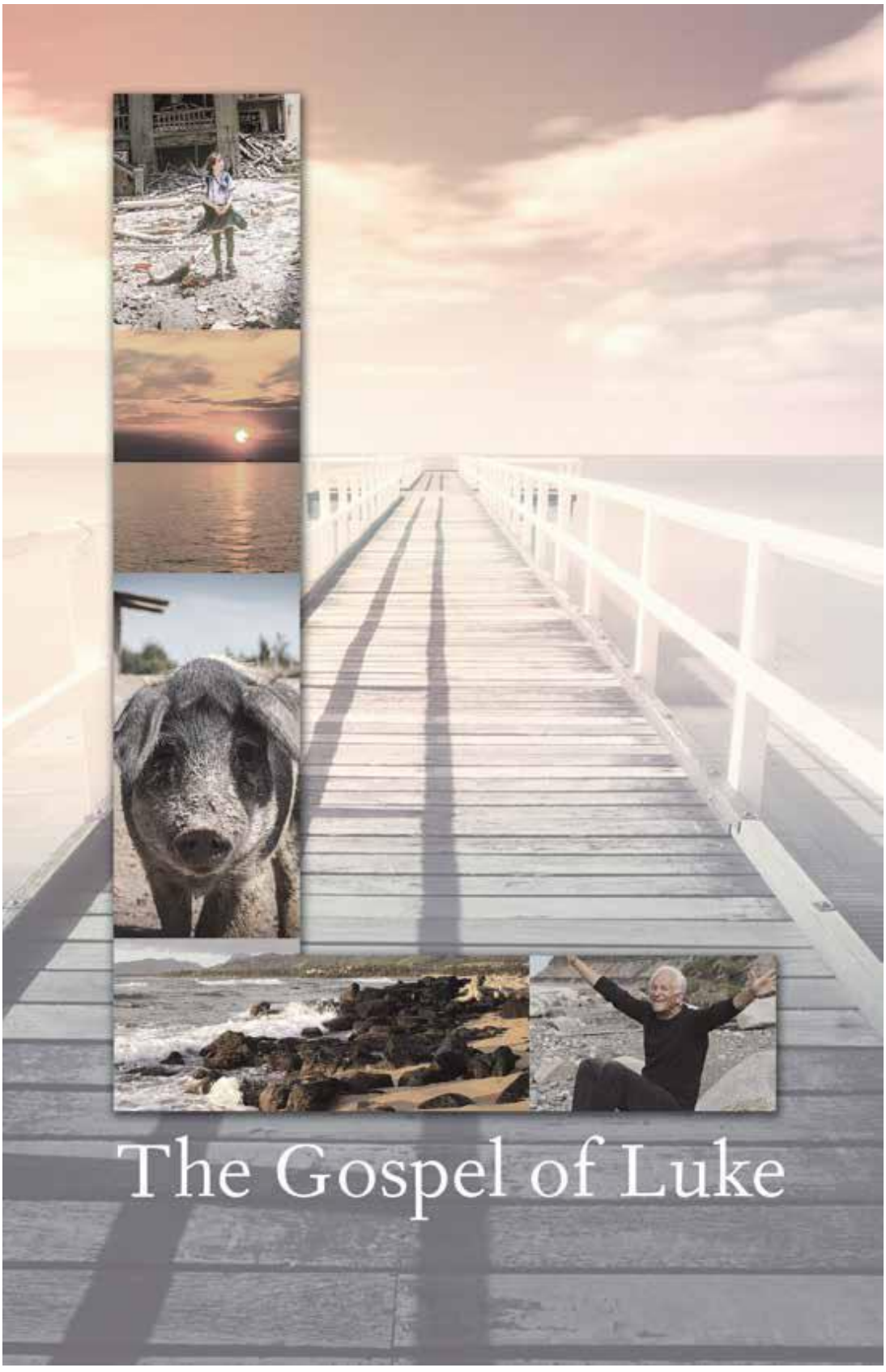


The Gospel of Luke

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Welcome to Visual Luke

The Bible is relevant for today's living. Yet sometimes the images and metaphors of our daily lives seem removed from the words of Scripture. Visual Luke in the Contemporary English Version (CEV) is designed to help link LIFE and SCRIPTURE.

Visual Luke is designed to match new images with ancient words. High school students and parents of children across the USA selected many of these images as they described their lives and spiritual journeys.

Some of these images will connect deeply with you. Other images may have little connection with your current life. Engage with the images that impact you as a means of better engaging with the timeless stories of Scripture.

In addition to images, each chapter has a variety of questions to help you consider the relevance of the passage to your life journey. Take time to consider some of the questions that seem most appropriate for you.









Many people have tried to tell the story of what God has done among us. [2] They wrote what we had been told
by the ones who were there in the beginning and saw what happened. [3] So I made a careful study[a] of
everything and then decided to write and tell you exactly what took place. Honorable Theophilus, [4] I have
done this to let you know the truth about what you have heard.

An Angel Tells about the Birth of John

[5] When Herod was king of Judea, there was a priest by the name of Zechariah from the priestly group of
Abijah. His wife Elizabeth was from the family of Aaron.[b] [6] Both of them were good people and pleased the
Lord God by obeying all that he had commanded. [7] But they did not have children. Elizabeth could not have
any, and both Zechariah and Elizabeth were already old.

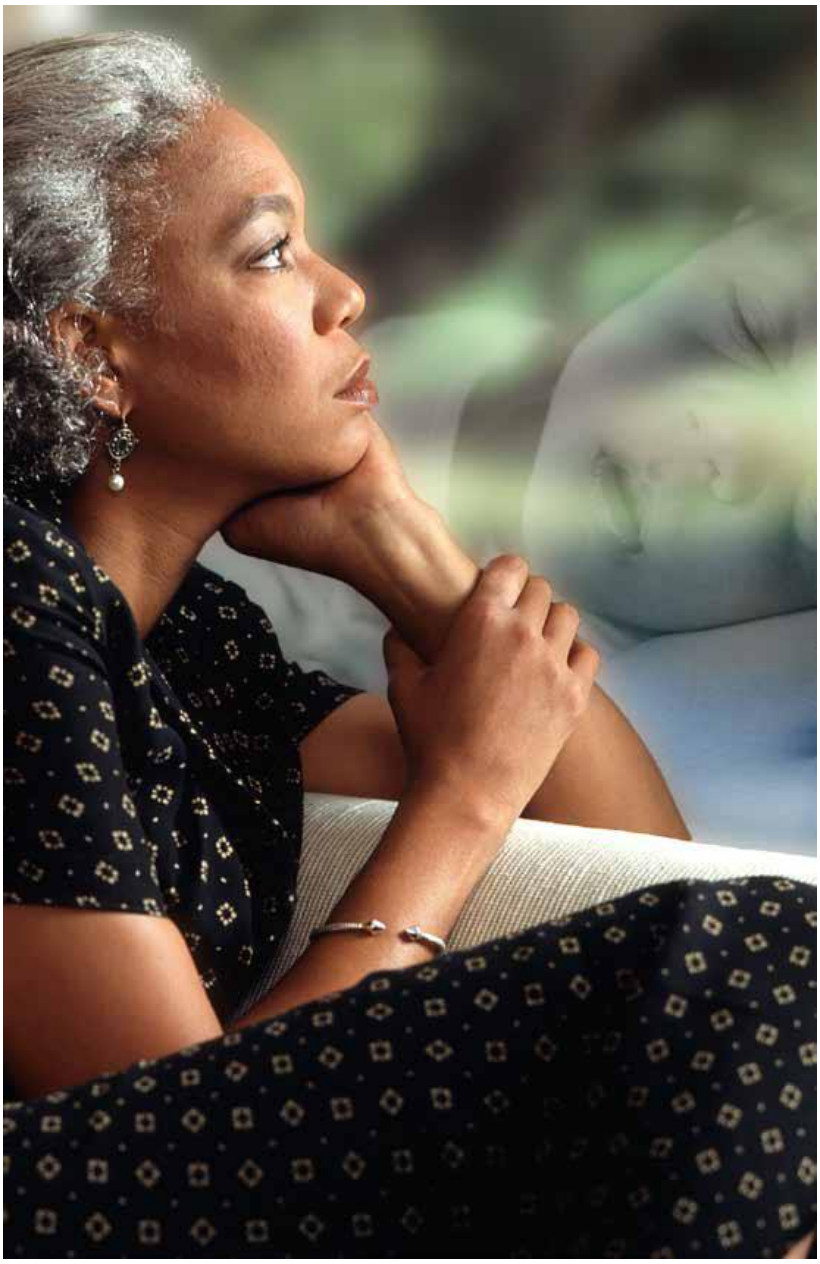
[8] One day Zechariah's group of priests were on duty, and he was serving God as a priest. [9] According to the
custom of the priests, he had been chosen to go into the Lord's temple that day and to burn incense,[c] [10] while
the people stood outside praying.

[11] All at once an angel from the Lord appeared to Zechariah at the right side of the altar. [12] Zechariah was
confused and afraid when he saw the angel. [13] But the angel told him:

Don't be afraid, Zechariah! God has heard your prayers. Your wife Elizabeth will have a son, and you must
name him John. [14] His birth will make you very happy, and many people will be glad. [15] Your son will be a
great servant of the Lord. He must never drink wine or beer, and the power of the Holy Spirit will be with him
from the time he is born. [16] John will lead many people in Israel to turn back to the Lord their God. [17] He will
go ahead of the Lord with the same power and spirit that Elijah[d] had. And because of John, parents will be
more thoughtful of their children. And people who now disobey God will begin to think as they ought to. That

is how John will get people ready for the Lord.

18 Zechariah said to the angel, “How will I



know this is going to happen? My wife and I are both very old.”

19 The angel answered, “I am Gabriel, God’s servant, and I was sent to tell you this good news. 20 You have not believed what I have said. So you will not be able to say a thing until all this happens. But everything will take place when it is supposed to.”

21 The crowd was waiting for Zechariah and kept wondering why

he was staying so long in the temple. 22 When he did come out, he could not speak, and they knew he had seen a vision. He motioned to them with his hands, but did not say a thing. 23 When Zechariah’s time of service in

the temple was over, he went home. [24] Soon after that, his wife was expecting a baby, and for five months she did not leave the house. She said to herself, [25] "What the Lord has done for me will keep people from looking down on me."[e]

An Angel Tells about the Birth of Jesus

[26] One month later God sent the angel Gabriel to the town of Nazareth in Galilee [27] with a message for a virgin named Mary. She was engaged to Joseph from the family of King David. [28] The angel greeted Mary and said, "You are truly blessed! The Lord is with you."

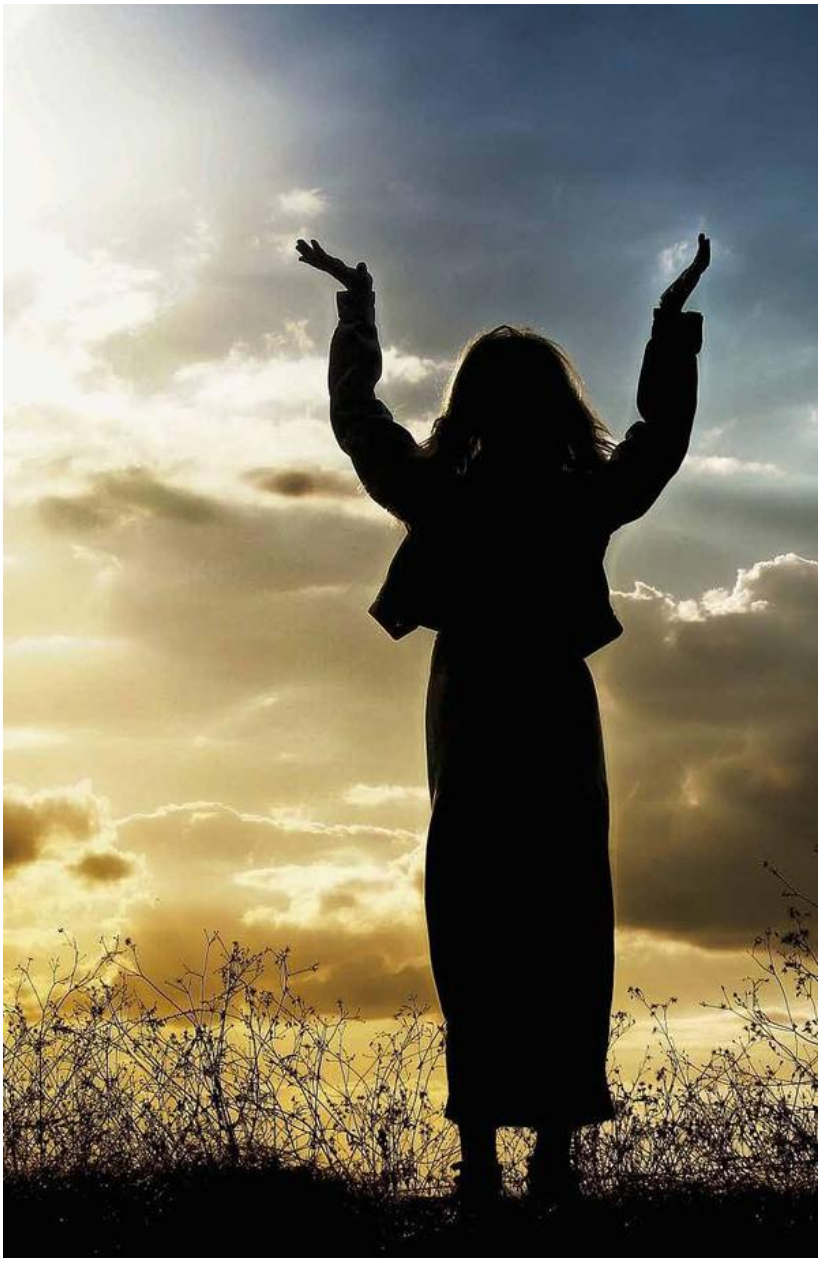
[29] Mary was confused by the angel's words and wondered what they meant. [30] Then the angel told Mary, "Don't be afraid! God is pleased with you, [31] and you will have a son. His name will be Jesus. [32] He will be great and will be called the Son of God Most High. The Lord God will make him king, as his ancestor David was. [33]

1.1

Look carefully at the image on this page. What are you feeling as you enter into this image? How might this image and the feelings it evokes– connect with an experience in your own life?

1.2

Zechariah experiences a range of emotions – fear, hope, disbelief – when he hears the news about the unexpected birth of his son who will become John the Baptist. Have there been times in your life when God is speaking to you – in prayer, through other people, through life experiences – and your response has been fearful or hopeful or simply disbelief? If yes, describe those experiences.



He will rule the people of Israel forever, and his kingdom will never end."

[34] Mary asked the angel, "How can this happen? I am not married!"

[35] The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come down to you, and God's power will come over you. So your child will be called the holy Son of God. [36] Your relative Elizabeth is also going to have a son, even though she is old. No one thought she could ever have a baby, but in three months she will have a son. [37] Nothing is impossible for God!"

[38] Mary said, "I am the Lord's servant! Let it happen as you have said." And the angel left her.

Mary Visits Elizabeth

[39] A short time later Mary hurried to a town in the hill country of Judea. [40] She went into Zechariah's home, where she greeted Elizabeth. [41] When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, her baby moved within her.

The Holy Spirit came upon Elizabeth. [42] Then in a loud voice she said to Mary:

God has blessed you more than any other woman! He has also blessed the child you will have. [43] Why should the mother of my Lord come to me? [44] As soon as I heard your greeting, my baby became happy and moved within me. [45] The Lord has blessed you because you believed that he will keep his promise.

1.3

Consider the image of the woman on this page. What story do you see in this image? What words would you use in writing your story of this image?

1.4

How does the image of the women connect with Mary's story? How might you imagine yourself in Mary's story—are their experiences in your life that connect with Mary's story? How can you live this story in your life today and into the future?

1.5

Imagine yourself as the child in the photo on this page. If you put yourself in that photo where would you be? What would you be feeling? thinking? doing?

Mary's Song of Praise

[46] Mary said:

With all my heart

I praise the Lord,
[47] and I am glad

because of God my Savior.
[48] He cares for me,

his humble servant. From now on,

all people will say

God has blessed me. [49] God All-Powerful has done
great things for me,

and his name is holy.
[50] He always shows

mercy

to everyone

who worships him. [51] The Lord has used
his powerful arm to scatter those
who are proud. [52] He drags strong rulers
from their thrones and puts humble people
in places of power. [53] God gives the hungry
good things to eat, and sends the rich away
with nothing.



[54] He helps his servant Israel

and is always merciful

to his people.
[55] The Lord made this promise

to our ancestors,
to Abraham and his family

forever!
[56] Mary stayed with Elizabeth about three months. Then she went back home.

The Birth of John the Baptist

[57] When Elizabeth's son was born, [58] her neighbors and relatives heard how kind the Lord had been to her, and they too were glad. [59] Eight days later they did for the child what the Law of Moses commands.[f] They were going to name him Zechariah, after his father. [60] But Elizabeth said, "No! His name is John." [61] The people argued, "No one in your family has ever been named John." [62] So they motioned to Zechariah to find out what he wanted to name his son.

[63] Zechariah asked for a writing tablet. Then he wrote, "His name is John." Everyone was amazed. [64] Right away, Zechariah started speaking and praising God.

[65] All the neighbors were frightened because of what had happened, and everywhere in the hill country people kept talking about these things. [66] Everyone who heard about this wondered what this child would grow up to be. They knew that the Lord was with him.

1.6

Put yourself inside Mary's life and her response to God's love and the gift of new life. How do you respond to God's grace and love in your own life? How does your response relate to how you see God and to the way you live?

1.7

How do you respond to the image of the baby and shoes? What feelings does the image stir-up in you? How do these feelings remind you of a story or experience in your own life?

1.8

How do you see God at work in the image? How do you see God at work in the story of John's birth? Thinking of your own life, how do you see God at work each day?



Zechariah Praises the Lord

67 The Holy Spirit came upon Zechariah, and he began to speak:

68 Praise the Lord,

the God of Israel!
He has come

to save his people.
69 Our God has given us

a mighty Savior[g]
from the family

of David his servant.
70 Long ago the Lord promised

by the words

of his holy prophets
71 to save us from our enemies

and from everyone

who hates us.



72 God said he would be kind

to our people

and keep

his sacred promise.
73 He told our ancestor Abraham

74 that he would rescue us

from our enemies.
Then we could serve him

without fear,
75 by being holy and good

as long as we live.

[76] You, my son, will be called

a prophet of God

in heaven above.
You will go ahead of the Lord

to get everything ready

for him.
[77] You will tell his people

that they can be saved
when their sins

are forgiven.
[78] God's love and kindness

will shine upon us
like the sun that rises

in the sky.[h]
[79] On us who live

in the dark shadow

of death
this light will shine

to guide us

into a life of peace.
[80] As John grew up, God's Spirit gave him great power. John lived in the desert until the time he was sent to the people of Israel.

1.9

Consider the image that begins this section. Can you see yourself in this photo? Have you ever been in a situation like this in your life?

1.10

How do you see this image connecting with Zechariah's speech? How does Zechariah's image of God compare to your own image of God?

1.11

How does this image and Scripture passage influence your own faith and your daily walk with God?



The Birth of Jesus

About that time Emperor Augustus gave orders for the names of all the people to be listed in record books.[a] [2] These first records were made when Quirinius was governor of Syria.[b]

[3] Everyone had to go to their own hometown to be listed. [4] So Joseph had to leave Nazareth in Galilee and go to Bethlehem in Judea. Long ago Bethlehem had been King David's hometown, and Joseph went there because he was from David's family.

[5] Mary was engaged to Joseph and traveled with him to Bethlehem. She was soon going to have a baby, [6] and while they were there, [7] she gave birth to her first-born[c] son. She dressed him in baby clothes[d] and laid him on a bed of hay, because there was no room for them in the inn.



2.1

What feelings and thoughts surfaced when you saw the image of the RV? Can think about experiences of traveling or making a journey? What's the hardest things about travel? the best things?

2.2

Have you ever experienced a time when there was "no room" for you? What was that like? How did you cope?

The Shepherds

[8] That night in the fields near Bethlehem some shepherds were guarding their sheep. [9] All at once an angel
came down to them from the Lord, and the brightness of the Lord's glory flashed around them. The shepherds
were frightened. [10] But the angel said, "Don't be afraid! I have good news for you, which will make everyone
happy. [11] This very day in King David's hometown a Savior was born for you. He is Christ the Lord. [12] You

will know who he is, because you will find him dressed in baby clothes and lying on a bed of hay."

13 Suddenly many other angels came down from heaven and joined in praising God. They said:

14 "Praise God in heaven!

Peace on earth to everyone

who pleases God."
15 After the angels had left and gone back to heaven, the shepherds said to each other, "Let's go to Bethlehem and see what the Lord has told us about." 16 They hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and they saw the baby lying on a bed of hay.

17 When the shepherds saw Jesus, they told his parents what the angel had said about him. 18 Everyone listened and was surprised. 19 But Mary kept thinking about all this and wondering what it meant.

20 As the shepherds returned to their sheep, they were praising God and saying wonderful things about him. Everything they had seen and heard was just as the angel had said.

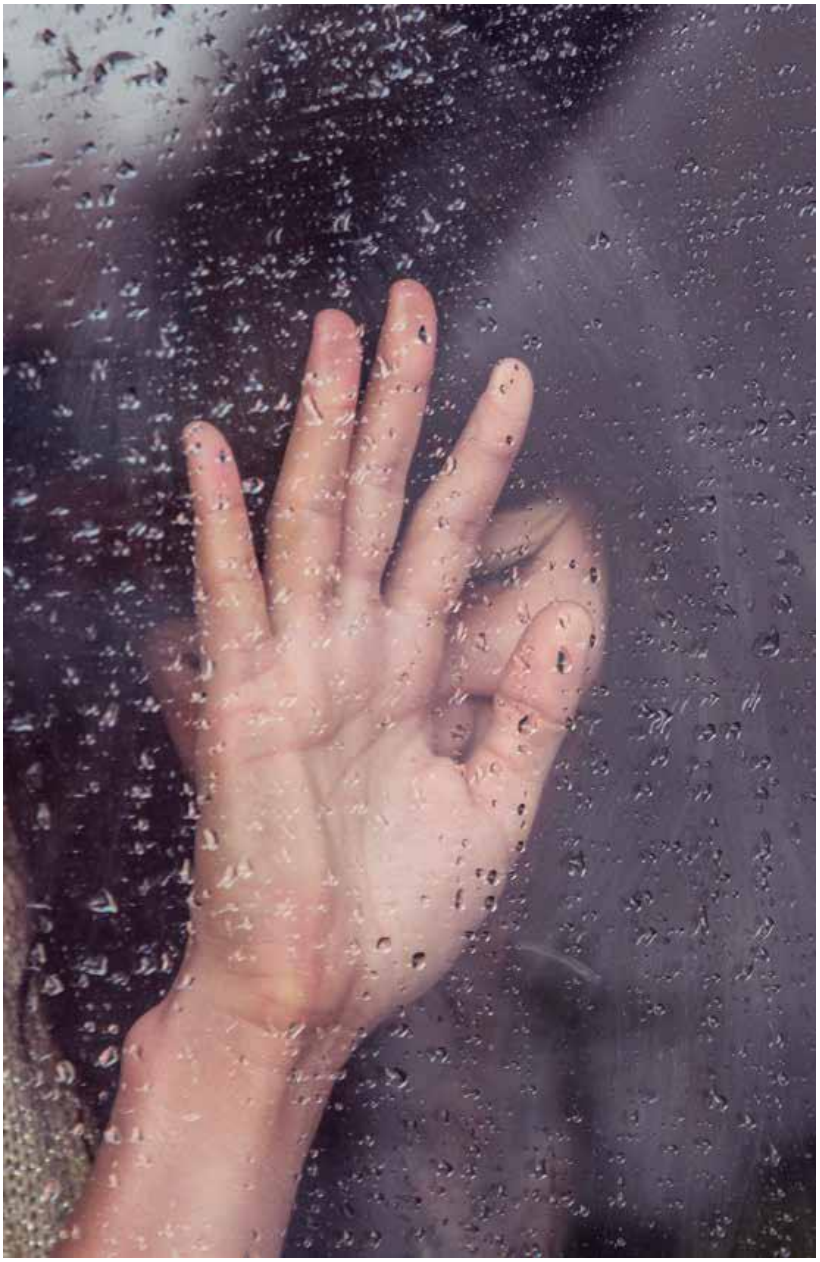
21 Eight days later Jesus' parents did for him what the Law of Moses commands.[e] And they named him Jesus, just as the angel had told Mary when he promised she would have a baby.

2.3

What do you see in this image? How does it connect (or not connect) to your own life? Can you imagine God speaking to "ordinary" shepherds in this setting?

2.4

Have you had personal encounters with Jesus? How has meeting Jesus in these encounters had an impact on you and the way you live daily - at home, at school or work, in the community?



Simeon Praises the Lord

22 The time came for Mary and Joseph to do what the Law of Moses says a mother is supposed to do after her
baby is born.[f] They took Jesus to the temple in Jerusalem and presented him to the Lord, 23 just as the Law of
the Lord says, "Each first-born[g] baby boy belongs to the Lord." 24 The Law of the Lord also says that parents
have to offer a sacrifice, giving at least a pair of doves or two young pigeons. So that is what Mary and Joseph
did.

25 At this time a man named Simeon was living in Jerusalem. Simeon was a good man. He loved God and was
waiting for God to save the people of Israel. God's Spirit came to him 26 and told him that he would not die
until he had seen Christ the Lord.

[27] When Mary and Joseph brought Jesus to the temple to do what the Law of Moses says should be done for a new baby, the Spirit told Simeon to go into the temple. [28] Simeon took the baby Jesus in his arms and praised God,

[29] "Lord, I am your servant,

and now I can die in peace,
because you have kept

your promise to me.
[30] With my own eyes I have seen

what you have done

to save your people,
[31] and foreign nations

will also see this.
[32] Your mighty power is a light

for all nations,
and it will bring honor

to your people Israel."
[33] Jesus' parents were surprised at what Simeon had said. [34] Then he blessed them and told Mary, "This child of yours will cause many people in Israel to fall and others to stand. The child will be like a warning sign. Many people will reject him, [35] and you, Mary, will suffer as though you had been stabbed by a dagger. But all this will show what people are really thinking."

2.5

If you put yourself into this picture, what would be feelings and thinking? How might this image connect to your own life experience?

2.6

How does this image connect with the story of Simeon and what he said to Joseph and Mary? If you had been there, which of his words would have impacted you the most? How does Simeon's words influence your understanding of Jesus and your relationship with him?



Anna Speaks about the Child Jesus

36 The prophet Anna was also there in the temple. She was the daughter of Phanuel from the tribe of Asher,
and she was very old. In her youth she had been married for seven years, but her husband died. 37 And now she
was eighty-four years old.[h] Night and day she served God in the temple by praying and often going without
eating.[i]

38 At that time Anna came in and praised God. She spoke about the child Jesus to everyone who hoped for
Jerusalem to be set free.



The Return to Nazareth

[39] After Joseph and Mary had done everything that the Law of the Lord commands, they returned home to Nazareth in Galilee. [40] The child Jesus grew. He became strong and wise, and God blessed him.

The Boy Jesus in the Temple

[41] Every year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for Passover. [42] And when Jesus was twelve years old, they all went there as usual for the celebration. [43] After Passover his parents left, but they did not know that Jesus had stayed on in the city. [44] They thought he was travel

2.7

Consider the image of the child on the bike in the prior section? What do you see in this story? What stories does it stir-up in your own life?

2.8

When you think of Jesus growing strong and wise, what images come to mind? What does the image in this section suggest to you? How might these images influence your knowledge of Jesus?

ing with some other people, and they went a whole day before they started looking for him. [45] When they could not find him with their relatives and friends, they went back to Jerusalem and started looking for him there.

[46] Three days later they found Jesus sitting in the temple, listening to the teachers and asking them questions. [47] Everyone who heard him was surprised at how much he knew and at the answers he gave.

[48] When his parents found him, they were amazed. His mother said, "Son, why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been very worried, and we have been searching for you!"

[49] Jesus answered, "Why did you have to look for me? Didn't you know that I would be in my Father's house?"[j] [50] But they did not understand what he meant.

[51] Jesus went back to Nazareth with his parents and obeyed them. His mother kept on thinking about all that had happened.

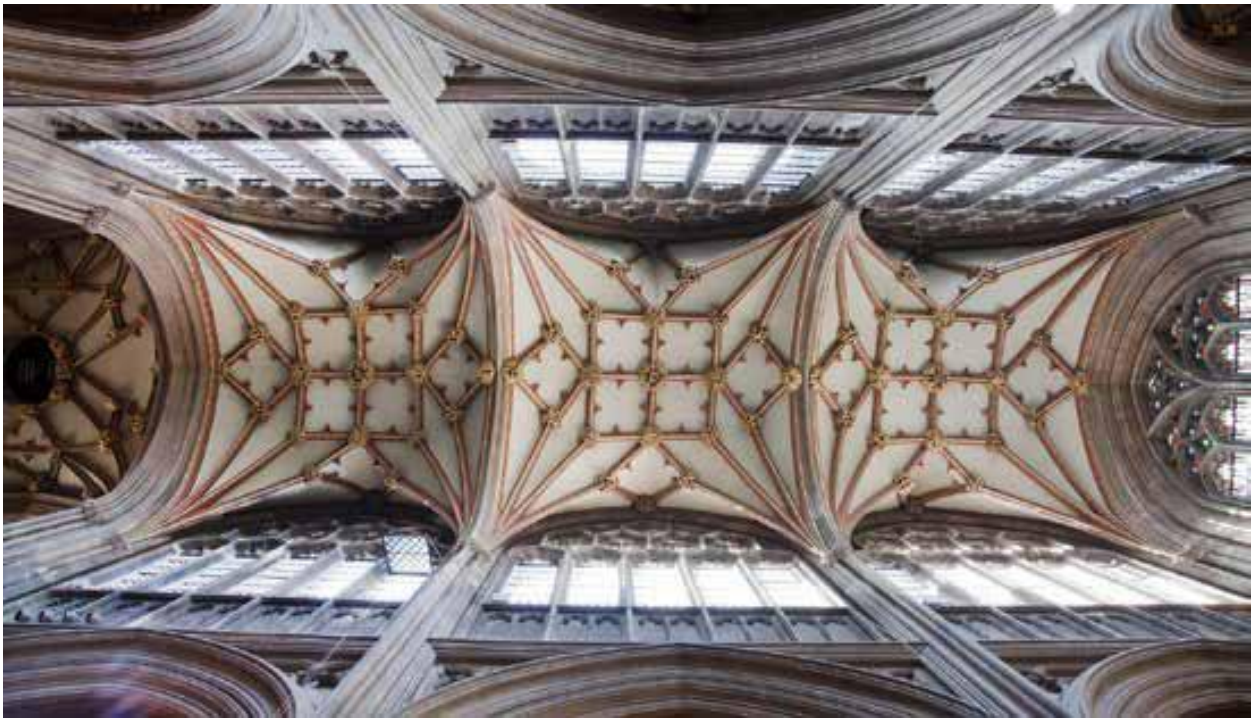
[52] Jesus became wise, and he grew strong. God was pleased with him and so were the people.

2.9

How do you see the image in this section connecting with the story of Jesus in the Temple? What insights for your life do you take away from this image and scripture story?

2.10

What do you think is the significance of this passage for understanding Jesus and the person he would grow to be as an adult?





The Preaching of John the Baptist

For fifteen years[a] Emperor Tiberius had ruled that part of the world. Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod[b] was the ruler of Galilee. Herod's brother, Philip, was the ruler in the countries of Iturea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias was the ruler of Abilene. [2] Annas and Caiaphas were the Jewish high priests.[c]

At that time God spoke to Zechariah's son John, who was living in the desert. [3] So John went along the Jordan Valley, telling the people, "Turn back to God and be baptized! Then your sins will be forgiven." [4] Isaiah the prophet wrote about John when he said,

[7] Crowds of people came out to be baptized, but John said to them, "You bunch of snakes! Who warned you to run from the coming judgment? [8]



“In the desert

someone is shouting, ‘Get the road ready
for the Lord!
Make a straight path

for him.
5 Fill up every valley

and level every mountain

and hill.
Straighten the crooked paths and smooth out

the rough roads.
6 Then everyone will see

the saving power of God.’”

Do something to show that you really have given up your sins. Don't start saying that you belong to Abraham's family. God can turn these stones into children for Abraham.[d] [9] An ax is ready to cut the trees down at their roots. Any tree that doesn't produce good fruit will be cut down and thrown into a fire."

[10] The crowds asked John, "What should we do?"

[11] John told them, "If you have two coats, give one to someone who doesn't have any. If you have food, share it with someone else."

[12] When tax collectors[e] came to be baptized, they asked John, "Teacher, what should we do?"

[13] John told them, "Don't make people pay more than they owe."

[14] Some soldiers asked him, "And what about us? What do we have to do?"

John told them, "Don't force people to pay money to make you leave them alone. Be satisfied with your pay."

[15] Everyone became excited and wondered, "Could John be the Messiah?"

[16] John said, "I am just baptizing with water. But someone more powerful is going to come, and I am not good enough even to untie his sandals.[f] He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire. [17] His threshing fork[g] is in his hand, and he is ready to separate the wheat from the husks. He will store the wheat in his barn and burn the husks with a fire that never goes out."

[18] In many different ways John preached the good news to the people. [19] But to Herod the ruler, he said, "It was wrong for you to take Herodias, your brother's wife." John also said that Herod had done many other bad things. [20] Finally, Herod put John in jail, and this was the worst thing he had done.

3.1

What story do you see in this image? If an image is worth a thousand words, what words would you put with this image?

3.2

What emotions surface as you look at this picture? How might this picture connect to your life in some way?

3.3

How does the image that began this section connect with John's message in this chapter? What are you thinking and feeling as you reflect on this image and John's message? What might this passage suggest about changes in your own life?

The Baptism of Jesus

[21] While everyone else was being baptized, Jesus himself was baptized. Then as he prayed, the sky opened up,
[22] and the Holy Spirit came down upon him in the form of a dove. A voice from heaven said, "You are my own dear Son, and I am pleased with you."

3.4

Where does this image of the sunrise/ sunset take you? What do you see? What are you feeling? What are you thinking? Where is God in your experience of this image?

3.5

How does this image connect you to Jesus' baptism? How has your own baptism started you on journey with God? How does the blessing of baptism encourage you in your daily walk with God?



The Ancestors of Jesus



[23] When Jesus began to preach, he was about thirty years old. Everyone thought he was the son of Joseph. But his family went back through Heli, [24] Matthat, Levi, Melchi, Jannai, Joseph, [25] Mattathias, Amos, Nahum, Esli, Naggai, [26] Maath, Mattathias, Semein, Josech, Joda;

[27] Joanan, Rhesa, Zerubbabel, Shealtiel, Neri, [28] Melchi, Addi, Cosam, Elmadam, Er, [29] Joshua, Eliezer, Jorim, Matthat, Levi;

[30] Simeon, Judah, Joseph, Jonam, Eliakim, [31] Melea, Menna, Mattatha, Nathan, David, [32] Jesse, Obed, Boaz, Salmon, Nahshon;

[33] Amminadab, Admin, Arni, Hezron, Perez, Judah, [34] Jacob, Isaac, Abraham, Terah, Nahor, [35] Serug, Reu, Peleg, Eber, Shelah;

[36] Cainan, Arphaxad, Shem, Noah, Lamech, [37] Methuselah, Enoch, Jared, Mahalaleel, Kenan, [38] Enosh, and Seth.

The family of Jesus went all the way back to Adam and then to God.

3.6

What story do you see in this image? How does this image connect to your own life? What memories, emotions, and thoughts does this image stir-up in your own life?

3.7

How does your family tree impact your faith and the quality of your life today? How might you impact the faith of future family generations?



Jesus and the Devil

When Jesus returned from the Jordan River, the power of the Holy Spirit was with him, and the Spirit led him
into the desert. [2] For forty days Jesus was tested by the devil, and during that time he went without eating.[a]
When it was all over, he was hungry.

[3] The devil said to Jesus, "If you are God's Son, tell this stone to turn into bread."

[4] Jesus answered, "The Scriptures say, 'No one can live only on food.'"

[5] Then the devil led Jesus up to a high place and quickly showed him all the nations on earth. [6] The devil said,
"I will give all this power and glory to you. It has been given to me, and I can give it to anyone I want to. [7] Just
worship me, and you can have it all."

4.1

What thoughts and feelings come to mind as your view this opening image? How might this image connect to the experience of temptation?

[8] Jesus answered, "The Scriptures say:

'Worship the Lord your God

and serve only him!'"
[9] Finally, the devil took Jesus to Jerusalem and had him stand on top of the temple. The devil said, "If you are God's Son, jump off. [10-11] The Scriptures say:

'God will tell his angels

to take care of you.
They will catch you

in their arms,
and you will not hurt

your feet on the stones.'"
[12] Jesus answered, "The Scriptures also say, 'Don't try to test the Lord your God!'"

[13] After the devil had finished testing Jesus in every way possible, he left him for a while.

Jesus Begins His Work

[14] Jesus returned to Galilee with the power of the Spirit. News about him spread everywhere. [15] He taught in the Jewish meeting places, and everyone praised him.

The People of Nazareth Turn against Jesus

[16] Jesus went back to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and as usual he went to the meeting place on the Sabbath. When he stood up to read from the Scriptures, [17] he was given the book of Isaiah the prophet.

He opened it and read, [18] "The Lord's Spirit
has come to me,
because he has chosen me

4.2

How does the image which opened this chapter connect with Jesus' experience of temptation in the desert? How does Jesus' experience of temptation relate to your own life? What might this passage suggest about changes in your own life?

4.3

What is your first impression – your thoughts and feelings - as you look at the image of the cliff? If you put yourself in this photo, where would you be? What does that tell you about yourself?



to announce freedom

for prisoners,
to give sight to the blind,

to free everyone

who suffers,
19 and to say, ‘This is the year

the Lord has chosen.’”
to tell the good news

to the poor.
The Lord has sent me

[20] Jesus closed the book, then handed it back to the man in charge and sat down. Everyone in the meeting place looked straight at Jesus.

[21] Then Jesus said to them, “What you have just heard me read has come true today.”

[22] All the people started talking about Jesus and were amazed at the wonderful things he said. They kept on asking, “Isn’t he Joseph’s son?” [23] Jesus answered:

You will certainly want to tell me this saying, “Doctor, first make yourself well.” You will tell me to do the same things here in my own hometown that you heard I did in Capernaum. [24] But you can be sure that no prophets are liked by the people of their own hometown.

[25] Once during the time of Elijah there was no rain for three and a half years, and people everywhere were starving. There were many widows in Israel, [26] but Elijah was sent only to a widow in the town of Zarephath near the city of Sidon. [27] During the time of the prophet Elisha, many men in Israel had leprosy.[b] But no one was healed, except Naaman who lived in Syria.

[28] When the people in the meeting place heard Jesus say this, they became so angry [29] that they got up and threw him out of town. They dragged him to the edge of the cliff on which the town was built, because they wanted to throw him down from there. [30] But Jesus slipped through the crowd and got away.

A Man with an Evil Spirit

[31] Jesus went to the town of Capernaum in Galilee and taught the people on the Sabbath. [32] His teaching amazed them because he spoke with power. [33] There in the Jewish meeting place was a man with an evil spirit. He

yelled out, [34] “Hey, Jesus of Nazareth, what do you want with us? Are you here to get rid of us? I know who you are! You are God’s Holy One.” [35] Jesus ordered the evil spirit to be quiet and come out. The demon threw the man to the ground in front of everyone and left without harming him.

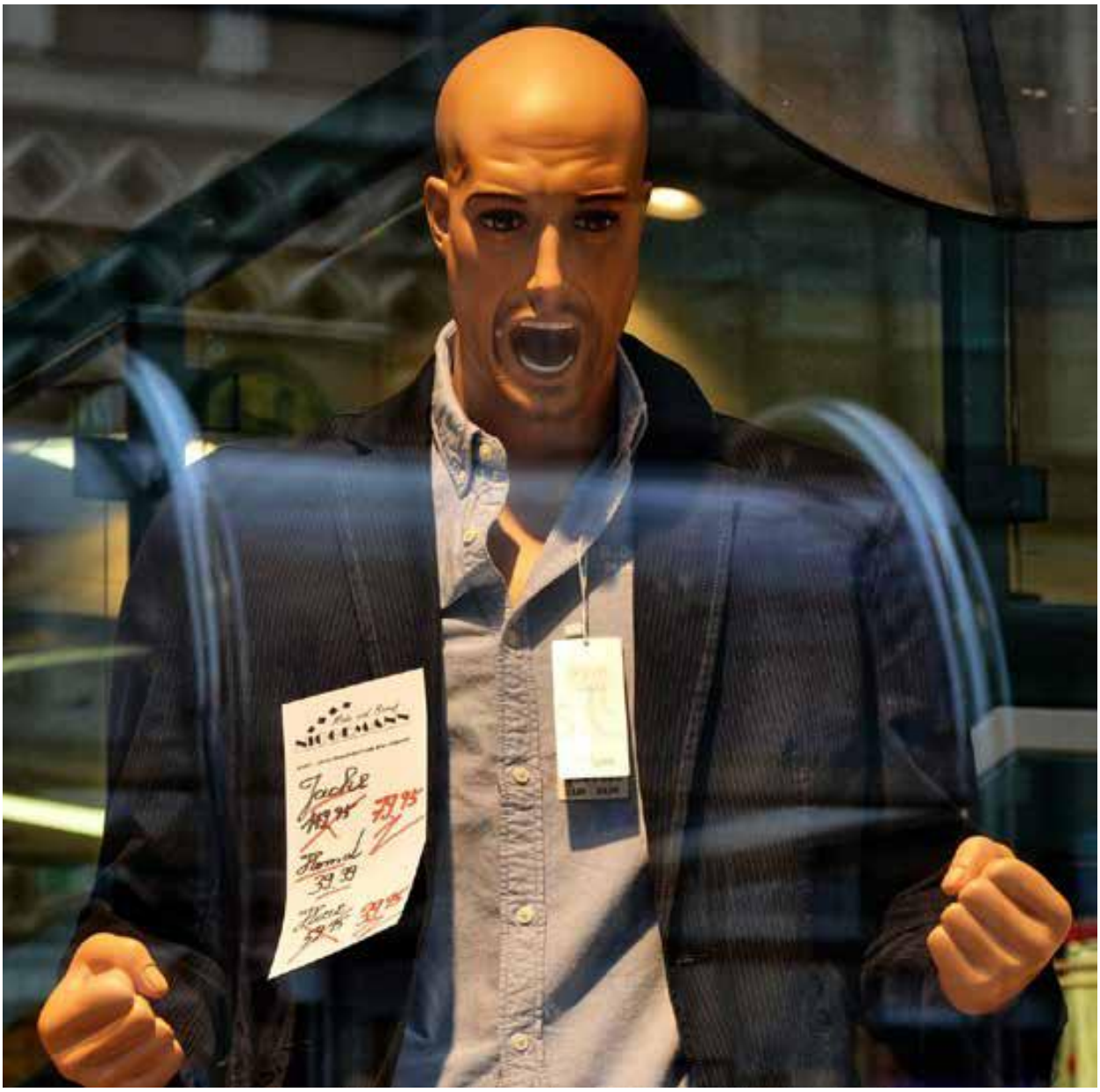
[36] They all were amazed and kept saying to each other, “What kind of teaching is this? He has power to order evil spirits out of people!” [37] News about Jesus spread all over that part of the country.

4.4

How do you respond to this image? What emotions/feelings does this image stir-up in you?

4.5

What story do you see in this image? How might this story connect to your life?



Jesus Heals Many People

38 Jesus left the meeting place and went to Simon's home. When Jesus got there, he was told that Simon's
mother-in-law was sick with a high fever. 39 So Jesus went over to her and ordered the fever to go away. Right
then she was able to get up and serve them a meal.

40 After the sun had set, people with all kinds of diseases were brought to Jesus. He put his hands on each one
of them and healed them. 41 Demons went out of many people and shouted, "You are the Son of God!" But
Jesus ordered the demons not to speak because they knew he was the Messiah.

42 The next morning Jesus went out to a place where he could be alone, and crowds came looking for him.
When they found him, they tried to stop him from leaving. 43 But Jesus said, "People in other towns must hear

the good news about God's kingdom. That's why I was sent." [44] So he kept on preaching in the Jewish meeting places in Judea.

4.6

What surfaces in your heart as you read about Jesus healing people? How does that influence your view of Jesus and his ministry?

4.7

How does the story of Jesus' healings relate to the experience you had when viewing the opening image and its connection to your life? How might Jesus' healing presence come into your life today?



Jesus Chooses His First Disciples

Jesus was standing on the shore of Lake Gennesaret,[a] teaching the people as they crowded around him to hear
God's message. [2] Near the shore he saw two boats left there by some fishermen who had gone to wash their
nets. [3] Jesus got into the boat that belonged to Simon and asked him to row it out a little way from the shore.
Then Jesus sat down[b] in the boat to teach the crowd.

[4] When Jesus had finished speaking, he told Simon, "Row the boat out into the deep water and let your nets
down to catch some fish."

[5] "Master," Simon answered, "we have worked hard all night long and have not caught a thing. But if you tell
me to, I will let the nets down."

5.1

If while fishing, you had "toiled all night and took nothing" (v. 5), how would you have responded to the words of Jesus to "let down your nets for a catch" (v. 4)? Is it worth the risk of failure, exhaustion and humiliation to obey the words of Jesus? Explain.



6 They did it and caught so many fish that their nets began ripping apart. 7 Then they signaled for their partners
in the other boat to come and help them. The men came, and together they filled the two boats so full that they
both began to sink.

8 When Simon Peter saw this happen, he knelt down in front of Jesus and said, “Lord, don’t come near me! I
am a sinner.” 9 Peter and everyone with him were completely surprised at all the fish they had caught. 10 His
partners James and John, the sons of Zebedee, were surprised too.

Jesus told Simon, “Don’t be afraid! From now on you will bring in people instead of fish.” 11 The men pulled
their boats up on the shore. Then they left everything and went with Jesus.

5.2

Consider the image for this section. How might you see yourself in this image? What would you be thinking and doing?



Jesus Heals a Man

12 Jesus came to a town where there was a man who had leprosy.[c] When the man saw Jesus, he knelt down to
the ground in front of Jesus and begged, “Lord, you have the power to make me well, if only you wanted to.”

13 Jesus put his hand on him and said, “I want to! Now you are well.” At once the man’s leprosy disappeared.
14 Jesus told him, “Don’t tell anyone about this, but go and show yourself to the priest. Offer a gift to the
priest, just as Moses commanded, and everyone will know that you have been healed.”[d]

15 News about Jesus kept spreading. Large crowds came to listen to him teach and to be healed of their
diseases. 16 But Jesus would often go to some place where he could be alone and pray.

Jesus Heals a Crippled Man

17 One day some Pharisees and experts in the Law of Moses sat listening to Jesus teach. They had come from every village in Galilee and Judea and from Jerusalem.

God had given Jesus the power to heal the sick, 18 and some people came carrying a crippled man on a mat. They tried to take him inside the house and put him in front of Jesus. 19 But because of the crowd, they could not get him to Jesus. So they went up on the roof,[c] where they removed some tiles and let the mat down in the middle of the room.

20 When Jesus saw how much faith they had, he said to the crippled man, "My friend, your sins are forgiven."

21 The Pharisees and the experts began arguing, "Jesus must think he is God! Only God can

5.3

The man with leprosy begged Jesus. Do you ever beg anyone? If so, who do you beg and for what? 5.4 Imagine being part of the large crowd that "came to listen to him teach and to be healed of their diseases" (v. 15). Would you be more focused on Jesus' teachings, the opportunity for healing or on the person of Jesus?

5.5

Consider the image for this section. What about the image relates to the story? How might you connect this story with your everyday life?

5.6

Which is easier for Jesus to do—to forgive sins or heal a person who is unable to rise from his mat (v.21-24)? Why do you think people were so disturbed by Jesus' displays of power and forgiveness?

forgive sins."

22 Jesus knew what they were thinking, and he said, "Why are you thinking that? 23 Is it easier for me to tell this crippled man that his sins are forgiven or to tell him to get up and walk? 24 But now you will see that the Son of Man has the right to forgive sins here on earth." Jesus then said to the man, "Get up! Pick up your mat and walk home."

[25] At once the man stood up in front of everyone. He picked up his mat and went home, giving thanks to God.
[26] Everyone was amazed and praised God. What they saw surprised them, and they said, “We have seen a great miracle today!”

Jesus Chooses Levi

[27] Later, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector[f] named Levi sitting at the place for paying taxes. Jesus said to him, “Come with me.” [28] Levi left everything and went with Jesus. [29] In his home Levi gave a big dinner for Jesus. Many tax collectors and other guests were also there.

[30] The Pharisees and some of their teachers of the Law of Moses grumbled to Jesus' disciples, “Why do you eat and drink with those tax collectors and other sinners?”

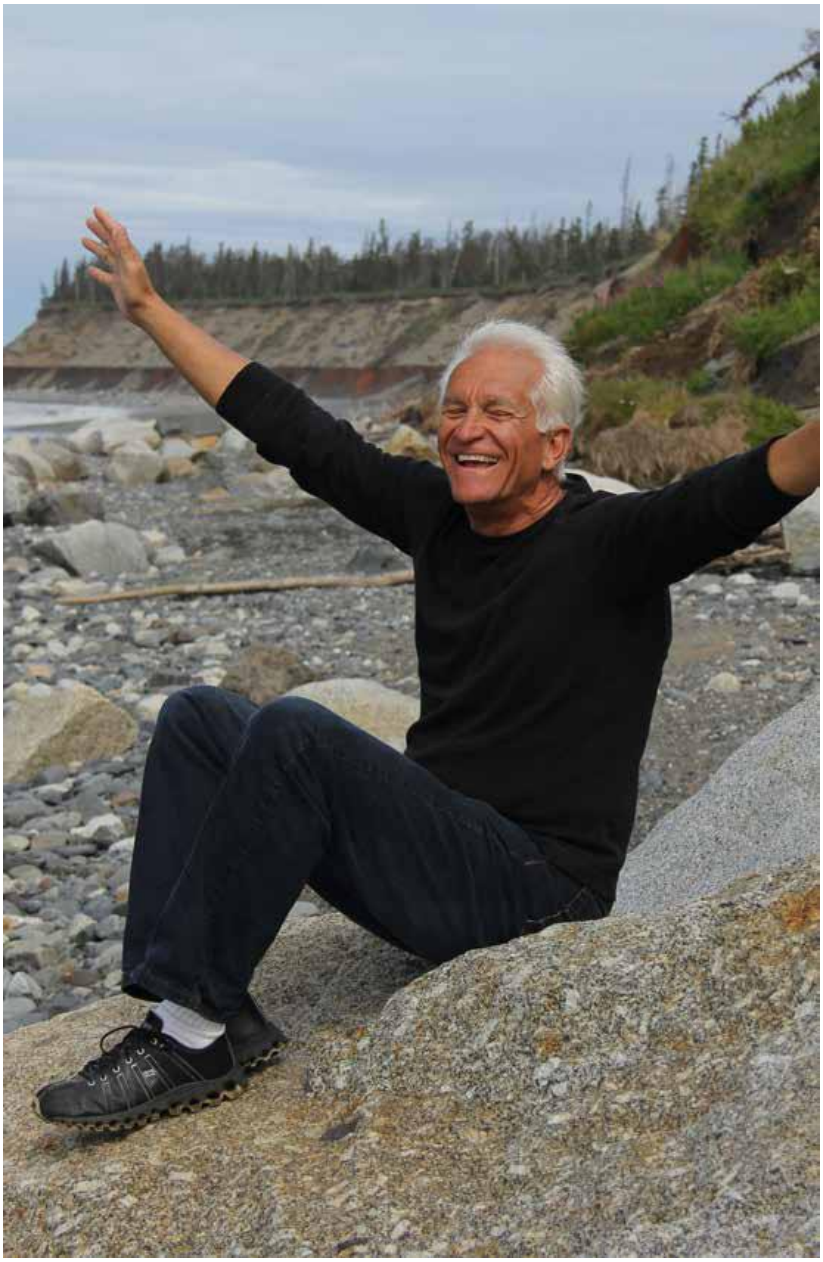
[31] Jesus answered, “Healthy people don’t need a doctor, but sick people do. [32] I didn’t come to invite good people to turn to God. I came to invite sinners.”

5.7

In this chapter Jesus calls people to himself (fishermen and a tax collector) and healing people with agonizing physical ailments (leprosy and paralysis). How does the “calling” and/or “healing” of Jesus impact your life today?

5.8

What might be God’s calling for your life?



People Ask about Going without Eating

[33] Some people said to Jesus, "John's followers often pray and go without eating,[g] and so do the followers of the Pharisees. But your disciples never go without eating or drinking." [34] Jesus told them, "The friends of a bridegroom don't go without eating while he is still with them. [35] But the time will come when he will be taken from them. Then they will go without eating."

[36] Jesus then told them these sayings:

No one uses a new piece of cloth to patch old clothes. The patch would shrink and make the hole even bigger.

[37] No one pours new wine into old wineskins. The new wine would swell and burst the old skins.[h] Then the wine would be lost, and the skins would be ruined. [38] New wine must be put only into new wineskins.

[39] No one wants new wine after drinking old wine. They say, “The old wine is better.”

5.9

Consider the story of old and new things. Can you think of old wineskins or garments that would be ripped by new ones within the context of routines for worshipping God (v. 33-39)? What fresh wineskins (v. 38) might God be creating today which honor his plans and purposes revealed in Scripture and do not violate/ dishonor them?

5.10

Select the picture in this chapter at you least like. As you consider this image, what questions or disconnects do you feel? How might these emotions relate to the rest of the chapter?



A Question about the Sabbath

One Sabbath when Jesus and his disciples were walking through some wheat fields,[a] the disciples picked some wheat. They rubbed the husks off with their hands and started eating the grain. [2] Some Pharisees said, "Why are you picking grain on the Sabbath? You're not supposed to do that!"

[3] Jesus answered, "You surely have read what David did when he and his followers were hungry. [4] He went into the house of God and took the sacred loaves of bread that only priests were supposed to eat. He not only ate some himself, but even gave some to his followers."

[5] Jesus finished by saying, "The Son of Man is Lord over the Sabbath."

6.1

From picking grain (v. 1) to healing a hand (v. 6-11), Jesus is demonstrating his teaching on the Sabbath. What might "The Son of Man is Lord over the Sabbath" (v. 5) mean to the Pharisees and disciples of Jesus? What might it mean in your cultural context?

A Man with a Crippled Hand

6 On another Sabbath[b] Jesus was teaching in a Jewish meeting place, and a man with a crippled right hand was
there. 7 Some Pharisees and teachers of the Law of Moses kept watching Jesus to see if he would heal the man.
They did this because they wanted to accuse Jesus of doing something wrong.

8 Jesus knew what they were thinking. So he told the man to stand up where everyone could see him. And the
man stood up. 9 Then Jesus asked, "On the Sabbath should we do good deeds or evil deeds? Should we save
someone's life or destroy it?"

10 After he had looked around at everyone, he told the man, "Stretch out your hand." He did, and his bad hand
became completely well. 11 The teachers and the Pharisees were furious and started saying to each other,
"What can we do about Jesus?"

6.2

Why do you think the Pharisees were "furious" at Jesus (v. 11)? Have you ever been furious at Jesus or God? Explain.

6.3

Imagine the consequences of being furious at someone. What might that look like when you first become furious? What might "being furious" at the same person for the same reason look like a year from now? How might your "fury" impact your soul?



Jesus Chooses His Twelve Apostles

12 About that time Jesus went off to a mountain to pray, and he spent the whole night there. 13 The next
morning he called his disciples together and chose twelve of them to be his apostles. 14 One was Simon, and
Jesus named him Peter. Another was Andrew, Peter's brother. There were also James, John, Philip,
Bartholomew, 15 Matthew, Thomas, and James the son of Alphaeus. The rest of the apostles were Simon,
known as the Eager One,[c] 16 Jude, who was the son of James, and Judas Iscariot,[d] who later betrayed Jesus.

6.4

Jesus went off and spent a whole night on a mountain in prayer before choosing twelve disciples to be apostles. Why was such prayer necessary and/or desirable for the Son of God?

6.5

Where do you retreat to pray for longer periods of time? Why or why not do you go off from others to pray? Imagine your "perfect" place alone to pray and describe how it looks, feels, smells, etc.



Jesus Teaches, Preaches, and Heals

17 Jesus and his apostles went down from the mountain and came to some flat, level ground. Many other
disciples were there to meet him. Large crowds of people from all over Judea, Jerusalem, and the coastal cities
of Tyre and Sidon were there too. 18 These people had come to listen to Jesus and to be healed of their
diseases. All who were troubled by evil spirits were also healed. 19 Everyone was trying to touch Jesus,
because power was going out from him and healing them all.

6.6

"Everyone was trying to touch Jesus" (v. 19). How can we "touch" Jesus today? How does his power go out to us in today's world?

Blessings and Troubles

[20] Jesus looked at his disciples and said:

God will bless you people

who are poor.

His kingdom belongs to you!
[21] God will bless

you hungry people.
You will have plenty

to eat!
God will bless you people

who are crying.

You will laugh!
[22] God will bless you when others hate you and won't have anything to do with you. God will bless you when people insult you and say cruel things about you, all because you are a follower of the Son of Man. [23] Long ago your own people did these same things to the prophets. So when this happens to you, be happy and jump for joy! You will have a great reward in heaven. [24] But you rich people

are in for trouble.
You have already had

an easy life!
[25] You well-fed people

are in for trouble.
You will go hungry!
You people

who are laughing now
are in for trouble.
You are going to cry

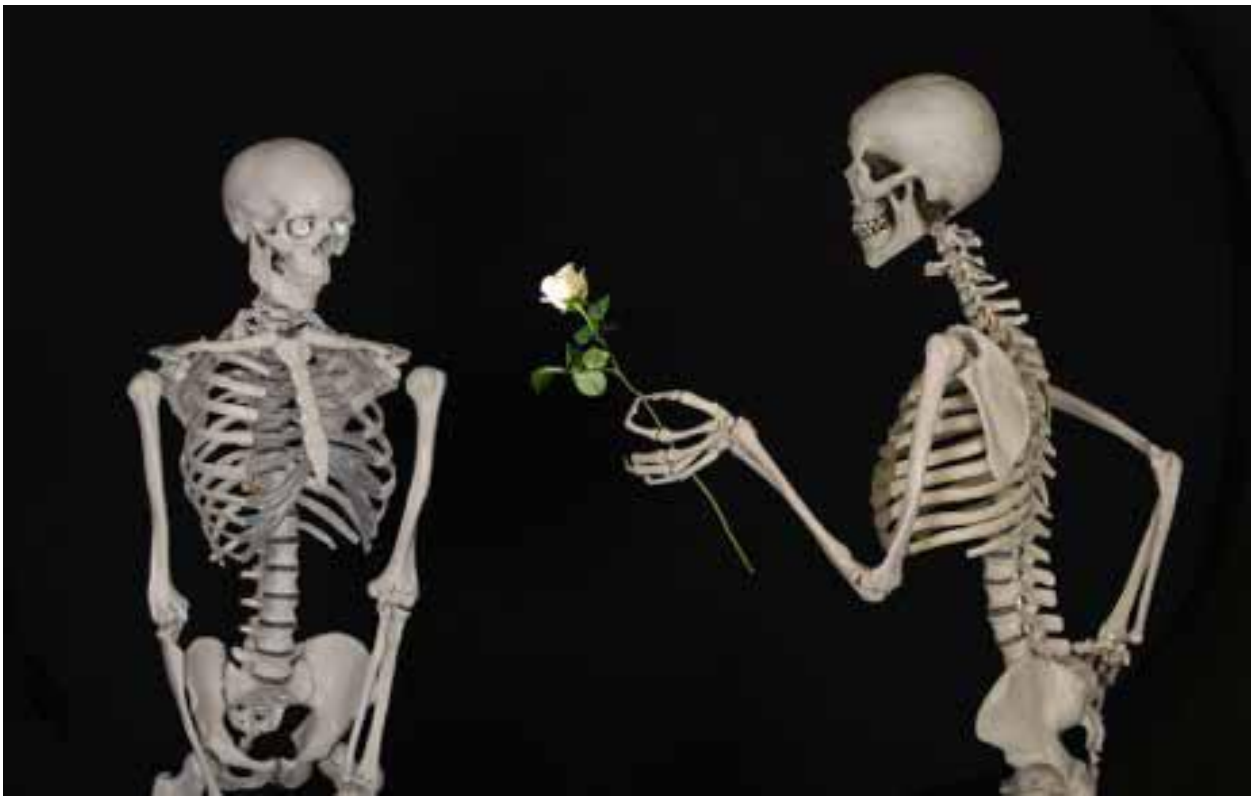
and weep!
[26] You are in for trouble when everyone says good things about you. That is what your own people said about those prophets who told lies.

6.7

Do you relate to any of the blessings or troubles described in this passage? Explain.

6.8

What would it look like for you to be truly “blessed”? How does this match with your culture’s view of happiness and/or harmony?



Love for Enemies

27 This is what I say to all who will listen to me: Love your enemies, and be good to everyone who hates you.
28 Ask God to bless anyone who curses you, and pray for everyone who is cruel to you. 29 If someone slaps you
on one cheek, don’t stop that person from slapping you on the other cheek. If someone wants to take your
coat, don’t try to keep back your shirt. 30 Give to everyone who asks and don’t ask people to return what they
have taken from you. 31 Treat others just as you want to be treated.

32 If you love only someone who loves you, will God praise you for that? Even sinners love people who love
them. 33 If you are kind only to someone who is kind to you, will God be pleased with you for that? Even
sinners are kind to people who are kind to them. 34 If you lend money only to someone you think will pay you
back, will God be pleased with you for that? Even sinners lend to sinners because they think they will get it all
back.

35 But love your enemies and be good to them. Lend without expecting to be paid back.[e] Then you will get a
great reward, and you will be the true children of God in heaven. He is good even to people who are

unthankful and cruel. [36] Have pity on others, just as your Father has pity on you.

6.9

Jesus' type of love is radical. We are to "love your enemies, and be good to everyone who hates you" (v. 28). Who are your enemies—your personal enemies, your family enemies, your cultural enemies, your political enemies, etc.? How can you love and be good to them? What do you risk in being good to your enemies? And what do you risk by not loving them?

6.10

Consider the image for this section. What feeling surface within you? How do you usually deal with these types of emotions?

Judging Others

[37] Jesus said:

Don't judge others, and God won't judge you. Don't be hard on others, and God won't be hard on you. Forgive others, and God will forgive you. [38] If you give to others, you will be given a full amount in return. It will be packed down, shaken together, and spilling over into your lap. The way you treat others is the way you will be treated. [39] Jesus also used some sayings as he spoke to the people. He said:



Can one blind person lead another blind person? Won't they both fall into a ditch? [40] Are students better than their teacher? But when they are fully trained, they will be like their teacher. [41] You can see the speck in your friend's eye. But you don't notice the log in your own eye. [42] How can you say, "My friend, let me take the speck out of your eye," when you don't see the log in your own eye? You show-offs! First, get the log out of your own eye. Then you can see how to take the speck out of your friend's eye.

6.11

Judging has consequences according to Jesus. How we judge others impacts how we are judged by God! Earlier, John the Baptist seems to judge others (chapter 3 verse 7). Is it possible to discern good and evil while not condemning people? Can we offer forgiveness as John did while calling people and ourselves to repentance? Or does "not judging" require us to totally accept all human behavior? Is that even possible and/or desirable? Can we always offer forgiveness?

A Tree and Its Fruit

[43] A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot produce good fruit. [44] You can tell what a tree is like by the fruit it produces. You cannot pick figs or grapes from thornbushes. [45] Good people do good things

because of the good in their hearts. Bad people do bad things because of the evil in their hearts. Your words show what is in your heart.



Two Builders

[46] Why do you keep on saying that I am your Lord, when you refuse to do what I say? [47] Anyone who comes and listens to me and obeys me [48] is like someone who dug down deep and built a house on solid rock. When the flood came and the river rushed against the house, it was built so well that it didn't even shake. [49] But anyone who hears what I say and doesn't obey me is like someone whose house wasn't built on solid rock. As soon as the river rushed against that house, it was smashed to pieces!

6.12

Imagine a bad tree with good fruit. Describe your imagination.

6.13

Consider verse 45. What kind of heart is good? Do you have a good and/or evil heart? What do your words show your heart to be (v. 45)? Explain.

6.14

Jesus posed an important question to the people (v.46), “Why do you keep on saying that I am your Lord, when you refuse to do what I say?” Why do you think people refuse to obey Jesus as Lord? Are you seeking to obey Jesus as Lord? Imagine what it might look like in your daily life to obey Jesus as Lord.

6.15

We humans have many longings including the desire to be whole, thrive, belong, be safe, make a difference, etc. As you review the images in this chapter, what longings surface in you? How might these longings connect with words of this chapter?



Jesus Heals an Army Officer's Servant

After Jesus had finished teaching the people, he went to Capernaum. [2] In that town an army officer's servant was sick and about to die. The officer liked this servant very much. [3] And when he heard about Jesus, he sent some Jewish leaders to ask him to come and heal the servant.

[4] The leaders went to Jesus and begged him to do something. They said, "This man deserves your help! [5] He loves our nation and even built us a meeting place." [6] So Jesus went with them.

When Jesus wasn't far from the house, the officer sent some friends to

tell him, "Lord, don't go to any trouble for me! I am not good enough for you to come into my house. [7] And I am certainly not worthy to come to you. Just say the word, and my servant will get well. [8] I have officers who give orders to me, and I have soldiers who take orders from me. I can say to one of them, 'Go!' and he goes. I can say to another, 'Come!' and he comes. I can say to my servant, 'Do this!' and he will do it."

[9] When Jesus heard this, he was so surprised that he turned and said to the crowd following him, "In all of Israel I've never found anyone with this much faith!"

[10] The officer's friends returned and found the servant well.

7.1

The leaders who came to Jesus proclaimed, “This man deserves your help!” (v. 4). Do you think the army officer felt he deserved help from Jesus to heal his servant? Explain.

7.2

Consider the picture on this page. How do you respond to it? Do you like or dislike it? What story might the image be telling? How might that image story relate to God’s grand story in this chapter?

A Widow’s Son

11 Soon Jesus and his disciples were on their way to the town of Nain, and a big crowd was going along with
them. 12 As they came near the gate of the town, they saw people carrying out the body of a widow’s only son.
Many people from the town were walking along with her. 13 When the Lord saw the woman, he felt sorry for
her and said, “Don’t cry!”

14 Jesus went over and touched the stretcher on which the people were carrying the dead boy. They stopped,
and Jesus said, “Young man, get up!” 15 The boy sat up and began to speak. Jesus then gave him back to his
mother.

16 Everyone was frightened and praised God. They said, “A great prophet is here with us! God has come to his
people.”

17 News about Jesus spread all over Judea and everywhere else in that part of the country.

John the Baptist

18-19 John’s followers told John everything that was being said about Jesus. So he sent two of them to ask the
Lord, “Are you the one we should be looking for? Or must we wait for someone else?”

20 When these messengers came to Jesus, they said, “John the Baptist sent us to ask, ‘Are you the one we
should be looking for? Or are we supposed to wait for someone else?’”

21 At that time Jesus was healing many people who were sick or in pain or were troubled by evil spirits, and he
was giving sight to a lot of blind people. 22 Jesus said to the messengers sent by John, “Go and tell John what
you have seen and heard. Blind people are now able to see, and the lame can walk. People who have leprosy[a]
are being healed, and the deaf can now hear. The dead are raised to life, and the poor are hearing the good
news. 23 God will bless everyone who doesn’t reject me because of what I do.”

[24] After John's messengers had gone, Jesus began speaking to the crowds

7.3

Did the widow deserve to have her son raised from the dead (v. 12-15)? Do you know anyone who needs and deserves help from Jesus? Do you deserve what you long for? Explain.

7.4

Imagine watching a dead boy being raised from the dead. What are you thinking, feeling, doing, saying? Is he an "undead" or truly alive? Explain.

about John:

What kind of person did you go out to the desert to see? Was he like tall grass blown about by the wind? [25] What kind of man did you really go out to see? Was he someone dressed in fine clothes? People who wear expensive clothes and live in luxury are in the king's palace. [26] What then did you go out to see? Was he a prophet? He certainly was! I tell you that he was more than a prophet. [27] In the Scriptures, God calls John his messenger and says, "I am sending my messenger ahead of you to get things ready for you." [28] No one ever born on this earth is greater than John. But whoever is least important in God's kingdom is greater than John. [29] Everyone had been listening to John. Even the tax collectors[b] had obeyed God and had done what was right by letting John baptize them. [30] But the Pharisees and the experts in the Law of Moses refused to obey God and be baptized by John.



31 Jesus went on to say:

What are you people like? What kind of people are you? 32 You are like children sitting in the market and
shouting to each other,

“We played the flute,

but you would not dance!
We sang a funeral song,

but you would not cry!”
33 John the Baptist did not go around eating and drinking, and you said, “John has a demon in him!” 34 But
because the Son of Man goes around eating and drinking, you say, “Jesus eats and drinks too much! He is
even a friend of tax collectors and sinners.” 35 Yet Wisdom is shown to be right by what its followers do.

Simon the Pharisee

36 A Pharisee invited Jesus to have dinner with him. So Jesus went to the Pharisee’s home and got ready to
eat.c

37 When a sinful woman in that town found out that Jesus was there, she bought an expensive bottle of
perfume. 38 Then she came and stood behind Jesus. She cried and started washing his feet with her tears and
drying them with her hair. The woman kissed his feet and poured the perfume on them.

39 The Pharisee who had invited Jesus saw this and said to himself, “If this man really were a prophet, he
would know what kind of woman is touching him! He would know that she is a sinner.”

40 Jesus said to the Pharisee, “Simon, I have something to say to you.”

“Teacher, what is it?” Simon replied.

41 Jesus told him, “Two people were in debt to a moneylender. One of them owed him five

7.5

John the Baptist sent messengers to confirm the identity of Jesus as “the one we should be looking for” (v. 20). Do you need assurance of your faith in Jesus’ identity as the Son of God? What assurances did Jesus give John (v. 21-23)? Are these enough to assure you? Explain.

7.6

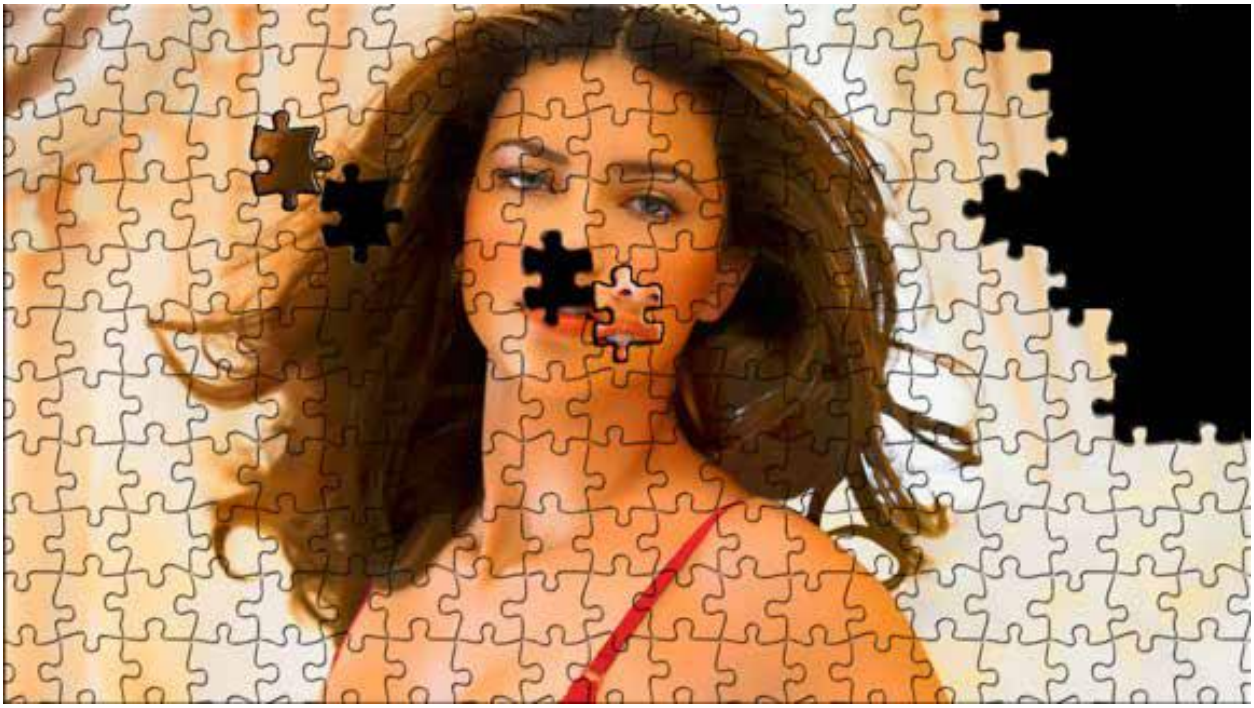
Consider the picture of the man looking out through a window on a rainy day. What would make this image even better for you as you consider who Jesus is?

hundred silver coins, and the other owed him fifty. 42 Since neither of them could pay him back, the moneylender said that they didn’t have to pay him anything. Which one of them will like him more?”

43 Simon answered, “I suppose it would be the one who had owed more and didn’t have to pay it back.”

“You are right,” Jesus said.

44 He turned toward the woman and said to Simon, “Have you noticed this woman? When I came into your home, you didn’t give me any water so I could wash my feet. But she has washed my feet with her tears and dried them with her hair. 45 You didn’t greet me with a kiss, but from the time I came in, she has not stopped kissing my feet. 46 You didn’t even pour olive oil on my head,[d] but she has poured expensive perfume on my feet. 47 So I tell you that all her sins are forgiven, and that is why she has shown great love. But anyone who has been forgiven for only a little will show only a little love.”



48 Then Jesus said to the woman, "Your sins are forgiven."

49 Some other guests started saying to one another, "Who is this who dares to forgive sins?"

50 But Jesus told the woman, "Because of your faith, you are now saved. [c] May God give you peace!"

7.7

In a religious leader's home, a woman known as sinful washed with tears and kissed Jesus' feet as she poured expensive perfume on them (v. 37,38). How might that look to others if this happen in your home? What response would you have to Jesus if you were the religious person? If you were the sinful one?

7.8

Jesus makes a point by asking a question. "Which one of them will like him more?" As you consider your life, do you like Jesus more or less? Has he forgiven you more or less (v. 47)? How does forgiven by Jesus impact your love for him? Explain.



Women Who Helped Jesus

Soon after this, Jesus was going through towns and villages, telling the good news about God's kingdom. His twelve apostles were with him, [2] and so were some women who had been healed of evil spirits and all sorts of diseases. One of the women was Mary Magdalene,[a] who once had seven demons in her. [3] Joanna, Susanna, and many others had also used what they owned to help Jesus[b] and his disciples. Joanna's husband Chuza was one of Herod's officials.[c]

8.1

Imagine the sight of Jesus, the twelve apostles, Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Susanna and other women following Jesus. If you came upon this group walking from town to town, what would you think?

8.2

Consider the women who were with Jesus. Would you naturally relate to any of these women?

A Story about a Farmer

[4] When a large crowd from several towns had gathered around Jesus, he told them this story:

[5] A farmer went out to scatter seed in a field. While the farmer was doing it, some of the seeds fell along the road and were stepped on or eaten by birds. [6] Other seeds fell on rocky ground and started growing. But the plants did not have enough water and soon dried up. [7] Some other seeds fell where thornbushes grew up and choked the plants. [8] The rest of the seeds fell on good ground where they grew and produced a hundred times as many seeds.

When Jesus had finished speaking, he said, “If you have ears, pay attention!”

8.3

Jesus often told stories about ordinary life to communicate spiritual truths to people. In a farming community, planting seeds in various types of ground was something ordinary. What spiritual truth do you think Jesus is being planting in the hearts of the disciples?

8.4

Jesus said, “If you have ears, pay attention!” (v. 8). How hard is it for you to pay attention in a noisy world? What might help you pay attention?



Why Jesus Used Stories

[9] Jesus' disciples asked him what the story meant. [10] So he answered:

I have explained the secrets about God’s kingdom to you, but for others I can only use stories. These people look, but they don’t see, and they hear, but they don’t understand.

8.5

Do you like stories? Why or why not? Does an image tell a story? Do you like image stories? Explain.

Jesus Explains the Story about a Farmer

[11] This is what the story means: The seed is God’s message, [12] and the seeds that fell along the road are the people who hear the message. But the devil comes and snatches the message out of their hearts, so that they will not believe and be saved. [13] The seeds that fell on rocky ground are the people who gladly hear the message and accept it. But they don’t have deep roots, and they believe only for a little while. As soon as life gets hard, they give up.

[14] The seeds that fell among the thornbushes are also people who hear the message. But they are so eager for riches and pleasures that they never produce anything. [15] Those seeds that fell on good ground are the people who listen to the message and keep it in good and honest hearts. They last and produce a harvest.



8.6

Consider the picture of a girl blowing seeds. What story might this image tell? Where might you fit within this story?

8.7

What three things from this passage keep seeds from growing well? When your life gets hard, do you have deep roots" (v. 13) into God's message (v. 11)? How can you grow deep roots (see verse 15)?



Light

[16] No one lights a lamp and puts it under a bowl or under a bed. A lamp is always put on a lampstand, so that people who come into a house will see the light. [17] There is nothing hidden that will not be found. There is no secret that will not be well known. [18] Pay attention to how you listen! Everyone who has something will be given more, but people who have nothing will lose what little they think they have.

8.8

Is it comforting or disturbing to you to know that “There is nothing hidden that will not be found. There is no secret that will not be well known” (17)? What emotions surface as you think about your secrets becoming well known to others? Does God know your secrets now?

8.9

“Pay attention how you listen!” (v. 18). How might you apply this to your everyday life?

Jesus' Mother and Brothers

19 Jesus' mother and brothers went to see him, but because of the crowd they could not get near him. 20
Someone told Jesus, “Your mother and brothers are standing outside and want to see you.”

21 Jesus answered, “My mother and my brothers are those people who hear and obey God’s message.”

A Storm

22 One day, Jesus and his disciples got into a boat, and he said, “Let’s cross the lake.”[d] They started out, 23 and while they were sailing across, he went to sleep.

Suddenly a windstorm struck the lake, and the boat started sinking. They were in danger. 24 So they went to Jesus and woke him up, “Master, Master! We are about to drown!”

Jesus got up and ordered the wind and waves to stop. They obeyed, and everything was calm. 25 Then Jesus asked the disciples, “Don’t you have any faith?”

But they were frightened and amazed. They said to each other, “Who is this? He can give orders to the wind and the waves, and they obey him!”

8.10

Jesus makes a bold statement. “my mother and my brothers are those people who hear and obey God’s message” (v. 21). Do you hear and obey God’s message? Explain.

8.11

Consider a storm. Imagine the feelings of uncertainty and fear as you ride out the storm waves in a sailing boat. Imagine Jesus asleep in that boat with you and your friends. What would you do?

8.12

After Jesus calmed everything (v.24), the disciples were frightened and amazed. Have you ever been frightened and amazed at Jesus? Has he brought calm into your life? Explain.



A Man with Demons in Him

26 Jesus and his disciples sailed across Lake Galilee and came to shore near the town of Gerasa.[e] 27 As Jesus was getting out of the boat, he was met by a man from that town. The man had demons in him. He had gone naked for a long time and no longer lived in a house, but in the graveyard.[f]

28 The man saw Jesus and screamed. He knelt down in front of him and shouted, “Jesus, Son of God in heaven, what do you want with me? I beg you not to torture me!” 29 He said this because Jesus had already told the evil spirit to go out of him.

The man had often been attacked by the demon. And even though he had been bound with chains and leg irons and kept under guard, he smashed whatever bound him. Then the demon would force him out into lonely places.

30 Jesus asked the man, “What is your name?”

He answered, “My name is Lots.” He said this because there were ‘lots' of demons in him. 31 They begged Jesus not to send them to the deep pit,[g] where they would be punished.

32 A large herd of pigs was feeding there on the hillside. So the demons begged Jesus to let them go into the pigs, and Jesus let them go. 33 Then the demons left the man and went into the pigs. The whole herd rushed

down the steep bank into the lake and drowned.

34 When the men taking care of the pigs saw this, they ran to spread the news in the town and on the farms. 35
The people went out to see what had happened, and when they came to Jesus, they also found the man. The
demons had gone out of him, and he was sitting there at the feet of Jesus. He had clothes on and was in his
right mind. But the people were terrified.

36 Then all who had seen the man healed told about it. 37 Everyone from around Gerasa[h] begged Jesus to leave,
because they were so frightened. When Jesus got into the boat to start back, 38 the man who had been healed
begged to go with him. But Jesus sent him off and said, 39 "Go back home and tell everyone how much God
has done for you." The man then went all over town, telling everything that Jesus had done for him.



8.13

Why do you think Jesus allowed the demons to enter the pigs with such disastrous results— they all drowned (v. 33)? How might you have reacted to seeing a large herd of pigs (part of the local farming business) rushing down a step bank into a lake? What would you think and feel about Jesus?

8.14

Consider the picture for this section. What reactions to you have to this image? How might our reactions to images display or impact our view of the meaning of life?

A Dying Girl and a Sick Woman

40 Everyone had been waiting for Jesus, and when he came back, a crowd was there to welcome him. 41 Just
then the man in charge of the Jewish meeting place came and knelt down in front of Jesus. His name was
Jairus, and he begged Jesus to come to his home 42 because his twelve-year-old child was dying. She was his
only daughter.

While Jesus was on his way, people were crowding all around him. 43 In the crowd was a woman who had
been bleeding for twelve years. She had spent everything she had on doctors,[i] but none of them could make
her well.

44 As soon as she came up behind Jesus and barely touched his clothes, her bleeding stopped.

45 "Who touched me?" Jesus asked.

While everyone was denying it, Peter said, "Master, people are crowding all around and pushing you from
every side."[j]

46 But Jesus answered, "Someone touched me, because I felt power going out from me." 47 The woman knew
that she could not hide, so she came trembling and knelt down in front of Jesus. She told everyone why she
had touched him and that she had been healed right away.

48 Jesus said to the woman, "You are now well because of your faith. May God give you peace!"

49 While Jesus was speaking, someone came from Jairus' home and said, "Your daughter has died! Why bother
the teacher anymore?"

50 When Jesus heard this, he told Jairus, "Don't worry! Have faith, and your daughter will get well."

51 Jesus went into the house, but he did not let anyone else go with him, except Peter, John, James, and the
girl's father and mother. 52 Everyone was crying and weeping for the girl. But Jesus said, "The child isn't
dead. She is just asleep." 53 The people laughed at him because they knew she was dead.

54 Jesus took hold of the girl's hand and said, "Child, get up!" 55 She came back to life and got right up. Jesus
told them to give her something to eat. 56 Her parents were surprised, but Jesus ordered them not to tell anyone
what had happened.



8.15

On his way to raise a dead girl, Jesus heals a sick woman. She touched his clothes (v. 44) and power went out from him (v. 46). Do you ever think that you touch Jesus with your longings to be whole? Does Jesus heal all our longings in this world? Why or why not?

8.16

Look over all the pictures in this chapter. Which stand out to you? Does anything about the images fit with the realities of your life? If so, explain.



Instructions for the Twelve Apostles

Jesus called together his twelve apostles and gave them complete power over all demons and diseases. [2] Then he sent them to tell about God's kingdom and to heal the sick. [3] He told them, "Don't take anything with you! Don't take a walking stick or a traveling bag or food or money or even a change of clothes. [4] When you are welcomed into a home, stay there until you leave that town. [5] If people won't welcome you, leave the town and shake the dust from your feet[a] as a warning to them."

[6] The apostles left and went from village to village, telling the good news and healing people everywhere.

9.1

Jesus' instructions are clear: tell about God's kingdom; heal the sick; don't take anything with you; when welcomed, stay; when not welcomed, leave. If you had such clear instructions from Jesus, would your faith in him flourish or wither?

9.2

Imagine being rejected in a new town. What emotions would feel? How would you deal with those emotions?



Herod Is Worried

7 Herod[b] the ruler heard about all that was happening, and he was worried. Some people were saying that John
the Baptist had come back to life. 8 Others were saying that Elijah had come[c] or that one of the prophets from
long ago had come back to life. 9 But Herod said, "I had John's head cut off! Who is this I hear so much
about?" Herod was eager to meet Jesus.

Jesus Feeds Five Thousand

10 The apostles came back and told Jesus everything they had done. He then took them with him to the village
of Bethsaida, where they could be alone. 11 But a lot of people found out about this and followed him. Jesus
welcomed them. He spoke to them about God's kingdom and healed everyone who was sick.

12 Late in the afternoon the twelve apostles came to Jesus and said, "Send the crowd to the villages and farms
around here. They need to find a place to stay and something to eat. There is nothing in this place. It is like a
desert!"

9.3

Even though Herod had John the Baptist's head cut off, he was eager to meet Jesus. Why do you think he was eager?

[13] Jesus answered, "You give them something to eat."

But they replied, "We have only five small loaves of bread[d] and two fish. If we are going to feed all these people, we will have to go and buy food." [14] There were about five thousand men in the crowd.

Jesus said to his disciples, "Have the people sit in groups of fifty." [15] They did this, and all the people sat down. [16] Jesus took the five loaves and the two fish. He looked up toward heaven and blessed the food. Then he broke the bread and fish and handed them to his disciples to give to the people.

[17] Everyone ate all they wanted. What was left over filled twelve baskets.

9.4

Imagine being in with the five thousand—or maybe twenty thousand or more including women and children (v. 14). What "ah-ha" moments might you have as the story unfolds and all are feed from "only five small loaves of bread and two fish" (v. 13)?

9.5

Consider the image for this section. How does the background of the image impact the image? If you changed the background, what would you change it to?



Who Is Jesus?

18 When Jesus was alone praying, his disciples came to him, and he asked them, “What do people say about me?”

19 They answered, “Some say that you are John the Baptist or Elijah[e] or a prophet from long ago who has come back to life.”

20 Jesus then asked them, “But who do you say I am?”

Peter answered, “You are the Messiah sent from God.”

21 Jesus strictly warned his disciples not to tell anyone about this.

9.6

Who is Jesus to you?

9.7

Does Jesus want you to tell anyone about who he is this week?



Jesus Speaks about His Suffering and Death

[22] Jesus told his disciples, "The nation's leaders, the chief priests, and the teachers of the Law of Moses will make the Son of Man suffer terribly. They will reject him and kill him, but three days later he will rise to life."

23 Then Jesus said to all the people:

If any of you want to be my followers, you must forget about yourself. You must take up your cross each day and follow me. 24 If you want to save your life,[f] you will destroy it. But if you give up your life for me, you will save it.



25 What will you gain, if you own the whole world but destroy yourself or waste your life? 26 If you are ashamed of me and my message, the Son of Man will be ashamed of you when he comes in his glory and in the glory of his Father and the holy angels. 27 You can be sure that some of the people standing here will not die before they see God's kingdom.

The True Glory of Jesus

28 About eight days later Jesus took Peter, John, and James with him and went up on a mountain to pray. 29 While he was praying, his face changed, and his clothes became shining white. 30 Suddenly Moses and Elijah were there speaking with him. 31 They appeared in heavenly glory and talked about all that Jesus' death[g] in Jerusalem would mean.

32 Peter and the other two disciples had been sound asleep. All at once they woke up and saw how glorious Jesus was. They also saw the two men who were with him.

33 Moses and Elijah were about to leave, when

9.8

For the first time Jesus foretells his coming sufferings— rejection and death— as well as his resurrection to life (v. 22). Jesus then calls his disciples into this way of life and death. What is you reaction to living for Jesus? What is your reaction to the possibility of dying for Jesus? And how does being ashamed enter into this discussion (v. 26)?

9.9

Peter's reaction to seeing Jesus, Moses and Elijah in heavenly glory (v. 31) was to suggest making three shelters. "But Peter did not know what he was talking about" (v. 33). Do you ever feel like your don't know what you're talking about when it comes to heavenly glories? Explain.

Peter said to Jesus, "Master, it is good for us to be here! Let us make three shelters, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." But Peter did not know what he was talking about.

[34] While Peter was still speaking, a shadow from a cloud passed over them, and they were frightened as the cloud covered them. [35] From the cloud a voice spoke, "This is my chosen Son. Listen to what he says!"

[36] After the voice had spoken, Peter, John, and James saw only Jesus. For some time they kept quiet and did not say anything about what they had seen.

Jesus Heals a Boy

[37] The next day Jesus and his three disciples came down from the mountain and were met by a large crowd. [38] Just then someone in the crowd shouted, "Teacher, please do something for my son! He is my only child! [39] A demon often attacks him and makes him scream. It shakes him until he foams at the mouth, and it won't leave him until it has completely worn the boy out. [40] I begged your disciples to force out the demon, but they couldn't do it."

[41] Jesus said to them, "You people are stubborn and don't have any faith! How much longer must I be with you? Why do I have to put up with you?"

Then Jesus said to the man, "Bring your son to me." [42] While the boy was being brought, the demon attacked him and made him shake all over. Jesus ordered the demon to stop. Then he healed the boy and gave him back to his father. [43] Everyone was amazed at God's great power.

9.10

Imagine a voice proclaiming, “This is my chosen Son. Listen to what he says!” (v. 35) How would listening to Jesus impact your daily life?

9.11

Jesus healed this man’s son! And “everyone was amazed at God’s great power” (v. 43). When was the last time you were amazed at God’s great power.

9.12

What is you view of power? Is it positive or negative? Do you desire to be a powerful person? Explain.



Jesus Again Speaks about His Death

While everyone was still amazed at what Jesus was doing, he said to his disciples, [44] "Pay close attention to what I am telling you! The Son of Man will be handed over to his enemies." [45] But the disciples did not know what he meant. The meaning was hidden from them. They could not understand it, and they were afraid to ask.

9.13

Jesus spoke of his death and his disciples "could not understand it, and they were afraid to ask" (v. 45). Is there anything you are afraid to ask God about that you don't understand? Explain.

Who Is the Greatest?

[46] Jesus' disciples were arguing about which one of them was the greatest. [47] Jesus knew what they were thinking, and he had a child stand there beside him. [48] Then he said to his disciples, "When you welcome even a child because of me, you welcome me. And when you welcome me, you welcome the one who sent me. Whichever one of you is the most humble is the greatest."

9.14

Imagine the most humble person in the world. Describe that imagination. How does humility vs. humiliation fit within your imagination? Is it your ambition to be great or humble? Explain.



For or against Jesus

49 John said, “Master, we saw a man using your name to force demons out of people. But we told him to stop,
because he isn’t one of us.” 50 “Don’t stop him!” Jesus said. “Anyone who isn’t against you is for you.”

A Samaritan Village Refuses To Receive Jesus

51 Not long before it was time for Jesus to be taken up to heaven, he made up his mind to go to Jerusalem. 52
He sent some messengers on ahead to a Samaritan village to get things ready for him. 53 But he was on his way
to Jerusalem, so the people there refused to welcome him. 54 When the disciples James and John saw what was
happening, they asked, “Lord, do you want us to call down fire from heaven to destroy these people?”[h]

55 But Jesus turned and corrected them for what they had said.[i] 56 Then they all went on to another village.

9.15

Who do you think might not be against you but is not one of your in-group? How do you treat people outside your in-group who are doing good works?

9.16

The Samaritans refused to welcome Jesus because he was going to Jerusalem. Have you ever refused someone because they associated with a culture or people that you didn't like? Have you ever had a negative reaction to those who refuse you and wished "fire from heaven to destroy these people" (v.54)?

9.17

Jesus corrected his disciples for what they said. Why do you think the disciples were so wrong to want brutal judgment on this Samaritan village?

Three People Who Wanted To Be Followers

57 Along the way someone said to Jesus, "I'll go anywhere with you!"

58 Jesus said, "Foxes have dens, and birds have nests, but the Son of Man doesn't have a place to call his own."

59 Jesus told someone else to come with him. But the man said, "Lord, let me wait until I bury my father."[j]

60 Jesus answered, "Let the dead take care of the dead, while you go and tell about God's kingdom."

61 Then someone said to Jesus, "I want to go with you, Lord, but first let me go back and take care of things at home."

62 Jesus answered, "Anyone who starts plowing and keeps looking back isn't worth a thing to God's kingdom!"

9.18

There is a cost to following Jesus. Some will pay any cost. Others will view Jesus as optional. Consider verses 57-62. Why do you think these three turned back and why do you believe Jesus wants us to not look back (v. 62)?

9.19

Select one picture from this chapter. As you sit with it for a while, what surfaces inside of you? How does it touch your soul? If a picture is really worth a thousand words, what words might go with this picture and connect with your soul?



The Work of the Seventy-Two Followers

Later the Lord chose seventy-two[a] other followers and sent them out two by two to every town and village
where he was about to go. [2] He said to them:

A large crop is in the fields, but there are only a few workers. Ask the Lord in charge of the harvest to send out
workers to bring it in. [3] Now go, but remember, I am sending you like lambs into a pack of wolves. [4] Don't
take along a moneybag or a traveling bag or sandals. And don't waste time greeting people on the road.[b] [5] As
soon as you enter a home, say, "God bless this home with peace." [6] If the people living there are peace-loving,
your prayer for peace will bless them. But if they are not peace-loving, your prayer will return to you. [7] Stay
with the same family, eating and drinking whatever they give you, because workers are worth what they earn.
Don't move around from house to house.

[8] If the people of a town welcome you, eat whatever they offer. [9] Heal their sick and say, "God's kingdom will
soon be here!"[c]

[10] But if the people of a town refuse to welcome you, go out into the street and say, [11] "We are shaking the dust
from our feet[d] as a warning to you. And you can be sure that God's kingdom will soon be here!"[e] [12] I tell you
that on the day of judgment the people of Sodom will get off easier than the people of that town!

The Unbelieving Towns

[13] You people of Chorazin are in for trouble! You people of Bethsaida are also in for trouble! If the miracles
that took place in your towns had happened in Tyre and Sidon, the people there would have turned to God

long ago. They would have dressed in sackcloth and put ashes on their heads.[f] [14] On the day of judgment the people of Tyre and Sidon will get off easier than you will. [15] People of Capernaum, do you think you will be honored in heaven? Well, you will go down to hell!

[16] My followers, whoever listens to you is listening to me. Anyone who says "No" to you is saying "No" to me. And anyone who says "No" to me is really saying "No" to the one who sent me.

The Return of the Seventy-Two

[17] When the seventy-two[g] followers returned, they were excited and said, "Lord, even the demons obeyed when we spoke in your name!" [18] Jesus told them:

I saw Satan fall from heaven like a flash of lightning. [19] I have given you the power to trample on snakes and scorpions and to defeat the power of your enemy Satan. Nothing can harm you. [20] But don't be happy because evil spirits obey you. Be happy that your names are written in heaven!

10.1

Reflect on the image for this section. What thoughts come to your mind as you place yourself within this story-image?

10.2

Jesus sent his disciples out to do his work in towns and villages (v. 1). Do you think he still sends people out to do his work? How might that play out in your life?

10.3

Jesus indicates that the towns of Chorazin and Bethsaida will be judged. Why do you think God will judge towns and not just individuals? Do you believe God has the right to judge? Explain.

10.4

Imagine the excitement of the seventy-two as they returned from various cities (v. 17). They were happy! What makes you happy today (v.20)? How do God's plans for you impact your happiness?



Jesus Thanks His Father

21 At that same time, Jesus felt the joy that comes from the Holy Spirit,[h] and he said: My Father, Lord of heaven and earth, I am grateful that you hid all this from wise and educated people and showed it to ordinary people. Yes, Father, that is what pleased you.

22 My Father has given me everything, and he is the only one who knows the Son. The only one who really knows the Father is the Son. But the Son wants to tell others about the Father, so that they can know him too.

23 Jesus then turned to his disciples and said to them in private, "You are really blessed to see what you see! 24 Many prophets and kings were eager to see what you see and to hear what you hear. But I tell you that they did not see or hear."

The Good Samaritan

25 An expert in the Law of Moses stood up and asked Jesus a question to see what he would say. "Teacher," he asked, "what must I do to have eternal life?"

26 Jesus answered, "What is written in the Scriptures? How do you understand them?"

27 The man replied, "The Scriptures say, 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, strength, and mind.' They also say, 'Love your neighbors as much as you love yourself.'"

28 Jesus said, "You have given the right answer. If you do this, you will have eternal life."

29 But the man wanted to show that he knew what he was talking about. So he asked Jesus, "Who are my neighbors?"

30 Jesus replied:

As a man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, robbers attacked him and grabbed everything he had. They beat him up and ran off, leaving him half dead.

10.5

Jesus felt joy from the Holy Spirit (v. 21). Jesus was grateful to his Father. The Father had given Jesus everything. The Son knows the Father. And the "Son wants to tell others about the Father, so that they can know him too" (v. 22). Thus God reveals some of the workings among the three Persons of the Trinity. Do you know the Father, Son and Holy Spirit better today that a year ago? Explain.

31 A priest happened to be going down the same road. But when he saw the man, he walked by on the other side. 32 Later a temple helper[i] came to the same place. But when he saw the man who had been beaten up, he also went by on the other side.

33 A man from Samaria then came traveling along that road. When he saw the man, he felt sorry for him 34 and went over to him. He treated his wounds with olive oil and wine[j] and bandaged them. Then he put him on his own donkey and took him to an inn, where he took care of him. 35



The next morning he gave the innkeeper two silver coins and said, “Please take care of the man. If you spend more than this on him, I will pay you when I return.”

[36] Then Jesus asked, “Which one of these three people was a real neighbor to the man who was beaten up by robbers?”

[37] The teacher answered, “The one who showed pity.”

Jesus said, “Go and do the same!”’

10.6

Consider the image with many faces. What surfaces for you? Is there any resistance to this image inside of your heart? Explain.

10.7

Who are our neigh- bors (v.29)? Jesus’ responds crosses religious, cultural and maybe economic barriers. Which man do you think had the hardest time crossing these barriers: the priest, the temple helper or the man from Samaria? Is it harder for you to give or to receive across such barriers?

Martha and Mary

[38] The Lord and his disciples were traveling along and came to a village. When they got there, a woman named Martha welcomed him into her home. [39] She had a sister named Mary, who sat down in front of the Lord and was listening to what he said. [40] Martha was worried about all that had to be done. Finally, she went to Jesus and said, "Lord, doesn't it bother you that my sister has left me to do all the work by myself? Tell her to come and help me!"

[41] The Lord answered, "Martha, Martha! You are worried and upset about so many things, [42] but only one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen what is best, and it will not be taken away from her."

10.8

Martha welcomed Jesus into her home and worried about all that had to be done (v. 38, 40). Mary, her sister, sat down and listened to Jesus (v. 39). Why do you think Jesus would not take away Mary's choice even when work needed to be done (v 41-42)? Who do you relate most to in this story? Explain.

10.9

Which picture in this chapter is least agreeable to you? What do you not like? How would you change the image so you would enjoy being in it?





LUKE

11

Prayer

When Jesus had finished praying, one of his disciples said to him, “Lord, teach us to pray, just as John taught his followers to pray.”

2 So Jesus told them, “Pray in this way:

‘Father, help us

to honor your name.
Come and set up

your kingdom.
3 Give us each day

the food we need.[a]
5 Then Jesus went on to say:

4 Forgive our sins,

as we forgive everyone

who has done wrong to us. And keep us
from being tempted.’”
Suppose one of you goes to a friend in the middle of the night and says, “Let me borrow three loaves of bread.
6 A friend of mine has dropped in, and I don’t have a thing for him to eat.” 7 And suppose your friend answers, “Don’t bother me! The door is bolted, and my children and I are in bed. I cannot get up to give you

something."

[8] He may not get up and give you the bread, just because you are his friend. But he will get up and give you as much as you need, simply because you are not ashamed to keep on asking. [9] So I tell you to ask and you will receive, search and you will find, knock and the door will be opened for you. [10] Everyone who asks will receive, everyone who searches will find, and the door will be opened for everyone who knocks. [11] Which one of you fathers would give your hungry child a snake if the child asked for a fish? [12] Which one of you would give your child a scorpion if the child asked for an egg? [13] As bad as you are, you still know how to give good gifts to your children. But your heavenly Father is even more ready to give the Holy Spirit to anyone who asks.

Jesus and the Ruler of Demons

[14] Jesus forced a demon out of a man who could not talk. And after the demon had gone out, the man started speaking, and the crowds were amazed. [15] But some people said, "He forces out demons by the power of Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons!"

[16] Others wanted to put Jesus to the test. So they asked him to show them a sign from God. [17] Jesus knew what they were thinking, and he said: A kingdom where people fight each other will end up in ruin. And a family that fights will break up. [18] If Satan fights against himself, how can his kingdom last? Yet you say that I force out demons by the power of Beelzebul. [19] If I use his power to force out demons, whose power do your own followers use to force them out? They are the ones who will judge you. [20] But if I use God's power to force out demons, it proves that God's kingdom has already come to you.

[21] When a strong man arms himself and guards his home, everything he

11.1

Jesus taught his disciples about prayer (v. 1-12). Do you feel comfortable praying using the same words Jesus taught his disciples or with similar words? How do you talk to God when you are in need of something? Do you talk with God when you don't have a pressing need?

11.2

Consider the picture of the woman with a book. What part of your spiritual journey relates to the image, if any?

owns is safe. [22] But if a stronger man comes and defeats him, he will carry off the weapons in which the strong man trusted. Then he will divide with others what he has taken. [23] If you are not on my side, you are against me. If you don't gather in the crop with me, you scatter it.

11.3

Jesus often confronted evil spirits (v. 14-26). Do you think these spirits are still active in today's word? Explain.



Return of an Evil Spirit

[24] When an evil spirit leaves a person, it travels through the desert, looking for a place to rest. But when it
doesn't find a place, it says, "I will go back to the home I left." [25] When it gets there and finds the place clean
and fixed up, [26] it goes off and finds seven other evil spirits even worse than itself. They all come and make
their home there, and that person ends up in worse shape than before.

11.5

Why to you think an evil spirit would "find seven other evil spirits even worse than itself "? Why do you think evil spirit "make their home there, and that person ends up in worse shape than before" (v. 26)?

11.6

Have you ever stopped a bad habit and then later returned to it? How hard was it to stop the second time?



Being Really Blessed

27 While Jesus was still talking, a woman in the crowd spoke up, "The woman who gave birth to you and
nursed you is blessed!"

28 Jesus replied, "That's true, but the people who are really blessed are the ones who hear and obey God's
message!"[b]

11.4

Do you desire to be really blessed by God? Is God worthy of your obedience or simply a good way to get really blessed? Explain.



A Sign from God

29 As crowds were gathering around Jesus, he said:

You people of today are evil! You keep looking for a sign from God. But what happened to Jonah[c] is the only
sign you will be given. 30 Just as Jonah was a sign to the people of Nineveh, the Son of Man will be a sign to
the people of today. 31 When the judgment comes, the Queen of the South[d] will stand there with you and
condemn you. She traveled a long way to hear Solomon's wisdom, and yet here is something far greater than
Solomon. 32 The people of Nineveh will also stand there with you and condemn you. They turned to God when
Jonah preached, and yet here is something far greater than Jonah.

11.7

The people of Nineveh turned to God when Jonah preached (v. 32)? Do you or the people of your city turn to God when they hear preaching or do they need a sign from God? What sign do you imagine would cause people in your context to turn to God and obey him as Lord?



Light

[33] No one lights a lamp and then hides it or puts it under a clay pot. A lamp is put on a lampstand, so that
everyone who comes into the house can see the light. [34] Your eyes are the lamp for your body. When your eyes
are good, you have all the light you need. But when your eyes are bad, everything is dark. [35] So be sure that
your light isn't darkness. [36] If you have light, and nothing is dark, then light will be everywhere, as when a
lamp shines brightly on you.

11.8

"If you have light" (v.36). What does it mean to have light in your daily life?

11.9

Do you desire light or darkness or both? Explain.



Jesus Condemns the Pharisees and Teachers of the Law of Moses

37 When Jesus finished speaking, a Pharisee invited him home for a meal. Jesus went and sat down to eat.[e] 38
The Pharisee was surprised that he did not wash his hands[f] before eating. 39 So the Lord said to him: You
Pharisees clean the outside of cups and dishes, but on the inside you are greedy and evil. 40 You fools! Didn't
God make both the outside and the inside?[g] 41 If you would only give what you have to the poor, everything
you do would please God.

42 You Pharisees are in for trouble! You give God a tenth of the spices from your gardens, such as mint and
rue. But you cheat people, and you don't love God. You should be fair and kind to others and still give a tenth
to God.

43 You Pharisees are in for trouble! You love the front seats in the meeting places, and you like to be greeted
with honor in the market. 44 But you are in for trouble! You are like unmarked graves[h] that people walk on
without even knowing it.

45 A teacher of the Law of Moses spoke up, "Teacher, you said cruel things about us."

46 Jesus replied:

You teachers are also in for trouble! You load people down with heavy burdens, but you won't lift a finger to
help them carry the loads. 47 Yes, you are really in for trouble. You build monuments to honor the prophets
your own people murdered long ago. 48 You must think that was the right thing for your people to do, or else
you would not have built monuments for the prophets they murdered.

[49] Because of your evil deeds, the Wisdom of God said, “I will send prophets and apostles to you. But you will murder some and mistreat others.” [50] You people living today will be punished for all the prophets who have been murdered since the beginning of the world. [51] This includes every prophet from the time of Abel to the time of Zechariah,[i] who was murdered between the altar and the temple. You people will certainly be punished for all of this.

[52] You teachers of the Law of Moses are really in for trouble! You carry the keys to the door of knowledge about God. But you never go in, and you keep others from going in.

[53] Jesus was about to leave, but the teachers and the Pharisees wanted to get even with him. They tried to make him say what he thought about other things, [54] so that they could catch him saying something wrong.

11.10

“You Pharisees clean the outside of cups and dishes, but on the inside you are greedy and evil” (v. 39). Imagine your favorite cup that is clean on the outside and has a slimy, bad smelling drink inside. What is your reaction to drinking out of it?

11.11

Repeatedly Jesus says, “You Pharisees are in for trouble!” Look back over versus 37-54. What stands out to you? How do you react to Jesus warning people so strongly? Are there any parallels in your life that you should be warned of trouble to come?

11.12

Look back over the images for this chapter. What one seems most desirable and most undesirable to you? Explain.



Warnings

As thousands of people crowded around Jesus and were stepping on each other, he told his disciples:

Be sure to guard against the dishonest teaching[a] of the Pharisees! It is their way of fooling people. [2] Everything that is hidden will be found out, and every secret will be known. [3] Whatever you say in the dark will be heard when it is day. Whatever you whisper in a closed room will be shouted from the housetops.

12.1

Jesus warned, “Be sure to guard against the dishonest teaching of the Pharisees! It is their way of fooling people” (v. 1). Who might be dishonest people who fool people in your context of living? How do you respond to them?

12.2

How do you discern what is honest and dishonest?

The One To Fear

[4] My friends, don't be afraid of people. They can kill you, but after that, there is nothing else they can do. [5] God is the one you must fear. Not only can he take your life, but he can throw you into hell. God is certainly the one you should fear!

[6] Five sparrows are sold for just two pennies, but God doesn't forget a one of them. [7] Even the hairs on your head are counted. So don't be afraid! You are worth much more than many sparrows.

12.3

The One Who values you "much more than many sparrows" (v.7), is the same One to fear. "God is certainly the one you should fear!" (v.5). How do you fit these ideas together as you seek to follow Jesus?

12.4

Imagine what it feels like to trust and fear simultaneously. Have you ever experienced that in any context? Explain.



Telling Others about Christ

[8] If you tell others that you belong to me, the Son of Man will tell God's angels that you are my followers. [9] But if you reject me, you will be rejected in front of them. [10] If you speak against the Son of Man, you can be forgiven, but if you speak against the Holy Spirit, you cannot be forgiven.

[11] When you are brought to trial in the Jewish meeting places or before rulers or officials, don't worry about how you will defend yourselves or what you will say. [12] At that time the Holy Spirit will tell you what to say.

12.5

Is it worth telling others about Jesus from your point of view? Explain.

12.6

Remember or imagine a time when you needed to defend yourself for belonging to Jesus (v. 8, 11). Did you worry about what to say? Did the Holy Spirit guide you in what to say (v. 12)? Explain.



A Rich Fool

13 A man in a crowd said to Jesus, "Teacher, tell my brother to give me my share of what our father left us when he died."

14 Jesus answered, "Who gave me the right to settle arguments between you and your brother?"

15 Then he said to the crowd, "Don't be greedy! Owning a lot of things won't make your life safe."

16 So Jesus told them this story:

A rich man's farm produced a big crop, 17 and he said to himself, "What can I do? I don't have a place large enough to store everything." 18 Later, he said, "Now I know what I'll do. I'll tear down my barns and build bigger ones,

12.7

Jesus taught, “Don’t be greedy! Owning a lot of things won’t make your life safe” (v. 15). In today’s world owning a lot of stuff seems to be highly valued. If money doesn’t buy safety, security or true identity, what does it buy? Is that worth being greedy for it?



where I can store all my grain and other goods. [19] Then I’ll say to myself, ‘You have stored up enough good things to last for years to come. Live it up! Eat, drink, and enjoy yourself.’”

[20] But God said to him, “You fool! Tonight you will die. Then who will get what you have stored up?”

[21] “This is what happens to people who store up everything for themselves, but are poor in the sight of God.”

Worry

[22] Jesus said to his disciples:

I tell you not to worry about your life! Don’t worry about having something to eat or wear. [23] Life is more than food or clothing. [24] Look at the crows! They don’t plant or harvest, and they don’t have storehouses or barns.

But God takes care of them. You are much more important than any birds. [25] Can worry make you live longer?[b] [26] If you don't have power over small things, why worry about everything else? [27] Look how the wild flowers grow! They don't work hard to make their clothes. But I tell you that Solomon with all his wealth[c] wasn't as well clothed as one of these flowers. [28] God gives such beauty to everything that grows in the fields, even though it is here today and thrown into a fire tomorrow. Won't he do even more for you? You have such little faith!

[29] Don't keep worrying about having something to eat or drink. [30] Only people who don't know God are always worrying about such things. Your Father knows what you need. [31] But put God's work first, and these things will be yours as well.

12.8

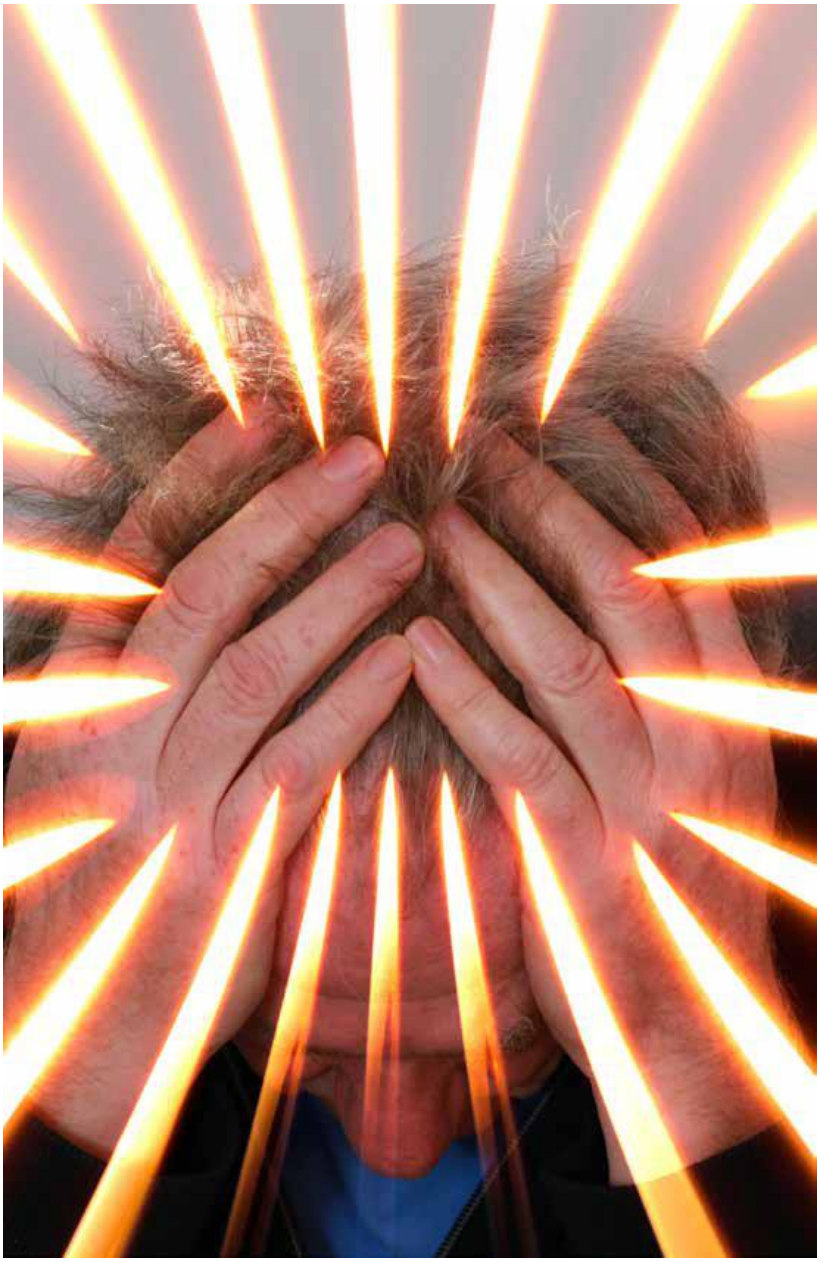
Jesus directly tells us, "… not to worry about your life!" (v. 22). What would a life without worry look like?

12.9

Is "no fear" and "not worry" the same thing? Explain.

12.10

Consider the picture for this section. What stands out to you? How does this image relate to your past and how might it relate to your future?



Treasures in Heaven

[32] My little group of disciples, don't be afraid! Your Father wants to give you the kingdom. [33] Sell what you have and give the money to the poor. Make yourselves moneybags that never wear out. Make sure your treasure is safe in heaven, where thieves cannot steal it and moths cannot destroy it. [34] Your heart will always be where your treasure is.

12.11

“Your heart will always be where your treasure is” (v. 34). Where is your treasure today? What is precious to you that you really don’t want to loose? How would your heart change if you lost it?



Faithful and Unfaithful Servants

[35] Be ready and keep your lamps burning [36] just like those servants who wait up for their master to return from a wedding feast. As soon as he comes and knocks, they open the door for him. [37] Servants are fortunate if their master finds them awake and ready when he comes! I promise you that he will get ready and have his servants sit down so he can serve them. [38] Those servants are really fortunate if their master finds them ready, even though he comes late at night or early in the morning. [39] You would surely not let a thief break into your home, if you knew when the thief was coming. [40] So always be ready! You don’t know when the Son of Man will come.

[41] Peter asked Jesus, “Did you say this just for us or for everyone?” [42] The Lord answered:

Who are faithful and wise servants? Who are the ones the master will put in charge of giving the other servants their food supplies at the proper time? [43] Servants are fortunate if their master comes and finds them doing their job. [44] A servant who is always faithful will surely be put in charge of everything the master owns.

[45] But suppose one of the servants thinks that the master won't return until late. Suppose that servant starts beating all the other servants and eats and drinks and gets drunk. [46] If that happens, the master will come on a day and at a time when the servant least expects him. That servant will then be punished and thrown out with the servants who cannot be trusted.

[47] If servants are not ready or willing to do what their master wants them to do, they will be beaten hard. [48] But servants who don't know what their master wants them to do will not be beaten so hard for doing wrong. If God has been generous with you, he will expect you to serve him well. But if he has been more than generous, he will expect you to serve him even better.

12.12

"Servants are fortunate if their master comes and finds them doing their job" (v. 43). Do you consider yourself a servant to God? What might that look like? Are you doing your job? Explain.

12.13

Is being a servant of God an identity that you prefer that others see you as? Explain.



Not Peace, but Trouble

[49] I came to set fire to the earth, and I wish it were already on fire! [50] I am going to be put to a hard test. And I will have to suffer a lot of pain until it is over. [51] Do you think that I came to bring peace to earth? No indeed! I came to make people choose sides. [52] A family of five will be divided, with two of them against the other three. [53] Fathers and sons will turn against one another, and mothers and daughters will do the same. Mothers-in-law and daughters-in-law will also turn against each other.

Knowing What To Do

[54] Jesus said to all the people:

As soon as you see a cloud coming up in the west, you say, “It’s going to rain,” and it does. [55] When the south wind blows, you say, “It’s going to get hot,” and it does. [56] Are you trying to fool someone? You can predict the weather by looking at the earth and sky, but you don’t really know what’s going on right now. [57] Why don’t you understand the right thing to do? [58] When someone accuses you of something, try to settle things before you are taken to court. If you don’t, you will be dragged before the judge. Then the judge will hand you over to the jailer, and you will be locked up. [59] You won’t get out until you have paid the last cent you owe.

12.14

Jesus says radical things! “Do you think that I came to bring peace to earth? No indeed! I came to make people choose sides” (v. 51). What sides are the options to choose? Imagine your life ten years from now if you choose either side?

12.15

We can actively choose sides or passively choose by putting off the choice—which is still a choice. Which side do you actively choose now? Explain.

12.16

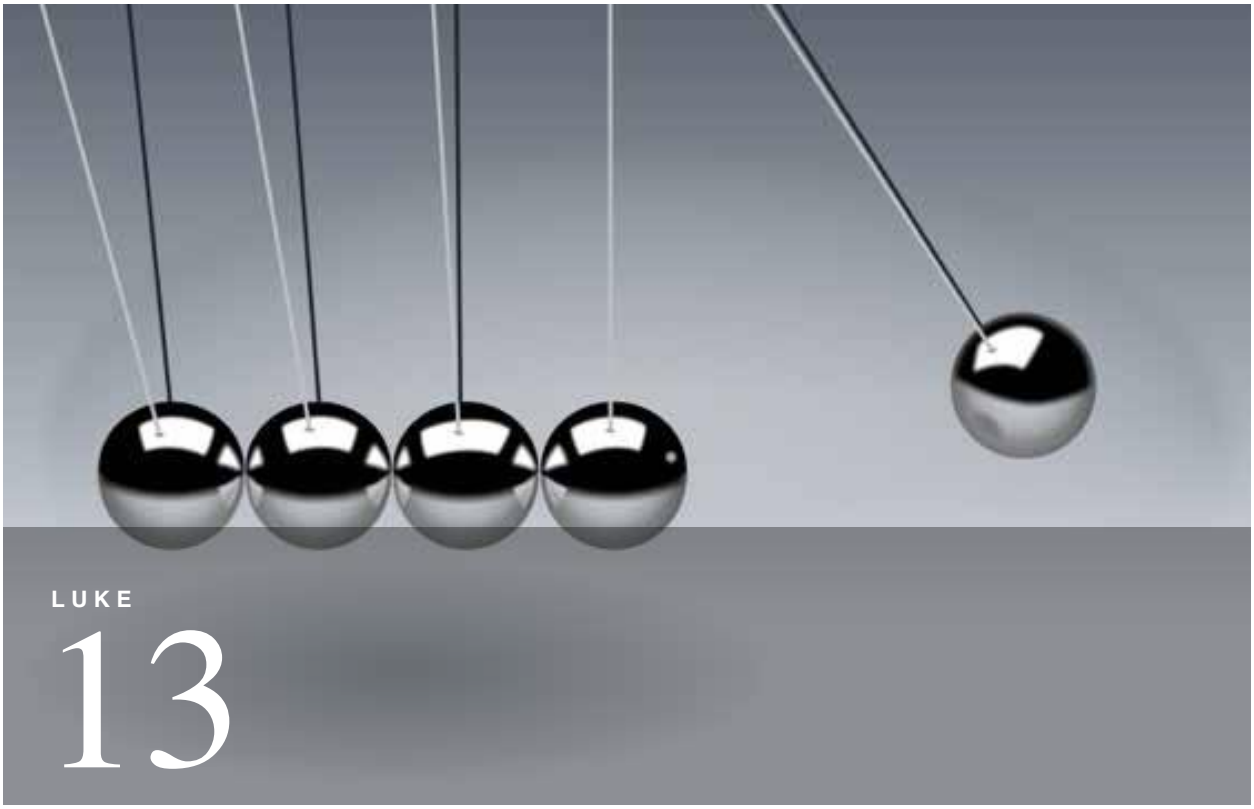
Jesus poses an important question, “Why don’t you understand the right thing to do?” (v. 57). Do you know the right thing to do? How do you know its right?

12.17

Are you doing the right thing these days? Can you always be right? Explain how you deal with not being right.

12.18

Consider each of the images in this chapter. Which one most relates to the person you desire not to become? If you put yourself into that image, where would you be and what would you be doing?



LUKE

13

Turn Back to God

About this same time Jesus was told that Pilate had given orders for some people from Galilee to be killed while they were offering sacrifices. [2] Jesus replied:

Do you think that these people were worse sinners than everyone else in Galilee just because of what happened to them? [3] Not at all! But you can be sure that if you don't turn back to God, every one of you will also be killed. [4] What about those eighteen people who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them? Do you think they were worse than everyone else in Jerusalem? [5] Not at all! But you can be sure that if you don't turn back to God, every one of you will also die.

13.1

Jesus warns us to turn back to God (v. 2-5) and that some will be told, "Get away from me, you evil people!" (v. 27). How do you respond to being warned about something?

13.2

If Jesus were to warn our world of something today, what do you think would be his first warning?

A Story about a Fig Tree

6 Jesus then told them this story:

A man had a fig tree growing in his vineyard. One day he went out to pick some figs, but he didn't find any. 7 So he said to the gardener, "For three years I have come looking for figs on this tree, and I haven't found any yet. Chop it down! Why should it take up space?"

8 The gardener answered, "Master, leave it for another year. I'll dig around it and put some manure on it to make it grow. 9 Maybe it will have figs on it next year. If it doesn't, you can have it cut down."

Healing a Woman on the Sabbath

10 One Sabbath, Jesus was teaching in a Jewish meeting place, 11 and a woman was there who had been crippled by an evil spirit for eighteen years. She was completely bent over and could not straighten up. 12 When Jesus saw the woman, he called her over and said, "You are now well." 13 He placed his hands on her, and right away she stood up straight and praised God.

14 The man in charge of the meeting place was angry because Jesus had healed someone on the Sabbath. So he said to the people, "Each week has six days when we can work. Come and be healed on one of those days, but not on the Sabbath."

15 The Lord replied, "Are you trying to fool someone? Won't any one of you untie your ox or donkey and lead it out to drink on a Sabbath? 16 This woman belongs to the family of Abraham, but Satan has kept her bound for eighteen years. Isn't it right to set her free on the Sabbath?" 17 Jesus' words made his enemies ashamed. But everyone else in the crowd was happy about the wonderful things he was doing.

13.3

Why is it so important that a fig tree bears fruit? Consider this question as if you were a farmer with many fruit bearing trees.

13.4

Have you ever cut down a barren fruit tree? Imagine that experience. What would that be like for you?

13.5

Jesus sets a woman free from a spirit that has crippled her for eighteen years (v.11-13). He did this on the Sabbath (v.10). How do you view the Sabbath and other religious days? Is there a bad time for a person to be set free? What does freedom look like to you?

13.6

As you reflect on the image of the girl in sand, what comes to mind? How might this impact the way you relate to God today?



A Mustard Seed and Yeast

18 Jesus said, “What is God’s kingdom like? What can I compare it with? 19 It is like what happens when someone plants a mustard seed in a garden. The seed grows as big as a tree, and birds nest in its branches.”

20 Then Jesus said, “What can I compare God’s kingdom with? 21 It is like what happens when a woman mixes yeast into three batches of flour. Finally, all the dough rises.”

The Narrow Door

22 As Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem, he taught the people in the towns and villages. 23 Someone asked him, “Lord, are only a few people going to be saved?”

Jesus answered:

[24] Do all you can to go in by the narrow door! A lot of people will try to get in, but will not be able to. [25] Once the owner of the house gets up and locks the door, you will be left standing outside. You will knock on the door and say, “Sir, open the door for us!”

But the owner will answer, “I don’t know a thing about you!”

[26] Then you will start saying, “We dined with you, and you taught in our streets.”

[27] But he will say, “I really don’t know who you are! Get away from me, you evil people!”

[28] Then when you have been thrown outside, you will weep and grit your teeth because you will see Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the prophets in God’s kingdom. [29] People will come from all directions and sit down to feast in God’s kingdom. [30] There the ones who are now least important will be the most important, and those who are now most important will be least important.

13.7

If possible find a picture of a mustard seed and tree. How might this compare with the kingdom of God?

13.8

When you think about the kingdom of God, how might you de- scribe it with words? with images?

13.9

Consider the photo- graph for this section—a doorway. Do you like entering through narrow doorways? Why or why not?

13.10

Jesus indicates that those who are least now will be most important in the kingdom of God (v. 29-30). Who do you consider to be least in your context? Imagine what it would look like for them to the most important? How might that impact how you relate to them now?



Jesus and Herod

31 At that time some Pharisees came to Jesus and said, “You had better get away from here! Herod[a] wants to kill you.”

32 Jesus said to them:

Go tell that fox, “I am going to force out demons and heal people today and tomorrow, and three days later I’ll be through.” 33 But I am going on my way today and tomorrow and the next day. After all, Jerusalem is the place where prophets are killed.

13.11

As you consider Jesus’ response to advice to get away from Herod, what comes to mind? What do you think the Pharisees that advised him thought about Jesus’ response?

13.12

Jesus was foretelling his death in Jerusalem—“the place where prophets are killed” (v.33). Why do you think Jesus expected to be killed in Jerusalem?

Jesus Loves Jerusalem

34 Jerusalem, Jerusalem! Your people have killed the prophets and have stoned the messengers who were sent to you. I have often wanted to gather your people, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings. But you wouldn’t let me. 35 Now your temple will be deserted. You won’t see me again until the time when you say,

“Blessed is the one who comes

in the name of the Lord.”

13.13

The compassion of Jesus for Jerusalem is evident in verses 34 and 35. As you re-read these verses, what emotions do you think Jesus experi- enced for the people of Jerusalem? Do you ever experience those kinds of emotions for a people? Explain.

13.14

Consider the pictures in this chapter. What image do you like the least? How might you persuade people to avoid this image story?





Jesus Heals a Sick Man

One Sabbath, Jesus was having dinner in the home of an important Pharisee, and everyone was carefully watching Jesus. [2] All of a sudden a man with swollen legs stood up in front of him. [3] Jesus turned and asked the Pharisees and the teachers of the Law of Moses, "Is it right to heal on the Sabbath?" [4] But they did not say a word. Jesus took hold of the man. Then he healed him and sent him away. [5] Afterwards, Jesus asked the people, "If your son or ox falls into a well, wouldn't you pull him out right away, even on the Sabbath?" [6] There was nothing they could say.

14.1

Why do you think the Pharisees wouldn't answer Jesus' question. "Is it right to heal on the Sabbath?" (v.3-4)?

14.2

What greater principle(s) was Jesus demonstrating as he healed this man?

How To Be a Guest

[7] Jesus saw how the guests had tried to take the best seats. So he told them:

[8] When you are invited to a wedding feast, don't sit in the best place. Someone more important may have been invited. [9] Then the one who invited you will come and say, "Give your place to this other guest!" You will be embarrassed and will have to sit in the worst place. [10] When you are invited to be a guest, go and sit in the worst place. Then the one who invited you may come and say, "My friend, take a better seat!" You will then be honored in front of all the other guests. [11] If you put yourself above others, you will be put down. But if you humble yourself, you will be honored.

[12] Then Jesus said to the man who had invited him:

When you give a dinner or a banquet, don't invite your friends and family and relatives and rich neighbors. If you do, they will invite you in return, and you will be paid back. [13] When you give a feast, invite the poor, the crippled, the lame, and the blind. [14] They cannot pay you back. But God will bless you and reward you when his people rise from death.

The Great Banquet

[15] After Jesus had finished speaking, one of the guests said, "The greatest blessing of all is to be at the banquet in God's kingdom!"

[16] Jesus told him:

A man once gave a great banquet and invited a lot of guests. [17] When the banquet was ready, he sent a servant to tell the guests, "Everything is ready! Please come."

[18] One guest after another started making ex-

14.3

In verses 8-9, the wedding guest who sat at the best place was re-seated to give way for a more important person. This was embarrassing! Jesus used this to teach the need for us to humble ourselves rather than "be put down" by others. (Re-read verse 11.) When have you felt embarrassed? Describe that situation.

14.4

When have you voluntarily humbled yourself? Describe that situa- tion.



cuses. The first one said, “I bought some land, and I’ve got to look it over. Please excuse me.” [19] Another guest said, “I bought five teams of oxen, and I need to try them out. Please excuse me.”

[20] Still another guest said, “I have just gotten married, and I can’t be there.”

[21] The servant told his master what happened, and the master became so angry that he said, “Go as fast as you can to every street and alley in town! Bring in everyone who is poor or crippled or blind or lame.”

[22] When the servant returned, he said, “Master, I’ve done what you told me, and there is still plenty of room for more people.”

[23] His master then told him, “Go out along the back roads and fence rows and make people come in, so that my house will be full. [24] Not one of the guests I first invited will get even a bite of my food!”

Being a Disciple

[25] Large crowds were walking along with Jesus, when he turned and said:

[26] You cannot be my disciple, unless you love me more than you love your father and mother, your wife and children, and your brothers and sisters. You cannot come with me unless you love me more than you love your own life. [27] You cannot be my disciple unless you carry your own cross and come with me.

[28] Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. What is the first thing you will do? Won't you sit down and figure out how much it will cost and if you have enough money to pay for it? [29] Otherwise, you will start building the tower, but not be able to finish. Then everyone who sees

14.5

When you consider "the banquet in God's kingdom" (v.15), is that your view of the "greatest blessing"? Explain. What blessings do you desire in this life? How might these blessings compete with the "greatest blessing"?

14.6

Find other pictures that relate to this chapter. Select one image that most "speaks" to you. How might your life story relate to the image and the Scripture? How might you apply some aspect of this chapter to your life today?

14.7

Jesus speaks of hard things as he tells what it means to be his dis- ciple. "You cannot be my disciple unless you carry your own cross and come with me" (v. 27). Is this mentality a part of your spiritual journey? How might "carry your cross" and "come to Jesus" impact your daily life?

what is happening will laugh at you. [30] They will say, "You started building, but could not finish the job."

[31] What will a king do if he has only ten thousand soldiers to defend himself against a king who is about to attack him with twenty thousand soldiers? Before he goes out to battle, won't he first sit down and decide if he can win? [32] If he thinks he won't be able to defend himself, he will send messengers and ask for peace while the other king is still a long way off. [33] So then, you cannot be my disciple unless you give away everything you own.

14.8

“So then, you cannot be my disciple unless you give away everything you own” (v. 33). Why do you think Jesus requires such difficult things to be his disciple? What do you really own?



Salt and Light

[34] Salt is good, but if it no longer tastes like salt, how can it be made to taste salty again? [35] It is no longer good for the soil or even for the manure pile. People simply throw it out. If you have ears, pay attention!

14.9

When salt no longer tastes salty and isn't good for the soil or manure pile, then people throw it out? In other words, salt has various functions. Why is it important that salt performs a function or else be thrown out?

14.10

Select your most favorite and least favorite picture in this chapter. Why did you select these two? What might both images have in common? How do the images connect with the stories in this chapter?





One Sheep

Tax collectors[a] and sinners were all crowding around to listen to Jesus. [2] So the Pharisees and the teachers of the Law of Moses started grumbling, "This man is friendly with sinners. He even eats with them."

[3] Then Jesus told them this story:

[4] If any of you has a hundred sheep, and one of them gets lost, what will you do? Won't you leave the ninety-nine in the field and go look for the lost sheep until you find it? [5] And when you find it, you will be so glad that you will put it on your shoulder [6] and carry it home. Then you will call in your friends and neighbors and say, "Let's celebrate! I've found my lost sheep." [7] Jesus said, "In the same way there is more happiness in heaven because of one sinner who turns to God than over ninety-nine good people who don't need to."

15.1

Do you believe "there is more happiness in heaven because of one sinner who turns to God than over ninety-nine good people who don't need to" (v.7)?

15.2

Who are the “good people” with no need to turn to God? Who is a “sinner”? What kind of person do you most identify with?

One Coin

8 Jesus told the people another story:

What will a woman do if she has ten silver coins and loses one of them? Won’t she light a lamp, sweep the
floor, and look carefully until she finds it? 9 Then she will call in her friends and neighbors and say, “Let’s
celebrate! I’ve found the coin I lost.”

10 Jesus said, “In the same way God’s angels are happy when even one person turns to him.”

Two Sons

11 Jesus also told them another story:

Once a man had two sons. 12 The younger son said to his father, “Give me my share of the property.” So the
father divided his property between his two sons.

13 Not long after that, the younger son packed up everything he owned and left for a foreign country, where he
wasted all his money in wild living. 14 He had spent everything, when a bad famine spread through that whole
land. Soon he had nothing to eat.

15 He went to work for a man in that country, and the man sent him out to take care of his pigs.[b] 16 He would
have been glad to eat what the pigs were eating,[c] but no one gave him a thing.

17 Finally, he came to his senses and said, “My father’s workers have plenty to eat, and here I am, starving to
death! 18 I will go to my father and say to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against God in heaven and against you. 19
I am no longer good enough to be called your son. Treat me like one of your workers.’”

20 The younger son got up and started back to his father. But when he was still a long way off,

15.3

Have you ever lost money? What did you do? What was it like to never find the money you lost?

15.4

Images tell stories. Select an image from this chapter and tell a story based on it. How might that story relate to the stories in this chapter?

15.5

In the story of the two sons and the father, which one do you most identify with? How might this story shape your view of God?

15.6

In the morning after his reunion and celebration with his father, what feelings do you imagine the son had as he looked at his new clothes, ring, and sandals? Do you think it was easy for him to put these on himself versus having them put on by the servants (v.22)? When is it difficult for you embrace forgiveness and acceptance?

his father saw him and felt sorry for him. He ran to his son and hugged and kissed him.

21 The son said, “Father, I have sinned against God in heaven and against you. I am no longer good enough to be called your son.”

22 But his father said to the servants, “Hurry and bring the best clothes and put them on him. Give him a ring for his finger and sandals[d] for his feet. 23 Get the best calf and prepare it, so we can eat and celebrate. 24 This son of mine was dead, but has now come back to life. He was lost and has now been found.” And they began to celebrate.

25 The older son had been out in the field. But when he came near the house, he heard the music and dancing. 26 So he called one of the servants over and asked, “What’s going on here?”

27 The servant answered, “Your brother has come home safe and sound, and your father ordered us to kill the best calf.” 28 The older brother got so angry that he would not even go into the house.

His father came out and begged him to go in. 29 But he said to his father, “For years I have worked for you like a slave and have always obeyed you. But you have never even given me a little goat, so that I could give a dinner for my friends. 30 This other son of yours wasted your money on prostitutes. And now that he has come home, you ordered the best calf to be killed for a feast.” 31 His father replied, “My son, you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. 32 But we should be glad and celebrate! Your brother was dead, but he is

now alive. He was lost and has now been found."





A Dishonest Manager

Jesus said to his disciples:

A rich man once had a manager to take care of his business. But he was told that his manager was wasting
money. [2] So the rich man called him in and said, “What is this I hear about you? Tell me what you have done!
You are no longer going to work for me.”

[3] The manager said to himself, “What shall I do now that my master is going to fire me? I can’t dig ditches,
and I’m ashamed to beg. [4] I know what I’ll do, so that people will welcome me into their homes after I’ve lost
my job.”

[5] Then one by one he called in the people who were in debt to his master. He asked the first one, “How much
do you owe my master?”

[6] “A hundred barrels of olive oil,” the man answered.

So the manager said, “Take your bill and sit down and quickly write ‘fifty’.”

[7] The manager asked someone else who was in debt to his master, “How much do you owe?” “A thousand
bushels[a] of wheat,” the man replied.

The manager said, “Take your bill and write ‘eight hundred’.”

[8] The master praised his dishonest manager for looking out for himself so well. That’s how it is! The people of
this world look out for themselves better than the people who belong to the light.

[9] My disciples, I tell you to use wicked wealth to make friends for yourselves. Then when it is gone, you will be welcomed into an eternal home. [10] Anyone who can be trusted in little matters can also be trusted in important matters. But anyone who is dishonest in little matters will be dishonest in important matters. [11] If you cannot be trusted with this wicked wealth, who will trust you with true wealth? [12] And if you cannot be trusted with what belongs to someone else, who will give you something that will be your own? [13] You cannot be the slave of two masters. You will like one more than the other or be more loyal to one than to the other. You cannot serve God and money.

Some Sayings of Jesus

[14] The Pharisees really loved money. So when they heard what Jesus said, they made fun of him. [15] But Jesus told them:

You are always making yourselves look good, but God sees what is in your heart. The things that most people think are important are worthless as far as God is concerned.

[16] Until the time of John the Baptist, people had to obey the Law of Moses and the Books of

16.1

Jesus told a story about a money-wasting manager. What do you make of the way the master later praised this man (v. 8)? Was he right to praise this dishonest man? Explain.

16.2

Then Jesus says to his disciples, “I tell you to use wicked wealth to make friends for yourselves. Then when it is gone, you will be welcomed into an eternal home” (v.9). How do you use money to make friends? How might you apply this passage to your spending habits?

16.3

Consider the pictures in this chapter as a group. Where do you see God at work in these images? How has God been active in your life this past week?

the Prophets.[b] But since God’s kingdom has been preached, everyone is trying hard to get in. [17] Heaven and earth will disappear before the smallest letter of the Law does.

[18] It is a terrible sin[c] for a man to divorce his wife and marry another woman. It is also a terrible sin for a man to marry a divorced woman.

Lazarus and the Rich Man

[19] There was once a rich man who wore expensive clothes and every day ate the best food. [20] But a poor beggar named Lazarus was brought to the gate of the rich man's house. [21] He was happy just to eat the scraps that fell from the rich man's table. His body was covered with sores, and dogs kept coming up to lick them. [22] The poor man died, and angels took him to the place of honor next to Abraham.[d]

The rich man also died and was buried. [23] He went to hell[e] and was suffering terribly. When he looked up and saw Abraham far off and Lazarus at his side, [24] he said to Abraham, "Have pity on me! Send Lazarus to dip his finger in water and touch my tongue. I'm suffering terribly in this fire."

[25] Abraham answered, "My friend, remember that while you lived, you had everything good, and Lazarus had everything bad. Now he is happy, and you are in pain. [26] And besides, there is a deep ditch between us, and no one from either side can cross over."

[27] But the rich man said, "Abraham, then please send Lazarus to my father's home. [28] Let him warn my five brothers, so they won't come to this horrible place."

[29] Abraham answered, "Your brothers can read what Moses and the prophets[f] wrote. They

16.4

Why do you think Jesus declares divorce to be "a terrible sin" (v. 18)? What is sin? In a world where many people experience divorce, why do you think Jesus call this sin?

16.5

In the story of Lazarus, the rich man and Abraham, the rich man declares, "If only someone from the dead would go to them, they would listen and turn to God" (v. 30). But Abraham responded, "If they won't pay attention to Moses and the prophets, they won't listen even to someone who comes back from the dead" (v. 31). Who would you listen to the most—the prophets or someone from the dead? Explain.

16.6

Reflect on the image of the gold bars. If you put yourself in the im- age, where would you be and what would you be saying?

should pay attention to that."

30 Then the rich man said, "No, that's not enough! If only someone from the dead would go to them, they would listen and turn to God." 31 So Abraham said, "If they won't pay attention to Moses and the prophets, they won't listen even to someone who comes back from the dead."





Faith and Service

Jesus said to his disciples:

There will always be something that causes people to sin. But anyone who causes them to sin is in for trouble.
A person who causes even one of my little followers to sin [2] would be better off thrown into the ocean with a
heavy stone tied around their neck. [3] So be careful what you do. Correct any followers[a] of mine who sin, and
forgive the ones who say they are sorry. [4] Even if one of them mistreats you seven times in one day and says,
"I am sorry," you should still forgive that person.

[5] The apostles said to the Lord, "Make our faith stronger!"

[6] Jesus replied:

If you had faith no bigger than a tiny mustard seed, you could tell this mulberry tree to pull itself up, roots and
all, and to plant itself in the ocean. And it would!

[7] If your servant comes in from plowing or from taking care of the sheep, would you say, "Welcome! Come on
in and have something to eat"? [8] No, you wouldn't say that. You would say, "Fix me something to eat. Get
ready to serve me, so I can have my meal. Then later on you can eat and drink." [9] Servants don't deserve
special thanks for doing what they are supposed to do. [10] And that's how it should be with you. When you've
done all you should, then say, "We are merely servants, and we have simply done our duty."

Ten Men with Leprosy

[11] On his way to Jerusalem, Jesus went along the border between Samaria and Galilee. [12] As he was going into a village, ten men with leprosy[b] came toward him. They stood at a distance [13] and shouted, "Jesus, Master, have pity on us!"

[14] Jesus looked at them and said, "Go show yourselves to the priests."[c]

On their way they were healed. [15] When one of them discovered that he was healed, he came back, shouting praises to God. [16] He bowed down at the feet of Jesus and thanked him. The

17.1

Serving as a servant is not a popular idea in today's world. And yet Jesus calls us to embrace the attitude of a servant: "Servants don't deserve special thanks for doing what they are supposed to do" (v. 9). "When you've done all you should, then say, 'We are merely servants, and we have simply done our duty'" (v. 10). What duties do you faithfully fulfill for which you don't deserve special thanks? How do you respond to not being thanked?

17.2

Reflect on the image the street sweeper. What view of serving is it portraying? Do you like that view? Explain.

17.3

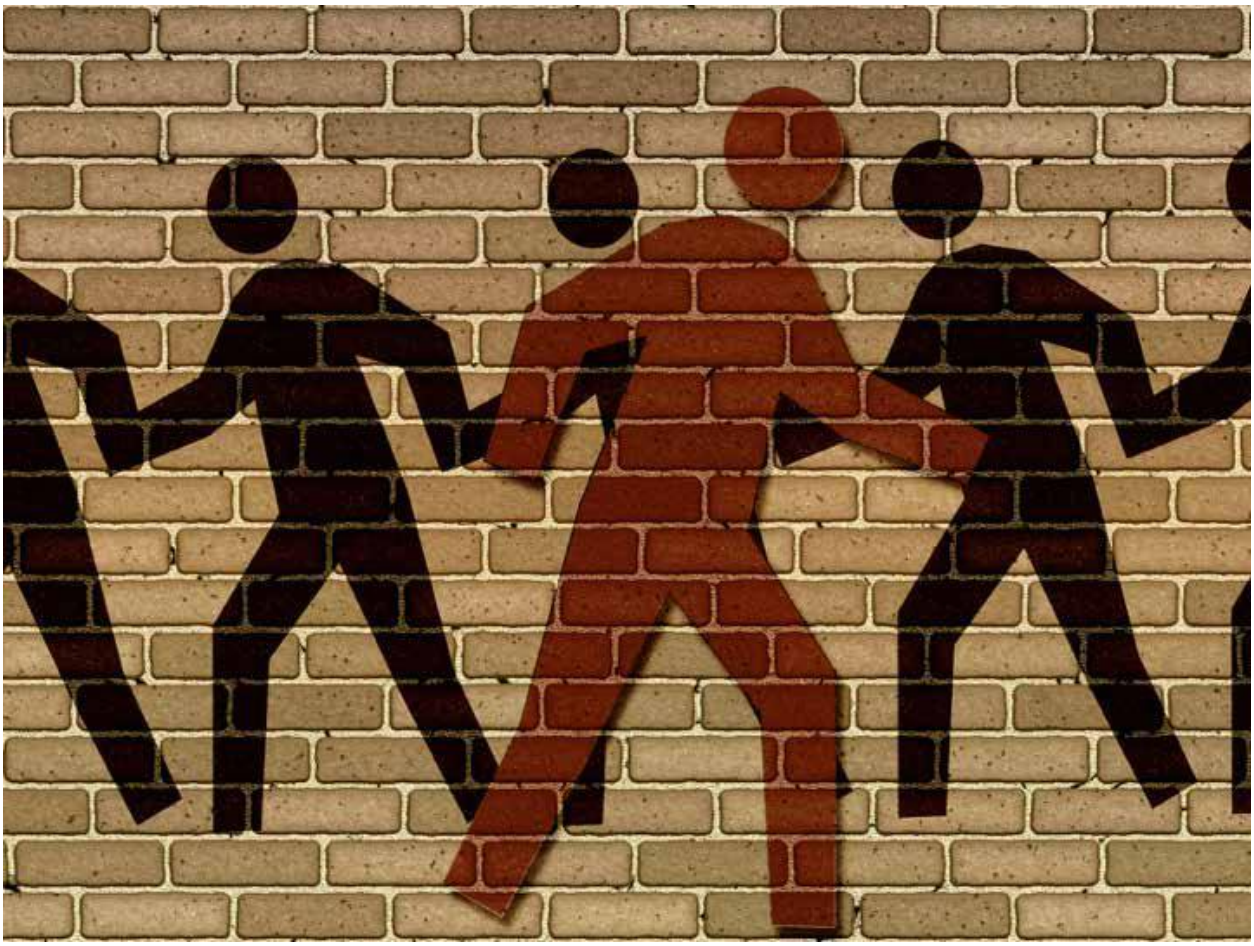
Of the ten men with leprosy, only the foreigner came back to thank Jesus for healing him (v. 15-16). How often do you thank Jesus versus ask something from him?

man was from the country of Samaria.

[17] Jesus asked, "Weren't ten men healed? Where are the other nine? [18] Why was this foreigner the only one who came back to thank God?" [19] Then Jesus told the man, "You may get up and go. Your faith has made you well."

17.4

Can you thrive in life without being thankful? How might thanking God more often impact the quality of your life?



God's Kingdom

[20] Some Pharisees asked Jesus when God's kingdom would come. He answered, "God's kingdom isn't something you can see. [21] There is no use saying, 'Look! Here it is' or 'Look! There it is.' God's kingdom is here with you."[d]

[22] Jesus said to his disciples:

The time will come when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, but you will not. [23] When people say to you, "Look there," or "Look here," don't go looking for him. [24] The day of the Son of Man will be like lightning flashing across the sky. [25] But first he must suffer terribly and be rejected by the people of today. [26] When the Son of Man comes, things will be just as they were when Noah lived. [27] People were eating, drinking, and getting married right up to the day when Noah went into the big boat. Then the flood

came and drowned everyone on earth. [28] When Lot[e] lived, people were also eating and drinking. They were buying, selling, planting, and building. [29] But on the very day Lot left Sodom, fiery flames poured down from the sky and killed everyone. [30]



The same will happen on the day when the Son of Man appears.

[31] At that time no one on a rooftop[f] should go down into the house to get anything. No one in a field should go back to the house for anything. [32] Remember what happened to Lot's wife.[g] [33] People who try to save their lives will lose them, and those who lose their lives will save them. [34] On that night two people will be sleeping in the same bed, but only one will be taken. The other will be left. [35-36] Two women will be together grinding wheat, but only one will be taken. The other will be left.[h]

[37] Then Jesus' disciples spoke up, "But where will this happen, Lord?"

Jesus said, "Where there is a corpse, there will always be buzzards."[i]

17.5

Jesus said, "The time will come when you will long to see one of the days of the Son of Man, but you will not" (v. 22). Do you long to see Jesus—the Son of Man? How does not seeing him (i.e. delayed gratification) impact your longing?

17.6

Look at the pictures in this chapter. If you were to add a picture to this chapter to better communicate the truths in the chapter, what would it be. Describe your image and why you would add it.



A Widow and a Judge

Jesus told his disciples a story about how they should keep on praying and never give up: [2] In a town there was once a judge who didn't fear God or care about people. [3] In that same town there was a widow who kept going to the judge and saying, "Make sure that I get fair treatment in court."

[4] For a while the judge refused to do anything. Finally, he said to himself, "Even though I don't fear God or care about people, [5] I will help this widow because she keeps on bothering me. If I don't help her, she will wear me out."

[6] The Lord said:

Think about what that crooked judge said. [7] Won't God protect his chosen ones who pray to him day and night? Won't he be concerned for them? [8] He will surely hurry and help them. But when the Son of Man comes, will he find on this earth anyone with faith?

18.2

Do you have faith that Jesus or someone else could find? Explain.

18.1

"But when the Son of Man comes, will he find on this earth anyone with faith?" (v. 8). Where do you see faith exhibited in the world you live in?

A Pharisee and a Tax Collector

9 Jesus told a story to some people who thought they were better than others and who looked down on
everyone else:

10 Two men went into the temple to pray.[a] One was a Pharisee and the other a tax collector.[b] 11 The Pharisee
stood over by himself and prayed,[c] "God, I thank you that I am not greedy, dishonest, and unfaithful in
marriage like other people. And I am really glad that I am not like that tax collector over there. 12 I go without
eating[d] for two days a week, and I give you one tenth of all I earn."

13 The tax collector stood off at a distance and did not think he was good enough even to look up toward
heaven. He was so sorry for what he had done that he pounded his chest and prayed, "God, have pity on me! I
am such a sinner." 14 Then Jesus said, "When the two men went home, it was the tax collector and not the
Pharisee who was pleasing to God. If you put yourself above others, you will be put down. But if you humble
yourself, you will be honored."

18.3

If you were to select an image to represent the way most peo- ple view taxes, what would that look like? What feelings surface for you as you pay any type of tax (sales, property, income, etc.)?

18.4

Jesus often made it clear to those who believe they are "not greedy, dishonest, and unfaithful in marriage like other people" (11) that they are not pleasing God (v. 14). When you look at yourself, do you see anyone of these things in you life? Do you "put yourself above others" or do you humble yourself before God in prayer (v. 14)? Explain.

Jesus Blesses Little Children

15 Some people brought their little children for Jesus to bless. But when his disciples saw them doing this, they
told the people to stop bothering him. 16 So Jesus called the children over to him and said, “Let the children
come to me! Don’t try to stop them. People who are like these children belong to God’s kingdom.[c] 17 You will
never get into God’s kingdom unless you enter it like a child!”

A Rich and Important Man

18 An important man asked Jesus, “Good Teacher, what must I do to have eternal life?” 19 Jesus said, “Why do
you call me good? Only God is good. 20 You know the commandments: ‘Be faithful in marriage. Do not
murder. Do not steal. Do not tell lies about others. Respect your father and mother.’”

21 He told Jesus, “I have obeyed all these commandments since I was a young man.”

22 When Jesus heard this, he said, “There is one thing you still need to do. Go and sell everything you own!
Give the money to the poor, and you will have riches in heaven. Then come and be my follower.” 23 When the
man heard this, he was sad, because he was very rich.

24 Jesus saw how sad the man was. So he said,

18.5

Consider the image for this section. What about a child appeals to you? Does anything about a child bring a sense of resistance within you? Explain.

18.6

Why do you think Jesus always seem to give special attention to little children? How might Jesus’ view of children impact your life?



"It's terribly hard for rich people to get into God's kingdom! [25] In fact, it's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich person to get into God's kingdom."

[26] When the crowd heard this, they asked, "How can anyone ever be saved?"

[27] Jesus replied, "There are some things that people cannot do, but God can do anything." [28] Peter said, "Remember, we left everything to be your followers!"

[29] Jesus answered, "You can be sure that anyone who gives up home or wife or brothers or family or children because of God's kingdom [30] will be given much more in this life. And in the future world they will have eternal life."

18.7

Have you ever asked this question, “What must I do to have eternal life?” (v. 18)? What do you see in this passage is necessary to have eternal life?

18.8

How do you imagine eternal life? Is that something desirable for you? Why or why not?



Jesus Again Tells about His Death

31 Jesus took the twelve apostles aside and said: We are now on our way to Jerusalem. Everything that the
prophets wrote about the Son of Man will happen there. 32 He will be handed over to foreigners,[f] who will

make fun of him, mistreat him, and spit on him. [33] They will beat him and kill him, but three days later he will rise to life.

[34] The apostles did not understand what Jesus was talking about. They could not understand, because the meaning of what he said was hidden from them.

Jesus Heals a Blind Beggar

[35] When Jesus was coming close to Jericho, a blind man sat begging beside the road. [36] The man heard the crowd walking by and asked what was happening. [37] Some people told him that Jesus from Nazareth was passing by. [38] So the blind man shouted, "Jesus, Son of David,[g] have pity on me!" [39] The people who were going along with Jesus told the man to be quiet. But he shouted even louder, "Son of David, have pity on me!"

[40] Jesus stopped and told some people to bring the blind man over to him. When the blind man was getting near, Jesus asked, [41] "What do you want me to do for you?"

"Lord, I want to see!" he answered.

[42] Jesus replied, "Look and you will see! Your eyes are healed because of your faith." [43] Right away the man could see, and he went with Jesus and started thanking God. When the crowds saw what happened, they praised God.

18.9

Jesus foretold his death and resurrection (v. 31-33) and the disciples/apostles "Did not understand what Jesus was talking about. They could not understand, because the meaning of what he said was hidden from them" (v. 34). Do you ever feel like spiritual truth is hidden from you as well? Explain.

18.10

Have you ever felt like a "blind beggar" shouting out to Jesus "have pity on me" (v. 35, 38)? Do you want pity for something in your life?

18.11

Think of a marketing ad you have seen that you liked a lot. What about the image (or video) did you like? Ads are intended to help motive people to decide to buy something. How did the ad you liked appeal to your motives for buying? Do any of your buying motives show up in the people of this chapter? Explain.



Zacchaeus

Jesus was going through Jericho, [2] where a man named Zacchaeus lived. He was in charge of collecting taxes[a] and was very rich. [3-4] Jesus was heading his way, and Zacchaeus wanted to see what he was like. But Zacchaeus was a short man and could not see over the crowd. So he ran ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree. [5] When Jesus got there, he looked up and said, "Zacchaeus, hurry down! I want to stay with you today." [6] Zacchaeus hurried down and gladly welcomed Jesus.

[7] Everyone who saw this started grumbling, "This man Zacchaeus is a sinner! And Jesus is going home to eat with him."

[8] Later that day Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "I will give half of my property to the

19.1

Reflect on the image for this section. How might you see God active in this picture? What is He doing?

19.2

Why do you think it was necessary for this passage to include the fact that Zacchaeus was a short man (v. 3, 4)? Do you ever feel "short"? What "trees" might you have to climb in order to see and/or be seen by others or by Jesus?

poor. And I will now pay back four times as much[b] to everyone I have ever cheated."

9 Jesus said to Zacchaeus, "Today you and your family have been saved,[c] because you are a true son of
Abraham.[d] 10 The Son of Man came to look for and to save people who are lost."

A Story about Ten Servants

11 The crowd was still listening to Jesus as he was getting close to Jerusalem. Many of them thought that
God's kingdom would soon appear, 12 and Jesus told them this story:

A prince once went to a foreign country to be crowned king and then to return. 13 But before leaving, he called
in ten servants and gave each of them some money. He told them, "Use this to earn more money until I get
back."

14 But the people of his country hated him, and they sent messengers to the foreign country to say, "We don't
want this man to be our king." 15 After the prince had been made king, he returned and called in his servants.
He asked them how much they had earned with the money they had been given.

16 The first servant came and said, "Sir, with the money you gave me I have earned ten times as much."

17 "That's fine, my good servant!" the king said. "Since you have shown that you can be trusted with a small
amount, you will be given ten cities to rule."

18 The second one came and said, "Sir, with the money you gave me, I have earned five times as much."

19 The king said, "You will be given five cities." 20 Another servant came and said, "Sir, here is your money. I
kept it safe in a handkerchief. 21 You are a hard man, and I was afraid of you.

19.3

In the story of the ten servants (v. 11-27), the king had harsh words to the worthless servant who didn't invest king's money (v. 20-24). Other servants objected at the command to give the money to the one who already had the most (v. 25). Does this redistribution of wealth seem fair to you? Why or why not?

19.4

Do you aspire to be a servant of God? If so, what type of servant do you aspire to be? What type of servant are you today?

You take what isn't yours, and you harvest crops you didn't plant." [22] "You worthless servant!" the king told him. "You have condemned yourself by what you have just said. You knew that I am a hard man, taking what isn't mine and harvesting what I've not planted. [23] Why didn't you put my money in the bank? On my return, I could have had the money together with interest."

[24] Then he said to some other servants standing there, "Take the money away from him and give it to the servant who earned ten times as much." [25] But they said, "Sir, he already has ten times as much!"

[26] The king replied, "Those who have something will be given more. But everything will be taken away from those who don't have anything. [27] Now bring me the enemies who didn't want me to be their king. Kill them while I watch!"



Jesus Enters Jerusalem

28 When Jesus had finished saying all this, he went on toward Jerusalem. 29 As he was getting near Bethphage
and Bethany on the Mount of Olives, he sent two of his disciples on ahead. 30 He told them, "Go into the next
village, where you will find a young donkey that has never been ridden. Untie the donkey and bring it here. 31
If anyone asks why you are doing that, just say, 'The Lord[e] needs it.'"

32 They went off and found everything just as Jesus had said. 33 While they were untying the donkey, its
owners asked, "Why are you doing that?"

34 They answered, "The Lord[f] needs it."

35 Then they led the donkey to Jesus. They put some of their clothes on its back and helped Jesus get on. 36
And as he rode along, the people spread clothes on the road[g] in front of him. 37 When Jesus was starting



down the Mount of Olives, his large crowd of disciples were happy and praised God because of all the miracles they had seen. 38 They shouted,

"Blessed is the king who comes

in the name of the Lord!
Peace in heaven

and glory to God."
39 Some Pharisees in the crowd said to Jesus, "Teacher, make your disciples stop shouting!" 40 But Jesus answered, "If they keep quiet, these stones will start shouting."

41 When Jesus came closer and could see Jerusalem, he cried 42 and said:

It is too bad that today your people don't know what will bring them peace! Now it is hidden from them. 43 Jerusalem, the time will come when your enemies will build walls around you to attack you. Armies will surround you and close in on you from every side. 44 They will level you to the ground and kill your people. Not one stone in your buildings will be left on top of another. This will happen because you did not see that God had come to save you.[h]

Jesus in the Temple

45 When Jesus entered the temple, he started chasing out the people who were selling things. 46 He told them, "The Scriptures say, 'My house should be a place of worship.' But you have made it a place where robbers hide!" 47 Each day, Jesus kept on teaching in the temple. So the chief priests, the teachers of the Law of Moses, and some other important people tried to have him killed. 48 But they could not find a way to do it, because everyone else was eager to listen to him.

19.5

When Jesus entered Jerusalem to the blessings of the people, they thought him to be "the king who comes in the name of the Lord" (v. 38) What does "king" mean? Do you believe Jesus is the king who came in the name of the Lord?

19.6

Who do you believe Jesus to be today? And where is he and what is he doing today?

19.7

Jesus chased out people who were selling things in the temple—a place of worship (v. 45-46). Why do you think Jesus reacted so strongly when business and worship collided within the space of the temple?



19.8

Have you ever seen business and worship try to occupy the same space? In that mix, what happened in the hearts of people from your point of view?

19.9

Images can powerfully convey emotions. What emotions surface in you as you look at any of the images in this chapter? How do you manage these emotions or how might they manage or control you?



A Question about Jesus' Authority

One day, Jesus was teaching in the temple and telling the good news. So the chief priests, the teachers, and the nation's leaders [2] asked him, "What right do you have to do these things? Who gave you this authority?"

[3] Jesus replied, "I want to ask you a question. [4] Who gave John the right to baptize? Was it God in heaven or merely some human being?" [5] They talked this over and said to each other, "We can't say that God gave John this right. Jesus will ask us why we didn't believe John. [6] And we can't say that it was merely some human who gave John the right to baptize. The crowd will stone us to death, because they think John was a prophet."

[7] So they told Jesus, "We don't know who gave John the right to baptize."

[8] Jesus replied, "Then I won't tell you who gave me the right to do what I do."

20.1

Jesus re-routed the question of his authority by asking a question the priest, teachers and leaders didn't want to address (v. 1-6). But the question lingers: Who gave Jesus authority? What is authority? Whose authority do you submit to?

20.2

Consider the image for this section. What does it relate to your view of authority? How might you make this image better?

Renters of a Vineyard

9 Jesus told the people this story:

A man once planted a vineyard and rented it out. Then he left the country for a long time. 10 When it was time to harvest the crop, he sent a servant to ask the renters for his share of the grapes. But they beat up the servant and sent him away without anything. 11 So the owner sent another servant. The renters also beat him up. They insulted him terribly and sent him away without a thing. 12 The owner sent a third servant. He was also beaten terribly and thrown out of the vineyard.

13 The owner then said to himself, "What am I going to do? I know what. I'll send my son, the one I love so much. They will surely respect him!" 14 When the renters saw the owner's son, they said to one another, "Someday he will own the vineyard. Let's kill him! Then we can have it all for ourselves." 15 So they threw him out of the vineyard and killed him.

Jesus asked, "What do you think the owner of the vineyard will do? 16 I'll tell you what. He will come and kill those renters and let someone else have his vineyard."

When the people heard this, they said, "This must never happen!"

17 But Jesus looked straight at them and said, "Then what do the Scriptures mean when they say, 'The stone that the builders tossed aside is now the most important stone of all'? 18 Anyone who stumbles over this stone will get hurt, and anyone it falls on will be smashed to pieces."

19 The chief priests and the teachers of the Law of Moses knew that Jesus was talking about them when he was telling this story. They wanted to arrest him right then, but they were afraid of the people.

20.3

Jesus told hard truth that often included consequences—judgment. Is any part of this passage hard truth for you? Explain.

20.4

When the chief priest and teachers disapproved of Jesus' hard truth, they wanted to arrest him right then. When people tell you hard truth that includes conse- quences, what's your immediate reaction? Does that reaction serve you well in the long run? Explain.

Paying Taxes

[20] Jesus' enemies kept watching him closely, because they wanted to hand him over to the Roman governor. So they sent some men who pretended to be good. But they were really spies trying to catch Jesus saying something wrong. [21] The spies said to him, "Teacher, we know that you teach the truth about what God wants people to do. And you treat everyone with the same respect, no matter who they are. [22] Tell us, should we pay taxes to the Emperor or not?" [23] Jesus knew that they were trying to trick him. So he told them, [24] "Show me a coin." Then he asked, "Whose picture and name are on it?"

"The Emperor's," they answered.

[25] Then he told them, "Give the Emperor what belongs to him and give God what belongs to God." [26] Jesus' enemies could not catch him saying anything wrong there in front of the people. They were amazed at his answer and kept quiet.

20.5

"Tell is, should we pay taxes to the Emperor or not?" (v. 22). "Give the Emperor what belongs to him and give God what belongs to God" (v. 25). Jesus flips the tone of the spies' question from "pay" to "give". Do you enjoy paying taxes? Do you enjoy giving to God and/or giving to the government? Explain.

20.6

Consider the picture for this section. How might you make this a better picture— better in the sense that good is overcoming evil?



Life in the Future World

[27] The Sadducees did not believe that people would rise to life after death. So some of them came to Jesus [28] and said:

Teacher, Moses wrote that if a married man dies and has no children, his brother should marry the widow. Their first son would then be thought of as the son of the dead brother. [29] There were once seven brothers. The first one married, but died without having any children. [30] The second one married his brother's widow, and he also died without having any children. [31] The same thing happened to the third one. Finally, all seven brothers married that woman and died without having any children. [32] At last the woman died. [33] When God raises people from death, whose wife will this woman be? All seven brothers had married her. [34] Jesus answered:

The people in this world get married. [35] But in the future world no one who is worthy to rise

20.7

“The Sadducees did not believe that people would rise to life after death” (v. 27). Do you believe in life after death? What do you believe about “after death”?

20.8

What difference does what happens after death make in how you live today?

20.9

Imagine your resurrected body? What might that look like?



from death will either marry [36] or die. They will be like the angels and will be God's children, because they have been raised to life.

[37] In the story about the burning bush, Moses clearly shows that people will live again. He said, "The Lord is the God worshiped by Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob."[a] [38] So the Lord isn't the God of the dead, but of the living. This means that everyone is alive as far as God is concerned. [39] Some of the teachers of the Law of Moses said, "Teacher, you have given a good answer!" [40] From then on, no one dared to ask Jesus any questions.

About David's Son

[41] Jesus asked, "Why do people say that the Messiah will be the son of King David?[b] [42] In the book of Psalms, David himself says,

'The Lord said to my Lord,

Sit at my right side[c]
[43] until I make your enemies

into a footstool for you.'
[44] David spoke of the Messiah as his Lord, so how can the Messiah be his son?"

20.10

Do you see Jesus as the son a King David and/or David's Lord, the Messiah? Explain.

20.11

Why does it matter to you how you see Jesus?



Jesus and the Teachers of the Law of Moses

45 While everyone was listening to Jesus, he said to his disciples: 46 Guard against the teachers of the Law of
Moses! They love to walk around in long robes, and they like to be greeted in the market. They want the front
seats in the meeting places and the best seats at banquets. 47 But they cheat widows out of their homes and then
pray long prayers just to show off. These teachers will be punished most of all.

20.12

Jesus has strong words of punishment to teachers who abuse their roles: who draw attention to themselves, cheat widows and show off with long prayers. “These teacher will be punished most of all” (v. 47). How do you react to such punishment for teachers/leaders who are show offs and cheaters of vulnerable people?

20.13

Images often tell a story in a way that encourages our imaginations. As you focus on any of the images in this chapter, what do you imagine is the next step in that image story? How might your imagined next step relate to the chapter?



A Widow's Offering

Jesus looked up and saw some rich people tossing their gifts into the offering box. [2] He also saw a poor widow putting in two pennies. [3] And he said, "I tell you that this poor woman has put in more than all the others. [4] Everyone else gave what they didn't need. But she is very poor and gave everything she had."

21.1

People give for many various reasons. Why do you think the rich give money? And why might the poor give?

21.2

Which do you consider yourself: rich or poor? Why do you give money—if you do? Are there any changes in the way you give money that you think you should make?

The Temple Will Be Destroyed

[5] Some people were talking about the beautiful stones used to build the temple and about the gifts that had been placed in it. Jesus said, [6] "Do you see these stones? The time is coming when not one of them will be left in place. They will all be knocked down."

21.3

Imagine a beautiful stone building which is completely knocked down. What emotions surface for you if that building had been a place of worship for you?

21.4

Jesus predicted the destruction of the temple that later came true. Why do you think the temple was destroyed?



Warning about Trouble

7 Some people asked, “Teacher, when will all this happen? How can we know when these things are about to take place?”

8 Jesus replied:

Don’t be fooled by those who will come and claim to be me. They will say, “I am Christ!” and “Now is the time!” But don’t follow them. 9 When you hear about wars and riots, don’t be afraid. These things will have to happen first, but that isn’t the end.

10 Nations will go to war against one another, and kingdoms will attack each other. 11 There will be great earthquakes, and in many places people will starve to death and suffer terrible diseases. All sorts of frightening things will be seen in the sky.

12 Before all this happens, you will be arrested and punished. You will be tried in your meeting places and put in jail. Because of me you will be



placed on trial before kings and governors. 13 But this will be your chance to tell about your faith.

14 Don’t worry about what you will say to defend yourselves. 15 I will give you the wisdom to know what to say. None of your enemies will be able to oppose you or to say that you are wrong. 16 You will be betrayed by your own parents, brothers, family, and friends. Some of you will even be killed. 17 Because of me, you will be hated by everyone. 18 But don’t worry![a] 19 You will be saved by being faithful to me.

Jerusalem Will Be Destroyed

[20] When you see Jerusalem surrounded by soldiers, you will know that it will soon be destroyed. [21] If you are
living in Judea at that time, run to the mountains. If you are in the city, leave it. And if you are out in the
country, don't go back into the city. [22] This time of punishment is what is written about in the Scriptures. [23] It
will be an awful time for women who are expecting babies or nursing young children! Everywhere in the land
people will suffer horribly and be punished. [24] Some of them will be killed by swords. Others will be carried
off to foreign countries. Jerusalem will be overrun by foreign nations until their time comes to an end.

21.5

In the midst of all kinds of troubles (v. 10-12), Jesus indicated that "… this will be your chance to tell about your faith" (v. 13). Do you believe you are prepared to tell about your faith in times of peace? Explain.

21.6

Do you believe you are prepared to tell about your faith in times of trouble? Explain.

21.7

Jesus spoke of "this time of punishment" (v. 22). Does God have the right to punish humanity? Why or why not? How does that impact your way of life?

21.8

"Jerusalem will be overrun by foreign nations until their time comes to an end" (v. 24). How might this view of nations impact your view of global society today?

When the Son of Man Appears

[25] Strange things will happen to the sun, moon, and stars. The nations on earth will be afraid of the roaring sea
and tides, and they won't know what to do. [26] People will be so frightened that they will faint because of what
is happening to the world. Every power in the sky will be shaken.[b] [27] Then the Son of Man will be seen,

coming in a cloud with great power and glory. [28] When all of this starts happening, stand up straight and be brave. You will soon be set free.

21.9

Jesus told his disciples about troubling times to come (v. 5-28). And he promised his disciples that, “Before all of this happens, you will be arrested and punished” (v. 12) and “when all of this starts happening, stand up straight and be brave. You will soon be set free” (v. 28). If trouble came your way as a disciple of Christ, do you believe you are prepared for it? Explain.

21.10

What does it look like for you to “stand up straight and be brave” in your context of life? Describe.



A Lesson from a Fig Tree

[29] Then Jesus told them a story:

When you see a fig tree or any other tree [30] putting out leaves, you know that summer will soon come. [31] So, when you see these things happening, you know that God's kingdom will soon be here. [32] You can be sure that some of the people of this generation will still be alive when all of this takes place. [33] The sky and the earth won't last forever, but my words will.

21.11

Jesus strongly declared, "The sky and the earth won't last forever, but my words will" (v. 33). Do you believe this to be true at face value?

21.12

Imagine living out the words of Jesus. How much do you consider the words of Jesus as you shape your way of living life well?

A Warning

[34] Don't spend all of your time thinking about eating or drinking or worrying about life. If you do, the final day will suddenly catch you [35] like a trap. That day will surprise everyone on earth. [36] Watch out and keep praying that you can escape all that is going to happen and that the Son of Man will be pleased with you.

[37] Jesus taught in the temple each day, and he spent each night on the Mount of Olives. [38] Everyone got up early and came to the temple to hear him teach.

21.13

"Everyone got up early and came to the temple to hear him (Jesus) teach" (v. 38). Is it worth your time to get up early to read or listen to the words of Jesus? Why or why not? How might that pre- pare you for troubling times?

21.14

We all have favorite ideas. Select an image from this chapter. What word or idea comes to your mind as you look at that image? Do you see any connect between your idea/word and the themes of this chapter? Explain.





A Plot To Kill Jesus

The Festival of Thin Bread, also called Passover, was near. [2] The chief priests and the teachers of the Law of Moses were looking for a way to get rid of Jesus, because they were afraid of what the people might do. [3] Then Satan entered the heart of Judas Iscariot,[a] who was one of the twelve apostles.

[4] Judas went to talk with the chief priests and the officers of the temple police about how he could help them arrest Jesus. [5] They were very pleased and offered to pay Judas some money. [6] He agreed and started looking for a good chance to betray Jesus when the crowds were not around.

22.1

"Then Satan entered the heart of Judas Iscariot" (v. 3). Why do you think Satan wants access to our hearts?

22.2

Consider what it means to be betrayed by a good friend. What image would you pick that would depict your heart after being betrayed? Describe this picture or find one that fits.



Jesus Eats with His Disciples

7 The day had come for the Festival of Thin Bread, and it was time to kill the Passover lambs. 8 So Jesus said
to Peter and John, "Go and prepare the Passover meal for us to eat." 9 But they asked, "Where do you want us
to prepare it?"

10 Jesus told them, "As you go into the city, you will meet a man carrying a jar of water. [b]Follow him into the
house 11 and say to the owner, 'Our teacher wants to know where he can eat the Passover meal with his
disciples.' 12 The owner will take you upstairs and show you a large room ready for you to use. Prepare the
meal there."

13 Peter and John left. They found everything just as Jesus had told them, and they prepared the Passover meal.

22.3

The people of Israel ate the first Passover meal before God miraculously brought them out of Egypt. This meal included a slain lamb (see Exodus 12:21). Why do you think God choose a lamb to be slain for his people? What feelings surface for you as you consider the Passover meal? Explain.

22.4

If you had been the owner of the house, would have shown the disciples a room where Jesus could eat the Passover meal with his disciples (v.11-12)? Why or why not?

The Lord's Supper

[14] When the time came for Jesus and the apostles to eat, [15] he said to them, "I have very much wanted to eat
this Passover meal with you before I suffer. [16] I tell you that I will not eat another Passover meal until it is
finally eaten in God's kingdom."

[17] Jesus took a cup of wine in his hands and gave thanks to God. Then he told the apostles, "Take this wine and
share it with each other. [18] I tell you that I will not drink any more wine until God's kingdom comes."

[19] Jesus took some bread in his hands and gave thanks for it. He broke the bread and handed it to his apostles.
Then he said, "This is my body, which is given for you. Eat this as a way of remembering me!"

[20] After the meal he took another cup of wine in his hands. Then he said, "This is my blood. It is poured out for
you, and with it God makes his new agreement. [21] The one who will betray me is here at the table with me! [22]
The Son of Man will die in the way that has been decided for him, but it will be terrible for the one who
betrays him!"

[23] Then the apostles started arguing about who would ever do such a thing.

An Argument about Greatness

[24] The apostles got into an argument about which one of them was the greatest. [25] So Jesus told them:

Foreign kings order their people around, and powerful rulers call themselves everyone's friends.[c] [26] But don't
be like them. The most

22.5

Jesus ate a Passover meal with his disciples (v. 15) and transformed its meaning “as a way of remembering me” (v.19). This meal is now often referred to as the Lord’s Supper (see the heading at verse 14). How might the Passover slain lamb be symbolically linked to Jesus?

22.6

How does the Lord’s Supper help you remember Jesus? What do you remember about him?

important one of you should be like the least important, and your leader should be like a servant. [27] Who do people think is the greatest, a person who is served or one who serves? Isn’t it the one who is served? But I have been with you as a servant.

[28] You have stayed with me in all my troubles. [29] So I will give you the right to rule as kings, just as my Father has given me the right to rule as a king. [30] You will eat and drink with me in my kingdom, and you will each sit on a throne to judge the twelve tribes of Israel.

22.7

Imagine a time when you had dreams of being famous or great in the eyes of others? Has your dream come true?

22.8

What longings or emotions surfaced for you in this dream or reality? How do you manage these longings and emotions?



Jesus' Disciples Will Be Tested

31 Jesus said, “Simon, listen to me! Satan has demanded the right to test each one of you, as a farmer does
when he separates wheat from the husks.[d] 32 But Simon, I have prayed that your faith will be strong. And when
you have come back to me, help the others.”

33 Peter said, “Lord, I am ready to go with you to jail and even to die with you.”

34 Jesus replied, “Peter, I tell you that before a rooster crows tomorrow morning, you will say three times that
you don’t know me.”

Moneybags, Traveling Bags, and Swords

35 Jesus asked his disciples, “When I sent you out without a moneybag or a traveling bag or sandals, did you
need anything?”

“No!” they answered.

36 Jesus told them, “But now, if you have a moneybag, take it with you. Also take a traveling bag, and if you
don’t have a sword,[e] sell some of your clothes and buy one. 37 Do this because the Scriptures say, ‘He was
considered a criminal.’ This was written about me, and it will soon come true.”

38 The disciples said, “Lord, here are two swords!”

“Enough of that!” Jesus replied.

22.9

Jesus prayed for Peter. He prayed “that your faith will be strong” (v. 32). Do you think Jesus is still praying this for his followers today? Explain.

22.10

Peter believed he was willing to go to jail and even die with Jesus (v. 33). How strong do you consider your faith to be today? Are you will to suffering with Jesus?

22.11

The Scriptures foretold that Jesus would be considered a criminal (v. 37). What actions of Jesus would you consider to be a crime? or an offense to others?

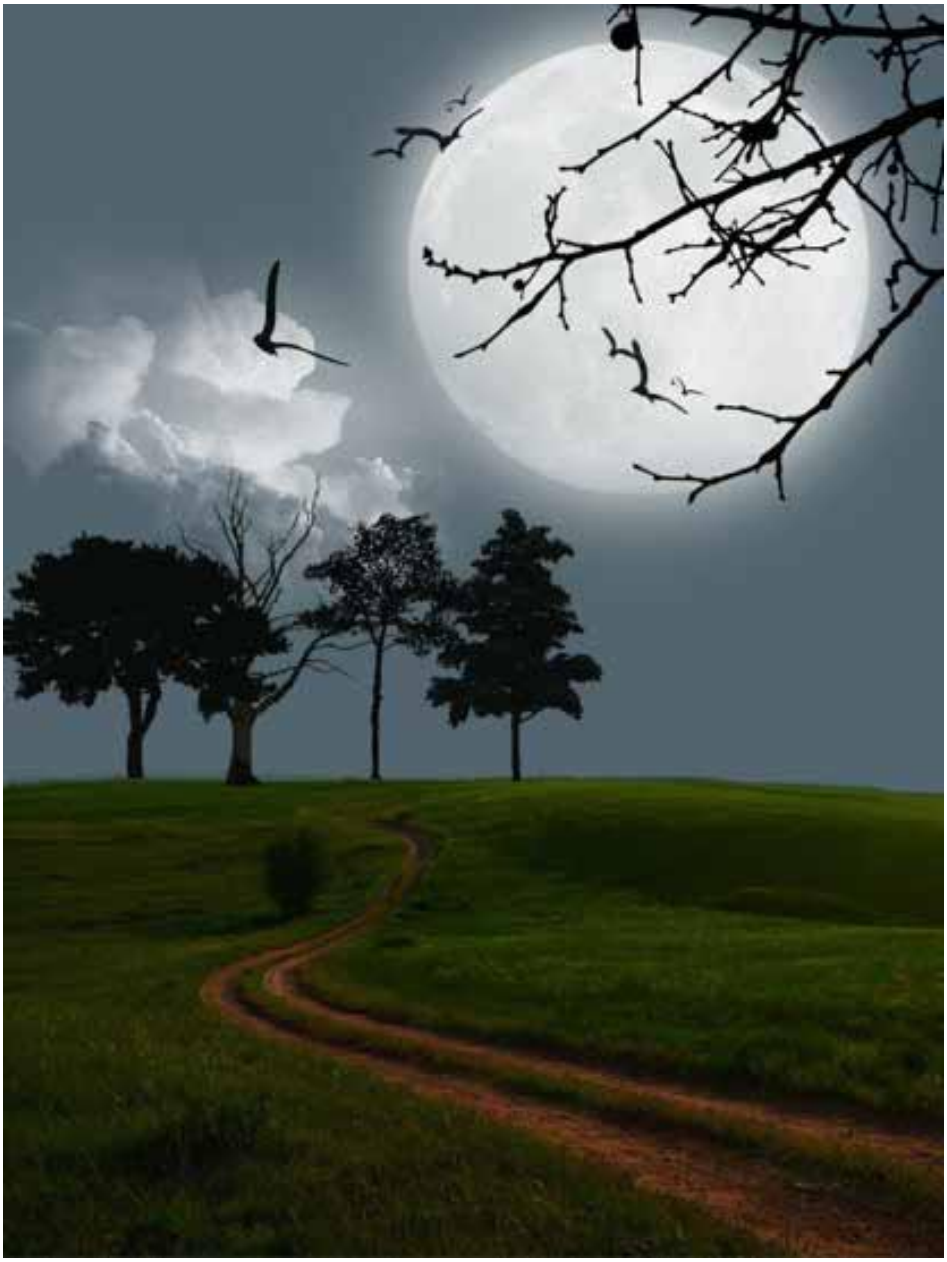
22.12

What actions of Jesus would you consider to be offensive to others in today’s world?



Jesus Prays

[39] Jesus went out to the Mount of Olives, as he often did, and his disciples went with him. [40] When they got there, he told them, “Pray that you won’t be tested.”



41 Jesus walked on a little way before he knelt down and prayed, 42 “Father, if you will, please don’t make me
suffer by having me drink from this cup.[f] But do what you want, and not what I want.”

43 Then an angel from heaven came to help him. 44 Jesus was in great pain and prayed so sincerely that his
sweat fell to the ground like drops of blood.[g]

45 Jesus got up from praying and went over to his disciples. They were asleep and worn out from being so sad.
46 He said to them, “Why are you asleep? Wake up and pray that you won’t be tested.”

22.13

Jesus told his Father, “But do what you want, and not what I want” (v. 42). Have you ever said that to God? Why or why not?

22.14

Imagine being on the Mount of Olives at night with Jesus praying. What thought and emotions might you have battled within you?



Jesus Is Arrested

47 While Jesus was still speaking, a crowd came up. It was led by Judas, one of the twelve apostles. He went
over to Jesus and greeted him with a kiss.[h]

[48] Jesus asked Judas, “Are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?” [49] When Jesus' disciples saw what was about to happen, they asked, “Lord, should we attack them with a sword?” [50] One of the disciples even struck at the high priest’s servant with his sword and cut off the servant’s right ear.

[51] “Enough of that!” Jesus said. Then he touched the servant’s ear and healed it.

[52] Jesus spoke to the chief priests, the temple police, and the leaders who had come to arrest him. He said, “Why do you come out with swords and clubs and treat me like a criminal? [53] I was with you every day in the temple, and you didn’t arrest me. But this is your time, and darkness[i] is in control.”

22.15

Consider the image for this section. What aspect of the image most attracts you and which aspect is most distasteful to you? Explain.

22.16

“Jesus asked Judas, ‘Are you betraying the Son of Man with a kiss?’” (v. 48). Why do you think Judas choose use a kiss to betray his good friend?

22.17

Have you ever been betrayed by a kiss? Or betrayed someone with a kiss? Explain.

Peter Says He Doesn’t Know Jesus

[54] Jesus was arrested and led away to the house of the high priest, while Peter followed at a distance. [55] Some people built a fire in the middle of the courtyard and were sitting around it. Peter sat there with them, [56] and a servant girl saw him. Then after she had looked at him carefully, she said, “This man was with Jesus!”

[57] Peter said, “Woman, I don’t even know that man!”

[58] A little later someone else saw Peter and said, “You are one of them!”

“No, I’m not!” Peter replied.

59 About an hour later another man insisted, “This man must have been with Jesus. They both come from Galilee.”

60 Peter replied, “I don’t know what you are talking about!” Right then, while Peter was still speaking, a rooster crowed.

61 The Lord turned and looked at Peter. And Peter remembered that the Lord had said, “Before a rooster crows tomorrow morning, you will say three times that you don’t know me.” 62 Then Peter went out and cried hard.

63 The men who were guarding Jesus made fun of him and beat him. 64 They put a blindfold on him and said, “Tell us who struck you!” 65 They kept on insulting Jesus in many other ways.

22.18

First, Judas betrayed Jesus with kiss (v. 47, 48). Then Peter declared, “I don’t even know that man!” (v. 57). Jesus felt the pains of close friends turning from him. What was Jesus’ reaction?

22.19

Have you ever experienced friends turning from you. What was your reaction?

Jesus Is Questioned by the Council

66 At daybreak the nation’s leaders, the chief priests, and the teachers of the Law of Moses got together and brought Jesus before their council. 67 They said, “Tell us! Are you the Messiah?”

Jesus replied, “If I said so, you wouldn’t believe me. 68 And if I asked you a question, you wouldn’t answer. 69 But from now on, the Son of Man will be seated at the right side of God All-Powerful.”

70 Then they asked, “Are you the Son of God?”[j]

Jesus answered, “You say I am!”[k]

71 They replied, “Why do we need more witnesses? He said it himself!”

22.20

Jesus announced to the leaders, priest and teacher, "… the Son of Man will be seated at the right side of God All-Powerful" (v. 69). How does this view of Jesus impact your way of living?

22.21

Some things are right and good and some are wrong and evil. The ability to discern between good and evil is essential as we follow the ways of Jesus (Hebrews 5:14). What is "good" and/ or "evil" about the images in this chapter? Explain.

22.22

Consider all the images in this chapter. Would you consider sharing one or two of the images with a friend? If so, which image(s)?



LUKE

23

Pilate Questions Jesus

Everyone in the council got up and led Jesus off to Pilate. [2] They started accusing him and said, “We caught this man trying to get our people to riot and to stop paying taxes to the Emperor. He also claims that he is the Messiah, our king.”

[3] Pilate asked Jesus, “Are you the king of the Jews?”

“Those are your words,” Jesus answered.

[4] Pilate told the chief priests and the crowd, “I don’t find him guilty of anything.”

[5] But they all kept on saying, “He has been teaching and causing trouble all over Judea. He started in Galilee and has now come all the way here.”

23.1

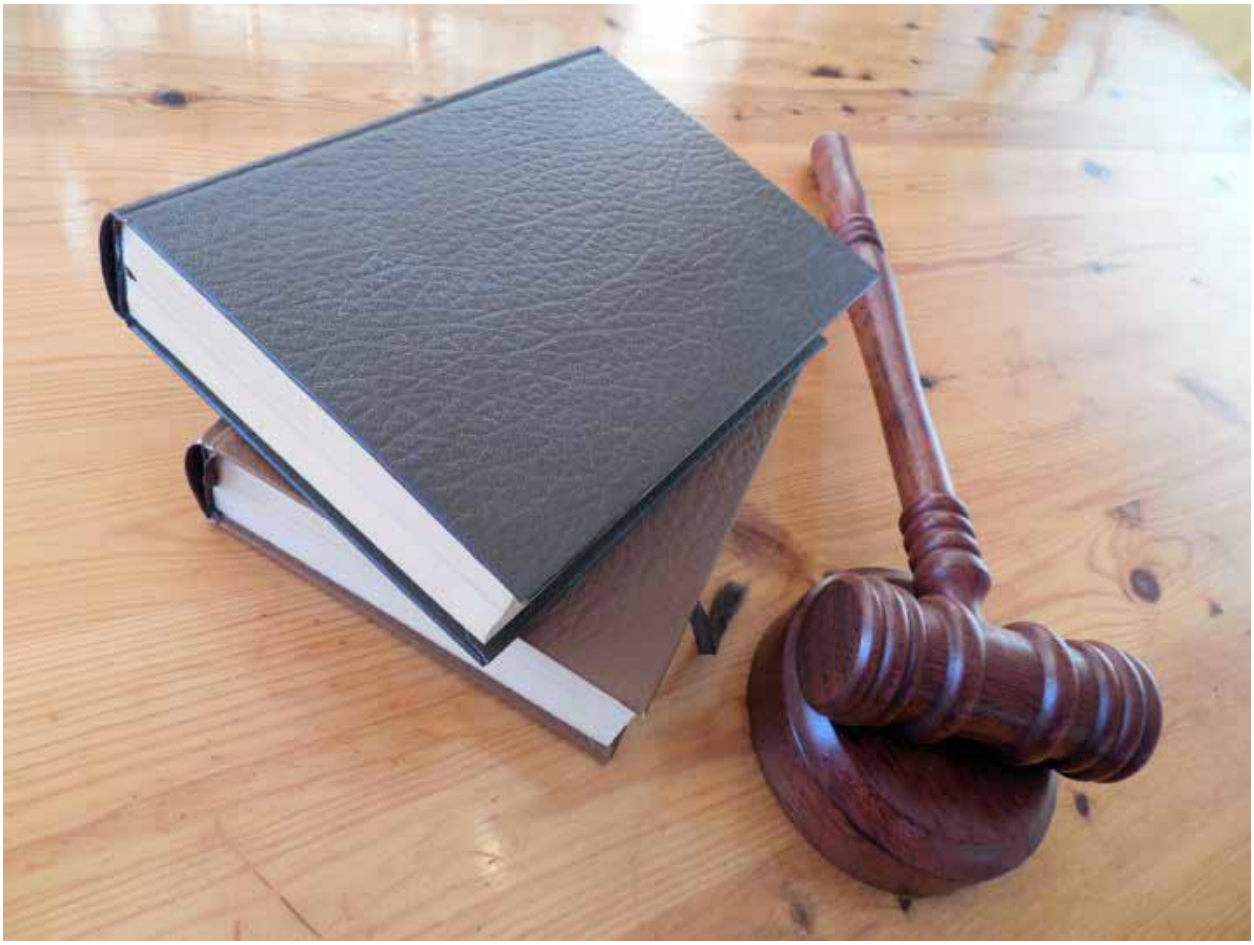
Before Pilate, the Jewish leaders accused Jesus of inciting a riot, encouraging tax evasion and claiming to be “the Messiah, our king” (v.2) Which one of these accusations would be most grievous in today’s world? Explain.

23.2

Imagine Pilate saying, “I don’t find him guilty of anything” (v. 4). Do you think the council members were blind-sided by Pilate’s verdict? What emotional reaction do you think the council had at that point in time?

Jesus Is Brought before Herod

6 When Pilate heard this, he asked, “Is this man from Galilee?” 7 After Pilate learned that Jesus came from the region ruled by Herod,[a] he sent him to Herod, who was in Jerusalem at that time.



8 For a long time Herod had wanted to see Jesus and was very happy because he finally had this chance. He had heard many things about Jesus and hoped to see him work a miracle.

9 Herod asked him a lot of questions, but Jesus did not answer. 10 Then the chief priests and the teachers of the Law of Moses stood up and accused him of all kinds of bad things.

11 Herod and his soldiers made fun of Jesus and insulted him. They put a fine robe on him and sent him back to Pilate. 12 That same day Herod and Pilate became friends, even though they had been enemies before this.

23.3

Why do you think Jesus choose not to answer Herod's many questions (v. 9)?

23.4

When accused have you ever decided not to answer (v. 9). How did that work out for you?

23.5

Both Pilate and Herod had questions for Jesus (v. 3, 9). What questions do you have for Jesus? Do you think he will answer? Explain.



The Death Sentence

13 Pilate called together the chief priests, the leaders, and the people. 14 He told them, "You brought Jesus to
me and said he was a troublemaker. But I have questioned him here in front of you, and I have not found him
guilty of anything that you say he has done. 15 Herod didn't find him guilty either and sent him back. This man
doesn't deserve to be put to death! 16-17 I will just have him beaten with a whip and set free."[b]

18 But the whole crowd shouted, "Kill Jesus! Give us Barabbas!" 19 Now Barabbas was in jail because he had
started a riot in the city and had murdered someone.

20 Pilate wanted to set Jesus free, so he spoke again to the crowds. 21 But they kept shouting, "Nail him to a
cross! Nail him to a cross!" 22 Pilate spoke to them a third time, "But what crime has he done? I have not
found him guilty of anything for which he should be put to death. I will have him beaten with a whip and set
free." 23 The people kept on shouting as loud as they could for Jesus to be put to death. 24 Finally, Pilate gave
in. 25 He freed the man who was in jail for rioting and murder, because he was the one the crowd wanted to be
set free. Then Pilate handed Jesus over for them to do what they wanted with him.

23.6

Consider the image for this section. What responds in your heart do you have to this image? Explain.

23.7

When the whole crowd shouted “Kill Jesus!” (v. 18), how do you imagine Jesus reacted?

Jesus Is Nailed to a Cross

[26] As Jesus was being led away, some soldiers grabbed hold of a man from Cyrene named Simon. He was coming in from the fields, but they put the cross on him and made him carry it behind Jesus. [27] A large crowd was following Jesus, and in the crowd a lot of women were crying and weeping for him. [28] Jesus turned to the women and said:

Women of Jerusalem, don’t cry for me! Cry for yourselves and for your children. [29] Someday people will say, “Women who never had children are really fortunate!” [30] At that time everyone will say to the mountains, “Fall on us!” They will say to the hills, “Hide us!” [31] If this can happen when the wood is green, what do you think will happen when it is dry?[c]

[32] Two criminals were led out to be put to death with Jesus. [33] When the soldiers came to the place called “The Skull,”[d] they nailed Jesus to a cross. They also nailed the two criminals to crosses, one on each side of Jesus.

[34-35] Jesus said, “Father, forgive these people! They don’t know what they’re doing.”[e]

While the crowd stood there watching Jesus, the soldiers gambled for his clothes. The leaders insulted him by saying, “He saved others. Now he should save himself, if he really is God’s chosen Messiah!”

[36] The soldiers made fun of Jesus and brought him some wine. [37] They said, “If you are the king of the Jews, save yourself!”

[38] Above him was a sign that said, “This is the King of the Jews.”

[39] One of the criminals hanging there also insulted Jesus by saying, “Aren’t you the Messiah? Save yourself and save us!”

[40] But the other criminal told the first one off, “Don’t you fear God? Aren’t you getting the same punishment as this man? [41] We got what was coming to us, but he didn’t do anything wrong.” [42] Then he said to Jesus, “Remember me when you come into power!”

[43] Jesus replied, “I promise that today you will be with me in paradise.”[f]



23.8

Consider the image for this section. What stands out to you? While being nailed to a cross, Jesus spoke profound words. Some of those words were, “Father, forgive these people! They don’t know what they’re doing” (v. 34, 35). Why do you think Jesus so quickly wanted forgiveness for those involved in his crucifixion? How quick are you to forgive?

The Death of Jesus

[44] Around noon the sky turned dark and stayed that way until the middle of the afternoon. [45] The sun stopped shining, and the curtain in the temple[g] split down the middle. [46] Jesus shouted, “Father, I put myself in your hands!” Then he died.

[47] When the Roman officer saw what had happened, he praised God and said, “Jesus must really have been a good man!”

[48] A crowd had gathered to see the terrible sight. Then after they had seen it, they felt brokenhearted and went home. [49] All of Jesus' close friends and the women who had come with him from Galilee stood at a distance and watched.

23.9

As Jesus was dying “… the curtain in the temple split down the middle” (v. 45) Why do you think this is significant? What was the function of the curtain?

23.10

The Roman officer concluded that “Jesus must really have been a good man!” (v. 47). Do you agree or disagree with this assessment of Jesus? Explain.



Jesus Is Buried

50-51 There was a man named Joseph, who was from Arimathea in Judea. Joseph was a good and honest man,
and he was eager for God's kingdom to come. He was also a member of the council, but he did not agree with
what they had decided.

52 Joseph went to Pilate and asked for Jesus' body. 53 He took the body down from the cross and wrapped it in
fine cloth. Then he put it in a tomb that had been cut out of solid rock and had never been used. 54 It was
Friday, and the Sabbath was about to begin.[h]

55 The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee followed Joseph and watched how Jesus' body was
placed in the tomb. 56 Then they went to prepare some sweet-smelling spices for his burial. But on the Sabbath

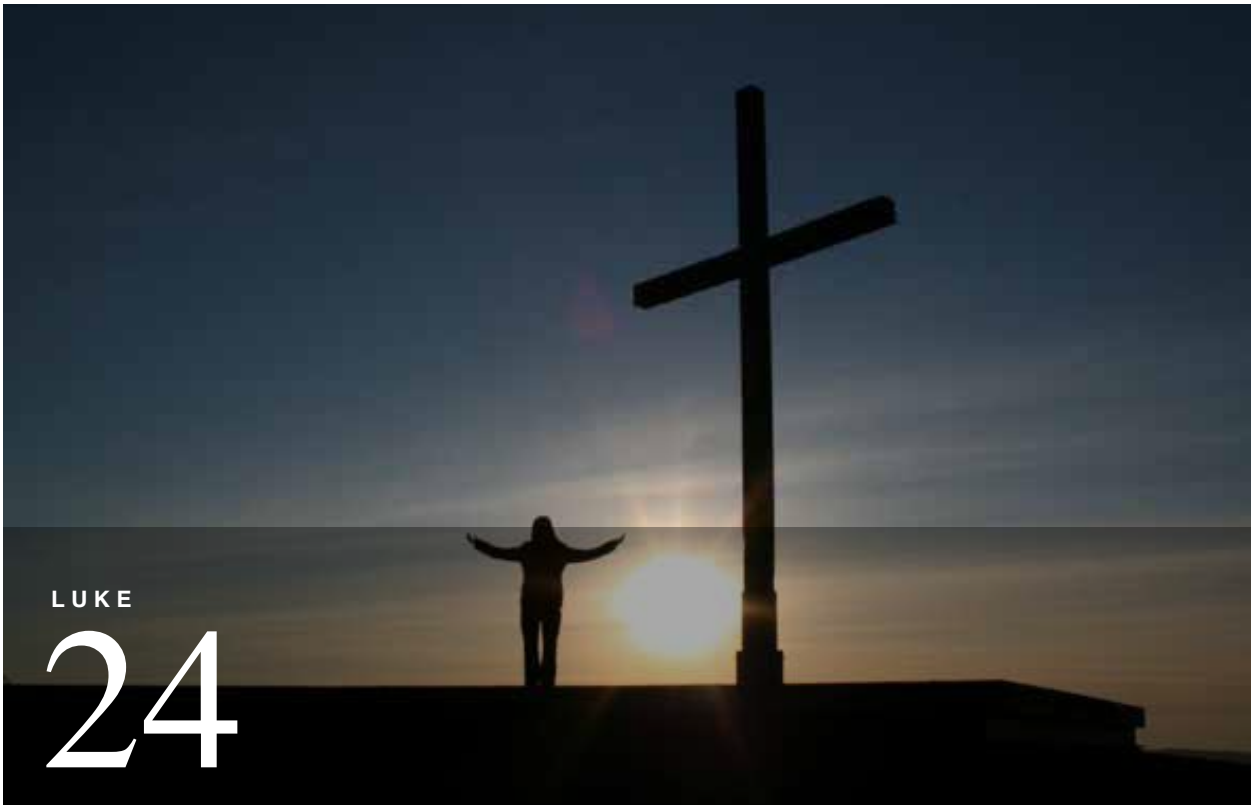
they rested, as the Law of Moses commands.

23.11

Jesus died a terrible death (v. 48) and was buried by a “good and honest man” named Joseph from Arimathea in Judea (v. 50-53). He was a council member who didn’t agree with the council’s demand for Jesus’ death sentence. How difficult do you think it would be for Joseph to ask Pilate for Jesus’ body (v. 52)? Explain.

23.12

The pictures in this chapter are designed to connect with the words. What connections do you see? How might these connections relate your daily life?



Jesus Is Alive

Very early on Sunday morning the women went to the tomb, carrying the spices that they had prepared. [2] When they found the stone rolled away from the entrance, [3] they went in. But they did not find the body of the Lord[a] Jesus, [4] and they did not know what to think.

Suddenly two men in shining white clothes stood beside them. [5] The women were afraid and bowed to the ground. But the men said, "Why are you looking in the place of the dead for someone who is alive? [6] Jesus isn't here! He has been raised from death. Remember that while he was still in Galilee, he told you, [7] 'The Son of Man will be handed over to sinners who will nail him to a cross. But three days later he will rise to life.' " [8] Then they remembered what Jesus had said.

[9-10] Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and some other women were the ones who had gone to the tomb. When they returned,

they told the eleven apostles and the others what had happened. [11] The apostles thought it was all nonsense, and they would not believe. [12] But Peter ran to the tomb. And when he stooped down and looked in, he saw only the burial clothes. Then he returned, wondering what had happened.[b]

24.1

Imagine the early time of day, smells of the spices for a dead body, feel the heaviness of heart at the brutal death of a good friend. How would you cope with such a situation?

24.2

Jesus fulfilled his prediction. He was “raised from death” (v. 6). Re-read verses 1-8. What stands out to you?

24.3

How does your heart respond to Jesus’ prediction and his rising from death to life?

Jesus Appears to Two Disciples

[13] That same day two of Jesus' disciples were going to the village of Emmaus, which was about seven miles
from Jerusalem. [14] As they were talking and thinking about what had happened, [15] Jesus came near and started
walking along beside them. [16] But they did not know who he was. [17] Jesus asked them, “What were you talking
about as you walked along?”

The two of them stood there looking sad and gloomy. [18] Then the one named Cleopas asked Jesus, “Are you
the only person from Jerusalem who didn’t know what was happening there these last few days?” [19] “What do
you mean?” Jesus asked.

They answered:

Those things that happened to Jesus from Nazareth. By what he did and said he showed that he was a powerful
prophet, who pleased God and all



the people. [20] Then the chief priests and our leaders had him arrested and sentenced to die on a cross. [21] We had hoped that he would be the one to set Israel free! But it has already been three days since all this happened. [22] Some women in our group surprised us. They had gone to the tomb early in the morning, [23] but did not find the body of Jesus. They came back, saying that they had seen a vision of angels who told them that he is alive. [24] Some men from our group went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said. But they didn't see Jesus either.

[25] Then Jesus asked the two disciples, "Why can't you understand? How can you be so slow to believe all that the prophets said? [26] Didn't you know that the Messiah would have to suffer before he was given his glory?" [27] Jesus then explained everything written about himself in the Scriptures, beginning with the Law of Moses and the Books of the Prophets.[c] [28] When the two of them came near the village where they were going,

Jesus seemed to be going farther. [29] They begged him, "Stay with us! It's already late, and the sun is going down." So Jesus went into the house to stay with them.

[30] After Jesus sat down to eat, he took some bread. He blessed it and broke it. Then he gave it to them. [31] At once they knew who he was, but he disappeared. [32] They said to each other, "When he talked with us along the road and explained the Scriptures to us, didn't it warm our hearts?" [33] So they got right up and returned to Jerusalem.

The two disciples found the eleven apostles and the others gathered together. [34] And they learned from the group that the Lord was really alive and had appeared to Peter. [35] Then the disciples from Emmaus told what happened on the road and how they knew he was the Lord when he broke the bread.

What Jesus' Followers Must Do

[36] While Jesus' disciples were talking about what had happened, Jesus appeared and greeted them. [37] They were frightened and terrified because they thought they were seeing a ghost.

[38] But Jesus said, "Why are you so frightened? Why do you doubt? [39] Look at my hands and my feet and see who I am! Touch me and find out for yourselves. Ghosts don't have flesh and bones as you see I have." [40] After Jesus said this, he showed them his hands and his feet. [41] The disciples were so glad and amazed that

they could not believe it. Jesus then asked them, "Do you have something to eat?" [42] They gave him a piece of baked fish. [43] He took it and ate it as they watched.

[44] Jesus said to them, "While I was still with you, I told you that everything written about me in the Law of Moses, the Books of the Prophets, and in the Psalms[d] had to happen."

[45] Then he helped them understand the Scriptures. [46] He told them: The Scriptures say that the Messiah must suffer, then three days later he will rise from death. [47] They also say that all people of every nation must

24.4

Consider the image of two people jumping up. If you put yourself in this image, where would you be and what would you be doing there?

24.5

Jesus asked penetrating questions: "Why can't you understand? How can you be so slow to believe all that the prophets said?" (v.25). Are you quick or slow to believe the Biblical prophets? Explain.

be told in my name to turn to God, in order to be forgiven. So beginning in Jerusalem, [48] you must tell everything that has happened. [49] I will send you the one my Father has promised,[e] but you must stay in the city until you are given power from heaven.

24.6

The disciples mistook Jesus' appearance to be that of a ghost (v. 36-39). Do you believe in ghosts or the undead? How was the resurrected Jesus different from a ghost or undead?

24.7

Jesus indicated that, "all people of every nation must be told in my name to turn to God, in order to be forgiven" (v. 47). In today's world how do you perceive that message is being received?



Jesus Returns to Heaven

[50] Jesus led his disciples out to Bethany, where he raised his hands and blessed them. [51] As he was doing this,
he left and was taken up to heaven.[f] [52] After his disciples had worshiped him,[g] they returned to Jerusalem and
were very happy. [53] They spent their time in the temple, praising God.



24.8

While he was blessing his disciples, Jesus “left and was taken up to heaven” (v. 50, 51). What do you imagine were the range of reactions by his disciples to his departure into heaven? What is your reaction to his departure? to his presence in heaven?

24.9

In Jesus’ day there were only a few im- ages. In today’s world we are exposed to im- ages from many direc- tions and with various intents. How do you respond to the idea of people seeking to influence you through images? As you look at the images in this chapter and all of Luke, what do you think are intended messages for you to consider?

24.10

Do you influence others through pictures you share? Explain.

Ideas for Group Discussions

Asking Image-Based Questions

Linking LIFE and SCRIPTURE using IMAGES is best done by asking questions. Visual Luke provides you with many such questions within the chapters. Below are ten types of image-based questions that are used. These types and examples can help you learn to craft your own questions as you facilitate group discussions and personally reflect on passages.

1. Image to Story

a. What story do you see in this image?

b. If an image is worth a thousand words, what words would you put with this image?

2.Response to Image

a. How do you respond to this image?

b. What emotions/feeling surface in you as you look at the picture?

c. How might these emotions link to your life story?

3.Imaginations (mental image … without looking at a picture)

a. As you consider the Biblical story, how would you imagine it playing out?

b. How might you imagine yourself in that story?

4.Link Image to Person

a. If you put yourself in this picture, where would you be?

b. What would you be feeling? … thinking? … doing ... saying?

c. How might this image connect with your longings as a human being? (Consider longings such as: Belong, Intimacy, Romance, Glory, Protect, Provide, Acquire, Power, build, Order, Nurture, Sustainability, Change, Movement, Justice, Mercy, Replicate, Doable, Explore, Know, Create, Transcend, Perfection, etc.)

d. What message does this image convey? How might the image

appeal to your buying decisions? … or other decisions in life
(choice of friends, career, etc.)?

5.Link Image to Concept

a. As you look at this image, how might it connect with the concept of grace, mercy, desired identity, power, etc.

b. Consider these deep metaphors: Balance, Transformation,

Journey, Container, Connection, Resource, Control (Gerald and Lindsay Zaltman, 2008). Which metaphor best relates to this image? Explain.

6. Link Image to Attractions, Aversions and Decisions

a. Do you like (are you attracted) to this image? If so, why? How do you usually manage your attraction? Is that a good strategy in this context?

b. Do you dislike (are you averse) to this image? If so, why? How do you usually manage your aversions?

c. How might this image influence the way you made decisions?

7. Link Image to God

a. Where would you imagine God in this picture?

b. What is he doing? … thinking? … feeling … saying? Explain why?

8. Link image to Bible

a. How do you see this image connecting with this passage?

b. What image might better connect with this passage for you?

9. Link Image to Culture

a. The culture bombards us with images, which images in the past week have you seen relate the passage? How did you respond to that image?

b. What is the message of the image from the culture?

c. Does that cultural message align with the message of the Bible? Explain.

10. Link Image to Transformation

a. As you reflect on this image and the passage, what surfaces in your heart? Where do you sense you are open to change or closed to change?

b. How does this image and passage impact your view of God and his agenda? Is your heart aligned with the agenda of God?

c. How might this image encourage you in your daily walk with God?

The Visual Faith Project

Partnership Acknowledgements

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Most images used in Visual Luke and many more images can be downloaded at:
http://www.thevisualfaithproject.com

Addition information and resources related to the Visual Faith Project can be found at:
http://vibrantfaith.org/research/projects/









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