

# Winter

~ BREAK ~

Quiet Time Packet



**-2019-**

*“Miracles, Wonders and Signs”*



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

Day 1: Why Miracles Matter	Murvi Babalola
Day 2: Parting the Red Sea	Jenna Winters
Day 3: Manna from Heaven	Haley Glenn
Day 4: Balaam's Donkey Speaks	Zia Bailey
Day 5: Walls of Jericho Fall	Anthony Pierre-Louis
Day 6: Philistines Return the Ark	Steve Schnell
Day 7: The Zarephath Widow is Fed	Emma Campbell
Day 8: Elijah Defeats the Prophets of Baal	Weldon Gibson
Day 9: Naaman Cured of Leprosy	Brittney Francisco
Day 10: Shadrach, Meshach & Abednego Delivered	Kai Arsenault
Day 11: Daniel Delivered from the Lion's Den	Miriam Cardoos
Day 12: Walking on Water	Christian Lewis
Day 13: Healing the Leper	Josh Maldonado
Day 14: Healing the Paralyzed Man	Anjali Kapur
Day 15: Calming the Storm	Cameron Glenn
Day 16: Feeding the 5,000	Nic Petre
Day 17: Healing the 10 Lepers	Courtney Charon
Day 18: Turning Water into Wine	Mari Sawamura
Day 19: Healing the Man at the Pool	Meagan McNair
Day 20: Raising Lazarus from the Dead	Emily Ford
Day 21: The Holy Spirit Comes Down at Pentecost	Jonathan Joint
Day 22: Peter Heals a Lame Man	Vanessa Wu
Day 23: Paul's Conversion	Zack Walters
Day 24: Paul and Silas Freed from Prison	Marquis Moore
Day 25: Miracles in the Modern Day	Jesse Ghoman



## WHY MIRACLES MATTER

Murvi Babalola

Do you know the stories?

Read **Isaiah 40:18-31**

I have a theory: everything we do is prompted by our belief in a “promise” associated with that thing. We believe that doing something is going to produce a desired result, and that’s why we do it. For example, we go to college (the action) because we believe that it will help us get a good job. A job leads to money, which brings stability, which ultimately leads to peace, joy, love or fulfillment (the promises). The same can be applied to the relationships we pursue, the food we choose to eat, or even the sin we let ourselves succumb to. But the promises we hope to see fulfilled are always the same: peace, joy, love, and fulfillment. This is at very foundation of our free will. So the question we all have to answer is this: *who/what do you trust to come through on their promises?* Stop and think about this for a moment. Consider how your life reflects what you have been putting your trust in. What promises do you think those things are fulfilling?

So where do miracles come into the picture? God uses miracles to prove to us who He is and the fact that He is the only one capable of coming through for us and fulfilling his promises. When we know and understand God’s power, we can trust that he will fulfill his promises to us today! Going back to the scripture, reflect on the following questions (and write something down too).

*Q1. What do you find yourself comparing God to or weighing him against? Why?*

*Q2. What aspects of God’s power or character have you forgotten lately, or perhaps never even been truly convinced of? Who can you talk to and how can you go after that now?*

Our God is AMAZING and AWESOME in the truest sense of those words! Miracles illustrate that in a powerful way. If we are to trust the promises of any being, lifestyle or system, it should be one that is actually powerful enough to come through for us.

But do you know the stories?

Time and time again in scripture, God calls his people back to remember some of his “greatest hits” of miracles. One notable time is recorded in Joshua as the Israelites near Jericho.

Read **Joshua 4:1-7**

*Q3. What miracles has God done in your life? How will you learn from and remember them?*

As we go through this series, my hope is that we can all gather insights from each of these stories that will serve as “stones of remembrance” (verses 5-7) in our walks with God; and that our eyes can be opened to seeing the miracles God continues to perform through and around us today.

*Prayer Prompt:* Walk through your life and thank God for the miracles He’s done along the way.

## PARTING THE RED SEA

Jenna Winters

### Read **Exodus 14:5-31**

The Israelites had been in Egypt for 430 years, and most of those years Israel was enslaved to the Egyptians. Generation after generation would pray to God asking for salvation and with no visible response. Then, finally, after years of desperation, Moses takes a stand against Israel's captor! They're free! They leave and they are safe. But what happens to the captives once they are freed?

Soon after the Israelites leave Pharaoh realizes he made a mistake. Please note how the Israelites leave...*defiantly* (verse 9). They are feeling pretty good about themselves and, with the miracles that just happened, who wouldn't be? But soon Pharaoh and his army catch up to them, and their confident demeanor quickly turns into fear, panic and sassiness. That's right, they totally sass Moses (verse 11). Yes, they were terrified for their lives, but somehow they still found time to come up with a sassy question like this one! Anyway, the more important question still remains: *why would the Israelites want to go back to slavery after being freed? Who would choose slavery over freedom?*

They ask to go back to Egypt, but the story doesn't end here. Thankfully, it ends with a shift in the Israelites' hearts: from wanting to run back to captivity to 'believing in the Lord and in his servant' (verse 31). But, in this moment, they wanted slavery over freedom and this is a theme we see many times in the bible, and in our own lives. We were all once slaves to sin and held in captivity. Then we were saved! We rejoiced and walked away from our sinful lives with the same *defiant* attitudes that the Israelites had while walking out of Egypt. Yet, somewhere along the way, we saw Satan coming after us with his army of temptations. It is so easy to judge the Israelites for wanting to go back, but isn't that what we do too? We desire or slip back into sinful patterns and give in to temptations. We are the Israelites saying to Moses, 'take us back!'

It's not exactly clear what moves the Israelites hearts. Maybe it was walking through the Red Sea; maybe it was the thick cloud of darkness that protected the Israelites throughout the night; or maybe it was the death of their captors. But something changed their minds and hearts that day. A miracle happened through God's saving power. I think Moses said it best, 'Fear not, stand firm, and you will see the salvation of the Lord' (verse 13).

*Q1. What sins used to entangle you?*

*Q2. How has God freed you from sin?*

*Q3. What sin do you find yourself wanting to go back to?*

*Q4. How did you feel prior to being saved and how do you feel now?*

*Prayer Prompt:* Thank God for saving you from slavery. Thank God for Jesus, the ultimate Moses in our lives. Ask God to protect you from sin and things that could tempt you. Ask God to show you His salvation.

MANNA FROM HEAVEN  
Haley Glenn

Read **Exodus 16:1-35**

(Verses 1-3) As the Israelites leave the oasis of Elim and set out towards Sinai, they find themselves caught in a dry, deserted wasteland. And, before our story even begins, we observe a people not at peace. They are a discontent, ungrateful lot, anticipating starvation without experiencing actual famine and choosing to *selectively remember* (Ecclesiastes 7:10) their days of slavery in Egypt. They despise the “neither-here-nor-there” places, yet they do not realize that the in-between spaces are where God does His best work.

*Q1. Are you too myopic to see miracles? What dark corners of ungratefulness, hidden deep in your heart, need to be brought to light before God can show you the manna?*

(Verses 4-16) Even though the Israelites grumbled and complained, God still chose to show his people “the glory of the Lord” (v.7). In this story, God didn’t demonstrate his divine presence by revealing his radiance but, instead, showed his people a loving provision. He showered the Israelites with mercy and goodness, even when they acted like his enemies (just like Jesus commands us to).

*Q2. When has God showered you with undeserved mercy?*

(Verses 17-27) God commands the Israelites to gather manna each day. Just as he provided for the Israelites every morning, you can trust that God will give *you* what you need. But, just as the Israelites were instructed to gather the manna *each day*, we too are instructed to trust *each day*. Belief in God is not a one-time decision, but a daily choice.

In verse 20 we see that some of the Israelites tried storing their bread for later, demonstrating a lack of trust that God would provide for them. And in verses 27-28 we observe some of the Israelites trying to gather bread on the 7<sup>th</sup> day, even when God warned them that there would be nothing. Sometimes, we go looking for fulfillment in places where God has told us there would be none.

*Q3. What does it look like for me to trust God today?*

(Verses 28-35) To conclude this chapter, God commands the Israelites to *remember* what He has done by storing a few pieces of the manna in a jar (a true “treasure in jars of clay”).

*Challenge:* Make a list of the miracles you treasure most.

*Prayer Prompt:* Share vulnerably with God about the things that prevent you from seeing Him work. Ask Him to give you the faith to trust him daily. Thank Him for the miracles you have seen and pray for the breakthroughs you still want to see!

## BALAAM'S DONKEY SPEAKS

Zia Bailey

“Shema” is the Hebrew word for listen. The word encapsulates more than just to hear sound waves, but to listen and *respond* with obedience.

So one time, there was this brother (because there, typically, always is \*eye roll\*) and from the time I met him he paid me a lot of extra attention, the type that wasn't always guarding my heart, if you get my drift. So much so, that I had a number of sisters come up to me totally convinced of what I secretly hoped for. But, I was very aware of my young-Christian brain and I knew this guy was not mature, so I did what every disciple is taught to do: I prayed, “Lord, if this is not for me make it clear!” almost every day for a semester. My silly-lookin' self, however, played into what was basically a “situationship”, trying to convince myself that I wasn't giving pieces of my heart away to someone who had no real plans to do anything with it. Well, hindsight is *cringingly* 20/20; God was very clear with me the whole time that my tom-foolery was not in his will, but I refused to open my eyes. Well, I guess the Lord had enough because suddenly the brother became distant and shortly after started dating another sister. Ya'll, I. Played. My. Self! On the surface, it seemed like I was listening to God, praying, but my judgement was so clouded by my own desires and the hype from other people, that I did not genuinely “shema” God's response to me. My actions were not responsive to God speaking to me. I can laugh at that whole situation now. And it's amusing to see that God has a history of using humor to call our attention to him.

### Read **Numbers 22:1-35**

In this passage we can see that Balaam turned to God, but did not really listen. We see this in his response to God's answers. Although he relayed God's clear “no” to the King, who propositioned him with clout and treasure, it was a **reluctant** response: “Go back to your own country, for the Lord has refused to *let* me go with you.”

*Q1. When God's response isn't what you want to hear, how have you responded?*

This is further confirmed when promises of even more riches and “honor” compel him to inquire of God again (v. 19). It was not that God was not clear the first time, Balaam just did not receive the answer he wanted. The powerful God of the universe is speaking to Balaam and he is too caught up in his own desires to respond to God with humility and eagerness to follow God's will, instead it's with reluctance, dismissing the fact that God made His will clear.

*Q2. What are some desires you have right now that could be blocking out God's voice?*

**2 Peter 2:15-16** says that Balaam loved to earn money in doing wrong and his donkey's rebuked stopped him in his crazy quest. Although God permitted him to go (because of free-will) He knew where Balaam's heart really was. God most definitely has a sense of humor, I mean, what better way reveal to a man his foolish ways than to deliver him wisdom through the mouth of a donkey?

*Prayer Prompt:* Meditate on **Ephesians 1:18** and pray God open your eyes to his will and give you a heart to “Shema.”



## WALLS OF JERICHO FALL

Anthony Pierre-Louis

Before you read, take some time to pray. Cry out to our God what is on your heart and draw near to him as you prepare to read his everlasting word!

**Context:** The nation of Israel had just spent the last 40 years in the Wilderness of Paran. Their former leader Moses had called them to be faithful to God as they were about to enter the promised land of Canaan. After crossing the Jordan River on dry land, Joshua, Israel's current leader, is faced with the challenge of overcoming the powerful stronghold city of Jericho.

### Read **Joshua 6:1-21**

Reading this story baffles me. It begs the question "How did the walls of Jericho fall?" I bet the people of Jericho and some of the Israelites were wondering the same thing. It makes me think about the military strategists of Israel that a brother encouraged me to ponder. The scriptures make no mention of them but imagine being skilled in warfare, knowing the ins and outs of battle and being told the plan to take down this city (Reread verses 3-5). They were basically told we are going to **WALK** around the city and at the end of the week, we're going to **BLOW SOME TRUMPETS AND SHOUT**. You don't have to know much about conquering cities to conclude that was a terrible plan. Nonetheless, the Israelites obeyed.

Six days in a row, the army of Israel encircled the city of Jericho and, on the seventh day, they encircled it seven times ending with a war cry. With that, the walls of Jericho fell and the Israelites took the city. How did the walls of Jericho fall? I wish I could tell you. More importantly though, why did the walls of Jericho fall? Because of the faithfulness of our God! I admire the faith and obedience of Joshua and the Israelites in this moment but I'm more inspired by what our God was able to do through them. God is the one who makes miracles happen. He's faithful beyond anything that we know and it's because of him that the walls of Jericho fell.

*Q1. Do you make decisions and plans based on what you think is best or what God thinks? How can you better seek God's will and trust in the plan that he has for your life?*

*Q2. How has God blessed your faith and obedience in the past?*

*Q3. What breakthroughs are you wanting God to do in your life?*

*Prayer Prompt:* Make a list of the miracles and breakthroughs you're desiring to see God do in your life. Pray consistently through that list and for a heart of faith and obedience like Joshua and the Israelite Army.

## PHILISTINES RETURN THE ARK

Steve Schnell

**Context:** On one of the darkest days in Israel's history, the Ark of the Covenant was captured by their archenemy, the Philistines. The priest Eli hears the news, falls and breaks his neck. His son dies in battle, but his son's pregnant wife is more heartbroken over the Ark's capture. She names her son Ichabod, which means "The glory has departed from Israel."



### The Ark of the Covenant

- *God's Spirit hovered on top! Exodus 25:22*
- *Every inch covered in gold!*
- *Contained manna (Ex 16), Aaron's staff (Numbers 17), and the 10 Commandments!*

Read **1 Samuel** chapters **5-7**

**[The Power of God]** Everywhere the bad guys take their prize, it wreaks havoc! The Ark is toppling idols, giving people STDs (1 Sam 5:9 groin tumors!), and causing rat infestations. The people of Ekron say, "No way! Don't bring that thing in here!" The incredible power of God was obvious, even to the enemies of God's people.

Q: What miracles have you seen God do this year?

**[Miracles Beyond My View]** The miracles of tumors, rats, and cart cows (6:12) were all happening in enemy territory, far away from God's people. The Israelites didn't know it, but God was doing incredible things! They were weeping, mourning, and fearing the inevitable invasion. But God wasn't gone- He was doing miracles! They just couldn't see it. How does your faith hold up in the dark moments? We must never stop doing the right things, even when it appears that all hope is lost. God does miracles even when we can't see them!

**[The Philistines See God]** The bad guys worship other gods, but they come face-to-face with the raw strength of the Lord - they even try to buy Him off with an apology gift of 10 golden sculptures (6:4)! Imagine the Atheist Club at your university spending its entire semester budget on a worship night!

**[Loving What God Loves]** The people in the fields rejoice at the Ark's return (6:13). These weren't priests or Levites, these are Average Joe Israelites. But this was a big deal to them! They stop what they're doing and begin worshipping God. They offer costly sacrifices - no one told them to do this! There's nothing in the Torah about Ark returns! But they can't help but rejoice and worship. Do you rejoice at the right things? "Find out what pleases the Lord" (Eph 5:10).

**[Respect for a Holy God]** In a tragic twist, some died that day (6:19). We can never mess up too much that God can't return the Ark. But we're reminded that God is serious about sin.

Q: What temptation have you entertained this week? Lust & impurity, insecurity, partying with old friends, laziness, not walking with God, not loving disciples (phone, FaceTime, text)

*Prayer prompt:* Ask God for the faith to believe in the faraway, hidden-from-sight miracles...

## THE ZAREPHATH WIDOW IS FED

Emma Campbell

### Read **1 Kings 17:7-16**

When I read this passage, the first thing I see is a woman who is exhausted, barely scraping by, and quite literally done with life (in verse 12, she says she's going to go home, cook and eat a meal with her family, and then die. If that's not despair, I don't know what is!). We don't know how long this drought had gone on for by this point, but we can assume that it's been long enough to the point where giving *anything* to anyone was a great sacrifice. When Elijah approaches the woman, asks her for water AND food, you'd expect her response to be one of outrage and selfishness (I know that's what mine would be like - I get upset when someone takes my food even when I have plenty). Yet she responds with a willingly obedient and deeply trusting heart because her Lord has promised His great provision. Because of this, her supply is miraculously unending and she's able to provide for Elijah, her family, and herself. What an amazing example of how God comes through for us, even in the times when we have so little to give!

*Q1. Have you ever had your own personal "drought," where you were lacking in seemingly necessary resources to be able to serve God?*

Personally, a drought I've been battling for a while now, and has become increasingly frustrating and disruptive to my daily life, has been my physical energy. I do all that I can to stay in good health: I get good sleep each night, I've learned to deal with my mental illness, and yet my gas tank seems to hover right around empty all day, every day. It's a mystery to me, but it's a daily opportunity for me to trust that God will provide me with the strength that I need to serve Him and His people.

*Q2. Do you have an Elijah in your life - someone who is there to remind you that God WILL provide for you if you set your heart on serving Him?*

My Elijah this semester has been my wonderful discipler, Ryane Adeniran. I am always reminded of a moment where she encouraged me by sharing Jesus' words to his disciples in the garden of Gethsemane: Mark 14:38b says, "The spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak." She reminded me that when my flesh is the weakest, God's Spirit in me gets to shine all the more brightly!

*Q3. In what ways can you serve God with what you have right now?*

It's easy to say "if only I had a little more \_\_\_\_\_, then I could really serve God." For me, it's "if only I had a little more energy..." But God provides us with exactly what we need, even when we think we need something different.

*Prayer Prompt:* Pray for contentment with what God has provided you with right now, and pray that you may have a heart that will trust Him to do the miracles He has promised you He will do!

## ELIJAH DEFEATS THE PROPHETS OF BAAL

Weldon Gibson

Being a disciple is a lonely path. It isn't glorious all the time, especially in a world as fallen and lost as the one we live in. As men and women who are followers of Jesus we are called to live honorable and holy (*set-apart*) lives for God; with righteousness, integrity, conviction, love, patience, and power from Jesus and the Holy spirit.

- Loving Jesus and spreading the gospel in a corrupt world isn't for the faint of heart. We are outnumbered. *The enemy is constantly working to kill, steal and destroy our faith to take us back to do his bidding. Will he succeed?*

- Elijah is a powerful prophet of the one and only true God and he demonstrates how the **power of prayer and having sincere faith in God's timing** will bring us victory and give us courage to confront the world's evil and win people to Jesus. Even though outnumbered and mocked Elijah defeats the prophets at baal by calling on his God in opposition to false prophets and idols.

### **Read 1 Kings 18:16-39:**

□ **(1 Kings 18:16-21)** Ask yourself, "Am I a troubler of Israel?" Meaning am I willing to stand up for God and his righteousness in the face of the world and challenge them (on campus, at workplaces, at home, etc).

-Do I believe that God will show up because of my faithfulness to him?

God can't honor someone's faith and work miracles for someone who isn't willing to represent him and make known who he is and what he expects.

-(v.20,21) Ahab sent word throughout ALL Israel (450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of Asherah) in response to Elijah's courage, so they could be assembled and confronted by Elijah because of his conviction and love for God: "How long will you waver between two opinions? If the Lord is God follow him; but if Baal is god, follow him." *Are you known for standing up for your love for God? Are you known to be set-apart from the world?*

If I were Elijah I'd definitely be afraid and intimidated by all these people opposing me but, the question is, will I let that fear paralyze me and stop God from working a miracle in my life?

□ **(1 Kings 18:22-29)** -(v.24-27) Elijah confidently addressed the false prophets and their false gods with the confidence and full assurance that God would provide fire. *Do you doubt God and waver in your faith when storms come or when worldly opposition tests you?*

□ **(1 Kings 18:30-39)** V.30 says "they came to him, and he repaired the altar of the Lord, *which had been torn down.*" With our actions and love for Jesus often we have to figuratively repair the altar of the Lord everywhere we go, because the sin of the world tears down God and his holiness that should be lived by.

-(v.36-39) Elijah stepped forward and prayed. Because of Elijah's prayer and faith God sent such a hot scorching fire that it burned up everything! And the people worshipped him.

**Prayer Prompt:** Pray more specific and audacious prayers to God. Is your prayer life helping "turn hearts" back to God? Prayer is power (v.39). *Reference scripture Mark 11:22-24, James 5:16-18.*

**Journal Prompt:** What practical ways can I be more bold and confront the world of its sin? How can I have faith that burns so bright that it inspires others to live for God and see his miracles?

NAAMAN CURED OF LEPROSY  
Brittney Francisco

**Read 2 Kings 5:1-15**

Naaman was a commander of an army, highly regarded by his master, and had a victory from winning a war for Aram. Overall, he was a brave, fearless, and courageous soldier. *But* he had leprosy. Leprosy is a skin disease that causes discoloration and lumps on the skin and, in severe cases, disfigurement and deformities. For a long time the disease was thought to be contagious and it didn't help that a leper's appearance would make him stand out from a mile away. This made those suffering from leprosy outcasts in their community, considered unholy and cursed. To even be seen with a leper was to be avoided at all costs. Knowing this, the fact that Naaman had leprosy yet accomplished so much is very inspiring from the outset!

Being of such high authority, Naaman probably saw his diseases as the one thing that was holding him back from doing even greater things. Most likely, being healed was something he had dreamed about his whole life, and when he saw the chance to get that he jumped on the opportunity, regardless of the cost.

God is a good, loving God and he wants to give us the desires of our hearts (Psalm 37:4) . However our hearts can become closed off from God when we chase after our wants more than we chase after Him.

How attached are you to the things you want? Sometimes we can be slaves to the things we want. We let our desires, whether good or bad, drive our emotions and actions. And instead of being obedient to God, we are obedient to our desires which can quickly end up becoming idols. *[Write down the desires of your heart as well as any God sized dreams you have.]*

In James 2:17 it says that faith without works is dead. So examine the faith you've put in to making those things happen. How much prayer time you've devoted to it, did God reveal something to you about it, was there a heart change regarding the matter?

Now examine the work you've put into making it happen. How have you been physically trying to make this a reality, how much time out of your day or week have you been giving to it?

We can become so stuck on obtaining something that we forget that, regardless of what we have or don't have, Jesus is enough for us. Being humble enough to lay down our own desires and surrender them to him will pave the way to obedience.

Take time to pray that, the next time God answers a prayer, your heart is humble enough to accept whatever God gives you and that obedience will come after.

## SHADRACH, MESHACH & ABEDNEGO DELIVERED

Kai Arsenault

### Read **Daniel 3:1-15**

Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego are put in a difficult situation here. They are no longer in Jerusalem and, due to King Nebuchadnezzar's orders, are commanded to either worship an image of gold or be thrown into a blazing furnace. And, when everyone around them fell to worship this image of gold, they refused to be idolatrous and stood out among the crowd.

How would *you* react in this situation? You may find yourselves in similar situations just like this. Winter break can be a trying time for our faith and devotion. When friends or family don't go to church, will you stand out and still go? When, back in the comforts of your home, old sin is knocking on your door, will you worship your sin as you have in years past or will you stand firm?

*Q1. What are the ways that Satan has or will try to tempt you over winter break? How will you stand firm and not bow down to these things?*

### Read: **Daniel 3:16-30**

Standing up for God does not come without its challenges. Although it may not come with physical punishment, it can certainly come in other ways. Persecution from friends or family, the feeling of isolation as someone who has committed themselves to living a repentant life, or even as simple as having to deny yourself daily and be disciplined enough to have a quiet time every morning.

But, because of God's grace, we don't have to endure these things alone. God has promised that he will deliver us from troubles (Ps. 34:19-20, Ps. 46:1, 2 Thes. 3:3). Through God, no matter what we face in this life, whether it be walking through a fiery furnace or the valley of the shadow of death, we know he is with us, protecting us.

*Q2. What are times that God has watched over you or protected you (e.g. answered a prayer, put people in your life to help you, or maybe given you comfort in a time of need?)*

Sometimes I think, "What was Daniel doing while all this was happening?" Though the Bible doesn't elaborate on it, I like to think that he went to his room in front of his open window and prayed for Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego to have the strength, as well as faith, to endure the challenges they were about to face. Go and do the same, pray for your brothers and sisters on winter break, that they can have the strength to persevere through whatever they may face.

*Prayer Prompt:* Meditate on the scriptures below. Thank God for how he has protected you. Pray for faith and strength, for yourself and for your brothers and sisters.

**Exodus 14:14** – "The LORD will fight for you; you need only be still."

**Psalms 118:6** – "The LORD is with me; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?"

## DANIEL DELIVERED FROM THE LION'S DEN

Miriam Cardoos

### Read **Daniel 6:1-23**

It's easy to forget our values when we encounter persecution, it's easy to try to blend in with the crowd. In most situations in life we can either make decisions out of *faith* or out of *fear*. When we make decisions out of faith, we are obedient to Jesus and we trust that he will work all things out for our good; we trust that he places situations in our lives to bring us closer to him. However, when we make decisions in fear, we choose to be obedient to our anxieties. We are obedient to ourselves and trust that we have a better plan than God does.

**(v. 1-9)** In Daniel 6, we see that Daniel is a righteous man of God; careful, trustworthy and set-apart. When Daniel heard that the law changed, he probably felt fear, anxiety and worry but he also had a spark of faith in his heart. He had two options in this moment, he could either cower to his fear or stand up strong, in faith. The scriptures show that this was a simple decision for Daniel, the *first* thing he did when he heard the law was go to his house, in his room, open his windows to Jerusalem and **prayed**. He prayed to God and let go of the fear he had so he could walk in faith. He didn't hide when he got on his knees and prayed three times a day, he thanked God through the persecution. How many of us would get on our knees and thank God three times a day, if we were in Daniel's shoes? His faith and courage alone, speak volumes! What a great example of obedience God gives us in him.

**(v.10-23)** When Daniel was being led to his death, I can't imagine him feeling that this was a blessing from God! He may have been confused and sad, but he found a way to trust God through his emotions. The last thing he heard, before a stone was pushed over the den and sealed him in, were these words from the king: "may your God, whom you serve continually rescue you!" If I were Daniel I would've held onto those words all night - and he did. We know this because God *did* rescue him! The next morning, the king comes to the lion's den and finds Daniel *alive*! Because Daniel trusted in God and was obedient through all the hard, lonely and confusing moments, God blesses him with life! He was saved because he trusted God. God blesses us when we put our trust in him. We will always have the choice to either choose our eternal God or choose to follow our temporary emotions. You will be faced with this, but which path will you take?

*Q1. Have you been choosing to walk in faith or fear? Think of a time you chose faith, and another time you chose fear. Think of the outcomes of each situation.*

*Q2. We miss out on the blessings of God when we don't choose to walk in obedience. What are some practical ways you can make sure to walk in faith?*

## WALKING ON WATER

Chris Lewis

Read **Matthew 14:22-33**

**Hebrews 11:1** says, “Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.” Being a disciple for five years now, my faith has been tested in more ways than I can remember. Whether being pulled by doubts, temptations of the world’s acceptance and “normalcy,” faith is the foundation in which my relationship with God stands. Yet it can be very hard to maintain a steady faith in the midst of storms. This passage is a prime example of that.

*After reading this passage, what first strikes you about Jesus’ character?*

- What was a part of his daily routine?
- Why do you think Jesus did these things?

Think about the disciples when they initially saw Jesus walking on water...

- What type of emotions did they have?
- Why were they feeling this way?
- Would you feel the same?

*Why do you think Peter asked to come on the water to Jesus?*

- What do you think was his mindset?
- Do you think this was out of disbelief or trust?

*What do you think caused Peter to sink?*

If you were in Peter’s situation, what would you have done differently to stay afloat?

*Why do YOU doubt God?* (Meditate on that for a minute or two.)

Are we all that different from Peter?

- He was human, just like us!
- He doubted and denied Jesus and sinned, just like us!
- He needed saving, just like us!

**Peter was only able to walk on the water so long as his eyes were fixed on Jesus.**

*How are you doing at fixing your eyes on Jesus?* (Cool reference scripture: Matthew 17:20)

- When storms crash how quickly do you turn to God, or towards something else?

Jesus says in Matthew 17:20, “He replied, “Because you have so little faith. Truly I tell you, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.”

Think about ways you can trust God in the midst of your storms!



## HEALING THE LEPER Joshua Paul Maldonado

### Read **Mark 1:40-45**

This miracle is easy to categorize as “Jesus has power over disease” but you’d be missing out on seeing God’s heart. We see a man with leprosy, an infectious skin disease that causes disfiguring skin sores, approach and beg Jesus to make him clean. (*Google “leprosy hands” for a clearer idea of what this might have looked like*). Yet, this sight didn’t elicit a reaction of disgust from Jesus. Jesus had compassion on the man and touched him, healing him in the process. A man that would have been required to live outside the community, alone (**Leviticus 13:45-46**). He probably hadn’t been touched in years! Jesus didn’t *need* to touch this man to heal him, but touching him made all the difference.

I remember meeting an elderly homeless man in Central Square, asking if I could spare any change. It was wicked hot out, so I offered to head into the Walgreens to buy him some water. I came out with a case of water and he seemed surprised that I’d give him all of that, but it wasn’t until I reached out my hand to introduce myself that he lit up and smiled. I immediately saw his fingers, swollen due to dehydration and malnutrition. I could see the dirt under his nails. I could feel the weathered skin of his hand as I gripped it tight. When our handshake finished, I didn’t reach for hand sanitizer, I didn’t pull back and look at my hand in disgust, I looked him in the eye and spoke to him as one would speak to a friend. That was when I realized that as much as he needed the water to hydrate, he needed to be treated like a person, not a “dirty homeless guy” whose cup we drop some spare change into. Touching him made all the difference.

Remember that we too we once unclean, covered in the shame of unforgiven sin. But Jesus had compassion on us and died on the cross so that we would be made clean and be added to the kingdom of God! We’re no longer outsiders, we’re a chosen people!

*Q1. As you reflect on these verses, remember the sins that made you unclean before God. How did you feel when you were baptized, knowing that because of Jesus’ love & sacrifice, you had been made clean and received the Holy Spirit? How did this change your relationship with God?*

*Q2. As a disciple of Jesus, what are some ways you can have compassion on people and show them God’s heart?*

[Some ideas: Be intentional about your giving. Fast from a meal and take the money you saved to provide a meal for a homeless person. Stop and have a short conversation. If you see someone who is sick, dirty or been disfigured by an accident, don’t recoil in disgust. Go out of your way to say hello. When someone is getting open with you about serious sin in their lives, withhold your reactions.]

*Prayer Prompt:* Pray for a heart like Jesus: compassionate and understanding. Ask for forgiveness where you’ve fallen short. Meditate on all the ways you’ve come up with and envision them.

## HEALING THE PARALYZED MAN

Anjali Kapur

### Read **Mark 2:1-12**

Imagine the scene: Jesus, this man who all your friends and family are talking about, is staying at a house right down the street, preaching to anyone who will listen. You're very curious about this man so you wrestle your way through the crowd to get a seat right in the front. As you're listening to Jesus speak, you hear a commotion above and look up to see a man lying on a mat, being lowered through a hole in the roof by four men. You spring to your feet both out of surprise and in an effort to make room for the man, who is now lying right where you were sitting, at Jesus' feet. It quickly becomes clear that the man is paralyzed and that he and his friends have come here hoping that Jesus would heal him. Jesus looks first up at the friends on the roof, then slowly moves his gaze to the paralyzed man, taking in his total stillness. After a moment, Jesus firmly and meaningfully says to the man, "Son, your sins are forgiven."

Okay, stop right there. Why does Jesus say this man is forgiven of his sins when the man is clearly there to be healed of his paralysis? When Jesus sees this man, he sees that there are *two* things broken about him: the physical (his body) and the spiritual (his relationship with God). Jesus chooses to heal first what is most important, this man's relationship with God, by forgiving his sins. Jesus' #1 priority is our spiritual needs.

*Think about your own life: What physical needs do you see (e.g., school, work, family, career)? What spiritual needs do you see? Which needs take priority in your relationship with God?*

Jesus ultimately heals the man of his paralysis too. But he wants the people watching to know that he does in fact have the authority to forgive sins. The people know that the only one who can forgive sins is God himself. So, either Jesus is the Son of God or he is lying. Jesus proves his power and authority by healing the man physically as well as spiritually - truly he is the Son of God!

*In what ways has Jesus forgiven you? How has Jesus healed you? Do you believe that Jesus has the power and authority to continue healing you?*

In the end, the man picks up his mat and walks away, freed from his physical and spiritual brokenness. There is freedom in the forgiveness that Jesus offers and with that freedom the opportunity to walk away from your old life and into a new one (John 8:36, 2 Corinthians 5:17). *How has the freedom that Jesus offers through forgiveness changed your life?*

*Prayer Prompt:* Take time to thank God for the ways that he has forgiven you and healed you. Meditate on the freedom that comes from Jesus' forgiveness and healing—you get to pick up your mat and walk away! Pray about the areas of your life where you want to see Jesus forgive and heal.

A special note: The paralytic is dependent on his friends to bring him to Jesus. You need your friends' faith and your friends need your faith to experience the miracles Jesus has to offer. *How can you use your faith to help your friends see miracles in their lives?*

## CALMING THE STORM

Cameron Glenn

Read: **Mark 4:35-41**

Vs. 35-37

- Jesus suggests him and his disciples venture across the Sea of Galilee one evening, although traveling in the morning would have been the safer option.
- A “furious squall” hits and waves start crashing over the boat “so that it was nearly swamped”.
  - The disciples must have felt so afraid here. If these men that fished for a living were fearful of the storm, it must have been pretty terrifying.

*What are the storms in your life that you have previously faced or are currently facing? Are you looking for someone to pull you out of the waves crashing over you?*

Vs. 38-39

- Despite the storm that is raging across the sea, the disciples find Jesus **asleep**
- They question his power and authority when they ask “Don’t you care if we drown”
  - The disciples have accepted their defeat and are assuming that the story is going to end in a certain way. Yet, Jesus has a different plan.

*Have you ever felt like Jesus was “sleeping” or ignoring a situation that is threatening to drown you?*

- Jesus gets up and **rebukes** the winds, quieting the storm. This is a miracle that will be remembered forever.
  - Jesus doesn’t just calm the storm, he completely halts the wind and the waves, displaying his immense power over nature.

*When has Jesus blown away your concept of him by displaying his power in your life? What miracles has He performed that have built your faith?*

Vs. 40-41

- Jesus doesn’t comfort his disciples but rather scolds them
  - Perhaps since Jesus suggested this trip in the first place, he wanted to test their faith and see how they would react in a less than ideal situation.
  - The disciples lack of faith led them to be controlled by fear.
- The disciples were terrified after Jesus calmed the storm. This came from witnessing the miracle of Jesus rebuking the waves. They were in complete and utter shock.

*Sometimes God leads us into situations where our faith is going to be tested. He takes us through storms in order for us to grow in our trust in Him. Yet, even when we are put in these frightful situations, His word always remains true. “Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me” (Psalm 23:4) You will not be overtaken in the storm as long as Jesus is on board with you.*

**Challenge:** Journal and pray about situations where you are tempted to be fearful instead of faithful. Remember the miracles and times that God has proven himself to be trustworthy. If our God has a hand over the wind & waves, what is stopping you from believing he will deliver you from the storms you are currently passing through?

## FEEDING THE 5,000

Nic Petre

### Read **Mark 6:30-44**

On this day in Mark 6, the apostles return to Jesus after days of hard travel, preaching, and miracle working. They come together and Jesus has his best idea yet - "Let's go and get some rest." They've earned it. They've seen God do amazing things through them and around them and now it's time for some relaxation at the Galilee Seaside Resort and Spa. When they arrive, swim trunks on and snacks packed, they see 5000+ people waiting for them. Jesus, to the dismay of his beach-bound apostles, decides he's going to spend the rest of the day teaching and ministering to the crowd. When the day is done, the apostles, who are eager to get their vacation on, ask Jesus to send the people away to find food for themselves. Jesus then has his worst idea and tells them that they will be the ones to feed the group.

Have you ever felt like you can't possibly meet the needs that demand your attention? Have you felt like you don't have what it takes to be the person God wants you to be? Do you often find yourself thinking about the many ways you fall short? Jesus' words, "you give them something to eat," really strike me every time I read them. I can audibly hear the gears spinning in their heads as they try to comprehend what he's asking them to do. They become instant accountants and make sure Jesus understands how expensive it would be to feed a group this large. But Jesus doesn't ask what it will practically take beyond the means of the apostles, but instead he asks what the apostles already have. God is not interested in what we *can't* do or *don't* have, but rather what he *can* do with what we *do* have. With five loaves and two fish, five thousand people were fed. Jesus took what the apostles had and produced one of the most incredible miracles of the Bible. This was such a special miracle, in fact, that it is the only one that appears in all four gospels.

God's message is clear: he's not interested in what you can't do and what you don't have. He's not interested in all the reasons why things may not work out. God is only interested in what you have right now and wants to blow your mind with what he can do. God asks much of us, but never asks us to do it on our own. He wants to take what you can offer and multiply it beyond what you could possibly imagine.

I want to challenge you to start having a new mindset in your walk with God. I want you to ask yourself "What *can* I do?" It means that "I don't know the Bible very well," turns into "What can God reveal to me today in my time with Him?" "There are so many needy people around us, we'll never have an impact," turns into "What needs can I meet today?" "I have too much on my plate to go and effectively share my faith" turns into "What time do I have to share my faith that God can use to touch someone's soul?"

When you live with the faith that God will use what you have and multiply it to achieve his will, the world will change. So let's ask "What can God do with me today?" and see what he does!

## HEALING THE 10 LEPERS

Courtney Charon

### Read **Luke 17:11-19**

In 2004, my family found out that the little baby girl my mom was carrying would most likely not make it, and that we should begin to prepare ourselves for the loss of a daughter and little sister. We were told that, if she did live, she wouldn't be able to do anything on her own. For 6 months my mom stayed in bed to make sure that she didn't do anything to stop the growth of my sister. Then she prayed for a miracle. On May 3, 2004, my little sister was born. Six weeks early, we thanked God that she was alive. Her lungs were not fully developed and her arms didn't fully extend but we thanked God that she was alive. She stayed in the hospital for a month growing, healing, and developing, her heart was still beating so we kept thanking God. Today she is 15 years old, a disciple of Jesus, plays basketball and is a competitive dancer. God healed her and my family is still thanking God that she is alive!

As you reflect on this passage, what are you grateful for?

Have you expressed this gratitude to God? Do you return to God to praise Him?

In verse 16 it says that one of the lepers "threw himself at Jesus' feet and thanked him". This man asked Jesus to heal him because he knew that Jesus was willing. When he was healed, he understood who he was asking the miracle of and thanked that miracle-worker; he thanked Jesus.

When miracles happen in your life do you thank the miracle-worker? What does gratitude look like for you? For this man, he *threw* himself at Jesus' feet! Do you throw yourself at the feet of Jesus?

As I think back on the last 15 years, I can't imagine what my life would be like if my family hadn't asked God for a miracle. When God gives you these amazing gifts, make sure to thank him both after God has revealed His work but even during the times of uncertainty.

*Prayer Prompt:* Take time to thank God for the miracles He has done in your life and the miracles He is working on!

## TURNING WATER INTO WINE

Mari Sawamura

### Read **John 2:1-11**

This miracle is monumental because it was Jesus' first one! This moment made his powers public to the world. However, did it sound like it was in Jesus' elaborate plan for this to be *the* moment? Not really. He said his hour had not yet come. This miracle became a powerful testament to God's glory, but started as an act of obedience and love towards Mary.

You know when your mom sends you subliminal messages to make you do something? Mary saying, "They have no more wine" really meant, "do something". Running out of wine at a wedding was a social disgrace that would embarrass the hosts. Jesus, knowing his own mother, caught her drift. He was like, "Mom, seriously? I know what you're thinking. Not now!" \*facepalm\* \*slight eye roll\* \*laughs at cheeky mom\*. Mary tells the servants to do whatever Jesus says, boldly (and faithfully) assuming that he will do for her this favor as a loving son.

Mary was once a scared teenager, as the angel Gabriel told her that she was miraculously pregnant with a baby supposedly destined to be great and the Son of the Most High (Luke 1:32). She kept faith in those words that her son, though he had not performed any signs yet, was special and would be the answer to the present crisis. She must have been eagerly anticipating this moment where her son would truly show himself as the son of God, fulfilling the truths she had held onto. In verse 7 and on, we see the result is an amazing miracle, God being glorified, a great celebration, exemplary hospitality, his disciples believing, and a very pleased Mary.

God is so personable. His mind and even his plans can be changed by human requests. He has a soft spot for all of us! Jesus was God and could defy all laws of nature by turning jugs of water into good wine. But he also humbled himself to the constructs of this world and served his friends and family. He did not seek to gain credit (verse 9). He was a silent hero and let the bridegroom receive the praise for throwing a great party. If anyone else were to possess the powers Jesus did on Earth, they certainly would not use them as selflessly as he did. He was perfect. A perfect son to a perfect God, and a perfect son to an imperfect mom.

*Q1. What are some bold requests that you can faithfully ask God for?*

*Q2. Do you understand the privilege you have to be able to change the mind of a divine God? To have a loving Father who considers your desires?*

*Q3. What are some ways that you can serve your parents while home for break? How can you be attentive to even their unspoken needs and requests?*

*Q4. How can you practice hospitality during break and next semester?*

## HEALING THE MAN AT THE POOL

Meagan McNair

### Read **John 5:1-9**

This man amazes me. I can't imagine how exhausting and lonely it would have been like to be waiting for a breakthrough for 38 years! I'm baffled that, though exhausted, lonely, and probably in pain - this man, after 38 *YEARS* of no cure or success, is still sitting in the same spot by the pool. He never stopped hoping for *just for the chance* to be the one to be healed. Imagine how this man felt showing up for the hundredth time just to be let down AGAIN. But he doesn't give up. He's unmoving. After 38 YEARS he still shows up by the pool with hope. **HOW!?**

### Read **Hebrews 11:1**

Faith is being *sure* of what we *hope* for. This man at the pool didn't only hope that he would receive healing, but he had FAITH that he would.

***\*\*The key to a hope that LASTS is faith.***

This man was sitting by a holy pool. I like to think that he had faith in the same God that you and I believe in. That he *believed* that somehow God would make a way. If we take faith out of the picture it can become all too easy to base our hope on what has happened to us in the past. It's absolutely crushing to hope for something with our whole heart just to be let down. At least that's how I've felt. It is extremely difficult to pick ourselves back up and try to hope AGAIN. That's why enduring with FAITH is so important. Faith withstands time. It withstands hurt and pain. It withstands doubt and fear. It withstands let downs and failure.

Our hope has to be married to our faith or we'll only find ourselves defeated and let down, unable to endure in hope. The crazy part is that in the end, even though he sat by the pool for 38 years it wasn't the thing that healed him!! His faith paired with his enduring hope was! When we don't give up and choose to stay through the waiting and through the darkness it builds something in us. It builds the faith that will eventually heal and save us.

*Q1. What do you hope for?*

*Q2. Have you abandoned your station by the pool? Have you lost hope in the things that you used to? Why?*

*Q3. How can you build your faith? How can you use your faith to start hoping or to hope again?*

What's a good quiet time packet without a few good practicals amIright!?

1. Soak whatever you're hoping for in prayer. Bring it to God. Ask about it, cry about it, yell about it, and even express if you're feeling defeated about it. Just bring it before him.
2. Hope WITH people. Ask your brothers/sisters to hope with you. Don't do it alone. That was the one fault of the man at the pool. He didn't have anyone to help him. You have people around you, use them.
3. **Don't give up.** I want to leave you with this. Jesus saw this man's faith and his lasting hope and HEALED HIM. Jesus has healing for you, your friends, your family, etc. Don't give up. God is faithful. Trust him and trust his process.

## RAISING LAZARUS FROM THE DEAD

Emily Ford

### Read **John 11:1-44** and **Ecclesiastes 3:1**

In the passage, we can see that Jesus was not worried about time or urgency in the face of Lazarus's sickness. About ten years ago my little sister got really sick. She was all out of sorts and very weak for longer than normal because she stubbornly refused any soup, toast, or liquid that we would bring her and didn't want to eat or drink anything. One night as she was washing her hands in the bathroom, she started to get dizzy, so she called out for our mom. As soon as my mom came in to see what was wrong, my sister went limp as a noodle and passed out. Hearing the commotion, I climbed out of bed as fast as I could and ran into the room, only to find my mom holding up and trying to talk to my barely conscious sister. She tells me to wake up my Dad and run downstairs for ice. The fear I felt as I sprinted down the stairs for ice is one that I would not wish on anyone. To know that someone you love is hurting or sick and that there is nothing you can do to help is a faith shaking thing.

*Q1. When you think of the miracles that you want to ask of God, do you have a due date in mind or are you surrendered to His timing even when it doesn't look likely? In vs14 we see that Jesus knew exactly what was going on in Bethany and decided to stay put. When things don't go "according to plan" who's plan are you talking about, yours or God's?*

First-century Jewish burial practices were very intricate and had strict procedures to follow. Men could only prepare the dead body of another man but women could prepare the bodies of both men and women. This means that Mary and Martha most likely prepared Lazarus's body for burial themselves. Vs 5 says that Jesus "loved [them]" and I'm sure that as they wrapped the body of their baby brother or maybe as they rolled the stone over his grave, the temptation to doubt Jesus' love was very strong.

*Q2: What tempts you to question Jesus' love? When you are tempted, what is your response? Do you trust the timing of God the same way that Mary and Martha did?*

As I think of the days following that night, I am grateful that I knew this miracle was in the Bible. If God can bring a 4-day old corpse back to life, then who am I to doubt His ability to change mine? We can trust that God is working in our lives because we see it in His Word!

*Prayer Prompt:* Take some time to think about the miracles in your life and thank God. Ask God to help you surrender your timeline for His. Rest today in the knowledge that even when things don't look great God is working on your miracle.



## THE HOLY SPIRIT COMES DOWN AT PENTECOST

Jonathan Joint

Read **Acts 1:4-8, 2:1-4; Joel 2:28-32**

Personally, if I could plan my entire life without error, I would. Even if I could guarantee accuracy and perfection with the way I envision my plans to play out about 75% of the time, I would be very pleased. As a matter of fact, if I could be right 50% of the time, I would be content. Truth is, with my extensive planning, things still do not go as planned! Even when my planning largely depends on my own autonomy, I fail to follow through. But when I consider God and His planning, I get a glimpse of the seemingly impossible made possible. God gets things done exactly as He wills it. In my eyes, God is the master planner. The miraculous events that took place in Acts 2:1-4 were foretold in the Old Testament in Joel 2:28-32; centuries before Jesus appears on the scene. And in Acts 1:4-8, Jesus alluded to God pouring out His Spirit just before His ascension to heaven. As far as things are concerned for you and I, whether we are willing participants or not, God's Word will march on and His truth will be proclaimed to all nations everywhere, whether we speak the language or not. On the day of Pentecost, God displayed His immeasurable power to do exactly as He says and just how he planned it. My dear friends, it is therefore to our great benefit to seek to know the things that God has to say and to tussle with those truths until they become undeniably real to us.

*Q1. What are the areas of your life that you trust in yourself and in your planning more than you trust in God's?*

*Q2. What measurable and conscious steps can you take today to rely on God's word?*

*Q3. In what ways have you stopped trusting in God's ways and turned to some other way?*

I can only imagine how beserk the apostles were when they realized that all of these events had taken place just as Jesus promised it would just a few days prior. Talk about a confidence booster! As this point, the apostles probably felt a great deal of fulfillment knowing that their sacrificial march with Jesus was not in vain. They were witnesses. We too are witnesses. God revealed these miracles to us that we may believe and be confident that this truth will continue to march on forever and ever!

*Prayer Prompt:* Take some time to consider and acknowledge God for who He says He is. Reflect on your struggles to take God at His Word and pray to God that He may help you fight to trust Him.

## PETER HEALS A LAME MAN

Vanessa Wu

### Read Acts 3:1-10

Since coming to college in Boston, I've been able to encounter experiences with the homeless and the poor around me more vividly – something I was not really familiar with in a city like Singapore where I am originally from. I have had to learn to grow in how to approach situations like these and, till this day, I can still feel very much less equipped to respond accordingly. However, this passage stands out to me because it just simply emphasizes and reveals the heart of God – and not to focus on material aid and our own resources, which I can worry about often.

In verse 6, Peter says, “Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.”

A little earlier (v5) – Peter calls out to the man (he initiates), and the man expects to receive some material aid from him. Though Peter and John are not able to provide him with the coins, they were able to meet his needs in a different way. They had compassion on the man, they shared their love, they shared God's love – that was what they had. That is what you and I will always have. And God worked through their faith, God revealed Himself through the miracle! “...instantly the man's feet and ankles became strong.”

*Q1. As you reflect on this verse, what does this miracle reveal about the heart of God? What do you think is important here?*

*Q2. How do you allow yourself to be a vessel of God's love in your journey as a student?*

Some ideas: How can you be more like a Peter and John on campus? Are you afraid to approach students who may seem isolated from the crowd? Who are some people you may feel biased against not “needing God” in their lives?

*Q3. Do you see the opportunity to share God's love in conversations with your friends? Regardless of what is conversed at hand, what is 'expected' in the conversation, do you still realize what you can offer?*

As I go about my day at school, I can often forget the times where God places opportunities on my path to imitate his heart and deeds, and remember what I am given to share! God wants to work His power through you! We just need to take the first step.

*Prayer Prompt: Ask God to reveal to you people whom you know (and have yet to know) whom you might demonstrate Jesus' heart towards. How is your faith? You are God's hands, feet and mouth, his chosen instrument for miracles to happen! Let Him work through you daily!*

## PAUL'S CONVERSION

Zack Walters

Read **Acts 9:1-19**

Formerly known as Saul, Paul was a religious man long before he was even mentioned in the scriptures. He was a God-fearing Jew that had believed he was doing the Lord's work by killing every Christian he could, as seen in Acts 7:54-8:1. His reasoning in doing so was to seize any new religious ideology from spreading. It's not until he is journeying to Damascus to continue in these efforts where Jesus appears to him for the first time. From Acts 9 on, we see a man that so obviously had an encounter with Jesus as he becomes perhaps the most effective missionary ever to walk the earth.

*Q1. Think about where God has placed you. How can you be more of a light on your campus and to the people around you?*

After the conversion, Paul continued worshiping the same God. However, he had found a new relationship.

*Q2. How has your relationship with God evolved? When you first became a disciple, how did you look at God? How do you look at God now?*

A tool Paul often turned to when preaching to the masses was telling his testimony. See **Acts 22:2-21** and **Acts 26:12-18**.

*Q3. Don't underestimate the power of your conversion story, you were converted when you were for a reason. Have you learned how to tell your testimony? What about your conversion story is the most powerful? How can you communicate your testimony to the closest people around you that may not be disciples today?*

Jesus changes lives.

*Prayer Prompt:* Take some time to pray to God and thank him for saving you when he did. Just like Paul, we are chosen instruments for God. Pray that God can lead us to where we can be most effective for him.

## PAUL AND SILAS FREED FROM PRISON

Marquis Moore

Before continuing on, make sure to really ask God to speak to you through his word and that none of it is in vain.

*How's your prayer life? Be honest, this is YOUR relationship with God.*

What exactly is worship? (John 4:23-24, a worshiper that God seeks) True worship is to display a vast amount of adoration, love and reverence for God sincerely.

What exactly is prayer? An act of worship where we simply talk to and glorify God, reinforcing our need for him and a relationship with him.

How can we break chains or strongholds in our life with worship and prayer? It is not a matter of "IF" worship/prayer can break chains but are we wholeheartedly and sincerely going after this in our walk with God?

### Read **Acts 16:25-34**

(Verse 25) Take a look at the time of which Paul and Silas were praying and worshipping God.

Whenever or whatever the time, feel free to sing and praise God. I once learned that prayer should be like a daily persistent cough - continuous and specific (Refer to Jesus in Gethsemane)

(Verse 26-28) Keep in mind that whatever challenge, obstacle, situation, etc. presenting itself in your life will never be bigger than God. "doors flew open...everyone's chains came loose." Do you worship and pray until there is a breakthrough? Or do you just pray about something once or never worship God at all? The scripture mentions that everyone's chains came loose! Don't selfishly limit your prayer life to just yourself, it is powerful enough to help anyone.

(Verse 29) The jailer was left trembling before Paul and Silas. This verse really stands out to me because it shows that, with God, through true prayer, worship and faith, our "jailers" will fall and tremble before us.

(Verse 30-34) Jailer > Household > Baptized > Saved. Through the hymns and prayers of Paul and Silas, one man and his whole household was saved! Small yet very powerful. When we come before God to pray and worship him, whether we're expecting it or not, God can move in extraordinary ways for all of his children.

### *Questions:*

- *How is your current worship/prayer life?*
- *Are you truly in awe of God?*
- *Do you consider being at church a form of worship?*
- *Do you ever feel led to pray/worship God? (Only because someone asked you to or because others are around?)*

### *Practicals:*

- *Pray and worship God if something goes well and if it goes not so well.*
- *Pray specific prayers.*
- *Make a list of people to pray for or about.*
- *Work like it depends on you, pray like it depends on God!*
- *Find some awesome worship music that YOU connect with (Hillsong or Upperroom)*
- *Have faith and, if you have little, pray for more!*

## MIRACLES IN THE MODERN DAY

Jesse Ghoman

Often times when we think of miracles we think of the physical acts of God, like the ones we read about in Scripture. In the New Testament there was only a specific time period where God did physical miracles. In Acts 2:22 Peter says, “Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know.” God allowed Jesus and then the apostles to do physical miracles at the beginning of the church to attest that they were sent by God and therefore people should listen to their message. But the physical miracles didn’t continue for everyone, forever. Nonetheless God still has great power, great plans for our lives, and for the world. What is a miracle though? Some would say when Malcolm Butler caught the game-winning interception in Super Bowl XLIX was a miracle. See God can still do miracles in the modern day, even if they look a little different than parting the Red Sea or turning healing a man of leprosy.

### Read **John 14:12-14**

This is a verse that I think can mess us up. Because as disciples we wonder what is wrong with us, or what is wrong with God when our prayers aren’t answered and we don’t see miracles. Well I think John was probably asked this question by disciples because he later amends this and explains further what Jesus taught/meant.

### Read **1 John 5:13-15**

Sometimes when we ask God for miracles, they just aren’t in His will. We couldn’t possibly understand the working of God and all He is doing. But even still, there are many things we can ask that are within his will. And these are the times where God gives us whatever we ask for in prayer. But here’s the key we can miss today...we **MUST BELIEVE**. Miracles require faith. Sometimes we don’t have because we don’t believe, don’t ask, or don’t continue to ask faithfully. This is what made Abraham able to see God’s miracles.

### Read **Romans 4:18-24** and **James 1:5-8**

To see modern day miracles, it is imperative that we believe and not doubt. We can often be unstable as James describes. But luckily God is not unstable. “He does not change like shifting shadows.” So we must turn to Him, rely on Him, and keep turning to Him. And if we ‘just believe’ like Abraham did, we will see miracles. In the great Christmas movie ‘The Polar Express,’ Josh Groban sings an amazing song. I’ll end with those lyrics.

“Believe in what your heart is saying, hear the melody that's playing. There's no time to waste, there's so much to celebrate. Believe in what you feel inside, and give your dreams the wings to fly. You have everything you need, if you just believe.”