

Monday  
**Mark 10:13–16**

One day, Jesus and his disciples decided to leave the region where they had grown up, the region of Galilee. They went south, to the region of Judea. This was an area where Jesus had not ministered before, so many people were coming to see this teacher that many people were talking about. Great crowds were gathering around Jesus and his disciples.

Some people brought their little children to Jesus. They wanted Jesus to put his hands on them and bless them. But the disciples thought Jesus had more important things to do than to occupy his time with children. They told the children to stop bothering Jesus.

When Jesus saw what was happening, he became angry and said to his disciples, “Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these. Truly I tell you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God like a little child will not enter it.” Jesus wanted all people to humbly trust him, like children recognizing their total dependence on God.

Then Jesus took the children in his arms and blessed them, laying his hands on them. Jesus loves and receives all kinds of people. We don't have to be grown up or wise or rich or good to come to Jesus. We simply need to trust that he will receive us and that he will take care of us, because he is everything we need.

- **Why were people bringing their children to Jesus?**
- **Why did Jesus become angry with his disciples?**
- **How you trust Jesus humbly, like a dependent little child, in your life?**

Close with prayer

Tuesday  
**Mark 12:41–44**

Inside the courtyards around the temple in Jerusalem, people gave offerings to God. Jesus sat down one day and watched people put their money in the offering box. The disciples were there too.

Jesus watched many rich people put large amounts of money in the box. They were wealthy and had a lot of money to give. Then Jesus saw a poor woman. Her husband had died, and she had only a very small amount of money left. Still, she was thankful to God, and she trusted him to provide all that she needed.

The widow dropped two copper coins into the offering box. It wasn't much money, but it was all she had. In fact, it was a great gift, because she gave it all to God.

Then Jesus gathered his disciples around him. He said that the poor widow had given more than all the rich people who were giving their great big gifts. That was because the rich people had plenty left for themselves after they gave their gifts, but the poor woman had nothing left.

The widow gave all she had to God, and kept nothing back for herself. Jesus gave all he had – even his life – and held nothing back, so that he could do the will of the Father and show us his deep and lasting love by saving us from our sins.

- **Why did Jesus say the poor widow gave more than the rich people had given?**
- **What does it mean for us to give Jesus everything we have?**

Close with prayer

Wednesday  
**Luke 10:25–37**

A scholar, an expert in the Law of Moses, stood up and questioned Jesus. He said, “Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?”

Jesus said, “What is written in the Law?”

The scholar quoted the Scriptures: “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind, and love your neighbor as yourself.”

Jesus said, “You have answered correctly; do this, and you will live.”

Then the scholar asked, “And who is my neighbor?” He did not think that he needed to love everyone – only those who were like him.

Jesus answered the scholar’s question with a story. Jesus described a Jewish man (like the scholar) who was going down the road from Jerusalem to Jericho. Everyone knew this road was dangerous. It passed through a narrow canyon that twisted and turned, full of caves where thieves could hide. Sure enough, the man came upon some robbers who beat him and stripped his clothes and left him half dead.

After some time, a Jewish priest came down the road. When he saw the hurt man, the priest walked by on the other side of the road to avoid him and not get near him. He did not help. Next, a Levite, a man who worked with the priests in the temple, came along and saw the hurt man. The Levite did not help either.

Finally, a Samaritan came by. In Jesus’ day, Samaritans and Jews did not like each other and did not get along. But this Samaritan saw the hurt Jewish man and had compassion on him. He put bandages and medicine on his wounds and placed the man on his own donkey. The Samaritan took him to an inn where he told the owner to take care of him. The next day when he got ready to leave, he paid the innkeeper for what the injured man would need. He said that he would come back later to check on the man. He even offered to pay for anything else the man might need.

When Jesus had finished the story, he asked the scholar, “Which of these three, do you think, proved to be a neighbor to the man in need?”

The scholar answered, “The one who had mercy on him.”

Then Jesus said, “Go and do likewise.”

Jesus tells us how we should live to please God – by loving God and others. These two commands sum up everything in the Law. Thankfully, Jesus died to pay for the many times we fail to do what we should. He came to us and helped us when we were lost and hurting, healing our wounds with his perfection, and carrying us to be with him and taken care of by him forever. If we have received mercy from God, we will want to show mercy to others. God gives us his Holy Spirit to live inside us, to help us to love him and love our neighbors as ourselves.

- **Why is it surprising that the priest and the Levite did not stop to help the hurt man?**
- **Why is it surprising that the Samaritan man did stop to help the hurt man?**
- **According to Jesus, who is our “neighbor”?**
- **What are some ways we can show love for others?**

Thursday  
**John 2:13–22**

Jesus walked to Jerusalem for the festival of Passover. During the Passover celebration, the Jewish people ate special foods and worshipped God by offering sacrifices at the temple. They remembered a time long ago when God led Moses and his people out of slavery in Egypt.

When Jesus got to Jerusalem, he went into the temple courtyards. In the courtyard, he saw men selling animals. But the men were charging people too much for the animals. And there were money-changers who cheated the people when they exchanged their money.

Jesus was angry and very upset at the people who were cheating those who came to the temple traveling from far away. The temple courtyard was supposed to be a place for prayer, and repentant self-reflection, a place where people could begin their worship and honor God the Father. The cheating merchants dishonored God with their dishonest sales and unfair money exchange. They were exploiting the occasion of God's religious holiday and taking advantage of the God's faithful people.

Jesus told the people who were buying and selling to stop. He commanded, "Take these things away; do not make my Father's house a house of trade or a den of robbers!" When they didn't do what Jesus said, he knocked their tables over, poured out their coins, and drove out the animals they were selling as sacrifices.

But when they saw what Jesus did, many of the people questioned Jesus. "What sign or authority do you have to do these things?" They didn't believe Jesus had the right to stop them. To prove who he was, they wanted Jesus to do a miracle like they had heard he could do.

So Jesus told the people about the great miracle that was going to happen very soon. Jesus said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." The people did not understand. They thought Jesus was talking about the temple building, which had taken many years to build. But Jesus was talking about himself as God's temple. Jesus knew that his life was going to be destroyed because many people were angry with him and did not like him – that soon he would die on the cross to save us from sin, and rise again on the third day.

Later, when Jesus rose from the dead, his disciples remembered these words Jesus had said about raising up the temple in three days. They knew Jesus' resurrection was the great sign, showing that he truly is the Son of God and that all authority belongs to him.

Friday  
**John 3:1–18**

There was a man named Nicodemus, who was one of the leaders of the Jewish people. Most of the leaders did not like Jesus and were angry at him, but Nicodemus agreed with Jesus and wanted to learn more. Late one night, Nicodemus went to visit Jesus. “We know that you are a teacher come from God,” Nicodemus said to Jesus. “No one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him.” Nicodemus had seen Jesus’ signs and miracles, and he wanted to know more about who Jesus really was.

Jesus told Nicodemus, “Truly, I tell you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.”

Nicodemus didn’t understand. He thought Jesus meant he had to become a little baby again inside his mother and be born a second time! But Jesus explained that he meant a person must be born of the womb and of the Holy Spirit. “That which is born of flesh is flesh,” Jesus said, “and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, ‘You must be born again.’”

Nicodemus had already been born once. But Jesus was telling Nicodemus that he must be born again, this time into God’s family. Jesus told Nicodemus that people who were born of the Spirit would believe in Jesus.

To help Nicodemus understand, Jesus reminded him of a true story in the Old Testament. There was a time once, long before, when the people of Israel had rebelled against God. Because of this, God allowed many terribly poisonous snakes to come to them. The snakes killed many people with their terrible, poisonous bites.

But then God told Moses to make a sculpture of a snake and put it on the top of a pole. God healed every person who would fix their eyes on the snake on the pole. Jesus explained: “As Moses lifted up the snake in the desert, so must the Son of Man be lifted up. And whoever believes in him will have eternal life.” Jesus is the “Son of Man” who was lifted up on the cross, and everyone who focuses on him will be born again by God’s Spirit and have eternal life.

Then Jesus explained the reason to Nicodemus: “For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him is not condemned.” Because of God’s love, he made a way for people to be born into his family forever. Through faith in Jesus, God forgives our sins for Jesus’ sake and promises to take us to live with him forever in heaven.

- **What did Jesus mean when he told Nicodemus, “You must be born again”?**
- **What did Jesus mean when he said he must be lifted up?**

Close with prayer