

JOHN

THAT YOU MAY BELIEVE

STUDY GUIDE

PART 1 - CHAPTERS 1-11



SUMMIT VIEW CHURCH

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INTRODUCTION

When someone is exploring Christianity, or right after they become a Christian, they are often encouraged to read the Gospel of John. Within these pages, the life and ministry of Jesus are put on display. In 21 chapters, one can get a good grasp of who Jesus is and what exactly He came to do.

For 16 weeks, Summit View Church will be studying the first part of the Gospel of John (we will study the remaining chapters next year). In this study, we'll be examining the first 11 chapters, which look at the public ministry of Jesus. In it, we will see Him perform seven miracles and the stories of others who come to a saving knowledge in Christ. It is our hope and prayer that though our time in this book together, those who know Christ will have their relationship strengthened, and those who don't know Him would come to believe that He is who He says He is.

BACKGROUND

While each of the Gospels share the view that Jesus is the promised Messiah of the Old Testament, each one takes a different approach in revealing how Jesus has come to bring about salvation. The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke are often referred to as the Synoptic Gospels, as they regularly mirror each other in their account of Jesus' life and ministry, all telling the story of Jesus from the earth up. Yet, the Gospel of John offers a completely different perspective, telling the story from heaven down. From the get-go, John emphasizes that Jesus has been sent from God. Matthew focuses on showing Jesus is the Jewish Messiah; Mark focuses on Jesus ushering in the Kingdom of God; Luke emphasizes Jesus welcoming the outsider; and John stresses Jesus is the eternal Son of God.

AUTHOR

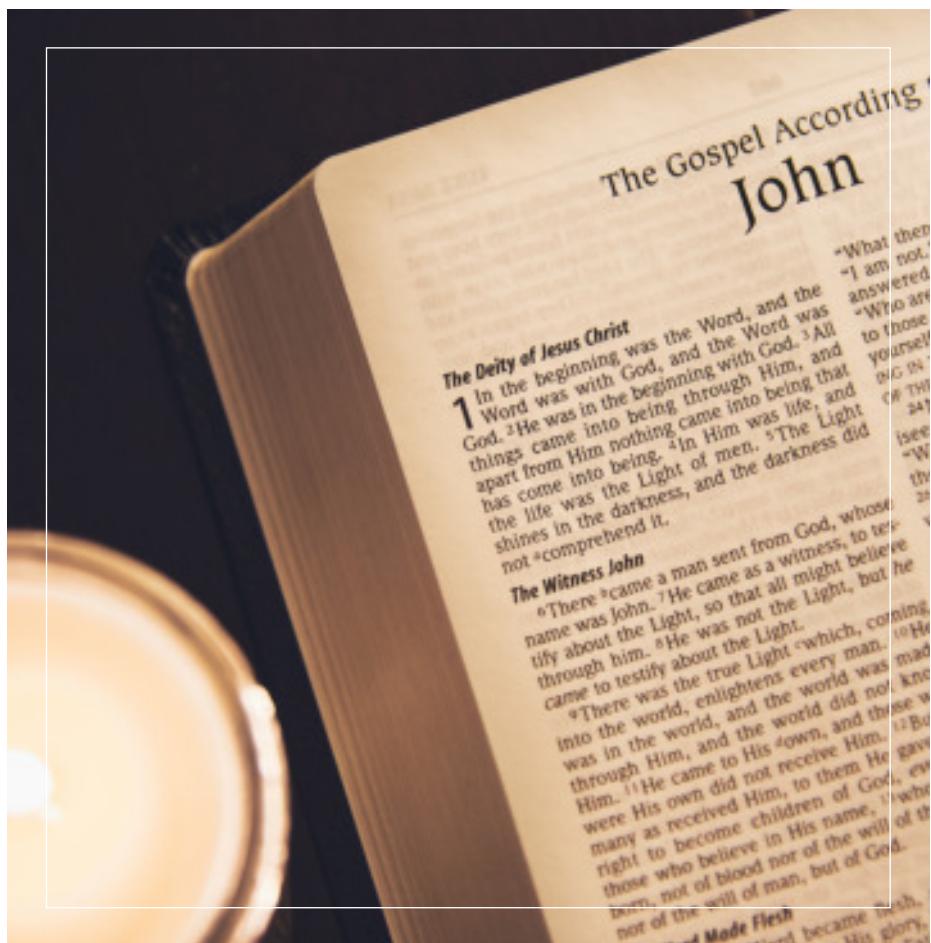
The most likely author of this Gospel account is the apostle John, the son of Zebedee. John would have been an eyewitness to many of the events that took place within this book, thus giving him the authority to write. John was a close friend of Jesus (John 13:32; 19:26; 20:2; 21:20). External evidence from church history also supports this claim.

DATE

Of the four Gospels written, the Gospel of John was most likely the one that was written last. The Gospel of John could have been written any time between 55-95 A.D. It was most likely written between 70-85 A.D., considering the other letters in the New Testament written by John.

PURPOSE OF JOHN

Fortunately for us, John leaves no doubt about the intention of his writing. He simply states that the purpose for his writing is **that you may believe** (John 20:30-31). The Gospel of John captures the life, teaching, and ministry of Jesus to bring the reader to a point of salvific belief in Jesus.



INTRODUCTION

MAJOR THEMES WITHIN JOHN

BELIEVE

The word **believe** appears 98 times within the book. It never simply prescribes one to a mere intellectual assent to a fact, but calls one to experience a personal response, commitment, and trust. Throughout the Gospel, notions such as **receiving** (John 1:12) **obeying** (John 3:36) and **abiding** (John 15:1-10) are all connected to this belief.

MIRACLES/SIGNS

While the synoptic Gospels refer to the miracles of Jesus as such, John describes them as signs. John is driving home the point that when we see Jesus perform a “sign” or “miracle”, the purpose is to point us to something much greater. These accounts are included to encourage us to look past what is on the surface and see what it says about the person of Jesus.

ETERNAL LIFE

Littered throughout the entire Gospel, Jesus is pictured as the one who brings about eternal life for all those who believe in Him. See 1:4; 3:15–16, 36; 4:14, 36; 5:24, 26, 39–40; 6:27, 33, 35, 40, 47–48, 51, 53–54, 68; 8:12; 10:10, 25, 28; 11:25; 12:25, 50; 14:6; 17:2–3; 20:31.

“I AM” STATEMENTS

See 4:26; 6:20; 8:24, 28; 13:19; 18:5, 6, 8.

In the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, and Luke), you often see Jesus referring to and teaching about the Kingdom of God. Yet, within the Gospel of John, the teachings of Jesus that are most emphasized are those where He is speaking about Himself. John is disclosing Jesus’ true identity with wonderful imagery to incite a response from the hearer (and reader). This finds its pinnacle in John 8, when Jesus simply states, “I am”—communicating His divine nature, as God has previously described Himself (such as in Exodus 3:13-14).

INTRODUCTION

OUTLINE OF THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

- I. Prologue (1:1-18).
- II. Jesus discloses Himself as the Messiah in word and deed (1:19-12:50).
 - a. The initial call of the disciples and John the Baptist's ministry (1:19-2:11).
 - b. Jesus begins His ministry in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria, and to Gentiles (2:12-4:45).
 - c. Opposition towards Jesus, His ministry, and miracles (5:1-7:52).
 - d. Opposition grows and confrontation climaxes (8:12-10:42).
 - e. Passover and new life (11-12:19).
 - f. The rejection of Jesus by the Jews (12:20-50).
- III. Jesus' passion and final words. Jesus discloses Himself as the Messiah in the cross and exaltation (13-20).
 - a. Jesus' final hours and instructions (13-16).
 - b. Jesus' high priestly prayer (17).
 - c. The betrayal, arrest, trial, death, and burial of Jesus (18-19).
 - d. The resurrection of Jesus and commissioning of the disciples (20:1-29).
 - e. The reason and purpose of the Gospel of John (20:30-31).
- IV. Epilogue (21).
 - a. The call on Peter and John's lives (21).

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

This guide has been specifically prepared with you in mind. It will help Life Groups grow deeper together in relationship with God and one another.

Each week, there are conversation starters to help get things rolling, followed by questions for discussion based on the text. Each week wraps up with personal applications and things to pray for to help you grow spiritually.

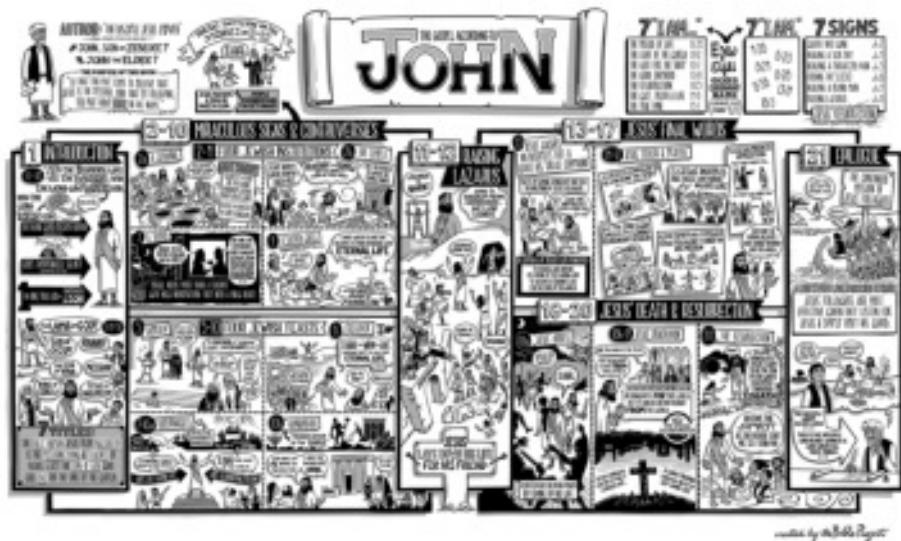
We realize you may not be able to get to every question. Pick the ones that would best work for your group. Obviously, you are more than welcome to pull in other resources, or highlights from the sermons each week. Our hope is that by participating in this study, you will have a firmer grasp on the Scriptures and a stronger connection to Christ.



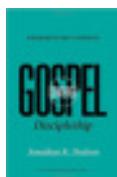
SUPPLEMENTAL RESOURCES

VIDEO

The Bible Project - John - <https://thebibleproject.com/explore/john/>

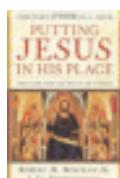


BOOKS



Gospel-Centered
Discipleship

By Jonathan Dodson
and Matt Chandler



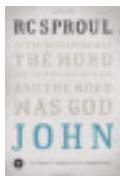
Putting Jesus in His Place: The
Case for the Deity of Christ

By J. Ed Komoszewski and
Robert M. Bowman Jr.



The Gospel According
to John (The Pillar New
Testament Commentary)

By D.A. Carson



John (St. Andrews
Expositional Commentary)

By R.C. Sproul

MUSIC

Spotify Playlist - Musical stylings curated by our Summit View musicians to help you get through your long commute or time in the cubicle! Search for *Gospel of John at Summit View Church*.

INTRODUCTION



Discipleship is an encounter; a discovery process in which we are invited to experience the person of Jesus. This is what we see take place in this passage. From the testimony of John the Baptist, to the invitation from another disciple, and ultimately from the call of Jesus Himself, we are repeatedly invited under the tutelage of Jesus. Within this call, there is an assumption that as you hear and heed the call, you would also invite others to come and see.

MAIN IDEA

Being a disciple of Jesus inherently means that you are also a disciple-maker for Jesus.

CONVERSATION STARTERS

Q As we see within this passage, the gospel spreads from person to person. Who first shared the gospel with you? Do you know where that person learned about the gospel?

Q Have you ever been discipled by someone? Have you ever discipled anyone? Share a little about what you have learned from each of those relationships.

A CALLING OF DISCIPLES

JOHN 1:35-51

READ & DISCUSS JOHN 1:35-51



What made those who were following John the Baptist decide to follow Jesus?

Follow Up: Briefly review the entire text (verses 35-51) and identify the people who believe in Jesus after hearing another person's testimony of Him. Does this teach us anything about how we are to structure our lives and ministry?



In verse 45, Philip tells Nathanael something specific about Jesus. What is it?

Follow Up: Philip seems to be alluding to the fact that Jesus is a fulfillment of the Old Testament. Why is this so important?



What other titles or names are ascribed to Jesus in this passage?

Follow Up: What is the significance of these names? (See next page.)



In this passage, Jesus gives the invitation to follow Him. What does it mean to "follow" after Jesus? Can you describe what this has looked like in your life? *Hint: The term "follow" gives the imagery of a deep relationship and fellowship. Jesus is inviting all of us to join Him to walk in the same manner, in full fellowship with and submission to God.*

NAMES OF JESUS

Messiah

The Anointed One; Christ. The Messiah has been referred to as the one who is expected to restore the kingdom of Israel; to redeem and deliver God's people. See *Isaiah 11:1-9*.

Lamb of God

Four dominant descriptions come to mind with this title:

1. The Passover Lamb in Exodus 12, pointing to Christ and His death;
2. The Suffering Servant in Isaiah 53 is described as a lamb;
3. The lamb sacrificed in the temple to make atonement (Leviticus 1:4; Exodus 29:38-46); for without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sins (Hebrews 9:22); and
4. The lamb offered in place of Isaac by Abraham in Genesis 22, drawing up imagery of a substitute.

Rabbi

A title used as a sign of respect and acknowledgment of one's authority.

Son of God

A reference to the Messiah. Highlights Jesus' divine Sonship, telling us He holds a special standing with God. Also associated with His virgin conception and His pre-existence.

King of Israel

A reference to the Messiah. A title connotating the political leadership of the Jewish people.

Son of Man

This title would immediately draw the Jewish listener back to two things. First, the high usage of the term in the book of Ezekiel, referring to a prophet's humanity. Secondly, in Daniel 7:13, the Son of Man was described as a heavenly figure full of God's power and authority; a figure of judgment. The title Son of Man highlights Jesus' humanity and His divine nature.

A CALLING OF DISCIPLES

JOHN 1:35-51

Q In Genesis 28:10-19, there is a story about Jacob, a figure from the Old Testament, having a dream in which he sees a ladder set up on earth with the top of it reaching heaven. There are angels ascending and descending upon this ladder. In John 1:51, Jesus alludes to the fact that He is that ladder that links heaven and earth. What is He trying to teach us about Himself?

Follow Up: What are some other “ladders” people try to climb to build a bridge between themselves and heaven?



REFLECTION & PERSONAL APPLICATION

As seen within this passage, discipleship is something that is integral to someone’s life if they are following Jesus. The first question you must answer is whether you have responded to Jesus’ invitation to “come and see.” Have you answered the call to follow Christ? If not, what’s keeping you from answering His call to “follow”?

In their excitement, the first disciples of Jesus share Jesus with those closest to them. Who is in your life that you could begin to share Jesus with? How can you pray for them and seek opportunities to share Jesus with them this week?

A CALLING OF DISCIPLES

JOHN 1:35-51

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

In Jesus' day, it was not uncommon for wedding celebrations to last a long time--sometimes even up to a week. In the ancient Jewish world, it would have brought great shame, embarrassment, dishonor, and even potentially a lawsuit if the groom of a wedding failed to properly show hospitality to its guests! Here we find Jesus stepping in to meet a great need in abundance. We learn that while Jesus is concerned with our spiritual needs, He is also aware of, and attentive to, our physical and social needs as well.



MAIN IDEA

Miracles and signs performed by Jesus aren't simply for the here and now, but to reveal His glory, driving us to a point of belief in Him.

CONVERSATION STARTER

Q When you think of a wedding ceremony, what comes to mind? Is there a specific wedding that comes to mind? What stands out to you about that wedding?



READ & DISCUSS JOHN 2:1-11

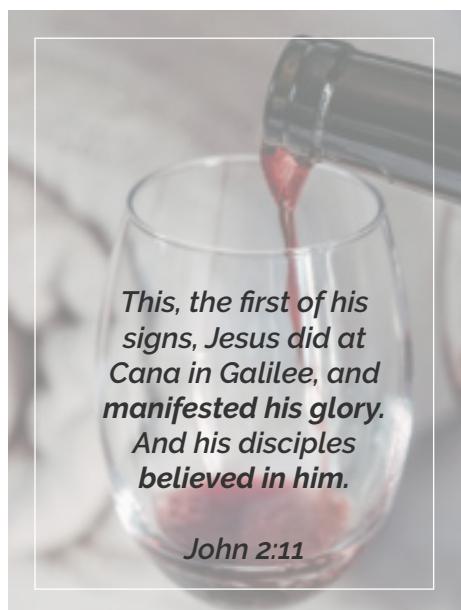
Q When a problem arises in your life, what is typically your initial response to it? Ignore it and hope it solves itself? Scramble to find a solution? Or ask Jesus to step in and help?

Follow Up: What does the interaction between Mary and Jesus tell us about Mary's belief in Jesus and where she sought to resolve the problem?

Follow Up: How can Mary's faith encourage us in our faith?

Q There are two things that stand out about this miracle. First, Jesus came through in a time of need. Secondly, He provided in abundance. Has this been your experience with Jesus? Can you think of a time in your life He has met a need abundantly?

Q What does Jesus mean when He says "my hour" in verse 4? What does this inform us about how Jesus viewed His mission here on earth? See John 7:30; 8:20; 12:23, 27; 13:1; 17:1 for further clarification.



Q When we think of Jesus' miracles, we often think of the spectacular ones, such as the healing of the blind and lame or raising the dead. Yet, the first recorded miracle in John wasn't spectacular. It was a miracle that brought joy and resolved a problem by turning water into wine. What does the text say about the quality of wine Jesus made? Does this impact the way you view or see Jesus and His ministry?

Q According to verse 11, what was the reason Jesus performed this miracle?

Follow Up: What impact did this miracle have on His disciples?

Q Explain why you agree or disagree with this statement: This miracle shows that Jesus didn't come to kill the party, but to bring about a better one.

REFLECTION & PERSONAL APPLICATION

What's remarkable about this miracle is that not everyone was fully aware of what was taking place at the time Jesus performed the miracle. This leads us to two different responses. First, take some time to pause, reflect, and pray, asking for God to reveal where some miracles are taking place today that we may not be seeing clearly. Secondly, seek to be a blessing to someone. This week, how can you bless someone (whether in your group, workplace, neighborhood, etc.) while keeping it quiet and not drawing attention to yourself?

NOTES



INTRODUCTION



This scene takes place in Jerusalem at the temple during the celebration of Passover. The temple was the center of worship for Israel and was a picture of God's presence with His people. The expectation for the Jews was to make a sacrifice there. Some Jews had to travel long distances to get there, so rather than bringing their offering with them, they'd purchase their sacrifice at the temple. Jesus was upset by the abuse found within the temple courts and He decided to act.

MAIN IDEA

Jesus is deeply passionate about God's honor and our worship of Him.

CONVERSATION STARTERS



What types of things cause you to get angry?



Can you think of the last time you reacted to something because you were angry? What are appropriate ways we can express our anger?

READ & DISCUSS JOHN 2:12-25



Jesus was in Jerusalem for Passover. What do you know about Passover?



Follow Up: Read Deuteronomy 16:1-8. What makes this such an important celebration for Israel?

Q Within this passage, we find Jesus' first confrontation with the religious leaders of the day. What activities were taking place in the temple that were in direct opposition to what the temple was originally intended for? Hint: *They were taking advantage of those coming to see God and preventing them from gaining access to Him.*

Follow Up: When you see people exploiting others, does it make you angry? When you see people preventing others from accessing God, does it make you angry?

Follow Up: This may be a dangerous question, but what (if anything) in the church today would potentially bring about a similar reaction from Jesus?

Q What do the actions taken by Jesus in this interaction inform us about what He values?

Follow Up: How do you find yourself responding to the way He acted?

Q What does the question posed by the Jewish leaders in verse 18 reveal about their hearts? See Matthew 12:39-40 and John 2:24-25. Hint: *When the Jews asked Him for a sign, they were essentially asking Him to reveal what gave Him the authority to do what He just did.*



Follow Up: Jesus was upset over misguided zeal, selfish intent, and a poor desire for God. What does true desire for God look like? How is that exhibited in your life?

Q What did Jesus say within this interaction that would have caused confusion in its original audience? See verse 19.

Follow Up: What was Jesus actually referring to when He said this?

Q Elsewhere in the Scriptures, it is said that our bodies (both individually and corporately) are the temple of God. See *1 Corinthians 3:16; 6:19*. This means that God no longer lives in a structure; He resides with His people. How is this made possible?

Follow Up: How does this impact the way you view yourself? Your actions? Participation within the church? Is there anything that may be in need of a cleansing?

Jesus was the
TEMPLE
to end all temples, the
PRIEST
to end all priests,
and the
SACRIFICE
to end all sacrifices.

-TIMOTHY KELLER

REFLECTION & PERSONAL APPLICATION

The temple was the place where people could come and interact with God, for it was His dwelling place. Yet, as we saw in John 1, Jesus (who is God) came to us and dwelt among us. Therefore, because Jesus has come, the temple is no longer needed. Through Jesus, we can access God and have a relationship with Him.

Do you live as though you have direct access to God?

NOTES



INTRODUCTION



John 3 begins with the first of a series of three conversations Jesus has with three very different kinds of people. He begins with a conversation with Nicodemus, a Pharisee, then a Samaritan woman, and lastly a Gentile. Do you see the foreshadowing of His command to His disciples in Acts 1:8 to be His witnesses in Judea, Jerusalem, Samaria, and the ends of the earth? Jesus' words revealed God's plan not only to save Israel, but the world, as Nicodemus is about to find out.

Right away, John mentions that Nicodemus was a Pharisee. When we read *Pharisee*, we automatically assign him to the role of villain. However, the Pharisees weren't all bad. They were highly-respected members of the Jewish community and they loved the Law. Maybe a bit too much—Jesus did criticize them for this (Luke 11:37-54, Matthew 23:1-39). They emphasized the careful observation of the Law and highly valued keeping tradition. The Jews also believed that they would see God's Kingdom simply by birthright (unless they had deliberately committed apostasy or were very wicked).

We see Jesus confront this wrongly-held belief and point Nicodemus to the truth. It is God who saves.

A photograph of a sunset or sunrise over a mountain range. The sky is filled with warm, orange and yellow clouds. In the foreground, dark silhouettes of trees and bushes are visible. A large blue rectangular box is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing the main idea text.

MAIN IDEA

It is God who saves.

CONVERSATION STARTERS

Q Some terms in Christianity seem to carry a lot of baggage. One of them is *born again*. When you hear that phrase, what comes to mind?

Q What are some examples of earthly kingdoms? How are those kingdoms different than the Kingdom of God?

READ & DISCUSS JOHN 3:1-21

Q When used by John, the words *night* or *darkness* usually carry a symbolic reference to spiritual darkness. Why do you think we are told Nicodemus visits Jesus at night?

Q What do you think the word *night* symbolizes for Nicodemus? *Hint: You cannot see at night because the darkness blinds you.*

Q Read ahead to verses 19-21. Does seeing Nicodemus as spiritually blind impact how you read the end of the conversation?

Q Before Nicodemus' interaction with Jesus, he could be classified as a closet admirer of Jesus; curious enough to want some information, but not sure enough to want people to know he's looking. Do you identify with Nicodemus's curiosity? Why or why not? Are there instances in your own life where you don't want people to know you are a follower of Christ?

Q Jesus says unless we are born again, we cannot see the Kingdom of God. Nicodemus doesn't understand. What does it mean to be born again?

Q Jesus' explanation to Nicodemus references Old Testament scriptures that would have lit up the room like a light bulb. Read the following passages out loud and connect them to Jesus' statements: Ezekiel 36:25-27; Proverbs 30:4; Ecclesiastes 11:5. What stands out?

Q Verses 16-18 are a continuation of Jesus' answer. He continues telling Nicodemus that God provides the way (He gave His only Son) for everyone (whoever believes) to have eternal life (verse 16). It is not by birth or effort.

Q Do you find it easy or hard to believe you can't do anything to earn your salvation? Explain.

Q Do you struggle knowing that God wants whoever believes in Him, even if that includes your enemies?

REFLECTION & PERSONAL APPLICATION

Spend time in prayer as a group thanking God for His redemptive plan, that it is God who saves, and not our efforts. Ask God for hearts to see that people who don't yet know Him are spiritually blind and to have hearts of compassion to help them see.

NOTES



INTRODUCTION



What we say about Jesus and how we describe Him to others is fairly telling about how we truly feel and think about Him. In this week's passage, John the Baptist appears again, makes his final public appearance, and continues to play a role as a witness to Jesus. We get yet another glimpse into just exactly how John the Baptist viewed Jesus. Here we find an example of humility and a proper understanding of one's role in relationship to Jesus. It is He who deserves to be first in our lives and the center of attention.

MAIN IDEA

Jesus deserves to be first in our lives. He must increase and we must decrease.

CONVERSATION STARTERS

Visit <https://www.youtube.com/user/iamsecondHQ/playlists> and find someone's video that you and your group may connect with. Listen to them share their story about how they are second to Jesus in their lives. Briefly discuss what stood out to you about them seeing Jesus as primary in their lives.

Q Are you a competitive person? How often do you find yourself comparing yourself to others, seeking an upper hand in some area of life? What kind of impact does that have on you physically, mentally, or spiritually?

READ & DISCUSS JOHN 3:22-36



What is the concern that the disciples of John the Baptist express to him?

Hint: John's disciples were wanting to play the comparison game. They were jealous about Jesus baptizing more people. See more about the popularity and influence of John in Matthew 3:5.



How does John the Baptist respond to the complaint that people are going to Jesus, being baptized, and following Him?

Follow Up: Read verses 27-28. What do these words from John the Baptist inform us about his understanding of his role in God's plan?



Q In John's interaction with his disciples, it's clear that he has a high view of God's sovereignty in all things. God's sovereignty simply means that He acts in whatever way pleases Him and that He's never constrained by anything or anyone. In verse 27, John makes the statement that all that he has is from heaven, and not by his own works and efforts. It's clear in John's words that he was perfectly content with where he was in life. Do you share the same sentiment?

Follow Up: When examining the posture of your heart, does it look more like John's or his disciples?

Follow Up: How would you move from a heart of comparison and completion to one of being content and full of gratitude?



Q John uses the terminology *friend of the bridegroom* to describe himself. In modern day context, that would be considered the best man. They would have been responsible for putting together many of the vital elements for the wedding. How does this description of John mirror the ways in which John has been described before, and how we view his role in relationship to Jesus?

Q There is some debate over whether verses 31-36 were spoken by John the Baptist, or The Apostle John (the author of the Gospel). Regardless of who said it, verses 31-36 speak about the superiority of Jesus over all things. What statements are made in these verses that stand out to you? What do they tell us about Jesus?

REFECTION & PERSONAL APPLICATION

In this passage, John famously says, “He must increase, but I must decrease.” Briefly take some time praying and reflecting upon areas in which you may have given space in your life where Christ should be instead. What are one or two simple steps that you can take this week for Christ to increase?

Q What does John communicate to us in verse 36 about obtaining eternal life?

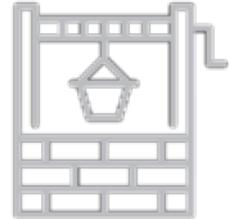
Follow Up: According to this passage, what is the opposite of belief? What is the result?

NOTES



INTRODUCTION

Jesus and His disciples have been traveling. Jesus, being exhausted from His travels, stops at a place called Jacob's Well in the middle of the day to replenish His tired and weary body. At this very same moment, Jesus encounters a woman who is tired, weary, and exhausted in a spiritual sense. It is within this interaction that Jesus is seen not only as a prophet, the Messiah, the Son of God, but ultimately as a life giver. The Samaritan woman got much more than she bargained for, as do we when we recognize Jesus for who He really is.



MAIN IDEA

Jesus came to quench our spiritual thirst.

CONVERSATION STARTERS

Q Who or what in your life (person, place, thing, etc.) do you consider to be most life-giving? What is it about it that makes you feel that way?

Q What makes certain commercials so appealing and persuasive? How do they target our innate urge to satisfy our desires?

READ & DISCUSS JOHN 4:1-45

Q Read the background on Samaria. Based upon this brief bit of history, what does it say about the gospel when you consider Jesus was a Jew, but went into Samaria to bring about the forgiveness of sins?

Follow Up: Why is it good news that Jesus shared this bit of information with someone to whom His society would have considered an outsider? How does this challenge you in your faith?

Follow Up: If you peek ahead in the story, as a result of this interaction, those who were considered some of the furthest from God declared the truth about Jesus long before many of the Jews ever did (verse 42). How does this encourage your faith?

A Brief Background on Samaria

At the time of Jesus' life, Samaria was united with Judea under the Roman empire in a political sense. The tension between the two regions and people dates back to approximately 700 B.C.

When Samaria fell to the Assyrians, the territory was populated with foreigners who had begun to incorporate worship of the true God into their own pagan religion (II Kings 17:14-34). While most Jews were deported back to their homeland, some stayed and ended up marrying and having children with the Samaritans.

The Jews who had returned home viewed those who stayed in Samaria as political rebels and saw their descendants as half-breeds who were apostate to God and ultimately unclean. Due to this conflict, when Israel was able to rebuild the temple after the exile, Samaritans were not permitted to participate (Ezra 4:1-3). In response, they built their own temple on Mt. Gerizim.

This is the premise for part of the discussion between Jesus and the Samaritan woman (see verses 19-24). The tension between the Jews and Samaritans only continued to build. Thus, when Jesus entered Samaria and interacted with them, it spoke volumes to the expansive mission He had been sent on by God.

A SACRED WELL

JOHN 4:1-45

6



Q All throughout Jesus' interaction with the woman at the well, He was attempting to get to the matters of the heart. But she quickly deflected His attempts to debate religious issues, theological questions, and church practices. Do you find yourself doing something similar to the Samaritan woman?

Q Take a moment to review the text and see what it tells us about the woman. Why would she be drawing water in the heat of the day?

Follow Up: Can you relate with her in any way (feeling or experiencing shame and/or rejection)?

Follow Up: How does Jesus' interaction with the woman encourage you?

Q At the end of the conversation with the woman, Jesus made a claim about Himself and who He is. What exactly does He reveal about Himself to her? See verses 25-26.

Follow Up: Why is this significant?

Q What does the woman do after her experience with Jesus? See verses 28-29 and 39-42.

Follow Up: What should we take away from this interaction?

Q This interaction ends with Jesus resuming a teaching moment for His disciples. How can His discussion help us in our evangelism? See verses 35-38.

REFLECTION & PERSONAL APPLICATION

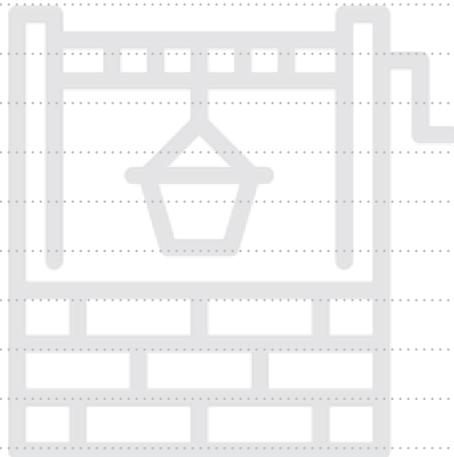
God continually invites His people to receive their sustenance for existence from Him. Yet, we unfortunately reach for things that we think are going to be just as satisfying, but end up tired, hungry, and thirsty. Read Isaiah 55:1 and Revelation 21:6. See if you can make any connection between these verses and what Jesus tells the woman of Samaria. See *John 4:13-15*. When is the last time you went to God and He gave you living water that satisfies?

A SACRED WELL

JOHN 4:1-45

6

NOTES



INTRODUCTION



We've arrived at the point in the Gospel of John where Jesus becomes more and more of a polarizing figure to the religious leaders of the day. Jesus is found in Jerusalem at the pool of Bethesda, which was believed to have been a pool of healing. While we are not told why Jesus went there, or why He singled out this one man, we continue to see and learn about the character and nature of Jesus as one who is deeply aware of individual's needs. This drove the religious leaders of the day to anger and they began to put into works the plan to destroy Jesus.

MAIN IDEA

Jesus is not merely a great healer, but God Himself.

CONVERSATION STARTER

Q Is there something in your life that you have spent a long time waiting for? What was it? What did you do in that season of waiting?



READ & DISCUSS JOHN 5:1-18

Brief note on this passage: You may or may not have noticed that verse 4 may be omitted from your Bible. That is because the earliest manuscripts in which our current translations are based do not include the verse. While some Bible translations include this verse, most modern translations omit this verse, yet include it at the bottom as a footnote. It is assumed that verse 4 was inserted later by scribes on the account to give an explanation of the belief about what happened at the pool and why the sick gathered around the pool for healing.

Q Why do you think Jesus asked the invalid if he wanted to be healed? Doesn't that sound like a preposterous question?

Follow Up: What is Jesus revealing about Himself when He asks the man this question?

Follow Up: Why is it easier at times to hold onto our brokenness and dysfunction rather than taking up the opportunity for healing? *Hint: "An eastern beggar often loses a good living by being cured." Receiving a cure has its implications. One's whole life needs to be reprioritized and restructured. As we see Jesus ask this man if he is ready to be healed, we also see Jesus asking if he is willing to rebuild his life around Christ (verse 14).*

Q What day of the week did the healing take place (verse 9)? What was the reaction of the people at the temple when this man who had been an invalid for 38 years was miraculously healed?

Follow Up: When the Jews confront the man for breaking the law (taking up his bed), what is His reaction?

Q Read Isaiah 35:3-6. What does this passage say about the coming Messiah? How might this be related to this passage in John?

Q When Jesus encounters this man later in the temple, what does He say to him (see verse 14)? Why do you think Jesus says this to him? Hint: *While sickness is not always caused by sin (as we will later see in John 9), it appears in this case it may have been. Also, consider something worse may be referring to the judgment Jesus later teaches about in this chapter (see verses 22-24).*

Q In this passage, it seems as if the religious leaders of the day were far more concerned with a legalistic keeping of the rule of law than with seeing the work of God in their midst. Do you think this can be a danger for us today as well?

Follow Up: What things come to mind when you think about someone doing God's work?

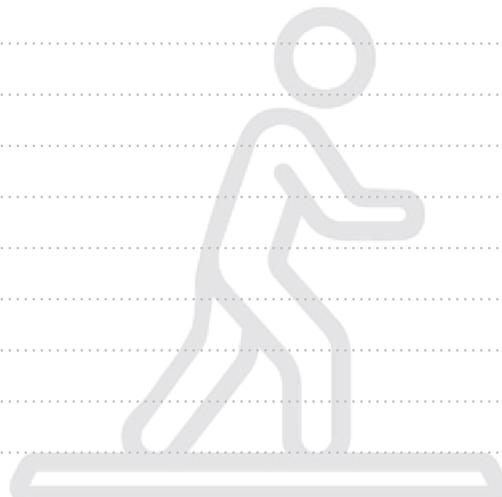
Q According to this passage, why were the Jews seeking to kill Jesus? See verses 17-18.

Q As Jesus is claiming equality with God, what does He also claim about Himself and the mission that God had sent him on? See verses 22 and 27-29.

REFLECTION & PERSONAL APPLICATION

Jesus asked the man lying at the pool if he wanted to be healed. What is an area in your life (physical, emotional, spiritual) that you find yourself in need of healing? What would your answer be if Jesus asked you if you wanted to be healed? What may He be calling you to do (or not do) for Him to heal and change you?

NOTES



INTRODUCTION



In some circles of Christianity, the divinity of Jesus seems to be under attack, doubting that Jesus claimed to be God, nor was ever recognized as such by His disciples. It seems crystal clear in many passages, such as the ones we're studying this week. Jesus explains how He shares nature with God and has the authority to judge all of humanity. Not only that, Jesus presents multiple witnesses who substantiate this. Witnesses are a very important role in any case when determining what took place and what is truth. They can help clarify what happened by telling everything they know about an event or a person. What they state becomes a part of the evidence in helping determine the ultimate outcome. Jesus and His witnesses present the case to the Jewish leaders and it infuriates them to a point where they seek to persecute and kill Him, rather than believing in Him.

MAIN IDEA

All that God has given points to and affirms Jesus.

CONVERSATION STARTER

Q Some say you can't teach an old dog new tricks. Others say it's never too late to learn. What is the proper balance between keeping old beliefs and accepting new ones? How does one discern what to keep and what to adopt, especially when it comes to religion?

READ & DISCUSS JOHN 5:30-47

Q Within this passage, Jesus lists five different witnesses/things that testify to His authority, mission, and nature. Can you find them? How did they bear witness? Hint: *Himself* (verse 30-31); *the Father* (32, 37-38); *John* (33-35); *His works* (36); *the Scriptures* (39-47).

Follow Up: Of these five witnesses, which one speaks the loudest to you?

Follow Up: Based upon the witnesses that Jesus presents, what should our response be to Him? Hint: *Remind yourself of the purpose of the Gospel of John. Also note, the word believe appears six times in this passage alone.*

Q According to what Jesus says in verse 38, can someone be a believer in God and refuse to accept Jesus as their Savior? Why or why not? (For other help, see John 15:6; I John 4:13-14; 5:10)

Q What is the specific ministry that Jesus was given to do while on earth? See verse 36.

Follow Up: Ephesians 2:10 states, “We are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” Do you know what ministry God has called you to do on earth? Are you walking in obedience to that call?

Q Based on what Jesus says in verse 39, do you think it is possible for someone to go to church, be baptized, study the Bible, and still not know Jesus? Why or why not?

Follow Up: If someone were to ask you what the Scriptures ultimately are about, how would you answer? See *Luke 24:25-27; 2 Timothy 3:16*. The entire Bible comes from God, points us toward salvation, shows us truth about God and life, and shows us how to live God's way.

Q In verse 44, Jesus critiques the religious leaders for seeking praise and adoration from one another rather than from God. What are some ways people receive praise from one another today?

Follow Up: In what areas of your life might you be doing the same?

PERSONAL APPLICATION / REFLECTION

Within this final section of Jesus' interaction with the religious leaders, Jesus presents multiple witnesses who can affirm and back up His identity and mission. Much like the Jews of His day, we are also presented with a choice about what to do with Jesus. Sometimes Jesus has hard words that we may not like, but that doesn't negate their truth. While we may not be hung up on Jesus' claim to divinity, are there other teachings and words that may be inciting a similar reaction to Him as that of the Jews? Areas where instead of belief and life, we are led to anger and rejection of Jesus?

NOTES





THE BREAD OF LIFE

JOHN 6

INTRODUCTION

This chapter of the Gospel of John packs quite a punch. Within these 71 verses, Jesus performs two miracles and continues to reveal His identity as the Messiah.

Sometime after Jesus' interaction with the religious leaders, Jesus was being followed by great crowds who began seeking Him because of the works He had been doing. Seeing the masses, Jesus took compassion on the crowds, met a fundamental need of theirs, and used it as a teaching opportunity to declare what it means to receive eternal life.



MAIN IDEA

God's gift of unending satisfaction and fulfillment is only available through Christ.

CONVERSATION STARTERS

Q Either from your personal experience, or what you've seen in others, what are some things that initially draw people to follow Jesus, but may not ultimately sustain them?

Q In John 4, Jesus speaks to the woman at the well and speaks to her about water. Here in chapter 6, Jesus talks about the bread of life. Why do you think Jesus keeps using basic, everyday, ordinary things?



READ & DISCUSS JOHN 6

Feeding of the Five Thousand (John 6:1-15)

Q In verse 4, John mentions the Passover meal. What do you think was his motivation in mentioning this in the story? *Hint: If you need a refresher, look back at week three in the study of John 2:12-25 or Exodus 12:1-14.*

Q Aside from the resurrection, this is the only miracle performed by Jesus that is recorded in all four of the Gospels (Matthew 13:13-21; Mark 6:32-44; Luke 9:10-17). Why does it appear that this event is so significant in the life of Jesus?

Follow Up: Jesus simply invited the crowd to sit and receive. How does this text describe how He provided for them? How much did they get? What does this tell us about Jesus' heart towards people?

Walking on Water (John 6:16-21)

Q For the disciples, some of these Old Testament Scriptures would have come to mind after seeing Jesus walk on water: Psalm 77:16-20; 107:23-30; Job 9:4-10. How do you think this impacted their view of Jesus at this time? How does it impact your view of Him?

Q Can you describe a time in which Jesus calmed the storms in your life and spoke to you saying, "Do not be afraid" as He did for the disciples here?



THE BREAD OF LIFE JOHN 6

Bread of Life (John 6:22-71)

Q Compare and contrast the *manna in the wilderness* with the *bread of life*. See verses 31-35 and 49-51. How does this help point us to Jesus?

Q What is the meaning and significance of the repeated phrase of Jesus in verses 39, 40, and 44?

Q Many people in our culture believe that living a good life is what will gain them eternal life. According to this passage, what does Jesus tell them is the one and only requirement to receive eternal life? See verses 40 and 47.

Follow Up: What does Jesus say about the origination of our salvation in verses 37 and 44?

Q What does Jesus mean when He tells the crowd to eat of His flesh and drink of His blood (verses 53-56)? *Hint: This is a metaphor for assimilation; to eat and drink means to receive, understand, and digest truth.*

Jesus said to them, "I am the bread of life;
whoever comes to me shall not hunger,
and whoever believes in me shall never thirst."

John 6:35



REFLECTION & PERSONAL APPLICATION

In the beginning of this chapter, Jesus performed a miracle by feeding a crowd with two fish and five loaves. At the sight of this, they wanted to make Him king. By the end of their interaction with Him and hearing His teaching, many abandoned Him. After being abandoned by the crowds, Jesus asked a poignant question to His disciples in verse 67. Do they want to leave as well? Peter responds to Him with, “Where else would we go?!? You have the words of eternal life!”

Do you find the same fickleness of the crowd within your own heart? Do you find yourself like the crowd, wanting Him to be how you prefer Him? Will you follow Him for who He truly is, rather than who you want Him to be?





THE BREAD OF LIFE

JOHN 6

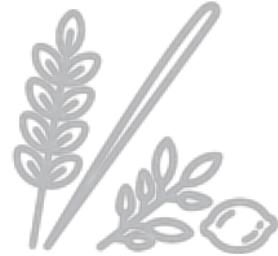
NOTES



INTRODUCTION

Who do you say Jesus is?

This is the question that was on people's minds and was coming out of their mouths in this week's text. Jesus' had built up quite a reputation and people were wondering, who exactly is this Jesus?!?! What's remarkable is that while this scene took place over 2,000 years ago, the same conversation and questions are still taking place today all around us.



Fortunately for us, Jesus didn't leave us without an answer. In His interaction here in this text, while causing quite the controversy, Jesus eliminates the confusion by stating He had been sent by God to accomplish the Father's Will.

MAIN IDEA

Jesus is neither a liar nor a lunatic. He is Lord.

CONVERSATION STARTER



If someone who didn't know anything about Jesus or the Bible was honestly seeking and asking questions, how would you answer their question of, "Who is Jesus?"

READ & DISCUSS JOHN 7:1-24

Background on the Feast of Booths / Feast of Tabernacles

Celebrated in autumn, the Feast of Booths (also known as the Feast of Tabernacles) was one of three pilgrim festivals in which Jewish males were expected to participate. It was a time of celebration and thanksgiving to the Lord (Leviticus 23:39-41; Deuteronomy 16:13-15), as well as an act of remembrance of the time God provided shelter to Israel during their wilderness years (Leviticus 23:42-43; Nehemiah 8:14-15). Jewish families would construct tents/tabernacles out of branches to live in during the time of the feast. If they lived within the city of Jerusalem, typically these would be constructed on their roofs or in their courtyards, while travelers would build theirs in and around the city. It lasted for seven days, with the eighth day being one of “holy convocation” where no work was to be done and offerings were to be made before the Lord.

Q For what reason did Jesus’ brothers want Him to go to the Feast of Booths?

Follow Up: Why didn’t Jesus want to go?

Follow Up: Even though Jesus ends up going to the Feast later in secrecy, does the way He went make sense, in light of the response He gave to His brothers?



THE FEAST OF BOOTHES

JOHN 7:1-24

10

Q Do you think Jesus' brothers took for granted that they were related to Jesus?

Follow Up: It's not uncommon to hear someone claim their faith based on the fact they come from a family of devout Christians. Is that enough for true authentic biblical faith? Does this impact how you or others around you may involve themselves with Jesus and the Church?

You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God, or else a madman or something worse.

You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon or you can fall at His feet and call him Lord and God.

– C.S. Lewis,
Mere Christianity

Q What is it about Jesus that people find so confusing and divisive? Hint: Look at verse 7. *What do you think He means by this statement?*

Q In verse 12, two differing thoughts about Jesus are put on display. What are they? Do people still express these same opinions today? How so? Can you give an example?

Q What did the Jews marvel at in Jesus' teaching? Was it His delivery style, or was it His content? Does it make a difference?

Follow Up: Verses 16-18 provide great insight and instruction on what sources we seek our instruction from. How careful are you when it comes to discerning true authentic biblical teaching? There are plenty of sources in which we can find teaching—various pulpits, groups, etc. How can we tell if one is seeking to do God's will, versus speaking on their own authority?

Q Jesus uses an analogy to make His argument in the temple. How does His illustration of the circumcision on the Sabbath apply to Jesus healing on the Sabbath? *Hint: Jesus was asking why it was acceptable to break the Sabbath for a ritual of circumcision, versus the healing of a man who had been crippled for years.*

Follow Up: Do you think Jesus was more interested in people following the letter of the Law or the heart of the Law? How can you tell? Explain.

REFLECTION & PERSONAL APPLICATION

This week's passage ends with an exhortation by Jesus to, "Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment." If you're human, this is something that must be regularly confessed and repented of. What kind of superficial judgments are you most likely to make of people? Is there a type of person whom you may dismiss because of a certain characteristic? Take time this week to ask God to allow you to live what Jesus calls us to do and see people with His eyes instead of our prejudices.



THE FEAST OF BOOTH'S

JOHN 7:1-24

10

NOTES

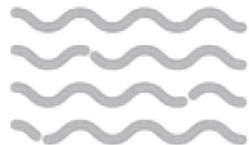


THE RIVERS OF LIVING WATER

JOHN 7:25-52

INTRODUCTION

Have you ever gotten into an argument and been so sure you were right, only to find out you were actually wrong? Have you ever judged someone based on what you thought you knew about them, but were unwilling to take the time to get to know them? There is great value in listening and asking questions. In this passage, we see repeated arguments about who Jesus was or was not. We see the authorities refuse to listen, or even ask Jesus who He was because they were so confident they knew. Their pride in what they thought they knew kept them from true knowledge. Throughout the Gospels, we see the disciples of Jesus ask Him for clarification when they don't understand. Disciples pursue knowledge, humbling themselves because they realize they don't have all the answers.



MAIN IDEA

You never know too much to learn.

CONVERSATION STARTER

Q When was the last time you realized you were on the losing side of an argument? Did you concede or just keep going?

THE RIVERS OF LIVING WATER

JOHN 7:25-52



READ & DISCUSS JOHN 7:25-52

Q The people look to the authorities to act. The authorities won't act because they fear the people. Yet, Jesus acts in confidence by speaking the truth. He knows what He was sent to do.

Q When Jesus says He was sent, He is claiming to have been in heaven with God and that God Himself sent Jesus. He was making the claim that He *was* God, which is why the authorities wanted to arrest Him. Are you ready and willing to proclaim Christ is Lord, even when it isn't the popular opinion in the room? What gets in the way?

Q I Peter 3:15 tells us to be ready to give an answer for the hope we have in Christ. Are you prepared to do so? If not, consider taking time as a group to practice talking about the reason for your hope so that when asked, you are prepared to give an answer.

Q Jesus tells the officers sent to arrest Him that where He is going, they cannot come. They take Jesus literally, but Jesus is talking about heaven. Why do you think Jesus said they could not come? *Hint: What was the posture of their hearts?*

Follow Up: When is the last time your hardened heart kept you from hearing the truth?



THE RIVERS OF LIVING WATER

JOHN 7:25-52

Q Psalm 51:17 says that God desires a broken and contrite spirit. Why does this matter? How do you know if you have one?

Q The feast being concluded is the Feast of Booths, where Israel takes a week to celebrate God's provision during their 40 years of wandering in the desert. As part of the celebration, water is ceremoniously poured out as a symbol of God's provision and the people would exclaim Isaiah 55:1 and 12:3. Read them out loud and then reread verses 37-39. What was Jesus revealing?

Q Drinking symbolizes receiving. Belief comes from acceptance of information. What does Jesus say will happen to those who receive what He offers and believe in Him? How do you know if that has happened in your life?

Q In John 7:40-52, there is more arguing about who Jesus is! Some will hear and have their eyes opened, while others will hear and harden their hearts. The Pharisees valued knowledge greatly and looked down on those without it, rendering them incapable of humbling themselves to be taught. Do you have a hard time when you don't know the answer?

Follow Up: What sin is at the root?

Follow Up: What do you do to ensure your heart stays soft toward God's Word?



REFLECTION & PERSONAL APPLICATION

Take time praying as a group, asking God to give you humble hearts that want to learn and know Him for who He truly is. Confess any misconceptions about Him that you may be operating from.



NOTE ABOUT JOHN 7:53-8:11

You may notice that we skipped a few verses as we've preached through John. In verses 7:53-8:11, there is a story of Jesus interacting with a woman who had been caught in adultery. You may also notice in your Bible a little note regarding this passage. If you were to just look at the end of John 7:52 and pick up at John 8:12, you would see a fairly seamless story, yet this story seems to abruptly interrupt the flow of the Gospel.

Many scholars believe that these verses were added into the Gospel of John at some point later, as these verses are practically absent from all early Greek manuscripts. While there is critique in its placement within the Gospel, many do believe this text does record an actual event that took place in Jesus' ministry and do accept it as a part of the canon of Scripture.

On your own time, read and reflect on this story.

- What does it teach us about how Jesus sees sinners who own and acknowledge their sin versus those who don't?
- In verse 11, after Jesus forgives this woman of her sin, Jesus instructs her to sin no more. Why do you think He tells her this? Is this a realistic expectation?
- After we confess our sin, what should we do?



THE RIVERS OF LIVING WATER

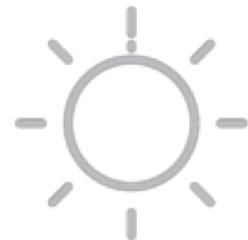
JOHN 7:25-52

NOTES



INTRODUCTION

In this week's passage, we come to the second "I am" statement within the Gospel of John. We've seen Him as the *bread of life* (see John 6, week 9), and today He declares Himself to be *the light of the world*. The timing of this passage is still during the Feast of Booths/Tabernacles, where torches were lit to be a remembrance of how God led His people in the wilderness after leaving Egypt. It is during this celebration that Jesus gets into yet another confrontation with the religious leaders. It is Jesus' claim of being the light of the world that sparks it this time, as they saw it as a claim of Jesus' messianic identity.



MAIN IDEA

Jesus is the Light of the World.

CONVERSATION STARTER



Can you think of a time when you were afraid of the dark? What was it that made things scary?



READ & DISCUSS JOHN 8:12-30

Q How does Jesus describe Himself at the beginning of this passage?

Follow Up: The religious leaders of the day would have known the passages in the Old Testament that promised about the coming Messiah; yet they failed to recognize Jesus was the fulfillment of such prophecies. Look up Isaiah 9:2, 42:6-7, 49:6, and 60:1-3. Do you see the connection?

Q Jesus says, “Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.” What else in the Gospel of John does this bring to mind? See John 1:4-9.

Follow Up: John also writes about this light in I John 1:5-7. What else do we learn when we look at these verses?

Follow Up: What does it mean to walk in darkness? How does Jesus bring light to our lives? Give practical examples. See Ephesians 5:8-14 for further assistance.

Q What is the relationship between Jesus’ identity as the light of the world, and His instruction to Christians in Matthew 5:14, stating they are a light of the world?



Q According to Jesus, why did the Pharisees have the inability to judge Him correctly? See verses 13-20.

Q What can we learn about Jesus' relationship with the Father? See verses 27-30.

Follow Up: Could the same thing be said about your relationship with God?

Q When we read John 8:28, we see Jesus allude to His crucifixion, stating that it will bring His entire purpose and mission into context. How does the “lifting up of the Son of Man” speak to this?

Q Jesus shared some fairly difficult words within this passage. In verse 30, John states that despite all of that, many believed in Him. It almost seems counterproductive. Yet, in the middle of conflict, Jesus' direct words led many to salvation. Why is it that we expect people to respond to Jesus when He says something easy or comforting; but when we look at His ministry, it is in the midst of His difficult teachings that people are most responsive?

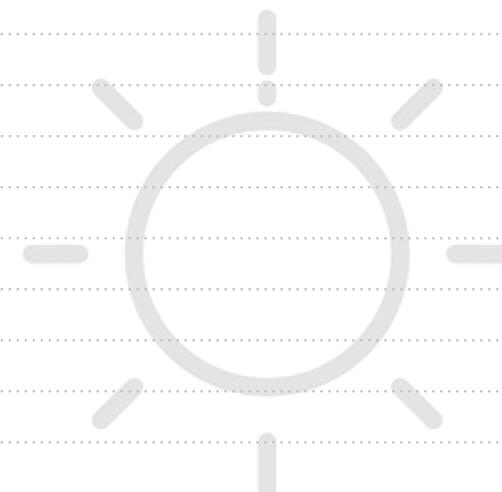
Follow Up: What does this teach us about the way we evangelize? Disciple? Engage in spiritual conversations?

REFLECTION & PERSONAL APPLICATION

It's easy for us to mock the Pharisees for wanting to stay in the darkness rather than walking in the light. Yet, if we take a moment to examine our thoughts, actions, and desires, we too will find ourselves tempted to act just like them. We love to justify our behavior and hide in darkness rather than walking in the light.

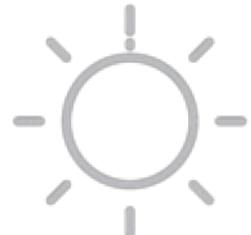
Take some time to acknowledge some areas in your life that you may be tempted to act just like them. Pray for Jesus' guiding light to lead you a place of life this week.

NOTES



INTRODUCTION

Jesus left the temple during the Feast of Booths/ Tabernacles and encountered a man who was born blind. While the healing for the man was one of physical sight, it points to the kind of sight that Jesus brings when one believes in Him. While many who encounter this man throughout the story come to question the validity of healing, the end result was not just physical healing, but one of spiritual healing as well. The former blind man comes to worship Jesus for who He is and what He has done.



MAIN IDEA

Jesus gives us eyes to see.

CONVERSATION STARTER

Q If you were to lose your sight, what is the one thing you would miss the most?

"One thing
I do know,
that though
I was blind,
now I see."

John 9:25

READ & DISCUSS JOHN 9



In verse 2, the disciples ask a question about suffering. How does Jesus respond to it?

Follow Up: Honestly, what do you think of Jesus' response? Does it help make sense of our own suffering?

Follow Up: How do you think the blind man felt as he heard the interaction between Jesus and the disciples?

Follow Up: How does Jesus' interaction with this man set an example with how believers are to respond to people in need?



Can you think of any Bible passages that speak to what the coming Messiah would do for the blind? *Hint: Isaiah 29:18; 35:5; 42:7; Luke 4:18*



After verse 7, Jesus seems to drop out of the scene until verse 35. The verses in-between highlight the man's story with his neighbors, the Pharisees, and his parents. In this story, the man's neighbors are amazed at what takes place and ask him a question. The man responds by giving his testimony. What does he include in it?

Q Instead of rejoicing in the fact that this man who couldn't see was healed, the Pharisees got frustrated that Jesus once again had healed someone on the Sabbath. Instead of believing, they doubted and questioned the man's parents to see if he really was blind or not. The parents, in fear of the Jews, didn't answer, and referred them back to the son. Do you think we, like the Pharisees or the parents, get caught up in details and miss the miracles that God is doing around us?

Follow Up: How does the blind man's character contrast with that of his parents in this story? What can we personally take away when examining their responses to the opposition they face because of Jesus?

Q In verse 27, the blind man asks the Pharisees if they are interested in becoming disciples of Jesus. How much did he really know about Jesus at the time? How much do you need to know about Jesus in order to tell people about Him?

Q When this man worships Jesus later in the passage, what does this reveal about who Jesus is? See verse 38.

Q At the beginning of the story, the man was physically and spiritually blind, but at the end, he had physical and spiritual sight. Jesus accused the Pharisees of being spiritually blind, yet they struggled with this accusation. What can we do to keep from being spiritually blind?

REFLECTION & PERSONAL APPLICATION

A famous hymn that has been sung by Christians since the 1770s was written by John Newton, entitled Amazing Grace.

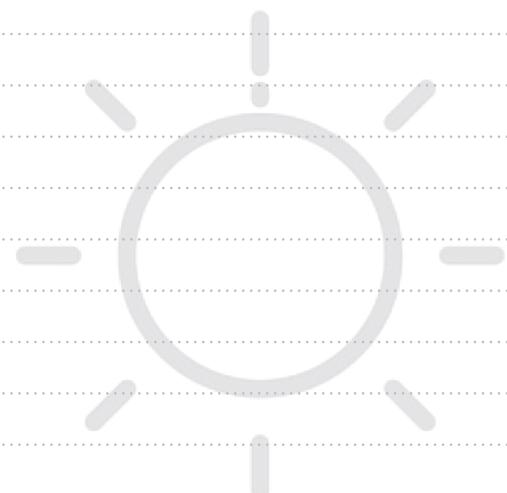
The opening verse goes:

*Amazing Grace
How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me
I once was lost
but now am found
T'was blind but now I see*

This week, as you spend time in prayer, give thanks to God for the grace He has shown you. Give thanks that He has healed your spiritual blindness and has given you eyes to see the beauties and wonders of Christ.

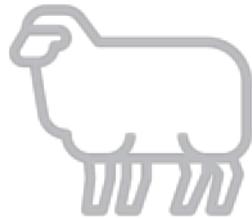
Spend time praying for those around you who are spiritually blind and deaf; that they may hear the sweetness of Amazing Grace and see Jesus for who He really is.

NOTES



INTRODUCTION

We've all seen movies with really obvious plots. Before the movie is at the half-way point, we can pick up on the cues and predict how it's going to end. In this section, Jesus is trying to get His listeners to take notice. He drops what should be obvious hints that should make them sit up straight. When Jesus talks about shepherds and sheep, not only would they understand the context, their minds should have connected the dots to references sprinkled all throughout what is now the Old Testament. What He is saying changes everything.



MAIN IDEA

Jesus is the Good Shepherd Israel had been waiting for.

CONVERSATION STARTERS

Q What do you know about sheep? How would you describe a sheep to someone who may have never been around one before? (Describe their look, their smell, their intellect, etc.)

Q When someone is described as sheepish, what does that usually mean about a person?

READ & DISCUSS JOHN 10:1-21

Alongside our text for the week, read the following passages: Ezekiel 34:1-24, Isaiah 40:11, Micah 2:12-13.

Q What stands out to you?

Q What surprises you the most?

Q In light of these texts and the one from this week, what truth is Jesus pointing us toward?

Q In Jesus' first illustration (verses 1-3), He seems to be challenging the religious leaders of Israel. What is Jesus calling out in them? Hint: *If the religious leaders were the gatekeepers, why would they not want to open the door for the shepherd of the sheep?*

Q When Jesus says, "I am the door" and "I am the good shepherd", that may create a nice word picture in our minds. But in the mind of the Jews, He was claiming to be the only way to God and stating that He was God. How did the people respond? What does it tell you about them? Hint: *Look at verses 3-5 and 14.*



Q What does Jesus say about Himself in verse 11? What exactly does a good shepherd do for his sheep?

Follow Up: Read Psalm 23. Meditate on the traits of the Shepherd. What does it reveal about God? What does it reveal about you? How should you respond and live, knowing this truth?

Q How we respond to the Bible and the truth it contains reveals our hearts. When you are confronted with the truth, do you run toward the Shepherd, or away?

Q When Jesus says something about sheep from another fold (verse 16), what is He talking about? *Hint: It's you and I.* Jesus is speaking to uniting Jew and Gentile in one community of God's people (see Isaiah 56:8).

Follow Up: Even though there seems to be a variety of sheep, what does Jesus say about the unity of the flock? What impact does that have on the way we view our church? Our groups?

REFLECTION & PERSONAL APPLICATION

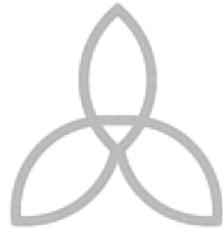
As you close your group today, remember the attributes of the Good Shepherd and spend time together praising God for who He is and thanking Him for how He cares for His sheep.

NOTES



INTRODUCTION

As you may have noticed over the last few weeks, the tension has been rising between Jesus and the religious leaders of the day. Yet again, we find Jesus in the midst of controversy as people question Him and His identity as we approach the end of His public ministry. Jesus defends His role and His relationship with the Father, while also providing comforting and encouraging words to His people during the Feast of Dedication. While Jesus continually invites people to believe, the rage and hatred against Him builds as they seek to destroy Him.



MAIN IDEA

We are safe in the hands of the Shepherd.

CONVERSATION STARTERS



All throughout the Gospel of John, we are introduced to the words and works of Jesus. Because of His words and works, many come to believe, while others reject Him. What are some of the reasons people today do not believe in Jesus?

Follow Up: Does it provide any comfort to you, as a believer in the 21st century, that Jesus has always been a polarizing figure?

READ & DISCUSS JOHN 10:22-42

Q The Jews seem to ask a fairly ironic question of Jesus in verse 24, asking, “How long will you keep us in suspense?!? If you are the Christ, tell us!” Why is this so ironic?

Follow Up: Do you think we make similar mistakes today? Asking God to reveal something that He had already made plain to us? Does this reveal anything about us and our hearts? Our knowledge of God’s Word?

Q How does Jesus respond to their question?

Follow Up: What is their response to Him?

Q Jesus picks up again on the sheep illustration from last week. Briefly looking back at last week, how are Jesus’ sheep any different from those who are not in His flock? *Hint: They hear His voice, He knows them, they follow Him.*

Follow Up: According to Jesus, what comes first—believing, or being one of His sheep? What do Jesus’ statements here teach us about salvation?

Q Within this passage (verses 28-30), Jesus teaches us something that theologians have since described as the *preservation of the saints*. This doctrine teaches on the eternal security of a believer. Why do you think it is important for Christians to know that there is nothing that can take them out of the Father's hand (including themselves)?

Follow Up: The Apostle Paul also teaches on this in Romans 8:28-39. What confidence does this give you in your life? How may this impact you in your future trials and suffering on this side of heaven?

Q In verse 30, what did Jesus mean when He said, “I and the Father are one”?



Background on the Feast of Dedication (Hanukkah)

This feast is not described nor prescribed within the Old Testament, as it was established during the Second Temple period (after the Old Testament was written).

In 167 B.C., Antiochus Epiphanes, a Syrian Emperor, seeking to establish his rule over the empire, took sights on the Jewish temple and their worship. Part of his desire was to put a cease to Jewish practices and desecrate their temple. He did this by erecting an altar to Zeus and sacrificing a pig—which would have been an abomination.

Over time, the oppressed Jewish people grew strong enough to overthrow the emperor underneath the leadership of Judas Maccabaeus and reclaimed the temple. The temple was rededicated in 164 B.C. It was at this time a festival was instituted to commemorate the event. It is an eight-day festival that you are familiar with—Hanukkah.



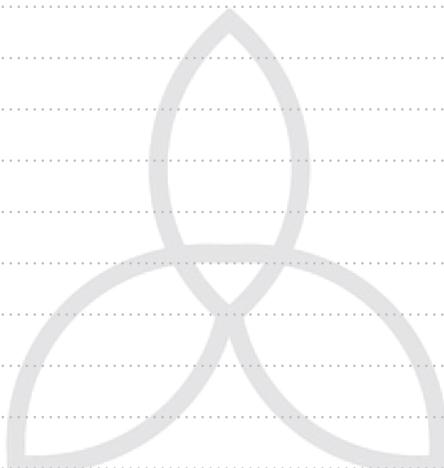
REFLECTION & PERSONAL APPLICATION

Consider taking time this week to reflect upon your doubts and insecurities when it comes to God's love for you. How might we combat these feelings with truth that Jesus will never lose His grip on us? How can we train our minds and hearts to keep trusting Him, no matter how difficult it may get?

I AND THE FATHER ARE ONE
JOHN 10:22-42

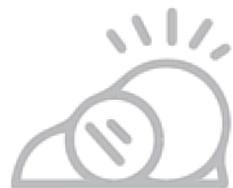
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NOTES



INTRODUCTION

While Jesus was concluding His final public presentation about who He is and what He has come to do, He performed one more very public miracle. Jesus went to the home of close friends where He entered into a scene of grief, sorrow, and the pains of death. However, He showed that He has the final say. Lazarus may have been dead for four days, but at the word of Jesus, he got up and walked out of the grave. The resurrection of Lazarus is not only a sign of Jesus' future resurrection, but also the resurrection of all believers.



MAIN IDEA

Jesus has the authority of life and death. He has the final say over all.

CONVERSATION STARTERS

Q Last week, we saw that we can take great comfort and confidence in knowing we are safe in our Shepherd's hands. This week, we turn to one of the more trying times of anyone's life—the loss of a loved one. Do you think it is by chance that these two accounts are right next to each other?

Q When you think of your own death, what do you really believe about your resurrection? How does a belief in Jesus change your perspective on life and death?

READ & DISCUSS JOHN 11

Q In verses 14-15, Jesus states that He wasn't around when Lazarus died. Why is that?

Follow Up: Does His comment and reasoning provide any insight to us when we may be going through a trying and difficult time?

Follow Up: See verses 4 and 42. Does this provide any further insight about the point Jesus is trying to make in this miracle?

Q Both Mary and Martha stated the same phrase to Jesus: 21 and 32. What are the differences in the way they responded to Jesus after they said that?

Follow Up: Whose response models more of how you think you would respond in a similar trial?

Follow Up: Is there any situation in your life that you feel may be beyond repair? What is it? How can we encourage one another to be like Martha, believing it isn't too much for Jesus to handle?

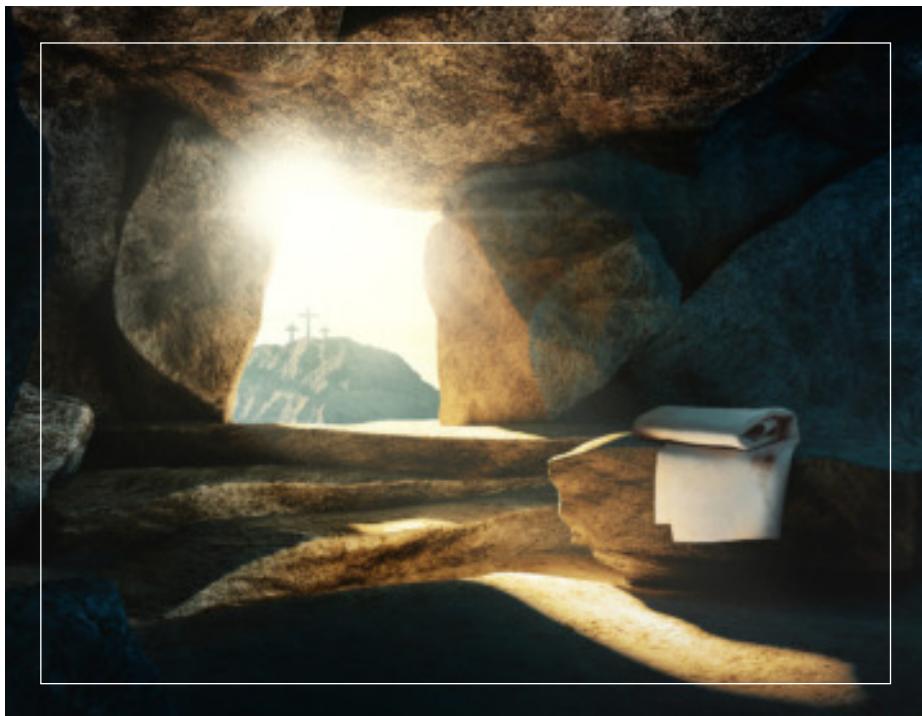
Q After Jesus tells Martha that Lazarus will rise, He makes a bold claim. What is it? What does it mean?

Follow Up: Read I Thessalonians 4:13-14. How does knowing Jesus help us face death?

Q In theology, there's an idea called the *hypostatic union*. This concept teaches that Jesus was 100% God and 100% man. Often our picture of Jesus is skewed, over-emphasizing one over the other. Within this passage, the humanity of Jesus is fully on display. We see that He had deep, meaningful relationships (John 11:5) and was moved to tears (John 11:35). Does this change your perception of Jesus at all?

Follow Up: What thoughts come to mind as you consider the fact that ordinary people, like Martha, Mary, Lazarus, you, and I, can have a friendship with God?

Q In response to this miracle, the decision had been made by the Jewish religious leaders that Jesus had to die. Within this interaction at the end of the passage, Caiaphas prophetically suggested something. What was it? See verses 49-52.



REFLECTION & PERSONAL APPLICATION

We've concluded 16 straight weeks of studying the life and ministry of Jesus. He fed a hungry crowd and said, "I am the bread of life." He healed a blind man and said, "I am the light of the world". He raised a dead man and said, "I am the resurrection and the life." All of the words and works of Jesus are here to increase your belief and hope.

Take time to reflect on what you've learned about Jesus through this study, thank Him for it, and seek His Spirit to learn more about Him as we continue to study the Scriptures together.

NOTES





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HERITAGE PARK

7701 NE 182ND AVE | VANCOUVER WA 98682

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