

Meeting The Master

GOSPEL ENCOUNTERS
WITH JESUS CHRIST

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*Personal Devotional & Study
Growth Group Study Guide*

**Meeting the Master: Gospel Encounters with Jesus Christ
Personal Reading and Growth Group Study Guide**

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*"What is impossible with man
is possible with God."*

Luke 18:27

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Foreword

I was generally raised as a good kid. Born and raised in Fernando Air Base, Lipa City, the youngest of eight children whose teenage life was relatively simple. During school days, my daily routine was home-school-home with no “extra-curricular” activities except for a few afternoon hours of playtime. Trained in household chores during weekends, summers were spent mostly inside the base except for occasional trips to Manila. Religious celebrations were strictly observed as part of the family tradition.

College life revolved around the University of Santo Tomas. Close friends were limited to a handful. I was focused on finishing B.S. Commerce Major in Accounting. I applied in Jollibee and SM (as supermarket bagger) to earn extra money but I was denied employment. *Can you imagine how low my self-esteem was after being denied employment as a bagger?* My accounting professor who happened to be the University Cashier showed compassion and helped me get part-time work as a cashier during enrolment periods.

In 1988, I took the CPA Board Exams immediately after graduation and board review. Two weeks after the board exams, I was hired to work at Pilipinas Shell Petroleum Corporation. Six months later—*yes, that’s how long it took then — the exams results came out and I passed!* However, I did not practice my accounting profession as I chose to stick it out with Shell for five years until the Lord led me to the aviation business.

In spite of being denied work as a bagger, I felt God had been so good to me all those years. But there was still something missing in my life.

Seats in UST were arranged alphabetically. My classmate, Jenny Yturzaeta, constantly gave me bookmarks and cards with Bible verses. But every time she handed them to me, I received them

with uneasiness. I was uncomfortable since my orientation was that the Bible is only for religious leaders. One of my college friends, Jeannette So-Cham also tried to invite me to their “fellowship” at Delta Theater. But again, it brought shivers down my spine just having the thought of attending their fellowship.

Looking back, I realized that God used all those encounters to prepare me for the greatest encounter that would define my life.

On March 11, 1990, I was invited by Linda (*who eventually became my beloved wife and greatest ministry supporter*) to their “church” at Greenhills Christian Fellowship (GCF) in Greenhills, San Juan. During that time, I already knew Linda for two years but only over the phone and only for official business relative to my work in Shell. To be honest, the desire to meet her personally overcame my fear to attend the fellowship!

I went to Greenhills looking for a traditional church building. It took me more than two hours to realize that GCF was occupying a couple of floors at Medecor Building along Ortigas Avenue. I caught the tail-end of the 4:30PM worship service. After the service, I was ushered to the Visitor’s Center where I was welcomed by a missionary from Navigators named Jun Espiritu (*presently one of our church elders*).

As Kuya Jun shared the gospel of Jesus Christ with me, it was as if God was speaking to me in a very personal way. I recognized I was a sinner in need of a Savior in Jesus Christ. I realized the magnitude of God’s great love for me by sending His One and Only Son to die on the cross to pay the penalty of my sins. I then repented of my sins.

My personal encounter with Jesus Christ was the defining moment in my life. I learned that it does not matter how good you think you are. Your goodness will never satisfy the emptiness in your life. The void in your heart can only be filled by the presence of our Master. Being good or doing good

works will never earn you salvation. It is only by grace through faith in the finished work of Christ on the cross.

From that day forward, God brought me to numerous situations meant to transform me into the likeness of His Son Jesus Christ. Transformation only happens though when I choose to follow God's way rather than my way, when I decide to do what God wants done rather than what I want.

Jesus said "*I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.*" - John 15:5"

Today we start our new sermon series **Meeting the Master: Gospel Encounters with Jesus Christ**. This will be a 15-part sermon series on gospel characters who encountered Jesus Christ our Master. These people came from all walks of life with different profiles, personalities and professions. Some believed while others did not. Others turned to Christ while others turned away.

Our sermon series will be accompanied by a personal devotional and a Growth Group study guide. This material includes personal devotions written by various individuals who have experienced the transforming power of Jesus Christ themselves. The devotional will be followed by study guide questions for individual reflection or Growth Group discussion. There will also be a Gospel reading plan spread for a period of seventeen (17) weeks (including series breaks.)

As we go through the sermon series on Sundays and/or as you go through this accompanying personal devotional and study guide individually or as a Growth Group, it is my prayer that your love for Christ will grow deeper as you abide in Him!

Rev. Lito Villoria

Senior Pastor, GCF South Metro

Introduction to the Gospels

The Gospels¹

The four Gospels comprise about 46 percent of the New Testament, and when the Book of Acts is added, the figure goes up to 60 percent. The early church placed the Gospels at the beginning of the new Testament canon, not because they were the first books to be written, but because they are the foundation upon which Acts and the Epistles are built.

The Greek word *euaggelion* refers to the “glad tidings” or “good news” about Jesus Christ that was orally proclaimed. It later came to be applied to the written accounts as well. The English word “gospel” is a derivative of the Anglo-Saxon *godspell* which can mean “God story” or “good story.” Although later gospels were written, the early church regarded only the four Gospels as we know them to be authoritative and divinely inspired. They were distinguished from one another by the Greek preposition *kata* (“according to”) followed by the name of the writer. The present order of the four Gospels goes back at least to the late second century, and it was thought to be the order in which they were written. Although there are some who have theorized that the Gospels were originally written in Aramaic, there is no real evidence for this position. The inhabitants of Palestine were primarily bilingual (Aramaic and Greek), and many were trilingual (Hebrew or Latin). But Greek was the common language of the whole empire, and thus the most suitable vehicle for the gospel accounts.

The literary form of the Gospels had no counterpart in Hellenistic literature. Although they are full of biographical material, they are really thematic portraits that almost entirely overlook the thirty plus years of preparation for Christ’s relatively brief public ministry. Even this portion of His life is presented in a highly skewed fashion with the emphasis on

¹Wilkinson, B., & Boa, K. (1983). *Talk thru the Bible* (303–306). Nashville: T. Nelson.

His last week. In all, only about fifty days of Jesus' ministry are touched upon in the combined Gospels.

The four complementary accounts provide a composite picture of the person and work of the Savior, working together to give depth and clarity to our understanding of the most unique figure in human history. In them He is seen as divine and human, the sovereign Servant, the God-man. Each gospel has a distinctive dimension to add, so that the total is greater than the sum of the parts.

Topics	Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Probable Date	A.D. 58–58	A.D. 55–65	A.D. 60–68	A.D. 80–90
Place of Writing	Syrian Antioch or Palestine	Rome	Rome or Greece	Ephesus
Original Audience	Jewish Mind (Religious)	Roman Mind (Pragmatic)	Greek Mind (Idealistic)	Universal
Theme	Messiah-King	Servant-Redeemer	Perfect Man	Son of God

The Gospels were written to awaken and strengthen faith in Christ and to answer objections and misconceptions about Him. They were also designed to guide believers into a fuller understanding of His person and power. As Christianity spread beyond Palestine, the oral testimony of the apostles was no longer adequate. Their message was multiplied and preserved through the medium of the written word.

Matthew, Mark, and Luke are known as the synoptic Gospels. The Greek word *synoptikos* means “seeing together,” and it is an appropriate description of these gospels because of their common viewpoint and similar characteristics, especially in contrast to John, the supplemental gospel.

Topics	Synoptics (Matthew, Mark Luke)	John
Portrait of Christ	God-man	God-man
Perspective	Historical	Theological
Unique Material	Less unique (Matthew, 42%; Mark, 7%; Luke 59%)	More unique (92%)
Chronology	Only on Passover mentioned	Three or four Passovers mentioned
Geography	Concentrate on Galilean ministry	Concentrates on Judean ministry
Discourse Material	More Public	More Private
Teaching Method	Parables	Allegories
Teaching Emphasis	More on ethical, practical teachings	More on the person of Christ
Relationship to other Gospel	Complementary	Supplementary

The agreements and differences among the synoptics have led to the “synoptic problem” of determining their literary relationship. The agreements include selection of materials, broad chronological outline, and literary structure. The differences include unique material, differences in some parallel accounts, and different historical contexts for some episodes. There are many proposed solutions to this problem, but most are variations on three basic suggestions: (1) oral tradition, (2) interdependence, and (3) documentary sources. The two-document theory proposes that Mark and an unknown source document named Q were the basis for Matthew and Luke. Multiple-documents theories propose additional hypothetical source documents.

The most satisfactory approach involves four elements: (1) direct knowledge, (2) oral tradition, (3) use of documents, and (4) the superintending ministry of the Holy Spirit (cf. John 14:26).

Christ indeed came in “the fullness of the time” (Gal. 4:4). Politically, the Roman Empire provided universal peace, improved travel (Roman roads), and a common language (Greek) that would facilitate the spread of the gospel. Economically, conditions of high taxation, poverty, and unrest put most people in a state of need. Spiritually, Judaism had lost its vitality and the Roman gods were dead or dying. It was in this context that Christianity flourished in its crucial beginning years.

Matthew

The first Gospel presents Jesus as the Christ, Israel’s messianic King. Jesus’ genealogy, fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy, authority, and power are emphasized as His messianic credentials. In spite of His unique words and works, gradually mounting opposition culminates in His crucifixion. But the King left an empty tomb and will come again.

Mark

The second Gospel presents Jesus as the Servant who came to “give His life a ransom for many.” In the beginning of His ministry He was a servant to the multitudes, but as His departure grew near, Jesus concentrated on teaching and ministering to His disciples. A full 37 percent of this gospel is devoted to the events of His last and most important week.

Luke

The third Gospel presents Jesus as the perfect Son of Man whose mission was “to seek and to save that which was lost.” This lucid historical portrait of Christ traces His advent, activities, admonitions, affliction, and authentication to demonstrate His perfect character and redemptive work.

John

The fourth Gospel presents Jesus as the eternal Son of God who offered eternal life to all who would believe in Him. John uses a carefully chosen series of seven signs to demonstrate that Jesus is the Christ. Five chapters of this gospel record Jesus’ parting discourse to His disciples only a few hours before His death. After His victorious resurrection, Christ further instructed His men in a number of appearances. ¹

Sects in Judaism²

Palestinian Judaism reflected the normal trend toward sectarianism, but it had a greater unity than other religions of the Graeco-Roman world. All Jewish sects professed devotion to the law, but their practice of obedience to the law varied from mere opportunism to punctilious performance. Even the groups mentioned below had various subdivisions that emphasized particular aspects of the law.

Pharisees

The Pharisees (Matt. 5:20) were religious leaders, and both scribes and priests could be found among them. As might be

² Packer, J., Tenney, M. C., & White, W. (1997). *Nelson's Illustrated Manners and Customs of the Bible* (512–513). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

expected, there was some latitude among the Pharisees with regard to how strictly the Law of Moses should be applied. Jesus had dedicated enemies among the Pharisees, who were not only able to appreciate his claims, but also to recognize the threat his claims represented to the status quo. Paul was a Pharisee who violently persecuted Christians, but who later became one of most effective defenders of the Christian faith.

The traditions of the Pharisees survived the destruction of the temple and the crushing defeat of the Bar Kochba rebellion. Pharisaic traditions are the source of what is known as rabbinic Judaism. As far as it can be discerned from the Mishnah (a collection of Pharisaic traditions), the teachings of the Pharisees were not fully opposed to Jesus' teachings. That is not surprising, since the basic mission of the Pharisees was to apply the Hebrew Scriptures, especially the five books of Moses, to the living of daily life.

The staunch enemies of Jesus depicted in the Gospel as Pharisees do not necessarily represent all Pharisees. Their interest in particular points of religion, such as fasting and ritual purity, is consistent with their interest in piety. The New Testament is also concerned with those very questions.

Sadducees

The Sadducees were aristocratic Jews not sympathetic to the teachings of the Pharisees. The Sadducees maintained that only the five books of Moses had authority and that subsequent traditions handed on by the rabbis did not. According to Mark 12:18, the Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection of the dead. The Sadducees as a group within Judaism did not flourish after the destruction of the temple, which was the locus of their power.

Essenes

Another movement within Judaism, one which included the community of Qumran, is known as the Essenes. Josephus described the Essenes as strict observers of the Sabbath. They believed in the immortality of the soul. Essenes would not blaspheme God or eat unlawful food, even when threatened with torture. Some Essenes, like those at Qumran, renounced marriage. The New Testament does not explicitly mention the Essenes, but it is clear that many of their ideas could be found in other circles.

Zealots

The Zealots. (see Luke 6:15; Acts 1:13) were armed resisters who fought against foreign rule and taxation. They were not a single organization; rather, the name could refer to any group or band that resisted foreign domination. Theirs was the program celebrated in the books of the Maccabees, theirs the struggle that came to an end with the Bar Kochba revolt. Opponents of the Zealots simply called them “bandits.” According to Josephus, the Zealots were the leaders in the defense of the temple in Jerusalem who met with defeat in A.D. 70.

² Packer, J., Tenney, M. C., & White, W. (1997). *Nelson's Illustrated Manners and Customs of the Bible* (512–513). Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Personal Devotional & Study

How to Use this Manual

This *Personal Devotional & Study* is a handy companion tool to accompany the fifteen-week series, “Meeting the Master: Gospel Encounter with Jesus Christ”.

The Devotional section contains precious and powerful nuggets for you to meditate on and to live by. Make time to answer the ponder questions every week. We also encourage you to read intently the selected narrative for the week many times over during the week and listen to what God is teaching you in the course of your personal time with Him.

The *Reading Through the Gospels* section is a pre-planned reading guide to lead you to read through the four Gospels by the end of the sermon series.

It is our great joy to aid you in your personal reading and Bible study. It is our hope that at the end of this sermon series, you will not only know God a little more but you will be more like Him in character.

God bless your reading and study of the Word!

Reading Through the Gospels

Week 01

Day 01
Matthew 1–2

Day 02
Matthew 3–4

Day 03
Matthew 5

Day 04
Matthew 6

Day 05
Matthew 7–8

Week 02

Day 01
Matthew 9

Day 02
Matthew 10

Day 03
Matthew 11

Day 04
Matthew 12

Day 05
Matthew 13

Week 03

Day 01
Matthew 14

Day 02
Matthew 15

Day 03
Matthew 16–17

Day 04
Matthew 18

Day 05
Matthew 19–20

Week 04

Day 01
Matthew 21

Day 02
Matthew 22

Day 03
Matthew 23

Day 04
Matthew 24

Day 05
Matthew 25

Week 05

Day 01
Matthew 26:1–25

Day 02
Matthew 26:26–75

Day 03
Matthew 27:1–44

Day 04
**Matthew 27:45–
28:20**

Day 05
Mark 1

Week 06

Day 01
Mark 2

Day 02
Mark 3–4

Day 03
Mark 5

Day 04
Mark 6:1–29

Day 05
Mark 6:30–56

Week 07

Day 01
Mark 7

Day 02
Mark 8–9

Day 03
Mark 10:1–16

Day 04
Mark 10:17–52

Day 05
Mark 11–12

Week 08

Day 01
Mark 13

Day 02
Mark 14:1–31

Day 03
Mark 14:32–72

Day 04
Mark 15–16

Day 05
Luke 1:1–25

Week 09

Day 01
Luke 1:26–80

Day 02
Luke 2

Day 03
Luke 3

Day 04
Luke 4

Day 05
Luke 5

Week 10

Day 01
Luke 6

Day 02
Luke 7

Day 03
Luke 8:1–39

Day 04
Luke 8:40–56

Day 05
Luke 9

Week 11

Day 01
Luke 10

Day 02
Luke 11

Day 03
Luke 12

Day 04
Luke 13

Day 05
Luke 14

Week 12

Day 01
Luke 15

Day 02
Luke 16–17

Day 03
Luke 18

Day 04
Luke 19

Day 05
Luke 20

Week 13

Day 01
Luke 21

Day 02
Luke 22:1–34

Day 03
Luke 22:35–71

Day 04
Luke 23

Day 05
Luke 24

Week 14

Day 01
John 1

Day 02
John 2

Day 03
John 3

Day 04
John 4

Day 05
John 5

Week 15

Day 01
John 6:1–59

Day 02
John 6:60–71

Day 03
John 7:1–8:11

Day 04
John 8:12–59

Day 05
John 9

Week 16

Day 01
John 10

Day 02
John 11

Day 03
John 12

Day 04
John 13

Day 05
John 14

Week 17

Day 01
John 15–16

Day 02
John 17

Day 03
John 18

Day 04
John 19

Day 05
John 20–21

01 | Rich Young Ruler

MATTHEW 19:16-22; MARK 10:17-22; LUKE 18:18-23

In today's society, many have been deceived by the popular belief that good works are a requisite for a person to be assured of eternal life when one dies. Jesus addresses the issue of salvation by good works in the story of "The Rich Young Man".

The young man comes to Jesus seemingly proud of his stature, attainment and apparently good behavior and conduct, which he believes may be his tickets to eternal life. Jesus, in His usual demeanor, rebuts the young man's belief by emphasizing that "good" was not good enough as a standard to carry one from this life to the next. Jesus uses the commandments as an example that no matter how "good" one is, he is unable to obey the commandments, which is the very reason why God sent His Son Jesus to die on the cross. It is for Him to be the ultimate sacrifice for us to have the gift of salvation through God's graciousness and love. No quantity or quality of being "good" will be able to secure us a pass to heaven for salvation is only by grace, "it is a gift of God so no one may boast".

The young proud man in the story who first "ran" to Jesus was deceived to believe that by being "good" he will be saved. God gave the commandments to show the people that no matter how "good" we are, we could never measure up to God's perfect holiness. The commandment was given to show people the need for a Savior. Since Jesus loved the young man, he pursued the conversation by bringing in the element of sacrifice. Jesus was asking the young man to "deny himself and take up His cross daily to follow Jesus". For this, the young man's true intentions surfaced for he left the scene

“sad for he had great wealth”. Clearly, when the time came to make a choice, his priority was not Jesus but the enjoyment of life and wealth.

Isn't this so true? Just like children, we seemingly want to follow authority, but on our own terms. If it inconveniences us, we drop the ball. We only want to believe in what we want to believe in; to hear what we want to hear. On our own, it is “impossible” but it is reassuring to know that it is God who seeks and empowers us to know Him for “with God all things are possible”. Because God loves us and He pursued us first, He continues to pursue us to this very day and gives us the ability and strength to know and follow Him fully. Like in Peter's words, may we have the grace to say “we have left everything to follow You!” Yes we can through Jesus. Philippians 1:6 says, “And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ”.

Ponder

1. *Why are many people in stuck with the belief that good works are means to receiving eternal life? Why is it difficult for people to understand that salvation is simple for it is a gift of God?*

Notes

02 | Zacchaeus

LUKE 19:1-10

In one of my special quiet times with the Lord, the Lord asked me a question, “Carolyn, why do you obey me?” I was dumbfounded. The Lord asked me a question so plain, yet so profound. My heart could not lie for there were times in my life that I obeyed only because I had to. However, what the Lord was teaching me that special day was that my obedience is only an outflow of my love for Him.

Zacchaeus was a man who could have everything. He had wealth, much wealth at his disposal. He may also have connections to retain the position he holds. Although, with everything he had, his heart was still empty. The emptiness of his heart was seen when Jesus came and what Zacchaeus did was what a plebe would do—climb the sycamore tree. He did it with the hope of getting a glimpse and maybe the attention of the Rabbi. The emptiness of his heart was seen when he was confronted by Jesus. Zacchaeus was willing to give not only a portion of his wealth, but all he had amassed. From a heart and life that was empty, Zacchaeus’ heart was filled with love—that allowed Him to joyfully respond in total obedience to the Master.

When love becomes the reason for our obedience, the Lord adds joy to our lives as we obey. This is one big lesson that I pray to live everyday as I live for Jesus – to joyfully obey Him. This was what Zacchaeus experienced in his encounter with Jesus. He was able to part with his riches not because he wanted to show off, but because the love of Christ towards him, a sinner was unexplainable. When the love of God grips

our heart, it overflows as joy and when the joy of the Lord is lavished upon us, we lavishly dispense of it as well.

My prayer is that as we obey Jesus, His love will continue to overflow in our lives, that we will learn to joyfully obey Him everyday!

Ponder

- 1. As an onlooker in the narrative, why do you think the crowd reacted that way to Jesus' request (v.5,7)? Knowing the consequences of such an action, would you respond the same way they did? Why or why not?*

- 2. What does this lesson show us about God's mercy and grace? Why is mercy and grace necessary for daily living?*

3. *How is the state of your heart allowing you in joyful obedience? Is there a place in your heart that does not allow you to gladly obey the Lord and His commands?*

Notes

03 | Nicodemus

JOHN 3:1-21

Being a separatist usually carries a negative connotation for many. However Nicodemus, who was a Pharisee, was not like other members of the ruling party—the Sanhedrin. They futilely awaited the coming of the Messiah, but Nicodemus recognized who Jesus was and showed Him favor in the three occasions that he is mentioned in the Gospel of John.

As Christians, we are called to be salt and light in this dark and dreary world. We are set apart by God through the magnanimous act of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. As such, we are separate from the world, much like Nicodemus and the Pharisees were in relation to Jesus, the promised Messiah.

However Nicodemus, from his three appearances in the gospel, seems to be a man transformed from being a doubter to a believer of Jesus. He hid under the cover of darkness, in addressing Jesus in his first appearance in the gospel, perhaps of fear of being ridiculed by members of his own party. He boldly exercised his faith by approaching Jesus in order to know what he needed to do to enter the kingdom of God. Like Nicodemus, there may be times when we need to be bold in our declaration of our faith in the living God, who alone can save people from their sins. Just as Nicodemus was bold, he was also cautious as he spoke to Jesus at night rather than in broad daylight when his fellow Pharisees would have certainly seen him. Like him, we must exercise some degree of caution so as not to repel others instead of leading them to Jesus. Let us pray for wisdom and discernment so that

God would reveal to us the situations which require boldness from us and situations where we need to exercise caution not only for our self preservation but more importantly for the preservation of the Gospel that we desire to preach.

Nicodemus also showed his favor upon Jesus when he defended Him from the temple guards who came to arrest Him as the people were divided on who Jesus was. Nicodemus was indeed transformed by his earlier encounter with Jesus when He declared that one must be born again in order to enter the kingdom of God. Why else would he have defended Jesus from the arresting officers, when he could have just joined the mob in sending Jesus to certain punishment as the crowd had clamored?

Finally, his last appearance showed a man who had compassion on Jesus as he helped bring Jesus' dead body down from the cross that brought pain, agony and death. This excruciating death is the same death that has given everyone the opportunity to be set free from their sins.

Ponder

1. *How did Jesus explain what it means to be born of water and born of the Spirit (vv.5-8)? How are you living in the power of the Spirit?*

2. *Amidst the false teachings that abound in the world, can we be like Nicodemus and show favor to Jesus, not just by merely professing faith in Him but by going further in leading others to faith in Him?*

3. *List down at least five friends / family members whom you would like to lead to Christ. Pray for them everyday.*

Notes

04 | Samaritan Woman

JOHN 4:1-42

Have you ever made bad choices in life? Have you ever felt that you were never truly loved for who you are? Have you ever felt lonely and filled with emptiness and all sorts of temporary happiness?

The Samaritan woman at the well of Jacob had been living this life when she met Jesus face to face. She never reflected on the lifestyle she chose and instead believed that she will find happiness in the arms of men. She never realized her true worth until she met Jesus that day.

Jesus chose to speak to the woman even if society dictated that He shouldn't. Jesus knew that she was longing for a love that lasts, so Jesus introduced Himself to her. He explained, "Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life. When she finally realized her need for this living water, He confronted her about the way she had been living.

That encounter with Jesus changed something inside of her. For the first time, she was not hiding behind the shame of her life. She was so excited to tell everyone that the Messiah has come. It was as if she was telling everyone that the Messiah has come, and He has come to love her and accept her despite her past. She wasn't just marveling at the prophetic power of Jesus Christ, but she was enthusiastically telling others of how Jesus has come to free her from her shame and guilt and has become her living water. The Samaritan woman's

transformation was so evident that many people came to Jesus because of her testimony. People encountered Jesus themselves and came to know that He is indeed the Savior of the world.

Are we like that Samaritan woman? Have we been looking for acceptance and love in all the wrong places? Jesus is not looking for perfect people in the world. He is actively pursuing the unlovable, desperate people who acknowledge their need for Him. Let us come and surrender our lives to Him so we can experience the refreshing presence of the living water in our lives. Then, people will see our transformation and come to know Jesus too.

Ponder

1. *Read through the dialogue between Jesus and the Samaritan Woman (vv. 1-26). How did the woman respond to the spiritual allusions of Jesus about the water and worship? How did Jesus unmask the woman as He confronted her regarding her relationships? (vv. 16-20)? How did the woman respond?*

2. *The Lord dealt with the woman. How is the Lord dealing with you in the areas of your life? Is there anything the Lord is confronting you with? Any challenges? Sin?*

Notes

Matthew the Tax Collector

MATTHEW 9:9-13; MARK 2:13-17; LUKE 5:27-32

The context of the calling of Matthew to become one of the chosen apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ is forgiveness. We can see it in verses 1-8 when Jesus healed a paralytic man and said “Take heart, my son; your sins are forgiven (v2).” And the scribes said that our Lord was committing “blasphemy” because only God can forgive sins and Jesus answered them saying “But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins (v6).” This proves the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ and indeed He can forgive sins.

Matthew was a tax collector. We all know that during that time the Jews hated tax collectors because they were collecting more than what they should. In other words, tax collectors back then were corrupt. In this story, we can see the power of our Lord Jesus Christ to forgive sins and to change a corrupt person to become a committed follower. The encounter of Matthew with Jesus changed his life forever. Matthew became one of the original twelve apostles who were with Jesus while He was doing His ministry here on earth.

The same is true for each believer. Our encounter with Jesus has resulted change in us from having a corrupt heart to becoming a committed follower of Jesus. There is forgiveness in the name of Jesus and He is and will continue to transform us to be like Him through the power of the Holy Spirit (2 Corinthians 3:18).

In the life of Matthew, when he encountered our Lord Jesus, there was life transformation, from being a corrupt official to being a committed follower of Jesus. How about us? When we encountered our Lord Jesus, were we transformed? Was there a change in the way we think? the way we act? and the way we talk?

Let us come to Jesus for He has the power to forgive us and to change us for His name's sake.

Ponder

- 1. In the narrative, we see the unequivocal obedience of Matthew. Do you remember that time in your Christian life the very first time the Lord nudged your heart? Why did you respond to the Gospel? Was it a struggle? What made you say "yes" to Jesus?*

Notes

06 | *The Woman Caught in Adultery*

JOHN 7:53-8:11

Adultery. The scarlet letter. It had been pinned on the woman whose name we don't know. But her story has been handed down to us to teach something. Something Jesus is. Something Jesus does.

They brought her before Jesus, they who were the religious elite. They made her stand before a gaping crowd. To shame her. To prosecute Jesus. Their words stung: "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?"

Jesus listens, but says not a word to the woman's accusers. But He does something odd: He bends down and starts writing on the ground with his finger. Meanwhile, the Pharisees keep hurling questions at Jesus (and they couldn't wait to hurl stones at the woman). Jesus speaks for the first time: "Let any one of you who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her." He continues to write. And a strange thing happens: One by one, the woman's accusers leave, and no one is left to accuse her.

Something caused them to do a 180. Something pierced their souls. Could it be that the very Scriptures they claimed to be experts of now exposed their own hypocrisy, their own adulterous ways? Could Jeremiah 17:13 have hit home? "Lord, you are the hope of Israel; all who forsake you will be put to shame. Those who turn away from you will be written in the

dust because they have forsaken the Lord, the spring of living water.”

The woman’s sin was exposed, but so were the hearts of her accusers. She was forgiven, but they turned away, unrepentant, hence unforgiven. Her slate was wiped clean, while their names stayed written in the dust. In forsaking Jesus, the Living Water, the scribes and Pharisees proved themselves to be adulterous, turning to religion and self-made rules instead of to a relationship with the One who pursues His beloved with an unrelenting love.

Ponder

1. *“Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her.”* What are the implications of verse 7b as to the following areas:
 - a. Sin
 - b. Judgment

In challenging times how easy or difficult is it for you to show mercy? Why or why not?

2. *Confrontation to Repentance: What does verse 10b teach us about:*

- *Forgiveness*
- *Repentance*
- *Discipline*
- *Victorious living*

3. *If you were among the crowd, how would you have responded and why? If you were the woman standing in front of Jesus, how would you feel about the scene that is before you? Would you have responded the way she did?*

- *Is there sin in your life you would like to confess before God?*
- *Is there anyone in your life that you need to forgive?*
- *Seek the Lord's grace that we may respond accordingly as to what the Holy Spirit is teaching us in this study.*

4. *Is Jesus still your first love? Or have you forsaken the spring of Living Water to drink from cisterns that hold no water (Jeremiah 2:13)? May today be the day that you renew your vows to the One who called you to be His bride, and to pledge your undivided love and loyalty to last a lifetime.*

07 | *The Woman Who Anointed Jesus*

MATTHEW 26:6-13; MARK 14:3-9; JOHN 12:1-8

The greatest things in life have been mostly due to acts of love. Out of love, beautiful works of art have been put into canvas and ceilings of chapels. Out of love, vaccines were produced and hospitals were built. Out of love, for God and the lost, men and women left their homes, countries and families only to be slaughtered by tribes.

Amy Carmichael, a missionary in India, saved the lives of many young girls from being sacrificed out of love. Out of love Jim Elliot attempted to bring the gospel to the Aucas of South America only to be killed by them. Out of love, his wife Elizabeth continued on to fulfill what he came to do.

The first outrageous act of love we find in Scripture was done by a woman. In the midst of the eyes of others who would disapprove, in spite of the obvious impropriety, a woman dared to publicly show her love for Jesus and with extravagance. She did this by pouring expensive perfume over his head in front of the disciples. Their response? What a waste. The money could have been used for the poor. Jesus' response? "Leave her alone, she's done a beautiful thing for me and what she's done will be spoken of wherever the gospel is preached." It is widely agreed upon that the woman spoken of in the passage is Mary of Bethany, the sister of Lazarus and Martha. In an earlier scene including her, Scripture says she stayed at the feet of Jesus, another outrageous act for a woman during that time. She sat at his feet to listen to and learn from Him. Out of her listening, watching, friendship and following

of Jesus, her love for Him grew and this love culminated in the account of an outrageous display of love.

Outrageous acts of love will be frowned upon, possibly seen and criticized as wasteful and bad stewardship. But it is God who is the object of that act and what matters to Him is the state of the heart. God rejected Cain's offering but accepted Abel's, though they were both crops. God sees what man does not and that is what echoes throughout eternity. What Mary did will forever be remembered and talked about. What she did showed how much she loved Jesus. This love grew and poured out because she sat at his feet, she listened, she devoted, she followed.

Ponder

1. *What enabled Mary to offer such an expensive perfume for Jesus? Why do you think Mary gave Jesus her best? Would you do the same?*

2. *How outrageous are our acts of love for Jesus? How reflective are they of our relationship with Him? How much time have we spent to sit at His feet, listen, wait, devote and follow?*

Notes

08 | *Doubting Thomas*

JOHN 20:19-29

Tim Callahan, a modern day skeptic and author of the book “The Secret Origins of the Bible” claimed that resurrection was just a myth. A few years ago, I watched a documentary on CNN showing that archeologists discovered what seemed like the body of Jesus Christ with His name written on the tomb. If they can prove that indeed it was the body of Jesus, then the Christian faith is destroyed. For Christians, everything hinges on the resurrection.

A lot of people doubt and disbelieve that a resurrection from the dead could actually happen. They just could not fathom the possibility of someone rising from the dead. They need physical and scientific evidence to validate the claim. This is not something new. Even someone who was among the twelve disciples of Jesus doubted the resurrection of his Lord. This disciple was Thomas.

Thomas was chosen by Jesus Christ as one of his twelve disciples (Matt. 10:3; Mark 3:18; Luke 6:15). He was with Jesus for 3 years. He witnessed the miracles his Lord performed. He saw Jesus calming the storm, healing the sick, restoring a demon-possessed man, feeding the five thousand, and making the blind see. He was an eyewitness when Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead (John 11)! He was able to listen to the teachings of Jesus – the very Word of God. He heard Jesus’ prediction of His death and resurrection, not just once but thrice! Yet, he doubted the resurrection of his Lord. He wanted physical evidence. He will only believe if he could personally see Jesus with his own eyes – the evidence of the nail marks and the pierced side.

But Jesus indeed resurrected from the dead! Peter and John saw the empty tomb (John 20:1-10). Jesus appeared to Mary Magdalene (John 20:11-18) in his resurrected body. He appeared to His disciples when Thomas was not there (John 20:19-23). Yet Thomas did not believe their testimony. He only believed when Jesus appeared to Him personally. Thus, he said to Jesus, “My Lord and my God!”

And Jesus said to him, “Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.” (John 20:29)

Indeed, we are blessed for we believed even if we haven’t seen Him. We trust in the written Word of God and the testimony of the Holy Spirit in our lives that indeed Jesus Christ resurrected from the dead. We can boldly declare that Jesus is alive! (1 Cor. 15)

We have to Believe and not Doubt! *“for we walk by faith and not by sight.”* 2 Corinthians 5:7

“Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.” Hebrews 11:1

“And without faith it is impossible to please him” Hebrews 11:6

Ponder

1. *Considering the reaction of Thomas in the latter part of verse 25, in what ways can you personally relate with him?*

2. *In both instances that Jesus revealed Himself to the disciples, He uttered the words, “Peace be with you” (verses 19, 21, 26) What does this imply?*

3. *In verse 28, we witness Thomas finally affirming the deity of Jesus Christ. What brought him out of his disbelief and doubt?*

Notes

09 | *Martha and Mary*

LUKE 10:38-42

After so many years of no communication, I suddenly got the chance to spend breakfast with a high school classmate. We reminisced those days when we struggled over Physics and Geometry. We recalled our “jeepney” rides from our school to our house and the financial difficulty of our families. After high school, we parted ways, moved on with our college education, and met new friends.

Our discussion went on, but this time he talked about his present life and the accomplishments he now enjoys as a result of hard work. He was recently awarded as the best manager of the year because of his good track record and faithful service. As a Christian, he acknowledges Jesus as his Savior and Lord, and he believes his blessings are the result of God’s love and mercy for him. However, my classmate has become too engrossed at work and admitted that he spends less time in personal devotion and sometimes misses to attend the Sunday service. He is doing well in the corporate world but giving less time to what really matters most in life.

As I think about my classmate, I also remembered Martha whose family was very close to Jesus. In John 11:5, it was noted that “Jesus loved Martha and her sister (Mary) and Lazarus.” I also believe that this closeness resulted to Martha’s support to the ministries of Jesus as she opened her home to Him and His disciples (Luke 10:38). It is obvious that Martha’s gift was hospitality. Hospitable people will not only open their home, they will surely serve meals and do all kinds acts of service to make their guests feel comfortable. If we will

rate Martha's diligence in serving Jesus, she would probably receive an A+.

If we think about it, there is nothing wrong with Martha's diligence. Neither is there anything wrong with my classmate's accomplishments. I admire their faithful service and I salute their deep devotion in serving others. However, as I recall Martha and her sudden outburst, I admire the gentle reminder of Jesus: "Martha, Martha," the Lord answered, "you are worried and upset about many things, but only one thing is needed. Mary has chosen what is better, and it will not be taken away from her (vv. 41-42)."

Just like Martha, our priorities could be out of order. We could be distracted by all the preparations in our service (v.40) and become worried and upset by so many things (v.41). We could be overly concerned with the task of serving that we miss the more essential matter, which is to find time to sit at the feet of Jesus. Jesus tells us that our topmost priority in life should be to spend time with Him, learn from His Word, and reflect what He would want us do.

Ponder

1. *What distractions are you experiencing now that prevent you from spending time with Jesus?*

2. *How can you manage your worries and disappointments in life so you can focus on giving quality time with Jesus?*

3. *Share one important lesson that you gleaned from this study and how you intend to apply it in your own life.*

Notes

10 | *The Poor Widow*

MARK 12:41-44; LUKE 21:1-4

It started with an ordinary description of what typically transpires in a temple. However, there was something noteworthy with how Luke 21 started as it began with “*Jesus looked up...*” (v.1, ESV). Jesus *intentionally* looked and watched. He could have concerned himself more with the scribes. He could have chosen to focus on His own worries since His arrest was forthcoming, but Jesus cared enough to look. There is comfort in knowing that nothing is trivial or mundane for Jesus, He keenly observes, and the same is still true today. Jesus still cares enough to concern Himself with our everyday affairs.

As the scene progressed, we can imagine the rich giving their gifts unabashedly. On the other hand, the poor widow probably tried to hide and remain as inconspicuous as possible. She knew very well how her two small copper coins were nothing compared to others. People possibly just passed her by. No one took notice of her, but Jesus did. No matter how small or insignificant she felt, she mattered to Jesus. In the same way, no one is beyond God’s attention. Amidst our limitations and perceived lack, we are important in God’s eyes.

While looking at the poor widow, Jesus said, “*Truly, I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them.*” (Luke 21: 3, ESV). As most people had probably been commending the rich, Jesus had been acknowledging the poor widow’s heart. We are often limited by what our eyes can see. Our judgments are clouded by how good or bad one looks. Our evaluations are tainted by the value that society has placed upon certain possessions or status. However, Jesus examines

our inner character. While we are prone to praise the outward performance, Jesus is bound to acknowledge the inner posture. While we are inclined to commend the rich's abundant possessions, Jesus recognizes the poor widow's worship.

Jesus saw something more in the heart of the poor widow. Notice that Jesus commended the poor widow as putting in *more*, compared to *all* of what the rich men gave (v.3b). It was not just the proportion vis-à-vis salary, it was more of seeing how this poor widow sees God as her everything, and is worthy of her every all (v. 4). She gave every last piece of her coins to the One who cared enough to look at her, to the One who deemed her important amidst the contrasting perception of many. Jesus saw her trust in the Lord, that she was willing to offer her source of living to the One who is the source of her life.

Ponder

1. *What does this teach us about the amount vs posture of our giving? Is one more important than the other? Or both? What hinders us to faithfully be good stewards of all our resources? What encourages you to be faithful in this area of your life?*

2. *Be able to Share: Derive a stewardship principle from the whole narrative. Take note of the following aspects:*

- *God*
- *Posture*
- *Truthfulness*
- *Faithfulness*

3. *How does faithful stewardship change our heart and life?*

Notes

11 | *Blind Bartimaeus*

MATTHEW 20:29-34; MARK 10:46-52; LUKE 18:35-43

It would always be said that it is better to lose the other senses than lose your sense of sight! I do not know how to affirm or deny this because, I enjoy having five senses! But have we ever thought of being mute, deaf, lest being blind?

I had the opportunity to work with the blind or the visually impaired when I suddenly had five blind students in one of my Bible classes. When I saw them enter my classroom, I got so worried. So, I asked the guide if they will be able to catch up with the lesson with the rest of the class. She confidently replied, “*Don’t worry Teacher, they will manage.*” And they did. In fact, they did a lot better than those students who were able to see.

Blindness can be caused by a disease. Spiritual blindness is caused by man’s fallen nature.. While both can be debilitating, spiritual blindness has an eternal effect when not abated. Bartimaeus was a blind beggar. He sat by the roadside keenly observing what was happening around Him. He knew the voice of people. He knew who was about to pass even though he could not see. As Jesus passed through the streets of Jericho, He heard Bartimaeus’ insistent shout for help, “***Lord, have mercy on us, Son of David!***” Bartimaeus’ shouts of help were the most important words he could have spoken. Bartmaeus affirmed his faith in Jesus, the One who is Messiah and Lord. He also invoked on Jesus’ mercy and compassion towards the outcasts of society.

Lord, have mercy! Was the only cure to abate Bartimaeus' blindness- both physically and spiritually While he may lose his sight once more when it is his time to sleep, Bartimaeus' spiritual eyes will remain forever open to worship and see the majesty of His Creator.

Ponder

1. *How does our knowledge of God give us the confidence and posture to call on Him? Write a very personal prayer acknowledging who God is and what He has done in your life.*

Notes

12 | *Mary Magdalene*

JOHN 20:1-18

There are times when we simply feel lost and utterly discouraged in our lives. We don't know what else to do but to turn to God. So, we do decide to turn to God and seek Him, but we cannot seem to find Him. Or is that really the case?

Mary Magdalene was discouraged because of the empty tomb. She was weeping when Jesus appeared before her. However, she did not immediately recognize Him. The Jesus she was looking for was a lifeless body that had been completely beaten, but the Jesus that found her weeping was completely without blemish. She had mistaken Him for a gardener. It was only when Jesus called her by name that Mary realized that she was already in His presence.

Mary Magdalene did not see that the empty tomb was a reassurance of Jesus' presence. The empty tomb was an affirmation of His power and victory over death. So when Jesus revealed Himself to her, she did not right away understand that there was absolutely no need to be discouraged.

Perhaps, we need to be reminded that the reason He overcame death for us is precisely so that we may be reconciled with Him and that we may dwell in His presence. If we believe that Jesus Christ died on the cross to save us of our sins, we can be assured that whatever we go through, He is present in our lives.

Ponder

1. *Why was there such an outburst of emotion and panic (v.13)? Can you relate with Mary in her display of grief?*

2. *As the tomb witnesses declared to the disciples the disappearance of the body and Mary's encounter with the Lord, how did the other disciples react to such great news (v.19)?*

If you were one of Jesus' disciples at that time (knowing how you reacted before He was crucified and died) how would you have felt and reacted? Why?

3. *“Peace be with you.” (This is a normal Jewish greeting meaning ‘shalom’). Why was this greeting appropriate for Jesus’ disciples at that time? What were they going through?*

How and why did Jesus have to show them His hands and side(v.20) ? How did that event comfort their grieving hearts? What does it tell us about their faith? Our faith?

Notes

13 | John the Baptist

JOHN 1:19-34

The silent years that bridged the gap between Old and New Testaments must have been excruciatingly difficult. Those who've long waited for the Messiah might have already asked, "will He still come to save us?"... That I can only guess. Yet as we open the Gospels, we are reminded that what seemed silent to man was not at all silent in *God's perspective*. Above all, He did not forget His promises. God worked throughout world history. Believe it or not, I believe the Roman roads and the Greeks' affinity towards education were part of His master plan. His sovereignty was displayed in the midst of the "400 years of silence".

Then after centuries of waiting, the seemingly deafening silence was broken by the voice of one crying in the wilderness (cf. Mark 1:2-3). His name was John the Baptist – a man known for his unusual appearance, eating habits, and boldness! This caught the attention of the religious people, so they inquired, "Are you Elijah? Are you the Prophet? Who are you?" Then he humbly replied, "***I am not... I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way of the Lord,' as the prophet Isaiah said. I baptize with water, but among you stands one you do not know, even he who comes after me, the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie***".

God's purpose for John was clear. He humbly came to usher in the entrance of Jesus Christ, the Savior of this broken world. John both had a proper view of his calling and a high view of the King he wholeheartedly served. He placed his trust on the promise-keeping God, while the vast majority might have been losing faith. He chose to point to the light

while darkness seemed to have covered the earth. Insignificant as John may seem, I find myself deeply grateful while reflecting on what Scripture says about him. Through him, a bright ray of hope was ignited through the testimony of this man who served as the Messiah's *forerunner*, which the Old Testament has foretold.

Because of John the Baptist, I am convinced that nothing could ever silence the *Living Word* (cf. John 1:1-5). God is real, and God is faithful. In Him, we can always have hope.

Ponder

1. *Have you been through a "season" in life that God seemed silent? What did God teach you during that phase?*

2. *What attributes of God is reflected in today's devotion about John?*

3. *How will today's reflections help you in your present situation?*

Notes

14 | Ten Lepers

LUKE 17:11-19

Many years ago my friend Doug revealed to me that I was missing many opportunities to extend thankfulness to those around me. As time went on, I began to observe how I responded to others and to situations around me. It became clear that I really had a lot to learn about having a thankful heart.

In the book of Luke, Jesus meets ten lepers as He was passing between Samaria and Galilee. Jesus shows us three key things during this encounter in Luke 17. First, we are to pray earnestly. In verse 13 they called out in a loud voice, “Jesus, Master, have pity on us!” These ten lepers knew how unclean they were. If we truly knew how unclean we are, we would also cry out to the Lord earnestly. Second, we are to act in obedience. We are told in verse 14 that when the lepers cried to our Lord, he only replied, “Go, show yourselves to the priests.” As they went to the priest, they were cleansed. Help comes to people in the path of obedience. The ten lepers showed obedience before Jesus healed their illness. We must make sure that we are not slow in heeding the Lord’s call but respond with immediate obedience. Third, we are to show humility through thankfulness. In verse 15 we see one leper turning back and praising God with a loud voice and in verse 16 he fell at Jesus’ feet giving thanks. Jesus responds to this one leper by asking, “Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine?” (verse 17). The other nine lepers were gone once they received healing. We are often like these nine lepers—quick to pray, but slow to praise. The one leper who had a thankful heart received more than physical healing. Jesus told him, “Rise and go your way; your faith has made you well.”

We often pray for what we can get *from* the Lord rather than praying *for* what we can do for the Lord. Let us have thankful hearts towards Jesus Christ who has given us a new life and the promise of eternal life.

Ponder

1. *How did the Samaritan leper react when he realized his healing (v.15)? What is the significance that he was a leper and a Samaritan? Describe the Samaritan leper's faith in light of his attitude of gratitude. What are the other undergirding lessons the pericope is saying apart from thanksgiving?*

2. *Spend some time thanking the Lord today. Intentionally plan out a small treat for someone special. Send a thank you card, a cupcake. Say thank you and send a token of kindness!*

Notes

15 | Peter

JOHN 21:15-25

In terms of leadership, we have so much to say about Peter—he was one of the first disciples called, his name would always be first in the list among the other disciples, he was one of the three who formed an inner circle around Jesus (Mark 5:37; 9:2; 14:33). As we dig deeper into one's devotion to Jesus, Peter would come out as the most passionate of them all—he dared to walk on water to go to Jesus (Mt. 14:28-29) and he stood as a willing representative of the disciples when Jesus asked them, “Who do people say I am?” (Mark 8:27, 29).

However, despite the display of loyalty and passion, Peter was not exempt from one of the most unforgettable tests in life as a leader called by God. In Mark 14:27-31, Peter boldly declared that he would never disown Jesus even at the point of death. Sadly, during the most critical moment, Peter disowned Jesus three times. He wept bitterly because he knew he failed, not only as a leader, but as a faithful disciple of Jesus (Mark 14:66-72).

Let us reminisce the time when Jesus called us to follow Him. We could probably boast of those remarkable moments with Him in our prayer and devotion time. Just like Peter, we have also displayed that same passion and loyalty as we serve Him and get involved in the various ministries of the church. In our journey as a disciple of Jesus, there will always be a series of times of testing along the way. Sometimes, we look at some tests as short quizzes with easy answers. Other times, we look at them as unannounced, long, and enduring. Have you come to the point in your life where you are confronted with

a similar situation as Peter's? Have you failed to choose Jesus? Have you denied Jesus and followed your own way instead? After failing the test, Peter decided to go back to fishing. His leadership remained intact when the other disciples said that they would go with him. It was morning when Jesus showed Himself to them and gave instructions that led to the miraculous catch of fish. Jesus came back for them. He did not leave them bewildered and confused especially in their calling as His disciples.

Jesus pursued Peter, spent time with Him, and taught him a lesson that would bring him back to his calling as a disciple and leader that Jesus wanted him to be. This is the best part in the life of Peter—the story of Jesus' love and compassion for him. He never left Peter in the pit of failure and despair. He restored him to fulfill the purpose that Jesus intended for him (John 21:15-19).

Ponder

1. *Why is thanksgiving an attitude believers should learn and develop? How can our consistent thanksgiving to God change the attitude of hearts and minds?*

2. *Apply: Attitude of Gratitude. Make time to appreciate someone today. List down names of people you like to pray for and appreciate.*

3. *Was there a time when you were confronted with a situation that you denied Jesus instead of yourself. How did Jesus restore you from that situation? Share the lessons that you gleaned from this study and how you intend to apply it in your own life.*

Notes

Growth Group Study Guide

How to Use this Manual

This basic *Growth Group Study Guide* desires to aide and guide the growth group leader. It has basic observation, interpretation and application questions. Learning goals have been established that reflect cognitive, affective and behavioral categories respectively.

For material appreciation, it is best to read and study the Bible text and then read through the suggested activities and discussion questions of the material. You are free to add activities and rephrase questions according to your Growth Group needs.

We would also like for you to share your journey with your GG mates. The GG leader can assign one or two people to share their life journey specifically answering “How their encounter with Jesus has changed their life.”

It is our prayer that we will have personal encounters with the Lord as we all make time to study, ponder and apply His Word.

May the Lord speak to us through this sermon series.

01 | Rich Young Ruler

MATTHEW 19:16-22; MARK 10:17-22; LUKE 18:18-23

Learning Goals

- Ascertain the most important thing in a man's life—salvation!
- Embrace the truth that our salvation only comes from having a saving faith in the Lord Jesus.
- Walk towards a full life in the Lord.

Understanding the Passage

This account of a wealthy religious ruler is an example of the self-justification exposed in the previous parable. Jesus stated that goodness is a quality only God possesses in its fullness. A person can be accepted by God only because of what God does in and for him. Jesus taught the man that only by following Him would result in eternal life and benevolence rewarded in heaven.

1. Observe the section (Matthew 18–20).
 - Describe the ruler based on verses 18–20?
 - How did Jesus respond to the young ruler's question on verse 18? Why do you think Jesus responded to him with another question?
 - On where does the ruler's goodness stand? How is this predicament true for us today?

2. Verse 22 records Jesus' second response to the young ruler. Why was Jesus' statement too hard to do for the man who was seemingly good and full? What was it that Jesus was asking him to do?

Think About This: Is there anything too hard for you to surrender to God? If there is, process and be able to share in your group.

3. What did Jesus mean when He said "For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to enter the kingdom of God." How does the man's possessions keep him from enjoying life here and in eternity in the process? What must he do to enjoy life that is full as promised by the Lord Jesus?
4. What was the one thing that Jesus requires from the young man in the narrative? Why do you think it was difficult for the young ruler to sell all he had in exchange for God's treasure in heaven?
5. What is the only source of righteousness and goodness according to the narrative? What was the promise of Jesus to those who heed His call to righteousness (vv.29-30)?

Conclusion

We are nothing without God. We are nothing apart from the Lord's saving grace. Our seemingly goodness will never suffice unlike the goodness and righteousness the Lord offers. May we always respond to the Lord's call in

our lives always in the affirmative for His call is always perfect and sure! May the choices we make on a daily basis reflect the call of Jesus in our lives as His disciples!

Prayer

Thank You dear God for the joy of having eternal life that is sure! We remember our friends and family who have yet to come to a saving knowledge of You. Allow us to have the courage and boldness to declare Your great love for us.

Notes

Notes

02 | Zacchaeus

LUKE 19:1-10

Learning Goals

- Understand the truth that the Lord wants us to be changed!
- Express our thanksgiving to the Lord for the grace extended to us **every day**.
- Respond with a sense of urgency and joy in the things the Lord presents to us.
- Share the Lord's love and mercy to those who have yet to have a personal relationship with Him.

Understanding the Passage

The journey towards Jerusalem presented Jesus doing the work of the ministry. Luke showed his readers the teaching, healing and the acts of compassion shown by Jesus as He proclaimed the good news. He particularly stressed how this salvation was for all who are poor and needy and the total impact of the Gospel was to show the “wideness of God’s mercy.” But what is amazing in the life of Zacchaeus is the joyful and willing heart to obey and be changed by the mercies of the Lord.

1. Who was Zacchaeus? What did his job entail?

Zacchaeus was a chief tax collector, a word that is only mentioned here in the NT and not attested in any Greek writing. The description of his trade implies that he was probably head of a group of tax collectors who were responsible for customs dues in the area on goods from Perea to Judea. Being a tax

collector was a disdain during those times for they were known to make rich profits for their transactions.

2. What reason does the Bible tell us about Zacchaeus' desire to see Jesus? How about Jesus seeing Zacchaeus (9: 5)? Do you feel the sense of urgency of both Zacchaeus and Jesus? Where do you think this sense of urgency is coming from?

Scripture does not give us a specific reason why Zacchaeus wanted to see Jesus as He was passing through Jericho. As a popular figure that time, people probably lined up to see and hear Jesus speak in order to receive healing or out of mere curiosity. Nonetheless, Scripture states that Zacchaeus wanted to see Jesus personally but was not able to do so because of his height. Jesus, on the other hand showed the intentionality of seeing Zacchaeus as He even called out Zacchaeus' name- whether as supernatural knowledge or by previous acquaintance. He further emphasizes this intentionality of meeting him as Jesus even ordered him to hurry down for He must stay in his house for the night.

3. As an onlooker in the narrative, why do you think the crowd reacted that way to Jesus' request (v.5,7)? Knowing the consequences of such an action, would you respond the same way they did? Why or why not?

As the onlookers were scandalized about what transpired, the grumbling begun as this was a usual response whenever Jesus would do something unacceptable to the general public. Because Zacchaeus was a chief tax collector, a sinner, to stay in his home was tantamount to share in his sin.

4. How does the Bible describe Zacchaeus' initial response in verse 6? What is verse 8 teaching us about the change of heart Jesus accomplished in this one encounter with Zacchaeus? How did Zacchaeus make this change of heart in v.8 real?

What is the Lord accomplishing in your heart in your everyday encounter? How are we responding to His daily call? Do we respond like Zacchaeus, with a sense of urgency and joy or do we tarry and worst, not mind God's daily call?

5. **Testimony Time:** What does this lesson show us about God's mercy and grace? Can you now grasp its width, *breadth (What do you mean?)* and height? Can you share with us how the Lord has called you to Himself and how He is manifesting grace and love as He changes you every day.

Conclusion

The account of Zacchaeus is not only about a rich man who gave all he had. It was about Jesus Christ reaching out to the publican, to the marginalized and oppressed. The encounter of Jesus and Zacchaeus allowed us a glimpse of how Jesus was able to change the lives of those who meet Him, to those who believed in His name. Thus, only by the name of Jesus are we changed and will never be the same again. Let us respond with a sense of urgency and joy!

Prayer

Teach us to always respond with a sense of urgency and joy. Reveal to us the things that do not allow us to give everything to you, dear Lord.

Notes

03 | Nicodemus

JOHN 3:1-21

Learning Goals

- Understand the salvation offered by the Lord Jesus Christ
- Believe in the salvation offered by the Lord Jesus Christ
- Appreciate the salvation we have in Christ through faith
- Share your life experience in the Lord to those who have yet to have a personal relationship with Christ

Understanding the Passage

Read: John 2:23-24

Jesus was in Jerusalem for the Passover feast, an annual feast that the Jews were required to do to celebrate God's passing over them and saving them from death. While in Jerusalem, Jesus ministered to people. Many believed Him but others did not and remained skeptical. Even religious leaders came to see why the people were flocking to Jesus. One such man was Nicodemus, the only man to whom Jesus explained the second birth in detail.

1. Who was Nicodemus (v.1,2)? How did he address Jesus (v.2b)? Describe his religiosity and openness towards the teachings of Jesus based on verses 1-2. Why do you think he had to come to Jesus at night?
2. What was Jesus' reply to Nicodemus pronouncements(v.3)? How did Nicodemus understand Jesus' statements (v.4)?

- How did Jesus explain what it means to be born of water and born of the Spirit (vv.5-8)?
- Read Numbers 21:4-9. This section depicts the Hebrew's stiff-necked attitude. It shows the condition of Israel's heart. Can you note and chart the parallelism of attitude, need and solution for those three eras mentioned in the table?

Topics	Time of Moses	Time of Jesus	Time of the Church
Attitude	Guilty of Sin	Guilty of Sin	Guilty of Sin
Need	Condemned	Condemned	Condemned
Solution	Look at the Serpent Numbers 21	Jesus is the Solution for the guilt brought by sin. (John 3: 15-16)	Jesus is the Solution for the guilt brought by sin. (John 3: 15-16)

- Jesus is the Son of Man. What does the phrase Son of Man denote? What did the Son of Man do for mankind (15-16)?
- What is the overwhelming result of this act of love of Jesus Christ to those who believe (v. 18,21)? What is the judgment for those who refuse to believe and continue to sin (vv.19-20)?

Application

What are you doing to share this very good news to your family and friends? With the help of your GG leadership, you may come up with a conscious effort to bring your unsaved family members and friends to your GG. Better yet, plan a bridge event with the goal of inviting pre-believers to your

GG. Pray also for divine appointments.

Conclusion

Indeed, there is no other way for one to be saved than to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God and to accept His word that He is the only way by which one may come to the Father!

Prayer

Thank you, Lord for eternal life. Give your church the boldness and courage to declare this to the world! Teach us to live the Great Commission.

Notes

Notes

04 | Samaritan Woman

JOHN 4:1-42

Learning Goals

- Believe in the salvation offered by the Lord Jesus Christ
- Develop a heart of compassion to those who have yet to know Jesus
- Share your life experience in the Lord to those who have yet to have a personal relationship with Christ

Understanding the Passage

Jews normally avoided traveling the ridge route north of Jerusalem to Samaria. Because of the tensions with the Samaritans, the Jews went east across the Jordan River and North through the Jordan Valley to travel to Galilee. As Jesus spoke with the woman at **the well**, He was crossing racial, cultural, gender and spiritual lines. Jesus' radical moves created radical changes in the life of the Samaritan woman.

1. Locate Samaria in the New Testament Map. How far was Samaria from Jerusalem, the capital of Israel. What was in Jerusalem? Samaria?
2. **Check your context:** As Jesus requested for water from the woman, why was the response of the woman appear to be hostile or indifferent (v.9)? Reading through the narrative, does the woman even know about Jesus even though He was a popular figure during that time?

3. Study the dialogue between Jesus and the Samaritan Woman (vv.1-26). How did the woman respond to the spiritual allusions of Jesus about the water and worship? How did Jesus unmask the woman as He confronted her regarding her relationships? (vv.16-20)? How did the woman respond?

Application: The dialogue shows us ways the Lord dealt with the woman. How is the Lord dealing with you in the areas of your life? Is there anything the Lord is confronting you with? Any challenges? Sin?

4. How did the woman respond as Jesus presents Himself as the Messiah (vv.25-28)? What did she do after her realization (vv.28;39-42)?
5. What was Jesus trying to teach the disciples in verses 34-38? How is this truth being made real by the Samaritan Woman in the succeeding verses?

Application

Do you have spiritual sons and daughters? The woman at the well sure has! Her life after meeting the Master changed. Has your life changed? Have you taken the bold step of telling your neighbor/s, family friend/s, sibling/s or even bus mate/s about your faith?

Conclusion

Our faith should move! The faith of the Samaritan woman moved her to tell others. When Jesus confronts and unmasks us, our life is ready to declare all He has done! Go!

Prayer

We pray that GCF South Metro will grow in their burden for the lost. We will be found faithful in our personal evangelism.

Notes

Notes

05 | Matthew the Tax Collector

MATTHEW 9:9-13; MARK 2:13-17; LUKE 5:27-32

Learning Goals

- Understand the truth that the salvation Jesus offers includes the outcasts of the society
- Develop a compassionate heart towards the outcasts and the marginalized sectors of society
- Devise ways and means to reach the marginalized sector of society through social work through our Community Farming

Understanding the Passage

Who were the other people mentioned in the narrative aside from Jesus. Give a brief description as to how you know them:

1. **The Tax Collector Matthew/ Levi** - described as the son of Alphaeus. Levi is probably the name given by his father Alphaeus. While the name Matthew as used in the same book is his apostolic name meaning “gift of the Lord.”

As a tax collector, Matthew/ Levi was despised by his fellow Jews. Tax collectors in general were classified as “sinners” (Matt. 9:10–11; Mark 2:15), probably because they were allowed to collect more than the government required and then to pocket the excess amount. John the Baptist addressed this when he urged tax collectors to

gather no more money than they should (Luke 3:12–13). But even further, the tax collectors were hated because their fellow countrymen viewed them as mercenaries who worked for the foreign oppressors of the Jewish people.

Pharisees – the largest and most influential Jewish group in the New Testament times. They accepted the directives of the oral and the written Law. They gave rigid observance of the oral law or tradition, neglecting grace which is why they are opposed to Jesus’ show of mercy to the outcasts of society. (*See Introduction to the Gospels*)

Be able to share: In the narrative, we see the unequivocal obedience of Matthew. Do you remember that time in your Christian life the very first time the Lord nudged your heart? Why did you respond to the Gospel? Was it a struggle? What made you say “yes” to Jesus?

2. While the narrative shows us the openness of Matthew, the tax collector, the next scenario shows us the disdain of the supposed teachers and practitioners of the law. Can you spot the incongruence of Jesus’ compassion and identification with the sinners and tax collectors vis a vis the indifference of the Pharisees?

Be able to share: Is the incongruence evident until today? In all honesty, how do we practice this indifference today? Now that we are conscious of our faults, how do we intend to amend our ways? How can our GGs, churches and homes be a place of refuge to the outcast and to those in need?

Application

As part of showing love to our neighbors, in your Growth Groups you can plan out a project that will benefit those who are in dire need of help. This activity can be an outreach to bless the community. You may also consider assisting in other efforts that will benefit the Yolanda survivors. You may also want to consider having a medical/ dental mission in your area.

Conclusion

The Call of Matthew shows us that no one is too far from the Lord's grace and mercy. Jesus came to call not the righteous, but the sinners, to bring them to repentance. As such we, His children, should extend this grace not only to the unbelieving but also to those who are outcasts of society, the poor, the needy and the oppressed. May Jesus' love and compassion be always reflected in our lives!

Prayer

Teach us how to have a compassionate heart so that we can show the love of Christ to those who are in need.

Notes

06 | *The Woman Caught in Adultery*

JOHN 7:53-8:11

Learning Goals

- Recognize our own need for God's forgiveness every day
- Depend on the Lord for grace that allows us to love others unconditionally
- Reflect on my life in the areas of sin, forgiveness and repentance
- Extend forgiveness and grace to anyone who has wronged us
- Reflect on the ugliness of sin in our lives
- Rejoice in the salvation that we have
- Live in victory and continuous repentance over sin

Understanding the Passage

John 7:53-8:11 is not found in many early manuscripts or other ancient testimonies. This section may be considered an authentic fragment of history even if it was not part of John's original manuscript. It may have been placed here because it fits the context of Jesus' claims to sinlessness as well as the unjust judgments of Israel's leaders. Within the account the Pharisees tested Jesus in hope of convicting Him of violating either Roman or Jewish law. To release the woman would condone her sin but to stone her would violate Roman law, which prohibited the Jews from carrying out their own executions. The lesson that Jesus taught was: "Do not judge, or you will be judged" (Matthew 7:1).

1. During a teaching moment, the learned in the law entered the scene. What was their reason for interrupting the teaching moment of Jesus (vv.1-4)? Do you see an ulterior motive as to why they did this in the middle of the crowd (v.7)? Why do you think they had to do that?

Be able to Share: Why do we do what we do? Have we ever thought about why we do certain things? Why we say what we say? Has there been a time that you have been checked by the Holy Spirit after uttering a word or doing something? Why were you checked by the Spirit at that time? What were your motives? Can it be that correction or confrontation should be done because our motives aren't right? Reconcile and be able to share.

2. **Examine the Verse:** “Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her.” What are the implications of verse 7b as to the following areas:

- a. Sin – everyone has sinned. No one is exempt.

- b. Judgment- Because we are sinners, we cannot judge

3. **Confrontation to Repentance:** What does verse 10 b teach us about:

- Forgiveness
- Repentance
- Discipline
- Victorious living

Reflection: If you were among the crowd, how would you have responded and why? If you were the woman standing in front of Jesus, how would you feel about the scene that is before you? Would you have responded the way she did?

To the GG Leader: Ensure that the reflection and examination of the verse will lead your group from areas of confrontation, repentance and victory.

Be able to share: Knowing our position in Christ today, do we realize how much grace has been extended to us? Why is it important that believers become reflective and thankful for the salvation given unto us? How do we show our thanksgiving to the Lord for the grace extended to us? How are we able to extend this to someone in need of forgiveness and mercy?

Reflection and Application

- Is there sin in your life you would like to confess before God?
- Is there anyone in your life that you need to forgive? Seek the Lord's grace that we may respond accordingly as to what the Holy Spirit is teaching us in this study.

Conclusion

The Lord's mercy and compassion moves Him to extend mercy. In the same way, we, His disciples, the church, should do the same. We are to extend mercy and grace to those who need it. Remember, only the Lord can judge! Only He is God!

Prayer

Teach us to extend mercy and grace!

Notes

07 | The Woman Who Anointed Jesus

MATTHEW 26:6-13; MARK 14:3-9; JOHN 12:1-8

Learning Goals

- Acknowledge the supreme worth of Jesus Christ
- Develop a heart that surrenders all for the sake of Jesus Christ
- Surrender to the Lord all of our being!

Understanding the Passage

Jesus was anointed by Mary with a pound of perfume, which is said to be equivalent to about a year's wage. This act done by Mary caused uneasiness for some due to the worth that was, according from their perspective, "wasted".

1. How does Luke portray Mary and her devotion to Jesus? (Luke 10:38-42) What does this tell us about Mary's delight for Jesus?

Be able to Share: Name one or two of your most prized possessions. What makes them so valuable? How do these things compare to your relationship with Jesus?

2. What enabled Mary to offer such an expensive perfume for Jesus?
 - *Faith – She believed in the claims of Jesus. *See Mark 8:31, 9:31 She believed that Jesus was about to be killed and buried, and thus, the pouring of the perfume was a preparation for what*

was yet to come. “She has done what she could; she has anointed my body beforehand for burial.” (Mark 14:8) “In pouring this ointment on my body, she has done it to prepare me for burial.” (Matthew 26:12)

- *The pouring of the perfume was but a manifestation of her faith in the coming death and resurrection of Jesus.*

Be able to Share: Are the things you do faith-driven or self-driven?

3. How did Mary’s devotion to Jesus reveal the hearts of some of the disciples? (Mark 14:4-5; Matthew 26:8-9; John 12:4-6) What are the similarities between the disciples’ reaction and Martha’s complaint in Luke 10:40?

- *Up until this point, unlike Mary, the disciples still did not understand and/or believe the necessity of His death and resurrection.*

- *The disciples and Martha were “majoring on the minor things”. They were focused on things they could do for Jesus, rather than focusing on Jesus Himself. (Matthew 26:9; Mark 14:4-5; John 12:4-6)*

Be able to Share: Who was Mary preoccupied with? Was she there to please others or Jesus?

4. What was Jesus’ reaction toward Mary (Matthew 26:10; Mark 14:6)?

Be able to Share: What would your reaction be if you hear Jesus say to you: “you have done a **beautiful thing** to me...”?

Conclusion

Jesus commended Mary not because of the worth of the perfume, but simply because Mary treasured His worthiness over all else. Jesus does not expect to receive grandeur and glorious things from us, but He does expect that we treasure His glory over all else. As Jim Elliot puts it, *“he is no fool who gives what he cannot keep, to gain what he cannot lose.”*

Prayer

Teach us to surrender to you everything we have without hesitation!

Notes

Notes

08 | *Doubting Thomas*

JOHN 20:19-29

Learning Goals

- Acknowledge God's faithfulness despite our doubts
- Depend on the Lord to overcome disbelief
- Rejoice in our risen Saviour!

Understanding the Passage

The disciples heard news that the stone from the tomb of Jesus had been taken away. Immediately they went and saw for themselves that the body of Jesus was nowhere to be found. They were clueless for up until this point, they had yet to understand scripture that "he must rise from the dead."

Later that evening, Jesus appeared to the disciples with all proof that He is indeed their risen Lord. At once the disciples rejoiced (vs.20b). Thomas, one of the disciples, not present during the first appearance of Jesus, found it impossible to comprehend the claims that they had seen the Lord (vs.25).

1. If you were one of the disciples that saw the risen Jesus firsthand, how would you have tried to convince Thomas of this truth?

Be able to Share: How do you share Jesus to your friends and family?

2. Considering the reaction of Thomas in the latter part of vs.25, in what ways can you personally relate with him?

Be able to Share: a time when you were faced with great doubt and how you were able to overcome it

3. In both instances that Jesus revealed Himself to the disciples, He uttered the words, “Peace be with you” (vs. 19, 21, 26), What does this imply?
4. In vs.28, we witness Thomas finally affirming the deity of Jesus Christ. What brought him out of his disbelief and doubt?

- *It was the presence of Jesus Christ Himself (vs.27). No matter how hard the disciples tried to convince Thomas, if not for the presence of Jesus, it would've been impossible for Thomas to believe.*

- *It is the same way for us, and for those who have yet to come to the knowledge of our risen Saviour. If not for Jesus Christ revealing Himself in us first, belief in Him would not be feasible. It takes a miracle to believe in such a miraculous act done at the cross. It takes Jesus to believe in Jesus.*

Conclusion

At the end of it all, it is the sovereignty of our Lord that brings salvation to all people. Despite our walls of doubt and disbelief, God continuous to be faithful in redeeming us through His resurrected Son, Christ Jesus. Our confidence ought to be in the truth that since death has been defeated, nothing can hinder us from having life through Him who lives forever.

Prayer

Heal us from our disbelief. Give us the eyes of faith so that we can always be one with you!

Notes

Notes

09 | Martha and Mary

LUKE 10:38-42

Learning Goals

- Ascertain before the Lord the state of our relationship with Him
- Cooperate with the Spirit in this heart check session
- Appropriate the proper response of surrender upon the call of God to be excellent in our “one thing” of Him

Understanding the Passage

Mary and Martha, Lazarus' sisters take the center stage as they host Jesus in their home. The focus of this passage is that all other things apart from Jesus is secondary for Jesus is the main thing at all times. As disciples, we are to listen to Him and obey His words.

1. How does the Bible introduce Mary and Martha in John 11 :1-5? What does that tell us of their relationship with Jesus?
2. How does the pericope describe Mary? Martha? In what ways are they the same ? Different?

Be able to Share: Looking at the people in your GG, how are you all the same and yet different? How can this apply to our preferences, service and even worship?

3. Why did Martha call the attention of Jesus (v.40)? What was Jesus reply to her vv.41-42? How does verse 40 complement what Jesus said about Martha?

4. Was there anything wrong in what Martha was doing? Mary? Where did Martha go wrong? What distractions are you experiencing now that prevent you from spending time with Jesus?

Be able to Share: Creating a balance in our time with the Lord, family and ministry. Has this been true of you lately? What are you doing about it?

5. What does it mean when Jesus said about the “one thing that Mary chose?” What does it mean to sit at Jesus’ feet?

Be able to Share: State of the Heart. Do you sometimes see yourself when we are barraged with many things to do? Do you see how our hearts churn when we lose focus on the necessary? How is this true to you? How much time do we sit at Jesus’ feet?

6. In what practical ways can we cultivate a strong pursuit of our “one thing” on a daily basis? What would be the evidence/s of such a life?

Conclusion

Just like Martha, our priorities could be out of order. We could be distracted by all the preparations in our service (v.40) become worried and upset by so many things (v.41), and neglect our “One Thing.” May we always make time for the most important thing in our life – the Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayer

Teach and help us make You our Main Thing at all times!

10 | *Poor Widow*

MARK 12: 41-44; LUKE 21:1-4

Learning Goals

- God is faithful to all His children
- Recognize that we are only stewards of God's grace
- Depend on the Lord for everything that we need
- Give to the Lord everything we have as He requires

Understanding the Passage

The bigger pericope (12:38-44) shows us the pronouncements of Jesus which ends with a condemnation and a commendation by Jesus. The warning (12:38-30) addressed the pride and oppression of unrighteous leaders who would be severely judged by God. A widow, on the other hand, was complimented because of her sacrificial giving (12:41-44). Godly disciples humbly serve with a sacrificial attitude.

1. **Check your Context:** What was Jesus doing in the temple? To whom was he talking to and what was He talking about?
2. What does the text say He was doing (12: 41)?
3. From both accounts in Mark and Luke, the woman gave two copper coins while the rich put in large sums. How is it that Jesus' comment states that she gave more than the others? Why do you think the woman gave as much? How can it be that her view of who God is dictates her giving?

Principle: What principle can you derive from this section? View of God and stewardship.

4. What does this teach us about the amount vs posture of our giving? Is one more important than the other? Or both? What hinders us to faithfully be good stewards of all our resources? What encourages you to be faithful in this area of your life?

Be able to Share: Derive a stewardship principle from the whole narrative. Take note of the following aspects:

- God
- Posture
- Truthfulness
- Faithfulness

5. How does faithful stewardship change our heart and life?

Conclusion

Our stewardship reflects our discipleship. The Lord is delighted when our hearts are right as we give unto Him!

Prayer

Lord keep me faithful in all areas of my life.

11 | Blind Bartimaeus

MATTHEW 20:29-34; MARK 10:46-52; LUKE 18:35-43

Learning Goals

- Recognize our own need for God's mercies everyday
- Appreciate the Lord for deliberate encounters with Him
- Live with thanksgiving and praise to God

Understanding the Passage

In a final display of His authority before He reached Jerusalem, Jesus healed two blind men near the city of Jericho. The other Synoptic writers (Mark and Luke) repeat this story with a few differences. Matthew wrote of two men; Mark and Luke spoke of one. Mark included the name of the blind man, Bartimaeus. Undoubtedly two men were there and Bartimaeus was the more noticeable of the two. Matthew and Mark said the men were healed when Jesus left Jericho, but Luke said the healing occurred when Jesus approached Jericho. *

1. Who was Bartimaeus (Mark 10: 47)? How did he present his request to Jesus? How does our knowledge of God give us the confidence and posture to call on Him?

The blind beggar's name was Bartimaeus. He was the son of Timaeus (Mark 10:46). He appeared to have been a regular feature of the roadside. Bartimaeus' familiarity of the crowd

* Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-). *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (Matthew 20:29-34). Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

gave him courage and confidence to continually call out to Jesus without fear even though he was rebuked for it. He called out to Jesus in this way as recorded:

- *Matthew – Lord; Son of David*
- *The usage of “Lord” and “Son of David” tells us that Bartimaeus acknowledges that Jesus is the awaited Messiah and is God.*
- *Mark- Son of David- affirmation of who Jesus is as Messiah*
- *Luke Son of David ; Lord- God and Messiah*

2. What did Jesus do to him and why (Matthew 20:33-34)? Can you now see the relationship between mercy and grace? Tell us how the Lord has shown you mercy and grace this week.

Invoking on Jesus’ mercy, Bartimaeus requested Jesus for his sight to be restored. Matthew records the incident describing Jesus’ emotion of pity. This is noteworthy because as grace upon grace is given to us, we have the tendency to take it for granted. It is good to be reminded in Scripture, that when we ask of the Lord, the Lord looks upon us with pity and great mercy.

GG Leader: You may use your thanksgiving time to heighten this section.

3. While the mercies of God are new every morning, how can you reconcile the truth that others receive their answers to prayer and some do not? What does this tell you about who God is and who we are in His sight?

While the mercies of God are available for all, the Lord decides to whom and when He appropriates them just as He said, “I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy.” This teaches us that as His subjects, we have to learn and appreciate His sovereignty in all things at all times. When we do, we see His

might and power and also learn to see that we are just His beloved subjects in need of His mercy and grace everyday!

4. How did Bartimaeus live his life after his one encounter with Jesus? Crowd? If you were the blind beggar, how will you live your life after that encounter.

Mark 10: 52c; Matthew 20:34b; Luke 18:43b records that Bartimaeus “followed” Jesus as a disciple. While the crowd gave praise to God.

Conclusion

The Lord allows us to have special encounters with Him only because of His mercy and grace. As such, this is a great privilege to be “visited ” by Him that merits our devotion and allegiance. As His disciples, our lives should always yield to Him, depending on His lavish grace and mercy that are new every morning.

Prayer

Open the eyes of our hearts that we may see You, dear Jesus.

Notes

12 | Mary Magdalene

JOHN 20:1-18

Learning Goals

- Describe the Lord's pursuit in the life of Mary
- Admit to the Lord our areas of challenge
- Submit to the Lord's loving pursuit

Understanding the Passage

“Mary of Magdala” is a translation of the same Greek words which elsewhere are rendered “Mary Magdalene” (Matt. 28:1; Mark 16:1, 9; Luke 24:10). Her devotion to Jesus, living and dead, was based on her gratitude for His delivering her from bondage to Satan. She had been an observer at the cross and now was the first person at the grave.*

1. Who was Mary Magdalene ? Check the following verses:
 - Luke 8: 1-3
 - Matthew 27: 56
 - John 19:25
 - Luke 24:1
 - John 20:11
 - Matthew 28:1
 - Mark 16:1
 - John 20:10-16

* Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-). *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (John 20:1-2.) Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

2. What was Mary and Peter's initial reaction after finding out that the Savior was no longer at the grave (vv.1-10)? The other disciple (John v. 8)? Why was there such an outburst of emotion and panic (v.13)?
3. Mary expressed her grief as she wept outside the tomb (v.11). What was her reply to the angels' inquiry? Why do you think she never realized it was Jesus that was talking to her in verses 13-16?

Be able to Share: Have you experienced such great grief in your life? How has the Lord comforted your heart in this hour of sorrow?

4. What was Jesus' instruction to Mary (17-18)? What are the implications of the truth of verse 17 c *"I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God."*
 - a. That Jesus has is going to where the Father is.
 - b. The Father in heaven is also our Father
 - c. We are now part of God's faith family
 - d. Jesus is God
 - e. Jesus is ascending to the Father.
5. As the tomb witnesses declared to the disciples the disappearance of the body and Mary's encounter with the Lord, how did the other disciples react to such great news (v.19)?

If you were one of Jesus' disciples at that time (knowing how you reacted before He was crucified and died) how would you have felt and reacted? Why?

6. Peace be with you." (This is a normal Jewish greeting meaning 'shalom'). Why was this greeting appropriate for Jesus' disciples at that time? What were they going through? How and why did Jesus have to show them His

hands and side(v.20) ? How did that event comfort their grieving hearts? What does it tell us about their faith? Our faith?

Be able to Share: Knowing what Scripture teaches us today, do we still need to see the physical manifestations of Jesus? Why? Why not? What are you doing to grow your faith in the Lord?

7. Mary Magdalene was a sinner- a prostitute. How did her encounter with Jesus lead her to this faith and trust in Him?

Be able to Share: Is there a particular Jesus encounter that you consider most special? How did it change your life?

Conclusion

The love of Jesus has changed the destiny of Mary Magdalene in the same way it has changed the lives of many of those who believe. Mary journeyed from being a sinner to a faithful disciple of our Lord. Indeed, nothing is impossible with God when we surrender our life to Him.

Prayer

Like Mary, my desire is to be changed by You, totally.

Notes

13 | John the Baptist

JOHN 1:19-34

Learning Goals

- Understand the role of John the Baptist in the ministry of Christ
- Display courage in the light of challenges we face in our daily walk as a witness for Christ
- Endure with joy in the challenges of living as a witness for Christ

Understanding the Passage

John the Baptist is the son of Elizabeth and the priest Zechariah (Luke 2 1:57) as foretold by the angel of God. He was the great forerunner of Jesus and was sent from God, which was the secret of his importance. Like the Old Testament prophets he was equipped and commissioned by God for special ministry. ★

1. Check on what the prophecy says about John the Baptist in Isaiah 40:3? How were Zechariah and Elizabeth introduced in Luke 1:6-7. Why do you think the Bible describes them that way? What does it tell us about John the Baptist?
2. How does Mark 1 describe John the baptizer (Mark 1:6)? How about in Matthew 3:4?

* Walvoord, J. F., Zuck, R. B., & Dallas Theological Seminary. (1983-). *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures* (John 1:6.) Wheaton, IL: Victor Books.

3. In John 1:6-8, what does the verse teach us about John the Baptist? What does it mean to witness? What does a witness have to do? What was John's role? Another word for this is a forerunner. What does a forerunner do?
4. What was John the Baptist's mission in life (v.23b)? How did he introduce himself (v.23)?
5. How does John introduce Jesus in Matthew 3:11-12; Mark 1:7-8; Luke 3:4-6?

Parallel Passages. Check these passages as to how John introduces Jesus. Can you see any similarities? Can you identify nuances?

6. How does John compare himself and his ministry to Jesus Christ (vv. 26-27)? What does this section teach us about his posture as a forerunner? Why should Christ's forerunner exhibit utmost humility?
7. How did John introduce Jesus in verses 29-31? What does his introduction declare about the One who is coming after him?

- *Lamb of God – from the OT figure of the lamb for the offering. This time the lamb is not from the offerer but the one doing the offering is God for Jesus is of God and He is God!*

- *Takes away the sins of the world- As the Lamb of God is perfect/ without sin- He is able to identify with our sins. Jesus took our place of punishment.*

- *The man who was before me- establishes that Jesus existed even before John and before time.*

8. What does Baptizing in water denote? Contrast this with Baptizing in the Holy Spirit that will be done by Jesus Christ (v.33b).
9. How did John the Baptist's life end(Matthew 14:1-12; Mark 1:14-15)? How difficult was it to be a forerunner for the Lord Jesus in his case? Why is suffering a necessary journey for John? For the other disciples? For you?

Conclusion

John the Baptizer is a great witness for the Lord. He is a forerunner of the Lord whose purpose for living is to declare the coming of the Lord Jesus! As a forerunner, he endured the shame, blame and even death. This is the life of a faithful disciple!

Prayer

Teach me to be a faithful witness – in joy and even in suffering!

Notes

14 | Ten Lepers

LUKE 17:11-19

Learning Goals

- Understand the true essence of thanksgiving and faith
- Appreciate the Lord's grace and mercy in our everyday life
- Thank God for today!

Understanding the Passage

Lepers were considered outcasts during the NT times. They could not come in contact with the people. However, the radical thing that Jesus did was to meet up with them. In the same way, Jesus stipulated location (near Samaria) is a place that the Jews will not pass by as there is animosity between the Samaritans and the Jews.

1. From the context of the passage, describe the amazement of the lepers upon meeting Jesus as He walked into the village? You may have a dramatic presentation of this in your GGs.
2. How did the lepers gladly greet Jesus? Why do you think they were ecstatic to meet with Him? What were their words? What does it say of their knowledge of who Jesus is?

The lepers were likely excited because as outcasts, (This was stipulated in the Law) (Lev. 13:45-46; Numbers 5:2-4). They were not to go near the townspeople as to the nature of their sickness. But Jesus being the radical that He is, met with them. The outcasts declares the following:

- Jesus, Master – affirmation that Jesus is Lord.
 - Have mercy –the source of their healing
3. What was Jesus' response to the lepers' declaration and request? Why did he have to send them to the priests?

Jesus instructed them to show themselves to the priests as this was a stipulation still of the law (Lev 14:2-32). This will also serve as proof to the priest and the people of Jesus' power. And it was only the priest that could declare that they are well and are now able to be part of the congregation and the community.

4. How did the Samaritan leper react when he realized his healing (v.15)? What is the significance that he was a leper and a Samaritan? Describe the Samaritan leper's faith in light of his attitude of gratitude. What are the other undergirding lessons the pericope is saying apart from thanksgiving?

The Samaritan leper gave thanks to the Lord. This is significant for not only was he an outcast but also a foreigner in the land with whom the Jews would not associate with. This teaches us the accepting attitude of Jesus and that the work of the Lord is not only for His chosen people but to anyone who are willing recipients of His good grace.

Be able to Share: Why is thanksgiving an attitude believers should learn and develop? How can our consistent thanksgiving to God change the attitude of hearts and minds?

Application

Attitude of Gratitude. Make time to appreciate someone today. Write a note of thanks and affirmation.

Conclusion

Only by the Lord's mercy can we experience His grace, love and healing. As such, the Lord merits no other response but to give thanks and worship Him. May our life be a reflection of true worship and thanksgiving to the Master.

Prayer

Train me to live a life of thanksgiving and faith everyday!

Notes

Notes

15 | Peter

JOHN 21:15-25

Learning Goals

- Understand the challenges of being a faithful disciple of Christ
- Display courage in the light of challenges we face in our daily walk as a witness for Christ
- Endure with joy in the challenges of living as a witness for Christ

Understanding the Passage

John 21 describes the life of the disciples after the crucifixion of Jesus. Peter, after denying Jesus thrice, decided to go back to fishing. But the hand of the Lord was always upon him, pursuing His servant Peter.

1. How does the Bible describe Simon Peter?

Bible Search: Take turns in describe Peter as a follower of Jesus using the following verses:

- Matthew 14: 28-30
- Matthew 16:15-20
- Matthew 16: 22-23
- Matthew 17:1
- Matthew 26: 30-35 ; Luke 22:31-34;
- John 18: 10-11
- Luke 22:38
- Luke 22:54- 62
- John 21: 1-14

At the end of this segment, formulate some statements about Peter and his journey of faith. What is the significance of the name change and the change of heart?

Be able to Share: Do you see yourself in the life of Simon Peter? What area of his life is nearest to yours? How is your life being changed as well?

2. How did Peter show his faith in the Lord in the way he obeyed in John 21: 4-11? If you were Peter, how would you feel coming face to face with the Lord you betrayed? What does this miracle intend to do in the life of the disciples' wavering faith?
3. In John 21:15-19, how did Jesus confront Peter in light of his guilt and faith in Him? Why were the Lord's questions very piercing for Peter?
4. How did the Lord show His love for Peter despite the incongruence of his life and character? Describe the pursuing love of God towards His children?

Be able to Share: Has there been a time in your life that the Lord has pursued and restored you to a most respectable position despite your flaws?

5. **Parallels:** Read Matthew 22:34-40. Can you spot the parallels? Why do you think Jesus had to remind Peter of this truth in light of his restoration to the ministry? What should be the "One Thing" that a multiplying disciple of Christ must remember as one does ministry? How should this "One Thing" be evident?

Be able to Share: Do you have a similar story with Peter. Share.

6. Survey 1st and 2nd Peter. How did Peter carry on with his life as a faithful disciple of the Lord Jesus? How did verses 18-19 come true in light of Peter's suffering as a disciple?

Conclusion

Peter was an ordinary man, prepared, equipped for the Lord's extra ordinary work. His life was a great tapestry of the Lord's love, care, teaching and compassion. Affirmed by the Lord's calling and hand upon His life, Peter carried on with the Lord's work until death!

Prayer

Lord, have your way in me!

Notes

Appendix

01 | Appendix

How to have a Meaningful Quiet Time

Regular Quiet Time with God

Your regular quiet time with God is not designed for detailed intellectual analysis of the Bible passage, but for prayerful consideration and exploration to see what God might be saying to you. This will strengthen your relationship with Him. As the words hit home, allow the Holy Spirit to show you what you should do next. Then you can say you are ‘listening’ to God – with his Spirit meeting with your spirit, conveying to you what God wants from you as you respond to what you are hearing.

This style of reading is often called ‘devotional reading’. It is important to distinguish between reading for *information* and reading for *formation*. Devotional reading is not so much concerned with acquiring knowledge as with transforming our lives and relationships.

More than one process is at work when you read devotionally so you will need to employ different methods to those normally used to process written information.

Here are some practical hints to help you read effectively:

- Read slowly.
- Read the passage several times, perhaps in different Bible versions if available.

- Read carefully to understand what the passage is actually saying rather than what you think it ought to be saying!
- Savor the passage. Sometimes you will need to read the passage in full to feel the force of its message; at other times you might pick out a verse or a line to mull over before moving on.
- Try to imagine yourself in the situation, as a participant or spectator.

Reading the Bible this way is especially helpful for your regular times with God. This will need to be complemented with times of in-depth Bible study, when your intellectual abilities and skills are brought to the passage. This will help you to understand the Bible more fully, which in turn will give you greater benefits from your devotional reading.

Ingredients for Special Meeting with God

What are the key ingredients of this special time for meeting with God?

Open Attitude

Remember you are meeting God, Who knows what is best for you – even though sometimes you might not understand where He is taking you. Be open to what God wants to say to you, and how you can respond. It may mean surprises or may require radical changes in your life.

Best Time

Most of us are ‘creatures of habits’ and regular habits can be useful. If you plan to meet God at the same time and in the same place each day, this can help you to come prepared. Choose a time when you are alert, unlikely to be interrupted and able to put to one side any pressing need.

- Many people find first thing in the morning is ideal, as they are fresh and less likely to be pressured by other concerns and unplanned interruptions. They begin the new day with God and can trust Him to take care of all that is to happen during it.
- Some people prefer the evening—but make sure you are sufficiently awake!
- Others prefer to take time out during the day – a mealtime, while commuting to work by train or bus, or a few minutes between other responsibilities.

Experiment until you find the time that suits you best.

How long should I spend?

The quality of time spent with God is more important than the quantity. You could start with five to ten minutes. As you grow closer to God you will find that you desire to spend a longer time with Him. God knows your situation and the time you have available – so it really depends on how much you want to grow in your friendship with Him.

Quiet Place

Find a place where you can focus on God, ideally somewhere relatively quiet and free from distractions. Most people are able to focus more easily on God when alone. However, if you cannot find such a place, you may still be able to ignore what is happening around you and discover spiritual, rather than physical solitude.

Don't be daunted!

Do not be daunted if at first you are unable to find the 'ideal' time and place. Flexibility and creativity are keys to resolving such difficulties.

Negotiate with those you live with for time and space. You could ask your house-mate(s) not to chat with you for a few minutes or let the family know that the closed door in the

evening means ‘please do not disturb’. However, make sure you don’t create misunderstandings as you work out these practical details.

Be creative in making time to spend alone with God. All of us face pressures – but whether you are an office worker, a business person who commutes for several hours each day, a member of a large family in a small home or apartment, or a busy mother with pre-school children – you can still find some time.

If, despite your efforts, you do not find a satisfactory block of time each day, develop the skill of meeting God many times during the day. Find a minute here, several there. Or plan for an extended interval once or twice a week when someone else is able to mind any pre-school children and keep them out of earshot. You might even find that an occasional formal or self-managed retreat suits your personal circumstances better.

A Bible

Choose a version of the Bible that you can readily understand. Many people appreciate the New International Version, the English Standard Version and the New Revised Standard Version. Ask a Christian friend or church leader to help you select the right version for you. A paraphrase like Eugene Peterson’s *The Message*, can also be helpful.

Paper and Pen

Keep some paper or a notebook handy to jot down things that come to mind, to help you keep track of what God is telling you.

A Four-Step Pattern to Get You Started

Prepare

Consciously prepare yourself to meet with God by opening your life to His presence and expecting to receive from Him.

- Use a simple prayer, such as ‘Lord, as I meet You now please help me listen carefully to You and to respond obediently’.
- Because God is the author of the Bible, ask Him to help you understand what the particular Bible passage might mean for your unique situation. Perhaps you could pray Psalm 119:18 – ‘Open my mind, and let me discover the wonders of your Law’.

Read

Read an appropriate section of the Bible, taking time to ‘get the feel’ of what is written. Sometimes you will need to read through the section several times.

Explore

Think about the meaning of the passage. Three especially helpful questions are:

- What is the main point of the passage?
- What does the passage tell me about God? In some parts of the Bible we read only of God the Father; in others we read about Jesus (God’s Son) or the Holy Spirit.
- What might God be saying to me personally through this passage? In what ways can I apply the Bible’s principles in my own circumstances and relationships?

Use your notebook to write down your discoveries.

Respond

Respond to your discoveries.

- Make your insights the basis of your prayer. Praise God for who He is and what you have discovered about Him. Thank Him for what He is doing in your life. Apologize for your failures and ask His forgiveness. Ask Him to meet your needs and those of others.
- Meeting God is life-changing. To make your time with God worthwhile, it needs to have an impact on your daily life. Ask God to help you live out what you have learned – at home, at work, in relationships – indeed, in the whole of your life.
- Christians are not meant to live in isolation. Look for opportunities to share your discoveries about God with others, in both words and actions. You may be able to use these insights to encourage and help another person, such as a family member, another Christian or a friend who is not yet a Christian.*

* Warren & Shell, *Dynamic Bible Study Methods*

02 | *Appendix*

Writing Your Story

In this sermon series, we would like for you to know each other a little more. This will enable you to love one another more and be accountable for all information shared in your group. As your GG mates share their life journey, it is our Christian duty to treat their story as a sacred trust. Thus, more than just a story to re-tell, it becomes an item of prayer for you.

In writing your testimony, you may choose about one area of your life you would like to share. In this series, we would like for you to answer the question, “How has meeting Jesus changed your life?” In crafting your testimony, spend about 20% in describing your life before Christ, 20% about how you received Christ and 60% on how your encounter with Christ changed your life.

As you prepare your testimony realize you are fashioning an tool so you will be a more proficient witness for the Lord Jesus Christ.

Testimony Draft

A. My Life before Christ

B. How I received Christ

C. My Life in Christ

03 | Appendix

Songs of Solitude

I Will Never be the Same Again

Artist: Hillsongs/Geoff Bullock

VERSE 1

D G G A D
I will never be the same again
G A
I can never return,
 G A D Asus
I've closed the door.
D G G A D
I will walk the path, I'll run the race
 G A G A D
and I will never be the same again

CHORUS:

C G
Fall like fire,
A D
soak like rain,
C G
flow like mighty waters
A D
again and again:
Bb C
Sweep away the darkness,
Am7 D
burn away the chaff
 Em D
and let the flame burn
 G A D A
to glorify you name.

VERSE 2

D G G A D
There are higher heights, there are deeper seas
G A
Whatever you need to do
G A D Asus
Lord do in me
D G G A D
The Glory of God fills my life
G A G A D
And I will never be the same again

Still

Artist: Hillsongs/Reuben Morgan

C G/B Am
Hide me now
F D/F# Gsus G
Under Your wings.
C F
Cover me
Dm7 G
Within Your mighty hand.

CHORUS: F G/B C2
When the oceans rise and thunders roar
F G/B Am
I will soar with You above the storm
F G/B C2
Father, You are king over the flood
F G/B F(1st time)
C(2nd Time)
I will be still and know You are God

VERSE 2:

C2 G/B Am
Find rest my soul
F D/F# Gsus G
In Christ a-lone
C2 F
Know His power
Dm7 G
In quietness and trust
(Chorus)

Great Is Thy Faithfulness

VERSE 1:

D G A7 D
Great is thy faithfulness, O God my Father,
G D Em A
There is no shadow of turning with Thee;
A7 D D Em7
Thou changest not, Thy compassions they fail not
G D A A7 D
As Thou has been Thou forever wilt be.

CHORUS:

A D
Great is Thy faithfulness!
Em Em
Great is Thy faithfulness!
A7 D Em A
Morning by morning new mercies I see.
A7 D D Em7
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided
G D A A7 D
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord unto me.

VERSE 2:

Summer and winter, and springtime and harvest,
Sun, moon, and stars in their courses above
Join with all nature in manifold witness
To Thy great faithfulness, mercy and love.

VERSE 3:

Pardon for sin and a peace that endureth,
Thy own dear presence to cheer and to guide.
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow
Blessings all mine, with ten thousand beside.

Bm F#m G D
High King of heaven, my treasure Thou art.

VERSE 5:

D Em G D
High King of heaven, my victory won,
A G A
May I reach heaven's joys, O bright heaven's Sun;
G D/F# Bm G A
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
Bm F#m G D
Still be my vision, O Ruler of all.

In Christ Alone

Artist: Adrienne Liesching and Geoff Moore

VERSE 1

G D G A
In Christ alone my hope is found.
D/F# G D/F# Em7 G/A D
He is my Light, my strength, my song.
G D G A
This Cornerstone, this solid ground
D/F# G D/F# Em7 G/A D
Firm through the fierc -- est drought and storm.
D/F# G D Asus A
What heights of love! What depths of peace----,
D G Bm7 Asus A
When fears are stilled, when strivings cease---.
G D G A
My Comforter, my all in all,
D/F# G D/F# Em7 G/A D
Here in the love of Christ I stand.
Dsus / D G D
(In Christ alone...)

VERSE 2

In Christ alone, who took on flesh,
Fullness of God in helpless Babe.
This gift of love and righteousness
Scorned by the ones He came to save
'til on that cross as Jesus died
the wrath of God was satis--fied,
for ev'ry sin on Him was laid.
Here in the death of Christ I live.

Turnaround after verse 2:

D G / A / Em7 G / D Dsus /
...live
D G D
(There in the ground...)

Unchanging God

Artist: Elevation Worship

INTRO: [E - B - F# - G#m - E - B - F#]

VERSE 1:

G#m E B F# G#m E
Faithful, in the waiting you are...always faithful
B F#
In the valley you are
G#m E B F# G#m - E - B - F#
Faithful, in the midst of hurt and pain...you are
faithful

CHORUS:

E B F# G#m
Your promises remain forever and ever
E B F# G#m
You won't fade away, You never, You never
E B F#
Change, You're unchanging God

G#m E B F#

You will never change, you're unchanging God

VERSE 2:

Mighty in the battle You are...always with me

You're the God who overcomes

Mighty, you have raised me from the grave...you
are mighty

INTERLUDE: [B - E - B - E]

BRIDGE:

B E

Oceans will rise, kingdoms will fall

B E

But the Word of the Lord stands forever

B E

The sun will start to fade, the world pass away

B E

But the Word of the Lord stands forever

G#m B E

Death will try to come but perfect love has won

B E

Cause the Word of the Lord stands forever

INTERLUDE: [G#m - E - B - F#]

OUTRO:

G#m E

Your kingdom is forever

B F#

Your love will last forever

G#m E B F#

All glory, all honor, unto our God forever

Jesus Be the Center

Artist: Adrienne Liesching and Geoff Moore

D A/E D/F#
Jesus at the center of it all
G D Asus A
Jesus at the center of it all
G D
From beginning to the end
A Bm A G A
it will always be, it's always been you, Jesus, Jesus
D D/F# G
Nothing else matters
Em D Dsus D
Nothing in this world will do
D D/F# G
Jesus you're the center
Em Bm7
everything revolves around you
A D A/E D/F# G
Jesus, you, (1) at the center of it all
D A/E D/F# G
the center of it all

Jesus be the center of my life...

(2) A
|: From my heart to the heavens
Bm7 D
Jesus be the center
G
It's all about you
A
Yes its all about you :|

D A/E D/F#
Jesus be the center of your church
G D Asus A
Jesus be the center of your church
G D
And every knee will bow
A Bm A G A
And every tongue will confess you Jesus, Jesus

Nothing else matters...

04 | Appendix

What it Takes to be a Christian

Has anyone shared with you from the Scripture what a Christian should know?

There are five things you should believe to become a Christian:

1. The Problem

Everyone has sinned against God. No Exception.

“For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.”
- **Romans 3:23**

2. The Predicament

Payment due for our sin is eternal separation from God.
No Excuses.

“For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”
- **Romans 6:23**

3. The Provision

God provided the remedy for our predicament. God sent His Son Jesus Christ to die on the cross as payment for sins we can never repay.

“But God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”

- **Romans 5:8**

4. The Prerequisite

Ask for forgiveness and turn away from your sins. Just like any gift, God’s free gift of eternal life must be received through faith. It is by grace that we are saved. No one can earn it by good works.

“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.”

- **Ephesians 2:8–9**

5. The Promise

The Bible promises eternal life to anyone who will repent and believe that Jesus died on the cross to pay for their sins. He has crossed over from death to life—and will no longer be condemned.

“Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life.”

- **John 5:24**

Do you believe the above affirmations from Scripture? If yes, you know what it takes to be a Christian! I encourage you to express this faith in a form of prayer to God:

“Lord Jesus, beginning today I ask you to become the Lord of my life. I believe that you died on the cross to pay for my sins. I confess that I am a sinner and I repent of my sins. Thank you for forgiving me and cleansing me from all my unrighteousness. Thank you for the gift of Eternal Life. Help me Lord to live a life pleasing to you. In Jesus’ Name I pray. Amen!”

Now that you know what it takes to be a Christian....

- **P**ray to God constantly.
- **R**ead your Bible every day.
- **E**xperience worship by attending Christian services.
- **S**tudy the Bible with other Christians.
- **S**hare the good news with others.

- **O**bey God at all times.
- **N**urture your spiritual walk.

05 | Appendix

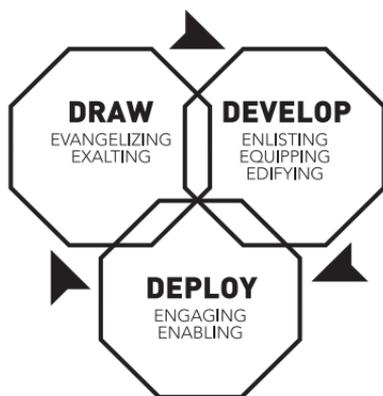
Multiplying Disciples

DISCIPLESHIP is the main thing in church. Everything we do gears towards Multiplying Disciples. Paul instructed Timothy, “*and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men who will be able to teach others also*” (2 Timothy 2:2). This verse gives a picture of a Multiplying Disciple—Paul discipling Timothy, Timothy discipling faithful men, the faithful men discipling others, and the others who will disciple others. Discipleship is a never-ending multiplication of Christ’s followers!

A DISCIPLE OF CHRIST is a committed follower of Christ. Jesus said, “*If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me*” (Luke 9:23). As you surrender your life to Christ and experience transformation, pray God will lead you to the right people to disciple.

Discipleship Process

A MULTIPLYING DISCIPLE finds “Timothies” who will multiply as a disciple. It requires endurance, obedience, and patience (2 Timothy 2:3-7). It involves a cyclical process of Draw, Develop, and Deploy:



E-Ministries

Evangelizing

Proclaim and Share the Gospel and Love of Christ

Exalting

Worship and Praise God Together

Enlisting

Connect and Assimilate to Growth Groups and Membership

Equipping

Teach and Train for Life and Service

Edifying

Renew and Refresh for Spiritual Transformation

Engaging

Serve and Send in Ministry and Missions

Enabling

Empower and Support All Ministries

**A PERSONAL TASK of guiding others
to be a Multiplying Disciple.**

Draw

- Share the gospel at every opportunity.
- Worship and invite people regularly in our Sunday services.
- Check up on their Sunday experience.

Develop

- Channel them to your Growth Group.
- Explain the importance of church membership.
- Stand alongside during their baptism.

- Sit beside them in equipping classes.
- Go together in fellowship groups.
- Discover and decide together in Crossroad Weekends.

Deploy

- Serve together in the ministry.
- Participate together in outreach.
- Pray for each other in missions involvement.

A COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY of Multiplying Disciples.

Each one of us has a role to play. Be one of the Multiplying Disciples of GCFSM. This is God's will for you. Be confident God will equip you as you commit and remain faithful in our pursuit of Multiplying Disciples.

*²⁰Now may the God of peace who brought again from the dead our Lord Jesus, the great shepherd of the sheep, by the blood of the eternal covenant, ²¹equip you with everything good that you may do his will, working in us that which is pleasing in his sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory forever and ever. Amen. - **Hebrews 13:20–21***

06 | *Appendix*

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Our Mission

To Know Christ and Make Him Known

Our Vision

By God's grace, we shall be a discipling church reaching influencers within our community to impact the Philippines and beyond.

Our Core Values

- Truth based on God's Word
- Love in All Relationships
- Empowerment by the Holy Spirit
- Diligence that Leads to Excellence

Our Strategic Goals

- Sustained Discipleship Process
- Continuing Leadership Development
- Everyone in a Growth Group
- Evangelism and Meaningful Worship
- Intentional Satellite Development and Support Church Planting Efforts

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