

beloved

*a John series by
Crosswalk Church*

beloved

March 12 - April 18

John is probably my favorite Gospel. While not being one of the synoptic Gospels, it is a gospel with a purpose, a plan, and a whole world of implications. John is writing this letter much later than the other gospels, and while it would make sense that he borrow from the other gospels, he does not so much as borrow, but in those things that are common to all, he elaborates, and on those things that do not appear in the other gospels, he has a purpose. The wedding at Cana, the interaction with Nicodemus, and the raising of Lazarus, among others are purposefully told and imagined so that we might learn the implications of following Jesus, in both its beauty and in its struggles.

John is full of extended conversation and discourses and perhaps less straightforward narrative. Jesus the Rabbi is on full display in this Gospel, and we can learn in a different mode than perhaps we can in the other narratives of Jesus' life found in the Synoptics. However, they all speak in the same tone, with a recognition that theology is learned is only good when it is theology practiced. The same can be said of our understanding of theology today. Without practical and applicable ways of putting good theology to use, we have missed the point. Orthodoxy is always important, but without Orthopraxy, it is dead. Good understanding should lead to good practice. These two things do not exist in a vacuum, rather, they uphold one another and one seeks to grow the other. We have to read John with the understanding that his words are applicable to our lives and our lives need to reflect the teachings of the Rabbi Jesus as we seek to make the kingdom of God a reality in our lives.

How long has it been since you engaged in a deep study of a book of scripture? We are taking 42 days to study this book, and it will lead us to Easter. This might be a wonderful opportunity to share this guide, or even study with someone for the next 6 weeks in order to bring them to a better understanding of Jesus and the story that unfolds in this powerful gospel. In fact, it could even lead them to a desire to be baptized, which we always love to offer to anyone in our Easter service. However, more important than filling a tank, is filling hearts with a greater understanding of Jesus Christ, his purpose, his words, and his love for us.

We always appreciate you joining us on these opportunities to learn, grow, and mature in an authentic relationship with Jesus.

Blessings,
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WEEK 1

Day 1

John 1:1

The Word was with God,
and the Word was God.

I have a particular affinity to this text in that when I learned the Greek language in my college studies, this was the text we began to translate first. We did it again and again until it was seared into our consciousness. All these years later, I can't

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- [illegible]

John 1:2-5

- 2 He existed in the beginning with God.
- 3 God created everything through him,
and nothing was created except through him.
- 4 The Word gave life to everything that was
created,
and his life brought light to everyone.
- 5 The light shines in the darkness,
and the darkness can never extinguish it.

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In verse 2, there has been a little argument over whether this just means that he is older than Adam, or if this assertion is that the Word is eternal. It seems that greater scholarship leans toward the eternality of Jesus, which goes along well with the use of the word Logos, word, to delineate Jesus. This word, logos, would have been familiar to the Greeks as well as the Hebrews. The Greek understanding centered on ultimate reason or the rationale of the universe, rather than the personal God revealed through the Old Testament scriptures and through the patriarchs of the Old Testament. John claimed that the God of creation, the ultimate mind of the universe, had taken on flesh, or he had become incarnate.

Scripture doesn't really give us any opportunity for atheism and no room for doubt about how God has spoken, which is through the word. Before there was a beginning, the Word had been coequal with God throughout all of eternity. But what did the author mean by "with God?" The Greek word is *pros* which literally means "toward," implying a face-to-face and equal relationship. While John later makes a case for the trinity, in this verse he recognizes the plurality of God throughout the ages.

While the other Gospel writers left it out, John makes a case--twice--for the emphasis. This language is a deliberate connection to Genesis and it sets the stage for other New Testament Scriptures which show us Jesus' involvement in creation.

"For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him" (Col. 1:16). "In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways,

but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe" (Heb. 1:1-2).

John is again setting up the reader to see the divinity of Christ in its fullest. To place Jesus at Creation, is foundational to an understanding of Jesus as eternal and part of the co-eternal Godhead. We cannot think of Jesus as having one role, and that being only an incarnate savior. Rather, it is all three of the Godhead working together at all times, from forever to forever. Without this understanding of the trinity, we fall into other heresies against which John was writing.

In verse 4 we see the first appearance of the word that is to become a keyword for us: Life. It means that the revelation of Jesus is also the revelation of life. We will find the Greek word for life, *zoe*, no less than 36 times in this Gospel. As well, John introduces another key word; light. Life becomes the light of man. These are positive terms, particularly in contrast to death and darkness.

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1. Have you ever thought about Jesus being present in creation? Why or why not?
2. Do you think about the different jobs that each member of the Trinity have? Are they relegated to just those jobs?
3. Why do you think John uses the word light so often?

John 1:6-9

6 God sent a man, John the Baptist, 7 to tell about the light so that everyone might believe because of his testimony. 8 John himself was not the light; he was simply a witness to tell about the light. 9 The one who is the true light, who gives light to everyone, was coming into the world.

In these texts we begin to see the purpose of Lamb. With the introduction of John the Baptist, we jump into the narrative with just enough context to understand. As well, we see another concept show up in John's writing, that of Witness. Now, we just did 7 weeks on Witness in our previous series, but I still want to touch on it with John. A good witness does not draw attention to themselves, rather to the one or to the facts which they represent. They are like a sign or a semiotic which points the way to the object of their attention.

John the author did something interesting with words when talking about John the Baptist; he says he was sent, and he uses the same word from which the word Apostle was built. In this way, John the Author seems to be acknowledging that John the Baptist was as much of an apostle as any of the other apostles were, as they were all “sent” by God to proclaim the good news about Jesus Christ.

But the author is quick to point out that John the Baptist was NOT the light, but was a witness to tell about the light. He was a lesser light pointing to the greatest light. In production we have a million different kinds of lights and settings that we use. We have movable gobos, we have front of house lights, LED panels that look like huge TV's, but all of them pale in comparison to a simple sunrise or sunset. Nothing that we can do will reproduce the beauty of the sun that we see everyday. Even the moon is a better reflection of the real light coming from the sun than anything we have tried to make so it can illuminate our paths.

But there is a little contrast given in verse 9, while John's light gives testimony to the light, the light of Jesus gives light to everyone in the world. There is an intended contrast here. John was a man, but Jesus is God. John is a witness to the word, and Jesus is the Word. John was a servant, and Jesus

is the Son. The last phrase "... was coming to the world" was certainly a recognition of the incarnation, the enfleshment of God as Jesus. It is clumsy in the English language, and my autocorrect wants to correct it, but it was meant to favor a reference to Jesus' birth.

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1. Have you ever wondered why the use of Light was used in the book of John?
2. How can you be a witness to the light? And does that make you a little light?
3. Are you okay with being a "lesser light?"

March 9, 2022

10 He came into the very world he created, but the world didn't recognize him. 11 He came to his own people, and even they rejected him. 12 But to all who believed him and accepted him, he gave the right to become children of God. 13 They are reborn—not with a physical birth resulting from human passion or plan, but a birth that comes from God.

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Verse 13 delineates between a spiritual regeneration, and a physical regeneration. He also is making the case that a spiritual renewal and rebirth is what he is seeking more than anything else. This concept of being reborn, or born-again will show up again in a few chapters, but the seed is planted.

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The overall message of this text is a gospel presentation, and a reality check of what happens when we accept the gospel, as well as when we reject it. It comes early in the writing, as John does not want us to miss it, as his tribe and people had missed it when Jesus was with them. So for us, it is a kind of grace that John gives to us to repeat the message of the good news again and again. We need to hear it often and always, so as not to take it for granted, to forget it, or to be allowed to live life that moves “beyond” the gospel into some other kind of understanding and worldview. This is why we are called Christians, this is what it is all about.

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Day 5

John 1:14-15

14 So the Word became human and made his

15 John testified about him when he shouted to the

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God became flesh, a child, and moved into

And through Jesus, we have seen God's glory,

Then the text takes a turn, and John is seen testi-

book of John in Scripture. Without this agreement, we could see this gospel falling into confusion about who and what Jesus is. But John the author of this Gospel was not interested in confusion, rather, he was interested in creating a clarity that was without question. Jesus was God.

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1. Have you ever questioned the divinity of Jesus?

If so, why? If not, Why not?

2. Why is it important for John to be completely

clear on the divinity of Jesus?

3. Why is it important for you to have complete

clarity in the divinity of Jesus?

16 From his abundance we have all received one gracious blessing after another. 17 For the law was given through Moses, but God's unfailing love and faithfulness came through Jesus Christ. 18 No one has ever seen God. But the unique One, who is himself God, is near to the Father's heart. He has revealed God to us.

Now, I know, it might not seem like you are constantly being blessed. It is possible to recognize that there are troubles in your life, even big ones, and still recognize the blessings that God has given you. Remember, John lost a lot of time in his life to exile and to jail. He could have focused on those things, and sent a testimony of frustration and anger to his readers. Rather, he chose to focus on the good that God had brought him throughout his life. His gratitude is pretty important for the tone of the book, as well as for a model to show us how we should and can live our lives as well. It only takes a point of view that allows for us to understand how good God really is. We count our blessings due to the fact they are so numerous.

In verse 18, we see an interesting idea, that no one has seen God. How can that be true? Didn't even Moses see God at Mount Sinai? Theologians tell us that what Moses saw was a "theophany" or a temporary revelation of God. while Jesus saw God in all his glory, his fullness, and his great divinity--in heaven itself. This is different than an appearing, rather, it is a full revelation of God, without reserve. We, as humans, could never handle this. But Jesus

1. What blessings have you received from God?
2. Have you ever had a theophany? When and where, be specific!
3. Why is God revealing himself to us? What is the purpose of that?

Companion Guide

John 14: 8-9, NLT

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THE WALK

Week 01 of 06

A Study Guide

In this series, we are leading up to one of our favorite holidays of the year as followers of Jesus, Easter! For Christians, Easter is where everything changed. The God of the universe had come down as a baby, lived and walked among us, revealed God to us in new and even more clear ways, and then gave His life by dying on a cross to save us from the curse of this world. No credible historians doubt whether or not Jesus of Nazareth was a real figure in history. No credible historians doubt that he was crucified and died. What they doubt is what happened next. We believe three days later Jesus rose from the grave and is alive.

Join us in this new sermon series as we study through the gospel of John, a gospel written later than the other three gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke), that elaborates on the story of Jesus with stories the other writers left out. John also elaborates on who Jesus is, the light of the world who takes away the sins of the world, and so much more. Ready to get to know Jesus better as we celebrate Easter? Let's connect!

CONNECT

Have you ever sent a text or posted a comment that was misunderstood or autocorrected in a way that changed the meaning of your message? Share what happened and what you meant to say, but also how it made you feel (was it funny, embarrassing, painful, etc...)? Why do you think words mean so much to us?

READ

As mentioned above, John wrote this gospel of Jesus later in his life, and later than the other gospel writers. He's also facing challenges that the earlier writers weren't. Those challenges included whether or not Jesus was really God, whether or not Jesus was flesh and blood, and who on earth had access to this new revelation of God. So as we read, let's ask for eyes to see and ears to hear what we learn about God through His Son, Jesus.

Read as a group JOHN 1: 1-18 – and share any thoughts, insights, or impressions you had as you read through the passage.

Where else in Scripture are the words “in the beginning” used? Why do you think John starts his gospel out by tying in to the creation of the world?

If Jesus is “the Word” then from verses 3-4, what was His role in creation?

What was John the Baptist's role concerning the light of the world? Was he the light as well? If he wasn't the light, do you think it was ever hard to keep sending the attention to Jesus instead of keeping a little of the attention for himself? How might John have been able to stay focused on his role instead of slipping and making it about himself?

Why didn't the world recognize Jesus for who He really is? (God, creator)

In verse 14, John says that the “Word became human” or “flesh” and “made his home among us.” We call this the Incarnation.

How do words become flesh today? If I tell you I'm angry, but then I hit you, my words just became flesh. So why was it important for God not just to tell us He loved us, but show us?

APPLY

Have you ever read stories in the OT and been afraid of or struggled to understand God? But what about Jesus? Have you ever been afraid of Jesus? John asserts that Jesus is God so if that's true how does Jesus help you see and know God better?

John talks a lot about life and light in his gospel. If the “light” shines in the “darkness” and Jesus is light, then what is the darkness? How do you and I help shine the light of Jesus in a world of darkness?

According to John in verses 12, when we believe in Jesus we become children of God, new identities. You and I struggle with identity all the time; who are we? What are we supposed to do with our lives? Knowing who we are matters, but the answer comes by knowing whose we are. If you are children of God, where would you go to learn more about what that means?

If Jesus was really God, what do you say to someone who thinks Jesus was just a good teacher or a wise person and nothing more?

THE WALK

The things we say matter, and the things we do back up the things we say. So how can you and I make sure that our words match our actions? And in light of Jesus, who loved us enough to become flesh, who around us today needs love and encour-

agement and what can we do to show them that love and encouragement today?

LIVING WORDS

Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied." Jesus replied, "Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and yet you still don't know who I am? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father!

So why are you asking me to show him to you?

John 14: 8-9, NLT

CWKIDS
Week 01 of 06 - Prologue
Sermon Series Kids Questions

John 1:1-18

Introduction - The following questions are a guide to help families with children understand God and discover His love throughout the series. You may think of other ideas that fit the needs of your family.

Read John 1:1-18 together with your family.

Have you ever been afraid of the dark? Maybe you worry about what you cannot see, or maybe you were afraid of the dark when you were younger but now you feel more brave and less afraid. Darkness can be a scary thing because we cannot see what is around us. But these verses describe the Word (Jesus) as a light that shines in the darkness. He shines so brightly that there is no darkness when he is here.

Demonstrate how light overcomes darkness by turning out the lights or going in a dark room, and then turning on a bright light. Darkness has to disappear because the light is here!

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What does it feel like to sit in the darkness? What are you afraid of?

What makes you feel brave?

How do you feel when the light is on and you can see everything?

WEEK 2

John 1:19-34

19 This was John's testimony when the Jewish leaders sent priests and Temple assistants from Jerusalem to ask John, "Who are you?" 20 He came right out and said, "I am not the Messiah." 21 "Well then, who are you?" they asked. "Are you Elijah?" "No," he replied. "Are you the Prophet we are expecting?" "No." 22 "Then who are you? We need an answer for those who sent us. What do you have to say about yourself?" 23 John replied in the words of the prophet Isaiah: "I am a voice shouting in the wilderness, 'Clear the way for the Lord's coming!'" 24 Then the Pharisees who had been sent 25 asked him, "If you're not the Messiah or Elijah or the Prophet, what right do you have to baptize?" 26 John told them, "I baptize with water, but right here in the crowd is someone you do not recognize. 27 Though his ministry follows mine, I'm not even worthy to be his slave and untie the straps of his sandal." 28 This encounter took place in Bethany, an area east of the Jordan River, where John was baptizing Jesus, the Lamb of God. 29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! 30 He is the one I was talking about when I said, 'A man is coming after me who is far greater than I am, for he existed long before me.' 31 I did not recognize him as the Messiah, but I have been baptizing with water so that he might be revealed to Israel." 32 Then John testified, "I saw the Holy Spirit descending like a dove from heaven and resting upon him. 33 I didn't know he was the one, but when God sent me to baptize with water, he told me, 'The one on whom you see the Spirit descend and rest is the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.' 34 I saw this happen to Jesus, so I testify that he is the Chosen One of God."

There is a lot to unpack here, and we will not get to it all. The first thing I want to emphasize is the way that John the Baptist knew his place, knew who he was, and did not wish for too much, and was content to be the words before the Word arrived. He spoke of being "a voice shouting in the wilderness..." as he quoted the Isaiah text, and he was happy to be the one chosen to prepare the way for the Lord's coming. It is not easy to stay this humble, especially when you are getting the kind of attention he was receiving for his preaching

and teaching. He could have easily been willing to take that notoriety and create more of a name for himself, invited more followers to himself, and to take on the position they almost assuredly would have given him.

However, we see from the initial interchange that this was not his desire. In fact, he immediately refused their inquiry about his messianic place. He let them know he was not the one. In fact, he refuses to be put in the line of prophets to which they gave much honor, and he wasn't even willing to be seen as someone of great importance. Rather, he was a sign, a semiotic, if you will, of the one that is to come.

Do you know who Peter Scolari is? He is the guy who played opposite Tom Hanks in an early sitcom called "Bosom Buddies". I'll save you from having to understand what the show was about, but obviously, Peter Scolari was no Tom Hanks. In some ways, John being mistaken for Jesus was like Peter Scolari being confused for Tom Hanks. Its nice, but when you see Tom Hanks act, you realize that Peter was not half the actor Hanks would become. The people just missed who John was pointing to, and John wouldn't let them forget how important the one who was to come would be.

You would think that when people saw what happened at the baptism of Jesus, they would have no doubt as to who Jesus was. However, miracles don't really convince people of much. I know we all think that all we need is one miracle to make us believe, but even those who heard of the miraculous happening at the Baptism of Jesus were not convinced of his divinity. We, however, should recognize that God does not speak a great deal in the New Testament, so when He does, we should take notice and make sure we take it seriously.

1. Has God ever spoken to you? What did he say? How did he communicate?
2. Have you ever been mistaken for someone famous? Did you tell the truth, or did you pretend like you were a famous person?
3. What do you think God was saying in his affirmation of who Jesus was?

John 1:35-51

35 The following day John was again standing with two of his disciples. 36 As Jesus walked by, John looked at him and declared, "Look! There is the Lamb of God!" 37 When John's two disciples heard this, they followed Jesus. 38 Jesus looked around and saw them following. "What do you want?" he asked them. They replied, "Rabbi" (which means "Teacher"), "where are you staying?" 39 "Come and see," he said. It was about four o'clock in the afternoon when they went with him to the place where he was staying, and they remained with him the rest of the day. 40 Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of these men who heard what John said and then followed Jesus. 41 Andrew went to find his brother, Simon, and told him, "We have found the Messiah" (which means "Christ"). 42 Then Andrew brought Simon to meet Jesus. Looking intently at Simon, Jesus said, "Your name is Simon, son of John—but you will be called Cephas" (which means "Peter"). 43 The next day Jesus decided to go to Galilee. He found Philip and said to him, "Come, follow me." 44 Philip was from Bethsaida, Andrew and Peter's hometown. 45 Philip went to look for Nathanael and told him, "We have found the very person Moses and the prophets wrote about! His name is Jesus, the son of Joseph from Nazareth." 46 "Nazareth!" exclaimed Nathanael. "Can anything good come from Nazareth?" "Come and see for yourself," Philip replied. 47 As they approached, Jesus said, "Now here is a genuine son of Israel—a man of complete integrity." 48 "How do you know about me?" Nathanael asked. Jesus replied, "I could see you under the fig tree before Philip found you." 49 Then Nathanael exclaimed, "Rabbi, you are the Son of God—the King of Israel!" 50 Jesus asked him, "Do you believe this just because I told you I had seen you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than this." 51 Then he said, "I tell you the truth, you will all see heaven open and the angels of God going up and down on the Son of Man, the one who is the stairway between heaven and earth."

Can anything good come from _____?
We can all ask this question of someplace close to where we live. As Jesus was calling the disciples, there was some trepidation amongst them about who could join, what they would be doing, who Jesus really was, and how they were supposed to

live. They even questioned his upbringing and background. However, with a simple "come and see" Jesus enticed them to come along for the most amazing ride. Later in the text, even Philip uses these words.

It seems that Philip understood something. He understood what we should all understand; people come to Christ through us, not by us, and certainly not to us! This means that we can all be conduits of the grace of Jesus Christ, while not getting the credit, nor needing the credit at all. The opportunity to be used by Christ to help someone to "come and see" how good God really is, is an exciting reality that we all get to live.

Verses 50 and 51 always gets me: 50 Jesus asked him, "Do you believe this just because I told you I had seen you under the fig tree? You will see greater things than this." 51 Then he said, "I tell you the truth, you will all see heaven open and the angels of God going up and down on the Son of Man, the one who is the stairway between heaven and earth."

He is basically telling them that although they have seen something miraculous, those miraculous things will become commonplace in light of everything else that Jesus has in store for them. And truly, they were the witnesses of the most amazing things that have ever happened in human history. They were witnesses to the salvation of mankind, to healings, to death on a cross and resurrection from the dead. They were there when this all happened. They were blessed and they were privileged to present in the midst of this kind of greatness and wonders. They watched the lame walk, the blind see, the hard hearted become soft and pliable, and they witnessed the deep and inclusive love that Jesus had for them all, and without a doubt it changed their lives. They never refuted what had happened, and they were willing to die for the truth they experienced.

It seems that if none of this happened, they would have been enticed to deny it all, but they never did. And this is perhaps one of the most amazing things about the history of Christianity. Those early church fathers and mothers were never interested in denying who Christ was and what he did. This, in itself, is a huge sign that what they saw and experienced was real, true, and the foundation of our faith.

1. When have you been used as a conduit for Christ? _____

2. Have you ever seen something amazing that Christ has done? _____

3. Do you think you would have believed these things if you saw them? _____

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John 2:1-11

2 The next day there was a wedding celebration in the village of Cana in Galilee. Jesus' mother was there, 2 and Jesus and his disciples were also invited to the celebration. 3 The wine supply ran out during the festivities, so Jesus' mother told him, "They have no more wine." 4 "Dear woman, that's not our problem," Jesus replied. "My time has not yet come." 5 But his mother told the servants, "Do whatever he tells you." 6 Standing nearby were six stone water jars, used for Jewish ceremonial washing. Each could hold twenty to thirty gallons. 7 Jesus told the servants, "Fill the jars with water." When the jars had been filled, 8 he said, "Now dip some out, and take it to the master of ceremonies." So the servants followed his instructions. 9 When the master of ceremonies tasted the water that was now wine, not knowing where it had come from (though, of course, the servants knew), he called the bridegroom over. 10 "A host always serves the best wine first," he said. "Then, when everyone has had a lot to drink, he brings out the less expensive wine. But you have kept the best until now!" 11 This miraculous sign at Cana in Galilee was the first time Jesus revealed his glory. And his disciples believed in him.

Ah, we all know this story well. It has given us some interesting conversations over the years, especially when it comes to whether Jesus made "real" wine, or fancy grape juice. (Does anyone else feel silly having these conversations now?)

Regardless of whether it was fancy grape juice (it wasn't) or phenomenal wine (it must have been), we see something miraculous happening, and it wasn't something Jesus was interested in doing at the time. He was forced into it by no other person than his mother! I think we can all understand this. Moms often force us to do things we would rather not do at all. They have a persuasive power over us, that even Jesus experienced. This is just one of those ways you KNOW he was human, he had a pushy mom!

He didn't want to perform the miracle because he said his "time had not yet come." She didn't seem to care, rather, she saw a need and wanted it to be taken care of. She was interested in the good of the people there, rather than being interested in the

proper time for Jesus to reveal himself. She thought it good and proper for them to see his good works now.

A couple of things we should think about: 1) She seemed to know he could do miraculous things. How did she know? Had he been practicing on animals and plants at home over the years? 2) She wasn't worried about what people would think. You would think that if something so phenomenal was about to happen, that she would be worried about the reaction some people might have. But she didn't seem to be worried about it, rather, she was encouraging him to do the supernatural in order to solve a problem that the people at the wedding were having.

Lastly, and I guess this would be 3), we need to recognize that Jesus didn't do the least for the wedding, rather, he gave the most of what could be given. Overflowing vessels with the best wine they had yet to have. It shocked the manager, and the guests would have been impressed with the groom's willingness to serve the best last, when they were drunk enough not to notice. But that is how God's abundance works. It is not that he saves the best for last, but everything is the best that God has to offer.

We often underestimate what it is that God has for us. We become comfortable with the least, when God is willing to give the most. We ask for very little, when he has everything to give us. The abundance of his love is overwhelming, and our willingness to ask for all that love is often waning. We can ask for more, God has it and is willing to share.

1. When has God given you more than you have asked for?
2. What does God's abundance look like in your life?
3. How can you show abundance in the lives of those around you?

John 2:12-25

12 After the wedding he went to Capernaum for a few days with his mother, his brothers, and his disciples. Jesus Clears the Temple. 13 It was nearly time for the Jewish Passover celebration, so Jesus went to Jerusalem. 14 In the Temple area he saw merchants selling cattle, sheep, and doves for sacrifices; he also saw dealers at tables exchanging foreign money. 15 Jesus made a whip from some ropes and chased them all out of the Temple. He drove out the sheep and cattle, scattered the money changers' coins over the floor, and turned over their tables. 16 Then, going over to the people who sold doves, he told them, "Get these things out of here. Stop turning my Father's house into a marketplace!" 17 Then his disciples remembered this prophecy from the Scriptures: "Passion for God's house will consume me." 18 But the Jewish leaders demanded, "What are you doing? If God gave you authority to do this, show us a miraculous sign to prove it." 19 "All right," Jesus replied. "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up." 20 "What!" they exclaimed. "It has taken forty-six years to build this Temple, and you can rebuild it in three days?" 21 But when Jesus said "this temple," he meant his own body. 22 After he was raised from the dead, his disciples remembered he had said this, and they believed both the Scriptures and what Jesus had said. 23 Because of the miraculous signs Jesus did in Jerusalem at the Passover celebration, many began to trust in him. 24 But Jesus didn't trust them, because he knew all about people. 25 No one needed to tell him about human nature, for he knew what was in each person's heart.

Interestingly, in the Johannine account (that is just a fancy word for John's account) of the ministry of Jesus, this clearing of the temple happens much earlier in his ministry than in the synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke). Again, John was working with a different purpose in the writing of his Gospel, so we need to take note of why he may have done this in a different order than the other gospel accounts. Perhaps it was to show the authority Jesus had from the beginning; perhaps it was to show the dissatisfaction with the usurious and closed economic system the Jews had created at that time; or perhaps he just forgot what order things happened in. I would think the first two make more

sense than the last idea.

The merchandise described in verse 14 was required for sacrifices. Worshipers had to travel from great distances, and sometimes their animals for sacrifice couldn't make the journey, would die, or simply weren't available. Have you ever tried to travel with a pet? It makes things much more difficult to be sure.

So what was the problem? The problem arises with the reality that these people were in "in the temple courts"--this was the place where gentiles could pray. As well, these concession stands had become cash cows for those selling animals for sacrifice. It was a closed economic system; you wanted to sacrifice, without the right kind of animal you couldn't, and you had to purchase from them. This did not honor God. But I want to be clear, it is due to the fact that there was a closed economic system that was taking advantage of people. This is very different from other forms of commerce that might happen at a church at times. When the sacrifices that were required for a right relationship with God were monetized, it became difficult and expensive for people to be able to gain that salvation. What this means is that they did not have access to forgiveness without finances. Jesus saw this as not only a problem, but evil.

Since the birth of protestantism, we have protested anyone who would keep forgiveness, salvation, and even heaven away from others due to economic hardship. When the catholic church moved to indulgences, Martin Luther fought back. In the same way, Jesus was protesting the usury found in the temple and the temple systems.

1. Have you ever been held back from salvation so that someone could make money off of you? Have you seen that?
2. Do you think this is the same sort of thing as selling merchandise on Sabbath?
3. What can you do to help make forgiveness and salvation more available to everyone?

John 3:1-21

3 There was a man named Nicodemus, a Jewish religious leader who was a Pharisee. 2 After dark one evening, he came to speak with Jesus. "Rabbi," he said, "we all know that God has sent you to teach us. Your miraculous signs are evidence that God is with you." 3 Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God." 4 "What do you mean?" exclaimed Nicodemus. "How can an old man go back into his mother's womb and be born again?" 5 Jesus replied, "I assure you, no one can enter the Kingdom of God without being born of water and the Spirit. 6 Humans can reproduce only human life, but the Holy Spirit gives birth to spiritual life 7 So don't be surprised when I say, 'You must be born again.' 8 The wind blows wherever it wants. Just as you can hear the wind but can't tell where it comes from or where it is going, so you can't explain how people are born of the Spirit." 9 "How are these things possible?" Nicodemus asked. 10 Jesus replied, "You are a respected Jewish teacher, and yet you don't understand these things? 11 I assure you, we tell you what we know and have seen, and yet you won't believe our testimony. 12 But if you don't believe me when I tell you about earthly things, how can you possibly believe if I tell you about heavenly things? 13 No one has ever gone to heaven and returned. But the Son of Man has come down from heaven. 14 And as Moses lifted up the bronze snake on a pole in the wilderness, so the Son of Man must be lifted up, 15 so that everyone who believes in him will have eternal life. 16 "For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. 17 God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him. 18 "There is no judgment against anyone who believes in him. But anyone who does not believe in him has already been judged for not believing in God's one and only Son. 19 And the judgment is based on this fact: God's light came into the world, but people loved the darkness more than the light, for their actions were evil. 20 All who do evil hate the light and refuse to go near it for fear their sins will be exposed. 21 But those who do what is right come to the light so others can see that they are doing what God wants."

Again, one of my favorite stories in John's gospel. There are a great many things happening that we need to keep track of. One, is simply the fact that Nicodemus came at night. In John, there is a contrast between light and dark, and when Nicodemus shows up at night, it is clear that something a little fishy is going on. Nicodemus is essentially showing up on behalf of the Pharisees and their interest and curiosity about Jesus. His first pitch was pretty nonchalant. He calls Jesus "rabbi", a title of respect, and says they know that he is coming from God, for no one else could do the things he is doing. I have always found this to be a bit of a misdirect; he was really looking to see if Jesus was going to identify as one of them, or as something else. However, Nicodemus is respectful, thoughtful, and is truly seeking answers.

Jesus has no time for this. His immediate answer is confusing, to say the least, and baffling, at best. 3 Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, unless you are born again, you cannot see the Kingdom of God." This is the equivalent of someone asking you if the sky is blue and you answering with the word "13!" It simply doesn't make any sense. It is confusing and Nicodemus clearly struggles with understanding what Jesus is trying to say. In some respects, it is pretty rude of Jesus to answer this way, and to confuse Nicodemus so much. Perhaps it was because he wanted Nicodemus to know that he wasn't fooling Jesus in any way at all. Jesus was clear on what the intention of this Pharisee really was. He was trying to veto Jesus, and Jesus wasn't standing for it.

The rest of the conversation seems to be just as confusing to Nicodemus as the first statement was. Being born again just didn't make sense. But Jesus was sticking to his guns, and in this case, to his understanding of the Holy Spirit and what his job was here on earth. The job Jesus had on earth was not to fit in, it was not to keep feathers unruffled, and it was not to explain himself to this man, rather, it was to save all who would listen and hear and believe. His unwillingness to explain himself was not due to the fact he didn't want people to know who he was, but more so because he wanted people to understand that he was different from what they were expecting. He was not there to assuage the system, but rather to change the world and change every system. Jesus was a revolutionary, they just were not sure what kind of revolution he was starting.

2000 years later we know, it was a revolution of salvation and righteousness for the whole universe.

- 1. What would you have said to Jesus if he answered your questions like this?
- 2. Do you think you would have been a Nicodemus, or a disciple?
- 3. Did Nicodemus ever come to believe in Jesus?

John 3:22-36

22 Then Jesus and his disciples left Jerusalem and went into the Judean countryside. Jesus spent some time with them there, baptizing people. 23 At this time John the Baptist was baptizing at Aenon, near Salim, because there was plenty of water there; and people kept coming to him for baptism. 24 (This was before John was thrown into prison.) 25 A debate broke out between John's disciples and a certain Jew over ceremonial cleansing. 26 So John's disciples came to him and said, "Rabbi, the man you met on the other side of the Jordan River, the one you identified as the Messiah, is also baptizing people. And everybody is going to him instead of coming to us." 27 John replied, "No one can receive anything unless God gives it from heaven. 28 You yourselves know how plainly I told you, 'I am not the Messiah. I am only here to prepare the way for him.' 29 It is the bridegroom who marries the bride, and the bridegroom's friend is simply glad to stand with him and hear his vows. Therefore, I am filled with joy at his success. 30 He must become greater and greater, and I must become less and less. 31 "He has come from above and is greater than anyone else. We are of the earth, and we speak of earthly things, but he has come from heaven and is greater than anyone else. 32 He testifies about what he has seen and heard, but how few believe what he tells them! 33 Anyone who accepts his testimony can affirm that God is true. 34 For he is sent by God. He speaks God's words, for God gives him the Spirit without limit. 35 The Father loves his Son and has put everything into his hands. 36 And anyone who believes in God's Son has eternal life. Anyone who doesn't obey the Son will never experience eternal life but remains under God's angry judgment."

Chances are you have heard this story before, but usually we just quote this part: 30 He must become greater and greater, and I must become less and less.

This is the quote that we all take home, the quote that we show again and again to make sure we know where we should place Jesus in our lives, and how we should see ourselves. There is nothing wrong with this text, and in fact, it is the point of the whole pericope. But that does not mean there aren't some interesting other facts that happen in this story.

John's teaching directly after verse 30 is important as well. He recognizes that Jesus has come from heaven, again affirming the divinity of Jesus. He also shows us that we don't really believe that Jesus has seen what he has seen or heard what he has heard. Perhaps that is because we are so used to hearing things of this world, that hearing things of heaven just simply don't make sense. And he also reminds us that we are to believe these things, not because they are provable, but because God is good and we are led by the Holy Spirit to believe all that Jesus said to us.

But perhaps verse 30 does need a bit more time and reflection. What does it mean that Jesus must increase and we must decrease? How is it that we can both be people of God, and people who are living lives that are important, meaningful, and full of joy? This comes from the idea of servant leadership and servant living. John the Baptist understood what his role was, and did not seek more than this, rather, sought to be the most effective in preparing the way of the Lord. In this way, he modeled what it truly meant to be a servant to something greater than ourselves. It is not that we don't have impact, influence, and value, rather, these things come from the way that we serve the one that is greater than us because he was before us, and will always be with us and come after us as well. We serve Jesus, and it is our task to do whatever we can to grow his recognition, his fame, his kingdom and his love. We do this by understanding who we are in his kingdom and what our role really is. We all have a job to do, but it is not to be the savior, that role is already taken. And thank goodness that it is, that was the tough job, our jobs are much easier. We just become signposts and semiotics pointing to the one who has already done everything we would need him to do.

1. What do you feel is your job in the kingdom of God?
2. How has God gifted you to be able to do the work to which he is calling you?
3. Is there a way that you can do this work even better today? How can your community help?

Companion Guide

The following is a guide to help facilitate discussion. Feel free to add or subtract or change questions to fit the conversation, and pray for the Spirit to lead in all things.

OPEN

What do you do for others that lets them know you care about them?

HEAD

SECTION I: John 1:19-51

Read together Scripture: John 1:19-51, and share anything that stands out to you or any questions/ comments that immediately pop-up.

Two times in this passage we see John calling Jesus “the Lamb of God.” What is the significance of that title? (see Ex.12:1-13; Isa. 53:7 for clues).

As we reflect on being God's "beloved", how important is it for us to remember that the gospel we share with the world must be centered around the truth that Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world? How can we do better about making this truth a core component of our witness and testimony?

SECTION II: John 2

Read together Scripture: John 2, and share anything that stands out to you or any questions/comments that immediately pop-up.

As we reflect on the goodness of God at the wedding in Cana, what can we conclude about the way Jesus provides for, heals, forgives, and blesses His children today? How have you experienced the abundance of God?

SECTION III: John 3:1-36

Read together Scripture: John 3:1-36, and share anything that stands out to you or any questions/ comments that immediately pop-up.

Is Jesus' message to Nicodemus relevant to you and your life today? Have you been "born again?" What does that mean for you?

John's statement about Jesus becoming greater and himself becoming less is so powerful. When you think about your life, what needs to change in order for you to completely say that you are decreasing and Christ is increasing?

HEART

What have these verses done for your heart and your relationship with Jesus?

HANDS

Studying scripture and spending time in community are two important spiritual disciplines. What other spiritual practices can you incorporate into your life this coming week?

LIVING WORDS for YOUR WEEK

“Look! There is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!”

“God did not send His Son into the world to condemn it, but to save it.”

“He must become greater and greater, and I must become less and less.”

HE>I

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slight shadow on the right side, suggesting it's resting on a surface.

In this series, we are leading up to one of our favorite holidays of the year as followers of Jesus, Easter! For Christians, Easter is where everything changed. The God of the universe had come down as a baby, lived and walked among us, revealed God to us in new and even more clear ways, and then gave His life by dying on a cross to save us from the curse of this world. No credible historians doubt whether or not Jesus of Nazareth was a real figure in history. No credible historians doubt that he was crucified and died. What they doubt is what happened next. We believe three days later Jesus rose from the grave and is alive.

Join us in this new sermon series as we study through the gospel of John, a gospel written later than the other three gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke), that elaborates on the story of Jesus with stories the other writers left out. John also elaborates on who Jesus is, the light of the world who takes away the sins of the world, and so much more. Ready to get to know Jesus better as we celebrate Easter? Let's connect!

CONNECT

Have you ever played 21 questions? If you haven't let me explain how to play. Someone thinks of a person, usually a well known public figure, and begins to answer 21 questions until someone figures out who the mystery person is. As each question is asked and answered the identity of the person becomes clearer and clearer. If you're with a group of friends, try and play this game.

READ

As mentioned above, John wrote this gospel of Jesus later in his life, and later than the other gospel writers. He's also facing challenges that the earlier writers weren't. Those challenges included whether or not Jesus was really God, whether or not Jesus was flesh and blood, and who on earth had access to this new revelation of God. So as we read, let's ask for eyes to see and ears to hear what we learn about God through His Son, Jesus.

John 1:19-3:36 has multiple moments where Jesus reveals a little bit more about himself. It's evident that people don't yet know who he is, they only know that Jesus is someone special. Through different events with Jesus it becomes clear that Jesus is

someone different - something holy.

Skim through John 1:19-3:36 and note the titles of Jesus's actions.

Read John 3:22-36 - and share any thoughts, insights, or impressions you had as you read through the passage

APPLY

In John 3:22-36 we see something amazing - John teaches how it is we are supposed to posture ourselves when learning who Jesus is. John teaches his disciple that he is there simply to give glory to Jesus.

This is a hard lesson for his disciples to learn - up until that point they were the ones with the attention. They were pointing people to God. With the arrival of Jesus they began to lose traction in the community - their influence began to drop as Jesus's influence began to rise.

The lesson that John teaches his disciples is that their influence is and always will be so that Jesus would be glorified. Jesus becomes the focal point when we take ourselves out of the spotlight.

THE WALK

In our world today there are so many opportunities to put ourselves in the spotlight. Social media has created a platform for everyone to gain influence. Following the way of Jesus causes us to pivot our influence - rather than direct the attention at us we are called to direct attention to Jesus.

We must ask ourselves the question - is our life making us bigger and Jesus smaller? If it is then we are called to pivot - our hope and joy comes from Jesus becoming more and us becoming less.

A wise person once said that humility is defined not as thinking less of yourself but as thinking of yourself less. How can you pivot your attention to Jesus rather than yourself today?

LIVING WORDS

"He must become greater and greater, and I must become less and less."

John 3:30

CWKIDS
Week 02 of 06 - Declarations
Sermon Series Kids Questions

John 1:19-3:36

Introduction - The following questions are a guide to help families with children understand God and discover His love throughout the series. You may think of other ideas that fit the needs of your family.

Read John 1:19-34 together with your family.

Have you ever been mistaken for someone else? Maybe someone called you the wrong name, or maybe you accidentally called someone else the wrong name! The people in this story thought they knew who John the Baptist was, but he had to correct them. "I am not the Messiah!" John helped prepare the way for Jesus by describing Jesus to them, and telling them who to look for.

-

Who did people think John the Baptist was?

Who did John the Baptist preach about?

Why do you think John the Baptist preached about Jesus?

Pretend you are John the Baptist describing Jesus, what do you want people to know about Jesus?

WEEK 3

Day 15
March 20, 2022

John 5

5 Afterward Jesus returned to Jerusalem for one of the Jewish holy days. 2 Inside the city, near the Sheep Gate, was the pool of Bethesda, with five covered porches. 3 Crowds of sick people—blind, lame, or paralyzed—lay on the porches. 5 One of the men lying there had been sick for thirty-eight years. 6 When Jesus saw him and knew he had been ill for a long time, he asked him, “Would you like to get well?” 7 “I can’t, sir,” the sick man said, “for I have no one to put me into the pool when the water bubbles up. Someone else always gets there ahead of me.” 8 Jesus told him, “Stand up, pick up your mat, and walk!” 9 Instantly, the man was healed! He rolled up his sleeping mat and began walking! But this miracle happened on the Sabbath, 10 so the Jewish leaders objected. They said to the man who was cured, “You can’t work on the Sabbath! The law doesn’t allow you to carry that sleeping mat!” 11 But he replied, “The man who healed me told me, ‘Pick up your mat and walk.’” 12 “Who said such a thing as that?” they demanded. 13 The man didn’t know, for Jesus had disappeared into the crowd. 14 But afterward Jesus found him in the Temple and told him, “Now you are well; so stop sinning, or something even worse may happen to you.” 15 Then the man went and told the Jewish leaders that it was Jesus who had healed him.

16 So the Jewish leaders began harassing Jesus for breaking the Sabbath rules. 17 But Jesus replied, “My Father is always working, and so am I.” 18 So the Jewish leaders tried all the harder to find a way to kill him. For he not only broke the Sabbath, he called God his Father, thereby making himself equal with God. 19 So Jesus explained, “I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself. He does only what he sees the Father doing. Whatever the Father does, the Son also does. 20 For the Father loves the Son and shows him everything he is doing. In fact, the Father will show him how to do even greater works than healing this man. Then you will truly be astonished. 21 For just as the Father gives life to those he raises from the dead, so the Son gives life to anyone he wants. 22 In addition, the Father judges no one. Instead, he has given the Son absolute authority to judge, 23 so that everyone will honor the Son, just as they honor the Father. Anyone who does not honor the Son is certainly not

honoring the Father who sent him. 24 “I tell you the truth, those who listen to my message and believe in God who sent me have eternal life. They will never be condemned for their sins, but they have already passed from death into life. 25 “And I assure you that the time is coming, indeed it’s here now, when the dead will hear my voice—the voice of the Son of God. And those who listen will live. 26 The Father has life in himself, and he has granted that same life-giving power to his Son. 27 And he has given him authority to judge everyone because he is the Son of Man. 28 Don’t be so surprised! Indeed, the time is coming when all the dead in their graves will hear the voice of God’s Son, 29 and they will rise again. Those who have done good will rise to experience eternal life, and those who have continued in evil will rise to experience judgment.

30 I can do nothing on my own. I judge as God tells me. Therefore, my judgment is just, because I carry out the will of the one who sent me, not my own will. 31 “If I were to testify on my own behalf, my testimony would not be valid. 32 But someone else is also testifying about me, and I assure you that everything he says about me is true. 33 In fact, you sent investigators to listen to John the Baptist, and his testimony about me was true. 34 Of course, I have no need of human witnesses, but I say these things so you might be saved. 35 John was like a burning and shining lamp, and you were excited for a while about his message. 36 But I have a greater witness than John—my teachings and my miracles. The Father gave me these works to accomplish, and they prove that he sent me. 37 And the Father who sent me has testified about me himself. You have never heard his voice or seen him face to face, 38 and you do not have his message in your hearts, because you do not believe me—the one he sent to you. 39 “You search the Scriptures because you think they give you eternal life. But the Scriptures point to me! 40 Yet you refuse to come to me to receive this life. 41 “Your approval means nothing to me, 42 because I know you don’t have God’s love within you. 43 For I have come to you in my Father’s name, and you have rejected me. Yet if others come in their own name, you gladly welcome them. 44 No wonder you can’t believe! For you gladly honor each other, but you don’t care about the honor that comes from the one who alone is God.

45 “Yet it isn’t I who will accuse you before the Father. Moses will accuse you! Yes, Moses, in whom

you put your hopes. 46 If you really believed Moses, you would believe me, because he wrote about me. 47 But since you don't believe what he wrote, how will you believe what I say?"

This is really the third miracle of Jesus in the book of John. In it, we see another recognition of the divinity of Jesus. As well, he is moving from relative obscurity to a much more well known figure, that is catching the attention of the leadership, both civil and religious, in Israel at the time. It is a lot to read, and this week has a great deal of reading as we take on a chapter each and every day, but I believe in you, you can do it!

The first story in this chapter is a well known story of the lame man at the pool of Bethesda. We all know the story, in fact, we have even written about it in a previous study, so we won't spend much time on it. However, it is fair to note that the healing came from a belief that Jesus can do what he says he can do. He simply told the man to take up his mat and walk, the man did it, and that was that. However, the Jewish leaders at the time saw issues with what he had done as he had done it on the Sabbath. This is often the case with those who can't see Jesus for the rules. They thought that Jesus was doing something that was not allowed in scripture, according to their understanding of the Old Testament. However, Jesus was taking the spirit of what the Old Testament said was appropriate and was reinterpreting it as befit his station and his purpose.

It is hard for us to see things change. Humans become habit-keepers very easily. We try to systematize things, make them work the same way each time, and be on the same page at all times. But this isn't how the Gospel works.

Jesus was doing what was most needed at the time so that the most people could be blessed, and so that this man could be healed. Jesus was not so much a rule follower, nor was he a rule breaker, he was cognizant of a higher rule that he paid attention to. That was the rule of Love, and that rule superseded all other rules. It would be tough to say that Jesus was compliant, but also hard to say that he was non-compliant. He had a greater rule, a greater law, and a greater love to live by. His decisions were not informed by human understanding, but by an understanding of a much greater love

and a much greater purpose for himself and for his mission here on earth.

- 1. Have you ever had to break a rule for the greater love?
- 2. What kind of love would make you do that?
- 3. How can you express that greater love in all aspects of your life?

John 6

Jesus Feeds Five Thousand

6 After this, Jesus crossed over to the far side of the Sea of Galilee, also known as the Sea of Tiberias. 2 A huge crowd kept following him wherever he went, because they saw his miraculous signs as he healed the sick. 3 Then Jesus climbed a hill and sat down with his disciples around him. 4 (It was nearly time for the Jewish Passover celebration.) 5 Jesus soon saw a huge crowd of people coming to look for him. Turning to Philip, he asked, "Where can we buy bread to feed all these people?" 6 He was testing Philip, for he already knew what he was going to do. 7 Philip replied, "Even if we worked for months, we wouldn't have enough money to feed them!" 8 Then Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, spoke up. 9 "There's a young boy here with five barley loaves and two fish. But what good is that with this huge crowd?" 10 "Tell everyone to sit down," Jesus said. So they all sat down on the grassy slopes. (The men alone numbered about 5,000.) 11 Then Jesus took the loaves, gave thanks to God, and distributed them to the people. Afterward he did the same with the fish. And they all ate as much as they wanted. 12 After everyone was full, Jesus told his disciples, "Now gather the leftovers, so that nothing is wasted." 13 So they picked up the pieces and filled twelve baskets with scraps left by the people who had eaten from the five barley loaves. 14 When the people saw him do this miraculous sign, they exclaimed, "Surely, he is the Prophet we have been expecting!" 15 When Jesus saw that they were ready to force him to be their king, he slipped away into the hills by himself.

Jesus Walks on Water

16 That evening Jesus' disciples went down to the shore to wait for him. 17 But as darkness fell and Jesus still hadn't come back, they got into the boat and headed across the lake toward Capernaum. 18 Soon a gale swept down upon them, and the sea grew very rough. 19 They had rowed three or four miles when suddenly they saw Jesus walking on the water toward the boat. They were terrified, 20 but he called out to them, "Don't be afraid. I am here!" 21 Then they were eager to let him in the boat, and immediately they arrived at their destination!

Jesus, the Bread of Life

22 The next day the crowd that had stayed on the far shore saw that the disciples had taken the only boat, and they realized Jesus had not gone with them. 23 Several boats from Tiberias landed near the place where the Lord had blessed the bread and the people had eaten. 24 So when the crowd saw that neither Jesus nor his disciples were there, they got into the boats and went across to Capernaum to look for him. 25 They found him on the other side of the lake and asked, "Rabbi, when did you get here?" 26 Jesus replied, "I tell you the truth, you want to be with me because I fed you, not because you understood the miraculous signs. 27 But don't be so concerned about perishable things like food. Spend your energy seeking the eternal life that the Son of Man[f] can give you. For God the Father has given me the seal of his approval." 28 They replied, "We want to perform God's works, too. What should we do?" 29 Jesus told them, "This is the only work God wants from you: Believe in the one he has sent." 30 They answered, "Show us a miraculous sign if you want us to believe in you. What can you do?" 31 After all, our ancestors ate manna while they journeyed through the wilderness! The Scriptures say, 'Moses gave them bread from heaven to eat.']" 32 Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, Moses didn't give you bread from heaven. My Father did. And now he offers you the true bread from heaven.

33 The true bread of God is the one who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world." 34 "Sir," they said, "give us that bread every day." 35 Jesus replied, "I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to me will never be hungry again. Whoever believes in me will never be thirsty. 36 But you haven't believed in me even though you have seen me. 37 However, those the Father has given me will come to me, and I will never reject them. 38 For I have come down from heaven to do the will of God who sent me, not to do my own will. 39 And this is the will of God, that I should not lose even one of all those he has given me, but that I should raise them up at the last day. 40 For it is my Father's will that all who see his Son and believe in him should have eternal life. I will raise them up at the last day." 41 Then the people[h] began to murmur in disagreement because he had said, "I am the bread that came down from heaven." 42 They said, "Isn't this Jesus, the son of Joseph? We know his father and mother. How can he say, 'I came down from heaven'?" 43 But Jesus replied, "Stop complaining about

what I said. 44 For no one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws them to me, and at the last day I will raise them up. 45 As it is written in the Scriptures, 'They will all be taught by God.' Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from him comes to me. 46 (Not that anyone has ever seen the Father; only I, who was sent from God, have seen him.) 47 "I tell you the truth, anyone who believes has eternal life. 48 Yes, I am the bread of life! 49 Your ancestors ate manna in the wilderness, but they all died. 50 Anyone who eats the bread from heaven, however, will never die. 51 I am the living bread that came down from heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will live forever; and this bread, which I will offer so the world may live, is my flesh."

52 Then the people began arguing with each other about what he meant. "How can this man give us his flesh to eat?" they asked. 53 So Jesus said again, "I tell you the truth, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink his blood, you cannot have eternal life within you. 54 But anyone who eats my flesh and drinks my blood has eternal life, and I will raise that person at the last day. 55 For my flesh is true food, and my blood is true drink. 56 Anyone who eats my flesh and drinks my blood remains in me, and I in him. 57 I live because of the living Father who sent me; in the same way, anyone who feeds on me will live because of me. 58 I am the true bread that came down from heaven. Anyone who eats this bread will not die as your ancestors did (even though they ate the manna) but will live forever." 59 He said these things while he was teaching in the synagogue in Capernaum. 60 Many of his disciples said, "This is very hard to understand. How can anyone accept it?" 61 Jesus was aware that his disciples were complaining, so he said to them, "Does this offend you? 62 Then what will you think if you see the Son of Man ascend to heaven again? 63 The Spirit alone gives eternal life. Human effort accomplishes nothing. And the very words I have spoken to you are spirit and life. 64 But some of you do not believe me." (For Jesus knew from the beginning which ones didn't believe, and he knew who would betray him.) 65 Then he said, "That is why I said that people can't come to me unless the Father gives them to me." 66 At this point many of his disciples turned away and deserted him. 67 Then Jesus turned to the Twelve and asked, "Are you also going to leave?" 68 Simon Peter replied, "Lord, to whom would we go? You have the words that give eternal life. 69 We believe, and we know you are the Holy

One of God." 70 Then Jesus said, "I chose the twelve of you, but one is a devil." 71 He was speaking of Judas, son of Simon Iscariot, one of the Twelve, who would later betray him.

Okay, I apologize for saying this again, but this is one of my favorite chapters in the book of John. It is long, but it is really important and super interesting. I have preached sermons on just a few verses and written devotionals on the whole thing. There is a great deal happening here, so stick with me today!

The story begins with Jesus feeding the (at least) 5000. If they were just counting the men, there were a ton more people. Kids and women were often not counted, nor would the Romans, who would have inevitably been around if there were that many people of Israel showing up to convene. As well, they probably wouldn't have counted those who were sick or disabled, as they were less than people. But at this point in the ministry of Jesus, he didn't really go anywhere without those who were in need of healing following him around hoping for a look, a touch, or a moment of grace from Jesus.

There would have been a great deal of commotion along with his teaching. Even today, you get 5000 people around to listen to someone, it is a big deal. Remember, we are dealing with an agrarian society where small villages were the norm. And Jesus meets with these people on a slowly rising seashore that allows for sound to travel a decent amount of distance. So he stood in the boat teaching, letting the water and the contours of the countryside take his message as far as any modern PA system. That is the setting we find ourselves in.

Now, normally, the content of the sermons are the star of these stories. However, today, it was happened after the sermon. Jesus wanted to prove a point, and so he did. It is the miracle of the loaves and fishes, which is amazing enough in itself. However, the most amazing part is how he told the disciples to feed them all. The sick, the Romans, the women and children, the men, and even the Pharisees. All were the same in the eyes of Jesus. Hungry people in need of sustenance. People who were willing to listen, and to receive the blessing that God has for them.

The way Jesus normalized every level of society was breathtaking, and it changes everything. There are no VIP's in the kingdom of God. Or perhaps a better way to say it would be like Southwest airlines says it; "every seat is first class!" That is how it is in the kingdom of heaven. There is no separation between the haves and the have-nots. Rich or poor, it doesn't matter to Jesus. He loves you and will sustain you all the same. New Christian, or 5th generation Adventist, it doesn't really matter, all are accepted and all are equally loved.

At the end of the text, we see a pretty serious conversation that Jesus has with his disciples. He had already made many of the Jews who were following him pretty upset, but then he turned on his disciples asking them if they were upset too! (v. 61ff) Then, Peter, who is a bit of a character, answers with this phrase: 68 Simon Peter replied, "Lord, to whom would we go? You have the words that give eternal life. 69 We believe, and we know you are the Holy One of God."

In this way, he was acknowledging the divinity of Jesus, while at the same time he was showing a bit of frustration at the situation and the question that Jesus asked. Again, we see that Jesus was 100% human, while also 100% divine.

- 1. How can one person be both human and divine?
- 2. Did you learn anything new in this reading of the text?
- 3. Have you ever been frustrated by the words of Jesus, yet still realized that he is God and worth listening to?

John 7

7 After this, Jesus traveled around Galilee. He wanted to stay out of Judea, where the Jewish leaders were plotting his death. 2 But soon it was time for the Jewish Festival of Shelters, 3 and Jesus' brothers said to him, "Leave here and go to Judea, where your followers can see your miracles! 4 You can't become famous if you hide like this! If you can do such wonderful things, show yourself to the world!" 5 For even his brothers didn't believe in him. 6 Jesus replied, "Now is not the right time for me to go, but you can go anytime. 7 The world can't hate you, but it does hate me because I accuse it of doing evil. 8 You go on. I'm not going to this festival, because my time has not yet come." 9 After saying these things, Jesus remained in Galilee. 10 But after his brothers left for the festival, Jesus also went, though secretly, staying out of public view. 11 The Jewish leaders tried to find him at the festival and kept asking if anyone had seen him. 12 There was a lot of grumbling about him among the crowds. Some argued, "He's a good man," but others said, "He's nothing but a fraud who deceives the people." 13 But no one had the courage to speak favorably about him in public, for they were afraid of getting in trouble with the Jewish leaders.

14 Then, midway through the festival, Jesus went up to the Temple and began to teach. 15 The people were surprised when they heard him. "How does he know so much when he hasn't been trained?" they asked. 16 So Jesus told them, "My message is not my own; it comes from God who sent me. 17 Anyone who wants to do the will of God will know whether my teaching is from God or is merely my own. 18 Those who speak for themselves want glory only for themselves, but a person who seeks to honor the one who sent him speaks truth, not lies. 19 Moses gave you the law, but none of you obeys it! In fact, you are trying to kill me." 20 The crowd replied, "You're demon possessed! Who's trying to kill you?"

21 Jesus replied, "I did one miracle on the Sabbath, and you were amazed. 22 But you work on the Sabbath, too, when you obey Moses' law of circumcision. (Actually, this tradition of circumcision began with the patriarchs, long before the law of Moses.) 23 For if the correct time for circumcising your son falls on the Sabbath, you go ahead and

do it so as not to break the law of Moses. So why should you be angry with me for healing a man on the Sabbath? 24 Look beneath the surface so you can judge correctly." 25 Some of the people who lived in Jerusalem started to ask each other, "Isn't this the man they are trying to kill? 26 But here he is, speaking in public, and they say nothing to him. Could our leaders possibly believe that he is the Messiah? 27 But how could he be? For we know where this man comes from. When the Messiah comes, he will simply appear; no one will know where he comes from."

28 While Jesus was teaching in the Temple, he called out, "Yes, you know me, and you know where I come from. But I'm not here on my own. The one who sent me is true, and you don't know him. 29 But I know him because I come from him, and he sent me to you." 30 Then the leaders tried to arrest him; but no one laid a hand on him, because his time had not yet come. 31 Many among the crowds at the Temple believed in him. "After all," they said, "would you expect the Messiah to do more miraculous signs than this man has done?"

32 When the Pharisees heard that the crowds were whispering such things, they and the leading priests sent Temple guards to arrest Jesus. 33 But Jesus told them, "I will be with you only a little longer. Then I will return to the one who sent me. 34 You will search for me but not find me. And you cannot go where I am going." 35 The Jewish leaders were puzzled by this statement. "Where is he planning to go?" they asked. "Is he thinking of leaving the country and going to the Jews in other lands? Maybe he will even teach the Greeks! 36 What does he mean when he says, 'You will search for me but not find me,' and 'You cannot go where I am going'?"

37 On the last day, the climax of the festival, Jesus stood and shouted to the crowds, "Anyone who is thirsty may come to me! 38 Anyone who believes in me may come and drink! For the Scriptures declare, 'Rivers of living water will flow from his heart.'" 39 (When he said "living water," he was speaking of the Spirit, who would be given to everyone believing in him. But the Spirit had not yet been given, because Jesus had not yet entered into his glory.)

40 When the crowds heard him say this, some of them declared, "Surely this man is the Prophet

we've been expecting." 41 Others said, "He is the Messiah." Still others said, "But he can't be! Will the Messiah come from Galilee? 42 For the Scriptures clearly state that the Messiah will be born of the royal line of David, in Bethlehem, the village where King David was born." 43 So the crowd was divided about him. 44 Some even wanted him arrested, but no one laid a hand on him.

45 When the Temple guards returned without having arrested Jesus, the leading priests and Pharisees demanded, "Why didn't you bring him in?" 46 "We have never heard anyone speak like this!" the guards responded. 47 "Have you been led astray, too?" the Pharisees mocked. 48 "Is there a single one of us rulers or Pharisees who believes in him? 49 This foolish crowd follows him, but they are ignorant of the law. God's curse is on them!" 50 Then Nicodemus, the leader who had met with Jesus earlier, spoke up. 51 "Is it legal to convict a man before he is given a hearing?" he asked. 52 They replied, "Are you from Galilee, too? Search the Scriptures and see for yourself—no prophet ever comes from Galilee!"

This text has it all. Intrigue, division, questions, and even Jesus hiding and showing up when least expecting it. We also see an old friend show up later in chapter 7, someone we haven't seen since chapter 3! (I won't ruin the surprise, in case you are reading this portion first.)

We begin this chapter by seeing Jesus traveling around Galilee, and wanting to stay out of Judea, as he knew things weren't great between him and the Jewish leaders. However, his brothers were urging him to go to Jerusalem and show his followers more miracles. Honestly, it is a pretty typical situation when someone is getting notoriety, the people around them want to continue to see their star rise, and therefore will urge more public appearances, and more opportunities to grow the name.

Jesus again says that "his time has not yet come", but then does something interesting, he shows up incognito, and begins to teach openly at the temple. Now, this was probably much more than Jesus just having FOMO, there is always a method to his madness. He taught things that he should not have known without the proper training, and people took notice. They were surprised and flummoxed as to how he could have known all of this.

It became an opportunity for Jesus to preach about his father and the connection he had to Jesus. Then, he calls out the machinations that were being made to kill him. The people didn't really believe him, in fact, they thought he was demon possessed. He then took the time to call them out for not believing in him. Jesus was just not playing around.

As you can imagine, he was forcing an issue. He was forcing them to ask the only question that matters; is Jesus really the messiah? And this is the question that we have to ask ourselves as well. Is Jesus the Messiah? And if so, how do we orient our lives around this truth. If he is not, then everyone who proclaims his name is a bit deluded in our thinking and believing. But if he is, then not only do we have to take his words seriously, we have to take our lives of faith more seriously than we do. It means that we have access to truly the most amazing thing in the universe, and we need to take it seriously. That does not mean we take fearfully, rather, we take it with the gravity it deserves.

- 1. Have you read this chapter before? What sticks out as the most important?
- 2. Why do you think that Jesus showed up at the temple when he said he wasn't going to?
- 3. When he says it is not yet his time, what does he mean?

Day 18
March 23, 2022

John 8

1 Jesus returned to the Mount of Olives, 2 but early the next morning he was back again at the Temple. A crowd soon gathered, and he sat down and taught them. 3 As he was speaking, the teachers of religious law and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in the act of adultery. They put her in front of the crowd. 4 “Teacher,” they said to Jesus, “this woman was caught in the act of adultery. 5 The law of Moses says to stone her. What do you say?”

6 They were trying to trap him into saying something they could use against him, but Jesus stooped down and wrote in the dust with his finger. 7 They kept demanding an answer, so he stood up again and said, “All right, but let the one who has never sinned throw the first stone!” 8 Then he stooped down again and wrote in the dust.

9 When the accusers heard this, they slipped away one by one, beginning with the oldest, until only Jesus was left in the middle of the crowd with the woman. 10 Then Jesus stood up again and said to the woman, “Where are your accusers? Didn’t even one of them condemn you?”

11 “No, Lord,” she said.

And Jesus said, “Neither do I. Go and sin no more.”

Jesus, the Light of the World

12 Jesus spoke to the people once more and said, “I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won’t have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life.”

13 The Pharisees replied, “You are making those claims about yourself! Such testimony is not valid.”

14 Jesus told them, “These claims are valid even though I make them about myself. For I know where I came from and where I am going, but you don’t know this about me. 15 You judge me by human standards, but I do not judge anyone. 16 And if I did, my judgment would be correct in every respect because I am not alone. The Father[a] who sent me is with me. 17 Your own law says that if two people agree about something, their witness is accepted as fact. 18 I am one witness, and my Father who sent me is the other.”

19 “Where is your father?” they asked.

Jesus answered, “Since you don’t know who I am, you don’t know who my Father is. If you knew me, you would also know my Father.” 20 Jesus made

these statements while he was teaching in the section of the Temple known as the Treasury. But he was not arrested, because his time had not yet come.

The Unbelieving People Warned

21 Later Jesus said to them again, “I am going away. You will search for me but will die in your sin. You cannot come where I am going.”

22 The people asked, “Is he planning to commit suicide? What does he mean, ‘You cannot come where I am going’?”

23 Jesus continued, “You are from below; I am from above. You belong to this world; I do not. 24 That is why I said that you will die in your sins; for unless you believe that I am who I claim to be, you will die in your sins.”

25 “Who are you?” they demanded.

Jesus replied, “The one I have always claimed to be. 26 I have much to say about you and much to condemn, but I won’t. For I say only what I have heard from the one who sent me, and he is completely truthful.” 27 But they still didn’t understand that he was talking about his Father.

28 So Jesus said, “When you have lifted up the Son of Man on the cross, then you will understand that I am he. I do nothing on my own but say only what the Father taught me. 29 And the one who sent me is with me—he has not deserted me. For I always do what pleases him.” 30 Then many who heard him say these things believed in him.

Jesus and Abraham

31 Jesus said to the people who believed in him, “You are truly my disciples if you remain faithful to my teachings. 32 And you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”

33 “But we are descendants of Abraham,” they said. “We have never been slaves to anyone. What do you mean, ‘You will be set free’?”

34 Jesus replied, “I tell you the truth, everyone who sins is a slave of sin. 35 A slave is not a permanent member of the family, but a son is part of the family forever. 36 So if the Son sets you free, you are truly free. 37 Yes, I realize that you are descendants of Abraham. And yet some of you are trying to kill me because there’s no room in your hearts for my message. 38 I am telling you what I saw when I was with my Father. But you are following the advice of your father.”

39 “Our father is Abraham!” they declared.

“No,” Jesus replied, “for if you were really the chil-

dren of Abraham, you would follow his example] 40 Instead, you are trying to kill me because I told you the truth, which I heard from God. Abraham never did such a thing. 41 No, you are imitating your real father."

They replied, "We aren't illegitimate children! God himself is our true Father."

42 Jesus told them, "If God were your Father, you would love me, because I have come to you from God. I am not here on my own, but he sent me. 43 Why can't you understand what I am saying? It's because you can't even hear me! 44 For you are the children of your father the devil, and you love to do the evil things he does. He was a murderer from the beginning. He has always hated the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, it is consistent with his character; for he is a liar and the father of lies. 45 So when I tell the truth, you just naturally don't believe me! 46 Which of you can truthfully accuse me of sin? And since I am telling you the truth, why don't you believe me? 47 Anyone who belongs to God listens gladly to the words of God. But you don't listen because you don't belong to God."

48 The people retorted, "You Samaritan devil! Didn't we say all along that you were possessed by a demon?"

49 "No," Jesus said, "I have no demon in me. For I honor my Father—and you dishonor me. 50 And though I have no wish to glorify myself, God is going to glorify me. He is the true judge. 51 I tell you the truth, anyone who obeys my teaching will never die!"

52 The people said, "Now we know you are possessed by a demon. Even Abraham and the prophets died, but you say, 'Anyone who obeys my teaching will never die!' 53 Are you greater than our father Abraham? He died, and so did the prophets. Who do you think you are?"

54 Jesus answered, "If I want glory for myself, it doesn't count. But it is my Father who will glorify me. You say, 'He is our God,' 55 but you don't even know him. I know him. If I said otherwise, I would be as great a liar as you! But I do know him and obey him. 56 Your father Abraham rejoiced as he looked forward to my coming. He saw it and was glad."

57 The people said, "You aren't even fifty years old. How can you say you have seen Abraham?"

58 Jesus answered, "I tell you the truth, before Abraham was even born, I am!" 59 At that point they picked up stones to throw at him. But Jesus

was hidden from them and left the Temple.

Chapter 8 is a long one, but we need to spend a little time in the first 11 verses to clarify some things. Basically, it is very possible that these verses were not in the original writings of John. Why? Because in earlier manuscripts we don't have them. It is conjectured and pretty well accepted that it was a later addition, perhaps put in by a scribe who was copying and saw them in a previous copies' margins. Sometimes, the scribes would put in commentary in the margin. That means that while these verses seem like something Jesus would say and do, we have to question the historicity of this section.

This understanding may lead you to question the veracity of all the texts found in scripture, but I wouldn't let that happen if I were you. The reason this is questioned is that the earlier manuscripts don't have this story, but they do have the others. Experts on scripture do a great deal of work to underpin the veracity of the scriptures. There is a constant flow of scholarship over each portion of scripture, especially the contested pieces and pericope's. Under their scrutiny, we can be confident in the honest academic discussion around these texts.

Here is something that I find interesting; even with this portion possibly not being in the earliest manuscripts, it sure seems like something that Jesus would do and say. And furthermore, I know that the Holy Spirit has been able to use these words to great efficacy over the last 2000 years. So even if these texts were not in the earliest manuscripts, as long as we understand them, we can still be taught about the assumed character of Christ through these texts. We often read stories that give us great moral teachings or an important lesson on values, and we find them to be beneficial. If we look at this text in the same way, we can be illuminated to a better understanding of what the kingdom of God looks like.

The rest of the chapter is important as well, as it holds great teaching about Jesus and Abraham, it holds warnings for those who will not believe in him, and it reminds us that Jesus is the light of the world. But for much of the chapter, people just don't seem to get it.

The truth is that Jesus made wild claims that either must be true, or he must be crazy. C.S. Lewis makes this assertion in his book, Mere Christianity. I highly recommend this book if you have not read it before, you will enjoy it immensely.

- 1. Do you believe that God can use the first few texts even if they were not in the original text?
- 2. Do you think they should be excised if they were added later? Why or why not?
- 3. Do you think you would have understood the words that Jesus was saying if you had heard them from his mouth?

John 9

Jesus Heals a Man Born Blind

9 As Jesus was walking along, he saw a man who had been blind from birth. 2 “Rabbi,” his disciples asked him, “why was this man born blind? Was it because of his own sins or his parents’ sins?”

3 “It was not because of his sins or his parents’ sins,” Jesus answered. “This happened so the power of God could be seen in him. 4 We must quickly carry out the tasks assigned us by the one who sent us. The night is coming, and then no one can work. 5 But while I am here in the world, I am the light of the world.”

6 Then he spit on the ground, made mud with the saliva, and spread the mud over the blind man’s eyes. 7 He told him, “Go wash yourself in the pool of Siloam” (Siloam means “sent”). So the man went and washed and came back seeing!

8 His neighbors and others who knew him as a blind beggar asked each other, “Isn’t this the man who used to sit and beg?” 9 Some said he was, and others said, “No, he just looks like him!”

But the beggar kept saying, “Yes, I am the same one!”

10 They asked, “Who healed you? What happened?”

11 He told them, “The man they call Jesus made mud and spread it over my eyes and told me, ‘Go to the pool of Siloam and wash yourself.’ So I went and washed, and now I can see!”

12 “Where is he now?” they asked.

“I don’t know,” he replied.

13 Then they took the man who had been blind to the Pharisees, 14 because it was on the Sabbath that Jesus had made the mud and healed him. 15 The Pharisees asked the man all about it. So he told them, “He put the mud over my eyes, and when I washed it away, I could see!”

16 Some of the Pharisees said, “This man Jesus is not from God, for he is working on the Sabbath.” Others said, “But how could an ordinary sinner do such miraculous signs?” So there was a deep division of opinion among them.

17 Then the Pharisees again questioned the man who had been blind and demanded, “What’s your opinion about this man who healed you?”

The man replied, “I think he must be a prophet.”

18 The Jewish leaders still refused to believe the man had been blind and could now see, so they

called in his parents. 19 They asked them, “Is this your son? Was he born blind? If so, how can he now see?”

20 His parents replied, “We know this is our son and that he was born blind, 21 but we don’t know how he can see or who healed him. Ask him. He is old enough to speak for himself.” 22 His parents said this because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders, who had announced that anyone saying Jesus was the Messiah would be expelled from the synagogue. 23 That’s why they said, “He is old enough. Ask him.”

24 So for the second time they called in the man who had been blind and told him, “God should get the glory for this,[b] because we know this man Jesus is a sinner.”

25 “I don’t know whether he is a sinner,” the man replied. “But I know this: I was blind, and now I can see!”

26 “But what did he do?” they asked. “How did he heal you?”

27 “Look!” the man exclaimed. “I told you once. Didn’t you listen? Why do you want to hear it again? Do you want to become his disciples, too?”

28 Then they cursed him and said, “You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses! 29 We know God spoke to Moses, but we don’t even know where this man comes from.”

30 “Why, that’s very strange!” the man replied.

“He healed my eyes, and yet you don’t know where he comes from? 31 We know that God doesn’t listen to sinners, but he is ready to hear those who worship him and do his will. 32 Ever since the world began, no one has been able to open the eyes of someone born blind. 33 If this man were not from God, he couldn’t have done it.”

34 “You were born a total sinner!” they answered. “Are you trying to teach us?” And they threw him out of the synagogue.

Spiritual Blindness

35 When Jesus heard what had happened, he found the man and asked, “Do you believe in the Son of Man?”

36 The man answered, “Who is he, sir? I want to believe in him.”

37 “You have seen him,” Jesus said, “and he is speaking to you!”

38 “Yes, Lord, I believe!” the man said. And he worshiped Jesus.

39 Then Jesus told him, “I entered this world to render judgment—to give sight to the blind and

to show those who think they see[e] that they are blind.”

40 Some Pharisees who were standing nearby heard him and asked, “Are you saying we’re blind?”

41 “If you were blind, you wouldn’t be guilty,” Jesus replied. “But you remain guilty because you claim you can see.

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This is just a great story of a man who was healed, Pharisee’s who couldn’t believe it, and some interesting family dynamics. I won’t recap the story here, as it is a quick read, but there are a few things we should highlight:

The question: “Why was this man born blind?”

The answer that Jesus gave is a bit of a puzzle. While we don’t have to argue causation on the part of Jesus, he did say that it could be used so the power of God could be seen in him.

The Process: Jesus spit on the ground and healed him with mud, and then the man had to go and wash.

Jesus didn’t need to touch the man, and didn’t need to make mud to heal the man. Because he did it, we should probably take notice and learn what he was trying to teach us with this lesson.

Day 20
March 25, 2022

John 10

10 "I tell you the truth, anyone who sneaks over the wall of a sheepfold, rather than going through the gate, must surely be a thief and a robber! 2 But the one who enters through the gate is the shepherd of the sheep. 3 The gatekeeper opens the gate for him, and the sheep recognize his voice and come to him. He calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. 4 After he has gathered his own flock, he walks ahead of them, and they follow him because they know his voice. 5 They won't follow a stranger; they will run from him because they don't know his voice."

6 Those who heard Jesus use this illustration didn't understand what he meant, 7 so he explained it to them: "I tell you the truth, I am the gate for the sheep. 8 All who came before me were thieves and robbers. But the true sheep did not listen to them. 9 Yes, I am the gate. Those who come in through me will be saved. They will come and go freely and will find good pastures. 10 The thief's purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life.

11 "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd sacrifices his life for the sheep. 12 A hired hand will run when he sees a wolf coming. He will abandon the sheep because they don't belong to him and he isn't their shepherd. And so the wolf attacks them and scatters the flock. 13 The hired hand runs away because he's working only for the money and doesn't really care about the sheep.

14 "I am the good shepherd; I know my own sheep, and they know me, 15 just as my Father knows me and I know the Father. So I sacrifice my life for the sheep. 16 I have other sheep, too, that are not in this sheepfold. I must bring them also. They will listen to my voice, and there will be one flock with one shepherd.

17 "The Father loves me because I sacrifice my life so I may take it back again. 18 No one can take my life from me. I sacrifice it voluntarily. For I have the authority to lay it down when I want to and also to take it up again. For this is what my Father has commanded."

19 When he said these things, the people[c] were again divided in their opinions about him. 20 Some said, "He's demon possessed and out of his mind. Why listen to a man like that?" 21 Others said, "This doesn't sound like a man possessed by a demon!

Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?"

In this chapter, we have Jesus mentioning 2 of the "I am" statements. He states that he is the good shepherd, as well as the gate. These "I am" statements are important to John, there are 7 of them, and they are all metaphors that Jesus uses in order for us to understand who he is, his character, and his position as it comes to our salvation. With these statements, we can have a better understanding of the love that Jesus has for us, his role in our salvation, and his place within the trinity. We find over and over again that his love is ubiquitous, his grace is accessible, and his desire is for our salvation and abundance.

He begins by saying that he is the Good Shepherd. This is juxtaposed with those who had come before and had been either thieves, robbers, or those who led people astray. In contrast to those people, Jesus is a shepherd who cares deeply for his sheep, and who is deeply committed to making sure they are not only safe, but that they thrive.

As well, Jesus mentions that true believers know the voice of their shepherd. And this concept is interesting. How is it that you know the voice of the shepherd? Have you been following him for a while and so his voice has become familiar? We have dogs, and they know when I am the one telling them what to do. They don't behave nearly as well with my boys as they do with my voice. They know who feeds them! Do you know who feeds you?

It is also important to note that the shepherd doesn't just call out to the whole flock, rather, he calls each sheep by name! He knows each one of them. It seems that this shepherd does not drive his sheep, rather, he leads them. If you have ever seen a shepherd driving sheep, it takes a switch, and a lot of yelling, as sheep are not the smartest of all animals. However, if you have seen a good shepherd, you know they can keep the sheep heading in the right direction by simply a whistle or a quick noise from their mouth. Jesus is this kind of shepherd. He knows his sheep, and his sheep know his voice, and they listen to the directions that he gives to them individually and this affects the whole flock. If the sheep are used to the shepherd's voice, they will not even follow the voice of a stranger. That is where safety lies.

- [illegible]

[illegible]

The following is a guide to help facilitate discussion. Feel free to add or subtract or change questions to fit the conversation, and pray for the Spirit to lead in all things.

OPEN

When you're introducing yourself to a new group of people, what characteristics do you usually use to describe yourself? Why do you use those characteristics?

HEAD

This week we are studying several of the confrontations that Jesus has with His disciples and the Jewish leaders of His time. During confrontations, we tend to "show our true colors." We'll be looking at key sections from the week to hone in on what exactly Jesus is revealing about Himself.

Read together John 5:25-30, and share what characteristics Jesus is claiming for Himself in this passage.

Read together John 6:30-40, and share what Jesus is revealing about Himself in this passage.

Read together John 7:37-44, and share what Jesus claimed to offer to those who come to Him.

What emotions would you use to describe the crowd's response to Jesus' claims?

Read together John 8:12, 23-24, 53-58, and identify what status Jesus is giving Himself.

Why would His statements cause the temple leaders to pick up stones?

Read John 10:6-16, and find the two I am statements that Jesus makes.

Notice that He makes a number of comparisons. Who do you think He's critiquing when He makes those comparisons?

HEART

There's a lot of Scripture that we're reading this week. When you survey all that we've read about who Jesus is and what He does, what are the major themes that stand out to you?

In what ways does who Jesus is and what He does comfort or encourage you?

In what ways does He challenge or inspire you?

Based on what we read this week, how would you describe the voice of Jesus in your life today?

How can we use what we read about Jesus this

week to create a filter for us that will help us discern between His voice and the voice of a stranger?

HANDS

Early in the week, we looked at John 5 where we discovered Jesus breaking a "rule" for the sake of a greater law—the law of Love. Based on this week's study, how can we develop a biblical understanding of how and when to prioritize the law of Love above human norms or practices?

Are there any immediate applications of the law of Love in your life that you might want to step into?

Are there any big choices you're wrestling with? One of the key takeaways from our passage this week is that Jesus' sheep know Him and follow Him confidently.

If you are at one of these transition moments, how can you reframe your big choice from a decision you have to make into a path you just have to follow behind Jesus? Knowing what you know about His voice, where might He be calling you?

LIVING WORDS for YOUR WEEK

Jesus spoke to the people once more and said, "I am the light of the world. If you follow me, you won't have to walk in darkness, because you will have the light that leads to life." (John 8:12)

INTRODUCTION - In this series, we are leading up to one of our favorite holidays of the year as followers of Jesus, Easter! For Christians, Easter is where everything changed. The God of the universe had come down as a baby, lived and walked among us, revealed God to us in new and even more clear ways, and then gave His life by dying on a cross to save us from the curse of this world. No credible historians doubt whether or not Jesus of Nazareth was a real figure in history. No credible historians doubt that he was crucified and died. What they doubt is what happened next. We believe three days later Jesus rose from the grave and is alive.

Join us in this new sermon series as we study through the gospel of John, a gospel written later than the other three gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke), that elaborates on the story of Jesus with stories the other writers left out. John also elaborates on who Jesus is, the light of the world who takes away the sins of the world, and so much more. Ready to get to know Jesus better as we celebrate Easter? Let's connect!

CONNECT

Have you ever seen something so awesome happen, but someone got angry over the small details? Maybe in your head you were yelling something like, "You're missing the point!" Talk about a time someone missed the point in your life.

READ

Read John 5:1-30 - and share any thoughts, insights, or impressions you had as you read through the passage

Some important context - Jesus was a Jewish man who lived within a Jewish system. In this system, the Sabbath, which is the Seventh Day, was of utmost importance. Multiple times in the old testament it is said to keep the Sabbath day holy. One of the ways this was done was by not working.

The healing Jesus performs here is considered work to the Jews - yet Jesus sees it as something else. What does Jesus view what he did as?

APPLY

This portion of scripture can be summed up by Jesus saying "you're missing the point!" Jesus did not consider what he was doing work but rather the will of God. He was doing what God had called him

to do - even if it meant doing things different than tradition.

Here Jesus explains that tradition takes second place when it comes to doing God's will. God's will always takes precedence in all situations.

Jesus knew the laws about the Sabbath! He knew the way his healing would be perceived. What's interesting is that even as Jesus was creating a new path, he probably didn't think of himself as not Jewish - rather he still lived as a Jewish man. He still valued his tradition - yet when it came to doing God's will he was willing to put tradition to the side.

THE WALK

Jesus shows us something important - God's will always comes first. This doesn't mean that we throw tradition out the window or leave behind the way of life that we were taught. Rather, we learn that when the rules and traditions are understood well enough we are able to step outside of them.

Think of God's call for you to reach out to others. Perhaps the way you reach out to others may look and sound different, but that may be the way God is calling you to reach out to someone. God is calling you to do his will not follow tradition blindly.

The walk is a place where we put God's will first - and if we ever are missing the point we are willing to turn back to God and follow his will.

LIVING WORDS

"My Father is always working, and so am I"

John 5:17

CWKIDS
Week 03 of 06
Confrontations
Sermon Series Kids Questions

John 5:1-10:21

Introduction - The following questions are a guide to help families with children understand God and discover His love throughout the series. You may think of other ideas that fit the needs of your family.

Read the events described in John 5:1-15, 6:1-14, 6:16-21, and/or John 9:1-13 together with your family.

Jesus did some pretty amazing things while he was here on Earth. If you read all of the texts listed above, or even just one of the stories, you can tell that Jesus performed incredible miracles. There are even more miracles recorded in other Bible stories too.

-

What miracle(s) did you read about?

What do you think you would do if you saw Jesus performing miracles?

Do you think Jesus still performs miracles today?

What miracle would you hope Jesus would do in your life?

WEEK 4

John 10:22-42

22 It was now winter, and Jesus was in Jerusalem at the time of Hanukkah, the Festival of Dedication. 23 He was in the Temple, walking through the section known as Solomon's Colonnade. 24 The people surrounded him and asked, "How long are you going to keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly."

25 Jesus replied, "I have already told you, and you don't believe me. The proof is the work I do in my Father's name. 26 But you don't believe me because you are not my sheep. 27 My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. 28 I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one can snatch them away from me, 29 for my Father has given them to me, and he is more powerful than anyone else. No one can snatch them from the Father's hand. 30 The Father and I are one."

31 Once again the people picked up stones to kill him. 32 Jesus said, "At my Father's direction I have done many good works. For which one are you going to stone me?"

33 They replied, "We're stoning you not for any good work, but for blasphemy! You, a mere man, claim to be God."

34 Jesus replied, "It is written in your own Scriptures[e] that God said to certain leaders of the people, 'I say, you are gods!' 35 And you know that the Scriptures cannot be altered. So if those people who received God's message were called 'gods,' 36 why do you call it blasphemy when I say, 'I am the Son of God'? After all, the Father set me apart and sent me into the world. 37 Don't believe me unless I carry out my Father's work. 38 But if I do his work, believe in the evidence of the miraculous works I have done, even if you don't believe me. Then you will know and understand that the Father is in me, and I am in the Father."

39 Once again they tried to arrest him, but he got away and left them. 40 He went beyond the Jordan River near the place where John was first baptizing and stayed there awhile. 41 And many followed him. "John didn't perform miraculous signs," they remarked to one another, "but everything he said about this man has come true." 42 And many who were there believed in Jesus.

As the people who were hearing Jesus were becoming more and more discontent, they finally

asked Jesus plainly if he was the messiah or not. They just wanted clarity and they wanted to be sure they were not wasting their time with a false messiah, as they had so many times before. However, he reminded them that he had been telling them exactly who he was, and they were simply not listening. He went back to the metaphor of the sheep pen to show them that there were those who listened and heard him, but they were not of that flock if they still didn't know.

The sheep in the flock that identifies with Jesus are those that listen, believe, and follow. These three things are indelible to those that call Jesus their shepherd. Without these three things, we don't know who Jesus is, we don't recognize his voice, and we don't go where he would have us go. But when we do listen, follow, and believe, we are safe in his keeping.

One of the jobs of a shepherd is to protect the flock from all that would assault and seek to destroy them. They carry a rod to beat back predators, and they keep the flock moving to safer pastures whenever appropriate. In this same way, Jesus takes care of those who listen, believe and follow.

There is a ton of theological ideas held in this chapter:

Union of Christ: "my sheep"

Calling: "listen to my voice"

Identification: "I know them"

Sanctification: "they follow me"

Grace: "I give"

Security: "eternal life"

Election: "given them to me"

Omnipotence: "greater than all"

With all of this happening, we should probably read this text more than once today to understand it all. I say this because you would think that these words would cause people to be converted, to listen, follow, and believe. However, it seems that it actually made those listening angry and they were more interested in seeing him dead than proclaimed as Messiah. We have a tendency to believe that they were foolish to miss Jesus as the Messiah, but it is possible that they simply had too much to lose to allow someone to talk that way to lead people away from their systems of power and economics and religious control. Jesus was a free radical and he freed people to be radical believers in God. This kind of freedom will always be dangerous to the religious establishment.

1. What does it take you to follow, listen, and believe?

2. Did you notice all that theology in this chapter? How do you begin to discern the theology when you read scripture?

3. Why is theology so important to an understanding of who Jesus is?

4. Do you know the shepherds voice?

[illegible]

Day 23
March 28, 2022

John 11

1 A man named Lazarus was sick. He lived in Bethany with his sisters, Mary and Martha. 2 This is the Mary who later poured the expensive perfume on the Lord's feet and wiped them with her hair. Her brother, Lazarus, was sick. 3 So the two sisters sent a message to Jesus telling him, "Lord, your dear friend is very sick."

4 But when Jesus heard about it he said, "Lazarus's sickness will not end in death. No, it happened for the glory of God so that the Son of God will receive glory from this." 5 So although Jesus loved Martha, Mary, and Lazarus, 6 he stayed where he was for the next two days. 7 Finally, he said to his disciples, "Let's go back to Judea."

8 But his disciples objected. "Rabbi," they said, "only a few days ago the people in Judea were trying to stone you. Are you going there again?"

9 Jesus replied, "There are twelve hours of daylight every day. During the day people can walk safely. They can see because they have the light of this world. 10 But at night there is danger of stumbling because they have no light." 11 Then he said, "Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but now I will go and wake him up."

12 The disciples said, "Lord, if he is sleeping, he will soon get better!" 13 They thought Jesus meant Lazarus was simply sleeping, but Jesus meant Lazarus had died.

14 So he told them plainly, "Lazarus is dead. 15 And for your sakes, I'm glad I wasn't there, for now you will really believe. Come, let's go see him."

16 Thomas, nicknamed the Twin, said to his fellow disciples, "Let's go, too—and die with Jesus."

17 When Jesus arrived at Bethany, he was told that Lazarus had already been in his grave for four days. 18 Bethany was only a few miles down the road from Jerusalem, 19 and many of the people had come to console Martha and Mary in their loss. 20 When Martha got word that Jesus was coming, she went to meet him. But Mary stayed in the house. 21 Martha said to Jesus, "Lord, if only you had been here, my brother would not have died. 22 But even now I know that God will give you whatever you ask"

23 Jesus told her, "Your brother will rise again."

24 "Yes," Martha said, "he will rise when everyone else rises, at the last day."

25 Jesus told her, "I am the resurrection and the

life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying. 26 Everyone who lives in me and believes in me will never ever die. Do you believe this, Martha?"

27 "Yes, Lord," she told him. "I have always believed you are the Messiah, the Son of God, the one who has come into the world from God." 28 Then she returned to Mary. She called Mary aside from the mourners and told her, "The Teacher is here and wants to see you." 29 So Mary immediately went to him.

30 Jesus had stayed outside the village, at the place where Martha met him. 31 When the people who were at the house consoling Mary saw her leave so hastily, they assumed she was going to Lazarus's grave to weep. So they followed her there. 32 When Mary arrived and saw Jesus, she fell at his feet and said, "Lord, if only you had been here, my brother would not have died."

33 When Jesus saw her weeping and saw the other people wailing with her, a deep anger welled up within him,^[f] and he was deeply troubled. 34 "Where have you put him?" he asked them.

They told him, "Lord, come and see." 35 Then Jesus wept. 36 The people who were standing nearby said, "See how much he loved him!" 37 But some said, "This man healed a blind man. Couldn't he have kept Lazarus from dying?"

38 Jesus was still angry as he arrived at the tomb, a cave with a stone rolled across its entrance. 39 "Roll the stone aside," Jesus told them.

But Martha, the dead man's sister, protested, "Lord, he has been dead for four days. The smell will be terrible."

40 Jesus responded, "Didn't I tell you that you would see God's glory if you believe?" 41 So they rolled the stone aside. Then Jesus looked up to heaven and said, "Father, thank you for hearing me. 42 You always hear me, but I said it out loud for the sake of all these people standing here, so that they will believe you sent me." 43 Then Jesus shouted, "Lazarus, come out!" 44 And the dead man came out, his hands and feet bound in graveclothes, his face wrapped in a headcloth. Jesus told them, "Un-wrap him and let him go!"

45 Many of the people who were with Mary believed in Jesus when they saw this happen. 46 But some went to the Pharisees and told them what Jesus had done. 47 Then the leading priests and Pharisees called the high council together. "What are we going to do?" they asked each other. "This man certainly performs many miraculous signs. 48

If we allow him to go on like this, soon everyone will believe in him. Then the Roman army will come and destroy both our Temple and our nation.”

49 Caiaphas, who was high priest at that time, said, “You don’t know what you’re talking about! 50 You don’t realize that it’s better for you that one man should die for the people than for the whole nation to be destroyed.”

51 He did not say this on his own; as high priest at that time he was led to prophesy that Jesus would die for the entire nation. 52 And not only for that nation, but to bring together and unite all the children of God scattered around the world.

53 So from that time on, the Jewish leaders began to plot Jesus’ death. 54 As a result, Jesus stopped his public ministry among the people and left Jerusalem. He went to a place near the wilderness, to the village of Ephraim, and stayed there with his disciples.

55 It was now almost time for the Jewish Passover celebration, and many people from all over the country arrived in Jerusalem several days early so they could go through the purification ceremony before Passover began. 56 They kept looking for Jesus, but as they stood around in the Temple, they said to each other, “What do you think? He won’t come for Passover, will he?” 57 Meanwhile, the leading priests and Pharisees had publicly ordered that anyone seeing Jesus must report it immediately so they could arrest him.

This story is often quoted, but rarely read. We see a lot of emotions happening with Jesus here, but we sometimes forget about how frustrated Jesus was, why he was frustrated, and then the outcome of this miraculous time in the ministry of Jesus. As well, we need to remember that this story is left out of all the other gospel accounts. The synoptic gospels didn’t put this story in their narratives. I want to take a look at this story from the vantage point of Jesus, rather than of Lazarus. We need to notice that Jesus is our friend in the same way that he was friends to Lazarus and the family, which consisted of Mary and Martha.

First though, we need to recognize that Jesus wasn’t interested in death in any way. His presence precluded death being part of the equation. And while Jesus had resurrected others, John decided to put this narrative in his gospel to show not only his power over death, but his deep love and commitment to Lazarus as a friend and companion, as well

as his love for the family. It seems that we are to learn that Jesus not only felt a range of emotions (Jesus wept-v.25, Angry-v.38) but also that we might recognize that Jesus also loves life so much that he will not allow death to deter him from his friendships.

For Jesus, death just wasn’t, and isn’t, a thing. He told people that Lazarus’ situation would not end in death, yet he was possibly already dead. That is the kind of disregard Jesus had for even the concept of death. He knew that death had no power over the power that was able to access, and so he didn’t worry about it. However, he still experienced the emotions of someone who had lost a great friend. This shows us the power of his love for his friends.

Have you ever wondered why we never heard from Lazarus again after this amazing show of the power of God’s love? I have often hoped we would hear more from this story, more from this character. But alas, we don’t. What we are left with is the reminder that while this resurrection was really a resuscitation, the resurrection of Jesus really was an eternal resurrection. While Lazarus died again, Jesus still lives and still advocates and still intercedes for us.

- 1. Have you ever thought about the difference between resurrection and resuscitation?
- 2. How does it make you feel knowing that Jesus has all the emotions that you do?
- 3. What do you want Jesus to feel when he thinks of you?

John 12:1-11

1 Six days before the Passover celebration began, Jesus arrived in Bethany, the home of Lazarus—the man he had raised from the dead. 2 A dinner was prepared in Jesus' honor. Martha served, and Lazarus was among those who ate with him. 3 Then Mary took a twelve-ounce jar of expensive perfume made from essence of nard, and she anointed Jesus' feet with it, wiping his feet with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance.

4 But Judas Iscariot, the disciple who would soon betray him, said, 5 "That perfume was worth a year's wages. It should have been sold and the money given to the poor." 6 Not that he cared for the poor—he was a thief, and since he was in charge of the disciples' money, he often stole some for himself.

7 Jesus replied, "Leave her alone. She did this in preparation for my burial. 8 You will always have the poor among you, but you will not always have me."

9 When all the people heard of Jesus' arrival, they flocked to see him and also to see Lazarus, the man Jesus had raised from the dead. 10 Then the leading priests decided to kill Lazarus, too, 11 for it was because of him that many of the people had deserted them and believed in Jesus.

This is an often misunderstood text. Jesus says something about the poor, and it has been taken out of context in order to be able to deny our responsibility of taking care of each other. The point of this text is not the poor, but the presence of Jesus. At least, it seems as if the poor were just an excuse not to protect the value of the nard that was being poured upon the feet of Jesus. Jesus encourages this kind of extravagance in order to recognize the presence of God in their midst.

But the way he said it made it easier to take out of context, unfortunately. When he states that the "poor will always be among you," some people have taken it to mean that there is no impetus to take care of the poor, or to make them less poor, due to the fact that they are an inevitability. However, I just don't believe that is what Jesus meant. There are over 2000 scriptures in the Bible that mention the poor, and specifically taking care of them. So for Jesus to go against this counsel simply doesn't make sense.

Have you ever received a gift that was simply too expensive? So expensive that it was embarrassing? So expensive that there was very little you could do except to simply say thank you and try to not cry or stare in disbelief? This was that kind of gift. But Jesus wasn't embarrassed, rather, he recognized that divinity deserves such a gift as this. He seemed frustrated that Judas would question the validity of such a gift. He was especially frustrated that Judas really didn't care about the money, rather he cared about what he deemed as appropriate. In his quest not to be embarrassed, he was stopping a wonderful gift given in love.

Have you ever done something that embarrassed someone else? Have you ever worshiped God in a way that made the people around you uncomfortable? Sometimes, those who grew up thinking there was only one way to worship, one way to honor God, and one way to do church, have a problem when it comes to new and more demonstrative expressions of faith. But here we see Jesus affirming extravagance.

We should be willing to be extravagant when it comes to honoring Jesus. In fact, it should always be our best that is given to God. Excellence is a way of honoring the amazing work that Jesus did for us on the Cross, and we should never be embarrassed to give gifts to God that seem extravagant and out of the ordinary.

1. What is the biggest and most extravagant gift you have ever received?
2. What does it mean to give God something overwhelming?
3. Do you think that having the poor with us should increase our desire to help, or quell it?

John 12:12-19

12 The next day, the news that Jesus was on the way to Jerusalem swept through the city. A large crowd of Passover visitors 13 took palm branches and went down the road to meet him. They shouted,

“Praise God!

Blessings on the one who comes in the name of the Lord!

Hail to the King of Israel!”

14 Jesus found a young donkey and rode on it, fulfilling the prophecy that said:

15 “Don’t be afraid, people of Jerusalem.

Look, your King is coming,
riding on a donkey’s colt.”

16 His disciples didn’t understand at the time that this was a fulfillment of prophecy. But after Jesus entered into his glory, they remembered what had happened and realized that these things had been written about him.

17 Many in the crowd had seen Jesus call Lazarus from the tomb, raising him from the dead, and they were telling others about it. 18 That was the reason so many went out to meet him—because they had heard about this miraculous sign. 19 Then the Pharisees said to each other, “There’s nothing we can do. Look, everyone has gone after him!”

Jesus is starting to fulfill prophecies that were pretty obvious at this point. While not everyone caught on, even the disciples remembered later this was a fulfillment of prophecy, but these prophecies were well known, and were easily accessible to anyone who was paying attention. The Pharisees sure were paying attention, there was no doubt of that. This is often true of detractors or haters, they are paying more attention to what is happening than those who want to support you.

Jesus discovered this early on in his ministry, and it held true throughout the whole of his time on earth. Those that would do him harm knew immediately why he was such a threat; they could see it and they were concerned. Those who supported were taken by the amazing words and deeds that Jesus said and did, and they were not sure where it would all lead. Resistance is often a good barometer of whether or not you are actually doing something that is having any impact on the world. When no one is paying attention, you are probably not doing

too much that is having an impact. When you get significant pushback, then you just might be saying and doing things that need to be done and said.

The message and person of Jesus was met with significant criticism and fear due to the fact that he was saying things that were going to upset everything that they held dear. All the infrastructure they had built up over centuries was about to fall into pieces with the message of Jesus, with the proximity he was willing to show toward people who were interested in being close to God, and with his disregard for the traditions that kept people away from the divine relationship. Those who opposed him understood, and for this moment, they realized that there was very little they could do about it.

This prophecy came from Zechariah 9:9. Interestingly, there were no palm branches to be found in Jerusalem at the time, so these would have been imported from around the area of Jericho. As well, they were calling him a king, something that Jesus had pushed off during his ministry, but he seems to accept it here in a way that he had not before. Was Jesus becoming more comfortable with his role? Or were the people becoming more and more adamant about who Jesus really was? Or was there still just simple confusion?

1. What kind of king do you expect Jesus to be?
2. Do you think you would have been taken up in this excitement as well?
3. Do you believe they were disappointed when he didn’t proclaim his kingship after this?

John 12:20-35

20 Some Greeks who had come to Jerusalem for the Passover celebration 21 paid a visit to Philip, who was from Bethsaida in Galilee. They said, "Sir, we want to meet Jesus." 22 Philip told Andrew about it, and they went together to ask Jesus.

23 Jesus replied, "Now the time has come for the Son of Man to enter into his glory. 24 I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat is planted in the soil and dies, it remains alone. But its death will produce many new kernels—a plentiful harvest of new lives. 25 Those who love their life in this world will lose it. Those who care nothing for their life in this world will keep it for eternity. 26 Anyone who wants to serve me must follow me, because my servants must be where I am. And the Father will honor anyone who serves me.

27 "Now my soul is deeply troubled. Should I pray, 'Father, save me from this hour'? But this is the very reason I came! 28 Father, bring glory to your name."

Then a voice spoke from heaven, saying, "I have already brought glory to my name, and I will do so again." 29 When the crowd heard the voice, some thought it was thunder, while others declared an angel had spoken to him.

30 Then Jesus told them, "The voice was for your benefit, not mine. 31 The time for judging this world has come, when Satan, the ruler of this world, will be cast out. 32 And when I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw everyone to myself." 33 He said this to indicate how he was going to die.

34 The crowd responded, "We understood from Scripture that the Messiah would live forever. How can you say the Son of Man will die? Just who is this Son of Man, anyway?"

35 Jesus replied, "My light will shine for you just a little longer. Walk in the light while you can, so the darkness will not overtake you. Those who walk in the darkness cannot see where they are going.

-
This section seems to start a new conversation. There were some Greeks who showed up. Who were they? Were they Greek Jews? Were they proselytes? Or were they pagans? It seems that they were probably God-fearers, but not circumcised Jews. They were there to worship at Passover, but they would have been called by another name if they were Jews of the diaspora of the time. Rather, they had interest in the religion, maybe even believed, but

were fascinated by Jesus and what was happening, perhaps with a different kind of interest than the Pharisees', as their economic and social structure was not so intricately tied to their religion.

Jesus is beginning to make the case that he will have to die, which confuses them, as they thought the Messiah would live forever. However, the argument that Jesus is making is that by his dying, his disciples will grow the kingdom even more than he had been able to. He believed that his sacrifice would bear much fruit among his followers. This, of course, turned out to be true beyond anything anyone could have imagined.

Remember, Jesus had just displayed some unusual power and attraction through his entry into Jerusalem on the donkey. They were, of course, interested in what it was that he was doing, and they wanted to meet him. The coming of the Greeks was probably a pretty significant marker for the Pharisees that Jesus was simply becoming a threat, becoming too popular, and was in need of some humbling.

When Jesus finally admits that his time had come, his time to be glorified, it is a significant moment. He is ready and willing to lean into the work that God had set for him from the beginning. While the glorification even had not yet happened (ch.16) for Jesus it was clear that the alarm clock had finally sounded and his time had come.

How do you feel when you have been waiting for something significant in your life, and then the time comes? Do you have trepidation, are you anxious, fearful, or excited? I would assume that Jesus was feeling all of these things as he announced that the time had come for him to fulfill all that was expected of him in the upcoming days. Jesus was ready for what the Lord had in store for him, and it would seem to be pretty unpleasant. By his willingness to go through what was ahead, he gave us all a chance to experience what true servant leadership and salvation really are. What a blessing he was willing to do that for us!

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1. Do you get excited before a big event?
 2. What do you do to help with those feelings?
 3. What do you think Jesus did in order to prepare himself for what was coming to him?

John 12:36-50

36 Put your trust in the light while there is still time; then you will become children of the light."

After saying these things, Jesus went away and was hidden from them.

37 But despite all the miraculous signs Jesus had done, most of the people still did not believe in him. 38 This is exactly what Isaiah the prophet had predicted:

"Lord, who has believed our message?

To whom has the Lord revealed his powerful arm?"

39 But the people couldn't believe, for as Isaiah also said,

40 "The Lord has blinded their eyes
and hardened their hearts—
so that their eyes cannot see,
and their hearts cannot understand,
and they cannot turn to me
and have me heal them."

41 Isaiah was referring to Jesus when he said this, because he saw the future and spoke of the Messiah's glory. 42 Many people did believe in him, however, including some of the Jewish leaders. But they wouldn't admit it for fear that the Pharisees would expel them from the synagogue. 43 For they loved human praise more than the praise of God.

44 Jesus shouted to the crowds, "If you trust me, you are trusting not only me, but also God who sent me. 45 For when you see me, you are seeing the one who sent me. 46 I have come as a light to shine in this dark world, so that all who put their trust in me will no longer remain in the dark. 47 I will not judge those who hear me but don't obey me, for I have come to save the world and not to judge it. 48 But all who reject me and my message will be judged on the day of judgment by the truth I have spoken. 49 I don't speak on my own authority. The Father who sent me has commanded me what to say and how to say it. 50 And I know his commands lead to eternal life; so I say whatever the Father tells me to say."

Okay, a whole bunch of stuff is going on in this text today. We won't be able to jump into all of it, but perhaps we can break it up into three parts to make sure we understand it. The first part, that Jesus stepped away and many people didn't believe in him. The second part is the Isaiah section that

John explains. Then, the third part is that Jesus tells people that while he will not judge them for not believing, they will be judged for it eventually. He also reminds them that when they see him, they see the father in all of his glory. I think an appropriate thing for you to think about right now is how you would have responded if you were there with Jesus and the others at that time. He is laying out everything for you to believe or not, and I wonder what you would have decided? I wonder what I would have decided as well.

I would like to think, like all of us, that I would be one of those who was able to buck convention and believe in something as miraculous as Jesus. But I wonder if that would have been the case? John felt the need to explain so much, because people were not understanding who Jesus really was, and therefore they were having a hard time believing. John wanted to make clear who Jesus was, and reminded them of Jesus telling them that when they saw Him, they saw the Father as well. This perichoretic relationship, a mutual indwelling is important to remember when it comes to understanding who Jesus is. When we see him, we see the father in all his glory and mercy and compassionate love.

People rejecting Jesus must have been one of the hardest things for John to continually witness and understand over his life and ministry. What else could he have done to help people to understand who Jesus really is. The seven signs in the previous texts should have been more than enough for everyone to understand. Even the word of Jesus when linked to the signs should have been enough for anyone. It seems that John came to the conclusion that it was definitely not Jesus' fault, rather it was people simply not understanding the signs and the clues that were left. Therefore, he becomes much clearer on what is really happening, and he uses the words of Jesus to help explain to everyone what they are called to believe in.

1. Who do you believe Jesus to really be?
2. What do you think of the Father when you look at Jesus?
3. Do you think we needed Jesus to really understand God?
4. How does the Holy Spirit continue to show us who Jesus is, so that we really know who God is?

Day 28
April 2, 2022

Week 04 of 06

Companion Guide

The following is a guide to help facilitate discussion. Feel free to add or subtract or change questions to fit the conversation, and pray for the Spirit to lead in all things.

OPEN

Is there any restaurant that you and someone you're close with (partner, best friend, relative) have both experienced but have very different opinions about?

HEAD

In this week's study, we're wrapping up our study on the confrontations in the gospel of John that we started last week. This week, we'll focus more on the reactions that people had to what Jesus does in each section of Scripture.

Read together John 10:25-33 & 39-21 and discuss the crowd's reaction to Jesus' words.

Read together John 11:45-48 & 53-57 and discuss how people reacted to Jesus' friendship with Lazarus, Martha, and Mary.

Reread Pastor Tim's commentary for March 28, 2022 for further understanding on why Jesus did much more than just resurrect Lazarus in this passage.

Read together John 12:1-11. It's easy to focus on Mary's actions in this story, but focus on what Jesus does (or doesn't do) and how those around Him react to Him.

Read together John 12:16-19, and discuss how people reacted to Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem.

Read together John 12:20-22 & 32-35. Jesus' words and actions are getting very explicit by this point in His ministry; how do people around Him react to Him?

Read together John 12:42-46. Discuss what we're being told about why some believed in Jesus and why some didn't.

How would you describe Jesus' words to those who were listening to him but not sure if they wanted to follow Him?

HEART

During Jesus' earthly ministry, do you think He was clear about His role and mission?

Do you think He's more or less clear today? Is that true in your personal life?

In John 12:1-11, we read about Mary's extravagant gift for Jesus. What does it mean to be extravagant in our giving/worship to Jesus?

Based on all that we've learned about Jesus the last two weeks, what do you believe the Father is like?

HANDS

Is there any extravagant worship that you feel compelled to do at this time and when do you plan to act upon it?

Is there any way your Crosswalk church can help with this?

What “tools” or “measures” do we have at our disposal to make sure that we follow, listen, and believe in Jesus today?

LIVING WORDS for YOUR WEEK

My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never perish. No one can snatch them away from me, for my Father has given them to me, and he is more powerful than anyone else. No one can snatch them from the Father's hand. (John 10:27-29)

[illegible]

THE WALK

Week 04 OF 06

A Study Guide

INTRODUCTION - In this series, we are leading up to one of our favorite holidays of the year as followers of Jesus, Easter! For Christians, Easter is where everything changed. The God of the universe had come down as a baby, lived and walked among us, revealed God to us in new and even more clear ways, and then gave His life by dying on a cross to save us from the curse of this world. No credible historians doubt whether or not Jesus of Nazareth was a real figure in history. No credible historians doubt that he was crucified and died. What they doubt is what happened next. We believe three days later Jesus rose from the grave and is alive. Join us in this new sermon series as we study through the gospel of John, a gospel written later than the other three gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke), that elaborates on the story of Jesus with stories the other writers left out. John also elaborates on who Jesus is, the light of the world who takes away the sins of the world, and so much more. Ready to get to know Jesus better as we celebrate Easter? Let's connect!

CONNECT

Have you ever been in a situation where someone is going a different pace than you? Maybe you were hiking or driving and someone was either going too fast or too slow? Think to a time when this happened.

READ

Read John 10:22-11:44 - and share any thoughts, insights, or impressions you had as you read through the passage

Some important context - Jesus consistently throughout the Gospel of John is doing miraculous signs in order to prove his validity as Messiah. He often explains that his signs are proof that he is who he says he is. The problem he consistently faces is that even though he does miraculous signs, people still don't believe him.

The people who don't believe in him become violent and try to kill him. Jesus leaves this place and returns because of Lazarus - what do you think his disciples would have felt?

The family and friends of Lazarus were wanting Jesus to visit to heal him - Jesus took quite a long time to get there. What do you think the family and friends of Lazarus felt?

APPLY

We see clearly in this text that there are two groups of people who had opinions on Jesus's pace. His disciples thought Jesus was going too fast - he was too quick to returning to the place where he was almost stones. Then there are the friends and family of Lazarus who thought he was going too slow - they wanted him there before Lazarus had died.

We learn a very important truth - Jesus walks at his own pace. No matter the situation or event Jesus always walks at his own pace. Everyone in this portion of scripture had to learn to adjust to the pace of Jesus.

THE WALK

Do you find yourself going at your own pace more than Jesus's pace? Often in life we will have our opinions on what God is doing and how we are supposed to follow him. We have to ask ourselves the question: Are we following God's pace or our own?

Jesus teaches his disciples and followers here that we are to follow his lead - not the other way around.

Jesus calls us today to walk at his pace - to follow his lead - to give Jesus the authority of our pace rather than us.

LIVING WORDS

"Jesus told her, " I am the resurrection and the life. Anyone who believes in me will live, even after dying. Everyone who lives in me and believes in me will never ever die."

John 11:25-26

CWKIDS
Week 04 of 06 - Confrontations
Sermon Series Kids Questions

John 10:22-12:50

Introduction - The following questions are a guide to help families with children understand God and discover His love throughout the series. You may think of other ideas that fit the needs of your family.

Read 12:12-19 together with your family.

So many people expected Jesus to show up like a king. Others saw the miracles that Jesus performed (some you read about last week) and wanted to see what he would do next. Many people gathered around to watch Jesus and greet him as he entered Jerusalem.

What would you do to get ready for Jesus to visit?

What do you think a King looks like? How does a king act?

If Jesus were coming to your town, how would you greet him?

WEEK 5

John 13:1-20

13 Before the Passover celebration, Jesus knew that his hour had come to leave this world and return to his Father. He had loved his disciples during his ministry on earth, and now he loved them to the very end. 2 It was time for supper, and the devil had already prompted Judas, son of Simon Iscariot, to betray Jesus. 3 Jesus knew that the Father had given him authority over everything and that he had come from God and would return to God. 4 So he got up from the table, took off his robe, wrapped a towel around his waist, 5 and poured water into a basin. Then he began to wash the disciples' feet, drying them with the towel he had around him.

6 When Jesus came to Simon Peter, Peter said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?"

7 Jesus replied, "You don't understand now what I am doing, but someday you will."

8 "No," Peter protested, "you will never ever wash my feet!"

Jesus replied, "Unless I wash you, you won't belong to me."

9 Simon Peter exclaimed, "Then wash my hands and head as well, Lord, not just my feet!"

10 Jesus replied, "A person who has bathed all over does not need to wash, except for the feet, to be entirely clean. And you disciples are clean, but not all of you." 11 For Jesus knew who would betray him. That is what he meant when he said, "Not all of you are clean."

12 After washing their feet, he put on his robe again and sat down and asked, "Do you understand what I was doing? 13 You call me 'Teacher' and 'Lord,' and you are right, because that's what I am. 14 And since I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you ought to wash each other's feet. 15 I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you. 16 I tell you the truth, slaves are not greater than their master. Nor is the messenger more important than the one who sends the message. 17 Now that you know these things, God will bless you for doing them.

18 "I am not saying these things to all of you; I know the ones I have chosen. But this fulfills the Scripture that says, 'The one who eats my food has turned against me.' 19 I tell you this beforehand, so that when it happens you will believe that I am the Messiah. 20 I tell you the truth, anyone who welcomes my messenger is welcoming me, and

anyone who welcomes me is welcoming the Father who sent me."

Richard Foster, in his much lauded book, "A Celebration of Disciplines", mentions that "with a bowl and basin, Jesus redefined greatness". Today's texts remind us of just that. This text brings us to the upper room, where Jesus and his disciples are beginning to get involved in what has been named the "Farewell Cycle", and it is considered to be one of the masterpieces of Christian literature that sears itself into our minds as we read it and experience it with them.

Isn't that one of the hallmarks of a great story? You feel as if you have experienced it with the characters? And as we read this story, we are being included and invited into an understanding of Jesus that we might not have had before. While Jesus has always been a servant leader, here we begin to see that his servanthood goes to the very lowest levels of servitude, while his leadership rises to the place of divinity. It is in the contrast of these two things that Peter finds himself embarrassed for Jesus that he would deign to humble himself so low as to wash their feet. This was a job for a servant, and probably a servant on the lowest end of any serving scale. This was not a job you would aspire to, it was a job you were stuck with.

But as Jesus took on that towel and basin, he began to show the disciples what they had been missing up until this point; he was showing that that servanthood was not something that one did in order to gain something else, rather, it was an end unto itself. He was willing to be a servant, not so they would grow in loyalty, but so they could understand that serving would always be embarrassing to those who you are serving. That is how low Jesus was willing to go.

Perhaps that question is pertinent to you today. How low are you willing to go in service to Christ and to others? How foolish will you make yourself, thinking of nothing in return, but knowing that you have been simply called to serve in this way, as it is the most excellent way of service? How far are you willing to go to be the one who follows Christ as a first follower, willing to go where he went, into the trenches of humanity in order to not only serve, but lead humanity to a higher and greater place?

(See the questions in the final paragraph to answer today)

Day 30
April 4, 2022

John 13:21-30

21 Now Jesus was deeply troubled, and he exclaimed, "I tell you the truth, one of you will betray me!"

22 The disciples looked at each other, wondering whom he could mean. 23 The disciple Jesus loved was sitting next to Jesus at the table| 24 Simon Peter motioned to him to ask, “Who’s he talking about?” 25 So that disciple leaned over to Jesus and asked, “Lord, who is it?”

26 Jesus responded, "It is the one to whom I give the bread I dip in the bowl." And when he had dipped it, he gave it to Judas, son of Simon Iscariot. 27 When Judas had eaten the bread, Satan entered into him. Then Jesus told him, "Hurry and do what you're going to do." 28 None of the others at the table knew what Jesus meant. 29 Since Judas was their treasurer, some thought Jesus was telling him to go and pay for the food or to give some money to the poor. 30 So Judas left at once, going out into the night.

I have always disliked this text. It is so blatant and must have been such an uncomfortable situation. It is like when you were at a friend's house when you were young and they would talk back to their parents. I didn't grow up in a home where the kids were allowed to speak back to their parents, so when I was at a home where this was commonplace, it was uncomfortable for me and I would find myself siding with the parents. This interchange seems to have some of that sort of uncomfortability for those of us who are listening in.

There seems to be a certain kind of grace that is extended in this interchange. He didn't simply call out Judas, he sort of passive-aggressively told him to go and do what needed to be done. Confusing as it was to the other disciples, it gave just enough time for Judas to go and set up the trap that Jesus would ultimately have to fall into. I would guess that if the disciples knew what was about to happen, they would not have let Judas go, and it might have gone quite poorly for him at the hands of the disciples.

What we can see happening here is that Jesus is willing to go down the path that is prescribed for him, and while, at any point, he could have veered

off, he did not. In fact, he even helped predicate the way by allowing Judas to leave and set the trap. Jesus shows grace in this in two ways: 1) by allowing Judas to continue to work toward his ultimate demise, 2) allowing what must happen to happen in order that he would be able to provide us with a power stronger than death, and a life that had overcome sin. His willingness to make that happen is why we can claim ourselves to be heir to the throne, citizens of the kingdom, and followers of Jesus Christ.

1. Have you ever done something you didn't want to in order to get a desired result? What was it, and how did it work out?
2. Have you ever been betrayed by a close friend? How did it feel?
3. What do you think the Disciples would have done in order to stop Judas had they known what he was about to do?

[illegible]

John 14:1-14

14 "Don't let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God, and trust also in me. 2 There is more than enough room in my Father's home. If this were not so, would I have told you that I am going to prepare a place for you? 3 When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am. 4 And you know the way to where I am going."

5 "No, we don't know, Lord," Thomas said. "We have no idea where you are going, so how can we know the way?"

6 Jesus told him, "I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me. 7 If you had really known me, you would know who my Father is. From now on, you do know him and have seen him!"

8 Philip said, "Lord, show us the Father, and we will be satisfied."

9 Jesus replied, "Have I been with you all this time, Philip, and yet you still don't know who I am? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father! So why are you asking me to show him to you? 10 Don't you believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me? The words I speak are not my own, but my Father who lives in me does his work through me. 11 Just believe that I am in the Father and the Father is in me. Or at least believe because of the work you have seen me do.

12 "I tell you the truth, anyone who believes in me will do the same works I have done, and even greater works, because I am going to be with the Father. 13 You can ask for anything in my name, and I will do it, so that the Son can bring glory to the Father. 14 Yes, ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it!"

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This text is certainly one you have read and pondered over before. John 14 is one of the most famous chapters in the whole of the John narrative, and it is pregnant with meaning in just about every word. It begins with a simple admonition; "Don't let your hearts be troubled." But why shouldn't we? We are living in tumultuous times. We are worried about our lives, our families, our jobs, and what is coming next for the world. It seems reasonable that we should be deeply troubled. In fact, if you look at a statistic, like gun purchases in the United States in 2021, you realize that there were almost

20 million guns sold in this calendar year. To be clear, while there are certainly gun enthusiasts who collect and purchase guns for the hobby of it, such a run on firearm purchases can only come from a place of fear.

The second part of that verse simply says: "Trust in God, trust also in me." This is pretty simple and straightforward if you ask me. Because of the ridiculously close proximity that Jesus has with the father, asking someone to trust the father is akin to asking them to trust Jesus. Perhaps this is a good question to ask yourself today. Do you trust in God and in Jesus? I'm not talking about some ridiculous kind of faith that ignores the safety and safeguards that God has put in place in our lives, like seatbelts and vaccines and medical intervention when we are sick. But I am talking about a reasonable faith that asks if you believe that God has a deep and abiding love for you, will walk with you through your trials, and will be the protection that you need from the evils of this world?

This kind of trust means that we can believe Jesus when he says that there are rooms in his fathers house for us. It was hard for the disciples to understand, as they were still struggling with the origin story of Jesus. But here Jesus makes it plain to them that he has already resided in the halls of heaven, and their invitation is secured as well. Not only are we let into the throneroom of heaven, but we are also invited to stay as sons and daughters of the kingdom.

Then, Jesus makes probably his most famous "I am" statement. He states that he is the way, the truth, and the life. However, there is a play on words here that is important. He is not simply saying that he is "a" way, "a" truth, and "a" life; rather, he is stating that of all the ways there are, he is the ONE way that you can go, and of all the truths you might find, he is the ONE truth that you need to believe in and consider, and of all the lives you might lead, his is ONE life that is eternal. This, connected with the declaration that we should trust in Jesus as we would trust in God, reminds us that we need not live by fear, but we can live by trusting in the goodness and greatness of God as established and expressed by Jesus.

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1. Have you heard all 7 of the "I am" statements? Which is your favorite and why?

[illegible]

John 14:15-31
Promises the Holy Spirit

15 “If you love me, obey my commandments. 16 And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, who will never leave you. 17 He is the Holy Spirit, who leads into all truth. The world cannot receive him, because it isn’t looking for him and doesn’t recognize him. But you know him, because he lives with you now and later will be in you. 18 No, I will not abandon you as orphans—I will come to you. 19 Soon the world will no longer see me, but you will see me. Since I live, you also will live. 20 When I am raised to life again, you will know that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you. 21 Those who accept my commandments and obey them are the ones who love me. And because they love me, my Father will love them. And I will love them and reveal myself to each of them.”

22 Judas (not Judas Iscariot, but the other disciple with that name) said to him, “Lord, why are you going to reveal yourself only to us and not to the world at large?”

23 Jesus replied, “All who love me will do what I say. My Father will love them, and we will come and make our home with each of them. 24 Anyone who doesn’t love me will not obey me. And remember, my words are not my own. What I am telling you is from the Father who sent me. 25 I am telling you these things now while I am still with you. 26 But when the Father sends the Advocate as my representative—that is, the Holy Spirit—he will teach you everything and will remind you of everything I have told you.

27 “I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give is a gift the world cannot give. So don’t be troubled or afraid. 28 Remember what I told you: I am going away, but I will come back to you again. If you really loved me, you would be happy that I am going to the Father, who is greater than I am. 29 I have told you these things before they happen so that when they do happen, you will believe.

30 “I don’t have much more time to talk to you, because the ruler of this world approaches. He has no power over me, 31 but I will do what the Father requires of me, so that the world will know that I love the Father. Come, let’s be going.

There are some serious words in this text that

remind us of the Perichoretic relationship that Jesus has with the father, and seeks to have with us as well. The use of the “in” language; “You will know that I am in my Father, and you are in me, and I am in you . . .” is indicative of the way that God thinks about relationships. Whether it is with the Son, the Holy Spirit, or you and I, there is a sense that we are to abide and dwell within one another. We are closer than family and our desire to dwell with one another helps bind us together in the kingdom of God.

In this text, Jesus is explicit in his explanation of what it means to be in relationship with him and in relationship with God. It is more than acknowledging that God is there. It is an intimacy that brings a sense of comfort and safety to the way we live our lives here on earth. It is a deep connection with God and with Jesus that is fostered by the Holy Spirit, and it enables us to transcend our understanding of things like life, death, suffering, joy and worship. When we have that intimacy with God our lives are simply different, better, and more fulfilled.

Jesus says that he is leaving them with a gift, peace of mind and heart. Can you imagine what your life would look like if you had consistent peace of mind and in your heart all the time. More so, what would the world look like if we were able to really abide in Christ and take to heart (and to mind) this peace that we are given. Jesus makes it clear that this is not the kind of peace that the world can give us. It is something that is supernatural, something that continually transcends our situation and that can only come from God.

The last line in this section is an invitation. Of course, it was in the midst of the conversation that Jesus was having so it probably is not literally for us, but what if it were? What if you were asked to walk away from everything that you know and find a new life in Christ? What would be the outcome of such a request. We say we want to follow Jesus, but how serious are we about that?

1. How far would you follow Jesus?
2. Do you think overly simplistic moralizing is really following Jesus and allowing him to live in you?
3. What is the purpose of having Christ abide in us?

John 15:1-17

15 "I am the true grapevine, and my Father is the gardener. 2 He cuts off every branch of mine that doesn't produce fruit, and he prunes the branches that do bear fruit so they will produce even more. 3 You have already been pruned and purified by the message I have given you. 4 Remain in me, and I will remain in you. For a branch cannot produce fruit if it is severed from the vine, and you cannot be fruitful unless you remain in me.

5 "Yes, I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing. 6 Anyone who does not remain in me is thrown away like a useless branch and withers. Such branches are gathered into a pile to be burned. 7 But if you remain in me and my words remain in you, you may ask for anything you want, and it will be granted! 8 When you produce much fruit, you are my true disciples. This brings great glory to my Father.

9 "I have loved you even as the Father has loved me. Remain in my love. 10 When you obey my commandments, you remain in my love, just as I obey my Father's commandments and remain in his love. 11 I have told you these things so that you will be filled with my joy. Yes, your joy will overflow! 12 This is my commandment: Love each other in the same way I have loved you. 13 There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends. 14 You are my friends if you do what I command. 15 I no longer call you slaves, because a master doesn't confide in his slaves. Now you are my friends, since I have told you everything the Father told me. 16 You didn't choose me. I chose you. I appointed you to go and produce lasting fruit, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask for, using my name. 17 This is my command: Love each other.

We just bought a new house this year, and we have about 18 orange trees in the backyard. They have been a little ignored over the years, to be honest. As I write this, I am looking out and seeing the trees laden with fruit, ready to be picked in about 10 days or so. As we have done some research on owning these trees and being good stewards of this bounty, we learned that we have to prune. With 18 trees this will be no small feat. But the main information we have gleaned is that a tree will be more fruitful if we do our due diligence and prune the branches

that are not producing fruit, but are actually starving the other branches from getting what they need.

Now, I am no botanist, but that makes some sense. When Jesus uses this metaphor, we realize that not everyone is interested in producing fruit for the kingdom. But the negative message is not the point of this text. Rather, it is the positive nature of the message that Jesus will remain in us if we remain in him. As he is the vine, our branches need to be connected to it if we are to have sustenance.

The overwhelming message is that we are to remain in the love that is offered to us from Jesus. It is not a command, but a request to accept the love that Jesus has given to us time and time again. We need to reflect on this from time to time in our lives. A great and unusual love has been offered to us from the creator of the universe, and it is available to us at any point in time. Without this offer, we would be aimless, and without a deeper purpose and contentment. However, because there is such a great love extended and given, we are able to live our lives knowing that we are chosen, we are loved, we have been sacrificed for, and we are part of a larger kingdom than we ever could have imagined. Our family is great and good and growing, and we are an integral part of that family.

God chose us, and gave us the command to go and bear fruit. And if you are a part of Crosswalk Church, we expect that as well. We want to be a community that is good soil for you to grow. We are blessed to know that you have chosen Crosswalk as your place to grow in the kingdom work that God has given you!

1. What does it mean to you to produce fruit for the kingdom?
2. How can you engage in this work that God has given you?
3. What do you need to pray for today, so that fruit may be produced in your life?

John 15:18-16:33

1 “If the world hates you, remember that it hated me first. 19 The world would love you as one of its own if you belonged to it, but you are no longer part of the world. I chose you to come out of the world, so it hates you. 20 Do you remember what I told you? ‘A slave is not greater than the master.’ Since they persecuted me, naturally they will persecute you. And if they had listened to me, they would listen to you. 21 They will do all this to you because of me, for they have rejected the one who sent me. 22 They would not be guilty if I had not come and spoken to them. But now they have no excuse for their sin. 23 Anyone who hates me also hates my Father. 24 If I hadn’t done such miraculous signs among them that no one else could do, they would not be guilty. But as it is, they have seen everything I did, yet they still hate me and my Father. 25 This fulfills what is written in their Scriptures: ‘They hated me without cause.’

26 “But I will send you the Advocate—the Spirit of truth. He will come to you from the Father and will testify all about me. 27 And you must also testify about me because you have been with me from the beginning of my ministry.

16 “I have told you these things so that you won’t abandon your faith. 2 For you will be expelled from the synagogues, and the time is coming when those who kill you will think they are doing a holy service for God. 3 This is because they have never known the Father or me. 4 Yes, I’m telling you these things now, so that when they happen, you will remember my warning. I didn’t tell you earlier because I was going to be with you for a while longer.

The Work of the Holy Spirit

5 “But now I am going away to the one who sent me, and not one of you is asking where I am going. 6 Instead, you grieve because of what I’ve told you. 7 But in fact, it is best for you that I go away, because if I don’t, the Advocate[a] won’t come. If I do go away, then I will send him to you. 8 And when he comes, he will convict the world of its sin, and of God’s righteousness, and of the coming judgment. 9 The world’s sin is that it refuses to believe in me. 10 Righteousness is available because I go to the Father, and you will see me no more. 11 Judgment will come because the ruler of this world has already been judged.

12 “There is so much more I want to tell you, but you can’t bear it now. 13 When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on his own but will tell you what he has heard. He will tell you about the future. 14 He will bring me glory by telling you whatever he receives from me. 15 All that belongs to the Father is mine; this is why I said, ‘The Spirit will tell you whatever he receives from me.’

Sadness Will Be Turned to Joy

16 “In a little while you won’t see me anymore. But a little while after that, you will see me again.”

17 Some of the disciples asked each other, “What does he mean when he says, ‘In a little while you won’t see me, but then you will see me,’ and ‘I am going to the Father’? 18 And what does he mean by ‘a little while’? We don’t understand.”

19 Jesus realized they wanted to ask him about it, so he said, “Are you asking yourselves what I meant? I said in a little while you won’t see me, but a little while after that you will see me again. 20 I tell you the truth, you will weep and mourn over what is going to happen to me, but the world will rejoice. You will grieve, but your grief will suddenly turn to wonderful joy. 21 It will be like a woman suffering the pains of labor. When her child is born, her anguish gives way to joy because she has brought a new baby into the world. 22 So you have sorrow now, but I will see you again; then you will rejoice, and no one can rob you of that joy. 23 At that time you won’t need to ask me for anything. I tell you the truth, you will ask the Father directly, and he will grant your request because you use my name. 24 You haven’t done this before. Ask, using my name, and you will receive, and you will have abundant joy.

25 “I have spoken of these matters in figures of speech, but soon I will stop speaking figuratively and will tell you plainly all about the Father. 26 Then you will ask in my name. I’m not saying I will ask the Father on your behalf, 27 for the Father himself loves you dearly because you love me and believe that I came from God.[b] 28 Yes, I came from the Father into the world, and now I will leave the world and return to the Father.”

29 Then his disciples said, “At last you are speaking plainly and not figuratively. 30 Now we understand that you know everything, and there’s no need to question you. From this we believe that you came from God.”

31 Jesus asked, “Do you finally believe? 32 But the

time is coming—indeed it's here now—when you will be scattered, each one going his own way, leaving me alone. Yet I am not alone because the Father is with me. 33 I have told you all this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world.”

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This is a long reading, and it covers lots of ground. It begins with the recognition that you should expect the world to hate you. Now, I want to be clear about something, there are many people who think that they can be deeply offensive as they “protect” their Christian beliefs, and they feel as they are being persecuted for believing in certain things. However, I don't think that this is what Jesus was talking about. Rather, I believe that Jesus was speaking about the abuse that comes when we have a desire to love beyond what people are really comfortable with. When we have chosen that we will be inclusive of those who are different than we are, when we take care of the least fortunate of us, and when we desire to to be a beacon of hope in a community. That is why Jesus was ultimately crucified; not because he was protecting God or what was perceived as “God’s” value system. He was crucified because he was ushering a new era of love, inclusivity, healing, and grace. Why is it that the world has such a hard time with this? Is it because this kind of love and grace pushes back on the structures that we build to protect our way of life?

This conversation is long, and Jesus begins by speaking in metaphors, but then, ultimately, just tells them what will happen. He will suffer, and then he will be taken back to where he came from, but then they will see him again. They will suffer, and they will be sad, but when they find joy, it will be a joy that comes from God and such that no one will be able to take it away from them. It is a joy that will transcend and a joy that will motivate them to become closer to God as they can.

After it all, Jesus asks them if they “finally believe?” He warns them of impending separation and struggle, but also reminds them that he is not leaving them alone, rather, he is leaving with them the Holy Spirit, a guide, a counselor, and God. Also, because he resides in us, we will never be left alone. This promise is something that we should take with us wherever we go and whatever we encounter.

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1. Do you feel like you are persecuted and hated by the world? Why?
2. What kind of comfort do you find from these texts? Be specific.
3. How can you go about helping others to know that they are never alone when they have accepted Christ?

The following is a guide to help facilitate discussion. Feel free to add or subtract or change questions to fit the conversation, and pray for the Spirit to lead in all things.

OPEN

If you knew you only had a short amount of time left to live, what would you do with your remaining time?

HEAD

SECTION I: John 13

Read together Scripture: John 13, and share anything that stands out to you or any questions/comments that immediately pop-up.

How does seeing Jesus serve and love his disciples help you understand how you are called to serve and love others?

What needs to change in your life in order for you to love and serve people in the ways that Jesus did?

SECTION II: John 14

Read together Scripture: John 14, and share anything that stands out to you or any questions/comments that immediately pop-up.

When you love someone and demonstrate love to them, what kind of results do you see in that relationship?

What results come into the life of a believer when they genuinely love Jesus and seek to honor Him with their life?

SECTION III: John 15

Read together Scripture: John 15, and share anything that stands out to you or any questions/comments that immediately pop-up.

What is the key to producing fruit in the life of a believer? What must be done in order to bear good/abundant fruit?

What is the basis for the joy Jesus talks about? Is that simply happiness or something else?

SECTION III: John 16

Read together Scripture: John 16, and share anything that stands out to you or any questions/comments that immediately pop-up.

Jesus tells the disciples that it is "good for them" that He is going away. Why is that? What "good" is

there in Him being physically absent?

How has the Holy Spirit helped guide you and helped you glorify Jesus in your own life?

HEART

What hope do you draw from these final scenes of Jesus' life on earth?

Which of the themes from these chapters is most relevant to your life today? (service, honesty/trustworthiness, hopefulness, connection, advocacy/counsel)

HANDS

Take a moment to thank God for the work of the Holy Spirit in you and around you. Pray that the Spirit would continue to guide you in truth and continue to work through you to be a beacon of light and hope in this world. Look for ways this week to share the hope and light you've received from your connection to the Spirit of God!

LIVING WORDS for YOUR WEEK

"I have given you an example to follow. Do as I have done to you."

John 13:15

"I am leaving you with a gift—peace of mind and heart. And the peace I give isn't like the peace the world gives. So don't be troubled or afraid."

John 14:27

"I am the vine; you are the branches. Those who remain in me, and I in them, will produce much fruit. For apart from me you can do nothing."

John 15:5

"I have told you all of this so that you may have peace in me. Here on earth you will have many trials and sorrows. But take heart, because I have overcome the world."

John 16:33

A Study Guide

INTRODUCTION - In this series, we are leading up to one of our favorite holidays of the year as followers of Jesus, Easter! For Christians, Easter is where everything changed. The God of the universe had come down as a baby, lived and walked among us, revealed God to us in new and even more clear ways, and then gave His life by dying on a cross to save us from the curse of this world. No credible historians doubt whether or not Jesus of Nazareth was a real figure in history. No credible historians doubt that he was crucified and died. What they doubt is what happened next. We believe three days later Jesus rose from the grave and is alive.

Join us in this new sermon series as we study through the gospel of John, a gospel written later than the other three gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke), that elaborates on the story of Jesus with stories the other writers left out. John also elaborates on who Jesus is, the light of the world who takes away the sins of the world, and so much more. Ready to get to know Jesus better as we celebrate Easter? Let's connect!

CONNECT

One of the most powerful scenes in movies are the final words/actions of a character before they die. Think to the most powerful ones for you and think about why they are meaningful.

READ

Read John 13:1-17 - and share any thoughts, insights, or impressions you had as you read through the passage

Think about what Jesus may of been feeling - he realizes that the moment he knew would come had finally arrived.

What people do in their final moments often reflect an important part of who they are - here Jesus does something incredible. What does Jesus's actions and words reveal to us about who he is?

APPLY

In verse 1 we learn that he loved his disciples deeply. Jesus takes his final moments with his disciples to wash their feet - he expresses his love through action.

Jesus both serves and teaches his disciples in this moment - he teaches his disciples that they are always to serve those around them and teach them

of the love that he had for them.

The work of a follower of Jesus is to love those around them through service - the point of this service is so that they would understand the love that Jesus has for them.

THE WALK

It's evident throughout the life of Jesus that the way that love is expressed the loudest is through action. Over and over again Jesus demonstrates enacted love.

We have to ask ourselves the question: How do we love? Do we love not just in words but in action?

As followers of Jesus we choose to love with our actions - reaching out to others so that they would understand the love that Jesus has for them.

LIVING WORDS

“...He had loved his disciples during his ministry on earth, and now he loved them to the very end.”

John 13:1

This image shows a blank sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and extend across the width of the page. There are no margins or other markings on the paper.

CWKIDS
Sermon Series Kids Questions
Week 05 of 06 - Instructions

John 13:1-16:33

Introduction - The following questions are a guide to help families with children understand God and discover His love throughout the series. You may think of other ideas that fit the needs of your family.

Read John 14:1-14 together with your family.

Have you ever been on a long trip in the car or an airplane with your family? Have you ever wondered how the driver knew where to go, or what roads to take, or even how to fly from one place to another? Jesus told the Disciples that he would leave them, but they would know exactly how to find Him. He was trying to prepare them to be without him. He left instructions for them, just like if we were following a map today. And, he promises that where he is, there are rooms ready for each of us to join him.

Hide a treat, gift, or surprise somewhere in your house and draw a map to help your family find it. Give clues if they need help following directions.

-

Have you ever had a best friend or someone you love move away? How do you stay connected with them? How does it feel to go and visit them?

What are you looking forward to about heaven?

WEEK 6

John 17

The Prayer of Jesus

17 After saying all these things, Jesus looked up to heaven and said, “Father, the hour has come. Glorify your Son so he can give glory back to you. 2 For you have given him authority over everyone. He gives eternal life to each one you have given him. 3 And this is the way to have eternal life—to know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, the one you sent to earth. 4 I brought glory to you here on earth by completing the work you gave me to do. 5 Now, Father, bring me into the glory we shared before the world began.

6 “I have revealed you to the ones you gave me from this world. They were always yours. You gave them to me, and they have kept your word. 7 Now they know that everything I have is a gift from you, 8 for I have passed on to them the message you gave me. They accepted it and know that I came from you, and they believe you sent me.

9 “My prayer is not for the world, but for those you have given me, because they belong to you. 10 All who are mine belong to you, and you have given them to me, so they bring me glory. 11 Now I am departing from the world; they are staying in this world, but I am coming to you. Holy Father, you have given me your name; now protect them by the power of your name so that they will be united just as we are. 12 During my time here, I protected them by the power of the name you gave me.[c] I guarded them so that not one was lost, except the one headed for destruction, as the Scriptures foretold.

13 “Now I am coming to you. I told them many things while I was with them in this world so they would be filled with my joy. 14 I have given them your word. And the world hates them because they do not belong to the world, just as I do not belong to the world. 15 I’m not asking you to take them out of the world, but to keep them safe from the evil one. 16 They do not belong to this world any more than I do. 17 Make them holy by your truth; teach them your word, which is truth. 18 Just as you sent me into the world, I am sending them into the world. 19 And I give myself as a holy sacrifice for them so they can be made holy by your truth. 20 “I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will ever believe in me through their message. 21 I pray that they will all be one, just as you and I are one—as you are in me, Father, and I am in you.

And may they be in us so that the world will believe you sent me.

22 “I have given them the glory you gave me, so they may be one as we are one. 23 I am in them and you are in me. May they experience such perfect unity that the world will know that you sent me and that you love them as much as you love me. 24 Father, I want these whom you have given me to be with me where I am. Then they can see all the glory you gave me because you loved me even before the world began!

25 “O righteous Father, the world doesn’t know you, but I do; and these disciples know you sent me. 26 I have revealed you to them, and I will continue to do so. Then your love for me will be in them, and I will be in them.”

This is the longest recorded prayer of Jesus that we have in scripture, and it is nothing short of amazing. He begins with an intimate reminder of the time that He and the Father spent together before the world began. The fact that he did this in front the disciples can be seen two ways, 1) That he wanted them to know that communication with the father was an easy thing, 2) That there was no one who could separate them from entering into a relationship and a communication with God. It was probably a much less formal kind of communication than they had encountered before, but as you read it, you realize that there are amazing things being said. Here are a few of them:

5 Now, Father, bring me into the glory we shared before the world began.

We should never forget that Jesus was not simply born into this world out of non-existence, rather, he came from heaven, shedding all that was royal and infinite to him in order to become finite, and to interact and understand exactly who we are and what we live with. But it was not a short journey, it was a condescension that was unheard of, something that is still hard for us to understand the weight and scope of it.

15 I’m not asking you to take them out of the world, but to keep them safe from the evil one. 16 They do not belong to this world any more than I do.

I have always thought this text was very important. Specifically because we come from a tradition that loves to talk about leaving society and running to the hills somewhere. But Jesus doesn’t seem to be interested in taking his followers out of the world, but to keep them safe in it. While we exist in this world, it is not our home. However, as long

as we are here we are to be stewards of the grace that God has given us. We are not to run from our responsibilities to this world, yet we are to know that we are protected from the evil one, who would love to see us run from the world that God created and therefore become completely worthless to the kingdom of God. This text reminds us that we are to engage, and we are protected by God. We should live like that!

20 "I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will ever believe in me through their message

That's us! He mentions us! It doesn't really get better than that if you ask me!

26 I have revealed you to them, and I will continue to do so. Then your love for me will be in them, and I will be in them."

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Again, this language of abiding speaks to the intimacy of the relationship that Jesus wants with us.

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1. What did you see in these texts that you perhaps have not noticed before?

2. Do you have anyone in your life that you could say you "abide" with?

3. What is the one thing that sticks out to you about this prayer?

Day 37

April 11, 2022

John 18

18 After saying these things, Jesus crossed the Kidron Valley with his disciples and entered a grove of olive trees. 2 Judas, the betrayer, knew this place, because Jesus had often gone there with his disciples. 3 The leading priests and Pharisees had given Judas a contingent of Roman soldiers and Temple guards to accompany him. Now with blazing torches, lanterns, and weapons, they arrived at the olive grove.

4 Jesus fully realized all that was going to happen to him, so he stepped forward to meet them. "Who are you looking for?" he asked.

5 "Jesus the Nazarene," they replied.

"I am he," Jesus said. (Judas, who betrayed him, was standing with them.) 6 As Jesus said "I am he," they all drew back and fell to the ground! 7 Once more he asked them, "Who are you looking for?"

And again they replied, "Jesus the Nazarene."

8 "I told you that I am he," Jesus said. "And since I am the one you want, let these others go." 9 He did this to fulfill his own statement: "I did not lose a

single one of those you have given me."

10 Then Simon Peter drew a sword and slashed off the right ear of Malchus, the high priest's slave. 11 But Jesus said to Peter, "Put your sword back into its sheath. Shall I not drink from the cup of suffering the Father has given me?"

Jesus at the High Priest's House

12 So the soldiers, their commanding officer, and the Temple guards arrested Jesus and tied him up. 13 First they took him to Annas, since he was the father-in-law of Caiaphas, the high priest at that time. 14 Caiaphas was the one who had told the other Jewish leaders, "It's better that one man should die for the people."

Peter's First Denial

15 Simon Peter followed Jesus, as did another of the disciples. That other disciple was acquainted with the high priest, so he was allowed to enter the high priest's courtyard with Jesus. 16 Peter had to stay outside the gate. Then the disciple who knew the high priest spoke to the woman watching at the gate, and she let Peter in. 17 The woman asked Peter, "You're not one of that man's disciples, are you?"

"No," he said, "I am not."

18 Because it was cold, the household servants and the guards had made a charcoal fire. They stood around it, warming themselves, and Peter stood with them, warming himself.

The High Priest Questions Jesus

19 Inside, the high priest began asking Jesus about his followers and what he had been teaching them. 20 Jesus replied, "Everyone knows what I teach. I have preached regularly in the synagogues and the Temple, where the people gather. I have not spoken in secret. 21 Why are you asking me this question? Ask those who heard me. They know what I said."

22 Then one of the Temple guards standing nearby slapped Jesus across the face. "Is that the way to answer the high priest?" he demanded.

23 Jesus replied, "If I said anything wrong, you must prove it. But if I'm speaking the truth, why are you beating me?"

24 Then Annas bound Jesus and sent him to Caiaphas, the high priest.

Peter's Second and Third Denials

25 Meanwhile, as Simon Peter was standing by the fire warming himself, they asked him again, "You're

not one of his disciples, are you?"

He denied it, saying, "No, I am not."

26 But one of the household slaves of the high priest, a relative of the man whose ear Peter had cut off, asked, "Didn't I see you out there in the olive grove with Jesus?" 27 Again Peter denied it. And immediately a rooster crowed.

Jesus' Trial before Pilate

28 Jesus' trial before Caiaphas ended in the early hours of the morning. Then he was taken to the headquarters of the Roman governor. His accusers didn't go inside because it would defile them, and they wouldn't be allowed to celebrate the Passover. 29 So Pilate, the governor, went out to them and asked, "What is your charge against this man?"

30 "We wouldn't have handed him over to you if he weren't a criminal!" they retorted.

31 "Then take him away and judge him by your own law," Pilate told them.

"Only the Romans are permitted to execute someone," the Jewish leaders replied. 32 (This fulfilled Jesus' prediction about the way he would die.)

33 Then Pilate went back into his headquarters and called for Jesus to be brought to him. "Are you the king of the Jews?" he asked him.

34 Jesus replied, "Is this your own question, or did others tell you about me?"

35 "Am I a Jew?" Pilate retorted. "Your own people and their leading priests brought you to me for trial. Why? What have you done?"

36 Jesus answered, "My Kingdom is not an earthly kingdom. If it were, my followers would fight to keep me from being handed over to the Jewish leaders. But my Kingdom is not of this world."

37 Pilate said, "So you are a king?"

Jesus responded, "You say I am a king. Actually, I was born and came into the world to testify to the truth. All who love the truth recognize that what I say is true."

38 "What is truth?" Pilate asked. Then he went out again to the people and told them, "He is not guilty of any crime. 39 But you have a custom of asking me to release one prisoner each year at Passover. Would you like me to release this 'King of the Jews'?"

40 But they shouted back, "No! Not this man. We want Barabbas!" (Barabbas was a revolutionary.)

It is tough going through a chapter like this in a day. This is the kind of chapter that should take a few weeks to go through, but we will do our best!

We have the encounter at the garden of Gethsemane, the denial of Jesus by Peter, and then the conviction of Jesus by Pilate. Of course, in the synoptic gospels we have a much broader explanation, but remember John was trying to do something different than simply telling the story. He was trying to nuance some different understandings and theology as his context had changed in the 30 years or so since the first gospels were written.

We see Jesus more than willing to fulfill his role as a sacrifice and savior. But then we get into the logistics of the next few hours and we realize that there are a lot of actors at play in this scenario. The character that takes the biggest hit is Peter, of course. Watching Peter deny Jesus in real time is just heartbreaking and like driving past a slow accident on the freeway. The worst part is that it was predicted (Mark 14:27-31), so that adds insult to injury in some respects.

The second thing that is worth mentioning is when Pilate says "What is truth?" This is a pretty powerful statement about what his epistemology is. Epistemology is the study of truth, and it is really something that needs to be considered, especially as we are currently living in what has been described as a "post-truth world." What does this mean? Well, it seems to mean that we are living in a world where people are having a hard time agreeing on what we can see as common truth, something we can all accept. Certainly in the US at this time we see the divide of belief when it comes to what is really true. The problem with this is that it becomes very difficult to really find a way to lean into the common good of society. We have seen this over the centuries in other cultures, and we seem to be living in that reality today.

Pilate, perhaps way ahead of his time, or perhaps just a savvy politician and not wanting to commit to anything. However, what we see is the seeds of the troubles our world has today. If we can't accept anything as truth, then it will be difficult for us to claim the promises of Jesus as anything more than just an interesting opinion of a historical figure. I think we have to go beyond truth at times and move to trust. Trust in the truth of Jesus as Savior, Messiah, and God.

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1. Have you ever denied Jesus? Did you know you were doing it when it was happening?

2. How do you come back from something like that?

3. What do you believe truth to be?

[illegible]

John 19

19 Then Pilate had Jesus flogged with a lead-tipped whip. 2 The soldiers wove a crown of thorns and put it on his head, and they put a purple robe on him. 3 "Hail! King of the Jews!" they mocked, as they slapped him across the face.

4 Pilate went outside again and said to the people, "I am going to bring him out to you now, but understand clearly that I find him not guilty." 5 Then Jesus came out wearing the crown of thorns and the purple robe. And Pilate said, "Look, here is the man!"

6 When they saw him, the leading priests and Temple guards began shouting, "Crucify him! Crucify him!"

"Take him yourselves and crucify him," Pilate said. "I find him not guilty."

7 The Jewish leaders replied, "By our law he ought to die because he called himself the Son of God."

8 When Pilate heard this, he was more frightened than ever. 9 He took Jesus back into the headquarters again and asked him, "Where are you from?" But Jesus gave no answer. 10 "Why don't you talk to me?" Pilate demanded. "Don't you realize that I have the power to release you or crucify you?"

11 Then Jesus said, "You would have no power over me at all unless it were given to you from above. So the one who handed me over to you has the greater sin."

12 Then Pilate tried to release him, but the Jewish leaders shouted, "If you release this man, you are no 'friend of Caesar.' Anyone who declares himself a king is a rebel against Caesar."

13 When they said this, Pilate brought Jesus out to them again. Then Pilate sat down on the judgment seat on the platform that is called the Stone Pavement (in Hebrew, Gabbatha). 14 It was now about noon on the day of preparation for the Passover. And Pilate said to the people, "Look, here is your king!"

15 "Away with him," they yelled. "Away with him! Crucify him!"

"What? Crucify your king?" Pilate asked.

"We have no king but Caesar," the leading priests shouted back.

16 Then Pilate turned Jesus over to them to be crucified.

The Crucifixion

So they took Jesus away. 17 Carrying the cross

by himself, he went to the place called Place of the Skull (in Hebrew, Golgotha). 18 There they nailed him to the cross. Two others were crucified with him, one on either side, with Jesus between them. 19 And Pilate posted a sign on the cross that read, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." 20 The place where Jesus was crucified was near the city, and the sign was written in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek, so that many people could read it.

21 Then the leading priests objected and said to Pilate, "Change it from 'The King of the Jews' to 'He said, I am King of the Jews.'"

22 Pilate replied, "No, what I have written, I have written."

23 When the soldiers had crucified Jesus, they divided his clothes among the four of them. They also took his robe, but it was seamless, woven in one piece from top to bottom. 24 So they said, "Rather than tearing it apart, let's throw dice for it." This fulfilled the Scripture that says, "They divided my garments among themselves and threw dice for my clothing." So that is what they did.

25 Standing near the cross were Jesus' mother, and his mother's sister, Mary (the wife of Clopas), and Mary Magdalene. 26 When Jesus saw his mother standing there beside the disciple he loved, he said to her, "Dear woman, here is your son." 27 And he said to this disciple, "Here is your mother." And from then on this disciple took her into his home.

The Death of Jesus

28 Jesus knew that his mission was now finished, and to fulfill Scripture he said, "I am thirsty." 29 A jar of sour wine was sitting there, so they soaked a sponge in it, put it on a hyssop branch, and held it up to his lips. 30 When Jesus had tasted it, he said, "It is finished!" Then he bowed his head and gave up his spirit.

31 It was the day of preparation, and the Jewish leaders didn't want the bodies hanging there the next day, which was the Sabbath (and a very special Sabbath, because it was Passover week). So they asked Pilate to hasten their deaths by ordering that their legs be broken. Then their bodies could be taken down. 32 So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the two men crucified with Jesus. 33 But when they came to Jesus, they saw that he was already dead, so they didn't break his legs. 34 One of the soldiers, however, pierced his side with a spear, and immediately blood and water flowed out. 35 (This report is from an eyewitness giving an accurate account. He speaks the truth so that you also may continue to believe.) 36 These things happened in

fulfillment of the Scriptures that say, “Not one of his bones will be broken,” 37 and “They will look on the one they pierced.”

The Burial of Jesus

38 Afterward Joseph of Arimathea, who had been a secret disciple of Jesus (because he feared the Jewish leaders), asked Pilate for permission to take down Jesus’ body. When Pilate gave permission, Joseph came and took the body away. 39 With him came Nicodemus, the man who had come to Jesus at night. He brought about seventy-five pounds of perfumed ointment made from myrrh and aloes. 40 Following Jewish burial custom, they wrapped Jesus’ body with the spices in long sheets of linen cloth. 41 The place of crucifixion was near a garden, where there was a new tomb, never used before. 42 And so, because it was the day of preparation for the Jewish Passover and since the tomb was close at hand, they laid Jesus there.

When was the last time you read this account of the sentencing and the crucifixion? We often go to the other gospels or a mix of the other ones for a broader understanding of the whole of the story, but staying here in John for a moment is pretty interesting, so let’s jump in. We see the struggle that Pilate is having with this situation. Pilate almost comes across as a pitiful figure, being thrown around by the politics of the day. He seems to clearly understand that Jesus did nothing wrong and shouldn’t be punished, however, he also understands how to read popular opinion and is trying to keep the masses at bay. It is a pretty shameful experience for all those involved, except of course, for Jesus.

Jesus maintains his composure throughout the entirety of the experience, yes even until death. And that is one of the things we can learn from all of this. Jesus had an incredible connection with God, and that allowed him to stay in control throughout all of the drama that was unfolding.

There seems to be a preoccupation with the idea of Kingship in these texts. Jesus never said he was king of the Jews, although he was accused of such. These words and the nomenclature of kingship really bothered those who opposed them. They certainly didn’t want anyone claiming kingship over them, even Caesar, but they could also not abide by one of their own claiming such. It was a conundrum that was clear because Jesus never said

that, rather, he said he was the Son of Man, or Son of God, which has a much greater connotation than simply being ruler over an area. However, in their myopathy, they couldn’t tell the difference and just knew they had to get rid of Jesus. Throughout the entire process, Pilate seems incredulous they would want to convict this man who had clearly done nothing wrong in the eyes of the law.

We must understand that when the way of life that people have is threatened, they will do anything to keep the status quo. This is just what was happening with Jesus, as his teaching threatened the loyalty of the community to the religious leaders, he undermined the authority of Rome by saying that God’s kingdom was to be considered first, and he seemed to live outside of every societal and economic system that existed at the time. He was so hard to pin down into anyone’s camp that his presence did nothing but make them uncomfortable. It wasn’t that he was a revolutionary, it’s that they didn’t know what type of revolution he was starting. Therefore, there was only one thing to be done; destroy him.

However, when you destroy the leader of an idea, we all know what happens, the idea grows and on a life of its own. And this idea still resides in each of our hearts today!

1. When you think of the crucifixion, what comes to your mind? What is the picture your heart draws?
2. Can you imagine being in the crowd that day? What do you think you would have been doing? Be honest with yourself!
3. How can you make sure you don’t end up in the crowd shouting “crucify him” when those moments come again in your life?

John 20

The Resurrection

1 Early on Sunday morning, while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene came to the tomb and found that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance. 2 She ran and found Simon Peter and the other disciple, the one whom Jesus loved. She said, "They have taken the Lord's body out of the tomb, and we don't know where they have put him!"

3 Peter and the other disciple started out for the tomb. 4 They were both running, but the other disciple outran Peter and reached the tomb first. 5 He stooped and looked in and saw the linen wrappings lying there, but he didn't go in. 6 Then Simon Peter arrived and went inside. He also noticed the linen wrappings lying there, 7 while the cloth that had covered Jesus' head was folded up and lying apart from the other wrappings. 8 Then the disciple who had reached the tomb first also went in, and he saw and believed— 9 for until then they still hadn't understood the Scriptures that said Jesus must rise from the dead. 10 Then they went home

Jesus Appears to Mary Magdalene

11 Mary was standing outside the tomb crying, and as she wept, she stooped and looked in. 12 She saw two white-robed angels, one sitting at the head and the other at the foot of the place where the body of Jesus had been lying. 13 "Dear woman, why are you crying?" the angels asked her.

"Because they have taken away my Lord," she replied, "and I don't know where they have put him."

14 She turned to leave and saw someone standing there. It was Jesus, but she didn't recognize him. 15 "Dear woman, why are you crying?" Jesus asked her. "Who are you looking for?"

She thought he was the gardener. "Sir," she said, "if you have taken him away, tell me where you have put him, and I will go and get him."

16 "Mary!" Jesus said.

She turned to him and cried out, "Rabboni!" (which is Hebrew for "Teacher").

17 "Don't cling to me," Jesus said, "for I haven't yet ascended to the Father. But go find my brothers and tell them, 'I am ascending to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"

18 Mary Magdalene found the disciples and told them, "I have seen the Lord!" Then she gave them his message

Jesus Appears to His Disciples

19 That Sunday evening the disciples were meeting behind locked doors because they were afraid of the Jewish leaders. Suddenly, Jesus was standing there among them! "Peace be with you," he said. 20 As he spoke, he showed them the wounds in his hands and his side. They were filled with joy when they saw the Lord! 21 Again he said, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I am sending you." 22 Then he breathed on them and said, "Receive the Holy Spirit. 23 If you forgive anyone's sins, they are forgiven. If you do not forgive them, they are not forgiven."

Jesus Appears to Thomas

24 One of the twelve disciples, Thomas (nicknamed the Twin), was not with the others when Jesus came. 25 They told him, "We have seen the Lord!"

But he replied, "I won't believe it unless I see the nail wounds in his hands, put my fingers into them, and place my hand into the wound in his side."

26 Eight days later the disciples were together again, and this time Thomas was with them. The doors were locked; but suddenly, as before, Jesus was standing among them. "Peace be with you," he said. 27 Then he said to Thomas, "Put your finger here, and look at my hands. Put your hand into the wound in my side. Don't be faithless any longer. Believe!"

28 "My Lord and my God!" Thomas exclaimed.

29 Then Jesus told him, "You believe because you have seen me. Blessed are those who believe without seeing me."

Purpose of the Book

30 The disciples saw Jesus do many other miraculous signs in addition to the ones recorded in this book. 31 But these are written so that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing in him you will have life by the power of his name.

These are glorious texts that speak of the risen Savior. We cannot overestimate the power of these occurrences in the life of the early church and in creating the ongoing narrative that we still believe in today. The thing that I find staggering is that regardless of the pain and torture that these people suffered because of this situation, they never denied the veracity of what happened in this account.

These men and women who were witness to the resurrection never recanted or claimed they had been lying. All it would have taken was one of them to say, “well, it didn’t really happen that way” and we all would have second guessed these occurrences. However, because they were not willing to go back on what they knew happened, we have our faith today.

After what must have been a deeply discouraging Sabbath, the women go to the tomb in order to prepare the body for burial. What they discovered was nothing short of miraculous. Their interchange with Jesus must have made them second guess how the world works, but confirmed their understanding of who Jesus really was. It is shame it took the men a little while to believe her, but eventually they did, and they were able to confirm her story, and then they were blessed to see Jesus, in person, later in the upper room.

It is no wonder that Thomas doubted what was really happening. The truth is that there will always be those who need just a little more understanding, a little more proof than you or I might need. There is nothing wrong with that, there are simply skeptics in the world. Perhaps this is why Scripture tells us to “taste and see” that the Lord is good, as that is one of the few things that will change a skeptic’s mind.

Have you ever wondered if you would have believed in the resurrection if you had watched the crucifixion? I wonder if it would have changed things for you? There is a fantastic nature, and by that I mean a supernatural nature to the story. But again, going back to those who witnessed it, they never recanted their understanding of this experience.

- 1. What do you think you would say to Jesus if you saw him after the resurrection?
- 2. Could you have stayed as strong as these men and women in their conviction of the truth of the resurrection?
- 3. Do you think that modern Christianity is anything like the ancient practice of the faith that these people were engaged in?

Day 40
April 14, 2022

John 21

21 Later, Jesus appeared again to the disciples beside the Sea of Galilee. This is how it happened. 2 Several of the disciples were there—Simon Peter, Thomas (nicknamed the Twin), Nathanael from Cana in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples.

3 Simon Peter said, "I'm going fishing."
"We'll come, too," they all said. So they went out in the boat, but they caught nothing all night.

4 At dawn Jesus was standing on the beach, but the disciples couldn't see who he was. 5 He called out, "Fellows, have you caught any fish?"

"No," they replied.

6 Then he said, "Throw out your net on the right-hand side of the boat, and you'll get some!" So they did, and they couldn't haul in the net because there were so many fish in it.

7 Then the disciple Jesus loved said to Peter, "It's the Lord!" When Simon Peter heard that it was the Lord, he put on his tunic (for he had stripped for work), jumped into the water, and headed to shore.

8 The others stayed with the boat and pulled the loaded net to the shore, for they were only about a hundred yards from shore. 9 When they got there, they found breakfast waiting for them—fish cooking over a charcoal fire, and some bread.

10 "Bring some of the fish you've just caught," Jesus said. 11 So Simon Peter went aboard and dragged the net to the shore. There were 153 large fish, and yet the net hadn't torn.

12 "Now come and have some breakfast!" Jesus said. None of the disciples dared to ask him, "Who are you?" They knew it was the Lord. 13 Then Jesus served them the bread and the fish. 14 This was the third time Jesus had appeared to his disciples since he had been raised from the dead.

15 After breakfast Jesus asked Simon Peter, "Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?"
"Yes, Lord," Peter replied, "you know I love you."

"Then feed my lambs," Jesus told him.

16 Jesus repeated the question: "Simon son of John, do you love me?"

"Yes, Lord," Peter said, "you know I love you."

"Then take care of my sheep," Jesus said.

17 A third time he asked him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?"

Peter was hurt that Jesus asked the question a third time. He said, "Lord, you know everything.

You know that I love you."

Jesus said, "Then feed my sheep.

18 "I tell you the truth, when you were young, you were able to do as you liked; you dressed yourself and went wherever you wanted to go. But when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and others[f] will dress you and take you where you don't want to go." 19 Jesus said this to let him know by what kind of death he would glorify God. Then Jesus told him, "Follow me."

20 Peter turned around and saw behind them the disciple Jesus loved—the one who had leaned over to Jesus during supper and asked, "Lord, who will betray you?" 21 Peter asked Jesus, "What about him, Lord?"

22 Jesus replied, "If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? As for you, follow me." 23 So the rumor spread among the community of believers[g] that this disciple wouldn't die. But that isn't what Jesus said at all. He only said, "If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you?"

24 This disciple is the one who testifies to these events and has recorded them here. And we know that his account of these things is accurate.

25 Jesus also did many other things. If they were all written down, I suppose the whole world could not contain the books that would be written.

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This text is one for the ages. In fact, we will spend two days on it because of the importance of it. Seven of the disciples were hanging out. Peter, Thomas, James, John, and two unnamed disciples. This wasn't really an important event, rather they were just hanging out with one another. For them, it meant going fishing, both as a social event, and because this was the life they understood.

Tenney observes: "The leadership of Simon Peter is apparent at this point. Whether he was motivated by the need of earning money for his family or whether he simply wanted some activity to relieve the mental tension after the preceding fortnight in Jerusalem is speculative. The others assented to Peter's proposal; so they embarked in a boat that was available for a night of fishing. The presence of the definite article 'the' (to) with the 'boat' (ploion) suggests that the boat was Peter's. Their enthusiasm ended in frustration, for no fish were caught".

So, they were going fishing and the emphasis on how futile their trip sets up the stage for the mira-

cle. I don't know about you, but I have actually never caught any fish, and I've been fishing a few times. It was incredibly frustrating to realize that my time had been wasted and the endeavor fruitless.

Then, they were told to throw the nets on the other side of the boat. Which just seems silly, if I am to be honest. There was really no reason for them to do that, it's not like the fish were just 8 feet on the other side of the boat. But the story tells us that they caught 153 fish! Then Jesus calls for them to come and have breakfast, so they might talk and fellowship some more. They certainly had enough fish!

What was the point of this miracle? Was it just to give them food? Perhaps it was connected to the other gospel stories when Jesus reminds them that they will become "fishers of men" and that they have been called to something greater than simply seeking fish in a net. Rather, they have been called to become those who would spread the Good news of the resurrection of Jesus Christ to the world!

- 1. Have you ever been fishing? What did you catch? Did it give you a feeling of accomplishment?
- 2. What would you have done if someone told you to put your fishing pole on the other side of the boat? Would you have done it with any expectation?
- 3. How do you think Simon Peter felt at this point, especially when he finally understood he was talking to Jesus?

Day 41
April 15, 2022

John 21
See previous Days Text.

We call today Good Friday, which is strange as it is not a great day at all. However, it is day when the world changed, as Jesus beat death. And while we talked about much of that previously, there is something that happened in chapter 21 that we should consider:

15 After breakfast Jesus asked Simon Peter, “Simon son of John, do you love me more than these?”

“Yes, Lord,” Peter replied, “you know I love you.”

“Then feed my lambs,” Jesus told him.

16 Jesus repeated the question: “Simon son of John, do you love me?”

“Yes, Lord,” Peter said, “you know I love you.”

“Then take care of my sheep,” Jesus said.

17 A third time he asked him, “Simon son of John, do you love me?”

Peter was hurt that Jesus asked the question a third time. He said, “Lord, you know everything. You know that I love you.”

Jesus said, “Then feed my sheep.

18 “I tell you the truth, when you were young, you were able to do as you liked; you dressed yourself and went wherever you wanted to go. But when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and others[f] will dress you and take you where you don’t want to go.” 19 Jesus said this to let him know by what kind of death he would glorify God. Then Jesus told him, “Follow me.”

20 Peter turned around and saw behind them the disciple Jesus loved—the one who had leaned over to Jesus during supper and asked, “Lord, who will betray you?” 21 Peter asked Jesus, “What about him, Lord?”

22 Jesus replied, “If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you? As for you, follow me.” 23 So the rumor spread among the community of believers[g] that this disciple wouldn’t die. But that isn’t what Jesus said at all. He only said, “If I want him to remain alive until I return, what is that to you?”

24 This disciple is the one who testifies to these events and has recorded them here. And we know that his account of these things is accurate. 25 Jesus also did many other things. If they were all written down, I suppose the whole world could not contain

the books that would be written.

This part of the story is beautiful, as what we see is the desire that Jesus has for reconciliation with Peter. While Peter denied Jesus three times, Jesus then gave Peter three opportunities to be reconciled. It sure seems like Peter needed all three, as he really didn’t get what Jesus was doing until the final time.

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The reason I think this is incredibly important is that we often need reconciliation with Jesus. Easter is one of those moments that we can stop and be reminded that Jesus wants to reconcile us to himself, and all he is doing is waiting for us to get it! From the Cross, to the Grave, to the Resurrection and even unto the reconciliation of Peter, Jesus is working at creating opportunities for us to come back into the family.

Perhaps you have been away for too long. Perhaps you have just felt some distance that you don’t want to have from Jesus. Today is the day you can get rid of all that space in between you and Jesus, and you can bring him back into your heart through the Holy Spirit.

The time has come. Jesus wants to call you his Beloved.

Amen.

The following is a discussion guide to help you (and your connect group if you have one) study our weekly sermon series further, digging into the Word and wrestling with what it meant and what its application is for us today. Feel free to use this as a guide to the conversation, but don't let it limit where the Spirit leads you along the way.

OPEN

As we start this series on the book of John leading up to Easter, if you were able to sit down with Jesus for 15 minutes, what would you do with your time?

HEAD

SECTION 1

Read together John 17: 1-5, 20-23, and share any insights, impressions, or thoughts that come to mind as you hear the Word.

We assume the prayer that John shares took place in the Garden of Gethsemane on the night of Jesus' arrest. The other gospel writers speak to a different aspect of this prayer, mainly the struggle Jesus had as he faced separation from God. What is meaningful to you about John's version, as well as the other gospel writers? (Matthew 26: 36-46, mark 14: 32-42, Luke 22: 39-46)

SECTION 2

Read together John 18: 1-11, 19-24, and share any insights, impressions, or thoughts that come to mind as you hear the Word.

The Pharisees capture and try Jesus at night, breaking their own rules about gathering. Why were they so willing to kill Jesus at all costs?

In verses 5-6, what was so different about Jesus that made all these men fall back and to the ground?

SECTION 3

Read together John 19: 1-16, 28-30, and share any insights, impressions, or thoughts that come to mind as you hear the Word.

Jesus was unlike anyone Pilate had ever met. Do you think this encounter with Jesus, as well as the stories of His resurrection, stuck with Pilate? Explain.

"We have no king but Caesar." They sold themselves and their nation out to kill Jesus. Do you see people today selling out their values and beliefs to

advance a different agenda?

Do you think those who believed in Jesus as the Messiah had hope up till His last breath that he'd still perform a miracle and come down off the cross? Could Jesus have done that if He wanted too?

SECTION 4

Read together John 20: 10-18, and share any insights, impressions, or thoughts that come to mind as you hear the Word.

Why do you think that Mary didn't recognize Jesus?

We know the tomb was in a garden, we know Mary mistook Jesus for a gardener. Coincidence or might there have been another reason? Was John pointing to another garden?

Why is it significant that the first witness of the resurrected Lord was a woman?

SECTION 5

Read together John 21: 7-14, 24-25, and share any insights, impressions, or thoughts that come to mind as you hear the Word.

What were the two responses to Jesus on the shore from the disciples?

Why were there so many post-resurrection stories of Jesus that involved food?

What is significant about John's words in verse 25?

HEART

What are some of your most meaningful insights or inspirational take-a-ways from the closing scenes of Jesus' life on earth?

Why do we still spend so much time on this 2,000 year old story?

HANDS

In light of the incredible love of God for us that we see through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, think of one practical way this week you can share that love with a neighbor, classmate, sibling, or colleague, for this is what it means to love well (to love like Jesus).

LIVING WORDS for YOUR WEEK

"For this is how God loved the world: He gave [a] his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him.

John 3: 16-17, NLT

INTRODUCTION - In this series, we are leading up to one of our favorite holidays of the year as followers of Jesus, Easter! For Christians, Easter is where everything changed. The God of the universe had come down as a baby, lived and walked among us, revealed God to us in new and even more clear ways, and then gave His life by dying on a cross to save us from the curse of this world. No credible historians doubt whether or not Jesus of Nazareth was a real figure in history. No credible historians doubt that he was crucified and died. What they doubt is what happened next. We believe three days later Jesus rose from the grave and is alive.

Join us in this new sermon series as we study through the gospel of John, a gospel written later than the other three gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke), that elaborates on the story of Jesus with stories the other writers left out. John also elaborates on who Jesus is, the light of the world who takes away the sins of the world, and so much more. Ready to get to know Jesus better as we celebrate Easter? Let's connect!

CONNECT

Have you ever sent a text or posted a comment that was misunderstood or autocorrected in a way that changed the meaning of your message? Share what happened and what you meant to say, but also how it made you feel (was it funny, embarrassing, painful, etc...)? Why do you think words mean so much to us?

HEAD

As mentioned above, John wrote this gospel of Jesus later in his life, and later than the other gospel writers. He's also facing challenges that the earlier writers weren't. Those challenges included whether or not Jesus was really God, whether or not Jesus was flesh and blood, and who on earth had access to this new revelation of God. So as we read, let's ask for eyes to see and ears to hear what we learn about God through His Son, Jesus.

SECTION 1

Read together John 17: 1-5, 20-23, and share any insights, impressions, or thoughts that come to mind as you hear the Word.

Jesus said in John 17: 20, "I am praying not only for these disciples but also for all who will ever believe in me through their message." What does

it mean to you that on the eve of the most horrific experience anyone could ever have, the Savior of the world not only thought about you, but prayed over you?

SECTION 2

Read together John 18: 1-11, 19-24, and share any insights, impressions, or thoughts that come to mind as you hear the Word.

The Pharisees capture and try Jesus at night, breaking their own rules about gathering. Why were they so willing to kill Jesus at all costs?

In verses 5-6, the soldiers had come full of adrenaline, expecting a battle, and ready to exude their own force and authority to arrest Jesus. Why do you think they were so quick to fall back and to the ground after Jesus spoke?

SECTION 3

Read together John 19: 1-16, 28-30, and share any insights, impressions, or thoughts that come to mind as you hear the Word.

Jesus was unlike anyone Pilate had ever met. Do you think this encounter with Jesus, as well as the stories of His resurrection, stuck with Pilate after the fact? Explain.

Do you think those who believed in Jesus as the Messiah had hope up till His last breath that he'd still perform a miracle and come down off the cross? Could Jesus have done that if He wanted too? If Jesus had the power to come down off the cross, why would he choose to resist that power and suffer to his death?

SECTION 4

Read together John 20: 10-18, and share any insights, impressions, or thoughts that come to mind as you hear the Word.

Why do you think that Mary didn't recognize Jesus? She spent countless hours with him over the years, so what's changed?

We know the tomb was in a garden, we know Mary mistook Jesus for a gardener. Coincidence or might there have been another reason? Was John pointing to another garden? If so, which one and why do you think?

Why is it significant that the first witness of the resurrected Lord was a woman?

SECTION 5

Read together John 21: 7-14, 24-25, and share any insights, impressions, or thoughts that come to mind as you hear the Word.

What were the two responses to Jesus on the shore from the disciples? (Peter vs other disciples)

Why were there so many post-resurrection stories

What is significant about John's words in verse 25? _____

CWKIDS

Week 06 of 06 - Crucifixion/Resurrection
Sermon Series Kids Questions

John 17-21

Introduction - The following questions are a guide to help families with children understand God and discover His love throughout the series. You may think of other ideas that fit the needs of your family.

Read John 19:17-18 and 38-42, 20:1-2 and 19-20 together with your family.

It can be difficult and painful to read about the events surrounding the death of Jesus. It might be intimidating to talk about Jesus' death with your children. But keep reading, because in this story there is hope, healing, and resurrection.

How do you think Jesus felt when this happened?

Even though Jesus is all-powerful, he stayed on the cross. What do you think would keep him on the cross, even though he had the power to make it stop?

There is hope in this story too! How did Mary respond to finding the empty tomb? How did the disciples respond to seeing Jesus?

Pray together as a family and thank Jesus for his sacrifice for each of us, and the hope we have because of his resurrection.

Blank lined paper for writing.

This image shows a full page of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page, providing a template for handwriting practice or general writing. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the page.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

Handwriting practice lines consisting of 20 horizontal lines.

CROSSWALK