

Friday, August 24: Read [Matthew 14-15](#)

Matthew 14 and 15 feature a duplicate miracle of Jesus, the feeding of a large crowd with scant resources. In chapter 14, it's 5000 men from fish and five loaves of bread. In chapter 15, it's 4000 men from seven loaves and fish. Neither number includes women or children present. What's the point of these two incidents? Jesus' concern for hungry people? Jesus' power to multiply the elements? Or God's willingness to provide for our needs when we turn to him for help? Jesus will refer back to both miracles when instructing his disciples about the hypocrisy of the Pharisees' teaching. He admonishes them not to forget what God has done in providing for them, especially as it relates to their present and yet future needs. We may need the same reminder today!

Notes:

Pray for Our Missionaries

Juan & Adriana Palacios (Angola, Africa), **David & Miriam Trott** (Cochabamba, Bolivia), **Mario Bloise** (Argentina), **Dan & DeAnn Gerard** (San Antonio, TX), **Robert and Kailey Newkirk** (South Sudan), **Mike and Fran VanBruggen**, (Word of Life), **Craig & Shelly Shafer** (Sentani, Indonesia), **Sue Saunders** (Bosnia), **Matt Kooi** (Tijuana), **Daniel Jezonski** (Wycliffe), **Andrew & Sara Williams** (Ethnos360), **Brad and Christa Babjack** (University of West Virginia), **Salomon and Megan Guzman** (Tijuana), **Alvaro and Rachel Garriga** (Central Asia)

Thru the New!

(Reading through the New Testament in 2018)

- *Invite the Holy Spirit to guide your reading each day.*
- *Read the chapters and underline any meaningful verses and take note of specific advice or wisdom gleaned from your reading.*
- *Note any unclear passages or teaching and seek insight, answers or help.*
- *Think about what you're reading. Ask:*
 1. *How does this apply to me?*
 2. *Are there any temptations to avoid, sins to confess, commands to obey or promises to claim?*
 3. *What insight do I gain on God, myself, others, or life?*
- *Ask God to show you any specific action you need to take as you read.*

Monday, August 20 Read [Matthew 8-9](#)

After preaching the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus hits the ground running. The next several chapters of Matthew record numerous miracles accomplished by Jesus. In each case, take note of the need at hand. Who initiates the miracle, Jesus or the needy person? What kind of belief or faith is present when Jesus heals? Where are the disciples during the miracle and how do the onlookers or the crowd respond? Matthew 9:35-36 pretty well summarizes Jesus' heart for the needy. Do you likewise see lost people like sheep without a shepherd? Who could you approach today with the intention of introducing them to Jesus, the good shepherd?

Notes:

Pray for: ---My relationship with God

---My life roles

---My personal needs/weak areas

---My goals and objectives.

Tuesday, August 21: Read [Matthew 10-11](#)

Matthew records the first missions trip of the disciples almost like a controlled experiment. Jesus sends them out two by two, telling them where to go and where not to go, what to say and what to do. The second half of the chapter includes both warnings and encouragements for all who would dare step out to reach others in Jesus' name. His words ring true for us as well today.

Next, news of John's imprisonment and ensuing doubts lead Jesus to further reveal who he is as well as who John the Baptist was and the role he played in presenting Christ to Israel. Matthew 11:28-30 are words of promise for you today!

Pray for family and friends by name.

Wednesday August 22: Read [Matthew 12](#)

Matthew 12 records several run-ins with the Pharisees who challenge Jesus' authority, especially as it relates to his "working" (doing miracles) on the Sabbath. Pay close attention to Jesus' responses to them because in them he often reveals hints as to his true identity. His declaration as "Lord of the Sabbath" sets the stage for opposition to his actions and claims. Jesus warns them of the fatal sin of blaspheming the Spirit, an admonition that has troubled Christians over the centuries. Can a Christian commit the unpardonable sin? Or, is that precisely the sin of rejecting Christ for which there is no redemption? Or, was the blasphemy of the Spirit a generational sin committed solely by the people of Jesus' day who had him physically present, speaking, by the Holy Spirit¹ directly to that generation of Jews? No more explanation is given in the New Testament.

Wednesday: Pray for Bethel Gilead Community Church

1. Leadership: Pray for God's grace and guidance in Pastor Jim and Pastor David's ministries and families. Pray for Linda Penn in her work at BGCC. Pray for the church council and the various ministry team leaders.
2. Worship: Ask God to strengthen our devotion to Him, in prayer, praise and thanksgiving. Pray for the development of a youth praise team.
3. Fellowship: Ask God to deepen our love and commitment to one another as a family of believers.
4. Discipleship: Ask God to develop the faith, dedication, and leadership of our people. Pray for the children and youth ministries at BGCC. Pray for our small group ministry.
5. Outreach: Pray that God will use Bethel Gilead to make a positive impact on our community so that many would come to Christ. Ask God to embolden our people to intentionally reach out to others.
6. Future Faith Goals: Ask God to give our congregation a united vision for the future. Pray for our upcoming 150th anniversary celebration. Ask God to use our church anniversary as a testimony to Branch County. Pray for God's clear leading in our upcoming 2020 plan.

Thursday, August 23: Read [Matthew 13](#)

Chapter 13 of Matthew contains a plethora of parables where Jesus uses figurative language, stories of familiar things to explain to the crowds something unfamiliar, namely the mysterious working of God in his kingdom. He secretly dispels the answers to his spiritual riddles to his disciples, but codes his language when speaking publicly (verse 11). He uses metaphors of farming, seeds, treasures, pearl merchants and fishing to explain in human analogies how God is working on earth. Even his disciples struggle to grasp his instruction. We do as well today as we re-read Jesus' words and wrestle with how the "kingdom of heaven" could operate even here on earth.

Notes:

Thursday Pray for "My World"

(Write down names as God brings people to mind.)

- Neighbors • People who live around me.
- People at Work • Others God brings into my life. Take note of specific needs around you and ask God what he wants you to do to help. Who can you invite to church this Sunday?
- Ask God to bring revival and a spiritual awakening to Branch County. Pray for the area churches and a greater spirit of unity and cooperation.
- Continue to pray for the nation, our national leaders and a revival in America.