



Easy-to-read overview of the Bible

Daily Devotionals for September

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September 1

Faith, Forgiveness, and Authority (Mark 11:20-33)

Jesus was never one to waste a moment. Every action He took—even something as small as cursing a fig tree—carried deep meaning. In Mark 11:20–33, we see Jesus teaching His disciples important lessons about faith, forgiveness, and spiritual authority. Let’s take a closer look at what happened and what it means for us today.

A Withered Tree and a Deeper Message

As Jesus and His disciples walked back into Jerusalem, they passed the same fig tree He had cursed the day before. To their surprise, it was completely dried up from the roots.

Peter pointed it out: “Rabbi, look! The fig tree you cursed has withered!”

Jesus had used the fig tree as a picture of what happens when something looks good on the outside but has no real fruit. Just like that tree, many in Israel appeared religious but didn’t have true faith or a relationship with God. It’s a reminder that God looks for spiritual fruit in our lives—things like love, kindness, and trust in Him.

Mountain-Moving Faith

Jesus didn’t just talk about the fig tree—He used it to teach about faith.

He told His disciples, “Have faith in God.” Then He said something powerful: “If anyone says to this mountain, ‘Go, throw yourself into the sea,’ and does not doubt in their heart but believes... it will be done.”

Of course, Jesus wasn’t telling us to throw actual mountains into the sea. He was showing how strong and effective real faith can be. When we truly trust God, even the biggest challenges in our lives—our “mountains”—can be moved. He wants us to pray with confidence, believing that He hears us and can do what seems impossible.

Don’t Forget to Forgive

But Jesus added an important point: when you pray, make sure you’re forgiving others. He said, “If you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins.”

Prayer isn’t just about asking for things—it’s also about keeping our hearts clean. Bitterness and anger can block our relationship with God. Forgiveness isn’t always easy, but it’s necessary. When we forgive, we make space for healing, peace, and answered prayers.

A Challenge to Jesus’ Authority

When Jesus arrived at the temple, some religious leaders—priests, teachers, and elders—came to challenge Him. They asked, “By what authority are you doing these things?”

They were upset about what He had done the day before, driving out people who were misusing the temple. But more than that, they were questioning His right to teach, heal, and lead people. In other words: “Who gave You permission to act like this?”

Jesus Flips the Question

Instead of answering directly, Jesus asked them a question: “Was John the Baptist’s work from heaven or from people?”

This was brilliant. If they said “from heaven,” then they’d be admitting that John—and by connection, Jesus—had God’s approval. But if they said “from people,” they feared the crowd, because many believed John was a true prophet.

Trapped by the Truth

Caught in their own trap, the leaders gave the safest answer they could think of: “We don’t know.”

Jesus responded, “Then neither will I tell you by what authority I’m doing these things.”

Jesus didn’t avoid their question out of fear—He exposed their unwillingness to accept the truth. They weren’t looking for real answers; they just wanted to hold on to their power.

What Does This Mean for Us Today?

This short passage is packed with truth for everyday life. Here are a few takeaways:

- God wants us to grow spiritually—not just look good on the outside.
 - Faith is powerful—even small faith in a big God can move mountains.
 - Forgiveness is essential—if we want peace with God, we must make peace with others.
 - Jesus has real authority—and He still invites us to follow Him.
 - Don’t avoid truth—like the religious leaders, we can miss what God is doing when pride or fear gets in the way.
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Final Thoughts

Jesus doesn’t just want our admiration—He wants our trust. He calls us to live with bold faith, open hearts, and a willingness to forgive. And He wants us to recognize that He truly

has the authority to lead our lives.

Is there a “mountain” you need to bring to God in prayer? Is there someone you need to forgive? Are you holding back from fully trusting Jesus’ authority?

Today is a good day to take that next step of faith.

September 2

Two Stories That Speak to the Heart (Matthew 21:28-46)

Have you ever said you’d do something—and then didn’t follow through? Or maybe you refused at first, but later changed your mind and did the right thing. In Matthew 21:28–46, Jesus tells two powerful stories that speak directly to our hearts. These stories—called parables—teach us about obedience, rejection, and what it means to be part of God’s kingdom.

Let’s walk through them together.

Story 1: The Two Sons

Jesus begins with a simple story: A father asks his two sons to go work in his vineyard.

- The first son says, “No, I won’t,” but later changes his mind and goes.
- The second son says, “Yes, sir,” but never goes.

Jesus then asks a question: “Which of the two did what his father wanted?”

The answer is clear—the first son.

Jesus used this story to show the difference between saying the right thing and actually doing it. Some people—like the religious leaders—talked a lot about following God, but they didn’t truly obey Him. Others—like tax collectors and people who had messed up—had said “no” to God in the past but later turned to Him in real repentance.

The lesson? What matters most is what we *do*, not just what we *say*. God cares about hearts that are willing to change and obey, not just words that sound good.

Story 2: The Wicked Tenants

Next, Jesus tells a more serious story:

A landowner plants a vineyard and rents it out to some tenants. When it's time to collect fruit from the harvest, he sends his servants. But instead of giving him what's his, the tenants beat or kill the servants. Finally, he sends his son, thinking they'll respect him. But they kill the son too, hoping to take over the vineyard.

Jesus then asks: What will the landowner do?

The people answer: "He will bring those wicked men to a terrible end and rent the vineyard to others who will give him his share."

This parable is a picture of how God sent prophets to His people over the years, but many were rejected, mistreated, or killed. Then He sent His Son—Jesus—and the religious leaders were planning to kill Him too. The story warns that rejecting God's messengers, and especially His Son, leads to serious consequences.

Jesus Makes It Clear

Jesus continues by quoting a verse from the Old Testament:

"The stone the builders rejected has become the cornerstone." (Psalm 118:22)

He's talking about Himself. The leaders were rejecting Him, but God was making Him the foundation of something new—His kingdom.

Then Jesus says something bold: "The kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to people who will produce its fruit." In other words, God's kingdom isn't about titles, traditions, or religious appearances. It's about people who actually live for Him.

How the Leaders Responded

The religious leaders realized Jesus was talking about them. They didn't like it. In fact, they wanted to arrest Him—but they were afraid of the crowd, who believed Jesus was a prophet.

Instead of taking Jesus' words to heart, they rejected Him even more. Sadly, they fulfilled the very story He just told.

What This Means for Us

These two parables still speak to us today. Here are a few key lessons:

- Obedience matters more than appearances. It's easy to say the right things, but God wants our actions to match our words.
 - God is patient—but not forever. He gives us many chances to respond, but we shouldn't ignore His voice.
 - Jesus is the cornerstone. He's either the foundation of your life—or the one you stumble over.
 - God's kingdom is for those who bear fruit. That means people who live out their faith with love, humility, and obedience.
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Final Thoughts

Jesus told these stories to open hearts and challenge pride. He wasn't trying to be harsh—He was trying to wake people up. He wanted them, and He wants us, to truly follow God, not just pretend.

So here's a question to think about:

Are you more like the son who talked a good game but didn't obey—or the one who changed and did what was right?

And another:

Is Jesus the cornerstone of your life—or are you keeping Him at a distance?

God is still looking for people who will respond to Him with real faith, real change, and real fruit. Let's be those people—starting today.

September 3

God's Invitation: Will You Be Ready? (Matthew 22:1-14)

Imagine getting invited to a royal wedding. The food is amazing, the celebration is grand, and the host is the king himself. You'd probably drop everything to go, right?

In Matthew 22:1–14, Jesus tells a story about just that—a king throwing a wedding feast for his son. But this isn't just any story. It's a parable that reveals what God's kingdom is like, how people respond to Him, and what He expects from those who say "yes."

Let's walk through it together.

The King Sends Out the Invitations

A king prepares a beautiful wedding banquet for his son. The food is ready, everything is set, and he sends his servants to call the invited guests.

But something strange happens—they refuse to come. So the king sends more servants, explaining that the meal is ready and waiting.

What does this mean?

Jesus is showing that God invites people—especially His chosen people Israel—to be part of His kingdom. But many don't respond.

Lesson: God is generous and kind. He invites us to something amazing—but He won't force us to come.

People Ignore or Reject the Invitation

The invited guests make excuses. One is too busy with his farm. Another focuses on business. Some even attack and kill the messengers.

The king is angry. He sends his army, punishes the murderers, and destroys their city.

What's happening here?

This part reflects how many people over time ignored or rejected God's messengers—the prophets—and eventually, Jesus Himself. It's also a warning about judgment.

Lesson: Ignoring God's invitation isn't just rude—it's serious. Our choices have real consequences.

The Invitation Opens to Everyone

The king says, "Those I invited didn't deserve to come. Go to the streets and invite anyone you find."

The servants go out and bring in everyone—good and bad alike—and the wedding hall is filled with guests.

What does this show us?

God's invitation is now open to everyone—not just a special group. Whether you've lived a "good" life or made a lot of mistakes, you're welcome.

Lesson: God's kingdom is for everyone. You're invited, no matter your past.

A Guest Without Wedding Clothes

Then the king notices a man at the feast who isn't wearing wedding clothes. The man is speechless. The king has him thrown out into the darkness.

At first, this might sound harsh—but there's a deeper meaning.

In Jesus' time, wearing proper clothes to a wedding showed respect and readiness. In this parable, the clothes represent being spiritually prepared—having a changed heart, true faith, and a life that honors God.

Lesson: Saying "yes" to God isn't enough—we must also let Him change us from the inside out.

Many Are Invited, But Few Are Chosen

Jesus ends with a powerful line:

"Many are invited, but few are chosen."

This means lots of people hear God's call, but only those who truly respond—with their hearts and lives—are ready for the kingdom.

What This Means for Us Today

This parable still speaks to us now. Here are a few simple takeaways:

- God is inviting you into His kingdom, His family, and eternal life with Him.
 - Don't be too busy or distracted to respond.
 - Don't just show up—let God clothe you with forgiveness, faith, and a new heart.
 - Everyone is welcome—but not everyone is ready. Will you be?
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A Personal Invitation

God's invitation is personal. He's not just calling out to the world—He's calling out to *you*. You don't have to be perfect. You just have to come with an open heart, ready to receive His love and follow Him.

So, how will you respond to the King's invitation?

September 4

Caught in a Trap? Jesus Has the Perfect Answer (Luke 20:20-40)

In Luke 20:20–40, Jesus is once again put to the test by religious leaders who are trying to trap Him with tricky questions. But instead of getting caught, Jesus answers in a way that surprises everyone and reveals deep truth. Let's take a closer look.

Trying to Trap Jesus

Some religious leaders didn't like Jesus. They were jealous of His popularity and didn't agree with His teachings. So they came up with a plan. They sent spies pretending to be sincere followers. Their goal? To get Jesus to say something that would either make Him unpopular with the people or get Him in trouble with the Roman government.

They asked Him a sneaky question:

“Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not?”

This was a clever trap. If Jesus said “yes,” the people might think He supported the Romans, who ruled over them harshly. If He said “no,” He could be arrested for rebelling against the government.

Jesus' Wise Answer

Jesus saw right through their trick. He asked them to show Him a Roman coin.

Then He asked,

“Whose image is on it?”

They answered, “Caesar's.”

And Jesus replied,

“Give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and give to God what belongs to God.”

Boom. Trap avoided. Jesus made it clear that people should respect the government’s rules—like paying taxes—but they must also give their hearts and lives to God.

A Second Challenge

Next, a group called the Sadducees came to challenge Jesus. These men didn’t believe in resurrection—they thought that once a person died, that was the end. They told Jesus a strange story about a woman who had been married to seven brothers (one after the other, as each one died), and they asked,

“In the resurrection, whose wife will she be?”

They were trying to make the idea of life after death seem silly.

Jesus Explains Eternal Life

Jesus answered them with deep wisdom. He said that life after death is not like life on earth. In heaven, people won’t marry like they do here. They’ll be like angels—living forever and belonging to God.

Then Jesus reminded them of something from Scripture. When God spoke to Moses from the burning bush, He said,

“I am the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.”

Jesus pointed out that God *is* their God—not *was*. That means they are still alive to Him. God is the God of the living, not the dead.

What We Can Learn

These stories show us that Jesus wasn’t just wise—He understood people’s hearts. The leaders came with traps, but Jesus responded with truth and love.

Here are a few simple lessons we can take away:

- Be honest in your questions—Jesus welcomes those who truly want to learn, not just argue.
- Give respect where it’s due (like paying taxes), but give your soul and devotion to God.

- Life after death is real, and it's more wonderful than we can imagine.
- God is the God of the living—those who trust in Him have eternal life.

Even when people try to confuse or challenge faith, the truth of Jesus shines through. His words still guide us today.

September 5

The Greatest Commandment—And a Surprising Question About the Messiah (Mark 12:28-37)

In Mark 12:28–37, we find two powerful moments in Jesus' ministry: one is a warm and thoughtful conversation about love, and the other is a deep question that makes people stop and think.

Let's explore what happens and what it means for us today.

A Sincere Question: What Matters Most?

One of the religious teachers overheard Jesus talking with a group of people and was impressed with His answers. This teacher had a real question on his heart, not a trick or trap like others had asked.

He asked Jesus,

“Of all the commandments, which is the most important?”

Jesus gave a clear and beautiful answer:

“The most important one is this: ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength.’ And the second is: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”

Jesus summed up the whole purpose of God's law in just two simple instructions: Love God completely. Love people deeply.

The Teacher Agrees

The teacher was moved by Jesus' answer. He said,
“You're right, Teacher. Loving God and loving others is more important than all the religious rituals and sacrifices.”

Jesus saw that the man truly understood. He told him,
“You are not far from the kingdom of God.”

This moment is meaningful because it shows that understanding God's heart—love—is the key to truly following Him.

A Deeper Question from Jesus

Right after this conversation, Jesus asked the crowd a thoughtful question of His own.

He said,
“Why do the teachers of the law say that the Messiah is the son of David?”

Then He reminded them that in the Scriptures, King David himself called the Messiah ‘Lord.’ So Jesus asked,
“If David calls him ‘Lord,’ how can he be his son?”

This might sound confusing at first, but Jesus was helping people think more deeply. They expected the Messiah to be a powerful human ruler from David's family. But Jesus was showing them the Messiah is more than just a man—He is Lord, meaning divine.

Jesus was gently pointing them toward the truth: He is both the promised descendant of David and the Son of God.

What This Means for Us

This short passage teaches us two big truths that are still important today:

1. Love is the foundation of faith.
God cares more about how we love Him and others than about outward appearances or religious routines.
 2. Jesus is more than a good teacher or a great leader—He is Lord.
He invites us not only to learn from Him, but to follow Him as the one who truly understands and fulfills God's plan.
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Final Thought:

You don't have to memorize a long list of rules to please God. Start by loving Him with all you are, and loving others as He loves you. That's what matters most—and when you do that, you're not far from the kingdom of God either.

September 6

Jesus Speaks Boldly—A Warning Against Hypocrisy (Matthew 23:1-39)

In Matthew 23:1–39, Jesus gives one of His most serious and passionate speeches. He speaks directly to the crowds and His disciples, warning them about the religious leaders of the day. It's a message full of strong words—but also deep love and truth.

Let's break it down into something we can all understand and apply.

The Problem with the Religious Leaders

Jesus starts by saying the teachers of the law and the Pharisees (the religious leaders) were in positions of authority. They taught people about God's laws—but the problem was, they didn't practice what they preached.

Here's what Jesus pointed out about them:

- They said the right things but didn't live them out.
They taught people to follow God, but didn't follow Him from the heart.
- They made life harder for others.
They added heavy rules and expectations, but didn't lift a finger to help.
- They did good things just to be seen.
They loved attention, fancy clothes, special titles, and the best seats—but their hearts were far from God.

Jesus warned His followers not to be like them.

What Jesus Wants Instead

Jesus told His disciples to be different:

- Don't seek titles or praise.

Don't try to be important in people's eyes—focus on serving others.

- The greatest among you is the one who serves.

In God's kingdom, being humble and helpful is more valuable than being famous or powerful.

- God lifts up the humble and brings down the proud.

This is a powerful reminder that God cares more about our hearts than our image.

Seven Warnings (The “Woes”)

Then Jesus turned directly to the religious leaders. He gave them a series of warnings—sometimes called the “Seven Woes.” Each one began with the words, “Woe to you,” which means sorrow is coming because of what they were doing.

Here are a few examples of what Jesus called out:

1. They shut the door to God's kingdom.

Instead of helping people find God, they were actually getting in the way.

2. They cared more about appearances than real holiness.

Like a clean cup that's dirty on the inside, they looked good outwardly but were full of selfishness and pride.

3. They honored past prophets—but didn't listen to God's message themselves.

They claimed to respect holy people, but were about to reject and even kill the greatest Messenger of all—Jesus Himself.

Jesus wasn't being harsh for no reason. He was calling out the kind of religion that looks good but has no love, justice, or mercy in it.

A Cry of Compassion

At the end of the chapter, Jesus changes His tone. He looks over the city of Jerusalem and speaks with sadness:

“Jerusalem, Jerusalem... how often I wanted to gather your children together, like a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing.”

This is the heart of Jesus. Even though the people rejected Him, He still loved them deeply. He longed to protect and care for them like a mother with her young. But they wouldn't let

Him.

What We Can Learn

Jesus' words in this chapter are strong—but they're also filled with love. Here's what we can take away:

- God values integrity over image. What's in our hearts matters more than how we look to others.
 - True greatness is found in serving, not showing off.
 - We must be careful not to push others away from God by being judgmental or fake.
 - Jesus deeply wants a relationship with us. Even when we mess up, He longs to gather us close.
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Final Thought:

Let's choose to be real. Let's love God and others from the heart, not just in words or outward actions. And let's never forget—Jesus doesn't just want rule-followers. He wants sons and daughters who trust Him, follow Him, and share His love with the world.

September 7

A Widow's Gift and a Warning About What's to Come (Luke 21:1-24)

In Luke 21:1–24, we read two important moments in Jesus' teaching. First, He notices a poor widow giving a small offering, and then He gives a serious warning about difficult times ahead. Both parts are deeply meaningful and show us what really matters to God.

Let's walk through it together.

A Tiny Gift with a Big Message

Jesus was at the temple, watching people bring their offerings. Many rich people were putting in large amounts of money. Then a poor widow came and dropped in two small coins—almost nothing by the world's standards.

But Jesus turned to His disciples and said something surprising:

“This poor widow has given more than all the others. They gave from their extra, but she gave all she had.”

What a powerful truth! God doesn’t measure generosity by the size of the gift, but by the heart behind it. The widow gave sacrificially, not just what was easy. Even though she had little, she trusted God enough to give what she had.

This teaches us that real giving is about faith, not just finances.

A Shocking Prediction

As people admired the beautiful temple, with its stones and decorations, Jesus told them something unexpected:

“The day is coming when all of this will be destroyed—not one stone will be left on another.”

That would have been hard to imagine. The temple was the center of Jewish life and worship. But Jesus was warning them that the things they put their trust in—like buildings, systems, or even traditions—would not last forever.

What the Future Holds

The disciples wanted to know more. “When will this happen?” they asked. So Jesus gave them a serious message about what was coming.

He told them there would be:

- False teachers and people claiming to be the Savior
- Wars and revolutions
- Earthquakes, famines, and disease
- Persecution for those who follow Jesus
- Betrayals, even by close friends or family

These were not easy words to hear. Jesus wasn’t trying to scare them—He was preparing them. He didn’t promise life would always be smooth, but He did promise to be with them.

“Not a hair of your head will be lost. Stand firm, and you will win life.”

Jesus wanted His followers to stay faithful and trust God, even when things around them fell apart.

The Fall of Jerusalem

Jesus also gave a very specific warning: Jerusalem would one day be surrounded by armies, and many people would suffer.

This actually happened about 40 years later, in 70 A.D., when the Romans destroyed Jerusalem and the temple. Jesus' words were not just spiritual—they were real and historical.

What We Can Learn

Luke 21:1–24 may seem heavy at times, but it gives us hope and direction. Here are a few key lessons:

- God sees the small things. Even a tiny act of faith, like the widow's offering, matters to Him.
 - Don't put your trust in things that don't last. Buildings, money, and even worldly power can fall apart. Only God remains forever.
 - Tough times will come, but Jesus will be with us. He prepares us so we won't be shaken.
 - Stand firm in faith. God honors those who stay true to Him, even when it's hard.
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Final Thought:

Life won't always be easy—but we are not alone. Whether we're giving from our need or walking through hard times, God sees, cares, and promises to carry us through. So don't lose heart. Keep trusting, keep giving, and keep standing firm.

September 8

Hope in the Middle of Hard Times—Jesus Is Coming Back (Luke 21:25-38)

In Luke 21:25–38, Jesus continues talking about the future. He describes some very intense events that will happen before He returns. But even though the things He says sound scary,

His message is full of hope, encouragement, and direction for how to live.

Let's take a closer look at what He said—and why it still matters today.

Signs in the Sky and Distress on Earth

Jesus said that in the last days, there will be signs in the sun, moon, and stars. On earth, people will be confused and afraid because of what's happening around them. It will feel like the whole world is shaking.

“People will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world.” (v. 26)

That sounds pretty overwhelming! But then Jesus says something amazing:

“At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.” (v. 27)

In other words, Jesus is coming back—not in weakness, but in glory and strength.

Lift Up Your Heads

Even though there will be trouble, Jesus tells His followers not to be afraid. He says:

“When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your redemption is drawing near.” (v. 28)

That's powerful. Jesus wants us to look up with confidence, not down in fear. These signs aren't the end of the story—they're the beginning of a new one, when God sets everything right.

A Lesson from the Fig Tree

To help people understand the timing, Jesus gives a simple picture: the fig tree. When its leaves start to appear, you know summer is near. In the same way, when we see the things He talked about happening, we'll know His return is getting closer.

He also says something important:

“Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away.” (v. 33)

That means everything around us may change, but God's Word will always stand.

Be Ready

Jesus ends this section with a loving warning. He tells His followers to stay alert and not let their hearts get distracted or weighed down with worry or partying or chasing after temporary pleasures.

“Be always on the watch, and pray that you may be able to stand before the Son of Man.”
(v. 36)

He wants us to live with purpose—not fear—so we’re ready when He returns.

Jesus Taught Daily

The chapter ends with a small but beautiful note: every day, Jesus taught at the temple, and people got up early just to listen to Him.

That’s a reminder for us, too. Let’s make time to listen to Jesus every day, through prayer, Scripture, and quiet reflection.

What This Means for Us Today

This passage may talk about big, dramatic events, but its message is simple and encouraging:

- Jesus is coming back. That’s not just a warning—it’s a promise full of hope.
 - Don’t be afraid—look up. When the world gets dark or uncertain, remember God is still in control.
 - Stay focused and stay faithful. Keep your heart centered on God, not distracted by worry or temporary stuff.
 - Hold on to God’s Word. His promises will never change.
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Final Thought:

The world can feel shaky sometimes, but Jesus tells us to lift our heads, not lower them. He’s coming again—not to scare us, but to save us. So let’s live with hope, stay ready, and keep our eyes on Him.

September 9

Be Ready and Be Faithful—Lessons from Jesus’ Stories (Matthew 25:1-30)

In Matthew 25:1–30, Jesus tells two important stories to help His followers understand what it means to live wisely and faithfully while waiting for Him to return. These stories are simple but powerful, and they still speak to us today.

Let’s take a look at what they mean.

Story 1: The Ten Bridesmaids – Be Ready!

Jesus tells a story about ten young women waiting for a wedding to start. In those days, part of the wedding celebration was to wait for the groom to arrive, usually at night. Each woman had a lamp to light the way.

- Five of them were wise and brought extra oil for their lamps.
- Five were foolish and didn’t bring any extra oil.

When the groom finally came, the wise women were ready. Their lamps were still burning, and they went in to the wedding. But the foolish ones had to run out and buy more oil. By the time they got back, the door was closed.

Jesus ends the story with a warning:

“Keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.” (v. 13)

What’s the lesson?

We don’t know when Jesus will return, so we need to live every day ready—trusting Him, staying faithful, and not putting it off.

Story 2: The Bags of Gold – Be Faithful!

In the second story, a man goes on a trip and leaves his money with three of his servants:

- He gives five bags of gold to one,
- Two bags to another,
- And one bag to the last.

The first two servants worked hard and doubled what they were given. But the third servant was afraid. Instead of using the money wisely, he buried it in the ground and did nothing with it.

When the master returned, he praised the first two servants:

“Well done, good and faithful servant!”

But to the third servant, he said:

“You wicked and lazy servant!”

The master took the one bag away and gave it to the servant who had ten.

What’s the lesson?

God gives each of us gifts—time, talents, opportunities. He wants us to use what He’s given us, not hide it or waste it. It’s not about how much we have, but what we do with it.

What These Stories Mean for Us

These parables may seem different, but they carry the same message:

1. Be ready – We don’t know when Jesus will return, so we should live each day with faith and purpose.
2. Be faithful – Use what God has given you. Even small acts of faith, love, and service matter to Him.
3. Avoid delay and fear – Don’t wait until it’s too late to follow Jesus, and don’t let fear stop you from doing good with your life.

Final Thought:

Jesus told these stories to help us live with focus and faith. We don’t need to live in fear, but we do need to live with intention. Whether He returns tomorrow or many years from now, let’s be ready—shining His light and using our gifts well.

“Well done, good and faithful servant”—may that be what we hear one day, too.

The Final Judgment—Loving Others Is Loving Jesus (Matthew 25:31-46)

In Matthew 25:31–46, Jesus tells a powerful story about what will happen when He returns. It’s often called “The Parable of the Sheep and the Goats.” It’s not just a story—it’s a picture of the final judgment and what truly matters to God.

Let’s walk through it in a way that’s easy to understand.

Jesus, the King, Will Return

Jesus begins by saying that one day He will return in glory, like a king sitting on a throne. Everyone in the world—all people, from all nations—will be gathered before Him.

Then, Jesus says, He will separate the people into two groups, just like a shepherd separates sheep from goats.

- The sheep go on His right side—this is the place of honor.
- The goats go on His left side—this is the place of judgment.

What’s the difference between the two groups? It’s not about wealth, knowledge, or even how religious someone was.

What the “Sheep” Did Right

To those on His right—the sheep—the King says:

“Come, you who are blessed by my Father... For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me...”

He continues, saying they clothed Him when He was naked, cared for Him when He was sick, and visited Him in prison.

The people are surprised. They ask, “When did we do all that for You?”

And Jesus says something amazing:

“Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.”

In other words: When you care for others, you are caring for Jesus.

What the “Goats” Did Wrong

Then Jesus turns to those on His left—the goats. He says they did not feed Him, give Him a drink, welcome Him, clothe Him, or care for Him when He needed it.

They’re confused too. “When did we see You and ignore You?”

And Jesus gives the same answer:

“Whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.”

What This Teaches Us

This story is clear and direct. Jesus is not impressed by just words or appearances. What matters is how we treat people—especially those in need.

Here are some key takeaways:

- Loving others is how we show love to Jesus.
 - Real faith shows up in action. Helping the hungry, the sick, the lonely, and the hurting is part of following Jesus.
 - God notices the small things. A meal, a visit, a kind word—they may seem small to us, but they matter deeply to Him.
 - We’re called to live with compassion every day.
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Final Judgment—Not to Scare, but to Prepare

Jesus ends the story with a serious note: there will be a final separation between those who lived with love and those who didn’t. One group will go to eternal life, the other to separation from God.

It’s not meant to scare us—but to wake us up. God’s judgment is real, but so is His grace. He gives us time, every day, to choose love.

Final Thought:

At the end of our lives, what will matter most isn’t how much we knew or how “religious” we looked—but how we loved. Jesus is found in the people we often overlook. When we serve them, we’re really serving Him.

So today, let's ask ourselves:

Who can I care for? Who needs encouragement, kindness, or support?

Because when we reach out with love, we're not just doing something good—we're doing it for Jesus.

September 11

Behind the Scenes of the Last Supper—A Quiet Plan and a Powerful Preparation (Luke 22:1-13)

In Luke 22:1–13, the final days of Jesus' life are beginning to unfold. This short passage gives us a glimpse into two very different moments happening at the same time: one of betrayal, and one of preparation.

Let's take a closer look at this powerful scene.

The Plot to Kill Jesus

The chapter begins with tension in the air. It was just before the Feast of Unleavened Bread, a major Jewish celebration that included the Passover meal, which reminded the people of how God had rescued them from slavery in Egypt.

But while the city was full of people preparing for the celebration, something dark was happening behind closed doors.

“The chief priests and the teachers of the law were looking for some way to get rid of Jesus...” (v. 2)

They were afraid of Jesus' growing influence. The crowds were listening to Him and following Him, and the religious leaders felt threatened. They didn't want to cause a scene in public, so they started plotting in secret.

Judas Makes a Deal

Then something shocking happens.

“Satan entered Judas, called Iscariot, one of the Twelve.” (v. 3)

Judas was one of Jesus’ own disciples—someone who had walked with Him, heard His teaching, and seen His miracles. But now, Judas went to the religious leaders and agreed to betray Jesus.

They were thrilled and offered him money. From that moment on, Judas watched for the right time to hand Jesus over when no one was around.

This part of the story reminds us that even people who seem close to Jesus can make heartbreaking choices. But even in betrayal, God’s plan was still moving forward.

Jesus Prepares the Passover

While the leaders were plotting and Judas was scheming, Jesus was getting ready for something sacred and beautiful—the Last Supper with His disciples.

He told Peter and John to go and prepare the Passover meal. But He didn’t give them the location directly. Instead, He said:

“As you enter the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him.” (v. 10)

This may seem like a small detail, but it was unusual. In that time, men didn’t normally carry water jars—women did. So this would have been a clear sign. Jesus had already arranged everything. He was in complete control, even with danger all around Him.

Peter and John followed the instructions, and everything happened just as Jesus said. They found the room, got it ready, and made preparations for the Passover meal.

What This Means for Us

This passage may seem like a setup for what comes next, but it’s full of meaning:

- God is still in control, even when things look dark. Evil was at work, but Jesus wasn’t caught off guard. He had already made plans for what mattered most.
 - Preparation matters. Jesus didn’t rush the moment. He made sure everything was ready so He could share a meaningful meal with His closest friends.
 - People have a choice. Judas chose to betray, while Peter and John chose to obey. Every day, we’re invited to choose trust and faithfulness.
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Final Thought:

This moment in Luke 22 is the calm before the storm. It reminds us that even when the world feels messy or uncertain, God's plan is never shaken. Jesus moved forward with quiet strength, preparing to give everything for us.

As we follow Him today, may we also choose to obey, prepare our hearts, and trust that He is working—even behind the scenes.

September 12

Jesus Washed Their Feet—A Lesson in Humble Love (John 13:1-20)

In John 13:1–20, we read about a powerful moment that happened just before Jesus went to the cross. He didn't preach a sermon or perform a miracle—instead, He washed His disciples' feet.

At first, that might sound like a small act. But in Jesus' time, it was a big deal. It was more than clean feet. It was a lesson in love, humility, and what it really means to follow Him.

Let's take a closer look.

Jesus Knew the Time Had Come

The story starts by telling us that Jesus knew His time had come. He was about to leave this world and return to the Father. The cross was just ahead. But before that happened, Jesus wanted to show His disciples how much He loved them.

“Having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end.” (v. 1)

Even with all the pain He was about to face, Jesus was focused on love.

The Unexpected Servant

While the disciples were eating the Passover meal, something surprising happened.

Jesus got up from the table, took off His outer clothing, tied a towel around His waist, poured water into a bowl, and began to wash His disciples' feet. (v. 4–5)

In those days, roads were dusty and people wore sandals. Feet got dirty fast. Usually, a servant—the lowest person in the house—would do the washing. It was a job no one wanted.

But here was Jesus, the Son of God, doing it Himself.

Peter's Reaction

When Jesus got to Peter, Peter was shocked.

“Lord, are You going to wash my feet?” (v. 6)

Peter didn't think this was right. He didn't feel comfortable letting Jesus act like a servant. But Jesus told him:

“Unless I wash you, you have no part with me.” (v. 8)

Peter quickly changed his mind. He said, “Then wash all of me!”

Jesus explained that this foot-washing wasn't just about being physically clean—it was about being spiritually clean. It was a symbol of the deeper cleansing that comes from trusting Him.

A Lesson in Love and Humility

After He finished washing their feet, Jesus put His clothes back on and sat down.

Then He asked them:

“Do you understand what I have done for you?” (v. 12)

He went on to explain that He, their Lord and Teacher, had served them, and now they should serve one another.

“I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you.” (v. 15)

Jesus wasn't just telling them what to do—He showed them.

What This Means for Us

This moment is more than a story about foot washing. It's a powerful reminder for all of us today:

- Real love is humble. Jesus, who had all the power in the universe, chose to serve. He didn't just talk about love—He demonstrated it.
- No task is too small. Helping others, even in simple ways, matters deeply to God.
- We're called to serve. Jesus invites us to love people not just with words, but with actions.

“Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.” (v. 17)

Jesus didn't say, “You'll be blessed if you understand this,” but “if you do it.”

Final Thought:

Jesus washed His disciples' feet, including the feet of Judas—the one who would betray Him. That's the kind of love He showed, and that's the kind of love He calls us to give.

Let's follow His example: Love deeply. Serve humbly. Live like Jesus.

September 13

A Dark Night and a Clear Command—When Love Shines in Betrayal (John 13:21-38)

In John 13:21–38, we step into one of the most emotional and intense moments of Jesus' final night before the cross. It's a night filled with pain, confusion, and surprising love.

Jesus shares that someone close to Him is about to betray Him. He gives His disciples a new command. And He predicts that even one of His most loyal followers will deny Him.

Let's walk through it together.

Jesus Feels Deeply Troubled

After washing His disciples' feet and showing them how to love and serve, Jesus suddenly becomes troubled. He looks around the table and says:

“One of you is going to betray me.” (v. 21)

Imagine the shock in the room. The disciples had followed Jesus for years. They had left everything to be with Him. Now He was saying one of them would turn against Him?

They began looking at each other, confused and worried. “Who is it?” they asked.

A Secret Signal

Peter motioned to the disciple sitting closest to Jesus—traditionally believed to be John—and told him to ask who Jesus meant.

Jesus answered quietly:

“It is the one to whom I will give this piece of bread.” (v. 26)

Then He dipped the bread and handed it to Judas Iscariot.

Right after that, Scripture says:

“Satan entered into him.” (v. 27)

Jesus told Judas, “What you are about to do, do quickly.” And Judas got up and left.

The others didn't fully understand what had just happened. Some thought Judas was going out to buy something or give money to the poor. But John tells us:

“And it was night.” (v. 30)

That small line means more than just time of day—it was also a symbol of darkness entering the story.

A New Command

After Judas left, Jesus turned to the others and gave them something new to carry with them:

“A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another.” (v. 34)

This wasn't just friendly advice. Jesus said this kind of love would be the mark of His followers:

“By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.” (v. 35)

Not just love in general, but the kind of love Jesus showed—humble, self-giving, servant-hearted love.

Peter's Bold Promise... and Jesus' Response

Peter, never one to stay quiet, asked Jesus where He was going. Jesus told him that he couldn't follow—not yet.

Peter insisted:

“I will lay down my life for you.” (v. 37)

But Jesus gently replied:

“Before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times.” (v. 38)

Even Peter—bold, passionate, loyal—would soon fall short.

What This Teaches Us

This passage is full of emotion, but it gives us a few powerful truths to hold onto:

- Jesus knows our hearts. He wasn't surprised by Judas' betrayal or Peter's denial. He loved them anyway.
 - Real love is shown in action. Jesus didn't just say “love each other”—He modeled it first. Now He calls us to do the same.
 - Failure doesn't stop God's plan. Even though Peter would deny Him, Jesus didn't give up on him. There is grace, even when we fall.
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Final Thought:

This part of the story reminds us that Jesus understands pain, betrayal, and broken promises. Yet even in the middle of it all, He focused on love.

He told His disciples—and He tells us today:

“Love one another... as I have loved you.”

Even when things are hard. Even when people disappoint us. That’s how the world will know we follow Jesus.

September 14

Don’t Be Troubled—Jesus Is the Way, the Truth, and the Life (John 14:1-14)

Have you ever felt confused, uncertain, or afraid of the future? In John 14:1–14, Jesus speaks words of comfort to His disciples—and to all of us—right when they needed it most. He knows what’s ahead for them, and He wants them to hold on to hope and trust.

Let’s explore this beautiful and encouraging moment.

“Do Not Let Your Hearts Be Troubled”

Jesus had just told His disciples that He was going to leave them soon. Naturally, they were scared and confused. They had followed Him for years—He was their teacher, their leader, and their hope. Now He was talking about going away?

Jesus looked at them and said:

“Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me.” (v. 1)

He was saying, “I know you’re afraid, but trust Me—just as you trust God.”

“I’m Going to Prepare a Place for You”

Then Jesus gives them a promise:

“My Father’s house has many rooms... I am going there to prepare a place for you.” (v. 2)

This was Jesus’ way of saying that He wasn’t leaving forever. He was going ahead to get everything ready—just like someone prepares a home before their family arrives.

And He added:

“I will come back and take you to be with me.” (v. 3)

That’s the heart of the message: Jesus wants us to be with Him, forever.

“I Am the Way, the Truth, and the Life”

Thomas, one of the disciples, spoke up. He said, “Lord, we don’t know where you’re going. How can we know the way?”

Jesus answered with one of the most powerful statements in the Bible:

“I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” (v. 6)

Let’s break that down:

- The Way – Jesus doesn’t just point us in the right direction. He is the way to God.
 - The Truth – In a world full of confusion, Jesus is the truth we can count on.
 - The Life – Real, full life is found in a relationship with Him.
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“Show Us the Father”

Then Philip said, “Lord, show us the Father, and that will be enough for us.”

Jesus replied, “If you’ve seen Me, you’ve seen the Father.”

In other words: Jesus is the visible image of the invisible God. If we want to know what God is like—His heart, His love, His power—we look at Jesus.

Greater Things Ahead

Jesus ends this section with another amazing promise:

“Whoever believes in Me will do the works I have been doing... and even greater things.” (v. 12)

That doesn’t mean we’ll be more important than Jesus, but that His work will continue through us. When we pray in His name and walk in His love, we become part of God’s ongoing mission to bring hope to the world.

What This Means for Us

This passage is packed with encouragement. Here are three takeaways:

1. Don't let fear have the final word. Jesus invites us to trust Him, especially in uncertain times.
2. Jesus is the way to God. If we follow Him, we're not lost.
3. We have a purpose. Jesus calls us to live out His love and continue His work in the world.

Final Thought:

Jesus spoke these words to His disciples during one of their hardest nights. But His message still speaks to us today:

“Do not let your hearts be troubled.”

When life feels overwhelming, when the future seems unclear, remember this: Jesus has made a way, and He walks with us every step of the journey.

September 15

You're Not Alone—The Holy Spirit Is With You (John 14:15-31)

In John 14:15–31, Jesus continues speaking with His disciples on the night before He goes to the cross. He knows they're worried and confused. So He shares a powerful message of comfort: Even though He's leaving, they won't be alone.

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

Love Leads to Obedience

Jesus begins by saying:

“If you love me, keep my commands.” (v. 15)

He doesn't say, "If you love me, feel something emotional." He connects love with action—specifically, with listening to His words and living them out. Our love for Jesus is shown by how we follow Him, not just by what we say or feel.

The Helper Is Coming

Jesus then gives them a promise that brings great comfort:

"I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth." (v. 16–17)

This Helper is the Holy Spirit—God's own Spirit who comes to live with us and in us. Jesus is saying, "Even though I'm going away, God will still be with you."

Here's what Jesus tells us about the Holy Spirit:

- He lives with us and in us.
- He helps us know the truth.
- He reminds us of what Jesus said.
- He gives us peace and courage.

This is a big deal. God doesn't just leave us to figure things out on our own. He sends His Spirit to be our guide, comforter, and strength.

"I Will Not Leave You As Orphans"

Jesus continues with a touching promise:

"I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you." (v. 18)

In other words, Jesus isn't abandoning them. Even though they won't see Him the same way anymore, He will still be with them—through the Holy Spirit.

He adds:

"Because I live, you also will live." (v. 19)

Jesus is saying that His life will give them life. Even after the cross, He will rise again—and His followers will share in that new life, too.

Peace in a Troubled World

Jesus finishes this part of the conversation by saying:

“Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.” (v. 27)

This peace isn’t the kind the world gives. It’s not based on comfort, safety, or everything going perfectly. It’s deep peace that comes from knowing God is with you, even when life is hard.

What This Means for Us

This passage gives us some powerful truths to hold on to:

1. We are not alone. If we follow Jesus, His Spirit is with us—always.
 2. Love leads to action. Loving Jesus means living the way He taught us to.
 3. Peace is possible, even in hard times. Because Jesus gives us His peace, we don’t have to be controlled by fear or worry.
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Final Thought:

Jesus spoke these words to comfort His friends during one of their darkest hours. He promised them the gift of the Holy Spirit—a constant companion, teacher, and source of peace.

That same promise is for us today. If you’re feeling uncertain, anxious, or like you’re facing life on your own, remember this:

You are not alone. The Spirit of God is with you, and Jesus has given you His peace.

September 16

Stay Connected to the Vine – Growing with Jesus (John 15:1-16)

In John 15:1–16, Jesus uses a beautiful picture to help His followers understand how important it is to stay close to Him. He compares Himself to a vine, and us—His followers

—to branches.

If you’ve ever seen a grapevine, you’ll know that the branches only stay alive and produce fruit if they stay connected to the main vine. That’s exactly the point Jesus wants to make: our spiritual life and growth depend on staying close to Him.

Let’s take a look at what He said and what it means for us today.

Jesus Is the Vine, We Are the Branches

Jesus begins with this powerful image:

“I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener.” (v. 1)

He’s saying that He is the source of life and growth, and God the Father lovingly cares for the vine—just like a gardener takes care of a plant to help it grow well.

“You are the branches.” (v. 5)

That means we are connected to Jesus—and through that connection, we receive everything we need to grow, stay strong, and produce good things in our lives.

What Does “Remain in Me” Mean?

Throughout this passage, Jesus repeats a key phrase:

“Remain in me, as I also remain in you.” (v. 4)

To “remain” means to stay close, stay connected, and stay in relationship with Him. Just like a branch can’t survive without the vine, we can’t grow or bear fruit without staying connected to Jesus.

So how do we remain in Him?

- Spend time with Him through prayer and reading His words
 - Listen to what He says and live it out
 - Trust Him and talk with Him throughout the day
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What Is the “Fruit” Jesus Talks About?

Jesus says:

“If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit.” (v. 5)

The “fruit” He means is not apples or grapes—it’s the good things that grow in us and come out of us when we follow Him. Things like:

- Love
- Joy
- Peace
- Patience
- Kindness
- Faithfulness

These are the qualities of a life that’s deeply connected to Jesus.

Apart from Him, We Can Do Nothing

Jesus makes it clear:

“Apart from me you can do nothing.” (v. 5)

That might sound strong, but it’s true. Just like a branch that breaks off a vine withers and dies, we can’t live the life God wants for us if we try to do it on our own. We need Jesus every step of the way.

Love One Another

As He continues, Jesus brings it all back to love:

“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love.” (v. 9)

“My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you.” (v. 12)

This is the heart of it all: Jesus loves us deeply, and He wants that love to flow through us into the lives of others.

You Are Chosen

One of the most encouraging parts of this passage is when Jesus says:

“You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last.” (v. 16)

Jesus reminds us that we matter to Him. He picked us, called us, and gave us a purpose—to love, to grow, and to live a life that brings good to others.

Final Thoughts

John 15:1–16 reminds us of some important truths:

- Stay close to Jesus. He’s the source of real life.
- Let His love shape your life. That’s how fruit grows.
- Love others as He has loved you. That’s how people see Him through you.
- You are chosen and loved. Your life has meaning and purpose.

So today, and every day, stay connected to the Vine. Jesus is ready to help you grow.

September 17

When Following Jesus Isn’t Easy—But You’re Not Alone (John 15:17-16:4)

In John 15:17 to 16:4, Jesus gives His disciples an honest warning. He has just talked about love—God’s love for us and how we should love others. But now, He tells them something they need to hear: not everyone will respond kindly to that love.

Sometimes, following Jesus comes with challenges. People may not understand your faith. Some might even reject or mistreat you for it. Jesus wanted His friends—and all of us—to be ready for that.

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

“The World Might Hate You”

Jesus says:

“If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first.” (John 15:18)

That’s a strong statement, but Jesus is being real. He was kind, loving, and truthful—and yet many people rejected Him. He wants His followers to know: don’t be surprised if people don’t always accept you either.

Why? Because when we follow Jesus, we live differently. We try to love when others hold grudges. We speak truth when lies are easier. That kind of life stands out—and not everyone likes that.

“You Don’t Belong to the World”

Jesus continues:

“You do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world.” (John 15:19)

This means that as followers of Jesus, our values and priorities are different. We belong to Him now. We try to live with love, honesty, and grace—even when that’s not popular.

It doesn’t mean we’re better than others. But it does mean we may not always fit in. And that’s okay.

“They Didn’t Know the One Who Sent Me”

Jesus also says that the people who rejected Him did so because they didn’t truly know God. They had religion, rules, and traditions—but they missed the heart of it all: God’s love and truth, shown through Jesus.

This reminds us that sometimes, opposition doesn’t come from a place of hatred, but from confusion, fear, or a lack of understanding.

The Holy Spirit Will Help You

Then Jesus shares something encouraging:

“When the Advocate comes... he will testify about me. And you also must testify.” (John 15:26–27)

The “Advocate” is the Holy Spirit—God’s presence with us. Jesus says, “Yes, things may get hard. But you won’t be alone. The Spirit will help you stay strong and remind you of the truth.”

Why Jesus Told Them All This

In John 16:1, Jesus explains why He’s saying all this:

“All this I have told you so that you will not fall away.”

He doesn't want His followers to be caught off guard or discouraged when things get tough. He wants them to stay steady in their faith.

He even says:

“They will put you out of the synagogue... In fact, the time is coming when anyone who kills you will think they are offering a service to God.” (John 16:2)

That happened to many early Christians—and still happens in parts of the world today. But Jesus didn't hide the truth. He prepared His followers so they would stand firm, knowing they were not forgotten or alone.

What This Means for Us Today

These words from Jesus are still true and important today. Here are a few takeaways:

- Being a Christian doesn't always mean an easy life. But Jesus walks with us through every challenge.
- It's okay to feel different. Our faith may not always make sense to the world—but it makes us who we are.
- You are never alone. The Holy Spirit is with you, guiding and strengthening you.
- Jesus understands rejection. When we face hard times, He knows exactly how we feel—and He cares.

Final Thought

Jesus never promised a smooth path, but He did promise His presence, His Spirit, and His peace. If you're facing resistance for your faith or feeling like you don't quite “fit in,” remember what Jesus said:

“I have told you this so that you will not fall away.”

You are seen. You are loved. And you are not walking this road alone.

September 18

Jesus Brings Peace in a Troubled World (John 16:5-33)

In John 16:5–33, Jesus is having an emotional conversation with His disciples. He knows He’s about to be arrested and taken to the cross, and He’s preparing them for what’s coming. His words are full of truth, comfort, and hope.

Let’s look at three big things Jesus shares in this passage—and what they mean for us today.

Jesus Had to Leave So the Holy Spirit Could Come

Jesus says:

“Now I am going to him who sent me...” (v. 5)

“Unless I go away, the Advocate will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you.”
(v. 7)

The disciples were sad because Jesus was talking about leaving. But He reassures them that this is not the end—in fact, it’s part of God’s bigger plan. When Jesus returns to the Father, He will send the Holy Spirit (the “Advocate”) to be with them.

This means that even though they won’t see Jesus with their eyes anymore, God’s presence will still be with them—inside their hearts.

The Holy Spirit Will Help Us Understand and Stay Strong

Jesus says the Holy Spirit will:

- Show people what’s right and wrong
- Teach them the truth
- Remind them of Jesus’ words
- Help them follow God even when it’s hard

“When he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth.” (v. 13)

We don’t have to figure out life on our own. The Holy Spirit is like a teacher, a guide, and a helper who gives us wisdom, peace, and strength.

Sorrow Will Turn Into Joy

The disciples are confused and worried. Jesus tells them:

“You will weep and mourn while the world rejoices. You will grieve, but your grief will turn to joy.” (v. 20)

He compares it to a woman giving birth: the pain is real, but once the baby is born, joy takes over. In the same way, the sadness of Jesus’ death will be replaced by the joy of His resurrection.

This reminds us that God can turn our deepest pain into lasting joy. It might not happen right away, but Jesus promises it will come.

We Can Have Peace in Him

Jesus ends this part of the conversation with one of the most powerful promises in the Bible:

“In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.” (v. 33)

Jesus doesn’t hide the truth—life can be hard. But He also gives hope: He has already won. His victory over sin and death means we can have peace, even when life feels uncertain.

What This Means for Us Today

This chapter may be over 2,000 years old, but its message is still true and needed today. Here’s what Jesus wants us to know:

- You are never alone. The Holy Spirit is with you.
 - God can turn your pain into joy. Even when you don’t see how.
 - Peace is possible, even in the middle of trouble. Because Jesus has already overcome the world.
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Final Thought

Jesus knows what it’s like to face fear, sadness, and uncertainty. He faced all of it for us—and He promises to walk with us through every moment of life. When things are hard, remember His words:

“Take heart! I have overcome the world.”

That’s the kind of peace that nothing can take away.

September 19

Jesus Prayed for You — A Glimpse Into His Heart (John 17:1-26)

In John 17, we get to listen in on a very special moment. Right before Jesus is arrested and sent to the cross, He stops to pray. This isn't just any prayer—it's deep, heartfelt, and full of love.

What's amazing is that in this prayer, Jesus doesn't just pray for Himself or His closest followers—He prays for all of us. Yes, even you and me.

Let's look at the three parts of His prayer and what they tell us about His heart.

Jesus Prays for Himself

Jesus begins by praying:

“Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son, that your Son may glorify you.” (v. 1)

He knows the cross is coming. He knows the pain ahead. But His focus is on bringing glory to God—showing the world how good, loving, and powerful God truly is.

In this moment, Jesus is asking God to help Him finish His mission: to give eternal life to everyone who believes.

“Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.” (v. 3)

Eternal life isn't just about heaven someday—it's about knowing God personally, starting now.

Jesus Prays for His Disciples

Next, Jesus prays for His closest followers—the disciples who had been with Him during His ministry. He thanks God for them and asks for their protection.

“Holy Father, protect them by the power of your name.” (v. 11)

Jesus knows they'll face challenges once He's gone. So He asks God to keep them safe, united, and full of joy, even in a difficult world.

He also prays that they will be set apart—not removed from the world, but made strong to live differently, to reflect God's truth and love.

“Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.” (v. 17)

Jesus Prays for All Believers

Now here's the part that's truly amazing:

“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message.” (v. 20)

That means Jesus was praying for future believers—including you. He prayed that we would be united, just like He is united with the Father.

“That all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you.” (v. 21)

Why is unity so important? Because when we love one another and live in harmony, the world gets a clearer picture of who Jesus is.

Jesus also prays that we would be with Him forever, and that we would know how deeply loved we are:

“Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.” (v. 23)

That's powerful. Jesus wants us to know that God loves us just as much as He loves Jesus Himself.

What This Means for Us Today

John 17 shows us that:

- Jesus longs for us to know God personally
- He wants us to be protected and filled with joy
- He prays that we would be united and loving
- He deeply desires that we know we are loved by God

And this isn't just a historical moment—it's a reminder that Jesus is still praying for us today (see Romans 8:34). His heart for you hasn't changed.

Final Thought

Sometimes we wonder if anyone really sees or cares about us. But John 17 tells us loud and clear: Jesus prayed for you. He thought of you. He wants you to know God's love and share it with the world.

So when life feels uncertain or you feel alone, remember this: Jesus has already prayed for you. And He still is.

September 20

Betrayed, Afraid, and Still Faithful — Jesus in the Garden (Mark 14:26-52)

In Mark 14:26–52, we see a very personal and emotional side of Jesus. He knows that His arrest, suffering, and death are just hours away. In this passage, He spends time with His disciples, talks honestly with them, and then prays to God in a garden called Gethsemane.

These events remind us that Jesus truly understands fear, pain, and betrayal—because He went through all of it.

Jesus Predicts That His Friends Will Leave Him

After sharing a special meal with His disciples (what we now call the Last Supper), Jesus leads them out to the Mount of Olives. On the way, He tells them something difficult:

“You will all fall away,” Jesus told them. “For it is written: ‘I will strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered.’” (v. 27)

He knows that when trouble comes, His friends will run. But even then, He gives them hope—He says He will rise again and meet them later.

Peter, one of His closest followers, insists he'll never leave Jesus:

“Even if all fall away, I will not.” (v. 29)

But Jesus gently tells Peter that before the rooster crows twice in the morning, Peter will deny knowing Him three times.

Sometimes, even when we really want to be faithful, fear gets the best of us. Jesus knew that. And He loved them anyway.

Jesus Prays in Deep Sorrow

Jesus takes three of His disciples—Peter, James, and John—with Him into a quiet garden called Gethsemane. He begins to feel overwhelmed with sadness and says:

“My soul is overwhelmed with sorrow to the point of death.” (v. 34)

Jesus falls to the ground and prays to God:

“Abba, Father... everything is possible for you. Take this cup from me. Yet not what I will, but what you will.” (v. 36)

He’s saying, “Father, I don’t want to suffer—but if this is the only way to save others, I will do it.”

This moment shows us that Jesus understands what it’s like to feel afraid and heavy with sorrow. But He still chooses obedience out of love.

Meanwhile, the disciples fall asleep—three times! Even though Jesus asked them to stay awake and pray, their eyes grew heavy. It’s another reminder that even those closest to Jesus struggled to stay strong, but He kept loving them anyway.

Jesus Is Betrayed and Arrested

Suddenly, Judas—one of the twelve disciples—shows up with a crowd carrying swords and clubs. He betrays Jesus with a kiss, a sign he had arranged to show the guards whom to arrest.

Jesus doesn’t resist. He says:

“Am I leading a rebellion, that you have come out with swords and clubs to capture me? Every day I was with you... and you did not arrest me.” (v. 48–49)

He knows what’s happening and willingly allows it. This is all part of God’s plan.

When things get intense, one of the followers cuts off the ear of a servant of the high priest (another gospel tells us it was Peter), but Jesus doesn't fight back.

Then something heartbreaking happens:

“Then everyone deserted him and fled.” (v. 50)

Just like Jesus had said—they all ran.

A Mysterious Young Man Flees

These verses describe a young man who had been following Jesus. When the guards tried to seize him, he ran away so quickly that he left his clothes behind and fled naked.

It's a strange little detail, but it shows just how scared everyone was. People were running to save themselves, doing anything to escape.

What This Means for Us Today

This part of the Bible shows us that:

- Jesus understands fear and sadness. He didn't run away from pain—He faced it with courage and love.
 - Even His closest friends let Him down. And yet, He still loved and forgave them.
 - When we feel overwhelmed or afraid, we can go to God in prayer—just like Jesus did.
 - Jesus chose the path of suffering so we could be forgiven and free. That's the kind of love He has for us.
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Final Thought

Jesus wasn't just a teacher or a good man. He was the Son of God who walked straight into betrayal, sorrow, and death—so that we could walk into grace, hope, and eternal life.

If you've ever felt abandoned, scared, or let down by others—Jesus understands. And He invites you to stay close to Him, even when life gets hard.

“Not what I will, but what you will.”

May that be our prayer too.

September 21

Arrested in the Garden — Jesus Stands Calm in Chaos (John 18:1-24)

In John 18:1–24, we see the beginning of Jesus’ journey to the cross. After spending time praying with His disciples, Jesus is arrested. What follows is a mix of betrayal, fear, and confusion—but through it all, Jesus remains calm, strong, and full of love.

Let’s walk through what happened and what it means for us today.

Jesus Is Arrested

After praying in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus and His disciples are approached by a group of soldiers and religious leaders. They’ve come to arrest Him, led by Judas, one of His own disciples.

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

When they answer, “Jesus of Nazareth,” Jesus replies, “I am he.” The power of His words is so strong that the soldiers actually fall backward to the ground!

Even though Jesus could have escaped or stopped them, He chooses to go with them, because He knows this is the path that will lead to saving the world.

Peter, trying to protect Jesus, pulls out a sword and cuts off the ear of a servant named Malchus. But Jesus tells Peter to stop. He says:

“Shall I not drink the cup the Father has given me?” (v. 11)

Jesus is saying, “This is part of God’s plan—and I’m willing to go through it.”

Jesus Is Taken to the High Priest

The soldiers arrest Jesus and take Him to Annas, a powerful Jewish leader and former high priest. His son-in-law, Caiaphas, is the current high priest. Caiaphas had already said it would be “better for one man to die for the people”—not realizing how true that would be.

This is the start of Jesus being questioned and passed between different leaders, all leading up to His crucifixion.

Peter Follows at a Distance

Peter and another disciple (probably John) follow Jesus from a distance. Peter manages to get into the courtyard of the high priest, where he warms himself by a fire with others. He's trying to stay close to Jesus, but fear is starting to creep in.

(We'll see later that this is where Peter ends up denying Jesus—just as Jesus had predicted.)

Jesus Is Questioned

Inside, Jesus is being questioned by the high priest about His teaching and His disciples. Jesus answers calmly and honestly:

“I have spoken openly to the world... I said nothing in secret.” (v. 20)

He's not hiding anything. He reminds them that everything He taught was out in the open for all to hear.

But one of the officials doesn't like Jesus' response and slaps Him in the face. Jesus replies:

“If I said something wrong, testify as to what is wrong. But if I spoke the truth, why did you strike me?” (v. 23)

Even when treated unfairly, Jesus stays calm and respectful. He's not fighting back—He's standing firm in the truth.

What This Means for Us Today

This passage shows us several powerful truths:

- Jesus was not surprised or afraid—He knew what was coming and chose to face it.
 - He stayed peaceful under pressure, even when betrayed and mistreated.
 - He cared for others even in His hardest moments—He protected His disciples, healed a man's ear (mentioned in other Gospels), and answered with kindness.
 - Peter's fear reminds us that even strong believers can struggle. But Jesus still loved him.
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Final Thought

Jesus didn't run from pain—He walked toward it, for our sake. His calm in the middle of chaos reminds us that God is in control, even when life feels out of control.

When you feel betrayed, afraid, or treated unfairly, remember this: Jesus understands. And He chose love, even in the hardest moment.

“I am He.”

Those three words show us the strength of a Savior who stood firm so we could be saved.

September 22

When Fear Speaks Louder — Peter's Denial and Jesus' Courage (Matthew 26:57-75)

In Matthew 26:57–75, we see two very different scenes happening at the same time. Jesus is on trial before powerful leaders, while Peter—one of His closest followers—is facing a personal test of courage nearby. Both are being questioned, but only one stands firm.

Let's take a closer look at this emotional and powerful moment.

Jesus Is Put on Trial

After Jesus is arrested in the garden, He is taken to the home of Caiaphas, the high priest. The religious leaders have already made up their minds—they want to find a reason to put Jesus to death.

They bring in people to lie about Him, but their stories don't even match up. Finally, the high priest demands:

“Tell us if you are the Messiah, the Son of God.” (v. 63)

Jesus answers boldly:

“You have said so... But I say to all of you: From now on you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Mighty One and coming on the clouds of heaven.” (v. 64)

This made the leaders furious. They tore their clothes and shouted that He was guilty of blasphemy—claiming to be equal with God. They spit on Him, hit Him, and mocked Him.

Even though He was innocent, Jesus stayed calm and told the truth. He didn't fight back. He was willing to face pain and injustice for us.

Peter's Moment of Fear

While Jesus is being questioned, Peter is outside in the courtyard. Earlier that evening, Peter had boldly promised that he would never leave Jesus—even if everyone else did.

But now, fear is setting in.

A servant girl says, "You were with Jesus." Peter quickly says, "I don't know what you're talking about."

Then another girl points him out. Again, Peter denies it.

Finally, some bystanders recognize his accent and say, "You're one of His followers!" This time, Peter swears and says, "I don't know the man!"

Just then, a rooster crows.

Peter suddenly remembers what Jesus had told him earlier:

"Before the rooster crows, you will disown me three times."

Peter runs away and weeps bitterly. He's heartbroken. He didn't want to fail, but his fear got the best of him.

What We Learn from This Story

This part of Scripture shows us something powerful about both Jesus and Peter:

- Jesus was faithful, even when everyone turned against Him. He told the truth and stood strong.
- Peter was afraid, and in a moment of weakness, he denied even knowing Jesus.

But here's the good news: this isn't the end of Peter's story. Later on, Jesus forgives Peter and restores him. Peter becomes a bold leader in the early church.

That reminds us that failure is not final when we turn back to Jesus.

Final Thoughts

We all face moments when we feel pressure to hide our faith, stay silent, or back down. Like Peter, we might be tempted to protect ourselves instead of standing with Jesus.

But Jesus shows us what it looks like to stand firm in love and truth. And when we fall short, He offers us grace, not guilt.

If you've ever let fear guide your actions, you're not alone. Peter did too. And Jesus still loved him—and He still loves you.

“The rooster crowed. Then Peter remembered... and he went outside and wept bitterly.” But that wasn't the end. And it doesn't have to be your end either.

September 23

Judas' Regret — When Guilt Feels Too Heavy (Matthew 27:1-10)

In Matthew 27:1–10, we witness one of the saddest moments in the story of Jesus' final hours. This part focuses on Judas Iscariot, the disciple who betrayed Jesus. It shows us what happens when guilt becomes overwhelming—and reminds us of the importance of turning to God with our failures.

Let's look at what happened.

Jesus Is Handed Over

Early in the morning, the religious leaders officially decide to send Jesus to the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate. The reason? They want Him to be sentenced to death—but they need Roman permission to make it happen.

So they tie Jesus up and lead Him away. It's a clear sign: they've rejected Him completely.

Judas Regrets What He Did

Meanwhile, Judas, the one who had betrayed Jesus for 30 pieces of silver, realizes the full weight of what he's done. When he sees that Jesus is being condemned to die, something hits him hard.

“He was seized with remorse.” (v. 3)

He goes back to the religious leaders and says,

“I have sinned... I have betrayed innocent blood.” (v. 4)

He tries to give the money back, hoping to undo the damage. But the leaders coldly respond:

“What is that to us? That's your responsibility.”

Judas, crushed by guilt and without hope, throws the silver into the temple and leaves. Sadly, instead of seeking forgiveness from God, he takes his own life.

The Money Is Used for a Burial Ground

The leaders pick up the silver coins but decide they can't put them back into the temple treasury—it's “blood money,” they say.

So they use the money to buy a field to bury strangers in. That place becomes known as the Field of Blood. Matthew points out that this fulfilled what had been spoken by the prophet Jeremiah, showing that even this tragic part of the story fits into God's bigger plan.

What We Learn from This

This passage is painful to read, but it teaches us a few important things:

- Guilt is real, but there is a right way to deal with it. Judas knew he had done wrong—but instead of turning to God for mercy, he gave in to despair.
- God's forgiveness is always available. Even when we mess up, there's hope if we go to Him. Peter also failed Jesus, but he was forgiven and restored.
- Religious leaders missed the heart of God. They were more concerned about the money than the life of an innocent man.

Judas made a tragic mistake. But what hurt him most wasn't just the betrayal—it was trying to carry the weight of his guilt alone.

Final Thought

We all fall short. We all make choices we regret. But the story of Judas reminds us how dangerous it can be when we hold onto guilt instead of running to God with it.

If you're carrying something heavy from your past, you don't have to carry it alone. Jesus came not only to take our sin—but also our shame.

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.” – Matthew 11:28

There's always hope when we turn to Him.

September 24

Jesus on Trial: A King Misunderstood (Luke 23:1–12)

In Luke 23:1–12, we see Jesus standing before powerful men who hold His fate in their hands—or so they think. This part of the story takes place after Jesus has been arrested. The religious leaders want Him gone, but they need the Roman governor, Pontius Pilate, to make it official.

A Trial Full of Accusations

The religious leaders bring Jesus to Pilate and accuse Him of things like stirring up trouble, refusing to pay taxes, and claiming to be a king. They know these charges will catch Pilate's attention, especially the part about Jesus being a king. In Roman times, that could sound like a threat to Caesar's authority.

But when Pilate questions Jesus, he's not convinced. Jesus isn't acting like a rebellious leader or someone trying to start a revolution. Pilate says, “I find no basis for a charge against this man.” In other words, Jesus is innocent.

Passing the Problem Along

Then Pilate hears that Jesus is from Galilee. That's not his territory—it belongs to Herod Antipas, another ruler under Roman authority. Pilate quickly sends Jesus to Herod, happy to pass the problem along.

Herod is curious. He's heard about Jesus and hopes to see a miracle. But Jesus doesn't perform or even answer his questions. The religious leaders are there too, still accusing Jesus loudly. In the end, Herod mocks Jesus by dressing Him in a fancy robe, like a pretend king, and sends Him back to Pilate.

What This Tells Us

This passage shows how Jesus was misunderstood and mistreated. Both Pilate and Herod saw no reason to punish Him, but neither stood up for what was right. Instead, they passed the responsibility back and forth like a political game. Jesus, though innocent, was caught in the middle.

It's a reminder that truth can be ignored when people care more about power and popularity than doing what's right. And it shows the calm strength of Jesus. Even when He was falsely accused and mocked, He didn't fight back. He chose silence and peace, knowing the bigger plan of God was unfolding.

Final Thought

Jesus wasn't the kind of king people expected. He didn't come with armies or crowns but with love, truth, and a willingness to suffer for others. Luke 23:1–12 invites us to think about what kind of king we follow—and whether we have the courage to stand for what's right, even when it's hard.

September 25

The Crowd, the Cross, and the King (Mark 15:6–24)

In Mark 15:6–24, we see some of the most intense moments in the story of Jesus' final hours before the crucifixion. This part of the Bible shows how an innocent man was rejected by the crowd, condemned by the government, and nailed to a cross—all for the sake of others.

A Choice Between Jesus and Barabbas

Every year during the Passover feast, the Roman governor Pilate had a tradition: he would release one prisoner that the people asked for. At this time, there was a well-known prisoner named Barabbas. He had taken part in a rebellion and committed murder.

Pilate offered the crowd a choice—should he release Jesus, who had done nothing wrong, or Barabbas, a known criminal? Pilate knew the religious leaders were jealous of Jesus, and that’s why they brought Him in. He probably hoped the crowd would choose to set Jesus free.

But the religious leaders stirred up the people to ask for Barabbas instead.

“Crucify Him!”

Pilate asked, “What do you want me to do with Jesus?” The crowd shouted, “Crucify Him!” Pilate didn’t see a reason to kill Jesus, but he gave in to the pressure. He wanted to keep the crowd happy, so he ordered Jesus to be whipped and then crucified.

Even though Pilate had the power to set Jesus free, he chose comfort and approval over justice.

Mocked Like a Fake King

After the decision was made, the soldiers took Jesus away. They mocked Him cruelly. They dressed Him in a purple robe, put a crown made of thorns on His head, and sarcastically called Him the “king of the Jews.” They hit Him and spit on Him. They didn’t understand who He really was—a true King, full of love and mercy.

Then they led Him out to be crucified.

The Journey to the Cross

As Jesus was taken to the place where He would be crucified (called Golgotha), He was so weak from the beating that He couldn’t carry His cross all the way. So the soldiers forced a man named Simon of Cyrene to carry it for Him.

Once they reached Golgotha, they nailed Jesus to the cross. The soldiers even cast lots—like rolling dice—to divide up His clothes, showing no respect for the one dying before them.

What This Means for Us

This part of the story shows the depth of human brokenness and the greatness of God's love. Jesus was rejected by the crowd, betrayed by leaders, and crucified like a criminal. But He went through it all willingly. He didn't fight back because He was taking on the punishment for sin—not His own, but ours.

It's painful to read, but it reminds us that God's love is real and costly. Jesus didn't just talk about love—He proved it by going to the cross.

Final Thought

In a world that often chooses power over truth, popularity over justice, and noise over quiet faith, Jesus stood firm in love. Mark 15:6–24 reminds us that God's plan of salvation came through suffering—but it ended in victory. And it's a victory that's offered freely to all who believe.

September 26

Forgiveness from the Cross (Luke 23:32–49)

In Luke 23:32–49, we witness the most powerful moment in history—the death of Jesus on the cross. It's a painful scene, but also one filled with love, forgiveness, and hope.

Crucified with Criminals

Jesus wasn't crucified alone. Two criminals were also sentenced to die that day, and they were placed on either side of Him. This was part of how the world treated Jesus—as if He were just another criminal. But even in this horrible situation, Jesus was different.

As the soldiers nailed Him to the cross, Jesus said something shocking:

“Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing.”

Think about that. While He was suffering, Jesus prayed for the very people who were hurting Him. He didn't respond with anger or hate. He responded with forgiveness.

Mocked by Many, Trusted by One

As Jesus hung on the cross, some people stood nearby mocking Him. They said things like, “If you’re really the King, save yourself!” Even one of the criminals beside Him joined in the insults.

But the other criminal saw something different in Jesus. He told the first man to stop, saying they were being punished fairly, but Jesus had done nothing wrong. Then he turned to Jesus and said,

“Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.”

And Jesus replied with incredible kindness:

“Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.”

Even in His final moments, Jesus offered mercy and hope to someone who believed in Him.

Darkness and Death

Around noon, the sky went dark for three hours. It was as if all of creation was mourning what was happening. Then Jesus cried out loudly, “Father, into your hands I commit my spirit,” and He died.

At that moment, something amazing happened. A Roman centurion—a soldier who had likely seen many executions—praised God and said,

“Surely this was a righteous man.”

The people who had come to watch were filled with sorrow. They had seen something they couldn’t explain—something holy and heartbreaking all at once.

What This Means for Us

This passage shows us that Jesus didn’t just die—He died for us. He took on the punishment we deserve so we could be forgiven. He showed love to His enemies, gave hope to a criminal, and stayed faithful to God until His last breath.

Even in death, Jesus was full of grace.

It also shows us that no one is too far gone. The criminal on the cross had nothing to offer, no time to fix his past, and no way to earn forgiveness. All he did was trust Jesus—and that was enough.

Final Thought

Luke 23:32–49 reminds us that the cross is not just a symbol of pain—it’s a symbol of love, forgiveness, and the open door to eternal life. Jesus gave everything so we could have a fresh start with God.

If you’ve ever wondered whether God can forgive you, look at the cross—and remember what Jesus said:

“Father, forgive them.”

That includes you.

September 27

A Tomb Sealed, But Not the End (Matthew 27:57–66)

After Jesus died on the cross, many people may have thought His story was over. But in Matthew 27:57–66, we see that even in death, something important was happening. This part of the story sets the stage for the greatest surprise in history.

A Brave Man Named Joseph

A man named Joseph of Arimathea stepped forward after Jesus died. He was a wealthy man and a follower of Jesus, though he had kept it quiet before. Now, with courage, he went to Pilate, the Roman governor, and asked for Jesus’ body.

This was a bold move. Associating with someone who had just been executed as a criminal could be risky. But Joseph loved and respected Jesus and wanted to give Him a proper burial.

Pilate agreed, and Joseph carefully wrapped Jesus’ body in a clean linen cloth and laid Him in his own new tomb, carved out of rock. Then he rolled a large stone in front of the entrance.

A Guard at the Tomb

The next day, the religious leaders went to Pilate with a concern. They remembered that Jesus had said He would rise from the dead after three days. They were worried that His

disciples might try to steal the body and then claim He had risen.

So they asked Pilate to secure the tomb. Pilate told them, “Take a guard... make it as secure as you know how.”

They sealed the stone and placed soldiers at the entrance to guard it. They did everything they could to make sure Jesus stayed in that tomb.

What This Tells Us

This passage may seem quiet compared to the dramatic events of the crucifixion, but it’s very important. It shows that Jesus was truly dead and buried. It also shows how the authorities tried to stop any chance of a resurrection claim.

They sealed the tomb and set guards to make sure nothing could happen.

But as we know, God’s plan can’t be stopped by stones, seals, or soldiers. What they thought was the end was only the beginning.

Final Thought

Matthew 27:57–66 reminds us that even when things look hopeless or finished, God is still at work. Sometimes the silence between Good Friday and Easter Sunday feels like a long wait—but the best part of the story is just around the corner.

The tomb was sealed, the guards were posted, and the world thought it was over.

But heaven knew a miracle was coming.

September 28

He Is Alive! (John 20:1–18)

John 20:1–18 tells the amazing story of the first Easter morning—the day Jesus rose from the dead. After all the sadness and pain of the cross, this moment brings hope, joy, and a whole new beginning.

An Empty Tomb

Early in the morning, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to Jesus' tomb. She had loved Jesus deeply and wanted to care for His body. But when she got there, she saw that the stone covering the entrance had been rolled away.

She ran to tell two of Jesus' disciples, Peter and John, "They have taken the Lord out of the tomb, and we don't know where they've put Him!"

Peter and John rushed to the tomb. John got there first but waited. Peter went in and saw the strips of linen that had been wrapped around Jesus' body—but Jesus was gone. Then John went in too, and when he saw the empty tomb, he believed something powerful had happened, even if he didn't fully understand it yet.

Tears in the Garden

After the disciples went back home, Mary stayed behind, crying outside the tomb. As she wept, she looked inside and saw two angels sitting where Jesus' body had been. They asked, "Why are you crying?"

She said, "They have taken my Lord away, and I don't know where they've put Him."

Then she turned around and saw a man standing there. She didn't recognize Him at first. She thought He was the gardener. He asked her the same question: "Why are you crying? Who are you looking for?"

She said, "If you've taken Him, tell me where He is so I can go get Him."

Then Jesus said one word: "Mary."

The moment He said her name, she knew it was Him. "Teacher!" she cried out with joy.

A Personal Encounter

Jesus told Mary not to hold on to Him because He hadn't yet returned to His Father. Then He gave her a mission:

"Go to My brothers and tell them, 'I am returning to My Father and your Father, to My God and your God.'"

Mary Magdalene became the first person to see the risen Jesus—and the first to share the good news.

What This Means for Us

This story shows that Jesus is alive. The tomb couldn't hold Him. Death didn't win. And the first person He appeared to wasn't a religious leader or a powerful person—it was Mary, someone whose life had been changed by His love.

It reminds us that Jesus knows our name. He meets us in our grief, our confusion, and our questions—and brings us hope. He doesn't wait for us to figure everything out. He comes to us with compassion and calls us by name.

Final Thought

John 20:1–18 is not just about an empty tomb—it's about a risen Savior who brings new life. Easter is the proof that God's love is stronger than death and that no matter how dark things seem, the light of Jesus always shines through.

He is alive—and that changes everything.

September 29

Two Reactions to the Resurrection (Matthew 28:8–15)

The resurrection of Jesus is the greatest event in history—but not everyone responded to it the same way. In Matthew 28:8–15, we see two very different reactions: joy and worship from some, and fear and cover-up from others.

Let's look at what happened.

Running with Joy

After the angel told the women at the tomb that Jesus had risen from the dead, they ran to tell the disciples. They were filled with a mix of fear and great joy—a powerful combination of emotions. What they had just seen was amazing and overwhelming.

But on their way, something even more incredible happened: Jesus Himself appeared to them.

He greeted them, and they fell at His feet and worshiped Him. He wasn't a ghost. He wasn't a vision. He was alive, and they could see Him and touch Him.

Then Jesus told them, "Don't be afraid. Go tell my brothers to go to Galilee; they will see Me there."

This is the heart of the resurrection story—Jesus is alive, and He meets people with comfort, love, and purpose.

Covering Up the Truth

While all this was happening, some of the guards who had been watching the tomb went into the city. They told the religious leaders everything that had happened—the earthquake, the angel, the empty tomb.

Instead of believing, the leaders came up with a plan to hide the truth.

They gave the soldiers a large amount of money and told them, "Say that Jesus' disciples came during the night and stole His body while you were asleep." They even promised to protect the soldiers if the Roman governor heard about it.

So the guards took the money and spread the lie.

And Matthew tells us that this story was still being told among the Jewish people when he wrote the Gospel.

What This Teaches Us

This short passage shows that people respond to Jesus in different ways. Some believe and worship—like the women who saw Him and ran to tell others. Others deny or cover up the truth—like the leaders who were more interested in protecting their power than in facing what really happened.

It also reminds us that the resurrection isn't just a story—it demands a response. If Jesus really did rise from the dead (and He did!), then that changes everything.

We can either run toward Him with joy or turn away and pretend it didn't happen.

Final Thought

Matthew 28:8–15 shows us both the beauty of faith and the tragedy of fear. Jesus rose from the dead not just to show His power—but to offer new life to everyone who believes.

The question is: What will you do with that news?

September 30

When Jesus Walks Beside You (Luke 24:13–43)

After Jesus rose from the dead, He didn't just appear in grand ways. Sometimes, He showed up in quiet, personal moments. Luke 24:13–43 tells the story of how Jesus met two of His followers on the road—and how their hearts were changed forever.

A Walk Full of Questions

Two followers of Jesus were walking from Jerusalem to Emmaus, a small village about seven miles away. As they walked, they talked about everything that had just happened—Jesus' death, the empty tomb, and the confusing news that some women said He was alive.

They were sad, confused, and trying to make sense of it all.

Suddenly, Jesus Himself came up and started walking with them—but they didn't recognize Him. Their eyes were somehow kept from seeing who He really was.

Jesus asked them what they were talking about, and they explained all their disappointments and questions. They had hoped Jesus would save Israel, but now He was gone. Or so they thought.

The Truth Explained

Then Jesus began to speak. He didn't just comfort them—He taught them. Starting with the writings of Moses and the prophets (what we now call the Old Testament), He explained how all of it pointed to the Messiah—and how everything had happened just as God had planned.

Even though they didn't yet know it was Jesus, something powerful was happening. Their hearts were burning within them, full of excitement and hope as He spoke.

Eyes Opened at the Table

When they reached their destination, the two men invited Jesus to stay and eat with them. As they sat down at the table, Jesus broke the bread—and in that moment, their eyes were opened. They realized it was Him!

Then, just as suddenly, He disappeared from their sight.

Even though it was late, they couldn't keep the news to themselves. They ran back to Jerusalem to tell the others:

“It is true! The Lord has risen!”

Peace in the Middle of Fear

While the disciples were all together, still trying to understand everything, Jesus appeared among them and said,

“Peace be with you.”

They were startled and afraid, thinking they were seeing a ghost. But Jesus calmed their fears. He showed them His hands and feet and let them touch Him to prove He was real. He even ate some fish to show that He was not just a spirit.

What This Means for Us

This story reminds us that Jesus often walks with us even when we don't realize it. In our confusion, sadness, or doubts, He is near. He listens, He teaches, and He opens our eyes—often in ordinary moments like a walk or a meal.

It also shows us that the resurrection isn't just about a past event. It's about a living Savior who still comes close to His followers today.

Final Thought

In Luke 24:13–43, Jesus meets people on the road, at the table, and in a locked room. Wherever we are—on a journey, in fear, or full of questions—He comes with peace, truth, and hope.

You may not always recognize Him at first, but know this: Jesus walks beside you, and He's still opening hearts today.

