

WEEK 18 DAY 1

Today's Reading: Luke 9:10-11

In today's passage, we read about how Jesus was eager and ready to love and serve the people around Him. In the various places he traveled, Jesus was not always the town's favorite, but people were always interested to hear what He had to say and witness His miraculous power. They followed Him to Bethsaida, where Luke tells us, "he welcomed them." Jesus then taught the people about the kingdom of God and cured their illnesses. Jesus did not respond to the crowds with annoyance, but with love. This account in Luke allows us to observe how Jesus received those who came to Him. Not only were they received, but they were given life-changing truth. To encounter Jesus is to discover One who can heal our physical and spiritual maladies and bring us from death to life.

Questions

1. Think about the times when you have been welcomed by God, where you have felt His love reach out, His healing hand touch your life, and His truth change you. How have those moments impacted your faith and walk with Christ?
2. Knowing we are made in God's image and are called to grow to be like Christ, how does this passage inform how we live?

PRAYER:

Thank You, Jesus, for Your loving heart toward me

**Bonus Reading: Matthew 14:13-14;
Mark 6:33-34**

WEEK 18 DAY 2

Today's Reading: Luke 9:12-17

Most of us know the story of Jesus' feeding the 5,000. It is an account many of us heard growing up or have encountered in other contexts. It is a classic telling of Jesus' miraculous power at work.

Familiarity can sometimes cause us to move past the wonder and awe we should possess in reaction to such a powerful account. And as wonderful as it was for Jesus to multiply the fish and loaves, an even greater miracle was at work in this account.

Verse 17 reads, "And they all ate and were satisfied." Consider the wonder these 5,000 people encountered when they came to Jesus, each seeking something specific and tangible. Many wanted to be healed, hear excellent teaching, or witness miracles, and Jesus delivered in such a way that all who were in His presence were satisfied. It was not the healing, teaching or miracles that satisfied; it was Jesus Himself. Whom Christ feeds, He fills.

Question

How have you experienced the satisfaction only Jesus can bring?

PRAYER:

Lord, You alone can satisfy my needs. Please help me to find complete satisfaction in You.

**Bonus Reading: Matthew 14:15-21;
Mark 6:35-44**

WEEK 18 DAY 3

Today's Reading: Luke 9:18a

Luke is often credited with the most detailed accounting among the Gospels. In today's passage, Luke provides an interesting detail: Jesus was alone and praying. Indeed, the Son of God had plenty of work to do. He had places to go, teachings to share, and miracles to perform. Yet, amidst a schedule full of important tasks, we read Jesus took the time to step away from the world and be alone. Specifically, to be alone in prayer.

Perhaps, like me, you have thought before, "I could really use some alone time." Perhaps we are envisioning a time of rest and personal care in our mind. We want to treat ourselves to some much deserved "me time." However, what Jesus modeled for us was the best personal care we can seek: the care of our heavenly Father - Jesus' time alone in prayer prepared Him for His time with others. It was at the feet of God that Jesus' strength was renewed. Do you need a renewal of strength?

Questions

1. How frequently do I take time to get away from the world's chaos and pray with God?
2. In what ways have I sought impact through consistent prayer?

PRAYER:

Lord, build in me the desire to sit at Your feet in prayer. Restore my body and heart. Fill me with Your love and compassion for those around me.

WEEK 18 DAY 4

Today's Reading: Luke 9:18b-22

In our reading this week, we have been prompted to consider the implications of Jesus' praying alone. Today, we will look at Jesus' conversation with His disciples following His time in prayer. He responds with a question. Rest assured, when Jesus (or God) asks a question in the Bible, it's rhetorical - He doesn't need the answer. So, it's very important for us to consider the question. Jesus asked, "Who do the crowds say that I am?" The disciples replied, but Jesus followed up with a far more personal question: "Who do you say that I am?"

Rarely at a loss for words, Peter boldly responded, "the Christ." After this, Jesus commanded the disciples to stay silent and not share that He was the Christ. Jesus wanted them to keep this to themselves because His work was not yet finished.

Jesus' death and Resurrection would be the ultimate proof of His position as the Son of God. However, before Jesus ultimately displayed to the world who He was, He asked the ever-important question: "Who do you say that I am?"

Question

1. We live on the backside of Jesus' death and Resurrection. We have been witnesses to the Scriptural history of Jesus. With that in mind, who do you say Jesus is?

PRAYER:

Lord, help me see who You really are. Help me know Your heart and believe that You are who You claim to be. Father, help my unbelief.

**Bonus Reading: Matthew 16:13-20;
Mark 8:27-30**

WEEK 18 DAY 5

Today's Reading: Luke 9:23-27

German theologian Dietrich Bonhoeffer asserted, "Nothing can be cheap to us which is costly to God. And 1 Corinthians 6:20 reminds us that above all, grace is costly, because it was costly to God, costing Him the life of His Son— "you were bought with a price."

In our final day of reading this week, Jesus makes it abundantly clear to His disciples that to follow Him comes with a cost ... and that cost is the world. "For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself?" (v. 25). As followers of Christ, we are called to forsake the world. In doing so, we must desire eternal joy in Christ more than we desire the things of the world - even our very favorite things such as our homes, cars, social calendars or dream jobs. Jesus paid the ultimate price so we might be free from sin. That is the very grace we should never take for granted.

May we gladly pick up our cross daily and pursue Christ in every area of our life, clinging to the promise that "whoever loses his life for my sake will save it" (v. 24b). On the other side of carrying our cross with Christ is eternity with Christ.

Question

How does the hope of eternity encourage you in our season of struggle?

PRAYER:

Lord, help me to leave this world behind and follow You. Please give me the strength to pick up my cross daily and follow You faithfully.

**Bonus Reading: Matthew 16:24-28;
Mark 8:34-38**