

In Between

March 2-7, 2026

Monday March 2nd, 2026

Scripture - Luke 6:36-38 'Be compassionate just as your Father is compassionate. Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned; forgive, and you will be forgiven. Give, and there will be gifts for you: a full measure, pressed down, shaken together, and overflowing, will be poured into your lap; because the standard you use will be the standard used for you.'

Observation: Compassionate is a closer rendering of the original Greek than the word "perfect" as is often seen in the similar statement by Jesus in the gospel of Matthew.

Narrative: I wish to flip or tweak the understanding of these three verses >> what if the aim of the actions were yourself. In other words, be compassionate, non-judgmental, lack condemnation, and forgiving of yourself. It would be difficult to do those same actions toward others if we come from a place of self-loathing or condemnation of ourselves >> as in the often heard statement >> "how can you love (insert other words) others if you don't love yourself as well?"

Question: Do you give yourself the same measure, as described, that you give to others? Are you much too hard on yourself?

Tuesday March 3rd, 2026 Scripture: Matthew 23: 1-3 Then addressing the crowds and his disciples Jesus said, 'The scribes and the Pharisees occupy the chair of Moses. You must therefore do and observe what they tell you; but do not be guided by what they do, since they do not practice what they preach.'

Observation: Being chapter 23, this is placed after many interactions with the Jewish leaders >> plenty of time for the followers of Jesus to know what his approach was to the hypocrisy of the leaders between what they said and did.

Narrative: It would be a mistake to throw out the teaching just because of a bad teacher; a mistake to ignore good "law" just because of the lawless actions of some leaders?

Question: Mmmm...for you personally > how does this apply to the failings of some cultural, political, and religious leaders compared to what they are representing?

Wednesday March 4th, 2026 Scripture - Matthew 20:24-28 When the ten heard about this, they were indignant with the two brothers. Jesus called them together and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be your slave— just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Observation: Jesus had just predicted his fate for a third time, and Salome with her two sons, James and John, came to ask Jesus if they/sons could have a special place in the kingdom... as conventional wisdom of the time had kingdoms with well developed and multiple layers of privilege, stature, and entitlement.

Narrative: The same Salome who would be at the crucifixion and see the empty tomb; and arguably one of the prominent female benefactors who provided support for the ministry of Jesus and the inner circle of disciples.

Question: How easy or difficult is it for you to break out of our present cultural wisdom around money, power, and entitlements to accept Jesus' more egalitarian call based on love and compassion?

Thursday March 5th, 2026 Scripture - Luke 16:19-21 'There was a rich man who used to dress in purple and fine linen and feast magnificently every day. And at his gate there used to lie a poor man called Lazarus, covered with sores, who longed to fill himself with what fell from the rich man's table. Even dogs came and licked his sores...'

Observation: What would follow is the continuing story of the rich man dying and going to Hades and sees Abraham embracing Lazarus and wants God to warn his family to be more compassionate to the poor...

Narrative: There will always be someone less fortunate than you and therefore you can be considered the rich person in purple who may ignore the less fortunate >> even if you live a modest life in America, you are better off than 90% of the people on the planet.

Question: So why do we tend to look in envy at the 10% who have it better than us, instead of being grateful and working toward bringing those less fortunate some relief?

Friday March 6th, 2026

Scripture-Matthew 21: 41-46 Jesus said to them, 'Have you never read in the scriptures: The stone which the builders rejected has become the cornerstone; this is the Lord's doing and we marvel at it? 'I tell you, then, that the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a people who will produce its fruit.' When they heard his parables, the chief priests and the scribes realized he was speaking about them, but though they would have liked to arrest him they were afraid of the crowds, who looked on him as a prophet.

Observation: Jesus had just told them the parable about a vineyard owner who went away, and the tenants abused the servants and eventually killed his son.

Narrative: Expectation and entitlement is hard to challenge even when warranted. When people in such a mindset are challenged, their mood can go beyond being shocked to anger..."how dare they." They have much to protect and much to lose if their "glass house" of entitlement would come crashing down.

Question: How did you deal with such an attitude, if experienced, in your life?

Saturday March 7th, 2026

Scripture – Luke 15:1-3 The tax collectors and sinners, however, were all crowding round to listen to him, and the Pharisees and scribes complained saying, 'This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.' So he told them this parable:

Observation: Although the reading for the day skips some verses, the story stated next by Jesus would be the prodigal son parable.

Narrative: The “other side of the tracks” syndrome once again >> The Pharisees, Scribes, and other religious elites were intrigued by Jesus, maybe even seeing him as a peer as a prophet. But Jesus would directly argue against the socio-religious purity system upon which they based their lives. Therefore, Jesus was from “the other side of the tracks” and they created direct conflicts with Jesus which included insulting Him, along with being rude and disrespectful.

Question: Have you or someone close to you ever been on one side or the other of such a dilemma or attitude?