

TWO MINUTES
IN THE BIBLE®

WITH
Jesus

BOYD BAILEY



HARVEST HOUSE PUBLISHERS
EUGENE, OREGON

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TWO MINUTES IN THE BIBLE® WITH JESUS

Copyright © 2017 by Boyd Bailey

Published by Harvest House Publishers

Eugene, Oregon 97402

www.harvesthousepublishers.com

ISBN 978-0-7369-6925-3 (pbk.)

ISBN 978-0-7369-6926-0 (eBook)

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Printed in the United States of America

17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 / BP-GL / 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

*To Gwynne
our very good friend
who is a lovely friend of Jesus*

Acknowledgments

Thank you, Brother Marcellus from the Abbey of the Genesee outside of Rochester, New York, for being Jesus to me during a very vulnerable time in my life.

Thank you, Wisdom Hunters team, for loving the way Jesus does: Rita Bailey, Bethany Thoms, Gwynne Maffet, Shana Schutte, Rachel Snead, Rachel Prince, Tripp Prince, Susan Fox, and Josh Randolph.

Thank you, Susan Fox and Gene Skinner, for your expert editing.

Thank you, Wisdom Hunters board of directors, for your love, prayers, and accountability: Deb Ochs, Jack McEntee, Cliff Bartow, Andrew Wexler, and John Hightower.

Thank you, National Christian Foundation, for the opportunity, by God's grace, to reach and restore every person by the love of Christ, and to mobilize biblical generosity for God's kingdom.

Thank you, Harvest House Publishers, for your vision and support for this book: Bob Hawkins, Terry Glaspey, Gene Skinner, Brad Moses, Ken Lorenz, and Kathy Zemper.

Introduction



When I was a child my relationship with Jesus was rather vague and incoherent, but today we enjoy a cherished, intimate friendship. Since becoming a Christian at age 19, I've experienced an ever-growing understanding of Jesus as my Savior, Lord, and friend. Jesus is my master, whom I gladly serve—a loyal friend who is closer than a brother and, amazingly, a patient forgiver. Over and over He extends His grace in the face of my glaring sins of self-indulgence, self-reliance, and selfish withholding. My affections are easily drawn to shiny idols—pride's lies, lust's ecstasy, and greed's allure—but my jealous lover Jesus melts my heart with His uncommon mercy and grace.

These 90 writings, mostly from the four Gospels, are reflections of how Jesus loves me in spite of me, allowing perfection to relate to imperfection in a way that moves my flawed faith into closer communion with Him. Life happens every day, so my simple plan was to write about my everyday experiences, using the Gospels as a backdrop. In the process, my life intersected with Christ's life—my questions with His answers, my fears with faith in Him, my pain with Christ's comfort, my ego with His meekness, my worry with His peace, my sorrow with His joy, and my ingratitude with grateful worship of Him.

I also attempted to prayerfully understand and empathize with the hurt and hubris of Jesus's contemporaries who engaged Him at their point of need. Some, like the Roman centurion, were full of faith. Others were like the rich young ruler, who was full of himself. One leper out of ten came back to thank Jesus. One short man, Zacchaeus, was asked to open his home, where Jesus modeled how to love sinners. One woman met Jesus at a well and found living water. One adulteress met Jesus in shame, but with sensitivity He unashamedly forgave her sin and admonished her to sin no more. Jesus exposed the religious elite's hypocrisy and offered hope to the religiously inferior.



“I tell you, unless you are more right with God than the teachers of the Law and the proud religious law-keepers, you will never get into the holy nation of heaven” (Matthew 5:20 NIV).

Christ’s everyday encounters are eerily similar to what we encounter in our culture today. Some questions relate to money: taxes, giving, saving, and spending. Others are a bit more challenging: How do we pray like Jesus? What does it mean to follow Jesus? Is Jesus really the only way to heaven? Why are some prayers answered when others remain unanswered? How do I handle hypocrisy, forgiveness, and change? What about work, worry, war, and demons? When will Jesus return? What is God’s will for my life? These are a few questions I addressed out of my own life struggles and doubts.

Our decision making can be suspect without a reliable filter to strain out the impurities and keep the purest thoughts. Just as air filters help us to breathe freely, coffee filters give us a cup of warm enjoyment, and oil filters contribute to a smooth-running engine, so asking what would Jesus have me do or not do serves as the most effective filter for making wise decisions. In light of how Jesus prayed to His Father, loved people, and approached uncertain circumstances, we must ask, what is the wisest choice? It may not be a matter of right or wrong, but of good or best. The life, death, resurrection, and teachings of Jesus provide a template of grace and truth. He is our life.

So I pray you will enjoy your journey with Jesus in these 90 readings and throughout the course of your lifetime. Keep your eyes on Him, for He will always be with you—He promised!



“I am with you always [remaining with you perpetually—regardless of circumstance, and on every occasion], even to the end of the age” (Matthew 28:20 AMP).

A servant and friend of Jesus,
Boyd Bailey
Roswell, Georgia

In Jesus's Name

*Very truly I tell you, my Father will give you
whatever you ask in my name.*

JOHN 16:23

At times, I find myself praying incomplete and ineffective prayers. Instead of praying in Jesus's name, I drift into praying in my name, or in the name of a cause or a church. My prayers become sterile when the spirit of my speech is self-directed, not Spirit-led. I still say "in Jesus's name," but that resembles a hollow habit or a rubber stamp instead of the Holy Spirit's validation. My prayers gain God's ear when truly I ask in Jesus's name.

In the moments preceding His passion, Jesus had the disciples' undivided attention. So He took time to remind them how to pray powerful prayers in His name. To pray in Jesus's name is to pray as a representative of the person of Christ. Pray peace because Jesus represented peace. Pray love because Jesus represented love. Pray meekness because Jesus represented meekness. Pray forgiveness because Jesus represented forgiveness. Prayers in Jesus's name are aligned with His heart. Prayers that are consistent with God's will further God's will. By faith, ask in Jesus's name.

"Until now you have not asked for anything
in my name. Ask and you will receive, and
your joy will be complete" (John 16:24).

Have some of your prayers become rote and religious, lacking the Lord's leadership? One way to restore freshness in your supplications to the Savior is to write out your prayers. Put words on paper so you

are precise and passionate about what stirs God's heart. Written prayers invite the Spirit to etch His desires onto the tablet of your soul. Write out what you want to live out.

You can also pray prayers found in the Bible. The precious prayers of God's people recalibrate your prayers to God's glory. "I will exalt you, my God the King" (Psalm 145:1).

There is a completeness of joy that comes from praying in Christ's name. As we pray in Jesus's name, we trust in the Lord to move hearts and accomplish His will. We rest in peace and joy, knowing He will handle whatever comes our way. Thus our sorrows become less burdensome where Jesus's joy deeply abides. Our heart can be heavy with sadness while our soul is lightened by our heavenly Father's love.

Above all, we focus on God's fame when we pray in Jesus's name. We are not the same when we pray in His name. Prayers in Jesus's name make our joy complete!



"Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction,
faithful in prayer" (Romans 12:12).

Heavenly Father, keep me focused on praying in Jesus's name.

Related Readings

1 Samuel 12:22; Psalm 138:2; Isaiah 56:7; Acts 4:11-12;

Philippians 1:4

A Heart for God



The seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop.

LUKE 8:15

A heart for God is nurtured by the Word of God. Just as the stomach receives good food so the body can grow, so a healthy heart receives nutritious morsels from a meal of Scripture. The spiritual development process begins with a heart hungry for God. A soft soul takes in truth and gives it time to deepen its roots in righteousness. Tests of trust come, but a humble heart stays true to its commitment to Christ. Faith perseveres and retains God's Word.

Beware of Satan's attempt to snatch away the seed from your pathway of faith and obedience. When you accept Christ by faith and obey His commands by grace, you hide the seed of God's Word from the snare of the enemy. Truth applied to your life cannot be taken by the devil. He trolls the surface of your thinking, trying to steal away the Word. However, when you hide holy Scripture deep in your heart, you are safe from the thief's clutches. You are saved!

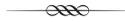


"Samuel did not yet know the LORD: The word of the LORD had not yet been revealed to him" (1 Samuel 3:7).

The word of the Lord allows you to know the Lord. Therefore, pace yourself in the grace of God so you continue to grow in your faith. It is not how early you start with God that counts, but how far you go over a lifetime. Don't allow trials to take away your joy in Jesus. You can still smile on the inside, even when you are suffering on the outside. The

tests of your faith teach forgiveness and grace in your relationships. Life lessons empower you to love more effectively.

Cares of this world must not block us from learning the Bible and becoming better followers of Christ. Worry can keep us from the Word of God, or the Word of God can keep us from worry. Therefore, it's imperative that we quietly meditate on Scripture so the Spirit can clearly speak to our heart with reassuring words of hope, wisdom, and encouragement. Once we are rooted and grounded with a heart for God, our heavenly Father multiplies the fruit of our faith in other faithful lives.



“We must pay the most careful attention, therefore, to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away” (Hebrews 2:1).

Heavenly Father, may my humble heart be fertile ground to receive Your Word, so You can grow my faith and the faith of those I influence for You.

Related Readings

Psalm 18:30; Matthew 4:4; John 8:51; Acts 12:24; 1 Peter 1:24-25

Good Among Bad



The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away.

MATTHEW 13:24-25

God sows good seed in the world. We see the Lord's good seed all around us: churches, ministries, hospitals, orphanages, families, and individuals who love and obey Christ. Law-abiding citizens, honest taxpayers, hard workers, generous givers, and studious students all sprout from the good seed of our Savior Jesus Christ. Moreover, the sowing of God's good seed never ceases. He will raise preachers, missionaries, church planters, diplomats, and executives for His glory.

However, while God is sowing good seed around you, Satan is sowing bad seed. He is creating evil influences that seek to thwart God's plans for good. Evil will mingle with the righteous until Christ comes to separate the wheat from the tares. Thus, demon-possessed people rampage among innocent children with rapid and murderous gunfire. The sons and daughters of disobedience look for ways to steal, kill, and destroy. Bad seed grows among good.



"You once walked according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit who now works in the sons of disobedience" (Ephesians 2:2 NKJV).

Further, the bad seed resembles the good seed, so its real nature is not revealed until it bears the fruit of its true intent. This is how two people can attend church together when one is going through the

motions and the other is a dedicated disciple. You can be a church member without being a child of God. The good seed of salvation is sown along with the bad seed of hypocrisy. But we wait for Christ's judgment and pray God's grace has its transforming effect on the lost.

We are not the judge of someone's soul. God is. Yet we can model what it means to be an authentic follower of Jesus. For example, as we encounter conflict at church we can remain calm and express our concerns with a voice of reason and grace. Our role is to represent Christ in our conduct and conversation. It's the Holy Spirit's role to examine motives and expose evil intent, so we will celebrate God's sowing of good seed and prayerfully trust in Christ's judgment.



"This will take place on the day when God judges people's secrets through Jesus Christ" (Romans 2:16).

Heavenly Father, thank You for Your good seed that grows and bears great fruit.

Related Readings

Matthew 3:12; Ephesians 5:6; 2 Timothy 4:1-2; Revelation 20:4

Fruitful Faith



Then he told this parable: "A man had a fig tree growing in his vineyard, and he went to look for fruit on it but did not find any."

LUKE 13:6

The Lord expects His children to bear fruit. A life without fruit takes up space instead of being an expression of God's grace. Our heavenly Father is patient, but He draws a line in the sand of time and says to individuals, institutions, and nations, "Repent or lose My favor." A soul or society that is barren will eventually see God move on to those governed by His principles. The fruit of faith flourishes in a heart cultivated by Christ.

What fruit is your faith producing? The fruit of peace comes after you plant the seeds of trust in Jesus. Patience's fruit appears as you prayerfully water the seeds of God's grace. The fruit of perseverance is produced when you fertilize God's goodness with faith. Humility's fruit ripens when your heavenly Father sows His loving-kindness into your soul. A harvest of good deeds—enough to fill a barn—occurs when death to self brings your love to life!



"I [Jesus] am the true vine, and my Father is the gardener. He cuts off every branch in me that bears no fruit, while every branch that does bear fruit he prunes so that it will be even more fruitful" (John 15:1-2).

The mercy of the Lord does include a pruning process. Instead of immediately removing a fruitless faith, He gives it time to grow by the shears of suffering. Yes, pain is meant to purge us from unhealthy habits and remind us of our undeniable dependence on Christ. Our

heavenly husbandman cuts back our branches diseased by sin. Jesus, our vine of spiritual nutrients, feeds our faith. Then the Holy Spirit nurtures the blossoms in our life, known as the fruit of the Spirit.

If the compassionate and thorough work of the Trinity is ignored, we are in danger of being cut off from the life-giving grace of the Father, Son, and Spirit. As believers we are commanded by Christ to spread the manure of His mercy around the base of the unhealthy lives we influence. Yes, our service may smell repulsive to sinful souls, but our relentless love and forgiveness may facilitate fruit with the sweet aroma of salvation. Fruitful faith enjoys God's favor.



“The one who plants and the one who waters have one purpose, and they will each be rewarded according to their own labor” (1 Corinthians 3:8).

Heavenly Father, prune my unhealthy attitudes and actions, so I can serve others.

Related Readings

Isaiah 5:2; Jeremiah 8:13; John 15:5-8; Hebrews 6:7

Friendship with Jesus

You are my friends if you do what I command.

JOHN 15:14

Jesus is a friend to His followers. He is Lord, but He is a friend. He is Savior, but He is a friend. He is the Son of God, but He is a friend. He is sinless and holy, but He is a friend. He is a friend to sinners, and a friend to those He saves. Jesus is a friend to His followers, but it is a friendship based on obedience. Complying with Christ creates companionship.

If I do not obey Christ's commands, He does not call me friend. It is through our actions that friendship with Jesus is validated. Obedience to Jesus inspires intimacy with Him. In obeying Jesus, we can really get to know Him. His friendship is free for all who follow hard with a heart hungry to obey. Friendship flourishes with faithful fidelity.

"Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and obey it" (Luke 11:28).

Friendship with Jesus is an invitation to intimacy. He reveals to His friends the riches of His grace and the hope of His glory. It is a friendship that bears the fruit of saved souls and solid character. You begin to emulate the attitude, actions, words, and spirit of Jesus, because this is what friends do. Friends look, act, and sound like each other. You know you are a friend of Jesus when Jesus consistently influences you to be like Him.

When others are around you, does your behavior provide evidence that you've been with Jesus? Is it a friendship based on conviction, not convenience; intimacy, not intimidation; and giving, not getting? As

you grow in your friendship with Christ, you better understand His heart, and your prayers align more with His will. Friendship with Jesus facilitates friendship with people. True friends flock to be with fellow friends of Jesus. Evangelism of the lost and edification of the saved flow freely when Jesus is your best friend.



“When Jesus saw their faith, he said, ‘Friend, your sins are forgiven’” (Luke 5:20).

How can I enjoy my friendship with Jesus and also honor Him in the process?

Related Readings

2 Chronicles 20:7; Job 29:4; James 2:23; 4:4