

The
New
Testament
in a Year

Week 30

Matthew 16-20

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Marianne worked in a children's library for 6 years while in high school and university. One of her favourite authors influences this week's reflections. She has a new puppy named Dobby.

General Questions for Reflection

You might pick one part of each chapter and think about these questions.

- What does this tell me about God (including Jesus and the Holy Spirit)?
- What does this tell me about our world?
- What does it tell me about me?
- What does it say about following Jesus?
- Is there something here I'd like to learn more about?

Why not use these thoughts to shape your prayer today.

Monday

Matthew 16

Lewis Carroll was not the first person to invite us to imagine life "through the looking glass" and see a mirror image world. I invite you to look in this chapter and see the kingdom through Jesus' eyes and how his view of the kingdom was/is similar to life "through the looking glass."

"Signs, signs everywhere a sign." It is a song I remember from my youth. In this chapter we see everyone around Jesus either wanting signs or missing signs. How many signs in a day do I see? How many signs is a day do I miss? Am I looking through the wrong lenses?

What is this about "leaven"? Those of us from a white bread world think of leaven as a good thing. When Jesus uses it, it means spoiled and corrupted. Do I recognize the signs when I spoil the gospel? How do I become aware of when I am influenced by "leaven"?

How am I like Peter? Do I also get it right and get it wrong at the same time? How is picking up my cross being prepared to live in a mirror image world? How does it relate to the life I am called to live?

Tuesday

Matthew 17

Being a witness to the transfiguration must have been one an unforgettable moment. Peter tells us about his experience in 2 Peter 1:16-18. How easily Peter could have missed the voice of God declare "*This is my Beloved Son, with him I am well pleased; listen to him!*" (NRSV)

How often do I want to do instead of being prepared to listen? When have I been building dwellings when God wanted me to be in his presence?

What parallels do you see between Moses coming down the mountain and Jesus?

The disciples must have been confused. In 10.8 the disciples cast out demons yet here it is only a couple of days and now they can't do anything. What happens when I do not keep my eyes on Jesus? How quickly do I lose faith? What mountains would move if I lived by faith?

How is Jesus modeling being wise as a serpent and innocent as a dove in the story of the temple tax and the fish?

Wednesday

Matthew 18

What would the winner of the “Inner Child” award look like to you? What could we learn from this person?

If the least are the greatest, in this mirror image kingdom, who are the least in the world today?

When have I been the one that the Father has come searching?

“Reconciliation is a huge issue today. We see clearly the results of not doing it: suicide bombs, campaigns of terror repression by occupying forces. That’s on the large scale. On the smaller scale, we see broken marriages, shattered families, feuds between neighbours, divided churches”

Tom Wright Matthew for Everyone.

What can I do today to seek true reconciliation? How do I find the courage to go to the one person I am in conflict with? How may the other person react?

How do I react? Am I ready to forgive? What does true forgiveness look like? How would I change if I truly forgive?

Thursday

Matthew 19

If your new car came with a list of instructions on how to miss every possible car accident or how to avoid all repairs would it encourage you to drive recklessly? Jesus reminds us not to be reckless with our relationships.

The message of an upside down kingdom continues. The first shall be last, the least shall be greatest. This is still very counter to our cultural values.

As I read this passage today all around me is the news of a pop icons death – The King of Pop. I can’t help but reflect on this passage in light of current events.

Peter who Jesus called the Rock shows his crumbly side again. There have been times when I too have felt like Peter and have wondered “how much more do I have to give up?” I believe that God’s kingdom is to be here on earth as it is in heaven so what does God require of me? What needs to change in my heart so I can go through the eye of the needle? What am I holding on to that needs to be given up?

Friday

Matthew 20

Every time I read the parable of the vineyard workers I have more questions. Each time I read it I see it through different eyes.

Is Jesus commenting on the social justice of the day?

Would Jesus have been the first union organizers?

If I look at this story through the looking glass what do I see?

This chapter further prepares the disciples for the journey that is about to happen. Drinking from the cup requires sacrifice. The disciples wanted fame and fortune but as we read both James and John do share in the suffering of Christ. See James story in Acts 12.2.

Signs, Signs, Signs. Are my eyes open? Do I ask Jesus to cure my blindness? Do I really want to see? Am I prepared to look through the looking glass. Am I willing to walk the journey and drink the cup? This week is all preparing for what is about to come.