



April 1

Trusting Yahweh Before the Fire is Kindled

The sun will be turned into darkness, and the moon into blood,
before the great and terrible day of Yahweh comes.

It will happen that whoever will call on the name of Yahweh shall be saved – Joel 2:31

[Luke 12:41-59] Peter said to him, “Lord, are you telling this parable to us, or to everybody?”

The Lord said, “Who then is the faithful and wise steward, whom his lord will set over his household, to give them their portion of food at the right times? Blessed is that servant whom his lord will find doing so when he comes. Truly I tell you, that he will set him over all that he has. But if that servant says in his heart, ‘My lord delays his coming,’ and begins to beat the menservants and the maidservants, and to eat and drink, and to be drunken, then the lord of that servant will come in a day when he isn’t expecting him, and in an hour that he doesn’t know, and will cut him in two, and place his portion with the unfaithful. That servant, who knew his lord’s will, and didn’t prepare, nor do what he wanted, will be beaten with many stripes, but he who didn’t know, and did things worthy of stripes, will be beaten with few stripes. To whomever much is given, of him will much be required; and to whom much was entrusted, of him more will be asked.

“I came to throw fire on the earth. I wish it were already kindled. But I have a baptism to

be baptized with, and how distressed I am until it is accomplished! Do you think that I have come to give peace in the earth? I tell you, no, but rather division. For from now on, there will be five in one house divided, three against two, and two against three. They will be divided, father against son, and son against father; mother against daughter, and daughter against her mother; mother-in-law against her daughter-in-law, and daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law.”

He said to the multitudes also, “When you see a cloud rising from the west, immediately you say, ‘A shower is coming,’ and so it happens. When a south wind blows, you say, ‘There will be a scorching heat,’ and it happens. You hypocrites! You know how to interpret the appearance of the earth and the sky, but how is it that you don’t interpret this time? Why don’t you judge for yourselves what is right? For when you are going with your adversary before the magistrate, try diligently on the way to be released from him, lest perhaps he drag you to the judge, and the judge deliver you to the officer, and the officer throw you into prison. I tell you, you will by no means get out of there, until you have paid the very last penny.”

1. What new reason for God-reliance does Jesus give? How is his train of thought altered?

2. How do interpreting the time and settling with adversaries relate? Who’s your adversary?

3. Jesus, soon I will see you face to face; so I rely on you with what you’ve entrusted to me...

April 2

All Will Die—But Not All Will Repent

Samson said, "Let me die with the Philistines!" He bowed himself with all his might; and the house fell on the lords, and on all the people who were therein. – Judges 16:30

[Luke 13:1-5, Judea] Now there were some present at the same time who told him about the Galileans, whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. Jesus answered them, "Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans, because they suffered such things? I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all perish the same way." Or those eighteen, on whom the tower in Siloam fell, and killed them; do you think that they were worse offenders than all the men who dwell in Jerusalem? I tell you, no, but, unless you repent, you will all perish in the same way."

1. Is this an attempt to deflect Jesus' teaching on judgment? How? How does Jesus respond?
2. Do you think about Judgment Day? What thoughts? How often? Why is it important?
3. Jesus, the worst death on earth is nothing compared to final judgment, please help me...

April 3

Don't Be Unfruitful in God's Vineyard!

My beloved had a vineyard on a very fruitful hill. He dug it up, gathered out its stones, planted it with the choicest vine, built a tower in its midst, and also cut out a winepress therein. He looked for it to yield grapes, but it yielded wild grapes. — Isaiah 5:1-2

[Luke 13:6-9, Jerusalem?] He spoke this parable. "A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard, and he came seeking fruit on it, and found none. He said to the vine dresser, 'Behold, these three years I have come looking for fruit on this fig tree, and found none. Cut it down. Why does it waste the soil?' He answered, 'Lord, leave it alone this year also, until I dig around it, and fertilize it. If it bears fruit, fine; but if not, after that, you can cut it down.'"

1. Perhaps a day or two later, this parable addresses judgment a bit differently; how so?
2. In what way are you "wasting soil"? What can you do today to be more fruitful?
3. Jesus, you are merciful to help me bear fruit, yet judgment is coming, so today I will...

The Blind Man Sees, But the Seeing Are Blind

Yahweh is far from the wicked, but he hears the prayer of the righteous – Proverbs 15:29

[John 9:1-34, Jerusalem] As he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?”

*I was blind,
now I see*

had received his sight, until they called the parents of him who had received his sight, and asked them, “Is this your son, whom you say was born blind? How then does he now see?”

Jesus answered, “Neither did this man sin, nor his parents; but, that the works of God might be revealed in him. I must work the works of him who sent me, while it is day. The night is coming, when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” When he had said this, he spat on the ground, made mud with the saliva, anointed the blind man’s eyes with the mud, and said to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which means “Sent”). So he went away, washed, and came back seeing. The neighbors therefore, and those who saw that he was blind before, said, “Isn’t this he who sat and begged?” Others were saying, “It is he.” Still others were saying, “He looks like him.”

He said, “I am he.” They therefore were asking him, “How were your eyes opened?”

He answered, “A man called Jesus made mud, anointed my eyes, and said to me, ‘Go to the pool of Siloam, and wash.’ So I went away and washed, and I received sight.”

Then they asked him, “Where is he?”

He said, “I don’t know.”

They brought him who had been blind to the Pharisees. It was a Sabbath when Jesus made the mud and opened his eyes. Again therefore the Pharisees also asked him how he received his sight. He said to them, “He put mud on my eyes, I washed, and I see.”

Some therefore of the Pharisees said, “This man is not from God, because he doesn’t keep the Sabbath.” Others said, “How can a man who is a sinner do such signs?” There was division among them. Therefore they asked the blind man again, “What do you say about him, because he opened your eyes?”

He said, “He is a prophet.”

The Jews therefore did not believe concerning him, that he had been blind, and

His parents answered them, “We know that this is our son, and that he was born blind; but how he now sees, we don’t know; or who opened his eyes, we don’t know. He is of age. Ask him. He will speak for himself.” His parents said these things because they feared the Jews; for the Jews had already agreed that if any man would confess him as Christ, he would be put out of the synagogue. Therefore his parents said, “He is of age. Ask him.”

So they called the man who was blind a second time, and said to him, “Give glory to God. We know that this man is a sinner.”

He therefore answered, “I don’t know if he is a sinner. One thing I do know: that though I was blind, now I see.”

They said to him again, “What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?”

He answered them, “I told you already, and you didn’t listen. Why do you want to hear it again? You don’t also want to become his disciples, do you?”

They insulted him and said, “You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses. But as for this man, we don’t know where he comes from.”

The man answered them, “How amazing! You don’t know where he comes from, yet he opened my eyes. We know that God doesn’t listen to sinners, but if anyone is a worshipper of God, and does his will, he listens to him. Since the world began it has never been heard of that anyone opened the eyes of someone born blind. If this man were not from God, he could do nothing.”

They answered him, “You were altogether born in sins, and do you teach us?” They threw him out.

1. Jesus is back in Jerusalem after two months away; how does he continue to make enemies?
2. The man born blind stands up for Jesus; why? Have you stood up for him? Why or why not?
3. Jesus, thank you for giving me spiritual sight, today please give me a chance to stand up for...

One Flock, One Shepherd

He will feed his flock like a shepherd. He will gather the lambs in his arm, and carry them in his bosom. He will gently lead those who have their young. – Isaiah 40:11

[John 9:35-10:21] Jesus heard that they had thrown him out, and finding him, he said, “Do you believe in the Son of God?”

He answered, “Who is he, Lord, that I may believe in him?”

Jesus said to him, “You have both seen him, and it is he who speaks with you.”

He said, “Lord, I believe!” and he worshiped him.

Jesus said, “I came into this world for judgment, that those who don’t see may see; and that those who see may become blind.”

Those of the Pharisees who were with him heard these things, and said to him, “Are we also blind?”

Jesus said to them, “If you were blind, you would have no sin; but now you say, ‘We see.’ Therefore your sin remains.

“Most certainly, I tell you, one who doesn’t enter by the door into the sheep fold, but climbs up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. But one who enters in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep listen to his voice. He calls his own sheep by name, and leads them out. Whenever he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. They will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him; for they don’t know the voice of strangers.” Jesus spoke this parable to them, but they didn’t understand what he was telling them.

Jesus therefore said to them again, “Most certainly, I tell you, I am the sheep’s door. All

who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep didn’t listen to them. I am the door. If anyone enters in by me, he will be saved, and will go in and go out, and will find pasture. The thief only comes to steal, kill, and destroy. I came that they may have life, and may have it abundantly. I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. He who is a hired hand, and not a shepherd, who doesn’t own the sheep, sees the wolf coming, leaves the sheep, and flees. The wolf snatches the sheep, and scatters them. The hired hand flees because he is a hired hand, and doesn’t care for the sheep. I am the good shepherd. I know my own, and I’m known by my own; even as the Father knows me, and I know the Father. I lay down my life for the sheep. I have other sheep, which are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will hear my voice. They will become one flock with one shepherd. Therefore the Father loves me, because I lay down my life, that I may take it again. No one takes it away from me, but I lay it down by myself. I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again. I received this commandment from my Father.”

Therefore a division arose again among the Jews because of these words. Many of them said, “He has a demon, and is insane! Why do you listen to him?” Others said, “These are not the sayings of one possessed by a demon. It isn’t possible for a demon to open the eyes of the blind, is it?”

1. How do you worship Jesus? How did Jesus make the seeing blind? How are you blind?
2. How do blindness and thieves relate? Who are the sheep? The thieves? The hired hands?
3. Jesus, you are my good shepherd, I want to know your voice better and help other sheep...



April 6

Jesus' Works Reveal His Divinity

Defend the weak, the poor, and the fatherless. Maintain the rights of the poor and oppressed. Rescue the weak and needy. Deliver them out of the hand of the wicked. – Psalm 82:3-4

[John 12:41-59, Jerusalem and Perea] It was the Feast of the Dedication* at Jerusalem. It was winter, and Jesus was walking in the temple, in Solomon's porch. The Jews therefore came around him and said to him, "How long will you hold us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly."

Jesus answered them, "I told you, and you don't believe. The works that I do in my Father's name, these testify about me. But you don't believe, because you are not of my sheep, as I told you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. I give eternal life to them. They will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all. No one is able to snatch them out of my Father's hand. *I and the Father are one.*"

Therefore Jews took up stones again to stone him. Jesus answered them, "*I have shown you many good works from my Father. For which of those works do you stone me?*"

[*Hanukkah, i.e. end of December]

The Jews answered him, "We don't stone you for a good work, but for blasphemy: because you, being a man, make yourself God."

I and the Father are one

Jesus answered them, "Isn't it written in your law, 'I said, you are gods?' [Psalm 82:6] If he called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and the Scripture can't be broken), do you say of him whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world, 'You blaspheme,' because I said, 'I am the Son of God?' If I don't do the works of my Father, don't believe me. But if I do them, though you don't believe me, believe the works; that you may know and believe that the Father is in me, and I in the Father."

They sought again to seize him, and he went out of their hand. He went away again beyond the Jordan into the place where John was baptizing at first, and there he stayed. Many came to him. They said, "John indeed did no sign, but everything that John said about this man is true." Many believed in him there.

1. Why didn't Jesus say, "I am the Christ"? How is he "one with" and "in" the Father?
2. What works are in Psalm 82? Did Jesus do these? Do you? What will you do today?
3. Jesus, you are the Christ, the Anointed, the Messiah, but you're also one with the Father...

April 7

Jesus' Enemies Care More for Oxen than Satan's Captives

The women sang one to another as they played, and said,
"Saul has slain his thousands, David his ten thousands."
Saul was very angry, and this saying displeased him – 1 Samuel 18:7-8

[Luke 13:10-17, Perea] He was teaching in one of the synagogues on the Sabbath day. Behold, there was a woman who had a spirit of infirmity eighteen years, and she was bent over, and could in no way straighten herself up. When Jesus saw her, he called her, and said to her, "*Woman, you are freed from your infirmity.*" He laid his hands on her, and immediately she stood up straight, and glorified God.

The ruler of the synagogue, being indignant because Jesus had healed on the Sabbath, said to the multitude, "There are six days in which men ought to work.

Therefore come on those days and be healed, and not on the Sabbath day!"

The multitude rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him

Therefore the Lord answered him, "You hypocrites! Doesn't each one of you free his ox or his donkey from the stall on the Sabbath, and lead him away to water? Ought not this woman, being a daughter of Abraham, whom Satan had bound eighteen long years, be freed from this bondage on the Sabbath day?"

As he said these things, all his adversaries were disappointed, and all the multitude rejoiced for all the glorious things that were done by him.

1. How does Jesus "rescue the weak and needy"? What were people's reactions? Why?

2. How are you a hypocrite? How do you rescue Satan's victims? What will you do today?

3. Jesus, the authorities were jealous of your works and the crowd's response; so also I...

April 8

The Kingdom Brings Down the High and Exalts the Low

I will also take of the lofty top of the cedar...I will crop off from the topmost of its young twigs a tender one...under it shall dwell all birds of every wing; in the shade of its branches...I, Yahweh, have brought down the high tree, have exalted the low tree – Ezekiel 17:22-24

[Luke 13:18-30, Perea] He said, “What is the Kingdom of God like? To what shall I compare it? It is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took, and put in his own garden. It grew, and became a large tree, and the birds of the sky lodged in its branches. [Ezekiel 17:23]”

Again he said, “To what shall I compare the Kingdom of God? It is like yeast, which a woman took and hid in three measures of flour, until it was all leavened.”

He went on his way through cities and villages, teaching, and traveling on to Jerusalem. One said to him, “Lord, are they few who are saved?”

He said to them, “Strive to enter in by the narrow door, for many, I tell you, will seek to enter in, and will not be able. When once the

master of the house has risen up, and has shut the door, and you begin to stand outside, and to knock at the door, saying, ‘Lord, Lord, open to us!’ then he will answer and tell you, ‘I don’t know you or where you come from.’ Then you will begin to say, ‘We ate and drank in your presence, and you taught in our streets.’ He will say, ‘I tell you, I don’t know where you come from. Depart from me, all you workers of iniquity. [Psalm 6:8]’ There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth, when you see Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the prophets, in the Kingdom of God, and yourselves being thrown outside. They will come from the east, west, north, and south, and will sit down in the Kingdom of God. Behold, there are some who are last who will be first, and there are some who are first who will be last.”

1. How is the Kingdom like a seed or yeast, and a shut house? Are you striving to enter?
2. If Jesus had answered you like this, would you be discouraged? Why? Who are “last”?
3. Jesus, I think of myself as first, and non-believers as last, but you are telling me that...

April 9

Jesus, the Cornerstone, is Undeterred from his Mission

The stone which the builders rejected has become the head of the corner.

This is Yahweh's doing. It is marvelous in our eyes. – Psalm 118:22-23

[Luke 13:31-35, Perea] On that same day, some Pharisees came, saying to him, "Get out of here, and go away, for Herod wants to kill you."

He said to them, "Go and tell that fox, 'Behold, I cast out demons and perform cures today and tomorrow, and the third day I complete my mission. Nevertheless I must go on my way today and tomorrow and the next

day, for it can't be that a prophet perish outside of Jerusalem.'

I wanted to gather your children together, like a hen gathers her own brood

day, for it can't be that a prophet perish outside of Jerusalem.' "Jerusalem, Jerusalem, that kills the prophets, and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, like a hen gathers her own brood under her wings, and you refused! Behold, your house is left to you desolate. I tell you, you will not see me, until you say, 'Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!' [Psalm 118:26]"

1. Have you been intimidated into changing your plans? How so? Was Jesus? Why not?
2. Could Jesus say the same to you as he did to Jerusalem? Why? How will you accept him?
3. Jesus, I run to you like a chick runs to its mother; hide me under your wings; today I...

April 10

The Lowly are Exalted at Jesus' Table

Don't exalt yourself in the presence of the king, or claim a place among great men; for it is better that it be said to you, "Come up here," than that you should be put lower in the presence of the prince, whom your eyes have seen – Proverbs 25:6-7

[Luke 14:1-24, Perea] It happened, when he went into the house of one of the rulers of the Pharisees on a Sabbath to eat bread, that they were watching him. Behold, a certain man who had dropsy was in front of him. Jesus, answering, spoke to the lawyers and Pharisees, saying, "Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath?"

But they were silent.

He took him, and healed him, and let him go. He answered them, "Which of you, if your son or an ox fell into a well, wouldn't immediately pull him out on a Sabbath day?"

They couldn't answer him regarding these things.

He spoke a parable to those who were invited, when he noticed how they chose the best seats, and said to them, "When you are invited by anyone to a marriage feast, don't sit in the best seat, since perhaps someone more honorable than you might be invited by him, and he who invited both of you would come and tell you, 'Make room for this person.' Then you would begin, with shame, to take the lowest place. But when you are invited, go and sit in the lowest place, so that when he who invited you comes, he may tell you, 'Friend, move up higher.' Then you will be honored in the presence of all who sit at the table with you. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and whoever humbles himself will be exalted."

He also said to the one who had invited him, "When you make a dinner or a supper, don't call your friends, nor your brothers, nor your kinsmen, nor rich neighbors, or perhaps

they might also return the favor, and pay you back. But when you make a feast, ask the poor, the maimed, the lame, or the blind; and you will be blessed, because they don't have the resources to repay you. For you will be repaid in the resurrection of the righteous."

When one of those who sat at the table with him heard these things, he said to him, "Blessed is he who will feast in the Kingdom of God!"

But he said to him, "A certain man made a great supper, and he invited many people. He sent out his servant at supper time to tell those who were invited, 'Come, for everything is ready now.' They all as one began to make excuses.

"The first said to him, 'I have bought a field, and I must go and see it. Please have me excused.'

"Another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I must go try them out. Please have me excused.'

"Another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I can't come.'

"That servant came, and told his lord these things. Then the master of the house, being angry, said to his servant, 'Go out quickly into the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor, maimed, blind, and lame.'

"The servant said, 'Lord, it is done as you commanded, and there is still room.'

"The lord said to the servant, 'Go out into the highways and hedges, and compel them to come in, that my house may be filled. For I tell you that none of those men who were invited will taste of my supper.'"

1. In what two ways does Jesus correct the party guests? How are these two connected?
2. Do you put rules above people, show favoritism and seek recognition? How will you stop?
3. Jesus, I really need to stop seeking worldly approval and focus my energy on the poor...

April 11

Disregarding All Loves But One

Of Levi he said, "Your Thummim and your Urim are with your godly one...who said of his father, and of his mother, 'I have not seen him;' Neither did he acknowledge his brothers, nor...his own children...Yahweh, bless his substance – Deuteronomy 33:8-11

[Luke 14:25-35, Perea] Now great multitudes were going with him. He turned and said to them, "If anyone comes to me, and doesn't disregard his own father, mother, wife, children, brothers, and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he can't be my disciple. Whoever doesn't bear his own cross, and come after me, can't be my disciple. For which of you, desiring to build a tower, doesn't first sit down and count the cost, to see if he has enough to complete it? Or perhaps, when he has laid a foundation, and is not able to finish, everyone who sees begins to mock him, saying, 'This man began to build,

Whoever doesn't bear his own cross, and come after me, can't be my disciple

and wasn't able to finish.' Or what king, as he goes to encounter another king in war, will not sit down first and consider whether he is able with ten thousand to meet him who comes against him with twenty thousand? Or else, while the other is yet a great way off, he sends an envoy, and asks for conditions of peace. So therefore whoever of you who doesn't renounce all that he has, he can't be my disciple. Salt is good, but if the salt becomes flat and tasteless, with what do you season it? It is fit neither for the soil nor for the manure pile. It is thrown out. He who has ears to hear, let him hear."

1. Are you bearing your cross today? How does that look? Is family or friendship an idol?
2. What are your projects? Do you plan them? Do you plan how you'll follow Christ?
3. Jesus, you made me salty, but I can lose that by getting sucked into other things, like...



Lost and Found

Woe to the shepherds of Israel...You haven't strengthened the diseased...neither have you brought back that which was driven away, neither have you sought that which was lost; but with force and with rigor you have ruled over them – Ezekiel 34:2-4

[Luke 15:1-10, Perea] Now all the tax collectors and sinners were coming close to him to hear him. The Pharisees and the scribes murmured, saying, "This man welcomes sinners, and eats with them."

He told them this parable. "Which of you men, if you had one hundred sheep, and lost one of them, wouldn't leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one that was lost, until he found it? When he has found it, he carries it on his shoulders, rejoicing. When he comes home, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me,

There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner repenting

for I have found my sheep which was lost!' I tell you that even so there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents, than over ninety-nine righteous people who need no repentance. Or what woman, if she had ten drachma coins, if she lost one drachma coin, wouldn't light a lamp, sweep the house, and seek diligently until she found it? When she has found it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the drachma which I had lost.' Even so, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner repenting."

1. Do you help Jesus search for the lost? How so? Do you celebrate them or judge them?

2. Do you murmur? About what? How can you rejoice with others? How can you help?

3. Jesus, I was lost, but you found me; thank you for throwing a party with the angels to...



April 13

A Dead Son Lives, but a Living Son Dies to His True Duty

“Take the filthy garments off of him...Behold, I have caused your iniquity to pass from you, and I will clothe you with rich clothing...set a clean turban on his head.”
So they set a clean turban on his head, and clothed him – Zechariah 3:3-5

[Luke 15:11-32] He said, “A certain man had two sons. The younger of them said to his father, ‘Father, give me my share of your property.’ He divided his livelihood between them. Not many days after, the younger son gathered all of this together and traveled into a far country. There he wasted his property with riotous living. When he had spent all of it, there arose a severe famine in that country, and he began to be in need. He went and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed pigs. He wanted to fill his belly with the husks that the pigs ate, but no one gave him any. But when he came to himself he said, ‘How many hired servants of my father’s have bread enough to spare, and I’m dying with hunger! I will get up and go to my father, and will tell him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight. I am no more worthy to be called your son. Make me as one of your hired servants.”’

“He arose, and came to his father. But while he was still far off, his father saw him, and was moved with compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in your sight. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’

*My son, was dead,
and is alive again*

“But the father said to his servants, ‘Bring out the best robe, and put it on him. Put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet. Bring the fattened calf, kill it, and let us eat, and celebrate; for this, my son, was dead, and is alive again. He was lost, and is found.’ They began to celebrate.

“Now his elder son was in the field. As he came near to the house, he heard music and dancing. He called one of the servants to him, and asked what was going on. He said to him, ‘Your brother has come, and your father has killed the fattened calf, because he has received him back safe and healthy.’ But he was angry, and would not go in. Therefore his father came out, and begged him. But he answered his father, ‘Behold, these many years I have served you, and I never disobeyed a commandment of yours, but you never gave me a goat, that I might celebrate with my friends. But when this, your son, came, who has devoured your living with prostitutes, you killed the fattened calf for him.’

“He said to him, ‘Son, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours. But it was appropriate to celebrate and be glad, for this, your brother, was dead, and is alive again. He was lost, and is found.’”

1. How do the lost coin, sheep, and son differ? Do you relate to the son? His older brother?
2. The older son’s true duty was to search for his brother. How have you failed at this duty?
3. Father, you watched for me from afar; now that I’m back I need to start searching for...



True Riches

Yahweh...both riches and honor come from you...who am I, and what is my people, that we should be able to offer so willingly as this? For all things come from you, and of your own have we given you – 1 Chronicles 29:11:14

[Luke 16:1-13, Perea] He also said to his disciples, "There was a certain rich man who had a manager. An accusation was made to him that this man was wasting his possessions. He called him, and said to him, 'What is this that I hear about you? Give an accounting of your management, for you can no longer be manager.'

"The manager said within himself, 'What will I do, seeing that my lord is taking away the management position from me? I don't have strength to dig. I am ashamed to beg. I know what I will do, so that when I am removed from management, they may receive me into their houses.' Calling each one of his lord's debtors to him, he said to the first, 'How much do you owe to my lord?' He said, 'A hundred batos of oil.' He said to him, 'Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.' Then he said to another, 'How much do you owe?' He said, 'A hundred

cors of wheat.' He said to him, 'Take your bill, and write eighty.'

The children of this world are, in their own generation, wiser than the children of the light

"His lord commended the dishonest manager because he had done wisely, for the children of this world are, in their own

generation, wiser than the children of the light. I tell you, make for yourselves friends by means of unrighteous mammon, so that when you fail, they may receive you into the eternal tents. He who is faithful in a very little is faithful also in much. He who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much. If therefore you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? If you have not been faithful in that which is another's, who will give you that which is your own? No servant can serve two masters, for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to one, and despise the other. You aren't able to serve God and mammon."

1. Should we use "unrighteous" wealth to make friends? Why? Why is it "unrighteous"?

2. Have you been faithful with wealth? Do you see it as God's or yours? Who do you serve?

3. God, I want to be wise with unrighteous wealth so you'll trust me with true riches; help me...



April 15

Repent! God Knows Your Heart

Solomon,...know...God...with a perfect heart and...a willing mind;...Yahweh searches all hearts, and understands all the imaginations of the thoughts...seek him, he will be found by you...forsake him, he will cast you off forever – 1 Chronicles 28:9

[Luke 16:14-31] The Pharisees, who were lovers of money, also heard all these things, and they scoffed at him. He said to them, “You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of men, but God knows your hearts. For that which is exalted among men is an abomination in the sight of God. The law and the prophets were until John. From that time the Good News of the Kingdom of God is preached, and everyone is forcing his way into it. But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away, than for one tiny stroke of a pen in the law to fall. Everyone who divorces his wife, and marries another, commits adultery. He who marries one who is divorced from a husband commits adultery.

“Now there was a certain rich man, and he was clothed in purple and fine linen, living in luxury every day. A certain beggar, named Lazarus, was laid at his gate, full of sores, and desiring to be fed with the crumbs that fell from the rich man’s table. Yes, even the dogs came and licked his sores. It happened that the beggar died, and that he was carried away by the angels to Abraham’s bosom. The rich man also died, and was buried. In Hades, he lifted

*You...justify yourselves
in the sight of men, but
God knows your hearts*

up his eyes, being in torment, and saw Abraham far off, and Lazarus at his bosom. He cried and said, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus, that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue! For I am in anguish in this flame.’

“But Abraham said, ‘Son, remember that you, in your lifetime, received your good things, and Lazarus, in the same way, bad things. But now here he is comforted and you are in anguish. Besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, that those who want to pass from here to you are not able, and that none may cross over from there to us.’

“He said, ‘I ask you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father’s house; for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, so they won’t also come into this place of torment.’

“But Abraham said to him, ‘They have Moses and the prophets. Let them listen to them.’

“He said, ‘No, father Abraham, but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.’

“He said to him, ‘If they don’t listen to Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded if one rises from the dead.’”

1. Why did the Pharisees (who wore purple) scoff? Do you equate wealth and godliness?
2. How was entering the Kingdom different before John? Why mention divorce and law?
3. Jesus, I live in luxury and license, I repent of my self-sufficiency and self-justifying...

April 16

Forgiveness Requires Faith, Faith Requires Humility

Then Eliphaz the Temanite answered, "Can a man be profitable to God? Surely he who is wise is profitable to himself. Is it any pleasure to the Almighty, that you are righteous? Or does it benefit him, that you make your ways perfect?" – Job 22:1-3

[Luke 17:1-10, Perea] He said to the disciples, "It is impossible that no occasions of stumbling should come, but woe to him through whom they come! It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea, rather than that he should cause one of these little ones to stumble. Be careful. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him. If he repents, forgive him. If he sins against you seven times in the day, and seven times returns, saying, 'I repent,' you shall forgive him."

The apostles said to the Lord, "Increase our faith."

The Lord said, "If you had faith like a grain of mustard seed, you would tell this sycamore tree, 'Be uprooted, and be planted in the sea,' and it would obey you. But who is there among you, having a servant plowing or keeping sheep, that will say, when he comes in from the field, 'Come immediately and sit down at the table,' and will not rather tell him, 'Prepare my supper, clothe yourself properly, and serve me, while I eat and drink. Afterward you shall eat and drink'? Does he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded? I think not. Even so you also, when you have done all the things that are commanded you, say, 'We are unworthy servants. We have done our duty.'"

1. Who do you need to forgive? Does it require faith? How so? How big is your faith? When Elisha had come...the child was dead...He...prayed to Yahweh...the child opened his eyes...he said, "Take up your son." Then she went in, and fell at his feet, and bowed herself to the ground; and she took up her son, and went out.

2. When have you prayed in faith? What happened? Did you become proud or humble?

3. Jesus, I want to serve you by praying in faith for your work; but I don't pridefulness to...

Lazarus' Death Glorifies God and His Son

When Elisha had come...the child was dead...he...prayed to Yahweh...the child opened his eyes...he said, "Take up your son." Then she went in, and fell at his feet, and bowed herself to the ground; and she took up her son – 2 Kings 4:32-37

[John 11:1-29, Bethany] Now a certain man was sick, Lazarus from Bethany, of the village of Mary and her sister, Martha. It was that Mary who had anointed the Lord with ointment, and wiped his feet with her

hair, whose brother, Lazarus, was sick. The sisters therefore sent to him, saying, "Lord, behold, he for whom you have great affection is sick." But when Jesus heard it, he said, "This sickness is not to death, but for the glory of God, that God's Son may be glorified by it." Now Jesus loved Martha, and her sister, and Lazarus. When therefore he heard that he was sick, he stayed two days in the place where he was. Then after this he said to the disciples, "Let's go into Judea again."

The disciples told him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just trying to stone you, and are you going there again?"

Jesus answered, "Aren't there twelve hours of daylight? If a man walks in the day, he doesn't stumble, because he sees the light of this world. But if a man walks in the night, he stumbles, because the light isn't in him." He said these things, and after that, he said to them, "Our friend, Lazarus, has fallen asleep, but I am going so that I may awake him out of sleep."

The disciples therefore said, "Lord, if he has fallen asleep, he will recover."

Now Jesus had spoken of his death, but they thought that he spoke of taking rest in sleep. So Jesus said to them plainly then, "Lazarus is dead. I am glad for your sakes that I

was not there, so that you may believe. Nevertheless, let's go to him."

I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will still live, even if he dies

Thomas therefore, who is called Didymus, said to his fellow disciples, "Let's go also, that we may die with him."

So when Jesus came, he found that he had been in the tomb four days already. Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, about fifteen stadia away. Many of the Jews had joined the women around Martha and Mary, to console them concerning their brother. Then when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, but Mary stayed in the house. Therefore Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you would have been here, my brother wouldn't have died. Even now I know that, whatever you ask of God, God will give you." Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again."

Martha said to him, "I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day."

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will still live, even if he dies. Whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

She said to him, "Yes, Lord. I have come to believe that you are the Christ, God's Son, he who comes into the world."

When she had said this, she went away, and called Mary, her sister, secretly, saying, "The Teacher is here, and is calling you."

When she heard this, she arose quickly, and went to him.

1. How will Jesus be glorified through Lazarus' death? Can you relate to Thomas? How?
2. What does "walks in the day" mean? Do you do this? Why did Martha tell Mary secretly?
3. Jesus, you are the resurrection, the life, and the light; I believe this in theory but I want to...

Jesus Weeps and Many Believe

The king was...saying, "Please tell me all the great things that Elisha has done."...as he was telling the king ...the woman...cried to the king...Gehazi said, "My lord, O king, this is the woman, and this is her son, whom Elisha restored to life." – Ezekiel 34:11-13

[John 11:30-46] Now Jesus had not yet come into the village, but was in the place where Martha met him. Then the Jews who were with Mary in the house, and were consoling her, when they saw her, that she rose up quickly and went out, followed her, saying, "She is going to the tomb to weep there." Therefore when Mary came to where Jesus was, and saw him, she fell down at his feet, saying to him, "Lord, if you would have been here, my brother wouldn't have died."

When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews weeping who came with her, he groaned in the spirit, and was troubled, and said, "Where have you laid him?"

They told him, "Lord, come and see."

Jesus wept.

The Jews therefore said, "See how much affection he had for him!" Some of them said, "Couldn't this man, who opened the eyes of him who was blind, have also kept this man from dying?"

Jesus therefore, again groaning in himself, came to the tomb. Now it was a cave, and a

stone lay against it. Jesus said, "Take away the stone."

Many of the Jews, who saw what Jesus did, believed in him

Martha, the sister of him who was dead, said to him, "Lord, by this time there is a stench, for he has been dead four days."

Jesus said to her, "Didn't I tell you that if you believed, you would see God's glory?"

So they took away the stone from the place where the dead man was lying. Jesus lifted up his eyes, and said, "Father, I thank you that you listened to me. I know that you always listen to me, but because of the multitude that stands around I said this, that they may believe that you sent me." When he had said this, he cried with a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!"

He who was dead came out, bound hand and foot with wrappings, and his face was wrapped around with a cloth.

Jesus said to them, "Free him, and let him go."

Therefore many of the Jews, who came to Mary and saw what Jesus did, believed in him. But some of them went away to the Pharisees, and told them the things which Jesus had done.

1. What specific details do you notice? Why are they important? How was Jesus glorified?

2. When have you wept? Why did Jesus? When has he not seemed to be there for you?

3. Jesus, you always come through, but right now I have trouble seeing how you're going...



April 19

Authorities Decide Jesus' Fate, but Only by God's Design

Doeg the Edomite...said, "I saw the son of Jesse coming to Nob... Ahimelech...gave him food, and gave him the sword of Goliath the Philistine."
The king said, "You shall surely die, Ahimelech" – 1 Samuel 22:9-16

[John 11:47-57, Jerusalem and Ephraim] The chief priests therefore and the Pharisees gathered a council, and said, "What are we doing? For this man does many signs. If we leave him alone like this, everyone will believe in him, and the Romans will come and take away both our place and our nation."

But a certain one of them, Caiaphas, being high priest that year, said to them, "You know nothing at all, nor do you consider that it is advantageous for us that one man should die for the people, and that

the whole nation not perish." Now he didn't say this of himself, but being high priest that year, he prophesied that Jesus would die for the nation, and not for the nation only, but that he might also gather together into one the children of God who are scattered abroad. So from that day forward they took counsel that they might put him to death. Jesus therefore walked no more openly among the Jews, but departed from there into the country near the wilderness, to a city called Ephraim. He stayed there with his disciples.

1. Who told the Pharisees? Why? How was Jesus' execution justified? Do you justify evil?

2. What did the Pharisees admit? How was Jesus like David? Where is your "Ephraim"?

3. Jesus, how can I thank you for dying for me? Please forgive me for justifying things I...

April 20

A Samaritan Outcast with a Humble, Thankful Heart

To him who is...of a contrite spirit..."Your brothers who hate you, who cast you out for my name's sake, have said, 'Let Yahweh be glorified, that we may see your joy;' but it is those who shall be disappointed." – Isaiah 66:2-5

[Luke 17:11-19, the border between Galilee and Samaria] It happened as he was on his way to Jerusalem, that he was passing along the borders of Samaria and Galilee. As he entered into a certain village, ten men who were lepers met him, who stood at a distance. They lifted up their voices, saying, "Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!"

When he saw them, he said to them, "Go and show yourselves to the priests." It

happened that as they went, they were cleansed. One of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back, glorifying God with a loud voice. He fell on his face at Jesus' feet, giving him thanks; and he was a Samaritan. Jesus answered, "Weren't the ten cleansed? But where are the nine? Were there none found who returned to give glory to God, except this stranger?" Then he said to him, "Get up, and go your way. Your faith has healed you."

1. How are you an outcast? In what ways can Jesus heal you? How can you show thanks?
2. What has Jesus done for you already? Have you thanked him enough? Why or why not?
3. Jesus, thank you for taking an outcast like me and... Please help me reach out to outcasts...

April 21

Man Asks, “When and Where?” God Says, “Just Prepare!”

Stop trusting in man, whose breath is in his nostrils;
for of what account is he? – Isaiah 2:22

[Luke 17:20-37, Galilee] Being asked by the Pharisees when the Kingdom of God would come, he answered them, “The Kingdom of God doesn’t come with observation; neither will they say, ‘Look, here!’ or, ‘Look, there!’ for behold, the Kingdom of God is within you.”

He said to the disciples, “The days will come, when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it. They will tell you, ‘Look, here!’ or ‘Look, there!’ Don’t go away, nor follow after them, for as the lightning, when it flashes out of the one part under the sky, shines to the other part under the sky; so will the Son of Man be in his day. But first, he must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation. As it happened in the days of Noah, even so will it be also in the days of the Son of Man. They ate, they drank, they married, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ship, and the

Whoever seeks to save his life loses it, but whoever loses his life preserves it

flood came, and destroyed them all. Likewise, even as it happened in the days of Lot: they ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; but in the day that Lot went out from Sodom, it rained fire and sulfur from the sky, and destroyed them all. It will be the same way in the day that the Son of Man is revealed. In that day, he who will be on the housetop, and his goods in the house, let him not go down to take them away. Let him who is in the field likewise not turn back. Remember Lot’s wife! Whoever seeks to save his life loses it, but whoever loses his life preserves it. I tell you, in that night there will be two people in one bed. The one will be taken, and the other will be left. There will be two grinding grain together. One will be taken, and the other will be left.”

They, answering, asked him, “Where, Lord?”

He said to them, “Where the body is, there will the vultures also be gathered together.”

1. How does Jesus answer the questions, “When and where”? Who’s the body? Vultures?
2. How are you saving your life? Losing it? How will you “remember Lot’s wife” today?
3. Jesus, I want to know when you’ll return so that I can be in control, but you told me to...

April 22

Crying out to God, Day and Night

Yahweh, the God of my salvation, I have cried day and night before you.
Let my prayer enter into your presence. Turn your ear to my cry. – Psalm 88:1-2

[Luke 18:1-8, Galilee] He also spoke a parable to them that they must always pray, and not give up, saying, "There was a judge in a certain city who didn't fear God, and didn't respect man. A widow was in that city, and she often came to him, saying, 'Defend me from my adversary!' He wouldn't for a while, but afterward he said to himself, 'Though I neither fear God, nor respect man, yet because this widow bothers me, I will

defend her, or else she will wear me out by her continual coming."

Won't God avenge his chosen ones, who are crying out to him?

The Lord said, "Listen to what the unrighteous judge says. Won't God avenge his chosen ones, who are crying out to him day and night, and yet he exercises patience with them? I tell you that he will avenge them quickly. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?"

1. How often do you pray? What do you pray about? What things haven't happened yet?
2. Why compare God to this judge? Why ask if faith will be found on earth? Do you have it?
3. Jesus, you could come back any second, I want to be found with faith, so today I pray...

April 23

To Be Forgiven, You Must Be Humbled

Help us, God of our salvation, for the glory of your name.
Deliver us, and forgive our sins, for your name's sake – Psalm 79:9

[Luke 18:9-14, Galilee] He spoke also this parable to certain people who were convinced of their own righteousness, and who despised all others. “Two men went up into the temple to pray; one was a Pharisee, and the other was a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed to himself like this: ‘God, I thank you, that I am not like the rest of men, extortioners, unrighteous, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week. I give tithes of all that I get.’ But the tax collector, standing far away,

*God, be merciful
to me, a sinner!*

wouldn't even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’ I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted.”

It happened when Jesus had finished these words, he *arose from there and* departed from Galilee, and came into the borders of Judea beyond the Jordan. Great multitudes followed him, and he healed them there. *As he usually did, he was again teaching them.* [Matthew 19:1-2, Mark 10:1]

1. Are you convinced of your own righteousness? Do you look down on others? How so?
2. How have you sinned? How do you ask for forgiveness? How will you humble yourself?
3. Jesus, I judge others and give myself too much credit, please forgive me; today I will...

April 24

Yahweh Seeks a Godly Seed, Not Contract Marriages

Did he not make you one?...Why one? He sought a godly seed. Therefore take heed to your spirit, and let no one deal treacherously against the wife of his youth. For I hate divorce," says Yahweh, the God of Israel – Malachi 2:13-16

[Matthew 19:3-12, Perea] Pharisees came to him, testing him, and saying, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any reason?"

He answered, "What did Moses command you?"

They said, "Moses allowed a certificate of divorce to be written, and to divorce her."

But he answered, "Haven't you read that he who made them from the beginning made them male and female, [Genesis 1:27] and said, 'For this cause a man shall leave his father and mother, and shall join to his wife; and the two shall become one flesh?' [Genesis 2:24] So that they are no more two, but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, don't let man tear apart."

They asked him, "Why then did Moses command us to give her a bill of divorce, and divorce her?"

He said to them, "Moses, because of the hardness of your hearts, allowed you to divorce

your wives, but from the beginning of creation it has not been so. I tell you that whoever divorces his wife, except for sexual immorality, and marries another, commits adultery against her; and he who marries her when she is divorced commits adultery. If a woman herself divorces her husband, and marries another, she commits adultery."

In the house, his disciples said to him, "If this is the case of the man with his wife, it is not expedient to marry."

But he said to them, "Not all men can receive this saying, but those to whom it is given. For there are eunuchs who were born that way from their mother's womb, and there are eunuchs who were made eunuchs by men; and there are eunuchs who made themselves eunuchs for the Kingdom of Heaven's sake. He who is able to receive it, let him receive it." (Mark 10:2-12)

What...God has
joined together, don't
let man tear apart.

1. Whose marriage (or divorce) affects you most? How can you help it (or deal with it)?
2. Who should stay single? Did you consider this? Why? Is "immorality" just a loophole?
3. Jesus, the Pharisees used loopholes to turn your covenant into a contract, please help me...

April 25

Born Again to Be Little Children for the Kingdom

Surely I have stilled and quieted my soul,
like a weaned child with his mother,
like a weaned child is my soul within me. – Ezekiel 34:11-13

[Matthew 19:13-15, Judea] Then little children *and babies* were brought to him, that he should lay his hands on them and pray; and the disciples rebuked those who were bringing them. But Jesus was moved with indignation. *Jesus summoned them and said, "Allow the little children, and don't forbid them to come to me;*

Allow the little children

for the Kingdom of Heaven belongs to ones like these. Most certainly I tell you, whoever will not receive the Kingdom of God like a little child, he will in no way enter into it." He took them in his arms, and blessed them, laid his hands on them, and departed from there. [Mark 10:13-16, Luke 18:15-17]

1. How are babies like God's redeemed? Why was Jesus so indignant? Would you be?
2. How will you receive the Kingdom like a baby? What "baby" can you allow to come?
3. Jesus, I receive your Kingdom without any hope of entering on my own power, please...



Breaking our Bonds by Giving to the Poor

Isn't this the fast that I have chosen: to release the bonds of wickedness, to undo the bands of the yoke, to...break every yoke...to distribute your bread to the hungry, and that you bring the poor who are cast out to your house? – Isaiah 58:6-7

[Matthew 19:16-22, Perea] Behold, As he was going out into the way, one certain ruler came to him, ran, knelt before him, and said, "Good teacher, what good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?"

He said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but one, that is, God. But if you want to enter into life, keep the commandments."

He said to him, "Which ones?"

Jesus said, "'You shall not murder.' 'You shall not commit adultery.' 'You shall not steal.' 'You shall not offer false testimony.' 'Honor your

If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have, and give to the poor

father and mother.' [Exodus 20:12-16] And, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'" [Leviticus 19:18]

The young man said to him, "All these things I have observed from my youth up. What do I still lack?"

Jesus looking at him loved him and said to him, "If you want to be perfect, go, sell what you have, and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me." But when the young man heard the saying, his face fell and he went away sad, for he was one who had great possessions. [Mark 10:17-22, Luke 18:18-23]

1. Does money bind you? What else does? How can you break free? Who can you bless?

2. How does yesterday's reading compare to today's? Are you self-righteous? How so?

3. Jesus, you convict me until I walk away, but I need to turn back and admit, "I CAN'T..."

God Does the Impossible, We Respond with Sacrifice

Ah Lord Yahweh! Behold, you have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and by your outstretched arm; there is nothing too hard for you – Jeremiah 32:17

[Matthew 19:23-30] Jesus *seeing that he became very sad*, looked around, and said to his disciples, “Most certainly I say to you, a rich man will enter into the Kingdom of Heaven with difficulty.”

The disciples were amazed at his words. But Jesus answered again, “Children, how hard is it for those who trust in riches to enter into the Kingdom of God! Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through a needle’s eye, than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of God.”

When the disciples heard it, they were exceedingly astonished, saying, “Who then can be saved?”

Looking at them, Jesus said, “With men this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”

Behold, we have left everything, and followed you

Then Peter began to tell him, “Behold, we have left everything, and followed you.

What then will we have?”

Jesus said to them, “Most certainly I tell you that you who have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of Man will sit on the throne of his glory, you also will sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. Everyone who has left houses, or brothers, or sisters, or father, or mother, or wife, or children, or lands, for my name’s sake, *for the Kingdom of God’s sake*, and for the sake of the Good News, will receive one hundred times more now in this time, houses, brothers, sisters, mothers, children, and land, with persecutions, and, in the age *and in the world to come*, will inherit eternal life. But many will be last who are first; and first who are last.” [Mark 10:23-31, Luke 18:24-30]

1. What did the disciples assume? How do we enter the Kingdom? What have you left?

2. Jesus lists 8 things left and 7 things received; what differs? What are your persecutions?

3. Lord God, nothing is impossible for you! Today for your Kingdom’s sake I will leave...



April 28

God Does What He Wants with What He Owns

Jesse made...his sons to pass before Samuel. Samuel said...“Yahweh has not chosen these...are all your children here?” He said, “There remains yet the youngest”...Yahweh said, “Arise, anoint him; for this is he.” – 1 Samuel 16:10-12

[Matthew 20:1-16] “For the Kingdom of Heaven is like a man who was the master of a household, who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. When he had agreed with the laborers for a denarius a day, he sent them into his vineyard. He went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the marketplace. To them he said, ‘You also go into the vineyard, and whatever is right I will give you.’ So they went their way. Again he went out about the sixth and the ninth hour, and did likewise. About the eleventh hour he went out, and found others standing idle. He said to them, ‘Why do you stand here all day idle?’

“They said to him, ‘Because no one has hired us.’

“He said to them, ‘You also go into the vineyard, and you will receive whatever is right.’ When evening had come, the lord of the vineyard said to his manager, ‘Call the laborers

and pay them their wages, beginning from the last to the first.’

**The last will be first,
and the first last**

“When those who were hired at about the eleventh hour came, they each received a denarius.

When the first came, they supposed that they would receive more; and they likewise each received a denarius. When they received it, they murmured against the master of the household, saying, ‘These last have spent one hour, and you have made them equal to us, who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat!’

“But he answered one of them, ‘Friend, I am doing you no wrong. Didn’t you agree with me for a denarius? Take that which is yours, and go your way. It is my desire to give to this last just as much as to you. Isn’t it lawful for me to do what I want to with what I own? Or is your eye evil, because I am good?’ So the last will be first, and the first last. For many are called, but few are chosen.”

1. What assumption does this parable overturn? What’s our eternal wage? Who chooses it?

2. Why did those standing idle agree to work? How could you apply this to evangelism?

3. Jesus, you hired me at the eleventh hour and decide what’s right to give me—such as...

April 29

Jesus is Our Ransom, but James and John Want Rewards

I will ransom them from the power of Sheol, I will redeem them from death!
Death, where are your plagues? Sheol, where is your destruction? – Hosea 13:14

[Matthew 20:17-28, Perea] As Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve disciples aside, and they were amazed; and those who followed were afraid. And on the way he said to them, “Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and all the things that are written through the prophets concerning the Son of Man will be completed and the Son of Man will be delivered to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn him to death, and will hand him over to the Gentiles to mock, to scourge, and to crucify; he will be treated shamefully, and spit on and the third day he will be raised up.” They understood none of these things. This saying was hidden from them, and they didn’t understand the things that were said.

Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee, James and John, came to him with her sons, kneeling and asking a certain thing of him (“Teacher, we want you to do for us whatever we will ask.”) He said to her, “What do you want me to do for you?”

She said to him, “Command that these, my two sons, may sit, one on your right hand, and one on your left hand, in your Kingdom glory.”

But Jesus answered, “You don’t know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with?”

The Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve

They said to him, “We are able.” He said to them, “You will indeed drink my cup, and be baptized with the baptism that I am baptized with, but to sit on my right hand and on my left hand is not mine to give; but it is for whom it has been prepared by my Father.”

When the ten heard it, they were indignant with the two brothers, James and John.

But Jesus summoned them, and said, “You know that the rulers of the nations lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. It shall not be so among you, but whoever desires to become great among you shall be your servant. Whoever desires to be first among you shall be bondservant of all, even as the Son of Man came not to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.” [Mark 10:32-45*, Luke 18:31-34] *Mark has the brothers addressing Jesus, but Matthew has their mother speaking. Mark names the source of these words; Matthew names the speaker. Thus, both narratives are correct.

1. How does today’s lesson compare to the previous three? How must your mind change?
2. What are your ambitions? What should they be? How does Jesus’ example help you?
3. Jesus, thank you for embracing crucifixion and shame, ransoming me from death; I will...

April 30

Blind Bartimaeus Perseveres and is Healed

You shall not curse the deaf, nor put a stumbling block before the blind; but you shall fear your God. I am Yahweh – Leviticus 19:14

[Mark 10:46-52, Jericho] They came to Jericho. As he went out from Jericho, with his disciples and a great multitude, the son of Timaeus, Bartimaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the road *begging. Hearing a multitude going by, he asked what this meant.* When he heard that it was Jesus the Nazarene passing by, he began to cry out, and say, “Jesus, you son of David, have mercy on me!” Many *who led the way* rebuked him, that he should be quiet, but he cried out much more, “Lord, You son of David, have mercy on me!”

Jesus stood still, and said, “**Call him.**”

They called the blind man, saying to him, “Cheer up! Get up. He is calling you!”

He, casting away his cloak, sprang up, and came to Jesus.

Jesus asked him, “**What do you want me to do for you?**”

The blind man said to him, “Rabboni, that I may see again.”

Jesus said to him, “**Receive your sight. Go your way. Your faith has made you well.**”

Immediately he received his sight, and followed Jesus in the way, *glorifying God. All the people, when they saw it, praised God.* [Matthew 20:29-30*, Luke 18:35-43] *Matthew has two blind men; most likely, Bartimaeus was the spokesman and the other was less prominent.

1. Who rebuked Bartimaeus? Why? Why did Jesus call him and ask him what he wanted?
2. How are you blind? What will you do to be healed? Is your faith like Bartimaeus'? How?
3. Jesus, you found me begging and gave me healing, today I need healing again so that...