

Journey to Easter



DailyLife
Five Oaks Church

Week 1: February 13–19, 2016

Day 1

February 15



WE CAN HAVE confidence in God that he will keep the promises he has given to us.

After Jesus' birth, Joseph and Mary are faithful to obey God's command to have Jesus dedicated to the Lord according to Levitical law. When they arrive at the temple in Jerusalem to dedicate him eight days after he is born, they meet a man named Simeon, who has been waiting his entire life to catch a glimpse of the Messiah God promised to send to deliver his people.



Read / Luke 2:22–32



Reflect / Read and reflect on the following.

Simeon's faith and hope in God's plan to bring about salvation through the Messiah is so great that he is content to die after seeing Jesus as a mere baby. He doesn't need to see God's plan completed or know how everything is going to fall into place; he trusts so strongly in the promises of God that having the blessing of seeing it begin is good enough.

God has made many promises to his people, some of which are being completed now in the lives of those around us, such as the spiritually blind receiving sight to see and accept God's truth. Other promises will not be completed until Jesus' second return, such as the ultimate defeat of sin and death. Sometimes waiting on these promises is difficult, especially when injustice or people we care about are involved. Which of God's promises are you looking to with peace and confidence, trusting that God's plan is being completed for good, even if you might only witness the briefest glimpse of it?

Day 2

February 16



SALVATION ISN'T EARNED, bought, or inherited. It is a free gift God graciously offers us.

John the Baptist comes to prepare God's people for the beginning of Jesus' ministry. He preaches that to receive forgiveness for their sins, they must have repentant hearts before God. But John starts accusing the crowd who has come to see him. His accusation is not in the crowd's coming but in the method they are using to try to obtain salvation from their sins, either using baptism as their means of salvation or claiming they have inherited salvation because of their ancestry. Neither method actually will save them from the judgment they deserve because of the sinfulness in their lives that separates them from a holy God.



Read | Luke 3:1-14



Reflect | Read and reflect on the following.

John's response to the question from the crowd of what, then, they should do if not use baptism as their means of salvation is not a mini-sermon on doing good works to earn salvation. Instead, John is saying the good they do should be the evidence (the good fruit) that they have received forgiveness from God because of their repentance—instead of the judgment they deserve because of their sin.

The same is true for us. Salvation is not earned by the good things we do but is a free gift; however, we should live lives that honor God and point others toward his goodness and generosity in response to that gift. In what ways can you live to more clearly point others to the generous God who, instead of the punishment you deserve for your sinfulness, freely gives salvation through Jesus if you repent?

Day 3

February 17



GOD’S PLANS ARE so much larger than we often focus on or can even comprehend. Unnecessary trouble and frustration arise when we lose sight of God’s wisdom and focus too intently on what we believe God needs to be accomplishing for us.

Jesus is baptized by John and begins his ministry. He makes a stop back in his hometown of Nazareth and goes to the synagogue on the Sabbath. Now that Jesus is beginning his active ministry, he starts to declare who he is and why he has come: to be the long-awaited deliverer. Take a moment to envision the scene as he tells the crowd (and imagine the twinkling in their eyes): A deliverer from this Roman oppression? Now wouldn’t that be something!

Jesus’ vision for their deliverance is so much greater than the tasks on their Messiah To-Do List, though, and he won’t waste time doling out miracles just to convince them of the truth of his mission.



Read | Luke 4:14–30



Reflect / Read and reflect on the following.

Jesus calls the people out on their desire for him to be a miracle worker and prove he has come to fulfill the Scriptures. He indicates that if (and when) they reject him, he'll go out to the Gentiles just as Elijah and Elisha did to offer healing and freedom to them. We have the gifts of the Scriptures and the Holy Spirit to help us see the depth of freedom (from spiritual death) and healing (from spiritual blindness) Jesus' ministry was bringing to anyone who would accept his message.

Even with this bigger picture view, we sometimes still limit God's bigger story and focus instead on what we want God to accomplish for us in our limited view. In what areas are you limiting your view and instead need to expand it to see the bigger story God is accomplishing so that you can open your life to what God wants to accomplish in and through you?

Day 4

February 18



JESUS DOESN'T EXPECT us to make our lives perfect before he can call us to be used in his mission to bring people close to God.

After Jesus leaves the Nazareth crowd who tried to throw him off a cliff, he makes his way to Capernaum, a city along the Sea of Galilee. One day, he comes to the home of a man named Simon, whose mother-in-law is sick with a high fever, and Jesus instantly heals her.

Not long after, Simon is washing his fishing nets with the other fishermen after an unsuccessful night on the sea when Jesus comes up and asks if he can use his boat to do some preaching. The shoreline provides an excellent natural amphitheater for preaching right offshore. It's a little favor to grant after the way Jesus so miraculously healed his wife's mother a few days before. But borrowing Simon's boat for some preaching isn't the only thing Jesus will be asking of him that day.



Read | Luke 5:1–11



Reflect / Read and reflect on the following.

Jesus prepares Simon Peter for his calling by giving him a small glimpse of the effective work that could be accomplished with Jesus' power and Simon's obedience to do what Jesus asks of him. Simon Peter's response, though, is fear of Jesus' greatness compared with his own sinfulness. Jesus essentially replies, "There's nothing to fear; I have amazing plans for your life." Are there things in your own life you see as barriers that God wants you to stop being blocked by (circumstances, your past, fear of inadequacy or failure) and to instead boldly follow him in life-changing obedience?

Day 5

February 19



JESUS CONTINUES HIS ministry, preaching the hard and challenging messages of the kingdom of God being bigger and farther reaching than we often keep our perspective on. The gospel Jesus preaches calls us to examine our lives to assess who or what we place our trust and joy in.

This Sermon on the Plain is similar to the Sermon on the Mount found in Matthew 6, but it focuses more directly not on the emotional or spiritual hardships people may face as much as emphasizing blessings on the people who endure physical suffering but who choose to place their trust in God's eternal providence.

Conversely, Jesus gives strong warning against those who live in abundance, presumably either because they place their trust in material possessions instead of God's ability to provide for their needs or because they do not obey God's call to let go of their money or food to provide for others who are in need.



Read / Luke 6:20–26



Reflect / Read and reflect on the following.

Jesus is speaking this message to his followers, who should have their trust in God's providence and their perspective on the eternal life they will experience with God, which should carry much greater weight than the poverty, hunger, or suffering they may experience now. He places a strong warning against those who rely on material possessions, fill themselves with things of this world, and seek after temporary happiness or social acceptance. God wants us all to be constantly assessing our lives and priorities to make sure they follow God. You may want to take a moment to reread today's passage. What changes do you need to make to more fully live with your life and priorities in eternal perspective?

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