



# my grandma time

...doing simple things together!

Week 40, Day 1 --- Malachi 1-4

Week 40, Day 2 --- Luke 1 - John 1:1-14

Week 40, Day 3 --- Matthew 1 - Luke 2:1-38

Week 40, Day 4 --- Matthew 2 - Luke 2:39-52

Week 40, Day 5 --- Mark 1 - Luke 3 - Matthew 3

Week 40, Day 6 --- John 1:15-51 - Matthew 4 - Luke 4-5

Week 40, Day 7 --- John 2-4

Week 40, Day 1 --- Malachi 1-4

I think I've said before that last words are important. In this book we have the last words of God before 450 years of silence that are followed by the coming of Jesus. The themes are the same as most of the other prophetic books. The people were not honoring God. The fact that they were not bringing their tithes, 10 percent of their income, to feed the Levites and care for the temple was a concrete example that they didn't trust God. Men were divorcing their wives and the family was breaking down. I find the final word of the book challenging and encouraging.

Malachi 4:5,6 "See, I will send you the prophet Elijah before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes. He will turn the hearts of the fathers to their children, and the hearts of the children to their fathers; or else I will come and strike the land with a curse."

Jesus is coming and one of the ways He will impact people is through families. Specifically, He will restore the relationship that God desires to see between fathers and their children. How many men do you know who had a positive and loving relationship with their earthly father? For those who didn't, how would their lives have been changed if they had really had a father who loved them?

Week 40, Day 2 --- Luke 1 - John 1:1-14

Luke 1:16 "Many of the people of Israel will he bring back to the Lord their God. <sup>17</sup>And he will go on before the Lord, in the spirit and power of Elijah, to turn the hearts of the fathers to their children and the disobedient to the wisdom of the righteous—to make ready a people prepared for the Lord."

The New Testament begins with the births of two very special men. The first is John who be known as the Baptist. Notice that John the Baptist comes to fulfill the prophecy made back in Malachi. John will prepare the people for Jesus. Jesus is God come to earth to dwell in a human body. His coming will change the world. What do you think it would have been like for these families to have these very special sons?

Week 40, Day 3 --- Matthew 1 - Luke 2:1-38

As you've probably discovered, names are important in the Bible. It was really important to know what family you belonged to. Matthew begins his history of Jesus' life by telling us what family He belongs to. Jesus comes from the tribe of Judah and from the line of kings. It was very important to show that Jesus was a descendant of David.

However, Joseph was really only Jesus' adopted father. Jesus' real father was God by the power of the Holy Spirit. Joseph and Mary did not have sex until after Jesus had been born and Mary had been purified from the birth. You'll find out later that Jesus did have brothers and sisters. Jesus was the greatest king ever born, but He was born in a stable in a small town. His birth was announced to the lowest class of people living at that time. Why do you think Jesus wasn't born in a palace? Why was His birth announced to shepherds instead of to kings?

Week 40, Day 4 --- Matthew 2 - Luke 2:39-52

Herod was an evil king. He was also a powerful king who had brought a certain level of peace to the region because of his political skill. He had managed to develop a very good relationship with the Romans and this is what kept Judea at peace and him in power. When he heard that a King of the Jews had been born he was very disturbed. The Jews always had someone striving for power. It was Herod's job to eliminate all of these men. Herod killed many of his own sons. He did not hesitate to kill the babies of Bethlehem in the hope that he had killed the future king of the Jews.

It is clear to me from the passage in Luke that Jesus knew who He was from a very early age. I'm certain He was the best son a parent ever had, but it is also clear that He was God's Son first and that must have been a challenge for Mary and Joseph.

Week 40, Day 5 --- Mark 1 - Luke 3 - Matthew 3

There are four books that describe Jesus' life and ministry on the earth: Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. The first three are called the synoptic gospels. Synoptic means that they work together to tell the whole story. Gospel simply means good news. Reading one of them will tell you the story of Jesus. Reading all three of them will give you the story from three different perspectives. It is a little like an accident scene. The police talk to the witnesses and every witness saw the same accident, but in a little different way. The big event they describe is the same, but each will differ in the details they remember and communicate. Matthew will focus on the concept of the kingdom. Luke will focus on Jesus including everyone. Mark will focus on action and the spiritual war that Jesus is fighting. John focuses on both the humanity and divine nature of Jesus.

In today's passage you see one of the prophecies from the Old Testament fulfilled. This will happen over and over again through Jesus' life. The Pharisees are a group of men who are very wealthy and very religious. They are attempting to purify the nation by keeping the law so that the Messiah will come and rescue them from the Romans. They are looking for an earthly king and most do not recognize Jesus as the Messiah they are looking for. The scribes are the men who copy the Law onto scrolls so that it can be preserved. They have begun to worship the Law more than they worship God. These groups will appear over and over through the story of Jesus.

Week 40, Day 6 --- John 1:15-51 - Matthew 4 - Luke 4-5

Come and see. That has been my invitation to you all along. As you read through these four stories of Jesus' life I hope you will see how unique He is. Who does Jesus pick to be His special followers? What kind of people would you have picked if you were hoping to save the world?

Jesus call to the men who would be called disciples was a very simple one. Disciple means learner and these men would learn by following Jesus wherever He went. In some ways they had it easy because they had a physical person to follow. In other ways it was incredibly difficult because He asked them to leave everything behind and He took them places they never would have gone on their own. Jesus makes the same invitation to everyone. As you read listen to His words and think about what it would mean to you to follow Jesus every day.

Week 40, Day 7 --- John 2-4

This is a chapter full of contrasts, but in those contrasts we really learn much about Jesus. The first story is about a man who has been paralyzed most of his life. He lives beside a pool of water that is supposed to have miraculous healing powers, yet there is nothing in the story to indicate that anyone in recent memory has actually been healed. Jesus does have the power to heal and He does heal this man. One of the big questions is why He doesn't just heal everyone who is beside the pool. There are no easy answers to that question. The big issue all through Jesus ministry was the Sabbath. The Sabbath was Saturday and was a day God intended to be a day of rest for people. The religious leaders had so distorted God's intent that people had to work very hard on that day to keep all the traditions that had been added to God's desire.

- Jesus asks the man by the pool, "Do you want to become well?" How does the man answer? Does this make sense? How would you respond if Jesus asked you, "Would you like to be released from prison?"
- Why do you think Jesus physically heals only this man at this time?
- Where does eternal life come from according to Jesus?
- Who do you think Jesus is? What does that mean to you?

John 3 – Nicodemus

This coming week I hope that you'll read the 3rd chapter of John. In this chapter Jesus meets with a man named Nicodemus. Nicodemus is a very religious man who thinks that the way to be saved, meaning have eternal life, is by obeying the letter of God's law as given in the Old Testament. What Jesus tells him is totally new to him. Jesus tells him that he can only have eternal life if he is born again. Jesus is talking about a spiritual birth. This happens when God's Spirit comes to live inside a person and this happens when a person places their trust completely in God.

The second part of the chapter talks about an argument between the followers of Jesus and the followers of John. This is a different John than the one who wrote the book. This is John the Baptist and he is the cousin of Jesus. His job was to tell everyone that Jesus was coming.

Here are some questions to think about as you read:

- How confident can you be that God loves you?
- Why did Jesus come to earth?
- What has God promised to everyone who believes in Jesus?

John 4 – The Samaritan Woman and the Royal Official

Jesus encounters two very different people in this chapter, but they have several important things in common. The first thing that they have in common is that they are not Jews. That is certain in the case of the Samaritan woman and very likely in the case of the royal official. At the time of Jesus the only royalty was Roman. They both have a need and they both demonstrate great faith. I find it interesting that John follows the story of Jesus' encounter with a Jewish religious leader with a story of a Samaritan woman who is living with a man. The Jewish religious leader is a good person, but doesn't seem to understand Jesus at all, at least not yet. The Samaritan woman would be despised by the Jews, first for her race, and second for her immoral lifestyle.

- Which one of these people do you identify with most: Nicodemus, the Samaritan woman, the royal official, or the disciples? Why?
- How would you respond if Jesus sat down with you and began to tell you everything that you had ever done wrong?
- What do you think Jesus means when He says this? John 4:23 "But a time is coming – and now is here – when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such people to be his worshipers."
- Why do you think the Jews, Jesus' own people, found it so difficult to believe and the Gentiles, people who weren't Jews, seemed to have such great faith?
- Most importantly, who does Jesus say He is in this chapter?