

Greetings friends,

I ask that as we begin our spiritual journey together we begin to take some time daily (if you are not already) to read the Scripture and pray. I thought it would be beneficial for us to focus on the same passage of Scripture for the week. This week, we will focus on Sunday's texts (See below) If you were not present in worship on Sunday and have not yet watched it, I encourage you to do so. The Scripture used on Sunday was **Matthew 9:27-38**. Matthew is one of the four Gospels, the first in the New Testament and is regarded as a synoptic Gospel, along with Mark and Luke. The original **audience was Jewish Christians**, so it is filled with referenced to Old Testament prophecies, **explaining how Jesus fulfilled the role of Messiah**. It is traditionally believed that the **author was Matthew, sometimes called Levi, who was one of the twelve disciples**. He had been a **tax collector (a job that would have made him despised as a traitor by the Jewish community)**. The **calling of Matthew** as a disciple is found in **Matthew 9:9-12, Mark 2:13-17, and Luke 5:27-32**.

Format-this is a repeat from every week, and will be consistently present for anyone new and as a reminder for all. It is listed at the bottom for review and for anyone who is new to this exercise. Please remember that it is a suggestion. There is no pressure to do it in the format suggested, to do everything on the days that are listed, or to even to answer all the questions. Allow the Holy Spirit to lead you. If one question takes up the time because you are moved in your spirit, then stay with it. The idea of this is to spend some intentional time with the Scriptures, in the presence of God, and in prayer and reflection- in whatever way that works for you!

Scripture:

Matthew 9:27-38

²⁷ As Jesus went on from there, two blind men followed him, calling out, "Have mercy on us, Son of David!"

²⁸ When he had gone indoors, the blind men came to him, and he asked them, "Do you believe that I am able to do this?"

"Yes, Lord," they replied.

²⁹ Then he touched their eyes and said, "According to your faith let it be done to you"; ³⁰ and their sight was restored. Jesus warned them sternly, "See that no one knows about this." ³¹ But they went out and spread the news about him all over that region.

³² While they were going out, a man who was demon-possessed and could not talk was brought to Jesus. ³³ And when the demon was driven out, the man who had been mute spoke. The crowd was amazed and said, "Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel."

³⁴ But the Pharisees said, "It is by the prince of demons that he drives out demons."

³⁵ 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. ³⁶ When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a

shepherd. ³⁷ Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. ³⁸ Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”

Other Scriptures referenced:

Ephesians 3:20-21

²⁰ Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, ²¹ to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

Matthew 7:7-8

⁷ “Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. ⁸ For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.

DAILY QUIET TIME WITH GOD:

Monday: v.27 “As Jesus went on from there” leading up to this point Jesus has been ministering to people, with many healed and “delivered” (from demons). There were also miracles, including raising a young girl from the dead (9:23-26)! “Two blind men followed him” we wonder how someone who is blind could follow Jesus. It was suggested in the sermon that they had spiritual sight and could sense Jesus. What do you think about “spiritual sight”? Throughout the Bible there are instances of people experiencing spiritual sight- whether it be through visions, dreams, revelations, or an inward knowing by the Spirit. Have you experienced any form of “spiritual sight” before? (*We need to make sure that it is not connected to the occult in any way! If you have practiced the occult before, please make sure to renounce and repent of it*) If you have experienced spiritual sight through the Holy Spirit, think about those moments and reflect upon what your spiritual state was at the time. Was your awareness of God heightened, and if so, why? If you have not experienced this, pray about it. Ask God to move, that you would experience spiritual sight in some way. Pray for openness to the Holy Spirit and a sensitivity and awareness of God with you. Listen, pay attention to thoughts and images that come to you, and ask God about it. Use discernment and wisdom, as everything must align with God’s Word. Continue to participate in worship, prayer, and reading Scripture at church and at home- wherever you may be! “Following him” imagine how hearing about Jesus and sensing his presence would compel people to follow! What does following Jesus mean to you? What did it mean to the two blind men? Is it different? Why, or why not? “Calling out, ‘Have mercy on us, Son of David!’” “Calling out” is actually a tame way to say what they were doing. Intense shrieking is how the Greek is described! No decorum, no holding back- just sheer emotion fueling the cry. Have you ever been so desperate for Jesus that you responded like this- whether it be screaming out, or some other form of intensified expression? If so, what was going on? How did others respond? How did you feel during and after, and why? If healing is needed, take the time to work through that with God and pray for healing. “Have mercy on us” mercy in this case can also be translated as pity, so they were asking Jesus to have compassion and heal them. “Son of David!” is terminology used throughout the Old Testament to refer to the coming

Messiah. They were boldly proclaiming their faith, acknowledging Jesus as the Messiah. Consider if, when, and how you make a proclamation of your faith in Jesus. Has it changed over the years? Does it change upon circumstances, and if so, how and why? Why do you believe God wants us to proclaim our faith in Jesus? If this is something you have struggled with, pray about it. Ask God to give you peace, strength, assurance, and opportunity.

Tuesday: v.28 “When he (Jesus) had gone indoors, the blind men came to him” Jesus had returned to his hometown, Capernaum, after spending time across the Sea of Galilee with Gentiles. Imagine first the perspective of the two blind men. They have been calling out and following, but Jesus has not stopped to respond. Yet they continued! Have you ever felt as if you have been crying out to God, but it feels as if Jesus continued on without answering? If so, what did you experience emotionally and spiritually in that process? What do you believe emboldened the two blind men to follow Jesus into the house? Do you think that their having to continue to call and follow, instead of receiving an instantaneous answer, contributed to their boldness? If so, why- what do you believe is the underlying thought process that inspired this? How does this relate to your own faith? Imagine now the perspective of Jesus. Why do you think Jesus chose to continue walking when they cried out, when he had stopped for others before? What purpose(s) could there have been? Was there a benefit that the blind men received from having to wait and pressing on? How do you think Jesus felt when they followed him right into his house? What does this mean for us? Jesus asked them “Do you believe that I am able to do this?” This pushes beyond proclaiming that Jesus is the Messiah to Jesus having power and authority to heal. What do you proclaim and what do you believe about Jesus? When you consider God, what descriptive words come to mind? Consider why certain words come first, easily, while others may not come as easily. Why do you think that is? Have there been experiences that have led you to a certain understanding over another? “Yes, Lord” they replied- something that every believer is called to live into- saying “Yes, Lord” to Jesus! Take some time and pray, asking God to show you any areas of your life where you may not be saying “Yes, Lord.” As things come up, be open with God, confess and repent, asking God for forgiveness.

Wednesday: v.29 “Then he (Jesus) touched their eyes and said, “According to your faith let it be done to you.” Jesus touched them- can you imagine what that felt like? Jesus touches us in a different way(s) today- how would you describe it? Think of a time when you felt the touch of God. How would you relay that experience to someone else, perhaps someone interested in your faith? Ask God if you should share your stories, and if so, which ones, to whom, and when. “According to your faith,” not in proportion to your faith, but, because you have faith- which has been demonstrated and proclaimed. Why do you think Jesus made it clear that faith was an important part of this healing process? If you get the time, examine the different healing stories in the Gospels and discern how faith played a role. “Let it be done to you”; and their sight was restored” Jesus heals with a touch and a word in this case. Have you ever experienced God healing you- not only naturally, but supernaturally? What happened? Have you ever shared that testimony? I encourage you to pray about doing so. V.30b “Jesus warned them sternly, “See that

no one knows about this.” But they went out and spread the news about him all over that region” This is more than Jesus giving advice, the word “sternly” is intentionally used. In the original Greek it is an intense word, meaning to be moved with anger, to admonish sternly. What are your thoughts about this sudden shift? Do you believe Jesus is asking something that is unreasonable or cannot be done? If so, then why was it asked? If not, then why do you believe the blind men chose to disobey Jesus, especially after he had just healed them? Upon reflection, what are some ways that you have disobeyed Jesus? Why do you believe you made those choices? What do you believe are God’s thoughts about any disobedience in your life? What is God asking you to do, and why? Has God ever asked you to do something that seemed very difficult, or maybe didn’t make sense to you? Did you do it? Why, or why not? What was the outcome?

Thursday: v.32 “While they were going out, a man who was demon-possessed and could not talk was brought to Jesus.” The actual Greek word here is *daimonízomai*, which is more closely translated as “demonized,” i.e. coming under the power of a demon. (biblehub.com). Demons are fallen angels, spiritual entities that attack and oppress people, including Christians, and as it says in John 10:10 seek to steal, kill, and destroy. Actual possession is very rare, but demonic attacks and oppression is common. In this case, the manifestation of the demon within the man was that he could not speak (commentators have noted that he could also not hear). This is not to say that every physical ailment has a demonic source, but sometimes it does occur. Demonic oppression manifests in many ways, physically and mentally, and it is important to have discernment about whether an issue is from a natural or supernatural, spiritual, source. It says that “when the demon was driven out, the man who had been mute spoke.” Ask God if there is any spiritual issue, any demonic influence that needs to be cast out by Jesus. Ask if there are any manifestations (physical, mental) in your life from demonic influences. If something comes up, ask God about the entry point when the demonization occurred. Ask that in Jesus’ name you be set free, delivered, and filled with the Holy Spirit. Praise God for Jesus’ power and authority! Note that the mute man was brought to Jesus- others who were able brought him to the One they believed could bring healing, because the man could not, or maybe would not, come on his own. Do you think the people that brought the man to Jesus knew that he was experiencing a spiritual issue that was contributing to his physical ailment? What does this tell you about what Jesus would want for us, and the expectation toward others?

Friday: v.32b “The crowd was amazed and said, “Nothing like this has ever been seen in Israel.” Have you ever witnessed, or been a part of, God moving and healing in some way, or perhaps even a miracle occurring? Think about all of the amazing things that God has done, including in your life, and give thanks. The crowd was amazed, sharing their amazement in front of the Pharisees, who immediately squashed it. The Pharisees said, “It is by the prince of demons that he drives out demons.” They acknowledged the deliverance and healing occurred, yet attributed it to satan, instead of acknowledging that God’s power was working through Jesus, that he was the Messiah. Have you even met anyone, or perhaps you have done this yourself, where the movement of God is dismissed and any other explanation but God is accepted? Why do you

think people often dismiss the clear evidence of God moving? What do you believe is the thought process and/or motivation? How do you think the Pharisees reaction, especially as people having religious authority, impacted the crowd? Why do you think that? What does that tell you about how we are to discuss our faith and the movement of God in our life? Ask God if there is any area in your faith life where God would want you to change your perspective, or have a greater awareness or openness to God working in the world and in your life.

Saturday: v.35 “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.” Jesus was teaching, proclaiming, and healing, which would include deliverance. When you think of Jesus, which part do you tend to focus on, and why? What is most talked about and accepted, in your experience? What do you believe the “good news of the kingdom,” (gospel=good news) means? Think about a kingdom where God is king- why would that be good news? V.36 “When he (Jesus) saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd”- compassion is a key element for our faith. Why do you believe that is, and what does compassion inspire believers to do, and why? “Harassed and helpless, like a sheep without a shepherd”- in what way is this still true today? Where do you see this? Give examples. When stating your examples were you moved with compassion? Why, or why not? v.37 Then he (Jesus) said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few”- What do you believe Jesus meant by the “harvest”? In what way is it plentiful now? v.38 “Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field”- Who is Jesus referring to as “Lord of the harvest”? What do you think is meant by that? What would workers do in the harvest field? How does that relate to our faith and what God is calling us to do? Why do you think Jesus said to ask... to send? What does compassion have to do with being a worker in the harvest field? Ask God about how you are sent. What is God asking you to do? Thank God for his compassion in your life and ask that your compassion increase for his glory. Ask God to be empowered and equipped for what God is asking you to do.

Other items:

Responsive Reading (2 Cor. 1:20, Romans 8:31)

Leader: Powerful, healing God

People: We praise Your holy name

L: If You are for us, who can be against us?

P: By faith in You we have victory over darkness

L: We put our trust in You

P: For You are our God

L: All of God’s promises are “Yes!” in Christ Jesus

P: Let the people of God say, “Yes, Lord!”

All: Through Christ we say “Amen!”

Unison Prayer

Lord of healing and wholeness
God of compassion and grace
We have thanksgiving in our hearts
For Your presence is among us
Shine Your light into our darkness
Where we are hurting or in need
Open us to Your Spirit
Reveal to us Your mercy
Your touch transforms our life
Through Jesus Christ our Lord

Song Lyrics:

He Touched Me UMH#367

Shackled by a heavy burden
'Neath a load of guilt and shame
Then the hand of Jesus touched me
And now I am no longer the same

He touched me, oh, He touched me
And oh, the joy that floods my soul
Something happened, and now I know
He touched me, and made me whole

Since I've met this blessed Savior
Since He's cleansed and made me whole
Oh, I will never cease to praise Him
I'll shout it while eternity rolls

Oh, He touched me, oh He touched me, He touched me
And oh, the joy that floods my soul
Something happened and now I know
He touched me and made me whole

Our God by Chris Tomlin

Water, You turned into wine
Opened the eyes of the blind
There's no one like You
None like You

Into the darkness, You shine
Out of the ashes we rise

There's no one like You
None like You

Our God is greater
Our God is stronger
God, You are higher than any other
Our God is healer
Awesome in power
Our God, our God

Into the darkness, You shine
Out of the ashes, we rise
There's no one like You
None like You

Our God is greater
Our God is stronger
God, You are higher than any other
Our God is healer
Awesome in power
Our God, our God

And if our God is for us
Then who could ever stop us?
And if our God is with us
Then what could stand against?

And if our God is for us
Then who could ever stop us?
And if our God is with us
Then what could stand against?
Then what could stand against?

Our God is greater
Our God is stronger
God, You are higher than any other
Our God is healer
Awesome in power
Our God, our God

Victory in Jesus UMH#370 v.1,2 (Delta UMC)

I heard an old, old story
How a Savior came from glory
How He gave His life on Calvary
To save a wretch like me
I heard about His groaning
Of His precious blood's atoning

Then I repented of my sins
And won the victory

Oh, victory in Jesus, my Savior forever
He sought me and bought me with His redeeming blood
He loved me 'ere I knew Him and all my love is due Him
He plunged me to victory beneath the cleansing flood

I heard about His healing
Of His cleansing power revealing
How He made the lame to walk again
And caused the blind to see
And then I cried, "Dear Jesus, come and heal my broken spirit"
And somehow Jesus came and brought to me the victory

Victory in Jesus, my Savior forever
He sought me, and He bought me with His redeeming blood
He loved me 'ere I knew Him and all my love is due Him
He plunged me to victory beneath the cleansing flood.

Healer of Our Every Ill TFWS#2213 (Rome First)

Refrain
Healer of our ev'ry ill,
light of each tomorrow,
give us peace beyond our fear,
and hope beyond our sorrow.

1 You who know our fears and sadness,
grace us with your peace and gladness;
Spirit of all comfort, fill our hearts. Refrain

2 In the pain and joy beholding
how your grace is still unfolding,
give us all your vision, God of love. Refrain

3 Give us strength to love each other,
ev'ry sister, ev'ry brother;
Spirit of all kindness, be our guide. Refrain

4 You who know each thought and feeling,
teach us all your way of healing;
Spirit of compassion, fill each heart. Refrain

Format (this is a repeat from last week, and will be consistently present for anyone new and as a reminder for all):

Find a quiet place and time to focus on the Word, and to hear from God through it. It doesn't have to be long, for some it will be longer than others. I encourage you, if possible, to do this practice in the morning. You will then find that God brings it to your mind throughout your day.

For greater impact I encourage you to get some paper and a pen and journal daily what thoughts and impressions God brings to mind. Write out also your own thoughts and your own prayers, making sure to leave space within your time for God's response. Listen intently, and notice what rises up within you- what you are thinking, feeling, memories that arise and ideas that spring up. It may be something God would want you to address within yourself and/or with others. It may be something God is inspiring you to begin or end. God's possibilities are infinite! After time, it is often beneficial to go back and read what you have written, and notice how God has been moving in your life (and praise God for it!).

Begin with prayer, quieting yourself within and opening up to hearing what God would like to reveal to you. Praise God for who he is, for loving you, being with you, and more. Then ask God to speak to you; to open your heart and mind to hear his message. (if you are journaling, you could write out the prayer)

Read the Scripture passage over twice; once as a read through, and the second time slowly, meditatively. Notice what God illuminates for you. Notice what words or ideas are "jumping off the page at you," impacting you from the Scripture. Ask God why that is being highlighted for you. What is God saying to you? What is God asking you to say, do, change, pray about, etc.? What is the application for my life today? **Most importantly- what am I going to do about it? (If you are journaling you could write it all out, which reinforces it in a greater way)

I have put together some daily questions based upon the Scripture. You may use those, but also feel free to deviate away from it if God is leading you there. They are simply offered to prompt contemplation with God. There is much more in this passage, feel free to delve in more!

At the end of your time pray again. I recommend praying throughout, but the ending prayer would include praise, thanking God for revelation, and asking for the Holy Spirit to continue to reveal, bringing to mind God's will. Ask God for the courage, empowerment, and opportunity to do what you have determined God is asking you to do.