

GOD'S SON, OUR SAVIOR

BY JACKIE OESCH

**STORIES FROM THE BOOKS OF MATTHEW,
MARK, LUKE AND JOHN**

LESSON 1: *A SAVIOR, WHO IS CHRIST THE LORD* – BIRTH OF JESUS

LESSON 2: *MY EYES HAVE SEEN* – THE MAGI, SIMEON, AND ANNA

LESSON 3: *COME FOLLOW ME* – JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES

LESSON 4: *I AM WILLING, BE CLEAN* – JESUS AND THE UNTOUCHABLES

LESSON 5: *HE HAD COMPASSION ON THEM* – JESUS AND THE CROWDS

LESSON 6: *DO YOU BELIEVE THIS?* – JESUS AND FAITH

“...I have stored up Your Word in my heart...”

Psalm 119:11

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GETTING STARTED

You are embarking on an adventure that will shape the rest of your life. Your journey will be unique to you and will be determined in part by your eager and enthusiastic desire to grow in your understanding of the book called The Holy Bible. Your commitment to the study promises to enrich your life as God speaks to you through His Word.

As you study you are encouraged to have some recommended supplies on hand:

1. This Bible Study unit: *God's Son, Our Savior*
2. English Standard Version of the Holy Bible (ESV). Note: If you are making a new purchase, look for a Bible, if possible, that has:
 - a. a cross-reference column preferably down the center of each page,
 - b. a Concordance usually found in the back of the Bible, and
 - c. a few basic maps also usually found in the back.
3. Pen or pencil
4. 3x5 or 4x6 index cards

With the three features listed in #2 you will be adequately supplied for your study and be ready to successfully navigate through these lessons. If, however, this is your first exposure to the Bible, you may want to consider beginning with the study entitled *Navigating the Bible*. This study provides navigational tools designed to help you develop skills and make you a more confident Bible student. *Navigating the Bible* may be downloaded at no cost or obligation from the CrossConnect Ministries website (www.crosscm.org). Although this study is recommended, it is not essential for success in studying *God's Son, Our Savior*.

Do not hesitate to mark up your Bible. It's your Bible to study. Make it your own with your notes, your underlining, highlighting, circling and arrows! You may choose to use a notebook or tablet for recording thoughts, questions, and tracking your journey through the study.

The study material is written so that you are able to learn on your own. With a degree of self-discipline you will cover the material with little or no difficulty. At the same time, you will acquire new information, share new insights, and ask some challenging questions that will beg for answers. Anticipating this response you are encouraged to seriously consider inviting a couple of friends to study with you.

May you find joy in your study. May your heart be receptive as God speaks to you through His Word. May these Bible stories reassure you of His great love given to you through His Son Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior.

Editor's note: For clarification, capitalized pronouns reference God. i.e. "...what He said."

UNIT INTRODUCTION

Throughout history God has been on a mission, the mission of calling us back into a relationship with Him. In Genesis 3 the perfect relationship that God had with Adam and Eve was destroyed by their disobedience. While still in the Garden, however, God began the process of restoring all that was broken. In Genesis 3:15 He gave the first promise of a Savior. His mission began as He set out to bring all creation back into a loving relationship with Him.

Now as we begin our study of the four Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John), the first four books of the New Testament, we will learn God's plan, His strategy for accomplishing His mission. God's Champion, His only Son Jesus, comes as a baby, lives life on this earth as a man, then suffers and dies in order that the payment for our sin might be paid which included the wrong doing that kept us separated from God. Jesus did this in order that the relationship God intended to have with humankind at creation would be restored to wholeness once again. Jesus, God's Champion, did for us all that we could not do for ourselves. We will see the promised Savior, Jesus Christ, the Messiah, God's Son revealed as the Victorious One over sin and death.

Throughout the lessons in this study we will read stories that reveal who Jesus is. We will go back and forth between the four Gospels in order to grow in our awareness of Him as the Son of God and Savior of the world. Some stories are told by only one or two of the Gospel writers while others may be told by all four. There will appear to be some discrepancies between the writers but don't get distracted. Remember that each writer has a target group he is attempting to reach and not all writers were eyewitnesses.

Once again, it is impossible to include all the recorded stories about Jesus in this brief study. The stories that have been chosen will get you started. Remember that God the Father wants you to know the great love He has for you and the relationship He longs to share with you. May you enjoy getting to know Jesus as your Savior and Redeemer!

LESSON ONE

A SAVIOR, WHO IS CHRIST THE LORD

THE BIRTH OF JESUS

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INTRODUCTION

The Gospels introduce us to Jesus. In this unit *God's Son, Our Savior* we learn the circumstances surrounding His birth and early childhood, watch as He began His ministry with the call of His disciples, and we observe Jesus develop His teaching, preaching, and healing ministry. The four Gospel writers reported what they knew firsthand and had researched in order to give to their readers an orderly and accurate account. Discover their ultimate purpose for writing. Find out and then finish this sentence: They wrote *so that*...

Jesus was given many different names, all names that would describe who He was and what He came to do. He came as a baby born and placed in a manger and yet those who saw Him had eyes to recognize who He was and sang His praises. They told everyone what they had seen and heard. Why? Who would believe them? What difference would this Baby make in their lives?

The reactions of those who encountered this perfect Son of God born as the Son of Man was amazement. They had a choice to receive Him or reject Him for who He was. The same opportunity lies in the same story that has been shared throughout the ages. As you hear the stories ask that God's Spirit enable you to receive the Father's perfect gift, His Son, our Lord and Savior.

LESSON 1

Part 1

INTRODUCTION: Several hundred years have passed since the remnant of Israel returned from Babylon and settled once again in the Promised Land. During this intertestamental period, the time between Malachi (Old Testament) and the birth of Jesus (New Testament), the Jews were made the oppressed subjects of Greek and Roman conquerors and rulers. At the opening of the New Testament Herod the Great was a subject of Rome and the ruthless ruler of Palestine, the land once given by God to His people the Israelites.

The first four Books of the New Testament are the four Gospels written by Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Each of these men wrote from a different perspective and with a different audience in mind. For example, Matthew wanted his Jewish readers to know that Jesus was the promised Messiah who fulfilled the prophecies of prophets like Isaiah and Jeremiah. Luke, on the other hand, wrote with Theophilus (Luke 1:3) in mind and other Romans who were learning about this Anointed One, the Messiah called the Christ.

As our Bible study continues we will focus on Jesus. We will get acquainted with Him as we consider a few stories found in the Gospels. Both Luke and John articulate *why* each of them wrote an account of Jesus' life.

1. What are we told in Luke 1:3-4? _____

2. What does John 20:31 tell us? _____

Luke wanted Theophilus to *know* for certain the truths he had been taught. John wrote in order that those who read what he wrote would *believe* that Jesus is the Christ and that by believing they would have eternal life. Many people have goals for their lives. They set their hearts and minds on attaining those goals. In Philippians 3:10 St. Paul shares his goal. He says, "I want to *know* Christ." May this also be the goal for our lives to *know* Jesus Christ as Lord, as Savior, and as Friend, and that knowing Him we come to *believe* in Him and have Life in His Name.

PRAYER: Gracious Father, I am about to embark on a fresh journey into the Gospels which tell Your Good News for the whole world. Jesus is Good News. Enable me to come to know Him as I seek to learn and gain understanding of Who He is, why He came to live on earth, and how His life impacts mine. Keep my mind alert and my heart eager to listen. Open my heart to the stories, the miracles, and the parables. They are Your Word and the means You use to reveal Yourself to me as I come to know You through Your Son, Jesus Christ my Lord. _____

TEACHING: The Book of Matthew opens with the genealogy of Jesus. Matthew answered the question: Where did Jesus come from? What was His lineage? As you glance through verses 2-17 some names may be familiar to you. Take a moment and underline the names of those individuals you recognize. Note the following:

1. Verses 1-6a bring us from Abraham (Genesis 12) to David (1 Samuel 16)
2. Verses 6b-11 include the generations of the kings of Israel (1 Kings and 2 Kings)
3. Verses 12-16 from the years spent in Babylon captivity to the time of Jesus' birth

Matthew speaks of two giants in Jewish ancestry, Abraham and David. He does not list all the ancestors of Jesus but, because Matthew is writing to the Jews, it is important that the lineage begins with their patriarch Abraham. Like Abraham, King David mentioned in verse 6 is another significant ancestor of the Jewish people. The title Son of David in Matthew's Gospel (9:27, 20:30), for example, identified Jesus as the Messiah, the Anointed One that Israel had waited for throughout their history.

Luke also records the genealogy of Jesus in Luke 3:23-38. What is different about this genealogy? What is different about this genealogy? _____

Where does Luke begin? _____ How far back does Luke trace Jesus' genealogy?

_____ Jesus was thought to be Joseph's son but Luke tells us that He was even before Adam! He is the _____ of _____ (verse 38).

Part 2

ASSIGNMENT: Read Mary's story in Luke 1:26-38.

- What are the facts in verses 26 and 27?
- What was Mary's reaction to the angel's greeting and message?
- What was Mary's response to the angel's visit?

EXERCISE:

1. Verses 26-27: Mary's relative Elizabeth was six months pregnant when God _____ the angel _____.
 - a. Gabriel was sent to _____, a town in _____, specifically to a _____ pledged to be _____.
 - b. The man's name was _____, a descendant of _____.
 - c. Her name was _____.
2. Gabriel tells Mary that she has found favor with God (verse 30). Because she has found favor with God, what will happen to her (verse 31)? _____

3. What will happen to her son (verses 32-33)? _____

4. How did Mary respond?
 - a. To the angel's greetings (verse 29)? _____
 - b. To the news that she would give birth to a son named Jesus (verse 34)? _____

 - c. To the words "nothing is impossible with God (verse 38)?" _____

5. What names will be given to Jesus?
 - a. Verse 32: _____
 - b. Verse 35: _____
6. How does Mary's story end (verse 38)? _____

ASSIGNMENT: Read Joseph's story in Matthew 1:18-25.

- What are the facts in verses 18-19?
- What did the dream reveal in verses 20-21?
- What was the prophecy that would be fulfilled according to verses 22-23?
- What was Joseph's response to the dream in verses 24-25?
- What are the similarities between Mary and Joseph's stories?

EXERCISE:

1. List the names and meanings that give reference to Jesus:
 - a. Verse 16, 18: _____ Meaning: _____

- b. Verse 21: _____ Meaning: _____
- c. Verse 23: _____ Meaning: _____

Both the Greek and Hebrew languages give insight into the meanings. Jesus means Savior. Jesus is the Greek word for the Hebrew word Joshua, the Lord saves. Christ is the Greek word for the Hebrew word Messiah, the Anointed One. Immanuel, also spelled Emmanuel, is the Hebrew word meaning God with us.

2. Joseph's fiancé is pregnant. Wanting to do the right thing from a human perspective, what did Joseph plan to do (verse 19)? _____
3. The child in her was not conceived by a _____ but rather the _____ was at work in her and she would give birth to a _____ (verses 21-22).
4. Joseph woke up. He responded obediently. What interesting fact are we given in verse 25?

REFLECTION: What a way for the story to begin! God was about to come to earth as a baby, the Son of God and Son of Man. For hundreds of years the people of God had been waiting for the promised Messiah. Years of slavery and bondage had almost snuffed out the flickering light of hope, hope that someday a Savior would come and be their Deliverer. And, now God sends an angel with the message of hope to this young girl. The Messiah would be conceived in Mary by the Holy Spirit, not by man, and Joseph was not to be afraid to take her as his wife.

One can't help wonder what it would have been like to be Mary and have an angel visit her and convey such a message or, for that matter, to be Joseph, righteous and wanting to do everything in good order. Yet Mary submitted to God's will and Joseph was obedient to Lord's command. He took Mary home as his wife and had no sexual union with her until she gave birth to Baby Jesus.

Part 3

INTRODUCTION: As we continue our study of this God-man Jesus we need to look at the Book of John. In the first chapter, John also wants to tell us about Jesus and His beginning. Who was He? Where did He come from? Why did He come? What was He like? John is writing to both the Jews (Israelites) and the Gentiles (non-Israelite people). Remember that John as an evangelist wants all people to believe and have life in His name (John 20:30-31).

ASSIGNMENT: Read John 1:1-5, 9-14, 16-18. We read Mary and Joseph's story. This is John's story about Jesus whom he refers to as the Word. What does John want us to learn about Jesus? This chapter may be challenging both to read and understand. Be patient with yourself as you read. Read slowly

with a pen or marker to underline words, phrases and picture words that intrigue you or give you insight.
Who is Jesus?

EXERCISE:

1. Verses 1-5

- a. What three truths are we told about Jesus in verses 1-2?
 - i. _____
 - ii. _____
 - iii. _____
- b. What was Jesus' involvement with creation (verse 3)?
 - i. _____
 - ii. _____
- c. In Him was _____ (verse 4).
- d. His life was _____ for all of humanity (verse 4).
- e. The light _____ in the _____ and the _____ has not _____ it (verse 5).

2. Verses 9-14

- a. The true _____, which _____ everyone, was coming into the _____ (verse 9). Jesus came as the light of the world.
- b. Jesus was in the world that He _____. Yet the _____ did not _____ Him (verse 10).
- c. Jesus came to that which was His own (Israelites), and His own _____ did not _____ Him (verse 11).
- d. What was given to all who received Him and believed on His name (verse 12)?

- e. We become His children, born of _____ (verse 13)?
- f. Jesus, the Word, became _____ and _____ among us. We (all who received Him – vs. 12) have seen His _____, the glory of the only Son of the _____, full of _____ and _____ (verse 14).

3. Verses 16-18

- a. From His _____ we have all _____ grace upon _____ (verse 16).
- b. The _____ was given through _____; _____ and _____ came through _____ (verse 17).

- c. No one has ever seen _____. Who reveals to us the Father? Who makes Him known to us? Who lets us know firsthand what God the Father is like (verse 18)?

With this verse we begin to get a glimpse of the Trinity, God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. All are the One God, the One and Only, full of grace and truth!

MEMORIZATION: Regardless of how overwhelmed you may feel at this point in your study, John 1:14 is a verse of great significance and carries the theme of the Book of John. “The Word (John’s introductory word for Jesus) became flesh and made His dwelling among us...who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.” In several of the Old Testament stories we read about God dwelling among His people. The pillar of fire and cloud that traveled with the Israelites during the 40 years they wandered in the wilderness reminded them that God was with them. The tabernacle God instructed Moses to build that served as a constant visual to the people that God would be with them and live among them. Now we have God coming to dwell in the God-Man Jesus Christ, Immanuel, God with us. What intensifies His dwelling among us is that He comes to us full of grace and truth. We experience in Him God’s unconditional love for us all. We experience His grace. We also find in Jesus truth, truth personified. He is the Way, the *Truth*, and the Life (John 14:6). He speaks truth. He says that He is with us always (Matthew 1:23; 28:20), and He is. He says that He came to seek and save the lost (Luke 19:10). He says that we are set free from everything that would cause us to live crippled lives (Luke 13:12). He says that eternal life is ours by faith in Jesus, the Savior of the world (John 3:16-17). His Word is Truth that sets us free (John 8:32). God’s truth reveals His grace, His gift of love for us.

Write verse 14 on an index card and keep adding notes to the card as you continue your study of the Good News books, the Gospels. Grow in your awareness of how God’s great love comes to you through Jesus, the One full of grace and truth.

REVIEW:

Jesus came as the firstborn Son of the Father. His names have told us who He is and what His mission was here on this earth. As a review recall some of these names and what they tell us about Him:

NAME	MEANING and MISSION
Jesus	
Christ	

Immanuel/Emmanuel	
Son of the Most High	
Son of God	

In addition to the names mentioned above, John, the Gospel writer, speaks of Jesus as the Word who was God, never created but who created all things (John 1:1-3).

Part 4

INTRODUCTION: We are ready to study one well-known Bible story. For Christian believers throughout the world it is the Christmas story, the story a Father tells about the birth of His firstborn Son, Jesus.

ASSIGNMENT: Read Luke 2:1-7. As you read, notice the different things the Father wants to tell us:

- The circumstances surrounding His Son’s birth,
- The celestial celebration, and
- The response to the Good News!

EXERCISE:

1. The land of Israel was under Roman rule. Who was the reigning emperor (verse 1)? _____

2. What was the Caesar’s decree (verse 1)? _____
3. The birth of Christ is dated by the Gospel writer St. Luke. What is the other reference he makes to date the event according to verse 2? _____
Both Caesar Augustus (Roman Empire) and Quirinius (Syria) had censuses taken that year. The census was only used for taxation purposes because the Israelites were exempt from military service under the Romans.
4. Where did everyone register (verse 3)? _____
5. What did this decree mean for Joseph (verse 4)? Follow his journey on a map.
 - a. Where was he living? What town? _____
 - b. In what area of Palestine was he living? _____
 - c. Where did he need to report? _____
 - d. Why did he need to travel to this particular town? _____

6. What did this decree mean for Mary (verse 5)? _____

The journey between Nazareth and Bethlehem took at least three days. Women twelve years and older were required to register and pay the mandatory tax.

7. And, what happened while Joseph and Mary were in Bethlehem (verse 6)? _____

Verse 7: “and she gave _____ to her _____, and
_____ him in _____ cloths and _____
_____ because there was _____.”

REFLECTION:

1. Take a moment and consider what such an untimely decree meant for Mary and Joseph.

2. Undoubtedly, family in Nazareth was anticipating Mary’s delivery. Mary, great with child, was uncomfortable and wondering if this trip was absolutely necessary at this particular time. Quite possibly she was eagerly waiting the baby’s birth. Joseph, on the other hand, probably had everything carefully planned. He might even have taken a couple of practice runs to the midwife’s home. What would be going through your mind had you been traveling with them?

3. God acts with intention. Consider the prophecy of the prophet Micah in Micah 5:2. Write out the verse: _____

4. Where was this ruler over Israel whose days are from eternity to be born? What had to be done in order to fulfill this prophecy? _____

5. How did God use these unbelieving rulers to accomplish His righteous purposes? _____

6. What does Luke 2:7 tell us about the conditions in which Jesus was born? _____

MEMORIZATION: Jesus came in the very nature of God yet we learn that He was willing to give it all up in order that we might have it all. He came into this world with nothing, born in poverty, born in a stable because Bethlehem had no room available. St. Paul tells us in 2 Corinthians 8:9 of the gracious

love of Jesus that although He was rich yet He willingly accepted poverty in order that we might have everything and be made rich.

Write this verse on an index card and make it a part of your memory library. Find rich moments in your days, moments that are rich in God's gracious love for you and take a moment to give thanks and then ask that as He came to serve in poverty you also may willingly serve in order that others may be made rich as they, too, come to know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

Part 5

INTRODUCTION: The Christmas story continues. It involves an announcement and a celebration! As you read these next verses attempt to visualize the excitement that's going on. Jesus, the Anointed One, the Messiah is born. If you were announcing the birth of your child how would you celebrate? If the whole world needed to know, who would you tell? How would you announce it? on Facebook? Twitter? Would you announce the birth by creating a video and posting it on YouTube? Let's consider what God the Father chose to do.

ASSIGNMENT: Read Luke 2:8-20.

- Who made the announcement?
- Who was told first?
- What was the response to the news?

EXERCISE:

1. What does verse 8 tell us? There were _____ out in the _____ keeping _____ over their _____ by night.

Although the verse doesn't say, the possibility exists that the shepherds were watching over the flocks that were kept for temple sacrifices. These sheep were perfect, without spot or blemish. It makes it interesting to consider why the Father chose to announce the birth of His Son to the shepherds.

2. Who appeared to the shepherds (verse 9)? _____
3. What accompanied the angel (verse 9)? _____
4. What was the reaction of the shepherds? _____
5. What was the first thing the angel said (verse 10)? _____
6. Why didn't they need to be afraid? _____

7. The message was *good news*. It was a message of *great joy*. The message was *for everyone*.
And, what was the message (verse 11)? _____

8. One of the first questions asked the parents of the newborn child is the child's name. Notice the names that are given in verse 11: _____
Recall what these names mean. See Matthew 1:21 and review the Exercise in Part 2.
9. What was the sign the angel gave the shepherds so they would know they had found the Baby (verse 12)? _____
10. What happened next (verse 13)?
- Suddenly _____ appeared
 - Praising _____ and _____,
 - “ _____.”
11. The birth announcement called for a response. Imagine the discussion among the shepherds after the angels had gone into heaven! What did they decide to do (verse 15)? _____

12. The celebration has started. The angels sang and now the shepherds hurry off to see this thing that has happened which the Lord has told them about. What did they find (verse 16)?

Do you find yourself approaching the manger with a quiet reverence in your heart? You are looking on the Father's Baby, your Savior and King? Do you see the Father hovering overhead so pleased, so proud? Do you hear Him saying, "See, it's just like I told you. The Baby, My firstborn Son, is wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger."

TEACHING: You may have several things going through your head right now. The world would never be the same because of this Baby who would grow up and become a man. Never had such a grand announcement been made. Not only did a multitude of the heavenly hosts appear praising God but the glory of the Lord shone around them.

What was this glory of the Lord? This was the glory of God revealing His visible presence among His people. The Israelites saw His glory in the pillars of cloud and fire that went with the Israelites during their forty years of wanderings in the wilderness before entering the Promised Land. Moses saw the glory of the Lord when the cloud descended on the tabernacle in Exodus 33. God granted His grace to Moses promising that His presence would go with him. The glory of the Lord that appeared to the shepherds was telling them that God's presence was in the Baby, in this the Christ Child of Bethlehem. The Good

News of great joy was that God's grace had come in His Son to dwell among us. He was full of grace and truth (John 1:14). The Good News of great joy was that God the Father was offering His Son as the perfect, holy, spotless Lamb of God who came to bring the peace that would pass all understanding, peace that would always be with us (John 20:19).

REFLECTION: Before leaving this Christmas story we must take time to consider the reaction of those who were included in the celebration—the angels, the shepherds, those who heard about the Baby, and Mary.

1. I can't help but have a smile on my face when I think of the angels. Imagine the excitement in heaven as they keep asking the question, "Is it time yet? Can we go tell the shepherds?"
Thousands of angels all aflutter in heaven! What a sight! So much energy! So much excitement! They've been waiting a long time to share the news that the Savior has come. It's almost how people feel when they have the perfect Christmas gift waiting to be given but it's just sitting under the Christmas tree because the right moment hasn't come!
2. And, what about those shepherds? Lord, make me like the shepherds who willingly drop everything and accept God's invitation to go to the manger and see His gift of grace for all mankind. Sometimes it seems as though the Baby gets lost and we need to rediscover Him by going back to Bethlehem and finding Him fresh and anew. But the shepherds didn't just go and check things out for themselves and then head back to the fields to once again tend their sheep. Lord, make me like the shepherds who spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child (verse 17). God's Good News isn't just for me, it's for all people (verse 14). We're told in verse 20 that the shepherds returned _____ and _____ God for all they had heard and seen. What difference will the Baby make in my life? Will I return from this visit to the manger glorifying and praising God for all that I have seen and heard? _____

3. The people whom the shepherds told had to respond. We're told in verse 18 that all who heard _____ at what the shepherds told them. Sometimes we get locked in amazement and almost live with a "that's nice" attitude. We don't commit to believing or disbelieving. We simply respond to the story with "that's nice...we'll be back again next year to hear the story and sing carols..."
4. Finally, we read these words in verse 19: Mary _____ up all these things, _____ them in her _____. These words keep us wondering what she knows that we don't. She didn't have photographs or a scrapbook to help her piece together these

last months and days. Her life the last nine months had been a flurry of activity and wonderment. Now her Baby was delivered. The Baby was a reality. The Baby needed care, love, and nurturing like any other human being yet this was not only the Son of Man but the Son of God. What did it mean that He would save His people from their sins? What would His obedience demand of Him? Of her?

APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

1. The Father gave the perfect gift, the gift of His Son. He gave His Son for each of us to receive into our lives by the action of God’s Holy Spirit or to reject by our own choice. What would it feel like to have your “perfect” gift received? _____

 2. Your gift wasn’t cheap but demanded that you sell everything in order to purchase it. The Father’s gift demanded that He give up His Child even though it ultimately meant death for Him. What value will you place on His Gift? What value does He place on you, the one to whom He gives the gift? _____

 3. As the receiver of God’s Good News we can be stuck on amazed. Write out John 3:16 and 17:

- Or, we can be like the shepherds and tell everyone what we have seen and heard. Write out Mark 16:15-16. _____

LESSON TWO

MY EYES HAVE SEEN

THE MAGI, SIMEON, AND ANNA

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INTRODUCTION

Even as a small child, people sought to kill Jesus. As you study, note the contrast between the Magi and King Herod. What made the difference between them? What did the Magi say? What were they looking for that made Herod react as he did? The Father set out to protect His Son. What steps was it necessary for Him to take?

The Magi were on a search. They hadn't travelled as far and as long as they had only to have King Herod cause them to abort the search. What was their manhunt all about? These men challenge us to consider our level of commitment to find Jesus and worship Him!

Simeon declared, "My eyes have seen..." What had he seen? What was Simeon looking for? How did he know he had found it? And Anna lived in the Temple all those years. She, too, recognized Jesus. So, the shepherds declared to the world that Jesus was born. The Magi searched, inquired, and worshipped Him while Simeon and Anna told everyone about the Child.

What am I going to tell everyone about Him who is born King of the Jews, Savior of the world, and a Light for the Gentiles? May the Lord enable you to recognize Him, worship Him, and share Him.

LESSON 2

Part 1

INTRODUCTION: Tradition has led people to believe that the Magi, or Wise Men, from the East came looking for Jesus in the Bethlehem stable on the night of His birth. Most likely, however, these astrologers came from the area of the Persian Gulf east of Palestine and their trip would have taken them several months. It could be noted that most scholars believe they arrived several months after Jesus' birth. Luke's account will fill us in on some details that happened the first weeks after Jesus' birth. We will begin by looking at Matthew's account of the coming of the Magi.

ASSIGNMENT: Read Matthew 2:1-12.

- What guided the Magi and brought them to Jerusalem?
- Why had they come to Jerusalem?
- What do we learn about King Herod?

EXERCISE:

1. What are we told in verse 1?
 - a. When did this story take place? _____
 - b. Who was the king? _____
 - c. Who came to Jerusalem from the east? _____
2. What was their inquiry when they arrived in Jerusalem? _____

3. Verse 2: They _____ His _____ when it arose and have come to _____ Him. If these astrologers traveled the desert in the dark of night with the stars brightly shining, this one particular star obviously caught their attention. It's interesting to note that they identified it as "his star." His star brought them to worship their King.
4. What was King Herod's reaction to what they said (verse 3)? _____
Note: King Herod was a Jew appointed by Rome to serve as King of Judea. He was a ruthless ruler who even murdered several members of his own household.
5. What was all of Jerusalem's reaction? _____
6. Who did King Herod call together (verse 4)? _____

The chief priests were those in charge of the temple in Jerusalem where the Jewish people worshipped. The scribes, or teachers of the law, were the Jewish scholars of the Old Testament law.

7. What did King Herod ask them (verse 4)? _____
How did they know that (verse 6)? _____
Using your cross-reference where was it written? _____
8. Now Herod is alone with the Magi. What does he ask them (verse 5-6)? _____

9. Then he sends them on their way to Bethlehem (verse 8). What did he ask them to do?

REFLECTION: Before we continue with the story let's take a moment for a brief time of reflection.

The Magi were first curious to discover the Child born King of the Jews because they saw His star in the east. Then they arrive in Jerusalem and their question is, "Where is the one who has been born King of the Jews?" Where is He? Where can we find Him? We want to see Him. We want to worship Him.

That's why we've come. That's why we've been on this journey all these many weeks. They were on a hunt to find Jesus and they weren't leaving town until they found Him and worshipped Him.

Have I searched for the Christ Child as diligently as the Magi? Has my curiosity turned to determination? They knew where he was because the prophets wrote about Him and His birth. Do I know where to find Him? Have I diligently searched for Him? Where am I looking expecting to find Him? He is revealed in His Word. Do I expect to find Him or am I searching in all sorts of strange places just hoping to find Him?

The Magi wanted to find Him in order that they might worship Him. What will we do when we find Him? Will we worship Him as our Savior and King? Will we recognize Him as the promised Messiah, the Anointed One? As God reveals His Word of Truth for us will we accept the hope, mercy, and life everlasting he offers and humbly bow before Him and worship Him?

What are some thoughts of your heart as you consider the seeking and searching Magi of the East who came to worship Him? _____

Part 2

INTRODUCTION: It doesn't take much to see the murderous plot King Herod is beginning to execute. He knows about this Baby born King of the Jews. He knows His whereabouts and sends the Magi off to Bethlehem. He makes them his own secret search party and has asked them to find the Child and when they have found Him to report back to him. He disguises his evil scheme by telling the Magi that he, too, wants to worship the Baby.

EXERCISE:

1. After the Magi met with King Herod, they naively proceeded on their way. What are we told about the star (verse 9)? _____

2. The star brought them to the place where the Child was! What was their reaction to the star?

3. Finally, they arrived at the house. When they saw Jesus with His mother Mary what did they do (verse 11)? _____
4. What did they do next? _____
5. What were their treasured gifts?
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
6. Their journey was complete. They had found the Child and worshipped Him. Now they are ready to return home. What are we told in verse 12? _____

Needless to say, Herod is going to be upset. He has been found out. His plot has been revealed. Someone knows! God the Father was not about to let His Son be carelessly slaughtered by this wicked and murderous king.

ASSIGNMENT: Read Matthew 2:13-23.

- Meanwhile, what is happening in Joseph's life?
- What is God's plan for this family?
- What did Herod do when he realized that the Magi were not returning?
- What was God's instruction again to Joseph?

EXERCISE:

1. The Magi left. An angel appears to Joseph in a dream. What was the command (verse 13)?

2. Joseph acted in obedience. How do we know he acted with a sense of urgency in verse 14?

3. How long did they stay in Egypt (verse 15)? _____

4. The prophecy was fulfilled. “_____ of _____ I _____ My _____.”

Using your cross-reference where was this prophecy recorded? _____

Note: As God’s chosen people of long ago had been brought out of Egypt, now He was delivering, or bringing out, His one and only Son, Jesus Christ, from Egypt as well.

5. Another prophecy is about to be fulfilled. What does Herod realize (verse 16)? _____

6. In his fury what does he order? _____

The number of children brutally murdered can only be estimated but there was no comfort for the grieving families in and around the small village of Bethlehem.

7. This is the last we hear of Herod the Great. The next thing we read is that he has died. Again, an angel of the Lord came to Joseph in a dream. What were his instructions this time (verses 19-20)? _____

8. Joseph responded obediently and returned to the land of Israel but what change was made in his plans? _____

9. He, too, was warned not to go back to Bethlehem in Judea. Where did he settle with his family?

10. On a map depicting Jesus’ ministry locate the following:

- a. The city of Jerusalem in the region of Judea,
- b. The village of Bethlehem nearby, and
- c. The town of Nazareth to the north, just west of the Sea of Galilee.

REFLECTION: The Magi came to worship Jesus. King Herod set out to kill Him. And Joseph was determined to protect Him. Joseph’s sensitivity to God’s direction enabled the Baby to rest securely in the arms of His mother. The Magi recognized His star to be different and set out on the long journey following it to Bethlehem. King Herod recognized that this Child born king of the Jews was a threat to

his power and position and set out on a mission to have Him killed. Joseph recognized his responsibility to be obedient to the will of the Baby's Heavenly Father and left for Egypt during the night with his family and didn't settle down until they finally came to the obscure little town of Nazareth.

1. All three individuals were on a mission. With which one do you find yourself identifying? Could it be the Magi who honored Baby Jesus with their gifts, their reverence, their worship and praise? Maybe you already know the Baby. Your thoughts: _____

2. Could it be Herod? Of course, you aren't going to go out and attempt to kill Baby Jesus but do you see Him as a threat to your position, your power, your lifestyle, and ambition? You may choose to ignore Him and thus attempt to starve the Baby who just wants to love you and be loved by you. Your thoughts: _____

3. Could you find yourself identifying with Joseph who acted obediently, avoiding all the threatening evil that sought to destroy Baby Jesus? Joseph guarded over the things of God. You may be one who is diligently guarding your mind and your heart, acting obediently to His Will.

With whomever you might identify, remember the words of the angel, "I bring you Good News of great joy that will be for all the people. For unto you is born...a Savior, who is Christ the Lord!"

Part 3

INTRODUCTION: Following the Christmas story Luke continues his writings with two stories of Jesus in the Temple. The first story takes place when He is about six weeks old and the other when He is 12 years old. These are the only accounts we have of Jesus growing up.

ASSIGNMENT: Read Luke 2:21-24.

- What happened to Jewish baby boys on the eighth day?
- Why did Mary and Joseph come to the Temple?
- What did the presentation mean to the people of Israel?

EXERCISE:

1. How old was Jesus (verse 21)? _____
2. What two things happened on this particular day in the life of a Jewish boy?
 - a. _____

b. _____

Note: Circumcision referred back to the time of Abram (Genesis 17) when God chose to covenant with the house of Abram. Circumcision was the sign of the covenant. He would be their God and the God of their descendants and they would be His people. It was also at the time when both Abram and Sarai were given new names, Abraham and Sarah.

3. On the eighth day Jesus was officially named (Luke 2:21). When had He been given His name? See Luke 1:31. _____
4. In Leviticus 12 we are told the Law of Moses regarding purification. Now 40 days after Jesus' birth Mary's days of purification are over and we find her with Joseph in the Temple (Luke 2:22). Mary's purification allowed her to come to the Temple. Why did she and Joseph come (verses 22-23)? _____
5. This was commanded by God in Exodus 13:2 when He said, "Consecrate to Me every firstborn male." Every firstborn offspring of Israel whether man or animal belonged to the Lord. What did this imply for Baby Jesus? _____
Jesus belonged to the Lord. He came as a human being not to serve His own purposes but His Father's will. This is what it meant that Jesus as the firstborn was consecrated to the Lord.
6. A sacrifice was also made. According to Leviticus 12:6-8 what were the requirements for the sacrifice? _____
7. In Luke 2:24 what are we told that Mary and Joseph brought for a sacrifice? _____

Note: There are a couple of things that can be said regarding their sacrifice: 1) They could not afford a year old lamb so they brought the two pigeons or doves. 2) They brought the Lamb, but didn't know it at this time, and the pigeons. Jesus is referred to in John 1:36. When John the Baptist sees Jesus passing by, how does he refer to Him? _____

Mary and Joseph completed all that was set forth in the Law of Moses regarding circumcision, naming the Child, and the rite of purification.

TEACHING: Jesus was circumcised and consecrated thus fulfilling the law that God gave to His people when He made His covenant with Abraham (Genesis 17). It is important for us to understand that neither of these acts was brought about by the will or decision of the child. Rather, parents were obedient to what God commanded for His people through which He brought them into a relationship with Him.

Israel lived under the covenant. In obedience to the covenant that God initiated and wanted for the child, the child was named. The name was given by the father. Officially, the child then belonged to the family and to the household of God's people. The child lived as a member of God's family free and forgiven.

One can't help but ask the question: Where do I connect up with living as a child of the Heavenly Father free and forgiven? Deuteronomy 30:6 tells us that God will _____ your _____ and the _____ of your _____, so that you will _____ the Lord your _____ with all your _____ and with all your _____, that you may _____.

In the New Testament we learn that God replaces the act of circumcision with baptism, the sign of His new covenant. In baptism we become part of God's family free and forgiven. The water and the Word used in baptism announce to us that in the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit our sins are forgiven. Because of Jesus we come under a new authority for our lives! Baptism has little to do with us and everything to do with God. It's God acting in our lives. It's God forgiving our sins. It's God making us His children. It's God claiming us to be His own. It's God giving us His Holy Spirit so that our lives are made new, reflecting His face to the world around us.

MEMORIZATION: Colossians 2:11-12 connect circumcision and baptism. The sinful nature has been put off. In Christ our *hearts* have been circumcised. In baptism we have been buried with Him and made alive again with Christ through faith in God's power, the same power that raised Jesus from the dead.

These verses say, "In _____ also you (put in your name) were _____ ...having been _____ with Him in baptism, in which you were also _____ with Him through _____ in the powerful _____ of _____, who _____ Him from the _____."

Once you have written this verse on an index card and memorized it, ask the Lord to give you faith to believe that He wants you to be His Child. If you have not been baptized and believe that God is encouraging you and calling you in faith to believe His Word, ask a godly church leader or a Christian friend to bring you to the waters of baptism and embrace His Words of ownership on your life as you hear the words, "I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit!"

PRAYER: O Lord, You claimed Your people to be Your own. You covenanted with them. You promised to be their God and promised that they would be Your people. Everything rested on You and Your committed promise to them. I come before You realizing that You did everything for Your people and You are the one who does everything for me. You make Your claim on me. You put me under new ownership as I live by faith in You. You reassure me that my sins are forgiven. I am free to live life under Your grace and favor. You know my sinful ways yet having been buried with Christ and raised to a new life with Him I know that my sins are forgiven. For this I can only give to You my thanks and praise. _____

Part 4

INTRODUCTION: As we move on in our study two significant individuals are mentioned in the next verses of Luke 2. Both are older in years and both testify that Jesus is the Messiah, the Promised One. These two individuals bridge the Old Testament promise with the New Testament fulfillment of those promises.

ASSIGNMENT: Read Luke 2:25-35.

- Who in the new character mentioned in these verses?
- What did he say about the Child?
- What were his words to Mary?

EXERCISE:

1. What do we learn about Simeon in verse 25?
 - a. _____ and _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
2. What had God's Spirit revealed to him (verse 26)? _____

3. Moved by the _____, where did he go (verse 27)? _____
4. Who else happened to be there that particular day? _____
5. Why are we told they were there (verse 27)? _____
6. Simeon recognized the child Jesus. We are told that he took Him in his arms and praised God (verse 28). How did Simeon know that this was Jesus, the salvation of Israel? We really don't know except that God's Spirit revealed Jesus to him. What does Simeon say in verse 29?

7. Yes, the Lord had kept His promise to him and now he would be able to die in peace. Why (verse 30-32)? "For my _____ have _____ Your _____, that _____ have _____ in the _____ of all _____, a _____ for _____ to the _____ and for _____ to Your _____."
8. What was Mary and Joseph's reaction to what Simeon said about Jesus (verse 33)? _____

-
9. Then Simeon departs by giving them a blessing. What are his final words to Mary (verses 34-35)? “This Child _____

_____ your own soul also.”

TEACHING: What was going on in the minds of Mary and Joseph as they encountered this man whom, most likely, they had never seen before? Simeon recognizes Jesus for who He is, the salvation for all people and then, he makes a profound statement. He says that Jesus, the Messiah, is for both the Gentiles and the Jews. The Israelites believed that the Messiah would come as their Savior. Let’s take time to use a couple of the cross-references for more insights.

1. Most likely, a cross-reference follows the word Israel in verse 32. What does the prophet Isaiah say regarding the Gentiles in Isaiah 42:6b-7? “...and a _____ for the

_____ ,

a. To _____

b. To _____

2. Again, Isaiah’s words in Isaiah 49:6 were inclusive of both Jew and Gentile. What does the prophet say? “... I will also make you a _____ for the

_____, that my _____ may reach to the ends of the earth (Isaiah 49:6).

3. In the New Testament reference Acts 13:47-48 we see the fulfillment of Simeon’s prophetic words spoken in the Temple to Mary and Joseph. What is the response of the Gentiles to these words? _____

4. Simeon also said some things that were not as easy for Mary and Joseph to hear. He said that everyone would have to come to grips with who Jesus was. Jesus would say that

a. He and the Father were _____ (John 10:30).

b. He would _____ (Matthew 10:34-39).

c. He would be _____ (Matthew 26:59).

d. He was _____ (Matthew 26:63-64)

e. He would be _____ (John 10:33).

- f. He would be a stumbling block causing many to fall but He would also be the One who would raise up those who were (spiritually) dead offering life and salvation (Ephesians 2:1).
5. Finally, what does Simeon tell Mary at the end of Luke 2:35? _____

One can't help but wonder what this mother thought would happen to her and her Son. As we reflect back on Luke 2:19 we can ask if this was another one of those things that Mary pondered in her heart.

APPLICATION:

1. What Simeon said about Jesus was true. Who do I believe this Child is? Do I agree with Simeon and the prophets who said that He was God's Salvation for all people? Do I believe Him to be the Savior of both the Jews and the non-Jews? And, most critically do I believe Him to be *my* Savior? If someone asked me what the Child Jesus means to me, what would I say? _____

2. Simeon saw Him and recognized Him because it had been revealed to him by the Holy Spirit. What is the Spirit revealing to you as He moves you to look closely at the Child? _____

Part 5

ASSIGNMENT: Read Luke 2:36-40.

- Who is the new character?
- What do we learn about her?
- What was her reaction to meeting Jesus?

EXERCISE:

1. Luke identifies exactly who this woman is. Her name is _____. Her father's name is _____ and she comes from the tribe of _____ (verse 36).
2. Luke also tells us some other things about her.
 - a. What did she do (verse 36)? _____
 - b. She was an old woman who had been married _____ years.
 - c. She was widowed and now was approximately _____ years old.

- d. Apparently she never left the temple (verse 37).
 - i. She _____ night and day.
 - ii. She also _____ and _____.
- 3. Anna, this prophetess who lived in the temple and spent her life in worship, fasting and prayer also came up to Mary, Joseph, and the Baby (verse 38). “Coming up to them at that very moment...” sounds as though she, too, like Simeon, was led by the Spirit to be present and recognized this Child. What did she do when she saw Him?
 - a. _____
 - b. _____

TEACHING: Anna, too, had been longing for, waiting for, anticipating, and expecting the redemption of Jerusalem. The intertestamental period, the years between Israel’s return from exile with Nehemiah and the time when Jesus was born, was an agonizing time for Israel. They were under the oppressive and dominating rule of Rome. They were burdened with taxation. They were a suppressed people. Much like their ancestors who were once in Egyptian bondage, now the Israelites were under a different authority, the authority of Rome, and prayed to be delivered. Anna recognized and acknowledged this immediate need for Jerusalem’s redemption. What is interesting is that she recognized Israel’s deliverer to be this Baby.

At the same time Jerusalem needed redemption, the people of Israel we’re watching and waiting for the Messiah, the Anointed One who would come as a King and militantly release them from their oppressors. Undoubtedly, Anna was also waiting for the Messiah but she recognized the Messiah, the Anointed One, to be the Savior. Mary and Joseph have brought Jesus to the temple. He has been given the name Jesus (Luke 2:21), because Joseph was instructed by the angel (Matthew 1:21) that He would save His people from their sins. As a prophetess Anna recognized who Jesus was and gave thanks to God (verse 38). What she does next is truly amazing. We are told that she spoke about the Child to all... Anna saw in the Child God’s gift to the world, the Child who had come to deliver all humankind from spiritual bondage, hopelessness and despair and would grant to all the peace and hope their hearts longed for.

REFLECTION: Imagine Mary and Joseph. What must they have been thinking now? People they had never met recognized the Baby. Simeon and Anna knew who He was and they were affirming what the angel had told these new parents. They must have marveled at how these people knew Him. But, the Father wanted everyone to know Him. So, we are told that Anna spoke about the Child to all. If the Father wants everyone to know, Anna wanted to help Him get the word out! As we reflect on her reaction to seeing Jesus it causes us to reflect on our own reaction when we recognize Him.

APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

1. How am I reacting to the fact that I have seen Jesus wrapped in swaddling clothes and lying in a manger? _____

2. How am I reacting now that I have seen Jesus whom the Father has given for the salvation of all people, including mine? _____

3. If I'm going to react to the Baby as Anna did, who are those to whom I am going to speak about the Child? What am I going to tell them about Him? _____

EXERCISE:

1. Joseph and Mary had completed the requirements of the Law of the Lord (verse 39). They returned to _____ and their own town of _____.
2. What are we told about Jesus in verse 40?
 - a. The Child _____ and _____
 - b. He was _____
 - c. And the _____

REFLECTION:

1. We learn that Jesus grew as a man. Physically He was strong.
2. We also learn that He was filled with wisdom. He grew intellectually. He revered His Father in heaven and respected His human parents. He increased in understanding, insights, and knowledge. Proverbs 1:7 says, "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge but fools despise wisdom and discipline."
3. And, we learn that the grace of God was on Him. His spirit became strong. He grew in His relationship with His Heavenly Father.
4. Jesus did not grow up to be a wimp, weak and feeble. Instead Scripture uses words like strong and filled. God's grace and favor were on Him. He nurtured His body, mind, and spirit.

APPLICATION: What might be one thing that I do to nurture my body, mind, and spirit in order that I, too, might grow strong in character and filled with the grace and love of God the Father?

1. Body: _____
2. Mind: _____
3. Spirit: _____

Parents want the best for their children and grandparents for their grandchildren. What might be a way to nurture these three areas of the children's lives you influence?

1. Body: _____
2. Mind: _____
3. Spirit: _____

Aunts, uncles, and friends also have influence on the lives of children. What might be a way to influence and nurture them, encouraging them to grow strong as children of God?

1. Body: _____
2. Mind: _____
3. Spirit: _____

PRAYER: Lift up to the Lord some area of concern that you have for your life that you would like Him to strengthen and fill in order that you might reflect to those around you that God's grace is on you.

Lift up the life of a child you know that they might also manifest God's grace in his/her life as they grow strong in body, soul, and spirit. _____

LESSON THREE

COME FOLLOW ME

JESUS AND HIS DISCIPLES

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INTRODUCTION

In Lesson 3 we observe Jesus as a man. His ministry has begun. He has begun making a name for Himself throughout the region of Galilee. The time has come for Him to identify men whom He can disciple, teaching them how to grow His kingdom by fishing for people.

If you were going to begin to attempt to find local workers to train to take over your business when you were gone, who would you select? What would you be looking for? Would you choose men and women? What would be the characteristic of this group of individuals? Where would you find them? Why would you choose those you did? Find out who these twelve men are that Jesus selected as His disciples. Do you think you would agree with His choices?

After Jesus called His disciples to come and follow Him, what would He need to teach them? What would they need to know? What could He promise them? How would He teach them?

He has called us to follow Him. Have you ever been required to leave everything? Have you committed yourself to something or someone only to discover that the commitment required more than you anticipated? Discover what being a disciple may demand. Watch Jesus at work teaching you and me how to fish! Enjoy your lesson!

LESSON 3

Part 1

INTRODUCTION: The last childhood story of Jesus that Scripture records is told at the end of Luke 2. We can ask why more stories weren't told of His years as He grew up and became a man. Wouldn't it be interesting to see how the perfect teenager lived! What choices did He make? Who were those who influenced His life? Did He always obey His parents or did He rebel at times against those in authority over Him? All we know about Jesus from verse 40 is that He _____ and became _____; He was _____ with _____, and the _____ of _____ was upon Him.

ASSIGNMENT: Read Luke 2:41-52.

- Why did His family go to Jerusalem?
- What happened while they were there?
- How does the story challenge you?

EXERCISE:

1. According to verse 41 where did Jesus' parents go each year? _____
What was the occasion? _____
Note: The law commanded that each year adult men were to attend three festivals—the festival of Pentecost, Passover, and Tabernacles. Quite possibly, this was Jesus' first year to accompany His parents.
2. How old was Jesus when this story took place (verse 42)? _____
3. What happened when the feast was over (verse 43)? _____

4. So, Mary and Joseph headed back to Nazareth. Where did they think Jesus was (verse 44a)? _____

5. How far had they traveled not knowing where He was? _____
6. Where did they look for Him (verse 44b)? _____
7. What did they do when they didn't find Him (verse 45)? _____

8. How long did it take them to find Him (verse 46)? _____
9. Where did they find Him? _____

10. Who was with Him? _____
11. What was He doing? _____
12. What was the reaction of those who heard Him (verse 47)? _____

13. What was Mary and Joseph's reaction when they found Him (verse 48a)? _____

14. What were His mother's comments (verse 48b)?
 - a. Question: _____
 - b. Fact: _____
15. What was Jesus' response (verse 49)?
 - a. Question: _____
 - b. Question: _____
16. Then, what does Luke say in verse 50? _____

17. Jesus returned to Nazareth with Mary and Joseph. What specifically was said about Him as a teenager (verse 51)? _____
18. Once again Luke gives us a window into Mary's heart and mind. What are we told? _____

19. And, what more are we told about Jesus (verse 52)?
 - a. He increased in _____ and in _____
 - b. He increased in _____ with _____ and _____

Part 2

REFLECTION:

1. Journal some of your thoughts about this story. _____

2. What would have been your reaction to Jesus' disappearance? _____

3. How do you think you would have handled it? _____

4. What do you think you would have responded to Jesus' words:
 - a. Why were you searching for Me?
Your response: _____
 - b. Didn't you know I had to be in My Father's house?

Your response: _____

5. Jesus asks: Why were you searching for me? Doesn't He seem rather surprised that Mary and Joseph didn't know where they would find Him? What does Jesus seem to have grasped already as a preteen? _____

6. Everyone was amazed at His understanding and His answers (verse 47). Jesus was found sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. Wouldn't you have loved to have been there with them? Don't you wonder what the topic of discussion was?
7. We are told that Jesus had such understanding. Imagine this 12 year old sitting among the theologians, doctors and professors, listening and asking them questions. Obviously, Mary and Joseph had taught Him the Scriptures. He knew the Law. He knew the Jewish traditions and customs. Jesus was at home in His Father's house!
8. In verse 50 we are told that His parents did not understand what Jesus was saying to them when He said, "Didn't you know I had to be in My Father's house." Undoubtedly, his parents were relieved that He had been found. But what did He mean that He had to be in His Father's house? Without question Jesus' growth and maturity had reached a new level but you'd think that Mary and Joseph would have understood. At the age of twelve Jesus might have had a major growth spurt. At 12 years of age He took ownership of His spiritual growth. He chose to be fed at the temple. He chose to grow in His understanding of Scripture by means of the questions and discussions in which He placed Himself.

APPLICATION QUESTIONS: What degree of responsibility am I taking for my spiritual growth and well-being?

1. What effort am I making to be in regular Bible study in order that I might grow in knowledge of my Heavenly Father and mature in my personal relationship with Him and His Son?

2. What effort am I making to regularly participate with others in worship and thanksgiving to our Heavenly Father? _____

3. Who are those helping me to grow in my personal relationship with my heavenly Father and His only Son Jesus Christ? _____

MEMORIZATION: We are told that Jesus grew in favor with God and men. Proverbs 3:1-4 guides us in order that we, too, may grow in favor with God and men. Solomon says these words to his son:

1. Do not forget my _____ but let your _____ keep my _____.
2. These teachings will give you _____ and _____.
3. Let not steadfast _____ and _____ forsake you; _____ them around your _____; _____ them on the _____ of your _____.
4. So you will find _____ and good _____ in the sight of _____ and _____.

Enjoy keeping these words in your heart that you might win favor and a good name. On your index card note some of the godly blessings of a good reputation.

PRAYER: O Jesus, You knew that You needed to be about Your Father's business. You heeded the Word that gave You wisdom and maturity. Grant that I learn and never forget the teachings in Your Word. Develop in me the godly qualities of love and faithfulness so that others will recognize You living in me and give You praise. _____

Part 3

TEACHING: The Bible contains many stories about Jesus. We learn about places He visited, people He met, stories He told, and miracles that He performed. We learn that He preached to crowds and taught what it meant to follow Him (Matthew 5-7). He healed the sick (Matthew 8:1-8) and He blessed the little children who came to Him (Luke 18:15-17). He condemned those who considered themselves to be better than others (Matthew 23), drove out demons (Matthew 8:28-34) and even raised the dead (John 11:38-44). We also learn that He spent time alone in prayer (Mark 1:35), retreated from the crowds to spend time with His disciples (Mark 4:9-11), and revealed Himself in special ways to those closest to Him (Matthew 17:1-8).

We don't know of any health clubs that He joined or country clubs that held His membership. We don't know what His favorite foods were or what His home address was. We don't know what family chores He was responsible for or if He dated in high school. These types of questions were not important to the Gospel writers. Jesus had no paparazzi following Him around with cameras and microphones but He did

have the poor and needy as constant companions. He didn't eat in pricy restaurants with the elite but did eat in the homes of tax collectors and other sinners. He criticized the Pharisees who gave great wealth and praised the woman who gave only two small coins. He lived a life that was counter-cultural to the society of His day, always turning upside-down the arrogant and proud as He lifted up the weak and the oppressed.

It is important to note that Jesus' public ministry did not begin with the calling of the disciples. Before Jesus called His disciples (Matthew 4:18-22) we learn in Matthew 3 and 4 the stories of His baptism by John the Baptist (Matthew 3:13-17) and after forty days and nights spent in the desert He was tempted by the devil (Matthew 4:1-11). In addition, St. Luke tells us that after His encounter with Satan in the desert He returned to Galilee where He taught in the synagogues. At the synagogue in Nazareth He declared Himself to be the One who was anointed to preach good news, release the oppressed, and to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor (Luke 4:14-19; Isaiah 61:1-2). Then we come to the narratives of Jesus calling His disciples who would eventually form the leadership for the Christian Church.

INTRODUCTION: His companions were an interesting bunch of characters. They came from different walks of life. Early in His ministry Jesus chose twelve men and called them His disciples. We will look at two references in Matthew and listen in as Jesus calls them.

ASSIGNMENT: Read Matthew 4:18-22.

- Who were these men?
- Where did He find them?
- Why did He want them hanging around Him?

EXERCISE:

1. Where was Jesus (verse 18)? _____
2. Who did He see? _____ and _____
3. What was the relationship between these two men? _____
4. What were they doing? _____
What was their profession? _____
5. What did Jesus say (verse 19)? _____
6. What was their response (verse 20)? _____
7. Jesus continued His walk beside the Sea of Galilee. Who did He see next (verse 21)? _____
and _____
8. What was the relationship between these two men? _____

9. What was their father's name? _____
 10. What were these men doing with their father? _____
 11. What are we told Jesus did? _____
 12. What was their response (verse 22)? _____
-

REFLECTION: Jesus was ready to begin His ministry. What thoughts come to your mind as you reflect on this story?

1. What was the first thing He did? _____
2. If you were just starting out as Jesus was, who would you want to join you? What would be some of their qualifications? _____

3. Who did Jesus choose? _____
4. What was His invitation? _____
5. What was His promise? _____
6. When the expert fishermen talks, everyone listens. The expert demonstrates technique, suggests bait to use, and directs other fishermen to good fishing holes. Those who follow him learn the better way to fish. In the end, fish are caught and brought into the boat!
7. Jesus knew the language of these four men. Peter and Andrew were *casting* their nets. James and John were *preparing* their nets. Fishermen do that.
8. Fishing was their profession. Jesus was calling them to something new and different. He was calling them to join Him in His vocation, or ministry, of fishing for people. Not only did Jesus invite them to join Him but if they followed Him He promised that they would become fishers of men. All four of these men responded immediately to Jesus' invitation. Keep in mind, a fisherman would never set out to fish unless he was convinced that he would catch something.
9. These men knew how to prepare and cast fishing nets to catch fish. Jesus was going to teach them how to prepare and cast nets that would catch people. How was He going to do that? Reflect for a moment on His invitation: Come, follow Me. His invitation was really the invitation to come into a relationship with Him. "Come, Peter, Andrew, James, and John! Come and follow Me. Let's get acquainted. Let's be friends. Let's rub together, spend time together, eat and fellowship together. As we do that, I will make you a fisher of men. As you get to know Me, spend time with Me, and actually follow Me watching what I do and say, you will become fishermen with Me. I will teach you and you will learn how it's done. You will become expert fishermen and others will want to learn from you."

10. Jesus wasn't all that popular yet. He had done a little preaching in and around Capernaum (verse 13) but certainly hadn't made a name for Himself. All we know from Matthew's Gospel is that Jesus had begun to preach. Keep in mind, news traveled by word of mouth in those days. Any form of mass media that created heroes and idols did not exist. One can't help but wonder what made Jesus attractive. Why would these fishermen immediately leave and follow Jesus?

APPLICATION:

1. If Jesus passed my way and simply invited me to come and follow Him, how would I respond?

2. If Jesus promised that if I followed Him that He would make me a fisher of people, how would I respond? _____

3. Jesus asks me to be His friend and has given me the directive to follow Him. What is my response? _____

Part 4

INTRODUCTION: This next story is told by Matthew the Gospel writer. Matthew is telling his own story when Jesus invited him to follow. The story isn't long but the story introduces new characters that will also follow Jesus throughout His ministry, forever challenging what He did and denying who He said He was. These individuals, the Pharisees, were influential men found throughout Palastine. They kept strict obedience to the Law and the interpretation of it. These men professed to be more righteous than others and they wanted Jesus to decide whether or not He was going to obey the Law. Their underlying question exposed their Pharisaic arrogance: Are you going to keep the Law and keep it as well as we do?

ASSIGNMENT: Read Matthew 9:9-13.

- Who was this tax collector?
- What was his invitation to Jesus?
- What was the situation that developed?

EXERCISE:

1. Jesus was going on His way and who does he see (verse 9)? _____

Note: This story is also recorded in Mark 2 and Luke 5. In these references, however, the name given to the man is Levi. Double names were common among the Jewish people. For example, Peter was also called Simon. Another disciple Thomas was call Didymus and Paul was first called Saul. In receiving a new name the person comes under the authority of the one who gives

the new name. Quite possibly, Levi refers to himself as Matthew after becoming a disciple of Jesus.

2. Where does Jesus find him (verse 9)? _____
3. Matthew was a tax collector. Tax collectors were considered by their fellow countrymen to be traitors because they were Jewish people who collected taxes for the Roman government. They had a reputation for cheating the people with excessive taxation. What does Jesus say to him?

4. What is Matthew's response? _____
5. Jesus invited Matthew to follow him. What apparently was Matthew's invitation to Jesus (verse 10)? _____
6. Who were all those having dinner together at Matthew's house?
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - d. _____
7. The Pharisees observed who had gathered to eat with Jesus (verse 11). What did they ask Jesus' disciples? _____
8. Who heard them ask this question (verse 12)? _____ What was His response? "Those who are _____ have no need for a _____, but those who are _____. Go and learn what it _____, 'I desire _____, not _____.' For I came not to _____ the _____, but _____."

REFLECTION: This story has several interesting relational dynamics going on:

- Between Jesus and Matthew
 - Between Matthew and his friends
 - Between the Pharisees and the disciples
 - Between the Pharisees and Jesus
1. First, let's look at the relationship between Jesus and Matthew. Here comes Jesus, the Son of God, holy and pure walking along and sees Matthew the tax collector, the scoundrel, the scourge of society, one of Israel's despised and rejected. Jesus approaches Matthew. The Holy One approaches the sinner. He not only approaches him but Jesus invites Matthew to come into a relationship with Him. This isn't just a casual friendship that Jesus has in mind but He invites him to be a follower, a disciple, one of His chosen, committed ones. Why of all people would

Jesus choose him? Don't you think Matthew often asked himself that question: Why me? I was living a life as such a cheater. I was doing no good for anyone but myself. I took advantage of others for my own selfish reasons and Jesus invited me to follow Him.

Question: What do we learn about Jesus? _____

2. Now Matthew has been invited to follow Jesus and what is the next thing we see him doing? He invites Jesus and his disciples to dinner. Not only does he invite them but his friends come and eat with them, too. And just who are these friends? Does this seem strange that his friends are tax collectors and "sinners"? Wouldn't you think that one who had encountered Jesus would change friends and straighten up his life? Not Matthew! His world no longer revolved around him but he had a new focus and that focus was Jesus. Matthew wanted his friends, the tax collectors and "sinners" to meet his Friend. He wanted them to meet Jesus, the one who didn't reject him but the one who called him into a relationship. Undoubtedly, the other tax collectors also lived lives of rejection and loneliness. Undoubtedly, the "sinners" were considered to be outcasts and loathed by society's elite, certainly not model citizens. Immediately, Matthew recognized God's grace in his life and wanted that same life of grace for those within his circle of friends.

Question: What do we learn about the effect Jesus had on Matthew's life? _____

3. And who do the pious Pharisees decide to pick on? They just can't seem to handle the fact that Jesus would eat and socialize with tax collectors and "sinners." So what do they ask the disciples? "_____?"
- The word "why" is a dangerous word. This little word can cause the other person to become defensive. Why questions our words and actions. Why causes us to justify ourselves. Why says that we had better answer the question correctly or there's a price to pay. The word why is an attack word. "Why does your teacher..." The Pharisees kept the Law impeccably and considered themselves better than everyone else. If the disciples had been Pharisees they wouldn't be eating with these folks. The accusations of the Pharisees were against Jesus. He was not keeping Himself separated from those who so grossly abused and neglected the Law. How did the disciples respond to their complaints? Did they?

Question: What do we learn about the effect Jesus had on the Pharisees? _____

4. It's interesting to note that the disciples said nothing. They really weren't given the chance to respond. Jesus heard the question that the Pharisees had asked them and He said, "It is not the

healthy that need a doctor, but the sick.” What was Jesus saying? Who was the doctor? Who were the sick? Who recognized that Jesus, the Doctor, offered to them help for their sinful condition? Undoubtedly, the Pharisees would have agreed that the tax collectors and sinners needed help and healing. But they also would have agreed that until they were well they were to be avoided. Jesus sent off the Pharisees telling them to come to grips with *mercy* that God graciously offers and *sacrifice* that the Pharisees offered in keeping with the Law. His final blow to the Pharisees is His declaration of why He has come into the world: I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners. And, who thought themselves to be righteous? Who did Jesus consider to be the sinners?

Question: Jesus was the Advocate for Matthew, the tax collectors, the sinners, and the disciples. What was His defense? _____

Part 5

INTRODUCTION: Our work on the story of Matthew isn’t quite finished. We know the *facts* of the story and we have reflected on the *teachings* of the story but we have yet to make *application* of this story to our lives. What do we learn from both Matthew and Jesus that make their relationship so many years ago have significance in our lives today?

MEMORIZATION REVIEW: Rather than learn a new passage to memorize for this lesson take time to pull out the index cards on which you have recorded the different verses you’ve put to memory throughout this Bible study series. Look for recent passages that help to give us an understanding of why Jesus, the Son of God, became man and chose to live among us. In the story of Matthew we are told that He shared the company of tax collectors and sinners. Review Matthew 1:21 and Luke 19:10. If you do not have these verses on index cards, be sure to write them down and add them to your memory library. Then consider this question: According to these verses why did Jesus come? _____

APPLICATION:

1. Why do you think Matthew wanted to include his story (9:9-13) in his Gospel? _____
-

2. Stories are important because they give a reference point for us and for those who listen to our stories. You have a story to tell. You have special memories of times in your life that hold particular significance for you. Recall such a time: _____

 What is one thing that made it memorable for you? _____

3. Have you had a memorable time with Jesus? Where are you right now in your spiritual journey? Who are some people and what are some circumstances that have brought you to where you are now? _____

4. Maybe you are like Matthew and some of his friends who are meeting Jesus for the first time. What are some of your thoughts about this man who calls Himself the Son of God? Are you getting acquainted? Why do you think Matthew was so excited about telling his story and introducing you to Jesus? What does he know that he also wants you to know? _____

TEACHING: We have read about five men whom Jesus called and invited to follow Him—Andrew and Peter, James and John, and now Matthew. In Matthew 10:2-4 we learn the names of the twelve who were called apostles.

1. What are their names?

2. Already in this listing of the apostles we learn a few things about these men. In addition to their names, what others things are we told? _____

3. Nowhere are we told that these men were exceptional. Take a moment and look ahead to Acts 4:13. What three observations did others make about these men?
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____

EXERCISE:

1. We are told that following Jesus entails a much greater commitment than what might appear at first glance. What are we told following Jesus demands in Luke 9:23? Write out verse 23:

2. Jesus now mentions something about taking up one's cross and following Him. Cross? No one ever mentioned a *cross* before. Now He's talking about *my* cross. What is the cross that I must take up according to this verse? _____

3. Jesus is talking about self-denial as one's cross. Denying oneself means putting God before me. We are all guilty of wanting "me first" in life. So, what does life look like when we deny ourselves, take up our crosses, and follow Him? We know from Philippians 2 that Jesus denied Himself. Verses 7- 8 tell us that He _____ Himself _____, taking the form of a _____, being born in the likeness of _____. And being found in _____ form, He _____ Himself by becoming _____ to the point of _____, even death on a _____!

APPLICATION: Denying oneself invites the Lord to have His rule and reign in our lives. He is the one to whom we submit our will. No longer do we insist on our own way and pout when we don't get it. No longer do we live for ourselves guarding our time, our space, our treasures and everything else that we have but rather we acknowledge that our time, our homes, our joys, our finances are all the things that He gives for us to use for living righteously before Him as we serve our family, friends, and those in need.

Denying oneself also acknowledges that we are unable to submit our will to Him because everything in us wants to hold fast to "me first." Only by the power of Jesus whom we follow and His cross are we able to "deny ourselves, take up our cross daily, and follow Him."

1. In what area(s) of my life am I apt to display a "me first" attitude? _____
2. What do I say and do that reveal my "me first" attitude? _____

PRAYER: Write out your prayer asking the Lord to empower you to deny yourself, take up your cross daily, and follow Him: _____

LESSON FOUR

I AM WILLING, BE CLEAN

JESUS AND THE UNTOUCHABLES

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INTRODUCTION

What is it about Jesus that makes Him so attractive that crowds follow after Him? We are told in Isaiah that Jesus wasn't handsome and certainly was not wealthy. He held no prestigious position politically and the religious leaders harassed him for His unorthodox teachings. Watch for clues in Lesson 4 which reveal Jesus' character, His personality, and the essence of who He was.

Not only do we observe Jesus performing miracles but we observe His generosity. He received people with many different diseases and turned no one away. He received the unclean when they cried out for mercy and made their presence known with the words, "Unclean! Unclean!" We learn more about Jesus' ministry of accomplishing the will of the Father as we observe His heart eager and willing to cleanse all humankind from the stench and filth of sin as He says, "I am willing. Be clean!"

Just as the lepers were cast out of the community and required to live lives alone, so our sin has propelled us out of the loving hands of our Father. Our relationship has been forever destroyed. Then why would Jesus touch the man? Why would He empathetically seek to remove all that separated the man from others?

Listen closely and hear Jesus say to you and to me, "I am willing. Be clean!" Rejoice in His great love that cleanses us from all wrongdoing that would separate us from the love of our Heavenly Father.

LESSON 4

Part 1

INTRODUCTION: The first miracle Jesus performed was in Cana. Locate Cana in the region of Galilee. The town is situated directly west of the Sea of Galilee. The story takes place at a wedding. Only a few days earlier Jesus had called His disciples together. This was the first time He revealed His glory. Imagine what might have gone through the minds of the disciples who had just left everything to follow Him.

ASSIGNMENT: Read John 2:1-11.

1. What was the problem?
2. Who shared the problem with Jesus?
3. What did Jesus do?
4. What did Jesus reveal?

EXERCISE:

1. Normally, a wedding celebration in Palestine during Jesus' time would last about a week. The family was expected to provide ample food and drink for the occasion. This particular wedding had rather unique guest list. According to verses 1-2 who were some of the guests? _____

2. What was the problem that developed (verse 3)? _____
3. Mary wanted to save the family any embarrassment. What did she do? _____

4. What was her prayer? _____
Did she give Jesus a solution? _____
Had she ever seen Jesus perform a miracle before? _____
Why do you think she went to Jesus? _____
5. Jesus' response may seem disrespectful and yet it was culturally appropriate. What did He tell her (verse 4)? _____
6. What did Mary do (verse 5)? _____
7. What was at hand and available (verse 6)? _____
The large stone jars held water needed for ceremonial washing and with the wedding lasting several days much water was needed.

8. What was Jesus' instruction to the servants in verse 7? _____
9. The servants _____ (verse 7b) and then what did Jesus tell them to do (verse 8a)? _____
10. What was the reaction of the master of the banquet when he had tasted the wine (verses 9-10)? What did he tell the bridegroom (verse 10)? _____
11. What did Jesus manifest through this first miraculous sign (verse 11)? _____
12. What was the reaction of His disciples (verse 11b)? _____

REFLECTION:

1. If prayer is talking to God and sharing our cares and concerns, and, if the Psalm writer encourages us to cast all our cares on Him (Psalm 55:22) and to call on Him in the day of trouble (Psalm 50:15), what do we learn about prayer as we observe Mary in John 2? _____
2. If the miracles of Jesus reveal His glory and give us a glimpse of who He is, what do we learn about the power and generosity of God from Jesus' first miracle? _____

PRAYER: Jesus, Mary came and shared such a simple and even mundane concern with You but You didn't dismiss or disregard her prayer to You as she simply said, "They have no more wine." We also see that she had no need to tell You what she wanted You to do but she could simply get things ready for Your miracle of love and generosity. You not only responded to her concern but blessed everyone at the wedding by preparing and serving the best. Enable me to trust You with my concerns. Teach me to keep from telling You how to do things for You know *all* things. Above all, I thank You that I can come before You with personal cares and concerns and also come on behalf of those I love. _____

SOMETHING TO REMEMBER: After reading about Jesus' first miracle we can become taken with Him as a miracle worker and we quickly want to move on to another story of some miraculous thing He did. For this reason it is important to remember *why* Jesus came. We learned from John 3:16-17 that the Father gave His Son Jesus to give us eternal life. In verse 17 we are told that Jesus came in order that through Him the world might be saved. The miracles that Jesus performed were called signs. They fulfilled the prophecies about the Messiah (i.e. Isaiah 61:1-2). Each sign actually pointed to His greatest

sign and greatest glory, namely the cross, for this is the very reason why He came (John 12:23-37, especially verse 27).

EXERCISE:

1. What was Jesus' three-fold ministry according to Matthew 4:23?
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 2. News spread throughout the land. Describe the people who were brought to Him who were ill and had various diseases:
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - d. _____
 3. The people came and Jesus _____ them.
 4. Use your map to identify the regions and cities that are mentioned in verse 25. We are told that large crowds followed Him. Why would you suspect that large crowds followed Jesus? _____

- How is this following different than the following Jesus described in Mark 8:34-35? _____

APPLICATION QUESTION: If I was in the crowds that followed Jesus, why would I be following Him? What about Him would be so attracting? _____

Part 2

INTRODUCTION: Now let's take a look at an example of Jesus' healing ministry. Probably one of the most dreaded diseases of Jesus' time was leprosy. Leviticus 13 records specific instruction for any individual who had this communicable disease. Anyone with an infectious skin disease was brought to the priest. The Priest would examine him. If confirmed to be an infectious skin disease, the priest would declare the person unclean.

ASSIGNMENT: With this introduction in mind, read Leviticus 13:45-46.

EXERCISE: The Law of God in the Old Testament gave specific instructions for the person with an infectious skin disease. What are the instructions in Leviticus 13:45-46?

- a. _____
- b. _____
- c. _____
- d. _____
- e. _____

REFLECTION: What would it mean to a man or woman returning from a visit to the priest who has just declared him or her to be unclean?

1. This person has an infectious disease and is now required to follow the procedures of the Law recorded in Leviticus 13: _____

2. What do you think it would mean to you if the leper was you? _____

3. How might you react to the requirements of the Law if you knew that the procedure was necessary for the sake of preserving the health and well-being of the whole community and, in this particular case, the whole community of Israel? Would you respond differently? _____

PRAYER THOUGHT: Spend a quiet moment coming into the presence of the Lord. Ask Him to open your heart and mind to His teaching. Ask Him for a growing awareness of sin and its effect on you as an individual and on the community in which you live. Thank Him that this is not where the story ends.

ASSIGNMENT: Read Mark 1:40-45.

- Who are the characters in this story?
- What is the problem?
- What is the news?

EXERCISE:

1. Read the verses that precede this story (Mark 1:35-39).
 - a. Where is Jesus traveling (verse 39)? _____

- b. What is He doing (verse 39)? _____
2. Jesus is determined to travel to village synagogues and preach. He lives an intentional life of preaching the Good News. The Kingdom of God (His rule and reign in the hearts and lives of people) is at hand and the satanic reign will be destroyed. He knows who He is and what His purpose is. What does He say in verse 38 to His disciples who were looking for Him? _____

This, He tells them, is why He came. Note the cross-reference in verse 38 of Isaiah 61:1.

3. And, who came to Jesus (verse 40)? _____
4. The story has two characters, Jesus and the man with leprosy. Envision the scene. What do you imagine this man looked like? _____
5. What is he shouting (Leviticus 13:45)? _____
6. If he was to be living outside of the camp, where was Jesus that he would be able to come to Him? _____
7. What was the posture of the man (verse 40)? _____
8. His plea was for mercy, asking Jesus to do for him what he could not do for himself. What did he say to Jesus (verse 40)? _____
9. What did the man admit about his condition? _____
10. What caused him to come to Jesus? _____
11. What did he know Jesus could do for him? _____

Keep in mind that this man also knew Jesus could choose not to heal him.

Part 3

APPLICATION: In a spiritual way leprosy is a picture of our sinful condition. An honest assessment of our lives contaminated by sin forces us to face a hard reality. Apart from Jesus there is no Good News. The beginning of our healing is the recognition and acknowledgement of our condition and our longing for wholeness and healing.

1. What would it be like to be told that you had an infectious disease? _____
- _____
2. What would it be like to be castigated from society and required to live with torn clothes, matted and unkempt hair? _____
3. What would it be like to live with one's mouth covered so no spittle or sputum could spread to another human being? _____
4. What would it be like to have to warn others of your presence even before they noticed you and all the time attracting attention to yourself and your condition? _____

-
5. And, what would it be like to live alone, apart from everyone else? No hugs. No kisses. No moments of intimacy. _____
-

REFLECTION: Sin is an infectious disease that has been passed down through history from generation to generation not missing a single person. We all have the disease and the disease ends in death. Our disease separates us from our Heavenly Father who is holy and righteous. Before Him we can only cry, “Unclean! Unclean!” Our disease keeps us separated not only from Him but from one another as sin’s venom seeks to destroy all of our relationships and forces us to live life in isolation and fear as one cast out.

PRAYER THOUGHT: This man came to Jesus as an outcast, pleading for mercy, knowing that he deserved nothing and yet asking for everything. Come humbly before Jesus as he did, confessing openly and honestly your condition, knowing that you deserve nothing yet asking for His love and forgiveness. Boldly come before Him asking for everything! _____

TEACHING: The man with leprosy knows that Jesus can heal him. Imagine this man kneeling before Jesus begging to be freed from his life of filth, isolation, and ostracism. He wanted Jesus to remove all that was a curse to him, all that separated him from family and friends. But Jesus knew that the separation went beyond family and friends. It also included the separation he knew existed between him and God, for it was the priest who declared him to be unclean.

EXERCISE:

1. What is going on inside of Jesus (verse 41a)? _____
 - a. *Compassion* is an interesting word. It is a powerful word that means more than feeling sorry for someone. Compassion literally causes the person to feel ill because of the pain or trauma of someone else. This man figuratively had a hold of Jesus’ gut, his stomach. Jesus was filled with compassion for the man. When a child gets hurt by someone and the parent sees the injustice done, the parent will feel “sick to his/her stomach.” The parent experiences compassion for the child.
 - b. Jesus knew the Law. He knew the life of this man, the isolation, loneliness, the filth and stench in which he lived day in and day out. He knew the Law separated him from others. The word “unclean” warned others to stay away from him.

2. Compassion responds. Jesus, however, neither ran from the man nor sent him away. Notice what compassion caused Jesus to do (verse 41): _____
 Compassion caused Jesus to act. He reached out His hand and touched the man. Jesus did the unthinkable. He touched the untouchable. One can hardly think that Jesus was repulsed and thus gave him a very cautious touch. When do you think was the last time this man had been touched? What did Jesus' touch communicate to him? _____

3. Without thinking twice, Jesus touched the man and what did He say (verse 41b)? _____

4. The man is cured. The leprosy is gone. Jesus _____ out His _____ and _____ the man (verse 41). Can you envision the hand of Jesus reaching out and Jesus taking into Himself, or soaking up like a sponge, the disease that ravaged this man's body? How would his healing effect the future way in which the man lived?
 - a. His clothing? _____
 - b. His hair? _____
 - c. His approach to people? _____
 - d. His relationships? _____

Part 4

REFLECTION: With the words of Jesus, "Be clean," this man no longer needed to hide and shout out, "Unclean!" and then watch others scatter in fear for their lives. Now he could live within the community of family and friends. He was embraced and brought back into fellowship with others. No longer was there anything to fear, no contamination, no rejection, no judgment, and no criticism.

But, more is involved from Jesus' perspective than healing the man of his physical disease. Jesus declared the man to be clean! Just as the man was cured of leprosy he was also cured of his spiritual disease, the disease of sin. This man was forgiven! Sin no longer had power over him. He was cured from the leprosy of sin. Because of Jesus' declaration he could now live free and forgiven, loved by God the Father who created him.

1. This man came to Jesus to be healed of his leprosy (verse 40). What are your thoughts regarding his relationship with Jesus after this encounter with Him? _____

Jesus is his friend, his healer, the one who restored his value and made him worth full value again!

2. What was the man's reaction to his cleansing (verse 45a)? _____

He was freed from the oppression of sin and made free to celebrate. Now he could talk freely for he was "clean"! Jesus had not only taken sin from him but in exchange gave to him an abundant life, a life restored, redeemed, and renewed. All the man could do was to talk freely, spreading the news!

APPLICATION:

1. Do you feel like an untouchable? Are there times when you feel as though you've been so bad, made such poor choices, treated others so cruelly that you don't deserve to be loved? _____

2. Have others told you that you were impossible to love? _____
3. Could your lifestyle be destroying you and you are finding yourself crying out to Jesus? "Lord, if you are willing, You can make me clean." _____

- a. Look straight into the eyes of Jesus and see Him filled with compassion.
- b. Watch Him reaching out His hand, not to strike or slap you but to embrace you.
- c. Feel the touch of Jesus, the touch filled with love and healing.
4. What difference would the touch of Jesus make on your life? _____

PRAYER THOUGHT: Lord Jesus, my life is filled with the leprosy of sin. I find myself crying out to you, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean." I come believing that you will forgive my sin and make me whole again. Thank you, Jesus... _____

GOD'S GOOD NEWS: Jesus calls you by name and says, "I am willing, _____ (your name) _____ . Be clean!" Allow Jesus to take the burden of your sin off your back and begin experiencing a new and exciting life, walking straight and tall while telling everyone what He has done! In the light of the regulations stipulated in Leviticus 13 we can assume that the leper had a dramatic lifestyle change. As you experience Jesus' healing touch and the words, "Be clean," you and those around

you will begin to notice changes happening in your life. Who are those who will walk with you offering support and encouragement as the Lord begins making these changes?

PRAYER THOUGHT: O Lord, You have given me a new life. You have restored me and made me worth full value to You once again. Ignite my spirit enabling me to live “talking freely, spreading the news” You want all to know. They, too, have been restored and are worth full value through Jesus.

Part 5

APPLICATION: People who consider themselves untouchable are all around us. They are people who won't let others get close to them. They always seem to have their guard up, forcing others to keep their distance. But, inwardly they are crying out, "Reach out and touch me." They feel so utterly worthless. They live in the muck and mire of life and see no way out without the healing touch of others. They want so desperately to hear someone say to them that God loves them, their sins are forgiven, and their relationship with Him can be restored and made whole once again. They want to know they are valued, significant, and worth full value through Jesus.

1. Take a moment and consider the untouchables in your life. Who are those you avoid? Who are those in your community who are unofficially labeled the untouchables? _____

2. Think of someone with whom you would like to share what Jesus has done for you, how He has loved you, forgiven you through His death on the cross, and now as the Resurrected Lord offers to all life everlasting. _____
3. Talk freely, spreading the news that we all are valued and significant to God because of Jesus! What is your “news” going to be? _____

PRAYER THOUGHT: Lord, fill me with compassion for others. Open my heart and my mouth to speak freely and spread the news of Your love and compassion to others. Enable me to courageously give my life, boldly proclaiming that Jesus makes each of us worth full value to God the Father. _____

TEACHING: The Gospels relate to us many of the stories of Jesus' healing ministry. Earlier in this lesson we read about the leper who was healed. In Luke 4:38-44 Jesus came to the home of _____ . Peter's mother-in-law was sick with a _____ (verse 38). Jesus _____ the fever and it _____ her (verse 39). The people heard about this and all those who had any who were _____ with various diseases brought them to Him (verse 40). He _____ His _____ on every one of them and healed them (verse 41). In the morning the people tried to keep _____ (verse 42). What did Jesus tell them (verse 43)? _____

We learn a couple of things about Jesus' ministry. Often we think that God should indeed heal each one of us when we are ill. We pray for ourselves and others that we will all be freed from diseases of various kinds that invade the body and mind. Not all the people, however, who came to Jesus were healed. It wasn't that He didn't have the power to heal but Jesus' primary ministry was more than healing of the body and mind. He came to heal the relationship that affected the spirit of humankind. It was the relationship broken and destroyed by sin. In these verses Jesus wanted the people to know that sickness was in their present world but the Good News of the kingdom of God had eternal significance. Therefore, He tells those who resisted His departure that people in other towns also needed to hear about the kingdom of God, the Good News that God's rule and reign was for them. Sin was in this world and sickness and disease would always abound. Preaching the kingdom of God, however, was the reason He came. It was the reason He was _____. This was the will of the Father. In obedience He kept on _____ in the _____ throughout the region (verse 44).

APPLICATION:

1. Recall a time when you or someone else you knew and loved had asked to be healed but healing wasn't granted: _____
 2. What were/are some of your heart-felt reactions to these prayers that were not answered as you had asked them to be? _____
 3. What were/are some of your heart-felt reactions to God who had/has the power to heal but seems to move on rather than stay and heal? _____
 4. In the light of Luke 4:43 what insight do you have into Jesus' healing ministry? _____
-

REFLECTION: Jesus had to do what He had to do. We might even say that He had to “keep the main thing the main thing.” In those days when He walked about on the earth He was limited by time and space. If I had come to Peter’s house for healing or brought someone to Jesus to be healed, what might my reaction have been to His words, “I must preach the Good News of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent (verse 43)”? _____

Now, He is the Resurrected Lord reigning on His throne in glory with no human limitations. What might be my reaction to a fervent, yet unanswered, prayer for healing? _____

LESSON FIVE

HE HAD COMPASSION ON THEM

JESUS AND THE CROWDS

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INTRODUCTION

Would you have been one that would have travelled far and wide just to be able to be with Jesus? Would you have been one that would have listened closely to His teachings and declare Him to be one who spoke with authority? Why would you have followed Him anyway? Would it be because of His miracles? He healed the sick, fed the hungry, and raised the dead. What about Jesus would make you come out to see Him or run around the lake to catch up with Him?

The crowds followed Him and He taught them about His Kingdom that was rooted in love. Learn the words Jesus used to describe the people as He looked upon them. His heart is moved with compassion. What does Jesus' mean when He says, "Ask the Lord of the harvest to sent out workers into His harvest field? What is His challenge for me as He invites me to participate in His mission?

Could Jesus be calling me to see the crowds with love and compassion? Could Jesus be asking me to get involved with Him by teaching others about His great love for them? Does this thought get me so excited that I find myself jumping up and down waving my arms and crying out, "Here am I! Send me! Send me!"

LESSON 5

Part 1

TEACHING: Some of Jesus' miracles are told throughout the four Gospels. His compassion for people was great. Turn to Matthew 9:35-37.

1. Once again in Matthew 9:35 we are reminded of Jesus' three-fold ministry. (See also Matthew 4:23.) What did He do as He travelled through all the towns and villages?
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____

2. We are told in verse 36 that when He saw the crowds He had _____ on them because they were _____ and _____, like _____ without a _____.

Note: You will recall that *compassion* is a word that stirs the heart to action. It is the feeling of the heart when one takes into himself/herself the experience of another. It literally means *with passion*. It's feeling sick in your stomach. "When [Jesus] saw the crowd He had compassion on them..."

3. Then Jesus proceeds to give instruction to His disciples. What does He say (verse 37)?
 - a. What is plentiful? _____
 - b. What is needed? _____
 - c. What is the solution (verse 38)? _____

REFLECTION:

1. Jesus describes some of those who were following Him as "sheep without a shepherd." Jesus' teaching gave them clarity and knowledge of God's Word for He spoke with authority. His preaching gave them some Good News and hope for their lives that was different than the oppressive rule of Rome. And, as Jesus healed every kind of disease and sickness, the people viewed Him as miracle worker who relieved them of physical pain and suffering. How would you regard such popularity? _____
2. We might think such popularity would be every person's dream! How did Jesus perceive it? What did He see when He saw the crowds? _____

APPLICATION:

1. Jesus saw people who were lost and living aimlessly, wandering purposelessly through life. Do you find yourself in the crowds following Him, intrigued by what He says, fascinated by what He does, and drawn to what He offers? Your thoughts: _____

2. Have you caught His attention? _____
3. If He asked you, “Why are you following Me,” what would you say? _____

4. Maybe you aren’t one in the crowd following Him like a “sheep without a shepherd,” but maybe you are one of His disciples and He has just turned to you and said, “...ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into His harvest field.” Are you enthusiastically raising your hand and shouting, “Oh, Oh, please send me, please, send me!”? What is your response to His need for workers? _____
5. The workers are sent ones. Never is a harvest invited into the warehouse or barn. It always takes workers who are sent into the field to gather the harvest. Where have you been sent? _____

6. And, what is your response to where you have been sent to bring in a harvest? We can be sheep aimlessly wandering about or we can be workers sent with purpose and meaning. Your thoughts: _____

Part 2

INTRODUCTION: The next miracle of Jesus for our study is a story of His compassion put into action. Compassion is the essence of who He is. He needed to instill compassion in His disciples. The story of Jesus feeding the five thousand is recorded in all four of the Gospels. Each recording gives some additional information about the miracle Jesus performed that day.

ASSIGNMENT: Read Matthew 14:13-21, Mark 6:30-44, and John 6:1-15.

- What was the situation from the disciples’ point of view?
- What was the situation from Jesus’ point of view?
- What was the miracle?

BACKGROUND: In the verses leading up to this story Jesus was told some devastating news about His cousin John the Baptist. Should you choose, you can read the story of how John was killed in Matthew 14:1-12, Mark 6:14-29, and Luke 9:7-9.

EXERCISE:

1. After hearing the news about John, what did Jesus do (Matt. 14:13a)? _____

- Mk. 6:31 tells us that Jesus and His disciples had had a full day! What was Jesus' suggestion?

2. What did the crowds do when they discovered that Jesus had left (Matt. 14:13b, Mk. 6:33)?

3. Why did the crowd follow Him (John 6:2)? _____
4. What was Jesus' reaction when He saw the great crowd (Matt. 14:14, Mk. 6:34)? _____
5. What did His compassion lead Him to do? _____ and _____
6. The day was passing and evening was approaching. Dinner time! What did Jesus specifically ask Philip in Jn. 6:5-6? _____
7. According to Matt. 14:15 and Mk. 6:35-36 what did the disciples want Jesus to do? _____

8. What was Jesus' response to them (Matt. 14:16, Mk. 6:37a)? _____

REFLECTION:

1. One can't help but smile. What must have been going on in the minds of these men? "Five thousand people, at least, and He's telling us to feed them! We are in a remote place with no food. What are you thinking, Jesus? If we send them away now they will be able to provide food for themselves. Besides, we're tired. You're tired. It's been a big day. We're all tired of these crowds. We came here in the first place to get away from everything and rest awhile (Mark 6:31)." Three of the Gospel writers record the same words: "Send the crowds (people) away..."
2. This must have been a shocking moment for the disciples to hear Jesus say, "You give them something to eat." Right! Sure! Five thousand people and we're supposed to give them something to eat. Jesus must have been asking a question that He knew was already on Philip's mind: "Where shall we buy bread for these people to eat?" Philip had already figured out in his mind what it would cost: "Eight months' wages would not buy enough for each one to have a bite (Jn. 6:7)!" Besides that, "Are we going to spend that much on bread and give it to them to eat (Mk. 6:37)?" What are you thinking, Jesus?

Part 3

TEACHING: How could Jesus who was filled with compassion for these people who appeared to be like sheep without a shepherd (Mk. 6:34), send them away? How could the One who would draw all men to Himself (Jn. 12:32) push them away? How could the Good Shepherd (Jn. 10:11) send them away without provisions? How could the Bread of Life (Jn. 6:35) not feed these who are hungry?

Consider for a moment the disciples who were experiencing the responsibility of feeding all these people. The only solution from their perspective was to send the people away. These men looked to themselves and saw their own poverty. After all, how would they even feed themselves? Some of them would have to trek into Bethsaida to buy food and bring it back. Jesus wanted them to wrestle with the solution. If sending them away was not an option then what would they do? They figured it out financially and, at best, everyone would only get a bite, hardly enough to satisfy their hunger.

What was wrong with this picture? What were the disciples missing? What did they fail to see that was right before them? What could happen *together* that couldn't be done *alone*? Jesus would feed the people. He would not send them away. Even Jesus did not choose to act alone. Let's return to the story.

EXERCISE:

1. What does Jesus ask in Mark 6:38? _____
2. What did the disciples find out (verse 38b) _____
3. Andrew found the young boy with the two fish and five loaves of bread and presented them to Jesus. What was Andrew's assessment of the number of fish and loaves that were found (John 6:9)? _____
4. Jesus answered Andrew's question with a command. What did He ask for (Matthew 14:18)?

5. What was His direction to His disciples regarding the people (Mark 6:39-40)? _____

6. The people were seated on the grass. What does Jesus do next (Matthew 14:19) before distributing the food? _____
7. Jesus then broke the loaves and _____ them to the _____ who _____ them to the _____.
8. Matthew 14:20 tells us that everyone ate and was _____.
9. What was Jesus' instruction to His disciples after everyone was fed and satisfied (John 6:12)?

10. What are we told was left over (John 6:13)? _____
11. Matthew and Mark finish the story by telling how many were fed. Matthew tells us that about 5,000 men were fed besides women and children. John 6:14-15 shares the reaction of the people to this miraculous sign. What did they say? _____
12. What did the people intend to do (John 6:15)? _____
13. What did Jesus do? _____

Part 4

REFLECTION: As you reflect on what has just happened, consider what would be some of your thoughts if you were *someone in the crowd* who had followed Jesus around the lake. You aren't exactly sure why you are attracted to Him but you know that He is a healer because you have seen the sick healed of various kinds of physical and psychological illnesses. You also know that He is a teacher who speaks with authority and power. It's getting late and you're getting hungry but don't want to leave... Your thoughts: _____

Consider what might be some of your thoughts if you were *one of the disciples* concerned about the practical needs of Jesus, of the crowd, or even of your own. It's been a big day; Jesus has received the bad news of John's death. It's late and the people are going to need to eat. There's no way to feed this crowd! You are beginning to panic because of your helplessness and inability to avert the problem that is about to unfold... Your thoughts: _____

OBSERVATIONS:

1. Jesus and the disciples saw the crowds coming toward them. Jesus and the disciples each saw something different. Jesus saw people and had compassion because they were like sheep without a shepherd (Mark 6:34). The disciples saw the people and began to worry about how they would be fed. Jesus saw spiritual hunger and fed the people by teaching them many things. The disciples were practical and saw physical hunger and didn't know how to provide the food it would take to satisfy them. Your thoughts: _____
2. The disciples wanted to send the people away and Jesus directed them to gather in small groups on the grass. The disciples were preparing the people for a disaster and Jesus was preparing them

for a miraculous blessing. Your thoughts: _____

3. Jesus asked for what was available (two fish, five loaves), received them, gave thanks, and gave them to all the disciples to distribute. Your thoughts: _____

4. We witness the generosity of Jesus. Everyone ate. Everyone was satisfied and twelve baskets were gathered up. We also see the disciples gathering the baskets in order that nothing is wasted. Your thoughts: _____

Part 5

APPLICATION QUESTIONS:

1. When I consider my life my physical hunger is relatively easy to identify and satisfy. Am I willing and eager to acknowledge my spiritual hunger? Do I know how to satisfy it? Just as hunger pains make me aware of my physical hunger, so my soul cries out in pain because it, too, cannot be neglected? These pains of spiritual hunger may have been disregarded and misunderstood for so long that they are difficult to recognize. What about my life is crying out for the Bread of Life, the Word of God, for Jesus to come and satisfy? _____
2. As I look around me do I see only two fish and five loaves and ask, “but what is this among so many (John 6:9)?” Or, do I see what I have and give it to the Lord asking Him to bless it and use it wherever and whenever He chooses to accomplish His purposes? Consider for a moment your talents and abilities, your personality and character, your knowledge and your sensitivity to others. _____

MEMORIZATION: Jesus fed the 5,000 and then withdrew from the crowd because they wanted to make Him king (John 6:15). Later that night the disciples were crossing to the other side of the lake in a boat and Jesus came to them walking on the water (John 6:16-21). The next day when the people realized that Jesus and His disciples were gone they got in boats to follow Him across the lake (John 6:22-24). When the people met up with Jesus He said to them that the reason they followed Him was not because of who He was but because they had their stomachs filled. However, Jesus in John 6 refers to Himself as the Bread of Life and that people should seek Him for spiritual nurture rather than seeking after food that

spoils. He is the spiritual Bread that provides spiritual food that lasts, the Bread that endures to eternal life (John 6:27).

Once again, on an index card write John 6:27, 35 – “Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life...I am the Bread of Life. He who comes to Me will never go hungry, and he who believes in Me will never be thirsty.”

1. If you had gotten paid by the hour this past week for work done to earn “bread that endures to eternal life” would you consider yourself to have earned enough bread that endures to be satisfied or would you consider yourself to be starving because you earned little or nothing for the bread that endures? _____

2. What are a couple of changes you might make in order to carve out the time to “work for bread that endures to eternal life?” _____

PRAYER: Lord, make me like the young boy who offered what he had in spite of what seemed to be so little to feed so many. He gave what he had. You gave thanks for it and the disciples distributed it among the people and everyone was satisfied with baskets left over. Enable me to be generous with my gifts and blessings. Give me the faith to believe that all that I have when offered to You can be used by You to bless others. Open my eyes not to see the little but to envision the possible. _____

LESSON SIX

DO YOU BELIEVE THIS?

JESUS AND FAITH

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INTRODUCTION

The disciples had been with Jesus and seen His miracles. Jesus acted with compassion but Jesus has more to teach them. How would they respond to daily situations that sometimes even involved the need for the miraculous? Would these men discover that Jesus was present in circumstances and that they could call on Him for whatever might be their need?

In Lesson 6 these men find themselves in a boat with Jesus crossing the Sea of Galilee, a rather shallow lake that had the potential for severe storms. How would they respond to the fierce winds and waves of nature? How might you respond? How would they cope? A catastrophe seemed imminent.

Another catastrophe is also on the horizon. Lazarus is sick and Jesus doesn't appear responsive to the urgency of the situation. Death does come. Dark days of grief bear down on his sisters. One of the most powerful Scripture passages is said by Jesus in this story recorded in John 11. And again we ask the question: Why did Jesus come? What was His mission to accomplish? What does His mission have to do with Lazarus? What does His mission have to do with me?

And all Jesus says to me is, "Do you believe this?"

LESSON 6

Part 1

INTRODUCTION: We have seen in this study *God's Son, Our Savior* that Jesus miraculously provided for the material and physical needs of people. He provided wine for the wedding and food for the crowd. We also met the man with leprosy and saw Jesus use His miraculous healing power to restore the man to health, reinstating him into the community as Jesus removed his disgrace and loneliness of living life as an outcast. In this next story Jesus demonstrates His authority and power over nature.

ASSIGNMENT: Read Matthew 8:22-27, Mark 4:35-41 and Luke 8:22-25.

- What is the situation?
- What did the disciples conclude?
- What did Jesus do?
- What was the question that Jesus asked the disciples?

EXERCISE:

1. What did Jesus suggest to His disciples (Luke 8:22)? _____

2. They set out in their boat. As the disciples were sailing what did Jesus do (verse 23a)?

3. They were sailing and Jesus was asleep when a furious storm, or squall, suddenly came down on the lake. Describe what was happening (verse 23b)? _____

4. What was Jesus still doing? _____
5. The disciples wake Jesus. What did they say to Him (verse 24a)? _____

6. What was their fear? _____
7. What did Jesus do (verse 24b)? _____
8. The storm _____ and all was _____.
9. What question did Jesus ask His disciples (verse 25a)? _____
See also Matthew 8:26. _____

10. What did they ask one another (verse 25b)? _____
 See Matthew 8:27. _____
 See also Mark 4:41. _____
11. What did they say about Him (verse 25c)? _____

REFLECTION: So, put yourself in the boat. It becomes a different story when we envision the wind so intense that the waves are sweeping over the sides. Your boat is being swamped and your bucket is not doing the job. In fact, your bucket and your buddies' buckets are not keeping up with the water that is coming into your boat. You are in grave danger.

1. How are you doing with the fact that Jesus is sleeping in the boat? _____

2. You believe you are going to drown and you ask Him to save you. And, what does He say?

It is hard to know how to respond to Jesus' question when you're scared. When you're afraid of drowning you know that you are being overtaken by something mightier than you. To be asked, "Why are you afraid?" seems a little nonsensical, doesn't it? To be referred to as one with little faith, or to be told that you have no faith, may just rub you the wrong way. Your thoughts:

3. Let's review: Jesus is in the boat sleeping. The disciples are sailing when suddenly they are in the midst of a squall that is dumping water in their boat. Jesus keeps on sleeping. They're afraid of drowning! They wake up Jesus, cry out for Him to save them before they all drown, and He asks them, "Where is your faith?" He rebukes the wind and the waves. Everything becomes calm, as though nothing has happened. And the disciples look at one another wondering, "Who is this?" "What kind of man is this?" Even the winds and the water obey Him. Your thoughts:

Part 2

PERSONAL APPLICATION:

1. Let's consider the boat for a moment. What might be your boat in which you find yourself sailing? Your home and family life? Your job and related work? Your schedule? Your relationships? What might be your boat that is being pummeled by the storms of life? _____

2. We all have a tendency to forget who is in our boat. We tend to forget that Jesus is in our home or on our job, that Jesus knows our schedule and things that are attacking our relationships. Many times, undoubtedly, we cry out in desperation, “Lord, save us! We’re drowning!” We become vulnerable when life seems out of control and we become afraid. Jesus did answer their prayer. He did rebuke the winds and waves bringing calm to the sea. What is my reaction to life when I feel swamped and think I’m going to drown? _____

3. Jesus is calling His disciples to a different response than the response of fear when life is difficult. The only way to respond differently is to know who Jesus is. They asked the question: Who is this? What kind of man is this? In difficult times how might my life give witness to others that I know the One who creates and controls the wind and the waves, the One who offers complete calm, the One I can go to whether I am overwhelmed with life or am experiencing danger?

4. Psalm 55:22 reassures us that the Lord does care for each of us. We are reminded to “_____.”

SUPPLEMENTAL READING: Read Psalm 107:23-32. At times we may feel like the merchant in a ship on the mighty waters of the sea.

1. These verses almost sound like the story of Jesus and His disciples on the raging sea. It doesn’t take much imagination to feel as though you are on the ship with the waves lifting the boat and then dropping it to the depths. Can you envision yourself being tossed around on the deck and staggering like a drunken person at your wits end?
2. In verse 28 the men cried out to the Lord and He delivered them! What are we told in verse 29?

What was their reaction in verse 30? _____
3. What do words like still, hushed, and quiet indicate to you? What are some pictures that come to mind with these words? _____
4. The merchants knew the Lord, the One they cried to in their trouble and He brought them out of their distress. He stilled the storm and what did they do?
 - a. The merchants _____ the _____ for His _____, for His wondrous _____ to the children of man (verse 31).
 - b. The merchants _____ Him in the _____ of the people, and _____ Him in the _____ of the elders (verse 32).

5. The merchants remind us in these verses that we are to
 - a. give thanks to the Lord and
 - b. exalt and praise Him by telling everyone what He has done!
6. What are some words I might use to give thanks to the Lord for rebuking the wind and the waves that cause my boat to become overwhelmed? _____

7. What are some opportunities I can create to exalt and praise Him by “telling everyone what He has done?” _____

8. How might I encourage others and give them the opportunity to exalt and praise the Lord by telling everyone what He has done? _____

PRAYER: O Lord, I cry out to You and You hear me. You answer me in my danger and distress and You save me by quieting everything around me that would seek to destroy me. When my boat gets bombarded with anything that brings about chaos, confusion, defeat and discouragement I cry out to You and You save me. Receive my prayer of thanks and praise. May I never cease to tell everyone what You have done. May I never stop worshipping You. Open my eyes and ears to see opportunities I have to tell of Your greatness and utilize opportunities in which I might encourage others to do the same. Thank You for Your unfailing love that endures forever. _____

Part 3

INTRODUCTION: The last enemy to be destroyed is death (1 Corinthians 15:26). “Thanks be to God! He gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ (1 Corinthians 15:57).” These words were written by St. Paul and offer to all of us the hope of eternal life through Jesus. In this next story we will see Jesus at work giving victory to a man named Lazarus as he is called forth from death to life.

ASSIGNMENT: Read John 11:1-44.

- Who are the main characters?
- Who does Jesus tell Martha that He is?
- What does Jesus promise Martha?
- What did Jesus want Martha to see?

EXERCISE:

1. What is the problem (verse 1)? _____
2. What is the solution (verse 3)? _____
3. What does Jesus say about Lazarus's sickness in verse 4? _____

4. What was Jesus' relationship with Lazarus and his sisters (verse 5)? _____

5. What did Jesus do when he heard the news (verse 6)? _____
6. Jesus was ready to go back to Judea. Where had He been (John 10:40)? _____
7. What did He tell His disciples in verse 11? _____
8. What was the misunderstanding in verses 12 and 13? _____

9. Jesus told them that Lazarus was dead (verse 14). Why did He want to go to him (verse 15)?

10. What do you think Jesus meant when He said, "so that you may believe" in verse 15? _____

TEACHING: In order to keep this story in its proper perspective we need to know what had transpired in the last couple of chapters of John. In John 11:7 Jesus suggests that it's time to return to Judea. If you locate Judea on a map during the time of Jesus' life and ministry you will find the region of Judea located in the south. The region of Judea along with the regions of Samaria and Galilee further north constituted the land of Palestine.

We are told that when Jesus made claims about Himself as the Son of God the Jews who followed Him picked up stones to stone Him (John 8:59). Another time while in Jerusalem the Jews believed He was guilty of blasphemy (John 10:33) and attempted to stone Him. He escaped their grasp, however, when they tried to seize Him (John 10:39).

In John 10:40 we are told that Jesus crossed over the Jordan and returned to the place where John the Baptist had been teaching and baptizing. Identify Jerusalem in Judea and the Jordan River that flows from the Sea of Galilee in the north to the Dead Sea in the south. Jesus is now in the region east of the river, the place where many people came to Him (John 10:40-41). One other town to locate is Bethany, the hometown of Mary, Martha, and Lazarus. Bethany is only a couple of miles from Jerusalem in Judea.

The stoning incidents and finding the locations where Jesus had been traveling will give understanding to John 11:7-8. The disciples were protective of their Master. That is why they were questioning Jesus' decision to go to Judea. They were there when He was about to be stoned and probably never cared to go back. Jesus, on the other hand, is ready to go because that's where Bethany was located, the place where His friends were who needed Him. In John 11:16 we read that Thomas is the one who encouraged the rest of the disciples to go with Jesus, even if it meant death.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS:

1. What do we learn about Jesus' ministry from John 11:7-8? _____

2. If I am a follower of Jesus Christ, what do these verses teach me about going back to people and places where ministry is rough? _____

3. Am I ready and willing to die to self in order that God's Son might be glorified (John 11:4)?
Your thoughts: _____

Part 4

EXERCISE (continue with John 11:17):

1. By the time Jesus reached Bethany what had already transpired (verse 17)? _____

2. Jesus and His disciples had traveled from across the Jordan. With Jerusalem only a couple of miles away who had already come to comfort Mary and Martha (verse 19)? _____

3. When news reached Martha that Jesus was coming what did she do (verse 20)? _____

- What did Mary do? _____
4. Martha went out to meet Jesus and what did she say (verse 21)? _____

5. Martha's heart spoke first (verse 21) and then her faith spoke (verse 22). What did she say in faith? _____
6. What did Jesus say to her (verse 23)? _____

7. What did Martha know to be true (verse 24)? _____

- What did Martha believe by faith? _____
8. Jesus makes a profound *statement* in verse 25. What does He say about Himself? _____

9. What does He go on to say about those who believe in Him? _____

10. Then Jesus asks Martha a profound *question* in verse 26b. What does He ask her? _____

11. What is Martha's profound *profession* of what she believed to be true (verse 27)? _____

REFLECTION: What has just happened? A few days ago Jesus got word that His good friend Lazarus was seriously ill. Rather than rush off to Bethany, however, Jesus lingered east of the Jordan a couple more days. Knowing that Lazarus was now dead He told His disciples that Lazarus had fallen asleep and He was going to Bethany to wake him up. Of course, the disciples think that Lazarus was resting and would be well soon, but Jesus spoke plainly and said, "Lazarus is dead."

When they get to Bethany they find out that Lazarus has been in the tomb four days. Jewish friends and neighbors were gathered with Mary and Martha to comfort them but when Martha finds out that Jesus has arrived she goes out to meet Him.

1. What do you think you would say to someone who you thought was such a good friend but just now shows up--four days later?
2. What do you think you would say to someone you knew could and, in fact, had raised the dead (Luke 7:11-17)?
3. What would you want to say to the one who had told a certain royal official that his son back home in Capernaum would recover from his illness and live (John 4:43-54) but who didn't declare that your brother would be healed when the messenger you sent returned?
4. Martha's grief was carried in her heart. Her feelings and emotions were sincere expressions that revealed this intense pain. Haven't we all been there? Someone in our lives is taken from us in death and we think, "if only You, God, had been there..." If only... If only... If only... The heart is the place where we are acutely conscious of our own helplessness in situations with death.
5. Martha's heart was full of grief but Jesus wanted to lift her to a higher reality, the reality her faith knew was true. He reminded her that her brother would rise again. Her faith knew that.

- a. He wanted her to know that He is the One who is the Resurrection and the Life.
 - b. He wanted her to know that whoever believes in Him will live (resurrection), even though he (physically) dies.
 - c. He wanted her to know that whoever lives and believes in Him will never die (eternal life).
6. In faith Martha was then able to say, "I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world." Even in the hours of grief and sadness caused by tragedy and death, we, too, can give the profound proclamation, "I believe that You are the Christ, the Son of God, who was to come into the world!"

APPLICATION:

1. When have your expectations been disappointed? Has someone let you down? Has God seemed silent, even absent, during an extremely difficult time and your heart has felt as though it has cried out in the empty void? _____

2. If Jesus had just said to you, "I am the Resurrection and the Life. He who believes in Me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in Me will never die," how would you answer His question: "Do you believe this?" _____

3. Finish this sentence: I believe that You, Jesus, are... _____

Part 5

EXERCISE (continue with John 11:28):

1. Martha returned to her home and told Mary that the _____ was asking for her. What was Mary's response (verse 29)? _____
2. Where did the Jews who had been with Mary think she was going (verse 31)? _____
3. What did Mary say when she saw Jesus (verse 32)? _____

4. When Jesus saw Mary weeping He was _____ in His _____ and _____ (verse 33). What did He ask (verse 34)? _____
5. Verse 35 tells us that Jesus _____. What did Jesus' grief, His tears, communicate to some of the Jews (verse 36)? _____

6. What was the reaction of others (verse 37)? _____

REFLECTION:

1. Jesus has now arrived outside of Bethany. Martha runs to get Mary who is so caught up in grief that when she quickly leaves to meet Jesus the Jews who are with her think she has left for the tomb to mourn there (verse 31). Instead, she goes straight to Jesus. Minutes later, the words Mary spoke to Jesus are the same words that Martha said when she met up with Him. Again, the words of the heart cry out, “If only You had been here!”
2. Our hearts get caught up in grief. It’s common to all humanity and it did not escape Jesus. As a man He, too, wept (verse 35) and was deeply moved again when He came to the tomb (verse 38). The tomb was a cave with a large stone laid across the entrance. At the end of verse 38 you may have a cross-reference after the word entrance. The references listed may include Matthew 27:60, Mark 16:3, Luke 24:2, and/or John 20:1. All of these references speak of the stone placed in front of the tomb in which Jesus was placed after His dead body was removed from the cross. Was Jesus’ grief for more than His friend Lazarus? What was the big picture for Jesus? What was the hopelessness that the dead body, the tomb, and the stone represented? _____

3. Perhaps you can recall the command given in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 2:17). What did God say? _____
Romans 5:12 reminds us that _____ brought _____ into the _____.
Death will come to all for all have sinned. Romans 5:15 reminds us that God’s _____
came as the _____ gift by the _____ of that one man, _____
_____ and _____ for _____!

4. Could Jesus’ tears of grief also have been for you and me? Death was not God’s plan for us. Yet sin brought death and man’s hopeless condition of saving himself. Your thoughts: _____

EXERCISE (continue with John 11:39):

1. Jesus was ready to act. What was His command in verse 39? _____
2. But Martha has a “but” to add. What is her concern? _____

Note: Jesus was told that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days when He came to town. Jewish people believed that after three days the spirit of a person had left the body. Jesus’ delay

in coming to Bethany gave certainty to the fact that Lazarus was indeed dead and his body was beginning to decay.

3. What does Jesus remind Martha (verse 40)? _____

4. They took the stone away and Jesus then prays to His Father thanking Him for always hearing Him. Why did He say this (verse 42)? _____
5. After He prayed, Jesus called out: “ _____!”
6. The dead man obeyed and came out! Describe his appearance (verse 44). _____

7. What was Jesus’ command (verse 44b)? _____

REFLECTION: Several years ago a movie was entitled *Dead Man Walking*. This would almost describe the scene. It’s interesting to note that the verse doesn’t read that Lazarus came out but rather that the man who had died came out. He was bound with all the strips of linen that kept his body confined to his dead, rotting and decaying condition. Even a cloth was wrapped around his face.

What would it have been like to be the one to take off the grave clothes? Wouldn’t you have been a little uncertain about what you might find under the grave cloths? Or, maybe you would have been more like Mary and Martha eagerly helping to release your brother from the bondage of death to live free once again. Maybe you would have been a spectator trying to take in all that’s going on. Would you be wondering who this man is who can speak to the decaying corpse and bring life to it? Where would you be in this drama? What would you be thinking and doing? _____

APPLICATION:

1. Jesus’ prayer to His Father was that the people standing there would believe that His Father, had sent Him. What do you think? Does Jesus’ miracle of raising Lazarus from the dead cause you to believe that Jesus is the One who gives Life to our souls? God the Father sent Jesus, the one who said of Himself, “I am the Resurrection and the Life?” Again, He asks us the question: Do you believe this? Your thoughts: _____

2. Many of us live wearing the grave clothes. Jesus wanted the grave clothes removed so Lazarus could be released, set free! What are the “grave clothes” that you are wearing that remind you and others that you are not set free, not released to live. It may be memories of the past either things you have done or things that have been done to you. Maybe it’s living life scared, afraid to

step out and live free and adventurous because someone or something haunts you with words that remind you that you are wearing the grave cloths of insecurity, inferiority, or loneliness. What are the grave clothes you want removed from your life? _____

3. And, who are those who can help set you free? Lazarus' hands and feet were wrapped, his face also. He needed help coming alive. Who are those who can help you come alive? _____

4. Quite possibly some people you know are walking around wearing the grave clothes and "living" life dead. Who might be someone in particular you want Jesus to call out of their "tomb" to a life of freedom and release? _____

5. In what ways might the Lord use you to help take off their grave clothes and release them to live unbound? _____

MEMORIZATION: John 11:25 and 26 are verses that you may already know but if not, write them on an index card and add these powerful words to your memory library. Remember why John wrote this Gospel. John 20:31 reminds us that these things are written in order that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in His name. In John 11 Jesus tells us plainly that He is the Resurrection and the Life! He gave His life in order that we might have life everlasting. These words are not for us alone. We live in a world that is longing for words of hope and promise. After you become familiar with these words share them with others. Share with others when they have lost a loved one in death. Share them when a friend has lost a job or a dream has vanished or a relationship has died.

PRAYER: Lord Jesus, if You are who You say You are then I ask You to give me the faith to believe. I desire life. I want to live my life in gratitude to You for the gift of the grace of God (Romans 5:15) that comes from You. I can envision You standing outside the tomb of my life. I see You weeping because You grieve my bound up condition. I hear You calling me in a loud voice inviting me to come out and live! Jesus, I need You and the community of Your people around me to remove all that has me bound up. I cannot free myself. Thank you for hearing my prayer. _____

CONCLUSION: The apostle John wrote, "Jesus did many other miraculous signs in the presence of His disciples...But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that

believing you may have life in His name.” In this study we were introduced to Jesus, the Savior, the promised Messiah, the Christ. His names told us who He was and why He came as a man to live as a teacher, preacher, and healer and, ultimately, why He willingly suffered and died as our Savior and Redeemer. His name Immanuel declared Him to be our God who chose to live and dwell among us, His people. Individuals like the Magi, Simeon and Anna all recognized who He was and why He came. They declared Him to be the One who would in obedience to His Father redeem Israel rescuing God’s people from the power and oppression of sin.

As an adult Jesus began His ministry by calling twelve men to follow Him in order that He might teach them to become fishers of men. They accompanied Him as He taught in various places, preached in the synagogues, and healed people with every imaginable sickness and disease. They learned of His generosity when He changed the water into wine, of His compassion when He healed the man with leprosy and fed the five thousand, of His power over nature when He calmed the storm and of His authority over death when He called Lazarus forth from the grave. These and other miraculous signs He did but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the _____ (Messiah), the _____ and that believing you may have _____ in His _____.”

He asks us the same question that He directed to His disciples: “Who do you say I am (Matthew 16:15)?” He’s asking you today. What is your answer? _____

Truly, He is God’s Son and our Savior!

UNIT REVIEW

**GOD'S SON,
OUR SAVIOR**

REVIEW

Congratulations! You have completed the study *God's Son, Our Savior*. You have become acquainted with several names of Jesus and their meaning, several miracles that Jesus performed and Jesus' growing popularity among the people and His opposition from the Jews. We learned of Jesus' compassionate heart and His desire to do the will of His Father. Now, it's time to review. Remember, this is not a test, only an opportunity to affirm you and your progress as you continue this exciting journey that is shaping your life. As you study you are learning the *facts* of the stories and the *truths* about God and humankind. You are also discovering how to *apply* the facts and truths to your life lived in this 21st Century.

1. Recall the names of Jesus. Which name is especially meaningful for you? Why? _____

2. What insights did you get into the life of one who truly accepted the call to ministry? What particular word did Jesus use (Matthew 10:38) when speaking about ministry? _____

3. What were the miracles that we studied?
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - d. _____
 - e. _____
4. Identify something about Jesus you learned or remembered about Him in each of these stories that you want to integrate into your life:
 - a. _____
 - b. _____
 - c. _____
 - d. _____
 - e. _____
5. If Jesus asked you "Why are you following Me," what do you think you would say?

6. In John's Gospel John records seven "I Am" statements, statements Jesus says about Himself. Although we did not touch on all of them take time to review those that we did and enjoy learning, even memorizing the others:

- a. John 6:35 – I am _____
- b. John 8:12 – I am _____
- c. John 10:7, 8 – I am _____
- d. John 10:11 – I am _____
- e. John 11:25 – I am _____
- f. John 14:6 – I am _____
- g. John 15:5 – I am _____

FINAL COMMENTS: Having grown in your discovery of who He really is, we are now prepared to learn more about Jesus, God's Son, our Savior who was sent for our salvation. Jesus is our Hope and for this we give Him our thanks and praise.

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