

**DISCIPLE 5**  
**Jesus in the Gospels**  
**THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF THE RESURRECTION**

**Orientation Meeting**

**SCRIPTURE**

*Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path. Psalm 119:105*

**PRAYER**

**Father God, as we gather today to begin this journey, we ask that your blessings be upon us, your presence with us, and that you pour out your understanding upon our hearts and minds. I thank you for these who have committed to follow you through the pages of Scriptures and I pray that you will bless our lives with deeply committed faith. We ask for comfort, please, guidance and healing for those within our group and extended group who need your healing touch. We praise you in Jesus' name. AMEN**

**GETTING ACQUAINTED**      Name, years attending Resurrection, hobby

**CALENDAR**                      Review calendar

**ATTENDANCE, SNACK SIGNUP**

**MISSION PROJECT & SOCIAL EVENT IDEAS**

Mission Projects:

Social Events:

- 1<sup>st</sup> social event: September 30 - Meet off campus for brunch
- Monthly lunches?

**INTRODUCTION TO *JESUS IN THE GOSPELS***

Questions to jot down as you study:

- What questions do I have?
- What answers have I discovered?
- Now, SO what?
- Okay, what does this ask me to do?

## STUDY MANUAL:

### They Have No Wine

Look at example on page 8/ This statement will incorporate some aspect of the human condition. Its intent is to be suggestive, to alert the reader to some part of daily life that needs attention. We will discuss a response question to this statement each week.

### Beginning With Moses and All the Prophets

Readings from the Old Testament will broaden our understanding of *who this Jesus is* – and God’s plan from the beginning of time.

- Look for clues which tell you about the Jesus of the New Testament
- Aprocrypha readings will add to this understanding.
- Glossary (p. 296-301) will be of value for definition of terms and books of the Aprocrypha, and the “L, M, and Q” theories
- Aprocrypha online: Wesley Center Online:  
Non-canonical literature:  
Old Testament Apocrypha:  
Select book

### Do You Want to Become His Disciples, Too?

See page 14. This portion focuses on the individual response to the study during the week. Be sure to take a few moments to write out your response. We will discuss and share these in class.

## GOSPEL COMPARISONS BOOK

### Jesus *in* the Gospels

See Page 8. Each week readings in the New Testament will address the topic for the week. The *Gospel Comparisons* is a companion study manual. It contains selected Gospel portions printed in multicolumn format to aid with comparison of the similarities and differences in the Gospel accounts. Look for the symbol **GC** symbol which lists the lesson number and the number of the comparison. **These readings will begin in Lesson 3: Celebrating Beginnings**

### CLOSING PRAYER

**Creator God: The psalmist wrote, “When I consider you heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him...?” As we begin this study of Jesus’ life, we will see that you are quite mindful of your children for you sent your only son to pay the price that we should have paid. Father, I ask that you make your presence felt within our lives throughout this next week as we begin to read about your awesome plan for mankind. AMEN**

**DISCIPLE 5**  
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**Week 1: Jesus *in* the Gospels**

**COMING TOGETHER**

**PRAYER**

**Father God, we come with humble hearts, acknowledging the blessings you have given us. We give praise for your unending love. Forgive us when we stumble and falter. Help us to be strong and to live by your commands. At this time we lift up those who are in need of healing, comfort, guidance and pray they will feel and know your love. Lord, be a presence within our group as we read your Word today. Speak to our hearts. AMEN**

**DVD Option: *In the Dust of the Rabbi* with Ray Vander Laan: #1 “When the Rabbi says come”**

**They Have No Wine**

**Read Psalm 78:5-7.** Building on Mary’s words to Jesus at the wedding in Cana, these statements reflect on some aspect of the human condition. They may not apply to everyone, they are intended to be suggestive and to alert the readers to some part of daily life that needs attention. Read the statement on page 8 of the Study Manual. What *will* we hand on to our children?

**Beginning With Moses and All the Prophets**

“Reading the Old Testament is a way to meet the God Jesus prayed to, the God he obeyed.”

- Agree or disagree? Support your answer

**The Old Testament** readings set the stage for us to tell us who God is and what He does. Summarize what the following Scriptures tell us about who God is and what he promises:

1. Exodus 14:13-28      Story of escape from Pharaoh and bondage
2. Deuteronomy 4:1-2    Keep my commands
3. Psalm 136:3-9; 23-26 Praise to God

Read the *Shema* in Deuteronomy 6:4-6. 12-15. Jews pray the *Shema* daily. In what ways would our lives be affected if Christians prayed this on a daily basis? How might the word *Israel* be replaced with a meaningful word for Christians?

Read the following Scriptures. In what ways is God at work in the **New Testament** readings?

1. Acts 2:14-36
2. Acts 10:1-8
3. Acts 13:13-43
  - 40 years in the wilderness
  - Promised land
  - King Saul
  - David anointed to be King
  - Jesus
  - Death and resurrection
  - V. 39: *everyone* who believes can be justified (absolved of sin)
  - V. 48: Gentiles reaction
  - V. 29 Jew's reaction

**QUESTION: In what ways is this scenario still played out in our world?**

### **Traditions**

What *traditions* do you have in your family? Why are they important to you and others in your family? Why do we develop *traditions*? Look up the following Scriptures which describe *traditions* in the Christian faith. Why are they important to you?

1. 1 Corinthians 15:3-8
2. Acts 13:39
3. 1 Corinthians 11:23-26
4. 1 Corinthians 12:27-31
5. Mark 1:10-11
6. Psalm 100:1-2
7. Mark 1:35
8. Matthew 18:18-20

## **Jesus in the Gospels: Page 15**

### **(Use the Glossary in the Back of the Study Manual)**

An entire generation of Christians believed the gospel *before* they read any of our Gospels, all written after Paul's letters. Not even Mark was written from "scratch." Scholars use "Q" to identify those passages that are virtually alike in Matthew and Luke, but are absent from Mark. The "Q" passages are almost entirely the words of Jesus which probably were put into writing around A.D. 50. Most scholars think this text of "Q" was used by both Matthew and Luke but in different ways and that both relied on Mark for their overall narrative. "Q" no longer exists (a few scholars deny that it ever did). "M" is used by scholars to identify those Gospel passages found only in Matthew: birth story, visit of the wise men, escape to Egypt at Herod's massacre order and return from Egypt. "L" is used to identify those Gospel passages found only in Luke" woe statements, Luke's resurrection story and the walk to Emmaus story.

Q Passages virtually alike in Matthew, Luke but absent from Mark. Were Q passages put into writing? Most scholars think Q was used by Matthew and Luke. Mark was the 1<sup>st</sup> gospel written. (Q is not in existence today (some scholar deny it existed)

M Gospel passages only found in Matthew

L Gospel passages found only in Luke

**WHY THE DIFFERENCES:**

- Mark was written from hearing the preaching of Peter in Rome. Mark performed as a scribe for Peter; Mark is John Mark and was not a disciple
- Matthew was written to the Jews to show them Jesus was the Messiah; therefore, there are many references to the Old Testament
- Since Matthew was a disciple, some of the information would have been first hand knowledge
- Luke was written from interviews of people who were first hand witnesses. Luke wrote to the Greeks to proclaim that Jesus was the Son of God.

**QUESTION:** In what ways does this explain how some passages are missing and some are included in individual gospels?

### **Why We Will Read Old Testament Scriptures, Too**

**Each of the Gospels links Jesus to Scripture.**

- We cannot study Jesus in the Gospels while ignoring the Old Testament. Therefore each week's readings include appropriate passages from the Old Testament
- In these Old Testament passages, we will meet God --- the God Jesus obeyed.
- For Christians, these two collections belong together in one Bible. For the Gospel writers, what we call the Old Testament was Scripture --- the only Scripture they knew and used.
- **QUESTION:** in what ways does reading the Old and New Testament enhance and enlarge our understanding of who we are as Christians?

**Read Hebrews 1-3: In what ways does this passage define "Faith" to you?**

List the people who are examples of faith found in Hebrews 11:1-39. This passage is sometimes called "The Hall of Faith." Why were their actions considered faithful?

- **Abel**
- **Enoch**
- **Noah**
- **Abraham**
- **Jacob**
- **Joseph**
- **Moses**
- **Rehab**
- **David**
- **Samuel**

Which books are considered the *Gospels*? Why? How are they different from the *gospels*? (See page 10 of the Study Manual). See page 301 in the Study Manual for the definition of "synoptic". Why is John not included in this group?

- The Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke are referred to as the *Synoptic Gospels* because they include many of the same stories, often in a similar sequence and in similar wording. They stand in contrast to John whose content is comparatively distinct. The term synoptic comes via Latin from “seeing all together”

### **Do You Want to Become His Disciples, Too?**

**PAGE 14 OF STUDY MANUAL:** Disciples do not write their own ticket; they follow the model, one they received from persons who live by it, and hand it on to others. What have we learned about Jesus that we want to hand on to others, especially to those who come after us?

**PRAY PRAYER ON PAGE 15**

**DISCIPLE 5**  
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**Week 2: When Words Became Events**

**COMING TOGETHER**

**PRAYER** *from Jesus Calling by Sarah Young* (August 26)

Trust Me in the midst of a messy day. Your inner calm – your peace in My Presence -- need not be shaken by what is going on around you. Though you live in this temporal world, your innermost being is rooted and grounded in eternity. When you start to feel stressed, detach yourself from the disturbances around you. Instead of desperately striving to maintain order and control in your little world, relax and remember that circumstances cannot touch my peace.....

**DVD option:** *Life and Ministry of the Messiah with Ray Vander Laan: #3 The Time has fully come*

**They Have No Wine**

Read the statement on page 16 of the Study Manual. What gives you hope? Today, we talk about *fulfillment* of God's promise.

**Beginning With Moses and All the Prophets**

**Old Testament**

**New Testament**

Promise..... Fulfillment

Prophet, Priest, King.....Jesus (All in One)

**In pairs**, compare the following Scripture passages from the Old and New Testaments. In what ways do these Scriptures confirm Jesus' identity?

- Isaiah 7:14 and Matthew 1:22-23
- Jeremiah 23:5 and Matthew 1:6
- Jeremiah 31:15 and Matthew 2:16-18
- Isaiah 9:6 and Matthew 2:16-18

**Genealogy of Jesus**

Turn to Matthew 1: Discuss the events surrounding the following people. Why do you think Matthew included gentiles; dishonest and sinful people in Jesus' ancestors?

- Judah and Tamar (Genesis 38)
- Salmon and Rahab (Joshua 2)
- Boaz and Ruth (Ruth 1-2)
- David and Bathsheba (2 Samuel 11:1-12:25)

**QUESTION: What do you find surprising about the inclusion of Gentiles, dishonest and sinful people in Jesus' ancestors?**

### **When Words Became Events**

Matthew wrote to a Jewish audience to prove Jesus was the Messiah. He includes events not found in Mark and Luke. Mark, a close companion of Peter, wrote his Gospel for the Church at Rome and explains Jewish customs. Luke, the only Gentile writer in the Bible, directed his work to Theophilus (means one who loves God) and there is support in the Gospel that Theophilus may have been a Roman official or at least of a high position and wealth (Luke 1:1-4). Luke wanted to show that the place of the Gentile Christian in God's kingdom is based on the teaching of Jesus.

### **AUDIENCES OF THE GOSPEL WRITERS**

- Matthew:** A disciple who wrote to a Jewish audience, one who knew the Torah and Writings (Hebrew Bible). He wrote to prove that Jesus fulfilled the prophecies of the Bible for Messiah
- Mark:** not a disciple but a scribe with Peter in Rome. He wrote down Peter's sermons to the Romans. Since the Romans did not have the Hebrew Bible, there are no references in Mark's gospel
- Luke:** Not a disciple but a physician and a Gentile – the only Gentile writer in the Bible. He wrote to a Greek audience: Theophilus (means lover of God). He wrote from interviews with eyewitnesses and other people who knew the stories. Again, not much reference to the Old Testament for the Greeks would have not had this knowledge
- John:** A disciple who wrote to the Greek thinkers – the philosophers. His first verse... "The Word was in the beginning, the Word was God and was with God"... was a way to help the Greeks understand God Incarnate which to them was foolishness. God in flesh, resurrection and a God of love were stumbling blocks to the Greeks.

### **Who is this Jesus?**

Read the following passages:

- **Hosea 11:1-11**
- **Micah 5:3-5**
- **Psalm 89:11-12**
- **Jeremiah 23:5-6**

In what ways do these Scriptures support the Messiahship of the Jesus of Matthew's Gospel?

### **Do You Want to Become His Disciples, Too?**

Turn to page 22 of the Study Manual. What claim does the Jesus of Matthew's birth story make on you?

What makes trusting God's promises difficult when they are kept in ways we do not expect?

### **Name Him Jesus: page 23**

Look at the Hebrew and Greek versions of the name of Jesus. There are many forms and translations of the name we know as "Jesus" yet they are one in the same. The name means "God is salvation." What does the name "Jesus" mean to you?

**NEXT WEEK GOSPEL COMPARISONS BOOK WILL BE USED**

**PRAY PRAYER ON PAGE 22**

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**Week 3: Celebrating Beginnings**

**COMING TOGETHER**

**PRAYER**

**Father God, Creator of the World, we come humbly before you. We are awed by your marvelous plan for salvation for the people of the world! This lesson on the birth of Jesus renews the magnitude of your plan. We give you our deeply felt thanks for your gift of GRACE! We lift up those within our group and extended acquaintances that are struggling with illness, discouragement, those in need of answers and guidance. We ask that you surround them with your love, with your healing, with your comfort. Come, gracious Lord, be a part of our lesson today. AMEN**

**DVD option:** *Life and Ministry of the Messiah* with Ran Vander Laan: #1 In the Shadow of Herod

**QUESTION:** In what ways can we live in hope with the shadow of our “Herods” looming over us?

**They Have No Wine**

Read the statement on Page 24. In what ways does hopelessness make us powerless?

**Beginning With Moses and All the Prophets**  
*All about promises*

**Conditional Covenant**

If you do this.....then

**Unconditional Covenant**

God says, “I’m going to do this....”

**In the Gospel Comparisons (page 13), what similar refrain do you hear?**

- Magnificat sung by Mary
- Benedictus sung by Zechariah (John the Baptist’s father)
- Hannah’s prayer found in 1 Samuel 1:1-10, mother of Samuel

**These children were significant:**

- Mary was told she would bear Jesus, the Son of God, born into a peasant line
- Zechariah was told he would have a son born into the priestly line
- Hanna was told she would bear a son who would become the first Judge and Prophet of Israel

**These births were in circumstances which would not be expected!**

- **Read Luke 1:37**

**The shepherds are told first of Jesus' birth!**

- Shepherds were on the lowest rung of society
- Because they were in the fields with the sheep, they ritually unclean and could not worship at the Temple

**QUESTION: "God uses the material he has to work with"**

- What do you find surprising about these stories of God granting children to those who desperately wanted them?
- What was Jesus' birth revealed to the shepherds first?

### **PROMISES OF THE OLD TESTAMENT**

Israel would have been familiar with these promises. Read and record God's promises and purposes:

Isaiah 40:3 \_\_\_\_\_

Isaiah 49:1-4 \_\_\_\_\_

Isaiah 40:25-26: \_\_\_\_\_

Isaiah 49:6 \_\_\_\_\_

Isaiah 40:31 \_\_\_\_\_

Isaiah 7:14 \_\_\_\_\_

Micah 5:2-5 \_\_\_\_\_

Hosea 11:1-2 \_\_\_\_\_

1 Samuel 7:5-13 \_\_\_\_\_

In what ways do these prophecies point to Jesus's birth?

What do you see in Matthew's genealogy (Matthew 1) that reflects these promises?

### **Celebrating Beginnings**

**33-G** Gospel Comparisons, pages 11-12

- **Jesus raised as a devout Jew**
- **Jesus is presented on the 8<sup>th</sup> day for circumcision**
- **Luke 2:25-32: Simeon, righteous and devout man. What is his response?**
- **Luke 2: 36-38: Anna, widow, lived in Temple, fasted and prayed. What is her response?**
- **In what ways to you see the Holy Spirit in these stories?**

### **Do You Want to Become His Disciples, Too?**

The joy of Christmas need not come once a year...each day, we can give God thanks for one good thing that has come our way...give thanks for the whole event of Jesus! What aspects of Luke's birth story combine to express your faith in Jesus?

**QUESTION:** What aspects of Luke's birth story combine to express your faith in Jesus?

- Mary and her willing strength? (This pregnancy put her in great jeopardy).
- God's amazing plan for salvation of the world

**QUESTION TO PONDER: Why do we question God's plans?**

**PRAY PRAYER ON PAGE 31**

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**Week 4: The Wilderness Voice**

**COMING TOGETHER**

**PRAYER:** Apostles' Creed

**THEY HAVE NO WINE**

Read the statement on page 32 of the Study Manual. What about today's world seems hopeless to you?

**QUESTION:** What is your response to the nightly news?? Do you ever have feelings of despair --- do you ask can anyone straighten out this mess??

**Beginning With Moses and All the Prophets**

**Read:** Malachi 3:1-5

**DVD option:** *The Gospel According to Matthew: Chapter 3*

In ancient times, before a king toured his kingdom, "messengers" were sent out to straighten the roads, to make them smooth and unhindered for the king's travel.

- **In what ways did John prepare the way for Jesus?**
- **REPENTANCE:** The Greek *metanoia* means "changed mind"; the Hebrew *teshubah* (from verb *shub*) means "turn" or "turn around"
- **Repentance is making a U-turn** --- changing the way one lives
- **READ ACTS 19:1-7.** Paul clarifies confusion about John, Jesus and the **Baptism....John's baptism looked forward to Jesus who death would make it possible to be forgiven of sin**

**FOCUS OF THE GOSPEL WRITERS**

Each writer of the Gospels had a focus in their writing:

- **Mark.** Since most Bible scholars agree that Mark's gospel was written first, it is the framework for Matthew and Luke. Mark was with Peter in Rome and recorded much of Peter's preaching and teaching, so his information comes from an eyewitness. Mark writes with great simplicity
- **Matthew.** Matthew's audience was the Jewish people. Using many references from the Old Testament, Matthew intended to prove to the Jews that Jesus was the long-awaited Messiah who fulfilled prophecy. His focus was explanation.

- **Luke.** Luke wrote a very factual account for the Gentile audience with dated references, geographic locations and historical information. His gospel can be dated and events identified through this very meticulous account.
- **John.** John wrote for a Greek audience; an audience who thought in very philosophical ways. John pictured Jesus using symbols. His gospel does not include parables, a method of teaching the Greeks would not have known. John does not use Old Testament references for the Greeks would not have been familiar with these as well.

**Gospel Comparisons 4-1:** William Barclay in *The Gospel of John* writes baptism was usually a ritual for one who wished to become a Jew, for *proselytes*. Israelites were never baptized; they were God's already and did not need to be washed. But *Gentiles* had to be washed in baptism. John was making Israelites do only what Gentiles had to do.

- **COMPARE ACCOUNT FROM THE 4 GOSPELS**
- Why was John suggesting that *the chosen people had to be cleansed*? See Study Manual pg. 35. (Symbolic of washing away sin; of making oneself clean --- washing was involved in Temple ritual)
- **In Luke 3:10-14**, John points to specific sins of the society. How are these similar to our society?
- What is John's understanding of the "one...coming after me"? What do you understand about the difference in the baptisms of water and of Holy Spirit?

#### **1 Kings 17, 18; 2 Kings 1; Apocrypha: Sirach 48:1-14**

- **What is the definition of a prophet?** According to the *Nelson's New Illustrated Dictionary*, a prophet is a person who spoke for God and who communicated God's message courageously to God's Chosen People --- the nation of Israel. Prophets receive their call or appointment directly from God. Some prophets, like Jeremiah or John the Baptist were called before birth. Except for God's call, prophets had no special qualifications for they came from all walks of life. Can you think of anyone who could be called a prophet of God today?
- **Elijah's role as a prophet was not only to transmit God's word to Israel also to act in such a way as to bring down divine judgment on the disobedient people through inflicting drought on them**
- **And to deal with hostile kings**
- **Elisha was empowered by the same spirit as Elijah and performed many miracles**
- **Despite this divine power, his call to repentance went largely unheard....Judah and Israel were in chaos and deeply p by idolatrous worship**

**What similarities do you see between Elijah and John?** Why would some of the Jews come to believe that John might be Elijah re-incarnated or the Messiah?

- **Went head to head with priests and Pharisees**
- **Called people to repent**
- **Elijah taken to heaven (did not die); John beheaded**

- **READ MARK 14-17.** Herod's paranoia is increased when he hears of Jesus' miracles. His wife Herodias was inflamed by John's accusations about her marriage and plotted revenge on John which resulted in his beheading
- **READ MARK 11:28-33: JESUS AND THE PHARISEES.** Why did the Pharisees back down???

### **The Wilderness Voice**

**GC 4-2:** In some ways, Jesus and John's ministries could be seen as a conflict, yet there are strong indicators they complement one another:

How does John confirm that Jesus is the One? How does John dismiss himself as the anticipated Messiah?

Both John and Jesus use language from Isaiah to characterize their missions:

- Isaiah 40:3-5 **A voice of one calling in the desert prepare the way for the Lord; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God**
- Isaiah 29:18-19 **In that day the deaf will hear the words of the scroll and out of gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind will see**
- Isaiah 35:5-6 **Then the eyes of the blind will be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped. Then will the lame leap like a deer and the mute tongue shout for joy**
- Isaiah 40:11 **He tends his flock like a shepherd; He gathers the lambs in his arms and carries them close to his heart; he gently leads those that have young**

**These metaphors have double meaning....who are the deaf, the blind, the lame and the mute?**

**What gives you understanding that Jesus was the long-anticipated Messiah?**

### **Do You Want to Become His Disciples, Too?**

At times, John's question to Jesus is also our question: "Are you the Coming One or shall we look for someone else?" **As we look back, Old Testament prophecy seems so clear. Yet, how could those people hearing this message from John and then from Jesus be sure? How would you have reacted had you been there?**

**PRAY PRAYER ON PAGE 39**

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**Week 5: Gifted by the Spirit and Tested by the Choices**

**COMING TOGETHER**

**PRAYER**

**Creator God:**

We come into your presence seeking your knowledge and wisdom. Be a presence within our group and lead us into knowledge of your Word and your Commands. We lift up those within our extended group who are in need of healing, comfort, guidance, and knowledge of your love. Let us be beacons of light in their presence that they may see your love in the way we relate to those around us. Forgive us when we stumble; when we miss the mark. Renew in us a clean spirit O Lord! In Jesus' name, AMEN

**SNACKS !!**

**DVD: *The Gospel of Matthew: Chapter 4:1-11*    The Temptation**

- **GC5-3:** Turn to page 24
- **Temptation:** Page 44 of Study Manual says: "Temptation is the bad usually concealed by the good"    **EXAMPLES???**
- **Lottery winners (Good???) – where are they now?** The web lists horror stories/lost everything/12 things NOT to do when you win/10 spectacular lottery burnouts. Doesn't sound very wonderful).
- **Choices are not labeled GOOD or BAD**

**They Have No Wine**

**Choices, Choices!** Choices affect our lives and those around us each and every day. What can help us with making good choices? Why is making the right choices rarely easy?

- **Satan presented Jesus with the 3 temptations: Food, Immortality, Power**
- **What does the sequence say about their lure?**
- **Jesus quoted Scripture when he renounced each temptation. In what ways does knowledge of Scripture make us strong?**
- **Could Satan actually deliver on his promises???** Why or why not???

**Beginning With Moses and All the Prophets**

**GC – 5-1:** Look at John's account of the baptism in John 1:29-34 and compare with the Mark, Matthew and Luke. How does it compare in tone and intention of the other accounts?

List the words John uses to describe Jesus. Why do you think John chose these words?  
(Remember from Lesson 4 that John pictured Jesus in symbols)

**In the Gospel Comparisons we find**

- **EACH gospel reports the SPIRIT coming down;**
- **Mark, Matthew, Luke report a VOICE declaring Jesus is the SON**
- **Mark, Matthew, Luke report the SPIRIT leading/driving Jesus into the wilderness**
- **John testifies: I HAVE SEEN AND TESTIFY THAT THIS IS THE SON OF GOD**

**WHY DID JESUS NEED BAPTISM?**

- Page 43 Stud Manual: **“It is proper for us to fulfill all righteousness”**
- **It was an outward sign of Jesus turning his life Godward since baptism represented a wholehearted turning to God and God’s will.**
- **Jesus WAS NOT CONFESSING SIN --- he had no sins to confess**
- **It marked the beginning of his ministry**

**Genesis:25:27-37 Testing and Tempting**

- Jacob and Esau are subjects of testing/tempting. Discuss their choices and the results.
- **Review the story of Jacob and Esau**
- **BIRTHRIGHT: a right, privilege or position to which a person especially the first born son was entitled by Birth in the Bible times. His birthright included a double portion of his father’s assets upon his death and a special blessing from the father along with the leadership of the family**
- **Esau sold his birthright for a morsel of food.....**
  
- What does Hebrews 12:14-15 teach us about dealing with temptation in our own lives?  
**Make every effort to live in peace with all men and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one misses the grace of God and that no bitter root grow up to cause trouble and define many.**
  
- Discuss the promise Paul gives about temptation in **2 Corinthians 10:4-5**

**“The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary they have divine power to demolish strong holds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.”**

**PARAPHRASE PAUL’S THOUGHTS**

**GC 5-2, page 22: The Parable of the Sower**

Temptation is talked about in different ways in Day 5 readings. Share responses to the comparison of Mark’s and Luke interpretations of the parable of the sower. Apply this parable to contemporary life to day: how does this parable address temptation in our lives?

- **PARABLE:** “literally something thrown beside something else”; a story with its own meaning and can be understood in the secular world. Side beside a heavenly meaning, the truth may be grasp more easily
- Jesus has left the synagogues and begun to teach in the open air ----
- John Wesley was for many years a faithful and orthodox servant of the Church of England. His friend George Whitefield was preaching to the miners – 20,000 at a time in the open and converting hundreds.
- The whole business of preaching in the fields rather offended Wesley: *“I could scarcely reconcile myself at first t this strange way having been all my life so tenacious of every point relating to decency and order that I should have thought the saving of souls almost a sin if it had not been done in a church.”* But Wesley saw that field preaching won souls and said, *“I cannot argue against a matter of fact.”*
- Jesus used parables to teach the people because they would be understood and remembered
- In pairs, take one part of the Parable of the Sower and discuss its heavenly meaning:
- **THE SEED THAT FELL ON THE PATH**
- **THE SEED THAT FELL ON THE ROCKY GROUND**
- **THE SEED THAT FELL INTO THE THORNS**
- **THE SEED THAT FELL INTO THE GOOD SOIL**

Share discussion

### **Do You Want to Become His Disciples, Too?**

Choices test our loyalty and form our character. **Temptation is experiencing the lure of wrong choices. In what ways does the tempted/tested Jesus challenge and comfort you? What choices must you make in order to become a disciple?**

**PRAY PRAYER ON PAGE 47**

**Please listen Lord and answer my prayer!**  
**I am poor and helpless**  
**Protect me and save me because you are my God**  
**I am your faithful servant and I trust you**  
**Be kind to me! I pray to you all day.**  
**Make my heart glad!**  
**I serve you and my prayer is sincere**  
**You willingly forgive and your love is always there**  
**For those who pray to you**  
**Please listen Lord! Answer my prayer for help**  
**When I am in trouble, I pray, knowing you will listen. Psalm 86:1-7 CEV**

**DISCIPLE 5**  
**Jesus in the Gospels**  
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF THE RESURRECTION

**Week 6: When God's Reign Becomes Real**

**COMING TOGETHER**

**PRAYER**

Gracious God

When we look around us we understand that you are working in ways that are beyond our own expectations. We pray for discernment and wisdom as we move forward into this new day. Help us release any fears that have held us captive and we ask that you help us release the anxieties that we carry around. We lift up those in our midst who face difficulties, who need healing, who need comfort, who need guidance. Surround them with your love and hold them in the palm of your hand. We lift up to you our individual thanksgiving for the blessings you have placed in our lives.....

[silent prayer]

We pray all this in Christ's name. AMEN

DVD *Life & Ministry of the Messiah*: Ray Vander Laan : #4 Mount of Beatitudes

Question: What new information did you hear?

**They Have No Wine**

Read the statement on page 48. Is it hard for you to set priorities? Who and what are you most deeply loyal to? Do you feel a need to reassess these priorities?

**Beginning With Moses and All the Prophets**

Psalm 93, Mark 1:14-15; Matthew 4:12-17; Luke 17:20-21, Tobit 13 (Apocrypha)

**KINGDOM OF GOD**

The Old Testament hope of the Kingdom was rooted in the expectation that God was about to enter this present age either progressively or through a catastrophic event and establish His rule and reign. Three expected realities:

1. Israel would return from exile
2. Defeat of all Israel's enemies whether they be Assyrians, Babylonians or Romans
3. Rebuilding and restoration of the Jewish temple in Jerusalem

**Tobit.**

- **Probably written in post-exile period.** A psalm written to praise God and his kingdom.
- The writer says to praise God several times; and reminds that God “scourges” or disciplines his children who sin.
- Verse 10-11: a hope that the tabernacle (Temple) will be rebuilt and generations will praise the Lord with great joy.

**Matthew 3:2**

- John the Baptist came preaching and saying repent for *the kingdom of heaven is near*

**Luke 4:14-21**

- Jesus announces **“today the Scripture is fulfilled in your presence.”**

**God’s Kingdom to the Jews in the village meant**

- Coming vindication of Israel
- Victory over the pagans (Romans)
- Peace, justice and prosperity

**Luke 17:20-21**

- *The kingdom of God is within you.....*
- **What did Jesus mean?**

**QUESTION:**

The ancients looked for an earthly kingdom, such as the Kingdom of King David – the Golden Age of Israel. *“The Kingdom is within you....”* How do you understand “The kingdom of God” ?

**Exodus 20:1-17; Matthew 19:16-22      Rich Young Man**

**Exodus 20:1-17:**

- **No other gods before me; do not make an idol; do not misuse the name of the Lord; keep the Sabbath**
- **Honor father and mother; do not murder; do not commit adultery; do not steal; do not give false witness; do not covet**

**Matthew 19:16-10**

*“What good thing must I do to get eternal life?”....“Keep the commandments”.... “I have done that all my life.”*

- How does the rich young man misunderstand the demands of the Law?
- **Doing versus believing.....what do we need to understand about the approach?**

- Explain Jesus' response. **How might riches become an obstacle for those seeking the Kingdom?**
- Do you agree with the statement "everything is the Lord's and we are the stewards" ? Why or why not?
- In light of what you have learned from the readings this week about the idea of God's kingdom or kingship, complete this sentence: "The Kingdom of God is....."  
(List adjectives)

## When God's Reign Becomes Real

**GC 6-1 page 28**

If a parable can be defined as an "a short, simple story drawn from everyday experiences designed to communicate a spiritual truth," how are the word pictures in a parable essential to the meaning of the parable? **Why did Jesus use parables???**

### **MATTHEW 13:10-15**

*To you it has been given to know the secrets of the kingdom of heaven*

- **Secrets = Greek word *musteria* or mysteries. It was a technical name for something which was unintelligible to the outsider but crystal clear to the one who has been initiated.**
- **EXAMPLE:** the Lord's Supper to one who has never seen such a thing will look like people eating little pieces of bread and drinking juice/wine. When they are referred to as the "body and blood" of Christ, it can become bizarre to the uninitiated. The ancients thought the early Christians were *cannibals!!*
- **Only the person who is prepared to become a disciple can enter into the most precious things of the Christian faith.**

What makes these parables appropriate for speaking of God's kingdom?

- **The stories stay with people --- they may understand the first layer of meaning, but as they learn and become prepared, they begin to understand the underlying layers**

Read the glossary entry *Allegorical Interpretation* on study manual page 296. Discuss the following:

**A type of communication written or visual in which the literal meaning conceals the real meaning. While the story says A, it really means X:**

- *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* by C.S. Lewis is a religious allegory with Aslan as Christ and Edmund as Judas.
- *Pilgrim's Progress* by John Bunyan is a spiritual allegory about a spiritual journey.
- *The Lord of the Flies* by William Golding has many allegories about society, morality and religion, to name a few.

- *Animal Farm* by George Orwell is a political allegory of events in Russia and Communism.

**Revelation:** First 19 chapters = allegory about the persecution of Christians in the 1<sup>st</sup> century

**The Old Testament prophets were preaching something crystal clear to them, but it fell on deaf ears ---- hearing the people did not understand!!**

### **Do You Want to Become His Disciples, Too?**

We must align our lives with the belief that God's reign is sovereign [above all others, supreme power]. Being a disciple takes imagination – but it gives hope! *What insights into Jesus do you get through the parables he told about God's reign?*

**PRAY PRAYER ON PAGE 55**

**DISCIPLE 5**  
**Jesus in the Gospels**  
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF THE RESURRECTION

**Week 7: Called and Commissioned**

**COMING TOGETHER**

**PRAYER**

**Heavenly Father:**

**You called the twelve to be your disciples. And you have also called us. As we read this Scripture lesson today, write on our hearts what it is you wish us to do and to be as your disciples. Help us to have the courage to say, I will follow you!" Today, we have many within this circle and extended family and friends who need to feel your presence, your healing touch, your peace which passes all understanding. Let us feel that power in our lives. Illuminate our souls! In Jesus name, AMEN**

**DVD option: Ted & Lee's Fish Eyes (Ted & Co. Theaterworks)**

- **The call of Peter and Andrew**
- **Feeding the 5000**
- **The Boat Ride and Walk on the Water**

**They Have No Wine**

**Read the statement on SM page 56: *All too often heroes let us down. Maybe we expect too much of them (??) When we learn they are fallible, we are deeply disappointed, cynical even. We need someone to show us the good in a real life --- not just tell us about it.***

**We forget heroes are human! In what ways have you been disappointed by someone you admired, someone who was a role model, some one who was a trusted friend? How did you find resolution, if there was one?**

**OPEN GOSPEL COMPARISION BOOK TO PAGE 30**

**This Time Beginning with Mark**

- **Now Jesus proceeds to build up his staff**
- **In Galilee there were many fishermen. Ordinary people seldom ate meat --- fish was a staple diet**
- **The fish was salted since there was no means of transporting fresh fish and it was exported all over as far as Rome**
- **These fishermen were not men of great scholarship or influence or wealth – they were ordinary men. BUT, they possessed qualities --- a fisherman must:**
  - 1) **Have patience. Anyone who has fished knows that you must wait for the fish**

- 2) **Have perseverance. A stay with it attitude**
  - 3) **He must have courage. Fishing on the Galilee could be dicey – violent storms rose quickly**
  - 4) **He must fit the bait to the fish. One fish will rise to one bait and another fish to another type.**
- **Becoming Jesus' disciple is not easy! We will see in the Gospels how clearly it was never easy.**
  - **Those who were with accompanied him found it hard to understand and to live by what they did understand?**

## GC 7-1      WHO WERE THE DISCIPLES AND WHERE WERE THEY FROM?

- **Simon Peter** – fisherman and brother of Andrew, brash and impulsive; yet, the “rock” of the church and spiritual leader. One theologian nicknamed Peter “the Apostle with the foot-shaped mouth” for Peter had problems with self-control and restraint.
- **James and John**– fishermen, Jesus called them “Sons of Thunder” because of their reckless tendencies. They provoked many of the arguments about who was the greatest among the disciples. James was the elder of the two brothers; John was the only disciple not martyred.
- **Andrew** – fisherman, brother of Peter, first to be called as a disciple. The brothers lived in Bethsaida (House of Fish) on the Lake of Galilee. Andrew appears to be thoughtful, an opposite of his brother, Peter.
- **Philip** – a Greek name meaning “Lover of Horses.” Was he from a family who adopted Greek customs? When Philip was called, he was evidently in the wilderness with John the Baptist.
- **Nathanael** (Bartholomew) – from Cana where Jesus performed his first miracle. He was knowledgeable of the Scriptures because he was told, “We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote” (John 1:45). He was a friend of Philip’s.
- **Matthew** (Levi) – Jewish tax collector for the Romans, an outcast with his people because he collected the harsh taxes from them. His call came from nowhere: “As Jesus passed on from [Capernaum], He saw a man named Matthew sitting at the tax office. And He said to him, ‘Follow Me.’ So he arose and followed him” (Matthew 9:9).
- **James** (The Less) – son of Alphaeus; we know little about him. The youngest? Shortest?
- **Thomas** (The Twin) – a questioner, a doubter, a worry-wart. Nothing known about his twin. He asked to put his hand in Jesus’ wounds before he would believe the resurrection.
- **Simon The Zealot** - a Jewish nationalist, pledged to murder or assassination to rid Palestine of Rome
- **Thaddaeus** - also called Judas (not Iscariot). His name means “breast child” -- was this a derisive version of “mamma’s boy”? Or was he the youngest in the family? Perhaps his name suggests he had a tender heart.
- **Judas Iscariot** – the Betrayer. His name means “Jehovah leads.” He probably came from Kerioth-hezron, south of Judea. All of the other disciples came from the Galilean

area. He may have been a Zealot -- a nationalist. We know he was a thief ; in John 12:6 we read he stole money from the Disciple's money bag.

**What were the strengths of the Twelve? What were their weaknesses?**

### **Mark 1:16-20 "FOLLOW ME!"**

- William Barclay says "it is not to be thought that on this day [Jesus] stood before them for the first time"
- No doubt they had stood in crowds and listened to him
- Jesus did not say to them: "I have a theological system which I would like to you to investigate; I have certain theories that I would like you to think over"
- He said "Follow me!"
- "*without delay*"..... "*at once*"..... "*immediately they followed him*"

### **THE CALLING OF MATTHEW**

- Galilee was one of the great road centers of the ancient world. The Via Maris or Road of the sea went from Damascus (to the north) all the way south and on to Egypt
- Import and export taxes were collected. People never knew how much they would pay --- tax-collectors took from them as much as they could possible get and lined their own pockets with the surplus
- There were three major taxes:
  - 1) Ground tax – 1/10 of grain and 1/5 of fruit
  - 2) Income tax – 1% of a man's income
  - 3) Poll Tax – on every male from 15-65 and female 12-65.....just for the privilege of living
- Taxes on main roads, to cross bridges, to enter market-places, town, harbors
- Tax on pack animals, on the wheels and axles of carts and sales taxes
- Any of this sound familiar???
- Of all the disciples Matthew gave up most. The fishermen could return to their boats and fish again. Not Matthew – he had put himself out of a job forever

**QUESTION:** Role play and put yourself in the shoes of a disciple. What about Jesus would have compelled you to leave your family, your income and follow him?

**GC 7-2**

**Mark 4:37-41; Matthew 8:24-27**

### **RAGING STORM**

- The Sea of Galilee is 680 feet below sea level. It is actually a sort of bowl with mountains on the north, west and south.
- Winds from the west come over the mountains and during a storm seem to blow from all directions at the same time
- In less than a half hour the calm sunshine can become a raging storm

### **WALKING ON WATER**

- In this scripture Jesus walks on the water

- Brash, knee-jerk, impulsive Peter, “Lord if it is you, command me to come to ou on the water.”
- Peter can and does walk.....until he took his eyes off Jesus....then he sank.
- When they are safely in the boat, the disciples say. “Truly you are the Son of God (Matthew 14:33)

**QUESTION:** The disciples were terrified! When they called on Jesus to do something and he did, they were astonished! *Who was* Jesus in the disciples’ minds at this point?

### GC 7-3

#### FEEDING THE 5000 MARK 8:14-21; MATTHEW 16:5-12

- The feeding of the 5,000 was indeed a miracle
- The Pharisees had demanded a sign for it was easier to think of the Messiah in terms of wonders and conquests and miraculous happenings
- Jesus told the disciples beware of the yeast of the Pharisees
- The disciples somehow thought Jesus was referring to the fact they had brought no bread

**QUESTION:** What did Jesus mean by the “yeast of the Phairsees?”

#### DRINK OF MY CUP MARK 10:34-35; MATTHEW 20:20-28

- James and John were ambitious; the aimed at being Jesus chief ministers of state
- They completely failed to understand Jesus
- They were still thinking of the earthly kingdom and did not understand the heavenly kingdom
- The cup became a metaphor for life and experience that God handed out to men

**QUESTION:** What was the “cup” Jesus referred to in his life?

#### Read John 12:1-8. The Judas Question

Who *was* Judas Iscariot? Was he a believer? Did he become disillusioned? Why did he steal from the money bag? Was money or political view more important than his belief? Was suicide his only answer? Would Jesus have forgiven him after the resurrection *had Judas asked?* What do you think??

#### Read Matthew 25:14-28; 1 Corinthians 4:1

“It is not what you have but what *you do* with what you have that counts.” Does this mean material possessions or talents and gifts?? Would you agree? Why or why not?

## **Commissioned and Called**

The word *disciple* comes from Latin *discipulus*, a learner or pupil. Much like an apprentice, a disciple learns by observing, accompanying, and being instructed by one who has mastered the craft.

Jesus worked with flawed followers. Why?

What is your impression of the disciples Jesus called and the gifts and/or strengths and/or weaknesses they brought to his ministry?

### **DO YOU WANT TO BECOME HIS DISCIPLES TOO?**

Today, we have the Scriptures and its stories to “show us the way.” In what ways does Jesus still have “flawed followers?”

What does your discipleship look like? What are authentic ways you follow in Jesus’ footsteps?

**PRAY PRAYER ON PAGE 63**

**DISCIPLE 5**  
**Jesus in the Gospels**  
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF THE RESURRECTION

**Week 8: Mission With Healing Power**

**COMING TOGETHER**  
**PRAYER**

**DVD option: *GOSPEL OF MATTHEW: Chapters 8:1-9:8***

**They Have No Wine**

Read the statement on page 64. Some of us pamper our bodies. Some of us abuse them. In what ways can inner self affect our physical bodies? In what ways can our physical bodies affect our inner self?

**Beginning With Moses and All the Prophets**

**Read Matthew 9:27-31. In some cases Jesus wanted to keep healings secret through none healed heeded him. Why would Jesus make this request? What happened as a result of the healings?**

- **V 34: But the Pharisees said, “It is by the prince of demons that he drives out demons”**
- **What is the fallacy of this statement?**

**ILLNESS AND DEMONS AND DISEASE**

**Illness and disease was viewed quite differently in ancient times.**

**DEMONS**

- Illness was caused by demons who were all around, especially at night.

**SIN**

- Illness was caused by sin of the person or of the parents.

**DISEASE**

- **Leprosy.** One of the most dreaded diseases. Caused by a bacillus and highly contagious. Creates nodules that spread causing loss of sensation and deformity. The afflicted were isolated from the general population. Skin diseases were very common in the Mid-East.
- **Mute Spirit.** Most probably a phrase for the disorder of epilepsy. Ancient theory was it was caused by the moon – hence “lunatic”
- **Blindness.** Sudden blindness caused by flies, harsh sun and aggravated by dirt and dust. Gradual blindness caused by old age; cataracts. Blindness caused by problems at birth and other physiological issues. Blindness was often understood to be a punishment for evildoing.
- **Paralysis.** Loss of muscle function and sensory loss from disease or injury
- **In reality, much of these afflictions were caused by unsafe hygiene practices: unclean water, unclean food, unclean clothing. There was no understanding of**

germs, contamination and cross-contamination, issues at birth which could cause blindness, deformed limbs. As one can see, a healer was so very important in this culture – it was a miracle!

### **JESUS HEALED WITH QUESTIONS AND COMMANDS**

**In the following passages, look for the method Jesus used to heal each person**

- Mark 7:31-37; 8:22-26; 10:46-52
- Matthew 8:1-4; Matthew 8:5-13; Matthew 8:28-32; Matthew 12:9-14
- Luke 7:1-17

**Jesus responses to person seeking healing:**

- **Leprosy** “Be Clean!”; “It will be done”
- **Demons** “Go” and by rebuke
- **Paralytic** “Get up and walk” “Pick up your mat”
- **Blind and deaf** “Do you believe I am able to do this”  
Use of spittle: spittle of learned/wise person had healing power
- **Healing from afar** “Your request is granted”
- **Stronger demons** prayer

➤ Historians have collected nonsense words and strange sounds use by healers and magicians to gain power over disease and demons; Jesus used Aramaic (Hebrew) words that were intelligible.

➤ **Jesus healed those who were isolated or put outside the community:**

- The **leper** excluded from society
- The **son of a Roman soldier** who was never in the community
- **Peter’s mother-in-law** who place as a woman was restricted in the community

➤ **Jesus redefined the boundaries of the people of God !!**

➤ **When Jesus healed, people were not required to believe!!!! It was Free -- GRACE**

### **Mission With Healing Power**

**GC 8-1: Jesus cast out a demon that the disciples had not been able to handle.**

These three accounts in Matthew, Mark and Luke give us the “big” picture

- With our 21<sup>st</sup> century knowledge, what was the boy’s probably affliction?
- What was Jesus’ explanation in Luke 9:29. How do you explain his answer?
- Why were the disciples ineffective against this particular type of demon? (only Mark tells us the answer)
- In Matthew 17:20, what is Jesus’ answer? (Only Matthew reports Jesus’ use of the mustard seed comparison to faith)
- Evaluate the use of healing in Jesus’ ministry? Why did it become a part of his preaching and teaching? (Use Maslow’s Hierarchy to explain why physiological and safety needs are necessary)

**GC 8-G: TEACHING WITH AUTHORITY**

- When Rabbis taught in ancient times, they always prefaced a statement with, “It is written....” Or “Galimel [a very renowned Rabbi] once said....”
- **When Jesus taught, he used, I say to you.....” statements “*with authority.*”**
- “They were astounded at his teaching for he taught them as one having authority,” and “For with authority and power he commands the unclean spirits and they come out.”

**QUESTION: Place yourself in this ancient time.**

- **What would your reaction be to a teacher who speaks with this kind of authority so vastly different from the passive statement made by Rabbis in the past?**
- **Would you believe? Would you be skeptical?**
- **Is it any harder to believe today?**

**Do You Want to Become His Disciples, Too?**

**Research shows a strong connection between faith and healing. Why is it important to be healed spiritually as well as physically?**

**PRAY PRAYER ON PAGE 71**

**DISCIPLE 5**  
**Jesus in the Gospels**  
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF THE RESURRECTION

**Week 9: Conflicts Over Obedience**

**COMING TOGETHER**  
**PRAYER**

**DVD option: GOSPEL OF MATTHEW - CHAPTER 12:1-45**

**They Have No Wine**

Page 72: “**Those who are determined to do what is right are often criticized most.**” Why? Does “But we’ve always done it this way!” ever plague you? (We have 33,000 denominations split from one church – the church formed in Jerusalem in during the Pentecost – because we cannot agree!)

**Beginning With Moses and All the Prophets**

*Hip e krit.* According to *Webster’s New World Dictionary*, a *hypocrite* is one who pretends to be pious, virtuous, etc. without really being so. The word comes from Greek and was applied to those who were actors. **Jesus applied this term to the Pharisees for their concern with petty details at the expense of the Law’s true purpose. The essence of the Law had been lost.**

*Legalism.* Rote act of following Law. **What part does the “heart” or “essence” of the Law play?**

- **Many Jews, in the heat of animosity with Rome were ripe for a Savior in the mold of King David, a warrior-king, who would lead a military uprising against Rome.**
- **This Nazarene, surrounded by fishermen, rag-tag Galileans and a tax collector, whose message was one of love and compassion, did not fit the bill!**
- **Jesus came not to change the law but to correct misapplications of the law (Isaiah 29:13)**

**Conflicts Between Jesus and the Pharisees**

This debate between Jesus and the Pharisees what perhaps the crux of the animosity of the religious leaders. Religion itself got mixed up with external rules and regulations. Jesus tried to point out misapplication of the Law. But, to the orthodox Jew, ritual *was* religion.

**ASSIGN PASSAGE TO PAIRS TO READ, THEN DISCUSS AS A WHOLE GROUP**

**SCRIPTURE**

**SOURCE OF CONFLICT/REACTION**

**Mark 2:1 – 12; Luke 5:17**

Paralytic lowered through the roof

“Sins forgiven; get up” Reaction:  
 “Blaspheming! Only God forgives sin!”  
 Plotted to kill Jesus

**Mark 3:1-6**

Man in Synagogue with shriveled hand

“Stretch out hand” “Which is lawful:  
 Good or evil/ save life or kill. Plotted  
 to kill Jesus

**Mark 12:38-40**

Jesus’ warning about teachers of the law

they want prestige and honor yet they have  
 no compassion or mercy

**Matthew 12:22-37; Luke 11:14-28**

Healed blind and mute

“It is only by Beelzebub (Satan – Baal) the  
 Prince of demons this man drives out  
 demons

**These are Genetic Fallacies: based on argument that the origins of a person, idea, institute or theory determine its character or nature: The VW Beetle is an evil car because it was originally designed by Hitler’s army.**

**Matthew 15:21-28**

Canaanite (pagan) woman with sick child

Jesus: “I was sent to the lost children of  
 Israel” “Yes, but even the dogs get the  
 crumbs!” She was willing to settle for  
 crumbs

**Luke 13:10-17**

Crippled woman (scoliosis?)

Jesus put his hand on her: “You are free”  
 Healing on the Sabbath. Called the  
 leaders hypocrites for they would water  
 their donkey on the Sabbath. Why should  
 she not be set free on the Sabbath?

**These are Begging the Claim Fallacies: conclusion is not validated by the claim: Pain, sickness and misery cannot be alleviated just because it is the Sabbath.**

**Luke 5:27-31**

Calling of Levi (Matthew); dinner at his house

Pharisees complained that Jesus ate and  
 drank with sinners. Jesus: “I have come  
 to the sick and sinners; the healthy do not  
 need a doctor.”

**This is Ad Hominem Fallacy: attack on the character of the person rather than his or her opinions or arguments: Green Peace’s strategies are not effective because they are all dirty, lazy hippies.**

**James 3:6** “By our speech we can ruin the world, turn harmony to chaos, throw mud on a reputation, send the whole world up in smoke and go up in smoke with it, smoke right from the pit of hell.” *The Message*

*One tree can make a million matches;  
One match can destroy a million trees.*

<b>GC 9-1 (Mark and Matthew)</b>	<b>That which defiles.....</b>
----------------------------------	--------------------------------

- According to Numbers 18:8-13, *priests* must wash (purify themselves ritually) before eating the holy food people had given as a sacrifice
- Uncleanness had nothing to do with *physical cleanliness* --- it was *entirely ceremonial*
- The Old Testament has no rules that require such ritual washing by ordinary folk
- Religion got itself mixed up with external rules and regulations --- to eat something unclean was like taking God’s name in vain
- To the orthodox Jew the ritual *was* religion

**CLAIM**

**Eating with defiled hands**

**RESPONSE**

“whatever goes into a person from the outside cannot defile (enters the stomach and goes out into the sewer). (ALL FOOD CLEAN) It is what comes out of the HEART.

**This is Slippery Slope Fallacy:** If A happens, then eventually through a series of small steps B, C, ...X, Y, Z will happen. A must not be allowed to occur. Through a series of interpretations of the Scriptures, the teachers of the Law had determined what was clean and unclean and if unclean was allowed to exist, people were not fit to worship God.

<b>GC 9-2 (Mark, Matthew, Luke)</b>	<b>What is the heart of the Sabbath?</b>
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**CLAIM**

Jesus and the disciples are accused of work: reaping, threshing, winnowing grain

**RESPONSE**

Claims of worship, or ritual, or liturgy are important *but prior to them is the claim of human need: food, safety, healing.* Jesus insisted that the greatest ritual of service is the service of human need

**This is Ad Populum Fallacy:** emotional appeal that speaks to patriotism, religion, democracy concepts rather than the real issue at hand. Teachers of the Law were more emotional about religious priority than the real issued involving human comfort and need.

**The Unforgivable Sin: Matthew 12:30-32      Read Study Manual pg. 74**

A person can lose any faculty if he refuses to use it. This is true of our physical ability, use of certain muscles, and our mental capacity. You have heard the cliché, “Use it or lose it.” So it is with heavenly things. We can lose the ability to recognize goodness and truth when we see them. God sends messages of truth to us through Christian fellowship, Scripture reading, prayer, and nudging from the Holy Spirit. If one chooses to be caught up in personal power or importance, and develops an attitude which lacks compassion and openness, or ceases to recognize God’s messages, one becomes blind and deaf to the promptings of God’s spirit. That is the state to which the Scribes and Pharisees had come.

**So what is the sin against the Holy Spirit? The Pharisees were able to look at Jesus and call him incarnate evil, an ally of the devil. They were blinded by their own narrowness and unwillingness to hear Jesus’ message; they had become hypocrites.. Why should that sin be unforgivable? For the most part, when a person reaches this stage, repentance is impossible.**

- How do you understand the “unforgivable sin”?

**Review GC 9-G**

To the Jews, almsgiving (offering), prayer and fasting were the three great works of life. Again, Jesus is using a unique tradition of Jewish wedding celebration, a time of special festival. The couple who married did not go away on a honeymoon; they spent their honeymoon at home. For a week, the house was kept open and their closest friends shared these festivities with them. This occasion might come only once in a lifetime. In the Mark, Matthew and Luke passages, what does Jesus mean?:

- **Who is the bridegroom?**
- **How will the bridegroom be taken away?**
- **Explain the “fast” to come.**

**Do You Want to Become His Disciples, Too?**

**Jesus found himself in conflict with the Pharisees at every encounter. Have you found yourself in a similar place with another person or a group? What do you see in this Jesus as he encounters conflict? What can you take away to be of help the next time you are in a similar situation?**

**PRAY PRAYER ON PAGE 79**

**DISCIPLE 5**  
**Jesus in the Gospels**  
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF THE RESURRECTION

**Week 10: The Inaugural Word**

**COMING TOGETHER**  
**PRAYER**

**DVD option:** *The Gospel According to Matthew : Chapters 5-7*

**They Have No Wine**

**Read the statement on page 80 of the Study Manual. What are the marks of “the good life”?**

**Beginning With Moses and All the Prophets**

Jesus’ teaching began in Galilee, in the synagogues. The synagogue was a teaching institution and the service consisted of three parts. The first part consisted of prayers, the second a reading from the Law or from the Prophets, and the third part was the address. The president of the synagogue could ask anyone judged to be a fit person to speak. After the address, there came a time for talk, questions, and discussion. The synagogue was an ideal place in which to get a new teaching across to the people.

**GC 10-G.** Assign readers for each color of boxes in Matthew and Luke: yellow, green, brown, blue, white, purple. Those not reading should follow along, and listen carefully to what is being read in this Sermon. [Remember “Q”? These were the sayings of Jesus which probably were put into writing around 50 AD . Most scholars think that the text of Q was used by both Matthew and Luke in different ways and both relied on Mark for their overall narrative].

**Matthew 5:3-22**                      **What is beatitude?**

- **Not statements of pious hope of future bliss;**
- **They speak of what is now**
- **Makarios (Greek) describes joy that has secret within itself**
- **Statement of joy nothing can take away**
- **Notice structure: a negative thought followed by a positive thought**

**Matthew 5:13**                      **Salt and light**

- **Salt was a preservative**
- **Salt added flavor**
- **Salt was an antiseptic**

**QUESTION:** In what ways can Christians function as flavor, preservative and antiseptic?

**Matthew 5:14-16**                      **Light of the World**

- On a dark night you can see a flickering candle flame up to 30 miles

**QUESTION:** In what ways do Christians provide light in a dark world?

**Matthew 5:17-20**                      **Abolish the Law**

- Again and again Jesus broke what the Jews called the LAW.
- He did not observe the handwashings....he healed on the Sabbath.....
- READ Exodus 20:1-17
- The teachers of the Law argued that out of the Law it must be possible to deduce a rule and regulation for every possible situation in life.
- SO.....Scribal Law tried to answer: What is work?
- ...to carry food equal to a dried fig
- ...a tailor committed a sin if he went out with a needle in his robe
- ...if a man lifted his child to his shoulder on the Sabbath Day
- ...to heal was work. Healing was allowed if life was in danger or steps could be taken to keep the patient from becoming worse. Otherwise a plain bandage—no ointment—was put on the wound
- The Pharisees --- whose name means *The Separated Ones* --- were men who had separated themselves from all the ordinary activities of life to keep these rules and regulations.
- When we look at the Ten Commandments --- which are essence and foundation of all law ---- whole meaning can be summed up in one word: RESPECT or REVERENCE
- It was the reverence and respect that Jesus came to fulfil.

**QUESTION:** Jesus said, “Whoever breaks one of the least of these commandments and teaches others to do the same will be called the least in the kingdom of heaven.” What responsibility does that put on us as Christians?

**Matthew 5:21-22**                      **Murder/Forbidden Anger**

- There are different types of anger: quick blazing anger that dies down and anger which is long-lived and nurtured
- Jesus condemns all selfish anger --- anger which broods, which seeks revenge
- This is the anger which “murders” another

**QUESTION:** As Christians, what are we to do with anger caused by silly, stupid people? Or caused by people who would wish us harm? Or people who are uncaring and cause great pain?

**Matthew 5:22-24**                      **Reconcile with Brother before Sacrifice**

**Matthew 5:5-26**                      **Quick terms with accuser**

- First, it was never a practice that a sacrifice could atone for deliberate sin
- Only sins committed unawares: moment of passion; self-control broken – then sacrifice was effective

- Effective sacrifice had to include confession of sin, true penitence and attempt to rectify any consequences caused by the sin
- If sacrifice was to be valid, confession and restoration were involved.
- Jesus was saying we cannot be right with God until we are right with men; if we have wronged someone and have done nothing to put things right.

**Matthew 5:27-30                      Lust, Adultery**

- Here is an example of a new standard: Adultery was one of the Big 10
- Jesus is not speaking of the natural normal desire
- He is condemning the one who deliberately uses his eyes to stimulate desire for the forbidden thing

**QUESTION:** These last three have been relational.....conduct between one person and another. These areas are the source of much argument and strife. In what ways can you summarize what Jesus would have us do in relationships with our fellow humans?

**Matthew 5:33-37                      Let yes be yes; let no be no**

- A person's character should make an oath unnecessary
- Only because of the evil in the world are oath necessary
- We have the obligation to make ourselves so that men will see our transparent goodness and they will never ask an oath from us.
- "That man is a good as his word." (Meant in a positive was!)

**Matthew 5:38-42                      Eye for an eye; tooth for a tooth**

- This was an ancient hyperbole
- Meant to define the limitation of the punishment meted out --- not to be harsher than the crime.
- Never really carried out in semi-civilized society
- Jesus obliterated the very principle of the law because retaliation, however controlled and restricted, has no place in Christian life.

**QUESTION:** What is your response to extracting vengeance and oath taking?

**Matthew 5:43-48                      Loving our enemies**

- What does Jesus mean by loving our enemies?
- There are four words for love in the Greek language:
- Storge – characteristic of family between parents and child
- Eros – sexual love
- Philia – love for closest, nearest and trusted friends
- Agape – loving kindness, caring concern; even in the face of bitterness and insult, we would never allow any bitterness in our hearts accomplished through a determined mind
- We are bidden to *pray* for them --- a sure way of killing bitterness

**QUESTION:** What is the greatest challenge in the practice of *agape* ???

**Question:** From your studies in the Old Testament, what do you hear Jesus re-enforcing?

- Micah 6:8: ....And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly, and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God
- **Review Deuteronomy 5:6-21.** Jesus said, “ I come not to abolish the Law, but to fulfill it.” In what ways is He doing this?
- **Read Psalm 37:3-9:** “**Trust in the Lord.....Delight yourself in the Lord....Commit your way to the Lord.....Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him.....Refrain from anger.....those who hope in the Lord will inherit**

**QUESTION:** What conclusions do you draw considering Jesus’ teaching and the Scriptures he knew?

### **DO YOU WANT TO BE HIS DISCIPLES, TOO?**

**What picture of Jesus emerges for you in the Sermon on the Mount and the Sermon on the Plain?**

**PRAY PRAYER ON PAGE 88**

**DISCIPLE 5**  
**Jesus in the Gospels**  
**THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF THE RESURRECTION**

**Week 11: Counting on God**

**COMING TOGETHER**  
**PRAYER**

**DVD option:** *Gospel of Matthew: Chapter 6*

**They Have No Wine**

We have looked at the Sermon on the Mount. Now we look at the Lord's Prayer. Giving serious thought to this prayer, what about these passages makes you uncomfortable?

**“Rules like moral values keep changing.” It is hard to know what to count on. Do you agree? Why or why not?**

**Beginning With Moses and All the Prophets**

What is prayer? Prayer is communication with God; conversation with Someone who loves us; a joyful response; crying out in sorrow and anguish; communing with a friend.

**Read GC 11-1, page 52:**

Read the versions of the Lord's Prayer in Matthew and Luke. Remember, Matthew was an eyewitness; Luke was writing from information gained from interviews. Mark wrote from hearing Peter preach and teach. In what ways are these three sources reflected in the prayer?

**To the Jew there were three great cardinal works of the religious life:**

- **Almsgiving**
- **Prayer**
- **Fasting**

**Strangely, these three great good works readily lend themselves to wrong motives:**

- **One may give money, not really to help people but simply to demonstrate his own generosity**
- **One may pray in such a way that his prayer is not really addressed to God but to demonstrate exceptional piety**
- **One may fast not really to humble oneself before God but to show the world what a splendidly self-disciplines character they are**
- **Good works may be practiced simply to win praise from men ---- not from God in whose name the works are being performed!**

**VERSE 5-6:**

- **Prayers tended to be formalized.....The Shema (Deuteronomy 6:4-9) was recited by every Jew every morning and every evening:**

Hear O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your strength. These commandments I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road and when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates.

Just as with the Lord's Prayer, the Shema has every chance of becoming rote repetition

VERSES 7-8:

- There is a subconscious idea that if one batters long enough at God's door, he will answer.
- The pagans felt that if they used many, many words, their gods would hear them

QUESTION: what is Jesus' directive about long, repetitious prayers?

LORD'S PRAYER
---------------

"Pray in this way....."

VERSES 9                      God's Name

- what does it mean to "hallow" God's name? Hallowed is connected to a Greek word which means "holy" (*hagios*). But the basic meaning of *hagios* is different or separate: Let God's name be treated differently from all other names.

VERSE 10                      God's Kingdom on earth

- The Hebrew tended to say everything twice --- repeated or amplified
- The Kingdom of God is a society upon earth where God's will is a perfectly done as it is in heaven

VERSE 11                      Daily Bread

- Note: Jesus did not say "Give me my daily bread." The problem of the world is not about having enough to go around --- the problem is the distribution of bread.
- This is a prayer that we may *share* our daily bread with others

VERSE 12                      Forgiveness

The words for sin in Greek have nuances of meaning

- Parabasis – stepping across the line between right and wrong
- Paratoma – slipping across the line – not deliberate, perhaps an impulse
- Anomia – lawlessness
- Opheilema – failure to pay a debt that is due
- What is Jesus' literal statement? (If we forgive others, God will forgive us. If we refuse to forgive others, God will refuse to forgive us.)

VERSE 13                      Protection

- The Bible does not think of evil as an abstract principle or force
- Evil is an active, personal power in opposition to God

- Evil is alive and well in our world. The word Satan = Adversary (an opponent; challenger, rival, enemy, foe)
- Temptation can come from within us or from outside us. People influence us. We are vulnerable in certain situations

**QUESTION:** what choices would you make if Jesus lived in your house?

**Read and examine the roots of Jesus' teaching in the Old Testament:**

- Deuteronomy 15:7-11 (open handed giving to the poor and needy)
- Deuteronomy 24:19-22 (leaving harvest gleanings for the poor)
- Proverbs 14:20 (poor are shunned while the rich have friends)
- Proverbs 14:31 (kindness to poor honors God)
- Proverbs 15:8-9 (Lord honors the upright and righteous)
- Sirach 29:8-11 (be generous and help the needy)
- Wisdom of Solomon 2:6-11 (hedonist, self-indulgent or pursuit of pleasure view - - Apocrypha) (eat, drink and be merry while we can!)

**QUESTION:** What are the connections between these Biblical Old Testaments passages and Jesus' teaching in the New Testament? In what ways does the Apocryphal reading contradict Jesus' teachings?

**Read GC 11-2, page 54: Material Things of Life**

**READ Verse 19:**

- Who has had something valued that has been destroyed by moths or rust? How did you feel?
- Who has had something of value stolen? How did you feel?
- In what ways can we balance the material needs of life with the spiritual needs?
- What can be protection from a serious case of "The Wants"?

### **Counting on God**

*"A faith not tested is a faith not trusted" ---Zan Holmes*

*Now faith is being sure of what we hope for, and certain of what we do not see.*

*Hebrews 11:1*

Read Paul's instructions to the early churches for living:

- 2 Corinthians 12: 7-10 (Paul's "thorn" which kept him humble)
- 1 Colossians 3:13 (bear with each other; forgive as God forgives us)
- 1 Thessalonians 5:23 (Paul's prayer that God will sanctify through and through)
- Philippians 4:8-9; 11-13 (Joy in all circumstances)

**QUESTIONS:**

- How does Paul's teaching re-enforce Jesus' teaching?

- Silently rethink and reorder the place of “things” in your life.
- In what ways is prayer more than a “Christmas List” of wants?
- How does prayer-conversation require a different way of thinking about prayer?
- Write a prayer as if you are talking with your heavenly parent expressing trust and needs:

### **Do You Want to Become His Disciples, Too?**

What does the Jesus of Matthew 6 require of you?

**PRAY PRAYER ON PAGE 97**

**DISCIPLE 5**  
**Jesus in the Gospels**  
**THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF THE RESURRECTION**

**Week 12: The Choice**

**COMING TOGETHER**  
**PRAYER**

**DVD option:** *Faith Lesson on the Promised Land* with Ray Vander Laan  
**#1: Standing Stones**

**QUESTION:** **Living at the Crossroads of Life. Standing Stones. In what ways are Christians challenged to live into this concept?**

**They Have No Wine**

We live in a time marked both by great tolerance, when being judgmental seems to be a greater sin than the wrong denounced, and by outspoken intolerance of other's people's wrongdoing. **We cannot be moral beings without making moral judgments; so how do we know when to say no and when to say yes, especially when the consequences are either mixed or unclear? Even, "nobody's perfect" implies a judgment about what is right.**

*Choice ! Sin. Grace. Love. Forgiveness. Hope. Discernment., Testing.  
Judging vs. Condemning!*

**Beginning With Moses and All the Prophets**

**DEFINITIONS**

**Judge.** To hear and pass judgment; to criticize, to censure, to think; to suppose

- We never know the whole facts or the whole person
- We are swayed by instinctive and unreasoning reactions to people
- Only a completely *impartial person* has the right to judge. Is there such person?

**Condemn.**

- To disapprove strongly; to declare guilty; to inflict penalty upon; to doom

**Discern.**

- To perceive or recognize clearly; to have good judgment

**Grace.**

- A gift received when the receiver does not merit the gift; good will; favor

**Sin.**

- Lawlessness or transgression of God's will either by *omission* or *commission*. Sin deserves punishment

**Forgiveness.**

- Act of excusing, pardoning others in spite of their slights, shortcomings and errors. God's pardon is gracious (grace)

**Choice.**

- Choosing; selection; a variety from which to choose

**Test.**

- An event that tries one's qualities; ability to choose by method or criterion
- ***LIFE IS HARD: IT GIVES YOU THE TEST BEFORE YOU HAVE THE LESSON.***

**Hope.**

- Confident expectancy; firm assurance. *Now faith is being sure of what we hope for and certain of what we do not see. (Hebrews 11:1)*

**GC 12-1:** In groups read the following passages and share with the group

- **GC: Matthew 7:1-5**
- **GC: Matthew 7: 7-11**
- **Deuteronomy 30:15-20:** *See I set before you today life and prosperity, death and destruction. For I command you to love the Lord your God; to walk in his ways and to keep his commands, decrees and laws, then you will live...and be blessed*
- **Copy: Tobit 4:5-11** *Keep the Lord in mind and do not seek to sin; Give alms from your possessions; don't turn away from the poor*
- **Copy: Tobit 4:14-19** *immediately pay a man for hire; never do what you hate to another; share bread with the needy*
- **Copy: Sirach 15:11-20** *accept your consequences of actions! Keep the Lord's commands...he is aware of everything a person does...He never gives permission to sin*

**QUESTION:** In forming opinions, we need to:

- Examine our own motives
- Determine if the traits we criticize are those we dislike in ourselves
- "Take the log out of our own eye"

In what ways do you see our culture reluctant to assume "consequences of actions?"

**Study Manual, page 100.**

- Jesus does not prohibit making moral judgments about right and wrong, good and bad, but prohibits condemning one another, excluding one another from the Kingdom; that is God's prerogative.

**QUESTION:** What is the difference between condemning a person and making moral judgments about right and wrong?

## GC 12-2:

- **Matthew 7:13-14; Luke 13:23-24** *The gate is narrow, the road is hard...false prophets are like bad trees --- they bear no fruit;*
- **Matthew 7:24-27; Luke 6: 47-49** *building of houses on the rock and sand*
- What are the gates, doors, roads, sand and flimsy foundations that confront us with choices?
- The ancients taught about the “Two Ways”: good and evil; light and darkness; life and death

## PROVERBS:

- **1:1** – The fear [reverence] of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge / but fools despise wisdom and discipline;
- **4:18** – The path of the righteous is like the first gleam of dawn...but the way of the wicked is like deep darkness;
- **11:21** - **Bue sure of this: the wicked will not go unpunished, but those who are righteous will go free;**
- **12:18** - **Reckless words pierce like a sword, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.**

## QUESTION: What makes the easy way attractive?

1. God gave humanity a clear choice
2. We can choose
3. We are responsible for the choice
4. We can do what is chosen
5. The consequences are clear and certain

## In what ways can we be standing stones?

### The Choice

Using these Scriptures from Day 4, explore the idea that making moral judgments is both necessary and dangerous:

- **Romans 2:1-14** *Paul says that when we pass judgment on someone else be also condemn ourselves because we do the same things!!*
- **Romans 12:14-21** *Paul says it is better to refrain from eating meat (sacrificed to idols) and drinking than to cause a brother to fall*
- **Galatians 6:1-10** *Do good to all people....especially to those who belong to the family of believers*
- **1 Thessalonians 5:1-22** *We are the sons of light.....we do not belong to the night or to the darkness....encourage one another; build each other up.....test everything, hold on to the good, avoid every kind of evil.*

**QUESTION:** Of the teachings of Jesus in this lesson, what do you find the most challenging? Why?

- **Judging others**
- **Golden Rule**
- **Living the Christian model**

### **Do You Want to Become His Disciples, Too?**

*What is difficult and demanding in the Jesus you hear in Matthew 7?*

**PRAY PRAYER ON PAGE 105**

**DISCIPLE 5**  
**Jesus in the Gospels**  
**THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF THE RESURRECTION**

**Week 13: Faith as Wonder**

**COMING TOGETHER**

**PRAYER of St. Francis of Assisi**

**DVD option:**    *The Gospel of Matthew: Chapters 14:22-15*

**They Have No Wine**

**Faith as Wonder.** Or perhaps a better word for wonder would be “awe.” Synonyms for awe are respect, wonderment, astonishment, reverence, worship. How do you describe your faith?

**As we read these stories of the “nature miracles,” are miracles limited only to the Bible times OR do we experience miracles today? Have you experienced one?**

**Beginning With Moses and All the Prophets**

Discuss the following questions, using your notes from daily readings. Be prepared to share ideas with the whole group:

**GC 13-1.**    **Mark 6:30-44; Mark 8:1-21**                      **Feeding the Crowds**

- **These were two separate events**
- The feeding of the 5,000 was in Galilee; the feeding of the 4,000 in the Decapolis and involved many Gentiles.
- Verse 39: they sat on “green grass.” The time was late spring or mid-April, the only time the grass would be green. The sun set at 6 pm, so this must have happened some time in the late afternoon.
- Verse 35-36: the disciples solution to feeding the hungry people
- Verse 37: Jesus’ solution
- The **five loaves** of bread were probably more like roll – barley bread was the cheapest and coarsest of bread.
- **Two fishes** --- probably the size of sardines – a common type of fish from the Sea of Galilee that were eaten as relish on the dry rolls
- **Mark 8:** the crowd had been with Jesus for **three days**
- We find **seven loaves** and **some small fishes** in this miracle
- In both miracles: there is food left over --- enough to fill baskets

- **Speculate on your own reaction in witnessing this event. Compare with that of the disciples.**

**GC 13-3. Mark 6:45-32; Matthew 14:22-33 “Calming of the Storm”**

- After the feeding, the crowd was of a mind to make Jesus King
- Jesus sent the disciple away first because he did not want them to become caught up in this nationalism
- When he was alone, he went up on the mountain to pray
- Mid-April was the Passover time. Passover was deliberately fixed for the full moon (Easter still is). The fourth watch of the night was about 3 am
- As he looked over the lake, he saw the disciples struggling with the boat in the waters
- Assess Peter’s boldness to step out of the boat and walk to Jesus
- When does Peter’s boldness fail and what is the result?
- **Put yourself in the place of one of the disciples. What questions, wonderment, or belief would be running through your mind?**

**Matthew 16:5-12 “Yeast of the Pharisees”**

- Yeast is a metaphor for sin.
- Yeast can expand --- double or triple --- or it can invade.
- **What happens with one bad apple in a barrel? One small drop of crude oil in water? One small bug in a bag of flour?**
- **Explain why the teaching of the Pharisees was compared to yeast.**

**Luke 9:18-20 “Who do you say I am?”**

- Jesus was already turning his face to go to Jerusalem
- He knew the cross awaited him there
- He had to know if they knew who he *really* was or if his work had gone for nothing
- **When Peter said, “The Christ [Messiah] of God” what do you think Jesus felt?**
- **Who do you think Jesus is?**

**GC 13-2 “Signs”**

- We say, “prove it.” “Show me!” “I won’t believe it until I see it.”
- Jesus said Jonah was 3 days in the belly of the fish; so will he be 3 days in the earth. To what is Jesus referring?
- **In what ways do we miss out by saying “prove it” instead of exercising faith and wonder?**

**Faith as Wonder**

**Mark 6:45-52 (Walking on the Water)**

- **In what ways does this story indicate the disciples’ repeated failure to understand how Jesus is linked to his greatest miracles?**

**Matthew 14:22-33 (Walking on the Water)**

- **In what ways do understanding and faith not always go hand in hand?**
- **Which events in Jesus' mission must remain a matter of decision and which remain a matter faith for you?**

### **Do You Want to Become His Disciples, Too?**

*When you read the stories of the nature miracles, who is the Jesus you see?*

**PRAY IN UNISON THE PRAYER ON PAGE 113**

**DISCIPLE 5**  
**Jesus in the Gospels**  
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF THE RESURRECTION

**Week 14: Destiny Disclosed**

**COMING TOGETHER**  
**PRAYER**

**DVD option:**     *GOSPEL OF MATTHEW: CHAPTERS 16-17:13*

**DESTINY:**   predetermined; ultimate fate; seemingly inevitable succession of events

**QUESTION:**   in what ways does this definition describe this part of Jesus' ministry as he turns to face Jerusalem?

**They Have No Wine**

**Tomorrow we will harvest mainly what was sowed yesterday and is cultivated today --- and not only by us!** The future brings consequences that sometimes surprise us, and sometimes seem inevitable, because who we are today works its way into who we will be tomorrow. Today's decisions are important even if we cannot foresee their consequences.

- We come back to the 'CHOICE' issue
- Choices do have consequences
- **Matthew 16:24**   *If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me*
- To believe or not to believe
- To follow a leader who tells you he will suffer and die  
(Mark 8:31; Matthew 16:21)

**Beginning With Moses and All the Prophets**

Discuss the following questions, using your notes from daily readings. Be prepared to share ideas with the whole group:

**GC 14-1:**           **CHOICE AND CONSEQUENCES**

**HEROD'S CHOICE:**

Herod is called *tetrarch* which means *ruler of one-fourth part*. Over the years, the term came to mean "*ruler over a part*." When Herod the Great died, his country was divided into three parts and was willed (with the consent of the Romans) to his sons. One son, Herod Antipas was ruler of the Galilee area. From his first act of seducing Herodias, **Herod spiraled downward into infidelity, intrigue, paranoia and the murder of John the Baptist**. Herod was eventually deposed and spent his last days were spent in exile in Gaul (Spain).

- In what ways did Herod experience the consequences of his actions in his decision to behead John the Baptist?

### WHO DO YOU SAY I AM?

- Mark 8:29; Matthew 16:15-16; Luke 9:18-19

### PETER THE ROCK

In Matthew, we see a play on words. In Greek, Peter is *Petros* and a rock is *petra*. Peter's Aramaic name *Cephas/Kephas* is the Aramaic word for rock.

To call anyone a *rock* was the greatest of compliments.

- Why did Jesus choose Peter, of all the disciples, to call his *rock*?

### Mark 8:32-33; Luke 9:7-9

- In what ways did Peter's actions (choices) collide with the choice that Jesus made to fulfill his destiny?
- Why are today's decisions important even if we cannot foresee their consequences?

### SERVANT-LEADER READ: Mark 10:42-45

- **Servant:** someone who performs menial services (especially in a household); a slave; someone devoted to another or a cause
- **Leader:** a person who leads, directs, commands
- **Servant-Leader** is an oxymoron; a title of opposite meanings

**QUESTION:** How can one be a servant ---- yet a leader?? In what ways did Jesus model this concept? How does this lead us to make yet another choice??

### DISCIPLESHIP READ: Mark 8:34-38; Luke 9:23-27

Understanding *ransom* and *atonement*, page 120 of the Study Manual.

- **Ransom** is what is paid to liberate others, especially captives. This metaphor was used to explain how people are released from sin.
- **Atonement** - with this doctrine, the metaphor changes somewhat because *atonement* is not only the **release** but the **removal** of sin that keep people alienated from God.
- "Anyone must deny himself....." What does this mean? In what ways can we put self last?
- "Anyone must take up his cross..." What is the "cross" we bear in our lives?
- Explain Jesus' teaching of "whoever loses his life for me will save it"

### GC 14:3 DESTINY DISCLOSED

- Somewhere on the slopes of the beautiful and stately Mount Hermon the Transfiguration happened
- Why did Jesus go there? READ Luke 9:28-29
- By this time Jesus was on the way to the cross; he had told his disciples this was so
- Did he have to make sure beyond all doubt he was doing God's will??
- He went to God for the answers
- We see Jesus on the mountain top with Elijah & Moses

- **Elijah = the greatest of the prophets; consistent with Jewish belief that Elijah was to be forerunner and herald of the Messiah**
- **Moses = the greatest of the Law Givers; when Moses came down from the mountain of Sinai after receiving the Ten Commandments, his face shone from the encounter with God**
- **READ Luke 9:31**
- **READ Mark 9:7; Matthew 17: 5; Luke 9:35 When have we heard this affirmation of Jesus before?? (Baptism in Luke 3:21-22)**
- **This experience enabled Jesus to continue on his Way to the Cross**

**GC 14:4**

**“Jesus and His Destiny”**

Jesus predicts his destiny:

- **How many times in Mark; Matthew and Luke did Jesus predict his destiny?? .**
- **Remember Mark and Luke *were not disciples*; only Matthew was a disciple who gives a witness’ account**
- **READ Luke 9:45. How might this explain the disciples’ lack of understanding? Why were they afraid to ask**

**Do You Want to Become His Disciples, Too?**

*How do you answer Jesus’ question, “Who do you say I am?”*

**PRAY IN UNISON THE PRAYER ON PAGE 121  
VIDEO - PART 2**

**DISCIPLE 5**  
**Jesus in the Gospels**  
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH OF THE RESURRECTION

**Week 15: Merciful Discipline**

**COMING TOGETHER**

**PRAYER**

**Heavenly Father:**

As we gather this morning to once again share in the study of your Word, we ask your presence to be strong within our group. We are tackling some very enormous ideas and teachings on difficult areas of relationship with one another. Guide us, give us insight, help us to understand Jesus' teachings and how they apply to our lives. We ask for forgiveness when we stumble and fail; when the humanness of us takes control. Help us to always remember that you are **THERE**; you are always **THERE** to guide us over the rough places and through the valley of the shadow. We ask for guidance, for healing, for comfort, for love and peace for those on our Joys and Concerns list who need to feel your love surrounding and holding them fast. We give thanks for the joys we share within our group. Guide us O thou great and loving God! **AMEN**

**DVD The Gospel According to Matthew: Chapters 18 & 19**

**They Have No Wine**

**Some people are easily offended; others offend easily**---often without intending to. Often groups can't function well because one member is considered to be "hard to get along with." Are congregations and church groups the exception? Why or why not?

**Beginning With Moses and All the Prophets**

**GC 15-1.**

**Relationships! Difficult? Heart-Warming? Annoying? Challenging? Deal Breakers?  
A part of life? All of these?**

**Read Mark 9:33-39:**

- When a rabbi was really making a pronouncement, *he sat to teach*. "*It might be on the test*"
- Why must one be "like a child" to enter the kingdom of Heaven?
- Why must whoever "wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all"?

- V. 38-39: Why should one “who does not follow us” OR “someone not like us” be stopped from casting out demons?
- In place of the disciples’ ambition to rule, Jesus substituted *the ambition to serve*.
- **Servant:** somebody who serves someone else – employer, public servant; slave
- **Leader:** someone whom people follow; someone in charge; someone who guides, direct, the head of a group, nation, political party
- What does our role as “servant-leader” look like???

#### Matthew 18:15-20 Handling Conflicts

- Jesus offered guidelines for handling conflicts within the church or congregation. What are they?
  1. Go to the offending person. If he does not listen....
  2. Take 1 or 2 with you to talk with the person.....if he still refuses to listen.....
  3. Go to the church....if he still refuses to listen to the church....
  4. Treat him as you would a pagan or a tax collector
- Why take these steps to resolve a conflict???
- **Gossip:** defined as any information passed on THAT IS NOT FIRST HAND KNOWLEDGE; information coming through 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> parties.....
- **SIRACH 19: 14-15** “Question a neighbor; perhaps he did not say it; question a friend for often it is slander so do not believe everything you hear.”
- Why is this good advice in the world of 21<sup>st</sup> century technology???

#### 1 Corinthians 5:1-3

- **What is the problem going on in the Church at Corinth?**
  1. A man was living with his mother/stepmother --- considered incest
  2. Evidently the church was proud.....
- **What stern words for the immorality in the church at Corinth does Paul have?**
  3. Being officially ostracized from the church may cause enough anguish to cause the man to repent
- **Why did Paul come down so hard on this situation?**
  4. “a little yeast”.....Like a bad apple in a barrel, *condoned* sin within the church can have a tragic effect

#### Matthew 18:21-35 “Forgive”

- **What is Jesus’ answer to Peter about forgiving?**
- Why the number? In other words, is there no limit to forgiveness?
- **But, why should we so forgiving to those who have hurt us so deeply?**
- **Who does the inability to forgive hurt the most?**
- **Read Sirach 28:1-7.** What message of forgiveness do you hear in this writing?

## Marital Conflict

Ancient times were much like our society today. People were so dominated by sin that shame and decency was forgotten. People were caught up in desires so much they did not care whose life they injured, whose innocence was destroyed.

### GC 15 -2 Matthew 19:1-15; Mark 10:1-16

- **No nation has ever had a higher view of marriage than the Jews.**
- It was a sacred duty
- “Be fruitful and multiply.” He who had no children “slew his own posterity.”
- Barrenness for women was the ultimate disgrace
- **YET, there was no uniformity about divorce among the Jews**
- In the eyes of Jewish law a woman was a thing. Often marriages were arranged by the father of the girl (at the age of 12 she could reject her father’s choice of a husband)
- Women could never initiate the process of divorce; she could be divorced but she could not divorce!
- **The process of divorce was fatally easy....if a man found no favor because of some indecency (being in public with her hair down; if she was a brawling woman whom the neighbors could hear; putting too much salt in his food) he could write a bill of divorce and send her out of his house**
- **Rabbinic Law** stated divorce was compulsory for the following reasons: **adultery and sterility**
- **21st Century: It has been said that Addiction, Adultery, Abuse are today’s standards for dissolving a marriage. These actions break the vows of the Marriage Covenant**
- **The Pharisees saw a point of attack: Moses did not command divorce; at best he only permitted it.**
- **READ Matthew 19:9 and Mark 10:11-12**
- **What message was Jesus trying to deliver about the Covenant of Marriage?**
- **Jesus was laying down the principle --- not the Law --- that the ideal of marriage is a union which cannot be broken.**
- **The world we live in has many PRINCIPLES OR IDEALS but we seldom live up to them completely.**

## Merciful Discipline

### Matthew 18:12-14

### Lost Sheep

- **The Palestinian shepherds were experts at tracking down their lost sheep.**
- **Shepherds always made the most strenuous and the most sacrificial efforts to find a lost sheep ---- if the live sheep could not be brought back, at least the bones and fleece could prove the sheep was dead.**
- **This parable teaches us:**
  - A. **God loves us individually (99 sheep were not enough; the lost one had to be brought home**
  - B. **God’s love is a patient love (the sheep might be foolish, but God seeks him out)**

- C. **God's love is a seeking love** (God was not content to wait for the sheep to come back --- he went out to search for it)

**Do You Want to Become His Disciples, Too?**

*What makes Jesus' teaching on forgiveness so hard to carry out fully?*

*What surprises you or shocks you about the Jesus who comes through this week's readings?*

**PRAY IN UNISON THE PRAYER ON PAGE 130**