

The
Life of

Christ

A 45 day scripture study

Day 1

Alma 7:10-13,, Micah 5:2,
Helaman 14:5-8, Isaiah 9:6
Prophecies of Christ's Birth

President Heber J. Grant described the Savior's peace this way: "His peace will ease our suffering, bind up our broken hearts, blot out our hates, engender in our breasts a love of fellow men that will suffuse our souls with calm and happiness."

What are the sources of peace? Many search for peace in worldly ways, which never have and never will succeed. Peace is not found by attaining great wealth, power, or prominence... Peace is not found in the pursuit of pleasure, entertainment, or leisure. None of these can, even when attained in abundance, create any lasting happiness or peace.

Emma Lou Thayne's beloved hymn asks the appropriate questions: "Where can I turn for peace? Where is my solace when other sources cease to make me whole?" The answer is the Savior, who is the source and author of peace. He is the "Prince of Peace."

Day 2

Luke 1

Angel visits Elisabeth & Mary

From Henry B. Eyring:

At the heart of the account of the birth of Jesus Christ is the testimony of angels, as recorded by the Apostles Jesus called and ordained.

God sent the angel Gabriel to Zacharias. The angel told him of the birth to the righteous and barren Elisabeth of John the Baptist, who would prepare the way for Jesus. Mary received the same heavenly messenger to prepare her to become the mother of the Son of God, the long-awaited Messiah. These righteous individuals knew and believed the sacred scriptures... And Elisabeth knew well that the Messiah would have a forerunner to prepare the way for Him. Isaiah, the poet-prophet, had written, "The voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord, make straight in the desert a highway for our God."

Both Elisabeth and Mary looked forward with confidence that the Savior of the world would come and that a great prophet would be His forerunner. But in their deep humility they were prepared by the Spirit for their sacred part in the greatest events in the history of all creation.

LIFE OF CHRIST

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|---|---|----------------------------|---|
| 1. Alma 7:10-13,, Micah 5:2, Helaman 14:5-8, Isaiah 9:6 | Prophecies of Christ's Birth | 25. Mark 11:11-33 | Cleaning of Temple |
| 2. Luke 1 | Angel visits Elisabeth & Mary | 26. Mark 12 | Parables of Wicked Hus
bandmen & Widows Mite |
| 3. Matthew 1:18-25 | Joseph learns of Savior's coming | 27. Matthew 25 | Parables of Ten Virgins,
the Talents, and the Sheep & Goat |
| 4. Luke 2:1-38 | Jesus' Birth | 28. John 13 | Jesus Washes Feet of
Twelve/ Last Supper |
| 5. Matthew 2:1-23 | Escape to Egypt | 29. John 14 | Jesus Comforts Disciples |
| 6. Luke 2:39-52 | Jesus as a Young Boy | 30. John 15-17 | Final Teachings |
| 7. Luke 5 | Jesus' Performs 3 Miracles | 31. Luke 22:1-46 | Sacrament Instituted/
Gathsemane |
| 8. John 5 | Jesus Heals at Bethesda | 32. Luke 22:47-71 | Jesus Betrayed by Judas &
Peter |
| 9. Matthew 4 | Jesus Tempted/Fisher of Men | 33. Luke 23, Mark 15:20-39 | Trial & Crucifixion |
| 10. Mark 2:23-36 | Jesus Heals on Sabbath | 34. John 19:31-42 | Burial |
| 11. Luke 6:12-49 | Disciples Chosen/Sermon on
the Mount | 35. John 20 | Resurrection |
| 12. John 7:1-23 | Jesus Heals | 36. Luke 24:13-53 | Jesus Appears to
Disciples |
| 13. John 7:36-50 | Jesus Heals Woman at Pharisee's
House | 37. John 20:19-21:25 | Jesus Appears to
Disciples |
| 14. John 8:4-18 | Parable of the Sower | 38. 3 Nephi 11 | Jesus Teaches Nephites |
| 15. Mark 4:37-41 | Jesus Calms Storm | 39. 3 Nephi 12 | Jesus Teaches Nephites |
| 16. Mark 5:22-43 | Jesus Heals Jairus' Daughter/
Woman Made Whole Through Faith | 40. 3 Nephi 13 | Jesus Teaches Nephites |
| 17. John 4:14-36 | Jesus Feeds 5000/Walks on Water | 41. 3 Nephi 14 | Jesus Teaches Nephites |
| 18. John 6:25-69 | Bread of Life | 42. 3 Nephi 15 | Jesus Teaches Nephites |
| 19. Mark 7:1-23 | Rebuking of False Traditions | 43. 3 Nephi 17 | Jesus Teaches Nephites |
| 20. Matthew 17 | Transfiguration | 44. 3 Nephi 18 | Jesus Teaches Nephites-
Sacrament |
| 21. John 8 | Adulteress Forgiven | 45. The Living Christ | |
| 22. Luke 14 | Supper Parable | | |
| 23. Luke 15 | Parables of Lost Sheep, Lost Coin
&Lost Son | | |
| 24. Luke 16 | Parables of Unjust Steward/Rich
Man & Lazarus | | |

Day 3 Matthew 1:18-25

Joseph learns of Savior's coming

From the LDS New Testament Institute Manual: [Mary and Joseph] were not married but were promised to each other under the strictest terms. Mary was virtually regarded as the wife of Joseph, and unfaithfulness on her part during the espousal period was punishable by death (Deuteronomy 22:23, 24). During the espousal period... all communication between herself and her promised husband was carried on through a friend. When Joseph learned of Mary's prospective maternity... he had two alternatives: (1) he could demand that Mary submit to a public trial and judgment, which even at that late point in Jewish history may have resulted in Mary's death; or (2) he could privately sever the espousal contract before witnesses. Joseph obviously chose the most merciful of the two alternatives. He could have reacted selfishly and with bitterness when he learned that Mary was expecting, and it is a profound witness to Joseph's character that he chose to annul the espousal privately...

It may be that the Lord designed such an experience to test Joseph, and if that be the case, Joseph proved faithful. After Joseph had made his decision, then the angel visited him and directed that he should proceed and take Mary as his wife... Surely Joseph was a noble soul in premortality to be blessed with the signal honor of coming to earth and acting as the legal guardian of the Son of the Eternal Father in the flesh.

Day 4 Luke 2:1-38

Jesus' Birth

Since Mary was near the end of her pregnancy, wisdom dictated that she remain in Nazareth... Yet Mary accompanied her husband on the journey... Inspiration guided the decision so that the ancient prophecy of Micah and others might be fulfilled: the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem (see Micah 5:2).

It would have been strange for Joseph and Mary to have traveled by themselves, for the route would have been crowded with friends and relatives headed for Jerusalem and the Passover celebration... As the travelers approached Jerusalem, thousands of people... would have crowded the narrow streets ... of the Holy City. Did anyone assist Mary at the birth of her first baby—a nearby midwife, or perhaps a female member of her family? The record is silent on this point. We can be assured, however, that she was watched over by angels as the Messiah entered into mortal life.

Generally, once an infant was delivered in those times, his skin was washed and cleansed with water, then gently rubbed with salt to guard against infection. Then the infant was “placed in a folded square of cloth, and then wrapped in swaddling bands”... Likewise, the baby Jesus was “wrapped in swaddling clothes” and placed in a manger for his bed.

Paul Thomas Smith, “Birth of the Messiah”
Dec. 1997 Ensign

Day 5 Matthew 2:1-23

Escape to Egypt

From the LDS New Testament Institute Manual:

The wise men arrived in Jerusalem when Jesus was a young child. They were directed by Herod's court to Bethlehem. [After worshipping the Savior,] the wise men, because an angel warned them not to return to Herod, departed into their own country by another way. When Herod saw that the wise men did not return & thinking that the promised Messiah would be a threat to his kingdom, he sent soldiers to destroy every child two years old and under in Bethlehem. But an angel had warned Joseph and he had taken Mary and the child Jesus to Egypt.

The Prophet Joseph Smith taught:

“When Herod's edict went forth to destroy the young children, John was about six months older than Jesus, and came under this hellish edict, and Zacharias caused his mother to take him into the mountains, where he was raised on locusts and wild honey. When his father refused to disclose his hiding place, and being the officiating high priest at the Temple that year, was slain by Herod's order, between the porch and the altar, as Jesus said. Zacharias died, then, to save his son; he died a noble martyr, perhaps the first of the Christian era.

Day 6 Luke 2:39-52

Jesus as a Young Boy

From the LDS New Testament Institute Manual:

...Jesus attended the Jewish synagogues and was taught in the learning of the Jews by the rabbis. If so, much of what Jesus heard would have been a perversion of truth, for Judaism was in a state of apostasy. His most significant education, therefore, came through the Spirit from his Heavenly Father... Who taught Jesus what he knew? His Father, God the Father, taught him. That he was taught by wiser than mortal men is evident, and that he learned his lessons well, for the Prophet Joseph Smith said of him:

“When still a boy, He had all the intelligence necessary to enable Him to rule and govern the kingdom of the Jews, and could reason with the wisest and most profound doctors of law and divinity, and make their theories and practice to appear like folly compared with the wisdom He possessed; but He was a boy only, and lacked physical strength even to defend His own person; and was subject to cold, to hunger, and to death.”

Day 45 The Living Christ

He rose from the grave to “become the firstfruits of them that slept” (1 Corinthians 15:20). As Risen Lord, He visited among those He had loved in life. He also ministered among His “other sheep” (John 10:16) in ancient America. In the modern world, He and His Father appeared to the boy Joseph Smith, ushering in the long-promised “dispensation of the fulness of times” (Ephesians 1:10).

Of the Living Christ, the Prophet Joseph wrote: “His eyes were as a flame of fire; the hair of his head was white like the pure snow; his countenance shone above the brightness of the sun; and his voice was as the sound of the rushing of great waters, even the voice of Jehovah, saying:

“I am the first and the last; I am he who liveth, I am he who was slain; I am your advocate with the Father” (D&C 110:3–4).

Of Him the Prophet also declared: “And now, after the many testimonies which have been given of him, this is the testimony, last of all, which we give of him: That he lives!

“For we saw him, even on the right hand of God; and we heard the voice bearing record that he is the Only Begotten of the Father—

“That by him, and through him, and of him, the worlds are and were created, and the inhabitants thereof are begotten sons and daughters unto God” (D&C 76:22–24).

Day 45 The Living Christ

We declare in words of solemnity that His priesthood and His Church have been restored upon the earth—“built upon the foundation of . . . apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone” (Ephesians 2:20).

We testify that He will someday return to earth. “And the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together” (Isaiah 40:5). He will rule as King of Kings and reign as Lord of Lords, and every knee shall bend and every tongue shall speak in worship before Him. Each of us will stand to be judged of Him according to our works and the desires of our hearts.

We bear testimony, as His duly ordained Apostles—that Jesus is the Living Christ, the immortal Son of God. He is the great King Immanuel, who stands today on the right hand of His Father. He is the light, the life, and the hope of the world. His way is the path that leads to happiness in this life and eternal life in the world to come. God be thanked for the matchless gift of His divine Son.

Gordon B. Hinckley
Thomas S. Monson
James E. Faust
Boyd K. Packer
L. Tom Perry
David B. Haight
Neal L. Maxwell
Russell M. Nelson

Dallin H. Oaks
M. Russell Ballard
Joseph B. Wirthlin
Richard G. Scott
Robert D. Hales
Jeffrey R. Holland
Henry B. Eyring

January 1, 2000

Day 44

3 Nephi 18

Jesus Teaches Nephites-
Sacrament

President Henry B. Eyring of the First Presidency reflected on the importance of the commissions to “always remember him” (D&C 20:77, 79) and to “pray always” (3 Nephi 18:18): “What does the Master mean when He warns us to ‘pray always’? ‘I am not wise enough to know all of His purposes in giving us a covenant to always remember Him and in His warning us to pray always lest we be overcome. But I know one. It is because He knows perfectly the powerful forces that influence us and also what it means to be human. ...’ ‘... He knows what it is like to have the cares of life press in upon us. ... And He knows how our human powers to cope are not constant. ...’ ‘... As the forces around us increase in intensity, whatever spiritual strength was once sufficient will not be enough. And whatever growth in spiritual strength we once thought was possible, greater growth will be made available to us. Both the need for spiritual strength and the opportunity to acquire it will increase at rates which we underestimate at our peril. ...’ ‘Start with remembering Him. You will remember what you know and what you love. ...’ ‘The Lord hears the prayers of your heart. The feelings of your heart, of love for our Heavenly Father and for His Beloved Son, can be so constant that your prayers will ascend always’ (“Always” [CES fireside for young adults, Jan. 3, 1999], 2–3, 5; see also “Always,” Ensign, Oct. 1999, 8–10, 12

Day 45

The Living Christ

The Testimony of the Apostles

As we commemorate the birth of Jesus Christ two millennia ago, we offer our testimony of the reality of His matchless life and the infinite virtue of His great atoning sacrifice. None other has had so profound an influence upon all who have lived and will yet live upon the earth.

He was the Great Jehovah of the Old Testament, the Messiah of the New. Under the direction of His Father, He was the creator of the earth. “All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made” (John 1:3). Though sinless, He was baptized to fulfill all righteousness. He “went about doing good” (Acts 10:38), yet was despised for it. His gospel was a message of peace and goodwill. He entreated all to follow His example. He walked the roads of Palestine, healing the sick, causing the blind to see, and raising the dead. He taught the truths of eternity, the reality of our premortal existence, the purpose of our life on earth, and the potential for the sons and daughters of God in the life to come.

He instituted the sacrament as a reminder of His great atoning sacrifice. He was arrested and condemned on spurious charges, convicted to satisfy a mob, and sentenced to die on Calvary’s cross. He gave His life to atone for the sins of all mankind. His was a great vicarious gift in behalf of all who would ever live upon the earth.

We solemnly testify that His life, which is central to all human history, neither began in Bethlehem nor concluded on Calvary. He was the Firstborn of the Father, the Only Begotten Son in the flesh, the Redeemer of the world.

Day 7

Luke 5

Jesus Performs 3 Miracles/Analogy
of Old Wine and New Bottles

One important part of the Savior’s mission was to establish the kingdom of God on earth. Jesus Christ called men whom He could trust to lead the Church after His resurrection and ascension into heaven. These men became the twelve Apostles. Jesus spent much time instructing and preparing His Apostles for their important role. Luke 5 tells how some of those men were called to follow Jesus.

In New Testament times wine was stored in bottles made from animal skins. Those leather bags were often called wineskins. Over time, those skins would become dry and brittle and could crack or spilt easily. New wine underwent a fermenting process, which naturally caused the liquid to expand. If new wine was put in an old bottle, the fermenting would cause the old wineskin to stretch and burst.

The following questions by Elder Bruce R. McConkie, [helps] explain [this parable]: “What, new baptism in an old church, new revelation in a dying kingdom, new doctrine in an apostate organization! Could Jesus add Christian ordinances, with their spirit and power, to the dead formalism and ritual of the Mosiac procedures?”

-From the New Testament study guide

Day 8

John 5

Jesus Heals at Bethesda

“Jesus Christ was rejected by the people because he told them what saving work he would for the captives then confined to a spiritual prison and for those who had been bruised in their souls through iniquity. Instead of rejoicing at this liberation, the people hated Jesus for being so presumptuous as to tell that that he had been anointed to open the prison doors. Even his very life was threatened. Nevertheless, he continued to preach this doctrine even more clearly, in the hopes that people would understand him and the importance of the work he had been called to do.”

-Theodore M. Burton, “The Spirit and Power of Elijah”

“Just as the lame man at the pool of Bethesda needed someone stronger than himself to be healed, so we are dependent on the miracles of Christ’s atonement if our souls are to be made whole from grief, sorrow, and sin... Through Christ, broken hearts are mended and peace replaces anxiety and sorrow.”

-Merrill J. Bateman, “The Power to Heal from Within”

Day 9 Matthew 4

Jesus Tempted

“Without a doubt, Jesus came into the world subject to the same condition as was required of each of us—he forgot everything, and he had to grow from grace to grace. His forgetting, or having his former knowledge taken away, would be requisite just as it is in the case of each of us, to complete the present temporal existence.”
- Joseph Fielding Smith

Can you see that although Jesus was the greatest spirit to come to the earth, he also had greater trials than anyone in the earth?...The fact that he was sinless and that he resisted every temptation does not make it any less a fact that he was subject to temptations. He knows how difficult temptations are, because he experienced bitter temptations; but he resisted them all.

Jesus suffered temptations far beyond what men could endure; he confronted the powers of evil and won. But because he had to resist temptations, he understands the effort man must make to resist temptation.

Jesus was perfectly obedient, and because he was, “he received all power, both in heaven and on earth.” But Jesus did not receive this great power and glory all at once. He received it piecemeal, step by step, degree by degree, “line upon line, precept upon precept” until he received a fulness of the glory of the Father.
-New Testament Institute Manual

Day 10 Mark 2:23-36

Jesus Heals on the Sabbath

Jesus came to preach the gospel more than He came to perform miracles. His miracles were outward physical symbols of what He could do for us spiritually. In Mark 2 we read of a time when Jesus taught this principle.
-New Testament Institute Study Guide

27 And he said unto them, The sabbath was made for man, and not man for the sabbath:
28 Therefore the Son of man is Lord also of the sabbath.

Brothers and sisters, in the latter days the adversary succeeds when we relax our commitment to the Savior, ignore His teachings in the New Testament and other scripture, and cease to follow Him. Parents, now is the time to teach our children to be examples of the believers by attending sacrament meeting. When Sunday morning arrives, help them to be well rested, properly dressed, and spiritually prepared to partake of the emblems of the sacrament and receive the enlightening, edifying, ennobling power of the Holy Ghost. Let your family be filled with love as you honor the Sabbath all day long and experience its spiritual blessings throughout the week. Invite your sons and daughters to “arise and shine forth” by keeping the Sabbath day holy, that “[their] light may be a standard for the nations.”

– Elder L. Tom Perry, “The Sabbath and the Sacrament”

Day 42 3 Nephi 15

Jesus Teaches Nephites

3 Nephi 15:9–10, Elder Marvin J. Ashton of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles: “What a spiritual comfort and blessing it is to know that, if we look to our Savior Jesus Christ and endure to the end, eternal life and exaltation can be ours. ... God becomes more approachable as we look to him. Looking to God teaches us to serve and live without compulsion [without being forced or pressured to do something]” (“There Are Many Gifts,” Ensign, Nov. 1987, 21).

Day 43 3 Nephi 17

Jesus Teaches Nephites

3 Nephi 17:11–24. “Behold Your Little Ones” While serving as the general president of the Primary, Sister Michaelene P. Grassli referred to the capacity of children for spiritual experiences: “It’s significant to me that ... the Savior gave the most sacred teachings only to the children, then loosed their tongues so they could teach the multitude. (See 3 Ne. 26:14.) “Is it any wonder that following the Savior’s visit to the Nephites, they lived in peace and righteousness for two hundred years? Because of miraculous instructions, blessings, and attention they and their children received, righteousness was perpetuated by their children’s children for many generations. “Let us not underestimate the capacity and potential power of today’s children to perpetuate righteousness. No group of people in the Church is as receptive to the truth” (“Behold Your Little Ones,” Ensign, Nov. 1992, 92–94).

Day40

3 Nephi 13

Jesus Teaches Nephites

President Ezra Taft Benson referred to the temporary nature of earthly treasures: “Our affections are often too highly placed upon the paltry perishable objects. Material treasures of earth are merely to provide us, as it were, room and board while we are here at school. It is for us to place gold, silver, houses, stocks, lands, cattle, and other earthly possessions in their proper place. “Yes, this is but a place of temporary duration. We are here to learn the first lesson toward exaltation—obedience to the Lord’s gospel plan” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1971, 17; or Ensign, June 1971, 33).

Day41

3 Nephi 14

Jesus Teaches Nephites

Elder Dallin H. Oaks clarified the meaning of verses 1–2 in 3 Nephi 14 by explaining the difference between righteous and unrighteous judgments: “I have been puzzled that some scriptures command us not to judge and others instruct us that we should judge and even tell us how to do it. But as I have studied these passages I have become convinced that these seemingly contradictory directions are consistent when we view them with the perspective of eternity. The key is to understand that there are two kinds of judging: final judgments, which we are forbidden to make, and intermediate judgments, which we are directed to make, but upon righteous principles. ... “First, a righteous judgment must, by definition, be intermediate. ... “Second, a righteous judgment will be guided by the Spirit of the Lord, not by anger, revenge, jealousy, or self-interest. ... “Third, to be righteous, an intermediate judgment must be within our stewardship. ... “Fourth, we should, if possible, refrain from judging until we have adequate knowledge of the facts” (“Judge Not’ and Judging,” Ensign, Aug. 1999, 7, 9–10).

President James E. Faust bore testimony of the gift and privilege we each have of access to our Heavenly Father through prayer: “Access to our Creator through our Savior is surely one of the great privileges and blessings of our lives. ... No earthly authority can separate us from direct access to our Creator. There can never be a mechanical or electronic failure when we pray. There is no limit on the number of times or how long we can pray each day. There is no quota of how many needs we wish to pray for in each prayer. We do not need to go through secretaries or make an appointment to reach the throne of grace. He is reachable at any time and any place”

Day11

Luke 6:12-49

Disciples Chosen

Jesus had previously called men to follow Him. Luke 6 records the official calling of twelve Apostles. We also read some of what He taught them as they went out to preach in His name. His counsel to them is similar to what you read in the Sermon on the Mount, in Matthew 5–7. Some have called Luke 6:20–49 the Sermon on the Plain.

-New Testament Institute Study Guide

Verse 38: Give, and it shall be given unto you; good measure, pressed down, and shaken together, and running over, shall men give into your bosom. For with the same measure that ye mete withal it shall be measured to you again.

“Shouldn’t this promise be enough to always focus our efforts on acts of kindness, forgiveness, and charity instead of on any negative behavior?”

-President Dieter F. Uchtdorf,
“The Merciful Obtain Mercy”
April 2012

Day12

John 7:1-23

Jesus Heals

The events in John 7 occurred in Jerusalem during the Feast of the Tabernacles. This feast, which the Lord had commanded the children of Israel to observe since the time of Moses, included several important symbolic rituals or rites. At the time of Jesus, one of these was the priests drawing water from the pool of Siloam and pouring it out in the holy place of the temple—symbolic of God pouring out His Holy Spirit among the people. As you read John 7, notice what Jesus taught that related to this symbolic activity...

-New Testament Institute Study Guide

17. If any man will do his will, he shall know of the doctrine, whether it be of God, or whether I speak of myself. We have to go through that same process if we want to gain that same kind of commitment... Sometimes we try to do it backward. For example, we may take this approach: I will be happy to live the law of tithing, but first I need to know that it’s true. Maybe we even pray to gain a testimony of the law of tithing and hope the Lord will bless us with that testimony... It just doesn’t work that way. The Lord expects us to exercise faith. We have to consistently pay a full and honest tithe in order to gain a testimony of tithing. This same pattern applies to all the principles of the gospel..,

– Bonnie L. Oscarson, “Be Ye Converted”
October 2013

Day13

John 7:36-50

Jesus Heals a Woman at Pharisee's House

On the last day of the feast of tabernacles, the Savior, now returned to Jerusalem, extended this timeless, universal invitation: "If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink."

Elder Bruce R. McConkie defined living water as "the words of eternal life, the message of salvation, the truths about God and his kingdom; it is the doctrines of the gospel." He went on to explain, "Where there are prophets of God, there will be found rivers of living water, wells filled with eternal truths, springs bubbling forth their life-giving draughts that save from spiritual death."

Elder M. Russell Ballard, "This is My Work and Glory" Oct 2013 General Conference:

Brothers and sisters, as the literal spirit children of our loving Heavenly Father, we have unlimited, divine potential. But if we are not careful, we can drift away from the true doctrine and gospel of Christ and become spiritually undernourished and wilted, having removed ourselves from the divine light and living waters of the Savior's eternal love and priesthood power.

Jesus said:

"If any man thirst, let him come unto me, and drink" (John 7:37).

If any one of you feels your faith or your testimony of Heavenly Father's plan is less than you know it should be, then turn more fully to the Savior. Let His light and His living water do for you and your family what a little water and light did in bringing life back to the weakened tomato plant.

Day14

John 8:4-18

Parable of the Sower

President James E Faust "Of Seeds and Soils" Oct 1999 General Conference: In this parable, the seed is the same but it lands on four different kinds of soil. The Savior also explained the meaning of the parable. The seed that "fell by the way side" represents those who hear the word of God but do not understand it and fall into the clutches of Satan. The second seed, which "fell upon stony places," describes those who joyfully hear the word and thrive as long as all goes well. But when trials come and they feel peer pressure because of their beliefs, they are offended and do not endure. The third seed, which "fell among thorns," represents those who hear the word, but worldliness and riches are more important to them, and they fall away from the truth. The last seed, however, which "fell into good ground," represents those who hear the word, understand it, live it, and reap great eternal rewards.

Marvin J Ashton "Who Will Forfeit the Harvest?" Oct 1978 General Conference: Deep and enduring testimonies grow and strengthen as they are daily nurtured. They increase as they are shared. Meaningful testimonies have roots planted in fertile soil. The sun, the rain, and even the storms make them stronger and more durable. As the events of daily life come upon us, some testimonies wither under the heat of everyday occurrences. Roots are shallow, testimonies fade, and there is no harvest.

Let us seek to be totally committed. Then we will not fall upon stony places, wither away, or stray from the paths of security and happiness. Those who serve with complete dedication wherever called do not wilt, wither, wonder, or wander. Their roots are deep and solidly planted in the fertile soils of the kingdom. The harvest is enjoyed with every passing day as they serve.

Day38

3 Nephi 11

Jesus Teaches Nephites

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, declared: "Even though the power of the Resurrection could have—and undoubtedly one day will have—completely restored and made new the wounds from the crucifixion, nevertheless Christ chose to retain those wounds for a purpose, including for his appearance in the last days when he will show those marks and reveal that he was wounded 'in the house of [his] friends' [Zechariah 13:6; see also D&C 45:52]. "The wounds in his hands, feet, and side are signs that in mortality painful things happen even to the pure and the perfect, signs that tribulation is not evidence that God does not love us. It is a significant and hopeful fact that it is the wounded Christ who comes to our rescue. He who bears the scars of sacrifice, the lesions of love, the emblems of humility and forgiveness is the Captain of our Soul. That evidence of pain in mortality is undoubtedly intended to give courage to others who are also hurt and wounded by life, perhaps even in the house of their friends" (Christ and the New Covenant [1997], 258–59).

Day39

3 Nephi 12

Jesus Teaches Nephites

Elder Neal A. Maxwell (1926–2004) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained the phrase "take up your cross": "The daily taking up of the cross means daily denying ourselves the appetites of the flesh. "By emulating the Master, who endured temptations but 'gave no heed unto them,' we, too, can live in a world filled with temptations 'such as [are] common to man' (1 Corinthians 10:13). Of course Jesus noticed the tremendous temptations that came to Him, but He did not process and reprocess them. Instead, He rejected them promptly. If we entertain temptations, soon they begin entertaining us! Turning these unwanted lodgers away at the doorstep of the mind is one way of giving 'no heed.'

President Spencer W. Kimball explained the need to strive for perfection: "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.' (Matthew 5:48.) Now, that is an attainable goal. We will not be exalted, we shall not reach our destination, unless we are perfect, and now is the best time in the world to start toward perfection. I have little patience with persons who say, 'Oh, nobody is perfect,' the implication being; 'so why try?' Of course no one is wholly perfect, but we find some who are a long way up the ladder" (Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball, 165

Day36 Luke 24:13-53

Jesus Appears to Disciples

Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained the “burning” that comes with revelation from the Holy Ghost: “The teachings of the Spirit often come as feelings. That fact is of the utmost importance, yet some misunderstand what it means. I have met persons who told me they have never had a witness from the Holy Ghost because they have never felt their bosom ‘burn within’ them. “What does a ‘burning in the bosom’ mean? Does it need to be a feeling of caloric heat, like the burning produced by combustion? If that is the meaning, I have never had a burning in the bosom. Surely, the word ‘burning’ in this scripture [D&C 9:8] signifies a feeling of comfort and serenity. That is the witness many receive. That is the way revelation works” (“Teaching and Learning by the Spirit,” Ensign, Mar. 1997, 13).

Day37 John 20:19-21:25

Jesus Appears to Disciples

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008) quoted John 20:25 and then likened the experience of Thomas to modern times: “Have you not heard others speak as Thomas spoke? ‘Give us,’ they say, ‘the empirical evidence. Prove before our very eyes, and our ears, and our hands, else we will not believe.’ This is the language of the time in which we live. Thomas the Doubter has become the example of men in all ages who refuse to accept other than that which they can physically prove and explain—as if they could prove love, or faith, or even such physical phenomena as electricity.”

President Hinckley then quoted John 20:26–29 and continued: “To all within the sound of my voice who may have doubts, I repeat the words given Thomas as he felt the wounded hands of the Lord: ‘Be not faithless, but believing.’ Believe in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the greatest figure of time and eternity” (“Be Not Faithless,” Ensign, May 1978, 59).

Day15 Mark 4:37-41

Jesus Calms the Storm

President Howard W. Hunter: All of us have seen some sudden storms in our lives. A few of them, though temporary like these on the Sea of Galilee, can be violent and frightening and potentially destructive. As individuals, as families, as communities, as nations, even as a church, we have had sudden squalls arise which have made us ask one way or another, “Master, carest thou not that we perish?” And one way or another we always hear in the stillness after the storm, “Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no faith?” None of us would like to think we have no faith, but I suppose the Lord’s gentle rebuke here is largely deserved. This great Jehovah, in whom we say we trust and whose name we have taken upon us, is he who said, “Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.” (Gen. 1:6.) Certainly it should be no surprise that he could command a few elements acting up on the Sea of Galilee. And our faith should remind us that he can calm the troubled waters of our lives.

Elder Robert D Hales: We are living through turbulent times. A great storm of evil has come upon the earth. The winds of wickedness howl about us; the waves of war beat against our ship. As Paul wrote to Timothy: “In the last days perilous times shall come. For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, ... Having a form of godliness; but denying the power thereof.” It is true that ominous clouds gather around us, but just as the Savior’s words brought peace to the Apostles in the boat, they bring peace to us today: “And when ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars, be ye not troubled: for such things must needs be; but the end shall not be yet.” “If ye are prepared ye shall not fear.”

Day16 Mark 5:22-43

Jesus Heals Jairus’ Daughter/
Woman Made Whole Thru Faith

Jesus Heals Jairus’ Daughter
President Howard W. Hunter “Reading the Scriptures” Oct 1979 General Conference
Whatever Jesus lays his hands upon lives. If Jesus lays his hands upon a marriage, it lives. If he is allowed to lay his hands on the family, it lives. ... Jesus took the little girl by the hand and raised her from the dead. In like manner, he will lift and raise every man to a new and better life who will permit the Savior to take him by the hand

Woman Made Whole through Faith
While serving as a member of the Seventy, Elder Dennis B. Neuenschwander spoke about how the woman in this account acted in faith to come to the Savior:
Among the crowd was a woman. Outwardly, there was little to distinguish her from any other person in the crowd. No one tried to stop her from moving toward Jesus. Certainly, the Apostles neither noticed her nor made any attempt to stop her. But there was something that set her apart from all others in the crowd that day. Though buried among the thronging mass, she resolutely and quietly pressed forward with a single purpose in mind: to come to the Savior, having faith that He had the power to heal her, that He cared about her and would respond to her need. In this one thing she set herself apart from the crowd. The crowd came to see, but the woman came to be healed. All of us are among the crowds of this world. Almost all of us are like the woman who, despite the crowd, comes to the Savior. We all have faith that just a touch will bring healing to our aching souls and relief to our innermost needs. “... In all of life’s circumstances let us quietly and resolutely press forward to the Savior, having faith that He cares about us and has the power to heal and save us. (“One among the Crowd”, Ensign May 2008)

Day17

John 4:14-36

Jesus Feeds 5000/Walks on Water

The feeding of the five thousand is one of the only miracles besides the Resurrection that is found in all four Gospels. Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles identified an eternal truth we learn from this miracle: “Don’t worry about Christ running out of ability to help you. His grace is sufficient. That is the spiritual, eternal lesson of the feeding of the 5,000”

Similarly, Elder J. Devn Cornish of the Seventy taught that the feeding of the five thousand is one of the scriptural accounts that “can teach us symbolically of the power and abundance of the Savior’s atoning grace. ... His grace is truly abundant and more than sufficient to meet all our needs”

President Howard W. Hunter (1907–85) taught: “It is my firm belief that if as individual people, as families, communities, and nations, we could, like Peter, fix our eyes on Jesus, we too might walk triumphantly over ‘the swelling waves of disbelief’ and remain ‘unterrified amid the rising winds of doubt.’ But if we turn away our eyes from him in whom we must believe, as it is so easy to do and the world is so much tempted to do, if we look to the power and fury of those terrible and destructive elements around us rather than to him who can help and save us, then we shall inevitably sink in a sea of conflict and sorrow and despair.

“At such times when we feel the floods are threatening to drown us and the deep is going to swallow up the tossed vessel of our faith, I pray we may always hear amid the storm and the darkness that sweet utterance of the Savior of the world: ‘Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.’ (Matt. 14:27.)”

Day18

John 6:25-69

Bread of Life

President Howard W. Hunter counseled: “We must know Christ better than we know him; we must remember him more often than we remember him; we must serve him more valiantly than we serve him. Then we will drink water springing up unto eternal life and will eat the bread of life”

Elder Bruce R. McConkie, taught: “We come now to the crowning teaching of the sermon on the bread of life, which is, that men are saved by eating the flesh and drinking the blood of the Son of God. ...

“The bread of life, of life eternal, living bread, the bread which came down from heaven—such is the language he uses to describe himself; and since his body is one of flesh and blood, to eat the heavensent bread, men must eat his flesh, the flesh he ‘will give for the life of the world,’ the flesh to be broken in his infinite and eternal atoning sacrifice. Knowing what Jesus’ words meant but being wholly unable to understand how they applied to salvation and to the works they must do to gain eternal life, the Jews ‘strove among themselves.’ ...

“To eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of God is, first, to accept him in the most literal and full sense, with no reservation whatever, as the personal offspring in the flesh of the Eternal Father; and, secondly, it is to keep the commandments of the Son by accepting his gospel, joining his Church, and enduring in obedience and righteousness unto the end. Those who by this course eat his flesh and drink his blood shall have eternal life, meaning exaltation in the highest heaven of the celestial world. Speaking of ancient Israel, for instance, Paul says: They ‘did all eat the same spiritual meat; And did all drink the same spiritual drink: for they drank of that spiritual Rock that followed them: and that Rock was Christ.’ (1 Cor. 10:3–4.)” (Mortal Messiah, 2:377–79).

Day34

John 19:31-42

Burial

A man known as Joseph of Arimathea, who was at heart a disciple of Christ, but who had hesitated to openly confess his conversion through fear of the Jews, desired to give the Lord’s body a decent and honorable interment. But for some such divinely directed intervention, the body of Jesus might have been cast into the common grave of executed criminals. This man, Joseph, was “a counsellor; and he was a good man, and a just.” Joseph was a man of wealth, station, and influence. He went in boldly unto Pilate and begged the body of Christ. The governor was surprised to learn that Jesus was already dead; he summoned the centurion and inquired as to how long Jesus had lived on the cross. The unusual circumstance seems to have added to Pilate’s troubled concern. He gave command and the body of Christ was delivered to Joseph.

The body was removed from the cross; and in preparing it for the tomb Joseph was assisted by Nicodemus. Nicodemus brought a large quantity of myrrh and aloes, about a hundred-weight. The odorous mixture was highly esteemed for anointing and embalming, but its cost restricted its use to the wealthy. These two revering disciples wrapped the Lord’s body in clean linen, “with the spices, as the manner of the Jews is to bury”; and then laid it in a new sepulchre, hewn in the rock. The tomb was in a garden, not far from Calvary, and was the property of Joseph. Because of the nearness of the Sabbath the interment had to be made with haste; the door of the sepulchre was closed, a large stone was rolled against it: and thus laid away the body was left to rest. Some of the devoted women, particularly Mary Magdalene, and “the other Mary,” who was the mother of James and Joses, had watched the entombment from a distance; and when it was completed “they returned, and prepared spices and ointments; and rested the Sabbath day according to the commandment.”

Day35

John 20

Resurrection

When Peter and John looked in the tomb, they saw “the linen clothes lie, and the napkin [a separate piece of cloth], that was about his head, not lying with the linen clothes, but wrapped together in a place by itself” (John 20:6–7). That is, the grave clothes were in the same position they had been in when they were placed around Jesus’s body—still wrapped, conforming to the general outline of His body, but now empty, with the head cloth in its place above the linen strips that had wrapped the body.

Elder Bruce R. McConkie (1915–85) of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles explained: “Together they view the grave-clothes-linen strips that have not been unwrapped, but through which a resurrected body has passed. And then, upon John ... the reality dawns first. It is true! They had not known before; now they do. It is the third day! Christ is risen! ‘Death is swallowed up in victory.’ (1 Cor. 15:54.)” (Doctrinal New Testament Commentary, 3 vols. [1965–73], 1:842).

Day32 Luke 22:47-71

Jesus Betrayed by Judas & Peter

From the New Testament Study Guide:

In a talk entitled Peter, My Brother, Elder Spencer W. Kimball, then a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, said that we should be careful about harshly judging Peter for his actions the night of Jesus' arrest. He reminded us that Peter had forsaken everything to follow Jesus (see Matthew 19:27–28). Furthermore, on different occasions, Jesus had commanded the Twelve to not tell what they knew “until the Son of man be risen again from the dead” (Matthew 17:9; see also Matthew 16:20).

Elder Kimball then said: “I do not pretend to know what Peter’s mental reactions were nor what compelled him to say what he did that terrible night. But in light of his proven bravery, courage, great devotion, and limitless love for the Master, could we not give him the benefit of the doubt and at least forgive him as his Savior seems to have done so fully. Almost immediately Christ elevated him to the highest position in his church and endowed him with the complete keys of that kingdom” (Brigham Young University Speeches of the Year, 13 July 1971, 5).

Day33 Luke 23, Mark 15:20-39

Trial & Crucifixion

I Stand All Amazed:

*I stand all amazed at the love Jesus offers me,
Confused at the grace that so fully he proffers me.
I tremble to know that for me he was crucified,
That for me, a sinner, he suffered, he bled and died.*

*I think of his hands pierced and bleeding to pay the debt!
Such mercy, such love, and devotion can I forget?
No, no, I will praise and adore at the mercy seat,
Until at the glorified throne I kneel at his feet.
Oh, it is wonderful that he should care for me
Enough to die for me!
Oh, it is wonderful, wonderful to me!
(Hymns, no. 193).*

The Atonement began in Gethsemane, and Mark 15 records its conclusion on the cross at Golgotha. Elder James E. Talmage, who was a member of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, wrote that “death by crucifixion was at once the most lingering and most painful of all forms of execution. The victim lived in ever increasing torture, generally for many hours, sometimes for days. ... The welcome relief of death came through the exhaustion caused by intense and unremitting pain” (Jesus the Christ, 655).

In Doctrine and Covenants 19:16–19, Jesus spoke of the pain He felt in Gethsemane, which seems to have been greater and more intense than His suffering on the cross. As one of our hymns declares: “We may not know, we cannot tell, What pains he had to bear, But we believe it was for us He hung and suffered there” (“There Is a Green Hill Far Away,” Hymns, no. 194). Keep in mind, as you read this chapter, that “it was for [you] he hung and suffered there.”

Day19 Mark 7:1-23

Rebuking of False Traditions

Elder Dallin H. Oaks declared that as members of the Church, we must be willing to give up “all of our practices—personal, family, ethnic, and national—that are contrary to the commandments of God”: “The teachings of Jesus also challenged the traditions of different groups. ... ‘Hypocrites’ is what He called those whose adherence to their traditions kept them from keeping the commandments of God.” The traditions or culture or way of life of a people inevitably include some practices that must be changed by those who wish to qualify for God’s choicest blessings.

Elder Richard G. Scott of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught that we will find greater happiness and peace when we make sure our family and cultural traditions align with the gospel of Jesus Christ: “I testify that you will remove barriers to happiness and find greater peace as you make your first allegiance your membership in the Church of Jesus Christ, and His teachings the foundation of your life. Where family or national traditions or customs conflict with the teachings of God, set them aside. Where traditions and customs are in harmony with His teachings, they should be cherished and followed to preserve your culture and heritage. There is one heritage that you need never change. It is that heritage that comes from your being a daughter or son of Father in Heaven. For happiness, control your life by that heritage” (“Removing Barriers to Happiness,” Ensign, May 1998, 87).

Day20 Matthew 17

The Transfiguration

Speaking of the Transfiguration, Elder David B. Haight said: “Perhaps Jesus felt not only a sense of the heavenly calm which that solitary opportunity for communion with His Father would bring, but even more, a sense that He would be supported in the coming hour by ministrations not of this earth. ... As He prayed to His Father, He was elevated far above the doubt and wickedness of the world which had rejected Him.”

“He took His three apostles with Him in the belief that they, after having seen His glory ... might be fortified, that their faith might be strengthened to prepare them for the insults and humiliating events which were to follow.”

“The three chosen apostles were taught of [the Savior’s] coming death and also His resurrection, teachings that would strengthen each of them in the eventful days ahead.”

Day 21

John 8

Adulteress Forgiven

Referring to the Savior’s statement, “Neither do I condemn thee” (John 8:11), Elder Dallin H. Oaks of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles taught, “In this context, the word condemn apparently refers to the final judgment.” Elder Oaks further explained that Jesus did not condone the woman’s sin, but He was allowing her time to repent and acknowledging that her final judgment would come later: “The Lord obviously did not justify the woman’s sin. He simply told her that He did not condemn her—that is, He would not pass final judgment on her at that time. This interpretation is confirmed by what He then said to the Pharisees: ‘Ye judge after the flesh; I judge no man’ (John 8:15). The woman taken in adultery was granted time to repent, time that would have been denied by those who wanted to stone her” (“‘Judge Not’ and Judging,” Ensign, Aug. 1999, 8).

President Spencer W. Kimball (1895–1985) similarly taught about the Savior’s words to the woman: “His command to her was, ‘Go, and sin no more.’ He was directing the sinful woman to go her way, abandon her evil life, commit no more sin, transform her life. He was saying, Go, woman, and start your repentance; and he was indicating to her the beginning step—to abandon her transgressions” (The Miracle of Forgiveness [1969], 165).

Day 22

Luke 14

Supper Parable

Latter-day revelation provides other applications of the parable. In the latter days, all nations will be invited to “a supper of the house of the Lord.” The first people to be invited will be “the rich and the learned, the wise and the noble.” If they do not accept the gospel, “then shall the poor, the lame, and the blind, and the deaf, come in unto the marriage of the Lamb, and partake of the supper of the Lord” (D&C 58:9–11). Also, the statement made by one of Jesus’s listeners—“Blessed is he that shall eat bread in the kingdom of God” (Luke 14:15)—reminds us that just before the beginning of the Millennium, Christ and His servants will partake together of the bread and water of the sacrament (see D&C 27:5–14).

While serving as a member of the Seventy, Elder F. Burton Howard referred to Doctrine and Covenants 58:8–10 and explained that these verses help us understand how concern for material things can prevent us from partaking of gospel blessings: “If the Lord is providing his own commentary on the parable of the great supper—and it seems that he is—then it is frightening to note that those who declined the invitation were those more concerned with temporal problems—for example, a piece of ground, a yoke of oxen, or a wife who did not understand the significance of the supper. As we look at the part riches play in this parable, we can see that there is great risk in them—risk that concern for material things may cloud our view of what is eternally important” (“Overcoming the World,” Ensign, Sept. 1996, 13).

Day 30

John 15-17

Final Teachings

The “word” of the Lord is His gospel, which includes His commandments. Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin, an Apostle, said, “Through the marvelous power of the Atonement of Jesus Christ, a power activated by our obedience to His commandments, we can be washed clean of our sins”

Elder Jeffrey R. Holland, an Apostle, taught, “Christ has overcome the world—our world—and His gift to us is peace now and exaltation in the world to come. Our fundamental requirement is to have faith in Him and follow Him—always. When He bids us to walk in His way and by His light, it is because He has walked this way before us, and He has made it safe for our own travel here” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1997, 89; or Ensign, Nov. 1997, 66).

Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin, an Apostle, said, “Perhaps all of us sometimes would like to withdraw and isolate ourselves from the storms of life and from the fiery darts of Satan. However, we must be in the world but not of the world, meaning to go forward in the midst of the sin, evil, and corruption that are in the world but resisting and rejecting them” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1993, 84; or Ensign, May 1993, 68).

Day 31

Luke 22:1-46

Sacrament Instituted/Gethsemane

From the New Testament Study Guide: According to Heavenly Father’s will and in preparation for the Atonement, Jesus Christ instituted the sacrament in an upper room in Jerusalem. This symbolized the infinite and eternal sacrifice that was carried out because of the Savior’s love for us. As you read Luke’s testimony of what happened in that upper room and in Gethsemane, consider how important the Atonement is in your life. How blessed are you because of Jesus’ sacrifice? How does partaking of the sacrament help you build faith in the Atonement of Jesus Christ and increase your testimony of Him as your Savior and Redeemer?

Elder Russell M. Nelson taught: “The ordeal of the Atonement centered about the city of Jerusalem. There the greatest single act of love of all recorded history took place. Leaving the upper room, Jesus and His friends crossed the deep ravine east of the city and came to a garden of olive trees on the lower slopes of the Mount of Olives. There in the garden bearing the Hebrew name of Gethsemane—meaning ‘oilpress’—olives had been beaten and pressed to provide oil and food. There at Gethsemane, the Lord ‘suffered the pain of all men, that all ... might repent and come unto him.’ He took upon Himself the weight of the sins of all mankind, bearing its massive load that caused Him to bleed from every pore” (in Conference Report, Oct. 1996, 46–47; or Ensign, Nov. 1996, 35).

Day 28

John 13

Jesus Washes Feet of Twelve/
Last Supper

In the Old Testament Jesus taught His people to love others, but this new commandment was to love “as I have loved you”. As He demonstrated by His Atonement, the way Jesus has and does love us is a deep, self-sacrificing love that has the eternal welfare of another as a highest priority.

President Howard W. Hunter taught: “We need to be kinder with one another, more gentle and more forgiving. We need to be slower to anger and more prompt to help. We need to extend the hand of friendship and resist the hand of retribution [revenge]. In short, we need to love one another with the pure love of Christ, with genuine charity and compassion and, if necessary, shared suffering, for that is the way God loves us” (“Come to the God of All Truth,” Ensign, Sept. 1994, 72).

Day 29

John 14

Jesus Comforts Disciples

From the New Testament Study Guide:

What might your thoughts be if you knew you would die in just a few days or hours? Would you worry about how painful death might be or worry about those who would be left behind? John 14–16 includes some of Jesus’ last teachings to His Apostles before His suffering and death. If you were one of Jesus’ disciples at that time, what would you have been concerned about if you knew Jesus was going to die and leave you? As you read the next several chapters, think about how Jesus’ teachings would have brought comfort and calmed the fears of the Apostles.

Jesus Christ died for us so that we might be redeemed from the grave. He also lived for us, “leaving us an example, that [we] should follow his steps” (1 Peter 2:21). The way to eternal life is to follow the Lord’s perfect example. Those who were followers of Jesus Christ were said to follow in His “way”

The Prophet Joseph Smith said, “After a person has faith in Christ, repents of his sins, and is baptized for the remission of his sins and receives the Holy Ghost, (by the laying on of hands), which is the first Comforter, then let him continue to humble himself before God, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and living by every word of God ... then it will be his privilege to receive the other Comforter, which the Lord hath promised the Saints. ... Now what is this other Comforter? It is no more nor less than the Lord Jesus Christ Himself”

Day 23

Luke 15

Parables of Lost Sheep, Lost Coin &
Lost Son

In Luke 15, Luke recorded three of the Savior’s most well-known parables: the lost sheep, the lost coin, and the prodigal (lost) son. The common theme in all three parables is that something was lost. In all three parables, the people involved rejoiced when that which was lost was found. Something was lost. President David O. McKay noted that in the three parables found in Luke 15, the sheep, the coin, and the prodigal son each became lost for different reasons. Regarding the sheep, President McKay taught: “How did that sheep get lost? He was not rebellious. If you follow the comparison, the lamb was seeking its livelihood in a perfectly legitimate manner, but either stupidly, perhaps unconsciously, it followed the enticement of the field, the prospect of better grass until it got out beyond the fold and was lost.

“So we have those in the Church ... who wander away from the fold in perfectly legitimate ways. They are seeking success, success in business, success in their professions, and before long they become disinterested in Church and finally disconnected from the fold.”

Regarding the lost coin, President McKay taught: “In this case the thing lost was not in itself responsible. The one who had been trusted with that coin had, through carelessness or neglect, mislaid it or dropped it. ... Our charge is not only coins, but living souls of children, youth, and adults. They are our charges.”

As for the prodigal son, he taught: “Here is a case of volition, here is choice, deliberate choice. Here is, in a way, rebellion against authority. And what did he do? He spent his means in riotous living, he wasted his portion”

Day 24

Luke 16

Parables of Unjust Steward/Rich
Man & Lazarus

Gordon B. Hinckley said:

“I plead for a stronger spirit of compassion in all of our relationships, a stronger element of mercy, for the promise is sure that if we are merciful we shall obtain mercy.

Mercy is of the very essence of the gospel of Jesus Christ. The degree to which each of us is able to extend it becomes an expression of the reality of our discipleship under Him who is our Lord and Master.

He, the Son of the everlasting Father, was the epitome of mercy. His ministry was one of compassion toward the poor, the sick, the oppressed, the victims of injustice and man’s inhumanity to man. His sacrifice on the cross was an unparalleled act of mercy in behalf of all humanity.

How great a thing is mercy. Most often it is quiet and unassuming. It receives few headlines. It is the antithesis of vengeance and hatred, of greed and offensive egotism.”

As Elder James E. Talmage once wrote: “Religion without morality, professions of godliness without charity, church-membership without adequate responsibility as to individual conduct in daily life, are but as sounding brass and tinkling cymbals. ... ‘Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world.’ Honesty of purpose, integrity of soul, individual purity, [absolute] freedom of conscience, willingness to do good to all men even enemies, pure benevolence—these are some of the fruits by which the religion of Christ may be known, far exceeding in importance and value the promulgation of dogmas and the enunciation of theories.”

Day 25

Mark 11:11-33

Cleaning of Temple

Mark 11 begins about three years after Jesus' baptism. Within one week He would be crucified. The events in Mark 11–16 occurred during the week of Passover—a time when Jews from all over gathered to Jerusalem to offer sacrifice at the temple. It was a perfect opportunity for Jesus to give His final testimony to a large number of people as He prepared to offer Himself as the Lamb of God for the redemption of all mankind.

Jesus continually condemned these Jewish leaders for their hypocrisy. Mark 11–12 implies that the source of their hypocrisy was pride. As President Ezra Taft Benson taught, “The proud stand more in fear of men’s judgment than of God’s judgment. ‘What will men think of me?’ weighs heavier than ‘What will God think of me?’” (in Conference Report, Apr. 1989, 4; or Ensign, May 1989, 5).

Day 26

Mark 12

Parables of Wicked Husbandmen & Widows Mite

Elder David A. Bednar said: Sometimes we may ask God for success, and He gives us physical and mental stamina. We might plead for prosperity, and we receive enlarged perspective and increased patience, or we petition for growth and are blessed with the gift of grace. He may bestow upon us conviction and confidence as we strive to achieve worthy goals. And when we plead for relief from physical, mental, and spiritual difficulties, He may increase our resolve and resilience.

I promise that as you and I observe and keep the law of tithing, indeed the windows of heaven will be opened and spiritual and temporal blessings will be poured out such that there shall not be room enough to receive them (see Malachi 3:10). We also will remember the Lord’s declaration:

“For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord.

“For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts” (Isaiah 55:8–9).

I testify that as we are spiritually attentive and observant, we will be blessed with eyes that see more clearly, ears that hear more consistently, and hearts that understand more fully the significance and subtlety of His ways, His thoughts, and His blessings in our lives.

Day 27

Matthew 25

Parables of Ten Virgins, the Talents, and the Sheep & Goat

From the New Testament Study Guide: Matthew 25 continues Jesus’ discussion of His Second Coming. In it He gave three parables. These parables can help us understand what we must do to be ready to meet Him and have that meeting be a pleasing and glorious experience.

President Spencer W. Kimball said, “In our lives the oil of preparedness is accumulated drop by drop in righteous living. Attendance at sacrament meetings adds to our lamps, drop by drop over the years. Fasting, family prayer, home teaching, control of bodily appetites, preaching the gospel, studying the scriptures—each act of dedication and obedience is a drop added to our store” (Faith Precedes the Miracle [1972], 256).

David A. Bednar Said:

I now want to use one of many possible interpretations of the parable of the ten virgins to highlight the relationship between testimony and conversion. Ten virgins, five who were wise and five who were foolish, took their lamps and went to meet the bridegroom. Please think of the lamps used by the virgins as the lamps of testimony. The foolish virgins took their lamps of testimony but took no oil with them. Consider the oil to be the oil of conversion.

Were the five wise virgins selfish and unwilling to share, or were they indicating correctly that the oil of conversion cannot be borrowed? Can the spiritual strength that results from consistent obedience to the commandments be given to another person? Can the knowledge obtained through diligent study and pondering of the scriptures be conveyed to one who is in need? Can the peace the gospel brings to a faithful Latter-day Saint be transferred to an individual experiencing adversity or great challenge? The clear answer to each of these questions is no.