

October 21 – Plug In

READ

Luke 18:9-30

Mark 10:1-31

Matthew 19:1-30

Luke 18:27, *“What is impossible with man is possible with God.”*

THINK

In the midst of an ever-changing world, we can feel stuck under the load of past baggage. Our initial reaction is to switch into self-improvement mode and make changes, only to realize the futility of our efforts. That is until we can admit that true and lasting change must come from an outside power source. A lamp can be sitting next to an electrical outlet, yet it can't turn on or function properly until it's plugged in. The same is true for us. Without plugging into God's power, we are powerless to overcome our past, find peace in the present, or flourish in the future.

God never asked us to try to be better people. Instead, He offers us a total makeover to become who we could never be on our own. Jesus is the ultimate change agent. When we plug into His power, we discover the power of true change.

Have you experienced that true change? Is God's transformational power at work within you? The moment you admit your powerlessness and commit to God's power, He will illuminate your path as you gradually shed the baggage of your past and enter into a life full of purpose and hope!

PRAY

Heavenly Father, Thank You for loving me enough to accept me as a work in progress. I praise You for sending Your only Son to make a way for me to turn from my past and transform me into who You want me to be. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Remember: there's nothing God can't do! Things may not happen in our way or preferred timing, but He always delivers on every promise! Aren't you glad you serve a God who can make the most unfathomable possibilities spring to life?

PRAY

Dear Lord, Thank You for making the impossible possible. Through Christ's death and resurrection, You made a way for me to have life after death. Help me to remember this in moments of doubt and remind me that Your promises are true. In Jesus' name, Amen.

October 20 – There's No Way!

READ

John 11:38-57

Luke 17:11-18:8

John 11:39-40," *'Roll the stone aside,' Jesus told them. But Martha, the dead man's sister, protested, 'Lord, he has been dead for four days. The smell will be terrible.'* Jesus said to her, *'Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?'*"

THINK

Walt Disney coined the phrase "The Plausible Impossible" to describe the magic of animation: What's impossible in real life is plausible for animated characters. For example, a giant talking mouse wearing red shorts is plausible in the cartoon world. A duck in a sailor suit is completely believable. In the Christian life, it's the opposite. We have a God of "The Implausible Possible." What seems implausible for us is possible for God.

In John 11, the distraught Mary and Martha couldn't understand why Jesus didn't come to heal their brother, Lazarus, while he was still alive. So, when Jesus asked to open the tomb, Martha objected in disbelief, "What's the point? He's already dead!" It's almost as if she forgot that Jesus could perform miracles; she couldn't see past the circumstances with eyes of faith in the all-powerful God! Maybe her first gut reaction was, "Why the insensitivity toward my brother's memory and lack of regard for everyone having to cope with the stench of bodily decomposition!" This was precisely why Jesus didn't arrive sooner. He wanted to show that when it seems all is lost is when it's most important for us to believe that all is possible. That sad, dark day became a day of celebration and a time of gratitude that would soon mean so much more for them in retrospect as it foreshadowed Jesus' own looming death and resurrection! In fact, it would become the most crucial moment in all of history!

As Christians, we're here to glorify God. So, for us to live a meaningful, purpose-filled life, it's contingent on the day Jesus sprang victoriously from the grave, forever defeating death and securing a God-filled eternity for those who believe in God's "implausible possible" power and call Jesus both Lord and Savior! Now, we can have unfettered confidence that no matter what happens in this life, that one day, we'll see Jesus face to face in heaven! That's better than even the most cheerful "happily ever after" in all of Walt Disney's Magic Kingdom combined, hands down!

October 19 – Homecoming

READ

Luke 14:25-17:10

John 11:1-37

Luke 15:20, *“But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him.”*

THINK

Because God's timing is always perfect, the Bible never mentions Him rushing to do anything. But there is one exception! In Luke 15, Jesus tells a story about a son who asked for his inheritance early and left home only to squander it all away. He hit the lowest of lows as he sold himself into slavery just to eat. Finally, he decided to head home, uncertain of his family's acceptance.

In ancient Jewish culture, men didn't run. It was undignified. But when this loving father spotted his long-lost son in the distance, he couldn't help himself. He ran to embrace him. The point Jesus was making is this: whenever a lost sinner returns to the Father, He runs to them and wraps His arms around them despite their past sin or current condition. This means we are never too dirty, never too lost, and never without hope. The moment we turn from our sin and turn toward God, He is there waiting.

If you have yet to return to the Father, know this: God isn't mad at you; He's madly in love with you! Allow Him to embrace you and say, "Welcome home, My beloved child!"

PRAY

Dear Lord, Your love knows no bounds and I am grateful that You chose to call me Your child. Despite all my messes and moral blunders, You call me righteous through Christ. Thank You! In Jesus' name, Amen.

October 18 – Are You Sure?

READ

John 10:1-42

Luke 13:22-14:24

Luke 13:24-25, *“Make every effort to enter through the narrow door, because many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able to. Once the owner of the house gets up and closes the door, you will stand outside knocking and pleading, ‘Sir, open the door for us’. But He will answer, ‘I don’t know you or where you come from.’”*

THINK

There’s a reason you won’t find today’s verse on coffee mugs or t-shirts. Hell doesn’t sell! People don’t like being reminded that it’s a real place, and, for many, death is a scary subject. But it doesn’t have to be — if we know Jesus! Only then can we rest in the certainty that comes from placing our hope in God.

In today’s reading, it’s essential to understand that Jesus wasn’t addressing a pack of pagans. He was talking to the “church” crowd, those who assumed they were headed toward heaven because they were decent, law-abiding Jews. What they didn’t know was that, although they were acquainted with Jesus, He wasn’t acquainted with them. And although they were “religious,” they’d never taken His message to heart: Turn from your sin and submit to God now or perish later!

Countless people believe many paths lead to God. Unfortunately, they’re sadly mistaken. There are no alternate routes to heaven; it’s a one-way street that leads to a narrow door for those who have a personal relationship with Christ. Remember, just because we know *about* Jesus doesn’t mean we know Him.

Do you know God? And more importantly, does God know you? Because there’s no greater peace than knowing that, when the time comes to knock on that narrow door, Jesus will answer and say, “I’m so glad you’re here, come in!”

PRAY

Father God, Thank You for placing eternity on my heart and securing my salvation through Christ. Help me maintain a narrow focus on the path You’ve set before me and not be afraid to share the reason for my hope with those who do not know You. In Jesus’ name, Amen.

October 17 – Seeing is Believing!

READ

Luke 12:35-13:21

John 9:1-41

John 9:3-5, “Neither this man nor his parents sinned,’ said Jesus, ‘but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him. As long as it is day, we must do the works of Him who sent Me. Night is coming, when no one can work. While I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”

THINK

When you see something that seems wrong, do you try to associate blame? In today's reading, the disciples see a man born blind, and they assume that his blindness is someone's fault. This was a common way of thinking about suffering in those days. Sickness and disability were often believed to be a result of sin somewhere in the family line. But Jesus complicates things even more by implying that God allowed the man to be blind so that his healing by Jesus could help people see the works of God being done. This is hard to understand – there is no getting around that. Human suffering is a lot more complicated than we would like to believe. Sin has broken this world in ways that go beyond our understanding.

But what's great about God is that He works through all things for our good and His glory. Although this man suffered, His sight was restored! And through it, the spiritual sight of others was regained as well! Unfortunately, many people are groping through the darkness of sin and self-reliance, blind to what they most need – Jesus' healing touch! But the moment we place our faith in Jesus, believing that through Him all things are possible, He touches our hearts and opens our eyes to a new life of possibility, freedom, and purpose anchored in God's absolute truth.

How is your spiritual vision? Are the eyes of your heart open and receptive to change? Allow the Lord's healing touch to bring about clarity and focus into your life!

PRAY

Dear Lord, I want to have a 20/20 spiritual vision. Open the eyes of my heart to see what You want me to see and guide my hands to touch the lives of others with Your message of hope and everlasting change. In Jesus' name, Amen.

October 16 – Now is the Time!

READ

Luke 11:14-12:34

Luke 12:20, *“But God said to him... ‘This very night your life will be demanded from you.’”*

THINK

We pay bills on time to avoid late fees. We put gas in the tank to keep from being stranded. We buy insurance just in case an unexpected accident or tragedy strikes. When tasks have foreseeable consequences, we act readily, because we can visualize the cost involved if we don't. Why, then, when it comes to choosing between eternal life and death, are so many of us procrastination? That is why the apostle Paul wrote, “Now is the time” for salvation. Tomorrow is not promised to us.

In Luke 12:20, Jesus talks about a man who had everything except what he needed most — eternal life. He died that night, and it was too late. Although scary to think about, this happens every day. Most of us can share stories of people we knew who woke up thinking they were facing another regular day, only to have their lives tragically end before sundown. Therefore, the need for rescue isn't just real — it's really urgent!

If you were to die today, do you know where you would go? Because we will all live forever in one of two places — in Heaven with God or separated from Him eternally in a place of darkness and isolation. If not, don't delay, because now is the time! Cry out to God, even if you have doubts. And, immediately, Jesus — the ultimate first responder — will rescue you and say, “Do not be afraid, I'm here! You're safe!”

PRAY

God, I am a sinner in need of a Savior. I believe Jesus died on the cross for the forgiveness of my sins and rose again. I turn from doing life my way and, RIGHT NOW, I turn to You. I'm ready to commit myself fully to Your plan and purpose rather than my own! In Jesus' name, Amen.

Heavenly Father, Thank You for calling me to You, reaching out Your hand, and never letting me go. I seek to be more like Jesus every day. Therefore, speak into my heart and challenge me to be a good neighbor when opportunities arise for me to share my story with others. In Jesus' name, Amen.

October 15 – Love Your Neighbor

READ

John 8:21-59

Luke 10:1-11:13

Luke 10:30-33, *“Jesus said, ‘A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him, and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him.’ ”*

THINK

“Love your neighbor as yourself” was part of the Old Testament Law. An expert in the Law who was “testing” Jesus knew this intellectually, but definitely not spiritually. In fact, he tried to trick Jesus by asking, “Who is my neighbor?” But the man also knew full well that God didn’t limit his “neighbors” to those who lived on the same street. So Jesus launched into a convicting story that surely hit home for the lawyer – and it should resonate in our lives as well.

A badly beaten man lay in the street half dead. Two men passed by and refused to help. Sadly, these weren’t ordinary men; they were scholars of the Law and supposedly men of God. One was a priest and the other a Levite who served in the Jerusalem Temple. What do they represent? The Law, which is merely a barometer for our brokenness. Just like the priest and the Levite, it cannot save us; only the Savior can!

If we know Christ personally, it’s our duty to step in and help when our neighbors are in need. Yet, how often do we pass by “half-dead” people – those alive on the outside but dying on the inside – and say or do nothing? Before receiving God’s mercy and grace, we were that half-dead man. Our lives were once broken as we lay dying in sin. But Jesus did the work to save us! And now, we have a responsibility to introduce the hurting and lost to the Savior who specializes in bringing the dead to life.

Or, maybe you are that injured and dying man. If so, then know this: Jesus wants to meet you right where you are. No matter how messy your life is, where you’ve been, or what you’ve done, God is madly in love with you. And right now, the Savior is extending His hand to you and offering a fresh start, a new life full of amazing love and unending joy!

PRAY