



**JESUS SAID  
WHAT!?**

# JESUS SAID WHAT!?



**AUTHORED BY RIVERVIEW CHURCH**

Riverview's mission is to make sacrificial followers of Jesus  
who grow, serve, and go.

Many thanks to Josh Michels, Melissa Kranzo, Tony Pyle, Ryan Freitas, and James  
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## A POEM

What would happen if we unpacked the controversial only to discover there's  
much less there to debate,

To stare truth in the face, unable to erase or reshape the base of its  
foundation, yes there's grace.

But let's not shy from sovereignty, that ultimately places God at the helm of  
determining what is right despite our taste.

See, when the pallet cries for synthetic and processed, man made objects,  
pleasure and convenience reign.

I'm guilty like the rest of us insane, practicing the same things while waiting  
to see a change.

I look to Jesus and what He's saying, but somehow it isn't gelling with ways in  
which He's been portrayed;

Conservative right, or dreaded hippie, somewhere beyond this marginal gap is  
a title fitting.

Some call Him prophet, but can a prophet lie, if claiming to be the way, truth,  
and the light is too far a cry?

Or if your eye caused you to sin, you willing to lose that eye? Is sin more  
serious than we assume? Could you deny?

I bet you try, cause what's worse than submission except treating someone  
who hates you as if they truly didn't, and who we kidding;

We struggle with love like we struggle with drugs, trying to kick it minus the  
commitment.

And if it's too much to ask us to be different,

Then is His saving grace our excuse to save face and mimic fake religion.

Can we deny the Prince of Peace to wield a sword and hold our priorities  
up with His that He may make incisions,

And expose how we fall so far below the standard the distance is only  
recouped in His forgiveness?

**- OZAY MOORE**

# INTRODUCTION

At Riv, our mission is to make sacrificial followers of Jesus who grow, serve, and go. Sometimes that word "sacrificial" can be intimidating or overwhelming considering all that Jesus commands and asks of us. How do we obey His words in our everyday lives? How do we get the strength to love as He loved? How do we stand in light of His perfection? The simple answer is we can't; at least not by ourselves.

We've all got questions. Reading Jesus' words, we can't help but ask how we are to actually live our life as a Christ follower.

The purpose of this study guide is to join together in taking a look at some of Jesus' crazy statements with your Life Group (or by yourself, but we'd strongly encourage you to engage in conversation with others, as that's where growth happens). As you read through the text, be sure to ask yourself these questions:

WHAT DID THIS PASSAGE MEAN TO THE ORIGINAL AUDIENCE?

WHAT DOES THIS PASSAGE MEAN IN A UNIVERSAL SENSE?

HOW CAN I APPLY THIS PASSAGE TO MY LIFE RIGHT NOW?

Everything we do is about the person and work of Jesus. Each week, thousands of us gather together across the Lansing area at one of our Venues and in each other's homes to talk about Jesus. We look outward to the nearly half a million people in the Lansing area and seek to share with them the good news and love that Jesus brings.

It's all about Jesus. (Even when we're like; Jesus said what!?)

**- RIVERVIEW CHURCH**

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>"NO ONE COMES TO THE FATHER EXCEPT THROUGH ME"</b>	
John 14:6 .....	7
<b>"IF YOUR EYE CAUSES YOU TO SIN, TEAR IT OUT AND THROW IT AWAY"</b>	
Matthew 18:9 .....	10
<b>"LOVE YOUR ENEMIES...PRAY FOR THEM...FORGIVE THEM"</b>	
Matthew 5:44 .....	14
<b>"I HAVE NOT COME TO BRING PEACE, BUT A SWORD"</b>	
Matthew 10:34 .....	17
<b>"NOT EVERYONE WHO SAYS TO ME, 'LORD, LORD,' WILL ENTER THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN"</b>	
Matthew 7:21 .....	20
<b>"DO NOT BE ANXIOUS ABOUT TOMORROW"</b>	
Matthew 6:34 .....	24
<b>"GO, SELL ALL THAT YOU HAVE AND GIVE TO THE POOR"</b>	
Mark 10:21 .....	27
<b>"MAKE FRIENDS FOR YOURSELF BY MEANS OF UNRIGHTEOUS WEALTH"</b>	
Luke 16:9 .....	30
<b>WORKS REFERENCED</b> .....	33
<b>READING PLAN</b>	
An 8 week plan to get in the Word a little each weekday .....	34

HERE'S A BRIEF LOOK AT WHAT SOME OF THE OTHER MAJOR RELIGIONS BELIEVE ABOUT JESUS.

## JUDAISM

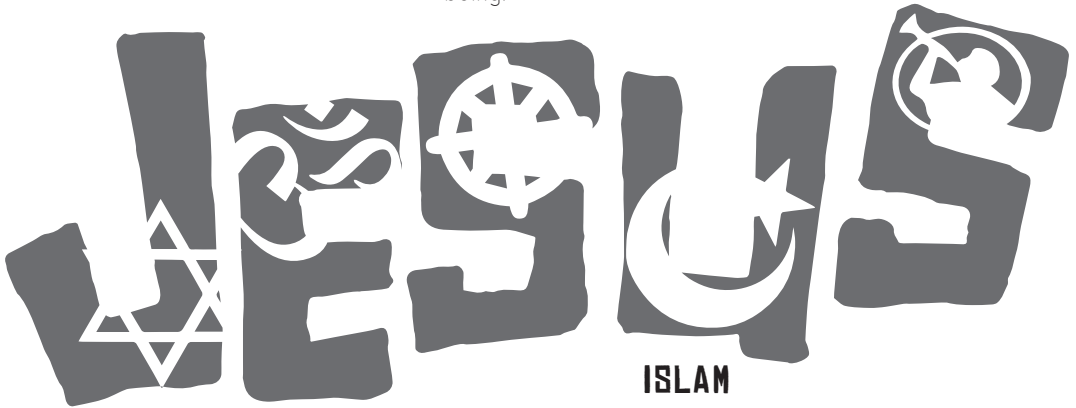
Jesus was a well respected teacher and miracle worker.

## BUDDHISM

Jesus lived a self sacrificial life and had compassion on those who were in spiritual need, but was not a divine being.

## MORMONISM

Jesus is the literal son of God who is the product of physical relations between God the Father and Mary. He is not the sole means of salvation.



## HINDUISM

Jesus was a wise teacher and holy man on account of his tolerance, love, non-violence, self-sacrifice and humility. Some would also say he is one of many gods.

## ISLAM

Jesus is just a prophet, second in importance to Muhammad.

JESUS SAID:

“ I AM THE WAY  
AND THE TRUTH  
AND THE LIFE. ”

# "NO ONE COMES TO THE FATHER EXCEPT THROUGH ME"

John 14:6

## BACKGROUND YOU SHOULD KNOW

At this point in the Gospel of John, Jesus has shown through different teachings and signs that he is the Messiah, or savior, that God has sent into the world. In his interactions with people, such as Nicodemus (John 3) and the Samaritan Woman (John 4), we see his desire to share the truth of who he is. Through his miracles, such as the healing at the pool (John 5) and the feeding of the five thousand (John 6), we see Jesus' power and truth that he is the ultimate Healer and Bread of Life.

Beginning in John 13, Jesus starts to prepare his disciples for the time when he'll be crucified and they'll have to continue on without him. Jesus then washes the feet of his closest friends (an act of service and submission) and gives them the encouragement they'll need to live on mission in the world after he returns to the Father (Luke 24:50-53).

## INSIGHTS

### DO ALL RELIGIONS WORSHIP THE SAME GOD?

There are many people that ask: "Don't all religions worship the same God? Why does Jesus really matter?" If we take a look at the most prominent world religions, it's pretty clear they do not believe Jesus was God incarnate. Judaism believes that Jesus was a good teacher, perhaps even a prophet, but not the Messiah. Islam acknowledges Jesus as a prophet, but denies his crucifixion and resurrection. Hinduism believes in an all-powerful God, but they do not see Jesus as that deity. So, do all religions worship the same God? The answer is no, and that's why Jesus must be central. It is only through his sacrifice that we can be justified before God and have a relationship with him.



## PICKING AND CHOOSING WHAT TO BELIEVE

Throughout Scripture, it's tempting to pick and choose what verses we want to believe. The bumper sticker Jesus statements like, "I have come to give you life to the full" and "Take heart, for I have overcome the world" are great truths to hold onto, but if we trust that "all Scripture is breathed out by God," (2 Timothy 3:16) then we have to trust that even the tough statements Jesus made are true and beneficial for us and should be believed and applied.

## THE NATURE OF TRUTH

Our culture tends to focus less on what is true and more on being "tolerant." We fear sharing the truth of the Bible because it may hurt someone's feelings or push against their way of life. But as Christians, when it comes to the Gospel and truth of Jesus Christ, sometimes we're going to offend others. The Gospel is offensive in its nature as it shows us our sin and separation from God. It shows us the need for a Savior. But let's not forget to "speak the truth in love," like Paul encourages us in his letter to the Ephesians (Ephesians 4:15).

## THE WAY, THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE

Jesus is the way, the truth, and the life. Jesus is the truth of the Father — he is the Word made flesh, the final word God has spoken to his people (Hebrews 1:2). Jesus is the way to the Father — he is both the sacrifice for our sins and the Mediator of the new covenant (Hebrews 12:24). Jesus is the life from the sovereign giver of life, the eternal Father — who gives life now and in the coming age for eternity (Hebrews 6:5).

## OTHER SCRIPTURE

John 10:16-18

John 14:1-14

Acts 4:12

Romans 5:1-5

1 Thessalonians 5:7-11

## CONVERSATION

What stuck with you from this week's message?

Jesus says He is the only way, truth, and life. What do you think about that?

Have you ever been challenged in conversations with people of other faith backgrounds? How did it go?

Are there verses in Scripture that are hard for you to believe or apply in your life? If so, which ones and why?

If Jesus really is the only way, what are some ways you can engage with your friends, neighbors, and co-workers in telling them about God's love through Jesus?

## YOUR NOTES

# "IF YOUR EYE CAUSES YOU TO SIN, TEAR IT OUT AND THROW IT AWAY"

Matthew 18:9

## BACKGROUND YOU SHOULD KNOW

The Gospel of Matthew, the first book of the New Testament, is filled with connections to the Old Testament, showing us Matthew's intent to show the truth of Jesus to a predominantly Jewish audience. Jewish people in that time would have had a relatively firm grasp on the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Old Testament. Often throughout Matthew, Jesus will say, "You have heard it said....but I say to you..." Jesus is actively drawing on the crowd's understanding of the Scriptures and correcting their misunderstanding of the Law.

We see Jesus teaching a lot in the book of Matthew; he is frequently speaking to his disciples, then large groups come to hear him, and religious leaders actively push against him and what he has to say. In Matthew 18, Jesus is nearing the end of his earthly ministry and spends time clarifying who he is as well as his mission in the world.

## INSIGHTS

### HYPERBOLE

Have you ever said something kind of crazy in order to get your point across? Jesus used an intentional overstatement in his teaching about the temptation to sin to show the severity of what he was talking about. Jesus was a brilliant teacher and wanted those he cared for to understand how important it was to actively fight against sin and temptation. This note in the ESV Study Bible is helpful: So did Jesus really mean to tear out our eyes? Jesus does not mean that people should literally tear out their eyes (or cut off their body parts), for the literal removal of an item cannot remove the root of sin in the heart. Jesus' words serve as a sober warning concerning the severity of sin, which can lead to hell and a fire that is not quenched.<sup>1</sup>

## "JUST IGNORE IT...MAYBE IT WILL GO AWAY"

Often in our spiritual lives, we ignore certain temptation and sin issues hoping that they'll just go away. This "sweeping things under the rug" is unhealthy because it tends to go with a lack of honesty about our needs as a Christ-follower and how we could use prayer or accountability. There is great power in coming clean and confessing sin. James 5:16-17 encourages us to "confess our sins to one another and pray for one another that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person has great power as it is working."

## IS GOD TEMPTING ME?

It is common for us to think that God is the one to blame for many of our sin issues and temptations that we face. You may have even asked the question; "Why is God tempting me?" Throughout Scripture, we see that God himself does not tempt us, but we are tempted by our own sinful desires (James 1:12-15). However, God does allow us to be tempted so that we can grow in our faith and in our character. 1 Corinthians 10:13 says this: "No temptation has overtaken you that is not common to man. God is faithful, and he will not let you be tempted beyond your ability, but with the temptation he will also provide a way of escape, that you may be able to endure it." So when we are tempted, the question we should be asking is not, "Why is God tempting me?" but "Where is God's escape plan that he is providing me?"

## OTHER SCRIPTURE

Matthew 18:1-35

Romans 6:1-14

1 Corinthians 10:13

James 1:12-15

James 5:16

## CONVERSATION

What stuck with you from this week's message?

Jesus says to tear out whatever causes us to sin. How do you respond to that?

How do we metaphorically do that?

Can you think of a time (maybe with a friend, your spouse, or kids) that you used an “intentional overstatement” to make your point? Why did you do this?

Are there any sin areas or places of temptation in your life that you need to deal with more seriously? How do you plan to do so?

Take time in your Life Group, either as a whole group or in pairs, to confess sin and pray for each other. This will help us to “not just be hearers of the Word, but doers” (James 1:22).

What are some ways we can continue being an encouragement to those around us as we all struggle with sin?

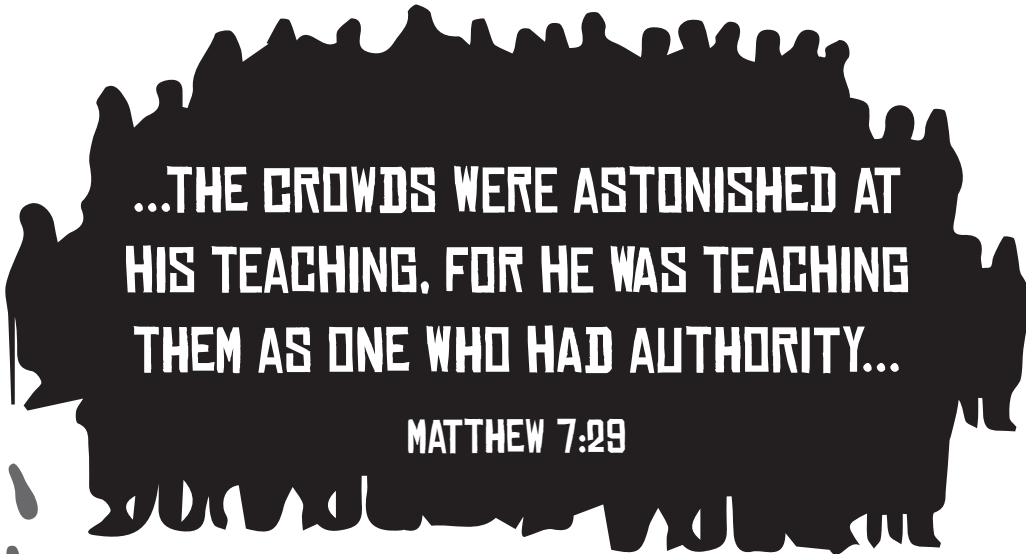
## YOUR NOTES



JESUS SPENT A GOOD AMOUNT OF HIS TIME WITH THREE TYPES OF PEOPLE:

## THE PHARISEES

They were super religious. While they held the Old Testament Law to the letter, they also added rules and regulations to the way they lived, and regarded these additions as law. On many occasions, they tried to trick Jesus by asking Him questions about the Law.




**...THE CROWDS WERE ASTONISHED AT HIS TEACHING, FOR HE WAS TEACHING THEM AS ONE WHO HAD AUTHORITY...**

**MATTHEW 7:29**

## THE DISCIPLES

These were followers of Jesus' teachings whose lives were marked by teaching others about Jesus, living selfless and sacrificial lives, worshipping God with one another, and embracing life together in community. They were committed to learning everything they could from Jesus and living as He lived while on earth.



# "LOVE YOUR ENEMIES...PRAY FOR THEM... FORGIVE THEM"

Matthew 5:44

## BACKGROUND YOU SHOULD KNOW

In chapters 5-7 of the book of Matthew, Jesus gives his famous "Sermon on the Mount." In these three chapters, Jesus sets a seemingly impossible standard for his audience. Building on the Law, he shows what a Kingdom lifestyle requires. There were two groups listening when Jesus began to teach: the disciples (those who had committed their lives to him and his teaching), and crowds of predominantly Jewish people who had come to hear him teach because his fame had been spreading throughout the area.

Jesus highlights a bunch of different topics that not only affect the way people live outwardly, but even more so, inwardly from the heart. From anger and divorce, to loving their enemies and giving to the needy, Jesus "raises the bar" for those who would follow Him. The end of Chapter 7 says: "And when Jesus finished saying these things, the crowds were astonished at his teaching, for he was teaching them as one who had authority, and not as their scribes" (Matthew 7:28-29).

## INSIGHTS

### TWO TYPES OF GRACE

Have you ever asked the question, "Why does God let people who don't even believe in Him have good things?" God's grace, or free, undeserved goodness that he gives, falls into two different categories. The first type of grace is "common grace." Theologian Charles Ryrie defined it as "the unmerited favor of God toward all men displayed in His general care for them." Common grace is God's continued care of His creation, His restraint of sin in the world, and humanity being made in the image of God, giving us an inherent understanding of right and wrong with our conscience. The second type is "special grace." Special grace is the grace God gives that results

in the salvation of people. This grace regenerates our hearts, justifies us before God, and continues on in our lives through God sanctifying those he has elected for salvation. Special grace is given to those who believe in Jesus for salvation, while common grace is given to all humanity.

## WHY DO WE LOVE OTHERS?

This passage of Scripture seems especially difficult for many of us. Love our enemies? Pray for those who persecute us? How do we even start to do something like that? A helpful reminder for us is in 1 John 4:19. It reads, "We love because he first loved us." We've got to remember that Jesus' love for us is so strong that he went to the Cross and died to save us. Our ability and willingness to love our enemies has to come from the fact that we understand Jesus loved us when WE were his enemies. His example of love and sacrifice encourages us to put ourselves aside and love not only our friends, but our enemies; like he did for us.

## FAITH FIRST

It's easy to read through these chapters and get down on ourselves. As we look through the markers that Jesus gave for those who believe in Him, the bar seems impossibly high. Apart from the empowerment of the Holy Spirit, it is impossible to live in the way Jesus is talking about. But once we're saved, God gives us himself, the Holy Spirit, to help us fight sin, grow spiritually, and live holy lives that are pleasing to Him. In Galatians 3:2-3, Paul asks: "Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?" The works we do and ways we live have to come from the faith God has given us, not the other way around.

## OTHER SCRIPTURE

John 15

Romans 5:6-10

Romans 12:3-21

Galatians 3:1-9

1 John 4:7-21

## CONVERSATION



What stuck with you from this week's message?

Jesus tells us to love, forgive, and pray for even our worst of enemies. What do you think about that?

Who in your life would you consider to be an "enemy"? How are you, considering this Scripture and message, going to change how you interact with them?

Is it possible to "forgive and forget"? How come? Come up with a better statement that you think better explains what Scripture calls us to do along with forgiveness.

Who in your life do you need to make a priority to pray for on a regular basis? Try to figure out a way for this to become a habit, and see what God will do through your prayers over time.

What are some practical ways you can love all those around you, not just your friends or your enemies, but even the random people you interact with?

## YOUR NOTES

# "I HAVE NOT COME TO BRING PEACE, BUT A SWORD"

Matthew 10:34

## BACKGROUND YOU SHOULD KNOW

After the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus performs many miracles to show people he is the Messiah. Matthew's Chapter 10 begins with the commissioning and empowering of the twelve disciples to spread the message of the gospel. Jesus gives them the power and authority to cast out unclean spirits and heal diseases. This empowerment is meant to show people the validity of who Jesus is and the full life that can be found by trusting in him. Before Jesus sends them out, he teaches them about what they should prepare themselves for.

Jesus continues to teach his disciples about the various reactions they may experience as they travel around and spread the message of salvation through Jesus. We read many sobering words from Jesus to his disciples about possible persecution, not being welcome where they travel, and the message demanding ultimate allegiance. Matthew 10 provides us with a clear understanding that the Christian life doesn't promise us comfort and happiness, but may actually be harder than a life of living only for ourselves.

## INSIGHTS

### SWORD

We've all seen a sword, right? Swords are used in battle to protect yourself and to attack. Jesus used the metaphor of a sword in this passage and contrasted it with the word peace. Jesus used this parallel to communicate that the message of salvation through Him alone might cause division and separation in earthly relationships in your life. Even Jesus' own family and people closest to him opposed him and his message before they realized his true identity as the Messiah (Matthew 13:53-58). Thinking about this helps us to see why making Life Group a priority is

so important - together we can pray for each other and stay on track in our faith. Jesus never asked us to go at this life alone.

## WHAT HAS PRIORITY?

Some may see Jesus' words as contradictory to others in Scripture that highlight leading our families spiritually and loving them well. Jesus' statement in Matthew 10:34 does not call us to love only God and hate everything else, but compares our love of God to our other relationships. We must love God with all of our heart, soul, mind, and strength first, and then others. This is the greatest commandment (Matthew 22:34-40). It is only through putting God first in our lives that we can rightly love the family and friends God has given us.

## THE BAD NEWS OF THE PROSPERITY GOSPEL

The Prosperity Gospel is a false understanding of God and Christianity that needs to be rejected. The Prosperity Gospel tells people that through great faith, God will provide you with health, wealth, and success. God never promises these things in Scripture, and we see that many of Jesus' disciples were persecuted for their great faith. We live in a culture where money and success are indicators of fulfillment. The biggest problem with the Prosperity Gospel is that it elevates material wealth and health over God Himself. When we are saved from our sins, God Himself gives us His Holy Spirit and empowers us to love Him and other people. That gift is so much greater than anything we can ever receive in this life!

## OTHER SCRIPTURE

Deuteronomy 6:4-7

Matthew 16:24-28

Matthew 22:34-40

Acts 4:13-22

Hebrews (all of it)

## CONVERSATION

What stuck with you from this week's message?

Jesus says he didn't come to bring peace, but rather a sword. What do you think about that?

How would you rank your love of God to other relationships in your life? Make a top 5 list of how you would rank your relationships with 1 being the most important.

How has your immediate family reacted to your faith? Explain how your relationship with Jesus has affected the relationships of those you are closest with.

What do you think Jesus means when he tells us to "take up our cross" in verse 38? How is that different from what the Prosperity Gospel tells us?

What do you think it looks like to put God first in all our interactions?

## **YOUR NOTES**

# "NOT EVERYONE WHO SAYS TO ME, 'LORD, LORD,' WILL ENTER THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN"

Matthew 7:21

## BACKGROUND YOU SHOULD KNOW

These verses are a part of Jesus' "Sermon on the Mount" (Matthew 5-7), where Jesus teaches that it is not our works or outward acts that give us eternal life, but rather a heart for God and others that comes from accepting Jesus.

Jesus' Sermon on the Mount is given to his disciples and a larger crowd that comes around them to listen in. The crowds were most likely working class peasants who would have been familiar with outdoor life, so metaphors such as "gates," "sheep," "fruit trees," "rocks," and "sand" were everyday occurrences that would have made it easy for them to grasp Jesus' meaning.

## INSIGHTS

### SEEK AND FIND

Many true Christians have looked at these verses and wondered, "What if I miss the narrow gate?" or "Have I been good enough?" This passage has even been used to warn Christians that if their lives and service for God is inadequate they might miss out on heaven — an idea found nowhere in Scripture. The key to understanding these verses is found in the context. These verses tie directly back to the verses on false prophets (Matthew 7:15-20). Jesus isn't talking about believers in general, but false prophets in particular.

The word that's translated "find" (*heurisko*) in verse 14 is never used to describe an intense yet futile search for something hard to find; it's used to describe something found simply by making the effort to look. Seeking and finding go hand in hand. The implication is not that many people look for the way but never find it; the implication is that not many even bother to look. If you look to Christ, you'll find Him.

## THE ONLY WAY

Jesus' message that he is the only way to God does not go over well in our pluralistic culture. Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6). Peter says, "there is salvation in no one else [except Jesus]; for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12). This line of thinking isn't always popular, but it's Jesus' message, and the truth.

## KNOW = RELATIONSHIP

The word "knew" in 7:23 is the Greek word *ginosko*, which means to recognize, understand, or know intimately. When Jesus says, "I never knew you," this does not discredit his omniscience (knowledge of everything). What Jesus is saying here is there is no real relationship between them, no personal connection or intimacy.

## OTHER SCRIPTURE

Jeremiah 23:16-32

Matthew 25:1-13; 41-46

Luke 13: 22-30

John 6:40

John 10:7-18

Romans 7:4-6

Galatians 5:18-24

## CONVERSATION

What stuck with you from this week's message?

Jesus says that not everyone who claims to know Him ("who says, Lord, Lord") will enter the Kingdom of Heaven. What do you think about that?

Who are our "false prophets" today? What kind of fruit should we be watching out for? (verses 15-20)

What does it mean to do "the will of the Father?" Read John 6:35-40 and 1 Thessalonians 4:3-12 and talk about what it means to live this out.

Jesus says that people will come to Him on judgment day and present their works, not their faith. What are you depending on to get you to heaven: something you've done or Someone who died for you?

John 10:7-18 assures us that Jesus is the way to salvation. Read these verses and talk about what it means to you to be "known" by Jesus. When was the first time you realized Jesus had given His life for you?

Jesus says the way to hell is the easier route and what most people take, and the road to eternal life is harder and fewer go for it. How are you directing people to the "narrow gate"? What are some things you or your Life Group can be doing to show others the way to Jesus? (Matthew 7:13-14)

## YOUR NOTES

**HOUSING**

**TRANSPORTATION**

**FOOD**

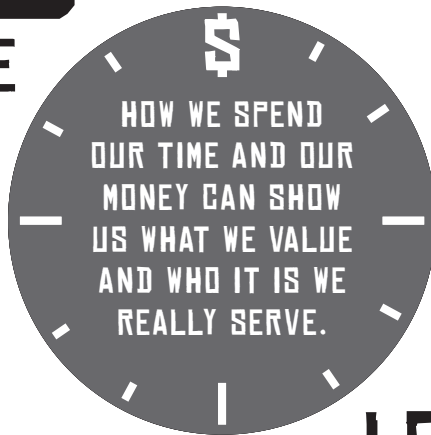
**INSURANCE**

**OTHER**

**HEALTH**

**FUN**

**DONATIONS  
CLOTHES**



**HOUSE  
EATING  
SERVICE**

**OTHER**

**LEISURE**

**SLEEPING**

**WORKING**



# “DO NOT BE ANXIOUS ABOUT TOMORROW”

Matthew 6:34

## BACKGROUND YOU SHOULD KNOW

These verses are a continuation of Jesus’ “Sermon on the Mount” (Matthew 5-7), a passage where Jesus teaches that it is not our works or outward acts that give us eternal life, but a heart for God and others that comes from accepting Jesus. This part of Jesus’ teaching emphasizes that when we live our lives for God, He will take care of us – all we have to do is trust.

The original crowds hearing this teaching were working class peasants who probably did have to think about food for day-to-day survival. This message was given to people who truly were in a place of having to trust God if they were going to get the basics.

## INSIGHTS

### ETERNAL VS. WORLDLY PERSPECTIVE

We live in the sixth richest country in the world<sup>3</sup> in one of the richest time periods in history, so we hear this teaching differently than the crowds during Jesus’ time did. The struggle for many of us might not be to trust God for the basics of survival, but on the flip side, to remember the wealth we have isn’t important and can’t give us survival forever. The root of it all is trusting God that the eternal perspective is more important than an immediate worldly perspective.

### SHIFTING OUR FOCUS

There are two different ways we can deal with worry. We can focus on trying to stop worrying, OR we can substitute our worry with a greater truth. In this passage, Jesus is telling us about a greater truth – that the Father loves us and truly cares for us. And so, if he cares for us, when we shift our focus to living out the gospel, He provides. This shift in our focus is not a mental accomplishment that can be done on our own strength; it’s the natural result of living for God and others.

## "GOD PROVIDING"

"God providing" does NOT mean that if we trust in God He will for sure bless us with money, a sweet new car, or perfect health. In the final verse of this chapter (Matthew 6:34) Jesus says that each day can be tough and he never promises things will be easy. What he does promise is that even through the tough times, we are valued by our Father in heaven, and that our all-powerful and all-knowing, good and loving Dad will take care of us in exactly the way we need to be taken care of. When we seek Him first, it's not that we'll suddenly be given riches beyond our wildest dreams...it's that we'll look around and see that what we have isn't as important as we thought it was.

## OTHER SCRIPTURE

Matthew 16:24-27

Luke 10:38-42

Luke 12:13-34

Hebrews 13:5

Luke 12:4-7

Philippians 4: 4-7; 11-13

I Peter 5:6-7

## CONVERSATION

What stuck with you from this week's message?

Jesus tells us to not be anxious about tomorrow. What do you think about that? Is it possible?

What are you most anxious or worried about right now?

When you start to worry about these things, how do you usually deal with it? Do you talk about it with anyone? Do you go to God through the Bible or in prayer?

What does it mean exactly to "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness?" (Matthew 6:33) What are some practical ways that we can be doing this?

Jesus gives us an amazing truth to focus on, and not only for ourselves – He’s left it in our hands to tell this truth to others. Our society is plagued by anxiety. What are some ways that we can be reaching out to people to share His truth in our neighborhoods, at work, or in our communities that might be having a hard time with worry or anxiety? What can we specifically be doing this month, this week, today?

## YOUR NOTES

# "GO, SELL ALL THAT YOU HAVE AND GIVE TO THE POOR"

Mark 10:21

## BACKGROUND YOU SHOULD KNOW

The Bible gives us examples of God using wealth and godly men with money to glorify Him (think of the Patriarchs, David, Solomon, and Joseph of Arimathaea, among others). Jesus is not speaking out against MONEY exactly, but the LOVE of money. The rich man Jesus is talking to here wasn't using his riches to glorify God. Instead of using his stuff to worship God, he was worshipping his stuff.

In verse 26, the disciples were shocked when Jesus said this guy couldn't enter the kingdom of heaven, because in their culture riches were seen as a blessing from God. The line of thinking was that if people were rich it was because in God's eyes, they were the best. So if the best of the best can't get in, who in the world can get in? That was their question.

## INSIGHTS

### GOD VS. GODS

If the guy had sold everything, would he have been worthy enough? No. No action in itself, even the most sacrificial or extreme, is enough to make us worthy of God. Why then did Jesus tell him to sell his stuff?

The rich man coming to Jesus was familiar with the "Law," or the Ten Commandments. Jesus started out by listing the last six commandments, intentionally leaving out the first four, which are the most important. The first four have to do with loving God and serving Him first. Jesus was pointing out that this guy's possessions had been made into a god, replacing the most important of the commandments. By telling him to sell his stuff, Jesus was lovingly showing this man that he should live a life that didn't cling to possessions, but to Him. When the rich man was faced with the choice between riches and Jesus, he walked away from Jesus.<sup>4</sup>

## CHRIST ALONE

At times we may assume those who have the most knowledge about the Bible or the highest seminary degrees are the ones who are for sure in good with God. But no one is made “good” by how much they have, whether it’s possessions or knowledge or anything else – we are only made righteous by grace through a humble reliance on Christ. (Ephesians 2:8-9)

## A RICH CULTURE

It may be easy for us to look at this passage and think that since we aren’t “rich,” this doesn’t apply to us. But why not stop for a second and consider that we live in one of the richest countries in the world, and by world standards all of us are “rich.” Jesus talks about money more than anything else, and for good reason. Sixteen of the thirty-eight parables have to do with how to handle money and possessions. In the Gospels, an amazing one out of ten verses (288 in all) deal directly with the subject of money. The Bible has 500 verses on prayer, less than 500 verses on faith, but more than 2,000 verses on money and possessions.<sup>5</sup> Materialism is an obvious vice in our culture. It can’t hurt to look at ourselves here, considering how much Jesus spent on the topic coupled with where and when we live.

## OTHER SCRIPTURE

Psalms 62:10

Proverbs 11:28

Matthew 19:16-30

Matthew 6:24

Matthew 13:22

Luke 12:13-21

I Timothy 6:6-10;17-19

Hebrews 13:5-6

## CONVERSATION

What stuck with you from this week’s message?

Jesus tells a rich man: “Go, sell all that you have and give to the poor.” What do you think about that?

When the rich man came up to Jesus, Jesus knew this man's heart was wrong. Instead of being angry at his selfish heart, it says Jesus LOVED him. When you interact with people who have completely wrong priorities, do you react in judgment or in love?

Jesus said, "One thing fails you...one thing you lack..." He saw what was holding this guy back from God: his wealth. Before you came to Christ, what do you think was the thing (or things) holding you back from God? Is there anything right now that holds you back from giving yourself fully to God?

Loving Jesus and Him loving you means prioritizing Him above everything else. What are the things you love or value the most right now? Do you think you are ever tempted to make these "gods" in your life?

Because of Jesus, we know that possessions can never bring us ultimate satisfaction or salvation. But there are so many around us who have never even heard this. What are some ways that we can be serving, providing, and sharing truth with the "underprivileged," while also sharing truth with the "overprivileged?"

## **YOUR NOTES**

# "MAKE FRIENDS FOR YOURSELF BY MEANS OF UNRIGHTEDOUS WEALTH"

Luke 16:9

## BACKGROUND YOU SHOULD KNOW

This is a debated passage with different interpretations between different scholars. Context is key, but even in understanding the context it's possible to come away with different ideas about Jesus' exact meaning on some things. In these open-handed issues, let's agree to disagree.

The context: Jesus was talking with the Jewish tax collectors and "sinners," and the Pharisees were openly disgusted that Jesus would associate with them. (Luke 15:1-2) In response, Jesus started telling parables with the Pharisees listening in - he tells the parable of the Lost Sheep (Luke 15:3-7), the Lost Coin (Luke 15:8-10), the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32), and then, this Parable of the Dishonest Manager. These were all meant to point out to the Pharisees that what they valued (their money and status) were worthless; what God is concerned with is loving people and the motives of the heart. (Luke 16:14-15)

## INSIGHTS

### ANALOGY BREAKDOWN

This parable is an analogy, with each character and situation representing something else. The rich man can be seen as God the Father, and the manager represents us. The manager's accounts represent what God has given us to manage in our lives: our time, talents, wealth, and resources. The termination could be seen as our approaching physical death. The manager acting shrewdly represents thinking beyond the immediate and acting to prepare for the future. This means using everything at our disposal in consideration of what's going to come after our "termination," or physical death. The worldly wealth Jesus refers to again is our money, health, or abilities. The "friends for yourself" are others that will be united with us in our "eternal dwellings," or heaven.

## ANALOGY INTERPRETATION

The boss praised the act of the manager despite his own loss because the manager thought quickly and proved his business savvy – he immediately used whatever he had at his disposal to prepare for the future. In this way, Jesus says that the “sons of this world” (meaning worldly unbelievers) act more wisely in worldly affairs than the “spiritual managers” act in the kingdom of heaven. Jesus implies that the Pharisees are the same as the “squandering” manager, because as spiritual leaders of Israel (God’s people) they hadn’t managed well what God had given them.<sup>6</sup>

## “UNRIGHTEOUS WEALTH”

The word “unrighteous” here means “deceitful, false, not to be trusted.” It does not mean wealth acquired “unjustly,” but that the wealth is “deceitful” and not to be trusted. The wealth of the steward was deceitful: he could not rely on it being there long; it could be gone any second. This is how the wealth of the world is deceitful. We can’t count on it. It may give us support or comfort now, but it could be taken away, or we could be taken from it, and so, we should only use it in a way to benefit from it later.<sup>7</sup>

## OTHER SCRIPTURE

Matthew 6:19-24

Luke 12:33

Acts 17:30-31

Hebrews 13:5

1 Timothy 6:17-19

James 5:1-6

## CONVERSATION

What stuck with you from this week’s message?

Jesus tells us, “Make friends for yourself by means of unrighteousness wealth.”

What does this mean to you?

Jesus is not praising the manager’s unrighteous actions. There is one thing about the guy we are to imitate though: his brilliant planning for the future. What do you think you pursue more – eternal or worldly riches? How often do you view your



money, possessions, or opportunities as belonging to you rather than an account you manage for God?

What are some ways you could use your possessions and resources more wisely in order for them to be used for eternal purposes?

In Luke 9:23-24, Jesus says, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it." When Jesus lived in the world, He gave everything – to the point of death – for our eternity. How does this impact how we live our lives?

What are some practical ways that you can use your time, abilities, or money to share the Gospel and benefit others at this point in your life?

## YOUR NOTES

## WORKS REFERENCED

1. ESV Study Bible, note on Mark 9:43-48, pp. 1913
2. The Highway to Hell (Matthew 7:13-24) by Keith Krell <https://bible.org/seriespage/highway-hell-matthew-713%E2%80%9324>
3. International Monetary Fund (World Economic Outlook Database - October 2013)
4. Concordia Seminary Chapel Sermons, Mark 10:17-22 by Seminarian Jason Moreno January 8, 2008 <https://itunes.apple.com/us/itunes-u/chapel-sermons-archive/id426811811?mt=10>
5. Howard L. Dayton, Jr., Leadership, Vol. 2, no. 2. <http://www.preachingtoday.com/illustrations/1997/december/410.html>
6. Q & A Series: What does it mean in Luke 16:9, 'make friends with mammon of unrighteousness'? By Craig Bluemel
7. Barnes' Notes on the Bible. Luke 16:9 <http://biblehub.com/commentaries/luke/16-9.htm>

## GRAPHIC SOURCES

### PAGE 6

CARM.org

PleaseConvinceMe.com

### PAGE 13

GotQuestions.org

### PAGE 23

TheAtlantic.com

BLS.gov - The Bureau of Labor Statistics. 2012 Statistics.

## READING PLAN

The text is what's important. Here's a reading plan for you to get into the Word a little each weekday over the course of this series. We left weekends off for you to catch up or reread a passage from earlier in the week.

### WEEK 1

**DAY 1** John 13, Mark 10:35-45

**DAY 2** John 14, Romans 5:1-5

**DAY 3** John 15, Romans 11:11-24

**DAY 4** John 16, 1 Thessalonians 5:7-11

**DAY 5** John 17, Acts 4:1-12

### WEEK 2

**DAY 1** Matthew 18:1-6, Galatians 5

**DAY 2** Matthew 18:7-9, Romans 6

**DAY 3** Matthew 18:10-14, John 10

**DAY 4** Matthew 18:15-20, Romans 12

**DAY 5** Matthew 18:21-35, Ephesians 4

### WEEK 3

**DAY 1** Matthew 5:1-37, 1 Peter 2

**DAY 2** Matthew 5:38-6:4,

2 Corinthians 9

**DAY 3** Matthew 6:5-24, Colossians 3

**DAY 4** Matthew 6:25-7:11,

Proverbs 3:1-12

**DAY 5** Matthew 7:12-29,

Colossians 2:6-15

### WEEK 4

**DAY 1** Matthew 10:1-15,

Deuteronomy 6:4-7

**DAY 2** Matthew 10:16-33,

Matthew 16:24-28

**DAY 3** Matthew 10:34-42,

Matthew 22:34-40

**DAY 4** Luke 22:1-38, Acts 4:13-22

**DAY 5** Luke 22:39-71, Hebrews (all of it)

WEEK 5

**DAY 1** Matthew 7:1-6,

Jeremiah 23:16-32

**DAY 2** Matthew 7:7-14, Luke 13: 22-30

**DAY 3** Matthew 7:15-23, John 6:40

**DAY 4** Matthew 7:24-29, John 10:7-18

**DAY 5** Matthew 7, Romans 7:4-6,

Galatians 5:18-24

WEEK 6

**DAY 1** Matthew 6:1-6,

Matthew 16:24-27

**DAY 2** Matthew 6:7-15, Luke 10:38-42,

Luke 12:13-34

**DAY 3** Matthew 6:16-24, Hebrews 13:5

**DAY 4** Matthew 6:24-34, Luke 12:4-7

**DAY 5** Matthew 6, I Peter 5:6-7

Philippians 4: 4-7; 11-13,

WEEK 7

**DAY 1** Mark 10:1-12, Psalm 62:10,

Proverbs 11:28

**DAY 2** Mark 10:13-31, Matthew 19:16-30

**DAY 3** Mark 10:32-45, Matthew 6:24,

Matthew 13:22

**DAY 4** Mark 10:46-52, Luke 12:13-21

**DAY 5** Mark 10, I Timothy 6:6-10;17-19,

Hebrews 13:5-6

WEEK 8

**DAY 1** Luke 16, Matthew 6:19-24

**DAY 2** Luke 16:1-13, Luke 12:33

**DAY 3** Luke 16:14-18, Acts 17:30-31

**DAY 4** Luke 16:19-31, Hebrews 13:5, 1

Timothy 6:17-19

**DAY 5** Luke 16, James 5:1-6

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