

***2020 Lenten Devotional:
The Teachings of Jesus Christ
On the Kingdom of God***



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***The mission of Mt. Healthy U.M.C.
is to LEAD the way to Christ
by serving others, and sharing God's Love.***

In the Christian world, the most sacred of days is Easter Sunday, the day we celebrate the resurrection of our Lord and Savior Christ Jesus. The forty days (excluding Sundays) that precede Easter is known as Lent. It is a time when Christians focus on Sacrifice (fasting), Repentance, and Preparation for a renewed relationship with God through His son Jesus.

After being baptized by His cousin John in the Jordan River, Jesus prepared for His ministry by spending forty days in the desert, fasting, praying, and being tempted by Satan. In this Lenten Devotional, we shall focus on preparation; prepare your hearts and minds to be accepting of the works and teachings of Christ.

Each day, read the Bible verse listed. Meditate on what the passage means; what is Jesus trying to teach us? Allow the meaning to influence both your mind and your heart, and make your daily prayer reflect your thankfulness for our savior and His teachings. Who else could teach us better to prepare for the coming Kingdom of God than Jesus?

This booklet contains the teachings of Jesus'. Thousands flocked to the hills and valleys to hear the Lord speak; in the next forty days, you are one of them! Hear His words, and let them speak to you. Witness the power of His Love in His actions.

Then, just as Jesus did, pray!

*May God bless you and keep you;
May the Peace of Christ Jesus,
and the power of the Holy Spirit,
envelop you and guide you every day. Amen.*

How to use this Devotional

Each day during Lent, read the scripture passage for that day. Let the message fill your heart with its meaning, and guide you in your prayers. There are questions and comments to help you find how the message speaks to you personally; use them as needed to make your daily prayers reflect your thoughts and your heartfelt desires.

There are no prescribed readings for the six Sundays during Lent; however, for those that will join in the Lenten Bible Study, use the blank pages (for Sundays) to record your thoughts and questions to the readings during the week. We will be discussing these during the study.

01 Ash Wednesday 02-26

BIBLE STUDY TEXT FOR SUNDAY 03-01

(Use page Sunday 03-01 for notes and questions)

Mark 01:14-20

14 Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, **15** and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news." **16** As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen. **17** And Jesus said to them, "Follow me and I will make you fish for people." **18** And immediately they left their nets and followed him. **19** As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets. **20** Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and followed him.

Even twenty centuries later, the words of Jesus are still true. The kingdom of God is indeed near; it is as near as your heart! Listen to your heart, for that is where the good news is written. Christ calls you; if you allow your heart to guide your actions with love and with mercy, you too will influence others by your deeds.

02 Thursday 02-27

Luke 04:16-25

16 When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the Sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, **17** and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written: **18** "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, **19** to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." **20** And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him. **21** Then he began to say to them, "Today this scripture has been fulfilled in your hearing." **22** All spoke well of him and were amazed at the gracious words that came from his mouth. They said, "Is not this Joseph's son?" **23** He said to them, "Doubtless you will quote to me this proverb, "Doctor, cure yourself! And you will say, "Do here also in your hometown the things that we have heard you did at Capernaum.'" **24** And he said, "Truly I tell you, no prophet is accepted in the prophet's hometown."

There are those people in your life that will find your spiritual transformation disingenuous. Do not be deterred! Over time, their lack of faith in the Gospel may be healed by the changes they see in you!

03 Friday 02-28

Mark 02:14-17

14 As he was walking along, he saw Levi son of Alphaeus sitting at the tax booth, and he said to him, "Follow me." And he got up and followed him. **15** And as he sat at dinner in Levi's house, many tax collectors and sinners were also sitting with Jesus and his disciples—for there were many who followed him. **16** When the scribes of the Pharisees saw that he was eating with sinners and tax collectors, they said to his disciples, "Why does he eat with tax collectors and sinners?" **17** When Jesus heard this, he said to them, "Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick; I have come to call not the righteous but sinners."

To which sinners is Jesus referring? More importantly, which sinners did he exclude? Since Jesus does not say "only these," and "never those," we must conclude that all are valued; all are loved. The primary concept of Alcoholics Anonymous is that recovery is for life. Perhaps Christianity should be viewed the same way; we are always forgiven sinners.

04 Saturday 2-29

Luke 05:33-39

33 Then they said to him, "John's disciples, like the disciples of the Pharisees, frequently fast and pray, but your disciples eat and drink." **34** Jesus said to them, "You cannot make wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is with them, can you? **35** The days will come when the bridegroom will be taken away from them, and then they will fast in those days." **36** He also told them a parable: "No one tears a piece from a new garment and sews it on an old garment; otherwise the new will be torn, and the piece from the new will not match the old. **37** And no one puts new wine into old wineskins; otherwise the new wine will burst the skins and will be spilled, and the skins will be destroyed. **38** But new wine must be put into fresh wineskins. **39** And no one after drinking old wine desires new wine, but says, "The old is good.' "

Fasting as a form of sacrifice for one's sins is a religious tradition to bring one closer to God, for favor or blessing. But God is with you, as Jesus was with his disciples, so this tradition is no longer necessary. Jesus as God in the flesh prefers relationship to religious practice.

Sunday 03-01

Notes and Questions for Bible Study

(01 Ash Wednesday 02-26)

Mark 01:14-20

05 Monday 03-02

Mark 02:23-28

23 One Sabbath he was going through the grain fields; and as they made their way his disciples began to pluck heads of grain. **24** The Pharisees said to him, "Look, why are they doing what is not lawful on the Sabbath?" **25** And he said to them, "Have you never read what David did when he and his companions were hungry and in need of food? **26** He entered the house of God, when Abiathar was high priest, and ate the bread of the Presence, which it is not lawful for any but the priests to eat, and he gave some to his companions." **27** Then he said to them, "The Sabbath was made for humankind, and not humankind for the Sabbath; **28** so the Son of Man is lord even of the Sabbath."

The Sabbath was created for the benefit of man, to give him a day of rest. To persecute the hungry for violating the law of the Sabbath is a perversion. Again, as in Saturday's reading from Luke, God prefers relationship to religious tradition.

06 Tuesday 03-03

Matthew 08:5-13

5 When he entered Capernaum, a centurion came to him, appealing to him **6** and saying, "Lord, my servant is lying at home paralyzed, in terrible distress." **7** And he said to him, "I will come and cure him." **8** The centurion answered, "Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof; but only speak the word, and my servant will be healed. **9** For I also am a man under authority, with soldiers under me; and I say to one, "Go," and he goes, and to another, "Come," and he comes, and to my slave, "Do this," and the slave does it." **10** When Jesus heard him, he was amazed and said to those who followed him, "Truly I tell you, in no one in Israel have I found such faith. **11** I tell you, many will come from east and west and will eat with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven, **12** while the heirs of the kingdom will be thrown into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." **13** And to the centurion Jesus said, "Go; let it be done for you according to your faith." And the servant was healed in that hour.

The faith of the centurion, who was an outsider, a Roman, and a gentile, was so great that Jesus commended him before his followers. How strong is your faith? "Now faith is confidence in what we hope for, and assurance about what we do not see."

Hebrews 11:1

07 Wednesday 03-04

BIBLE STUDY TEXT FOR SUNDAY 03-08

(Use page Sunday 03-08 for notes and questions.)

Luke 6:39-45

39 He also told them a parable: "Can a blind person guide a blind person? Will not both fall into a pit? **40** A disciple is not above the teacher, but everyone who is fully qualified will be like the teacher. **41** Why do you see the speck in your neighbor's eye, but do not notice the log in your own eye? **42** Or how can you say to your neighbor, "Friend, let me take out the speck in your eye," when you yourself do not see the log in your own eye? You hypocrite, first take the log out of your own eye, and then you will see clearly to take the speck out of your neighbor's eye. **43** "No good tree bears bad fruit, nor again does a bad tree bear good fruit; **44** for each tree is known by its own fruit. Figs are not gathered from thorns, nor are grapes picked from a bramble bush. **45** The good person out of the good treasure of the heart produces good, and the evil person out of evil treasure produces evil; for it is out of the abundance of the heart that the mouth speaks.

The series of images that Jesus presents are meant to make us think about our choices. When learning about God, choose your guide carefully; when tasked with teaching, be a guide who can see the destination clearly, so both guide and guided do not stumble and fail together.

08 Thursday 03-05

John 04:31-38

31 Meanwhile the disciples were urging him, "Rabbi, eat something." **32** But he said to them, "I have food to eat that you do not know about." **33** So the disciples said to one another, "Surely no one has brought him something to eat?" **34** Jesus said to them, "My food is to do the will of him who sent me and to complete his work. **35** Do you not say, 'Four months more, then comes the harvest'? But I tell you, look around you, and see how the fields are ripe for harvesting. **36** The reaper is already receiving wages and is gathering fruit for eternal life, so that sower and reaper may rejoice together. **37** For here the saying holds true, 'One sows and another reaps.' **38** I sent you to reap that for which you did not labor. Others have labored, and you have entered into their labor."

This scene in John's Gospel occurs immediately after the encounter with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well. This is the work of the Father that sustains Jesus more than earthly food. It is also an example of the harvest to which Jesus refers. When we encounter the broken or outcast of this world, and offer them the Gospel of Jesus, not only they are healed; we too are healed and sustained by the effort.

09 Friday 03-06

Luke 06:6-10

6 On another Sabbath he entered the synagogue and taught, and there was a man there whose right hand was withered. **7** The scribes and the Pharisees watched him to see whether he would cure on the Sabbath, so that they might find an accusation against him. **8** Even though he knew what they were thinking, he said to the man who had the withered hand, "Come and stand here." He got up and stood there. **9** Then Jesus said to them, "I ask you, is it lawful to do good or to do harm on the Sabbath, to save life or to destroy it?" **10** After looking around at all of them, he said to him, "Stretch out your hand." He did so, and his hand was restored.

Jesus healed the man, despite the Sabbath, for as he said earlier, that Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. How do we keep the Sabbath? Our

kids play sports; we go shopping, and do projects around the house. Do we rest? Sometimes, maybe. Next Sunday, after worship, consider spending the day in the present, with family and friends, enjoying each other for what we are; God's gifts to each of us.

10 Saturday 03-07

Mark 03:22-30

22 And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, "He has Beelzebul, and by the ruler of the demons he casts out demons." **23** And he called them to him, and spoke to them in parables, "How can Satan cast out Satan? **24** If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. **25** And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. **26** And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but his end has come. **27** But no one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his property without first tying up the strong man; then indeed the house can be plundered. **28** "Truly I tell you, people will be forgiven for their sins and whatever blasphemies they utter; **29** but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit can never have forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin"— **30** for they had said, "He has an unclean spirit."

Remember always that words have meaning and power; power to hurt, power to shame, and power to uplift. Always choose your words wisely!

Sunday 03-08

Notes and Questions for Bible Study

(07 Wednesday 03-04)

Luke 6:39-45

11 Monday 03-09

Matthew 09:01-08

1 And after getting into a boat he crossed the sea and came to his own town. **2** And just then some people were carrying a paralyzed man lying on a bed. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Take heart, son; your sins are forgiven." **3** Then some of the scribes said to themselves, "This man is blaspheming." **4** But Jesus, perceiving their thoughts, said, "Why do you think evil in your hearts? **5** For which is easier, to say, 'Your sins are forgiven,' or to say, 'Stand up and walk'? **6** But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—he then said to the paralytic—"Stand up, take your bed and go to your home." **7** And he stood up and went to his home. **8** When the crowds saw it, they were filled with awe, and they glorified God, who had given such authority to human beings.

The power to forgive is one of the outward signs Jesus used to show the people that he was sent by God. He gave that power to his apostles, so that they could do the same. The thing many of us often forget is that we have that power as well. To forgive someone can be the greatest, most liberating gift you can give, or receive. Forgiveness is an act of healing oneself, and another, at the same time. It is a power we should all try to use more often.

12 Tuesday 03-10

Luke 06:20-31

20 Then he looked up at his disciples and said: "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God. **21** Blessed are you who are hungry now, for you will be filled. Blessed are you who weep now, for you will laugh. **22** Blessed are you when people hate you, and when they exclude you, revile you, and defame you on account of the Son of Man. **23** Rejoice in that day and leap for joy, for surely your reward is great in heaven; for that is what their ancestors did to the prophets. **24** But woe to you who are rich, for you have received your consolation. **25** Woe to you who are full now, for you will be hungry. Woe to you who are laughing now, for you will mourn and weep. **26** Woe to you when all speak well of you, for that is what their ancestors did to the false prophets. **27** But I say to you that listen, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, **28** bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. **29** If anyone strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also; and from anyone who takes away your coat do not withhold even your shirt. **30** Give to everyone who begs from you; and if anyone takes away your goods, do not ask for them again. **31** Do to others, as you would have them do to you."

How beautiful are the words of our Lord describing the Kingdom of God, and the blessings of God's children?

13 Wednesday 03-11

BIBLE STUDY TEXT FOR SUNDAY 03-15

(Use page Sunday 03-15 for notes and questions.)

Matthew 10:11-15

11 "Whatever town or village you enter, find out who in it is worthy, and stay there until you leave. **12** As you enter the house, greet it. **13** If the house is worthy, let your peace come upon it; but if it is not worthy, let your peace return to you. **14** If anyone will not welcome you or listen to your words, shake off the dust from your feet as you leave that house or town. **15** Truly I tell you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah on the Day of Judgment than for that town."

To wish peace to a family, in the name and by the authority of Christ, was in effect a positive promise, on the Lord's side, of all the good implied in the wish. This was paying largely even beforehand. Whoever receives the messengers of God into his house confers the highest honor upon himself, and not upon the preacher, whose honor is from God, and who comes with the blessings of life eternal to that man and his family who receives him.

(Adam Clarke)

14 Thursday 03-12

John 06:22-29

22 The next day the crowd that had stayed on the other side of the sea saw that there had been only one boat there. They also saw that Jesus had not got into the boat with his disciples, but that his disciples had gone away alone. **23** Then some boats from Tiberias came near the place where they had eaten the bread after the Lord had given thanks. **24** So when the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they themselves got into the boats and went to Capernaum looking for Jesus. **25** When they found him on the other side of the sea, they said to him, "Rabbi, when did you come here?" **26** Jesus answered them, "Very truly, I tell you, you are looking for me, not because you saw signs, but because you ate your fill of the loaves. **27** Do not work for the food that perishes, but for the food that endures for eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. For it is on him that God the Father has set his seal." **28** Then they said to him, "What must we do to perform the works of God?" **29** Jesus answered them, "This is the work of God, that you believe in him whom he has sent."

God wills everyone to be active and diligent in the manner of work in which He has placed us; but it is also His will that that employment, and all the concerns of life, should be subservient to the interest of one's eternal soul. (Adam Clarke)

15 Friday 03-13

Mark 4:1-9

1 Again he began to teach beside the sea. Such a very large crowd gathered around him that he got into a boat on the sea and sat there, while the whole crowd was beside the sea on the land. **2** He began to teach them many things in parables, and in his teaching he said to them: **3** "Listen! A sower went out to sow. **4** And as he sowed, some seed fell on the path, and the birds came and ate it up. **5** Other seed fell on rocky ground, where it did not have much soil, and it sprang up quickly, since it had no depth of soil. **6** And when the sun rose, it was scorched; and since it had no root, it withered away. **7** Other seed fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up and choked it, and it yielded no grain. **8** Other seed fell into good soil and brought forth grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirty and sixty and a hundredfold." **9** And he said, "Let anyone with ears to hear listen!"

The seed, the Gospel of Christ, is to be spread everywhere. The hardened soil on the beaten path offers no purchase, the stony ground has neither soil nor water for nutrition, and the thorns are the concerns of the everyday life, which overshadow the power of the Word. The good soil is those who receive the Word with good and open hearts, is fertilized regularly with scripture and prayer, and thus produces for the kingdom of God. Which soil are you?

16 Saturday 03-14

John 15:1-16

1 "I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine grower. **2** He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. **3** You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you.

4 Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me.

5 I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing. **6** Whoever does not abide in me is thrown away like a branch and withers; such branches are gathered, thrown into the fire, and burned. **7** If you abide in me, and my words abide in you, ask for whatever you wish, and it will be done for you. **8** My Father is glorified by this, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples. **9** As the Father has loved

me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. **10** If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love. **11** I have said these things to you so that my joy may be in you, and that your joy may be complete. **12** "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. **13** No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends. **14** You are my friends if you do what I command you. **15** I do not call you servants any longer, because the servant does not know what the master is doing; but I have called you friends, because I have made known to you everything that I have heard from my Father. **16** You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name."

He who brings forth fruit to God's glory, according to his light and power, will have the hindrances taken away from his heart; for his very thoughts shall be cleansed by the inspiration of the Holy Ghost.

(Adam Clarke)

Sunday 03-15

Notes and Questions for Bible Study

(13 Wednesday 03-11)

Matthew 10:11-15

17 Monday 03-16

Matthew 15:10-20

10 Then he called the crowd to him and said to them, "Listen and understand: **11** it is not what goes into the mouth that defiles a person, but it is what comes out of the mouth that defiles." **12** Then the disciples approached and said to him, "Do you know that the Pharisees took offense when they heard what you said?" **13** He answered, "Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will be uprooted. **14** Let them alone; they are blind guides of the blind. And if one blind person guides another, both will fall into a pit." **15** But Peter said to him, "Explain this parable to us." **16** Then he said, "Are you also still without understanding? **17** Do you not see that whatever goes into the mouth enters the stomach, and goes out into the sewer? **18** But what comes out of the mouth proceeds from the heart, and this is what defiles. **19** For out of the heart come evil intentions, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, false witness, slander. **20** These are what defile a person, but to eat with unwashed hands does not defile."

It is not what we eat that makes us evil, but the expressions of an evil heart, both word and deed, that are the sign of a sinful heart.

18 Tuesday 03-17

Luke 6:32-38

32 "If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them.
33 If you do good to those who do good to you, what credit is that to you? For even sinners do the same.
34 If you lend to those from whom you hope to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to receive as much again. **35** But love your enemies, do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return. Your reward will be great, and you will be children of the Most High; for he is kind to the ungrateful and the wicked. **36** Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful. **37** Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven;
38 give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back."

Let your love and mercy know no bounds; for which among you deserves God's gifts less than you do?

19 Wednesday 03-18

BIBLE STUDY TEXT FOR SUNDAY 03-15

(Use page Sunday 03-22 for notes and questions.)

Matthew 18:21-35

21 Then Peter came and said to him, "Lord, if another member of the church sins against me, how often should I forgive? As many as seven times?"

22 Jesus said to him, "Not seven times, but, I tell you, seventy-seven times. **23** "For this reason the kingdom of heaven may be compared to a king who wished to settle accounts with his slaves. **24** When he began the reckoning, one who owed him ten thousand talents was brought to him; **25** and, as he could not pay, his lord ordered him to be sold, together with his wife and children and all his possessions, and payment to be made. **26** So the slave fell on his knees before him, saying, "Have patience with me, and I will pay you everything.' **27** And out of pity for him, the lord of that slave released him and forgave him the debt. **28** But that same slave, as he went out, came upon one of his fellow slaves who owed him a hundred denarii; and seizing him by the throat, he said, "Pay what you owe.' **29** Then his fellow slave fell down and pleaded with him, "Have patience with me, and I will pay you.' **30** But he refused; then he went and threw him into prison until he would pay the debt. **31** When his fellow slaves saw what had happened, they were greatly distressed, and they went and reported to their lord all that had taken place. **32** Then his lord summoned him and said to him, "You wicked slave! I forgave you all that debt because you pleaded with me. **33** Should you not have had mercy on your fellow slave, as I had mercy on you?' **34** And in anger his lord handed him over to be tortured until he would pay his entire debt. **35** So my heavenly Father will also do to every one of you, if you do not forgive your brother or sister from your heart."

If "Thy will be done" is one of the most difficult prayers to pray, and I believe at times it most definitely is, then "forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who have trespassed against us" may be the second most difficult. Being wronged is painful, as we all know. But forgiveness is the only method of relieving that pain, and only if it comes from the heart. I myself do not wish to be judged by God by the same standard that I have used to judge others!

20 Thursday 03-19

John 6:30-40

30 So they said to him, "What sign are you going to give us then, so that we may see it and believe you? What work are you performing? **31** Our ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness; as it is written, "He gave them bread from heaven to eat.' "**32** Then Jesus said to them, "Very truly, I tell you, it was not Moses who gave

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 that which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." **34** They said to him, "Sir, give us this bread always." **35** Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry, and whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. **36** But I said to you that you have seen me and yet do not believe. **37** Everything that the Father gives me will come to me, and anyone who comes to me I will never drive away; **38** for I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me. **39** And this is the will of him who sent me, that I should lose nothing of all that he has given me, but raise it up on the last day. **40** This is indeed the will of my Father, that all who see the Son and believe in him may have eternal life; and I will raise them up on the last day."

The person who believes in Jesus as the great atoning sacrifice, shall be perfectly satisfied, and never more feel misery of mind. All the guilt of his sins shall be blotted out, and his soul shall be purified unto God; and, being enabled to love him with all his heart, he shall rest, fully, supremely, and finally happy, in his God.

21 Friday 03-20

Mark 8:11-21

11 The Pharisees came and began to argue with him, asking him for a sign from heaven, to test him. **12** And he sighed deeply in his spirit and said, "Why does this generation ask for a sign? Truly I tell you, no sign will be given to this generation." **13** And he left them, and getting into the boat again, he went across to the other side. **14** Now the disciples had forgotten to bring any bread; and they had only one loaf with them in the boat. **15** And he cautioned them, saying, "Watch out—beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and the yeast of Herod." **16** They said to one another, "It is because we have no bread." **17** And becoming aware of it, Jesus said to them, "Why are you talking about having no bread? Do you still not perceive or understand? Are your hearts hardened? **18** Do you have eyes, and fail to see? Do you have ears, and fail to hear? And do you not remember? **19** When I broke the five loaves for the five thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you collect?" They said to him, "Twelve." **20** "And the seven for the four thousand, how many baskets full of broken pieces did you collect?" And they said to him, "Seven." **21** Then he said to them, "Do you not yet understand?"

How often do we lose sight of our faith and allow the concerns of daily life to command our attention, as the disciples did in the story? If we are to be part of the kingdom of God, we must become more spiritual in nature than we are now.

22 Saturday 03-21

Matthew 16:21-28

21 From that time on, Jesus began to show his disciples that he must go to Jerusalem and undergo great suffering at the hands of the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and on the third day be raised. **22** And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him, saying, "God forbid it, Lord! This must never happen to you." **23** But he turned and said to Peter, "Get behind me, Satan! You are a stumbling block to me; for you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things." **24** Then Jesus told his disciples, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. **25** For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it. **26** For what will it profit them if they gain the whole world but forfeit their life? Or what will they give in return for their life? **27** "For the Son of Man is to come with his angels in the glory of his Father, and then he will repay everyone for what has been done. **28** Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the Son of Man coming in his kingdom."

Maybe it is a matter of perspective; we typically think of our lives as the time spent between birth and death. We rarely even consider our time in the womb before our birth. Yet if we imagine our lives as eternal, then our time in this body is as short as the gestation in the womb.

Sunday 03-22

Notes and Questions for Bible Study

(19 Wednesday 03-18)

Matthew 18:21-35

23 Monday 03-23

John 6:41-51

41 Then the Jews began to complain about him because he said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." **42** They were saying, "Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, 'I have come down from heaven'?" **43** Jesus answered them, "Do not complain among yourselves. **44** No one can come to me unless drawn by the Father who sent me; and I will raise that person up on the last day. **45** It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to me. **46** Not that anyone has seen the Father except the one who is from God; he has seen the Father. **47** Very truly, I tell you, whoever believes has eternal life. **48** I am the bread of life. **49** Your ancestors ate the manna in the wilderness, and they died. **50** This is the bread that comes down from heaven, so that one may eat of it and not die. **51** I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Whoever eats of this bread will live forever; and the bread that I will give for the life of the world is my flesh."

God draws man by showing him the Savior whom he has provided; man feels himself a lost sinner; and, through the desire to escape hell, and get to heaven, he comes unto Christ, that he may be justified by his blood.

24 Tuesday 03-24

Luke 7:20-23

20 When the men had come to him, they said, "John the Baptist has sent us to you to ask, 'Are you the one who is to come, or are we to wait for another?'" **21** Jesus had just then cured many people of diseases, plagues, and evil spirits, and had given sight to many who were blind. **22** And he answered them, "Go and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind receive their sight, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have good news brought to them. **23** And blessed is anyone who takes no offense at me."

The question in this story is: did John ask this for himself in a moment of weakened faith, or for the benefit of his followers?

25 Wednesday 03-25

BIBLE STUDY TEXT FOR SUNDAY 03-29

(Use page Sunday 03-15 for notes and questions.)

Matthew 20:24-28

24 When the ten heard it, they were angry with the two brothers. **25** But Jesus called them to him and said, "You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones are tyrants over them. **26** It will not be so among you; but whoever wishes to be great among you must be your servant, **27** and whoever wishes to be first among you must be your slave; **28** just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many."

*Lord God; instill in me a desire to serve others,
just as my Lord Jesus instructed; Amen.*

26 Thursday 03-26

Luke 7:24-35

24 When John's messengers had gone, Jesus began to speak to the crowds about John: "What did you go out into the wilderness to look at? A reed shaken by the wind? **25** What then did you go out to see? Someone dressed in soft robes? Look, those who put on fine clothing and live in luxury are in royal palaces. **26** What then did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more than a prophet. **27** This is the one about whom it is written, "See, I am sending my messenger ahead of you, who will prepare your way before you.' **28** I tell you, among those born of women no one is greater than John; yet the least in the kingdom of God is greater than he." **29** (And all the people who heard this, including the tax collectors, acknowledged the justice of God, because they had been baptized with John's baptism. **30** But by refusing to be baptized by him, the Pharisees and the lawyers rejected God's purpose for themselves.) **31** "To what then will I compare the people of this generation, and what are they like? **32** They are like children sitting in the marketplace and calling to one another, "We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we wailed, and you did not weep.' **33** For John the Baptist has come eating no bread and drinking no wine, and you say, "He has a demon'; **34** the Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, "Look, a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!" **35** Nevertheless, wisdom is vindicated by all her children."

Jesus is the fulfillment of many of the prophecies in the Old Testament, as well as those of John; he is the promised messiah.

27 Friday 03-27

Matthew 18:1-7

1 At that time the disciples came to Jesus and asked, "Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?" **2** He called a child, whom he put among them, **3** and said, "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. **4** Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. **5** Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me. **6** If any of you put a stumbling block before one of these little ones who believe in me, it would be better for you if a great millstone were fastened around your neck and you were drowned in the depth of the sea. **7** Woe to the world because of stumbling blocks! Occasions for stumbling are bound to come, but woe to the one by whom the stumbling block comes!"

No greater wrong can be done, than to prevent or inhibit someone who wishes to come to and accept Jesus, and thus the Father.

28 Saturday 03-28

Mark 10:17-31

17 As he was setting out on a journey, a man ran up and knelt before him, and asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

18 Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good?"

No one is good but God alone. **19** You know the commandments: You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; You shall not defraud; Honor your father and mother.' " **20** He said to him, "Teacher, I have kept all these since my youth."

21 Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said, "You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me." **22** When he heard this, he was shocked and went away grieving, for he had many possessions. **23** Then Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!" **24** And the disciples were perplexed at these words. But Jesus said to them again, "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! **25** It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God." **26** They were greatly astounded and said to one another, "Then who can be saved?" **27** Jesus looked at them and said, "For mortals it is impossible, but not for God; for God all things are possible." **28** Peter began to say to him, "Look, we have left everything and followed you."

29 Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields, for my sake and for the sake of the good news, **30** who will not receive a hundredfold now in this age—houses,

brothers and sisters, mothers and children, and fields, with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life. **31** But many who are first will be last, and the last will be first."

What you accumulate in this life is not the true measure; what you do, and how you love your neighbor is the key to eternal life.

Sunday 03-29

Notes and Questions for Bible Study

(25 Wednesday 03-25)

Matthew 20:24-28

29 Monday 03-30

Matthew 21:18-22

18 In the morning, when he returned to the city, he was hungry. **19** And seeing a fig tree by the side of the road, he went to it and found nothing at all on it but leaves. Then he said to it, "May no fruit ever come from you again!" And the fig tree withered at once. **20** When the disciples saw it, they were amazed, saying, "How did the fig tree wither at once?" **21** Jesus answered them, "Truly I tell you, if you have faith and do not doubt, not only will you do what has been done to the fig tree, but even if you say to this mountain, 'Be lifted up and thrown into the sea,' it will be done. **22** Whatever you ask for in prayer with faith, you will receive."

Jesus is obviously teaching the disciples about faith. Has anyone ever tried to teach you faith? Did it work? Have you learned more about faith from a teacher, or from your own observations and experiences?

30 Tuesday 03-31

Mark 12:13-17

13 Then they sent to him some Pharisees and some Herodians to trap him in what he said. **14** And they came and said to him, "Teacher, we know that you are sincere, and show deference to no one; for you do not regard people with partiality, but teach the way of God in accordance with truth. Is it lawful to pay taxes to the emperor, or not? **15** Should we pay them, or should we not?" But knowing their hypocrisy, he said to them, "Why are you putting me to the test? Bring me a denarius and let me see it." **16** And they brought one. Then he said to them, "Whose head is this, and whose title?" They answered, "The emperor's." **17** Jesus said to them, "Give to the emperor the things that are the emperor's, and to God the things that are God's." And they were utterly amazed at him.

*Consider the following: What do you give to God?
What things does Jesus believe belong to God?
Are they the same things?*

31 Wednesday 04-01

BIBLE STUDY TEXT FOR SUNDAY 03-15

(Use page Sunday 04-05 for notes and questions.)

John 13:1-7

1 Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end.

2 The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during supper **3** Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, **4** got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. **5** Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him. **6** He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" **7** Jesus answered, "You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand."

How do you understand this act of Jesus? Is this just a ritual of cleansing, or something more? In your prayers today, try to imagine Peter's emotions as Jesus washed his feet, and then pray from that humbled emotion.

32 Thursday 04-02

John 14:1-7

1 "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me. **2** In my Father's house there are many dwelling places. If it were not so, would I have told you that I go to prepare a place for you? **3** And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also. **4** And you know the way to the place where I am going." **5** Thomas said to him, "Lord, we do not know where you are going. How can we know the way?" **6** Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. **7** If you know me, you will know my Father also. From now on you do know him and have seen him."

Think about the places, people, or events, where you have "seen" God. Remember the emotions it invoked within your heart; now, make your prayers for today.

33 Friday 04-03

John 14:8-14

8 Philip said to him, "Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied." **9** Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and you still do not know me? Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, "Show us the Father"? **10** Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I say to you I do not speak on my own; but the Father who dwells in me does his works. **11** Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; but if you do not, then believe me because of the works themselves. **12** Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. **13** I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. **14** If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it."

Is there a more powerful passage for the modern day reader of John's Gospel? It is a statement that should not be taken lightly! Consider carefully what you should ask for in Jesus' name.

34 Saturday 04-04

Luke 7:36-50

36 One of the Pharisees asked Jesus to eat with him, and he went into the Pharisee's house and took his place at the table. **37** And a woman in the city, who was a sinner, having learned that he was eating in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster jar of ointment. **38** She stood behind him at his feet, weeping, and began to bathe his feet

with her tears and to dry them with her hair. Then she continued kissing his feet and anointing them with the ointment. **39** Now when the Pharisee who had invited him saw it, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would have known who and what kind of woman this is who is touching him—that she is a sinner." **40** Jesus spoke up and said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." "Teacher," he replied, "speak." **41** "A certain creditor had two debtors; one owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. **42** When they could not pay, he canceled the debts for both of them. Now which of them will love him more?" **43** Simon answered, "I suppose the one for whom he canceled the greater debt." And Jesus said to him, "You have judged rightly." **44** Then turning toward the woman, he said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave me no water for my feet, but she has bathed my feet with her tears and dried them with her hair. **45** You gave me no kiss, but from the time I came in she has not stopped kissing my feet. **46** You did not anoint my head with oil, but she has anointed my feet with ointment. **47** Therefore, I tell you, her sins, which were many, have been forgiven; hence she has shown great love. But the one to whom little is forgiven, loves little." **48** Then he said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." **49** But those who were at the table with him began to say among themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?" **50** And he said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

Why was the woman crying? Have you ever felt as she does? Center yourself, heart and mind, on her emotion before you make your prayers today.

Sunday 04-05

Notes and Questions for Bible Study

(31 Wednesday 04-01)

John 13:1-7

35 Monday 04-06

Matthew 21:28-31

28 "What do you think? A man had two sons; he went to the first and said, 'Son, go and work in the vineyard today.' **29** He answered, 'I will not'; but later he changed his mind and went. **30** The father went to the second and said the same; and he answered, 'I go, sir'; but he did not go. **31** Which of the two did the will of his father?" They said, "The first." Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, the tax collectors and the prostitutes are going into the kingdom of God ahead of you.

This is ultimately a lesson in the truth of deeds over words. We all have moments of weakness; pray for forgiveness. Let your actions speak louder than your words.

36 Tuesday 04-07

Mark 12:18-27

18 Some Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to him and asked him a question, saying, **19** "Teacher, Moses wrote for us that if a man's brother dies, leaving a wife but no child, the man shall marry the widow and raise up children for his brother. **20** There were seven brothers; the first married and, when he died, left no children; **21** and the second married the widow and died, leaving no children; and the third likewise; **22** none of the seven left children. Last of all, the woman herself died. **23** In the resurrection whose wife will she be? For the seven had married her." **24** Jesus said to them, "Is not this the reason you are wrong, that you know neither the scriptures nor the power of God? **25** For when they rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven. **26** And as for the dead being raised, have you not read in the book of Moses, in the story about the bush, how God said to him, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? **27** He is God not of the dead, but of the living; you are quite wrong."

The God of the living wants to be in a relationship with you! He wants you to tell Him your fears, ask for your needs, and give thanks for the blessings He bestows upon you; now and forever, Amen.

37 Wednesday 04-08

John 14:15-21

15 "If you love me, you will keep my commandments. **16** And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. **17** This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows

him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you. **18** "I will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you. **19** In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me; because I live, you also will live. **20** On that day you will know that I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you.

21 They who have my commandments and keep them are those who love me; and those who love me will be loved by my Father, and I will love them and reveal myself to them."

The Spirit of Truth is with us always. It is the voice in our heads that tells us we should do something we would not have done otherwise. It is the voice that says forgive this one, or show love to that one. What has the Spirit told you lately?

38 Thursday 04-09

Luke 8:43-48

43 Now there was a woman who had been suffering from hemorrhages for twelve years; and though she had spent all she had on physicians, no one could cure her. **44** She came up behind him and touched the fringe of his clothes, and immediately her hemorrhage stopped. **45** Then Jesus asked, "Who touched me?" When all denied it, Peter said, "Master, the crowds surround you and press in on you." **46** But Jesus said, "Someone touched me; for I noticed that power had gone out from me."

47 When the woman saw that she could not remain hidden, she came trembling; and falling down before him, she declared in the presence of all the people why she had touched him, and how she had been immediately healed. **48** He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has made you well; go in peace."

After all the miracles and healings that Jesus performed, we can assume that he would have cured the woman had she just asked. This is what God wants; He wants us to trust Him enough to ask for his blessings. Reflect on this as you prepare to pray today.

39 Friday 04-10

John 14:22-31

22 Judas (not Iscariot) said to him, "Lord, how is it that you will reveal yourself to us, and not to the world?" **23** Jesus answered him, "Those who love me will keep my word, and my Father will love them, and we will come to them and make our home with them. **24** Whoever does not love me does not keep my words; and the word that you hear is not mine, but is from the Father who sent me. **25** "I have said these things to you while I am still with you. **26** But the Advocate, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you everything, and

remind you of all that I have said to you. **27** Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid. **28** You heard me say to you, 'I am going away, and I am coming to you.' If you loved me, you would rejoice that I am going to the Father, because the Father is greater than I. **29** And now I have told you this before it occurs, so that when it does occur, you may believe. **30** I will no longer talk much with you, for the ruler of this world is coming. He has no power over me;

31 but I do as the Father has commanded me, so that the world may know that I love the Father. Rise; let us be on our way.

The advocate, of whom Jesus speaks, has a still and quiet voice. To hear his words, one must become quiet and still and listen carefully. That is the hallmark of meditation and prayer; it is the careful listening that follows the heartfelt asking.

40 Saturday 04-11

John 15:17-27

17 I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another. **18** "If the world hates you, be aware that it hated me before it hated you. **19** If you belonged to the world, the world would love you as its own. Because you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world—therefore the world hates you. **20** Remember the word that I said to you, 'Servants are not greater than their master.' If they persecuted me, they will persecute you; if they kept my word, they will keep yours also. **21** But they will do all these things to you on account of my name, because they do not know him who sent me. **22** If I had not come and spoken to them, they would not have sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin. **23** Whoever hates me hates my Father also. **24** If I had not done among them the works that no one else did, they would not have sin. But now they have seen and hated both me and my Father. **25** It was to fulfill the word that is written in their law, 'They hated me without a cause.' **26** "When the Advocate comes, whom I will send to you from the Father, the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, he will testify on my behalf. **27** You also are to testify because you have been with me from the beginning.

Today, thank God for the testimony you can give of the power of our living God. Remember, what you have seen, and what you have known, is your testimony to share with the world, so they too will know the power of our God!

Because God loves us so much, He has given us free will, the ability to choose between right from wrong. God already knows that while we could choose His path, some of us will choose otherwise and sin against Him. The pain of a loving parent, who watches a child make a bad decision, or a series of them, may

be the only comparison our earthly experience can offer. Of course the parent still loves the child as much as before, but the errant child will be somewhat out of favor with the parent until that child repents. It is the same with God. He still loves us so very much, but realizes we cannot repent for all we have done. God does not like the void that has come between Him and His children, and offers a sacrifice for our sins. God offers the life and death of His son Jesus as the sacrificial lamb, to atone for our sins. Yet even God cannot assign this task; Christ has the same free will that we do. Jesus had to be willing to do this; He had to choose to submit to the will of God, and He did so out of love.

We have been given a gift. Because of Christ Jesus, we have the ability to step past that void between God and us, and dwell in His Grace. All we have to do is accept the forgiveness of Jesus Christ, as a result of the Resurrection.

We have been given another gift as well. Beyond forgiveness, we have been given the opportunity to serve this loving and holy God, just as Christ did. To that end, it is the hope and prayer of all at Mt. Healthy U.M.C., that the past forty days of prayer and meditation have been influenced by the Holy Spirit, and have brought you closer to God. We prayed this together before you ever saw this program, and we know that it is given, for we asked in the name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.



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Sunday School: 8:45 AM
Sunday Worship Service: 10 AM
Church Office Hours:
Wednesday, 9 AM-12 PM and Thursday, 9 AM-4 PM
Weather Emergency:
When the Mt. Healthy City Schools are closed,
the church office is closed. (Check local T.V. closings list)

We support the Mt. Healthy Alliance Food Pantry:
7717 Harrison Avenue; 521-3700; www.mthealthyalliance.org
Mon., 11 AM-1 PM; Tues., 5 PM-7 PM; Thur., 9 AM-12 PM; Sat., 9 AM-12 PM
Serving 45231
Mailing Address for the Mt. Healthy Alliance:
P.O. Box 31028; Mt. Healthy, Ohio; 45231

*The mission of Mt. Healthy United Methodist Church is to
LEAD the way to Christ by serving others and sharing God's love.*