

*Fifty Three Days  
With Jesus*

Devotionals for the 2014  
Slovakia English Camps

## **Fifty-three days with Jesus:**

Jesus is revealed in his works, words and witnesses

There are fifty-three days between the first day in Slovakia and the last day for the half of the team that is staying for the Berea camp. We have chosen one paragraph about Jesus for each of these days. They are organized to trace the Gospel accounts of Jesus, with a few texts from the later parts of the New Testament thrown in to shine light. The main 'life-line' ends when the first half of the team leaves, on August 7th, and the remaining paragraphs are further thoughts on Jesus from the Epistles and the Old Testament.

Each day you will be asked to read the paragraph and answer one or two content questions and an application question. If that doesn't fill your time, we encourage you to dive into some aspect of inductive study, as outlined on the following pages, for each passage.

We are praying that the time in Slovakia will truly be time with Jesus. He wants to be with you every day, more real than your fellow team members or even the people of Slovakia. We encourage you to consider these studies simply as time watching Jesus, getting to know him like you would any friend. But they are also an opportunity to communicate Jesus, to bring the person you are getting to know into the day-to-day life of the team and the ministry in Slovakia.

Above all, we are praying that Jesus will receive the praise and honor he deserves as a result of your encounter with him in Scripture. If all we accomplish in Slovakia is to praise Jesus, individually and as a group, we will have done what we were created for!

So the two unwritten questions each day will be:

What jumps out at you from this text?

What is praise-worthy about Jesus in this text?

Finally, brothers and sisters, Jesus is true, Jesus is honorable, Jesus is just, Jesus is pure, Jesus is lovely, Jesus is commendable, Jesus is excellent, Jesus is worthy of praise, ***think about these things.***

(Philippians 4:8, paraphrased)

## **Basic Inductive Study Questions**

### ***Preparation*** – Pray and Read

Begin with prayer, seeking God’s direction and revelation. Continue with prayer, asking Him questions, seeking His answers. Let your study time be a conversation with Jesus.

Read the section through several times, in context. Read it slowly and imaginatively, placing yourself in the setting. Allow the words to speak to you personally.

### ***Observation*** - Record the objective information in the text.

Begin by observing the context of the passage: What groups of people are mentioned or to whom is the passage directed? What is their situation? What role does Jesus play? Or is this a teaching passage? What is the focus of his teaching? What does the teaching reveal about Jesus?

Observe the specifics of the passage: Mark the key words and phrases used in this passage. Make a list of the most significant keywords and tell what you learn about those words or from their use in this passage. Consider the key words further by using a dictionary (English, Greek or Bible) to help you gain a deeper understanding.

Are any cause and effect relationships described in the passage? Are there any comparisons or contrasts? Are there any thoughts that are emphasized or repeated?

### ***Interpretation*** – Expand your understanding of the passage by considering additional information.

Read the text again. Mark the following: comparisons (‘This is like that’); promises that are made; commands that are given; examples that should or should not be followed; actions or attitudes that shed light on the character of Jesus.

Look up any cross references that come to mind as you study. Feel free to go on any “rabbit trails” that seem important. In many ways this is the heart of personal inductive study.

What do you learn about Jesus from this portion of Scripture?  
What do you learn about the attitudes and behaviors that should characterize the lives of Jesus followers?

***Application*** – How might your praise, your life and the team change as you apply the practices and principles of this passage?

What is praiseworthy about Jesus in this passage? Is there any way, public or private that you can add this truth to your praise life?

What do you learn about your own heart attitudes from this passage? What have you seen that challenges the way that you live? Are there any “course corrections” you would like to make to either your attitudes or your behaviors?

Are there any lessons you want to learn? Commands you need to obey? Sins that you want to avoid? Promises that you can claim? Examples you would like to follow?

Write a specific response to this passage (perhaps a prayer), specifying how you will honor Jesus from this passage and apply its teaching to your attitudes and actions, to the circumstances around you and to your relationship with God.

June 27, 2014

The divine nature of Jesus

**John 1:1-5** In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup>He was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup>All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. <sup>4</sup>In him was life, and the life was the light of men. <sup>5</sup>The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

Who is the Word?

Where was Jesus at the time of creation?

In verse four, what does Jesus have that we need?

How can a person live in the light and have life?

June 28, 2014

Jesus is the image of the invisible God

**Colossians 1:15-20** He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. <sup>16</sup>For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. <sup>17</sup>And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. <sup>18</sup>And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. <sup>19</sup>For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, <sup>20</sup>and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross.

Who is Jesus exactly like, and what does that mean?

Why did Jesus create things?

As a Christian, who is our boss, who do we take orders from?

Is Jesus first place in every part of your being?

June 29, 2014

Jesus is the firstborn, the Son of God

**Hebrews 1:1-6** Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, <sup>2</sup>but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world. <sup>3</sup>He is the radiance of the glory of God and the exact imprint of his nature, and he upholds the universe by the word of his power. After making purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, <sup>4</sup>having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs. <sup>5</sup>For to which of the angels did God ever say, “You are my Son, today I have begotten you”? Or again, “I will be to him a father, and he shall be to me a son”? <sup>6</sup>And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, “Let all God’s angels worship him.”

List things in this passage that Jesus does or is:

Where is Jesus now?

Who holds your life together and how?

How are our sin washed away?

**John 1:9-18** The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. <sup>10</sup>He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. <sup>11</sup>He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. <sup>12</sup>But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, <sup>13</sup>who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. <sup>14</sup>And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. <sup>15</sup>(John bore witness about him, and cried out, “This was he of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.’”) <sup>16</sup>For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. <sup>17</sup>For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. <sup>18</sup>No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father’s side, he has made him known.

The “true” light has come that gives life. Why did/does the world reject Him?

What does “children of God” mean to you?

Jesus became flesh. Why should that be an encouragement to us?

Read 1 Thess 5:4-8. As children of God, how should we be living?

What should our message be to people, verse 17?

July 1, 2014

The birth of Jesus announced to Mary

**Luke 1:26-38** In the sixth month the angel Gabriel was sent from God to a city of Galilee named Nazareth, <sup>27</sup>to a virgin betrothed to a man whose name was Joseph, of the house of David. And the virgin's name was Mary. <sup>28</sup>And he came to her and said, "Greetings, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" <sup>29</sup>But she was greatly troubled at the saying, and tried to discern what sort of greeting this might be. <sup>30</sup>And the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary, for you have found favor with God. <sup>31</sup>And behold, you will conceive in your womb and bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus. <sup>32</sup>He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. And the Lord God will give to him the throne of his father David, <sup>33</sup>and he will reign over the house of Jacob forever, and of his kingdom there will be no end." <sup>34</sup>And Mary said to the angel, "How will this be, since I am a virgin?" <sup>35</sup>And the angel answered her, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be called holy—the Son of God. <sup>36</sup>And behold, your relative Elizabeth in her old age has also conceived a son, and this is the sixth month with her who was called barren. <sup>37</sup>For nothing will be impossible with God." <sup>38</sup>And Mary said, "Behold, I am the servant of the Lord; let it be to me according to your word." And the angel departed from her.

How long will Jesus reign and what do we know about His kingdom?

What is possible through God?

If we are in Christ, what does our future look like?

Are we willing to let God do the impossible in our lives?

**Matthew 1:18-25** Now the birth of Jesus Christ took place in this way. When his mother Mary had been betrothed to Joseph, before they came together she was found to be with child from the Holy Spirit. <sup>19</sup>And her husband Joseph, being a just man and unwilling to put her to shame, resolved to divorce her quietly. <sup>20</sup>But as he considered these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, “Joseph, son of David, do not fear to take Mary as your wife, for that which is conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. <sup>21</sup>She will bear a son, and you shall call his name Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins.” <sup>22</sup>All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: <sup>23</sup>“Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall call his name Immanuel” (which means, God with us). <sup>24</sup>When Joseph woke from sleep, he did as the angel of the Lord commanded him: he took his wife, <sup>25</sup>but knew her not until she had given birth to a son. And he called his name Jesus.

Do we really believe that God can do miracles through ordinary people?

How is Joseph’s response an example to you?

Look at the names given to Jesus in this passage. What did Jesus come to do for man?

How can knowing God is with me radically change the way I live and think?

July 3, 2014

The baptism of Jesus

**Matthew 3:13-17** Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to John, to be baptized by him. <sup>14</sup>John would have prevented him, saying, “I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?” <sup>15</sup>But Jesus answered him, “Let it be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Then he consented. <sup>16</sup>And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water, and behold, the heavens were opened to him, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming to rest on him; <sup>17</sup>and behold, a voice from heaven said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased.”

How did the baptism of Jesus ‘fulfill all righteousness?’

What do you notice from this passage about the Trinity?

Why was the Father pleased with Jesus?

If Jesus pleased the Father, shouldn’t you be pleased with him as well?  
How would that look in your life today?

What would it look like to be pleasing to the Father today?

**John 1:19-34** And this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, “Who are you?” <sup>20</sup>He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, “I am not the Christ.” <sup>21</sup>And they asked him, “What then? Are you Elijah?” He said, “I am not.” “Are you the Prophet?” And he answered, “No.” <sup>22</sup>So they said to him, “Who are you? We need to give an answer to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?” <sup>23</sup>He said, “I am the voice of one crying out in the wilderness, ‘Make straight the way of the Lord,’ as the prophet Isaiah said.” <sup>24</sup>(Now they had been sent from the Pharisees.) <sup>25</sup>They asked him, “Then why are you baptizing, if you are neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?” <sup>26</sup>John answered them, “I baptize with water, but among you stands one you do not know, <sup>27</sup>even he who comes after me, the strap of whose sandal I am not worthy to untie.” <sup>28</sup>These things took place in Bethany across the Jordan, where John was baptizing. <sup>29</sup>The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, “Behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! <sup>30</sup>This is he of whom I said, ‘After me comes a man who ranks before me, because he was before me.’ <sup>31</sup>I myself did not know him, but for this purpose I came baptizing with water, that he might be revealed to Israel.” <sup>32</sup>John bore witness: “I saw the Spirit descend from heaven like a dove, and it remained on him. <sup>33</sup>I myself did not know him, but he who sent me to baptize with water said to me, ‘He on whom you see the Spirit descend and remain, this is he who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.’ <sup>34</sup>And I have seen and have borne witness that this is the Son of God.”

What is John’s view of Himself, and his view of Jesus?

Why is the term, “lamb of God” significant?

John never exalted himself, he exalted Jesus. How can you do the same today?

July 5, 2014

Jesus the Lamb is our salvation

**1 Peter 1:17-21** And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile, <sup>18</sup>knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold, <sup>19</sup>but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot. <sup>20</sup>He was foreknown before the foundation of the world but was made manifest in the last times for the sake of you <sup>21</sup>who through him are believers in God, who raised him from the dead and gave him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.

What do we know about the blood of Jesus?

What do we know about this world we live in?

Knowing this world is not our home, how then should we be living?

What does it mean to live as if our faith and hope are in God?

**Luke 4:1-12** And Jesus, full of the Holy Spirit, returned from the Jordan and was led by the Spirit in the wilderness <sup>2</sup>for forty days, being tempted by the devil. And he ate nothing during those days. And when they were ended, he was hungry. <sup>3</sup>The devil said to him, “If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become bread.” <sup>4</sup>And Jesus answered him, “It is written, ‘Man shall not live by bread alone.’” <sup>5</sup>And the devil took him up and showed him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time, <sup>6</sup>and said to him, “To you I will give all this authority and their glory, for it has been delivered to me, and I give it to whom I will. <sup>7</sup>If you, then, will worship me, it will all be yours.” <sup>8</sup>And Jesus answered him, “It is written, “‘You shall worship the Lord your God, and him only shall you serve.’” <sup>9</sup>And he took him to Jerusalem and set him on the pinnacle of the temple and said to him, “If you are the Son of God, throw yourself down from here, <sup>10</sup>for it is written, “‘He will command his angels concerning you, to guard you,’ <sup>11</sup>and “‘On their hands they will bear you up, lest you strike your foot against a stone.’” <sup>12</sup>And Jesus answered him, “It is said, ‘You shall not put the Lord your God to the test.’”

Can the Spirit lead believers into difficult times? If so, why?

What was the devil trying to do to Jesus?

How can we defend ourselves from the devil’s attacks? Read James 4:7.

What is your enemy trying to do to you today? How can you respond?

July 7, 2014

Jesus announces his ministry

**Luke 4:16-21** And he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up. And as was his custom, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, and he stood up to read. <sup>17</sup>And the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written, <sup>18</sup>“The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, <sup>19</sup>to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.” <sup>20</sup>And he rolled up the scroll and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. <sup>21</sup>And he began to say to them, “Today this Scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing.”

What was normal for Jesus to do?

What did Jesus come to do?

How was the Scripture fulfilled that day?

Which of these things is a need you particularly have?

What can you do to take hold of Jesus’ fulfillment of that need?

**John 4:7-26** A woman from Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, “Give me a drink.”<sup>8</sup>(For his disciples had gone away into the city to buy food.)<sup>9</sup>The Samaritan woman said to him, “How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?” (For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans.)<sup>10</sup>Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.”<sup>11</sup>The woman said to him, “Sir, you have nothing to draw water with, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water?”<sup>12</sup>Are you greater than our father Jacob? He gave us the well and drank from it himself, as did his sons and his livestock.”<sup>13</sup>Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again,<sup>14</sup>but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him will never be thirsty again. The water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”<sup>15</sup>The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water, so that I will not be thirsty or have to come here to draw water.”<sup>16</sup>Jesus said to her, “Go, call your husband, and come here.”<sup>17</sup>The woman answered him, “I have no husband.” Jesus said to her, “You are right in saying, ‘I have no husband’;<sup>18</sup>for you have had five husbands, and the one you now have is not your husband. What you have said is true.”<sup>19</sup>The woman said to him, “Sir, I perceive that you are a prophet.<sup>20</sup>Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, but you say that in Jerusalem is the place where people ought to worship.”<sup>21</sup>Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father.<sup>22</sup>You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews.<sup>23</sup>But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him.<sup>24</sup>God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.”<sup>25</sup>The woman said to him, “I know that Messiah is coming (he who is called Christ). When he comes, he will tell us all things.”<sup>26</sup>Jesus said to her, “I who speak to you am he.”

**John 7:37-39** On the last day of the feast, the great day, Jesus stood up and cried out, “If anyone thirsts, let him come to me and drink.<sup>38</sup>Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture has said, ‘Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.’”<sup>39</sup>Now this he said about the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were to receive, for as yet the Spirit had not been given, because Jesus was not yet glorified.

What is the way of the master (the approach to evangelism) in John 4?

Where can you look for daily opportunities to share Jesus with people?

What is the meaning of 'living water'?

How long will this water last for those that ask for it?

What will it look like if living water is flowing from your heart?

What difference can this living water make to those around you today?

July 9, 2014

The healing power of Jesus

**Luke 4:38-41** And he arose and left the synagogue and entered Simon's house. Now Simon's mother-in-law was ill with a high fever, and they appealed to him on her behalf. <sup>39</sup>And he stood over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her, and immediately she rose and began to serve them. <sup>40</sup>Now when the sun was setting, all those who had any who were sick with various diseases brought them to him, and he laid his hands on every one of them and healed them. <sup>41</sup>And demons also came out of many, crying, "You are the Son of God!" But he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew that he was the Christ.

Who was Jesus healing?

Who did the demons believe Jesus was?

Who can we go to with all of our problems?

Do you really believe that Jesus can heal? How often do you pray for healing for yourself and others?

July 10, 2014

The creation power of Jesus

**Luke 8:22-25** One day he got into a boat with his disciples, and he said to them, “Let us go across to the other side of the lake.” So they set out, <sup>23</sup>and as they sailed he fell asleep. And a windstorm came down on the lake, and they were filling with water and were in danger. <sup>24</sup>And they went and woke him, saying, “Master, Master, we are perishing!” And he awoke and rebuked the wind and the raging waves, and they ceased, and there was a calm. <sup>25</sup>He said to them, “Where is your faith?” And they were afraid, and they marveled, saying to one another, “Who then is this, that he commands even winds and water, and they obey him?”

What does Jesus have power over?

What does Jesus want us to have?

When the storms of life hit, how do we live out trust in Jesus?

What do we need to do when trials come our way?

**Matthew 14:13-21** Now when Jesus heard this, he withdrew from there in a boat to a desolate place by himself. But when the crowds heard it, they followed him on foot from the towns. <sup>14</sup>When he went ashore he saw a great crowd, and he had compassion on them and healed their sick. <sup>15</sup>Now when it was evening, the disciples came to him and said, “This is a desolate place, and the day is now over; send the crowds away to go into the villages and buy food for themselves.” <sup>16</sup>But Jesus said, “They need not go away; you give them something to eat.” <sup>17</sup>They said to him, “We have only five loaves here and two fish.” <sup>18</sup>And he said, “Bring them here to me.” <sup>19</sup>Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass, and taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing. Then he broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. <sup>20</sup>And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up twelve baskets full of the broken pieces left over. <sup>21</sup>And those who ate were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

What character quality of Jesus is at work in verses 13-14? How is the same quality at work in verse 15-21? (cf. Mark 8:1-3).

What Old Testament miracle(s) is this like? (Look at tomorrow’s text if you need a hint.)

If Jesus can feed 5000 with five loaves, (and if Jesus is just as real now), then . . . (Complete the sentence, applying the truth to your own circumstances.)

**John 6:25-35** When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, “Rabbi, when did you come here?” <sup>26</sup>Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, you are seeking me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. <sup>27</sup>Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give to you. For on him God the Father has set his seal.” <sup>28</sup>Then they said to him, “What must we do, to be doing the works of God?” <sup>29</sup>Jesus answered them, “This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent.” <sup>30</sup>So they said to him, “Then what sign do you do, that we may see and believe you? What work do you perform?” <sup>31</sup>Our fathers ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’” <sup>32</sup>Jesus then said to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father gives you the true bread from heaven. <sup>33</sup>For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” <sup>34</sup>They said to him, “Sir, give us this bread always.” <sup>35</sup>Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life; whoever comes to me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.

What miracles precede this discussion?

What are the crowds after? What does Jesus offer instead?

What does spiritual hunger and thirst look like? Do you have it? How is Jesus satisfying it?

July 13, 2014

The rest we find in Jesus

**Matthew 11:25-30** At that time Jesus declared, “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that you have hidden these things from the wise and understanding and revealed them to little children; <sup>26</sup>yes, Father, for such was your gracious will. <sup>27</sup>All things have been handed over to me by my Father, and no one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son chooses to reveal him. <sup>28</sup>Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. <sup>29</sup>Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. <sup>30</sup>For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.”

How do the will of the Father and the authority of the Son work together in verses 25-27?

Who does the Son invite? (Note that ‘labor and are heavy laden’ is ‘weary and burdened’ in NIV and HCSB.)

What is the yoke? What does it mean to take Jesus’ yoke?

How does Jesus describe himself in verses 28-30?

What is your weariness today? What is your burden? What can you do today to find Jesus’ promised rest?

July 14, 2014

Jesus the Messiah

**Matthew 16:13-17** Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?”<sup>14</sup> And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”<sup>15</sup> He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?”<sup>16</sup> Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.”<sup>17</sup> And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.

What is the basic attitude of people toward Jesus? Positive or negative? What role do they see him fulfilling?

What is another word for ‘Christ’ in verse 16? What role does Peter see Jesus fulfilling?

What is the significance of the fact that Peter did not learn this from men but it was revealed from God?

Who do you say Jesus is? Is he really all he is supposed to be? In what way does he want to be more the center of your life today?

July 15, 2014

The passion of Jesus foretold

**Matthew 16:21-23** From that time Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. <sup>22</sup>And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, “Far be it from you, Lord! This shall never happen to you.” <sup>23</sup>But he turned and said to Peter, “Get behind me, Satan! You are a hindrance to me. For you are not setting your mind on the things of God, but on the things of man.”

“Setting your mind” can also be translated as “savor,” KJV, or “have in mind,” NIV. How do we savor God’s interests, the things of God?

Jesus says that Peter is not setting his mind on God’s interests. What are Peter’s interests?

What are God’s interests in these verses?

What are God’s interests in your life? What can you do today to have them in mind?

**Matthew 16:24-28** Then Jesus told his disciples, “If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. <sup>25</sup>For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. <sup>26</sup>For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world and forfeits his soul? Or what shall a man give in return for his soul? <sup>27</sup>For the Son of Man is going to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay each person according to what he has done. <sup>28</sup>Truly, I say to you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom.”

(At first Peter did not understand Jesus mission, but he came to understand. Peter himself was crucified, crucified upside down. He changed from desiring earthly pleasures, power and prestige to desiring the kingdom of God. In I Peter, Peter encourages us to follow in Jesus’ footsteps. Peter beautifully explains our position in Christ and speaks of Jesus’ sufferings. Cross References: Luke 9:23-26, I Peter 1, I Peter 2:21-25, 2 Corinthians 4:10-11)

We all have areas of life that are important to us, and although they are not sin, sometimes Jesus asks us to deny them. What areas in your life has or is Jesus asking you to deny?

What higher goals is He asking you to deny yourself for?

Jesus promises to repay us according to what we have done. How does He repay us, and what actions do you think is He looking to repay us for?

**Matthew 17:1-8** And after six days Jesus took with him Peter and James, and John his brother, and led them up a high mountain by themselves. <sup>2</sup>And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became white as light. <sup>3</sup>And behold, there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. <sup>4</sup>And Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good that we are here. If you wish, I will make three tents here, one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah.” <sup>5</sup>He was still speaking when, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my beloved Son, with whom I am well pleased; listen to him.” <sup>6</sup>When the disciples heard this, they fell on their faces and were terrified. <sup>7</sup>But Jesus came and touched them, saying, “Rise, and have no fear.” <sup>8</sup>And when they lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.

(It seems that Peter is expecting Jesus to fulfill the prophecy in Zechariah 14 which is why he offers to build tabernacles (Zechariah 14:16). As Jesus began to shine, Zechariah 14:6-7 must have made a lot of sense. The prophecy in Zechariah is the day we yearn for. We yearn for God to make all things right, to be the king on the throne, to destroy evil and exalt righteousness, but that day is yet to come, and Peter, James, and John only have a glimpse of Jesus’ glory.)

What do Peter, James, and John learn about Jesus in this passage?

How should we respond to Jesus in this passage?

How should this knowledge of Jesus affect our actions today?

July 18, 2014

Jesus the Light of the World

**John 8:12** Again Jesus spoke to them, saying, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

(As we mentioned yesterday, the Feast of Booths/Tabernacles was the feast in which the Jews looked for the messiah to make his appearing. However they were looking for an appearing like Zechariah describes where the messiah comes as a conquering king. Jesus will fulfill that prophecy in the future, but His first appearing was to come as a suffering servant. He did present Himself, though, during the Feast of Booths, and the Jews rejected him. During the feast, the Jews set up four giant candle sticks in the temple court. These candelabra were so big they could be seen from all around the city. Every evening the priests would light torches and there would be great singing and rejoicing.)

The day after the feast, the day when the giant candelabra would have been put out, Jesus stood in the temple and announced, John 8:12 “I am the Light of the world; he who follows Me will not walk in darkness, but will have the Light of life.”

What does it mean to be the Light of the world?

How does light influence the world?

Early the next morning Jesus returned to the temple and performed a miracle that gave further illustration of this truth:

**John 9:1-7** As he passed by, he saw a man blind from birth. <sup>2</sup>And his disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” <sup>3</sup>Jesus answered, “It was not that this man sinned, or his parents, but that the works of God might be

displayed in him. <sup>4</sup>We must work the works of him who sent me while it is day; night is coming, when no one can work. <sup>5</sup>As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.” <sup>6</sup>Having said these things, he spit on the ground and made mud with the saliva. Then he anointed the man’s eyes with the mud <sup>7</sup>and said to him, “Go, wash in the pool of Siloam” (which means Sent). So he went and washed and came back seeing.

What is the nature of spiritual blindness?

What does it mean that Jesus is the light of the world in this context?

How should the miracle of spiritual light impact us?

July 19, 2014 The Jesus who seeks and saves

**Luke 19:1-10** He entered Jericho and was passing through. <sup>2</sup>And behold, there was a man named Zacchaeus. He was a chief tax collector and was rich. <sup>3</sup>And he was seeking to see who Jesus was, but on account of the crowd he could not, because he was small in stature. <sup>4</sup>So he ran on ahead and climbed up into a sycamore tree to see him, for he was about to pass that way. <sup>5</sup>And when Jesus came to the place, he looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today.” <sup>6</sup>So he hurried and came down and received him joyfully. <sup>7</sup>And when they saw it, they all grumbled, “He has gone in to be the guest of a man who is a sinner.” <sup>8</sup>And Zacchaeus stood and said to the Lord, “Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor. And if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I restore it fourfold.” <sup>9</sup>And Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, since he also is a son of Abraham. <sup>10</sup>For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.”

How was Jesus’ perspective different from the perspective of the religious people? Who is this man Zacchaeus that Jesus went to see?

So was Zacchaeus saved because he restored fourfold to those he stole from? Why was this an important action for him?

Who are you most like in this chapter? The religious people who are only friends with the righteous? Zacchaeus who needs a change of heart? Or Jesus who has a love and compassion for the wicked, lowly sinners?

We like this story because Zacchaeus turns to Jesus and repents, but not everyone we witness to and befriend turns to Jesus. How do we handle those people?

July 20, 2014

Jesus the Good Shepherd

**John 10:11-18** I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. <sup>12</sup>He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. <sup>13</sup>He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. <sup>14</sup>I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, <sup>15</sup>just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep. <sup>16</sup>And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. <sup>17</sup>For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. <sup>18</sup>No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father.”

Is a sheep a good trade for the life of a shepherd? Why would a shepherd lay down his life for the sheep?

What does it mean to know the voice of the shepherd? How does that translate into real life?

Who are the other sheep who “are not of this fold”?

Several years ago one of the fathers of our campers told Jozef that he just couldn't understand how a good God could kill His own son. Jozef used this passage to answer him. What would you say to that man?

What character qualities do you see in Jesus in this passage?

**John 11:17-27** Now when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. <sup>18</sup>Bethany was near Jerusalem, about two miles off, <sup>19</sup>and many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to console them concerning their brother. <sup>20</sup>So when Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went and met him, but Mary remained seated in the house. <sup>21</sup>Martha said to Jesus, “Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. <sup>22</sup>But even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you.” <sup>23</sup>Jesus said to her, “Your brother will rise again.” <sup>24</sup>Martha said to him, “I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.” <sup>25</sup>Jesus said to her, “I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, <sup>26</sup>and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this?” <sup>27</sup>She said to him, “Yes, Lord; I believe that you are the Christ, the Son of God, who is coming into the world.”

Why is it important that Lazarus was in the tomb four days?

What ideas are Mary and Martha struggling with?

Who is Jesus in this passage?

Because Jesus is the resurrection and the life, we will have life after death. Yet, His offer of life does not only start after death. He offers us fullness of life now. What does it mean to have life here and now?

**Luke 18:9-14** He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt: <sup>10</sup>“Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. <sup>11</sup>The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. <sup>12</sup>I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.’ <sup>13</sup>But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’ <sup>14</sup>I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.”

What did the Pharisee trust in?

What did the tax collector ask for?

What does the word ‘justified’ mean? What does this teach us about the grace of God?

In what ways have you been like the Pharisee? In what ways have you been like the tax collector?

How does the tax collector’s attitude translate into everyday life?

July 23, 2014

The humble kingship of Jesus

**John 12:12-19** The next day the large crowd that had come to the feast heard that Jesus was coming to Jerusalem. <sup>13</sup>So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying out, “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!” <sup>14</sup>And Jesus found a young donkey and sat on it, just as it is written, <sup>15</sup>“Fear not, daughter of Zion; behold, your king is coming, sitting on a donkey’s colt!” <sup>16</sup>His disciples did not understand these things at first, but when Jesus was glorified, then they remembered that these things had been written about him and had been done to him. <sup>17</sup>The crowd that had been with him when he called Lazarus out of the tomb and raised him from the dead continued to bear witness. <sup>18</sup>The reason why the crowd went to meet him was that they heard he had done this sign. <sup>19</sup>So the Pharisees said to one another, “You see that you are gaining nothing. Look, the world has gone after him.”

What does the word ‘Hosanna’ mean?

What names and titles is Jesus given in this passage?

What areas of your life today are pushing you to cry “O Lord, Save!”

What areas of your life today need a renewed submission to the humble King?

July 24, 2014

The remembrance of Jesus

**1 Corinthians 11:23-26** For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, <sup>24</sup>and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, “This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.” <sup>25</sup>In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.” <sup>26</sup>For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.

This may be the earliest record of the Lord’s Supper (1 Corinthians was written before the Gospels). What does it mean to you today that Jesus compared his body to the broken bread?

What does it mean to you today that there is a new covenant in Jesus’ blood? What was the old covenant? How has he made a new covenant?

What does it mean to you today that Jesus called this ‘a remembrance.’ How do you ‘remember’ Jesus when you take communion?

What difference will it make today that you have remembered Jesus’ body broke and his blood shed?

**John 13:1-11** Now before the Feast of the Passover, when Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart out of this world to the Father, having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. <sup>2</sup>During supper, when the devil had already put it into the heart of Judas Iscariot, Simon's son, to betray him, <sup>3</sup>Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going back to God, <sup>4</sup>rose from supper. He laid aside his outer garments, and taking a towel, tied it around his waist. <sup>5</sup>Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was wrapped around him. <sup>6</sup>He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, do you wash my feet?" <sup>7</sup>Jesus answered him, "What I am doing you do not understand now, but afterward you will understand." <sup>8</sup>Peter said to him, "You shall never wash my feet." Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no share with me." <sup>9</sup>Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" <sup>10</sup>Jesus said to him, "The one who has bathed does not need to wash, except for his feet, but is completely clean. And you are clean, but not every one of you." <sup>11</sup>For he knew who was to betray him; that was why he said, "Not all of you are clean."

How was foot-washing a sign that Jesus 'loved them to the end.'

Why did Peter push back against having Jesus wash his feet?

What is the significance of 'If I do not wash you'?

What would it mean to have Jesus wash you today?

July 26, 2014

Jesus the way, truth and life

**John 14:1-7** “Let not your hearts be troubled. Believe in God; believe also in me. <sup>2</sup>In my Father’s house are many rooms. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? <sup>3</sup>And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, that where I am you may be also. <sup>4</sup>And you know the way to where I am going.” <sup>5</sup>Thomas said to him, “Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?” <sup>6</sup>Jesus said to him, “I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. <sup>7</sup>If you had known me, you would have known my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him.”

What is Jesus’ counsel to those whose hearts are troubled?

What is Jesus’ reason for going to prepare a place for us?

How is Jesus himself the way to the place he has prepared?

How is Jesus the truth and the life?

What difference will it make in your life today that ‘no one comes to the Father except through me’?

**John 15:1-11** “I am the true vine, and my Father is the vinedresser.

<sup>2</sup>Every branch in me that does not bear fruit he takes away, and every branch that does bear fruit he prunes, that it may bear more fruit.

<sup>3</sup>Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you.

<sup>4</sup>Abide in me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit by itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in me. <sup>5</sup>I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing. <sup>6</sup>If anyone does not abide in me he is thrown away like a branch and withers; and the branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned.

<sup>7</sup>If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. <sup>8</sup>By this my Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit and so prove to be my disciples. <sup>9</sup>As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Abide in my love. <sup>10</sup>If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father’s commandments and abide in his love. <sup>11</sup>These things I have spoken to you, that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be full.

What does it mean to ‘abide’ in Jesus? What does this look like in daily life?

What does it mean to ‘bear fruit’? What does this look like day to day?

How have you seen a correlation in your own life between abiding in Jesus and fullness of joy?

**Matthew 26:36-44** Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane, and he said to his disciples, “Sit here, while I go over there and pray.”<sup>37</sup> And taking with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, he began to be sorrowful and troubled.<sup>38</sup> Then he said to them, “My soul is very sorrowful, even to death; remain here, and watch with me.”<sup>39</sup> And going a little farther he fell on his face and prayed, saying, “My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as you will.”<sup>40</sup> And he came to the disciples and found them sleeping. And he said to Peter, “So, could you not watch with me one hour?”<sup>41</sup> Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”<sup>42</sup> Again, for the second time, he went away and prayed, “My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done.”<sup>43</sup> And again he came and found them sleeping, for their eyes were heavy.<sup>44</sup> So, leaving them again, he went away and prayed for the third time, saying the same words again.

What was the cup which Jesus dreaded to drink?

What did it mean for Jesus to say ‘your will be done’ at this moment?

How do you reconcile the prayer ‘your will be done’ to Jesus’ command ‘ask and it will be given you?’

What areas or circumstances in your life today need this prayer?

July 29, 2014,

The suffering of Jesus

**Matthew 27:24-31** So when Pilate saw that he was gaining nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, “I am innocent of this man’s blood; see to it yourselves.”<sup>25</sup> And all the people answered, “His blood be on us and on our children!”<sup>26</sup> Then he released for them Barabbas, and having scourged Jesus, delivered him to be crucified.<sup>27</sup> Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the governor’s headquarters, and they gathered the whole battalion before him.<sup>28</sup> And they stripped him and put a scarlet robe on him,<sup>29</sup> and twisting together a crown of thorns, they put it on his head and put a reed in his right hand. And kneeling before him, they mocked him, saying, “Hail, King of the Jews!”<sup>30</sup> And they spit on him and took the reed and struck him on the head.<sup>31</sup> And when they had mocked him, they stripped him of the robe and put his own clothes on him and led him away to crucify him.

What is terrifying about the phrase ‘His blood be on us and on our children’?

Do you sense the wrongness and the irony here? What should have been happening?

In what ways have you mocked the Kingship of Jesus?

How can you honor and worship Jesus today?

July 30, 2014

The essential facts about Jesus

**1 Corinthians 15:3-8** For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, <sup>4</sup>that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, <sup>5</sup>and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. <sup>6</sup>Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. <sup>7</sup>Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. <sup>8</sup>Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.

Why are these the central facts about Jesus?

How are Jesus' death and resurrection 'in accordance with the Scriptures'? What Old Testament Scriptures would you point to that were fulfilled?

What happens if you removed the resurrection from Jesus' story? (You might want to read the rest of 1 Corinthians 15 for more on this topic.)

How can the truth of Jesus' death and resurrection change your life today?

July 31, 2014

We participate in the essential facts about Jesus

**Colossians 2:9-14** For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily,<sup>10</sup> and you have been filled in him, who is the head of all rule and authority. <sup>11</sup>In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, <sup>12</sup>having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead. <sup>13</sup>And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, <sup>14</sup>by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.

How do we participate in the death of Jesus? What dies in us?

How do we participate in the resurrection of Jesus? What no longer applies to us?

How does baptism symbolize this truth?

What role does faith play?

How should these truths change who you are today?

**Matthew 27:32-44** As they went out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name. They compelled this man to carry his cross. <sup>33</sup>And when they came to a place called Golgotha (which means Place of a Skull), <sup>34</sup>they offered him wine to drink, mixed with gall, but when he tasted it, he would not drink it. <sup>35</sup>And when they had crucified him, they divided his garments among them by casting lots. <sup>36</sup>Then they sat down and kept watch over him there. <sup>37</sup>And over his head they put the charge against him, which read, “This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.” <sup>38</sup>Then two robbers were crucified with him, one on the right and one on the left. <sup>39</sup>And those who passed by derided him, wagging their heads <sup>40</sup>and saying, “You who would destroy the temple and rebuild it in three days, save yourself! If you are the Son of God, come down from the cross.” <sup>41</sup>So also the chief priests, with the scribes and elders, mocked him, saying, <sup>42</sup>“He saved others; he cannot save himself. He is the King of Israel; let him come down now from the cross, and we will believe in him. <sup>43</sup>He trusts in God; let God deliver him now, if he desires him. For he said, ‘I am the Son of God.’” <sup>44</sup>And the robbers who were crucified with him also reviled him in the same way.

Why do you think the Gospels are so matter-of-fact about the process of crucifixion? (cf. Mark 15:24, Luke 23:23, John 19:18)

Once again, there is a good deal of irony here. The mockers want Jesus to prove himself by coming down from the cross, but he can only accomplish God’s will by enduring the cross. What truths about Jesus do his mockers distort?

Can you think of a time you wanted God to prove something to you, but the only way he could accomplish his will was to not answer that prayer?

**Matthew 27:45-56** Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land until the ninth hour. <sup>46</sup>And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?” that is, “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?” <sup>47</sup>And some of the bystanders, hearing it, said, “This man is calling Elijah.” <sup>48</sup>And one of them at once ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine, and put it on a reed and gave it to him to drink. <sup>49</sup>But the others said, “Wait, let us see whether Elijah will come to save him.” <sup>50</sup>And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up his spirit. <sup>51</sup>And behold, the curtain of the temple was torn in two, from top to bottom. And the earth shook, and the rocks were split. <sup>52</sup>The tombs also were opened. And many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised, <sup>53</sup>and coming out of the tombs after his resurrection they went into the holy city and appeared to many. <sup>54</sup>When the centurion and those who were with him, keeping watch over Jesus, saw the earthquake and what took place, they were filled with awe and said, “Truly this was the Son of God!” <sup>55</sup>There were also many women there, looking on from a distance, who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to him, <sup>56</sup>among whom were Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James and Joseph and the mother of the sons of Zebedee.

What was happening to make Jesus cry out ‘My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?’

What is the significance of the curtain of the temple being torn in two? (cf. Hebrews 10:19-23)

What is the significance of the centurion’s recognition of Jesus as ‘the Son of God.’

August 3, 2014

The burial of Jesus

**Matthew 27:57-66** When it was evening, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who also was a disciple of Jesus. <sup>58</sup>He went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate ordered it to be given to him. <sup>59</sup>And Joseph took the body and wrapped it in a clean linen shroud <sup>60</sup>and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had cut in the rock. And he rolled a great stone to the entrance of the tomb and went away. <sup>61</sup>Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were there, sitting opposite the tomb. <sup>62</sup>The next day, that is, after the day of Preparation, the chief priests and the Pharisees gathered before Pilate <sup>63</sup>and said, “Sir, we remember how that impostor said, while he was still alive, ‘After three days I will rise.’ <sup>64</sup>Therefore order the tomb to be made secure until the third day, lest his disciples go and steal him away and tell the people, ‘He has risen from the dead,’ and the last fraud will be worse than the first.” <sup>65</sup>Pilate said to them, “You have a guard of soldiers. Go, make it as secure as you can.” <sup>66</sup>So they went and made the tomb secure by sealing the stone and setting a guard.

All three Gospels (and Paul’s ‘essential facts’ in 1 Corinthians 15) emphasize the fact that Jesus was buried. Why was this important?

Who were the witnesses? Why is this important?

What difference does it mean to you that the Gospel writers emphasize these things?

**Matthew 28:1-15** Now after the Sabbath, toward the dawn of the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to see the tomb. <sup>2</sup>And behold, there was a great earthquake, for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone and sat on it. <sup>3</sup>His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing white as snow. <sup>4</sup>And for fear of him the guards trembled and became like dead men. <sup>5</sup>But the angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. <sup>6</sup>He is not here, for he has risen, as he said. Come, see the place where he lay. <sup>7</sup>Then go quickly and tell his disciples that he has risen from the dead, and behold, he is going before you to Galilee; there you will see him. See, I have told you.” <sup>8</sup>So they departed quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to tell his disciples. <sup>9</sup>And behold, Jesus met them and said, “Greetings!” And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him. <sup>10</sup>Then Jesus said to them, “Do not be afraid; go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee, and there they will see me.” <sup>11</sup>While they were going, behold, some of the guard went into the city and told the chief priests all that had taken place. <sup>12</sup>And when they had assembled with the elders and taken counsel, they gave a sufficient sum of money to the soldiers <sup>13</sup>and said, “Tell people, ‘His disciples came by night and stole him away while we were asleep.’ <sup>14</sup>And if this comes to the governor’s ears, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble.” <sup>15</sup>So they took the money and did as they were directed. And this story has been spread among the Jews to this day.

Compare the people present in yesterday’s text to those present in today’s text. What is Matthew trying to show by this?

Put yourself in the place of Mary Magdalene or one of the other witnesses? What are you thinking and feeling?

What difference should it make to you today that Jesus is risen?

August 5, 2014    Jesus humbled himself to death, and was exalted

**Philippians 2:5-11** Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, <sup>6</sup>who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, <sup>7</sup>but emptied himself, by taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. <sup>8</sup>And being found in human form, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. <sup>9</sup>Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, <sup>10</sup>so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, <sup>11</sup>and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

Draw a picture to show the arc of Jesus' mission.

What role did humility play for Jesus?

How would your life on the team look different if you were fully characterized by humility? How about in your home?

**John 20:19-29** On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you."<sup>20</sup> When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord.<sup>21</sup> Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you."<sup>22</sup> And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit.<sup>23</sup> If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you withhold forgiveness from any, it is withheld."<sup>24</sup> Now Thomas, one of the Twelve, called the Twin, was not with them when Jesus came.<sup>25</sup> So the other disciples told him, "We have seen the Lord." But he said to them, "Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into the mark of the nails, and place my hand into his side, I will never believe."<sup>26</sup> Eight days later, his disciples were inside again, and Thomas was with them. Although the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, "Peace be with you."<sup>27</sup> Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and see my hands; and put out your hand, and place it in my side. Do not disbelieve, but believe."<sup>28</sup> Thomas answered him, "My Lord and my God!"<sup>29</sup> Jesus said to him, "Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."

What do you learn about the resurrected body of Jesus in these episodes?

What do you learn about the purpose of the resurrection?

Jesus graciously offers proof of the resurrection to Thomas, but commends those 'who have not seen and yet have believed?' Are you one of those? Do you feel that you need more proof than you have?

August 7, 2014

The commission of Jesus

**Matthew 28:16-20** Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. <sup>17</sup>And when they saw him they worshiped him, but some doubted. <sup>18</sup>And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup>Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup>teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Why do you think some of these eyewitnesses doubted? What does this teach you about the power of doubt?

Why does Jesus preface his command with the comments about authority?

What is the main command? What are the subsidiary commands. (Note that verse 19 could be translated ‘as you are going, make disciples . . .)

Why does Jesus end with the assurance of his presence? Are you experiencing his presence on this trip?

**Acts 16:25-34** About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the prisoners were listening to them, <sup>26</sup>and suddenly there was a great earthquake, so that the foundations of the prison were shaken. And immediately all the doors were opened, and everyone's bonds were unfastened. <sup>27</sup>When the jailer woke and saw that the prison doors were open, he drew his sword and was about to kill himself, supposing that the prisoners had escaped. <sup>28</sup>But Paul cried with a loud voice, "Do not harm yourself, for we are all here." <sup>29</sup>And the jailer called for lights and rushed in, and trembling with fear he fell down before Paul and Silas. <sup>30</sup>Then he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" <sup>31</sup>And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." <sup>32</sup>And they spoke the word of the Lord to him and to all who were in his house. <sup>33</sup>And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their wounds; and he was baptized at once, he and all his family. <sup>34</sup>Then he brought them up into his house and set food before them. And he rejoiced along with his entire household that he had believed in God.

How could Paul and Silas have this attitude while in prison?

Is verse 31 the whole of the gospel? What evidence does the passage give that there is more.

What, then, in verse 31, makes it an appropriate one line summary for Paul to use?

Has the gospel made an impact on your family?

**Isaiah 53:1-11** Who has believed what he has heard from us? And to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? <sup>2</sup>For he grew up before him like a young plant, and like a root out of dry ground; he had no form or majesty that we should look at him, and no beauty that we should desire him. <sup>3</sup>He was despised and rejected by men; a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief; and as one from whom men hide their faces he was despised, and we esteemed him not. <sup>4</sup>Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. <sup>5</sup>But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed. <sup>6</sup>All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned—every one—to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all. <sup>7</sup>He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth; like a lamb that is led to the slaughter, and like a sheep that before its shearers is silent, so he opened not his mouth. <sup>8</sup>By oppression and judgment he was taken away; and as for his generation, who considered that he was cut off out of the land of the living, stricken for the transgression of my people? <sup>9</sup>And they made his grave with the wicked and with a rich man in his death, although he had done no violence, and there was no deceit in his mouth. <sup>10</sup>Yet it was the will of the LORD to crush him; he has put him to grief; when his soul makes an offering for guilt, he shall see his offspring; he shall prolong his days; the will of the LORD shall prosper in his hand. <sup>11</sup>Out of the anguish of his soul he shall see and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous, and he shall bear their iniquities.

What phrases about the work of Jesus stand out to you? How can they make a difference in your life?

Do you see the resurrection anywhere in this text?

**Revelation 1:9-20** I, John, your brother and partner in the tribulation and the kingdom and the patient endurance that are in Jesus, was on the island called Patmos on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. <sup>10</sup>I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and I heard behind me a loud voice like a trumpet <sup>11</sup>saying, "Write what you see in a book and send it to the seven churches, to Ephesus and to Smyrna and to Pergamum and to Thyatira and to Sardis and to Philadelphia and to Laodicea." <sup>12</sup>Then I turned to see the voice that was speaking to me, and on turning I saw seven golden lampstands, <sup>13</sup>and in the midst of the lampstands one like a son of man, clothed with a long robe and with a golden sash around his chest. <sup>14</sup>The hairs of his head were white, like white wool, like snow. His eyes were like a flame of fire, <sup>15</sup>his feet were like burnished bronze, refined in a furnace, and his voice was like the roar of many waters. <sup>16</sup>In his right hand he held seven stars, from his mouth came a sharp two-edged sword, and his face was like the sun shining in full strength. <sup>17</sup>When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. But he laid his right hand on me, saying, "Fear not, I am the first and the last, <sup>18</sup>and the living one. I died, and behold I am alive forevermore, and I have the keys of Death and Hades. <sup>19</sup>Write therefore the things that you have seen, those that are and those that are to take place after this. <sup>20</sup>As for the mystery of the seven stars that you saw in my right hand, and the seven golden lampstands, the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches, and the seven lampstands are the seven churches.

How does the description of Jesus fit with what you have learned in studying the gospel accounts of Jesus? How do his words fit? Can you think of any cross references that prove his assertions?

If Jesus is who he says he is, how can that change the way you live today?

August 11, 2014

Jesus is the one prophesied to be crucified

**Psalm 22:1-8** My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me, from the words of my groaning? <sup>2</sup>O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer, and by night, but I find no rest. <sup>3</sup>Yet you are holy, enthroned on the praises of Israel. <sup>4</sup>In you our fathers trusted; they trusted, and you delivered them. <sup>5</sup>To you they cried and were rescued; in you they trusted and were not put to shame. <sup>6</sup>But I am a worm and not a man, scorned by mankind and despised by the people. <sup>7</sup>All who see me mock me; they make mouths at me; they wag their heads; <sup>8</sup>“He trusts in the LORD; let him deliver him; let him rescue him, for he delights in him!”

**Psalm 22:12-18** Many bulls encompass me; strong bulls of Bashan surround me; <sup>13</sup>they open wide their mouths at me, like a ravening and roaring lion. <sup>14</sup>I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joint; my heart is like wax; it is melted within my breast; <sup>15</sup>my strength is dried up like a potsherd, and my tongue sticks to my jaws; you lay me in the dust of death. <sup>16</sup>For dogs encompass me; a company of evildoers encircles me; they have pierced my hands and feet— <sup>17</sup>I can count all my bones— they stare and gloat over me; <sup>18</sup>they divide my garments among them, and for my clothing they cast lots.

How does Psalm 22 fit with what you've learned about Jesus in this study?

Look up the end of Psalm 22 (from about verse 19 on). How does this triumphant assertion fit with what you have learned in this study?

August 12, 2014

Jesus is the source of all our blessings

**Ephesians 1:3-14** Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, <sup>4</sup>even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love <sup>5</sup>he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will, <sup>6</sup>to the praise of his glorious grace, with which he has blessed us in the Beloved. <sup>7</sup>In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, <sup>8</sup>which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight <sup>9</sup>making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ <sup>10</sup>as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth. <sup>11</sup>In him we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of him who works all things according to the counsel of his will, <sup>12</sup>so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. <sup>13</sup>In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, <sup>14</sup>who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

What are the blessings listed in this passage? For each blessing, list at least one way that should show up in your daily life.

August 13, 2014

Salvation is by faith in the sacrifice of Jesus

**Romans 3:21-26** But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— <sup>22</sup>the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: <sup>23</sup>for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, <sup>24</sup>and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, <sup>25</sup>whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. <sup>26</sup>It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.

What does Paul mean by the word 'righteousness?'

Why is righteousness needed?

What does the word 'propitiation' mean? (check other translations, especially the NIV footnote.)

How is righteousness obtained?

August 14, 2014

In Jesus, God is for us

**Romans 8:31-39** What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? <sup>32</sup>He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? <sup>33</sup>Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. <sup>34</sup>Who is to condemn? Christ Jesus is the one who died—more than that, who was raised—who is at the right hand of God, who indeed is interceding for us. <sup>35</sup>Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or danger, or sword? <sup>36</sup>As it is written, "For your sake we are being killed all the day long; we are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered." <sup>37</sup>No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. <sup>38</sup>For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, <sup>39</sup>nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Do you ever feel accused or condemned by others? How does this passage affect that?

How does this passage address suffering?

How does this passage affect your sense of the presence of Jesus?

August 15, 2014

Jesus is our example of selfless sacrifice

**1 Peter 2:18-25** Servants, be subject to your masters with all respect, not only to the good and gentle but also to the unjust. <sup>19</sup>For this is a gracious thing, when, mindful of God, one endures sorrows while suffering unjustly. <sup>20</sup>For what credit is it if, when you sin and are beaten for it, you endure? But if when you do good and suffer for it you endure, this is a gracious thing in the sight of God. <sup>21</sup>For to this you have been called, because Christ also suffered for you, leaving you an example, so that you might follow in his steps. <sup>22</sup>He committed no sin, neither was deceit found in his mouth. <sup>23</sup>When he was reviled, he did not revile in return; when he suffered, he did not threaten, but continued entrusting himself to him who judges justly. <sup>24</sup>He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed. <sup>25</sup>For you were straying like sheep, but have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

Have you ever been punished or judged when you truly had done nothing wrong? How did that impact you. How about a time you were clearly wrong?

How does the example of Jesus change our response to suffering?

What was the purpose of Jesus suffering?

August 16, 2014

Jesus is the wisdom and power of God

**1 Corinthians 1:18-25** For the word of the cross is folly to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. <sup>19</sup>For it is written, “I will destroy the wisdom of the wise, and the discernment of the discerning I will thwart.” <sup>20</sup>Where is the one who is wise? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world? <sup>21</sup>For since, in the wisdom of God, the world did not know God through wisdom, it pleased God through the folly of what we preach to save those who believe. <sup>22</sup>For Jews demand signs and Greeks seek wisdom, <sup>23</sup>but we preach Christ crucified, a stumbling block to Jews and folly to Gentiles, <sup>24</sup>but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God and the wisdom of God. <sup>25</sup>For the foolishness of God is wiser than men, and the weakness of God is stronger than men.

What examples of worldly wisdom have you seen on this missions trip?  
How does the wisdom of God contrast with these examples?

What is the central message that defies worldly wisdom?

How is Jesus ‘the power of God and the wisdom of God?’

Have you experienced Christ’s power? His wisdom? Can you give examples?

August 17, 2014

Jesus is our reconciliation

**2 Corinthians 5:14-21** For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; <sup>15</sup>and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised. <sup>16</sup>From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer. <sup>17</sup>Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come. <sup>18</sup>All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; <sup>19</sup>that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation. <sup>20</sup>Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. <sup>21</sup>For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

How does the death and resurrection of Jesus impact how we view ourselves?

In what sense do you find yourself to be a new creation? What aspects of the old creation still impact you?

What is the ministry of reconciliation? Has God used you as an ambassador of reconciliation on this trip? How do you see him using you when you get back to the U.S.?

August 18, 2014, We are one in Jesus

**Ephesians 4:11-16** And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, <sup>12</sup>to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, <sup>13</sup>until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, <sup>14</sup>so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. <sup>15</sup>Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, <sup>16</sup>from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.

Have you behaved like a child at any point on this trip? Have you been deceived by any worldly schemes or lies of the enemy?

Have you grown toward maturity in Christ on this trip? Do you have a vision of what maturity will look like from here on?

Have you experienced the unity of the body on this trip? What can you do to take that unity home with you?