

Reflection Guide

***Who is Jesus to Me?***

*And*

***Receiving Christ's Peace***



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## Introduction to Guide

This guide gives space to note reflections about “Who is Jesus to me?” It also provides a set of practices for readings from the Gospels on the life and ministry of Jesus for us to be open, daily, to receive Christ’s invitation. Take a moment to reflect on these quotes:

*If we want to be witnesses like Jesus, our only concern should be to be as alive with the love of God as Jesus was. - Henri Nouwen*

*The purpose of the... practices is not to make us more religious. It is to make us more alive. Alive to God. Alive to our spouses, parents, children, neighbors, strangers, and yes, even our enemies... Alive to open books and folded sheets, a sleeping dog, migrating geese, frying eggs, everything... We join God in seeing. – Brian McLaren, Finding Our Way Again, p.182-183*

This guide is an invitation to go deeper with Christ so we can go deeper with one another. This is the essence of embracing and living into our divine identity as Community of Christ. It is God's intent that we create spiritual safety and intimacy for one another as God's creates that space for us to be vulnerable to divine grace. This is so important because it is in this space we truly discover how to receive and give Christ's peace as invitation, hospitality, compassionate ministry and transformational ministry. It is in this sacred space of safety and trust with God and one another that we see, increasingly, ourselves and others from a changed perspective (164:5). This is why we are taking the time to get know Christ as the full revelation of God - there is so much more yet to see and do.

Together, let’s explore incarnational mission—each day going deeper in our relationship with God in Christ who calls, inspires, and challenges us be a unique expression of God's nature individually and in community as the body of Christ. Let’s reflect on this essential question:

How can I nurture a daily relationship with the Living Christ to receive his invitation?

## **Who Is Jesus to Me? —Notes Page for Reflections**

## Descriptions—Six Missional Practices: To Receive Christ's Invitation

Below are brief descriptions of six missional practices that offer various approaches to being open to Christ's invitation while reflecting on a story of Jesus from the Gospels. Choose two missional practices to try during this retreat.

1. ***Prayer of Examen: Receiving Christ's Invitation***—to be awake to Christ's invitation in a story of scripture from the four Gospels and reflecting on your life as it unfolds each day.
2. ***Imaginative Contemplation: Receiving Christ's Invitation***—to be awake to Christ's invitation by reading and imagining or placing one's self with Jesus in a story of scripture from the four Gospels.
3. ***In Creation: Receiving Christ's Invitation***—to be awake to Christ's invitation in a story of scripture from the four Gospels and by being attentive to creation.
4. ***Writing a Poem: Receiving Christ's Invitation***—to be awake to Christ's invitation in a story of scripture from the four Gospels and by reflecting on an experience from one's life and then writing a poem.
5. ***Hymn Reading: Receiving Christ's Invitation***—to be awake to Christ's invitation by recognizing Christ's invitation in a story of scripture from the four Gospels and in reading a hymn that calls us to action.
6. ***Craft Making: Receiving Christ's Invitation***—to be awake to Christ's invitation in a story of scripture from the four Gospels and as you do a craft, such as knitting, carpentry or gardening.

## ***Craft Making: Receiving Christ's Invitation—A Missional Practice***

*Missional practices: cultivating new understandings, ways of being, and living Christ's mission.*

**Purpose:** to be awake to Christ's invitation in a story of scripture from the four Gospels and as you do a craft, such as knitting, carpentry or gardening. Inviting People to Christ includes our increasing awareness of all the ways to slow down and see, hear, taste, feel, and experience the presence of the living Christ in the seemingly routine and ordinary experience of our daily lives. Christ's invitation is about being awoken to the reality of the living Christ expressed in so many ways – doing the dishes, knitting, wood carving or finishing furniture.

### **Steps:**

1. Become aware of the presence of God and awake to Christ's invitation. Take a moment to be calm and centered.
2. Choose and read a text from the four Gospels in the spirit of prayer, seeking to be closer to the Living Christ.
3. While engaging in the use of your hands, value these moments as opportunities to "slow down" and being in harmony with God for God to guide you to new insights or feelings of well-being.
4. Consider exploring one or more of these questions:
  - How does this activity minister to you?
  - What is it about this activity or moment that awakens you to Christ's invitation?
5. Offer a prayer of gratitude.

### **Tips for the Process:**

- Seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit to draw closer to the Living Christ by remembering his ever being present and his invitation to share life with him.
- Do not rush—take time. There may be days when you follow each step. Other days, you may want to stay only with one or two steps.
- The key is simplicity and not being constrained by each step.
- Consider beginning your day with the Mission Prayer and then remembering it while doing an activity with your hands.

## ***Hymn Reading: Receiving Christ's Invitation—A Missional Practice***

*Missional practices: cultivating new understandings, ways of being, and living Christ's mission.*

**Purpose:** to be awake to Christ's invitation by recognizing Christ's invitation in a story of scripture from the four Gospels and in reading a hymn that calls us to compassionate ministry. This practice is inspired by the fact that we, Community of Christ, have many new hymns in *Community of Christ Sings* that challenge us to offer compassionate ministries.

### **Steps:**

1. Become aware of the presence of God and awake to Christ's invitation. Take a moment to be calm and centered.
2. Choose and read a text from the four Gospels in the spirit of prayer, seeking to be closer to the Living Christ.
3. Choose and read a hymn.
4. Invite God's Spirit to open your heart and mind to guide you to a particular aspect of the hymn such as a word, phrase, feeling or image.
5. Take a few moments to reflect on what you sense God may be bringing into your awareness.
6. Consider one of these questions:
  - How can I be more compassionate towards myself, loved ones, or a neighbor?
  - Is there a need for compassion that only I can meet?
  - What new ways am I seeing or responding to Christ's invitation?
7. Offer a prayer of gratitude and be ready to share your compassion in ministry.

### **Tips for the Process:**

- Seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit to draw closer to the Living Christ by remembering his ever being present and his invitation to share life with him.
- Be aware of hymns sung in congregational worship that you may want to choose.
- Do not rush—take time. There may be days when you follow each step. Other days, you may want to stay only with one or two steps. There is no particular length—less or longer than 10 minutes is fine.
- The key is simplicity and not being constrained by each step.
- Find and follow a pattern that works for you.
- Consider beginning your day with the Mission Prayer.

## ***Imaginative Contemplation: Receiving Christ's Invitation—A Missional Practice***

*Missional practices: cultivating new understandings, ways of being, and living Christ's mission.*

**Purpose:** to be awake to Christ's invitation by reading and imagining or placing one's self with Jesus in a story of scripture from the four Gospels. Rather than just using our thoughts and memories, we place ourselves in a story from the Gospels to encounter the Living Christ in a personal way by use of all or any of our senses. To receive Christ we must know him! This practice is inspired and adapted from the spiritual practice "Imaginative Contemplation" developed by Ignatius of Loyola.\*

### **Steps:**

8. Become aware of the presence of God and awake to Christ's invitation. Take a moment to become calm and centered.
9. Choose and read a text from the four Gospels in the spirit of prayer seeking to be closer to the Living Christ.
10. Read the text a 2<sup>nd</sup> time and visualize and sense the scene or event by sensing the details: sights, sounds, tastes, smells, and feelings of the event.
11. Place yourself in the scene and spirit of the story in a way that makes sense to you, whether in the Biblical time or a modern time or circumstance for a personal encounter with the Living Christ.
12. Invite the Holy Spirit to reveal the Living Christ in a way that is meaningful for you now.
13. End this time by reading the same passage of scripture in a spirit of prayer and conversation—heart to heart talk with Jesus—using your everyday language as you would with a friend.

### **Tips for the Process:**

- Request the Holy Spirit to draw you closer to the Living Christ by remembering his promise to always be with you and his invitation to share life with you.
- Use your imagination. Although, it takes an 'imaginary' eye to see yourself in the scripture, this practice is enhanced when we use all of our senses and imagine the elements in the 'scene' of the scripture such as wind, the dry heat, the spray of water, feelings of joy, sorrow, tiredness, and any thoughts that would 'go through one's head.'
- Do not rush—take time. There may be days when you follow each step. Other days, you may want to stay with only one or two steps. There is no particular length—less or longer than 10 - 20 minutes is fine.
- The key is simplicity and not being constrained by each step. Find and follow a pattern that works for you.
- Consider beginning this practice with the Mission Prayer.

\* See more at: <http://www.ignatianspirituality.com/ignatian-prayer/the-spiritual-exercises/prayer-is-a-conversation/#sthash.FlnpU0TW.dpuf>



## ***Prayer of Examen: Receiving Christ's Invitation—A Missional Practice***

*Missional practices: cultivating new understandings, ways of being, and living Christ's mission.*

**Purpose:** to be awake to Christ's invitation in a story of scripture from the four Gospels and reflecting on your life as it unfolds each day. To receive Christ we must know him! This practice is inspired and adapted from the spiritual practice "Prayer of Examen" developed by Ignatius of Loyola.\*

### **Steps:**

1. Become aware of the presence of God and awake to Christ's invitation. Take a moment to become calm and centered.
2. Choose and read a text from the four Gospels in the spirit of prayer, seeking to be closer to the Living Christ.
3. Spend a few moments recalling your day with gratitude and reverence. Let the details, events and conversations drift through your memory. Identify feelings, emotions, insights or times that touched your heart—either enlivening or disheartening.
  - Gratitude reveals what we value and what brings us joy or meaning.
  - Reverence allows us to see the ordinary parts of our day as sacred opportunities.
4. Choose a feeling, emotion, insight or time in your day and pray from it. Ask the Holy Spirit to reveal how this may draw you closer to the Living Christ and his invitation.
5. Look forward to the remainder of the day or toward tomorrow. Talk with Jesus like a friend. Be honest and open. Use everyday language. Leave times for silence to listen. Share your feelings. Ask for his help and wisdom about the questions you have, the desires of your heart and the problems you face.

### **Tips for the Process:**

- Request the Holy Spirit to draw you closer to the Living Christ by remembering his promise to always be with you and his invitation to share life with you.
- Do not rush—take time. There may be days when you follow each step. Other days, you may want to stay with only one or two steps. There is no particular length—less or longer than 10 – 20 minutes is fine.
- The key is simplicity and not being constrained by each step.
- Find and follow a pattern that works for you.
- Consider beginning your day with the Mission Prayer then with a Prayer of Examen at noon and before you go to bed.

\*See more at Ignatian Spirituality at <http://www.ignatianspirituality.com/ignatian-prayer/the-examen/#sthash.u7RB0O6Q.dpuf> and Pastors and Leaders Field Guide at <http://www.cofchrist.org/leaders/CL-spiritualpractices.asp#2>

## ***In Creation: Receiving Christ's Invitation—A Missional Practice***

*Missional practices: cultivating new understandings, ways of being, and living Christ's mission.*

**Purpose:** to be awake to Christ's invitation in a story of scripture from the four Gospels and by being attentive to creation. Receiving Christ's invitation is about being awake to the reality of the Living Christ expressed in so many ways—in relationships, in the beauty of nature, music, and art, as well as in circumstances of pain or violence where one would not expect God's future to emerge.

### **Steps:**

6. Become aware of the presence of God and awake to Christ's invitation. Take a moment to become calm and centered.
7. Choose and read a text from the four Gospels in the spirit of prayer seeking to be closer to the Living Christ. A text to consider is "Lilies of the Fields – Matthew 6: 25-34."
8. If helpful, read and reflect on a poem or quote on the following page.
9. If able, go outdoors and be present to an aspect of creation. If unable to be outdoors, use art, photography or a web-site to "put you in touch" with creation.
10. Invite the Holy Spirit to guide you to a particular aspect of creation and take a few moments for it to be present to you and how it may minister to you.
11. Consider exploring one or more of these questions:
  - What is it about this place or aspect of creation that causes you to be awakened to it?
  - How does this place or aspect of nature minister to you?
  - What does this experience have to do with receiving Christ's invitation?
12. Offer a prayer of gratitude.

### **Tips for the Process:**

- Request the Holy Spirit to draw you closer to the Living Christ by remembering his promise to always be with you and his invitation to share life with you.
- Do not rush—take time. There may be days when you follow each step. Other days, you may want to stay with only one or two steps. There is no particular length—less or longer than 10 - 20 minutes is fine.
- The key is simplicity and not being constrained by each step.
- Find and follow a pattern that works for you.
- Consider beginning this practice with the Mission Prayer.
- Alternative—go and focus on one square yard of ground. No matter how plain looking and uninteresting, let the ordinary speak—in silence, not going from one place to another.

## What We Need is Here

By Wendell Berry

Geese appear high over us,  
pass, and the sky closes.  
Abandon, as in love or sleep,  
holds them to their way,  
clear in the ancient faith:  
what we need is here. And we pray,  
not for new earth or heaven,  
but to be quiet in heart, and in eye, clear.  
What we need is here.

## Aurora Leigh: a Poem

By Elizabeth Barrett Browning

Earth's crammed with heaven,  
And every common bush afire with God;  
But only he who sees, takes off his shoes—  
The rest sit around it and pluck blackberries.



## Lead

By Mary Oliver

Here is a story to break your heart. Are you willing?  
This winter the loons came to our harbor and died,  
one by one, of nothing we could see.  
A friend told me of one on the shore that lifted its head  
and opened the elegant beak and cried out in the long,  
sweet savoring of its life, which, if you have heard it,  
you know is a sacred thing, and for which, if you have not heard it,  
you had better hurry to where they still sing.  
And, believe me, tell no one just where that is.  
The next morning this loon, speckled and iridescent  
and with a plan to fly home to some hidden lake,  
was dead on the shore. I tell you this to break your heart,  
by which I mean only that it break open  
and never close again to the rest of the world.

*In this vision he showed me a  
little thing,  
the size of a hazelnut,  
and it was round as a ball.  
I looked at it with the eye of  
my understanding  
and thought  
"What may this be?"  
And it was generally  
answered thus:  
"It is all that is made."  
I marveled how it might last,  
for it seemed it might  
suddenly  
have sunk into nothing  
because of its littleness.  
And I was answered in my  
understanding:  
"It lasts and ever shall,  
because God loves it."*

*- Julian of Norwich*

## ***Writing a Poem: Receiving Christ's Invitation—A Missional Practice***

*Missional practices: cultivating new understandings, ways of being, and living Christ's mission.*

**Purpose:** to be awake to Christ's invitation in a story of scripture from the four Gospels and by reflecting on an experience from one's life and then writing a poem.

### **Steps:**

14. Become aware of the presence of God and awake to Christ's invitation. Take a moment to be calm and centered.
15. Choose and read a text from the four Gospels in the spirit of prayer seeking to be closer to the Living Christ.
16. See next page for an example of a pattern to follow (using excerpts from Seasons of the Heart: Prayers and Reflections by Macrina Wiederkehr) and then:
  - Read the text a 2<sup>nd</sup> time.
  - Invite God's Spirit to help you recall an experience or observation from your own life related to the scripture.
  - Write a few sentences about your experience or observation and its connection to the scripture.
  - Compose a poem. You may only be able to begin writing a poem. It may take days to complete your poem. *Note: a poem does not have to rhyme or be in complete sentences. Often, just beginning your poem with a few words that reflect and remind you how you are feeling can be the basis of a good and even a short poem.*
17. End this time in a spirit of prayer.

### **Tips for the Process:**

- Seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit to draw closer to the Living Christ by remembering his ever being present and his invitation to share life with him.
- Do not rush—take time. There may be days when you follow each step. Other days, you may want to stay only with one or two steps. There is no particular length—less or longer than 10-20 minutes daily is fine. Be willing to spend multiple days to complete your poem. Find and follow a pattern that works for you.
- The key is simplicity and not being constrained by each step.

**Read a text from the Gospels** (the text below illustrates a connection to the reflection quoted):

*Jesus said to her, "Give me a drink." The Samaritan woman said to him, "What? You are a Jew and you ask me, a Samaritan, for a drink?" Jesus replied:*

*"If you only knew what God is offering and who it is saying to you:  
'Give me a drink,' you would have been the one to ask,  
and he would have given you living water."*

—John 4:7-10, JB

**Write a reflection** (the reflection below illustrates a connection to the poem quoted):

*Sometimes I get tired of walking with strangers. Sometimes I get tired of giving drinks. One such tired moment found me in the Kansas City airport. I was on my way to Phoenix to give myself a drink, a workshop given by the monks of Weston Priory.*

*But strangers have a way of bumping into me even when I'm not handing out free drinks. This one was obviously very thirsty. And before I realized what was happening, I became the woman at the well asking the same kind of questions, struggling with the same living water. Looking into the eyes of that thirsty stranger, I was able with the help of grace to notice that his well was deep and that I did, after all, have a bucket.\**

**Write a poem:** (the poem below illustrates a connection to the text and reflection quoted):

I'm tired of giving drinks  
I'm closing up my well for the winter  
I'm throwing the bucket away  
By the time I get to Phoenix  
I'll be ready for a few drinks myself.  
  
But I hadn't even gotten out of Kansas City  
when someone came up to me  
already wanting a drink.  
  
He was old  
and not used to traveling alone.  
He had just had knee surgery  
and couldn't get around very well.  
He wanted to talk.  
  
I back away in my heart.  
Everything in me said:  
"Giving drinks is not in season for me  
My well is closed for the winter

Don't ask me for a drink  
Please don't  
I am too empty  
I am thirsty myself."  
  
But it was too late  
I had already seen his eyes  
I had already heard his voice.  
"Give me a drink," it said...  
  
And I?  
Well, I didn't cancel my trip to Phoenix  
but I was filled  
with a new kind of vision  
and I knew that  
by the time I got to Phoenix  
My well would be open again.\*

\*Reflection and poem from Wiederkehr, Macrina.  
SEASONS OF YOUR HEART: Prayers & Reflections.  
Rev. and Expanded. ed. San Francisco, Calif.:  
HarperCollins Publishers, 1991. P. 164-167.

## **Missional Practice for Receiving Christ's Invitation—Notes for Reflections**

### **Consider the Lilies of the Field – Matthew 6:25-35 NRSV**

‘Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink, or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air; they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? And can any of you by worrying add a single hour to your span of life? And why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin, yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not clothed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which is alive today and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you—you of little faith? Therefore do not worry, saying, “What will we eat?” or “What will we drink?” or “What will we wear?” For it is the Gentiles who strive for all these things; and indeed your heavenly Father knows that you need all these things. But strive first for the kingdom of God\* and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

‘So do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will bring worries of its own. Today’s trouble is enough for today.

### **Consider the Lilies of the Field – Matthew 6:25-35 The Message**

“If you decide for God, living a life of God-worship, it follows that you don’t fuss about what’s on the table at mealtimes or whether the clothes in your closet are in fashion. There is far more to your life than the food you put in your stomach, more to your outer appearance than the clothes you hang on your body. Look at the birds, free and unfettered, not tied down to a job description, careless in the care of God. And you count far more to him than birds.

“Has anyone by fussing in front of the mirror ever gotten taller by so much as an inch? All this time and money wasted on fashion—do you think it makes that much difference? Instead of looking at the fashions, walk out into the fields and look at the wildflowers. They never primp or shop, but have you ever seen color and design quite like it? The ten best-dressed men and women in the country look shabby alongside them.

“If God gives such attention to the appearance of wildflowers—most of which are never even seen—don’t you think he’ll attend to you, take pride in you, do his best for you? What I’m trying to do here is to get you to relax, to not be so preoccupied with getting, so you can respond to God’s giving. People who don’t know God and the way he works fuss over these things, but you know both God and how he works. Steep your life in God-reality, God-initiative, God-provisions. Don’t worry about missing out. You’ll find all your everyday human concerns will be met.

“Give your entire attention to what God is doing right now, and don’t get worked up about what may or may not happen tomorrow. God will help you deal with whatever hard things come up when the time comes.

### **Jesus Forgives and Heals a Paralyzed Man - Mark 2:1-12 NRSV**

When he returned to Capernaum after some days, it was reported that he was at home. So many gathered around that there was no longer room for them, not even in front of the door; and he was speaking the word to them. Then some people came, bringing to him a paralysed man, carried by four of them. And when they could not bring him to Jesus because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him; and after having dug through it, they let down the mat on which the paralytic lay. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, 'Son, your sins are forgiven.' Now some of the scribes were sitting there, questioning in their hearts, 'Why does this fellow speak in this way? It is blasphemy! Who can forgive sins but God alone?' At once Jesus perceived in his spirit that they were discussing these questions among themselves; and he said to them, 'Why do you raise such questions in your hearts? Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, "Your sins are forgiven", or to say, "Stand up and take your mat and walk"? But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins'—he said to the paralytic— 'I say to you, stand up, take your mat and go to your home.' And he stood up, and immediately took the mat and went out before all of them; so that they were all amazed and glorified God, saying, 'We have never seen anything like this!'

### **Jesus Forgives and Heals a Paralyzed Man - Mark 2:1-12 The Message**

After a few days, Jesus returned to Capernaum, and word got around that he was back home. A crowd gathered, jamming the entrance so no one could get in or out. He was teaching the Word. They brought a paraplegic to him, carried by four men. When they weren't able to get in because of the crowd, they removed part of the roof and lowered the paraplegic on his stretcher. Impressed by their bold belief, Jesus said to the paraplegic, "Son, I forgive your sins." Some religion scholars sitting there started whispering among themselves, "He can't talk that way! That's blasphemy! God and only God can forgive sins." Jesus knew right away what they were thinking, and said, "Why are you so skeptical? Which is simpler: to say to the paraplegic, 'I forgive your sins,' or say, 'Get up, take your stretcher, and start walking'? Well, just so it's clear that I'm the Son of Man and authorized to do either, or both . . ." (he looked now at the paraplegic), "Get up. Pick up your stretcher and go home." And the man did it - got up, grabbed his stretcher, and walked out, with everyone there watching him. They rubbed their eyes, incredulous - and then praised God, saying, "We've never seen anything like this!"



## **The Transfiguration – Matthew 17:1-13 NRSV**

Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and his brother John and led them up a high mountain, by themselves. And he was transfigured before them, and his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became dazzling white. Suddenly there appeared to them Moses and Elijah, talking with him. Then Peter said to Jesus, “Lord, it is good for us to be here; if you wish, I will make three dwellings here, one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.” While he was still speaking, suddenly a bright cloud overshadowed them, and from the cloud a voice said, “This is my Son, the Beloved; with him I am well pleased; listen to him!” When the disciples heard this, they fell to the ground and were overcome by fear. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, “Get up and do not be afraid.” And when they looked up, they saw no one except Jesus himself alone.

As they were coming down the mountain, Jesus ordered them, “Tell no one about the vision until after the Son of Man has been raised from the dead.” And the disciples asked him, “Why, then, do the scribes say that Elijah must come first?” He replied, “Elijah is indeed coming and will restore all things; but I tell you that Elijah has already come, and they did not recognize him, but they did to him whatever they pleased. So also the Son of Man is about to suffer at their hands.” Then the disciples understood that he was speaking to them about John the Baptist.

## **The Transfiguration – Matthew 17:1-13 The Message**

Six days later, three of them saw that glory. Jesus took Peter and the brothers, James and John, and led them up a high mountain. His appearance changed from the inside out, right before their eyes. Sunlight poured from his face. His clothes were filled with light. Then they realized that Moses and Elijah were also there in deep conversation with him.

Peter broke in, “Master, this is a great moment! What would you think if I built three memorials here on the mountain—one for you, one for Moses, one for Elijah?” While he was going on like this, babbling, a light-radiant cloud enveloped them, and sounding from deep in the cloud a voice: “This is my Son, marked by my love, focus of my delight. Listen to him.” When the disciples heard it, they fell flat on their faces, scared to death. But Jesus came over and touched them. “Don’t be afraid.” When they opened their eyes and looked around all they saw was Jesus, only Jesus.

Coming down the mountain, Jesus swore them to secrecy. “Don’t breathe a word of what you’ve seen. After the Son of Man is raised from the dead, you are free to talk.” The disciples, meanwhile, were asking questions. “Why do the religion scholars say that Elijah has to come first?”

Jesus answered, “Elijah does come and get everything ready. I’m telling you, Elijah has already come but they didn’t know him when they saw him. They treated him like dirt, the same way they are about to treat the Son of Man.” That’s when the disciples realized that all along he had been talking about John the Baptizer.

### **Walking on the Water - Matthew 14:22-33 NRSV**

Immediately he made the disciples get into the boat and go on ahead to the other side, while he dismissed the crowds. And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray. When evening came, he was there alone, but by this time the boat, battered by the waves, was far from the land, for the wind was against them. And early in the morning he came walking towards them on the lake. But when the disciples saw him walking on the lake, they were terrified, saying, 'It is a ghost!' And they cried out in fear. But immediately Jesus spoke to them and said, 'Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid.'

Peter answered him, 'Lord, if it is you, command me to come to you on the water.' He said, 'Come.' So Peter got out of the boat, started walking on the water, and came towards Jesus. But when he noticed the strong wind, he became frightened, and beginning to sink, he cried out, 'Lord, save me!' Jesus immediately reached out his hand and caught him, saying to him, 'You of little faith, why did you doubt?' When they got into the boat, the wind ceased. And those in the boat worshipped him, saying, 'Truly you are the Son of God.'

### **Walking on the Water - Matthew 14:22-33 The Message**

As soon as the meal was finished, he insisted that the disciples get in the boat and go on ahead to the other side while he dismissed the people. With the crowd dispersed, he climbed the mountain so he could be by himself and pray. He stayed there alone, late into the night.

Meanwhile, the boat was far out to sea when the wind came up against them and they were battered by the waves. At about four o'clock in the morning, Jesus came toward them walking on the water. They were scared out of their wits. "A ghost!" they said, crying out in terror.

But Jesus was quick to comfort them. "Courage, it's me. Don't be afraid."

Peter, suddenly bold, said, "Master, if it's really you, call me to come to you on the water."

He said, "Come ahead."

Jumping out of the boat, Peter walked on the water to Jesus. But when he looked down at the waves churning beneath his feet, he lost his nerve and started to sink. He cried, "Master, save me!"

Jesus didn't hesitate. He reached down and grabbed his hand. Then he said, "Faint-heart, what got into you?"

The two of them climbed into the boat, and the wind died down. The disciples in the boat, having watched the whole thing, worshiped Jesus, saying, "This is it! You are God's Son for sure!"

## Woman at the Well - John 4:1-26 NRSV

Now when Jesus learned that the Pharisees had heard, “Jesus is making and baptizing more disciples than John” <sup>2</sup>—although it was not Jesus himself but his disciples who baptized— <sup>3</sup>he left Judea and started back to Galilee.

<sup>4</sup>But he had to go through Samaria. <sup>5</sup>So he came to a Samaritan city called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob had given to his son Joseph. <sup>6</sup>Jacob’s well was there, and Jesus, tired out by his journey, was sitting by the well. It was about noon. <sup>7</sup>A Samaritan woman came to draw water, and Jesus said to her, “Give me a drink.” <sup>8</sup>(His disciples had gone to the city to buy food.) <sup>9</sup>The Samaritan woman said to him, “How is it that you, a Jew, ask a drink of me, a woman of Samaria?” (Jews do not share things in common with Samaritans.) <sup>10</sup>Jesus answered her, “If you knew the gift of God, and who it is that is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him, and he would have given you living water.” <sup>11</sup>The woman said to him, “Sir, you have no bucket, and the well is deep. Where do you get that living water? <sup>12</sup>Are you greater than our ancestor Jacob, who gave us the well, and with his sons and his flocks drank from it?” <sup>13</sup>Jesus said to her, “Everyone who drinks of this water will be thirsty again, <sup>14</sup>but those who drink of the water that I will give them will never be thirsty. The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.” <sup>15</sup>The woman said to him, “Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water.” <sup>16</sup>Jesus said to her, “Go, call your husband, and come back.” <sup>17</sup>The woman answered him, “I have no husband.” Jesus said to her, “You are right in saying, ‘I have no husband’; <sup>18</sup>for you have had five husbands, and the one you have now is not your husband. What you have said is true!” <sup>19</sup>The woman said to him, “Sir, I see that you are a prophet. <sup>20</sup>Our ancestors worshiped on this mountain, but you say that the place where people must worship is in Jerusalem.” <sup>21</sup>Jesus said to her, “Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. <sup>22</sup>You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. <sup>23</sup>But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father seeks such as these to worship him. <sup>24</sup>God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth.” <sup>25</sup>The woman said to him, “I know that Messiah is coming” (who is called Christ). “When he comes, he will proclaim all things to us.” <sup>26</sup>Jesus said to her, “I am he, the one who is speaking to you.”

## **Woman at the Well - John 4: 4-26 The Message**

To get there, he had to pass through Samaria. He came into Sychar, a Samaritan village that bordered the field Jacob had given his son Joseph. Jacob's well was still there. Jesus, worn out by the trip, sat down at the well. It was noon.

A woman, a Samaritan, came to draw water. Jesus said, "Would you give me a drink of water?" (His disciples had gone to the village to buy food for lunch.) The Samaritan woman, taken aback, asked, "How come you, a Jew, are asking me, a Samaritan woman, for a drink?" (Jews in those days wouldn't be caught dead talking to Samaritans.)

Jesus answered, "If you knew the generosity of God and who I am, you would be asking me for a drink, and I would give you fresh, living water."

The woman said, "Sir, you don't even have a bucket to draw with, and this well is deep. So how are you going to get this 'living water'? Are you a better man than our ancestor Jacob, who dug this well and drank from it, he and his sons and livestock, and passed it down to us?"

Jesus said, "Everyone who drinks this water will get thirsty again and again. Anyone who drinks the water I give will never thirst—not ever. The water I give will be an artesian spring within, gushing fountains of endless life."

The woman said, "Sir, give me this water so I won't ever get thirsty, won't ever have to come back to this well again!"

He said, "Go call your husband and then come back." "I have no husband," she said. "That's nicely put: 'I have no husband.' You've had five husbands, and the man you're living with now isn't even your husband. You spoke the truth there, sure enough."

"Oh, so you're a prophet! Well, tell me this: Our ancestors worshiped God at this mountain, but you Jews insist that Jerusalem is the only place for worship, right?"

"Believe me, woman, the time is coming when you Samaritans will worship the Father neither here at this mountain nor there in Jerusalem. You worship guessing in the dark; we Jews worship in the clear light of day. God's way of salvation is made available through the Jews. But the time is coming—it has, in fact, come—when what you're called will not matter and where you go to worship will not matter.

"It's who you are and the way you live that count before God. Your worship must engage your spirit in the pursuit of truth. That's the kind of people the Father is out looking for: those who are simply and honestly themselves before him in their worship. God is sheer being itself—Spirit. Those who worship him must do it out of their very being, their spirits, their true selves, in adoration."

The woman said, "I don't know about that. I do know that the Messiah is coming. When he arrives, we'll get the whole story."

"I am he," said Jesus. "You don't have to wait any longer or look any further."