



my grandma time

...doing simple things together!

Week 42, Day 1 --- Luke 8 - Matthew 13

Week 42, Day 2 --- Mark 4-5 - Matthew 8:14-34

Week 42, Day 3 --- Matthew 9-10

Week 42, Day 4 --- Mark 6 - Luke 9:1-17 - Matthew 14

Week 42, Day 5 --- John 6

Week 42, Day 6 --- Mark 7 - Matthew 15

Week 42, Day 7 --- Mark 8 - Luke 9:18-27 - Matthew 16

Week 42, Day 1 --- Luke 8 - Matthew 13

These two chapters cover a similar time period, but really show the difference in emphasis between Luke and Matthew. Luke is interested in people and how they respond to Jesus. Luke wants us to see the humanity of Jesus and His love for the people who hear His message. Matthew is interested in the bigger story, the story of the kingdom. He wants us to see that Jesus is the ultimate King and wants us to understand how important it is to be a part of His kingdom. Each story is complete, but the story is much richer when we look at all the different perspectives.

Did Jesus come from a small family or a large family? How can you tell? What do you think it would have been like to have Jesus as your older brother?

Week 42, Day 2 --- Mark 4-5 - Matthew 8:14-34

Yesterday and today you're really getting a good example of how the gospels work. There are many stories from Jesus' ministry that are included in 3 of the gospels: Matthew, Mark, and Luke. There are a very few stories that are included in all 4 gospels.

Jesus taught in parables. A parable has been defined as an earthly story with a heavenly meaning. When Jesus told a parable He was intending to speak to the heart or the emotions of the listener. He used objects and situations that were very familiar to His audience to communicate spiritual truths.

Jesus continually invites people to follow Him? Are you willing to follow Him?

Week 42, Day 3 --- Matthew 9-10

Chapter 10 contains many very hard sayings of Jesus. It is a chapter that many would prefer to ignore. Jesus makes it very clear that life is found by following Him, but that following Him may lead to physical death. Jesus knows that not everyone will accept His message and choose to follow Him.

It is hard for most of us in this country to understand these words. Until recently our culture generally accepted the concept of following Jesus, but this is not true in other places in the world. Many who choose to follow Christ are sent away from their families. In some countries today there are men and women killed every day because they have chosen Jesus. Following Jesus is hard when we don't completely trust Him and we are trying to preserve our lives in this world. However, it is easy to follow Jesus when we trust Him completely and replace our desire for this life with a desire for eternal life with God.

Week 42, Day 4 --- Mark 6 - Luke 9:1-17 - Matthew 14

Two of the stories in today's reading are repeated in all 4 gospels. This doesn't mean that the one that isn't is insignificant. Think about it. How many real friends do you think Jesus had? John the Baptist was probably the only person on earth who really understood who Jesus was, why He had come, and what He was going through. We're never told that John and Jesus got together to talk, but I suspect that they knew each other really well since they grew up as cousins. I think that when John was executed Jesus both lost a friend and was confronted with His purpose in coming to earth. How can you tell that John's death has an emotional impact on Jesus? Have you ever lost someone really close to you to death? What did you feel?

The following story talks about the incident in the very beginning of Mark 6. When have you experienced what the author is talking about? Why do you think the people of Jesus' hometown rejected Him?

TITLE: Challenging Circles

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ILLUSTRATION:

The hometown of Jesus was a small village tucked between the hills of the Sea of Galilee and the Mediterranean, located away from the main centers of the population. The Gospel of Mark describes the first time Jesus visited his hometown after he had become a public figure (Mark 6:1-6). His public ministry had, up until then, been based largely in Capernaum.

The townspeople had undoubtedly heard stories. Whispers of miracles and strange events were being reported from neighboring cities. His teaching was different, authoritative. I imagine the people of his hometown took a proud interest in all of the murmuring, anxious to see why everyone was talking about Jesus, anxious to claim him as their own. Now he was coming back home and they were excited about it. Invitations to teach in the synagogue were usually extended to distinguished visitors; he was, no doubt, in many eyes the local boy done good, and now they would see for themselves.

According to Mark they were not disappointed. In fact, he reports, "they were astounded" (6:2). Making reference to the wisdom they heard and power they beheld, they clearly took notice that he was a man out of the ordinary. And yet, they couldn't take the man at face value, for it was not just any man; it was Jesus. They could not get past the fact that this seeming authority in front of them was Mary's son, the carpenter, the boy next door. And Mark notes, they "took offense" at him, stumbling over the commonality of the extraordinary one before them (6:3).

During his tenure as a professor at Magdalen College in Oxford, C.S. Lewis delivered a memorial oration to the students of King's College, the University of London. It was titled, "The Inner Ring." Addressing his young audience as "the middle-aged moralist," Lewis warned: "Of all passions, the passion for the Inner Ring is most skillful in making a man who is not yet a very bad man do very bad things." (1)

Lewis speaks of the natural desire to find ourselves a part of the inner circles that exist endlessly and tauntingly throughout life. He cautions about the consuming ambition to be an insider, and not an outsider, though the lines we chase are invisible, and the circle is never as charming from within as it looks from without. Like the taunting mirage the weary traveler chases through the desert, the quest for

the Inner Ring will break your heart unless you break it. For “it is the mark of a very perverse desire that seeks what can not be had.”(2)

Yet it is a desire that touches us all. The longing to belong is an intense motivator of human behavior. Still, one only has to watch a group of kids to see how easily our desire to belong is corrupted by our need to exclude. The inner circle is not inner if there are no outsiders. The invisible line would be futile if the majority was not on the wrong side. Notably, it seems an examination of playground behavior is one of the strongest proofs for the depravity of man.

The kinfolk of Jesus chose to belittle the depth of his teaching, the compassion of his hands, and the significance of his power because they could not see past the circles they were certain he was excluded from. Mark gives witness to the close ties between faith and healing, expectation and eyesight. They could not see Jesus for who he was because they were blinded by lines that told them what he could not be. “Isn't this Mary's son?” they scoffed in fear and disgust (6:3). Excluding mention of Joseph, their words were intended to belittle Jesus and his origins, to put him on the wrong side of the line with one who was sexually suspect.

And yet ironically, in pointing to Mary, they point to the miracle of the virgin birth, when God spoke life into a womb that broke the lines of separation and offered the world forever an invitation into his presence.

1. The Weight of Glory (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1980), 154.

2. Ibid., 154.

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Week 42, Day 5 --- John 6

There is so much in this chapter. It includes two amazing miracles, but also includes some of the most difficult words that Jesus ever says. His words were so difficult to understand and accept that many people who had been following Him decided to leave. The people were attracted to Jesus because of His ability to create food for them. However, when He tells them that He is food, they totally misunderstand Him. Verses 52-58 would have been very difficult for the Jews to accept. They were forbidden to eat blood in any form. Their butchering methods made sure that all the blood was removed from an animal before any meat was cooked or eaten. What they didn't realize was that Jesus was going to be a sacrifice for them just like the animal sacrifices they were used to, but much better. When we accept Jesus' sacrifice for us and celebrate this each week by sharing in the communion meal, then in a way we are eating His flesh and drinking His blood.

- Which miracle is more amazing to you: feeding the 5000 or walking on the water? Why?
- Why did Jesus walk away when the people wanted to make Him a king?
- How would you have felt if you were in a boat at night and you saw someone walking to the boat on the water?

- Why did the people ask for another miracle when Jesus had just fed them?
- Why does Jesus say things that are so hard to understand? Which of the things that Jesus says in this chapter is the hardest for you to understand?

Week 42, Day 6 --- Mark 7 - Matthew 15

The Pharisees were obsessed with cleanliness. They kept the letter of the law and went beyond that to create thousands of traditions that were designed to prevent them from breaking the law. They attacked Jesus for allowing His followers to break their hand washing tradition. We know now that it is healthier to wash before eating or preparing food to prevent the spread of germs. The Pharisees didn't know that. They weren't concerned about hygiene, but about whether or not a person was ceremonially clean. To be ceremonially clean was to be able to worship in the temple or to be allowed into the presence of God. What they didn't realize was that God was standing right in front of them.

When Jesus tells us what makes us unclean He is telling us what separates us from Him. He is very clear that it is not the food we eat or our level of hygiene. We pay attention to these things to be healthy rather than as an attempt to get close to Jesus. What separates us from Jesus is the evil in our hearts, the things we say and do that do not show love to either God or others. Jesus gives a great example. I'll try to put it in modern terms. My parents are rapidly reaching the point where they will need outside care. I could take all my financial resources and tie them up in trust to support church ministries and then tell my parents that I couldn't help them because my money was all dedicated to God. This would be wrong. My first responsibility is to care for my parents.

What is making you unclean?

Week 42, Day 7 --- Mark 8 - Luke 9:18-27 - Matthew 16

We have reached the middle of the story of Jesus. This point is marked in 3 of the gospels by Peter's confession that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah. Up until this time Jesus' ministry has been focused on spreading the good news of His coming to the people. He has been telling people how to live through words while He has been demonstrating how to live through His actions. Now He has turned His focus toward the cross. It isn't that this has ever been out of Jesus' mind, but now He lets His disciples know that this is where He is going. He also clarifies that this is what it means to follow Him. His invitation hasn't changed. Following Jesus does mean giving up many of the things that we consider to be valuable. Anything that I want to hang on to that would keep me from following Jesus fits in this category. Jesus asks us to decide if we want to focus on this life or the life to come. Which one have you chosen?