

Day 1
June 11



*Pray / That God would show you where you can help
both the poor in spirit and the poor in body.*

FEED YOUR BODY; FEED YOUR SOUL. The two are interconnected throughout Scripture.

This week's passage shows us Jesus standing in front of his fellow Jews in the synagogue, claiming to be the fulfillment of some of the words of the prophet Isaiah, which were spoken 700 years earlier. The passage Jesus chooses to claim is one which preaches freedom and blessings, but also physical healing. Of course Jesus was sent to redeem our souls, and he expects us to help others find that healing for their souls, but we cannot overlook the call to take care of each other physically as well.

In fact, Jesus says later on in the New Testament that whenever we feed or clothe the poor, it is as though we are doing it to him. Likewise, if we ignore the poor or needy, it is as though we are ignoring him.



Read / Matthew 25:41-45; Luke 3:11, 4:16-21



Reflect / Spend some time reflecting on one or more of the following:

After Jesus died and rose, Jews gathered in the first “churches” and the book of Acts was born. This book tells us that in the church, everyone took care of each other and no one was in need. In our individualistic society we can all become like islands, working hard to be self-sufficient, and disconnecting from those around us. What does Jesus say about this in the Matthew passage? How might individualism be detrimental to the work Jesus came to do according to Luke? Consider this question from both the side of the rich, and the poor; the blessed and the destitute.

How have you followed Jesus' example of caring for the physically poor?
What could you do better?

Maybe you are in a place of physical need right now. How does knowing the desire of Jesus' heart to take care of you lift your burden?

Day 2

June 12



Pray | That God would be the loudest voice in your head.

LISTEN LOUDER

Jesus knew the Scriptures well. He knew that the Messiah would be rejected by the ones closest to him. He knew the stories of the prophets Elijah and Elisha, who were rejected by their own people. And as Jesus stood up in front of them all and told them that he was the fulfillment of Isaiah's prophecies, they responded just as he knew they would. But Jesus was undeterred by their doubt. He listened to his Father more intently and pressed on in his mission.

The voices of the people in your life doubting your call or attempting to dissuade you from following God can be discouraging and make you question that calling. But just as Jesus did we must listen to our Father's voice and pray that we hear his over any voice of doubt.



Read | Luke 4:23-30



Reflect | Spend some time reflecting on one or more of the following:

Jesus knew what it was like to be rejected for the sake of his calling. He knew what it was like to look for support in his new ministry and be met with only opposition. When have you been rejected for something God has called you to? How did you have the courage and confidence to continue?

Consider what you know about athleticism. In order for our heart, lungs or muscles to get stronger and more efficient, we must challenge them. Or consider the mental challenge of starting a new job or a new class, feeling like your brain hurts. But over time we get stronger and the pain is gone. In what ways does our endurance in the midst of rejection or opposition strengthen our witness and mission like a muscle?

The synagogue was one of the ways that Jews maintained their spiritual identity as set apart for God in times of oppression. How do you maintain your identity in Christ when voices around you try to redefine you?

Day 3
June 13



Pray | For the humility to let God's light shine in your heart.

JESUS SHINES LIGHT INTO THE CORNERS OF OUR HEARTS.

Think about when you move the fridge or bed away from the wall after many years, exposing the mess underneath that you'd just as soon keep hidden. Once light is shed on anything, all its ugliness is exposed.

When we let God into our lives, he brings beautiful light to us. But sometimes that light makes us feel vulnerable or embarrassed about the messes in our hearts. It exposes our "demons" and vices. And then we must decide what we are going to do with them all. Sometimes we reject God because we just aren't ready or willing to clean up the messes in our hearts.



Read | Luke 8:16-17; John 3:18-21



Reflect | Spend some time reflecting on one or more of the following:

What does Luke say will be exposed in today's passage? How do you feel about this? Spend some time talking to God about what you are afraid to expose.

Sometimes when Jesus' light shines on our souls, it uncovers parts of us we'd like to keep hidden. Or it uncovers ugly parts of us we didn't know existed that we now must decide what to do with. What has Jesus' presence in your life uncovered that you have been avoiding dealing with? Give this to him today and trust that he will not uncover you and leave you exposed. He will minister to you as he cleans out the dark corners of your heart.

Day 4

June 14



Pray | That you would remain faithful to God.

REMAINING FAITHFUL TO THE FATHER

Jesus warned us that we too would be rejected, just like he was. But just like he did, we can endure it and triumph over it through our relationship with and reliance on the Father. Jesus was faithful to God and his mission for him by staying in close relationship with God. As he remained faithful to God and his calling, God was able to continue to sustain him and bear fruit in him. This is our blueprint for remaining faithful to God so that he can sustain us.

There are three things we can do that will allow God to bear fruit in us and sustain us. First, we must abide in constant fellowship with him. Second, we must allow his Word to be the umpire for all of our actions. And third, we must submit to the Holy Spirit's control and influence over our attitudes, action and speech.



Read | John 15:1-4; Colossians 3:15-17; Galatians 5:22-25



Reflect | Spend some time reflecting on one or more of the following:

What is the fruit that John is referring to according to today's passages? Write them down. Which of these do you want to grow in? Challenge yourself to work purposely with God on growing in this area.

Colossians gives us words of encouragement in our walk with God. What does it say we are to do when we meet as a community of supportive believers? How do you do these things?

When have you seen God sustain those doing the work of the ministry in spite of obstacles and opposition?

Day 5

June 15



Pray | To have a deeper understanding of your role in God's story.

WHO DO YOU SAY I AM?

The people of Nazareth did not accept Jesus as their Messiah. Similarly today people say Jesus was a lot of things. Some say he was God in flesh; some say he was delusional; some say he was just another prophet or enlightened human. But Jesus claimed to be God and he claimed to be the fulfillment of Scripture. That sounds like either a crazy person, or someone telling the truth. Jesus is either who he says he is, or he is not, and we are free to choose either of those options. Our choice, however, dictates our eternity.

Once we decide to follow Jesus, he starts working on our hearts to mold us into the person he created us to be because he has a plan for each and every one of us in his eternal story. Consider today where you fit in Jesus' story stretching from the beginning of time, to today and beyond. Consider how God is asking you to feed and care for the needy; or press forward with courage and confidence as you face rejection. Consider how he is working in your heart to clear out the darkness so he can use you powerfully in his story.



Read | [Matthew 16:13-17](#)



Reflect | Spend some time reflecting on one or more of the following:

Who do you say Jesus is? And how does this change your life? If you have not let Jesus come in and change your life, it is as simple as telling him right now that you say he is God, and want him to change your life.

Attending the synagogue was one of the ways the Jews maintained their spiritual identity and ethnic heritage in times when they were being oppressed. What is your spiritual identity? How do you maintain it?

Consider the part that you have played in God's story thus far, and consider where God is taking you. Take a few moments with Jesus to open your heart to understand the role he needs you to play in his story.

For a deeper dive into who Jesus was and is, take a look at this sermon, "Jesus: Avatar or God". <https://whchurch.org/sermon/jesus-avatar-or-god/>

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