

Wisdom for the Wild

Devotions for Trail Life



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Scriptural Reference: John 1:1-5

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was with God in the beginning. ³ Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ⁴ In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

Wisdom:

Trail Life is a Christian boy's organization. We are Christians because we believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of the Living God. As we learn about how to live our lives in a way that would bring honor and glory to the one who made us, it is only fitting that we spend time learning about the one who made us.

God is the one who made us. He has given us His Word. This Word in written form is called the Holy Bible. It is important to know some things about the Bible:

- The Holy Bible was written by approximately 40 men after they were inspired by God to do the same.
- The Old Testament was originally indited in the Hebrew language, whereas the New Testament in Greek.
- The Holy Bible is a book that has partially or totally been translated into more than about 1200 languages and dialects.
- All over the world, the number of Holy Bibles sold is greater than any other published book.
- The complete Bible is divided into 66 books, with 39 being in the Old Testament and 27 being in the New Testament.
- In the entire Bible, there are 1189 chapters; with 929 chapters making up the Old Testament and 260 chapters included in the New Testament.
- Coming to the number of verses, there are 31,173 verses in this Book of Life; with 23,214 verses in the Old Testament and just 7,959 verses in the New Testament.
- The longest chapter in the Bible is believed to be Psalm 119, whereas, the shortest one is Psalm 117.
- The shortest Bible verse in this holy book is John 11:35, quoted as 'Jesus Wept', whereas, the longest one is Esther 8:9.

- The longest word in the Holy Bible is 'Mahershalalhashbaz' which has 18 letters and can be found in Isaiah 8:1.

Read more at Buzzle: <http://www.buzzle.com/articles/interesting-facts-about-the-bible.html>

The Bible is the source for all mankind for God's TRUTH.

It is among these pages that we will find our guidance from God on how we should live the life that He has given to us.

Application:

Just as it is a good practice to read the instruction manual anytime you buy a new piece of equipment, we would be wise to read God's instruction manual for our lives.

Read:

Psalm 19:7

⁷ The law of the LORD is perfect,
refreshing the soul.

The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy,
making wise the simple.

The Bible tells us that at age 12, Jesus was found among the teachers in the temple courts in Jerusalem. Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers (Luke 2:47). You can bet He knew the scriptures.

Memory Verse for the week:

Psalm 119:105-

¹⁰⁵ **Your word is a lamp for my feet,
a light on my path.**

Scriptural Reference: John 1:1

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Wisdom:

The original language that the New Testament was written in is Greek. In our English Bibles, the Greek word that is translated as “Word” in John 1:1 is Logos. It is pronounced “low-goes”. The meaning of this word is a title of Jesus understood as God’s ultimate communication of truth about Himself.

Other English words that capture the meaning of Logos include: statement; speech; gospel; treatise; account; reason; event; appearance.

The Bible tells us a lot about Jesus. In fact, men who study the Bible very diligently can see and teach that all of the Old Testament points to the coming of Jesus and the New Testament speaks of his arrival; his life; his teachings; his death; his resurrection back to life; and his influence in our lives every day we live through his precious Holy Spirit.

So if we want to know God, then we can know him by getting to know his Son. In fact, the Bible also teaches that anyone who has seen the Son has seen the Father (John 14:9), and that the Father and the Son are One. (John 10:30).

Application

So the next time someone says to you, “What’s the word?” you can answer, “Jesus.” If they ask you what you mean by that, then you can take that opportunity to talk to them about your Lord and Savior.

Memory Verse for the week:

“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.” (Isaiah 9:6, NIV)

Scriptural Reference: **John 1:2-3**

“He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.” (John 1:2–3, NIV)

Wisdom:

One of the special things that the Bible teaches us about Jesus is that he was with God in the beginning. For each of us, our beginning is the day that we are born. Jesus was a man like us in every way being fully human (Hebrews 2:17), and yet he was not like us in that he was also fully God (Colossians 2:9).

These verses in John may surprise us because Jesus was born as a baby like we are, but the scriptures tell us that this was not a beginning for Jesus. In fact, by studying the scriptures we learn that God the Father created the heavens and the earth by speaking. It was his Word that caused things to come into being. These verses in John tell us that Jesus was God the Father’s Word.

In trail life, we will learn a lot about God’s creation. We also will learn a lot about God.

Application

Jesus’ beginning was not like ours, even though he was born as a baby like us. Jesus is the very Word of God that brought things into being. When we enjoy God’s creation, we are enjoying something that God the Father used Jesus to make for us.

Memory Verse for the week:

“The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.” (Psalm 19:1, NIV)

Scriptural Reference: **John 8:12**

When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

Wisdom:

A couple of weeks ago we had as our memory verse Psalm 119:105 which reads,

¹⁰⁵ Your word is a lamp for my feet,
a light on my path.

One of the things that we learn about camping outdoors is sometimes we have to do things in the dark. For example, if we have to go a long way to where we will be camping, then many times when we arrive it is long after the sun has gone down. If it is a cloudy night, then it can be really dark.

[ask the trailmen:] What can be hard about doing things in the dark?

[possible answers: We can't see what we are doing, we have to use flashlights which we hold in one hand and that leaves us only one hand to work with. Younger boys might say it is scary in the dark. These are good answers]

So working in the dark or walking in the dark is not a very comfortable thing to do, right? In fact, even when we are in the comfort of our own home at night and we walk into a dark room what is the first thing that we usually do? [answer: turn on the light] Why? [because we do not like to walk in the dark]

Well, this verse says that God's word is a lamp for my feet, a light on my path. Does that bring to mind kind of what we have been talking about?

Last week, in the Wisdom from the Wild, we learned that Jesus is the Word of God in John chapter 1. In our Bibles the word "Word" is spelled with a capital W. So if we take what we learn in John Chapter 1 and what we learn in Psalm 119:105, we see that Jesus is a lamp for our feet and a light for our path, right? Well, did you know that Jesus told us this very thing in John 8:12?

Jesus is the light of the world, whoever follows him will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of light.

Application

Just as we don't want to walk into a dark room, or work on setting up a camp site in the dark, we should not want to live our lives in the dark. Jesus is the light of the world. We want to always have Jesus with us to be a lamp for our feet, and a light showing us our path to eternal life.

Memory Verse for the week:

**²The people walking in darkness
have seen a great light;
on those living in the land of deep darkness
a light has dawned.**

~Isaiah 9:2

Scriptural Reference: **Luke 1:28-37**

The angel went to her and said, "Greetings, you who are highly favored! The Lord is with you."

²⁹ Mary was greatly troubled at his words and wondered what kind of greeting this might be. ³⁰ But the angel said to her, "Do not be afraid, Mary; you have found favor with God. ³¹ You will conceive and give birth to a son, and you are to call him Jesus. ³² He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High. The Lord God will give him the throne of his father David, ³³ and he will reign over Jacob's descendants forever; his kingdom will never end."

³⁴ "How will this be," Mary asked the angel, "since I am a virgin?"

³⁵ The angel answered, "The Holy Spirit will come on you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you. So the holy one to be born will be called the Son of God. ³⁶ Even Elizabeth your relative is going to have a child in her old age, and she who was said to be unable to conceive is in her sixth month. ³⁷ For no word from God will ever fail."

Wisdom:

For the last couple of weeks we have been learning in the Wisdom for the Wild that the Bible is the written Word of God and we also learned that the Word of God became flesh and lived among us. Further we learned that the Word of God is to be a lamp for our feet and a light for our path showing us the correct way in a dark world how to live our lives. Tonight, we read that Mary was visited by an angel and told how that Jesus would be born even before Mary had a husband and while she was still a virgin. This is something that only God could do.

God does things in our world that only he can do. He does these things so that we will know that He is God and that He is with us. The angel assured Mary that no word from God will ever fail.

Application

We read in the Bible time after time where God says that he will do something, and the Bible confirms for us that he does it. In fact, every time that God makes a promise, he keeps his promise. When he says he will do something, He always does it. This makes God's Word the final word. Above all other things we know that God's Word is Truth and we can know without a doubt if the Bible says it, then we can believe it.

Memory Verse for the week:

**From the east I summon a bird of prey;
from a far-off land, a man to fulfill my purpose.
What I have said, that I will bring about;
what I have planned, that I will do. ~ Isaiah 46:11**

Scriptural Reference: **Luke 2:4-14**

4 So Joseph also went up from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to Bethlehem the town of David, because he belonged to the house and line of David. 5 He went there to register with Mary, who was pledged to be married to him and was expecting a child. 6 While they were there, the time came for the baby to be born, 7 and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no guest room available for them.

8 And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. 9 An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. 10 But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. 11 Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord. 12 This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger."

13 Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying,

**14 "Glory to God in the highest heaven,
and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests."**

Wisdom:

Last week in our Wisdom for the wild, we learned that Mary was promised that she would have a son, and that he would be the son of God. This passage in the Bible describes some amazing things that happened on the night that Jesus was born. We are very familiar with this story as it is sometimes called the Christmas story. The scriptures tell us that an angel of the Lord appeared to some shepherds that were keeping watch over their flocks in a nearby field, and when the glory of the Lord shone around them the shepherds were afraid, but the angel told them not to be afraid, because the angel was bringing good news that would bring joy for all people. A savior had been born. He was the messiah. This word messiah means "the anointed one" or "one who has been chosen".

Application

The birth of Jesus happened along with amazing signs from God. When the Bible describes times when human beings are allowed to come near the presence of God, almost always the humans become very afraid, because God is so holy and we are not. However, the birth of Jesus was an event that brought good news for all people everywhere because he was the messiah, God's special chosen one, to be the savior for the world; and this is GREAT NEWS that should fill our hearts with joy!

Memory Verse for the week:

²⁹ The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! – John 1:29

Scriptural Reference: **Luke 2:41-52**

⁴¹ Every year Jesus' parents went to Jerusalem for the Festival of the Passover. ⁴² When he was twelve years old, they went up to the festival, according to the custom. ⁴³ After the festival was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. ⁴⁴ Thinking he was in their company, they traveled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. ⁴⁵ When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him. ⁴⁶ After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. ⁴⁷ Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. ⁴⁸ When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you."

⁴⁹ "Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?" ^d ⁵⁰ But they did not understand what he was saying to them.

⁵¹ Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart. ⁵² And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and man.

Wisdom:

This story in the life of Jesus is the only story that has been preserved for us in the scriptures about the life of Jesus when he was a boy. He is twelve years old in this story, so he would just be a Navigator in our program. This story tells us that Jesus was found by his parents in the temple courts sitting among the teachers and asking them questions. The Temple was the place where the Jewish people would come to offer sacrifices to God. This was their way of offering worship. The temple courts were the gathering places for people outside of the Temple. Often people who were searching for God would come and learn from men who were very knowledgeable about the scriptures. This is where we find Jesus in this story.

You might find it unusual that of all the things that a 12-year old boy could be doing after three days of being separated from his parents, this is what Jesus is found doing. This story reveals that even at such an early age, Jesus was very knowledgeable about the scriptures. In fact, we are told that everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers.

Also, isn't it interesting that even though he had been separated from his parents, he had no anxiety about being on his own for three days! Even when his mother asked him why he had caused her and his father so much anxiety, the question he asked them in return implied that they should have known that he would be in his Father's house. At age 12, Jesus knew that God the Father was not only His heavenly father, but trusted Him to take care of him on earth just like we trust our earthly fathers to take care of us.

Application

Even at an early age, Jesus demonstrated an amazingly close relationship with his Heavenly Father. We can learn from Jesus and know that just as Jesus trusted that God, His father would always take care of him, we too can trust God. We should desire to know God just like Jesus did. We should not be afraid to study the scriptures to learn as much about God as we can. We should ask questions and feel comfortable being “In our father’s house.” Our memory verse today tells us that searching for God is something that God the Father rewards.

Memory Verse for the week:

6 And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.
– Hebrews 11:6

Scriptural Reference: **Matthew 3:13-17**

13 Then Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan to be baptized by John. 14 But John tried to deter him, saying, "I need to be baptized by you, and do you come to me?"

15 Jesus replied, "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness." Then John consented.

16 As soon as Jesus was baptized, he went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. 17 And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased."

Wisdom:

Jesus came to John the Baptist while he was baptizing people in the Jordan River. He wanted John to baptize him, but John did not feel worthy. In fact, earlier John had told the people that there would be one who would come after him that whose sandals he would be unworthy to tie (Matt. 13:7). What do you think that means? [wait for some answers from the boys]

What did Jesus say to John? "Let it be so now; it is proper for us to do this to fulfill all righteousness." What do you think that means? What is righteousness?

After Jesus was baptized, he saw heaven torn open and the Holy Spirit descending on him like a dove. We also heard a voice from Heaven say, "This is my Son, whom I love; with him I am well pleased." Who do you think said that?

Do we always see the Holy Spirit? No, in fact normally we do not.

Do we always hear God the Father use a voice to tell us something? No, in fact normally we do not.

Application

This story about Jesus teaches us many things. John did not think that he was worthy to baptize the Son of God, and he was not worthy, but Jesus allowed himself to be baptized because he did all things because they were the right thing to do. Jesus life shows us how we should live. He is a perfect example for us to know how to live our life.

Also, the baptism of Jesus was a special event because both God the Father and the Holy Spirit showed us that Jesus was special to them. If Jesus was special to the Holy Spirit and God the Father, should he be special to us? [of course!]

Memory Verse for the week:

**2 The Spirit of the Lord will rest on him—
the Spirit of wisdom and of understanding,
the Spirit of counsel and of might,
the Spirit of the knowledge and fear of the Lord— Isaiah 11:2**

Scriptural Reference: **Luke 5:1-11**

5 One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret, the people were crowding around him and listening to the word of God. ² He saw at the water's edge two boats, left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets. ³ He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat.

⁴ When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, "Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch."

⁵ Simon answered, "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets."

⁶ When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. ⁷ So they signaled their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink.

⁸ When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!" ⁹ For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken, ¹⁰ and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon's partners.

Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will fish for people." " So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.

Wisdom:

This story tells how Jesus first revealed himself to Andrew and Simon (also called Peter) who were brothers, and James and John sons of Zebedee. These men were fishermen. They were outdoorsmen and fished as a way to earn money to make a living. Notice how Peter responded when Jesus asked him to put his nets into the water. Peter explained that he knew because they had fished and worked hard all night without catching anything that putting the nets in the water would not accomplish anything. From his knowledge as a professional fisherman, doing this would be a waste of time. However to Peter's credit, he had enough respect for Jesus to obey, even when he did not expect anything good to come from it. "Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets." What happened after they put down the nets? [allow the Trailmen to respond. 1. They caught so many fish that their nets began to tear, so they called for help from their two friends in the other boat. 2. They continued to catch fish until both boats were full and began to sink]

Do we think it was just a coincidence that Jesus told the men to put down their nets, and then they caught so many fish their boats began to sink?

Application

Jesus was revealing to these men who he was. He is the Son of God. Peter recognized immediately that he was in the presence of someone who was from God. His own personal sinfulness was the first thing on his mind and he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!"

But Jesus chose these men. They were not the most promising young Jewish boys at the most elite Synagogue in Jerusalem. Instead, Jesus chose ordinary men, in ordinary professions, and they left everything to follow him. We should dedicate our own lives to following the great fisher of men, our Lord and savior, Jesus Christ.

Memory Verse for the week:

47 "Once again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net that was let down into the lake and caught all kinds of fish. – Matthew 13:47

Scriptural Reference: **John 2:1-11**

2 On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there,
² and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding. ³ When the wine was gone, Jesus' mother said to him, "They have no more wine."

⁴ **"Woman, * why do you involve me?"** Jesus replied. **"My hour has not yet come."**

⁵ His mother said to the servants, "Do whatever he tells you."

⁶ Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons.

⁷ Jesus said to the servants, **"Fill the jars with water";** so they filled them to the brim.

⁸ Then he told them, **"Now draw some out and take it to the master of the banquet."**

They did so, ⁹ and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realize where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside ¹⁰ and said, "Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now."

¹¹ What Jesus did here in Cana of Galilee was the first of the signs through which he revealed his glory; and his disciples believed in him.

Wisdom:

Verse 11 tells us that this was the first of the signs through which Jesus revealed his glory. What do you think glory means? [give the Trailmen the opportunity to offer some answers, "God's goodness", "God's power", etc.]

In the Bible we read about God's glory being described in different ways. When Moses was talking with God on the mountain and then he would come back down to the people his face would glow. It would glow because he was in the presence of God's glory. One time when Moses asked God to show him his face, God put Moses in a crack in a rock because the glory of his face was so great that no one could see it and live.

This story tells us that Jesus Turning water into wine was a sign for us. This wedding celebration was a festive occasion where many friends and family are called upon to come and celebrate the marriage of two people. It would be very embarrassing for the host to run out of wine. Jesus' mother felt sorry for them and looked for Jesus to do something. Jesus' answer to his mother in his original language was not disrespectful the way it sounds in our language: "woman". It should probably say, "dear woman".

But Jesus calls for the servants to fill six very large jars with water. Think of the largest jugs of water we take camping. These were probably at least twice as big as one of those. When they pulled out the water, it had changed into wine. In fact, not just any wine but the best there is.

Application

Jesus changes things into the best they can be. This is just one way we learn about who Jesus is. In John 3:3 the Bible says that unless we are born again, we cannot see the kingdom of God. 2 Corinthians 5:17 says, "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! So Jesus changing us is a good thing. In fact, when he changes us, he changes us to be like him, and Jesus is the BEST!

Memory Verse for the week:

**¹⁰ Create in me a pure heart, O God,
and renew a steadfast spirit within me. – Psalm 51:10**

Scriptural Reference: **Luke 5:12-16**

¹² While Jesus was in one of the towns, a man came along who was covered with leprosy. ^e When he saw Jesus, he fell with his face to the ground and begged him, "Lord, if you are willing, you can make me clean."

¹³ Jesus reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" And immediately the leprosy left him.

¹⁴ Then Jesus ordered him, "Don't tell anyone, but go, show yourself to the priest and offer the sacrifices that Moses commanded for your cleansing, as a testimony to them."

¹⁵ Yet the news about him spread all the more, so that crowds of people came to hear him and to be healed of their sicknesses. ¹⁶ But Jesus often withdrew to lonely places and prayed.

Wisdom:

Leprosy is a horrible disease of the skin. People that had this disease were often made to live by themselves or together with other people having the same disease. The last thing anyone would want to do would be to touch someone with this disease because they would be afraid of getting the disease themselves. However, look at what Jesus did. The scriptures tell us that Jesus reached out and touched the man. This may have been the only human touch this man had felt in a very long time.

Jesus also told the man to not say anything to anyone about this. That shows us that Jesus was not doing this to make himself popular, or to put on a show. Jesus was extending genuine compassion to someone that most people were afraid to even touch.

But the people heard about this anyway. So much so that crowds of people came to hear him and to be healed of their sicknesses. The last verse of this story is important for us to make note of. Jesus often would go by himself to lonely places and pray.

Application

Jesus is a wonderful example for each of us. In our lifetime, we will have opportunities to touch people. It may not be people who have leprosy, but it could be people who are hurting, people who need a friend, or maybe someone who is searching for God and just have lost their way. May we all be willing, just as Jesus was willing, to reach out and touch other people. Kindness is part of the fruit of the Holy Spirit who lives inside us. When we show kindness, we show God to other people.

Also, we need to regularly pray and talk to God and ask him to help find ways for us to be kind to others. We also need to talk to God so we can recharge our batteries. Jesus would pray alone and talk to God and this important for us to do also every day.

Memory Verse for the week:

**²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness,
²³ gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. — Galatians 5:22-23**

Scriptural Reference: **Mark 2:1-12**

2 A few days later, when Jesus again entered Capernaum, the people heard that he had come home. ² They gathered in such large numbers that there was no room left, not even outside the door, and he preached the word to them. ³ Some men came, bringing to him a paralyzed man, carried by four of them. ⁴ Since they could not get him to Jesus because of the crowd, they made an opening in the roof above Jesus by digging through it and then lowered the mat the man was lying on. ⁵ When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralyzed man, **“Son, your sins are forgiven.”**

⁶ Now some teachers of the law were sitting there, thinking to themselves, ⁷ “Why does this fellow talk like that? He’s blaspheming! Who can forgive sins but God alone?”

⁸ Immediately Jesus knew in his spirit that this was what they were thinking in their hearts, and he said to them, **“Why are you thinking these things? ⁹ Which is easier: to say to this paralyzed man, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Get up, take your mat and walk’? ¹⁰ But I want you to know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins.”** So he said to the man, ¹¹ **“I tell you, get up, take your mat and go home.”** ¹² He got up, took his mat and walked out in full view of them all. This amazed everyone and they praised God, saying, **“We have never seen anything like this!”**

Wisdom:

The word about Jesus had spread quickly throughout the land. In this story we see that so many came to see him that there was no room for the four men to bring the paralyzed man to be in front of Jesus. These men were determined. In fact, they were so sure that Jesus could heal their friend that they dug a hole in the roof so that they could lower their friend down in front of Jesus. But Jesus said something that the crowd did not expect. He said, “Son, your sins are forgiven.” Now everyone knows that only God can forgive sins, so when Jesus said this, the people did not like it. Who was this man who claimed to be able to forgive sins? Now, Jesus knew in his heart what they were thinking. Jesus then did something amazing, he healed the man who was paralyzed, but before he did he asked them this question, “Which is easier: to say to this paralyzed man, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, “Get up, take up your mat and walk?” The people were amazed and praised God.

Application

Jesus was showing that he was from God, and that he was God. The ability to heal in a way that only God can heal was a sign for all there to know that he was from God.

Some people today still say that Jesus was not who he said he was. May we never be like those who refuse to believe in him; instead, let us praise God because he sent to us his son and gave us signs like this so that we can know in our hearts that he is truly the Son of God.

Memory Verse for the week:

The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is proclaimed to the poor. – Matthew 11:5

Scriptural Reference: **Luke 4:16-30**

¹⁶ He went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath day he went into the synagogue, as was his custom. He stood up to read, ¹⁷ and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was handed to him. Unrolling it, he found the place where it is written:

**¹⁸ “The Spirit of the Lord is on me,
because he has anointed me
to proclaim good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners
and recovery of sight for the blind,
to set the oppressed free,
¹⁹ to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”** ^a

²⁰ Then he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant and sat down. The eyes of everyone in the synagogue were fastened on him. ²¹ He began by saying to them, “Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.”

²² All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his lips. “Isn’t this Joseph’s son?” they asked.

²³ Jesus said to them, “Surely you will quote this proverb to me: ‘Physician, heal yourself!’ And you will tell me, ‘Do here in your hometown what we have heard that you did in Capernaum.’”

²⁴ “Truly I tell you,” he continued, “no prophet is accepted in his hometown. ²⁵ I assure you that there were many widows in Israel in Elijah’s time, when the sky was shut for three and a half years and there was a severe famine throughout the land. ²⁶ Yet Elijah was not sent to any of them, but to a widow in Zarephath in the region of Sidon. ²⁷ And there were many in Israel with leprosy in the time of Elisha the prophet, yet not one of them was cleansed—only Naaman the Syrian.”

²⁸ All the people in the synagogue were furious when they heard this. ²⁹ They got up, drove him out of the town, and took him to the brow of the hill on which the town was built, in order to throw him off the cliff. ³⁰ But he walked right through the crowd and went on his way.

Wisdom:

Jesus begins to reveal by his teachings who he is. The reading that he performed was taken from the Holy Scriptures written some seven hundred years before he was born, and yet, the scripture he was reading contained his own words. How could this be?

Jesus knew their thoughts, so he gave them additional scriptures to think about and help them see the truth. Jesus had come to his home town, the place where he had grown up among the people. The fact that these people knew him and his parents as a boy was a stumbling block for them. In their own minds, the messiah would have to be someone mysterious and unknown. Jesus teaches them by even more scripture that their refusal to believe in him reflects a pattern of God's people refusing to recognize God among them even when surrounding peoples and nations did recognize him.

The people did not like hearing this, because they considered themselves to be better than other people because they were God's chosen people.

Application

If we believe that Jesus is the Son of God, then we are God's chosen people also. 1 Peter 2:4-5 says: ***⁴As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him—⁵you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house^c to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ***

It is God's desire that we as a chosen people never fail to recognize Him among us. Just as Jesus used the scriptures to see what their eyes had overlooked, we too should always be looking in the scriptures so that we are ready and able to see where God is and what He is doing.

Memory Verse for the week:

**Who has believed our message
and to whom has the arm of the LORD been revealed? – Isaiah 53:1**

Scriptural Reference: **John 4:43-54**

43 After the two days he left for Galilee. 44 (Now Jesus himself had pointed out that a prophet has no honor in his own country.) 45 When he arrived in Galilee, the Galileans welcomed him. They had seen all that he had done in Jerusalem at the Passover Festival, for they also had been there.

46 Once more he visited Cana in Galilee, where he had turned the water into wine. And there was a certain royal official whose son lay sick at Capernaum. 47 When this man heard that Jesus had arrived in Galilee from Judea, he went to him and begged him to come and heal his son, who was close to death.

48 “Unless you people see signs and wonders,” Jesus told him, “you will never believe.”

49 The royal official said, “Sir, come down before my child dies.”

50 “Go,” Jesus replied, “your son will live.”

The man took Jesus at his word and departed. 51 While he was still on the way, his servants met him with the news that his boy was living. 52 When he inquired as to the time when his son got better, they said to him, “Yesterday, at one in the afternoon, the fever left him.”

53 Then the father realized that this was the exact time at which Jesus had said to him, “Your son will live.” So he and his whole household believed.

54 This was the second sign Jesus performed after coming from Judea to Galilee.

Wisdom:

This story about Jesus teaches us that his ability to heal was not limited by space. He was able to heal someone even from a distance. The Bible tells us that this man was a royal official whose son lay sick in a town that was about twenty miles away to the East. This was a significant distance in a day and time when the most common way to travel was by foot.

This father was willing to travel this twenty miles to ask Jesus to come and heal his son. The response that Jesus gave was not directed at this one man, but rather it was directed to all of the people and their spiritual condition. Jesus always looked for ways to teach us the importance of faith (or believing without having to see it first). One way to explain it is that Faith is like Belief combined with Trust.

We can see that this man already believed that Jesus could heal his son, because he was willing to travel 20 miles to ask Jesus to return with him. However, when Jesus told the man, “Go! Your son will live,” the man proved that he had FAITH in Jesus, because he began the return journey of twenty miles. On the way, the man’s faith was confirmed by servants from his household that said the boy was healed at the exact time Jesus said, “Your son will live.”

Application

When we make up our minds to believe in and have Faith in our Lord, Jesus Christ, we should have the kind of faith that this man had. We should not limit our faith to only those things that we can touch and see with our eyes. We should instead put our faith into those things that we know in our heart to be true. We can rely on God's Word to know what to have faith in. God's Word is absolute truth. Our faith should be a faith that leads to action. Just like the father in this story demonstrated his faith in Jesus by his actions.

Our God is faithful, and we know that his Word became flesh and lived among us, and his Word is always to be accepted with Faith.

Memory Verse for the week:

Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. – Hebrews 11:1

Scriptural Reference: **Matthew 4:18-22**

¹⁸ As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. ¹⁹ “Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will send you out to fish for people.” ²⁰ At once they left their nets and followed him.

²¹ Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, ²² and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

Wisdom:

This story about Jesus teaches us that the men that he chose to be his disciples were not among the best and brightest Jewish boys from the top of their class at the local synagogue. These were fishermen. They represented hard workers that earned their living through the strength of their arms rather than the power of their minds. They were just “regular guys” like you and me.

Isn't it amazing that when Jesus called to these men that they responded by walking away from their jobs and their families without so much as a question like, “Master, where are we going?” This shows an amazing faith from all four of these men.

These men were fishermen and the type of fishing they were doing involved casting nets into the water and when they would pull in the nets their hope would be that it would contain a large catch of fish. This is what they did to make money and feed themselves and their families. Jesus says something very interesting to these men. He says, “Come, follow me, and I will send you out to fish for people.” I wonder what he meant by that. Does anyone know? [give the Trailmen an opportunity to respond]

Application

The scriptures tell us that Jesus still calls us today. 1 Peter 2:9 says: *⁹ But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. ¹⁰ Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.*

Romans 1:6 says: *⁶ And you also are among those Gentiles who are called to belong to Jesus Christ*

There are many other scriptures as well that speak about God calling us. How will we respond? My hope for each of you is that you will respond with the same faith that these four men did in this story. There is no greater calling than for us to become among our Lord's “Fishers of Men”.

Memory Verse for the week:

For God's gifts and his call are irrevocable - Romans 11:29

Scriptural Reference: **Mark 1:21-28**

21 They went to Capernaum, and when the Sabbath came, Jesus went into the synagogue and began to teach. 22 The people were amazed at his teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law. 23 Just then a man in their synagogue who was possessed by an impure spirit cried out, 24 “What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!”

25 “Be quiet!” said Jesus sternly. “Come out of him!” 26 The impure spirit shook the man violently and came out of him with a shriek.

27 The people were all so amazed that they asked each other, “What is this? A new teaching—and with authority! He even gives orders to impure spirits and they obey him.” 28 News about him spread quickly over the whole region of Galilee.

Wisdom:

This story tells us some interesting things about Jesus. Do you ever wonder what it might have been like to hear Jesus teach a lesson one morning at your church? This passage of scripture tells us that the people that heard Jesus teach were amazed at his teaching. The Synagogue for the Jews would be very similar to our church buildings today. It was a place where people would go to offer worship to God and to hear and learn from his word.

There are several passages in scripture that tell us that it was customary for Jesus to teach in the synagogues wherever he was on the Sabbath. The Sabbath was the day that the Lord commanded the Israelites to remember and to keep holy, it was the seventh day of the week, Saturday. It was a day when no work was to be done and was created as a reminder to God’s people that God rested on the seventh day after his creation. Well, the scriptures tell us that the people were amazed because Jesus taught as one who had authority. This was different from what the people were used to from their teachers of the law. Those teachers had no authority of their own, all of their teaching was based upon the authority of the Holy Scriptures that had already been written. However, when Jesus taught, it was like brand new words coming directly from God and being heard for the very first time! The people were very eager to hear this new message because they could tell that the message had the authority of God behind it.

In addition to the way Jesus taught, he also demonstrated that he had authority. This story tells of a man that was possessed by an impure spirit and something very extraordinary happened. The man cried out, “What do you want with us, Jesus of Nazareth?” “Have you come to destroy us? – I know who you are, the Holy One of God!” Look how Jesus responds to the words of the impure spirit. He commands it to be quiet and to come out of the man. The impure spirit obeyed! Not only did Jesus teach with authority, he demonstrated authority over evil spirits when they obeyed his commands!

Application

When we read the scriptures, we should always read with a desire to know more about our God and who he is. This story shows us that Jesus was special when it came to the words that he taught. Even though we cannot go back in time and hear Jesus teach for ourselves, God's words have been brought forward in time and have been given to us in the Holy Bible. We should read the Bible with the same eagerness that the people who heard Jesus teach in person had for his words! After all, Jesus IS the Word. He is in fact God's Message to us. Let's learn all we can about this wonderful Message and what he tells us today!

Memory Verse for the week:

**¹⁰³ How sweet are your words to my taste,
sweeter than honey to my mouth! - Psalm 119:103**

Scriptural Reference: **Mark 1:35-39**

³⁵ Very early in the morning, while it was still dark, Jesus got up, left the house and went off to a solitary place, where he prayed. ³⁶ Simon and his companions went to look for him, ³⁷ and when they found him, they exclaimed: “Everyone is looking for you!”

³⁸ Jesus replied, “Let us go somewhere else—to the nearby villages—so I can preach there also. That is why I have come.” ³⁹ So he traveled throughout Galilee, preaching in their synagogues and driving out demons.

Wisdom:

The scriptures tell us that Jesus would often go by himself and pray. In addition to this passage, we are also told that Jesus prayed on the following occasions:

- When he was baptized. (Luke 3:21)
- When he was transfigured. (Luke 9:29)
- When he chose the twelve apostles. (Luke 6:12, all night long)
- After feeding the 5,000. (Matthew 14:23)
- In the Garden of Gethsemane (Mark 14:32)

These are just examples that have been recorded in scripture. It is clear to us that there were likely very many more times that Jesus prayed in a similar manner that have not been recorded.

Think about who Jesus is. He is the Son of God, full of grace and truth. The scriptures tell us that whenever he would preach the good news and wherever he went he would heal the people of all of their diseases. If Jesus, who was perfect in every way, demonstrates for us a dependence upon God through prayer, how much more should we, who are sinful, be praying like Jesus prayed?

Application

The Bible teaches in many locations that man’s strength does not lie within himself. Man’s strength lies within his God. Jesus relied on prayer with his father to find the strength to do the work that he had been sent to earth to do.

Let us learn from Jesus’ example. Let us talk regularly and sincerely to our God in prayer every day. Just as Jesus showed us how important time with God in prayer was to him, let us make sure that we make time for our own prayers to God an important part of our lives and our walk with Jesus.

Memory Verse for the week:

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. – Philippians 4:6

Scriptural Reference: **Luke 4:38-44**

38 Jesus left the synagogue and went to the home of Simon. Now Simon's mother-in-law was suffering from a high fever, and they asked Jesus to help her. 39 So he bent over her and rebuked the fever, and it left her. She got up at once and began to wait on them.

40 At sunset, the people brought to Jesus all who had various kinds of sickness, and laying his hands on each one, he healed them. 41 Moreover, demons came out of many people, shouting, "You are the Son of God!" But he rebuked them and would not allow them to speak, because they knew he was the Messiah.

42 At daybreak, Jesus went out to a solitary place. The people were looking for him and when they came to where he was, they tried to keep him from leaving them. 43 But he said, "I must proclaim the good news of the kingdom of God to the other towns also, because that is why I was sent." 44 And he kept on preaching in the synagogues of Judea.

Wisdom:

This story shows us that Jesus healed people miraculously. We have previously seen this aspect about who he is. This story shows that Jesus not only healed people on multiple occasions from many types of diseases, but he also demonstrated his authority over the evil spirits. In fact, the very presence of Jesus became a place to come to be healed. He did not withhold healing from anyone that came to him. Not only did God's word bring a message of hope into the world, but God's Word brings healing as well.

Application

God still heals the broken today. We should always pray to God for healing as he has the power to heal us. He does not only heal us physically, but he also heals us spiritually. Let us always look to the great physician and bring to him our cares and our worries. He is able and he is faithful.

Memory Verse for the week:

**² Lord my God, I called to you for help,
and you healed me. – Psalm 30:2**

Scriptural Reference: **Luke 5:27-32**

²⁷ After this, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector by the name of Levi sitting at his tax booth. “Follow me,” Jesus said to him, ²⁸ and Levi got up, left everything and followed him.

²⁹ Then Levi held a great banquet for Jesus at his house, and a large crowd of tax collectors and others were eating with them. ³⁰ But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law who belonged to their sect complained to his disciples, “Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?”

³¹ Jesus answered them, “It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. ³² I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.”

Wisdom:

This story tells about Jesus calling a man named Levi, who was a tax collector, to follow him. We know from other accounts of this story that Levi was also named Matthew. The scriptures tell us that Matthew was a tax collector. When Jesus was alive, the people of Israel were ruled by a government of foreign people who had conquered their land, the Romans. The Romans required the Israelites to pay taxes to the emperor of Rome. As a result, they would appoint Israelite people to collect these taxes. Many times, people who collected taxes were dishonest; and often they would collect more money than Rome required and keep the extra for themselves. For this reason, tax-collectors were particularly hated by the people. It was considered shameful to eat with or be friends with a tax-collector. So when Jesus was seen eating with Levi and other “sinners”, the Pharisees, who were a very strict religious sect of the Jews and held in high esteem by the people, challenged Jesus’ righteousness because of who he was associating with.

Jesus responded in a way that reveals how God feels about “sinful” people. He loves them, he cares for them, and he desires for them something better than their sinful lives. He came to call them to repentance.

Application

As Christians, we have to always look to our master, Jesus, to make sure that we live our lives the way that he lived his. Sometimes we get comfortable with the people that we go to church with and we only want to be around “good people” or people that act and think like we do. We have to remember the lesson that Jesus teaches us. The Gospel is good news and it is not just good news for “good people”, it is good news for broken sinners. This is very important for us to understand, because the Bible also teaches that there are no “good people”. There are only people who THINK they are “good”.

Romans 3:23 teaches us, “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,” and 1 John 1:8 teaches, “If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.” So God calls all men to repent from their sinful ways. Aren’t we glad that our Lord Jesus loves sinners? That is wonderful news, because we are ALL sinners in need of a loving savior! So let us not be afraid to love people the way Jesus did. After all, we have great news for all mankind, let’s tell others about it!

Memory Verse for the week:

**Create in me a pure heart, O God,
and renew a steadfast spirit within me. – Psalm 51:10**

Scriptural Reference: **Mark 2:18-22**

18 Now John's disciples and the Pharisees were fasting. Some people came and asked Jesus, "How is it that John's disciples and the disciples of the Pharisees are fasting, but yours are not?"

19 Jesus answered, "How can the guests of the bridegroom fast while he is with them? They cannot, so long as they have him with them. 20 But the time will come when the bridegroom will be taken from them, and on that day they will fast.

21 "No one sews a patch of unshrunk cloth on an old garment. Otherwise, the new piece will pull away from the old, making the tear worse. 22 And no one pours new wine into old wineskins. Otherwise, the wine will burst the skins, and both the wine and the wineskins will be ruined. No, they pour new wine into new wineskins."

Wisdom:

The act of fasting would involve the refusal to take in food for a period of time during prayer and meditation. The idea is that we are so focused on our spiritual needs that we intentionally deny our body its physical needs. This act was seen as an example of discipline and devotion to God. The Old Testament Law of Moses prescribed fasting for all Jews only on the Day of Atonement, once a year. However, the strict sect of the Jews known as the Pharisees promoted voluntary fasts on every Monday and Thursday (cf. Luke 18:12) as an act of piety, meaning to demonstrate how much they loved God. We learn elsewhere that Jesus was not opposed to fasting as long as it was done in the right way and for the right reason (see Matt. 6:16-18). However, when the question was asked of Jesus why his disciples did not fast, the real question that they were asking was, "why are your disciples not as righteous as we are?"

Jesus answered by providing two illustrations. First, he used the illustration of a wedding where the guests would be full of joy during the ceremony because they were in the presence of the bride groom. Jesus said that there would be a time when the bridegroom would be taken from them. It would be after this time that his disciples would fast, but not before.

The second illustration was that of sewing an unshrunk piece of cloth to an old garment in order to patch a hole. Doing this would not be wise, because the new cloth would shrink and would tear the garment and defeat the purpose of the patch.

The third illustration was that of placing new wine in old wine skins. When wine ferments, it expands. When a container to hold wine is made from animal skins, it has the ability to stretch over time, but once it has stretched, it cannot stretch any further. It was common then to place new wine that had not finished fermenting into new wineskins so that as the wine fermented, and expanded, the skin that was holding it could stretch as well.

Application

There were two main things that Jesus was teaching us by his responses. First, he was drawing attention to the fact that his presence among his disciples was of a temporary nature and it was an occasion for undisputable joy. This was a foreshadowing of him being taken from his disciples later when he was crucified and then after the resurrection when he ascended into heaven.

The second main lesson that he was teaching was that his disciples were receiving something new. The gospel is a New Covenant that was foretold by God from of old (Jeremiah 31:31-34). He was comparing his disciples, who were ordinary and common men, to items that had the ability to learn and stretch with the new teaching. The implication here for us is that the Pharisees and other religious leaders that lived in Jesus' day were not willing or able to stretch and learn anything new because they thought that they already knew all that there was to know about God.

May we, as Christians, always humble ourselves in the presence of our God and desire to know him, seek him and ask that he would reveal himself to us as only he can.

Memory Verse for the week:

**⁴ Show me your ways, Lord,
teach me your paths.
⁵ Guide me in your truth and teach me,
for you are God my Savior,
and my hope is in you all day long. – Psalm 25:4-5**

Scriptural Reference: **John 5:1-14**

5 Some time later, Jesus went up to Jerusalem for one of the Jewish festivals. **2** Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool, which in Aramaic is called Bethesda and which is surrounded by five covered colonnades. **3** Here a great number of disabled people used to lie—the blind, the lame, the paralyzed. ^[4] **5** One who was there had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. **6** When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, **“Do you want to get well?”**

7 “Sir,” the invalid replied, “I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me.”

8 Then Jesus said to him, **“Get up! Pick up your mat and walk.”** **9** At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked.

The day on which this took place was a Sabbath, **10** and so the Jewish leaders said to the man who had been healed, “It is the Sabbath; the law forbids you to carry your mat.”

11 But he replied, “The man who made me well said to me, ‘Pick up your mat and walk.’ ”

12 So they asked him, “Who is this fellow who told you to pick it up and walk?”

13 The man who was healed had no idea who it was, for Jesus had slipped away into the crowd that was there.

14 Later Jesus found him at the temple and said to him, **“See, you are well again. Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you.”** **15** The man went away and told the Jewish leaders that it was Jesus who had made him well.

Footnote: [4] Some manuscripts include here, wholly or in part, *paralyzed—and they waited for the moving of the waters.* ⁴*From time to time an angel of the Lord would come down and stir up the waters. The first one into the pool after each such disturbance would be cured of whatever disease they had.*

Wisdom:

This story of Jesus performing a miraculous healing of a man that was an invalid would set the stage for the beginning of conflict with the religious leaders of Jesus’ time that were in the position of power. Once again, Jesus showed that he was someone from God by doing something that only God could do. He healed a man that had been unable to walk for thirty-eight years! Notice that Jesus was not “putting

on a show” by healing in a crowd, because he slipped away into the crowd after this healing. The day that this healing occurred was a Sabbath day.

Listen closely to what was said by the Jewish leaders when they saw this man carrying his mat. They told the man, “It is the Sabbath; the law forbids you to carry your mat.” Notice also what they did NOT say. They did not ask the man how this miracle of healing had happened to him. Instead, they immediately made a statement that this healed man was violating the laws of God. The man responded by bringing the authority of one able to perform a healing miracle to his defense, “the man who made me well said to me, ‘Pick up your mat and walk.’” Again, the Jewish leaders ignored the miraculous healing instead focusing on the fact that a rule had been broken.

Later Jesus found the man at the temple and said something very important to him he said, “See, you are well again. Stop sinning or something worse may happen to you.” Then the man went and told the Jewish leaders that it was Jesus that had healed him.

Application

This last statement made by Jesus provides for us a contrast in the things that God cares about with the things that the Jewish leaders cared about. Jesus instructed a man that had just received an amazing miraculous healing from God on how he should thank God by the way he lived his life going forward. He also warned the man that continuing to live in rebellion against God could have serious consequences.

This also showed that men that were supposed to be leaders for God had somehow become so focused on rules and regulations that they were overlooking the very presence and power of God among them. In fact, their actions placed their rules and regulations above God himself!

As we search for God in his scriptures we need to always know that reading the Bible is not about memorizing rules. It is not a rule book. It is a message from God that reveals to us WHO HE IS. We need to always read, and study and meditate and pray to God that he would help us understand what we are reading and open our minds and hearts to know Him.

Memory Verse for the week

13 The Lord says:

“These people come near to me with their mouth

and honor me with their lips,

but their hearts are far from me.

Their worship of me

is based on merely human rules they have been taught. – Isaiah 29:13

Scriptural Reference: **Matthew 12:1-8**

12 At that time Jesus went through the grainfields on the Sabbath. His disciples were hungry and began to pick some heads of grain and eat them. ² When the Pharisees saw this, they said to him, “Look! Your disciples are doing what is unlawful on the Sabbath.”

³ He answered, “Haven’t you read what David did when he and his companions were hungry? ⁴ He entered the house of God, and he and his companions ate the consecrated bread—which was not lawful for them to do, but only for the priests. ⁵ Or haven’t you read in the Law that the priests on Sabbath duty in the temple desecrate the Sabbath and yet are innocent? ⁶ I tell you that something greater than the temple is here. ⁷ If you had known what these words mean, ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice,’ ^d you would not have condemned the innocent. ⁸ For the Son of Man is Lord of the Sabbath.”

Wisdom:

Last week our story told of a lame man at the Pool of Bethesda that Jesus healed miraculously, but the Pharisees, the Jewish Leaders, were only concerned about one thing. That the man had been healed on a Sabbath day, and he was carrying his mat. The religious leaders were concerned about the wrong things. Tonight’s story is similar in that Jesus’ disciples were picking grain in a field and eating. The Pharisees desired to point out that the disciples of Jesus were breaking God’s law. What Jesus told them was that they did not truly understand God’s law, and as a result they were wrong to accuse him.

What had actually happened was that over time the religious teachers of Israel had added rules to clarify what activities are included in the command for the people not to work on the Sabbath. The writings on this were created by man rather than given by God. We call writings of man traditions. Jesus used scripture to show how the traditions of man were wrong and did not truly reflect the laws of God.

When Jesus said, “something greater than the temple is here”, he was revealing to those who believed in him who he was. He was the Son of God. Further, Jesus pointed specifically to a scripture that they did not understand. The scripture records God saying, “I desire mercy, not sacrifice.” Jesus tells them that if they had known what these words mean, they would not have made a false condemnation. To make sure he drives his point home, he says, “For the Son of Man is the Lord of the Sabbath.”

Application

The scriptures lead us to God. It is only when we read the scriptures with a desire to search for and know who God is that we are looking for the right things (Hebrews 11:6). If we think that the Bible is just a set of rules to be memorized, then we will make the same mistake that these Pharisees made. They were so proud that they had memorized the rules that they had overlooked the very presence of the Son of God among them. This was also a problem in the ancient days when the Jews were so careful to obey the rules of sacrifice that they ignored the very nature of their God and what it means to be

made in his image. He desires mercy, not sacrifice, because He is a Merciful God, and it pleases him when his children reflect his true nature.

So let us all read the Bible and look for ways to learn about who God is, and what he is like, then we will know how we should be; because we always want to be like Jesus.

Memory Verse for the week

¹³ If you are pleased with me, teach me your ways so I may know you and continue to find favor with you. – Exodus 33:13a

Scriptural Reference: **Mark 3:1-6**

¹ Another time Jesus went into the synagogue, and a man with a shriveled hand was there. ² Some of them were looking for a reason to accuse Jesus, so they watched him closely to see if he would heal him on the Sabbath. ³ Jesus said to the man with the shriveled hand, “Stand up in front of everyone.”

⁴ Then Jesus asked them, “Which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?” But they remained silent.

⁵ He looked around at them in anger and, deeply distressed at their stubborn hearts, said to the man, “Stretch out your hand.” He stretched it out, and his hand was completely restored. ⁶ Then the Pharisees went out and began to plot with the Herodians how they might kill Jesus.

Wisdom:

Last week our story told of how the Pharisees had accused Jesus’ disciples of breaking God’s laws because his disciples were picking grain with their hands on a Sabbath day. We learned last week that Jesus responded to these accusations by using scripture to demonstrate how the traditions of men that the Pharisees were considering equal to scripture were wrong. The story this week tells of another confrontation with the religious leaders of his day on a Sabbath day. This time, Jesus was in a Synagogue which is like our church buildings on the Sabbath which was the custom of the Jews. There was a man there with a shriveled hand. Jesus knew in his heart that the Pharisees believed that their own traditions were equal to the laws of God. Jesus had tried to teach them that their traditions did not accurately reflect God’s law, but they remained prideful and stubborn.

Jesus would challenge their stubborn hearts by point-blank asking the question, “Which is lawful on the Sabbath: to do good or to do evil, to save life or to kill?” The answer to this question is so obvious that anyone who knew the slightest bit about who God is would get the answer right. OF COURSE, God is good and not evil! OF COURSE saving life is better than killing! But instead of giving these obvious answers to the question asked by Jesus, the religious leaders remained silent with stubborn hearts.

Jesus was angry that they would so stubbornly refuse to admit that they were wrong about their traditions and how they were teaching people to observe the Sabbath. He then showed them something that should have amazed them and proven that his words had the direct authority of God. He told the man, “stretch out your hand.” The man obeyed and his hand was completely restored. This was a miracle! But instead of the religious leaders praising God for the healing, they left and began to plot how to kill Jesus.

Application

As human beings, we have to be very careful where we look for truth. God has given us his Bible which contains his holy scriptures. It is in the pages of scripture that we should search for truth and for who God truly is. We cannot trust things written by human men above the Holy Scriptures. This story shows

us how ridiculously stubborn these men who knew the scriptures had become about their written traditions. May we never be that way! Let us always honor God's word and search for him earnestly in it.

Memory Verse for the week

6 And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. – Hebrews 11:6

Scriptural Reference: **Mark 3:7-12**

7 Jesus withdrew with his disciples to the lake, and a large crowd from Galilee followed. 8 When they heard about all he was doing, many people came to him from Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea, and the regions across the Jordan and around Tyre and Sidon. 9 Because of the crowd he told his disciples to have a small boat ready for him, to keep the people from crowding him. 10 For he had healed many, so that those with diseases were pushing forward to touch him. 11 Whenever the impure spirits saw him, they fell down before him and cried out, "You are the Son of God." 12 But he gave them strict orders not to tell others about him.

Wisdom:

Last week we learned that the religious leaders of the day wanted to kill Jesus because he did not support the things that they were teaching the people. They could not overcome his teaching with words, so they decided to take his life. However, Jesus moved away from there. He went by the Sea of Galilee in the region where he grew up. So many people followed Jesus that he had to get into a boat just to keep the crowd from pressing around him. They had all heard about the miraculous way that Jesus had healed many people and they wanted to be healed also. They came from places all around to try to be healed by him. Some people were possessed by impure spirits who recognized who Jesus really was, the Son of God; but Jesus would not allow these impure spirits to tell the people who he was.

Application

Knowing who Jesus really is should be the very thing that we search for today. Many of these people just came to Jesus to have their bodies healed, but when we search the scriptures we learn that Jesus was someone who did so much more than this. In fact, he brought life to mankind where there was only death before. The scriptures tell us that all men have sinned (Romans 3:23) and that the wages for sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (Romans 6:23). Did you know that you can study the Bible your entire life and still be learning new things about who Jesus is? Let's be eager to know him, because knowing Jesus causes you to love Jesus, and the one who saved us when we had earned death is worth loving. The more you know him, the more you love him. So open your Bibles and search for who he is.

Memory Verse for the week

**6 For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given,**

and the government will be on his shoulders.

And he will be called

Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,

Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. – Isaiah 9:6

Scriptural Reference: **Luke 6:12-16**

¹² One of those days Jesus went out to a mountainside to pray, and spent the night praying to God. ¹³ When morning came, he called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles: ¹⁴ Simon (whom he named Peter), his brother Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, ¹⁵ Matthew, Thomas, James son of Alphaeus, Simon who was called the Zealot, ¹⁶ Judas son of James, and Judas Iscariot, who became a traitor.

Wisdom:

These verses tell us that Jesus spent all night in prayer on the night before he would choose twelve men. There are two things that this tells us about this event. The first is that Jesus was a very big believer in the power of prayer. To spend all night long denying our body the sleep that it needs in favor of something different should cause all of us to pay close attention on what the “something else” might be. It was prayer. Talking to God was very important to Jesus and he shows us just how important right here in these verses. The second thing that this passage teaches us is just how important the event was that followed this night of prayer. Jesus would choose twelve men from his disciples to be also designated as apostles.

There are two words we need to understand, and we hear them a lot. The first word, disciple, means someone that follows a teacher. Jesus had many disciples and he taught all of them. The second word is apostle. This means, “Messenger sent on foreign mission”. When we use the word apostle in the Christian faith this meaning becomes “messenger sent by God”.

In Hebrews 1:1-2 we read:

In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, ² but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe.

These verses remind us that in the Old Testament, God spoke to us using many people over a long period of time. In fact, the writings of the Old Testament were created over a period of some thousand years! But the writer of Hebrews says that in these last days he speaks to us through his son. Jesus is who God uses to speak to us. Jesus was one man who preached only for three and a half years on this earth. How would the words of God reach all over this planet with such a small beginning? The answer is in tonight's verses. He would pour his life into twelve men. God would take it from there.

Application

Jesus was very careful to let us know that the words that he spoke were not his own, but had been given to him by God the Father (John 14:24). Jesus would share what he learned so that we also could know the Father just as he did. Jesus would pour his life into twelve men, and then those men would pour

their lives into other men and women and so on and so on. Of course, it was God the Father himself who protected and preserved the message through his Holy Spirit. These men were filled with God's Spirit and Jesus' words and teachings were preserved for us so that we can read them today almost two thousand years later!

In Trail Life, Christian men are still pouring themselves into the lives of others. The message and life lessons of Jesus continue to be shared just as God intended through the example of believers pouring their lives into other believers. May God always give us courage and strength to let our lights shine and share the good news that God has placed upon our hearts!

Memory Verse for the week

7 How beautiful on the mountains

are the feet of those who bring good news,

who proclaim peace,

who bring good tidings,

who proclaim salvation,

who say to Zion,

"Your God reigns!" – Isaiah 52:7

Scriptural Reference: **Matthew 5:1-12**

5 Now when Jesus saw the crowds, he went up on a mountainside and sat down. His disciples came to him, ² and he began to teach them.

He said:

³ **Blessed are the poor in spirit,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**

⁴ **Blessed are those who mourn,
for they will be comforted.**

⁵ **Blessed are the meek,
for they will inherit the earth.**

⁶ **Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness,
for they will be filled.**

⁷ **Blessed are the merciful,
for they will be shown mercy.**

⁸ **Blessed are the pure in heart,
for they will see God.**

⁹ **Blessed are the peacemakers,
for they will be called children of God.**

¹⁰ **Blessed are those who are persecuted because of righteousness,
for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.**

¹¹ **“Blessed are you when people insult you, persecute you and falsely say all kinds of evil against you because of me. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, because great is your reward in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.**

Wisdom:

These verses are the very beginning of one of the longest sermons of Jesus that have been preserved for us in scripture. For Bibles that have a “red letter” edition where the words of Jesus are printed in red, this is the beginning of the largest uninterrupted collection of red letters. This is a good place if you are just beginning to search for who Jesus is to get a feel for the truth foretold in scripture at Isaiah 11:4:

⁴ **but with righteousness he will judge the needy,
with justice he will give decisions for the poor of the earth.
He will strike the earth with the rod of his mouth;
with the breath of his lips he will slay the wicked.**

These first verses of this sermon are often referred to as “The Beatitudes”. The word beatitude is not found in the Bible, but it means “a supreme state of happiness” and collectively, each of these statements reflect Jesus’ teaching us about things which bring this about.

Now, knowing this how do we respond when we hear with our human ears these words from our master?

Application

Jesus taught like no human man had ever taught before. Several times in scripture we are told that those who heard him were amazed at his teaching. He did not speak as the Pharisees and the teachers of the law spoke. He spoke as one who had authority. As Christians, we want to follow in the footsteps of the Master. That means we want to hear the words that he speaks. We want to learn from the lessons that he taught. As the ancient prophecy foretold, Jesus struck the earth with the rod of his mouth. Let us open our minds and hearts and pray that God would give our ears the ability to hear and place within our hearts His understanding so that we might know our Master, the Lord Jesus Christ. Fasten your seatbelts and hang on tight, if you thought the beatitudes were a wild ride, rest assured Jesus is only getting started.

Memory Verse for the week

¹⁶ In his right hand he held seven stars, and coming out of his mouth was a sharp, double-edged sword. His face was like the sun shining in all its brilliance. – Revelation 1:16

Scriptural Reference: **Matthew 5:13-16**

¹³ “You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot.

¹⁴ “You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden.

¹⁵ Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. ¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

Wisdom:

This week we are continuing our study of the teaching of Jesus at the sermon of the mount. He tells us that we are to be the salt of the earth. Salt has a flavor all of its own. It is different from the flavor of the food that we put it on. Jesus tells us that salt that loses its saltiness is worthless; it becomes something to be thrown away.

In the same way, Jesus tells us that we are to be light of the world. Light is very different from darkness. In fact, where there is light, there cannot be darkness. Jesus tells us that just like a city being on the top of a hill can be seen by everyone, our light should be seen by everyone and not covered up or hidden.

Application

Jesus calls us to be different. A decision to follow Jesus is a decision to be different. This is not something to be afraid of, but rather something to celebrate. As we grow up, we will be tempted to be like everyone else around us. We will want to fit in, and not stand out. We need to hear Jesus' warning to us that desiring to be like the world is like salt losing its saltiness. If we are just like the world, then the world will see no difference in us, and we are like salt that does not change the flavor. What good is it? We will lose our ability to lead others to him. Our influence for Jesus will be lost.

The scriptures also tell us that Jesus was the light of the world. In John 3:19 we read:

This is the verdict: Light has come into the world, but people loved darkness instead of light because their deeds were evil.

The Bible uses light to describe good and darkness to describe evil. Jesus teaches us that when we follow him, we are to be different from the world. We never want to be afraid or ashamed of how we are different because we are like Jesus. In fact, we should spend our time and energy working as hard as we can to be like him. When we do this, we will bring light to darkness, and comfort and healing to a lost and broken world.

Memory Verse for the week

**2 The people walking in darkness
have seen a great light;
on those living in the land of deep darkness
a light has dawned. – Isaiah 9:2**

Scriptural Reference: **Matthew 5:33-37**

³³ “Again, you have heard that it was said to the people long ago, ‘Do not break your oath, but fulfill to the Lord the vows you have made.’ ³⁴ But I tell you, do not swear an oath at all: either by heaven, for it is God’s throne; ³⁵ or by the earth, for it is his footstool; or by Jerusalem, for it is the city of the Great King. ³⁶ And do not swear by your head, for you cannot make even one hair white or black. ³⁷ All you need to say is simply ‘Yes’ or ‘No’; anything beyond this comes from the evil one.

Wisdom:

This week as we continue to learn from Jesus at the Sermon on the Mount, we are taught by him about oaths. An oath is a promise you make in which you place something of value at stake if you are not truthful. Jesus began his teaching referring to commands in the laws of God about making promises to God, but he quickly taught us that it was important to keep our promises to everyone, and not just the promises that we make to God.

Application

We have an oath in Trail Life that is a promise that we make upon our honor. The purpose of this oath is to remind us of who we are and how we will conduct ourselves. If we fail to keep this oath, then what is at stake is our honor. As followers of Christ, we should reflect God in everything that we do. God detests a dishonest person and he brings judgement upon all liars (Deuteronomy 25:16; Revelation 21:8). So let us be faithful to God first and foremost, but let us also be trustworthy and keep the promises we make. Let our ‘yes’ be ‘yes’, and our ‘no’ be ‘no’

Memory Verse for the week

**The Lord is trustworthy in all he promises
and faithful in all he does. – Psalm 145:13b**

Scriptural Reference: **Matthew 5:38-42**

³⁸ “You have heard that it was said, ‘Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.’ ³⁹ But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also. ⁴⁰ And if anyone wants to sue you and take your shirt, hand over your coat as well. ⁴¹ If anyone forces you to go one mile, go with them two miles. ⁴² Give to the one who asks you, and do not turn away from the one who wants to borrow from you.

Wisdom:

This week as we continue to learn from Jesus at the Sermon on the Mount, we are taught by Jesus about dealing with evil people. These words of Jesus take the current thinking of that day as well as worldly thinking of this day and turn it upside down on its head. Not only does Jesus tell us to turn the other cheek if someone slaps us, he also tells us not to resist an evil person. In fact, he tells us to give even more than an evil person asks us to give! There is definitely something different about these new words from God. Nothing like it has ever been heard before or since.

Application

This teaching causes us to know that revenge and the feelings that come along with being taken advantage of are not to be traps that we Christians fall into. We are called to think differently than the way that the world thinks. Some people may see this as weakness, but the truth is that it takes great strength to have the courage to live by faith. God tells us in scripture **Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us. – 1 Peter 2:12**

And also,

¹⁵ For it is God’s will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish people.

– 1 Peter 2:15

Like all of the teachings of Jesus, we should cling to these words as TRUTH that we can live by. In fact, when we live the way that Jesus commands us to live, we find that we begin to be like Jesus. This is God’s work, not ours. This should be the goal of every Christian: to be like JESUS.

Memory Verse for the week

¹⁷ Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. ¹⁸ And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate ^a the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. – 2 Corinthians 3:17-18

Scriptural Reference: **Matthew 5:43-48**

⁴³ “You have heard that it was said, ‘Love your neighbor ² and hate your enemy.’ ⁴⁴ But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵ that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. ⁴⁶ If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? ⁴⁷ And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? ⁴⁸ Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.

Wisdom:

For the last several weeks we have been learning from Jesus and his teachings at the Sermon on the Mount. Tonight we continue to be challenged by the words of our Lord. Jesus tells us to love our enemies and pray for those who persecute us; further, he gives us a reason to do this: “so that we may be children of our Father in heaven.” WOW!

Jesus knew that these words would be hard to understand, so he gives us other words to help us understand. He shows that loving and praying only for people whom you love and who love you, is not hard at all. In fact, even wicked people do that. As Christians, we are to be children of our Father in Heaven. If we are going to God’s children, we must act and think and treat other people in a way that honors him. Just as the way that we conduct ourselves in Trail Life reflects upon the earthly family that God has given us, our conduct also reflects upon our heavenly family.

Since Jesus is God’s only son, if we want to know how to act like a child of God, who should we act like? [\[allow Trailmen to respond\]](#)

Application

The last words of the passage that we read tonight may be the most challenging of all: “Be perfect, as your heavenly father is perfect.” When we read these words, the standard set for us by Jesus is perfection, because God is perfect! WOW! Notice that Jesus does not tell us, “just try your best,” or “if and when you feel like it, pray for your enemies.” Jesus tells us to be like our father in heaven, perfect!

So like all words of scripture, we know these words to be absolute truth. You may be tempted to say, but that is impossible! In fact, there is another scripture that says, “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,” (Romans 3:23). **Here is the key: We are not God’s children because of what we have done, we are God’s children because of what Jesus has already done for us. When we believe in Jesus, we are saved by what Jesus did for us on the cross. The righteousness of Jesus (not our own**

righteousness) saves us. Since Jesus is the one who saved us by what he did, we should do everything we can to be like him, and he tells us to be like his Father: Perfect.

Memory Verse for the week

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. — Ephesians 2:8-9

Scriptural Reference: **Matthew 6:1-4**

“Be careful not to practice your righteousness in front of others to be seen by them. If you do, you will have no reward from your Father in heaven.

² “So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. ³ But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, ⁴ so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.

Wisdom:

Tonight Jesus cautions us about our motivations when we do our righteous deeds. The reason that our God calls us to do righteous deeds is because we were made in His image and He is righteous. God desires that His children reflect His nature. We see Jesus set an example for us in this regard.

Do you know that Jesus never performed a miracle in order to “put on a show”? There were many times after Jesus would perform amazing miraculous acts of healing that he would tell the ones that he healed, “do not tell anyone about this.”

When Jesus performed miraculous acts, he did so to bring honor and glory to God and to demonstrate that Jesus’ words on earth had authority from heaven.

Application

As Christians, God has called us to do good deeds (Matthew 5:16). However, if we do good deeds so that people will see us and think we are good, then there is a problem with our motivation. Jesus tells us that if this is why we do good deeds, we will not receive a reward in heaven, because we care more about what men think about us than what God thinks about us.

A truly righteous good deed is done from the heart whether anyone sees or not. In fact, Jesus teaches us here to make an effort NOT to let our giving to the needy be known so that we are not tempted to have false motives in this regard. Jesus words and actions pointed people to God, and our words and actions should point people to God also, and not to ourselves.

Memory Verse for the week

¹⁶ In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven. – Matthew 5:16

Scriptural Reference: **Matthew 6:5-15**

“And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. ⁶ But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. ⁷ And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. ⁸ Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him.

⁹ “This, then, is how you should pray:

“ ‘Our Father in heaven,

hallowed be your name,

¹⁰ your kingdom come,

your will be done,

on earth as it is in heaven.

¹¹ Give us today our daily bread.

¹² And forgive us our debts,

as we also have forgiven our debtors.

¹³ And lead us not into temptation, s

but deliver us from the evil one.’

¹⁴ For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵ But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

Wisdom:

Jesus teaches us in these verses several important things about prayer. First of all, prayer is something that matters, and there are right ways to pray and wrong ways to pray. For example, we should make sure that when we pray that we are doing so with a right motivation in our heart. A hypocrite is

someone that claims to believe one thing, but his or her actions show that they really believe something different than what they say.

Another thing that Jesus teaches us that the way we treat other people can make a difference in whether or not God will find our prayers to be pleasing.

Finally, Jesus reminds us that our battle is not against flesh and blood but is spiritual in nature. We need to know our enemy and the God who is able to deliver us from him.

Application

When we pray we should not do so out of a desire to be seen. We should be just as happy to pray when we are home alone in our closet as when we are starting off a Trail Life meeting.

God knows what we need before we ask him, so we do not need to be worried about saying a lot of words or exactly the right words. What comes out of our mouths is not nearly as important as what is in our hearts when we talk to our heavenly Father.

Finally, we need to forgive people around us and treat them the way that we want to be treated just like we say when we recite the Trail Life Oath. If we do not live by our Oath, then our prayers will suffer because of it.

Memory Verse for the week

**Hear my prayer, O God;
listen to the words of my mouth. – Psalm 54:2**

Scriptural Reference: **Matthew 6:19-24**

¹⁹ “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. ²⁰ But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. ²¹ For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

²² “The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy, your whole body will be full of light. ²³ But if your eyes are unhealthy, your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!

²⁴ “No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.

Wisdom:

Jesus challenges us in these verses to think differently from the way the world thinks. He tells us that the things that people seem to want to have in this world are not true treasure. One of the ways that he teaches us this is showing how these treasures don't last. Moths and vermin are creatures that can eat holes in clothing and cause other kinds of damage to things that we have put into storage. Furthermore, Jesus reminds us that thieves can break in and take earthly treasures, and then they become completely worthless to us. Finally, Jesus points out that there is a connection to the things that we desire to have with the condition of our heart.

There is a different kind of treasure that Jesus wants us to see and desire to have. He calls this treasure in heaven, and this kind of treasure will never be damaged or taken away from us. It will be true treasure to last forever.

Jesus then warns us about our eyes. It is with our eyes that we see and want things. In fact, Jesus calls our eyes the lamp of the body. Sometimes people call the eyes the windows of the soul. He tells us that if our eyes are healthy, our body will be full of light, but if our eyes are not healthy our body will be full of darkness.

Finally, Jesus warns us specifically against the love of money. The Bible tells us that the love of money is the root of all evil (1 Timothy 6:1).

Application

Treasure in heaven refers to things that God cares about. If we want to know the things that God cares about, then we have to learn what God is like. We do this by reading our Bibles. In the scriptures, we learn that you can tell how good a tree is by the fruit that it produces. We also learn that God's Holy Spirit produces fruit that is described as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, gentleness and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23). We also are taught that religion that is pure and faultless is to look after widows and orphans and to keep ourselves from being polluted from the world (James 1:27). In short, God desires that we be Holy, or "set-apart" from the world, and he calls us to be a Holy Nation (1 Peter 2:9).

When our hearts desire to be like God, then we have our eyes set on the Treasures of Heaven, and our hearts will be full of light. So let us learn to think differently from the world and desire the things that invite light into our hearts and stay away from the things that bring darkness.

Memory Verse for the week

¹⁴ **"You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. – Matthew 5:14**

Scriptural Reference: **Matthew 6:25-34**

²⁵“Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? ²⁶ Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? ²⁷ Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?

²⁸ “And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labor or spin. ²⁹ Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of these. ³⁰ If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? ³¹ So do not worry, saying, ‘What shall we eat?’ or ‘What shall we drink?’ or ‘What shall we wear?’ ³² For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. ³³ But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.n

³⁴ Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

Wisdom:

These words of Jesus encourage us not to worry. This is a hard lesson to understand until you have come to know the nature of who God is. You see, this world wants us to believe that it is only by our own hands and by our own doing that good things come to us. The truth that Jesus wants us to see by these words is that we do not live this life on earth all alone. We have a heavenly father who watches over us day and night and he is able to meet every need we have. Furthermore, it is a life lesson and a faith lesson that we learn that it is only by the Father’s grace that good things come to us at all.

Jesus makes one of God’s amazing promises in these verses. He tells us to “seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.” That is an amazing promise. Now all we have to do is believe it and live it.

Application

This lesson centers around the idea of trusting in God. The world tries to teach us to chase after many things in search of happiness, or security or money. Jesus tells us that there is only one thing that we need to search for, and if we will only search for this one thing, then all of the other things that we need will be given to us. This is an amazing Biblical truth that we should cling to and trust in as we make up our mind to search for God in his Holy word.

Memory Verse for the week

³⁰ And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. ³¹ So don't be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows. – Matthew 10:30-31

Scriptural Reference: **Matthew 7:1-5**

¹“Do not judge, or you too will be judged. ²For in the same way you judge others, you will be judged, and with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.

³“Why do you look at the speck of sawdust in your brother’s eye and pay no attention to the plank in your own eye? ⁴How can you say to your brother, ‘Let me take the speck out of your eye,’ when all the time there is a plank in your own eye? ⁵You hypocrite, first take the plank out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to remove the speck from your brother’s eye.

Wisdom:

Jesus tells us with these words not to judge. These words bring to mind a court with a single man, called a judge who has a big hammer, called a gavel, banging on a desk and deciding between right and wrong in a court of law. Although it is a good thing that we have judges in our country that can decide whether or not our laws have been broken, and that can make wise decisions concerning these matters, Jesus is talking to us about the way that we live our lives and how we treat other people.

Jesus tells us not to act this way to other people. We may not walk around wearing a black robe and carrying a gavel and judge that way, but when we make decisions about someone else and about the sins that we may believe are in their lives, we are acting like a judge. Jesus tells us not to do this. Furthermore, he tells us that if we do judge other people, then the way that we judge will be the same way that God will judge the sin in our lives. This should make us stop and think VERY HARD about how we treat other people. Our Trailman Oath says that we will treat others the way that we want to be treated. We sure better hope we are living our oath faithfully, because these words of scripture serve as a warning that how we treat others and judge others is how God will judge us.

In order to show us how silly we can be sometimes about this he uses the image of a speck of sawdust in our brother’s eye while we have a huge board in our own.

Application

The scriptures are clear to us that God loved us so much that even when we were enemies of God he saved us.

But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. – Romans 5:8

That means that he saved us even when there was nothing good in us. We need to always remember that we have already been forgiven more than we will ever be asked to forgive someone else. We have been saved by grace.

For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—⁹ not by works, so that no one can boast. – Ephesians 2:8-9

This means that we never deserved to have God forgive us in the first place, but he did. Let us then be like God and love others and not judge them. Remember that when other people's sins bother you more than your own, you have forgotten the gospel.

Memory Verse for the week

³⁵ By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.”- John 13:35

Scriptural Reference: **Matthew 7:7-11**

⁷ “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. ⁸ For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

⁹ “Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? ¹⁰ Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? ¹¹ If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!

Wisdom:

Jesus uses these words to teach us about the nature of God. He tells us first that we should “ask”. The way that we ask God is through prayer. When we pray to God, not only are we able to talk to him to tell him how much we love him and thank him for saving us, we can ask him for the things that we need. When we ask God to provide for us, we are showing him that we know he is able to do it, and that we are looking to him only to meet those needs. This pleases God.

Second, Jesus tells us to “seek”. This word means “search”. When we want to find something that is hidden we have to search for it. We have to want to find it enough to go looking for it. The scriptures tell us that God rewards those who earnestly search for him (Hebrews 11:6). Jesus tells us here that if we will search for God, then we will find him.

Finally, Jesus tells us to “knock”. If we will knock on God’s door, then he will open it. If we want to visit someone in their home, it is the polite thing to do to knock on their door and wait to be invited in rather than just opening the door ourselves and walking in. Jesus tells us that if we will desire to come into the presence of God, and if we will knock, then the door will be opened.

To help us understand his words, Jesus gives us the example of earthly fathers that know how to give good gifts to their children. When Jesus calls us evil, he is speaking about our sinful nature. The bible teaches us that all people have sin in their lives and fall short of the glory of God (Romans 3:23). God, on the other hand, is perfect and is the source of everything that is good. Earthly fathers know how to give good gifts to their children, so how much more will our heavenly father, who is perfect, know how to give good gifts to his children that ask him.

Application

The application of these words Jesus has given us is that our Heavenly Father should be at the center of our lives. By asking him, we show that we know that he is our provider. By seeking him or searching for him in the scriptures, we show that we care who he is, and that we want to know him. By knocking on the door, we express to God that we desire to be in his presence, and there is no better place to be than in the presence of God. So in all of these ways in each and every day let us remember to ask, seek, and knock.

Memory Verse for the week

**'You, God, are my God,
earnestly I seek you;
I thirst for you,
my whole being longs for you,
in a dry and parched land
where there is no water. – Psalm 63:1**

Scriptural Reference: **Matthew 7:24-29**

²⁴ “Therefore everyone who hears these words of mine and puts them into practice is like a wise man who built his house on the rock. ²⁵ The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock. ²⁶ But everyone who hears these words of mine and does not put them into practice is like a foolish man who built his house on sand. ²⁷ The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house, and it fell with a great crash.”

²⁸ When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, ²⁹ because he taught as one who had authority, and not as their teachers of the law.

Wisdom:

These words conclude the sermon on the mount which represents the largest collection of the sayings of Jesus in the gospels. With these final words, Jesus tells one last parable. The parable teaches us that hearing and putting the words of Jesus into practice is like building your house upon a rock. This is a wise decision. A house built on a firm foundation will be dependable during the storms that life can throw at it. In contrast, Jesus teaches that anyone that hears these words and does not put them into practice is like building a house on sand which is an unsteady and unreliable foundation. The storms of life will take such a house and destroy it.

Application

This lesson shows us how important it is to hear and actively put into practice the words of Jesus. A house is the most expensive thing that most people ever will buy in their entire lives. It will cost the earnings of many, many years of hard work to pay for. For something that important, we would be wise to make sure it was built to last.

Well, our lives are more important than any single thing or possession, and we would be wise to listen to the words that our God gives us about how to live our lives. So now that we know just how important these words are to our lives, let us listen carefully and put these words into practice. The last thing that we need is for our lives to fall with a loud crash like the house built on the sand.

Memory Verse for the week

¹⁶ So this is what the Sovereign LORD says:

“See, I lay a stone in Zion, a tested stone,

**a precious cornerstone for a sure foundation;
the one who relies on it
will never be stricken with panic. – Isaiah 28:16**

Scriptural Reference: **Luke 7:1-10**

When Jesus had finished saying all this to the people who were listening, he entered Capernaum.² There a centurion's servant, whom his master valued highly, was sick and about to die.³ The centurion heard of Jesus and sent some elders of the Jews to him, asking him to come and heal his servant.⁴ When they came to Jesus, they pleaded earnestly with him, "This man deserves to have you do this" because he loves our nation and has built our synagogue."⁶ So Jesus went with them.

He was not far from the house when the centurion sent friends to say to him: "Lord, don't trouble yourself, for I do not deserve to have you come under my roof."⁷ That is why I did not even consider myself worthy to come to you. But say the word, and my servant will be healed.⁸ For I myself am a man under authority, with soldiers under me. I tell this one, 'Go,' and he goes; and that one, 'Come,' and he comes. I say to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it."

⁹ When Jesus heard this, he was amazed at him, and turning to the crowd following him, he said, "I tell you, I have not found such great faith even in Israel."¹⁰ Then the men who had been sent returned to the house and found the servant well.

Wisdom:

This story from Jesus' life tells of an encounter with a soldier. A Centurion was a high-ranking soldier in the Roman army who was in charge of many men. The number of men could have been as high as 1,000. A soldier like that was someone who was very important to the army that he served. It should be noticed in this story that Jews did not normally associate themselves with non-Jews or Gentiles. A Roman soldier was most certainly a Gentile. However, apparently this Gentile had gained honor for himself even among the Jewish elders because of the way that he paid respect to the Jewish nation. We read that he even built a synagogue. This would be like our church buildings. This centurion must have been a remarkable man.

We should notice how this man that had gained so much honor in the army that he served as well as among the elders of a nation to which he did not belong treated Jesus. He said to him, "Lord, don't trouble yourself for I do not deserve you to come under my roof. That is why I did not consider myself worthy to come to you." These words of this important man show that he has humbled himself before Jesus and honors Jesus above himself.

Application

When the centurion tells Jesus to just, “say the word and his servant will be healed”, he is recognizing that Jesus is one who has authority. This is something that many of Jesus’ own people still could not see. Jesus brings to the attention of the crowd that it is a sign of great faith to recognize Jesus for who he truly is. He is our King. Even though we did not live in the days when Jesus lived, we still have the opportunity to recognize who Jesus is. He is our King of kings, and he is our Lord of lords. May we ever bow before him just as the centurion with great faith did.

Memory Verse for the week

¹⁴ They will wage war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will triumph over them because he is Lord of lords and King of kings—and with him will be his called, chosen and faithful followers.” – Revelation 17:14

Scriptural Reference: **Luke 7:11-17**

¹¹ Soon afterward, Jesus went to a town called Nain, and his disciples and a large crowd went along with him. ¹² As he approached the town gate, a dead person was being carried out—the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the town was with her. ¹³ When the Lord saw her, his heart went out to her and he said, “Don’t cry.”

¹⁴ Then he went up and touched the bier they were carrying him on, and the bearers stood still. He said, “Young man, I say to you, get up!” ¹⁵ The dead man sat up and began to talk, and Jesus gave him back to his mother.

¹⁶ They were all filled with awe and praised God. “A great prophet has appeared among us,” they said. “God has come to help his people.” ¹⁷ This news about Jesus spread throughout Judea and the surrounding country.

Wisdom:

This amazing story from the life of Jesus shows us many things. First, this was a very sad situation as a widow was someone whose husband had already died. This was a funeral for her only child, her son, who now also lay dead. This means that the widow was all alone in the world with no one left to take care of her. We can only imagine the grief and hurting that must have been felt by this poor woman. Our Lord, Jesus came upon this scene and had pity and compassion for this woman. He was not asked for anything by this woman or members of the crowd, but he saw her pain and suffering and he did something that no one else could do. He gave life to her dead son. He said to her, “Don’t Cry” which shows us that his desire was to bring comfort to her in this impossible situation. Then he said to her dead son, “Young man, I say to you, get up!” Our hearts are left to imagine the joy that must have filled her heart at the sight of her only son, who was dead, now sitting up and talking! We are told that the crowd was amazed, and they were all filled with awe and praised God.

Application

Reading our Bible helps us know who our God is and what he is like. Here are some lessons we learn about Jesus from this story:

1. **Sin has brought pain and suffering into this world-** It is because of what happened in the Garden of Eden that this world is full of sin and sadness and suffering. When man decided that he would be like God, then sin and death came as a result. Although man is the reason for the sin and suffering, God is the answer for a better world and a better life.
2. **Jesus cares about people deeply.** No one asked Jesus to help here, but he did. This tells us that Jesus cares when we are hurting and sad, and he wants us not to cry. Jesus demonstrates here that no matter what sadness or suffering comes upon us, we have a God that loves us and wants something better for us.
3. **Jesus brings life where there was only death before.** – The amazing power of our Lord Jesus Christ is displayed in this great miracle. We see that the power of death is something that our

Lord controlled by simply speaking. In John 5:28-29 we read: “Do not be amazed at this, for a time is coming when all who are in their graves will hear his voice ²⁹ and come out—those who have done what is good will rise to live, and those who have done what is evil will rise to be condemned.” And also in John 5:21 we read: “For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son gives life to whom he is pleased to give it.” Our Lord Jesus Christ is our hope for eternal life.

Memory Verse for the week

**¹³ Shout for joy, you heavens;
rejoice, you earth;
burst into song, you mountains!
For the LORD comforts his people
and will have compassion on his afflicted ones. – Isaiah 49:13**

Scriptural Reference: **Luke 7:36-50**

³⁶ When one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, he went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. ³⁷ A woman in that town who lived a sinful life learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house, so she came there with an alabaster jar of perfume. ³⁸ As she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them.

³⁹ When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is—that she is a sinner."

⁴⁰ Jesus answered him, "Simon, I have something to tell you."

"Tell me, teacher," he said.

⁴¹ "Two people owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. ⁴² Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he forgave the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?"

⁴³ Simon replied, "I suppose the one who had the bigger debt forgiven."

"You have judged correctly," Jesus said.

⁴⁴ Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. ⁴⁵ You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. ⁴⁶ You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. ⁴⁷ Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—as her great love has shown. But whoever has been forgiven little loves little."

⁴⁸ Then Jesus said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."

⁴⁹ The other guests began to say among themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?"

⁵⁰ Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

Wisdom:

Jesus teaches us in this lesson that there are no people who have been forgiven little. There are only those people who THINK that they have been forgiven little. The scriptures are clear that all people are in need of forgiveness from God for sin.:

Romans 3:23-24 reads:

²³for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, ²⁴and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus.

1 John 1:8 reads:

⁸If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.

Application

The life lesson of this parable is that when we believe that our sinfulness is less than the sinfulness of someone else then we have given ourselves credit that we do not deserve. Simon had a prideful heart and considered himself to be much more acceptable to God than the sinful woman. Jesus points out all of the ways that this woman was superior to Simon because she truly grasped the extent of her own sinfulness and unworthiness. Jesus told her that her faith had saved her. So let us never presume to be more worthy than any other sinner before God because of our own deeds or actions, instead, let us have faith in and love for the God whose righteousness is given freely to all who believe in him.

Memory Verse for the week

¹⁷For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: “The righteous will live by faith.” — Romans 1:17

Scriptural Reference: **Matthew 13:1-23**

That same day Jesus went out of the house and sat by the lake. ² Such large crowds gathered around him that he got into a boat and sat in it, while all the people stood on the shore. ³ Then he told them many things in parables, saying: “A farmer went out to sow his seed. ⁴ As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, and the birds came and ate it up. ⁵ Some fell on rocky places, where it did not have much soil. It sprang up quickly, because the soil was shallow. ⁶ But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched, and they withered because they had no root. ⁷ Other seed fell among thorns, which grew up and choked the plants. ⁸ Still other seed fell on good soil, where it produced a crop—a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown. ⁹ Whoever has ears, let them hear.”

¹⁰ The disciples came to him and asked, “Why do you speak to the people in parables?”

¹¹ He replied, “Because the knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them. ¹² Whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them. ¹³ This is why I speak to them in parables:

“Though seeing, they do not see;

though hearing, they do not hear or understand.

¹⁴ In them is fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah:

“ ‘You will be ever hearing but never understanding;

you will be ever seeing but never perceiving.

¹⁵ For this people’s heart has become calloused;

they hardly hear with their ears,

and they have closed their eyes.

Otherwise they might see with their eyes,

hear with their ears,

understand with their hearts

and turn, and I would heal them.’ d

¹⁶ But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear. ¹⁷ For truly I tell you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.

¹⁸ “Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: ¹⁹ When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what was sown in their heart. This is the seed sown along the path. ²⁰ The seed falling on rocky ground refers to someone who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. ²¹ But since they have no root, they last only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, they quickly fall away. ²² The seed falling among the thorns refers to someone who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, making it unfruitful. ²³ But the seed falling on good soil refers to someone who hears the word and understands it. This is the one who produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown.”

Wisdom:

In these scriptures Jesus both teaches us a parable and he then gives the interpretation of that parable to his disciples which has been recorded for us in the Bible. A parable is a story using physical things that is told in such a way that it gives spiritual truths or teaching. In this parable, Jesus uses a farmer’s seed to represent God’s Word. He then tells of four different types of soil as an illustration of four different responses of the human heart to that message. The first response is from those who hear the message but do not understand it. Satan snatches the message away from their hearts. The next two responses show initial interest in what God has to say, but the interest is shown not to be a true interest because as soon as things get hard for believing in God’s Word, those people fall away from God and his truth. The final response is the response that eagerly hears God’s Word and the impact of hearing and believing God’s Word is a life that bears fruit and good deeds for God in amazing ways.

Application

The application of this lesson is that we should eagerly desire to receive and learn from God’s Word. We should not be surprised when trying to follow God’s Word becomes hard. Instead, we should cling to these words of Jesus and know without a doubt in our heart that God’s Word applied in our lives will make our lives the best they could ever be, and we will bear fruit and good deeds for our Lord and Savior.

Memory Verse for the week

**³³ Teach me, Lord, the way of your decrees,
that I may follow it to the end.**

**³⁴ Give me understanding, so that I may keep your law
and obey it with all my heart. – Psalm 119:33-34**

Scriptural Reference: **Mark 4:35-41**

³⁵ That day when evening came, he said to his disciples, "Let us go over to the other side." ³⁶ Leaving the crowd behind, they took him along, just as he was, in the boat. There were also other boats with him. ³⁷ A furious squall came up, and the waves broke over the boat, so that it was nearly swamped. ³⁸ Jesus was in the stern, sleeping on a cushion. The disciples woke him and said to him, "Teacher, don't you care if we drown?"

³⁹ He got up, rebuked the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet! Be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm.

⁴⁰ He said to his disciples, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?"

⁴¹ They were terrified and asked each other, "Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!"

Wisdom:

Like all scripture, these verses help us understand who our God is. This story tells of a time when Jesus demonstrated amazing power over the winds and the sea. Jesus and his disciples were in a boat on the Sea of Galilee and a furious storm came upon them. The Sea of Galilee was known by experienced sailors to be dangerous because these furious storms could come up suddenly without warning. The scriptures tell us that the storm was so bad that water was coming in the boat and in such a way that the boat was about to sink.

Jesus was asleep and his disciples were afraid for their lives so they woke him to in their time of greatest fear and need. Jesus spoke harshly to the wind and said to the waves, "Quiet, be still!" Then the wind died down and it was completely calm. This was amazing that Jesus could control the wind and the waves of the sea with just the sound of his voice. This teaches us that Jesus had authority over things that human man does not. None of us could command the wind and the waves to obey us, but Jesus did.

Also, isn't it interesting what Jesus asked his disciples? He said to them, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?" Who would not be afraid of drowning at such a time as this? Yet, these were the words that our Lord spoke. So we must learn from them.

Application

This passage not only reveals to us an important understanding of the authority that Jesus has over nature, but it also reveals what Jesus expects from us as far as trusting in him. In our lifetime there may be hard or scary times or things that threaten our very lives, but this story tells us that we can put our hope and our faith in Jesus. If he can even tell a storm that is about to sink a boat to shush and be still, what can he do with the storms in our life? He is able to take care of us no matter what happens, and we should not worry but only trust our very lives to the Master of the Storm. When we have faith in Jesus, we no longer need to be afraid; God will deliver us from all that this world threatens us with.

Memory Verse for the week

**⁴ Even though I walk
through the darkest valley, ^a
I will fear no evil,
for you are with me;
your rod and your staff,
they comfort me. – Psalm 23:4**

Scriptural Reference: **Luke 8:40-56**

⁴⁰ Now when Jesus returned, a crowd welcomed him, for they were all expecting him. ⁴¹ Then a man named Jairus, a synagogue leader, came and fell at Jesus' feet, pleading with him to come to his house ⁴² because his only daughter, a girl of about twelve, was dying.

As Jesus was on his way, the crowds almost crushed him. ⁴³ And a woman was there who had been subject to bleeding for twelve years, but no one could heal her. ⁴⁴ She came up behind him and touched the edge of his cloak, and immediately her bleeding stopped.

⁴⁵ **"Who touched me?"** Jesus asked.

When they all denied it, Peter said, "Master, the people are crowding and pressing against you."

⁴⁶ But Jesus said, **"Someone touched me; I know that power has gone out from me."**

⁴⁷ Then the woman, seeing that she could not go unnoticed, came trembling and fell at his feet. In the presence of all the people, she told why she had touched him and how she had been instantly healed. ⁴⁸ Then he said to her, **"Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace."**

⁴⁹ While Jesus was still speaking, someone came from the house of Jairus, the synagogue leader. "Your daughter is dead," he said. "Don't bother the teacher anymore."

⁵⁰ Hearing this, Jesus said to Jairus, **"Don't be afraid; just believe, and she will be healed."**

⁵¹ When he arrived at the house of Jairus, he did not let anyone go in with him except Peter, John and James, and the child's father and mother. ⁵² Meanwhile, all the people were wailing and mourning for her. **"Stop wailing,"** Jesus said. **"She is not dead but asleep."**

⁵³ They laughed at him, knowing that she was dead. ⁵⁴ But he took her by the hand and said, **"My child, get up!"** ⁵⁵ Her spirit returned, and at once she stood up. Then Jesus told them to give her something to eat. ⁵⁶ Her parents were astonished, but he ordered them not to tell anyone what had happened.

Wisdom:

These scriptures tell of two amazing instances of Jesus' power of healing. In the first case, a woman who had been sick for twelve years because no one could heal her. She thought in her heart that if she could only touch his clothes as he walked by she would be healed. The scriptures tell us that she was healed just as she believed that she would be. Even without Jesus giving permission for his power to be used for healing, God the Father allowed this woman to receive the healing that she believed that she would receive. When the woman confessed to Jesus that she was the one who had touched him and received his power, Jesus showed compassion to her, and he says an amazing thing: he tells her, **"Daughter, your**

faith has healed you. Go in peace.” This should have our full attention on the importance of our faith in God.

The second healing was no less miraculous. A twelve-year-old girl had died, and some witnesses from the ruler’s home had just reported this news to the girl’s father when Jesus said to him, “Don’t be afraid; just believe, and she will be healed.” Can you imagine how these words from Jesus must have sounded in the ears of the father of this girl? His heart must have been spiraling into a deep despair of grief, and in the midst of the very spiral of the crash of his heart he hears the words, “Don’t be afraid, just believe.” The scriptures do tell us that the girl’s father believed that if Jesus would only touch his daughter, that she would be healed, but that was when she was still living. The scriptures do not tell us how the man responded after hearing the news of her death. Clearly, the friends and relatives that had come to comfort the family thought that Jesus was being ridiculous when he told them that the girl was only asleep. What Jesus was about to do was not for those unbelievers, because Jesus only allowed the girl’s parents to witness what he did for this girl. He raised her from the dead, and then he instructed them not to tell anyone about what he had done.

Application

Clearly these two stories are intended to teach of us the importance of our belief in our God and the resulting power of God that this will bring into our lives. Our faith and belief in God is something that we should cling to with every ounce of strength we can master. No matter how hard things seem to be or how hopeless things may seem to be from a human perspective, when we have faith in God and believe in him, anything is possible. We never need to be afraid when we have Jesus in our heart. He is a God that is mighty to save.

Memory Verse for the week

**Yet he saved them for his name’s sake,
to make his mighty power known. – Psalm 106:8**

Scriptural Reference: **Mark 6:1-6**

Jesus left there and went to his hometown, accompanied by his disciples. ²When the Sabbath came, he began to teach in the synagogue, and many who heard him were amazed.

“Where did this man get these things?” they asked. “What’s this wisdom that has been given him? What are these remarkable miracles he is performing? ³Isn’t this the carpenter? Isn’t this Mary’s son and the brother of James, Joseph, Judas and Simon? Aren’t his sisters here with us?” And they took offense at him.

⁴Jesus said to them, “A prophet is not without honor except in his own town, among his relatives and in his own home.” ⁵He could not do any miracles there, except lay his hands on a few sick people and heal them. ⁶He was amazed at their lack of faith.

Wisdom:

First, we see how apt people are to undervalue things with which they are familiar. The people of Nazareth “took offense” at our Lord. They could not think it possible that someone who had lived among them for so many years, and whose brothers and sisters they knew, could deserve to be followed as a public teacher.

Nowhere on earth ever had the privileges Nazareth had. For thirty years the Son of God lived in this town, and went about its streets. For thirty years he walked with God under the eyes of its inhabitants, living a blameless, perfect life. But it was all lost on them. They were not ready to believe the Gospel when the Lord came among them and taught in their synagogue. They would not believe that someone whose face they knew so well and who had lived such a long time eating, drinking and dressing like one of themselves, had any right to claim their attention. They “took offense at him” (verse 3).

Above excerpt from Ryle, J. C. (1993). *Mark*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, pg 79.

Application

There is nothing in all this that need surprise us. The same thing is going on around us every day, in our own country. The holy Scriptures, the preaching of the Gospel, the public ordinances of religion, the abundant means of grace that we enjoy, are continually undervalued by people. They are so accustomed to them they do not know their privileges. It is an awful truth that in religion more than in anything else familiarity breeds contempt.

There is comfort in this part of our Lord’s experience for some of the Lord’s people. There is comfort for faithful ministers of the Gospel who are depressed by the unbelief of their parishioners or regular hearers. There is comfort for true Christians who stand alone in their families, and see all around them clinging to the world. Let both remember that they are drinking the same cup as their beloved Master. Let them remember that he too was despised most by those who knew him best. Let them learn that the utmost consistency of conduct will not make

others adopt their views and opinions, any more than it did the people of Nazareth. Let them know that the sorrowful words of their Lord will generally be fulfilled in the experience of his servants, "Only in his own town, among his relatives and in his own house is a prophet without honor" (verse 4).

The above excerpt from Ryle, J. C. (1993). *Mark*. Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, pp 79-80.

Memory Verse for the week

**I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people,
- Ephesians 1:18**

Scriptural Reference: **Matthew 14:13-21**

¹³ When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns. ¹⁴ When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick.

¹⁵ As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a remote place, and it's already getting late. Send the crowds away, so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food."

¹⁶ Jesus replied, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat."

¹⁷ "We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish," they answered.

¹⁸ "Bring them here to me," he said. ¹⁹ And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. ²⁰ They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. ²¹ The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children.

Wisdom:

These verses tell us of one of Jesus' most famous miracles, the feeding of the five thousand. There are several things about this story that are worthy of our careful attention. First, if we look just a little bit ahead of this story, we learn that the incident that had Jesus decide to withdraw privately by boat to a solitary place was the news of the death of John the Baptist. We can only imagine how this news must have affected our Lord, but it would be reasonable to assume that it made Jesus very sad and full of grief, and perhaps this was the reason that he wanted to be alone.

However, it says a lot about Jesus that when he saw the crowds who were trying to come and see him while he was trying to be alone during this difficult time he had compassion on them. This means that he cared more about their feelings than he cared about his desire to be alone. The scriptures tell us that he healed their sick.

Second, the number of people in the crowd was substantial. Five thousand people is about the number of people that you can find cheering at a high school football game in an average stadium. This many people would eat a lot of food in a single meal. These were the thoughts going through the minds of the disciples when Jesus said to them, "they do not need to go away, you give them something to eat." Imagine if you were one of the disciples at the football game and responded to Jesus, "Well, we do have here a McDonalds Happy Meal to share," how many could you hope to feed? The scriptures say that the crowd ate, and was satisfied. This means that everybody, including the over-eaters in the crowd that were surely there, had all the food they wanted, and the leftovers filled 12 baskets! This is beyond amazing; it was a miracle.

Application

There are many applications that can be taken from this story. One of the more obvious is that we should never allow in our minds what seems to be impossible to be a limitation that we place on God. The disciples knew without a doubt that they could not feed a crowd of this size, and it was getting late, so the crowd should be dismissed so the people could go eat. Jesus showed them this was not a limitation where God is.

Another application is that we can always trust in God to provide for us the things that we need. Jesus trusted in God and prayed that the food would be blessed to feed the people, and it was. May we never find ourselves trying to make our mighty God fit inside a tiny human-sized box.

Memory Verse for the week

Jesus looked at them and said, “With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.” – Matthew 19:26

Scriptural Reference: **Matthew 14:22-32**

²² Immediately Jesus made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead of him to the other side, while he dismissed the crowd. ²³ After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside by himself to pray. Later that night, he was there alone, ²⁴ and the boat was already a considerable distance from land, buffeted by the waves because the wind was against it.

²⁵ Shortly before dawn Jesus went out to them, walking on the lake. ²⁶ When the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified. "It's a ghost," they said, and cried out in fear.

²⁷ But Jesus immediately said to them: "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid."

²⁸ "Lord, if it's you," Peter replied, "tell me to come to you on the water."

²⁹ "Come," he said.

Then Peter got down out of the boat, walked on the water and came toward Jesus. ³⁰ But when he saw the wind, he was afraid and, beginning to sink, cried out, "Lord, save me!"

³¹ Immediately Jesus reached out his hand and caught him. "You of little faith," he said, "why did you doubt?"

³² And when they climbed into the boat, the wind died down. ³³ Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God."

Wisdom:

These verses tell us that after Jesus had fed the 5000 that he still made time to be alone with his God. Talking to God in prayer was more important to Jesus than getting sleep after a long day of serving the needs of the people. The disciples had followed the instructions given by Jesus and had left the shore without him to go to the other side of the Sea of Galilee. These verses tell us that the wind was against the men so it was taking a long time to cross, and Jesus walked out to them on the water.

Notice how the first response of Jesus to the fears of the men were to comfort them with his words, "Take courage! It is I. Don't be afraid." Even today Jesus comforts us with his words when we are afraid. Reading the Bible when we are afraid is a good thing for us to remember to do. There is no one who cares more for us than the one who died to save us. We should listen to him.

Peter said to Jesus, "Lord, if it is you, tell me to come to you on the water." We can learn a lot from Peter here if we are careful to pay close attention. First, Peter did not dare presume to get out of the boat to walk on water with his own strength, he asked Jesus to command him to do so, and Jesus gave him this command. Peter got out of the boat and began walking on water toward Jesus! But when he saw the wind he was afraid and beginning to sink cried out, "Lord, save me!" We need to pay close attention to the words that Jesus spoke to Peter when he immediately reached out his hand and caught him. Jesus said, "You of little faith, why did you doubt?"

Application

There are many applications that we can receive from this lesson. First, Peter has set for us an excellent example of courageous belief in the power of God. How many men stepped out of the boat? Only one did. Second, Peter also teaches us not to presume to be God. He first asked for the command and authority of Jesus to get out of the boat. Finally, we learn from the words of Jesus that faith is belief plus trust. Peter had no problem believing enough to get out of the boat, but when he took his eyes off of Jesus and doubted in what God was able to do, he showed a lack of trust. May we always keep our eyes on Jesus and trust in him and God with our very lives.

Memory Verse for the week

Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see. – Hebrews 11:1

Scriptural Reference: **Mark 6:53-56**

⁵³ When they had crossed over, they landed at Gennesaret and anchored there. ⁵⁴ As soon as they got out of the boat, people recognized Jesus. ⁵⁵ They ran throughout that whole region and carried the sick on mats to wherever they heard he was. ⁵⁶ And wherever he went—into villages, towns or countryside—they placed the sick in the marketplaces. They begged him to let them touch even the edge of his cloak, and all who touched it were healed.

Wisdom:

These scriptures tell us some amazing things about who Jesus was. As we visualize what these scriptures tell us, it is amazing that everyone, regardless of the kind of sickness they were suffering from, if they were able to get close enough to Jesus to touch his clothes, they were healed. Imagine at any point in time today how many of our friends and relatives are sick in some way or another. There is hardly a family alive anywhere that does not have at least one loved one that we wish that we could help not to be sick. This was true in Jesus' day also. Everyone who touched him were healed. He is the Great Physician. The hope of searching for and finding Jesus was a hope that promised healing and a new and better life for everyone.

Application

This hope still stands true for us today. The scriptures tell us that we should earnestly seek Jesus even today. Hebrews 11:6 tells us:

"And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

Also, Jesus tells us in John 10:10:

"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."

And again Jesus tells us in John 17:3:

"Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent."

Today we search for Jesus by reading about him in the scriptures. The rewards of finding and knowing him are no less amazing today than they were when he walked on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. May we eagerly and earnestly search for him daily and trust God's promise that by doing so, we will be rewarded.

Memory Verse for the week

**¹⁸ In that day the deaf will hear the words of the scroll,
and out of gloom and darkness
the eyes of the blind will see. – Isaiah 29:18**

Scriptural Reference: **John 6:25-40**

²⁵ When they found him on the other side of the lake, they asked him, “Rabbi, when did you get here?”

²⁶ Jesus answered, “Very truly I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw the signs I performed but because you ate the loaves and had your fill. ²⁷ Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For on him God the Father has placed his seal of approval.”

²⁸ Then they asked him, “What must we do to do the works God requires?”

²⁹ Jesus answered, “The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.”

³⁰ So they asked him, “What sign then will you give that we may see it and believe you? What will you do? ³¹ Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written: ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’”

³² Jesus said to them, “Very truly I tell you, it is not Moses who has given you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. ³³ For the bread of God is the bread that comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”

³⁴ “Sir,” they said, “always give us this bread.”

³⁵ Then Jesus declared, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never go hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. ³⁶ But as I told you, you have seen me and still you do not believe. ³⁷ All those the Father gives me will come to me, and whoever comes to me I will never drive away. ³⁸ For I have come down from heaven not to do my will but to do the will of him who sent me. ³⁹ And this is the will of him who sent me, that I shall lose none of all those he has given me, but raise them up at the last day. ⁴⁰ For my Father’s will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day.”

Wisdom:

These words of Jesus help us see spiritual truths by using imagery that we can understand. The first thing that Jesus points out to those who had been searching for him is that they were looking for him for the wrong reason. They were searching for him because he had fed them. They were really interested in another free meal. Jesus teaches us not to work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life. This teaches us that there was a type of food that was more important than food that provides nourishment for the body. This food would be given by the Son of Man who has been approved by God the Father. Jesus was using an old testament prophetic title of the messiah when he referred to himself as the Son of Man. When the people did not understand his words, Jesus came right out and told them, “I am the Bread of life”.

Application

Just as our bodies need bread every day to get bigger and stronger, we need Jesus every day so that our souls will be nourished with the words that give eternal life. Man does not live by bread alone, but by the very words of God. By reading the Bible every day we strengthen our spiritual bodies, and this is

even more important than eating food every day because our bodies will not last forever, but our souls will live forever when we feast upon the Bread of Life.

Memory Verse for the week

**Your word, LORD, is eternal;
it stands firm in the heavens. – Psalms 119:89**

Scriptural Reference: **John 8:12-20**

¹² When Jesus spoke again to the people, he said, “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

¹³ The Pharisees challenged him, “Here you are, appearing as your own witness; your testimony is not valid.”

¹⁴ Jesus answered, “Even if I testify on my own behalf, my testimony is valid, for I know where I came from and where I am going. But you have no idea where I come from or where I am going. ¹⁵ You judge by human standards; I pass judgment on no one. ¹⁶ But if I do judge, my decisions are true, because I am not alone. I stand with the Father, who sent me. ¹⁷ In your own Law it is written that the testimony of two witnesses is true. ¹⁸ I am one who testifies for myself; my other witness is the Father, who sent me.”

¹⁹ Then they asked him, “Where is your father?”

“You do not know me or my Father,” Jesus replied. “If you knew me, you would know my Father also.” ²⁰ He spoke these words while teaching in the temple courts near the place where the offerings were put. Yet no one seized him, because his hour had not yet come.

Wisdom:

This teaching of Jesus tells of the second of the great I AM statements made by Jesus. Last week we heard about when Jesus said, “I AM the bread of life” This week we read of a teaching where he tells us, “I am the Light of the World”.

We know from the Old Testament that the name of God given to Moses was I AM that I AM. When Jesus says, “I AM the light of the world” he uses the name of God as part of the revelation of who he is. Jesus tells us here that he is the Light of the World, and that anyone who follows him will never walk in darkness. These are spiritual words, but we can understand the meaning of walking in darkness. As Trail Life Trailmen, we often are outdoors in the darkness, and the first thing that we want to have is light so that we do not have to walk or work in the dark. The light helps us to see where we are going and that the things that we are doing are correct. Jesus is our light in this world. If we follow him, we are promised that we will never find ourselves walking in spiritual darkness.

Application

Jesus gives us words to help us understand spiritual truths. Just as we can understand the value of light in a place of darkness, Jesus tells us that he is our light in this world. We will always want to follow and walk toward the light. Doing so will make sure that we will not become lost in the darkness of this world. So let us fix our eyes on Jesus and always walk worthy toward the light!

Memory Verse for the week

**² The people walking in darkness
have seen a great light;
on those living in the land of deep darkness
a light has dawned. – Isaiah 9:2**

Scriptural Reference: **John 10:7-10**

⁷ Therefore Jesus said again, "Very truly I tell you, I am the gate for the sheep. ⁸ All who have come before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep have not listened to them. ⁹ I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture. ¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

Wisdom:

Jesus teaches us with these words that he, and he alone is the point of entry into salvation. He uses the illustration sheep pen that protects and houses the flock. It is through him that we both enter into safety and protection as well as exit and find pasture where we will experience the nourishing things that a protected life has to offer. This is the third of the great I AM statements that is recorded for us in the book of John.

Application

Like many of the teachings of Jesus, these words use a physical and familiar illustration to teach a spiritual truth. Just as we can understand how important a gate is to a flock of sheep both for entering into protection as well as exiting for nourishment and exercise, we learn that Jesus also is our point of entry into eternal salvation. This salvation holds the promise of both protection as well as life that is abundant. A decision to follow Jesus is not a decision to give up good things, it is a decision to accept the best of all things.

Memory Verse for the week

**⁸ Taste and see that the LORD is good;
blessed is the one who takes refuge in him. – Psalm 34:8**

Scriptural Reference: **John 10:11-18**

¹¹ “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. ¹² The hired hand is not the shepherd and does not own the sheep. So when he sees the wolf coming, he abandons the sheep and runs away. Then the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it. ¹³ The man runs away because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep.

¹⁴ “I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me—¹⁵ just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep. ¹⁶ I have other sheep that are not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also. They too will listen to my voice, and there shall be one flock and one shepherd. ¹⁷ The reason my Father loves me is that I lay down my life—only to take it up again. ¹⁸ No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down and authority to take it up again. This command I received from my Father.”

Wisdom:

Last week in our Wisdom for the Wild, we read that Jesus said, “I AM the Gate for the Sheep”. This week we are reading another of the great I AM statements that Jesus makes that teaches us who he is. He is our good shepherd and we are his lambs. Not all shepherds are good. Jesus teaches here that a hired hand cares nothing about the sheep if something dangerous comes and threatens them. Instead of protecting and caring for the sheep which he has been hired to protect, he will run away to save himself. Jesus is not like that. He laid down his life for us. No one took his life from him, he willingly died to save us.

Application

Not only does Jesus teach us with these words how much he loves us when he describes that he willingly traded his life for ours, but he also teaches us about his authority as the Son of God. There may be some people that you love enough in this world that you would trade your life to protect, but none of us can break and undo the chains of death. Jesus has this authority because it was given to him by God the Father. As lambs in the flock of the Good Shepherd, we should sleep well at night and be full of joy in our hearts knowing that we are in the best of good hands when we trust in Jesus, our Good Shepherd who loves us, protects us, and laid down his life to rescue us from the chains of death.

Memory Verse for the week

³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹ neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord. – Romans 8:38

Scriptural Reference: **John 15:1-8**

"I am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. ² He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful. ³ You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. ⁴ Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

⁵ "I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. ⁶ If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. ⁷ If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. ⁸ This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

Wisdom:

Jesus teaches us spiritual truths by using words that we can understand. He tells us here that he is the True Vine and God the Father is the gardener. We understand that for branches to continue to live, they must remain connected to the vine which brings the nourishment and life-giving sap to the branches. Also, this same sap flows through the branches and produces fruit the weight of which must be held by the branches. Jesus tells us that we are the branches, and by remaining connected to him we will be able to bear much fruit. It is very important to note that Jesus did not tell us we are to produce the fruit, God will do that through us. We need to remain faithful to Jesus and God will use us to bear the fruit that he will produce through us. Further, Jesus makes it clear that a branch that does not remain connected to the vine can do nothing.

Application

Just as the branches need to remain connected to the vine to receive life-giving sap, we need to remain connected to Jesus in our hearts. This can look like regularly praying to God and reading the scriptures about Jesus so that we can learn more about him and his love for us. Perhaps most importantly, it also will look like us being very careful to give credit where credit is due when our hearts that love Jesus prompt us to do good deeds and show love, mercy and kindness to those around us. We should always give God all the honor, glory and praise when people offer us praise or pats on the back when they see us do good deeds. We need to be the first to tell them that we are just the branches and God is producing the fruit through us. This can also be an opportunity to begin to talk to someone about who Jesus is if our answer surprises them or leaves them with a puzzled look. Try it some time. God will be using you before you know it to tell other people about Jesus.

Memory Verse for the week

⁶ On my bed I remember you; I think of you through the watches of the night. ⁷ Because you are my help, I sing in the shadow of your wings. ⁸ I cling to you; your right hand upholds me. – Psalm 63:6-8

Wisdom for the Wild – Supplemental Material

No. 1

TROOP AR-7070

Begin with the material written under the Wisdom section and read the first two paragraphs to the troop. Allow members of the troop to share any information they may like to about what they know about the Bible. Now share the information from the bullet points listed under the Wisdom section.

Stress the importance of receiving God's guidance from his Word. Display the scripture reference, John 1:1-5, on the tv and read it aloud to the troop. Repeat what these scriptures say about the Word of God:

The Word was with God

The Word was God

He was with God in the beginning

Through him all things were made

In him was life and the light of men

It sounds like the Word of God is actually a person. Who do you think this person is?

This person is Jesus Christ, God's Son.

Did you know that Jesus was always with God from the beginning and that all things in creation were made through Him?

Did you know that the Bible, which is the Word of God, is always pointing us to Jesus? That is because Jesus is God's Word. Jesus only speaks God's words. If we want to know God, we need to listen to Jesus. And we do this by reading the Bible.

This year in Trail Life we are going to spending time in the Gospel of John. Encourage troop members to begin reading John chapter 1 this week.

End with material written under Application section.