

## 90 DAYS THROUGH THE GOSPELS:

A Prayer - Care – Share Scripture Journey with Jesus

by Kathy Branzell

### **Introduction and Invitation**

#### 90 Days Through the Gospels: A Prayer-Care-Share Scripture Journey with Jesus

Welcome to the year 2020 and “90 Days Through the Gospels: Journeying with Jesus to Prayer-Care-Share.” How fitting to begin this year by saturating ourselves in the supremacy of Jesus by reading and learning His Words, will, ways, commands and promises written for us in the gospel scriptures. Many of you may have made a commitment or “resolution” to read your Bible every day and pray; this journey will help to make that hope a habit this year. We are so humbled and grateful that you joined us on this journey.

This is going to be an amazing journey that will help you live out life as a disciple-maker. Whether in a synagogue, by the sea, or walking down the street; Jesus modeled how to love God, love our neighbor and share the Good news of salvation. We can show love and make disciples every day, along the way to wherever we are going or whatever we are doing by following Jesus’ example. The gospels tell us that as Jesus was “passing through,” “on his way to do...”, or sitting on the shore enjoying the view; He prayed, He cared, and He shared the Kingdom message of salvation.

This journey was written to show us how simple it can be to be a disciple-maker every day by following Jesus’ model that is recorded in every chapter of the gospels. Every day you will read one chapter of the gospels beginning with Matthew and a short devotional prompt of how you can pray, care and share based on that chapter. It is simple to share the love and message of Jesus every day; giving help and hope to those who need it. A simple, “How are you doing?” can open an entire conversation that will teach you how to pray and how to care for them – sharing the message of Jesus will change them forever. Your life; your attitude, affection, availability, and affirmation will help show them what it looks like to be a follower of Jesus Christ. Please pray with us and read Isaiah 9:1-7; looking forward to the coming Christ as we look forward to beginning our gospel journey in Matthew 1.

Prayer: Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace – I look forward to what You will do; what You will teach me, and the doors You will open for me to share Your love and message on our journey with You these next 90 days. I commit to be faithful in this journey. I want You to saturate my life with Your Word and Your purpose. I seek to know You and make You known: be glorified in my life. Help me to focus – to give you my full attention as I read – and teach me to live a prayer-care-share lifestyle so that I can be Your witness, sharing Your love and message everywhere and every day.

## **Mark 1**

**Prayer:** Jesus, You made time in prayer with Your Father a priority; from very early before dawn to late at night after a full day You would go and pray alone. I want to spend more time with You in prayer. Help me to remember that people were searching desperately for You. Your disciples were urging You to come do this or that, but You prayed. If prayer was more important than what people expected from You – if it was a vital part of Your schedule before, after and throughout the business of Your day – help me to remember that my time and my day is certainly not more valuable than Yours. Help me to remember that I need Your guidance, strength, wisdom and Word in my heart and on my mind before I leap into a full day of people, places, plans and projects. Do not let me settle for excuses but summon me to always saturate my days in prayer.

**Care:** Jesus' fame spread so widely and rapidly that He could no longer stay in homes and towns but had to go to desolate places where people chased and reached out for Him, everywhere He went. Jesus gave up the glory of heaven to come save us and then gave up the comforts of earth in order to preach and teach. Caring for others usually takes a sacrifice, sometimes great sacrifice. Being a foster parent, senior care, disaster relief, respite care volunteer; all of these can mean urgent, unplanned changes in one's schedule and a significant amount of time, energy, and funding. Compassion comes at a cost and being a Jesus-follower calls us to be willing to pay. Are you willing to have Jesus surprise your schedule with opportunities to serve Him? What are you willing to sacrifice?

**Share:** Verse twenty-eight repeats a familiar phrase we hear throughout the gospels, "And at once His fame spread everywhere..." Jesus would show compassion, speak truth with love, provide for a need or heal someone's body and tell them about His Kingdom and the need to follow or believe Him. Most of the time Jesus would tell people NOT to tell anyone what He had done for them, but they just could not help themselves. Imagine suffering immensely for years, maybe even a lifetime and then in one compassionate moment you are healed! How could you keep that to yourself? The truth is that we were all terminal; headed for death and eternal torture. We were all living life in darkness; blinded by sin, limping along in our own strength or crippled by shame and guilt. Then we met Jesus and our eyes and hearts were opened, light poured into our darkness and love washed over us cleansing every spot of shame. Joy flooded our souls and we found ourselves running without the burdens of the past. How can we resist spreading His name and fame with every person we see? Everyone has a story; a past, a present, and a future. Someone you know or that you will meet today needs to know that Jesus changes lives; be prepared to share this message with them. What do these verses mean to you in your life?

## **Mark 2**

**Prayer:** Jesus, You were so disrespected by the religious leaders of Your day. Instead of worship they gave You grief; conflict and conspiracy were in their hearts and on their tongues. I want to thank You for all that You have done for others and for me. I want to worship You as the King of Kings, Mighty, Wonderful, Lord of all. Know my heart and my intentions towards You; the love and awe in my heart and mind for You. Please help me to be a peacemaker when there is conflict; touch my lips that they will

be filled with praise and not grumbling. Make me new and pour Your word and will in me and through me for Your glory. Let me gain life from Your love and commands and not become a finger-pointing stumbling block that pushes people away from Your message and love.

**Care:** The religious leaders of Jesus' day followed Him around with constant questioning, testing, and accusations, in order to try to bring charges against Jesus. They did not follow Him around to learn and be changed; their heads and hearts were hard. They did not rejoice when Jesus healed people and they had no intention of following Him in faith; all they were concerned about was keeping their own positions of honor and authority within their religion and the current Roman government occupation. They were concerned for themselves first and foremost, and conflicts abounded as they watched Jesus and His disciples' every move. Do you have someone like that in Your life? Is it a neighbor, someone at work, school or even church that just seems to be watching for your slightest slip-up so they can reprimand or embarrass you? Is there someone in your life that always seems to need to put you down in front of others even if they say they are "just kidding?" How do you react to them? The only people Jesus ever spoke angrily to were the religious folks; the people who should have been helping Him, praising Him, worshipping Him as their long awaited Messiah; but instead they tried to trip Him up at every step He took. Jesus never showed anger toward the people who did not know better, who were trapped in Satan's clutches or had never heard the news of the Kingdom of heaven. How can you show care and patience today with the person who is not the kindest of friends to you? How can you squelch conflict instead of fanning its flames? What is this person really needing in their life that you would help supply; respect, attention, a listening ear, affirmation, a friend? Find their need and show them you care.

**Share:** Jesus came to transform us not just reform us. This is not an extreme make-over it is a love-filled take-over that will set you on the path to the destiny you were designed for. It is a life of steadfast courage and peace in threatening times and horrific trials. It is not an easy life but it is the best possible life you could ever want or imagine. It is ok to ask Jesus questions; to wonder and to be honest about your emotions, doubts and fears; remember that He not only knows all of your thoughts, He also knows what is in your heart. Asking questions and learning about life with Him is not the same as doubting Him as Lord; there is a big difference in a sincere seeker vs. unbelief. Someone you know or that you will meet today needs to know that Jesus wants their whole life – to make it His wonderful workmanship as they put their trust in Him. Be prepared to share this message with them. What do these verses mean to you in your life?

### **Mark 3**

**Prayer:** Jesus, thank You for teaching me through Your Word and example. Thank You Holy Spirit for the wisdom, knowledge and understanding You give to me as I read my Bible and pray. Thank You Jesus for the many preachers and teachers who follow You and have studied Your Word deeply in seminary and Bible colleges and universities. Thank You for the life lessons and Your faithfulness to journey with me and never leave me on my own. I want to learn something new about You every day

that equips me to go tell others about You. I want to know You and make You known. Thank You for Your patience and persistence in my life.

**Care:** The Jews who accepted Jesus as their Savior were rejected by the members of their families who did not put their faith in Him. In a land of oppression, Jesus touched them with compassion and teaching; He brought hope and love to people who were cast down and cast out. Jesus called the people who did the will of God His family; He spoke of them in the deepest relational terms. Do you know anyone who is an outsider; someone who has been rejected or harmed at the hand or unfaithfulness of another person? Do you know a teen who is having family problems or a single-parent who is trying to love and make a living for their family while running on empty themselves? How can you encourage them? What does your relationship mean to them, and what could it mean to them if you stepped a little closer to encourage them? What does it mean to you when someone calls you their friend or says that you are “like family” to them? Jesus made it possible for us to be with Him forever; we have millions of brothers and sisters in the family of God. Show others what it means to be a part of a loving family.

**Share:** Many people get confused about Jesus’ disciples and His apostles. The word disciple means pupil or student. Jesus had many pupils that He taught; His closest disciples were the ones that He called to follow Him, those He spent the most time with and poured into them. They journeyed with Him, learned from Him and then He appointed them as apostles. An apostle is one who is “sent out.” Jesus did not just want these men to hang out with Him; He sent them out for Him. He wanted to pour His message and authority into them and have them go pour into others. They were disciples sent to make disciples. Jesus’ love and message is meant to be multiplied so that He can be glorified. Someone you know or that you will meet today needs to know that Jesus has sent you out to share His love and make disciples; be prepared to share this message with them. What do these verses mean to you in your life?

#### **Mark 4**

**Prayer:** Jesus, thank You for teaching us through Your Word; for explaining what Your disciples did not understand and for the Holy Spirit’s guidance as we study Scripture. Thank You for teachers and preachers who help us, for commentary and other study materials. Help me to remember that there is no substitute for Your Word; let me be drawn to read it as You sow it in and through my life. Please prepare my heart as “good soil” to receive and reap the harvest of its wisdom. Turn the soil of my mind and heart to be softened and plant Your Word deep within me so it will take root and grow strong through the trials and thorns of life. Sow Your Word in me that You would reap a plentiful harvest for Your kingdom.

**Care:** There were many times that Jesus taught and His disciples would come to Him in need of an explanation. There are many people who want to read and understand the Bible but have a hard time with some or many of its teachings and stories. Other people have a hard time believing and want more “proof,” while others want a deep understanding, even looking to the original language and cultural

context of each lesson. Be prepared to help people where they are, so that the Word can take deep root in them. Help them to not be embarrassed to ask questions; be willing to confess when you do not know the answers and then look for a teacher together. Apologetics is the field of study that defends and explains what we believe through Biblical and extra-biblical resources such as science, literature, history, archeology, and more. It is a great tool for discussing Biblical truths and the reliability of Scripture with someone who believes that Christianity is for the less educated or is just a “fairytale.” It is also a phenomenal way to share or study Scripture in a deep thinking, intellectual context. Whether you read devotionals or deep apologetic materials; help plant the seeds of Scripture in the hearts of others.

**Share:** “Growing” in faith is not easy; Satan comes to swipe our “seed;” he confuses us with twisted truth and confounds us with questions. There pressure of living in our own flesh in a culture that has turned their back on Jesus seeks to scorch our “seed” with worries and distractions of this world. Daily life and desperate trials either draw us closer to Jesus or drive us away; it is a choice, our choice. Everyone gets a chance to hear the Word of God, how we choose to receive and nurture it is our decision. Someone you know or that you will meet today needs to know that faith matters; that they need to read and accept the Bible and be willing to fight to keep their faith; be prepared to share this message with them. What do these verses in mean to you in your life?

## **Mark 5**

**Prayer:** Jesus, thank You for Your compassion on the sick and scared. You have authority over evil, over demons and Satan himself. You are Creator and healer; You brought Jairus’ daughter back from death and You have taken away the sting of death for all who will follow you. Thank You for the peace of knowing that death is not a punishment but an exciting reward with You. Help me to keep my heart open for people who need Your love and message. Help me to be compassionate and patient; let me see Your miracles as You change hearts and lives. Let me have the same strong faith as the woman with the issue of blood; let me seek You as desperately as she did just to remain in Your presence. You are my refuge and strength.

**Care:** Jesus continued to pray, to care and to share the message of the Kingdom every day along the way to wherever He was going or whatever He was doing. As He stepped out of the boat He was met by the man with an unclean spirit who lived amongst the tombs and He cast out the Legion of spirits in him and restored him to his right mind. He was on the shore by the sea when Jairus came to plead for Him to come to his home to heal his daughter, and on the way to Jairus’ house the woman with the issue of blood touched his hem. Then Jesus went on to his home – even after the report had come that Jairus’ daughter had died – and an even greater miracle happened. Jesus was not detained, He was not too late or detoured, He was right where His Father wanted Him to be at just the perfect time. He was never annoyed by the people who needed Him, He did not view these moments as irritating interruptions. As He went about His day He had opportunities to love people and the same is true for you. Living a disciple-makers’ lifestyle of prayer-care-share is not a once a month or once a year planned out event or trip; it is an everyday lifestyle that shares the love and message of Jesus everywhere you go

with the people Jesus puts in your path. Look around; there is someone close to you who needs for you to show them some compassion, comfort, wisdom, a helping hand and a caring heart. Be open to opportunities throughout your day; not as interruptions but as His purpose put in your path.

**Share:** Jairus sought out Jesus, the woman sought out Jesus, pushing her way through a crowd just to touch His robe. We need to seek Jesus, to set aside time for prayer and Bible study. We need to make Him a priority and reach out and believe that He is able and willing to do exceedingly and abundantly more than we could ever imagine. He asks us to follow Him, to seek Him, and so we must move toward Him in prayer and walk in faith. Jesus' power will flow out of Him as you press in to be closer to Him. Someone you know or that you will meet today needs to know that Jesus wants them to come to Him and call out for His help; be prepared to share this message with them. What do these verses in mean to you in your life?

## **Mark 6**

**Prayer:** Jesus, I know where Your wisdom and works come from; You are God, Creator of heaven and earth. I am in awe of Your authority but I do not doubt or question You like those who did in Nazareth. You are Mighty and Wonderful and I thank You that You never leave us alone, and that You prayed and instructed us, Your church, to be unified. Draw us together; let us be like Your disciples that You sent out in groups of two, never alone. Bring us together to share Your love and message. Open our mouths to give You praise and open our arms to embrace one another and the commands and promises You have given to us. You are the One who tramples the waves, feeds the thousands and restores the broken and brokenhearted.

**Care:** Jesus sent out His apostles to share His love and His message. Although Jesus came to take away the sin of the world, He was full of compassion and His heart was always touched by those who had physical needs and came to Him in faith. Whether you are prompted to meet a need of one person, one family or a whole group of people; follow your heart and be obedient to meet the need. You are surrounded by people who need help and you have something to give; some can give time, some talent or special ability and others can give financially. You may be able to take care of someone's children after school or pay for afterschool care. You may be able to buy a couple of tablets or computers for a school or you may be able to help teach English or tutor after school. Find a way to share whatever you have been given.

**Share:** In the story of Jesus walking on the water in Mark 6:48; Mark notes that Jesus "meant to pass by them." This term is used twice in the Old Testament when Moses and Elijah ask to see God's glory. God says that no man can see His face but His glory will "pass by" him on the mountain. The 5000 people that Jesus fed were stirred up, connecting Jesus to Moses, but Jesus walked out on the Sea of Galilee to show His disciples that He was not just a great prophet, He is God. Jesus wanted to show them His glory, the one who tramples the waves in Job 9. Jesus still wants to show us His glory; He wants to exhibit His power and authority in, through and around us. Someone you know or that you will meet

today needs to know that Jesus wants to show them His glory in their life; be prepared to share this message with them. What do these verses mean to you in your life?

## **Mark 7**

**Prayer:** Jesus, help me to hold on to Your commands and promises more tightly than traditions. Please give me wisdom to know what I should do; what is of You and what is of man. Lead me in Your ways and teach me Your precepts. Give me ears to hear Your voice and keep me from being tongue tied when I know I should share Your Word. Help me to share Your truth with love and fill me with compassion. I desire to keep a grateful heart for every crumb of Your grace and gifts. Open my mouth to give You praise and share Your love.

**Care:** The Syrophenician woman was Greek by religion, Syrian by tongue, and Phoenician by race. She was very Greek and had no claim to the Jewish Messiah yet her faith in Him knew that a crumb of His goodness was all that she needed for her daughter to be healed. How do you approach people from another country, of a different religious belief and of a different race? Are you drawn to them? Do you see them as people who need to know Jesus and jump at the opportunity to share His love and message with them or do you tend to turn away? Are you afraid of people who are different or are you concerned that you do not know enough about them to talk with them about Jesus? Jesus cared enough to talk with this woman and to heal her daughter; in addition, He died for her. If you have immigrants, refugees, or a neighbor or two from another country, get to know them; learn about their culture, their family and their beliefs. You may be surprised to find out they are Christians or you may have the great joy of sharing the love and message of Jesus with them.

**Share:** Throughout the beginning of Mark 7 the Pharisees and scribes begin to discuss the disregard that the disciples had for the ritual cleansing. Jesus begins to tell them that it is what comes from inside of us that defiles a person. The choices that a person makes come from the overflow of a pure heart that loves Jesus or from a dark or divided heart that seeks to satisfy their flesh and self. Hidden, secret sin is still sin. The good news is that the blood of Jesus washes us clean from the inside-out. Repentance comes from inside; it is a change of heart and a change of action. When you confess your sin and repent from your sinful, selfish ways, Jesus washes you white as snow, clean, forgiven; no longer entangled by guilt and shame. Someone you know or that you will meet today needs to know that sin destroys us but Jesus came to save us from the sin and shame that steals life and love; be prepared to share this message with them. What do these verses mean to you in your life?

## **Mark 8**

**Prayer:** Jesus, thank You for Your compassion that never ends; for Your love that is filled with compassion that supplies all that I need again and again. Your love never fails; it fed the five thousand and then again four thousand. Please keep my eyes open to see Your goodness around me; the signs

that You are God are all around me, I do not question Your power, authority and abilities. I know that there is nothing that is greater than You and nothing is out of Your reach. I love and trust You; I pray that instead of asking You for a sign, that my life is a sign of my faith to delight You and draw others to You. Help me to see people clearly; through Your eyes and not as a blur in my busy day or as an obstacle or interruption to my plans and schedule. Open my eyes and heart to their needs and to share Your love and message with them; may I confess You as the Christ, just as Peter did, everywhere I go.

**Care:** Shortly after seeing Jesus supply an abundance of food for thousands of people, the disciples get on a boat and begin to be concerned that they only have one loaf of bread on the boat with them. We might sit back and think, “Really? You just saw Jesus feed thousands of people!” It is easy to point the finger at people who do not seem to understand or have faith in Jesus’ power, but we are all guilty of worry, fear and even panic. The disciples had one loaf of bread and the Bread of Life; always remember that what you have plus Jesus equals more than enough! You may think that your few dollars won’t make a difference. You may think that your small bag of clothes, food or household goods won’t help anyone. You may wonder how volunteering for a few hours every week or month might matter; but when you give Jesus what you have and ask Him to glorify Himself with it, He will multiply its impact. What will you give Him to multiply and supply someone’s needs?

**Share:** So many times people do not pray about things because they do not want to “bother” God or because they feel their need is too insignificant or that they are too small to ask Jesus to intervene in their circumstances. Chapter eight of Mark begins with a significant sentence; “In those days, when again a great crowd had gathered...” Over four-thousand people gathered for three days and did not even disperse to go get food. They were so captivated by Jesus’ teachings that they did not want to miss a single word. Jesus has compassion on the crowd again but ironically his disciples begin to question where they could get food for the crowd in such a desolate place. Pause and take that in; they had witnessed Him feeding five thousand but looking to Jesus to glorify Himself in these familiar circumstances was not their first thought. How has Jesus taken care of you in desperate or discouraging circumstances in your past? Jesus loves you deeply and specializes in the impossible. No person or situation is too big or too small to pray about. Ask Him to use your circumstances to bring glory to Himself. Someone you know or that you will meet today needs to know that Jesus loves them deeply and is ready for them to invite Him into their circumstances; be prepared to share this message with them. What do these verses mean to you in your life?

## **Mark 9**

**Prayer:** Jesus, I envision You in Your radiant glory; standing transfigured in front of Your three closest disciples’ eyes. I cannot imagine how breath-taking this must have been and how exciting for these three to see Elijah and Moses with You. I worship You; awestruck and amazed by You, the King of glory. Help me to look for others who are serving and worshipping You and to encourage them as we work together to share Your love and message. Your desire for all people to come to repentance that none may perish. Guide me to be filled with faith that overflows and fortify me to avoid and ignore



temptation. In my darkest days and biggest challenges I want to cling to You; if I stumble or doubt I beg You to heal my unbelief; knowing You are able.

**Care:** The father of the possessed child asked Jesus to have compassion and help them. There are millions of people in this world who need compassion. Compassion ministries cover a variety of needs including ministering to the hungry, homeless, prison, addictions, adoption/foster care, abuse, critical incident or crisis, persons with disabilities, domestic violence, education, human trafficking, immigrants and refugees, senior adults, and more. The list can be overwhelming; the solution is three-fold; first the needs and solutions must be bathed in prayer from beginning to end. No matter how much money or how many volunteers you have, nothing can be accomplished for the Kingdom without prayer. Secondly, you must get Jesus-followers from many denominations and churches together to fill the needs and solve the problems. Unity is key; Jesus prayed for the unity of His disciples and followers and we must remember that we should be one body serving in His love and name. Thirdly, we have to be committed to stay and sustain the care we start. There are many ministries that start strong but volunteers begin to drop off as schedules, distractions, and even discouragement chip away at their commitment. What ministries on this list grab your heart and attention? Grab a few friends and look for somewhere to serve together.

**Share:** Jesus comes down from the mountain after being transfigured and finds a great argument going on between a desperate father whose child is possessed by an evil spirit and the disciple who cannot cast it out. In verse twenty-two the father says to Jesus, "If you can do anything, have compassion on us and help us." Jesus calls out the father's unbelief, "If you can?" the father then cries out, "I believe, help my unbelief." In that moment the father professes faith in Jesus and at the same time begs Jesus to help his faith. The father came for healing for his child and ends up crying out for spiritual healing for himself. Jesus is willing and able to heal them both. When you approach Jesus with faith the size of a mustard seed and ask Him to nurture it, He is more than happy to grow your trust and give Him glory. Never be afraid to ask for help; Jesus' first priority is to heal us spiritually. Cry out to Him, ask for help, draw near to Him in prayer and profess your faith in Him as you pray. Do not let doubt count you out. Someone you know or that you will meet today needs to know that Jesus will grow your faith. Professing a drop of faith in prayer is the beginning of an ocean of faith in the hands of Jesus; be prepared to share this message with them. What do these verses in mean to you in your life?

## **Mark 10**

**Prayer:** Jesus, I want to seek You first; to know Your will and Your ways. I want to walk in the confidence of Your promises and the comfort of Your love. My relationship with You is more valuable than gold; I would not trade any riches or power for what I have in You. I do not look for loopholes in Your commands but seek to obey them in response to Your love for me. I know that You know what is best for me; You created me and authored my days, and Your commands protect me and light my path.

**Care:** It is very easy to get distracted by wealth and power. It is not wrong to have money, nice things and leadership positions; hard work and smart savings is biblical. We are supposed to make the

most of our opportunities and be good stewards of our time, talent and treasure. We get in trouble when we get caught up in pride, power and buying things we cannot afford. The Bible says that the LOVE of money is a sin, not having money. It is vital to keep our priorities in the right order; your personal relationship with Jesus, your relationship with your spouse and children, family, and friends. Your workplace is a mission field; you cannot separate areas of your life as spiritual and secular, it ALL belongs to God. Worship while you work, work with integrity and refuse to compromise your values for any deal or promotion. Pray for the people you work with and work for and always live out attitudes and behavior that provide a witness to your faith in the workplace. How can you show your love for Jesus in the workplace today?

**Share:** In verse two, the Pharisees begin testing Jesus by asking, “Is it lawful to...” They are looking to accuse Jesus and abuse the law with loopholes that help them gain power and wealth. Politics and government can be a very divisive conversation. Politicians’ careers rise and fall with their policies and promises. The lawmakers and courts have written and upheld many laws in the past several years that go directly against God’s commands. While this is detrimental to our nation it is important for all Christians to remember that not everything that is lawful is beneficial. Just because you can does not mean you should; and there are many things that man has made “legal” that God has said, “Thou shall not.” Rest assured that God’s “no” is always wrapped in love; He knows what will destroy us, what causes irreparable pain and damage. Someone you know or that you will meet today needs to know that knowing and obeying God’s Word is the key to a happy and successful life; be prepared to share this message with them. What do these verses mean to you in your life?

## **Mark 11**

**Prayer:** Jesus, thank You for prayer; for opening the door of heaven so that we can talk directly to You. Thank You for the assurance of knowing that You hear and answer our prayers. I rejoice in knowing that You will guide me in Your ways; that You know what is best for me. Like those who shouted Hosanna as You rode into Jerusalem; I shout Your praise and want to give You glory. Blessed is Your coming Kingdom; You reign forever and ever. You are my King, Master and Savior. You are my redeemer and I thank You for saving me. Hosanna! Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord!

**Care:** In verse seventeen, Jesus rebukes the money-changers and reminds the crowd at the Temple that, “My house shall be called a house of prayer.” Churches are supposed to be houses of prayer and since our bodies are the temple of the Lord where His Spirit resides, we are supposed to be “houses of prayer.” Prayer ministries should be a priority in the church and outside its walls. Prayer should be a constant part of your life every day. Prayer is a conversation with God; filled with praise, thanks, asking for guidance, and willingness to be His instrument for His Kingdom. Your prayers are a place to profess your faith in Jesus, lay your burdens down, and always a place where you confess your sin and ask for forgiveness. Your prayers should be filled with intercession for others; the greatest way to care for someone is to pray for them. If you know someone who is sick, hurting, needs to make a decision, or is having family or financial problems; pray for them. If you know someone who is making

bad choices, destroying their life or relationships, falling into temptation or chasing after it; pray for them. Pray for blessings and wisdom, comfort and peace, and most of all, always pray for salvation and their relationship with Jesus. Who will you pray for today? Is there a vibrant prayer ministry at your church? Consider participating or starting a prayer group in your church, neighborhood, campus or workplace.

**Share:** In verses twenty-two and twenty-three, Jesus tells His disciples, “Have faith in God,” and in the next sentence tells them to pray and not doubt but believe... Faith grabs Jesus’ heart; our faith-filled prayers move God’s hands. You have to believe in the One you pray to and you have to believe that He hears and answers your prayers. Prayers are not like tossing a penny in a wishing well or making a wish upon a star. Prayer is powerful. Passionate prayers that are grounded in the Word and will of God invite Jesus into our needs, desires and circumstances. Someone you know or that you will meet today needs to know that faith and prayer brings God’s power to pass in our lives; be prepared to share this message with them. What do these verses mean to you in your life?

## **Mark 12**

**Prayer:** Jesus, we thank You for this beautiful world You created and we thank You that we get to be Your tenants. I pray that I serve and steward this gift well; that I please You in my care of Your creation and the nurturing of the harvest that You desire. Everything and everyone that I see belong to You; remind me of Your hand that made them and Your heart that desires all to be united under Your love and authority. God, You sent Your own Son to redeem Your people; let the lost yearn and groan for You as the earth groans to be brought back to the perfection that You created; the beauty and peacefulness that existed before sin entered and darkness tainted this world. I want to love You with all of my heart, soul, mind and strength; and love my neighbor so that they come to love You too.

**Care:** Taking care of the earth and all that exist on it is not a political idea; it is not just for liberals and it is not a replacement for our love and worship of the Creator. Creation care is a commandment; we are to be good stewards of the planet that God gave us to live on and all who inhabit it as we “love our neighbor as ourself.” God created the earth and then He set man and woman in a garden where they could live out their days in relationship with one another and God. We get to be the tenants of this beautiful place with many other amazing people created by Him. We should make every effort to take care and repair man’s damage to the earth and to one another. What steps are you taking each day to be a good steward of God’s creation? Go out of your way today to set a new habit at home, in your neighborhood, workplace or campus to help care for creation and give glory to the Creator.

**Share:** Jesus sat and watched the people as they came and gave their money to the treasury at the Temple. He was not watching to be impressed with the amount of their gift but rather the attitude of their heart as they gave. Some people give so that people will see them give and make a fuss over their generosity. Other people give to have their names put on buildings or their family’s fame to spread. Jesus watched a widow quietly step up and give a tiny monetary amount that represented a giant heart’s worth of generosity. Jesus told His disciples that she gave everything; all that she had to

live on. God loves a cheerful giver; generosity breaks the back of greed in our hearts. Many people give out of their abundance, and that is good, but when we give to God in a way that causes us to sacrifice something we want or need, we delight Him. Someone you know or that you will meet today needs to know that there is no gift too small to give to Jesus because He multiplies it by the love in our heart to impact His Kingdom; be prepared to share this message with them. What do these verses mean to you in your life?

### **Mark 13**

**Prayer:** Jesus, I look forward with great anticipation for the day that You return. I know that no one knows the hour or the day that You will come, not even the angels in heaven. Please shut the mouths of false prophets who claim dates and times. Remind Your people to keep watch and to stay on mission; to share Your love and gospel to every nation on earth. Help us to not be so distracted looking for signs but keep us focused on Your warning to be on guard, and Your Word that will not pass away. I want to be fruitful all of the days You give me while always watching for Your return.

**Care:** Jesus told His disciples in verse ten that the gospel must be first proclaimed to all nations before He would return, and then He commanded and commissioned His followers to go and share the gospel. Instead of waiting on Jesus, He may be waiting on us. Jesus desires that every person repent and call on Him to be their Lord and Savior; He wants every nation to have the opportunity to accept or reject Him. Sharing His love and message every day is a sure way to live in loving obedience while we wait on Him to return. Pray for revival to come and for every heart to turn to Jesus; love the people Jesus put in your path enough to share the gospel with them.

**Share:** Absolutely no one knows the day or the hour that Jesus will return; they do not even know the year. Beware of people who say, "This day or that." You can rest assured Jesus will not be coming on that day. All kinds of people say all kinds of things to lead people astray; Jesus warned us throughout this chapter that many will come using His name to lead us astray. We have to stay on guard and warn others so that people follow Jesus in faith and not false predictions and promises. The earth is filled with hurting people in a broken world who will grasp on to any sign or rumor in hopes of living in paradise; it is up to us as followers of Christ to share the desperate need for sinners to repent and follow Jesus without proclaiming to know with all certainty the signs and times. A life that follows Jesus is far more fulfilling and joy-filled than a life without Him; do not present salvation as a death-destination decision. Jesus could come today or a hundred years or more from now; but we are to be ready. Someone you know or that you will meet today needs to know that Jesus is going to return and He wants them to be ready; be prepared to share this message with them. What do these verses mean to you in your life?

### **Mark 14**

**Prayer:** Jesus, I pray that my life is poured out for You like the ointment in the alabaster jar. I want my flesh to be broken for you and my heart to pour out with love for You and others. As she anointed You, You knew it represented preparing You for burial; You knew Your crucifixion was near and as Your betrayer watched and scorned her gift to You, Your heart was set to be the atoning sacrifice for my sins. Please keep my heart soft and never let me judge a person's gift given to You in love. Only You know our hearts; let me rejoice in all that is given and done in Your name under Your authority and love. Thank You for giving us the bread and the cup to remember Your sacrifice. Thank You for teaching us to pray; "not my will but Yours Lord." If You can pray those words and face the cross, then there is nothing that I could desire more than for Your will to be done in my life. Thank You for Your compassion when Your disciples flee and deny You; thank You for forgiving me when I lose courage; draw me closer to You under Your wings of protection and power.

**Care:** When Jesus was taken before the council of the chief priest, elders and scribes; they had assembled a crowd of false witnesses to try to arrange a false trial and to pronounce a quick sentence of death over Jesus. It was a gruesome night of injustice that played at night between the religious rulers who were being paid off to keep the status quo and those who paid them to do so. Notice that it happened at night, while Jesus' followers and admirers were asleep. God permitted these things to take place so that sin could be dealt with and salvation could be offered. There are many people locked up in prison waiting for a trial; hoping it will be fair and justice will be served. There are people in prison who received a fair trial for the crimes they committed and they need to know Jesus. There are victims of crimes that need ministering to for help and healing. There is great repentance, prayer meetings and Bible study going on in lots of our prisons. Jesus said visiting people in prison meant as much to Him than if you had visited Him in prison. Pray for those who are imprisoned and for the victims of their crimes. Consider getting involved or supporting a prison ministry in your area.

**Share:** Peter was shocked when Jesus predicted that he would deny Him; Peter's rebuttal was that not only would he never deny Jesus but he was willing to die for Jesus. As dawn broke, Peter found himself weeping in shame; he had denied Jesus more than once. The good news is that when Jesus rose from the grave He sent the women to tell the disciples and Peter. Peter's denial was not the end of their relationship and Peter's usefulness to the Kingdom. Some people deny Jesus with their words and other people deny Him with their actions. Peer pressure, work pressure, or cultural persecution can wear some people down and their behavior begins to say, "I am not with Jesus, I don't even know Him." Thankfully there is forgiveness when they repent and profess their faith in words and action. Someone you know or that you will meet today needs to know that Jesus will forgive them if their words or actions have "denied" their relationship with Him; be prepared to share this message with them. What do these verses mean to you in your life?

## **Mark 15**

**Prayer:** Jesus, You are the King of Kings and Lord of Lords! The soldiers mocked You as they clothed You in a purple cloak and crushed the crown of thorns on Your head. Now You are clothed in

glory and crowned with many crowns. Your splendor shines gloriously and we praise You knowing that every knee will bow and every tongue will confess that You are LORD!

**Care:** Imagine being Simon of Cyrene, who was “compelled” to help carry Jesus’ cross to Golgotha. Imagine walking so close to Jesus, torn by His torture and weakened from the great loss of blood He had already suffered. Simon was forced to carry a burden that he did not want any part of, but I often wonder if he was able to speak to Jesus; Scripture does not tell us if he offered words of praise or comfort – most likely he just walked resolutely and compassionately up the hill next to Jesus in the midst of chaos, shouting, and weeping. Someone you know or that you will meet needs you to just sit or walk compassionately with them through a painful time in their life. Sometimes there are just no words that can express the love and comfort you want to say but your presence will speak volumes to them. The present of your presence can bring strength to those who are picking up their cross and carrying it daily.

**Share:** Verse ten says that Pilate “perceived that it was out of envy that the chief priests had delivered Jesus up,” and as he was ready to release Jesus, the chief priests were busy stirring up the crowd to shout for Jesus’ crucifixion. Envy is a dangerous emotion; so dangerous that God included it in the Ten Commandments, that we would not envy anyone or anything that belonged to another person including their gifts, position or favor from God. When other people are successful through righteous means, we should celebrate with them. When family or friends go on trips or purchase something new we should congratulate them. When a neighboring church or ministry receives a financial gift or grows as a result of new believers coming to Christ, or believers being brought back into the fellowship of a church, we should thank God and be glad. God has a plan for every person and He will provide every opportunity and for every need in order for His plan to play out for His Kingdom. We do not compete for His blessings; we complete His mission and His will together. There is no room for envy in Kingdom work. Someone you know or that you will meet today needs to know the part envy played in the lives of the religious leaders in Jesus’ day and how Jesus prayed for unity; be prepared to share this message with them. What do these verses mean to you in your life?

## **Mark 16**

**Prayer:** Jesus, before the sun had risen You had risen! I can just imagine the moment that You sat up in that tomb and walked out in all of Your power and glory. I imagine the angels in heaven cheering and the joy that filled the heavenly throne room of The Father. I often wonder if it was that celebration in heaven that shook the earth. I want to celebrate You with great joy and excitement every day of my life. I want to keep that heart-pounding moment in my mind as I face the trials and stress of the day and remember that You have overcome death and the enemy, and that greater in He that is in me than he that is in the world. I serve You, my RISEN Savior!

**Care:** Before Jesus ascended to heaven He commanded His followers to take the whole gospel to the whole world. There is nothing greater that you can do for another person than to tell them about the love and Lordship of Jesus. Every person needs to have the chance to believe and be saved or to not

believe and be condemned. The Holy Spirit will convict them of sin and change; our job is to have a compassionate conversation filled with love so that they have the opportunity to choose. Always be prepared to share the gospel and what Jesus means to you.

**Share:** The women who went to anoint Jesus' wrapped body in the tomb were met by an angel instead of a corpse. He told them to go and tell the disciples and Peter that Jesus was alive and to go and meet Him as He had told them before in Galilee. Note that Peter had been a disciple, so why the need to add his name separately? We can only imagine the anguish Peter was still feeling after denying Christ three times. On the night that Jesus needed Peter most, Peter had denied even knowing Jesus. Peter was part of Jesus' inner-circle; he had seen most of Jesus' miracles and even witnessed Jesus' transfiguration with Moses and Elijah. But probably all that Peter could see in his memory now was the look of Jesus' face as he shouted the third denial. Jesus knew that Peter would have to be invited and included; Peter had to know that Christ did not deny him as a disciple. Someone you know or that you will meet today needs to know that Jesus forgives; be prepared to share this message with them. What do these verses mean to you in your life?