



FOLLOWING JESUS

A 21-DAY JOURNEY

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21 DAYS OF FOLLOWING JESUS

Can you imagine Jesus walking into your story? Him just showing up at work one day right there in your office? Or arriving home later in the day to find Him in the rocker on your front porch? Or maybe sitting in the booth next to you at the restaurant?

Sounds kind of crazy, and yet that is exactly what happened to all kinds of people more than 2,000 years ago. He showed up in their story. In the flesh. He moved into the neighborhood.

Jesus came to earth for many reasons – but one of them was to show us how to live better. As the perfect example He extended an invitation to “follow” Him, and to “learn from” Him. His plan was not to offer a seminar, though he took many opportunities to teach. He didn’t pitch a book – though many have been written about Him. He didn’t set up a shop, though He did take on apprentices – a dozen young guys that He would live with, work with, travel with, and teach how to live a life that mattered. They were His disciples.

The plan was simple. They could just watch and learn. And ask questions at will. Then from time to time He give them some real life experiences to move through, because He knew that His way was the best way for someone to be transformed.

The invitation still exists for us today. Jesus invites us to follow Him. And that’s what this journey / journal is all about. For the next twenty-one days, we will be tracking along with some of the experiences the disciples had as they followed Jesus. Our prayer is that these experiences – and the lessons they teach - will resonate with you, and that you will be changed by Jesus as His original disciples were.

But before we dive in...

On a couple of occasions Jesus paired up His followers in groups of two and sent them out to do ministry as partners. We’d like to encourage you to tackle this 21-day challenge with a partner (or a group). Touch base periodically with each other to check on progress, to compare what you’ve learned, or even to tackle an action project together (the action steps marked with an * are especially geared towards a joint effort). Don’t do the journey alone.

actual verses where the promise is made. Then read the list out loud to yourself (and keep it handy for future reference).

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April 21 | **The Resurrection** | Matthew 28:1-15

The Resurrection is the greatest story in history, and all of Christianity hangs on it. Disprove the resurrection, and you can dismiss Jesus and all His promises of eternal life. But no one ever has. And no one will, because it happened.

The soldiers were paid off, but it seems unlikely their story was accepted. In fact, if what the soldiers said was true, they were in danger of execution, for failing to carry out their duties and protect the body, yet strangely their lives were spared.

- How does the resurrection bring hope?
- How did the resurrection authenticate everything that Jesus did and taught?
- What do you think it must have been like for the early followers of Jesus when they discovered that Jesus was indeed risen – as He had said?
- Where in your life do you need to experience Jesus’ resurrection power?

Life lesson: We can still follow Jesus today, because He is alive. He defeated death. And He defeated sin – both its penalty and its power. As followers you can live in victory and say good bye to the things that drag you down. That’s the power of Easter.

*** Action:** Share with someone the impact that this 21-day challenge has had on you. Identify one thing that you learned or experienced that you can take with you as you continue to try to be a better follower of Jesus.

Notes: _____

Life lesson: From Day 1 when Jesus came to earth it was all about the cross. It was about God loving the world so much He would give his Son. It was about Jesus laying down His life for His friends. It was about supernatural love. Following Jesus is about love – the kind of love that only Jesus can give. Sacrificial and unconditional. We are known as His disciples by our love. (John 13:35)

Action: Choose one of the gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John) and reread the crucifixion story – slowly. Try to put yourself in the story and imagine it happening as if you were there. Let the horror of what happened impact you. Finish by thanking Jesus for what He did for you.

Notes: _____

April 20 | **Expectations?** | Matthew 18:21-28

We know what happens next in the story – and that Easter is coming. The disciples should have known as well, because Jesus told them what was going to happen. It should have been easy – or not?! They totally missed it.

Jesus makes promises to us, but we don't always understand how they will play out, and then when the circumstances go south, we panic, and either forget what we've been told or believe what we're seeing.

Good news. Tomorrow is coming. And in your story, too.

- Do you ever struggle to believe God's promises? Why? (Or why not?)
- When in your life have you seen God intervene in your story in some way that surprised you (but maybe should not have)?
- Also included in this passage is the reminder that following Jesus comes with a cost. Why are we asked to pay that cost? What promises might help us?

Life lesson: Things aren't always what they seem. Sometimes circumstances seem insurmountable. They're not. Sometimes situations seem hopeless. They're not. You just have to choose to believe the promises of God. The story is never over!

Action: For whatever issue is taking up space in your soul and in your mind right now make a list of some of the promises of God that might apply. Identify the

April 1 | **The Call to Discipleship** | John 1:40-42; Matthew 4:18-22; Luke 5:1-11

We have three different stories about Jesus calling His first disciples. It's possible that there are three different accounts of the same event, but that seems unlikely considering the differences in the details that are shared. It's more likely that these are three separate incidents that, when stacked on top of each other, led to the disciples' willingness to make a career turn and go "all in" as Jesus-followers.

- When have you sensed Jesus asking you to follow Him?
- What was your response?
- What might be some reasons that you might be hesitant to go "all in"?
- What have you given up at this point to follow Jesus? What might be the next step?
- What assurances does He offer?

Life Lesson: When we follow Jesus, He promises to change us. How have you seen your life changed on your spiritual journey? How would you like to see it changed?

Action: On a piece of paper create two columns, one labeled "Then" and one labeled "Now." Use the columns to contrast who you were / how things were before you met Christ and after. Or use the columns to identify ways that you have grown or changes you've experienced even within the past year.

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April 2 | **The Cost of Discipleship** | Luke 9:57-62

Jesus had more followers than just His twelve disciples (think of people like Mary, Martha and Lazarus), and He also had those who seemed to want to follow—yet He pushed back against them. Maybe He knew that they were in it for themselves, and didn't have the heart to be a true follower. Many people today are "wanna be" followers, but there is a cost that ultimately drives them away.

- Why does Jesus seem to reject some people who claimed to want to follow Him?
- What is the true test of discipleship?
- What has following Jesus cost you in your life?

- Are there areas of your life that you are still holding on to, and were you following Jesus?
- What are some areas of life where we might be tempted to put our desires ahead of following Jesus?

Life lesson: Following Jesus is not easy. It may require sacrifice. You will likely have to make hard choices. You may even suffer for choosing Him over something or someone else.

Action: What is one area of your life that you have been hanging on to? Maybe it is a possession. Maybe it is a habit. Maybe it is a dream. What would it look like for you to let it go, and to let it be part of the cost of following Jesus?

Notes: _____

April 3 | **Learning from Jesus** | Matthew 11:25-30

We seem to get some mixed signals from Jesus. In yesterday’s readings we are confronted with the fact that following Jesus will be hard and costly, and will call for sacrifice on our part. And then we read today that Jesus is gentle and humble of heart, and that following Him is the best way to find rest for your soul.

But in His comments Jesus makes an interesting statement. He says, “Learn from me.” Learn by watching me and being with me and by interacting with me. Jesus offered His disciples many teachable moments – some planned and some seemingly impromptu, but how much did they learn just by being with Him?

- What in your life causes you to feel weighed down and worn out?
- What seems to be the heart that Jesus has for his disciples?
- What are some of the things that you have learned from Jesus, simply by spending time with him?
- Do you think discipleship is more about radical obedience or meaningful relationship?

Life lesson: We can learn important things by paying attention to what He said. But we can learn even more by honing in on what he did.

- Do you sometimes struggle with doing tasks that are beneath you, or maybe that no one will notice or see? What would Jesus do?
- Do you sometimes struggle to love and serve people who make your life more difficult? What did Jesus do?
- Are you aware of the needs of people around you, regardless of how simple those needs may seem?
- How have you washed someone else’s feet?

Life lesson: The humility of Jesus was constantly on display. Coming as a baby and to poverty. Living in obscurity for thirty years. Taking time for children. Avoiding the crowds. Washing feet. Any follower of Jesus should live a life of humility.

Action: Do a humility inventory. How important is it for you to get credit? To win the argument? To have it your way? To be known and respected, even admired? To have the best for yourself?

Now find someone to serve today. In a lowly way. Maybe even keep it anonymous. It’s not about you.

Notes: _____

April 19 | **The Crucifixion** | Matthew 27:27-56

Because the story of the crucifixion is so familiar to us, we often lose sight of its awfulness. Jesus was stripped and beaten and mocked and humiliated and ultimately nailed to a cross to suffer a slow, excruciatingly painful death. It was horrific; yet He chose it. Willingly. For each of us.

The impact of His death was incredible. The earth shook and rocks split. Dead people came back to life. But also the veil was torn in two. Jesus made a way for us to access the Father.

- When was the last time you took a few minutes to remember just how much Jesus suffered for you on the cross? When was the last time you said, “Thank you”?
- How has the crucifixion changed your life? How does it need to?

And even a person who has been in the grave for several days can rise again! Death is no match for life!

But this story contains some unusual elements – all of which are worth noting. Like the fact that He waited to go. Like the fact Jesus does not react to Martha and Mary’s frustration with Him. Like the fact that He weeps with the sisters.

- When has God asked you to wait for an answer – or are you still waiting? How has the wait affected your faith?
- Jesus could have prevented the sisters’ grief, yet He chose instead to let them experience it and to go through it with them. Why?
- How does the reality of the resurrection affect the way that you live?
- Do you think it was hard to roll the stone from the grave? Are there any stones that God might be waiting for you to move?

Life lesson: Following Jesus can mean waiting for Jesus. At the first feelings of pain we cry out for relief, but sometimes He’s up to something bigger. And even when it seems all hope is lost there is still God, who is totally able to do the unthinkable.

Action: Have you lost confidence in God? Maybe he hasn’t responded as you thought He would. So you’ve given up, even stopped praying. What would it look like for you to choose hope? Maybe you and God just need to have a big conversation about it. Today is the day!

Notes: _____

April 18 | **Washing the Disciples’ Feet** | John 13:1-17

Feet in Palestine got dirty. There were no shoes and socks – just sandals and dusty roads. So arriving at a destination was typically followed by washing feet. Often the household servants would do the washing, but at the Last Supper, no servants were present. Except for one.

Jesus was the Teacher, the last person who should have been washing feet, but He was the one who stepped up (or down) to the task. Later that night one set of feet would deny him, another set would betray him, but Jesus still washed their feet.

Action: Take a few minutes to look through the gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John) and identify 3-5 stories where Jesus is in action. Make notes of what you can learn from what he did.

Notes: _____

April 4 | **Life Building** | Matthew 7:24-29

The Sermon on the Mount is the most well-known of Jesus’ discourses. He covers many, many different topics and issues – and somehow seems to put a “twist” on each one – but then He gets to the end and tells this little story about two builders. Both are building a life. Both are going to face storms. But only one will survive the deluge. What is the key?

(Take a few minutes to look over Matthew 5-7)

- What are some of the things that Jesus said in His Sermon on the Mount?
- Do you find any of them difficult to understand or obey?
- How does putting Jesus’ teachings into practice protect someone against the storms of life?
- What separates Jesus’ true disciples from the crowd?

Life lesson: Some “followers” are more like spectators at a sporting event. They enjoy the show – but they have nothing invested in the game. They’re really not followers; they’re simply fans. Jesus expects His followers to listen – and to do. Knowledge isn’t the end goal. Obedience is. For truth to be transforming it must be activated.

Action: Read one of the chapters of the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5,6,7). In the chapter you read, what does Jesus teach that you really have not been living out? Make a specific plan that will help you take steps of obedience. (“It’s not the Bible you know, but the Bible you live.”)

Notes: _____

April 5 | **The First Miracle** | John 2:1-11

This is an odd story, and Mary's precociousness seems to put Jesus in a bit of a bind. Yet He goes ahead and performs this miracle. But why? Sure, changing the water to wine helped the host save face – but did it really make much of a lasting difference? You might think not, but John (the author here) saw something more in Jesus' miracles than just amazing feats of wonder – He called them signs. They helped people, but they also revealed the Father, and the mission, and the heart of who He was. So what did this miracle teach?

- Are you ever hesitant to ask Jesus for help because you feel like your predicament is the result of your own poor planning?
- Are you ever hesitant to ask Jesus for help because you feel like the issue is not important enough?
- What is it that makes a miracle a miracle? Have you ever experienced any in your life?
- How was this miracle a picture of Jesus' role in our stories?

Life lesson: Some people enjoyed better wine; but those closest to Jesus got an intimate look at a God who celebrates life with us, surprises us, and gives us good things (even though we are often the cause of our own problems).

Action: No miracle happens if the servants don't do as Jesus instructs. What is something that you have been praying about where you could take a literal step of faith? Will you take it?

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April 6 | **A Day of Healing** | Mark 1:21-34

This day seems to start out like just a typical Sabbath. Jesus and His followers step into the synagogue and Jesus begins to teach – and then the first domino topples. An evil spirit confronts Jesus – and Jesus heals the man possessed. Then He heads off to Peter's house to heal Peter's mother-in-law. And then the word gets out. Everyone with an evil spirit problem or a sickness problem seems to show up. And Jesus heals them all.

April 16 | **Forgiveness** | Matthew 18:15-35

Because we are not familiar with the types/denominations of money that serve as the basis of this parable, we can lose the contrast of the two debts. To put it in today's terms, the first man's debt was several million dollars. The second man owed less than twenty dollars. The parallels are pretty easy to read – the forgiveness God has granted us is extreme; any forgiveness we need to grant costs us little in comparison.

Forgiveness is a necessary part of following Jesus. But be aware of the fact that the original lender lost millions willingly. When we forgive the cost doesn't go away, we simply choose to take it on ourselves.

- What steps are we to take if we find that we cannot forgive and reconcile?
- Do they seem difficult? Why?
- What person / people in your life do you struggle to forgive? Why?
- How would forgiving them bring you freedom?
- What are the risks of not forgiving?

Life lesson: The only way for Jesus' to accomplish His mission was for Him to offer forgiveness. The same is true for us – grudges, bitterness, broken relationships and unresolved conflicts don't belong in the life of a Jesus-follower. We should be the first to forgive.

Action: Whom do you need to forgive? Forgive him or her. Where are you dealing with bitterness or resentment? Will you let it go? Maybe you even need to address a situation. Do so. And get things taken care of. Just never forget how much you have been forgiven!

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April 17 | **Raising of Lazarus** | John 11:1-44

This was probably the last miracle Jesus performed before His crucifixion (with the exception of restoring Malchus' ear when Peter cut it off). If so, the timing is certainly significant. Jesus is making a statement – that He has power over death.

Action: What do you need Jesus to do for you? Maybe it's something simple or maybe it is something pretty serious. But if He were to ask you the question (just assume that He is), what would you say?

Notes: _____

April 15 | **The Sower (and the soil)** | Matthew 13:3-23

Jesus told His followers many parables. Parable comes from two Greek words – *para+ballo*, which literally means “to come alongside.” So a parable is a story that came alongside of a truth. What's surprising, however, is that while we see these stories as bringing more clarity, the opposite often happened – especially for those who opposed Jesus. They just didn't understand.

This parable – that of the sower or more accurately, of the soils – comes with an explanation. Spiritual success depends on good dirt, or the condition and receptivity of your heart determines your spiritual progress.

- Which of the soils best describes you?
- Where / how have you seen God's Word grow in you, and grow you?
- What is the evidence of good soil?
- How attentive are you to what Jesus is trying to teach you?

Life lesson: Jesus is looking for receptivity. The Pharisees were not open to him – so He hid truth from them. But for those who were responsive, He made things clearer. The way we respond may impact how much and how quickly Jesus teaches us more.

Action: Sometimes we're wanting God to intervene in our stories, or even just speak. But then we hear nothing. Could it be because you have not responded to / obeyed something that He has been showing you already? Ask yourself – and if it is the case, take the step you need to take.

Notes: _____

- Does it seem unusual to you that demons would often speak out and acknowledge Jesus? What does this tell you about His authority over evil?
- What is Jesus' response to the need?
- How have you experienced Jesus' healing in your life – whether spiritual or emotional or even physical. What need are you asking Him to help you with right now?
- What do you think the disciples were learning through this experience? How about you?

Life lesson: It seems doubtful that Jesus' day went according to plan (at least humanly speaking), yet He made adjustments and made Himself available for people. It's often hard to accept or embrace interruptions, but we need to be sensitive enough to the people around us that we will easily change our plans.

* **Action:** Today, deliberately choose to be interrupted. It might mean giving someone time and attention who is intruding into your day; it might mean setting aside a task so that you can intentionally enter into their world for a few minutes.

Notes: _____

April 7 | **Spiritual Connection** | Mark 1:35-39

This story immediately follows yesterday's. Yesterday Jesus was observing a day of rest – when overwhelming needs interrupted that rest and pressed Him into action. You might think that sleeping in the next morning would have been something Jesus might have considered? But no, He got up early and went out and prayed. He knew that when He was depleted He needed to be spiritually rehydrated.

But notice how the story goes. It's not a case of Jesus taking His thirty minutes to pray, folding up His list, and heading back to town. No, His disciples find Him. In a posture of prayer. In the place of dependency.

- What situations in life tend to leave you feeling depleted? How do you recover?
- Why was prayer such an important part of Jesus' life?
- If following Jesus means doing what He does, how does this story impact how you view spending time with God?

- Why is it that when we get busy or stressed we often skip the most important thing to keep us strong?

Life lesson: The demands of life deplete our physical, emotional and even spiritual resources. Taking time for restoration is a necessary thing. Taking time to get replenished spiritually is not optional.

Action: Tomorrow morning set your alarm to go off 20 minutes earlier than usual. Find some quiet place in the house where no one will bother you, and then just pray. Just tell God what's going on in your heart and head (He already knows, but it's important that we express our needs, fears, desires, etc.). If you normally have a morning quiet time, add another 20 minutes, at least for tomorrow.

Notes: _____

April 8 | **Learning to Pray** | Luke 11:1-4; Matthew 6:5-13

We often refer to this as the Lord's Prayer – but it is really the disciples' prayer. They asked Jesus to teach them how to pray, and He offered them this example. It's a pretty short prayer – which is worth noting. Long prayers are not necessarily better prayers. Think of this prayer as a template designed to provide some structure and direction to our prayers. (We're talking about this prayer in our message series this April – now would be a good time to review what we have explored so far on Sunday mornings.)

- Does it seem strange to you that immediately following Jesus' instructions to not pray mindlessly (Matthew 6:7 - many words / vain repetitions), we tend to recite this prayer and say it mindlessly?
- If "many words" are not the requirement for "good prayer," then what is?
- How intentional are you about including the various elements of the Lord's Prayer in your personal prayer life? (praise/worship, surrender, humility, confession, etc.)
- Jesus followed the passage in Luke 11 with a parable. How is God not like the stingy friend?

- Why do you think Jesus chose Matthew? Why do you think He chose you? (That question isn't meant to insult, rather to help us understand who Jesus is.)
- Why did Jesus call himself a doctor?
- What did Jesus reveal about one of His purposes in coming to earth?
- How can you follow Christ and reach out to others?

Life Lesson: Jesus came to seek the lost. And He gives us the same mission (see Matthew 4:19, Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 1:8). Every person is a potential Jesus-follower, even some who may not seem like it. So we need to share.

Action: Who is your Matthew? Your Zacchaeus? Who do you know right now that needs Jesus? Take some extra time to pray for him or her today – and then plan a step that you can take to reach out.

Notes: _____

April 14 | **The Blind Man** | Mark 10:46-52

The crowd can be unfriendly and unpredictable. This is a story of a man who desperately needed to meet Jesus, yet the crowd tried to silence him and push him back. And then when Jesus acknowledged him, the crowd cheers him on.

Then Jesus stands before Him and asks a question, "What do you want me to do for you?" It would seem like it would have been obvious – and yet Jesus asks. But maybe He's asking for all of us. What would you say if Jesus stopped you today and asked, "What do you want me to do for you?" He's a God who wants to do good things for us. Do you believe that?

- What was the criteria for a person to be healed by Jesus?
- Do you ever get the feeling that Jesus was in a hurry or too busy? Or do you sometimes wonder if He hears you or is paying attention? What can you learn from this story?
- What is it that you need Jesus to do for you? Have you asked?

Life lesson: Jesus doesn't invite us to follow Him for His sake, but for our sake. He wants to make our lives better – much like this blind man. He's tuned into your needs – so don't be shy in asking Him for help.

along with the religious leaders of the day. Often times He was unassuming and not wanting to draw attention to Himself. Yet they were forming opinions – and Jesus point-blank asks them what they think.

- Why do you think Jesus initially asks His followers who others thought He was, rather than asking them what they thought?
- How did believing that Jesus is Christ change things for the disciples? How has it changed things for you?
- Jesus went on to tell about the coming of the church and the fact that Peter would play an important role – but how has the church impacted you? Have you ever considered the fact that Jesus knew that day that you would be a part of it?
- Why was the church important to the work that Jesus was doing in training His followers?

Life lesson: At some point every follower must wrestle with the question of who Jesus actually is. The answer is not just something you believe, but something you live. What does your life say about Jesus?

Action: Grab a piece of paper and make a list. Write “Jesus is...” at the top, and then get started. Think through ways that you have experienced Him, or even ways that you would like to experience Him.

Notes: _____

April 13 | **The Tax Collectors** | Matthew 9:9-13, Luke 19:1-10

Tax collectors were not society’s favorites. They were known for being dishonest and taking advantage of people. Since they worked for Rome, most Jews considered them to be traitors. Since they were unpopular in general, it seems they often hung out with each other – and with Jesus. He seemed to be drawn to these people that others shunned. He called Matthew to be a disciple, and intentionally stopped to converse with Zacchaeus on the road to Jericho (and afterwards went to his house, too!). But these interactions were not random; Jesus was doing so intentionally.

Life lesson: We often make prayer more complicated than it needs to be. Jesus’ prayer is both simple and short. God just wants us to connect with Him, to worship Him, and to declare our need to trust Him.

***Action:** Take some time today to connect with your journey partner concerning prayer. Share some praises, concerns and prayer requests and commit to praying for each other – or even with each other.

Notes: _____

April 9 | **The Woman at the Well** | John 4:1-42

Jesus’ trip through Samaria was not random (see vs. 4), but part of God’s plan to both do something and communicate something important. Jesus was breaking down some social norms and cultural barriers. First, He chose to engage with a Samaritan. From a Jewish perspective, that was inappropriate. Then He chose to initiate a conversation with a woman. Again, taboo. Finally, He chose to have a conversation with a woman whose past had been a relationship disaster and who was currently living in a sinful relationship. Needless to say, His followers were stunned.

- Why do you think Jesus needed to go through Samaria?
- Are there people (or people groups) who in your mind are inferior – or at least to be avoided?
- What negative affects to do class / gender / economic / etc. divisions have on society? How about the church?
- What person do you need to reach out to – even though it might be uncomfortable?

Life lesson: Jesus never seemed to be attracted to the attractive, rather He was drawn to the down-and-outers, the marginalized in society. He showed compassion and empathy for all – and if we want to follow Him, we have to value and care for all people, regardless.

***Action:** Jesus said He would make the disciples fishers of men – and then gave a very tangible example of what that would look like. We are to be engaging with

people around us who do not know Jesus or have a real faith. Who is sitting at your well? What step will you take towards them? Take a dinner by? Connect with them and ask if there is anything you can pray for? Invite them to church (Easter)?

Notes: _____

April 10 | **The Feeding of the 5,000** | Matthew 14:13-21

This is another miracle that seems to have no lasting impact, as everybody who ate got hungry again. And yet, it is the only miracle of Jesus that is recorded in all four gospels, which speaks to its significance. So why would Jesus feed the crowd? Perhaps because of empathy. They were hungry – He knew it and could do something about it. Or maybe because it gave Him an opportunity to teach His disciples an important lesson – about God and what He can do, or about the disciples and their inadequacy / His sufficiency.

- Where in your life have do you feel like Jesus has asked you to do something that was beyond your capacity (“You give them something to eat.”)?
- Did Jesus need the loaves and fish to perform the miracle? Then why did He choose to use them?
- What are some of the resources that God has given you that He might be able to use if you’d give them back to Him?

Life lesson: Jesus didn’t really need the disciples, but He invited them to play an important part of the story – even telling them that they would feed the crowd. He’s still up to things in our world that are beyond our abilities, but He invites us into the story. How are you “giving them something to eat”?

God can take your little and make it much.

Action: Are you involved and engaged in ministry (official or unofficial)? That’s step one. And if you are – what can you attempt in that role that might go beyond anything you’ve done so far?

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April 11 | **Walking on Water** | Matthew 14:22-33

This event in the life of the disciples happened the very same day that Jesus fed the 5,000. Interestingly enough, their prior experience didn’t seem to help them all that much when they were faced with a new challenge.

Maybe Peter was bold, maybe he was foolish. But Peter’s faith led him to action. And he did something that no one had ever done before, if only for a short burst. He walked on water.

Jesus speaks to one of the great challenges we face – displacing doubt with faith. It’s hard, isn’t it? To believe in spite of what seems to be true?

- Why was Jesus walking on the water?
- What events in your life have led you to be convinced that Jesus “truly is the Son of God”?
- Where is fear holding you back in your life right now?
- Do you think the boat may have provided a false sense of security? What are things that you are trusting that maybe you shouldn’t be?
- Do you ever feel like you are somehow outside of God’s sight?

Life lesson: Following Jesus often means being asked to step out of your comfort zones. It doesn’t take faith to sit in a boat. It takes faith to try. (And don’t be afraid of failing; He will be there to help you!)

***Action:** What is a big spiritual dare for you? Maybe sharing your faith with a friend? Maybe sponsoring a child through Compassion? Maybe stepping back into a broken relationship? But find something big – and then DO IT! (And then when you do, share your experience with your journey partner.)

Notes: _____

April 12 | **Who is Jesus?** | Matthew 16:13-20

Every Jew looked for the Messiah’s coming – yet Jesus didn’t seem to check off the right boxes on their Messiah list. It seems that even His disciples wavered back and forth on whether He really was the One. He wasn’t political. He didn’t seem to get