

WEEK 16 DAY 1

Today's Reading: Luke 8:16-18

As you read these verses, perhaps like me, you sang the childhood song in your head.

"Hide it under a bushel, no! I'm gonna let it shine."

So many memories flood my mind as this song plays through my thoughts, culminating in a chorus of questions: Have I let my life shine? Have I hidden my faith in insecurity and apprehension? Does my "light" even matter? How does a person, truly, let it shine?

One way we can begin is to list the talents and blessings God has given us. As we consider these many blessings and abilities, let's think about how we can use these gifts to serve or bless other people. How does the Lord want you and me to use the things He has given us to minister to those around us?

Perhaps we have the gift of teaching. Are we using that gift? We could teach a LifeGroup or Bible study class.

Maybe we're blessed with a large home. Are we opening it up for people to gather and fellowship together? Perhaps the Lord has given you a beautiful voice and the ability to sing. Don't keep that talent to yourself! Volunteer to serve on the church Worship Team, in Student Worship, Kids' Worship, which includes our Preschool Choir! Letting our light shine means we share our God-given gifts in service to others and to bring glory to God!

No matter how God has gifted us, let's not hide it or cover it up! Let's be vessels of service and ministry to others in the name of Jesus.

PRAYER:

Father, please reveal the gifts and talents You have given to me and allow me to use those gifts to bring glory to You.

**Bonus Reading: Matthew 5:14-16,
Luke 11:33-36**

WEEK 16 DAY 2

Today's Reading: Luke 8:19-21

Depending on whom you ask, "What is family?" the answers will vary. Some will say it is the nucleus of parents and children, others will include grandparents, cousins, aunts and uncles. Still others will respond that family is the people who love you. In this passage, we see Jesus also has an answer for the question at hand. He defines family by saying, "My mother and my brothers are those who hear the Word of God and do it." Let's unpack what this means.

Jesus is referring to God's family. When we confess Jesus as our Lord and Savior, we are grafted into the family of God, adopted as His sons and daughters. Fellow believers become our brothers and sisters in Christ. As God's children, we are called to trust Him and obey His Word. This is challenging for all of us, and we need help from the Holy Spirit as we seek to know what-and-how to obey. Reading and studying God's Word is an important practice for every believer. When we study God's Word, we get to know Him more. The more we know God, the better we become at obeying His commands.

From the beginning of creation, God has desired a relationship with us. He has given us every opportunity to know Him and to have a daily relationship with Him. If we want to know God, we must be in His Word daily. Every day, we can learn to know Him more and grow to love Him deeper.

PRAYER:

Lord, let me know You more intimately and help
me love You more deeply.

**Bonus Reading: Mark 3:31-35, Mark
3:21, John 7:1-9**

WEEK 16 DAY 3

Today's Reading: Luke 8:22-25

Have you ever been caught in a tumultuous storm that left you uneasy and afraid? As a resident of North Texas, I'm all too familiar with this scenario.

Springtime often brings storms, howling winds, violent hailstones, and the threat of tornadoes.

Just a couple of weeks ago, I stood on my porch and watched hail rain down for 15 minutes straight. As the storm progressed, the hailstones got bigger and bigger. Thankfully, my family remained safely inside our home, but the damage to our trees, plants, cars and roof was tremendous.

Imagine, now, being in a boat on the open water without protection as a violent storm swells around you. How scary it would be to have no protection and be far from the shore! Today we read about a similar, harrowing event the disciples of Jesus faced. Thankfully, they were close to the ultimate source of safety, protection and answers: Jesus.

The disciples were scared and at a loss, but Jesus moved into action quickly and calmed the storm.

Using the opportunity to challenge them, Jesus inquired, "Where is your faith?" It appeared they doubted His ability to save them.

Perhaps you have been in a situation where you doubted the Lord. Maybe you doubted His ability to pull you out of a bad situation, or maybe you doubted His goodness. Like the disciples we read about today, we need to learn to trust God in every situation.

We may not know how or what He will do, but we know what He won't do: He will not leave or forsake us. Whether He rescues us from the situation or walks through it with us, we can trust He will be with us.

PRAYER:

Lord, give me the ability to trust You in every situation.

Bonus Reading: Daniel 3, Matthew 8:23-27, Mark 4:35-41

WEEK 16 DAY 4

Today's Reading: Luke 8:26-39

Throughout the book of Luke, we have seen Jesus perform miracles of all kinds. The blind were given sight; the lame walked; dead men were raised to life; and people were freed of demons.

Once again, in today's reading, we'll see Jesus come face to face with a demon-possessed man. This man had so many demons, they were identified as Legion. Amazingly, we learn the demons immediately recognized Jesus, fell at His feet, and begged for mercy. Jesus had mercy on both the possessed man and the demons by allowing the demons to enter a herd of pigs in a nearby field. And the possessed man? He was given life! His earthly life was restored back to him, and his belief in the Messiah promised eternal life.

Jesus continued to reveal Himself to person after person through the miracles He performed. The fantastic part was the man who found freedom in Jesus returned to his hometown and declared Jesus as Lord. In the days of this Bible account, news of the Messiah was spread exclusively by word of mouth. The only way people who had not seen with their eyes learned about Jesus, the Messiah, was by the testimony of others.

Today, Scripture is easily accessible to us. Churches are easy to find, and books and podcasts herald the Good News 24/7. Yet, God still uses people like you and me to spread the Word.

When was the last time we told someone about what Jesus did in our life? Have we spoken up and told others about the saving power of His grace? Are we declaring how much the Lord has done for us? May we wrestle through these questions and be ready to share our testimony of how Jesus changed us to those in our path who need to hear.

PRAYER:

Lord, give me the boldness to speak truth so others might come to know You as their Lord and Savior.

**Bonus Reading: Matthew 8:29-9:1,
Mark 5:1-21, Ephesians 6:19-20,
Colossians 4:1-6**

WEEK 16 DAY 5

Today's Reading: Luke 8:16-39 (Read in a different translation)

Have you ever held a secret you were certain would not be discovered? Maybe someone trusted you with something and asked you to never tell anyone. How did you feel as time passed? Holding things in can easily become a burden over time.

For example, have you ever lied to someone? Sometimes, in our lives, we commit a sin that we believe will remain secret. Sin is anything that violates how God has told us to think or live. It's missing the mark. Scripture affirms that all of us are sinners, though we sometimes think we can keep it hidden from others forever. Unconfessed, unrepentant sin will often weigh on us and cause us to feel like we must tell someone. We often fail to consider that God already knows everything we have done - even every thought.

Luke 8:17 reads, "For nothing is hidden that will not be made manifest, nor is anything secret that will not be known and come to light." The things we hide in the darkness will be brought into the light and revealed. Let's take a few minutes today and consider the things in our life that we've sought to keep hidden in the darkness. We can confess any sin to the Lord and ask Him to forgive us, and He will. When we confess and ask His forgiveness, peace will fill our body and allow us to walk with the Lord more intimately.

PRAYER:

Lord, reveal the sin in my life. I confess my sin to
You now and receive your forgiveness.

**Bonus Reading: Ecclesiastes 12:14,
Numbers 32:23, Psalm 139:1-24**