

Listening to Jesus

A study of the Gospel of Matthew

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Study Time Suggestion for This Series -

PREPARING YOURSELF – Find a quiet place where you can hear Jesus clearly without interruptions or distractions. Have your Bible, paper and pen, along with your study guide ready. Ask the Holy Spirit to open up your mind and heart to listen to Jesus, the King.

LISTENING INTENTLY -

As you come to the Gospel of Matthew, you will read many of the sermons and conversations that Jesus had during the three years of His public ministry. It is very important that you consider the setting and the people to whom He is talking. Think about what Jesus said and why He might have said those things at that time. You may want to read the same chapters in a few different translations in order to hear the message in new ways. It is also helpful to read the passage out loud, as if His voice could really be heard by you.

PONDERING CAREFULLY –

Here are some basic questions to ask yourself as you meditate on the words of Jesus.

1. What did He really say? Try to summarize briefly the content of His message.
2. When and where did He say those things? Why did He talk to that person or group?
3. What did He hope to accomplish?
4. What was the response of the listeners? Of those standing near to them? Of others?

RESPONDING PERSONALLY -

All Scripture is "useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that God's people may be thoroughly equipped for every good work". Bible study is much more than an intellectual exercise, so let God's still, small voice move His message from your head to your heart. He is waiting for you to hear His voice and to respond to His love and mercy.

BONUS – Why a creative challenge? It's your opportunity to reinforce some aspect of the lesson using your imagination and mind. It will reinforce the ideas and cement them in your memory. Besides that – it is just plain fun to be creative. You will be blessed.

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Lesson One

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**From then on Jesus began to preach,
"Repent of your sins and turn to God, for the Kingdom of Heaven is near." Matthew 4: 17**

There is something about a crowd that attracts the attention of everyone. It has always been true. Even though Jesus had gone up on the mountainside with His disciples, the people followed Him. They listened that day to one of the most penetrating, most insightful messages that has ever been set before an audience. Matthew tells us that "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". The Israelites had been waiting for their Messiah, so Matthew has already presented Jesus' qualifications to be their King through His genealogy, His miraculous birth, baptism and His response to temptation and then he records this amazing message. That day Jesus began to explain to His followers about the things that characterize His Kingdom. He begins to explain to His eager listeners what the "Kingdom of Heaven" is like for those who recognize the King. How eager are you to listen and learn about Him and His Kingdom?

PREPARING YOURSELF – Find a quiet place where you can hear Jesus clearly without interruptions or distractions. Ask the Holy Spirit to open up your mind and your heart to listen, to hear the King.

LISTENING INTENTLY – Read Matthew 5, 6, and 7 - "The Sermon on the Mount"

Do not stop to ponder any particular section, but read it as a rather short & complete sermon. If you can, read it again out loud with expression and emphasis– as if you had an audience.

PONDERING CAREFULLY – What did Jesus say? What did He accomplish?

1. Think about the setting of this message. Who was Jesus talking to? Where were they? Why did Jesus want to teach/preach this particular message at that time?
2. Make a short outline of the 3 chapters, including a title for each one and the subdivisions.
3. What makes this sermon cohesive? How would the disciples have summarized or responded to Jesus' explanation of what He came to do and how it related to the law of Moses?
4. Find all the references to the Kingdom or the Kingdom of Heaven and write an explanation about the content of each statement. What did Jesus want the people to understand about it?
5. What do you think are the big lessons to be learned from this sermon as a whole? Perhaps your outline would help you summarize a few applications.

RESPONDING PERSONALLY – What did YOU hear Jesus say?

This would be a great time to go back and re-read the sermon, stopping wherever you feel that God's spirit is prompting you to consider the heart of Jesus more seriously and practically. Just take time, at the feet of Jesus, listening for the word that He has for you today. He will make it clear to you if you wait patiently for his gentle and kind promptings and encouragement.

CREATIVE CHALLENGE – Write an editorial for the local newspaper or a letter to a friend, describing that day on the hillside with Jesus.

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Lesson 2

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“Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, preaching the good news of the Kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, He had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.”

Matthew 9: 35 -36

When you listen to someone over the telephone or the radio, you can hear their words and listen to the tone of their voice, but you cannot “read” their body language. What you communicate through the sound of your voice and the gestures of your face and body can either confirm the meaning of your words or actually discredit them. As you “listen” to the words of Jesus, try to use your ears to hear the sound of His voice, your eyes to see how His actions clarify His words, and your God-given imagination to understand what He is saying more accurately. Would you agree that His actions speak as loud as His words so that together the purposes of The King were and are being accomplished?

PREPARING YOURSELF – Find a quiet place where you can hear the words of Jesus without distractions. Ask the Spirit of God to be present and to make clear to you the truth of what He wants you to understand.

LISTENING INTENTLY – Read Matthew 8, 9, and 10 - Ten Vignettes and Some Instructions
Matthew 8 and 9: 34 - Part One – 10 short stories of miracles and conversations
Matthew 9: 35 - 10 - Part Two – Jesus challenges, instructs, and empowers His disciples

PONDERING CAREFULLY – What did Jesus say? What did He accomplish?

PART 1 – Matthew 8 and 9: 34

1. Think about the setting of each short story. Give a title to each of them and summarize in a sentence what Jesus’ communicated through His actions and words.
2. What would you say is a common theme or idea that Jesus is teaching His disciples or the crowds? What impresses you about the diversity of the people and their needs?
3. As you study these chapters is there any new information or insight about the Kingdom or the King?

PART II – Matthew 9: 35 – 10 (Mark 6: 7 – 13, Luke 9: 1 – 6 and Mark 13: 9 – 13, Luke 21: 12 - 17)

1. Do you think that the last verses of chapter 9 fit equally as well with chapter 10? How do they add to your understanding of the setting and the purposes of Jesus at this time?
2. What is Jesus teaching his disciples about Himself and His commitment to them?
3. Does anything in these instructions remind you of some concepts that were in the Sermon on the Mount? Is there anything that you feel Jesus might be emphasizing?

RESPONDING PERSONALLY – What did Jesus say to YOU?

As you contemplate the 2 parts of this lesson, what is God’s spirit prompting you to consider more carefully? Take some time, at the feet of Jesus, to listen to the word that He wants to speak into your heart and life. He will make it clear to you, so wait patiently for His gentle and kind promptings and encouragement.

CREATIVE CHALLENGE – Imagine that you are one of Jesus’ disciples. Write a letter home to a friend and explain to that person the challenge, risks, and adventure that you will be having in the days ahead as you follow the instructions of Jesus.

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Lesson 3

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“Jesus replied, ‘Go back and report to John what you hear and see: The blind receive sight, the lame walk, those who have leprosy are cured, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the good news is preached to the poor.’” Matthew 11: 4 – 5

People ask questions for many different reasons, don't they? Some questions are legitimate, honest and sincere. At other times they are asked out of curiosity or inquisitiveness. Then there are the times when a question is asked in order to confuse, to trick, or to discredit another person. We usually assume that the questions which people ask us are in the first category, but Jesus could never make that assumption. And He didn't have to because He knew what was in the heart of those who were seeking an answer. He always welcomed the questions which came from those who wanted to learn from Him. Do you have any questions?

PREPARING YOURSELF – As you come to listen to Jesus, find a quiet place where the noise and pressures of your life can be set aside for this important appointment with The King of Kings. Give Him all of your attention and He will meet with you.

LISTENING INTENTLY – Read Matthew 11 and 12 - Questions and Answers

Matthew 11 – Part One – Answering the questions from John the Baptist

Matthew 12 – Part Two – Answering the accusations of the Pharisees

PONDERING CAREFULLY – What did Jesus say? What did He accomplish?

Part one – Matthew 11 (Luke 17: 18 – 35 and Luke 10: 13 – 15 and 21-22)

1. What do you remember about John the Baptist? (John 1: 6-34, 3:24-36 and Matt.14: 1 – 12) How did Jesus satisfy John's question concerning His identity as the Messiah?
2. This may be the harshest words that Jesus has yet spoken to the crowd. What is He saying? Why now? What are his warnings? What do you learn about the Kingdom of heaven?
3. There must have been others in the crowd who were ready to believe and needed encouraging words. What does Jesus offer to them as He concludes His speech?

Part two – Matthew 12 – The Opposition Begins to Escalate

1. Why do you think the Pharisees are beginning to challenge the credibility and authority of Jesus? What are the 4 accusations which they make against him in this chapter?
2. As you listen to Jesus respond to these religious leaders, what do you think his tone of voice and actions are communicating to them? How do the miracles add credence to His words?
3. What was Jesus communicating to the crowd and to His disciples in verses 46 – 50?

RESPONDING PERSONALLY – What is Jesus saying to you?

Maybe you have some questions for Jesus, too. You might as well ask Him now because He already knows your thoughts. Many of our questions center on our willingness to submit to His authority, His way of doing things, or the circumstances in which we find ourselves. Go ahead. He wants you to listen and to give you some of the answers. Are you willing to wait and listen?

CREATIVE CHALLENGE – Can you create a cartoon featuring the Pharisees' questions or would you rather write a letter to the editor of the "Daily News"?

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Lesson 4

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“And the disciples came and said to Jesus, ‘Why do You speak to them in parables?’ He answered and said to them, ‘Because it has been given to you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it has not been given.’” Matthew 13: 10 – 11

Everyone loves to hear a story, don't they? In fact, a well told story captures the attention of young and old alike and Jesus was a master storyteller. His stories, however, were really parables – a teaching method that was familiar to that culture. A parable uses common scenes from everyday life to teach new truths. The truth about the kingdom of heaven, as Jesus explained, would be clear to those who had believed and would be concealed from those who rejected it. Where do you want to sit and listen when someone is telling a good story – or a parable?

PREPARING YOURSELF – Find a quiet place where Jesus can tell you His stories. Why don't you invite the Holy Spirit to come and help you unwrap the specific truths about God's kingdom that are inside the simple and informal package of each story? His invitation is clear to those who will “understand with their ears and turn so that He can heal them”.

LISTENING INTENTLY – Read Matthew 13 - Seven Parables

Read Matthew 14 and 15 – Additional events, miracles and insights

PONDERING CAREFULLY – What did Jesus say about His kingdom? What did He accomplish?

1. There are 7 parables in Matthew 13:1 - 52 – seven simple stories with profound truth and often diverse applications. Jesus explained 2 of the parables. As you read each parable, think of your own name for it. What is Jesus trying to illustrate about the Kingdom of Heaven through each particular story?

Parable 1

Parable 2

Parable 3

Parable 4

Parable 5

Parable 6

Parable 7

2. As Jesus concludes this teaching time, what does He tell His disciples in Matthew 13: 52 when He calls these truths “treasures”?

RESPONDING PERSONALLY – What is Jesus saying to you?

Look back over the parables. What phrase or idea is a “treasure” that you need to know and to understand or to apply or obey? What word of challenge or encouragement is God giving to you?

CREATIVE CHALLENGE – Take one or more of the events in Chapter 14 or 15 and write a news article about it. There are 6 options and they are all newsworthy!

Listening to Jesus

A study of the Gospel of Matthew

Lesson 5

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“From that time on Jesus began to explain to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem and suffer many things at the hands of the elders, chief priests and teachers of the law, and that He must be killed and on the third day be raised to life.” Matthew 16: 21

An apprentice is someone who spends a specific amount of time working for a master craftsman in order to receive instruction and training in that particular set of skills. The disciples probably didn't realize that they were in many ways an apprentice to The Master. It wouldn't be too many more months before they would come to understand what their mission was to become and it won't look at all like they had expected it to be. They will need not only to believe that Jesus really is Who He claims to be but that Jesus is going to enable them to do amazing things in His Kingdom. Do you think that is the call of all those who believe in Him?

PREPARING YOURSELF – How serious are you about receiving His instructions so that you are ready for the things “he has prepared for you”? Find a quiet place to study His Word and to listen to His voice.

LISTENING INTENTLY – Read Matthew 16, 17 and 18 - Lessons for His Disciples

Beginning in chapter 16 everything seems to intensify. Jesus begins to focus on the reality of His death and resurrection. The opposition is increasing. The disciples are coming to grips with the truths that Jesus is trying to teach them. It can't be easy for anyone! Put yourself in the place of each group of people and try to imagine what they are able to hear and to understand.

PONDERING CAREFULLY – What did Jesus say to His disciples? What did He accomplish?

Look carefully and try to write a brief summary of each lesson that Jesus gives to them.

1. Matthew 16: 5 – 12
2. Matthew 16: 13 – 20
3. Matthew 16: 21 – 28
4. Matthew 17: 1 – 13
5. Matthew 17: 14 – 23
6. Matthew 17: 24 – 27
7. Matthew 18: 1 – 9
8. Matthew 18: 10 – 19
9. Matthew 18: 20 – 35
10. Matthew 18: 16 - 30

RESPONDING PERSONALLY – What is Jesus saying to you?

There's so much to think about, isn't there? Ask the Lord for 1 or 2 things on which to focus and spend time with the One who wants you to feel His love, His forgiveness and His strength today.

CREATIVE CHALLENGE – Try looking at life from Peter's viewpoint. He has had some very unusual experiences in the last few months. Write down some journal entries in his book for him.

Listening to Jesus

A study of the Gospel of Matthew

Lesson 6

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"Jesus stopped and called them, 'What do you want Me to do for you?'" He asked.

Matthew 21: 32

When is the last time that you were in a big crowd of people? It may have been at a parade or a sports event or concert. Perhaps you went to a large arena to hear someone speak or watch someone perform. Often you have to get your tickets in advance and the anticipation is part of the whole experience. Most of the time, it would not even occur to you that the honored guest or participants would have any personal interest in the people in the audience. When the crowds followed Jesus, however, he noticed everyone and often He would ask them how He could help them. He is still doing the same thing today. While you cannot see Him in person, through His Spirit He quietly calls out to you and says, "What would you like Me to do for you?"

PREPARING YOURSELF – In that quiet place, why don't you take some time to think about the answer to His question and then talk over some of your thoughts with Jesus?

LISTENING INTENTLY – Read Matthew 19 and 20 - Several Conversations

Jesus always seems to be able to balance the crowds, the small groups, and the individuals. How did He do it? When the disciples try to exert their influence and protect Him from the children, He welcomes them. When the crowd tries to quiet the blind men, He had compassion on him. As you read, think about the value that Jesus places on people and relationships.

PONDERING CAREFULLY- What did Jesus say? What did He accomplish?

Six conversations with very different groups and individuals. Try to summarize what Jesus is communicating in each conversation. Be sure to notice the setting of each conversation.

1. Matthew 19: 1 – 12 – With the Pharisees
2. Matthew 19: 13 – 14 – With the disciples
3. Matthew 19: 15 – 20: 16 – With the Young Man and the disciples
4. Matthew 20: 17 – 19 – With the disciples
5. Matthew 20: 20 – 28 – With the mother of James and John
6. Matthew 20: 29 – 34 – With the 2 blind men

RESPONDING PERSONALLY – What is Jesus saying to you?

There seems to be an emphasis in some of these conversations about position, service, wealth, and rights. What other words would you add to these? Listen with your heart and your mind to what God may be wanting to show you. It would be a risk, but if you're willing, you could even ask the Lord, "What do I still lack?" Do you want to hear His answer?

CREATIVE CHALLENGE – How could you re-write the parable of the workers in a current setting for today?

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Lesson 7

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“When the chief priests and the Pharisees heard Jesus’ parables, they knew He was talking about them. They looked for a way to arrest Him, but they were afraid of the crowd because the people held that He was a prophet.”

Matthew 21: 45 – 46

When someone attacks your integrity, questions your motives, or tries to set a trap for you, how do you feel? How do you respond? The highly respected religious leaders were doing all of these things to Jesus. He did not have to use retaliation, anger or any defensive strategy, did He? All authority was rightfully His. He knew their hearts and what they needed to hear in response to their insincerity and their unbelief. How did this influence the disciples, the crowds and eventually the antagonists?

PREPARING YOURSELF – Find your quiet place where you can hear the words of Jesus, where you can listen with your ears, your mind, and your heart. Ask Him to speak to you through His Word today.

LISTENING INTENTLY – Read Matthew 21 and 22 - Tough Questions for Jesus

PONDERING CAREFULLY – What did Jesus say? What did He accomplish?

The triumphal entry into Jerusalem and the adoration of the crowds further infuriated the religious leaders. They become even more intent on finding a way to incriminate Him. As you study their questions, think about how Jesus answers them and in the process teaches everyone about His kingdom and His attitudes. What does each parable help them to understand?

Question #1 - Matthew 21: 23 – 22:14 –
His Response –

Parable # 1

Parable # 2

Parable # 3

Question #2 – Matthew 22: 15 – 22

Question #3 – Matthew 22: 23 – 33

Question #4 – Matthew 22: 34 – 40

Jesus asks a question of the Pharisees – Matthew 22: 41 - 46

RESPONDING PERSONALLY –

The Sadducees counted on their wealth, power and status. The Pharisees counted on their education and position. The scribes and chief priests were often lawyers and interpreters of the law. Is there anything that is holding you back in your commitment and faith in Jesus? Listen to His voice and open up your heart to Him. He wants to forgive and restore you. He wants to give you His peace and His promises.

CREATIVE CHALLENGE – Write a song or a poem or make a sign. How can you create a reminder of the first and greatest commandment? – Read Deuteronomy 6: 4 – 9.

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.”

Listening to Jesus

A study of the Gospel of Matthew

Lesson 8

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“The teachers of the law and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat, so you must obey them and do everything they tell you. But do not do what they do, for they do not practice what they preach.”

Matthew 23: 2 – 3

It’s serious business when a parent corrects and disciplines a child. If the child is wise, he will listen. It’s very serious business when you break a law and you must go to court, to learn of your penalty. But when God tells you that you are dead wrong, it is the greatest warning of all. God made it abundantly clear that His law was a matter of the heart, not the external appearance and yet the religious leaders had put a higher value on their own rules and regulations than over the Scriptures. They were far more interested in following their external laws meticulously and following the “letter of the law” than the spirit of the law. Is that a temptation for you and for the church today?

PREPARING YOURSELF – If you’re ready to be corrected by the Lord, tell Him that you are willing to listen to His words of instruction, correction, and admonition. It might not be easy, but it will be worth it! He will gather you under His wings and take care of you in very special ways.

LISTENING INTENTLY – Read Matthew 23 – Exposing the Hypocrisy of the Religious Leaders

PONDERING CAREFULLY – What did Jesus say? What did He accomplish?

1. Jesus explains his grievances against the teachers of the law and the Pharisees to the crowd and the disciples. Try to summarize what He is saying about them – Matt. 23: 1 – 12
2. Jesus then speaks directly to those whom He is accusing – the religious leaders.
 - Accusation #1 – 23: 13 – 14
 - Accusation #2 – 23: 15
 - Accusation #3 – 23: 16 – 22
 - Accusation #4 – 23: 23 – 24
 - Accusation #5 – 23: 25 – 26
 - Accusation #6 – 23: 27 – 28
 - Accusation #7 – 23: 29 – 32
3. What additional warning does Jesus give to them? (23: 33 – 36)
4. In conclusion, Jesus shows a very tender spirit towards those who have so despicably rejected Him. Why do you think He does this? What gives Him the strength to do this? (verses 37 – 39)

RESPONDING PERSONALLY – What do you hear Jesus saying to you?

Where do you see the possibility that some of these tendencies might be in our churches and in sincere believers today? Are there any accusations that you might want to consider more carefully? It might take some quiet meditation and an honest heart before you’re ready to admit your need.

CREATIVE CHALLENGE – How could you respond creatively to this lesson? Surprise yourself – and maybe all of us!

Listening to Jesus

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Lesson 9

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"As Jesus was sitting on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately. 'Tell us,' they said, 'when will this happen (destruction of the temple), and what will be the sign of Your coming and of the end of the age?'" Matthew 24: 3

One of the headlines in today's paper is the prediction of the next financial crisis in our country. People have tried for centuries to predict the time of certain events and catastrophes. Perhaps more people have tried to give a time and a date to the return of Jesus than any other thing. Do you think knowing this information would have any impact on your actions and anticipation? Why is it better that we do not know?

PREPARING YOURSELF – Just as the disciples came to Jesus privately with their questions, you are invited to come and sit with Him so that you can talk together. How do you want to open up your conversation today?

LISTENING INTENTLY – Read Matthew 24 and 25 – A Look Into the Future

Parallel passages are found in Mark 13 and Luke 21)

The disciples probably are asking one question, not two, because they would have assumed that with the destruction of the temple, it would mean the end of the age and the time when the new kingdom would be established. We know that there has been a major time gap between those events, so the second part of their question, the part that Jesus' describes in these 2 chapters, is still in the future.

PONDERING CAREFULLY – What did Jesus say? What did He accomplish?

1. Be careful! – What are the specific warnings that Jesus gives to His disciples?
2. Be watchful! – How does Jesus describe the time of His return?
3. "Keep watch" illustrated – Parable 1 – Matthew 25: 1 – 13 – What is the point?
4. "Keep watch" illustrated – Parable 2 – Matthew 25: 14 – 28 – What is the point?
5. Be ready! – Matthew 25: 29 – 46 – What is Jesus clearly telling His disciples about priorities?
6. Take time to go back and read these 2 chapters again. Reading them out loud would be a helpful. What do you think the disciples heard the most clearly from this time together?

RESPONDING PERSONALLY – What is Jesus saying to you?

"Coming Again! Coming Again! Maybe morning, maybe noon, maybe evening and maybe soon!" The hymn writer captures some of the impact of our study, doesn't He? What would the Holy Spirit like to impress on you in the circumstances of your life right now? Listen to His voice . . . and then take heed!

CREATIVE CHALLENGE – Which disciple do you want to be? Use your imagination and creativity by getting out your "daily journal". Try to recall the significant points of what you heard Jesus telling you earlier today along with your questions and feelings about this information.

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Lesson 10

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When Jesus had finished saying all these things, He said to His disciples, 'As you know, the Passover is two days away—and the Son of Man will be handed over to be crucified.'"

Matthew 26: 1 – 2

There are special times in a friendship when the conversation is more personal, perhaps more intimate and one is allowed to glimpse into the soul of the other person. Those are very memorable and meaningful occasions, aren't they? Sometimes those moments are romantic and intense; other times they are simply open, honest or emotional; but always they are poignant and powerful. You cannot plan for or predict the rare times when you or your friend will feel the freedom to be really vulnerable and transparent. You can only hold on to them in your memory and treasure them.

PREPARING YOURSELF – There is One who already knows and loves you totally. He is waiting for you to come and tell Him your joys and your sorrows, your successes and your failures. He wants you not only to know, but to feel, His love and forgiveness, His acceptance and His mercy. Let His grace and loving kindness filter down from your head to your heart in these quiet, intimate moments.

LISTENING INTENTLY – Read Matthew 26 and 27 – Intimate Moments with Jesus

PONDERING CAREFULLY – What did Jesus say? What did He accomplish?

1. To His disciples – 26: 1-5 - How does He prepare His disciples for the next events?
2. To His disciples – 26: 6 – 13 – What did this woman know that the disciples needed to learn?
3. To His disciples – 26: 17 - 30 – (Mark 14: 12 – 31, Luke 21: 7 – 13, 22: 14 – 34)
What do you think the disciples will remember from this evening together with Jesus?
4. To His disciples in the Gethsemane - 26: 36 – 45 - and to His Father –
Both conversations are passionate and intimate, aren't they? What would His loneliness be like?
5. To Judas, to Peter, and to the crowd – 26: 46 – 56 – In these intense moments of purpose and determination, how does Jesus respond to the individual and to His opponents?
6. To Caiaphas, the high priest, and the Sanhedrin – 26: 57 – 67 – Why did Jesus use silence and only a simple statement in response to their accusations? What were His options?
7. To Pilate, the governor – 27: 1 – 44 – One sentence and silence. Why?
8. To God, His Father – 27: 45 – 66- The big question is WHY? Why? Why?

RESPONDING PERSONALLY – What is Jesus saying to you?

Why was Jesus willing to leave His place and position in The Kingdom of Heaven? Take it in – every day. Think about it. Talk about it with your friends and family. What is your response to Him?

CREATIVE CHALLENGE – Write a letter to Jesus, or a poem or song, expressing your response to Him.

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Lesson 11

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“Suddenly Jesus met them. ‘Greetings,’ He said.

They came to Him, clasped His feet and worshiped Him. Then Jesus said to them . . . ” Matthew 28:9

Remember what happened right after the big earthquake in 1989? People came out of their homes and places of business to talk to each other, to help each other, to find comfort in the presence of others. There was not any time or interest in being alone. In our neighborhood we shared meals and we waited with apprehension for the next quake. Can you even begin to imagine what it was like for those 11 disciples after the crucifixion? What was it like for the women who cared so deeply for Jesus? What was it like for those who had begun to understand many things about the Messiah and His coming Kingdom? Had they felt the “violent earthquake” earlier that Sunday morning? Did the words that He had spoken make a difference for them? Did they remember what He had said?

PREPARING YOURSELF – Try to remember a time in your life when recalling some words from Scripture helped you have strength or inner peace. What words of encouragement or love does He want to give to you today? Or maybe you need to hear a challenge from Him. Listen quietly for His voice.

LISTENING INTENTLY - Matthew 28 – Jesus’ Final Instructions

PONDERING CAREFULLY – What did Jesus say? What did He accomplish?

1. To the women – The angel and Jesus both spoke to them at the empty tomb. What do you think this experience was like for them? How did they respond?
2. “The Great Commission” – Matthew 28: 16 – 18
His first words were – “All authority” – what do you think this meant to the disciples?
3. What do the following passages add to Matthew’s account?
Mark 16: 14 – 18

Luke 24: 36 – 49

John 20: 19 – 23

Acts 1: 6 – 8
4. What are the 4 instructions in the Great Commission?
5. What is the wonderful promise to the disciples? How would this motivate and encourage them?

RESPONDING PERSONALLY – What do you hear Jesus saying to you?

Are you listening? What is He saying to you?

CREATIVE CHALLENGE – Think about the whole Gospel of Matthew. This is your chance to put into words some of the ways this study has influenced your thinking about The King and His Kingdom.

“May Your Kingdom come soon. May Your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.” Matt. 6: 10 NLT