



RELATIONAL
SUFFERING
between PERSONS:
The TEACHINGS
of JESUS CHRIST

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*Following the text
is included an appendix
expanding the passages
of Sacred Scripture
used in the footnotes,
in order to provide
the context in which Jesus'
or the writer's intention
might be better understood.*

In the time that we have together today, I hope to introduce the mystery of human suffering as it is revealed and understood through the teachings of Jesus Christ, in his words and his deeds. The four Gospel accounts of the life of Jesus in our Sacred Scriptures are filled with examples of Jesus' love in the face of suffering, his exercise of humility and charity seeking forgiveness and reconciliation, transcending the limits of the self to manifest healing and wholeness, and new life.

As a Catholic pastor, I see this love of God in the eyes of the people I serve everyday. It is a mystery that is hard to put into words: the love of a parent who will never give up on their child, no matter how serious the wrongs; a mother who will suffer whatever is necessary to overcome obstacles threatening the survival of her family; so many men and women in the military and public service who selflessly risk giving their lives everyday for their brothers and sisters, friends, and even those they do not know. We know people whose lives give testimony to the struggle of ending racism and discrimination, willing to cross social and cultural lines which have divided people for generations. This willingness to suffer for another is not a self-emptying that eliminates the self, but rather a love that is its greatest act, its realization. The self is never so strong when, by willingness to suffer for another, it has offered itself.

Too often, though, we see conflict test the boundaries of human emotion. What do we do with relationships that are broken? It is almost as though, when we aren't looking, betrayal, infidelity, indifference, selfishness, neglect, or jealousy enter and, like a cancer, eat relationships from within. "Broken" is really a good word: it describes too often today the relationship between races, generations, people of faith, nations, even the relationship between us and our environment. These are instances of the mystery of suffering where it is hard to grasp onto love, because love is no longer the motive of action.

Jesus confronted this absence of love with a new way. He taught us to love our enemies,¹ to step outside the cultural discriminations of his day by not judging² and not excluding those who were considered "sinful" or "unclean,"^{3,4} to forgive and be reconciled to all. He sought to make his healing and love available to all without favoritism, a universal ministry to save all people.^{5,6}

¹ Matthew 5:44-45. *"I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your heavenly Father, for he makes his sun rise on the bad and the good, and causes rain to fall on the just and the unjust."*

² Luke 6:37-38. *"Stop judging and you will not be judged. Stop condemning and you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven." Give and gifts will be given to you*

³ Matthew 9:10-13. *While [Jesus] was at table in [Matthew's] house, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat with Jesus and his disciples. The Pharisees saw this and said to his disciples, "Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?" He heard this and said, "Those who are well do not need a physician, but the sick do. Go and learn the*

meaning of the words, 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.'"

⁴ Luke 7:47. 47 *"So I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven; hence, she has shown great love. But the one to whom little is forgiven, loves little."*

⁵ John 4:9-10. *The Samaritan woman said to him, "How can you, a Jew, ask me, a Samaritan woman, for a drink?" (For Jews use nothing in common with Samaritans.) Jesus answered and said to her, "If you knew the gift of God and who is saying to you, 'Give me a drink,' you would have asked him and he would have given you living water."*

⁶ Matthew 49:50. *And stretching out his hand toward his disciples, [Jesus] said, "Here are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of my heavenly Father is my brother, and sister, and mother."*

God is Love

Mysteries are daunting topics. Many people mistakenly dismiss Mysteries as things that cannot be understood when, in fact, in the Christian context, they are things that can be known, but not fully in time. Each time we come close to a Mystery we understand it a bit more, and all the more we realize how much deeper is the Mystery than we had previously thought. In order to have a glimpse of the reality of suffering from the perspective of Catholic faith, we must first speak for a bit about Christians Mystery of God as Trinity: the Relationship of Father, Son and Spirit.

This trinitarian nature of “God is Love” is unique compared to many world religions. God, as divine Subject (here we could use the word “Lover”) is, by his nature Relationship: Lover and Beloved, divine Community. Jesus reveals God as Trinity, in the Gospels, One who is at the same time Revealing Self and Being Revealed (One who begets, One who is begotten). The two are perfectly one.⁷ God’s perfect self-expression in Love is speaking the *perfect* “Word” of self-revelation.⁸ This self-emptying Word is so perfect that another Subject is being begotten, the Beloved. We use the language of “Persons,” the same substance, indivisible yet distinct in their Person-ality. To know one is to know the other.⁹ Jesus uses the names “Father” and “Son.” This self-gift in fullness involving both Giver and Receiver, Being and Being Begotten, is the eternal reality of God’s life. In this, God is perfectly happy in himself. The relationship of Love between Giver and Begotten, in constant motion, action, shared, coming forth, and binding the two in perfect love, is the resulting Holy Spirit of God. A distinct Person (though the same God), he, likewise in turn, pours himself out from the Community of Father and Son as Gift, seeking to share the perfect joy of God.¹⁰

In the context of this dynamic action of this divine Relationship, creation is taking place. God calls us first into his relationship: *“It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you, and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain...”*¹¹ and

⁷ John 10:29-30. Jesus, speaking to the Jewish leaders about those who have become his followers: *“My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one can take them out of the Father’s hand. The Father and I are one.”*

⁸ John 1:1-5, 14. The beginning of the Gospel of John proclaims Christ as the Word of God pre-existing all creation: *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came to be through him, and without him nothing came to be. What came to be through him was life, and this life was the light of the human race; the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.*

And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us, and we saw his glory, the glory as of the Father’s only Son, full of grace and truth.

⁹ John 14:9-11. *“Whoever has seen me has seen the Father.*

How can you say, ‘Show us the Father’? Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on my own. The Father who dwells in me is doing his works. Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else, believe because of the works themselves.”

¹⁰ John 14:16-18, 20-21, 23. *“And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you always, the Spirit of truth . . . I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you. On that day you will realize that I am in my Father and you are in me and I in you. Whoever has my commandments and observes them is the one who loves me. And whoever loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and reveal myself to him . . . Whoever loves me will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our dwelling with him.”*

¹¹ John 15:16.

gives to humanity a free will so that we may freely choose him in returning love. Without this freedom to choose, we would be little more than slaves, forced to love him. Thus the possibility of sin exists. Sin happens where we choose *other than God*, and the reality of suffering—whether in the form of brokenness, illness, isolation, fear, even death—enters into God’s creation as a possibility. We would not be able to freely choose to love God in return, if we weren’t also free to sin. For believers in Jesus, this primordial choice of *other than God* is called “original sin” and is the advent of all suffering to follow.

Pope Francis, just last month, said the Trinity is

“the wonderful mystery from which we come and to which we are going, which makes us renew our mission to live in communion with God and to live in communion with each other, based on the model of divine communion. We are required to live not without others, or above or against others, but with others, for others, and in others...”

The Trinity is also *“the final object of our earthly pilgrimage... Therefore, we seek to maintain the ‘high tone’ of our life, recalling the reason and the glory for which we work, struggle and suffer, and the immense reward to which we are called.”*¹²

Christians understand sin as an act or a failure to act according to the faithfulness due to God and our relationship with him. Rather than love of God and other, our activity (or lack of it) is directed by selfishness. If God is love, then sin is choosing not to respond in love to that trust, the covenant that God has established with his people. For the rupture to be reconciled, forgiveness is required. Sin, as a part of our lives, causes suffering, both spiritually and on all levels of human relationship.

Forgiveness cannot be earned; humans, after sinning against God, are not capable by their own power to reconcile that relationship of Love with God’s justice. In the fullness of time, God stoops down, in Jesus Christ, his definitive “Word,” the invisible God made visible in the Incarnation, to accomplish the work of redemption and communion. The Word became flesh so that God’s creation can once again experience Love’s fullness as the beloved.

This self-emptying nature of God (*kenosis*) is seen in the Father begetting the Son,¹³ in the Son becoming Man, emptying himself “*taking the form of a slave*”¹⁴ so that glory of God might be seen, and pouring out his Holy Spirit upon creation.¹⁵

¹² Pope Francis, Vatican City, 31 May 2015. During Holy Trinity Sunday *Angelus* message, Pope Francis explained the mystery of the Trinity to the faithful gathered in St. Peter’s Square.

¹³ Matthew 11:27. “All things have been handed over to me by my Father.”

¹⁴ Philippians 2:5-8. *Have among yourselves the same attitude that is also yours in Christ Jesus, Who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped. Rather, he emptied himself, taking*

the form of a slave, coming in human likeness; and found human in appearance, he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross.

¹⁵ John 16:13-15. “But when he comes, the Spirit of truth, he will guide you to all truth. He will not speak on his own, but he will speak what he hears, and will declare to you the things that are coming. He will glorify me, because he will take from what is mine and declare it to you. Everything that the Father has is mine; for this reason I told you that he will take from what is mine and declare it to you.”

Jesus, in his Incarnation, did not enter into history with any power or prestige, but rather a humble and poor man in the ancient Near East, stepson of a carpenter, Joseph. He chose to enter the reality of our poverty and homelessness.¹⁶ In his humility Jesus gave over to us everything that he received from his Father.¹⁷

He went about preaching of the Kingdom of God, life eternal, an existence of perfect joy, and he alleviated the suffering of others, healing illness, restoring wholeness and casting evil away. He bestowed upon us the new life of adopted children of God¹⁸ calling all creation back together in unity in him. Jesus then sent his followers out into the world in poverty to do the same,¹⁹ to continue this mission he received from his Father, the work of mercy, reconciliation, restoration to truth, beauty and goodness: they went out, knowing that their ministry would lead to persecution and death.²⁰ Finally, Jesus, without sin, freely chose a death for himself which he would not have known otherwise,^{21, 22} to atone for our sins and take upon himself our sentence of God's justice.

In Jesus we see the Father:

*"As the Father loves me, so I also love you. Remain in my love."*²³

The Reality of Suffering

We see in Jesus an approach to suffering that is not avoidance; he responds in love, acknowledging and entering into the suffering of others. He experiences grief, rejection, humiliation and ridicule. He opens himself to hatred and hostility, persecution and threats on his life. He accepts betrayal from people who plot against his life as well as from his closest circle of friends. I imagine, as God, how he must have suffered watching how people had no regard for God, no respect for one another, no stewardship for his creation.

There are many examples in the Gospels where Jesus went about in his public

¹⁶ Matthew 8:19-20.

¹⁷ John 17:6-8. *"I revealed your name to those whom you gave me out of the world. They belonged to you, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word. Now they know that everything you gave me is from you, because the words you gave to me I have given to them, and they accepted them and truly understood that I came from you, and they have believed that you sent me."*

¹⁸ Ephesians 1:4-6. *"In love he destined us for adoption to himself through Jesus Christ, in accord with the favor of his will, for the praise of the glory of his grace that he granted us in the beloved."*

¹⁹ Matthew 10:5-10. *Jesus sent out these twelve after instructing them thus, "...As you go, make this proclamation: 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.' Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, drive out demons. Without cost you have received; without cost you are to give."*

Do not take gold or silver or copper for your belts; no sack for the journey, or a second tunic, or sandals, or walking stick. The laborer deserves his keep."

²⁰ Matthew 10:22. *"You will be hated by all because of my name, but whoever endures to the end will be saved."*

²¹ John 10:17-18. *"This is why the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. No one takes it from me, but I lay it down on my own. I have power to lay it down, and power to take it up again. This command I have received from my Father."*

²² Romans 5:6-8. *For Christ, while we were still helpless, yet died at the appointed time for the ungodly. Indeed, only with difficulty does one die for a just person, though perhaps for a good person one might even find courage to die. But God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us."*

²³ John 15:9.

ministry, the final three years of his life, healing the sick, delivering people from evil spirits, miraculously providing food for the hungry and bringing people back to life. In his compassion he wills that those who suffer find relief.

In what are called his *Beatitudes*, Jesus gives a heavenly perspective to the merit of and reward for embracing human suffering, even persecution at the hands of others for his sake.²⁴ When asked how many times we must forgive those who cause us suffering, Jesus replies, essentially, as many times as we are asked to forgive.²⁵ One of Jesus' most moving parables is commonly known as the parable of the prodigal son, when the father embraces his repentant son after he finally comes home. He rejoices that his son who was as much as dead has come back to life.²⁶ It is actually the Father who is more reckless with his mercy than all his sons and daughters who have squandered their inheritance by sin.

Jesus shows by his words and deeds that his disciples must reach out in mercy and healing to all, following his example. So often his compassion drives him to re-store order where his creation has become disordered. One of his parables speaks about a man who was attacked by robbers on the road. He is passed by by a priest and a Levite, but a Samaritan, his cultural enemy, the least likely to take pity on him, stops, gives him compassionate care, carries him to a local inn and pays for his lodging while his wounds heal. "Who was the true neighbor?" asks Jesus.²⁷ One day Jesus and his disciples encounter the grief of a widow who follows in funeral procession the body of her deceased only son. The scene so moves Jesus, prefiguring his own death and the grief of his own widowed mother, Mary, that he brings the young man back to life.²⁸ His own grief at the death of his friend, Lazarus, and his desire to give witness to the life-giving love of God are motive for him to bring Lazarus back to life as well.²⁹ The compassion that was shown to Jesus by a thief crucified alongside him at Calvary was enough for Jesus, in the midst of dying, to promise him paradise that very day.³⁰

²⁴ Matthew 5:10-12. *Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you [falsely] because of me. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven. Thus they persecuted the prophets who were before you.*

²⁵ Matthew 18:21-22. *Then Peter approaching asked him, "Lord, if my brother sins against me, how often must I forgive him? As many as seven times?" Jesus answered, "I say to you, not seven times but seventy-seven times."*

²⁶ Luke 15:21-24. *His son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you; I no longer deserve to be called your son.' But his father ordered his servants, 'Quickly bring the finest robe and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. Take the fattened calf and slaughter it. Then let us celebrate with a feast, because this son of mine was dead, and has come to life again; he was lost, and has been found.' Then the celebration began.*

²⁷ Luke 10:36-37. *"Which of these three, in your opinion, was neighbor to the robbers' victim?" He answered, "The one who treated him with mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."*

²⁸ Luke 7:13-14. *"When the Lord saw her, he was moved with pity for her and said to her, "Do not weep." He stepped forward and touched the coffin; at this the bearers halted, and he said, "Young man, I tell you, arise!"*

²⁹ John 11:32-35. *"When Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died." When Jesus saw her weeping and the Jews who had come with her weeping, he became perturbed and deeply troubled, and said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Sir, come and see." And Jesus wept.*

³⁰ Luke 23:42-43. *Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom." Jesus replied to him, "Amen, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise."*

Perhaps the most graphic and stark teaching of Jesus about our obligation to alleviate the suffering of others comes late in the Gospel of Matthew when Jesus speaks of the image of the Son of Man on the throne of judgment on the last day.³¹ The ones who will be saved, who will be brought into “the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world,” are those who gave food to the hungry, clothed the naked, gave of themselves to those who suffer. Those who did not do this will go off to eternal punishment. Jesus clearly identifies himself as “one of these least brothers of mine.” In another place Jesus promises that, of his disciples, the one who gives even as much as a glass of cold water to one who is thirsty “will surely not lose his reward.”³² The lesson not to be missed, of course, is that the motive for action is not only to alleviate suffering, but to make manifest Christ’s unconditional love for the person who is to be served. The one who serves becomes, too, “the least of these,” transformed into the image of Christ..

The transformation that takes place in a true disciple of Jesus Christ is taken literally in his teachings and the witness of the Church. The generations that followed Christ who gladly gave up their lives rather than deny him are an eloquent witness to this faith, as are the many today who lose their lives because they are his followers. In his letter to the Galatians, St. Paul states it so simply, so perfectly this transformation: *It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.*³³

Suffering as Love

Human suffering, for Catholics, finds its fullest meaning in Jesus Christ, whose love transforms our human suffering. Through his teachings, his words and deeds, he not only models a humanity that is compassionate in seeking to end the suffering of others. He freely chooses to enter into relationship with us, to heal our damaged relationships with one another and with God.

Consider Jesus Christ, as Christians do, one Person with two natures, divine and human (God incarnate). Anything less than the perfect joy of his divinity is, for him in the context of time and space, some form of privation, or suffering.

Jesus first empties himself of his glory as Son of God in the Incarnation, embracing the suffering of human limitation. But to only see this from a human per-

³¹ Matthew 25:34-40. “‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.’ Then the righteous will answer him and say, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? When did we see you ill or in prison,

and visit you?’ And the king will say to them in reply, ‘Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.’”

³² Ibid. 12, v. 42.

³³ Galatians 2:19-20. *I have been crucified with Christ; yet I live, no longer I, but Christ lives in me; insofar as I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who has loved me and given himself up for me.*

spective would be to obscure the love with which God decided to intervene in human history. God, whose love is perfect, chooses to experience that privation, but because his motive is perfect love, not limited to human suffering: *It is joy*. What would be considered pain, privation, loss and humiliation by humans is, in Christ, the fulfillment of his Father's will and plan of Love. His selflessness allows all focus (*intention, action*) to be not on the One who loves, but the beloved.

Further, the pain of human suffering, itself, is the reality that Jesus Christ incorporates into his own Mystery of the invisible God made visible. Having no requirement to know our suffering, he freely chooses it, in life and ultimately in the greatest sacrifice of self-emptying love in his death, passing *through* suffering—not circumventing it—to bring all things into one in him.

Finally it is in the Mystery of Jesus on the Cross, freely chosen for us (*in our place*) and for our salvation (*in our interest*) that the sacrifice of self-interest in the form of suffering becomes the greatest expression of God. Tortured and crucified as he was, I am certain that this was not a happy moment. At the same time, I believe that the fulfillment of his Father's will and the work accomplished of saving his creation, as a shepherd who goes out and finds the lost sheep, humanity, produced a perfect joy even in the middle of such pain and sorrow. One theologian said that it was in the Silence of the Cross that the Word of God has its most profound proclamation.

In this mystical life in Christ, Christians learn to embrace their own crosses according to Christ's own example.³⁴ *"We are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if only we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him."*³⁵ The self-emptying love of the Father, given completely to the Son, is now given to us: he has given it all to us and transformed death to life.³⁶ Jesus loved us to the point of death that we might know eternal life.

*"I give you a new commandment: love one another. As I have loved you, so should you love one another. This is how all will know you are my disciples."*³⁷

*"I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and your joy may be complete. This is my commandment: love one another as I love you. No one has greater love than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends."*³⁸

It is Jesus' love for the Father, to do his will, and his love for us to die for our

³⁴ Ibid. 12, v. 38-39. *"Whoever does not take up his cross and follow after me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it."* with him so that we may also be glorified with him."

³⁵ Romans 8:16-17. *"The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if only we suffer*

³⁶ Romans 6:8. *"If, then, we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him."*

³⁷ John 13:34-35.

³⁸ John 15:11-13.

sake, that gives us a profound challenge to love unconditionally and willingly enter into the suffering of others for their redemption in the name of Christ.

In this understanding, “to take up our crosses” means to bear our suffering patiently, to bear the burden of others’ suffering with them, and to make of it an offering to God, an act of selflessness to balance the scale of the world’s acts of selfishness and lack of love.

It calls us to an intensification of compassion: not only to accompany others in their suffering and alleviate it as we are able, but to willingly enter into the mystery of our suffering in Christ’s name. He not only suffered alongside us, in poverty and homelessness and privation, but entered completely into our suffering and death, accomplishing a favor from the Father that we could never have accomplished ourselves, alone. In the face of our willful lack of love, the cause of our suffering, he has willingly emptied himself of life, of blood, of Spirit. On the cross he says, “*I thirst,*” and as the moment of Silence comes on the Cross, Jesus, the Word of God says “*It is finished.*”³⁹ His mission is complete.

This moment was a moment of the greatest agony that a human being could endure, the moment that God had planned for the reconciliation of all humanity with himself. Jesus’ human consciousness was aware of every pain and suffering which might have been known to him, but he also knew that he was fulfilling the will of his Father. This knowledge, because of his Great Love despite the unhappiness of suffering, was for him the source of pure joy. We pray that by his grace we can follow him.

One clarification may need be made in conclusion: as God who is All, God cannot know a lack of love, or suffering. He exists in perfect beatitude, joy in the community of divine Relationship. His relationship of Love, however, involves him in the experience of the beloved, and in our case this involves suffering where creation has diminished in love. For this reason, he becomes one of us so that he might use our human experience of suffering to restore us to union with him. Because he is Love. A sixteenth century mystic in the Carmelite Tradition, Saint John of the Cross, simply put it this way: “*Where there is no love, let me put love, and there I will find love.*”

What a remarkable, healing reality union with the divine must be, and there may be myriad, parallel ways to achieve this bliss. For Christians, suffering is given as a path: salvation for those who serve to heal the suffering of others, salvation for those who freely choose to endure suffering for the sake of the Kingdom, and salvation for those who are willing to give the ultimate sacrifice of self for other. All of these are forms of self-emptying love, out of which the self realizes fullness in time and is given eternal life.

³⁹ John 19:28 and 30.

1. The Gospel of Matthew 5:43-48

⁴³“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.’ ⁴⁴But I say to you, love your enemies, and pray for those who persecute you, ⁴⁵that you may be children of your heavenly Father, for he makes his sun rise on the bad and the good, and causes rain to fall on the just and the unjust.

⁴⁶For if you love those who love you, what recompense will you have? Do not the tax collectors do the same? ⁴⁷And if you greet your brothers only, what is unusual about that? Do not the pagans do the same? ⁴⁸So be perfect, just as your heavenly Father is perfect.

2. The Gospel of Luke 6:37-38

³⁷ “**Stop judging and you will not be judged. Stop condemning and you will not be condemned. Forgive and you will be forgiven.**

³⁸ **Give and gifts will be given to you;** a good measure, packed together, shaken down, and overflowing, will be poured into your lap. For the measure with which you measure will in return be measured out to you.”

3. The Gospel of Matthew 9:9-13

The Call of Matthew

⁹ As Jesus passed on from there, he saw a man named Matthew sitting at the customs post. He said to him, “Follow me.” And he got up and followed him.

¹⁰ **While he was at table in his house, many tax collectors and sinners came and sat with Jesus and his disciples.** ¹¹ **The Pharisees saw this and said to his disciples, “Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?”**

¹² **He heard this and said, “Those who are well do not need a physician, but the sick do.** ¹³ **Go and learn the mean-**

ing of the words, ‘I desire mercy, not sacrifice.’ I did not come to call the righteous but sinners.”

4. The Gospel of Luke 7:36-50

The Pardon of the Sinful Woman

³⁶A Pharisee invited him to dine with him, and he entered the Pharisee’s house and reclined at table.

³⁷ Now there was a sinful woman in the city who learned that he was at table in the house of the Pharisee. Bringing an alabaster flask of ointment, ³⁸ she stood behind him at his feet weeping and began to bathe his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them, and anointed them with the ointment.

³⁹ When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this he said to himself, “If this man were a prophet, he would know who and what sort of woman this is who is touching him, that she is a sinner.”

⁴⁰ Jesus said to him in reply, “Simon, I have something to say to you.” “Tell me, teacher,” he said.

⁴¹ “Two people were in debt to a certain creditor; one owed five hundred days’ wages and the other owed fifty. ⁴² Since they were unable to repay the debt, he forgave it for both. Which of them will love him more?”

⁴³ Simon said in reply, “The one, I suppose, whose larger debt was forgiven.” He said to him, “You have judged rightly.”

⁴⁴ Then he turned to the woman and said to Simon, “Do you see this woman? When I entered your house, you did not give me water for my feet, but she has bathed them with her tears and wiped them with her hair. ⁴⁵ You did not give me a kiss, but she has not ceased kissing my feet since the time I entered. ⁴⁶ You did not anoint my head with oil, but she anointed my feet with ointment.

⁴⁷ So I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven; hence, she has shown great love. But the one to whom little is forgiven, loves little.”

⁴⁸ He said to her, “Your sins are forgiven.”

⁴⁹ The others at table said to themselves, “Who is this who even forgives sins?” ⁵⁰ But he said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you; go in peace.”

5. The Gospel of John 4:7-15

⁷ A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, “Give me a drink.”

⁸ His disciples had gone into the town to buy food.

⁹ **The Samaritan woman said to him, “How can you, a Jew, ask me, a Samaritan woman, for a drink?” (For Jews use nothing in common with Samaritans.)**

¹⁰ **Jesus answered and said to her, “If you knew the gift of God and who is saying to you, ‘Give me a drink,’ you would have asked him and he would have given you living water.”**

¹¹ [The woman] said to him, “Sir, you do not even have a bucket and the cistern is deep; where then can you get this living water? ¹² Are you greater than our father Jacob, who gave us this cistern and drank from it himself with his children and his flocks?”

¹³ Jesus answered and said to her, “Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again; ¹⁴ but whoever drinks the water I shall give will never thirst; the water I shall give will become in him a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

6. The Gospel of Matthew 12:46-50

The True Family of Jesus

⁴⁶ While he was still speaking to the crowds, his mother and his

brothers appeared outside, wishing to speak with him.

⁴⁷ [Someone told him, “Your mother and your brothers are standing outside, asking to speak with you.”]

⁴⁸ But he said in reply to the one who told him, “Who is my mother? Who are my brothers?”

⁴⁹ And stretching out his hand toward his disciples, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers. ⁵⁰ For whoever does the will of my heavenly Father is my brother, and sister, and mother.”

7. The Gospel of John 10:22-30

Feast of the Dedication.

²² The feast of the Dedication was then taking place in Jerusalem. It was winter. ²³ And Jesus walked about in the temple area on the Portico of Solomon. ²⁴ So the Jews gathered around him and said to him, “How long are you going to keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly.”

²⁵ Jesus answered them, “I told you and you do not believe. The works I do in my Father’s name testify to me. ²⁶ But you do not believe, because you are not among my sheep. ²⁷ My sheep hear my voice; I know them, and they follow me. ²⁸ I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish. No one can take them out of my hand.

²⁹ **My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one can take them out of the Father’s hand.**

³⁰ **The Father and I are one.**”

8. The Gospel of John 1:1-5, 10-14

¹ **In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was in the beginning with God. ³ All things came to be through him, and without him nothing came to be. What came to be ⁴ through**

him was life, and this life was the light of the human race; ⁵ the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.

¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world came to be through him, but the world did not know him.

¹¹ He came to what was his own, but his own people did not accept him. ¹² But to those who did accept him he gave power to become children of God, to those who believe in his name, ¹³ who were born not by natural generation nor by human choice nor by a man’s decision but of God.

¹⁴ **And the Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us, and we saw his glory, the glory as of the Father’s only Son, full of grace and truth.**

9-10. The Gospel of John 14:1-27

The Last Supper Discourses.

¹ “Do not let your hearts be troubled. You have faith in God; have faith also in me. ² In my Father’s house there are many dwelling places. If there were not, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? ³ And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back again and take you to myself, so that where I am you also may be. ⁴ Where [I] am going you know the way.”

⁵ Thomas said to him, “Master, we do not know where you are going; how can we know the way?”

⁶ Jesus said to him, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. ⁷ If you know me, then you will also know my Father. From now on you do know him and have seen him.”

⁸ Philip said to him, “Master, show us the Father, and that will be enough for us.”

⁹ Jesus said to him, “Have I been with you for so long a time and you still do not know me, Philip? **Whoever has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, ‘Show us the**

Father’? ¹⁰ Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on my own. The Father who dwells in me is doing his works.

¹¹ **Believe me that I am in the Father and the Father is in me, or else, believe because of the works themselves.**

¹² Amen, amen, I say to you, whoever believes in me will do the works that I do, and will do greater ones than these, because I am going to the Father. ¹³ And whatever you ask in my name, I will do, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. ¹⁴ If you ask anything of me in my name, I will do it.

The Advocate.

¹⁵ “If you love me, you will keep my commandments. ¹⁶ **And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate to be with you always, ¹⁷ the Spirit of truth, which the world cannot accept, because it neither sees nor knows it. But you know it, because it remains with you, and will be in you.**

¹⁸ **I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you. ¹⁹ In a little while the world will no longer see me, but you will see me, because I live and you will live. ²⁰ On that day you will realize that I am in my Father and you are in me and I in you. ²¹ Whoever has my commandments and observes them is the one who loves me. And whoever loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and reveal myself to him.”**

²² Judas, not the Iscariot, said to him, “Master, [then] what happened that you will reveal yourself to us and not to the world?”

²³ Jesus answered and said to him, “**Whoever loves me will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our dwelling with him.** ²⁴ Whoever does not love me does not keep my words; yet the word you hear is not mine but that of the Father who sent me.

²⁵ “I have told you this while I am with you. ²⁶ The Advocate, the holy Spirit that the Father will send in my name—he will teach you everything and remind

you of all that [I] told you.

²⁷ Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give it to you. Do not let your hearts be troubled or afraid.

11. The Gospel of John 15:9-17

⁹ As the Father loves me, so I also love you. Remain in my love.

¹⁰ If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and remain in his love.

¹¹ "I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and your joy may be complete. ¹² **This is my commandment: love one another as I love you.**

¹³ **No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends.**

¹⁴ **You are my friends if you do what I command you. ¹⁵ I no longer call you slaves, because a slave does not know what his master is doing. I have called you friends, because I have told you everything I have heard from my Father.**

¹⁶ **It was not you who chose me, but I who chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit that will remain, so that whatever you ask the Father in my name he may give you.**

¹⁷ **This I command you: love one another.**

13. The Gospel of Matthew 11:25-30

²⁵ At that time Jesus said in reply, "I give praise to you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, for although you have hidden these things from the wise and the learned you have revealed them to the childlike. ²⁶ Yes, Father, such has been your gracious will.

²⁷ **All things have been handed over to me by my Father. No one knows the Son except the Father, and no one knows the Father except the Son and anyone to whom the Son wishes to reveal him.**

²⁸ "Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will

give you rest. ²⁹ Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart; and you will find rest for your selves. ³⁰ For my yoke is easy, and my burden light."

14. The Letter of Paul to the Philippians 2:1-11

Plea for Unity and Humility.

¹ If there is any encouragement in Christ, any solace in love, any participation in the Spirit, any compassion and mercy, ² complete my joy by being of the same mind, with the same love, united in heart, thinking one thing.

³ Do nothing out of selfishness or out of vainglory; rather, humbly regard others as more important than yourselves, ⁴ each looking out not for his own interests, but [also] everyone for those of others.

⁵ Have among yourselves the same attitude that is also yours in Christ Jesus, ⁶ **Who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God something to be grasped.**

⁷ **Rather, he emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, coming in human likeness; and found human in appearance, ⁸ he humbled himself, becoming obedient to death, even death on a cross.**

⁹ Because of this, God greatly exalted him and bestowed on him the name that is above every name, ¹⁰ that at the name of Jesus every knee should bend, of those in heaven and on earth and under the earth, ¹¹ and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.

15. The Gospel of John 16:5-7, 12-15

Coming of the Advocate

"I did not tell you this from the beginning, because I was with you. ⁵ But now I am going to the one who sent me, and not one of you asks me, 'Where are you

going?' ⁶ But because I told you this, grief has filled your hearts.

⁷ But I tell you the truth, it is better for you that I go. For if I do not go, the Advocate will not come to you. But if I go, I will send him to you.

¹² "I have much more to tell you, but you cannot bear it now.

¹³ **But when he comes, the Spirit of truth, he will guide you to all truth. He will not speak on his own, but he will speak what he hears, and will declare to you the things that are coming.**

¹⁴ **He will glorify me, because he will take from what is mine and declare it to you. ¹⁵ Everything that the Father has is mine; for this reason I told you that he will take from what is mine and declare it to you.**

16. The Gospel of Matthew 8:19-20

¹⁹ A scribe approached and said to him, "Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go."

²⁰ Jesus answered him, "Foxes have dens and birds of the sky have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to rest his head."

17. The Gospel of John 17:3-8

³ Now this is eternal life, that they should know you, the only true God, and the one whom you sent, Jesus Christ. ⁴ I glorified you on earth by accomplishing the work that you gave me to do. ⁵ Now glorify me, Father, with you, with the glory that I had with you before the world began.

⁶ **"I revealed your name to those whom you gave me out of the world. They belonged to you, and you gave them to me, and they have kept your word.**

⁷ **Now they know that everything you gave me is from you, ⁸ because the words you gave to me I have given to them, and they accepted them and truly understood that I came from you, and they have believed that you sent me.**

18. The Letter of Paul to the Ephesians 1:3-10

³ Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavens, ⁴ as he chose us in him, before the foundation of the world, to be holy and without blemish before him. **In love ⁵ he destined us for adoption to himself through Jesus Christ, in accord with the favor of his will, ⁶ for the praise of the glory of his grace that he granted us in the beloved.**

Fulfillment through Christ

⁷ In him we have redemption by his blood, the forgiveness of transgressions, in accord with the riches of his grace ⁸ that he lavished upon us. In all wisdom and insight, ⁹ he has made known to us the mystery of his will in accord with his favor that he set forth in him ¹⁰ as a plan for the fullness of times, to sum up all things in Christ, in heaven and on earth.

19-20. The Gospel of Matthew 10:5-33, 37-42

The Commissioning of the Twelve

⁵ Jesus sent out these twelve after instructing them thus, "Do not go into pagan territory or enter a Samaritan town. ⁶ Go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

⁷ **As you go, make this proclamation: 'The kingdom of heaven is at hand.'** ⁸ **Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse lepers, drive out demons.**

Poverty of Discipleship

Without cost you have received; without cost you are to give.

⁹ **Do not take gold or silver or copper for your belts; ¹⁰ no sack for the journey, or a second tunic, or sandals, or walking stick. The laborer deserves his keep.**

¹¹ Whatever town or village you enter, look for a worthy person in it, and stay there until you leave. ¹² As you enter a house, wish it peace. ¹³ If the house is worthy, let your peace come

upon it; if not, let your peace return to you.

¹⁴ Whoever will not receive you or listen to your words—go outside that house or town and shake the dust from your feet.

¹⁵ Amen, I say to you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrah on the day of judgment than for that town.

Suffering of Discipleship

¹⁶ "Behold, I am sending you like sheep in the midst of wolves; so be shrewd as serpents and simple as doves. ¹⁷ But beware of people, for they will hand you over to courts and scourge you in their synagogues, ¹⁸ and you will be led before governors and kings for my sake as a witness before them and the pagans.

¹⁹ When they hand you over, do not worry about how you are to speak or what you are to say. You will be given at that moment what you are to say. ²⁰ For it will not be you who speak but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.

²¹ Brother will hand over brother to death, and the father his child; children will rise up against parents and have them put to death.

²² **You will be hated by all because of my name, but whoever endures to the end will be saved.**

²³ **When they persecute you in one town, flee to another. Amen, I say to you, you will not finish the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes.**

²⁴ **No disciple is above his teacher, no slave above his master.**

²⁵ **It is enough for the disciple that he become like his teacher,** for the slave that he become like his master.

If they have called the master of the house Beelzebul, how much more those of his household!

Courage under Persecution

²⁶ "Therefore do not be afraid of them. Nothing is concealed that will not be revealed, nor secret that will not be known. ²⁷ What I say to you in the darkness, speak in the light; what you hear whispered, proclaim on the housetops.

²⁸ And do not be afraid of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather, be afraid of the one who can destroy both soul and body in Gehenna. ²⁹ Are not two sparrows sold for a small coin? Yet not one of them falls to the ground without your Father's knowledge. ³⁰ Even all the hairs of your head are counted. ³¹ So do not be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.

³² Everyone who acknowledges me before others I will acknowledge before my heavenly Father.

³³ But whoever denies me before others, I will deny before my heavenly Father.

The Conditions of Discipleship

³⁷ "Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; ³⁸ and **whoever does not take up his cross and follow after me is not worthy of me.** ³⁹ **Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.**

Rewards

⁴⁰ "Whoever receives you receives me, and whoever receives me receives the one who sent me.

⁴¹ Whoever receives a prophet because he is a prophet will receive a prophet's reward, and whoever receives a righteous man because he is righteous will receive a righteous man's reward.

⁴² **And whoever gives only a cup of cold water to one of these little ones to drink because he is a disciple—amen, I say to you, he will surely not lose his reward."**

21. The Gospel of John 10:11-18

¹¹ I am the good shepherd. A good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.

¹² A hired man, who is not a shepherd and whose sheep are not his own, sees a wolf coming and leaves the sheep and runs away, and the wolf catches and scatters them. ¹³ This is because

he works for pay and has no concern for the sheep.

¹⁴ I am the good shepherd, and I know mine and mine know me, ¹⁵ just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I will lay down my life for the sheep.

¹⁶ I have other sheep that do not belong to this fold. These also I must lead, and they will hear my voice, and there will be one flock, one shepherd.

¹⁷ This is why the Father loves me, because I lay down my life in order to take it up again. ¹⁸ No one takes it from me, but I lay it down on my own. I have power to lay it down, and power to take it up again. This command I have received from my Father.

22. The letter of Paul to the Romans 5:3-11

Brothers and sisters,

³ We even boast of our afflictions, knowing that affliction produces endurance, ⁴ and endurance, proven character, and proven character, hope, ⁵ and hope does not disappoint, because the love of God has been poured out into our hearts through the holy Spirit that has been given to us.

⁶ For Christ, while we were still helpless, yet died at the appointed time for the ungodly. ⁷ Indeed, only with difficulty does one die for a just person, though perhaps for a good person one might even find courage to die. ⁸ But God proves his love for us in that while we were still sinners Christ died for us.

⁹ How much more then, since we are now justified by his blood, will we be saved through him from the wrath.

¹⁰ Indeed, if, while we were enemies, we were reconciled to God through the death of his Son, how much more, once reconciled, will we be saved by his life. ¹¹ Not only that, but we also boast of God through our Lord

Jesus Christ, through whom we have now received reconciliation.

23. The Gospel of John 15:7-13

⁷ If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask for whatever you want and it will be done for you. ⁸ By this is my Father glorified, that you bear much fruit and become my disciples.

⁹ As the Father loves me, so I also love you. Remain in my love. ¹⁰ If you keep my commandments, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and remain in his love.

¹¹ "I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and your joy may be complete.

¹² This is my commandment: love one another as I love you.

¹³ No one has greater love than this, to lay down one's life for one's friends.

24. The Gospel of Matthew 5:1-12

The Sermon on the Mount

¹ When he saw the crowds, he went up the mountain, and after he had sat down, his disciples came to him.

² He began to teach them, saying:

³ "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

⁴ Blessed are they who mourn, for they will be comforted.

⁵ Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the land.

⁶ Blessed are they who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be satisfied.

⁷ Blessed are the merciful, for they will be shown mercy.

⁸ Blessed are the clean of heart, for they will see God.

⁹ Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

¹⁰ Blessed are they who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

¹¹ Blessed are you when they insult you and persecute you and utter every kind of evil against you [falsely] because of me. ¹² Rejoice and be glad, for your reward will be great in heaven. Thus they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

25. The Gospel of Matthew 18:21-35

The Parable of the Unforgiving Servant

²¹ Then Peter approaching asked him, "Lord, if my brother sins against me, how often must I forgive him? As many as seven times?"

²² Jesus answered, "I say to you, not seven times but seventy-seven times.

²³ That is why the kingdom of heaven may be likened to a king who decided to settle accounts with his servants. ²⁴ When he began the accounting, a debtor was brought before him who owed him a huge amount.

²⁵ Since he had no way of paying it back, his master ordered him to be sold, along with his wife, his children, and all his property, in payment of the debt. ²⁶ At that, the servant fell down, did him homage, and said, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay you back in full.'

²⁷ Moved with compassion the master of that servant let him go and forgave him the loan.

²⁸ When that servant had left, he found one of his fellow servants who owed him a much smaller amount. He seized him and started to choke him, demanding, 'Pay back what you owe.'

²⁹ Falling to his knees, his fellow servant begged him, 'Be patient with me, and I will pay you back.'

³⁰ But he refused. Instead, he had him put in prison until he paid back the debt.

³¹ Now when his fellow servants saw what had happened, they

were deeply disturbed, and went to their master and reported the whole affair. ³² His master summoned him and said to him, 'You wicked servant! I forgave you your entire debt because you begged me to. ³³ Should you not have had pity on your fellow servant, as I had pity on you?'

³⁴ Then in anger his master handed him over to the torturers until he should pay back the whole debt.

³⁵ So will my heavenly Father do to you, unless each of you forgives his brother from his heart."

26. The Gospel of Luke 15:11-24

¹¹ Then he said, "A man had two sons, ¹² and the younger son said to his father, 'Father, give me the share of your estate that should come to me.' So the father divided the property between them.

¹⁴ After a few days, the younger son collected all his belongings and set off to a distant country where he squandered his inheritance on a life of dissipation.

¹⁴ When he had freely spent everything, a severe famine struck that country, and he found himself in dire need. ¹⁵ So he hired himself out to one of the local citizens who sent him to his farm to tend the swine. ¹⁶ And he longed to eat his fill of the pods on which the swine fed, but nobody gave him any.

¹⁷ Coming to his senses he thought, 'How many of my father's hired workers have more than enough food to eat, but here am I, dying from hunger. ¹⁸ I shall get up and go to my father and I shall say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. ¹⁹ I no longer deserve to be called your son; treat me as you would treat one of your hired workers.'"

²⁰ So he got up and went back to

his father. While he was still a long way off, his father caught sight of him, and was filled with compassion. He ran to his son, embraced him and kissed him.

²¹ His son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you; I no longer deserve to be called your son.'

²² But his father ordered his servants, 'Quickly bring the finest robe and put it on him; put a ring on his finger and sandals on his feet. ²³ Take the fattened calf and slaughter it. Then let us celebrate with a feast, ²⁴ because this son of mine was dead, and has come to life again; he was lost, and has been found.' Then the celebration began.

27. The Gospel of Luke 10:25-37

*The Mission of the Seventy-two
The Greatest Commandment*

²⁵ There was a scholar of the law who stood up to test him and said, "Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?"

²⁶ Jesus said to him, "What is written in the law? How do you read it?"

²⁷ He said in reply, "You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your being, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself."

²⁸ He replied to him, "You have answered correctly; do this and you will live."

The Parable of the Good Samaritan

²⁹ But because he wished to justify himself, he said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?"

³⁰ Jesus replied, "A man fell victim to robbers as he went down from Jerusalem to Jericho. They stripped and beat him and went off leaving him half-dead.

³¹ A priest happened to be going down that road, but when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side. ³² Likewise a Levite came to the place, and when he

saw him, he passed by on the opposite side. ³³ But a Samaritan traveler who came upon him was moved with compassion at the sight.

³⁴ He approached the victim, poured oil and wine over his wounds and bandaged them. Then he lifted him up on his own animal, took him to an inn and cared for him. ³⁵ The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper with the instruction, 'Take care of him. If you spend more than what I have given you, I shall repay you on my way back.'

³⁶ Which of these three, in your opinion, was neighbor to the robbers' victim?"

³⁷ He answered, "The one who treated him with mercy." Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise."

28. The Gospel of Luke 7:11-17

Raising of the Widow's Son.

¹¹ Soon afterward he journeyed to a city called Nain, and his disciples and a large crowd accompanied him.

¹² As he drew near to the gate of the city, a man who had died was being carried out, the only son of his mother, and she was a widow. A large crowd from the city was with her.

¹³ When the Lord saw her, he was moved with pity for her and said to her, "Do not weep."

¹⁴ He stepped forward and touched the coffin; at this the bearers halted, and he said, "Young man, I tell you, arise!"

¹⁵ The dead man sat up and began to speak, and Jesus gave him to his mother.

¹⁶ Fear seized them all, and they glorified God, exclaiming, "A great prophet has arisen in our midst," and "God has visited his people."

¹⁷ This report about him spread through the whole of Judea and in all the surrounding region.

29. The Gospel of John 11:1-44

The Raising of Lazarus.

¹ Now a man was ill, Lazarus from Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha.

² Mary was the one who had anointed the Lord with perfumed oil and dried his feet with her hair; it was her brother Lazarus who was ill.

³ So the sisters sent word to him, saying, "Master, the one you love is ill." ⁴ When Jesus heard this he said, "This illness is not to end in death, but is for the glory of God, that the Son of God may be glorified through it."

⁵ Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus. ⁶ So when he heard that he was ill, he remained for two days in the place where he was. ⁷ Then after this he said to his disciples, "Let us go back to Judea."

⁸ The disciples said to him, "Rabbi, the Jews were just trying to stone you, and you want to go back there?"

⁹ Jesus answered, "Are there not twelve hours in a day? If one walks during the day, he does not stumble, because he sees the light of this world. ¹⁰ But if one walks at night, he stumbles, because the light is not in him." ¹¹ He said this, and then told them, "Our friend Lazarus is asleep, but I am going to awaken him."

¹² So the disciples said to him, "Master, if he is asleep, he will be saved."

¹³ But Jesus was talking about his death, while they thought that he meant ordinary sleep. ¹⁴ So then Jesus said to them clearly, "Lazarus has died. ¹⁵ And I am glad for you that I was not there, that you may believe. Let us go to him."

¹⁶ So Thomas, called Didymus, said to his fellow disciples, "Let us also go to die with him."

¹⁷ When Jesus arrived, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb for four days. ¹⁸ Now Bethany was near Jerusalem, only about two miles away.

¹⁹ And many of the Jews had come to Martha and Mary to comfort them about their brother.

²⁰ When Martha heard that Jesus was coming, she went to meet him; but Mary sat at home.

²¹ Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died. ²² [But] even now I know that whatever you ask of God, God will give you."

²³ Jesus said to her, "Your brother will rise."

²⁴ Martha said to him, "I know he will rise, in the resurrection on the last day."

²⁵ Jesus told her, "I am the resurrection and the life; whoever believes in me, even if he dies, will live, ²⁶ and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

²⁷ She said to him, "Yes, Lord. I have come to believe that you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one who is coming into the world."

²⁸ When she had said this, she went and called her sister Mary secretly, saying, "The teacher is here and is asking for you." ²⁹ As soon as she heard this, she rose quickly and went to him.

³⁰ For Jesus had not yet come into the village, but was still where Martha had met him. ³¹ So when the Jews who were with her in the house comforting her saw Mary get up quickly and go out, they followed her, presuming that she was going to the tomb to weep there.

³² When Mary came to where Jesus was and saw him, she fell at his feet and said to him, "Lord, if you had been here, my brother would not have died."

³³ When Jesus saw her weeping and the Jews who had come with her weeping, he became perturbed and deeply

troubled,

³⁴ and said, "Where have you laid him?" They said to him, "Sir, come and see."

³⁵ And Jesus wept.

³⁶ So the Jews said, "See how he loved him." ³⁷ But some of them said, "Could not the one who opened the eyes of the blind man have done something so that this man would not have died?"

³⁸ So Jesus, perturbed again, came to the tomb. It was a cave, and a stone lay across it. ³⁹ Jesus said, "Take away the stone." Martha, the dead man's sister, said to him, "Lord, by now there will be a stench; he has been dead for four days."

⁴⁰ Jesus said to her, "Did I not tell you that if you believe you will see the glory of God?"

⁴¹ So they took away the stone. And Jesus raised his eyes and said, "Father, I thank you for hearing me. ⁴² I know that you always hear me; but because of the crowd here I have said this, that they may believe that you sent me."

⁴³ And when he had said this, he cried out in a loud voice, "Lazarus, come out!"

⁴⁴ The dead man came out, tied hand and foot with burial bands, and his face was wrapped in a cloth. So Jesus said to them, "Untie him and let him go."

30. The Gospel of Luke 23:39-43

³⁹ Now one of the criminals hanging there reviled Jesus, saying, "Are you not the Messiah? Save yourself and us."

⁴⁰ The other, however, rebuking him, said in reply, "Have you no fear of God, for you are subject to the same condemnation? ⁴¹ And indeed, we have been condemned justly, for the sentence we received corresponds to our crimes, but this man has done nothing criminal."

⁴² Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."

⁴³ Jesus replied to him, "Amen, I say to you, today you will be with me in Paradise."

31. The Gospel of Matthew 25:31-46

The Judgment of the Nations

³¹ "When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit upon his glorious throne, ³² and all the nations will be assembled before him. And he will separate them one from another, as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. ³³ He will place the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.

³⁴ Then the king will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father. Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. ³⁵ For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, a stranger and you welcomed me, ³⁶ naked and you clothed me, ill and you cared for me, in prison and you visited me.'

³⁷ Then the righteous will answer him and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? ³⁸ When did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? ³⁹ When did we see you ill or in prison, and visit you?'

⁴⁰ And the king will say to them in reply, 'Amen, I say to you, whatever you did for one of these least brothers of mine, you did for me.'

⁴¹ Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you accursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.

⁴² For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, ⁴³ a

stranger and you gave me no welcome, naked and you gave me no clothing, ill and in prison, and you did not care for me.'

⁴⁴ Then they will answer and say, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or ill or in prison, and not minister to your needs?'

⁴⁵ He will answer them, 'Amen, I say to you, what you did not do for one of these least ones, you did not do for me.'

⁴⁶ I And these will go off to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life."

32 (18). The Gospel of Matthew 10:42

⁴² And whoever gives only a cup of cold water to one of these little ones to drink because he is a disciple—amen, I say to you, he will surely not lose his reward."

33. The Letter of Paul to the Galatians 2:15-20

Faith and Works

¹⁵ We, who are Jews by nature and not sinners from among the Gentiles, ¹⁶ [yet] who know that a person is not justified by works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by works of the law, because by works of the law no one will be justified. ¹⁷ But if, in seeking to be justified in Christ, we ourselves are found to be sinners, is Christ then a minister of sin? Of course not!

¹⁸ But if I am building up again those things that I tore down, then I show myself to be a transgressor.

¹⁹ For through the law I died to the law, that I might live for God. **I have been crucified with Christ;**

²⁰ **yet I live, no longer I, but Christ lives in me; insofar as I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God who has loved me and given himself up for me.**

34 (19). The Gospel of Matthew 10:37-39

The Conditions of Discipleship

³⁷ "Whoever loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me, and whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me; ³⁸ and **whoever does not take up his cross and follow after me is not worthy of me.** ³⁹ **Whoever finds his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life for my sake will find it.**

35. The Letter of Paul to the Romans 8:14-17

¹⁴ For those who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God. ¹⁵ For you did not receive a spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you received a spirit of adoption, through which we cry, "Abba, Father!" ¹⁶ **The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, ¹⁷ and if children, then heirs, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if only we suffer with him so that we may also be glorified with him.**

36. The Letter of Paul to the Romans 6:3-11

³ Are you unaware that we who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death?

⁴ We were indeed buried with him through baptism into death, so that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might live in newness of life.

⁵ For if we have grown into union with him through a death like his, we shall also be united with him in the resurrection.

⁶ We know that our old self was crucified with him, so that our sinful body might be done away with, that we might no longer be in slavery to sin. ⁷ For a dead person has been absolved from sin. ⁸ **If, then, we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him.**

⁹ We know that Christ, raised from the dead, dies no more; death no longer has power over him. ¹⁰ As to his death, he died to sin once and for all; as to his life, he lives for God.

¹¹ Consequently, you too must think of yourselves as [being] dead to sin and living for God in Christ Jesus.

