



WEEKLY STUDY

WEEK NINE

As Jesus anticipated his own crucifixion and death, he began to take the next steps towards equipping his disciples. It was time for them to see themselves more and more like himself. They were called to live in such a way that causes other people to see Jesus in them and to desire more of him in their own lives until eventually they choose to become disciples as well. That's our calling too! May you experience bits of your own transformation into the likeness of Jesus this week as you study, pray, and share about your faith.

Peace of Christ,
Pastor Mark Youngman

If you are studying with your Providence Small Group or Discipleship Group, you can share from daily readings as well as the additional questions at the bottom of this guide. If you would like to get connected visit prov.church/smallgroups.

Find a time each day to read the passage of scripture and follow the daily prayer prompt.

DAILY STUDY

MONDAY: LUKE 9.1-9 (NIV)

When Jesus had called the Twelve together, he gave them power and authority to drive out all demons and to cure diseases,² and he sent them out to proclaim the kingdom of God and to heal the sick.³ He told them: "Take nothing for the journey—no staff, no bag, no bread, no money, no extra shirt.⁴ Whatever house you enter, stay there until you leave that town.⁵ If people do not welcome you, leave their town and shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them."⁶ So they set out and went from village to village, proclaiming the good news and healing people everywhere.

⁷Now Herod the tetrarch heard about all that was going on. And he was perplexed because some were saying that John had been raised from the dead,⁸ others that Elijah had appeared, and still others that one of the prophets of long ago had come back to life.⁹ But Herod said, "I beheaded John. Who, then, is this I hear such things about?" And he tried to see him.

- We have been studying the Gospel of Luke for several months now. We have arrived at chapter 9 which is the final chapter in the long section outlining Jesus' Galilean ministry. In the next chapter, Jesus will set his face towards Jerusalem and the cross. Before he does that he begins to reveal to

his disciples that their roles in this movement will grow exponentially. We draw great comfort from gathering together to worship, to hear the stories of Jesus, and to witness his miracles. In the community we find peace and hope. But we also hear our mission and mandate as disciples ourselves. We too are sent out into the world proclaiming the good news and bringing healing in Jesus' name. It's not hard to imagine that more than one disciple thought to himself, "Actually, I'd like to keep watching you do these things Jesus, after all...you are Jesus!" We might feel that way too, but we are clearly called to this. **Where have you felt that Jesus is inviting you to share the good news?**

- *Jesus, I love to learn from you, and to see your great power on display. Give me courage to step out with nothing but what you have equipped me with in order that more people might know you. Amen.*

TUESDAY: JOHN 15.4 (NIV)

Abide in Me, and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, neither can you, unless you abide in Me.

- In Sunday's message, we heard about three aspects of being a disciple of Jesus. Be with Jesus, Be like Jesus, Do what Jesus did. These are not linear steps but ways that we are always relating to Jesus as we grow deeper in our discipleship. In John 15, Jesus introduced a very helpful image of what it means to be with Jesus. We are called to abide in Jesus. We stay connected. We get our nourishment from him. We bear fruit because of our connection to Jesus. **What regular practices help you to abide in Jesus?**
- *Lord God, you have designed me to bear good fruit. In Jesus you have given me everything I need to live into that design. Help me to abide in him today. Amen.*

WEDNESDAY: 2 CORINTHIANS 3.17-18, 1 JOHN 3.2 (NIV)

Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.¹⁸ And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is.

- A disciple of Jesus is always in the process of becoming like him. Like apprentices of a master artist or craftsman, we watch and learn and then go and do. Over time (as Paul wrote to the church in Corinth) we will be transformed from one degree of glory to another—into his image. And 1 John records that when Jesus returns we will be like him. We will recognize him, because he has been coming alive in us! This could all be a bit overwhelming considering how far we have to go—how much transformation still needs to take place—but this is also meant as encouragement for us. Keep your eyes on Jesus! Trust that your imperfect steps are progress towards Christ-likeness. **Sometimes this is easier to see in others. Have you ever witnessed this progress from one degree of glory to another in someone else?**
- *Lord God, I want to be transformed. I know that it can sometimes be painful and painfully slow, but I commit to keeping my eyes on Jesus. Amen.*

THURSDAY: JOHN 14.12-14, JOHN 15.2-8 (NIV)

Very truly I tell you, whoever believes in me will do the works I have been doing, and they will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father.¹³ And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son.¹⁴ You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.

He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful.³ You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you.⁴ Remain in me, as I also remain in you. No branch can bear fruit by itself; it must remain in the vine. Neither can you bear fruit unless you remain in me.

⁵“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.⁶ If you do not remain in me, you are like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned.⁷ If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.⁸ This is to my Father’s glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

- A disciple is being transformed so that he or she can do what Jesus did. Or, according to Jesus, even greater things. Greater things than Jesus?! We are tempted to hear this as hyperbole, but Jesus meant what he said. And the reason it is indeed possible is because he will be behind every good work. We do what Jesus did in his name. **We are able to do even greater things because we abide in the One who provides the strength, wisdom, and love that it requires. Do you believe that is true in your life? Why or why not?**
- *Jesus, Jesus, Jesus, I am beginning to learn what it means to follow you. Honestly, it seems that your vision for me is far bigger than my own. So I humbly continue to abide in you today, seeking you in everything I do and say. Amen.*

FRIDAY: ACTS 1.7-8 (NIV)

“It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority.⁸ But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

- Continuing Jesus’ theme of doing greater things, Luke records this final promise of Jesus to his disciples before he ascends to the Father. We as disciples do not have to worry about the time or dates of Jesus’ return or the gifts of the Holy Spirit. We will receive power from the Holy Spirit and will be sent to all the earth at just the right time. We just have to position ourselves as ready to receive and ready to go. That’s what the disciples did in the upper room just before the church was born at Pentecost. **Are you eagerly awaiting the next movement from the Holy Spirit? Is it already here? Where would you go to serve as a witness to the good news of Jesus?**
- *God, send your Holy Spirit on me and on my fellow disciples. We need that power to reach beyond our comfort zones and to boldly go where you lead. Amen.*

SATURDAY: ROMANS 1.16-17 (NIV)

For I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God that brings salvation to everyone who believes: first to the Jew, then to the Gentile.¹⁷ For in the gospel the righteousness of God is revealed—a righteousness that is by faith from first to last, just as it is written: “The righteous will live by faith.”

- Paul, about as far away from God as you can get (even though knowing about God’s Law was his profession), was still called and empowered as a catalyst in the rapid expansion of the movement that Jesus set in motion. The way in which disciples respond to this calling truly matters. “The righteous will live by faith.” If we are truly seeking righteousness, the world will see Jesus. **Are there areas of your life, or your community’s life where you are not seeking righteousness? What changes might be necessary in order that the power of God to bring salvation might spread further and deeper in your lifetime?**
- *Almighty God, it is through the grace of Jesus Christ and through your power that I have come to believe. Thank you for the gift of salvation. Amen.*

SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

Consider the following quote from Sunday's message.

It's easy to define my expectation by my spiritual experience to this point rather than on the promises of Jesus and witness of Scripture. But what if the gap between biblical promise and my personal experience is a gap God longs to close? (Lectio365App)

How would you describe your expectations of how Jesus might work in your life in light of your spiritual experience so far?

What are the promises found in the following verses?

Isaiah 41.10 _____
 Psalm 32.8 _____
 Matthew 11.28-29 _____
 Exodus 14.14 _____
 Romans 8.28 _____

What expectations might these promises reasonably set for us?

Is there a gap between the promises of scripture and your experience?