



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

Week 5 Chapter 17 A Day in the Life-- to Chapter 23 Be Open

Check in Question: All of meet challenging people, who have you encountered lately?

Opening Prayer

Loving God,

As we gather today, open our hearts to Your Word and Your work within us.

Give us the courage to step into deep water, to face our fears and doubts, and to welcome Your healing touch in the hidden corners of our lives.

Teach us to notice what others overlook, and to trust that You transform the ordinary into the sacred.

Make us open—open to Your love, open to one another, and open to the newness You bring each day.

Amen.

Reflection questions:

Based on Chapter 17: *A Day in the Life*

1. How are you intentionally shaping or “sculpting” your daily life of faith?
2. Do you think Jesus ever experienced “no” from God the Father? What might that teach us?
 - o *Optional addition:* How do you respond when God says “no” or “not yet”?
3. Have you ever practiced any form of healing—spiritual, emotional, or physical?
4. Like Jesus, are you able to let go and move on when a situation does not unfold as you hoped?

Based on Chapter 18: *Same Old, Same Old*

1. Do you agree with the author that Jesus’ invitation into deep water is a promise to cultivate us, not to sever us from what we love?
2. Thompson says that in God’s Kingdom there is “no need.” How do we participate in building such a Kingdom in our homes, parish, and community?

Based on Chapter 19: *They Have No Wine*

1. God’s desire and capacity transforms the ordinary into the sacred, the weak into the strong, and the incomplete into the whole. Where have you seen this kind of transformation in your life or in others?
2. Thompson says Mary notices things—like the shortage of wine. What have you noticed in your family, church, or community that you wish had a solution?

Based on Chapter 20: *The Exorcist in the Synagogue*

1. Do I approach my spiritual life with curiosity or with boredom?
2. When I sit in the pew on Sunday, am I open to encountering something new, or do I expect to be comforted and affirmed?
3. What “possesses” us—what attitudes, fears, habits, or attachments have a hold on us?
4. Do you allow Jesus to enter the frightening or “nightmare” parts of your life?

Based on Chapter 21: *Out on the Water*

1. What do you fear most right now?
2. If Jesus asked you to walk on water, would you try—or would fear hold you back?
3. What doubts do you struggle with?
4. What tends to trigger or intensify your fear?

Based on Chapter 22: *The Question That Hurts*

1. Do you believe God causes illness?
2. Do you believe God desires for you to thrive again?
3. Thompson says that confronting the question of what we truly want is where healing begins. How does this resonate with you?

Based on Chapter 23: *Be Open*

1. Reflect on Thompson's statement: "Jesus shows us what a life infused with God's love and loveliness looks like." What stands out to you?
2. Thompson suggests that outcasts are welcome at the table. Do you believe this is true at Holy Family? Why or why not?
3. In what ways is Jesus calling you personally to be open?

Closing Prayer

For whom and what shall we pray...

Gracious Lord,

Thank You for the ways You have stirred our minds and hearts today.

Help us leave this place with renewed trust, deeper curiosity,
and a willingness to let go of what holds us back.

May we walk forward with openness, compassion, and the faith to follow wherever You call.

Bless our steps, heal our wounds, and strengthen our hope.

Amen.

Next time Chapters 24-When Daughters Go in Peace --- 28-Good for Us to Be Here?
