

Friday, August 31: Read [Matthew 21](#)

Matthew 21 launches what we call holy week. The author will dedicate the last fourth of his gospel to seven days in the life of Christ. In fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy, Jesus rides into Jerusalem on a young donkey, cleanses the temple for a third and last time, curses the fig tree as a symbol of Israel's fruitlessness and then answers his Jewish challengers one last time as to his authority to speak and act on God's behalf. His closing parable of the vineyard predicts the eventual loss of Israel's sovereignty and the coming "times of the Gentiles", an allusion to the church era that we are now in. This parable seals Jesus' doom as his opposers finalize plans to do away with him.

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 27 Read [Matthew 16](#)

Matthew 16 begins with the Pharisees again challenging Jesus' authority to minister. A sign would come, well enough, but they would not likely believe it. The sign of Jonah, his resurrection, would be the final proof of his identity. From there, he warns the disciples against the unbelief and false teaching of the Pharisees.

Jesus does reveal his true identity to his disciples, however, along with the true essence of his mission, and what it would cost them to follow him as his disciples. His question to them rings true for us today as well, "What can a man give in exchange for his soul?"

Notes:

Pray for: ---My relationship with God

---My life roles

---My personal needs/weak areas

---My goals and objectives.

Tuesday, August 28: Read [Matthew 17](#)

In the prologue of his gospel, John says “We beheld his glory” ([John 1:14](#)). The transfiguration is the likely explanation of that reference. Jesus gives three disciples a peek at who he really is and what he is about to accomplish. God’s audible voice speaks forth his identity in response to Peter’s fumbling suggestions. From the “mountain top”, Jesus goes to “a valley” of failure -- his disciples unable to liberate a demon-possessed boy due to their lack of faith. Then, for a second time, he reveals his upcoming mission of vicarious suffering and death.

Pray for family and friends by name.

Wednesday, August 29: Read [Matthew 18](#)

Matthew 18 addresses the issue of sin and how to deal with it. Jesus begins with mistaken ideas about greatness. Next he deals with stumbling stones and the need to radically remove them from our lives. Like a shepherd, God is concerned about our tendencies to stray.

The second half of the chapter deals with sin and forgiveness among brothers in the church. His conclusion is that the kingdom requires that we willingly and repeatedly forgive one another from the heart.

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 30: Read [Matthew 19-20](#)

Matthew 19 opens with Jesus addressing marriage and the issue of divorce. Due to hardheartedness, Jesus presents divorce as an allowance to marital unfaithfulness.

The story of the rich young ruler illustrates the tension of following Christ over following wealth and its worldly alternatives. Like the rich young man, we must daily choose the riches of the kingdom over the riches of the earth. Jesus assures his disciples it will be worth the trade off.

Chapter 20 opens with the parable of the vineyard, illustrating God’s generosity to all, in spite of our human effort. The parable could especially apply to the inclusion of the Gentiles as equals in the kingdom, in spite of the Jews’ two thousand years of spiritual heritage. Then Jesus again addresses the topic of true greatness, contrasting the gentile concept of dominance with God’s concept of submission and servanthood.

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.