

THE GOSPEL

HOW THE MESSAGE OF JESUS IS MORE THAN YOU THINK IT IS

COMPANION STUDY GUIDE

THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

You are beginning a study in the Gospel according to John. This gospel was written by the disciple of whom it was said, Jesus loved him. This gospel was one of the last books of the New Testament to be written. He does not retrace many of the events recorded in the synoptic (similar) gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. John's gospel is different. John himself told us why he wrote this gospel:

Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. (John 20:30-31)

The Book of John has four major sections. Chapter 1 lays the theological foundation. Chapters 2-12 describe the ministry of Jesus, including signs He performed. Chapters 13-17 record the Upper Room Discourse and is a core section of teaching. Chapters 18-21 cover the events surrounding the cross and His resurrection. The two major themes of John are light and life. Jesus is the one who enlightens the men and women of the world. John also describes new life found in Jesus that is vital, fulfilling, compelling and abundant.

We hope that this guide will immerse you, and possibly others that you may be praying will take this journey with you, in a first-hand look at the person of Jesus, His divinity and His love for you!

If you don't have a Bible of your own or yours is a different version than the NIV that we use here at Grace, please let us know, we'd be happy to get you one—our gift to you!



Day 1 - THE GOD MAN

The miracle of Christmas is found in the snapshot taken by John. The big idea of John's account is that at the first Christmas, God showed up in a manger. The creator in a cradle; the infinite was an infant. John says that God literally wrapped Himself in skin (vs. 14). This is not only amazing, but very distinctive! Of all the religions of the world, Christianity has a God who became a man, not a man who became a God!!! God was in the manger. Jesus was God wrapped in skin. He cried when sad, bruised when hit, bled when cut, and laughed when happy. Our God became a man! Not only that, the Bible says that He wrapped Himself in skin and He pitched his tent among us (vs. 14). That is literally what it means that He made His dwelling among us!! This is the story of Emmanuel, which means "God with us." Our God pitched His tent in our backyard so to speak. Lastly, John says Jesus is not only God wrapped in skin, pitching His tent in the backyard of our life, but He also is the explanation of God. Verse 18 says He is the "exegete" of the Father, meaning He is the explanation of the Father. If we ever wondered what God is like, we can look at Jesus. The fact that God became a man means I can know Him and that He can sympathize with me.

Read John 1:1-18

Q: List all the things you think of when you think of God.

Q: List all the things you think of when you think of a baby.

Q: Why is it significant that God became a man?

Q: How does God becoming a man change the way you and I can pray and interact with God?

For Further Study: Genesis 1 and 2

Day 2 - THE LAMB OF GOD

John referred to Jesus as the "Lamb of God, who takes away the sins of the world!" (John 1:29). When Jesus is referred to as the Lamb, it is referring to Him as the perfect and ultimate sacrifice for sin. Within the Old Testament period, God had established a sacrificial system that set the stage for the arrival and death of Jesus Christ. The Jews held daily sacrifices to atone for the sins of the people (Exodus 29:38-42). They held a yearly Passover feast where the Passover lamb was slain and the blood of the lamb was applied to the doorposts of Jewish homes (Exodus 12:11-13). These customs represented the one and only perfect sacrifice that would completely and, once for all, atone for the sins of the world.

Read John 1:19-34

Q: What does this passage say about the sacrifice of Jesus as the Lamb of God?

Q: How had the Old Testament sacrificial system set the stage for the arrival of Jesus Christ? How could many of the Jews have missed His arrival? Why do some of us miss it still today?

Q: How does the fact that Jesus died once for all change my understanding and view of my sin?

For Further Study: Hebrews 9:22-10:10

Day 3 - THE DISCIPLE MAKER

Looking in the Bible for a definition of the word “Christian” is really not that helpful. But, you know what’s interesting? Although the word Christian is only used 3 times in the Bible, the word “Disciple” is used more than 250 times!

Read John 1:35-51

Q: When you think of a “Christian,” what comes to mind? Describe him/her.

Q: What do you think a disciple is/does?

Q: How did these men respond to the calling of Jesus? How might you have responded to Jesus calling you?

Q: When you look at the lives of the disciples, how would you say their choice to be a disciple was different than a modern-day internship? What level of sacrifice did they have to give?

Q: Being a disciple of Christ while He lived on the earth was a full-time thing. Do you think this calling has changed almost 2000 years later? If so, how?

Q: A disciple of Christ is called to live all-in! What hesitation or reservations might this bring? Why is it difficult to commit to being all-in?

For Further Study:

Matthew 19:21, 27-30; Matthew 9:9-10; Matthew 4:18-22

Day 4 - THE MIRACLE WORKER

Jesus begins His ministry by turning water in wine. We begin at a wedding in Cana where Jesus, His mother, and His disciples were in attendance. Weddings were a significant event and often lasted a week. Wine was an important aspect of ceremonies and running out would have been a significant problem. In this story, we see Mary turning to Jesus for help and guidance in solving a problem (John 2:4). Mary knows that Jesus can solve the problem, so she tells the servants at the wedding to follow the directions of her son. The servants follow Jesus' directions by filling the six stone jars with water. They did so without reservation and because of their faithful obedience, an entire group of people were blessed with a miracle. Imagine the scene as it unfolds and what they learn about Jesus through this miracle.

Read John 2:1-11

Q: This was Jesus' first miracle. What would this miracle have conveyed to His audience?

Q: What did Mary know about her son?

Q: Why did Jesus say, "My hour has not come?"

Q: Imagine what the servants thought of Jesus? The master of the banquet?

Q: What response did it illicit from the disciples?

Q: Do you believe God has the power to still perform miracles? Why or why not?

For Further Study: Luke 16:19-31, Acts 2:22, Hebrews 2:4

Day 5 - THE TEMPLE CLEANSER

The next picture of Jesus is the most unusual picture. It's a picture of Jesus getting mad. You can tell a lot about a person by what makes them mad. Anger can be the emoting of a passion that represents what is a priority and of utmost importance in your life!! Someone starts picking on and mistreating one of my children, I will become irate. On this occasion, Jesus enters the temple (Mark 11:11), but does not do anything, He simply observes. But the next day it becomes apparent that He did not like what He saw!! When He entered the temple this time, the Bible says He turned over tables, upset money buckets and started driving out people who were selling and changing money! Then, it says, with the voice of authority He would not let them carry their merchandise through the temple!! Why was He so mad? He says in verse 17 what is sticking in His craw. Jesus is mad that they have substituted God-centered worship for religious busyness and activity—they were robbing men and God in the process. And He says you have taken what was meant to be set apart for prayer and distorted, minimized, and polluted it. **YOU QUIT PRAYING!!**

Read John 2:12-25

Q: How does this particular picture of Jesus impact you?

Q: Why do you think Jesus was so frustrated at the absence of prayer?

Q: What does the fact that Jesus desires to hear from you convey about His character?

Q: How does this picture help me process anger and the purpose and reason for anger/emotion?

For Further Study: Matthew 21:12-17

Day 6 - BORN OF THE SPIRIT

The old saying goes, "If we are born once we die twice, if we are born twice we die once (or never die)!" What a concept! This is exactly what Nicodemus was struggling to comprehend! *"Are you the teacher of Israel and yet you do not understand these things?"* Jesus asked. Nicodemus, throughout this dialogue, was struggling to comprehend what Jesus was teaching. *"I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you Heavenly things"* asked Jesus. Let's jump into the story!

Read John 3:1-15

Q: What does it mean to be 'born again'?

Q: How are we 'born again'?

Q: When we are 'born again', God becomes our Father! How does the fact that God becomes our Father change our identity?

Q: Do you interact regularly with God as a loving Father? How can you grow in seeing Him more as a loving Father?

For Further Study:

2 Corinthians 5:17, Titus 3:5, Ezekiel 36:25-27, Numbers 21:4-9

Day 7 - TO SAVE OR CONDEMN?

Jesus loves **EVERYBODY** and Jesus loves **ME**. John 3:16 *“For God so loved the world, that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.”* We cannot fully grasp *how wide and high and long and deep* is the love of Christ for us! Christ loves the world— that is everybody! And He loves (your name here)! Even if you do not believe or understand it!

- Q: What does John say about God’s classification of two distinct groups of people? Hint: those condemned and those not condemned
- Q: Why do you think individuals struggle with the thought of a condemning God? How can God be both loving and yet hate sin?
- Q: John states in verse 17 that Jesus was sent not to condemn the world, but rather to save the world. How does the manner in which Jesus was sent impact our relationships with those who have not said “yes” to the gospel?
- Q: Is it easy for you to avoid condemnation of those who have not said yes to the gospel? Why or why not? Do you interact with those who have not said yes to the gospel with an urgency to save them from condemnation?

For Further Study: Romans 5:1-11, Ephesians 2:1-10, Mark 1:1-8

Day 8 - THE LIVING WATER

Water is one of the most important substances on earth. All humans (as well as plants and animals) must have water to survive. If there was no water there would be no life on earth. Jesus refers to Himself as offering living water. This water is satisfying, quenching and everlasting. Whoever drinks the water He offers will never thirst (John 4:10-13).

Read John 4:1-42

- Q: Have you ever been in an environment where you lacked access to water? What emotions do you think you would feel?
- Q: Why did Jesus go through Samaria? Where does the church have to go to get involved with bringing hope and healing to those that are hurting?
- Q: Describe Jesus' interaction with the woman at the well? What may have likely been our justified interaction with someone of the same struggles? Why do you think her background is important in understanding to whom Jesus offers this water?
- Q: What is the difference between seeing people and problems? How can I guard against not seeing problems but rather people?
- Q: How did the gospel satisfy the woman's thirst for her soul? Do you think she realized her great need for a savior?

For Further Study: John 7:37-39

Day 9 - THE GREAT PHYSICIAN

Jesus healed people who were unlovely, helpless, and sinful. When you stop and think about it that pretty much describesME! I am unclean. I am spiritually helpless and I am a sinner. I am so glad He heals people like that. If Jesus heals people like that, I think if I am going to follow I will devote my life to loving people who are unlovely, to being a stretcher-bearer bringing people into His presence that are paralyzed by life and to befriending those who are "sinners". His message is of sick people who need a doctor and we are not just talking about physical ailments.

Read John 4:43-54

Q: Describe what happened in this story in your own words?

Q: What do you think the royal official believed about Jesus before the miracle?

Q: What do you think he believed about Jesus after the miracle?

Q: Why is his response such a significant expression of faith?

Q: Is there an aspect of your life that God is asking you to trust Him and take Him at His word? If so, how you can trust God fully with what He has said in His Word?

For Further Study: Similar incidents of Jesus healings are found in Matthew 8:5-13 and Luke 7:1-10

Day 10 - THE HEALING THAT RAISED OPPOSITION

Imagine what it must have been like to lie around the pool of Bethesda? The name Bethesda meant house of mercy. A great number of disabled: the blind, lame & paralyzed held onto a glimmer of hope. After 38 long years of waiting for a miracle, Jesus poses a question that would change his life.

Read John 5:1-15

Q: Why did Jesus ask him if he wanted to get well?

Q: Did he answer the question, why or why not?

Q: The religious leaders missed the miracle because all they could see was the mat. What are some modern day mats that cause us to miss miracles?

Q: What "afflictions" or "sins" do we hang on to and refuse to "get well"? What would Jesus say to us.

Read John 5:16-30

Q: What did Jesus do wrong according to the Jewish leaders? How did He justify it?

Q: Why didn't the Jews believe Jesus was the Son of God?

Q: The Jews didn't think Jesus was acting like the Messiah they expected. He didn't follow the rules or rescue them from oppression. What expectations can we place on Jesus to fulfill that may not always be correct?

For Further Study: 1 Corinthians 15:42-57, 1 John 5:11-13

Day 11 - WHAT IS THE BIBLE ALL ABOUT

Jesus was hard on the religious leaders and teachers of the day. They knew a lot of information, or so they thought about God, but it never produced transformation. In this passage, Jesus challenges them as to whether their pursuits are rightly guided. He is making them aware that there is a difference in Knowing about Jesus and Knowing Jesus. He is also letting them know that The Bible is FROM God, ABOUT Jesus, and FOR me.

Read John 5:31-47

Q: Is it possible to read the Bible, know the Bible, and study the Bible and still miss the whole point of the Bible." What do you think?

Q: If you don't read the Bible with a lens looking for Jesus it will either crush you with guilt or make you like a Pharisee." What do you think?

Q: What did the religious teachers know about Jesus?

Q: How do we safeguard our lives to keep us from *knowing about* Jesus, but not *knowing* Him?

Q: Do you think it would be easier to follow Jesus if you felt like you knew Him more? What might be keeping you from knowing more about Him?

For Further Study: 2 Timothy 3:15-16, 1 Peter 1:21

Day 12 - THE MULTIPLYING CHEF

A crowd is gathered (5,000 men plus women and children, some commentators say upwards to 20,000 people may have been in the crowd). The hour is getting late and the crowd is getting hungry and the disciples think that they ought to send them away to get something to eat. Jesus on the other hand sees this as an opportunity to stretch their faith muscle, to build their faith walk! He tells them to feed them. They scour the crowd and come up with 2 slimy fish and 5 barley loaves from a boys' lunch. The disciples said this is all we have and Jesus said will you be willing to release what you have so that I can do what I do. Immediately after that, Jesus sends the disciples across the lake in a boat. He dismisses the crowd and then the disciples find themselves in a storm, rowing but not getting anywhere. They look and there is a figure walking on the water, and they are terrified (I would be too). Jesus lets them know it is Him, don't be afraid. Jesus was not simply testing and showing off His water-walking skills, but He was preparing to take them a little further in their faith. Peter says if it is you, invite me to come to you. Jesus simply says, come. What is amazing is that Peter gets out of the boat and starts to walk. He does what he knows how to do, namely get out of the boat and walk, so Jesus can do what He does, namely help him walk on water. Remember there are 11 others in the boat.

Read John 6:1-15

Q: Is there something that you think God wants you release to Him so He can use it? Is there a need you think He wants you to meet that you feel you don't have enough resource to meet?

Q: What keeps you from releasing what you have to God?

Q: Have you ever released something to God and watched Him do more with it than you imagined?

Q: What is an area of your life that you need to entrust to God and walk in faith?

For Further Study: Read Matthew 14

Day 13 - PEACE IN THE STORM

Someone once said, "You are either in the midst of a storm, you've just come out of a storm, or you're headed into a storm!" Today's story highlights the fact the Jesus is the Master of the storm! We don't have to be overwhelmed by the trials of life because Jesus has promised us His presence and His peace.

Read John 6:16-24

Q: Why did the disciples react the way they did?

Q: What happened when Jesus climbed in?

Q: How might the disciples have felt after Jesus had calmed the storm?

Q: Why does God allow storms in our lives?

Q: What storms are you currently facing?

Q: How can Jesus calm the storms in our lives?

For Further Study: John 14:27, Romans 8:28, Phillipians 4:6-7

Day 14 - THE BREAD OF LIFE

Jesus says, *"I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty."* He's not advocating some freaky form of cannibalism. He's speaking spiritually here, right? Metaphorically. So what's He saying? The bread of life satisfies forever. Just as physical food nourishes our physical bodies and allow us to live, so we need spiritual/eternal food to nourish our spirits and give us spiritual/eternal life. The spiritual/eternal food is the Bread of Life, and who is the Bread of Life? Jesus. And how do we receive the Bread of Life? Believe. And when we believe we are satisfied forever. What's Jesus saying? *He's saying He satisfies.* After we have Jesus we no longer feel empty inside, like we're missing something. We have peace. We have contentment. We can finally experience true satisfaction. So, here's our temptation. *Too often we settle for moldy bread.* Jesus is the Bread of Life. When we receive this Bread, no longer do we hunger or thirst. It satisfies us forever, even to eternal life. Jesus is who satisfies us and our greatest needs.

Read John 6:25-59

Q: What is "moldy bread" in your life? What are those things you're tempted to seek to bring satisfaction, instead of seeking the Lord?

Q: What are keys to finding your satisfaction in Jesus? How do you continue to be satisfied in Christ, even when your life isn't exactly how you want it or planned it?

Q: How does your satisfaction with the Bread of Life impact those around you who are looking for satisfaction with moldy bread?

For Further Study: 1 Corinthians 11:23-26, Ephesians 1:3-6

Day 15 - ALL IN FOR JESUS

Are you all in? In the world of sports, *all in* is going all out, exerting yourself to physical exhaustion. In the world of poker, *all in* means to commit all of your chips on one play. In the world of relationships, *all in* means committing yourself fully to one spouse for the rest of your life. All in is a high commitment to a cause where there is no turning back; it's do or die. But what does in mean to be all in in terms of following Jesus? What does it mean to be sold out in terms of our spiritual lives? Am I apathetic, indifferent, lukewarm and unenthusiastic about my relationship with God or am I fervent, enthusiastic and zealous in my pursuit of God and his calling on my life. Today's passage gives us indication that following Jesus may not always be easy.

Read John 6:60-72

Q: What conditions may have been hard for the folks that turned away from following Jesus?

Q: How can/could your relationship with Jesus compete with your relationship with your family? Your friends?

Q: How might possessions hinder a person from going all in for Jesus?

Q: What did the disciples sacrifice to follow Jesus? How has sacrifice and risk been a part of following Jesus for you personally?

Q: What counsel would you give to a friend who truly thought the conditions of following Jesus were too hard? How would you explain the reward of following Him?

For Further Study: Matthew 16:13-17, Luke 14:25-33

Day 16 - EVERYBODY'S TALKING

As Chapter 6 transitions into Chapter 7, we move from the Galilean ministry of Jesus to Jerusalem in Judea. The feast of the Tabernacles was one of the three major feasts of the Jews. It memorialized the wandering in the desert before the entrance to the Promised Land. People would travel from all over to camp out (pitch their tents) for seven days. All work would stop, there was feasting and the city was packed with people. As they gathered, Jesus was the topic of conversation!

Read John 7:1-24

Q: How did the disciples (advisers) misinterpret Jesus? What pressure was Jesus receiving from His disciples? Why did He give the response He gave?

Q: How did the admirer's misinterpret Jesus (v.11-12)?

Q: How did the despiser's misinterpret Jesus (v.12-13)?

Q: How can we learn from all three about the nature of humanity and of Jesus. How does Jesus make clear the nature and extent of His work?

For Further Study: John 8:49-51, John 5:1-15, Matthew 7:28-29 for authority on Jesus' teachings

Day 17 - IS JESUS GOD?

The claims that Jesus made about Himself were monumental, earth shattering, and life changing. In the words of C.S. Lewis, "Jesus was either a Liar, a Lunatic, or the Lord"

Read John 7:25-52

In this passage people responded to Jesus' claims about Himself in 4 ways: Some were Convinced, "He is the Messiah" (v40)! Others were Curious, "How can the Messiah come from Galilee" (v41)! A few were Confused, "No one ever spoke the way this man does" (v46)! And some were Coercive, "Some wanted to seize Him" (v44)

- Q: What had the authorities concluded about Jesus (v.28-29)? Why is this significant?

- Q: How have you seen others respond to Jesus in a similar manner to how those in the passage reacted?

- Q: What would best describe how you see Jesus? (Convinced, curious, confused)

- Q: Do you know anyone who is curious about Jesus? How could you be of assistance in helping them better understand who He is?

- Q: Do you know anyone who is confused about Jesus? How could you be of assistance in helping them better understand who He is?

For Further Study: 2 Corinthians 4:4-6

Day 18 - WHEN OUR SECRETS COME OUT

Our secrets are easy to hide but they become really hard to manage and we feel like they are impossible to expose because then my life will be over but I think that there is a story in the Bible that might suggest that life truly might begin when our secrets are exposed! What if exposing your secret was when life changed for the better and not for the worse?

Read John 8:1-11

- Q: Describe the circumstances taking place when Jesus meets the woman from this story?
- Q: This woman's secret became obvious to all. Describe how you think this woman felt holding her secret? Describe what you think she was feeling the moment she was brought before Jesus and her secret was exposed?
- Q: Why was the executing mob slowly becoming the exiting mob? What had taken place to alter the expectation of this crowd? Can you think of a time when you have been a part of the crowd trying to cast stones on others as their secrets have been exposed?
- Q: How had the worse day of this woman's life become the most liberating day of this woman's life?
- Q: What former secret/secrets have you held? How was the holding of that secret similar to being trapped in a prison? How did you come to the point of liberation?
- Q: Has the exposure of a past secret become a significant part of the story that God has given you to share with others? How have you seen it used to connect with others?

For Further Study: Matthew 9:1-8, Hebrews 4:13

Day 19 - THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

Jesus said in John 9:5, *"While I am in the world, I am the light of the world"*. What does this mean *for us* that Jesus is the Light of the World. First, Light Makes Life Possible. It's true with all creation. I'm no scientist but from my understanding, you can make a pretty good case that creation—life—could not exist without our light source. Look at John 1:4. *"In Him (Jesus) was life, and that life was the light of (for) men."* In Jewish thought, "life" and "light", when taken metaphorically, were often very similar. Jesus is the source of life, and He offers that life as the light (an essential element for all life) to all men. In Jesus, we have both fullness of life here and now, and eternal life to come. He is our Light, which gives us life. Secondly, Light also chases away the darkness and reveals the way. In John 8:12, Jesus tells the people listening to Him that He's the Light, and those that follow Him will never walk in darkness. There's that connection between "light" and "life" again, right? Light chases away darkness, right? Darkness is the absence of light. When light appears, the darkness is gone and when the darkness is gone we can see clearly the way we're supposed to go, the way that leads to life. Lastly, He Calls Us to be His Light Bearers. You know, none of us are the Light. We're not the Light itself, but we bear the Light. We house the Light. We're light containers, lanterns, if you will, for the one true Light. John 12 says we become children of the Light. 2 Corinthians 5:6 says that God made His light shine in our hearts to give us the light of Jesus Christ.

Read John 8:12-30

Q: What does life look like in the darkness? How about the light?

Q: In what ways can you order your life to more consistently walk the way Jesus illumines (makes clear)? What part do others play in your walk?

Q: How are you Jesus' light bearer? Are there ways you can keep your light hidden or covered?

Q: Who in your life is living in darkness and needs Jesus' light in you?

For Further Study: Matthew 5:14-16

Day 20 - THE GREAT I AM

There's a great passage in the Gospel of John where some people think they know who Jesus is and they accuse Him of being someone He's not. And so Jesus responds ultimately in one very loaded statement and He reveals to us in just a few words an awful lot about who He is. After an argument with some Jewish seekers, Jesus changes everything with one single statement. It was either the most heinous, deceptive, psychotic thing He could say, or it was the most life-giving, beautiful, illuminating, wonderful truth that they, and we, could ever know. Jesus said in verse 58, *"I tell you the truth, before Abraham was born (came into being), I am!"* Jesus was equating Himself with God! In Exodus 3:13-14 God tells Moses to tell the Israelites that "I AM" (Jehovah, Yahweh) sent Him to them. Jesus was telling these Jews that He was God, and they understood exactly what He meant, because they immediately wanted to stone Him, the punishment for blasphemy.

Jesus is a polarizing figure. We all have a choice to make with Jesus Christ. There's no riding the fence. We must either dismiss Him as a mentally ill or trying to deceive and manipulate the world, or accept and follow Him as the Savior of the world. This is a huge decision. The whole trajectory of our lives depends on what we believe about Jesus Christ.

Read John 8:31-59

Q: Why is it significant that Jesus claimed this about Himself?

Q: What would you have thought of Him had He not? How else could He have conveyed that He was God?

Q: What possible alternatives are there to believe about Jesus?

Q: What would you say to someone who says I believe in God, and I think Jesus was a real human, just not God?

For Further Study: 1 Corinthians 2:14, Romans 6:16, Genesis 2:15-17 and 3:1-4, Exodus 3:14

Day 21 - I WAS BLIND, NOW I SEE

Read John 9:1-7

- Q: What do you envision life would be like for someone born blind in the 1st century? Consider what this man's journey was like from birth into adulthood?
- Q: What does the disciples' response to seeing the man born blind tell us about their understanding of God?
- Q: Describe in your own words Jesus' interactions with the blind man. What do you think He was trying to teach His disciples? What do you think He was trying to teach the blind man?

Read John 9:8-17

- Q: How did the blind man's story impact those around him? How did the blind man respond to the questions that were posed to him? How do you think he felt about sharing his journey with others?

Read John 9:18-23

- Q: How were the parents of the blind man impacted by their son's story? How did they respond to the questions that were posed to them? How would this story have impacted their view and understanding of Jesus?

Read John 9:24-34

- Q: How does the blind man's response in verse 25 impact the knowledge base that is required/expected of us when we share our story?
- Q: How does the blind man's transition from telling his story to inviting them to follow God? What assumptions or misinterpretations of God is he trying to correct?

For Further Study: **Matthew 9:27-29**

Day 22 - THE GOOD SHEPHERD

In the passage it becomes evident that Jesus is the Good Shepherd, we are sheep and that He is forming His flock! There are several things this passage tells me about the Good Shepherd. First, the Good Shepherd knows me. He knows His sheep (vs. 15). He calls them each by name (vs. 3). The Good Shepherd knows me and still exchange places with me (v. 15). Jesus says several times that the Good Shepherd lays down His life for His sheep. Wow!! One of the things this passage points out is that the Good Shepherd cares for His sheep and leads them and protects them because He cares for them. Real life is found in the presence of the Good Shepherd (vs. 7-10). Eternal life does not begin the moment we die but the moment we accept Jesus eternal and abundant life is ours. This life is found in the Good Shepherd, He says stay with me, follow me! Jesus wants us to experience life to it's full. How does that happen? I need to learn to listen to and for His voice in my life! Our Good Shepherd leads us, He does not drive us. He leads us by the sound of His voice. The question is do I recognize and follow the Good Shepherd's voice? There are many voices today and He leads us with the sound of His voice. Not only does He lead us to life but He protects us. He will never leave us and He will not abandon us!

Read John 10:1-21

Q: How well does our Shepherd know us?

Q: In what ways are you like a sheep?

Q: What kind of life does our Good Shepherd provide for His sheep?
What does that look like?

Q: How can I better recognize the Good Shepherd's voice in my life?

For Further Study: Isaiah 53:6

Day 23 - TRUE SECURITY

When people come to know Christ as their Savior, they are brought into a relationship with God that guarantees His forever love. As we have seen earlier in John that whoever believes in Jesus Christ will "have eternal life." If a person were to be promised eternal life, but then have it taken away, it would have never been "eternal" to begin with and God would not be a keeper of His promise. John MacArthur has this to say about the passage we will be taking a look at today, "No stronger passage in the Bible exists for the absolute, eternal security of every true Christian."

Read John 10:22-42

Q: John 10:28 says "I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand." What do you think this verse means?

Q: When you come to true saving faith in Jesus Christ, can anything separate you from the Love of God, or take you out of His family?

Q: How does God's love provide security?

Q: Do you sense the security of God's love? Why or why not?

Q: How do security and intimacy correlate? How have you witnessed it within your marriage, other's marriages?

For Further Study: 1 John 5:13, Rom 8:37-39, Jude 24

Day 24 - THE RESURRECTION AND THE LIFE

This story starts off with Jesus responding in a confusing way. Some people that He loves call for His help as Lazarus is sick. Jesus purposely does not go right away and when He finally does decide to go it seems to be too late. If we were to be honest, this is something many of us have experienced at one time or another. There are times we expect God to show up in our life in a particular way and at a particular time and when He doesn't it can make us doubt His love and wonder if He hears us. In this story it is very clear that Jesus loves Lazarus and his sisters and He hears their cry for help yet decides to wait to go to their side. Once Jesus gets to the scene, Lazarus has been dead for 4 days already and both sisters let Jesus know that if He had been there He could have helped Lazarus. Jesus tells them that He is the resurrection and the life and if someone believes in Him He will live even when he dies. Once Jesus goes to the tomb He is deeply moved by the situation and then asks the stone to be moved. Jesus tells them to move the stone away and then calls Lazarus to come out. The dead man comes out dressed in his grave clothes. Jesus tells them to take his grave clothes off and frees the dead man!! What is the point of this incredible story? There is a spiritual reality pictured here and a physical truth that is illustrated. The story does give us a very clear picture of the fact that Jesus is the only one who can give life to me spiritually. Jesus waits for me to realize that I really am dead. Jesus loves me and is deeply moved by the effects of my deadness. Jesus is the only one who can give me hope beyond my funeral!

Read John 11:1-44

- Q: What can you gather about Jesus' relationship with Mary, Martha & Lazarus from this passage? (v.3, 6, 21-22, 35). How do you think they felt when Jesus waited four days to see Lazarus?
- Q: What do Mary and Martha's reactions when meeting Jesus tell you about their understanding of who He is?
- Q: Describe the mood surrounding Lazarus' death? What reactions do you imagine would have taken place when they saw him resurrected? Describe how you envision this moment would have been a "my life changed when moment" for those involved?
- Q: C.S. Lewis stated, "that the death of a beloved is like an amputation." How has the loss of a loved one personally affected you? Did your experience correlate with what you anticipate an amputation would be like? Do you still often remember that person's significance in your life?
- Q: What does the fact that Jesus cried tell you about Him? If Jesus is crying over the effects of sin, what does this tell us about Him?
- Q: How does this story and the gospel give you hope when experiencing loss?

For Further Study: 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

Day 25 - WORSHIP OR WASTE?

Worship is the act of ascribing ultimate value to something in such a way that it engages the entire being. We all worship something. Mary and Judas both worshipped something. Their perspectives on the event that you will read about today, lead us to better understand what they worshipped.

Read John 11:55-12:10

Q: Compare and contrast Mary vs. Judas? Do you initially identify yourself more with the Mary or Judas in the story? Why?

Q: What did Judas' thoughts about Mary communicate about his view of himself? What did it communicate about his understanding of Jesus?

Q: How did Mary see herself?

Q: How did Mary passionately and courageously worship Jesus? What are some factors that keep us from worshipping in this same manner?

Q: What did Mary witness happening in Chapter 11? How does seeing Jesus for who He truly is continually supply the ignition for passionate worship in our lives?

For Further Study: Matthew 26:6-13, Mark 14:3-9, Luke 7:36-50

Day 26 - THE KING OF KINGS

Jesus is the King, not that He will be KING. Mary was told her child would reign on the throne of David His kingdom would be forever (Luke 1:32,33). The wise men came looking for the King of the Jews born in Bethlehem (Matthew 2:1-12). The crowd wanted to take him by force and make Him a king after He had fed the crowd of over 5,000 people, but Jesus slipped away to avoid this premature coronation (John 6), and on His entry into Jerusalem they spread branches and proclaimed the prophecy of their king who had come (John 12:12-19; Zechariah 9:9).

Read John 12:12-26

Q: What type of King were the Jewish people hoping for?

Q: Why type of King did the Jewish people need?

Q: What prophecy was fulfilled with Jesus riding in on a donkey?

Q: How is riding on a donkey a bit ironic for the King of Kings?

Q: Do you believe that Jesus is a triumphant King who will reign eternal?
Do you live with anticipation and hope for Him to fully reign?

Q: What will it be like to live in the kingdom under the reign of Jesus?

For Further Study: Matthew 10:37-39 and 16:24-26

Day 27 - BELIEF VS. UNBELIEF

Reading through the book of John reveals many things: Who Jesus is, where Jesus comes from, what Jesus was sent to do, and the power that Jesus has as displayed through His miracles. Jesus uses His miracles to substantiate His teaching and His claims to be the Messiah. Often throughout the book of John His miracles and teachings come together! If Jesus were to come down and perform miraculous signs today, do you think everyone would believe? Today we will look at how miracles may affect belief.

Read John 12:37-50

Q: How did different groups of people respond to the miracles of Jesus?

Q: Why do you think they responded in this manner?

Q: In what ways are others looking for signs today before putting their belief in Jesus?

Q: Think about the miracles Jesus performed? What did they authenticate about who He said He was?

Q: Do you believe God possesses the same power of nature today? How should this change the way in which you pray to Him?

For Further Study: Luke 16:31, 2 Corinthians 4:4

Day 28 - THE CLEANSING SERVANT

The next picture of Jesus is that He is the King who serves. Mark 10:45 says that Jesus came not to be served but to serve. He is the King who serves. In John 13 we see an interesting snapshot of Jesus. In this passage Jesus and the disciples prepare for the Passover Feast. Jesus knows that shortly He will undergo the agony of the garden and the torture of the cross. As the meal is being served, Jesus is ready to show the full extent of His love to these men He had lived life with for the last couple of years. As the meal is being served something interesting, something odd, something even confusing happens. Jesus stands up and wraps a towel around Himself and begins to wash the disciples feet one by one, drying them with the towel. I imagine this scene would have caught the disciples off guard. This task was for the servants. As they walked the dirty roads their feet would have gotten dirty. A servant would have offered to wash the feet of the guests, but on this night the King of Kings, the Son of God takes the posture of the servant and washed His disciples' feet.

Read John 13:1-17

Q: Think about what it might have been like to be one of the disciples that night.

Q: Why is significant that Jesus chose to wash His disciples' feet?

Q: Why is significant that Jesus chose to wash Judas Iscariot's feet?

Q: Why is significant that Jesus chose to wash Peter's feet?

Q: What are the things that keep me from regularly placing my life in Jesus' basin of grace? (Pride, Lazy, Apathy, Comparing to others not so bad, keep my image up?)

Q: Why is it important to be aware of my sin and to look for the cleansing that Jesus offers?

For Further Study: 1 John 1:7-9

Day 29 - LOVE IS HOW HE LIVED

A disciple is someone who is all in to how Jesus lived His life. One word to accurately describe how Jesus lived is the word Love. 1 John 4:7-11 says that God's indispensable quality is love, that God's love is demonstrated through Jesus and that God's love is the catalyst for our love (1 John 4:11). To fully understand what Jesus is saying in verse 34-35 of this chapter, we have to take a deeper look at the context surrounding His statement of what it means to be a disciple. If you want to know what Jesus means by what He said, look at what Jesus did. As we saw yesterday, Jesus demonstrated a visible sign of an invisible quality of love for His disciples. The command to love was not new; the newness was found in loving one another as Jesus had lived and loved His disciples. Jesus' own love and teachings deepen and transform the command to love. Love itself was not a new commandment; it is an old commandment found in Leviticus 19:8 and Deuteronomy 6:5. The Greek word translated "new" (*kainos*) speaks of what is new in the sense of unused or fresh, rather than something recent or different. It is not so much that the commandment hasn't been given before as that it has a different quality about it, a quality of freshness that differentiates it from any other. To put it simply, this new commandment has a *new object* and a *new measure*.

Read John 13:18-38

- Q: What condition does Jesus give for being His disciple? What does He attach to His command to love one another?
- Q: What is a proper definition of love as defined by Jesus? How has He modeled and demonstrated His love? How does loving others differ from always saying yes to other's demands and being able to say no?
- Q: How does your view of yourself affect your ability to love others? If someone is having trouble loving others, what should be the first place for them to start?
- Q: Why is it significant that the command to love one another is directed to fellow believers? Who will notice the love that is being displayed among the body of Christ? Have you seen this happen to someone outside the church, and if so, how?
- Q: How have you experienced examples of the one anothers by being a part of Grace Church?

For Further Study: 1 John 4:10-12

Day 30 - THE WAY, THE TRUTH AND THE LIFE

What's the difference? Don't all religions believe the same thing? I assume you have heard others and maybe even this once or twice yourself. Jesus clearly shows us that there is a difference in the gospel. Jesus does not say that He is a way, rather that He is the way. The gospel is drastically different than other religions. The gospel is God's plan to rescue me, while religion is man's attempt to confuse God's plan with his own. The gospel says I need rescued... religion says I just need to be improved! The gospel says I am powerless to rescue myself...religion says that I can become better! The gospel is God's plan to get to us... religion is man's attempt to get to God. The gospel plan is Jesus + NOTHING...religion's plan is Jesus + or - SOMETHING! The gospel produces grace and peace...religion produces guilt and pride. In the gospel God gets the glory...in religion man seeks the glory!

Read John 14:1-14

- Q: Compare and contrast the Gospel vs. Religion?
- Q: Why is it so hard for humanity to accept the fact that we need rescued? In what respects is humanity caught in prison before embracing the gospel?
- Q: Suppose you were drowning in the middle of the ocean. Religion and it's leaders stand on the shore and try to teach you how to swim. The gospel is about a God who jumped in and swam to you to rescue you! How does this truth make you feel? What should be the result of being rescued vs. trying to swim your way to shore?
- Q: What is something that you have seen added or subtracted to Jesus that is embraced in religion?
- Q: How have you witnessed religion producing guilt and pride? How has the gospel provided you with a peace that passes all understanding?
- Q: How does religion ascribe glory to man? In what manner does the gospel ascribe glory to God?
- Q: What promises are given in the passage for those that have embraced the Gospel?

For Further Study: John 3:16; Romans 5:1, 6-8; Galatians 1:1-7; and Ephesians 2:8-9, Colossians 4:3-6

Day 31 - JESUS PROMISES THE HOLY SPIRIT

There are many misconceptions about this member of the Trinity. The Bible declares that the Holy Spirit is God: a divine person with a mind, emotions and will. The Holy Spirit possesses both omnipresence (Psalm 139:7-8) and omniscience (1 Cor. 2:10-11). Today we will look at the promised comforter and counselor that Jesus promised.

Q: What comes to your mind when you think of the Holy Spirit?

Read John 14:15-27

Q: How is the Holy Spirit described in this passage?

Q: What is the job of the Holy Spirit?

Q: How do you personally interact with the Holy Spirit?

Q: How have you seen God (The Holy Spirit) provide you with peace and comfort?

For Further Study: Philippians 4:6-7, Romans 8:10, Eph 4:30-32

Day 32 - THE TRUE VINE

In this picture Jesus is the vine, we are branches and the Father is tending the vineyard and wants it to be fruitful. The context in John 15 is Jesus having an intimate pre-cross conversation with His disciples. He has identified the one who would betray Him as Judas Iscariot and now He continues instructing His disciples hours before He goes to the cross. Jesus is teaching that the life of a Christian is like being in a vineyard and Jesus has a role, the Father has a role, the Holy Spirit has a role. Jesus is the life-giving source and we represent branches in this vineyard where the whole goal is to produce fruit. It is all about fruit and producing fruit. This is a passage that is speaking mainly to people who are followers of Jesus. In this picture is that Jesus wants us to produce fruit with our lives not simply to decorate our lives. Many people live their Christian life like a Christmas tree. At Christmas time you go and cut down a tree and then decorate it to make it look impressive. Many Christians are decorating their lives with morality, mechanically trying to impress God and others with their busy lives and religious activity. The problem with a Christmas tree is that it is not attached to the source of life anymore and eventually dies. Many who profess to be Christians are decorated to impress but not connected to the source of life. Jesus says I want you to produce fruit. I want there to be a dynamic and organic reality about your life that comes from inside of you and produces spiritual fruit! Jesus says that fruit is a result of staying close to Him. Eleven times in this chapter John uses the word "abide" or "remain". Simply put Jesus is saying that the priority and the passion of our lives needs to be to remain connected to Him.

Read John 15:1-17

- Q: Write down how many times the words "remain" and "fruit" are used?
- Q: What condition does Jesus give for being His disciple? What is fruit in this passage? Why does the passage so strongly highlight the connection to the vine and remaining in Him to produce fruit?
- Q: Compare and contrast someone who decorates the outside of their life with morality or acts of service versus someone who has connected their life, mind and heart with Jesus?
- Q: We cannot bear fruit, let alone lasting fruit, if we do not remain in Jesus. How have you seen this to be true in your life?
- Q: The gardener prunes every branch so that it can bear more fruit. God will never cut away anything I need but only what will hinder me from producing more good and lasting fruit. Think back on your walk with Christ, what is something that God has pruned or you felt convicted to remove because it hindered the amount of fruit that you were able to produce?

For Further Study: 1 John 2:3-5

Day 33 - AN OFFENSIVE MESSAGE

Have you ever felt intense hostility or extreme aversion to something or someone else? Today's passage talks about the hate that Jesus experienced without reason. We have seen that love is how Jesus lived, yet what He extended was not always reciprocated. As we seek to follow Jesus, what is a proper expectation for us to have regarding how others may respond to us?

Read John 15:18-27

Q: Why does Jesus say those who have said "Yes" to Christ do not belong to the world?

Q: Why can the gospel message be offensive to others?

Q: How have you noticed others negatively respond to the gospel?

Q: How can we ensure we are not the ones being offensive, rather it is the message we are called to share?

Q: What comfort does this passage give you as navigate the difficulties of living in this world?

For Further Study: Psalm 69:4, Romans 12:9-21, 1 Corinthians 1:18

Day 34 - THE ROLE OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit is the Author of Scripture (1 Peter 1:21), the deposit or down payment on our heavenly inheritance (Ephesians 1:13-14), our intercessor (Romans 8:26) and a teacher/comforter/advocate and counselor that we saw last week (John 14). This week we will look at His role of Convicter of Sin and Guider of Truth!

Read John 16:1-33

Q: How does this passage allude to the working relationship of the Holy Spirit with the other two persons of the triune God?

Q: What will the Holy Spirit help communicate to us?

Q: Describe the work of the Holy Spirit as seen in this passage?

Q: Are you allowing the Holy Spirit to convict you of sin? What should this process look like?

Q: Are you allowing the Holy Spirit to guide you into truth? What should this process look like?

Q: What is an area you have felt like the Holy Spirit is leading you into that you have been apprehensive to try?

For Further Study: Romans 8:14, Galatians 5:18

Day 35 - NAVIGATING THE WINDING ROAD OF CULTURE

In John 17:13-19 Jesus is praying for His disciples and as He does He prays that they will be in the world but not of the world. In it but not of it was His mode of operation, and I believe His desire for us as parents and as a church is to train, teach and coach our kids in this next generation to be in the world but not to be of it. This means we will have to teach them how to drive through the winding road of cultural shifts and trends they will encounter at break-neck speeds. The first thing that seems important is to teach them to drive defensively. We must teach them to be aware that Satan is trying to wreck their lives by enticing them to love the things that will not last (1 John 2:15-17). Not only is it about driving defensively, but then it is important to teach them to steer into the truth. Jesus says that we need to understand we are set apart by the truth. The most important thing we can do with our children is give them Jesus, tell them about Jesus, and cultivate their relationship with Jesus. We also must also teach them to engage their culture to make a difference. If they are going to follow Jesus they are not going to avoid their culture; they will engage their culture, but with the purpose of being God's change agent in a culture looking for hope, joy, and forgiveness. One of the most important opportunities we have is to help our kids see themselves as sent on mission from God. Lastly, Jesus then prays for unity among believers and that their unity would be a testimony to people who are watching.

Read John 17

Q: What are the biggest changes you have seen in culture over the last 20-30 years?

Q: What philosophy have you been exposed to:

Separatist – culture is bad, stay away

Conformist – you are going to make mistakes anyway, just let them learn the hard way

Q: What do you think it means to be in the world, but not of the world?

Q: How do we help the next generation steer into...

The truth of who Jesus is?

The truth of where the Bible leads?

The truth of how the Spirit guides?

Q: Why is it important to engage our culture?

For Further Study: Matthew 28:18-20, Ephesians 6:10-17

Day 36 - PUT ON TRIAL

A trial is a proceeding in which opposing parties dispute, present evidence, and make arguments before a judge or jury about their case. Throughout the evening, Jesus was put on trial multiple times regarding who He said He was! The circumstances surrounding his arrest and trials and the loneliness He must have experienced throughout the process highlight the depth of God's love for us!

John 18:1 – 19:3

Q: Describe in your own words the circumstances surrounding the arrest and trials of Jesus?

Q: What emotions do you think Jesus and His disciples were feeling through this period?

Q: What do you think was on Jesus' mind as He navigated the final days before His death? How clear was His purpose in fulfilling God's will?

Q: What do we learn about Peter through his interactions in these passages?

Q: Has there been a time when your anger got the best of you like it did Peter (v.10-11)?

Q: Has there been a time when you were unwilling to stand for the name of Jesus (v.17, 25 & 27)?

For Further Study: Luke 22:7-23:25

Day 37 - THE CROSS BEARER

All four of the gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John) record the events surrounding Jesus' crucifixion. In fact, proportionally they spend a lot more time surrounding these events than the rest of Jesus' life. The Bible indicates that what we believe about the cross of Jesus and what happened on the cross is central to the message of God in the Bible. In fact, Paul felt so strongly about it that he said in 1 Corinthians 1:18, "For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God." and in 1 Corinthians 2:2, "For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified." The message of the cross is central to faith in Jesus.

Read John 19:4-42

Q: What are the different responses to the message of Christ on a cross in our culture today? What are some responses that you have encountered? What is your response?

Q: Why do you think the message of Christ on a cross is offensive to some and foolishness to others?

Q: Why is the cross central to what I believe about Jesus?

Q: What does Christ on a cross communicate to us about the holiness of God? What does it communicate about the love of God? Why are the two inseparable?

For further study: Luke 23:26-56

Day 38 - THE EVENT THAT CHANGED EVERYTHING

What changed everything was not the teachings of Jesus, not the miracles of Jesus or even His inspirational life. The event that changed everything was that this Jesus who lived and taught and did incredible things eventually died an awful death and was buried in a borrowed tomb! But the story didn't end on that Friday because only a few days later, He would rise again!

Read John 20:1-18

Q: What are some interesting circumstances/events that took place around the empty tomb?

Q: What did the disciples most likely believe about Jesus before His death and resurrection?

Q: How did seeing the once-dead Jesus, who was now living, change the disciples?

Q: Why is the resurrection so crucial to our faith? What are the ramifications if there is no resurrection?

For Further Study: Luke 24:1-12

Day 39 - DIDN'T HE DIE?

The once-dead Jesus, once-buried Jesus, and now-missing Jesus showed up and talked to His disciples. He laughed with them, ate with them and hung out with them and you know what happened? Everything changed because of what they witnessed and it caused this group of confused, skeptical, fearful, disillusioned and bewildered followers to take to the streets with a bold message of a risen Christ!

- Q: What evidence for the resurrection of Jesus Christ is given in this passage?

- Q: How many people did Jesus appear to after He resurrected from the dead? (see 1 Cor. 15:6)

- Q: What evidence for the resurrection of Jesus Christ has been particularly helpful for building your faith?

- Q: How did what the disciples believe about the resurrection change the trajectory of their lives?

- Q: How does what you believe or don't believe about the resurrection change the trajectory of your life?

For further study: Read 1 Corinthians 15

Day 40 - DO I FOLLOW? DO I FEED?

On day 36, we looked at Peter's final interactions with Jesus surrounding His arrest and trial. Imagine how Peter must have felt the days following the death of the one He recognized as his Messiah? He had let Jesus down, he had blown the opportunity to stand alongside of Him. As Jesus appeared to others as the Resurrected Christ, He specifically went to Peter to reinstate him and the mission He had for him in regards to reaching the world.

Read John 21

- Q: What was Peter's reaction upon noticing it was Jesus calling from the shore?
- Q: Jesus prepared breakfast (fish and bread) for His disciples around a burning hot fire. How does this event speak to the condition of Jesus' resurrected body?
- Q: Jesus chooses to pull Peter aside to ask him a few questions. Why is it significant that Jesus asked Peter three times if he loved Him?
- Q: Jesus gave Peter two commands following their conversation. What did He mean by "follow me?" What did He mean by "feed my sheep?"
- Q: How are you doing at following Jesus? What is one step you can take in becoming a more faithful follower?
- Q: How are you doing at feeding His sheep? What is one way in which you can grow in leading others toward Jesus?

For Further Study: Matthew 28:19-20



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