

Caught by Jesus

6-WEEK DEVOTIONAL AND PERSONAL STUDY IN
THE GOSPEL OF MARK

By Kelli LaFramboise

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Table of Contents

Introduction	1
Week One.....	4
Week Two	17
Week Three.....	30
Week Four.....	44
Week Five	58
Week Six.....	72

Introduction

This, you will see, is a very simple book written for a very simple reason: to look more closely at the very simple message of the Gospel. My prayer for this book is that the Lord uses it to draw you closer to Him as you dive deep into His word -- going beyond the surface of the text, studying the original Greek and Hebrew words, and seeking out how to apply the Word to your daily life.

In the Book of Mark you will see that Jesus is the beloved Son of God who came to find His lost sheep and to serve them well. Through the verses Jesus exercised His divine power and authority to command nature, heal the sick, cast out demons and forgive sin. This is the same power and authority that He set aside to do the will of the Father -- to lay down His life as the ultimate sacrifice so that "he who believes and is baptized will be saved" (Mark 16:16).

This study is divided into six weeks. The goal is to study the key and supporting passages on days one through five. On these days I have included a small devotional intended to help you look more closely at the text. Following each devotional there is a series of questions and space provided for you to write out your response. These questions are intended to help you identify what God is speaking directly to you -- where your attention is being caught by Jesus. If nothing jumps off the pages of your bible at first read, do not be discouraged. Simply read the passage again, paying attention to anything that creates even the smallest stir inside you. The Lord often speaks with a still small voice (1 Kings 19:11-13). Be aware of this and listen.

Days six and seven of this study are designated for review and reflection. On these days spend time reviewing the verses that seemed to jump off the pages, the notes you took, and the prayers you wrote down. As you reflect on the week, try to identify any ideas or

themes the Lord may be trying to teach you. Spend time quietly seeking the Lord in prayer and asking Him to reveal to you how to apply what you have learned to your life.

There is also a memory verse identified at the beginning of each week. Should you choose to commit to verse memorization, I suggest that you copy the verse down and post it where you will see it several times a day. For more suggestions on verse memorization check out <https://scripturetyper.com> and <http://donotdepart.com/bible-memory-resources>.

In addition to this book and your Bible, I suggest that you have a few more resources handy. First, you'll need a Strong's concordance in order to define the original Greek and Hebrew words that catch your attention during this study. You can purchase a Strong's from most Christian bookstores and online book sellers. You can check out my book store on www.quietlyreminded.com for my recommendation. If you prefer to go paperless, you may want to consider downloading e-Sword, an app available through www.e-sword.net. You can also access Strong's for free through www.blueletterbible.org. However, I do not recommend this if being online will distract you during your quiet time.

You may find that the space provided in this book is not enough to record your thoughts and prayers. If not, keep an empty notebook or journal nearby. You may want to consider purchasing the Caught by Jesus companion journal.

Last, but certainly not least, you'll need an open heart ready to be filled, taught, and pruned by the Holy Spirit. Each morning, study with expectation, knowing that the Lord desires to speak to you and refine you to be more like His Son, Jesus Christ. Be prepared to have the hidden places of your heart revealed and your sin exposed. With an open and honest heart, be prepared to repent and ask for forgiveness. Expect His presence. Expect His grace. Most important, expect for His love to wash over you in an overwhelming and indescribable manner.

Search me, O God, and know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties; And see if there is any wicked way in me, And lead me in the way everlasting (Psalms 139:23-24).

Week One

Memory Verse :: John 3:30

Write :: Use this space to write out the weekly memory verse.

:: Day 1 ::

Prayer :: Use this space to write down anything you need to take to the Lord in prayer. Surrender these cares/needs/worries/troubles/requests to Him. Surrender your heart to Him. Invite Him to sit with you and teach you. Ask that His presence be felt and that His voice be heard.

Devotional :: Read the following scriptures:

Key Text :: Mark 1:1-15

Supporting Passages :: Isaiah 40:1-5, Luke 9:35, John 3:27-30

John was a messenger. Whose messenger (v2)? What was his purpose and his message (vv 3-4)?

John was a messenger sent by God. He had purpose to prepare the way for the coming Christ. He preached a message that was intended to point others to Jesus. John said He (He, being Jesus) "must increase, but I must decrease" (John 3:30). John knew that his life's purpose was not to gain fame or fortune, it was not to become the most popular, or to be deemed the hardest worker for Christ. No, he knew that his sole purpose was to bring glory to God through the Son. As Christians, this should be our purpose for living as well.

In what ways must you decrease? What areas of your life can you direct the spotlight toward Jesus and not yourself?

Personal Study :: Read the key passage again. Allow your attention to be caught by Jesus. What other verse or verses jumped off the page? Write them here.

What words caught your attention? Look up the original Greek word in Strong's concordance and use this space to write the definition.

Consider all you've read today and what the Lord is speaking to your heart at the moment. How can you apply this to your life today? Use this space to journal your thoughts and prayers.

:: Day 2 ::

Prayer :: Use this space to write down anything you need to take to the Lord in prayer. Surrender these cares/needs/worries/troubles/requests to Him. Surrender your heart to Him. Invite Him to sit with you and teach you. Ask that His presence be felt and that His voice be heard.

Devotional :: Read the following scriptures:

Key Text :: Mark 1:16-45

Supporting Passages :: Jeremiah 7:23, Romans 1:5-6, Hebrews 5:9

Jesus called Simon, Andrew, James, and John to follow Him. How did they respond (vv 16-20)?

The scriptures say that these men immediately followed Jesus. In other words, they obeyed Him without question the very moment He spoke. What amazes me the most is that they didn't stop to ponder what would happen to their boats or fishing nets, how their families would feel about their decision, or consider any other logistics of following Jesus. They simply obeyed.

In what ways have you been able to obey the Lord without question? What areas of life are you still struggling to submit to His authority?

Personal Study :: Read the key passage again. Allow your attention to be caught by Jesus. What other verse or verses jumped off the page? Write them here.

What words caught your attention? Look up the original Greek word in Strong's concordance and use this space to write the definition.

Consider all you've read today and what the Lord is speaking to your heart at the moment. How can you apply this to your life today? Use this space to journal your thoughts and prayers.

:: Day 3 ::

Prayer :: Use this space to write down anything you need to take to the Lord in prayer. Surrender these cares/needs/worries/troubles/requests to Him. Surrender your heart to Him. Invite Him to sit with you and teach you. Ask that His presence be felt and that His voice be heard.

Devotional :: Read the following scriptures:

Key Text :: Mark 2:1-28

Supporting Passages :: John 17:20-21, 1 Thessalonians 5:17, 1 Timothy 2:1-4

Who carried the paralytic to Jesus (vv 1-4)? What did Jesus see that caused Him to respond (v 5)?

Four men carried their paralytic friend to Jesus and when it got difficult they didn't give up. The crowd was blocking their path so they found another route. The paralytic couldn't get himself in to see Jesus. Who knows, maybe he didn't even want to go, but his friends were determined to get him there. And when Jesus saw their faith, He responded. Ponder that little word for a minute -- their. Jesus responded to their faith, not the faith of the paralytic. I can't help but see this story as a metaphor for carrying others to Jesus in prayer.

Who do you know that can't get themselves to Jesus? Are you carrying him or her to the Lord in prayer?

Personal Study :: Read the key passage again. Allow your attention to be caught by Jesus. What other verse or verses jumped off the page? Write them here.

What words caught your attention? Look up the original Greek word in Strong's concordance and use this space to write the definition.

Consider all you've read today and what the Lord is speaking to your heart at the moment. How can you apply this to your life today? Use this space to journal your thoughts and prayers.

:: Day 4 ::

Prayer :: Use this space to write down anything you need to take to the Lord in prayer. Surrender these cares/needs/worries/troubles/requests to Him. Surrender your heart to Him. Invite Him to sit with you and teach you. Ask that His presence be felt and that His voice be heard.

Devotional :: Read the following scriptures:

Key Text :: Mark 3:1-35

Supporting Passages :: Proverbs 11:3, 21:3 & 28:6, Philippians 4:8, 1 Peter 2:12

The word integrity sticks out to me in this passage. No, we don't actually read the word, but Jesus's actions speak loudly of His integrity. Mark 3:5 tells us that Jesus was angry with the Pharisees, but did you notice how He reacted to His own anger? Did He shout at them, or point out the hardness of their hearts, or in any way attempt to prove that He was right? No, He simply did what was right. He healed the man with the withered hand.

Jesus was a Man of integrity because He did what was right despite having people oppose Him (v6), despite being mocked (v21), despite being lied about (v22), and despite distractions (v31-32). His character was, and is, in stark contrast to the Pharisees who were more concerned with being right than with doing right.

Do you believe you are a person of integrity? Are you more concerned with doing what is right or with being right? How can you be more like Jesus?

Personal Study :: Read the key passage again. Allow your attention to be caught by Jesus. What other verse or verses jumped off the page? Write them here.

What words caught your attention? Look up the original Greek word in Strong's concordance and use this space to write the definition.

Consider all you've read today and what the Lord is speaking to your heart at the moment. How can you apply this to your life today? Use this space to journal your thoughts and prayers.

:: Day 5 ::

Prayer :: Use this space to write down anything you need to take to the Lord in prayer. Surrender these cares/needs/worries/troubles/requests to Him. Surrender your heart to Him. Invite Him to sit with you and teach you. Ask that His presence be felt and that His voice be heard.

Devotional :: Read the following scriptures:

Key Text :: Mark 4:1-20

Supporting Passages :: Psalm 119:11-12, 103; Proverbs 4:20-22; Proverbs 30:5-6; John 17:17

Since you are taking the time to study your Bible, I think it is safe to assume that you want to be of the "ones sown on good ground, those who hear the word, accept it, and bear fruit" (Mark 4:20). But this doesn't just happen by chance. It takes effort on our part.

The Lord has the responsibility of calling us and sowing the Word in our hearts. Once it is there it is our responsibility to see it nourished. We each must decide to accept the Word or reject it (v 15). We decide if we are going to enjoy it in the good times but forget it in the bad (vv 16-17). It is our choice to make knowing the Word our number one priority or to care more for the things of this world (v19). To bear good fruit we must each decide to pursue the Word and seek to understand it (v20).

How well are you nourishing the Word that has been planted in your heart? Where are you seeing good fruit in your life?

Personal Study :: Read the key passage again. Allow your attention to be caught by Jesus. What other verse or verses jumped off the page? Write them here.

What words caught your attention? Look up the original Greek word in Strong's concordance and use this space to write the definition.

Consider all you've read today and what the Lord is speaking to your heart at the moment. How can you apply this to your life today? Use this space to journal your thoughts and prayers.

:: Days 6 & 7 ::

Prayer :: Use this space to write down anything you need to take to the Lord in prayer. Surrender these cares/needs/worries/troubles/requests to Him. Surrender your heart to Him. Invite Him to sit with you and teach you. Ask that His presence be felt and that His voice be heard.

Review :: Spend some time reading again the passages that caught your attention this week. Review the words you studied and look over your notes.

Are there ideas that are repeating themselves? What themes do you see?

Do themes or ideas call your attention to any situation in your life? If so, what is it?

What has God revealed to you about Himself or His will this week? How can this knowledge be applied to your situation? Do you recognize actions, behaviors, or beliefs that you need to modify or adopt?

Reflection :: Consider all you have read, reviewed, and reflected on. Take time to listen to what the Lord is saying to you now. Use this space to journal your thoughts and prayers.

Week Two

Memory Verse :: Psalm 145:18

Write :: Use this space to write out the weekly memory verse.

:: Day 1 ::

Prayer :: Use this space to write down anything you need to take to the Lord in prayer. Surrender these cares/needs/worries/troubles/requests to Him. Surrender your heart to Him. Invite Him to sit with you and teach you. Ask that His presence be felt and that His voice be heard.

Devotional :: Read the following scriptures:

Key Text :: Mark 4:21-41

Supporting Passages :: Psalm 119:105, Psalm 139:23-24

What is the point of having a lamp if we are not going to use it? There isn't one, right? The purpose of a lamp is to shine light when it is dark and we need to be able to see. And the same is true of the Word of God -- the Holy Bible that you probably have sitting near you as you read this.

I once heard a pastor say that the most valuable possession that we can ever hold, the possession that has lasting and eternal significance, is our Bible. Think about that. Your

Bible is a lamp that searches the hidden places of your heart, reveals the wickedness that resides there, brings it into the light, and speaks clearly the truths of God.

How often are you using the Lamp given to you by God Himself? Is it under a bed or a basket? Or are you using it to shine brightly in your own life?

Personal Study :: Read the key passage again. Allow your attention to be caught by Jesus. What other verse or verses jumped off the page? Write them here.

What words caught your attention? Look up the original Greek word in Strong's concordance and use this space to write the definition.

Consider all you've read today and what the Lord is speaking to your heart at the moment. How can you apply this to your life today? Use this space to journal your thoughts and prayers.

:: Day 2 ::

Prayer :: Use this space to write down anything you need to take to the Lord in prayer. Surrender these cares/needs/worries/troubles/requests to Him. Surrender your heart to Him. Invite Him to sit with you and teach you. Ask that His presence be felt and that His voice be heard.

Devotional :: Read the following scriptures:

Key Text :: Mark 5:1-20

Supporting Passages :: James 1:22-26; James 4:7; 1 Peter 5:6-7

There seems to be a whole lot going on in this passage but a few things stick out to me.

1) The demons recognize Jesus as the Son of God and are unable to do anything without His permission (vv 10-13); 2) the people from the city are confused and afraid of what is going on, so they beg Jesus to leave, which He does (vv 15-18); and 3) Jesus doesn't permit the one man who wants to be with Him to be with Him (vv 18-19).

So what does all this mean? Jesus had authority -- given to Him by the Father -- over all creation, but He did not enforce His authority over mankind. He did not stay where He was not welcome. He didn't force His presence on anyone.

Are there areas in your life where you are not welcoming the presence of Jesus?

You may be wondering about the demon-possessed man. If Jesus doesn't enforce His authority over mankind, how come the demon-possessed man obeyed Jesus? Why did he stay behind like he was told? I think the answer is simple, the man obeyed because he chose to submit to Jesus. And he chose to submit to Jesus because he loved Him. And the man loved Jesus because he saw how much Jesus loved him first.

Do you truly believe that Jesus loves you? How are you responding to that love?

Personal Study :: Read the key passage again. Allow your attention to be caught by Jesus. What other verse or verses jumped off the page? Write them here.

What words caught your attention? Look up the original Greek word in Strong's concordance and use this space to write the definition.

Consider all you've read today and what the Lord is speaking to your heart at the moment. How can you apply this to your life today? Use this space to journal your thoughts and prayers.

:: Day 3 ::

Prayer :: Use this space to write down anything you need to take to the Lord in prayer. Surrender these cares/needs/worries/troubles/requests to Him. Surrender your heart to Him. Invite Him to sit with you and teach you. Ask that His presence be felt and that His voice be heard.

Devotional :: Read the following scriptures:

Key Text :: Mark 5:21-43

Supporting Passages :: Psalm 145:18, Romans 8:28, James 4:8

After Jesus called the little girl to rise "He commanded them (in the room) strictly that no one should know it" (v43). Why?

Throughout His ministry, Jesus would sometimes command or strictly warn those who He had touched to tell no one. I believe this was for one simple fact. The news of His power wouldn't just attract those who would "call upon Him in truth" (Psalm 145:18), but it would also attract spectators -- people just looking for a show, to be entertained, and/or to be pleased. So that leads to a question we need to ponder today: Why are you attracted to Jesus?

Personal Study :: Read the key passage again. Allow your attention to be caught by Jesus. What other verse or verses jumped off the page? Write them here.

What words caught your attention? Look up the original Greek word in Strong's concordance and use this space to write the definition.

Consider all you've read today and what the Lord is speaking to your heart at the moment. How can you apply this to your life today? Use this space to journal your thoughts and prayers.

:: Day 4 ::

Prayer :: Use this space to write down anything you need to take to the Lord in prayer. Surrender these cares/needs/worries/troubles/requests to Him. Surrender your heart to Him. Invite Him to sit with you and teach you. Ask that His presence be felt and that His voice be heard.

Devotional :: Read the following scriptures:

Key Text :: Mark 6:1-29

Supporting Passages :: Psalm 143:10, Matthew 6:24, Luke 6:46, John 14:15, James 1:22-25

What were Herod's opinions, or feelings toward John (v20)?

Herod respected John... somewhat. Yet, he still kept John imprisoned for the sake of his wife who hated John. Verse 20 even tells us that when Herod heard John's teachings, "he did many things, and heard him gladly." Many things, but not all. He only gave himself partially over to the teachings of John, which were ultimately from God. Herod wasn't fully committed to a life of obedience. He wouldn't fully submit to godly teachings. So when push came to shove Herod gave into wickedness and had John beheaded. Why? Because he was serving two masters. Herod was attempting to be godly, yet at the same time, attempting to please the worldly people around him.

Are there areas in your life where you are not fully committed to a life of obedience?
What are the possible consequences of this choice?

Personal Study :: Read the key passage again. Allow your attention to be caught by Jesus. What other verse or verses jumped off the page? Write them here.

What words caught your attention? Look up the original Greek word in Strong's concordance and use this space to write the definition.

Consider all you've read today and what the Lord is speaking to your heart at the moment. How can you apply this to your life today? Use this space to journal your thoughts and prayers.

:: Day 5 ::

Prayer :: Use this space to write down anything you need to take to the Lord in prayer. Surrender these cares/needs/worries/troubles/requests to Him. Surrender your heart to Him. Invite Him to sit with you and teach you. Ask that His presence be felt and that His voice be heard.

Devotional :: Read the following scriptures:

Key Text :: Mark 6:30-56

Supporting Passages :: Psalm 121, Philippians 4:19

When the disciples saw Jesus walking on the water, how did they react? What did they think? What were their feelings? (vv 48-50)

I study with a New King James Version of the Bible and verse 49 tells us that they were troubled, they cried out (presumably in fear), and that "they supposed it was a ghost." The original Greek word for supposed is *dokeo* and it means "to be of opinion, think, suppose." It also means "it seems to me - I think, judge: thus in question." In other words, the disciples quickly formed an opinion and jumped to a conclusion about the scene in front of them. It is important to point out that opinions, judgements, and conclusions are not always accurate because they are not necessarily based on fact. In this case, the disciples based their opinions on their feelings and their current circumstances.

The disciples had seen many miracles happen including the feeding of the five thousand, but verse 52 tells us that they didn't understand this miracle because of the hardness of their hearts. For some reason they had a thick callous covering the very place where all spiritual knowledge resides.

Following the storm they arrive in Gennesaret where the people recognized Jesus immediately. I find this interesting, don't you? On one hand you have the disciples of Jesus, the ones who had cast out demons and healed the sick (Mark 6:13, 30), who didn't recognize Jesus when He came to be with them during the storm. On the other hand you have people who hadn't spent as much time with Jesus but were desperate to be with Him and experience His power, and these were the ones who recognized Him.

Everyone has an immediate need for Jesus. Where do you have an immediate need for Him? Does this make you desperate for His presence?

Personal Study :: Read the key passage again. Allow your attention to be caught by Jesus. What other verse or verses jumped off the page? Write them here.

What words caught your attention? Look up the original Greek word in Strong's concordance and use this space to write the definition.

Consider all you've read today and what the Lord is speaking to your heart at the moment. How can you apply this to your life today? Use this space to journal your thoughts and prayers.

:: Days 6 & 7 ::

Prayer :: Use this space to write down anything you need to take to the Lord in prayer. Surrender these cares/needs/worries/troubles/requests to Him. Surrender your heart to Him. Invite Him to sit with you and teach you. Ask that His presence be felt and that His voice be heard.

Review :: Spend some time reading again the passages that caught your attention this week. Review the words you studied and look over your notes.

Are there ideas that are repeating themselves? What themes do you see?

Do themes or ideas call your attention to any situation in your life? If so, what is it?

What has God revealed to you about Himself or His will this week? How can this knowledge be applied to your situation? Do you recognize actions, behaviors, or beliefs that you need to modify or adopt?

Reflection :: Consider all you have read, reviewed, and reflected on. Take time to listen to what the Lord is saying to you now. Use this space to journal your thoughts and prayers.

Week Three

Memory Verse :: Psalm 25:5

Write :: Use this space to write out the weekly memory verse.

:: Day 1 ::

Prayer :: Use this space to write down anything you need to take to the Lord in prayer. Surrender these cares/needs/worries/troubles/requests to Him. Surrender your heart to Him. Invite Him to sit with you and teach you. Ask that His presence be felt and that His voice be heard.

Devotional :: Read the following scriptures:

Key Text :: Mark 7:1-23

Supporting Passages :: Deuteronomy 6:5-9, Matthew 22:36-40

The Pharisees and the scribes were concerned that the disciples did not observe certain traditions. Whose traditions (v5)?

The Pharisees and the scribes held the traditions of the elders, like the traditions of personal hygiene and dishwashing, higher than needed. These were traditions and practices that had been created by man and were not in line with the laws of God. Obviously cleanliness is necessary and has its purpose, but being physically clean should never be more important than the Word of God. In this passage Jesus was pointing out that loving God and your neighbor had become far less important than washing dishes, personal hygiene, and giving to the temple.

Do you have any family or religious traditions, or cultural practices that you have laid aside the commandments of God for?

Personal Study :: Read the key passage again. Allow your attention to be caught by Jesus. What other verse or verses jumped off the page? Write them here.

What words caught your attention? Look up the original Greek word in Strong's concordance and use this space to write the definition.

Consider all you've read today and what the Lord is speaking to your heart at the moment. How can you apply this to your life today? Use this space to journal your thoughts and prayers.

:: Day 2 ::

Prayer :: Use this space to write down anything you need to take to the Lord in prayer. Surrender these cares/needs/worries/troubles/requests to Him. Surrender your heart to Him. Invite Him to sit with you and teach you. Ask that His presence be felt and that His voice be heard.

Devotional :: Read the following scriptures:

Key Text :: Mark 7:24-37

Supporting Passages :: Romans 1:16

Why did Jesus want no one to know where He was (v 24)?

Jesus, though God, resided in a human body. This body underwent all the things our bodies undergo, including fatigue, hunger, pain, etc. I think sometimes we forget this, or at least focus less on Him being human and focus more on the fact that He is God. I don't necessarily think there is anything wrong with this focus, but when we consider the human needs of Jesus, they highlight His deity.

Verse 24 tells us that "He entered a house and wanted no one to know it..." Why? Well because He was physically tired. He wanted rest but instead of making Himself the number one priority, He repeatedly set aside His wants and needs for others (vv 29-30). And when I say others, I don't just mean a select few or the religious elite. He cared for and showed compassion to everyone, not just the Jews. This woman who begged for His healing power was a Gentile and when Jesus recognized her faith He responded to her

request. He didn't care about her family tree, her ethnicity, or where she lived. He simply cared about her.

Do you believe that Jesus cares about you? In what ways has He shown His compassion for you?

Personal Study :: Read the key passage again. Allow your attention to be caught by Jesus. What other verse or verses jumped off the page? Write them here.

What words caught your attention? Look up the original Greek word in Strong's concordance and use this space to write the definition.

Consider all you've read today and what the Lord is speaking to your heart at the moment. How can you apply this to your life today? Use this space to journal your thoughts and prayers.

:: Day 3 ::

Prayer :: Use this space to write down anything you need to take to the Lord in prayer. Surrender these cares/needs/worries/troubles/requests to Him. Surrender your heart to Him. Invite Him to sit with you and teach you. Ask that His presence be felt and that His voice be heard.

Devotional :: Read the following scriptures:

Key Text :: Mark 8:1-26

Supporting Passages :: Psalm 23, Psalm 25:1-5

This morning Jesus has caught my attention with the blind man from Bethsaida, the man whom He led out of town. Led. Jesus led the blind man out of town; away from the crowds; away from where he presumably made his living begging; away from all other distraction.

Led. Jesus did the leading, but Jesus couldn't have led had the man not been willing to follow. The passage doesn't say Jesus told him He was going to restore his vision. Nor does it say that the blind man understood every detail of Jesus's plan. But we can tell by the blind man's actions that he trusted Jesus to some degree because he followed.

You see when we let Jesus lead -- when we follow even without understanding -- we are choosing to trust Jesus. Trust doesn't say, "Wait! Explain this to me first." Trust doesn't say, "Hold up! You are taking me away from the familiar." Trust doesn't say, "Slow down! This is happening too fast." Trust just trusts.

Are you being led by Jesus? Where can you choose to surrender and follow without question?

Personal Study :: Read the key passage again. Allow your attention to be caught by Jesus. What other verse or verses jumped off the page? Write them here.

What words caught your attention? Look up the original Greek word in Strong's concordance and use this space to write the definition.

Consider all you've read today and what the Lord is speaking to your heart at the moment. How can you apply this to your life today? Use this space to journal your thoughts and prayers.

:: Day 4 ::

Prayer :: Use this space to write down anything you need to take to the Lord in prayer. Surrender these cares/needs/worries/troubles/requests to Him. Surrender your heart to Him. Invite Him to sit with you and teach you. Ask that His presence be felt and that His voice be heard.

Devotional :: Read the following scriptures:

Key Text :: Mark 8:27-38

Supporting Passage :: Romans 8:31-32

"Get behind Me, Satan! For you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men." Pretty strong rebuke, right? I mean, come on, Jesus! Peter just professed You as the Son of God, the coming Messiah, the Christ! Now you rebuke him and call him Satan!

The old King James puts it this way "thou savourest not the things that be of God." Thou savourest. The original Greek word for savourest (or mindful depending on the translation you are reading) is *phroneo* and part of its definition is "to seek one's interest or advantage." The Son of Man suffering many things, being rejected and killed was not to Peter's interest or advantage -- at least not from his point of view.

We can be just like Peter; in love with Christ, willing to profess His name, but still focused on what we believe is best for ourselves. We fail to see that Jesus also has our best interest at heart and what is best for us is complete and total surrender to Him and the Father's will.

How can you be more mindful of the things of God, and less so on the things of men?

Personal Study :: Read the key passage again. Allow your attention to be caught by Jesus. What other verse or verses jumped off the page? Write them here.

What words caught your attention? Look up the original Greek word in Strong's concordance and use this space to write the definition.

Consider all you've read today and what the Lord is speaking to your heart at the moment. How can you apply this to your life today? Use this space to journal your thoughts and prayers.

:: Day 5 ::

Prayer :: Use this space to write down anything you need to take to the Lord in prayer. Surrender these cares/needs/worries/troubles/requests to Him. Surrender your heart to Him. Invite Him to sit with you and teach you. Ask that His presence be felt and that His voice be heard.

Devotional :: Read the following scriptures

Key Text :: Mark 9:1-29

Supporting Passages :: Deuteronomy 18:15-19, Ecclesiastes 5:1-3, Mark 4:24, Revelation 2:7

Peter didn't know what to say, so what did he do (vv 5-6)?

I find it odd that "because he did not know what to say" Peter just started talking while in the presence of the transfigured Jesus. I find it even odder that I find this odd because, if I'm honest with myself, I do the same thing -- I talk too much... especially when I should be listening. I think I know what is good, just like Peter (v5). I come up with what I think are awesome ideas and plans, just like Peter (v5). And I open my mouth and start rambling because, just like Peter, I think I need to do my part to fill up the airwaves (v6).

But the truth is, I should be doing a lot less talking and a lot more listening. Can you relate? Don't get me wrong, I do believe 100% that Jesus wants us to talk to Him. That is why He taught us to pray. However, in our prayer-conversations, He wants to be heard

as well. Why? Because God said so. "This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!" Exclamation point.

Hear Him. Not just listen politely while we give the Holy Spirit a chance to speak to us, but hear intentionally. We need to consider what is being said. We need to listen in order to understand, to perceive, and to fully grasp the message that is being conveyed to us. How can we do that if we never shut up?

How can you start talking less and listening more? Be specific about the topics you ramble on about.

Personal Study :: Read the key passage again. Allow your attention to be caught by Jesus. What other verse or verses jumped off the page? Write them here.

What words caught your attention? Look up the original Greek word in Strong's concordance and use this space to write the definition.

Consider all you've read today and what the Lord is speaking to your heart at the moment. How can you apply this to your life today? Use this space to journal your thoughts and prayers.

:: Days 6 & 7 ::

Prayer :: Use this space to write down anything you need to take to the Lord in prayer. Surrender these cares/needs/worries/troubles/requests to Him. Surrender your heart to Him. Invite Him to sit with you and teach you. Ask that His presence be felt and that His voice be heard.

Review :: Spend some time reading again the passages that caught your attention this week. Review the words you studied and look over your notes.

Are there ideas that are repeating themselves? What themes do you see?

Do these themes or ideas call your attention to any situation in your life? If so, what is it?

What has God revealed to you about Himself or His will this week? How can this knowledge be applied to your situation? Do you recognize actions, behaviors, or beliefs that you need to modify or adopt?

Reflection :: Consider all you have read, reviewed, and reflected on. Take time to listen to what the Lord is saying to you now. Use this space to journal your thoughts and prayers.

Week Four

Memory Verse :: James 3:17

Write :: Use this space to write out the weekly memory verse.

:: Day 1 ::

Prayer :: Use this space to write down anything you need to take to the Lord in prayer. Surrender these cares/needs/worries/troubles/requests to Him. Surrender your heart to Him. Invite Him to sit with you and teach you. Ask that His presence be felt and that His voice be heard.

Devotional :: Read the following scriptures:

Key Text :: Mark 9:30-50

Supporting Passages :: Psalm 14:2, Proverbs 3:5, James 3:17

"For He taught His disciples and said to them, 'The Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of men, and they will kill Him. And after He is killed, He will rise the third day.' But they did not understand this saying, and were afraid to ask Him" (Mark 9:31-32).

They did not understand and were too afraid to ask. It seems silly at first, doesn't it? But then I remember all the times I've done the same thing. I'm sure we all have been sitting in class, a little confused at what the teacher is saying, however, not wanting to be the only kid to raise her (or his) hand, not wanting to look stupid.

Perhaps this is why the disciples didn't ask for clarification. Or maybe they had an inkling to what Jesus was saying and didn't want to face the reality of the truth. Maybe they just had other things on their minds and didn't want to take the time to grapple with what Jesus was saying. Or maybe they assumed with pride that they had or would figure everything out on their own without Jesus's help.

I can relate to every single one of these heart issues, because I've had each of these same thoughts at one time or another. And every time I choose to rely on these thoughts instead of asking for clarification I am choosing to be without understanding, to be without wisdom -- to be ignorant. I don't know about you, but I don't want to be ignorant especially when I could gain wisdom by simply seeking the Lord.

Which one of these heart issues are you dealing with? How can you choose to seek God in order to find wisdom from above?

Personal Study :: Read the key passage again. Allow your attention to be caught by Jesus. What other verse or verses jumped off the page? Write them here.

What words caught your attention? Look up the original Greek word in Strong's concordance and use this space to write the definition.

Consider all you've read today and what the Lord is speaking to your heart at the moment. How can you apply this to your life today? Use this space to journal your thoughts and prayers.

:: Day 2 ::

Prayer :: Use this space to write down anything you need to take to the Lord in prayer. Surrender these cares/needs/worries/troubles/requests to Him. Surrender your heart to Him. Invite Him to sit with you and teach you. Ask that His presence be felt and that His voice be heard.

Devotional :: Read the following scriptures:

Key Text :: Mark 10:1-31

Supporting Passages :: Proverbs 15:31-33, 2 Timothy 3:16. 2 John 1:9

In the key text the Spirit has caught my attention with two words, looking and loved. "Then Jesus, looking at him, loved him, and said to him..." (v 21).

The rich young ruler believed that he had obeyed all the commandments since he was a boy (v 20). However, when Jesus looked at him He saw beyond the outward appearance. He saw more than just the man's action. Jesus saw the young ruler's heart where all sin originates (Mark 7:20-23). And that's when Jesus did something that amazes me. He loved him -- loved him dearly according to the original Greek. And because Jesus loved him, He chose to reveal the ruler's sin to him in order to correct him.

When I think of rebuke, reproof, discipline, or correction I tend to think of the one with authority inflicting a punishment out of anger; but this is not the character of our Lord. When He corrects He does so not because He is mad at us, but because He loves us. He knows that our sin keeps us at a distance from Him. He wants us closer so we may "have treasures in heaven" (v 21).

How can you hear the Spirit revealing your sin to you? Do you hear it and turn away sorrowful or do you listen to His wisdom with humility?

Personal Study :: Read the key passage again. Allow your attention to be caught by Jesus. What other verse or verses jumped off the page? Write them here.

What words caught your attention? Look up the original Greek word in Strong's concordance and use this space to write the definition.

Consider all you've read today and what the Lord is speaking to your heart at the moment. How can you apply this to your life today? Use this space to journal your thoughts and prayers.

:: Day 3 ::

Prayer :: Use this space to write down anything you need to take to the Lord in prayer. Surrender these cares/needs/worries/troubles/requests to Him. Surrender your heart to Him. Invite Him to sit with you and teach you. Ask that His presence be felt and that His voice be heard.

Devotional :: Read the following scriptures:

Key Text :: Mark 10:32-52

Supporting Passages :: Isaiah 43:2, John 16:33, 2 Timothy 3:12, 1 Peter 5:10

After Jesus had told His disciples that "many who are first will be last, and the last first," the passage tells us that they were both amazed and afraid (Mark 10:31-32). The original Greek word for amazed means to be astonished or terrified; and the original Greek for afraid means to be scared away or struck with fear. So, in other words, the disciples were terrified and wanted to run away.

Why? Well, I believe it is because they were focused on themselves and all the discomfort and dishonor that would be associated with following Jesus. They were also probably quite confused. First last and last first? What did all that mean? Would they have to become the lowest ranked and most worthless people in society?

Jesus, sensing their fears, pulls them aside and explains that only one can be last, therefore only one can be first -- and that one is Him (vv 33-34). No, He doesn't say it just like that, but He is trying to reveal to them that He came to this earth to be mocked, to be scourged, to be spit on, to be killed, to be viewed as the lowest and most worthless all in order to defeat death and sin on their (and our) behalf.

Do the disciples get it? No, just read the rest of the key text. Jesus says, "Hey look, I'm going to die for you," and James and John immediately ask to be made first. This, of course, aggravates the rest of them because they all want to be first too. But before we roll our eyes at the disciples and judge them for being so selfish and slow, let's look at our own hearts.

Are you currently focused on yourself and your discomfort? What uncomfortable situation are you currently dealing with that has taken your eyes off the cross? Are you seeking to be first or are you seeking to follow the One who put Himself last?

Personal Study :: Read the key passage again. Allow your attention to be caught by Jesus. What other verse or verses jumped off the page? Write them here.

What words caught your attention? Look up the original Greek word in Strong's concordance and use this space to write the definition.

Consider all you've read today and what the Lord is speaking to your heart at the moment. How can you apply this to your life today? Use this space to journal your thoughts and prayers.

:: Day 4 ::

Prayer :: Use this space to write down anything you need to take to the Lord in prayer. Surrender these cares/needs/worries/troubles/requests to Him. Surrender your heart to Him. Invite Him to sit with you and teach you. Ask that His presence be felt and that His voice be heard.

Devotional :: Read the following scriptures:

Key Text :: Mark 11:1-19

Supporting Passages :: John 15:14, Hebrews 11:1-3, 8-11

Sometimes it seems like the Lord commands us to do some crazy things -- like go take a stranger's donkey, or leave your home and start traveling to a foreign country, or be prepared to be pregnant at 90 years old. Using our human logic, the Lord's commands don't always make sense, but when we choose to obey something amazing always happens. The Lord's plan works.

We see evidence of this in the passage of the triumphal entry. The Lord commands His disciples to do something very specific. Go do this and if you need to say this. When the disciples were questioned about what they were doing, the NKJV says "they spoke to them just as Jesus had commanded." And what do you know!?! The Lord's plan worked.

Have you noticed that I keep using the terms the Lord and command? It is intentional. The original Greek word for lord means he to whom a person or thing belongs, he who has power of deciding, and master. The definition for command means to order or require with authority. When we confess that Jesus is our Lord and Savior we are freely giving ourselves to Him. We belong to Him and we give Him all authority over our lives.

Has there been a time in your life when submitting to the Lord's crazy command has actually worked out? What happened? Has there been a time when you didn't submit? What happened then?

Personal Study :: Read the key passage again. Allow your attention to be caught by Jesus. What other verse or verses jumped off the page? Write them here.

What words caught your attention? Look up the original Greek word in Strong's concordance and use this space to write the definition.

Consider all you've read today and what the Lord is speaking to your heart at the moment. How can you apply this to your life today? Use this space to journal your thoughts and prayers.

:: Day 5 ::

Prayer :: Use this space to write down anything you need to take to the Lord in prayer. Surrender these cares/needs/worries/troubles/requests to Him. Surrender your heart to Him. Invite Him to sit with you and teach you. Ask that His presence be felt and that His voice be heard.

Devotional :: Read the following scriptures:

Key Text :: Mark 11:20-33

Supporting Passages :: Psalm 86:11, Mark 9:22-25

"Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them."

Just believe. It sounds so simple, but it's not. Not really, is it? Why is that? Perhaps it could be one of two things. First, it is possible that we don't believe because we do not trust our Father. Maybe it is an outright, in your face, there is no way God will answer, doubt. Maybe it is a quieter skepticism that you hide deep down and refuse to acknowledge. Or maybe it is somewhere in between.

The second possibility is that we don't believe because we don't trust our own understanding of God and His word. We doubt because we fear that perhaps we are praying amiss, or praying for things that are outside of God's will for our lives.

There are two cures for both of these doubts, and these cures go hand-in-hand. One cure is time in our Bibles and the other is time spent in prayer. Both will bring us into a closer relationship with our Father, which is exactly what He wants. As we begin to

know Him more our trust and belief in Him will strengthen. And when we still find ourselves doubting we simply pray, "Lord, I believe, but help my unbelief!"

Where is your doubt rooted? Do you doubt God's goodness or do you doubt your own understanding of who He is?

Personal Study :: Read the key passage again. Allow your attention to be caught by Jesus. What other verse or verses jumped off the page? Write them here.

What words caught your attention? Look up the original Greek word in Strong's concordance and use this space to write the definition.

Consider all you've read today and what the Lord is speaking to your heart at the moment. How can you apply this to your life today? Use this space to journal your thoughts and prayers.

:: Days 6 & 7 ::

Prayer :: Use this space to write down anything you need to take to the Lord in prayer. Surrender these cares/needs/worries/troubles/requests to Him. Surrender your heart to Him. Invite Him to sit with you and teach you. Ask that His presence be felt and that His voice be heard.

Review :: Spend some time reading again the passages that caught your attention this week. Review the words you studied and look over your notes.

Are there ideas that are repeating themselves? What themes or do you see?

Do themes or ideas call your attention to any situation in your life? If so, what is it?

What has God revealed to you about Himself or His will this week? How can this knowledge be applied to your situation? Do you recognize actions, behaviors, or beliefs that you need to modify or adopt?

Reflection :: Consider all you have read, reviewed, and reflected on. Take time to listen to what the Lord is saying to you now. Use this space to journal your thoughts and prayers.

Week Five

Memory Verse :: James 2:17

Write :: Use this space to write out the weekly memory verse.

:: Day 1 ::

Prayer :: Use this space to write down anything you need to take to the Lord in prayer. Surrender these cares/needs/worries/troubles/requests to Him. Surrender your heart to Him. Invite Him to sit with you and teach you. Ask that His presence be felt and that His voice be heard.

Devotional :: Read the following scriptures

Key Text :: Mark 12:1-27

Supporting Passage :: Matthew 25:34-45

Who do the characters in the parable of the wicked vinedressers represent?

I think that most of us would agree that the parable of the wicked vinedressers is a story in which the land owner represented God, the hired vinedressers represented the Pharisees, the servants represented Old Testament prophets, and the land owner's son represented Jesus Christ. Very few of us would read this story and think *the vinedresser represents me*.

The vinedressers had a choice: to do evil or to do good. The vineyard was not theirs but they acted as if it was and their pride and self-entitlement led them to commit murder... over some fruit! I'd like to point out that the land owner didn't send his servants or his son to ask for all of the fruit. He only requested some of it.

Like the vinedressers, what is in our possession and what we are responsible for is not actually ours. It belongs to our Father in heaven, just as the vineyard belonged to the land owner. When He asks us to give to the hungry, the thirsty, the homeless, the naked, or the imprisoned and we don't, are we any better than the wicked vinedresser? When we tell God no, we may not be committing murder, but who are we really rejecting?

What has the Lord given to you that He is now asking you to give to others?

Personal Study :: Read the key passage again. Allow your attention to be caught by Jesus. What other verse or verses jumped off the page? Write them here.

What words caught your attention? Look up the original Greek word in Strong's concordance and use this space to write the definition.

Consider all you've read today and what the Lord is speaking to your heart at the moment. How can you apply this to your life today? Use this space to journal your thoughts and prayers.

:: Day 2 ::

Prayer :: Use this space to write down anything you need to take to the Lord in prayer. Surrender these cares/needs/worries/troubles/requests to Him. Surrender your heart to Him. Invite Him to sit with you and teach you. Ask that His presence be felt and that His voice be heard.

Devotional :: Read the following scriptures:

Key Text :: Mark 12:28-44

Supporting Passages :: James 2:17, Jeremiah 29:11

"You are not far from the kingdom of God." As I read through the passage, these words grab my attention right away. "You are not far..." and in my mind I immediately add *but you are not there yet*.

This scribe understood and agreed with what Jesus was teaching. He had the right theology down, but was still not quite in the kingdom of God. Why? Because thinking, knowing, understanding, and agreeing are different than applying, doing, obeying, and submitting. To be in the kingdom of God means to allow the Lord to have all rule, authority and dominion in our lives. If we haven't allowed Him to take that position in our hearts then our faith is dead. Lack of obedience means lack of works. And isn't faith without works dead (James 2:17)?

I am so convicted and encouraged by these words. You are not far...

I am convicted because I see that I need to do more than talk the talk, I need to walk the walk that Jesus has called me to. I am also encouraged because I am not far, I just need to step out in faith as the Lord leads, trusting that He is with me every step of the way and that He has wonderful plans of peace and hope for my future (Jeremiah 29:11).

How can you walk the walk this week?

Personal Study :: Read the key passage again. Allow your attention to be caught by Jesus. What other verse or verses jumped off the page? Write them here.

What words caught your attention? Look up the original Greek word in Strong's concordance and use this space to write the definition.

Consider all you've read today and what the Lord is speaking to your heart at the moment. How can you apply this to your life today? Use this space to journal your thoughts and prayers.

:: Day 3 ::

Prayer :: Use this space to write down anything you need to take to the Lord in prayer. Surrender these cares/needs/worries/troubles/requests to Him. Surrender your heart to Him. Invite Him to sit with you and teach you. Ask that His presence be felt and that His voice be heard.

Devotional :: Read the following scriptures:

Key Text :: Mark 13:1-37

Supporting Passages :: Psalm 145:10-21, Revelations 12:11

Not exactly one of my favorite passages to read. I can't imagine it's yours either. No one wants to read about sorrows and tribulations, but I do find comfort in these scriptures. For example, do not be troubled (v 7). Don't be afraid, don't be alarmed, don't cry out in fear. All these messy, crazy, scary things will happen, but do not be troubled.

And when all these things start moving closer to home; when they are no longer stories happening in other lands; when they start happening to you... do not be troubled. And when you are called to give your testimony -- you know, that thing that is used to overcome Satan -- do not be troubled, because the Holy Spirit is with you. He will give you words to speak so that He may be glorified and so that the gospel may be preached. So, do not be troubled. Be excited that the Lord is using you, His servant, for His name's sake.

Are you experiencing sorrows, trials, or tribulations today? Can you see how God may be using these for His name's sake?

Personal Study :: Read the key passage again. Allow your attention to be caught by Jesus. What other verse or verses jumped off the page? Write them here.

What words caught your attention? Look up the original Greek word in Strong's concordance and use this space to write the definition.

Consider all you've read today and what the Lord is speaking to your heart at the moment. How can you apply this to your life today? Use this space to journal your thoughts and prayers.

:: Day 4 ::

Prayer :: Use this space to write down anything you need to take to the Lord in prayer. Surrender these cares/needs/worries/troubles/requests to Him. Surrender your heart to Him. Invite Him to sit with you and teach you. Ask that His presence be felt and that His voice be heard.

Devotional :: Read the following scriptures

Key Text :: Mark 14:1-31

Supporting Passages :: Ephesians 2:10, John 4:23-24, Hebrews 13:15

"She has done a good work for Me" (v6)... for Me. The woman at Bethany had done a good work for Jesus; not for recognition, not for praise, not for herself in anyway, but for Jesus alone. Jesus recognized that she had "done what she could" (v8), that she worshiped Him with everything she had and He would not let her critics take that away from her.

You and I have been made for good works, and those good works are to worship God. We may not have been created to worship with an alabaster jar, but we are created to worship. Worship is our reason for existence -- our purpose for living. And even though we may share that same purpose, we have each been formed to worship Him in a unique way.

We generally think of worship as the time we spend singing songs at the beginning of church service, but it is so much more than that. Worship is the act of honoring, adoring, loving, and admiring our God and it can be done in a multitude of ways. When we worship in spirit, we worship with our knowledge, our desires, our decisions, and our

actions. When we worship in truth, we worship out of our own free will -- no one forcing us or telling us how to do it -- we worship because we want to.

We use our knowledge all day long. We have desires all day long. We make decisions and act all day long. And we have free will all day long. Is it possible to worship all day long? How will you specifically choose to worship the Lord today?

Personal Study :: Read the key passage again. Allow your attention to be caught by Jesus. What other verse or verses jumped off the page? Write them here.

What words caught your attention? Look up the original Greek word in Strong's concordance and use this space to write the definition.

Consider all you've read today and what the Lord is speaking to your heart at the moment. How can you apply this to your life today? Use this space to journal your thoughts and prayers.

:: Day 5 ::

Prayer :: Use this space to write down anything you need to take to the Lord in prayer. Surrender these cares/needs/worries/troubles/requests to Him. Surrender your heart to Him. Invite Him to sit with you and teach you. Ask that His presence be felt and that His voice be heard.

Devotional :: Read the following scriptures:

Key Text :: Mark 14:32-52

Supporting Passages :: Psalm 37:3-6, Romans 8:18, 28

Jesus didn't want to go to the cross. I know that is a bold statement, but I know it true based on what He said in verse 36. "Take this cup away from Me." Even more amazing is that He didn't have to go to the cross. For God, all things are possible and God could have changed the way the story would play out. But He didn't.

Jesus may not have wanted to go to the cross, but He trusts His Father. He knew that in order to exercise His trust that He had to obey and obey He did, even unto death. And what do you know, trusting paid off for Him. Yes, Jesus died (and I can't even begin to imagine the physical pain He endured). Yes, He was separated from His father (and I can't even begin to imagine the spiritual pain He endured). But despite the pain and sorrow of the events of the cross, Jesus inherited the greatest reward ever -- sitting at the right hand of God for all eternity.

Not only does Jesus enjoy this inheritance, but He passes a portion of it on to those who believe in Him. What I mean by a portion is that, though we don't get to sit at God's right hand, we'll inherit a crown and receive an eternal address in Heaven (John 3:16).

So what can we learn from Christ's obedience? I think it is this: Christian or not, life on earth is not easy or comfortable. There will be many times when we pray "take this cup away from Me." Or in other words, "make the pain stop," "rescue me from this situation," or "fix this problem, God!" And we know that God has the power to do it, but sometimes (maybe most times) He doesn't.

So, we must ask ourselves *do I trust God's choice? Will I obey Him not matter the circumstance? Will I rely on the Holy Spirit to strengthen and comfort me when the sorrow is more than my soul can bear?* Ponder these questions and journal your thoughts here.

Personal Study :: Read the key passage again. Allow your attention to be caught by Jesus. What other verse or verses jumped off the page? Write them here.

What words caught your attention? Look up the original Greek word in Strong's concordance and use this space to write the definition.

Consider all you've read today and what the Lord is speaking to your heart at the moment. How can you apply this to your life today? Use this space to journal your thoughts and prayers.

:: Days 6 & 7 ::

Prayer :: Use this space to write down anything you need to take to the Lord in prayer. Surrender these cares/needs/worries/troubles/requests to Him. Surrender your heart to Him. Invite Him to sit with you and teach you. Ask that His presence be felt and that His voice be heard.

Review :: Spend some time reading again the passages that caught your attention this week. Review the words you studied and look over your notes.

Are there ideas that are repeating themselves? What themes or do you see?

Do themes or ideas call your attention to any situation in your life? If so, what is it?

What has God revealed to you about Himself or His will this week? How can this knowledge be applied to your situation? Do you recognize actions, behaviors, or beliefs that you need to modify or adopt?

Reflection :: Consider all you have read, reviewed, and reflected on. Take time to listen to what the Lord is saying to you now. Use this space to journal your thoughts and prayers.

Week Six

Memory Verse :: 1 John 4:15

Write :: Use this space to write out the weekly memory verse.

:: Day 1 ::

Prayer :: Use this space to write down anything you need to take to the Lord in prayer. Surrender these cares/needs/worries/troubles/requests to Him. Surrender your heart to Him. Invite Him to sit with you and teach you. Ask that His presence be felt and that His voice be heard.

Devotional :: Read the following scriptures

Key Text :: Mark 14:53-72

Supporting Passages :: Deuteronomy 5:20, 19:15-21

No matter how hard they tried, the Sanhedrin could not produce two witness with matching testimonies. You may be wondering why this is important. Jewish law concerning witnesses said that two or three witness statements (or testimonies) must agree in order for the accusation to be considered verified (Deuteronomy 19:15). The law goes on further explaining how to deal with false witnesses -- today we say that these are people who commit perjury.

The Sanhedrin council sure was obsessed with getting an accusation to stick with multiple witness statements, but they didn't seem to be too concerned with the second half of the law -- the part that dealt with false witnesses. They attempted to get the law to fit their agenda, instead of modifying their agenda to match God's perfect law.

There was one person, however, who kept the law during this whole process and that person was Jesus. He would not bear a false witness. In fact, for most of the hearing He remains silent, not defending Himself, trusting in His Father and His ultimate will. But when asked point-blank if He was the Son of God, He refused to stay quiet and gave an accurate witness statement of who He was (and still is) -- God!

He declares, "I am," and with those two words announces that He is the same God who spoke to Moses in the wilderness (Exodus 3:14). He predicts that He will sit at the Father's right hand, announcing that He has the power to reign as the Messiah (Psalm 110). He claims that He will return in the clouds of heaven, meaning that He will be given all dominion, all glory, and an everlasting kingdom (Daniel 7:13-14).

All these things still stand true today! No matter what the Sanhedrin tried to do to Him, no matter what He allowed them to do, Jesus is who He says He is. He is God. Period.

How will knowing that Jesus is God affect your life-long witness statement today?

Personal Study :: Read the key passage again. Allow your attention to be caught by Jesus. What other verse or verses jumped off the page? Write them here.

What words caught your attention? Look up the original Greek word in Strong's concordance and use this space to write the definition.

Consider all you've read today and what the Lord is speaking to your heart at the moment. How can you apply this to your life today? Use this space to journal your thoughts and prayers.

:: Day 2 ::

Prayer :: Use this space to write down anything you need to take to the Lord in prayer. Surrender these cares/needs/worries/troubles/requests to Him. Surrender your heart to Him. Invite Him to sit with you and teach you. Ask that His presence be felt and that His voice be heard.

Devotional :: Read the following scriptures

Key Text :: Mark 15:1-15

Supporting Passages :: Proverbs 10:9, Proverbs 11:3 & 23, 1 Peter 2:11-12

What did Pilate believe about Jesus, the chief priest, and the current situation (v10)?

Pilate knew that Jesus had done no wrong. He knew that the chief priests were simply jealous of Jesus and wanted Him dead. So what does Pilate do? He gratifies the crowd. I'm not judging Pilate, I've done the same thing: neglected to do the right thing in order to please my friends or coworkers. This type of behavior shows a lack of integrity.

Integrity is simply this: doing what you know is right despite your circumstances, despite pressure from others, despite your own desires or feelings, and despite what might seem like an easier or more logical choice. Exercising integrity isn't always comfortable. In fact, in the short term, choosing to be a woman (or man) of integrity could cause pain. Maybe you'll lose friends or a job. Maybe you'll end up spending more money than you want to. Maybe, maybe, maybe... However, if we turn to the Word of

God we see that walking in integrity is far safer than walking in wickedness. Not only that, it brings glory to the Lord.

How can you walk in integrity today?

Personal Study :: Read the key passage again. Allow your attention to be caught by Jesus. What other verse or verses jumped off the page? Write them here.

What words caught your attention? Look up the original Greek word in Strong's concordance and use this space to write the definition.

Consider all you've read today and what the Lord is speaking to your heart at the moment. How can you apply this to your life today? Use this space to journal your thoughts and prayers.

:: Day 3 ::

Prayer :: Use this space to write down anything you need to take to the Lord in prayer. Surrender these cares/needs/worries/troubles/requests to Him. Surrender your heart to Him. Invite Him to sit with you and teach you. Ask that His presence be felt and that His voice be heard.

Devotional :: Read the following scriptures:

Key Text :: Mark 15:16-32

Supporting Passages :: 1 Corinthians 13:4-8, 1 John 4:7-16

Throughout the key text Jesus is mocked repeatedly. You would think that as He hung on the cross they would have let up a bit but they didn't. In fact, they taunted Him even more, saying, "descend now from the cross, that we may see and believe." And Jesus could have. But He didn't.

You see, at any point Jesus could have stopped the entire process, from the moment He was arrested to the time He was hung. He was (and still is!) God. He could have said, "No thank you, I'm not going to be crucified today." But He didn't. He could have smote His mockers and sent them to hell on the spot. But He didn't. He could have jumped off the cross at any time and said, "See! I am who I say I am!" But He didn't.

Instead of being right, Jesus did what was right. Instead of proving who He was (which He had actually already done time and time again throughout His ministry), He decided to demonstrate His love. And by demonstrating His love, a holy love that is far beyond anything we can comprehend, He showed us who He is. He is God and God is love.

How did Jesus demonstrate the 1 Corinthians 13 love? How can you demonstrate this love today?

Personal Study :: Read the key passage again. Allow your attention to be caught by Jesus. What other verse or verses jumped off the page? Write them here.

What words caught your attention? Look up the original Greek word in Strong's concordance and use this space to write the definition.

Consider all you've read today and what the Lord is speaking to your heart at the moment. How can you apply this to your life today? Use this space to journal your thoughts and prayers.

:: Day 4 ::

Prayer :: Use this space to write down anything you need to take to the Lord in prayer. Surrender these cares/needs/worries/troubles/requests to Him. Surrender your heart to Him. Invite Him to sit with you and teach you. Ask that His presence be felt and that His voice be heard.

Devotional :: Read the following scriptures:

Key Text :: Mark 15:33-47

Supporting Passages :: John 12:32, 1 Corinthians 2:1-5

I'm not exactly sure what specific event happened while Jesus hung and died on the cross to make the centurion say, "Truly this Man was the Son of God," but being at the foot of the cross caused him to believe in Jesus Christ. Why? Because the power of the cross does that.

I think at times we, as Christians, attempt to overcomplicate the message of the Gospel. We try to fancy it up in order to make it more attractive to a lost world. But God doesn't need our help. He didn't demonstrate His love for us on the cross and then ask us to do more. He simply said, "Now go tell the world." God created a simple message to draw all people to Himself and our responsibility is to simply share it.

Meditate on the simple truth of the gospel today. How can you share this simple gospel message today?

Personal Study :: Read the key passage again. Allow your attention to be caught by Jesus. What other verse or verses jumped off the page? Write them here.

What words caught your attention? Look up the original Greek word in Strong's concordance and use this space to write the definition.

Consider all you've read today and what the Lord is speaking to your heart at the moment. How can you apply this to your life today? Use this space to journal your thoughts and prayers.

:: Day 5 ::

Prayer :: Use this space to write down anything you need to take to the Lord in prayer. Surrender these cares/needs/worries/troubles/requests to Him. Surrender your heart to Him. Invite Him to sit with you and teach you. Ask that His presence be felt and that His voice be heard.

Devotional :: Read the following scriptures:

Key Text :: Mark 16:1-20

Supporting Passages :: Matthew 28:16-20, Luke 24: 44-49

Jesus gave His disciples a big to do, to “go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature.” Yet, He didn’t expect them to do it on their own. In fact, He didn’t even want them to do it on their own and told them not to. He wanted them to do it by the power of the Holy Spirit. Mark 16:20 says that the Lord was working with them. In Matthew 28:20, Jesus told His disciples that He would be with them always. In Luke 24:49, He tells them to wait until they have been “endued with the power from on high.”

Each of us has the same calling as these eleven disciples, to preach the gospel to the whole world. It may look a little different for you and me today, but the the power behind our ministry is still the same. That power: the Holy Spirit.

Now you may be thinking, *I don’t have a ministry*. But wait, dear Sister (or Brother), that simply isn’t true. You may not be a part of a formal ministry organization with a fancy name, a budget, or a plan of action, but you have been called to minister. Ministering simply means to serve. Jesus told His disciples to “go therefore and make disciples of all nations... teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:20). Jesus commanded the disciples to preach the gospel and the

disciples have taught you to do the same thing. *How have they taught me?* you may ask. Well, by writing the gospels down for you to read. If you have read even one of the four Gospels, you have been taught.

So, what does that mean? You keep it simple. You let others know about the good news of the cross; that “he who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned” (Mark 16:16). That said, however, do not attempt to minister on your own. Remember that Jesus is with you always and that the power of the Holy Spirit is yours.

How can you go and tell the good news today?

Personal Study :: Read the key passage again. Allow your attention to be caught by Jesus. What other verse or verses jumped off the page? Write them here.

What words caught your attention? Look up the original Greek word in Strong's concordance and use this space to write the definition.

Consider all you've read today and what the Lord is speaking to your heart at the moment. How can you apply this to your life today? Use this space to journal your thoughts and prayers.

:: Days 6 & 7 ::

Prayer :: Use this space to write down anything you need to take to the Lord in prayer. Surrender these cares/needs/worries/troubles/requests to Him. Surrender your heart to Him. Invite Him to sit with you and teach you. Ask that His presence be felt and that His voice be heard.

Review :: Spend some time reading again the passages that caught your attention this week. Review the words you studied and look over your notes.

Are there ideas that are repeating themselves? What themes or do you see?

Do themes or ideas call your attention to any situation in your life? If so, what is it?

What has God revealed to you about Himself or His will this week? How can this knowledge be applied to your situation? Do you recognize actions, behaviors, or beliefs that you need to modify or adopt?

Reflection :: Consider all you have read, reviewed, and reflected on. Take time to listen to what the Lord is saying to you now. Use this space to journal your thoughts and prayers.

Friend,

I am so glad you have reached the end of this book. My prayer has been that as you read you were *caught by Jesus* and that He drew your attention to the scriptures that would speak to you the loudest. I hope that Jesus whispered gently to your heart, that you responded, and that you can put this book down knowing that you are secure in His loving arms.

I truly believe that the words I have written were inspired by the Holy Spirit. That said, however, I am human, a sinner, and flawed. Please never take my thoughts as fact without first comparing them to the Word of God. Please remember to always seek the Lord and His truths by opening your Bible, praying, and listening to what the Holy Spirit is speaking to you.

Only by grace,

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