

“The Follow Jesus Project”

Monday, July 13

Scriptures to read: Matthew 14:22-31, Mark 6:45-50, John 6:14-20
1 John 5:4

Thoughts to consider:

After Jesus performed the miracles (including the feeding of the 5000), the multitude wanted to make Jesus a king. They misunderstood the nature of Jesus' mission and kingdom. Jesus sent the apostles across the Sea of Galilee in a boat and dismissed the crowd. He went away for a time of solitude and meditation. The sea is six miles across. A storm had arisen. Jesus walked on the water and went to the disciples about midway of the sea. After they recognized Him, Peter asked to walk on the water also. After a bit, Peter shifted his focus from Jesus to the boisterous waves and fear destroyed his faith. As Peter began to sink he cried out, “Lord, save me!” We must keep our eyes on Jesus too when the storms of life seem to overtake us. If we walk with Jesus, we should not have fear.

Tuesday, July 14

Scriptures to read: Matthew 14:32-33, Mark 6:51- 52, John 6:21

Thoughts to consider:

As soon as Jesus and Peter entered the boat, the wind died down and they reached shore. The apostles were amazed. Do you find this hard to believe? Only a few months previously, Jesus had stilled the wind and the waves. For the first time the apostles used the full title, the Son of God, in addressing Jesus. Faith grows and worship is the product of that faith. When we really trust our lives with Jesus, a peace enters our souls. Probably there will never be worldwide peace between nations on this earth. Do you have the peace that passes understanding in your heart?

Wednesday, July 15

Scriptures to read: John 6:25-69, Hebrews 11:6

Thoughts to consider:

The multitude did not understand Jesus' purpose and mission. Many followed Him for what He did and not who He was. They wanted a wonder-worker. Jesus' works authenticated His mission. Jesus repeatedly affirmed His divine origin: “came down from Heaven.” It is God's will that all who believe in Jesus should have everlasting life. Every soul that fails to feed on Jesus will suffer spiritual malnutrition. Many were not ready to receive life in the way Jesus taught—is it any different today? Christ knows not only what we do, but why we do it. When Jesus said, “I am the bread of life,” He was using a metaphor. A metaphor is a figure of speech in which a word or phrase that ordinarily designated one thing is used to designate another. See if you can find six other “I am...” passages. Hint: they are all in the Gospel of John.

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Thursday, July 16

Scriptures to read: Matthew 15:21-28, Mark 7:24-30

Thoughts to consider:

The Phoenicians lived along the Mediterranean coast north of Mt. Carmel and west of northern Galilee. Phoenicia belonged to Syria at that time and is now modern Lebanon. The people there were considered Greek because of their culture. Jesus did not go into that territory to preach, teach or heal. Apparently He wanted some private time with the apostles. This Canaanite woman was desperate for healing for her daughter. She used a Messianic title for Jesus; she was persistent; she worshiped Jesus. This is the only time in Mark's gospel that Jesus is addressed as Lord. It is noteworthy that the two most notable for their faith— this woman and the centurion—were both Gentile. Although it appears that Jesus was rude to the woman and a racist, He indicated that the Gospel was to be given first to the Jews. The short fervent prayer, "Lord, help me," is sometimes the most appropriate one we can offer.

Friday, July 17

Scriptures to read: Matthew 16:13-16, Mark 8:27-30, Luke 9:18-20

Thoughts to consider:

We should not confuse Caesarea Philippi with Caesarea on the Mediterranean coast. Caesarea Philippi was located near Mt. Hermon (today's Golan Heights) about 25 miles north of the Sea of Galilee. It was named for Philip (a son of Herod) and the Roman emperor Caesar. When Jesus asked these questions of His apostles, they had been with Him for about 2 ½ years. There were two questions: 1) Who do people say I am? (what is the popular opinion); 2) Who do you say I am? Peter, speaking for the apostles, gave the complete and perfect answer. Jesus is the Messiah—the anointed one—the Christ. He is not just the deliverer or king as previously thought. As Christ, this denotes His office. Jesus is the Son of God, denoting His divinity. A shorter form uses the term Christ, of God. Even today many people think that Jesus was a prophet—a good man. Unless we accept Jesus as the Christ, the Son of God, we are calling Him a liar because He made this claim for Himself.

Saturday, July 18

Scriptures to read: Matthew 16:17-20, Acts 2:36-39
Acts 10:43-48, Ephesians 2:19-22, 1 Peter 2:4-8

Thoughts to consider:

There is confusion as to the words spoken to Peter after the Good Confession. Two words are used: petros (masculine) for Peter and petra (feminine) for rock or stone. One view is that the church is built upon Peter. This is incorrect. The church is built upon the confession made by Peter and all others. Christ himself is the chief cornerstone. This is the first reference to the church. We can equate it to the kingdom. Note that Jesus says that He (Jesus) is the builder. He uses future tense. The church will be built. We know that Peter used the keys to open the doors of the church on the Day of Pentecost. Seven years later he used the keys to open the door to the Gentiles. We have the invitation to enter that kingdom.

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