IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF JESUS

A 31 DAY DEVOTIONAL
TRACING PLACES JESUS WALKED

BY PASTOR GARY STUMP
Dear Friends,

Jesus walked on the dusty roads of Israel up the hills and down in the valleys requiring three days to travel from Galilee to Jerusalem. As they traveled, He walked with His disciples and slept under the stars many nights. Through the witness of the Scriptures we can follow Jesus as He fulfills the mission His Father gave Him.

This is a look at some of the sites in Israel that have been connected with the life and ministry of Jesus. My hope is that these images connected with the applicable Bible passages might bring you to a better understanding of our Savior and our God—the Lord Jesus Christ!

For the next 31 days we will consider one place each day where Jesus walked. You will see a picture of a Biblical place in Israel with a relevant Scripture and a devotional thought for you to ponder.

My prayer is that your spiritual life will be enriched as you walk with me...

In the footsteps of Jesus!

Onward following Jesus,
Pastor Gary
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IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF JESUS—DAY 1

Luke 2:8–11 (NKJV) Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were greatly afraid. Then the angel said to them, “Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord.”

Can you picture being in these fields on that first Christmas night? Maybe some of the shepherds were sitting around a fire, while others with their dogs took turns making sure all the sheep were safe and bedded down for the night.

When suddenly…can you see it in your mind?…blinding light shining from the angel as he made the most glorious announcement in the history of the world! Two thousand years have passed since then and yet the shepherd fields in Bethlehem remain, pretty much undisturbed, as a testimony to that glorious night.

Luke 2:13–14 (NLT) Suddenly, the angel was joined by a vast host of others—the armies of heaven—praising God and saying, “Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased.”
One more important note:

Everyone knows that Bethlehem was the place where Jesus was born but did you know it was chosen by God for more than one reason? It goes back to the story of Ruth who, after her husband died, moved to Bethlehem with her mother-in-law, Naomi. She committed herself to the God of Israel and was relationally and financially saved by Boaz, her kinsman redeemer, when he married her. They had a son named Obed, who had a son named Jesse, who had a son named David. God promised that Messiah would be born of David and therefore would be born in Bethlehem—David’s hometown.

But there is even more: Bethlehem (בֵית לַחֲמִים) means “House of Bread.”

Jesus said, “I tell you the truth, Moses didn’t give you bread from heaven. My Father did. And now he offers you the true bread from heaven. The true bread of God is the one who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.” “Sir,” they said, “give us that bread every day.” Jesus replied, “I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry again” (John 6:32–35a, NLT).

What does it mean to you that the Bread of Life was born in the House of Bread?

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF JESUS—DAY 2

Luke 2:25–35 (NLT) At that time there was a man in Jerusalem named Simeon. He was righteous and devout and was eagerly waiting for the Messiah to come and rescue Israel. The Holy Spirit was upon him and had revealed to him that he would not die until he had seen the Lord’s Messiah. That day the Spirit led him to the Temple. So when Mary and Joseph came to present the baby Jesus to the Lord as the law required, Simeon was there. He took the child in his arms and praised God, saying,

“Sovereign Lord, now let your servant die in peace, as you have promised. I have seen your salvation, which you have prepared for all people. He is a light to reveal God to the nations, and he is the glory of your people Israel!”
This is a model of Herod’s Temple from the large, meticulously presented model of Jerusalem on display at the Israel Museum. You can see how impressive these buildings would have been to anyone who saw them.

It was in keeping with the Law of Moses that 40 days after a son was born the parents were required to offer a sacrifice—either a lamb, or if the parents couldn’t afford it, they could offer two pigeons (Leviticus 12:1-8). As Joseph and Mary carried Jesus into the Temple that day, they had no idea what a special blessing awaited them.

The Holy Spirit prompted this aged righteous man named Simeon that here was the long-awaited Messiah. It is quite possible that this Simeon was the son of the famed rabbi Hillel and the father of the famous rabbi Gamaliel (who was the Apostle Paul’s teacher).

Hurrying up to them, Simeon picked Jesus up in his arms and raised Him as an offering of faith before the Lord. Then he made the beautiful proclamation of what Jesus came to be: “a light for the Gentiles and the glory of Israel!”

How true his words have become! Jesus is the light in the darkness of the nations, and He still is the glory of His fellow Jews. In fact, billions of people in the world have come to know and love the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob through Jesus!

What are you doing to help others see the salvation which God has prepared for all people?
IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF JESUS—DAY 3

Matthew 2:19–23 (NLT) When Herod died, an angel of the Lord appeared in a dream to Joseph in Egypt. 20 “Get up!” the angel said. “Take the child and his mother back to the land of Israel, because those who were trying to kill the child are dead.” 21 So Joseph got up and returned to the land of Israel with Jesus and his mother. 22 But when he learned that the new ruler of Judea was Herod’s son Archelaus, he was afraid to go there. Then, after being warned in a dream, he left for the region of Galilee. 23 So the family went and lived in a town called Nazareth. This fulfilled what the prophets had said: “He will be called a Nazarene.”

Jesus grew up in Nazareth. Most Christians know that, but do you know why He had to grow up there?

First of all, Messiah had to be from the region of Galilee:

Isaiah 9:1–2 (NLT) Nevertheless, that time of darkness and despair will not go on forever… but there will be a time in the future when Galilee of the Gentiles, which lies along the road that runs between the Jordan and the sea, will be filled with glory. 2 The people who walk in darkness will see a great light. For those who live in a land of deep darkness, a light will shine.

Secondly, another title for Messiah was the Branch. Nazareth is a derivative of the Hebrew word for branch (netzer), so you could say that Jesus (the Branch) grew up in “Branchville.”

Isaiah 11:1 (NLT) Out of the stump of David’s family will grow a shoot—yes, a new Branch bearing fruit from the old root.
When Nathaniel asked, “Can anything good come from Nazareth?”, his brother Phillip answered, “Come and see for yourself!” (John 1:46).

What testimony can you give that Jesus is good?

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF JESUS—DAY 4

Matthew 13:54–57 (NLT) He returned to Nazareth, his hometown. When he taught there in the synagogue, everyone was amazed and said, “Where does he get this wisdom and the power to do miracles?” Then they scoffed, “He’s just the carpenter’s son, and we know Mary, his mother, and his brothers—James, Joseph, Simon, and Judas. All his sisters live right here among us. Where did he learn all these things?”

During Jesus’s adolescence, Josephus records that Herod Antipas (the son of Herod the Great) rebuilt the city of Sepphoris as the “ornament of the Galilee,” and conscripted all of the builders in the area to help. Joseph was a builder (not necessarily a carpenter) and trained Jesus in his craft (Mark 6:3).

It is very likely that Joseph would have awakened Jesus each day before daylight, Mary would probably hand them a basket containing lunch, as they walked up the road four miles to the city of Sepphoris.

Can you imagine Jesus seeing the craftsmen working on the beautiful mosaics (like this one shown in the picture which is called the "Mona Lisa of the Galilee")? Can you picture Joseph and Jesus walking up the road to this town each morning?
The people of Nazareth had a difficult time imagining Jesus as anything more than the "carpenter's (builder's) son" as He began his ministry.

How would you explain to others that Jesus is more than a “carpenter’s son?”

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF JESUS—DAY 5

Luke 13:6–9 (NLT) Jesus told this story: “A man planted a fig tree in his garden and came again and again to see if there was any fruit on it, but he was always disappointed. Finally, he said to his gardener, ‘I’ve waited three years, and there hasn’t been a single fig! Cut it down. It’s just taking up space in the garden.’ “The gardener answered, ‘Sir, give it one more chance. Leave it another year, and I’ll give it special attention and plenty of fertilizer. If we get figs next year, fine. If not, then you can cut it down.’”

Pictured here is an actual working replica of a first century AD olive press. Jesus would have seen this in operation and most probably would have helped during harvest time.

Jesus used many farming illustrations in His teaching. His point in the story above is made clear in this passage…

John 15:4–5 (NLT) “Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful unless you remain in me. Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches.”
Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing."

Jesus expects us to produce spiritual fruit. He has planted us in His kingdom, cultivated us with His love, watered us with His word, and pruned us with His challenges. Now we should produce fruit to His glory. But this will only happen if we are tightly connected to the vine!

What are you doing to stay tightly connected to the vine?

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF JESUS—DAY 6

Matthew 3:13–17 (NLT) Then Jesus went from Galilee to the Jordan River to be baptized by John. But John tried to talk him out of it. “I am the one who needs to be baptized by you,” he said, “so why are you coming to me?” But Jesus said, “It should be done, for we must carry out all that God requires.” So John agreed to baptize him. After his baptism, as Jesus came up out of the water, the heavens were opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and settling on him. And a voice from heaven said, “This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy.”

At a place similar to this, John was baptizing all who were willing to prepare their hearts for the coming of the Lord. It had been 400 years since Malachi had promised a prophet would announce the arrival of the Lord’s Messiah (Mal. 3:1). Jesus was baptized by John in order to
identify himself with the message John was preaching. He was the promised reality of the “coming of the Lord.”

But He isn’t only the presence of the Lord, He is the provision of the Lord. He is the provision of God that takes away our sin through faith!

John 1:29 (NLT) The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!

With whom have you shared Jesus as the one who takes away the sin of the world?

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF JESUS—DAY 7

Luke 4:16–19 (NLT) When he came to the village of Nazareth, his boyhood home, he went as usual to the synagogue on the Sabbath and stood up to read the Scriptures. The scroll of Isaiah the prophet was handed to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where this was written: “The Spirit of the LORD is upon me, for he has anointed me to bring Good News to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim that captives will be released, that the blind will see, that the oppressed will be set free, and that the time of the LORD’s favor has come.”

Pictured here is a reproduction of the first century Nazareth synagogue as seen in Nazareth Village—a living history museum. As a rising Jewish rabbi, Jesus was given the scroll of the prophets to read on the Sabbath. Beginning from where they had left off the previous week, Jesus read
from Isaiah 61. The passage predicts the coming ministry of the Messiah who would bring freedom and healing to the oppressed and marginalized. Then He boldly proclaimed, “The Scripture you’ve just heard has been fulfilled this very day!” Instead of rejoicing over this Good News, the people rejected His offer. How could this local son possibly be the Messiah? It reminds me of what John wrote, “He came to his own people, and even they rejected him. But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God.” (John 1:11–12).

How would you describe the freedom and healing that comes from being a child of God?

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF JESUS—DAY 8

Matthew 4:12–13a (NLT) When Jesus heard that John had been arrested, he left Judea and returned to Galilee. He went first to Nazareth, then left there and moved to Capernaum, beside the Sea of Galilee…

So much happened in this ancient village. The ruins above are the actual streets that Jesus and the disciples would have walked as they ministered from this base of operation. You can see the ruins of the beautiful white synagogue here.
At Capernaum Jesus healed Peter’s mother-in-law, called Peter, Andrew, James, and John to leave their nets and follow Him. He called Levi (Matthew) to leave his tax collecting business and follow him. From here he traveled to the surrounding towns and villages healing the sick, casting our demons, and performing many miraculous signs to confirm He was truly Immanuel (“God with us”).

But one of my favorite stories was when Jesus healed the man let down on ropes through the roof because they couldn’t get into Peter’s house. When Jesus saw their faith He said, “Your sins are forgiven.” The people were indignant with Him saying “Who can forgive sins except God alone?” Then Jesus said, “So I will prove to you that the Son of Man has the authority on earth to forgive sins.” Then Jesus turned to the paralyzed man and said, “Stand up, pick up your mat, and go home!” (Mark 2:10–11).

**In what specific ways does Jesus use your life as a base of operation?**

**IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF JESUS—DAY 9**

*Mark 1:21–28 (NLT)* Jesus and his companions went to the town of Capernaum. When the Sabbath day came, he went into the synagogue and began to teach. The people were amazed at his teaching, for he taught with real authority—quite unlike the teachers of religious law.
Suddenly, a man in the synagogue who was possessed by an evil spirit cried out, “Why are you interfering with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are—the Holy One of God!” But Jesus reprimanded him. “Be quiet! Come out of the man,” he ordered. At that, the evil spirit screamed, threw the man into a convulsion, and then came out of him. Amazement gripped the audience, and they began to discuss what had happened. “What sort of new teaching is this?” they asked excitedly. “It has such authority! Even evil spirits obey his orders!”

Jesus stood in this synagogue and commanded the demon to come out of this poor man. The people were astonished at the authority Jesus commanded. They had never seen anything like this before.

When Jesus finished His teaching of what we call the Sermon on the Mount we read,

Matthew 7:28–29 (NLT) When Jesus had finished saying these things, the crowds were amazed at his teaching, for he taught with real authority—quite unlike their teachers of religious law.

When Jesus rebuked the wind and waves and calmed the sea we read,

Mark 4:41 (NLT) The disciples were absolutely terrified. “Who is this man?” they asked each other. “Even the wind and waves obey him!”

Then Jesus gave us a command from His total authority,

Matthew 28:18–19 (NLT) “I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations…”

Based on Jesus’ authority in your life, who have you been discipling?

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF JESUS—DAY 10

Matthew 5:1–10 (NLT) One day as he saw the crowds gathering, Jesus went up on the mountainside and sat down. His disciples gathered around him, and he began to teach them. “God blesses those who are poor and realize their need for him, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs. God blesses those who mourn, for they will be comforted. God blesses those who are humble, for they will inherit the whole earth. God blesses those who hunger and thirst for justice, for they will be satisfied. God blesses those who are merciful, for they will be shown mercy. God blesses those whose hearts are pure, for they will see God. God blesses those who work for
peace, for they will be called the children of God. God blesses those who are persecuted for doing right, for the Kingdom of Heaven is theirs.”

One of the most beautiful places we visit in Israel is the hillside where Jesus taught the Sermon on the Mount. It is near Capernaum and rises up from the shore of the Sea of Galilee. This area creates a natural amphitheater where Jesus could be easily heard even if the crowd numbered 20,000 people.

As people relaxed in the grass, children maybe running around, with the cooling, gentle breezes coming off the lake, Jesus taught the blessings and responsibilities of those who would become part of His kingdom. He developed an ethic that would identify His own people who determined to live by faith under His authority.

He taught that to be a part of His kingdom, a person did not need any prequalification or spiritual pedigree. God’s blessings were available to the poorest of the poor, the outcast, the downtrodden, the marginalized, but were equally available to the noble and privileged as well. One only needs to be surrendered to Him as King to have the promised blessings.

He ended His teaching by telling a parable of two people—one a fool who built his life on sand, and the wise one who built his life on solid rock. Both heard His teaching, but one obeyed and one did not.

How would someone be able to know if you were building on the sand or on the rock?
Matthew 14:22–33 (NLT) Immediately after this, Jesus insisted that his disciples get back into the boat and cross to the other side of the lake, while he sent the people home. 23 After sending them home, he went up into the hills by himself to pray. Night fell while he was there alone. 24 Meanwhile, the disciples were in trouble far away from land, for a strong wind had risen, and they were fighting heavy waves. 25 About three o’clock in the morning Jesus came toward them, walking on the water. 26 When the disciples saw him walking on the water, they were terrified. In their fear, they cried out, “It’s a ghost!” 27 But Jesus spoke to them at once. “Don’t be afraid,” he said. “Take courage. I am here!” 28 Then Peter called to him, “Lord, if it’s really you, tell me to come to you, walking on the water.” 29 “Yes, come,” Jesus said. So Peter went over the side of the boat and walked on the water toward Jesus. 30 But when he saw the strong wind and the waves, he was terrified and began to sink. “Save me, Lord!” he shouted. 31 Jesus immediately reached out and grabbed him. “You have so little faith,” Jesus said. “Why did you doubt me?” 32 When they climbed back into the boat, the wind stopped. 33 Then the disciples worshiped him. “You really are the Son of God!” they exclaimed.

Two thousand years have changed the look of this body of water very little. During our tours, one of the highlights is always taking a boat ride on the Sea of Galilee. Can you imagine being in a boat here with a storm raging when you see someone walking on top of the waves? How
terrifying! And yet in the midst of the storm, Jesus is there! He is always there in our storms.

Although we often make fun of Peter for sinking, at least he had the courage to get out of the boat. Pastor John Ortberg wrote a book titled, “If You Want to Walk on Water, You’ve Got to Get Out of the Boat.” In the history of the world, as far as we know, there have only been two people who have ever walked on water: Jesus…and Peter for a few steps.

Maybe the Lord is calling you to do something that requires faith and you’re afraid to step out in faith. It can be scary to obey the Lord. Often a step of faith is required when a storm is raging which makes it all the more challenging. Learn from Peter’s example. Trust the Lord and take that step!

What is Jesus calling you to do that you’re afraid to obey?

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF JESUS—DAY 12

Luke 8:1–2 (NLT) Soon afterward Jesus began a tour of the nearby towns and villages, preaching and announcing the Good News about the Kingdom of God. He took his twelve disciples with him, along with some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases. Among them were Mary Magdalene, from whom he had cast out seven demons.
This is one of those places where we are certain Jesus walked. In fact, you can see the stone lectern in the middle of this synagogue where Jesus would have sat to teach as He read the Scriptures. This ancient city was undiscovered until 2006 when a priest from Mexico attempted to build a hotel for “pilgrims” on the northwest shore of the Sea of Galilee.

Mary Magdalene was from Magdala. She was so thankful to the Lord for her deliverance that she followed Him and helped to fund His ministry from that time onward. She did not forsake Him when He was on the cross and was the first at His tomb the morning of His resurrection. When His body was not there she began to cry. That is when her resurrected Lord said, “Mary!” She immediately responded, “My teacher!”

Mary immediately recognized the voice of her Lord. Jesus said,

John 10:27 (NLT) “My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me.”

**In what specific ways are you following your Shepherd?**

**IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF JESUS—DAY 13**

Mark 5:1–13 (NLT) So they arrived at the other side of the lake, in the region of the Gerasenes. 2 When Jesus climbed out of the boat, a man possessed by an evil spirit came out from the tombs to meet him. 3 This man lived in the burial caves and could no longer be restrained, even with a chain. 4 Whenever he was put into chains and shackles—as he often was—he snapped the chains from his wrists and smashed the shackles. No one was strong enough to subdue him. 5 Day and night he wandered among the burial caves and in the hills, howling and cutting himself with sharp stones. 6 When Jesus was still some distance away, the man saw him, ran to meet him, and bowed low before him. 7 With a shriek, he screamed, “Why are you interfering with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? In the name of God, I beg you, don’t torture me!” 8 For Jesus had already said to the spirit, “Come out of the man, you evil spirit.” 9 Then Jesus demanded, “What is your name?” And he replied, “My name is Legion, because there are many of us inside this man.” 10 Then the evil spirits begged him again and again not to send them to some distant place. 11 There happened to be a large herd of pigs feeding on the hillside nearby. 12 “Send us into those pigs,” the spirits begged. “Let us enter them.”
13 So Jesus gave them permission. The evil spirits came out of the man and entered the pigs, and the entire herd of about 2,000 pigs plunged down the steep hillside into the lake and drowned in the water.

This place is on the eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee. The steep cliffs run down to the edge of the water. There are caves scattered on the side of the slopes exactly like described in this story. This poor demon possessed man had been living as an animal, out of his right mind. But a brief encounter with Jesus changed his life forever!

Mark 5:18–20 (NLT) As Jesus was getting into the boat, the man who had been demon possessed begged to go with him. But Jesus said, “No, go home to your family, and tell them everything the Lord has done for you and how merciful he has been.” So the man started off to visit the Ten Towns of that region and began to proclaim the great things Jesus had done for him; and everyone was amazed at what he told them.

Our good friend Ying Kai (a missionary in Southeast Asia who was able to see almost 2 million people baptized through his ministry) was especially excited about seeing this place when we traveled there in 2015. It was because he used this story often when training disciple-makers. The example of the witness of this man should inspire us. He had been a believer for less than 24 hours when Jesus told him to go back to his home and tell his family what the Lord had done for him. In addition to telling his family he went to the ten largest cities in the area witnessing to the power of Jesus.
After Pentecost, when the Gospel was spreading from Jerusalem, the people of these areas were very receptive to believe in Jesus. It is easy to connect the dots that the testimony of this formerly demon-possessed man had prepared the soil!

Who have you told about what the Lord has done for you?

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF JESUS—DAY 14

Matthew 16:13–19 (NIV) When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?” 14 They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” 15 “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?” 16 Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.” 17 Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. 18 And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.”

Above is a picture of the great stone cliff (500’ long and over 100’ high) at Caesarea Philippi that in Jesus’ day was the location of the pagan temple to the god Pan (you can still see the niche in the stone where the idol sat). People would sacrifice their children here to Pan, a god of fertility, so that this place was often called “the gates of hell.”
It is with this as a backdrop that we hear the discussion in the passage above. Jesus and the disciples were traveling through this area and I can imagine that as they stopped to rest, and enjoy a drink from the spring that provided ample water, Jesus asked, “Who do you say that I am?” That’s when Peter burst out his now famous answer, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the Living God!”

Jesus commended Peter and yet told him that his confession came from spiritual revelation from His Father. Jesus went on to declare, making a play on Peter’s name, that on this confession of who Jesus is will be the rock foundation on which He will build His church (look again at this massage rock cliff as an illustration) and that even the gates of hell (remember this pagan place) will not hold back the onslaught of His church! Gates are not offense weapons, but defensive. The church is to be releasing people from the gates of hell through the proclamation of this Gospel message of who Jesus is!

**Who do you say Jesus is? How would you explain who He is to someone who doesn’t know Him?**

**IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF JESUS—DAY 15**

*Matthew 17:1–8 (NLT)* Six days later Jesus took Peter and the two brothers, James and John, and led them up a high mountain to be alone.  As the men watched, Jesus’ appearance was transformed so that his face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as light.  Suddenly, Moses and Elijah appeared and began talking with Jesus.  Peter exclaimed, “Lord, it’s wonderful for us to be here! If you want, I’ll make three shelters as memorials—one for you, one for Moses, and one for Elijah.”  But even as he spoke, a bright cloud overshadowed them, and a voice from the cloud said, “This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy. Listen to him.”  The disciples were terrified and fell face down on the ground.  Then Jesus came over and touched them. “Get up,” he said. “Don’t be afraid.”  And when they looked up, Moses and Elijah were gone, and they saw only Jesus.
To the far north of Israel is a mount range called Hermon. Although there are two different sites where people have thought that this happened, I believe it was somewhere on this mountain that Jesus revealed His glory to Peter, James and John.

This had to be an overwhelming experience. Not only did Jesus glow bright as the sun, but there with Jesus stood Moses and Elijah. Can you imagine if you saw these three standing together? When Peter suggested that he build three shelters (in reference to the Feast of Tabernacles), the Father spoke from heaven and said, “This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy. Listen to him.”

Jesus declared, “I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won’t have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life” (John 8:12). As Jesus was facing the cross, He asked the Father to return Him to the glory He had before (John 17:5), so it is awesome that Paul saw Jesus shining brighter than the sun when He appeared to him on the road to Damascus (Acts 26:13). John tells us that in the future the New Jerusalem will need no sun or moon because the Son will be its source of light (Rev. 21:23).

Peter never forgot the impact of this mind-blowing experience:

2 Peter 1:16–18 (NLT) For we were not making up clever stories when we told you about the powerful coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. We saw his majestic splendor with our own eyes when he received honor and glory from God the Father. The voice from the majestic glory of God said to him,
This is my dearly loved Son, who brings me great joy.” We ourselves heard that voice from heaven when we were with him on the holy mountain.

John used this experience as a powerful illustration when he wrote:

John 1:4–5 (NLT) The Word gave life to everything that was created, and his life brought light to everyone. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness can never extinguish it.

In what ways to you is Jesus the Light of the World?

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF JESUS—DAY 16

John 5:1–9 (NLT) Afterward Jesus returned to Jerusalem for one of the Jewish holy days. Inside the city, near the Sheep Gate, was the pool of Bethesda, with five covered porches. Crowds of sick people—blind, lame, or paralyzed—lay on the porches. One of the men lying there had been sick for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him and knew he had been ill for a long time, he asked him, “Would you like to get well?” “I can’t, sir,” the sick man said, “for I have no one to put me into the pool when the water bubbles up. Someone else always gets there ahead of me.” Jesus told him, “Stand up, pick up your mat, and walk!” Instantly, the man was healed! He rolled up his sleeping mat and began walking!

At the bottom of this picture are the ruins of the Pool of Bethesda. These pools were used as a water source for Jerusalem. There was a valve
system that could be opened periodically to add water to the pools that caused the water to stir. People held a superstition that when the water stirred it was from an angel, and the first to enter would be healed.

Among all of those who were scattered about this pool, Jesus approached one man who had been lame for 38 years. He asked him a very significant question, “Do you want to get well?” At first glance this question sounds condescending, almost sarcastic, but Jesus was challenging the man to consider whether or not he was ready to undertake the responsibilities that being well would bring.

Some people nurse their hurt, curse their hurt, or rehearse their hurt. Often people are unwilling to allow the Lord to reverse their hurt.

Will you nurse, curse, and rehearse your hurt, or will you allow the Lord to reverse your hurt and make you well?

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF JESUS—DAY 17

John 9:1–7 (NLT) As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man who had been blind from birth. “Rabbi,” his disciples asked him, “why was this man born blind? Was it because of his own sins or his parents’ sins?” “It was not because of his sins or his parents’ sins,” Jesus answered. “This happened so the power of God could be seen in him. We must quickly carry out the tasks assigned us by the one who sent us. The night is coming, and then no
one can work. But while I am here in the world, I am the light of the world.” Then he spit on the ground, made mud with the saliva, and spread the mud over the blind man’s eyes. He told him, “Go wash yourself in the pool of Siloam” (Siloam means “sent”). So the man went and washed and came back seeing!

This is a picture of the edge of the Pool of Siloam from Jesus’ day. It was discovered just a few years ago when a sewer pipe needed repair. This is a few hundred yards south of the Temple, and like the Pool of Bethesda, was also used as a water source for the city. On the day of Pentecost AD 33 these pools were probably used to baptize the 3,000 new Christians.

I don’t want you to miss that the testimony of this formerly blind man is still a powerful truth for us today. When the Jewish leaders asked him what happened, he simply replied, “One thing I know: I was blind and now I see!” (John 9:25).

What can you now see because Jesus has taken away your spiritual blindness?

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF JESUS—DAY 18

Mark 13:1–2 (NLT) As Jesus was leaving the Temple that day, one of his disciples said, “Teacher, look at these magnificent buildings! Look at the
impressive stones in the walls.” Jesus replied, “Yes, look at these great buildings. But they will be completely demolished. Not one stone will be left on top of another!”

This is a rare picture of snow at the Western Wall (also called the Wailing Wall) which is part of the retaining wall of the temple mount that Herod the Great built in the first century. When I look at this wall I don’t just see history, I see the fulfillment of Jesus’ prophecy when the temple was completely destroyed by the Romans in AD 70.

Growing out of the wall, just above the heads of the people praying, is hyssop. This plant was to be used in applying the blood of the Passover lamb to the doorposts of the houses of the Israelites. Throughout Scripture hyssop is used by the Lord as a symbol of applying God’s instructions by faith. Every time I stand at this wall and watch the people pray, I’m am aware that God is reminding people through the subtle presence of hyssop that He must be approached by faith in His Son—our Lord and Messiah—the sinless, spotless Lamb of God!

What evidence can you give that you are approaching the Father through faith?

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF JESUS—DAY 19

Matthew 23:37–39 (NKJV) “O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to
gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! See! Your house is left to you desolate; for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!’"

After Jesus rode into Jerusalem on the donkey on Palm Sunday, He taught in the temple each day calling people to faith and challenging the leaders to repent. I can picture Jesus leaving Jerusalem (most probably on Tuesday of the week He died) headed for Bethany where He and the disciples were staying with Lazarus, and his sisters.

As He walked up the side of the Mount of Olives, I can picture Him stop and look back at the Temple and crying out the words of the above Scripture…“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem!” But in the midst of His lament, He provided hope when He said, “You will see me no more until you say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the Lord.’” Since the people had already said this on Palm Sunday, Jesus is referring to His second coming when He will enter the city as King of kings and Lord of lords!

How are you preparing yourself to be ready for His return?

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF JESUS—DAY 20

John 2:13–22 (NLT) It was nearly time for the Jewish Passover celebration, so Jesus went to Jerusalem. In the Temple area he saw merchants selling

Southwest corner of Temple
cattle, sheep, and doves for sacrifices; he also saw dealers at tables exchanging foreign money. Jesus made a whip from some ropes and chased them all out of the Temple. He drove out the sheep and cattle, scattered the money changers’ coins over the floor, and turned over their tables. Then, going over to the people who sold doves, he told them, “Get these things out of here. Stop turning my Father’s house into a marketplace!” Then his disciples remembered this prophecy from the Scriptures: “Passion for God’s house will consume me.” But the Jewish leaders demanded, “What are you doing? If God gave you authority to do this, show us a miraculous sign to prove it.” “All right,” Jesus replied. “Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.” “What!” they exclaimed. “It has taken forty-six years to build this Temple, and you can rebuild it in three days?” But when Jesus said “this temple,” he meant his own body. After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered he had said this, and they believed both the Scriptures and what Jesus had said.

This view is looking north along the retaining wall of the temple platform from the southwest corner. The street in front of you is where the moneychangers and temple merchants had their shops. They exchanged coins so that the Jewish travelers could pay the ½ shekel temple tax that was required, and they sold animals for sacrifice. The problem was that they were ripping people off with dishonest exchange rates and highly inflated prices. Jesus determined to disrupt the business of these con men.

The Jewish leaders asked Jesus what miraculous sign He could give to show He had authority to stop them from selling. He responded that when His temple was destroyed, He would raise it up on the third day. Jesus was once again predicting His death and resurrection. The death and resurrection of Jesus is the foundation for our faith. We can trust Him because He died and rose again!

What would you say to express your faith in a Risen Savior?

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF JESUS—DAY 21

Mark 14:32–36 (NLT) They went to the olive grove called Gethsemane, and Jesus said, “Sit here while I go and pray.” 33 He took Peter, James, and John
with him, and he became deeply troubled and distressed. \(^{34}\) He told them, “My soul is crushed with grief to the point of death. Stay here and keep watch with me.” \(^{35}\) He went on a little farther and fell to the ground. He prayed that, if it were possible, the awful hour awaiting him might pass him by. \(^{36}\) “Abba, Father,” he cried out, “everything is possible for you. Please take this cup of suffering away from me. Yet I want your will to be done, not mine.”

This grove of olive trees is on the side of the Mount of Olives. Can you imagine Jesus on His face in deep prayer in this place while the disciples fell asleep maybe nestled into the crooks of one of these great trees? There is evidence of a first century olive press by this site. Some of the olive trees here have been estimated to be almost 1,000 years old, with the roots system dating back to the time of Jesus.

The word Gethsemane means “oil press,” which is very appropriate since Jesus was pressed to almost the breaking point as He faced His death.

The writer of Hebrews provides an application to Jesus being pressed in Gethsemane,

**Hebrews 4:15–16 (NLT)**  
This High Priest of ours understands our weaknesses, for he faced all of the same testings we do, yet he did not sin.  
So let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God. There we will receive his mercy, and we will find grace to help us when we need it most.

What does it mean to you that Jesus understands what you feel?
Mark 14:43b–45, 53 (NLT) Judas, one of the twelve disciples, arrived with a crowd of men armed with swords and clubs. They had been sent by the leading priests, the teachers of religious law, and the elders. 44 The traitor, Judas, had given them a prearranged signal: “You will know which one to arrest when I greet him with a kiss. Then you can take him away under guard.” 45 As soon as they arrived, Judas walked up to Jesus. “Rabbi!” he exclaimed, and gave him the kiss… 53 They took Jesus to the high priest’s home where the leading priests, the elders, and the teachers of religious law had gathered.

Once Jesus was arrested, they walked Him about one mile from the Garden of Gethsemane to the house of the High Priest Caiaphas. This picture is of a holding cell that was found beneath what is thought to be Caiaphas’ house. If so, then Jesus might have been held in this cell awaiting His trial before the Jewish rulers.

Can you imagine how futile it would be for this cell to hold Him if He didn’t willingly stay? He created the rock out of which this cell is carved. He said He had more than 12 legions of angels ready to come to His defense (Matt. 26:53). All He had to do is give the command!

No, He willingly sat in this cell as the religious and political powers determined to do with Him what God had planned from before the foundation of the world!
John 10:18 (NLT) “No one can take my life from me. I sacrifice it voluntarily. For I have the authority to lay it down when I want to and also to take it up again. For this is what my Father has commanded.”

What would you say to our Lord in response to His willingly laying down His life for you?

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF JESUS—DAY 23

Luke 23:26–27 (NLT) As they led Jesus away, a man named Simon, who was from Cyrene, happened to be coming in from the countryside. The soldiers seized him and put the cross on him and made him carry it behind Jesus. A large crowd trailed behind, including many grief-stricken women.

As Jesus was led away from the judgment seat of Pilate to the place of crucifixion, He walked along streets very much like these. Although the actual streets that Jesus walked are buried 30 feet under the current level, this is close to the pathway that Jesus would have traveled to the cross. It is called the “Via Dolorosa” (Latin for way of suffering).

As Jesus made the journey to the cross, they carried a sign that read, “Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews.” What irony that the King of kings was being put to death. Do you remember what the wise men asked Herod when they were searching for Jesus after His birth? They asked,
“Where is the newborn king of the Jews? We saw his star as it rose, and we have come to worship him” (Matthew 2:2).

One day Jesus will return and He will walk these streets again, no longer as the Suffering Servant, but as the Conquering King!

Revelation 19:11, 16 (NLT) Then I saw heaven opened, and a white horse was standing there. Its rider was named Faithful and True… On his robe at his thigh was written this title: King of all kings and Lord of all lords.

How are you preparing to be useful in His Kingdom when He returns?

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF JESUS—DAY 24

Mark 15:22–32 (NLT) And they brought Jesus to a place called Golgotha (which means “Place of the Skull”). They offered him wine drugged with myrrh, but he refused it. Then the soldiers nailed him to the cross. They divided his clothes and threw dice to decide who would get each piece. It was nine o’clock in the morning when they crucified him. A sign announced the charge against him. It read, “The King of the Jews.” Two revolutionaries were crucified with him, one on his right and one on his left. The people passing by shouted abuse, shaking their heads in mockery. “Ha! Look at you now!” they yelled at him. “You said you were going to destroy the Temple and rebuild it in three days. Well then, save

Golgotha
yourself and come down from the cross!" 31 The leading priests and teachers of religious law also mocked Jesus. “He saved others,” they scoffed, “but he can’t save himself! 32 Let this Messiah, this King of Israel, come down from the cross so we can see it and believe him!” Even the men who were crucified with Jesus ridiculed him.

As you look at this picture of the place that might have been where Jesus was crucified, you can see how the hill looks like a skull. This hill is on Mount Moriah, a few hundred yards north of the temple with an ancient tomb in a garden nearby. Contrary to many popular depictions, it is most likely that Jesus was crucified at eye-level below this hill so that people walking by would be terrorized by crucifixion, which was designed to strike fear in the hearts of Roman subjects.

It was on the cross that God proved His love for you and me. It was on the cross that Jesus completed the work of our redemption when He cried out the words “It is finished!” (John 19:30). Although Jesus most probably spoke these words in Hebrew (or Aramaic) which would have been a derivative of the word “shalom” (meaning “peace has been made”), it is recorded in Greek as “tetelestai.” This word is very significant to a Greek speaking first century world because this word was written on receipts meaning that an obligation has been “paid in full.”

Our sin debt has been paid in full,

Colossians 2:14 (NLT) He canceled the record of the charges against us and took it away by nailing it to the cross.

Like we sing in the great old hymn,

Jesus paid it all,  
All to Him I owe;  
Sin had left a crimson stain,  
He washed it white as snow.

What would you say to Jesus as He proclaimed that your sin is paid in full?

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF JESUS—DAY 25

John 19:38–42 (NLT) Afterward Joseph of Arimathea, who had been a secret disciple of Jesus (because he feared the Jewish leaders), asked Pilate for permission to take down Jesus’ body. When Pilate gave permission,
Joseph came and took the body away. With him came Nicodemus, the man who had come to Jesus at night. He brought about seventy-five pounds of perfumed ointment made from myrrh and aloes. Following Jewish burial custom, they wrapped Jesus’ body with the spices in long sheets of linen cloth. The place of crucifixion was near a garden, where there was a new tomb, never used before. And so, because it was the day of preparation for the Jewish Passover and since the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there.

On that first Easter Sunday morning the angels announced…

Luke 24:5b–6a (NLT) “Why are you looking among the dead for someone who is alive? He isn’t here! He is risen from the dead!”

This is called the Garden Tomb and is a very special place to visit in Israel. We’re told in the above passage that Joseph of Arimathea and Nicodemus buried Jesus hurriedly in a new tomb which was in a garden. Two popular sites in Jerusalem vie for the claim of Jesus’ tomb. Both can make good historical cases for their location.

But THE issue that is not to be forgotten is that Jesus doesn’t have a tomb! He is alive! He is risen from the dead! He is seated at the right hand of the Father where He constantly intercedes on our behalf. The resurrection of Jesus has the most historical support of any miracle of ancient history.

Because He lives…
Because He lives, I can face tomorrow,
Because He lives, all fear is gone;
Because I know He holds the future,
And life is worth the living,
Just because He lives!

How would you describe the relevance of Jesus’ resurrection to someone you love?

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF JESUS—DAY 26

John 21:4–9 (NLT) At dawn Jesus was standing on the beach, but the disciples couldn’t see who he was.  He called out, “Fellows, have you caught any fish?” “No,” they replied.  Then he said, “Throw out your net on the right-hand side of the boat, and you’ll get some!” So they did, and they couldn’t haul in the net because there were so many fish in it.  Then the disciple Jesus loved said to Peter, “It’s the Lord!” When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his tunic (for he had stripped for work), jumped into the water, and headed to shore.  The others stayed with the boat and pulled the loaded net to the shore, for they were only about a hundred yards from shore.  When they got there, they found breakfast waiting for them—fish cooking over a charcoal fire, and some bread.
On the shore of the Sea of Galilee very near here, Jesus appeared to the disciples after His resurrection. Peter was so distraught about his failure on the night Jesus was arrested that he and six other disciples quit their calling and decided to go back to their fishing careers. Peter most probably thought that his failure permanently disqualified him from the Lord’s service.

It was here in the context of discouragement and failure that Jesus appeared to the disciples early one morning. Jesus had prepared a fish breakfast and wanted some special time with Peter. He asked three times, “Peter, do you love me?” I’m convinced this was once for each time Peter denied Jesus. When Peter assured Jesus that he loved Him, Jesus instructed him, “Feed my sheep!”

It was as if Jesus was saying, “Peter, I’m not done with you yet. Your temporary failure does not make you unfit to serve me. I have big plans for you. Will you be willing to lead and feed my people?”

No matter your past, the Lord has work for you to do. He’s not finished with you. He desires to use you in the work of His kingdom…that is, if you love Him enough!

**Will you pray and express your love for the Lord, and your availability to be used in the work of His kingdom?**

**IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF JESUS—DAY 27**

Acts 1:6–11 (NLT) So when the apostles were with Jesus, they kept asking him, “Lord, has the time come for you to free Israel and restore our kingdom?” 7 He replied, “The Father alone has the authority to set those dates and times, and they are not for you to know. 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” 9 After saying this, he was taken up into a cloud while they were watching, and they could no longer see him. 10 As they strained to see him rising into heaven, two white-robed men suddenly stood among them. 11 “Men of Galilee,” they said, “why are you standing here staring into heaven? Jesus has been taken from you into heaven, but someday he will return from heaven in the same way you saw him go!”
This is a picture of the Mount of Olives. So many important things happened here. It was here that Jesus rode into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. This is where He wept over Jerusalem. He sat on this hill and taught about the coming Tribulation. It was from here that He ascended into heaven, and it will be here where He will return to establish His Millennial Kingdom.

During my first visit to Israel, my son, Rick, said, “Dad, why don’t you bury something on the Mount of Olives and during the Kingdom maybe you and I can go dig it up?” I buried a Jerusalem Cross with our name and the date on it on this hill. I can walk you right to the spot where it is. The thought that my son and I will be in this city while Jesus is literally ruling on David’s throne still brings tears to my eyes!

One day Jesus will return to this mountain just like He left. He left in the clouds, and He will return in the clouds.

Zechariah 14:4a (NLT) On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem.

Are you ready for His return to rule as King?
IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF JESUS—DAY 28

Revelation 16:16 (NLT) And the demonic spirits gathered all the rulers and their armies to a place with the Hebrew name Armageddon.

Revelation 19:19, 21 (NLT) Then I saw the beast and the kings of the world and their armies gathered together to fight against the one sitting on the horse and his army…21 Their entire army was killed by the sharp sword that came from the mouth of the one riding the white horse. And the vultures all gorged themselves on the dead bodies.

This is an aerial picture of the tel of Megiddo. It is looking east across the Jezreel Valley. A number of famous generals have said that this is one of the world’s best battlefields. It is the precise location of what will be the most important war in history—the battle of Armageddon. The word Armageddon is a contraction of Har (meaning hill) and Megiddo which is this ancient city.

This is the final battle between the armies of antichrist and the army of the Lord. The armies of all the nations who have joined with the antichrist will be gathered here against the resistance forces of the Christians (both Gentile and Jewish) who have trusted in Jesus during the Tribulation. The righteous will be greatly outgunned and outnumbered, but at the point when it looks like the antichrist will be victorious Jesus returns with His saints to win the battle.

How does knowing that the Lord is victorious make you feel about your problems?

37
Ezraiel 44:1–3a (NLT) Then the man brought me back to the east gateway in the outer wall of the Temple area, but it was closed. 2 And the LORD said to me, “This gate must remain closed; it will never again be opened. No one will ever open it and pass through, for the LORD, the God of Israel, has entered here. Therefore, it must always remain shut. 3 Only the prince himself may sit inside this gateway to feast in the LORD’s presence.”

This is the Eastern Gate, also called the Golden Gate, on the east side of the temple mount. This gate was rebuilt by Suleiman the Magnificent in AD 1537. When he heard that the future King of the Jews was to enter the city through this gate, he bricked it closed. In doing this he was actually fulfilling prophecy (see passage above).

One day our Lord will walk into the city as the victorious King of kings. He will come into the city as people praise Him saying,

Psalm 118:25–26 (NIV84) O LORD, save us; O LORD, grant us success. 
Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD. 
From the house of the LORD we bless you.

He will walk through this gate and then the Scripture will be fulfilled that says,

Revelation 21:3 (NKJV) And I heard a loud voice from heaven saying, “Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them,
and they shall be His people. God Himself will be with them and be their God.”

In what ways does Jesus have rule of your life?

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF JESUS—DAY 30

Isaiah 11:1–9 (NKJV) There shall come forth a Rod from the stem of Jesse, And a Branch shall grow out of his roots. 2 The Spirit of the LORD shall rest upon Him, The Spirit of wisdom and understanding, The Spirit of counsel and might, The Spirit of knowledge and of the fear of the LORD. 3 His delight is in the fear of the LORD, And He shall not judge by the sight of His eyes, Nor decide by the hearing of His ears; 4 But with righteousness He shall judge the poor, And decide with equity for the meek of the earth; He shall strike the earth with the rod of His mouth, And with the breath of His lips He shall slay the wicked. 5 Righteousness shall be the belt of His loins, And faithfulness the belt of His waist. 6 “The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, The leopard shall lie down with the young goat, The calf and the young lion and the fatling together; And a little child shall lead them. 7 The cow and the bear shall graze; Their young ones shall lie down together; And the lion shall eat straw like the ox. 8 The nursing child shall play by the cobra’s hole, And the weaned child shall put his hand in the viper’s den. 9 They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, For the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD As the waters cover the sea.
When I think about my Lord, I think of the time coming when He will rule the earth. He will put creation back in its original order so that lions and lambs will be at peace with one another. He will take away death and pain and suffering. We will have our new glorified bodies and live forever with our Lord.

A word about eternity: A few people have told me that eternity in heaven sounds boring to them, so I give them this illustration. I’ve been to Hawaii and it has to be one of the most beautiful places on earth…a real paradise, but forever and ever in Hawaii, even as beautiful as it is, sounds like it would get boring after a while. However, if I add that my wife, Kathy, is there then eternity is not long enough to be with her. Heaven as a beautiful place would be boring. But heaven with my Jesus is not long enough to fully enjoy Him!! Does this make sense to you?

What do you need to do to be ready to spend eternity with Jesus?

IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF JESUS—DAY 31

John 14:1–6 (NLT) “Don’t let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me. 2 There is more than enough room in my Father’s home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? 3 When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am. 4 And you know the way to where I am

“I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.”

John 14:6 (NLT)
“No, we don’t know, Lord,” Thomas said. “We have no idea where you are going, so how can we know the way?” Jesus told him, “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.”

This is a painting of Jesus sitting on top of Mount Scopus (just north of the Mount of Olives) as He is overlooking the temple mount. On the night when He was arrested, He taught His disciples that He was going away to prepare a place for us, and that He promised to come back for us one day. He said the disciples knew the way to get to where He was going. When Thomas asked for an explanation Jesus responded with these famous words. “I am the way, the truth and the life!”

Sometimes people say that Christianity is narrow and exclusive. What Jesus said by being the only way to God can seem narrow to people, but that is because they don’t understand that, although there is only one way, anyone can come to the Lord.

**Jesus said that whoever believes can be saved,**

*John 3:16 (NLT)* “For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.”

**Jesus says come to me,**

*Matthew 11:28–29 (NLT)* “Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. 29 Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls.”

**Peter says there is no other way,**

*Acts 4:12 (NLT)* “There is salvation in no one else! God has given no other name under heaven by which we must be saved.”

**How to be saved,**

*Romans 10:9 (NLT)* If you openly declare that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.

*Will you put your faith in Jesus as your Lord and Savior?*
One more explanation of how to be right with God...

Romans 6:23
For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus our Lord.

This verse tells us that because of our sin we have earned death (which is separation from God). It’s as if we’re on one side of a great canyon and God is on the other side. On God’s side of the canyon He offers the gift of Eternal Life (E.L.) But there is nothing we can do to get across on our own efforts. This is why Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead in order to provide the way—the bridge—to lead us into a right relationship with God. Just like you can’t cross a bridge without trusting it to hold you, you can’t cross this bridge without trusting that Jesus leads you into a relationship with God.

Jesus taught about crossing over from death to life:
John 5:24 (NIV) “Very truly I tell you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be judged but has crossed over from death to life.”

Then in praying to the Father, Jesus defined Eternal Life in terms of a relationship with the Father through Him:
John 17:3 (NIV) “Now this is eternal life: that they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.”

Is Eternal Life in relationship with God something you would like to experience for yourself?

Are you willing to cross over the bridge by placing your faith in Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior?
Gary L. Stump—Gary is Pastor of Onward Church in Fishers, Indiana. When Onward Church was planted November 2011 we determined to bless Israel by leading Bible Study Tours to the Holy Land as an important part of our church’s vision. We have seen how walking where Jesus walked ignites a passion for Messiah and His work in the world. Pastor Gary has pastored in Indiana since 1990. He is married to Kathy; they have five children and eighteen grandchildren. Gary studied at Indiana University, Crossroads Bible College (BS in Leadership & Ministry), Southern Seminary, and is currently enrolled at The King’s University in Masters of Theology—Messianic Jewish Studies program.

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