

the only thing that matters is that you are reading God's word regularly. While that is still true with this schedule, the goal with this one is to get a better understanding of the entire story of the bible. There is no substitute for reading God's word. Keep reading! My website is at <http://graceofourlord.wordpress.com>. I encourage you to get the actual reading plan I am currently following. You can get it from the same place I do - at [this link](#). They have some great guidance for the reading plan there as well, and they have it all in both PDF and in Kindle format!

August 2012						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
(Week 31)	John 1	Luke 1	1 Luke 2	2 Matthew 3	3 Matthew 4	4
5 (Week 32)	6 Matthew 5	7 Matthew 6	8 Matthew 7	9 John 2	10 John 3	11
12 (Week 33)	13 John 4	14 Luke 6	15 Luke 7	16 Matthew 13	17 Matthew 15	18
19 (Week 34)	20 Mark 6	21 Matthew 16	22 Luke 9	23 Luke 10	24 Luke 15	25
26 (Week 35)	27 John 9	28 John 11	29 Mark 10	30 Mark 11	31 Luke 20	

August Week 3 (Week 34) Summary

Mark 6, Matthew 16, Luke 9, 10, and 15- Click the chapter below to go to the ESV Bible passage for that chapter and read or listen.

Mark 6 - Here, we have another account of Jesus returning to His hometown. Verse 5 simply means that their lack of faith prevented him from doing many mighty works. Indeed, His own family had already believed him to be out of His mind ([Mark 3:20-21](#)). In verses 7-13, He sends out the apostles, giving them authority over the unclean spirits, and to heal.

In verses 14-16, we find Herod Antipas leaning toward the belief that Jesus must be John the Baptist raised from the dead - perhaps because of fear from his own guilt in John's death. Verse 17-29 detail the death of John the Baptist, as his pronouncement of lawlessness on Herod's part (he had committed

adultery by marrying his brother Philip's wife, Herodias) cost John his life in an ugly and inhumane act of murder (verses 27-28).

Verse 30 takes up when the apostles return to Jesus, and tell Him all that they had done. He takes them to a "desolate place" by boat to get away from the crowds and to rest. But people were already waiting for them when they came ashore. In verse 34 He "had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd," and began teaching them. The disciples wanted to send them away so they could eat, but Jesus told them that they would feed them. This time, there were five thousand men, plus women and children, and they fed them with five loaves of bread and two fish; and they took up twelve baskets full when everyone was full (verse 43). Two hundred denarii in verse 37 was about 200 days' worth of a laborer's wages.

Jesus sent His disciples ahead to Bethsaida by boat, as He dismissed the crowds and went up to the mountain to pray. But they were making their way "painfully" because of the wind, and Jesus began walking out to them on the water about the fourth watch (between 3:00 and 6:00 a.m.). When they saw Him, they thought it was a ghost, but He told them not to be afraid - "it is I." As He got in the boat, the wind ceased. Mark explains that the hardness of their hearts kept them from seeing who He really was, despite the miracle of the loaves or seeing Him walk on the sea with their own eyes.

Verse 53 seems to indicate that the wind had taken them southwest of Bethsaida to Gennesaret. As He came to the villages, cities and countryside, word had spread of His arrival; and people brought the sick to Him. "On their beds" in verse 55 would indicate some gravely ill people being brought. Contrast verse 5 with verse 56. Many just wanted to touch the fringe of His garment, believing that would heal them. That faith made it so.

[Matthew 16](#) - Normally, the Pharisees and Sadducees were at odds, and had little to do with each other. But Jesus was perceived by both groups as a threat to their power. That is why they came together in verse one asking him for a sign - in order to try to get something to use against him as the Pharisees and scribes had done earlier. Jesus points out their ability to understand meteorological signs (verse 2), but they are unable to understand the signs that He has done (because they choose not to). In verse 4, he says that no sign will be given except the sign of Jonah (a repeat of His earlier statement in the encounter in [Matthew 12:38-40](#)). He had told them of His coming death and resurrection already, but they had not understood that either.

In verse 5, the disciples caught up with Him (Jesus had gone over on the boat without them after feeding the four thousand in chapter 15) and realized they had forgotten to bring any bread. So when He tells them to "beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees," they still have their minds on bread; and they do not properly understand the statement. Jesus is using the word "leaven" in the sense of something that influences another - in this case, the corrupt doctrine and hypocrisy of the Pharisees and Sadducees. It is their (the disciples) faith (verse 8) that is preventing them from understanding the way He wants them to understand Him. Jesus focuses their minds by reminding them of the miracles of feeding the two groups of thousands and the abundant left-overs, and repeating the warning. That has the desired effect, and they finally "get it."

After they arrive in the district of Caesarea Philippi, Peter answers Jesus' question of verse 15 with the knowledge that He is the son of God. Jesus declares that he was blessed to have such

knowledge revealed to him by God Himself (verse 17). Unfortunately, verses 18-19 are the subject of much confusion and controversy. Many people get lost in scrutinizing the Greek and Aramaic words for rock, but the simple fact is that Jesus uses a play on words, as scripture very often does, with Peter's name. And despite his flaws (and maybe even because of them), most of us really just like Peter. But the gospel is not about the glory of Peter. It is about Jesus, and our hope of salvation through Him.

The two verses are not so difficult to understand when you put them in context with verse 20, with the preceding verses, and with Jesus' previous words about building a house on the rock ([Matthew 7:24](#)). The rock that Jesus is building on is the foundation of the son of God and His teachings; and his church or kingdom (Greek "ekklesia" - congregation or assembly) is the collection, or body, of people who have been saved by their obedience and faithfulness ([Ephesians 2:19-22](#), [1 Corinthians 12:13](#)). When Jesus says that He will give him the keys to the kingdom (in contrast to the scribes and Pharisees who cause people to be shut out - see [Matthew 23:13](#)), He is speaking of the divine revelation of His word, that will be given to the apostles by the Holy Spirit ([John 16:12-15](#)) to impart to us to be saved. That is when they will truly "get it." The next part of verse 19 is best translated in the New American Standard Version, which in the correct tense says "and whatever you bind on earth *shall have been bound* in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth *shall have been loosed* in heaven." Binding and loosing refer to forbidding and permitting, and the authority for their knowledge of it will be given to them. This is repeated to all of them in [Matthew 18:18](#).

Jesus then tells them to tell no one that He is the Christ. Like Peter in verse 22, nobody would understand that the Christ has not come to rule as their earthly king anyway. Only after He offers Himself in death will that understanding come. Verse 21 ("From that time...") is the first of four times from then until His arrival in Jerusalem, that He will tell them in Matthew of His imminent death and resurrection. We tend to forget that as Jesus was also a man, Peter's sentiment for keeping Jesus alive would be a temptation, knowing what He has to suffer. It is in that light that we better understand His strong words to Peter in verse 23.

Verses 24-27 are the essence of what it means to be a Christian. The knowledge of what the salvation of our souls means to us eternally should be enough to cause us to deny ourselves the worldly pleasures everyone finds so important - those things that would stand in the way of salvation. If we do not, and we "gain the world," we still will have lost everything. The meaning of verse 28 is said by some to be that some of those present will see Him come into His kingdom at His death and resurrection, which makes sense. Others believe that it is the Transfiguration that comes in chapter 17, and is a preview of His divine glory to come. Both answers have merit; and both may well be correct. The point is that the time is coming soon.

[Luke 9](#) - The first 27 verses of this chapter consist of details told in [Mark 6](#) (sending out the Apostles, and the feeding of the five thousand) and [Matthew 16](#) (Peter's confession, and Jesus' foretelling of His death and resurrection. Jesus took Peter, John, and James with Him in verse 28 to pray on the mountain where they witnessed an unforgettable sight, as His appearance and even His clothing are transformed; and Moses and Elijah (representing the Law and the Prophets) appeared and spoke of Jesus departure "he was about to accomplish at Jerusalem." This of course, refers to what follows His coming crucifixion and resurrection. Just

as Peter speaks hastily again (verse 33), they hear the voice of God declaring what Peter had said - that Jesus is the son of God. Peter assumed that Moses and Elijah would stay with them, but they were gone after God spoke, saying "Listen to Him." The significance of the presence and removal of those two is clear, and would not be lost on them later.

As Jesus foretells His death and resurrection in verse 44, verse 45 is one of a few verses that tell us how understanding and recognition was concealed from the disciples at various times until after Jesus departed following His resurrection (see also [Luke 18:34](#) and [Luke 24:16](#)). It is no small wonder then, that they began debating their own importance over each other. Jesus settles the dispute with another statement in verse 48 that they would not yet understand - "he who is least among you all is the one who is great." He would have more to say about this in [Luke 22:26](#).

The lessons of verses 57-62 are in light of the urgency of the moment at which Jesus encounters them. Two say that they want to follow Him, and He tells another to follow Him. He tells one that he will have to make sacrifices in order to do so (verse 58). The other two speak of matters important to them at the time that they want to take care of first (59, 61). This was no time for other priorities; and though these instances refer to a more physical following, the application for us is the same - that following Jesus must take first priority in our lives.

[Luke 10](#) - Most translations have the number as seventy-two in verse one and in verse 17, but some have it as seventy. There are many old and reliable manuscripts that have it each way, and there is no effect on doctrine either way. The laborers are those who proclaim the gospel, and their harvest is in gaining more laborers to further God's kingdom. "Peace" in verses 5-6 has a deeper meaning than we associate it with, and carries with it a blessing - in this case, the blessing of salvation (see also [Luke 7:50](#), [8:48](#)), but only if it is received (accepted). "Greet no one on the road" in verse 4 is most likely an expression of the urgency of the mission, as in [2 Kings 4:29](#) when Elisha sent his servant to the Shunammite's son. Likewise in verse 7, they are not to waste any time going from one household to another, but accept the hospitality provided because the laborer deserves his wages. Paul refers to this in [1 Corinthians 9:14](#), and quotes it as scripture in [1 Timothy 5:18](#). In verses 10-16, those who do not receive them are rejecting Jesus, and so are rejecting the one who sent Him - God.

When they returned they were filled with joy at the success of their mission, noting that "even the demons are subject to us in your name!" Jesus may be speaking in verse 18 of a heavenly vision He saw while they were about their business, or of something more specific. The message is that their use of the authority He had given to them had diminished the authority that Satan had. In verse 21 of His prayer, he is thanking God that those who were children in His kingdom had been given these gifts of understanding, favoring them over those who are wise in their own eyes ([Job 37:24](#)). Verses 23-24 are a reminder of how long the prophets have been looking ahead to these times when the Messiah would come and work these wonders, yet these disciples have been blessed to see it with their own eyes!

Verse 25's beginning with "lawyer stood up to put him to the test" suggests another occasion or location in which others were sitting while Jesus taught. He asks what he should do to inherit eternal life. Note that Jesus does not tell him that being saved is a result of his own

actions. Rather he asks the counter-questions "What is written in the law?" and "how do you read it?" The lawyer then quotes [Deuteronomy 6:5](#) and [Leviticus 19:18](#), which Jesus approves. In verse 29, though, the lawyer is trying to define the meaning of "neighbor" in a narrow way, so that he can be justified in not treating most people with that sort of love and compassion.

The Parable of the Good Samaritan that Jesus answers with in verses 30-35 is one of the most famous. But it is much more than a simple story of a good-hearted man helping a stranded stranger on the side of the road - which is what most people associate with it. It is the story of a man who was undoubtedly Jewish (travelling from Jerusalem to Jericho), who was beaten and left for dead by robbers (who could also have been Jewish). He was passed by, and his dire situation ignored by first a Jewish priest, and then a Levite. By definition, all would certainly be his kinsmen and his neighbors. But the one who does help him is a Samaritan, a group of people that Jews had anything but love for, and the feeling was mutual ([John 4:9](#)). Yet, the Samaritan not only had compassion and came to stop the bleeding and clean the wounds. He then carried the man back to town to an inn, and stayed with him overnight, caring for him. The next day, he gave the innkeeper his own money to look after him for a couple of days while he is gone, promising to stand good for any other expenses.

Being a compassionate neighbor in this case meant this Samaritan giving no small amount of time, effort and money to help someone in need, when that person most likely would have considered him an enemy. So if we are to love our neighbor as ourselves, we must truly love even our enemies ([Matthew 5:44](#)).

Side note: Though the Bible does not tell us where the inn was, a site has been identified and associated with the parable, and has become a museum. You can read about it in [this article at BibleArchaeology.org](#).

[Luke 15](#) - As Jesus was teaching, the tax collectors and sinners had gathered around him. We are not told what the latter were guilty of, but they obviously had a dubious reputation because of it. The Pharisee and scribes, of course, were looking for anything to use against Jesus; and they began grumbling about the company He was keeping. Of the three parables Jesus then tells in this chapter, the parable of the prodigal son is the most famous. But all three make the point about those who are lost, best stated in verse 7 by Jesus - "there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance."

The image in verse 20 of the father running to his son to embrace him when he returned should be comforting to anyone who has fallen away from the Lord and wants to return. No matter what we have done, God wants us to come back to Him, and will receive us gladly. The elder son is upset that his father is celebrating the return of his prodigal brother who, in verse 30, he does not even want to acknowledge as such ("this son") because of his anger. After all, he had remained behind and did not "devour" his father's "property with prostitutes" (verse 30). Why should his brother deserve to be received that way? God will forgive in the same way; and we must realize that it is not because any of us deserve that forgiveness.