

KJW16 to April 22

April 16 Su Reading 106 — Luke 7:18-30 — John Questions Jesus

¹⁸ *And the disciples of John reported to him about all these things.* ¹⁹ *Summoning ^[fn]two of his disciples, John sent them to the Lord, saying, "Are You the One who is to come, or should we look for someone else?"* ²⁰ *When the men came to Him, they said, "John the Baptist has sent us to You, saying, 'Are You the One who is to come, or should we look for someone else?'"* ²¹ *At that ^[fn]very time He cured many [people] of diseases and afflictions and evil spirits, and He granted sight to many [who were] blind.* ²² *And He answered and said to them, "Go and report to John what you have seen and heard: [the] BLIND RECEIVE SIGHT, [the] lame walk, [the] lepers are cleansed, and [the] deaf hear, [the] dead are raised up, [the] POOR HAVE THE GOSPEL PREACHED TO THEM.* ²³ *Blessed is he ^[fn]who does not take offense at Me."*

²⁴ *And when the messengers of John had left, He began to speak to the crowds about John, "What did you go out into the wilderness to behold? A reed shaken by the wind? ²⁵ ^[fn]But what did you go out to see? A man dressed in soft garments? Behold, those who are splendidly clothed and live in luxury are [found] in royal palaces! ²⁶ But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and even more than a prophet. ²⁷ This is [the one] about whom it is written,*
'BEHOLD, I SEND MY MESSENGER ^[fn]AHEAD OF YOU,
WHO WILL PREPARE YOUR WAY BEFORE YOU.'

²⁸ *"I say to you, among those born of women there is no one greater than John; yet he who is ^[fn]least in the kingdom of God is greater than he."*

LSB Footnotes

(7:19) Lit a certain two

(7:21) Lit hour

(7:23) Lit whoever

(7:25) Or Well then, what

(7:27) Lit before Your face

(7:28) Or less

Are You the One? — John the Baptist was stuck in prison, and he was wondering about Jesus. Was He really the expected Messiah? Although he had heard the voice from heaven at Jesus' baptism saying, "You are My beloved Son, in You I am well-pleased" (Luke 3:22), John was having doubts. Perhaps he had also been picturing the Messiah as a military hero. His question was, "Are You the One?" (Luke 7:19, 20). Notice that Jesus did not answer John's question directly with a "Yes." He pointed to the miraculous evidence, but did not remove the necessity for faith. God never gives enough proof so that faith is not required. I have kept in contact with a fellow who attended the same church with me when we were both young men. He was very bright and was on his way to study at Stanford University when we had a conversation about some questions regarding the biblical chronology of Adam as the first man. I recently received a letter from him in which he asked, "How can I surrender the theological demand to accept the Bible as divine, literal, and factual truth and yet keep some version of my faith?" He is still struggling with facts versus faith. I haven't responded to him yet, but I think my theme will be that God never gives us enough facts that removes the necessity for faith.

[Faith Is the Victory - YouTube](#)

Encamped along the hills of light,
Ye Christian soldiers rise,
And press the battle ere the night
Shall veil the glowing skies.
Against the foe in vales below
Let all our strength be hurled;
Faith is the victory, we know,
That overcomes the world.

— John Henry Yates (b. 1837)

²⁹ *And when all the people and the tax collectors heard [this], they ^[fn]acknowledged God's justice, having been baptized with the baptism of John.* ³⁰ *But the Pharisees and the scholars of the Law rejected God's purpose for themselves, not having been baptized by ^[fn]John.*

³¹ *"To what then shall I compare the men of this generation, and what are they like? ³² They are like children, sitting in the marketplace and calling to one another, who say, 'We played the flute for you, and you did not dance; we sang a dirge, and you did not cry.'* ³³ *For John the Baptist has come eating no bread and drinking no wine, and you say, 'He has a demon!'* ³⁴ *The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, 'Behold, a gluttonous man and a ^[fn]drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and ^[fn]sinners!'* ³⁵ *Yet wisdom is vindicated ^[fn]by all her children."*

LSB Footnotes

- (7:29) Or *justified God*
- (7:30) Lit *him*
- (7:34) Or *wine-drinker*
- (7:34) Irreligious Jews
- (7:35) Or *from*

A Friend of Sinners — The “bad guys” in this passage are certainly “*the Pharisees and the scholars of the Law*” (v. 29), because they had not only rejected John’s baptism, but in the process, “*rejected God’s purposes*” (v. 30). They claimed to have rejected John because he didn’t eat “normal food” and had a demon (v. 33), but the real reason was that they refused to submit to John’s insistence on repentance. On the other hand, they said they rejected Jesus because He *did* eat “normal food,” exaggerating the amount (v. 34a) and criticizing the company He kept, being “*a friend of tax collectors and sinners*” (v. 34b). Jesus certainly was not participating in their sin when He met with them, because most of them were probably *converted* tax collectors and sinners. They had repented of their sins and submitted to the baptism of repentance. To the Pharisees, however, “once a sinner, always a sinner.” These were a class of people the Pharisees didn’t want to have anything to do with; even if they had repented, the Pharisees still considered them to be stained. They were people who had acknowledged their sin, turned from it, came to Jesus in faith, and enjoyed dining with Him. They loved to be in His presence, and He loved to be with them. The Church today is also a collection of admitted and repentant sinners who have come to Jesus for forgiveness and cleansing. We fellowship together with our Friend.

[Our Great Savior - YouTube](#)

Jesus, what a Friend for sinners!
Jesus, Lover of my soul;
Friends may fail me, foes assail me,
He, my Savior, makes me whole.

Hallelujah! What a Savior!
Hallelujah! What a Friend!
Saving, helping, keeping, loving,
He is with me to the end.

— J. Wilbur Chapman (1910)

³⁶ Now one of the Pharisees was asking Him to eat with him, and He entered the Pharisee's house and reclined [at the table]. ³⁷ And behold, there was a woman in the city who was a ^[fn]sinner. And when she learned that He was reclining [at the table] in the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster jar of perfume. ³⁸ And standing behind [Him] at His feet, crying, she began to wet His feet with her tears. And she kept wiping them with the hair of her head, and kissing His feet and anointing them with the perfume. ³⁹ Now when the Pharisee, who had invited Him, saw this, he said to himself, saying, "If this man were a prophet He would know who and what sort of person this woman is who is touching Him, that she is a sinner."

⁴⁰ And Jesus answered and said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." And he ^[fn]replied, "Say it, Teacher." ⁴¹ "A moneylender had two debtors: one owed five hundred ^[fn]denarii, and the other fifty. ⁴² When they were unable to repay, he graciously forgave them both. So which of them will love him more?" ⁴³ Simon answered and said, "I suppose the one whom he graciously forgave more." And He said to him, "You have judged correctly." ⁴⁴ And turning toward the woman, He said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has wet My feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. ⁴⁵ You gave Me no kiss; but she, since the time I came in, has not ceased to kiss My feet. ⁴⁶ You did not anoint My head with oil, but she anointed My feet with perfume. ⁴⁷ For this reason I say to you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little, loves little." ⁴⁸ Then He said to her, "Your sins have been forgiven." ⁴⁹ And those who were reclining [at the table] with Him began to say ^[fn]to themselves, "Who is this [man] who even forgives sins?" ⁵⁰ And He said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

LSB Footnotes

(7:37) An immoral woman

(7:40) Lit. says

(7:41) A Roman silver coin, approx. a laborer's daily wage

(7:48) or *among*

Who is This Man? — Simon the Pharisee probably had some measure of respect for Jesus, as shown by his invitation to dinner. He showed disrespect, however, by not washing His feet, or giving a kiss of greeting, or anointing His head with oil. Simon questioned in his mind whether Jesus was really a prophet when He didn't seem to notice that "a sinner" was wiping His feet (v. 39). Jesus showed prophetic ability, however, by knowing what was in Simon's mind and by telling a related story that contrasted the great love of the woman versus the neglectful attitude of the host. As the love of the debtor was in response to being forgiven his debt, so the expressed love of the woman was the result of her forgiveness. Those were tears of repentance from her sins and gratefulness for forgiveness. When Jesus told her, "Your sins have been forgiven" (v. 48), He also said, "Your faith has saved you" (v. 50). Her salvation came not from her tears or her love, but from her faith. Simon's response was, "Who is this man who even forgives sins?" (v. 49). Yes, He was more than a prophet; He was God.

[Freely, Freely - YouTube](#)

God forgave my sin in Jesus' name;
I've been born again in Jesus' name,
And in Jesus' name I come to you,
To share His love as He told me to.
He said, "Freely, freely you have received;
Freely, freely give.
Go in My name, and because you believe
Others will know that I live."

— Carol Owens (1972)

Matthew 12

²² Then a demon-possessed man [who was] blind and mute was brought to ^[fn]Jesus, and He healed him, so that the mute man spoke and saw. ²³ And all the crowds were astounded, and were saying, "Can this man [really] be the Son of David?" ²⁴ But when the Pharisees heard [this], they said, "This man does not cast out demons except by ^[fn]Beelzebul the ruler of the demons."

²⁵ And knowing their thoughts He said to them, "^[fn]Any kingdom divided against itself is laid waste; and ^[fn]any city or house divided against itself will not stand. ²⁶ And if Satan casts out Satan, he ^[fn]is divided against himself; how then will his kingdom stand? ²⁷ And if I by ^[fn]Beelzebul cast out demons, by whom do your sons cast [them] out? For this reason they will be your judges. ²⁸ But if I cast out demons by the Spirit of God, then the kingdom of God has come upon you. ²⁹ Or how can anyone enter the strong man's house and carry off his property, unless he first binds the strong man? And then he will plunder his house.

³⁰ "He who is not with Me is against Me; and he who does not gather with Me scatters.

³¹ "Therefore I say to you, any sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven people, but the blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven. ³² And whoever ^[fn]speaks a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him; but whoever ^[fn]speaks against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the [age] to come.

LSB Footnotes

(12:22) Lit *Him*

(12:24) Or *Beezebul*

(12:25) Lit *Every*

(12:25) Lit *every*

(12:26) Lit *was*

(12:27) v 24, note 1

(12:32) Lit *will speak*

(12:32) Lit *will speak*

Mark 3

²⁰ And He came ^[fn]home, and the crowd gathered again, so that they could not even eat ^[fn]a meal. ²¹ And when His own ^[fn]people heard [this], they went out to take custody of Him; for they were saying, "He has lost His senses." ²² And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem were saying, "He is possessed by ^[fn]Beelzebul," and "He casts out the demons by the ruler of the demons." ²³ And He called them to Himself and [began] speaking to them in parables, "How can Satan cast out Satan? ²⁴ And if a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. ²⁵ And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. ²⁶ And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand, but ^[fn]he is finished! ²⁷ But no one can enter the strong man's house and plunder his property unless he first binds the strong man, and then he will plunder his house.

²⁸ "Truly I say to you, all sins shall be forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they utter; ²⁹ but whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is guilty of an eternal sin"— ³⁰ because they were saying, "He has an unclean spirit."

LSB Footnotes

(3:20) Lit *into a house*

(3:20) Lit *bread*

(3:21) Or *kinsmen*

(3:22) Or *Beezebul*; some mss *Beelzebub*

(3:26) Lit *he has an end*

Jesus' Holy Power — All of this controversy happened as the result of Jesus healing a demon-possessed man who was also blind and could not talk. That was a very dramatic event that could not be ignored. A line of decision was drawn in the sand. Jesus said, "*He who is not with Me is against Me*" (Matt. 12:30). The crowds had to wonder if Jesus was the Messiah: "*Can this man really be the Son of David?*" (Matt. 12:23). Even the Pharisees acknowledged that what had happened was miraculous, but they put a deadly twist to it, saying that Satan (Beelzebul) was the power behind the miracle and that Jesus was "*possessed by Beelzebul*" (Mark 3:22). Jesus presented two logical arguments against that charge. 1) Satan would not work against himself by casting out his own demons, and 2) Satan (the "*strong man*"—Mark 3:27) would have to be bound for Jesus to cast out the devil's demons. In contrast to the evilness of Satan's powers, the power at work in Jesus was that of the Holy Spirit. Jesus was not possessed by the evil Beelzebul but by the Holy Spirit. To confuse the two is an eternal, deadly mistake. To call the Holy Spirit evil or to attribute His work to that of Satan is an unforgiveable sin. Those Pharisees had done just that.

[All Hail the Power of Jesus' Name - YouTube](#)

All hail the power of Jesus' name! Let angels prostrate fall. Bring forth the royal diadem, and crown Him Lord of all. Bring forth the royal diadem, and crown Him Lord of all! — Edward Perronet (1780)
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April 20 Th Reading 110 — Matthew 12:38-42 — Something Greater Is Here

³⁸ *Then some of the scribes and Pharisees answered and said to Him, "Teacher, we want to see ^[fn]a sign from You."* ³⁹ *But He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation eagerly seeks for a sign; and [yet] no sign will be given to it but the sign of Jonah the prophet; ⁴⁰ for just as JONAH WAS THREE DAYS AND THREE NIGHTS IN THE BELLY OF THE SEA MONSTER, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. ⁴¹ The men of Nineveh will stand up with this generation at the judgment, and will condemn it because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and behold, something greater than Jonah is here. ⁴² The Queen of the South will rise up with this generation at the judgment and will condemn it, because she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold, something greater than Solomon is here.*

Seeking Signs — These scribes and Pharisees represented the "*evil and adulterous generation*" (v. 38), being unfaithful to God. Although they presented a righteous exterior, they were rotten on the inside and were repelled by the true righteousness of Jesus. We read yesterday that they had already witnessed the amazing miracle ("*sign*") of Jesus healing the blind, mute, and demon-possessed man (v. 22). That was all the sign they needed to conclude that Jesus was the Messiah. They would not be convinced by an additional sign. Jesus hinted to them about the future sign of His death and resurrection ("*three days and three nights in the heart of the earth*"—v. 40). Most of them would not believe but would manufacture excuses, like the disciples stealing His body (cf. Matt. 27:63-64). At the final judgment, they would be condemned for not responding to the signs they were given. People from Nineveh would condemn them because they repented after seeing the sign and hearing the message of Jonah. The Queen of Sheba would condemn them because she responded to the wisdom of Solomon. Jesus is greater than Prophet Jonah and King Solomon because He is God. His signs were greater, His message was greater, and His wisdom was greater.

Jesus, I Will Trust Thee - YouTube

Jesus, I will trust Thee,
Trust Thee with my soul,
Guilty, lost and helpless,
Thou canst make me whole.
There is none in heaven
Or on earth like Thee.
Thou hast died for sinners,
Therefore, Lord, for me.
— Mary Jane Walker (1864)

April 21 F Reading 111 — Mark 3:20-21, 31-35 — Jesus' Family

²⁰ *And He came ^[fn]home, and the crowd gathered again, so that they could not even eat ^[fn]a meal. ²¹ And when His own ^[fn]people heard [this], they went out to take custody of Him; for they were saying, "He has lost His senses."*

³¹ *Then His mother and His brothers arrived, and standing outside they sent [word] to Him, calling Him. ³² And a crowd was sitting around Him, and they said to Him, "Behold, Your mother and Your brothers are outside looking for You." ³³ And answering them, He said, "Who are My mother and My brothers?" ³⁴ And looking about at those who were sitting around Him, He said, "Behold My mother and My brothers! ³⁵ For whoever does the will of God, he is My brother and sister and mother."*

LSB Footnotes

(3:20) Lit *into a house*

(3:20) Lit *bread*

(3:21) Or *kinsmen*

Two Families — It might seem that Jesus was being insensitive toward His family in this passage, but it had to do with priorities. For one thing, He knew what they thought: "*He has lost His senses*" and that they wanted "*to take custody of Him*" (v. 21). The Gospel of John tells us that "*not even His brothers were believing in Him*" (John 7:5). The only puzzling part of this picture was that Mary was a part of this party, after having been told by Gabriel that her son "*will be called the Son of the Most High*" (Luke 1:32). Do you ever wonder how the son or daughter of godly parents could forsake God? Jesus' siblings grew up with a perfectly godly big brother, yet they didn't see who He really was. Jesus hadn't rejected His family when He said to the crowd in the house, "*Who are My mother and My brothers?*" (Mark 20:33); He was only contrasting and prioritizing the spiritual family over one's physical family. The spiritual family is eternal. While He hung on the cross, Jesus showed His loving care for Mary when, in referring to John, said, "*Woman, behold, your son!*" (John 19:26). John took her into his home after that. At least two of Jesus' brothers came to believe that Jesus was the Messiah after His resurrection. Jesus appeared to James (1 Cor. 15:7), who became the leader of the early church, and Jude (or Judas) wrote one of the books of the New Testament. Now, we also belong to the family of Jesus, the family of God.

The Family of God - YouTube

I'm so glad I'm a part
Of the family of God;
I've been washed in the fountain,
Cleansed by His blood.
Joint heirs with Jesus
As we travel this sod,
For I'm part of the family,
The family of God
— Bill and Gloria Gaither (1970)

April 22 Sa Reading 112 — Matt. 13:34-35; Mark 4:33-34 — Speaking in Parables

Matthew 13

³⁴ *All these things Jesus spoke to the crowds in parables, and He was not speaking to them without a parable* ³⁵ *so that what was spoken through the prophet might be fulfilled, saying,*
"I WILL OPEN MY MOUTH IN PARABLES;
I WILL UTTER THINGS HIDDEN SINCE THE FOUNDATION OF THE WORLD."

Mark 4

³³ *And with many such parables He was speaking the word to them, as they were able to hear [it];* ³⁴ *and He was not speaking to them without a parable; but He was explaining everything privately to His own disciples.*

Able to Hear — Just before this general statement about parables, Mark recorded several parables that Jesus told: The Sower, which He also explained to His disciples (vv. 1-20), The Lamp Under the Basket (vv. 21-25), The Seed (vv. 26-29), and The Mustard Seed (vv. 30-32). Jesus frequently used parables when He taught, but there often remains a mystery that cries for explanation. Jesus explained parables only to His close disciples. There are levels of learning involved here. When He told parables to the crowd, they benefited only “*as they were able to hear it*” (Mark 4:33). Their understanding was limited without explanation. Parables were partly intended to arrest attention and to cause one to seek understanding and application. We often feel that we are not “*able to hear*” well enough when we read Scripture. We need an explainer. The Holy Spirit helps us in that area, as do pastors, teachers, study Bible notes, commentaries, etc. The more we learn, the better we are able to learn and “*able to hear.*”

Open My Eyes That I May See - YouTube

Open my eyes that I may see
glimpses of truth Thou hast for me.
Place in my hands the wonderful key
that shall unclasp and set me free.
Silently now I wait for Thee,
ready, my God, Thy will to see.
Open my eyes, illumine me,
Spirit divine!
— Clara H. Scott (1895)