

## Into the Mess & Other Jesus Stories: Reflections on the Life of Christ by Debi Thomas—

**Week 4 Chapter 12 The Widowed Prophet to Chapter 16 But What do you Think?**

**Check in Question:** What would you like to ask God right now?

### Opening Prayer

Loving God,

As we gather to reflect on Your Word, open our hearts to the wisdom of the widowed prophet, the sheltering care of the mother hen, and the courage of Jesus who calls us to truth and service. Give us the grace to ask honest questions, to see Your glory in surprising places, and to confront anything that harms Your children.

May Your Spirit guide our conversation so that we may hear You more clearly and follow You more faithfully. Amen.

### Reflection questions:

#### Based on Chapter 12: The widowed prophet

1. Do you see the widow's offering as a celebratory story of deep generosity, or as a cautionary tale about a system that exploits the vulnerable?
2. Why do you think Jesus praised the widow for giving to an institution he also criticized?
3. Should disciples today challenge any form of religious practice that pressures or harms vulnerable people?
4. Who in your life today acts with the same prophetic courage as the widow?



#### Based on Chapter 13 The Way of the Hen (Dominus Flevit church)

1. Who has been a "mother hen" figure in your life—someone who has gathered, protected, or nurtured you?
2. What would help us recognize Jesus's vulnerability as a source of strength? And besides a hen, what other image might beautifully



describe God?

3. Who are the people you long to protect, help, or "gather in" as Jesus does?

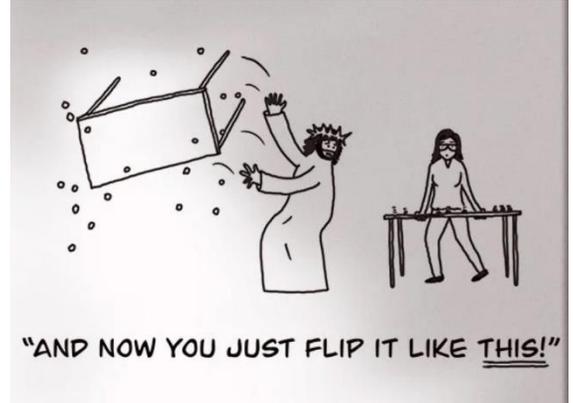
#### Based on Chapter 14: What Glory Looks Like

1. The sons of Zebedee asked Jesus for special places of honor. What is it that *you* most want from Jesus?
2. James and John placed deep trust in Jesus. How would you describe your own trust in him?
3. What do you sense God desires from you? What obstacles make that difficult?

4. Marketers talk about WIIFM—“What’s in it for me?” What is your personal WIIFM when it comes to following Jesus?
5. Do you agree with the author that service should be our highest priority as disciples?
6. Are we willing to let go of privilege in order to seek true glory?

**Based on Chapter 15: The Temple of his Body (The Naked Pastor..art)**

1. Zeal fueled Jesus in this moment. What fuels or animates you in your faith life?
2. How do you feel about Jesus’s posture, tone, and actions when he overturned the tables in the Temple?
3. Is it godly to respond to systemic evil with silence, passive acceptance, or complicity? Why or why not?
4. When have you found yourself challenged to act—or not act—in a similar way?



**Based on Chapter 16: But What do *You* Think?**

1. Do you consider yourself someone who asks thoughtful, honest questions?
2. If Jesus asked you today, “Who do you say that I am?” how would you answer?
3. What do you think belongs to God’s realm, and what belongs to the earthly realm?
4. Matthew’s lists ways Jesus shaped him: “You are the one who... helped me be brave... whom I denied...” How would you complete the sentence: “You are the one who...”
5. What stories—faith stories or family stories—have you inherited? Do they feel comforting and familiar, or challenging and difficult?

**Closing Prayer**

For whom and what shall we pray...

Merciful God,

We thank You for the insights shared and the questions stirred within us.

Strengthen our trust in Jesus, deepen our desire to serve, and give us courage to act with compassion and justice.

As we leave this place, help us live the stories of faith we have inherited—becoming people of hope, protection, and prophetic love.

Hold us close under Your wings and send us forth in peace.

Amen.

Next time Chapters 17-A day in the Life --- 25 Be Opened