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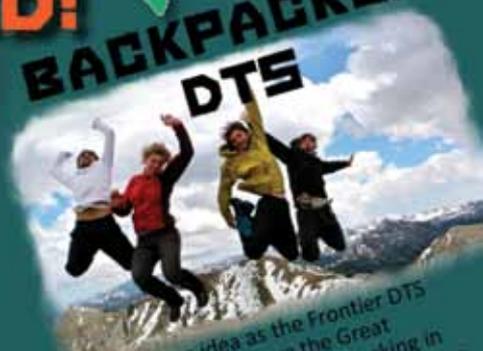
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REACH THE UNREACHED!



BACKPACKERS DTS

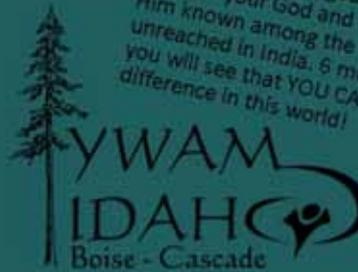


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CONTRIBUTORS



My name is Sheril Brasher and I'm from Alabama (I don't have a southern accent). I'm on staff with YWAM San Diego Baja working with Mission Adventures. I can write backwards and upside down with accuracy. My favorite verse is 1 Timothy 4:12. sheril.brasher@ywamsdb.org



Ashley Chen is from the Bay Area, CA but is currently residing in Pittsburgh at Carnegie Mellon University. She's better than Chuck Norris because Chuck Norris never went on Mission Adventures. Get in touch with that much awesomeness at ashleychen414@gmail.com.



My name is Brett Cox and I'm from Kansas. I'm currently on staff with YWAM in Las Vegas, with my wife Sami. My favorite bible verse is John 14:15 and my favorite animal is a giraffe. Contact me at brette@ywamlasvegas.org



My name is Sami Cox and I'm from Kansas City MO or KS depending on how I feel. I am on staff at YWAM Las Vegas with DTS and 'The Butterfly Project'. I love making my own soaps, lotions, salves, and shampoos! Oh, and I have a throwing up phobia. samiweakley@gmail.com



Phil Cunningham is married to Amy Cunningham. Father of Emma (8) Abby (3) and one more girl on the way. Has worked with YWAM since 1994. He can be found playing with his kids, doing dishes and blogging over at StepsofJustice.org



My name is Teresa. I'm from West Covina, CA and working with YWAM San Diego Baja. I work in the Human Resources department and as a translator. I have been to 32 countries, and love sharing the gospel. I come from a huge Mexican family, including my twin sis. titadeleon@gmail.com



My name is Dave Dubrall and I'm from Southern California. I was previously on staff at YWAM Idaho. There's motion in the ocean.



Kia Ora! My name is Erica Gadsby and I am writing this from downtown Auckland, New Zealand where my husband Wade and I look after Mission Adventures. My favorite food is KFC, and my life was enriched when I ate a KFC curry in Thailand. erica@missionadventures.co.nz



My name is Wade Gadsby. I am currently the Mission Adventures NZ Executive National President Director (along with my wife). When I was two years old I attempted to flush the toilet all by myself, I fell, landed on my head and still have a scar to this day.



You can call me Big Mike. Originally from SoCal, now living in OR, I've been a YWAMer for 3 years and have loved empowering people to change the world. I love Jesus and want the entire world to know of His goodness. With the help of all of you, I desire to see every nation reached.

YWAM MINNEAPOLIS

DTS

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does this photo bother YOU?



Cambodia, Garbage Dump

Photo: Vanessa Hadford

CONTRIBUTORS



My name is Jean-Philippe Godin but people call me JP and I'm from Switzerland. I have spent the last 3 and half years with YWAM Ensenada, and I'm married to a beautiful Mexican lady.

My life verse is, Jeremiah 1:10. Write me: tchampi_one@yahoo.fr



My name is Madison Graffe and I'm from Gig Harbor, WA. I live in Tijuana, Mexico staffing the Biblical Core Course. I'm currently brainstorming how to combine teaching the Bible,

discipleship and justice issues into the same ministry.



My name is Lacey Gray and I'm from Washington. I was previously on staff with YWAM Idaho. My long term goal is to start a ministry for women and children who are abused by the sex-trafficking

industry and give them a chance at hope and life restored.



My name is Thomas Gray and I was previously on staff with YWAM Idaho. I currently live in Washington with my wife, Lacey. We had our first date at a wonder of the world the Taj Mahal

and I proposed to her at another wonder, the Pyramids of Giza.



My name is Ronda. I worked at YWAM San Francisco for 10 years. Today I live in Seattle. I'm studying International Business and hope to own a business in SE Asia. I married my best

friend and we love to laugh, enjoy good food and spend time with the people we love.



My name is Samuel Lee Henderson and I'm from Boise, ID/Modesto, CA. I direct Mission Adventures in Las Vegas. I dream of the North American streets being empty of Christians because the church went to

serve the nations. Natalie and Rosalee are the next queens of England (my nieces).



My name is Beth Konrath and I'm from Nova Scotia, Canada. I am currently on staff at YWAM Las Vegas with Mission Adventures.

My favorite animal is a bear ... that is yellow, wearing a red shirt I can be reached at bethk@ywamlasvegas.org

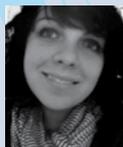


My name is Kay-Charlotte McClurg and I was born in Oklahoma and now reside in San Diego. I've been in YWAM for 21 years, and one of my favorite experiences was standing face to face

with a practicing cannibal and not getting eaten (see picture).



My name is Marty Meyer and I am the pioneer and director of YWAM Idaho. I'm passionate about Jesus, my family and all things outdoors! marty@ywamidaho.org



My name is Sarah Jayne Murphy and I live in Prince George, BC Canada. I am currently a student at UNBC for Social Work. This side of eternity, the most freeing thing I did was shave my

head after my high school graduation. I did my DTS in viva Las Vegas

Our lives go from ignorance of what is going on in the world to paralysis as we find out how messed up and unjust the world really is. 1.25 billion living on less than \$1 a day, 27 million slaves, a child dying every 15 seconds from a water related illness. These facts can easily lead us to despair.

Steps Of Justice is a ministry that helps you and I take steps towards doing justice in a messed up and unjust world. Please join us and take steps towards justice at www.stepsofjustice.org and follow us on twitter @stepsofjustice and join us on Facebook.

Check out the 30 Day Prayer & Action Guide that takes you though 30 day's of doing justice. Also, see the web site for 2012 Mission trip opportunities to Thailand and Cambodia.



STEPS OF JUSTICE
A MINISTRY OF YOUTH WITH A MISSION

CONTRIBUTORS



P. Wade Pallister likes cooking, laptop techno (it's the new punk), playing bass, hanging out with his wife Joanna and übercute kids, and sticking it to The Man.

He makes soap (yes, like *Fight Club*) and when he can't sleep, he dreams of Asian soup, BBQ ribs, and making the world a better place through social enterprise.



My name is Danielle (Reedy) Roberts and I live in Maryland serving in the United States Navy. I did my DTS in the fall of 2006 in Ensenada, Mexico. I love to run and swim and adventure

along with my husband, Lucas, in our Jeep Wrangler.



Tim & his wife Sarah & four kids, work with Mission Adventures in Salem, Oregon. They've been with YWAM for 11 years, 8 of which were in Russia, which explains Tim's fluency in

Spanish. Tim loves to hang with his family, play rugby, & watch John Wayne movies.



My name is Andrew Ramsey and I'm from Fort Wayne, Indiana. I am currently on staff at YWAM Las Vegas where I also did my DTS. Check out 2 Timothy 2:15 for my favorite verse.



My name is Martine, I have a last name you gotta be Scandinavian to pronounce, and I come from Norway. I love Jesus, people and coffee, and my goal in life is to do everything with passion.

martineht@gmail.com



My name is Zianna Weston and I'm from Bellingham, WA. I'm currently a student at University of Washington in Seattle. I did my DTS in Las Vegas with outreach to Turkey in 2009 with a lot of

awesome people.

THE ABOLITIONIST DISCIPLESHIP TRAINING SCHOOL

AUGUST 2011

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EXPAND HEAVEN HERE

*“As you go,
preach this
message: ‘The
kingdom of heaven
is near.’ Heal the sick,
raise the dead, cleanse
those who have leprosy, drive
out demons. Freely you have
received, freely give.”*

Matthew 10:7-8 (NIV)

Image courtesy NASA | earthobservatory.nasa.gov

EXPAND HEAVEN HERE

It's About the Kingdom of Heaven

All through his ministry, Jesus spoke about the Kingdom of Heaven. Again and again he told us it's time to, "Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near." In the coming days, we're going to go explore what Jesus meant when he spoke about this kingdom:

It Has to Be Seen

The Kingdom has to be perceived. If you try to get a sharp definition and a clear scholarly understanding, you don't get very far. Jesus said only those who walk by faith can see it. It's like when the prophet Elisha and his servant were facing the entire Aramean army. The servant could not understand Elisha's optimism. When Elisha prayed, the servant saw that God's heavenly army was indeed bigger than the Aramean's. (See 2 Kings 6).

It Is Supernatural

We tend to think that ultimate reality is what we can see, touch and taste. We're taught that if you can test it and repeat it, then it must be true. But before there was time or material, there was another reality. It was a supernatural, heavenly reality. The things that came to be when God spoke are nothing more than the word of God, secondhand. Spiritual things may not be material, but they are substantial, and they can be perceived. One day, this earth will melt away, and we will all more clearly see the supernatural reality.

It Is Relational

One of the mysteries of God that he is revealing to us is that he is three in one. God has always been three, and he has always been relational. Perhaps the reason God created the universe and humanity, was to share the goodness of his relationship with us. The ultimate heavenly kingdom is based on relationship. When we have healthy relationships with those around us, we are reflecting the nature of the heavenly kingdom

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It's About the Spheres

This Kingdom of Heaven is entering all area of our societies. The culture of heaven is being imprinted on all the cultures of the earth. As we explore the theme we'll consider how heaven is expressed in:

- Family
- Education
- Media
- Celebration
- Economy
- Government
- Religion

In 1975, Loren Cunningham, the founder of Youth With A Mission, was spending time with his family on a sunny day in Colorado. As he was relaxing in the sun, he was praying and thinking, and “considering how we Christians – not just the mission [he] was part of, but all of us – could turn the world around for Jesus.” (*Making Jesus Lord* (YWAM, 1988, p. 134) A list of seven points, what would later be known as the Seven Spheres of Society, began to come together in his mind. He believed that God was giving him this list of categories that we as Christians should focus on in order to turn the nations to God. He wrote down the list on a little piece of paper, and stuck it in his pocket.

The next morning, Loren went to meet his good friend, Dr. Bill Bright, the leader of Campus Crusade for Christ. During the meeting, Bill started telling Loren of this list God had given them, that he believed we should focus on to turn the nations back to God! Loren pulled his little piece of paper out of his pocket and showed it to Bill, and the men were in awe that both the lists were almost exactly the same! Today, YWAM bases and other organizations around the world are focusing on these specific areas and seeking God through intercession on His heart for these specific areas, and what we can do to bring the nations back to Jesus!



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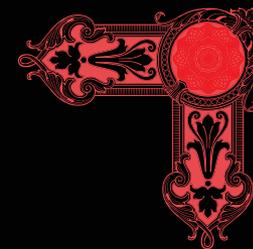


It's About the Character of God

When we consider what the Kingdom of Heaven is like, we quickly realize we need to understand what God is like. Of course, all of us have limited understanding of this unlimited Being. Yet, God is revealing himself to us. If we seek him, if we search for him, we'll discover what he is like and how he operates.

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It's About Seeking & Finding

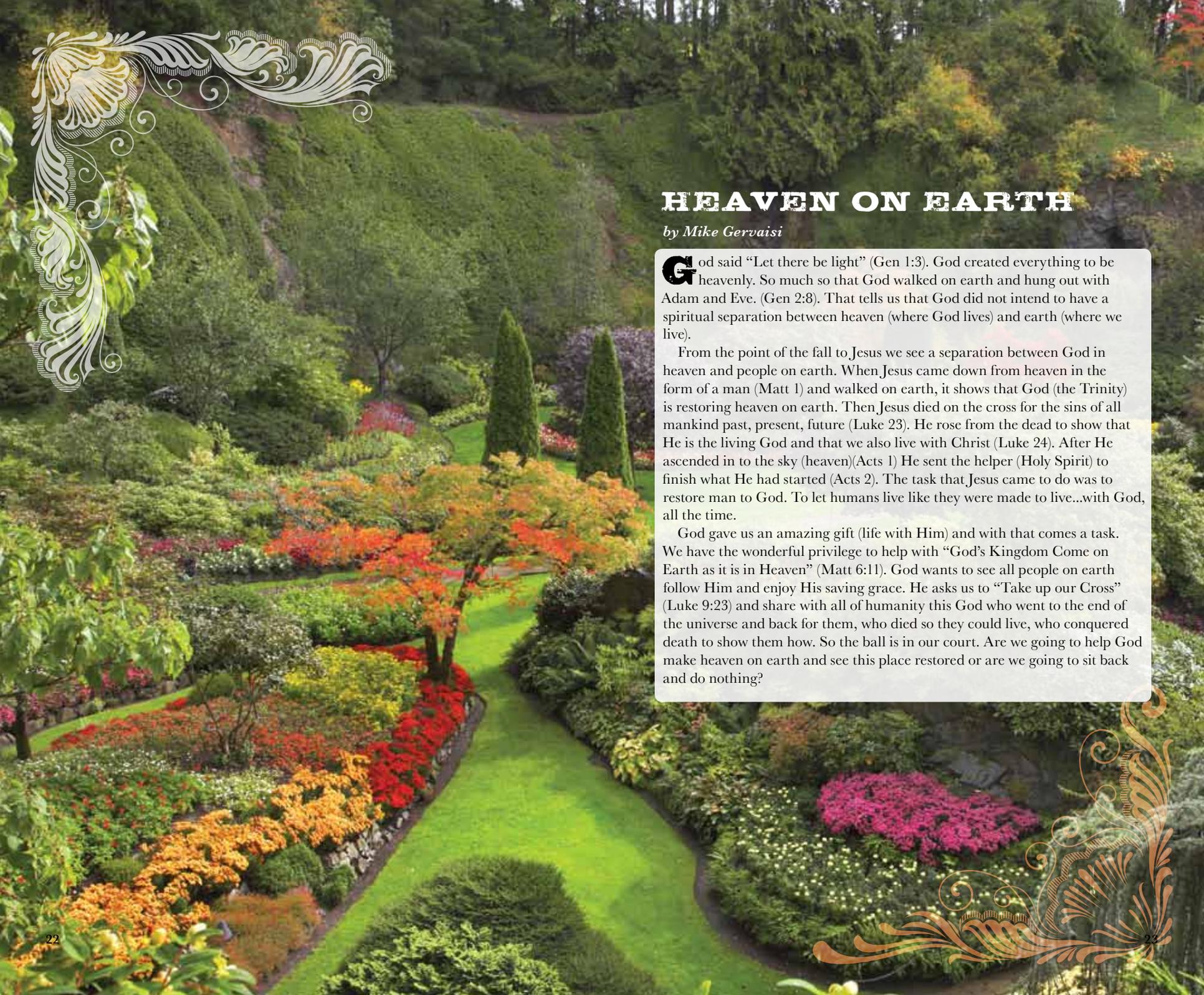
The kingdom has to be sought after. It can and will be found, and because of this, all these things will be given to you. He has promised us his kingdom, we haven't been asked to seek and achieve something that isn't obtainable.

“The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field.

“Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.

Matthew 13:43–46





HEAVEN ON EARTH

by Mike Gervaisi

God said “Let there be light” (Gen 1:3). God created everything to be heavenly. So much so that God walked on earth and hung out with Adam and Eve. (Gen 2:8). That tells us that God did not intend to have a spiritual separation between heaven (where God lives) and earth (where we live).

From the point of the fall to Jesus we see a separation between God in heaven and people on earth. When Jesus came down from heaven in the form of a man (Matt 1) and walked on earth, it shows that God (the Trinity) is restoring heaven on earth. Then Jesus died on the cross for the sins of all mankind past, present, future (Luke 23). He rose from the dead to show that He is the living God and that we also live with Christ (Luke 24). After He ascended in to the sky (heaven)(Acts 1) He sent the helper (Holy Spirit) to finish what He had started (Acts 2). The task that Jesus came to do was to restore man to God. To let humans live like they were made to live...with God, all the time.

God gave us an amazing gift (life with Him) and with that comes a task. We have the wonderful privilege to help with “God’s Kingdom Come on Earth as it is in Heaven” (Matt 6:11). God wants to see all people on earth follow Him and enjoy His saving grace. He asks us to “Take up our Cross” (Luke 9:23) and share with all of humanity this God who went to the end of the universe and back for them, who died so they could live, who conquered death to show them how. So the ball is in our court. Are we going to help God make heaven on earth and see this place restored or are we going to sit back and do nothing?

TORNADOES

by Tim Walter

I think one of the coolest jobs in the world would be a Tornado Chaser. I love watching *Storm Chasers* on the Discovery Channel. It's an intense show to say the least. It is cool when they show the moment the tornado hits the ground and things are thrown all over the place. But the part I love the most is the two minutes before the twister hits when the sky is a weird dark color and the wind begins to pick up.

As a child, I lived in South Dakota and I remember those hot summer afternoons that would all of a sudden turn cool and the sky would turn shades of purple and blue... ahh, the anticipation of the storm! My whole family would sit on our porch and watch the clouds roll in—we even saw the twisters fall—what a rush!

Let's get spiritual for a moment. When it comes to Christ returning to bring His kingdom to earth I am convicted that my anticipation and excitement for that often is nowhere near the type I had when I used to watch twisters drop. If anything should give us excitement, hope, and thrills, it should be the *fact* that our King is coming back—and all things will be made right! All the injustices we battle, all the junk that destroys us will be wiped away. Do we pray for the return of Jesus Christ? How can we anticipate the coming of the kingdom? Kind of the same way we would prepare for a twister when you think about it.

- 1. Expect and Appreciate:** Sitting on the porch was always a special time admiring the majestic beauty of the coming storm. Do you expect the coming of the Kingdom of Heaven? Do you appreciate the *truth* that it is indeed coming, and, despite all the bad things going on, we have a true *hope* to be held now and in the future?
- 2. Plan and Prepare:** Most people in the Midwest, or any other geographical location similar to a pancake, have some plan for what to do when the twisters come—for the “what if” situation. How are you living your life today in preparation for the coming eternal kingdom? Are the plans you are making in your life in line with the word of God? Are you living a life that will be unashamed at the coming of the king?
- 3. Act and Attack:** Those tornado chasers are some crazy dudes... but they sure got guts! We are called to look for the kingdom that is coming, and we are called to *act* on our faith and *attack* the present kingdom of darkness in this world. Are you an active Christian, dedicated to battling the forces of darkness all around you? This kingdom of the world we live in is no joke and we have to deal aggressively and battle for the kingdom of God to come. If we only had the bravery of some of those tornado chasers when it comes to dealing with the injustices we see... how amazing a show we could have on the Discovery Channel!



Our Father in heaven,

hallowed be your name,

your kingdom come,

your will be done,

on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

And forgive us our debts,

as we also have forgiven our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation,

but deliver us from

the evil one.

ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN

by Sheril Brasher

When the disciples asked their Master to teach them to pray, Jesus taught them the simple prayer we find recorded in Matthew 6. It's meant to be a guide on how to pray—like a pattern. It's not some sort of magical spell that will make all your wishes come true if you repeat it again and again. Let's break it down and see what Jesus taught his disciples.

Our Father in Heaven: Calling God, “Our Father” was (and still is) a radical thing. Jesus taught his followers that we can have a relationship with him, and that we can go directly to God. Back in the Old Testament, people had to go through a priest. Jesus showed the disciples that God isn't just some far off being, but a near Father. Jesus also uses the pronoun ‘Our,’ not ‘my.’ This suggest our relationship with God is like Jesus’ relationship with Him.

Holy Is Your Name: To the disciples, God's name was so holy that they wouldn't say it out loud or even write it out. Holy means sacred, regarded with reverence, and set apart. It involves love, respect and longing to please Him in all we say and do. God should be honored in everything, one of the commandments is do not take the Lord's name in vain.

Your Kingdom Come: Matthew 10 describes the Kingdom as healing the sick, raising the dead, casting out demons, and cleansing the lepers. When we pray these words, we recognize that not everything is right and healthy in our world yet. It's an acknowledgement that we want God's authority to extend all the way from heaven into our reality. It even implies that we want to be active in helping the Kingdom come.

Your Will Be Done on Earth: God's Will is perfect. When we pray this, we're asking God to guide our movements, our thoughts, and our actions. And not just in our own lives, we're asking God to accomplish His purposes in the whole earth.

As It Is in Heaven: God's will is already being done in Heaven. It's described in scripture as having been created by God (Gen 1), the storehouse of his bounty (Deut 28:12), God's dwelling place (1 Kings 8), God's Throne (Isaiah 66), there are angels (Matt 18:10), powers and authorities in submission to Jesus (1 Peter 3:22), all praising God (Revelation). Every time we pray, we're asking God to make Earth more like heaven.

Give Us this Day Our Daily Bread: God expects us to ask him for what we need. It's not a surprise to him, and it's an indication of what kind of Father He is that he's looking to provide for us.

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ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN

Forgive Us Our Debts: This isn't necessarily about money. The Hebrew word for debt means to topple or falter. We are asking God to forgive us for our faults—the times we mess up.

As We Have Forgiven Our Debtors: Jesus taught his disciples that his followers are people who forgive. He expects us to forgive those who offend us even as we ask God to forgive us.

And Lead Us not into Temptation: The Hebrew word used here for temptation means trial. We are to ask God to prevent us from failing, to keep us safe.

But Deliver Us From The Evil One: The evil one is Satan. Ephesians 6:12 says that we struggle against darkness and the evil forces in the heavenly realms. In the book of John, Jesus asks not to take His disciples out of the world but protect them from the evil one. Matthew 13 talks about the evil one snatching away what is sown into the hearts of men (the word of God).

So why don't you take five minutes and pray through the Lord's Prayer right now? As you pray, think about these things and remember all that this prayer means. Psalms 19:14 says, "Let the words of your mouth and the meditation of your heart be acceptable in the sight of the Lord."

EVERYDAY HEAVEN

by Ronda Kimm

When I was eighteen, I decided that I never wanted a normal life. I left home, went on a mission trip and just never came home. I mean, every day my job was to tell people about Jesus and travel around the world. It seemed like heaven had come to my life that had seemed so boring before.

Ten years later, God began to call to my biggest fear: a season of normalcy. I mean how could He do this? I was tired yes, and perhaps I really did want to expand my education and experiences, but normal life? Where is heaven in that? So, I had to challenge myself that if the Kingdom of Heaven is near, how do I reach it in my everyday, normal life? He began to speak...

*Go through,
Go through the gates!
Prepare the way for the people;
Build up,
Build up the highway!
Take out the stones,
Lift up a banner for the peoples!*
Isaiah 62:10

I need to take action and “Go through the gates.” I can’t sit still, even in normal life. Every day I need to get up and say, “which way do I go today?” There is no sitting back; it’s about action.

After that, I need to “Prepare the way for the people.” This kingdom of Heaven is something I have tasted. The day I met my Savior my life changed forever. I need to prepare that same hope for those who don’t have it yet. I need to prepare for each friend, each co-worker, and each family member a way to taste heaven. I can do that through intercession, prayer and study.

Next, I need to “Build up the highway.” For me, this has been building relationships and trust. Building up a road where Jesus and others can meet and also a road where Jesus and I can meet. I need to make each relationship purposeful and strong; quality time, cups of coffee and truth.

Then it’s all about “taking out the stones.” This one is hard. Even if there is a road built for all of us to meet God, if it’s full of stones, we can’t walk on it. It is difficult to experience heaven on earth with so much mess. I need to deal with the sin in my life and see God clear that path for Him and all of us to walk on. “Repent, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near.” (Matthew 4:17). Jesus knew this was an important piece of experiencing heaven on earth. I need to daily take the stones out of the roads I am building.

And lastly, “Lift up a banner for the peoples!” There is nothing normal or boring about this. It’s a shout, it’s praise, and it’s bold and scary and exciting all at the same time. My life needs to loudly lift up a banner that points to Jesus. If I don’t do this then the road I built will lead to nothing.

I believe that heaven on earth looks like Isaiah 62:10, every day, no matter how normal or exciting it may be. And in that, miracles will happen! People will get healed. Friends will find Jesus. I will have more intimacy with God. After all, the Kingdom of Heaven is near!

DO JUSTICE

by Phil Cunningham

I used to wander around wondering what I was supposed to do to follow Jesus. Then I came across this verse that seemed to sum everything up for me:

“He has shown you, oh man what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To do justice, to love mercy and to walk humbly with Him.” Micah 6:8 (NIV)

When I look at this verse, I don’t just see it as some suggestions on what my calling is as a follower of Jesus. I see God saying, “If you consider yourself my follower, this is what it looks like. You should be doing justice, loving mercy and walking humbly with me.”

So, umm, what does it look like to ‘do justice?’

- Currently there are 27 million people living in slavery.
- 1.25 billion people are living in extreme poverty, earning only \$1 US a day—or less.
- 10 million Africans die each year from preventable diseases like malaria, diarrhea and TB.

This list goes on and on. What does it look like to ‘do justice’ in situations like these? It is to tell Jesus you care and that you want to help. Then look for ways to get involved. This is your responsibility, it is not someone else’s. You are invited to be a part of putting an end to injustice.

What does it look like to love mercy? Well, it is seeing the world as Jesus sees it. When you see the poor, help them out. When you see a hungry person on the side of the freeway or in your town, ask what they need. As I am writing this a punk rock looking dude just walked by my window. He has knee-high black leather boots, a shaved head and frankly, he looks a bit scary.

The thing that made me notice him though was that he was pushing a handicapped person in a wheel chair. I’ve seen him at the feeding program too. Scary or not, he is showing love for sure.

Finally, what does it look like to walk humbly with God? Well, just admit that you are His creation and not the other way around. Walk in obedience to Him, trusting that when He tells you what do to it is always for the best, even though it may not seem that way at the time.

I have found that when I live this way, being obedient to Micah 6:8, that I am usually living my life with purpose and feeling like I am doing what He has called me to do. Try it, it just may work.





MERRY CHRISTMAS

by P. Wade Pallister

Okay, so I doubt that you're reading this on Christmas, but it's at the top of my mind right now. See, I watch a lot of people get caught up in the rat race so that they can make more money, so they can drug themselves with more stuff. This downward spiral can be really intense during the commercial insanity that is the Christmas shopping season. Right now, I have an increasing desire to avoid the useless junk, materialism, stress, and especially the heavy credit card debt, that this brings. I know, I know, you might not be thinking of Christmas right now, but please, hear me out.

The last few years I have been really challenged by an organization called Advent Conspiracy (adventconspiracy.org) They aim to “restore the scandal of Christmas by substituting compassion for consumption.” Their goal is to challenge people to “Worship Fully, Spend Less, Give More, and to Love All.” Sounds pretty great, huh? This sounds so cool I want to do it all year long, not just at Christmas!

So what does *restore the scandal of Christmas* mean—I mean, other than that ugly sweater that your Aunt knitted for you? Well, we all know that we celebrate the birth of Jesus at Christmas. But have you really thought about how scandalous and revolutionary this is? The actual, real, live-in-the-flesh, Son of the Almighty Creator of the Universe was born here on our tiny little planet. He was *simultaneously* 100% God and 100% human—not one or the other, but both, at the same time. That is absolutely insane! Jesus did all sorts of normal human stuff like growing up, hanging out in the tabernacle, working as a carpenter, going to weddings, loving his mother, going fishing with his friends—all while still being 100% God. Jesus showed us that what we do with our lives here and now has spiritual value and eternal consequences. He didn't just pass his time on earth until he went to heaven because nothing here mattered.

And then he said completely mind-blowing things like Matthew 10:7,8 - “As you go, proclaim this message: “The kingdom of heaven has

come near.’ Heal the sick, raise the dead, cleanse those who have leprosy, drive out demons. Freely you have received; freely give.”

So often we live our day to day lives in complete opposition to that verse. Too many Christians seem to just try to be good while waiting to go to heaven thinking that the work of healing the sick, raising the dead, and casting out demons is only for much more spiritual people—for professionals like pastors and missionaries.

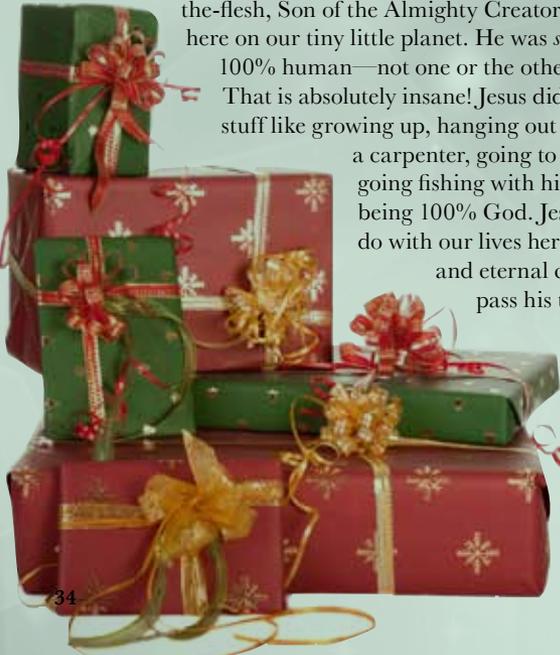
Just for interest's sake, let's imagine that it is backwards day and I will rephrase that verse in the complete opposite...

8,7:01 wettaM - “I am going to stay and keep my mouth shut because heaven is a long way away. I will sit on my butt and do nothing, not help anyone and think only about me. God gave me lots and I will keep it to myself.”

When I put it that way it does sound pretty stupid. The scandal of all of Christianity is that not only is Jesus the greatest gift to mankind but he wants us to help him bring heaven to earth. All of Christianity is about Jesus giving all of himself to us so we can give all of ourselves to those who need to experience the miracle of heaven in their day-to-day lives, right now.

What would it look like if we spent less time on ourselves and meeting our own needs, and instead thought of others and how we could meet their needs? Isn't that exactly what Jesus did for us? An obvious thing to do would be to spend less money on ourselves so we can give more money away. There are lots of great charities who are doing all sorts of great things to bring the Kingdom of Heaven here on earth. We should totally give more of our resources to make the world a better place. But what if we also gave more of ourselves? What if we gave more of our time to our families, our children, or if we volunteered? How would that make a difference in seeing a little bit more of heaven here?

Continues on the Next Page...



Merry Christmas

Merry Christmas



Jesus showed us how to love the poor, the forgotten, the overlooked and the sick. That is exactly what you are going to have a chance to do on this mission trip. The question I have for you is, how are you going to continue to do that when you go home next week? How will you do that when you go back to school? Will your focus be on yourself, your wealth, your comfort or is it on bringing the Kingdom of Heaven to the earth and his plans for your life? Are you going to Worship Fully, Spend Less, Give More, and Love All?

The life of Jesus on earth shows us that what we do in our day to day lives has eternal consequences. He is interested in every part of our lives, not just the “spiritual” bits. The challenge of Matthew 10:7,8 is to be the agent of change to bring heaven here, right now.

The kingdom of God is about the present, not just the future, and God is most interested in what He can do through us, not just what He has done in and for us. Remember, worship fully, spend less, give more, love all.

Merry Christmas and have a great summer!

~pwade



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LET'S READ THE WHOLE BOOK OF MATTHEW

by Sheril Brasher

We're about to take a journey through the book of Matthew. It's widely believed that the apostle Matthew wrote this book to Jews to convince them that Jesus really was the Messiah. He references 40 Messianic prophecies from the Old Testament to show that Jesus fulfilled them. He also uses the phrase "Kingdom of Heaven" instead of "Kingdom of God" because Jews believed that God's name was too holy to speak.

Cast of Characters:

- **Jews:** They were the nation of Israel (Israelites from the Old Testament). In the OT we learn that the Israelites divided into two different kingdoms (Israel, the Northern Kingdom and Judah, the Southern Kingdom).
- **Gentiles:** Basically anyone NOT Jewish. In the OT the Gentiles were simply those not descendants from Abraham but were not despised. This changed during the exile as the Jews suffered the bitterest of treatment at the hands of their Gentile captors. They were then regarded as unclean and were considered the enemies of God and His people.
- **Pharisees:** Mostly middle class tradesmen with no formal education. They had a passion to keep Israel spiritually and ethically clean by the observation of the Law (as given by God to Moses in the OT). To avoid breaking the Law, they kept themselves as far as possible from other men. They were the ultimate legalists and were known for their covetousness, self-righteousness and hypocrisy.
- **Sadducees:** They were more secularly minded and had adopted many of the Greek customs. They were very wealthy and influential and were the elite nobles of the Jewish nation. They rejected oral Law and only accepted the 5 books of Moses as inspired scripture (the first 5 books of the OT).
- **Samaritans:** They were the descendants of the Israelites of the Northern Kingdom (Israel). After the fall of Samaria, they stayed and married with people who migrated from Assyria. They were hated by the Jews and considered "half-breeds" because they had married foreigners. The Jewish people considered them to be equal to dogs.
- **Disciples/Apostles:** Followers of Jesus. These were the people who left everything behind, including their families, to follow Jesus.



What are you hoping to get out of the devotionals in the following pages?

Is God speaking to you about anything, through what you just read?

Pick a character to be. Pray that God would speak to you through His word, as we dig through the book of Matthew.



READ MATTHEW 1

by Sheril Brasher

The book of Matthew starts with the genealogy of Jesus. This was extremely important to the Jewish people. Not only does this help to prove that Jesus was from the line of David and Abraham as promised in Genesis 12 & 22 as well as 2 Samuel 7, but it helps to set the stage with a reminder that not everyone in that lineage was “pure-bred.” I believe the 5 women listed here are significant because in Jewish custom women were not included in their records. Even more so because these women had scandalous pasts and many weren’t even Jewish to begin with.

Tamar: (Genesis 38:6-30). Through a series of circumstances she coerced her father-in-law, Judah (also called Israel) to impregnate her and was important in saving this family name and inheritance.

Rahab: (Joshua 2: 1-24) She was a prostitute who hid the 2 spies at the risk of her own life.

Ruth: (Ruth 1:1 - 4:22) She was a humble servant, an outcast in a foreign land.

Bathsheba: (2 Samuel 11:1-27) She had an adulterous affair with King David after which David ordered the murder of her husband on the front lines of battle.

Mary: (Matthew 1:30-36) She was pregnant while still engaged. This caused quite the controversy to the point that Joseph, her fiancé, wanted to leave her until an angel confirmed that it was part of God’s plan.

After reading each story, why do you think it is important that these women were included in the lineage of Jesus? What significance would this have for the Jewish nation?

Who else can you think of in the Bible that have similar stories of scandals that God used in mighty ways?

Do you ever feel like you don’t belong, like you are too insignificant to be a part of God’s plans? After reading about each of these women, how do you feel?

READ MATTHEW 2

by Sami Cox

When we think of the birth of Jesus, most of us think of a bright star leading three wise men through the desert to find a baby with a bunch of happy farm animals, and Mary and Joseph smiling serenely. This is the sweet version. In actuality, Jesus was born in a dirty stable filled with animals and muck. Shortly after Jesus' birth, King Herod heard of the Messiah being born, and Kings worshipping Him. He became insanely jealous and went to kill the baby. God spoke to Joseph in a dream, telling him, "Get up, take the child and his mother and escape to Egypt. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him."

Joseph acted out of obedience, fleeing to Egypt with Mary and Jesus and staying there until Herod was dead. After the death of Herod, God spoke to Joseph once again in a dream, saying "Get up, take the child and his mother and go to the land of Israel, for those who were trying to take the child's life are dead." Joseph once again acted in obedience and took Mary and Jesus back to Nazareth.



Has God ever told you to do something specific?

Did you do it? If not, why? What held you back?

Pray now and ask God if there's anything that He wants you to do. Will you be obedient?



READ MATTHEW 3

by Erica Gadsby

John the Baptist was a hard-core guy. He lived in the desert and ate locusts like they were popcorn. He ripped the hair off camels and made it into his clothing. When the Pharisees and the Sadducees—the holiest of men—came to where he was baptizing, he called them all “vipers” and threatened them with the thought of “unquenchable fire!”

On the other hand, John the Baptist devoted his life to preparing the way for Jesus, who was his younger cousin. He baptized tons of people, leading them through a personal confession and gently committing them to the Lord. At the height of his mission, he baptized Jesus Himself after saying that he didn’t feel worthy to do so.

I just love this combination of raw manliness and sensitivity. I also love the fact that this rugged and up-front man was used to release Jesus into His ministry here on Earth. Isaiah had prophesied decades earlier that John would “prepare the way for the Lord,” and although John was the son of a priest, he did what it took to lead people to repentance in readiness for Jesus. He sacrificed a clean, comfortable, easy life in order to “make straight paths” for our Lord.

What comforts are you willing to sacrifice in order to carry out the call that God has for your life?

Are you willing to do anything for Jesus? Find a locust and eat it now! (hehe)

What else did you learn from this chapter?



READ MATTHEW 4

by Beth Konrath

In this chapter, Jesus is led by the Spirit into the desert to be tested. He fasted for 40 days and 40 nights. During this time, Satan/the tempter came to tempt Jesus. If you look closely at the dialogue that goes on between Jesus and Satan, you'll notice that Satan used the Word of God to tempt Jesus!! Satan's no idiot; he's pretty much a master at tricking people into lies. He'll do anything to make us believe lies; even if that means twisting scripture!

We have to be very careful of this happening in our own lives. Satan will try to convince us of things that aren't from God and we need to have scriptures in our heart so we can discern and remember God's truth and not Satan's lies.

Jesus knew the Word of God and He was able to silence the lies of the enemy with God's truth. It's so important to know God's Word and what He says about certain things. We aren't always going to have a Bible with us during those difficult times, so we need to have some verses memorized!

What are some things that the enemy has tried to convince you of? (ex: you're ugly, God doesn't love you, etc.)

Find some scriptures that God says otherwise about the points you just listed. Write them down here. (ex: 1 Peter 3:3-4, 1 John 4:9-10)

Pray against the enemy's influence in your life. Ask God to speak more of His truth into your life.

READ MATTHEW 5

by Beth Konrath

In this chapter, Jesus is talking to his followers about the Kingdom of God. I especially like verses 3-10 where Jesus is talking about blessings. If you read through those verses again you might notice that God blesses people in situations that we usually wouldn't consider blessings. Even though by the world's standards we may not look blessed, we need to focus on what Jesus says. Notice that He is blessing these people with eternal things; things that last. He isn't blessing them with earthly things; a new car, a cute puppy dog or a \$50 bill.

Jesus says, "for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs" at both the beginning and end of the Beatitudes. It is written in the present tense, indicating that we can have the kingdom of heaven NOW. The kingdom of Heaven is both a present and future reality. It is at hand, we just need to take hold of it.



If you read the rest of Matthew 5, you'll see what the kingdom of heaven looks like *here* on earth. What are some of those attributes?

By Jesus' standards, what have you been blessed with? (Matt. 5:3-10)

What does it look like to bring the Kingdom of Heaven to earth, now?

READ MATTHEW 6

by Sheril Brasher

Do you ever worry about what people think about you? What about your weight or the size of your muscles? Have you ever worried about food or having trendy clothes? I have. Growing up, my family didn't have much money. Often our food came from a local food bank and our clothes were from thrift stores. How embarrassing. I saw my mom struggle and worry about providing for us. We were constantly worried about where our next meal was coming from and if we were going to have electricity when we got home.

Verses 25 - 34 talk specifically about worrying. Jesus encourages us not to worry about things like food and clothing because if we look at the birds and the flowers, they are well taken care of. God loves us so much more so why wouldn't he take care of those things for us. The Bible says in 1 Peter 5:7 "Cast all of your cares on Jesus because He cares for you" and Philippians 4:6 "Do not be anxious about anything but in everything in prayer and thanksgiving, present your requests to God."

As I look back on those years, I realize God was providing everything we needed. We never ran out of food and we always had nice clothes to wear. Seek first God's kingdom and righteousness and all of these things will be given to you!



What are some things that you worry about often?

Are you willing to hand those things over to Jesus?

If you are, pray ... cast your burdens onto Him.



READ MATTHEW 7

by Lacey Gray

Listen and obey.” Man, this seems so simple, yet sometimes so hard to do, huh? We have all found ourselves at one point or another in our lives saying, “Yeah, I do what I want”. When it comes to obeying God, this is an option, but not one I would advise that you choose!

Jesus is so passionate about you that he designed special boundaries for your protection and well-being. Jesus has many amazing teachings about how life can be lived to the fullest. He also has teachings that are “Cause and Effect”. Do this and good things will happen to you or to others. Do this (or don’t do this) and bad things will happen to you or to others. God’s word is pretty black and white when it comes to listening and obeying.

Build your life on the rock, that firm, unchanging foundation. You can do this by listening and obeying Jesus’ teachings. And when the wind of confusion, doubt, and the rains of selfishness blow and rock your life, you will not crumble. For you listened and followed the wise teachings of your loving Father who always wants your very best. Build on that **ROCK!!!**

What things have you built your life (house) on? (i.e.: what your friends think of you, what the world says you should be, what your parents want you to be...)

If the question above has been based on things other than Jesus’ truth, how can you start to rebuild your life (foundation)?

What are the things God is calling you to right now? Remember you need to “listen and obey.”



READ MATTHEW 8

by Zianna Weston

In this chapter alone Jesus heals at least 5 individuals; the man with leprosy, the Roman officer's servant, Peter's mother-in-law and 2 demon-possessed men. Jesus does not discriminate. He heals men, women, children and he even heals the Romans who were ruthless soldiers that oppressed his people. Jesus is in the business of healing people; physical sickness and spiritual sickness.

Jesus saved his disciples even when they had little faith in His power to save them from the storm. Jesus braves danger to save. When was the last time you saw someone who was really sick and thought to yourself, "Hey self, I really want to go touch and heal them"? We've been given the power AND authority to call on Jesus to heal people.

God is just as faithful to heal people today as He was back when Jesus was healing people. John 14:12 says; "I tell you the truth, anyone you believes in me will do the same works I have done, and even greater works."

Is there anything in your life that is holding you back from stepping out and asking God to heal someone?

Is there someone you know who needs to be healed by Jesus? Are you willing to pray for them?

What do you need healing for? (Spiritual or physical)

READ MATTHEW 9

by *Jean-Philippe Godin*

Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send our workers into his harvest field.”

Jesus was travelling and teaching about the good news of the kingdom. Did you notice that the good news in this scripture is actually “the kingdom”? So why does Jesus present it as a good news? We have here a picture of the situation Jesus was facing: diseases and sicknesses; lost, harassed and helpless people. It seems that the people were not very happy but struggling with all kinds of troubles. Jesus was of course interested in touching and transforming their lives. He was doing it at the same time that He was teaching about the kingdom, because the two cannot be separated. The kingdom of God, when truly present, transforms the whole community. It starts with individuals who experience a transformation through Christ and then understand the radical obedience to God’s will. The kingdom is present when God’s will is done.

God is waiting for you to take care of the broken and the helpless, to heal the sick and to shepherd his sheep.



Have you ever thought that you could be the one working in the harvest field?

What kind of impact do you want to have on the nations?

Pray and ask God how you can be a world changer.



READ MATTHEW 10

by Samuel Henderson

Sometimes we don't realize how much Christ warned us, or how much guidance He gave us before leaving. When I was younger, I'd cry out, "God! How do I heal? How do I save lives?"

He showed me these verses.

Guide to changing the world:

- Go-(v.5) Go to the lost sheep of Israel. That means "unsaved" people. The family has more seats at the dinner table. Jesus calls us to bring back the rest of the family to the father's arms (see. Matt 28:19)
- Do what Jesus did-(v.7-8) We are not called to just smile at one another, even the world does that. We literally are called to reach out our hands and heal the broken hearts and broken bodies (Isa 61:1-3).
- Don't wait/no excuses-(v.9-10) About 80% of all reasons ever given to stay home from missions, from stepping into our true calling, are influenced by lack of finances. Jesus clearly tells his followers to not be held in fear of materialistic needs. He's called us to reach out, no matter what.
- Don't stress the small stuff-(v.11-15) Often we give up after someone shuts the door on us. We don't even knock twice. How many times has Jesus knocked on our doors? How much more should we not be shaken by a little rejection? Jesus encourages you to not be moved by someone laughing at your idea.
- Expect it to be hard-(v. 16) A sheep around wolves is cautious; it's smart. Jesus warns us to act like sheep; ready to be attacked. When trying to change the world, expect for it to be hard! But do not give up!
- Do Not Be Afraid-(v. 26-33) Don't be afraid of the consequences of living fully alive for Christ. "Behold, I will be with you, even until the end of time." (Matt 28:20)

If I am a disciple of Christ, how do these steps apply to me in everyday life?

Where are the "Lost Sheep" in my life?

What things do I let stop me from walking out my calling? (i.e. money, education, friends).

READ MATTHEW 11

by Madison Graffe

Have you ever seen what a yoke looks like? It's a very large piece of wood, sort of shaped like a mustache which is used to connect two oxen at the neck as they walk and pull a load together. We are all yoked to something, some of those things we have chosen and some are things that have been dumped on us. Jesus is not asking us to take all of our burdens and anxieties, throw them at His feet and step away. He wants you to take those burdens and exchange them for what He has for you.

It's all about being in a relationship with Jesus and, like any relationship, there needs to be trust. A trust that He loves you, a trust that He is gentle, a trust that He truly wants to give you rest in His presence. Jesus loves you so, so much, His plan for you is good, the burdens you bear are light and He will carry them with you. He is desperate for you. That was His desire from the beginning, and it's His desire for you right now.



Imagine Jesus is saying these words to you specifically, how do you feel?
What is happening in your heart?

Are "gentle" and "humble in heart" words that you would use to describe Jesus? If yes, why? If not, why not?

What are yokes in your life that God is asking you to exchange for His?



READ MATTHEW 12

by Brett Cox

What could possibly make someone think that doing something such as healing a person is evil? In this passage the Pharisees, who are the religious leaders of Jesus' time, are defending a law that had become about the visible action more than the heart of God. Jesus called them out on their religiosity, saying to them "If you had one sheep and it fell into a well on the Sabbath, wouldn't you get to work and pull it out? Of course you would!"

We as Christians tend to adopt this judgmental way of thinking into our faith without realizing it. I was in downtown Las Vegas with a friend of mine who is a very godly man that follows the Lord. At the time he was wearing a leather jacket with spikes and a huge wallet chain (this happens to be his style). We walked by an evangelist who told my friend that he wasn't a real Christian because of the way he was dressed. Sometimes we as Christians can get so caught up on the exterior that we can't look past something as silly as a wallet chain. God is more concerned with our hearts than our leather jackets.

Have you ever done something out of religious obligation rather than a heart of honoring God?

Is there a specific area that you tend to have a religious attitude towards?

How are you going to move past your religious thinking/ behavior?



READ MATTHEW 13

by Sarah Murphy

Jesus used parables to relate God's plan in earth's terms. Let's take a closer look at the parable of the farmer scattering seed. The seed is the word of God and the truth of salvation. The sower is Jesus Christ and His disciples (followers) who bring the Good News by His Spirit, and the ground is our hearts. What distinguished the good ground from the others was its fruitfulness (Jesus did not say that the good ground had no stones or thorns—but none that could hinder the growth of the seed).

The difference between hearing and obeying is the difference between fruitful-Christians and barren-hypocrites. Jesus is instructing those who have the ability; those who have heard and understood His words must plant the truth in their hearts, nurture that seed, and put its growth into action.

What is the condition of your heart?

What kind of soil will your seed fall on? What kind of "hearer" are you?

How will you nurture your seed and soil so that it will GROW?

READ MATTHEW 14

by Kay-Charlotte McClurg

This chapter is full of exciting stories of Herod ordering John's head to be chopped off, Jesus feeding five thousand people with only a few loaves of bread and a couple of fish, and then later in the chapter Jesus walks on water and invites Peter to join him out on the lake for a walk too. But it is not these stories that strike me as I read this chapter. I am drawn to verses 13 & 23. If I had just heard the news of a friend dying, I would want someone to comfort me. If I had just spent all night healing people, speaking, and feeding thousands, I would want to go to sleep. Instead, we see Jesus withdrawing to a private place to spend time with God. He didn't need the comfort of a human friend. After healing and speaking and traveling all day He didn't go to bed, instead he went up the mountain by himself to pray.



How much time do you spend alone with God? (Willing to spend more?)

What questions do you have for God?

Name a time when God answered your prayers.

READ MATTHEW 15

by Lacey Gray

There are numerous instances in the Bible where crowds were drawn to Jesus. They were in awe of who He was, the parables He taught, the divine presence He had, and the miracles He preformed.

One of my favorite things the Bible mentions about the crowds that followed him, was Jesus' response when he saw them. Over 14 times just in the gospels, it is mentioned that Jesus "had compassion and love for them". A lot of times, we don't view God that way. We end up having these false ideas that God is judgmental; sitting on his mighty throne to smite you at any wrong move. These ideas couldn't be farther from the truth of his heart for YOU.

In verses 29-31, it mentions that everyone who was brought to Jesus at the Sea of Galilee was healed. Jesus wanted to heal them, no matter how they got the sickness or diseases: by birth, or by disobedience. He wanted them to know they were loved. He wanted to show them the Father and what it looks like to bring heaven here on earth. After all were healed, they praised God for healing them!

Jesus still wants to do the same for you today. He wants to heal, restore, set free, give hope and purpose, show love and spend time with you. Yes, you! Jesus wants to heal you, no matter what you have done, are doing now, or will do. He wants to bring life to you because as the Bible says "He has compassion on you."



What do you need healing in right now? (Whether it be physical, spiritual, emotional or mental?)

Do you believe Jesus has "compassion" on you? Or do you view him as some of the statements listed above?

Take a minute to receive Jesus' love and compassion for you. Sit and listen for his voice to let you know you matter to him!