

SEEING JESUS

A GUIDE TO REFLECTION

For anyone and everyone who wants to see Jesus.

INTRODUCTION

Jesus, a Jewish man who lived over two thousand years ago, claimed to be God himself. Since his life and subsequent death, few would argue he is the most influential figure in all of human history. Why? That is what we all must find out for ourselves. Believers and nonbelievers both have reflecting to do. Who is this man, Jesus? And who is he to you?

Whoever you are, wherever you are, whenever you are, Jesus' words are kindling to the flame of humanity, either destroying or giving life. What do his words do to you? And are you brave enough to search for answers in your encounter with him? Mystified, enraged, amazed, disgusted; his life and teachings demand reflection.

Those who saw Jesus in the flesh had a similar task. They first had an initial reaction about Jesus' words and actions. Then, if they had any sense, they had questions. Those observations and questions would then lead them to reflections, and perhaps major shifts in their lives both in thought and action.

As you see Jesus over the next eight weeks, you'll go through the same experience. Here are three questions to consider after each encounter:

1. What is striking to you about the story/teaching of Jesus?
2. What questions are you left pondering?
3. What might this mean for your life?

"Do you have eyes but fail to see, and ears but fail to hear?"

-Jesus

HIS PURPOSE

LUKE 19:1-10

Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. And there was a man called by the name of Zaccheus; he was a chief tax collector and he was rich. Zaccheus was trying to see who Jesus was, and he was unable due to the crowd, because he was short in stature. So he ran on ahead and climbed up a sycamore tree in order to see Him, because He was about to pass through that way. And when Jesus came to the place, He looked up and said to him, "Zaccheus, hurry and come down, for today I must stay at your house." And he hurried and came down, and received Him joyfully. When the people saw this, they all began to complain, saying, "He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner!" But Zaccheus stopped and said to the Lord, "Behold, Lord, half of my possessions I am giving to the poor, and if I have extorted anything from anyone, I am giving back four times as much." And Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because he, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost."

JOHN 10:1-10

"Truly, truly I say to you, the one who does not enter by the door into the fold of the sheep, but climbs up some other way, he is a thief and a robber. But the one who enters by the door is a shepherd of the sheep. To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep listen to his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. When he puts all his own sheep outside, he goes ahead of them, and the sheep follow him because they know his voice. However, a stranger they simply will not follow, but will flee from him, because they do not know the voice of strangers." Jesus told them this figure of speech, but they did not understand what the things which He was saying to them meant.

So Jesus said to them again, "Truly, truly I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. All those who came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. I am the door; if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came so that they would have life, and have it abundantly.

HIS GRACE

JOHN 8:1-11

But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. And early in the morning He came again into the temple area, and all the people were coming to Him; and He sat down and began teaching them. Now the scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman caught in the act of adultery, and after placing her in the center of the courtyard, they said to Him, "Teacher, this woman has been caught in the very act of committing adultery. Now in the Law, Moses commanded us to stone such women; what then do You say?" Now they were saying this to test Him, so that they might have grounds for accusing Him. But Jesus stooped down and with His finger wrote on the ground. When they persisted in asking Him, He straightened up and said to them, "He who is without sin among you, let him be the first to throw a stone at her." And again He stooped down and wrote on the ground. Now when they heard this, they began leaving, one by one, beginning with the older ones, and He was left alone, and the woman where she was, in the center of the courtyard. And straightening up, Jesus said to her, "Woman, where are they? Did no one condemn you?" She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said, "I do not condemn you, either. Go. From now on do not sin any longer."

MATTHEW 18:23-35

"For this reason the kingdom of heaven is like a king who wanted to settle accounts with his slaves. And when he had begun to settle them, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him. But since he did not have the means to repay, his master commanded that he be sold, along with his wife and children and all that he had, and repayment be made. So the slave fell to the ground and prostrated himself before him, saying, 'Have patience with me and I will repay you everything.' And the master of that slave felt compassion, and he released him and forgave him the debt. But that slave went out and found one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and he seized him and began to choke him, saying, 'Pay back what you owe!' So his fellow slave fell to the ground and began to plead with him, saying, 'Have patience with me and I will repay you.' But he was unwilling, and went and threw him in prison until he would pay back what was owed. So when his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were deeply grieved and came and reported to their master all that had happened. Then summoning him, his master said to him, 'You wicked slave, I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. Should you not also have had mercy on your fellow slave, in the same way that I had mercy on you?' And his master, moved with anger, handed him over to the torturers until he would repay all that was owed him. My heavenly Father will also do the same to you, if each of you does not forgive his brother from your heart."

HIS LOVE

JOHN 21:15-17

Now when they had finished breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Tend My lambs." He said to him again, a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Shepherd My sheep." He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me?" Peter was hurt because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Tend My sheep."

JOHN 15:12-17

"This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that a person will lay down his life for his friends. You are My friends if you do what I command you. No longer do I call you slaves, for the slave does not know what his master is doing; but I have called you friends, because all things that I have heard from My Father I have made known to you. You did not choose Me but I chose you, and appointed you that you would go and bear fruit, and that your fruit would remain, so that whatever you ask of the Father in My name He may give to you. This I command you, that you love one another."

HIS HUMILITY

JOHN 13:1-10

Now before the Feast of the Passover, Jesus, knowing that His hour had come that He would depart from this world to the Father, having loved His own who were in the world, He loved them to the end. And during supper, the devil having already put into the heart of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, to betray Him, Jesus, knowing that the Father had handed all things over to Him, and that He had come forth from God and was going back to God, got up from supper and laid His outer garments aside; and He took a towel and tied it around Himself. Then He poured water into the basin, and began washing the disciples' feet and wiping them with the towel which He had tied around Himself. So He came to Simon Peter. He said to Him, "Lord, You are washing my feet?" Jesus answered and said to him, "What I am doing, you do not realize right now, but you will understand later." Peter said to Him, "Never shall You wash my feet!" Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no place with Me." Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, then wash not only my feet, but also my hands and my head!" Jesus said to him, "He who has bathed needs only to wash his feet; otherwise he is completely clean. And you are clean—but not all of you."

MATTHEW 5:1-12

Now when Jesus saw the crowds, He went up on the mountain; and after He sat down, His disciples came to Him. And He opened His mouth and began to teach them, saying, "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
"Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.
"Blessed are the gentle, for they will inherit the earth.
"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied.
"Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.
"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.
"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God.
"Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

HIS GENEROSITY

MARK 8:1-8

In those days, when there was again a large crowd and they had nothing to eat, Jesus summoned His disciples and said to them, “I feel compassion for the people because they have remained with Me for three days already and have nothing to eat. And if I send them away hungry to their homes, they will faint on the way; and some of them have come from a great distance.” And His disciples replied to Him, “Where will anyone be able to find enough bread here in this desolate place to satisfy these people?” And He was asking them, “How many loaves do you have?” And they said, “Seven.” And He directed the people to recline on the ground; and taking the seven loaves, He gave thanks and broke them, and started giving them to His disciples to serve, and they served them to the people. They also had a few small fish; and after He had blessed them, He told the disciples to serve these as well. And they ate and were satisfied; and they picked up seven large baskets full of what was left over of the broken pieces.

LUKE 21:1-4

Now He looked up and saw the wealthy putting their gifts into the temple treasury. And He saw a poor widow putting in two lepta coins. And He said, “Truly I say to you, this poor widow put in more than all of them; for they all contributed to the offering from their surplus; but she, from her poverty, put in all that she had to live on.”

HIS SUFFERING

JOHN 19:1-7, 17-19

So Pilate then took Jesus and had Him flogged. And the soldiers twisted together a crown of thorns and placed it on His head, and put a purple cloak on Him; and they repeatedly came up to Him and said, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and slapped Him in the face again and again. And then Pilate came out again and said to them, "See, I am bringing Him out to you so that you will know that I find no grounds at all for charges in His case." Jesus then came out, wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And Pilate said to them, "Behold, the Man!" So when the chief priests and the officers saw Him, they shouted, saying, "Crucify, crucify!" Pilate said to them, "Take Him yourselves and crucify Him; for I find no grounds for charges in His case!" The Jews answered him, "We have a law, and by that law He ought to die, because He made Himself out to be the Son of God!"...They took Jesus, therefore, and He went out, carrying His own cross, to the place called the Place of a Skull, which in Hebrew is called, Golgotha. There they crucified Him, and with Him two other men, one on either side, and Jesus in between. Now Pilate also wrote an inscription and put it on the cross. It was written: "JESUS THE NAZARENE, THE KING OF THE JEWS."

MARK 8:34-37

And He summoned the crowd together with His disciples, and said to them, "If anyone wants to come after Me, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake and the gospel's will save it. For what does it benefit a person to gain the whole world, and forfeit his soul? For what could a person give in exchange for his soul?"

HIS POWER

JOHN 20:1-2,11-18

Now on the first day of the week Mary Magdalene came early to the tomb, while it was still dark, and saw the stone already removed from the tomb. So she ran and came to Simon Peter and to the other disciple whom Jesus loved, and said to them, "They have taken the Lord from the tomb, and we do not know where they have put Him."...

But Mary was standing outside the tomb, weeping; so as she wept, she stooped to look into the tomb; and she saw two angels in white sitting, one at the head and one at the feet, where the body of Jesus had been lying. And they said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "Because they have taken away my Lord, and I do not know where they put Him." When she had said this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, and yet she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you seeking?" Thinking that He was the gardener, she said to Him, "Sir, if you have carried Him away, tell me where you put Him, and I will take Him away." Jesus said to her, "Mary!" She turned and said to Him in Hebrew, "Rabboni!" (which means, Teacher). Jesus said to her, "Stop clinging to Me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father; but go to My brothers and say to them, 'I am ascending to My Father and your Father, and My God and your God.'" Mary Magdalene came and announced to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord," and that He had said these things to her.

2 CORINTHIANS 12:9-10

And He has said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for power is perfected in weakness." Most gladly, therefore, I will rather boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may dwell in me. Therefore I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in distresses, in persecutions, in difficulties, in behalf of Christ; for when I am weak, then I am strong.

HIS INVITATION

MATTHEW 8:18-22

Now when Jesus saw a crowd around Him, He gave orders to depart to the other side of the sea. Then a scribe came and said to Him, “Teacher, I will follow You wherever You go.” And Jesus said to him, “The foxes have holes and the birds of the sky have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.” And another of the disciples said to Him, “Lord, allow me first to go and bury my father.” But Jesus *said to him, “Follow Me, and let the dead bury their own dead.”

MATTHEW 13:44-46

“The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in the field, which a man found and hid again; and from joy over it he goes and sells everything that he has, and buys that field. “Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant seeking fine pearls, and upon finding one pearl of great value, he went and sold everything that he had and bought it.