

Love: How do these devotions teach about the love of God and the love for one another?

Learn: What have you learned about where Jesus walked

that helps you with where you walk?

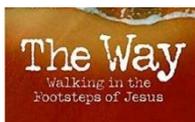
Share: What key insights have you learned this week on how to share your faith with others?

Serve: Look at the prayer list. Who can you pray for? Who needs a little extra help in an area where you can make a difference?

Healing Strength: Rex Townsend, Chris Osborn (Ken and Sandy Grubb's daughter), Janet Coons (Donna's daughter)

Homebound: Mary Hicks, Mary Schmidt, Joann Young, Jeanne Carman

Military Personnel: Adam Walters, Joseph Roberts, Lucas Lamkin, Adam Clark



MONDAY 3.7.16 Luke 5:10-12 Jesus made Capernaum, on the Sea of Galilee's shoreline, the center of his ministry. It made sense that most of his followers came from that area. But his vision always reached farther than any one location. He asked

the first disciples to "push into the deep water," pointing toward the ultimate task he had for them. "Fishing for people" would push them into the deep waters of a whole world filled with suffering and spiritual hunger. "When Simon Peter saw the catch, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, "Leave me, Lord, for I'm a sinner!" (verse 8) When did you most vividly realize, "God is God—and I'm not"? Did you feel any fear, as Peter seems to have in this passage? Did you take in Jesus' reassurance: "Don't be afraid" (verse 10)? How has realizing who God is, who you are, and who God wants to be in your life changed things for you?

TUESDAY 3.8.16 Matthew 17:24-27 All Jewish men paid a yearly tax for the Temple's costs (furnishings, special vestments, rituals). Roman emperors and their families, like most monarchs, never paid taxes they levied on others. Jesus had a similar relationship with the Temple—he called it "my Father's house" (Luke 2:49). He paid the Temple tax in a way that gave Peter, and later Christians, a valuable model of trust in God's sustaining power and of good citizenship. When the Jerusalem Temple was destroyed in 70AD, Rome forced Jews to pay the Temple tax anyway—to a pagan temple in Rome! This included the Jewish Christians for whom Matthew probably wrote his gospel. Yet refusing would have caused more cruelty and persecution, with no positive effect on Rome's attitude. Peter, maybe recalling this story, urged Christians to "honor the Emperor" (see 1 Peter 2:13-17) if they didn't have to give up their faith in doing so. Does Jesus' example in paying that tax say anything to us today, in very different conditions? In what parts of life can you live out your Christian convictions and "honor the Emperor"?

WEDNESDAY 3.9.16 Mark 6:33-52 In Galilee, it was hard for Jesus and his disciples to find privacy. (Though often called a "sea," the body of water in Galilee is a

relatively small lake of about 120 square miles. By contrast, Lake Michigan covers 22,400 square miles.) Jesus caringly used his power to feed a large crowd in a remote place. Even after seeing that, though, the disciples still didn't seem to think Jesus could help them when the weather on the lake turned against them. They'd helped Jesus feed the crowd, yet the disciples were terrified to see him walking on water (verse 50). Despite what they'd seen, their thoughts were limited to the "normalcies" of daily life. Mark said "they hadn't understood about the loaves" (verse 52). In what parts of your life do you find it hard to trust that God's power can make any real difference? What keeps you from "understanding about the loaves"?

THURSDAY 2.10.16 Matthew 14:22-33 Matthew's story sounded almost exactly like the one we read in Mark yesterday—until Peter spoke up. He showed that mix of faith and doubt most of us wrestle with at times: "Lord, if it's you, order me to come to you on the water." Then he was striding across the water! It worked until he let the wind distract him and his fear took over. "As he began to sink, he shouted, 'Lord, rescue me!'" And Jesus did. The story starts with a sense of urgency: "Right then, Jesus made the disciples get into the boat" (verse 22). Many scholars believe it was to avoid a move to forcibly declare Jesus a military leader and king (John 6:15). What issues or situations do you face that require you to take urgent action in order to stay in tune with God's will for you?

FRIDAY 2.11.16 Mark 4:35-41 This passage evoked the famous Old Testament story of Jonah (see Jonah 1-2). In each, a storm blew, while the main character slept. But Jonah was running from God, while Jesus slept in peace and trust. When the disciples asked, "Don't you care that we're drowning?" (verse 38), Jesus (being God in the flesh) calmed the storm. They were amazed. Only God could calm the sea's stormy chaos (Jeremiah 5:22). This miracle further revealed and affirmed Jesus' identity as Messiah. Think of one major life "storm" you've experienced. How did you make it through that experience? Did you have a sense Jesus was "in the boat" with you to guide, comfort, and help bring you peace? How has that experience impacted your relationship with God, and shaped the person you are today?

SATURDAY 2.12.16 Mark 5:1-20 Mark said that right after calming the storm on the Sea of Galilee, Jesus went to its eastern shore where mainly Gentiles lived. He found himself facing a man whose life was torn apart by terrible inner storms. Jesus healed the man, cast out his demons, and brought calm and peace to his storm-tossed life. When the transformed man sought a mission, Jesus told him to "Go home to your own people and tell them what the Lord has done for you and how he has shown you mercy." As *The New Interpreter's Bible* puts it, the man became Jesus' "first Gentile missionary." Where do you most need wholeness, healing and hope in place of inner or outer "storms"? In what ways, directly or through human instruments, do you believe Jesus' power is available for you, just as it was for the man in today's story? What abilities and possessions is God calling you to put at his disposal, so that you can become a channel of blessing to others facing life's storms? How could a deeper involvement in God's healing mission bring new freedom and purpose to your life?