



FIRST MELISSA A 40-DAY FAITH EXPERIENCE



DAILY WORKBOOK

HEALER 40-DAYS – THEME VERSE

Jeremiah 17:14

Heal me, O Lord, and I shall be healed; save me, and I shall be saved, for you are my praise.

Scripture in this workbook is from the English Standard Version (ESV) unless otherwise indicated.

SUNDAY, JANUARY 9

NOTES FROM PASTOR TREY GRAHAM'S TEACHING

WEEK 1 / SMALL GROUP / JANUARY 9-15

Read **Isaiah 53:4-5**:

Surely he has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; yet we esteemed him stricken, smitten by God, and afflicted. But he was pierced for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his wounds we are healed.

HEALING THE PARALYTIC AT THE POOL OF BETHESDA

Read **John 5:1-17**.

- How long had the man suffered?

Read **Deuteronomy 2:14**.

- How might these two historical episodes correlate?
- What are we told in verse 6 of John 5? How might it provide comfort to know that God sees us and knows exactly what is hurting us – and for how long?

Theologian Matthew Henry says that Jesus “delights to help in desperate cases.”

- How does this provide comfort? Have you experienced desperate suffering?

Henry notes, “Our covenant and communion with God take rise, not so much from our knowledge of Him, as from His knowledge of us.”

- What’s another way to say that?

According to *Jesus Through Middle Eastern Eyes* by Kenneth E. Bailey, Jesus tested many people He encountered, and this paralytic was no exception. Jesus’ “exam question” in this case was – Do you want to be healed? According to Bailey, “The reason for the exam is to say to the paralytic, ‘You have survived as a beggar for years. If healed, you will have your livelihood stripped from you because no one will give to a healthy man. Are you ready for the new responsibilities that will come with healing?’”

- Are you ready for the new responsibilities that will come with healing?
- Does God’s ability to heal depend on the amount or quality of our faith?

The Jewish scholars had developed Sabbath regulations that were more restrictive than those given in God’s Torah, and the paralytic broke one of those rules by lifting his bed and moving it.

- Why did the Jews ask the man who told him to take up his bed and walk, as opposed to asking who made him whole?

Of course, Jesus could have healed him any day of the week.

- Why did He choose the Sabbath? (Hint: He knew what He was doing)
- What statement was He making? (Jesus is Lord of...)
- How can we “rise and walk” after being healed?
- We aren’t told whether the man followed Jesus after this. Do you think he did? Why or why not?

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS ABOUT PAIN

The Bible is startlingly realistic when it comes to the problem of pain – in fact, an entire book is devoted to the topic. The biblical book of Job underscores the importance of trusting God’s purposes in the midst of suffering, even when we don’t know what those purposes are. In the end, we learn we may never know the specific reason for our suffering, but we can trust in our sovereign, good God.

Consider this quote from author Phillips Brooks: "God wants us to choose to love Him freely, even when that choice involves pain, because we are committed to Him, not to our own good feelings and rewards. He wants us to cleave to Him, as Job did, even when we have every reason to deny Him hotly."

Read **Genesis 50:20**.

Read **Psalm 22**.

David did not see the fullness of God's answer in his lifetime. But God did answer. Roughly one millennium later, one of David's descendants was killed on a hill called Calvary (known as Golgotha in Aramaic), enduring the suffering and shame of His forefather. Christ's hands and feet were pierced. Christ's garments were divided among his enemies. Christ was stared at and derided. In fact, Christ uttered the words with which David opens this psalm: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" thus identifying Himself with the suffering of David.

WINDING UP

Each week our group will also read a Psalm together that provides direction or comfort for our pain. This week's passage is **Psalm 16**.

Read **Psalm 16**.

Consider these two final thoughts:

Christian theism is the only worldview which can consistently make sense of the problem of evil and suffering. Christians serve a God who has lived on this earth, and the cross of Christ stands as the ultimate manifestation of God's justice.

Question: How much does God care about our pain?

Answer: Look at the cross. That's how much He cares.

"The greater your knowledge of the goodness and grace of God on your life, the more likely you are to praise Him in the storm." - Matt Chandler, pastor

MONDAY, JANUARY 10

HEALING THE PARALYTIC AT THE POOL OF BETHESDA

Kick off your first day in this study by reading this week's miraculous healing:
Read **John 5:1-17**.



Christ Healing the Paralytic at the Pool of Bethesda by Bartolome Murillo, 1667

- What strikes you most about this healing?
- The man had suffered for 38 years. Why do you think God allows suffering?

Sin entered the world when Adam and Eve rebelled against God in the Garden of Eden, and mankind has been in rebellion ever since. Sin's effects permeate everything, and the suffering we see all around us is a direct result of that sin. In fact, the first "pain" mentioned in the Bible is part of the curse that resulted from sin, so it could reasonably be concluded that pain is one of the many sad results of original sin. Although pain and sin will no longer be part of our experience in God's perfect future, for now in this world (as Jesus tells us in **John 16:33**) we will have tribulation – including pain. But our merciful God, as He does with all things, works this for our good as well. Read **Romans 8:28**.

- Does this verse apply to good things or bad things?

This week we will dive into the subject of pain – and what good, if any, can come of it.

PRAYER

Father God, thank You for being our Great Physician, who made us, and is more than capable of making us healed and whole. Help our understanding of suffering to grow and enlarge our view of You. Heal our wounds, and give us compassion for the hurting. Thank You for healing that man at the Bethesda pool, and thank You that Your healing never runs out.

REVIEW

For this study, we will have a different memory passage each week. This week it's our theme verse, **Jeremiah 17:14**. Choose your translation, write it out, and start committing it to memory! (Pro tip: If you have kids – teach each week's passage to them! As they practice with you, you will all hide God's Word in your hearts!)

TUESDAY, JANUARY 11

HEALING THE PARALYTIC AT THE POOL OF BETHESDA

We are still learning from **John 5:1-17**. Can any good come from pain?

The man at the pool was virtually hopeless, after 38 years. Yet now, 2,000 years later, we speak of this man and learn from his story. We benefit, even today, from his suffering. Had he not suffered, he would not have been healed, nor would he have personally experienced the mighty power of God.

Physically, pain can be a gift. Without it we would not always know we needed medical attention.

- Think of an example where a lack of ability to feel pain could harm you physically.

Spiritually speaking, pain drives us to the Father's arms. As His children, we always find Him waiting to comfort and uphold us through it all, proving His faithfulness time and again. In Christ we have an anchor that holds fast in all the storms of life, but if we never sail into those storms, how would we know that? Pain helps us know Him better – which in turn, equips us to help others know Him better as well.

- Read **1 Corinthians 1:3-7** and write your thoughts.

PRAYER

Creator God, it's challenging for us to think of "benefits" of pain, but the world is full of suffering, and You make all things work together for good. Help us think rightly about this world, its pain, and our relationship with You. Thank You for being our anchor in the storm.

REVIEW

Read our memory passage (**Jeremiah 17:14**) out loud today at least five times.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 12

HEALING THE PARALYTIC AT THE POOL OF BETHESDA

The paralytic didn't answer Jesus' question to him – "Do you want to be healed?" Instead he started listing reasons he hadn't yet been healed. Jesus knew the man's heart, however, and in a dazzling display of God's creative power, instantly regenerated the man's atrophied muscles merely by telling him to get up!

Read **2 Corinthians 12:7-10**

Apostle Paul asked God three times to be healed of his "thorn in his flesh." The Lord's response? "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness."

Who was weaker (physically) than the paralytic at the pool? He too could now "boast of his weakness" because that weakness allowed the power of Christ to rest upon him. God's grace was sufficient for him, too. As it is for us. When we are in pain, we know that God is telling us – His grace is sufficient for us, even in the midst of suffering.

Read **James 1:2-3**

- Besides grace, what else is produced by trials?

Tomorrow we'll find out what some great Christian thinkers wrote on the subject of pain.

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, please keep reminding us how You work all things together for our good – even the ugly, painful, hurtful things. Remind us of how Your life, Your miracles, and Your excruciatingly painful sacrifice on the cross provided us with a Healer who absolutely knows exactly what we need before we are even aware of it. Thank You for Your gifts in the midst of pain.

REVIEW

Try reciting our memory passage today, and read it aloud at each meal.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 13

HEALING THE PARALYTIC AT THE POOL OF BETHESDA

Some of the Jews in this week's story were blinded to Jesus' power, and deaf to His teachings, instead attacking Him for breaking a manmade regulation that benefitted no one, while they themselves lifted not a finger to help the needy. The paralytic – also a Jew – had been there for 38 years. Was he helped by any religious people? Was he helped by anyone else? Only God saw through to his suffering, and provided decisive healing.

Jesus could have healed him the next day and avoided the wrath of the unbelievers. Clearly he was making a point – what was it? Read the rest of John 5, after this story (**John 5:18-47**).

Jesus used this man's incredible healing experience to draw attention to Himself – where we should all be looking, not blinded by lies of the world. C.S. Lewis, author of the *Chronicles of Narnia* and countless other Christian classics, had this to say about pain: "God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains: it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world."

Blind and deaf to God is no way to go through life. If pain turns any of us to Him, it is a price well worth paying.

PRAYER

Merciful Father, please open our eyes and ears and all our senses to You and Your working. It is so easy to fall back on rules and deceive ourselves that the rules prove our goodness. Open our eyes to You and to those around us who need You. Use our pain to rouse us – to wake us up and point us where You want us to go. Thank You for the pain that forces us to our knees, that humbles us before Your throne, and that brings us around to seeing and hearing You clearly.

REVIEW

Try reciting our memory passage to someone else today.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 14

HEALING THE PARALYTIC AT THE POOL OF BETHESDA

In John 5:14, Jesus told the former paralytic to “sin no more.” We don’t know if this man’s pain was brought on by his own sin or not. Sometimes we bring on our own suffering, and sometimes it just hits us from other sources.

However, we can react to our pain sinfully. Lashing out at others, causing more pain, is an understandable and common response, but it doesn’t honor Christ, who suffered for us without a complaint. It doesn’t honor Him to ignore Him through the pain either. Consider this quote from theologian Ole Hallesby:

"I do not think that we should look upon painful experiences too pessimistically. Surely they are more profitable than we think at the time we are going through the anguish connected with them. But if they are to be of any benefit to us, we must, in the first place, be truthful and not begin to practice deception, that is, excuse and defend our slovenly prayer life. We must admit our weakness in prayer; admit that we are faced with a problem which cannot be solved by our own efforts."

We do like to solve our own problems, don’t we? But surely a weak prayer life hinders our healing from any pain, as does withdrawing from our community of believers.

- Read **James 5:14-15** – Practically speaking, how should we respond to suffering in light of this teaching?

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, help us bring our pain directly to You. Physical suffering, emotional suffering, all suffering. Help us lay it at the foot of the cross. Help us know when and how to share our pain with others who can also hold us up in prayer and help meet our needs. Thank You that You never, ever leave us. No matter how dark the suffering, You are still there. We praise Your Holy Name, and thank You that “in Your presence there is fullness of joy.”

REVIEW

If you don’t have this week’s passage committed to memory yet, set aside 10 or 15 minutes today to do so.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 15

HEALING THE PARALYTIC AT THE POOL OF BETHESDA

This week in the small group discussions we touched on what the Bible says about pain. Consider reading the book of Job during this series, which offers great truths on the topic:

- Things are happening in heaven with God that we cannot know, yet they may affect our lives, and even the best effort at explaining them may be useless.
- God's people do suffer. Bad things happen all the time to good people, so one cannot judge a person's spirituality by his painful circumstances or by his earthly successes.
- Even though God may seem far away, perseverance in faith is a most noble virtue since God is good and one can safely leave his life in His hands.
- The suffering believer should not abandon God but draw near to Him, so out of the fellowship can come the comfort – without the explanation.
- Suffering may be intense, but it will ultimately end for the righteous and God will bless abundantly. (Notes courtesy Bible teacher John MacArthur)

To help you read this book during the series, each Saturday will include a suggested reading outline for the next week:

- **Job 1-2** – sets up the story of Job, and introduces his friends who try to comfort him
- **Job 3-14** – the first “cycle” of discussions between Job and his friends

REFLECT

Today, prayerfully reflect on God's provision for us through suffering. Consider listening or singing along to *Praise You in the Storm* – this link provides lyrics:

<https://youtu.be/OYUGwUgBvTU>

- This week in the small groups we read **Psalm 16**. What do you find in this psalm that relates to our healing?

You may have heard of *The Chosen*, a TV series crowdfunded by Christians that depicts the life of Christ. It takes dramatic license to fill in details of what life walking with Jesus might have really been like, and is careful to treat the scriptures with great respect. In fact, millions of people have been inspired to read the Gospels through the ministry of this film project. It is also extraordinarily well done. You may enjoy watching a depiction of the miracle we studied this week – here: <https://youtu.be/JMj1ggiNLe4>

SUNDAY, JANUARY 16

NOTES FROM PASTOR TREY GRAHAM'S TEACHING

WEEK 2 / SMALL GROUP / JANUARY 16-22

DELIVERING THE DEMONIAK

Read **Mark 5:1-20**.

- How did this incident vividly demonstrate the massive destruction demons cause to people and the real, physical world?
- Picture the pigs stampeding to their death. How does this illustrate how Satan works in the minds of men and women (how does he “drown” them)?

Consider that clothing and shelter are two of the most fundamental human needs – and these demons had robbed their victims of both. Likewise, we tend to shy away from things related to death (we don’t enjoy visiting cemeteries, usually) – but this legion had their victims living “among the tombs.”

- How does Satan dehumanize people? Give specific examples.
- A legion indicates thousands – and we know there were 2,000 pigs. Who can stand before the power of a legion?
- What does this passage tell us about Christ’s power in relation to evil?
- Were Jesus (or His companions) ever in danger from these demons?
- If we are walking with Jesus, are we ever in danger from demons?
- If the powers of darkness cower before Jesus – what comfort does that give us?

The demons knew very well whom they were encountering. They were in the presence of the Most High God, and they said so. They confessed with their mouths.

- What would you say to someone who told you that it’s enough to just know that Jesus is God?

To be saved, we must come into that freely-offered relationship with Messiah Jesus. Or as Matthew Henry, a theologian of the 17th and 18th century, put it, “It is no strange thing to hear the best words drop from the worst mouths... there is no judging of men by their loose sayings, but by their fruits ye shall know them... piety from the teeth outward is an easy thing.”

Much more recently, Bible teacher John MacArthur noted that the demons' identification of the Most High God "was factually correct, but it is one thing to know the truth, and quite another thing to love it."

Read **James 2:19**.

The people of the area wanted Jesus to leave, which is quite a contrast from other passages we've read where people begged Jesus to stay and keep healing them. These men had in effect terrorized the community – read **Matthew 8:28**.

"Those lose their Savior, and their hopes in Him, that love their swine better." – Matthew Henry

- A question to think about privately: Are there any swine in our lives right now?
- Do the people from our past – who knew us before we belonged to Him – need us to testify about the mercy found in Jesus?
- Can our Jesus-changed life work to repair broken relationships from the past?
- Another private question: Is there someone in your past you need to seek out? Is there someplace in your past where you need to return?

We are called both to know Jesus and to make Him known. At different times in our lives, the emphasis may be more on one than the other. About this story, Matthew Henry says, "We must sometimes deny ourselves the satisfaction even of spiritual benefits and comforts, to gain an opportunity of being serviceable to the souls of others."

- One more private question: What is He calling you to do – now?

JESUS OFFERS DELIVERANCE

Jesus can deliver us with as much authority and power as He demonstrated against the demons in this passage. As His children He offers us deliverance from so much. A partial list:

- Pain – caused by others, or caused by ourselves
- Shame over our actions
- Regret over missed opportunities and mistakes
- Hurt caused by those close to us
- Feelings of abandonment, rejection, and betrayal
- Refusing to trust Him

- Selfishness
- Pride
- Any habitual sin

This week in the daily workbook we will address the question below – if you have time, you might discuss it now.

- What if God doesn't heal when we ask?

WINDING UP

This week's psalm is **Psalm 33**.

Read **Psalm 33**.

MONDAY, JANUARY 17

DELIVERING THE DEMONIAC

In small groups this week we discussed the mighty power of deliverance offered by Christ and demonstrated quite forcefully by His healing of the demon-possessed man in Mark 5.



Casting Out Demons from the Gerasene Demoniac by Sebastian Bourdon, 1653

- Read the other two gospel versions of this story (we read Mark 5:1-20 in the small groups) – **Matthew 8:28-34**; **Luke 8:26-39**. Note differences between the versions.

This week's psalm is **Psalm 33**, which we also read in the small groups. Today, read that psalm in three sections:

- Read **verses 1-5**, then list God's attributes on which we can rely for His deliverance
- Then read **verses 6-12**, and list more attributes on which we can rely for His deliverance
- Finally read **verses 13-22**, and answer the question one more time

And one last exercise for today – write out your thoughts about **verse 12** in relation to America today.

In this life, what does it look like to rely on the Lord our God for deliverance? What if God doesn't heal us when we ask? This week we'll discuss some of these "hard" questions.

PRAYER

Lord, thank You that we can rely on You. Your love proves it, Your power and might make all things possible, and putting our trust in any other thing is not only pointless but an affront to Your tender concern for each one of us. As our psalm says this week, “let Your steadfast love be upon us, even as we hope in You.”

REVIEW

Recite last week’s memory verse, **Jeremiah 17:14**. Then write out this week’s verse and begin working to memorize it: **Deuteronomy 32:39**.

TUESDAY, JANUARY 18

DELIVERING THE DEMONIAC

Returning to this week's story – read verses 6 and 7 from this week's story in Mark 5:

6 And when he saw Jesus from afar, he ran and fell down before him. 7 And crying out with a loud voice, he said, "What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me."

Running to Jesus from afar... Scholars say that part may have been the man's desire, to run toward Jesus. It may even have been the man's desire to fall down before Him, but certainly the demons didn't have much choice. They were utterly powerless before the power of the Most High God.

We see God's mighty healing power in this story, but what about when we don't see it happening in our time? What if God doesn't heal when we ask?

Read **Isaiah 55:8**.

God's timetable is not our timetable, and He does not always respond to our desires, frequently allowing circumstances we wish He would not. This is another way of saying God is sovereign. God sees the big picture that we cannot see. If you were going to build a house, would you rather hire an experienced builder who understood every detail of construction, or would you prefer to use only your own knowledge to build your home? In life we have the privilege of relying on the Master Builder who understands every detail about everything.

- How does this knowledge help us trust in God's sovereignty, even when we're in pain?

The more we learn about God's character, the easier it is to trust His sovereignty. We'll explore more scripture about this tomorrow.

PRAYER

Mighty God, we are in awe that You – who created the world and all of us – also love each of us individually and fiercely, understanding every detail about our circumstances, and always offering Your presence to guide us through any and every pain, hurt, betrayal – whatever the evil one throws our way. The enemy is no match for You. We thank You and praise You for that!

REVIEW

If you haven't already, write out our week's memory passage (**Deuteronomy 32:39**) now.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 19

DELIVERING THE DEMONIAK

Can you imagine the love and compassion in Christ's eyes as He cast out the demons and freed the demoniac from years of agony and isolation? Read **Luke 8:35**.

- Where was the healed man sitting?

You may still be walking through great pain; you may be suffering immensely right now. But as His child by faith, you are already healed of the worst pain any human can suffer, eternal separation from your God. Jesus healed you of that as surely as He cast out the demons here. And like the former demoniac, our place is "sitting at His feet." We can see Him quite clearly from that vantage point!

- Read **1 Chronicles 16:34**. What does this tell you about God? What does it tell you to do?
- Read **Nahum 1:7**. What does this tell you about God? What does it tell you to do?
- Read **Hebrews 4:16**. What does this tell you about God? What does it tell you to do?
- Read **1 Peter 5:6-7**. What does this tell you about God? What does it tell you to do?

Can you trust God's timetable for your healing (or the healing of someone else you are praying for)? Write a line or two explaining your answer.

PRAYER

God, You are such a good, good father. Thank You for loving us. Thank You for providing refuge in our times of trouble. We are astounded that through Your Son, You opened Your very throne room to us, any time of the day or night, as a place where our needs meet Your mercy and grace. Thank You for Your never-ending care, and thank You that all of that means we can trust Your timing, even in the midst of the pain. Heal us, dear Father, and remind us that one day every tear will be wiped away. Praise Your Holy Name.

REVIEW

Read our week's memory passage aloud at least five times today.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 20

DELIVERING THE DEMONIAC

The stories of Jesus' miraculous healings in the Bible teach us so much, but one of the best lessons is that we serve a God who longs to heal us from all our afflictions. However, as we know, often this is not an instantaneous process. Although He certainly has the power to do so, as he did with the demoniac... He often chooses a different route to our healing.

One might say that internationally known author and speaker Joni Eareckson Tada has earned an advanced degree in the art of suffering. At age 17 she was paralyzed from the shoulders down after a diving accident, and subsequently struggled with anger, depression, and suicidal thoughts before finding peace in Jesus. She became a writer, artist, speaker, and advocate for the disabled. Now she is also a two-time cancer survivor, at age 72. In an interview with Time magazine, Joni was asked why God doesn't always heal when asked. Here's her response:

"...Jesus is delighted to heal people who come to him. But he says, if your hand or your foot causes you to sin, cut it off. Now right there, it shows that Jesus has a different priority, and that is our spiritual healing. If I had been granted a miraculous physical healing back when I was 17, I know I wouldn't be in a ministry serving other people with disabilities around the world... We can certainly ask to be healed. Even I ask for healing regarding this pain, regarding this cancer. Anyone who takes the Bible seriously agrees that God hates suffering. Jesus spent most of His time relieving it. But when being healed becomes the only goal — "I'm not letting go until I get what I want" — it's a problem. There comes a point at which if you don't start living, your whole life is spent jumping from one healing crusade to the next. And I believe I have been healed — just not in the way that others expect."

Joni has even emerged victorious from COVID! Read the story here:

<https://www.christianpost.com/news/joni-eareckson-tada-what-covid-meant-for-evil-christ-meant-for-good.html>

- Read the verse Joni references, **Psalm 84:11**, and write your thoughts in response.

PRAYER

Lord – “No good thing do You withhold from those who walk uprightly,” Your Word tells us. Help us to know You as the Giver of all things good, the Father who charts our every step, the Shepherd who keeps us close. Thank You Jesus!

REVIEW

Try to recite our week's memory passage at every meal today; if you don't have it yet, read it aloud three or four times between each meal.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 21

DELIVERING THE DEMONIAK

In the small groups this week we had some questions that were perhaps more private in nature. Let's return to those today to allow ourselves time to prayerfully consider anything God has for us here. Read **Luke 8:26-39** and then answer the questions below.

We talked about how the people of the demoniac's region, who asked Jesus to leave, preferred their swine to their Savior.

- Are there any swine (unnecessary things, unclean things) in your life right now?

We also talked about how the former demoniac wanted to go with Jesus, but Jesus had other ideas about how the man could best serve Him. Jesus wanted him to stay and proclaim to his own communities what God had done for him.

- Do the people from our past – who knew us before we belonged to Him – need us to testify about the mercy found in Jesus?
- Can our Jesus-changed life work to repair broken relationships from the past?
- Is there someone in your past you need to seek out? Is there someplace in your past where you need to return?

Sometimes Jesus wants us sitting at His feet. Sometimes He bids us to go and serve.

- What is He calling you to do – now?

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, we humbly seek Your guidance for how to spend each day. Help us be diligent to carve out time sitting at Your feet and seeking to be like You. Help us be equally diligent to listen for Your voice directing us when, where and how to go and serve. Thank You for being such a loving Father, who seeks the very best for every day of our lives!

REVIEW

Can you recite our week's passage? If not, keep working on it over the weekend.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 22

DELIVERING THE DEMONIAC

This week we studied how God Incarnate confronted evil head-on in the form of a legion of demons – but it was really no battle whatsoever. God’s power is so far above that of any evil spirits that they cannot do anything He does not, in His sovereignty, allow them to do, for now. Satan played a big role in Job’s life as well, and we are reading the book of Job during this 40-Day series. This coming week, read **Job 15-21** – the second “cycle” of discussions between Job and his friends.

REFLECT

Read **Psalm 25**, and take a few minutes to prayerfully meditate specifically on verses 1-10.

God is not only “good” – He is the definition of good. Consider listening or singing along to *The Goodness of God* – lyrics at this link: <https://youtu.be/-f4MUUMWMV4>

- This week in the small groups we read **Psalm 33**. What do you find in this psalm that relates to our healing?

SUNDAY, JANUARY 23

NOTES FROM PASTOR TREY GRAHAM'S TEACHING

WEEK 3 / SMALL GROUP / JANUARY 23-29

TWO HEALINGS

Read **Mark 5:22-43**.



Source: <https://www.baslibrary.org/biblical-archaeology-review/33/5/10>

THE SYNAGOGUE LEADER SEEKS HIS DAUGHTER'S HEALING

Read **Luke 4:31-37**.

- Given where Jesus' boat landed – which synagogue was Jairus likely helping lead?
- If he saw Jesus perform the earlier miracle in the synagogue (which also seems likely), does that add to your understanding of why he fell at Jesus' feet to beg Jesus to heal his only beloved daughter?
- Consider: Should we who have seen Christ work be the most fervent in our prayers, since we've seen Him in action, just like Jairus did?

THE DESPERATE WOMAN OF FAITH

Read **Luke 8:43**.

- From Luke's version of this story, what does "she could not be healed by anyone" suggest?

Consider John MacArthur's thoughts on this:

"Christ's power, His inherent ability to minister and work supernaturally, proceeded from Him under the conscious control of His sovereign will. When He asked who had touched His garments, He asked not out of ignorance but to draw the woman out of the crowd and allow her to praise God for what had happened."

No shame was involved here. Jesus was encouraging her and acknowledging her faith. Another way to put it: Jesus wanted to establish a relationship, not just heal wounds.

- Is Jesus looking for us?
- Should we fear His reaction?
- Is He aware of all of our past?

God's work is perfect, and as we see in many of His healings, it is also remarkably fast. The woman was cured instantly at the touch of His garment. Re-read **Mark 5:34**.

- What was Jesus telling her?
- What does this tell us about this woman's future?

The singer Josh Groban wrote a whole song (from the movie *Polar Express*) that seems to make a case for "belief" as the solution to everything. Look at the lyrics:

*Believe in what you feel inside
And give your dreams the wings to fly
You have everything you need*

*If you just believe
If you just believe
If you just believe
If you just believe*

*Just believe
Just believe*

- What is wrong with that message?

- Was the woman healed by the amount of her faith? Or the object of her faith?

One last note on the woman. John MacArthur points out that because of her affliction, she would normally have caused anyone she touched to become unclean.

- How amazing is it that when she touched the Healer, the effect was precisely the opposite?

Let's return to Jairus.

THE SYNAGOGUE LEADER SEEKS HIS DAUGHTER'S HEALING

Read **Luke 8:51-53**.

Scholars say this text suggests that the people "laughed Him to scorn" or "were laughing in His face." John MacArthur notes that although this was shallow and irreverent, it proves quite clearly that the people were convinced of the irreversible nature of the girl's death, underscoring the reality of the miracle Jesus was about to do.

Interestingly, even though the people appeared to mock Jesus' words, the Mark narrative indicates they obeyed when He put them all out of the house – what MacArthur calls "an emphatic, forceful expulsion that showed Christ's authority and was done because the disbelieving mourners had disqualified themselves from witnessing the girl's resurrection."

Not only did He quiet their mocking laughter – but they likely regretted the opportunity to have seen nothing less than an actual resurrection.

The Mark version says Jesus had told the people, "Do not fear, only believe." With apologies to Josh Groban, He wasn't telling them "only believe – in something." He was God Incarnate, standing in front of them.

- What was He telling them to believe, specifically?

WINDING UP

This week's psalm also addresses the issue that will be discussed this week in the Daily Workbook: can any good come from pain?

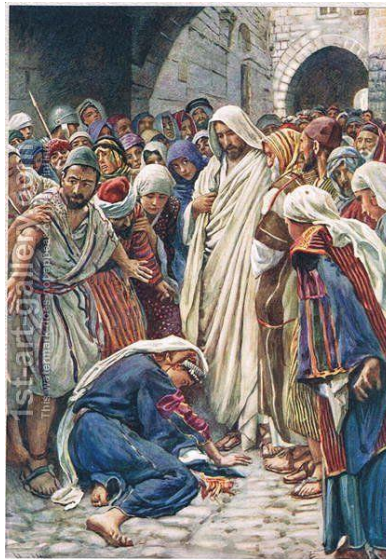
Read **Psalm 6**.

MONDAY, JANUARY 24

TWO HEALINGS



The Raising of Jairus' Daughter by Vasilij Dmitrievich, 1871



The Woman Who Touched the Hem of His Garment by Harold Copping, 1927

In our small group discussions, we read Mark's version of these two famous healings. Today, let's read Luke's version, focusing on the healing of Jairus' daughter.

Read **Luke 8:41-42** and then **49-56**.

- Imagine you were a mourner in the house with the little girl and write your thoughts.

Those who have lost a child endure unimaginable pain. That particular trauma can destroy marriages and lives – some parents never recover, and all parents will carry scars. This week we will return to this particular pain of losing a child as we look at the question: Can any good come from pain? Thoughtful people – and believers – have struggled with this question for centuries. The rest of this week we'll unpack some of those thoughts.

PRAYER

Father God, sometimes we hurt so much we can't bear it. Or at least, we feel as if we can't bear it. But in the very worst situations, we must remember that You are always good. This world is not good. It was made good, but sin marred it for all of us. Of course, You came to set things right, and on the Cross, You did exactly that. But while we are still in this world, we still hurt. Help us take our pain to that very Cross, even while we are groping in the dark, searching for answers. We know the only healing comes from You. Thank You for being right next to us, holding our hands, no matter how dark a place we find ourselves in. Thank You, Jesus.

REVIEW

Our memory passage this week (**Matthew 11:28**) is itself a healing balm. Begin "hiding it in your heart" today, so that it will always be available to you. Review the previous two memory verses occasionally this week as well (**Deuteronomy 32:39** and **Jeremiah 17:14**).

TUESDAY, JANUARY 25

TWO HEALINGS

Today let's read the "middle" of this week's "sandwich" story – the woman's healing.

Read **Luke 8:43-48**

This woman was, in the current vernacular, "laser-focused" on Jesus, to the point where she had told herself all she needed was one brief touch of the hem of His garment. She was definitely focused on the right thing.

- Are you focused on the right thing? Explain.

If your faith has wavered due to pain in your life (or even if it hasn't wavered) – it is good that we remember how God uses pain to help us focus on things that matter, like the woman in our story. The Bible teaches us not to get caught up in things of the world (good or bad), because they will pass away. The kingdom of God, on the other hand, is eternal, and things of His kingdom should always be our focus. Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world" (**John 18:36**), and we who follow Him cannot see the things of this life as the end of the story.

- Read **Romans 8:18** and write your thoughts.

PRAYER

Jesus, thank You that this is not our home, and that You've gone to prepare a place for us in our permanent dwelling – with You! Help us raise our troubled eyes to You when we're hurting and remember that You allow nothing to touch us that hasn't been sifted through Your nail-scarred hands. All praise to You that nothing in this world is the end of our story!

REVIEW

If you haven't written out this week's verse (**Matthew 11:28**), do so today, and continue working to memorize it.

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 26

TWO HEALINGS

What joy the parents of the young girl in our story this week experienced. While Jesus is certainly still capable of resurrecting a child who has died – or preventing a child from dying – we recognize that in this fallen world today, and in His sovereign wisdom, those kinds of miracles are not common.

Consider this incident, which happened in the past few months in Collin County. Some people reading this may even know the family involved. Emily, age 18, went to a friend's house one day this past November and waited more than an hour for him to get home, just so she could tell him to never give up on God. She told him she would have waited all day, because God had told her that he had to get this message from her THAT DAY. The next day, Emily's heart stopped and she was declared brain dead. She passed on December 2.

Or this incident, involving a 23-year-old from Boise, Idaho. Taylor had just returned from his honeymoon when he was killed in a freak accident. He left behind not only a widowed young wife but two devastated parents – and a big group of friends who had not taken God seriously, despite Taylor's constant witness to them.

- Emily and Taylor are both with their Savior now – but the pain left behind is unfathomable unless it's been experienced. Given the details shared above, what kinds of good can you imagine might come from these two deaths?

Tomorrow and the next day we'll share more about Emily and Taylor.

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, unless we've walked in those shoes, we can't imagine the pain, nor do we want to. But what is just as real as the pain is the fact that You are always good. You are always near. When our eyes are blinded with tears and we can't even think straight for the pain, we know You are there in the midst of it, holding us close, enveloping us in Your comfort and love, and reminding us that one day You will wipe away every tear. Thank You, Jesus.

REVIEW

Try to recite this week's memory verse, **Matthew 11:28**, to one other person today.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 27

TWO HEALINGS

We are talking about good that can come from pain, using some of the worst pain imaginable as our example – the pain of losing a child. Yesterday we learned about Taylor, a young man who died just after his honeymoon. His mother, Carla, reports that many of his friends took his witness to heart, after his death, and are now seeking a deeper relationship (or starting a relationship) with Jesus. But Carla says she too has received much good out of this tragedy, even as her pain continues to heal by God’s grace. Her heartfelt blog chronicles some of her journey. A couple of notable entries:

<https://carlastories.me/2015/07/19/beauty-in-grief-beauty-in-brokenness/>
<https://carlastories.me/2018/03/18/sorrow-and-joy-can-dance-together/>

- Read the first one, and the comments below it. Do you see God working in this tragedy? How?

Carla says she has leaned on the scriptures listed below. Read each one and write how it might be meaningful to you in a painful situation. What about the passage offers hope or light?

- Hebrews 11:1
- Psalm 20
- Ephesians 3:14-21

PRAYER

Lord, we pray for this family that suffered such a loss. We praise You that You do bring good out of the worst of times, that You heal the deepest pain, and that You walk with us during that sometimes long journey as our wounds become scars. Give us boldness to come to You with our pain, with our suffering, be it physical, emotional, or spiritual – we ask Your Spirit to guide us into Your throne room, where we are most welcome, to lay these burdens at Your feet and ask for Your comfort. Thank You for opening that room to us at any time.

REVIEW

Try to write this week’s passage, **Matthew 11:28**, from memory.

FRIDAY, JANUARY 28

TWO HEALINGS

We've learned about some families this past week who are walking the painful road of losing a child. They may well ask – why did Jesus heal Jairus' daughter, but not my son? Not my daughter? That is a good question. And one we can't really answer, because we are not sovereign, like God. We cannot see the big picture, the good that could come of the terrible pain we are suffering, the great tapestry of life in this world that only He can weave.

Returning to Emily's story – the day that she died, this past December 2, this is what her mom, Shelley, posted:

"Out of His kindness and intense love for Emily, God answered our prayers. We all prayed that she would rise. God answered. He raised her soul to heaven at 1:55 this morning. We prayed she would open her eyes. God answered. She opened her eyes and smiled at her Savior. We prayed she would live. God answered. She now lives with Him for eternity."

Humbly accepting that God is God, and that He loves us best – this is how Shelley will survive this trauma. This is how her family will begin to heal, and eventually, turn their attention to whatever God has next for them. They will be scarred. They will never forget. But they will heal. And of course – both Carla and Shelley know there's a happy ending ahead. As Shelley put it:

"As I sob, the Lord reminds me that we grieve with hope. Her death is not the final word. Jesus spoke the final word when He died and rose again. It is the word LIFE for those of us who have placed our faith in Him. We will spend eternity with Him (and with Emily)! I imagine with joy the day when we get to heaven. And after falling into the arms of our Savior, there will be Emily, waiting for us – eyes dancing, full of energy, laughing her big, bold laugh, and saying, 'It's about time you got here! We have such adventures for you!'"

PRAYER

Loving Father, we pray for this family too, whose grief is quite fresh. We praise You for the tremendous faith of Emily's parents, and the example they set for all of us. Help us to see our pain, our grief, our struggles, our suffering, with the same humble acceptance that You are God and we are not – but that You are right here with us, guiding us gently through the darkest of valleys, never letting go of our hands. Thank You that you never grow tired of us clinging to You.

REVIEW

Today, recite or write out all three of our memory passages that we've studied thus far.

SATURDAY, JANUARY 29

TWO HEALINGS

Read Matthew's brief version of this week's text – **Matthew 9:18-26**.

This past week's study has been heavy. But ultimately, there is some very good news about pain.

Read **1 Peter 3:18**.

Through belief in Jesus Christ, God gives us eternal life and every blessing included with that, one of which is: "He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, *nor pain anymore*, for the former things have passed away." (**Revelation 21:4**).

The pain we experience as a natural part of living in a fallen, sin-cursed world will be a thing of the past for those who, through faith in Christ, spend eternity in heaven with Him. That alone is reason to thank Him, even in pain, for His excruciating emotional and physical sacrifice for us, suffered willingly to redeem us and glorify His Father. As author Philip Yancey notes, "Any discussion of how pain and suffering fit into God's scheme ultimately leads back to the cross."

We are reading the book of Job during this study. This coming week, read **Job 22-26** – the third "cycle" of discussions between Job and his friends.

REFLECT

- This week in the small groups we read **Psalm 6**. What do you find in this psalm that relates to our healing?

To conclude this week, consider perhaps the most compelling benefit of experiencing pain, according to Joni Eareckson Tada, who we met earlier in this study. She's been paralyzed her entire adult life due to a diving accident and has now survived two bouts with cancer as well. In Joni's words:

"If you had never known physical pain in your life, how could you appreciate the nail-scarred hands with which Jesus Christ will meet you?"

SUNDAY, JANUARY 30

NOTES FROM PASTOR TREY GRAHAM'S TEACHING

WEEK 4 / SMALL GROUP / JANUARY 30-FEBRUARY 5

HEALING THE MAN BORN BLIND – JOHN CHAPTER 9:1-41

The question the disciples ask in verse 2 brings us back to the topic of “why does anyone suffer?”

According to pastor and writer Warren Wiersbe, “The disciples did not look at the man as an object of mercy but rather as a subject for a theological discussion. It is much easier to discuss an abstract subject like ‘sin’ than it is to minister to a concrete need in the life of a person.”

- Have you found this to be true in your life? How or how not?

Another thought on this verse comes from Matthew Henry: “The grace of repentance calls our own afflictions ‘punishments,’ but the grace of charity calls the afflictions of others ‘trials’ – unless the contrary is very evident.”

- What does he mean by this?

Read this quote from Warren Wiersbe on this subject, and discuss:

“In the final analysis, *all* physical problems are the result of our fall in Adam, for his disobedience brought sin and death into the world. But afterward, to blame a specific disability on a specific sin committed by specific persons is certainly beyond any person’s ability or authority. Only God knows why babies are born with disabilities, and only God can turn those disabilities into something that will bring good to the people and glory to His name.”

In verse 5, Jesus plainly states that He is the light of the world.

- Why was that pronouncement especially meaningful at this moment?
- How did Jesus come to give light? How did He come to give sight?
- Why do you think He chose to heal this common beggar?

- Can you think of some reasons why Jesus used the spittle and clay? Why do you think He told the man to go wash in the pool of Siloam?

John MacArthur speculates that “as He had done when He originally made human beings out of the dust of the ground, Jesus may have used the mud to fashion a new pair of eyes.” Warren Wiersbe points out that daubing clay in the man’s eyes may have caused irritation that motivated him to quickly obey the instruction to go wash it out.

- Could our pain ever be an irritation designed to encourage our obedience?

PART 1 – THE MIRACLE AND INITIAL REACTION

- Why is it important is it that we own what we were before – and tell how God’s favor changed us?
- What might be some of the reasons the people brought the man to the Pharisees?

PART 2 – THE PHARISEES GET INVOLVED

The Pharisees also asked how the man had been healed, and he told them the same thing he’d already said. Some of the Pharisees claimed Jesus was not from God, because He “does not keep the Sabbath.”

- Was this true?

Throughout history, men have wanted to “add” to God’s laws, and as Matthew Henry notes, “Much unrighteous and uncharitable judging is occasioned by men’s making the rules of religion more strict than God has made them, and adding their own fancies to God’s appointments.”

- What were the “fancies” the Pharisees had added?
- Read **Proverbs 29:25**. How does this apply here?

So the Pharisees turn to the healed man again, and use the phrase “Give glory to God” to imply that he is not giving glory to God, but to this “sinner,” Jesus. (Matthew Henry notes that the phrase is good, but here it was “ill-used.”) The man answers with one of the most beautiful lines in any of the stories about Jesus:

“Whether he is a sinner I do not know. **One thing I do know, that though I was blind, now I see.**” Praise God for this bold statement from this “common beggar”!

PART 3 – THINGS GET UGLY

Read **verses 28-29**.

- How did they know that God had spoken to Moses? What else should they have known, had they been searching the scriptures?

The man must have been fed up with the Pharisees at this point, because his final response to them drips with sarcasm – read **verses 30-33**.

- Read **Psalm 66:18**. Summarize some of the healed man’s arguments.

The Pharisees thought they got the last word – they cast him out of the synagogue. But of course, “the healed man’s wit had exposed the bias of his inquisitors” as John MacArthur says.

We’ll look at more on this story in this week’s daily workbook.

WINDING UP

Read together the Psalm of the week – **Psalm 27**.

MONDAY, JANUARY 31

HEALING THE MAN BORN BLIND

Read this week's healing story, **John 9:1-41**.



Jesus Opens the Eyes of a Man Born Blind by Duccio di Buoninsegna, 1311

- Jesus makes an important statement in verse 5. What is it? Why is this meaningful in light of what is about to happen?

Read **Matthew 5:14-16** and **Ephesians 5:8-14**

- What is our responsibility in terms of being light?

Our scripture passage this week made it very clear that the Pharisees were walking in spiritual darkness. They did everything in their power to try to deny that this healing even took place. We'll look at that more tomorrow.

HEALING SCRIPTURES

As we think about our pain or suffering, we always want to move our mind to focusing on Him, who is the only solution, the only Healer. Meditate on these scriptures today:

- **Psalm 6:2**
- **Psalm 30:2**
- **Psalm 41:2-3**
- **Psalm 103:2-4**
- **Psalm 119:50**
- **Proverbs 3:5-8**

PRAYER

Thank You, Jesus, that You came to be the Light of the World, and You make a way for us to obtain and share that Light – even when we are suffering. Help us to see You clearly when we are in pain, so we can more fully understand Your healing and Your love. Thank You for Your Word which is full of promises and encouragement for those who are suffering.

REVIEW

Our memory passage this week is **Proverbs 3:5-8**, that you just read above. Write it out and begin committing it to memory.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 1

HEALING THE MAN BORN BLIND

We've been talking about the Pharisees' and their unkind response to Jesus' miracle of healing the man born blind. John MacArthur points out they demonstrated many characteristics of willful unbelief ("we don't know it, so we don't believe it, and we don't want to know it"):

- Unbelief sets false standards (example: the rule against healing on the Sabbath was a false standard from men, not from God)
- Unbelief always wants more evidence but never has enough (example: this entire story)
- Unbelief does biased research on a purely subjective basis (or does no research at all)
- Unbelief rejects facts (example: this entire story)
- Unbelief is self-centered (the greatness of this miracle could only indicate that Jesus was from God – and the Jews did believe that God responds in proportion to the righteousness of the one praying – so by their own standards, this miracle should have caused them to wonder, at least)

This story also reveals their ignorance of scripture – the Old Testament indicated that the coming messianic age would be evidenced by restoration of sight for the blind (see **Isaiah 35:4-5**).

Warren Wiersbe sums up this story: "It seemed incredible to the healed man that the Pharisees would not know this Man who had opened his eyes! How many people were going around Jerusalem, opening the eyes of blind people? Instead of investigating the miracle, these religious leaders should have been investigating the One who did the miracle and learning from Him." Instead, they mocked the healed man as having been born utterly in sin – in complete darkness as to the reality that they were born into exactly that same sin.

- Do we see this kind of pride in the world today? Give examples.

PRAYER

Heavenly Father, check our hearts for pride. It is so easy to fall into thinking better of ourselves instead of simply thanking and praising You for the immense gift You've given us. We see examples all around us of prideful people – we pray they will open their eyes to see that to be truly whole, we must surrender to You and be transformed. Praise You for justifying and saving us, who were "born utterly in sin." You are a God of miracles.

REVIEW

Recite our memory passage at least three times today (morning, noon, and night, preferably).

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 2

HEALING THE MAN BORN BLIND

We talked in the small groups about how the poor blind beggar actually went toe-to-toe with the learned Pharisees – how his wit exposed their bias and blindness. Even before seeing Jesus, he had a clearer picture of the kingdom of God than did those who stood in judgment of him.

Re-read **verses 24-34** of John 9.

We know that the beggar's parents feared being (socially) thrown out of the synagogue, and now their son meets that fate. Scholars say he is the first known person to be cast out in this way. Why was this such a fearsome event? Because it "excluded a man from civil commerce and deprived him of his liberty and property" according to Matthew Henry. Warren Wiersbe notes that it cut you off from family and friends, and you were looked upon as a publican and sinner. Even as he became physically able to work, the man would now be shunned, a permanent outcast.

- Have you ever been cast out by someone?
- Who came for the outcasts?

Read **verse 35**.

Note that Jesus sought out the healed man after he was cast out, to offer Him the ultimate healing that he still needed, just as He graciously finds those who for His sake are unjustly rejected and cast out. Jesus is a hiding place for outcasts.

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, thank You for your unfathomable grace in calling us to You. Even when we suffer the pain of rejection from loved ones, You seek us out to provide comfort, encouragement, and rest. Thank You for seeking us, for finding us, for saving us, and for sustaining us.

REVIEW

See how much of our memory passage you can write from memory.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 3

HEALING THE MAN BORN BLIND

Yesterday we saw how the beggar was cast out of the synagogue, but Jesus found him.

Read **verses 35-37** of John 9.

Christ spoke of His deity this plainly to only two individuals, according to Matthew Henry, and both were complete outcasts at the time. One was the woman at the well in John 8. The other was this beggar. Both had an incomplete faith, an unclear understanding of God, that Jesus made right.

Re-read **verses 35-38**.

- Jesus had already granted the man physical sight. What does He grant the man here?

Scholars think it likely that this man became one of Jesus' permanent followers. In any event, as Warren Wiersbe notes, "the beggar was cast out of the synagogue but taken in by the Good Shepherd and added to His flock!"

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, we thank You for your mercy and grace in reaching out to the people who were shunned by their communities. You demonstrated Your tender love for each downtrodden soul by lifting them up and restoring them. And we thank You that You do the same today. Praise Your Holy Name.

REVIEW

Recite our memory passage to another person today.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 4

HEALING THE MAN BORN BLIND

The healing we studied this week is beautiful in so many ways, as we've seen. But John 9 doesn't have a happy ending.

Read **verses 39-41**.

- How were the Pharisees "blind"?

Warren Wiersbe's answer to that question: "They were blinded by their pride, their self-righteousness, their tradition, and their false interpretation of the Word of God."

- How might we fall into those same traps today?

PRAYER

Father God, we ask You to keep us close to You. As the old hymn says, we are prone to wander. And when we wander, we risk (among other things) those same traps the Pharisees were walking in. We ask You, every day, to keep our eyes clearly focused on You, because that is the antidote to falling into blindness. Help us instead deepen our love for Your Word; we know that as long as we are in that, we are in You. Thank You for your tender mercy for us all.

REVIEW

Today, recite or write out all four of our memory passages that we've studied thus far.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 5

HEALING THE MAN BORN BLIND

We are reading the book of Job during our 40-Day study. This next week, read **Job 27-31** – the “final defense” Job makes.

We studied an incredibly rich story this week in John 9. With that story in mind, read our psalm for this week, **Psalm 27**, and write out your thoughts.

REFLECT

- This week in the small groups we read **Psalm 27**. What do you find in this psalm that relates to our healing?

Meditate on **Lamentations 3:21-23**.

But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; His mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is Your faithfulness.

- What does this offer the suffering believer?

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 6

NOTES FROM PASTOR TREY GRAHAM'S TEACHING

WEEK 5 / SMALL GROUP / FEBRUARY 6-12

Read **John 11:1-46**.

This week's memory passage is **Isaiah 53:4-5** – read it together.

- How does verse 4 relate to our text for this week? (See **John 11:33-36**.)

THE RESURRECTION OF LAZARUS

As Warren Wiersbe put it, if Jesus could do nothing about death, then whatever else He could do amounts to nothing.

Read **1 Corinthians 15:19-26**.

- What is man's last enemy?
- Read **John 11:4**. Why did Lazarus fall ill?

THE DELAY

- Have you ever told God what He could have done?

Discuss this quote from Wiersbe: "God's love for His own is not a pampering love; it is a perfecting love. The fact that He loves us and we love Him is no guarantee that we will be sheltered from the problems and pains of life. After all, the Father loves His Son, and yet the Father permitted His beloved Son to drink the cup of sorrow and experience the shame and pain of the cross. We must never think that love and suffering are incompatible. Certainly they unite in Jesus Christ."

- If Jesus does not act WHEN you ask Him to act, will you still trust that He loves you?

TWO DAYS LATER

- Did Jesus know that His return to Judea and His forthcoming raising of Lazarus would precipitate His own arrest and death? Read **verses 9-10**.

Read **Luke 18:35-19:10** to learn what Jesus did on the way to heal Lazarus.

(Next week we will read a different version of the first of these incidents.)

JESUS ARRIVES IN BETHANY OF JUDEA

- Might “sitting shiva” be a model for us today still? Read **Romans 12:15**.

Jesus had of course visited Mary and Martha before. Read **Luke 10:38-42**.

- Based on that visit – which sister would you have guessed would drop everything and come running to meet Jesus?

Read **verses 21-22** of John 11.

- What were the two messages she conveyed?
- Have you ever told God what His timing and actions should have been?

In **verse 24**, Martha says she knows her brother will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.

- How did she know that? Read **Daniel 12:2**.
- Jesus makes another of His wonderful “I AM” statements in response to Martha. Read **verses 25-27**, and note what truths Martha expresses in **verse 27**.

Wiersbe says He was angry “at the ravages of sin in the world that He had created. Death is an enemy, and Satan uses the fear of death as a terrible weapon.” Read **Hebrews 2:14-18**.

Jesus wept, as well. He felt the pain of grief and loss. Wiersbe again: “Our Lord’s weeping reveals the humanity of the Savior. He has entered into all of our experiences and knows how we feel. In fact, being the perfect God-man, Jesus experienced these things in a deeper way than we do. His tears also assure us of His sympathy; He is indeed “a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief... We see in His tears the tragedy of sin but also the glory of heaven. Perhaps Jesus was weeping *for* Lazarus, as well as *with* the sisters, because He knew He was calling His friend from heaven and back into a wicked world where he would one day have to die again. Jesus had come down from heaven; He knew what Lazarus was leaving behind.”

THE MIRACLE

- Do you think the disciples ever wondered if Jesus Himself would rise again?

WINDING UP

Our psalm for this week is a psalm of deliverance and has messianic overtones as well. Read **Psalm 34** together.

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 7

THE RESURRECTION OF LAZARUS

This week's miracle story demonstrated Christ's power over that worst scourge that sin brought into our fallen world – death. Read **John 11:1-46**.



Resurrection of Lazarus by Jose Casado del Alisal, 1854

- Write your thoughts about this statement, from Dr. Eli Lizorkin-Eyzenberg: “Resurrection is not something Jesus does – it is something He IS.”

With this miracle, Jesus moved the doctrine of the resurrection out of the future and into the present. In **verse 24** of our text, Martha was looking into the future, knowing Lazarus would rise again. In **verse 37**, others around her were looking to the past and saying “He could have prevented Lazarus from dying.” But Jesus centered their attention on the present: Wherever He is, God’s resurrection power is available now. Read the following verses and write your thoughts:

- Romans 6:4
- Galatians 2:20
- Philippians 3:10

Have you been resurrected? If you are a child of God, you have indeed.

PRAYER

Mighty God, how can we ever thank You for redeeming us from death? Although our physical bodies will die (unless You come for us first), we are already alive forever in You. We don't understand how You loved us like this, but we are humbly grateful that You chose us to be in Your presence forever. Hallelujah!

REVIEW

Our memory passage this week is so beautiful. Write out **Isaiah 53:4-5** and begin committing it to memory.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 8

THE RESURRECTION OF LAZARUS

Jesus came not to turn things upside down, as some say, but to turn things right side up. He came to vanquish sin and death for His children, righting what had gone wrong in the Garden and preparing a way for us to live, one day, in the presence of His holiness.

- Consider how Moses showed that God had sent him – read **Numbers 16:28-33**.
- Consider how Elijah showed that God had sent him – read **1 Kings 18:21-40**.

Now consider how Christ proved His mission – perhaps most astonishingly with Lazarus, but over and over again. His miracles of healing, casting out demons and even raising people from the dead were a mere foreshadowing of both His resurrection and our own future resurrection, to a world where every tear will be wiped away.

PRAYER

Jesus, thank You for coming to meet us where we were – and are. Thank you that in a world where people's hearts had grown cold – as they are now – You entered in and gently, tenderly, and lovingly began restoring good – restoring things to how You originally created them. We are overcome with Your kindness and love for us. Thank You Jesus.

REVIEW

Read our memory passage aloud at least five times today.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 9

THE RESURRECTION OF LAZARUS

In **John 11:43**, we're told that Jesus cried out with a loud voice to raise Lazarus from the dead. Just as Lazarus' resurrection foreshadows our own, Jesus' shout also foreshadows.

Read **1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**.

- What event does this describe?

One day we will meet the Lord in the air, whether we are still alive or not when that moment on God's timetable arrives. Until then, we remain here, in a world where we face sin, pain, suffering, darkness, and death on a regular basis. How do we survive here? Throughout this study we've been seeing ways to do just that, and Lazarus' story provides a powerful way as well – the knowledge that even when we do not see God moving... He has a better plan.

Martha and Mary may not have fully realized this until their brother came back to them – but they surely realized it after, when at least some of the Jews who witnessed this miracle came to a saving faith in Christ (read **John 11:45**). Precious souls, precious people to our Father – drawn near to Him by the situation that initially caused painful grief to the two sisters.

Write your thoughts about this quote from Bible teacher Brian Dembowczyk: "Jesus' delay led to Lazarus' death which led to Jesus' miracle which led to faith which always leads to God's glory."

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, we look forward with great anticipation to the day when You descend from heaven with a shout! And You will be calling our names! Help us to keep looking heavenward as we struggle with pain and suffering, and help it to grow our faith both for our comfort and Your glory. Thank You that Your Word promises we will always be with You.

REVIEW

If you have children old enough to understand, read our memory passage to them today and explain it.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 10

THE RESURRECTION OF LAZARUS

Lazarus came out of the tomb alive, but still bound in grave clothes. Many of us live that way – alive in reality because Christ saved us, but still wearing our grave clothes as if we were not saved.

- Read **Ephesians 2:4-7** and write out the truth about who and where you are in Jesus.
- Is someone wearing “grave clothes” living this truth?
- Do you need to be “unbound”? Who can accomplish that? Take it to the Father right now.

Tomorrow we will revisit where our loving Father is in the midst of tragedy and pain.

PRAYER

Father God, we know You have saved us. Help us to throw off our grave clothes and live victoriously in You. Even in the midst of pain and suffering, Lord, we turn our eyes to You for comfort and hope, knowing that Your plan is best. Accepting what You have allowed in our lives provides peace to us, and for that also we thank You.

REVIEW

Recite our memory passage to at least one other person today.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 11

THE RESURRECTION OF LAZARUS

Someone dies. Or a lot of people die, in some horrific tragedy – there are new ones in the headlines almost daily. And the godless people ask – “Where is your God in the midst of this tragedy?”

What is your answer?

What is your answer in your own pain and suffering? A child who wanders away from God. A marriage in trouble. Finances out of control. A serious illness or injury.

The short answer, of course, is that He is right where He always is, on the throne of heaven, reaching out to us in love. That answer may not placate the godless, but nevertheless it is truth.

Another truth is that the depths of affliction need not send us to the depths of despair, because each and every experience of suffering or trial is an **opportunity for God to move and grow our faith**. And His Word is where we turn. Wiersbe says, “When we find ourselves confronted by disease, disappointment, delay, and even death, our only encouragement is the Word of God. We must live by faith and not by sight.”

That is what Jesus our loving Savior calls us to do.

- Read **Psalm 50:15**. What are the great truths in this verse?

PRAYER

Dear Savior, thank You for Your loving embrace – that when we are hurting we can come to You not only for comfort, but for the peace that knows You orchestrate every detail of our lives for Your glory – and in that, we can fully trust. Thank You for Your Word which sustains us.

REVIEW

Today, recite or write out all five of our memory passages that we’ve studied thus far.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 12

THE RESURRECTION OF LAZARUS

Our old friend Matthew Henry had this to say about the story of Lazarus' resurrection. Read it slowly and savor how the author underscores what we have learned this week:

"The afflictions of the saints are designed for the glory of God, that He may have opportunity of showing them favour; for the sweetest mercies, and the most effecting, are those which are occasioned by trouble. Let this reconcile us to the darkest dispensations of Providence, they are all for the glory of God, this sickness, this loss, or this disappointment, is so; and, if God be glorified, we ought to be satisfied. Let this comfort those whom Christ loves under all their grievances that the design of them all is that *the Son of God may be glorified thereby*, His wisdom, power, and goodness, glorified in supporting and relieving them."

Break this down into today's language and make this statement your own, writing it in the first person (example: "Any affliction I suffer is designed for God's glory...")

Read our psalm for the week, **Psalm 34**.

Our reading from the book of Job for this coming week is **Job 32-37** – when another friend, Elihu, comes to see Job.

REFLECT

- This week in the small groups we read **Psalm 34**. What do you find in this psalm that relates to our healing?

Meditate on **2 Corinthians 12:9-10**.

But He said to me, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me. For the sake of Christ, then, I am content with weaknesses, insults, hardships, persecutions, and calamities. For when I am weak, then I am strong.

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 13

NOTES FROM PASTOR TREY GRAHAM'S TEACHING

WEEK 6 / SMALL GROUP / FEBRUARY 13-19

Read **Mark 10:46-52**.

Our last memory passage is **Psalm 147:3**.

BLIND BARTIMAEUS

- So why is he named in scripture?

Bar means son, so Bartimaeus means son of Timaeus. What does Timaeus mean? Various translations refer to “unclean” or “blind.” Scholars say that naming Bartimaeus points to the truth that Jesus came to heal spiritual blindness, even more than any physical healing.

Author Roc O’Connor, who wrote a book about this particular story, says “blindness here serves as a metaphor for the all-too-human unwillingness to recognize whatever wounds, hurts, and diseases keep us from recognizing God, ourselves, and others.”

BARTIMAEUS ASKS FOR HELP

- How do you think he knew that this Jesus might help him?
- What exactly did he say? Read **verse 47**.

John MacArthur notes that Bartimaeus’ use of “Son of David” indicated he recognized Jesus as Messiah and King (which will be more fully clear later in the story).

- Why do you think a blind beggar had a better grasp of who Jesus was than the learned Pharisees? Read **1 Corinthians 1:26-31**.
- How did the crowd respond to Bartimaeus’ cries? Why do you think they tried to shut him up?
- The blind beggar was not deterred by the hostile reaction of the crowd, but cried all the more. Do you value connecting with God more than public approval?

JESUS RESPONDS

- What does this tell us about His reaction when we cry out? Read **Psalm 34:6**.
- What did they tell the beggar? Read **verse 49**.

Read **Hebrews 12:1-2**.

- Jesus then asked – “What do you want me to do for you?” Of course He already knew. But what does He ask of us? Read **Philippians 4:6**.

Matthew Henry says “in prayer we do not draw the mercy to ourselves, but ourselves to the mercy.”

- How is our faith strengthened by better knowing Him?
- Read **Hebrews 11:6**.
- Read **Luke 18:42-43** aloud.

What better picture of discipleship could we have?

- Bartimaeus recognized his inability
- He trusted Jesus as the One to give him God’s gracious mercy
- And when he could see clearly, he began to follow Jesus

But this isn’t really a story of Bartimaeus. It’s a story of God:

- God chose Bartimaeus – just like He chose us
- God graciously granted a kernel of faith to Bartimaeus – enough to believe in this “Son of David” that the scriptures had foretold
- God allowed his suffering so that a glorious dawning of light could save him physically and spiritually in one unforgettable meeting with His Son – and so that others would see and praise the Lord

WINDING UP

Psalm 145 is our last “psalm of the week.”

One last question:

- What is the most meaningful thing God has taught you during this 40 day journey? How will you apply it?

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 14

BLIND BARTIMAEUS

In this last week of our 40-Day study, we examined Jesus' healing of blind Bartimaeus as told in Mark 10:46-52. Other than Lazarus, this blind beggar is the only person healed by Jesus whose name is shared in the Bible. This story is important because it demonstrates Jesus' overall mission on earth – to bring people out of darkness and into light, by faith, in Him. Bartimaeus experienced this healing both physically and spiritually – because he had faith in “Jesus of Nazareth.”



Jesus Heals the Blind Bartimaeus by Nicholas Poussin, 1650

Two other gospel writers shared this story (although neither of them name Bartimaeus). We learn just a few more details by studying them all. Today read Luke's version (**Luke 18:35-43**).

Note that while Mark said this happened “as He was leaving Jericho,” Luke says “as He drew near to Jericho.” This may be because there were two Jerichos at the time, one on the mound of the ancient city (from Joshua's time) and the other the newer inhabited city built by Herod.

- What new detail do you learn in the Luke version? (Hint: It's at the end.)

PRAYER

Lord Jesus, never let us stop learning from Your Word. You are a God of details and the more we absorb and understand about You, the stronger our faith, and the more effective we are for You. Thank You for bringing us out of darkness and into Your marvelous light!

REVIEW

Our last memory passage is very brief. Today write out **Psalm 147:3**.

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 15

BLIND BARTIMAEUS

Mark's version of this story was the focus of our weekly study, and yesterday we read Luke's version. Today read Matthew's account – **Matthew 20:29-34**.

Note that Matthew's version records two blind beggars. Scholars believe this is a situation like we encountered with the demoniac healing – there was a second man, but the narrative focused on the vocal one. In this case, we know Bartimaeus cried out loudly!

- There is one other additional detail in this version. What is it? (Hint: It's in the last sentence again)

All three versions tell us Jesus stopped what He was doing to call over the hurting man. This is an important lesson for us in our busy-ness. For some of us, our daily to-do list challenges us to ignore the needs of that hurting friend or acquaintance until "later."

- Who in your life is hurting? Do you need to stop what you're doing, call them over, and show them the kindness of Jesus?

PRAYER

Lord, please help us structure our days so that we are always open to Your Spirit's nudging us to act when someone near us is hurting, whether that is someone close to us or just a need we come upon "randomly." Break our hearts for what breaks Yours – and help us walk in Your steps to help people find healing. Thank You for being the source of all goodness, all kindness, all thoughtfulness – all love. To us, and through us to others. Thank You, Jesus.

REVIEW

You may already have **Psalms 147:3** memorized for this week. We will use this section this week to provide some additional help in making scripture memorization a regular part of your walk with the Author of scripture. The first tip is this – read the passage in context. Read the whole section or chapter to get an accurate understanding of the meaning. This will help you remember the passage better.

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 16

BLIND BARTIMAEUS

Bartimaeus cried out because he was hurting – he was in darkness, he was destitute, and he needed healing. Crying out is a perfect response to hurt – when you’re crying out to the One who will always hear you (like Bartimaeus did). God even put a whole book in the Bible that helps us put into words what we say to Him when we’re in pain or suffering.

The Book of Psalms is a collection of cries, prayers and praise. The authors of each chapter experienced every struggle, heartache and fear imaginable, and their words, inspired by God, will help guide you toward whole and complete healing. We’ve been reading a weekly psalm during this series – here are some additional psalms to consider. For each, write a few notes summarizing what help you gain from it, or how it could help someone else you know:

- Psalm 23 (a great one to memorize if you haven’t already)
- Psalm 30
- Psalm 31
- Psalm 100
- Psalm 73
- Psalm 107 – there is a sentence that is repeated numerous times in this psalm. Write it out.

Consider adding a daily psalm reading to your daily routine. Perhaps it could be at lunchtime, or some other time of day when you take a break.

PRAYER

You have given us everything we need, Lord God, including Your Word which even gives us words to help us pray to You. Thank You in particular for the psalms, which cover such an enormous range of human experience, and therefore offer us something to comfort our souls when we are hurting. Thank You for this beautiful book.

REVIEW

Today’s tip on Bible memory is one we’ve mentioned here before – write out the passage. Just the process of writing it starts your brain remembering it. Then keep that card or sticky note somewhere you can see it often (purse/wallet, mirror, fridge, desk, etc.). If you use index cards, you can keep a file of them to refer back to, rotating them occasionally to keep them all fresh in your head.

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 17

BLIND BARTIMAEUS

Blind Bartimaeus is certainly one of the most famous of Jesus' healings, but there are many more in scripture (and surely countless more that were not written down). Take a few moments today to read through these passages to help grasp the enormity of what our Savior accomplished in His time on earth. (Note Luke – a physician – recorded many instances!)

- Matthew 4:23-24
- Matthew 8:1-3
- Matthew 9:35
- Matthew 10:1-8
- Mark 1:29-34
- Luke 5:12-15
- Luke 5:17-26
- Luke 6:19
- Luke 13:11-13
- Luke 14:1-6
- Luke 17:11-19
- Acts 10:37-38

➤ What is your reaction after reading all of these at once? Write out your thoughts to God.

PRAYER

Jesus, we are astounded by what You accomplished while on this earth. We remember what You did at the cross, but you spent three years pouring Yourself into the people of Galilee and Jerusalem, as well. You healed because You ARE the Light of the World. Heal us now, Lord Jesus, so that we can follow Bartimaeus' example – and spring up joyfully to follow You.

REVIEW

Today's Bible memory tip is another one you've seen here before. Read the verses out loud. Hearing them while you're seeing them is a powerful memory aid. Plus – hearing the Word of God increases our faith, even if we're speaking it to ourselves.

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 18

BLIND BARTIMAEUS

On this last weekday of our study, let's return for a moment to a question we touched on earlier in our 40-Days. Sometimes our prayers are not answered the way we wish them to be, and the pain can seem unrelenting. How do we deal with a tragic loss? A few thoughts to consider:

- Sin and death are real, and unavoidable in this life.
- The decisions we make in this life have eternal consequences.
- Jesus loves us more than we can imagine, but this does not exempt us from sorrow and pain.
- It is normal – and right – to grieve a loss.
- Jesus understands our pain and grief.
- Learning to trust God's perfect timing brings peace.
- Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life.
- Some point to evil and death and say this means there is no God – that is a lie from the pit of hell, which is where evil and death originate.
- Once you have received life from Christ, take off your grave clothes of doubt and fear.
- Help others remove the obstacles preventing them from meeting Jesus the Healer.

PRAYER

Father God, You did not create a world of death. Sin brought that. But You sent Your Son to conquer death forever, and in that we must rest. Comfort our hearts in loss. Help our grief ignite a passion to ensure that those around us know Your love and salvation. And Lord Jesus, please give us the words and actions to comfort and encourage those grieving – give us Your very heart for those suffering a loss.

REVIEW

One final tip to help commit more of the Bible to memory. Use art to help cement passages in your long-term memory. Some people draw little stick figures that “act out” the passage, some set the passage to music (this is highly effective), some have their kids create art based on the verses they're learning.

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 19

We covered a lot of scripture in this study, but we only scratched the surface of all the Bible has to say about healing. Here's a list of other passages. Read through them and note which might be helpful in various situations – for yourself, of course, but also so you have help ready for others in pain.

God's instructions to the Israelites

- Exodus 15:26
- Exodus 23:25
- 2 Chronicles 7:11-15 (national healing)

God's wisdom

- Proverbs 4:20-22
- Proverbs 16:24
- Proverbs 17:22
- Ecclesiastes 3:1-8

Words of the prophets

- Isaiah 33:2
- Isaiah 35:6
- Isaiah 38:16-17
- Isaiah 40:29-31
- Isaiah 41:10
- Isaiah 57:18-19
- Isaiah 58:8
- Jeremiah 30:17
- Jeremiah 33:6

New Testament teachings

- Mark 2:17
- John 14:27
- Romans 5:3-4
- 1 Corinthians 10:13
- Philippians 4:6-7
- Philippians 4:19
- 1 Peter 2:24
- 3 John 1:2

Don't forget to finish the book of **Job** – **chapters 38-42**, where God answers and restores Job.

God is Healer, the Great Physician. Praise His Holy Name!

BONUS PAGE

We talked in week one about *The Chosen*, the production that's bringing Jesus' life on earth to episodic television – and winning hearts and minds for Him along the way. It is NOT scripture – and the filmmakers tell us to read our Bibles to get God's Word! But using the Bible record, the filmmakers seek to flesh out what those days of our Lord on earth might have been like, with an eye to the culture as it was at that time. Millions have found this approach to be very powerful in their spiritual lives. If you haven't already started watching the series, you can do online:

<https://watch.angelstudios.com/thechosen>

Two seasons are available, and more episodes are coming.

The series has already depicted a few of Jesus' healings, which you might enjoy watching "come to life":

Jesus heals the leper

<https://youtu.be/VL8DThIIZAY>

Jesus heals the paralytic who was lowered through the ceiling

<https://youtu.be/dlB0mQ1PaMY>

Jesus heals Simon's mother-in-law

<https://youtu.be/ywNvWU9ZsTA>

Jesus heals the withered hand

<https://youtu.be/YWoTGzlefq8>