

Jesus Said Series: 11-week Devotional Series on Jesus



*Living at the foot of the cross,
encouraging all women to see God in the ordinary*

I pray that through your commitment and study God knocks your socks off!

Jesus Said Series
allisonTcain.com

Encouraging ALL women to see God in the ordinary

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Introduction

In this 11-week devotional series, I incorporate the skills I introduce in my Bible study, *In the Mi[God]dle*, with reflections from *The Whisper of God* devotional. My prayer is that, through these combined resources, your devotional time will launch you into a deeper relationship with our Father in Heaven and give you a solid foundation in His word.

How to use this devotional

First things, First!

Before you begin this devotional, pray God opens your mind to His word. He wants to help us and all we have to do is ask.

Look up and write out these verses:

Jeremiah 33:3-

Luke 11:9-

James 1:5-

What are these verses saying? Ask and receive the Holy Spirit's direction before you begin each day. You don't need a long prayer. Just a simple, "Father, please open my heart and mind to Your written Word today so that I may draw closer to You." He wants to help you, and all you have to do is ask.

After each devotion, is a section for you to write your thoughts and revelations. You may need more space, so I encourage you to pick up one of those empty journals (if you are like me) and start filling it up.

Below is the format for each devotion. Take your time. We never do that these days. Read just one a week, sit on the scriptures in the devotion, think about them, reflect and listen. I pray God does some amazing things in your life and in your relationship with Him as you take this journey.

Monday- Find a Word

Choose a word from the devotion or cited scriptures to reflect on for the week. Some examples: sovereign, righteous, almighty, full, uphold, future, hope, love, obedience.

Use your Bible index/reference or search your favorite online Bible the scriptures containing the word you chose. Write out at least five of the verses you find. We will go back and read them after we have compiled the list.

Go back to read the five verses and make notes in your journal about each one. Pray God will open your mind to understand His word and your heart will receive a fresh revelation from Him. As you reflect on the scriptures, ask yourself what you think God wants you to hear.

Tuesday – Define

Choose one or two words from each Bible verse that you want to look up in the dictionary. Write out the words and their definitions. Then, reread the scriptures and replace each word with its definition. How did it take your scriptural understanding to a new level?

For example:

Return to the Lord your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity.” Joel 2:13 (emphasis mine)

Gracious – kind, polite, generous

Abounding - great in number or amount

Relents - to become more sympathetic, to surrender, to give in and become less intense

I don't know about you, but when I reread the scriptures and replace those words with their definitions, I gain new meaning, feeling and understanding that I otherwise may have missed or passed over.

Wednesday – Translate

Choose two to three different Bible translations and read the Monday verses in each. I like to use the King James, NIV and The Message translations. You may have another favorite. Using an online Bible resource like biblegateway.com will help a lot. Write out the verses in your journal or on another sheet of paper.

Thursday – Go the Distance

Take one of your favorite verses from the week's devotion and read the entire chapter. For example, if you found Jeremiah 29:11 especially meaningful, go to Jeremiah and read the entire 29th chapter. This will give the verse more context and may open a deeper meaning for you. We are accountable for our actions and thoughts. Think about your week. Are you on the right track with God, your family, your children, your life, etc.? If not, what changes do you feel you need to make?

Friday – Prayer

Reflect on the verses you've studied, and through prayer, thank God for all He revealed to you during the week.

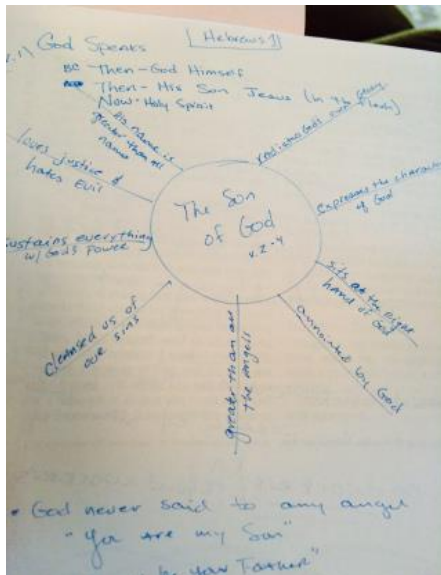
Week 1 - Jesus Said Series

After spending some time in Hebrews over the past few weeks, I was moved by several verses that describe Jesus and make Him known in ways that give us no room for doubt about His character and His heritage. So, over the next few months I've decided to do a series about the Son of God and what He said (as documented in scripture) about certain topics. Disclaimer: it's not going to be political. We are going to look at what Jesus said about everyday things like secrets, cumin, angels and more.

First, who this Jesus?

Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs. For to which of the angels did God ever say, "You are my Son, today I have begotten you" Or again, "I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son" And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, "Let all God's angels worship him." Hebrews 1:1-5 (ESV)

This is what ended up in my notes after reading this passage (see picture below).



I know it's difficult to read so I'll put my rays of sunshine into bullet points. *The Son of God*: radiates from God's own glory, expresses the character of God, sits at the right hand of God, is anointed by God, greater than all the angels, cleansed us of our sins, sustains everything with God's power, loves justice and hates evil, has a name above all names. It's tough to argue with those facts. The unknown author of Hebrews cuts right to the chase about Jesus in these first few verses. It's almost as if he is in a hurry to get the most amazing facts out as a reminder so they (Jewish Christians considering turning back to the old ways of Judaism) won't disregard the rest as junk mail and toss it. I feel like, as Christians, we sometimes do this to the word of God. We take what we like and we toss what we don't. It's all there for a reason and it's ALL God inspired. Every single word!

Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. Hebrews 2:1

This verse reminds us of something vital to our Christian lives! We can read these incredible descriptions of Christ and believe them, but if we aren't paying close attention to what He said and taught as He walked this Earth by reading the Bible, we will have the tendency to drift away from it. To forget the Truth, who we serve, His power and His glory can mean death to our faith and His light that desires to shine in us.

I hope you will stick around for this series. We are going to have some fun exploring the scriptures and uncovering some interesting thoughts shared by our Savior. Let's do some reading so we don't do any drifting!

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**Monday – Find a word**

Choose a word from the devotion or cited scriptures to reflect on for the week. Some examples: sovereign, righteous, almighty, full, uphold, future, hope, love, obedience.

What is your word? \_\_\_\_\_

Search your Bible commentary. What verses use your word? List them here. Use your journal if you need additional space.

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**Tuesday – Define**

Choose one to two words to define and then reread the scriptures, replacing the word with the definition. How did it take your understanding to a new level?

### **Wednesday – Translate**

Choose two or three different Bible translations. Read the Monday verses (cited in the devotional or found in your study) in each translation. Now write them in your journal.

### **Thursday – Go the Distance**

Read the entire chapter of your favorite verse for the week.

### **Friday – Prayer**

Close your eyes and talk to God or write out your prayer in your journal or the space provided.

## Week 2 - Jesus and Salt

This is my 2nd blog in a series called “Jesus Said”. The purpose of this series is to look closer at the word of God and discover the message God has for us so we don’t drift away from the life He desires for us. **Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. Hebrews 2:1** Today we are looking at what Jesus said about salt.

Let’s begin by looking at the definition of salt. Salt is a white substance used to flavor or preserve food. Chemically speaking, salts are compounds that result from an acid or base after being neutralized.

**“You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people’s feet.” Matthew 5:13 (from the Sermon on the Mount to Jesus’s disciples and the crowds who gathered)**

Like salt, when our lives are filled with the Word of God we can be preserved to look more like the person Christ sees and have the ability to bring others to Christ. Being filled with Christ, we can neutralize anger, resentment, fear and other entanglements that enter our hearts and minds.

**Salt is good, but if the salt has lost its saltiness, how will you make it salty again? Have salt in yourselves, and be at peace with one another.” Mark 9:50**

We could look at this from several angles, but it seems Jesus mostly talks about how we restore the saltiness if the taste is lost. In other words, how do we return to being the salt of the earth and productive disciples for His glory and kingdom if we have lost our way (saltiness). We are useless if we are not connected in Christ through His word and Holy Spirit. Although, Jesus doesn't give us specific directions in these verses on how to specifically restore the saltiness, He reminds us that salt without flavor is useless. In fact, in Luke 14:35 (ESV) Jesus says, “It is of no use either for the soul or for the manure pile” No sugar coating the meaning in that verse!

We are useless to share God's word and love with others if we lose our saltiness or connection with Him. All the things we desire: peace, rest, forgiveness, love, restoration, healing, eternal life, contentment, strength, passion, \_\_\_\_\_ (you fill in a word). All these things can only come from one source. The source of life that flows from our Heavenly Father. He is the only one who can offer us the lasting salty flavor we crave and need to be useful for His glory.

Although he doesn't give us specific ways to find our salty flavor in these passages, we are reminded throughout scripture in other places on how to make it happen. Check out these verses:

**But seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be added to you. Matthew 6:33**

**And without faith it is impossible to please him, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who seek him. Hebrews 11:16**

**“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. Matthew 7:7**

**If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him. James 1:5**

I know! It seems to simple, but the key to keeping it salty is to ask and to believe. He who has given so much to us – asks so little in return. Why do we make it harder than it needs to be? What are some ways you can return the salty flavor into your life?

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Monday – Find a word

Choose a word from the devotion or cited scriptures to reflect on for the week. Some examples: sovereign, righteous, almighty, full, uphold, future, hope, love, obedience.

What is your word? _____

Search your Bible commentary. What verses use your word? List them here. Use your journal if you need additional space.

Tuesday – Define

Choose one to two words to define and then reread the scriptures, replacing the word with the definition. How did it take your understanding to a new level?

Wednesday – Translate

Choose two or three different Bible translations. Read the Monday verses (cited in the devotional or found in your study) in each translation. Now write them in your journal.

Thursday – Go the Distance

Read the entire chapter of your favorite verse for the week.

Friday – Prayer

Close your eyes and talk to God or write out your prayer in your journal or the space provided.

Week 3 - Jesus and Your Right Eye!

This is my 4th blog in a series called “Jesus Said”. The purpose of this series is to look closer at the word of God and discover the message God has for us so we don’t drift away from the life He desires for us. **Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. Hebrews 2:1** Today we are looking at what Jesus said about body parts, specifically your right eye and right hand.

“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. And if your right hand causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to go into hell. Matthew 5:27-30

OK, this is a pretty harsh and bit yucky too (it certainly fits in with the “Halloween time” of year). Leave it to Jesus to give a little shock factor. I love it! However, I believe Jesus is trying to get our attention for an important reason that isn’t just a tough lesson on adultery and marriage . . . it goes much deeper.

Obviously, Jesus isn’t really saying we should gouge out our eyes or cut off our hands when we sin – otherwise we would all be dead pretty early on in life. Amen! In these scriptures, He is trying to illustrate how incapable we are of overcoming sin and temptation (whether it’s lust or something else) if we don’t have Him in our lives. God did not create us with the ability to overcome temptations and sin on our own. It requires our Heavenly Father to be in the mix. It’s only through the grace, strength, endurance, love and courage that God offers that we are able to stamp out the deceiver’s lies and tricks.

Is there something in your life that is causing you to stumble repeatedly? Maybe it’s a friend that isn’t a great influence, maybe it’s your eyes that seem to wander or a hand that never seems fulfilled unless it’s holding the latest jewelry or trendy top. Or is it innocent flirting that could slowly lead to more before you realize it or just a grip on our finances that is too tight to be generous for God’s kingdom? I believe we all have something in our lives that needs a little cutting off, a trim. Unlike a haircut, this trim will take much more effort and may even be a little painful, but the final product will be a life that depends more on the Lord, one that walks closer with Him and a Light that shines brighter for Him.

Will you take a minute to reflect and pray about what needs to be trimmed out of your life so there is more room for Christ?

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### **Monday – Find a word**

Choose a word from the devotion or cited scriptures to reflect on for the week. Some examples: sovereign, righteous, almighty, full, uphold, future, hope, love, obedience.

What is your word? \_\_\_\_\_

Search your Bible commentary. What verses use your word? List them here. Use your journal if you need additional space.

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### **Tuesday – Define**

Choose one to two words to define and then reread the scriptures, replacing the word with the definition. How did it take your understanding to a new level?

### **Wednesday – Translate**

Choose two or three different Bible translations. Read the Monday verses (cited in the devotional or found in your study) in each translation. Now write them in your journal.

### **Thursday – Go the Distance**

Read the entire chapter of your favorite verse for the week.

### **Friday – Prayer**

Close your eyes and talk to God or write out your prayer in your journal or the space provided.

## Week 4 - Jesus and Angels

This is my 3rd blog in a series called “Jesus Said”. The purpose of this series is to take a closer look at the word of God and discover the message God has for us so we don’t drift away from the life He desires for us. **Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. Hebrews 2:1** Today we are looking at what Jesus said about angels.

Hebrews 1 and 2 are filled with references to angels and how Jesus stands out among them. I find it fascinating how the unknown author of Hebrews takes so much time pointing out to his readers that Jesus is no ordinary angel or person. Jesus stands out! He is above the angels, and as these verses point out, God never spoke of any of His angels the way He spoke about Jesus.

**For to which of the angels did God ever say, “You are my Son, today I have begotten you”? Or again, I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son”? And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, “Let all God’s angels worship him.” Hebrews 1:5-6**

Then, we get to the actual references that Jesus uses in His life and parables.

In the parable of the lost sheep where Jesus is talking about the value of children, He says, **“See that you do not despise one of these little ones. For I tell you that in heaven their angels always see the face of my Father who is in Heaven.” Matthew 18:10**

Even here, as Jesus awaits His faith in the Garden of Gethsemane, He says to Peter as he tries to defend Him, **“Put your sword back into its place. For all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions of angels? But how then should the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must be so?” Matthew 26:52-54**

My children have asked me so many times if angels really exist. There have been times in my life where people I don’t know (or do) have shown up at just the right time to help me when I was in need. I have even said to them, “Thank you for being my angel today.” I have had others say the same to me. I have felt the presence of angels at the death bed of two dear friends. However, before digging into the scriptures to see what Jesus said about angels, I couldn’t say with confidence, “Yes! angels to exist!”

Studying the word of God is so important. We can’t answer the important questions in life, find the correct guidance and grow closer to a Heavenly Father that loves us beyond imagination without sitting down and picking it up for ourselves. I pray as we continue to move through this “Jesus Said” series you will be inspired to grab your Bible off the shelf and dig a little deeper into the topic on your heart.

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Monday – Find a word

Choose a word from the devotion or cited scriptures to reflect on for the week. Some examples: sovereign, righteous, almighty, full, uphold, future, hope, love, obedience.

What is your word? _____

Search your Bible commentary. What verses use your word? List them here. Use your journal if you need additional space.

Tuesday – Define

Choose one to two words to define and then reread the scriptures, replacing the word with the definition. How did it take your understanding to a new level?

Wednesday – Translate

Choose two or three different Bible translations. Read the Monday verses (cited in the devotional or found in your study) in each translation. Now write them in your journal.

Thursday – Go the Distance

Read the entire chapter of your favorite verse for the week.

Friday – Prayer

Close your eyes and talk to God or write out your prayer in your journal or the space provided.

happened to a friend, but when we see that friend we always want them to share their story, their feelings and their experience. We want to listen because we care and we realize it helps when we actively listen and let others share their hearts. When we pray, that's what God is doing for us. So, leave out the flashy, fake and planned. He just wants you to come as you are and share what's on your heart – plain and simple.

“The world is full of so-called prayer warriors who are prayer-ignorant. They’re full of formulas and programs and advice, peddling techniques for getting what you want from God. Don’t fall for that nonsense. This is your Father you are dealing with, and he knows better than you what you need. With a God like this loving you, you can pray very simply. Like this: Our Father in heaven, Reveal who you are. Set the world right; Do what’s best— as above, so below. Keep us alive with three square meals. Keep us forgiven with you and forgiving others. Keep us safe from ourselves and the Devil. You’re in charge! You can do anything you want! You’re ablaze in beauty! Yes. Yes. Yes. Matthew 6:7-13 MSG

A prayer request as I close:

I know we all have a thousand and one people to pray for these days, but if you would add one more to your list and pray for my friend’s family. She is celebrating in Heaven with her mom, but there is a sweet little boy who has lost his mom, an adoring husband who will miss her painfully and a father and step-mom who must endure the loss of a child. They are left with hearts full of sadness, loss and grief. Please pray God will provide them every provision during this time of loss and I will pray for those of you who are also grieving the loss of a friend, loved one or relationship. God hears our prayers – every one – and is close to the broken-hearted.

Keep it simple. God hears you!

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**Monday – Find a word**

Choose a word from the devotion or cited scriptures to reflect on for the week. Some examples: sovereign, righteous, almighty, full, uphold, future, hope, love, obedience.

What is your word? \_\_\_\_\_

Search your Bible commentary. What verses use your word? List them here. Use your journal if you need additional space.

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**Tuesday – Define**

Choose one to two words to define and then reread the scriptures, replacing the word with the definition. How did it take your understanding to a new level?

### **Wednesday – Translate**

Choose two or three different Bible translations. Read the Monday verses (cited in the devotional or found in your study) in each translation. Now write them in your journal.

### **Thursday – Go the Distance**

Read the entire chapter of your favorite verse for the week.

### **Friday – Prayer**

Close your eyes and talk to God or write out your prayer in your journal or the space provided.

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Week 6 - Jesus and Fertilizer

This is my 5th blog in a series called “Jesus Said”. The purpose of this series is to take a closer look at the word of God and discover the message God has for us so we don’t drift away from the life He desires for us. **Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. Hebrews 2:1** Today we are looking at what Jesus said about fertilizer. Yes, fertilizer. Stick with me!

Then he told this parable: “A man had a fig tree growing in his vineyard, and he went to look for fruit on it but did not find any. So he said to the man who took care of the vineyard, ‘For three years now I’ve been coming to look for fruit on this fig tree and haven’t found any. Cut it down! Why should it use up the soil?’ “‘Sir,’ the man replied, ‘leave it alone for one more year, and I’ll dig around it and fertilize it. If it bears fruit next year, fine! If not, then cut it down.’” Luke 13:6-9

Although this parable is said to symbolize Israel’s disobedience towards God, let’s break down and see how it can relate to our own lives by looking a little closer at three phrases or ideas: 1) for three years, 2) dig around it and fertilize and 3) cut it down. Here we go again, last there was the gouging of eyes and this week more cutting, but at least it’s just a fig tree this time. Let’s break it down:

1. *three years* – Scripture tells us that we have a patient God who is slow to anger. He will never leave us, but he has given us free will which sometimes provides us with just enough rope to tie ourselves up in a BIG mess. Amen!?

2. *dig around it and fertilize* – When we create a mess, God does what He can with it to turn it into a beautiful Abstract piece of art to molds and shapes us in ways that make us stronger, more faithful and trusting of His ways. We may dig the hole, but God uses that hole to fill it up with fertilizer. The purpose of fertilizer in soil and in us is to promote growth and increase productivity. God desires that for each of us.

3. *cut it down* – Unfortunately, sometimes we are stubborn, slow learners who have to learn the hard way (Ugh, that would be me). When this happens and God has been patient, fertilized hoping for a change, but gets no response we give Him no choice but to leave us to our own devices. We are so caught up in ourselves, our pride, fear and addictions the fertilizer useless; the disease and infection has spread to far. The tree dies (or our hearts do) and it must be cut down. Cut down so it can be replanted with, hopefully, richer soil, greater strength and no disease. A fresh start!

The Lord is slow to anger but great in power; the Lord will not leave the guilty unpunished. His way is in the whirlwind and the storm, and clouds are the dust of his feet. Nahum 1:2

Thankfully, we don’t need to be cut down to start over. However, I can’t promise it won’t feel as if you have been. We only have to believe in our risen Lord, ask for a fresh start and accept the gracious and merciful gift of forgiveness and love. Being forgiven doesn’t mean that the consequences of our actions will disappear. Paying the consequences for ignoring the benefits of the fertilizer still come with the love and forgiveness, but the love and forgiveness are real!

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### **Monday – Find a word**

Choose a word from the devotion or cited scriptures to reflect on for the week. Some examples: sovereign, righteous, almighty, full, uphold, future, hope, love, obedience.

What is your word? \_\_\_\_\_

Search your Bible commentary. What verses use your word? List them here. Use your journal if you need additional space.

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### **Tuesday – Define**

Choose one to two words to define and then reread the scriptures, replacing the word with the definition. How did it take your understanding to a new level?

### **Wednesday – Translate**

Choose two or three different Bible translations. Read the Monday verses (cited in the devotional or found in your study) in each translation. Now write them in your journal.

### **Thursday – Go the Distance**

Read the entire chapter of your favorite verse for the week.

### **Friday – Prayer**

Close your eyes and talk to God or write out your prayer in your journal or the space provided.

## Week 7 - Jesus and Tears

This is my 7th blog in a series called “Jesus Said”. The purpose of this series is to take a closer look at the word of God and discover the message God has for us so we don’t drift away from the life He desires for us. **Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. Hebrews 2:1** Today we are looking at what Jesus said about tears.

My daughter came home the other day and told me they had celebrated the Day of the Dead in Spanish class. “They have a myth that you shouldn’t cry or it will create problems for your dead friends and family.” she mentioned causally, but with a look of question in her eyes. “Well, I’m glad that isn’t true!” I quickly remarked to all my friends, relatives and people I didn’t even know would be REALLY mad at me because I cry when they die and it’s healthy to cry.” I explained that I thought the reason I have to have my tear ducts replaced (I really did last week) is because I have cried so many tears for those who have come into my life and died, or for those who I recognize will be missed deeply, died tragically and sometimes when I’ve cried for joyous occasions and miracles of healing or a birth I’ve witnessed. Of course, I was kidding about the amount of my tears being the reason for my need of new tear ducts, but it feels like that could be the reason at I look back at some seasons of my life.

I discovered three main things about Jesus and tears this week. One, our tears are an offering. Two, Jesus didn’t like to see people weep and three, when it comes to death we shouldn’t weep, but rejoice. Let’s take a look.

In the book of Luke when Simon (a Pharisee) invites Jesus to dinner a sinful woman anointed His feet. Jesus responds:

**“Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—as her great love has shown. But whoever has been forgiven little loves little.” Luke 7:44-47**

First, our tears are an offering. An offering is defined as something that is given to God or a god as a part of religious worship. When we cry to Him, the tears that fall are an offering. He takes the offering and offers us His peace, comfort, care, healing and love.

**Those who sow with tears will reap with songs of joy. Psalm 126:5**

Jesus brought more than one person back from the dead. He didn’t like to see others weeping and wailing over the loss. Just like we don’t. Only Jesus could actually do something about it and sometimes did. We see an example of this in Luke 7:13-14 when Jesus raises a young man from the dead after seeing the widow weeping.

**When the Lord saw her, his heart went out to her and he said, “Don’t cry.” Then he went up and touched the bier they were carrying him on, and the bearers stood still. He said, “Young man, I say to you, get up!”**

His heart goes out to us when we are hurting and when we cry, we wail, we mourn. He has compassion on us. He seeing and feels our pain and walks with us promising joy and laughter. I’m not sure about you, but knowing someone understands and cares when I’m am hurting always helps.

**Blessed are you who hunger now, for you will be satisfied. Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh. Luke 6:21**

Third, Jesus reminds us not to cry for those who leave this earth. Now, I get this, but let’s be honest! It’s not them I’m crying for, they have it easy up there in Heaven hanging out with Jesus, seeing old friends and relatives, singing praise songs in the Glory of our God. I’m crying for me! Yes, it’s selfish, but I’m the one stuck down here without my person and it hurts when daily life, food, places, and songs remind us of what we once had that is now gone. That said, Jesus asked an interesting question when He first appeared to Mary Magdalene after she tells John and Simon Peter His tomb is empty:

**“He asked her, “Woman, why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?” Thinking he was the gardener, she said, “Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will get him.” Jesus said to her, “Mary.” She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, “Rabbani!” (which means “Teacher”). Jesus said, “Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, ‘I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.’” John 20:15-17**

OK, I love this. Jesus is like, “Woman, what’s up with this crying?! Don’t you know I’ve got to head back up to Heaven to work out the rest of this BIG plan God’s got going on for you and everyone else. It’s all good. I’m headed right where I belong.” Again, so much easier for the one who is going to Heaven (Oh, and for the Son of God) to be all chill about it. (side note: I’m not sure why death makes me us so much slang. It just seems to work here.)

As the holiday season approaches, emotions are heightened and the sense of loss we seem to deep to overcome. Keep crying when you need to cry. Don’t deny yourself the quiet moments to mourn the loss of those you love and have lost, our tears are an offering and God cares and sees your pain and has promised you joy and laughter in the days to come. God adores YOU and counts each tear that falls.

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Monday – Find a word

Choose a word from the devotion or cited scriptures to reflect on for the week. Some examples: sovereign, righteous, almighty, full, uphold, future, hope, love, obedience.

What is your word? _____

Search your Bible commentary. What verses use your word? List them here. Use your journal if you need additional space.

Tuesday – Define

Choose one to two words to define and then reread the scriptures, replacing the word with the definition. How did it take your understanding to a new level?

Wednesday – Translate

Choose two or three different Bible translations. Read the Monday verses (cited in the devotional or found in your study) in each translation. Now write them in your journal.

Thursday – Go the Distance

Read the entire chapter of your favorite verse for the week.

Friday – Prayer

Close your eyes and talk to God or write out your prayer in your journal or the space provided.

Week 8 - Jesus and Rust

This is my 8th blog in a series called “Jesus Said”. The purpose of this series is to take a closer look at the word of God and discover the message God has for us so we don’t drift away from the life He desires for us. Therefore, we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. Hebrews 2:1 Today we are looking at what Jesus said about rust.

Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys, and where thieves do not break in or steal; for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also. Matthew 6:19-21

Many of us have read this verse no less than a hundred times, but this reminder that Jesus spoke in Galilee so many centuries ago during His Sermon on the Mount seemed more than appropriate as we come off of the Black Friday and Cyber Monday madness.

So, today I’m going to ask, “Where is your treasure?” Idols are always quick to take over our thoughts and hearts, but around Christmas it seems to flare up a bit more as our minds and lists start to resemble that of a Hollywood personal shopper. Buying, wrapping and delivering gifts, hosting, cooking, cleaning, Christmas parties and schedules packed so tight there is hardly a moment left to sit at the table with our families and reflect on the actual reason we celebrate Christmas.

Somewhere, beneath the wrapping paper, lists, guilty feelings of not being able to find and deliver the perfect gift, resentful feelings of the past and present that come along with family we visit with, pride about what we have given and received, jealousy of the gifts and opportunities those around us receive that we could never have . . . somewhere, beneath all of those things, feeling and false treasures there is a child who was sent by a loving Father to carry the weight and sin of all the world from creation to His glorious return.

This gift, the gift of our Savior and all the love, kindness, forgiveness, grace, peace He offers can’t be destroyed. It can sit on a shelf, unaccepted and unacknowledged, but it can never be taken away, destroyed or stolen from us.

This December, as every day moves us closer to the day we celebrate the birth of Christ, I pray we all take time to remember and reflect on what Jesus said about rust and what He offers all of us is everlasting and can never be destroyed by it.

Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests.” When the angels had left them and gone into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us about.” Luke 2:13-15

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### **Monday – Find a word**

Choose a word from the devotion or cited scriptures to reflect on for the week. Some examples: sovereign, righteous, almighty, full, uphold, future, hope, love, obedience.

What is your word? \_\_\_\_\_

Search your Bible commentary. What verses use your word? List them here. Use your journal if you need additional space.

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### **Tuesday – Define**

Choose one to two words to define and then reread the scriptures, replacing the word with the definition. How did it take your understanding to a new level?

### **Wednesday – Translate**

Choose two or three different Bible translations. Read the Monday verses (cited in the devotional or found in your study) in each translation. Now write them in your journal.

### **Thursday – Go the Distance**

Read the entire chapter of your favorite verse for the week.

### **Friday – Prayer**

Close your eyes and talk to God or write out your prayer in your journal or the space provided.

## Week 9 - Jesus and Gifts

This is my 9th blog in a series called “Jesus Said”. The purpose of this series is to take a closer look at the word of God and discover the message God has for us so we don’t drift away from the life He desires for us. **Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. Hebrews 2:1** Today we are looking at what Jesus said about gifts.

You probably already know Jesus didn’t talk much about the gifts you buy online, wrap and give at Christmas or birthdays, but He did talk a lot about giving to others and it’s so fitting for this holiday season of Christmas I thought we would take a deeper look at three passages (although there are several more) where Jesus goes into detail about gift giving.

**Do not judge so that you will not be judged. <sup>2</sup> For in the way you judge, you will be judged; and by your standard of measure, it will be measured to you. <sup>3</sup> Why do you look at the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but do not notice the log that is in your own eye? Matthew 7:1-3 (NASB)**

Ah, the gift of judgement. No one has that on their wish list. I’ve been the victim of it and I admit I’ve also dished it out. I’m a recovering “judger”. Not that I don’t catch myself every now and then, but thankfully the more I grow in my faith the quicker the Holy Spirit brings it to my attention and puts a damper on it. In these verses from Matthew, Jesus is reminding us that what we give will be given to us in return. Yikes! This week, let’s consider what we are giving to others: judgement or acceptance, love or hate, smiles or frowns, support or condemnation . . . and make sure we are gifting what we would like in return.

**In everything I did, I showed you that by this kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’ Acts 20:35**

Think honestly about this next question. What if you cooked everyone Christmas dinner and bought everyone the perfect gift only to discover that no one brought you one side dish or dessert to put on the table, neglected to even consider buying you a present to put under the Christmas tree and didn’t even offer up one “thank you”? How would you feel? Honestly and truly, how would you feel? I know the answer I should give, but I also know that isn’t the way I would respond. At least, not at first. I would need some time to pout and be resentful first, then I would pray and God and I would work it out. It’s easy to give to others who are in need and don’t have anything. We feel good about helping and being Christ’s hands and feet, but when we give to those who can give back and they don’t . . . well, our expectations change a little. This month, consider giving with no strings attached. As difficult is for my Southern roots to type this, consider not even expecting a “thank you”.

**“But to you who are listening I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, <sup>28</sup> bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. <sup>29</sup> If someone slaps you on one cheek, turn to them the other also. If someone takes your coat, do not withhold your**



**shirt from them. <sup>30</sup> Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. <sup>31</sup> Do to others as you would have them do to you. Luke 6:27-31**

Finally, Jesus gives us this most challenging concept of giving: give to anyone who asks, even if they are your enemy, curse you and slap you. This is certainly not a human response, but that's what makes it so much more amazing when we are able to give in this way. We know it's JESUS when we are able to give generously and freely to our enemies. It's His power and not our own. When I am able to pull off something like this, I feel closer to God than ever because I know He is near and working a miracle in my human heart. If you have a story of a time God did this for you I would love to hear it. E-mail me!

I want to try to more give gifts as Jesus did. Surely, they are the gifts that can't be taken away, stolen, never rust and can change lives in ways we could never imagine. His gift ideas are so much better than ours and can make lasting impressions on the hearts of those who receive and on our very own.

My all our gifts be given in the spirit of the Creator.

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Monday – Find a word

Choose a word from the devotion or cited scriptures to reflect on for the week. Some examples: sovereign, righteous, almighty, full, uphold, future, hope, love, obedience.

What is your word? _____

Search your Bible commentary. What verses use your word? List them here. Use your journal if you need additional space.

Tuesday – Define

Choose one to two words to define and then reread the scriptures, replacing the word with the definition. How did it take your understanding to a new level?

Wednesday – Translate

Choose two or three different Bible translations. Read the Monday verses (cited in the devotional or found in your study) in each translation. Now write them in your journal.

Thursday – Go the Distance

Read the entire chapter of your favorite verse for the week.

Friday – Prayer

Close your eyes and talk to God or write out your prayer in your journal or the space provided.

Week 10 - Jesus and Permission

This is my 10th blog in a series called “Jesus Said”. The purpose of this series is to take a closer look at the word of God and discover the message God has for us so we don’t drift away from the life He desires for us. **Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. Hebrews 2:1** Today we are looking at what Jesus said about permission.

The blueprints of our life don’t always turn out or happen the way we planned or prefer. What Jesus says to Simon Peter during the Last Supper and before He is crucified can be easily passed over because we are so focused on what Simon Peter does and the death of our Savior, but let’s take a close look at what Jesus says about power of permission.

“Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift all of you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers.” But he replied, “Lord, I am ready to go with you to prison and to death. “Jesus answered, “I tell you, Peter, before the rooster crows today, you will deny three times that you know me.” Luke 22:31-34

Satan asked if he could test Peter’s faith. To sift him as wheat. Crazy, right?! Ever been through a time (maybe it’s now) in your life where you felt as if you were put through the grinder (or sifted)? I have. Satan has to ask permission, but when he receives it don’t miss what is so amazing. Jesus says this, **“But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail”** Jesus, the Son of God praying for us. For you and for me every time we are in a trail, feel as if we can’t take one more step or seem to have lost all hope. Jesus prays for us. Take a look at some verses from Job that support this idea.

One day the angels came to present themselves before the Lord, and Satan also came with them. The Lord said to Satan, “Where have you come from?” Satan answered the Lord, “From roaming throughout the earth, going back and forth on it.” Then the Lord said to Satan, “Have you considered my servant Job? There is no one on earth like him; he is blameless and upright, a man who fears God and shuns evil.” “Does Job fear God for nothing?” Satan replied. “Have you not put a hedge around him and his household and everything he has? You have blessed the work of his hands, so that his flocks and herds are spread throughout the land. But now stretch out your hand and strike everything he has, and he will surely curse you to your face.” The Lord said to Satan, “Very well, then, everything he has is in your power, but on the man himself do not lay a finger.” Then Satan went out from the presence of the Lord. Job 1:6-12

Permission! Not really the permission we want God to give, but if we consider it this way – nothing is out of the Master’s hand. He is with us, love us and praying for us in all things. We may only see the back of the cross stitch, but God sees the entire beautiful picture that is creating in us, through us and in what looks like a big mess is His beautiful plan.



(This is the back of cross stitch illustrating what we see of God’s perfect plan from our perspective.)

May we all find rest in the truth of His word and His promises of protection more than we ever have in the upcoming year.



(But, this is what God sees from His vantage point)



Monday – Find a word

Choose a word from the devotion or cited scriptures to reflect on for the week. Some examples: sovereign, righteous, almighty, full, uphold, future, hope, love, obedience.

What is your word? _____

Search your Bible commentary. What verses use your word? List them here. Use your journal if you need additional space.

Tuesday – Define

Choose one to two words to define and then reread the scriptures, replacing the word with the definition. How did it take your understanding to a new level?

Wednesday – Translate

Choose two or three different Bible translations. Read the Monday verses (cited in the devotional or found in your study) in each translation. Now write them in your journal.

Thursday – Go the Distance

Read the entire chapter of your favorite verse for the week.

Friday – Prayer

Close your eyes and talk to God or write out your prayer in your journal or the space provided.

Week 11 - Jesus and The End

This is my 11th and final blog in a series called “Jesus Said”. The purpose of this series was to take a closer look at the word of God and discover the message God has for us so we don’t drift away from the life He desires for us. **Therefore we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it. Hebrews 2:1** Today we are looking at what Jesus said about the end.

“Immediately after the distress of those days “the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from the sky, and the heavenly bodies will be shaken.’ “Then will appear the sign of the Son of Man in heaven. And then all the peoples of the earth will mourn when they see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven, with power and great glory. And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other. Matthew 24:29-31

I used “the end” because this would be my last blog in the Jesus Said series, but it means so much more. As we approach December 25th and the birthday of our Savior Jesus Christ we are reminded that what started so many centuries ago in a barn will one day end with His glorious and mighty return.

It’s all connected, woven together from Genesis to Revelation with a golden thread that ties each word, lesson, truth and story together perfectly to tell the story of Jesus. The ultimate gift!

Jesus said a lot while He walked among us. We have talked about some strange things like what Jesus said about: gifts, rust, tears, fertilizer, salt and much more, but there is so much more. We can’t follow and obey Him if we don’t know what He asks of us. Jesus said this when talking to a group of Jews who HAD believed him, **“I know that you are Abraham’s descendants. Yet you are looking for a way to kill me, because you have no room for my word.” John 8:37**

We must make room for His word, know His word, trust His word, study His word and live the word. John says this in **1 John 2:3, “We know that we have come to know him if we keep his commands.”** Do you know Him? We know we do when we keep His command, but we must know them to keep them.

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### Monday – Find a word

Choose a word from the devotion or cited scriptures to reflect on for the week. Some examples: sovereign, righteous, almighty, full, uphold, future, hope, love, obedience.

What is your word? \_\_\_\_\_

Search your Bible commentary. What verses use your word? List them here. Use your journal if you need additional space.

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### **Tuesday – Define**

Choose one to two words to define and then reread the scriptures, replacing the word with the definition. How did it take your understanding to a new level?

### **Wednesday – Translate**

Choose two or three different Bible translations. Read the Monday verses (cited in the devotional or found in your study) in each translation. Now write them in your journal.

### **Thursday – Go the Distance**

Read the entire chapter of your favorite verse for the week.

### **Friday – Prayer**

Close your eyes and talk to God or write out your prayer in your journal or the space provided.