

A large, mature tree with a thick trunk and a full canopy of green leaves. The tree's roots are exposed and spread out across the ground. The background is a bright, slightly hazy sky with soft, white clouds. The overall tone is peaceful and hopeful.

STORIES OF HOPE

**8 LESSONS FROM
THE LIFE OF JESUS**

About the Stories of Hope

This booklet is a training manual for leading a discipleship group through the "Stories of Hope". Each meeting will be structured according to the three-thirds process. The first third focuses on loving accountability. The second third focuses on learning and studying a Bible story. The final third focuses on practicing retelling the story and making plans to share and apply the story.

For the first meeting, the first third will be a little different since you have nothing to hold them accountable to. In future weeks, you will hold them accountable to the plans they made during the final third.

For each meeting, follow the three-thirds process that is outlined in the following pages. You will find the story and discussion questions for each week after the explanation of the process. The discussion questions are designed to teach someone to study the Bible.

Each week's questions will follow the Bible study method that is described on the Page 3. Here are some tips as you get started on your journey to train trainers who train trainers!

Helpful Tips!

Here are some tips as you get started on your journey to train trainers who train trainers!

- Stick to the Bible stories.
- As a trainer, you should plan to talk no more than 30% of the time. Let your group talk the remaining 70% of the time.
- Let the Holy Spirit work rather than looking for right answers.
- Don't talk about religion or politics, either good or bad.
- Stay on topic; don't chase "rabbits" (subjects which are appealing, but off topic).
- Don't dominate the conversation; let everyone participate.
- Don't make long, religious prayers.

Bible Study Method

Hebrews 4:12 says, "For the Word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart."

This picture of a sword helps us to teach and learn from any passage from the Bible. When we think of a sword, we think of key questions that we need to ask.

What **Scripture** verse or question pops out?

Are there any **promises** or **principles** to claim?

What **attributes** of God do we see in the story?

Are there any **commands** we should obey?

Are there any **examples** – healthy or unhealthy – that we should follow or avoid?

What is the **main point** from the passage that God wants us to know?

What general **application(s)** can we make from this passage?

What are **possible** situations in which you might share this passage with someone?

After reading or telling any story from the Bible ask these questions one at a time and search the story for answers. The answers you find will reveal the meaning of the story for our lives.

3 Thirds Small Group Meeting

<p style="text-align: center;">First Third Look Back</p> <p>1. Pastoral Care <i>In consistent gender-specific groups of 3-5</i> <u>Open-ended questions</u> such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - What has been a bright spot since we last met? - What is an area where you feel like you've blown it since we last met? <p>* Pray for one another</p> <p>2. Worship <i>All together</i> Possibly...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Celebrate the Lord's Supper* - Read & pray through a verse or Psalm - Sing a song(s) <p>3. ACCOUNTABILITY <i>All together if group isn't too large</i></p> <p><u>Following - Possible questions:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. How did you do with last week's goal to follow Jesus? 2. How have you seen Christ come out of you this week? <p><u>Fishing - Possible questions:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Who are you meeting to train? 2. How did you sow the Gospel this week? 3. Did anyone receive Christ this week? <p>4. VISION CASTING <i>All together</i></p> <p>Share a verse, story, vision of the future, etc. that reminds us why to love Jesus first and/or why to pursue the lost.</p>		
	<p style="text-align: center;">Middle Third Look Up</p> <p>5. New Lesson <i>All together</i></p> <p>Choose a story or passage that is manageable for your group in the time you have.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Share the story with them in your own words. - Ask them to retell the story in pairs - Read the story together (using 2 translations if possible.) <p><u>Questions to ask of this passage:</u></p> <p>S - Is there a scripture or question that sticks out to you?</p> <p>P - Are there any promises or timeless principles?</p> <p>A - What attributes of God do you discover?</p> <p>C - Do you see any commands?</p> <p>E - Are there any examples to follow or avoid?</p> <p>M - What is the main point of the story?</p> <p>A - What are some possible applications?</p> <p>P - What are possible situations in which you might share this passage with someone.</p>	
		<p style="text-align: center;">Final Third Look Ahead</p> <p>6. PRACTICE <i>In pairs</i></p> <p>Pick one of the following to do for practice:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A story or summary from the lesson - His Story (Bridge Diagram or 3 Circles) - Your Story (2 - 3 minute Testimony) <p>7. SET GOALS & PRAY</p> <p><u>Following:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What action will you take based on the lesson? <p><u>Fishing:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Who would you like to share the Gospel, testimony or this story with this week? 2. Is there anyone who you will be training this week? <p>Pair up and pray for the people on your list and your goals.</p>

* When celebrating the Lord's Supper, you may position it in any of several places - during worship, vision casting or the prayer time after setting goals.

Story #1 – Jesus Forgives the Sinful Woman

Luke 7:36-50

In this story Jesus forgives a sinner and she responds with real worship. This is a great “hook” story for the very first lesson because it gives us some great things to wrestle with:

- Jesus forgiving and touching a sinner. This is in contrast to how many think that Jesus and Christians are judgmental and aloof.
- Jesus forgives her sins. We introduce the topic of sin right at the beginning and see that we need forgiveness.

Discussion Questions

1. [What do we learn about God?]
 - a. What does this story say about Jesus?
2. [What do we learn about people?]
 - a. What does this story say about the sinful woman?
 - b. What does this story say about Simon the Pharisee (Jewish religious scholar)?
 - c. What does this story say about the other guests?
3. What are the sins to avoid in this story?
4. What are the promises to claim in this story?
5. What are the examples to follow in this story?
6. What are the commands to obey in this story?
7. Who do you identify with in this story? Why?

Luke 7:36-50 (NKJV)

36 Then one of the Pharisees asked Him to eat with him. And He went to the Pharisee's house, and sat down to eat. 37 And behold, a woman in the city who was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at the table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of fragrant oil, 38 and stood at His feet behind Him weeping; and she began to wash His feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head; and she kissed His feet and anointed them with the fragrant oil. 39 Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he spoke to himself, saying, "This Man, if He were a prophet, would know who and what manner of woman this is who is touching Him, for she is a sinner."

40 And Jesus answered and said to him, "Simon, I have something to say to you." So he said, "Teacher, say it." 41 "There was a certain creditor who had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. 42 And when they had nothing with which to repay, he freely forgave them both. Tell Me, therefore, which of them will love him more?" 43 Simon answered and said, "I suppose the one whom he forgave more."

And He said to him, "You have rightly judged." 44 Then He turned to the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has washed My feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head. 45 You gave Me no kiss, but this woman has not ceased to kiss My feet since the time I came in. 46 You did not anoint My head with oil, but this woman has anointed My feet with fragrant oil. 47 Therefore I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little."

48 Then He said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." 49 And those who sat at the table with Him began to say to themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?" 50 Then He said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you. Go in peace."

Story #2 – The Pharisee & The Tax Collector

Luke 18:9-17

The parable of the Pharisee & the Tax Collector teaches that the kingdom is for humble and repentant sinners, not for the proud and self-righteous. Jesus tells the story of the “good” Pharisee who doesn’t need to repent vs. the very bad tax collector who begs for God’s forgiveness.

Discussion Questions

1. [What do we learn about God?]
 - a. What does this story say about Jesus?
2. [What do we learn about people?]
 - a. What does this story say about the sinful woman?
 - b. What does this story say about Simon the Pharisee (Jewish religious scholar)?
 - c. What does this story say about the other guests?
3. What are the sins to avoid in this story?
4. What are the promises to claim in this story?
5. What are the examples to follow in this story?
6. What are the commands to obey in this story?
7. Who do you identify with in this story? Why?

Luke 18:9-17 (NKJV)

9 Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: 10 "Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. 11 The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, 'God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. 12 I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.' 13 And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!' 14 I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted."

15 Then they also brought infants to Him that He might touch them; but when the disciples saw it, they rebuked them. 16 But Jesus called them to Him and said, "Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. 17 Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it."

Story #3 – The Paralytic

Mark 2:1-12

In this story, Jesus demonstrates that He is a healer in every sense. But before he brings about the physical healing of a man who had been paralyzed all his life, Jesus shows that His first and ultimate concern is for the man's spiritual health.

Discussion Questions

1. [What do we learn about God?]
 - a. What does this story say about Jesus?
2. [What do we learn about people?]
 - a. What does this story say about the sinful woman?
 - b. What does this story say about Simon the Pharisee (Jewish religious scholar)?
 - c. What does this story say about the other guests?
3. What are the sins to avoid in this story?
4. What are the promises to claim in this story?
5. What are the examples to follow in this story?
6. What are the commands to obey in this story?
7. Who do you identify with in this story? Why?

Mark 2:1-12

When He had come back to Capernaum several days afterward, it was heard that He was at home. ² And many were gathered together, so that there was no longer room, not even near the door; and He was speaking the word to them. ³ And they *came, bringing to Him a paralytic, carried by four men. ⁴ Being unable to ^[a] get to Him because of the crowd, they removed the roof ^[b] above Him; and when they had dug an opening, they let down the pallet on which the paralytic was lying. ⁵ And Jesus seeing their faith *said to the paralytic, "^[c] Son, your sins are forgiven." ⁶ But some of the scribes were sitting there and reasoning in their hearts, ⁷ "Why does this man speak that way? He is blaspheming; who can forgive sins ^[d] but God alone?" ⁸ Immediately Jesus, aware ^[e] in His spirit that they were reasoning that way within themselves, *said to them, "Why are you reasoning about these things in your hearts? ⁹ Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Your sins are forgiven'; or to say, 'Get up, and pick up your pallet and walk'? ¹⁰ But so that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins"—He *said to the paralytic, ¹¹ "I say to you, get up, pick up your pallet and go home." ¹² And he got up and immediately picked up the pallet and went out in the sight of everyone, so that they were all amazed and were glorifying God, saying, "We have never seen anything like this."

Story #4 – Who Is Jesus?

Matthew 16:13-20

People have always had varying ideas about who Jesus is – a teacher, a prophet, a “good man.” But in this story, Jesus establishes that it is not by man that His identity is revealed but by the direct intervention of the Father.

Discussion Questions

1. [What do we learn about God?]
 - a. What does this story say about Jesus?
2. [What do we learn about people?]
 - a. What does this story say about the sinful woman?
 - b. What does this story say about Simon the Pharisee (Jewish religious scholar)?
 - c. What does this story say about the other guests?
3. What are the sins to avoid in this story?
4. What are the promises to claim in this story?
5. What are the examples to follow in this story?
6. What are the commands to obey in this story?
7. Who do you identify with in this story? Why?

Matthew 16:13-20

¹³ Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, He was asking His disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" ¹⁴ And they said, "Some say John the Baptist; and others, ^[h]Elijah; but still others, ^[j]Jeremiah, or one of the prophets." ¹⁵ He *said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" ¹⁶ Simon Peter answered, "You are ^[i]the Christ, the Son of the living God." ¹⁷ And Jesus said to him, "Blessed are you, Simon ^[k]Barjona, because flesh and blood did not reveal *this* to you, but My Father who is in heaven. ¹⁸ I also say to you that you are ^[l]Peter, and upon this ^[m]rock I will build My church; and the gates of Hades will not overpower it. ¹⁹ I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; and whatever you bind on earth ^[n]shall have been bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth ^[o]shall have been loosed in heaven." ²⁰ Then He ^[p]warned the disciples that they should tell no one that He was ^[q]the Christ.

Story #5 – Jesus Shares His Plan

Matthew 16:21-17:9

In this story Jesus tells His gospel plan and displays His holiness as God's Son. The transfiguration demonstrates His holiness and uniqueness as God's Son. But the preceding verses powerfully show that Jesus planned to go to the cross, rise again, and rule the world.

Discussion Questions

1. [What do we learn about God?]
 - a. What does this story say about Jesus?
2. [What do we learn about people?]
 - a. What does this story say about the sinful woman?
 - b. What does this story say about Simon the Pharisee (Jewish religious scholar)?
 - c. What does this story say about the other guests?
3. What are the sins to avoid in this story?
4. What are the promises to claim in this story?
5. What are the examples to follow in this story?
6. What are the commands to obey in this story?
7. Who do you identify with in this story? Why?

Matthew 16:21-28 (NKJV)

21 From that time Jesus began to show to His disciples that He must go to Jerusalem, and suffer many things from the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day. 22 Then Peter took Him aside and began to rebuke Him, saying, "Far be it from You, Lord; this shall not happen to You!" 23 But He turned and said to Peter, "Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men.

24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. 25 For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. 26 For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul? 27 For the Son of Man will come in the glory of His Father with His angels, and then He will reward each according to his works. 28 "Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom."

Matthew 17:1-9 (NKJV)

1 Now after six days Jesus took Peter, James, and John his brother, led them up on a high mountain by themselves; 2 and He was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and His clothes became as white as the light. 3 And behold, Moses and Elijah appeared to them, talking with Him. 4 Then Peter answered and said to Jesus, "Lord, it is good for us to be here; if You wish, let us make here three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah."

5 While he was still speaking, behold, a bright cloud overshadowed them; and suddenly a voice came out of the cloud, saying, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased. Hear Him!" 6 And when the disciples heard it, they fell on their faces and were greatly afraid. 7 But Jesus came and touched them and said, "Arise, and do not be afraid." 8 When they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no one but Jesus only.

9 Now as they came down from the mountain, Jesus commanded them, saying, "Tell the vision to no one until the Son of Man is risen from the dead."

Story #6 – Jesus & His Death

Luke 22:66-23:25, 23:32-43

This story depicts Jesus' death on the cross and his forgiveness of a criminal. Even the Romans had to admit that Jesus had not sinned, yet Jesus refused to avoid the cross, which is presented in graphic, painful detail. Even on the cross, Jesus is loving the people around Him and offering forgiveness to those who seem unforgivable.

Discussion Questions

1. [What do we learn about God?]
 - a. What does this story say about Jesus?
2. [What do we learn about people?]
 - a. What does this story say about the sinful woman?
 - b. What does this story say about Simon the Pharisee (Jewish religious scholar)?
 - c. What does this story say about the other guests?
3. What are the sins to avoid in this story?
4. What are the promises to claim in this story?
5. What are the examples to follow in this story?
6. What are the commands to obey in this story?
7. Who do you identify with in this story? Why?

Luke 22:66-23:25, 23:32-43 (NKJV)

66 As soon as it was day, the elders of the people, both chief priests and scribes, came together and led Him into their council, saying, 67 "If You are the Christ, tell us." But He said to them, "If I tell you, you will by no means believe. 68 And if I also ask you, you will by no means answer Me or let Me go. 69 Hereafter the Son of Man will sit on the right hand of the power of God." 70 Then they all said, "Are You then the Son of God?" So He said to them, "You rightly say that I am." 71 And they said, "What further testimony do we need? For we have heard it ourselves from His own mouth."

1 Then the whole multitude of them arose and led Him to Pilate. 2 And they began to accuse Him, saying, "We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, saying that He Himself is Christ, a King." 3 Then Pilate asked Him, saying, "Are You the King of the Jews?" He answered him and said, "It is as you say." 4 So Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowd, "I find no fault in this Man." 5 But they were the more fierce, saying, "He stirs up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee to this place."

6 When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked if the Man were a Galilean. 7 And as soon as he knew that He belonged to Herod's jurisdiction, he sent Him to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem at that time. 8 Now when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceedingly glad; for he had desired for a long time to see Him, because he had heard many things about Him, and he hoped to see some miracle done by Him. 9 Then he questioned Him with many words, but He answered him nothing. 10 And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused Him. 11 Then Herod, with his men of war, treated Him with contempt and mocked Him, arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe, and sent Him back to Pilate. 12 That very day Pilate and Herod became friends with each other, for previously they had been at enmity with each other.

13 Then Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests, the rulers, and the people, 14 said to them, "You have brought this Man to me, as one who misleads the people. And indeed, having examined Him in your presence, I have found no fault in this Man concerning those things of which you accuse Him; 15 no, neither did Herod, for I sent you back to him; and indeed nothing deserving of death has been done by Him. 16 I will therefore chastise Him and release Him" 17 (for it was necessary for him to release one to them at the feast).

18 And they all cried out at once, saying, "Away with this Man, and release to us Barabbas"— 19 who had been thrown into prison for a certain rebellion made in the city, and for murder. 20 Pilate, therefore, wishing to release Jesus, again called out to them. 21 But they shouted, saying, "Crucify Him, crucify Him!" 22 Then he said to them the third time, "Why, what evil has He done? I have found no reason for death in Him. I will therefore chastise Him and let Him go." 23 But they were insistent, demanding with loud voices that He be crucified. And the voices of these men and of the chief priests prevailed. 24 So Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they requested. 25 And he released to them the one they requested, who for rebellion and murder had been thrown into prison; but he delivered Jesus to their will.

Luke 23:32-43 (NKJV)

³² There were also two others, criminals, led with Him to be put to death.³³ And when they had come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on the right hand and the other on the left.³⁴ Then Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do."^[h]

And they divided His garments and cast lots.³⁵ And the people stood looking on. But even the rulers with them sneered, saying, "He saved others; let Him save Himself if He is the Christ, the chosen of God."

³⁶ The soldiers also mocked Him, coming and offering Him sour wine,³⁷ and saying, "If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself."

³⁸ And an inscription also was written over Him in letters of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew.^[i]

THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

³⁹ Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, "If You are the Christ,^[j] save Yourself and us."

⁴⁰ But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, "Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation?⁴¹ And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong."⁴² Then he said to Jesus, "Lord,^[k] remember me when You come into Your kingdom."

⁴³ And Jesus said to him, "Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."

Story #7 – Jesus Rises

Luke 24:1-53

This story highlights the personal reactions of those who interacted with Jesus after His resurrection!

Discussion Questions

1. [What do we learn about God?]
 - a. What does this story say about Jesus?
2. [What do we learn about people?]
 - a. What does this story say about the sinful woman?
 - b. What does this story say about Simon the Pharisee (Jewish religious scholar)?
 - c. What does this story say about the other guests?
3. What are the sins to avoid in this story?
4. What are the promises to claim in this story?
5. What are the examples to follow in this story?
6. What are the commands to obey in this story?
7. Who do you identify with in this story? Why?

Luke 24:1-53

Now on the first *day* of the week, very early in the morning, they, and certain *other women* with them, came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared. ² But they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. ³ Then they went in and did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. ⁴ And it happened, as they were greatly perplexed about this, that behold, two men stood by them in shining garments. ⁵ Then, as they were afraid and bowed *their* faces to the earth, they said to them, "Why do you seek the living among the dead? ⁶ He is not here, but is risen! Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee, ⁷ saying, 'The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.'"

⁸ And they remembered His words. ⁹ Then they returned from the tomb and told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. ¹⁰ It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary *the mother* of James, and the other *women* with them, who told these things to the apostles. ¹¹ And their words seemed to them like idle tales, and they did not believe them. ¹² But Peter arose and ran to the tomb; and stooping down, he saw the linen cloths lying by themselves; and he departed, marveling to himself at what had happened.

¹³ Now behold, two of them were traveling that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was seven miles from Jerusalem. ¹⁴ And they talked together of all these things which had happened. ¹⁵ So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them. ¹⁶ But their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Him. ¹⁷ And He said to them, "What kind of conversation is this that you have with one another as you walk and are sad?"

¹⁸ Then the one whose name was Cleopas answered and said to Him, "Are You the only stranger in Jerusalem, and have You not known the things which happened there in these days?"

¹⁹ And He said to them, "What things?" So they said to Him, "The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, ²⁰ and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him. ²¹ But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, today is the third day since these things happened. ²² Yes, and certain women of our company, who arrived at the tomb early, astonished us. ²³ When they did not find His body, they came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said He was alive. ²⁴ And certain of those *who were* with us went to the tomb and found *it* just as the women had said; but Him they did not see."

²⁵ Then He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! ²⁶ Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" ²⁷ And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.

²⁸ Then they drew near to the village where they were going, and He indicated that He would have gone farther. ²⁹ But they constrained Him, saying, "Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent." And He went in to stay with them.

³⁰ Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke *it*, and gave it to them. ³¹ Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight.

³² And they said to one another, "Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?" ³³ So they rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven and those *who were* with them gathered together, ³⁴ saying, "The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" ³⁵ And they told about the things *that had happened* on the road, and how He was known to them in the breaking of bread.

³⁶ Now as they said these things, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said to them, "Peace to you." ³⁷ But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit. ³⁸ And He said to them, "Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts?" ³⁹ Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have."

⁴⁰ When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet. ⁴¹ But while they still did not believe for joy, and marveled, He said to them, "Have you any food here?" ⁴² So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some honeycomb. ⁴³ And He took *it* and ate in their presence.

⁴⁴ Then He said to them, "These *are* the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and *the* Prophets and *the* Psalms concerning Me." ⁴⁵ And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.

⁴⁶ Then He said to them, "Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise ^[h] from the dead the third day, ⁴⁷ and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. ⁴⁸ And you are witnesses of these things. ⁴⁹ Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem ^[i] until you are endued with power from on high."

⁵⁰ And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. ⁵¹ Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven. ⁵² And they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, ⁵³ and were continually in the temple praising and ^[i] blessing God. Amen.

Story #8 – The Lost Son

Luke 15:11-32

In this story, Jesus uses a parable to help us understand the way God regards people who are far from Him.

Discussion Questions

1. [What do we learn about God?]
 - a. What does this story say about Jesus?
2. [What do we learn about people?]
 - a. What does this story say about the sinful woman?
 - b. What does this story say about Simon the Pharisee (Jewish religious scholar)?
 - c. What does this story say about the other guests?
3. What are the sins to avoid in this story?
4. What are the promises to claim in this story?
5. What are the examples to follow in this story?
6. What are the commands to obey in this story?
7. Who do you identify with in this story? Why?

¹¹ Then He said: "A certain man had two sons. ¹² And the younger of them said to *his* father, 'Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to *me*.' So he divided to them *his* livelihood. ¹³ And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living. ¹⁴ But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want. ¹⁵ Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. ¹⁶ And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him *anything*.

¹⁷ "But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! ¹⁸ I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, ¹⁹ and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.'"

²⁰ "And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. ²¹ And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.'

²² "But the father said to his servants, 'Bring^[b] out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on *his* feet. ²³ And bring the fatted calf here and kill *it*, and let us eat and be merry; ²⁴ for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' And they began to be merry.

²⁵ "Now his older son was in the field. And as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. ²⁶ So he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. ²⁷ And he said to him, 'Your brother has come, and because he has received him safe and sound, your father has killed the fatted calf.'

²⁸ "But he was angry and would not go in. Therefore his father came out and pleaded with him. ²⁹ So he answered and said to *his* father, 'Lo, these many years I have been serving you; I never transgressed your commandment at any time; and yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might make merry with my friends. ³⁰ But as soon as this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with harlots, you killed the fatted calf for him.'

³¹ "And he said to him, 'Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours. ³² It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found.'"