

The Chosen

Season 3 - “The Way of the Chosen”

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Episodes 1 and 2

Opening Prayer

To open our Bible study on *The Chosen*, let us read from the Gospel of Matthew 7:13-14.

"Enter by the narrow gate. For the gate is wide and the way is easy that leads to destruction, and those who enter by it are many. For the gate is narrow and the way is hard that leads to life, and those who find it are few."

Season 3

In Season 1, we focused on Isaiah 43: what it means to be chosen.

In Season 2, we focused on Matthew 5: what it means to be blessed.

In Season 3, we focus on the way back to the Garden of Eden, back to eternal life with God. For those with undisciplined free will, it is easy to lose one's way which ultimately leads to destruction. As Proverbs 14:12 states, "There is a way which seems right to man, but in the end it leads to death." Watch the news. Devastation and ruin are around us all the time. The numbers are on the rise for divorce, single-parent births, high school dropouts, crime, mental illness, racist violence, or suicide. People are using their free will to commit sin. It started with Adam and Eve, and it continues with us. We are prone to wander away from God, to leave the narrow path. But Jesus saves us. God gives us a new heart through the Holy Spirit, and Jesus gives us the way, the truth and the light.

In this season, we focus on the way to the narrow gate. It requires submission, yielding our desires to God: personal sacrifice, self-control, self-denial, being humble, and

repenting when we go astray. No wonder so many resist or even choose to refuse to follow this path, preferring their own way.

Today we are covering episodes 1 and 2: *Forgive as Jesus Forgives* and *Go as Jesus Sends You*.

Episode 1 - Forgive as Jesus Forgives (Matthew 5-7; Luke 8)

Biblical Characters - Jesus, James, John, Andrew, Peter, Thomas, John the Baptist, Matthew, Joanna

Synopsis. In A.D. 24, Matthew became his parents' tax collector, and he is immediately rejected by his father. A few years later, Matthew attends the Sermon on the Mount, and is moved by Jesus' teachings about reconciliation. After the Sermon, Judas meets Jesus and joins the movement. A woman named Joanna, whose husband works in Herod's court, comes with a financial offering for the ministry and a message from John the Baptist. Andrew goes back with Joanna to meet John in prison. Simon and Edén return to Capernaum, hoping for a little privacy, but are surprised to learn that Nathanael and Simon the Zealot will be staying with them. Thomas stays with Zebedee's family. Ramah and Tamar stay with Mary Magdalene. Yussif learns that a new administrator named Jairus has been appointed to his synagogue. Judas says goodbye to his sister. Andrew apologizes to Mary Magdalene for the way he treated her after her relapse in Jericho. Matthew goes to his parents' house to make his own apology, and is surprised when his father greets him warmly at the door.

Notable quotes: "I require... that you seek to be like me. Are you ready to do hard things?" (Jesus)

Episode Talking Points

In this episode, we learn more about what it means to forgive.

"For if you forgive others their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you, but if you do not forgive others their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." Matthew 6:14-15

Wait...what!? God will not forgive me? But God always forgives. That is what we remember from our religious education. Perhaps, we conveniently forget that forgiveness is part of the covenant: a relationship between God and us. That is, both parties have requirements in this covenant.

- *Why would God not forgive you?*
- *Where else does Jesus give this same message? (hint: one is said at every Mass)*

The Sermon on the Mount is hard to understand and to apply due to the complexities of our lives. It was hard for the Disciples back then, and it is hard for us today. Works of mercy are hard, otherwise they would not be called "works". Jesus' words sound great and inspiring until we actually have to apply them: the one about forgiving others their sins and especially the one about loving your enemies.

- *When was the last time you prayed for your enemy?*
- *When was the last time you forgave your enemy?*

As Joanna, who is an actual Gospel character, puts it: it's all upside down, and nothing of it makes sense:

- the last will be first
- to lead we must serve
- to gain we must give
- to live we must die
- to inherit the earth we must become poor in spirit, meek, and even be persecuted

It makes no sense. Everyone knows the opposites are true:

- hate your enemy
- never forgive a transgression
- the first gets the rewards
- the leader has servants
- take as much as you can
- my life is more important than anything

Jesus teaches us that his way does not make sense to man, but it does make sense to those who see the way through the eyes of God.

- *Where has this path that "makes sense to man" led society?*
- *What kind of world is created by following the way of Jesus?*
- *Although society has many faults today, how has society embraced "the way"?*

God fulfilled his promise given to Jeremiah (Jeremiah 24:7) when Jesus gave us the Sermon on the Mount (or Sermon on the Plain in Luke). The Sermon on the Mount is about changing our heart, changing our being. Jesus' message is not to simply follow rules, but is to truly be like God to your neighbor. You want God to forgive you? Then forgive your neighbor. You want God to give you food and shelter? Then give food and shelter to your neighbor. You want God to comfort you? Then comfort your neighbor. We must change our human, self-loving heart to a God-like, servant heart. And that's not easy to do.

[Watch - [Matthew goes to forgive his parents 55:03 - 55:08](#)]

- *Do you think the Apostle Matthew actually ever reconciled with his family?*
- *Are there people in your life with whom you still need to reconcile?*

Reading

Let's read from John 14:1-7:

"Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. My Father's house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. You know the way to the

place where I am going.” Thomas said to him, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?” Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.”

Episode 1 prayer: Dear Lord, Thank you for loving me even though I have been rebellious against You, sometimes in my heart and sometimes in my actions. Thank you for sending Jesus to provide the way of salvation, and to restore me to a right relationship with You. I acknowledge I can't earn Your forgiveness and must receive it as a gift paid for by Jesus. Thank you that Your forgiveness can change my life, including the way I respond to others. Give me the ability to forgive and the courage to ask for forgiveness when I'm the one who needs it. Restore to me the joy of your salvation, and uphold me with a willing spirit, so I can invite others to do the same. Amen

Episode 2 - Go as Jesus Sends You (Matthew 10, Luke 9)

Biblical Characters - Jesus and the Disciples

Synopsis. The disciples continue to rest with family and anxiously await what will be next for them and their ministry with Jesus. In the meantime, Thomas believes he’s ready to marry Ramah and asks for Jesus’ blessing. Simon Peter is enjoying spending time with his wife, Eden, despite other disciples living in their home. Matthew reconciles with his parents. Judas is ready to follow Jesus and says goodbye to his sister. At the end of the episode, Jesus gathers his disciples and informs them that they will split up into pairs and embark on missionary journeys of their own. Some are excited, others are reluctant, and most are anxious. However, they trust that Jesus’ will is the best way forward and are all-in to expand the kingdom of God. The episode ends with a moment between Jesus and Little James.

Notable quote: “I want you to learn what it means to fully rely on your Father in heaven and for those around you.” (Jesus)

In this episode, we learn more about God sending you on mission.

Episode Talking Points

Did you know that the better translation of Jesus’ name in Hebrew is Joshua? In Hebrew text, the name is Yeshua. In Greek, the name becomes Iēsous, which gets translated into English as Jesus. As *The Chosen* states, the name Jesus, or Yeshua, was common. Hence, the Gospels emphasized Jesus “of Nazareth” to distinguish him from other people named Jesus.

Atticus continues to be used as a writer’s tool to provide the viewer with the Roman history and perspective on Jesus that is not stated in the Bible. Through Atticus, the viewer learns that Rome knew of the Jew’s belief in a coming messiah to free them. So

the Romans tracked anyone who was said to be the “messiah”. Also, Rome knew of the Maccabean revolt against the Greeks, and making a martyr can cause a rebellion. So, Rome would have kept close eyes on anyone who drew crowds. But also Atticus, like some Roman leaders at the time, were intrigued by Jesus’ message.

- *Why was Atticus (Rome) so intrigued by Jesus’ message?*
- *How were the Romans similar to many Jews with these thoughts?*

Sometimes we forget the disciples were real people. We tend to read the Bible in a way that strips away their humanity. We quote verses, sing hymns, and view paintings and sculptures. We also tend to think they had less to lose. They didn’t have families, houses, careers, cars, mortgages, college loans, or vacations. Or did they? Simon Peter had a wife. Matthew had a well paying career. James and John were part of the family business. Simon the Zealot had a sworn mission. While their circumstances were different from ours, they were still people with ambitions, plans, happiness, stress, confusion, fear, love, and heartbreak. Yet, they dropped everything when Jesus asked, “Come, follow me.”

Jesus sent out his Apostles two-by-two. Twos has a Biblical meaning. God creates in twos: day and night, sun and moon, water and dry land, man and woman. Jesus later states that where two or more gather, there I am in their midst. When two work together, God’s blessing comes forth out of the relationship. Does this sound familiar? Think about the Trinity. The Father loves the Son. The Son loves the Father. And the Holy Spirit springs forth through this relationship.

The Apostles struggled when being told about their mission. They were not to bring anything. But, Jesus was giving them his authority.

- *Why did Jesus send them out this way? (Societies such as the Franciscan still do)*
- *Did you ever think about how the Apostles would have reacted when told they were being sent out...but to not carry anything with them? How would you have reacted?*
- *Do you think the Apostles truly believed they were being given the authority of God?*

Basically, Jesus was telling his Apostles about the kingdom God: take nothing and receive everything. It does not make sense...through the eyes of a human. The kingdom of God starts with being sent. But Jesus also instructs us to manage our expectations. As we represent Jesus, we should expect the same kind of things his early disciples did. Where the kingdom of heaven is well received, we should rejoice and praise God. But when it is rejected, we should not be surprised nor shaken but continue to rejoice and praise God. We still belong to the kingdom.

Let’s talk about the scene between Jesus and Little James.

[Watch [Little James scene 53:10 - 57:56](#)]

- *How is this scene about accepting who you are, loving yourself, and carrying your cross?*
- *Do you need to be perfect to be a disciple of God?*

- *Is lack of faith the reason we not healed from our infirmities?*

Out of our struggles, God makes us strong. The Apostles struggled with the idea that they were being sent. Were they worthy enough? Do they understand “the message” enough? Do they have enough “faith”?

- *Like the Apostles, do you still struggle with your faith?*

Read Matthew 28:18-20

Let's read from Matthew 28:18-20:

"And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'"

Episode 2 prayer: Dear God, Thank you for sending Jesus to announce Your kingdom that has come to earth through His life and work. Thank You for bringing me into Your kingdom through repentance and faith in Jesus. You have chosen to continue your kingdom work through followers of Jesus like me. But I'm not always sure about when, where, or how to best carry out Your work. Please guide me and help me respond well to Your guidance. You have promised to provide for me, so help me put Your kingdom first. Please give me compassion for those who will hear me, courage to speak the gospel message boldly, and wise words. Amen.

Episodes 3 and 4

Opening Prayer

To open our Bible study on *The Chosen*, let us read from the Book of Isaiah 61:1-2.

"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the afflicted; He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to captives and freedom to prisoners; to proclaim the favorable year of the Lord."

Today we are covering episodes 3 and 4: *Grieve as Jesus Grieves* and *Stand Where Jesus Stands*.

Episode 3 - Grieve as Jesus Grieves (Luke 4)

Biblical Characters - Jesus, Mother Mary, Joseph, Lazarus, Mary and Martha

Synopsis. The episode opens with a short scene of Jesus as a toddler playing with Lazarus. Then, Jesus is at Mother Mary's home in Nazareth before Rosh Hashanah, and Mary gives Jesus a box. Jesus' childhood friend, Lazarus, shows up. In the synagogue, Jesus reads from Isaiah 61 and says he is the Messiah. Jesus is brought to the edge of a cliff for execution because of his alleged false prophesy. But Jesus walks past the crowd. At the tomb of Joseph, Jesus has a flashback to when Joseph gave Jesus a bridle. The episode ends with Lazarus giving Jesus his bag which contains the bridle.

Notable quotes: "I am the Law of Moses." (Jesus)

- *Why did Jesus mean by this statement?*

In this episode, we learn more about grieving as Jesus grieves.

Episode Talking Points

The Messiah had been prophesied since Moses. The Jews knew that God would send a man to save His people. The prophets foretold this man would be the "Son of David"...David who was Israel's greatest king. So, naturally the Jews were looking for someone charismatic, a mighty warrior to unite the people and defeat the Romans and surrounding kingdoms. Certainly, this man would not be God Himself. The Incarnation would be...inconceivable! Humans were flawed, sinful, and mortal. The concept of demigod, part human part god, was idolatry and an abomination to the one true God. So the Jews were not prepared for Jesus. Jesus was not a demigod; He was fully God and fully human. The Apostles struggled with this until the Resurrection. The early Church even struggled with it which is why we have the Nicene Creed: God from God,

Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten not made, consubstantial with the Father.

Nazareth was a small town, so it is almost certain everyone knew everyone else...like Mayberry from TV. Many people before Jesus claimed to be the Messiah.

- *What must have it been like to see Jesus grow up in your little town, then hear him say that he is the Messiah?*
- *How much sorrow must Jesus have felt to see his closest friends reject him? Is this the last time his closest friends would reject him?*
- *Why were Lazarus, Martha, and Mary open to Jesus' message?*
- *Would you have believed Jesus?*
- *Why do you believe Jesus is the Messiah?*

Jesus did not finish the second verse from Isaiah 61: "And the day of vengeance of our God; To comfort all who mourn."

- *Why did Jesus stop reading?*
- *God told Moses he heard his people's cry in Egypt. What was Jesus saying to the Jews?*
- *When is the day of vengeance?*

Our God is a compassionate god, who loves us with motherly love. Jesus grieved for the Jews, God's chosen people.

- Matthew 9:36, "Seeing the people, He felt compassion for them, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd.
- Mark 3:5, "After looking around at them with anger, grieved at their hardness of heart, He said to the man, "Stretch out your hand." And he stretched it out, and his hand was restored.
- John 11:33, "When Jesus therefore saw her weeping, and the Jews who came with her also weeping, He was deeply moved in spirit and was troubled"
- *Why did God send Jesus into the world? (John 3:16)*

The Bible refers to Jesus as a man of sorrows, acquainted in every way with grief. There is no pain in life He does not intimately understand, no burden He hasn't felt. Thus, grief isn't something we should fear or deny or avoid. Jesus promises that in this world we are going to have have trouble. But God moves toward us in our grief, rescuing and comforting us, offering hope for a day when suffering and sadness will be no more. We are to grieve **with** Jesus and to respond to others the way Jesus does. Sin should break our hearts. Lost people should break our hearts. Suffering should break our hearts. And people perpetuating grief on others should break our hearts. If we know Jesus and have changed our heart to be like God's heart, then our compassion, our motherly love weeps when others grieve.

- *What grieves you today? What makes you sad?*

[Watch - [Joseph and the bridge 42:55 - 46:22](#)]

- *What do you think is the significance of the bridle?*

Reading

Let's read from Romans 8:18-39:

For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself also will be set free from its slavery to corruption into the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and suffers the pains of childbirth together until now. And not only this, but also we ourselves, having the first fruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our body. For in hope we have been saved, but hope that is seen is not hope; for who hopes for what he already sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, with perseverance we wait eagerly for it.

Episode 3 prayer: Dear God, I'm grieving today, but I'm also bringing it to You. Thank You that You've long been aware of my pain and that You choose to share in it. Thank You for sending Jesus to draw near to me, and to grieve with me, and that He made a way through and beyond my grief. I admit that some of my sadness comes from my own sinful choices. So, I thank You for Your forgiveness and Your promise to restore and make me new through Him. As I turn everything over to You, please help me bear up under them, trusting in You fully. Please change my heart to be grieved by what grieves You. And then grant me the love and grace to minister to others the way You want me to. Amen.

Episode 4 - Stand as Jesus Stands (Matthew 6, Luke 8)

Biblical Characters - Jesus, Disciples, Zebedee, Jairus, Woman with hemorrhaging

Synopsis. The opening shows the first missionary journey of the Apostles. We see them in pairs healing the sick, exorcising demons, caring for the poor, and proclaiming the kingdom of God. The Apostles return, reflect on their experience, and struggle to process what took place. Eden meets Veronica and learns Veronica has been bleeding for 12 years. The Apostles notice there is growing friction between Eden and Simon Peter. Simon Peter and Gaius share a moment about being frustrated with their leaders. Yussif, one of the Pharisees, shares his observations with Jairus, the synagogue leader. Having read Yussif's accounts and comparing them to the scriptures, Jairus now is convinced that Jesus is the promised Messiah. Jairus tells Yussif that his daughter is very sick and fears God may be punishing him for believing in Jesus.

Notable quote: "If people knew something that would help, I wouldn't want them to withhold it." (Veronica)

- *Has there ever been a time when you withheld talking about God though it might have helped?*

The theme of “unclean” runs through this episode.

Episode Talking Points

The episode begins with a montage of the Apostles performing miracles.

- *Did you ever think about the Apostles being surprised when they first performed a miracle?*
- *What do you think that experience did to their faith?*
- *How did the Apostle’s sharing of faith impact their own relationship with God?*
- *How could Judas be apart of performing miracles, then later betray Jesus?*

After the montage, the Disciples are in a synagogue listening to a reading from Leviticus about how having a bodily discharge makes one unclean and the steps to take to make oneself clean again. Then, we learn the cistern used for water and purification is broken.

- *What events in this episode does this scene foreshadow?*

The name Veronica does not appear in the Bible. It is early Christian tradition that her name was Veronica, and she was the same woman who met Jesus on the way to Calvary. Most Christians today know the story of the woman with the hemorrhaging, but they do not understand the loneliness she faced. By Mosaic Law - Leviticus 15 which was being read in the synagogue, blood was a sign of being unclean including women menstruating. Any woman having her period was considered unclean until 7 days after the bleeding stopped. Anything she touched would be unclean and need to be washed. Anyone touching her or touching anything she touched would also be unclean until they washed and waited for evening.

- *Did watching this episode change your understanding of the woman’s situation?*
- *Did you ever see the woman as having the same fate as a leper?*

Jesus does not promise an easy life for his followers. As Jesus says in Season 2: bones will still break, hearts will still be broken in this world. Life can be difficult, and believing in Jesus does not remove us from the storms of life:

- The Jews and Romans struggle with a broken cistern used for clean water and purification.
- The Apostles struggle with their worthiness to be followers of Jesus.
- Eden and Simon Peter struggle with marriage.
- Veronica struggles with bleeding that won’t stop.
- Yusuf and Jairus struggle with their belief that Jesus is the Messiah.
- Jairus struggles with a sick daughter
- Gaius struggles with issues at home and at work.
- Mary Magdalene and Tamar struggle with each other’s culture.

We are broken, and we live in a broken world. We need a savior. Through life’s storms, do you stand where Jesus stands...on the rock of faith in God to withstand and endure

the struggles and adversities of life? As the Gospels point out, even the Disciples who could see, touch, and talk to Jesus struggled with their ability to place their faith in Jesus when they encountered the troubles of life. We want to be in control. We want to know in advance how things are going to end, though we rarely get to.

- *What did we learn in Season 1 about trusting in ourselves when facing difficulties?*
- *What do you think about Jesus' message that if you love God and love your neighbor, then there is nothing to fear, not even death?*

Conversion is not about the religion and rules. As the Beatitudes state, it's about a change of heart, a change in being. We don't convert the person. It is the person's self-choice to respond to God's invitation to faith. Therefore, before converting someone, you need to get to know them. Conversion often is a long game - seldom does it happen overnight. Notice that Simon Peter does not preach to Gaius. Simon simply talks with him.

- *When teaching the faith, do we tend to focus too much on the religion and the rules?*
- *Why do you think converts to Christianity often express more faith than those born into Christianity?*

[Watch Jairus revelation 13:39 - 17:40]

- *Even though you claim to be Christian, have you ever had a revelation of joy like Jairus that the Gospels are true?...that God does exist?...that Jesus is the Messiah?...and you have been chosen to respond to Jesus' call to follow him?*
- *What does the Catechism teach when faced with evil consequences if one tells the truth?*

Read Matthew 7:24-25

"Everyone then who hears these words of mine and does them will be like a wise man who built his house on the rock. And the rain fell, and the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on the rock."

Episode 4 prayer: Dear Jesus, I am so glad that You have revealed Yourself as the Rock of salvation. Thank you that I don't have to try to save myself; I trust in You. And thank You that, better than any other rock, you are the most sure and unmovable foundation for life and hope. Nevertheless, and as You already know, I am facing storms right now, and I'm tempted to try to manage them on my own. Please help me trust You in the midst of these difficulties. Please help me experience more of Your peace in this time, even right now. Rather than pulling away from You, I want to remain in You, drawing courage, strength, and hope from You. Please help me do that. By Your Spirit's work in my life, surprise me with some fruit of obedience that comes only from You and not from my own efforts. And I will praise You for it. Amen.

Episodes 5 and 6

Opening Prayer

To open our Bible study on The Chosen, let us read from the Gospel of Matthew 6:19-21.

"Do not lay up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust destroy and where thieves break in and steal, but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust destroys and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

Today we are covering episodes 5 and 6: *Delight as Jesus Delights* and *Ask How Jesus Asks*.

Episode 5 - Delight as Jesus Delights (Matthew 9)

Biblical Characters - Jesus, Simon Peter, woman with hemorrhaging, Jairus, Jairus' daughter

Synopsis. The episode begins with Eden bleeding, like Veronica, then having a miscarriage. Simon Peter and Gaius work on the broken cistern. We learn that Gaius has two children, one of whom is a servant child. Simon tells Gaius the prophecy of Jeremiah that the Jews rejected the living water for broken cisterns that do not hold water. Gaius points out that if this broken cistern is the fulfillment of the prophecy, then the Jews must have done something wrong. Jairus finds Jesus in Eden's home and begs for Jesus to heal his very sick daughter. Jesus draws a great crowd while going to Jairus' house. Veronica touches Jesus' garment and is healed. Afterwards, Jesus asks Simon Peter, James, and John to enter Jairus' house with him. There, Jesus brings the dead girl back to life.

Notable quotes:

"I know who you are." (Jairus the Pharisee)

"I know who you are." (Akiva the Pharisee)

- *Although the phrase is the same, what is the difference in meaning?*
- *Did Jesus come to send peace on earth? Why will Jesus divide the world?*

Episode Talking Points

In this episode, we see Jesus' followers experience varying types of delight. Zebedee and some of the disciples celebrate their new found interest in olive oil production. Gaius and Simon are building an unlikely friendship. And the Apostles are eager to bask in the company of Jesus again. God wants us to enjoy relationships, new discoveries, teamwork, a good meal, a thriving community, and a home at the end of the day. God wants us to enjoy the world He's made for us. But more than these earthly enjoyments, God wants us to enjoy Him. Our relationship with God is our greatest treasure. God wants us to be eager to spend time with Him, listening to His

word, and being filled with joy and peace after being in His presence. God wants our hearts and minds to be transformed so we see the world the way He sees the world.

Practicing religion can be easier than pursuing relationships. We find comfort leaning on our own behavior, following a set of rules and regulations, and doing what we must do to keep in good standing with God. But Jesus teaches that behavior is not the endgame. To be true followers, we must repent, transform our hearts and minds, and place our relationship with the bridegroom, Jesus, as the endgame. No one has ever been good enough to earn their own salvation.

- *What do you find easier: attending church on Sunday or performing works of mercy?*
- *How can religious practices sometimes get in the way of building one's relationship with God?*

Jesus said, "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest....For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light." (Matthew 11:28-30). Unfortunately, it is common for us to practice religion and hold tightly to our burdens....practice religion but grasp what is earthly, not heavenly. Give to Jesus your burdens, and take up your relationship with God. Delight in God's creation. Delight in God's mercy. Delight in your faith. Delight in your worship. Delight in your participation in God's kingdom work.

Raising someone from the dead is the greatest of miracles, performed only three times by Elijah and Elisha, who are viewed as the greatest prophets since Moses. What other proof do you need that Jesus was sent by God? But Jesus instructs those present not to tell anyone.

- *Why did Jesus tell the mourners that the girl was sleeping?*
- *Why did Jesus tell them to not tell anyone?*
- *Why did Jesus choose only Peter, James, and John to witness it?*

[Watch - [Veronica healed](#) 34:00 - 38:30]

For whatever you do to the least of my brothers, you have done to me.

- *Have you ever done an action that would have delighted Jesus so much that his response to you would be, "You have blessed me today"?*
- *Is not having enough faith the reason we become or stay sick? Why not?*

Reading

Let's read from 1 John 1-5:

Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well. This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. In fact, this is love for God: to keep his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith.

Who is it that overcomes the world? Only the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

Episode 5 prayer: Lord Jesus, You are such an awesome, selfless, loving, merciful, kind, generous, patient, perfect, powerful Savior. You are worthy of worship for who You are. And You have given me so many good things! Salvation from sin and the hope of eternity with You are bigger than I sometimes grasp. But even here, in the midst of my struggles, I recognize that I have many, many delights. My home, clothing, and food. My history and skills, my job and my hobbies. My family and friends, neighbors and coworkers. And, of course, Your Spirit within me. You are worthy of praise and thanks for all these things—-they are gifts from You. Thank You. Amen.

Episode 6 - Ask Because Jesus Tells You To (Luke 7)

Biblical Characters - Jesus, Pilate, Disciples

Synopsis. The episode opens with Pilate's wife dreaming about a snake attacking Jesus, and she warns Pilate about being too harsh. When Atticus catches up Pilate on the events in Capernaum, Pilate says he enjoys being in an unimportant, backwater territory of the empire during a time of peace. The Disciples debate whether they need weapons and combat training to protect Jesus. Word comes back that the preaching by the Disciples caused riots in the Decapolis, brother against brother. Simon the Zealot confronts the Zealots who are hunting him. Jesus returns to town, and the Zealots see Jesus perform more healings. Deviating from orders, Gaius begins to help the pilgrims. Gaius even pulls a sword on a Pharisee who is hassling Jesus. Disciples from John the Baptist ask Jesus if he is the true messiah. Jesus shares a touching moment with Shula and Barnaby. Eden informs Simon Peter that she was pregnant, but lost the baby. The episode ends with Simon Peter asking God, "Why? Why?"

Notable quote: "I joined the order to fight for the messiah's coming, and he is here."
(Simon the Zealot)

In this episode, we learn more about asking God.

Episode Talking Points

There is a lot in this episode.

In the 16th Century, St John of the Cross coined the phrase, "the dark night of the soul". The phrase describes a crisis of faith or a difficult, painful period in one's life when it seems God does not exist. The Book of Job is about this experience. St Teresa of Calcutta revealed that even she experienced it. In this episode, we are seeing some of the disciples experience it: John the Baptist, Simon Peter. In later episodes, we'll see other characters experience it. Spoiler alert: Jesus also will experience it.

- *Have you ever experienced the "dark night of the soul"?*
- *What actions can help you through such an experience?*

Jesus was not the kind of messiah people were expecting. We've talked about this before, but this episode brings it to the front. Simon the Zealot confronts the Zealots saying the Zealots were seeking the wrong kind of messiah. Perhaps Simon's Zealot training allowed him to understand Jesus' message before the others? Think about it: God the Creator has an army of angels and has the power over life and death. No human power can withstand the power of God. Thus, why would the Messiah need a human army to bring about the kingdom of God? The Messiah, the Son of God, is here. Instead of preparing for battle, we need to ask for mercy for our sins.

Jesus also was not the kind of messiah John the Baptist expected. John was still in jail, and he may have been experiencing the dark night of the soul. The messiah was to set the captives free and declare favor of the Lord. John was doing God's will and preparing the way. Why then is he still in jail? Where is this kingdom of God? Like Job's cry to God, nothing was making sense anymore. This could be the reason John sent his followers to ask Jesus whether he was the true messiah.

- *Have you ever ask God, "Where is your kingdom?"*
- *What signs show you the kingdom is here, but it is still under construction?*

Jesus says in this episode, "As you see what is happening to those around you, as you see the lives being changed by repentance and salvation, do not ignore the evidence of the kingdom of God."

Too many Christians today also expect a different messiah. Jesus' message is to repent and believe. However, many Christians say "believe" but omit the "repent". They embrace the loving God while holding onto their sinful lives. They claim Jesus as their Lord and Savior while not changing their minds and hearts to live the Beatitudes. To them, belief alone will save them. But being a citizen of God's kingdom means embracing the symbol of the kingdom: the cross. It means celebrating Christian holidays. It means performing works of mercy. It means worshipping God. Otherwise, you are just an individual, an alien, moving about the kingdom of God.

- *The kingdom of God is here. How do people know you are a citizen of God's kingdom and not just an individual living in it?*
- *Can one have faith in Jesus but not perform works of mercy?*

[Watch [Simon and Eden 1:04:50 - 1:08:50](#)]

One might forget that pregnancy tests are a modern invention. So, Eden might have been into her second trimester before Eden knew for sure that she was pregnant. So it is plausible Simon Peter did not know of the pregnancy due to being away on mission, and be the reason he did not ask Eden about her condition when he returned. A miscarriage makes a woman unclean for a period of time. So Eden and Veronica shared this feeling of uncleanliness together, shared the loneliness. But did Eden share in the delight of Veronica's healing?

- *How do you think Eden felt hearing people ask Jesus for help and seeing Veronica healed by Jesus, yet Jesus did not heal her to save her baby?*

- How do you think Simon Peter felt seeing Jesus heal strangers, heal gentiles, and even raise the dead, yet Jesus did not heal Eden to save their baby?

Both the Old and New Testament implore us to trust God. Jesus says to bring the most important and basic facts of our hearts and lives to the Lord, especially our confusion, our doubt, and our fear. We can trust God to handle our questions with care, kindness, patience, and truth. Although discernment may not be easy, trust that asking God is the surest path to finding your answer.

Read Matthew 7:7-11

"Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him!"

Episode 6 prayer: Dear Jesus, Thank You that You are not afraid of my questions and fears and doubts. Forgive me for the times I've tried to lean on my own wisdom, courage, and confidence when I should've been turning to You, Thank You that you've invited me to bring my problems and questions to You. And thank You for the encouragement of Your response to John the Baptist. Please help me look to Scripture for the answers You've already provided, and help me trust You for the answers I'm still waiting for. Please grant me the patient faith I need to accept what You say as loving, trustworthy, and true. Amen.

Episodes 7 and 8

Opening Prayer

To open our Bible study on The Chosen, let's read the Parable of the Banquet from the Gospel of Luke 14:16-23:

"A man once gave a great banquet and invited many. And at the time for the banquet he sent his servant to say to those who had been invited, 'Come, for everything is now ready.' But they all alike began to make excuses. The first said to him, 'I have bought a field, and I must go out and see it. Please have me excused.' And another said, 'I have bought five yoke of oxen, and I go to examine them. Please have me excused.' And another said, 'I have married a wife, and therefore I cannot come.' So the servant came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house became angry and said to his servant, 'Go out quickly to the streets and lanes of the city, and bring in the poor and crippled and blind and lame.... Go out to the highways and hedges and compel people to come in, that my house may be filled.'"

Today we are covering episodes 7 and 8: *Welcome Who Jesus Welcomes* and *Trust Jesus All the Time*.

Episode 7 - Welcome Who Jesus Welcomes (Luke 14, Matthew 1, Mark 7)

Biblical Characters - Jesus, Disciples, Deaf Man, Decapolis Crowd

Synopsis. The episode opens with the joyful Jewish celebration of Purim which celebrates God saving the Jews from Haman's genocide as told in the Book of Esther. While others celebrate, Simon Peter is smashing items in his rage. Later, Simon Peter meets Gaius' family who mistake Simon for the Jewish healer. Mary Magdalene meets with Matthew to talk about his prayer tassels she found. In a flashback of Matthew working as a tax collector, Matthew meets an old man who has bought all the debt of his children. The old man knows this act will sacrifice himself but will free his children. The old man gives Matthew his last object of value, his prayer tassels, and says he is confident Matthew will someday learn the value of his gift. Jesus and the Apostles set off for Decapolis without Simon Peter and John, but Jesus tells John to bring Simon since Simon's presence is crucial to the success of the mission. In the Decapolis, Jesus heals a deaf man and meets with the leaders of the Decapolis factions.

Notable quotes:

"Because sometimes, God sends a dove." (Mary Magdalene)

- *What does Mary mean by "sends a dove"?*
- *Has God ever sent you a "dove"?*

Episode Talking Points

The theme of this episode is salvation. Salvation for who? God's promise to Abraham was that through Abraham, God would bless all the nations. That is, through Abraham's descendants, God will bring salvation to both Jew and Gentile. This is why

Jesus welcomed religious and non-religious, righteous and sinners, rich and poor, young and old, men and women, Jews and non-Jews. Jesus doesn't turn away anyone. There is only one God, one Creator, the god of everyone. All are welcome to the Father's banquet, the kingdom of God.

To better understand this episode, one needs to know about the Decapolis and the Jew's expectations of salvation. The Decapolis was a region of 10 Greek cities within the borders of old Israel. As the episode portrays, it was a metropolis of mostly gentiles, but it did have a Jewish population. Jews often talked about the sufferings of their people. But God's hears and know their suffering, and one day will send the messiah to end the suffering. They knew the messiah will save the Jews first..., then will save all the nations. Hence, the Jews viewed it as unfair for their messiah to be spreading the blessing to gentiles, too. They had suffered for God, not the gentiles. But Jesus talks about bringing salvation **through** the Jews, not salvation **for** the Jews.

- *What is the difference between salvation through the Jews vs salvation for the Jews?*
- *How are the Jews behaving like the older son in the prodigal son parable?*
- *How are the messiah's actions reconciling the broken families of Cain and Abel?*

Pay attention to Matthew's genealogy of Jesus. There are four gentile women named, hence Jesus' bloodline was not 100% Jewish. Matthew was pointing out that God used both Jews and Gentiles to bring forth Jesus. Jesus wants us to be tolerant of others: to be gracious, kind, patient, loving, generous, and attentive to people's needs just as Jesus, God, is to us.

Our welcome of other people, our treatment of them, our way we respond to them is to be independent of their attitudes, their beliefs, and their actions toward us. And unfortunately, Jesus promised that we'd be hated just like He was. But thanks be to God, He is not asking us to welcome others with our own strength. When we surrender our lives to the Lord, the Holy Spirit possesses our hearts, enabling us to treat others the way God does. And God works through us to gather more people to His heavenly banquet. And this all starts with us welcoming as Jesus welcomes.

In the Book of Esther and story of Purim, God is everywhere present but the book itself never mentions God. It symbolizes that even if you cannot see God, trust that God is at work. That is, even when you are in the darkness of the soul, God is at work. Trust in God.

- *Why does Jesus tell John that Simon Peter is critical to the success of the mission?*
- *What does Simon Peter have to learn about welcoming who Jesus welcomes?*

Let's turn our attention to the old man and Matthew. The scene is too long for us to watch it all. The old man tells Matthew, the tax collector, that he has purchased the debt of his family and children so that they can be free. Mathew says human sacrifice is against their religion. The old man replies that symbolic self-sacrifice is not. The old man gives Matthew the only thing he has of value, prayer tassels from the first Exile, and says someday Matthew will understand how precious this gift is.

- *What is the old man foreshadowing?*

- *Did the scene help make sense of the concept that Jesus paid for our sins? That he ransomed captive Israel?*

[Watch - [Mary Magdalene and Matthew 32:30 - 35:52](#)]

- *How was the old man the “dove” that saved Matthew?*
- *Do you believe that God still steps in?*

Reading

Let's read from the Gospel of Luke 6:32-26.

“If you love those who love you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners love those who love them. And if you do good to those who do good to you, what benefit is that to you? For even sinners do the same. And if you lend to those from whom you expect to receive, what credit is that to you? Even sinners lend to sinners, to get back the same amount. But love your enemies, and do good, and lend, expecting nothing in return, and your reward will be great, and you will be sons of the Most High, for he is kind to the ungrateful and the evil. Be merciful even as your Father is merciful.”

Episode 7 prayer: Dear Master in heaven, Thank You for sending Jesus for my salvation. Thank You for welcoming me into Your kingdom, into Your family, and to Your banquet in eternity. Forgive me for the times I fall into pride, acting like I somehow deserve to treat others like I'm better than them. Thank You that Your presence is always part of my life even now by Your Spirit. And by Your Spirit, please raise up within me a Christlike love that welcomes others. May I respond lovingly to the needs of those around me, even with the strength to love those who are my enemies, so that they too might come to faith in You. Amen.

Episode 8 - Trust Jesus All the Time

Biblical Characters - Jesus, Disciples, Decapolis Crowd

Synopsis. The episode opens with King David hearing the beginning of Psalm 77. Then, the scene switches to Jesus telling parables to the Apostles in attempt for them to have faith in Him, in God, and that His message is for everyone, not just the Jews. Jesus heals a man, then begins to teach to the Decapolis crowd. Eden confides with Mary Magdalene, Zebedee and his wife that she is desperate and angry that Jesus gives healing and joy to others but not to her: losing her baby and marital difficulties. Eden is advised to see Rabbi Yusef who recommends that she read Psalm 77. Shmuel learns that Jesus has gone to the Decapolis, then Shmuel goes to find him. Jesus feeds the 5000 with 5 loaves and 2 fishes which makes Simon Peter desperate and angry at Jesus. Shmuel and the other Pharisees arrive after the crowds have eaten and hear that Jesus said salvation is for Jews and Gentiles. This news makes them furious. Jesus tells the Apostles to row back to Galilee without him. Then, Jesus walks with

Shmuel. The Apostles find themselves rowing in a terrible storm, then they see Jesus walking on the water. Simon Peter walks to Jesus on the water. At the same time, Eden is being cleansed in the cistern. Both Simon and Eden go under the water. Jesus grabs Simon before he drowns. Simon clutches Jesus and begs repeatedly, "Don't let me go, please!" Eden comes up from the water praying, "Please, don't let him go." The episode ends with King David hearing the end of Psalm 77.

Notable quotes:

- "The rabbi I want to talk to isn't here."(Eden)
- "He will take care of it if He wants to." (Simon Peter)
- "I'm afraid that He will choose them." (Simon Peter)
- "Lord, don't let me go." (Simon Peter)
- "Lord, don't let him go." (Eden)
- "Just keep your eyes on Me." (Jesus)

In this episode, we learn to trust Jesus all the time.

Episode Talking Points

For many, this is the most spiritually moving episode so far.

This episode explores the meaning of faith. Is faith believing? Or is faith trusting? Jesus says the size of one's faith does not matter. It is in whom one has faith that is important. The Apostles fully believed that Jesus is the messiah. But did the Apostles fully trust in Jesus? Throughout this episode, Simon Peter firmly expresses the belief that Jesus is God. When they need to feed the crowd, Simon Peter is the only one not worried. Simon says, "He will take care of it if He wants to."

- *How is Simon Peter showing more than belief in Jesus with these words?*
- *Why is Simon Peter afraid that Jesus will choose "them"?*

The Bible reflects real life with all its joys and sorrows. The Bible does not whitewash human life. Amongst the great joy can be periods of great pain, suffering, and desperation that can lead to questioning whether God exists. And if God does exist, is He actually a loving God? Eden believes Jesus is the messiah, but does Eden trust Jesus? Eden tells Mary Magdalene, "The rabbi I want to talk to isn't here."

- *To where does Mary Magdalene advise her to go to hear Jesus' words?*
- *In times of trouble, do you seek Jesus' words? Where do you go?*

So many times, we place our hope in things that disappoint: money, relationships, jobs, success. Jesus is the hope that does not disappoint. The Bible teaches that sometimes God allows pain and suffering to happen to us because we need to surrender to Him. The dark night of the soul leads us be closer to God, more willing to do God's will instead of our will. Trusting Jesus all the time sounds great but proves to be difficult even for the Apostles when they were asked to travel to new places, preach to all kinds of people, when the crowds grew, when people got angry, when people went hungry, when people made accusations, and when people killed Jesus. Trusting Jesus was challenging for those who lived with Jesus and experienced the awesomeness of God

firsthand. So it should not surprise you if you find it challenging. Life is hard, and hard things challenge our faith. Hard things can cause our faith to waver and wane.

Dallas Jenkins, the Director, says he was experiencing the dark night of the soul about his directing career when Psalm 77 saved him. The Psalm begins as a lament to the Lord. Has God changed? Has God abandoned me? Has God's love ended? Then, the Psalm changes to remember the great deeds God has done. God is faithful. God never abandons us. These hard things can cause our faith to grow because God uses all things for a greater good and for His glory. That's the promise of the narrow road that leads to life: God has a plan for you, plan for good, not evil.

- *Did you know Psalm 77 before this episode, or has the significance to you changed?*

[Watch walking on water 1:08:00 - 1:12:52]

- *How were these scenes like a baptism for these two characters?*

- *Have you ever prayed, "Lord, don't let me go"?*

- *Have you kept your eyes on Jesus even in life's storms?*

Read Psalm 77

Let's read Psalm 77 and reflect on the times in your life when your questioned God's love for you.

I cry aloud to God, aloud to God, and he will hear me. In the day of my trouble I seek the Lord; in the night my hand is stretched out without wearying; my soul refuses to be comforted. When I remember God, I moan; when I meditate, my spirit faints. You hold my eyelids open; I am so troubled that I cannot speak. I consider the days of old, the years long ago. I said, "Let me remember my song in the night; let me meditate in my heart." Then my spirit made a diligent search: "Will the Lord spurn forever, and never again be favorable? Has his steadfast love forever ceased? Are his promises at an end for all time? Has God forgotten to be gracious? Has he in anger shut up his compassion?" Then I said, "I will appeal to this, to the years of the right hand of the Most High." I will remember the deeds of the Lord; yes, I will remember your wonders of old. I will ponder all your work, and meditate on your mighty deeds. Your way, O God, is holy. What god is great like our God? You are the God who works wonders; you have made known your might among the peoples. You with your arm redeemed your people, the children of Jacob and Joseph. When the waters saw you, O God, when the waters saw you, they were afraid; indeed, the deep trembled. The clouds poured out water; the skies gave forth thunder; your arrows flashed on every side. The crash of your thunder was in the whirlwind; your lightnings lighted up the world; the earth trembled and shook. Your way was through the sea, your path through the great waters; yet your footprints were unseen. You led your people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.

Episode 8 prayer: Dear Jesus, Thank You for coming to earth, not only to die for my sins and rise again to secure my salvation, but also for living a perfect life. Your life displayed wisdom in the face of confusion, courage in the face of hardship, peace in

the face of difficulty, and faithfulness in the face of despair. You understand the storms of life that I find myself in today, and I recognize that You're Lord of my storms. I do believe in You, but help my unbelief. Please make me more and more like You so that I can live in the midst of these storms with more of Your character. When I need to step out in faith and take a stand for You, give me the wisdom, courage, peace, and faithfulness to do it with my hope set on You.

Conclusion

This concludes Season 3. Jesus continues on His journey to Jerusalem with his Disciples in Season 4. Season 4 includes the resolution of John the Baptists's story, the renaming of Simon, the rising anxiety among the Jewish and Roman leaders, more miracles including the raising of Lazarus, and more questions about the messiah and the point of Jesus' message.