

Introduction to the GOSPELS and the ACTS of APOSTLES

Have you ever noticed how many different cameras are used to produce a professional sports game? Some show the entire field, others aerial views, and some can zoom in. They all show the same game, but their different perspectives enhance our appreciation of the game. The same can be said of the Gospels and the Acts of the Apostles. They each offer a different perspective on the events surrounding Jesus' life. Taken together, they enhance our appreciation of the life and mission of Jesus.

The Gospel of Matthew offers the traditional view from the sidelines. Matthew focuses on the continuity between Jesus and the traditions found within the Old Testament. The collection of shots used in a game's highlight clips are similar to the Gospel of Mark. Mark has a brief and fast-paced presentation of Jesus' ministry, emphasising his miracles and his suffering. The Gospel of Luke offers the wide-angle view. In Luke, Jesus' life and mission are presented in a way that challenges society's limited perspectives. The Gospel of John is like the camera over the field that zooms in for incredible detail. John focuses on Jesus' identity as God's divine son and gives us in-depth insight into Jesus' purpose and mission. Finally, the Acts of the Apostles is like the camera capturing the post-game interviews. It describes how the early Christians continued Jesus' mission despite conflicts and persecutions.

Together these complementary perspectives lay the foundation for understanding the message and mission of Jesus, the centre of the Christian faith.

Other Background

Collectively the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke are referred to as the synoptic Gospels. *Synoptic* is from a Greek word that means "seeing the whole together." These three gospels share a common perspective. They even share many of the same stories. The Gospel of John is simply referred to as the Fourth Gospel, as it offers its own unique perspective.

The Gospel of Luke and the Acts of the Apostles were written by the same author and are essentially a two-volume work.

The original Greek word for *gospel* is *euangelion*, which means "big or important news" (sometimes translated as "good news"). The Gospel writers wanted to share the important news of Jesus Christ.



The Relationship between the Old and New Testaments

Christians understand the Old Testament as preparing us for the coming of Jesus Christ. The authors of the New Testament incorporated Old Testament texts in their writings to demonstrate how this is seen. Below are some of the passages that are connected in the Old Testament and the New Testament. What other connections between the Old and New Testaments can you identify as you read through the Bible?

From the House of David



Old Testament Isaiah II:1-7 "A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, / and a branch shall grow out of his roots" (verse 1).

New Testament Matthew 1:1-17

"The genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham" (verse 1).





Old Testament Isaiah 7:14

"The Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son, and shall name him Immanuel."

New Testament

Luke 1:26-38 "The angel Gabriel was sent by God to a town in Galilee called Nazareth, to a virgin engaged to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. The virgin's name was Mary" (verses 26–27). Ruler of Israel to Come from Bethlehem

Old Testament

Micah 5:1-5 "But you, O Bethlehem . . . / from you shall come forth for me / one who is to rule in Israel" (verse 2).

New Testament

Luke 2:1-14 "Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem" (verse 4). Wise Men

Old Testament

Isaiah 60:1-6 "The wealth of the nations shall come to you. . . . / They shall bring gold and frankincense, / and shall proclaim the praise of the LORD" (verses 5-6).

New Testament

Matthew 2:1-12 "In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem" (verse 1).

"The New Testament Lies Hidden in the Old, and the Old Testament is Unveiled in the New."

-Saint Augustine





Old Testament Isaiah II:2 "The spirit of the LORD shall rest on him."

New Testament

Luke 3:21-22 "The Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, 'You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased'" (verse 22). Entry into Jerusalem



Old Testament Zechariah 9:9-10 "Lo, your king comes to you; / triumphant and victorious is he, / humble and riding on a donkey" (verse 9).

New Testament

Matthew 21:1-11 Also Mark 11:1-11; Luke 17:28-40; John 12:12-17 "When they had come near Jerusalem . . . Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, 'Go into the village ahead of you,

and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me''' (verses 1–2). Suffering Servant

Old Testament Isaiah, chapter 53 "He was wounded for our transgressions . . . / upon him was the punishment that made us whole, / and by his bruises we are healed" (verse 5).

New Testament John, chapter 19

"The soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they dressed him in a purple robe. Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit" (verses 2 and 30).

Pentecost

Old Testament

"I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; / your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, / your old men shall dream dreams, / and your young men shall see visions" (verse 28).

New Testament Acts 2:1-13

"Suddenly from heaven there came a sound like the rush of a violent wind, and it filled the entire house where they were sitting. Divided tongues, as of fire, appeared among them, and a tongue rested on each of them" (verses 2–3). 1102

Gospel Comparisons Narte Natthew Luke

Writer

Mark: A second generation Christian. possibly a follower of Peter; traditionally the John Mark of Acts

Date Written

65-70 CE

Images of Christ The suffering servant of God, Son of Man, Son of God, Messiah, and Lord

The Author's Community A Gentile Christian community in Rome undergoing persecution

Theological Themes

Jesus shows that the suffering in our lives can be a source of grace when united to the sufferings of Christ.

Historical Situation

The Romans subdue armed Jewish rebellions. Christians experience persecution in Rome.

Matthew: An unknown lewish Christian, traditionally the apostle Matthew

75-80 CE

Teacher and prophet like Moses, Son of God, Son of Man, Messiah, and Lord

A Jewish Christian community in Antioch, Syria

Jesus teaches what it means to be a member of the kingdom of heaven. He prepares his followers to continue his teaching and ministry.

Written after Romans had destroyed all of Jerusalem, including the temple of Herod

Luke: A Gentile Christian, traditionally Luke the physician and Paul's travelling companion

80-85 CE

Great healer, merciful, compassion for the poor, Son of God, Son of Man, Messiah, and Lord

Written to Theophilus (meaning "lover of God"), who possibly represents any Christian (Greece)

Jesus heals longstanding divisions among people. He calls his followers to have a special compassion for those excluded from wealth and power.

Written when the persecution of Jews and Christians was intensifying

John: The beloved disciple, the apostle John, or his disciple

John

90-110 CE

Logos, Word of God, Son of God, Son of Man, Lamb of God, Redeemer, Messiah, and Lord

Community of Jews, Gentiles, and Samaritans of Ephesus in Turkey

Jesus is the divine Son of God, the image of God in flesh. Salvation is available for those who believe in Jesus and commit their lives to him.

Emperor Domitian deified himself and mandated that all people worship him. Jewish leaders banned Christians from the synagogues.



The Gospel According to

MATTHEW

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Quick Summary

Have you ever watched a really good movie with a plot twist at the end that makes you rethink the whole movie? Well, if the Old Testament was the first part of such a movie, the Gospel of Matthew would be the plot twist at the end. The twist? All the events in the Hebrew Scriptures (the Christian Old Testament) were a preparation for the coming of Jesus Christ!

To show how Jesus was the fulfilment of the hopes and prophecies contained in the Old Testament, Matthew draws parallels between the life and teaching of Jesus and the people and events of the Old Testament. We read about Jesus in situations that recall Old Testament heroes like Moses and the prophets. Jesus takes Old Testament teachings and gives them renewed meaning in the Sermon on the Mount. Matthew makes it clear that Jesus' suffering, death, and resurrection are the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecies.

The Gospel of Matthew concludes with Jesus commissioning his followers to bring his good news to the whole world. He calls us to participate in that mission too.

How Is This Relevant to My Life Today?

- Matthew shows us that true love requires commitment and sacrifice.
- Jesus shows us how to stay faithful when the right thing is difficult to do.
 - Our actions towards one another have consequences, *eternal* consequences. We find Jesus in the people we meet, especially those who are needy.

Headline Highlights

- Magi Investigate New Star (2:1–12)
- Getting God's Attention (5:1–12)
- Cure for Anxiousness (6:25–34)
- Thousands Fed with Miracle Lunch! (14:13–21)
- Jesus' True Identity Revealed (16:13–20)
- Rich Man Leaves Troubled (19:16–30)
- Christ's Disguises (25:31–46)
- Betrayed! Betrayed! (26:36–56)
- Officials Plot Empty Tomb Cover-Up (28:1–15)



The Genealogy of Jesus the Messiah An account of the genealogy^{*a*} of Jesus the Messiah,^{*b*} the son of David, the son of Abraham.

²Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac the father of Jacob, and Jacob the father of Judah and his brothers, ³and Judah the father of Perez and Zerah by Tamar, and Perez the father of Hezron, and Hezron the father of Aram, ⁴and Aram the father of Aminadab, and Aminadab the father of Nahshon, and Nahshon the father of Salmon, ⁵and Salmon the father of Boaz by Rahab, and Boaz the father of Obed by Ruth, and Obed the father of Jesse, ⁶and Jesse the father of King David.

And David was the father of Solomon by the wife of Uriah, ⁷and Solomon the father of Rehoboam, and Rehoboam the father of Abijah, and Abijah the father of Asaph,^c ⁸and Asaph^c the father of Jehoshaphat, and Jehoshaphat the father of Joram, and Joram the father of Uzziah, ⁹and Uzziah the father of Jotham, and Jotham the father of Ahaz, and Ahaz the father of Hezekiah, ¹⁰and Hezekiah the father of Manasseh, and Manasseh the father of Amos,^d and Amos^d the father of Josiah, ¹¹and Josiah the father of Jechoniah and his brothers, at the time of the deportation to Babylon.

¹²And after the deportation to Babylon: Jechoniah was the father of Salathiel, and Salathiel the father of Zerubbabel, ¹³and Zerubbabel the father of Abiud, and Abiud the father of Eliakim, and Eliakim the father of Azor, ¹⁴and Azor the father of Zadok, and Zadok the father of Achim, and Achim the father of Eliud, ¹⁵and Eliud the father of Eleazar, and Eleazar the father of Matthan, and Matthan the father of Jacob, ¹⁶and Jacob the father of Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom Jesus was born, who is called the Messiah.^{*e*}

¹⁷So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David to the deportation to Babylon, fourteen generations; and from the deportation to Babylon to the Messiah,^e fourteen generations.

The Birth of Jesus the Messiah

¹⁸Now the birth of Jesus the Messiah^b took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been engaged to Joseph, but before they lived together, she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. ¹⁹Her husband Joseph, being a righteous man and unwilling to expose her to public disgrace, planned to dismiss her quietly. ²⁰But just when he had resolved to do this, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. ²¹She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." ²²All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet:

²³ "Look, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him Emmanuel,"

a Or birth *b* Or Jesus Christ *c* Other ancient authorities read Asa *d* Other ancient authorities read Amon *e* Or the Christ

Matthew 1:1

Like Jesus, we also have a genealogy. Often our faith and values are learned or passed down from these people, and from others who have had a major influence in our lives, directly or indirectly.

TAKE ACTION!

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1 Create a chart with your name as well as the names of three to five people who have had a spiritual or faith influence in your life.

2 Write a word next to each person's name that represents the value they have passed on to you.

3 Reach out to each person on your chart, and tell them how grateful you are for what you have learned or inherited from them. Ask them how they learned what they passed on to you.

4 Continue to think of others who have passed on important things to you. Fill out your chart with more names as people come to mind. Place your chart between these pages.

which means, "God is with us." ²⁴When Joseph awoke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him; he took her as his wife, ²⁵but had no marital relations with her until she had borne a son;" and he named him Jesus.

CLAIM YOUR SPIRITUAL FAM

The Visit of the Wise Men

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men^b from the East came to Jerusalem, ²asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising,^c and have come to pay him homage." ³When King Herod heard this, he was frightened, and all Jerusalem with him; ⁴and calling together all the chief priests and scribes of the people, he inquired of them where the Messiah^d was to be born. ⁵They told him, "In Bethlehem of Judea; for so it has been written by the prophet:

- ⁵ 'And you, Bethlehem, in the land of Judah,
 - are by no means least among the rulers of Judah;

for from you shall come a ruler who is to shepherd^e my people Israel.'"

⁷Then Herod secretly called for the wise men^b and learned from them the exact time when the star had appeared. ⁸Then he sent them to Bethlehem, saying, "Go and search diligently for the child; and when you have found him, bring me word so that I may also go and pay him homage." 9When they had heard the king, they set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising,^{*c*} until it stopped over the place where the child was. ¹⁰When they saw that the star had stopped^f they were overwhelmed with joy. ¹¹On entering the house, they saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh. ¹²And having been warned in a dream not to return to Herod, they left for their own country by another road.

The Escape to Egypt

¹³Now after they had left, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream and said, "Get up, take the child and his mother, and flee to Egypt, and

a Other ancient authorities read her firstborn son b Or astrologers; Gk magi c Or in the East d Or the Christ e Or rule f Gk saw the star

remain there until I tell you; for Herod is about to search for the child, to destroy him." ¹⁴Then Joseph^a got up, took the child and his mother by night, and went to Egypt, ¹⁵and remained there until the death of Herod. This was to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet, "Out of Egypt I have called my son."

The Massacre of the Infants

¹⁶When Herod saw that he had been tricked by the wise men,^b he was infuriated, and he sent and killed all the children in and around Bethlehem who were two years old or under, according to the time that he had learned from the wise men.^b ¹⁷Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah:

¹⁸ "A voice was heard in Ramah,

wailing and loud lamentation,

Rachel weeping for her children;

she refused to be consoled, because they are no more."

The Return from Egypt

¹⁹When Herod died, an angel of the Lord suddenly appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt and said, ²⁰"Get up, take the child and his mother, and go to the land of Israel, for those who were seeking the child's life are dead." ²¹Then Joseph^a got up, took the child and his mother, and went to the land of Israel. ²²But when he heard that Archelaus was ruling over Judea in place of his father Herod, he was afraid to go there. And after being warned in a dream, he went away to the district of Galilee. ²³There he made his home in a town called Nazareth, so that what had been spoken through the prophets might be fulfilled, "He will be called a Nazorean."

The Proclamation of John the Baptist

In those days John the Baptist appeared in the wilderness of Judge and his highlight and highlight and highlight appeared in the second wilderness of Judea, proclaiming, ²"Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near."^c ³This is the one of whom the prophet Isaiah spoke when he said,

"The voice of one crying out in the wilderness:

'Prepare the way of the Lord,

make his paths straight?"

⁴Now John wore clothing of camel's hair with a leather belt around his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. ⁵Then the people of Jerusalem and all Judea were going out to him, and all the region along the Jordan, 6 and they were baptized by him in the river Jordan, confessing their sins.

⁷But when he saw many Pharisees and Sadducees coming for baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? 8Bear fruit worthy of repentance. 9Do not



Jesus' Family Tree

The unique focus of the Gospel of Matthew is immediately revealed in the first two chapters. The author of Matthew starts by tracing Jesus' family tree, making his case that Jesus was the Messiah who would restore the covenant promised to Abraham, the father of the Jewish people. Next he traces Jesus' ancestry back to David to show that Jesus is the fulfilment of the promises made to David. Things get even more fascinating with a closer look at all the people mentioned in the list: patriarchs and slaves, kings and peasants, men and women, Jews and non-Jews.

Essentially, this genealogy demonstrates that God has been present and at work from the call of Abraham, the "father" of Judaism, through the high point of their history (David), and even through their darkest times (the Babylonian exile). And "God is with us" still in Jesus (Matthew 1:23).



presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. ¹⁰Even now the ax is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

¹¹"I baptize you with^d water for repentance, but one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to carry his sandals. He will baptize you with^d the Holy Spirit and fire. ¹²His winnowing fork is in his hand, and he will clear his threshing floor and will gather his wheat into the granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire."

The Baptism of Jesus

¹³Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptized by him. 14John would have prevented him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?" ¹⁵But Jesus answered



Jesus, Emmanuel

Matthew 1:23

The author of Matthew's Gospel presents Jesus as the promised Messiah and highlights Jesus' Jewish origins. The author does this to let Jewish-Christian readers know that believing in Jesus as the Messiah is not a break with their Jewish traditions.

One of the first examples is in the announcement of Jesus' birth. The author quotes Isaiah 7:14, in which Isaiah tells King Ahaz that his young wife will conceive a son and they will name him Immanuel, which means "God is with us."

This is the perfect description for Jesus, the Son of God, who fully shares our humanity. The gospel ends with the same promise, when the Risen Jesus tells his disciples, "I am with you always" (Matthew 28:20).

him, "Let it be so now; for it is proper for us in this way to fulfill all righteousness." Then he consented. ¹⁶And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. ¹⁷And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, the Beloved," with whom I am well pleased."

The Temptation of Jesus

Then Jesus was led up by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. ²He fasted forty days and forty nights, and afterwards he was famished. ³The tempter came and said to him, "If you are the Son of God, command these stones to become loaves of bread." ⁴But he answered, "It is written,

'One does not live by bread alone,

but by every word that comes from the mouth of God."

⁵Then the devil took him to the holy city and placed him on the pinnacle of the temple, ⁶saying to him, "If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down; for it is written, 'He will command his angels concerning you,' and 'On their hands they will bear you up,

so that you will not dash your foot against a stone."

⁷Jesus said to him, "Again it is written, 'Do not put the Lord your God to the test.'"

⁸Again, the devil took him to a very high mountain and showed him all the kingdoms of the world and their splendor; ⁹and he said to him, "All these I will give you, if you will fall down and worship me." ¹⁰Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! for it is written,

'Worship the Lord your God,

and serve only him."

¹¹Then the devil left him, and suddenly angels came and waited on him.

Jesus Begins His Ministry in Galilee

¹²Now when Jesus^b heard that John had been arrested, he withdrew to Galilee. ¹³He left Nazareth and made his home in Capernaum by the sea, in the territory of Zebulun and Naphtali, ¹⁴so that what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled:

¹⁵ "Land of Zebulun, land of Naphtali, on the road by the sea, across the Jordan,

Galilee of the Gentiles—

¹⁶ the people who sat in darkness

have seen a great light,

and for those who sat in the region and shadow of death

light has dawned."

 17 From that time Jesus began to proclaim, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." $^{\circ}$

Jesus Calls the First Disciples

¹⁸As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen. ¹⁹And he said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fish for people." ²⁰Immediately they left their nets and followed him. ²¹As he went from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John, in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them. ²²Immediately they left the boat and their father, and followed him.

Jesus Ministers to Crowds of People

²³Jesus^{*d*} went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the good news^{*e*} of the kingdom and curing every disease and every sickness among the people. ²⁴So his

a Or my beloved Son b Gk he c Or is at hand d Gk He e Gk gospel

WHO my NEIGHBOUR?

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Jesus' Refugee Family Matthew 2:13

Following an angel's order and facing the massacre of all boys under age two, Joseph takes Mary and Jesus to Egypt to protect them from Herod's threats. Like Mary and Joseph, millions of people in the world become refugees or immigrants every year, fleeing their countries because of poverty, persecution, or violence. Often they find themselves feeling like unwelcomed strangers, not able to communicate in the language of their new land and even mistreated by its inhabitants. As Christians, we are called to welcome the stranger, especially those who suffer.

Today ask God to bless legislators with the love and wisdom to welcome refugees and immigrants, and to give your generation a courageous heart to seek justice and peace in the world.

fame spread throughout all Syria, and they brought to him all the sick, those who were afflicted with various diseases and pains, demoniacs, epileptics, and paralytics, and he cured them. ²⁵And great crowds followed him from Galilee, the Decapolis, Jerusalem, Judea, and from beyond the Jordan.

The Beatitudes

5 When Jesus⁴ saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. ²Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

³"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

⁴"Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

 $^{\rm 5"} {\rm Blessed}$ are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

⁶"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

⁷"Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

⁸"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

⁹"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

¹⁰"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹"Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely^{*b*} on my account. ¹²Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Salt and Light

¹³"You are the salt of the earth; but if salt has lost its taste, how can its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything, but is thrown out and trampled under foot.

¹⁴"You are the light of the world. A city built on a hill cannot be hid. ¹⁵No one after lighting a lamp puts it under the bushel basket, but on the lampstand, and it gives light to all in the house. ¹⁶In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

The Law and the Prophets

¹⁷"Do not think that I have come to abolish the law or the prophets; I have come not to abolish but

Catholic Connection Matthew 3:13-17

Come to the Water

John the Baptist stands by the Jordan, calling people to be baptised in water as a sign of conversion from sin. Who steps forward? Jesus, the Son of God, who is without sin! God reveals Jesus' true identity: "This is my Son, the Beloved" (Matthew 3:17).

Baptism, the first sacrament of initiation, established us as God's adopted children and members of the Church. Many Catholics are baptised as infants, but others, called catechumens, are baptised at each Easter Vigil. The catechumen is immersed in water or has water poured over his or her head three times with the words, "I baptise you in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, number 226). The catechumen dies to sin and rises as a new creation in Christ. The newly baptised is then anointed with sacred oil to strengthen him or her. Finally, the new Catholic puts on a white garment, signifying new life in Christ, and receives a candle, calling him or her to walk in the light of Christ.

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to fulfill. ¹⁸For truly I tell you, until heaven and earth pass away, not one letter,^a not one stroke of a letter, will pass from the law until all is accomplished. ¹⁹Therefore, whoever breaks^b one of the least of these commandments, and teaches others to do the same, will be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does them and teaches them will be called great in the kingdom of heaven. ²⁰For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven.

Concerning Anger

²¹"You have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, 'You shall not murder'; and 'whoever murders shall be liable to judgment.²²But I say to you that if you are angry with a brother or sister,^c you will be liable to judgment; and if you insult^d a brother or sister,^e you will be liable to the council; and if you say, 'You fool,' you will be liable to the hell' of fire. ²³So when you are offering your gift at the altar, if you remember that your brother or sister^g has something against you, ²⁴leave your gift there before the altar and go; first be reconciled to your brother or sister,^g and then come and offer your gift. ²⁵Come to terms quickly with your accuser while you are on the way to court^h with him, or your accuser may hand you over to the judge, and the judge to the guard, and you will be thrown into prison. ²⁶Truly I tell you, you will never get out until you have paid the last penny.

Concerning Adultery

²⁷"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall not commit adultery.' ²⁸But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman with lust has already committed adultery with her in his heart. ²⁹If your right eye causes you to sin, tear it out and throw it away; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.^f ³⁰And if your right hand causes you to sin, cut it off and throw it away; it is better for you to lose one of your members than for your whole body to go into hell.f

Concerning Divorce

³¹"It was also said, 'Whoever divorces his wife, let him give her a certificate of divorce.' ³²But I say to you that anyone who divorces his wife, except on the ground of unchastity, causes her to commit adultery; and whoever marries a divorced woman commits adultery.

a Gk one jota b Or annuls c Gk a brother, other ancient authorities add without cause d Gk say Raca to (an obscure term of abuse) e Gk a brother f Gk Gehenna g Gk your brother h Gk lacks to court

Concerning Oaths

^{33"}Again, you have heard that it was said to those of ancient times, 'You shall not swear falsely, but carry out the vows you have made to the Lord.' ³⁴But I say to you, Do not swear at all, either by heaven, for it is the throne of God, ³⁵or by the earth, for it is his footstool, or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the great King. ³⁶And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make one hair white or black. ³⁷Let your word be 'Yes, Yes' or 'No, No'; anything more than this comes from the evil one.^{*a*}

Concerning Retaliation

³⁸"You have heard that it was said, 'An eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth.' ³⁹But I say to you, Do not resist an evildoer. But if anyone strikes you on the right cheek, turn the other also; ⁴⁰and if anyone wants to sue you and take your coat, give your cloak as well; ⁴¹and if anyone forces you to go one mile, go also the second mile. ⁴²Give to everyone who begs from you, and do not refuse anyone who wants to borrow from you.

Love for Enemies

⁴³"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy? ⁴⁴But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. ⁴⁶For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even the tax collectors do the same? ⁴⁷And if you greet only your brothers and sisters,^b what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? ⁴⁸Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Concerning Almsgiving

6 "Beware of practicing your piety before others in order to be seen by them; for then you have no reward from your Father in heaven.

²"So whenever you give alms, do not sound a trumpet before you, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, so that they may be praised by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ³But when you give alms, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴so that your alms may be done in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.^c

Concerning Prayer

⁵"And whenever you pray, do not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the



Pharisees, Sadducees, and Scribes

Matthew 3:7

The Pharisees were devoted laymen who were scholars of the law of Moses and experts at interpreting it. People looked up to them for guidance about how they should live as good Jews.

The Sadducees were associated with the temple and the ruling class and thought that the well-being of the Jewish people was dependent on proper operation and support of the temple.

Scribes were not a religious group within Judaism, but they would have been familiar with the Torah and other aspects of religious practice because they worked as secretaries for the Pharisees and Sadducees.

The negative reaction of John the Baptist to the Pharisees and Sadducees is typical in Matthew, but in general they were respected leaders during Jesus' time.

synagogues and at the street corners, so that they may be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ⁶But whenever you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.^c

^{7"}When you are praying, do not heap up empty phrases as the Gentiles do; for they think that they will be heard because of their many words. ⁸Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

9"Pray then in this way:

Our Father in heaven,

11

hallowed be your name.

- Your kingdom come. Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.
 - on earth as it is in heaven.
 - Give us this day our daily bread.^d

¹² And forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.

a Or evil *b* Gk your brothers *c* Other ancient authorities add openly *d* Or our bread for tomorrow

Catholic Connection

Be Happy!

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus offers a radical view of true happiness in a list of attitudes called the Beatitudes. Jesus calls us to turn away from self-centred attitudes and towards the truth of who we are before God. In the Beatitudes, lesus paints a word picture of his true followers. We are poor: Our true happiness does not come from things. At times, we are sad and we mourn: We look to God and God's people to comfort us. We are meek: We accept compliments graciously but know our value lies in our dignity as God's children. We hunger and thirst for justice in our world, and we show mercy to others. We are clean of heart, avoiding temptation in thought and action, and we are peacemakers. If we endure persecution, Jesus promises us a sure reward.

Living the Beatitudes leads us to a right relationship with God and others. Eventually the Beatitudes will lead us to the eternal life God has prepared for us in heaven. In the meantime, make the Beatitudes your daily attitudes, and know that you are not alone in the pursuit of true happiness. You walk this journey with your brothers and sisters in faith, led by Mary and the saints!

Catechism, numbers 1716–1729 ¹³ And do not bring us to the time of trial,^a but rescue us from the evil one.^b

¹⁴For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you; ¹⁵but if you do not forgive others, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses.

Concerning Fasting

¹⁶"And whenever you fast, do not look dismal, like the hypocrites, for they disfigure their faces so as to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. ¹⁷But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, ¹⁸so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you.^c

Concerning Treasures

^{19"}Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust^d consume and where thieves break in and steal; ²⁰but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust^d consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

The Sound Eye

^{22"}The eye is the lamp of the body. So, if your eye is healthy, your whole body will be full of light; ²³but if your eye is unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light in you is darkness, how great is the darkness!

Serving Two Masters

 24 "No one can serve two masters; for a slave will either hate the one and love the other, or be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and wealth."

Do Not Worry

²⁵"Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink,^f or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? ²⁶Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? ²⁷And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life?^{g 28}And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, ²⁹yet I tell

a Or us into temptation b Or from evil. Other ancient authorities add, in some form, For the kingdom and the power and the glory are yours forever. Amen. c Other ancient authorities add openly d Gk eating e Gk mammon f Other ancient authorities lack or what you will drink g Or add one cubit to your height you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. ³⁰But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? ³¹Therefore do not worry, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear?' 32For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. ³³But strive first for the kingdom of God^a and his^b righteousness, and all these things will be given to vou as well.

³⁴"So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today's trouble is enough for today.

Judging Others

"Do not judge, so that you may not be judged. ²For with the judgment you make you will be judged, and the measure you give will be the measure you get. ³Why do you see the speck in your neighbor's^{*c*} eye, but do not notice the log in your own eye? 4Or how can you say to your neighbor,^d 'Let me take the speck out of your eye,' while the log is in your own eye? ⁵You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your neighbor's^c eye.

Profaning the Holy

⁶"Do not give what is holy to dogs; and do not throw your pearls before swine, or they will trample them under foot and turn and maul you.

Ask, Search, Knock

⁷"Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. 8For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. 'Is there anyone among you who, if your child asks for bread, will give a stone? ¹⁰Or if the child asks for a fish, will give a snake? ¹¹If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him!

The Golden Rule

¹²"In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets.

a Other ancient authorities lack of God b Or its c Gk brother's d Gk brother

Catholic Connection

Matthew 6:1-18

Desert the

We hear Matthew 6:1–18 on Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent. Lent is a forty-day period of prayer, service, and fasting, a time when we look forward to Easter, when we will renew our baptismal commitment to Christ and celebrate his resurrection. The forty days recall the forty years that the people of Israel spent wandering in the wilderness before arriving at the promised land, as well as the forty days that Jesus spent in the desert after being baptised (see Matthew 4:1).

On Ash Wednesday, we receive ashes that remind us of our nature as created beings (see Genesis 3:19). This practice echoes the Old Testament tradition of wearing ashes as a sign of anguish and repentance (see Judith 4:11). As the ash cross is made on our foreheads, we hear words that echo John the Baptist's call to conversion: "Repent, and believe in the Gospel" (Roman Missal, page 211). We respond with, "Amen," meaning, "So be it."

When Lent begins again, make a special commitment to prayer, service, and fasting, and ask God for the grace to grow from it.

> Catechism, numbers 538-540, 1438

Matthew

1113

Catholic Connection Matthew, chapters 5-7 Upside-Down World

In the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus turns his listeners' attitudes upside down. He says it is not enough simply to follow the letter of the law and perform minimal acts to care for the poor, bury the dead, and give alms. Rather, people should do these things generously, compassionately, and humbly, with a hunger for justice, a pure heart, and a desire for peace.

God has a special love for the poor and oppressed. These are "the last" who are first in God's eyes. To be authentic Christians, we must show similar "upside-down" love for those most in need. Thankfully our world has been blessed with modern-day prophets who have shown us what it truly means to love and care for those who are poor. For example, Blessed Oscar Romero of El Salvador was martyred for speaking out against grave injustices being inflicted upon the poor in his country. Dorothy Day founded the Catholic Worker movement and devoted her life to promoting peace while serving the most destitute. With these faithful disciples and so many others as examples, we too must always opt to love and serve the poor in our midst.

Catholic Social Teaching: Option for the Poor and Vulnerable

¹³"Enter through the narrow gate; for the gate is wide and the road is easy^{*a*} that leads to destruction, and there are many who take it. ¹⁴For the gate is narrow and the road is hard that leads to life, and there are few who find it.

A Tree and Its Fruit

¹⁵"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves. ¹⁶You will know them by their fruits. Are grapes gathered from thorns, or figs from thistles? ¹⁷In the same way, every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. ¹⁸A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, nor can a bad tree bear good fruit. ¹⁹Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. ²⁰Thus you will know them by their fruits.

Concerning Self-Deception

²¹"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only the one who does the will of my Father in heaven. ²²On that day many will say to me, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and cast out demons in your name, and do many deeds of power in your name?' ²³'Then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; go away from me, you evildoers?

Hearers and Doers

²⁴"Everyone then who hears these words of mine and acts on them will be like a wise man who built his house on rock. ²⁵The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house. but it did not fall, because it had been founded on rock. ²⁶And everyone who hears these words of mine and does not act on them will be like a foolish man who built his house on sand. ²⁷The rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell-and great was its fall!"

²⁸Now when Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were astounded at his teaching, ²⁹ for he taught them as one having authority, and not as their scribes.

Jesus Cleanses a Leper

When Jesus^b had come down from the mountain, great crowds followed him; ²and there was a leper^c who came to him and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, if you choose, you can make me clean." ³He stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, "I do choose. Be made clean!"

Matthew

a Other ancient authorities read for the road is wide and easy b Gk he c The terms leper and leprosy can refer to several diseases

Immediately his leprosy^{*a*} was cleansed. ⁴Then Jesus said to him, "See that you say nothing to anyone; but go, show yourself to the priest, and offer the gift that Moses commanded, as a testimony to them."

Jesus Heals a Centurion's Servant

⁵When he entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, appealing to him 6 and saying, "Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, in terrible distress." 7And he said to him, "I will come and cure him." 8The centurion answered, "Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; but only speak the word, and my servant will be healed. 9For I also am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes, and to another, 'Come,' and he comes, and to my slave, 'Do this,' and the slave does it." ¹⁰When Jesus heard him, he was amazed and said to those who followed him, "Truly I tell you, in no one^b in Israel have I found such faith. ¹¹I tell you, many will come from east and west and will eat with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, ¹²while the heirs of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." ¹³And to the centurion Jesus said, "Go; let it be done for you according to your faith." And the servant was healed in that hour.

Jesus Heals Many at Peter's House

¹⁴When Jesus entered Peter's house, he saw his mother-in-law lying in bed with a fever; ¹⁵he touched her hand, and the fever left her, and she got up and began to serve him. ¹⁶That evening they brought to him many who were possessed with demons; and he cast out the spirits with a word, and cured all who were sick. ¹⁷This was to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah, "He took our infirmities and bore our diseases."

Would-Be Followers of Jesus

¹⁸Now when Jesus saw great crowds around him, he gave orders to go over to the other side. ¹⁹A scribe then approached and said, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go." ²⁰And Jesus said to him, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head." ²¹Another of his disciples said to him, "Lord, first let me go and bury my father." ²²But Jesus said to him, "Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead."

a The terms *leper* and *leprosy* can refer to several diseases *b* Other ancient authorities read *Truly I tell you, not even*





ou Pra-

In the Book of Matthew, Jesus teaches his followers the Lord's Prayer as an alternative to hypocritical and empty prayer. If we pray this prayer without meaning, it can become "empty phrases" for us too (see Matthew 6:7). As you pray the Our Father, honour God's name, pray for God's kingdom of peace and love to come, resolve to do God's will even when it goes against your own, pray for daily bread for all, ask for forgiveness, give forgiveness, and pray to be delivered from all evil. Amen!

Matthew

ON EARTH AS IT IS IN EARTH OIVE US THIS EAVEN. GIVE US THIS ONY OUR DAILY BREAD

Jesus Stills the Storm

²³And when he got into the boat, his disciples followed him. ²⁴A windstorm arose on the sea, so great that the boat was being swamped by the waves; but he was asleep. ²⁵And they went and woke him up, saying, "Lord, save us! We are perishing!" ²⁶And he said to them, "Why are you afraid, you of little faith?" Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the sea; and there was a dead calm. ²⁷They were amazed, saying, "What sort of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey him?"

Jesus Heals the Gadarene Demoniacs

²⁸When he came to the other side, to the country of the Gadarenes,^a two demoniacs coming out of the tombs met him. They were so fierce that no one could pass that way. ²⁹Suddenly they shouted, "What have you to do with us, Son of God? Have you come here to torment us before the time?" ³⁰Now a large herd of swine was feeding at some distance from them. ³¹The demons begged him, "If you cast us out, send us into the herd of swine." ³²And he said to them, "Go!" So they came out and entered the swine; and suddenly, the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the sea and perished in the water. ³³The swineherds ran off, and on going into the town, they told the whole story about what had happened to the demoniacs. ³⁴Then the whole town came out to meet Jesus; and when they saw him, they begged him to leave their neighborhood. ¹And after getting into a boat he crossed the sea and came to his own town.

Jesus Heals a Paralytic

²And just then some people were carrying a paralyzed man lying on a bed. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Take heart, son; your sins are forgiven." 3 Then some of the scribes said to themselves, "This man is blaspheming." ⁴But Jesus, perceiving their thoughts, said, "Why do you think evil in your hearts? ⁵For which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Stand up and walk'? 'But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"-he then said to the paralytic-"Stand up, take your bed and go to your home." ⁷And he stood up and went to his home. ⁸When the crowds saw it, they were filled with awe, and they glorified God, who had given such authority to human beings.

a Other ancient authorities read Gergesenes; others, Gerasenes

Matthew 6:21

What we treasure says a lot about who we are and what we value. Because of this, it is good to be mindful where we place our time and attention and what we value as important.

TAKE ACTION!

Imagine you had to move to a deserted island and could only take five people and five items with you. Whom and what would you bring?

2 Reflect about why you chose the items you did for the deserted island. Do they represent your heart and values well?

ALLEN

3 Take time this week to tell the five people who are your treasure how important they are to you. Say a prayer of thanks every night this week for each of them.

The Call of Matthew

RECOGNISE AND SHARE YOUR TREASURE

> ⁹As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man called Matthew sitting at the tax booth; and he said to him, "Follow me." And he got up and followed him.

> ¹⁰And as he sat at dinner^{*a*} in the house, many tax collectors and sinners came and were sitting^{*b*} with him and his disciples. ¹¹When the Pharisees saw this, they said to his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" ¹²But when he heard this, he said, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. ¹³Go and learn what this means, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.' For I have come to call not the righteous but sinners."

The Question about Fasting

¹⁴Then the disciples of John came to him, saying, "Why do we and the Pharisees fast often,^c but your disciples do not fast?" ¹⁵And Jesus said to them, "The wedding guests cannot mourn as long as the bridegroom is with them, can they? The days will come when the bridegroom is taken away from them, and then they will fast. ¹⁶No one sews a piece of unshrunk cloth on an old cloak, for the patch pulls away from the cloak, and a worse tear is made. ¹⁷Neither is new wine put into old wineskins; otherwise, the skins burst, and the wine is spilled, and the skins are destroyed; but new wine is put into fresh wineskins, and so both are preserved."

A Girl Restored to Life and a Woman Healed

¹⁸While he was saving these things to them, suddenly a leader of the synagogue^d came in and knelt before him, saving, "My daughter has just died; but come and lay your hand on her, and she will live." ¹⁹And Jesus got up and followed him, with his disciples. ²⁰Then suddenly a woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years came up behind him and touched the fringe of his cloak, ²¹for she said to herself, "If I only touch his cloak, I will be made well." ²²Jesus turned, and seeing her he said, "Take heart, daughter; your faith has made you well." And instantly the woman was made well. ²³When Jesus came to the leader's house and saw the flute players and the crowd making a commotion, ²⁴he said, "Go away; for the girl is not dead but sleeping." And they laughed at him. ²⁵But when

Matthew

a Gk reclined b Gk were reclining c Other ancient authorities lack often d Gk lacks of the synagogue



TAKE ACTION!

1118

Identify Your Foundation: Read Matthew 7:24–27 and think about the two different foundations. In your notebook or journal, write about the foundation that best describes your life right now.

Describe a Solid Foundation: Think about what builds a strong foundation for you, and write these things down, such as "friends" or "love."

Commit to Building: Name where your foundation might be the weakest, and commit to one thing you can do every day this month to make that part of your foundation more solid.

the crowd had been put outside, he went in and took her by the hand, and the girl got up. ²⁶And the report of this spread throughout that district.

BUILD YOUR HOUSE ON ROCK

Jesus Heals Two Blind Men

²⁷As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed him, crying loudly, "Have mercy on us, Son of David!" ²⁸When he entered the house, the blind men came to him; and Jesus said to them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?" They said to him, "Yes, Lord." ²⁹Then he touched their eyes and said, "According to your faith let it be done to you." ³⁰And their eyes were opened. Then Jesus sternly ordered them, "See that no one knows of this." ³¹But they went away and spread the news about him throughout that district.

Jesus Heals One Who Was Mute

³²After they had gone away, a demoniac who was mute was brought to him. ³³And when the demon had been cast out, the one who had been mute spoke; and the crowds were amazed and said, "Never has anything like this been seen in Israel."
³⁴But the Pharisees said, "By the ruler of the demons he casts out the demons."^a

The Harvest Is Great, the Laborers Few

³⁵Then Jesus went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and curing every disease and every sickness. ³⁶When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. ³⁷Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; ³⁸therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."

The Twelve Apostles

10 Then Jesus^b summoned his twelve disciples and gave them authority over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to cure every disease and every sickness. ²These are the names of the twelve apostles: first, Simon, also known as Peter, and his brother Andrew; James son of Zebedee, and his brother John; ³Philip and Bartholomew; Thomas and Matthew the tax collector; James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus;^c ⁴Simon the Cananaean, and Judas Iscariot, the one who betrayed him.

a Other ancient authorities lack this verse *b* Gk *he c* Other ancient authorities read Lebbaeus, or Lebbaeus called Thaddaeus

The Mission of the Twelve

⁵These twelve Jesus sent out with the following instructions: "Go nowhere among the Gentiles, and enter no town of the Samaritans, ⁶but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. ⁷As you go, proclaim the good news, 'The kingdom of heaven has come near.'^a ⁸Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers,^b cast out demons. You received without payment; give without payment. 9Take no gold, or silver, or copper in your belts, ¹⁰no bag for your journey, or two tunics, or sandals, or a staff; for laborers deserve their food. 11Whatever town or village you enter, find out who in it is worthy, and stay there until you leave. 12As you enter the house, greet it. ¹³If the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it; but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. ¹⁴If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet as you leave that house or town. ¹⁵Truly I tell you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town.

Coming Persecutions

¹⁶"See, I am sending you out like sheep into the midst of wolves; so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves. ¹⁷Beware of them, for they will hand you over to councils and flog you in their synagogues; ¹⁸and you will be dragged before governors and kings because of me, as a testimony to them and the Gentiles. ¹⁹When they hand you over, do not worry about how you are to speak or what you are to say; for what you are to say will be given to you at that time; ²⁰for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you. ²¹Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child, and children will rise against parents and have them put to death; ²²and you will be hated by all because of my name. But the one who endures to the end will be saved. ²³When they persecute you in one town, flee to the next; for truly I tell you, you will not have gone through all the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes.

²⁴"A disciple is not above the teacher, nor a slave above the master; ²⁵it is enough for the disciple to be like the teacher, and the slave like the master. If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more will they malign those of his household!

Whom to Fear

²⁶"So have no fear of them; for nothing is covered up that will not be uncovered, and nothing secret that will not become known. ²⁷What I say to you in the dark, tell in the light; and what you hear whispered, proclaim from the housetops. ²⁸Do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul:



Reveal

People today tend to view reports of miracles with suspicion because our rational mind wants to believe that everything has a scientific explanation. But people in Jesus' time were more concerned about what the miracle revealed than in the miracle itself or even the miracle worker. In fact, Jesus' healing miracles were not taken as proof of his divinity, only that he worked by the power of God.

In curing people of their illnesses and driving out demons, Jesus was revealing that the Reign of God is a place where suffering and evil are banished and all are welcomed, especially outcasts.

Whether miracles are easily explained or beyond reasonable explanation does not matter; what matters is that they make us aware of God's loving presence in our lives.

rather fear him who can destroy both soul and body in hell.^{c 29}Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. ³⁰And even the hairs of your head are all counted. ³¹So do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows.

³²"Everyone therefore who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven; 33but whoever denies me before others, I also will deny before my Father in heaven.

Not Peace, but a Sword

³⁴"Do not think that I have come to bring peace to the earth; I have not come to bring peace, but a sword.

³⁵ For I have come to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother,

and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law;

³⁶ and one's foes will be members of one's own household.

a Or is at hand b The terms leper and leprosy can refer to several diseases c Gk Gehenna

³⁷Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; ³⁸and whoever does not take up the cross and follow me is not worthy of me. ³⁹Those who find their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.

Rewards

⁴⁰"Whoever welcomes you welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. ⁴¹Whoever welcomes a prophet in the name of a prophet will receive a prophet's reward; and whoever welcomes a righteous person in the name of a righteous person will receive the reward of the righteous; ⁴²and whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones in the name of a disciple—truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward."

Now when Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples, he went on from there to teach and proclaim his message in their cities.

Messengers from John the Baptist

²When John heard in prison what the Messiah^{*a*} was doing, he sent word by his^{*b*} disciples ³and said to him, "Are you the one who is to come, or are we

to wait for another?" ⁴Jesus answered them, "Go and tell John what you hear and see: ⁵the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers^c are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the poor have good news brought to them. ⁶And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me."

Jesus Praises John the Baptist

⁷As they went away, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? ⁸What then did you go out to see? Someone^d dressed in soft robes? Look, those who wear soft robes are in royal palaces. ⁹What then did you go out to see? A prophet?^e Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. ¹⁰This is the one about whom it is written,

'See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.'

¹¹Truly I tell you, among those born of women no one has arisen greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he. ¹²From the days of John the Baptist until now the

GROWING IN FAITH

Matthew 10:34-39

Life as Disciples

The community that the author of Matthew lived in knew that living as Jesus' disciples was not always simple or easy. This is why Jesus says such a curious thing as he prepares the twelve for their mission: "I have not come to bring peace, but a sword" (Matthew 10:34). Jesus isn't advocating violence, just simply predicting how people will likely react to the values and way of life of his followers. He is speaking metaphorically to emphasise the extreme demands of discipleship. What are the challenges you face in being a disciple today, and how might you rely on other disciples to strengthen you for the important road ahead?

a Or the Christ b Other ancient authorities read two of his c The terms leper and leprosy can refer to several diseases d Or Why then did you go out? To see someone e Other ancient authorities read Why then did you go out? To see a prophet?

kingdom of heaven has suffered violence,^{*a*} and the violent take it by force. ¹³For all the prophets and the law prophesied until John came; ¹⁴and if you are willing to accept it, he is Elijah who is to come. ¹⁵Let anyone with ears^{*b*} listen!

¹⁶"But to what will I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces and calling to one another,

¹⁷ 'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance;

we wailed, and you did not mourn.

¹⁸For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon'; ¹⁹the Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, 'Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' Yet wisdom is vindicated by her deeds."^c

Woes to Unrepentant Cities

²⁰Then he began to reproach the cities in which most of his deeds of power had been done, because they did not repent. ²¹⁴'Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the deeds of power done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. ²²But I tell you, on the day of judgment it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon than for you. ²³And you, Capernaum,

will you be exalted to heaven?

No, you will be brought down to Hades. For if the deeds of power done in you had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. ²⁴But I tell you that on the day of judgment it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom than for you."

Jesus Thanks His Father

²⁵At that time Jesus said, "I thank^d you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and the intelligent and have revealed them to infants; ²⁶yes, Father, for such was your gracious will.^{e 27}All things have been handed over to me by my Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.

²⁸"Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. ²⁹Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. ³⁰For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light."

Plucking Grain on the Sabbath

12 At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the sabbath; his disciples were hungry, and they began to pluck heads of grain and to eat. ²When the Pharisees saw it, they said to him, "Look, your disciples are doing what is not lawful to do on the sabbath." ³He said to them, "Have you not read what David did when he and his companions were hungry? ⁴He entered the house of God and ate the bread of the Presence, which it was not lawful for him or his companions to eat, but only for the priests. ⁵Or have you not read in the law that on the sabbath the priests in the temple break the sabbath and yet are guiltless? ⁶I tell you, something greater than the temple is here. ⁷But if you had known what this means, 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the guiltless. ⁸For the Son of Man is lord of the sabbath."

The Man with a Withered Hand

⁹He left that place and entered their synagogue; ¹⁰a man was there with a withered hand, and they asked him, "Is it lawful to cure on the sabbath?" so that they might accuse him. ¹¹He said to them, "Suppose one of you has only one sheep and it falls into a pit on the sabbath; will you not lay hold of it and lift it out? ¹²How much more valuable is a human being than a sheep! So it is lawful to do good on the sabbath." ¹³Then he said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." He stretched it out, and it was restored, as sound as the other. ¹⁴But the Pharisees went out and conspired against him, how to destroy him.

God's Chosen Servant

¹⁵When Jesus became aware of this, he departed. Many crowds^{*f*} followed him, and he cured all of them, ¹⁶and he ordered them not to make him known. ¹⁷This was to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet Isaiah:

- ¹⁸ "Here is my servant, whom I have chosen, my beloved, with whom my soul is well pleased.
 - I will put my Spirit upon him, and he will proclaim justice to the Gentiles.
- ¹⁹ He will not wrangle or cry aloud,
- nor will anyone hear his voice in the streets. ²⁰ He will not break a bruised reed
 - or quench a smoldering wick until he brings justice to victory.

²¹ And in his name the Gentiles will hope."

Jesus and Beelzebul

²²Then they brought to him a demoniac who was blind and mute; and he cured him, so that the one who had been mute could speak and see. ²³All the crowds were amazed and said, "Can this be the Son of David?" ²⁴But when the Pharisees heard it,

a Or has been coming violently b Other ancient authorities add to hear c Other ancient authorities read children d Or praise e Or for so it was well-pleasing in your sight f Other ancient authorities lack crowds

SAMPITA an Matthew 11:28

Matthew

they said, "It is only by Beelzebul, the ruler of the demons, that this fellow casts out the demons." ²⁵He knew what they were thinking and said to them, "Every kingdom divided against itself is laid waste, and no city or house divided against itself will stand. ²⁶If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then will his kingdom stand? ²⁷If I cast out demons by Beelzebul, by whom do your own exorcists^{*a*} cast them out? Therefore they will be your judges. ²⁸But if it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come to you. ²⁹Or how can one enter a strong man's house and plunder his property, without first tying up the strong man? Then indeed the house can be plundered. ³⁰Whoever is not with me is against me, and whoever does not gather with me scatters. ³¹Therefore I tell you, people will be forgiven for every sin and blasphemy, but blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven. ³²Whoever speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come.

A Tree and Its Fruit

³³"Either make the tree good, and its fruit good; or make the tree bad, and its fruit bad; for the tree is known by its fruit. ³⁴You brood of vipers! How can you speak good things, when you are evil? For out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks. ³⁵The good person brings good things out of a good treasure, and the evil person brings evil things out of an evil treasure. ³⁶I tell you, on the day of judgment you will have to give an account for every careless word you utter; ³⁷for by your words you will be justified, and by your words you will be condemned."

The Sign of Jonah

³⁸Then some of the scribes and Pharisees said to him, "Teacher, we wish to see a sign from you." 39But he answered them, "An evil and adulterous generation asks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. 40 For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so for three days and three nights the Son of Man will be in the heart of the earth. ⁴¹The people of Nineveh will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the proclamation of Jonah, and see, something greater than Jonah is here! ⁴²The queen of the South will rise up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to listen to the wisdom of Solomon, and see, something greater than Solomon is here!

a Gk sons

The Return of the Unclean Spirit

⁴³"When the unclean spirit has gone out of a person, it wanders through waterless regions looking for a resting place, but it finds none. ⁴⁴Then it says, 'I will return to my house from which I came.' When it comes, it finds it empty, swept, and put in order. ⁴⁵Then it goes and brings along seven other spirits more evil than itself, and they enter and live there; and the last state of that person is worse than the first. So will it be also with this evil generation."

The True Kindred of Jesus

⁴⁶While he was still speaking to the crowds, his mother and his brothers were standing outside, wanting to speak to him. ⁴⁷Someone told him, "Look, your mother and your brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you."^{a 48}But to the one who had told him this, Jesus^b replied, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" ⁴⁹And pointing to his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! ⁵⁰For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother."

The Parable of the Sower

That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat beside the sea. ²Such great crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat there, while the whole crowd stood on the beach. ³And he told them many things in parables, saying: "Listen! A sower went out to sow. ⁴And as he sowed, some seeds fell on the path, and the birds came and ate them up. ⁵Other seeds fell on rocky ground, where they did not have much soil, and they sprang up quickly, since they had no depth of soil. 6But when the sun rose, they were scorched; and since they had no root, they withered away. ⁷Other seeds fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked them. 8Other seeds fell on good soil and brought forth grain, some a hundredfold, some sixty, some thirty. ⁹Let anyone with ears^c listen!"

The Purpose of the Parables

¹⁰Then the disciples came and asked him, "Why do you speak to them in parables?" ¹¹He answered, "To you it has been given to know the secrets^d of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given. ¹²For to those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. ¹³The reason I speak to them in parables is that 'seeing they do not perceive, and hearing they do not listen, nor do they understand.' ¹⁴With them indeed is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah that says: 'You will indeed listen, but never understand,

and you will indeed look, but never perceive.



Parables

Matthew 13:10

The gospels frequently describe Jesus' teaching in parables. A parable is a literary form that uses a fictional story to make a point.

Many of Jesus' parables are like riddles. They have surprising endings designed to tease the people of his time into examining certain beliefs they took for granted. Unfortunately, the surprise of Jesus' parables is hard for some of us to understand today because we may be unfamiliar with the examples he used: baking bread, planting crops, herding sheep, or fishing for supper.

Jesus also used parables to teach about God's Reign. These were often in the form of analogies comparing God's Reign to common things or events: "The kingdom of heaven is like . . . " Using parables, Jesus challenged powerful and educated people, but he was also understood by common people.

¹⁵ For this people's heart has grown dull, and their ears are hard of hearing, and they have shut their eyes; so that they might not look with their eyes,

and listen with their ears,

and understand with their heart and turn and I would heal them.'

¹⁶But blessed are your eyes, for they see, and your ears, for they hear. ¹⁷Truly I tell you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see, but did not see it, and to hear what you hear, but did not hear it.

The Parable of the Sower Explained

¹⁸"Hear then the parable of the sower. ¹⁹When anyone hears the word of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what is sown in the heart; this is what was sown on

a Other ancient authorities lack verse 47 b Gk he c Other ancient authorities add to hear d Or mysteries



to experience *later* but also an

and love that we can help to

create now. Think about this:

or image best describes your

nary reality?

extraordinary reality of new life

What would our world look like if it truly reflected the kingdom

of heaven? What object, action,

understanding of this extraordi-

the path. ²⁰As for what was sown on rocky ground, this is the one who hears the word and immediately receives it with joy; ²¹yet such a person has no root, but endures only for a while, and when trouble or persecution arises on account of the word, that person immediately falls away.^{*a*} ²²As for what was sown among thorns, this is the one who hears the word, but the cares of the world and the lure of wealth choke the word, and it yields nothing. ²³But as for what was sown on good soil, this is the one who hears the word and understands it, who indeed bears fruit and yields, in one case a hundredfold, in another sixty, and in another thirty."

The Parable of Weeds among the Wheat

²⁴He put before them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven may be compared to someone who sowed good seed in his field; ²⁵but while everybody was asleep, an enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and then went away. ²⁶So when the plants came up and bore grain, then the weeds appeared as well. ²⁷And the slaves of the householder came and said to him, 'Master, did you not sow good seed in your field? Where, then, did these weeds come from?' ²⁸He answered, 'An enemy has done this? The slaves said to him, 'Then do you want us to go and gather them?' ²⁹But he replied, 'No; for in gathering the weeds you would uproot the wheat along with them. ³⁰Let both of them grow together until the harvest; and at harvest time I will tell the reapers, Collect the weeds first and bind them in bundles to be burned, but gather the wheat into my barn?"

The Parable of the Mustard Seed

³¹He put before them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; ³²it is the smallest of all the seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches."

The Parable of the Yeast

³³He told them another parable: "The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed in with^b three measures of flour until all of it was leavened."

The Use of Parables

³⁴Jesus told the crowds all these things in parables; without a parable he told them nothing. ³⁵This was to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet:^c

 $a\ {\rm Gk}\ {\rm stumbles}\ b\ {\rm Gk}\ {\rm hid}\ {\rm in}\ c\ {\rm Other}\ {\rm ancient}\ {\rm authorities}\ {\rm read}\ {\rm the}\ {\rm prophet}\ {\rm Isaiah}$

Jesus Explains the Parable of the Weeds

³⁶Then he left the crowds and went into the house. And his disciples approached him, saying, "Explain to us the parable of the weeds of the field." ³⁷He answered, "The one who sows the good seed is the Son of Man; ³⁸the field is the world, and the good seed are the children of the kingdom; the weeds are the children of the evil one, ³⁹and the enemy who sowed them is the devil; the harvest is the end of the age, and the reapers are angels. ⁴⁰Just as the weeds are collected and burned up with fire, so will it be at the end of the age. ⁴¹The Son of Man will send his angels, and they will collect out of his kingdom all causes of sin and all evildoers, ⁴²and they will throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth. ⁴³Then the righteous will shine like the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Let anyone with ears^b listen!

Three Parables

⁴⁴"The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

⁴⁵"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls; ⁴⁶on finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold all that he had and bought it.

⁴⁷"Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was thrown into the sea and caught fish of every kind; ⁴⁸when it was full, they drew it ashore, sat down, and put the good into baskets but threw out the bad. 49So it will be at the end of the age. The angels will come out and separate the evil from the righteous ⁵⁰ and throw them into the furnace of fire, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Treasures New and Old

⁵¹"Have you understood all this?" They answered, "Yes." 52 And he said to them, "Therefore every scribe who has been trained for the kingdom of heaven is like the master of a household who brings out of his treasure what is new and what is old." 53When Jesus had finished these parables, he left that place.

The Rejection of Jesus at Nazareth

⁵⁴He came to his hometown and began to teach the people^{*c*} in their synagogue, so that they were astounded and said, "Where did this man get this wisdom and these deeds of power? 55 Is not this the carpenter's son? Is not his mother called Mary?

And are not his brothers James and Joseph and Simon and Judas? ⁵⁶And are not all his sisters with us? Where then did this man get all this?" 57And they took offense at him. But Jesus said to them, "Prophets are not without honor except in their own country and in their own house." 58 And he did not do many deeds of power there, because of their unbelief.

The Death of John the Baptist

At that time Herod the ruler^d heard reports about Jesus; ²and he said to his servants, "This is John the Baptist; he has been raised from the dead, and for this reason these powers are at work in him." ³For Herod had arrested John, bound him, and put him in prison on account of Herodias, his brother Philip's wife,^e ⁴because John had been telling him, "It is not lawful for you to have her." ⁵Though Herod^f wanted to put him to death, he feared the crowd, because they regarded him as a prophet. 'But when Herod's birthday came, the daughter of Herodias danced before the company, and she pleased Herod ⁷so much that he promised on oath to grant her whatever she might ask. 8Prompted by her mother, she said, "Give me the head of John the Baptist here on a platter." 9The king was grieved, yet out of regard for his oaths and for the guests, he commanded it to be given; ¹⁰he sent and had John beheaded in the prison. ¹¹The head was brought on a platter and given to the girl, who brought it to her mother. ¹²His disciples came and took the body and buried it; then they went and told Jesus.

Feeding the Five Thousand

¹³Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a deserted place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. ¹⁴When he went ashore, he saw a great crowd; and he had compassion for them and cured their sick. ¹⁵When it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a deserted place, and the hour is now late; send the crowds away so that they may go into the villages and buy food for themselves." 16Jesus said to them, "They need not go away; you give them something to eat." ¹⁷They replied, "We have nothing here but five loaves and two fish." 18 And he said, "Bring them here to me." ¹⁹Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven, and blessed and broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds.

a Other ancient authorities lack of the world b Other ancient authorities add to hear c Gk them d Gk tetrarch e Other ancient authorities read his brother's wife f Gk he

²⁰And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full. ²¹And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

Jesus Walks on the Water

²²Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. ²³And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, ²⁴but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land,^{*a*} for the wind was against them. ²⁵And early in the morning he came walking toward them on the sea. ²⁶But when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were terrified, saying, "It is a ghost!" And they cried out in fear. ²⁷But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, "Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid."

²⁸Peter answered him, "Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water." ²⁹He said, "Come." So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came toward Jesus. ³⁰But when he noticed the strong wind,^b he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, "Lord, save me!" ³¹Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?" ³²When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. ³³And those in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

Jesus Heals the Sick in Gennesaret

³⁴When they had crossed over, they came to land at Gennesaret. ³⁵After the people of that place recognized him, they sent word throughout the region and brought all who were sick to him, ³⁶and begged him that they might touch even the fringe of his cloak; and all who touched it were healed.

The Tradition of the Elders

15 Then Pharisees and scribes came to Jesus from Jerusalem and said, ²"Why do your disciples break the tradition of the elders? For they do not wash their hands before they eat." ³He answered them, "And why do you break the commandment of God for the sake of your tradition? ⁴For God said,^c 'Honor your father and your mother,' and, 'Whoever speaks evil of father or mother must surely die.' ⁵But you say that whoever tells father or mother,

 a Other ancient authorities read was out on the sea b Other ancient authorities read the wind c Other ancient authorities read commanded, saying

GROWING IN FAITH

Matthew 14:22-33

Take the Risk

Of the four gospels, only Matthew includes the story of Peter's walking on the water. Peter is willing to take the risk, so why does he start to sink? When he is focused on Jesus, everything is fine, but as soon as he takes his eyes off Jesus, noticing the fierce wind, he begins to sink.

Jesus invites you to risk a relationship with him. You have to step out in faith, maybe leaving some old ways of life behind. Following him might get scary or difficult at times, but all great adventures involve some risk! 'Whatever support you might have had from me is given to God,'^a then that person need not honor the father.^b ⁶So, for the sake of your tradition, you make void the word^c of God. ⁷You hypocrites! Isaiah prophesied rightly about you when he said:

- ⁸ 'This people honors me with their lips,
 - but their hearts are far from me;
- ⁹ in vain do they worship me, teaching human precepts as doctrines."

Things That Defile

¹⁰Then he called the crowd to him and said to them, "Listen and understand: 11 it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but it is what comes out of the mouth that defiles." 12Then the disciples approached and said to him, "Do you know that the Pharisees took offense when they heard what you said?" ¹³He answered, "Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. ¹⁴Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind.^d And if one blind person guides another, both will fall into a pit." ¹⁵But Peter said to him, "Explain this parable to us." ¹⁶Then he said, "Are you also still without understanding? 17Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth enters the stomach, and goes out into the sewer? ¹⁸But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this is what defiles. ¹⁹For out of the heart come evil intentions, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, slander. ²⁰These are what defile a person, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile."

The Canaanite Woman's Faith

²¹Jesus left that place and went away to the district of Tyre and Sidon. ²²Just then a Canaanite woman from that region came out and started shouting, "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is tormented by a demon." ²³But he did not answer her at all. And his disciples came and urged him, saying, "Send her away, for she keeps shouting after us." ²⁴He answered, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." ²⁵But she came and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, help me." ²⁶He answered, "It is not fair to take the children's food and throw it to the dogs." 27She said, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their masters' table." 28 Then Jesus answered her, "Woman, great is your faith! Let it be done for you as you wish." And her daughter was healed instantly.

Jesus Cures Many People

²⁹After Jesus had left that place, he passed along the Sea of Galilee, and he went up the mountain, where he sat down. ³⁰Great crowds came to him, bringing with them the lame, the maimed, the blind, the mute, and many others. They put them at his feet, and he cured them, ³¹so that the crowd was amazed when they saw the mute speaking, the maimed whole, the lame walking, and the blind seeing. And they praised the God of Israel.

Feeding the Four Thousand

³²Then Jesus called his disciples to him and said, "I have compassion for the crowd, because they have been with me now for three days and have nothing to eat; and I do not want to send them away hungry, for they might faint on the way." ³³The disciples said to him, "Where are we to get enough bread in the desert to feed so great a crowd?" ³⁴Jesus asked them, "How many loaves have you?" They said, "Seven, and a few small fish." 35 Then ordering the crowd to sit down on the ground, ³⁶he took the seven loaves and the fish; and after giving thanks he broke them and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. ³⁷And all of them ate and were filled; and they took up the broken pieces left over, seven baskets full. ³⁸Those who had eaten were four thousand men, besides women and children. ³⁹After sending away the crowds, he got into the boat and went to the region of Magadan.^e

The Demand for a Sign

The Pharisees and Sadducees came, and to test Jesus^f they asked him to show them a sign from heaven. ²He answered them, "When it is evening, you say, 'It will be fair weather, for the sky is red.' ³And in the morning, 'It will be stormy today, for the sky is red and threatening.' You know how to interpret the appearance of the sky, but you cannot interpret the signs of the times.^g ⁴An evil and adulterous generation asks for a sign, but no sign will be given to it except the sign of Jonah." Then he left them and went away.

The Yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees

⁵When the disciples reached the other side, they had forgotten to bring any bread. ⁶Jesus said to them, "Watch out, and beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees." ⁷They said to one another, "It is because we have brought no bread." ⁸And becoming aware of it, Jesus said, "You of little faith, why are you talking about having no bread? ⁹Do you still not perceive? Do you not remember the five loaves for the five thousand, and how many baskets you gathered? ¹⁰Or the seven loaves for the four thousand, and how many baskets you gathered? ¹¹How could you fail

a Or is an offering *b* Other ancient authorities add or the mother *c* Other ancient authorities read law; others, *commandment d* Other ancient authorities lack of the blind *e* Other ancient authorities read Magdala or Magdalan *f* Gk him *g* Other ancient authorities lack ²When it is . . . of the times

Matthew 16:12

Catholic Connection Matthew 16:13-20 Peter's Final

Answer

Jesus asks the disciples, "Who do you say that I am?" (Matthew 16:15). Peter replies that Jesus is the Messiah. Jesus then tells Peter that he will build the Church upon Peter and give him the keys to the kingdom of heaven.

Two thousand years later, the Catholic Church recognises Peter's authority through his successor, the Pope. Like Peter, the Pope has ultimate authority over and care for the Church as both pastor and teacher. Similarly, the bishops are the successors of the apostles. Under each bishop's authority and care are the priests and deacons who help care for the faithful.

The Catholic Church also includes men and women living a consecrated life. Those in consecrated life are not ordained but have taken vows to live a lifestyle dedicated to Christ and to his people.

Finally, the laity are the main body of the Church. As laypeople we are called to seek the Reign of God in our everyday lives, to proclaim the good news, and-by virtue of our Baptismto bless the world by offering our lives to God in joyful and loving service to all.

> Catechism. numbers 871-945

to perceive that I was not speaking about bread? Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees!" ¹²Then they understood that he had not told them to beware of the yeast of bread, but of the teaching of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

Peter's Declaration about Jesus

¹³Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" ¹⁴And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, but others Elijah, and still others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." ¹⁵He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" ¹⁶Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah," the Son of the living God." 17 And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. ¹⁸And I tell you, you are Peter,^b and on this rock^{*c*} I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. ¹⁹I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven." 20 Then he sternly ordered the disciples not to tell anyone that he wasd the Messiah.a

Jesus Foretells His Death and Resurrection

²¹From that time on, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. ²²And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, "God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you." ²³But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things."

The Cross and Self-Denial

²⁴Then Jesus told his disciples, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. ²⁵For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. ²⁶For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life?

²⁷"For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay everyone for what has been done. ²⁸Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom."

a Or the Christ b Gk Petros c Gk petra d Other ancient authorities add Jesus

The Transfiguration

🅎 Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves. ²And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white. ³Suddenly there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. ⁴Then Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, I^a will make three dwellings^b here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah." 5While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud a voice said, "This is my Son, the Beloved;^c with him I am well pleased; listen to him!" 'When the disciples heard this, they fell to the ground and were overcome by fear. ⁷But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Get up and do not be afraid." 8And when they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus himself alone.

⁹As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus ordered them, "Tell no one about the vision until after the Son of Man has been raised from the dead." ¹⁰And the disciples asked him, "Why, then, do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?" ¹¹He replied, "Elijah is indeed coming and will restore all things; ¹²but I tell you that Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him, but they did to him whatever they pleased. So also the Son of Man is about to suffer at their hands." ¹³Then the disciples understood that he was speaking to them about John the Baptist.

Jesus Cures a Boy with a Demon

¹⁴When they came to the crowd, a man came to him, knelt before him, ¹⁵and said, "Lord, have mercy on my son, for he is an epileptic and he suffers terribly; he often falls into the fire and often into the water. ¹⁶And I brought him to your disciples, but they could not cure him." 17Jesus answered, "You faithless and perverse generation, how much longer must I be with you? How much longer must I put up with you? Bring him here to me." 18 And Jesus rebuked the demon,^d and it^e came out of him, and the boy was cured instantly. ¹⁹Then the disciples came to Jesus privately and said, "Why could we not cast it out?" ²⁰He said to them, "Because of your little faith. For truly I tell you, if you have faith the size of af mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible for you."g

Catholic Connection

Matthew 17:1-13 <

Old and New

The story of the transfiguration in Matthew's Gospel is packed with Old Testament allusions. The transfiguration took place on a mountain, just as Moses met with God and established the covenant on Mount Sinai (see Exodus 24:12–18). Moses (representing the law) and Elijah (representing the prophets) appeared with Jesus during the transfiguration. Finally, God's command to the disciples to listen to Jesus fulfilled a prophecy in Deuteronomy (see 18:15–22).

Since apostolic times, the Catholic Church has affirmed the relevance and importance of the Old Testament. From creating the world to sending Jesus and the Holy Spirit, God gradually revealed himself and his saving plan. Because God's plan spans both Old and New Testaments, the Church accepts and honours their natural unity. The Old Testament lays the foundation and prophesies the coming of Christ. The New Testament fulfils the prophecies by recounting the teachings of Jesus Christ and the Paschal Mystery. We read both testaments in light of each other, studying both to fully understand God's plan for our salvation.

Catechism, numbers 120–137

a Other ancient authorities read we b Or tents c Or my beloved Son d Gk it or him e Gk the demon f Gk faith as a grain of g Other ancient authorities add verse 21, But this kind does not come out except by prayer and fasting



Matthew 18:10-14 and Shepherds

The image of a shepherd tending a herd of sheep would have been well known to Jesus' disciples. It was a common occupation for people living outside the bigger cities. Shepherds tended flocks of sheep and goats, leading the flocks to food and water, keeping their flocks together, searching for strays, and protecting them from predators. At night the shepherd might lead the flock to a pen with walls made from stones. The shepherd would sleep across the opening to the pen, acting as the "gate" to keep the sheep in and their predators out (see John 10:1–10).

A shepherd's life was not easy. They worked long hours of hard physical labour, endured extremes of temperature, and sometimes faced dangerous predators. Despite this, shepherds were held in low esteem by many in higher society, who considered them dirty and unimportant (Genesis 46:34). However, the common person understood shepherds' importance and even admired their commitment and bravery. Perhaps this is why God is compared to a good shepherd in the Old Testament (Psalm 23) and Jesus calls himself the good shepherd in the New Testament (John 10:11).

Jesus Again Foretells His Death and Resurrection

²²As they were gathering^{*a*} in Galilee, Jesus said to them, "The Son of Man is going to be betrayed into human hands, ²³and they will kill him, and on the third day he will be raised." And they were greatly distressed.

Jesus and the Temple Tax

²⁴When they reached Capernaum, the collectors of the temple tax^{*b*} came to Peter and said, "Does your teacher not pay the temple tax-?"^{*b* 25}He said, "Yes, he does." And when he came home, Jesus spoke of it first, asking, "What do you think, Simon? From whom do kings of the earth take toll or tribute? From their children or from others?" ²⁶When Peter^c said, "From others," Jesus said to him, "Then the children are free. ²⁷However, so that we do not give offense to them, go to the sea and cast a hook; take the first fish that comes up; and when you open its mouth, you will find a coin;^{*a*} take that and give it to them for you and me."

True Greatness

At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" ²He called a child, whom he put among them, ³and said, "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. ⁴Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. ⁵Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me.

Temptations to Sin

⁶"If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck and you were drowned in the depth of the sea. ⁷Woe to the world because of stumbling blocks! Occasions for stumbling are bound to come, but woe to the one by whom the stumbling block comes!

⁸"If your hand or your foot causes you to stumble, cut it off and throw it away; it is better for you to enter life maimed or lame than to have two hands or two feet and to be thrown into the eternal fire. ⁹And if your eye causes you to stumble, tear it out and throw it away; it is better for you to enter life with one eye than to have two eyes and to be thrown into the hell^e of fire.

a Other ancient authorities read *living b* Gk *didrachma c* Gk *he d* Gk *stater*, the stater was worth two didrachmas *e* Gk *Gehenna*

Matthew 18:21-22

Sometimes the people we love can hurt us the most. Forgiveness is never easy, but Jesus challenges us to forgive—over and over and over again. This does not mean to stand still and endure pain inflicted by others, but rather to cultivate a forgiving heart.

TAKE ACTION!

Write It: Handwrite a letter on paper to a person you need to forgive, explaining how you are feeling and why. Put the letter in your Bible. When you feel like you are able to forgive, tear up the letter.

FORGINE

Pray It: Spend time in prayer, asking God for the strength to forgive. Read Matthew 18:21–35 and highlight the verse in the parable that most strikes you.

Speak It: Take small steps towards forgiveness. When you feel ready, talk to the person who hurt you. Explain your feelings but focus on the many things you love about that person.

The Parable of the Lost Sheep

^{10"}Take care that you do not despise one of these little ones; for, I tell you, in heaven their angels continually see the face of my Father in heaven.^{*a*} ¹²What do you think? If a shepherd has a hundred sheep, and one of them has gone astray, does he not leave the ninety-nine on the mountains and go in search of the one that went astray? ¹³And if he finds it, truly I tell you, he rejoices over it more than over the ninety-nine that never went astray. ¹⁴So it is not the will of your^{*b*} Father in heaven that one of these little ones should be lost.

Reproving Another Who Sins

^{15"}If another member of the church^c sins against you,^d go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one.^e ¹⁶But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. ¹⁷If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. ¹⁸Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. ¹⁹Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. ²⁰For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them."

Forgiveness

²¹Then Peter came and said to him, "Lord, if another member of the church^{*f*} sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?" ²²Jesus said to him, "Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven^{*g*} times.

The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant

²³"For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. ²⁴When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents^h

Please Jorgense a

a Other ancient authorities add verse 11, For the Son of Man came to save the lost *b* Other ancient authorities read $my \ c \ Gk \ lf \ your brother d Other ancient authorities lack against you$ *e*Gk the brother*f* $Gk if <math>my \ brother \ g \ Or \ seventy \ times \ seven \ h \ A \ talent \ was worth \ more \ than \ fifteen \ years' \ wages of a laborer$

WHO my NEIGHBOUR?

Forgiveness Meditation Matthew 18:21-35

The parable of the unforgiving servant spells out clearly, and a bit harshly, what it means to ask God to "forgive us our debts, / as we also have forgiven our debtors" (Matthew 6:12).

Bring to mind a person who has hurt you or recently made you angry, and hold this person in your thoughts. Now tell this person, in your thoughts, how she or he has hurt you. Finally, forgive this person so that you can let go of the burden of your hurt. When you are done, imagine Jesus in your prayer and share with him something you have done that has hurt another person. Let Jesus forgive you in the same way you just forgave.

was brought to him; ²⁵and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. ²⁶So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.²⁷And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. ²⁸But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii;^a and seizing him by the throat, he said, 'Pay what you owe'. 29 Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, 'Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' ³⁰But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. ³¹When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. ³²Then his lord summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. ³³Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?' ³⁴And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. 35So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister^b from your heart."

Teaching about Divorce

When Jesus had finished saying these things, he left Galilee and went to the region of Judea beyond the Jordan. ²Large crowds followed him, and he cured them there.

³Some Pharisees came to him, and to test him they asked, "Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife for any cause?" ⁴He answered, "Have you not read that the one who made them at the beginning 'made them male and female,' ⁵and said, 'For this reason a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh'? 'So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate." 7They said to him, "Why then did Moses command us to give a certificate of dismissal and to divorce her?" 8He said to them, "It was because you were so hard-hearted that Moses allowed you to divorce your wives, but from the beginning it was not so. 9And I say to you, whoever divorces his wife, except for unchastity, and marries another commits adultery."c

¹⁰His disciples said to him, "If such is the case of a man with his wife, it is better not to marry."

a The denarius was the usual day's wage for a laborer b Gk brother c Other ancient authorities read except on the ground of unchastity, causes her to commit adultery, others add at the end of the verse and he who marries a divorced woman commits adultery
1133

Matthew 19:14

CARE FOR THE CHILDREN

Children are a gift from God, not just for their families but for all people. We are all called to care for God's children.

TAKE ACTION!

Sponsor a Child: Identify an organisation that offers sponsorship of a child in a developing country. Gather four or five of your friends who are willing to sponsor a child for a year and, if the organisation invites it, be a pen pal, as well. At the end of the year, decide whether to recommit, or maybe invite others to sponsor your child.

Support a Parent's Night Out: Coordinate with your friends and school or parish administration to offer a fun night for young children (without their parents). Share your favourite Bible story with the children.

Collect Toys: Sponsor or get involved with a toy drive for underprivileged children around Christmas or Easter. Have your friends help you deliver the toys to a social service agency that serves children and families.

CHALLEN

¹¹But he said to them, "Not everyone can accept this teaching, but only those to whom it is given. ¹²For there are eunuchs who have been so from birth, and there are eunuchs who have been made eunuchs by others, and there are eunuchs who have made themselves eunuchs for the sake of the kingdom of heaven. Let anyone accept this who can."

Jesus Blesses Little Children

¹³Then little children were being brought to him in order that he might lay his hands on them and pray. The disciples spoke sternly to those who brought them; ¹⁴but Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs." ¹⁵And he laid his hands on them and went on his way.

The Rich Young Man

¹⁶Then someone came to him and said, "Teacher, what good deed must I do to have eternal life?" ¹⁷And he said to him, "Why do you ask me about what is good? There is only one who is good. If you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments." ¹⁸He said to him, "Which ones?" And Jesus said, "You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; ¹⁹Honor your father and mother; also, You shall love your neighbor as yourself." ²⁰The young man said to him, "I have kept all these;^{*a*} what do I still lack?" ²¹Jesus said to him, "If you wish to be perfect, go, sell your possessions, and give the money^{*b*} to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me." ²²When the young man heard this word, he went away grieving, for he had many possessions.

²³Then Jesus said to his disciples, "Truly I tell you, it will be hard for a rich person to enter the kingdom of heaven. ²⁴Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God." ²⁵When the disciples heard this, they were greatly astounded and said, "Then who can be saved?" ²⁶But Jesus looked at them and said, "For mortals it is impossible, but for God all things are possible."

²⁷Then Peter said in reply, "Look, we have left everything and followed you. What then will we

Catholic Connection

Matthew 20:1-16

Working to Live

In the parable of the workers in the vineyard, Jesus says a landowner paid the same daily wage no matter when his workers started—dawn, midday, or evening. Some workers found the wage unfair, even though they received the amount they agreed to when hired. What a difference between God's notions of fairness and justice and ours! To us, fairness means paying workers for hours worked. Justice, however, means providing all people with what they need to live. Such is the radical grace of God!

Worldwide, many workers toil long hours under brutal conditions for unjust wages. Even in developed countries, someone working forty hours a week might not earn enough for basic needs (food, shelter, transportation, medicine), especially if she or he supports a family. We must advocate that all workers receive a living wage—the minimum necessary to achieve a basic standard of living above the poverty line. Small business owners sometimes fear that a living wage will raise operating costs and put them out of business, yet failing to pay what workers need to survive is inexcusable.

Catholic Social

Teaching: The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers have?" ²⁸Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, at the renewal of all things, when the Son of Man is seated on the throne of his glory, you who have followed me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. ²⁹And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or fields, for my name's sake, will receive a hundredfold,^{*a*} and will inherit eternal life. ³⁰But many who are first will be last, and the last will be first.

The Laborers in the Vineyard

"For the kingdom of heaven is like a landowner who went out early in the morning to hire laborers for his vineyard. ²After agreeing with the laborers for the usual daily wage,^b he sent them into his vineyard. ³When he went out about nine o'clock, he saw others standing idle in the marketplace; ⁴and he said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard, and I will pay you whatever is right.' So they went. ⁵When he went out again about noon and about three o'clock, he did the same. 6And about five o'clock he went out and found others standing around; and he said to them, 'Why are you standing here idle all day?' ⁷They said to him, 'Because no one has hired us.' He said to them, 'You also go into the vineyard.' ⁸When evening came, the owner of the vineyard said to his manager, 'Call the laborers and give them their pay, beginning with the last and then going to the first.' When those hired about five o'clock came, each of them received the usual daily wage.^b ¹⁰Now when the first came, they thought they would receive more; but each of them also received the usual daily wage.^{b 11}And when they received it, they grumbled against the landowner, ¹²saying, 'These last worked only one hour, and you have made them equal to us who have borne the burden of the day and the scorching heat.' ¹³But he replied to one of them, 'Friend, I am doing you no wrong; did you not agree with me for the usual daily wage?^b ¹⁴Take what belongs to you and go; I choose to give to this last the same as I give to you. ¹⁵Am I not allowed to do what I choose with what belongs to me? Or are you envious because I am generous?'^{c 16}So the last will be first, and the first will be last."d

A Third Time Jesus Foretells His Death and Resurrection

¹⁷While Jesus was going up to Jerusalem, he took the twelve disciples aside by themselves, and

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a Other ancient authorities read manifold b Gk a denarius c Gk is your eye evil because I am good? d Other ancient authorities add for many are called but few are chosen

said to them on the way, ¹⁸"See, we are going up to Jerusalem, and the Son of Man will be handed over to the chief priests and scribes, and they will condemn him to death; ¹⁹then they will hand him over to the Gentiles to be mocked and flogged and crucified; and on the third day he will be raised."

The Request of the Mother of James and John

²⁰Then the mother of the sons of Zebedee came to him with her sons, and kneeling before him, she asked a favor of him. ²¹And he said to her, "What do you want?" She said to him, "Declare that these two sons of mine will sit, one at your right hand and one at your left, in your kingdom." ²²But Jesus answered, "You do not know what you are asking. Are you able to drink the cup that I am about to drink?"^a They said to him, "We are able." ²³He said to them, "You will indeed drink my cup, but to sit at my right hand and at my left, this is not mine to grant, but it is for those for whom it has been prepared by my Father."

²⁴When the ten heard it, they were angry with the two brothers. ²⁵But Jesus called them to him and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. ²⁶It will not be so among you; but whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant, ²⁷and whoever wishes to be first among you must be your slave; ²⁸just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many."

Jesus Heals Two Blind Men

²⁹As they were leaving Jericho, a large crowd followed him. ³⁰There were two blind men sitting by the roadside. When they heard that Jesus was passing by, they shouted, "Lord,^b have mercy on us, Son of David!" ³¹The crowd sternly ordered them to be quiet; but they shouted even more loudly, "Have mercy on us, Lord, Son of David!" ³²Jesus stood still and called them, saying, "What do you want me to do for you?" ³³They said to him, "Lord, let our eyes be opened." ³⁴Moved with compassion, Jesus touched their eyes. Immediately they regained their sight and followed him.

Jesus' Triumphal Entry into Jerusalem

21 When they had come near Jerusalem and had reached Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, Jesus sent two disciples, ²saying to them, "Go into the village ahead of you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her; untie them and bring them to me. ³If anyone says anything to

a Other ancient authorities add or to be baptized with the baptism that *I* am baptized with? *b* Other ancient authorities lack Lord

for GOD

That's So Unfair!

Matthew 20:1-16 <

If you were like the workers in the vineyard who worked a whole day, would you resent the latecomer who received the same pay as you did? Maybe you would. But if you were the latecomer, how would you feel? It may seem unfair, but that is how God's love works. God cannot give less than all his love to everybody—whenever they turn to him-even if that might seem "unfairly generous" to us. Pray this prayer: God, thank you for being so unfairly generous to each one of your children, including me. Help me to imitate that generosity in my own life. Thank you for giving me all your love, all the time, and showing it once and for all in your Son, Jesus. Help me to follow him now and always. Amen.



WHO is NEIGHBOUR?

True Greatness Matthew 20:20-28

What good parent does not want his or her children to find success in life? The mother of James and John is confused about the kingdom that Jesus has come to establish. She lobbies for her sons, hoping they might be made "senior vice presidents" of the new "firm." Jesus reminds the disciples—and reminds us today that true greatness is gained in serving others.

Whenever you are in a position of leadership, rather than seeing it as a chance to control others in order to gain power or social status, see it as an opportunity to serve others and help them obtain what they need to live full and healthy lives.

you, just say this, 'The Lord needs them.' And he will send them immediately.^{*a*}' ⁴This took place to fulfill what had been spoken through the prophet, saying,

⁵ "Tell the daughter of Zion,

Look, your king is coming to you,

humble, and mounted on a donkey,

and on a colt, the foal of a donkey."

⁶The disciples went and did as Jesus had directed them; ⁷they brought the donkey and the colt, and put their cloaks on them, and he sat on them. ⁸A very large crowd^b spread their cloaks on the road, and others cut branches from the trees and spread them on the road. ⁹The crowds that went ahead of him and that followed were shouting,

"Hosanna to the Son of David!

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!

Hosanna in the highest heaven!"

¹⁰When he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was in turmoil, asking, "Who is this?" ¹¹The crowds were saying, "This is the prophet Jesus from Nazareth in Galilee."

Jesus Cleanses the Temple

¹²Then Jesus entered the temple^c and drove out all who were selling and buying in the temple, and

he overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. ¹³He said to them, "It is written,

'My house shall be called a house of prayer'; but you are making it a den of robbers."

¹⁴The blind and the lame came to him in the temple, and he cured them. ¹⁵But when the chief priests and the scribes saw the amazing things that he did, and heard^{*d*} the children crying out in the temple, "Hosanna to the Son of David," they became angry ¹⁶and said to him, "Do you hear what these are saying?" Jesus said to them, "Yes; have you never read,

'Out of the mouths of infants and nursing babies

you have prepared praise for yourself'?" ¹⁷He left them, went out of the city to Bethany, and spent the night there.

Jesus Curses the Fig Tree

¹⁸In the morning, when he returned to the city, he was hungry. ¹⁹And seeing a fig tree by the side of the road, he went to it and found nothing at all on it but leaves. Then he said to it,

 $a\,$ Or 'The Lord needs them and will send them back immediately.' $b\,$ Or Most of the crowd $\,c\,$ Other ancient authorities add of God $\,d\,$ Gk lacks heard

"May no fruit ever come from you again!" And the fig tree withered at once. ²⁰When the disciples saw it, they were amazed, saying, "How did the fig tree wither at once?" ²¹Jesus answered them, "Truly I tell you, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only will you do what has been done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, 'Be lifted up and thrown into the sea,' it will be done. ²²Whatever you ask for in prayer with faith, you will receive."

The Authority of Jesus Questioned

²³When he entered the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people came to him as he was teaching, and said, "By what authority are you doing these things, and who gave you this authority?" ²⁴Jesus said to them, "I will also ask you one question; if you tell me the answer, then I will also tell you by what authority I do these things. ²⁵Did the baptism of John come from heaven, or was it of human origin?" And they argued with one another, "If we say, 'From heaven,' he will say to us, 'Why then did you not believe him?' ²⁶But if we say, 'Of human origin,' we are afraid of the crowd; for all regard John as a prophet." ²⁷So they answered Jesus, "We do not know." And he said to them, "Neither will I tell you by what authority I am doing these things.

The Parable of the Two Sons

^{28"}What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work in the vineyard today.' ²⁹He answered, 'I will not'; but later he changed his mind and went. ³⁰The father^a went to the second and said the same; and he answered, 'I go, sir'; but he did not go. ³¹Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you. ³²For John came to you in the way of righteousness and you did not believe him, but the tax collectors and the prostitutes believed him; and even after you saw it, you did not change your minds and believe him.

The Parable of the Wicked Tenants

³³"Listen to another parable. There was a landowner who planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a wine press in it, and built a watchtower. Then he leased it to tenants and went to another country. ³⁴When the harvest time had come, he sent his slaves to the tenants to collect his produce. ³⁵But the tenants seized his slaves and beat one, killed another, and stoned another. ³⁶Again he sent other slaves, more than the first; and they treated them in the same way. ³⁷Finally he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' ³⁸But when the tenants saw the son, they said to themselves, 'This is the heir; come, let us kill him and get his inheritance.' ³⁹So they seized him, threw him out of the vineyard, and killed him. ⁴⁰Now when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those tenants?' ⁴¹They said to him, "He will put those wretches to a miserable death, and lease the vineyard to other tenants who will give him the produce at the harvest time."

⁴²Jesus said to them, "Have you never read in the scriptures:

'The stone that the builders rejected

has become the cornerstone;^b

this was the Lord's doing,

and it is amazing in our eyes'?

⁴³Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces the fruits of the kingdom.^{*c*} ⁴⁴The one who falls on this stone will be broken to pieces; and it will crush anyone on whom it falls.^{*n*}

⁴⁵When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard his parables, they realized that he was speaking about them. ⁴⁶They wanted to arrest him, but they feared the crowds, because they regarded him as a prophet.

The Parable of the Wedding Banquet

🔊 🐬 Once more Jesus spoke to them in parables, 🙆 💪 saying: 2"The kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who gave a wedding banquet for his son. ³He sent his slaves to call those who had been invited to the wedding banquet, but they would not come. ⁴Again he sent other slaves, saying, 'Tell those who have been invited: Look, I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fat calves have been slaughtered, and everything is ready; come to the wedding banquet.' 5But they made light of it and went away, one to his farm, another to his business, ⁶while the rest seized his slaves, mistreated them, and killed them. 7The king was enraged. He sent his troops, destroyed those murderers, and burned their city. 8 Then he said to his slaves, 'The wedding is ready, but those invited were not worthy. 'Go therefore into the main streets, and invite everyone you find to the wedding banquet.' 10 Those slaves went out into the streets and gathered all whom they found, both good and bad; so the wedding hall was filled with guests.

¹¹"But when the king came in to see the guests, he noticed a man there who was not wearing a

a Gk He b Or keystone c Gk the fruits of it d Other ancient authorities lack verse 44

WHO my NEIGHBOUR?

The Perfect Plan Matthew 22:34-40

Can you imagine a world where every person lives according to the two commandments Jesus gives in Matthew 22:34–40, where every word, thought, and action is motivated by a deep love for God and by a desire for the well-being of others? Jesus articulates the perfect plan for achieving the ideal human society in just a few short sentences.

The message of these two great commandments obviously remains real and relevant for us today. Following in the footsteps of the apostles who first heard Jesus' words, we are responsible to live out these commandments in our world—becoming living, breathing examples of what it means to love God, neighbour, and self.

wedding robe, ¹²and he said to him, 'Friend, how did you get in here without a wedding robe?' And he was speechless. ¹³Then the king said to the attendants, 'Bind him hand and foot, and throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' ¹⁴For many are called, but few are chosen."

The Question about Paying Taxes

¹⁵Then the Pharisees went and plotted to entrap him in what he said. ¹⁶So they sent their disciples to him, along with the Herodians, saying, "Teacher, we know that you are sincere, and teach the way of God in accordance with truth, and show deference to no one; for you do not regard people with partiality. ¹⁷Tell us, then, what you think. Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor, or not?" ¹⁸But Jesus, aware of their malice, said, "Why are you putting me to the test, you hypocrites? ¹⁹Show me the coin used for the tax." And they brought him a denarius. ²⁰Then he said to them, "Whose head is this, and whose title?" ²¹They answered, "The emperor's." Then he said to them, "Give therefore to the emperor the things that are the emperor's, and to God the things that are God's." ²²When they heard this, they were amazed; and they left him and went away.

The Question about the Resurrection

²³The same day some Sadducees came to him, saying there is no resurrection;^{*a*} and they asked him a question, saying, ²⁴"Teacher, Moses said, 'If a man dies childless, his brother shall marry the widow, and raise up children for his brother.' ²⁵Now there were seven brothers among us; the first married, and died childless, leaving the widow to his brother. ²⁶The second did the same, so also the third, down to the seventh. ²⁷Last of all, the woman herself died. ²⁸In the resurrection, then, whose wife of the seven will she be? For all of them had married her."

²⁹Jesus answered them, "You are wrong, because you know neither the scriptures nor the power of God. ³⁰For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels^b in heaven. ³¹And as for the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was said to you by God, ³²'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? He is God not of the dead, but of the living." ³³And when the crowd heard it, they were astounded at his teaching.

a Other ancient authorities read who say that there is no resurrection *b* Other ancient authorities add of God

The Greatest Commandment

³⁴When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, ³⁵and one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. ³⁶"Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?" ³⁷He said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. ³⁸This is the greatest and first commandment. ³⁹And a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' ⁴⁰On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

The Question about David's Son

⁴¹Now while the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them this question: ⁴²"What do you think of the Messiah?^a Whose son is he?" They said to him, "The son of David." ⁴³He said to them, "How is it then that David by the Spirit^b calls him Lord, saying,

⁴⁴ 'The Lord said to my Lord,

"Sit at my right hand,

until I put your enemies under your feet"?? ⁴⁵If David thus calls him Lord, how can he be his son?" ⁴⁶No one was able to give him an answer, nor from that day did anyone dare to ask him any more questions.

Jesus Denounces Scribes and Pharisees

Then Jesus said to the crowds and to his ظمَع disciples, ²"The scribes and the Pharisees sit on Moses' seat; ³therefore, do whatever they teach you and follow it; but do not do as they do, for they do not practice what they teach. ⁴They tie up heavy burdens, hard to bear,^c and lay them on the shoulders of others; but they themselves are unwilling to lift a finger to move them. ⁵They do all their deeds to be seen by others; for they make their phylacteries broad and their fringes long. ⁶They love to have the place of honor at banquets and the best seats in the synagogues, ⁷and to be greeted with respect in the marketplaces, and to have people call them rabbi. 8But you are not to be called rabbi, for you have one teacher, and you are all students.^d ⁹And call no one your father on earth, for you have one Father-the one in heaven. ¹⁰Nor are you to be called instructors, for you have one instructor, the Messiah.^e ¹¹The greatest among you will be your servant. 12 All who exalt themselves will be humbled, and all who humble themselves will be exalted.

¹³"But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you lock people out of the kingdom of heaven. For you do not go in yourselves, and when others are going in, you stop them.^{*f*} scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cross sea and land to make a single convert, and you make the new convert twice as much a child of hell^g as yourselves.

¹⁶"Woe to you, blind guides, who say, 'Whoever swears by the sanctuary is bound by nothing, but whoever swears by the gold of the sanctuary is bound by the oath.' 17You blind fools! For which is greater, the gold or the sanctuary that has made the gold sacred? 18And you say, 'Whoever swears by the altar is bound by nothing, but whoever swears by the gift that is on the altar is bound by the oath.' 19 How blind you are! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that makes the gift sacred? ²⁰So whoever swears by the altar, swears by it and by everything on it; ²¹and whoever swears by the sanctuary, swears by it and by the one who dwells in it; ²²and whoever swears by heaven, swears by the throne of God and by the one who is seated upon it.

²³"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint, dill, and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. It is these you ought to have practiced without neglecting the others. ²⁴You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel!

²⁵"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and of the plate, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. ²⁶You blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup,^h so that the outside also may become clean.

^{27"}Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs, which on the outside look beautiful, but inside they are full of the bones of the dead and of all kinds of filth. ²⁸So you also on the outside look righteous to others, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.

^{29"}Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and decorate the graves of the righteous, ³⁰and you say, 'If we had lived in the days of our ancestors, we would not have taken part with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.' ³¹Thus you testify against yourselves that you are descendants of those who murdered the prophets. ³²Fill up, then, the measure of your ancestors. ³³You snakes, you brood of vipers! How can you escape

a Or Christ b Gk in spirit c Other ancient authorities lack hard to bear d Gk brothers e Or the Christ f Other authorities add here (or after verse 12) verse 14, Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you devour widows' houses and for the sake of appearance you make long prayers; therefore you will receive the greater condemnation g Gk Gehenna h Other ancient authorities add and of the plate

being sentenced to hell?^{*a*} ³⁴Therefore I send you prophets, sages, and scribes, some of whom you will kill and crucify, and some you will flog in your synagogues and pursue from town to town, ³⁵so that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed on earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah son of Barachiah, whom you murdered between the sanctuary and the altar. ³⁶Truly I tell you, all this will come upon this generation.

The Lament over Jerusalem

³⁷"Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the city that kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to it! How often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings, and you were not willing! ³⁸See, your house is left to you, desolate.^b ³⁹For I tell you, you will not see me again until you say, 'Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.'"

The Destruction of the Temple Foretold

As Jesus came out of the temple and was going away, his disciples came to point out to him the buildings of the temple. ²Then he asked them, "You see all these, do you not? Truly I tell you, not one stone will be left here upon another; all will be thrown down."

Signs of the End of the Age

³When he was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to him privately, saying, "Tell us, when will this be, and what will be the sign of your coming and of the end of the age?" ⁴Jesus answered them, "Beware that no one leads you astray. ⁵For many will come in my name, saying, 'I am the Messiah!'^c and they will lead many astray. ⁶And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars; see that you are not alarmed; for this must take place, but the end is not yet. ⁷For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, and there will be famines^d and earthquakes in various places: ⁸all this is but the beginning of the birth pangs.

Persecutions Foretold

⁹"Then they will hand you over to be tortured and will put you to death, and you will be hated by all nations because of my name. ¹⁰Then many will fall away,^e and they will betray one another and hate one another. ¹¹And many false prophets will arise and lead many astray. ¹²And because of the increase of lawlessness, the love of many will grow cold. ¹³But the one who endures to the end will be saved. ¹⁴And this good news^f of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the world, as a testimony to all the nations; and then the end will come.

The Desolating Sacrilege

¹⁵"So when you see the desolating sacrilege standing in the holy place, as was spoken of by the prophet Daniel (let the reader understand), ¹⁶then those in Judea must flee to the mountains; ¹⁷the one on the housetop must not go down to take what is in the house; 18 the one in the field must not turn back to get a coat. ¹⁹Woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing infants in those days! ²⁰Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a sabbath. ²¹For at that time there will be great suffering, such as has not been from the beginning of the world until now, no, and never will be. ²²And if those days had not been cut short, no one would be saved; but for the sake of the elect those days will be cut short. ²³Then if anyone says to you, 'Look! Here is the Messiah!'g or 'There he is!'—do not believe it. ²⁴For false messiahs^h and false prophets will appear and produce great signs and omens, to lead astray, if possible, even the elect. ²⁵Take note, I have told you beforehand. ²⁶So, if they say to you, 'Look! He is in the wilderness, do not go out. If they say, 'Look! He is in the inner rooms,' do not believe it. ²⁷For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. ²⁸Wherever the corpse is, there the vultures will gather.

The Coming of the Son of Man

²⁹"Immediately after the suffering of those days

the sun will be darkened,

and the moon will not give its light;

the stars will fall from heaven,

and the powers of heaven will be shaken.

³⁰Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see 'the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven' with power and great glory. ³¹And he will send out his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

The Lesson of the Fig Tree

³²"From the fig tree learn its lesson: as soon as its branch becomes tender and puts forth its leaves,

a Gk Gehenna b Other ancient authorities lack desolate c Or the Christ d Other ancient authorities add and pestilences e Or stumble f Or gospel g Or the Christ h Or christs

you know that summer is near. 33 So also, when you see all these things, you know that he^{*a*} is near, at the very gates. 34 Truly I tell you, this generation will not pass away until all these things have taken place. 35 Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away.

The Necessity for Watchfulness

³⁶"But about that day and hour no one knows, neither the angels of heaven, nor the Son,^b but only the Father. ³⁷For as the days of Noah were, so will be the coming of the Son of Man. ³⁸For as in those days before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day Noah entered the ark, ³⁹and they knew nothing until the flood came and swept them all away, so too will be the coming of the Son of Man. ⁴⁰Then two will be in the field; one will be taken and one will be left. ⁴¹Two women will be grinding meal together; one will be taken and one will be left. 42Keep awake therefore, for you do not know on what day^c your Lord is coming. ⁴³But understand this: if the owner of the house had known in what part of the night the thief was coming, he would have stayed awake and would not have let his house be broken into. ⁴⁴Therefore you also must be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an unexpected hour.

The Faithful or the Unfaithful Slave

^{45"}Who then is the faithful and wise slave, whom his master has put in charge of his household, to give the other slaves^d their allowance of food at the proper time? ⁴⁶Blessed is that slave whom his master will find at work when he arrives. ⁴⁷Truly I tell you, he will put that one in charge of all his possessions. ⁴⁸But if that wicked slave says to himself, 'My master is delayed,' ⁴⁹and he begins to beat his fellow slaves, and eats and drinks with drunkards, ⁵⁰the master of that slave will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour that he does not know. ⁵¹He will cut him in pieces^e and put him with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

The Parable of the Ten Bridesmaids

25 "Then the kingdom of heaven will be like this. Ten bridesmaids^{*f*} took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom.^{*g*} ²Five of them were foolish, and five were wise. ³When the foolish took their lamps, they took no oil with for GOD Matthew 25:1-13

I have accepted your invitation, Lord,

When Ara

ou Comi

But when are you coming? I need to be ready, Lord, But when are you coming? I want to share your love with others, Lord,

But when are you coming? I will be prepared, Lord, No matter when you are coming. Amen.



a Or it b Other ancient authorities lack nor the Son c Other ancient authorities read at what hour d Gk to give them e Or cut him off f Gk virgins g Other ancient authorities add and the bride

Catholic Connection Matthew 25:31-46 Who Cares?

We often hear excuses to not help those in need: "He got what he deserved!" "She is not my problem!" But Jesus commands us to reach out to those who suffer. He declares that God will judge how we care for those who are disadvantaged, for in them we encounter and minister to Christ.

Catholic social teaching states that all human beings have basic rights we must always protect. The United Nations' "Universal Declaration of Human Rights" lists thirty human rights, including rights to work, education, fair legal treatment, and ownership of property. With these rights come responsibilities, similar to what Jesus outlines for his disciples in Matthew 25:31–46: feeding the hungry, welcoming the stranger, clothing the naked, tending to the sick, and so on. These are the demands of our faith, if we want to call ourselves disciples.

In your community, can hungry people receive a free meal? Does your school or parish have food or clothing drives? How are housebound or terminally ill people cared for? Who visits or writes to prisoners? How are refugees welcomed? In other words, in your community, who cares? Who responds to Jesus' call?

Catholic Social Teaching: Rights and Responsibilities

Matthew

1142

them; ⁴but the wise took flasks of oil with their lamps. ⁵As the bridegroom was delayed, all of them became drowsy and slept. ⁶But at midnight there was a shout, 'Look! Here is the bridegroom! Come out to meet him.' 7Then all those bridesmaids^a got up and trimmed their lamps. ⁸The foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' 9But the wise replied, 'No! there will not be enough for you and for us; you had better go to the dealers and buy some for yourselves.' ¹⁰And while they went to buy it, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went with him into the wedding banquet; and the door was shut. ¹¹Later the other bridesmaids^a came also, saying, 'Lord, lord, open to us.' 12But he replied, 'Truly I tell you, I do not know you.' ¹³Keep awake therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour.^b

The Parable of the Talents

¹⁴"For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; ¹⁵to one he gave five talents,^{*c*} to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. ¹⁶The one who had received the five talents went off at once and traded with them, and made five more talents. ¹⁷In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. ¹⁸But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. ¹⁹After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. ²⁰Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, 'Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents.' ²¹His master said to him, 'Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.²²And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, 'Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents.' 23 His master said to him, 'Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things, I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.' 24 Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, 'Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow, and gathering where you did not scatter seed; ²⁵so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.' ²⁶But his master replied, 'You wicked and lazy slave! You

a Gk virgins b Other ancient authorities add in which the Son of Man is coming c A talent was worth more than fifteen years' wages of a laborer

The Plot to Kill Jesus

1143

26 When Jesus had finished saying all these things, he said to his disciples, ²"You know that after two days the Passover is coming, and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified."

³Then the chief priests and the elders of the people gathered in the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, ⁴and they conspired to arrest Jesus by stealth and kill him. ⁵But they said, "Not during the festival, or there may be a riot among the people."

The Anointing at Bethany

⁶Now while Jesus was at Bethany in the house of Simon the leper,^b⁷a woman came to him with an alabaster jar of very costly ointment, and she poured it on his head as he sat at the table. ⁸But when the disciples saw it, they were angry and said, "Why this waste? "For this ointment could have been sold for a large sum, and the money given to the poor." ¹⁰But Jesus, aware of this, said to them, "Why do you trouble the woman? She has performed a good service for me. ¹¹For you always have the poor with you, but you will not always have me. ¹²By pouring this ointment on my body she has prepared me for burial. ¹³Truly I tell you, wherever this good news^c is proclaimed in the whole world, what she has done will be told in remembrance of her."

Judas Agrees to Betray Jesus

¹⁴Then one of the twelve, who was called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests ¹⁵and said, "What will you give me if I betray him to you?" They paid him thirty pieces of silver. ¹⁶And from that moment he began to look for an opportunity to betray him.

The Passover with the Disciples

¹⁷On the first day of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Where do you want us to make the preparations for you to eat the Passover?" ¹⁸He said, "Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, 'The Teacher says, My time is near; I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples.'" ¹⁹So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them, and they prepared the Passover meal.

²⁰When it was evening, he took his place with the twelve;^{*d*} ²¹and while they were eating, he said, "Truly I tell you, one of you will betray me." ²²And they became greatly distressed and began to say to him one after another, "Surely not I, Lord?" ²³He answered, "The one who has dipped his hand into the bowl

a Gk these my brothers *b* The terms leper and leprosy can refer to several diseases *c* Or gospel *d* Other ancient authorities add disciples

knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow, and gather where I did not scatter? ²⁷Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest. ²⁸So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. ²⁹For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance; but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. ³⁰As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

The Judgment of the Nations

³¹"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory. ³²All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats, ³³and he will put the sheep at his right hand and the goats at the left. ³⁴Then the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; ³⁵ for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, ³⁶I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.' ³⁷Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry and gave you food, or thirsty and gave you something to drink? ³⁸And when was it that we saw you a stranger and welcomed you, or naked and gave you clothing? ³⁹And when was it that we saw you sick or in prison and visited you?' 40And the king will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family,^a you did it to me.' ⁴¹Then he will say to those at his left hand, 'You that are accursed, depart from me into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels; ⁴²for I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me nothing to drink, 43I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not give me clothing, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.' 44 Then they also will answer, 'Lord, when was it that we saw you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not take care of you?' ⁴⁵Then he will answer them, 'Truly I tell you, just as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.' ⁴⁶And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

Catholic Connection Matthew 26:26-27 K A New People

The Bible is often called the Old and New Covenants-or Testaments, from the Latin word for *covenant*. The word *covenant* expresses the unique relationship between God and God's people. In the Old Testament, the Israelites' laws and worship were a sign of this covenant. Then Jesus Christ, the Word Made Flesh, initiated the New Covenant through his life offered in sacrifice for all.

lesus taught that the true covenant is found in the commandments to love God totally and to love one another with the same unconditional love God shows us. During the Last Supper, Jesus catapulted humanity into a new dimension of the covenant with God when he shared the cup and said, "Drink from it, all of you, for this is my blood of the covenant" (Matthew 26:27–28). When the disciples partook of the body and blood of Christ, they became the body of Christ, entering the deepest kind of communion with God.

This communion in the body of Christ also points to the communion of all believers-of every nationality, race, culture, and social status. Our communion as Christians, the New Covenant people of God, transcends any and all human division.

Catechism. numbers 68-73, 610, 613, 1365, 1405 with me will betray me. 24 The Son of Man goes as it is written of him, but woe to that one by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been better for that one not to have been born." ²⁵Judas, who betrayed him, said, "Surely not I, Rabbi?" He replied, "You have said so."

The Institution of the Lord's Supper

²⁶While they were eating, Jesus took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it he broke it, gave it to the disciples, and said, "Take, eat; this is my body." ²⁷Then he took a cup, and after giving thanks he gave it to them, saying, "Drink from it, all of you; ²⁸for this is my blood of the^{*a*} covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins. ²⁹I tell you, I will never again drink of this fruit of the vine until that day when I drink it new with you in my Father's kingdom."

³⁰When they had sung the hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.

Peter's Denial Foretold

³¹Then Jesus said to them, "You will all become deserters because of me this night; for it is written.

'I will strike the shepherd,

and the sheep of the flock will be scattered. ³²But after I am raised up, I will go ahead of you to Galilee." ³³Peter said to him, "Though all become deserters because of you, I will never desert you." ³⁴Jesus said to him, "Truly I tell you, this very night, before the cock crows, you will deny me three times." ³⁵Peter said to him, "Even though I must die with you, I will not deny you." And so said all the disciples.

Jesus Prays in Gethsemane

³⁶Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane; and he said to his disciples, "Sit here while I go over there and pray." ³⁷He took with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be grieved and agitated. ³⁸Then he said to them, "I am deeply grieved, even to death; remain here, and stay awake with me." ³⁹And going a little farther, he threw himself on the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from me; yet not what I want but what you want." ⁴⁰Then he came to the disciples and found them sleeping; and he said to Peter, "So, could you not stay awake with me one hour? ⁴¹Stay awake and pray that you may not come into the time of trial;^b the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak." 42Again he went away for the second time and prayed, "My Father,

a Other ancient authorities add new b Or into temptation

WHO my NEIGHBOUR?

Imperfect Friends Matthew 26:36-45

Imagine that you are in the middle of a crisis and you ask your best friends to stay with you while you prepare to face the situation. They all promise to be there for you. But one friend after another fails to come through, and you are left to face the predicament alone.

Jesus' friends were no different. They were well intentioned and meant to stay awake with him, but in their tiredness, they let him down. Yet Jesus loved his disciples despite their failings and even when they were disloyal. Consider how you might follow the example of Jesus by loving your friends despite their failings.

if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done." ⁴³Again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy. ⁴⁴So leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words. ⁴⁵Then he came to the disciples and said to them, "Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? See, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. ⁴⁶Get up, let us be going. See, my betrayer is at hand."

The Betrayal and Arrest of Jesus

⁴⁷While he was still speaking, Judas, one of the twelve, arrived; with him was a large crowd with swords and clubs, from the chief priests and the elders of the people. ⁴⁸Now the betrayer had given them a sign, saying, "The one I will kiss is the man; arrest him." 49At once he came up to Jesus and said, "Greetings, Rabbi!" and kissed him. ⁵⁰Jesus said to him, "Friend, do what you are here to do." Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and arrested him. ⁵¹Suddenly, one of those with Jesus put his hand on his sword, drew it, and struck the slave of the high priest, cutting off his ear. 52 Then Jesus said to him, "Put your sword back into its place; for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. ⁵³Do you think that I cannot appeal to my Father, and he will at once send me more than twelve legions

of angels? ⁵⁴But how then would the scriptures be fulfilled, which say it must happen in this way?" ⁵⁵At that hour Jesus said to the crowds, "Have you come out with swords and clubs to arrest me as though I were a bandit? Day after day I sat in the temple teaching, and you did not arrest me. ⁵⁶But all this has taken place, so that the scriptures of the prophets may be fulfilled." Then all the disciples deserted him and fled.

Jesus before the High Priest

⁵⁷Those who had arrested Jesus took him to Caiaphas the high priest, in whose house the scribes and the elders had gathered. 58But Peter was following him at a distance, as far as the courtyard of the high priest; and going inside, he sat with the guards in order to see how this would end. 59Now the chief priests and the whole council were looking for false testimony against Jesus so that they might put him to death, 60 but they found none, though many false witnesses came forward. At last two came forward 61 and said, "This fellow said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days?" 62 The high priest stood up and said, "Have you no answer? What is it that they testify against you?" 63But Jesus was silent. Then the high priest said to him, "I put you under



Judas' Suicide

The Gospel of Matthew presents Judas' suicide as the fulfilment of some Old Testament prophecies, but it does not tell us why Judas killed himself. We don't know the historical circumstances around this event, nor do we know what was in Judas' mind, what motivated him to do this, or how this event would have been perceived at a different time and in a culture very different from our own.

Unfortunately, suicide ends not just the pain one is currently feeling but everything: future possibilities for healing, for growth, for new relationships, and for good times. Consider this: Both Judas and Peter betrayed Jesus. Judas ended his life, but Peter trusted in God's love and forgiveness and went on to become a significant figure in the life of the Church. Nothing you can do is so terrible that your only option is to take your own life. Nothing.

oath before the living God, tell us if you are the Messiah,^a the Son of God." ⁶⁴Jesus said to him, "You have said so. But I tell you,

From now on you will see the Son of Man seated at the right hand of Power

and coming on the clouds of heaven." ⁶⁵Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "He has blasphemed! Why do we still need witnesses? You have now heard his blasphemy. ⁶⁶What is your verdict?" They answered, "He deserves death." ⁶⁷Then they spat in his face and struck him; and some slapped him, ⁶⁸saying, "Prophesy to us, you Messiah!^a Who is it that struck you?"

Peter's Denial of Jesus

⁶⁹Now Peter was sitting outside in the courtyard. A servant-girl came to him and said, "You also were with Jesus the Galilean." ⁷⁰But he denied it before all of them, saying, "I do not know what you are talking about." ⁷¹When he went out to the porch, another servant-girl saw him, and she said to the bystanders, "This man was with Jesus of Nazareth."^b ⁷²Again he denied it with an oath, "I do not know the man." ⁷³After a little while the bystanders came up and said to Peter, "Certainly you are also one of them, for your accent betrays you." 74 Then he began to curse, and he swore an oath, "I do not know the man!" At that moment the cock crowed. 75 Then Peter remembered what Jesus had said: "Before the cock crows, you will deny me three times." And he went out and wept bitterly.

Jesus Brought before Pilate

My When morning came, all the chief priests and **4** the elders of the people conferred together against Jesus in order to bring about his death. ²They bound him, led him away, and handed him over to Pilate the governor.

The Suicide of Judas

³When Judas, his betrayer, saw that Jesus^c was condemned, he repented and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders. ⁴He said, "I have sinned by betraying innocent^d blood." But they said, "What is that to us? See to it yourself." ⁵Throwing down the pieces of silver in the temple, he departed; and he went and hanged himself. ⁶But the chief priests, taking the pieces of silver, said, "It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, since they are blood money." ⁷After conferring together, they used them to buy the potter's field as a place to bury foreigners. ⁸For this reason that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day. 9Then was fulfilled what had been spoken through the prophet Jeremiah,^e "And they took^{*f*} the thirty pieces of silver, the price of the one on whom a price had been set,^g on whom some of the people of Israel had set a price, ¹⁰and they gave^{*h*} them for the potter's field, as the Lord commanded me."

Pilate Questions Jesus

¹¹Now Jesus stood before the governor; and the governor asked him, "Are you the King of the Jews?" Jesus said, "You say so." ¹²But when he was accused by the chief priests and elders, he did not answer. ¹³Then Pilate said to him, "Do you not hear how many accusations they make against you?" ¹⁴But he gave him no answer, not even to a single charge, so that the governor was greatly amazed.

Barabbas or Jesus?

¹⁵Now at the festival the governor was accustomed to release a prisoner for the crowd,

a Or Christ b Gk the Nazorean c Gk he d Other ancient authorities read righteous e Other ancient authorities read Zechariah or Isaiah f Or I took g Or the price of the precious One h Other ancient authorities read I gave

Matthew

anyone whom they wanted. ¹⁶At that time they had a notorious prisoner, called Jesus^a Barabbas. ¹⁷So after they had gathered, Pilate said to them, "Whom do you want me to release for you, Jesus^a Barabbas or Jesus who is called the Messiah?"b ¹⁸For he realized that it was out of jealousy that they had handed him over. ¹⁹While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent word to him, "Have nothing to do with that innocent man, for today I have suffered a great deal because of a dream about him." ²⁰Now the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowds to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus killed. ²¹The governor again said to them, "Which of the two do you want me to release for you?" And they said, "Barabbas." ²²Pilate said to them, "Then what should I do with Jesus who is called the Messiah?"^b All of them said, "Let him be crucified!" ²³Then he asked, "Why, what evil has he done?" But they shouted all the more, "Let him be crucified!"

Pilate Hands Jesus over to Be Crucified

²⁴So when Pilate saw that he could do nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took some water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this man's blood;^c see to it yourselves." ²⁵Then the people as a whole answered, "His blood be on us and on our children!" ²⁶So he released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.

The Soldiers Mock Jesus

²⁷Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor's headquarters,^{*d*} and they gathered the whole cohort around him. ²⁸They stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him, ²⁹and after twisting some thorns into a crown, they put it on his head. They put a reed in his right hand and knelt before him and mocked him, saying, "Hail, King of the Jews!" ³⁰They spat on him, and took the reed and struck him on the head. ³¹After mocking him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him. Then they led him away to crucify him.

The Crucifixion of Jesus

³²As they went out, they came upon a man from Cyrene named Simon; they compelled this man to carry his cross. ³³And when they came to a place

a Other ancient authorities lack Jesus b Or the Christ c Other ancient authorities read this righteous blood, or this righteous man's blood d Gk the praetorium

GROWING IN FAITH

Matthew 27:27-44

Experiencing Suffering

Dear Jesus, everyone endures some suffering in life. Some people suffer in silence, some complain loudly, and others bitterly blame everyone around them. You suffered ridicule, betrayal, persecution, crucifixion, and death, and yet you endured. Strengthen me to withstand the suffering I must face in my life. Help me to confidently reach out for support from the people in my life who love me. When I feel that I have more than I can take, give me the courage and the patience to endure it, knowing that you are with me every step of the way. Amen.

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Happened

According to the Gospel of Matthew, some strange things happened when Jesus died. Each event tells us something about Jesus. The darkness that covered the land (see Matthew 27:45) and the earthquake (see verse 51) show that all creation was aware that something significant had happened. The splitting of the sanctuary veil (see verse 51), which is the barrier that separated the holiest part of the temple (where God was thought to dwell) from the rest of the temple area, symbolises that now God would be directly accessible to the people. And the dead saints who came out of their tombs to walk in the city symbolise God's triumph over death. With Jesus' death, a new age had dawned!

called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull), ³⁴they offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall; but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. ³⁵And when they had crucified him, they divided his clothes among themselves by casting lots;^a ³⁶then they sat down there and kept watch over him. ³⁷Over his head they put the charge against him, which read, "This is Jesus, the King of the Jews."

³⁸Then two bandits were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. ³⁹Those who passed by derided^b him, shaking their heads ⁴⁰and saying, "You who would destroy the temple and build it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross." ⁴¹In the same way the chief priests also, along with the scribes and elders, were mocking him, saying, 42"He saved others; he cannot save himself.^c He is the King of Israel; let him come down from the cross now, and we will believe in him. ⁴³He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he wants to; for he said, 'I am God's Son.' " 44 The bandits who were crucified with him also taunted him in the same way.

The Death of Jesus

⁴⁵From noon on, darkness came over the whole land^d until three in the afternoon. ⁴⁶And about three o'clock Jesus cried with a loud voice, "Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?" that is, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" ⁴⁷When some of the bystanders heard it, they said, "This man is calling for Elijah." ⁴⁸At once one of them ran and got a sponge, filled it with sour wine, put it on a stick, and gave it to him to drink. ⁴⁹But the others said, "Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him."e 50 Then Jesus cried again with a loud voice and breathed his last.^f ⁵¹At that moment the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. The earth shook, and the rocks were split. 52 The tombs also were opened, and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised. 53 After his resurrection they came out of the tombs and entered the holy city and appeared to many. ⁵⁴Now when the centurion and those with him, who were keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were terrified and said, "Truly this man was God's Son!"g

⁵⁵Many women were also there, looking on from a distance; they had followed Jesus from Galilee and had provided for him. ⁵⁶Among them were Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.

The Burial of Jesus

⁵⁷When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who was also a disciple of Jesus. ⁵⁸He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus; then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. 59So Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen cloth 60 and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn in the rock. He then rolled a great stone to the door of the tomb and went away. 61 Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb.

The Guard at the Tomb

62The next day, that is, after the day of Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate 63 and said, "Sir, we remember what that impostor said while he was still alive, 'After three days I will rise again.' ⁶⁴Therefore command the tomb to be made secure until the third day; otherwise his disciples may go and steal him away, and tell the people, 'He has been raised from the dead,' and the last deception would be worse than

a Other ancient authorities add in order that what had been spoken through the prophet might be fulfilled, "They divided my clothes among themselves, and for my clothing they cast lots." b Or blasphemed c Or is he unable to save himself? d Or earth e Other ancient authorities add And another took a spear and pierced his side, and out came water and blood f Or gave up his spirit g Or a son of God

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CHALLENGE

The good news is that even when we feel most alone, we are not. In our darkest hour and deepest pain, God is always with us.

Matthew 27:46

TAKE ACTION!

Reach Out in Prayer: Set aside 5 minutes of intentional prayer time every day, even if you don't feel God's presence. Bring your pain, anger, and frustration to God. God can handle it.

Reach Out through Scripture: Spend time this week with the "Sometimes Life Stinks!" reading plan on page 1552 or the "When I'm Feeling . . . Alone or Abandoned" list of Scripture verses on page 1557. Turn to Joshua 1:9 and pray the verse.

Reach Out to Professionals: Find a spiritual director, counsellor, priest, or mentor and ask for help, if necessary.

For more on feeling alone or abandoned, see the Challenge feature on page 612.

the first." ⁶⁵Pilate said to them, "You have a guard^{*a*} of soldiers; go, make it as secure as you can."^{*b*} ⁶⁶So they went with the guard and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone.

REACHOUT

The Resurrection of Jesus

After the sabbath, as the first day of the week was dawning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. ²And suddenly there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord, descending from heaven, came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. ³His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. 4For fear of him the guards shook and became like dead men. ⁵But the angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid; I know that you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. 6He is not here; for he has been raised, as he said. Come, see the place where he^c lay. ⁷Then go quickly and tell his disciples, 'He has been raised from the dead,^d and indeed he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him? This is my message for you." *So they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. "Suddenly Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!"

And they came to him, took hold of his feet, and worshiped him. ¹⁰Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me."

The Report of the Guard

¹¹While they were going, some of the guard went into the city and told the chief priests everything that had happened. ¹²After the priests^e had assembled with the elders, they devised a plan to give a large sum of money to the soldiers, ¹³telling them, "You must say, 'His disciples came by night and stole him away while we were asleep.' ¹⁴If this comes to the governor's ears, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble." ¹⁵So they took the money and did as they were directed. And this story is still told among the Jews to this day.

The Commissioning of the Disciples

¹⁶Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. ¹⁷When they saw him, they worshiped him; but

a Or Take a guard b Gk you know how c Other ancient authorities read the Lord d Other ancient authorities lack from the dead e Gk they

Matthew 28:19

Jesus calls us to reach out, share our faith, and make disciples of all nations. Jesus isn't sending us all overseas—he is calling us to share our faith and tell people about his universal love.

TAKE ACTION!

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Share by Witness: Give a talk for a retreat or youth-group gathering, or have a conversation with someone you think might be open to hearing about why your faith matters to you. Share your favourite Bible verse and explain why it is important to you.

SHARE YOUR FAITH

Share by Invitation: Invite a friend or friends to church or youth group, and share with them your reason for going.

Share by Example: Share your faith by making choices that reflect your faith, especially in the way you treat others. You will not be perfect, but strive to let others see Christ through you.

some doubted. ¹⁸And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."^a

a Other ancient authorities add Amen