

EVERY DAY WITH JESUS (December 14-20)

Savor a segment of the gospel each day so that you may...

“...grow in the grace and knowledge of our LORD and Savior Jesus Christ.” “II Peter 3:18)

MONDAY, December 14 **Please read: John 3:22-35** **Background:** From verse 24 it appears that for a brief time the ministry of John the Baptist and the ministry of Jesus were occurring at the same time and even in proximity to each other. From verse 31 to the end of the chapter it seems the words are commentary of John the evangelist and not quotes from John the Baptist. **Questions:** 1. What concern do John the Baptist’s followers apparently have? 2. What is John’s feeling about this? 3. What can we present day followers of Jesus apply to this concerning ourselves and our congregation? **Possible Answers:** 1. John the Baptist’s followers no doubt loved him. They are concerned that his popularity is rapidly being surpassed by that of Jesus. 2. John was not jealous but joyful! He reminds his followers that he was the way preparer not the Way. Jesus is the “Bridegroom”. The church, that is the bride, belongs rightly to Him as the gift from His Father in heaven. 3. Our purpose is to humbly and joyfully lead people to Jesus. Our concern is not at all our own popularity or praise or even the outward growth of an organization. We want Jesus to be praised and people to be joined to Him! **Prayer:** Dear Jesus, like John the Baptist, our joy is complete when You are honored as people become “Your bride” by believing in You as their Savior. AMEN!

TUESDAY, December 15 **Please read: John 4:1-26** **Background:** “The sixth hour” in John’s timing is noon. “Nice girls” didn’t go to draw water from the well in the heat of the day. “Religious” Jewish men would not be talking with a Samaritan woman (at least not in the light of day). Jesus revealed Himself to her as the Messiah because her expectation of the Messiah was valid. She looked to the Messiah to explain everything. **Questions:** 1. Why did Jesus “have to go through Samaria”. 2. Jesus is the Good News and He is perfect at sharing it. What are some things you and I can learn from this particular example that will help us to share the message of eternal life with others. 3. Again what do we see about Jesus’ knowledge of people? 4. What is the mark of true (acceptable to God) worship? **Possible Answers:** 1. Jesus had to go through Samaria not because there wasn’t another route to Galilee but because the salvation of a sinful woman and her community and country depended upon it. 2. He was always ready to witness and looking for the opportunity to do so. Jesus did not turn away from anyone no matter how “checkered” their past. He looked for a segue, that is, a chance to smoothly connect a spiritual message to an ordinary situation. He refers to what He has to offer in glowing terms that might make a person “thirsty” to know more. He doesn’t flatter nor does He avoid the unpleasantness of our sinful condition. He straightforwardly tells it like it is about sin and salvation. 3. Jesus knows everything about everybody. We need to ask Him to help us to know others and to understand how best to communicate with them. 4. “True worship” is “worship the Father in Spirit and in truth”. (This is a profound statement with deep meaning. Certainly it includes the thought of being guided and motivated by the Spirit to be Christ-centered in worship and to see to it that the content of our worship is “the whole truth and nothing but the truth”. **Prayer:** Jesus, You desired a relationship with the Samaritan woman and with me, a relationship with You as the Savior and us as the saved. Use me to achieve a relationship between You and many others. Amen!

WEDNESDAY, December 16:**Please read: John 4:27-38** **Questions:** 1. What significance is there in the woman’s action of leaving her jar and going back to the townsfolk? 2. What was first in the life of Jesus? 3. What kind of “vision” did Jesus want His disciples to have? **Possible Answers:** 1. It’s always the same story, saved people want to save people. For the moment she forgot everything else except the joy in knowing Jesus and the desire for others to know Him too! 2. Jesus was concerned about doing the Father’s will. Jesus ate to live, He didn’t live to eat. While He, as a genuine human being, needed food to sustain His body and health, seizing this spiritual opportunity was more important. 3. Jesus wanted His disciples to see the world through His eyes – seeing sinners who needed to hear about their Savior **Prayer:** Dear Jesus, by Your Spirit, help me to imitate You the way the Samaritan woman did – she dropped everything to tell others about You. AMEN!

THURSDAY, December 17: Please read: John 4:39-42 Background: This “Samaritan woman” had a lot of “baggage” in her town – five previous husbands and now a live-in lover. **Questions:** 1. How did God’s amazing grace make this woman into an effective evangelist?! 2. How can you and I identify with the people to whom we witness? 3. What kind of harvest did the LORD gather through her? 4. What kind of harvest will He gather through you? **Possible Answers:** 1. She was what someone has called “a wounded healer”. Everyone in town knew what she had been. She didn’t hide the reality of her sin but confessed it (and no doubt didn’t continue in it any longer!). 2. Humbly we need to honestly see and admit our own need for a Savior while assuring other sinners that our Savior is their Savior too. In other words, convict ourselves with them of being sinners; and, comfort them with ourselves in the good news of God’s forgiveness in Jesus. 3. Many believed. 4. That remains to be seen! Prayerfully live your faith and give it away – see what happens. **Prayer:** LORD, help me to find encouragement from how You used the Samaritan woman so that I am free to unashamedly tell others about my Savior from sin and theirs. Amen!

FRIDAY, December 18: Please read: John 4:43-54 Background: “Two days!” Jesus stayed in that Samaritan town for two whole days! Wouldn’t that have been sweet?! **Questions:** 1. What had the Galileans seen of Jesus in Jerusalem that made them interested in Him when He arrived back in Galilee? 2. The “royal official” went through what one might call several stages of faith. Can you find those stages? **Possible Answers:** 1. Jesus’ cleansing of the temple was an astoundingly bold act, it was a proclamation of Himself as the Messiah sent from God. 2. First He believed Jesus could heal his son. Next, after Jesus told him his son would be healed, he believed Jesus’ promise. Then, after the healing took place, he and his entire family came to saving faith in Jesus as the promised Messiah. **Prayer:** Dear Jesus, embolden me to come to You with everything that I desire for others and myself. Help me to trust in Your love and to believe that You can do everything and will always do what is best in answer to my prayers. Amen!

SATURDAY, December 19: Please read: John 5:1-15 Background: In an effort to explain the man’s words to Jesus in versed 7, some people in the early new testament times seem to have created a story explaining the “stirring” of the water. The best and earliest manuscripts do not include this explanation. Honesty and integrity require that they therefore not be included as a part of the text. **Questions:** 1. Is there any significance to the fact that the man had been an invalid for 38 years? 2. What motivated Jesus to act on the invalid’s behalf? 3. The man had been delivered from physical evil, what worse evil was he to guard against? **Possible Answers:** 1. The length of time that he had been an invalid shows that this was not some phony miracle. 2. Love. Love. Love. Love is the motive for everything that Jesus did and does – love for God (who deserves it), love for us (who need it). 3. His soul was in peril because he was about to be assaulted by opponents of Jesus. He might be tempted to abandon his infant trust in Jesus. **Prayer:** Savior, thank You for Your compassion to the invalid and to me the helpless sinner. You delivered him and saved me! AMEN!

SUNDAY, December 20: Please read: John 5:16-23 Questions: 1. It’s a very interesting thought! For whom was the 3rd commandment’s prohibition about working on the Sabbath Day given and to whom did it not apply? 2. What was Jesus boldly claiming when He said, “...*I too am working*”?! 3. How does Jesus prove the validity of His verbal claim? 4. What is the Father’s will for all people with respect to His Son? **Possible Answers:** 1. The commandment was given to all men. It did not apply to God. God “works” every day supplying the needs of His creation. 2. Clearly, Jesus was claiming to be the Son of the Father, equal to Him. 3. Jesus shows His claim to be God is valid when He, with His own power, does the same things the Father does. 4. Verses 22,23 give us the answer! **Prayer:** Jesus, I know that together with the Father and the Spirit You are indeed God. Help me to honor You before God and to confess You before men. AMEN!