



**Daily God Walk**  
**Life of Christ**

**Ministry**  
**Book - 6**

**Daily God Walk  
Life of Christ**

**His Ministry  
Book Six**

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All Scripture quotations are taken from the New International Version (NIV). All other translations used will be credited using these abbreviations:

(KJV) – King James Version

(NKJV) – New King James Version

(TLB) – The Living Bible

(TM) – The Message

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# Who You Are As A Child Of God

Perhaps among the greatest disappointments to God has been our lack of understanding who we are. We very well know that we are sinners. Our faults, failures and limitations are glaringly before us. We have come to believe what the world has said we must be. Our environment, family, socio-economic level, and psychologists have all told us what we are and what we are to become. All of this is based upon the limited knowledge and reason of man. What follows is a gathering of scripture based ideas of what we are to God.

We have been held captive in a box that defines who we are as a person without God, and too often we carry that definition over into our life as a Christian. We forget that when we come to God we are “born again” and we become “new creations.” We are no longer held captive by the circumstances that have formed us into the person we have been; Who we are is now defined by the revelation of God’s will to us.

These pages contain over 100 confessions of faith based in Scripture. Read them often. Meditate upon them and God will make your way prosperous and successful (Joshua 1:8).

Having received Christ in my heart and life –through Faith, repentance and Confession- I acknowledge who I am (my identity):

1. **I am His most wonderful Creation.**

- ❖ **Ephesians 2:10** – For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

I am God’s creation, God doesn’t make any trash;  
I am made in his image for his glory

- ❖ **Psalm 139:13-14** – For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made.

The hand of the almighty has created me a unique specimen of his creative love – I will not cease to praise him for what he has done.

2. **I am in Christ, and Christ is in me**

- ❖ **John 14:20** - “On that day you will realize that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you.”

We have become one with Christ. If I can accept it, I am Christ to those in my world.

3. **I am a Child of God.**

- ❖ **John 1:12** - “Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.”

God has given me the right to become anything that a child of divine lineage can become.

- ❖ **1 John 3:1** - “How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God!”

We are both born and adopted by our Father; every promise he has given and is recorded in his word, is ours.

#### **4. I am a living Temple of God.**

- ❖ **1 Corinthians 3:16** - “Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit lives in you?”

Religions around the world have built temples to house their gods and God has chosen to take up residence on the inside of his people; we are not only the people of God, we are the house of God.

- ❖ **1 Corinthians 6:19** - “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own.”

We made a trade. We were living in a house of decay with no eternal hope; God chose to give us a house not made by the will of man, or the hand of man, one that is eternal. As the temple of God we are blessed with eternal life.

#### **5. I am a Partaker of His Divine Nature.**

- ❖ **2 Peter 1:4** - “Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires.”

As children of God we participate in the divine nature. We have been given access to the resources of divinity – to the extent that it is possible in the flesh, we have divine power.

**6. I am an extremely significant as a person.**

- ❖ **Ephesians 2:10** - “For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus...”

All of the creative craftsmanship of God has been brought to bear in the creation of man, in his very image.

- ❖ **Psalm 139:14** - “I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made...”

Not only was the hand of God evident in the original man, he watches over the formation, birth and life of every person who comes into this world; there are no insignificant no-bodies to God.

**7. I am a joint-heir with Him of the Glory of the Father.**

- ❖ **Romans 8:17** - “Now if we are children, then we are heirs – heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.”

In this becoming process as the children of God we are also becoming heirs and co-heirs with Christ. As we grow into the fullness of the stature of Christ God releases more of his glorious inheritance into our lives.

## 8. I am a new person.

- ❖ **2 Corinthians 5:17** - "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come."

Thank God I am a new creation; I am not what I want to be, neither am I what I was and I am not what I am going to be. I am a new creation that is becoming like him.

- ❖ **Ephesians 4:24** "You were taught, with regard to your former way of life: to put off your old self, which is being corrupted by its deceitful desires; to be made new in the attitude of your minds; and to put on the new self, created to be like God in true righteousness and holiness."

The only way we can progress in this journey of becoming is to "put off" and "put on." As we put off the old attitude, and adopt a new attitude we are becoming righteous and holy.

## 9. I am dead to sin.

- ❖ **Romans 6:8-11** - "Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus."

Just as Christ through his death defeated the hold of sin, so we through



**10. I am victorious over fear.**

- ❖ **2 Timothy 1:7** - “For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.”

My confidence is in the power of God and I am not intimidated by this world

**11. I am full of goodness, knowledge and able to counsel.**

- ❖ **Romans 15:14** - “I myself am convinced, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, complete in knowledge and competent to instruct one another.”

God’s word rests in me, therefore it is has made me good and complete and able to counsel others.

**12. I am being conformed to His image. I am a prince.**

- ❖ **Romans 5:17** - “For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God’s abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in and through the one man, Jesus Christ.”

**13. I am justified by faith.**

- ❖ **Romans 5:1** - “Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Justified: just as if I’d not sinned. What a thought.

**14. I am not ashamed of the gospel.**

- ❖ **Romans 1:16** - “I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes: first for the Jew, then for the Gentile”

God's grace and power in me has taken shame and fear out of my life. I am confident in him.

**15. I am born again.**

- ❖ **John 3:3,5** - "I tell you the truth, unless a man is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God."

**16. I am His Ambassador.**

- ❖ **2 Corinthians 5:20** - "We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God."

**17. I am an earthen vessel of God's treasure. (II Corinthians 4:7)**

- ❖ **2 Corinthians 4:7** - "For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all."

**18. I am a servant of the new covenant. (II Corinthians 3:6)**

- ❖ **2 Corinthians 3:6** - "He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant - not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life."

## **Characteristics of Being In Christ:**

**1. I am forgiven of all sin**

- ❖ **1 John 2:12** - I write to you, dear children, because your sins have been forgiven on account of his name.

- ❖ Colossians 2:12 - When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins.
- ❖ Ephesians 1:7-8 - In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace that he lavished on us with all wisdom and understanding.

## 2. **I am loved immeasurably**

- ❖ John 3:16 - For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

## 3. **I am accepted in the Beloved**

- ❖ Ephesians 1:6 - To the praise of the glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved (KJV).

## 4. **I am pleasing to God**

- ❖ Colossians 1:10 - And we pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God.

## 5. **I am complete**

- ❖ Colossians 1:28 - We proclaim him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect (complete) in Christ.

- ❖ Colossians 2:10 - You have been given fullness in Christ, who is the head over every power and authority.

#### **6. I am righteous by His blood**

- ❖ 2 Corinthians 5:21 -God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

#### **7. I am holy and blameless**

- ❖ Colossians 1:22 - Now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation.

#### **8. I am sanctified in the truth of God's word**

- ❖ John 17:17 - Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth.

#### **9. I am a saint**

- ❖ Colossians 1:2 - To the saints and faithful brethren in Christ which are at Colosse: Grace be unto you, and peace, from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. (KJV)

- ❖ Philippians 1:1 - To all the saints In Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons.

- ❖ Ephesians 1:1 - To the saints in Ephesus, the faithful in Christ Jesus.

#### **10. I am as He is in this world**

❖ 1 John 4:17 - In this way, love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like him.

### **11. I am Victorious over Satan**

❖ James 4:7 - Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.

❖ Luke 10:19 - I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you.

❖ Revelation 12:11 - They overcame him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony.

### **12. I am Victorious over sin**

❖ Romans 6:14 - Sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace.

❖ Romans 6:18 - You have been set free from sin and have become slaves to righteousness.

### **13. I am more than a conqueror**

❖ Romans 8:37 - In all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us.

### **14. I am an overcomer of the world.**

❖ 1 John 5:3-4 - This is love for God: To obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith.

**15. I am Free from all condemnation.**

- ❖ Romans 8:1-2 - Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.

**16. I am a resident of Christ's Kingdom**

- ❖ Colossians 1:13-14 - He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins.

**17. I am bold and confident. Eph. 3:6**

- ❖ Ephesians 3:12 - In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence.
- ❖ 1 Timothy 3:13 - Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus.

**18. I am able to do all things. Phil 4:13**

- ❖ Philippians 4:13 - I can do everything through him who gives me strength.

**Where I Am Positionally in Christ:**

**I am saved by His grace**

- Ephesians 2:8 - It is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God.
- Acts 16:31 - Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved.

### **I am eternally chosen**

- Ephesians 1:4 - He chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight.

### **I am secure**

- Hebrews 13:5 - God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you."
- John 6:37 - All that the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away.

### **I am received into God's family**

- John 1:12 - To all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.
- John 17:9 - I pray for them. I am not praying for the world, but for those you have given me, for they are yours.

### **I am protected from the evil one**

- John 17:15 - My prayer is not that you take them out of the world but that you protect them from the evil one.

### **I am crucified with Him**

- Galatians 2:20 - I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.

- Romans 6:3 - Don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?

### **I am buried with Him and**

#### **I am raised to walk in newness of life**

- Romans 6:4 - We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.

### **I am Free from the law of sin and death**

- Romans 8:2 - Through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death.

### **I am enthroned in heavenly places**

- Colossians 3:1 - Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God.
- Ephesians 2:6 - And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus.

### **I am delivered from the domain of darkness**

- Colossians 1:13 - He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son he loves.

### **I am reconciled to God**

- Colossians 1:22 - Now he has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in his sight, without blemish and free from accusation.



- 2 Corinthians 6:18 - All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them.

### **I am provided for according to His riches**

- Philippians 4:19 - My God will meet all your needs according to his glorious riches in Christ Jesus.

### **I am sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise**

- Ephesians 1:13 - You also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit.

### **I am bought with the Highest Price**

- I Corinthians 6:20 - You were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.

### **I am inseparable from God's love**

- Romans 8:35-39 - Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble, or hardship, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? As it is written: "For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered." No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

## **As A Consequence of Who I am, What I am and Where I am:**

### **I am enjoying His peace.**

- John 14:27 - Peace I leave with you; my peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid.

### **I am walking in a manner worthy of the Lord.**

- Colossians 1:10 - We pray this in order that you may live a life worthy of the Lord and may please him in every way: bearing fruit in every good work, growing in the knowledge of God.

### **I am considered worthy to suffer shame for His Name.**

- Acts 5:41 - The apostles left the Sanhedrin, rejoicing because they had been counted worthy of suffering disgrace for the Name.

### **I am authorized to have power over demons.**

- Luke 9:1,2 - When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases, and he sent them out to preach to kingdom of God and to heal the sick.

### **I am filled with power of the Holy Spirit.**

- Acts.1:8 - You will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.

**I am being guided by the Holy Spirit of Truth.**

- John 16:13 - When he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come.

**I am walking by faith, not by sight.**

- II Corinthians 5:7 - We live by faith, not by sight.

**I am a sweet aroma of the knowledge of Christ.**

- II Corinthians 2:14 - Thanks be to God who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of him.

**I am being transformed into his likeness with ever increasing glory.**

- II Corinthians 3:18 - We, who with unveiled faces all reflect the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

**I am being renewed in the inner man day by day.**

- II Cor. 4:16 - We do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day.

**I am blessed with all spiritual blessings in heavenly places.**

- Eph 1:3 - Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.

## **I am healed by His stripes.**

- Isa. 53:5 - He was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed.
- I Peter 2:24 - He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.

## **His Word Declares That I AM...**

1. A child of God (Romans 8:14-16)
2. Redeemed from the hand of the enemy (Psalms 107:2)
3. Forgiven (Colossians 1:13-14)
4. Saved by Grace through Faith (Ephesians 2:8)
5. Justified (Romans 5:1)
6. Sanctified (I Corinthians 5:17)
7. A New Creature (II Corinthians 5:17)
8. Partaker of His Divine Nature (II Peter 1:4)
9. Redeemed from the curse of the Law (Galatians 3:13)
10. Delivered from the powers of darkness (Colossians 1:13)
11. Led by the Spirit of God (Romans 8:14)
12. Kept in Safety wherever I go (Psalms 8:14)
13. Getting all my needs met by Jesus Christ (Philippians 4:15)
14. Casting all my cares on Jesus Christ (1 Peter 5:7)

15. Strong in the Lord and in the Power of His Might  
(Ephesians 6:10)
16. Able to do all things through Christ who strengthens me  
(Phil. 4:13)
17. An Heir of God and a joint Heir with Jesus  
(Romans 8:17)
18. An heir to the blessings of Abraham (Galatians 3:13-14)
19. Able to accomplish in Christ the Lord's Commandments  
(Deut. 28:12)
20. Blessed Coming in and Blessed going out (Deut. 28:6)
21. An Heir of Eternal Life (1 John 5:11-12)
22. Blessed with all kinds of Spiritual Blessings  
(Ephesians 1:3)
23. Healed in my soul by the stripes on His Body  
(1 Peter 2:24)
24. Able to Exercise His Authority over the Enemy  
(Luke 10:19)
25. The head and not the tail (Deut. 28:13)
26. More than a conqueror (Romans 8:37)
27. Establishing God's Word here on Earth (Matthew 16:19)
28. An Overcomer by the Blood of the Lamb and the Word  
of His Testimony (Revelation 12:11)
29. Can daily overcome the Devil (1 John 4:4)
30. Not moved by what I see (2 Corinthians 4:18)
31. Walking by Faith and not by sight (2 Corinthians 5:7)
32. Casting down vain imaginations (2 Corinthians 10:4, 5)
33. Bringing every thought into captivity (2 Corinthians 10:5)
34. Am transformed by renewing my mind (Romans 12:1, 2)
35. A laborer together with God (2 Corinthians 5:21)

36. The righteousness of God in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:21)
37. An imitator of Jesus (Ephesians 5:1)
38. Light to this World (Mathew 5:14)
39. Blessing and praising the Lord at all times (34:1)

## **Affirming your faith in Christ:**

**Lord, I here and now take my stand of faith in You and say that:**

1. I choose Jesus Christ as my God (He is Almighty, Creator and Ruler)
2. I choose Jesus Christ as my Savior (He died on the Cross for me)
3. I choose Jesus Christ as my Best Friend. (He Eternally Loves me and Accepts me)
4. I choose Jesus Christ as the most important Person in my life (Only He can give real meaning to my life)
5. I choose Jesus Christ as my Lord (to command and control my life)
6. I choose Jesus Christ as my Eternal Teacher (He knows Everything )
7. I choose Jesus Christ as my Only Guide (Only He is Trustworthy)
8. I choose my position in Christ (He has made of me a Child of God)
9. I choose to be Free in Christ (I am under no restriction to be saved)
10. I choose Victory in Christ (I can do all things He wants me to do)

Day One

## *Blessed Are the Eyes Which See*

Then he turned to his disciples and said privately, “Blessed are the eyes that see what you see. For I tell you that many prophets and kings wanted to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it. - Luke 10:23-24

Jesus had sent out 72 of his followers to go from village to village preaching the kingdom of heaven. He gave them power over disease and demons. They returned rejoicing that even the demons submitted to them (v17).

Jesus began to give them a little perspective concerning who they had become. He admonished them, “Do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.” He was saying, “Don’t get the big head over how the Father chooses to use you; you are just another servant in the kingdom.”

We have plenty of examples of people who have been used of God and along the way they became puffed up by the accolades poured upon them by the people. The grace of God upon them becomes an occasion for pride which far too often leads to their downfall.

Jesus was trying to help his disciples to see the danger of taking credit for what God did and he warned them to keep in mind that they were simply tools in the hand of the master.

With all that being said Jesus took his disciples aside and privately told them that they were blessed. They had seen what prophets and kings had longed to see. All the prophets had looked forward to the day in which Jesus and the disciples lived, but they did not have that

blessing. These men were there; they were enjoying the blessing of knowing Jesus, the Messiah, the Christ of redemption and restoration.

While we are to remember that it really isn't about us, and that we must keep all things in perspective, it is also true that we are a blessed people because we still live in the day of revelation. We have seen the glory of the Lord manifest through Christ and his followers through the centuries. Rejoice - your name is in the book of heaven.

**Prayer:** Thank you Lord for allowing me to live in the age of revelation. I ask in Jesus name. Amen.

**Message:** While we are to remember that it really isn't about us, and that we must keep all things in perspective, it is also true that we are a blessed people because we still live in the day of revelation.

**Affirmation:** I have seen God do many mighty works in our ministry, and I feel blessed, but I am most thankful that God has chosen me serve in the kingdom.

**Reflection:** The message of this passage is twofold. First, he admonishes his disciples (v20) not to become top heavy over their newly acquired power. Then he speaks to the blessing they have in being kingdom servants in the era of revelation. Give some thought to how this might affect your service.

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Two

## *One Thing I know*

A second time they summoned the man who had been blind. "Give glory to God," they said. "We know this man is a sinner." He replied, "Whether he is a sinner or not, I don't know. One thing I do know. I was blind but now I see!" - John 9:24-25

This particular event had caused quite a stir. Jesus not only had healed this man but he had done it in a peculiar way. He spit on the ground and made a little mud ball which he applied to the man's eyes then told him to go wash in the pool of Siloam. The man went and washed then went home being able to see.

The man's friends and neighbors couldn't believe it was him. He had been born blind and had been a beggar all of his life. Now he walked among them seeing as well as any of them. They asked him what happened and he recounted the story to them.

His friends were so excited they took him to the Pharisees to show them what Jesus had done. Then the fireworks started. The Pharisees told them, "This man is not from God, for he does not keep the Sabbath."

I find it incredible that Jesus could perform such a miracle and the religious leaders would declare, "He is not from God for he does not keep the Sabbath." And what did he do on the Sabbath that was so bad? He healed the sick and cast out demons, and oh yes, he forgave sins.

This man had been healed, he knew he had been healed and he knew that only God could do what Jesus did. He didn't care what others had to say about it, he only knew one thing; "I was blind but now I see."

All of us who have come to faith in Christ know this one thing; I once was lost but now I'm found; I was blind but now I see." The critics will argue, they will offer logic and reason, but they can't explain why we have such peace and joy in our life.

There is no more powerful witness to the power of God than a life which has been affected by the grace of God. We will not be successful in arguing doctrine with people whose minds are made up - but they can't argue with what you know has happened in you.

**Prayer:** Thank you Lord for the grace you have shown me. Amen.

**Message:** There is no more powerful witness to the power of God than a life which has been affected by the grace of God. We will not be successful in arguing doctrine with people whose minds are made up - but they can't argue with what you know has happened in you.

**Affirmation:** The world can argue about my doctrine, but they cannot refute what God has done for me.

**Reflection:** What made the leaders so angry about what Jesus had done in healing this man? Why did they say, "We know this man is a sinner"? Can you think of any modern examples of someone who was obviously doing the works of God, yet religious people scorned him?

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Three

*The Blind See And the  
Seeing Become Blind*

“For judgment I have come into this world, so that the blind will see and those who see will become blind.” Some Pharisees who were with him heard him say this and asked, “What? Are we blind too?” Jesus said, “If you were blind, you would not be guilty of sin; but now that you claim you can see, your guilt remains.”

- John 9:39-41

The Pharisees found that the man who had been healed from his blindness had a valid argument; I once was blind but now I see. However, they were not willing to “see” the truth of the man’s statements. He argued that Jesus could not have done this if he wasn’t sent from God and their response was to insult him.

Finally they told the man, “You were steeped in sin at birth; how dare you lecture us!” and they threw him out (John 9:34).

Jesus heard that they had thrown him out of the synagogue. He went and found him. He said, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?” The man asked, “Who is he sir? Tell me so that I may believe in him.”

Jesus said, “You have now seen him; in fact, he is the one speaking with you.” Then the man said, “Lord, I believe,” and he worshiped him.” It was at this point that Jesus spoke the words of our text.

The Pharisees who were standing nearby listening got the point. They asked, and it sounds like they may have been a little angry, “What? Are we blind too?” They were in fact blind to the truth, but because they thought they

had the truth Jesus said it was their inability to accept their error which made them guilty.

The problem with the Pharisees is that they were not willing to see beyond their traditions. If it did not fit into their tidy little belief system then they were obligated to reject it. Jesus didn't fit so virtually anything he taught they rejected. Their traditions had blinded them to the truth.

We must be careful that we do not become so committed to our own traditions that we are not able to see what God is doing today. Let God open your heart so you can see the glory he is revealing today.

*Prayer:* Lord, open my eyes so that I might see all that you have planned for me today. In Jesus name, amen.

*Message:* We must be careful that we do not become so committed to our own traditions that we are not able to see what God is doing today. Let God open your heart so that you can see the glory he is revealing today.

*Affirmation:* There is no tradition stronger than the truth revealed through Jesus, the Christ of truth and life.

*Reflection:* Jesus certainly led these Pharisees into a trap. If they confessed they were blind then their followers would be released to follow Jesus instead of them. By denying they were blind Jesus declared that they guilty of sin because they had eyes to see yet they did not follow the Christ that God himself had sent.

*My Thoughts:*

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Day Four

## *His Sheep Are Secure In His Hand*

My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. I and my Father are one. - John 10:27-29

The Pharisees were constantly trying to get Jesus to say something that would incriminate him. They had just asked, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly" (v24).

Jesus replied, "I did tell you, but you do not believe. The miracles I do in my Father's name speak for me, but you do not believe because you are not my sheep" (v25-26).

They didn't understand what he said because they weren't his sheep. In another place he tells them they don't even know who their father is and it certainly wasn't Abraham, Moses or God.

Jesus then went on to explain that those who are his sheep listen to his voice and they follow him. Those who follow him are given eternal life and there is no power on earth that can snatch those believers from his hand. This is among the best statements of Jesus which gives us faith to continue our walk.

Because of what Jesus has said we know that regardless of how hard the journey becomes we are secure in him. When we are talking about the security of the believer there are many ideas that come into play. Some believe that once one has become a believer that they then can do anything they want and they can't lose

their salvation. Others who believe that just any old sin is enough to keep us out of heaven.

What is the truth of the matter? I'll leave that up to the theologians, but I will step out on a limb and say, "I agree with Jesus." Jesus said that no one can snatch the believer from his hand. That is a pretty secure position if you ask me. However, he never has said that we couldn't step out of his hand on our own.

Our security is that as long as we remain submitted to him and are in the palm of his hand we have nothing to fear. The caution is that we must remain committed and stay in the palm of his hand.

**Prayer:** Thank you for keeping me safe. Help me to stay in your hand. In Jesus name, amen.

**Message:** Our security is that as long as we remain submitted to him and are in the palm of his hand we have nothing to fear. The caution is that we must remain committed and stay in the palm of his hand.

**Affirmation:** I am secure in my salvation because I have chosen to remain in the palm of his hand and nothing can snatch from that secure position.

**Reflection:** A great question is raised in this devotion. This question has been debated by theologians for centuries. Can a person lose their salvation? In one sense a saved person is as secure as he can be; and in another sense there is the danger of falling away. Ask yourself what could affect your secure position.

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Five

## *This Sickness Will Not End in Death*

Now a man named Lazarus was sick. He was from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. This Mary, whose brother Lazarus now lay sick, was the same one who poured perfume on the Lord and wiped his feet with her hair. So the sisters sent word to Jesus, "Lord, the one you love is sick." When he heard this, Jesus said, "This sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God's glory so that God's son may be glorified through it." - John 11:1-4

It had become obvious that this family meant much to Jesus. Mary, who was thought to have been freed from many demons, is the one who washed his feet with expensive perfume, perhaps it was the perfume she had used in her days of being given to evil. The message these sisters sent to Jesus was, "Lord, the one you love is sick."

The disciples thought that Jesus would immediately stop what he was doing and go to heal his friend. Then he said something strange. He said, "This sickness will not end in death," and he stayed where he was teaching for two more days.

When he decides to go back to Bethany he got into a discussion with his disciples about how unsafe it was because the Jews were trying to get him killed. Besides, by now the disciples knew Lazarus had died. What would be the benefit of going to see him if he was already dead?

After much discussion Thomas said, "Let us also go, that we many die with him." Such faith!

They had forgotten one thing. Jesus said, "This sickness would not end in death." He didn't say Lazarus wouldn't die, but he said that would not be the end of

the story. Lazarus is indeed dead, and had been dead for four days, but when Jesus arrived he raised Lazarus from the dead.

There is a lesson for us to learn in this passage. Often when we can only see defeat, and the circumstances have lead us to despair, Jesus is saying, "This is not the end. Trust me, everything is going to turn out alright." Circumstances may speak death, but Jesus speaks life.

***Prayer:*** Lord, grant me the faith to trust you in the face of impossible circumstances. In Jesus name, amen.

***Message:*** Often when we can only see defeat, and the circumstances have lead us to despair, Jesus is saying, "This is not the end. Trust me, everything is going to turn out alright." Circumstances may speak death, but Jesus speaks life.

***Affirmation:*** I know that in the darkest of circumstances Jesus is with and He is the light which will guide me and the life which will sustain me.

***Reflection:*** Why do you think Jesus did not drop everything and hurry to the bed of his friend who was dying? Jesus said, "This sickness will not end in death," yet Lazarus did die. What is the meaning of that?

***My Thoughts:***

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Day Six

## *Jesus: "I Am the Resurrection and the Life"*

Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." Martha answered, "I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day." Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" - John 11:24-26

"I am the resurrection and the life," is one of the most powerful statements Jesus made while he was on earth. Even those who believed in him, as did Mary and Martha, the sisters of Lazarus, did not understand the significance of who Jesus was.

We have the advantage today to look at the life of Christ from the perspective of recorded history, but his contemporaries did not have that convenience. All they knew about Jesus was what they could glean from Old Testament prophecies and by what he revealed of himself in his teaching. They knew him as a good teacher, even a great teacher. Some were beginning to know him as the Messiah, the promised one who would establish the kingdom of heaven.

However, they did not fully realize who he was. He was beginning to reveal himself as the Son of God, the very manifestation of God himself, but they weren't quick to grasp that truth. Now he was trying to show himself to have the power of life, and death.

"I am the resurrection... and the life." Mary was distressed about the death of her brother. In fact, she was quite disappointed in Jesus. She said to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." She believed he was the giver of life, the healer, but he had not yet revealed himself to her as the resurrection.

When we have come to know Jesus we have come to know life and the life that we know is resurrection life. The moment we believe in Christ that life enters our inner person and that life which is now in us is resurrection life. When we are finished with this body the life that is in us will break free of the bondage of this life and we will be with Christ in his heaven in a glorified state.

**Prayer:** Lord, I thank you for the life of Christ that is in me. Grant me the grace to always live in that faith. In Jesus name, amen.

**Message:** When we have come to know Jesus we have come to know life and the life that we know is resurrection life. The moment we believe in Christ that life enters our inner person and that life which is now in us is resurrection life.

**Affirmation:** The life of Christ is in me and that life is resurrection life. Resurrection life is eternal life. I have eternal life.

**Reflection:** The most powerful statement ever made is this: "I am the resurrection and the life." And the most powerful promise ever given is this: "He who believes in me will live, even though he dies." How do those two statements square with the following statement: "Whoever lives and believes in me will never die."

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Seven

## *Four Desperate Days – Then Jesus Came*

“Take away the stone,” Jesus said. “But, Lord,” said Martha, the sister of the dead man, “by this time there is a bad odor for he has been there four days.” Then Jesus said, “Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?” - John 11:38-40

The family of Lazarus had been grieving for four days when Jesus finally arrived at Bethany. Mary said, “Lord, If you had only been here my brother would not have died.” The mockers said, “Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying” (v37). And all Jesus said was, “Take away the stone.”

Mary and Martha couldn’t understand why Jesus had not come in time to heal Lazarus. They may have even began to have doubts about him. If he had only been there... For four days they had wondered where he was as they grieved their loss. For four days their faith was questioned and they wondered why Jesus didn’t come in time.

Then, on the fourth day Jesus came. Martha wanted him to ask God for a miracle (v21), but she didn’t know that God himself was there. She wanted life for her brother, but she didn’t know that life himself was there. She had hope for the resurrection, but she didn’t know that the resurrection himself had arrived.

Most of us have had the occasion of a severe trial and for days, even weeks and sometimes months, we struggled with our faith. Has God heard me? Is God even there? Does God even care? We have all of those questions which reveal that our faith has become a bit shaky. Then, in the depth of our sorrow, when it looks like there is no hope, Jesus shows up.

When Jesus comes on the scene there isn't always a physical resurrection, but there is always a resurrection of life. When Jesus shows up hope is renewed, our hurts begin to heal and our dreams are restored. When Jesus shows up we begin to believe again.

When you are faced with terrifying circumstances commit yourself to holding on until Jesus shows up. It may be a few days, weeks, or even months, but I can promise you this; when the time of trial has ended Jesus will be there.

**Prayer:** Thank you for being the resurrection and the life. Amen.

**Message:** When you are faced with terrifying circumstances commit yourself to holding on until Jesus shows up. It may be a few days, weeks, or even months, but I can promise you this; when the time of trial has ended Jesus will be there.

**Affirmation:** Jesus always shows up and it is usually "just in time." Even when the circumstances dictate that the bad news is the final news, Jesus shows up.

**Reflection:** Four desperate days - Then Jesus showed up. Have you faced that kind of hurt and disappointment? Have you cried as Mary cried, "If you had only been here?" God is calling us to trust him all the way. Not only in the darkness of trial but through the death of a dream, or even a physical death.

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Eight

## *It's Time to Take Off the Grave Clothes*

When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!" The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, "Take off the grave clothes and let him go." - John 11:43-44

In the time that Jesus lived the dead were not prepared for burial in the same way that they are today. When one died the body would be covered with certain herbs and spices then it would be wrapped in cloth to help preserve it.

When Jesus called Lazarus forth from the tomb he had these "grave clothes" that still restricted him, even though life had returned to his body. If he continued to be wrapped in grave clothes he would never get the benefit of the new life that Jesus had given him. That is why Jesus commanded that they remove the grave clothes and let him go.

Our faith walk is very parallel to this event. Our spirit man, which was wrapped in a body of death, was as dead within us. When we come to Christ new life is released in us, our spirit man is awakened, and the new life within us is the life of Christ.

When this happens we have a problem similar to the problem Lazarus had. We are still wrapped in a body of death. Until we become free of the effects of being wrapped in this body of flesh, which is dying almost from the day of our birth, we will not be free to walk fully in the abundance of the new life Christ has given us.

We can't literally cut our body away from our spirit, but we can minimize the effects of living in the flesh. In

Galatians 5 the apostle Paul lists the effects of living in the flesh (v19-21). He follows that list with a list of the effects of living in the Spirit (v22-23).

As we grow in Christ and become spiritually mature we are symbolically cutting off the grave clothes. The more we focus on the Spirit the less effect the flesh will have on us. Paul writes, "Live by the Spirit and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature."

Let us remove the grave clothes from this new life that God has given us and let us live in the freedom Christ has given us.

**Prayer:** God, grant me the grace to continue building my spirit man.

**Message:** As we grow in Christ and become spiritually mature we are symbolically cutting off the grave clothes. The more we focus on the Spirit the less effect the flesh will have on us. Paul writes, "Live by the Spirit and you will not gratify the desires of the sinful nature."

**Affirmation:** Bit by bit I am trimming away this body of death and longing for the day that I will be totally free from the decay of this temporal body.

**Reflection:** Can you identify with the process of cutting away the old life which leads to death and freeing the new life which is eternal?

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Nine

*The Kingdom of God is  
Like a Mustard Seed*

Then Jesus asked, “What is the kingdom of God like? What shall I compare it to? It is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his garden. It grew and became a tree, and the birds of the air perched in its branches.” - Luke 13:18-19

Jesus was trying to convey the idea that the kingdom of God might have a small beginning, but when it is in full bloom it will become a massive bush, or as he calls it a tree, that has many branches which becomes the resting place for birds.

The religious leaders had turned against him. They saw what he was doing as a threat to their influence on the people and they intended to stop him. They had already begun to make plans to kill him. They did not realize that Jesus himself was the seed which, when sown into the earth, would grow up to become a mighty influence in the world.

In another place Jesus said, “Unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds” (John 12:24). A farming community would know well what Jesus was talking about. Seed must be planted in the earth and there it germinates, it then breaks open and begins to push up through the ground.

Jesus was one small seed that would be planted in a grave of death, but when he pushed up through the grave and began to grow in the hearts of mankind he quickly became a mighty tree with many branches. He was just one seed, but he had prepared 12 who would also be seeds of the kingdom. Those 12 became 120 in the upper

room when this bush called the kingdom of God began to grow. Then on that day there were 3000 added and the bush grew.

This mustard seed bush we call the kingdom of God became the resting place of all who were in need of God's rest. The kingdom of God is still growing and is still providing a place of rest for those who are weary. People who study such things tell us that about 2 billion people claim to be Christian today. The bush has grown quite well.

**Prayer:** Lord, I desire to be a seed of the kingdom that is planted in the earth. Help me to be a resting place for the weary. Amen.

**Message:** Jesus was our great example of the mustard. He was just one seed, but he had prepared 12 who would also be seeds of the kingdom. Those 12 became 120 in the upper room when this bush called the kingdom of God began to grow. Then on that day there were 3000 added and the bush grew.

**Affirmation:** I claim the principle of mustard seed faith. As I invest in others they themselves become seeds which when developed begin to sow into the lives of other who become seeds in the kingdom.

**Reflection:** No parable presents the power of sowing and reaping better than the mustard seed. When it is sown into the ground it grows to become a mighty bush with many branches that bear many seeds. Sow your mustard seed.

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Ten

*The Kingdom of God is  
Like Yeast in Dough*

Again he asked, “What shall I compare the kingdom of God to? It is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into a large amount of flour until it worked all through the dough.” - Luke 13:20-21

Jesus had just given the “macro” picture of the kingdom in comparing it to a mustard seed that is so small it is hard to see but when it is fully grown it becomes like a tree. In these verses he is giving the “micro” picture of the kingdom. He is speaking about the effect the kingdom has on one life that will allow its influence to affect it.

I have often watched my wife make bread. She mixes all the ingredients together, including some yeast. Then she sets it aside and lets the yeast work on the dough. In a little while she will go back to the dough which has now doubled in size because of the yeast and she will pound it down until all of the air has been pushed out of it and it seems the effect of the yeast has been wasted. She puts the dough aside again and waits a little while. When she returns the bread has reached just the right consistency so she puts it in the oven to bake.

Jesus was saying that the kingdom of God is like the yeast to us. When it is added to our lives it begins to change us. The kingdom of God in us starts to transform us into the very image of Christ. Our nature is being changed; our habits are being changed; our thoughts are being changed. God is using the yeast of the kingdom to change us into his likeness.

There will be times as we are growing in the kingdom that God will need to put some pressure on us, just like

my wife putting pressure on the dough as she is trying to make it just right. In those times we may be saying, “God, what’s up? I didn’t think being kingdom dough would be so hard.” That is when God is shaping us and preparing us to be the final product.

Then comes the oven. Heat is the last test for the dough. If we have let the yeast do its job then the oven will perfect the work of the kingdom in us. He’s the yeast, we’re the dough; he will shape us into his image.

**Prayer:** Lord, give me a heart that submits to the work of kingdom-yeast in me. Help me grow into the image of Christ. In Jesus name, amen.

**Message:** Holy Spirit in us is like yeast. It is just a small amount, but it works through us to affect our whole person. Just as the baker puts pressure on the dough so the yeast will have its affect, so God puts pressure on us so Holy Spirit can do its work in us.

**Affirmation:** I sense Holy Spirit working in me preparing me for service. I embrace the father's gentle pressure as he works his will in me.

**Reflection:** In this analogy of Holy Spirit as yeast working in us to prepare us to be all that God has intended a question arises. Yeast and dough need a baker to prepare it for the oven. In our analogy, who would be the baker? And what is the heat of the oven? How does that compare with our spiritual walk?

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Eleven

## *The Door to Heaven is Narrow*

Then Jesus went through the towns and villages, teaching as he made his way to Jerusalem. Someone asked him, “Lord, are only a few people going to be saved?” He said to them, “Make every effort to enter through the narrow door, because many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able to.” - Luke 13:22-24

I once heard a song by a popular singer that was about going to heaven. In the song he sang these words, “Everyone wants to go to heaven, but nobody wants to die.” Most of us at some time have the thought go through our mind that we want to go to heaven when we die, but we aren’t ready to go just yet.

Those who were asking Jesus the question, “are only a few people going to be saved?” were probably like us. They wanted to be sure they were going to heaven, but they weren’t ready to go right now.

Jesus responded with a statement that should give us all concern. He said, “Make every effort to enter through the narrow door, because many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able to.” He is warning them that just wanting to go to heaven was not enough. He was saying that going to heaven requires full surrender.

There are many today who believe that if they just recite a magic formula they have their eternity secured and nothing they do after that affects their spot in heaven. Jesus seemed to be in disagreement with that idea when he said, “Make every effort to enter through the narrow door.” He at least is implying that we must make an effort on our own to prepare; and he is saying the door we go through is pretty narrow - there isn’t room to carry much baggage.

I'm not implying that we are saved by our own efforts, but I do believe Jesus is giving us a warning here that we can't just float into heaven on a cloud. We must follow him to the cross and live committed to the principles he taught.

If we are not willing to do that then we probably have not made him Lord in our life. Someone coined the phrase, if he is not Lord of all he is not Lord at all. I think that is what he was trying to say.

***Prayer:*** Lord, grant me the grace of being surrendered to you and help me to be ever mindful of the narrow door. In Jesus name, amen.

***Message:*** Jesus warns us that we can't just float into heaven on a cloud. We must follow him to the cross and live committed to the principles he taught. The door to heaven is narrow.

***Affirmation:*** I know the road is straight and the door is narrow therefore I am careful to follow Jesus with diligence.

***Reflection:*** How do we reconcile what Apostle Paul said in Ephesians 2:8-9 ( we are saved by grace through faith and not by works) with what Jesus said in this passage about making every effort (sounds like works) to enter through the narrow door?

***My Thoughts:***

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Day Twelve

## *Don't Wait For The Door To Close*

Once the owner of the house gets up and closes the door, you will stand outside knocking and pleading, "Sir, open the door for us." But he will answer, "I don't know you or where you come from." Then you will say, "We ate and drank with you, and you taught in our streets." But he will reply, "I don't know you or where you come from. Away from me, all you evildoers!" - Luke 13:25-27

There are two messages in this passage. In verses 22-24 he is warning us that the way to heaven takes us through a narrow door. In verses 25-27 he is telling us that the door does not remain open forever and when it is closed it will not be opened again.

I am reminded of the time when Noah built the ark. God said, "My Spirit will not contend with man forever, for he is mortal; his days will be a hundred and twenty years." God then commissioned Noah to build the ark and prepare for a catastrophic flood. When the ark was finished, man's time was finished. The door to the ark was open for the animals to go in and anyone who would enter could.

When the day of the rains came God shut the door to the ark. Those who were outside the ark could not get in and they perished in the flood. This story can be read in Genesis 6-8. God didn't just all at once shut man off. Noah preached for 120 years for people to be prepared and they just laughed at him. Then the door was closed and they couldn't get in.

We are living in a good time. Oh yes, I know we are in tough times economically, but in the sense of being able to call upon the name of the Lord and have him respond, it is a good time. We are still in the day of the open door. We can come to him and he will invite us in.

Do remember this though; he seems to be making a distinction between those who claim to believe just so they can cover their bases, and those who truly believe and who have submitted their life to him.

We must be careful that we do not put our hope in anything less than the truth that Jesus taught about being his disciples.

**Prayer:** Lord, help me to always remember that it is only through faith in Christ and accepting the grace to follow you that I am saved. Grant me a submitted heart. In Jesus name I pray. Amen

**Message:** To some who claimed to follow him he said, "I don't know you or where you come from. Away from me, all you evil doers. We must be careful that we do not put our hope in anything less than the truth that Jesus taught about being his disciples.

**Affirmation:** I know Christ is my salvation and my hope because I have committed myself to him and I trust him to guide me from here to eternity.

**Reflection:** Give some thought to the idea that Jesus seems to be teaching that a person can think they are secure, yet he declares he doesn't know them. What are the distinguishing marks between those who truly believe and those who would just like for others to think they believe?

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Thirteen

### *Who is That He is Throwing Out?*

Then you will say, “We ate and drank with you, and you taught in our streets.” But he will reply, “I don’t know you or where you come from. Away from me, all you evildoers!” There will be weeping there, and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but you yourselves thrown out. – Luke 13:26-28

Most religious movements begin with a genuine touch of God, but in time men begin to idolize the movement and build an institution around it. They then develop doctrines to secure the institution. The result tends to be that the touch of God is minimized and the work of the institution is immortalized.

Usually in just a few short generations a movement that began in the fire of revival becomes smoldering embers with little similarity to the movement that had been.

Jesus was addressing that issue as he taught these people. Abraham, Isaac and Jacob got it right. The prophets had it right; but the religious leaders of Jesus day were more interested in preserving their traditions than they were in what God was doing in his kingdom right then. The result was that Jesus said they would be thrown out of the kingdom.

God is calling us to a commitment which goes beyond a casual adherence to the faith. He is calling us beyond Sunday morning songs and sermons. He is calling us to a life of following him, even when following him means that we must sever ties with old traditions.

Every once in a while I catch myself becoming comfortable with being “a Christian.” I have good

fellowship. I have lived the lifestyle so long that it is second nature to me. I go to church every week, I teach every week. I become comfortable with the whole picture. Then one day in prayer the Holy Spirit begins to call me apart and points out areas of my life that need to change. Then he points out those around me who need to hear what I know and have what I have.

I pray that the Holy Spirit will convict you to keep the passion you were given at conversion and that you will not become comfortable.

**Prayer:** Lord, help me to always be sensitive to your leading. Amen.

**Message:** God is calling us to a commitment which goes beyond a casual adherence to the faith. He is calling us beyond Sunday morning songs and sermons. He is calling us to a life of following him, even when following him means that we must sever ties with old traditions.

**Affirmation:** I have chosen to follow Jesus all the way, regardless of what it costs in terms of my former traditions.

**Reflection:** This devotion brings up a serious question. Can people participate with religion, go church on days of worship, learn the scripture and the church doctrines, and still not be in the kingdom?

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Fourteen

## *Jesus Was Concerned for Jerusalem*

O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stoned those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing.

- Luke 13:34

Jesus had come to the world to offer hope and peace to all who would hear him. His desire was for Jerusalem to receive his message and become the place where life flowed out to the world. What he found in Jerusalem was people who were committed to keeping things the way they had always been. He was offering them a chance to become the center of kingdom influence to the world, but they weren't willing.

The irony of this passage is that Jesus was on his way to meet his destiny in Jerusalem and the people were not only unaware of what lay ahead of him but they also were not aware of what he wanted to do for them.

People followed him for loaves and fishes and to see the miracles. As long as it was safe, and as long as they didn't have to change too much, they would follow him. But when following him became unpopular and dangerous, they all turned against him.

The leaders of the people did not realize the plan God had for them. They were concerned about the Roman occupation, and they wanted to be independent; otherwise they were content with their tradition. Jesus not only threatened their tradition but they also saw him as a threat to their somewhat fragile peace with Rome.

It was their fear of the unknown coupled with their fear of Rome and their commitment to tradition which caused them to miss the blessing God had for them.

All too often we fall victim to the same issues. We fear to tread where we have not gone before. The unknown scares us. We are concerned about upsetting the balance we have achieved living in this world. To upset the whole thing might not be a good idea... thus we argue ourselves out of trusting God and stepping toward him in faith.

**Prayer:** God, grant me the confidence to trust you and the wisdom to step toward you in faith. In Jesus name, amen.

**Message:** The unknown scares us. We are concerned about upsetting the balance we have achieved living in this world. To upset the whole thing might not be a good idea... thus we argue ourselves out of trusting God and stepping toward him in faith.

**Affirmation:** I know that to follow Christ requires that I be prepared for change and to take risk. I am willing to do that to achieve the purposes God has for me in his kingdom.

**Reflection:** Have you found yourself trying to secure your world within your own comfort zone? Give some thought to how the leaders of Jesus day were comfortable within their traditions and didn't want to change, and how that compares to leaders today whose greatest concern is preserving their tradition. Has that affected their ability to step out in faith?

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Fifteen

## *Humility Helps Prevent Embarrassment*

When someone invites you to a wedding feast, do not take the place of honor, for a person more distinguished than you may have been invited. If so, the host who invited both of you will come and say to you, "Give this man your seat." Then, humiliated, you will have to take the least important place. But when you are invited, take the lowest place, so that when your host comes he will say to you, "Friend, move up to a better place." Then you will be honored in the presence of all your fellow guests. Everyone who exalts himself will be humbled and he who humbles himself will be exalted. - Luke 14:8-11

Many of us have been guilty of walking into a situation where we thought we were in a position greater than we actually were. Many years ago I attended a two-week training for a job I had. At the end of the training they had a rewards ceremony. They gave an award to the person who had overcome the most obstacles to achieve success in that field and a well deserved person received that award.

Then they were preparing to give the award for the overall number one person in the program. They began to describe the efforts of the person getting the award and they talked about his high scores on the tests and in his classroom performance. They were describing me to a "T." I had the highest scores and had won first place in a category or two. I knew they were talking about me.

As they were nearing the time of announcing the name of the person to be awarded I checked hair, took a deep breath and was ready to go forward to receive the award, when they called another person's name. At that moment I was very happy that I had not expressed my expectations to the person sitting next to me.

Jesus is telling us in this passage that we should not be worried about prestige or position because if we are we are likely to be embarrassed along the way. Be willing to take a lower place and when your talents and achievements are recognized you will be moved to a better position.

**Prayer:** Lord, give me the grace to think soberly about my position and not to think more highly of myself than I should. In Jesus name, amen.

**Message:** We should not be worried about prestige or position because if we are we are likely to be embarrassed along the way. Be willing to take a lower place and when your talents and achievements are recognized you will be moved to a better position.

**Affirmation:** Sometimes my place seems lower than where I belong, but I have learned that if I am humble that I will not only be saved from potential embarrassment but when others recognize my service they will move me to a new position.

**Reflection:** Have you ever been guilty of assuming you belonged in a certain position and faced the embarrassment of being asked to move so the intended person could be there? I have and it isn't comfortable. Give some thought to the message Jesus was presenting in this passage.

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Sixteen

## *A Call to Benevolence*

Then Jesus said to his host, “When you give a luncheon or dinner, do not invite your friends, your brothers or relatives, or your rich neighbors; if you do, they may invite you back and so you will be repaid. But when you give a banquet, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, the blind, and you will be blessed. Although they cannot repay you, you will be repaid at the resurrection of the righteous.” - Luke 14:12-14

In the verses above our passage Jesus is instructing guests who attend a banquet. In these verses Jesus is giving instructions to those who host the banquet. Typically, when people hosts an event they will invite people who will in some way be a benefit to them. They will invite business associates they are trying influence, or they might invite friends that they believe will reciprocate by inviting them to an event. Jesus is telling us that our motivation must be different than that.

The message seems to be that if we have influence and resources we should use them to benefit those who are not as blessed as we are. Jesus was consistently calling our attention to those around us who are less fortunate. He healed the blind, the leprous, and the lame. He ministered to all who needed what he had to offer and he didn't worry about being politically correct or about what was socially acceptable.

It was not uncommon for him to free people from demons or to forgive a prostitute and free her from that lifestyle. He was not afraid to go to the home of the publicans and he was not afraid to allow a forgiven woman to wash his feet with tears in the home of a Pharisee.

Jesus was a man of the people, the common man and the hurting masses. His heart was to touch those who didn't have the ability to help themselves. He is calling us to the same mind set.

When was the last time you set down with a homeless person and talked with them enough to know who they were? How about the people in your own church that could never invite you to dinner; have you invited them to dinner?

**Prayer:** Lord, grant me the grace of seeing others as you see them and to give myself to serving others. In Jesus name, amen.

**Message:** Jesus was a man of the people, the common man and the hurting masses. His heart was to touch those who didn't have the ability to help themselves. He is calling us to the same mind set.

**Affirmation:** I have accepted the call to serve those around me who are in need of someone to love them unconditionally.

**Reflection:** Is Jesus just talking about a banquet in this passage or is he talking about something more? Here is my question: Who are you helping that cannot help themselves and who cannot repay you for helping them? How willing are you to step outside your comfort zone to serve someone whose station in life is far below yours?

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Seventeen

## *The Table is Ready*

A certain man was preparing a great banquet and invited many guests. At the time of the banquet he sent his servant to tell those who had been invited, "Come, for everything is now ready." But they all began to make excuses. - Luke 14:15-18

An apparently wealthy and well known man was preparing a banquet for his friends and business associates. It was to be a gala event. Much preparation had gone into decorating the banquet hall and preparing the food. The invitations had been sent out, but no one had come.

The host sent out his servants to all of those who had been invited to remind them that this was the day of the great event. One by one those who had been invited made excuses for not coming. One said he had just bought some property and he had to go check it out. Another said that they had just bought five yoke of oxen and I have to put my servants to work plowing in the field. One by one they all made excuses.

Jesus was telling this story to let the religious leaders know that the Father had prepared the kingdom of heaven for them, but they were all rejecting it because they each had their own agenda. He was trying to tell them that the kingdom was going forward with them or without them and he preferred for them to come along.

The message of this parable applies to us today. Many of us, because of our preconditioning and our traditions, find it difficult to follow God wherever he leads. We'll go so far, but when our comfort zone begins to be stretched we tend to pull back into a comfortable place.

We must remember that God's plan for the kingdom will be executed, with us or without us. He prefers for us to be a part of what he is doing in these times, but if we refuse to follow wholeheartedly he loves us enough to let us stay behind.

The banquet is ready and the table is set. We are welcome to join the party, but if we don't the party will go on any way. Let's join the master at the banquet table.

***Prayer:*** Lord, I tend to get involved in the world and forget that your kingdom is most important. Help me to always remember that. Amen.

***Message:*** God's plan for the kingdom will be executed, with us or without us. He prefers for us to be a part of what he is doing in these times, but if we refuse to follow wholeheartedly he loves us enough to let us stay behind.

***Affirmation:*** I have accepted the reality that If I do not choose to wholeheartedly follow Christ he will move on without me. That is why I do follow him with my whole heart.

***Reflection:*** God calls, but it is up to those he calls to respond. Give this some careful thought: What is it in your life that is more important to you than fully surrendering to God and pursuing his will with a passion?

***My Thoughts:***

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Day Eighteen

*The Banquet is ready – Come  
One, Come All*

The servant came back and reported this to his master. Then the owner of the house became angry and ordered his servant, “Go out quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and bring in the poor, the crippled, the blind and the lame. - Luke 14:21

They had probably heard that the rich and famous had been invited to the mansion for an elaborate banquet, but not one of them had given a thought to being invited themselves. They all knew that poor aren't invited to such events. The crippled, blind and lame knew that they would certainly never be invited.

Perhaps these poor folks had fantasized about being invited to the mansion, but they knew it could never happen to them. All they knew was a life of poverty and hard knocks. Even in their fondest dreams the crippled, blind and lame never imagined dining in the mansion.

But that was what was being rumored about. Servants of the owner of the mansion were going up and down the streets telling them that banquet was ready and they were invited. The poor ones who had never been to such a place now found their feet taking them to the mansion. The physically impaired who had known nothing but rejection were now riding in the carriage of the wealthy man of the mansion.

The most rewarding time of my life has been when I've been working with people who had lost hope. They were stuck at the bottom of their barrel and could see no way out. Then someone reaches down and says, “Jesus loves you.” At first they can't believe it. They think you

are pulling some kind of a scam, but then, when they take you up on the offer they realize it is true.

You may have been one of those who never thought God would ever give you any attention. The things you had done were too bad and you had been doing it for so long that there was no way God would invite you to his banquet; but here you are feasting on the good things he provides.

Come one come all to the banquet God has prepared.

**Prayer:** Lord, I am not the kind of person others think of as great, but you have seen value in me. Thank you for inviting me into your banquet.

**Message:** God has first offered the kingdom to those who qualified by birth. Then he offered it to whoever would come. Today the banquet of salvation is prepared to all who would come.

**Affirmation:** I have no joy that the chosen ones rejected the call but I am rejoicing that the Lord extended the call who "whosoever will."

**Reflection:** How do you feel about being invited to the banquet of salvation? Do you feel worthy? What about those around you, maybe even some you wouldn't normally take the time to even greet, should they be invited?

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Nineteen

## *Count the Cost of Discipleship*

Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Will he not first sit down and estimate the cost to see if he has enough money to complete it? For if he lays the foundation and is not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule him, saying, "This fellow began to build and was not able to finish." - Luke 14:28-39

When we are witnessing to someone about Christ and redemption we rarely sit them down and say, "Now, this is what it means to follow Christ..." and follow that with the message Jesus was giving those who were following him. If we did that we would have fewer people say the sinners prayer, but we would probably have a larger number of people who are truly converted.

Just as in the day Jesus ministered, when there are spectacular things happening, people want to come and see what it is all about. Verse 25 of this passage tells us, "Large crowds were raveling with Jesus." Wherever he went the crowds followed, until he began to explain what it meant to follow him.

In verses 26-27 he says, "If anyone comes to me and does not hate his father and mother, his wife and children, his brothers and sisters - yes, even his own life - he cannot be my disciple. And anyone who does not carry his cross and follow me cannot be my disciple."

Having said that, Jesus gives the example of a builder. When he has the plans in his hands he begins to count the cost of the material and labor involved to see if he has what it takes to complete the project. Most of us have seen buildings partially finished because the builder ran out of money and that is not a good thing to see.

While he's calling his followers to count the cost of discipleship Jesus goes on to say, "Any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple" (v33).

Have you counted the cost of calling yourself a "Christian?" If you have, then what have you done that shows you have given up everything?

**Prayer:** Lord, counting the cost to follow you is a little scary. Give me the grace to surrender all to you. In Jesus name, amen.

**Message:** While he's calling his followers to count the cost of discipleship Jesus goes on to say, "Any of you who does not give up everything he has cannot be my disciple" (v33).

**Affirmation:** All that I am; all that I have; all that I ever hope to be, have been surrendered to Him and He is in charge of my life.

**Reflection:** As long as I can remember I knew that I was supposed to be a preacher, but it wasn't until I received the call at age 16 that I began to count the cost. Have you counted the cost of following Christ the way he has called you to follow him?

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Twenty

## *Parables of Found Things*

Now the tax collectors and “sinners” were all gathering around to hear him. But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, “This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.” Then Jesus told them this parable; “Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them...” - Luke 15:1-3

Most of us heard the parable of the lost sheep in Sunday School as a child, as well as the parable of the lost coin and parable of the lost son. However, we may not have considered why Jesus was telling these parables at this particular time. The Pharisees and other religious leaders were complaining because Jesus was not careful of who he ate and drank with.

The root problem was that Jesus and the Pharisees came from two different points of view. The Pharisees were concerned about keeping themselves pure and undefiled by sinners; Jesus was concerned about giving the opportunity to sinners to be made clean. Jesus saw the sinner as an opportunity to save and the Pharisees saw them as a pariah to be avoided.

Each of these parables emphasizes the joy of one who found the missing object. The shepherd calls his friends and neighbors together and says, “Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.” The housewife calls her friends and neighbors together and says, “Rejoice with me; I have found my lost coin.” The father of the found son says, “We had to celebrate and be glad because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.”

Jesus tells us at the end lost sheep parable, “I tell you in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven

over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.” And again at the end of the lost coin parable, “I tell you there is rejoicing in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.”

All of us were lost, and were like the prodigal son, away from the comfort and safety of home, then Jesus found us... or we found him. There is much rejoicing in heaven over you and I coming to Christ.

**Prayer:** Thank you Lord for continuing to call me until I surrendered. Amen.

**Message:** The conclusion of each parable of something lost then found is rejoicing. The often missed point of these parables is that heaven rejoices over those who are found.

**Affirmation:** I know that heaven rejoices when another receives the blessing of Christ and I am doing my part to keep heaven rejoicing.

**Reflection:** This 15th chapter of Luke has three stories of things lost then found. There is the lost coin, the lost sheep and the lost son. What do you see is the significance of these parables? Can you identify, and give some possible reasons for both the similarities and differences in these parables?

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Twenty One

## *A Shrewd Manager Loses His Job*

The master commended the dishonest manager because he had acted shrewdly. For the people of this world are more shrewd in dealing with their own kind than are the people of the light. - Luke 16:8

Jesus is telling the story of a man who was the manager of his master's business affairs. He was careless with the management of the business. In fact, he may even have been embezzling a little here and there. When the owner of the business found out that his manager was wasting resources he called the manager to account.

The manager knew he was in trouble when the owner called him in so he began to make a place for himself among those who were indebted to the business owner. He said to himself, "What shall I do now? My master is taking away my job. I'm not strong enough to dig, and I'm ashamed to beg - I know what I'll do so that, when I lose my job here, people will welcome me into their houses" (v3-4).

He called in the debtors one by one and began making deals with them. He asked the first debtor, "How much do you owe my master?" He answered, "Eight hundred gallons of olive oil." The manager said, "Take your bill, sit down quickly, and make it for hundred." He asked the next debtor, "How much do you owe?" He responded, "A thousand bushels of wheat." The manager said, "Take your bill and make it eight hundred."

When the owner found out what his manager was doing he was impressed at the wisdom of the man and commended him for his shrewdness. However, the man was still fired because of his dishonesty and mismanagement of the master's resources.

Jesus concludes this story by giving a tongue-in-cheek instruction. He said, “I tell you, use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings” (v9). He was reminding them that securing a place for themselves in this life is not nearly as important as securing a place in the eternal kingdom.

Friendship with the world ends with the grave, but friendship with God is eternal.

***Prayer:*** Lord, help me to be faithful to your kingdom. Amen.

***Message:*** In the story of the shrewd manager Jesus was reminding his followers that securing a place for themselves in this life is not nearly as important as securing a place in the eternal kingdom.

***Affirmation:*** I realize that Jesus was telling this parable to warn his followers that they must be wise about eternal matters and not to become fooled by the world's wisdom.

***Reflection:*** What do you make of the remark Jesus made in verse 8 about worldly wealth? Was he encourage people to seek worldly wealth because, after all it is only temporal and when it is all over we're going to heaven anyway? Or did he have another meaning?

***My Thoughts:***

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Day Twenty Two

## *Being Faithful in the Small Things*

Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else's property, who will give you property of your own? - Luke 16 10-12

Jesus is explaining the significance of the story in yesterday's message. The manager in that story was unfaithful to his master and not only wasted his master's resources but he cheated the master trying to secure a place among those who were indebted to his master.

Our verses today are telling us of the importance of paying attention to the little things because if we are faithful in the little things the big things will also be taken care of.

Some years ago our ministry was given the responsibility of a rather large motel to use as transitional housing for homeless people. Before we took over the facility there was a maintenance man in charge of keeping things in good shape. Over  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the rooms were uninhabitable. When we met the man we found out why.

When he would receive a maintenance call he would check it out and report back, "That is a big job and I don't have the time to do it now." Everything to him was a big job, even the seemingly simple things. The result was that things were falling apart because there was no regular maintenance.

So, why did he not have time to do the maintenance? Well, as soon as we were given the keys to the facility we

went straight to him and fired him on the spot. When our new man looked through the maintenance shop he found stacks of pornography. He did not have time to do his job because he was using his time unwisely.

The message Jesus is giving us in these verses is that if we can't be trusted to use wisely the resources we have then we cannot be given the responsibility of greater things. I once heard a wise man say, "You can tell how a person values their life by how they spend even a half hour of their time."

**Prayer:** Lord, grant me a heart to be faithful in even the small things and to use my resources wisely. In Jesus name. Amen.

**Message:** The message Jesus is giving us in these verses is that if we can't be trusted to use wisely the resources we have then we cannot be given the responsibility of greater things.

**Affirmation:** I continually seek to understand the value of my time, talent and other resources so that I can faithfully use those resources for the benefit of the kingdom of God.

**Reflection:** In these verses Jesus is giving us a better understanding of the parable of the shrewd manager. When you look at the way you handle the resources you have been given do you feel that you can be trusted with more?

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Twenty Three

## *What Do You Love?*

No servant can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money. - Luke 16:13

I once heard a person say, “I don’t love money - I get rid of it as soon as I get it!” Of course this person was just making a flippant comment, but the truth is whether you love to accumulate money, or you love the things money buys, if your love is for this world then you cannot love God and his kingdom.

We got started on this line of thought with the servant who was about to be fired because of his mismanagement of his master’s business. Jesus is teaching about faithfulness with the resources we have been given the responsibility to manage. That includes our time, talent and treasure.

The issue with the servant in the story is that he was more concerned about himself than he was about his master’s business. His number one concern was how he was going to maintain his lifestyle. He was not faithful to his master because he was only committed to his own will and desires.

I know a person who often talks about pursuing an ecstatic experience he calls “love,” yet, in the context of his quest for love he only talks about himself. He wants to have that utopian kind of serenity that in his mind is a perfect state of love.

The reality is that what he is seeking is the opposite of love. It is selfishness. It is all about him. Love is about others not ourselves. He is deluded into pursuing a self-centered objective.

I have known people who think of God as the great butler in the sky. They seek him continually for the things they want and confess that he is bound to give it to them because he said, "Ask and you will receive." So they ask, and ask and ask.

In fact, their asking reveals their heart. It is not their love for God which drives them to prayer, it is their desire for their own pleasures. The things we value in our life reveal what we have in our heart. What do the things you value reveal about your heart?

**Prayer:** Lord, help me to love you the way you deserve to be loved and to hold lightly the things of this world. In Jesus name. Amen.

**Message:** The things you ask for reveals your heart. Is it your love for God which drives you to prayer, or is it your desire for your own pleasures? The things we value in our life reveal what we have in our heart.

**Affirmation:** I am committed to keeping my heart free of desire for this world's goods so that my motives for seeking God's blessings are pure.

**Reflection:** Have you given much thought to the motivation behind your desires, even for spiritual things? I sometimes hear people talking about wanting certain gifts and I can tell by the way they are talking they aren't concerned about being able to minister to others. They just want to be blessed. How about you - do you desire spiritual gifts?

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Twenty Four

## *In Whose Eyes Are You Justified?*

The Pharisees, who loved money, heard all this and were sneering at Jesus. He said to them, "You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of men, but God knows your hearts. What is highly valued among men is detestable in God's sight." - Luke 16:14-15

Power, position, authority, tradition; these are all words which describe what motivated the Pharisees. Jesus confronted them time and time again on their attitude and the wickedness of their heart.

The Pharisees were listening to this story and were no doubt muttering among themselves about the naiveté of Jesus. In their mind he didn't have a clue as to how the world functioned. One must be "wise," even to the point of being deceitful, if one was to succeed.

It was more important for them to be thought of as righteous in the eyes of men than it was to actually be righteous before God. All of their righteousness was about impressing others, but true righteousness comes from God and pleases God.

Many years ago, when I was in college, I worked in a factory. Many of the college students worked there and one of them was a leader on campus. The other workers called us all preachers because we all attended Bible college. One day a fellow worker looked at the man who was a leader at the college and asked, "Is he a preacher?" I said yes he is. The other man then said, "He doesn't act like it."

As I observed this other fellow I began to realize our fellow worker was right. Oh, he didn't use bad language or tell bad jokes, in fact he didn't tell jokes at all. And

he was a good worker. What then caused the other worker to think badly about this man?

It was his attitude. He carried a “holier than thou” aura about him. He talked down to the “sinners” he worked with and was judgmental of others from our own school. He really didn’t project the spirit of Christ.

It is true that God knows our heart, and unfortunately, others can read our hearts as well. What does God, and others, see in your heart?

**Prayer:** Lord, Help me to be more concerned about what you see in my heart than the concern I have for how others see me. In Jesus name, amen.

**Message:** The words of Jesus: “You are the ones who justify yourselves in the eyes of men, but God knows your hearts. What is highly valued among men is detestable in God’s sight.”

**Affirmation:** The opinion of man is of little value when weighed in the light of God's opinion of us. I value God's opinion above man's.

**Reflection:** The following statements are from the last paragraph of the devotion for today. What do they mean to you? "It is true that God knows our heart, and unfortunately, others can read our hearts as well. What does God, and others, see in your heart?"

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Twenty Five

*Our Choices Today Affect  
Our Eternal Destiny*

There was a rich man who was dressed in purple and fine linen and lived in luxury every day. At his gate was laid a beggar named Lazarus, covered with sores and longing to eat what fell from the rich man's table. Even the dogs came and licked his sores.

The time came when the beggar died and the angels carried him to Abraham's side. The rich man also died and was buried. In hell, where he was in torment, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. So he called to him, "Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, I am in agony in this fire."

But Abraham replied, "Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, while Lazarus received bad things, but now he is comforted here and you are in agony. And besides all this, between us and you a great chasm has been fixed, so that those who want to go from here to you cannot, nor can anyone cross over from there to us."

He answered, "Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my father's house, for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment."

Abraham replied, "They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them."

"No, father Abraham," he said, "But if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent."

He said to him, "If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead." - Luke 16:19-31

Jesus gives us much to think about in this parable. First is the fact that we all will die regardless if we are rich or poor. Second, each of us has an eternal destiny; either in heaven with the righteous, or in hell with those who have not accepted the righteousness of Christ. Third, now is the time to consider our life while we have the opportunity to make the right choices. Think about these things.

**Prayer:** Lord, thank you for the opportunity to believe and accept Christ in this life so I am prepared for the next life. Amen.

**Message:** Each of us will die, regardless of our station in life. When that happens we will be asked to give account of our life and our eternal destiny is determined by what that accounting reveals.

**Affirmation:** I am careful to choose God's plan when making choices in my life that will affect my eternal destiny.

**Reflection:** Give some thought to the three points made in the last paragraph of this devotion. First, we all will die regardless if we are rich or poor. Second, each of us has an eternal destiny; either in heaven with the righteous, or in hell with those who have not accepted the righteousness of Christ. Third, now is the time to consider our life while we have the opportunity to make the right choices. Think about these things.

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Twenty Six

## *Faith to Forgive*

If your brother sins, rebuke him, and if he repents, forgive him. If he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times comes back to you and says, "I repent," forgive him. The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!" - Luke 17:3-4

Just as the disciples, most of us struggle with this issue of forgiveness. And, like the disciples, we often find ourselves lacking the faith to forgive. How often have we prayed, "Lord, give me the faith to forgive?" If you haven't prayed that prayer I've probably prayed it enough to make up for what you haven't done. Forgiving those who offend us does not come easy.

In verses 1-3 of this passage Jesus offers a perspective on forgiveness that may give us some motivation to be forgiving. Luke records Jesus saying, "Things that cause people to sin are bound to come, but woe to that person through whom they come. It would be better for him to be thrown into the sea with a millstone tied around his neck than for him to cause one of these little ones to sin. So watch yourselves." Then he goes directly to teaching on forgiveness.

Jesus is connecting our need to forgive others with a caution about offending others. Can it be that the way we respond to an offense will affect how another person responds to us?

It looks like Jesus is saying that when someone else commits an egregious act against us that we must consider their need for forgiveness above our need for retribution.

We must take seriously his caution to watch ourselves so that we do not offend others by our lack of forgiveness. If you are having a problem with being able to forgive I offer two ideas. First, consider the need the other person has to be forgiven. Second, pray for faith to forgive.

**Prayer:** Lord, increase my faith. Grant me the grace of being able to forgive others just as I need to be forgiven. In Jesus name. Amen.

**Message:** Jesus tells us that when someone else commits an egregious act against us we must consider their need for forgiveness above our need for retribution.

**Affirmation:** I have purposed to have an attitude of forgiveness toward those who are offensive toward me, regardless of whether they acknowledge their wrong. It is not my job to avenge myself, rather, it is my responsibility to offer grace.

**Reflection:** One phrase in our Scripture passage for today got my attention; "Increase our faith." We usually hear that quoted in the context of increasing our faith to believe for great things, but it was given in response to the Lord explaining about forgiveness. Do you need greater faith to forgive others? Think about it.

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Twenty Seven

## *The Saint and the Sinner*

Now one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, so he went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. When a woman who had lived a sinful life in that town learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster jar of perfume, and as she stood weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them.

When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is - that she is a sinner."

Jesus answered him, "Simon, I have something to tell you." "Tell me, teacher," he said.

"Two men owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he canceled the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?"

Simon replied, "I suppose the one who had the bigger debt canceled."

You have judged correctly." Jesus said.

Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven - for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little."

Then Jesus said to her, “Your sins are forgiven.”

The other guest began to say among themselves, “Who is this who even forgives sins?”

Jesus said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you; go in peace.” - Luke 7:36-56

Who is the saint, and who is the sinner?

**Prayer:** Lord, grant me the grace of being grateful for your gift of forgiveness to me and to be gracious to others you have forgiven. In Jesus name I ask. Amen.

**Message:** Those who do not see their sin as being very bad also have a hard time loving fully. Those who know their sins were horribly offensive to God have no problem loving fully when forgiven.

**Affirmation:** Before Christ my sins were ever before me, but now I know I am free of sin because of Christ and I love him much.

**Reflection:** A couple of interesting points stand out in this story. First Jesus uses the analogy of two different debtors forgiven and who would love the most. The other interesting point is that Jesus said the sins of the woman had been forgiven because she loved much. Was her sins forgiven because she loved much, or did she love much because her sins were forgiven?

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Twenty Eight

## *Faith That Moves Trees*

The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith!" He replied, "If you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be uprooted and planted in the sea,' and it will obey you." - Luke 17:5-6

Now that was really encouraging. If faith as small as a mustard seed can move trees, then how small must my faith be? Do you know how big a mustard seed is? It's about the size of the period at the end of this sentence.

I don't think the size of the mustard seed is the real point. It seems to me he is saying that it's not how much you have it's just whether you have it. If you have faith, even a little faith, a whole new world is opened to you.

What I really found interesting about the way Jesus responds to the request of the disciples for faith is the example he gave. Read verses 7-10:

Suppose one of you has a servant who comes in from plowing the field or tending the sheep. Would you take his coat, set the table, and say, "Sit down and eat"? Wouldn't you be more likely to say, "Prepare dinner; change your clothes and wait table for me until I've finished my coffee; then go to the kitchen and have your supper"? Does the servant get special thanks for doing what's expected of him? It's the same with you. When you've done everything expected of you, be matter-of-fact and say, "The work is done. What we were told to do we did." - The Message Bible

Can you see the foundations of faith in that story? I can. First, there is commitment to one greater than ourselves. We must realize there is a power greater than ourselves and we must submit to that power. Then there

is the trust that the one we serve will honor our service by giving us the agreed upon recompense. Finally, when we have done the job we were asked to do we can enjoy the fruit of our labor.

God's word has given us many promises and each promise seems to hinge on a responsibility. God is saying, "Trust me. Follow my instructions and I will bless you." We believe the one we serve is faithful and he will fulfill what he has promised. That is faith.

***Prayer:*** Thank you for the grace of believing your promises. Amen.

***Message:*** The foundations of faith: First, there is commitment to one greater than ourselves. Then there is the trust that the one we serve will honor our service by giving us the agreed upon recompense. Finally, when we have done the job we were asked to do we can enjoy the fruit of our labor.

***Affirmation:*** I serve cheerfully because I know there is a blessing at the end of the day.

***Reflection:*** Give some thought to the way Jesus answered the request of the disciples to increase their faith. He made faith as simple as doing what we know to do with the sure knowledge that God is going to do what he has promised to do.

***My Thoughts:***

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Day Twenty Nine

## *Only One Returned to Say, "Thank You"*

As he was going into a village, ten men who had leprosy met him. They stood at a distance and called out in a loud voice, "Jesus, Master, have pity on us!" When he saw them, he said, "Go, show yourselves to the priests." And as they went they were cleansed. One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. He threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him - and he was a Samaritan. - Luke 17:11-19

In the time of Jesus one who had leprosy was banned to a particular place for fear that the disease would spread. Jesus was going into a village to minister, and because they weren't allowed to enter the village, or to have contact with anyone who didn't have the disease, the 10 lepers waited for him at a safe distance and when they saw him they began to cry out for him to show them mercy and heal them.

Jesus didn't touch them, or even invite them to come closer. He simply told them to go to the priest and have him examine them. The 10 lepers saw him, they heard him, and they listened to what he said. They immediately began to go find a priest, and in the mean time they looked at themselves and realized that they were being healed.

Two major ideas seem to jump off the page at us. First, when Jesus gave them a command, they immediately went to do as he had said. It should be noted that they were not healed until they acted in obedience to the command of the Lord. It wasn't until they were on the journey to find a priest that Jesus healed them. I see a lesson for us in this part of the story. The message is this: when you hear the word of

the Lord, act on it without regard to whether you see the manifestation of the Holy Spirit.

The second idea that jumped off the page to me was this phrase, "One of them, when he saw he was healed, came back, praising God in a loud voice. He threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him." This man had a grateful heart. We must learn the lesson of a grateful heart.

**Prayer:** Help me to always be grateful for the gifts you give even when there is no obvious manifestation. In Jesus name, amen.

**Message:** It is not enough to reach out to the Lord for the answer to your difficult situation - you must also show gratitude for the good God does for you.

**Affirmation:** I have tried working things out on my own and I didn't like the results. I now have learned to trust the Lord and he works the circumstances for my ultimate benefit. Thank you Lord.

**Reflection:** Besides the obvious lesson on forgiveness, what other oddity do you notice about this passage? Look at the man who returned to thank Jesus for healing. He was a Samaritan. The 9 Jews didn't return to thank him, but the Samaritan did. What is the message you see here?

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Thirty

## *The Kingdom of God is Within You*

Once, having been asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come Jesus replied, “The kingdom of God does not come with your careful observation. Nor will people say, “Here it is,” or “There it is,” because the kingdom of God is within you.

- Luke 17:20-21

The Pharisees were stuck in their tradition. Their tradition said that the Messiah would come with force and would overthrow the oppressive governments that had intimidated them for centuries. They had hope for a literal kingdom and a literal throne. Jesus was trying to introduce them to a new idea regarding the kingdom.

Jesus had been trying to convince people for about three years and he had quite a following, but most of those who followed him were in it for the free bread and fish they were given. It appears that the general population loved Jesus and his teaching, but they didn't understand the kingdom of God as Jesus was teaching it. The religious leaders could not accept the kingdom of God Jesus was teaching because it was not in their tradition.

In short, it seems that nobody understood the kingdom. Even after his resurrection when he was giving his last instructions to the disciples they still hadn't understood the message. He instructed them to go to Jerusalem and wait for the promise of the Father. Their response was, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?” They did not yet understand, but they were about to.

Jesus clearly told the Pharisees, and anyone else who was listening, that the kingdom of God was not centered in buildings one could see but it was in the hearts of those who believed. That is an incredible revelation. We don't have to go to Jerusalem to find the kingdom; we don't have to go to Mecca to find the kingdom; we don't even have to go anywhere to find the kingdom of God.

When we believe in and commit our hearts to Jesus as our Lord and Savior we have found the kingdom of God and we carry the kingdom with us wherever we go because the kingdom of God is within us.

**Prayer:** Lord, thank you for allowing me into your kingdom. Grant me grace that I might bring honor to your kingdom. Amen.

**Message:** When we believe in and commit our hearts to Jesus as our Lord and Savior we have found the kingdom of God and we carry the kingdom with us wherever we go because the kingdom of God is within us.

**Affirmation:** The kingdom of God is within me because I have in faith embraced Jesus, the Christ as Lord.

**Reflection:** Today we do not have a problem with the kingdom of God being within us. Why do you suppose the people of Jesus day had difficulty understanding that? Do we as believers have some of the same difficulty understanding what God is doing today? Does our denominational tradition sometimes keep us from moving forward in our walk with God?

**My Thoughts:**

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Day Thirty One

*Ready or Not - He's Coming!*

The time is coming when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, but you will not see it. Many will say, "There he is!" or "here he is!" Do not go running of after them. The Son of Man in his day will be like the lightning, which flashes and lights up the sky form one end to the other. But first he must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation.

- Luke 17:22-26

Jesus was predicting three things in this passage. He was first predicting the time that has been called, "The day of the Lord." That is the time when the Lord returns and that day will come as lightning comes from the clouds. No one can predict the exact time of a lightning strike, if they could no one would ever be hit by it.

The second thing Jesus is predicting is that there will be many who will claim to be the promised one. They will be seen (and today are seen) as "the enlightened ones." And there are many of those today. People from all over the world travel to faraway places to be taught by these enlightened ones.

But Jesus tells his disciples not to be carried away by such things but to be faithful to the teachings he has given them and to look for his return.

The final thing he addresses is his own suffering that would soon be taking place.

The message I see in this passage is that there will be a time of great glory for all who are faithful, but until that day believers who are followers of Christ must remain faithful, not being carried away by those claiming to have special revelation and anointing.

We may not know just when or where lightening will strike, but we can tell when a storm is near. In the verses following our passage today Jesus gives a few clues of when to look for his return.

He warns, "Just as it was in the days of Noah." Wickedness had become so prevalent in those days that God was moved to destroy mankind. He also refers to the days of lot and the wicked people of that time.

Look around you. Observe the times. This is his warning.

***Prayer:*** Lord, help me to observe the times and prepare myself. Amen.

***Principle:*** We may not know just when or where lightening will strike, but we can tell when a storm is near. The signs around us today speak of a coming storm and of the return of our Lord and King, Jesus. We must be ready because ready or not He is coming.

***Affirmation:*** I am ready for his return. Like the bride of revelation, I have made myself ready and the cry of my heart is, "Come Lord Jesus."

***Reflection:*** Jesus warns about going from place to place trying to find a Messiah when he has already come. We do not have to go to a high mountain or a strange place to find him. He is right here, right now. His desire is to fill us with hi Spirit and prepare us for his return.

***My Thoughts:***

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