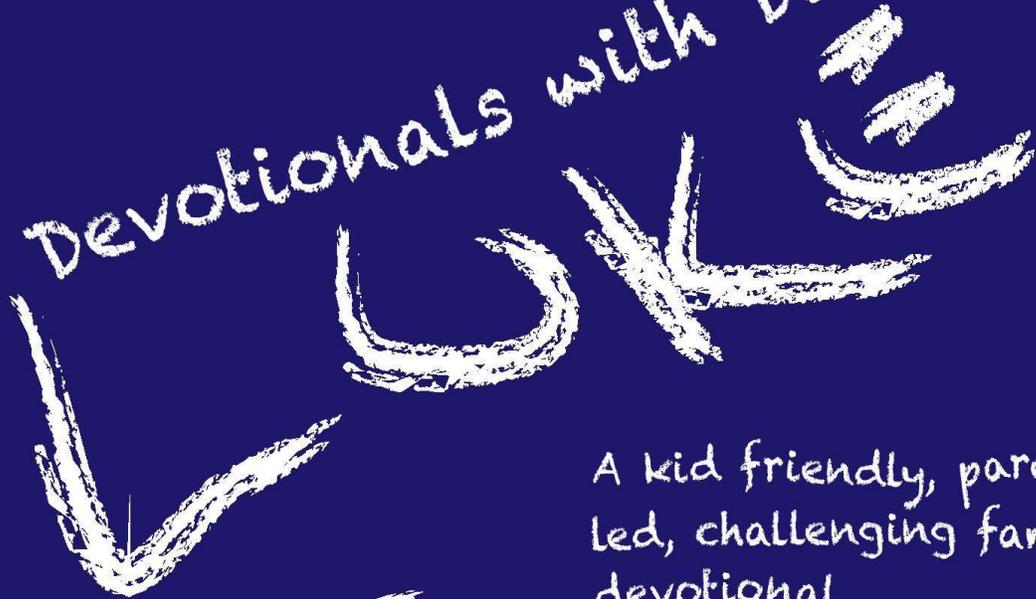


# Devotionals with Dad



A kid friendly, parent led, challenging family devotional



DAD

AL WEINBERG

## **Special Thanks**

First and foremost I thank my Heavenly Father for seeking me when I was lost. For giving me the right amount of joys and sorrows, successes and failures to keep me walking with Him. To You God Be All Praise and Glory.

To my beloved wife Jenny, thanks for supporting me through this adventure called life. I couldn't imagine living life without you. Thank you!

To AJ, Carly and Wil thank you for being such a great test audience. Most of all thank you for following our heavenly Father with me and your mom. We are so proud of each of you and can't wait until you are all out of the house. I mean we can't wait to see how God continues to use you to do His work.

To Sarah & Craig thank you for all your help on this project. From editing, to words of encouragement, you are both great friends!

To my church family thank you for allowing me to be apart of a great congregation that has played an integral part of me and my families walk. I'm glad Christ established the Church!

# The Genesis of Devotionals with Dad

(Optional reading but not necessary for optimal family devotionals)

It was July, 4<sup>th</sup> 2001. I was hiking up the side of a mountain in southwest Pennsylvania after spending the day whitewater rafting. I was 36 years old and in good health. As I was walking up the mountain with the students I started to get a small pain in the *right* side of my chest. It felt like someone just frog punched me in the ribs. Being a wilderness guide, I was familiar with the signs and symptoms of a heart attack. None of them are pain on the right side of your chest. So I continued to hike. I felt that if I could take a deep breath I could get rid of the pain. I started a breathing regiment that went something like this: in through the nose, out through the mouth. After a few moments of rhythmic breathing and trying to look cool in front of the students I was working with, my hands began to tingle. As you may, or may not, know hand tingling is a sign of a heart attack, but by this time I had reached my destination and was able to sit down and my symptoms passed, but the memory didn't.

You always hear of those guys with chest pain for a week who don't get it checked out. Then one day they clutch their chest and leave a wife, 17 children and a mortgage behind. Well, I didn't want to be one of *those* guys. So when I got home I went to my family doctor. Incidentally, you have to be very careful when you are a 36 year-old male calling the doctor for an appointment because you experienced chest pain. If you aren't they will insist that you hang up the phone and call 911 for an ambulance. Not wanting that to happen, I called for a "physical", a totally non threatening, protocol preventing plan. It worked perfectly. I was scheduled for an appointment in a day or two without hysteria.

Now my doctor is cool; he actually listens to you. You feel like he is on your team rather than trying to pump you full of meds so he can pimp a free vacation from Pfizer or something. So I told him my story and that I was concerned for my heart. He laughed and said, "Al, your resting heart rate is 56. Your BP is 119/76. Your cholesterol is 183. You're active. You're healthy. There is less than a 2% chance this has anything to do with your heart. But if you want I can set up a stress test for you." Much to his surprise I wanted to go through with it, and a stress test was scheduled.

Now when you go for a stress test they ask you to take off your shirt and before you know it nurse Cratchet is shaving your chest with a razor with a bush guard on it. There is no warning, no shaving cream, no "you're gonna look funny the next time you go swimming," or anything. They just go for it. As if that weren't bad enough, then they take 60 grit sandpaper and rough up the shaved spots. After all of this they take your blood pressure; as you might guess, it was a touch high.

Well, to make a long story short I failed that stress test. My doctor told me not to worry, that it was probably my normal rhythm. He said he would send the results to a cardiologist who would look them over just to be sure but that it was probably nothing. The next thing I knew, the cardiologist office called to schedule an echo stress test. Well that didn't turn out like they hoped so I was off to schedule a heart cath.

When I went in for the heart cath everyone was all smiles. They got me into my gown and wheeled me to the back of a semi truck that housed the mobile cath lab (which is as good as it get in rural Michigan). After my cath was over I knew something was wrong.

Maybe it was the fact that the smiles on the staff changed to somber, more caring looks. My biggest clue, however, was that I saw my wife, Jenny, crying while talking to the cardiologist. I thought to myself, “Well either the doctor doesn’t take our insurance or the test showed a problem with my heart.”

I will never forget my thought when they said my left anterior descending artery was 99% blocked. I immediately thought, “Great. The only thing I know that I will pass on to my kids is a history of heart disease.”

From that day on I made a vow that even though I don’t hold the keys to life and death that I would use my days to influence my kid’s lives with something other than heart disease.

Soon after that I started leading a family devotional. Every school day we would wake up, get dressed, make breakfast/ coffee, and I would lead a devotional. I am under the philosophy that you should “go big or go home.” Because of this I would make a big deal out of doing these devotionals. After all, faith and fun aren’t mutually exclusive. In fact I giggle with God all the time. All this to say, I always start devotionals with Dad like a radio program: “It’s time now...for devotionals with Dad”! Then I hum a hymn from my childhood. The kids hated it: ok- they didn’t hate it but they thought I was being stupid. My wife thought the theme song needed to go too. But I stuck with it; now we all sing it every morning. We are all dorks!

This devotional is the result of years of practice leading “Devotionals With Dad.” But before I go any further I need to tell you one other factor that has made this process of leading family devotionals possible. When our first child was born my wife (Jenny) would insist that we pray with our son every night when we put him to bed. I was not opposed to this idea. But every night? There would be nights that I just put the child to bed and Jenny would ask, “Did you pray with Him?” The nights that I was in a hurry to get them to bed and skip prayer time so we could have parent time, she would say go back in there and pray with him. Now, the logical side of me said, “Listen, why does it matter if we pray with him. He doesn’t understand English, we could pray, ‘icha bicka boo. Amen.’ And the kid would be none the wiser.” But I would always find myself back in the room picking the baby up holding him, or her, in my arms and praying a simple prayer with him, for him and on behalf of him. Today we have a 18 year old son, a 16 year old girl, and a 12 year old boy. I have had the privilege to pray with them every night that I am home. It is a part of their custom to pray with a parent before bed. They ask for us to pray with them. I’m so glad that my wife insisted that we pray with our kids then because it is invaluable now. It is not too late to start praying with your kids.

## ***Devotionals With Dad Should Be***

Short and to the point ~ While I value spiritual education for my kids, the reality is that that there isn’t that much time in the day when everyone can be around. So, family devotionals need to be short and to the point. Most devos take about 10 – 15 minutes, depending on the discussion and random questions that come up.

No Prep ~ I seldom talk about this, but deep down inside I’m lazy. If I want to keep devotionals going they can’t be a hassle. These devotionals are written in first person so all you have to do is read them, and “voila!” You’re doing a devotional.

Parent led ~ the effectiveness of these devotionals relies on the parent. You have to be the leader. You will need to establish the pattern of where and when to have the devotionals. Will it be at the table or on the couch? Will it be in the morning or at night? Will you push an issue or just skirt it? Can your kids handle a passage that is deep or more adult in it's tone or should you edit some words in the day's scripture reading? Should attendance be mandatory or optional? There is no one size fits all program. You know your kids better than anyone. These devotionals are written as an aid to your spiritual leadership. So it is a requirement that you accept your role as the spiritual leader.

Kid friendly ~ I believe that it is easier for an adult to go to a kid level than it is for a kid to go to an adult level. If I want my kids to be involved with the devo I need keep it on their level.

Family Applicable ~ while being kid friendly is important, this is about *family* devotionals. Therefore, the whole family needs to be able to be learning and growing because of the devotionals that you are all take part in.

Integrated ~ some people strive to lead balanced lives. I think that is ridiculous. God isn't something to balance with all the other aspects of your life. God wants us to include him in every aspect of our life. The best way to get the biggest bang out of your family devotionals is to keep bringing it up throughout the days and weeks. "Hey Johnny, how did you do on the challenge to remember God today?" Or "Wow, that is just like we talked about in Devotionals with Dad last week."

Integrated faith is like a steak that is put into a marinade over night, then grilled to perfection. It's juicy, tender and delicious the way God intended steak to be made. Then there is the way I usually make steak. I pull it out of the freezer, throw it in the microwave to defrost it, slap it on the grill, spill a little A1 Sauce and there you go. It tastes good but not great. God wants us to marinade in him, not just spill a little "Jesus Sauce" on our lives and be on our way.

## ***How To Use Devotionals With Dad***

Sections ~ each devotional is broken into four sections.

### ***Connect***

This section is designed to help draw people into to the scripture in a relevant way. Simply said it helps you identify your need to continue with the devotional. The Connect section will help get the family thinking about the day's topic in a non- threatening, non-cheesy way. Anyone and everyone should be able to contribute to the discussion during the connect section.

### ***Content***

This section contains the bulk of the questions and teachings. My hope is that your family discovers the truth of God's word together. Stay on topic and stay in the day's scripture. Not only will this keep it simple for your kids but it is a good practice for Bible study.

# Content

In this section I offer a challenge to take a truth from the day's scripture and apply it to everyday. The goal of a bible study or devotional isn't to be able to win Bible Jeopardy, it is to be able to apply God's word to our lives to grow us up into who God wants us to be. We are to be "doers of the word not just hearers" James 1:22. The challenge is just that, a challenge for your family to embark on together.

# Close

Transitions are often the elements that make doing a family devotional awkward. The close section helps you close the devotional in a non-awkward way. Usually this is just a simple prayer that you can lead, say together, or pray individually allowing for the opportunity to make it personal.

# Questions & Teachings

A bullet-pointed line signifies that there is a question to be asked and answered. If the question isn't bulleted then it is meant as a rhetorical question.

The teaching sections are just written out in easy to read sections so you can either paraphrase them in your own words or read it as is. It's your choice.

# Written for the Nlrv

This is a good kid friendly translation and I had a copy of it. So that is what we use. The questions and the terms that I use will be out of the Nlrv but any version will do, you just may have to adapt more. I believe kids need to see the Bible being used. That is why I don't have it printed in this devotional for you. While it would be easier it doesn't help your family become more at ease with using their Bible. When you see the Phase Read: Luke 1:1-4 then turn to your Bible and do just that. Try having you kids read the scripture once in a while just to shake things up.

# Prayers

Each day's devotional ends with a prayer. Many times there is a \_\_\_\_\_ in the prayer. The blank is there for you and your family to fill in the blank with something that is applicable to their lives as they pray.

For example if the prayer is:

*"God thank you for \_\_\_\_\_. God please help \_\_\_\_\_."*

# Tips To Becoming A Family That Prays

1. Be real with your prayers.
2. Allow enough time to pray.
3. Model short, heartfelt praying.
4. Encourage everyone to pray out loud.
5. Ask someone else to close and/or open.
6. Pay attention to each other's prayers.
7. Follow up on each other's prayers.
8. Thank your family for praying with you.

# Day 1 Why Are We Doing This?

## Connect

⌘ What is the difference between a rumor and an eye witness account?

## Content

Read Luke 1:1-4

- What did Luke do to write this book?
- Who did Luke get his information from?
- Who is Luke writing to?
- Why does Luke write this book?

## Challenge

⌘ Why is it important to know the truth about Jesus?

## Close

Jesus was and is the most important person who ever lived. That is why it is important for us to know everything we can about his life, his miracles, his teachings, his experiences, his purpose, his death, his resurrection, his life today and most of all his purpose for our lives today.

*God thank you for \_\_\_\_\_.*

# Day 2 A Big Surprise!

## Connect

- Why is having a baby a big deal?

In Jesus' time having children was really important because kids helped with work that the family needed to do to survive. Kids were also a way that the family could pass on values to the next generation. Also at that time having kids was a sign of status. The more kids you had and the better they behaved the better the parents looked to their neighbors and friends. So if you were married for a while and didn't have any kids you were seen as weird or even cursed by God.

# Content

Read Luke 1:5-25

- What do you think it would be like to be in a room alone, and then all of a sudden an angel appears?
- What was Zechariah's reaction to the angel?
- What did the angel say was going to happen to him and his wife?
- Why was this surprising?

The angel Gabriel told Zechariah that not only was he going to have a son, but that his son would be used by God in a huge way. Zechariah found it hard to believe the angel because he and his wife were too old to have kids. Plus if they did have a son to think that he would grow up to be used by God in this mighty way was incredible to him!

- What did Zechariah ask the angel?
- What sign did the angel say was going to happen?
- Why did the angel say Zechariah wasn't going to be able to talk until his son was born?

# Challenge

- Why is believing what God says so important?
- When was it hard for you to trust God?
- What is one way that you will trust and obey God?

# Close

You would think that if an angel appeared to you and told you something that you would believe it. But it was hard for Zechariah to do just that. I don't think we should be too hard on him though. We have God's word (hold up the Bible) completely given to us and yet we don't always trust God. When you think about it trusting and obeying God is really the most important thing that we can do. Zechariah and Elizabeth did trust God. That is why God was doing this great thing for them. God's ways are the best ways. When we trust God we will be living the best way.

*Father God, help us to know you. Help us to trust and obey you today.  
(Pray specifically for the areas shared in the challenge section)*

# Day 3 Gabriel Visits Mary Too

## Connect

Yesterday we read about Zechariah who was a priest, who was old, and who was wise and how the angel Gabriel announced that he would be a father.

- What was Zechariah's response to Gabriel's message?

Today we are going to read about a young, teenage girl and her response to another incredible message from the angel Gabriel.

## Content

Read Luke 1:26-38

- What did the angel say about Mary?
- What did the angel say was going to happen to Mary?
- Why could this be hard to believe?

The angel Gabriel told Mary that she would become pregnant with God's son. Wow! Imagine that. "Hello Mary. Good news! You are going to give birth to God's son.!" I would find that hard to believe, wouldn't you?

- What was Mary's reaction to this?

## Challenge

There are phrases that I want us to think about today. The first is what Gabriel said, "Nothing is too hard for God." That means that God can do anything. There are a lot of things that are impossible for us, but there is nothing that is impossible for God. That is why we can trust God because he can do anything. When God says He will do something, we can trust that he will, even if that thing is impossible for us.

Yesterday old, wise Zechariah doubted what God said he would do. Look at what young Mary said. "I serve the Lord, may it happen to me just as you said it would." Mary trusted God even when it was hard.

✞ How can you trust God today?

## Close

Remember we can always trust God because nothing is too hard for God.

*God, I believe that nothing is too hard for you.  
Help me to trust you even when it is hard.*

# Day 4 Who Am I?

## Connect

- What is the best gift you have ever received?
- What is the nicest thing someone has ever said about you?

Sometimes when people give you a great gift or compliment you may feel overwhelmed because you don't feel like you deserve it. Try to imagine what it would be like to be Mary being the mother of God's son.

- How would you feel if you were Mary?

## Content

Read Luke 1:39-56

- What happened to Elizabeth when Mary greeted her?

Because of what Jesus did, followers of Jesus today always have God's spirit in them. But before Jesus, God's spirit would come on people only on special occasions. When God's Spirit came on Elizabeth her baby jumped for joy and she prophesied that Mary was the most blessed woman ever because of what God was doing in her life.

Elizabeth and Mary both had reason to be very proud. God chose them to do great things. But Mary and Elizabeth weren't proud; they were humble. They both said, "Who am I to have this great thing happen to me?"

## Challenge

- What great things has God done for you?
- Did you deserve them?

If we deserve something, it isn't a blessing or a gift; it is a payment. When God does great things for his people it is a blessing because we don't deserve God's love but he gives it to us anyway. Mary and Elizabeth weren't all proud and boastful. "Hey Everyone Look what God has done for me and not you." No. They were humble and grateful. When we truly understand what God has done for us, that will be our response to him as well. Followers of God should be the most humble and thankful people on the planet.

- Are you humbled by what God has done for you? Are you thankful?
- How can we be more thankful to God for the great things he has done for us?

## Close

*God, thank you for \_\_\_\_\_*

Optional prayer

Luke 1:46-55

"My soul glorifies the Lord  
and my spirit rejoices in God my Savior,  
for he has been mindful  
of the humble state of his servant.  
From now on all generations will call me blessed"

*Tell God how great He is to you*

"for the Mighty one has done great things for me-  
holy is his name.  
His mercy extends to those who fear him,  
from generation to generation."

*Thank God for the great things He has done for you*

"He has performed mighty deeds with his arm;  
he has scattered those who are proud in their inmost thoughts.  
He has brought down rulers from their thrones  
but has lifted up the humble.  
He has filled the hungry with good things  
but has sent the rich away empty."

*Ask God to help you be humble and obey all his commands*

"He has helped his servant Israel,  
remembering to be merciful  
to Abraham and his descendants forever,  
even as he said to our fathers." NIV

*God, you remember and keep your promises. Help us to remember your truth today and to  
obey your will. Amen*

# Day 5 His Name Shall Be John or Pop Goes The Prophet

## Connect

If you were struck silent for 9 months by God what do you think your first words would be?

Would they be:

- “Hey! Listen to me!”
- “Someone make me a sandwich!”
- “Wow, It is good to hear my voice again!”

Well that is what happened to Zechariah. God made him unable to speak for 9 months while his wife Elizabeth was pregnant. Listen to hear what his first words were after not speaking for 9 months.

## Content

Read Luke 1:57-66

- What did Elizabeth and Zechariah want to name their son?
- Why didn't the people agree with them?
- Why did Elizabeth and Zechariah want to name their son John?
- When Zechariah was able to speak again what was the first thing he did?

## Challenge

Wow! The first thing he did was praise God. How cool is that? I wonder if we were in the same situation, would we praise God? After being silent for 9 months Zechariah knew how powerful and awesome God was, it is no wonder why, the first thing on his tongue was praise.

One of the reasons we are doing these devotionals is because we need to know how great God is so our lives can be filled with praise for the great things God has done and who he is. The God of the universe loves us and He wants us to know him. Zechariah knew this and that is why his first words were to give God praise.

## Close

Listen to what Zechariah said

Read Luke 1:67-79

*God I praise you for \_\_\_\_\_*

# Day 6 Patience is Rewarded

## Connect

- Tell me a time when it is/was hard for you to be patient.
- Why is being patient so hard?

God's people were waiting for thousands of years for God to make good on His promise for a deliverer for the people. Mary and Joseph waited for 9 months for God's son Jesus to be born. It must have been so hard to be patient.

## Content

Read Luke 2:1-7

- Do you think it would be confusing to be told that you were going to birth God's Son and then have to do it in a stable?

In a way, Mary and Joseph's patience was rewarded by having a baby boy just like the angel told them would happen. But in another way they still had to wait for Jesus to grow up and become all the things that God said he would become. So there they were alone in a stable with their newborn baby boy, who just so happened to be God's Son, the savior of the world. Mary and Joseph still needed patience.

Read Luke 2:8-20

- What was the shepherd's first reaction to the angel appearing to them?
- What would your reaction have been?

Being shepherd wasn't a very glamorous job. It wasn't one of those jobs that kids dream of becoming. "When I grow up I want to be a shepherd." No; it was a job that someone had to do, but if you had to do it you probably weren't that important to a lot of other people in town.

Remember that the people of Israel had been waiting for a savior for years and years. So imagine how surprising it must have been that not just one angel but a whole bunch of angels came to tell the shepherds, before anyone else in the whole world, that Jesus the savior was born tonight. No wonder the shepherds dropped everything and went to see Jesus! They knew what was happening before anyone else. This was the biggest news ever and they knew it first.

## Challenge

When you learn something new about God, what do you want to do? Do you want to think about it? Do you wonder if it is true? Do you check it out to see if it is true? I think it is cool how the shepherds reacted to the Angels message about Jesus' birth. First they went where God told them to go. Next they told everyone what God did.

Think about your own life. When you learn about God do you immediately go where God wants you to and say what God wants you to say?

That is exactly what God wants us to do, to obey. Just like the shepherds we need to:

Obey God Right Away  
&  
All The Way

## Close

Sometimes being obedient to God means that you act right away. Sometimes being obedient means to wait and be patient for God's perfect timing to happen. Either way when we obey we are rewarded by God.

*Father God, Help me to obey you by \_\_\_\_\_*

## Day 7 Childhood Memories

### Connect

(Fill in the blanks that make this personal to you and your kids. Feel free to elaborate.)  
When you were born I felt \_\_\_\_\_. I thought that maybe someday you would grow up to be \_\_\_\_\_. I knew right then and there that I loved you.  
Today we are going to look at 2 stories from Jesus' childhood.

### Content

Read Luke 2:21-40

- What do you think it would be like to hear these things about your child?

Even as a child people around Jesus knew he was special. He grew strong, he was very wise and blessed by God's grace.

Read Luke 2:41-52

- What would happen to you if you were left behind at the mall or something for a whole day?
- Do you think you would be in trouble if you snuck off like Jesus did?
- Where was Jesus when they found him?
- What was he doing?
- Jesus asked his parents, "Why were you looking for me? Didn't you know that I would be in my father's house?" What did Jesus say about why he was at the temple?

### Challenge

Twice today we read how Jesus as a child was strong, wise and he grew in favor with God and people. He didn't wait until he was grown up to grow in his friendship with God. Neither should you. In fact, today is the day that God is calling you to be in relationship with him. Today you can grow in favor with God. You don't have to wait; God is with you now.

## Close

Do you sometimes worry about what will happen in the future? The best thing that you can do for your future is to be close with God today. You don't have to grow up at all to be friends with God. Actually Jesus told adults that if they wanted to be friends with God they had to be like kids. So it should be all the easier for you since you already are kids.

*God I want be close to you today.*

*Help me to make good choices today that will make me who you want me to be.*

## Day 8 Out With The Bad In With The Good

### Connect

Supplies needed:

- Turkey baster or bulb syringe
- Glass of water
- Do you remember the baby John that we read about last week? The angel said that he would do great things for God. Today we are going to find out what he told the people to do to get ready for Jesus.

### Content

Read Luke 3:1-20

God told John to tell the people to stop doing bad things and to ask God to forgive them. John said that if they did this that God would forgive them.

- When the crowd asked John what they should do, what did John tell them?
- If the people did these things would their sins be forgiven? Why or why not?

### Challenge

John told the people that if they admitted to God the bad things they did and apologized to God for them that he would forgive them. So why then did John tell the people to do things for the poor and so forth? I think there are two reasons why John said to do these things.

The first reason is that when you are truly forgiven by God you feel thankful to God so you naturally want to please Him by obeying Him.

The second reason is that if you don't replace bad things in your life with good things you will most likely go back to doing bad things.

Take this baster for example.

Let's say that air represents sin in our life.

We can try to get sin out of our life but (squeeze the bulb) but if we don't have something to replace the air it will just come back. (Let the bulb go)

But if we squeeze the out the air and then put it in this glass of water the baster fill up with water instead of air.

It is the same way with us. When we get rid of sin in our life it is important for us to fill up our time with good choices so we don't go back to our old bad choices. When we do this we will be ready for Jesus to do big things in our life.

## Close

Have you asked God to forgive you lately? If not let's take a moment to pray

*God I'm sorry for \_\_\_\_\_.*

What good thing do you think God wants you to do? Pray

*God Help me to obey you by \_\_\_\_\_.*

## Day 9 Who's Your Daddy?

### Connect

- What would be different in your life if you were born into someone else's family? Would you like the same things? Would you go to the same school? Would you have the same friends? What would be different if you were born into someone else's family?
- Would you have the same parents or grandparents?
- How would that change your life?

Being in this family makes a difference in who you are. Today we are going to learn a bit more about Jesus' family.

### Content

Read Luke 3:21-22

- What happened when Jesus prayed?
- What did God say about Jesus?
- What would you think if you were there and you saw the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove sit on Jesus' shoulder?
- What would you think if you heard God say to you from Heaven, "You are my son, and I love you. I am very pleased with you."?

### Challenge

Your family is very important. More than anyone else, your family has the biggest impact on your life.

Let's say at least one reason why you are glad that you are a part of this family, or one reason why you are thankful for our family.

(Don't miss this opportunity to tell each of your children that you love them and that you are pleased with them.) Optional reading Luke 3:23-38

## Close

*God thank you for my family because \_\_\_\_\_.*

# Day 10 The Truth Wins

## Connect

Let's say you aren't allowed to eat any food before dinner. You ask when supper will be and you are told not for two more hours. You are really hungry. When you come into the kitchen you see three things: a bowl of fresh fruit, a big bowl of ice cream and a plate of cookies.

- Which one of these would be the most tempting to you?
- Would there be anything more tempting to you?

Being tempted is a normal part of life. Being tempted isn't bad. Giving into temptation is bad. Being tempted means that you are human and that you need God's help to resist.

## Content

Read Luke 4:1-13

- Who was tempting Jesus?
- How did Satan tempt Jesus?
- How did Jesus resist temptation?

Both Jesus and Satan know the Bible. Jesus not only knew the Bible, but he also understood it's meaning and he knew how to apply it to his situation. Jesus was able to resist temptation because he knew what God wanted him to do. His mind was made up and he wouldn't give in to the temptations that Satan dealt him.

Some people think that these temptations weren't that big of a deal for Jesus. But that is so wrong. Think about the first temptation to turn rocks into bread. How long was it since Jesus ate something? 40 days! Do you think that you would want to eat something have not eating for 40 days?

- Are you ever tempted to do wrong things?
- 

Everyone is tempted. Jesus models the best way to resist temptation, by knowing what God has said. We can choose to resist temptation by remembering what God said. God's ways are the best ways. When we believe this and trust God, the thing that we are being tempted by shrinks and is less of a temptation.

## Challenge

This is why we are doing Devotionals with Dad. So we can know the truth of what God said, and what He wants for us. Notice when Satan tempted Jesus, Jesus didn't say, "Wait a second let me look up what the Bible says about this." No. He already knew the truth and believed it was the best way. So he was able to say no to the temptation. Truth defeated Satan's lies.

- What are ways that you are tempted?
- What does God say that will help you resist those temptations?

## Close

*God help me to resist the temptation of \_\_\_\_\_ by remembering \_\_\_\_\_.*

## Day 11 Faith First

### Connect

- If you could have any super power what would it be?

Pretend a friend of yours goes with his family on vacation to another state or country. One day you are watching the news and you see your friend. The reporter is telling the world how your friend is amazing and that he/she is the worlds best singer, or athlete, or they can fly or that he has the power to heal people.

What would you expect from that friend when you see him/her? You would expect him to show off his skill or powers for you.

Well that is exactly what Jesus' friends felt like when he returned to his home town.

### Content

Read Luke 4:14-30

- What did Jesus say about himself by reading from the scroll?

In those days if you were sick or had a disability it was the worst possible thing that could happen to you. If you were a widow or an orphan you were pretty much on track for a hard life. So when Jesus came to town he was known for helping these people - people who were desperate for help.

Jesus knows that the people are there expecting him to perform miracles for them. That is why the people are being so nice to Jesus at the beginning of the story. They want to see for themselves if what was said about Jesus is true. But in their hearts they are thinking, "How can this be? This is Jesus the son of Joseph the carpenter. "

Now Jesus could have healed everyone in the whole world with just one word if he wanted to. But Jesus' mission wasn't to get rid of sickness. It was to bring people back into a relationship with God. And there is only one thing that you need for that to happen: Faith.

Miracles don't make faith; miracles make faith grow. The people in Jesus' hometown didn't believe that Jesus was God's son. They just wanted him to give them special treatment because he was from their town.

So one minute they were kissing up to Jesus and the next minute they were trying to kill him.

I guess Jesus was right about them after all.

## Challenge

- What does it mean to have faith in Jesus?

Faith in Jesus means that you trust that Jesus is who he said he is. Faith means that you trust and obey him. Faith means that you love Jesus more than everything else.

- Do you have this type of faith in Jesus?

Faith is what Jesus requires you to have for Jesus to work in your life.

- In what ways is it hard for you to trust or have faith in Jesus?

## Close

*Jesus help me to trust you with\_\_\_\_\_.*

## Day 12 Timing Is Everything

### Connect

- What does it mean to keep a secret?
- Is it ok to keep a secret from a friend?

Let's say your friend is having a surprise birthday party thrown for her. Would it be ok if you told her? What is the difference if she was going to find out about the party anyway so why not tell her? If you told her she would still get the party but it wouldn't be as special as a surprise party would have been. Sometimes timing is everything.

### Content

Read Luke 4:31-44

- What did the demons say when Jesus drove them out of people?
- Does it seem weird that Jesus wanted them to be quiet?

Jesus had a bigger purpose than to just heal people and do a few miracles. He wanted people to learn about God's plan for them and to get their relationship back on the right

track with God. To do that, he would eventually have to take the punishment for the world's sins. But all of this needed to be done in God's perfect timing. The demons knew this so they wanted to screw up God's plans. That is why Jesus told them to be quiet. Remember God's ways are the best ways, so sometime in order to follow God we have to trust his timing in our life. Romans 5:6 says "You see, at just the right time, when we were still powerless, Christ died for the ungodly." (NIV) This verse talks about God's timing. You see, God is never late. He is always on time.

## Challenge

Psalms 130:5-6

I wait for the LORD, my soul waits,  
and in his word I put my hope.

My soul waits for the Lord  
more than watchmen wait for the morning, NIV

- When is it hard for you to wait on God's perfect timing?

## Close

*God help me to be patient with \_\_\_\_\_. Help me to trust your perfect timing in this situation.*

## Day 13 Leave It

### Connect

What is something that you worked really hard to accomplish?  
What does it feel like to accomplish something really big?

### Content

Read Luke 5:1-11

- What was Peter's job?
- What did Jesus ask Peter to do?

Peter most likely stayed up all night fishing and was cleaning up the nets and getting everything ready for the next night's fishing. Then Jesus says out of the clear blue, "Hey Pete. Let's go out again and fish." If I were Peter I would have said, "Um, Jesus, I appreciate the offer but I have been up all night and its really not a great time to catch any fish. Plus I just got everything all cleaned up and I would rather not have to clean the nets again. Maybe tonight." But Peter obeys Jesus and they row out together to fish, even though it doesn't make sense to fish in the middle of the day.

- What happens when they pull the nets up?
- What does Peter tell Jesus when he sees all the fish?
- What does Jesus tell Peter?

## Challenge

Peter realized that Jesus was no ordinary man. He believed that Jesus was sent by God to do God's work. Because of this Jesus told Peter to follow him and to become a fisher of men. This means that he will be helping Jesus complete his mission.

- What happened to all the fish they caught?
- Peter just caught the biggest catch of his life. He sold fish for a living. He was just about to make a lot of money. Why do you think he would leave all the fish and follow Jesus?

Peter realized that Jesus was of far greater worth than a big catch of fish so he left them on the beach and followed Jesus.

Jesus today is still asking people to leave what they love to follow him.

- Is there anything in your life that you love more than Jesus? If so that thing will get in the way of you following him. We need to be like Peter and leave everything behind and fully follow Jesus. Remember we need to obey right away and all the way!

## Close

*God help me to follow you, to obey you and to love you more than anything else.*

## Day 14 Good Friends

### Connect

- Who is your best friend?
- What makes a good friend?
- Who do you know that you would like to introduce to Jesus?
- Why do you want them to know Jesus?
- What would you be willing to do to help them meet Jesus?

### Content

Read Luke 5:12-26

- Why couldn't the people just bring their friend straight to Jesus?
- What did the people have to do to get their friend who couldn't walk to Jesus?
- What does Jesus do for the man at first?
- What did the people think about this?
- Who is the only one who can forgive sins?
- Did Jesus have the power to forgive someone of their sins? Why?
- What did Jesus do to prove to the people he had the power to forgive someone's sin?

### Challenge

- Do you believe that Jesus has the power to forgive?
- Have you ever asked Jesus to forgive you?

- If yes continue below If not do you want to right now? See the last page to see how to become friends with Jesus.

These four guys were willing to do a lot to get their friend in front of Jesus. They demonstrated that they really believed that Jesus could help their friend and that they were good friends. Good friends introduce their friends to Jesus.

- How can we introduce our friend to Jesus?

## Close

*Father God Help me to introduce \_\_\_\_\_ to Jesus.*

## Day 15 Priorities

### Connect

- If our house suddenly caught on fire what would be 2 or 3 things would you want to save? Why? (Give your answer last.)

If there was a choice between these things and you, I would choose you. But it makes you think about what is really important to you.

### Content

Read Luke 5:27-39

- What was Levi's job?

Tax collectors were known for making a lot of money.

- Jesus asked Levi to follow him. What was Levi's response?
- Would it be hard for you to give up some of the things you mentioned above if God asked you to?

When Levi gave the big party in honor of Jesus, some people where upset about Jesus spending time with sinners.

- If Jesus never spent any time with people who sin, who would he be able to spend time with?
- What does it mean to have a priority?

In these two stories today we see different people and their priorities

Person	Priority
Levi	Made following Jesus a priority over money
Jesus	Made helping people turn away from sin a priority
Pharisees	Made looking good in front of others a priority over helping people
Other disciples	Made fasting/ going without food a priority so they might have more time to pray
Jesus' Disciples	Made spending time with Jesus a priority over fasting

## Challenge

- What is your priority?

Following Jesus needs to be our highest priority. But what does that mean? It means a lot of different things to different people. Jesus said the most important thing is to love God above everything else and to love others as your self.

The people in these two stories showed their love for God by obeying Jesus even if no one else understood.

- How can you show your love for God by obeying him today?

## Close

*God I love you. Help me to follow and obey Jesus today by\_\_\_\_\_ .*

# Day 16 Lord Of The Sabbath

## Connect

- What is the Sabbath Day?

The Sabbath Day is a day of the week set aside for worship and rest.

- What day of the week do we do that?
- What are our traditions on our Sabbath Day?

## Content

Read Luke 6:1-11

- Jesus does two things wrong in the Pharisees' eyes. What were they?
- Why was picking grain or healing someone considered wrong? (It was considered work which is the opposite of rest)

The Pharisees were more concerned about *looking* right rather than *doing* right.

## Challenge

- Are there times when you are more concerned about looking right than you are with doing right?

Looking Right	Doing Right
Winning at all cost	Doing your best and playing fair
Wanting your way	Wanting the best way for everybody
Being kind so people will be kind to you	Being kind to everyone
Not admitting you were wrong	Apologizing when you are wrong
Showing off	Being humble
Bragging	Using your talent to help others

- What are other ways that we look right rather than do right?  
Jesus shows us that it is always the right time to do the right thing.

- How do we know what is right?

Read Luke 6:11-16

## Close

Luke 6:12 says that Jesus “spent the night praying.”

⊕ Wow, if Jesus had to spend the night praying how important should it be for us to pray?

Prayer is a way that we stay connected to God. If we want to do the right things, we need to stay connected with God so we can know what he wants us to do.

*Father God, Help me to do the right thing by \_\_\_\_\_.*

## Day 17 Now Or Later

### Connect

Let’s say that you went to the mailbox today and you received a letter that had a special offer. The offer was to return the coupon today and receive a chocolate bar free or wait 1 year and return the coupon for the whole chocolate factory. Your choice would be one chocolate now or a lifetime of chocolate bars later.

- Which would you choose?

A life time supply of chocolate is worth the wait.

Today we are going to read what Jesus said to people about choosing the right thing even when it is hard.

### Content

Read Luke 6:17-26

Do you remember when we talked about obeying God? We should obey him right away and all the way. Sometimes it is hard to do what is right. Jesus is telling the people it is better do have a hard time now and choose the right thing than to take the easy way and

disobey God. Sometimes doing the wrong thing might seem better now but it won't be in the long run. When we disobey God, a lot of times it is because we think God's way is too hard. When we disobey it is like we take the candy bar today instead of waiting and getting the whole chocolate factory tomorrow.

If we obey God, God will bless us. But when we disobey God we may get away with it for a while but eventually God will hold us accountable for the bad choices that we have made. God knows everything. That is why following God's ways make sense because God's ways are the best ways.

God's blessing doesn't mean that we will get everything that we want right away but, God does promise his followers that he will never abandon them here on earth and that we will someday be able to spend forever with him in heaven.

When we follow God we are blessed now and later.

## **Challenge**

- Why is doing the right thing sometimes hard?
- When is it hard for you to make the right decision?
- Are there hard choices that you have to make in life right now?

Jesus teaches us to do the right thing even when it's hard. When we are faced with hard choices the best thing we can do is to ask God for help. We can trust that he will help us make the right choice. Remember, we follow God because we believe that God's ways are the best ways.

## **Close**

*Father God I trust you. Help me to follow your ways even when it is hard.*

# **Day 18 God's Love is Never Ending**

## **Connect**

Remember yesterday when we talked about choosing the candy bar and the chocolate factory? Let's imagine you have the chocolate factory. One day someone steals a chocolate bar from you.

- What would you do to that person?
- If you have a lifetime supply of chocolate, did stealing a candy bar really take something from you?

We have that choice everyday with people around us. Will we be generous and forgiving or will we be stingy and punishing.

## **Content**

Read Luke 6:27-36

- How did Jesus tell us to treat our enemies?
- Why should we love our enemies?

God wants everybody in the world to understand his love. When we are kind to our enemies it is so surprising to people that they ask the questions. “How can they be so kind?” The answer to that question can only be that they have received so much of God’s love that they can love other people even when they don’t love them back.

Go to the sink and fill a glass ½ full with water. Give each child an empty glass.

Let’s say that this glass is all the love I have. If I want to give love to you I can. Pour some water into their glasses.

Then I will have less love. But if you were a friend you would give me some love back.

Have them pour some water back into your glass.

Now if you were an enemy if I poured into you would you pour back? Probably not. You would keep it.

Jesus is telling us to love our enemies. Let’s say all of you are enemies. Pour all of your water into the glass. Hold up the empty glass.

- Is this the way Jesus wants us to be completely empty without love?

God does want us to love our enemies but he doesn’t want us to be empty either.

If you own a chocolate factory you have an endless supply of chocolate bars. So you can afford to give away as many chocolate bars as you want to.

Turn on the faucet.

If this faucet is God and the water is love this is what we are to be like. Keep your glass in the water stream but allow it to spill into the other glass.

You see God fills us up with love we can never run out of God’s love. So we can love other people even if they don’t return our love. God’s love never runs out.

## **Challenge**

- Is there someone in your life that is hard to love?

The only way that you will be able to love anyone perfectly is by allowing God’s love to flow through you.

## **Close**

*Thank you God for loving me.  
Please help me to love my friends and enemies.*

# **Day 19 The Heart Of The Matter**

## **Connect**

- What lesson did we learn at the sink yesterday?

God’s love is never ending. God is the source of our love.

- What would happen if we pulled our glass out from the faucet?

# Content

Read Luke 6:37-49

Today Jesus tells us 3 things.

1. To judge our self before we judge others
2. Just like a good tree produces good fruit, a good heart produce good works
3. Following Jesus is like building your house on a good foundation. In order to do these we need to remember that Jesus is not only our source of love (like we talked about yesterday) he is the source of goodness as well.

Sometimes we forget that Jesus is the source of everything good in our life. Then we start to think that there are other sources of goodness. So we start spending time filling up with them instead of Jesus. Things like TV, music, hobbies, friends, work or school. None of these are bad, but if they take our focus off of Jesus, our Source, we will start making poor choices like judging other people to make us feel better.

Jesus gives us a way to help us see what source we are tapped into when he talks about the tree. He said that a good tree makes good fruit and a bad tree makes bad or no fruit. So if we look at our life, our words, our thoughts, our actions and they match up with what God says they should be, then we know we are tapped into the right source. If not then we need to get back to Jesus and allow him to change our heart.

## Challenge

The story of the two builders reminds us that we need to stick with Jesus' plans for our life. Take a moment to ask Jesus if there is anything in your life that is getting in the way of your friendship with him.

## Close

*Father God, you are the source of love and goodness.  
Help me to stay connected to you.*

# Day 20 Jesus Understands How You Feel

## Connect

Part of being human is to have emotions. Let's take a moment to think about some emotions that we feel. For each emotion I say, make your face represent that emotion.

Happy  
Sad  
Mad

Fear  
Amazed  
Confused

Today we will be reading two stories where Jesus expressed his emotions. Listen to see what there were.

# Content

Read Luke 7:1-17

- What did the roman commander want Jesus to do?
- How did he ask Jesus?
- Where was Jesus when he healed the commander's servant?

Jesus demonstrates to the people his power isn't limited by distance.

- What emotion did Jesus express? (Amazement)
  
- When Jesus came to the town called Nain what did he see?
  
- What emotion did Jesus feel?

Anytime someone dies it is sad. But in this case it was very sad because this woman had no one left to take care of her. She would most likely become very poor.

- What did Jesus do for her?
- If you were the commander or the widow what emotions do you think you would have felt?

# Challenge

Jesus demonstrated his power in both of these stories. Many times we remember that Jesus has awesome power, but we forget that he was human and felt emotions. Jesus understands our feelings and emotions because he has emotions as well.

Sometimes in our lives we feel like no one can understand us. Jesus does understand you. He knows you better than you know yourself. Sometimes we feel like we need to act a different way in order for Jesus to love us. The commander in this story was scared that his servant would die and the widow was so sad that her son had died. Both of these people were open and honest with Jesus with the way they felt.

Jesus was amazed at the commander's faith. I wonder what it would take for Jesus to be amazed with our faith. Even though he was afraid that his servant would die he went to Jesus because he had faith that Jesus could heal his servant.

- Are you honest with God about what you are feeling?
- Do you have faith that God can and will help you with what you are facing today?

God wants you to be honest with your feelings. He understands you and he will help you no matter what you are feeling.

# Close

*Jesus thank you for understanding me.  
Help me to always be honest with you.  
God help me\_\_\_\_\_.*

# Day 21 Real Encouragement

## Connect

- Have you ever been excited about something at first, then after a while your feelings changed?
- Have you ever had a time in your life where you needed to be encouraged?
- Why do we need encouragement?

## Content

Read Luke 7:18-35

- Do you remember what John the Baptist's purpose was in God's plan? (To prepare the way for Jesus.)
- What did John have his disciples ask Jesus?

John at this point was in jail and about to die. As he is there he starts to wonder if it was all worth it. So he has his disciples ask Jesus if he is the Messiah or if there will be another person after him.

- Who baptized Jesus?
- What two things did God do to demonstrate who Jesus was when he was baptized?

Wouldn't you think that if the Holy Spirit in the form of a dove flew and landed on Jesus' shoulder and if God spoke from heaven and said, "This is my son in whom I am well pleased" that you would remember that Jesus was the Messiah?

You would think so but the truth is we all need reminders. We all need encouragement to keep believing in God.

## Challenge

- In what ways are you encouraged to stay believing in Jesus?  
The Bible, church, prayer, listening to Christian music, talking about Jesus with your friends are all great ways to encourage your faith.
- What did Jesus say about how important John the Baptist was?

In a way we can be like John the Baptist today. We can use our lives to point other people to Jesus. We can be an encourager, not a wimpy encourager that just says, "You can do it" but a real encourager that takes the time to really listen and to know what to say to help someone believe in Jesus.

- What are some ways that you can encourage your friends today?

## Close

*Lord, help me to be an encourager today by \_\_\_\_\_*

# Day 22 Forgiven Much, Thankful Much

## Connect

- How do you act when you are really tired or really hungry?
- Do you act differently when you are tired or hungry than you normally would? Why?
- How do you feel when you finally get to sleep or eat?

## Content

Read Luke 7:36-50

- When we have someone special over for dinner how do we treat them?
- How did this Pharisee treat Jesus when he came to his house?
- How did the woman treat Jesus?

Jesus told a story of two men who owed money. One man owed 500 silver coins and the other 50 silver coins. Both were forgiven, but the man who was forgiven more was more grateful than the one who was forgiven the smaller amount.

- What did the story Jesus told have to do with the woman and the Pharisee?

Romans 3:23 says “Everyone has sinned. No one measures up to God’s glory.” This means that both the woman and the Pharisee desperately needed forgiveness. The only difference is that the woman knew it and the Pharisee didn’t.

## Challenge

- Do you know your need for a savior?

This story reminds us that no matter how good or bad you are or no matter how good or bad you think you are that everyone needs God’s forgiveness.

When we understand our sin we understand our need for forgiveness. When we understand how much we have been forgiven then the only reaction that we can have is thankfulness. This woman was so thankful for Jesus forgiving her.

When you are forgiven you are thankful. When you are thankful your actions show it.

- Do your actions show how thankful you are for Jesus’ forgiveness?
- What is one way that you can do to show Jesus that you are thankful for his forgiveness?

If you have never asked for Jesus to forgive you, you can do so right now. (See the last page How To Become Friends With Jesus.)

## Close

*Jesus thank you for forgiving me.  
Help me to show it by \_\_\_\_\_ .*

# Day 23 Till Your Heart

## Connect

What are the four things that every plant needs? *Sun, Soil, Water, Air.*  
How are you like a plant?

The answer to this question is called a metaphor. A metaphor is when you use something known to help you understand something unknown. Jesus used metaphors to help people understand God's Kingdom.

## Content

Read Luke 8:1-15

Story of the Farmer facts sheet

Object	Meaning
Farmer	God
Seed	God's truth
Soil	Our hearts
Path	A heart that rejects God's truth
Rocky Soil	A heart that receives God's truth but falls away when times get hard
Thorny Soil	A heart that receives God's truth but has slow growth in the LORD because their desire for comfort gets in the way.
Good Soil	A heart that receives God's word and allows it to grow by study, prayer and teaching

## Challenge

For the last 22 days we have been given a challenge in the challenge section of this devotional. Do we take them seriously? Do we take the challenge and apply it to our lives or do we just think about it and let it go because it is too hard?

Think about this: If we don't take God's truth and apply it to our lives we allow other messages to grow up in place of God's truth. The result will be that we won't grow as much as we could. But... if we take God's truth and learn to apply it everyday, then that truth will actually grow. We will become more wise, more obedient, more Christ like because the truth that we have received will grow in our hearts and life just like a plant that is in good soil.

## Close

*God help me to grow in you.  
Help me to know your truth and to obey it.*

# Day 24 Shine

## Connect

- Have you ever done something for someone and they didn't really appreciate it?  
Or
- What would it be like if you worked really hard on a gift and the person you gave it to didn't really like it.
- How would that feel?

When Jesus comes into our lives that is the best gift that anyone could ever receive. What we do with that gift shows how much we appreciate it.

## Content

Read Luke 8:16-21

- What is the purpose for turning on a lamp?

When something is lost or hidden turning on a light is the first step to finding it. When Jesus enters our life it is like He lights a lamp in our life to help guide us to where He wants us to be. His light also helps us find areas in our life that God wants us to be cleaned up. God's light helps us be obedient to His will. God wants everyone in the world to be in His Light.

In verse 18 Jesus warns the people not to take the light that they were given for granted. When we receive God's forgiveness we receive God's Spirit or the light. We have a responsibility to use that light to help other people to see their need for God. The more we use the light that, God has given us, the more it shines. The more God's light shines in us the more impact Jesus will have in us and through us.

## Challenge

We have been given a great gift! Our neighbors, friends and family need this gift as well. If we don't shine Jesus' light in our lives it is as if we received a gift and never played with it.

- How can you show your light?
- How can we show our light as a family?

## Close

*God please help me to show your light in my life by \_\_\_\_\_.*  
*God please help us to show your light as a family by \_\_\_\_\_.*

# Day 25 Storms In Life

## Connect

- Have you ever done the right thing or made the right choice and things still didn't work out the way you hoped they would?
- Does being a Christian mean that you will never have a hard time?

In today's reading we will see what happens when Jesus' disciples do exactly as they are told.

## Content

Read Luke 8:22-25

- What did Jesus tell the disciples to do?
- Did the disciples obey Jesus?
- What was Jesus doing in the boat when the storm hit?
- What did the disciples think was going to happen?
- How did Jesus solve the problem?

Just like a friendship or a relationship with a family member, our relationship with Jesus has to grow. Jesus used this miracle to help the disciples' faith in him grow. Their faith grew when they saw Jesus speak to the storm and the storm obeyed. I wonder if the disciples were thinking, "Hey. We obeyed Jesus and now look at us. We are going to die!" Sometimes Jesus uses hard times in our lives to help us grow.

Knowing Jesus is different than knowing about Jesus. Jesus could have just told the disciples that he was able to calm a storm. Or Jesus could have been on shore when a storm blew in and said, "Hey guys, watch this." and then calm a storm. Neither of those options would have been as life changing as actually being in a storm, afraid for your life and then, just when you thought you were going to die, Jesus says, "Hey! Storm! Quiet! I'm sleeping!" (A slight paraphrase) Jesus used the storm to show the disciples that they could trust him in the hard times as well as the good times. He used the storm to help them know him better rather than just to know about him.

## Challenge

There are two lessons that we can learn from this story.

Lesson 1: Everyone goes through storms. Hard times come to people who obey God and to those who disobey God. God uses storms to draw us closer to him.

Lesson 2: There is a big difference between *knowing* Jesus and knowing *about* Jesus. You can learn about Jesus by reading the Bible. But you can only know Jesus by living with Jesus.

Have you invited Jesus to live with you? Do you remember to live life with Jesus everyday? When we live life with Jesus our relationship with Jesus grows because we see him in action in good times and hard times.

# Close

*Father God, Thank you for using storms in our lives to help our faith in you grow.  
God, please help us to remember that you are with us everyday, all the time.*

## Day 26 It's How You Look At It

### Connect

Here is a fun little exercise that demonstrates a difference in a point of view.  
Hold one finger up and hold your hand above your head.  
Spin your hand in a clockwise direction.  
Continue watching your hand while you slowly lower it until it is below your chin.

- What direction is your hand moving now?

It is going counter clockwise. Your hand never changed direction but your point of view did.

Sometimes people see God work in their lives and they accept it, and sometimes people see God work in their lives and they reject it. The difference is a point of view. See if you can pick out the different points of view on Jesus.

### Content

Read Luke 8:26-39

⊗ How many points of view concerning Jesus did you find?

Point Of View From	Jesus' Action	Response
The Demons	Jesus cast them into a herd of pigs	They ran the pigs into the lake and drowned
The Townspeople	Jesus freed the man from the control of the demons. By doing so he helped the town so the demon controlled man wouldn't bother them anymore.	The people were afraid of Jesus and the asked him to leave.
The Demon Freed Man	Jesus freed him from the control of the demons.	He started thinking right. He wore clothes. He wanted to come with Jesus. He obeyed Jesus by staying in town and told people how much God had done for him.

### Challenge

- ⊗ What have you seen Jesus do in your life?
- ⊗ How would you describe your response to Jesus in your life?

- |              |                 |                 |
|--------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| a. Fear      | d. Thankfulness | g. Greed        |
| b. Rebellion | e. Obedience    | h. Indifference |
| c. Love      | f. Awe          | i. Entitlement  |

Our reactions to Jesus show our real thoughts about Him, not only to God but to the world around us.

God is working His plan in our life everyday. If we can't see it or if we don't believe it maybe it is because our perspective on God is off.

## Close

*God, help us to see things like you do.  
Help us to be a part of your plan for us and our world today.*

# Day 27 The More You Know The More You Grow

## Connect

- Name something that is amazing to you. Something from nature, sports, music...
- What makes something amazing?

You know those guys in the circus who can catch bullets in their teeth? I always wonder how they practice that. If they miss, they are dead. I'm sure it is just a trick but they make it look so easy and so quick it is amazing.

Jesus did many amazing things. Today we will read about 2 amazing miracles that Jesus did that seemed like they took little effort at all.

## Content

Read Luke 8:40 -56

- What were the 2 miracles that Jesus did?
- What did Jesus do to heal them?
- What does this say about Jesus' powers?

Because Jesus is God, healing his creation isn't difficult for him at all. It is easier for Jesus to heal the girl and the woman than it is for us to put a bandage on a cut.

- What did Jesus say enabled the woman to be healed?
- What did Jesus say to Jairus when he found out that his daughter was dead?
- Why is faith so important?

Jesus can do anything he wants. He doesn't need any help from us. So he doesn't need our faith. But he does require it.

Jesus is more concerned with our hearts being turned toward him than he is with healing. Our faith in Jesus, our belief and trust in him is what he wants for us. When we trust Jesus and have faith in him he can work his plan out in our lives.

Keep in mind that both the girl and the woman ultimately died. Otherwise they would be alive today. So faith in Jesus doesn't mean that no bad thing will ever happen to us. It just means that we trust in God's plan for our lives regardless of what happens.

## Challenge

- On a scale of 1 to 5 how do you rate your faith in Jesus? 1 being low and 5 being high.

I noticed none of us rated our faith as a 5. Because of that we can all benefit by our faith growing.

⊗ How do we grow our faith?

We grow our faith by knowing what he has done in the past. And knowing what Jesus wants for us today. The more we know Jesus and the more we follow him the more our faith will grow.

## Close

*God, help me to grow closer to you.  
Help me to know who you are and what you want for me today.*

## Day 28 It's Your Turn

### Connect

Have you ever noticed that crowds of people attract more people? For example, if there is a fight at school or if someone gets hurt everyone gathers around to see what's going on and soon everybody passing by is there trying to see what is happening. This happens with adults too. If you are driving south on a highway and there is an accident on the northbound lanes, even the southbound traffic will back up because everyone wants to see what is going on.

Because of this fact some sociologist did an experiment on a busy downtown street where there were thousands of people walking. The experiment started by one person looking up at a tall building. Once in a while they would point up. Soon other people noticed that they were looking up and they started to look up. Eventually they caused a scene where almost everyone was looking up at the sky or buildings looking for something of interest. The funny thing was that there wasn't anything of interest there. Because others were doing it they joined in because they didn't want to miss out on something cool.

The reason why this works is, every once in a while there really is something cool to look at. Today Jesus caused a stir in the community by saying to his disciples, "Ok it's your turn."

### Content

Read Luke 9:1-9

- What did Jesus tell the disciples to do?

- What did Jesus tell them to bring?
- In verse one what did Jesus give the disciples before he sent them out?
- Do you think the disciples could have done this without Jesus' authority?

Sometimes we disciples are guilty of not doing anything. We take God's gifts and hoard them to our selves. Other times we go off to do something without God's blessing or his authority. Both of these are bad. What we need to realize is that we can not do anything good with out Jesus. That means we have to be relying on Jesus 100%. Jesus provided for his disciples so they were able to do great things.

- What were people saying about the disciples?
- What did this cause Herod to want?

Because the disciples did exactly what Jesus told them to do, people were healed, relationships with God were restored and Herod's curiosity about Jesus was aroused.

## **Challenge**

When we live the way Jesus wants us to, we will also arouse the curiosity of those around us. It may or may not be the people we expect but God uses our dependence on Him to draw other people to Him.

- Is there anything that you are depending on more than God?
- How can we live 100% relying on Jesus?

When we live for Jesus others will notice and be drawn to Him.

1 Peter 3:15

But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect. NIV

## **Close**

*God, help me to live 100% relying on you.  
Help me to be a good example of you to others.*

# **Day 29 Something From Nothing**

## **Connect**

Did you know that back in the day before modern science, people actually believed that if you put an old shirt and some corn in a corner of a barn that eventually they would make mice? That's right; *make* mice, *not* attract mice. Then some scientist started to think about this and asked, "How can this be"? So they performed an experiment placing an old shirt and some corn in a corner of a barn and put a box over it so no mice could get in. After a while they looked in the box and behold. There were no mice. The scientist proved that shirts and corn don't make mice; they just attract mice. They disproved spontaneous generation. Meaning, you can't make something out of nothing. That is; unless you are God.

# Content

Read Luke 9:10-17

- How much food did they start with?
- How much food did they end up with?
- Why was feeding these people a miracle?

Jesus proves that he is much more than a man. He proves that he is God. He can create something out of nothing. Just like God did in creating the world, he created everything out of nothing.

- What would your reaction be if you were a disciple there?

When Jesus performed a miracle it wasn't just to get attention or to show that he was cool, or to prove that his dad could beat up your dad. Jesus did miracles for a specific ministry reason.

If you remember, the disciples just came back to Jesus after telling people the Good News and healing people. When they returned, Jesus decided to leave the city so they could have some alone time. But the crowds followed them.

- If you planned to have some alone time with your disciple and a bunch of people followed you what would be your reaction?
- What was Jesus' reaction?

Jesus welcomed the people. He welcomed them because he loved them. He welcomed them because he knew they needed to know the truth about God. He welcomed them because they came to be with him.

Jesus welcomes all who seek him.

- Do you seek God daily?

# Challenge

While Jesus welcomed the crowd it is important to notice that the disciples' plan was to send them off to fend for themselves.

- Are we welcoming to people when they are looking to discover Jesus?
- Are we welcoming at church when new people are there?
- Are we welcoming to those people who aren't in our friend group?

If we see people the way Jesus saw people we would welcome them into a friendship with us so they could form a friendship with Jesus.

Who in your life can you welcome into a friendship today?

## Close

Hebrews 13:1-2

Keep on loving each other as brothers. 2 Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it.

NIV

*God help me to see people the way you do.  
Help me to welcome everyone into a friendship with you.*

## Day 30 The Most Important Question Ever

### Connect

Back before Jesus was born there was a Greek philosopher named Socrates. Socrates was considered one of the wisest men ever. The interesting thing about Socrates is that he didn't go around telling people what they needed to know. He spent his time asking people questions that made them think. Socrates was a master questioner. By asking the right series of questions he was able to guide people in the discovery of truth.

That is why Devotionals With Dad uses questions as well. We could just read the Bible passage, then I could tell you what I wanted you to know and we could be done in record time. But no, questions are used to help us think and discover the truth for ourselves. Asking the right questions will always get you the right answers. Here is a story that illustrates this point.

There once was a group of monks who enjoyed smoking pipes. Today we know that smoking is bad for your health but in those days they didn't. There were large amounts of time dedicated to prayer in the daily routines for the monks. One day the monks decided to write a letter to their leader and ask if they could smoke when they were praying. A few days later a letter came back to them from their leader stating No. They should absolutely not smoke while they were praying. The monks were very disappointed but they never smoked their pipes during their prayer time again.

A few years later these monks went to visit another monastery. When they were there they noticed that these monks were smoking their pipes during the prayer times. After prayer time the visiting monks confronted their hosts about smoking during prayer.

They said, we talked to our leader and he said we couldn't smoke during prayer time. The hosting monks responded, "That's strange. The leader told us we could smoke. What exactly did you ask him?"

The visiting monks replied, "We asked 'Can we smoke when we pray?'"

"Oh. That explains it," said the hosting monk, "We asked can we pray when we smoke?"

Asking the right questions gives you the right answers.

# Content

Read Luke 9:18-27

- What questions did Jesus ask his disciples?
- What was Peter's response to Jesus' question about who they thought Jesus was?

When Peter said this, he was telling Jesus that he believed Jesus was God, the Savior and LORD of everything. He was telling him that he was more than just a good man, that he was more than just a prophet; he was telling him that he was more than any other god.

- What did Jesus say that we would have to do to follow him?

# Challenge

The question, "Who do you say Jesus is?" is still most important question. It is a question that everyone has to answer. Our answer to this question not only determines our eternity but it determines our everyday as well.

Jesus paints a bleak picture of following him. He does this to warn his disciples that he is going to have to die on the cross to pay the penalty for our sins. Jesus is also warning them, that while God will never abandon them, that following Jesus is sometimes hard.

Following Jesus is hard because the rest of the world isn't. So you have to choose between what we may want to do and what Jesus is telling us to do. It may even be that we have to give up our very life in our pursuit of Jesus. Sometimes this means dying for Jesus but most of the times it means living for him.

But if Jesus is who he says he is, Lord and King of everything, and he saved us from eternal separation from God's love, then living our lives completely for him makes sense. If we think that Jesus isn't who he said he was, then living for him doesn't make sense. But Consider this:

## Pascal's Wager

If you believe in God and you are right then you gain everything.

If you believe in God and you are wrong you lose nothing.

If you don't believe in God and you are right then you gain nothing.

If you don't believe in God and you wrong you lose everything.

# Close

So the question still remains.

- Who do you say Jesus is?
- Have you ever told Jesus that he is your Lord and Savior?

If this is true for you then let's pray

*God I believe that Jesus is my Lord, King and Savior.  
Because of this I want to live my life for him.*

# Day 31 Dudes Wake Up!

## Connect

- Have you ever noticed that Jesus takes an awful lot of time to be alone and pray?
- Why do you think it was important to Jesus to do this?

## Content

Read Luke 9:28-36

- Who did Jesus take with him to the mountaintop to pray?
- What happened to Jesus when he was praying?
- What were the disciples doing while Jesus was praying?

They were sleeping while Jesus was praying. Then the next thing they know, Moses and Elijah are standing with Jesus. And Jesus is in His glory! His appearance changed and his clothes are as bright as lightning. All this and the disciples are asleep again. Luckily they woke up to see Moses and Elijah leaving.

Have you ever heard the expression a “mountaintop experience”? Well this is where we get that expression from. A mountaintop experience is an experience that is so awesome that you don’t want it to end. That is the way Peter felt. He was so into this experience that he wanted to spend the rest of his life there.

- Who was the cloud?
- What did God say about Jesus?
- Can you remember another time when God said this about Jesus?

## Challenge

God uses this experience to confirm Peter, James and John’s faith. They believed Jesus is the Christ. I think that God can use this story to challenge us to do two things. The first is that if Jesus made it a priority to be alone and pray that we should do that as well. While we can pray anytime, we need to make special time to pray and listen to God. Again, this is why we do Devotionals With Dad, to make time for God in our day.

The second challenge is to be alert when we do spend time with God. The disciples’ actions suggest that they may have been taking their alone time with Jesus for granted. When they were supposed to be praying they were sleeping.

Sometimes it is easy to forget why we do our devotions. We do devotions because we believe that this is how we get to know God. So when we pray we need to expect that God is listening to us and that he will answer our prayer. When we do our devotions we need to expect that we will be learning something that God wants us to know. We need to wake up and see what God is doing around us.

## Close

*God, we believe that you are doing things in our lives.  
Help us to be alert to who you are and what you are doing today.*

# Day 32 You Still Don't Get It

## Connect

Have you ever told a joke that someone just didn't get it? Or maybe you are the one who doesn't get jokes. In order to get a joke you have to understand the situation and then be surprised by the punch line. Not getting a joke is one thing, but missing instructions is another. If you don't get what someone is telling you for your own safety, then that is a problem.

Today Jesus is dealing with his disciples in areas where they just don't get it.

## Content

Read Luke 9:37-55

- In these three stories how did the disciples demonstrate that they just didn't get it?

Verses	Who	Didn't Get it Action	Desired Action
Luke 9:40	The Disciples	A lack of faith to heal the boy.	Drive of demons with the authority Jesus gave them.
Luke 9:44 - 45	The Disciples	Jesus' words were hidden from them by their false belief that Jesus was going to conquer their earthly enemies.	Understand that Jesus was going to suffer and die.
Luke 9:46	The Disciples	They argued about who would be the greatest.	To humbly follow Christ by being like a child.
Luke 9:49	John	Stopping people from following Jesus, so they could be seen as the best.	To be happy that people are choosing to follow Jesus
Luke 9:54	James & John	Wanted to call fire from heaven to punish them.	Love and forgiveness allowing God to be the judge rather than them

- Which of these "didn't get it" actions would you be most likely to do?

## Challenge

In these 3 stories we see that even though the disciples have been living with Jesus for a long time, their past beliefs and their pride got in the way of understanding what Jesus was doing.

Before we pass judgment on the disciples, however, we need to take a look at ourselves. If we are honest there are things that we just can't believe about Jesus. Our unbelief is what causes us to sin.

In all of these stories the disciples were more concerned with looking good or being popular than they were about seeing God's work being done.

When we don't get something about God, we need to work harder to understand him. And sometimes we just need to believe God even if it doesn't make sense to us right now.

## Close

*God, your ways are better than my ways.  
Please help me to understand you more and more.*

# Day 33 Cost Benefit Analysis

## Connect

Let's say you own a bubble gum factory. One day one of your researchers tells you that they've discovered a new flavor, "Thanksgiving Dinner." When you chew the gum it first tastes like turkey and gravy, then mashed potatoes, and finally pumpkin pie. You think, "Eureka! We'll be rich. Everyone will want to buy this gum."

Because you are wise, before you start to make this gum you look at all the costs that go into making and advertising this new gum. After a close look you come to realize that making the gum will cost you \$1.5 million and you project that you will only make \$100,000 in sales per year.

- Should you make the gum? Why or why not?

To answer this question you did a cost benefit analysis. A cost benefit analysis is when you weigh the costs of doing something against the benefits of doing something.

This analysis isn't only useful in make business decisions it's also useful in making life choices as well.

## Content

Read Luke 9:57-62

In this passage Jesus is interacting with 3 different people.

- What are their responses to Jesus' statement to follow him?
- Do the requests of the last two people sound unreasonable?

We have to remember Jesus knows the hearts of everyone. He knows their thoughts and reasons. Jesus sees in these people that the requests to bury his father and to say goodbye to his family are excuses of why they will not immediately follow Jesus. These people prioritize other things higher than Jesus.

Jesus uses the analogy of the farmer plowing his field. In order to plow a straight line you must stay focused on a point across the field. If you stop looking at that point your row will be crooked. When we take our focus off Jesus and place it on anything else, even a good thing like our family, we are making a poor choice and we are not following Jesus.

Jesus isn't saying to totally disregard our families or to be rude. He is saying that we can't love two things the most. There is no such thing as a tie for first place in our life.

The cost of following Jesus is to give up everything.

Read Luke 10:1-24

- What were the 72 people empowered to do?
- When they came back to Jesus what did they say they could do?

The benefit to following Jesus is that we gain access to the God of the universe. We also get the privilege to work for God and to help build His Kingdom.

- What was Jesus' warning to them?

Again Jesus warns his followers to keep their focus on the right thing. Jesus warns that even the ministry of leading people to Christ can get in the way of following Christ. It is easy to think that the good things that we are able to do with Christ's power come from us. It is so cool to be used by God that we value the feeling of doing God's work more than God.

## **Challenge**

The cost of following Jesus is everything we have.

The benefit to following Jesus is everything he has.

Only when we keep our focus on Christ will we be able to give up everything we have to gain everything he has.

## **Close**

*Lord nothing I have compares with how great you are.*

*Please help me to make Jesus my focus.*

# **Day 34 Just Because You Know It Doesn't Mean You Get It**

## **Connect**

Once there was a park that had a beautiful overlook. The overlook was a 300' high cliff that allowed people to see the sunset over a small inland lake. Unfortunately one day a young man looking at a sunset slipped and fell down the cliff to his death. In reaction to this event the park officials put a fence up to prevent others from falling. The family also placed an 8 foot cross with a plaque in memory of their son had fallen.

Years passed until one day a young man came to the overlook with his girlfriend, after reading the plaque commemorating the death of the young man who had fallen to his death, he wanted to impress his girl friend. So he climbed over the fence and started swinging on the 8' cross. Well you guessed it- the cross broke and the young man fell to his death.

The young man knew that the cliff posed a danger to him but for whatever reason he didn't see it as a danger for him. You see just because you know it doesn't mean you get it.

## Content

Read Luke 10:25-37

- What does it mean to be an authority on the law?

This man was an expert. He had most likely studied the law his entire life. In fact, the man answers his own question.

- What does the man say is the answer to his question?
- What does Jesus tell him to do after he answers the question?

Jesus then told a story to help the man better understand how to love God and his neighbor. In the story Jesus told of 3 people who came by the man who was beaten and left to die.

- Who would you think would be the most likely person to help the man? The priest whose job was to tell people about God, the Levite whose job was to serve God, or the Samaritan who was seen as an outcast by the Jews?

The priest and the Levite knew what God wanted them to do for the man. They just didn't do it. Maybe they were afraid something bad would happen to them. Or maybe they thought they could get away with not having to do the extra work. Or maybe they were squeamish about the sight of blood. Whatever the reason, Jesus makes it clear that the right thing to do was to have pity on the man and help him out like the Samaritan did.

## Challenge

Like the priest and the Levite, it is possible that we can think we know everything that we need to know. And that may be true (although I doubt it). The point here is that Jesus wants us to do what he says, not just know what he says.

We do Devotionals with Dad so we can not only know what God wants us to know but to also inspire us to do what God wants us to do.

If our Christianity is only knowing facts about God then we are like the young man swinging on the cross that fell. We know it but we don't get it.

## Close

James 1:22 Don't just listen to the word. You fool yourselves if you do that. You must do what it says

*God, help us to know what you want and help us to do it.*

# Day 35 Stop Then Go!

## Connect

Let's say you come home from school one day and a rock star is there wanting to talk to you about her album. You need to invite her in but you also know that your house is a mess and really should be cleaned up before you entertain.

⊗ You want to be a good host so what would you do?

## Content

Read Luke 10:38-42

- What is Martha upset about?
- Would you be upset with your sister if she left you to do all the work?
- What was Martha spending her time doing when Jesus was at her house?
- What was Mary doing?
- Which sister would you be if you were in this story? Would you be Martha who is fussing around cooking and cleaning, or would you be Mary who is sitting at Jesus feet listening to him?

You would think that the best thing that you could do if a celebrity came to your house would be to host her with good food and a comfortable chair. But Jesus shows us that that isn't what he wanted. Jesus wants our complete love and trust. In order for us to give that to him we need to first give him our time.

Think about it; just a few days before Jesus was at Martha's house he fed 5000 men with 2 fish and 5 loaves of bread. Jesus didn't need Martha to cook anything. Jesus wanted to spend time with her.

## Challenge

That is still true for us today. There are so many things that can distract us. Even good things can sometimes get in the way of our time with Jesus. That is why we need to set time aside for Devotionals with Dad. That's why God commanded us to keep the Sabbath Day holy. It's not that God needs anything from us; it's that *we* need something from him. We need to stop and just be at the feet of Jesus to listen, to talk, to love and to learn to trust him.

Don't be confused. Jesus does call us to action. But his call to action comes out of our willingness to stop. If we go be for we stop we're not *Followers* of Jesus we are a *Doers* of Jesus.

As we close today let's take 1 minute, just 60 seconds, to close our eyes and be silent. Picture yourself sitting at the feet of Jesus. *(Pause)* Maybe you picture your head on his lap and he is stroking your hair. *(Pause)* Maybe he is answering a question that you have always wondered about. *(Pause)* Picture how everything feels right because you're spending time with Jesus.

## Close

*Father God, thank you for this time together with you.  
Help us to continue to stop and spend time with you.  
Help us to be followers of Jesus rather than doers of Jesus!*

## Day 36 Priorities

### Connect

- What are the top 5 priorities or the 5 most important things in your life?
- How would someone else know what your priorities are?

One of the easiest ways to discover our priorities is by what we talk about. If you are really excited about something then you talk about it.

Today Jesus is asked to teach his disciples how to pray. His answer to that question shows us his priorities.

### Content

Read Luke 11:1-4

⌘ What would you say is important to Jesus when we pray?

These are a list of Jesus' priorities from his example of *what* we should pray.

Phase	Priority
Father	An affectionate name for God, meaning that we are in a relationship with God. God is our loving Father and he is kind to us as his children.
May your name be honored	The things that are important to God are important to me.
May your kingdom come	God's ways are the best ways.
Give us each day our daily bread	We trust you to give us what we need.
Forgive us our sins	We need your forgiveness. God's perfect and holy standard is THE Standard. "I'm better than most people" doesn't cut it with God.
As we also forgive everyone who sins against us.	We realize that we were forgiven so much by God that we gladly choose to forgive people who do us wrong.
Keep us from falling into sin when we are tempted	Help us to not be trapped in sin. Help us to trust and rely on you when we are tempted.

Jesus goes on to tell the people *how* we should pray.

Read Luke 11:4-13

- How does the story of the man going to his neighbor for food relate to prayer?

Read Verses 9 & 10 again.

- Do these verses mean that we if ask God for something that he will always give it us?

This joke pokes fun at the idea that God always says yes to our prayers.

Boy~ God is it true that 1 second is like a 1000 years to you?

God ~ Yes.

Boy ~ God, is it true that a million dollars is like 1 penny to you?

God ~ Yes.

Boy~ God, can I have a penny?

God ~ Yes, in a second.

## **Challenge**

⌘ If we pray to get a million dollars will we get it?

These stories tell us the importance of asking God for what we need. Jesus teaches us that we can come to God anytime and as often as we want. One of two things will happen when we pray. Either God will change the situation or God will change us.

Remember that we are to pray that God's plans happen on earth. So if our plans are in line with God's plans the situation will change. If our plans aren't God's plans then He will change us. Either way you can see how important it is for us to pray and to ask God to do his thing in our lives.

## **Close**

Pray the Lords prayer if you have it memorized. Then pray

*Our Heavenly Father, thank you for loving us, and allowing us to ask you anything.*

*Please help us to want the same things that you want.*

# **Day 37 It's Just Not Right**

## **Connect**

Do you remember the movie The Incredibles? In the beginning of the movie Mr. Incredible is being sued for injuring people when he was saving their lives. This didn't seem fair. How can someone be mad at the guy who was trying to help them? You would think that they would be mad at the bad guy and not the good guy. Sometimes people are so mad they just want to blame someone.

Today we will see some people mad at Jesus for helping someone. Jesus doesn't let this bother him though; Jesus uses the opportunity to teach people that the Kingdom of God is here.

## **Content**

Read Luke 11:14 -28

- Jesus healed a man. What was his problem?
- What happened after Jesus healed the man?

Isaiah 35: 6a says "Those who can't walk will leap like a deer. And those who can't speak will shout with joy." This was part of a prophesy to tell the people that when they see someone healing people in God's name that he would be the Messiah, the Son of God. So

the people are thinking, “Wow, Jesus is the Messiah!” The Pharisees are worried that they would lose their power so they say, “No it’s not by God that he’s driving out demons and making people who have never talked before talk. It’s by Satan’s power that he is doing that.”

Now if Jesus were sarcastic he might have said, “Yeah that’s right. This makes perfect sense. I’m for Satan, that’s why I go around healing people and driving out demons because that’s what Satan would do. These acts couldn’t be from GOD because God doesn’t help people. Satan does.”

Thankfully Jesus isn’t sarcastic and neither should we be. The point is that it made no sense that Jesus was driving out demons by the power of Satan because Satan is smart enough to know that he can’t win a war against him self.

- Would you feel sad if you were Jesus?

There is no greater sin than the sin of not accepting God. Jesus is obviously doing God’s work. To say that his work was the work of Satan would be the ultimate sin.

- What did the woman yell out as Jesus was explaining these things to the people?

In today’s terms she was saying, “Your mom must be so proud of you,” or “You Rock.” Jesus is quick to help people know that they are to not just listen and know what God is doing but to obey God.

## Challenge

Today we see a great example of how we can totally miss what God is doing in our lives if we aren’t looking for God.

Yesterday we talked about how we need to pray for God’s will to be done, and that when we search for God we will find him. Today’s reading gives us a great example of why we should do that. If we don’t daily search for God and pray for his will to be done we will most likely miss what he is doing. Even worse than that we may even misunderstand what God is doing for what Satan is doing.

## Close

*God we believe that you have a great plan for our lives.  
Help us to see what you are doing in our lives today  
so that we may give you the credit and work with you and not against you.*

## Day 38 Pop Quiz

### Connect

- What emotion do you feel when you hear the phrase, “Pop Quiz?”
- Why do you feel that way about pop quizzes?

Well today we will be having a short pop quiz on 3 Old Testament characters.  
Pop Quiz

- What did God ask Jonah to do? (*Go to Nineveh*)
- What did God ask Jonah to tell the people of Nineveh to do? (*turn back to God, or be destroyed*)
- What did King Solomon have more than any other person? (*Wisdom*)

Extra Credit

- What was the Queen's name who came to learn from King Solomon's wisdom? (*The Queen of Sheba*)

Now for us we had to think of these answers but in Jesus' day these stories were very well known. So when Jesus talks about them people understand what he is talking about.

Before I read our passage I have one more question

⊕ What are some of your favorite miracles that Jesus has done?

## Content

Read Luke 11:29-36

- Why do you think Jesus called the people evil?
- What did they want from Jesus?

They wanted a sign or a miracle that would prove to them that he was the son of God. Think about it. He's already done a bunch of miracles like healing people and driving out demons. As far as signs, God spoke out of heaven saying, "This is my Son of whom I am well pleased." So you would think they would get it.

- What does Jesus say they received as a sign?

The people of Nineveh listened to what God said through Jonah and turned back to him. The Queen of Sheba or the Queen of the South went out of her way to gain wisdom from Solomon.

- What lessons is Jesus trying to teach the people?

With Jonah Jesus is telling the people that if the people of Nineveh turned to God because of Jonah's message how much more should the people of Israel turn back to God from Jesus' message? He also is telling them that if the Queen was willing to travel all that way to hear King Solomon's wisdom how much more should they listen, to Jesus' wisdom who is right here and now! Jesus' message is far greater than Jonah's message. Jesus' wisdom is far greater than Solomon's wisdom.

## Challenge

Today we learn a huge truth about faith in God. That is, just because we hear or see something doesn't mean that we will believe it. Miracles don't give faith; they just strengthen faith. If you have no faith when you see a miracle, you won't have any afterwards either. Wisdom doesn't make you have knowledge and understanding; it just offers it to you. If you don't want to understand God's ways you won't. In both cases you have to want it. Jesus is telling the people that because they kept choosing to disbelieve

him, it's like they are asking him to light a candle so they can see but they are putting the candle under a bowl.

Today we have the same choice. Will we choose to have faith in God and work to know him better each day? Or will we be like the people who didn't have faith and didn't try to know God?

Jesus is clear that if we don't choose to follow him we will be judged for our disbelief.

## Close

*God, thank you for your wisdom. Help us to know your ways better.  
God thank you for your miracles and the way we see you working in our lives today.  
Please help our faith in you to grow strong.*

## Day 39 Truth & Love

### Connect

There were two hunters walking thru the forest. As they were walking they came upon a set of tracks. The one hunter said, "Oh no, we better get out of here! These are cougar tracks."

The other hunter said, "No they're not; they're deer tracks."

The two hunters argued about what kind of tracks they were until all of a sudden they were hit by a train.

The hunters were so involved with the argument of what kind of track they saw that they didn't hear or see the train coming. They didn't realize they were train tracks.

Obviously this is a joke, and a lame one at that. We are sometimes like those hunters. We get caught up in the little things and miss the big things that are more important.

### Content

Read Luke 11:37-54

- What was the Pharisee worried about?
- What did Jesus say he was worried about?
- What were the 6 warnings that Jesus gave the Pharisee?
  - Even though they said they loved God they didn't show it by treating people fairly.
  - They wanted people to honor them more than they wanted people to honor God.
  - They pretended like they followed God but their hearts weren't following God.
  - They judged people who were far from God instead of helping them to get closer to God.
  - They buried the dead prophets in fancy tombs but they didn't listen to what God was saying to them.
  - Instead of using God's word to encourage the people they used it to shame the people and kept them from knowing the truth.
- Do you do any of these things?

We all have things that we struggle with, but sometimes instead of admitting that we need Jesus to be our savior we try to hide our sin. We can hide our sin in different ways. Which ones of these do you use to hid your sins?

- point out other people's sins
- make excuses about your sin
- try to do good things to help people forget that you sinned
- avoid people or God who know that you sinned

- What should we do when we sin?
- What did the Pharisees and the teachers of the law feel about Jesus after he said these things?

No one likes being told that they are wrong. And many times when you tell someone they are wrong they don't like you. This is why they say "The Truth Hurts."

## Challenge

When we are told that we are doing something wrong, we need to stop, listen, and if it's true (we were doing something wrong) we need to ask for forgiveness and stop doing that.

- What happens if we never ask God to forgive us?

The Bible says that if we never ask God to forgive us we will be forever separated from him. So it is important to see that Jesus is actually showing his love for the Pharisees and the teachers of the law by helping them see that they were wrong. Even though he knew that they would get mad at him he still told them the truth because God's love and God's truth are never separated.

Ephesians 4:15

Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. NIV

## Close

*God, help us to know your truth, the things that really matter to you.*

*Help us to be honest with you when we sin.*

*Help us to speak the truth even when it's hard.*

*Help us to never separate your truth from your love.*

## Day 40 No Fear

### Connect

Imagine this. You go to the movies with your friends. You get your popcorn and drink. Then you sit down just in time for the previews to start. These words come up on the screen: "The following preview has been rated R and is for restricted audiences only." You may be thinking, "Hey I shouldn't see an R rated preview", but you watch any way. You are shocked by what you see next. It wasn't a preview for a violent action movie, it wasn't some

comedian using filthy language trying to be funny, it wasn't even some swanky actress doing her thing. No it was the most shocking thing you would ever expect to see on the big screen. The words of the title read, "The Secret Life of (*insert you and your kid's names*)."

At that moment you find out that every secret act that you have ever done was filmed and made into a movie to be shown all over the country. Your friends will see it; your family will see it. Everyone will see everything you've ever thought about and done.

- What would you feel like if that happened?
- What would you do?

Today Jesus' words to us say that in a way that will happen.

## Content

Read Luke 12:1-3

- What does Jesus say about the Pharisees?
- What does yeast do?

When you make bread you put a bunch of flour, some water, a little honey and salt and a teeny tiny bit of yeast. Yeast is a living organism that actually eats the flour and other ingredients and changes it to bread dough. Without yeast you don't get bread dough you get Play dough™. Even the smallest amount of yeast will have a huge effect on the ingredients. Jesus is warning the disciples to not be like the Pharisees who have "little" secret sins but think that they are ok because nobody else knows.

Read Luke 12:4&5

- Who did Jesus say to not be afraid of?
- Who did Jesus say to be afraid of?

Read Luke 12:6&7

- Why don't we have to be afraid of God?

Read Luke 12:8-12

- Does how we live our life matter to God?
- What can we do to effect what Jesus says about us to God?

Jesus then warns them that someday they may be brought in front of a king and be pressured to say that they don't believe in Jesus. Now, this might be cause for alarm. This could cause you to loose some sleep. Yes, someday you will be arrested and even put to death but don't worry.

- Why does Jesus say not to worry?

Jesus promised them that the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of the God of the universe would be with them. If you think about this, this is one of the most encouraging things Jesus could have told them. Jesus is like, "Sure you may be in trouble with some powerful men, but God loves you and he will send the Holy Spirit to take care of you. God is way more powerful than all of the kings combined."

## Challenge

Once again we are reminded not to be worried about little earthly things but to keep our mind on serving God, and to trust him to take care of us. Remember this doesn't mean that we aren't going to die or that everything is going to go our way or that we will live in big homes and drive FJ Cruisers. No. Many of the disciples were killed because they followed Jesus.

Jesus' reminder to them encourages us today. There is nothing that anyone can do can separate us from God. If we die we go to be with him. If we live God is working in us to do His will.

Philippians 1:20b-21

(I) will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. NIV

## Close

*God, help us to live for you without fear.*

# Day 41 First Things First

## Connect

There once was a man who was very wealthy but he was about to die. Even though he was a Christian he loved his wealth. He pleaded with God to allow him to take his treasure to heaven with him. Surprisingly God allowed him to take one item to heaven when he died. So the man decided he would take his most valued treasure a 20 pound brick of gold. Later that day the man died and he walked up to the gates of heaven with his gold brick. He got to the gate and told the angel his name. The angel checked the registration book and sure enough his name was written in the book. Just as the gates were opening the angel stopped him and asked him what he had in his hand. The man replied, "Oh God said I could bring some of my wealth to heaven so I brought this brick of gold with me. "Wow," the angel replied, "most people aren't allowed to bring anything from earth to heaven. I just have 1 question... if you wanted to bring something valuable with you to heaven why did you bring a piece of pavement?"

In heaven the streets are said to be made of gold. The point of the story is that sometimes we value things that aren't valued by God.

## Content

Read Luke 12:13-21

- What did the man want Jesus to tell his brother?
- What does Jesus say to watch out for?
- What story does Jesus tell make his point?

This story talks about selfishness. In fact every character in today's reading is selfish other than Jesus. The man who wanted the family property was selfish because in that day everything went to the oldest son. It may not have been fair but that was the way it was.

The older brother was selfish because he must have been hoarding the inheritance instead of taking care of the family.

You may be wondering what the rich farmer did that was wrong. It's not a sin to have a good crop. It only make sense to store the crop that you harvest. If you don't it will spoil. So what is so bad about this? The sin here is the farmer's attitude. He says, "I'll be able to take it easy the rest of my life."

It is very important to know that God's goal for our lives is for us not to be lazy, selfish or to "take it easy." God's goal for us is to love him with all our hearts and to love others. We can't do that when we are thinking about how we can take life easy.

So, is it bad to have nice things? No. But it is bad to have those things as your priority. God wants us to use the things we have as tools to serve him.

## Challenge

It is so easy to get caught up in the race to get things. The world is full of really cool things. The trick to not getting caught up in the "things race" is to remember that everything we have belongs to God. We own nothing. We are only *in charge* of things God has given us. How we choose to use them tells the world and God what we truly believe about God.

- How can you serve God with the things you have?

## Close

*Father, You are more important than \_\_\_\_\_.  
Help me to serve you by \_\_\_\_\_.*

## Day 42 Give It Up For God

### Connect

- What is the difference between wanting something and needing something?
- Physically, there are 5 basic needs to survive. What are they?
  - *Oxygen*
  - *Water*
  - *Food*
  - *Body Shelter (i.e. clothes, shade, sleeping bag, tent, umbrella...)*
  - *The Will To Live ( The desire to live even through the hardest of circumstances)*

Many survivalists say that the will to live is the most important of all of these needs. Without a will to live people get discouraged in survival situations and panic or give up. Both of these usually lead to their demise, even when their situation isn't that life-threatening. On the other hand, sometimes people have a will to live so strong that they survive impossible odds.

God has given everybody a will to live to a certain degree. Some people have developed it more and other people have learned to squelch it. Somewhere along the way people have confused their needs with their wants. If their 5 basic needs are being met on a regular basis, their will to live changes from a will to survive to a will to flourish.

When we start to want to flourish rather than survive we lose sight of our priorities similar to yesterday's story with the rich farmer.

## Content

Read Luke 12:22-34

- What does Jesus say about worrying?
- In vs. 31 what does Jesus say we are supposed to put first in our lives?
- What happens when we put God's Kingdom first?

Jesus tells his disciples to sell what they have and give to the poor. In order to do that you really have to trust God to provide for you and believe that rewards in heaven are much greater than anything the world can give you.

There once was a boy named Nicholas whose parents were very wealthy. As is the case with wealth, it may make your life a bit easier but it never makes it any longer. During these days there was a sickness called the black plague. It was far worse than the H1N1 virus that has gone around lately. Both of Nicholas' parents died from the plague. He was orphaned. But now he was also very wealthy. Nicholas was a follower of Jesus. One day he read the same verses that we read today. He read Luke 12:33 "Sell what you own and give to those who are poor." Nicholas did just that. He sold everything that he had and gave it to the poor and needy children of his community. He dedicated his life to God by serving the church.

His acts of generosity would become legendary. After he passed away the church recognized him as a saint. You may know him as St. Nicholas later to be known as Santa Clause.

## Challenge

St. Nicholas was a great example of not worrying about food and wealth but seeking to please God with everything you have.

- Are we worried more about ourselves than we are about serving God?
- In what way can we seek to serve God rather than trying to serve ourselves?

## Close

*God, we love you more than anything else.  
Help us not to worry about things that don't matter.  
Please help us to seek you and to serve you with everything we have.*

## Day 43 Get Ready And Stay Ready

### Connect

Do you remember the story of Robin Hood? Prince John was placed in charge by King Richard to take care of the kingdom while he was away fighting in the war. After a while Prince John liked being in charge and stopped taking care of the kingdom for the king and

started taking care of the kingdom for himself. Then, of course Robin put a stop to that. King Richard returned and the rest is history and or legend as the case maybe.

## Content

Read Luke 12:35-48

- What is Jesus saying to do?
- What happens to the servant who is ready to serve when the master returns?
- What happens to the servant who isn't ready to serve when the master returns?

Jesus described 3 types of servants:

1. The Boldly Disobedient Servant, The one who actively disobeys the master by getting drunk thinking that he would never return.
2. The Passively Disobedient Servant, The one who knew the master would return but wasn't ready for him when he did. This servant was not doing bad things but he wasn't doing what was right either.
3. The Ignorantly Disobedient Servant, The one who was disobeying but didn't know any better.

- Who gets the most severe punishment of 3 servants?
- Why do you think the master punishes his servants in this way?
- Which one of the servants are you the most like?

After hearing this story you may be thinking it is better to not know anything about God than it is to know God. This is a lazy man's way of thinking. We have to remember that God's ways are the best ways and that God rewards obedience. So it makes sense to learn as much as God has for us to learn about serving him. But, it is important to remember, that God wants us to not just *know* what is right but *do* what is right.

Jesus makes it really clear that we are to be actively serving him to the best of our abilities.

## Challenge

- If Jesus returned today and looked at how you are serving him would he be pleased or disappointed with your service?
- What could you do to serve Jesus better?

## Close

*God you are \_\_\_\_.*

*Help me to obey you right away, all the way and always.*

## Day 44 Spiritual Weathermen

### Connect

- What would you look for to tell you if it were going to rain or not?
- Would the presence of clouds make a difference?
- Would the color of clouds make a difference?

- Would the wind make a difference?

All of these play a part in determining if it is going to rain or not. But the best thing you could do is turn on the Weather Chanel. They have access to radars and satellites that can show you what's happening now and what will be happening in the future. Knowing what is going on with the weather helps you make a better choice of how to be ready for the day.

## Content

Read Luke 12:49-59

Sometimes we are forced to make tough choices. Sometime when we follow Christ people get mad at us and make us choose between loving them or loving God. If someone were to come up to us and give us the choice to love God or to love them the choice might be easy. "Hey Bud, are you going to love God and serve him or are you going to love me?" They could make it a harder choice by saying. "Hey Bud, if you love God I'm going to beat you up and throw you into jail, so do you love God or what?" This might be a harder choice because we know the consequence of saying you love God.

I'm not saying that it is impossible for these questions to be asked but, in my experience no one has ever asked these questions like this. They are usually more subtle like, "Hey Bud, wouldn't it be fun if we\_\_\_\_\_." Or "Hey Bud, if you really loved me then you would do this." When these questions are asked we need to be able to know what is right so we can respond wisely.

Jesus says we need to be spiritual weathermen. Just like a weatherman can look at the clouds and predict whether it is going to rain or not, we need to be able to look at our situations and know how God wants us to respond. God wants us to look for him in every situation so we can make God honoring choices.

## Challenge

Just like the weathermen are constantly looking at the sky to know what is happening with the weather, spiritual weathermen need to constantly looking to God to know how to respond to the world around them.

Over the last couple of days we have read chapters 11 and 12 of the book of Luke. These chapters tell us a lot about being Spiritual Weathermen by obeying Jesus' teachings.

- What are some of the things Jesus has taught you in these two chapters?

## Close

*God, thank you for teaching us your ways.  
Help us to know what is happening around us so we can respond wisely.*

# Day 45 God Is The Standard

## Connect

Have you ever had the experience of a teacher passing back a graded test? She comes up to you and you can tell it's not going to be good. She hands you the test and you see the number 43% in red ink on the top of the page. Yikes! You feel terrible. If only you would have studied more. Studied more!?! If only you had studied at all! Your mind is racing. What are you going to tell your parents. What's going to happen to your GPA? College? Graduate school? Your spouse? After all who wants to marry a test-failer?

You chance a look at you neighbor's grade and suddenly everything is better. Because on the top of their paper... in bold red ink... is the number ...42%. She did worse than you. You aren't the dumbest kid in the class after all. Oh the relief!

For whatever reason, when we fail a test it seems better if other people fail it as well. It doesn't change anything for you, but it somehow makes you feel better. Now if school were only about being better than someone else then this would be a good strategy, but school is about learning. Learning is based on a standard that the teacher sets. If you answer 90% of the questions correctly then you demonstrated to your teacher that you know the material. Your classmates aren't the standard, the teacher is. It doesn't matter that you weren't the lowest grade in the class it only matters that you failed the test and if you don't do better on the next test you may have another chance to take the same tests again next year.

## Content

Read Luke 13:1-9

In order to understand today's passage there is some background information that is needed. The Jews at this time sacrificed animals according to the law for God's forgiveness. Onetime while the Galileans were sacrificing to God, Herod the governor, came into the temple and killed them. This is what is meant when verse 1 refers to, Herod mixing their blood with the blood of the sacrifices.

What happened to these people was seen a double whammy. Not only did they get killed (Bummer); their sacrifice was screwed up so the forgiveness of their sins didn't take place (A Big Bummer). So the people of that day figured, "Wow, they must have been really bad to have that happen to them."

- What does Jesus say about the Galilean's sin compared to their sins?
- Who sets the standard of what is sin and what isn't sin?

In God's eyes you are either guilty of your sins or you are forgiven. Everyone one is equally a sinner. In God's eyes you are either holy or you aren't. End of the story.

So when these people are asking Jesus if these people were really bad, Jesus takes the chance to share the bad news/ good news scenario with them.

The bad news is that you are guilty of sin just like they were. The penalty for sin is death, so you deserve death just like they did. In fact, everybody deserves death. So, whether you deserve to die because you stole something or you deserve death because you lied to your mother, the result is the same. You're gonna die.

The good news is this. (Its goanna be painless... no that's not it.) The good news is that if you turn away from your sins and follow Jesus you will be saved.

It doesn't matter how bad you think others are and how good you think you are. All that matters is that we fall short of God's standard and we need God's forgiveness.

## Challenge

The greatest news is that God's forgiveness is available because of Jesus' sacrifice. While forgiveness is free, we need to accept that God is the standard and that we fall short of it. We have to realize our need for God's forgiveness.

Do you realize that you fall short of Gods standard? Have you asked for his forgiveness?

## Close

*God, you are the standard of what's right and what's wrong.  
I'm sorry for \_\_\_\_\_. Please forgive me.*

## Day 46 Compassion

### Connect

Take a moment and tie your shoe. That was easy, right? Now try to do it again without using your thumbs. It's much harder.

- What other tasks would be difficult to do if you couldn't use your thumbs?
- What would it feel like to never to be able to use your thumbs?
- What would you feel like if someone healed you and you were able to use your thumbs for the very first time?
- What would you feel like if a friend of yours was healed and was able to use their thumbs for the very first time?

Think about these feelings as we read today's passage.

### Content

Read Luke 13:10-17

- What was the woman's disability?
- What was the woman's reaction when Jesus set her free from her disability?
- If you saw this miracle happen, what would your reaction be?
- What was the synagogue ruler's reaction to Jesus healing the woman?

Sometimes God's people focus on do nots more than the dos. While it is important not to do bad things it is equally important to do good things. It makes sense that if we are busy doing good things we will have less time to do bad things.

The synagogue ruler was upset that Jesus healed the woman on the Sabbath day. In the ruler's defense the Bible does say, "to keep the Sabbath Holy." But to think that healing someone is ever wrong is ridiculous.

Reasons why Jesus didn't break the Sabbath by healing this woman:

1. Keeping the Sabbath day holy means you aren't supposed to work, Jesus didn't have to work to heal this woman all he did was touch her and pray.
2. As a teacher on the Sabbath day your job is to lead people in worshipping God, this woman immediately praised God for healing her.
3. As followers of God we are to have compassion for those people who are in a tough situation, Jesus shows his compassion by going out of his way to heal this woman.

Did you know that about 20% of all people in the United States have a disability that hinders them from physically or mentally or emotionally accomplishing daily activities?

Now most of us don't have healing powers like Jesus, but we can have compassion for those around us. When we see a person struggling, for whatever reason, we can go out of our way to help. Compassion is the ability to understand someone's situation and then desire to help out. Jesus' whole life was one big act of compassion.

Maybe if we better understood Jesus we would be more compassionate people.

## Challenge

Here are a few suggestions on how to be compassionate

1. Be kind to everyone even if they don't deserve it
2. Listen to a person and try to understand their point of view
3. Encourage someone without expecting anything in return.
4. Look for ways to help people in need.
5. Partner with people or organizations that help people.

- What is one way that you can show compassion today?

## Close

*God, thank you for showing us compassion by sending Jesus to understand us and to helping us deal with our sins. Please help me to show compassion to my world.*

## Day 47 It's Useful So Use It

### Connect

- Have you ever received a gift that wasn't really useful to you?
- What do you do with gifts that aren't useful to you?

- What do you do with gifts that are useful to you?

## Content

Read Luke 13:18-21

- What do you think of when you hear the word “kingdom?”

Most people back in the day believed that the kingdom of God would be on earth and be a mighty nation that ruled the rest of the world.

- What did Jesus say the Kingdom of God was like?

Mustard seed facts:

It is one of the smallest seeds of all garden plants.

While it is only an annual plant (meaning that it dies every year when the frost comes), without frost it can grow into a tree.

It's leaves can be ground into a spice.

If left to grow it can become shelter and a food source for birds.

Yeast facts:

Yeast is a live organism.

It eats the mixture and transforms the ingredients into one dough.

Both the mustard seed and the yeast may start small, but they have great results. God's kingdom is like the seed because when it is full grown like the birds we can find shelter in God's kingdom. God's kingdom is like the yeast because God changes each believer into a new creation ready to be used for him.

When we give our life to Christ, Jesus promises us that he will make his home in us. As a follower of Christ, the kingdom of God is a part of us. Because it is like yeast, God's Kingdom in us changes us into some thing different than we could ever be on our own.

Read Luke 13:22-30

- What does this story say about God's kingdom?

In this story the Kingdom that Jesus is referring to is Heaven.

- Will everyone get to be in God's Kingdom?

Jesus tells the people that unless God's kingdom is a part of their lives on earth they won't be apart of it in heaven either. Just as God's kingdom is useful in our lives we are to be useful to God's kingdom. That means we need to be about God's work while we are here on earth. The only way to do that is by knowing God, and giving Him complete control of your life.

## Challenge

God has given each one of us gifts. The most precious one is God's Spirit in us. When we obey the Holy Spirit we become what God wants us to be... Useful!

- What is one way that you can be useful to God today?

## Close

*God, thank you for allowing me to know you, help me to know you more.  
God show me how you want to use me today.*

## Day 48 I Love You Too Much To Leave

### Connect

- Have you ever lost a friend?

Let's say you and Chris were best friends. But then over time you drifted apart. For a while, when you saw each other you would say hi and a polite smile or head nod was all that was returned. Then as time went by you lost contact with Chris completely.

You miss your friend and you are concerned for them. You Facebook them, you send them birthday and Christmas cards. But they never return your kindness.

One day when you open up your email there it is... a message from Chris. Your excited, finally a response!

! You open the message and to your surprise it is a short message in capital letters saying. "WE ARE NOT FRIENDS ANYMORE! STOP CONTACTING ME!"

- How would you feel if this happened to you?

In a way this is God's story with his people.

### Content

Read Luke 13:31-35

It might appear that these Pharisees were actually trying to be nice to Jesus. After all, it's a pretty rotten thing to do to someone. If you know a guy is out to kill someone and you don't warn him. This would be a drastic change in behavior for the Pharisees to start being kind to Jesus.

You see, they didn't want what was best for Jesus. They just wanted Jesus to go away. Jesus saw through their masks of false kindness and tells them that he's not going to stop his ministry.

- What does verse 34 say about why Jesus won't stop his ministry?

Jesus knows that he will be put to death by Herod eventually but His love for his people is too great to give up on them.

The Bible is filled with example after example of God reaching out to his people and warning them, or giving them instructions of how to be right with God. But time after time the people rejected God's ways and went their own way. Sadly most of the prophets that God sent to warn the people were killed instead of obeyed.

- If you were God how would you feel?

Jesus' love is so great that even though he knows that he will die just like the rest of the prophets before him, Jesus is sad... not mad.

Jesus shows us the greatness of his love by allowing us to see how great his heart was broken by us.

## **Challenge**

- Do our actions tell Jesus to go away?
- Do we listen to God's instructions and warnings in our lives.

Sometimes God's ways are uncomfortable. But we can always trust God because we know he loves us and wants what is best for us. Just like a loving parent wants what is best for their children. Just like a hen will gather up her chicks to protect them from danger. Jesus love us too much to leave.

## **Close**

*God, thank you for your love for me. God I love you because \_\_\_\_\_. Amen*

# **Day 49 Take My Chair I'll Stand**

## **Connect**

- Have you ever been in a crowded room and someone was waving to you? They looked really excited to see you. Then you smile a big smile and return the wave, only to find out they weren't waving to you at all. They were waving to someone else behind you?
- How do you feel when this happens?
- Have you ever expected a gift and not received one?
- Have you ever expected a complement and not received one?

Having too high expectations of someone or a situation only leads to heart ache.

## **Content**

Read Luke 14:1-14

- Who should have been seated at the seat of honor?

Anyway you look at it Jesus was the most important person at the dinner. But Jesus isn't concerned with looking good or being honored by having a comfortable chair. Neither should we. Jesus is concerned with helping people know God. He is concerned with doing the right thing.

Many times people do the right thing but for the wrong reasons. The Pharisee invited his guests for two reasons; first to be able to brag about who was at his house and second to be invited to someone else's house for dinner.

Jesus says that instead of our image and social status we need to be focus on God's mission and how we can be used by God.

## Challenge

- Are you more focused on your social status, being liked by the most popular people, or are you focused on how you can be used by God?

God wants to use you to show his love and share his truth to the people all around you.

- Are you available to do that today?
- What if it means standing up for someone who is really hard to like?

If you do this, can you do this without expectations of them paying you back for your kindness?

Remember the faucet illustration where we were at the sink and as our cup got filled so did the other cup? Jesus' love to us fills us up to overflowing so we have the privilege to be ridiculously generous with our love for others without the need for paybacks.

## Close

*God, thank you for your love.  
Help me always to love generously.*

# Day 50 No Excuses Accepted

## Connect

Back in the 1970s the Detroit News posted an article of notes that school secretaries have actually received asking for their children to be excused from school. These are some of the best.

"Please excuse John for being absent Jan. 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, and 33."

"Ralph was absent yesterday because of a sour throat."

"Please excuse Joey Friday. He had loose vowels."

"Please excuse Joyce from Jim today."

"Please excuse Roland from P.E. for a few days. He fell out of a tree and misplaced his hip."

"John was absent yesterday because he had a stomach."

"Please excuse Sarah from being absent yesterday. She was sick and I had her shot."

“Please excuse Jennifer for missing school yesterday. We forgot to get the Sunday paper off the porch, and when we found it Monday, we thought it was Sunday.”

“Sally won’t be in school a week from Friday. We have to attend her funeral.”

- Have you ever made a funny excuse for your behavior?

Sometimes an excuse is appropriate in one situation but not in another. For example, if it was the middle of the night and the phone rang you might say I was too tired to get up. This might be an ok excuse. But it wouldn’t be an ok excuse if the fire alarm was going off. In today’s reading Jesus talks about the lame excuses that people give God when they are invited to a big celebration.

## **Content**

Read Luke 14:15- 23

“Blessed is the man who will eat at the feast in God’s Kingdom” was a common saying at Jewish dinners. It was a way of saying “this is good but the party that God will throw someday will be even better.” Which, let’s face it, we might throw a good party but we will never be able to live up to a party that God throws.

But Jesus detects a problem with this saying, and that is that the people saying it assume that they would be at the party no matter what they do here on earth.

- What excuses were given to the man holding the big dinner?
- What was the man’s reaction to the people’s excuses?
- Why do you think the poor people accepted the invitation when the other people didn’t?

The Jewish people of that time believed that they were the only ones in the world that were going to be a part of God’s kingdom. They believe this because they thought they were the only ones that God loved and chose. But Jesus shows us that this isn’t true. Anyone who accepts God’s invitation will be accepted.

Some people think that because God is love that they can keep giving God lame excuses for their disobedience and God will just forgive them even though they aren’t sorry for their behavior. They believe that God owes them kindness and forgiveness. This story shows us that Jesus doesn’t believe this. Jesus shows us that we have to accept God’s invitation and be obedient to his call in order to be a part of his kingdom.

God invites us to be in right relationship with him by accepting his son Jesus as our savior from sin, the king of our life, and our forever friend. There is no excuse good enough for God to reject this invitation.

## **Challenge**

- Have you accepted Jesus, your savior from sin, the king of your life, and your forever friend? If not, what is stopping you from accepting God’s invitation?

Verse 23 shows us that God is very patient with us and wants as many people as possible to accept his invitation. But verse 24 shows us that God's invitation and patience won't last forever. It's our choice to respond to God's invitation.

- How will you respond to God's invitation today?
- Have you given God a lame excuse for not obeying him?

## Close

God, I'm sorry for \_\_\_\_\_.

God, I accept your invitation to be a part of your kingdom. I believe that Jesus is my savior, king and forever friend. Help me to obey your commands today.

## Day 51 #1 Or Nothing

### Connect

In the Disney's movie Aladdin, Aladdin sings a beautiful love song to his heart throb Jasmine. As I read the lyrics, make a buzzer sound whenever I read something that sounds too good to be true.

*I can show you the world  
Shining, shimmering, splendid*

*I can open your eyes  
Take you wonder by wonder  
Over, sideways and under  
On a magic carpet ride*

*A whole new world  
A new fantastic point of view*

*No one to tell us no  
Or where to go  
Or say we're only dreaming  
A whole new world  
A dazzling place I never knew  
But when I'm way up here  
It's crystal clear  
That now I'm in a whole new world with  
you*

Often love songs sound as if they are actually worshiping the people rather than God.

### Content

Read Luke 14:25-35

Do you think that Jesus was saying that we have to hate our family in order to be his follower?

Jesus could not mean this because in the 10 commandments it say to honor your mother and father. So Jesus won't contradict a direct command from God. Jesus also said that you can't love God and hate your brother.

- What do you think Jesus meant when he said you have to hate your family in order to be his follower?

What Jesus is saying is that you need to love him more than anyone else. He has to be #1 or nothing.

Jesus also warns the people that while following him is the right thing to do, it often times is not the easiest thing to do. Not only should we love Jesus more than our family, we also need to love him more than anything else including our own life.

When Jesus said, “Anyone who doesn’t carry his cross and follow me can’t be my disciple,” the people knew that anyone carrying a cross was humiliated and full of shame.

## Challenge

Everyone goes through hard times, but Jesus tells us that there is cost to following him. We have to be willing to lose everything. We have to be so in love with Jesus that even if we did lose everything we would still be devoted to him just like Horatio Spafford.

Horatio Spafford was a man who lived in the late 1800s and he suffered great loss. In 1871 his son died at an early age but Horatio still trusted Jesus. Then a few years later he lost everything he owned to the Great Chicago fire. Horatio still trusted Jesus. Because he was in financial ruin he decided to send his wife and four daughters back to Europe to live with family and when he made enough money he would move there too. On the boat ride across the ocean their ship collided with another ship and sank. His wife survived but his four daughters did not. Later that year Horatio was traveling to be with his wife when his boat passed the location where his daughters died. Even though he lost all his money, and lost his children he wrote the famous hymn “It Is Well With My Soul.”

## Close

I pray that we don’t know tragedy like Horatio Spafford, but more than that I pray we love Jesus more than anything else.

Today I would like to close with some of the words for the hymn “It Is Well With My Soul.”

*When peace like a river, attendeth my way,  
When sorrows like sea billows roll;  
Whatever my lot, Thou hast taught me to say,  
It is well, it is well, with my soul.*

*My sin, oh, the bliss of this glorious thought!  
My sin, not in part but the whole,  
Is nailed to the cross, and I bear it no more,  
Praise the Lord, praise the Lord, O my soul!  
It is well, it is well, with my soul.*

*For me, be it Christ, be it Christ hence to live:*

*If Jordan above me shall roll,  
No pang shall be mine, for in death as in life,  
Thou wilt whisper Thy peace to my soul.  
It is well, it is well, with my soul.*

*But Lord, 'tis for Thee, for Thy coming we wait,  
The sky, not the grave, is our goal;  
Oh, trump of the angel! Oh, voice of the Lord!  
Blessed hope, blessed rest of my soul.  
It is well, it is well, with my soul.*

*And Lord, haste the day when my faith shall be sight,  
The clouds be rolled back as a scroll;  
The trump shall resound, and the Lord*

*shall descend,  
Even so, it is well with my soul.*

*It is well, it is well, with my soul.*

## **Day 52 Hurray I Found It!**

### **Connect**

- Have you ever lost something that was valuable to you?
- What did you do to find it?
- How did you feel when you finally found it?

### **Content**

Read Luke 15:1-10

- Who was Jesus eating with?
- What did the Pharisees think about Jesus eating with people who were sinners?
- Jesus told two stories about people losing things. What were they?
- When the people find the lost items what do they do?

Jesus points out to the Pharisees that they would get excited about finding something that was lost that was valuable to them. Then he made a comparison between the people that they called sinners and the lost sheep and coins.

Jesus shows them that all people are valuable to God. But some people are lost in their sin. In fact, everybody is at sometime in their life. That is why Jesus came to seek lost people and to bring them back to God.

Everyone knew that the tax collectors and the so called “sinners” were sinners because they stole from people and did a bunch of bad things.

- Do you think the Pharisees thought they were sinners too?
- What did the Pharisees do in this story that was a sin?
- What does Jesus say will happen in heaven when someone turns away from their sin?

### **Challenge**

God wants us to be a part of Jesus’ continuing mission to help people turn from their sin back to God. He doesn’t want us to think we are better than they are. He wants us to be friends with them so we can tell them about how much Jesus loves them and how Jesus died on the cross so they can be best friends with God.

- Who do you know that needs to know about Jesus’ love for them?

### **Close**

Let’s each pray for the friend that we mentioned, that they would turn to God.

*God, please help \_\_\_\_\_ to follow you.  
Help me to show them how much you love them.*

- Were the people sinning at the time Jesus was eating with them?

It is important for us to realize that while Jesus hung out with people who were lost he didn't hang with them when they were sinning. Jesus loved the people but he didn't approve of their sins. Jesus knew that the only way that he could help them out of their bad choices and sinful ways was to show them that he loved them. But if they were actively sinning when Jesus was there he would have stopped it or he would have left.

It is important to have friends that we are leading to Christ, but if they aren't making good choices at the time we need to say something in hopes that they will stop. If they don't stop we have to leave so we aren't tempted to sin.

## **Day 53 I Want It Now Oh Shucks!**

### **Connect**

You have probably seen this happen if it hasn't happened to you: two people fighting over an object. One person has it and the other person wants it. They may have asked for it at first, but now it has turned into a tug of war over the object. Back and forth they pull saying "It's Mine!" "No IT'S MINE!" Then, just when the person is about to tug on the item with all their might, the other person in the battle let's go of the item. The person thinking that they were going to get resistance all of a sudden pulls and goes tumbling backwards.

Maybe this has happened to you. You are trying to loosen a nut. It is really stuck so you put all of your strength into turning the wrench. It's not budging. You push on the wrench and when you least expect it the nut breaks free. The next thing you know is that you are howling in pain with bloody greasy knuckles.

Sometimes the thing that we want to happen ends up being a bad thing. Sometimes we're trying to force something to happen and when it does we are not ready for it.

### **Content**

Read Luke 15:11-32

- What did the son ask his father for?

When a father divides up his property and gives it to his sons that is called an inheritance. Inheritances are usually given after the father dies and his will is read. So when the younger son asked for his inheritance it was like he was saying to his father, "I can't wait until you die. Give me my money now."

- How do you think the father felt when his son asked for the money?
- Do you think he thought this was a good idea?
- How did the younger son spend his money?
- What did the boy do when his money ran out?

Pigs for a Jewish person were considered the dirtiest of all creatures. So for this boy to be working with pigs was pretty bad. But to think that their food looked good to him meant that he was about as low as a person could go. He was starving and humbled.

- Have you ever been in a place where you felt like things just couldn't get any worse?
- What did the younger son decide he would do rather than feed pigs?
- How did his father react when the younger son returned?
- Why do you think the older son was angry that his dad gave a party for the younger son?

## Challenge

Sometimes in life we want things really badly but they aren't good for us. God sometimes allows us to walk paths that aren't good for us. He warns us and gives us people to give us good advice, but sometimes people need to lose something before they realize how good they had it.

It has been said that you can't fully trust Jesus until Jesus is the only thing you have to trust. When you feel like you have lost everything you are what is called broken. Jesus came to fix broken people. He does so with his love, with his forgiveness and with his Holy Spirit that he gives us as our guide.

- Which of the two sons understood how much the father loved him?
- Which son are you more like?

The Bible doesn't say this but I bet the younger son was way different after he returned home. I bet he was way more thankful. I bet he was way more willing to follow his father's instructions. I bet he was way more content in just being with his father than he ever was before or ever thought he could be.

## Close

*Father Thank you for \_\_\_\_\_.*  
*I love you more than \_\_\_\_\_.*  
*Please help me to know you better and trust you more.*

## Day 54 Tools In God's Shed

### Connect

In January of 2007 something happened that had never happened before in the world of professional football. Lovie Smith was the first to do it and Tony Dungy was right behind him. Coach Smith and Coach Dungy were the first African Americans to lead their teams to the Superbowl. With all the other teams eliminated from football news, the attention of the football world was directed at these two teams, their players, coaches and their owners. Soon the world found out that there was something far greater to these two coaches that motivated them. Sure they were excited by their professional accomplishments, they were proud of what their accomplishment meant to the African American population, but more

than that they were excited about the opportunity they had to point people to their God. Both Lovie Smith and Tony Dungy are followers of Christ. They saw their football success as a tool for ministry. They coached football in a way that would lead others to God.

- Do you use your abilities and blessings to point people to God?

## **Content**

Read Luke 16 1-19

- What was the manager doing that made the rich man mad?
- What did the manager do when he realized that he was going to lose his job?
- How would you feel if you had a manager who was stealing from you and giving your money away so people would like him?
- What was the rich man's reaction to the manager cheating him?
- What does Jesus say we should do with the riches of this world?
- What does Jesus say about those who can't be trusted with little things?
- What does Jesus say about those who can be trusted with little things?

Sometimes people get their thoughts on money messed up. Sometimes people think that everything will be good if they could get more money. Before they know it, their god is money rather than God.

Think about this. As humans we need to breathe air to live. But we don't live just so we can breathe. It is the same with money or any worldly riches. We may need money to live but we shouldn't live for money. Jesus said, "You can't serve God and money at the same time."

## **Challenge**

We need to see our money, our things and our abilities as tools that God can use for His work. Like Lovie Smith and Tony Dungy, we need to use the blessings in our lives to help others find Jesus. We need to see our life as tool for God.

The Bible refers to God as a gardener. Think of yourself as a garden tool. Lets ay you are a shovel. In order for a shovel to be a good shovel (one that gets used by the gardener) the favorite shovel it has to have all the right features. The shovel must be sturdy; it must be light; it must be comfortable to hold; and it must have a sharp edge.

We need to see ourselves as tools in God's shed. We need to be ready to be used whenever God wants to. We need to be sharp where we are supposed to be sharp and smooth where we are supposed to be smooth. Think about how useless a shovel would be if the handle was sharp with splinters and cracks and the blade was dull!

One way that we can make sure that we are ready to be used by God is to start using everything we have to serve God.

- Can you use your money better to serve God?
- Can you use your time better to serve God?

- Can you use your abilities better to serve God?
- What is one way that you will use your life to serve God better?

## Close

*God, help me to be a better tool for you to use  
by using my \_\_\_\_\_ to serve you.*

## Day 55 Awe You Just Missed It

### Connect

“Awe you just missed it,” are some of the most disappointing words ever.

“Did you see that shooting star? Awe you just missed it!”

“Look a bald eagle! Awe you just missed it!”

“Did you hear your name for the door prize? Awe you just missed it!”

“You have to get to the 10 yard line for a first down. Awe you just missed it!”

- What are some things that you have missed?

If we would have just done something a little different we wouldn't have missed it. It is one thing to miss a sight or an event. It is a whole different thing to miss an invitation from God!

### Content

Read Luke 16:19-31

- What was the rich man's life like on earth?
- What was Lazarus' life like on earth?
- Where did Lazarus go after he died?
- Where did the rich man go?
- What was it like for the rich man?
- What did the rich man ask of Abraham?
- What was Abraham's answer?

It is important to remember that the key to our eternity isn't what we do on earth. The key to eternity is our relationship with Jesus. Our relationship with Jesus, however, affects what we do, and who we live for. We can see that the rich man lived his life to please himself rather than God.

- When did the rich man discover the consequences of his actions?
- What could he do about his circumstances in hell?

Do you think he regretted his choices? Do you think Lazarus said, “Awe you just missed it?” We don't know if the rich man thought he had more time to decide to follow God, or if he just blew God off all together. But we do know that his suffering was terrible and that he regretted his bad choice not to trust God.

## Challenge

Sometimes we are tempted to put God off. We delay our obedience, thinking we have more time. Some people think, “I still have a few more sins that I would like to commit before I turn my life over to God.” This is completely foolish thinking! God’s ways are the best ways and when we trust and follow God we know that we are in his will. Delaying our obedience to God could eternally separate us from God and everything good. Once we die our opportunity to choose is over. That is why the Bible says, “Listen to his voice today. If you hear it don’t be stubborn. (*Hebrews 3:15b*) and “Now is the time God shows his favor. Now is the day he saves.” (*2 Corinthians 2b*)

Have you made the choice to trust God? Do you love him more than anything else? If not what are you waiting for? Today is the day to get right with God! Please don’t be like the rich man and miss your chance. When it comes to your relationship with God you don’t want to hear, “Awe you just missed it!”

## Close

If you want to trust and follow God, pray the prayer on the last page The ABC of Salvation. If you are already following God then think about other people in your life that are like the rich man. Think about those who haven’t chosen to follow God by believing Jesus. Take a moment to pray for them by name.

*God, please help (person’s name) to know you and to trust you.  
Please use me to help others trust you today. Amen*

## Day 56 God Gets The Credit

### Connect

There once was a boy named Michael. He was named after the great basketball player Michael Jordan. Because of this he grew up with a love for basketball. One day his mom called Michael in for dinner. He said to his mom, “Wait I want to dunk it before dinner!” Michael’s mom smiled and sighed because Michael was only 4 years old. He had no chance to dunk the basketball anytime soon, but Michael was determined.

After several failed attempts to dunk, Michael’s dad who was very tall said, “Ok Mike, last try.” Michael started his approach and leapt into the air. Just then his dad caught him and lifted him up so he could reach the rim. Michael’s face was beaming. He was really going to dunk! As Michael rose he swung the ball over his head and then threw it down through the hoop with authority.

When his dad set him down Michael started bragging that he could dunk. Everyone but Michael knew that it was only because of his dad that he could do it.

As we read today’s scripture listen to the “hard or impossible” things that Jesus talks about. See if you can figure out how we can do the impossible and who should get the credit.

# Content

Read Luke 17:1-3

- What does Jesus warn the disciples about?

Jesus says it would be better for a person to have a huge grind stone tie around their neck and thrown into the sea than it would to lead someone into sin. That's pretty bad. So it must be important not to lead someone to sin.

Jesus warns the disciples to watch out that their words, their actions and their lives don't cause people to sin.

- Doesn't that seem impossible?

Read Luke 17:4-6

- What does Jesus ask the disciples to do?
- Do you think it would be hard to forgive someone that many times in one day?
- Doesn't that seem impossible?
- What is their request of Jesus?

The disciples realize that they need to have more faith and trust in God's ways in order to do what is right.

- Do you ever feel like you deserve a reward for doing something right?

Read Luke 17: 7-10

- How did they plow fields back in this time?
- How would you feel if you had to plow a huge field that way?
- If you were a servant would you expect to be able to sit with the master of the house to eat dinner?

Jesus says this is like our relationship with God. We are asked to do hard things. And when we do them we shouldn't expect praise because it is our duty.

At first this sounds kind of cold on God's part. But if we look at it carefully we will see the only way for us to anything good is with God's help. So if we are honest we will understand that when we do hard things, or even impossible things for God, we don't deserve any credit for them, God does. Just like Michael's slam dunk, it was his father who gave him the ability to do it.

# Challenge

- What hard thing is God asking you to do today?
- Is there anything that God has done for you that you are taking the credit for?

## Close

*God, with your strength help me to do the hard things that you have for me.  
Father, I know anything good I do is because of Your Spirit working in me. Thank you for  
allowing me to serve you.*

## Day 57 What Do You Say?

### Connect

If you travel the world, and who knows maybe even the galaxies, you will find that moms are know for saying the same things.

These are a few of the most popular mom sayings:

“Somebody’s going to get hurt.”

“Tie your shoe before you break your neck.”

“Come inside before you catch pneumonia.”

“Call me when you get there, just so I know you are ok.”

“Don’t sit so close to the TV, you’ll ruin your eyes.”

“This is the worst pig sty I have ever seen.”

“Don’t you have anything better to do?”

But the most popular thing that a mother says is after a child has received a gift they say, “Now what do you say?” to which the child is supposed to say, “Thank you.”

- Why do you think it is important to say thank you?

### Content

Read Luke 17:11-19

- What did the men need from Jesus?
- When were they healed?

All 10 of the men believed that Jesus could heal them. So together they called to Jesus for help. Because of their skin disease these men were not able to go by other people so they wouldn’t spread their disease. If a person with this disease was better, the law commanded that they show themselves to the priest to prove that they were well. So when Jesus sent them to see the priest, they immediately knew they were going to be healed.

- What did the Samaritan do when he found out that he was healed?
- Why do you think the other 9 men didn’t return to thank Jesus?

Maybe it was because they thought they deserved to be healed because they were God’s chosen people. Maybe they wanted to go be with their families. Either way, the fact is they took a blessing from Jesus and they didn’t show their gratitude. They didn’t even say thanks. Maybe that was because their mom wasn’t there to say, “Now what do you say?”

## Challenge

- Who are you most like? The 9 who left or the 1 who returned?

Remember yesterday's lesson taught us that everything good in our lives is from God. If we believe that, then we should be the most thankful people ever.

- What are we thankful to God for?
- What great things has he done for us? (salvation, healing, comfort in hard times, perseverance)

## Close

*God, thank you for \_\_\_\_\_.  
Help me to be more thankful to you.*

## Day 58 Regrets

### Connect

- Have you ever had the chance to do something really cool, like jump off a high dive, do a zipline, or drop in on a half pipe, but you chickened out only to regret your choice later?
- Why do we sometimes regret our choices?

Sometimes people choose not to do something because they are afraid that they will look stupid, or that they will not do as well as they hoped. When you think about it, while both of these feelings are normal, they don't really make sense with God. We don't have to worry what people think about us because God is crazy about us, and because of that we can have the freedom to try things and fail because God loves us the same no matter how good or bad we are at something.

But, sometimes we as people get so wrapped up in one thing that we miss all the other great things that are going on around us. That is what happened in Jesus' day. Some people were so concerned with the coming of God's kingdom that they missed it.

### Content

Read Luke 17:20-37

- What did Jesus say about the kingdom of God?

When Jesus said "the kingdom of God is among you" he meant two things. Jesus might have explained it this way: "The first is that it's here right now because I'm here. I know that you are hoping that God's kingdom will bring freedom from the Romans but that's not your biggest problem. Your problem with sin is keeping you from being apart of God's kingdom so let's take care of the sin problem first."

The second thing is that the Kingdom of God is something that you join in your heart and that you live out day to day. So to look for it is kind of silly because God's kingdom isn't on a map."

But there will be a day, no one knows for sure when, Jesus will return and set up a kingdom that will be permanent. This kingdom will not just be on the map. It will be The Map. Everywhere will be God's Kingdom. But the only way to be a part of it is by being a part of God's Kingdom now.

- What do you think Jesus meant when he said, "Anyone who tries to keep his life will lose it." and, "Anyone who loses his life will keep it"?

The only way to join God's kingdom is to give your life over to God by trusting and following him because you love him more than anything. Jesus explains that when he returns to establish his permanent Kingdom it will be too late to change.

## Challenge

- Is there anything that you are letting get in the way of your relationship with Jesus?
- Are you living for God and following his plans or are you living for yourself and following your own plans?

When we give up our own plans and follow God's plan we lose our temporary life but gain God's eternal life.

## Close

*God, Help me to love you more than anything else.  
Please give me the courage to lose my life to gain your eternal life. .*

# Day.59.Persistent.Prayer

## Connect

- Have you ever wanted something so bad that you just kept asking for it?
- What does it mean to be persistent?
- What is the difference between nagging someone and being persistent?

Today we will read a story of how a woman was persistent with her request and how Jesus used it to teach us something about prayer.

## Content

Read Luke 18:1-8

- What do we know about the judge?
- What did the woman want from the judge?
- Did the judge give the woman what she wanted?

Jesus uses this story to teach us that if a lazy, self centered judge will do the right thing how much more will our gracious, loving and generous heavenly father be willing to do the right thing? This story isn't a lesson about God. God is in no way like the judge in this story. This story is about how we should pray.

- Who has the power to make things right for the woman, the woman or the judge?

So even though the judge doesn't help the woman, she continues to do what is right by asking the judge for help. She realized that the only way to get justice was from the judge. There was nothing that she could do for herself other than ask for the judge to make things right.

There are a few things that we can learn about our prayers from this woman.

1. We need to ask God for help until the problem is solved. God doesn't always say yes to our requests, but he always helps us when we ask. If we are still having hard times then we should keep praying.
2. Many times we use prayer as a last resort after we have tried every other option. God wants us to come to him first before we have tried things our way. This isn't to say that God will tell us exactly what we should do in every situation. It just means that God is active in our life and we need to tune in to what he is doing before we act. It's kind of like "look before you leap" its just; "pray before you leap."
3. Lastly, coming to God first means that we have confidence in him and his ways. The more we trust God with our lives the more we can see that he is faithful. This woman realized that she was in need of the judge's help. She completely put her faith in the judge believing that he would help her.

The amount of time that we spend in prayer is a reflection of how much we trust God.

## Challenge

- On a scale of 1 -5 (1 being low and 5 being high) how would you rate yourself on these categories?

Time spent in prayer.	1	2	3	4	5
Praying right away.	1	2	3	4	5
Trusting God completely	1	2	3	4	5

- What one aspect needs improving in your prayers?

## Close

*God, help me to improve my \_\_\_\_\_ in my prayers*

## Day 60 Honest With God

### Connect

There once was a clown that was known for his funny antics and gags. One of his most famous gags was this: The clown would come out in front of a crowd and pull out a mirror.

He would look in the mirror, scream and quickly look away. The second time he would sneak a peek in the mirror and then have the same reaction. This would go on for a while until the crowd would wonder what was going on, then the clown would go up to someone and ask them what they saw when they looked in to this mirror. The person would look in the mirror and reply, "I see myself." The clown would then breathe a huge sigh of relief that say, "Whew I thought that was me"!

Many times people are like that clown. When we look at ourselves we tend to minimize our faults. Many times we attempt to bring up other peoples faults so we can look good in comparison.

We are like the clown who doesn't like what he sees in the mirror, but is content thinking that the scary image in the mirror was someone else rather than him.

## Content

Read Luke 18:9-17

- There are two people in this story. Describe their prayers.
- Which man understood who he was?
- Which man was honest with God?
- Which man's prayer was accepted by God?

God asks us to be honest with him. After all, it makes no sense to try and fool God. When we think we are awesome and completely good on God's standards we fool ourselves. That is why the Bible says in Isaiah 64:6a "All of us have become like one who is unclean, and all the good things we do are like polluted rags..."

- What did Jesus mean when he said, "Everyone who lifts himself up will be brought down and anyone who is brought down will be lifted up?"

## Challenge

Do you know your need for God? Are you aware that your sin separates you from God? We may think we are better than other people but we still need God's forgiveness just like everyone else. When we remember this we are humble. We need to be like toddlers who have dirty hands but will still run to their parent because they are loved and they are accepted just as they are. And they have no other way to get clean with out their help.

## Close

*God, thank you for your forgiveness.  
Help me to be honest with you about who I really am.  
God I'm sorry for \_\_\_\_\_.*

# Day 61 A Beautiful Let Down

## Connect

Do you know the song by the band Switchfoot called *Beautiful Let Down*? The first 2 verses go along with the story that we are going to read today. It goes like this: (extra parent points for singing or finding this song in your kids MP3 player or on YouTube)

*It was a beautiful let down  
When I crashed and burned  
When I found myself alone, unknown and hurt  
It was a beautiful let down  
The day I knew  
That all the riches this world had to offer me  
Would never do*

*In a world full of bitter pain and bitter doubt  
I was trying so hard to fit in  
Until I found out  
I don't belong here ...*

When we read this story see if you think this would be a song that the man identifies with.

## Content

Read Luke 18:18-29

- What does the ruler call Jesus?
- What does Jesus say about who is good?
- What does the ruler want to know?

The question that the ruler asks Jesus is the most important question ever. What other question could be more important for you to know than how to have eternal life?

- What is Jesus' answer to the man at first?
- What was the ruler's response about following these commandments?
- Do you think the man was able to follow all of the commandments?

Jesus just got finished saying that only God was good. So because this man isn't God he should know he isn't good. He was probably nice and well behaved but he wasn't good or right with God and he knew it. Otherwise he wouldn't be asking Jesus how to receive eternal life.

- What does Jesus tell him he must do to receive eternal life?
- Is becoming poor one of the steps to becoming a Christian?
- Then why does Jesus asks the man to do this?

Jesus tells the man to sell everything he had because he knew that his wealth was in the way of his relationship with God. Anything that gets in the way of your relationship with God is sin and we need to leave it.

- What does Jesus say will happen when we leave everything for the Kingdom of God?
- Do you think that Jesus' deal to leave a few earthly riches to someday receive many heavenly riches is worth it?

## Challenge

- Is there anything that is getting in the way of your relationship with God?
- Are you willing to let everything go and follow God?

Don't be like the ruler in this story that went away sad because he had to give up his wealth. Trust that God will make this right for you.

## Close

*Father I love you. I believe that you are more valuable than anything in this world.*

## Day 62 Some People Just Don't Get It

### Connect

Play Sticks

Supplies: 5 toothpicks, straws or whatever you have handy

Directions:

- Hold the toothpicks in one hand, then drop them on the table so everyone can see.
- With your other hand sneakily place on the table in front of you with 0 -5 fingers out.
- Then ask your family what number is this?
- They will most likely look at the toothpicks and not your hand.

*You can choose to tell them at the end of your devotional time or keep them guessing for hours/ days / years/ or until they hate you.*



- Have you ever thought something was going to be easy and it wasn't?
- What did it feel like when you were the last to catch on in this game?

I wonder if this is what the disciples felt like after he told them everything that was going to happen to them.

Today we are going to read about 2 groups of people who just didn't get it. The first group is the disciples and the second group was the crowd.

# Content

Read Luke 18:31-34

- What did Jesus say was going to happen to him?
- Why didn't the disciples get what he was saying?

It was important that the disciples knew what was going to happen to Jesus so when it happened it would all make sense to them. But if they understood what Jesus was saying beforehand they might have tried to stop him. Think about it wouldn't you try to stop Jesus from going to Jerusalem if he told you he was going to be arrested and hung on a cross to die?

- Have you ever known the right answer or the right thing to do and nobody listened to you?
- How does it feel when no one listens to you?
- What would you do if everyone was telling you to stop doing something but you knew what you were doing was right?

Read Luke 18:35-43

- What did the man want from Jesus?
- What did the crowd tell him to do?
- What did he do after they told him to be quiet?
- What did he call Jesus?

When the man called Jesus the Son of David he showed that he not only believed that Jesus was able to heal him, he also showed that he believed Jesus was the Messiah, the Son Of God.

- What did the man do after Jesus healed him?
- What did the crowd do after Jesus healed the man?

## Challenge

Sometimes doing the right thing is hard. Sometimes it is hard because we are confused like the disciples were, but other times it is hard because we are the only one doing what it is right. We can learn a lesson from the blind man. Even though other people were mad at him he was determined to get Jesus' attention. In the end everyone was glad he did.

- Do people sometimes get in the way of you doing what is right?

This may sound simple but doing the right thing is always the right thing. Another way to say it is: there is never a time that it is right to do the wrong thing.

- Who got the credit for healing the man?

We know that we are doing the right thing when Jesus or God gets the glory instead of us.

Just like the man in the story, we need to come to Jesus for help when we need it. We need to do what God wants even though other people might tell us to stop. We need to do what is right because sometimes people around us just don't get it.

## Close

*God, help me to do what is right even if other people don't get it.  
Thank you for allowing me to come to you whenever I want to.*

# Day 63 Jesus' Mission Statement

## Connect

- Have you ever heard of the term Mission Statement? What does that mean?

A mission statement is a statement that describes the purpose of a company or an individual. A person's or a company's mission helps them to make the right choices day to day and to stay focused on what is important. See if you can guess these famous companies' mission statements.

Our mission is:

To refresh the world, inspire moments of optimism and happiness, create value and make a difference. = Coca Cola Company

To be the world's best quick service restaurant experience. Being the best means providing outstanding quality, service, cleanliness, and value, so that we make every customer in every restaurant smile. = McDonalds

To be one of the world's leading producers and providers of entertainment and information. Using our portfolio of brands to differentiate our content, services and consumer products, we seek to develop the most creative, innovative and profitable entertainment experiences and related products in the world. = Disney

Today we will read a great story of how Jesus was able to change the life of a man who was known for being a liar and a cheat. We will also get a peak into Jesus' mission statement.

## Content

Read Luke 19:1-10

Yesterday we read about the blind man who wouldn't stop calling for Jesus' help until Jesus heard him. He went out of his way to get Jesus' attention. Today we read about how Zacchaeus went out of his way to see Jesus.

- What did Zacchaeus do to see Jesus?
- What would you do to see Jesus?
- Why was it surprising to everyone when Jesus said he would go to Zacchaeus' house?
- What did Zacchaeus say he was going to do to make things right with others?
- What did Jesus say about Zacchaeus' plan?

When someone receives Jesus' forgiveness it always results in a changed life. Some are more extreme than others but Jesus always has an affect on people.

- What did Jesus say his purpose or mission was in verse 10?
- What does that mean to you?

## Challenge

If Jesus' mission was to look for the lost and to save them, and if we are followers of Jesus, don't you think our main goal or purpose in life should be the same?

- How would your life be different if your mission was the same as Jesus'?
- What is one thing that you will do to be on Jesus' mission?

One note of caution: while we can reach out to lost people and love them like Jesus and even introduce them to Jesus, there is nothing we can do to save them. That is completely Jesus' job.

## Close

*Father God, thank you for sending Jesus to look for the lost and to save them.  
Thank you for saving me. Help me to bring other people to you.*

# Day 64 Be Faithful With What You Have

## Connect

- What would you do if I gave you \$1000?
- What would you do if I gave you \$10,000?
- What would you do if I gave you \$ 100,000,000?

The truth of the matter is that if you are foolish with your money when you have a little you will be foolish if you have a lot. That is why it is important to learn how to manage your money as a kid so that you can manage your money as an adult.

Jesus tells the people a story using this principle to help them understand the importance of working for God's kingdom everyday.

## Content

Read Luke 19:11-27

- What did the master expect his servants to do with the money he gave them when he came home?
- What was the difference between the first two servants and the third servant in how they spent their money?
- How did the master reward the first two?

- How did the master reward the third servant?

It is clear from this story that the master wanted his servants to be faithful and hard working. He expected them to use the money that he gave them to make more. He wanted them to do something positive with it.

- What do you think the point of Jesus' story is?

God wants us to be on his mission. He gives us talents and resources to accomplish his mission. How we choose to use our talents and resources shows God how much we love him and how faithful we are at serving him.

## Challenge

- What talents do you have that you can serve God with?
- What resources do you have to serve God with?
- If Jesus came to you today would he be pleased with how you are using your talents and resources for him?
- Are you doing what you can to help those around you to know Jesus as their personal Lord and Savior?
- What is one way you will use your talents and resources to help people to know Jesus?

## Close

*Lord help me to use the talents and resources that you gave me to serve you today.*

# Day 65 No Rocks Gonna Do My Job

## Connect

Listen to this passage from Psalms 148 and tell me who or what is to be praising God.

Psalms 148:1-10

Praise the LORD.

Praise the LORD from the heavens,

Praise him in the heights above. 2 Praise him, all his angels,

Praise him, all his heavenly hosts. 3 Praise him, sun and moon,

Praise him, all you shining stars. 4 Praise him, you highest heavens and you waters above

the skies. 5 Let them praise the name of the LORD,

for he commanded and they were created. 6 He set them in place for ever and ever;

he gave a decree that will never pass away.

7 Praise the LORD from the earth,

you great sea creatures and all ocean depths, 8 lightning and hail, snow and clouds,

stormy winds that do his bidding, 9 you mountains and all hills,

fruit trees and all cedars, 10 wild animals and all cattle,

small creatures and flying birds. NIV

- If all these praise God, how important is it that we praise God?

Today we are going to read about what happened when Jesus came to Jerusalem (what we remember as Palm Sunday.)

## Content

Read Luke 19:28-44

- What did the crowd do when Jesus rode into town on the donkey?
- Why did the crowd praise Jesus?
- What did the Pharisees want Jesus to do?
- What did Jesus say would happen if the people didn't praise him?

Imagine this: you are walking down the street with a few friends and then all of a sudden a pile of rocks yells out. "PRAISE THE LORD, JESUS IS LORD!" I don't know about you but I think that would be pretty cool. Don't you think that would convince some of your non-Christian friends that Jesus really is the way, the truth and the life? But Jesus must think that the praise of his people is far better than the praise of a rock.

- Why do you think it is better for people to praise God over rock?

To praise God means that we tell God how valuable he is. The best praise comes from those who truly believe that God is who he says he is.

## Challenge

Do we praise God like it is our job or do we shirk our privilege and responsibility on others? It is our job to praise the lord.

## Close

Today as we close I will read a passage from Psalm 104 as our prayer. When I pause I would like us to respond together with the phrase *I will praise the Lord*.

<sup>1</sup> I will praise the Lord.

Lord my God, you are very great.

You are dressed in glory and majesty. (*I will praise the Lord.*)

<sup>2</sup> You wrap yourself in light as if it were a robe.

You spread the heavens out like a tent. (*I will praise the Lord.*)

<sup>3</sup> You build your palace high in the heavens.

You make the clouds serve as your chariot.

You ride on the wings of the wind. (*I will praise the Lord.*)

<sup>4</sup> You make the winds serve as your messengers.

You make flashes of lightning serve you. (*I will praise the Lord.*)

<sup>5</sup> You placed the earth on its foundations.  
It can never be moved. (*I will praise the Lord.*)

## Day 66 Clean It Up

### Connect

Picture this, it is a summer afternoon and you have been playing outside almost all day. It comes to supper time and you are called in. You come in the house. While you are taking off your shoes you smell your favorite food wafting through the air. You quickly sit down at the table ready to eat this delicious meal.

- From your experience what would happen next in this story?

You may be hungry, you may be able to eat, but you are not allowed to eat until you wash your hands.

Often in our life we need to clean up the mess that was made before we can move on to doing the next thing.

### Content

Read Luke 19:45- 20:8

- What did Jesus do when he entered the temple?
- What did Jesus say the temple was for?
- What were these people doing in the temple?

Just like us with dirty hands needing to be washed before dinner, the temple needed to be cleaned before Jesus would teach there. The temple was there for praying and worshiping God. Somewhere along the way people started selling things that were needed to worship like animals to be sacrificed and they also exchanged Roman money for Hebrew money so people could tithe. All of this took the focus off God and made this part of the temple seem anything but holy.

Imagine what it would be like if you came to church and there were a bunch of people selling Bibles, Bible studies and worship CDs like they were at a baseball game.

“Bibles! Get your Bibles, you name the version I got it. Get you own copy of God’s word here!”

“Hey, Hey, Hey! I got the best Worship CD Ever. You can worship on your own but it will be better when you put this in your player.”

“Too busy to study God’s word on your own? *Little Dab Will Do Ya Bible studies* are here. Check off your daily quiet time with just one page of reading. Be spiritual and be on your way! *Little Dab Will Do Ya!*”

This would be pretty distracting wouldn't it? By the time you got into church I bet your mind would be on a zillions things but Not Worshiping God. This is kind of what was happening with the temple before Jesus cleared it out.

## **Challenge**

Are there things that get in the way of worshiping God? Are doing devotionals just a habit? Or are they still a way that you allow God to change your life? It is easy to get caught up in things without realizing that we're off base from where Jesus wants us to be.

Back in the day the temple was the place where God made his home. Because of Jesus the Bible says that God's temple is now in us.

Let's take a few moments to allow God to examine some areas of our life to make sure they are cleaned and acceptable him. When I say an area of your life, ask God to make you clean in that area.

Home. Is everything the way God wants it to be with your Family?  
School or work. Is everything the way God wants it to be at school or work?  
Friends. Is everything the way God wants it to be with your friends?  
Thoughts. Are your thoughts pleasing to God?

## **Close**

*God, please look into all areas of my life and clean them up. Help me to always be ready for you in all areas of my life.*

## **Day 67 Stop Stealing From God!**

### **Connect**

It has been said that all sin can be called stealing. When you lie to someone you rob them of the truth. When you bully someone you rob them of their freedom. When you gossip about someone you rob them of their reputation.

Jesus tells a story of some farmers who rented a vineyard who planned to rob the owner of the rent and ultimately they planned to steal the whole vineyard. As I read this story see if this story sounds familiar to you.

### **Content**

Read Luke 20:9-19

- How were the farmers supposed to pay for the land that they were renting?
- What did they do to the servants who came to collect the payment?
- Who did the owner send to collect the rent after the servants?
- What did the renters do to the son?
- Does this story sound like another story you know?

Jesus told this story as a warning to the people. The land owner is like God who gives us everything we have. The farmers are his people. The servants that came to collect the rent were the prophets of the Old Testament and John the Baptist, all who were rejected for the most part by God's people. So, just like in the story, God sent his son to the people to collect the rent. But the people rejected Jesus.

Jesus teaches the people that if they reject God's son they will be punished just like the people who wouldn't pay the rent in the story.

Hopefully all this makes sense. There is just one more question and that question is perhaps the most important question ever.

- If we are the renters and God has sent the prophets and his very own son to collect rent, what is the real rent that God requires?

The rent that God requires from his people is for them to love, respect and to obey God. Ecclesiastes 12:13 says, "Have respect for God and obey his commandments. That's what everyone should do." When we disrespect God and we disobey his commands we rob God of the worship that he is due.

## **Challenge**

Are you living your life to respect God? Have you accepted Jesus as God's son sent to make peace between God and man? Today is the day you can stop robbing God of the respect and honor that he is due. (Turn the last page The ABC of salvation)

## **Close**

*Father, thank you for loving me so much. God I love you. Please help me to show that by obeying you.*

## **Day 68 Trapped**

### **Connect**

Have you ever been caught in a trap? Have you ever gotten yourself stuck in a tight spot and where you couldn't get out without help? Maybe you have never been physically trapped. Maybe you have been emotionally or intellectually trapped. Maybe it was a situation that you had with a friend that you felt like you had no choice in the matter, or at least none of the choices that you had available where good ones.

There is an old story of a shrewd lawyer who would question his witnesses in a way that would make them confess to crimes that they didn't commit. After the witness was sworn in to tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, the lawyer would ask him a series of questions to answer with yes or no answers only. After a few simple questions the lawyer would ask trapping questions like, "have you stopped beating your dog?" If the

witness answered yes, they were admitting to beating their dog. If the witness answered no they were admitting that they still beat their dog. Either way they were trapped.

Sometimes we may feel as if we are trapped so that no matter what we do we are wrong, or we will lose.

## Content

Read Luke 20:20-40

- How did people try to trap Jesus in today's reading?
- Would you have been trapped by any of these questions?
- Why didn't Jesus fall for the traps that the people were setting for him?

## Challenge

Jesus didn't fall for any of these traps. In fact he never fell for the other traps that people laid for him either. He never made a mistake at all. He always had the wise thing to say or do.

So if we believe this about Jesus, doesn't it make sense to trust him with the problems that we are faced with?

Here are a couple things to consider when we feel trapped.

**God Gives Wisdom**~ Jesus didn't just hope that things would work out he knew what God thought about each situation that he faced. He had wisdom. Wisdom comes from God. We can have wisdom by knowing God's word.

**Glorify God**~ Jesus came to bring people back to God. When people were trying to trap him, he was trying to restore them. He did this because he wanted to make God look good. Many times we feel trapped because the choices that we have aren't easy for us because we are thinking about us rather than Glorifying God.

**God Gives Courage**~ Jesus promises that in this life there will be trials, that was true for Jesus, and it's true for us too. So when things are hard remember that Jesus went thru hard times too.

**God Gives Faith**~ God promises that he will work everything, even the hardest of times, times when you are laughed at, made fun of, rejected, and our failures, he will work them out for good for those who love him and who are on his team. This takes faith because he doesn't promise that we will always see how he does this. So when we lack faith we can ask God for more faith and he will give it.

## Close

*Father, Please give us the Wisdom, the Courage and the Faith to bring you glory!*

# Day 69 Check Your Course

## Connect

There once was a Navy battleship commander who was known for being strong-willed and determined. In many situations these were useful traits for a commander. But sometimes the commander would make a decision without listening to feedback from others.

One particularly foggy night the battle ship was out at sea when the night watchman announced that he spotted a light off the bow of the ship and they were on a collision course with the light.

The commander got on the radio and announced the course they were on and that anything in front of them needed to move 20 degrees to the southwest. He awaited the reply. After a while a voice returned on the radio and said, "Negative; please alter your course 20 degrees to the northeast." The commander was offended by this notion so he restated that they should change their course 20 degrees to the southwest. Again the voice repeated for the commander to change his course. The commander's temper started to rise he got on the radio and announced, "I am a commander in the USA Navy now redirect your course 20 degrees to the southwest immediately." Again the voice returned, this time a bit more hesitantly. "I am only an ensign but please change your course 20 degrees to the northeast."

The commander was irate at the nerve of an ensign to direct him to change course. The commander screamed in the microphone. "I AM THE COMMANDER OF A FULLY ARMED BATTLESHIP. CHANGE COURSE IMMEDIATELY OR I WILL OPEN FIRE!"

"Please," the voice returned with a distinct quiver, "I can not comply with your order I am in a lighthouse please consider changing your course 20 degrees to the northwest."

It is one thing to be highly thought of by people. It is another thing to think highly of yourself. The commander thought that just because of who he was that anything in his path should move. The Bible calls this pride. In today's reading we will see how pride gets in the way of making good choices for God.

## Content

Read Luke 20:41- 21:4

- How did the teachers of the law show their pride?
- Why do you think Jesus said that God will punish them?

All of the things that the teachers of the law were doing were good, but they did them for their good rather than for God. They loved being popular and being thought of as better than other people.

The Old Testament law said that the rich should take care of widows. The teachers did, but in doing so they took over the ownership of the homes without paying for them. They did this with the attitude of, "How dare you lowly widow question me an upright teacher of the law?"

Jesus then pointed out the rich people who gave a lot of money in their offering. This was another thing that people took pride in. Jesus pointed out to people that offerings aren't about the amount given; they are about the condition of your heart.

A millionaire can put \$10,000 in the offering without even thinking about it. He has plenty of money to live on. Jesus points out the awesome sacrifice of the widow. Even though her offering was very small, she gave everything she had. She showed that she was thankful for how God provided for her and that she trusted God to continue to provide for her. This trust is way more valuable to God than all the money in the world.

Sometimes we get caught up in ourselves and we start valuing other things that aren't important to God. When we value ourselves more than we should that is called pride.

## **Challenge**

⊕ What things do we value more than God values?

Do we value our money more than God? Do we value other people's respect more than being respected by God? Do we do good things just to get the credit? When we do this we are just like the teachers of the law or the Navy commander; we are on a collision course with God and we are too wrapped up in ourselves to notice the warning signs.

## **Close**

*God, help me to be humble. Help me to do the right thing for the right reasons*

# **Day 70 Paradox**

## **Connect**

Suppose there is a town with just one male barber and that every man in the town keeps himself clean-shaven, some by shaving themselves, some by attending the barber. It makes sense that the barber shaves all the men in town who do not shave themselves. In fact you could make a rule that if a man doesn't shave himself he is shaved by the barber.

If that rule is followed then:

If the barber does not shave himself, he must shave himself.

and

If he does shave himself, according to the rule he (the barber) will not shave himself.

This is an impossible situation. This story is called a paradox. A paradox is when two true statements disagree with each other. Paradoxes almost always ask the question, "Now how can this be true?"

See how many paradoxes you can find in today's reading.

# Content

Read Luke 21:5-38

Jesus talks about the hard times that will be ahead for his disciples.

- Did you find any paradoxes in what he said?
- Do these seem like paradoxes to you?

Vs 9 says, “Do not be afraid when you hear about wars and about fighting against rulers.” Wouldn’t that be the perfect time to be afraid when there is a war?

Jesus goes on to say all these terrible things will happen and that the disciples will be arrested and brought to trial. But he tells them don’t worry. Why wouldn’t they worried about that?

But in Vs 16 -19 Jesus says two of the biggest paradox of this passage.

Jesus says, “They will put some of you to death.” But then later he says, “not a hair on your head will be harmed.” How can that be?

He also says that, “Everyone will hate you because of me.” But, “If you stand firm, you will gain life.” WHAT?

You see, in life there are a lot of impossible situations, but with God nothing is impossible. It might seem impossible not to worry when you are being arrested. It might seem impossible to be able to say the right thing when you are in front of an angry mob of people who want to kill you, especially if your family handed you over to them. And it just makes sense that if someone kills you that by definition a hair on your head has been harmed, either that or you have some really good hairspray.

- What lesson can we learn from all of this?

Jesus tells us that life can, and at times will be hard. Sometimes people say that if you are facing hard times it is because you lack faith in God, or that you have sinned and God is punishing you. This is not the truth. Jesus promises that “in this life you will have struggles.”

But Jesus also promises that this life isn’t all that there is. That life forever with him will be well worth any pain that we may go through in our lives on earth.

# Challenge

Jesus says to do these things:

Make up your mind.

Do not to worry ahead of time about how to stand up for yourselves.

Why? Because Jesus will:

Give you words of wisdom.

Not allow your enemies to withstand them or oppose you. Meaning that in the end God wins!

To do this we have to trust God with all of our heart, soul and strength. In every situation God has a plan and he can make impossible situations work out for good.

Our job is to trust God. God's job is to make things right.  
Our job is not to worry. God's job is to do what he promised.

## Close

*God, thank you for helping us when we face hard times. God help us to trust you more.*

# Day 71 A Mistake Or On Purpose

## Connect

Sometimes we make plans that seem right to us but in the end they didn't turn out the way we thought they would.

Listen to these stories sent into Seventeen Magazine by their readers.

"I was at the fair with my friends and saw this really cool ride. There wasn't a line, so I ran right in. The man working there came over and started pointing and yelling at me to get out. Once outside the ride, my friends told me I had waltzed in through the exit. And there was a huge line of people waiting to get in!"

"My friend had a piñata at her party. I planned to impress my boy friend by hitting the piñata really hard. My friends spun me and I finally located the piñata. I swung with all my might, and I heard a scream. As I took off the blindfold, and instead of finding candy all over, I found some girl kneeled over in pain. I felt so bad!"

Sometimes the plans we make don't work out the way we thought they would. Other times we make plans to do the wrong thing. As I read today's passage listen to the action words. See if you think the characters were making a mistake or planning to do something bad.

## Content

Read Luke 21:1-4

- What were the chief priest and the teachers of the law planning to do?
- What was Judas planning to do?
- Do you think this was a mistake or was or did they plan on doing a bad thing?
  
- When is it ever right to try and get rid of an innocent man?

Never! But that is what the teachers of the law were thinking about.

- When is it right to go behind someone's back to make a plan that will hurt them?

Never! But that is what Judas did.

Sometimes its hard to know what is right. It is true that everyone makes mistakes because no one is perfect. I wonder if Judas and the teachers of the law knew they were making a bad choice or if they really thought that getting rid of Jesus or handing Jesus over was the right thing to do.

Both Judas and the teachers went out of their way to do wrong. If their first concern was to trust God then they wouldn't have been thinking the things that they were thinking.

## **Challenge**

Do the things we think about really affect our choices and actions? The answer is yes. In fact, our feelings and actions are directly affected by our thoughts. That is why the Bible says in Philippians 4:8 "... whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable--if anything is excellent or praiseworthy--think about such things."

- If we were to keep a list of everything we thought of during the day would the list look like the list in Philippians 4:8?

Or would it look like this:

Whatever makes sense to me

Whatever helps me out

Whatever makes me popular

Whatever feels right

Whatever makes me happy

Whatever is good enough

Anything to make my life better or make me look good

In short ME, ME, ME, ME!

Judas and the teachers of the law made a terrible choice to get Jesus arrested. Whether they thought they were doing right or not we may never know. We do know that what they were thinking about they acted on.

## **Close**

*God, help my thoughts be about you and how to do what is right in your eyes.*

# **Day 72 To Lead Is To Serve**

## **Connect**

There once was a man who was very wealthy. He had the finest things in the land. His most prized possession was his collection of gold. He had more gold bricks than any other person in the world.

The man was getting old and knew that he was going to die soon. So he asked God if he could take one thing with him to heaven when he died.

Surprisingly God said, “Yes.” He could take one item with him when he died.

A few days later the man died and there he was up in heaven. As you might guess, in the man’s hand was one of his many gold bricks. As he was getting a tour of heaven St. Peter asked him what was in his hand.

The man replied, “A brick of gold.”

“Oh,” Peter replied. “Usually God doesn’t let anyone bring stuff with them to heaven.”

The man told him about the deal that he made with God.

Just then Peter and the man started walking on the streets of gold as Peter asked, “Of all the things you could have brought with you to heaven why did you bring a chunk of pavement?”

You see, the things that seem important to us in this world aren’t always important to God.

## **Content**

Read Luke 21: 5-38

- What seemed to be important to Jesus in this story?
- What did the disciples start to argue about?

Do you think it was disappointing to Jesus that when he was trying to give some final words of wisdom to his disciples they were fighting over who was going to be the greatest in God’s Kingdom?

- What did Jesus say about what the greatest person should be like?
- What did Jesus say leaders or rulers should do?

Jesus’ ways are so different than our ways. We think a ruler should make people serve them but Jesus says that if we are a leader we should serve.

- Why do you think leaders should serve people rather than the other way around?

## **Challenge**

Jesus the King of kings and Ruler of everything was about to serve humankind in the most selfless act ever. He was about to lay down his life and take the punishment for every sin that ever was, or would be, committed.

God wants us to take the free gift of Jesus’ forgiveness and use that to serve him by helping other people get connected with God.

Jesus has made us sons and daughters of God it doesn't make any sense to argue over who is more a son or daughter of God because that is the highest position anyone can ever get. And there isn't a single thing we can do to earn this status with God. We got this promotion because of Jesus.

- Do you worry about getting your fair share?
- How will you follow Jesus' example of service today?
- Have you asked Jesus to forgive you of your sins? (Turn to the last page The ABC's of salvation.)

## Close

*God, thank you for sending your Son on the earth to serve. Help me to serve you by \_\_\_\_\_.*

# Day 73 A Chain Of Betrayal

## Connect

Supplies needed  
A dinner candle  
Lighter

*Light the candle.*

Have you ever heard of a chain reaction? A chain reaction is a reaction that once it is started keeps going until the conditions change and causes it to stop. There are many different chain reactions in our everyday lives that we may take for granted. One of the most common chain reactions is a line of dominos. Once they are set up in a line and the first one is pushed, the chain reaction starts and they all fall down.

A candle is another example of a chain reaction. Once the candle is lit the candle will keep burning all by itself. It needs no other help. How the candle works is actually quite interesting. The wick is twine or string that is very absorbent. The wax is made from oil. When these two elements are combined a candle is made. The candle may be plain looking or ornate, but make no mistake, the candle is made for one thing...to burn.

When a match is held to a candle wick, the wick heats up the oil and turns it into gas. The wax gas or vapors start to burn and this process will continue until the candle runs out of fuel or something blows the candle out. Blowing out the candle makes it so the wick isn't hot enough to keep the chain reaction going.

Both the domino line and a candle are built to perform a function. But both need a start. In today's reading we will see a chain reaction that lead to the betrayal of Jesus.

## Content

Read Luke 22:1-6

- What were the chief priests and teachers of the law looking to do?
- Why were they trying to get rid of Jesus?

- What did Judas do in verse 4?
- What did Judas agree to do?
- How did the teachers and priests feel about Judas' plan?

Whose fault was this?

- A. The teachers and priests
- B. Judas'
- C. Satan

Many times it is easy to blame Satan for our mistakes. "The devil made me do it" makes a great excuse. When the Bible says that Satan entered him it doesn't mean that Satan took over Judas and he no longer had control. It just means that Satan set into motion what was on Judas' mind and in his heart already. Maybe he wouldn't have acted on it without Satan's twisted influence, but both Judas and the leaders were plotting against Jesus before hand.

This story is a chain reaction. The leaders wanted to get rid of Jesus. Judas went to the leaders to see if he could hand Jesus over to them. All Satan did was set the reaction in motion and the rest of the events eventually led to the arrest and execution of Jesus.

## Challenge

Satan is amazingly good at tempting people to make bad choices. At the same time people are amazingly good at having evil thoughts and desires. So in a way unless we are seeking God with all of our heart we will allow evil thoughts to creep into our minds. In turn what we think about will affect the way we act.

What are you thinking about? Is it taking you away from God? Does it give Satan an opportunity to tempt you to sin? Satan will get what is coming to him when he stands before God's throne. Let's not make his job easier by allowing ourselves to think about things that invite Satan to set a chain reaction of evil in our lives. We too are accountable to our choices no matter who gave us the nudge to do them.

## Close

Psalms 139:23-24

God, see what is in my heart. Know what is there. Put me to the test. Know what I'm thinking. See if there's anything in my life you don't like. Help me live in the way that is always right.

*God you know my heart. Help me to think your thoughts and act in a way that pleases you.*

## Day 74 Follow My Example And Serve

### Connect

- What if you knew that today would be your last time to see any of your friends?

- How would you spend your last day with your friends if you could do anything you wanted to do?

## Content

Read Luke 22:7-38

- Does Jesus' last meal with his friends look like what you described your last day with your friends would be?
- What did Jesus say the bread and wine represented?
- Does this remind you of anything we do at church?

Communion is a time to remember the sacrifice that Jesus made for us. In this case, it is the sacrifice that Jesus is about to make. We celebrate the new communion that we have with God because of Jesus' sacrifice for us.

- When Jesus tells the disciples that he is going to be killed and that one of the twelve betrayed him, what do the disciples start to argue about?

We can clearly see that the disciples didn't learn their lesson that Jesus gave in chapter 21. The disciples are still concerned about who would be the greatest among them.

- What would you be feeling if you were Jesus and you just announced that you were going to be murdered, and instead of being shocked and horrified your disciples twist the conversation into a debate on who's the best?
- Who does Jesus say the most important person will be?

## Challenge

Mark 10:45 says, "Even the Son of Man did not come to be served. Instead, he came to serve others. He came to give his life as the price for setting many people free."

The main desire for a disciple was to become just like their mentor. If Jesus came to serve, then his disciples should have been all about being a servant as well.

- Do you serve more than you are served?
- What are some areas where you can serve rather than be served?

Jesus valued serving so much that even on his last night with his friends he chose to serve them. If we are his disciples then what does that mean for us?

## Close

*Father God, help me to be a better servant by\_\_\_\_\_.*

# Day 75 Jesus Prays As Usual

## Connect

Throughout the course of time many prayers have been spoken. Some are funny like one by a three-year old who was praying the Lord's Prayer. She carefully enunciated each word, right up to the end of the prayer: "Lead us not into temptation," she prayed, "but deliver us some E-mail. Amen."

Some are poetic, and some are powerful. Today we will get the opportunity to hear a prayer that Jesus spoke. What is so unique about this prayer it is the only prayer where Jesus prays for himself.

## Content

Read Luke 27:39-46

We believe that Jesus was 100% God and 100% man. Back in the day of the Apostle Paul, some people couldn't believe that Jesus was a man. Nowadays it is hard for some people to believe that Jesus was God. This story of Jesus praying is a great demonstration of Jesus' human feelings and thoughts. Because of this we get a few insights into how we can and should pray.

- How often do you think Jesus came to this spot to pray?

Verse 39 says that Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives. Jesus prayed often. Jesus didn't need a specific spot to pray and neither do we. We can pray whenever we want to, but it seems that Jesus liked this spot to pray. Maybe it was because he was outside of the hustle and bustle of the city, maybe because it was in nature, or maybe it was because he liked to eat olives when he prayed. Nonetheless Jesus had a place where he could be alone and pray.

- Do you have a special place of prayer? If so where?
- Is your place of prayer available to you whenever you need it?

If Jesus was in the habit of going to a place of prayer and praying on a regular basis then how much more important should it be for us to set a special time and place to pray?

- What does Jesus want God the Father to do for him?

Jesus knew that it was getting close to the time that he would be crucified. Because of this, as you can imagine, he was dreading the arrival of that time. Jesus doesn't want to go to the cross. Can you blame him? Who would want to be nailed to a cross? Jesus speaks his mind to God. He's completely honest.

- Are you completely honest with God when you pray? Do you tell him what you really think?

God allows us to be angry, happy, sad and confused but he doesn't allow us to be dishonest. Oh you can try to be dishonest with God but your relationship will be stuck until you come to grips with what is true.

Jesus' prayer doesn't stop there. He doesn't say, "God please don't make me go through with this. Amen." If he did, the next thing he probably would have done was run away. But his prayer doesn't stop there.

- How does Jesus finish his prayer?

Jesus finishes His prayer time by saying "Do what you want God, not what I want."

- How would our lives would different if we prayed that prayer?
- How is Jesus prayer answered?
- What did the angel do for Jesus?

When we pray, "God do what you want, not what I want" God will always provide strength to do what he wants us to do. More often than not it won't be from an angel appearing, but God always delivers!

## Challenge

- ⊗ What did Jesus ask the disciples to do while he was praying?
- ⊗ What did they do instead?
- ⊗ Whose example best describes your prayer life? The disciples or Jesus?
- ⊗ Which of these areas are you willing to change to make your prayer life more like Jesus?
  - A. Make a specific time everyday where you meet with God to pray.
  - B. Be completely honest with God with your feelings and thoughts. This will include all areas of your life: school, home, friends, ect.
  - C. Finish your prayer times with a commitment to God that you want what he wants rather than what you want.

Maybe you are already doing this. If you are then great! If you aren't committing to do one of these action steps, it will change your life.

## Close

*God, help me to \_\_\_\_\_*

## Day 76 When I Said I Would I Didn't Mean This

### Connect

It was October 1, 1932. The New York Yankees were in game 3 of the World Series with the Chicago Cubs. The Cubs were down 2-0 in the series. But the cubs were at home to a record setting crowd of 50,000 fan due to some temporary bleachers that were set up on Waveland and Sheffield Avenues. Chicago's all time winningest pitcher Charlie Root was on the mound for the Cubs. Root, however was off to a rough start. He allowed the first two Yankees to get on base. Then the legendary Babe Ruth stepped up to the plate, looked around and pointed to the center field bleachers. Babe Ruth called his shot. It was like he was saying to God, country and the 50,000 people in the stands (not to mention Charlie Root

and the entire Cubs organization) that he would first show you were he was going to hit the ball. Then he would hit it there and there wasn't anything anyone could do about it. This was a bold move, but this would be just a funny thing that Babe Ruth did if he didn't deliver on his called shot.

With 2 runners on base Charlie looked to his catcher to get the sign. He looked back the runners to prevent them from stealing a base. Then he wound up and delivered a pitch to Babe Ruth. Sure enough, on the very first pitch, there was the crack of the bat and the roar of the crowd as the ball sailed over the center field wall into the bleachers for a 3 run homerun. Babe Ruth delivered! He called his shot and made it.

Now anyone can point to the center field wall whenever they get up to bat. Anyone can say, "I'm going to hit a homer." But saying something and doing something are often very different. When you do what you said you would do, that is called follow-through. Or maybe it's just called lucky.

Jesus' disciples said that they would follow him no matter what. Today we will see they followed through.

## Content

As I read today's passage I want you to show me where the disciple's commitment level is by using your thumb as an indicator. Thumbs up means they are fully committed to Jesus. Thumbs down means they aren't committed at all. Keep in mind that things get really extreme so leave room for things to get pretty bad, because they do.

Read Luke 22:47-65

- How would you describe Judas' follow through on his commitment to Jesus?
- What do you think it felt like for Jesus when Judas kissed him as a sign to the guards that this was the man that they were looking to arrest?

Remember in the story of the last supper when Peter said that he would die for Jesus? Jesus told him that he would deny Jesus three times before the end of the night.

- How would you describe Peter's follow through on his commitment to Jesus?
- How does Peter respond to his lack of commitment to Jesus?

Luke doesn't record how Judas responded after he betrayed Jesus but the book of Matthew does in Matthew 27:3-6.

Judas, who had handed him over, saw that Jesus had been sentenced to die. He felt deep shame and sadness for what he had done. So he returned the 30 silver coins to the chief priests and the elders. "I have sinned," he said. "I handed over a man who is not guilty." "What do we care?" they replied. "That's your problem." So Judas threw the money into the temple and left. Then he went away and hanged himself.

## Challenge

- How strong is your commitment to Jesus?

- Is it possible that your commitment may not be so good one day?

We all deny Jesus with our words or with our actions at some point. This is called sin. Unfortunately we are all sinners. The question is;

- What do you do when you sin? Do you feel bad, do you run away or do you stay committed?

Judas felt bad but he never went back to Jesus. He never asked for God's forgiveness. Peter felt bad too but he stayed committed to the other disciples and asked for God's forgiveness, as we will see later.

We all sin, but our follow through is shown when we stay at it even after we have messed up.

## Close

*Father, I love you and I am committed to you.  
Help me to have the courage to stick with you even after I have sinned.*

## Day 77 listen!

### Connect

Many teachers will tell you that the only dumb question is a question that isn't asked. This is true. But sometimes there are questions that people ask that show you that they really don't get it. Like this:

A husband and wife were watching the TV. After a few commercials the newscaster came on the air with a headline for the 6:00 news. The newscaster said, "Two Brazilian men die in parachuting accident." The wife gasped and began to cry. The husband, both impressed and shocked by how touched his wife was, attempted to console her saying, "Honey, sky diving is a dangerous sport. They are bound to have a few deaths once in a while." "Yes I know that," the wife replied, "but all that loss, think of all those men's families, how terrible it will be for all of them." Then she asked, "How many people are a Brazillion?"

When it comes to questions there are factual ones, complex ones, philosophical ones, rhetorical ones and personal ones just to name a few. One of the most frustrating questions is when the asker is unwilling to listen to the answer. They think they know everything already. This is what Jesus faced when he was arrested.

Listen for the questions that are asked and the answers that aren't listened to.

### Content

Read Luke 22:66 -23:25

- What question did Jewish leaders ask Jesus?
- What was Jesus' response to their question?
- What did the leaders want Pilate and Herod to do?

- What did Pilate and Herod find Jesus guilty of?
- What did Pilate and Herod want to do to Jesus?
- What did the Jewish leaders want Pilate and Herod to do to Jesus?

Isn't it sad that the people known as God's people were the very ones that shouted over and over, "CRUCIFY HIM!" Where did they go wrong? When did they stop listening to God? Think about it. God sent His Son Jesus to the world, to His people. Not only did they not listen to Him, they chanted "CRUCIFY HIM!" until Pilate gave in to them just to get them to stop.

The people of God didn't wake up one day and say, "You know we've been following God for a while now. What do you say we stop listening to God from now on and start doing things our own way?" Somehow after watching and listening to Jesus they decided, "Nope this guy isn't God's Son; he doesn't deserve to be worshiped. He deserves to die."

How painful that must have been for God to hear his people reject His Son and His plan for salvation.

## **Challenge**

Before we judge them too severely we may want to look at ourselves. Do we seek God with all our might? Or do we think we know everything that there is to know about God?

Maybe we think that we've got God all figured out. When we start to think like this we may start thinking that devotionals and church and youth group and Sunday school are boring. We've heard it all before. When we think like this we are in danger of being like what Isaiah described the people of God to be like in Isaiah chapter 6 verse 9. "You will hear but never understand. You will see but never know what you are seeing."

God is speaking to us everyday. The question is: are we listening to him? The great thing about God is that anyone can know him but no one will know him completely this side of heaven. There is always more to learn about God. Every word of God is worth listening to.

## **Close**

*God, help us to listen to you today.*

## **Day 78 Don't Miss It**

### **Connect**

Back in the day there was a TV show called Get Smart. The show was about a top secret organization that worked for the United States Government fighting the evil forces of the terrorist organization called Chaos. The show's main character was the bumbling but ever so lucky Maxwell Smart. In virtually every show Max would attempt to do a heroic act that would inevitably fail. When it did he would say his classic line, "Missed it by that much."

Have you ever missed something by just a little bit? Have you ever felt like Milo Cavic the Serbian Olympic swimmer who missed the gold medal in the 100 meter butterfly by only one-hundredth of a second? That's really close. If you divide 1 second into 100 pieces of time that would be one-hundredth of a second. In the end, "He missed it by that much!"

## Content

Read Luke 23:26-43

- Where was Jesus taken to be crucified?
- What did the soldiers say to Jesus when he was on the cross?
- What was Jesus' response to the people doing this to him?

WOW! His entire body weight is hanging on three nails on a cross in front of the whole city, after being beaten and verbally mocked. Not to mention that all of this is entirely unfair and unjust. Jesus' only reply to these people is, "Forgive them." You would think that would be an eye opener to those people standing around there. Who but God would be able to have that much grace to say "Forgive them" in that situation?

- Who was being punished with him?
- What does the first criminal say to Jesus?
- How does the first criminal's mock the second criminal?
- What does the second criminal ask Jesus?
- What was Jesus' response to his question?

## Challenge

Jesus' response means that that criminal is in heaven. Talk about a close finish! This guy was nailed on a cross and left to die. Minutes before he dies he puts his faith in Jesus. A few moments later and it would have been all over for him... forever.

For whatever reason some people put off Jesus. They refuse to, or just delay, putting their trust in Jesus. Most people think that they can trust Jesus later, but no one is ever promised that they will have a chance later. When it comes to trusting Jesus we need to do it now and not later.

It is not wise to glide to the finish like Milo Cavic, because there is no silver medal for second place when it comes to salvation. You must trust in Jesus now and not delay.

- Have you put your trust in Jesus?

(If you need to, refer to last page The ABC of salvation)

## Close

Father, thank you for sending Jesus to die for us. We love you and trust you.

# Day 79 It Is Finished!

## Connect

Have you ever seen the president on TV? No matter where the president goes he (or maybe someday she) always has body guards. These guards are members of the Secret Service. Their job is to keep the president safe at all times even if it means to jump in front of an assassin's bullet.

- Do you think you could step in front of a bullet to save the president's life?
- Who would you be willing to die for?

Tommy was a boy who was very sick with cancer. The only way Tommy would live is if he were to have a bone marrow transplant. Without a transplant Tommy would die. Luckily Tommy had a younger brother whose bone marrow was a match for his brother.

The day came when the little brother was to give his bone marrow. The procedure for collecting bone marrow looks a lot like giving blood. The little brother, who was only 5 years old at the time, walked into the hospital room very bravely. He didn't even cry when they poked him with the needle. As the blood was flowing into the tube and into the bag, the boy asked his mom, "Mommy, how long until all my blood runs out and I die so Tommy can live?" Tommy's brother thought that he was going to die in order to help his brother live.

## Content

Read Luke 23:44-49

On the day that Jesus died, a lot of strange things took place. Some of these seem insignificant and you may wonder why the author decided to put them in the book when other events seem to be more important.

We need to remember that the Bible is the Word Of God so we can be sure that if it is in the Bible, God wants us to know it.

- What did Jesus say before he died?

This shows that Jesus even at his death trusted God. When he prayed, "not my will God but your will," Jesus meant it. Even to the point of death!

- What did the Roman commander say about Jesus?
- How did the people feel about what happened to Jesus?

The commanders and the people's response to Jesus' death shows that they realized that this was an unjust act. Jesus wasn't a criminal and he did not deserve to die. In fact, the Roman commander praised God. This means that he believed Jesus was who he said he was.

- What was the weather like that day?

- What happened to the curtain in the temple?

Now in order to understand the significance of this we have to remember a few things from the Old Testament. The temple was built as a special place for God's presence to live. It was a place for the people to go and worship God. When God came to the temple the whole area was covered in a cloud, just like it was on the day that Jesus died.

When Solomon built the temple he built a special room in the middle of the temple called the Holy of Holies. This room was where God's presence was. No one was to go into this room except the high priest once a year. Zechariah, John the Baptist's dad, was in this room when the angel Gabriel told him that his wife would give birth to a son. If anyone were to enter this room without being the chosen priest they would die. There were a few times when the priest's themselves were not right with God and they died too. This event caused people to tie a rope around the ankle of the priest so if he would die they could haul him out without having to go in and collect the body.

To keep people from wondering into the Holy of Holies, God had them place a curtain in the doorway. This curtain separated God's presence from everyone because unholy people in the presence of a Holy God die. When Jesus died God ripped this curtain in two. This means for us that because of Jesus' sacrifice the separation between God and His people would no longer be an issue.

## **Challenge**

Because Jesus was holy, righteous, and sinless when he died, he broke the curse that all mankind lived with since Adam and Eve first sinned in the Garden of Eden way back in Genesis.

Believers in Christ could now have access to God because Jesus paid the penalty for their sin. This means when God looks at us he doesn't see us as unholy, unrighteous and sinful. He sees us as clean and pure as Jesus.

- How do we use this privilege of being able to go into God's presence?

You would think that after Jesus bought this privilege with his very life that we would choose to be in God's presence all the time. When the curtain in the temple tore it was like God was saying, "Come on in!" to everyone who believed in Jesus.

- How can you be in God's presence more today?

## **Close**

*God, help me walk in your presence today.*

# Day 80 It's Over

## Connect

- How many different ways can you come up with to say goodbye?

Here are few examples

Adieu	Don't let the door hit you	See u on the flip side
Adios	on the way out	See ya!
Aloha	Farewell	See you again
Auf wieder sehn	Get off my lawn!	See you later, alligator
Be cool	Go Home	See you soon
Be good	Goodbye	So long
Be safe	Goodspeed	So there
Be well	Have a good one.	Stay well
Bye	Here's your coat; what's	Take care
Byebye	your hurry?	Talk to you later
C ya	I'm outy	Time to bounce
Catch you later	Later	Toodle loo
Catch you on the rebound	Later, gator	Toodles
Chow	Let's go to bed so these	TTFN Ta Ta For Now
Don't let the door hit ya	people can go home.	
where the good lord split	Peace	
ya	Roger that	

## Content

Read Luke 23:50-56

What do you think these people were feeling or thinking after Jesus died?

The Disciples  
Mary, Jesus' mom  
The jewish leaders  
The Roman solders  
Pilate  
Joseph of Arimathea  
God

- How would you have felt if you were alive then?
- What is your favorite memory of Jesus' life?

## Challenge

Explain why that memory is so special to you.

## Close

*God, thank you for sending Jesus to die for us.*



# The ABC's of Salvation

**A.** Admit that you sin. Ask God to forgive you

1 John 1:9 God is faithful and fair. If we admit that we have sinned, he will forgive us our sins. He will forgive every wrong thing we have done. He will make us pure.

**B.** Believe that Jesus took the punishment for your sins by dying on the cross and that he came back to life so that we can be with God forever.

Romans 10:9 Say with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord." Believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead. Then you will be saved.

**C.** Commit to follow Jesus.

Mark 8:34 Jesus called the crowd to him along with his disciples. He said, "If anyone wants to come after me, he must say no to himself. He must pick up his cross and follow me

Asking Jesus to forgive you isn't the end; it's the beginning of an eternal relationship with the one and only God of the universe. It is the beginning of you knowing Jesus as your Saviour, King and Friend!