

Walk Thru the Bible

THE YEAR OF THE BIBLE

New Testament: Part 1

Dr. Matt Cassidy --- August 30, 2020

Good morning, Grace Covenant Church! I come to you with some good news. We're going to meet together in two weeks. We are regathering on September 13. We are very much looking forward to that event! We've been doing all sorts of things to prepare for that. We have a new audio system, we have a new video system with four brand new cameras, and then we installed a bipolar ionization air filtration system. I'm actually getting younger every moment that I'm staying here in this room. I'm sleeping here at night now. I feel like I'm fifty-nine all over again. Hmm ... that was a good year.

We have limited capacity for gathering together, so we need everyone to register early. We'll tell you a little more about that in just a second. You're going to need to wear your mask the entire time you'll be here, for the safety of other people and their friends that they go home to. And then, there will be no childcare these first few Sundays. We're looking to fire up our children's ministry. If you're wondering, *Hey, when will the children's ministry get started?*-- what you're really saying is, *How can I volunteer in the children's ministry?* Because the children's ministry—actually the church—is run by volunteers. And at this point we're getting a lot of the systems up and running. We just need volunteers to do that. Maybe you could contact the church and see how you could play a part in that.

SEPTEMBER 6: TEST SERVICE

Let me tell you a little more about those few things that are missing. We have two things left. One, we have to hire a makeup artist for me because of the new cameras. And two, we need to learn how to work our registration system. So next week we're inviting everyone to our dress rehearsal; you have a chance to be part of our live studio audience. So, this is what we need you to do. If you want to come next week why don't you try out our reservation system? It goes like

this. You text to make a reservation here. You text the word “INVITE” to these numbers on the screen there. I don’t know how to do it. You text “INVITE” to those numbers. Then it’s going to send you to some place and then you’ll fill out some forms to make sure you’re okay. Make sure you fill out all the forms until it’s all the way confirmed that you registered. That will help you when you come next Sunday.

Text “INVITE” to 737.214.4747

So, if you want to come next Sunday and give it a try—even right now, if you want--text “INVITE” to that number and you can come next week. And then in two weeks we’re inviting the whole city.

Now this week is a really great week. Actually, this week starts twenty years ago. Twenty years ago, our executive pastor Ray Anderson and I said, *What are we going to do about what we’ll be teaching here at Grace Covenant Church? Why don’t we come up with a core curriculum?* And so, Ray and I got some smart people in a room and said, *Why don’t we have a scope and sequence, from everything from the pulpit all the way down to the children’s ministry curriculum? Let’s have a plan.*

And so, the men and women in the room—we stole from other places. We went to seminary notebooks and looked at their curriculum. What does it look like to get a masters in Bible study—and MBS—a Masters in Biblical Studies? And we’ve been using that as our core curriculum from the pulpit for the last nineteen years or so.

Here’s how the seminary does it and here’s how we do it. You start the first year with a big picture—surveys. We do that here. It starts very broad and gets narrower with each kind of discipline. Then it goes to a medium level. Those are studies of epics like the United Kingdom or the life of Christ. And then narrower still where you’ll maybe do a study on a single book of the Bible or a single topic that you might want to know about, like evangelism. And then finally, it can get to a microscopic—not wide angle, but microscopic—where you spend time studying just one word. And here at Grace we had an eleven-week study on one Hebrew word. It changes people’s lives—it’s the word *tzadik*, or righteousness. People end up getting that tattooed and the end of that thing sometimes. It’s worth it.

And that's what we do here at Grace. That's how you do it in seminary, that's what we do here at Grace, and sometimes the seminary will take you to an Israel trip. We do that too—we go to Israel! We're going to Israel in 2021. We'd love you to join us in November. You go online and sign up.

Now when I was in grad school my first year, 1983, I was taking a Survey of the Old Testament class my first week. And we did a thing called Walk Thru the Bible. It was an international ministry. We met at a church and spent one day just learning the entire story of the Old Testament. Because when you pick up the Bible, sometimes it's really hard to know what the big idea is, what the storyline is, where to start reading. Walk Thru the Bible was invented to answer just those kinds of questions.

We took a lunch break that Saturday morning and I went to the instructor and said, "This is revolutionizing my Bible reading. I want to become an instructor."

He said, "Graduate, and then give us a call."

I did. And in 1985 when I graduated from grad school, that was the first phone number I called. I became an instructor and served at Walk Thru the Bible for eleven years. I traveled all over the world teaching the Bible, sometimes around Texas for sure, but foreign countries like Louisiana, Arkansas, Boston, and even Moscow. Anyway, as I was working here at the same time, we started doing the Walk Thru, Old Testament and New Testament, here at our church. And we still do that about every five to seven years.

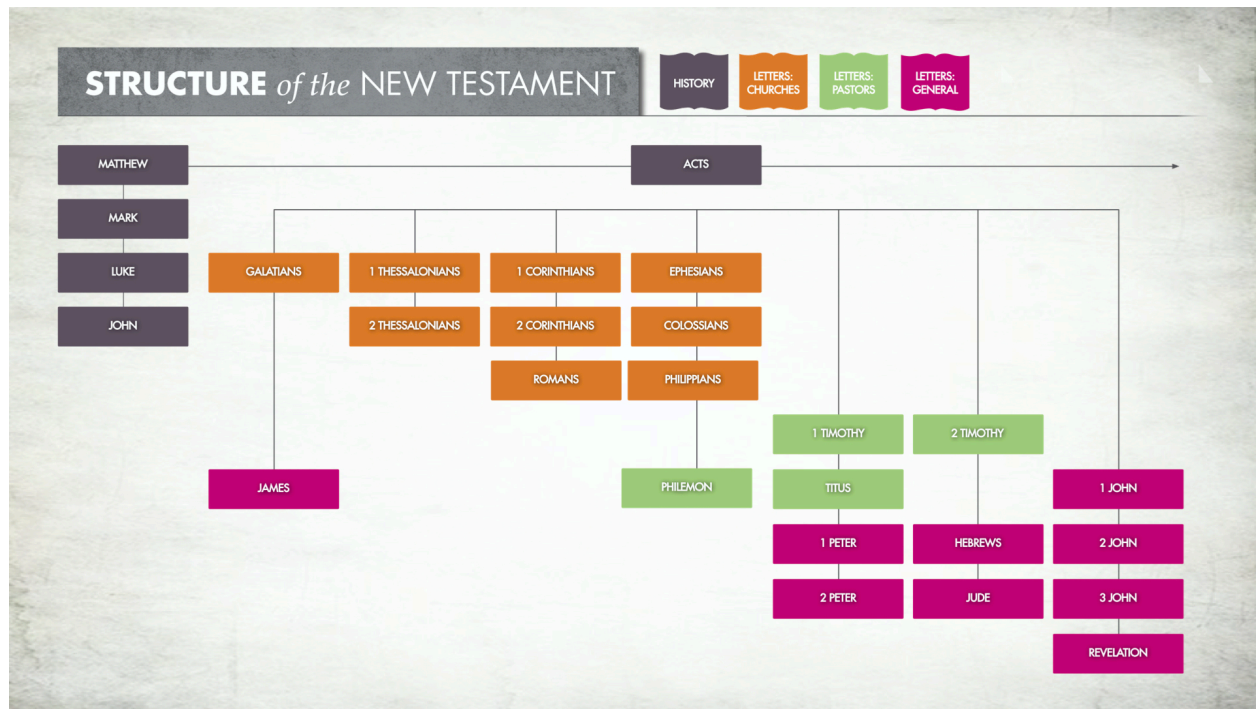


THE NEW TESTAMENT

The Year of The Bible

All that to say that we're doing one today. We're doing a year through the Bible because of the Bible survey. And then in January we did the Old Testament Walk Thru the Bible seminar and we had over 1,200 people attend that. We were going to do a New Testament Walk Thru the Bible seminar this Sunday so we know the New Testament, and then COVID (stupid COVID). So, we're going to do it in two, maybe three, parts. This will be part one, and we're going to enjoy that.

The New Testament itself in the Walk Thru is broken down into the life of Jesus and then the birth of the Church and then the expansion of the Church, the missions of the Church. Today we're just going to look at the life of Jesus Christ.



Now before we do, I want you to see the structure of how the New Testament is written. Two-thirds of the way through the Bible you're in the New Testament. And the overall structure looks like this, as you can see on your screens or on your TV set. There are different genres of literature, and so the genre of history is going through and those are the biographies of Jesus and the history of the Church, the Book of Acts.



Then there are letters; the way we say “letters” is “epistles.” “Epistles” means “letters,” so there are letters to churches and letters to the pastors and letters in general. The way they look over time is this chart, and you’ll get that when you come to the Walk Thru seminar and we hand out the books, and that will help you read through your Bible in order—the New Testament.



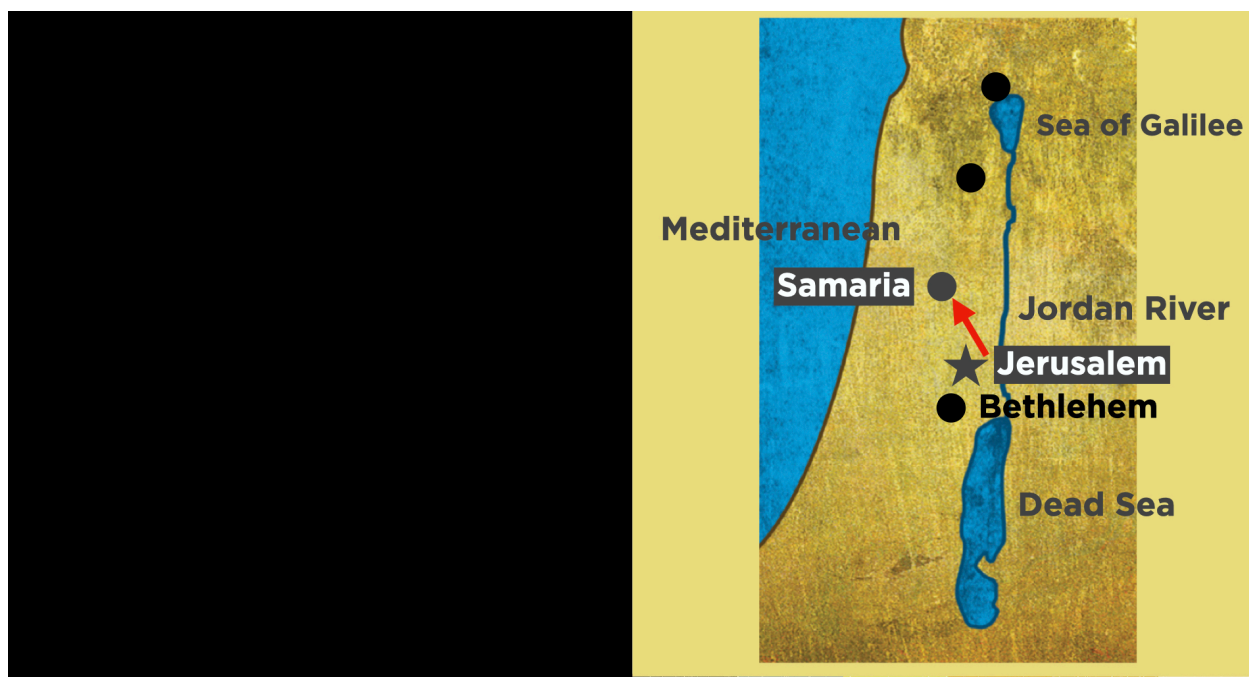
When we study the New Testament, it's very important for us to know the geography, because the story itself is taking place geographically. So, what I'd like to do now is show you the geography of the life of Jesus. We're going at this pretty fast, but here's the geography of the Middle East itself, and then zoom in on Israel.



Let me tell you about four bodies of water that will be very helpful to give us boundaries. The first one is the **Sea of Galilee**. That's at the top. It's seven miles by fourteen miles. It's a beautiful lake. It's not really a sea—it's the Sea of Galilee, but it's a lake. And it's the most pleasant body of water that you're going to see in the Promised Land.

Flowing out of there heading south is the **Jordan River**. It's about sixty-five miles long. It's murky most of the time, and it drains into the lowest point on planet Earth, called the **Dead Sea**. It's dead because everything drains in and it can't drain out because there's nothing lower than that. And all the water evaporates and the Dead Sea is inundated with, actually, precious minerals. But nothing can live there.

The other body of water we need to know about is the **Mediterranean Sea** which gives Israel access to the rest of the world by sea. Primarily the land between the Mediterranean Sea and that boundary of the Jordan River is Israel. That's where Jesus is going to spend His life. And when we look at that, that's the area He will be traveling in.



Now what I'd like to do is teach you some cities or counties (in our vocabulary) in that Promised Land area. I'm going to be working my way from the north to the south. And for some of you that may have never seen a map because you're so young, that's going to be from the top of the page to the bottom of the page.

Now the reason I'm telling you that is because what we're going to do here when we study and learn the life of Jesus, I'm going to tell you from top to bottom, and then Jesus' life is going to go from bottom to top and then back from top to bottom. That's how I keep it straight in my mind.

So here we go, from the top down. **Capernaum**—it's a beautiful city on the north side of the Sea of Galilee where Jesus is going to spend most of His ministry. That's base camp for Him.

Below that is **Nazareth** where Jesus grew up as a young boy until He was an adult male.

Then as we come down on the left side there is **Samaria**. Samaria is a province, an area—it used to be the capital of the northern tribes of Israel after their civil war. You need to know that because the thoroughbred Jews resented the Samaritans.

As we come down there's **Jerusalem**, the eternal capital, the city of God. Jerusalem literally means "home of peace"—"shalom."

And then below that, just below that, about five miles or so, is that little town of **Bethlehem**.

So, there's the geography that we kind of need to know. Normally I would come down and make the floor map and enjoy that and show you where things were taking place, but I'm not able to do that because of our pandemic. But what I'd like to do now is show you how that works. And we're going to learn the life of Jesus Christ (up until the Passion Week) today. We'll learn it together and memorize it together.



It starts with Jesus coming here. This is the icon of His early years. And this birth was planned centuries before—no, I'm sorry—millennia before—before Jesus was ever born, going all the way back to the Garden of Eden, we find out that in the fall of mankind very early that what we broke, we can't fix. Only God can.

And so, God comes and makes a promise to Adam, a covenant to Adam, and He says, Listen, *I'm going to send a new Adam. And He will free you from the power of sin and restore you to the righteousness that you were designed to have.*

Later on, that promise was made clearer when God comes to Abraham and tells him, *I'm going to promise you this. I'm going to promise you a nation—so many descendants that they will be a nation. And I'm going to give you the promised land. And Abraham, you're going to be the root of the family tree that brings about a savior.*

A thousand years after that promise, God comes to David. And He says to King David, *One of your sons will be an eternal and everlasting king.* That was the plan.

Galatians 4:4

But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His son ...”

That’s why the Bible says in Galatians 4:4 “But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth His son ...” In the fullness of time...

And while Malachi puts an end to the Old Testament revelation, in the fullness of time God is using all sorts of people to get this birthday ready. As a matter of fact, He uses the Greek culture--Alexander the Useful, to make sure the Middle East and most of the West speaks one language, because when this baby announcement comes out they need to be able to read that. They need to be able to deliver these baby announcements, and so they use Herod—Herod the Hardhat. You know, Herod the Great—really? He’s just a construction guy that’s working for God to build roads everywhere so they could spread the good news with a common language.

And while all that is happening, while God is using Herod the Great and Alexander the Great, He’s putting in the heart of Israel hope. They’d lost hope. And God is stirring people up and He’s reminding them that His promises are true.

I want to stop before we get into the study itself and just say, you know, this is a strange time for our country. And I know a lot of people, many people, even in the church, are angry or scared. And some of it has to do with a lack of understanding about the omni-power, the all-power of a sovereign God. And God rules. He uses Alexander the Useful and Herod the Hardhat and Socrates to help us understand some philosophical things. And they’re just pawns on His chessboard.

Friends, right now—I mean every four years, two parties choose their best narcissist to represent them, I guess ... whatever. And we have to submit to that. It’s okay. They think they’re carving their names in stone and they’re going to make a huge difference. From a perspective from heaven, they’re just playing a part in God’s sovereign plan. Rest, don’t worry. Read your Bible—turn off your TV.

Birth

Our story begins in the south in Bethlehem—that little town of Bethlehem. Five hundred years before Jesus was born, Micah promised that the Savior would come to the city where David was born, Bethlehem. And we're going to remember that event by just remembering the word "Birth." Jesus was born. The first thing we remember in the life of Jesus is birth.

Now we have hand signs that go with every one of our little clichés or phrases, and the hand sign for birth is this: we're just going to rock this baby Jesus. So, you guys out there in the audience, say the word "Birth" and go like this. "Birth"—great, good job. That's one. We have about nine to go today.

Baptized by John

Not a lot is known about the life of Jesus, and so it's His birth, He's got a teenage story we won't find out a lot about, and then all of sudden he's thirty years old and He makes His appearance. This is His introduction, this is His coming forth, this is His debutante event: it's when He is baptized by John the Baptist.

Now John the Baptist is the last Old Testament prophet, and it's his job to introduce the world to the Messiah. "The Messiah" means "the promised one." And so, there's a morning when John the Baptist looks at Jesus and he says, "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world." And He climbs into the water where John is—John's out in the wilderness on the Jordan River—and he baptizes Jesus. And it's not like other baptisms. Because when Jesus is baptized, the Holy Spirit comes down upon Him like a dove. And then the Father up above says, "This is my Son in whom I am well pleased." Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and the last Old Testament prophet all say, *This is the man*.

We're going to remember that event--after we say "Birth", we're going to say "Baptized by John." This is what it looks like to be in the Walk Thru of the New Testament. "Birth"—let's do it—"Baptized by John." And the King has received His crown.

Tempted by Satan

But the knight in shining armor has never been tested. And so, the Spirit leads Him out to the desert in the wilderness where He has to prove Himself to be worthy. And He is tempted by

Satan. And Jesus does what Adam couldn't. The second Adam did in the wilderness what the first Adam couldn't do in a garden, the Garden of Eden. Jesus submits to the will of the Father and obeys Him all the way, all the while being hounded and tormented and tempted by Satan.

That event we're going to remember—it seems easy enough—by just saying “Tempted by Satan.” Say that out loud. Watch this—“Birth”—“Baptized by John”—“Tempted by Satan.”

Second Birth

Now Jesus has proved Himself. He's been initiated into the world and announced. He's shown Himself to be a warrior king. And then He goes to Jerusalem where He's going to start His ministry. That's where the first little ministry activity takes place, where he goes and he meets a man named Nicodemus.

Nicodemus is a religious leader. He's called a Pharisee. He's a scholar. He's an Old Testament scholar who knows the Word by heart. But he doesn't know what it means. And he knows there's something very special about Jesus. And so, he meets him in the night where he can have a quiet, private conversation with Jesus. And Jesus pulls out of him the things that he has memorized but doesn't understand. And it's a little bit unfortunate, because it's what can happen to us when we study our Bibles. Jesus says, *You have so much information but no understanding. You have so much knowledge but you have no wisdom. You know what it says but you don't know what it means or the difference it can make in your life.*

And so, He says to Nicodemus, *All this scholarly endeavor—you have to be born again. You see, just like you've been born once of the flesh, you must see that you have to have a supernatural, miraculous rebirth of the spirit.* Born again—it's kind of funny because it's a play on words in Greek. “Again” is also the word for “spirit,” so it's “born again,” “born of the spirit.” And Nicodemus needs to learn that, yeah, you have to be born again to have eternal life.

This is where we know that famous verse that we see at sporting events--John 3:16 is in this conversation. “For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believed in Him would not perish but have eternal life.” Second birth. You have to be born again to be right with God.

We're going to remember that conversation and we're going to say the words “Second birth” and we'll do this: “Second [two fingers on one hand held up] ... birth [cradling motion].”

Let's go back to the beginning. With the first birth we'll say, "Birth"—"Baptized by John"—"Tempted by Satan"—"Second birth."

Great. I'll tell you what we'll do. Here's a good thing to do. We have our live studio audience right here, and people at home: if you want to just stand up, we'll do those four hand signs together, look at each other, social distance ... whatever the rules are. Could you do that for just a few seconds? Start with "Birth" and go all the way to "Second birth."

[Pause]

Woman at the Well

Okay. You guys have a seat. Here's the strange thing. Now Jesus is ready to go. It is ministry time and He's going to head home to Nazareth and get that ministry started. But instead of heading dead north, He veers and takes a detour to Samaria. This is very strategic for Jesus, and it's a lesson for us.

When He goes to Samaria, it's not an easy way to go. It's actually kind of the badlands. It's dangerous for marauders, but also you're going into the country Samaria, and the Jews didn't like Samaritans. They kind of got mixed racially and their view of God was twisted and they weren't liked. They had a saying: better to be a dog than a Samaritan.

And so, Jesus goes there with His men and He's teaching them a lesson. And He meets a woman at high noon at the water well. No one gets water in the Middle East at noon. It's too hot. She's there by herself because she's a woman of shame. The men are sent into town to get some resources and while they're there, Jesus has a conversation with this woman who's been married five times and currently is sleeping with another man. And the conversation gives her honor. It's a classic interaction where Jesus looks at a woman who's living in shame. And it's hard for us to grasp it, but she's a Samaritan. She's a Samaritan woman. She's a Samaritan woman who's famous for the adultery, her bad reputation. Other Samaritan women won't even acknowledge her. And Jesus comes and has a conversation with her that says that salvation is not based on location, ethnicity, or where you've been or what you've done.

Pascal said, "Man is made in such a way that he cannot exalt himself to be like God, but God is such that He could bend down and lift us up."

It's a story of Jesus bending down and lifting up and restoring this woman out of shame. And He tells her all that she had done. And in that she receives salvation. She's the woman at the well.

It's a famous story that teaches us that it doesn't matter where you've been; salvation is for all mankind. All men, all women, doesn't matter what your color is, doesn't matter where you've been or what you've done. That's it.

We're going to remember the woman at the well—we're going to pull up that rope with that bucket of water on it. And we'll say "Woman at the well."

We have a "Baptized by John," "Tempted by Satan," "Second birth," "Woman at the well."

Rejection

From here Jesus is going to go to Nazareth. And when He goes to Nazareth there, we're going to begin the ministry of Jesus officially. This is where He gets formal with His purpose. And He goes to Nazareth, and when He does, He goes to His home temple and when He goes there He reads a passage out of Isaiah. And the passage in Isaiah is a prophecy relating to the Messiah, the promised one. Jesus reads it, closes it, and says, *Yeah. That's about me.*

And they say, *What? Hey, carpenter boy, I saw you grow up around here. And that's a messianic passage. What you just did is called blasphemy and we're going to kill you.* And they try to throw Him off a cliff, and Jesus is rejected by His own people. Sometimes the hardest time to be a good Christian is when you go home. Can I hear an amen? Amen!

Jesus is rejected. And we'll remember that because it changes His ministry a lot. We'll do this. We'll start here at the top and move down and say "rejected." Rejected. After "Woman at the well," the word "Rejection."

Selection

And then from there He's going to go up to Capernaum. And Capernaum is going to be His ministry headquarters. That's His base camp. That's where He's going to do a lot of His miracles, do His teaching. But before He gets going with that, after His rejection, there's going to be a selection. This is where He picks His twelve disciples. There are a lot of men and women

that follow Jesus. The most famous are the twelve that He picked called disciples or followers. But He's going to pick those.

After we say "Rejection" we're going to say "Selection." And we're just going to be picking people out of the crowd to follow Jesus. It goes like this: "Rejection"—"Selection."

Parables

Now He's going to spend about two and a half years on that northern shore of the Sea of Galilee, Capernaum, where He's going to start teaching. This is where we hear about the Sermon on the Mount, or sometimes it's called the Sermon on the Hill. It's probably a very similar sermon taught all over the area. And He's going to talk about the values of what it means to be blessed. Blessed is the man ... blessed is the person ... and how God keeps score. It turns their whole worldview upside down. He's introducing people to an eternal perspective on life, on what to care about, what to worry about, and what not to worry about.

In that, He's going to start telling parables. And the reason Jesus starts telling parables is because He kept getting into so much trouble in His teaching, that Jesus realized, *You know what, I'm going to start telling these stories that are earthly stories, but they have a spiritual meaning.* They're kind of hidden. Parables have a hidden meaning. You only see what you can see. And some people who had hard hearts could only see the physical story. But there was so much more. He told parables to let the teaching handle itself and determine who would be His followers.

Miracles

Another activity that Jesus found Himself doing in those days was participating in miracles. Jesus did miracles to prove Himself to be the promised one. He had to show Himself to be different than any other rabbi, and other kind of teacher. And so, you might know the stories where He fed five thousand men, not including women and children, with just a loaf of bread and some fish. And then He fed three thousand in another situation with meager resources. And not only was He the God that provides, He also was the God who protects. He was casting out demons and even raised a little girl from the dead. It was showing that God's miraculous hand was on this Jesus. He was the second Adam. He was the promised one to come. He was

validating it with miracles. He healed a blind man. And people always end up like this [arms up and outstretched] in these miracles.

For this section of His ministry in the northern province of Capernaum, we'll put one hand over our eye and say "Parables," and then we'll put them both over our eyes, and then we'll be healed and we'll say "Miracles." It goes like this: "Parables"—"Miracles."

So let's think about the ministry of Jesus starting with "Woman at the well."
"Woman at the well"—"Rejection"—"Selection"—"Parables"—"Miracles."

Why don't you guys stand up in the crowd here, and maybe you at home. Do those four. We'll start at "Woman at the well." Ready? I'm going to do it and then do it with your friend. "Woman at the well"—"Rejection"—"Selection"—"Parables"—"Miracles." Do that with your partner, at least one time.

[Pause]

Okay, great, have a seat.

Testimony of Peter

Well, in light of all of Jesus' teaching, in His parables and otherwise, and because of all the miracles that He had done, now Jesus takes His disciples, these few people, and He takes them to Caesarea Philippi. And He's literally standing in front of the gates of hell. It's this cave, this cavern, that people used to throw their babies into to sacrifice to keep the demons away from the gates of hell.

And He says, *All right guys, pop quiz. Who do people say that I am?*

Oh, people think you're great, Jesus. I mean, some people think you're John the Baptist reincarnated. Some people think you're Elijah reincarnated. Some people say you're the best teacher Israel has ever had.

And Jesus think, *Umm ... that's not it.* So, He turns to Peter and says, *Peter, who do you say that I am?*

And Peter said, *Oh, you're the promised one. You're the Messiah. You're the Son of the living God. You're Him.*

And Jesus says to Peter, *God gave you that. You're right—God gave you that. And upon this rock I will build my house, my church—the first time the word "church" is used—and the gates of hell will not prevail against it.*

You can go down in there and clean it up. You can do that. Thou art the Christ.

We're going to remember that, because Peter passes that test for the disciples. We'll put our fingers to our mouth and say "Testimony of Peter." So, we have "Parables" and "Miracles", which lead to the "Testimony of Peter." The parables of Jesus and the miracles of Jesus lead to the testimony of Peter.

Transfiguration

Now because they got the answer right, Jesus is going to start heading south towards Jerusalem. He's going to finish things up. He's ready to delegate the ministry of expanding the kingdom of God to these men and women who are His followers.

But before He gets there He takes three of His disciples---they're sometimes called the inner circle—Peter, James, and John. And He takes them up to a mountaintop and He says, *Okay, guys. I want you to know, I want to see, I want you to experience who I really am—the full me. Me before I was born.* And He goes there and there's this magical moment that takes place that's called the transfiguration. And for a few seconds in time all of eternity stood still. And all of the angels gazed and watched, and Jesus was transfigured. I don't know exactly what that means, but it was like His glory was radiating from inside to out. And these three men got to see who Jesus truly was when He wasn't holding back His glory.

Who was there? Peter, James, and John and Jesus. But also there was Elijah, who represented all the prophets of the Old Testament, and Moses, who represented all the teachings, the law, of the Old Testament. And Elijah and Moses were staring up and worshiping Jesus. So, it's Jesus, Moses, and Elijah, and the three men gawking in the transfiguration. And so, there was that one brief second in time where Jesus was who He really was. It's called the transfiguration. What do you do with that? I don't know, but we just came up with this where it's like glory is raining down like this—transfiguration.

Watch how the teaching leads. It goes like this: "Parables," "Miracles," "Testimony of Peter,"—that leads to the "Transfiguration." Let's do that again. "Parables" lead to "Miracles" lead to "Testimony of Peter" and the "Transfiguration."

Counting the Cost

Now Jesus is going down south. He is heading to Jerusalem. And when He gets there it's really getting confrontational because Jesus is not mincing words. He's going to tell it just loud and clear from this point forward. And John chapter 8 is a very famous chapter where He's going back and forth with some religious leaders.

And when they say, *Who do you say that you are?* He just says, *I'm Abraham's greatest dream. I'm the promise to Abraham, I'm the promise to David, I'm the promise to Adam all the way back.*

And they say, *What? You can't be better than Moses.*

He says, *I'm better than Moses.*

You can't be better than Abraham.

He said, *Before Abraham was, I AM.*

I AM is the formal name of YHWH God. And when Jesus said, *Before Abraham was, I AM* (*ego aimi* in Greek), the religious leaders picked up stones and said, *That's blasphemy. You can't even say the name and you are not Him.* And so, they tried to stone Him.

After the event, Jesus pulls the men and the women who are following Him off to the side. They go outside the city across the other side of the Jordan River. And He says, *Listen, you've got to count the cost. This following me is going to get real very quickly, and for you—He didn't say it but it's true—you're going to die martyrs.*

You have to count the cost. You're going to pay more than you think, and maybe even more than you want. But know this, that this life's persecution and costs and injury is nothing but dust in the life to come. You don't pay; you invest. Jesus says, *You have to count the cost, but the cost or investment is into an eternal reward coming your way.* Nobody regrets following the Lord fully. But He warns them, *You have to count the cost.*

After that experience of trying to kill Him, He tells the boys, Count the cost. And that's what we're going to do. "Count the cost." After the "Transfiguration" we're going to "Count the cost."

Seeking the Lost

Then after that event He's got to go back into Jerusalem. And everybody's asking the big question, especially His followers. *Why? Why would God send You to do this? What motivates*

YHWH, the God of the universe, that You would be here? Why did You make the promise and why are You the fulfillment of that promise?

And Jesus tells a story about the heart of God. He says, *Well, it's kind of like a woman who lost a coin. She turned her whole world upside down. But it was worth it, because when she found it, she danced. She called her friends and said, "Let's have a party."*

No, some of you guys will understand this—it's kind of like a shepherd who loses a sheep. He's going to live the other ninety-nine with some friends to take care of them, but he's going to search. He's going to go through the storms, he's going to risk his own life. Because when he finds that lost sheep, he's going to dance and he's going to bring his friends. This is what it looks like to be celebrating.

No, it's more than a coin or a sheep. It's more like a man who has two sons and they're both lost. One's lost, crazy drunk; one's lost, crazy religious. But they're both lost. But when they're found, he celebrates and dances and wants everybody to be part of it.

Why would God send His only Son? Because God so loved the world. And we need to go seek the lost. Seeking the lost is the heart of God. That is what motivates Him to send His only Son. He didn't send His Son into the world to condemn the world; He sent His Son into the world so that the world might know God and believe in Him. And those who believe in Him will have eternal life.

After we count the cost, Jesus sends them out seeking the lost. "Seeking the lost." "Counting the cost"—"Seeking the lost." Here's what the ministry looks like: it's "Parables"—"Miracles"—"Testimony of Peter"—"Transfiguration"—"Counting the cost"—"Seeking the lost."

Why don't you guys stand up and do those? Start with "Parables." "Parables"—"Miracles."

[Pause]

We have only two more little things to learn. Why don't we start with "Parables"? We'll do a quick review right now. Follow along with me if you would. Okay, we'll start with parables. "Parables"—"Miracles"—"Testimony of Peter"—"Transfiguration"—"Counting the cost"—"Seeking the lost." Let's go back to "Baptized by John." "Baptized by John"—"Tempted by Satan"—"Second birth"—"Woman at the well"—"Rejection"—"Selection"—"Parables"—

“Miracles”—“Testimony of Peter”—“Transfiguration”—“Counting the cost”—“Seeking the lost.”

Do you guys want to go all the way back to birth? Can you do that? Yeah, sure, let’s get crazy, okay? “Birth”—“Baptized by John”—“Tempted by Satan”—“Second birth”—“Woman at the well”—“Rejection”—“Selection”—“Parables”—“Miracles”—“Testimony of Peter”—“Transfiguration”—“Counting the cost”—“Seeking the lost.” Good for you guys. Have a seat.

Lazarus Raised

Just a couple of more. Jesus ends up just outside of the northern part of Jerusalem and He finds out that His dear, close, intimate friend Lazarus is sick. And Jesus needs to get there quick. And Jesus says, *Oh, he’s not sick unto death. This is all for the glory of God.*

And so, Jesus intentionally waits. And Lazarus dies. He’s dead four days and then Jesus shows up. Wow, did He miss an appointment. And Jesus says, *No, this is all to show the power of YHWH, even over death. What men have feared since the day of Adam’s fall is no longer boss.* And He says, “Lazarus, come forth.” And Lazarus comes forth.

I would love to interview that man after that day, right? *What are you afraid of?*

Nothing.

Are you afraid of death?

Did it. It kind of wasn’t what I thought it was. No worries ... no worries ... it’s all good.

Jesus says in that experience, “I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me, though he dies, he will live again.” I quote that verse every time we do a funeral just in case someone forgot.

We’re going to remember “Lazarus raised.”

And then Jesus ends up a little bit north of there. He ends up in Jericho. And there’s this wee little man. His name is Zacchaeus. And Zacchaeus is a tax collector and the Jews hate him because he’s working for the Romans to collect taxes from them. He’s such a small guy that Jesus is coming through town—by now Jesus is rather famous and it’s somewhat of a parade and he can’t see. So, he climbs up a tree to just see the face of Jesus. And Jesus walks by in this parade, looks up and sees Zacchaeus, and says, “Come down. I’m going to have dinner at your house.”

Again, it's the Middle East, it's a shame-based culture. Food is a huge relational connector, but it's a place of honor. And Jesus says, *I'm going to give you honor. I'm coming to your house in front of all these people and I'm going to show people like I did that woman at the well that there's no place you can go that's going to keep me out of your soul.*

And in that moment of redemption we see what it means to be repentant, what it means to repent. Because Zacchaeus realizes, *Wow, if I'm right with God, I should get right with all men.* And he swears at that table, *If I have cheated anyone in my tax-gathering, I will pay them back fourfold. And I'm going to give half of my wealth away. What do I need this for? It's like Confederate money. I can't take this with me in the real life. So yeah.* And he runs out of there hysterical because he's experienced the redemption of Jesus Christ. He's had an audience with the great King.

Everyone else thought he was shameful, and Jesus said, *But I can come down and lift you up.*

We're going to remember "Zacchaeus" and we're going to use our other hand and we'll say, "Zacchaeus praised." That's Jesus saying, *There you go, Zacchaeus.* I love this story. It says that even short people can be saved by God. Thank you, Jesus.

So, here's this little after-the-fact. We have "Counting the cost"—"Seeking the lost"—"Lazarus raised"—"Zacchaeus praised." That's what those four look like. "Counting the cost"—"Seeking the lost"—"Lazarus raised"—"Zacchaeus praised."

Okay. You guys want to try to practice that together? We're done. This is it. I've got a couple of little applications in a second. You know what, let me give you part one of an application.

Application: Church Unity

One is this. When you look at the life of Jesus and the people He attracted to travel with Him for three years—they're traveling—it's like they're camping for three years. He takes Simon the Zealot. Now Simon the Zealot was part of the zealots who thought that the best way to get independence for Israel was a violent military takeover. And they were known for causing riots and stabbing people, Romans--particularly Roman soldiers--because they were going to take it back with blood.

On the other extreme is Matthew, who is a tax collector working for Romans, taxing Jews. So, we have a Jew who wants a military takeover, a violent takeover. And we have a tax collector for the Romans taxing Jews. Everyone else fits pretty much somewhere in between them. My point is, you couldn't have two opposite people really hating each other, for the most part, politically and otherwise. And Jesus brings them all together and He says, *Can you love something more than your values and ideals and all this stuff that you let contaminate your heart? Is there something bigger than that, maybe the kingdom of God? And the King who saves you?*

Jesus says, "They're going to know you're Christians by your love for one another." His prayer for us—He prayed for them He's praying for us—was for our unity. Because unity is not just a value; unity is a supernatural visitation from the Spirit of God on a church. And it has the power of redemption. It is the means the Spirit is going to use to translate the gospel to any culture. *Look how they are one.*

So, Jesus says, *Look, it is a supernatural event that requires choice on an individual level. Choice—you have to choose to submit to the Spirit to be unified.*

Right now, our country's being torn apart. I think it's on a spiritual level. It's not just politicians and media. There are demons in this. He loves division and chaos. It's not supposed to affect the Church. I mean, I would give my life for this country. But it's not my home. It's not our home, you guys. He's our King, that's our kingdom. And with that we can be at peace with one another and one with one another. You are a consequence of what you spend your mind, what you spend your time thinking on. What your mind thinks, you become. What do you think about? You think about the glory of God, the power of salvation, the unity of the Spirit, and the Church can do whatever the King commands. There's power and unity. But unity requires a choice.

I love the story of the gospels: if nothing else, just looking at that crazy bunch of mutts that come together and change the world because they'd rather be one with Christ, therefore one with each other, for a common purpose. Let's be like that.

When we talk about the future in the continuation of the Walk Thru the Bible, now we're in the Holy Week at this point—this is the life of Jesus. We learned it right now—I think there are ten hand signs. But they all point to the destiny of Jesus Christ. Jesus was born so that He

would die. We'll tell you more about that in weeks ahead when we do part two and part three and we do the Walk Thru again.

Why don't we just now all stand up together? We're going to review the New Testament Walk Thru that we've learned so far. I'm going to pray. Kevin Maurice is going to come up, because the entire youth ministry for winter retreat did the Old and New Testament. He's going to do the Old Testament, and we're going to pick it up with the New Testament and then be dismissed after that. Okay?

Let's remember the life of Jesus Christ. We'll start with Him being born. Ready? "Birth"—"Baptized by John"—"Tempted by Satan"—"Second birth"—"Woman at the well"—"Rejection"—"Selection"—"Parables"—"Miracles"—"Testimony of Peter"—"Transfiguration"—"Counting the cost"—"Seeking the lost"—"Lazarus raised"—"Zacchaeus praised." We've had to do this very quickly without a whole lot of review and repetition. So, you can do that at home this week.

Kevin, why don't you come up here? Kevin has provided us all sorts of resources on the web so that we can go back and learn. I think you have a video online, right?

Kevin: We do. Yeah, we have an Old Testament review video that you can download and watch and make sure you've got the Old Testament forty words and hand signs memorized and ready to go. We've got a PDF of all of the words Matt taught today so you can practice. You can cover them up, look at them, see what you can remember, and keep going from there.

Matt: Great.

Kevin: ... get ready for part two.

Matt: Do you remember the Old Testament Walk Thru?

Kevin: I do.

Matt: Okay, let's see if you do. We've got to do it in order, so you'll be over there, and then you're going to hand off to me.

Kevin: And if you at home did the Old Testament back with us in January, stand up and do this with us ... pop quiz.

Matt: It starts at “Creation,” I think, right?

Kevin: I believe so.

Matt: Let’s go. Ready?

Kevin: “Creation”—“Fall”—“Flood”—“Nations”—“Abraham”—“Isaac”—“Jacob”—“Joseph”—“Moses”—“Passover”—“Law”—“Tabernacle”—“Offerings”—“Feasts”—“Counting”—“Spying”—“Wandering”—“Dying”—“Second law”—“Joshua”—“Divide”—“Conquer”—“Twelve tribes”—“Judges”—“Deborah”—“Gideon”—“Samson”—“Everyone did what was right in their own eyes except”—“Ruth”—and “Samuel”—“United Kingdom”—“Saul, no heart”—“David, whole heart”—“Solomon, half heart”—“Divided kingdom”—“Mostly bad kings”—“Prophets speak”—“Israel scattered”—“Judah is exiled”—“Judah returned”—“Zerubbabel, temple”—“Esther, queen”—“Ezra, people”—“Nehemiah, walls”—“Wait”—“Christ.”

Matt: “Birth”—“Baptized by John”—“Tempted by Satan”—“Second birth”—“Woman at the well”—“Rejection”—“Selection”—“Parables”—“Miracles”—“Testimony of Peter”—“Transfiguration”—“Counting the cost”—“Seeking the lost”—“Lazarus raised”—“Zacchaeus praised.” To be continued. Give yourselves a hand. Let me pray.

[Prayer]

Lord, it is great to see the big picture, the whole story. We live in a great time where we can kind of look back and see all that You’ve done so that we’re not so afraid in the present and what it looks like is going to happen in the future.

Lord, I'd ask that You would give us the faith of those Old Testament saints that just wished for, hoped for, maybe, dreamed about, the day that Jesus would be born in that town of Bethlehem. Let us think of our future the way they did, women and men of faith, believing that You are sovereign, You are powerful, You are in control, You have a plan, and You love us. It is the love of God that compels all things that You do.

Lord, help us be a unified church. Help us choose to love Your kingdom come more than this kingdom here. I'd ask, Lord, that You would fill our minds. What we think about You is the most important thing about us. I'd ask that You would fill our minds with true things about who You are and what You do.

Lord, I'd ask that You bless us. Bless our church, that we might meditate on these words. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Thank you, Grace. Thanks for coming! We'll see you next week!