**I Love to Tell the Story**

Explore every story of Jesus in this year-long devotional guide.

**Day 61: Fasting**

**Matt 9:14-17, Mark 2:18-22; Luke 5:33-39**

Guided reflection:

Once again, the Pharisees are “on” Jesus because now he parties too much. They were so proud of their religious practices that they judged Jesus and his disciples as party animals. Jesus points out that fasting is for those times when your spirit is dry and needs new life but while the party is still happening, join in! The Messiah was right there in front of their eyes why should they go and fast for the messiah to come? Grab every moment when God is right there in front of you! So, today we can ask: “Where is Jesus’ activity visible? Where should I be enjoying God’s presence?” OR, “Is this the time and place to seek newness… a fresh new day?”

Guided Prayer: *“O God of life and vitality, help me enjoy what you are doing in my life today. Help*

*me see where I should celebrate your love. And help me also see where I need something new and fresh in my spirit. Will you meet me at my point of need today? Thank you. Amen!*

**Day 62: The difference a day in Jesus’ life makes!**

**Matt. 9:18-26**

Guided reflection:

In these eight short verses, we see lives turned around. We see a ruler who believes that Jesus can make his dead daughter come back to life and a women believes if she can just touch the fringe of his garment, she can be healed. Jesus said – Stop the mourning party – she is just asleep. He raised her from her death bed. Wow! I wonder what the woman thought that night as she drifted off the sleep and I wonder what the ruler and his wife did with that daughter that night when they tucked her into bed. What a difference Jesus can make! Where do you need Jesus’ touch today? Where have you been touched? Are you still in awe?

Guided prayer: *“What a thrill it must have been to walk with Jesus on earth, O God. Help me not*

*pine for those days, but help me see where Jesus is at work in my house, in my heart, in my time in history. Help me to open to Jesus’ touch in my life.* (Name where that might be!) *Amen.*

**Day 63:More healings… and commotion!**

**Matt 9:27-31; Matt 9:32-34**

Guided reflection:

Two blind men were determined that they were going to get Jesus’ attention! Because they asked and believed, they received. A man “dumb” (meaning, unable to speak) was healed and his tongue was free but the reviews were divided. Most said – WOW, we have never seen anything like this before! But those pesky Pharisees still saw Jesus as problem. Now, they must have been intrigued, because they seem to be always around, offering their comment and their take on what Jesus was up to. Where do you see people in our culture today divided as to what is good and what is “of the devil”? Have you ever had a paradigm shift from believing one thing to be true and then becoming convinced to another point of view? Are you open to new ways to thinking?

Guided prayer: *“Loving God, open my heart and my mind to see things in new ways. Show me the*

*places where I have judged another as wanting or unacceptable… help me see people and their situations from your point of view. Give me your eyes, please! Amen”*

**Day 64: Jesus sends out the twelve**

**Matt. 9:35–10:16**

Guided reflection:

This is Jesus’ leadership development phase with his disciples. They are named and listed, and now Jesus wants them to go out and replicate his own way of doing ministry. They are not to carry along a bunch of stuff they do not need… they are to learn to trust God as they go… and to discern who is open and who is not… and if people are not open, get out! Now, if we had a “how to be a disciple” workshop scheduled with Jesus as the teacher, what would his instructions be for us today? Maybe, Live simply; develop an attitude of gratitude; and know that you are not responsible for another’s response!

Guided prayer: “*Jesus, where are people around me open to your love? Show me how I can simplify*

*my life so I can be moved by the Spirit. Help me to know what part is my responsibility and what part is the responsibility of others. Grant me wisdom to know the difference! Amen.*”

**Day 65: The tough side of discipleship**

**Matt. 10: 17-25**

Guided reflection:

Wow, now this is a way to motivate a sales team! Jesus knew how to face reality. He knew if they preached his words they would be brought up on charges and possibly face death! Jesus tells them not to concentrate on what to do when that happens, just know that if and when it does, the spirit will provide the words to say. Then they should flee and go to the next place. Again, the response of those who hear the word is not the responsibility of the disciples! How fortunate we are in America. We have the right to share Christ’s message without worry. However, we do need to understand that Jesus’ way is not always the most comfortable way. Where are you being stretched in your discipleship?

Guided Prayer: *“Our hearts are filled with gratitude in knowing that we live in a place where we are*

*free to speak and move as we wish. But we realize that others are in harm’s way because of their faith. Protect those, I pray, and give me courage to be the ambassador for Christ no matter the cost. I guess what I am asking, Lord, is to give me a spiritual backbone! Ame*n.”