

GOSPEL

FOUNDATIONS



GROW

GOSPEL

FOUNDATIONS

LESSONS

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GROW

GOSPEL FOUNDATIONS | LESSON ONE

WHAT ARE THE GOSPELS?

The word "gospel" means "good news." For that reason, the word "Gospel" is also used to refer to the life and ministry of Jesus (or to a book that tells of the life and ministry of Jesus).

"The beginning of the good news about Jesus the Messiah, the Son of God." [Mark 1:1]

Because in the end, Jesus is the good news. Who he is and what he has done is the gospel.

Discuss: What are the benefits of having four Gospel accounts?

MATTHEW



- Author: one of Jesus' 12 disciples, a Jew, former tax collector
- Primary Audience: Jewish Christians
- Unique Purpose: to show that although Jesus was rejected and crucified by their own religious leaders, those who put their hope in Jesus are not mistaken; he is indeed the promised Messiah
- Unique Characteristics: includes lots of Old Testament prophecies, presupposes an understanding of Jewish culture and geography, and especially focuses on Jesus' interactions with the Jewish leaders

MARK



- Author: also known as John Mark, associate of both Peter and Paul
- Primary Audience: Gentile Christians in the West [Italy]
- Unique Purpose: to show that Jesus always had all power over all things and that he used that power to willingly give himself completely to fulfill his purpose of conquering our enemies and giving us victory
- Unique Characteristics: moves quickly and is action-packed, includes added explanations of Jewish practices and customs, and stresses Jesus as the courageous and powerful Son of God

LUKE



- Author: an associate of the Apostle Paul, a physician, also wrote Acts
- Primary Audience: Theophilus and other Gentile Christians
- Unique Purpose: to show that even though Jesus was a Jew, he is the Savior of all and that the powerful gospel message is for absolutely everyone as well
- Unique Characteristics: is organized by journeys to Jerusalem, emphasizes the historicity of Jesus' life, and gives special attention to Jesus' loving encounters with marginalized people

JOHN



- Author: one of Jesus' 12 disciples, also wrote 1–3 John and Revelation
- Primary Audience: Late 1st-century Christians dealing with false teachings
- Unique Purpose: to give clear testimony and evidence that Jesus is exactly who he claimed to be—true God and true man—and that we are saved and have eternal life only through faith in him
- Unique Characteristics: includes lots of unique material with an inside look at Jesus' love and friendship, emphasizes the importance of believing in Jesus, and explains the relationship between the Father and the Son

Explore: Take a look at the very first chapter of each of the Gospels. In what ways do you see the unique purpose and characteristics of each Gospel shining through?

- MATTHEW
- MARK
- LUKE
- JOHN

GOSPEL BACKGROUND

It had been 400 years since God had sent a prophet among the Jewish people. In the meantime, they had been conquered by the Greeks, experienced some extreme persecution, gained a bit of independence, and then had been brought under Roman rule. In the face of these changes and challenges, different groups, or schools of thought, emerged. Each group had its own perspective of what it meant to be a Jew and live like a Jew, and how to interact with the Gentile (non-Jew) world.

The common language among the Jews was Aramaic, but a number of Jews would have also known Hebrew. Greek was the common language of the Roman world at that time, so a considerable number of Jews would have known it as well. The Roman empire at this time extended all the way around the Mediterranean Sea and was in the middle of a period of peace and prosperity.

WHO'S WHO?

Here's a brief summary of some of the different groups of people in Jesus' day.

PHARISEES

The Pharisees are the group mentioned the most in the Gospels. They are often mentioned together with the scribes or the teachers of the law. They were the religious leaders among the Jewish people and had great influence in the synagogues. They held to the tradition of the elders, which were hundreds of additional man-made rules which had been passed down orally. They prided themselves in being Jews and thought that this status plus their strict adherence to the law made them righteous before God. The Pharisees were in constant conflict with Jesus who called them out publicly for their hypocrisy, self-righteousness, and unbelief, which is why they plotted to have him crucified.

SADDUCEES

The Sadducees were the social and political elite of the Jewish people. They were closely associated with the temple in Jerusalem, with some being priests and others being members of the Sanhedrin (the Jewish ruling council). Despite being so closely connected with the temple, they were focused on worldly wealth, success, and that which they could see. They did not believe in angels or the resurrection from the dead. They were more tolerant of Gentile nations and practices when it was to their benefit. They were generally in disagreement with the Pharisees. However, the Gospels often mention them side by side as being adherents of false teaching and fierce opponents of Jesus.

HERODIANS

The Herodians are only mentioned a few times in the Gospels. They supported the rule of King Herod Antipas, who had been given his authority by the Romans. Despite their many differences with the Pharisees, they also united with them in their joint hatred of Jesus and wanted to get rid of him.

ZEALOTS

The Zealots strongly opposed Roman rule, looking forward to the Messiah and working towards the independence of the Jewish nation. Some of them resorted to violence to achieve this goal. This group is never mentioned in the Gospels, but Jesus did have a disciple known as Simon the Zealot.

ESSENES

The Essenes are never mentioned in the Gospels. They lived separate from others in monastic communities and practiced strict Judaism. The Dead Sea Scrolls came from an Essene community.

SAMARITANS

The Samaritans were the inhabitants of Samaria, sandwiched between Judea and Galilee. They were of mixed Jewish and Gentile descent and had their own temple. By Jesus' day, Jews and Samaritans generally hated each other and went out of their way to avoid having contact with each other.

THE PURPOSE OF THE GOSPELS

The word "Messiah" means "Anointed One" or "Chosen One." It's the word that was used by Jews to refer to the special person God had promised to send to bring deliverance and be the Savior. ("Messiah" is a Hebrew word. "Christ" is a Greek word that means the exact same thing.)

While not every Jew in Jesus' day was looking for a Messiah, many were. Based on what we've learned about the background of the first-century Jewish world and some of the different groups, what different kinds of "Messiahs" do you think people were looking for then?

What different kinds of "Messiahs" are people looking for now?

Demonstrating that Jesus is the Messiah and explaining what kind of a Messiah he is and what that means for their audience was the ultimate purpose of each of the Gospel writers. Due to the differences in their audiences (and in God's wisdom and by his inspiration, for the collective benefit of their future audiences), each Gospel writer does this in his own way. While no Gospel writer gives us all the stories and details we may wish to have about Jesus' life, we can be certain that they tell us everything we need in order to know that Jesus is the Messiah and to have life by believing in him.

"Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name." [John 20:30-31]

TIPS FOR READING THE GOSPELS

- Keep the ultimate purpose of the gospel in mind.
- Keep the specific purpose of each Gospel writer in mind.
- Consider the context of each account or teaching by asking lots of questions. Some examples:
 - How does this connect with what just happened or was just said?
 - To whom is Jesus talking and why does he say what he says?
- Use the footnotes to cross-reference Scripture passages which are closely connected.
- Determine whether Jesus' words are law or gospel, or contain both.
- Focus first on who Jesus is and what he did for you; then consider how you can better follow him.

GOSPEL FOUNDATIONS REVIEW - LESSON ONE

AGREE OR DISAGREE?

1. The Gospel writers mostly agree in what they say that Jesus said and did.
2. All four Gospel writers were among Jesus' 12 disciples.
3. The words "Messiah" and "Christ" mean the same thing - "Anointed One."
4. The word "gospel" means "good advice."
5. Jesus may not be the Messiah that everyone is looking for, but he is the Messiah they need.

WHICH GOSPEL IS IT? MATTHEW, MARK, LUKE, OR JOHN?

1. Includes lots of historical details and shows that Jesus loved the outcasts - _____
2. Was written last and includes the most unique stories and sayings of Jesus - _____
3. Is fast-moving and action-packed and emphasizes that Jesus has all power - _____
4. Highlights Jesus' love and friendship and his relationship with the Father - _____
5. Was written to a primarily Jewish audience and mentions lots of prophecies - _____

MATCH EACH GROUP WITH THE PROPER DESCRIPTION

- | | |
|---|---------------|
| 1. Social elite who didn't believe in the resurrection - _____ | A. Pharisees |
| 2. Racially-mixed group that was hated by most Jews - _____ | B. Sadducees |
| 3. Lived apart from others and had the Dead Sea Scrolls - _____ | C. Herodians |
| 4. Religious leaders who held to lots of extra laws - _____ | D. Zealots |
| 5. Really wanted to get rid of the Romans - _____ | E. Essenes |
| 6. Supported the Roman-appointed ruler - _____ | F. Samaritans |

WHAT ARE YOU PERSONALLY HOPING TO GET OUT OF THIS CLASS?

DIGGING EVEN DEEPER - LESSON ONE

GOSPEL READING CALENDAR

Day 1 - Matthew 1-3

Day 4 - John 1-2

Day 2 - Luke 1

Day 5 - John 3

Day 3 - Luke 2-3

Day 6 - Mark 1-2

MEMORY TREASURE

"But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name." (*John 20:31*)

FURTHER APPLICATION

While we can all learn so much from each of the four Gospels, each Gospel writer had a specific audience in mind. Consider the unique characteristics of each Gospel, and try to come up with some examples of the kind of people who could especially benefit from reading that specific Gospel.

(For example - LUKE: someone who feels left out, forgotten, and unlovable)

MATTHEW: _____

MARK: _____

LUKE: _____

JOHN: _____

ADDITIONAL READING RESOURCES

- *The People's Bible Books* **
- *The Lutheran Study Bible* **
- *Bible History Commentary* *
- *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah* *
- *On Giving Advice to God: Part 1* *
- *Concordia Self-Study Commentary* *
- *Your Kingdom Come: A Commentary on Mark* *
- *The Savior: A Devotional Commentary* *
- *The Life of Christ* *
- *The Gospels* *

** Can be borrowed from our church library

* Can be borrowed from pastor's personal library

GOSPEL FOUNDATIONS | LESSON TWO

JESUS' EARLY LIFE & JOHN THE BAPTIST

The Gospels tell us very little about Jesus' life before he began his public ministry at the age of 30. But what they do tell us is extremely important for a proper understanding of who Jesus really is and what he came to do.

THE GENEALOGY OF JESUS

Matthew 1:1-17 & Luke 3:23-37

Matthew especially highlights Abraham and David, showing that Jesus is the Messiah-King. Luke traces Jesus' line all the way back to Adam, showing that he is the second Adam for the whole world. However, the divergence in their records of the family line between David and Joseph has been a cause of concern for many. The two most reasonable conclusions that have been offered are that one of them gives the line of Joseph and the other gives the line of Mary, or that one gives a legal genealogy and the other gives a biological genealogy. In the end, both present their genealogies as historically accurate, and even though we can't explain every detail, we trust that they are true.

What does Matthew's inclusion of four specific women remind us about the way that God works?

THE BIRTH OF JOHN ANNOUNCED

Luke 1:5-25

The angel Gabriel appeared to Zechariah while he was serving in the temple. He told Zechariah that his wife Elizabeth, although old and barren, would have a son whom they were to name John, which means "the Lord is gracious." Because Zechariah doubted Gabriel's words, he was unable to speak until after John was born. And just as Gabriel said, Elizabeth conceived, and she rejoiced in the Lord.

According to Gabriel, what was going to be so special about John?

THE BIRTH OF JESUS ANNOUNCED

Matthew 1:18–25 & Luke 1:26–38

Matthew gives us the account of the announcement of Jesus' birth to Joseph, and Luke gives us the account of the announcement of Jesus' birth to Mary. Both accounts highlight the fact that Mary is a virgin and that this child is from the Holy Spirit. They also explain clearly that Jesus is the Son of God who was coming to save people from their sins and to live and reign forever.

For what reasons is the virgin birth so important?

What was the difference between Mary's and Zechariah's responses to Gabriel?

"No word from God will ever fail." What is a word from God that is especially comforting to you?

MARY VISITS ELIZABETH & THE BIRTH OF JOHN

Luke 1:39–80

Both Elizabeth and John rejoiced when Mary, who was pregnant with their Lord, came to visit. Mary glorified God as her Savior who extends his mercy and might to those in need. After John was born and named John, Zechariah was once again able to speak and praised God as he prophesied.

In what ways does this section help us to understand how to properly view Mary?

What especially sticks out to you in the songs of Mary and Zechariah? For what reasons?

THE BIRTH OF JESUS

Luke 2:1-20

Mary and Joseph had to travel to Bethlehem, and that's where Jesus was born in humility and placed in a manger. Angels announced the good news of the Savior and Messiah's birth to lowly shepherds who then went to see the newborn Jesus, told others about his birth, and rejoiced and praised God.

To what important truths does the inclusion of Luke's historical details draw our attention?

Imagine that you were there the night Jesus was born. What are the sights, sounds, and smells?

Take a look at the words of the angels. What words or phrases especially stick out? For what reasons?

What attitudes and actions of the shepherds do we want to imitate?

JESUS' FIRST TRIP TO THE TEMPLE

Luke 2:21-40

Jesus was circumcised on the eighth day, in accordance with God's command, as he willingly placed himself under the law and kept it perfectly for us. Mary and Joseph also brought him to the temple and consecrated him in accordance to God's law. At the temple, two devout believers - Simeon and Anna - praised God and spoke about Jesus and the salvation and redemption he would bring.

What strikes you about Simeon's words of praise? What about his words to Mary?

THE VISIT OF THE MAGI

Matthew 2:1-12

Sometime within Jesus' first couple of years while he and Mary and Joseph were still in Bethlehem, Magi from the east came to visit and worship him. Although we know the three gifts they brought, we do not know exactly who the Magi were, where they came from, or how many of them there were. We do know that they were not Jews though. Many deduce that they were highly educated royal advisors or astronomers, perhaps from the former kingdom of Babylon who had learned about the coming King of the Jews from Daniel or other Jews who had been scattered during the previous centuries. God guided them by a special star, and then protected them and Jesus from Herod who pretended to want to worship him.

For what reasons were Herod and the people of Jerusalem disturbed?

Herod knew that they were talking about the Messiah. How did he figure out where he was?

This account is what we celebrate on Epiphany. What great truth is clearly revealed to us in this story?

THE ESCAPE TO EGYPT

Matthew 2:13-23

Just like God had warned the Magi not to return to Herod, he warned Joseph to leave Bethlehem and take Mary and Jesus to Egypt. After he did, Herod had all the baby boys in the vicinity of Bethlehem who were two years and younger killed. After Herod's death, the family moved back to Nazareth. While we may wrestle with why God allowed Herod to carry out something so horrific and didn't stop him from doing that (just like we wrestle with why God allows all the different kinds of evils and tragedies in our lives and in the world today), we see that God did not fail to protect his child. Through Jesus, we are God's children too, and God will protect us, even in the midst of tragedy.

TWELVE-YEAR-OLD JESUS IN THE TEMPLE

Luke 2:41–52

When Jesus was twelve years old, he went with his family to Jerusalem for the Passover. After it was over, they left without him because they thought he was in their bigger group of travelers. He was actually still in the temple courts talking with the teachers who were amazed by his understanding. When Mary and Joseph found him, Mary questioned why he had done this. Jesus explained that he had to be in his Father's house.

This is the only story we have about Jesus' childhood. Why do you think that it is included in the Bible?

JOHN THE BAPTIST PREPARES THE WAY

Matthew 3:1–12; Mark 1:1–8; Luke 3:1–20; John 1:19–36, 3:22–36

John the Baptist was chosen to prepare the way for Jesus and carried out his ministry in the wilderness near the Jordan River. His clothing of camel hair and a leather belt was like that of the prophet Elijah and so was his message of repentance. Those who came to him confessed their sins and received a baptism for the forgiveness of sins. However, he called out the Pharisees and Sadducees who came to him thinking that they had no need for repentance. He never proclaimed himself to be the Messiah but always told people about the greater one who was coming soon. He always pointed the attention to Jesus, and multiple times, he actually had the opportunity to point to Jesus and proclaim to all around that Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

What is repentance, and for what reasons do baptism and repentance go together?

What does it mean that Jesus is the "Lamb of God"?

WHO'S WHO?

Here's a brief description of some of the people connected to the early life of Jesus.

ZECHARIAH

Zechariah was a very old priest who served at the temple. He was married to Elizabeth, who was also old and barren. The angel Gabriel appeared to him and told him they would have a son. Zechariah doubted and was unable to talk until after John was born. Then he praised God and prophesied.

ELIZABETH

Elizabeth was the wife of Zechariah. She was very old and barren, but she conceived and gave birth to John, just as the Lord had said through the angel Gabriel. While she was pregnant, Mary came to visit her, and she rejoiced on seeing the mother of her Lord, and unborn baby John leapt for joy too.

JOHN

John is most commonly known as John the Baptist because he baptized many people in the Jordan River while preparing the way for Jesus and teaching a baptism of repentance. He wore camel's hair and a leather belt, and he pointed the people to Jesus as the great Messiah and the Lamb of God.

JOSEPH

Joseph was the legal father of Jesus. He was pledged in marriage to Mary, and remained with her and took Jesus as his legal son because he trusted the angel of the Lord's words. The Gospels do not tell us anything that Joseph said, but he is shown to be a righteous and obedient believer.

MARY

Mary was the mother of Jesus. She was a virgin, but the Holy Spirit came upon her and conceived in her the one who is both true God and true man. She sang a song of praise to the Lord, rejoicing that God is her Savior, she treasured everything in her heart, and she lovingly cared for and raised Jesus.

GABRIEL

Gabriel is the angel who appeared to both Zechariah and Mary, telling them about the miraculous births of their sons, John and Jesus.

SIMEON

Simeon was a devout believer to whom God made the promise that he would not die until he saw the Messiah. When he saw baby Jesus in the temple, he took him in his arms and praised the Lord.

ANNA

Anna was a widow and prophet who spent all of her time at the temple and also met baby Jesus there. She gave thanks to God and spoke about Jesus to those waiting for God's redemption.

GOSPEL FOUNDATIONS REVIEW - LESSON TWO

AGREE OR DISAGREE?

1. The three Magi visited Jesus when he was still in the manger.
2. From the very beginning, Jesus was obedient to the law and fulfilling it perfectly for us.
3. We should consider Mary especially blessed.
4. Mary was a virgin when Jesus was born and always remained a virgin.
5. Jesus grew and learned just like any other child.

WHICH GOSPEL IS IT? MATTHEW, MARK, LUKE, OR JOHN?

1. Contains the story of Jesus' birth and the angels and the shepherds - _____
2. Contains the story of the visit of the Magi - _____
3. Contains the story of John calling Jesus the Lamb of God - _____
4. Contains the stories of Gabriel's appearances to Zechariah and Mary - _____
5. Contains nothing about Jesus' birth and early life - _____

MATCH EACH PERSON WITH THE PROPER DESCRIPTION

- | | |
|--|--------------|
| 1. The father of John who prophesied and praised the Lord at his birth - _____ | A. Zechariah |
| 2. The prophet and widow who met Jesus at the temple - _____ | B. Elizabeth |
| 3. The one chosen to prepare the way for the Lord - _____ | C. John |
| 4. The believer who was ready to die in peace since he saw Jesus - _____ | D. Joseph |
| 5. The mother of Jesus who was a virgin at the time - _____ | E. Mary |
| 6. The mother of John who had previously been barren - _____ | F. Gabriel |
| 7. The angel who announced the births of John and Jesus - _____ | G. Simeon |
| 8. Jesus' legal father who obeyed the Lord's words to him - _____ | H. Anna |

WHAT IS YOUR BIGGEST TAKEAWAY FROM THIS LESSON?

DIGGING EVEN DEEPER - LESSON TWO

GOSPEL READING CALENDAR

Day 1 - Matthew 4-5

Day 4 - Luke 4-6

Day 2 - Matthew 6-7

Day 5 - John 4

Day 3 - Matthew 8-9

Day 6 - Mark 3

MEMORY TREASURE

But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord." *(Luke 2:10-11)*

FURTHER APPLICATION

While the most important person we encountered in these stories is Jesus, there's also a lot to learn and consider from the other people we encounter. Pick two of them, and write about how their story impacts you - for example, what similarities do you see in them and you, what about them do you want to imitate, what about them do you want to avoid, etc. Be sure to consider how the good news of Jesus impacted that person and how the good news of Jesus also impacts you.

CONNECTING TO OUR WORSHIP

A number of the songs in Luke's Gospel (Mary's, the angels', and Simeon's) as well as John the Baptist's words about Jesus can be found in the songs in the orders of service in our red hymnal. Page through those orders of service in the front of the hymnal, find where these songs are used, and give your best explanation for why those specific words are used at that place in the service.

GOSPEL FOUNDATIONS | LESSON THREE

JESUS BEGINS HIS PUBLIC MINISTRY

When Jesus was about thirty years old, he was baptized and tempted in the wilderness by the devil. He then began his public ministry, including calling twelve disciples to follow him. Although he had always been the Savior, others now began to see the proof, hear his teachings, and believe in him.

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

Matthew 3:13-17; Mark 1:9-11; & Luke 3:21-22

Jesus asked John the Baptist to baptize him. At his baptism, the Holy Spirit descended upon Jesus in the form of a dove and the heavens opened up as the Father pronounced, "You are my Son, whom I love; with you I am well-pleased." This section is one of the ones in which we so clearly see the biblical teaching of the Trinity. The words "Trinity" and "triune" mean three-in-one and are words that you won't find in the Bible, but the Christian church has used them for centuries to summarize the truth that God reveals himself as a three-in-one God, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

Why did John the Baptist object to baptizing Jesus at first? What does Jesus' baptism mean for me?

The baptism of Jesus was also an anointing. Among the Jews, the three different positions for which someone was anointed were prophet, priest, and king. In what ways is Jesus all three of those?

PROPHET



PRIEST



KING



THE TEMPTATION OF JESUS

Matthew 4:1-11; Mark 1:12-13; & Luke 4:1-13

After Jesus was baptized, the Spirit led him into the wilderness. There he fasted for forty days and was tempted by the devil. The Gospels record three of the devil's specific temptations, but Jesus overcame every single one of them perfectly. He sinlessly obeyed his Father's will as he fought and defeated the devil for us. He demonstrated that he was the one who could crush the devil's head.

What is at the core of each of the devil's temptations? How does the devil tempt us in the same ways?

- Temptation #1 - "If you are the Son of God, tell this stone to become bread."
- Temptation #2 - "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down [from the top of the temple]."
- Temptation #3 - If you worship me, [all the kingdoms of the earth] will all be yours."

First and foremost, we see that Jesus was our sinless substitute and champion warrior. But we do also want to learn from Jesus concerning how to resist temptation. What do we learn?

JESUS' MAIN MESSAGE

Matthew 4:12-17 & Mark 1:14-15

Just like John the Baptist, Jesus called people to repentance. The reason to repent was that the kingdom of God, or the kingdom of heaven, has come near.

What does Jesus mean when he talks about "the kingdom of heaven"?

JESUS CALLS PETER, ANDREW, JAMES & JOHN

Matthew 4:18-22; Mark 1:16-20; Luke 5:1-11; John 1:35-42

Rather than having his disciples seek him out, Jesus sought them out and chose them. Jesus did not choose the rich and the famous to be among his twelve disciples. He chose the simple. He chose the sinful. And that's what he still does as he's called us to be his disciples. As he called these four fishermen to come follow him, he told them that they would now fish for people.

In what ways is making disciples similar to fishing?

Andrew couldn't wait to tell Peter that Jesus is the Messiah. In what ways can we imitate his evangelism eagerness? Who is someone you know that needs to know who Jesus really is?

JESUS CALLS PHILIP AND NATHANAEAL

John 1:43-51

Jesus called Philip to come follow him, and Philip told Nathanael that he'd found the Messiah. Although Nathanael was skeptical, he believed and followed after Jesus proved that he knew him.

What can we learn from Philip when dealing with people who are skeptical of Jesus and the Bible?

JESUS CALLS MATTHEW

Matthew 9:9-13; Mark 2:13-17; & Luke 5:27-32

Matthew, also known as Levi, was a tax collector and thus would have been hated by the Jews as a thief and traitor. But Jesus called him to be one of his twelve disciples and happily went to his house.

What does Jesus mean when he says, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick"?

WHO'S WHO?

Here's a brief description of Jesus' twelve disciples.

PETER

Peter, also known as Simon or Simon Peter, was the brother of Andrew and a fisherman. He was also part of Jesus' inner circle and the main spokesman for the disciples who also preached on Pentecost. Sometimes he displayed an incredible faith in Jesus, but other times he resisted and denied Jesus.

JAMES

James was the brother of John and part of Jesus' inner circle. He was a fisherman, and he and John were nicknamed the "sons of thunder." He was also the first of the disciples to be martyred.

JOHN

John was the brother of James and part of Jesus' inner circle. He was also a fisherman and part of the "sons of thunder." He authored five books of the Bible and lived the longest of all the disciples.

ANDREW

Andrew was the brother of Peter who first told Peter about Jesus. He was a fisherman, together with Peter, James, and John. He, Peter, and Philip were originally from the town of Bethsaida.

PHILIP

Philip was from Bethsaida and was the one who introduced Nathanael to Jesus.

NATHANAEL

Nathanael, also known as Bartholomew, was the disciple whom Jesus saw under the fig tree.

MATTHEW

Matthew, also known as Levi, was a former tax collector who authored the Gospel of Matthew.

THOMAS

Thomas, also known as Didymus, is most well-known for demanding proof of Jesus' resurrection.

JAMES THE SON OF ALPHEUS

We know nothing else about James, who may also be known as James the Lesser or Younger.

THADDEUS

We know nothing else about Thaddeus, who is also known as Judas, son of James or (not Iscariot).

SIMON THE ZEALOT

We know nothing else about Simon the Zealot except for what his name implies.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

Judas Iscariot was the keeper of the money among Jesus' disciples. He was the one who betrayed Jesus for thirty pieces of silver and with a kiss. He hanged himself and was replaced by Matthias.

GOSPEL FOUNDATIONS REVIEW - LESSON THREE

AGREE OR DISAGREE?

1. Jesus wasn't actually tempted because he couldn't possibly sin.
2. All three Gods were present at Jesus' baptism - the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
3. Jesus is our anointed prophet, priest, and king.
4. We know a lot about all of Jesus' twelve disciples.
5. Jesus calls disciples who are to follow him as well as to go and make more disciples.

WHO IS THIS TALKING ABOUT? (A PERSON OR A GROUP)

1. The first ones to hear about the birth of Jesus and to see him in the manger - _____
2. The angel who announced the births of John the Baptist and Jesus - _____
3. The religious leaders of Jesus' day who held to lots of extra laws - _____
4. The man whom God had promised he would not die until seeing the Messiah - _____
5. The social elite of Jesus' day who didn't believe in angels or the resurrection - _____

MATCH EACH DISCIPLE WITH THE PROPER DESCRIPTION

- | | |
|--|-------------------|
| 1. The disciple who lived longer than any of the others - _____ | A. Peter |
| 2. The disciple who denied knowing Jesus three times - _____ | B. James |
| 3. The disciple who had formerly been a tax collector - _____ | C. John |
| 4. The disciple who betrayed the Son of Man with a kiss - _____ | D. Andrew |
| 5. The disciple who needed to see Jesus' hands and side to believe - _____ | E. Nathanael |
| 6. The brother of Simon Peter who told him about Jesus - _____ | F. Matthew |
| 7. The first martyr among the disciples who was killed by Herod - _____ | G. Thomas |
| 8. The disciple who is also known as Bartholomew - _____ | H. Judas Iscariot |

WHAT IS YOUR BIGGEST TAKEAWAY FROM THIS LESSON?

DIGGING EVEN DEEPER - LESSON THREE

GOSPEL READING CALENDAR

Day 1 - Matthew 10-11 Day 4 - John 5-6
Day 2 - Matthew 12-13 Day 5 - John 7-8
Day 3 - Luke 7-8 Day 6 - Mark 4-5

MEMORY TREASURE

And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." (*Matthew 3:17*)

FURTHER APPLICATION

When Jesus called Peter and Andrew, he told them that they would fish for people. In other words, he was saying that they would be disciples who make disciples - ones who keep learning from Jesus and keep helping others to know who Jesus is and keep learning from him. You're not one of the twelve, but Jesus has called you to come follow him and to be his disciple. What does that mean? What does (or could) following Jesus and being a disciple who makes disciples look like in your life?

THE POWER OF BAPTISM

In baptism, you were clothed with Christ and connected to his death and resurrection. Because you are in Christ Jesus, what the Father says about him, he says about you: "You are my child, whom I love, with whom I am well pleased." What are some things that you can do to regularly remind yourself of your baptism and all the promises God made to you in baptism?

In what ways can remembering your baptism help you to stand firm and resist temptation?

GOSPEL FOUNDATIONS | LESSON FOUR

JESUS' TEACHINGS #1

"When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law." [Matthew 7:28-29]

As we begin our consideration of Jesus' teachings, we hear Jesus' authoritative message. Everything he says is true. And as we'll see, everything he says has our eternal salvation as its end goal.

Because there is so much material, I have come up with five major themes found throughout Jesus' teachings and included references to some (but not all) of the sections which bring out each theme.

THE ETERNAL DANGER OF SIN & SELF-RIGHTEOUSNESS

Throughout his ministry, Jesus was often challenged by the Pharisees. In their interactions, Jesus exposed their self-righteousness, which maintained that God was pleased with them because of their Jewish heritage and their strict obedience of the law, which they thought showed that they were better than others. In these and other conversations, Jesus pointed out that the demands of God's law are much higher than we would like to imagine them to be and that the problem of sin is much deeper and more serious than we would like to imagine it to be too. Jesus also regularly confirmed that eternal punishment is very real, and that all are in need of repentance and forgiveness.

(See Matthew 5:17-48, 11:20-24, 15:1-20, 23:1-39; Luke 11:37-54, 13:1-5; John 5:31-47, 8:31-47)

Skim through Matthew 23. For what reasons did Jesus talk so harshly to and about the Pharisees?

Take a look at Matthew 5:29-30 and Matthew 15:17-20. What do these sections teach us about sin?

Read Luke 13:1-5. What do we learn about tragedy and the consequences of sin from this section?

WHO IS JESUS?

Jesus asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of Man is?" They replied, "Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets." "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." By God's grace, Jesus' disciples had come to believe that Jesus was exactly who he said he was. Although Jesus was often not as overt as Peter in proclaiming it, Jesus did clearly teach that he is the promised Messiah and the sole source of salvation for the world.

(See Matthew 11:1-15, 11:25-30; Luke 4:14-30; John 5:16-30, 6:26-71, 7:14-44, 8:12-59, 10:22-42)

In what ways does each of Jesus' "I AM" statements show who he really is?

- "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty."
- "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."
- "I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved."
- "I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me—just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep."
- "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die."
- "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."
- "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing."
- "Very truly I tell you," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!"

Which "I AM" statement is most precious to you? For what reasons?

THE SON OF MAN MUST SUFFER, DIE, AND RISE

Throughout his ministry, Jesus gave hints about his death and resurrection. But after his disciples had confessed that he was the Messiah and the Son of God, Jesus then began to teach them clearly and repeatedly what he needed to do in order to fulfill his role and mission: "The Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men. They will kill him, and on the third day he will be raised to life."

However, the disciples responded with opposition, confusion, and grief. They did not understand that he had to die and rise from the dead, which is why they were sad and shocked when it happened.

(See Matthew 12:38-42, 16:21-23, 17:9-13, 17:22-23, 20:17-19; John 3:1-15, 10:11-18, 12:20-36)

Twice, Jesus referenced an Old Testament story to give an indication of his ultimate mission. Which Old Testament story did he mention, and what is the connection with each?

- Matthew 12:38-42

- John 3:1-14

In Matthew 16:21-23, Jesus responds very strongly to Peter's rebuke. For what reasons?

The disciples had a hard time accepting Jesus' message. What messages from God's Word do you have a hard time accepting? For what reasons?

In Luke 9:22, Jesus says, "The Son of Man **must** suffer many things and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the teachers of the law, and he must be killed and on the third day be raised to life."

For what reasons did Jesus **have to** do these things?

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE

Jesus also taught a lot about what life as his followers looks like as he expounded upon God's will and laid out proper expectations. He explained that the life of a Christian is one of constant and countless blessings, but that following him also brings pain and persecution in this life. He taught his followers to go to God in prayer and to focus on heavenly treasures rather than money and earthly ones. He taught people not to worry, giving proof that God will provide. He explained that true greatness is not found in doing things to get praise and recognition from people, but rather in selflessly forgiving and serving others, just as he himself came to serve and forgive. And to summarize God's will for us, he said "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"

(See Matthew 5-7, 10, 16:24-27, 18:1-5; 18:15-22; Luke 6:17-49, 11:1-13, 17:1-10, 18:15-17)

Skim through Jesus' Sermon on the Mount in Matthew 5-7. Which section do you have questions about or want to talk about more?

Although we may say the Lord's Prayer often, we may not always take the time to really think about what we're praying for with each phrase. What makes this such a beautiful prayer?

Take a look at Matthew 16:24-27. What does it mean to take up your cross? What does that look like?

What does it mean to "love your neighbor as yourself"?

THE END OF THE WORLD AND ETERNITY

The gift of eternal life which Jesus came to give is mentioned throughout the Gospels, especially in John. That is contrasted to the eternal punishment, often talked about in terms of an eternal fire or darkness with weeping and gnashing of teeth. Toward the end of Jesus' ministry, he also taught his disciples more directly about the end of the age, when he would return. Since the disciples had asked him about the signs of the destruction of Jerusalem and of the end of the age, Jesus gives his answer to both questions side by side. We have to look at these sections with prophetic perspective - like looking at a mountain range ahead, where the peaks all seem like they're right next to each other until you get closer and see the true distance in between. The destruction of Jerusalem would itself be a prefiguring of the complete destruction that will come upon all unbelievers at Jesus' return. But for all who believe in Jesus, that day will usher in the fullness of life with God forever.

(See Matthew 5:1-12, 19:16-30, 22:23-33, 24-25; Luke 12:35-40, 17:20-37, 21:5-36; John 5:16-30)

Take a look at Matthew 24. What are the signs of Jesus' return? How many do you see today?

Based on that same chapter, how would you answer someone who asks you when Jesus is returning?

In John 5:29, Jesus says that "those who have done what is good will rise to live, and those who have done what is evil will rise to be condemned." So are we saved by our works or through faith?

What questions do you still have about heaven, hell, Jesus' return, eternity, etc.?

WHO'S WHO?

Here's a brief description of some of the people with whom Jesus had personal teaching interactions.

NICODEMUS

Nicodemus was a Pharisee who recognized that Jesus was a teacher sent by God who came to Jesus at night with some questions. Jesus taught him about being born again and the need for the Son of Man to be lifted up to give eternal life. This conversation is recorded in John 3. He was later criticized by the other Pharisees when he stood up for Jesus. Every indication is that Nicodemus became a believer because at Jesus' death, he was one of the men who publicly went and took Jesus' body in order to give it a proper burial.

A SAMARITAN WOMAN

A Samaritan woman met Jesus when he was waiting at the well and asked her for a drink of water. Jesus then took the conversation to living water and eternal life. When he told her that she had had five husbands and the man that she now had was not her husband, she recognized that he was a prophet. This led to Jesus telling her that he was the Messiah. She went and told everyone in her town, and many Samaritans heard Jesus' words for themselves and believed. This story is in John 4.

MARY

Mary was Jesus' friend who lived in the small town of Bethany, outside of Jerusalem. She had a sister named Martha and a brother named Lazarus. In Luke 10, Mary is sitting at Jesus' feet listening to him. Jesus also interacts with Mary in John 11 before he raised her brother Lazarus from the dead.

MARTHA

Martha was the sister of Mary and Lazarus who was also from Bethany. In Luke 10, she was distracted by all the preparations of serving and asked Jesus to make Mary, who was just sitting at Jesus' feet, help her. Jesus admonished her that Mary had chosen what was most important and it would not be taken away from her. Martha's faith is put on display in John 11 when she speaks of her confidence in the resurrection on the last day and the fact that Jesus is the Messiah.

ZACCHAEUS

Zacchaeus was a short tax collector who climbed a tree because he wanted to see Jesus when he was passing through Jericho. Jesus came by, called Zacchaeus by name, and told him that he was coming to his house. Zacchaeus gladly had Jesus over, believed in him and received salvation, and promised to make reparations for all that he had stolen. This account is found in Luke 19.

A RICH YOUNG RULER

A rich young ruler asked Jesus what he must do to inherit eternal life. After expressing that he had kept all of the commandments, Jesus told him to sell all he had and follow him. But he went away sad because he didn't want to give up his great wealth. Jesus then talked about how hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God but reminded his disciples that anything is possible with God.

GOSPEL FOUNDATIONS REVIEW - LESSON FOUR

AGREE OR DISAGREE?

1. Since God is all about love, he wouldn't actually send anyone to hell.
2. Jesus had to suffer, die, and rise from the dead.
3. God will give believers anything that they ask for.
4. We need to stay on watch so that we don't miss Jesus' return.
5. Many people turned away from Jesus because his teachings were hard to accept.

WHICH PERSON IS THIS TALKING ABOUT?

1. The female follower of Jesus who was distracted by all the preparations - _____
2. The Pharisee who came to Jesus at night and later demonstrated his faith - _____
3. The believer who sat at Jesus' feet and listened instead of helping her sister - _____
4. A short tax collector who had Jesus over for dinner and believed in him too - _____
5. The disciple who referred to himself as "the disciple whom Jesus loved" - _____

MATCH EACH PERSON WITH THE PROPER DESCRIPTION

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| 1. The people who didn't believe in angels or the resurrection - _____ | A. the Twelve |
| 2. The people who were chosen to be Jesus' parents - _____ | B. the Magi |
| 3. The people who saw Jesus in the temple and praised God - _____ | C. the Pharisees |
| 4. The people who were very legalistic and self-righteous - _____ | D. the Sadducees |
| 5. Two names for the same disciple who was the spokesman - _____ | E. Mary & Joseph |
| 6. The people who came to visit Jesus and bring gifts from afar - _____ | F. Zechariah & Elizabeth |
| 7. The people who were chosen by Jesus to come follow him - _____ | G. Simeon & Anna |
| 8. The people who were chosen to be John the Baptist's parents - _____ | H. Simon & Peter |

WHAT IS YOUR BIGGEST TAKEAWAY FROM THIS LESSON?

DIGGING EVEN DEEPER - LESSON FOUR

GOSPEL READING CALENDAR

Day 1 - Matthew 14-15 Day 4 - Luke 11-12
Day 2 - Matthew 16-17 Day 5 - John 9-10
Day 3 - Luke 9-10 Day 6 - Mark 6-7

MEMORY TREASURE

Jesus answered, "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (*John 14:6*)

FURTHER APPLICATION

In his Sermon on the Mount, Jesus completely turned the culture of his day on its head. He called for a much deeper understanding and application of God's law, and he questioned the wisdom of the day with his words "You have heard that it was said...but I say to you..." Today too, we are also products of our time and are not immune from the influence of our culture. What are some generally accepted "truths" of our day that you are tempted to believe and go along with, but that Jesus and the rest of God's Word actually say something else?

PERSONAL INTERACTIONS WITH JESUS

Take a look at the Who's Who? page. Pick one of the people listed there, read the Gospel account in which Jesus interacts with them, and then write three personal takeaways from each account. Let the first one be a law point - a way in which this account reveals your own sinfulness. Let the second one be a gospel point - a way in which Jesus' words and actions in this account reveal his love, grace, and forgiveness to you too. Let the third one be an application point - a way in which this account now directs you to live for God in response to his grace, mercy, and forgiveness.

GOSPEL FOUNDATIONS | LESSON FIVE

JESUS' TEACHINGS #2

"Jesus spoke all these things to the crowd in parables; he did not say anything to them without using a parable. So was fulfilled what was spoken through the prophet: 'I will open my mouth in parables, I will utter things hidden since the creation of the world.'" [Matthew 13:34-35]

Thus, our study of Jesus' teachings would certainly be missing a lot if we didn't also consider Jesus' parables. This lesson will consider his parables as a whole and take a closer look at some of them.

WHAT ARE PARABLES AND WHY DID JESUS USE THEM?

One of the common definitions for a parable is "an earthly story with a heavenly meaning." This definition is helpful if we remember that "heaven" does not just refer to the place where we will live with God but also refers to the kingdom of grace, God's rule in our hearts right now. A parable is a physical and concrete story which illustrates one or more invisible and spiritual truths. Some of Jesus' parables are only a couple sentences, while others are vivid stories full of intricate details.

Read through Matthew 13:10-17. For what two very different reasons did Jesus speak in parables?

For what reasons were parables excellent ways to do both of those things?

SOME TIPS FOR INTERPRETING PARABLES

1. Look at the immediate context. Very often, it will steer you towards the point Jesus is making.
2. Consider the broader context. Don't press the details in a way that contradicts clear biblical truths.
3. Determine whether specific elements and details of the story are included to illustrate additional truths or to further the overall point which Jesus is making.
4. Especially consider the surprising and shocking elements and what truth they are trying to convey.
5. Look at the immediate audience. Then ask what Jesus was trying to teach them at that time.
6. Consider the broader audience. Then ask what Jesus is trying to teach us today.

PARABLES ABOUT THE GROWTH OF GOD'S KINGDOM

God's kingdom doesn't grow in the ways we might expect. The same Word that is rejected by many is what causes it to grow and flourish in others. God's kingdom grows in the midst of evil. It has small and seemingly insignificant beginnings but becomes something large and impressive. It's growing even when we can't see it, and it grows because of God's power, not ours.

- The Parable of the Sower (Matthew 13:1-9 & 18-23; Mark 4:1-9 & 13-20; Luke 8:4-8 & 11-15)
- The Parable of the Weeds Among the Wheat (Matthew 13:24-30 & 36-43)
- The Parable of the Growing Seed (Mark 4:26-29)
- The Parable of the Mustard Seed (Matthew 13:31-32; Mark 4:30-32)
- The Parable of the Yeast (Matthew 13:33)

What do the parable of the sower, the parable of the growing seed, the parable of the mustard seed, and the parable of the yeast teach us about evangelism?

The servants in the parable of the weeds among the wheat ask two questions. In what ways does each question show the natural (but incorrect) ways in which we often respond to the evil in the world?

PARABLES ABOUT THE VALUE OF GOD'S KINGDOM

Having God's kingdom is worth more than anything and everything in the whole wide world.

- The Parable of the Hidden Treasure (Matthew 13:44)
- The Parable of the Pearl (Matthew 13:45-46)

How would you retell one of these parables in a way that people today could easily relate to?

PARABLES ABOUT THE GRACE OF GOD'S KINGDOM

Luke 15 is the "Lost" chapter. God's grace is evident in the fact that he goes looking for that which is lost and in how much rejoicing there is when each is found. These parables all illustrate the fact that Jesus came to seek and to save what was lost.

- The Parable of the Lost Sheep (Matthew 18:10-14; Luke 15:4-7)
- The Parable of the Lost Coin (Luke 15:8-10)
- The Parable of the Lost Sons (Luke 15:11-32)

What does a lost sheep look like, and what does the parable of the lost sheep teach us about what to do when a sheep is lost?

What details about Jewish culture and law make the parable of the lost sons even more surprising?

To which son do you more closely relate, and for what reasons? Where do you see God's grace to you?

PARABLES ABOUT PRAYER

Jesus' parables about prayer encourage us to go to God in prayer with boldness and persistence.

- The Parable of the Friend at Night (Luke 11:5-10)
- The Parable of the Persistent Widow (Luke 18:1-8)

Luke tells us the interpretation of the parable of the persistent widow: that we should always pray and not give up. Why shouldn't we give up?

PARABLES ABOUT THE REJECTION OF GOD'S KINGDOM

Especially at the end of Jesus' ministry, a number of his parables were condemnations and warnings directed at his unbelieving enemies. He warned about loving money and using it selfishly. He called out lip service without repentance. He exposed their murderous and treacherous ways and got them to unwittingly admit that they deserved a wretched end. All in all, he warned that they had no place in God's kingdom. However, even in many of these parables, the depth of God's grace is also so clearly on display as we see properly that Jesus Christ himself is the key for understanding every parable.

- The Parable of the Rich Fool (Luke 12:13-21)
- The Parable of the Shrewd Manager (Luke 16:1-13)
- The Parable of the Two Sons (Matthew 21:28-32)
- The Parable of the Wicked Vineyard Tenants (Matthew 21:33-41; Mark 12:1-9; Luke 20:9-16)
- The Parable of the Wedding Banquet (Matthew 22:1-14; Luke 14:15-24)

In the parable of the wicked vineyard tenants, what stands out to you as crazy or unexpected?

Take a look at Isaiah 5:1-7. In what ways does this text help you to better understand the parable of the wicked vineyard tenants?

The parable of the wedding banquet is in some ways a double parable. What spiritual truths do we learn from the first section of the parable?

What spiritual truths do we learn from the second half of the parable?

PARABLES ABOUT LIFE IN GOD'S KINGDOM

The parables listed below don't necessarily have a close connection to each other, but they all teach profound truths about life in God's kingdom. As members of God's kingdom, there is no limit to the love and forgiveness which we show to others. All of this flows from God's immeasurable forgiveness and mercy, which are what makes us right in his sight. Thus, we are grateful for all of God's gifts to us and rejoice at his generosity to others because he keeps all his promises, giving us more than we could have ever asked for or deserved.

- The Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-37)
- The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant (Matthew 18:21-35)
- The Parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector (Luke 18:9-14)
- The Parable of the Workers in the Vineyard (Matthew 20:1-16)

Is the parable of the Good Samaritan law or gospel? What is your evidence for your answer?

In what ways does the parable of the unforgiving servant demonstrate why and how we can forgive?

In what ways do you find yourself tempted to mimic the pride of the Pharisee in the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector?

For what reasons is that same parable also so comforting?

What lesson does the parable of the workers in the vineyard teach?

PARABLES ABOUT THE FINAL COMING OF GOD'S KINGDOM

As Jesus taught about the end of the age and his return, he emphasized the importance of being faithful and watchful. When Jesus returns, it will be too late to repent, and there are only two possibilities of what each person will receive - eternal life or eternal death. The signs show that the end is near, so we need to be ready even though we do not know exactly when Jesus will return. Once again, Christ is the key to properly understanding the parables. Not only is he the one who is coming, but it is through faith in him that we remain ready for his return.

- The Parable of the Net (Matthew 13:47-50)
- The Parable of the Budding Fig Tree (Matthew 24:32-35; Mark 13:34-37; Luke 21:29-33)
- The Parable of the Thief (Matthew 24:42-44; Luke 12:35-40)
- The Parable of the Faithful Servant (Matthew 24:45-51; Mark 13:32-37; Luke 12:42-48)
- The Parable of the Ten Virgins (Matthew 25:1-13)
- The Parable of the Talents (Matthew 25:14-30; Luke 19:12-27)

What warning signs of Jesus' second coming are as obvious as the buds on a fig tree right now?

So many of these parables focus on remaining watchful. For what reasons is it so hard to do that?

What are some things that we can do to stay watchful?

What questions do you still have about parables or any parable in particular?

GOSPEL FOUNDATIONS REVIEW - LESSON FIVE

AGREE OR DISAGREE?

1. Jesus used parables because he didn't want people to understand what he was saying.
2. Jesus used parables because he did want people to understand what he was saying.
3. Jesus never explained what any of his parables mean.
4. When interpreting parables, we should pick apart every detail of every parable.
5. The "kingdom of God" or "kingdom of heaven" refers to God's ruling activity in our hearts.

WHICH GOSPEL IS IT? MATTHEW, MARK, LUKE, OR JOHN?

1. Was extensively researched and includes lots of historical names and details - _____
2. Does not include any parables, but does include Jesus' "I AM" statements - _____
3. Especially portrays Jesus' love to outsiders and includes the "Lost" parables - _____
4. Includes a lot of the same material as Matthew but goes through it quickly - _____
5. Includes the Sermon on the Mount and parables on "the kingdom of heaven" - _____

MATCH EACH PERSON WITH THE PROPER DESCRIPTION

- | | |
|---|--------------------|
| 1. Sat at Jesus' feet listening instead of helping her sister - _____ | A. Nicodemus |
| 2. Spent every day in the temple for years and met Jesus there - _____ | B. Samaritan woman |
| 3. Climbed a tree in order to see Jesus and later ate with him - _____ | C. Mary |
| 4. Was the brother of Mary and Martha whom Jesus raised - _____ | D. Martha |
| 5. Came to Jesus at night and heard about being born again - _____ | E. Lazarus |
| 6. Went and told her whole town about Jesus and many believed - _____ | F. Zacchaeus |
| 7. Did not die until after seeing the Messiah, just as God promised - _____ | G. Simeon |
| 8. Was upset because her sister was just sitting and not helping - _____ | H. Anna |

WHAT IS YOUR BIGGEST TAKEAWAY FROM THIS LESSON?

DIGGING EVEN DEEPER - LESSON FIVE

GOSPEL READING CALENDAR

Day 1 - Matthew 18-19

Day 4 - John 11-12

Day 2 - Luke 13-14

Day 5 - Mark 8-9

Day 3 - Luke 15-16

Day 6 - Mark 10-11

MEMORY TREASURE

"Blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear." (*Matthew 13:16*)

FURTHER APPLICATION

Most of Jesus' parables are obviously parables, but the story of the Rich Man and Poor Lazarus has been a source of debate among Christians. Read this story, which is found in Luke 16:19-31. Make a list of all the things that could make one conclude that it is a parable. Then list all the things that could make one conclude that it is not a parable, but a true account. Finally, list three spiritual truths that you learn from this story regardless of whether or not it is a parable.

PARABLE _____

NOT A PARABLE _____

THREE TRUTHS _____

EVANGELIZING THROUGH JESUS' PARABLES

Because parables are stories, they have a way of conveying truth in a way that often lets you tell the whole story without people immediately interrupting or rejecting and can even make people agree with your point even when they don't want to. Pick a parable and explain how you could use this parable to try to bring some of the truths of God's Word to someone through it.

GOSPEL FOUNDATIONS | LESSON SIX

JESUS' MIRACLES #1

"Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people. News about him spread all over Syria, and people brought to him all who were ill with various diseases, those suffering severe pain, the demon-possessed, those having seizures, and the paralyzed; and he healed them." [Matthew 4:23-24]

We've already taken a quick look at Jesus' teaching, so now we turn our attention to Jesus' miracles. In this lesson we will especially look at some of Jesus' healing miracles, and we'll see that Jesus also taught a lot about himself, his purpose, and his love through his healing miracles.

WHAT ARE MIRACLES AND WHY DID JESUS DO THEM?

A miracle in the strict sense is a deed which is performed by power beyond the laws of nature which God created and established. God himself is the true source of miracles, though Scripture makes clear that he often did miracles through his human servants as well.

The Gospels present three main reasons why Jesus did miracles, and they are always intimately connected. One, he loved people and sincerely desired to help them. Jesus never healed someone for his own benefit or just for show. Two, in doing miracles he gave signs or proof that he was the promised Messiah, doing the very things that the Old Testament foretold that the Messiah would do. Three, his miracles served to give attention and authority to his message. In other words, the one who can heal the sick, disabled, demon-possessed, and dead is one to whom we should listen and one whom we can trust. Sadly, however, many only cared about the miracles and not his message.

Read through Luke 7:18-23. For what reasons might John the Baptist have had doubts that Jesus truly was the Messiah?

Take a look at Isaiah 35 and 61. For what reasons did Jesus direct attention to his miracles?

JESUS HEALS THE BLIND, DEAF, AND MUTE

Just as Isaiah had foretold, Jesus came healing the blind, deaf, and mute. He dealt with every person and situation somewhat differently, giving each individual what he knew they needed. He often did not want others to know because his mission was not just to draw large crowds and amaze them.

- Jesus Heals Two Blind Men (Matthew 9:27-31)
- Jesus Heals a Mute Man (Matthew 9:32-34)
- Jesus Heals a Deaf and Mute Man (Mark 7:31-37)
- Jesus Heals a Blind Man (Mark 8:22-26)
- Jesus Heals a Man Blind Since Birth (John 9:1-12)
- Jesus Heals a Blind and Mute Man (Matthew 12:22-23; Luke 11:14)
- Jesus Heals Blind Bartimaeus (Matthew 20:29-34; Mark 10:46-52; Luke 18:35-43)

Read any of the first four miracle accounts. In what ways does Jesus show his personal love and care?

In what ways does John 9:1-5 help to shape our view of physical suffering and ailments? Of God?

The man born blind serves as a beautiful example of a Christian witness throughout the rest of John 9. What are some specific attitudes and actions of his that we want to imitate?

In Mark 10:48, Bartimaeus called Jesus "the Son of David." What does that term mean?

JESUS HEALS THE PARALYZED AND CRIPPLED

All of the accounts of Jesus healing someone who was paralyzed or crippled are also coupled with the Pharisees questioning Jesus. In connection with the paralytic who was lowered through the roof, Jesus' enemies accused him of blasphemy for forgiving the man's sins as well. In all the other cases, Jesus healed them on the Sabbath, for which they accused him of working unlawfully.

- Jesus Heals and Forgives a Paralytic (Matthew 9:1-8; Mark 2:1-12; Luke 5:17-26)
- Jesus Heals a Paralytic (John 5:1-9)
- Jesus Heals a Man with a Withered Hand (Matthew 12:9-14; Mark 3:1-5; Luke 6:6-11)
- Jesus Heals a Crippled Woman (Luke 13:10-13)
- Jesus Heals a Man with Dropsy (Luke 14:1-4)

Read Luke 5:17-26. What is the answer to Jesus' question: "Which is easier: to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'?"

John 5:1-19 tells the account of Jesus healing a paralytic, as well as the Jewish leaders' reactions. What do their reactions teach us about unbelief? What do they teach us about Jesus?

JESUS HEALS THE LEPERS

People with leprosy were unclean and had to stay away from others. But that didn't stop Jesus from healing a man of leprosy by touching him. Jesus is willing to make clean all who are unclean.

- Jesus Heals a Man with Leprosy (Matthew 8:1-4; Mark 1:40-45; Luke 5:12-14)
- Jesus Heals Ten Lepers (Luke 17:11-19)

What can we learn from the story of Jesus healing the ten lepers?

JESUS HEALS THE DYING

Twice we're told of Jesus healing someone who was on the verge of death. Jesus healed both the dying child and servant by his word, not touching or even seeing them. And both the royal official and the centurion who asked Jesus to heal these people trusted Jesus' word.

- Jesus Heals an Official's Son (John 4:43-54)
- Jesus Heals a Centurion's Servant (Matthew 8:5-13; Luke 7:1-10)

Take a look at either one of these accounts. What do we learn about the power of Jesus' word?

What are one or two of your favorite promises from God's Word? What are some situations in which this reminder of the power of God's Word is especially comforting?

JESUS HEALS OTHERS IN NEED

Jesus didn't only heal people who had the worst of the worst problems. He healed all who were in need. He was never too busy. He was always concerned with helping each and every individual.

- Jesus Heals Peter's Mother-in-Law and Many More (Matthew 8:14-17; Mark 1:29-34)
- Jesus Heals a Woman with Blood Issues (Matthew 9:20-22; Mark 5:25-34; Luke 8:42-48)

Read Matthew 8:14-17. In what ways does this account help us respond to suffering and healing?

Take a look at Luke 8:42-48. In what ways does this account help us to see the fullness of Jesus' power as well as the fullness of Jesus' personal love?

GOSPEL FOUNDATIONS REVIEW - LESSON SIX

AGREE OR DISAGREE?

1. Jesus did miracles because he loved people and wanted to help them in their suffering.
2. Jesus did miracles to fulfill the Old Testament prophecies and give proof that he is the Messiah.
3. Jesus did miracles in order to demonstrate the authority of his message.
4. God is still doing miracles in the world today.
5. We should expect God to do miracles in our lives.

WHAT IS THE PROPER TERM?

1. This term means "good news" and always has Jesus at its center - _____
2. This term refers to a concrete story with a spiritual meaning - _____
3. This term refers to God's gracious ruling activity in believers' hearts - _____
4. This term means "Anointed One" in Hebrew - _____
5. This term means "Anointed One" in Greek - _____

MATCH EACH GOSPEL WRITER WITH ANY PROPER DESCRIPTIONS

- | | |
|--|------------|
| 1. Was a companion of the apostle Paul (2) - _____ | |
| 2. Was one of Jesus' 12 disciples (2) - _____ | A. Matthew |
| 3. Calls himself "the disciples whom Jesus loved" - _____ | B. Mark |
| 4. Was likely a close companion of Peter in the city of Rome - _____ | C. Luke |
| 5. Writes to a Jewish audience and includes lots of prophecies - _____ | D. John |
| 6. Lived the longest and wrote four other New Testament books - _____ | |
| 7. Was a detailed historian and also a physician - _____ | |
| 8. Writes with special interest about people who were marginalized or outcasts - _____ | |

WHAT IS YOUR BIGGEST TAKEAWAY FROM THIS LESSON?

DIGGING EVEN DEEPER - LESSON SIX

GOSPEL READING CALENDAR

Day 1 - Matthew 20-21

Day 4 - Luke 19

Day 2 - Matthew 22-23

Day 5 - Luke 20-21

Day 3 - Luke 17-18

Day 6 - Mark 12-13

MEMORY TREASURE

"Great crowds came to him, bringing the lame, the blind, the crippled, the mute and many others, and laid them at his feet; and he healed them." (*Matthew 15:30*)

FURTHER APPLICATION

A fellow Christian comes to you with this dilemma: "I know that Jesus' miracles are supposed to be comforting because they show his power to heal and save and they show that he's the Savior. But I still can't help but be disheartened every time I read one of them or hear about one of them in church because God still hasn't healed me/my loved one, even though I know that he can." What would you say, and which one of Jesus' miracles and the surrounding context might you refer to in your answer?

EYEWITNESSES TO JESUS' MIRACLES

Wouldn't it have been amazing to be able to see Jesus do a miracle?! Out of all the miracles that are mentioned in this lesson - if you could only pick one - which miracle would you choose to have been an eyewitness for? Explain your reasons for picking that miracle and the reasons why you especially treasure that miracle even though you were not an eyewitness.

GOSPEL FOUNDATIONS | LESSON SEVEN

JESUS' MIRACLES #2

In the last lesson, we took a look at the miracles of Jesus in which he healed people of various physical ailments. Today, we focus our attention on the other kinds of miracles that Jesus did.

JESUS CASTS OUT DEMONS

The Bible makes it clear that demons are real, and they are very powerful. However, even all the demons combined are no match for Jesus. The one who came to destroy the devil's work displayed his power over the demons as he cast them out and brought people relief and healing.

- Jesus Drives an Evil Spirit from a Man (Mark 1:21-27; Luke 4:31-36)
- Jesus Casts Demons into a Herd of Pigs (Matthew 8:28-33; Mark 5:1-20; Luke 8:26-39)
- Jesus Heals a Canaanite Woman's Possessed Daughter (Matthew 15:21-28; Mark 7:24-30)
- Jesus Casts Out a Demon from a Boy (Matthew 17:14-20; Mark 9:14-29; Luke 9:37-43)

Read through Mark 1:21-27. What do we learn about demons from this account? What do we learn about Jesus from this account?

Take a look at Luke 8:26-39. In what ways does this miracle display Jesus' power even more fully?

What can we learn about Jesus sending the healed man home?

Read Matthew 15:21-28. What is it about this woman's faith that is so great?

JESUS PROVIDES FOOD AND DRINK

Out of his love and compassion, Jesus also provided food to two large crowds whom he had been healing and to whom he had been preaching, as well as the best wine when they ran out at a wedding.

- Jesus Turns Water into Wine (John 2:1-11)
- Jesus Feeds Over 5,000 People (Matthew 14:13-21; Mark 6:30-44; Luke 9:10-17; John 6:1-14)
- Jesus Feeds Over 4,000 People (Matthew 15:32-39; Mark 8:1-10)

What are we to make of Jesus' interaction with Mary in John 2:1-11?

What did the disciples learn about Jesus from this miracle? What do we learn about Jesus from it?

In Mark 6:37, Jesus tells the disciples to give the crowd of 5,000 men (plus women and children) something to eat. What do we need to remember about all the things that God asks us to do?

The feeding of the 5,000 is the only miracle (besides Jesus' resurrection) which is recorded in all four of the Gospels. Why do you think that is? What is the importance of this miracle?

In what ways do you see yourself in the disciples in the account of the feeding of the four thousand?

JESUS DEMONSTRATES HIS POWER OVER NATURE

On two occasions, Jesus calmed a storm on the Sea of Galilee while his disciples were in a boat. The one time, he was in the boat the entire time. The other time, he came walking to them on the water. In doing so, Jesus displayed that he truly is the Son of God and Lord over all creation.

- Jesus Calms the Storm (Matthew 8:23-27; Mark 4:35-41; Luke 8:22-25)
- Jesus Walks on Water (Matthew 14:22-33; Mark 6:45-52; John 6:16-21)

Take a look at Mark 4:35-41. In what ways are we similar to the disciples during the storms of life?

What is the only reasonable answer to the disciples' question in verse 41? For what reasons is this truth so comforting?

In Matthew 14:22-33, what do we want to commend Peter for, and what would we critique him for?

Walking on water and calming a storm are both amazing, but what is so amazing about what Jesus says and does in verse 31?

What is your biggest takeaway from these miracles in which Jesus shows his power over nature?

JESUS RAISES PEOPLE FROM THE DEAD

Of all Jesus' miracles, perhaps the most amazing are the times which he raised people from the dead. Death is the great equalizer and the one thing which everyone can anticipate, but Jesus demonstrated that he is the one who came to defeat and destroy death and give people life.

- Jesus Raises a Widow's Only Son from the Dead (Luke 7:11-17)
- Jesus Raises Jairus' Daughter from the Dead (Matthew 9:18-26; Mark 5:21-43; Luke 8:41-56)
- Jesus Raises Lazarus from the Dead (John 11:1-44)

For what reasons was the death of the boy whom Jesus then raised in Luke 7:11-17 especially sad?

What would you have been thinking and feeling if you were Jairus throughout the different stages of events recorded in Mark 5:21-43?

What different lessons about Jesus and our lives of faith can we learn from that account?

What especially sticks out to you in the conversation between Jesus and Martha in John 11:20-27?

What do we learn from Jesus' reaction to Lazarus' death in John 11:33-36?

How would you answer the question which some of the onlookers posed in John 11:37?

GOSPEL FOUNDATIONS REVIEW - LESSON SEVEN

AGREE OR DISAGREE?

1. Sometimes Jesus said things that at first glance appear to be rather rude.
2. Just because Jesus allows something hard or horrible to happen doesn't mean he doesn't care.
3. People years ago talked about "demons" because they didn't have the science we have today.
4. We have no idea how many miracles Jesus actually did.
5. Each miracle that Jesus did gave evidence of his love and the fact that he is the Son of God.

WHICH GROUP OF PEOPLE IS BEING DESCRIBED?

1. These militants were strongly bent on getting rid of the Romans - _____
2. These priestly elites didn't believe in the resurrection or angels - _____
3. These Jews secluded themselves and stored the Dead Sea Scrolls - _____
4. These synagogue leaders strictly held to the traditions of the elders - _____
5. These people supported the Roman-picked governor of Judea - _____

WHICH OLD TESTAMENT PERSON COMPLETES THE SENTENCE?

1. Jesus would be in the earth 3 days and nights like _____ was in the fish - _____ A. Noah
2. Jesus was called the "Son of _____," a term meaning he's the Messiah - _____ B. Abraham
3. John the Baptist was full of the spirit and power of _____ - _____ C. Lot
4. The last day will come like the destruction of Sodom in _____'s day - _____ D. Moses
5. Jesus once said about this patriarch, "Before _____ was, I am." - _____ E. David
6. John says the prophet _____ "saw Jesus' glory and spoke about him." - _____ F. Elijah
7. _____ lifted up a snake, just like Jesus would be lifted up on the cross - _____ G. Jonah
8. The last day will come like the worldwide flood in _____'s day - _____ H. Isaiah

WHAT IS YOUR BIGGEST TAKEAWAY FROM THIS LESSON?

DIGGING EVEN DEEPER - LESSON SEVEN

GOSPEL READING CALENDAR

Day 1 - Matthew 24

Day 4 - John 13-14

Day 2 - Matthew 25-26

Day 5 - John 15-16

Day 3 - Luke 22

Day 6 - Mark 14

MEMORY TREASURE

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die" (*John 11:25*)

FURTHER APPLICATION

A fellow Christian comes to you with this dilemma: "I know that my loved one is with Jesus now, and I really am happy about that, but I still feel so sad and empty. And then I feel bad about feeling that way because I know I'm just being selfish and should have accepted it by now." What would you say, and which one of Jesus' miracles and the surrounding context might you refer to in your answer?

EYEWITNESSES TO JESUS' MIRACLES

Wouldn't it have been amazing to be able to see Jesus do a miracle?! Out of all the miracles that are mentioned in this lesson - if you could only pick one - which miracle would you choose to have been an eyewitness for? Explain your reasons for picking that miracle and the reasons why you especially treasure that miracle even though you were not an eyewitness.

GOSPEL FOUNDATIONS | LESSON EIGHT

HOLY WEEK

Jesus lived for 33 years, but a third of the material in the four Gospels is dedicated to the last week of his life. Clearly, this week was extremely important. This lesson will walk us through Holy Week, these final days leading up to Jesus' death and subsequent resurrection.

PALM SUNDAY

Matthew 21:1-11; Mark 11:1-11; Luke 19:28-44; John 12:12-19

On the Sunday before Jesus was crucified, he rode on a donkey into the city of Jerusalem. While he was doing this, people spread their cloaks and palm branches out in front of him, and praised God.

Take a look at Luke 19:28-34. What do the details about the two disciples getting the donkey remind us about Jesus as he comes into Jerusalem?

Take a look at any of the four Gospel accounts about Palm Sunday. In what ways do the various aspects of what happened on Palm Sunday show us who Jesus really is?

- riding on a donkey
- the cloaks and palm branches
- the words the people say
- Jesus' interaction with the Pharisees

"MY HOUSE" MONDAY

Matthew 21:12-22; Mark 11:12-25; Luke 19:45-58

On the Monday before Jesus was crucified, he did two things which seem rather strange at first glance. He cursed a fig tree that was not producing any fruit and he overturned tables and drove people out of the temple courts.

Read through any of the accounts of Jesus cleansing the temple and/or the cursing of the fig tree. For what reasons is it rather surprising to see Jesus do what he does?

What does seeing this side of Jesus teach us about him?

The Bible calls our bodies temples of the Holy Spirit. What are the implications of this truth?

What was Jesus teaching by cursing the fig tree and the follow-up conversation with his disciples?

BUSY OR TEACHING TUESDAY

Matthew 21:23-26:5; Mark 11:27-13:36; Luke 20:1-38

The Gospels record a number of different things that Jesus taught during Holy Week, and even what is included is certainly not exhaustive. Even though Luke tells us that Jesus was teaching in the temple courts every day, Tuesday is the Holy Week day that has become most associated with Jesus teaching. His teachings during Holy Week included masterful answers to his enemies' trap questions, signs of the destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the age, parables about his enemies, parables about the need for watchfulness, and more.

SILENT OR SPY WEDNESDAY

Matthew 26:1-16; Mark 14:1-11; Luke 22:1-6

On the Wednesday before Jesus was crucified, we are not specifically told what Jesus said or did. Thus the name Silent Wednesday has sometimes been used. Others use the term Spy Wednesday because it is thought that this is the day that Judas conspired with the chief priests against Jesus.

One of the things that has troubled people about the Gospel accounts is that their order of events do not always seem to line up. However, the Gospels never claim to have a strict chronology of the life of Jesus as their goal. They do have the goal of relating real stories about Jesus' life in order that we may know who he really is and believe in him.

One of the places where this difficulty comes in concerns Jesus being anointed. John states that Jesus was anointed by Mary, the sister of Lazarus, six days before the Passover. Matthew and Mark also talk about Jesus being anointed by a woman for his burial, but they do not give her name and include this account after the events of Monday and Tuesday. Some consider these to be two separate anointings, while others consider them to be the same event.

Read through Luke 22:1-6 or Matthew 26:14-16. For what reasons did Judas agree to betray Jesus?

What lessons can we learn from the anointing of Jesus and the surrounding discussion?

MAUNDY OR HOLY THURSDAY

Matthew 26:17-56; Mark 14:12-52; Luke 22:7-53; John 13:1-18:12

We are told about a lot that happened on the night before Jesus died. Jesus washed his disciples' feet, taught his disciples, celebrated the Passover with his disciples, warned his disciples about falling away, went to the Garden of Gethsemane and prayed, was betrayed by Judas, and was arrested. The name Maundy Thursday comes from the Latin word "mandatum" which means "command," referring to the new command Jesus gave: "Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another."

Read John 13:1-17. For what reasons does Jesus wash his disciples' feet? What do we learn about Jesus and about us from this account?

In Matthew 26:20-25, Jesus says some strong words to Judas. Why does Jesus say what he does?

Look at Jesus instituting the Lord's Supper in Matthew 26:26-30, Mark 14:22-26, or Luke 22:15-20. What do these sections teach us about what the Lord's Supper is and what it does for us?

Take a look at Mark 14:32-42. What does this section teach us about us?

Did Jesus really want to go suffer and die or did he not?

Open up to one of the accounts of Jesus' arrest in Matthew 26:47-56, Mark 14:43-52, Luke 22:47-53, or John 18:1-12. What does this section teach us about...

- Jesus' power and authority
- Jesus' innocence
- Jesus' love

GOSPEL FOUNDATIONS REVIEW - LESSON EIGHT

AGREE OR DISAGREE?

1. About a third of the material in the Gospels is about Holy Week.
2. The fact that Jesus cleansed the temple shows how serious Jesus is about removing sin.
3. Jesus willingly went to take our sin upon himself and to suffer and die for us.
4. The Gospels are concerned with giving us an accurate history, but not necessarily a chronology.
5. Jesus meant exactly what he said when he instituted the Lord's Supper: It is his body and blood.

ON WHICH DAY OF HOLY WEEK DID EACH EVENT HAPPEN?

1. Jesus drove the moneychangers out of the temple courts - _____
2. Jesus washed his disciples' feet and told them to do the same - _____
3. Jesus celebrated the Passover and instituted the Lord's Supper - _____
4. Jesus prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane and was arrested - _____
5. Jesus entered the city of Jerusalem on a donkey to "Hosannas" - _____

WHICH NUMBER CORRECTLY COMPLETES THE SENTENCE?

1. _____ friends brought a paralytic to Jesus, lowering him through a roof - _____ A. One
2. Jesus cast _____ demons out of Mary Magdalene - _____ B. Two
3. After Jesus healed ten lepers, _____ of them returned to thank him - _____ C. Three
4. When Jesus fed the 5,000, he started with _____ loaves and two fish - _____ D. Four
5. _____ days after he was born, Jesus was circumcised - _____ E. Five
6. There were _____ stone jars full of water, which Jesus turned into wine - _____ F. Six
7. When Jesus was transfigured, _____ Old Testament men spoke with him - _____ G. Seven
8. Jesus told Peter he would deny him _____ times before the rooster crows - _____ H. Eight

WHAT IS YOUR BIGGEST TAKEAWAY FROM THIS LESSON?

DIGGING EVEN DEEPER - LESSON EIGHT

GOSPEL READING CALENDAR

Day 1 - Matthew 27

Day 2 - Luke 23

Day 3 - John 17

Day 4 - John 18

Day 5 - John 19

Day 6 - Mark 15

MEMORY TREASURE

"My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends..." (*John 15:12-14*)

FURTHER APPLICATION

On Holy Thursday, Jesus showed his disciples the full extent of his love as he washed their feet, gave them the Lord's Supper, and surrendered himself over to suffering and death for them. The forgiveness, high status, and new life he has won for us now puts us in the position to love others as he has loved us. Come up with three different characteristics of Jesus' love for you, and for each one, include a specific way in which you can put that characteristic into action in your life.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

LORD, TEACH US HOW TO PRAY

When Jesus' disciples asked him how to pray, he taught them the Lord's Prayer. As we listen to Jesus praying in the Garden of Gethsemane, we first and foremost see him praying perfectly for us, submitting to his Father's will perfectly for us, and going to suffer and die for us. But we also want to imitate Jesus. What are three things about how to pray that we learn from Jesus in the garden?

GOSPEL FOUNDATIONS | LESSON NINE

JESUS' TRIAL & CRUCIFIXION

Having willingly allowed himself to be arrested, Jesus was then put on trial. Even though he was not guilty of anything, he allowed himself to be sentenced to death and crucified in order to save us.

JESUS BEFORE ANNAS & CAIAPHAS

Matthew 26:57-68; Mark 14:53-65; Luke 22:54, 63-71; John 18:13-14, 19-24

During every step of Jesus' trial, the goal was not to discern the truth, but rather to condemn Jesus. While Jesus mostly remained silent, he did also confess that he is the Son of Man and Son of God.

Take a look at Matthew 26:63-66. What was it about Jesus' answer that made everyone so upset?

PETER DENIES JESUS THREE TIMES

Matthew 26:69-75; Mark 14:66-72; Luke 22:54-62; John 18:15-18, 25-27

Just as Jesus had foretold, Peter denied knowing Jesus three times before the rooster crowed.

Read Luke 22:54-62. For what reasons do you think Peter denied knowing Jesus?

What kind of a look do you think Jesus gave Peter? For what reasons do you think that?

In Matthew's Gospel, the account of Peter's denial is immediately followed by the account of Judas's remorse and then hanging himself. What was the difference between Peter and Judas?

JESUS BEFORE HEROD & PILATE

Matthew 27:11-31; Mark 15:1-20; Luke 23:1-25; John 18:28-19:22

Since the Jewish leaders did not have the right to exercise capital punishment without facing major repercussions from the Romans (and because Jesus himself had prophesied that he would be crucified), the leaders got Pilate involved. Even though he himself was convinced that Jesus was innocent and tried to get Jesus set free, he eventually handed Jesus over to be crucified.

For what reasons did Pilate know that Jesus was innocent? For what reasons did he hand Jesus over to be crucified anyways?

In what ways are we tempted to talk and act like Pilate?

In what ways are we like Barabbas?

John 19:19-22 tells us about the notice Pilate wrote for the cross. What was it about that sign that bothered Jesus' enemies?

SIMON CARRIES JESUS' CROSS

Matthew 27:32; Mark 15:21; Luke 23:26-31; John 19:17

As they took Jesus to the place where he would be crucified, they made him carry his own cross. But then, perhaps because he was too weak, they made a man named Simon of Cyrene carry it for him.

In what ways was Simon similar to Jesus? In what ways is he similar to us?

JESUS' CRUCIFIXION, DEATH, & BURIAL

Matthew 27:33-61; Mark 15:22-47; Luke 23:32-56; John 19:23-42

Just as he said he would be, Jesus was put to death. Nevertheless, his life wasn't taken from him. He gave it up willingly in order to save us. He is the Son of God and the Savior of the world.

Which words of Jesus from the cross do you find especially comforting? For what reasons?

- "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing."
- "Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise."
- "Woman, here is your son," and to the disciple, "Here is your mother."
- "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" (which means "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?").
- "I am thirsty."
- "It is finished."
- "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit."

What details surrounding Jesus' crucifixion and death do you have questions about or have you found fascinating?

What are some of the different Old Testament prophecies that Jesus fulfilled on the cross?

What is the significance of Jesus' burial that all four Gospel writers included it?

WHO'S WHO?

Here's a brief description of some of the people involved in the events surrounding Jesus' death.

ANNAS

Annas was the Jewish high priest from 6–15 AD, but then continued to play a prominent role in Jerusalem in the years that followed. His five sons all served as the high priest as well, and so did his son-in-law Caiaphas. The Gospel of John tells us that Jesus was first brought to Annas, who questioned him, and then he was sent to the active high priest Caiaphas.

CAIAPHAS

Caiaphas was the Jewish high priest from 18–36 AD, and was the active high priest when Jesus was on trial and sentenced to be crucified. He was the son-in-law of Annas. Some think that the story of the rich man and Lazarus was spoken against him. Caiaphas is the one who had said that it would be better for one man to die for the people, not realizing that God was prophesying through him.

HEROD

Herod, also known as Herod Antipas, was the ruler of Galilee. He was the son of Herod the Great, the one who ordered the massacre of all the baby boys in Bethlehem. He is the same Herod who imprisoned and had John the Baptist beheaded. He is also the one whom Jesus called a "fox."

PONTIUS PILATE

Pilate was the Roman governor of the province of Judea from about 26–36 AD. The name "Pontius" likely signifies part of his ancestry, but he was also simply known as "Pilate." He is mentioned elsewhere in Scripture and in extrabiblical historical writings. As the governor of Judea, he was the one who had the authority to put Jesus to death. Though he had ample evidence to find Jesus innocent, he did end up handing Jesus over to be crucified, as we often mention in the creeds.

BARABBAS

Barabbas, also called Jesus Barabbas, was the criminal whom the crowd asked for Pilate to release instead of Jesus, and who was released. All that we know about Barabbas is what the Gospels tell us: he was an insurrectionist who had taken part in at least one uprising and committed murder.

SIMON OF CYRENE

Simon of Cyrene is the man who was forced to carry Jesus' cross. Cyrene was a Greek city located in the present-day country of Libya. Thus, Simon was hundreds of miles away from home. Many believe that he was part of the large Jewish community there and had come to Jerusalem to celebrate the Passover. Mark's mention of his two sons perhaps indicates that his sons were Christians.

JOSEPH OF ARIMATHEA

Joseph of Arimathea was a rich and prominent member of the Sanhedrin, the Jewish ruling council, but he did not support putting Jesus to death. He had secretly believed in Jesus, but he let his faith become known when he asked for Jesus' body and buried him in his own brand new tomb.

GOSPEL FOUNDATIONS REVIEW - LESSON NINE

AGREE OR DISAGREE?

1. The Jews are the ones who were responsible for Jesus' death.
2. Many people involved in the crucifixion knew that Jesus didn't deserve to die.
3. Jesus didn't come down from the cross because he was concerned with saving us, not himself.
4. Jesus' suffering and death now give us a chance to atone for our sins.
5. Absolutely no one involved in the crucifixion questioned that Jesus was actually dead.

TO OR ABOUT WHOM DID JESUS SAY THESE WORDS?

1. "Dear woman, here is your son." - _____
2. "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing." - _____
3. "My kingdom is not of this world." - _____
4. "Truly, I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise." - _____
5. "Here is your mother." - _____

WHICH PERSON IS BEING DESCRIBED?

- | | |
|--|--------------|
| 1. The criminal who was released instead of Jesus - _____ | A. Annas |
| 2. A prominent Jewish leader who had previously been the high priest - _____ | B. Caiaphas |
| 3. A man from Cyrene who was forced to carry Jesus' cross - _____ | C. Herod |
| 4. A rich man from Arimathea who gave Jesus his brand new tomb - _____ | D. Pilate |
| 5. The Roman ruler who handed Jesus over to be crucified - _____ | E. Barabbas |
| 6. The ruler of Galilee who dressed Jesus in a robe and mocked him - _____ | F. Simon |
| 7. The high priest who thought it would be better for one man to die - _____ | G. Joseph |
| 8. A Pharisee who secretly believed and then asked for Jesus' body - _____ | H. Nicodemus |

WHAT IS YOUR BIGGEST TAKEAWAY FROM THIS LESSON?

DIGGING EVEN DEEPER - LESSON NINE

GOSPEL READING CALENDAR

Day 1 - Matthew 28

Day 4 - Mark 16

Day 2 - Luke 24

Day 3 - John 20

MEMORY TREASURE

Jesus called out with a loud voice, "Father, into your hands I commit my spirit." When he had said this, he breathed his last.

(Luke 23:46)

FURTHER APPLICATION

A fellow Christian comes to you with this dilemma: "You know, I'm just not so sure. I'm pretty sure I believe. I want to believe. But I just don't know how God could love me and forgive me after all the things that I've said and done, despite all his goodness to me." How could you use one or more of the events of Jesus' trial, crucifixion, and death to bring this person comfort in Christ Jesus?

"SO THAT SCRIPTURE WOULD BE FULFILLED"

Jesus' crucifixion is at the heart and core of the Christian faith. It's also a focal point of Scripture. This is obvious in the New Testament, where Jesus' death is mentioned time and time again. But lots of details of the Savior's death are also in the Old Testament. Use your Bible's footnotes and/or the internet to see how many prophecies and promises you can find fulfilled in Jesus' crucifixion and death. Take note of any of them that are new to you or that you find especially amazing.

GOSPEL FOUNDATIONS | LESSON TEN

THE RESURRECTED JESUS

All four Gospels include accounts of the bodily resurrection of Jesus, giving their testimony that the exact same Jesus who died on the cross rose from the dead and lives, just as he said. The day on which Jesus rose from the dead is commonly referred to as Easter. While the etymology of the word "Easter" is uncertain, this word has been used for centuries to denote the day of Jesus' resurrection.

SECURING THE TOMB & THE GUARDS' REPORT

Matthew 27:62-66, 28:11-15

Jesus' enemies did everything they could to try to ensure that Jesus' body would stay in the tomb. But when their plan backfired and he rose from the dead anyways, they paid off the guards to spread a lie.

What is the irony in Jesus' enemies securing the tomb and then the report they have the guards tell?

EARLY MORNING AT THE TOMB

Matthew 28:1-10; Mark 16:1-8; Luke 24:1-12; John 20:1-18

A number of different people went to Jesus' tomb early in the morning, but they did not find his body. Angels told the women that Jesus had risen from the dead, and Jesus also appeared to the women.

Read through all four of these Gospel accounts. What are we to make of the differences that we find?

Look especially at the words of the angels. What is the significance of each phrase for the women, and for us? What is the significance of Jesus' resurrection?

JESUS APPEARS ON THE ROAD TO EMMAUS

Luke 24:13-35

Later that day, Jesus appeared to Cleopas and another disciple while they were walking to Emmaus. They didn't know what to think or feel about everything that had happened to Jesus, but Jesus taught them the need of his suffering, death, and resurrection before revealing himself to them.

What portions or passages from the Old Testament do you think Jesus talked about?

What attitudes and actions from these two disciples do we want to imitate?

JESUS APPEARS TO THE DISCIPLES

Luke 24:36-49; John 20:19-29

That same night, Jesus also appeared to his disciples who were all gathered together. He appeared to them again the next week, and this time Thomas was present. They all saw the resurrected Jesus.

What is so significant about Jesus' first words to his disciples: "Peace be with you"?

What were the different proofs of his resurrection that Jesus gave to his disciples?

For what reasons do you think Thomas refused to believe that Jesus had truly risen from the dead?

For what reasons do we struggle to believe the true things that God says to us in his Word?

THE MIRACULOUS CATCH OF FISH

John 21:1-14

Sometime during the forty days between Jesus' resurrection and ascension, he appeared to seven of his disciples while they were fishing and blessed them with a miraculous catch of fish.

For what reasons do you think John realized that it was the Lord?

JESUS REINSTATES PETER

John 21:15-25

After Jesus blessed the disciples with a miraculous catch of fish and ate breakfast with them, he had a special conversation with Simon Peter, confirming that he wanted Peter to feed his sheep.

For what reason do you think Jesus asked Peter "Do you love me?" three times?

What can we learn from getting to overhear this conversation between Jesus and Peter?

THE GREAT COMMISSION

Matthew 28:16-20

Sometime before his ascension, Jesus appeared to the eleven disciples in Galilee and gave them their instructions as apostles (ones who are sent), while promising to be with them always.

In what ways do these verses both tell us what our mission is as a congregation and as individual Christians while also giving us the comforting promise of how we will be able to carry it out?

JESUS ASCENDS INTO HEAVEN

Luke 24:50–53

Forty days after Jesus rose from the dead, he ascended into heaven.

What is the significance of the detail that Jesus ascended while he was blessing them?

Jesus' disciples would not see him again until they died. For what reasons did they rejoice then? For what reasons can we rejoice too, even though we will not see Jesus until we die or until he returns?

THE ENDING OF MARK

Mark 16:9–20

Perhaps you've noticed in your Bible that there is a special note concerning the last twelve verses of the Gospel of Mark, that says something to the effect of "The earliest manuscripts and some other ancient witnesses do not have verses 9–20." This note is completely true, but there is much stronger evidence that verses 9–20 are the original and actual ending to the book of Mark.

What questions do you have about this note or about the content of these verses?

CLOSING THOUGHTS

What questions do you still have about the Gospels that you would like to explore even more?

What have you most appreciated about this study of the Gospels?

GOSPEL FOUNDATIONS REVIEW - LESSON TEN

AGREE OR DISAGREE?

1. Jesus was dead for three days.
2. It's ok if someone doesn't believe in a bodily resurrection since Jesus lives on in our hearts.
3. After Jesus rose from the dead, people were not always able to easily recognize him.
4. Jesus' resurrection is the guarantee that our sins are forgiven and we will live forever with him.
5. Jesus gave many convincing proofs to many people that he had indeed risen from the dead.

TO WHOM DID JESUS SAY THESE WORDS?

1. "Woman, why are you crying? Who is it that you are looking for?" - _____
2. "Do you love me?...Feed my sheep." - _____
3. "What are you discussing together as you walk along?" - _____
4. "Reach out your hand and put it into my side." - _____
5. "And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." - _____

WHICH PERSON IS BEING DESCRIBED?

1. One of the two disciples Jesus met on the road to Emmaus - _____ A. Joanna
2. James and John's mother who went with other women to the tomb - _____ B. Nathanael
3. A man from Cyrene who was forced to carry Jesus' cross - _____ C. Salome
4. The disciple who won the race to the tomb but didn't go in first - _____ D. Mary Magdalene
5. The disciple who lost the race to the tomb but did go in first - _____ E. Cleopas
6. The woman whom Jesus appeared to first - _____ F. Thomas
7. The wife of Chuza who went with the other women to the tomb - _____ G. Peter
8. A disciple who was there for the miraculous catch of fish - _____ H. John

WHAT IS YOUR BIGGEST TAKEAWAY FROM THIS LESSON?

DIGGING EVEN DEEPER - LESSON TEN

MEMORY TREASURE

The Messiah will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance for the forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. *(Luke 24:46-47)*

FURTHER APPLICATION

The disciples on the road to Emmaus were feeling hopeless and confused until Jesus came and explained the Old Testament Scriptures to them and showed them that the Scriptures all pointed to the necessity of Jesus' suffering and death. Imagine you're talking to someone who's hopeless and confused. Summarize the message of the Gospels to show this person what it all means for them.

PREACH THE GOSPEL TO ALL CREATION

Jesus alone accomplished the mission of our salvation, but he now works through his disciples to bring that salvation to others by preaching the gospel to all creation. That is the mission Christ has given us, and he accompanies us as we carry out that mission. To "preach" means to be a herald, a messenger. In what ways are you currently serving as a messenger of the gospel? What are some potential new opportunities for you to serve as a messenger of the gospel?
