

## OCTOBER WEEK FOUR: THE TRANSFIGURATION

Monday

# Mark 9:2–10

One day Jesus took Peter, James, and John with him on a journey. He led them up a high mountain. When they reached a certain spot, something amazing happened: Jesus was transfigured. His appearance completely changed. The glory of God began shining from Jesus' face. His clothes became radiant, whiter than anyone could ever make them with soap or bleach.

While they were on the mountain, Moses and Elijah appeared and talked with Jesus. Both of these men had lived long ago. Moses lived at the time when God first gave the Ten Commandments. And Elijah was one of God's prophets. Both of them had gone to heaven a long, long time ago, but now here they were on earth, talking with Jesus!

The disciples were surprised and terrified. Not knowing what else to say, Peter said to Jesus, "It is good that we are here. Let us make three tents – one for you and one for Moses and one for Elijah."

Then a cloud came over them. God's voice came out of the cloud with a message about Jesus. God said, "This is my beloved Son; listen to him."

Suddenly, looking around, Peter, James, and John saw only Jesus. Moses and Elijah were gone. The cloud was gone. And Jesus looked like a normal person again.

As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus told the three disciples not to tell anyone what they had seen or heard until he had risen from the dead. And even though they had some questions about what Jesus meant, the disciples did as he asked.

The three disciples saw Jesus glorified as God's Prophet and Son. They heard God's voice telling them to listen to Jesus. Later, after Jesus had risen from the dead, they would remember what they had seen and they would tell everyone. People would know that Jesus was truly human, but he was also God and shared in the glory of God. He left that glory to come save his people from their sin. The suffering and death that he experienced was not because he was beaten or anyone forced it upon him. He willingly let it happen for our sake. What a great God and Savior! To him alone be the glory!

- **What did Jesus look like on the mountain of transfiguration?**
- **Who were Moses and Elijah?**

Close with prayer

## OCTOBER WEEK FOUR: JESUS SENDS OUT THE 72

Tuesday

# Luke 10:1–20

Jesus was planning to visit people in the cities and villages of Israel, to tell them about God and his kingdom. Before he went, he chose 72 men to go ahead of him in groups of two.

Before the men left, Jesus talked to them about their work. He said, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Pray to the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into his harvest field.” Jesus wasn’t talking about workers to pick wheat or olives. He was talking about people who would tell others about the gospel. Jesus told the men that he would take care of their needs. They didn’t even need money.

Jesus also gave the men special directions about their work. He said, “Whenever you enter a town and they receive you, eat what is set before you. Heal their sick and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’”

Jesus knew that some people would reject the news about him and his forgiveness. When that happened, Jesus said his messengers should leave those people with a warning. They should wipe the dust of that town from their feet, because God’s judgment will fall on those who reject Jesus.

Finally, after Jesus had finished teaching them, the 72 went on their way. They did just as Jesus had told them. Through God’s power, they healed the sick and cast out evil spirits hiding inside of people. When they had done all that Jesus had asked, they returned with great joy.

The 72 men told Jesus about the great and powerful things that they had done in his name. Although this was good news, Jesus reminded them that they should rejoice about something even more important: their names were written in heaven! Jesus had given them the right to be with him in heaven when their work on earth was finished.

God chose the 72 for a special task. God places each of us just where he wants us, giving us opportunities to serve him and share our faith with others. Yet more important than the work we do for Jesus is our faith in the work Jesus has done for us as our Savior.

- **What did Jesus tell the 72 disciples to pray for?**
- **In what ways has Jesus brought his message to you?**
- **How can you share it with others?**

Close with prayer



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## OCTOBER WEEK FOUR: FIERY FURNACE

Wednesday

# Daniel 3

Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were three young men who believed in God and worshipped him. Enemy soldiers took them away from their home to Jerusalem to live in a faraway country called Babylon where the king and the people did not love God.

One day, King Nebuchadnezzar made a huge golden idol that was 90 feet tall. The king had his servant command everyone, "When you hear the sound of music, you are to fall down and worship the golden image that King Nebuchadnezzar has set up. And whoever does not fall down and worship shall immediately be cast into a burning fiery furnace."

When the music started to play, most of the people bowed down – but not Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego. They loved the one true God, and they refused to bow to worship the idol.

This made the king furious. He warned the three young men that they must bow down to the idol, or he would throw them into the fiery furnace. "And who is the god who will deliver you out of my hands?" he asked.

The three young men were very respectful to the king. But they told him, "Our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery furnace, and he will deliver us out of your hand, O king. But if not, O king, we will not serve your gods or worship the golden image that you have set up." Now King Nebuchadnezzar was even more furious!

He ordered that the fire should be heated seven times hotter than it had been before. Then he told his soldiers to tie up Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego and throw them into the burning fiery furnace.

But when King Nebuchadnezzar looked into the furnace to see what had happened, he was amazed. He saw Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego walking around in the fire – not hurt or burnt at all!

Then the king said, "Did we not cast three men into the fire?" Yes, his servants answered. "But I see four men walking in the midst of the fire," Nebuchadnezzar said, "and they are not hurt!" And the fourth man looked like a "son of the gods."

The king had Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego taken out of the furnace. Not even their hair or their clothes had been burned. And they didn't even smell like smoke!

Then the king said to all the people, "Blessed be the God of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego, who sent his angel and delivered his servants, who trusted in him." Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were willing to give up their lives to worship and trust only the one true God. God protected them and saved them from the fiery furnace.

God calls us to worship and trust him alone, for only he can save us. God sent his Son Jesus to die on the cross for us – to take the punishment we deserve and to save us from our sins. Jesus is our Savior and our God.

- **Why wouldn't Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego bow to King Nebuchadnezzar's idol?**
- **What happened when King Nebuchadnezzar threw Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fiery furnace?**
- **Why should we trust only in Jesus to protect us forever?**

Close with prayer

## OCTOBER WEEK FOUR: DANIEL IN LION'S DEN

Thursday

# Daniel 6

King Darius of Persia and Babylon chose three leaders to help him rule his very large kingdom. Daniel was one of the three, but Daniel was the leader of them all.

Daniel believed in God and prayed to God every day. The king's other workers did not like Daniel, because they were jealous of him. So they made a plan to get Daniel in trouble. They told the king that they wanted him to make a new law. The law would say that, for 30 days, people could only ask the king for things they wanted. If someone asked another person or a god for something instead of asking only the king, then that person would be thrown into a den full with hungry lions.

The king agreed and made the new law. When Daniel heard about the law, he went home to his upstairs room, got down on his knees by the window, and prayed to God, just as he always did.

Daniel's enemies saw him praying to God. They hurried to the king and told him that Daniel was not obeying the new law – Daniel was asking God for something, instead of the king!

The king liked Daniel very much, and he was upset that the new law got Daniel in trouble. He tried to think of a way to save Daniel, but once the law had been passed, it could not be taken back.

King Darius had no choice. He had to throw Daniel into the lions' den. The king told Daniel, "May your God, whom you serve continually, deliver you!" Then the king's helpers threw Daniel into the den of hungry lions. That night the king did not sleep or eat, because he was so upset that Daniel would be devoured by the lions.

At first light of dawn, the king ran to the lions' den and shouted, "O Daniel, servant of the living God, has your God, whom you serve continually, been able to deliver you from the lions?"

Daniel answered, "My God sent his angel and shut the lions' mouths, and they have not harmed me."

The king was so happy! Daniel was alive! The king gave orders to lift Daniel out of the lions' den. Then King Darius threw Daniel's accusers into the lions' den. The king wrote to everyone in his kingdom saying, "I make a decree, that in all my royal dominion people are to tremble and fear before the God of Daniel, for he is the living God, enduring forever; his kingdom shall never be destroyed, and his dominion shall be to the end. He delivers and rescues; he works signs and wonders in heaven and on earth, he who has saved Daniel from the power of the lions."

God watches over you and me each day too. God sent Jesus to be our Savior and rescue us from all our sins. We can trust God to care for us.

- When the new law said that no one could pray to God, what did Daniel do?
- What happened to Daniel when he was thrown into the lions' den?
- Can you think of times when you suffered because of your faith? How did God protect you in those times?

Close with prayer

## OCTOBER WEEK FOUR: LUTHER

Friday

# Romans 1:16–17, 3:19–28

As a young boy, Martin Luther was afraid of God. He thought that no matter how good he was at anything, he couldn't please God. So he was afraid of God – too scared even to talk to him. He didn't know about God's love and forgiveness. When he was trying to figure out what he wanted to do when he grew up and how he wanted to live the rest of his life, Martin Luther was deciding that he didn't want to have to have anything to do with God.

Then one day, something happened that changed everything. He was walking to school when suddenly the sky darkened and a violent thunderstorm broke out. He was all alone on the road and terribly frightened. Lightning cracked the sky and bolted to the ground right beside him! Desperate and afraid for his life, he cried out a prayer, "Help me, and I will become a monk." He lived through the awful storm and kept his vow. He became a monk and went to live at a monastery.

But the longer he stayed in the monastery, the less he liked it. He still thought that Jesus was someone who always wanted to strike him to blisters for his sins. He always felt like he could never do enough good things to please God.

One day, as he was feeling depressed about all this, he was reading and studying the Bible. He read through the book of Romans and found that it says, "The just shall live by faith." He read that, and reread it, and read it again. Suddenly he was filled with relief and greater happiness than he'd ever known!

The Holy Spirit led him to realize, in one moment, that God freely gives forgiveness of sins and eternal life to all who have faith in Jesus as their Savior. Oh, what a relief! It's not good works that earn us a place in heaven. God gives it as a free gift to those who trust him and believed the message of the gospel. He was finally able to sense and know God's love, and to want to love God too.

You don't have to do anything to make God love, because you are already loved by God. God doesn't want to punish you for your sins, God wants to save you from your sins. That's why God sent Jesus to receive punishment for sin instead of you, and to open heaven to you as a free gift by faith, trusting in Jesus and his promises.

- **Martin Luther had a big problem. What helped him?**
- **As a child and young man, Martin Luther thought of God as angry and harsh. When you think of God, what characteristics do you think of?**

Gracious Lord, by your Holy Spirit, lead us to share your Word faithfully, protect your truth, help us to show everyone that you love and forgive, that all may trust Jesus and live. Amen.