began to fill with water. The disciples were terrified and woke Jesus up, shouting, “We’re going to drown!”

Jesus stood up and simply spoke to the wind and waves. Right away, the storm stopped and the lake became calm. Then He asked His disciples, “Where is your faith?”

What we learn: Jesus is more powerful than any storm—whether it’s on the sea or in our lives. When we’re afraid, He invites us to trust Him. He is always with us, even when things feel out of control.

Jesus Heals a Man Controlled by Evil

When Jesus reached the other side of the lake, He met a man who was suffering terribly. This man lived alone among tombs, and many evil spirits had taken control of him. People had tried to help, but nothing worked.

But when the man saw Jesus, everything changed. Jesus told the evil spirits to leave, and they did. The man was completely healed—calm, peaceful, and in his right mind. He wanted to stay with Jesus, but Jesus told him to go home and share what God had done for him.

What we learn: Jesus has power over spiritual struggles and dark forces. No one is too broken or too far gone for Him. He brings freedom and peace where there was once pain and fear.

Jesus Heals a Sick Woman

As Jesus was on His way to help someone else, a woman in the crowd quietly came up behind Him. She had been bleeding for twelve years, and no doctor had been able to help

her. She believed that if she could just touch the edge of Jesus' clothes, she would be healed.

And she was. Right away, she felt her body change. Jesus stopped and asked, "Who touched me?" The woman came forward, nervous and afraid, but Jesus looked at her with kindness and said, "Your faith has made you well. Go in peace."

What we learn: Even small, quiet faith touches Jesus' heart. He sees us, even when we feel invisible. And He meets our needs with love and compassion.

Jesus Brings a Girl Back to Life

While all of this was happening, a man named Jairus had asked Jesus to heal his dying daughter. But before they could reach her, news came that the girl had already died.

Jesus looked at Jairus and said, "Don't be afraid. Just believe." When they arrived at the house, people were crying, but Jesus went in, took the girl by the hand, and said, "Get up." She opened her eyes and came back to life.

What we learn: Even when things seem hopeless, Jesus is not done. He has the power to bring life where there is death, and hope where there is sorrow.

Final Thoughts: Jesus Is With Us in Every Challenge

In just one chapter, we see Jesus calm a storm, set a man free, heal a woman, and bring a child back to life. These stories are not just about what He did back then—they show us who He still is today.

Here's what we can remember:

- Jesus is stronger than any storm.
- He brings freedom to those who feel trapped.
- He sees and responds to quiet faith.
- He gives hope, even when things seem beyond help.

Whatever you're facing today, know this: Jesus cares. He's near. And nothing is too big or too small for Him.

July 13

Eyes Opened and Hearts Moved: The Compassion of Jesus (Matthew 9:27-38)

Have you ever felt unnoticed, unheard, or just plain stuck? In Matthew 9:27–38, we see Jesus meet people exactly in those kinds of moments—with kindness, healing, and care. He doesn't just see the crowd; He sees the person. And His heart is full of compassion.

Let's take a look at what happens in these verses and what it means for us today.

Two Blind Men Are Healed

As Jesus is walking, two blind men begin to follow Him. They cry out, asking for mercy and help. Even though they can't see, they believe Jesus can heal them.

Jesus asks them, "Do you believe I can do this?" They answer yes. Then He gently touches their eyes, and suddenly—they can see!

What we learn: Faith matters. These men couldn't see Jesus, but they trusted Him. And He responded to their faith with healing. Sometimes all we need is to believe that Jesus really can help us—even when we're in the dark.

A Mute Man Speaks Again

Right after that, someone brings Jesus a man who can't speak. This man is also controlled by an evil spirit. Without a big show or long speech, Jesus drives out the spirit, and the man starts speaking.

The crowd is amazed! But not everyone is happy. Some of the religious leaders accuse Jesus of doing wrong. Still, the man is healed, and the people praise what they've seen.

What we learn: Jesus brings freedom. Even when others criticize or don't understand, He keeps caring, healing, and helping. And no one is too far gone for His help.

Jesus Looks at the Crowds with Compassion

Jesus keeps traveling—going from town to town, teaching, healing, and helping. But then He pauses. He sees the large crowds, and His heart is deeply moved.

Why? Because the people are lost, confused, and hurting—like sheep without a shepherd.

What we learn: Jesus doesn't just care about big miracles. He notices our everyday struggles—our loneliness, confusion, and pain. His heart breaks when He sees people who feel lost. And He wants to guide them with love.

A Prayer for More Helpers

After seeing the crowds and feeling compassion, Jesus turns to His disciples and says something powerful: “The harvest is great, but the workers are few. Ask God to send more workers.”

In other words, there's so much need—and Jesus wants His followers to care too. He invites them (and us!) to pray and be part of the work.

What we learn: Jesus doesn't do everything alone. He invites us to pray, to care, and to help. Whether by sharing kindness, encouraging someone, or simply listening, we can be part of what God is doing in the world.

Final Thoughts

This part of the Bible shows us who Jesus is:

- He listens to cries for help.
- He responds to faith, even small and quiet faith.
- He heals what's broken—whether it's bodies, hearts, or spirits.
- And He deeply cares about every person.

If you've ever wondered whether Jesus sees you or cares about your struggles, the answer is yes. And just like in this passage, He's still asking us to notice others too—to pray, to care, and to help however we can.

July 14

When Familiarity Meets Faith: What We Can Learn from Jesus and His Disciples (Mark 6:1-13)

Have you ever had someone doubt you just because they knew you “back when”? Maybe they couldn’t see how you’ve grown or didn’t take you seriously because they thought they already had you figured out. In Mark 6:1–13, even Jesus experienced this.

This passage shows us how Jesus was treated in His hometown and how He still pressed forward—sending out His disciples to carry His message of love and healing.

Let’s break it down together.

Jesus Is Rejected at Home

Jesus returned to His hometown, where people had known Him since He was a boy. He taught in the synagogue, and at first, people were amazed. But then they started saying things like, “Isn’t this the carpenter? Mary’s son?” They remembered His family, His past, and couldn’t believe someone like Him could teach with such wisdom or perform miracles.

Because they didn’t believe in Him, Jesus didn’t do many miracles there. Their lack of faith held them back from experiencing what He could do.

What this teaches us: Sometimes, the people closest to us have the hardest time seeing who we’ve become. But just because someone doubts you doesn’t mean you’ve done anything wrong. Jesus understands that feeling—He lived it.

Jesus Sends Out His Disciples

Even after being rejected in His hometown, Jesus didn’t stop. He gathered His twelve disciples and sent them out to share God’s message with others. He gave them the ability to help people, heal the sick, and encourage those who were hurting.

He told them not to take extra supplies—no bag, no money, just the basics. Why? Because they would have to trust God to provide along the way. And if people didn’t welcome them or listen, they were to simply move on.

What this teaches us: Jesus invites everyday people to do meaningful things. Sharing hope, healing, and kindness isn’t just for “experts”—it’s for anyone willing to go. And when you step out in faith, God provides what you need.

Keep Going, Even When It's Hard

Both parts of this story show us something important: not everyone will believe, not everyone will listen—but that doesn't mean we give up.

Jesus was rejected, but He kept going.

His disciples weren't guaranteed success in every town—but they went anyway.

And we're called to do the same.

When someone doesn't understand you, when your message isn't accepted, or when things don't go as planned—don't lose heart. Keep doing good. Keep loving. Keep trusting God.

Final Thoughts

This passage reminds us:

- People might overlook what God is doing through you, especially if they think they “already know you.”
- Faith opens the door to seeing God at work.
- Jesus sends ordinary people—like you and me—to make a difference.
- Rejection is not the end of the story. It's just a moment along the way.

So the next time you feel discouraged or unnoticed, remember Jesus understands—and He's still inviting you to be part of something greater.

Reflection Question:

Who in your life might need a little hope today? How can you share it—through a kind word, a helping hand, or a simple prayer?

July 15

Courage, Cost, and Calling – What Jesus Taught About Following Him (Matthew 10:16-42)

Have you ever started something exciting, only to realize it's harder than you expected? That's exactly the kind of talk Jesus gave to His disciples before sending them out to share His message. He didn't promise an easy journey, but He did promise that they wouldn't be alone.

Let's take a look at what Jesus told them—and what it means for us today.

It Won't Always Be Easy

Jesus began by saying something surprising: "I'm sending you out like sheep among wolves." In other words, the disciples were going to face tough situations. People might treat them badly, reject them, or even try to harm them. Some might even be turned against them by their own families.

But Jesus didn't leave them in fear. He told them not to worry about what to say—God's Spirit would help them speak with courage and wisdom.

What we learn: Following Jesus might bring challenges, but we never face them alone. God helps us even in the hardest moments.

Don't Be Afraid—God Is with You

Jesus told His disciples not to be afraid of those who might oppose them. People may be able to hurt our bodies, but they can't touch our souls. Jesus wanted His followers to live boldly and share His truth without fear.

He reminded them that God knows even when a tiny bird falls to the ground—and that we are worth far more than many birds. Every hair on our heads is numbered. That's how closely God watches over us.

What we learn: God sees every part of our lives and cares deeply for us. We are never forgotten or overlooked.

Following Jesus Might Create Tension

Jesus also said something that can be hard to hear: not everyone will support our decision to follow Him. Sometimes, even our own family members may not understand. Faith can bring division—but Jesus calls us to love Him above all else.

He said that following Him means “taking up our cross,” which means being willing to make sacrifices for what’s right. It’s not about being perfect—it’s about choosing to stay close to Him even when it’s tough.

What we learn: Being a true follower of Jesus may cost us something, but in the end, it leads to real and lasting life.

Every Kind Act Matters

Jesus ended His message with encouragement. He said that anyone who welcomes one of His followers is also welcoming Him. Even giving a simple cup of cold water to someone in need is noticed and valued by God.

What we learn: Small acts of kindness matter. Every loving action is seen by God and brings joy to His heart.

Final Thoughts: Faith That Stays the Course

In this passage, Jesus is honest. He doesn’t promise comfort, but He promises purpose. He calls us to live boldly, love deeply, and stay faithful—even when the road is hard.

So if you’re facing rejection or challenge because of your faith—or if you’re unsure whether the cost is worth it—remember this: Jesus sees you. He walks with you. And every step you take in love and faith matters.

July 16

Herod’s Regret and John’s Courage — A Story of Conscience and Choices (Mark 6:14-29)

As Jesus became more well-known, people began asking questions: “Who is this man?” Some said He was a prophet. Others thought He might be Elijah. But King Herod had a different—and much more troubling—thought. He believed Jesus might be John the Baptist raised from the dead.

Why would Herod think that? Because he knew what he had done. And his guilty heart couldn’t shake it.

This is the story of Herod, John the Baptist, and a decision Herod wished he could take back.

Herod's Fear

Herod was a powerful man, but he wasn't at peace. When he heard about Jesus' miracles and teachings, he immediately thought of John the Baptist. He had John killed, and now he was afraid that John had somehow come back.

This shows us something important: even when people seem strong on the outside, they can still be deeply troubled inside. Herod couldn't forget what he did—and it haunted him.

Why John Was in Trouble

John the Baptist had spoken out against Herod. Herod had taken his brother's wife, Herodias, and married her—and John boldly said it was wrong. Herod didn't like being called out, but strangely, he still liked listening to John. He knew John was a good man.

But Herodias was furious. She wanted John dead. And she waited for the right moment to get her way.

A Party, A Promise, and a Deadly Request

One day, Herod threw a big birthday party. There was food, drinking, and entertainment. Herodias's daughter danced for the guests, and Herod was so impressed that he made a dramatic promise: "Ask me for anything, and I'll give it to you—even half my kingdom!"

The girl asked her mother what to request. Herodias told her to ask for John the Baptist's head on a plate.

Herod was shocked. He didn't want to kill John. But because he had made the promise in front of his guests, he didn't want to look weak. So, sadly, he gave the order—and John was executed.

What We Can Learn

This story may be disturbing, but it teaches us some powerful lessons:

- A guilty conscience is heavy. Herod was haunted by what he did, even though he tried to move on.
 - Truth can be costly. John the Baptist stood up for what was right, even though it eventually cost him his life.
 - Pride and pressure can lead to bad choices. Herod didn't want to kill John—but he cared more about what others thought than doing what was right.
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Final Thoughts

Herod had power, but no peace. John had no power, but he had courage and integrity.

This story challenges us to think about our own choices:

- Do we let fear or pride guide us?
- Are we willing to stand for what's right, even when it's unpopular?
- Are we listening to that inner voice—our conscience—or trying to ignore it?

God invites us to live with clear hearts and honest lives. And when we mess up, He doesn't want us to run from our guilt—He wants us to bring it to Him, find forgiveness, and start again.

Reflection Question:

Have you ever felt pressured to do something you knew wasn't right? What helped you—or what do you wish you had done differently?

July 17

Provision and Power: Two Miracles That Show Who Jesus Is (Matthew 14:13-36)

Life can bring hunger, storms, and sickness—all things that leave us feeling helpless. In Matthew 14:13–36, we see Jesus meet people exactly where they are: hungry, afraid, and in need of healing. Two miracles stand out in this passage—feeding a massive crowd and walking on water—and both reveal His heart of compassion and His power over every situation.

Jesus Feeds Over 5,000 People

After hearing about the death of John the Baptist, Jesus withdraws by boat to a quiet place. But the crowds—tens of thousands—follow Him on foot. When He lands, He sees them and feels deep compassion.

The disciples worry there's no food for so many. They suggest sending the people away to buy something to eat. Instead, Jesus tells them, "You give them something to eat."

All they have is five small loaves of bread and two fish. But Jesus blesses this tiny meal, and it multiplies until everyone is full. There are even twelve baskets of leftovers.

What this teaches us:

No gift is too small for Jesus to use. When we offer what we have—even if it feels inadequate—He can multiply it in ways we never imagined.

Jesus Walks on Water

Later that evening, Jesus sends His disciples ahead by boat while He goes up a mountainside to pray alone. During the night, a fierce storm rises on the lake. The disciples fight wind and waves for hours.

Just before dawn, Jesus comes to them—walking on the water. They're terrified, thinking they've seen a ghost. But Jesus calls out, "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."

Peter, eager and bold, asks to walk on the water too. Jesus invites him, and for a moment Peter walks on the sea. But when he notices the wind, fear takes over and he begins to sink. Jesus immediately reaches out, grabs his hand, and brings him safely back to the boat. Then He calms the storm with a simple command.

What this teaches us:

When we're in the middle of life's storms, Jesus doesn't stay distant. He comes to us. And if we step out in faith—even imperfect faith—He's right there to catch us when we start to sink.

Healing at Gennesaret

When the boat finally reaches the shore at Gennesaret, people recognize Jesus. They carry their sick on mats and bring them to Him. Even his cloak becomes a source of healing—wherever it touches, people are made well.

What this teaches us:

Jesus' presence brings hope and healing. He meets both our physical and emotional needs. Sometimes, simply reaching out in faith is enough for His power to flow.

Final Thoughts

In just one chapter, we see Jesus:

- Feed the hungry with far more than enough.
- Walk through storms to reach us and invite us to join Him.
- Heal the hurting with tender compassion.

Whether we face emptiness, fear, or illness, these stories remind us that Jesus provides, protects, and heals. No situation is too big or too small. We can bring our little loaves, our trembling steps, and our deepest needs to Him—and watch Him work.

Reflection Question:

What “small gift” can you offer to Jesus today, trusting Him to multiply it? How can you step out in faith, even in the middle of your own storms?

July 18

The True Bread from Heaven – What Jesus Really Offers (John 6:22–40)

Have you ever worked hard for something—only to realize later it didn't truly satisfy you?

That's what happened to a large crowd in John 6. The day before, they had seen Jesus do something amazing: He fed over 5,000 people with just a few loaves of bread and fish. The next day, they came looking for Him again. But Jesus wasn't where they had left Him. So, they got into boats and crossed the sea to find Him in Capernaum.

They were eager to see Jesus—but why?

Looking for the Wrong Kind of Bread

When they found Jesus, He surprised them. Instead of praising them for seeking Him, He told them something challenging:

“You’re looking for Me not because of the miracle you saw, but because you ate the bread and were full.”

In other words, they wanted more free food—not a deeper relationship with Him.

Jesus told them not to spend all their energy chasing food that doesn’t last. He said they should work for “food that gives eternal life,” which only He can give.

This got their attention.

What Does God Want from Us?

The people asked, “What must we do to do the works God requires?”

Jesus gave a simple but powerful answer:

“The work of God is this: to believe in the one He has sent.”

He wasn’t asking them to do a bunch of religious tasks or try to earn their way to God. He was asking them to believe in Him—to trust that He was the one sent by God to bring life.

Show Us a Sign!

But the crowd wanted more proof. They reminded Jesus that Moses gave their ancestors bread from heaven—manna—in the wilderness. They were saying, “If you want us to believe, do something big—like Moses did.”

They still didn’t understand what Jesus was trying to tell them.

Jesus Points to the True Bread

Jesus corrected them gently. He said it wasn’t Moses who gave the bread—it was God. And now, God was offering them the true bread from heaven.

This bread doesn’t just fill your stomach—it gives life to the world.

The crowd liked the sound of that. “Sir, give us this bread always,” they said.

But they were still thinking about physical bread.

Jesus Says, “I Am the Bread of Life”

Then Jesus made a bold statement:

“I am the Bread of Life.”

He was saying, “I’m not just here to give you bread—I am the bread. If you come to Me, you’ll never be hungry again. If you believe in Me, you’ll never be thirsty.”

Jesus explained that He had come down from heaven to do God’s will—and God’s will is that everyone who believes in Jesus will have eternal life and be raised to life again at the last day.

What an amazing promise.

What Does This Mean for Us Today?

We live in a world that offers us many kinds of “bread”—things we think will satisfy us: money, success, relationships, comfort. But just like the food the crowd ate, these things don’t last. They don’t feed our souls.

Jesus offers something deeper. He offers Himself.

He invites us to come to Him, to trust Him, and to receive the life that only He can give. Not just a better life now, but eternal life that starts today and lasts forever.

Final Thoughts

The crowd came to Jesus looking for another free meal. What they got instead was an invitation to receive the Bread that never runs out.

Jesus still makes that offer today.

Are you hungry for something more?

Come to Him. Believe in Him. And never hunger again.

July 19

When the Teaching Gets Tough — Staying with Jesus When It's Hard (John 6:41-71)

Have you ever heard something that challenged what you thought you knew? Maybe it made you uncomfortable or confused you. In John 6:41–71, Jesus says some things that were hard for people to understand—and many walked away from Him because of it. But others stayed. This moment helps us see what real faith looks like, especially when following Jesus isn't easy.

The People Start to Complain

Jesus had just said that He was the “bread that came down from heaven.” That sounded strange to the crowd. They said, “Wait a minute—we know His parents. How can He say He came from heaven?”

The people couldn't get past what they thought they knew. They looked at Jesus as just a regular man, not someone sent by God. Because of this, they started to doubt Him.

Jesus Explains Even More

Jesus didn't back down. In fact, He took the conversation even deeper. He said that to have eternal life, people had to eat His flesh and drink His blood.

This sounded shocking! But Jesus was speaking spiritually, not literally. He meant that people needed to fully accept Him—His life, His death, and His sacrifice. He was offering something greater than physical food. He was offering life that never ends.

Still, the words were hard to hear. Many people didn't understand, and some were offended.

Some Disciples Walk Away

What Jesus said was difficult. It challenged the crowd's ideas, and many didn't want to hear more. So they left. They walked away from the one who had just fed thousands and healed the sick. They were okay with the miracles—but not the message.

This was a turning point. Not everyone who followed Jesus wanted to follow Him forever—especially when the road got tough.

Peter Speaks Up with Faith

After many left, Jesus turned to His closest disciples and asked, “Do you want to leave too?”

Peter answered with a beautiful reply:

“Lord, where else would we go? You have the words of eternal life. We believe and know that you are the Holy One of God.”

Peter didn’t fully understand everything Jesus said—but he knew who Jesus was. And that was enough to stay.

A Quiet Warning

Jesus also mentioned that one of the Twelve (Judas) would later betray Him. This reminds us that even people close to Jesus can struggle with belief. It’s not about being near Him physically—it’s about truly trusting Him.

What This Means for Us

This story teaches us an important truth: following Jesus isn’t always easy. Sometimes His words challenge us. Sometimes life brings questions we can’t answer. But real faith means staying close to Him—even when we don’t understand everything.

Peter’s response is a great example for us. When things are confusing or hard, we can still say, “Lord, where else would I go? You have the words of life.”

Reflection:

Has there ever been a time when something about faith felt confusing or difficult? What helped you keep going?

Encouragement:

Jesus invites you to walk with Him, even when it’s not easy. He doesn’t expect us to have all the answers—He just asks us to trust Him and stay close.

July 20

What Really Defiles Us (Mark 7:1-37)

Have you ever felt like someone judged you just for not following the “rules”? In Mark chapter 7, Jesus has some strong words for people who care more about traditions than true faith. He also shows us what it means to really believe—even when others might say you don’t belong.

Let’s walk through this powerful chapter and see what we can learn.

Clean Hands vs. Clean Hearts

It all starts when some religious leaders, called Pharisees, noticed that Jesus’ disciples weren’t washing their hands before eating. Now this wasn’t just about hygiene—it was a religious ritual they believed made someone “clean” before God.

They asked Jesus, “Why don’t your disciples follow the traditions of our elders?”

Jesus didn’t hold back. He pointed out that these leaders were more focused on man-made rules than on God’s actual commands. He even quoted the prophet Isaiah, saying, “These people honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.”

Jesus made it clear: following traditions doesn’t mean much if your heart isn’t right.

What Really Makes Us Unclean

Then Jesus turned to the crowd and taught a simple but powerful truth. He said, “Nothing outside a person can make them unclean by going into them. It’s what comes out that defiles them.”

In other words, it’s not about what you eat or whether you wash your hands a certain way. It’s about what’s in your heart.

Jesus explained that evil thoughts, pride, jealousy, lying, and other sins come from the inside. That’s what truly separates us from God—not what we eat or touch.

A Mother’s Bold Faith

Next, Jesus traveled to a region called Tyre. There, a Gentile woman (someone who wasn’t Jewish) came to Him. Her daughter was suffering from an evil spirit, and she begged Jesus

to help.

At first, Jesus gave her a puzzling response, comparing the children (Israelites) and the “dogs” (Gentiles). But she didn’t give up. She replied, “Even the dogs under the table eat the children’s crumbs.”

Her answer showed deep humility and great faith. Jesus was moved and told her that her daughter had been healed. Even though she was an outsider, her faith was enough.

Healing a Deaf and Mute Man

Finally, Jesus went to a region called the Decapolis, where people brought Him a man who was deaf and could barely speak. They begged Jesus to heal him.

Jesus took the man aside, touched his ears and tongue, and said, “Be opened.” Immediately, the man could hear and speak clearly!

The crowd was amazed and said, “He has done everything well!”

What Can We Learn from Mark 7?

This chapter shows us three important things:

1. God cares more about the heart than outward rules. Following religious customs means nothing if our hearts are full of pride, anger, or selfishness.
2. Faith matters more than background. The Syrophoenician woman wasn’t part of the “in” crowd, but Jesus honored her faith anyway.
3. Jesus is powerful and compassionate. He heals with a touch and responds to those in need—even when others might overlook them.

No matter who you are or where you come from, Jesus cares more about your heart than your history. And when you come to Him with honest faith, He listens—and He heals.

July 21

Seeing Beyond the Surface: Lessons from Jesus' Compassion and Warnings (Matthew 15:32-16:12)

Sometimes we need reminders—not just about what God *can* do, but what He's already done. In one part of Jesus' ministry, we see a powerful moment where He feeds a large crowd, faces criticism from religious leaders, and gently warns His disciples to think deeper about their faith.

Let's walk through the story together and see what it teaches us.

Compassion That Leads to Action

A huge crowd had been following Jesus for three days. They were hungry and far from home, but instead of sending them away, Jesus looked at them with deep compassion. He didn't just feel sorry for them—He decided to feed them.

He asked His disciples what food they had, and it wasn't much—just seven loaves of bread and a few small fish. But Jesus blessed it, broke it, and had the people sit down.

Miraculously, everyone ate until they were full, and there were even baskets of leftovers!

Jesus didn't ignore their needs. He saw their hunger, involved His followers, and provided more than enough. That's the kind of God He is—one who sees, cares, and provides.

Asking for Signs but Missing the Point

After that, some religious leaders came to Jesus and asked Him for a sign from heaven.

They wanted proof that He was truly sent by God. But the truth is, Jesus had already been healing, teaching, and performing miracles. The signs were already there—they just refused to see them.

Jesus told them they were good at predicting the weather by looking at the sky, but couldn't recognize the spiritual signs right in front of them. They were stuck in their doubt, even while standing face-to-face with the Son of God.

Sometimes we're like that too. We want God to give us “just one more sign,” when He's already given us so many reasons to trust Him.

A Gentle but Firm Warning

Later, while Jesus and His disciples were in a boat, the disciples realized they had forgotten to bring bread. Jesus, knowing what they were thinking, used the moment to give them a warning: “Be careful of the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees.”

At first, the disciples were confused. They thought He was still talking about bread! But Jesus reminded them of how He had fed thousands with just a few loaves—twice. He wasn’t worried about food. He was warning them about influence.

Just like yeast spreads through dough, wrong beliefs and attitudes—like those held by the religious leaders—can quietly shape how we think and live. Jesus was telling His disciples to stay alert and not let false teaching or prideful attitudes take root in their hearts.

What Does This Mean for Us Today?

This story reminds us of a few important truths:

- God sees our needs and cares deeply—not just about spiritual things, but also our daily struggles.
- We don’t need to keep asking for signs to believe. Sometimes faith means remembering what God has already done.
- We need to guard our hearts against ideas or influences that pull us away from trusting Jesus fully.

Even when the disciples didn’t understand at first, Jesus didn’t give up on them—and He doesn’t give up on us either. He teaches patiently, and He wants us to grow, think deeper, and trust Him more.

Have you ever missed what God was doing because you were focused on something small or surface-level? Let’s keep our eyes open—not just for signs, but for the Savior Himself.

July 22

Seeing Clearly and Following Fully (Mark 8:22-37)

Have you ever felt like you’re trying to understand something important, but it’s just a little blurry? Maybe you’re searching for clarity about who Jesus is or what it really means to

follow Him. In this part of Mark's Gospel, we see Jesus gently helping His followers move from confusion to clarity—and calling them to take bold steps of faith.

Let's take a closer look at what happens.

Healing in Stages

Jesus and His disciples arrived in a town called Bethsaida. Some people brought a blind man to Jesus and begged Him to heal him. Jesus took the man by the hand and led him outside the village. Then, He spit on the man's eyes, placed His hands on him, and asked, "Do you see anything?"

The man replied, "I see people, but they look like trees walking around." His sight had started to return, but it wasn't clear yet.

So Jesus touched his eyes again, and this time, the man saw everything clearly.

This is the only story in the Bible where Jesus heals someone in two stages. Why? Maybe to show us something deeper. Just like that man, sometimes our understanding of Jesus doesn't come all at once. It's a process. He meets us where we are and gently helps us see more clearly over time.

A Question That Changes Everything

As Jesus and His disciples continued traveling, He asked them an important question: "Who do people say I am?"

They gave various answers: John the Baptist, Elijah, one of the prophets.

Then Jesus made it personal: "But who do *you* say I am?"

Peter spoke up boldly: "You are the Messiah."

Peter got it right. He recognized that Jesus wasn't just a great teacher or a miracle worker—He was the Savior they had been waiting for. But Peter didn't fully understand what that meant yet, and Jesus told them not to tell anyone for now.

A Hard Truth to Hear

Right after Peter's big declaration, Jesus began to explain what it meant to be the Messiah. He told them He would suffer, be rejected, killed, and then rise again.

This shocked the disciples. Peter even pulled Jesus aside and tried to stop Him from saying these things.

But Jesus corrected Peter strongly: "You are not thinking about the things of God, but the things of people."

Peter wanted a victorious, powerful Messiah—but Jesus came to save through suffering. This was not what anyone expected, but it was exactly what the world needed.

The Cost of Following Jesus

Then Jesus turned to the crowd and said something powerful:

"If anyone wants to follow me, they must say no to themselves, take up their cross, and follow me."

He explained that trying to save your life your own way will actually cause you to lose what matters most—your soul. But if you're willing to give up control and trust Him fully, that's when you truly find life.

Jesus doesn't promise comfort or ease. He offers something much better—purpose, truth, and eternal hope. But it comes with a cost: surrender.

Seeing Clearly, Following Fully

This part of Mark's Gospel shows a clear journey:

- A blind man slowly begins to see.
- A disciple begins to recognize who Jesus is.
- Jesus reveals what following Him really involves.

It's a journey we're all invited to take. Jesus doesn't expect us to understand everything right away. He walks with us, teaches us, and helps us see more clearly over time. But once we begin to see who He really is, He invites us to follow—with open hands and a willing heart.

So here's the question Jesus still asks today: "Who do *you* say I am?"

And when you answer, are you ready to follow Him fully, wherever He leads?

July 23

Glory, Confusion, and Compassion: Lessons from the Mountain and the Valley (Luke 9:28-45)

Have you ever had a moment where everything felt clear—like God was right there with you—and then suddenly, life got messy again? In this part of Luke's Gospel, we see that same shift. Jesus shows His closest friends a glimpse of His glory on a mountain, but they come down to find pain, confusion, and struggle. Through it all, we see who Jesus really is and why we can trust Him.

Let's explore what happened.

A Glimpse of Glory

Jesus took three of His disciples—Peter, James, and John—up a mountain to pray. While Jesus was praying, something amazing happened: His face changed, and His clothes became as bright as a flash of lightning. Suddenly, two famous figures from the Old Testament—Moses and Elijah—appeared and spoke with Him about His coming death in Jerusalem.

The disciples were tired and overwhelmed, but they woke up just in time to see the glory of Jesus and the two men with Him. Peter, not knowing what to say, suggested building shelters for them to stay. Then, a cloud appeared and covered them, and they heard a voice from the cloud say, "This is my Son, whom I have chosen. Listen to Him."

It was a holy, unforgettable moment. The disciples were in awe—and silent afterward.

What can we learn from this?

Jesus is more than a good teacher or miracle worker. He is the chosen Son of God. And when God says, "Listen to Him," it's a reminder to pay attention—not just when things are going well, but always.

Back to Reality

The very next day, Jesus and His disciples came down the mountain—and walked right into a problem. A man in the crowd called out, begging Jesus to help his only son. The boy was suffering terribly, tormented by an evil spirit that would throw him into violent fits.

The man explained that he had asked the disciples to help, but they couldn't do it.

Real life isn't always peaceful or easy.

Even after experiencing something amazing on the mountain, the disciples came back to a broken, hurting world. That's often how life goes—one moment feels full of faith and wonder, and the next we're struggling with problems we can't fix on our own.

Jesus Steps In

Jesus was frustrated by the lack of faith He saw around Him, but He didn't walk away. Instead, He told the man to bring his son. As the boy approached, the spirit attacked him again. But Jesus rebuked the spirit, healed the boy, and gave him back to his father.

The crowd was amazed. They saw the power of God in action.

When we feel helpless, Jesus isn't.

Even when others fail, even when our faith feels small, Jesus has the power to heal, restore, and make things right.

Still Not Understanding

While everyone was still amazed, Jesus turned to His disciples and told them something serious: He was going to be handed over to His enemies.

But the disciples didn't understand. In fact, they were afraid to even ask what He meant.

This wasn't the first time Jesus had spoken about His suffering and death. But it didn't fit their expectations. They wanted glory, not pain. Victory, not a cross.

Sometimes we don't understand what God is doing.

But even when we're confused or afraid, He still invites us to follow and trust Him.

From the Mountain to the Mess

This story is a powerful reminder that Jesus meets us in both the mountaintop moments and the messy ones. He shows us His glory, yes—but He also walks down into our pain, our confusion, and our weakness to bring healing and hope.

We may not always understand the plan, but we can trust the One who holds it all.

So here's the question for you:

Are you listening to Jesus—not just when it's easy, but also when life feels confusing or hard?

He's still speaking. He's still healing. And He's still inviting us to follow Him.

July 24

Small Coins, Big Lessons: Humility and Care in God's Kingdom (Matthew 17:24-18:6)

Sometimes the smallest stories in the Bible carry the biggest lessons. In this part of Matthew's Gospel, we see Jesus do something unexpected to pay a tax, and then He teaches His disciples what greatness really looks like. It's all about humility, trust, and caring for others—especially the ones who seem small or unimportant.

Let's take a closer look at what happened.

A Coin in a Fish: Trusting God to Provide

When Jesus and His disciples arrived in a town called Capernaum, some tax collectors came up to Peter and asked, "Does your teacher pay the temple tax?" Peter said yes, even though he hadn't actually checked with Jesus first.

Later, Jesus asked Peter a question: "Do kings collect taxes from their own children or from others?" Peter answered, "From others." Jesus agreed—since He is the Son of God, He shouldn't have to pay the temple tax at all.

But Jesus didn't want to cause trouble or offend anyone. So He told Peter to go fishing. The first fish Peter caught would have a coin in its mouth—just the right amount to pay the tax for both of them.

What can we learn from this?

Even though Jesus had every right not to pay the tax, He chose to be kind and respectful. He didn't start a fight. He also showed that God can provide in amazing and unexpected ways—even through a fish with a coin in its mouth!

Who Is the Greatest? Becoming Like a Child

Soon after, the disciples asked Jesus a big question: “Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?”

Maybe they were hoping to hear that it would be one of them. But Jesus did something surprising—He called over a little child. Then He said, “Unless you change and become like children, you won't even enter the kingdom of heaven.”

He explained that the greatest person in God's kingdom is the one who is humble like a child.

What does that mean for us?

In God's eyes, greatness isn't about being important, powerful, or popular. It's about being humble—willing to learn, willing to trust, and not thinking you're better than others. Just like little children depend on their parents, we're called to depend on God.

A Serious Warning: Don't Lead Others Astray

Jesus went on to say that anyone who welcomes a child in His name is actually welcoming Him. But then He gave a strong warning: if anyone causes one of these little ones to stumble or turn away from God, it would be better for that person to face a very serious punishment.

Why is this important?

Jesus cares deeply about those who are humble, young, or new in faith. He wants us to protect, encourage, and care for them—not hurt, mislead, or ignore them. Our actions toward others, especially the vulnerable, really matter.

Living It Out: Humility and Care

This passage reminds us that God sees things differently than we do. He values quiet trust over loud pride. He honors humble hearts over high status. And He pays attention to how

we treat people who might seem small or unimportant to the world.

Here's a simple way to live out what Jesus taught:

- Trust that God can provide for your needs—even in surprising ways.
 - Be humble, like a child, ready to learn and open to God's guidance.
 - Be kind and careful with others, especially those who are young in age or young in faith.
-

Final thought:

Jesus didn't just teach these lessons—He lived them. He was the King who humbled Himself, the Son who trusted His Father, and the Savior who cared for the least. Let's follow His example in how we live, love, and lead others.

July 25

Who's In, What Matters, and Living Pure (Mark 9:38-50)

Have you ever thought someone wasn't doing things the "right way," just because they weren't part of your group? Or struggled with a habit you knew wasn't right but found hard to let go? In this part of the Gospel of Mark, Jesus talks to His disciples about these very issues—and what He says might surprise you.

Let's take a look at what happened and what we can learn.

Don't Stop Them: Welcoming Others Who Do Good

One day, one of the disciples told Jesus that they had seen someone driving out demons using Jesus' name. But here's the catch—this person wasn't part of their group. So they tried to stop him.

Jesus responded, "Don't stop him. If someone is doing good in My name, they're not your enemy." He went on to say that even a small act of kindness—like giving someone a cup of water because they follow Jesus—matters to God.

What's the point?

Jesus was reminding His disciples (and us) not to be exclusive or proud. If someone is genuinely doing good and honoring Jesus, we should welcome and support them—not shut them out just because they don't “belong” to our circle.

A Serious Warning: Don't Lead Others Astray

Jesus then gave a strong warning. He said if anyone causes one of His “little ones” (meaning someone humble or new in faith) to sin or stumble, it would be better for that person to face a harsh punishment.

Why does this matter?

It shows how deeply Jesus cares for those who are vulnerable—whether they're young in age or just beginning to trust God. We need to be careful not to do or say things that could cause others to doubt, fall into bad choices, or feel pushed away from God.

Cut It Off: Taking Sin Seriously

Next, Jesus used some very intense images. He said that if your hand, foot, or eye causes you to sin, you should remove it—because it's better to give something up than to lose what matters most.

Of course, Jesus wasn't saying we should literally harm ourselves. He was using strong words to make a point: Don't treat sin lightly. If there's something in your life that keeps pulling you away from God, it's worth letting go—even if it's hard.

Here's the big idea:

Sometimes we need to make difficult choices to protect our hearts and stay close to God.

Be Salted with Fire: Staying Faithful and Living in Peace

Jesus finished by saying, “Everyone will be salted with fire.” That might sound strange, but He was talking about the idea of being purified—made stronger and cleaner through challenges.

He also talked about salt, which in Bible times was used to keep food fresh and add flavor. In the same way, Jesus wants His followers to bring goodness into the world and stay faithful to Him.

Then He said, “Have salt among yourselves, and be at peace with each other.”

What does that mean for us?

It means we’re called to stay strong in our faith, live in a way that brings value to others, and avoid arguing or competing with fellow believers.

Final Thoughts: A Life That Honors Jesus

In just a few short verses, Jesus gives us some big truths:

- Don’t push people away just because they’re not part of your group.
- Take care not to hurt others with your actions or words.
- Be serious about letting go of things that pull you away from God.
- Stay faithful through challenges.
- Live in peace with others.

Following Jesus isn’t always easy—but it’s always worth it.

So here’s a question to think about:

Are there areas where God might be calling you to include someone, let something go, or live more peacefully?

You don’t have to figure it out alone. Jesus is with you every step of the way.

July 26

Found, Forgiven, and Faithful: How Jesus Teaches Us to Treat Others (Matthew 18:10-22)

It’s easy to think that some people matter more than others—maybe because they seem more successful, more spiritual, or more important. But in this part of the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus reminds us that in God’s eyes, every person matters. He also shows us how to care for others, deal with problems kindly, and forgive more than we think we can.

Let’s walk through what Jesus teaches in this passage.

Don't Look Down on Others—God Doesn't

Jesus begins by saying we should never look down on others, especially the “little ones.” He could be talking about children or anyone who seems small, humble, or overlooked.

Why? Because God values them deeply. In fact, Jesus says their angels are always in God's presence—He's watching over them with love and care.

The message for us:

No one is unimportant. Whether someone is young, new in faith, or struggling, we should treat them with respect and kindness—just like God does.

The Lost Sheep—God Goes After the One

Next, Jesus tells a short story. Imagine a shepherd has 100 sheep. If one wanders off, he doesn't just stay with the 99—he goes looking for the one that's lost.

And when he finds it, he's full of joy.

What does this teach us?

God doesn't give up on anyone. Even if someone has made mistakes or walked away from faith, He still cares and wants them back. And when they return, He celebrates.

It's a reminder that we should never write people off. Like the shepherd, we're called to care about the one who's missing.

When Someone Hurts You—Speak in Love

Jesus also talks about what to do when someone sins or wrongs you. He gives a simple, respectful process:

1. First, talk to them one-on-one.
2. If that doesn't work, bring one or two others to help.
3. If they still won't listen, bring the matter to the larger group (like the church).

The goal isn't to embarrass or punish someone—it's to help restore the relationship and guide them back to what's right.

The lesson here:

Handle conflict quietly, kindly, and with hope. We should aim to heal, not to hurt.

God Is With Us When We Work Together

Jesus then talks about unity and prayer. He says that when people agree on something in prayer, God hears them. And when two or three gather in His name, He is there with them.

That's a powerful promise.

So what does this mean?

When we come together with others to seek God's will, fix problems, or pray, we're not alone. God shows up and honors those efforts.

Forgiveness That Doesn't Keep Count

Peter, one of Jesus' disciples, asks a question we might all wonder about: "How many times should I forgive someone? Seven times?"

Jesus replies, "Not seven, but seventy-seven times." Some versions even say "seventy times seven."

Either way, the point is clear:

Don't keep track. Forgiveness should be a regular part of our lives, not something we limit or measure.

It's not always easy, but Jesus shows us that forgiveness sets both the other person and ourselves free.

Final Thoughts: Living Out Jesus' Love

In just a few short verses, Jesus teaches us a lot about how to treat people:

- Value everyone, even the ones others overlook.
- Go after the lost, and don't give up on people.
- Deal with problems gently, aiming to restore, not reject.
- Stay united, because God is with us when we work together.
- Forgive freely, just like God forgives us.

These aren't just good ideas—they're the way Jesus lived, and how He invites us to live, too.

Here's a simple challenge:

This week, ask yourself: *Is there someone I've looked down on, given up on, or struggled to forgive?* Then pray for a heart like Jesus'—one that sees, seeks, and forgives with love.

July 27

Jesus at the Festival: Faith, Doubt, and Truth in the Open (John 7:1-31)

Sometimes, people have mixed feelings about Jesus—some believe, others doubt, and a few even get angry. That's exactly what happens in this part of the Gospel of John. Jesus goes to a big festival in Jerusalem, and while He's there, people talk, question, argue, and listen. Through it all, Jesus stays calm, faithful, and focused on what He came to do.

Let's take a closer look at what happened and what it means for us today.

Jesus Waits for the Right Time

At the beginning of the story, Jesus is in Galilee. He doesn't go to Judea right away because people there are trying to kill Him. His own brothers tell Him, "If You really want people to know who You are, go to the festival and show off Your miracles."

But Jesus doesn't jump at their advice. Instead, He says, "It's not the right time for Me yet."

What does this show us?

Jesus didn't let pressure from others—even His family—push Him to do something before the right time. He listened to God and waited patiently.

People Whisper and Wonder

Later, Jesus goes to the festival quietly, without drawing attention to Himself. Meanwhile, the crowd is buzzing. Some say, "He's a good man." Others argue, "No, He's fooling people."

But no one speaks too loudly. They're afraid of how the leaders might react.

What does this mean?

People still have different opinions about Jesus today. And sometimes, fear of others keeps us from speaking up. But Jesus shows that truth doesn't depend on what people say—it stands on its own.

Jesus Teaches Openly

Halfway through the festival, Jesus begins teaching in the temple. Everyone is surprised. “How does He know so much? He hasn't even been trained like the teachers!”

Jesus tells them, “My teaching comes from God, not from Me. If you really want to do God's will, you'll recognize that what I say is true.”

What can we learn here?

Jesus wasn't looking for praise or popularity. He simply shared what God gave Him to say. And He invites people to listen with open hearts.

Jesus Points Out Hypocrisy

Jesus challenges the crowd: “You say you follow Moses, but some of you are trying to kill Me. You're angry because I healed someone on the Sabbath, but you also do certain things on the Sabbath yourselves.”

The people are confused and even accuse Jesus of being out of His mind.

What's going on?

Jesus is showing that some people care more about keeping rules than showing love and mercy. He tells them, “Don't judge by appearances. Judge with fairness.”

That's a good reminder for us—to look deeper and not jump to conclusions about people or situations.

The Crowd is Divided, but Jesus Stays Bold

As Jesus keeps teaching, some people are puzzled. “Isn't this the man they want to kill? Why is He speaking so openly?” Others think He can't be the Messiah because they know where He's from—and they believe the Messiah's arrival will be a mystery.

Jesus responds boldly: “You don’t really know Me or the One who sent Me. But I know Him, because I came from Him.”

The leaders try to arrest Jesus, but they can’t—not yet. His time hasn’t come.

What does this show us?

Jesus knew who He was and where He came from. Even when people didn’t understand or accept Him, He stayed focused on His purpose.

Final Thoughts: Following the Truth, Even When It’s Hard

In this part of John’s Gospel, we see Jesus face pressure, doubts, confusion, and even danger. But He stays steady. He keeps teaching, keeps loving, and keeps pointing people to the truth.

Here’s a simple question to think about:

Are we willing to follow Jesus even when it’s unpopular, unclear, or difficult?

Jesus didn’t hide from tough moments—and He promises to be with us when we face them too.

July 28

Divided Over Jesus: The Rising Tension at the Feast (John 7:32–53)

When Jesus showed up in Jerusalem during the Feast of Tabernacles, people were already talking about Him. Some were amazed by His teachings and miracles. Others were confused—or even angry. In John 7:32–53, we see how the crowd, the religious leaders, and even the temple guards all had different opinions about Jesus. This part of the Bible shows us how people reacted when faced with the truth—and how those same questions about Jesus are still being asked today.

The Leaders Try to Stop Jesus

The religious leaders—mainly the Pharisees and chief priests—had heard enough. They didn’t like how people were starting to believe in Jesus. Afraid of losing control, they sent

the temple guards to arrest Him.

But Jesus didn't seem worried. Instead, He said something mysterious:

"I am with you for only a short time, and then I am going to the one who sent me... Where I am, you cannot come."

This left the leaders scratching their heads. Was He going to leave the country? Was He planning something strange? They didn't realize He was talking about returning to God the Father after His mission on earth was complete.

A Powerful Invitation—and More Division

On the last day of the feast, Jesus stood up and shouted:

"Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink."

He wasn't talking about water. He was offering *spiritual life*—a relationship with God that satisfies the deepest parts of our hearts. He promised that those who believed in Him would receive the Holy Spirit.

The crowd's reactions were all over the place:

- Some thought He was *the Prophet* that Moses talked about.
- Others believed He was *the Messiah*—the Savior they had been waiting for.
- But some doubted because they thought the Messiah wouldn't come from Galilee.

Even though they were seeing and hearing the truth right in front of them, many still chose not to believe.

The Guards Come Back Empty-Handed

The temple guards who were sent to arrest Jesus returned without Him. When the leaders asked why, the guards simply said:

"No one ever spoke the way this man does."

They were amazed by Jesus' words. Even trained guards, under orders, couldn't bring themselves to arrest Him.

But the religious leaders weren't impressed. They mocked the guards and looked down on the people who believed in Jesus, saying they were ignorant and easily fooled. Their hearts were closed to the truth.

A Quiet Voice Speaks Up

At that point, someone unexpected spoke up—Nicodemus. He had met Jesus earlier and was clearly still thinking about their conversation.

Nicodemus said, “Does our law judge a man without first hearing him to find out what he has been doing?”

It was a small, careful defense, but it was quickly shot down. The other leaders mocked him and made it clear: they didn’t want to hear anything good about Jesus.

Everyone Goes Home

The last verse says simply:

“Then they all went home.”

It’s a quiet ending to a tense scene. The people were divided. The leaders were angry. And Jesus’ invitation still hung in the air.

What About Us?

This story reminds us that people have always responded to Jesus in different ways. Some believe. Some doubt. Some ignore. Some try to shut Him down.

But Jesus still calls out:

“If you are thirsty, come to Me.”

He’s not just talking about physical thirst. He’s offering peace, purpose, and a new life through a relationship with Him. The question is: How will you respond?

July 29

Grace, Truth, and Light: Jesus in the Temple (John 8:1-20)

One morning, Jesus went to the temple to teach. A crowd quickly gathered around Him, eager to hear what He had to say. But the peaceful moment was interrupted by a group of

religious leaders dragging in a woman. They had caught her doing something wrong—she had been unfaithful in her marriage—and they wanted her punished.

This wasn't just about justice. They were trying to trap Jesus.

A Public Trap

The leaders threw the woman into the middle of the crowd and said to Jesus, "This woman was caught in the act. The law says she should be stoned. What do you say?"

They thought they had Him. If He said, "Let her go," they could accuse Him of ignoring the law. If He said, "Stone her," He'd seem heartless, and it would go against His message of love and forgiveness.

Everyone waited for His answer.

A Surprising Response

Jesus didn't respond right away. Instead, He knelt down and began writing on the ground with His finger. We don't know what He wrote, but it created a moment of silence.

Then He stood up and said something simple, but powerful:

"If any of you has never sinned, go ahead and throw the first stone."

That one sentence changed everything. One by one, the accusers began to walk away—starting with the oldest. They knew they weren't perfect either.

Mercy with a Call to Change

Soon, only Jesus and the woman were left. He asked her, "Where are your accusers? Didn't anyone condemn you?"

She replied, "No one, sir."

Then Jesus said, "I don't condemn you either. Go, and leave your life of sin."

Jesus didn't ignore what she had done. But He didn't shame her either. He gave her a second chance—with a clear call to live differently. It was a moment full of mercy, honesty, and hope.

Light in the Darkness

After that, Jesus spoke to the crowd again. He said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me won’t walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

The religious leaders didn’t like that. They challenged Him again, questioning His right to say such things. But Jesus calmly pointed back to the truth—He was sent by God and was only speaking what the Father gave Him to say.

The Takeaway

This powerful moment in the temple shows us what Jesus is really like. He doesn’t ignore sin, but He doesn’t lead with judgment either. He offers forgiveness, then invites us into a better way of living.

And when He calls Himself the *light of the world*, He’s telling us that we don’t have to stay stuck in shame, guilt, or confusion. With Him, we can see clearly. With Him, we can start fresh.

So if you feel weighed down, judged, or unsure of where to turn—Jesus still offers you grace, truth, and light. Will you follow Him?

July 30

Before Abraham Was: Jesus Reveals Who He Is (John 8:21-59)

As Jesus continued teaching in the temple, the tension between Him and the religious leaders kept growing. In one powerful conversation, He made bold claims about who He was—and it left the people shocked, angry, and divided.

This part of His life shows us how clearly Jesus spoke about His identity, even when it caused conflict. Let’s walk through what happened and what it means for us today.

A Serious Warning About Unbelief

Jesus began by telling the people something difficult to hear:

“If you do not believe in Me, you will die in your sins.”

That’s a strong warning. But it wasn’t said to scare people—it was a call to wake up. Jesus wanted them to understand that without Him, there is no real hope.

The people didn’t understand what He meant. They asked where He was going. Jesus explained that He came from above—from God—but they were thinking only about earthly things. Still, some people listening began to believe in Him as He spoke more about His connection to God the Father.

Real Freedom Comes Through Jesus

Then Jesus turned to those who had started believing and said:

“If you hold to My teaching, you are really My disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

The crowd didn’t like that. They said they were already free because they were descendants of Abraham, the father of the Jewish people. But Jesus explained that being physically related to Abraham wasn’t enough.

He told them that sin makes people slaves. Only He—the Son—could truly set them free.

Who Are You Really Following?

The people insisted they were children of Abraham, but Jesus pointed to their actions:

“You’re trying to kill Me. Abraham didn’t do that.”

He made a clear point: If they were truly following Abraham’s example or truly connected to God, they would love and listen to Jesus. Instead, they were rejecting Him.

Jesus went even further. He said they were acting like children of the devil—not because of their family line, but because of their choices, lies, and hatred. That deeply offended the crowd, and they started accusing Him of being crazy or possessed.

“Before Abraham Was, I Am”

Jesus didn’t back down. He spoke about His relationship with the Father, His mission, and His authority. He even said:

“If anyone keeps My word, they will never see death.”

Now the people were furious. They reminded Jesus that even Abraham and the prophets had died. How could He claim something greater?

Then Jesus said the most shocking thing of all:

“Before Abraham was born, I am.”

This wasn’t just a strange way to speak. It was a clear reference to the name God used for Himself when He spoke to Moses—“I AM.” By saying this, Jesus was claiming to be eternal, divine, and one with God.

The people knew exactly what He meant. They picked up stones to kill Him for what they thought was blasphemy. But Jesus slipped away.

What Does This Mean for Us?

This moment forces every person to ask a question: Who do I believe Jesus is?

He didn’t just claim to be a good teacher or a prophet. He claimed to be God Himself. That’s why the crowd reacted so strongly. And it’s why His words still matter today.

Jesus offers forgiveness, truth, and eternal life—but we have to believe in Him to receive it. The people who argued with Him that day were holding onto pride, tradition, and their own ideas. But Jesus was offering something far better: Himself.

If you’ve never made up your mind about who Jesus is, this passage invites you to take a closer look. He’s not afraid to speak the truth, and He never hides who He is. He simply asks:

Will you believe?

July 31

Sent Out with Joy: What We Learn from the 72 (Luke 10:1-24)

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to be sent on a mission by Jesus Himself? In Luke 10, we get a glimpse of that moment. Jesus sends out 72 of His followers with a message to share and work to do—and what happens next is full of lessons for us today.

Jesus Sends the 72

As Jesus travels toward Jerusalem, He chooses 72 of His followers and sends them out in pairs. Their job? To visit the towns He plans to go to and prepare the way.

He tells them, “The harvest is great, but the workers are few.” In other words, there are many people ready to hear God’s message, but not enough people willing to go. So Jesus tells them to pray for more helpers—and then go themselves.

He gives them some simple instructions:

- Don’t carry extra stuff—travel light.
- Focus on the mission.
- Greet people with peace.
- Stay where you’re welcomed and share this message:
“The kingdom of God has come near.”

He also prepares them for rejection. Not everyone will listen. But even when that happens, they’re told to keep moving and stay faithful.

Warning for Unrepentant Cities

Jesus doesn’t hold back. He speaks strongly about some cities that saw His miracles but still didn’t turn to God. Cities like Chorazin and Bethsaida are warned—they had a chance to respond and didn’t take it.

This part reminds us that seeing something amazing doesn’t always change a heart. Jesus is saying that when we see God at work, we should respond—not just watch.

The 72 Return with Joy

When the 72 come back, they are thrilled. They say, “Even the demons obeyed us when we used Your name!” They had seen real power—healing, freedom, and lives changed.

Jesus celebrates with them but gently redirects their focus. He says, “Don’t rejoice just because the spirits obey you. Rejoice because your names are written in heaven.”

In other words, what matters most isn’t the success of your mission—it’s your relationship with God. That’s where real joy comes from.

Jesus Rejoices in the Father’s Plan

Then something beautiful happens. Jesus is filled with joy and thanks God out loud. He praises His Father for revealing His truth not to the proud or powerful, but to the humble—to people with open hearts, like children.

He tells His followers how blessed they are. Many prophets and kings had longed to see and hear what they were experiencing, but didn’t get the chance. The 72 were part of something truly special.

What This Means for Us

This story isn’t just about a mission long ago—it’s a picture of what following Jesus looks like today:

- We’re sent – God wants to use us in our everyday lives to bring His love and truth to others.
 - We’re equipped – We don’t need to have all the answers or carry a lot with us. Jesus gives us what we need.
 - We’ll face challenges – Not everyone will listen or accept what we share, but we’re called to stay faithful.
 - We’re deeply loved – Our greatest joy isn’t in what we do, but in knowing that we belong to God.
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Jesus didn’t send the 72 out alone, and He doesn’t send us alone either. He walks with us, works through us, and rejoices when we return with stories of what He’s done.

So today, remember this: You are sent, you are loved, and your name is known in heaven. That’s something to celebrate.
