



August 1

## *See It God's Way, Do It God's Way*

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I see not as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but Yahweh looks at the heart – 1 Samuel 16:7

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[Matthew 7:1-17] “Don’t judge, so that you won’t be judged. For with whatever judgment you judge, you will be judged; and with whatever measure you measure, it will be measured to you. Why do you

see the speck that is in your brother’s eye, but don’t consider the beam that is in your own eye? Or how will you tell your brother, ‘Let me remove the speck from your eye;’ and behold, the beam is in your own eye? You hypocrite! First remove the beam out of your own eye, and then you can see clearly to remove the speck out of your brother’s eye.

“Don’t give that which is holy to the dogs, neither throw your pearls before the pigs, lest perhaps they trample them under their feet, and turn and tear you to pieces.

“Ask, and it will be given you. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and it will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives. He who seeks finds. To him who knocks it will be opened. Or who is there among you, who, if his son asks him for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, who will give him a serpent? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask him! Therefore whatever you desire for men to do to you, you shall also do to them; for this is the law and the prophets.

“Enter in by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and many are those who enter in by it. How narrow is the gate, and restricted is the way that leads to life! Few are those who find it.

The multitudes were astonished at his teaching

“Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly are ravaging wolves. By their fruits you will know them. Do you gather grapes from thorns, or figs from thistles? Even so, every

good tree produces good fruit; but the corrupt tree produces evil fruit. A good tree can’t produce evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree produce good fruit. Every tree that doesn’t grow good fruit is cut down, and thrown into the fire. Therefore, by their fruits you will know them. Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will tell me in that day, ‘Lord, Lord, didn’t we prophesy in your name, in your name cast out demons, and in your name do many mighty works?’ Then I will tell them, ‘I never knew you. Depart from me, you who work iniquity.’

“Everyone therefore who hears these words of mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man, who built his house on a rock. The rain came down, the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat on that house; and it didn’t fall, for it was founded on the rock. Everyone who hears these words of mine, and doesn’t do them will be like a foolish man, who built his house on the sand. The rain came down, the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat on that house; and it fell—and great was its fall.”

It happened, when Jesus had finished saying these things, that the multitudes were astonished at his teaching, for he taught them with authority, and not like the scribes. When he came down from the mountain, great multitudes followed him.

1. What good and bad fruit do you produce? Who do you judge and who do you follow?
2. Are pearls good pig food? Do you give non-believers what is good for them? How so?
3. Jesus, I will enter the narrow gate today by applying your words to my life; help me...



August 3

*Faithful Friends, Naysaying Nitpickers*

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It happened, when Moses held up his hand, that Israel prevailed...But Moses' hands were heavy...Aaron and Hur held up his hands, the one on the one side, and the other on the other side. His hands were steady – Exodus 17:11-12

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[Mark 2:1-12, Capernaum] When he entered again into Capernaum after some days, it was heard that he was in the house. Immediately many were gathered together, so that there was no more room, not even around the door; and he spoke the word to them. And there were Pharisees and teachers of the law sitting by, who had come out of every village of Galilee, Judea, and Jerusalem. The power of the Lord was with him to heal them. Four people came, carrying a paralytic to him. When they could not come near to him for the crowd, they went up to the housetop they removed the roof where he was. When they had broken it up, they let down through the tiles the mat that the paralytic was lying on. Jesus, seeing their faith, said to the paralytic, *“Son, cheer up! Your sins are forgiven you.”*

But there were some of the Scribes and Pharisees sitting there, and reasoning in their

hearts, “Why does this man speak blasphemies like that? Who can forgive sins but God alone?”

*Son, cheer up! Your sins are forgiven you... arise... and go to your house.*

Immediately Jesus, perceiving in his spirit that they so reasoned within themselves, said to them,

*“Why do you reason these things in your hearts? Which is easier, to tell the paralytic, ‘Your sins are forgiven;’ or to say, ‘Arise, and take up your bed, and walk?’ But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—he said to the paralytic—“I tell you, arise, take up your mat, and go to your house.”*

He arose, and immediately took up the mat, and went out in front of them all and departed to his house, glorifying God; so that they were all amazed, and glorified God, *who had given such authority to men saying, “We never saw anything like this!”* They were filled with fear, saying, “We have seen strange things today.” [Luke 5:17-26, Matthew 9:2-8]

1. Whose faith did Jesus see? Have you had faith for your friends? What was the result?
2. How might the Scribes have felt when the man walked? Have you “naysayed”? How?
3. Jesus, please forgive my sins today and always, and please help me with the problems...

August 4

## *Partying and Fasting*

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Judah, what shall I do to you?  
For your love is like a morning cloud,  
and like the dew that disappears early. – Hosea 6:4

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[Mark 2:13-17, Capernaum] As Jesus passed by from there, he went out again by the seaside. All the multitude came to him, and he taught them. As he passed by, he saw Levi [Matthew], the son of Alphaeus, sitting at the tax office, and he said to him, “Follow me.” And he arose, left everything, and followed him. Levi made a great feast for him in his house. There was a great crowd of tax collectors and others who were reclining with them, for there were many, and they followed him. The scribes and the Pharisees, when they saw that he was eating with the sinners and tax collectors, said to his disciples, “Why is it that he eats and drinks with tax collectors and sinners?”

When Jesus heard it, he said to them “*But you go and learn what this means: ‘I desire mercy, and not sacrifice,’* [Hosea 6:6], Those who are healthy have no need for a physician, but those who are sick. I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”

*As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they can't fast*

John’s disciples and the Pharisees were fasting, and they came and asked him, “Why do John’s disciples often fast and pray and the disciples of the Pharisees fast, but your disciples don’t fast?”

Jesus said to them, “Can the groomsmen fast [and] mourn while the bridegroom is with them? As long as they have the bridegroom with them, they can’t fast. But the days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then will they fast in that day. No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old garment, or else the patch shrinks and the new tears away from the old, and a worse hole is made; and also the piece from the new will not match the old. No one puts new wine into old wineskins, or else the new wine will burst the skins, and the wine pours out, and the skins will be destroyed; but they put new wine into fresh wineskins and both are preserved. And no man having drunk old wine immediately desires new, for he says, ‘The old is better.’” [Luke 5:27-38, Matthew 9:9-17]

1. How did Levi respond to Jesus’ call? How do you respond to his invitation to follow?
2. Is our Bridegroom taken from us? Do you fast? What did Jesus mean about old/new?
3. Jesus, in Acts your people fasted and prayed, yet you were with them, please show me...

August 5

## *Desperate Believers, Cynical Crowds*

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Let your tender mercies speedily meet us, for we are in desperate need.  
Help us, God of our salvation, for the glory of your name. – Psalm 79:8-9

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[Mark 5:22-43, Capernaum] Behold, one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name, came; and seeing him, he fell at his feet, and begged him much to come into his house, for he had an only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she was dying saying, “My little daughter is at the point of death. Please come and lay your hands on her, that she may be made healthy, and live.”

He *got up and* went with him, and a great multitude followed him, and they pressed upon him on all sides. A certain woman, who had an issue of blood for twelve years, and had suffered many things by many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was no better, but rather grew worse, having heard the things concerning Jesus, came up behind him in the crowd, and touched the fringe of his clothes. For she said *within herself*, “If I just touch his clothes, I will be made well.” Immediately the flow of her blood was dried up, and she felt in her body that she was healed of her affliction.

Immediately Jesus, perceiving in himself that the power had gone out from him, turned around in the crowd, and asked, “*Who touched my clothes?*”

His disciples, Peter and those with him, said to him, “You see the multitude pressing against you, and you say, ‘Who touched me?’”

But Jesus said, “*Someone did touch me, for I perceived that power has gone out of me.*” He looked around to see her who had done this thing. But the woman, *saw that she was not hidden*; fearing and trembling, knowing what had been done to her, [she] came and fell

down before him and declared to him in the presence of all the people the reason why she had touched him, and how she was healed immediately.

**Don't be afraid,  
only believe**

He said to her, “*Daughter, cheer up! Your faith has made you well.*”

*Go in peace, and be cured of your disease. And the woman was made well from that hour.*

While he was still speaking, people came from the synagogue ruler's house saying, “Your daughter is dead. Why bother the Teacher any more?”

But Jesus, when he heard the message spoken, immediately said to the ruler of the synagogue, “*Don't be afraid, only believe, and she will be healed.*”

He allowed no one to follow him, except Peter, James, and John the brother of James. He came to the synagogue ruler's house, and he saw an uproar, *flute players*, weeping, and great wailing. When he had entered in, he said to them, “*Why do you make an uproar and weep? Make room, the child is not dead, but is asleep.*”

They ridiculed him knowing that she was dead. But he, having put them all out, took the father of the child, her mother, and those who were with him, and went in where the child was lying. Taking the child by the hand, he said to her, “*Talitha cumi!*” which means, being interpreted, “*Girl, I tell you, get up!*” Immediately her spirit returned and the girl rose up and walked, for she was twelve years old. They were amazed with great amazement. He strictly ordered them that no one should know this, and commanded that something should be given to her to eat.

*The report of this went out into all that land.* [Luke 8:40-56, Matthew 9:19-26]

1. Twelve years is a long time to love or to suffer, what made these believers desperate?
2. What makes you desperate? Cynical? What will you do to put your faith in action today?
3. Jesus, no problem, no matter how big or persistent, is too tough for you, so please...

August 6

*Blind and Mute*

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Then the eyes of the blind will be opened,  
and the ears of the deaf will be unstopped.  
Then the lame man will leap like a deer,  
and the tongue of the mute will sing – Isaiah 35:6-7

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[Matthew 9:27-34, Capernaum] As Jesus passed by from there, two blind men followed him, calling out and saying, "Have mercy on us, son of David!"

When he had come into the house, the blind men came to him. Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?"

They told him, "Yes, Lord."

Then he touched their eyes, saying, "According to your faith be it done to you." Their eyes were opened. Jesus strictly

commanded them, saying, "See that no one knows about this." But they went out and spread abroad his fame in all that land.

As they went out, behold, a mute man who was demon possessed was brought to him. When the demon was cast out, the mute man spoke. The multitudes marveled, saying, "Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel!"

But the Pharisees said, "By the prince of the demons, he casts out demons."

*According to your faith  
be it done to you*

1. Who are truly unable to see or speak in this passage? How does their argument fail?
2. When did you fail to see/speak about God's work? Did he restore your sight/speech?
3. Jesus, so often I doubt your power, please forgive me, heal me and help me speak...

*Wanting to Be Well*

I set some of my servants over the gates, that no burden should be brought in on the Sabbath day. – Nehemiah 13:19

[John 5:1-18, Jerusalem] After these things, there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now in Jerusalem by the sheep gate, there is a pool, which is called in Hebrew, "Bethesda," having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of those who were sick, blind, lame, or paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water; for an angel went down at certain times into the pool, and stirred up the water. Whoever stepped in first after the stirring of the water was made whole of whatever disease he had. A certain man was there, who had been sick for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he had been sick for a long time, he asked him, "Do you want to be made well?"

The sick man answered him, "Sir, I have no one to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up, but while I'm coming, another steps down before me."

Jesus said to him, "Arise, take up your mat, and walk."

Immediately, the man was made well, and took up his mat and walked.

*Sin no more, so that nothing worse happens to you*

Now it was the Sabbath on that day. So the Jews said to him who was cured, "It is the Sabbath. It is not lawful for you to carry the mat."

He answered them, "He who made me well, the same said to me, 'Take up your mat, and walk.'"

Then they asked him, "Who is the man who said to you, 'Take up your mat, and walk'?"

But he who was healed didn't know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, a crowd being in the place.

Afterward Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, "Behold, you are made well. Sin no more, so that nothing worse happens to you."

The man went away, and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well. For this cause the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill him, because he did these things on the Sabbath. But Jesus answered them, "My Father is still working, so I am working, too." For this cause therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill him, because he not only broke the Sabbath, but also called God his own Father, making himself equal with God.

1. After 38 years, why did God heal him on this day? Are you wanting to be well, too?
  
2. How did the man continue to sin? Are you continuing to sin even after being healed?
  
3. Jesus, I try to constrain your work, but you do what you and your Father want to do...



August 8

## *Searching the Scriptures, Missing the Messiah*

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Many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt – Daniel 12:2

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[John 5:18-47, Jerusalem] Jesus therefore answered them, “Most certainly, I tell you, the Son can do nothing of himself, but what he sees the Father doing. For whatever things he does, these the Son also does likewise. For the Father has affection for the Son, and shows him all things that he himself does. He will show him greater works than these that you may marvel. For as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son also gives life to whom he desires. For the Father judges no one, but he has given all judgment to the Son, that all may honor the Son, even as they honor the Father. He who doesn’t honor the Son doesn’t honor the Father who sent him.

“Most certainly I tell you, he who hears my word, and believes him who sent me, has eternal life, and doesn’t come into judgment, but has passed out of death into life. Most certainly, I tell you, the hour comes, and now is, when the dead will hear the Son of God’s voice; and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in himself, even so he gave to the Son also to have life in himself. He also gave him authority to execute judgment, because he is a son of man. Don’t marvel at this, for the hour comes, in which all that are in the tombs will hear his voice, and will come out; those who have done good, to the resurrection of life; and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of judgment. I can of myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge, and my judgment is righteous; because I don’t seek my own will, but the will of my Father who sent me.

*I say these things that you may be saved...yet you will not come to me*

“If I testify about myself, my witness is not valid. It is another who testifies about me. I know that the testimony which he testifies about me is true. You have sent to John, and he has testified to the truth. But the testimony which I receive is not from man. However, I say these things that you may be saved. He was the burning and shining lamp, and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light. But the testimony which I have is greater than that of John, for the works which the Father gave me to accomplish, the very works that I do, testify about me, that the Father has sent me. The Father himself, who sent me, has testified about me. You have neither heard his voice at any time, nor seen his form. You don’t have his word living in you; because you don’t believe him whom he sent.

“You search the Scriptures, because you think that in them you have eternal life; and these are they which testify about me. Yet you will not come to me, that you may have life. I don’t receive glory from men. But I know you, that you don’t have God’s love in yourselves. I have come in my Father’s name, and you don’t receive me. If another comes in his own name, you will receive him. How can you believe, who receive glory from one another, and you don’t seek the glory that comes from the only God?

“Don’t think that I will accuse you to the Father. There is one who accuses you, even Moses, on whom you have set your hope. For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote about me. But if you don’t believe his writings, how will you believe my words?”

1. What can Jesus do and not do? Why? What does “the hour comes, and now is” mean?
2. Do you bask in the light of Jesus’ servants? Who are they? Will you also come to him?
3. Dear Jesus, you are my judge and life giver, I believe in you and come to you now by...



August 9

## *Making Idols out of God's Laws*

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Behold, all of them, their works are vanity and nothing.  
Their molten images are wind and confusion. — Isaiah 41:29

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[Matthew 12:1-21, toward Galilee] At that time, Jesus went on the Sabbath day through the grain fields. His disciples were hungry and, *as they went*, began to pluck heads of grain and to eat rubbing them in their hands. But the Pharisees, when they saw it, said to him, "Behold, your disciples do what is not lawful to do on the Sabbath."

But he said to them, "Haven't you read what David did, when he *had need and* was hungry, and those who were with him; how he entered into the house of God *when Abiathar was high priest*, and ate the show bread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for those who were with him, but only for the priests? [1 Samuel 21:3-6] Or have you not read in the law, that on the Sabbath day, the priests in the temple profane the Sabbath, and are guiltless? But I tell you that one greater than the temple is here. But if you had known what this means, 'I desire mercy, and not sacrifice,' [Hosea 6:6] you would not have condemned the guiltless. *The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. Therefore, the Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath.*"

He departed there, and went into their synagogue on another Sabbath that he entered into the synagogue and taught. There was a man there, and his right hand was withered. The scribes and the Pharisees watched him to see whether he would heal on the Sabbath, that they might find an accusation against him. They asked him, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath day?" that they might accuse him.

He said to them, "What man is there among you, who has one sheep, and if this one falls

into a pit on the Sabbath day, won't he grab on to it, and lift it out? Of how much more value then is a man than a sheep! Therefore it is lawful to do good on the Sabbath day." *But they were silent.*

Then, *when he had looked around at them with anger, being grieved at the hardening of their hearts*, he knew their thoughts and told the man, "Rise up, and stand in the middle." He arose and stood. And he said to the man "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out; and it was restored whole, just like the other. But the Pharisees went out, and conspired with the Herodians against him, how they might destroy him. Jesus, perceiving that, withdrew from there. Great multitudes followed him; and he healed them all, and commanded them that they should not make him known: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through Isaiah the prophet, saying,

"Behold, my servant whom I have chosen;  
my beloved in whom my soul is well pleased:

I will put my Spirit on him.

He will proclaim justice to the nations.

He will not strive, nor shout;

neither will anyone hear his voice in the streets.

He won't break a bruised reed.

He won't quench a smoking flax,  
until he leads justice to victory.

In his name, the nations will hope."

[Isaiah 42:1-4]

[Luke 6:1-11, Mark 2:23-3:6]

1. When, like a Pharisee, do you enforce rules? When should you not enforce them?
2. How does Isaiah 42 relate to Jesus commanding people not to make him known?
3. Jesus, I make "molten images" and other idols out of my own works and rules, please...



August 10

## *The Multitude and the Twelve*

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I will give great thanks to Yahweh with my mouth.  
Yes, I will praise him among the multitude.  
For he will stand at the right hand of the needy,  
to save him from those who judge his soul. – Psalm 109:30-31

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[Mark 3:7-19, Galilee] Jesus withdrew to the sea with his disciples, and a great multitude followed him from Galilee, from Judea, from Jerusalem, from Idumaea, beyond the Jordan, and those from around Tyre and Sidon. A great multitude, hearing what great things he did, came to him. He spoke to his disciples that a little boat should stay near him because of the crowd, so that they wouldn't press on him. For he had healed many, so that as many as had diseases pressed on him that they might touch him. The unclean spirits, whenever they saw him, fell down before him, and cried, "You are the Son of God!" He sternly warned them that they should not make him known.

He went up into the mountain to pray, and he continued all night in prayer to God. When it was day, he called his disciples, and from them he chose

twelve, whom he also named apostles that they might be with him, and that he might send them out to preach, and to have authority to heal sicknesses and to cast out demons: Simon, to whom he gave the name Peter; James the son of Zebedee; John, the brother of James, and he surnamed them Boanerges, which means, Sons of Thunder; Andrew; Philip; Bartholomew\*; Matthew; Thomas; James, the son of Alphaeus; Thaddaeus (Judas the son of James); Simon the Zealot; and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed him. He came down with them, and stood on a level place, with a crowd of his disciples, and a great number of the people from all Judea and Jerusalem, and the sea coast of Tyre and Sidon, who came to hear him and to be healed of their diseases; as well as those who were troubled by unclean spirits, and they were being healed. All the multitude sought to touch him, for power came out from him and healed them all. [Luke 6:1-19]

\*possibly the Nathanael of John's gospel.

1. How does this differ from the last time Jesus got in a boat to avoid the crowd (Jan. 26)?
2. Why did Jesus pick the Twelve? Why did he choose you? How will you respond?
3. Jesus, I want to cling to you as a disciple, not as just one of the multitude, so today I...



## *Receiving from God, Giving to Others*

Yahweh, the God of their fathers, sent to them by his messengers, rising up early and sending, because he had compassion on his people, and on his dwelling place: but they mocked the messengers of God – 2Chronicles 36:15-16

[Luke 6:20-38, near Capernaum] He lifted up his eyes to his disciples, and said,

“Blessed are you who are poor,  
for yours is the Kingdom of God.

Blessed are you who hunger now,  
for you will be filled.

Blessed are you who weep now,  
for you will laugh.

Blessed are you when men shall hate you, and when they shall exclude and mock you, and throw out your name as evil, for the Son of Man’s sake.

Rejoice in that day, and leap for joy, for behold, your reward is great in heaven, for their fathers did the same thing to the prophets.

“But woe to you who are rich!

For you have received your consolation.

Woe to you, you who are full now,  
for you will be hungry.

Woe to you who laugh now,  
for you will mourn and weep.

Woe, when men speak well of you,  
for their fathers did the same thing to the false prophets.

“But I tell you who hear: love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, and pray for those who mistreat you. To him who strikes you on the cheek, offer also the other; and from him who takes away your cloak, don’t withhold your coat also. Give

to everyone who asks you, and don’t ask him who takes away your goods to give them back again.

**Blessed are you when  
men shall hate you**

“As you would like people to do to you, do exactly so to them. If you love those who

love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive back as much. But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing back; and your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for he is kind toward the unthankful and evil.

Therefore be merciful,

even as your Father is also merciful.

Don’t judge,

and you won’t be judged.

Don’t condemn,

and you won’t be condemned.

Set free,

and you will be set free.

“Give, and it will be given to you: good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, will be given into your lap. For with the same measure you measure it will be measured back to you.”

1. Do you think this is a different event than the Sermon on the Mount? Why or why not?
  
2. Do you think of yourself as poor? Excluded? How will you love your enemies today?
  
3. Jesus, I judge and condemn all the time, please help me give freedom to others by...



August 12

*Doing the Lord's Words*

Says Yahweh of Armies to you, priests, who despise my name. You say, 'How have we despised your name?' You offer polluted bread on my altar. You say, 'How have we polluted you?' ...When you offer the blind for sacrifice, isn't that evil? And when you offer the lame and sick, isn't that evil? Present it now to your governor! Will he be pleased with you?" – Malachi 1:6-8

[Luke 6:39-49] He spoke a parable to them. "Can the blind guide the blind? Won't they both fall into a pit? A disciple is not above his teacher, but everyone when he is fully trained will be like his teacher. Why do you see the speck of chaff that is in your brother's eye, but don't consider the beam that is in your own eye? Or how can you tell your brother, 'Brother, let me remove the speck of chaff that is in your eye,' when you yourself don't see the beam that is in your own eye? You hypocrite! First remove the beam from your own eye, and then you can see clearly to remove the speck of chaff that is in your brother's eye. For there is no good tree that brings forth rotten fruit; nor again a rotten tree that brings forth good fruit. For each tree is known by its own fruit. For people don't gather figs from thorns, nor do they gather grapes from

*Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and don't do the things which I say?*

a bramble bush. The good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings out that which is good, and the evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings out that which is evil, for out of the abundance of the heart, his mouth speaks.

"Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and don't do the things which I say? Everyone who comes to me, and hears my words, and does them, I will show you who he is like. He is like a man building a house, who dug and went deep, and laid a foundation on the rock. When a flood arose, the stream broke against that house, and could not shake it, because it was founded on the rock. But he who hears, and doesn't do, is like a man who built a house on the earth without a foundation, against which the stream broke, and immediately it fell, and the ruin of that house was great."

1. Which of these teachings are hardest for you to do? Why? What's the first step for you?
  
2. What kind of fruit marks your life? Have you seen changes since starting this study?
  
3. Jesus, I see everyone's specks but not my own beam, please help me do your words by...

August 13

## *Great Faith for a Dear Friend*

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Then they cry to Yahweh in their trouble,  
...He sends his word, and heals them...

Let them praise Yahweh for his loving kindness – Psalm 107:19-21

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[Luke 7:1-10, Capernaum] After he had finished speaking in the hearing of the people, he entered into Capernaum. A certain centurion's servant, who was dear to him, was sick paralyzed, grievously tormented, and at the point of death. When he heard about Jesus, he sent to him elders of the Jews, asking him to come and save his servant. When they came to Jesus, they begged him earnestly, saying, "He is worthy for you to do this for him, for he loves our nation, and he built our synagogue for us." Jesus went with them. When he was now not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to him, saying to him, "Lord, don't trouble yourself, for I am not worthy for you to come under my roof. Therefore I didn't even think myself worthy to come to you; but say the word, and my servant will be

*I have not found such great faith...in Israel*

healed. For I also am a man placed under authority, having under myself soldiers. I tell this one, 'Go!' and he goes; and to another, 'Come!' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."

When Jesus heard these things, he marveled at him, and turned and said to the multitude who followed him, "I tell you, I have not found such great faith, no, not even in Israel. I tell you that many will come from the east and the west, and will sit down with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the Kingdom of Heaven, but the children of the Kingdom will be thrown out into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." Jesus said to the centurion, "Go your way. Let it be done for you as you have believed." Those who were sent, returning to the house, found that the servant who had been sick was healed in that hour [Matthew 8:5:13].

1. Who are your dear friends? What are their needs? How can you help or pray for them?
2. In what way did the centurion have great faith? What keeps your faith from being great?
3. Dear Jesus, you called me your friend and do all things to help me; today I will be a...

August 14

## *Jesus, the Life-Giving Prophet*

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Yahweh your God will raise up to you a prophet from the midst of you, of your brothers, like me. You shall listen to him. – Deuteronomy 18:15

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[Luke 7:11-17, near Nain] It happened soon afterwards, that he went to a city called Nain. Many of his disciples, along with a great multitude, went with him. Now when he drew near to the gate of the city, behold, one who was dead was carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. Many people of the city were with her. When the Lord saw her, he had compassion on her, and said to her, "Don't

*cry.*" He came near and touched the coffin, and the bearers stood still. He said, "Young man, I tell you, arise!" He who was dead sat up, and began to speak. And he gave him to his mother.

Fear took hold of all, and they glorified God, saying, "A great prophet has arisen among us!" and, "God has visited his people!" This report went out concerning him in the whole of Judea, and in all the surrounding region.

1. Why did Jesus raise *this* widow's son? What parallels are there to Elijah (see Jan. 25)?
2. Have you ever felt fear because of seeing God's blessings? Why is Judea mentioned?
3. Jesus, you can raise me from my lifeless state and give back to me my hopes, today I...

August 15

## *Stumbling over the Stumbling Stone*

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“The messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, behold, he comes!” says Yahweh of Armies. “But who can endure the day of his coming? And who will stand when he appears? For he is like a refiner’s fire” – Malachi 3:1-2

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[Luke 7:18-33, Perea and Capernaum]  
The disciples of John told him in the prison about all these things. John, calling to himself two of his disciples, sent them to Jesus, saying, “Are you the one who is coming, or should we look for another?” When the men had come to him, they said, “John the Baptizer has sent us to you, saying, ‘Are you he who comes, or should we look for another?’”

In that hour he cured many of diseases and plagues and evil spirits; and to many who were blind he gave sight. Jesus answered them, “Go and tell John the things which you have seen and heard: that the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news preached to them. Blessed is he who finds no occasion for stumbling in me.”

When John’s messengers had departed, he began to tell the multitudes about John, “What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? But what did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft clothing? Behold, those who are gorgeously dressed, and live delicately, are in kings’ courts. But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and much more than a prophet. This is he of whom it is written,

‘Behold, I send my messenger before your face,

who will prepare your way before you.’  
[Malachi 3:1]

Blessed is he who  
finds no occasion  
for stumbling in me

“For most certainly I tell you, among those who are born of women there is not arisen a greater prophet than John the Baptizer, yet he who is least in the Kingdom of God is greater than he.

From the days of John the Baptizer until now, the Kingdom of Heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force. For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John. If you are willing to receive it, this is Elijah, who is to come. He who has ears to hear, let him hear.”

When all the people and the tax collectors heard this, they declared God to be just, having been baptized with John’s baptism. But the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected the counsel of God, not being baptized by him themselves.

“To what then will I liken the people of this generation? What are they like? They are like children who sit in the marketplace, and call one to another, saying, ‘We piped to you, and you didn’t dance. We mourned, and you didn’t weep.’ For John the Baptizer came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say, ‘He has a demon.’ The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, ‘Behold, a gluttonous man, and a drunkard; a friend of tax collectors and sinners!’ Wisdom is justified by all her children.” [Matthew 11:2-19]

1. How do you think John reacted to Jesus’ answer? How did the Pharisees react to John?
2. Have you stumbled over Jesus’ actions? Did they make others think you were foolish?
3. Jesus, I want to be a fool to the world so I can be wise in you, help me not to stumble...



August 16

*Hidden from Some, Revealed to Others*

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Thus says Yahweh, "Stand in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, 'Where is the good way?' and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls. But they said, 'We will not walk in it.'" — Jeremiah 6:16

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[Matthew 11:20-30, Capernaum] Then he began to denounce the cities in which most of his mighty works had been done, because they didn't repent. "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon which were done in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I tell you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon on the day of judgment than for you. You, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, you will go down to Hades; for if the mighty works had been done in Sodom which were done in you, it would have remained until this day. But I tell you that it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom, on the day of judgment, than for you."

*Come to me, all you who labor  
and are heavily burdened,  
and I will give you rest*

At that time, Jesus answered, "I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you hid these things from the wise and understanding, and revealed them to infants. Yes, Father, for so it was well-pleasing in your sight.

All things have been delivered to me by my Father. No one knows the Son, except the Father; neither does anyone know the Father, except the Son, and he to whom the Son desires to reveal him.

"Come to me, all you who labor and are heavily burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart; and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

1. Capernaum welcomed Jesus more than Nazareth or Jerusalem. Why this harsh rebuke?
2. Have you seen Jesus' works and not "come to him"? When? Why is that so wrong?
3. Jesus, I want you to show me your power over my problems, and I'll come to you by...

August 17

## *Loving Sinners, Complaining Do-gooders*

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God saw their works—that they turned from their evil way. God relented of the disaster which he said he would do to them, and he didn't do it. But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he was angry — Jonah 3:10-4:1

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[Luke 7:36-8:3, Galilean towns] One of the Pharisees invited him to eat with him. He entered into the Pharisee's house, and sat at the table.

Behold, a woman in the city who was a sinner, when she knew that he was reclining in the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster jar of ointment. Standing behind at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears, and she wiped them with the hair of her head, kissed his feet, and anointed them with the ointment. Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw it, he said to himself, "This man, if he were a prophet, would have perceived who and what kind of woman this is who touches him, that she is a sinner."

Jesus answered him, "Simon, I have something to tell you."

He said, "Teacher, say on."

"A certain lender had two debtors. The one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. When they couldn't pay, he forgave them both. Which of them therefore will love him most?"

Simon answered, "He, I suppose, to whom he forgave the most."

He said to him, "You have judged correctly." Turning to the woman, he said to Simon,

To whom little is forgiven,  
the same loves little.

"Do you see this woman? I entered into your house, and you gave me no water for my feet, but she has wet my feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head. You gave me no kiss, but she, since the time I came in, has not ceased to kiss my feet. You didn't anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little." He said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."

Those who sat at the table with him began to say to themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?"

He said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you. Go in peace."

It happened soon afterwards, that he went about through cities and villages, preaching and bringing the good news of the Kingdom of God. With him were the twelve, and certain women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities: Mary who was called Magdalene, from whom seven demons had gone out; and Joanna, the wife of Chuzas, Herod's steward; Susanna; and many others; who served them from their possessions.

1. Does it say "...is forgiven much loves much"? Why the difference? Do you love much?
2. How does this differ from a later anointing (e.g. John 12)? Why are the women listed?
3. Lord, I want to be like this woman, not like Jonah or Simon the Pharisee, please forgive...



## *Explaining Away Jesus' Works*

For the fool will speak folly, and his heart will work iniquity, to practice profanity, and to utter error against Yahweh...The ways of the scoundrel are evil. He devises wicked devices to destroy the humble with lying words, – Isaiah 32:6-7

[Matthew 12:22-37, Capernaum] He came into a house. The multitude came together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread. When his friends heard it, they went out to seize him: for they said, "He is insane." Then one possessed by a demon, blind and mute, was brought to him and he healed him, so that the blind and mute man both spoke and saw. All the multitudes were amazed, and said, "Can this be the son of David?" But when the Pharisees and the scribes who came down from Jerusalem heard it, they said, "This man does not cast out demons, except by Beelzebul, the prince of the demons."

Knowing their thoughts, Jesus summoned them and said to them in parables, "How can Satan cast out Satan? Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and every city or house divided against itself will not stand. If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself. How then will his kingdom stand? If I by Beelzebul cast out demons, by whom do your children cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges. But if I by the Spirit of God cast out demons, then the Kingdom of God has come upon you. Or how can one enter into the house

of the strong man, and plunder his goods, unless he first binds the strong man? Then he will plunder his house.

*You offspring of vipers,  
how can you, being evil,  
speak good things?*

"He who is not with me is against me, and he who doesn't gather with me, scatters. Therefore I tell you, every sin and blasphemy will

be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men. Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit is guilty of an eternal sin, it will not be forgiven him neither in this age, nor in that which is to come"—because they said, "He has an unclean spirit."

"Either make the tree good, and its fruit good, or make the tree corrupt, and its fruit corrupt; for the tree is known by its fruit. You offspring of vipers, how can you, being evil, speak good things? For out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaks. The good man out of his good treasure brings out good things, and the evil man out of his evil treasure brings out evil things. I tell you that every idle word that men speak, they will give account of it in the day of judgment. For by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned." [Mark 3:19-30]

1. "by Beelzebul" was common lie against Jesus (see Luke 11). What lies do you believe?
  
2. How do you know that you have "good treasure" in your heart? What is your fruit?
  
3. Jesus, I've believed lies people tell against you and my words condemn me, please...



August 19

## *The Destinies of Sign-Seekers and God-Obeyers*

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“Blessed is Yahweh your God, who delighted in you, to set you on the throne of Israel. Because Yahweh loved Israel forever, therefore made he you king, to do justice and righteousness.” ...the queen of Sheba...to king Solomon. – 1 Kings 4:9-10

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[Matthew 12:38-50] Then certain of the scribes and Pharisees answered, “Teacher, we want to see a sign from you.”

But he answered them, “An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, but no sign will be given it but the sign of Jonah the prophet. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. The men of Nineveh will stand up in the judgment with this generation, and will condemn it, for they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, someone greater than Jonah is here. The queen of the south will rise up in the judgment with this generation, and will condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, someone greater than Solomon is here. But the unclean spirit, when he is gone out of the man, passes through waterless places, seeking rest, and doesn’t find it. Then he says, ‘I will return into my house from which I came out,’ and when he

Behold, someone greater than Solomon is here

has come back, he finds it empty, swept, and put in order. Then he goes, and takes with himself seven other spirits more evil than he is, and they enter in and dwell there. The last state of that man becomes worse than the first. Even so will it be also to this evil generation.”

While he was yet speaking to the multitudes, behold, his mother and his brothers stood outside, seeking to speak to him and they could not come near him for the crowd. One said to him, “Behold, your mother and your brothers stand outside, seeking to speak to you.”

But he answered him who spoke to him, “Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?” He stretched out his hand towards his disciples, and said, “Behold, my mother and my brothers! For whoever hears the word of God, and does the will of my Father who is in heaven, he is my brother, and sister, and mother.” [Luke 8:19-21]

1. What signs have you requested from God? How was this different than just praying?
2. Is “the unclean spirit” related to yesterday’s “strong man”? How does this apply to you?
3. Jesus, I want to be your brother, sister and mother, help me to do God’s will today by...



## *Hearing, Understanding, and Accepting*

As a terebinth, and as an oak, whose stock remains when they are felled;  
so the holy seed is its stock. — Isaiah 6:13

[Matthew 13:1-23, Capernaum's beach]  
On that day Jesus went out of the house, sat by the seaside, and again he began to teach. Great multitudes gathered to him, so that he entered into a boat, and sat, and all the multitude stood on the beach. He spoke to them many things in parables, saying, "Behold, a farmer went out to sow. As he sowed, some seeds fell by the roadside, *and it was trampled under foot* and the birds of the sky came and devoured them. Others fell on rocky ground, where they didn't have much soil, and immediately they sprang up, because they had no depth of earth. When the sun had risen, they were scorched. Because they had no root, *and had no moisture* they withered away. Others fell among thorns. The thorns grew up and choked them and [they] yielded no fruit. Others fell on good soil, and yielded fruit: some one hundred times as much, some sixty, and some thirty. He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

When he was alone the disciples came, and said to him, "Why do you speak to them in parables?"

He answered them, "To you it is given to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, but to those who are outside it is not given to them. For whoever has, to him will be given, and he will have abundance, but whoever doesn't have, from him will be taken away even that which he has. Therefore I speak to them in parables, because seeing they don't see, and hearing, they don't hear, neither do they understand. In them the prophecy of Isaiah is fulfilled, which says,

'By hearing you will hear,  
and will in no way understand;  
Seeing you will see,  
and will in no way perceive:

This is he who  
...bears fruit

for this people's heart has grown callous,  
their ears are dull of hearing,  
they have closed their eyes;  
or else perhaps they might perceive  
with their eyes,  
hear with their ears,  
understand with their heart,  
and should turn again;  
and I would heal them.' [Isaiah 6:9-10]

"But blessed are your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear. For most certainly I tell you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see the things which you see, and didn't see them; and to hear the things which you hear, and didn't hear them." He said to them, "Don't you understand this parable? How will you understand all of the parables? Hear, then, the parable of the farmer. When anyone hears the word of the Kingdom, and doesn't understand it Satan, the evil one, comes and snatches away that which has been sown in his heart *that [he] may not believe and be saved*. This is what was sown by the roadside. What was sown on the rocky places, this is he who hears the word, and immediately with joy receives it; yet he has no root in himself, but endures for a while. *And in time of temptation* when oppression or persecution arises because of the word, immediately he stumbles. What was sown among the thorns, this is he who hears the word, but the cares *and pleasures* of this age, and the deceitfulness of riches the lusts of other things entering in choke the word, and he becomes unfruitful, *and brings no fruit to maturity*. What was sown on the good ground, this is he who hears the word, and understands it, *and accepts it*; who most certainly bears fruit *with patience*, and brings forth, some one hundred times as much, some sixty, and some thirty." [Mark 4:1-20, Luke 8:1-15]

1. Why did Jesus tell parables? To what end did Isaiah preach? Why does God do this?
2. When was a "time of temptation"? What are your cares? What can you do to bear fruit?
3. Jesus, I want to bear the fruit of right-living and kingdom growth; I'll be patient to...

*The Kingdom Will Reveal It All*

Hear my teaching, my people. Turn your ears to the words of my mouth.— Psalm 78:1

[Matthew 13:24-43] He set another parable before them, saying, "The Kingdom of Heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field, but while people slept, his enemy came and sowed darnel weeds also among the wheat, and went away. But when the blade sprang up and brought forth fruit, then the darnel weeds appeared also. The servants of the householder came and said to him, 'Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where did this darnel come from?'"

"He said to them, 'An enemy has done this.'

"The servants asked him, 'Do you want us to go and gather them up?'"

"But he said, 'No, lest perhaps while you gather up the darnel weeds, you root up the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest, and in the harvest time I will tell the reapers, "First, gather up the darnel weeds, and bind them in bundles to burn them; but gather the wheat into my barn.'"

He set another parable before them, saying, "The Kingdom of Heaven is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in his field; which indeed is smaller than all seeds that are on the earth. But when it is grown, it is greater than the herbs, puts out great branches and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge under its shadow in its branches."

He spoke another parable to them as they were able to hear it "The Kingdom of Heaven is like yeast, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, until it was all leavened."

He said to them, "Is the lamp brought to be put under a basket or under a bed? Isn't it put on a stand *that those who enter in may see the light?* For there is nothing hidden, except that it should be made known; neither was anything made secret, but that it should come to light. If any man has ears to hear, let him hear."

He said to them, "Take heed what you hear, with whatever measure you measure, it will be

measured to you, and more will be given to you who hear. For whoever has, to him will more be given, and he who doesn't have, even that which he has will be taken away from him."

*The Kingdom of Heaven is like...*

He said, "The Kingdom of God is as if a man should cast seed on the earth, and should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed should spring up and grow, he doesn't know how. For the earth bears fruit: first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. But when the fruit is ripe, immediately he puts forth the sickle, because the harvest has come."

Jesus spoke all these things in parables to the multitudes; and without a parable, he didn't speak to them, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken through the prophet, saying,

"I will open my mouth in parables;

I will utter things hidden from the foundation of the world." [Psalm 78:2]

Then Jesus sent the multitudes away, and went into the house. His disciples came to him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the darnel weeds of the field."

He answered them, "He who sows the good seed is the Son of Man, the field is the world; and the good seed, these are the children of the Kingdom; and the darnel weeds are the children of the evil one. The enemy who sowed them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. As therefore the darnel weeds are gathered up and burned with fire; so will it be at the end of this age. The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will gather out of his Kingdom all things that cause stumbling, and those who do iniquity, and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be weeping and the gnashing of teeth. Then the righteous will shine forth like the sun in the Kingdom of their Father. He who has ears to hear, let him hear. [Mark 4:21-34, Luke 8:16-18]

1. Darnel looks like wheat until the full ear appears. How does this connect the parables?
2. What have you done—bad or good—that was exposed or brought to fruit later on?
3. Jesus, I want to listen to your words, not hear without understanding, so today I will...



August 22

*Jesus Seeks Us, Even as We Seek Him*

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Yes, if you...lift up your voice for understanding;  
 If you seek her as silver,  
 and search for her as for hidden treasures:  
 then you will understand the fear of Yahweh,  
 and find the knowledge of God – Proverbs 2:3-5

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[Matthew 13:44-53] “Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found, and hid. In his joy, he goes and sells all that he has, and buys that field.

“Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like a man who is a merchant seeking fine pearls, who having found one pearl of great price, he went and sold all that he had, and bought it.

“Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like a dragnet that was cast into the sea and gathered some fish of every kind, which, when it was filled, they drew up on the beach. They sat down, and gathered the good into containers, but the bad they threw away. So will it be in the

*The Kingdom of Heaven is like a man who is a merchant seeking fine pearls*

end of the world. The angels will come forth, and separate the wicked from among the righteous, and will cast them into the furnace of fire. There will be the weeping and the gnashing of teeth.”

Jesus said to them, “Have you understood all these things?”

They answered him, “Yes, Lord.”

He said to them, “Therefore, every scribe who has been made a disciple in the Kingdom of Heaven is like a man who is a householder, who brings out of his treasure new and old things.”

It happened that when Jesus had finished these parables, he departed from there.

1. How does “seek and sell all” in the first two parables relate to “separate” in the third?
2. Are you a good fish, a treasure field, a pearl of great price? How did God obtain you?
3. Jesus, you are bringing God’s rule to our unruly world by buying us, separating us from...

August 23

## *Calmed Sea, Worried Disciples*

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By awesome deeds of righteousness, you answer us, God of our salvation.  
You who are the hope of all the ends of the earth, of those who are far away on the sea  
...who stills the roaring of the seas, the roaring of their waves,  
and the turmoil of the nations – Psalm 65:5-7

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[Mark 4:35-41, Galilee] On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, "Let's go over to the other side."

Leaving the multitude, they took him with them, even as he was, in the boat, himself and his disciples, and they launched out. Other small boats were also with him. A big wind storm arose on the sea, and the waves beat into the boat, so much that the boat was already filled. He himself was in the stern, asleep on the cushion, and they came to him, woke him up, and told him, "Save

us, Teacher, don't you care that we are dying?"

**Why are you so afraid? How is it that you have no faith?**

He awoke, and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water, and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" The wind ceased, and there was a great calm. He said to them, "Why are you so afraid? How is it that you have no faith?"

They were greatly afraid, and said to one another, "Who then is this, that commands even the wind and the sea, and they obey him?" [Luke 8:22-25, Matthew 8:23-27]

1. Has your life (or your friend's) been in danger? How were you fearful or faith-filled?
2. The disciples were afraid even after the calm, why? Is this fear good? Do you have it?
3. Jesus, you are so powerful, yet often I want you to "wake up" to help me, please give...



August 24

## *Right-Minded Demoniac, Frightened Countrymen*

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Come, and hear, all you who fear God.  
I will declare what he has done for my soul. – Psalm 66:16

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[Mark 5:1-20, Gadara] They came to the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes, which is opposite Galilee. When he had come out of the boat, immediately an exceedingly fierce man of the city with an unclean spirit met him out of the tombs. He had demons for a long time, wore no clothes, and didn't live in a house, but lived in the tombs. Nobody could bind him any more, not even with chains, because he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been torn apart by him, and the fetters broken in pieces. Nobody had the strength to tame him. Always, night and day, in the tombs and in the mountains, he was crying out, and cutting himself with stones, [and] nobody could pass that way. When he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and fell down before him and bowed down to him, and crying out with a loud voice, he said, "What have I to do with you, Jesus, you Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, don't torment me before the time." For he said to him, "Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!"

He asked him, "What is your name?"

He said to him, "My name is Legion, for we are many." (For many demons had entered into him). He begged him much that he would not send them away out of the country and would not command them to go into the abyss. Now on the mountainside far away from them

there was a great herd of pigs feeding. All the demons begged him, saying, "Send us into the pigs, that we may enter into them."

Tell them what great things  
the Lord has done for you

At once Jesus gave them permission. The unclean spirits came out from the man and entered into the pigs. The herd of about two thousand rushed down the steep bank into the sea, and they were drowned in the sea. Those who fed them fled, and told it in the city and in the country.

All the people of the surrounding country came to see what it was that had happened. They came to Jesus, and saw him who had been possessed by demons sitting at Jesus' feet, clothed, and in his right mind, even him who had the legion; and they were afraid. Those who saw it declared to them how it happened to him who was possessed by demons, and about the pigs. They began to beg him to depart from their region for they were very much afraid.

As he was entering into the boat, he who had been possessed by demons begged him that he might be with him. He didn't allow him, but said to him, "Go to your house, to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord has done for you, and how he had mercy on you."

He went his way, and began to proclaim in Decapolis how Jesus had done great things for him, and everyone marveled.

1. How would the demoniac's friends (no match for ~2000 "guests") feel before and after?
2. How does this story relate to the calmed sea? Can you tell your friends of God's work?
3. Jesus, you have set me free from millions of sins; today I will go and tell others how...

August 25

*No Honor In Jesus' Own House*

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For even your brothers, and the house of your father, even they have dealt treacherously with you – Jeremiah 12:6

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[Mark 6:1-6, Nazareth] He went out from there. He came into his own country, and his disciples followed him. When the Sabbath had come, he began to teach in the synagogue, and many hearing him were astonished, saying, "Where did this man get these things?" and, "What is the wisdom that is given to this man, that such mighty works come about by his hands? Isn't this the carpenter, the carpenter's son, the son of

He marveled because  
of their unbelief

Mary, and brother of James, Joses, Judah, and Simon? Aren't his sisters all here with us?" They were offended at him.

Jesus said to them, "A prophet is not without honor, except in his own country, and among his own relatives, and in his own house." He could do no mighty work there, except that he laid his hands on a few sick people, and healed them. He marveled because of their unbelief. [Matthew 13:53-58]

1. How does this differ from the last time Jesus was here (Jan. 25)? What upset them now?
2. Is Jesus' inability to do mighty work related to their unbelief? How about your unbelief?
3. Jesus, I want to put you in a box, just like your neighbors did, please forgive me and...





August 27

## *Sending Sheep to the Wolves*

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Her priests have done violence to my law...Her princes in its midst are like wolves ravening the prey, to shed blood, and to destroy souls – Ezekiel 22:26-27

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[Matthew 10:16-11:1] “Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents, and harmless as doves. But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to councils, and in their synagogues they will scourge you. Yes, and you will be brought before governors and kings for my sake, for a testimony to them and to the nations. But when they deliver you up, don’t be anxious how or what you will say, for it will be given you in that hour what you will say. For it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you.

“Brother will deliver up brother to death, and the father his child. Children will rise up against parents, and cause them to be put to death. You will be hated by all men for my name’s sake, but he who endures to the end will be saved. But when they persecute you in this city, flee into the next, for most certainly I tell you, you will not have gone through the cities of Israel, until the Son of Man has come.

“A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his lord. It is enough for the disciple that he be like his teacher, and the servant like his lord. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more those of his household! Therefore don’t be afraid of them, for there is nothing covered that will not be revealed; and hidden that will not be known. What I tell you in the darkness, speak in the light; and what you hear whispered in the ear, proclaim on the housetops. Don’t be afraid of those who kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul. Rather, fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in Gehenna.

“Aren’t two sparrows sold for an assarion coin? Not one of them falls on the ground apart from your Father’s will, but the very hairs of your head are all numbered. Therefore don’t be afraid. You are of more value than many sparrows. Everyone therefore who confesses me before men, him I will also confess before my Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies me before men, him I will also deny before my Father who is in heaven.

“Don’t think that I came to send peace on the earth. I didn’t come to send peace, but a sword. For I came to set a man at odds against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law. A man’s foes will be those of his own household.’ [Micah 7:6] He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he who loves son or daughter more than me isn’t worthy of me. He who doesn’t take his cross and follow after me, isn’t worthy of me. He who seeks his life will lose it; and he who loses his life for my sake will find it. He who receives you receives me, and he who receives me receives him who sent me. He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet’s reward. He who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man will receive a righteous man’s reward. Whoever gives one of these little ones just a cup of cold water to drink in the name of a disciple, most certainly I tell you he will in no way lose his reward.”

It happened that when Jesus had finished directing his twelve disciples, he departed from there to teach and preach in their cities.

1. How would you feel to be sent out like this? What about this is scary? Comforting?
2. How does this relate to Jesus’ recent parables (Feb. 21)? What do you want exposed?
3. Jesus, as I go into the harvest, thank you that you will preach there too; today help me...

August 28

## *Evil's Temporary Victory*

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“What is your petition, queen Esther?...Even to the half of the kingdom.”...  
“If it please the king, let my life be given me at my petition, and my people at my request. For we are sold...to be slain”— Esther 7:2-4

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[Mark 6:12-29, Perea] They went out and preached that people should repent. They cast out many demons, and anointed many with oil who were sick, and healed them. King Herod heard this, *all that was done by him, and he was very perplexed*, for his name had become known. *He sought to see him*, and he said, “John the Baptizer has risen from the dead, and therefore these powers are at work in him.” But others said, “He is Elijah.” Others said, “He is a prophet, or like one of the prophets.” But Herod, when he heard this, said, “This is John, whom I beheaded. He has risen from the dead.” For Herod himself had sent out and arrested John, and bound him in prison for the sake of Herodias, his brother Philip’s wife, for he had married her. For John said to Herod, “It is not lawful for you to have your brother’s wife.” Herodias set herself against him, and desired to kill him, but she couldn’t, for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a righteous and holy man. *When he would have put him to death, he feared the multitude (because they counted him as a prophet) and kept him safe. When he heard him, he was much perplexed, and he heard him gladly.*

Then a convenient day came, that Herod on his birthday made a supper for his

Give me right now the  
head of John the  
Baptizer on a platter

nobles, the high officers, and the chief men of Galilee. When the daughter of Herodias herself came in and danced, she pleased Herod and those sitting with him. The king said to the young lady, “Ask me whatever you want, and I will give it to you.” He swore to her, “Whatever you shall ask of me, I will give you, up to half of my kingdom.”

She went out, and said to her mother, “What shall I ask?”

She said, “The head of John the Baptizer.”

She came in immediately with haste to the king, and asked, “I want you to give me right now the head of John the Baptizer on a platter.”

The king was exceedingly sorry, but for the sake of his oaths, and of his dinner guests, he didn’t wish to refuse her. Immediately the king sent out a soldier of his guard, and commanded to bring John’s head, and he went and beheaded him in the prison, and brought his head on a platter, and gave it to the young lady; and the young lady gave it to her mother.

When his disciples heard this, they came and took up his corpse, and laid it in a tomb, and they went and told Jesus. [Matthew 14:1-12, Luke 9:7-9]

1. How would you have felt hearing this, if you were Jesus? Was he tempted to despair?
2. When has evil seemed to triumph in your life? What ended up happening? Who did it?
3. Jesus, your innocent cousin was imprisoned and killed; I know you can relate to my...



*The Lesson of the Leftovers*

A man...brought...twenty loaves of barley...His servant said, "What, should I set this before a hundred men?" But he said, "Give the people, that they may eat; for thus says Yahweh, 'They will eat, and will have some left over.'" – 2 Kings 4:42-44

[Mark 6:35-44] When it was late in the day, When evening had come, his disciples came to him, and said, "This place is deserted, and it is late in the day."

Jesus therefore lifting up his eyes, and seeing that a great multitude was coming to him, said to Philip, "Where are we to buy bread, that these may eat?"

"Send them away, that they may go into the surrounding country and villages, and lodge, and buy themselves bread, for they have nothing to eat and we are here in a deserted place."

But he answered them, "They don't need to go away. You give them something to eat." This he said to test him, for he himself knew what he would do.

They asked him, "Shall we go and buy two hundred denarii worth of bread, and give them something to eat?"

Philip answered, "Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that everyone of them may receive a little!"

He said to them, "How many loaves do you have? Go see."

You give them something to eat

When they knew, they (Andrew, Simon Peter's brother) said, "There is a boy here who has five barley loaves and two fish, but what are these among so many?"

He said, "Bring them here to me." He commanded them that everyone should sit down in groups on the green grass. Now there was much grass in that place. They sat down in ranks, by hundreds and by fifties. He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, he blessed and broke the loaves, and he gave to his disciples to set before them, and he divided the two fish among them all. They all ate, and all were filled. When they were filled, he said to his disciples, "Gather up the broken pieces which are left over, that nothing be lost."

They took up twelve baskets full of broken pieces and also of the fish. Those who ate the loaves were\* five thousand men, besides women and children. When therefore the people saw the sign which Jesus did, they said, "This is truly the prophet who comes into the world." [Matthew 14:15-21, Luke 9:12-17, John 6:4-14]

1. What did Jesus ask you that seemed impossible? Did you respond like Philip or Andrew?
2. Why did Jesus have them get the leftovers? How has he used this lesson in your life?
3. Jesus, you constantly taught the 12, even as you had compassion on the crowd; please...





