

Sunday, March 17, 2013

Read Mark 4:1-20

Reflect Crowds were following Jesus. Jesus got into a boat so he could teach the crowds gathered on the shore. Jesus taught using parables that some could understand and some could not understand. Jesus explained to the twelve why he was teaching in parables.

Pray Praise God for the way God not only loves us, but the way God communicates that love to us. Thank God for the way Jesus interacted with people. Thank God for the way Jesus taught in ways that sincere and open hearts could understand. Express your love to God and declare your desire to listen and understand.

Exercise Having crowds follow Jesus could have easily “gone to his head.” Jesus could have been lured into the trap of craving crowds to validate him. Jesus doesn’t view crowds of people as validation and doesn’t want the twelve to, either. Jesus explains some will continue following and will experience life change while others will not. Take time to ponder this: Is your view of church more concerned with crowds or life change?

Monday, March 18, 2013

Read Mark 4:21-34

Reflect Jesus tells three stories to communicate to people on a level they can understand. Consider what Jesus is saying about the source of growth in the kingdom. What causes growth and expansion of the kingdom?

Pray Give thanks to God for the patient way by which God communicates to people. Tell God what is on your heart -- the things that give you life and the things that drain you.

Exercise Take note how important it is to Jesus to communicate with others in a way they can understand. Are you intentional in ways you communicate with others? Do you consider their ability to hear as much as what you want to say? Listen carefully.

Tuesday, March 19, 2013

Read Mark 4:35-41

Reflect Jesus and his disciples left the crowds to go to the other side of the water. Jesus took a nap. The weather turned severe. The disciples feared for their lives. Jesus stilled the storm before confronting the disciples’ fear and questioning their faith.

Pray Thank God for Jesus. Express your wonder at Jesus’s ability to calm the wind and waters. Confess your fears to God. Ask God to increase your faith.

Exercise What are your fears? Make a list of situations, problems, actions, and people who bring fear to your mind and heart. With your list in hand, read the story again. Allow the reaction of the disciples (“Who is this? Even the wind and the waves obey him!”) to encourage your faith.

Wednesday, March 20, 2013

Read Mark 5:1-20

Reflect Jesus encounters a man with an impure spirit who lived among the tombs, could not be restrained by people or chains, cried out, and cut himself with stones. The story concludes with the man telling everyone about his encounter with Jesus.

Pray Ask God to give you an opportunity to tell people how God has changed you or walked with you through a difficult time.

Exercise Remember a time when God walked with you through a difficult, even impossible situation? When God changed your life? Prepare a brief summary of that story (5-7 sentences) so that you can share with others when opportunity arises.

Thursday, March 21, 2013

Read Mark 5:21-43

Reflect Jairus fell at Jesus’s feet and pleaded for his help. The problem? His daughter was dead. A woman heard about Jesus

and reached out for his help. Her problem? She had been bleeding for twelve years and spent all she had seeking a cure.

Pray Pray about seemingly impossible situations. Pray about chronic, seemingly impossible problems. Give thanks to the God who responds even if you turn to Jesus as a last resort.

Exercise What situation has you feeling at the end of your rope? Don't be paralyzed by fear. Cry out to God. Reach out to God.

Friday, March 22, 2013

Read Mark 6:1-13

Reflect Jesus teaches crowds who follow him, those who gather in the synagogue, and the twelve who travel with him. How important is teamwork and community to Jesus?

Pray Give thanks to God for those who walk with you during challenging times. Give thanks for those who partner with you in kingdom work.

Exercise "If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together." Find a partner to work with in whatever you are doing to serve the church. Or, offer to partner with someone else in whatever they are doing to serve the church.

Saturday, March 23, 2013

Read Genesis 2:1-3, Deuteronomy 5:15

Reflect We think of Sabbath as being part of the Old Testament law. We need to remember that God set out the idea of Sabbath rest long before the law. While we are not under Sabbath laws as Christians, we have opportunity to imitate God in our rest.

Pray Give thanks for God's creative powers. Give thanks for God's example of resting. Give thanks for God working to make us holy.

Exercise Slow it down for a day. Take a break from rushing around. Do something fun. Something refreshing. Something to recharge your batteries. Rest from your work.



*Readings, prayers, and exercises to stimulate growth
and enjoyment in living*

The New Life



Part 6, March 17-23, 2013