



**Jesus In The Streets**

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# **Jesus In The Streets**

JESUS IN

# Intro

THE STREETS

**Jesus bumped into many people in his life. Some were rich and powerful, but more were poor and needy. Whether the person was poor or rich, Jesus always tried to help them see God more clearly.**

This booklet tells some of the well-known stories from the life of Jesus. As we will see, Jesus always showed extra concern for those in the greatest need. In addition, he told many stories to help people get a taste for what God is like.

We want to help you encounter Jesus through these stories. We believe he is the key to a life that is rich and sane and worth living.

We hope you will read each story and do three things. First we want you to LOOK. We want you to notice things about Jesus and how he touched those around him. Second we want you to ASK and REFLECT. That is, we want you to ask questions to help you think about the story. But don't ask these questions too quickly. We want you to think hard about the questions and the kinds of thoughts they raise. Thinking is difficult, but valuable.

The better we can think about the passage, the more we can see our own lives in these stories.

Third, we want you to PRAY.

Ask Jesus to meet you as he met people in these stories.

We pray you will be brought close to Jesus the Son of God and Savior of the world.



Story

01

# The Leper





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**MARK 1: 40-45**

A man with leprosy came to him and begged him on his knees, “If you are willing, you can make me clean.”

Jesus was indignant. He reached out his hand and touched the man. “I am willing,” he said. “Be clean!” Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cleansed.

Jesus sent him away at once with a strong warning: “See that you don’t tell this to anyone. But go — show yourself to the priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded for your cleansing, as a testimony to them.”

Instead, he went out and began to talk freely, spreading the news. As a result, Jesus could no longer enter a town openly but stayed outside in lonely places. Yet the people still came to him from everywhere.

## **Look**

- A man with leprosy was “unclean.” This means he was cut off from the community. No one could touch him or interact with him.
- Notice what the man said to Jesus. He knew Jesus could heal him. He was not sure if Jesus would be willing to heal him.
- Notice that Jesus touched him before He healed him.
- Jesus touched him while he was still untouchable.

## **Ask & Reflect**

- Who are the “untouchable” people in your world?
- Do you ever feel untouchable? When do you feel that way?
- Do you have the courage to approach Jesus?
- Do you believe He can make you clean?
- Do you believe He is willing? Why or why not?

**“Jesus, I know that I am not clean. Please touch me where I need You to most. Thank you that You are willing, and that You can make me well.”**

PERSONAL PRAYER TIME

Story

02

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MAN

The Paralyzed Man

One day Jesus was teaching, and Pharisees and teachers of the law were sitting there. They had come from every village of Galilee and from Judea and Jerusalem. And the power of the Lord was with Jesus to heal the sick. Some men came carrying a paralyzed man on a mat and tried to take him into the house to lay him before Jesus. When they could not find a way to do this because of the crowd, they went up on the roof and lowered him on his mat through the tiles into the middle of the crowd, right in front of Jesus. When Jesus saw their faith, he said, "Friend, your sins are forgiven."

The Pharisees and the teachers of the law began thinking to themselves, "Who is this fellow who speaks blasphemy? Who can forgive sins but God alone?" Jesus knew what they were thinking and asked, "Why are you thinking these things in your hearts? Which is easier: to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Get up and walk'? But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins." So he said to the paralyzed man, "I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home." Immediately he stood up in front of them, took what he had been lying on and went home praising God. Everyone was amazed and gave praise to God. They were filled with awe and said, "We have seen remarkable things today."

## **Look**

- Think about how much work the men did to bring the paralyzed man to Jesus. Think about all the obstacles in their way.
- Blasphemy was a serious charge. It meant to make yourself equal to God.
- The Pharisees said, “Who can forgive sins but God alone?” They were right about this, but they did not see that Jesus was God!

## **Ask & Reflect**

- Why do you think the crowd wouldn't make room for the paralyzed man?
- What do you think the men wanted? What did the paralyzed man want?
- Jesus asked, “Which is easier to say...?” What is the answer? But which is easier to do?
- When do you feel like you are paralyzed – that you need to be in the presence of Jesus, but you cannot get there on your own? Why do you feel that way?
- Is it hard to ask others to help you?
- Can you help others get into the presence of Jesus?

**“Jesus, I know I need to be in your presence. Sometimes I cannot get there. Help me reach out to others who can help me be with you. Help me carry my own friends into your presence.”**

PERSONAL PRAYER TIME

Story

03

# A Rich Man's Challenge





A certain ruler asked him, “Good teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

“Why do you call me good?” Jesus answered. “No one is good — except God alone. You know the commandments: ‘You shall not commit adultery, you shall not murder, you shall not steal, you shall not give false testimony, honor your father and mother.’”

“All these I have kept since I was a boy,” he said.

When Jesus heard this, he said to him, “You still lack one thing. Sell everything you have and give to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven. Then come, follow me.”

When he heard this, he became very sad, because he was very wealthy. Jesus looked at him and said, “How hard it is for the rich to enter the kingdom of God! Indeed, 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.”

Those who heard this asked, “Who then can be saved?”

Jesus replied, “What is impossible with man is possible with God.”



## **Look**

– When this rich man asked what he needed to do, Jesus quoted from the ten commandments. The man claimed that he had fulfilled all of these.

– Jesus told him to sell all he had and give the money to the poor.

– The picture of a camel going through an eye of a needle is a vivid picture of something impossible.

## **Ask & Reflect**

– Jesus did not tell every rich person he met to sell everything and give the money to the poor. Why do you think he told this man to do so?

– If gaining eternal life is about trusting Jesus, why would it be hard for rich people to have this trust?

– Even if you are not rich, there are things in your life that make it hard to trust Jesus. What are some of those things? How hard would they be to give up?

– Jesus said that what is impossible for us is possible for God. How does this comfort you?

**“Jesus, help me not hold onto the things that prevent me from trusting you. Help me be willing to sell all or give all. Thank you that all things are possible for you, even my salvation!”**

PERSONAL PRAYER TIME



Story

04

# A Blind Man's Vision

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**MARK 10: 46-52**

Then they came to Jericho. As Jesus and his disciples, together with a large crowd, were leaving the city, a blind man, Bartimaeus (which means “son of Timaeus”), was sitting by the roadside begging. When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!”

Many rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he shouted all the more, “Son of David, have mercy on me!”

Jesus stopped and said, “Call him.”





So they called to the blind man, “Cheer up! On your feet! He’s calling you.” Throwing his cloak aside, he jumped to his feet and came to Jesus.

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

The blind man said, “Rabbi, I want to see.”

“Go,” said Jesus, “your faith has healed you.” Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road.

## **Look**

– When the crowd told Bartimaeus that Jesus was passing by, he cried out to Jesus for mercy.

– When the crowd told him to be quiet, he continued to cry out for mercy.

– When Jesus called to him, he threw his cloak aside.

This was very risky for a blind person. How would he find it again? Notice that this demonstrated his confidence in Jesus.

– Jesus always seems to stop and listen to people who need mercy and help.

## **Ask & Reflect**

– Bartimaeus would not let other people stop him from seeking Jesus for what he needed. How do you let other people stop you from pursuing Jesus?

– It looks like Bartimaeus never went back to get his cloak. Now that he was following Jesus, he left his old life behind. What parts of your old life have you left behind to follow Jesus? What things do you still need to leave behind?

– Jesus asked “What do you want me to do for you?” How would you answer him?

**“Jesus, you stop and listen to those who cry out for mercy. I need mercy today in many ways. Please meet me and provide what I need. Help me leave my cloak and follow you.” What else do you want to pray?**

PERSONAL PRAYER TIME

Stories

05 - 07



Two Daughters

Then one of the synagogue leaders, named Jairus, came, and when he saw Jesus, he fell at his feet. He pleaded earnestly with him, "My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live." So Jesus went with him. A large crowd followed and pressed around him.

And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse. When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, because she thought, "If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed." Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering.

At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, "Who touched my clothes?" "You see the people crowding against you," his disciples answered, "and yet you can ask, 'Who touched me?'" But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it. Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her,

came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth.

He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering." While Jesus was still speaking, some people came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue leader. "Your daughter is dead," they said. "Why bother the teacher anymore?" Overhearing what they said, Jesus told him, "Don't be afraid; just believe."

He did not let anyone follow him except Peter, James and John the brother of James. When they came to the home of the synagogue leader, Jesus saw a commotion, with people crying and wailing loudly. He went in and said to them, "Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep." But they laughed at him.

After he put them all out, he took the child's father and mother and the disciples who were with him, and went in where the child was. He took her by the hand and said to her, "Talitha koum!" (which means "Little girl, I say to you, get up!"). Immediately the girl stood up and began to walk around (she was twelve years old). At this they were completely astonished. He gave strict orders not to let anyone know about this, and told them to give her something to eat.

**THERE ARE THREE STORIES IN THIS PASSAGE:**

Story 5 – A leader comes to Jesus

Story 6 – A woman touches Jesus

Story 7 – A girl is raised by Jesus



Story

05

# A Leader Comes To Jesus





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**MARK 5:22-24**

Then one of the synagogue leaders, named Jairus, came, and when he saw Jesus, he fell at his feet.

He pleaded earnestly with him, “My little daughter is dying. Please come and put your hands on her so that she will be healed and live.”

So Jesus went with him. A large crowd followed and pressed around him.

## **Look**

- A synagogue leader was pretty important. He was not as important as the mayor of the town. He was more like the leader of a church or the owner of the local Starbucks.
- Notice that even someone who is pretty important faces problems that he cannot solve on his own.
- Jairus comes to Jesus and falls at his feet. Notice two things: 1. He comes to Jesus face to face. 2. He falls at his feet.

## **Ask & Reflect**

- Jairus' daughter is dying. How desperate do you think he feels?
- What does the way that Jairus comes to Jesus tell us about him? What does it say about what he thought of Jesus? (We will look at this also in the second story from this passage)
- Do you think coming to Jesus is a last resort for him? Is coming to Jesus a last resort for you?
- Why is Jesus willing to go with Jairus?

**“Jesus, Often I come to you as a last resort. Thank you that you welcome me at any time, with all of my needs.”**

PERSONAL PRAYER TIME

Story

06



# A Woman Touches Jesus



And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years. She had suffered a great deal under the care of many doctors and had spent all she had, yet instead of getting better she grew worse. When she heard about Jesus, she came up behind him in the crowd and touched his cloak, because she thought, "If I just touch his clothes, I will be healed." Immediately her bleeding stopped and she felt in her body that she was freed from her suffering.

At once Jesus realized that power had gone out from him. He turned around in the crowd and asked, "Who touched my clothes?" "You see the people crowding against you," his disciples answered, "and yet you can ask, 'Who touched me?'" But Jesus kept looking around to see who had done it. Then the woman, knowing what had happened to her, came and fell at his feet and, trembling with fear, told him the whole truth. He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering."



## **Look**

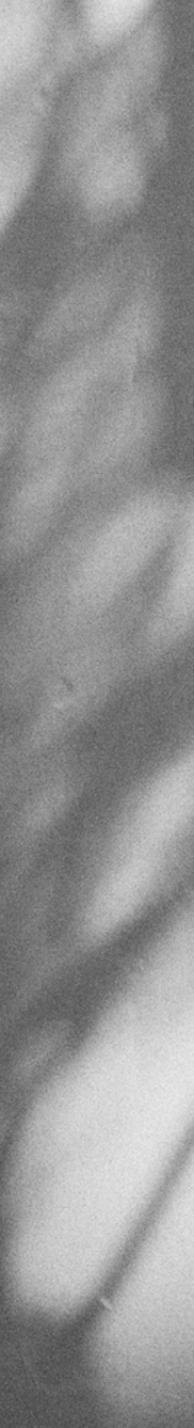
- The kind of bleeding the woman had made her “unclean.” She was not supposed to touch anyone, or be close to anyone.
- Notice that she had suffered for twelve years. This is exactly the age of Jairus’ daughter.
- The woman did not want Jesus to see her.
- Jesus calls her, “Daughter.” The woman is the only person Jesus calls daughter in the whole Bible.

## **Ask & Reflect**

- What does the way the woman comes to Jesus tell us about her? What does it say about the way she thought of Jesus? Compare her with Jairus in the previous story.
- Why do you think Jesus forced her to come before him and tell her story? Does it seem cruel?
- Do you ever want to stay hidden and unknown?
- Does Jesus want us to remain hidden?

**“Jesus, thank you that you know us and want to know us. You do not want us to remain hidden. We can be your son or daughter. Help me to come before you with all of my needs.”**

PERSONAL PRAYER TIME



Story

07

# A Daughter Is Raised





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**MARK 5:35-43**

While Jesus was still speaking, some people came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue leader. “Your daughter is dead,” they said. “Why bother the teacher anymore?” Overhearing what they said, Jesus told him, “Don’t be afraid; just believe.”

He did not let anyone follow him except Peter, James and John the brother of James. When they came to the home of the synagogue leader, Jesus saw a commotion, with people crying and wailing loudly. He went in and said to them, “Why all this commotion and wailing? The child is not dead but asleep.” But they laughed at him. After he put them all out, he took the child’s father and



mother and the disciples who were with him, and went in where the child was. He took her by the hand and said to her, “Talitha koum!” (which means “Little girl, I say to you, get up!”).

Immediately the girl stood up and began to walk around (she was twelve years old). At this they were completely astonished. He gave strict orders not to let anyone know about this, and told them to give her something to eat.

## **Look**

- Once Jairus' daughter died, people thought Jesus could do nothing.
- People were already mourning the dead child. Jesus told them she was only asleep. He knew he would raise her from the dead.
- Notice that when they go into her room, Jairus is called “the father.” His position as synagogue leader does not matter now.
- Jesus takes her by the hand and raises her from the dead. He is perfectly confident he can do this!

## **Ask & Reflect**

- Do you get to the point where you think even Jesus can do nothing for you? When do you think this?
- If Jesus is truly God, there is no point at which he can do nothing for you. Can you trust him in your hardest times?
- If even death cannot stop Jesus, what possibly can stop him?
- Why does Jesus tell them to give her food? (Probably because she is nearly a teenager!)

**“Jesus, not even death can stop you. Help me trust you in my darkest, most difficult times. Take my hand and raise me up.”  
What else do you want to pray?**

PERSONAL PRAYER TIME

Story

08

# A Widow & Her Two Cents





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**MARK 12:41-44**

Jesus sat down opposite the place where the offerings were put and watched the crowd putting their money into the temple treasury.

Many rich people threw in large amounts. But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a few cents.

Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, “Truly I tell you, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything — all she had to live on.”

## **Look**

- The people in the story are bringing offerings to the temple.
- A widow had almost no standing in that culture. She was completely dependent on her children.
- Her offering amounted to a small fraction of a day's wage for a laborer.
- We get the expression “Put in your two-cents' worth” from this story.

## **Ask & Reflect**

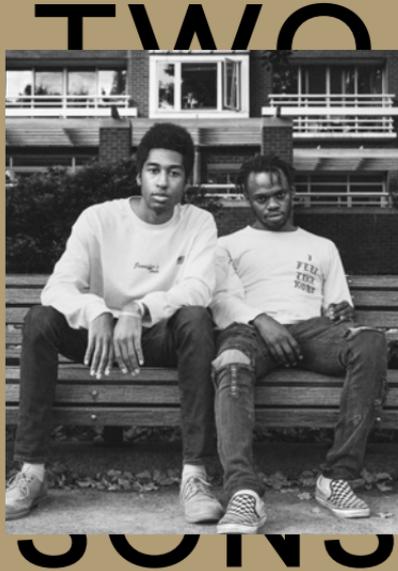
- What do you think the wealthy people thought of the widow and of her offering?
- Why did Jesus commend her?
- What good qualities did she show?
- Do you ever feel like you have nothing to give?
- Given this story, what do you think Jesus would say to you?

**“Jesus, I know that I do not have much to give to you or to others. I thank you that you do not worry about the amount I give. Help me give all that I have and all that I am.”**

PERSONAL PRAYER TIME

Stories

10 - 11



Two Sons

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**MARK 10:13-16**

Jesus continued: "There was a man who had two sons. The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So he divided his property between them.

"Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

"When he came to his senses, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and

against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.' So he got up and went to his father.

"But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.

"The son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.'

"But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate.

"But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate.

“Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on. ‘Your brother has come,’ he replied, ‘and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.’

“The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. But he answered his father, ‘Look! All these years I’ve been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!’

“‘My son,’ the father said, ‘you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’”

**THERE ARE TWO SONS & TWO STORIES HERE —**

Story 10 — The Rebellious Son

Story 11 — The Respectable Son

## **Look**

– The disciples are the people Jesus chose to be his closest followers. He was teaching and training them for his work.

– They thought he was too busy to welcome the children.

– Jesus was indignant because his disciples did not understand that he valued children and welcomed people who were not important.

– Children are enthusiastic, trusting, loving, and fun. They have nothing to give but themselves. Jesus taught that we should approach him like children.

## **Ask & Reflect**

– What do you think the disciples were thinking when they turned away the children?

– How did the parents feel?

– Do you feel turned away or welcomed by Jesus?

– What does it mean to receive the kingdom of God like a little child?

**“Jesus, thank you that you welcome even those who bring nothing. Help me come to you like a little child, and to bring myself with joy and enthusiasm.”**

PERSONAL PRAYER TIME

Story

10



# The Rebellious Son



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**LUKE 15:11-24**

Jesus continued: "There was a man who had two sons. The younger one said to his father, 'Father, give me my share of the estate.' So he divided his property between them. "Not long after that, the younger son got together all he had, set off for a distant country and there squandered his wealth in wild living. After he had spent everything, there was a severe famine in that whole country, and he began to be in need. So he went and hired himself out to a citizen of that country, who sent him to his fields to feed pigs. He longed to fill his stomach with the pods that the pigs were eating, but no one gave him anything.

“When he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.’ So he got up and went to his father. “But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him. “The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ “But the father said to his servants, ‘Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let’s have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ So they began to celebrate.



## **Look**

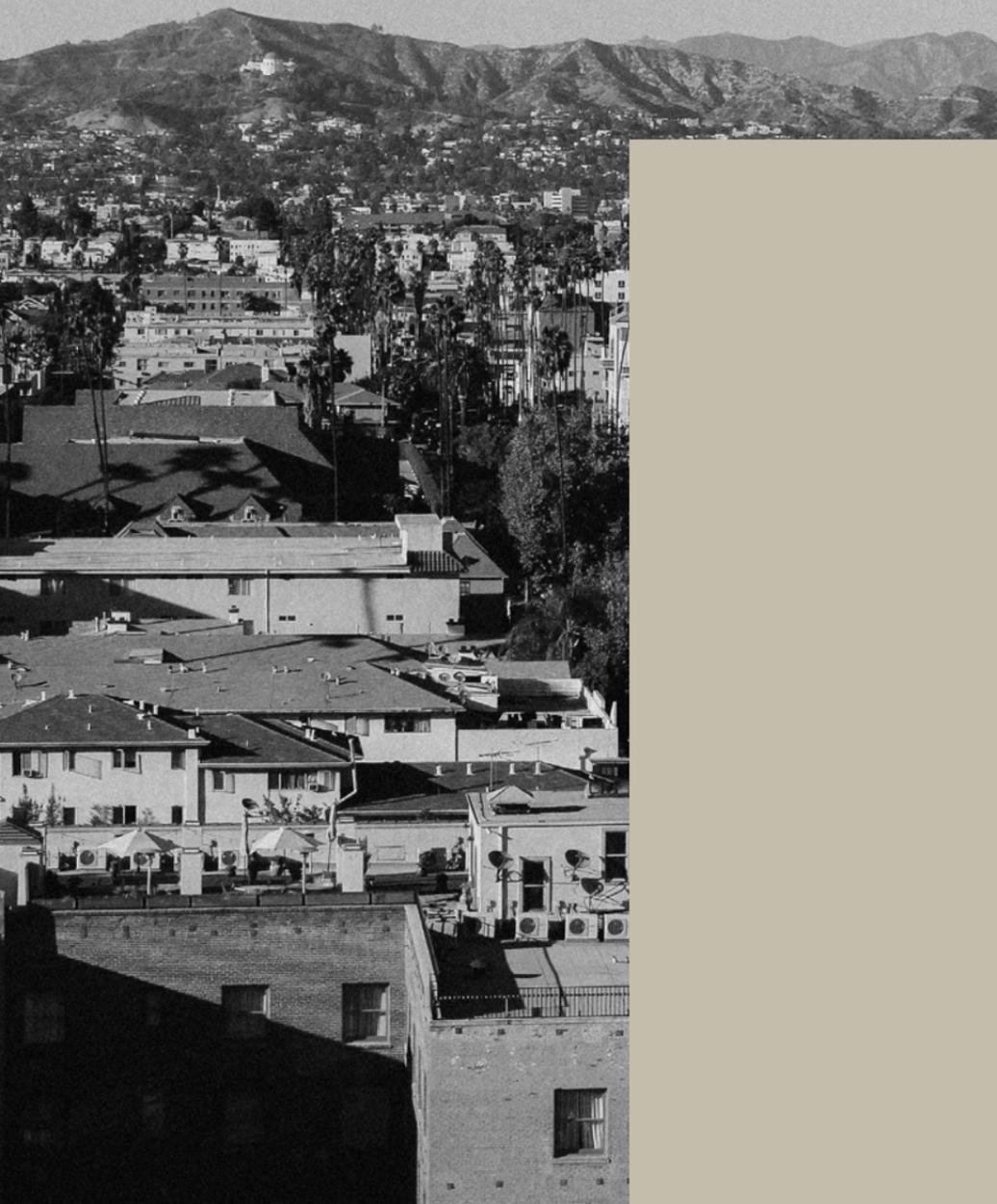
- This son did not want to wait until his father died to get his inheritance. This is one of many ways that this son was disrespectful of the father.
- When he came to his senses, he resolved to be a servant rather than a son.
- The son had a strategy to earn his way back into his father's house.
- Notice that the father would not accept his strategy.

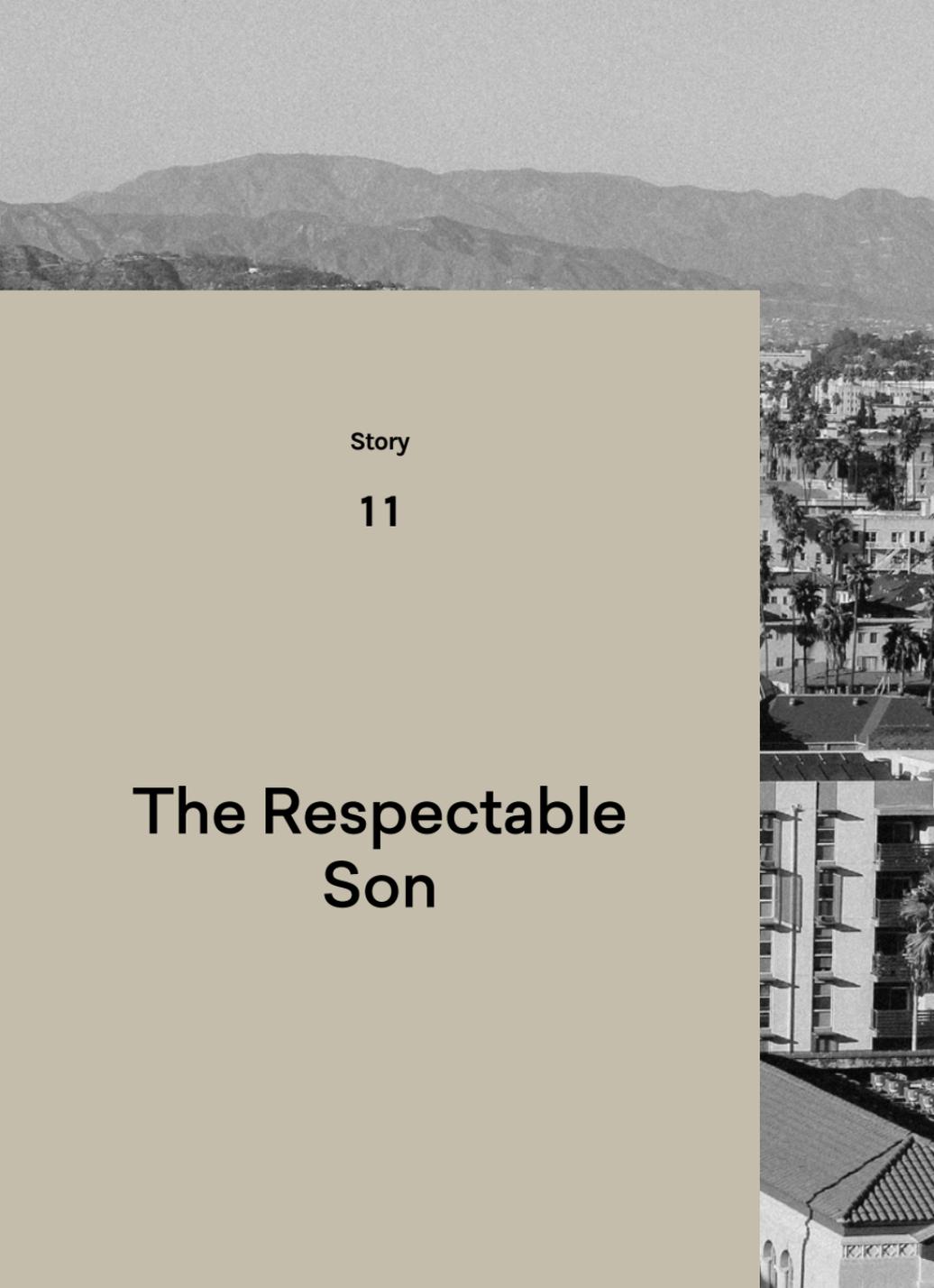
## **Ask & Reflect**

- “While he was still a long way off, his father saw him.” The father felt compassion, ran to the son, threw his arms around him and kissed him. What do these things tell you about God's love for you?
- Can you imagine God running to you like that? Why or why not?
- The son wanted to be treated as a servant, but the father treated him as a loved son. Is it hard to think of God treating you as a loved son?

**“Jesus, thank you that you are full of love and compassion. You are quick to forgive and to welcome me with open arms. Help me not be afraid to run to you.”**

PERSONAL PRAYER TIME





Story

11

# The Respectable Son

“Meanwhile, the older son was in the field. When he came near the house, he heard music and dancing. So he called one of the servants and asked him what was going on.

‘Your brother has come,’ he replied, ‘and your father has killed the fattened calf because he has him back safe and sound.’

“The older brother became angry and refused to go in. So his father went out and pleaded with him. But he answered his father, ‘Look! All these years I’ve been slaving for you and never disobeyed your orders. Yet you



never gave me even a young goat so I could celebrate with my friends. But when this son of yours who has squandered your property with prostitutes comes home, you kill the fattened calf for him!

“‘My son,’ the father said, ‘you are always with me, and everything I have is yours. But we had to celebrate and be glad, because this brother of yours was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’”



## **Look**

- The older son had spent all his life working for the father.
- Notice that he did not want to welcome his brother.
- He thought the other son deserved to be an outcast forever.
- He was angrier at his brother for insulting and hurting the father than his father was.

## **Ask & Reflect**

- The father forgave the younger son quickly but the older son could not. When do you find it hard to forgive others?
- When you see that God is quick to forgive, does it help you forgive?
- The father said, “We had to celebrate...” Think hard about why the father wanted to celebrate. Can you imagine God celebrating over you?
- This son tried to do everything right but he had deep feelings of envy and pride. Do you see these things in your heart?
- The story ends without us knowing how the oldest son responded. Do you think he put his anger aside and entered into the celebration?

**“Jesus, don’t let me resist your love and compassion for people who need it. Help me be as quick to forgive and welcome others as you are.”**

PERSONAL PRAYER TIME

Story

12



# Jesus Invites Us



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**MATTHEW 11:28-30**

“Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.”



## **Look**

- These are words that Jesus spoke to the crowds.
- A yoke is a harness that is put on oxen to link two together so they can pull a plow or cart.
- Jesus extends this invitation to all who are weary and burdened.
- Jesus promises rest for our souls.

## **Ask & Reflect**

- What do you think “rest for your souls” would be like?
- Describe how you are weary and how you are burdened.
- Notice what Jesus tells us to do: Come to him, take his yoke, learn from him. What do you think each of these would mean for you?
- Besides Jesus, where else do you go to release your burdens?
- Do think Jesus can really give you rest?

**“Jesus, I am weary; I am burdened by many things. Right now, I want to come to you and learn from you. Please take my burdens and give me rest for my soul.”**

PERSONAL PRAYER TIME

Story

13



Jesus Calms The Sea

That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side." Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him.

A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?"

He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.

He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?"

They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

## **Look**

- Some of the disciples had been professional fishermen. They knew the Sea of Galilee and the kinds of storms that were common.
- Notice that while the disciples panicked, Jesus slept.
- First the disciples were afraid of the storm. Then they were terrified of Jesus.
- They saw clearly that Jesus was not an ordinary man.

## **Ask & Reflect**

- What does it say about Jesus that the winds and waves obey his word?
- Imagine you were in the boat. How would you react when you saw Jesus tame a fierce storm with just a word?
- Throughout his life, Jesus showed his power over sickness, over death, over evil spirits, and over natural forces. Are these stories hard for you to believe?
- Although this is a story about a real storm, it is also a picture of how Jesus can calm the storms in your life. Is it hard for you to trust him in your storms? Why or why not?

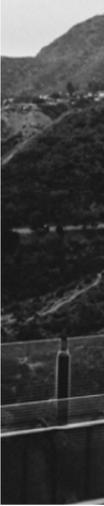
**“Jesus, you calmed a  
raging storm on the sea.  
Help me trust you to calm  
the storms in my life.”**

PERSONAL PRAYER TIME

Story

14

# How God's Kingdom Grows





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**MATTHEW 13:31-33**

He told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed, which a man took and planted in his field.

Though it is the smallest of all seeds, yet when it grows, it is the largest of garden plants and becomes a tree, so that the birds come and perch in its branches.”

He told them still another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like yeast that a woman took and mixed into about sixty pounds of flour until it worked all through the dough.”

## **Look**

- The kingdom of heaven (sometimes called the “kingdom of God”) is God’s rule in the hearts of his people.
- The kingdom grows as God’s people live out God’s will and influence people around them to follow Jesus.
- The seed and the yeast have two things in common. They start small, and they grow throughout the garden or the flower.
- We don’t often see the growth of the seed or the yeast as it is happening, but we see the effects in the long run.

## **Ask & Reflect**

- A parable is a story with a point. What is the point of each of these stories?
- What would it look like if God’s rule were spreading where you live? Do you see hints of the rule of God?
- Sometimes it looks like God is not working in the world. What do these stories tell you about how God works?
- How can you continue to trust God when his work is hard to see?

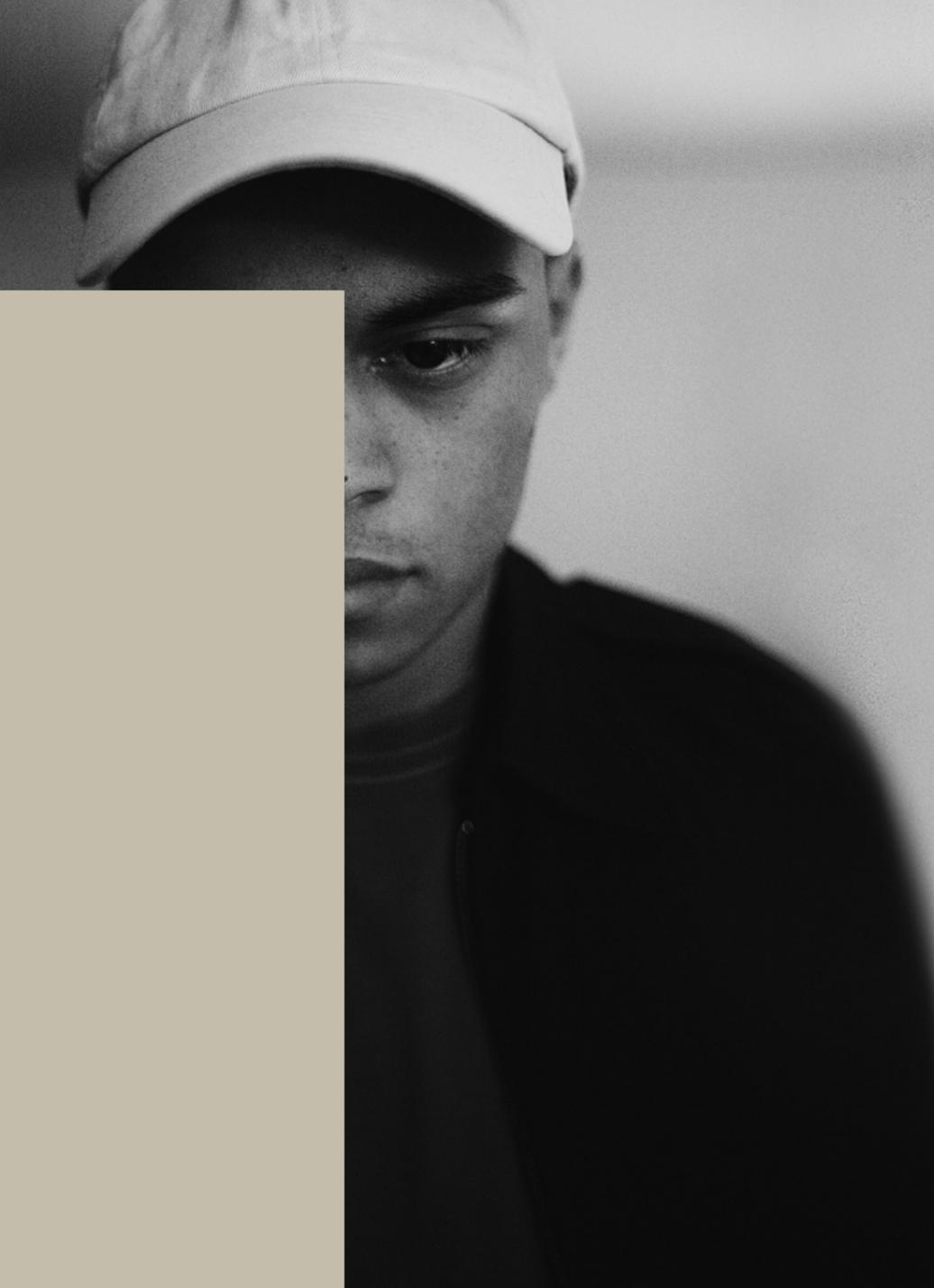
**“Jesus, I know you want your kingdom to spread through the world. Help me trust you and obey you and to be part of your work where I live.”**

PERSONAL PRAYER TIME

Story

15

# Do Not Be Anxious



“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they?

Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?

“And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was



dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you — you of little faith?

So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.



## **Look**

- Solomon was one of the richest kings in Israel's history. The pagans are people who do not know God.
- Look for the questions Jesus asks. Each teaches a principle about God's care for us:

1. Life is more than food and clothes.
2. You are much more valuable to God than the birds.
3. You cannot add to your life by worry.
4. God will much more clothe you.

- One big principle in this passage is that worry is the opposite of trust.

## **Ask & Reflect**

- Which of the four principles listed above is hardest for you to believe?
- Try to think throughout today that you are deeply valuable to God. How might that change your day?
- What does it mean to seek first God's kingdom and righteousness?

**“Jesus, it is so easy for me to worry. Help me sense your deep care for me. Help me trust you in the details of my life and to turn my worries over to you.”**

PERSONAL PRAYER TIME

Story

16

# The Taxman





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**LUKE 15:27-35**

After this, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector by the name of Levi sitting at his tax booth. “Follow me,” Jesus said to him, and Levi got up, left everything and followed him.

Then Levi held a great banquet for Jesus at his house, and a large crowd of tax collectors and others were eating with them. But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law who belonged to their sect complained to his disciples, “Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?”

Jesus answered them, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the

righteous, but sinners to repentance.”

They said to him, “John’s disciples often fast and pray, and so do the disciples of the Pharisees, but yours go on eating and drinking.”

Jesus answered, “Can you make the friends of the bridegroom fast while he is with them? But the time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them; in those days they will fast.”



## **Look**

- Levi was a Jewish taxman. Many people thought he was a traitor because he collected taxes for Rome. This explains why the Pharisees (one group of powerful religious leaders) did not think that Jesus should eat with him or people like him.
- When Jesus told Levi to follow him, Levi left everything right away.
- Jesus uses two ideas- that of the doctor and that of the wedding. The doctor goes to those who are sick and the guests at a wedding celebrate and rejoice.

## **Ask & Reflect**

- The Pharisees thought they were “healthy.” Do you think they were?
- After he begins to follow Jesus, Levi throws a big party. Why do you think he did so?
- The Pharisees would eat only with “respectable” people. Jesus welcomed everyone. Can you imagine Jesus welcoming you?
- What would it be like to be with Jesus at a party?
- Do you think he would be willing to show up at one of your parties?

**“Jesus, I am weary; I am burdened by many things. Right now, I want to come to you and learn from you. Please take my burdens and give me rest for my soul.”**

PERSONAL PRAYER TIME

Story

17



How To Pray

“And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

“This, then, is how you should pray:

“Our Father in heaven,  
hallowed be your name,  
your kingdom come,  
your will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us today our daily bread.  
And forgive us our debts,  
as we also have forgiven our debtors.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from the evil one.’

“For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.”

## **Look**

- Hypocrites like people to notice them when they pray. They seek the approval of other people rather than God.
- People who do not know God (pagans) think of God as a slot machine. If you pull the lever correctly you will get what you want.
- Notice the simplicity of the prayer. These are not magic words. They express who God is and who we are.
- The prayer expresses first a desire to follow God. Next, it expresses our needs.
- Notice the importance of our forgiving each other.

## **Ask & Reflect**

- Think about each line in the prayer. Why should we pray in each of these ways specifically?
- When we ask for daily bread and for forgiveness and for protection, we are admitting that we are hungry, that we are sinful, that we are weak. Why do you think it is important for you to admit these things to God?
- Try to pray this prayer slowly each day for a week. Then pray it backwards, line by line. Begin with your need for protection and end with praising God for his great name.

**“Jesus, help me to pray  
the way you want me to.”**

PRAY THE PRAYER IN THIS PASSAGE EVERY DAY THIS WEEK

Story

**18**

# The Lost Sheep





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**LUKE 15:1-7**

Now the tax collectors and sinners were all gathering around to hear Jesus. But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law muttered, “This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.”

Then Jesus told them this parable: “Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn’t he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, ‘Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.’”

I tell you that in the same way there will be more rejoicing in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who do not need to repent.”

“When he came to his senses, he said, ‘How many of my father’s hired servants have food to spare, and here I am starving to death! I will set out and go back to my father and say to him: Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.’ So he got up and went to his father. “But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him. “The son said to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy to be called your son.’ “But the father said to his servants, ‘Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let’s have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.’ So they began to celebrate.



## **Look**

- Sheep are not very smart. They get lost easily. They are weak and open to danger.
- Notice that the Pharisees and teachers of the law thought that Jesus should not spend time with outcasts. This is a common conflict that Jesus encountered.
- Jesus' story about one sheep that wanders away speaks of the great value of a single person who comes to God.
- Notice the great joy when even one lost sheep is found!

## **Ask & Reflect**

- Have you ever had the same attitude that the Pharisees had?
- Put yourself in the place of the lost sheep. If the shepherd does not come and find you, you will remain lost. What does this tell us about our relationship to Jesus?
- Do you picture God more like the Pharisees in this story or more like the shepherd who searches diligently for the lost ones?
- How do you feel when you picture God rejoicing over you?

**“Jesus, I know I am like that lost sheep. Unless you find me, I am lost. Thank you that you never give up on me.”**

PERSONAL PRAYER TIME





Story

**19**

# Greater Love

When one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, he went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. A woman in that town who lived a sinful life learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house, so she came there with an alabaster jar of perfume. As she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them. When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is—that she is a sinner." Jesus answered him, "Simon, I have something to tell you." "Tell me, teacher," he said.



“Two people owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he forgave the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?” Simon replied, “I suppose the one who had the bigger debt forgiven.” “You have judged correctly,” Jesus said. Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon, “Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven— as her great love has shown. But whoever has been forgiven little loves little.” Then Jesus said to her, “Your sins are forgiven.” The other guests began to say among themselves, “Who is this who even forgives sins?” Jesus said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you; go in peace.”



## **Look**

— It was the custom to show honor to guests by greeting them with a kiss and by providing water to wash the road-dust off their feet. Simon did neither of these things, but the woman was extravagant in her display of love and honor.

— In the story of the two people who owed money, one owed fifty days' wages for a laborer, and the other owed five hundred days' wages. Both were large debts.

## **Ask & Reflect**

— Everyone needs the forgiveness that only Jesus brings. Many people are not aware that they have this need. How have you become aware of your need for forgiveness?

— Grasping that we are forgiven brings an overflow of gratitude and love and a change in our lives. Have you experienced this kind of gratitude? How have you seen your life change because of the forgiveness Jesus brings?

— Jesus told the woman to “Go in peace.” How does Jesus help you have peace?

**“Jesus, my need for your forgiveness is big, but your love is even bigger. Thank you for your love and mercy to me. Help me express my love and gratitude and to experience your peace!”**

PERSONAL PRAYER TIME

Stories

20-22

# Jesus Raises Lazarus





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**JOHN 11:7-44**

On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. Now Bethany was less than two miles from Jerusalem, and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother. When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home. “Lord,” Martha said to Jesus, “if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask.” Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.” Martha answered, “I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day.”

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?" "Yes, Lord," she replied, "I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world."

After she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary aside. "The Teacher is here," she said, "and is asking for you." When Mary heard this, she got up quickly and went to him. Now Jesus had not yet entered



the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. When the Jews who had been with Mary in the house, comforting her, noticed how quickly she got up and went out, they followed her, supposing she was going to the tomb to mourn there.

When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. "Where have you laid him?" he asked. "Come and see, Lord," they replied.

"But the father said to his servants, 'Quick! Bring the best robe and put it on him. Put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Bring the fattened calf and kill it. Let's have a feast and celebrate. For this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' So they began to celebrate.

Story

20



Jesus And Lazarus

Jesus, once more deeply moved, came to the tomb. It was a cave with a stone laid across the entrance.

“Take away the stone,” he said. “But, Lord,” said Martha, the sister of the dead man, “by this time there is a bad odor, for he has been there four days.” Then Jesus said, “Did I not tell you that if you believe, you will see the glory of God?”

So they took away the stone. Then Jesus looked up and said, “Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that you always hear me, but I said this for the benefit of the people standing here, that they may believe that you sent me.”

When he had said this, Jesus called in a loud voice, “Lazarus, come out!” The dead man came out, his hands and feet wrapped with strips of linen, and a cloth around his face. Jesus said to them, “Take off the grave clothes and let him go.”

## **Look**

— This part of the story is the climax of the chapter. Jesus loves Lazarus and is deeply moved that he is dead.

— Notice that, when Jesus asks them to take away the stone, Martha warns him about the odor of the decaying body.

— Jesus prays with full confidence. He knows God will allow him to raise Lazarus.

— Notice that Jesus has authority even over the dead!

— Lazarus is a picture of all of us. We are dead spiritually and only Jesus can call us to life.

## **Ask & Reflect**

— Who is Jesus that he can call Lazarus out of the grave?

— When you read this story, do you believe that God sent Jesus? (notice that he says this in his prayer)

— Do you feel like you can be confident when you pray? Why or why not?

— Do you feel like Jesus can call you out of your death or out of your deepest troubles?

**“Jesus, only you can call me out of the death in which I live. Thank you that you love me and long for me to respond to your call.”**

PERSONAL PRAYER TIME

Story

21

# Jesus And Mary



After she had said this, she went back and called her sister Mary aside. "The Teacher is here," she said, "and is asking for you." When Mary heard this, she got up quickly and went to him. Now Jesus had not yet entered the village, but was still at the place where Martha had met him. When the Jews who had been with Mary in the house, comforting her, noticed how quickly she got up and went out, they followed her, supposing she was going to the tomb to mourn there.

When Mary reached the place where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come along with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. "Where have you laid him?" he asked. "Come and see, Lord," they replied.

Jesus wept.

Then the Jews said, "See how he loved him!" But some of them said, "Could not he who opened the eyes of the blind man have kept this man from dying?"



## **Look**

— Mary is one of Lazarus' sisters. She is deeply grieved at his death. Notice she did not understand why Jesus had not come earlier to save Lazarus from death.

— Jesus was “deeply moved in spirit and troubled.” He wept. Jesus knew he was going to bring Lazarus from the dead. Why did he weep? I think he wept because death is evil. We were never meant to die. Death is a result of human sin. When we turned away from God, we turned into death.

— The crowd who was with Mary thought that Jesus could have healed him. They had no idea that Jesus could or would raise Lazarus from death.

## **Ask & Reflect**

— Think about Jesus weeping at death and at the sorrows of his friends. How does this image make you feel? Do you often think of God feeling troubled about our pains and sorrows?

— What else do you think makes God sad?

— The crowd said, “See how Jesus loved him.” Think for a minute. Can you see how Jesus loves you? What helps you see his love?

**“Jesus, your love moves you to sorrow at our suffering. Help me know the depth of your love for me and help me be moved to sorrow at the suffering of others.”**

PERSONAL PRAYER TIME



Story

**22**

# Jesus And Martha

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**JOHN 11:17-27**

On his arrival, Jesus found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. Now Bethany was less than two miles from Jerusalem, and many Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them in the loss of their brother.

When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went out to meet him, but Mary stayed at home. "Lord," Martha said to Jesus, "if you had been here, my brother would not have died. But I know that even now God will give you whatever you ask."



Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise again." Martha answered, "I know he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day."

Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

"Yes, Lord," she replied, "I believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, who is to come into the world."

We wanted to do these stories backwards because we wanted to focus on Jesus' claims that he is the resurrection and the life.



## **Look**

— Notice Jesus' says those who believe will live even if they die. He means that our bodies may die, but we will live forever.

— All we need to do is to believe in him. To believe in Jesus is more than having good opinions about him. It is to trust in him or to commit our lives to him.

— Jesus is the resurrection because he died on the cross for us and was raised again. He took the penalty of our sin and rebellion- our walking away from God- so we could have forgiveness and eternal life.

— There is no resurrection apart from Jesus.

## **Ask & Reflect**

— Think hard about Jesus' statement, "I am the Resurrection and the Life." What did he mean?

— Jesus asked Martha, "Do you believe this?" If Jesus asked you the same question, what would you say? Be honest with yourself. Be honest with him.

— Can you commit your life to him?

**“Jesus, I know you are the resurrection and the life. I know you died for me so I can live. I trust you now to forgive me and to make me whole. I give you my life, once and for all.”**

PERSONAL PRAYER TIME

