



Gospel Scenes
and
Meditations

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This Book is dedicated to Its Readers.

Gospel Scenes
Meditations

Gospel Scenes

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Parents

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1. Jerusalem in Herod the Great's Time

A priest from the Judean hills enters the Temple sanctuary. He and his wife are old and childless descendents of Aaron, a pious couple, strict observers of God's ceremonies and laws. He has been called with others of his order to officiate for a term and has been chosen by lot to burn incense while the people pray outside. He sees an angel standing next to the altar of incense on the altar's right side.

THE ANGEL

Zachary! Don't be scared: your prayer's heard. Elisabeth will give you a son, whom you'll call John. You'll be jubilant and his birth will be a festival, because he'll be great in the Lord's eyes. He will not drink wine: in his mother's womb he'll be filled with the Holy Spirit—in Elijah's spirit he'll walk before his Lord—turning fathers' hearts to the children and naysayers to the wisdom of the loyal, making a people ready for the Lord: many of Israel's children he'll turn to the Lord God.

ZACHARY

How will I know this? I'm old—so is my wife.

THE ANGEL

I am Gabriel, who stand in God's presence and am sent to you to speak this good news. Look: you'll not talk till the day these things are achieved—because you don't believe my words, which will be accomplished in their time.

The congregation waits for Zachary, wondering what's delaying

him. He comes out unable to speak but gestures that he has seen a vision.

2. Zachary Goes Home

Soon after, his wife becomes pregnant.

ELISABETH

The Lord has done this for me: he has looked on me and repelled the scorn of men.

3. Nazareth Six Months Later

God sends the angel to a girl.

GABRIEL

Hail, Well-Loved, the Lord is with you.

The girl's scared.

GABRIEL

Mary, don't be scared: God loves you. Look: you'll become pregnant with a son who'll be called Jesus. He'll be great and be called the Son of the Highest. The Lord God will give him his father David's throne, and Jacob's house he'll rule always. His kingdom won't end.

MARY

How can it be? No man is God's son.

GABRIEL

The Holy Spirit will come over you, and the power of the Highest will consume you: therefore that holy thing which will be born will be called God's son. Look: in her old age your cousin Elisabeth is pregnant also with a son. She who was thought barren is in her sixth month. To God nothing can't be.

MARY

Look on the Lord's servant: let the word you say be done to me.
The angel leaves her.

4. Elisabeth's House in the Judean Hills

Mary calls to her cousin. Elisabeth hears Mary's voice—her unborn child jumps in her womb.

ELISABETH

Exalted of women and exalted the child in your womb. But why to me—why should my Lord's mother come to me? I heard your voice—my baby in me jumped for joy. Exalted the woman who held firm. There'll be the doing of everything the Lord promised her.

MARY

My mind glorifies the Lord, and my heart revels in God my Savior, who sees the humiliation of his servant Israel. Look: every generation shall see me exalted, for the Almighty has done great things to me and shows mercy to them who feared him from age to age. Holy is his name: he unveils his arm's strength and scatters the proud to their hearts' despair. He throws down the mighty and lifts up the lowly. He fills the hungry with glad things and sends away the empty rich. He remembers his mercy and befriends his servant, as he promised Abraham and all our fathers.

5. Elisabeth's Time Comes

She gives birth to a son. Hearing of God's gift to her, her relatives and friends gather to be happy with her. For seven days they call

the baby Zachary after his father. Then it's time to circumcise the boy.

ELISABETH

No—his name's John.

They go to Zachary for some sign what he'll call his son. Asking for a tablet, he writes, to everyone's surprise, "His name is John." Immediately, Zachary's mouth opens—his tongue loosens.

ZACHARY

Praise the Lord God of Israel, for he has visited and rescued his people. He has sounded the horn of our salvation in the house of his servant David. As he spoke through the mouths of his holy prophets since the world began, so he will save us from our enemies and free us from the hand of all that hate us. He will perform the mercy promised to our father Abraham, that he will grant that we, being delivered out of the hand of our enemies, shall serve him without fear, upright and holy before him, every day of our life. You, baby boy, will be called the prophet of the Highest. You will go before the Lord to prepare his way, to give his people the knowledge of their salvation through God's tender mercy in forgiving their sins. The morning sun of heaven has risen before us to give light to those who sit in darkness and the shadow of death: it will guide our feet to the way of freedom.

God's hand is on John. As the story of his birth becomes known, people stop, look into themselves, and ask, "What will the boy be?" He will grow up strong and impetuous, and go to live in the wilderness till the day comes when he shows himself to Israel.

6. Mary Pregnant

Joseph, her fiancé, a kindly man unwilling to shame her, resolves to break off their engagement privately. Mulling over his resolve, falling asleep, dreaming, he sees God's angel come to him.

THE ANGEL

David's son Joseph, don't be scared to make Mary your wife, for what is alive in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will give birth to a son whom you'll name Jesus, because he will free his people from their sins.

Joseph remembers Isaiah's words, "The Lord himself shall give you a sign: a virgin shall conceive and give birth to a son, who shall be called Immanuel, God-with-us." He marries Mary but does not have intercourse with her.

7. Many and One

A census is ordered by the Emperor, Augustus. Being of David's house, Joseph takes Mary with him to register in David's village, Bethlehem in Judea. While they're there Mary's time comes and she gives birth to a boy. She winds strips of cloth around the baby and puts it in a trough, because there is no room for them in the inn.

8. Shepherds in the Countryside

They're watching their sheep. Suddenly an angel's on them—God's glory penetrates the night.

THE ANGEL

Don't be scared: I bring you great happiness and good news for all

men. Today in David's city your Savior is born: your anointed Lord. This is your sign: you'll find the child wrapped in cloth, lying in a trough.

A storm of angels appears in the sky, praising God and singing.

ANGELS

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth freedom to men of God's will.

The angels vanish into the stars.

SHEPHERDS

Let's run to Bethlehem and see what the Lord told us has happened.

They run to the village and find Mary and Joseph. A baby lies in a trough. Seeing it, the shepherds tell Mary and Joseph how the angels sang of the child. Others later scoff at the story, but Mary will remember the words and weigh them in her heart. The shepherds go back to their sheep and shout cheers and praises to God for what they saw and heard.

9. A Jewish Boy

On the eighth day the boy is circumcised and named Jesus.

10. Simeon and Anna

When the month's purification required by the Mosaic Law is over, his parents take him to Jerusalem. They sacrifice a pair of turtledoves and dedicate their son to God, in accordance with the teaching, "Whatever opens the womb belongs to God." In Jerusalem a devout and holy man named Simeon has been waiting for Israel's liberation. The Holy Spirit is in him and has promised him he won't die before seeing the Lord's Anointed. The Spirit leads him to the Temple, where Mary and Joseph have brought the infant. Praising God, he takes the baby in his arms.

SIMEON

Lord, now let your servant go in peace, as you said to me. My eyes see the deliverance you have prepared for every people: a light enlightening the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel.
The old man blesses Mary and Joseph.

SIMEON, to Mary

The child is destined for the death and resurrection of many in Israel, and as a witness which will be condemned so that hearts will be opened: yes, besides, a sword will pierce your own heart.
A prophetess steps forward, thanks God, and speaks of Jesus to those yearning for Israel's freedom. She's Anna, Phanuel's daughter in Asher's tribe, an old woman, married for seven years and a widow for eighty-four, who spends her life in the Temple praising God night and day with fasting and prayer.

11. Astrologers in Jerusalem

They're asking, "Where is the child who was born king of the Jews? We saw his star in the east and have come to worship him." Herod becomes nervous, as do many others in the city. The king rounds up the high priests and scripture scholars and demands they tell him where the Anointed One was to be born. They say, "At Bethlehem in Judea: scripture says, 'Bethlehem Ephratah, though you are little among the thousands of Judah,

yet from you a king shall come, the shepherd of my people Israel.” Meeting privately with the astrologers, Herod questions them about when the star appeared. Then he sends them to Bethlehem.

HEROD

Be sure to find the boy, and when you find him send me word, so that I, too, may come and worship him.

12. Gifts

The star they saw in the east goes before them until it stands over where a young child is. In a house they see him and his mother. They kneel and worship him, and open their strongboxes and give him gifts: gold, frankincense, and myrrh. Then, being warned in a dream, they return to their country without telling Herod.

13. Joseph Dreaming, Rachel Weeping

The angel warns Joseph, “Get up, take the boy and his mother, and escape to Egypt. Stay there till I bring you word: Herod’s looking for the child to destroy him.” Joseph gets up, takes Jesus and Mary, and escapes during the night to Egypt, where they remain until Herod’s death; in this way he makes true Hosea’s prophecy, “When Israel was a child I loved him, and called my son out of Egypt.” When Herod is told that the astrologers have left Judea he’s enraged. Deciding from his talk with them that the child must be less than two years old, he sends his men into Bethlehem and the surrounding country and orders them to kill every boy two years old or younger; thus he makes true Jeremiah’s prophecy, “A voice was heard in Ramah—lamenting, bitter weeping; Rachel weeping for her children, refusing to be comforted, for her children were no more.”

14. Out of Egypt

After Herod dies the angel comes to Joseph and tells him in a dream, “Get up. Take the child and his mother out of Egypt and go back to Israel. They’re dead who wanted to kill the boy.” He gets ready to take Jesus and Mary back to Israel, but hearing that Herod’s son Archelaus rules Judea he’s afraid to return. So, being told in a dream, he skirts Judea, goes into Galilee, and settles in Nazareth: there his son grows strong and intelligent, a pleasure to God.

15. Aged Twelve

The family goes to Jerusalem, as they do every year at Passover. After celebrating the festival, his parents start for home, unaware that their son isn’t with them. They assume he’s with the party, and travel for a day before asking for him among their relatives and friends. Not finding him, they turn back to search for him and reach Jerusalem again the following night. In the morning they find him in the Temple—sitting with scholars, listening to them, and asking them questions. All present are amazed by his knowledge and wit. Mary and Joseph are bewildered.

MARY

Son, why have you done this to us? Your father and I searched for you in tears.

JESUS

Why did you search? Didn't you know I'd be in my Father's house? *They don't understand what he's saying. He returns to Nazareth with them and is obedient to them. Mary remembers what he told her. Jesus grows in wisdom and strength, and in the good opinion of God and men.*

Heaven

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16. Tiberius Caesar's Fifteenth Year

Pontius Pilate is governor of Judea, Philip is tetrarch of Trachonitis and Iturea, his brother Herod Antipas tetrarch of Perea and Galilee, and Lysanias tetrarch of Abilene; Annas and Caiaphas are the High Priests. John prophesies in the wilderness.

JOHN

Turn, everyone! the kingdom of heaven is coming.
His clothes are of camel's hair; his loincloth is leather. He feeds on carob and wild honey. People from Jerusalem, Judea, and both banks of the Jordan come to Bethany-across-Jordan to hear him proclaim a new life based on God's forgiving their sins. Many are washed by him in the Jordan River as they confess their sins. Even Sadducees and Pharisees line up to be washed.

JOHN, to the Sadducees and Pharisees
Venomous bedfellows—who told you to escape from the coming anger?

JOHN, to the crowds
Produce the fruits of new life. Never say to yourselves, “We are Abraham’s children.” I tell you that God can make children of Abraham out of stones. The ax is already at the roots of the trees. Every tree that doesn’t produce fruit shall be hacked down and thrown to fire.

PEOPLE IN THE CROWD

What should we do?

JOHN

Whoever has two coats must give to the person who has none. Whoever has food must share it.

TAX COLLECTORS

What should we do?

JOHN

Exact no more than you’re entitled to.

SOLDIERS

What should we do?

JOHN

Don’t be brutal; don’t make false arrests; be satisfied with your pay.

The people are excited: they think John might be the Anointed One.

JOHN

I’m not.

PRIESTS AND LEVITES FROM JERUSALEM

Who are you? Are you Elijah or the prophet Moses foretold?

JOHN

No.

PRIESTS AND LEVITES

What shall we report to those who sent us? Tell us who you say you are.

JOHN

I’m what Isaiah said of me: “The voice of him that shouts in the wilderness, ‘Prepare the way of the Lord.’”

PHARISEES

Why, then, do you purify, if you aren’t the Anointed One, or Elijah, or Moses’ prophet?

JOHN

I wash you in water, but near you walks a man you don’t know, a man stronger than I, whose sandals I don’t deserve to touch. He’ll wash you in holy wind and fire. He’s ready to separate the wheat

from the chaff. He'll winnow the entire harvest and gather his wheat in a granary. But the chaff he'll burn in insatiable flames. He's above me who comes from above. Dust is dust and speaks of dust, but one is coming from heaven. He'll tell you what he has heard and seen. No one has seen it. He who has seen it will prove that God is true. God is sending him to speak his words, and God has given him the Spirit beyond limit. The Father loves the son and gives him everything. Who believes in the son lives in the Father. Who doesn't believe doesn't see life, but God's hate. *Jesus, about thirty years old, arrives from Galilee and is washed by John. Walking out of the water, they see the heavens open and God's Spirit come down like a dove and rest on Jesus. They hear a voice: HERE IS MY LOVED SON, IN WHOM I DELIGHT.*

JOHN

I need to be purged by you—yet you bent to me.

JESUS

Accept what happened: in doing this we did God's will.

JOHN, to the crowd

Look—all of you—this is God's lamb, who takes on himself the world's guilt, who's last and first, who comes after and before. I didn't know him, but to make him known to Israel I washed you in water. I didn't know him, but the one who sent me to wash with water said to me, "On whom you see the Spirit come down and rest—he washes with the Spirit." I saw, and now say, Here is God's Chosen One.

17. Desert

The Spirit leads him to live with wild animals and be tempted by the devil. He fasts for forty days and is hungry.

THE DEVIL

If you're God's son, turn these stones into bread.

JESUS

It's written, "Man does not live by bread only: by every word that comes from the Lord's mouth man lives."

The devil takes him to a holy city and puts him on the pinnacle of its temple.

THE DEVIL

If you're God's son, throw yourself down: it's written, "He will summon his angels to protect you: they will lift you in their hands, lest you brush your heel against a stone."

JESUS

It's also written, "Do not tempt the Lord your God."

The devil takes him to a high mountain and shows him all the kingdoms of the world in their greatness.

THE DEVIL

All these I give, if you serve me.

JESUS

Get out of my way, Satan. It's written, "Fear the Lord your God, and serve him, and swear by his name."

Satan leaves him. Angels come and give him food.

18. Disciples

About four o'clock in the afternoon. John's standing with two of

his followers when he sees Jesus walk by.

JOHN

There is God's lamb.

The two leave him and follow Jesus, who, seeing them, waits.

JESUS

What are you looking for?

JOHN'S FOLLOWERS

Teacher, where can we talk?

JESUS

Come: walk with me.

They walk with him to where he's staying and talk with him the rest of the day. In the evening one of the two, Andrew, leaves and brings back his brother Simon, telling him, "We've found the Anointed One."

JESUS, to Simon

You're Jonah's son Simon. I'll call you The Rock.

The next day Jesus decides to go to Galilee. Andrew and John's other follower, also named John, bring Philip, their friend from Bethsaida, who goes and tells his friend Nathaniel, "We've met the man Moses and the prophets wrote about: he's Jesus, Joseph's son from Nazareth."

NATHANIEL

Can anything good come out of Nazareth?

PHILIP

Come: find out.

Jesus sees Nathaniel coming.

JESUS

Here comes a true Israelite, who'd wrestle with God.

NATHANIEL

How do you know me?

JESUS

Before Philip went to you I saw you under the fig tree.

NATHANIEL

Teacher—if you did that, you're God's son and Israel's king.

JESUS

Nathaniel, will you walk with us because I say I saw you under the fig tree? What I say is. I say to you, You'll see the heavens open and God's angels loop the loop around Adam's son.

19. A Wedding

They start for Galilee and after three days arrive in Cana, where they attend a wedding with Jesus' mother. The wine runs short.

MARY

They have no wine.

JESUS

Mother, what is it to us? My time hasn't come.

MARY, to the servants

Do what he tells you.

In the room are six stone water jars for ceremonial washing.

JESUS

Fill the jars with water.

They fill them to the brim.

JESUS

Now take a cup to the master of ceremonies.

They take the cup to the master of ceremonies, who drinks the wine made from water. Not being told by the servants where it came from, he calls out to the bridegroom.

MASTER OF CEREMONIES

Others serve the good wine first, and when everybody is beaming bring in the cheap wine—you saved the best for last.

This is the first sign by which Jesus shows himself to his followers, and at Cana in Galilee they begin to believe.

20. Two Baptisms

From Cana he goes with his mother and other relatives and his followers to Capernaum, where he stays several days. He and his followers then return to Judea. He lives with them while they carry on John's practice of baptizing. In Enon near Salim, where there's a large body of water, John continues to wash those who come to him. Soon a dispute about the two baptisms arises between a Jew and John's followers.

JOHN'S FOLLOWERS, to John

Teacher, the very person you singled out on the other side of the Jordan has himself begun to baptize, and everybody's running to him.

JOHN

No one has what isn't from heaven. You yourselves know that I said I am not the Messiah but am sent ahead of him. It's the bridegroom who has the bride. The one who brings them together waits and listens and is happy when he hears his voice. That is my joy. I must remain, he must go forward.

Actually, not Jesus but the followers who came to him from John are attracting and baptizing many more people than John himself. But when Jesus hears that the Pharisees see him and John as rivals, he and his followers leave Judea and head back to Galilee.

21. Jacob's Well

They go by way of Samaria and stop around noon at a cistern. It's near the Samaritan village of Sychar. Tired, Jesus sits down while the others go into the village to buy food. A Samaritan woman comes to the cistern to draw water.

JESUS

Let me drink.

THE WOMAN

You must be a thirsty Jew to ask water from a Samaritan.

JESUS

If you knew what God can give and who said to you, "Let me drink," you would have asked him: he would have given you spring water.

THE WOMAN

You can't even scoop up this water—where will you get spring water? Are you better than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us this cistern and drew water for himself, his family, and his flocks?

JESUS

Whoever drinks this will thirst, but whoever drinks the water I give will never thirst. The water will be in him a spring always giving life.

THE WOMAN

Sir, give me this water, that I never again thirst or come here to draw.

JESUS

Go: call your husband and come back.

THE WOMAN

I don't have a husband.

JESUS

As you say: you don't have a husband; in fact, you've had five husbands and the man you live with now you haven't married. You speak rightly.

THE WOMAN

I can see you're a prophet. Our ancestors worshipped God on the mountain—even if you Jews say they should've gone to Jerusalem.

JESUS

Then believe me: the time is coming when you won't go to the mountain, or to Jerusalem, to worship the Father. It's true you hardly know the Father, while we know him: freedom will come from the Jews. But God is everywhere, and they who worship him will worship him in spirit and truth. The true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, and the Father will look for them.

THE WOMAN

I know the Messiah is coming, the one who'll tell us everything.

JESUS

I who tell you this am he.

His followers come back and are surprised to see him talking with a woman. Still, they don't ask her, "What do you want?" or him, "Why are you talking with her?" The woman puts down her water jar and runs into the village.

THE WOMAN

Come, see the man who showed me my life: can he be the Messiah?

The villagers come out to see Jesus.

JESUS' FOLLOWERS

Teacher, eat.

JESUS

I've food to eat you know nothing of.

They ask themselves, "Did somebody give him something to eat?"

JESUS

My food is doing the will of him who sent me and completing his work. There's a saying, "First plant—then harvest." I say, Open your eyes—look around you—the harvest is ripe for reaping. Everyone who reaps receives his pay and brings fruit to everlasting life, sower and reaper gladdening together. It's also said, "One sows, another reaps." I send you to reap a harvest you didn't sow. Others sowed, that you may reap.

22. A King's Officer

He remains two days in Sychar, then goes into Galilee. The people of Cana welcome him. Some were at the wedding banquet at which he turned water into wine; others heard of him in Judea. A king's officer arrives from Capernaum: his son is dying, and hearing that Jesus is in Galilee, he has come to beg him to go to Capernaum and cure his son.

JESUS

Unless they see signs and miracles they won't believe.

THE KING'S OFFICER

Sir, come with me before my son dies.

JESUS

Go home: the boy will live.

The king's officer goes away. His servants meet him near Capernaum and say, "Your son is living." He asks when the boy began to get better. They say, "Yesterday at one in the afternoon the fever left him." It was the hour Jesus told him, "The boy will live." It's the second time Jesus has shown his power after coming into Galilee from Judea.

23. Fishers

In Perea, Herod Antipas arrests John and imprisons him. Jesus is living in Capernaum near the Sea of Galilee, in the territory about which Isaiah said, "A people walking in darkness have seen a great light: a light has shined on them who dwell in the valley of the shadow of death." Here Jesus declares the coming of God's kingdom.

JESUS

The time is big with gladness. The Father's kingdom is near. Turn to it and believe.

Walking along the Sea of Galilee in the middle of a large crowd that's listening to him, he sees fishers washing their nets on the beach next to their boats. They are the brothers Simon and Andrew and their partners, Zebedee's sons John and James. He steps into Simon's boat and asks that it be taken a little ways from shore. Sitting down, he speaks for a while to the crowd standing on the beach, then turns to Simon.

JESUS

Go into deep water and lower the nets.

SIMON

Teacher, we fished all night and caught nothing: but if you say so I'll put down the nets.

They catch a large number of fish and their nets begin to break. Simon and Andrew yell to shore for James and John to help. The catch fills both boats to the sinking point. The fishers fall down at Jesus' feet.

SIMON

Sir, leave me—I'm a sinful man.

JESUS

Simon, don't be scared. From now on you'll fish for men.

When they reach shore he says, "Walk with me." They leave their boats and the catch and walk with him. Zebedee remains with the boats with the hired hands to sell the fish and mend the nets.

24. Sabbath in Capernaum

He goes into the synagogue and teaches. He surprises people, for unlike the scholars he seems to make the truth of what he says depend only on himself. Suddenly a man with a sick spirit shouts.

THE MAN

What are we to you, Jesus of Nazareth. Have you come to destroy us? I know you are God's Holy One.

JESUS

Peace: come out of him.

The sick spirit comes out of the man with a shriek, convulsing him and throwing him to the floor but not hurting him. The people in the synagogue murmur to themselves, "What can it mean? On his own he commands even spirits and they obey him."

25. Simon's Mother-In-Law

She lies in bed with a high fever. He takes her hand and scolds the fever, and the fever leaves her. He helps her to her feet and she serves them.

26. Evening

As the sun sets, people bring their sick. He puts his hands on them and makes them whole. Demons come out of some, screaming, "You are the Son of God." He commands them not to reveal that he is the Messiah.

27. Early Morning

It's still dark. He goes out alone to pray. Simon and the others go looking for him.

SIMON

Everyone's looking for you.

JESUS

Let's walk to other towns and tell them the good news. That is why I have come.

28. Fame

He proclaims the good news throughout Galilee, speaking in synagogues, curing the sick, throwing out demons. His fame spreads to Syria. People come to him from the Ten Towns, Jerusalem, Judea, and the lands beyond the Jordan. They bring him the sick of all kinds, the tormented, the possessed, the paralyzed, and the insane. They find him "a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief," who lifts their sorrows and takes their griefs.

29. Blasphemy

In Capernaum, people crowd his dwelling; nobody can enter. Four men arrive carrying a paralytic; not being able to get in by the door, they lower him through the roof. Jesus sees their faith.

JESUS

Son, be happy, your sins are forgiven.

The scholars present look at each other, thinking, "The man's blaspheming! Only God can forgive sins."

JESUS, to the scholars

What do you question by your looks—whether it's easier to say "Your sins are forgiven" or "Stand up and walk"? Now you know

that Adam's son has power to forgive sins on earth.

JESUS, to the paralytic

Stand up, pick up your mat, and go home.

The paralytic stands up, takes his mat, and walks away.

Astonished, the crowd praises God and says, "We've never seen anything like it."

30. Loved are the Wicked

One day while walking, Jesus sees the customs official Levi collecting taxes at a table.

JESUS

Come: walk with me.

They walk to Levi's house, where Levi gives a big dinner to which he invites other tax collectors and agents of Rome. The Pharisees are angry.

PHARISEES, to Jesus' followers

Why does he eat with traitors and renegades?

JESUS, to the Pharisees

The healthy don't need a doctor, but the sick do. Go away: I haven't come to ask the holy but the wicked to turn to me.

John's followers are also puzzled.

JOHN'S FOLLOWERS, to Jesus

Why don't your followers fast as we and the Pharisees do?

JESUS

How can the wedding guests fast while the bridegroom is still with them? The time will come when the bridegroom is taken from them; then they will fast.

He explains why sinners are drawn to him and defenders of the Law are not.

JESUS

Nobody uses new cloth to patch an old garment. The new cloth will shrink and tear the old, making the hole worse than before.

Nobody makes new wine in old wineskins. The fermenting wine will burst the wineskins and spill out, and the wineskins will be ruined. Nobody who drinks old wine will want the new. He'll say, "The old is better."

31. A Hillside

He prays all night. At dawn he calls his followers to him and chooses from them twelve whom he calls apostles: Simon, whom he calls Peter, the Rock; Simon's brother Andrew; Zebedee's sons John and James, whom he calls Benaregesh, Sons of Wrath; Philip and Philip's friend Nathaniel Barthalmi; the customs official Levi, who is also known by the name of Matthew; Thomas; Alphaeus' son James and James' son Jude, also known as Thaddeus; Simon, a partisan; and Jude Iscariot. He sits down with his followers and tells them about his Father's kingdom.

JESUS

Loved are the beggars; God's kingdom is theirs. Loved are the tortured; they shall be comforted. Loved are the slaves; they shall inherit the earth. Loved are they who hunger and thirst for God's love; they shall be satisfied. Loved are they who forgive; they shall be forgiven. Loved are the single-hearted; God shall embrace

them. Loved are the peacemakers; they shall be called God's children. Loved are they who are hated because they love virtue; they are God's prophets. Men hated the prophets who came before you; loved are you when men despise, revile, and slander you for loving me: be glad and exult, because you shall enter heaven in splendor. You are the world's salt. Think how badly dung burns. It needs salt. But if salt loses its saltiness, what can make it salty? Such salt is unfit to be mixed with dung or sprinkled on the floor of an oven, and it must be thrown away. You are the world's light. The lights of a city standing on a hill cannot be hidden. People don't light a lamp and put it in shrouds but on a stand where it gives light to the whole house. Allow your light to shine, so people will see your brightness and mirror the splendor of your Father in heaven. Don't think I wish to destroy the Law and the Prophets. I don't wish to destroy but to show them. Until earth is raised up to heaven not a single letter—not a single stroke of the pen—must be removed from the Law. Everything must be observed. Whoever slights the least commandment or teaches others to do so will be called the least in the Father's kingdom, and whoever observes and teaches the commandments will be called great. Unless your obedience exceeds that of the Pharisees and scribes, you will never enter the Father's kingdom. You've heard that in the old days our people were told, "You shall not kill; whoever kills shall be in danger of the judgment." I tell you now, Whoever is angry with his brother is in danger of the judgment; whoever says to his brother, "You are useless," will be brought to trial; whoever says, "You are evil," will be in danger of hellfire. Therefore: if you are praying and remember that your brother has something against you, leave off praying and go to him. First be reconciled with your brother, then pray. Make peace with your enemies. Don't plan on accusing them at the judgment. At the judgment you will find your enemies accusing you. The judge will hand you over to his officers, who will throw you in prison. In this case, you will not come out before you have paid the last cent. You've heard that the people were told, "You shall not commit adultery." I tell you now, Whoever looks at a woman to desire her has already committed adultery with her in his heart. Therefore: if your right eye betrays you, pluck it out and throw it away; better that part of your body should perish than that your whole body should be in torment. If your right hand betrays you, chop it off and throw it away; better that part of your body should perish than that your whole body should be in torment. You've heard that the people were told, "You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain and shall not swear falsely by his name, nor shall you profane his name." I tell you now, Do not swear: not by heaven, because it is God's throne; not by the earth, because it is his footstool; not by Jerusalem, because it is his holy city. Do not swear by your head, since you cannot make one hair white or black. Simply say yes or no; anything more tempts to evil. You've heard that the people were told, "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a wound for a wound, a stripe for a stripe." I tell you now, Don't resist evil. If somebody hits your right

eye, turn and offer the left. If somebody takes you to court to win a suit, throw in the case. If somebody forces you to walk a mile, walk two. Give to whoever asks you; never turn away anyone who wants to borrow from you. You've heard that the people were told, "You shall not take vengeance or bear any grudge against the children of the people, but shall love your neighbor as yourself." I tell you now, Love your enemies. Bless them who curse you, do good to them who hurt you, and pray for them who ignore you. Then you will be true children of your Father in heaven, who causes his sun to shine on the evil and on the good, and sends his rain to fall on the unjust and on the just. What merit is yours if you do good just to those who do good to you? It's the way of the world. What better are you than anyone else if you are kind just to friends? It's the way of the world. You must be perfect, since your Father in heaven is perfect. And take care not to parade your goodness, or you will have no reward from your Father in heaven. When you do good do it without fanfare, not like the pretenders who indoors and out grind the organs of publicity. I tell you they are already repaid in echoes. Don't keep a scrapbook of good deeds. Your Father in heaven will remember them for you and reward you. When you pray you mustn't be like the pretenders who maintain a public piety. I tell you their prayers are already answered. When you pray, go into your room and shut the door. Pray to your Father quietly, and your Father who hears all things will help you talk with him. Therefore: don't mumble a lot of prayers, as if to conjure your Father. He is with you now and knows what you need before you ask him. Pray like this: Our Father, who are in heaven, glory to your name; your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven; give us today our day's bread, and forgive us our sins as we forgive them who sin against us; and keep us from temptation, and defend us from the devil. If you forgive others their wrongs, your Father in heaven will forgive you. If you do not forgive, you will not be forgiven. When you fast don't act wretched, like pretenders playing beggars. I tell you they are already repaid in groans. When you fast put on a genial mask, so that nobody but your Father will notice you are fasting. Then your Father, who misses nothing, will applaud you. Don't strive to amass on earth wealth you won't long enjoy. Strive to amass in heaven wealth you will enjoy always. Where your treasure is, there your heart will be. The light of the body is the eye. If the light is clear the body is full of light. If the eye is dark the body is full of darkness. If your light is dark, how dark must your darkness be! Nobody can serve two masters. He will hate one and love the other, or side with one and despise the other. You can't serve God and money. So: be careless with your life. Don't brood over how you'll eat or drink or what you'll wear. Life's more than food, the body more than clothing. Look at the ravens in the sky. They don't plant, reap, or gather in barns, yet your Father in heaven feeds them. Aren't you worth much more than they? Which of you fed himself when a child? Look at the lilies growing in the field. They neither card nor spin, yet not Solomon in his magnificence was dressed like one of them.

If God so clothes the lilies, which are alive today and pulled up tomorrow, won't he be even more certain to clothe you, O petty believers? Therefore take no thought of tomorrow. Tomorrow can take care of itself. Enough for this day is its evil. Don't ask anxiously, "How will we eat? How will we drink? What will we wear?" Your Father in heaven knows you need these things. Seek first his kingdom, and his will: everything will be given to you. Don't condemn others and you won't be condemned. Your hatred returns to you, and in damning others you damn yourself. Why frown at another's defects when your whole character is twisted? Why say to another, "I'll remove that blemish," when your whole character distorts your vision? God give your neighbor the wit to say to you: "Quack, first straighten yourself out, then perhaps you'll see me as I am." Don't give holy things to dogs or throw pearls in front of pigs. They'll trample them underfoot and turn to attack you. But ask and it will be given you, search and you will find, knock and it will be opened to you. Everyone who asks will receive, everyone who searches will find, everyone who knocks will enter. Who of you will give a stone, if a child asks for bread? If asked for fish, who will give a snake? If you who are evil know how to give good things to children, how much more will your Father in heaven give you good things when you ask him? Go in by the low gate. The high gate and the wide path lead to destruction, and many are going that way. But the low gate and the narrow path lead to life, and a few are finding it. What you want others to do for you do for them—that is the Law and the Prophets. Don't be beguiled by fake prophets, who come to you with woolly philosophies and inwardly are ravening wolves. Know things by their fruits. Do grapes come from thorns and figs from thistles? Every good tree produces good fruit, but a rotten tree produces bad fruit. A good tree will not produce bad fruit, while a rotten tree cannot produce good fruit. Every tree that doesn't produce good fruit will be chopped down and thrown in the fire. Remember then: know them by their fruits. Not everyone who calls me Master will enter the Father's kingdom. The person who does the will of my Father in heaven will enter his kingdom. Many when their day comes will say to me, "Master, Master, haven't we done great things in your name?" I shall tell them, "I never knew you—leave me, you evildoers." Therefore, whoever hears my words and does them will be like the wise man who built his house on rock. Rains fell, floods came, winds blew and beat against the house, and it did not fall; it was built on rock. But whoever hears my words and does not do them will be like the foolish man who built his house on sand. Rains fell, floods came, winds blew and beat against the house, and it fell. Its destruction was total.

32. Down from the Hillside

He meets a large crowd. A leper throws himself in front of him.

THE LEPER

Sir, if you want to you can make me clean.

JESUS

Yes, I want to. Be clean.

He touches the man: the leprosy leaves.

JESUS

Don't speak. Go to Jerusalem, offer the gift Moses commanded, and show yourself to the priests: they will testify to your purification.

33. A Centurion

In Capernaum, a centurion accompanied by some Jews approaches him.

THE CENTURION

Sir, my servant lies paralyzed and in great pain.

AN OLD JEW

Help him: he loves our people and has built a synagogue for us.

JESUS

Let's go to him.

THE CENTURION

Sir, I don't deserve that you come to my house. Just give the order and my servant will get well. Having soldiers under me, I know what it is to command. I say to one, "Go," and he goes; and to another, "Come," and he comes. I say to my slave, "Do this," and he does it.

JESUS, to the centurion

The truth is, I haven't found as much faith in Israel. Go your way: what you believe I command.

The centurion goes home and finds his servant cured.

34. Women

Jesus again leaves Capernaum to take the news of God's kingdom to other towns and villages. With him are the twelve and women he saved from sickness or madness—Mary Magdalene, out of whom he threw seven devils; Joanna, the wife of Herod's steward Chuza; Susan; and many other women who help him with their money.

35. Near Nain

A large procession is leaving the town. On a bier is a dead man, the only son of a widowed mother. Jesus pities her.

JESUS

Don't cry.

He goes to the bier and puts his hand on it to stop the bearers.

JESUS

Young man, I say to you, Get up.

The dead man sits up and begins talking. Jesus gives him to his mother. Amazed, the crowd praises God and shouts, "A great prophet has risen among us. God is visiting his people."

36. John's Followers

Two of them overtake him. They've come from John in prison.

JOHN'S FOLLOWERS

Are you the one we're expecting—or is he someone else?

JESUS

Go and tell John what you have seen. The blind see, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor are granted news of happiness: everyone who receives me is blessed.

As John's followers depart, Jesus speaks to the crowd.

JESUS

What did you go to the desert to see? A reed shaking in the wind? What is it you went to see? A man wearing fine clothes? But fine clothes and fine manners are found in fine houses. What did you go to the desert to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and more: John is the messenger who has prepared the way, and the Lord you seek is coming quickly to his Temple. Both the Law and the prophets waited for John. If you can grasp it, he is the Elijah who was coming. If you have ears, listen to what I am saying. Among men born of women, there is not a prophet who sees more than John; and though I say this, I say also, the least in God's kingdom will see what John has not seen. John washed everyone, including tax collectors. Since then God's kingdom has been coming in strength and seizing strong men. John welcomed tax collectors, but the Pharisees and scholars rejected John and refused God's call to them. How shall I describe the present generation of Jews? What are the Jews of this generation like? They are like children who sit idly in the marketplace heckling each other. Yet they begrudge mourning at a funeral or dancing at a wedding. John denied himself food and drink, and they said, "He's a fanatic!" while the Son of Adam denies himself nothing, and they say, "He's greedy and wanton, a lover of traitors and sinners!" Wisdom will have her own children to justify her.

37. At a Pharisee's House

A Pharisee named Simon invites him to supper. A village woman known by everyone to be a sinner hears where he is, takes an alabaster jar filled with oil, and goes to him. Weeping, she kneels at his feet, washes them with her tears, dries them with her hair, kisses them, and rubs them with oil. The Pharisee looks on and says to himself, "If he were a prophet he'd know the sins she's committed." After a while Jesus looks at Simon.

JESUS

Simon, let me ask you something.

SIMON

Please do, teacher.

JESUS

A creditor had two debtors. One owed five hundred days' wages and the other fifty. Since neither could pay, he forgave them both. Tell me, which of them will love him more?

SIMON

I suppose the one to whom he forgave more.

JESUS

No doubt you're right. Now see this woman. When I came to your house you did not give me water for my feet; she washed my feet with her tears and dried them with her hair. You did not welcome me with a kiss; this woman, since I came, has not stopped kissing my feet. I say, since she loves much, her many sins are forgiven. The man to whom little is forgiven loves little.

JESUS, to the woman

Your sins are forgiven.

38. Sabbath. A Wheat Field

His followers, hungry, start picking the grain and rubbing off the chaff. Some Pharisees notice them.

A PHARISEE

Teacher, your disciples are doing what isn't lawful on the Sabbath.

JESUS

Did you never read what David and his men did when they were hungry? They went into God's house and ate bread offered to God—bread the Law says only priests may eat. Haven't you read that Temple priests may lawfully violate the Sabbath? What if standing before you is a person greater than the Temple? If you knew what the words meant—"I desired mercy and not sacrifice, and the knowledge of God more than burnt offerings"—you wouldn't damn the innocent. The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath. Adam's son is lord of the Sabbath.

Going into the synagogue, he sees a man whose hand is shriveled.

A PHARISEE

Is it lawful to cure on the Sabbath?

JESUS, to the disabled man

Come, stand with me.

JESUS, to the Pharisees

Who of you, if his sheep fell in a ditch on the Sabbath, wouldn't grab hold of it and pull it out? Isn't a man more valuable than sheep?

The Pharisees say nothing. Jesus glares at them.

JESUS

Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath, or to do evil? to save a life or to kill?

He turns to the man whose hand is shriveled.

JESUS

Stretch your hand.

The man stretches the hand, and it is as sound as the other. Jesus leaves the synagogue and finds a large crowd waiting for him.

He cures their sick and at the same time asks the crowd not to make his power known. The crowd follows him to a house and so presses after him that he doesn't go in to eat. His friends hear what's happening and go outside to beg him to enter. They say to themselves, "He's crazy." People bring him a demoniac who's blind and dumb. Jesus cures him: the man sees and speaks. The crowd wonders, "Can Jesus be the next David?"

A PHARISEE

How could he be David's successor? He banishes devils by Beelzebub, the prince of devils.

JESUS

Every kingdom that wars with itself must fall. Every city or house that wars with itself cannot stand. If Satan drives out Satan, he wars with Satan. How, then, can his kingdom stand? If Satan rebels against Satan and is divided, he cannot stand, but falls flat. If I throw out devils by Satan, by whom do your people throw them out? They will judge you for accusing me. But if it is by God's spirit I throw out devils, then God's kingdom has come to you.

Nobody can break into an armed man's house and take his property unless he overpowers him and ties him; if he ties him, he can take what he wants. Come with me or go against me. Gather or scatter. Every kind of evil word and act will be forgiven, except words against the Spirit. Whoever blasphemes Adam's son will be forgiven, but whoever blasphemes against the Spirit will not be forgiven, not in this world and not in the world to come. A tree is known by its fruit. Unless you make your tree and its fruit good, you rot it and rot its fruit. How can the serpent's inheritance, being evil, speak good things? The tongue speaks what the heart is full of. A good man from the good treasure of his heart brings out good, while an evil man from evil treasure brings out evil. Every careless word you speak you will have to account for in the day of judgment: by your words you will be saved in that day, and by your words you will be condemned.

A SCHOLAR

Teacher, show us a sign that what you say is true.

JESUS

A doubting and adulterous age hungers for signs, but the only sign given it will be the sign of Jonah. As Jonah was three days in the whale's belly, so Adam's son will be three days in the heart of the earth. In the judgment the people of Nineveh will rise up with this age, and they will condemn it. They repented when Jonah preached, and what you see is greater than Jonah. The Queen of the South will rise up with this age in the judgment, and she will condemn it. She came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon, and what you hear is greater than Solomon. When an evil spirit goes out of a person, it walks through arid places seeking rest. Finding none, it says to itself, "I will return to the house I came out of." When it returns it finds the house fixed up, tidy, vacant. It goes and finds seven other spirits more wicked than itself, and they all go and live there. So it will be for this wicked age. The last state will be worse than the first.

A WOMAN

Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the nipples you sucked.

JESUS

Say instead, "Blessed are they who hear God's word and do it." *His mother and other relatives arrive at the house and ask to speak with him. Someone says to him, "Your mother and brothers have come and want to talk with you."*

JESUS

Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?
He stretches his hands toward his followers.

JESUS

Here are my mother and brothers. Whoever does my Father's will is my brother, my sister, and my mother.

39. Parables

A crowd's with him. As before, he gets in a boat and talks to the crowd, which stands at the edge of the water.

JESUS

Listen: look. A farmer went out to sow seed. Some seed fell on the

path. Birds came and ate the seed. Some seed fell on stony ground, where there was little dirt. Plants sprang up quickly in the shallow ground, but when the sun came up they were scorched, and having no root they withered away. Some seed fell among weeds. The weeds grew up and choked the young plants, which produced no fruit. But some seed fell on good ground. The plants sprang up and flourished and produced fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, some a hundred. Who can hear, let him hear.

Afterwards he's alone with the twelve and other close followers. They ask him what his story means.

JESUS

To you it's given to perceive the truth of the Father's kingdom, but to those who judge from outside, everything will remain something else. What Isaiah says to them is true: "You hear indeed, but understand not; and see indeed, but perceive not. You make the heart of the people fat, their ears heavy, and their eyes dark; lest they see with their eyes, hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and turn, and be healed." But happy are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear. I tell you many prophets and good men and women yearned to see what you see and did not see it, to hear what you hear and did not hear it. And yet—you don't know the meaning of the comparison of the farmer? How then will you know the meaning of any comparison? The farmer sows the word. People along the path receive the word, but they do not take it in. As soon as they hear the word, Satan comes and takes away the word that was sown in their hearts. People on stony ground receive the word gladly, but it does not take root in them, and so cannot last. When trouble and persecution come because of the word, they give it up. People among weeds receive the word, but the worries of the world, the enchantments of wealth, and the desires of existence choke the word, and it produces no fruit. People on good ground receive the word and nourish it. It is they who produce fruit, some thirtyfold, some sixty, some a hundred. What you give will be given you, and much more. The farmer will throw seed on the ground. The next day he will get up and go elsewhere. The seed must sprout and grow up, though the ground doesn't understand how. The ground must produce fruit out of itself: first the leaf, then the flower, after that the grain. When the grain has matured, the farmer will return with his sickle, because the harvest has come.

He gives his followers and the crowds other comparisons, making real the Psalmist's prophecy, "I will open my mouth in parables: I will reveal dark sayings of old. What we have heard and known and our fathers have told us, we will not hide from the children; we will show to a generation to come the praises of the Lord, his strength, and the wonderful works he has done."

JESUS

A farmer planted good seed in his field. While his men were sleeping, his enemy came, planted weeds among the wheat, and went away. When the wheat sprouted and began to grow, the weeds also appeared. The farmhands went to the farmer and said,

“Sir, didn’t you plant good seed in your field? Why, then, does it have weeds?” He said to them, “My enemy has done this.” The men asked, “Shall we go and dig them out?” But the farmer said, “No, in digging the weeds out you might also root up the wheat. Let both grow together until the harvest. At harvest time I will tell the reapers, Gather the weeds and bind them in bundles to be burned, and gather the wheat into my barn.”

This, too, he explains to his followers.

JESUS

The farmer is Adam’s son. The field is the world. The good seed are God’s children. The weeds are the children of corruption. The enemy who plants them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the world. The reapers are God’s angels. Just as today weeds are gathered at the harvest and thrown in the fire, so it will be at the end of the world. Adam’s son will send his angels, who will remove from his kingdom everything that prevented good or did evil and will throw it in a blazing furnace; then the good will shine like suns in the Father’s kingdom. A net thrown in the sea catches every kind of fish. When the net is full the fishers draw it to shore, then sit down and put the good fish in barrels and throw away the bad. At the world’s end angels will come to remove the wicked from among the holy. They will throw the wicked in a burning oven, where they will shriek and chew their tongues. Do you understand what I’m telling you?

JESUS’ FOLLOWERS

Yes.

JESUS

Every student who understands your Father’s kingdom is like a householder who is able to bring out from his storeroom new things and old. Your Father’s kingdom is like treasure hidden in a field. A man has found it and hidden it again. He will gladly sell everything he has to buy it. Your Father’s kingdom is like a costly pearl. A merchant looking for fine pearls has discovered it, and to buy it he will sell everything he has.

40. Home

Nazareth. He goes to the synagogue and stands up to read. Handed the book of Isaiah, he unrolls it.

JESUS

“The Spirit of the Lord God is in me, because the Lord has anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to captives and the opening of the prison to them that are bound, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all that mourn, to call to them that mourn in Zion, to give them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, that they might be called trees of righteousness, the Lord’s planting, that he might be glorified.”

He rolls up the book, hands it to the attendant, and sits down. The congregation waits.

JESUS

Today these words are realized in your hearing.
They're furious. "Where did he learn to blaspheme? They say he told truths and did miracles, but isn't he a builder? Isn't Mary his mother? Don't we know his brothers? Aren't his sisters our neighbors?"

JESUS

A prophet isn't unwelcome, except in his own country and house. Will you quote me the proverb, "Physician, heal thyself," and challenge me to do here what you heard I did in Capernaum? I remind you that there were many widows in Israel in Elijah's day, when for three and a half years the heavens were shut and a great famine ate up the land. Elijah was not sent to them, but to a widow of Sidon in the village of Zarephath. There were many lepers in Israel in the time of the prophet Elisha, and not one of them became clean, but Naaman, a Syrian.
Some run up to taunt him; others hoot at him from their places; a few want to take him to the edge of the hill on which the town is built and throw him down—but he walks out of the synagogue and no one touches him. He does no miracles in Nazareth, because its people do not believe.

41. At Sea

He returns to Capernaum. One evening he's getting ready to cross the lake.

A SCRIBE

Tell me where you're going: I'll follow.

JESUS

Foxes have holes and birds have nests. Adam's son is a stranger on the earth.

He and the twelve get into several small boats and take to sea. As they cross, a great windstorm arises and threatens to throw the boats under the waves. Jesus lies in the stern of his boat, asleep on a pillow.

THE APOSTLES

Teacher, don't you care that we're dying?

He sits up, scolds the wind, and says to the sea, "Peace, be still." The winds drop, and the sea becomes calm.

JESUS

Why are you so much afraid? Where is your faith?

But they now have another reason to be scared. Looking at each other, they ask, "What sort of man is he, that even the winds and the sea obey him?"

They land near Gergesa, where a man lives crazed by demons. Ropes and chains can't hold him: he roves naked among the tombs and hills, terrorizing the populace. If he finds nothing to destroy he cuts himself with stones. Seeing Jesus step from the boat, he runs to him and falls down before him.

JESUS

Who are you?

THE CRAZED MAN

My name is Legion: there are many of us. Don't order us from this country.

In the distance a large herd of pigs is feeding.

THE DEMONS

Send us into the pigs—we will live in them.

JESUS

Go.

The demons come out of the man and go into the pigs. The herd of about two thousand rushes over a cliff, plunges into the sea, and is drowned. The swineherds run into the village to tell what happened. The villagers come out and see Jesus sitting with the crazed man, who's clothed and fully himself. They beg Jesus to leave their country. The man he gave back to himself asks to go with him.

JESUS

Go back to your family and tell them the great thing the Lord has done for you, and how he has loved you.

The man goes back to his village in the Ten Towns, where he astonishes his friends with his story.

42. Daughters

Jesus returns to Capernaum. Jairus, a leader of the synagogue, is in the large crowd of people waiting for him. Going to Jesus, he falls down in front of him and begs for help.

JAIRUS

My little daughter is nearly dead. Please come and put your hands on her. You'll cure her and she will live.

He goes with Jairus. The crowd follows, jostling them both. Suddenly Jesus turns.

JESUS

Who touched me?

HIS FOLLOWERS

Everybody's crowding about you and you ask, "Who touched me?"

He continues to look around him. A woman, scared and trembling, steps out of the crowd and falls at his feet.

JESUS

Daughter, rejoice, your faith has made you whole.

The woman had suffered from hemorrhages for twelve years. She had been treated by many doctors and had spent all she had trying to find a cure but had gotten worse instead of better. Then she heard of Jesus, followed him, and touched his clothes, thinking, "If I can only touch his clothes I shall be cured."

JESUS

Walk in peace, and be free.

They reach Jairus' house and see people running about and wailing. Someone comes out and tells Jairus, "Your daughter is dead: send him away."

JESUS, to Jairus

Don't fear—have faith.

They go into the house.

JESUS, to the mourners

Why are running you around wailing? The girl isn't dead, but sleeping.

They laugh at him bitterly, but he prevails on Jairus to have them

sent out of the house. He, Peter, James, and John accompany Jairus and his wife to the girl's room. A child of about twelve lies in bed. He takes her hand.

JESUS

Talitha cumi: little girl, wake up.
The girl gets out of bed and walks to her parents.

JESUS, to Jairus

Tell no one what you have seen. Give the girl something to eat.
As he comes from Jairus' house two blind men shout.

BLIND MEN

Son of David, help us!

JESUS

Do you believe I can make you whole?

BLIND MEN

Yes, Lord.

JESUS

What you believe will be done.
He touches their eyes: they open.

JESUS

Tell nobody about this.

They leave and tell everybody. A man's brought to him who's dumb, being possessed by a demon. Jesus throws the demon out, and the man talks. Many others are made whole. Nothing like it has been seen before, but the Pharisees continue to insist: "He can command devils because he's sent by the prince of devils."

43. Workers

Large crowds follow him everywhere.

JESUS, to the twelve

The harvest is in fact great, but the workers are few: pray that the Lord of the harvest sends workers to his harvest.
He sends the apostles out by twos and gives them power over demons.

JESUS

Don't go into Gentile territory or into Samaritan towns, but go to the lost sheep of Jacob. As you go, tell them, "The Father's kingdom has come." Cure the sick, clean the lepers, throw out demons, raise the dead. As you have received freely, so freely give. Don't take with you copper, silver, or gold. Don't carry a beggar's bag or an extra coat, extra sandals, or an extra staff: a workingman deserves his keep. Whatever town or village you go to, ask who in it is respected and stay with him until you leave. As you go into the house give it your blessing—if the house welcomes you give it your blessing. But if the house doesn't welcome you and listen to what you have to say, leave it and its town and shake the dust off your feet. I tell you it will be more bearable for Sodom and Gomorrah when they are judged than for that town. Know: I am sending you out as lambs among wolves. Therefore be as clever as serpents and as innocent as doves. Don't be misled by men. They will deliver you to the courts and abuse you in synagogues. You will be brought before governors and kings because of me, and you will speak for me to them and the Gentiles. If you are arrested, don't

plan your defense. Say whatever comes to you as you are speaking. Don't be scared. It won't be you speaking but the Holy Spirit. If you're thrown out of one town, hasten to another. You will not have covered the cities of Israel before the son of Adam arrives. A disciple isn't better treated than his teacher or a slave than his master. For the disciple it's enough to be with his teacher; for a slave, to be with his master. If people call the master the son of Beelzebub, what will they call the master's slaves? Don't be afraid of them; nothing is covered that won't be revealed, and hid that won't be known. What I tell you now while we are alone, proclaim in the markets; what I whisper in your ear, shout from the rooftops. Don't fear those who can kill the body but not the soul. Fear him who can destroy both body and soul in hell. Who could count the sparrows? Yet not one falls to the ground without your Father's knowing it. Hence get rid of fear: you are worth so far more than sparrows, even your hairs are counted. Whoever pleads for me in front of men, I'll plead for in heaven in front of the Father. Don't think that I shall bring peace on earth: I shall not bring peace but a sword. Where five live together, three will be against two and two against three. Micah said, "A son will accuse his father, a daughter will betray her mother, a daughter-in-law will betray her mother-in-law, and a man's enemies will be of his own house." So I say to you, Whoever welcomes a good man because he is good will receive a good man's reward. Whoever welcomes a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward. Whoever gives you even a cup of cold water because you are my disciple will receive a disciple's reward. Whoever welcomes you welcomes me. Whoever welcomes me welcomes him who sent me. I have come to set fire to the earth: I would it were already kindled. I have a baptism to be baptized with: I am held back until it is accomplished.

44. The Spring Festival

Jesus goes to Jerusalem. Near the Sheep Gate is a pool called Bethesda. It's surrounded by five porches, where many of the sick, the blind, the lame, and the paralyzed lie waiting for the water to move. For it's said an angel sometimes comes down and stirs the water: whoever then first after the stirring of the water steps in is cured. A man lying there has been sick for thirty-eight years. Jesus sees him.

JESUS

Do you hope to be cured?

THE SICK MAN

Sir, I've no one to put me in the pool when the water moves; while I'm trying to get there, someone steps in before me.

JESUS

Stand up, take your mat, and walk.

The man stands up, takes his mat, and starts walking. It's the Sabbath: seeing the sick man, people say to him, "You're breaking the Law by carrying your mat."

THE MAN

The man who made me whole said, "Take your mat and walk."

HIS QUESTIONERS

Point him out to us.

Jesus, however, has disappeared into the crowd. Later, the man sees him in the Temple.

JESUS

You're whole: don't sin again or something worse will come to you. *The man leaves the Temple and is able to tell those who questioned him that it was Jesus who cured him. They go to Jesus.*

THE QUESTIONERS

Why do you do these things on the Sabbath?

JESUS

My Father is working, and I am working.

The reply makes them angry; not only has Jesus broken the Sabbath but he is calling himself God's son.

JESUS

What I say is. I say to you, A son does nothing of his own, but only what he sees his Father do. What the Father does the son does also. The Father loves the son and shows him all that he does—things far greater than this cure that upsets you. As the Father raises the dead and makes them live, so the son also gives life to whom he chooses. The Father judges no one: he gives all judging to the son to make sure the son is honored as the Father is honored: who does not honor the son does not honor the Father. What I say is. I say to you, Whoever hears me and believes him who sent me will always have life. He won't be condemned but has passed from death to life. What I say is. I say to you, The time is coming and now is when the dead will hear the voice of the Father's son; and hearing it, will live. As the Father has life in himself, so he gives to the son to have life in himself. And he gives to his son power to execute judgment as the son of Adam. Don't balk at this. The time is soon when all in their graves will hear his voice and rise up. Those who have done good will rise to life, and those who have done evil will rise to damnation. I do nothing on my own. As I hear, so I judge. The judgment is just, because I don't look to my will but to the will of my Father who sent me to you. If I ask you to believe my word only, you are right to deny me. Other things recommend me. You heard John. He vouched for me. I don't say it to base my claim on a man but to incline your hearts to me. John was a burning and shining light. Once you were willing to rejoice in that light. I have a greater witness than John: the works the Father gives me to do, which I do daily, testify that the Father sent me. The Father himself who sent me tells you about me. You've never heard him. Since his words do not live in you, you do not believe the person he sent. But look in the scriptures, which you say have eternal life. They testify to me; yet you won't come to me and receive that life. So my claim doesn't depend on me. I know you. I know that you don't love God. I come with the Father's love. You do not welcome me, though if another came loving himself you would welcome him. How can you love me, if you love self-love more than the love that comes from God only?

Don't think I'll condemn you in front of the Father. Another will: Moses, whom you look to. Had you believed him you would believe me, for he wrote of me. Since you don't believe Moses, how can you believe me?

45. Salome

Herod Antipas hears about Jesus and exclaims to his court, "John's back from the dead! It's he who's working miracles." Herod had had John put in chains because John condemned his marriage to Herodias, his brother Philip's wife. Herodias wanted John killed, but Herod was afraid of the people, who took John for a prophet. Besides, Herod revered John. He visited him in prison, and though John's words upset him, he was eager to hear them. But on Herod's birthday Herodias' daughter danced before the court and pleased Herod so well we vowed to give her whatever she asked.

HEROD

Ask what you want and I will give it to you: what you ask of me I will give you, be it half my kingdom.
The girl went to her mother.

SALOME

Mother, what shall I ask for?

HERODIAS

John's head.
She ran to the king.

SALOME

Bring me John's head on a plate.
Herod was aghast when he heard this. But because of his promise and because he did not dare appear irresolute in front of his guests he gave the order: John's head was cut off and carried on a plate to the girl, who gave it to her mother.

46. Bread and Water

After the festival, Jesus leaves Jerusalem and returns to Capernaum. The apostles also return, and tell him what they did and taught.

JESUS

Let's go by ourselves to a quiet place where you can rest. Here people are always coming—you won't be able to eat or sit down.
Early in the morning they cross by boat to a place near Bethsaida, but people find out what they did and follow by land. Jesus sees them running toward him.

JESUS

They are like sheep without a shepherd.
He makes whole those who are sick and talks to the crowd until the late afternoon.

THE APOSTLES

It's almost evening, and there's nothing here for these people to eat: tell them to go into the villages and buy themselves food.

JESUS

You feed them.

PHILIP

Two hundred days' pay would only tickle their appetite.

JESUS

Go and see what we have.

ANDREW

A boy over there has food, but only five barley loaves and a couple of fish.

JESUS

Bring it here and ask the people to sit down.

The people sit down in groups of fifty to a hundred. They look like flower beds in the green grass. Looking up to the sky, Jesus takes the five loaves and the two fish, blesses them, breaks them, and gives them to the twelve, who give them to the crowd. Five thousand men and many women and children eat until they are sated.

JESUS

Gather the pieces that haven't been eaten, so that nothing is lost. *The apostles fill twelve baskets with the fragments of the five loaves. As Jesus sends the crowd home, some people come up to him and say, "Surely you're the prophet who is to come." They want to make him king, but he turns from them. Telling the apostles to take a boat and return to Capernaum, he goes up the hillside alone and prays through the night. At sea a gale opposes the boat and waves throw it about. The boat does not get beyond three miles from shore. Just before daybreak, the apostles see a figure walking past them on the water. Thinking, "It's a ghost!" they panic and start hurling curses at it.*

JESUS

Cheer up: it's me. Don't be scared.

PETER

Master, if it's you tell me to come to you on the water.

JESUS

Come.

Peter steps out of the boat and walks on the water toward Jesus. But noticing the gusting wind, he hesitates and sinks.

PETER

Master, save me!

Jesus puts his hand out and catches him.

JESUS

O you petty believer, why did you doubt?

As he carries Peter back to the boat the winds become calm. Falling on their knees, the apostles cry, "You really are God's son."

47. Gennesaret

They land. People recognize him and spread word to bring him everyone who's sick. They beg him to let the sick touch at least the hem of his cloak. All who touch he makes whole.

48. Meat

He returns to Capernaum. Some people who had remained on the other shore where Jesus had given them bread were now asking, "Where is he?" They knew that his followers had taken the only boat and had left without him. But being unable to find him and seeing the arrival of boats from Tiberias that they could

take to Capernaum, they decide to look for him there. They find him in a synagogue.

JEWES SEEKING JESUS

Teacher, when did you get back to Capernaum?

JESUS

What I say is. I say to you: You weren't looking for me because you saw God's will being done, but because you ate and were fed. Don't work for food that doesn't last, but for food that feeds life always. Adam's son will give you this food: it is why the Father sent him.

JEWES

What must we do to do God's work?

JESUS

This is God's work for you: believe him whom he sent.

JEWES

What proof have you that we should believe you? Our fathers ate manna in the desert. It's written, "He rained food on them to eat, and gave them food from heaven."

JESUS

What I say is. I say to you: Moses did not give you food from heaven. My Father is giving you the true bread from heaven. The bread descends from heaven and gives the world life.

JEWES

Master, always give us this food.

JESUS

I am the food of life. Whoever comes to me will not hunger; whoever comes to me will not thirst. But as I say, you saw me and don't believe. All whom the Father gives me will come to me; who comes to me I'll never refuse. I did not come down from heaven to do my will but the will of him who sent me. It is his will that I shall lose nothing of all he gives me, but shall raise everyone up on the last day. It is the Father's will that everyone who sees the son and believes in him shall always have life, and I shall raise him up on the last day.

They grumble against him because he calls himself the food that came down from heaven. They say to themselves, "Isn't he Joseph's son? How can he say, 'I came down from heaven'?"

JESUS

Don't grumble. Nobody can come to me unless the Father who sent me brings him. I will raise him up on the last day. Isaiah wrote, "God will teach the children." Therefore everyone who has heard the Father and recognizes him will come to me. Not that anyone has seen the Father: only he who comes from God has seen the Father. What I say is. I say to you: Whoever believes in me will live always. I am the living bread. Your fathers ate manna in the desert and are dead. I am the food that comes from heaven. Who eats me will not die. I am the living food that comes from heaven. If anyone eats this food he will live always. The food I give is my body. I give it for the life of the world.

JEWES

How can a man give us his body to eat?

JESUS

What I say is. I say to you: Unless you chew the flesh of Adam's son and swallow his blood you have no life in you. Who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has life without end and I will raise him up on the last day. My body is your true food and my blood is your true drink. Who eats my body and drinks my blood lives in me and I in him. As I live in the Father who sent me, so who eats me will live in me. I am the true food that comes from heaven. Your fathers ate manna and are dead. Who eats this food lives always. *Many of his followers are saying to themselves, "This is outlandish: nobody will listen to him."*

JESUS

Is it too much for you? Would it be easier if you saw Adam's son go up to where he came from? Love gives life. Authority creates nothing. What I tell you is love and life. Yet you won't believe; that is why I say: no one can come to me unless the Father brings him. *At this many leave him. He turns to the twelve.*

JESUS

Will you also go?

PETER

Master, to whom? Your words have eternal life.

JESUS

Didn't I choose you twelve? Yet one is a devil.

49. Scribes and Pharisees from Jerusalem

They see some of his followers eat without washing hands.

SCRIBES and PHARISEES

Why do your followers break ancient tradition and omit washing their hands when they eat?

JESUS

Why do you follow your ancient tradition of breaking God's commandments? God said, "Honor your father and mother," and, "He that injures his father or mother, let him die." You say, "Let a man tell his parents, 'All the money I can spare I have pledged to God,' and he is innocent." It's fitting that you turn away from God and follow the tradition of your fathers. Pretenders, Isaiah already saw through you when he said, "This people worships me with their mouth and serves me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; their prayer is empty, for they teach as God's word the edicts of men."

He turns to the crowd.

JESUS

Listen and know: it isn't how a man eats that pollutes him but how he speaks.

The scribes and Pharisees leave. The apostles come to him and say, "The Pharisees resent what you said about them."

JESUS

Every plant not planted in heaven by my Father will be uprooted. Let them alone. They are the blind leading the blind, and if one blind man leads another both end in the gutter.

PETER

Explain the new principle.

JESUS

Are you as acute as they? Don't you see that what goes into a person's mouth passes through his bowels into the sewer but that what comes out of his mouth comes from his heart and defiles him? Out of the heart come hatred, murder, adultery, fornication, theft, lies, and impiety. These defile: to eat without washing hands does not.

50. On the Mediterranean

He's walking along the shore between Tyre and Sidon. A Greek Canaanite woman from the region approaches him.

THE WOMAN

Lord, son of David, help me! A demon is torturing my daughter. *He pays no attention to her.*

THE APOSTLES

Do something about her—she's following us and shouting.

JESUS

I was sent to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

THE WOMAN

Lord, help me.

JESUS

It isn't right to take food from the children to give it to the dogs.

THE WOMAN

Lord, that's very true, yet the dogs feed on scraps that fall from their master's table.

JESUS

Woman, you have a jumping faith: whatever you beg for you'll get. *Her daughter is cured.*

51. Signs

They go up to Sidon, then visit the territory of the Ten Towns. Some friends of a man who is deaf and dumb ask Jesus to put his hands on him. Taking the man aside, he puts his finger on the man's ears, then spits on the finger, puts the spit on the man's tongue, looks up to the sky, and groans.

JESUS

Ephphatha: be opened.

The man hears him and speaks. Jesus goes up a hillside. A great crowd brings him cripples, deaf-mutes, the blind, and others who are sick. For three days he cures the sick. Then he calls his followers together.

JESUS

I feel sorry for them. They've been here three days and have nothing to eat. If I send them away hungry, they'll faint on the road.

THE APOSTLES

Where are we going to get enough food in this isolated spot to feed such a crowd?

JESUS

How much food have you?

THE APOSTLES

Seven loaves and a few small fish.

He asks the people to sit on the ground. Thanking God, he takes

the loaves and the fish, blesses them, and gives them to the apostles, who give them to the people. Four thousand men and many women and children eat and are sated, and what remains of the bread fills seven hampers. He sends the crowd away and goes by boat to Magadan. There Pharisees and Sadducees try to provoke him into showing them a sign from God.

JESUS

After a red sunset you say, "It will be fair weather"; and after a red sunrise you say, "It will rain." You read the skies—can't you read the signs of the times?

JESUS, to the apostles

Take care you don't eat the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees. *They've forgotten to bring food with them: they have only a loaf of bread. They complain among themselves, "But we have not bread of our own."*

JESUS

What petty believers you are! Is it so difficult to take in? Don't your ears hear and your eyes see? Have you already forgotten that five loaves fed five thousand and filled twelve baskets and that seven loaves fed four thousand and filled seven hampers? Where is the difficulty seeing I was not talking about food? I repeat, Beware of the yeast of the Pharisees and Sadducees.

52. Bethsaida

A blind man who lives outside the village is brought to him. Taking him by the hand, Jesus leads him beyond the village gate and wets the man's eyes with spit.

JESUS

Do you see?

THE BLIND MAN

I see people looking like trees, but walking. *He again puts spit in the man's eyes and asks him to look. The man's sight is completely restored.*

JESUS

Go home. Don't go into the village or say anything to the villagers.

53. Near Caesarea Philippi

JESUS

Who do men say I am?

THE APOSTLES

Some say you're John, others Elijah, others Jeremiah or another prophet.

JESUS

Who do you say I am?

SIMON PETER

You are the Messiah, the son of the living God.

JESUS

Loved are you, Simon, Jonah's son. No man told you this, but my Father in heaven. And I say to you: on this Rock I shall build my temple. In it Death will not triumph. I shall give you keys made in the Father's kingdom: what is locked in heaven you shall lock on earth, and what is open in heaven you shall open on earth.

He warns them to tell no one he is the Messiah. He tells them he

will go up to Jerusalem, where he will be put on trial by the high priests, elders, and scribes, be put to death, and be raised on the third day. Peter draws him aside and starts arguing with him.

PETER

This isn't you, Lord—it can't happen.

JESUS

Get out of my way, Satan, you are a stone in my path. You speak for men and not God.

JESUS, to the twelve

If anyone wishes to be with me, he will have to disown himself each day, take up his cross, and walk with me. Everyone who looks after his life will lose it, and everyone who loses his life for me and the good news will find it. What use is it to win the whole world and lose your life? What would you offer to buy it back? When the son of Adam comes in his Father's power accompanied by angels he will reward everyone according to his acts. If you deny me now, he will deny you when he comes with the holy angels and his Father's glory. What I say to you is, Some here today will not die before seeing Adam's son enthroned.

54. Six Days Later

He takes Peter and the brothers James and John up a high mountain where they are by themselves. Peter and Zebedee's sons are very drowsy. When they open their eyes, Jesus is changed before them. His face shines like the sun and his clothes are like light. Moses and Elijah are talking with him.

PETER, to Jesus

It's good we're here: we can put up three tents—for you, Moses, and Elijah.

In fact Peter's terrified—he doesn't know what he's saying.

Suddenly a lightning cloud illumines the landscape—a voice comes out of the cloud: THIS IS MY SON, WHOM I LOVE: HEAR HIM. Peter and the brothers find themselves face down shaking on the ground. Jesus' hand is on them.

JESUS

Stand up. Don't be afraid.

They come down the mountain.

JESUS

Tell no one what you saw until Adam's son has returned from the dead.

JAMES

Why do the scribes say that first Elijah must return and make everything ready?

JESUS

What they say happened. Elijah came and they didn't know him. They used him for their own purposes, and they will do the same with Adam's son.

At the bottom of the mountain he finds his followers arguing with scribes.

JESUS, to the scribes

What are you arguing about?

A man out of the crowd kneels before him.

THE MAN

Sir, help my son. He's insane; something inside him is tearing him apart. He never hears or says anything. He often falls into fire or water. For long periods he doesn't do anything but lie on the ground foaming at the mouth and grinding his teeth. I brought him to your followers, but they couldn't cure him.

JESUS

A suspicious and twisted age. How long will I be with you, and how long will I carry you? Bring the boy here.

The man brings his son, who rolls on the ground, his mouth foaming.

JESUS

How long has he been like this?

THE BOY'S FATHER

Since he was very young. If you can do anything, be kind and help us.

JESUS

If you believe—everything is possible to one who believes.

THE FATHER

Sir, I believe: stop my not believing.

Jesus looks at the boy.

JESUS

Dumb and deaf spirit, I say to you: come out and never return.

The boy shakes and gives a yell, then lies perfectly still. The crowd murmurs, "He's dead!" Jesus takes him by the hand: he stands up. Afterwards, when they're alone, the twelve question Jesus.

THE APOSTLES

Why couldn't we throw the spirit out?

JESUS

Because you don't believe.

55. Children and Servants

Collectors of the Temple tax approach Peter.

TAX COLLECTORS

Does your master support the Temple?

PETER

Yes.

He goes to tell Jesus, but before he can say anything Jesus speaks to him.

JESUS

What do you think, Simon—do the kings of earth tax their children or outsiders?

PETER

They tax outsiders.

JESUS

Then the children are exempt. Nevertheless, that no one be offended, throw a line in the sea, take the first fish you catch, and open its mouth. You'll find a coin: take it and give it to the collectors for us both.

They are returning from a walk.

JESUS

What were you discussing along the way?

The apostles say nothing, since they were arguing about who among them was greatest. Jesus calls a small child to him, sits down, and asks the twelve to come near.

JESUS

What I say to you is, Unless you turn around and become like small children you won't get into your Father's kingdom. Whoever makes himself as small as this child is greatest in the Father's kingdom. Who receives such a child receives me, and who receives me receives him who sent me. Never disdain a child. What I say to you is, their angels in heaven are always standing close to my Father. He does not want any child to be lost. Better drown at the bottom of the sea with a millstone tied around your neck than stand in the way of these small ones who believe in me. Alas for a world of barriers! There will be barriers, but alas for the person setting them! Remember what Isaiah says: "His worm shall not die, neither shall his fire be quenched, and all flesh shall find him abhorrent."

JOHN

Master, we saw somebody throw out devils in your name. He wasn't one of us, so we told him to stop.

JESUS

Don't. Nobody who does good in my name will lightly speak evil of me: whoever isn't against us is for us.

PETER

Master, how many times should my brother hurt me and I forgive him? Seven?

JESUS

Not seven but seventy times seven. Your Father's kingdom is as if a king decided to call in debts owed him by his servants. One of the first to have to settle accounts was a man who owed an immense sum. Since he couldn't pay, his master commanded that he be sold along with his wife, his children, and all he owned, and the money handed over. The man fell down and praised the king and said, "Lord, be patient with me and I shall pay you everything." The king pitied him, released him, and cancelled the debt. The servant went out and found a fellow servant who owed him a trifling sum. He took him by the arm and throat and said, "Pay me what you owe me." His fellow servant fell to his knees pleading with him and said, "Be patient with me and I'll pay you everything." But he would not listen and had him jailed till the debt should be paid. When the other servants saw what happened they were saddened and told the king. The king called the man in and said, "You wicked servant. I forgave you your debt as you asked. Shouldn't you show the same mercy to your fellow servant as I showed to you?" The king was angry and handed the servant over to the torturers until he paid the full amount. So my Father in heaven will do to you, if you don't in your hearts forgive your brother his faults.

Some time before, he had appointed seventy-two disciples and had sent them by twos to every town and village of Galilee,

giving them the same instructions he had given the twelve. The seventy-two now return elated because, as they tell him, "Master, when we invoked your name even devils obeyed us!" Yet they report few conversions.

JESUS

I saw Satan fall from heaven like lightning. Though I give you power to walk on scorpions and snakes and to overcome demons, yet don't be happy that the spirits obey you: rather, be happy that your names are written in heaven. Alas for you, Chorazin! Alas, Bethsaida! If the people of Tyre and Sidon had seen the miracles you have seen they would have long repented and sat in sackcloth and ashes. It will be more bearable for Tyre and Sidon in the judgment than for you. And you, Capernaum, how will you be raised up to heaven?—you will be thrown down to hell. All things are given me by the Father. No one knows the son but the Father, and no one knows the Father but the son and those whom the son brings to the Father. I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for hiding these things from the learned and the astute and revealing them to babies. Father, I thank you that this seemed good in your eyes. Come to me, all you who struggle and are weighed down, for I shall give you rest. Put on my yoke and learn from me, for I am gentle and loving, and your souls will find rest. My yoke is easy and my burden is light.

Jerusalem

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56. The Fall Festival

At the Spring Festival, he had infuriated Jews in Jerusalem by claiming to be God's son. Many in the city vowed to kill him if he returned. Yet as the Fall Festival approaches, his relatives in Galilee advise him, "Leave here and go to Judea, where the whole world can see the great things you're doing. No one can stay away from Jerusalem if he wants to make himself known." Even now his relatives, though wishing him well, don't believe in him. He says to them, "My time isn't yet, but your time is always. The world doesn't hate you, but it hates me because I tell it its works are evil. Go to the festival: I'll go when my time comes." So he remains in Galilee. But after his relatives depart, he and the twelve also set out for Jerusalem. On their way they come to a Samaritan village. He sends messengers to arrange for resting, but when the villagers learn he's going to Jerusalem they refuse him their welcome.

JAMES and JOHN

Master, do you want us to call down fire from heaven and burn them up?

He scolds the brothers. Before they reach the next village, a Samaritan from the previous village overtakes them.

THE SAMARITAN

Master, I'm with you, but let me settle matters at home.

JESUS

No one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for God's kingdom.

He enters Jerusalem secretly. People are watching for him, since he's a figure of controversy. Some are saying, "He's a good man"; others, "Not at all—he's deceiving the people." Still others hope

he's the Messiah but are afraid to say what they think. Halfway through the festival, he goes to the Temple and speaks to the crowds.

BYSTANDERS

How can a man who hasn't studied know what he's talking about?

JESUS

What I tell you isn't mine, but his who sent me. Try to do his will and you'll know if what I teach comes from me or from God. Whoever speaks for himself must look after his own reputation. Whoever delivers a message can rely on the person who sent him. If the sender is true the messenger is trustworthy. Didn't Moses give you the Law? If you object to the Law, why try to kill me?

BYSTANDERS

That's ridiculous—who said anything about killing you?

JESUS

I do good on the Sabbath and you find it shocking. Moses was following his fathers when he gave you circumcision. You're permitted to circumcise a man on the Sabbath, yet you're angry with me when on the Sabbath I make a man perfectly whole. I ask you not to judge by what seems to be the case but by what is the case.

They now know who he is.

A JEW

He's talking openly, yet nobody's denouncing him. Have they decided he really is the Messiah? But we know the man and where he comes from. When the Messiah appears, no one will know where he comes from.

JESUS

You say you know me and know where I come from, yet I didn't come on my behalf but because he who sent me is true: It's he you don't know.

Some of the Pharisees and chief priests have brought with them Temple guards to arrest him. They want to seize him right there, but the crowd protects him.

THE CROWD

If the Messiah ever comes, will he do anything this man hasn't?

JESUS

For a short time I'll be with you; then I'll return to him who sent me. You'll look for me and won't find me.

PEOPLE IN THE CROWD

Where will he go that we can't find him? Will he appeal to Jews throughout the Empire? Is he going over to the Greeks? Why does he say we'll look for him and won't find him?

The last and greatest day of the festival. He again talks to the people.

JESUS

If anyone thirsts, come to me and drink. Everyone who believes in me will have flowing in him rivers of living water.

SOME JEWS

He is the Prophet! He is the Messiah!

OTHERS

Will the Messiah come from Galilee? Doesn't scripture say that he'll come from David's family and be born in David's city?

THE CHIEF PRIESTS, to the guards

Why don't you arrest him?

GUARDS

Nobody talks like him.

CHIEF PRIESTS

Are you people also fools? Has anyone who has the right to know ever spoken up for him? You people who know nothing are a curse.

NICODEMUS, a Pharisee

Does our Law judge anyone before it hears him and knows what he's done?

OTHER PHARISEES

Are you from Galilee too? However you twist scripture, no prophet will come out of Galilee.

The crowd disperses. After spending the night on the Mount of Olives, Jesus returns to the Temple. It's the Sabbath. A crowd gathers around him; he sits down and speaks with them. A group of Pharisees and scribes brings him a woman guilty of adultery and holds her in front of him.

SCRIBES

Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. Moses in the Law says that such persons must be stoned to death. What do you say?

Ignoring them, he bends down and writes on the ground with his finger. When they continue to insist that he answer them, he stands up.

JESUS

Whoever of you is without sin: let him throw the first stone. *He bends down and again writes on the ground. Beginning with the eldest, the woman's accusers go away one by one until she is alone before him. He looks at her and stands up.*

JESUS

Where are the judges? Is no one here to condemn you?

THE WOMAN

No one, Lord.

JESUS

I don't condemn you either: go and don't sin again.

He goes to the Temple treasury.

JESUS

I am the world's light. Who follows me won't walk in the dark but will have the light of life.

A PHARISEE

You're talking about yourself: what you say has no authority.

JESUS

Even when I speak of myself, you can believe what I say. I, at least, know where I come from and where I am going, but you have no notion of my origin or my destiny. You have authority over men. I

have authority over no one. Yet what authority I possess is true authority because I am not alone. I am with my Father who sent me. The Law says, "At the mouth of two witnesses the matter shall be established." I am one that testifies to me, and my Father who sent me testifies to me.

ANOTHER PHARISEE

Where is your father?

JESUS

You don't know me and don't know my Father. If you knew me you'd know my Father. I am going away. You will look for me and die in your sins. Where I am going you cannot follow.

THE CROWD

Will he kill himself? Where can we go that we can't follow?

JESUS

You are from below, I am from above. You are of the world, I am not. Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins. I say again: If you do not believe that I am that I am, you will die in your sins.

A THIRD PHARISEE

Who are you?

JESUS

I am who I am, as always. I could say many things that would condemn you, but I speak to the world those things which I have heard from him who sent me. I come to tell you they are true. When you have lifted up the son of Adam, you will know that I am that I am and that I do nothing of myself: that as my Father taught me, so I teach you. He that sent me is with me. The Father has not left me alone, for the things I do please him. If you hold to what I say, you are my disciples. You'll know the truth, and the truth will make you free.

PHARISEES

We are descendants of Abraham and have never been anyone's slaves. How can you say you'll make us free?

JESUS

I say to you: whoever sins is the slave of sin. A slave has no standing in a house. The son has. If the son makes you free, then you really are free. I know you are Abraham's descendants. Yet you want to kill me because what I say has no place in you. I speak what I have seen with my Father. Your acts show who your father is.

PHARISEES

Abraham is our father.

JESUS

If you were Abraham's children you would do Abraham's works. Why, then, do you want to kill me, who has told you the truth he has heard from God? Is that Abraham's example? You are doing your father's work.

PHARISEES

We are not born of fornication. We have one Father, God himself.

JESUS

If God were your Father you would love me, because I come from

and am sent by God. I willingly came because he sent me. You cannot grasp my message, because you will not hear what I am saying. Your father is the devil and you do the will of your father. He was a murderer from the beginning and hated truth because he had no truth in him. When he speaks he speaks in you, because he is a liar and the father of lies. Who of you can convict me of sin? If I tell you the truth, why don't you believe me? It's because I tell you the truth that you don't believe me. Whoever is of God hears God's words: because you are not of God, you do not hear.

PHARISEES

Didn't we tell you that you are a blasphemer and a madman?

JESUS

I am not mad. I honor the Father. You dishonor me. I don't seek my glory. One who does seek it will judge you. What I say is. I say to you: If anyone keeps my word, he will not die.

PHARISEES

Now we know you're crazy. Abraham's dead, so are the prophets, and you tell us anybody who believes you won't die. Who do you think you are?

JESUS

If I honor myself the honor is nothing. It is my Father—of whom you say, he is your God—who honors me. But you do not know him. I do: if I said I did not I'd be a liar like you. But I know him and keep his word. Your father Abraham rejoiced to see my day. He saw it and was glad.

PHARISEES

You aren't fifty years old, and you tell us about Abraham!

JESUS

What I say is. I say to you: before Abraham was, I am.
They pick up stones, but the crowd protects him. He walks out of the Temple. On the street he meets a man who was born blind.

THE APOSTLES

Teacher, who sinned, he or his parents, that he should be blind all his life?

JESUS

He is not blind because of anyone's sins, but because God's work will shine in him.

Making some mud with spit, he rubs it on the man's eyes.

JESUS

Wash your eyes in the Siloam Pool.
He goes to the pool, washes his eyes, and looks up seeing. Some priests see him walking about.

PRIESTS

Didn't this man sit and beg?

SOME IN THE CROWD

He did.

OTHERS

Looks like him.

THE MAN HIMSELF

I'm the one.

PRIESTS

How is it you're able to see?

THE MAN

Someone named Jesus put mud on my eyes and told me to go to the Siloam Pool and wash. I went, washed, and saw.

PRIESTS

Where is this Jesus?

THE MAN

I don't know.

PRIESTS

This man you're talking about isn't from God: he doesn't keep the Sabbath.

BYSTANDERS

How can a sinner work miracles?

PEOPLE, to the man who was born blind

What's your opinion?

THE MAN

He's a prophet.

The priests go to the man's parents.

PRIESTS

If your son was born blind, how has he come to see?

HIS PARENTS

He is our son, and he was born blind. How he came to see or who opened his eyes, we don't know. Ask him. He's old enough: let him speak for himself.

They go back to him.

PRIESTS

Give God the praise: we know this man is a sinner.

THE MAN

Whether he's a sinner or not I don't know. One thing I do know: I was blind—now I see.

PRIESTS

What did he do to you? How did he open your eyes?

THE MAN

I've already told you and you didn't believe me. Why do you want me to repeat it? Are you going to do what he does?

PRIESTS

You're this magician's accomplice. We are disciples of Moses. We know God spoke to Moses. Your man comes out of nowhere.

THE MAN

Remarkable: a man from nowhere opens eyes. You know as well as I that God doesn't listen to sinners. God only listens to the man who worships him and does his will. It's unheard of for someone to be born blind and have his eyes opened. If he were a sinner, he could do nothing.

PRIESTS

You were born in sin and you're telling us what to think?

They turn and walk away. He sees Jesus.

JESUS

Do you believe in God's son?

THE MAN

Show him to me and I'll believe.

JESUS

You see him: he's talking with you.

THE MAN

Lord, I believe.

JESUS

My coming is a judgment on the world. The blind will see and the seeing will be blind.

Some Pharisees overhear this.

PHARISEES

What you're saying is: we're blind to you.

JESUS

If you were blind you would have no sin; but since you say, "We see," your guilt remains. What I say is. I say to you: Anyone who does not go in the sheepfold through the gate but climbs in some other way is a thief or a robber. The shepherd goes in through the gate. The gatekeeper opens the gate to him and the sheep hear his voice. He calls his sheep by name and leads them out. The sheep follow him because they know his voice. They will not follow a stranger, but will run from him, because they do not know the voice of strangers. What I say is. I say to you: I am the sheep gate. All who don't come through me are thieves and robbers. The sheep will not hear them. I am the gate. Whoever enters through me will be saved, will go in and go out, and find pasture. I am the shepherd: the good shepherd who gives his life for his sheep. The thief comes to steal, kill, and destroy. I come to give my sheep life. The hireling sees the wolf coming, forsakes the sheep, and runs away—and the wolf attacks the sheep and scatters them. The hireling runs away because he's hired. The sheep are not his, and he doesn't love them. I am the shepherd. The Father knows me and I know the Father. In the same way, I know my sheep and my sheep know me. I give my life for my sheep. I have other sheep, that are not of this fold. I must bring them in also. They will hear my voice, and they will come to me, and there will be one shepherd and one sheep herd. My Father loves me, because I give my life to receive it again. No one takes it from me. I give it willingly. I give my life and receive it back. It is my Father's wish.

57. Martha and Mary

He remains in Judea and teaches in the villages near Jerusalem. One day he walks to Bethany, where the sisters Martha and Mary welcome him to their home. Martha serves, while Mary sits at his feet.

MARTHA

Master, do you think it's right that my sister should leave it to me to do all the serving? Please ask her to help me.

JESUS

Martha. Martha. You are conscientious and worry over many things. One thing only was needed: Mary gave it, and it won't be taken from her.

58. Praying

He's praying. A follower comes to him.

FOLLOWER

Master, teach us to pray as John taught his followers.

JESUS

Whenever two of you agree here on earth to ask anything, my Father in heaven will give it to you; and when two or three of you come together because of me, I am there with you. Suppose you had a friend and you went to him in the middle of the night and said, “Friend, lend me some food; someone I know who is traveling has come to my house, and I’ve nothing to feed him.” Suppose your friend said, “Don’t bother me—I’ve locked the door and my children are in bed; I can’t give you what you want.” Yet I say to you, even if he won’t get up and give you food because he’s your friend, he will give you everything you need if you keep insisting.

59. Wealth

A man asks a favor.

THE MAN

Master, talk to my brother: tell him to give him my share of our inheritance.

JESUS

Friend, who made me a judge between you and him? If he wrongs you, tell him about it between yourselves. If he listens you’ve won him over. If he doesn’t, bring one or two others and establish the truth. If he doesn’t listen, inform the community. If he won’t listen to the community—then he’s a stranger to you. But why be rich, since you won’t find life in what you own? A man once reaped a tremendous harvest—much more than he could store. “How could I do better,” he thought, “than pull down the old granaries and put up larger ones? I’ll store all the grain and also my possessions. I’ve enough for many years: I’ll lie back, eat, drink—really enjoy life.” But God said, “Fool, tonight your life will be taken from you—who will now enjoy what you have provided?”

60. The Seventh Day

He sees a woman who’s bent double. She has been sick eighteen years. He calls her to him and puts his hands on her.

JESUS

Woman, stand free of your illness.

She straightens up and praises God. A synagogue leader observing this becomes angry and shouts at the crowd.

THE SYNAGOGUE LEADER

There are six days in the week when a man can work. Come and get cured on those days and let the Sabbath alone.

JESUS

You pretender, doesn’t everyone untie his ox on the Sabbath to give it water? May not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan has bound for eighteen years, be untied on the Sabbath?

61. Judgment

People tell him of Galileans whose blood Pilate had spilled on their sacrifices.

JESUS

Do you think they died because they were worse sinners than other Galileans? I say they were not, and unless you reverse yourselves

you also shall die. Consider the eighteen who were crushed when the Siloam Tower fell. Do you think they died because they were worse sinners than the other Jews of Jerusalem? I say there were not. Unless you reverse yourselves you also shall die. A fig tree grew in a vineyard. The owner came looking for fruit and, finding none, said to the gardener, "Look at this. Three years I've come here expecting fruit and have found not a fig. Cut it down—why waste the space?" But the gardener said, "Lord, please give it another year. I shall dig around it and give it manure. If it bears fruit, good; if it does not, then I will cut it down."

62. Hanukkah

Jesus walks into the Temple at Solomon's Porch. A crowd gathers.

A JEW

How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, say so.

JESUS

I told you and you don't believe. What I do for my Father tells you who I am and you don't believe. As I said, you aren't my sheep. My sheep hear my voice and I know them. They follow me and I give them life always. They will not die and no one will take them from me. My Father who gave them to me is more powerful than all, and no one will take them from him. I and the Father are one. *Again they pick up stones.*

JESUS

I've shown you many good things from the Father. For which of them do you stone me?

JEWS

Not for any good you've done, but for blasphemy: a man, you make yourself out to be God.

JESUS

Isn't it sung in the psalms, "I have said, You are gods"? You can't deny scripture. If they to whom God's word was sent are called gods, can you say to him whom the Father anointed and sent to the world, "You blaspheme," because he says, "I am God's son"? If I don't do the Father's work, then don't believe me. If I do, then even if you don't believe me, believe the work. Then you shall know that the Father is in me and I in him.

They try to seize him, but he walks away.

63. Perea

He and the apostles leave Judea and cross the Jordan River to Perea, where John first baptized. Large crowds come to him, and he cures their sick.

A JEW

Lord, will only a few be saved?

JESUS

The way to get in is through the narrow door.

A PHARISEE

Leave Perea—or Herod will kill you.

JESUS

Tell that fox: Today and tomorrow I'll expel demons and cure the

sick, and on the third day I'll be glorified. I'll go my way today and tomorrow: and on the third day I'll go up to Jerusalem; for a prophet can't die away from Jerusalem.

64. Guests

A leading Pharisee gives a large dinner party, to which he invites Jesus and the apostles. Seeing the guests eagerly seeking the best places, Jesus speaks to the twelve.

JESUS

Don't sit in the best seats when you're asked to a banquet. Someone worthier than you may have been invited—your host may say to you, "Give this person his seat"—and you will have the shame of trying to find a place far away. No: when asked to a banquet, go and sit in the worst seat, that your host may say to you, "Friend, come closer." Then your fellow guests will be delighted to sit and eat with you.

He turns to his host.

JESUS

When you give a party or a feast, don't just invite your friends, your relatives, and your rich neighbors. They will repay you by inviting you to their parties and feasts. Beg the poor, the sick, the cripples, the blind to come. You'll be fortunate because they can't repay you. When the just rise from the dead, then you'll be repaid.

A DINNER GUEST

Blessed is he who will eat bread in God's kingdom.

JESUS

A man once gave a great banquet and invited many guests. When the meal was prepared he sent his servant to tell the guests, "Come, everything is ready." But every one of the guests excused himself. The first said, "I've just bought some property and must inspect it; please say I can't attend." Another said, "I've just bought five yoke of oxen and must look at them; please say I can't attend." And another said, "I've just gotten married—I can't come." When the servant returned and reported to his lord, the master became angry and said, "Quick, go into the streets and alleys of the town and bring here the poor, the sick, the cripples, and the blind." The servant did this. He returned to his master and said, "Lord, we did what you asked, and there is still room." The master said, "Go out into the roads and the fields and force those you find to come in, until my house is full. But not one of them I invited first shall taste my banquet."

65. Discipleship

A crowd is following him.

JESUS

If anyone comes to me and does not hate his mother and father, his wife and children, his sisters and brothers, and yes, his own life, he cannot be my disciple. If any of you intended to build a tower, wouldn't he first sit down and count the cost to see whether he can afford to finish it? Otherwise, he might lay the foundation and not be able to go on. People will look and laugh; they'll say: "He started, but couldn't finish." What king going to make war against another king doesn't sit down and consider whether his

ten thousand soldiers can defeat his enemy's twenty thousand? If they can't he sends emissaries and sues for peace while the other army is a great way off. So: who even among you does not forsake everything can't be my disciple.

66. Happiness

Turncoats and criminals come to hear him.

SCRIBES and PHARISEES

The man delights in traitors and eats with them.

JESUS

What shepherd having a hundred sheep and losing one doesn't leave the ninety-nine and go in the wilderness to find the one that is lost? And when he finds it, he puts it on his shoulders and is filled with happiness. He runs home, calls his friends and neighbors together, and says, "Let's celebrate—I've found my sheep that was lost." I say to you there is more happiness in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine persons who need no repentance. What woman having ten pieces of silver and losing one doesn't light a candle and sweep the house and look searchingly until she finds it? And when she finds it, she jumps up, calls her friends and neighbors together and says, "Let's celebrate, I've found my silver piece that was lost." I say to you there is among God's angels more happiness over one sinner who repents. A man had two sons. The younger said to his father, "Father, give me now my share of the inheritance." So the man divided his property. A few days later the son brought together what he had received and moved to a foreign country, where he used up his wealth in riotous living. After he lost everything a great famine came over the land, and he began to starve. He attached himself to a citizen of the country, who sent him to a farm to feed pigs. And he would willingly have filled his stomach with the middlings the pigs ate, his ration was so meager. Then he came to his senses and said, "My father's many servants have more than enough food and I'm dying of hunger. I shall leave this place and go to my father and say, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I no longer deserve to be called your son. Take me as one of your hired servants.'" So he left the place and went to his father. While he was still in the distance, his father saw him and loved him. He ran to his son, held his shoulders, and kissed him. The son said, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you and don't deserve to be called your son." But the father said to the servants, "Bring out the best robe and put it on him; put rings on his fingers and shoes on his feet; bring out the fatted calf and kill it. Let us enjoy ourselves and eat. My son was dead and now is alive. He was lost, and now he's found." And they began to enjoy themselves. The elder son was in the fields. As he came near the house he heard music and dancing. He called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. The servant said, "Your brother has returned. Your father has killed the fatted calf, the boy has come home safe and sound." Then the elder brother grew angry and would not go in. His father came out to plead with him, but he answered, "Look, for many years I've worked for you and have

never once disobeyed your orders, yet you have never given me a single goat for me to enjoy with my friends. Now this boy comes who spent your money on whores, and for him you kill the fatted calf." The father said, "Son, you are with me always. Everything I have is yours. It is right that we should be happy and enjoy ourselves. Your brother was dead and is alive. He was lost, and now he's found."

67. Here

He's walking with his followers.

JESUS

A rich man had a steward who was accused of misusing the property. He called him in and said, "What's this I hear about you? Hand in your records: you're no longer my steward." The steward walked away saying to himself, "What shall I do, now that my master is taking the stewardship away from me? I can't dig. I'm ashamed to beg. I must see to it that even when I'm no longer steward I shall be taken into people's houses." The steward called on the rich man's debtors. He said to the first, "How much do you owe my master?" And when the answer came, "A hundred measures of oil," he said, "Take your bill, sit down, and quickly write in fifty." He asked another, "How much do you owe?" When the answer came, "A hundred measures of wheat," he said, "Take your bill and write eighty." The master heard of this, and commended the unjust steward for his cunning. The children of the world know better than the children of light how to deal with the world. I say to you: use the things of this world to make friends, so that when you fall out of the world they will receive you in their eternal homes. Whoever can be trusted with little things can be trusted with great. Whoever cheats in little things cheats in great. If you can't be trusted with wealth that rots, who will trust you with true wealth? If you can't be trusted with what is lent you, who will give you anything to own? A rich man and a beggar lived in the same neighborhood. The rich man dressed in purple and in linen and ate sumptuously every day. The beggar, whose name was Lazarus and who was full of sores, lay at the rich man's door. For he hoped to feed himself with the scraps that fell from the rich man's table; and besides, the dogs came and licked his sores. The beggar died and was carried by angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died. He was buried and from hell he lifted his eyes in torment. Far off he saw Abraham with Lazarus in his arms. He cried, "Father Abraham, pity me. Send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue." Abraham said, "Son, remember that you in your lifetime received your good things, and Lazarus received evil from you. Now he is comforted and you are in torment. Moreover, there is a great gulf between us and you. They who would pass from here to you cannot, nor can they pass to us, who come from you." The man who had died rich said, "If that is true, father, I pray you send him to my father's house. I have five brothers, and he will warn them, and they won't come to this place of torment." Abraham said, "They have Moses and the prophets to listen to." The man said, "No, Father Abraham, if

someone came to them from the dead, they will repent.” Abraham said to him, “If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, they will not listen, if a man rose from the dead.”

PETER

Lord—increase our faith.

JESUS

If you had faith the size of a mustard seed, you could tell this mulberry, “Be uprooted and planted in the sea,” and it would obey you. If you had a servant plowing a field or feeding cattle, would you say when he comes in, “Please, sit down and eat”? Should a master reward his servant for obeying him? When you have done all the things commanded you, you will say, “I am a useless servant: I have done only my duty.”

68. Ten Lepers

Near a village on the border between Perea and Samaria. Ten lepers stand at a distance and salute them.

THE LEPERS

Jesus, Master, help us!

JESUS

Go: show yourselves to the priests.

Going, they're made clean. One of them, a Samaritan, turns back, falls at Jesus' feet, and shouts praises to God.

JESUS

Weren't ten made clean? Where are the other nine? Must a man be a foreigner to turn and give God glory? Stand up: your faith makes you whole.

69. God's Kingdom

They encounter some Pharisees.

PHARISEES

Where should we look for God's kingdom?

JESUS

God's kingdom won't come from looking for it. Don't hope that someone will say, “Look here” or “Look there,” for—look—God's kingdom is in you.

THE APOSTLES

Lord, when will we see it?

JESUS

In a certain town there was a judge who feared neither God nor man. A widow in the town came to him and said, “Give me justice against my enemy.” At first the judge did nothing; but when the woman came back again and again he said to himself, “Will there be no end to this trouble? I know I'll get nothing out of this quarrel, but I had better do something about it in her favor—at least I'll get rid of a wearisome woman.” So the unjust judge. Can you doubt that God defends his elect, who cry to him day and night? I tell you, while they're waiting he has already given them everything they need.

THE TWELVE

We shall never stop praying.

JESUS

Two men entered the Temple to pray: a Pharisee and a tax

collector. The Pharisee walked to the front, looked up, and prayed, “God, thank you for making me different from other men—robbers, cheaters, adulterers—and from that tax collector. I fast twice a week. A tenth of what’s mine I give to you.” The tax collector remained in the back, did not look up to God, but beat his chest and said, “God, pity me, a sinner.” The tax collector and not the Pharisee returned blessed to his home.

ANOTHER PHARISEE

Are there any grounds for which a man may divorce his wife?

JESUS

Haven’t you read, “In the beginning he who created man created him male and female,” and “therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and cling to his wife, and they shall be one flesh”—no longer two but one flesh? Therefore what God joins together no man may separate.

THE PHARISEE

Why, then, did Moses allow us to divorce a wife after giving her a notice of separation?

JESUS

It is because of your recalcitrance that Moses allowed you to divorce your wives. It was not so in the beginning. I say to you that anyone who divorces a faithful wife forces her into adultery, and anyone who marries a divorced woman commits adultery himself.

THE APOSTLES

If that’s how it is, it’s better not to marry.

JESUS

Not everyone will agree with your conclusion, but some will find it given them. Some are born eunuchs, some are made eunuchs by men, and some make themselves eunuchs for the sake of God’s kingdom. Whoever can accept this let him do so.

70. Infants

Some people bring him infants for him to touch. The Apostles reprimand them.

JESUS

Let the children come to me: God’s kingdom is made of them.

71. Life

A young man runs up and kneels before him.

THE YOUNG MAN

Good teacher, what must I do to always have life?

JESUS

Why say good? One is good, who is God. If you want life keep the commandments.

THE YOUNG MAN

Which?

JESUS

“You shall not kill,” “You shall not commit adultery,” “You shall not steal,” “You shall not bear false witness,” “Honor your father and mother,” and “Love your neighbor as yourself.”

THE YOUNG MAN

I have kept these since childhood.

Jesus puts his hands on the young man’s shoulders.

JESUS

If you wish to be perfect, sell what you have and give to the poor for treasure in heaven. Then walk with me.

The young man turns away sorrowing, for he owns much.

JESUS

A rich man will find it hard to get in the Father's kingdom: it is easier for a camel to get through a needle's eye than for a rich man to get in my Father's kingdom.

The apostles stare at Jesus.

JESUS

Children, how hard it will be for the rich to get in the Father's kingdom!

THE APOSTLES

Then who can be saved?

JESUS

With men it can't be. With God all can be.

PETER

We've given up everything to walk with you. What will we get for it?

JESUS

What I say to you is: In the next age, when Adam's son sits on his throne of power, you who have walked with me will sit on twelve thrones and judge the twelve tribes of Israel. Whoever gives up for me his home and possessions, his brothers and sisters, his father and mother, and his children, will in this life have hundreds of possessions, homes, brothers, sisters, fathers, mothers, and children, and in the next life will live forever.

A PHARISEE

We've served God our entire lives!

JESUS

The Father's kingdom is like a landowner who went out at dawn to hire workers for his vineyard. He agreed with the workers on the day's wage and sent them into the vineyard. He went out at mid-morning and found others standing idly in the marketplace. He said, "Go into the vineyard: I'll give you what is right." At noon and in the afternoon he hired more workers. Then near the end of the working day he went out and found others still idle. He asked, "Why stand here all day doing nothing?" They said, "Nobody hired us." He said, "Go into the vineyard and I'll give you what is right." Evening came. The landowner said to his foreman, "Call the workers in and pay everyone his wage." When the workers who were hired last came up they received the day's wage. The workers who were hired first expected more but they also received the day's wage. As they took it they complained to the landowner, "The last were here an hour and you treat them equally with us who have done the bulk of the work through the heat of the day." But the landowner said to their leader, "Friend, I didn't cheat you. Didn't you and I agree on the day's wage? Take your pay and go. I give to these last the same as I give you. May I not do what I want with my own estate? Are you resentful because I am generous?"

72. Precedence

They cross the Jordan to the Jerusalem side of the river. Again he tells his apostles: We are going up to Jerusalem; Adam's son will be handed over to the chief priests and scribes; they will condemn him to death and hand him over to the Gentiles, who will mock him, scourge him, and put him to death; on the third day he will rise.

Zebedee's wife, the mother of James and John, asks to see him.

JESUS

Tell me what you want.

ZEBEDEE'S WIFE

Let my two sons sit next to you in your kingdom—one at your right hand, the other at your left.

JESUS, to James and John

You don't know what you're asking. Are you willing to drink the cup I shall drink and be baptized with the baptism I shall be baptized with?

JAMES and JOHN

We are.

JESUS

You will drink my cup and be baptized with my baptism, but to be at my right and my left is not mine to give: it is for them my Father has prepared it for.

The other apostles hear what is being said and are angry with the two brothers. Jesus calls the twelve together.

JESUS

With the Gentiles the bosses give the orders and get the honors: it mustn't be so with you.

73. Jericho

Outside the city, they're met by a large crowd. Two blind men sitting along the road, hearing that Jesus is passing by, yell, "Lord, son of David, help us!" Some in the crowd try to quiet them but again they yell, "Lord, son of David, help us!" Jesus stops and asks them to come to him. The same people who were trying to quiet them now say, "Be happy—he's calling you." They jump up and throw their cloaks off.

JESUS

What do you want me to do for you?

BARTIMEUS, one of the blind men

Teacher, let us see.

Jesus touches their eyes.

JESUS

Your faith makes you whole: go your way.

They see and follow him into the city. Zaccheus, the chief tax official of the city and a rich man, wants to see who he is. Being very short, he can't peer over the crowd, so he runs ahead and climbs a sycamore, hoping to have a good look at Jesus going by. Jesus reaches the tree, looks up, and sees the tax official.

JESUS

Zaccheus, jump down quick: today I'm your guest.

Zaccheus jumps down and greets Jesus. Some people in the crowd are muttering, "He's staying with a traitor."

ZACCHEUS

Sir, I give half my property to the poor, and if I overtax anyone I repay him four times the amount.

JESUS

Today freedom comes to your house.

JESUS, to the crowd

This man, too, is Abraham's son. Adam's son has come to look for and save those who are lost.

74. Lazarus

In Bethany, Martha and Mary's brother Lazarus is sick. The sisters send word to Jesus: "Lord, one whom you love is sick."

JESUS, to the twelve

The sickness won't end in death.

They remain where they are two days. Then:

JESUS

Let's go and see Lazarus.

THE TWELVE

Lord, a little while ago they tried to stone you—you want to go back?

JESUS

Doesn't the day have twelve hours? If someone walks in the light he won't fall, because he'll see the world in light. But if he goes by night he will fall, because he will have no light in him. Our friend Lazarus is asleep: I must wake him.

THE TWELVE

Lord, if he's asleep he'll get better.

JESUS

Lazarus is dead. For your sakes I'm glad I wasn't there—so you'll believe. Now let's go to him.

THOMAS, to the others

Let's go and die with him.

By the time they reach Bethany, Lazarus has been buried four days. Martha and Mary are in the house with friends who have come to comfort them. Many are from Jerusalem, two miles away. Martha, hearing that Jesus is nearing the village, goes to meet him.

MARTHA

Lord, if you had come sooner, my brother wouldn't be dead. Even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask

JESUS

Your brother will live again.

MARTHA

I know he will live again at the Resurrection on the last day.

JESUS

I am the Resurrection and life: who believes in me and dies will live, and who lives in me will never die. Do you believe?

MARTHA

Yes, Lord, I believe that you are the Messiah, God's son who has entered the world.

Martha goes home and whispers to Mary, "Our Master's here—he's asking for you." Mary gets up quickly and the sisters leave

the house; their friends follow, thinking, "They're going to weep at the grave." Mary goes to Jesus and falls at his feet.

MARY

Lord, if you had been here, my brother wouldn't have died.

JESUS

Where have you laid him?

MARY

Lord, come and see.

They go to the cave where Lazarus is buried. Jesus is crying.

Some of the mourners are saying: "See how much he loved him."

Others: "The man made the blind see, but could he have kept Lazarus from dying?"

JESUS

Push the stone away.

MARTHA

Lord, he's been dead four days: by now he's stinking.

JESUS

Didn't I say to you that if you believe you'll see God's glory?

The stone is removed. Jesus looks at the sky.

JESUS

Father, I thank you for hearing me. And though I know that you hear me always, yet I say it now, that those who stand here with me will believe that you sent me.

He looks into the tomb.

JESUS

Lazarus, come out.

Lazarus who was dead comes out. He's still wrapped in his graveclothes and his face is covered.

JESUS

Untie him and let him see us.

Many now vow their support of Jesus; others go off to tell the Pharisees what happened.

Temple

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75. One Will Die

The chief priests and Pharisees meet: "What are we going to do? The man's succeeding. If we let him continue, everybody will believe him. The Romans will come and rob us of our place and our nation."

CAIAPHAS, the High Priest

You don't know what you're saying. It's an opportunity for us: one will die for his people, and the people will not die.

Where Jesus is isn't known; he's believed to be with his followers in the wilderness near Ephraim.

76. Passover

Jews from many countries are arriving in Jerusalem to purify themselves. Visiting the Temple, they look for Jesus and speculate with their acquaintances, "What do you think—that he won't show himself?" The chief priests and Pharisees give word that they should be told if Jesus is seen: they will have him arrested. They don't know that he's near Jerusalem and about to enter the city.

JESUS, to two followers

Go to Bethphage. You'll see a tethered donkey and her colt: untie them and bring them here. If anyone talks to you, say, "The Lord needs them and will return them soon."

The two go into the village and find a donkey and her colt tied to a door near a street corner. They begin to untie them. Some people standing in the street ask them, "What are you doing, untying these animals?" They answer as Jesus told them and take the animals. They bring them to Jesus and put on the colt's back blankets for him to sit on. Then they head toward Jerusalem, the donkey leading, the colt following her, Jesus

riding on the colt, as in Zechariah's prophecy: "Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion. Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem. Look! Your king comes to you. He is powerful and bringing salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey: a colt, a donkey's foal." Near Jerusalem a large crowd comes out to see him. They want to see Jesus and also Lazarus. Some spread clothes along the path. Others cut palm branches and lay them down. The crowd's shouting, "Long live the son of David! Hail to him who comes in the Lord's name! Long live our father David's kingdom that comes in the Lord's name! Hail to the Highest!"

PHARISEES

Master, stop these people.

JESUS

If they stopped, the stones would cry out.

He comes to the city gate. From the walls people ask, "Who's coming?" and are told, "Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee." The Pharisees complain among themselves, "Now what can we do? The world's mad for him." Jesus enters the city and weeps.

JESUS

If only you could see that this is your hour of freedom. But freedom is hidden from your eyes. The time is coming when your enemies will surround your walls. They will encircle you and hem you in everywhere. They will lay you and your children flat, and break you, and grind you to powder, because you did not know when God came to you.

He sees a fig tree in the distance and goes to it. It's covered with leaves but has no fruit since it is not the season.

JESUS

Let no one ever eat fruit from you.

He goes to the Temple and sees money-changers and sellers of sheep, oxen, and doves. Making a knot of cords, he drives the money-changers and sellers out of the Temple and overturns their tables and chairs.

JESUS

Take these things away. Don't make my Father's house a house of trade. It's written, "My house is a house of prayer for all people." You've made it the home of robbers.

THE SELLERS

What right have you to do what you're doing?

JESUS

Destroy this temple and in three days I'll raise it up.

THE SELLERS

The Temple took forty-six years to build and you'd rebuild it in three days!

But others recall the psalm, "Zeal for your house eats me up, and the scorn of them that scorn you is fallen on me." Cripples come to him: he makes them whole. Children are chanting, "Long live the son of David!"

THE CHIEF PRIESTS

Do you hear what they're saying?

JESUS

I hear. Haven't you read—"to the tongues of babes and sucklings you have given strength, because of your enemies"?

77. Night

He and the twelve leave the city and spend the night in Bethany.

78. Posers

They return to Jerusalem.

PETER

Master, look: the fig tree you cursed has withered away.

JESUS

Believe God. Whoever tells this mountain, "Get up and throw yourself in the sea," and has no doubt but believes that what he asks will happen, will have what he asks. Therefore I say to you: whatever you pray for, believe when you pray that you will get it, and you will.

He again goes to the Temple.

CHIEF PRIESTS and ELDERS

By what authority do you do the things you do? Who authorized you?

JESUS

I also shall ask a question: answer it and I'll tell you by what authority I do what I do. John's testimony—was it from God or from men?

They say to themselves, "If we say from God, he'll say, 'Then why didn't you believe him?' but if we say from men we anger the people, who are convinced that John was a prophet."

CHIEF PRIESTS

We do not know.

JESUS

Then you will not know by whose authority I do what I do. Let me ask you this. A man had two sons. He went to the firstborn and said, "Son, work today in my vineyard." The boy replied, "Yes, sir," but did not work. The man then went to his other son and asked him. First the boy said, "No, I will not," but later he changed his mind and worked in the vineyard. Tell me, which son did his father's work?

ELDERS

The second.

JESUS

Yes: that is why the tax collectors and the prostitutes will enter the kingdom before you.

CHIEF PRIESTS

John said it himself: he was not a prophet.

JESUS

A landowner planted a vineyard, set a hedge around it, built a wine press, and erected a tower; then he let the vineyard out and went to another country. At harvest time he sent a servant to the vineyard to receive his share of the produce. The tenants beat the servant and sent him away empty-handed. The landowner sent another servant. The tenants threw stones at him and struck his head before sending him away. The landowner sent another

servant. The tenants murdered him. Many others were sent; some were murdered and some merely beaten. The landowner had a son, whom he loved. He said to himself, "At least they'll respect my son." He sent him to his vineyard. When the tenants saw the landowner's son they said to themselves, "This is the heir: if we kill him the inheritance is ours." They seized the son, took him out of the vineyard, and murdered him. Tell me—when the landowner returns, what will he do to the tenants?

CHIEF PRIESTS

He'll destroy them and lease his vineyard to others who will give him its fruits.

JESUS

Do you remember the passage, "The same stone the builders refused is become the headstone in the corner: this is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our eyes"? Don't be surprised when the Father's kingdom is taken from you and given to a people who will bring forth its fruits. A king gave his son in marriage and invited the entire kingdom to attend the wedding. As the king greeted his guests he saw among them a man who was not properly dressed. He asked him, "My friend, why aren't you wearing your wedding clothes?" But the man said nothing. The king said to his servant, "Tie his hands and feet, and toss him into the darkness where he will scream and chew his tongue."

Herod's supporters join the discussion.

HERODIANS

Master, we know you always speak the truth and teach God's word regardless of persons or public opinion. Tell us, then, is it lawful to give tribute to Caesar or is it not?

JESUS

Pretenders, do you wish to tax or be taxed? Show me a coin.

They bring out a silver piece.

JESUS

Whose image and name are on it?

HERODIANS

Caesar's.

JESUS

Then give Caesar what is Caesar's and give God what is God's. *Although the Sadducees don't believe in existence after death, some Sadducees pose Jesus a question about it.*

SADDUCEES

Teacher, you know the law of Moses: "If brothers live together and one dies childless, his wife shall not marry outside the family; her husband's brother shall marry her and perform the duty of a husband's brother to her." Given this, consider the case of seven brothers. The eldest married and died, leaving no children. The second married his brother's wife and also died leaving no children. So the third down to the seventh. Last of all the woman died. Tell us: at the Resurrection, which of her seven husbands will she be married to?

JESUS

On this point and others you misunderstand both scripture and

God's power. When men and women rise from the dead they will neither marry nor be given in marriage but will live like God's angels in heaven. But why cite Moses, since you don't believe in the Resurrection? You remember God said to Moses, "I am the God of your fathers: the God of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob." The God of Moses is not the God of the dead but of the living.
A Pharisee lawyer speaks up.

THE LAWYER

Teacher, which command of the Law is the greatest?

JESUS

You know the first commandment, "Hear, Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord: you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might." You know the second also: "Love your neighbor as yourself."

THE LAWYER

Rabbi, you are right. There is only one God, and there is none other than he, and to love him with all one's understanding, strength, and will, and one's neighbor as one's self, is worth more than any amount of burnt offerings and sacrifices.

JESUS

You are near God's kingdom: love your neighbor.

THE LAWYER

Tell me, who is my neighbor?

JESUS

A man was going from Jerusalem to Jericho. He fell among thieves who wounded him, stripped him, and left him for dead. A priest was going down the same road. He saw the man and passed by on the other side. A Levite came by and also avoided him. Then a Samaritan came by, saw him, and pitied him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds after bathing them in oil and wine. He carried him to an inn, and nursed him through the night. The next morning he gave the innkeeper two silver coins and said, "See that he gets well—whatever the added expense I'll repay you when I return." Tell me, of the three, who was the neighbor of the person who fell among thieves?

THE LAWYER

The person who did good to him.

JESUS

Go and do like him.

JESUS, to some scribes

Tell me about the Messiah. Whose son is he?

SCRIBES

He will descend from David.

JESUS

Then why did David call him Lord, as in the psalm, "The Lord said to my Lord, sit at my right hand, until I make your enemies my footstool"? If David called him Lord, how is he his son?

They don't answer him. He turns to the crowd.

JESUS

The Pharisees and scribes preside over the Law. You may therefore do what they say. But you mustn't do what they do, since they say

and do not. They tie together heavy loads and put them on men's backs and won't lift a finger to lighten them. They do everything for display. They have the Law written all over them and they dress in dark robes. They are passionate for the head table at banquets and for the front seats in synagogues. They preen themselves on being recognized in public and being called Rabbi. You are to call no man Rabbi. You have one Rabbi, the rest are students. You are to call no man Father. You have one Father, he is in heaven. You are to call no man leader. You have one leader, the Messiah. The greatest among you will be your servant. The man who raises himself will be lowered and the man who lowers himself will be raised. Alas, Pharisees and scribes, pretenders! You block the door to God's kingdom, neither entering yourselves nor allowing others to enter. Alas, Pharisees and scribes, pretenders! You eat up widows' houses and make a show of being devout: thus you double your damnation. Alas, Pharisees and scribes, pretenders! You somersault land and sea to make a single convert, and then make him twice as twisted as yourselves. Alas, blind guides. You say, "If anyone swears by the Temple it does not count, but if he swears by the gold in the Temple he is bound by oath." Ignorant teachers, which is more important, the gold or the Temple that sanctifies the gold? You say, "If anyone swears by the altar it means nothing, but if he swears by the gift of the altar he is bound by oath." Blind fools, which is more important, the gift or the altar that sanctifies the gift? Anyone who swears by the altar swears by everything on it. Anyone who swears by the Temple swears by God's kingdom and its king. Alas, Pharisees and scribes, pretenders! You deal in the herbs and spices and ignore the meat of the Law—charity, forgiveness, faith. Attend to these and the rest will have their place. Blind mouths, you vomit the ant and swallow the camel. Alas, Pharisees and scribes, pretenders! You scour the outside of cups and plates and leave the inside full of greed and crime. Blind Pharisees, clean the inside first, then the outside. Alas, Pharisees and scribes, pretenders! You build monuments to the prophets and filigree the graves of the just, and say, "If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we should never have joined them in killing the prophets." What you are saying is, your fathers murdered the prophets and you bury them. Children of snakes, no wonder you love graves, being worms. How can you escape damnation in hell? I shall send to you prophets, and wise men, and teachers. Some you will kill and crucify, some you will scourge in synagogues and persecute from village to village until on you comes all the righteous blood shed on earth from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zacharias, Barachias' son, whom you murdered between Temple and altar. What I say to you is, All this shall be laid to this generation. Jerusalem, my dear Jerusalem, who kill the prophets and stone the messengers sent you, how often I would have gathered your children together as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you refused. Look: your house is empty. I say to you, You will not see me again until you say, "Blessed is he that comes in the Lord's name."

People are putting money in the Temple treasury. Many rich people are contributing large sums. A poor widow comes and puts in two copper coins amounting to a penny. Jesus sees her and points her out to his followers.

JESUS

What I say is. The poor woman gave more than the rest. They gave part of their wealth: she in her poverty gave everything, even what she needs to live.

He goes out of the Temple.

A FOLLOWER

Look, Master—what magnificent structures and stonework!

JESUS

Observe the buildings well: the time is coming when everything will be thrown down and not one stone will stand on another.

THE TWELVE

When will it be—what signs should we look for?

JESUS

Don't be misled by prophecies and portents. Men will say, "I am the one," and "The time is coming." Many will be deceived—you mustn't be. If anyone says to you, "He is in the desert," don't follow him. If anyone says, "He is in the next room," don't believe it. Adam's son will come like lightning out of the east shining into the west. You'll hear of wars and threats of wars. Don't be deceived: these things must happen, but they are not the end. Nation will war against nation, and kingdom against kingdom; there will be earthquakes and famines and plagues: these will be like only the beginnings of birth pains. When you see standing in the sacred place the abomination of desolation Daniel saw, then everyone in Judea must escape to the mountains. No one on the rooftop must return to his house to get his clothes. Alas for those who are pregnant or have babies at the breast! Pray that you don't need to escape in winter or on the Sabbath. There will be sorrow, such as hasn't been from the beginning of the world until now and never will be again. If these days are not shortened, no one would live, but for the sake of the chosen the days will be shortened. Two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding at a mill: one will be taken and the other left. The people will fall by the edge of the sword and will be imprisoned by the nations. Jerusalem will be kicked by the nations, until the nations are weary. When a tree is budding and putting forth leaves, you know spring is near. Know then that it is near—at your very door. You will see it happen in this generation. Heaven and earth will be destroyed: my word will remain. You won't see Adam's son, but you will vindicate him before the world. The world will hate you; you will be tortured and killed; many will fail, and betray one another, and hate one another; evil will abound; love will grow cold: but whoever endures to the end will be saved. As to the day and the hour, no one knows, not the angels in heaven nor the son, but only the Father. As the flood came in Noah's day, so Adam's son will come. Before the flood up to the day Noah entered the ark there was eating and drinking, marrying

and being given in marriage. No one knew until the flood came and took them all away. That is how Adam's son will come. The earth will shudder; the sun will be darkened; the moon will not give her light; the stars in the heavens will fall; there will be a groaning among the powers of heaven. Then from the clouds the son of Adam will come with great power and glory: he will send out his angels to gather his chosen ones from the four winds and his trumpet will blast from the ends of the earth to the utmost reaches of heaven. So be alert: you don't know when your master will come. If a man knew what hour a burglar intended to break into his house he would be ready and not let his house be broken into. Because you don't know when the son of Adam will come, you must always be ready. Who is the dutiful and intelligent servant whom his master put in charge of the household to feed everyone at the proper time? Fortunate for that servant when the master returns and finds him at his task. He will give his servant charge of all his lands. But the neglectful servant, thinking his master slow in coming, will make slaves of his fellow servants and feast with gluttons, and his master will return when he no longer expects him. The master will torture the neglectful servant and put him with the other pretenders, where there will be screeching and chewing of tongues. Consider ten bridesmaids who took up their lamps and awaited the bridegroom. Five were prudent and five careless. The careless ones took lamps but no extra oil, while the prudent took containers of oil with their lamps. Since the bridegroom was long in coming they all grew drowsy and slept. At midnight they heard a shout: "The bridegroom's coming! Get ready to meet him!" The bridesmaids woke up and trimmed their lamps. The careless said to the prudent, "Give us some oil—our lamps are going out." But the prudent answered, "There may not be enough for us and you. Get some from the sellers." While they were getting oil the bridegroom came: the bridesmaids who were ready went in with him to the wedding and the door was shut. When the others returned they said, "Master, Master, open the door!" He said, "I don't know you." An employer was going away. He called his servants and made them responsible for his property. To one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, according to their ability. Then he left. The servant who received five talents used them to acquire five more. Likewise the servant who received two acquired two. But the servant who received one talent dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's wealth. After a long time the employer returned and called his servants in for an accounting. The servant who received five talents brought also the other five and said, "Master, you gave me five talents. Look: I have acquired five more." The master said to him, "Excellent, my good and trustworthy servant. Because you have accomplished much with little I shall give you charge of much. Come: share your master's delight." The servant who received two talents said, "Master, you gave me two talents. Look: I have acquired two more." His master said to him, "Excellent, my good and trustworthy servant. Because you have accomplished

much with little I shall give you charge of much. Come: share your master's delight." Then the servant who received one talent said, "Master, I knew you were greedy—reaping where you haven't sown and harvesting where you haven't planted. I was scared and hid your talent in the earth. Look: you have back what is yours." His master said, "You miserable and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I don't sow and harvest where I don't plant. You should at least have given my wealth to usurers, in order that I might get it back with interest. Take from him his one talent and give it to the servant with ten. Everyone who has used his wealth shall be given more and shall be rich, but everyone who has not used it shall be deprived of it. Throw the useless servant out into the darkness, where he can screech and chew his tongue." When Adam's son comes in glory with all his holy angels about him, he will sit on this throne of glory. Before him all the nations will be gathered. He will divide each nation, putting the sheep on his right side and the goats on the left. He will turn to his right and say, "Come into my Father's blessing and inherit the kingdom I have prepared for you from the beginning of creation. I was hungry; you fed me. I was thirsty; you gave me drink. I was abandoned; you received me. I was naked; you clothed me. I was sick; you visited me. I was in prison; you came to me." The righteous will say, "Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, thirsty, and give you drink, abandoned and receive you, naked and clothe you, sick and visit you, in prison and come to you?" The king will say, "What you did to the lowest of my brothers you did to me." He will turn to his left and say, "Leave me, you accursed ones, and dwell in the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels. I was hungry; you gave me no food. I was thirsty; you gave me no drink. I was abandoned; you did not receive me. I was naked; you did not clothe me. I was sick; you did not visit me. I was in prison; you did not come to me." They will say, "Lord, when did we see you hungry, or thirsty, or abandoned, or naked, or sick, or in prison, that we should go to you?" He will say to them, "What you did not do to the lowest of my brothers, you did not do to me." Then these will go away to everlasting torment, and the just will enter into everlasting life.

79. Nicodemus

Night falls. The Pharisee Nicodemus comes to Jesus.

NICODEMUS

Rabbi, I know you are a teacher sent by God: nobody can do what you do unless God is in him.

JESUS

What I say is. I say to you, Unless a man is reborn, he cannot see God's kingdom.

NICODEMUS

How can a man be reborn when he is old? Can he go back in his mother's womb and be born again?

JESUS

What I say is. I say to you, Unless a man is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter God's kingdom. Flesh is born of flesh, and

spirit is born of Spirit. Don't be surprised when I say to you: You must be reborn. The wind blows where it wills. You can hear it even if you don't know where it comes from or where it is going. So everyone born of the Spirit will hear the Spirit.

NICODEMUS

How can these things be?

JESUS

Do you teach Israel and not know these things? We say what we know and tell what we have seen, but you don't hear us. If I tell you about the world and you don't believe, how can I tell you about heaven? No one has gone up to heaven but him who came down from heaven—Adam's son, who is in heaven. Moses lifted up the snake in the desert. Adam's son must also be lifted up, and whoever believes in him will not die but will always have life. God so loves the world that he gives his only son, and whoever believes in him will not die but will have always life.

80. Greek Jews

Some Greek Jews who are in Jerusalem for Passover want to see him. They go to Philip, who tells Andrew. They bring the Greeks to Jesus.

JESUS

The time has come for Adam's son to be glorified. What I say is. I say to you: unless a wheat seed falls to the ground and dies it remains alone. But if it dies it brings forth more seed. Everyone who loves his life will lose it. Everyone who scorns his life in the world will live it in eternity. If anyone wishes to serve me he will walk with me. Where I am my servant will be. If anyone serves me my Father will honor him. I am filled with anxiety; what should I say—Father, save me from this hour? But for this hour I have come: Father, glorify your name.

A voice comes from the heavens: I HAVE GLORIFIED IT, AND WILL GLORIFY IT. Some in the crowd say, "It's thundering"; others, "An angel spoke."

JESUS

The voice didn't come for my sake but for yours. Now is the judgment time for the world. Now will the prince of the world be thrown out. When I am lifted up from the earth I shall draw all to me.

A GREEK JEW

The scriptures tell us the Messiah will live forever. You tell us Adam's son will be lifted up. Who, then, is the Messiah?

JESUS

You still have the light in you: walk while you have the light. Darkness is coming, and whoever walks in the dark won't know where he's going. While you have the light believe in the light, that you may be children of the light. Who believes me believes not me only, but him who sent me. Who sees me sees him who sent me. I've come into the world as a light: who believes in me will not live in darkness. God hasn't sent his son to the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Whoever believes in him will not be condemned, but whoever does not believe is already

condemned by his not believing. His condemnation is that light has come in the world and he loves the darkness instead of the light, because his deeds are lies. For all who do evil hate the light and do not come to it, lest their deeds be shown. But all who do truth come to the light, that their deeds may shine brightly, because they are done by God. I haven't come to condemn the world but to save it. Whoever doesn't believe me and spurns my word will be judged on the last day by the word he spurns. The word I speak isn't mine alone. The Father who sent me commanded me to speak it. I know his command is always living. The things therefore which I speak are as the Father said I should speak.

The Greek Jews shake their heads and go back to the Temple.

81. Ointment

JESUS

In two days it will be Passover. Adam's son will be betrayed and crucified.

The chief priests, scribes, and elders meet with Caiaphas, the High Priest, to discuss how to trap Jesus and kill him. They decide, "Not during the festival, or the people will riot." Jesus is in Bethany. Martha serves supper while Lazarus eats with him. Mary takes a pound of spikenard, anoints Jesus' head and feet, and wipes his head and feet with her hair. The smell of spikenard fills the house.

JUDAS ISCARIOT

Why wasn't the perfume sold? We could've gotten a good price for it and given the money to the poor.

JESUS

Don't dishearten her. She did good to me by preparing me for my burial. The poor you have always: me you do not have always. Wherever the good news is told she will be remembered for what she did.

Judas goes to the chief priests and offers to hand Jesus over. They agree to give him thirty pieces of silver.

82. Seder

THE TWELVE

Where do you wish us to prepare the Seder for you?

JESUS, to Peter and John

Go into the city. You'll see a man carrying a pitcher of water. Follow him. When he goes into a house say to the owner, "The Master says, 'My time has come: where is the room where I shall eat my Passover with my followers?'" He'll take you upstairs and show you a large furnished room. Prepare a Seder for us there. *Everything is as he tells them. Peter and John get the Seder ready. In the evening Jesus is at the table with the twelve.*

JESUS

I have longed with longing for this meal, to eat it with you before I suffer. I shall not eat it again with you until the Father's kingdom has come, nor shall I drink the fruit of the vine until I drink it new in the Father's kingdom.

He leaves the table, takes off his clothes, and ties a towel around

his waist. He pours water into a basin and starts washing his disciples' feet.

PETER

Lord, how can you wash our feet?

JESUS

What I do now you'll understand later.

PETER

You'll never wash my feet.

JESUS

If I don't wash you, Peter, you aren't with me.

PETER

Lord, then not just my feet but my hands and head also!

JESUS

Simon, if you've washed yourself you need only your feet rinsed to be wholly clean.

JESUS, to the twelve

You are clean but one.

He washes their feet. Then he puts on his clothes and lies down with them.

JESUS

Do you comprehend what I've done? You call me Teacher and Lord. You are right, because I am your teacher and lord. If I, your teacher and lord, have washed your feet, you, follow my example, must wash each other's feet. Do to each other what I've done to you. The servant isn't greater than his lord, nor the student greater than his teacher: if you understand these things, you will be glad to do them. I don't speak to you all. I knew you when I chose you. Scripture will be made true: "One who eats bread with me will lift his foot against me." I tell you this now, that when it happens you will believe that I am who I am. One of you will betray me.

THE TWELVE

No, Lord, not me!

JESUS

It would be better for one of you if he had never been born.

He moistens a piece of bread and hands it to Judas Iscariot.

JESUS

Do quickly what you are doing.

Judas takes the bread and goes out into the night.

Peter motions to John, who's leaning against Jesus.

JOHN

Lord, who is it?

JESUS

Someone I dipped bread with. Adam's son will soon be glorified and God in him. When God is glorified in him, God will glorify him in himself. God glorifies him now.

He takes bread, blesses it, breaks it, and gives it to the eleven.

JESUS

Take and eat: it is my body.

He takes his cup and gives thanks.

JESUS

Take and drink: it is my blood, which binds us always and is shed

for many to forgive sins.

Remember me and do this.

My children, a little while I am with you. Then you'll search for me and—as I told the others—where I am going you cannot come.

Tonight you will all lose your way because of me. What Zechariah saw will happen: "Strike the shepherd, and the sheep will be scattered." When it happens obey my new commandment. Love each other as I have loved you. As I love you, love each other.

Everyone will know you are following me, if you love each other. *After eating they sing a psalm and go up to the Mount of Olives.*

PETER

Lord, tell us where you're going.

JESUS

Where I am going you can't go now: but afterward you'll come to me.

PETER

Lord, even if the others fail, I won't: I'll walk with you to prison and death.

JESUS

Peter, tonight before the cock crows you'll deny me three times.

PETER

I will never deny you—I'll die with you.

The others also protest their loyalty.

JESUS

When I sent you to preach in Galilee and told you to go without an extra staff or extra clothes or shoes, did you lack anything?

THE ELEVEN

No.

JESUS

What if I told you now, Whoever has a bag or wallet, cling to it. Whoever has no sword, sell your cloak and buy one, because today will be accomplished what is written about me: "He was tried with the sinners, and he shouldered their sins, and pleaded for the sinners"?

THE ELEVEN

Lord, we have two swords.

JESUS

Enough! Don't be disheartened. You believe in God: believe also in me. In the Father's house are many mansions. If it weren't so, would I tell you that I go to prepare a place for you? I'll come again and bring you in: then where I am you'll also be. Now you know where I am going and you know the way.

THOMAS

Lord, we don't know where you're going—how can we find our way?

JESUS

I am the way, the truth, and life. No one comes to the Father, except by me. If you know me you know the Father. Henceforth you know him and have seen him.

PHILIP

Lord, show us the Father and it will be enough for us.

JESUS

Philip, have I been with you so long without your knowing me? Who sees me sees the Father. Why, then, do you say, "Show us the Father"? Don't you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? What I say to you I say to bring you to me and to the Father who is working in me. Therefore believe me when I say: I am in the Father and the Father is in me. Believe me and do what I do. Who believes me will do what I do: and will do greater. I will go to the Father and do everything you ask me. To glorify the Father in the son, I will give you everything you ask. If you love me, obey my commandment. I will ask the Father, and he will send you a protector, the Spirit of Truth, who'll be with you always. The world won't accept him, since it can't see him or know him, but you'll know him because he'll live in you and be in you. I won't abandon you: I'll come to you. In a little while the world won't see me. You'll see me, and because I live you'll also live. Then you'll know that I am in the Father, that you are in me, and that I am in you. Whoever learns to obey my commandment loves me. Whoever loves me will be loved by my Father, and I'll love him and show myself to him.

THADDEUS

Lord, how can you show yourself to us and the world not know it?

JESUS

Whoever loves me will keep my commandment. My Father will love him. We'll come to him and live in him. Who doesn't love me will not keep my commandment: it isn't mine but the Father's who sent me. I say this to you while I am with you. The Holy Spirit, the protector whom the Father will send because of me, will tell you what it means, and will remind you. My peace I give you: it is my peace I give: what the world doesn't give I give you. Don't be anxious and afraid. You heard me say I'll leave you and come to you. If you love me you will be glad: I'm going to the Father, who's greater than I. I tell you these things before they happen, that when they take place you'll continue to believe in me. I will not talk to you much longer. The prince of the world is coming, and though he has no power over me, yet I do as the Father tells me. Come: let us leave this place.

I am the vine. My Father is the vinedresser. Every branch in me that doesn't produce fruit he removes, and every branch that produces fruit he prunes, so that it produces more fruit. You I've prepared myself by my words. You live in me and I in you. As the branch can't produce fruit by itself but must live in the vine, so for you to produce fruit, you must live in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Who lives in me, I'll live in him: and we will produce much fruit. Apart from me you can do nothing. Who doesn't live in me is a withered branch and will be cut off. These branches will be gathered and thrown in the fire and burned. If you live in me and my words live in you, ask what you wish and it will be done for you. It is my Father's glory that you produce much fruit: then you will be my disciples. As my Father loves me, so I love you: live in my love. If you obey my commandment you live in my love, just as

I keep my Father's commandment and live in his love. I tell you these things so that you will be happy and your happiness complete. This is my command: Love each other as I love you. There is no greater love than when a man lays his life down for his friends. You are my friends if you do what I command you. No longer my servants only, but also my friends. A servant doesn't know what the master knows. You are my friends: everything I have heard from my Father I have made known to you. You didn't choose me. I chose you. I chose you to bear fruit. Your fruit will live: whatever you ask the Father for my sake he'll give you. I order you to love each other. If the world hates you, know that it hated me before you. If you belonged to the world the world would welcome you as its own; but because you don't belong to the world and I took you out of the world, the world will hate you. Remember what I said before: a servant isn't greater than his master. If they had obeyed me they would obey you. Since they persecuted me, they will persecute you. They will persecute you because of me, because they do not know who sent me. If I hadn't come and spoken to them, they would have no sin; but now they have no excuse for their sin. Whoever hates me hates my Father. If I hadn't done among them deeds no one ever did, they would have no sin; but now they have seen and hated both me and my Father. So the psalm becomes true: "They that hate me without cause are more than the hairs of my head; they that are my enemies, and would destroy me guiltless, are mighty." But the Protector whom I'll send you from the Father, the Spirit of Truth whom the Father will send you, will give evidence of me. And you will give evidence, who have been with me from the first. I tell you these things, that you don't stumble. You will be put out of the synagogues—the time is coming when whoever kills you will think he is serving God. They will kill you because they don't know the Father or me. I tell you these things so that when the time comes you will remember that I foretold them. I didn't tell you these things before, because I was with you: now I go my way to him who sent me. Are you no longer eager to ask me, "Where are you going?" You are full of heartache because I tell you these things. Yet I tell you the truth: it is for you I go. If I do not go, the Protector will not come to you. When I go I'll send him to you. He'll prove the world wrong about sin, about faith, and about judgment. About sin, because the world didn't believe me; about faith, because I go to the Father and you see me no more; about judgment, because the prince of the world is condemned. I could tell you many other things, that you could not bear to hear. When the Spirit of Truth comes he'll be your guide to truth. He won't speak for himself, any more than I speak for myself, but will tell you what he hears. He'll show you the things to come. He'll exalt me, taking what is mine and revealing it to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine: the Holy Spirit will reveal to you what is mine. You will weep, and the world will be glad. You will be in anguish, but your anguish will burn into gladness. When a woman is giving birth she is in agony during her time of delivery. When she has given birth to her child she no

longer remembers her agony, because a human being is born in the world. Now you are in agony. But I will see you again, and your hearts will be glad, and no one will take your gladness away; you'll have everything. What I say is. I say to you: ask the Father anything for me and he will give it to you. Up to now you haven't asked him anything for me. Ask, and you will receive. Ask, that your joy may be full. I've talked to you in images. Now's the time to put images away and tell you plainly about the Father. When I leave you, you'll pray in my name. I won't say to you I'll plead with the Father for you: the Father himself loves you, because you love me and believe I came from him. I came from him to the world. Now I leave the world and go to him.

THE ELEVEN

Now that you're speaking plainly and not in images, we're certain you've knowledge of what you say. We don't need to ask any more: from your words we know you come from God.

JESUS

Do you now believe? The time is coming, and is here, when you'll be scattered each to himself and none by me. Yet I won't be alone, because the Father will be with me. I tell you this that you might be free. In the world you are slaves. Be glad: I've overthrown the world.

They cross the Cedron Brook to the Garden of Gethsemane. Jesus looks up.

JESUS

Father, the time has come. Lift your son up, that your son may reveal you. You made him rule over nature, that those you gave him may be given life always, knowing you, their only true God, and Jesus, their Savior whom you sent. I revealed you on earth. I have finished the work you gave me to do. Now return me to your glory, the glory I had with you before the world was. I made your word flesh to the people you gave me from the world. They were yours, you gave them to me, they kept your word. I gave them the words you gave me. They will keep the words, knowing I came from you, believing you sent me. I pray for them. I don't pray for the world, but for those you gave me. I pray for them because they are yours. All mine are yours, and all yours mine: I am glorified in them. Now I come to you. I am no more in the world, but these remain. Father, protect through your power these you gave me, that they may be one, as we are. While I was with them in the world I brooded over them for you. Everyone you gave me I kept watch over for you. Not one is lost. Now I return to you. I say these things before these friends, that they may be filled with my happiness in themselves. I have given them your word. The world hated them because they are not of the world. I don't pray that you take them out of the world, but that you keep them from evil. As I am not of the world, they are not of the world. Your word is truth: make them holy in your truth. As you sent me into the world, so I send them into the world. For their sakes I sanctify myself, that the truth will sanctify them. Nor do I pray for these alone, but for all who believe in me through their word, that all may be one in

me as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they may be one in us, and that the world may believe that you sent me. Father, I have told them who you are, that they may be one as we are one—I in them, you in me, they made perfect in us, the world knowing that you sent me and that you love them as you love me. Father, I also pray that these you gave me may be with me where I am, that they may see the glory you have given me out of your love since the world began. O righteous Father, the world has not known you. I know you and these now know, whom you sent me. I revealed you to them, and I reveal you to them now, that the love you love me with may be in them, and I in them.

JESUS, to the eleven

Sit here while I pray.

He takes with him Peter and Zebedee's sons.

JESUS

My heart is grieving to death: watch here while I pray.

He goes a short distance from them and falls to the ground.

JESUS

Abba, Father, all things are possible to you. Take this cup away from me. Father, if it is possible, take this cup away from me. Yet not my will, but yours.

An angel from heaven comes to strengthen him. In his anguish he prays more strenuously, and his sweat falls to the ground like drops of blood. Then he returns to the three and finds them sleeping from fear.

JESUS

Simon, are you asleep? Couldn't you watch an hour with me? Pray that you don't fail tonight. The heart is willing, but the body is weak.

He goes again and prays.

JESUS

Abba, Father, if the cup cannot pass unless I drink it, your will be done.

He returns: the three are asleep. They don't know what to say to him. He goes to pray a third time. When he returns:

JESUS

It's settled. Sleep now and take your rest.

83. Kiss

JESUS

Get up: the son of Adam is being betrayed to Adam's sons. Here is my betrayer: let us go to meet him.

The garden lights up with lanterns and torches. Judas arrives surrounded by a crowd of people carrying swords and clubs. The chief priests and elders have sent soldiers and officers to arrest Jesus. Judas has said to the soldiers: "The man I kiss is the one you want. Take him and guard him closely." He sees his master, goes up to him, and kisses him lovingly.

JUDAS

Peace, Rabbi.

JESUS

Friend, tell me what you want: will you betray Adam's son with a

kiss?

JESUS, to the crowd

Who are you looking for?

THE CROWD

Jesus from Nazareth.

JESUS

I am.

They shrink from him and cover their faces.

JESUS

Who are you looking for?

AN OFFICER

Jesus from Nazareth.

JESUS

I said I am. If you are looking for me, let the others go.

They take him and hold him. Peter, who has a sword, draws it and strikes at Malchus, the high priest's slave: he cuts off an ear.

JESUS

Peter, put your sword down. Don't you think I could ask my Father and he would immediately send me more than twelve legions of angels? But then how would the scriptures be fulfilled, which say all these things must happen? Shall I not drink the cup which the Father gives me?

Touching Malchus, he restores the ear.

JESUS

Am I a thief, that you come with swords and clubs to arrest me? Day after day I sat teaching in the Temple, and you did not touch me. But this is happening now, that what the prophets saw might be made true.

They arrest him. His followers abandon him and flee. Among them is a young man who's wearing only a linen cloth. The soldiers try to grab him, but he leaves the cloth in their hands and runs away naked.

84. A Cock Crows

They take Jesus to Annas, a former High Priest and Caiaphas' father-in-law, who questions him.

JESUS

I've taught in the open air, in synagogues, and in the Temple. Jews of every town of Israel and Judah have heard me. I said nothing in secret. Why ask me, "What are your teachings? who are your followers?" Ask those who heard me. They know what I said.

An attending officer hits him with the palm of his hand.

THE OFFICER

Is that the way to answer the High Priest?

JESUS

If I said anything false, tell what it is. But if I said the truth, why hit me?

Annas sends him to Caiaphas, the High Priest. Peter and John follow at a distance. John, who's known at the court of the High Priest, enters after Jesus has been taken inside. Peter waits at the gate. John speaks to a maid, then brings Peter into the courtyard where Jesus is being held.

THE MAID

Are you also a follower of the Galilean?

PETER

No, I don't know him.

A charcoal fire is in the middle of the courtyard. The weather being cold, people are gathered around the fire to warm themselves. Peter joins them.

A BYSTANDER

Haven't I seen you with the Nazarene?

PETER

Oh no, I don't know him.

He makes his way to the gate. One of the servants of the High Priest, a relative of the man whose ear he cut off, follows him.

THE SERVANT

Of course you're one of that gang; I saw you in the garden. Even your accent betrays you.

PETER

God is my witness, I tell you: I never knew the man.

A cock crows. Peter turns and sees Jesus looking at him. He goes out into the night and weeps bitterly.

85. Council

Caiaphas calls the scribes and elders to assemble in council.

CAIAPHAS

If you're the Messiah, tell us.

JESUS

You wouldn't believe me when I told you; yet when I asked you, you wouldn't answer me.

Witnesses testify against him, but their stories don't agree.

Finally two witnesses come forward who say: "The man said, 'Destroy the Temple, and in three days I shall rebuild it.'"

Caiaphas stands up.

CAIAPHAS

Do you hear what these men are accusing you of? Have you nothing to say to defend yourself?

He says nothing.

CAIAPHAS

I command you by the living God, tell us whether you are the Messiah, the son of God.

JESUS

You say what I am: and what is more, from now on you will see Adam's son sitting at the right hand of the Power and blinding you with his glory.

Caiaphas tears his robe in front of the council.

CAIAPHAS

Why do we need witnesses? The man condemns himself out of his own mouth! You heard his blasphemy—what's your decision?

The council decides that Jesus deserves to die. He's blindfolded, spit on, and hit, and asked to prophesy, "Who's hitting you?"

Even the servants join in hitting him. Then they lead him away into the night and take him to the palace of the Roman governor.

Not wishing to go in during Passover for fear of becoming

impure, they call on Pilate to come out.

86. Silver

Judas brings the thirty pieces of silver to the Temple.

JUDAS

I've sinned by betraying an innocent man.

CHIEF PRIESTS and ELDERS

Why come to us? Take care of it yourself.

He flings the silver pieces to the Temple floor, goes out into the night, and hangs himself. Picking the silver up, the chief priests say: "This is blood money: it isn't lawful to put it in the treasury." They agree to buy a field for the burial of strangers. It will become known as the Field of Blood.

87. Rome

Pilate comes out to see what the crowd wants.

CHIEF PRIESTS

We found this man subverting the nation, telling the people not to pay taxes to Caesar, saying he is the Messiah and a king.

PILATE

So you are the king of the Jews?

JESUS

You are saying it.

PILATE, to the crowd

I don't find him punishable.

THE ELDERS

He's stirring up trouble: he started in Galilee—now he's doing it in Judea.

Hearing Galilee mentioned, Pilate asks whether Jesus is a Galilean. Being told yes, he decides that the case belongs in Herod's jurisdiction. Herod is in Jerusalem: Jesus must be sent to Herod. Hoping to see him work some miracle, Herod has long wanted to see Jesus. But though he questions him at length, and though the chief priests and the elders don't stop denouncing him, Jesus says nothing. Herod is piqued. He turns contemptuously from the chief priests and elders and ridicules Jesus, ordering the soldiers to put an elegant robe on him and return him to Pilate. Herod and Pilate, who disliked each other before, become friends from this day. Pilate's with his wife, who tells him, "Don't have anything to do with murdering him. Last night I dreamed of him, and I dread what will happen today." Leaving Jesus in the palace, he goes out again to meet the crowd.

PILATE

You bring me a man who you say is fomenting rebellion. I examine him in front of you and do not find him guilty; neither does Herod, who sends him back to me. Have you anything else to say against him?

THE CHIEF PRIESTS and ELDERS

If the man weren't guilty we wouldn't have brought him to you.

PILATE

In that case take him and try him yourselves under your own laws.

CHIEF PRIESTS and ELDERS

Your law won't let us put a man to death.

Pilate wants to interrogate Jesus again.

PILATE

Are you the king of the Jews?

JESUS

Do you ask for yourself, or others?

PILATE

Am I a Jew? Your own people and your own priests are after your life. What have you done?

JESUS

My kingdom isn't in the world. If it were, my servants would defend me from my enemies. Therefore my kingdom isn't in the world.

PILATE

Then you are a king?

JESUS

You are saying it. I was born and entered the world to bear witness to the truth: who lives in the truth hears my voice.

PILATE

What is truth?

He leaves Jesus and goes to speak to the crowd.

PILATE

There is a custom that during Passover I release one of your people. Shall I release Barabbas, who is an insurrectionist, a thief, and a murderer, or Jesus, who is called the Messiah?

THE CROWD

Barabbas—give us Barabbas!

PILATE

And what shall I do with your king of the Jews?

THE CROWD

Crucify him!

Pilate calls his soldiers. He orders Barabbas released and Jesus scourged with whips of iron chain that have bone and lead balls at the end, which not only tear the skin but rip off the flesh as well. The soldiers strip Jesus, put a scarlet robe on his back, a crown of thorns on his head, and a reed in his right hand. Taking turns, they kneel in front of him, say, "Hail, King of the Jews!" and punch his head with their fists. Then they bring him back to Pilate and the crowd.

PILATE

Here is your king.

THE CROWD

Crucify him! Crucify him!

PILATE

Why? What evil has he done?

A PRIEST

We have a Law, and by that Law he must die, for he made himself the son of God.

Pilate is worried. He takes Jesus back into the palace.

PILATE

Where are you from?

He says nothing.

PILATE

You won't speak? Don't you know I have the power to release you and the power to crucify you?

JESUS

What power you have over me comes from above. Therefore he who brought me before you sins more.

Daybreak. Pilate takes Jesus with him to a place called The Pavement and sits on the judge's seat. The crowd surrounds them.

PILATE

I do not find the man guilty of a crime.

THE PRIESTS

If you free him you aren't Caesar's friend. Anyone who makes himself king is Caesar's enemy.

PILATE

Shall I kill your king?

THE CROWD

We have no king but Caesar.

PILATE

Then take him yourselves and kill him: I find no crime in him. *He calls for water and washes his hands in front of the crowd.*

PILATE

I am innocent of the man's blood.

THE CROWD

His blood be on us and our children.

The soldiers take Jesus away to be crucified. They put a cross on his shoulders and march him to the Place of the Skull, called Golgatha in Aramaic and Calvaria in Latin. They force a Cyrenian—Simon, the father of Alexander and Rufus—to help carry the cross. The crowd throngs the path. Jesus sees a group of women crying.

JESUS

Daughters of Jerusalem, don't cry for me, but for yourselves and your children. The days are coming when the people will say, "Blessed are the barren, the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never gave suck." They will plead with the mountains, "Fall on us," and with the hills, "Bury us." If men kill in the spring, how will they live in the fall?

The four soldiers assigned to Jesus try to get him to drink some wine mixed with myrrh, but though they bring it to his lips he won't drink. They divide his clothes among them. His tunic being seamless, they agree to throw lots for it. Thus they fulfill the psalm verse, "They divide my garments among them, and cast lots for my cloak."

An inscription is attached to the cross. In Hebrew, Latin, and Greek it reads: JESUS OF NAZARETH, KING OF THE JEWS. The chief priests go to Pilate to complain.

CHIEF PRIESTS

Don't write: "King of the Jews," but: "The man said, 'I am king of the Jews.'"

PILATE

What I have written I have written.
He is crucified between two terrorists.

TERRORIST

If you're the Messiah, save yourself and us.

THE OTHER, to the first

Don't you fear God now that we're dying? We deserve what we're getting. He hasn't done anything wrong.

THE OTHER, to Jesus

Sir, remember me when you go to your kingdom.

JESUS

What I say is: today you will be with me in paradise.

Led by the priests, the crowd taunts Jesus. Some say, "You wanted to destroy the Temple and rebuild it in three days. Come down from the cross—the Temple is still standing." Others say, "You said, 'I am the son of God.' Trust in God now. God will deliver you. Ask him." The priests themselves go around saying, "He wanted to save others, and he can't save himself. This is the king of Israel! Let him come down from the cross and we'll believe him."

JESUS

Father, forgive them. They don't know what they are doing.

88. Three Marys

Standing near the cross are Mary his mother, Mary Magdalene, and Cleophas' wife Mary. Jesus sees his mother, and John next to her.

JESUS

Mother: here is your son. Son: here is your mother.

89. Noon

The sky and land darken.

90. Three O'clock

JESUS

ELOI, ELOI, LEMA SABACHTHANI?—GOD, MY GOD, WHY HAVE YOU FORSAKEN ME?

BYSTANDERS

He's calling Elijah!

Someone takes a sponge soaked in vinegar and puts it on a stick to offer it to him.

OTHERS

Wait! Let's see if Elijah will save him.

91.

JESUS

Father, into your hands I give my Spirit.

JESUS

I'm thirsty.

The sponged soaked with vinegar is put to his mouth. He drinks.

JESUS

It's done.

He bows his head and dies.

The earth shakes and graves open. In the Temple, the sanctuary curtain is torn from top to bottom. The centurion, looking at the

body hanging from the cross, says, "Surely the man was God's son."

92. Rest

Evening's near. The chief priests ask Pilate that the legs of the criminals be broken and the bodies taken down from the crosses. The soldiers break the legs of the two who are crucified with Jesus, but when they come to him they see he's dead and don't break his legs. One of the soldiers runs a spear through his side. Blood and water come out. Pilate is surprised to hear that Jesus was dead. Joseph, a rich man from Arimathea, who was a secret follower of Jesus and a member of the council but who was afraid to speak out, requests the body. Pilate consents. Joseph takes the body and wraps it in linen. Because it must be buried before the Sabbath, he lays it in a new tomb which he recently had had hewn for himself in rock near the city. The body is wrapped in a hundred pounds of myrrh and aloes given by Nicodemus. A stone is rolled against the tomb's entrance. Mary Magdalene and Jesus' mother Mary watch the tomb until the Sabbath. Then they go home and rest in obedience to the Law.

93. The Second Day

The chief priests and the Pharisees go to Pilate.

CHIEF PRIESTS and PHARISEES

We remember that when he was alive the impostor said, "In three days I will rise again." Please order that the cave be guarded until the third day to make certain his followers don't come at night, steal the body, and say to the people, "He's risen from the dead." That lie would be worse than the first.

PILATE

You have soldiers: go tell them to secure the grave.
The stone is sealed. Soldiers guard the tomb.

Peace

- [94. Three](#)
- [95. Report](#)
- [96. Road to Emmaus](#)
- [97. A Room](#)
- [98. Galilee](#)
- [99. Fishing](#)
- [100. Home](#)

94. Three

The Sabbath's over but it's still dark. Mary Magdalene, James' mother Mary, and Salome prepare spices to take to the grave. During the night each had dreamt: a great trembling; the Lord's angel—face like lightning, raiment brilliant as snow—rolling back a stone; guards looking like dead men; the angel saying to women, "Don't fear: I know you are looking for Jesus who was crucified. Why look for the living among the dead? He is risen—he is not here. Remember what he said in Galilee: Adam's son must be put in the hands of sinful men, be crucified, and on the third day rise. Come, see where the Lord lay, then go quickly and tell his followers that he has risen from death, and look: he is going into Galilee. You'll see him there: I have told you."

Walking to the tomb as the sun rises, they ask each other, "How will we roll the stone away?" At the grave they see that the stone has been rolled away and that the body is gone. The women, wild with fright, run to tell Peter and John.

Peter and John run to the tomb. John reaches it first; stopping at the entrance and looking in, he sees the linen graveclothes but no body. Peter comes up, sees the linen, and enters the tomb. The cloth that covered Jesus' face is not with the linen but is rolled up in a place by itself. Peter and John return to the city. Mary Magdalene remains outside the grave, crying. Looking into the grave, she sees two angels in white sitting where the body was, one at the head, the other at the feet.

ANGELS

Woman, why are you crying?

MARY MAGDALENE

Because they've taken away my Lord and I don't know where they've put him.

She sees a man standing behind her. She takes him for the gardener.

THE MAN

Woman, why are you crying? Who are you looking for?

MARY MAGDALENE

Sir, if you carried him away, tell me where you put him: I will take him with me.

JESUS

Mary.

MARY MAGDALENE

Rabboni—Teacher.

JESUS

Don't cling to me: I have not yet gone up to my Father. Go to my brothers and tell them I am going to my Father and their Father: to my God and their God.

She runs and tells the others, "I've seen the Lord," but they don't believe her.

95. Report

The soldiers who guarded the tomb report that the body's no longer in the grave. The council gives them money to say: "While we were sleeping at night his sympathizers broke in and stole his body."

96. Road to Emmaus

Afternoon. Two followers of Jesus, Simon and Cleopas, are on their way to Emmaus, about seven miles from Jerusalem. They are talking about Jesus' death and the disappearance of his body. While they're thus abstracted in discussion Jesus himself draws near and walks with them. But they don't recognize him.

JESUS

What are you talking about that make you so sad?

CLEOPAS

Are you alone in not knowing what's happened in the past few days?

JESUS

What has happened?

SIMON

Jesus of Nazareth, a prophet great in word and action before God and his people, came to Jerusalem. He was condemned to death by our rulers and chief priests and was crucified. We were hoping that he was the one who would set Israel free. He was killed two days ago; this is the third day. This morning some women who also believed shocked us. They went to the grave very early and the body was gone. They came back saying they saw angels who told them Jesus was alive, but when some men went they saw an empty tomb and they didn't see Jesus.

JESUS

Haven't you the brain and heart to believe that what the prophets said was actually true, that the Messiah had to suffer to be glorified?

He explains passages in the scriptures that tell about him. As they reach Emmaus he makes to walk further, but the two beg him to stop with them.

CLEOPAS

Stay with us. It's almost evening—the sun's going down. *So he stays with them. When they come to the table, he takes the bread, blesses it, breaks it, and gives it to them. Their eyes open and they see him: then he vanishes.*

SIMON

Didn't our hearts burn as he talked to us along the road and explained the scriptures?

They hurry back to Jerusalem.

97. A Room

The apostles have locked the door in fear.

CLEOPAS

The Lord has risen: Simon and I saw him.
They describe what happened on their way to Emmaus and how Jesus revealed himself to them when he broke the bread. While they're still talking, Jesus comes into the room.

JESUS

Peace.
His followers think they're seeing a ghost.

JESUS

Why are you afraid? Who do you think I am? Look: my hands and my feet. Skin and bones are unheard of in a ghost.
They're now too happy to believe.

JESUS

May I eat?
They give him a piece of broiled fish: he takes it and eats it.

JESUS

All that I spoke to you about is done: everything written about me in Moses, in the prophets, and in the psalms has been made true.
He explains the scriptures to them.

JESUS

And now you see it was good that the Messiah should suffer and should rise from the dead on the third day. Beginning with Israel, preach in my name to all the nations. Teach them new life and forgiveness of sins. You are witnesses of what I say: as the Father sent me, I send you. I say again: Peace. Whose sins you forgive will be forgiven: whose sins you don't forgive won't be forgiven.
One of the eleven, Thomas, known as the Twin, was not with the others when Jesus came. When the others tell him, "We've seen the Lord," he says, "Unless I see the nail wounds in his wrists and put my finger in the wounds and my hand in his side, I won't believe." The next week, the apostles are again in the house and Thomas is among them. The door's locked, but Jesus appears in front of them.

JESUS

Peace.
He looks at Thomas.

JESUS

Here are my wrists: put your finger here. Give me your hand and put it in my side: don't be faithless, but believe.

THOMAS

My Lord and my God.

JESUS

Thomas, because you see you believe: it is better to not see and yet believe.
He tells them to go to a hill in Galilee, where they'll see him again.

98. Galilee

They go there and meet him. Even now some of them can't comprehend what has happened.

JESUS

Receive the Holy Spirit. All vindication in heaven and earth comes

from me and ends in me. Go and make disciples of all nations. Baptize them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Teach the nations what I commanded you. Look: I am with you to the end of time.

99. Fishing

Another evening. Peter, Thomas, Nathaniel, and Zebedee's sons are near the Sea of Galilee.

PETER

I'm going fishing.

THE OTHERS

We'll go with you.

They get into a boat and fish all night, but catch nothing. At daybreak, while they're still about a hundred yards out, a stranger on the shore calls to them.

THE STRANGER

Boys—any fish?

THE APOSTLES

No.

THE STRANGER

Throw your net out on the right and you'll find some.

They throw their net into the sea and quickly discover they can't pull it back because it's full of fish.

JOHN

It's the Lord!

Hearing what John said, Peter throws off his clothes, jumps into the water, and swims toward shore. The others follow in the boat, dragging a net full of fish after them. Landing, they see a charcoal fire with fish and bread lying on it.

JESUS

We need more fish.

Peter and the others drag the net to shore. Although they count a hundred and fifty-three large fish, the net isn't broken.

JESUS

Come: eat.

He gives them bread and cooks some fish. None of the apostles ask, "Who are you?" for they know he's their Lord. After they eat:

JESUS

Jonah's son Simon, do you love me more than the others do?

PETER

Yes, Lord, you know I love you.

JESUS

Feed my lambs.

JESUS

Jonah's son Simon, do you love me?

PETER

Yes, Lord, you know I love you.

JESUS

Watch my sheep.

JESUS

Jonah's son Simon, do you love me?

PETER

Lord, you know all things: you know I love you.

JESUS

Feed my sheep.

JESUS

Simon, when you were young you dressed as you liked and walked where you would. When you are old, you will stretch your hands and someone else will dress you and carry you where you will not want to go. But now: walk with me.

Peter gets up but sees that John remains sitting.

PETER

Lord, what about him?

JESUS

If I want him to wait till I return, what is it to you? Walk with me.

100. Home

Forty days after he rose from the dead. Jesus is on the Mount of Olives with his followers. He lifts his hands and blesses them. As they look, he's himself lifted up and a cloud takes them out of their sight. Two angels dressed in white stand over them.

ANGELS

Men and women of Galilee, why do you stand here staring at the skies? When the Father wills, this Jesus who was taken up from you to heaven will come in the same way you saw him go. But do not wait here: go and receive the Holy Spirit.

So they go back to Jerusalem, to the house where they are staying: Peter, John, James, and Andrew, Philip, Nathaniel, Thomas, and Matthew, Alphaeus' son James, James's son Judas, and Simon the Zealot; they devote themselves to prayer, as do the women who walked with Jesus, his mother Mary, his sisters, and his brothers.

Meditations

Meaning in the Our Father

On the Holy Family

Time, Talent, and Treasure

Meaning in the Our Father

The Our Father is not one person's prayer: it is the prayer that our Lord Jesus taught *us* to pray. Who *we* are includes at the very least all who pray the Our Father, and most likely all the sons and daughters of Man. Whether prayed alone or in a group, the Our Father is a prayer for the prayer and the prayer's brothers and sisters. Even when prayed alone—and the prayer never is alone, since the Our Father is always being prayed, and the Father is always listening—the Our Father is a people's prayer: "Our ... us ... us ... we ... us ... us ... us ... us."

Our Father,

God is our parent, our maker. We are his sons and daughters, the brothers and sisters of his Son. We, male and female, are made in his image. We talk familiarly (as family) to our parent.

Who art in Heaven,

Our Father is in heaven; heaven is our home. We are not necessarily far from heaven. The kingdom of heaven is at hand, and perhaps, within us. But heaven is not earth.

Hallowed be thy name.

Our first thought is for our Father. We obey the first commandment. We do not commit the faux pas of saying, Dear Father, I'm fine, how are you? Instead, we use the language of heaven and say, Hallelujah!

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Earth is not heaven. We pray that heaven come to earth. Heaven is the kingdom of God, not any human government; as the King's children, we have standing in the kingdom and our first loyalty is to the King. How is our Father's will done in heaven? With joy. We should do likewise. What heaven and our Father's will are we learn from our Lord, from our brothers and sisters, and from our minds and hearts. When we don't know, are in conflict, or when our will differs from our Father's, we pray that His will be done.

Give us this day our daily bread.

We ask our Father to give us today what we need for today, every man according to his eating. We do not ask for more than what we need today. We ask our Father for this, knowing that no matter what our own efforts, all gifts are from him. We trust that our Father knows what we need and will give us good things when we ask.

And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.

We are aware of our sins, and the sins of others; we know sin in history, in our life, and in our heart. To forgive is hard for sinners. We ask our Father to forgive us, as he does when we forgive our brothers and sisters; when we forgive we do as our Father does, and become more like him. We, and earth, shall not have peace without forgiveness.

And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.

We know our weakness in the face of temptation; we ask that we be not put to the test. Temptation often ends in evil and our capture by the tempter, the evil one who is the enemy of our Father. We cannot free ourselves from evil. Our Father must free us.

Amen.

So be it. This is our agreement, as between a Father and his children.

On the Holy Family

Reflection shared on February 14, 2000, at St. Thomas the Apostle Parish Center in Delmar, NY, during a Renew 2000 Mission. The reflection and Mary Murphy's story "The Little Mermaid" were responses to the theme "Strengthening Family Life and Supportive Relationships."

I am so glad that Jesus' public ministry did not involve his family—that he did not require his followers to say good things about Joseph and to recognize Mary as the Mother of God, that he did not establish a Holy Family website, jmj.com.

Jesus' family and background did not recommend him to his hearers. A son of a carpenter? From Nazareth? And his mother—weren't the circumstances of her pregnancy and marriage rather suspect?

Of course, we believe that Joseph was a saint to whom angels spoke, that Mary was the immaculately conceived Virgin Mother of God, and that Jesus was God's son, a descendant of David born in Bethlehem as the Scriptures foretold.

What is the connection between Jesus' family in his lifetime and the Holy Family that we have been learning to know for two millennia and will continue to learn to know in the next millennium?

The most important connection is: it's the same family. The Joseph who heard the angel also worked for a living, paid taxes, and registered in the census. When the Blessed Virgin was found to be pregnant before marriage, others besides Joseph knew it, and not everyone had Gabriel's insider information. Jesus, God's Son, would not have been born if Mary had not accepted the angel's word and would have been killed by Herod's troops if Joseph had not obeyed the angel's command.

There were indeed perks for being the parents of God. We know of a few: messages from angels early on, visits from shepherds and astrologers, good wine at a wedding—once. But however many of these there may have been, great experiences recede, and life—so difficult and unsatisfactory for me and so easy for everybody else; or perhaps so sweet to me, but with a precarious sweetness—comes back. The angel spoke to Joseph in dreams, and Simeon had told Mary: "A sword shall pierce through thy own soul." And Jesus was forsaken by God.

When Joseph and Mary's twelve-year-old son was missing after the feast, his parents really didn't know where he was, did search for him sorrowing, did receive from him a rather smart remark about "Why did you search? Didn't you know I had to be here in my Father's house?"—and it certainly wasn't Joseph and Mary's house in Nazareth—and they really didn't understand what he was saying. And: how would you have felt?

Much of the Holy Family's life was like our life: eating and drinking, earning a living, cooking and cleaning, being tired, sleeping, being faithful to our spouse, raising and protecting our children, visiting relatives, partying with friends, praying in a group, dancing; and whatever may have been the state of their

souls and spirit, their bodies and perceptions and emotions and joys and sufferings and fears were like ours. And we know from the Gospels that Mary and Jesus did not always agree.

This life with family and friends and coworkers is the life that God asked the Holy Family to live and asks most of us to live, and it affords plenty of opportunity to learn to love God and learn to love our neighbor—to learn to love God by learning to love our neighbor.

And that neighbor includes our family. In some ways, it is harder to act with charity towards those we love than towards a friend or a stranger. We want more for our loved ones and expect more, and we expect them to agree with us about the what, the how, and the when even before we tell them. A long day of working, homemaking, and schooling shortens fuses, and we face, yet again, other wills, when we want our will be done.

It is at home when I most feel Our Lady's admonition at Medjugorje: "You cannot say you are converted because your life must become an every day conversion."

I used to regret that I did not do great things. I know now that the great thing always available to me is to do from obedience and love what I am doing. For most of us, it is our vocation to live in a family, and it is our path to glory. For myself, I don't tell Mary and Olivia often enough how much happiness I have experienced in this path.

The opportunities for learning to love that God's love gives us are abundant. They come our way much more frequently and inconveniently than we want them to come. Every moment—this moment—is a calling from God. Often we do not listen, and God accepts this. It has taken me years to hear some things, and I still miss a lot; and too often when I do hear, I still disobey.

Every moment is a calling from God. And we may also say: a calling from Mary, who is our Mother. On the cross, Jesus saw his mother, and the disciple whom he loved, and he said to his mother, "Woman, behold thy son!" And to the disciple, "Behold thy mother!" And from that hour the disciple took her into his home (John 19:26–27).

As we have taken her into our own homes with devotions, images, and the Rosary. We know that Mary considers us her children: she has told us. We in our homes, our friends in their homes, and strangers, some of whom have no homes, are brothers and sisters in her holy family, now and forever.

St. Valentine's Day 2000 +

Time, Talent, and Treasure

I was reluctant to talk or even think about this topic of “time, talent, and treasure.” I once wrote cynically in a notebook: “Time, talent, and treasure—and the greatest of these is treasure.” I meant, of course, that almost always when we hear about this trio of T’s, the underlying text is: Give more money.

There is a good reason for this, besides the fact that money is always lacking. Time and talent are demanding; they require management. Give me money, and all I need say is: Thanks, I really am *very* grateful.

But then I reflected that for many of us time is our treasure, or talent is our treasure. Take my wife (please). Mary has a talent for writing and telling stories, and she spends a lot of time doing both. That talent and time is a treasure that she gives to the world and today to you in this church. So, for many of us, time, talent, and treasure are not three separate things but three related things—three things that may support each other, like a triangle, which is a symbol of the Trinity. Treasure is not just silver and gold—or in our day paper and plastic. Treasure is what you have brought here today for us to enjoy.

Then I reflected on something Jesus said in the Sermon on the Mount: “Where your treasure is there will your heart be also.” Commonly, the interpretation is: Take care what you work for: you might get it, or even become it. If you accumulate earthly things, don’t expect to fly up to heaven with them: there is a weight limit—no suitcases, no carry-ons—just come as you are. Don’t count on entering the kingdom of heaven with a camel. But if you accumulate heavenly things—that is to say, acts of love—you can expect them to be waiting for you when you arrive.

This is a true interpretation, but I want to turn what Jesus said around and say: Where your heart is, there your treasure may also be.

That is to say: what you love doing may be the very thing that is your treasure. This treasure you can give to God, by doing it well, by doing it for Him, and by doing it for others. If you love to cook, that is one of your treasures. If you love to sing, that is one of your treasures. If you love children, that is one of your treasures.

The love—the treasure—may require discovery, or even hunting. When children watch commercials, they often say: “I need that!” What they mean is: “I want that!” What they don’t mean is: “I love that!”

It may be that your treasure is missing. For example, if you are lonely, it may be that you will find your treasure in helping others. Some will tell you that treasure comes from God, and in sharing it, you are merely returning what you have received. That is true. But I find it upsetting, since God has given so much, and I have returned so little. So let’s not talk about that.

This is the only radical thing I have to say: When asked for time, talent, and treasure, try to determine what your real treasure is, and go from there.

A few of you might feel cheated if I don’t talk about money and the

Church. I don't know if what I have to say will lead you to give more or less money to the Church.

First, I have a word for those of you whose treasure is the time and talent to make a lot of money. The word is not Jesus' word to the rich young man (though fortunate is the person who follows Jesus' word), but this: you will be happier if you give more of it away.

What about the rest of us, who don't have a lot of money, or even don't have enough money? I look at giving money to the Church as a discipline, or a prayer, like fasting. You don't have to like it, but you have to do it. You are not giving your treasure (I am not talking to the well-off) but an offering, an oblation, that is to say, a sacrifice. And like all disciplines, it should be done regularly, and you should feel it a little.

With this I have given my widow's mite of thought about the three T's. To sum up:

1. Look on time, talent, and treasure as possibly related and not separate gifts.
2. Regard giving money to the Church as a prayer—do it regularly and attentively.