

*Lent*  
2024

# COME & SEE WHAT THE LORD HAS DONE

Welcome to week 5 of the Lent 2024 devotionals. In keeping with our theme of come and see what the Lord has done, we will focus on scriptures from the New Testament. We will be examining instances in the life of Jesus where those encounters changed the lives of the people whom Jesus encountered. We will also look at how their encounters reflect in our lives today. This week, we will see what we can find in the Book of Luke for the devotionals. Our verses will capture Jesus' interactions with many and some of the parables He shared.

Lent is a time for reflection. And this time, we are given many opportunities to consider our lives and our lives in Christ. The people we encounter, the places we go, and how people see us live our lives can be part and parcel of our walk-in faith. Periodically, we should consider how our lives are going and whether we are on the right path. That right path is being laid out for us by the Lord.

Pam and I hope you are blessed by your time in reflection and study of His word during this season of Lent.

Leaning on Jesus

Forest & Pam Holmes

All scriptural references are from the English Standard Version of the Holy Bible.

Much of the technical and theological practices of biblical times used in these devotionals come from the Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary.

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## Stubbornly Hanging On To The Past

There is much to be learned from the past. That is if we are willing to set aside our bias. Looking into the Old Testament, we see a picture of the people of Israel being stubborn, disobedient, and often doing evil in the eyes of the Lord. It's not a very pretty picture. Many times, the Israelites were often subdued and lived under the sandals of an oppressive regime that worshipped false gods. Sadly, there were many instances where the Israelites also chose to follow those false gods—repeatedly forsaking the God that rescued them from Pharaoh—even abandoning the Sabbath in their rebellion against God. And then the pendulum would swing back, and they fell back in line, obeying the Lord.

Such is a time when Jesus was visiting a synagogue. We pick up the story of the man with the withered hand from Luke 6:6-11. On another Sabbath, he entered the synagogue and was teaching, and a man was there whose right hand was withered. And the scribes and the Pharisees watched him, to see whether he would heal on the Sabbath, so that they might find a reason to accuse him. But he knew their thoughts, and he said to the man with the withered hand, “Come and stand here.” And he rose and stood there. And Jesus said to them, “I ask you, is it lawful on the Sabbath to do good or to do harm, to save life or to destroy it?” And after looking around at them all he said to him, “Stretch out your hand.” And he did so, and his hand was restored. But they were filled with fury and discussed with one another what they might do to Jesus. Jesus challenges the Pharisees in their interpretation of what is allowable on the Sabbath. In their minds, healing was not allowed unless it was life-threatening. By our standards today, this would seem brutal. And that is what we can learn from this lesson—compassion and mercy are needed, regardless of the day.

Can you imagine a world where treating illness, injury, or disease was not allowed on a given day of the week? Cruel and insensitive are the words that come to mind. The Sabbath is a day of rest established to enable us to rest, as the Lord did on the seventh day of creation. But Jesus pointed out the error of blind compliance with Rabbinic Law at the expense of common sense. We look at the story and find where compassion and mercy have a place. If we were to follow the strict Rabbinic Law today, we could not bring food to church for the Food Bank. Church potlucks for Camp Perkins could not take place on Sundays. But we do what is right and merciful things. Mercy and compassion have a place in our lives. As Jesus modeled, sometimes we must make a statement about compassion and mercy. We reach out in love because that changes lives. And that is the business we are in, changing lives for Jesus.

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Forest and Pamela Holmes