**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 111 “Bread” Matt 16: 5-12; Mark 8:14-21; Luke 12:1**

Guided reflection:

The disciples had just realized they had forgotten to stop and pick up the bread they needed – they were down to one loaf between them. The disciples get distracted by considering whose fault it is that they forgot to have enough bread. Jesus is thinking about something else. He says “Beware of the leaven of the Pharisees” and the disciples, distracted by the blame game, think he is blaming them because there is no bread! Jesus cannot believe that they are still focused on whether there is enough bread – did they so easily forget the feeding of the 5000 and the feeding of the 4000. What’s the deal with the worry over bread? Jesus was trying to say that the way the Pharisees thought could permeate a person’s thinking and would mess up their chances to be and do all that God wanted for them. Now, I would have been just like the disciples. I was not there when Jesus did the miracles, but I am on this side of the cross and know the stories, but I still focus on the little things! Lynette, Get off the bread worry! There is enough!

Guided prayer:

*“Jesus wanted the disciples to beware of the Leaven of the Pharisees. Do I have any signs of being Pharisee-like? Do my actions and my philosophies limit your work in me and those around me? Show me the way!* Amen”

 **Day 112 The Blind Man at Bethsaida Mark 8:22-26**

Guided reflection:

As we have been reading about Jesus and his ministry of healing the sick and afflicted, I am taken by the fact that many times Jesus takes the person by the hand and leads them away from the spectacle of the crowd. Jesus cared for their dignity and was not trying to put on a show at someone else’s expense! Here Jesus’ miracle seems to be a process. First, he starts to see but the world is fuzzy. Then, clear sight comes. That is how it is with me sometimes. At first, I think I understand what God is doing in and through me but as I go along it becomes clearer. Paul wrote that we see through a glass darkly, but someday we will see things clearly. This story reminds me that I am still under construction. I am not what I used to be, but Praise God, I am not what I am going to be…yet! My paint is still wet!

Guided prayer:

*“Yes, Lord, we are still in the process of being healed and being made whole. Thank goodness, you have not given up on me! Help me remember my job is to be willing to be in the process of wholeness. I believe in you and you believe in me. I wonder what is going to happen next! Amen!* “
 (Spend a few moments thanking God for how you have grown in your faith over the years.)

**Day 113 The BIG Confession Matt 16: 13-23; Mark 8:27-33; Luke 9: 18-22**

Guided reflection:

Jesus wants to know what the word on the street is about who he is. The Disciples say they hear all kinds of stories – some think he is Elijah, some say he is John the Baptist come back to life. Jesus looks them in the eye and asks: “who do you say that I am?” Peter gives his famous confession: “You are the Christ, the Son of the Living God.” Matthew’s passage adds a conversation between Jesus and

Peter: Jesus predicts that the church will be built on Peter’s confession. He adds that he is giving the keys to the kingdom of God to him and that those keys have the power to bind things or to loose things. Jesus begins to talk about going to Jerusalem to be killed. There is a shift in Jesus focus now and Peter is not happy. He thinks that Jesus is just being negative, but Jesus was just telling the truth. Jesus even reprimands Peter’s denial as a hindrance to Jesus. So, today, first ask yourself: “who do I say that Jesus is in my life?” And then, where do I want a happy ending? Where do I desire to skip the tough times? Might I be missing out on what God planned for my own growth and personal good?

Guided prayer:

*“If I confess that Jesus is the Christ, then I have to embrace the work of the cross as well. I don’t like crosses and suffering and talk of death, so I understand Peter’s rebuke. But, Dear God, help me to put away my rose colored glasses and see that you are with me, even if I have to face a cross in my own life. I know that after the cross came the resurrection. Help me remember that, O God. Amen”*

**Day 114 The Conditions of Being a Disciple Matt 16: 24-28; Mark 8:34-9:1; Luke 9:23-27**

Guided reflection:

Now I can understand why the Disciples were thinking that walking with Jesus was going to be a great high! Goodness, Peter has walked on water; has seen people healed; watched 9000 people eat food from miracles – quite an adventurous way to live, this walking with Jesus! Can you imagine what it felt like to hear Jesus tell you that to be his disciple you have to take up a cross and you have to lose your life to save it? What are you trying to say, Jesus? What will it profit me if I gain the world but end up losing my life for it? The MESSAGE puts it this way: “Anyone who comes with me has to let me lead!” Where are you having a hard time allowing Jesus to lead in your life?

Guided prayer:

*“Loving God, show me what it means for me to deny myself and follow you. What does it mean for me to allow you to take over the driver’s seat of my life? Show me. I turn the wheel over to you, right now. I don’t know what end is up and what is down, so give me your eyes to see things from your point of view. Amen”*

**Day 115 The Transfiguration of Jesus Matt 17: 1-8; Mark 9:2-8; Luke 9:28-36**

Guided reflection:

I have lots of questions I would love to have answered, like: How did the Disciples know it was Elijah and Moses? What does it look like to see someone “transfigured!?” And, what did Jesus talk to Elijah and Moses about? Jesus took his inner circle with him (Peter, James and John) and they saw it all. Peter, who always opens his mouth and inserts his foot, thinks it would be great to build tents right there so they can just stay there. The voice of God shakes them with this word: “This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, listen to him!” Jesus knew they were blown away, so he touches them tenderly and tells them to have no fear. Somehow I think this whole experience had nothing to do with the disciples, they were just spectators in a God moment with Jesus. But Jesus left that mountain top experience and started toward Jerusalem and all that was to face him there.

Guided prayer:

*“O God, I love mountain top experiences. I would like to just pitch a tent and stay there too. But I know that it is those spiritual high times that give me the fuel to stay focused on you in the tough times. Thank you for the ups and the downs of life. Amen”*