

Grace Guide



July 20-26

MONDAY
7/20

MATTHEW 11:2-6

At this point in the narrative of the Gospel, John the Baptist is in prison and facing a death sentence. He wants to know if the one that he had put his trust in was the real deal – Jesus, are you really the deliverer, are you really the one sent by God? It's interesting to me that Jesus' response is not to have John released from prison (that happens to the disciples later, as we will see in Acts), rather he says, "Look at the evidence." God has worked amazing things – people are healed physically and spiritually. And I believe that this answer gave John peace.

1. What evidence do you see of Jesus' healing – physically and spiritually? Who is being delivered, healed, reconciled, forgiven?
2. Does this truth give you peace in Christ? How can you trust Him more?

TUESDAY

7/21

MARK 2:3-12

I love this story – partly because of the imagery of these guys digging through someone’s roof while Jesus is teaching below (I can just see bits of roof falling on Jesus as he’s kind of glancing up...). But this is such a powerful image of the Church as a community of healing. Four men bring their friend to Jesus. “When Jesus saw their faith...” he said to the man, “Your sins are forgiven.” A man so broken that he couldn’t bring himself to Jesus was brought by the faith of his friends. And Jesus offers the ultimate healing first – salvation, the forgiveness of his sins. In fact, he physically heals the man to provide proof of the truth of the man’s salvation – the visible to reveal the invisible.

1. Who do you know who needs released from brokenness, forgiven of sin, healed of sickness or freed from bondage? How can you bring them to Jesus?
2. Do you believe that Jesus can do the kinds of things today that He did when he walked the earth?

WEDNESDAY

7/22

JAMES 5:13-20

James, the brother of Jesus, writes that when we are sick or hurting, we should confess our sins and pray for one another. Here, specifically, James says that leaders in the faith should anoint with oil and pray over them. Oil is a symbol of the Holy Spirit. There is nothing magical or special about being anointed with oil – it is a reminder that we pray in the power of God’s Spirit, not in our own power. “The prayer of the righteous is powerfully effective.” Why? Because the one who is righteous (standing right with God) is fully trusting in God.

1. Do you feel like your prayers are “powerfully effective”? How is your daily walk with God?
2. Again, we see a connection between forgiveness and healing. How could sin prevent God from working in our lives?

THURSDAY

7/23

2 CORINTHIANS 5:11-21

As new creation (5:17), as our new selves in Christ (Colossians 3:10), we are not bound to the brokenness and sin of our past, but we are reconciled with God. And having experienced the power of being forgiven and restored, we are called to, as Paul calls it here, the message (or ministry) of reconciliation (5:19).

1. How do you experience a reconciled relationship with God? How is your life different now from, say, ten years ago?
2. How are you sharing the message of reconciliation? Is there someone in your life that you need to reconcile with? Is there someone in your life who you believe needs to reconcile with God? How do you share?

FRIDAY

7/24

PSALM 103

Verse 12 says, "...as far as the east is from the west, so far has he [God] removed our transgressions from us." This is, in part at least, what we mean by "forgive and forget." God releases us from our sin – as if God "forgets" our sin. It's not about forgetting, though, but about releasing. God knows our sin – but, in forgiving, chooses not to ever hold it against us. Released and set free.

1. Do you ever struggle with releasing yourself from your own sin? Do you believe that God removes our transgressions from us, as far as the east is from the west? If so, why do we struggle with releasing ourselves?
2. Is there anyone you struggle with forgiving? Have you ever forgiven someone, only to have the hurt well up again and you feel like you've "taken back" the forgiveness? Take a few moments and pray for God to allow you to truly forgive others.

**SATURDAY/
SUNDAY
7/25-26**

ACTS 3:1-26

When Peter and John meet the beggar, they immediately get his attention. The man wants money – and who could blame him? He can't work, he's not even welcome in the temple because of his disability. But they don't have any money. "What I do have, I give you." What does he have? He has faith. He has the Holy Spirit. He has Jesus. And so, in the name of Jesus, rise and walk. And the man's response is the praise God. And Peter's response is to give God glory and point people toward God – and to try to bring them to repent, to receive forgiveness, to be healed in the way they need it the most.

1. What is easier to do, give people a handout or be a conduit through which the Holy Spirit can bring healing and reconciliation and forgiveness?
2. How can you be more open to God working in you? We are to pray for one another. How can you pray for someone else today? How are your prayers "powerful and effective"?

Key Verse:

**"But he was pierced for our transgressions,
he was crushed for our iniquities;
the punishment that brought us peace was on him,
and by his wounds we are healed."**

(Isaiah 53:5)