

Young Mothers' Bible Study

CAST

Carrie -

Sarah –

Lee –

Candi -

Heather –

Jesus –

James -

Matthew –

John –

Peter -

Disciple –

(A group of young mothers gather for their Thursday Morning with the Word group.)

(Carrie and Sarah enter together)

Sarah: Looks like we are first – I'll put on the water for tea.

Carrie: I brought some chai tea – have you tried it?

Sarah: No, what is it?

Carrie: It is blend of some green teas and cinnamon and spices – I really like it!

Sarah: Does it have caffeine? That little one I'm carrying is already active enough!

Carrie: It does. I guess you will have to wait a few months to try it.

Lee (complaining as she enters): I never thought I'd get Debbie to the sitter's today. Boy was she stubborn!

Sarah: Hi Lee!

Carrie: Glad you made it!

Lee: Why is it that when I am in the biggest hurry she causes the most trouble?

Sarah: You're not late, Lee. We just got here.

Lee: Lately it feels like I am always playing tug of war with her.

Carrie: Maybe she misses Ed as much as you do.

Lee: It sure has been tough since he got called up by the National Guard. I'm not cut out for this single parent role.

Carrie: Well, I may have a lot more experience in that role since Tom and I separated, but I sure don't like it.

(Candi and Heather enter – everyone greets one another)

Candi: It's my fault we were late – Scott wet his bed again – he was upset and I had to get everything in the wash – by the time I got everything taken care of and settled him down I was ten minutes late picking up Heather. I'm glad the local police didn't give me the blue light special on the way!

Heather: Candi, you need to slow down and take a deep breath. I'm not upset that I had to wait a little.

Carrie: Well, we are all here so let's get started. I will lead us in prayer. Gracious God, we give you thanks for one another, that we can gather to study your Word and support one another. We thank you that we have all arrived safely. Guide us in this time of sharing and study. Help us to understand Jesus better and to know your will for our lives. Watch over our loved ones, especially we pray for Ed. Keep him and the other soldiers safe and help Lee through this difficult time. All this we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

Carrie: Well, where did we leave off?

Heather: I think we got as far as Mark 8:26. I remember us talking about how even Jesus did not get it right the first time.

Lee: I remember. That blind man didn't see clearly when Jesus first healed him. It made me feel good to know that I am not the only one who doesn't always get things right the first time.

Candi: And I liked it that Jesus didn't give up but laid his hands on the man and healed a second time and that time the man saw clearly. It gave me hope that Jesus won't give up on me.

Carrie: That was a good study last week. Well, let's see where the next verses lead us. Mark 8:27 – Jesus went with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi
(Women freeze in place – attention is drawn to the other side of the narthex where Jesus enters with his disciples)

Jesus: Who do people say that I am?

James: Some people are saying that you are John the Baptist raised from the dead. Rumor is that King Herod, who had John beheaded, thinks that John has come back in you!

Matthew: I hear people say you are Elijah – the prophet who was taken up into heaven alive.

Andrew: The prophet Malachi said that Elijah would come back right before the great and terrible day of the Lord – the day when the Lord will destroy all evil and judge the world.

John: I heard some speculating you were more like Isaiah or Ezekial or Daniel or Amos – one of the important prophets.

Jesus: But who do you say that I am?

Peter: You are the Messiah.

Jesus: Listen, don't let me ever hear you telling anyone that about me.

Jesus (after a pause for reflection): Listen, the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.

(Disciples are silent – heads down – pondering. Peter touches Jesus' arm and motions for Jesus to accompany him so they can speak alone – they move away from the other disciples)

Peter: Jesus, how can you talk about dying. I know that God has plans for you to defeat all of God's enemies – All the promises for the Messiah will come true in you. Jesus – stop this talk about suffering and rejection – you need to plan for victory – God will give it to you.

Jesus (sternly): Get behind me, Satan. You are not thinking what God thinks but what human beings think.

(Jesus and the disciples freeze and remain in place)

Heather: That sounds like Jesus was really angry with Peter – calling him Satan! Peter only wanted what we pray for – that good will win over evil and our soldiers will be safe.

Candi: Jesus was no soldier.

Heather: In a way he was – he was the one God was sending into the battle against evil – all Peter wanted is that Jesus would be kept safe.

Carrie: I think Jesus was tempted to want that also. I've always thought that is why Jesus called Peter Satan. Part of Jesus wanted to be Messiah without suffering and rejection and death.

Lee: The way I wish Ed could be a soldier without car bombs and mortars. I really believe in what we are doing in Iraq but I do not want my husband to be wounded there.

Sarah: Neither do we, Lee. (pause – everyone looks at Lee – then looks away)

Sarah: I am not as up on this Bible stuff as the rest of you – but I always thought Peter said, “You are the Christ.”

Heather: Christ means Messiah – The Anointed One. Those are all ways of saying that Jesus is the king God promised to send to win the victory over all the enemies of God's people.

Candi: The king who would be a descendant of King David.

Heather: Peter said Jesus was that king.

Carrie: And Jesus said, “Don't tell anyone.” I wonder why.

Candi: I've always thought that Jesus knew that people would get the wrong idea. They would think that he was a king that would lead an army. But Jesus did not want violence. He did not defeat evil through violence.

Sarah: When Jesus came into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday, that is what he was demonstrating. A king who comes humble and lowly, riding on a donkey.

Lee: But the people still shouted, “Blessed is the coming kingdom of our Ancestor David.” I'll bet the Romans loved hearing that.

Carrie: They may not have but I think Jesus' disciples did. I think they expected Jesus to be a political ruler and when he was arrested and did not fight – they gave up on him – they ran away.

Heather: I have always thought it interesting that when the crowd had a choice between Jesus and Barabbas, they chose Barabbas. He had committed murder in a revolt against the Romans.

Candi: I heard somewhere that his name means Son of Father, or Son of Daddy. It is like the crowd was allowed to choose between two sons of the Father, one violent and one who would suffer the violence of others.

Sarah: Well, I will always choose to have my son be violent rather than suffer violence.

Carrie: Are you sure about that? Lee, I don't want to upset you, but I have been wondering what it does to someone when they know they have taken another life. Did you and Ed ever talk about that?

Lee: Before he left Ed said he would be praying that he would not have to kill anyone. I have been praying that whatever happens he will not be harmed by it. I can't imagine what it would be like to have him injured physically or emotionally.

Sarah: Do you think God found it easier to live with God's own self with Jesus suffering rather than causing suffering?

Lee: But in a way that was easy for God because all God had to do was snap the fingers and Jesus would be alive again. If Ed dies, I'll be alone.

Heather: But Ed would be safe with Jesus. And we would be there for you.

Lee: This is depressing. I thought Bible Study would leave me feeling better. First my daughter and now all of you.

Heather: It must have been awfully depressing for God to see Jesus go through what he did. Not to mention how God must feel about Ed being in Iraq and the people there suffering as they do.

Lee: I've always thought God was the one in control.

Carrie: I don't think so. I think Jesus had to die because God is committed to this world even if we are not so committed to God. God is not the one who chooses the terrible things we do to each other. We do.

Sarah: I think that God is still suffering – with the soldiers and families on both sides of this war – and every war.

Carrie: I suppose if God loves us all that God will not stop suffering until all people are suffering no more.

Lee: I think it will help me to remember that.

Candi (looking at her watch): Time for me to pick up the kids.

Heather: Let's close with prayer: Loving God, help us. Help us trust in your love and when challenges come walk with us. We thank you for Jesus' love for us, for his dying on the cross for us. Help us always to love all your children. And keep Ed safe. Amen.