



2021 BIBLE DISCOVERY GUIDE

OCTOBER

MARK — ACTS

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25 TISHREI, 5782 – 25 CHESHVAN, 5782

Jesus Christ

After God created the heavens and the earth, He put the plants, animals, and two people in place. He gave those people choice so that they were free. They could choose to follow God or choose not to. Unfortunately, we all know how that went: The humans choose not to follow God and that violation brought about the worst day in history. We have lived with sin ever since. It surrounds us, destroys our ability, and steals our life.

But also in Genesis 3, God speaks profoundly to the trickster, satan. He tells him, “And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel” – **GENESIS 3:15**.

This is the original prophecy of Jesus Christ! God promised in front of all humanity to bring a Messiah to earth, take the cost of sin, and offer humanity a chance of recovery. This transformation process begins with repentance of sin. The cost of sin must be paid for, and it is through Jesus Christ. As a result of His

assignment on earth, Christ made a way for us to have eternal life. His life and death are widely recognized today as historical, but it is His resurrection from the dead that is only agreed on by a few of us.

Through the study of the Bible and the recovery of ancient culture, we continue to discover the intricacies of how Jesus acted and reacted here on earth. This is fascinating, since He is fully man and fully God. How does God live on earth in the midst of human sin? How does the LORD navigate the reason of man, motivated by evil and turn it to a demonstration of God’s Kingdom? The Heavenly Kingdom is at hand, and the choice is for everyone to make: Jesus Christ, is He LORD or not?



Rod Hembree, Th.D, DE.



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How to use this Guide

Make the most of your devotional time with our Guide to the Bible in a year. Each Guide provides valuable context and theological insight to help strengthen your faith and dig deeper into the richness of God's Word every day.

The following three tips will help you make the most of your daily Bible reading and Guide:



SPOTLIGHT ON...

In every Guide, you'll find a section with specific highlights from the perspectives of history, apologetics, theology, and more. These viewpoints provide a holistic context from which to view the month's Bible reading, giving us a greater understanding of the Word, and equipping us to grasp the impact of the Bible in these important fields.



DAILY READING

The readings are in traditional order, with a date corresponding to the Hebrew calendar. Each reading consists of a daily insight and a focus on three major takeaways from the day's Bible passage. Challenge yourself to meditate on the *Discovering The Truth* and *Today's Prayer* sections as you go about your day.



WATCH THE DAILY SHOW

Catch our companion TV series for even more valuable insight and theological discussion, hosted daily by the Hembree family. Join Rod, Janice, Ryan and Corie in this thirty-minute devotional show that will change the way you see and read the Bible. Visit **BibleDiscoveryTv.com** to watch our show online or to find a TV channel in your area.

Caesar Augustus

by Corie Bobecko



In March of 44BC, Julius Caesar's great-nephew and adopted heir, the eighteen-year-old Octavian, began his journey to absolute power under a new name: Augustus. The name Augustus signified its owner as something greater than human, and yet for political safety in Rome, still something less than a Roman god.

THE NAME AUGUSTUS SIGNIFIED ITS OWNER AS SOMETHING GREATER THAN HUMAN...

Augustus wisely chose how to push boundaries. He chose not to promote himself as "emperor" but instead he marketed himself as the truest Roman by calling himself the Princeps, the first citizen. As Princeps, Augustus effectively gained control over the political sphere of Rome, the military, and Rome's religious life. Though he kept the appearance of the Roman Republic, this trifecta of power unrivalled in leaders of the past, has caused historians to see through his thin veil of Princeps, labelling him instead the first, and possibly, most powerful Emperor of Rome.

After the assassination of his great-uncle Julius Caesar, Augustus recognized a great opportunity, calling on the loyalty

of military leaders to his uncle, and the republic's tenuous hold on peace, Augustus' first task was to use and then defeat a major threat to his future power: Mark Antony and Cleopatra VII of Egypt.

Once they were dealt with, Augustus returned to Rome and, at least in show, respected the Republic by relinquishing his power back into the Senate's hand. It was a show however, and by it Augustus was actually able to garner more power! He kept the consulship of Rome, which was normally a yearly elected position, and he was given control over the provinces with the largest armies.

Augustus ensured military loyalty by creating a large retirement fund and colonies for them, and in a controversial move he created the Praetorian Guard, an elite personal army to protect the Princeps. Eventually, Augustus was also able to round out his power by securing the job of high priest of Rome. He styled himself the protector of Rome's religious traditions, ushering in what he called the "Pax Romana" the peace of Rome. With one man at the helm, Rome had lost its Republic and gained its first Emperor. ■

Temple Two-Timer

by Ryan Hembree



When it comes to the ministry and earthly life of Jesus Christ, the four gospel accounts record a number of the same events such as the baptism of Jesus, the feeding of the five thousand, the triumphal entry, the last supper, etc. On the other hand, there are many events which do not appear in all four gospels such as the Magi visiting from the east, the temptation of Christ in the wilderness, the wedding at Cana, and the sermon on the mount.

Certainly, one of the more high-profile acts of Jesus, which is recorded in all four gospel accounts, is the cleansing of the temple in which He drives out those who had turned God's house of prayer into a house of profit. Because Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John all make mention of this temple cleansing, many readers assume that each gospel writer is recording the same event. However, this creates a contradiction of sorts because while John places this event near the beginning of Jesus' ministry (JOHN 2), according to the Synoptic gospels it was near the end of His ministry just days before His crucifixion (MATTHEW 21; MARK 11; LUKE 19).

So how are we to resolve this discrepancy? The answer is actually remarkably simple: These are two separate events. Jesus

cleansed the temple both at the beginning of His ministry as John records and again near the end of His ministry as recorded in the Synoptics.

There are several chronological markers which confirm this conclusion. Consider John the Baptist. When Jesus cleansed the temple in John's account John the Baptist was still alive (JOHN 3:22-24). But in Matthew, Mark, and Luke's account he was clearly already dead. Another difference that sets these passages apart is in the book of John where Jesus was immediately confronted by temple officials, but Matthew, Mark, and Luke make no mention of this confrontation. Also, the Synoptics record that following the temple cleansing Jesus began to teach and heal people there, but there is no mention of this in John. Similarly, in John, Jesus fashioned a whip of cords to drive out the money changers, but the Synoptics do not mention a whip at all. Even the words Jesus spoke while cleansing the temple (while similar in message) are distinctly different (COMPARE JOHN 2:16 WITH MATTHEW 21:13; MARK 11:17; LUKE 19:46).

Thus, we come to the somewhat surprising conclusion that Jesus, on at least two occasions, cleansed the temple. ■



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MARK — ACTS



The Spirit of God

MARK 3-4

DISCOVERING THE WORD

The Spirit that hovered over the waters in Genesis 1:2 is the same Spirit fully manifest in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is God! When the LORD poured Himself into human flesh, He willfully limited Himself to flesh for a short period of 33 years (PHILIPPIANS 2:7-8). Jesus understood His human limitations were bound in flesh, but that the Spirit supersedes it. When Jesus healed people, He did so through the Holy Spirit. The evil spirits trembled in His presence. This was no ordinary man, and everyone knew it.

It's fascinating to think that Jesus spoke of the spiritual war taking place all around us (MARK 3:22-30; EPHESIANS 6:12), and to combat the enemy we must receive the Spirit of adoption: Holy Spirit (ROMANS 8:15; GALATIANS 3:26; EPHESIANS 1:5). Our spirit is made holy through the life-time sanctification of His Spirit. To reject His Spirit is to ally yourself with satan.

DISCOVERING GOD — MARK 3:7-27

— 1 —

Jesus understood His human limitations bound in flesh and made provision through the Spirit. We, too, are limited in the flesh, and must trust in God for our strength.

(v. 7-12)

— 2 —

The ministry of Jesus was not limited by human flesh. The Spirit of God supersedes the physical world and prepares us for spiritual war as His children. (v. 13-19)

— 3 —

Jesus Christ was not out of His mind but seemed so to those who had a hardened heart. When we give our lives to the LORD Jesus Christ, we receive a heart of the Spirit. (v. 20-27)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

We are limited by our flesh, but the Spirit of God is not. The LORD is the same yesterday, today, and forever! We would do well not to limit God's Spirit to our understanding. The LORD our God is *holy*.

TODAY'S PRAYER

**LORD, YOU ALONE ARE HOLY AND
YOU ALONE HAVE MADE ME HOLY,
AS I FOLLOW YOU WITH MY LIFE.**

The Spiritual Story

MARK 5-6

DISCOVERING THE WORD

As we continue reading in the Gospels, we will see this pattern of Jesus Christ travelling from one place to another, touching and healing people by His presence. Even though Jesus was bound by incarnate limitations, His presence would still heal people. And since His presence healed, it disturbed the spiritual forces of darkness. In fact, it is interesting to read how the demonic forces reacted to His presence. They recognized Jesus as the Son of God, and usually begged for mercy. It's also interesting to think that the LORD was fully in our presence here on earth, confined to a single point in space and time. And we did what the demons would not do—instead of trembling, we killed Him. His mercy is truly beyond our understanding!

DISCOVERING GOD — MARK 5:18-34

— 1 —

When our lives are saved by Jesus Christ we are excited. God calls us to let others know Who He is and what He has done for us.

(v. 18-20)

— 2 —

Jesus was followed by many people who were sick and suffering.

We are reminded that God's healing comes through the Holy Spirit, not us.

(v. 21-24)

— 3 —

Jesus heals us in our faith. Our faith in the LORD Jesus affects how we live.

(v. 25-34)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

As we follow our LORD Jesus Christ, we live knowing that we are ultimately healed and restored through Him. Our lives begin as a transformation from an attitude of self-love to a life lived to follow God: True Love. This way of thinking and believing produces a change in our character.

TODAY'S PRAYER

**LORD, LET YOUR WORD CHANGE
AND DIRECT MY ATTITUDE AS I
FOLLOW YOU.**

The Food of Our Souls

MARK 7-8

DISCOVERING THE WORD

Jesus Christ spoke about the soul of man. He knows how we are created, because He is the One who made us. His point was that it is not that which goes into our body that troubles us, in the case of food, but that which goes into our heart and soul. If music was food, what are you eating? Is it a good diet for sustaining life, or is it sweet like candy, yet rotten at its core? Is the melody set on things above or on things below: earthly and unspiritual? Do the lyrics express the things of God and the Kingdom of heaven or is it about earthbound relationships and material things? We should always pay attention to what we are feeding our soul.

DISCOVERING GOD — MARK 7:14-23

— 1 —

It's not the food we eat but what comes out of our heart that makes us unclean. We should feed our souls with good food from the Bible.

(v. 14-16)

— 2 —

Sometimes the disciples of Jesus didn't understand because they were not truly listening. We should keep our hearts and minds tuned into God and His

Word, above all else. (v. 17-19)

— 3 —

Sin begins in the heart and is played out in the body. Our soul is the most important thing we can make right with God.

(v. 20-23)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

Our soul is made right when we come to Jesus Christ. But we have the responsibility of keeping what we listen to, in our soul, right. Remember; if we keep feeding our soul rotten things, it will eventually corrupt our character (1 CORINTHIANS 15:33). Human beings are growing creatures in spirit. Let's not stunt that growth.

TODAY'S PRAYER

**HELP ME, LORD, TO GROW THE
RIGHT THINGS IN MY SOUL.**

The Boy Who Was Healed

MARK 9-10

DISCOVERING THE WORD

Many of us live with ailments, disease, impairments, and health issues our whole lives. Often they become so normal that we just accept them as part of who we are. But in God's original design, the first man and woman were created "very good" with no physical problems. If we have accepted Jesus Christ as LORD of our life, then the sin and sickness in this world, and in our bodies, is confined to this world—it is not forever. Some things may last for our lifetime here on earth, but in heaven and the future world to come, we will be restored to our original, glorified state. Sickness is not something that we have to accept forever, it is a weakness that comes to all of us from the result of our sin nature. Jesus Christ knew this but His disciples did not. Today, we have many medical options to choose from. But we would be wise not to put our faith in the medical system. Rather, we should put our faith in God who supersedes over it all. Our God is a miracle-working God.

DISCOVERING GOD — MARK 9:14-27

— 1 —

When Jesus arrived, the arguing stopped and the people ran to greet Him. The presence of God changes everything. He brings salvation and healing. (v. 14-15)

— 2 —

There is absolutely no healing without God's intervention. Doctors learn how God has created the body, and they heal us based on God's design and supervision. (v. 16-18)

— 3 —

The boy's father was desperate for God to do something. We must be honest with God about our belief or lack thereof. He will help us. (v. 19-27)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

We are people bound by sin. There is good news, however: Jesus Christ frees our spirit from sin when we repent! From then on, we must learn to live a life with God, for God. The sanctification process is learning how to follow the LORD Jesus Christ. He is the way, and the truth, and the life.

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, I WANT TO TRUST YOU WITH ALL MY LIFE. HELP MY FAITH TO GROW EACH DAY.

The Fruit of the Fig Tree

MARK 11-12

DISCOVERING THE WORD

In our reading today, there is a fascinating encounter between Jesus, the Creator of all things, and a fig tree. Jesus, seeing a fig tree in the distance and being hungry, approaches the tree to see if there is any fruit among the leaves. Finding no fruit, Jesus openly curses the tree, as His disciples listened in. The interesting part about fruit is that God speaks to us through Paul the apostle and tells us the fruit of the Spirit, which is not to be confused with the gifts of the Spirit: “But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control. Against such there is no law.” (GALATIANS 5:22-23). The LORD teaches us about bearing fruit for anyone who is hungry. The Church of the LORD Jesus Christ is like a seed that grows into a tree and bears good fruit. As the Church, we should always be growing the fruit from the Holy Spirit, ready for anyone who is hungry.

DISCOVERING GOD — MARK 11:12-19

— 1 —

Jesus spoke against the tree because it had no fruit. We must always keep our hearts turned toward God, growing His fruit in our lives.

(v. 12-14)

— 2 —

Jesus rebelled against buying and selling for profit in the temple. We should keep our hearts honest and right before the LORD, seeking Him more than riches. (v. 15-16)

— 3 —

Jesus rightly calls out and teaches against the attitude toward God’s temple. Many seek power and position in the Church, not rightness with God.

(v. 17-19)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

The attitudes of the Pharisees and Sadducees are still around today. And, God is continuing to make right what was, and has been, consistently wrong in the Church. Remember that buildings and institutions are not the Church, God’s people are. No matter where God’s people meet, they are the Church of the LORD Jesus Christ.

TODAY’S PRAYER

**LORD, HELP ME TO KEEP MYSELF
RIGHT WITH YOU. YOU ARE THE
ONE I SERVE.**

Keep Watch!

MARK 13-14

DISCOVERING THE WORD

The end of time is a controversial idea. Many do not believe in an end of time in our lifetime because they do not believe the Biblical account of the beginning of time. But if time itself had a beginning, logic would dictate that it will have an end. The Word of God tells us that time itself has a beginning and has an end. The beginning appears in Genesis 1. Time, as we know it, started with God's creation of the universe and the earth. The end is recorded in Revelation. But when will it end? Even though an event is recorded, Jesus says no one knows the day or the hour when the end will come, except the Father. Not even Jesus knows! If someone claims to know when the end will come, they are claiming to know more than Jesus did. This is telling. A new revelation such as this contradicts Jesus's own words.

DISCOVERING GOD — MARK 13:28-37

— 1 —

The end of time is near when we see changes happen unlike anything we've seen before. Daniel 12 says that knowledge will dramatically increase in those days. (v. 28-29)

— 2 —

The generation alive to see the signs Jesus predicted will not pass away until all things are fulfilled. God's Word stands eternal. We will all bow to Jesus Christ! (v.30-31)

— 3 —

Jesus commands His people to watch and be ready for the beginning of the end. Watch and pray; seek the LORD always; and tell others the good news of Jesus Christ! (v.32-37)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

Today things are changing dramatically. The first reason is Israel; the chosen people of God are sharing the planet with the Church of Jesus Christ for the first time since AD 70. So, keep watch of Israel, God has set her in place for this time for a reason — a time of unprecedented knowledge.

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, COME BACK QUICKLY! BUT HELP ME TO TELL PEOPLE WHO YOU ARE AND WHAT YOU DID FOR ME.

The Great Commission

MARK 15-16

DISCOVERING THE WORD

The gospel is the good news of Jesus Christ. The good news is that the cost for sin was paid for in full by our LORD Jesus Christ through His death, resurrection, and ascension. We can be reconciled to God and be made right before Him when we accept Jesus Christ and follow Him as the LORD of our life. This is integral to the great commission. We are told first by Jesus to share the gospel message and share how our lives have been changed by Him. Second, we are commanded to make disciples through baptism, teaching, and obedience (MATTHEW 28:19-20). In the last 30 years, the idea of sharing the good news of Christ seems to have been looked down on because many in the West think that humanity is becoming better with time. Some believe that the less we acknowledge God, the better we are. But that idea is simply not true! A quick look at the global statistics today reveals we are not better, humanity is still drenched in its own evil. The gospel and great commission are the truth!

DISCOVERING GOD — MARK 16:12-20

— 1 —

After hearing from two disciples who saw the risen Jesus, the others still did not believe. What will we do with the evidence of Jesus and His Word – are we for or against Him? (v. 12-13)

— 2 —

Jesus challenged His disciples for not believing. We should keep our hearts and minds seeking after God and trusting in His Word. (v. 14)

— 3 —

Jesus commissioned His disciples to go into the world and speak about Him to others. As they shared the gospel, signs followed their work. (v. 15-20)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

Jesus gives each of us who serve and follow Him the commission to go into the world and preach the gospel to every living creature (MARK 16:15). The word commission means the act of committing or entrusting a person, group, etc., with supervisory power or authority. Let's remember that this commission is not a suggestion, but a command from the LORD.

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, HELP ME TO OBEY YOUR COMMANDS AS SUCH, AND NOT AS MERE SUGGESTIONS.

The Greatest Message

LUKE 1-2

DISCOVERING THE WORD

The word *angel* means messenger of God, and the name *Gabriel* means strong one of God. Gabriel was sent as God's messenger to a young virgin named Mary to foretell the divine birth of the coming Christ. This pregnancy would come as a result of the Holy Spirit descending upon Mary. This was the greatest message ever announced by anyone, anywhere: God Himself pouring His Spirit into flesh and Jesus emerging into the human race; God's holy blood mixed with unholy flesh. Only God could do this miraculous event! Luke was likely a Gentile; he wrote the Gospel of Luke and the book of Acts. The apostle Paul identified Luke as a travel companion and as a medical doctor (COL. 4:14). A lot has been written about how Luke focused on including accounts of Gentiles and societal outcasts. While most Scripture focuses on the Jewish people, Luke focused on the plan of God for all humanity, and so he wrote towards both a Jewish and a Gentile audience.

DISCOVERING GOD — LUKE 1:26-38

— 1 —

Mary was highly favored by God. God had a special role for Mary in His plan. Each of us are called according to God's plan for our lives.

(v. 26-28)

— 2 —

Mary learns that Jesus will be exalted and unique above all.
We should share the good news of Jesus Christ!

(v. 29-33)

— 3 —

With God, NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE! We should put our trust and hope in God and His Word.

(v. 34-38)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

The impossible is not a problem for the great God of the Bible. There is nothing that is, or will be, impossible with God! As Christians, we need to think differently as we strive to live for God. We need to become aware of the patterns of our thoughts and apply Scriptural truth to them. As we strive to follow Him, the Holy Spirit will work in us for our good.

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, HELP ME TO HAVE THE MIND OF CHRIST THROUGH THE HOLY SPIRIT. I WANT TO THINK YOUR WAY INSTEAD OF THE EARTHLY WAY.

Legacy of Jesus

LUKE 3-4

DISCOVERING THE WORD

It is all too easy for critics of Jesus Christ to call Him an accident. However, the Bible claims that Jesus is the planned and only begotten Son of God, sent to earth to seek and save the lost. Jesus' great love for God and us emboldened Him to submit to death to pay the cost of sin. Death could not hold Him, and neither can our assumptions about Him. He rose from the dead to give the gift of eternal life to all those who choose to follow Him. Jesus' human lineage is recorded in Luke, chapter 3. Often, we look to our own lineages and try to point out skills and weaknesses that we have acquired from our forefathers. Luke's genealogy of Jesus traces all the way back to the first man, Adam. Rather than continuing Adam's legacy of sin, Christ overcame this weakness. Rather than perpetual death, Jesus passes on eternal life. Now, all of humanity has a choice: Who will we follow? The sin of Adam or the life of Christ?

DISCOVERING GOD — LUKE 3:21-38

— 1 —

The Holy Spirit activated the ministry of Jesus Christ. Fully God and fully man, Jesus was destined to pay the cost for sin and offer us eternal life.

(v. 21-22)

— 2 —

Jesus began His ministry on earth at about 30 years of age. We are activated as soon as we are saved or "born again". How are we doing?

(v. 23)

— 3 —

The genealogy of Jesus is tied to a Jewish lineage. God chose the Jewish people to bring Messiah to the world.

(v. 24-38)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

God chose the Jewish people to bring us most of His Word and to bring us the Messiah. God's work through history has given all of mankind the opportunity of reconciliation with Him. He has now chosen Christians to spread the Word, to share our stories about how God has changed us. Let's speak up.

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, PLEASE HELP ME TO SHARE MY PERSONAL TESTIMONY WITH OTHERS. PLEASE EMBOLDEN ME AND GIVE ME YOUR LOVE FOR OTHERS.

He Could Not Keep Silent

LUKE 5-6

DISCOVERING THE WORD

Today's reading gives us amazing examples of Christ's ability and willingness to heal physical sickness. These accounts point out Jesus' divine nature, the sacredness of His mission, His concern for our wellbeing, and much more. But there was, and is, a temptation that comes with this: *Are we following Jesus for the sake of eternal life, or for the sake of physical wellness now?* The concept of divine healing has been abused. Even when people aren't sure of someone's message, they'll travel from near and far for a chance to be cured of a sickness or disease. Today, mass media can be used to publicize claimed healers, and generate massive incomes for them regardless of the outcomes of claimed miracles. The good news is that we don't have to travel far to get to Jesus, and He is not after our wallets or physical wealth. When we trust God and His will for our lives, He will provide healing as He deems necessary. I wonder...the United States currency has embedded on it, "In God We Trust"...but do we really?

DISCOVERING GOD — LUKE 5:12-16

— 1 —

There is only One person who can heal us from all our health problems.

Jesus Christ is the creator of all things living, we need to recognize that.

(v. 12)

— 2 —

Many times our healing comes so we can share our testimony with others.

The LORD's will for our life is the most important thing.

(v.13-14)

— 3 —

Jesus often withdrew by Himself from the people to pray. There is no ministry without personal prayer.

(v.15-16)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

One of the best ways to understand the will of God is to remove our lust from it and consider that His will for our lives is the very best for us. We all tend toward selfishness; it is easy for us not to consider the wellbeing of others before our own. Our goal as Christians is to build the Kingdom of heaven, not to secure our own kingdom in the here and now.

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, HELP ME TO REMEMBER THAT IT IS NOT MY NEED THAT IS THE MOST IMPORTANT THING, BUT YOUR WILL.

Death to Life

LUKE 7-8

DISCOVERING THE WORD

Some of the most shocking and important miracles of Jesus were the times He brought people back from the dead. It was a serious marker of His spiritual authority, and surely, people were astounded by it. Today, apparently, a scientifically defined miracle is an event that has a probability of one in 200 with 15 zeros behind it. In other words, it's a basically impossible event. In our western society we tend to reject the idea of miracles; if a claim can't be explained naturally or scientifically, we dismiss it. Miracles are impossible, things like them just don't happen. Even so, when the birth announcement of Jesus Christ was given to Mary, the angel said, "For with God nothing will be impossible" (LUKE 1:37).

DISCOVERING GOD — LUKE 7:11–17

— 1 —

The miracles of Jesus always come just when we need Him. We must keep our mind, soul and body close to Christ, and follow Him more than ever.

(v. 11–12)

— 2 —

Jesus tells the grieving mother not to weep. We should keep our spirits in line with the Holy Spirit, who knows our grief.

(v. 13)

— 3 —

Jesus Christ raised the dead boy to life with His word! The Word of God is quick and powerful, bringing new life and healing! (v. 14–17)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

The Word of God is powerful and changes things. We should always remember that! When we trust in the LORD Jesus Christ, we can depend on Him to fulfill His will in our life. Those who follow Jesus as LORD will live forever in eternity with Him.

TODAY'S PRAYER

**LORD, HELP ME TO REMEMBER MY
HEAVENLY POSITION WITH YOU.**

Feeding The 5000

LUKE 9-10

DISCOVERING THE WORD

Jesus Christ's ministry was full of joy and wellness. As thousands of people gathered to see and hear Jesus, He compassionately ministered to them. On one particular occasion we learn that Jesus has no food on hand for the crowd. The disciples knew this and told Jesus to break ministry and send the people away. Jesus had another plan! A miracle would allow ministry to continue and the entire crowd would be fed through the provision of God. What are the details of this ministry event? How did Jesus Christ distribute the food? How did He make sure that everyone got what they needed in the middle of the wilderness area? This miracle is remarkable to think about, especially when we break it down and study the events surrounding it.

DISCOVERING GOD — LUKE 9:10-17

— 1 —

Jesus separates from the people to gain physical strength and teach His disciples. There are times when we would do well to rest.

(v. 10)

— 2 —

Jesus tells His disciples to feed the crowd. Many times God tells us to do the impossible!

(v. 11-13)

— 3 —

Jesus taught the disciples how to feed the people who were hungry. We should always look to God, and never to our own ways of ministry.

(v. 14-17)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

Some of the most challenging things we read in the Word show us the provision of God do to the impossible for His people. When we are faced with what may seem like an impossible situation, we should first go to God in prayer and not look to ourselves for the answer. For with God nothing is impossible!

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, I NEED TO KNOW YOUR STRENGTH AND PROVISION, HELP ME TODAY.

Be Persistent!

LUKE 11-12

DISCOVERING THE WORD

When someone is persistent, they usually get what they need. Persistence is a critical exercise for followers of Jesus Christ as well. The LORD taught us the importance of persistence; when we act on our faith by pursuing the will of God. When we begin to live our lives for God our expectations shift, we are no longer trying to get the very best for ourselves, instead, we are giving our very best for our God. Living our lives in gratitude for God's salvation and eternal life becomes a strong motivating factor. It is easy to fail in this area and become lazy in our faith, but God will help us as we try to follow Him. We will discover the great things God has for us as we strive to make ourselves depend and trust on God. We are people who love the LORD with all our heart, mind, and soul, so we are grateful for everything the LORD has given us.

DISCOVERING GOD — LUKE 11:5-13

— 1 —

While it may not be convenient, we should have a responsive attitude toward others in their time of need. We should understand and listen to persistence. (v. 5-8)

— 2 —

Jesus reminds us to continue to ask, seek, and knock. We should live our lives to be persistent in our relationship with God.
(v. 9-10)

— 3 —

Jesus says that the Holy Spirit will be given if we simply ask for it. Prayer is powerful because God hears our prayers!
(v. 11-13)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

When we read the Bible, we are hearing the words of the Holy Spirit. When we pray, we are hearing the sound of our heart. Reading the Bible and praying is the healthiest thing we can do on a daily basis.

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, HELP ME TO SET ASIDE TIME TO READ MY BIBLE AND PRAY EVERY DAY.

Lost Sheep

LUKE 13-15

DISCOVERING THE WORD

It is easy for us to become ungrateful as we face the daily reality of our lives. When this happens, we make mistakes. Remember that as followers of Jesus Christ, we are called to always show love to others and confess any hatefulness to Him. When Jesus was ministering here on earth, the scribes and Pharisees were religious groups of people who dedicated themselves to following God. Too often, however, this dedication also separated them from everyday people and became about showing off their great wisdom and righteousness. The LORD is not interested in our religious abilities, He is passionate about saving those who do not know Him. Jesus sought those who were lost, He spent time with people who needed Him, and He was criticized for it. Luke 15 records Jesus' parable of the lost sheep; its message was that God cared for everyone, even the least, or the worst among them.

DISCOVERING GOD — LUKE 15:1-7

— 1 —

Jesus was criticized for associating with “sinners”. A big part of the Church is to tell others about Jesus Christ.

(v. 1-2)

— 2 —

There is great rejoicing for a lost sheep when it is found. Fellowship is not just about us but others joining us!

(v. 3-5)

— 3 —

When someone comes to God, all of heaven rejoices. Time is short! We need to share our testimony with anyone who will listen.

(v. 6-7)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

The job of the Church is not to be some sort of Christian club – we have a job to do! God's voice cries out across time, “Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come into him and dine with him, and he with Me”

– REV. 3:20.

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, HELP ME TO REACH OUT TO TELL OTHERS MY TESTIMONY!

Persistence Pays

LUKE 16-18

DISCOVERING THE WORD

When we continually seek the God of heaven and earth it pays off. When Jesus taught the parable of the persistent widow, He reminded us to have perseverance in prayer. Widows were often overlooked in ancient societies; they were often viewed as a drain on society, rather than an asset. Here though, Jesus uses the position of a widow to encourage persistence. Even an ungodly judge would help a widow if she continued to insist on help. The idea of persistence in faith is something we should all pay attention to. As we are persistent in following after God, as we are serious about His work in our life, and as we dedicate ourselves to His will, God will continue to reward and bless us. Jesus Christ explained that we should never be stagnant when it comes to faith in Him. There are times when we should be still and know that He is God, but we should not use this as an excuse to not move forward in our lives.

DISCOVERING GOD — LUKE 18:1-8

— 1 —

The widow is persistent with her request for justice. Jesus teaches we should be persistent when we pray, and not give up.
(v. 1-3)

— 2 —

The evil judge grants the widow's persistent petitions. If the evil judge will grant the widow's petitions, how much more does God respond to those who call out to Him. (v. 4-6)

— 3 —

God is faithful and will bring justice to all who are persistent in their faithfulness to Him. It is always the right time to pray for God's provision.
(v. 7-8)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

There are times in our different governments when we can, or should, demand justice for God's will and people. However, we can never be successful without consistent and persistent prayer! We must always be persistent when we seek the will of God and the ways of the Bible.

TODAY'S PRAYER

**LORD, HELP ME TO BE
PERSISTENT IN MY PURSUIT
OF YOUR RIGHTEOUS JUSTICE!**

The Time Is Near

LUKE 19-21

DISCOVERING THE WORD

We should be aware, but not concerned, that the end of time is near. While nations war with one another, little do they realize we all have a mutual enemy. Seen only by those who live by faith, satan lurks in the darkness, puppeteering our sinful desires and using the power of the flesh against us. So, let's do as Holy Spirit says: "Put on the whole armor of God, that you may be able to stand against the schemes of the devil.... that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand." (EPHESIANS 6:10-13)

As Christians, we now have the mind of Christ. This means that we are different than the rest of the world in how we see and think. We think differently about money, time, and resources, understanding that God is the owner and supplier of all things we need. So, if our life is right and our thinking is correct, we will know what is happening, and how God is working—the Kingdom of God is at hand!

DISCOVERING GOD — LUKE 21:1-13

— 1 —

Jesus taught that one who gives out of their need has done greater than one who gives out of their abundance. Giving to God's work is a privilege.

(v. 1-4)

— 2 —

God is not impressed with buildings and infrastructure. People are the Church of the LORD Jesus Christ, not the structures built by human hands. (v. 5-6)

— 3 —

Jesus says there will be many signs and persecution before the end. There are more than 340 million people each year who are persecuted for their faith in Jesus Christ*. (v. 7-13)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

The persecuted Church is growing around the world because the global Church is growing even faster, and is much larger than we can see or hear. China is the largest country and church in the world, followed by Nigeria and India. Persecution and discrimination of those who have faith in Jesus Christ abounds around the world. This is a sign to us that Jesus Christ is close.

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, HELP ME TO REMEMBER TO PRAY FOR MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS IN THE PERSECUTED CHURCH EVERY DAY.

*visit www.opendoorsca.org

The Resurrection

LUKE 22–24

DISCOVERING THE WORD

The bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ is the foundation of the Christian faith. In order for us to gain eternal life, death had to be defeated. Many envision Jesus Christ hanging on the cross and paying the price for sin, but they leave Him there – nailed to the cross. Others try to argue that Christ only rose spiritually and not physically. But the truth is Jesus is alive and at the right hand of the Father in heaven. There are many who deny that Jesus Christ rose from the dead in the flesh. But when we look at the cost of sin, we understand that someone had to physically die and rise from the dead after paying the cost of sin, because the cost of sin is death (ROMANS 6:23). Luke 24 confronts the unbeliever with the fact that Jesus Christ did rise from the dead. When we believe that, our life changes forever!

DISCOVERING GOD — LUKE 24:1–12

— 1 —

Up from the grave He arose! Jesus is alive! Belief in the resurrection of Jesus Christ is a key component to faith in God.

(v. 1–7)

— 2 —

We should always remember the words of Jesus! He sent His Word and healed us and delivered us from our destruction.

(v. 8)

— 3 —

Peter, who denied Jesus three times, is the one who ran to see the evidence. The LORD is merciful and gracious to provide us with redemption.

(v. 9–12)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

The bodily resurrection of the LORD Jesus Christ is a key element to the Gospel, we must never forget. We go to church every week to celebrate the resurrection of the LORD Jesus Christ and to worship Him. We must remind ourselves of how important this is. When we celebrate the resurrection, we celebrate eternal life. Hallelujah!

TODAY'S PRAYER

**LORD, I WANT TO CELEBRATE
ETERNAL LIFE, SO I CELEBRATE
YOUR RESURRECTION. THANK
YOU, JESUS!**

The Temple of the LORD

JOHN 1-2

DISCOVERING THE WORD

Many are excited about the rebuilding of the Temple in Jerusalem, while others are not. The Temple was, and is, one of the most foundational elements of the Jewish faith. It is critical that the future for Jerusalem includes the rebuilding of the Temple. But how do Christians see the Temple? Most get lost in the interest of God's presence and see the Temple as an absolute necessity, soon, for the end of time. But, remember, the Temple of the Holy Spirit is in us (1 CORINTHIANS 6:19). In other words, we are saved by God, and His Holy Spirit is placed within our being as our spirit is reborn, and changes us. To be a Christian means that we have received an intimate level of fellowship with Almighty God, through His Holy Spirit. The Temple structure is an element that the Jews see as necessary, not the Christians.

DISCOVERING GOD — JOHN 2:13-22

— 1 —

Jesus warned us not to make the Church, or Temple, a house of merchandise. As believers, we should not be motivated by money, but by the Holy Spirit. (v. 13-16)

— 2 —

Jesus desires to make us clean as we yield to the work of His Holy Spirit in us. We should always submit to the Holy Spirit, and not to men. (v. 17)

— 3 —

Our body is the place where the Holy Spirit comes in and makes His home. When we yield to the Holy Spirit, we are in the will of God. (v. 18-22)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

The LORD Jesus Christ made His plans clear to His disciples. They did not understand it totally, but as time marched forward, they made sense of what He said. This is how we make ourselves in alignment with the Spirit of God; we should do what He has said in His Word.

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, FILL ME WITH YOUR HOLY SPIRIT. I NEED TO PAY ATTENTION TO THE THINGS THAT ARE HAPPENING!

The Answer

JOHN 3-4

DISCOVERING THE WORD

The message of why God did what He did is captured in the conversation Jesus Christ had with Nicodemus. Nicodemus was a religious ruler of the Jews, a Pharisee, separated and devoted to the Word of God. So, it is not surprising that the LORD Jesus included this message in His conversation with him. Nicodemus longed to speak with Jesus personally, and ask Him questions. The key to understanding this whole discussion is to remember what it says in John 3:16-17, "For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved." God is not against this world. The deep difficulties we have are often because God is excluded from our lives.

DISCOVERING GOD — JOHN 3:10-17

— 1 —

Jesus told Nicodemus that he must listen and learn from Him. We should learn from God!

(v. 10-12)

— 2 —

Nicodemus learns that the Son of God must be lifted up as a sacrifice for sin. Sin is real and hard, and it destroys us.

(v. 13-15)

— 3 —

The plan of Jesus Christ, God's only Son, is revealed to Nicodemus. Praise God for His plan to save us!

(v. 16-17)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

Nicodemus was a man who specialized in God's Word but did not understand the LORD's plan. When we read how Jesus spoke and what He said to Nicodemus, we learn that God's plan is for salvation not for judgment. We must seek to learn the cost of sin as well as the greatness and mercy of God.

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, I WANT TO PRAISE YOUR NAME FOR ALL YOU ARE, NOT JUST WHAT YOU DO. I PRAISE YOU, LORD GOD!

Who Is God?

JOHN 5-6

DISCOVERING THE WORD

One of the hardest things to learn and understand is Who God really is. We cannot fully understand the complexity and absolute truth about the Godhead. It takes faith for us to learn and know God's presence. Jesus Christ was fully man and fully God. How can that be? We don't really know, but we do know it is true. If something is truth, we don't always know the elements of that truth, but we never question its fact. We know that air is good for breathing, but do we know how to make air from nothing? God does, and did, but we don't stop breathing until we know that truth, now do we? There are things that the Bible explains which we cannot understand, or realize, in our mind. John 5 contains one of those things. It requires faith for us to see and hear Who God really is.

DISCOVERING GOD — JOHN 5:16-23

— 1 —

Jesus told those who opposed His teaching that He and His Father had been working every Sabbath. Manmade church rules are not to be held sacred. (v. 16-17)

— 2 —

Jesus' opponents wanted to kill Him because the Truth He spoke of did not fit their understanding of truth. God is real, and Jesus Christ is God. That is the Truth! (v.18)

— 3 —

Jesus told His opponents that He was equal with the Father. When we trust in Jesus Christ for our life, we are trusting in God. (v.19-23)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

Jesus Christ lived like us. He was falsely accused and killed by crucifixion, one of the most excruciating deaths anyone could imagine. In doing this, Jesus removed the conviction of our sins once and for all. If we confess our sins to Him and give our life to follow Him. By doing this, we turn our actions and reactions to serve God.

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, HELP ME TO ACT AND REACT AS YOU WOULD HAVE ME DO.

Good & Bad

JOHN 7-8

DISCOVERING THE WORD

What is good? What is bad? Those are two questions we seek to answer in today's world. But how do we choose? The answer to this question requires a knowledge of God. If there is no knowledge of God, there is no way to tell the difference between good and bad. But if we do know the LORD, our mind is caught up into determining the difference between right and wrong. The problem was just that in Jesus' day, there were the religious elite who could not determine the difference between right and wrong. They called on their own interpretation of the law of God. And still today, that is when we fail, when we interpret the law of God without the Holy Spirit. We cannot tell the true difference between right and wrong without the mind of Christ.

DISCOVERING GOD — JOHN 7:11-24

— 1 —

The religious men searched for Jesus. Some said He was good, others said He was bad. Jesus is the definition of goodness, and we can know Him if we give our life to Him. (v. 11-13)

— 2 —

Jesus Christ was different, He even taught differently. The LORD teaches that a relationship with God is real and can happen through Him. (v. 14-18)

— 3 —

Jesus told us that we should judge only by God's Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit keeps us focused on Jesus Christ, not on ourselves. (v. 19-24)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

Jesus lived to teach us how God's Kingdom is built. When we focus on that, our ideas, motivations, and desires become different like His, not like those who seek their own dynasty of fame or fortune. The LORD empowers us to grow in His Kingdom and not to build our own ways to live.

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, HELP ME TO BUILD YOUR KINGDOM AND NOT MY OWN.

Back To Jerusalem

JOHN 9-11

DISCOVERING THE WORD

Jerusalem was not the place where Jesus Christ was best protected. In fact, many so-called spiritual people there wanted Him dead. Jesus knew this and told His disciples that He was going anyway. One of the things Jesus had to do was raise Lazarus from the dead, because he had been sick. The disciples were well-aware of the potential danger to come. It was Thomas who said, "Let us also go, that we may die with Him!" Thomas often gets negative press and the nickname "Doubting Thomas" because of his questioning of Christ after His resurrection, but listen carefully to this man. When we begin to hear what Thomas says, we identify with him. Thomas was a lot like us today, he knew the facts and was still skeptical, yet followed Christ. We should remember that the Holy Spirit still heals and helps us, but we should use the Bible to hear how God speaks to us and heals us.

DISCOVERING GOD — JOHN 11:1-16

— 1 —

Jesus said the death of Lazarus was for the glory of God, and that God's Son would be glorified through it. We should listen to what God says!

(v. 1-4)

— 2 —

Our LORD tells His disciples that He will go to Lazarus and heal him. We should remember that God has His plan in, and for, everything.

(v. 5-13)

— 3 —

Thomas was a committed disciple! Sometimes we have to go and move where God tells us, even though we may not understand it.

(v. 14-16)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

Most of the time, the LORD Jesus Christ speaks through His Word, the Bible. The rest of the time, He speaks to us in Spirit through "wordless groans", which never contradicts His Word (ROMANS 8:26-27). The Bible is the Word of God, spoken by prophets carried along by the Holy Spirit. We should know it, hear it, and put it into action. The Holy Spirit is talking to us through it.

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, I NEED TO HEAR YOUR HOLY SPIRIT WHEN YOU SPEAK THROUGH THE WORD OF GOD. HELP ME TO LISTEN AND LEARN.

The Timing of Works

JOHN 12-14

DISCOVERING THE WORD

What does the word “works” mean? When I say works, division takes place in the Church. Some believe that we have to work our way to heaven, others believe it is a gift of grace. But what does Jesus mean when He says, “...the Father who dwells in Me does the works.” (JOHN 14:10). God modeled the way His Holy Spirit works in this world; He does it through the Holy Spirit in us. That means that works are not a part of salvation, but they are a result of faith in God. The works we produce, then, are a part of God’s timing.

The idea of timing often throws off our understanding of Scripture. Timing is everything with God. He created time. So, keep in mind that time to God is not the same as it is with us. The LORD often speaks truth in intervals of time, so we should listen to God, understanding that we may not get it all at once, but through time we will. And when we do, we work out our salvation through Christ who strengthens us (CF. PHILIPPIANS 2:12).

DISCOVERING GOD — JOHN 14:1-11

— 1 —

Jesus explains that we are called to be with Him.

The LORD has made that possible from the time we give our lives to follow Him.

(v. 1-4)

— 2 —

Our LORD Jesus tells us that He is the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to God except through Him. God is

exclusive, not inclusive of false beliefs. (v. 5-6)

— 3 —

God limited Himself in Jesus Christ, but made Himself known through Him. Jesus Christ was fully God, and fully man.

(v. 7-11)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

We must listen to God in order to hear what the Bible is saying. Many attempt to hear God, but ignore His Word. Yet, God has spoken through the Bible. We are wise when we listen and apply the words of God.

TODAY'S PRAYER

**LORD, I MUST DISCIPLINE MYSELF
TO READ YOUR WORD TODAY,
HELP ME.**

As The World Was

JOHN 15–17

DISCOVERING THE WORD

Jesus Christ is the only begotten Son of God. This is best illustrated in Jesus' prayer to the Father in John 17. This unique passage of Holy Scripture is important because it reminds us that Jesus cares deeply for those who believe in Who He is. Jesus speaks to God the Father in ways that lead us to know more about Who God is, and why He sent Jesus Christ in the first place. There is a lot that can be said about what Jesus did for us and how He spoke to His Father in Heaven. For one, we are chosen by God and redeemed by Jesus Christ to spend our existence with Him. This is the essence of knowing Who God is, as we give our whole life to the LORD. Jesus also speaks about His divine power and eternal nature, as He identifies Himself with God before the world was.

DISCOVERING GOD — JOHN 17:1–11

— 1 —

Jesus Christ is the exclusive way to eternal life. It is our LORD who decides, not we ourselves. God is exclusive, and no one can do what He did.

(v. 1–2)

— 2 —

Jesus Christ our LORD explains that He is eternal. God is eternal, and was made known in the flesh through Jesus Christ.

(v. 3–5)

— 3 —

Jesus prays for us as we build our closeness with the LORD God. Our life is always about growing in the LORD through His Word and prayer.

(v. 6–11)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

TODAY'S PRAYER

As a Christian our lives are not about us, it is about knowing, loving, and serving God throughout our lives by loving others as ourselves. Our faith in Jesus Christ leads us to properly understand and apply justice, righteousness, and love of neighbour.

**LORD, I MUST KEEP MYSELF
FOCUSED ON LIVING FOR JESUS
CHRIST WITH ALL MY HEART,
MIND, STRENGTH, AND SOUL.**

Judging Jesus

JOHN 18–19

DISCOVERING THE WORD

When Jesus Christ was arrested, they first took Him to Annas, the father-in-law of Caiaphas, who was the High Priest in Jerusalem that year. It was Caiaphas who advised the Jews that it was beneficial that one Man should die for the people. They did not treat Jesus as the Holy Son of God, the Messiah. Nevertheless, the LORD Jesus answered their questions the way He always did, with direct truth. This trial was a façade, a show of posturing for those who were interested in power and position. But for others, it was revealing. Scholars have theorized that John may have known the High Priest because he was given access to Jesus' trial in the High Priest's court, but Peter was denied this privilege and had to remain outside. The confrontations that slammed Peter head-on were telling. As a man, Peter could do nothing about the fear that was residing in his heart. However, in Acts 2, we see that fear disappear in the lives of the disciples, as the Holy Spirit enters the men with the power, strength, and the fire of God to judge correctly.

DISCOVERING GOD — JOHN 18:12–24

— 1 —

Jesus is arrested and is taken first to Annas, father-in-law of the High Priest. The religion in this world is not friendly to believers in Christ.

(v. 12–14)

— 2 —

Peter denied Christ the first time, to get in and see the case against Him. The LORD wants us to move in His ways, not our ways.

(v. 15–18)

— 3 —

An officer hit Jesus in the face and Jesus answered him with a question. We have all sinned and must come to Christ in humility.

(v. 19–24)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

Our society does not understand humility. In fact, this world is anything but humble. However, the perfect example of humility was Jesus Christ, the LORD of lords and King of kings. When we come to Jesus Christ, we set our values and live our lives contrary to those in the world.

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, I SHOULD CONSIDER HOW I ACT AND REACT! HELP ME TO BE HUMBLE LIKE YOU ARE.

When It's All Over

JOHN 20-21

DISCOVERING THE WORD

When Jesus Christ was dead, it seemed like it was all over. This was the death of the so-called Messiah, and death is permanent. There was no one left to raise Jesus from the dead – He was the miracle worker. Death seems to be the constant enemy of humanity. In a battle, people kill each other to stop the advancement of the opposing side. When a crime is perpetrated, those who are defending what is right threaten those doing wrong, often with the threat of death. If you want to scare someone you propose to kill them. Death is permanent. But, God changed all of that through Jesus Christ. He was killed by us and died. But He was holy, He was more than a man! How do you kill Someone like that? Death is permanent, but God changed death to life when Jesus Christ rose from the dead. The significance of this resurrection is unmatched. John 20, reveals the elements of the resurrection of Christ.

DISCOVERING GOD – JOHN 20:11-23

– 1 –

Mary does not recognize Jesus until He calls her by name. When the Holy Spirit calls our name, we should respond.

(v. 11-16)

– 2 –

Mary is instructed by her LORD to share His resurrection with the disciples. The disciples are lost in doubt and cannot see the reality of God.

(v. 17-18)

– 3 –

God has saved us and sent us, today. We are called to tell the world about Jesus Christ!

(v. 19-23)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

As Christians, we are called and commissioned to tell the world our testimony of how Jesus Christ saved our lives. This is our first assignment! The LORD remains with those He has saved, His Holy Spirit dwells in us. We must continue to share the Gospel message with others.

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, I PRAY FOR OPPORTUNITIES TO SHARE MY TESTIMONY WITH MY FRIENDS AND FAMILY.

Sin

ACTS 1-3

DISCOVERING THE WORD

Every day was the same for the man born lame from birth. All his life he was not able to move like others, he had no ability to walk or to do work. Each day he was carried and laid at the Temple gate called *Beautiful*. Here, the man would beg for money. But one particular day, things were going to be very different! In years past, Jesus would have walked by that same man as He walked through the Temple gate and the man was not healed. However, this day, God's Holy Spirit was planning on doing something so different and unique that people would be shocked. It was not a big political or a social move, but rather a personal healing that would move people. It was a miracle that happened through Peter and John by the power of God through Christ and the working of the Holy Spirit.

DISCOVERING GOD — ACTS 3:1-10

— 1 —

Peter and John were confronted by a lame man who was asking for money.

Sometimes God surprises and prepares us for a move of His Holy Spirit when we least expect it. (v. 1-4)

— 2 —

Rather than get the money he asked for, God blessed the lame man with healing. Sometimes the

blessings we receive from God are not what we ask for or expect. (v. 5-6)

— 3 —

God used Peter and John to establish His word and will for the man who had been tarnished by sin.

Sin is not just intentional, but many times the culture of sin causes us to fail. (v. 7-10)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

When we come to know Jesus Christ as LORD of our life, we are pitted against sin. Sin is real – it has a culture, lifestyle, and temptation. God will strengthen us as we work to make ourselves clear of sinful activities, through the help of the Holy Spirit.

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, I PRAY THAT YOU KEEP ME AWAY FROM SIN, AS I RESIST IT IN MY LIFE.

In the Name of Jesus

ACTS 4-5

DISCOVERING THE WORD

Jesus Christ is perhaps the most well-known name in all of history. Sadly, though, it seems that more and more people in the west only recognize the name of Jesus Christ as a swear word. The question is *why*? Why do people use the name of Jesus Christ as a curse? There are others who know the power of that name and have dedicated their lives to make both the Person of Jesus Christ and His character known. The first time the name of Jesus Christ was banned from use was in the first century, and the first place it was prohibited was in Jerusalem. The persecution of the Church began nearly right away, recorded in the book of Acts. The Church has a rich history that includes persecution and punishment for using the name of Jesus Christ. We know the truth; His name is powerful. Peter and John knew this firsthand, and they remained faithful to their LORD.

DISCOVERING GOD — ACTS 4:13-22

— 1 —

Peter and John were uneducated and untrained men. The Holy Spirit is our best Teacher!

(v. 13)

— 2 —

God offers undeniable miracles. There is power in the name of Jesus. Glory to God!

(v. 14-17)

— 3 —

We cannot deny what God has done when He moves in miraculous ways. Don't be afraid to speak about Jesus Christ and what He has done in your life. There is power in His name! (v. 18-22)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

TODAY'S PRAYER

It is the LORD God who created us and intervenes when we do not expect it. He does this to show Who He is and how much He loves us. When we know and love God, we cannot help but praise His Name and give Him all the glory. Praise is powerful. It changes our attitudes, focuses our minds, and sends a clear message to all around us that we serve the LORD, even in our imperfections.

LORD, THANK YOU FOR WHO YOU ARE. I WANT TO PRAISE YOUR NAME EVERY DAY AND EVERY HOUR!

The Church Expands

ACTS 6-8

DISCOVERING THE WORD

The Church of the LORD Jesus Christ began to expand with remarkable numbers of people. Amazingly, this occurred despite the persecution they were receiving. God has a way of advancing His Kingdom despite human opposition and sometimes even through human opposition. This is an interesting fact that I have observed, every time humans attempt to control God, God controls them. We have never learned the lesson of submission. In today's societies, *submission* is a bad word. But, to the Christian, it is a good word and idea. As Christians, we have given our lives in submission to God's Word and will; we do not make our own decisions about how we live. We arrange our lives according to the law of Christ and we pray and include the LORD Jesus Christ in our decision making. Chapter 8 of the book of Acts explains how and why we must always look to the LORD, and fulfill our calling as human beings.

DISCOVERING GOD — ACTS 8:1-13

— 1 —

Saul, later to become Paul the apostle, was active in the persecution of the early Church. The persecuted Church must be lifted up in our prayers.

(v. 1-3)

— 2 —

Philip was the great disciple who went to Samaria and preached about Jesus Christ. We are all called to tell our testimonies to friends and family! (v. 4-8)

— 3 —

The Holy Spirit used Philip through preaching and miracles to build the Church. Today, the Holy Spirit seeks to use us to do the same.

(v. 9-13)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

As Christians, we are called to tell others about Jesus Christ. Bible reading and prayer are critically important to our relationship with Jesus Christ, and so is sharing with others what He has done in our life. When we share our testimonies and praise to God, it helps us grow in Him.

TODAY'S PRAYER

LORD, I PRAY THAT I WOULD HAVE THE COURAGE TO TAKE THE FIRST STEP OF TELLING OTHERS ABOUT YOU.

Here I Am, LORD

ACTS 9–10

DISCOVERING THE WORD

There are some things that are risky. Standing in the highway is risky. Hanging around on a bungee cord is risky. But, as Christians, all the risk is removed, right? Wrong! Risk is spelled in a different way: F-A-I-T-H. The question is simple: What do we have faith in? When we come to the LORD Jesus and give our lives over to Him, we must learn to place *all* our faith completely in Him. Life or death depends on what Jesus Christ has for us. Ananias was a disciple of Jesus who lived in Damascus, and he had heard many reports about a man named Saul, who was responsible for the persecution and death of many Christians. Now, God was calling Ananias to go to Saul and pray for him. What? Really? When Ananias answered God, “Here I am, LORD”, would he go? God knows everything, including the future, past and present. We would do well to pay attention to the LORD when He assigns us to a task.

DISCOVERING GOD — ACTS 9:10–19

— 1 —

Ananias knew about Saul and feared him. The easy things are simple, the hard things are difficult but amazing with God’s help!

(v. 10–14)

— 2 —

Ananias discovered God’s plan for Saul, before Saul did. We should always listen to the active work of the Holy Spirit.

(v. 15–16)

— 3 —

God used Ananias to start Paul’s ministry. We are strengthened through the fellowship with one another through God.

(v. 17–19)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

Sometimes the LORD uses people and places and things to direct us. We should not be surprised when our expected plans are radically changed by the unexpected. The LORD knows how to guide and direct us better than we do. Grasping this in today’s culture is vital.

TODAY’S PRAYER

LORD, HELP ME TO TRUST IN YOU, EVEN WHEN YOU CHANGE MY PLANS!

Spiritual War

ACTS 11-13

DISCOVERING THE WORD

Paul taught us about spiritual war in Ephesians 6. This is something Paul first encounters in the book of Acts; something we, too, will also encounter if we are trained in the ways of Jesus Christ. Spiritual conflict is real as we follow the LORD and serve Him, and it is very difficult to fight the good fight within ourselves. The truth is, we cannot fight it with our own thinking. Only through God's presence of the Holy Spirit, that Jesus Christ placed in us, can we win in any spiritual war. In the Old Testament, the Ark of the Covenant represented God's presence with the people in warfare. In this time, after the death and resurrection of Jesus, our spirits, or hearts, is the place where the presence of God's Holy Spirit is placed.

DISCOVERING GOD — ACTS 13:1-12

— 1 —

The Holy Spirit of God chose Paul and Barnabas to go and preach Jesus Christ.

We, too, are chosen today to tell others about the LORD, in our

way. (v. 1-3)

— 2 —

We should never fear or fall away from anyone who is resisting our faith.

Remember, Jesus Christ fought the war on the cross. It is finished.

(v. 4-8)

— 3 —

Paul confronted the man with the truth of God, and he was taken down.

The LORD is seeking people to stand up for His Word and ways.

(v. 9-12)

DISCOVERING THE TRUTH

Spiritual war is the real conflict we face when we become followers of Jesus Christ. The LORD has prepared us to fight these battles. Christians are often tricked by evil to be afraid and fear confrontations. We should have faith for fighting spiritual battles; remembering to put on the whole armor of God and praying always in the Spirit (EPH. 6:10-18).

TODAY'S PRAYER

**LORD, HELP ME NOT TO BE
AFRAID OF SPIRITUAL BATTLES.
YOU HAVE ALREADY WON!**

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