

Name: _____

GRATITUDE AND SERMON JOURNAL

Signs and Wonders

March 7 - April 21, 2019

Love Like Jesus

April 22 - May 26, 2019

Dear Church,

A particularly inspiring book for me is “Atomic Habits.” An atom is a tiny particle of matter invisible to the naked eye. Though an atom is small, it has a dramatic effect. The application of “Atomic Habits” is not to make enormous changes but only focus on one percent. Don’t resolve to lose 30 pounds; lose three. Do it daily. Do it consistently. Do it over time. Do not focus on momentary gains; focus on results. Doing the right “atomic” thing again and again over time becomes a habit. We become the sum of our habits.

This sermon journal is intended for daily use, consistently and over time. *Helping Others Follow Jesus* is more than a one-time event. Atomic habits are what John Wesley intended for the Methodist people (they didn’t call it that in the 1700s because atoms weren’t invented yet 😊).

I want you to use this journal every day and come to worship every Sunday. Take the challenge over these next twelve weeks. Let these be your atomic habits. Use this journal with your daily readings and be intentional in giving thanks. (Paul told one congregation, “*give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you,*” 1 Thessalonians 5:18.)

Finally, I’d ask you to consider bringing your Gratitude and Sermon Journal with you to Sunday worship. I find this helps me be more mindful of the Word of God. (You also might consider gifting one of these to a friend.)

The series on “Signs and Wonders” takes us through Easter. The Gospel of John is our foundation to look at Jesus’ miracles. These miracles are signs that point to a greater revelation of His identity: Jesus Christ is Lord. We follow Easter with a relational series. A book by Les Parrott, “*Love Like That,*” teaches us to *love like Jesus*. The Gospels show the characteristics and nature of Jesus in His relationships to people in His ministry. He is portrayed as being: mindful, approachable, grace-full, bold and self-giving. With all things in life, Jesus is our model.

In Christ,

Tom

Consider using this journal not only for yourself but also as an opportunity to meet with others in a small group. The Christian faith is about making disciples of Jesus. This journal provides a mutually blessed way for you to do precisely that. Below are questions your small group may use for weekly discussion.

Weekly Sermon Reflection Questions:

- Review the key scripture(s).
- Review the key point(s) from the sermon.
 - How were you encouraged?
 - How were you challenged?
 - What questions did it create?
 - What convictions did it bring?
- What was the pastor asking of you, even expecting you to do in response?
- How has the Lord spoken to you through this sermon?
- What are you going to do as a result?

Scripture Readings

SIGNS AND WONDERS

WATER INTO WINE

- 3/7 John 2:1-11
- 3/8 1 Kings 17:8-16;
2 Kings 4:1-7
- 3/9 Luke 7:18-35
- 3/10 John 2:1-11

THE OFFICIAL'S SON

- 3/11 John 4:46-54
- 3/12 Daniel 4:1-3
- 3/13 Matthew 8:5-13
- 3/14 Luke 17:20-21
- 3/15 Acts 2:14-41
- 3/16 Hebrews 2:1-4
- 3/17 John 4:46-54

FEEDING THE 5,000

- 3/18 John 6:1-15
- 3/19 Matthew 14:13-21
- 3/20 Mark 6:30-44
- 3/21 John 6:22-40
- 3/22 John 6:41-59
- 3/23 John 6:60-71
- 3/24 John 6:1-15

WALKING ON WATER

- 3/25 John 6:16-24
- 3/26 Job 38
- 3/27 Jonah 1
- 3/28 Matthew 14:22-33
- 3/29 Mark 6:45-52
- 3/30 Luke 8:22-25
- 3/31 John 6:16-24

THE MAN BORN BLIND

- 4/1 John 9:1-7
- 4/2 John 9:8-12
- 4/3 John 9:13-17
- 4/4 John 9:18-23
- 4/5 John 9:24-34
- 4/6 John 9:35-41
- 4/7 John 9:1-7

RAISING LAZARUS

- 4/8 John 11:1-16
- 4/9 John 11:17-37
- 4/10 John 11:38-44
(preaching text)
- 4/11 John 11:45-57
- 4/12 John 12:1-11
- 4/13 John 12:12-19
- 4/14 John 11:38-44

THE RESURRECTION

- 4/15 John 20:24-31
- 4/16 Matthew 12:38-42
- 4/17 1 Corinthians 1:18-31
- 4/18 John 13:31-35
- 4/19 John 19:16-30
- 4/20 John 19:31-42
- 4/21 John 20:24-31

Scripture Readings

LOVE LIKE JESUS

MINDFUL

- 4/22 Luke 19:1-10
- 4/23 Matthew 25:14-30
- 4/24 John 4:1-30
- 4/25 2 Corinthians 4:7-18
- 4/26 Hebrews 2:1-9
- 4/27 1 Peter 3:8-12
- 4/28 Luke 19:1-10

APPROACHABLE

- 5/13 Luke 15:1-10
- 5/14 Matthew 9
- 5/15 Mark 14:1-9
- 5/16 Luke 13:10-17
- 5/17 John 3:1-21
- 5/18 Hebrews 4:14-16
- 5/19 Luke 15:1-10

BOLD

- 4/29 Matthew 21:12-17
- 4/30 Acts 4:13-31
- 5/1 Ephesians 3:7-13
- 5/2 2 Corinthians 3:12-18
- 5/3 Philippians 1:12-18
- 5/4 Philemon 8-16
- 5/5 Matthew 21:12-17

SELF-GIVING

- 5/20 John 15:12-17
- 5/21 Romans 12:9-21
- 5/22 1 Thessalonians 3:11-13
- 5/23 1 Peter 4:7-11
- 5/24 1 John 3:11-24
- 5/25 1 John 4:13-21
- 5/26 John 15:12-17

GRACE-FULL

- 5/6 John 1:14-18
- 5/7 Matthew 18:21-35
- 5/8 John 8:1-11
- 5/9 Ephesians 2:1-10
- 5/10 2 Corinthians 12:1-10
- 5/11 Revelation 22:6-21
- 5/12 John 1:14-18

SIGNS AND WONDERS

March 7 - April 21, 2019

SIGNS AND WONDERS

Monday, March 25, 2019

John 6:16-24

The Jews were not a sea-faring people. Calling the “Lake of Gennesaret” a “sea” seems odd. We wouldn’t call Lake Skiatook, “The Sea of Skiatook.” It is 13 miles north-to-south and 7 miles east-to-west. While Luke’s Gospel has a story about Jesus calming the storm, he does not have a “water-walking” story like Matthew, Mark and John. Again, this seems odd. This miracle in John’s Gospel is sandwiched between the feeding of the 5,000 and Jesus’ discourse on “I Am the Bread of Life.”

God’s creation far surpasses our comprehension. Job 38 introduces us to God’s perspective. The Lord is sovereign over all. Jonah illustrates someone who was overwhelmed by hatred, disobedience and water. The disciples were overwhelmed by fear and water.

They went from a “mountain top” experience (the miraculous feeding) to believing they were “dead” in the water, to suddenly being out of danger and “back on top” all in less than 24 hours. How could they wrap their minds around Jesus walking on water? The text notes, they were “glad” to have Him in their boat.

APPLICATION: Have you ever experienced a miracle or known someone who has? When have you experienced a spiritual high? Low? What do you do when overwhelmed by circumstances? When was the last time Jesus made you “glad”? How often do you worship Jesus as a worker of signs and wonders?

THE MAN BORN BLIND

Monday, April 1, 2019

John 9:1-7

This is one of my favorite stories in the entire Bible. It seems like a comedy routine, which is probably why I like it so much. I love verse 27 when the blind man asks his critics if they want to become followers of Jesus, too. Wouldn't you have loved to have been a fly on the wall and witnessed this spectacle?

Here is our cast of characters in chapter nine: the disciples, Jesus, a man blind since birth, his parents, his neighbors and the Pharisees. I also love this story because the Pool of Siloam has been found in Jerusalem and stands as a sign that still points to Jesus as Lord. We also get from this story the most beloved and amazing song.

APPLICATION: This sign is a physical healing, but it is obvious there is more to this than meets the eye. Humans are physical, spiritual and relational beings. People can be “blind” in more ways than one. When we emerge from our blindness, we perceive what was before us all along—Jesus. Like the blind man, we are invited to be part of Jesus’ story. How has Jesus helped you to “see?” When you need answers, where do you usually look?

SIGNS AND WONDERS

Monday, April 8, 2019

John 11:1-16

This week's readings are different, as the raising of Lazarus has a huge backdrop and we want to look at the entire episode. This story has many components. As you read this week, look at all the people involved with Jesus: Mary, Martha, Lazarus, His disciples, Thomas (the Twin), the Jews, Pharisees, chief priests, Caiaphas, Judas, the crowd and a donkey. Put yourself in the place of these individuals. What were they thinking? Whose side were they on? Why? What were their responses? The raising of Lazarus was the final straw for Jesus' opposition. They felt they were losing control, and everyone would believe in Him if He wasn't stopped. Holy Week begins on Palm Sunday (also called "The Triumphal Entry"). There's a lot of heartache, disappointment, defeat, darkness, opposition and death. But since Jesus is involved, there is also much wonder, astonishment, joy, worship, attraction, hope and victory.

Of all the signs Jesus performed, this was the big one. It would reveal He is the Resurrection and the Life. It was His death warrant, too.

APPLICATION: The first six signs and wonders dealt with life issues. This final miracle deals with death. We might be able to find food and medical supplies, but nothing compares with raising to life a man dead for four days. The raising of Lazarus shows and tells what is in store for those who accept The Sign, Jesus, into their lives. Imagine your own mortality. What does Jesus mean to you? How will this truth affect your worship on Sunday?

THE RESURRECTION

Monday, April 15, 2019

John 20:24-31

Thomas thought he knew how following Jesus should work. The cross crushed his expectations. His disappointment gave way to cynicism. Thomas resisted the testimony of his fellow disciples. He had to discover the resurrected Christ for himself. *“Unless I see in his hands the mark of the nails, and place my finger into his side, I will never believe.”* Though he had witnessed Jesus’ signs and wonders, he needed more proof than what his peers claimed. The stone-cold dead Jesus suddenly stood among them – living, breathing, flesh-and-blood with wounds still in His hands and side. This doubting disciple went from disbelief to faith.

The Resurrection answers the question, “How is Jesus’ death different from the death of any other leader?” Moses, Caesar, Mohammed, etc. all died and are still dead. The Resurrection validated Jesus’ promises for all time. All the signs and wonders point to this specific claim: Jesus is Christ the Lord and the Son of God.

APPLICATION: Faith is easy to accept and believe for some while it is a struggle for others. God works in unexpected ways. Many benefits are given when we choose to follow Jesus: forgiveness, God’s presence, purpose in life, the church as a family, and eternal life. What additional sign needs to happen for you to put your faith in Jesus Christ?

LOVE LIKE JESUS

April 22 - May 26, 2019

LOVE LIKE JESUS

Monday, April 22, 2019

Luke 19:1-10

Jesus paid attention to people and situations overlooked by others. He spoke to a despised woman in Samaria (John 4). He saw the hated Zacchaeus hiding in a tree. (He was hated as a tax collector who ripped off his own people to finance a foreign army's occupation.) To his credit, Zacchaeus sought the best possible place to encounter Jesus. "Seeking" goes both ways. His conversion story ends with Jesus' point: "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost." Jesus redeemed wasted lives. He saw the untapped potential beneath the surface. He spent three years constantly correcting the misconceptions of His disciples. Salvation is holistic. It is more than an isolated, stand-alone event. Zacchaeus was forgiven, welcomed and loved, but he could no longer live in the same old way. A relationship with Jesus moves us from taking to giving. Asbury helps us love like Jesus. *Helping Others Follow Jesus* means we will be present in the moment and be mindful in service, generosity and care.

APPLICATION: Our membership vows ask, "Will you be loyal to Jesus Christ expressed through Asbury...and will you uphold it by your prayers, presence, gifts, service and witness?" We express loyalty to Him through faithful habits. How has following Jesus resulted in being attentive to others? How are you serving, giving and caring?

BOLD

Monday, April 29, 2019

Matthew 21:12-17

Jesus said bold things. He always cared but never compromised His message. The Apostles followed His lead. It's interesting how Paul wrestled with this matter with the Corinthian church (see 2 Corinthians 10:1). Our boldness is rooted in our confidence in the grace and love of Jesus. We are "in Christ." Since we are loved by such a great love, we confidently share the good news of grace and truth.

"A Failure of Nerve" is a challenging book to read but it has helped me enormously. Rabbi Ed Friedman described how leaders can lose their confidence (nerve) by not being "self-differentiated." Our identity can be hijacked by others. All are susceptible but especially leaders. Sabotage and triangulation dogs those at the top. Business, education, politics and ministry, etc. leaders can lose their identity. Chronic anxiety and fear follow. Self-differentiation means choosing responsibility over empathy while retaining emotional warmth for others. Friedman felt the best self-differentiation anyone can attain is 70 percent. Jesus was the most self-differentiated man who ever lived. He always kept a strong sense of self. He always spoke with both grace and truth.

APPLICATION: Have you ever lost your nerve? What was the result? Are you a calm or anxious person? How can you be "self-differentiated" and still have warmth for others?

LOVE LIKE JESUS

Monday, May 6, 2019

John 1:14-18

I was shocked to discover John is the only Gospel to use the word “grace” (all four times in John 1:14-17). John says Jesus is “*full of grace and truth.*” “Mercy” was a much more common term in Matthew, Mark and Luke (but not found in John). Grace never says the Old Testament Law is bad, nor does it tell us anything goes. God’s grace is always linked with truth. The forgiveness of Jesus in John 8 was not permission to return to the old way. Grace is given to transform.

“Grace” occurs frequently (11 times) in the Book of Acts. Acts shows how Jesus’ followers were grace-full. Saul was a man who lived righteously according to the Law. He was so transformed by grace that even his name changed (to “Paul” meaning “small” or “humble.”) After being God’s enemies, we were saved by grace through faith (Ephesians 2:8-9). The intent is for us to exhibit God’s grace through the Holy Spirit. God’s grace is all we need to make us strong (2 Corinthians 12:9-10). The last verse in the Bible ends with, “*The grace of the Lord Jesus be with you all. Amen.*” God loves me even though I am a sinner – Christ died for sinners.

APPLICATION: Have you received God’s grace? How does God’s grace affect the way you live? In Matthew 18:21-35, Jesus stresses the importance of extending grace. Are you grace-full toward others or are you excluding others from God’s grace? Why is this question so important?

APPROACHABLE

Monday, May 13, 2019

Luke 15:1-10

Some are not approachable. Wearing a "NO!" face, they barricade and wall off others. Why? Isolation may occur because of insecurity. Insecurity is rooted in fear, mistrust and hurt. Hurt people may avoid commitments and risks. Sometimes wounded people are opposite - SO approachable they allow others to take advantage. There is a time to say "NO!" and a time to say, "YES!" Jesus established clear boundaries.

Some are unapproachable because they hold others in contempt. John Gottman (famous author and counselor) says contempt kills a marriage. Many of the Pharisees held Jesus in contempt. Yet, He offered grace (even to Nicodemus who came to see Him at night).

His character attracts. Jesus could be tough but also tender. Jesus is "The Lamb of God." Lambs are approachable. Matthew 9 shows many types of people approaching Him. Children, women, Gentiles, the diseased, social outcasts and misfits all came to Him.

Discipleship is becoming like Jesus. He invites us to come to Him so He can transform us, too.

APPLICATION: Is Jesus approachable for you? Are you approachable to others? Do you have good boundaries? Do you hold anyone in contempt? Why? How can you get past this impasse?

