

JESUS

THE LIGHT BY WHICH WE SEE



**“Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these things have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Son of God and that by believing you may have life in his name.”
John 20:30-31**

The apostle John crafts a perfect picture of Jesus as the Son of God and promised Messiah. As you study the book, you will come to a deeper understanding of Jesus, the Good Shepherd, the Resurrection and the Life, and Bread of Life. So join us on this ten-week study through the gospel of John, as we our eyes of Jesus, the Light by which we see.



TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION

WEEK ONE: JOHN 1-3

- The start of Jesus's ministry
- Jesus is the Lamb of God
- Jesus' first miracle
- A new way of thinking
- Reflection and prayer
- Teaching notes and prayer requests

WEEK TWO: JOHN 4-5

- Jesus continues his ministry
- Jesus is the living water
- Jesus heals the official's son
- Jesus heals on the Sabbath
- Father-Son relationship
- Teaching notes and prayer requests

WEEK THREE: JOHN 6-7

- Jesus does the impossible
- Jesus feeds 5000
- Jesus is the bread of life
- Rivers of living water
- Reflection and prayer
- Teaching notes and prayer requests

DAY FIVE
REFLECTION AND PRAYER

But be doers of the Word, and not hearers only...
James 1:22a

Today's Reading: Choose a verse or passage from this week's reading that stuck out to you from this week's reading and write it below.

01 | What attribute of the Lord shines through this verse?

02 | Can you find an Old Testament verse that reinforces that attribute?

03 | What do you think the Lord could be teaching you through this verse or passage?

INTRODUCTION

Every part of this study was written with you in mind. My prayer over you has been, "...that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God" (Philippians 1:9-11). May this study be a vehicle through which your affection for Jesus is stirred and your faith in his character is bolstered.

Each week has five days of homework. Each step of the HEAR model is followed:

Hear the Lord speaking through His word
Explain what the text is saying
Apply the text to your own life
Reflect on the character of God

Day one of each week, you will read the larger passage of Scripture in its entirety in one sitting. Then the rest of the week will be spent breaking down and studying the Scripture in smaller detail. The "go deeper" sections are designed to be opportunities for additional study, should you care to take them.

As you work through the study, you will notice that the focus is significantly more on God, rather than self. This is intentional. While it is essential to be doers of the words and not hearers only, we must first be hearers. I want us to sit at the feet of Jesus and feast on his word. Let's delight in his character before we think about what's in it for us. The final day of most weeks is a reflection day, a time designed for contemplation and application of the word.

Most importantly, begin each day with prayer, asking the Lord to fill you with discernment as you study His word and for a softened heart to see whatever He may have for you that day. If we believe that God's word is living, active, and able to pierce our hearts, we must approach it in that way each day.

Here's the prayer I often use: Father, I believe every word of yours proves true. I believe everything pertaining to life and godliness is written in it. Give me grace and discernment today as I study to hear your voice. Protect me from wrong thinking. I open my heart and mind to your leading.

When we meet together each week, you will hear teaching from the chapters you spent the previous week studying and then we will have time in growth groups to discuss what you noticed in the gospel of John.

Let's begin!

The true light, which gives
light to everyone, was
coming into the world.

JOHN 1:7

GO DEEPER

My favorite thing by far about studying the Bible is when I notice God speaking to me through Scripture. When I take the time to look back over the past few weeks in my Bible journal, I notice patterns, especially in the first days encountering a passage. Often what I'm "noticing" or "wondering" in day one each week is similar. Week after week, the characteristic of Jesus that keeps arresting my heart is the same. I look at specific verses I wrote down that were stuck in my head and a message begins to come through the scribblings. Remember, "The word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart" (Hebrews 4:12). God's word is relevant today, accomplishing work today, personal today, and active today.

Let's put that to the test. After you've completed the above work, stop and pray that the Lord would help you see the patterns in your thinking. He says if you "seek him with all your heart, you will find him" (Jeremiah 29:13). Pray this back to him. Then go back to the past two weeks of study. Look at your Day One answers. Look at your Day Five reflections. What connections can you start to make? Why does that specific aspect of the Lord's character stick out to you right now? What is he teaching you in this season?

02 | What does the outward action of washing the disciples feet reveal about Jesus and about his relationship with his disciples?

03 | Why is it significant that Jesus also washes Judas' feet?

Jesus tells his disciples, "If I then, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. For I have given you an example that you should do just as I have done to you" (John 13:14-15).

04 | What does this act of service practically look like today, especially since we no longer require foot-washing when entering someone's house?

05 | In verses 28 and 29, why do the disciples not assume that Judas is the one who will betray Jesus? What does this tell you about Judas?

06 | Write out the last four words of verse 30. What do we know about the gospel of John that makes these four words significant?

Jesus knows his "hour" has come. It is time for the Father to be glorified in the Son. The wild thing about this chapter is we see two vastly different plans springing into action- of God's plan and of the devil's plan. Satan utilizes both Judas and the Pharisees to enact his ultimate plan of destruction- kill the Son of God and step in as ruler of the world he created. Yet, nothing is stronger than God Almighty. Though we read, "It was night," and understand John is pointing to the spiritual darkness at war with the light, we know the end of the story. Darkness will not overcome the light. Hallelujah, Amen.

WEEK 1

John 1-3

THE START OF JESUS' MINISTRY

DAY ONE
THE START OF JESUS' MINISTRY

Jesus calls his disciples to join the expansive work of his ministry

Today's Reading: John 1-3

The true light, which gives light to everyone,
was coming into the world.
John 1:7

We've all heard the phrase "hindsight is twenty-twenty." Looking back on an event or situation, the intricacies and subtleties are so much easier to catch. So often I think, "If I would have known then what I know now, I would have acted differently." This is the power of hindsight.

It's with hindsight that John writes his gospel, years after Matthew, Mark, and Luke crafted their accounts. Jesus has already ascended; the church has already been growing; Peter has already been martyred. John is an older man looking back on all that occurred during his time with Jesus with the knowledge of how everything played out. So, he selects details that provide the clearest picture of his experience, all in the hopes of communicating the most important message: Jesus is the Son of the Living God and the long-awaited Messiah. He writes so those who hear will believe and receive life in Jesus.

As we begin to study this text, we must first pray for discernment, for clarity, for understanding, and for open hearts. God the Father promises that if we seek Him, we will find Him IF we seek Him with all our hearts.

This week's reading will cover John 1-3. We will read the first of seven miracles, encountering many Jewish traditions such as weddings, temple worship, and Sabbath. Remember John's gospel is a work of literature filled with literary techniques. Pay attention to patterns, symbols, and words. Each detail is intentional and can illuminate our understanding.

Begin by reading John 1-3 in its entirety. Try in this first reading not to spend too much time on any one thing. Later we will dig deeper into the text and rest on certain aspects of the story BUT for now, just read all the way through John 1-3 to gain a big picture understanding of what is going on in these first chapters.

DAY FOUR
JESUS WASHES THE DISCIPLES' FEET

You must be born of water and spirit

Today's reading: John 13

Jesus answered him, "If I do not wash you, you have no share with me"
John 13:7

Chapter 13 begins what scholars refer to as Jesus' "upper room discourse." This is the final teaching he gives to his disciples before he is arrested, tried, and put to death. This conversation will last for several chapters. But before he teaches anything about the Kingdom of Heaven, he shows them what the Kingdom of Heaven is like. He models for his apprentices what it looks like to be great in the Kingdom: you must become less.

Feet washing was a lowly, gross task. To me, it's the equivalent of scrubbing a toilet or giving my dog a bath. There was nothing about the task that was considered elite, or even sanitary. Yet, as a way to welcome outsiders into a home, the first century Jewish host would make sure each guest's feet were cleaned by the lowliest in the household, most often a non-Jewish servant.

Jesus washing the disciples feet is not a power play, yet his actions are powerfully revealing. In a culture consumed with honor, dignity, status, and influence, Jesus chose a role associated with humility and lowliness.

Read John chapter 13 in its entirety.

01 | Twice in this chapter, John refers to what the devil is up to in these final hours before the cross. What are the two things the devil does in chapter 13? Does the devil know what God has planned?

THE UPPER ROOM

The Upper Room, also known as the "cenacle", is described in Matthew 26:1-29, Mark 14:12-25, Luke 22:7-20, and John 13:1-38. It was a room often found on the roof of a typical home accessible from the outside. In Jerusalem, these rooms were often used for special occasions, including meditation and prayer. Here is where Jesus ate the Passover, also referred to as the Last Supper, with his disciples. Jesus institutes the "new covenant" in his blood, instructing believers who follow him to love one another and to live by the power of the Holy Spirit in the Upper Room. It is also said to be the place where the apostles continued to gather after the ascension of Jesus.

GO DEEPER

Let's do a study on what Jesus meant when he said that "Whoever loves their life loses it and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life" (12:25) in the New Testament outside of the gospels.

Look up each of the following passages and make notes about how *losing and keeping life* is used.

Romans 6:1-14-

2 Corinthians 5:14-15-

Galatians 6:14-

As you make notes, connections and patterns will start to emerge. Then it's time to write those connections down, all the while prayerfully asking God to reveal His character to you and why this idea of losing and keeping life is an important pattern or theme in His word.

01 | What did you notice? Choose a few topics, themes, stories, or details that caught your attention.

02 | What do you wonder? Jot down a question or two you had as you read the text.

03 | What characteristic of Jesus stood out to you most in these chapters?

04 | Choose one verse that highlights that characteristic and write it below.

GO DEEPER

Beginning in verse 1 of Chapter 1, John wastes no time telling his audience that Jesus is God in the flesh. Jesus is the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. Jesus is the Word physically present in creation, revealing the glory of the Father and dwelling among his people.

Spend some time considering what it means that Jesus is the Word.

Read Revelation 19:13, Hebrews 4:12, and I John 1:1.

05 | What do each of these passages reveal about the Word?

MESSIAH WOULD...	JESUS FULFILLED BY...
Come to the people of Israel	
Be righteous and possess salvation	
Set the prisoners free from waterless pits	
Shall speak to the nations	
Rule from sea to sea	
Restore to his people double	

04 | What does Jesus mean in verse 25 when he says, “Whoever loves his life loses it, and whoever hates his life in this world will keep it for eternal life”? In what way do Mary and Judas represent these two groups of people?

In verse 20, a group of Greeks desire to see Jesus. In response, for the first time, Jesus says “the hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified” (12:23). And yet he does not meet with the Greeks. Perhaps this section highlights that with Jesus’ death and resurrection, all people- Jew or Gentile- are welcomed into fellowship with the Father.

05 | Although most would think that the hour of death is a humiliation, Jesus says it is his glorification. Why is that?

06 | In John chapter 12, there are many “good news” verses. Choose one and write it below. Then reflect why on this particular verse such good news to you.

Normally, anointing was festive in nature, yet here, whether she knew it or not, Mary was preparing Jesus' body for burial. This event foreshadows what this week will hold. The anointing took place on Saturday, mere days before Jesus would be crucified then buried. Because Jesus would have died so close to the Sabbath, preparing his body for burial would have been considered work and, therefore, breaking the Sabbath. Mary's act of worship ensures that Jesus would receive a proper burial.

02 | What is Judas' objection to what Mary did? Is there any merit in it? What are Judas' true motives in his objection?

OLD TESTAMENT LINK

03 | Read Zechariah 9:9-13 and make a list of everything prophesied about how the Messiah will save the nation of Israel.

Notice all of the aggressive language in Zechariah: cut off the chariot, set the prisoners free, bend Judah as my bow, your king is coming to you, wield you like a warrior's sword. Imagine how the Jewish people were expecting the Messiah to look. I imagine they expected a mighty warrior, rather than a humble servant. A donkey was a sign of peace, not of aggression. But look at Zechariah again. How did Jesus fulfill all of these prophecies, perhaps in an unexpected way?

DAY TWO JESUS IS THE LAMB OF GOD

John the Baptist recognizes Jesus' divinity

Today's Reading: John 1

The next day he saw Jesus coming toward him, and said,
"behold, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"
John 1:29

John begins his gospel with a prologue, a technique seen frequently in literature. A prologue establishes a point of view, foreshadows soon-to-be events, and sets the tone for the rest of the work. It is easy to forget that the Bible is a work of literature. The Bible is a songbook, a biography, a collection of Proverbs, and short stories. It is a work of literature, complete with symbolism, irony, metaphor and similes, paradox, and themes.

John's prologue accomplishes all the tasks of a classical literature prologue. He establishes the focus- Jesus, only Jesus. In fact, John rarely shows up in his gospel at all, often avoiding the chance to even use his name. While he might be crafting the narrative, he is not the focus. He foreshadows the end of all days- the darkness has not overcome- and in turn sets the tone for the rest of the work. There will be looming darkness (heavy, oppressive, hard), but light overcomes (victorious, celebratory, hopeful).

We see the "why" behind his gospel immediately. By connecting the story of Jesus to the first words of Genesis, to the prophet Ezekiel, to the Psalms, and to Isaiah, this prologue establishes that this is not a NEW story; it's a continuation of the story that's been going on for centuries!

John uses his gospel to prove definitively that Jesus is the promised Messiah, the Son of the Living God, the far and better Moses, the far and better Elijah, the one of whom John the Baptist proclaimed, the fulfillment of prophecy. He was and is and is to come.

In the Gospel of John, "light" is consistently mentioned, often signifying deliverance, security, truth, holiness, and revelation.

01 | If darkness is the opposite of light, what then would darkness represent?

LIGHT	DARKNESS
Deliverance	
Security	
Truth	
Holiness	
Revelation	

Spend some time with the following verses focusing on the theme of “light” in the Old Testament.

02 | What aspect of “light” is the passage demonstrating?

Psalm 36:9-

2 Samuel 23:4-

Job 12:22-

Psalm 112:4-

Psalm 139:11-12-

Isaiah 42:6, 16-

DAY THREE
JESUS IS THE ROYAL MESSIAH KING

Mary’s anointing of Jesus and his entry into Jerusalem point to his royal status

Today’s Reading: John 12

So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying out, “Hosanna! Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!”
 John 12:13

Chapter 12 reveals two different portrayals of “worship.” While one pours out, both literally and figuratively, everything she has at the feet of Jesus, the other critiques the extravagance of the offering. Both, however, reveal the state of the worshiper’s heart. As you read these stories, may your mind reflect on the state of your own heart, whether you are giving everything you have to the Lord or if you are holding back in your worship.

Begin by reading chapter 12 in its entirety.

Pure nard was an oil prepared from the roots and stems of an herb from Northern India. It was fragrant and expensive, and would have been kept in a sealed alabaster jar. This perfume would have only been opened on special occasions. Most likely, this jar would have been Mary’s dowry to give to her future husband’s family as a bride price. This jar represented her economic status, future plans, and most treasured possession.

Additionally, Mary wipes the fragrance into Jesus’ feet with her hair. In ancient times, hair was considered to be a woman’s crown. So she washed Jesus’ feet- the typical job of a servant- with her crown.

01 | The question is: why? Why does she pour it out on Jesus’ feet and wipe it with her hair? What are these actions revealing about her character?

THE MONEY PURSE

The most trustworthy person in the group would have been considered worthy of watching over the money purse. Though Jesus knows the true nature of Judas’ heart, the disciples only see his outward appearance and his seemingly trustworthy nature.

GO DEEPER

In this chapter, we get another “I AM” statement. Go back and look at each one and discover how each “I AM” builds on the one before it. Remember, Hebrews 1:3 says that Jesus is the exact imprint of God’s nature. So, it should be that what we see in Jesus we also see in God! THEN, here’s where study gets really fun. Go back to the first “I AM,” way back in Exodus 3. Reread the chapter and notice the ways God’s character is reflected in Jesus and his “I AM” statements. Write your findings in the space below.

JOHN THE BAPTIST

When the religious leaders asked John the Baptist for his identity, he said he wasn’t the Christ, wasn’t Elijah, and wasn’t the Prophet. Instead, he quotes Isaiah 40, specifically the prophecy in verses 3-5. By doing so, John the Baptist is saying that he is preparing the way of the LORD; Jesus, then, the glory of the LORD that shall be revealed and all people shall see that glory together.

In the Old Testament, access to God was available only to the High Priest and only on one day of the year, the Day of Atonement. Few other people had an audience with Yahweh. Why then is John 1:14 so significant?

John 1:18 says, “No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father’s side, he has made him known.” What does this mean that Jesus has made the Father known? How is this relationship different from the Israelites relationship with Yahweh in the Old Testament?

To know Jesus is to know the Father. His character reflects that of Yahweh. To an ancient Jewish listener, this idea is revolutionary.

THE LAMB OF GOD

When John calls Jesus the Lamb of God, he is referring to the Passover lamb and a key Messianic prophecy in Isaiah 53:7. Read Exodus 12, paying attention to the symbolism of the lamb. Note each reference to the characteristic the lamb must display and what its blood would do for Israel.

Now, read the following passages in Revelation and consider how John continues to speak of Jesus as the Lamb of God (Rev. 5:6-13, 7:17, 21:22-23, 22:1-3).

03 | How is the Lamb in Revelation similar to the Lamb of God in John and the Passover lamb in Exodus?

In John 1:35-51, Jesus calls his first five disciples. As these disciples encounter Jesus, they each have different responses. Two of John the Baptist's disciples hear his proclamation of Jesus' identity as the Lamb of God, and follow Jesus, seeing him as a great Teacher. Andrew's response is to tell his brother, Simon, that they had found the Messiah, the long-awaited deliverer. After Jesus told Philip to follow him, Philip goes to recruit Nathaniel, telling him that Jesus is the one the prophets had foretold. When Jesus tells Nathaniel that he saw him under the fig tree, Nathaniel is convinced that Jesus is the Son of God and King of Israel.

Consider what was told of the yet-to-come Messiah in Isaiah 9:6-7:

“For to us a child is born, to us a son is given; and the government shall be upon his shoulder, and his name shall be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and of peace there will be no end, on the throne of David and over his kingdom, to establish it and to uphold it with justice and with righteousness from this time forth and forevermore. The zeal of the LORD of hosts will do this.”

04 | If Andrew, Philip, and Nathaniel are already convinced that Jesus is the fulfillment of this prophecy, what are they expecting him to be like? What are they expecting him to do?

GO DEEPER

Every time Jesus summons a disciple to follow him, he initiates the relationship. No one needed to apply or meet certain qualifications. The only thing required was faith to follow.

05 | What is your story of how Jesus called you? What evidence shows he initiated the relationship? What strengthened your faith?

Isn't it interesting how even in his varied responses to both Mary and Martha, Jesus shows how deeply he knows each of them? To Martha, he reminds her of his deity and his character. He teaches her. To Mary, he shows empathy and cries with her.

05 | How have you seen him respond to you in seasons of grief?

06 | John 11:5 says, “Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus.” How does this love show up in his actions and his words toward them in this passage?

Though Jesus raising Lazarus from the dead is definitively revealing that he has authority over death, the Pharisees still do not believe him to be the Son of God. On the contrary, they see him to be more dangerous than ever and are motivated to kill him. They fear the Roman response to so many people believing in Jesus. Ironically, they are afraid the Romans will destroy the temple to keep the Jewish people from overpowering them. Yet, in 70 AD, before John composed this gospel, the Romans did destroy the temple. Even the high priest of Jesus' time, Caiaphas, thought Jesus could be an acceptable scapegoat to decrease the Roman frustrations toward the Jews. Rather than the Jews all suffering by the hands of the Romans, Jesus could die in place of the Jewish people. Little did Caiaphas know, Jesus was already destined to be the Lamb of God who would take away the sins of the world.

DAY THREE
JESUS' FIRST MIRACLE

#bestweddingever

Today's Reading: John 2

This, the first of his signs, Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory, and his disciples believed in him.
 John 2:11

WHAT IS THE SIGN?	WHAT DOES THE SIGN REVEAL ABOUT JESUS?
Jesus turned water into wine.	Jesus is the creator of all things and has authority over all things.

02 | What does Martha's conversation with Jesus in verses 21-27 reveal about her faith?

Jesus' next "I AM" statement is in this chapter. "Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live, and everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die' (John 11:25-26). When have we read Jesus speaking like this in the past ten chapters of John?

03 | Go back and find a verse that speaks to the same idea of eternal life with Jesus. Write that verse below.

04 | How is Jesus' interaction with Mary in verses 32-35 different from his interaction with Martha? What does this teach about how Jesus interacts with us?

The very last verse of the book of John points to the miracles of Jesus. "Now there are also many other things that Jesus did. Were every one of them to be written, I suppose that the world itself could not contain the books that would be written." (John 21:25)

This tells us that John had MANY miracles from which to choose to write about, and yet, he included only seven miracles of Jesus that point to both his divinity and to his character. Remember numbers in the Bible are significant! In Jewish culture, the number 7 symbolized completion.

Begin today's study by reading chapter two in its entirety. In this chapter you will find the first of Jesus' miracles.

It is easy to read Jesus' response to his mother's request in verse 4 as harsh and insensitive. "Woman, what does this have to do with me? My hour has not yet come." We have the benefit of reading this story knowing the ending, knowing who Jesus is. Yet, while Mary knew Jesus' birth was a miracle and that he was sent from God, she did not yet know what he was capable of. Mary is Jesus' mother and here he calls her "woman." Even though in Jewish culture, woman was a respectful address, Jesus is distancing himself from his earthly mother, telling her his hour has not yet come. This "hour" refers to the glory displayed in Jesus' death and resurrection. Verse four reveals that Jesus was fully aware of the divine timing of the "hour."

01 | There is no written record of Mary having witnessed Jesus performing a miracle before this and yet she tells the servants to do whatever he says. She is completely confident that Jesus can fix this disastrous situation, even though she has never seen him do it before. What does this reveal about her faith? What can we learn from her conviction?

THE MIRACLES OF JESUS IN JOHN

- 01 | Turning water into wine (2:1-12)
- 02 | Healing the nobleman's son (4:46-54)
- 03 | Healing the man at the pool (5:1-11)
- 04 | Feeding of the 5,000 (6:1-15)
- 05 | Walking on water (6:16-21)
- 06 | Healing a man born blind (9:1-12)
- 07 | Resurrecting Lazarus (11)

The six stone waterpots held twenty to thirty gallons of water each, totaling anywhere from 120 to 180 gallons of water. When they brought the water to the head servant, they learned that the water had been transformed into exquisite wine.

This was the first of seven signs in the book of John. A sign is a miracle designed to “confirm the authority of the messenger and the validity of His message.” Each miracle Jesus did put his glory on full display. “The divine glory and presence that first dwelt in the Old Testament tabernacle was now residing in the person of Jesus,” (Moody Commentary).

02 | How public is this miracle really? Who are the ones to witness it and what is their response?

Does it surprise anyone else that this miracle is witnessed by so few? Jesus could have made this miracle as public as he wanted. Everyone at that wedding could have seen his power and ability, which could have led them to believe that he is the Messiah. And yet, Jesus keeps the circle small, revealing his power to only a few. Why would this be?

Recently a colleague’s son was diagnosed with an incurable brain tumor and given mere months to live. The Church surrounded this family, offering help and comfort. And we prayed. And we prayed. And we prayed. Nearly a year later, the boy passed away.

If I can be honest with you, I was absolutely astounded by God. Wouldn’t healing him have brought more glory to God? Consider the doctors, nurses, students, parents, strangers, even, who would have witnessed a miracle firsthand! Wouldn’t that bring you more renown, God? Didn’t you hear the prayers of your people?

The words of Isaiah 55:9 take on new meaning in questions like this. “For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.” Whether I understand it or not, Jesus’ choice to keep his power visible to only a few is higher than my agenda.

In those seasons where God’s ways do not make sense to me, I have found a sort of comfort in repeating Isaiah back to Him, reminding my soul that my Father who loves me sees the whole story much clearer than I see the moment. Because as the heavens are higher than the earth, that’s how much higher his ways are than mine.

JESUS RAISES LAZARUS FROM THE DEAD

Jesus is deeply moved by the grief of others

Today’s Reading: John 11

When Jesus saw her weeping, and the Jews who had come with her also weeping, he was deeply moved in his spirit and greatly troubled.

John 11:33

In John chapter 9, when questioned if the blind man’s affliction was of his own doing, Jesus gives his disciples a difficult truth to grasp. He tells the disciples that it wasn’t the man’s sin, nor that of his parents, that caused his blindness, but rather “that the works of God might be displayed in him” (John 9:3b). The man’s affliction, and then his healing, brought the Lord more glory than if the man had been born seeing. This idea is so much easier to handle when it is merely subjective. But when you are the one afflicted, or when your parents are, or when your friends are, or when it’s your kids who are afflicted, this teaching can become debilitating.

WHY WAIT?

Jewish tradition in the time of Jesus taught that a body was not really dead until the fourth day when one’s face began to change. Talmud (think of this as the Jewish handbook) taught that a deceased person’s soul would hover over the body for three days, hoping to reenter. As soon as decomposition began, however, Jewish teachers believed the soul would leave and the deceased would be irrevocably dead. In other words, Jesus waited until there was no possibility that Lazarus wasn’t really dead.

John 11 takes this abstract concept and provides a concrete example. Verse 6 tells us that when Jesus heard that Lazarus was ill, he stayed longer in the place where he was. He waited, knowing how the situation would play out, knowing that God would receive more glory if Lazarus was dead for several days and was then raised to life, than if he was healed beforehand.

Yet, when he sees Mary, Martha, and the village who gathered to mourn with them, Jesus is “deeply moved” by their grief (11:33, 11:35, 11:38).

We do not serve a King who is unmoved by our sorrow. No, in fact, we serve a King who not only bears our grief and carries our sorrow (Isaiah 53:4), but also uses every hardship for our ultimate good (James 1:2-4).

Read John chapter 11 in its entirety.

01 | Let’s review signs we’ve read and what each one reveals about Jesus. What is the purpose of a sign? (If you need a reminder, see the chart on week 1, day 3).

GO DEEPER

In John 13:34-35, Jesus says to his disciples, “A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.”

05 | Leviticus 19:18 and Deuteronomy 6:5 are Mosaic commands about love. Read those two OT passages on love commands and then compare them to John 13:34-35, Matthew 5:43-48, and Mark 12:28-33. Does Jesus’ command in the gospels imply a departure from these Mosaic commands? What do these passages show you about what Jesus means when he says “a new commandment?”

DAY TWO

THE WEDDING FEAST

Read the parable of the wedding feast in Matthew 22. Read about the marriage feast of the Lamb in Revelation 19:6-9.

03 | In what ways is the wedding in John 2 similar to these other wedding feasts?

04 | What characteristics of God the Father and Jesus the Son shine through in these stories?

TEMPLE CLEANSING

Jesus’ first major confrontation with the Jewish leaders in John’s gospel occurs during the Passover (Look back at yesterday’s lesson. Isn’t it interesting that it’s near the Passover that John the Baptist refers to Jesus as the Lamb of God?!). When Jesus went to the Temple, he found people selling animals and converting currency. He throws the coins to the ground and rebukes the people, saying in verse 16 “Take these things away; do not make my Father’s house a house of trade.”

05 | What does this story teach us about Jesus?

The section shows the first opposition against Jesus' ministry in the book of John. Consider the question they ask Jesus in verse 18- What sign do you show us for doing these things? Remember, a sign "confirms the authority of the messenger and validity of His message" (Moody Commentary).

06 | What is Jesus' response to their question? What does this reveal about Jesus?

GO DEEPER

While Jesus' miracle at the wedding in Cana was done in secret, his cleansing of the temple was striking and public. The interesting thing is that many Jews believed the soon coming Messiah was going to be a great warrior who would "bring forth justice to the nations" (Isaiah 42:1), "bring out the prisoners from the dungeon" (Isaiah 42:7), and would show no end to the "increase of his government" (Isaiah 9). And yet, the justice Jesus brings forth begins in the temple. The dungeon from which he is freeing prisoners is the prison of legalism and self-righteousness in their church. The government he seems to be dismantling is that of religious establishment.

Jesus' rebuke of what the Pharisees have allowed to take place in the temple seems harsh and unloving, yet Proverbs says, "Do not regard lightly the discipline of the Lord, nor be weary when reproved by him. For the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and chastises every son whom he receives" (Proverbs 3:11-12). In throwing the coins to the floor and raising his voice, Jesus rid His Father's House of what didn't belong and the things that kept it from being a true House of worship. In the same way, the discipline of the Lord rids us of sin that doesn't belong in our hearts and is keeping us distanced from the Father.

07 | In what way have you experienced this kind of discipline in your own walk with Jesus?

01 | What did you notice? Choose a few topics, themes, stories, or details that caught your attention.

02 | What do you wonder? Jot down a question or two you had as you read the text.

03 | What characteristic of Jesus stood out to you most in these chapters?

04 | Choose one verse that highlights that characteristic and write it below.

DAY ONE
JESUS' SIGN SOLIDIFIES HIS DIVINE NATURE

He is the resurrection and the life

Today's Reading: John 11-13

"I have come into the world as light,
so that whoever believes in me may not remain in darkness."
John 12:46

There is so much "good news" wrapped up in the person of Jesus. Think of what we've read in the first ten chapters of John alone- Jesus knows my story and calls me to him (John 1). Jesus satisfies every longing of my heart (John 4). Jesus can turn my mourning into rejoicing (John 5). Jesus provides for my every need (John 6). Jesus is my healer (John 9). Nothing is impossible to Jesus (all of the book of John). This, my friends, is good news for all people!

For me, however, familiarity can often desensitize me to the beauty of something. I remember when we first toured the house we now live in, I was taken aback by the beautiful backyard. The back of our lot is lined with oak trees and wildflowers grow throughout our property. I remember telling my husband that the yard felt like a sacred place to me. Yet, five years later, I walk in our backyard and the trees and gardens no longer arrest my heart. More often than not, I instead notice the weeds threatening to take over our house or the lawn that needs to be mowed. The familiarity has overshadowed the beauty.

If I'm not careful, the Bible can become too familiar. I can read through these stories I've heard for years and miss the astounding good news within the words. May it not be so, Lord Jesus!

Before you begin your reading, pray for fresh eyes and a renewed discernment as you approach Scripture.

Read John chapters 11 through 13 in their entirety.

DAY FOUR
A NEW WAY OF THINKING

Jesus revolutionizes what Jewish leaders thought of salvation

Today's Reading: John 3

And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil.
John 3:19

John 3:16 is one of the first Bible verses I memorized when I was a young girl. For many, this verse is the embodiment of the gospel story. However, Jesus did not say these words in an isolated moment, but rather in a conversation with a Jewish rabbi, Nicodemus, who did not yet believe that Jesus was the Messiah. Today we will consider the context of this conversation and the gravity of Jesus' words.

Begin by reading chapter three of John in its entirety.

01 | What information are we given about Nicodemus and his title in verse 1?

Nicodemus tells Jesus, "We know you are a teacher come from God, for no one can do these signs that you do unless God is with him." (3:2) But Jesus does not address this statement at all. Instead, he tells Nicodemus, "unless someone is born again, he or she cannot see the Kingdom of God." (3:3)

02 | What connection can you make between Nicodemus' statement and Jesus' response?

WHAT IS THE RULING CLASS?

Nicodemus was a prominent figure in the Jewish faith during Jesus' time. Not only was he a respected Pharisee (notice Jesus even called him the teacher of Israel), but he also was a member of the "ruling class," also known as the Sanhedrin. This Council of Elders was set up in Exodus 11 as a way of alleviating the workload for Moses. Their responsibilities included ruling over grievances or infractions among the Jewish people. Though the Sanhedrin was still under Roman rule and did not have the authority to execute anyone, their power did extend quite far in Jewish culture, earning them both the respect and fear of the Jewish people.

OLD TESTAMENT LINK

In Numbers 21, despite God's consistent care for and protection of the wandering Israelites, the people complained against the Lord. They claimed slavery in Egypt was better than wandering in the desert. As a consequence, for their grumbling and lack of faith, God inflicted the people with snakes, who bit many Israelites. The people were dying with no hope in sight. God instructed Moses to build a bronze serpent and put it up on a pole and "...everyone who is bitten, when he sees it, shall live. So, Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on a pole. And if a serpent bit anyone, he would look at the bronze serpent and live," (Numbers 21:8-9). The inflicted looked at the snake and were saved.

Isn't it curious that the solution to the Israelites' infliction of snakes was a snake on a pole? The image that brought healing was what was also killing them. So what does any of that have to do with Jesus? Why would he reference this peculiar story in his conversation with Nicodemus?

03 | What might be the significance of Jesus referring to this story in his response to Nicodemus in John 3:14?

2 Corinthians 5:21 says, "For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God." Just like the bronze snake was a picture of the thing that was killing the Israelites and by "lifting it up" it provided rescue, Jesus became the sin that was killing us and was "lifted up" so He could provide rescue.

Jesus is telling Nicodemus that He is here to provide him rescue.

Consider Jesus' words in John 3:19-21:

"And this is the judgment: the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their works were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed. But whoever does what is true comes to the light, so that it may be clearly seen that his works have been carried out in God."

04 | If darkness symbolizes vulnerability, ignorance, perversion, and bondage, why would people love the darkness?

WEEK 5

John 11-13

JESUS'S FINAL SIGN SOLIDIFIES HIS DIVINE NATURE

“I have come into the world
as light, so that whoever
believes in me may not
remain in darkness.”

JOHN 12:46

05 | What is the relationship between coming into the light and being born-again?

Both coming into the light and being-born again involve leaving a previous state of being. One must leave the darkness to come into the light and one must leave the former self to be reborn into new creation. The apostle Paul furthers this idea in 2 Corinthians 5:17:

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.”

Paul continues this idea in his letter to the Romans. We know that our old self was crucified with Christ in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. When we walk in the light of Jesus, we must leave behind every aspect of our old life in darkness.

This becomes especially clear when we consider the story we read yesterday of Jesus cleansing the temple. Remember how Jesus rebuked the Jewish leaders for making His Father’s House a house of trade? Paul writes in 1 Corinthians 19 about how if we are in Christ, our bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, whom we have from God the Father. Jesus’ words to the Jewish leaders are the same as they are to each of us walking in the light: Do not bring acts of darkness into the light!

06 | If the old self has been put to death, what must happen to the “darkness” that previously existed in the born-again Christian’s life?

GO DEEPER

When John the Baptist's disciples are concerned that Jesus' influence is overtaking that of his own, he tells his disciples that Jesus must increase and he must decrease. His story about the bride, bridegroom, and friend of the bridegroom can be a bit confusing, but it is interesting considering the wedding we read about yesterday in chapter two.

In John the Baptist's analogy, the bridegroom is Jesus and his bride is the Church. John the Baptist, as a friend of the bridegroom, does not want to steal the bridegroom's glory, but instead wants to step to the side, so to speak, and allow the bridegroom to receive all the attention and praise. May this be our same approach toward ministry!

TEACHING NOTES AND PRAYER

DAY FIVE
REFLECTION AND PRAYER

But be doers of the Word, and not hearers only...
James 1:22a

Today's Reading: Choose a verse or passage from this week's reading that stuck out to you and write it below.

01 | What attribute of the Lord shines through this verse?

02 | Can you find an Old Testament verse that reinforces this attribute?

03 | What do you think the Lord could be teaching you through this verse or passage?

DAY FIVE
REFLECTION AND PRAYER

But be doers of the Word, and not hearers only...
James 1:22a

Today's Reading: Choose a verse or passage from this week's reading that stuck out to you and write it below.

01 | What attribute of the Lord shines through this verse?

02 | Can you find an Old Testament verse this reinforces that attribute?

03 | What do you think the Lord could be teaching you through this verse or passage?

**CROSS-REFERENCING
SCRIPTURE**

While we are reading one book of the Bible, the Bible is ONE sprawling story, full of patterns and hyperlinks. A cross-reference is one such link between verses in the Bible that connects themes, locations, people, phrases, or prophecies. Learning to find them is one way to let Scripture illuminate Scripture. If you ever encounter a difficult or even upsetting passage of the Bible, utilizing Scripture can provide clarity and understanding. If you have a study Bible or commentary, cross-references can be found in the margins of the text. Using Biblestudytools.org is another way to find cross-references. As you get in the habit of cross-referencing, you may even notice your mind providing them for you. You'll read a verse and remember something you read like this new verse and will create your own cross-reference. This is where we can find new joy and excitement in Scripture.

SHEPHERD DOORS

Shepherds created “doors” to the sheepfold out of thorns and brush to keep out thieves and predators.

01 | There are two “I AM” statements in verses 1-21: I am the door of the sheep and I am the Good Shepherd. What does each of these statements reveal about Jesus’ character?

Verse 10 refers to thieves who come to steal, kill, and destroy the sheep. The thief here is not the devil, but rather false teachers, specifically the religious leaders of Jesus’ time. How is the Good Shepherd different than the thief in how they relate to the sheep?

THE GOOD SHEPHERD...	THE THIEF
Lays down his life for the sheep	
Gives life in abundance	
Knows the sheep	
The sheep listen to him	

02 | If the thieves are so dangerous, why are the sheep still tempted to listen to them?

03 | Are there still “thieves” attacking God’s people? If yes, how can Christians spot them? How should we as Christians respond?

04 | What important truth about Jesus is revealed in verse 18? What aspect of the Good Shepherd is confirmed in that verse?

05 | In verse 24, the Jewish leaders finally ask Jesus directly if he is the Christ, the anointed, the Messiah. Why do you think Jesus goes back to talking about sheep? Are the Pharisees Jesus’ sheep?

And many more believed
because of his word.

JOHN 4:41

DAY FOUR
JESUS IS THE GOOD SHEPHERD

No one comes to the Father except through Jesus

Today's Reading: John 10

"I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep.
John 10:14-15

From the beginning to the end of the Bible, the shepherd theme is present. Jacob refers to God the Father as his shepherd in Genesis 48:15 saying, "The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has been my shepherd all my life long to this day." Asaph calls Yahweh the "Shepherd of Israel" in Psalm 80:1. Many of the Patriarchs of the faith were shepherds- Jacob, Moses, David. Isaiah 40:11 prophesied that Messiah will "tend his sheep like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms; he will carry them in his bosom and gently lead those who are with young." The angels delivered the news of Jesus' birth to shepherds in the field. In the final days, Revelation 7:17 says, "For the Lamb in the midst of the throne will be their shepherd, and he will guide them to springs of living water, and God will wipe out every tear from their eyes."

Shepherding was a common occupation in the Middle East at Jesus' time. The terrain of the area had little grass and few dependable sources of water, making sheep the preferred livestock, as they move around with relative ease and require less water than other animals. Therefore, those early Bible readers would have understood the role of a shepherd.

A shepherd's primary job is to protect the sheep. He or she must watch the sheep graze by day and lead them into the sheepfold (think a cave or cavern in the ground that could hold a flock of sheep) at night, keeping watch over the door so intruders could not come in and sheep could not escape.

Read John chapter 10 in its entirety.

05 | Why are the Jewish leaders so bothered by this healing?

06 | What is the newly appointed consequence if anyone confesses Jesus to be the Christ?

GO DEEPER

THE SYNAGOGUE

In that time, the synagogue was the social center for the Jewish people. It was the gathering place. To be cast out of the synagogue would have had significant social and economic consequences to the Jew. The synagogue was also the place to hear Scripture and be in God's community.

Look at the responses to this healing and Jesus' identity from three groups of people- the man born blind, the Pharisees, and the boy's parents. Jot down what is similar or different in their responses.

07 | How do these three responses fit what we're learning about those who walk in the light versus those who walk in darkness?

08 | Spiritual healing would cost this once blind man his social standing and his relationship with his parents. Yet, even in his small faith he can see Jesus is worth that cost. What has faith in Jesus required you to surrender? How has he proven to be worth the cost of following him?

WEEK 2

John 4-5

JESUS CONTINUES HIS MINISTRY

DAY ONE
JESUS CONTINUES HIS MINISTRY

Jesus reveals himself as the healer, both for Spiritual and physical ailments

Today's Reading: John 4-5

And many more believed because of his word.
John 4:41

There are passages in the Bible that stop us in our tracks- those verses that unlock something within our minds and open up a new aspect of our understanding of the Kingdom of heaven. For me, John 4 and 5 are those such passages. Jesus continues to stun me in these chapters, despite having read them many times over. The deeper I dig, the more things I find that these verses stir my affections for him and remind me of how powerful and personal he is.

Read John chapters 4 and 5 in their entirety. May these stories stir up your affections, just like they still do mine.

01 | What did you notice? Choose a few topics, themes, stories, or details that caught your attention.

02 | What do you wonder? Jot down a question or two you had as you read the text.

The stories in these chapters reveal much about the character of Jesus, and in turn the character of God the Father. God does not change; He is the same God today as He was yesterday and as He will be tomorrow. Therefore, His kind pursuit of a shamed woman, a stressed government worker, and a destitute cripple is the same as his kind pursuit of you and of me.

03 | What characteristic of Jesus stood out to you most in these chapters?

04 | Choose one verse that highlights that characteristic and write it below.

02 | How does James' teaching about suffering correspond to Jesus teaching?

Romans 8:28 says, "And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose."

03 | Have you experienced a season of suffering that, although difficult, still displayed the character of God and ultimately resulted in good? In the midst of that season, what did God reveal to you about His character?

04 | What do you notice is different about the healing of this blind man than other healings Jesus has done so far in the book of John and in other gospels?

Though Jesus could have said the word and the man would have regained sight, he instead spits on the ground to make mud and puts the mud on the man's eyes. He then tells the man to go wash in the pool at Siloam. Why? What is gained from those extra steps? Why do you think Jesus did not stick around to see the man gain sight or even to be the first face the man sees?

Remember how Jesus told Nicodemus that unless someone is born of water and Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven. It is interesting to note that first Jesus used water to heal the man's physical blindness and Jesus gave the man his Spirit to heal his spiritual blindness.

ANOTHER SIGN

The healing of the blind man is the fifth of Jesus' signs recorded in the book of John. This sign points to a powerful spiritual message. Jesus giving sight to the blind is another representation of Jesus as the light of the world, bringing the knowledge of God to people walking in ignorance.

DAY THREE
JESUS HEALS A BLIND MAN

He is the light by which we see

Today's Reading: John 9

“As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world.”
John 9:5

Most everyone knows the hymn “Amazing Grace:”

“Amazing grace, how sweet the sound
that saved a wretch like me
I once was lost but now am found,
was blind but now I see.”

Though the lostness and blindness in the song are abstract, what they represent is quite concrete: I once was separated from God and lived in my foolish ways, drowning in anxiety and insecurity. But God opened my eyes to my own depravity and need for a Savior. I surrendered the authority my life over to Him, choosing to follow His way and wait on His timing. And now I dwell secure within the loving relationship between Jesus and me. I was blind but now I see.

That is reason to worship. As the Psalmist says, “I will sing to the LORD as long as I live; I will sing praise to my God while I have my being” (Psalm 104:33).

Chapter 9 tells such a story. Jesus miraculously heals a man's physical and spiritual blindness.

Read John chapter nine in its entirety.

01 | In verse 2, the disciples ask Jesus a difficult question about suffering. What is Jesus' response?

James 1:2 states, “Count it all joy, my brothers, when you meet trials of various kinds.”

GO DEEPER

Read 2nd Kings 17.

This passage of 2nd Kings provides some history on the nation of Samaria. Hoshea was the King over Samaria in Israel, and he was evil in the sight of the Lord. When the king of Assyria captured Samaria and took possession of its cities, God did not defend the people of Israel. In fact, verses 7-8 explain why the capture occurred “...because the people of Israel sinned against the LORD their God, who brought them out of the land of Egypt from under the hand of Pharaoh king of Egypt and had feared other gods and walked in the customs of the nation whom the LORD drove out before the people of Israel, and in the customs that the kings of Israel had practiced.”

So, the Assyrians moved into the cities of Samaria, bringing with them people from other pagan cities.

05 | According to verse 25, did the new residents fear the LORD? How did God respond to their disregard of Him?

Paying attention to verse 28 is crucial to understanding the foundation of the tension between Jews and Samaritans. To relieve them (WHO?) from the lions God sent, the king of Assyria has the idea of bringing back an Israelite priest to resettle in Samaria and teach the new residents the ways of Yahweh.

06 | Reread verse 33. Describe the new way the Samaria residents' worship.

That's right. Now the people occupying Samaria fear Yahweh AND still worship their pagan gods. Eventually, those Israelites intermarry with the Assyrians, while in exile, and the Samaritan people become torn between the worship of God and pagan worship. Jews looked at Samaritans as spiritually inferior. Some influential rabbis, namely Ben-Sira (180 BC) regarded Samaritans as unclean, because of the Gentile blood within their veins.

None of this mindset reflected the Lord's heart, as we will clearly see as we study John 4 deeper tomorrow.

WHO? WHERE? WHY?

Throughout the reigns of Saul, David, and Solomon the twelve tribes of Israel were one kingdom called “Israel.” However, during Solomon's son Rehoboam's reign, the nation was foolishly divided in two with ten tribes comprising the northern kingdom still going by the name Israel and the tribe of Judah and Benjamin comprising the southern kingdom, called Judah. Jerusalem, which David had made the capital of Israel when it was one kingdom, became the capital of the southern kingdom until Judah was captured by the Babylonians. Samaria was the capital of the northern kingdom.

DAY TWO
JESUS IS THE LIVING WATER

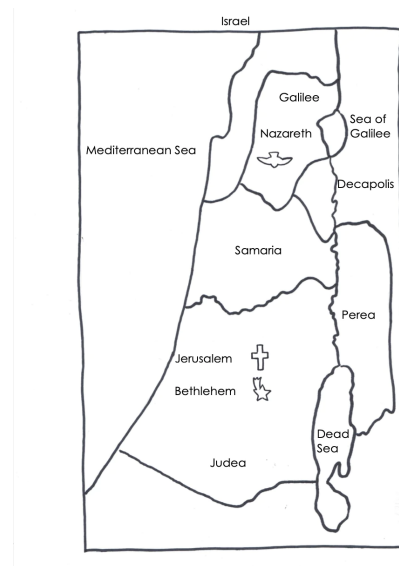
Jesus crosses cultural boundaries to deliver good news to the lost

Today's Reading: John 4: 1-42

Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did.
Can this be the Christ?
John 4:29

In John chapter 3, the teacher of Israel, Nicodemus, could not grasp the upside-down qualifications for entering the kingdom of God. Despite being educated, respected, and wealthy, Nicodemus was baffled that he still did not meet the requirements and needed to be born-again. In chapter four, however, Jesus meets a woman who is in every way opposite to Nicodemus, including how she responds to Jesus' message.

Begin our study today by reading John 4:1-42.



As chapter four begins, Jesus leaves Judea and travels north to Galilee. Geographically, traveling straight from Judea through Samaria to Galilee would have made sense, but many Jews chose to go around Samaria, adding many miles to the journey, because of the tension between Jews and Samaritans. Yet Jesus chose to go through Samaria, stop at this well, and speak to this woman.

01 | List some ways this woman is different from Nicodemus.

Despite the woman's various questions, Jesus directs the conversation back to the topic of water. In John 2, water was transformed into wine, revealing Jesus' divinity. In John 3, water was a picture of cleansing from sin and forsaking one's former life. In John 4, Jesus offers living water welling up inside of the one who believes. Water becomes a symbol of healing in John 5. Are you starting to see a pattern? What is with all of this water?

07 | Reflection: How are you doing at abiding in Jesus' words? What keeps you from abiding in him?

In verse 44, Jesus provides insight into the devil's strategies to keep people in darkness: lies. Jesus says "He was a murderer from the beginning" (John 8:44). Reread Genesis 3 and the serpent's conversation with Eve.

08 | How does this strategy show up "in the beginning"?

09 | Chapter 8 ends with a bold proclamation from Jesus. What does Jesus say in verse 58 and how do the Pharisees respond?

GO DEEPER

Choose a passage from this chapter that you found perplexing. What questions remain unanswered? Write the questions below and ask the Lord to help Scripture interpret Scripture. Look for cross-references (for a reminder on how to do this, see week one, day five) to that perplexing passage and see if any provide clarity to your question. As you dig for answers, journal your thinking below. Let's take the LORD at his word from Deuteronomy 4:29, "But from there you will seek the LORD your God and you will find him, if you search after him with all your heart and all your soul."

01 | What is the reason the Pharisees give for bringing this woman before Jesus?

02 | What does this reveal about their hearts? Is their concern more for the woman's breaking Mosaic law or for trapping Jesus in false doctrine?

03 | How does Jesus adhere to Mosaic law *and* still defend this woman?

Jesus waits until the lights from the temple candles are out to declare his next "I AM" statement: I am the light of the world.

04 | Read Isaiah 42:6-7. List below this passage prophesied about the Messiah. Remember "LORD" stands for God's covenant name. The "you" He is speaking of in this passage is the Messiah.

05 | How is Jesus already fulfilling Isaiah's prophecy?

06 | Look at John 8:30-31. What does Jesus mean by "if you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples"? What does it look like to "abide" in Jesus' word?

Remember how John began his gospel with "In the beginning," words that would instantly remind the reader of the Genesis creation story? In the midst of God was created was the Garden of Eden, a place for Adam and Eve to dwell. The Garden was lush and lovely with a few key distinguishing features- two specific trees and a river. Far too often, we only pay attention to the trees and miss out on the river. Through the center of Eden ran a river, whose water gave life to everything around it. Interestingly, we are told in Revelation that running through the center of Heaven will be the River of Life. In the first book and the last book of the Bible, water is a picture of life.

02 | Given what the Bible says about water, what is the "living water" Jesus can give to this woman that will well up to eternal life?

The "living water" is the blessings that come from the presence of God in the person of Jesus. Even more specifically, Jesus will explain in John 7:38-39, that the spring of living water that wells up inside a person is the Holy Spirit dwelling within a believer. The longing inside a believer to know God personally will be satisfied forever by the spring of living water.

03 | What could Jesus mean when he says the Father is looking for worshippers that will worship in "Spirit and truth"?

God is Spirit. He is not made of physical matter, nor can we see or touch Him, but he is knowable. We sense His presence. We speak to Him regularly. We see evidence of His movements. We grab hold of what we know of Him and cling to His promises. That is how we worship Him in Spirit and truth.

04 | What happens in Samaria thanks to this woman's testimony? What can we learn from her story?

OLD TESTAMENT COVENANTS

A covenant is a contract between two partners with both parties agreeing to conditions. In the Old Testament, God made covenants with Abraham in Genesis 12:2 saying He would make Abraham (then Abram) into a “great nation” and in Genesis 15:7 saying He would lead Abram’s great nation into the “Promised Land.” Other Old Testament patriarchs like Noah, Moses, and David all made covenants with the Lord. In all instances, though God was true to His word and did everything He said he would, the human parties entering into covenant with God could not hold up their end of the agreement perfectly. Each one failed.

GO DEEPER

This phrase “living water” showed up in the Bible long before the book of John, in the Old Testament book Jeremiah. Often called “the weeping prophet,” Jeremiah heralded the words of Yahweh warning the Israelite nation of what would happen if they broke their covenant with God by treating fellow Jews unjustly or worshipping other gods. In chapter two, Jeremiah prophesies Yahweh’s issue with His people:

“Be appalled, O heavens, at this; be shocked, be utterly desolate,’ declares the Lord, ‘for my people have committed two evils: they have forsaken me, the fountain of living waters, and hewed out cisterns for themselves, broken cisterns that can hold no water’.” (Jeremiah 2:12-13)

Although God provided for every need of his people, the Israelites rejected him, running to other idols to satisfy their “thirst,” but finding those idols incapable of satisfying their deeper spiritual needs. In the end, the Israelites did not heed Jeremiah’s warnings and eventually suffered the consequences of enslavement by the Babylonian nation and exile from their land.

Consider the river running through Eden and the fountain of living water the Israelites rejected in lieu of broken waterpots. The water represents life; therefore the cistern represents anything pretending to be a life-giver, but really will only leave them thirsty.

Remember Jesus’ words to the woman of Samaria in John 4:13; everyone who drinks water from the well will be thirsty again. Yes, the well water would satisfy her initial thirst, but she would find herself thirsty again. Likewise, non-life-givers might temporarily meet her need to belong, to be safe, to be seen, but no one but Jesus could satisfy her needs eternally.

05 | What “cisterns” do you tend to cling to in difficult seasons hoping they will satisfy you? For me, the “cisterns” of Instagram, of leisure, or date nights with my husband, and of vacations are all good things but, if I’m not careful, I look to them for satisfaction over Jesus. Ultimately, none of these things can satisfy my spiritual longings like Jesus can.

CISTERNS

A cistern is an underground reservoir for storing water which was collected from rainfall or from a spring. Most homes in Jerusalem had private cisterns, but there were also huge public cisterns. One such cistern was set in the temple area and had capacity to hold over 2 million gallons of water.

DAY TWO THE DARKNESS HATES THE LIGHT

The Pharisee’s misconceptions about righteousness keep them in the dark

Today’s Reading: John 8

Jesus answered, “You know neither me, nor my Father.
If you knew me, you would know my Father also.”
John 8:19b

It is common for families to have traditions- holidays celebrated in similar ways every year, places frequently visited, certain food cooked to commemorate an event. As a culture, there are many holidays we collectively celebrate. Even our church has traditions and events we look forward to each year.

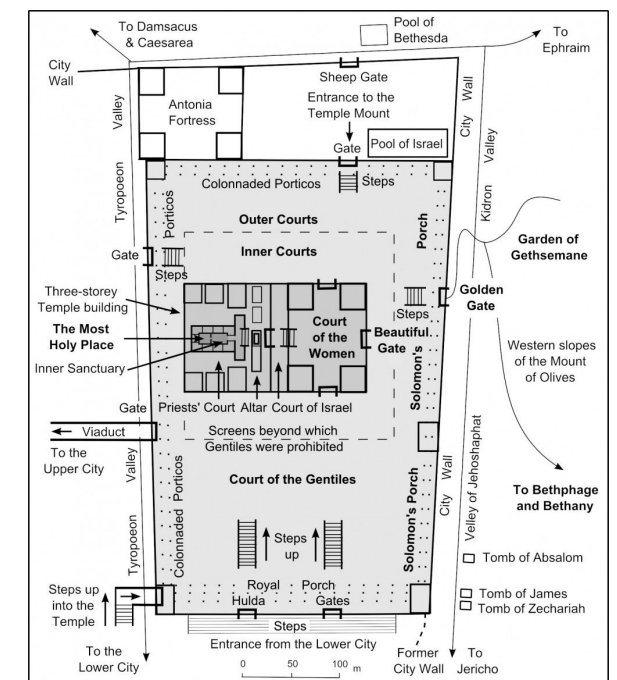
The Jewish people of the Bible- and still today- were immersed in tradition. One such tradition plays a key role in John chapter 8: the Feast of Booths (or Tabernacles, depending on your translation). We remember the Feast of Booths from just a few chapters ago. The purpose of the festival was to remember Yahweh’s provision in the Exodus, specifically delivering the Hebrew people from Egyptian oppression, directing their steps in the wilderness, and providing a secure place to dwell in the Promised Land.

During the feast, large menorahs lit up the temple grounds, symbolizing the “fire by night” Yahweh used to direct the Israelites to the Promised Land (Exodus 13:22). The light also symbolized the promised Messiah who would bring light to the nations (Isaiah 9:2). This light illuminated the entire temple area and would spill out to the space outside the temple.

But as John chapter 8 opens, the festival has just ended. The candles have been snuffed out. The temple grounds are no longer bathed in light.

Read John chapter 8 in its entirety.

The temple was a place for worship. According to custom, Rabbis would not have customarily taught in the temple, but on the steps leading up to the temple. These stairs were called the Southern Steps. Most likely, Jesus was sitting on these steps teaching his disciples when the Pharisees brought him this woman.



GO DEEPER

Let's do a word study on the use of *light* in other places in the New Testament outside of the gospels. To do a word study, look up each of the following passages and make notes about how *light* is used. Is light representative of something? Who is in authority over the light? Is everyone bathed in light or are some in the darkness?

LIGHT PASSAGES:

Acts 9:3-

Acts 26:18-

Romans 13:12-

2 Corinthians 4:6-

2 Corinthians 11:14-

Ephesians 5:8-

1 Thessalonians 5:5-

1 Timothy 6:16-

James 1:17-

1 Peter 2:9-

1 John 1:5-7-

1 John 2:8-10-

As you make notes, connections and patterns will start to emerge. Then it's time to write those connections down, all the while prayerfully asking God to reveal His character to you and why light is an important pattern or theme in His word.

Finish your word study with a final statement about how you see the Lord using *light* in these passages. It can be as simple as, "Light is the representation of _____" or God uses light to reveal "_____."

DAY THREE JESUS HEALS THE OFFICIAL'S SON

#hewasn'teventhere

Today's Reading: John 4: 43-54 ; John 1:1-13

For he himself believed and all his household.
John 4:53b

This portion of chapter 4 focuses on the second of the 7 signs Jesus performed that are recorded in the book of John. Remember, a sign confirmed the authority of the messenger and the validity of the message. These seven signs demonstrate that Jesus is the promised Messiah and that his message of "repent for the Kingdom of God is near" (Luke 17:21) is true. The wild thing about this second miracle is that Jesus wasn't even in the room where the sign took place.

Read John 4:43-54.

Jesus has now encountered a Jewish rabbi, a Samaritan woman, and a Roman official, showing that Jesus pursues people from all nations, from all economic statuses, and from all walks of life.

01 | Did the official have faith in Jesus? What evidence from the text validates your thinking?

02 | How does Jesus heal the official's son? What does that show us about the power of Jesus' words?

Re-read the prologue of John found in verses 1:1-13 that we studied last week.

So much in John's prologue is abstract, or something that cannot be seen, touched, or comprehended easily. Yet, everything that happens in John 4 is the opposite of abstract: it is concrete. It is almost as if the story of the Samaritan woman and the official with faith are the evidence of all the claims John made about Jesus in the prologue.

03 | Make a connection between the abstract truths about Jesus John wrote in chapter 1 and the concrete actions of Jesus in John 4.

THE MISSION OF THE EARLY CHURCH

The mission of the early church was to take the good news of the gospel to Jerusalem and Judea and Samaria to the ends of the earth (Acts 1:8).

ABSTRACT TRUTH	CONCRETE ACTION
The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world (v.9)	Jesus takes the message beyond the Jewish people, now giving "light" to Samaritans and Romans.
The Word was God (v.1)	
In him was life, and the life was the light of men (v.4)	
He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him (v. 11)	
He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him (v. 10)	

GO DEEPER

When Jesus says to the official in verse 48, "Unless you see signs and wonders you will not believe," the "you" he uses is plural in Greek. Think of it as "you all" rather than just referring to the official alone.

04 | What do you think Jesus mean with this rebuke?

Jesus is saying that some people become so enamored with the signs he is performing but fail to see that each one points to him. The "signs" are not a negative thing, far from it. But seeing these miracles should lead the watcher to faith in Jesus.

Have you been caught in this in your own life- becoming more enamored with what Jesus did rather than focusing on who he is?

01 | What did you notice? Choose a few topics, themes, stories, or details that caught your attention.

02 | What do you wonder? Jot down a question or two you had as you read the text.

03 | What characteristic of Jesus stood out to you most in these chapters?

04 | Choose one verse that highlights that characteristic and write it below.

DAY ONE
JESUS INVITES HIS FOLLOWERS INTO RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM

Life and security are found in Jesus

Today's Reading: John 8-10

Again Jesus spoke to them, saying "I am the light of the world.
Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness,
but will have the light of life."
John 8:12

Have you ever been so confident of something only to find out you were, in fact, wrong? Recently I read an article about a myriad of "truths" I grew up believing that actually are entirely false. Though I was taught to listen to classical music because it makes you smarter, no scientific study has found a connection between the two. I grew up believing the "truth" that swallowed gum stays in your stomach for seven years, when actually scientists have proven gum will exit your stomach in the same timeline as any other digested food. Camels do not, in fact, store water in their humps, but rather, they store fat in their humps so they can go long periods of time without eating. Until I was proven wrong, I was so confident I was right.

Yes, all of those examples of false thinking are relatively insignificant in the grand scheme of all there is to know. However, if I'm honest, I've been stuck in false thinking with much more significant topics. Lord, have mercy on me for those hills I was so confident were worth dying on, only to later realize I was wrong.

It's so easy to judge the Pharisees' actions and words in this week's chapters in John. They are so obviously wrong and drowning in their own self-righteousness. But remember Jesus' word to Nicodemus, a prominent Pharisee, in John 3:19: "...the light has come into the world, and people loved the darkness rather than the light because their words were evil. For everyone who does wicked things hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his works should be exposed." The "righteousness" the Pharisees were using to oppress others produced a confidence and pride; a darkness they loved. So, they hated the light.

This week's study is all about spiritual blindness. May the Lord stir our affections for Him and convict our hearts in our study this week.

Begin by reading John chapters 8-10 in their entirety.

DAY FOUR
JESUS HEALS ON THE SABBATH

Jesus defies Jewish law, challenging the accepted theology of the Sabbath

Today's Reading: John 5:1-17

Jesus answered them, "My Father is working until now, and I am working."
John 5:17

Chapters 5 through 10 will take us through the festival cycle and focus on Jesus' public ministry. In chapter 5 where we are focused today, Jesus is back in Jerusalem in and performing another sign.

01 | Review question: what is the purpose of Jesus' signs? What does each one reveal?

Read John 5:1-17.

If your Bible is like mine, John 5:4 is omitted. Have you ever noticed that before? This verse was not in the original scrolls of the book of John when they were discovered. Scholars believe the verse was supplied by a later scribe to provide context for the popular superstition the paralytic must have believed in order to have sat by this pool for so long. The verse says:

"From time to time an angel of the Lord would come down and stir up the waters. The first person into the pool after each such disturbance would be cured of whatever disease he had," (John 5:4)

In other words, the paralytic believed the water would heal him, he waited for thirty-eight years, hoping that one day he would make it into the pool first and believing he would be healed.

Verse 3 tells us that within the five roofed colonnades (think covered porches) of this pool lay a multitude of invalids all wanting to be the first one in the pool. Picture this group of desperate, sick people competing for healing. Let's add one more layer into that situation- no one knew when the pool would be stirred up. It wasn't a daily occurrence. It wasn't a guaranteed yearly occurrence. It could be that someone could wait for years for the pool to finally be stirred up and miss the opportunity to enter. Imagine this pool and this man, who had missed his opportunity who knows how many times, possibly losing all hope of healing. This is the man that Jesus chose to heal.

**HEBREW FESTIVALS
AND THEIR PURPOSES**

01 | Passover and the Festival of Unleavened Bread (remembering)

02 | Festival of Weeks (reaping)

03 | Festival of Trumpets (reunion)

04 | The Day of Atonement (redemption)

05 | Festival of Booths (rejoicing)

WHAT IS A MULTITUDE?

If you're like me, measuring how many people are present at an event is very difficult to do. If my husband asks me how many people came to the party the night before, I guess twenty, but there were seventy-five. I don't know what this is all about. But I do know that we can look at the word "multitudes" and just guess a group of people were present. But this is no group. The other times we see "multitudes" in the Bible should give us a hint. There was a "multitude of the heavenly host" that appeared to the shepherds the night Jesus was born (Luke 2:13). There was a multitude of fish caught in John 21:6, so many that "they were not able to haul it in because of the great number of fish." A "multitude" is not a small group, a bunch of people, or a gathering of sorts, but rather a massive collection of people.

#worstwaitingroomever

OLD TESTAMENT LINK

Read Deuteronomy 2:14.

02 | How long did the Israelites wander in the wilderness? What are some similarities about their deliverance and the paralytic's healing?

In John 5:6, Jesus asks the paralytic if he wants to be healed, or to translate it literally from the Greek, "Do you want to be made whole?" The man does not respond with a "yes" or "no" answer.

03 | What is his response? What does his response reveal about his heart?

04 | Read Luke 5:30-31. What does Jesus mean when he says "Those who are well have no need of a physician"?

WEEK 4

John 8-10

**JESUS INVITES FOLLOWERS INTO
RELATIONSHIP WITH HIM**

Again Jesus spoke to them, saying “I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will not walk in darkness, but will have the light of life.”

JOHN 8:12

Humanity’s great problem seems to be one of two things: not knowing when we are sick or not wanting to be healed. Remember, Jesus said that some will love the darkness and not want to enter the light for fear of their acts being exposed. Yet there is another group of people who are in the darkness and cannot yet see the light. To which group does this man belong?

Notice where the paralytic’s attention was- the water. If he could just get into the water, he could be healed and whole. If he could just get off the mat and into the water, everything would be solved. Little does he know, the Creator of water itself, the giver of living water, is standing in front of him.

05 | Can you relate at all? Consider a time when your mind was focused more on the provision than the Provider, or more on the healing than the healer. What did you learn in that season? How did God get your attention?

THE SABBATH

Jesus then heals the paralytic man, the third sign in the book of John. Consider the miracle taking place in that moment! Muscles long atrophied sprung to life. The man’s brain knew how to make his legs not only stand up but walk. And yet, no faith was expressed before the miracle took place.

And then there is controversy. “Now that day was the Sabbath.” The fourth commandment God gave to Moses as detailed in Exodus 20 commanded Jews to honor the Sabbath day and keep it holy.

“Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore, the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.”
(Exodus 20:9-11)

DAY FIVE
REFLECTION AND PRAYER

But be doers of the Word, and not hearers only...
James 1:22a

Today's Reading: Choose a verse or passage from this week's reading that stuck out to you and write it below.

01 | What attribute of the Lord shines through this verse?

02 | Can you find an Old Testament verse that reinforces this attribute?

03 | What do you think the Lord could be teaching you through this verse or passage?

GO DEEPER

Reread John 5:6. The English word translated “knew” in verse six is the Greek word “ginosko.” It means “to have experiential knowledge, to perceive, to come to know”. This is the same word used in Jesus’ conversation with Nathaniel in John 1:48 and with the Samaritan woman in John 4:18.

09 | Read both of those verses again. What is revealed about Jesus’ interactions with people in all three of these passages?

DAY FIVE
FATHER-SON RELATIONSHIP

Jesus explains his authority and his unity with God the Father

Today's Reading: John 5:19-46

For whatever the Father does, that the Son does likewise.
John 5:19b

Today's passage is a heady one, but theologically powerful. Don't get discouraged or give up if after your first reading of the passage you feel a bit clueless. When we approach Scripture, especially difficult passages, we ask the Holy Spirit for guidance because Jesus said the Holy Spirit will lead his disciples (that includes you and me) into all truth (John 16:13). So, do not shrink back from these difficult passages or think they have nothing to offer you in your season of life. I am confident this particular passage will solidify your understanding of who Jesus is, who God is, and the nature of their relationship.

Start by reading John 5:19-24. Today let's focus on this larger passage in smaller sections.

The conflict between the Jewish leaders and Jesus is intensifying, and John 5:18 explains why.

Jesus is breaking the Sabbath.
Jesus is calling God his own Father.
Jesus is making himself equal with God.

The Jewish leaders want to kill Jesus, to silence his ministry. Jesus responds to their frustration with more teaching.

01 | From verses 19-24, list what you learned about God the Father. What does God the Father have authority over?

02 | From verses 19-24, list what you learned about the Son. What authority has the Father given the Son?

Reread verses 21 and 24.

GO DEEPER

Read Acts 2 which details the coming of the Holy Spirit on the early Church. In the middle of the passage, Peter stands up and delivers a message about how a Messianic prophecy delivered by the prophet Joel was fulfilled that day.

07 | List some of the differences between the disciples' mindset, words, and actions in John 7 versus in Acts 2. How are their actions affected by knowing the fullness of Jesus' mission on earth as opposed to what they knew in part in John 7.

There is division among the people in how to respond to Jesus. Some say he is the Prophet. Some say he is the Christ. Some say he is deceiving the crowd. Notice though, in verse 49 who speaks up for Jesus!

03 | What do Nicodemus' words reveal about who he believes Jesus is?

04 | Let's review: What ran through the middle of the Garden of Eden and will run through the middle of heaven?

Through the center of the Garden of Eden was a river that gave life to everything around it. Eden was the place where God's presence dwelled with mankind. But we know the story. Eve and Adam sinned against God, taking what wasn't theirs to take. They wanted what the serpent had promised. They wanted to be "like God" (Genesis 3:4). They ate of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, and realized that what they thought would satisfy their longings only left them devastated.

As part of their punishment, Adam and Eve are sent out from the Garden of Eden, away from the presence of God, away from the lush and lovely vegetation, and away from the river.

Reread Jesus' words in John 7:37-39.

05 | Where have we read about "living water" before?

06 | Compare the two statements about "living water" in John 4:10 and John 7:38. What is Jesus saying about the rivers of living water? How does someone access them?

That river is Eden imagery! God's presence dwelled with mankind in Eden and now through Jesus, his Holy Spirit dwells within anyone who believes! God is bringing us back to Eden.

03 | How are these two verses related? How does verse 24 illuminate what is said in verse 21? What insights into verse 21 does verse 24 offer us?

God the Father gave Jesus the Son the authority to give life to whom he will (v. 21). The way to access that life Jesus gives is by hearing his word and believing in him (v. 24). If you believe in Jesus for eternal life, you will pass "from death to life," (v. 24).

Now, keep reading now John 5:25-29.

The dead who hear the voice of the Son of God and pass into life (v. 25) are nonbelievers who come to faith and receive eternal life. They walk out of darkness and into the light. They leave bondage and are set free.

THE HOUR IS COMING

"The hour is coming" is a phrase Jesus used frequently in the book of John. It refers to the future resurrection.

See also Matthew 24:26 and John 12:23.

Verse 26 says the Son has life IN himself.

04 | What do verses 25 and 26 mean? How do these reinforce what Jesus said to Nicodemus, the woman of Samaria, the official, and the paralytic that we have studied so far?

Finish reading John 5:30-47. Stick with this now; understanding is worth the work of getting there!

04 | This section focuses on the relationship God the Father and God the Son enjoy. List what you see described about their relationship.

God the Father's will dictates Jesus the Son's actions (v. 30). The Father bears witness about the Son (v. 37) by sending John the Baptist to bear witness about the Son (vs.33-35) and then Jesus' actions bear witness about the Father (v. 36). Jesus came to earth in the Father's name (v.43). Coming "in the name" of God the Father means that Jesus came as a representative of the entire character of the Father. He is the physical manifestation of God the Father. They are one and also distinct from each other.

Consider Jesus' words:

"You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me... Jesus later says. "If you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me" (vs. 39, 46).

05 | What is Jesus saying about the Old Testament?

GO DEEPER

Remember, the Bible is made up of sixty-six books but tells one big story. Jesus teaches us that the Old Testament is pointing to him, the Messiah, the Lamb of God, the Savior of the world.

If that doesn't stir you up, read this all again.

DAY FOUR **RIVERS OF LIVING WATER**

Jesus further explains how we have access to the water

Today's Reading: John 7

The one who speaks on his own authority seeks his own glory,
but the one who seeks the glory of him who sent him is true,
and in him there is no falsehood.

John 7:18

While our calendar marks twelve months and follows the seasons of weather, the Jewish calendar centered around annual feasts, three of which asked for all Jews to converge in Jerusalem to celebrate: the Passover, the Feast of Weeks (also known as the Pentecost), and the Feast of Booths (also known as the Feast of Tabernacles). Each feast celebrated one of Yahweh's past provisions and looked ahead to the arrival of Messiah, the anointed deliverer. John 7 takes place during the Feast of Booths. During the feast, the Jewish people would live in shelters (booths) to remember God's faithfulness to Israel during her years of wandering in the wilderness. It was also a time to celebrate the harvest. The festival lasted for eight days, Sabbath to Sabbath. Yet, in the midst of ceremony and merriment in this year's celebration is the underlying growing tension between the Jewish authorities and Jesus.

Begin by reading John chapter 7 in its entirety.

01 | What does Jesus mean by "My time has not yet come" (v.6)? To what "time" is he referring?

Even though Jesus needs to keep a low profile so as to not incite an arrest before it is time, the disciples are free to go into town and celebrate. In verses 14-23, the Jewish leaders reaction to Jesus is in stark contrast to that of the woman in Samaria or the official in chapter four.

02 | What is their accusation and how does Jesus respond?

GO DEEPER

Jesus is the living water (John 4:10) and the living bread (John 6:51); he is the giver and sustainer of life. Jesus' teaching in this section is very difficult to understand, especially because he speaks in symbolic terms. Because we know the end of the story, we can see how the "Eating of his flesh and drinking of his blood" (vs. 53) is communion language. We partake in communion to celebrate and remember the saving work Jesus did for each one of us on the cross.

Yet, to the Jewish people hearing Jesus's teaching for the first time, this was a dangerous conversation because they interpreted everything Jesus said literally, rather than figuratively. In fact, verse 66 says that many of his disciples turned back and no longer walked with Jesus. Yet, when Jesus asks the twelve if they wished to leave as well, Peter has the best response.

08 | Write out Peter's response in verses 68 and 69.

09 | What would your response be? Why do you continue to follow Jesus even in seasons of trial or doubt? If he asked you if you "want to go away as well" (vs.67), what would your response be?

TEACHING NOTES AND PRAYER

Whoever believes in me,
as the Scripture says,
“Out of his heart will flow
rivers of living water.”

JOHN 7:38

Remember what Yahweh said to Moses in Exodus 3:15? “This is my name forever...” The disciples should not be afraid because Jesus, the physical manifestation of “I AM,” is with them.

Following this story is the first of seven “I am” statements Jesus makes and John records. Each statement focuses on an aspect of Jesus’ character, but also reveals the Father’s character. Jesus is God and distinct from God. If you know him, you know the Father. With each “I am” statement, we learn about the character of Jesus and God the Father. Prepare your heart, dear sister. You will be astounded by the person of our King.

03 | Review: What did Jesus tell the official in John 4:48 about seeing signs?

04 | In what way are those who followed Jesus to Capernaum in Chapter 6 confirming what Jesus said to the official in Chapter 4?

05 | How are the “living water” (John 4:10) and the “bread of life” (John 6:35) similar?

While the Israelites wandered in the wilderness with no grocery store in sight, Yahweh sustained them by raining manna from the sky each day (Numbers 13). Jesus says in John 6:32-33, “Truly, truly, I say to you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.”

06 | What is significant about Jesus saying he is the true bread?

07 | Connect this to what John writes in John 1:9, when he says Jesus is the true light. How are these two “trues” similar?

DAY THREE
JESUS IS THE BREAD OF LIFE

Jesus establishes himself as the provider for every need

Today's Reading: John 6:16-71

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

While the feeding of the 5,000+ was a very public sign, Jesus walking on the water was witnessed only by the disciples. To the Ancient Hebrews, the sea often represented disorder, evil spirits, and danger; yet this sign reveals Jesus in authority over that chaos. Even the wind and waves obey him. Go ahead and read John 6: 22-71.

In the midst of the darkness, with the wind swirling around them and the waves tossing their boat from side to side, the disciples are exhausted. Rightfully so. We learn in Matthew's account (Matthew 14:25) that Jesus does not walk out onto the water until the fourth watch of the night, which would have been anywhere from 3:00-5:00 am. This means that what should have been an hour-long boat ride from one side of the Sea of Galilee to another had become a battle with the sea lasting up to nine hours. They're exhausted and afraid when they see a figure walking on the water, coming directly toward them.

Yet, Jesus says, "It is I; do not be afraid" (John 6:20). These words, "It is I" are "ego eimi" in Greek, translated literally as "I am." Sound familiar? The reason the disciples should not be afraid is because "I AM" is with them.

THE SEVEN "I AM" STATEMENTS

I AM THE...

01 | Bread of life

02 | Light of the world

03 | Door of the sheep

04 | Resurrection and the life

05 | Good Shepherd

06 | Way, the truth, and the life

07 | True vine

01 | When Jesus walks on the water, he demonstrates his authority over the storm. Considering that, why did he allow the disciples to battle the storm for so long?

02 | Think about the timeline of this. The disciples just witnessed an astounding miracle. Imagine how their faith must be ignited. What could be the purpose in allowing them to go through such a challenging trial?

WEEK 3

John 6-7

JESUS DOES THE IMPOSSIBLE

DAY ONE
JESUS DOES THE IMPOSSIBLE

#reallifesuperhero

Today's Reading: John 6-7

Whoever believes in me, as the Scripture says,
"Out of his heart will flow rivers of living water."
John 7:38

In John 5:46, Jesus says to the Jewish authorities, "For if you believed Moses, you would believe me; for he wrote of me." Moses is a patriarch, or father, of the faith, both for Jews and for Christians. The Jewish authorities set their hope on Moses. Yet, Jesus says that Moses was writing about him! This week's reading harkens back to Moses and the story of the Exodus quite a lot. So, before we begin reading, let's brush up on our Exodus knowledge.

The book of Exodus recounts the story of the Israelites' deliverance from bondage in Egypt through the person of Moses. God uses Moses as his mouthpiece to convince an oppressive ruler, Pharaoh, to let the Israelites go and free them from their slavery. God promises the Israelites that through Moses, He will bring them into the Promised Land, but because of their disobedience and distrust, they first have to wander through the wilderness for thirty-eight years before they make it to the Promised Land. God sustains them through it all.

Jesus' words in John 6 remind us of Moses' early interactions with God the Father. While Moses is in the wilderness of Midian one day, the angel of the LORD appears to him in a "flame of fire out of the midst of a bush," (Exodus 3:2). The LORD tells Moses about the Israelites' bondage and of His plan to use Moses to deliver them from the hand of Pharaoh. When Moses gives God many reasons why he is the wrong guy for the job, the Lord tells him "But I will be with you..." (Exodus 3:12a). Moses then asks God a very important question:

"If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?" God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." And he said, "Say this to the people of Israel: 'I AM has sent me to you,' God also said to Moses, "Say this to the people of Israel; 'The LORD, the God of your fathers, the god of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.' This is my name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations."
(Exodus 3:13-15)

I AM. There are no vowels in the Hebrew alphabet, so this name of God is written out as YHWH, or in English, Yahweh: God's covenant name. This name was so sacred to the Jewish people that they wouldn't say it out loud or even write it, unless it was

GO DEEPER

There are many parallels to be drawn between Jesus' feeding of the 5,000 in John 6 and God providing manna for the Israelites in Numbers 11.

05 | Read the account in Numbers 11 and list the connections you see.

06 | Considering all of these connections, what is being revealed about Jesus in John 6? How does this solidify what Jesus said to the Jewish authorities in John 5:39?

Begin by reading all four accounts of the feeding of the 5,000 as listed in today's reading.

Now go back through and look for details that are included in all four accounts and the details that are only in one or two gospels. Make sure you include which gospel included the details.

DETAILS ALL GOSPELS INCLUDE	DETAILS IN ONLY 1 OR 2 GOSPELS
The amount of loaves and fish (5 and 2)	Mark includes that the people "ran on foot from all the towns and got there ahead of them" (Mark 6:33)

02 | How do the details included in each gospel speak to the intended audience?

03 | Does this sign result in an expression of faith either before or after the sign commences?

04 | What is the number of baskets of leftover loaves and fish? Does that number remind you of anything? (If you can't think of anything yet, the answer will be in this week's teaching!)

HOW MANY PEOPLE WERE THERE?

The number 5,000 would have only accounted for the men present at the event. Considering that women and children would have also been present but not included in that number, scholars estimate that Jesus fed up to 20,000 people with five barley loaves and two fish.

absolutely necessary. In your Bibles, if you see "LORD" in all capitals, it is Yahweh, God's covenant name. I AM. It means God is self-existent, uncaused, and uncreated. He depends on no other source for existence. "I AM" denotes an eternity to his existence. He was and is and is to come. In Hebrew, the word for god is elohim. It means deity. God is a title, not a name. God the Father's name is Yahweh: I AM.

God says this is His name forever. The apostle John includes seven of Jesus' I AM statements to further show that Jesus and God share the same character. Each I AM statement sheds more light on both the person of Jesus and the person of God. So as we dig into his word this week, keep in mind the character of the God you are studying. We do not approach Him with fear or timidity, because we know He is a God who cares deeply for us.

Read John 6-7 in its entirety.

01 | What did you notice? Choose a few topics, themes, stories, or details that caught your attention.

02 | What do you wonder? Jot down a question or two you had as you read the text.

03 | What characteristic of Jesus stood out to you most in these chapters?

04 | Choose one verse that highlights that characteristic and write it below.

GO DEEPER

Take one of the questions you wrote down for your “wonders”. Rather than waiting for my answers to the questions, let Scripture interpret Scripture. Look for cross references to that perplexing passage and see if any provide clarity to your question. As you dig for answers, journal your thinking below. Let’s take the LORD at his word from Deuteronomy 4:29, “But from there you will seek the LORD your God and you will find him, if you search after him with all your heart and with all your soul.”

DAY TWO JESUS FEEDS 5000

No one went away hungry

Today’s Reading: John 6:1-15, Matthew 14:13-21, Mark 6:30-44, and Luke 9:10-17

And when they had eaten their fill, he told the disciples,
“Gather up leftover fragments, that nothing may be lost.”
John 6:12

Last week we read in John 4 when Jesus told the official, “Unless you see the signs and wonders you will not believe” (verse 49). Remember “you” is plural in that statement. *You all* want to see miracles or *you all* will not believe. In John 6, a large crowd- a multitude, if you will- saw the signs and wanted more. So they follow Jesus and the disciples to the other side of the Sea of Galilee.

Let’s review.

O1 | What is the purpose of signs? This is the third sign of Jesus in the book of John. What were the first two signs, and what did they reveal about Jesus?

There are four books in the Bible that give accounts of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. We call them the gospels, and each is named after its author. Each one of the gospel writers chose to emphasize certain events and teachings in their books, mainly because each writer had a specific audience. Matthew directed his gospel to the deeply religious Jews. His gospel draws out the many prophecies of Messiah that Jesus fulfilled. Mark wrote his gospel mainly for the Romans. The Romans would have had little knowledge of the Hebrew scriptures, but they did understand power. Mark’s account uses the word “and” 1,375 times to create a non-stop, action-packed picture of Jesus, the almighty King. Luke’s gospel is directed to his own people, the Greeks, who valued culture, beauty, and truth. His account is the most detailed and shows Jesus to be the source of all truth. John’s gospel is for everyone- all nations, all backgrounds, all cultures, all economic statuses, men and women, young and old, all people.

There are few events and teachings that all four gospels include, one being this particular sign of Jesus, the feeding of the 5,000. While the miracle is the same, the. So, we do not need to read these stories and look for contradictions, but rather we can read them all to get a fuller picture of what happened.