**I Love to Tell the Story**

Explore every story of Jesus in this year-long devotional guide. Go at your own pace using the online archive.

**Day 66: Concerning fear of others**

**Matthew 10:26-33; Luke 12: 2-9**

Guided reflection:

Of course we are worried about what others think and what they can do to us, but

in Jesus’ day and for the early church they had realistic fear of harm for their faith. Jesus does not pretend that they have no reason to fear, but reminds them of the bigger picture – eternity! Jesus reminds us that our bodies are just a vessel… our spirits will live forever AND he reminds us that we are of value and not forgotten by God – even the hairs on our head are numbered! (Some of us have made the job easy for God – ha!) The point is that our confession of Christ as our savior is not about what other people think, but about what God thinks. Based on this scripture, what do you think is God’s opinion of you? You are of value to God! WOW!

Guided prayer: *“Loving God, it is hard to imagine that you care about the sparrows and the hair on*

*my head, but I am reminded that I am of great value to you. Help me to not allow other people’s opinion and possible harmful actions keep me from serving you. Show me where fear holds me back from my potential. Amen.”*

**Day 67: Peace or chaos?**

**Matt. 10: 34-36, Luke 12:51-58**

Guided reflection:

How many times have you thought that folks ought to get along? Well, Jesus

tells us that there are times for peace in the family, but sometimes serving Christ and making choices for God might make your family be in chaos! Now, this is not blessing family turmoil – just helping us see that God has no grandchildren or in-laws… being a child of God is a 1st generation thing! Some in your family may turn against you! Can you remember a time when your decisions caused turmoil in your family? As you reflect back, did you stand for the right things, or was it just more family feuding?

Guided prayer: *“Serving you, O God, can be tough sometimes. Keeping peace in my family*

*sometimes is more important to me than being at one with you. Help me remember that you come first. Help me make choices that honor you… and may my family support me. Be with those whose decision to follow you have caused them to be in harm’s way. Amen”*

**Day 68: Cost of Discipleship**

**Matt 10:37-39; Luke 14: 26-27**

Guided reflection:

Is Jesus saying that my family should not be important to me? No, we are to love and care for our family, but the issue is about who gets first place in your life! When we give our life to Christ we are to surrender all of ourselves. We take up our cross, take our place,

and “lose” or surrender, ourselves to God. Day 67 and today’s readings are not about making others unimportant, but about keeping the big picture in our minds – this life is not all there

is! But where we place our loyalties in this life will make a difference. JOY: Jesus first; Others second, and You last!

Guided prayer: *“These two days’ scripture readings are disturbing, Lord. It seems that you want my*

*undivided loyalty. I would rather give you my divided attention… but work in me to understand how to take up my cross and follow you. Amen.”*

**Day 69: End of this teaching session with the Disciples**

**Matthew 10:40-11:1**

Guided reflection:

All of chapter 10 has been Discipleship Training 101 – this was the “lecture

phase” and now they were to go out and live the lab work of being a disciple in their time in history. Jesus is making clear that when we serve others, it is really serving Christ and when someone welcomes us, they are welcoming Christ because Christ is in us! We ARE the hands and feet of Christ! What does it mean when you do something for your secretary, boss, spouse, child, or neighbor? Does it mean you are serving Christ? What does it mean to you that when someone responds to you, they are responding to Christ in you? WOW! We are to be Christ with skin on for others! Think about that for a bit… and get up and go to the closest person to you right now and look at them as though they are the visible person of Christ… does that affect how you might treat them?

Guided prayer: *“I am not sure I understand all of this, Loving God, but when I see others I usually*

*see them as a pain or a promise… now help me adjust my spiritual glasses and see them through your eyes… and may they clearly see you in me. Amen”*

**Day 70: John the Baptist and Jesus**

**Matt. 11: 2-6; Luke 7:18-23**

Guided reflection:

You will remember that John the Baptist baptized Jesus in the Jordan and

pronounced that Jesus was the Messiah - he had only been a voice, crying out in the wilderness for people to get ready for Jesus to come. Now John is in prison and wonders if he got it right. Is Jesus the One, the Messiah, or is he just his cousin and they need to wait for the real thing. Jesus sends back the message: “Well, buddy, you figure it out – the blind see, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the dead are raised up, and the poor have good news. Does this fit your bill of a Messiah, cuz?” Put yourself in John’s shoes…have you ever wondered if this Jesus thing is the real deal?

Guided prayer: *“I admit that sometimes I wonder if Jesus is the real deal, O God. I wonder, where*

*are the blind seeing today… and then I realize that I may be one of the blind ones… or lame ones.. or a leper who needs cleansed… or even dead on the inside. Forgive my doubts. Open my eyes. Amen.*