



# LIVING THE MISSION

*A guide to 14 days of prayer & fasting*

Aligning your life with the mission of Jesus



**RadiantLife**  
MINISTRIES

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## LIVING THE MISSION

Welcome, we are so glad you have decided to join us over the next two weeks to pray and align your heart with the mission of Jesus.

### How to Use This Guide:

- Each day, set aside time to pray and read through this devotional.
- Invite the Holy Spirit to speak to you as you read each day's devotional passages.
- Pray in response to what God speaks to your heart as you read.
- Invite God to show you how to put it into practice in your life.
- Attend our Night to Respond at the end of the two weeks of prayer and fasting and see how God might be inviting you to join with others to reach those around you.

May God draw you close and increase your heart and vision for those around you through this experience.

Blessings,

Craig & Stephanie

Directors, Radiant Life Ministries

*The following has been modified and adapted with permission from Paulo Mazoni's devotional entitled – 21 Days of Fasting and Prayer.*

# DAY 1 – Monday, January 16

## FLEEING FROM GOD

*The word of the Lord came to Jonah son of Amittai: "Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me." But Jonah ran away from the Lord and headed for Tarshish. He went down to Joppa, where he found a ship bound for that port. After paying the fare, he went aboard and sailed for Tarshish to flee from the Lord. (Jon. 1:1-3)*

### INTRODUCTION

Doesn't it seem odd, for a prophet, a man used by God, to run away from God's presence? Why did Jonah take that attitude? Hasn't that been our reality too?

Are we not fleeing from God and His will? Do we not have the feeling that confusion in our life is related to our fleeing attitude?

Did you know that the first human beings created by God also acted like Jonah? The Biblical narrative says that Adam and his wife, soon after they had sinned and realized they were naked, hid themselves from the presence of the Lord (Gn. 3:8). It is incredible. Jonah, Adam and Eve, and even we know that we can run away or even hide from God, but it is impossible to run away from His presence. Psalm 139, among other matters, speaks of God's omnipresence. David declares: *"Where shall I flee from your Spirit? Where shall I flee from your face? If I ascend into heaven you are there; if I make my bed in the deepest abyss, you are there also...."* WE CANNOT FLEE FROM THE PRESENCE OF GOD. He knows us completely; He knows our afflictions and knows all our ways.

What makes us try to run away from God? Is there not often in our hearts a certain distrust of the Lord? Why do we run away?

#### 1. Fear of condemnation

We run away because we're afraid of condemnation. This was certainly the cause of Adam's flee from God in Eden's garden. When he realized that he had sinned and his nakedness was exposed, he hid himself and his wife among the trees of the garden. Guilt should not take us away from God; instead, it should bring us closer, because in Him we find full forgiveness and abundant grace. We must trust the Word that if we confess our sins, God is faithful and righteous to forgive us of our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 Jn. 1:9). We do not need to walk in fear of condemnation.

#### 2. Fear of rejection

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We also run away because we are afraid of rejection. When we are afflicted by a difficult situation and enter into tribulation, our tendency is to think that the Lord does not care about us. If the situation continues, a feeling of frustration and desperation arises and we are led to think that God has abandoned us.

### **3. Fear of revelation**

Another reason we run away is the fear of revelation. We are afraid of God's will; often we do not accept it. This was probably the reason for Jonah's escape. God was sending Jonah to preach to the enemy! A very oppressive enemy, who had often killed and enslaved his brothers. Jonah knew the Lord and was afraid that instead of exercising judgment, God would exercise mercy. The Bible tells us that God's will is good, perfect, and pleasing. God's will is to bless us. We should not be afraid that God will take something from us. If this happens, we must understand that it is for our good. God is the rewarder of all who seek Him.

## **CONCLUSION**

The worst attitude we can take in our lives is to run away from God, to walk away from Him. We should never be afraid of Him. God is good, His will is good, perfect, and pleasing. Don't run away from your mission. You know that just as God had a purpose for Jonah's life, He has a purpose for yours too. Let God "use" you. Be an instrument to carry God's Word and influence the lives of many people. Receive this Word in your life!

# DAY 2 – Tuesday, January 17

## GOD'S HEART EXPOSED

*“And should I not have concern for the great city of Nineveh, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left — and also many animals?” (Jon. 4:11)*

### INTRODUCTION

Compassion can be defined as a burning will or desire to help someone in some way, or to feel the pain of others, and to do something to relieve or reduce their suffering. Compassion is goodness in action, driven by a deep interest in people. It is practical love, the coherence between love and acts of love.

God told this to Jonah because He wanted to send him to Nineveh to preach to those people, even though they were Israel's enemies. He did this because He had compassion for the Ninevites. God wished that those who lived in that city would not perish and so He decided to do something about it.

The Bible talks a lot about compassion. Perhaps it is the central value of the Kingdom of God, because God is love. Let's see what the Bible says about compassion.

#### 1. Compassion is God's attribute

*The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. (Ps. 103:8)*

Compassion is inherent in God. The best-known verse of the Bible (Jn. 3:16) is a great expression of God's compassion. He loved so much that He gave. Love was put into action. As Jesus came to fulfill the Father's will and to provide the way for our salvation, He became the greatest model of compassion. He loved and proved His love through His actions.

#### 2. Jesus was moved by compassion

If we look at the Gospel narratives, we will see that compassion was like fuel for Jesus. Let's look at some examples. He healed when He was moved by compassion.

*When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, He had compassion on them and healed their sick. (Mt. 14:14)*

He multiplied loaves and fishes and fed a crowd when He was moved by compassion.

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*Jesus called his disciples to him and said, "I have compassion for these people; they have already been with me three days and have nothing to eat. I do not want to send them away hungry, or they may collapse on the way." (Mt. 15:32)*

Moved by compassion, Jesus resurrected the widow's son from the city of Nain.

*When the Lord saw her, His heart went out to her and he said, "Don't cry." (Lk. 7:13)*

Jesus also expressed compassion when He saw people distressed and helpless who were compared to sheep without a shepherd. When the sheep does not have the protection of the shepherd, it becomes an easy catch for wolves.

*Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. (Mt. 9:36)*

When Jesus had compassion on the crowd, He turned to his disciples and said that the harvest is great but there are few workers. And He commanded them to ask the Father to send out workers. This is a speech about the lost people's salvation.

### **3. We are called to have compassion**

*Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you. (Eph. 4:32)*

The New Testament talks a lot about compassion. The Lord's Church is called to have compassion for people. We need to be sensitive to people's needs; we need to do as Jesus did. God calls us to feed the hungry, heal the people, and be instruments of God to take the Gospel to all people. That's compassion.

## **CONCLUSION**

Compassion is God's attribute and we saw this feeling constantly manifested in Jesus' life. We are called to be compassionate. Compassion should be our daily fuel.

God sent Jonah to Nineveh because He had compassion on that city. He did not want them to die lost. We need to take that seriously. Moved by compassion, we must take the Gospel, so that no one perishes but has eternal life.

# DAY 3 – Wednesday, January 18

## AN EXTRAORDINARY DISCOVERY

Read Isaiah 6:1-8

### INTRODUCTION

This text describes a remarkable experience in Isaiah's life that deeply marked his life. The Bible is not only a book that contains God's revelation to men. It also tells how men reacted to God's revelation. The Bible is a book of experiences; just like Isaiah, others such as Noah, Abraham, Elijah, etc. also had their outstanding moments with God.

The biblical characters that we so admire only did incredible things and persevered because they had EXPERIENCES WITH GOD.

Isaiah knew very well what and when it happened. In fact, this experience brought him profound discoveries. What were they?

#### 1. The discovery of who God is

Isaiah saw God. First of all, it's essential to see God. The biblical text brings out the idea of experience. Jesus said: *"he who sees me sees my Father" (Jn. 14:9)*.

- Jacob was touched by God and said, *"I saw God face-to-face and my life was saved" (Gn. 32:30)*.
- Gideon was changed by God when he saw the angel of the Lord face-to-face (Jg. 6:22).
- Paul saw Jesus and his whole life was changed (1 Co. 9:1).
- Job only knew him from hearing, but one day he saw the LORD (Jb. 42:5).

Have we seen God? Have we had experiences with Him? Hasn't our life become like Job's? The Scripture tells us: *"...prove and see that the Lord is good..." (Ps. 34:8)*.

The main characteristic that God wanted to manifest to Isaiah was His Holiness.

- Moses had an experience with God (Ex. 3:5).
- God is holy (creation declares this – Rev. 5:8).
- Joshua had a similar experience (Jos. 5:15).
- The Bible declares that without holiness no one will see the Lord (Heb. 12:14).
- God wants a separated people (1 Pe. 2:8; Ex. 19:6).
- God yearns for us (Jm. 4:4,5).

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### 2. The discovery of who I am

Isaiah said: *"Woe to me, I am lost (destroyed, dead) I am ... impure"*. His big problem: THE LIPS.

When he contemplated God and looked at himself, his condition became very evident. The Bible declares that all have sinned and are destitute of the glory of God (Rom 3:23). WE ARE SINNERS.

We have great difficulty recognizing our sin. We are proud, self-sufficient, and selfish (Rev. 3:14-22). We think that the whole world is centered on us. When David sinned and was reproved by God, he recognized his sin. He said: Against you, against you only, have I sinned and done what was evil in your sight.

### 3. The discovery of who I can become

The angel touched the sore: the impure lips. God has medicine for our wounds *"...Surely he took up our pain and bore our suffering..." (Is. 53:4)*.

David, although he sinned terribly, could say:

*Blessed is the one whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered.*

*Blessed is the one whose sin the LORD does not count against them and in whose spirit is no deceit.*

*When I kept silent, my bones wasted away through my groaning all day long.*

*For day and night your hand was heavy on me; my strength was sapped as in the heat of summer. Then I acknowledged my sin to you and did not cover up my iniquity. I said, "I will confess my transgressions to the LORD." And you forgave the guilt of my sin. (Ps. 32:1-5)*

I can be forgiven, purified, and enter into a sanctification process.

### 4. The discovery of what I can do

God has purposes for us. He has clearly left us a mission. As incredible as it may seem, God seeks people. He asked: Who shall I send? The Bible describes situations where God has not found anyone (Eze. 22:30).

Paul wrote to those in Ephesus and declared that God has something extraordinary prepared for us to accomplish (Eph. 2:8-10). Isn't that incredible? The Lord has called us to do the greatest of all works; He commanded us to go and do it - the Great Commission.



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*"Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Mt. 28:19-20)*

## **CONCLUSION**

Wasn't Isaiah's experience wonderful? May ours be also. God wants to touch us, reveal Himself, forgive our sins and show His plans for our life. There is something extraordinary that God sends us to do: preach the Gospel and make disciples. Alleluia!

# DAY 4 – Thursday, January 19

## LOVE SERVES

Read John 21:1-19

### INTRODUCTION

We live in a selfish time like never before in history. People only care about themselves and always look at situations from the perspective of self-benefit. In other words: “What do I gain from this?” The "gospel" that has been preached only emphasizes the benefits we will have; it does not speak of a merciful life that loves one's neighbor as oneself. Today's preaching emphasizes only receiving and never giving.

The reality of our post-modern society is we are concerned only about feelings; that is, if I feel good, I'll do it, otherwise damn the others. We live in situations with a complete lack of commitment in all areas.

It is in this context that we will consider the text we read. Jesus appears to his disciples on a beach after His resurrection, when in a moment of great frustration, they decided to return to fishing and after a whole night of trying, they have caught nothing. When Jesus orders them to throw their nets to the right side of the boat and the net becomes full of fish, John declares “It is the Lord.” Then, Peter jumps into the waters and goes to meet the Lord.

What would have gone through Peter's mind in those moments? Would he have remembered the first fishing experience with Jesus, when something very similar happened? On that occasion, Jesus called them to be fishermen of men and they left their nets and followed Him.

Perhaps Peter was overcome with a sense of frustration that Jesus had died; he did not feel like or did not know how to fish for men; and he had also denied the Lord.

After they have dinner, Jesus has a very private conversation with Peter when He reinforces Peter's call to be a disciple and this is what we will talk about.

### **1. What is the main condition to become a disciple? Love the Lord.**

Peter "messed up." He denied the Lord. Jesus didn't even mention it. That was one of Jesus' last moments with Peter, who would become one of the main leaders of the early Church. However, Jesus gave him no instruction on how to do it or where to go; He made no strategic planning. JESUS SIMPLY ASKED A QUESTION: DO YOU LOVE ME?

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### 2. Jesus declared that those who love, serve.

When Peter answered affirmatively that he loved the Lord, then Jesus said, *"Take care of my sheep; shepherd my flock."* In other words, Jesus was telling Peter that those who love the Lord must do something for Him. It has one purpose.

How to serve?

#### a) Shepherding the flock

This is what Jesus requires from us. We see many who want to serve but don't care about the sheep. On the other hand, many actually use and manipulate the sheep. Once again, Jesus asked Peter, "Do you love me? Shepherd my flock."

#### b) Having a commitment

Many scholars say that Jesus asked Peter three times to remind him of the triple denial. Whatever the issue, Jesus wants to emphasize the gravity of the matter, drawing attention to the commitment. To serve Him we need to have commitment.

It is stunning that many do not want commitment. Believers who do not want commitment exist in droves. They only want the benefits of the Gospel, but not commitment. They conduct their life and ministry without any care.

#### c) Being willing to sacrifice

When Peter was called to the ministry, he was warned that he would die because of the Lord, but his death would glorify the Lord. Would you be willing? We live in a country where we are free to speak of the Lord. However, there are places where people are killed just for having a Bible or even saying Jesus' name.

Even in a comfortable situation, few are willing to sacrifice anything for the Gospel in order to fulfill the mission that we have been given by the Lord. The Bible talks about

- The widow who gave two coins.
- The widow of Zarephath of Sidon, who gave her flour and oil to Elijah.
- The young man who gave 5 loaves and 2 fish for Jesus to perform the multiplication.

## CONCLUSION

## **LIVING THE MISSION**

The natural question is: Do you love the Lord? Are you willing to serve him? Are you willing to make a commitment? Are you willing to sacrifice? Those who love, serve!

# DAY 5 – Friday, January 20

## A RESTORED LIFE

Read Mark 5:1-20

### INTRODUCTION

Have you ever experienced situations where there are people who are unwelcome? Nobody wants them around or will even pay attention to them because they cause embarrassment, discomfort, or even threat. Have you ever wished you would never see someone again because that person causes trouble?

That was the situation of that man who lived among the graves. Nobody wanted him around. He was probably considered a person who is no good and a lost case; the best thing would be to keep him away and, if possible, locked up.

The Bible tells us a beautiful story of this man's restoration when he met Jesus. What have we learned from this Bible narrative?

#### 1. God always takes the initiative to reach out to lost people

Jesus' journey to that place was purposeful. He knew there was a captive man there and went to meet him. After all, Jesus came to free the captives. We see in the Bible, all the time, the Lord going after the one who was lost.

- It was that way with Adam in Eden.
- It was so with Cain when he killed his brother Abel.
- So it was also with Zacchaeus when Jesus declared that he came to seek and save the lost.

The Lord cares about us. He saw us as sheep without shepherds and came to become the Great Shepherd of sheep.

#### 2. There is a struggle involving each person's life

Jesus and his disciples faced a very violent storm to cross the lake to reach that region. The disciples were terrified while Jesus slept. Jesus, after being awakened by them, rebuked the wind and the sea, commanding them to be quiet. Only in this way could they get to the other side.

These things happen because there is a struggle for people's lives. We all know the struggles we face because the enemy tries to prevent us from having an encounter with Jesus.

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Jesus once said to Peter, *"Satan has claimed you to sift you like wheat" (Lk. 22:31)*. Our adversary wanted to hurt Peter and the disciples, as well as us. But Jesus prayed for him. Glory be to God, for God is watching over our lives.

### 3. The enemy wants to destroy lives

The description of that man's life is frightening. The Bible speaks of someone who did not live in his own home, but instead lived in a cemetery. He was bound in chains, which were often broken by him. No one could dominate him. He screamed a lot and cut himself with stones. How terrible!

The text makes it clear that the cause of that man's condition was demonic action. He was possessed by a legion of demons. A Roman legion was composed of 6,000 soldiers. Jesus said that the Devil is a murderer (Jn. 8:44). What a terrible thing!

That man had lost his identity. He was not created to live like this. Maybe you're not in a situation like that particular man, but you realize something that holds you back, ties you up, takes you where you don't want to go. The feeling you have is that something sucks your strength, pushes you away from your family. Let me tell you something: Only Jesus can set you free!

### 4. Only Jesus can set us free from the darkness

For that town, that man was a hopeless case. There was no more hope for him. Nobody even wanted to live with him. The best thing was to chain him up.

But Jesus had compassion on that man. The word says: *"For this the Son of God manifested Himself: to destroy the works of the Devil" (1 Jn. 3:8b)*. Jesus can. Jesus has power.

Look what happened during one of Paul's missionary trips. Some Jews tried to cast out demons without being committed to Jesus. They were totally defeated.

*Some Jews who went around driving out evil spirits tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who were demon-possessed. They would say, "In the name of the Jesus whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out." Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. One day the evil spirit answered them, "Jesus I know, and Paul I know about, but who are you?" Then the man who had the evil spirit jumped on them and overpowered them all. He gave them such a beating that they ran out of the house naked and bleeding. (Acts 19:13-16)*

When it happened with Paul, the result was completely different.

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*She kept this up for many days. Finally, Paul became so annoyed that he turned around and said to the spirit, "In the name of Jesus Christ I command you to come out of her!" At that moment the spirit left her. (Acts 16:18)*

Peter, when he preaches to the Gentiles, declares the essence of Jesus' ministry:

*...how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and power, and how he went around doing good and healing all who were under the power of the devil, because God was with him. (Acts 10:38)*

Jesus wants, Jesus does; only He can set you free. When the demons saw Him, they fell down and recognized His authority.

### 5. Jesus' work is complete

Christ Jesus' work of restoration is complete. He does not retread; He makes an improvement. He actually does everything new. According to the biblical narrative, after being set free by Jesus, that man:

- He was sitting: Now he had peace. He could sit down and talk. He didn't have to walk around tormented.
- He was dressed: He didn't have to be embarrassed anymore. All his nakedness was covered by Jesus.
- He was in perfect mind: He was no longer a madman. He became a sensible, balanced person who could live with others.
- He became Jesus' witness: When Jesus was leaving, that man manifested his desire to go with him. Jesus did not allow it, but ordered him to go and tell others what God had done for him. Right after his encounter with Jesus, he became a preacher of the Gospel.

## CONCLUSION

That man considered a lost case by everyone in that city was completely restored by Jesus. He became a Jesus' witness in the Decapolis region. What about us? Have we had an encounter with Jesus? Have we been transformed by Him? If your answer is no, turn to the Lord and be free, as that man was. And all of us who have experienced the restoring power of Jesus in our lives must tell what the Lord has done for us. We all have a beautiful story to tell.

# DAY 6 – Saturday, January 21

## WHO'S OUR NEIGHBOR?

Read Luke 10:25-37

### INTRODUCTION

The Good Samaritan Parable is one of the best known in the Bible. It communicates in such a strong and clear way Jesus' teaching about showing love to our neighbor. It is important to note that Scribe came intending to test Jesus. Several times Jesus went through situations like this and had to face real traps. However, He did not miss the opportunity to teach fundamental principles to those who came to Him.

What have we learned from this parable? That Jesus summarized people's lifestyles into three categories.

#### **1. The Robbers: What's yours is mine.**

There are people who look at life from that perspective. They want to take what the other has. Many are driven by need. But most of the time they are driven by envy or fleshly desires and they don't hesitate to take what doesn't belong to them.

You're probably going to say that you are not like that. And it's true, most of us aren't like that. We don't want what doesn't belong to us.

#### **2. The Priest and Levite: What is mine is mine.**

Both the priest and the Levite were the spiritual representatives of Israel and they were expected to give help to the person in need. Jesus said that they passed by, pretending that they had not even seen him who had been robbed. They did not care about the suffering of others.

Unfortunately, this has been the attitude of most "religious" people - those who profess a faith. The main characteristic of the church today is indifference or selfishness.

You knew that the opposite of love is not hate, but indifference. We always have an excuse. Probably those Priests had spiritual commitments, a service to lead, a praise to do, etc.

#### **3. The Samaritan: What is mine is yours.**



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This is where help was least expected to come from. It came from a Samaritan. They were considered Jews' enemies, called impure, not pure Jews. They were often considered as DOGS!

The Samaritan was moved with great compassion. Only this feeling can make us move from our comfort and selfishness. He took a risk because he was liable to be robbed too. He invested in the life of the needy with the things we value most: his time and his resources. He made the effort to take him to an inn and still left resources available for his treatment. He was willing to give up what he had for others.

### **CONCLUSION**

After he had ended the parable, Jesus asked the expert, "Which one was the neighbor of the one who was robbed? He answered correctly: "The one who used mercy." Jesus commanded him to do the same. How can we love people? By doing as God did. Giving!

In our journey, we will find many who have been robbed, who are naked and wounded, like the character in the parable. What will be our attitude? Christians need to have evidence that they are new people.

Remember: (a) Don't let other things be more important than people; (b) Don't wait for people to applaud you; (c) Don't let them steal your identity, we are children of the Almighty God.

# DAY 7 – Sunday, January 22

## HOW TO FULFILL THE GREAT COMMISSION

*Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Mt. 28:18-20)*

### INTRODUCTION

All biblical scholars agree that this is the mission left by Jesus to His Church. Jesus' plan is extremely simple. He did not expect a single group to do this, but that there would be a multiplication of the number of believers involved, through discipleship.

Jesus commanded His church to be sent out, to come out of the four walls, and to make disciples. The strategy He gave was to teach others to obey what He taught. Therefore, what are the implications for us as Jesus' followers.

#### 1. I need to win people

I need to be involved in evangelization. I will only make a disciple if I first win a person for Jesus. That is the initial step.

How do I do it? How to be committed?

- By being individually involved in evangelization. I need to preach the gospel. In the street, in the cell group, inviting people, etc.
- Praying for people. We know that God's movement comes through prayer. Prayer makes God's arm move. Through prayer, the eyes of unbelievers are opened, through prayer the doors are opened.
- Contributing to God's work. In order for God's work to be done, and here we define work as evangelization itself, resources are needed. And these resources come from us. We need to contribute to God's work.

#### 2. I need to be a disciple

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I cannot teach something that I am not or that I do not live. There is no such possibility. What makes me a disciple of Jesus? What are the disciple's characteristics?

- Love Jesus. *If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters —yes, even their own life —such a person cannot be my disciple. (Lk. 14:26)*
- Commit yourself to God's word. *To the Jews who had believed him, Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. (Jn. 8:31)*
- Be willing to sacrifice. *In the same way, those of you who do not give up everything cannot be my disciples. (Lk. 14:33)*
- Love your neighbor. *A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another. (Jn. 13:34-35)*
- Bearing fruit. *This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples. (Jn. 15:8)*

### 3. I need to generate disciples

We must be alert to Jesus' order. He didn't just tell us to preach the gospel; He called us to make disciples. We must remember that we make disciples for Jesus and not for us.

All teaching is done by example. That is why we use the expression: Life in Life. Look what Paul said to Timothy:

*...but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity. (I Ti. 4:12b)*

To make disciples, we must:

- Develop relationships. We are relational people. We live in communities and need others.
- Invest in people's lives. We need to understand that to make a person Jesus' disciple, it takes TIME and INVESTMENT.

## CONCLUSION

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We cannot miss out on what Jesus considered to be the Church's most important mission. We need to get involved. We need to win people and make them Jesus' disciples. To do this, each of us must first be disciples of our Savior. Let us fulfill the Great Commission.

# DAY 8 – Monday, January 23

## THE EXTREME SEARCH FOR THE LOST

Read Luke 15:1-24

### INTRODUCTION

To speak of God's love for lost people and how God is not indifferent to people, Jesus told this parable. It is only one parable and not three. Perhaps we can consider it as a parable divided into three parts.

Jesus told this parable in response to the religious leaders who complained that Jesus '*He receives sinners and eats with them.*' He wanted to talk about how God loves people no matter who they are. As we read the passage, we realize that the emphasis of the parables is:

- Something was lost.
- There was a great effort by the one who lost the object to recover what was lost.
- After the recovery, there was great joy and rejoicing.

Jesus wanted to emphasize with this parable how the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit work for the salvation of one who is lost.

### 1. The Lost Sheep

This first parable part, called The Lost Sheep, is an example of what Jesus did for us. It tells about the Son's work. Even Jesus, who is God, did not consider this to be something that he should hold onto; rather, He emptied Himself, stripped Himself of all his glory, and made Himself flesh, becoming like men and a servant. And so, He was humbled to death and death on a cross (Phil 2:5-8).

Jesus did this in order to seek the one who was lost. The Bible says that the Good Shepherd gives His life for His sheep (John 10:11).

When the sheep is recovered and carried on the shepherd's back, he gathers his friends and expresses his great joy for the sheep's recovery. This also happens in heaven when a sinner repents.

### 2. The Lost Coin

The second parable part, called The Lost Coin, refers to the work that the Holy Spirit does in us. He brings light into the darkness and illuminates us so that we can see the truth. Isn't that how it happened

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to you? One day, suddenly, you can't even explain it properly, your eyes were opened and you saw the truth.

When the coin was lost, the woman lit a lamp to illuminate the area and then took a broom to sweep, with the purpose of finding the coin. The Holy Spirit does this: He convinces us of truth, justice, and judgment, teaches us all things, and reminds us of all that Jesus did (Jn. 14:26; 16:8).

In the same way, after recovering the coin, the woman gathers her friends and expresses her joy. The same thing happens in heaven when a sinner repents.

### 3. The Lost Son

The third part, often called The Prodigal Son, refers to the Father's work. After He had sent His only begotten Son to accomplish redemption, and then the Holy Spirit to show us the truth, He awaits eagerly for His children to return home. That is God's great desire. He hopes that the lost one is found and that whoever is dead lives again. He did that for love.

In this last part, Jesus is more specific. He tells how people became lost and still get lost. The steps in the son's fall were:

- (a) obstinacy - v.12
- (b) selfishness - v.13
- (c) separation - v.13
- (d) sensuality - v.13,
- (e) spiritual destruction - v.14
- (f) humiliation - v.15
- (g) hunger - v. 16

The steps in his return were:

- (a) recognition - v.17
- (b) resolution - v.18
- (c) repentance - v.19
- (d) return - v.20
- (e) reconciliation - v.20
- (f) new clothes - v.22
- (g) rejoicing - v.23-24.

What happened in Eden is still happening. People allow rebellion against God to enter their hearts and they become stubborn and selfish and begin to do things that bring a curse to their life. To take the inheritance before time brings a curse (Pr. 20:21).

## **LIVING THE MISSION**

But note Jesus says that in this case there was great joy too, because of the lost son that was found.

### **CONCLUSION**

The greatest desire of God's heart is to rescue the one who is lost. The Father, Son and the Holy Spirit are committed to this mission. May God's love be manifested in your life today in Jesus' name. And may you also commit yourself to the very end to seek the lost.

# DAY 9 – Tuesday, January 24

## SHEPHERD MY SHEEP

*Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us." Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'?" (Jn. 14:8-9)*

*Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. (Jn. 17:17)*

### INTRODUCTION

Christianity is not a formal religion, although many consider it to be. The essence of Christianity is to know God and to have a relationship with Him. For this reason, we often find in the Bible a calling to know God.

How can we know God? The two John passages above answer this question. If we want to know God, we need to know Jesus - everything He said and did; for He declared to Philip that he who sees Him sees the Father.

Another way to know God is through His written Word left to us, known as Scripture, for it is the Truth. Therefore, we will understand one of Jesus' characteristics, presented by the Bible.

#### **1. Why did Jesus come into the world? People were lost like sheep. (Is. 53:4-6)**

The Spirit of God made clear when describing the Messiah's suffering because of our transgressions and injustices, that we were straying like sheep, each going astray along the way (Is. 53:4-6). It emphasizes the fact that when we went astray like sheep, that was one of the motivations that led Jesus to die on the cross of Calvary. He showed that a sheep without a shepherd, a stray sheep, and this stirs God's heart.

#### **2. What was Jesus' concern? People were like Sheep without a Shepherd (Mt. 9:36-38)**

Jesus was filled with compassion when He saw the afflicted and exhausted people, like sheep without a shepherd. Because of this, He went to His disciples and asked them to pray for workers raised up by God (Mt. 9:36-38). The question is: what kind of workers? I believe that the answer is: shepherds, the kind who look after the sheep.

#### **3. When did Moses express a concern? People were like Sheep without a Shepherd (Num. 27:16-17)**



## LIVING THE MISSION

It is amazing that Moses had Jesus' same feeling. Let's remember that Moses was one of the closest men to God. When God said that his time had ended, he asked God to raise a man as a leader of the congregation, so that they would not be like sheep without a shepherd (Nm. 27:16-17).

### **4. How did Jesus teach about God's love? The lost Sheep (Lk. 15:4)**

When Jesus was questioned by the Pharisees why He ate with sinners, He explained about the shepherd seeking the lost sheep (Lk. 15:4) to speak of God's love for all human beings. Jesus, came to seek and save the lost.

### **5. How did Jesus introduce Himself to people? The Good Shepherd (Jn. 10:14)**

Jesus loved the sheep (people) so much that He declared that He was the Good Shepherd, the one who gives His life for the sheep; He also declared that the Good Shepherd must know His sheep (Jn. 10:14).

### **6. What did Jesus say to Peter in their last conversation? Shepherd my sheep (Jn. 21:15-17)**

After Jesus rose again and gave His disciples a second wonderful fishing experience, He called Peter aside for a special talk. He made it clear that if Peter loved Him, he should demonstrate it by shepherding the sheep (Jn. 21:15-17).

## CONCLUSION

In the verses we read, we see one of the most evident characteristics of Jesus' life. He is the Good Shepherd. He loves and protects His flock. Jesus called for Peter and all His disciples to have the same heart and to also shepherd the sheep, meaning the people. We need to have the same feeling that is in Jesus' heart!

# DAY 10 – Wednesday, January 25

## FRUITFUL LIVES

*You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit —fruit that will last —and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. (Jn. 15:16)*

## INTRODUCTION

Jesus was a fantastic preacher and He often made use of parables, which are stories that use elements of people's everyday lives to express spiritual truths.

## LIVING THE MISSION

One of His parables was The True Vine. He chose us to go and bear much fruit. We want to talk about that.

### 1. WE WERE CHOSEN

*For he chose us in him before the creation of the world to be holy and blameless in his sight. In Love...(Eph. 1:4)*

God's purpose is eternal and we are part of it. His eternal purpose began before the foundation of the world. God offers the Gospel of grace to everyone. Those who accept it become God's chosen ones. The Lord does not violate our free will, but from the moment we accept His grace, He unveils a wonderful plan before us.

The choice we made means: (a) that our faith is based on something eternal, on a God who does not change and whom we can trust; (b) there is a wonderful plan for us.

### 2. CHOSEN TO GO

Jesus always made clear to His disciples His purpose for their lives. Since the initial call, Jesus' plan was already very clear. It was clear that there was a sending.

*Jesus went up on a mountainside and called to him those he wanted, and they came to him. He appointed twelve "that they might be with him and that he might send them out to preach and to have authority to drive out demons. (Mk. 3:13-15)*

During His time on earth, Jesus "trained" His disciples by sending them to towns and villages, preparing the way for Jesus to go to those places later.

*After this the Lord appointed seventy-two "others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go. (Lk. 10:1)*

Jesus has a call for each one of us. We need to get out of our comfort zone. We need to get out of our closed little world. God asked Isaiah who will go. See his answer:

*Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!" (Is. 6:8)*

When Paul was converted, God expressed His plan for Paul's life, His plan for one who was the Church's persecutor: Paul would have to go.

## LIVING THE MISSION

*But the Lord said to Ananias, "Go! This man is my chosen instrument to proclaim my name to the Gentiles and their kings and to the people of Israel. (Acts 9:15)*

### 3. AND BEAR FRUIT

Jesus calls us to bear fruit. We need to bear fruit. Jesus saw a fig tree. He wanted to eat the fruit, but because He did not see any fruit, He cursed the tree.

*In the morning, as they went along, they saw the fig tree withered from the roots. Peter remembered and said to Jesus, "Rabbi, look! The fig tree you cursed has withered!" (Mk. 11:20-21)*

God's man is like a tree planted by streams, a tree that bears fruit:

*That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither — whatever they do prospers. (Ps. 1:3)*

What would be the fruit?

**Fruit worthy of repentance:** John the Baptist and Paul both used that expression to mean that we believers need to show life-changing evidence. This means that someone who repented of his sins, of a worldly and unclean life that offended God, now evidences a totally different life.

We are not worldly anymore; we no longer participate in impurities or orgies. We do not steal; we do not lie; Jesus has transformed us.

**Fruit of the Spirit:** Our works are no longer fleshly, but have another nature. It's not just a matter of ceasing to do something. We show a new life through our character and positive attitudes.

But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. Against such things there is no law. (Ga. 5:22-23)

**Fruit of Lives:** There is no such expression in the Bible, but the text (Jn. 15:16) implies that Jesus was talking about lives (fruit that remains). When Jesus spoke of giving His life, He used the expression:

*Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds. (Jn. 12:24)*

When Jesus talked about bearing fruit, He was talking about generating life. One seed produces another tree that generates seeds that produce many trees, which will generate many fruits. And it will only happen when we die to the world. Jesus sowed His life and generated many brothers and sisters.

## LIVING THE MISSION

### CONCLUSION

We can never lose sight of Jesus' call for us to go and bear much fruit. We need to generate lives, spiritual children, for the glory of God. Jesus said it this way:

*Herein is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit; so shall you be my disciples. (Jn. 15:8)*

Be fruitful in the name of Jesus.

# DAY 11 – Thursday, January 26

## FISHING

Read Luke 5:1-11

### INTRODUCTION

Jesus preached to a crowd. He asked Peter to use his boat as a pulpit to speak to the people. His future disciples were certainly listening. Soon after, Jesus ordered them to return to the sea for a catch of fish. The disciples, certainly under great frustration, argued saying "Master, we tried all night and caught nothing"

That has been the reality for many people. Frustrated with life, work, marriage, children, society, etc. They feel empty and disappointed. They work long hours, work hard like Peter and his friends, and end up frustrated. They get tired of fighting!

What can you do to deal with frustration?

#### **1. Consider Jesus' word: (... But because you say so, I will let down the nets)**

Peter's initial reaction was to question Jesus' word. He and his friends were professional fishermen after all. How many times do we act like this by not taking Jesus' words seriously? What importance do we give to God's word?

Peter decided to give credit to Jesus' word. He stopped looking at the circumstances that indicated that the sea was not suitable for fish and said, "*because it is you who are talking, I will do it.*" The result of obedience was tremendous.

We need to consider the Lord's words. He said some very strong things. Do we believe that He will set people free (John 8:32,36), bring peace (John 20:21), and forgive sins (Mark 2:5)? Do we believe who He is? He affirmed that He is: the Light of the world (Jn. 8:12), the Way (Jn. 14:6), and the Life (Jn. 11:25).

#### **2. Expect a miracle from Jesus: (...They caught so many fish that the nets began to tear...)**

The Bible says that Peter and his friends were perplexed by what happened. That's all God does. He is a God of miracles. He does infinitely more than we ask or think.

## LIVING THE MISSION

It was not reasonable to fish at that time and place. An expert fisherman would not have taken Jesus' suggestion. But the Word asks *"Is there anything impossible for God?"* We must believe in God with all our hearts for this is the victory that overcomes the world, our faith (1 John 5:4).

### **3. Be a broken-hearted person before Jesus: (...Get away from me, Lord, because I am)**

What would have led Peter to act this way? This is a natural reaction of people who have an experience with God. Do you remember Isaiah? He, like Peter, bowed down before God in repentance. When we contemplate God and His holiness, there is no other attitude to take.

The message of the early church was this: Repent of your sins. Jesus commanded us to preach this message. It is written that a broken heart pleases God (Ps. 51:17).

### **4. Answer Jesus' calling: (...from now on you will be a fisher of men... they left everything and followed Him.)**

Jesus made it clear that God has a call for each one of us. He had a call for Peter and his friends, and He has a call for us too. We were called for a purpose. Paul wrote to the Ephesians that God created and saved us to walk in the works He had prepared for us beforehand.

We must definitely understand that. It is impossible for us to be free from the frustrations of life without fulfilling God's purposes for us.

## CONCLUSION

This fisherman's story teaches us how to deal with frustrations that happen in our lives. To overcome them we need to value God's word, wait for His miracles, and live in God's presence with a broken heart. But frustration will only end when we embrace God's whole plan for us.

This is a beautiful story of what happened when the disciples obeyed God. It may be our own story as well.

Only those who truly believe in Jesus follow Him. Biblical faith implores us to follow, trust, and obey. It's worth it to follow Jesus. Don't you want to do this right now?

# DAY 12 – Friday, January 27

## GOD'S WILL

*...your kingdom come, your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. (Mt. 6:10)*

### INTRODUCTION

We have all heard, and many know by heart, the Lord's Prayer. Jesus taught this prayer in response to a request from His disciples asking Him to teach them to pray. The Lord was not giving them something to repeat over and over again but was actually establishing some principles that should govern our prayers.

I need to pray that God's will be done on earth as it is done in heaven. With that in mind, a question immediately arises. If I am going to pray with this purpose, I need to recognize what is God's will. Have you thought about it? What is God's will?

#### 1. We must practice what is good.

*For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish people. (1 Pe. 2:15)*

God expects every believer to do good things. He expects us to share all that He has given us by being generous. We must be rich in good works and not omit ourselves from other people's needs.

#### 2. We must give thanks

*...give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. (1 Th. 5:18)*

Gratitude is the feeling experienced by a person towards someone who has granted him some favor, help, benefit, thanks, or recognition. When I express gratitude, I am under a state of grace, I understand God's grace.

Gratitude is so important that it is the gateway to worship (Ps. 100:4) and it also honors God (Ps. 50:23).

#### 3. We must be sanctified...

*It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality; (1 Th. 4:3)*

The word holy means: to be separated. Holy is not someone special, who is above other people, but someone separated by God, to become a royal priesthood, a people owned exclusively by God (1 Pe. 2:9).

## LIVING THE MISSION

In a very simple way, to be holy is to be like Jesus. In the above text, Paul exhorts the Thessalonica Church to run away from sexual immorality.

### 4. He wants to give us eternal life

*For my Father's will is that everyone who looks to the Son and believes in him shall have eternal life, and I will raise them up at the last day." (Jn. 6:40)*

Jesus declared that the reason He came to the world was to do the Father's will. And God's will is that all may believe in Jesus and receive eternal life. Paul, inspired by the Spirit of God when he wrote to Timothy, also declared the same thing: that God's desire is that all be saved and come to the full knowledge of the truth, that there is one God and one mediator between God and men - the Man Jesus Christ (1 Timothy 2:4-5).

## CONCLUSION

Do you remember how we started? We talked about the prayer Jesus taught. We must pray for God's will to be established on earth. Therefore, we must pray and practice God's will. God wants us to do good works, to be grateful, and to walk in holiness. And we that have already been saved must also pray so that lost people will be saved.

Only those who truly believe in Jesus follow Him. Biblical faith implies following, trusting, and obeying. It is worth it to follow Jesus. Don't you want to do this right now?



# DAY 13 – Saturday, January 28

## THE RACE MARKED OUT FOR US

*Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinners, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. (Heb 12:1-3)*

### INTRODUCTION

The book of Hebrews was written for the Jews who had become Christians and were now thinking of returning to Judaism because of the persecution they were suffering. The author talks about the greatness of Christ, how He is greater than the angels and greater than Moses, how His priesthood is greater than the Levites, and how He is superior to Aaron.

The text we read begins with the word ‘therefore.’ It means it is linked to the so-called text of Heroes of the Faith. After he speaks of their faith, the author speaks of their life as a race. Have you ever thought that our Christian journey can be compared to a race?

### 1. THERE IS A RACE PROPOSED FOR US

The brothers of the Old Testament ran a race of faith. We should do the same. Their actions were testimonies of perseverance and trust in the Lord, despite all their struggles and conflicts.

Paul used similar language when he wrote to the Church in Corinth and also to Timothy.

*Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one gets the prize? Run in such a way as to get the prize. Everyone who competes in the games goes into strict training. They do it to get a crown that will not last, but we do it to get a crown that will last forever. Therefore I do not run like someone running aimlessly; I do not fight like a boxer beating the air. No, I strike a blow to my body and make it my slave so that after I have preached to others, I myself will not be disqualified for the prize. (1 Co. 9:24-27)*

*For I am already being poured out like a drink offering, and the time for my departure is near. I have fought the good fight, I have finished the race, I have kept the faith. Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day —and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing. (2 Ti. 4:6-8)*

## LIVING THE MISSION

Therefore, the proposed race is for those who have already been saved. It is not about earning salvation. It's for those who have already been saved. It's about receiving the payment, the reward. The crown is about God's Kingdom!

### 2. HOW TO RUN: UNTANGLED

The Hebrews text says that we have to get rid of two things:

**Sin** - Sin disqualifies the runner because it breaks the rules. Envy, pride, impurity of heart, lies, strong ego, and uncontrollable desires have to be treated because we are dead to sin. We cannot keep sinning. We must promote goodness and make restitution.

Moses preferred to be mistreated ... rather than enjoy sin's fleeting pleasures (Heb 11:25). Sin often provides pleasure. The flesh likes it. Many times we will be persecuted when we abandon sin.

**Everything that hinders (weight)** - These weights are the thoughts or beliefs that distract or prevent us from running effectively. A runner doesn't run in restrictive clothing and they don't carry a lot of equipment. We too should look to get rid of the burdens that slow us down or prevent us from running the race before us.

### 3. HOW TO RUN: WITH PERSEVERANCE

The prize is not awarded in the beginning, but at the end of the race. The fact that you start well does not mean that you will end well. We should remember Solomon. He started out very well, receiving wisdom from God, and then he achieved glory and wealth. However, his end was very sad. He had a thousand women and ended up introducing the worship of strange gods into the midst of Israel.

If there was one person who had all the reasons to give up, it was Paul. He was persecuted, stoned, and whipped. He suffered from hunger, cold, shipwreck, etc. However, he persevered to the end.

### 4. HOW TO RUN: LOOKING TO JESUS

In our race we must firmly look only to Jesus and never turn away. He is the author and finisher of our faith. CHRIST IS EVERYTHING. We cannot look at the circumstance (for example if it rains or gets hot). We have to be independent of personal conditions.

### 5. HOW JESUS RAN

## **LIVING THE MISSION**

Jesus took pleasure in obeying God. He said this several times. But Jesus also looked at the reward and that is not wrong! The text says that in exchange for the joy, He endured the pain and now He is seated at the Father's right hand. Even though He suffered strong opposition, Jesus did not give up.

Paul thought the same way. He said: *forgetting the things that remain behind and moving forward to those that are before me, I proceed to the target, to the heavenward of God's sovereign vocation in Christ Jesus (Phil. 3:14,15).*

## **CONCLUSION**

There is a race proposed for us. It is not what we want, but what God has prepared for us. God has a purpose for us. He wants that purpose to be fulfilled. Do not be discouraged, look at Jesus and receive your crown.

# DAY 14 – Sunday, January 29

## THE GREATEST PURPOSE

Read John 4:27-42

### INTRODUCTION

The disciples went to the market to shop, entered the city, greeted people, and shopped. When they returned, they found Jesus talking with a Samaritan woman. The woman was deeply impacted by her encounter with Jesus. She understood Jesus' message, repented, and returned to the city to tell everyone. The disciples then insisted that Jesus should eat something because they went to the city to buy food. Jesus used that situation to minister to their hearts.

#### 1. Jesus taught about a greater purpose for our life

When the disciples talked about eating, Jesus changed the talk direction and spoke about another food: to do the Father's will and to complete His work. To eat refers to a basic need, because without eating a person dies. Jesus said something that should be basic and essential for all of us. Do the Father's will and do His work.

Many of us understand that spiritual food is God's Word. But Jesus says that to do God's work is the fuel of His life. More important than feeding on the Word is to feed on God's presence. What keeps the believer alive is not only the food of the Word but to carry out His will and completing His work. That is the greatest purpose.

#### 2. The purpose is to win souls

Jesus connected the subjects of doing the Father's will and fulfilling of harvest work. Jesus always used this analogy (Mt. 9:36-38). He had just "won" the Samaritan woman and told His disciples that this was more important than food.

Jesus expected His disciples to understand that there is a greater purpose than going shopping. We need to understand that there is a much greater purpose than going to the mall to buy a new dress, or to complete my college degree, or to negotiate, to buy, to build, to do social work, or anything else. There is a greater purpose! He expects me to understand that my life's purpose is to bring souls to His presence.

*The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life, and the one who is wise saves lives. (Pr. 11:30)*

## LIVING THE MISSION

### 3. People are ready

Jesus said to His disciples, *"Open your eyes and see the fields. They are ripe for the harvest."* We must open our eyes. When we do not embody God's purpose, we always give an excuse: "This is not the time for evangelism." Excuses and explanations are always made because we are not engaged headfirst in God's eternal purpose. We are always dealing with issues that we consider more important. Every day is a harvest day. In the office, it is harvest season, in school, in sports, etc. There is no one who is not ready to be harvested. Jesus said that the whole world is already white for the harvest.

### 4. Special preparation is not necessary

The Samaritan woman without any hesitation or preparation went to her city and brought many people to Jesus' feet. She said, "Come and see a man who told me everything." She did not have a polite, theological message. She did not have Gospel jargon. I may not have all the knowledge, but if I embrace the greater purpose of life here on earth, a simple word makes an impact.

The Samaritan woman would have to do a great "cleaning" in her life, break many bonds, and restore many areas of her life. But it is amazing that right after her first encounter with Jesus, she seems to have absorbed her life's purpose.

## CONCLUSION

Commit yourself to God's greatest purpose for your life. God called us to win souls for Him. Never lose sight of it. People are already ready and Jesus empowers us to fulfill His purpose.

**Join us tonight for a Night of Response to complete the prayer and fasting series and to respond with others to what God did in your heart over the course of these two weeks.**

We pray that your heart has been expanded and filled with compassion to reach those around you. If you would like to become a Radiant Life Partner and join the team of people helping to fuel our mission to reach the lost and equip disciples who make disciples, you can give online @ [radiantlifeministries.com/give](https://radiantlifeministries.com/give).

## LIVING THE MISSION

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